

News & Noteworthy

In Uganda, new \$2.85 million grant supports demobilization and reinsertion of over 28,000 reporters

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The Ugandan government and the World Bank have recently signed an agreement worth US\$2.85 million to support the country's efforts in the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatant "reporters".



This will be the first phase of an *Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project*, with a total grant amount of US\$8.2 million through 2010. The project is currently funded by five donors: Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, with other agencies (USAID and UNDP) providing parallel support. Additional donors are expected to join in funding in a second phase.

The project is the main funding source for one of the components of the Government's Peace, Recovery and Development Program (PRDP) for Northern Uganda.

It is also working closely with several UN agencies (OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP), NGOs and other partners throughout the country.

The 1st phase of the project will fund the Uganda Amnesty Commission (see box 1) to provide social and economic reintegration assistance to former rebel combatants, in order to aid their peaceful reintegration into local communities. The 2nd phase will support the demobilization and repatriation of combatants yet to come forward as reporters. This caseload of reporters

Box 1

The **Uganda Amnesty Commission (AC)** was established by an act of Parliament in 2000 to support the return to civilian life of "reporters" – those individuals associated with rebel groups who renounce and abandon involvement in armed rebellion and apply to the Government of Uganda for amnesty.

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would include members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as well as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and other existing groups eligible for amnesty. A total of 28,800 reporters are targeted by the project, but their families and communities will also draw benefits from the various activities, which will contribute to consolidating peace, and to supporting reconciliation and enhanced security throughout the country.

The project builds on the activities of a previous project financed by the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) and implemented by the Amnesty Commission between January 2005 and June 2007. Financed by a US\$4.2 million grant, the MDRP project achieved significant results: more than 14,000 ex-combatants and collaborators received reinsertion support.

A survey¹ of 2,000 male and female LRA reporters conducted in 2005 in Gulu, Pader and Kitgum districts found that reporters were overwhelmingly positive about their experience with the amnesty process: 99% said that the amnesty conditions had fully met their expectations.

The survey also indicated that reporters had high levels of trust in others in the communities where they returned. However, they felt as though other people within the community did not tend to trust them as much. This suggested a continued need for reconciliation, trust building and stigma prevention activities at the community level, which has been included as a component in the new project (see box 2).

Box 2: Uganda Emergency Demobilization and Reintegration Project

The project has five components:

- 1. Demobilization and repatriation of members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF):** including post-disarmament assembly, transport, food, shelter and medical care, registration, information and sensitization, and transfer to Uganda.
- 2. Reinsertion of new and back-logged caseload of "reporters"** (former rebel combatants and collaborators); involving the short-term support for ex-combatants to return to communities through provision of basic items, cash grants, and interim care in coordination with partners who facilitate re-entry of "reporters" and associated populations.

¹ Carried out for the Amnesty Commission by Nordic Consulting group. Key results available at the following link: http://www.mdrp.org/PDFs/MDRP_DissNote2_0208.pdf

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3. **Support for socio-economic reintegration of up to 28,800 “reporters”**; including counseling, referral and follow-up services to ensure that reporters have equal access to education, livelihood and other services available within the community - with special attention to the needs of the vulnerable including women, children and disabled.

4. **Dialogue and reconciliation promotion** through the dissemination of information about the Amnesty process and reporter return. This component aims to encourage social reintegration, reconciliation and trust-building of ex-combatant and host community populations to support local development

5. **Project implementation and capacity building** for early implementation support and preliminary technical preparation.

“This new grant is a direct follow-up to the previous MDRP operation. It will support the Amnesty Commission in dealing with the remaining caseload of ex-combatants”, said Sean Bradley, Senior Social Development Specialist at the World Bank who co-manages the project. "The work that the Amnesty Commission is doing with support from donors gives us high hopes that Uganda can move steadily toward reconciliation and peace, paving the way for economic development" added Bradley.

For more information on MDRP, please visit www.mdrp.org or contact Bruno Donat, Communications Officer, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank at info@mdrp.org.