

## MDRP engages in outreach in Uganda, the UK, France and Belgium

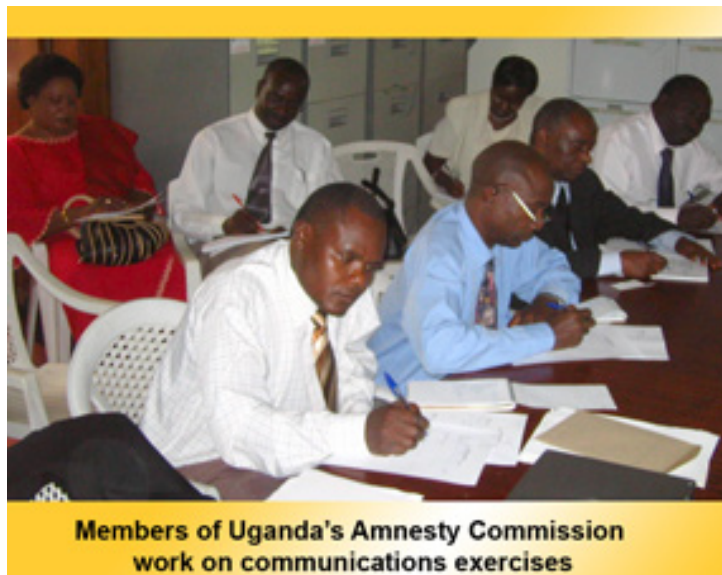
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To improve communications and increase awareness of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP), MDRP Secretariat staff recently conducted consultations and briefings with colleagues and press in Uganda, the United Kingdom, France and Belgium.

Bruno Donat, MDRP Secretariat Communications Officer described the outreach work as “highly valuable.”

“Improving our collaboration with colleagues and partners depends upon our listening carefully to their ideas, questions and concerns, and establishing good relationships with them,” he explained.

During the first leg of the trip, staff of the Uganda’s Amnesty Commission and the MDRP Secretariat exchanged communications experiences and also discussed the Commission’s strategy on their information and sensitization work.



**Members of Uganda's Amnesty Commission work on communications exercises**

The Commission has planned, among other activities, to diffuse a series of radio spots and features targeting several audiences, including combatants who wish to demobilize and embrace amnesty under the Amnesty Act of 2000.

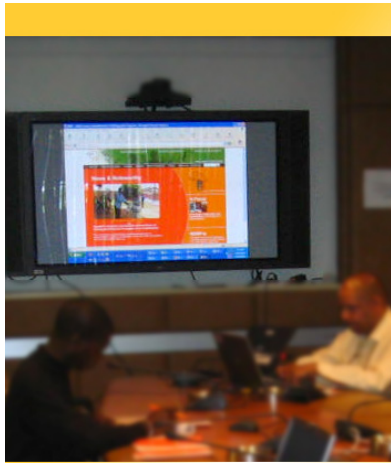
In Europe, the MDRP Secretariat gave a panel at Chatham House in London and also held a series of briefings with the press, and World Bank and NGO colleagues in Paris and Brussels.

These were arranged in partnership with MDRP’s focal point for the government of the UK, Patrick Merienne, European Commission focal point Rory Keane, and Program Manager Nathalie Mendes of Save the Children in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as with the assistance of numerous World Bank External Affairs-Europe staff.

# News & Noteworthy

Audiences were given an overview of MDRP's background, progress and challenges, and had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss particular issues of interest or concern.

Many participants asked about MDRP's demobilization and reintegration (D&R) figures. They pointed out that numbers only indicate who has gone through the program, but may not indicate how well D&R activities were implemented.



**A press encounter  
in Paris**

MDRP staff fully acknowledged that numbers are indeed only one indicator of progress, and that accurate data can be very hard to obtain, both for practical and political reasons. However, they maintained that the successful demobilization of some 235,000 individuals as of April 31, 2006 was nonetheless a significant accomplishment.

“And among them are a significant number of children,” added Donat. “Take the DRC, for example, where 18,000 children formerly associated with armed forces have been demobilized. Many of those children have lived through terrible things.”

Briefing participants also discussed the quality of reintegration and the timeframe of such activities. MDRP staff noted that there is always room for improvement, and that MDRP will support reintegration activities through the life of the program.

In sum, the MDRP outreach sessions were very fruitful. Press encounters allowed MDRP to raise awareness about its D&R activities in Central Africa.

Meetings with NGO colleagues provided a venue for increased exchange and discussion about further collaboration and communication in the future.

European Commission MDRP focal point, Rory Keane, commenting on one session in Belgium, said, “The MDRP outreach with civil society facilitated a two-way information flow. It enabled MDRP and NGOs to cross-reference DDR experiences and in this way further refine DDR best practice for the greater Great Lakes region.”

*For more information on MDRP, please visit [www.mdrp.org](http://www.mdrp.org) or contact Bruno Donat, Communications Officer, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank at [info@mdrp.org](mailto:info@mdrp.org).*