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**Chapter 11**

# Juggling between Social Obligations and Personal Benefit in Western Côte d'Ivoire

## How Do Ex-combatants Spend Their Cash Allowance?

Magali Chelpi-den Hamer

The use of cash transfers in aid programming has received growing support in recent years despite the fear of misuse and loss of control. There is one sector in particular in which its use has rarely been questioned: in processes dealing with the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants (commonly known as DDR). The use of cash has become increasingly widespread in this field, yet few grounded studies systematically document its diversity of impacts. Cash transfers are sometimes used in the disarmament stage to "buy back" weapons, in the hope of reducing the number of guns and ammunition in circulation, and they are also sometimes used in the reinsertion/reintegration stage, with the aim to facilitate ex-combatants' return to civilian life. What lies behind these practices is the assumption that giving money to ex-combatants can have a positive and direct effect on their lives and will prevent them from taking up weapons again. Based on a careful examination of over one hundred individual testimonies collected in western Côte d'Ivoire between December 2006 and July 2007, this chapter examines how the financial incentives distributed in the summer of 2006 to pro-governmental demobilized militias were spent, providing an empirical base on the subject.

### Cash Transfers in the Ivorian DDR: Process and Specificities in a Nutshell

The Ivorian DDR process planned to use cash transfers during the reinsertion stage with the intended aim of facilitating ex-combatants' transitioning from soldiering to civilian life. The

process was designed in line with what was agreed upon in Linas-Marcoussis in 2003, which was several times reiterated in follow-up agreements. At the time of my fieldwork, the National DDR Commission (CNDDR) was the governmental institution mandated to implement the Ivorian DDR program with the help of the United Nations peacekeeping mission.[1] Official parties were included in the process (which consisted of the Ivorian army and recognized rebel groups), as well as paramilitary and militia groups, which had been active on both sides. Inclusion in the DDR process was based on lists of recruits provided by the respective chiefs of staff, checked by the CNDDR. In line with the national plan, demobilized combatants were entitled to a financial package of 499,500 CFA francs (equivalent to €760 / $940 U.S.), locally designated as *filet de sécurité* (this term literally means "net of safety" and is the term locally used in official wording). The financial package was scheduled to be disbursed in three installments: 25 percent paid upon demobilization, 25 percent paid forty-five days later, and 50 percent paid ninety days after demobilization. It was supposed to cover for ex-combatants' basic expenses for the first six months following their demobilization, helping them face the immediate challenges encountered after their return into their community of origin.

In the summer of 2006 (July–August), after a series of political stalls and false starts, pro-governmental militia members started an official demobilization process that included cash transfers.[2] The cash was handed over in three installments, as initially planned (only the third installment was delayed), in Duékoué, western Côte d'Ivoire, under the supervision of the CNDDR and the UN peacekeeping mission. A peculiarity of the Ivorian situation was that the majority of pro-governmental militias undergoing the process were local recruits and had already spontaneously demobilized in 2004–2005 and resumed personal activity. The bulk of the weapons had in fact been collected by their leaders during the course of 2005, when the military

situation had stabilized, for storage in local arsenals, ready for a potential redistribution should the situation deteriorate or for a hand-over in case of sustainable peace. Right before the start of the militias' demobilization in the summer of 2006, militia leaders had surrendered batches of weapons to peacekeeping forces as a sign of goodwill. Most of the weapons collected during the summer demobilization operation, however, were defective, and the ratio of combatant per surrendered weapon/ammo was also very low. This situation led the DDR division of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to suspend the demobilization operation in the beginning of August. Nevertheless, 981 militia members had already been registered and had received financial compensation. Out of those, five hundred could enter a follow-up reinsertion program, run by the German organization GTZ-IS,[3] to benefit from individual advice and socioeconomic support. This chapter specifically analyzes the use of cash of these low-ranked demobilized militia members one year after receiving their financial compensation. One hundred individuals were interviewed using two GTZ-IS reinsertion centers as premises for conducting the meetings. Respondents were not observed in situ, when they received their cash transfers, or when they spent them; instead, they were asked to reconstruct their perceptions of past events by taking their life story as a point of departure.

**How Were the Cash Allowances Spent?**

Among the interviewed recruits, genuine belief that they had earned the right to compensation was a recurring litany throughout the discussions. "We lost five years of our time." "We've been delayed." There was something intrinsic to these statements, namely, the expression of a certain conception of fairness and the implicit claim that financial compensation was due, regardless of the outcome of the conflict. The majority of militia members emphasized the fact that, despite

having been called to fight for their country, they had gained little from it, and they had mainly lost their time in the movement instead of being able to work elsewhere. They were therefore entitled to a proper reward for the services rendered. Some threatened to return to violence if not satisfied, but such claims were mostly rhetorical since most of them had already put down their guns and were no longer armed.

While most low-ranked recruits saw financial compensation as a back-payment for their services, military leaders, and especially the high-ranking ones, had a different perspective: they mainly used it as a carrot—an incentive—to retain their troops, especially after it was institutionalized in the national DDR plan. Indeed, the prospect of getting no financial reward at all would probably have led many recruits to abandon their ranks after a certain time, especially among the western militias, who were in this respect much freer than their rebel counterparts. But the prospect of being on the official demobilization list, hence the prospect of potentially being eligible to receive a cash allowance, had the reverse effect of maintaining recruits' loyalty.

As already noted above, the financial incentive distributed in the summer of 2006 to the 981 militia members was dispatched in three installments: the first installment was supplied in July 2006, right after their official demobilization (125,000 CFA francs);[4] the second installment (same amount) was dispatched mid-September; and the third installment (249,500 CFA francs)[5] was distributed at the end of November.

The three interview fragments presented below show different examples of use of the financial incentives received:

> The first installment, I shared with my family and my in-laws. I kept a little, but not much. Most of the money was used to pay miscellaneous expenses. The

> second installment, I gave 50,000 to my wife for her small business. I also set up a *cabine* [local phone booth] for my little brother but he screwed everything up. I used the last installment to invest in my own business, a *maquis* [local eating place] and to improve my home.
>
> I gave the money to my family, and I also paid for my uncle's medical expenses. I also gave petty cash to friends I had in the militia group, who were not yet demobilized. I also bought a plot of land in Guiglo, near the timber industry for 50,000 CFA francs. I am currently building my own house. I purchased wood from the timber company, to make charcoal, and I opened a bank account at the local post.
>
> I improved my home. I set up a water tap for 58,000 CFA francs and I purchased an electricity counter at 72,000 CFA francs. I helped my brother start his own hevea field and I gave him 125,000 CFA francs. I also gave petty cash to my family.

As seen in the testimonies, respondents used their safety net very differently, constantly juggling between social obligations and personal benefit. A rough categorization of expenses is presented below. The findings are grouped into five categories of expenses: (1) the reimbursement of creditors, (2) response to familial demands, (3) investments, (4) dealing with social events (such as medical expenses, funerals, home improvements), and (5) reward to the military leader.

*Reimbursing Creditors*

Reimbursing creditors was not an uncommon answer, and many respondents said that upon receipt of the cash, one of the first things they did was to pay the debts they—or their family—had accumulated during the war period. One respondent had accumulated as much as 325,000 CFA francs in debt since the beginning of the war. He had not paid his house rent for several months (which had put him 25,000 CFA francs in debt every month), not to mention the unpaid utilities bills (electricity/water) that had accumulated over the years. For him, it was important to pay his creditors first since he feared they would have gone to the police to file a formal complaint when they found out that he had received a cash allowance (the official demobilization process had been widely advertised in the local medias so it was difficult to hide having received something). Another respondent explained that even if he had slept most of the war in military camps, he had kept renting a home in town for his wife. Several people mentioned having to buy food on credit during the war because even if they could usually eat in the military camps, their dependents were usually not entitled to free food, so they had to contract loans to have them eat. One respondent contracted a loan to bury his mother while he was in the armed group. His dead parent had remained in the mortuary for a month (which is billed 5,000 CFA francs a day), the coffin cost 50,000 CFA francs, and he had to borrow to pay for the stay of his relatives who had come to attend the funeral. Most of his cash allowance was therefore used to clear this debt.

*Responding to Familial Demands*

The relationships respondents had with their family after receiving their cash entitlement were quite complex, and the way they managed these ranged from strategies of avoidance to strategies of resignation. How to best manage the burden eventually appeared to be the most standard

concern. Several respondents reported difficulties in avoiding relatives' requests. As this interview fragment tells, "People know when you get your cash. The following morning, you see all your relatives in a row in front of your door and you have to give them something. You give 5,000 to your aunt, 5,000 to your cousin, 5,000 to your other cousin, etc." One respondent succeeded in bypassing such an issue by putting all his cash in the local bank and by returning empty-handed to his village. Even when cornered, he was essentially incapable of giving cash to anyone.

A few respondents mentioned having loaned money to a sibling (up to 100,000 CFA francs). While most loans were not yet repaid at the time of the interviews, some had already been bitterly abused. One respondent mentioned he had given his complete first installment to his family, "to be left in peace." He used to be employed as a *katakata* driver before the war (a *katakata* is a sort of bush tractor that transports all kinds of merchandise), and he wanted to save the second and third installment of his cash allowance to buy a *katakata* for himself. Given the second-hand cost of such a vehicle (1.5 million CFA francs), one of his brothers convinced him to entrust him with his money. The plan was to travel to Abidjan to ask their eldest brother to participate in the purchase by paying the remaining million. What eventually happened is that the entrusted brother eventually usurped all the money and claimed to the former militiaman that he had been robbed on the way.

But regardless of these cases of peer abuse, a recurring argument in favor of family support is gratefulness. Close to the front line, villages often played an important role in supplying food to combatants, and complex mechanisms of money collection occurred between armed groups, villagers, and the educated elite in Abidjan who were native to these war-affected areas (the *cadres villageois*). One interview fragment summarized it very well: "You have to be

grateful and reward those who fed you during the war." Several respondents therefore felt obliged to reward their benefactors, and these included close relatives who participated in the war effort and who supported them during difficult times, including the times spent in the armed group. Rewards to the spouse and to direct parents (father/mother) were rather standard patterns, and several stories were heard of respondents setting up a farm for their father, or helping their wife to develop her own business.

*Investing*

Several respondents mentioned that it was not until the last installment that they could do something productive with their money. Western Côte d'Ivoire is particularly conducive to agriculture; some also invested in wood and bought loads from the nearby timber industry to turn into charcoal. Others entered the growing sector of hevea cultivation or expanded the plantation they already had (this sector was especially in vogue in 2006–2007, during the period of fieldwork). Respondents who were already engaged in cultivating hevea before the war bought new plants, and those who were new to the activity purchased land, cleared a field, and/or joined the myriad of private and local humanitarian projects that were then offering incentives to cultivate hevea in the Moyen-Cavally region.

One respondent used his last installment to purchase one hectare of hevea for 180,000 CFA francs.[6] He had used the previous two transfers to give petty cash to his relatives (wife, brothers, and sister), to pay for his son's school boarding expenses (35,000 CFA francs), to buy food (three bags of rice at 36,000 CFA francs), and to purchase agricultural equipment (a pulverizer at 48,500 CFA francs). Another respondent used his third transfer to enter a local project, the Nouvelles Plantations Hévéïcoles de l'ouest Montagneux de la Côte d'Ivoire, to

benefit from free seedlings. When we met, he had just started contracting workers to clear two hectares of forest to start a hevea plantation.

But respondents did not solely invest in agricultural activities. One used his safety net to purchase a sewing machine, a *Singer-à-tête-noire* (75,000 CFA francs). He was planning to return to tailoring, an activity he was doing before the war, and to run his own workshop. Another had to wait for the third installment to restock his shop with 200,000 CFA francs worth of new merchandise. Another invested in a chicken farm. He bought poultry, food, and vaccines, and resumed his prewar activity. Another used most of his safety net to open a local restaurant. He spent 300,000 CFA francs to purchase a freezer, several chairs, a few tables, the first stock of drinks, and to cover the various costs related to the installation (restoration, rent, and a security deposit). Other types of investments included partial payment to an auto school (in the prospect of getting a driving license to be able to work as a taxi/truck/minivan driver), paying city fees for setting up a market stall or a small business, paying intermediaries to find a job, paying registration fees for being authorized to take national civil service exams, and paying bribes and fees to be allowed to take the ninth- and twelfth-grade exams in the hope that this would open more doors (having these diplomas allows the person to sit civil service entrance exams).

*Social Uses*

Improving one's home, buying a plot of land (when not for agricultural purposes), building a house, purchasing basic furniture, buying clothes, marrying, or rewarding old men who provided mystic protection during the war (*gris-gris*), all these different uses were cited as common expenses. Being further recognized, within the household and/or the community of belonging, as capable of doing so was also sending important social messages. Notably, a certain number of

respondents took advantage of their financial safety net to leave the family home and to settle independently: “Before the war, I used to sleep at my parents. With the safety net, I detached myself. I built a *2-chambres-salon*.”[7] One respondent used his second installment to have his identity papers drawn up. In a country where the lack of documentation often impedes free circulation, this is worth noting. Many respondents also mentioned having spent substantial sums on medical expenses right after receipt of their cash entitlement, either for themselves or for close relatives. Usually, such a use was a major expense, and there was rarely anything left. It is difficult to label such types of expenses unproductive even if, indeed, the money was eventually wasted on social matters. When a serious disease hit them (or their family), respondents preferred to refer to the period as “bad timing.”

Perhaps the best statement to illustrate how most respondents felt upon receipt of their cash allowance is the following: “When you are not paid for years, you live one day after the other. This cash we got, we could do nothing good with it.”[8] That partly explains why a lot of respondents spent their money quickly, with relatively insignificant personal benefit. Many respondents were also not happy with the fact that the safety net had come in three installments. They would have preferred to receive everything in one go, as smaller cash amounts were easily wasted in their views, in particular by responding to familial demands and by dealing with social events (such as medical expenses, funerals, and home improvements).[9] Payment by installment nevertheless continues to remain the preferred international approach for fear of misuse and mismanagement, while, paradoxically, western Côte d’Ivoire is known for seasonal farming activities, with local people relatively used to circulation of large amounts of cash in one go.

*Allocating Money to War Chiefs: Racket or Reward?*

Allocating part of the financial safety net to war chiefs—the "chiefs' share," as Olivier de Sardan and Hamani label it, in their chapter on Niger (chapter 12 in this volume)—was also a common feature in western Côte d'Ivoire, which raises the question of the extent to which it should be interpreted as a racket or a reward. If we look at interview fragments, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence suggesting that extortion was real. One account is particularly enlightening: "It was serious in Duékoué.[10] You were obliged to give. If you did not give, you could not get out. The first time, my leader took 30,000 out of my installment as recognition payment. The next two times, he did not get anything. As I was walking out of the compound with the cash in my pockets, he asked me, but I lied to him. I told him that I was still expecting my money and that I just wanted to get out for a drink." Retaliation rarely followed such avoidance strategies, and once the immediate threat had passed, there was usually no follow-up action on the part of war chiefs. Other respondents were less resourceful and could not avoid being shaken down after having received each installment.[11]

If some militia leaders seemed more prone to extorting from recruits, some were also more magnanimous than others, and who really benefited from this money eventually remained vague in many situations. The distinction between war leaders and war leaders' envoys was often blurred on the ground and in the respondents' discourse, and it was not easy to distinguish between organized racketeering orchestrated by militia leaders and simple robbery by higher-ranked recruits who were taking advantage of their position to abuse their peers. Most accounts showed, however, that rather than giving cash directly to their chiefs, recruits were more likely to pay an intermediary, especially if the person was known to have a close relationship with their

leader (some even signed receipts!). In addition, there was a certain group dynamic, and after the first demobilized recruits had given money to their chiefs, the others were likely to do the same.

Rewarding war chiefs thus resembled a racket in some cases, but that was not the only pattern, and the informal back payment to warlords varied considerably from one individual to another. Several respondents pointed out that they were not forced to give money. There were even accounts of militia leaders gathering recruits before the first installment was made and telling them that they were not obliged to make any financial contributions.[12]

Some recruits beside did not perceive it as coercion. One respondent reported that he had rewarded his chief by paying for several rounds of drinks, and another militia member mentioned that although his chief had mentioned that he did not want anything in return, he was happy to give him 20,000 out of his last installment. Allocating money to war chiefs therefore seemed strongly connected to social obligation. One has to bear in mind that the majority of recruits were grateful to have been put on the official demobilization list by their militia leaders, which turned out to be the key to being eligible for financial compensation.

A last feature to take into account is also to whom recruits wanted to give. Militias also have their hierarchy, and while some felt more inclined to give to their general leader, others preferred rewarding a war chief who was closer to them in the battlefield and to whom they related more. A few respondents who fought in advanced positions reported being keen on rewarding the chiefs of their section. In their view, he had succeeded in the most important thing: he had preserved their lives during combat. One female recruit liberally praised her local commander: “I really say thank you to Colonel T. because he took good care of us. We did not lose anyone in our group. He watched our back. When he knew the day was not good, he would tell us not to move. That’s the way we worked.” The social value of reward associated with

mystic beliefs must therefore not be downplayed when examining the relationship between war chiefs and recruits.

**Has the Spending of Cash Allowances Facilitated Social Acceptance?**

Given the well-known controversies associated with using cash transfers in the reinsertion stage of ex-combatants, it is worth questioning the extent to which the financial safety net has been helpful in securing acceptance by the community with whom ex-combatants associated, and whether it played a role in facilitating their transition to civilian life. Examining these questions is particularly relevant since in the western Ivorian context, most low-ranked militias had returned home several months/years before being officially demobilized; hence they eventually faced immediate reinsertion issues upon return without any financial safety net then to help them cope. Return to their home mostly occurred in 2004–2005, after the end of open conflict (2002–2003) and after the end of the encampment period in the military settings of Blolequin, Toulepleu, Zéo, and Zagné (the location where they were based depended on the armed group in which they were integrated). As noted above, the first time any financial compensation was disbursed was in the summer of 2006. Accounts widely varied per respondent. The ones who chose to remain in Guiglo, in the militia leaders' compounds or nearby, were clearly waiting for the official disarmament to start and for the supply of the several-times-announced financial benefits. Some reported having experienced no problems at all upon return and being warmly welcomed by their families: "My folks were told I was dead. They were quite happy to see me back." Others had never severed contacts with their parents during their time in the armed group, so their return was expected. Many local recruits, in fact, appointed near their place of residence,

did not need to be resocialized after their military experience since their actual bonds with their prewar network had never been cut.

But how smooth was their return to civilian life? Accounts were rather mixed on this question, and there was no single pattern. While reinsertion problems directly experienced after having demobilized oneself were not often spontaneously mentioned (and unfortunately not systematically probed during interviews), several things came up during the discussions. Shortly after their return, a certain number of militia recruits were feared by the people with whom they usually associated, especially those known to have fought with Liberian mercenaries. The account of this female recruit is particularly enlightening:

> In the beginning, I was scaring everyone. Even my cousins were afraid. Even my mother. When I was angry, I often noticed that people acted different. They were all scared of me. But I said no. What I did [during the war], it is past. But even my friends were scared, and they were saying, "She went to war, she's going to kill you at night." It did not feel good. So I moved on elsewhere for some time. I spent two months in Abidjan. When I came back to Guiglo, I started to sell alloco [fried banana] in front of the Becanti. People were coming to see me out of curiosity, also soldiers. Some were surprised, "Eh, you are here now!" Some did not even want to eat alloco, they just came to see me. It took some time, but people eventually saw me differently. I had not changed, but their perception did. They saw that I behaved well, and that I did not look for arguments with anybody. Now everything is okay.

Like her, several respondents mentioned having felt the need to work on their image shortly after returning to their prewar lives and having to emphasize their nonviolent attitude. If some respondents could resume their prewar activities relatively quickly, others reported encountering difficulties. Again, there was a multiplicity of patterns, which mostly depended on respondents' individual attitudes, characteristics, and social networks. One respondent could not go back to his previous work because he had a bad reputation. He shared his point of view: "Many things happened during the war. I did not know the face of all rebels, so when the chief suspected someone and said, 'This person is a rebel, he has to be killed,' we obeyed. But this man might have family in Guiglo; and now if I approach someone for work, these people can tell him that I'm not a good person and that it is better to avoid me." In contrast, well-known fighters had no problems resuming their prewar jobs. One respondent who had fought in the front line with the Liberians resumed upon return his work as a building painter, and even if he mentioned getting fewer contracts than before, the main cause was the general decrease in the local economic activity due to the displacement of most of the local middle class, not the fear of dealing with him.

Has financial compensation facilitated social acceptance then? For most demobilized militia recruits, the financial safety net was distributed years after their return to their community. This raises doubts about the extent to which cash allowances facilitated social acceptance. In addition, not every combatant benefited from them. As already mentioned, the demobilization program of the summer of 2006 was only partial and only targeted 981 low-ranked militia recruits. Not everyone appeared on the list for inclusion, and in a single village—even in a single family—some received the cash allowance and others did not, even if they also participated in the war effort. Selection appeared quite arbitrary in some cases, and perhaps the

most interesting feature is that those who did not receive financial compensation and who were locally known to have participated in the war effort were mocked by their peers. A posteriori, going to war and getting nothing out of it was perceived locally as ridiculous and as a waste of time. There was, however, a certain tolerance with respect to this unfairness, and although the few militia recruits I interviewed who did not receive compensation indeed expressed their frustration, they seemed to accept their situation.

**Conclusion**

Respondents used their safety net very differently, constantly juggling between social obligations and personal benefit. Out of the five broad categories of expenses identified—(1) reimbursing creditors, (2) responding to familial demands, (3) investing in one's own business, (4) dealing with social events (such as medical expenses, funerals, home improvements), and (5) allocating money to war chiefs—three would not have existed if no cash allowance had been given to ex-combatants. Creditors would not have rushed to ask for their full payback and would have continued to display the same attitude as toward their other debtors; relatives would not have lined up in front of respondents' doors; and war chiefs and undemobilized friends would not have had a share.

For the two other categories (investing and dealing with social events), the financial compensation was useful but rather limited in time and scope. When discussing investments, a recurring point that came up from the interviews was that the financial safety net should have been given in one go instead of in three installments. Relevant investments usually involve substantial sums of money, and small amounts are easily wasted on day-to-day expenses. With respect to social events, one important contribution that this extra cash has made was in allowing

young men to emancipate, by being able to leave the family home and/or by becoming a short-term provider for their close family.

Given the fact that most local recruits who benefited from DDR-related cash transfers had in fact spontaneously demobilized years before the start of the official process, the financial safety net received had a limited impact on their immediate post-return phase, which is probably when social acceptance was the most challenging. If cash transfers have the potential to curb ex-combatants' dependencies on their direct support structures when they return to their homes, it is likely in this case that ex-combatants' spouses and families were socially and economically affected by their return, more or less adversely depending on individual situations.

This case shows little evidence that individuals used the money unwisely on the so-called "temptation goods," such as drinking alcohol, buying drugs, or gambling. After receiving their safety net, ex-recruits faced a certain number of socioeconomic demands (from creditors, family, and acquaintances made during the war) to which they had to respond, and the range of responses greatly varied from one individual to another. In some instances, the extra cash has helped them face a certain number of social events (such as medical expenses, school fees, or costs associated with marriage, a funeral, or a newborn child), and sometimes it has enabled them to partially invest in a small business. The use of cash transfers in the reinsertion phase has indeed meant a breath a fresh air for ex-combatants, but should not be overrated, as their room to maneuver was eventually limited by the way they individually balanced social obligations with personal benefit. Demobilized militia members did not seem particularly privileged in comparison with the communities they related to, and many ended up probably more exposed to abuse by their direct entourage and by targeted robberies.

**Postscript**

Ten years after the failed start of the demobilization of pro-governmental militias, it is worth reflecting on how the process evolved. If during the period 2003–2007, DDR progress was very slow to materialize, the dynamics changed in 2007–2009, following the Ouagadougou comprehensive peace agreement. The APO, as it was locally labeled, promoted direct dialogue between the Ivorian government and the rebel forces while reiterating its attachment to the existing National DDR Plan. It created two new structures for dealing with demilitarization issues: the Integrated Command Centre (CCI), which was put in charge of the military component of the process (the disarmament and demobilization phases), and the National Reinsertion and Community Rehabilitation Program (PNRRC), which was empowered to deal with the reinsertion of former combatants. Political appeasement then seemed possible, and a series of symbolic launches of the DDR process were organized in several localities. The dismantling of western militias was quickly announced and scheduled for May 2007. But unlike the 2006 attempt, the 2007 operation was very opaque in terms of cash transfers, and neither the National DDR Commission nor the UN peacekeeping mission were associated with the event. In 2007, the dismantling of militias took the form of a media operation, where 1,026 weapons were collected and handed over to the presidency by several militia leaders in return for a presidential envelope of 280 million CFA, supposed to be distributed to low-ranked recruits. Following that event, an official press release announced the official end of the operation.

The government switched focus afterward, away from the militia issue, which obviously had not been solved by the press release, toward the demilitarization of the official parties, which consisted of reducing the size of the Ivorian army while finding ways to incorporate part of the rebels in the new force. In 2008–2009, some disarmament and reintegration initiatives occurred,

but they were very localized and small-scale, and in 2010, the DDR process was put to a halt again in view of the resumption of tensions around the presidential elections. After the electoral crisis, demilitarization came back high on the agenda. The modalities of the Ivorian DDR process still largely drew on the procedures developed in the 2000s, but a new institution replaced the CCI and the PNRRC, the ADDR (Autorité pour le désarmement, la démobilisation et la reintegration). If the name change was mostly symbolic, two main adjustments were made. First, a noteworthy increase in terms of financial compensation: while the previous safety net had been set at 499,500 francs CFA, in 2012, it was decided to provide more per ex-combatant (800,000 CFA francs), with flexible disbursement conditions. Second, there was a change in definition of who was considered to be a combatant (hence a change in who had access to financial benefits). Before 2012, the Ivorian DDR process integrated a large diversity of profiles in the definition of who was considered "ex-combatant" (from fighting to support tasks), but after 2012, the definition took a more restrictive turn, and individuals who wanted to be part of the official DDR process had to be identified as fighters by their respective commanders and had to pass a weapons-handling test. With respect to the dismantling of pro-governmental militias, ADDR had planned to process 23,000 individual applications out of a total of 74,000 for the entire process. At the end of January 2015, 46,031 ex-combatants, all categories taken together, had benefited from support, according to ADDR statistics. These successes were only relative though, and the ADDR director was not hiding the persistence of many difficulties. Mistrust of some former militia groups allied with the former regime was one of them, as many were fearing reprisals if they officially integrated the process. Direct observations conducted in Duékoué in May 2015, however, showed that some former pro-Gbagbo militias had been taken into account

in the process and had received 800,000 CFA francs in cash transfers (with some in fact having benefited twice, in 2006 and in 2013).

At the time of writing (November 2017), the use of the term “militia” finally seems to have disappeared in western Côte d’Ivoire, for the best. ADDR officially announced the end of the DDR process in June 2015, and more recently, in June 2017, the UN peacekeeping mission, which was in charge of controlling part of the DDR process, put a term to thirteen years of mandate. Empirical work is still needed, however, to document the impact of the ADDR program and to see—among other things—if the doubling of amount of the cash transfers led to different uses.

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**<HDA>Notes**

1. For detailed information on the process, see Chelpi-den Hamer 2011: 77–84.

2. At the time of doing fieldwork (2006–2007), disarmament in Côte d’Ivoire had not yet started on a massive scale for the main belligerents, and the dismantlement of pro-government militias had only partially occurred.

3. Deutsche Gesselschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, International Services (German Organization for Technical Cooperation).

4. 125,000 CFA francs are equivalent to €190 or $235 (U.S.).

5. Initially planned on 29 October 2006, it was delayed a month.

6. Access to land must not be considered a given, even for autochthonous populations (here, Guérés), who formed the base of the majority of the respondents. Out of the people interviewed, some mentioned that they could rely on their father's forest to start their own plantation, but others reported having to buy a piece of land to be able start on their own.

7. *2-chambres-salon* is the local term to designate a small house with two bedrooms and a living room.

8. "Quand vous êtes resté quelque part sans salaire pendant des années, tu vis au jour le jour. Cet argent, on ne pouvait rien faire avec."

9. Most respondents could not do anything productive with their money until the third installment.

10. Duékoué is the site where militia recruits were gathered and officially demobilized under PNDDR and ONUCI supervision. The money was given in a protected compound, but as soon as people got out, they were prone to abuse.

11. One respondent could not avoid giving half of his safety net. He was relieved of 70,000 CFA francs from his first installment, 80,000 from the second, and 100,000 from the third.

12. Some added that those willing to give were nonetheless very welcome.