

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil–military relations

After a thorough survey of the various issues involved in understanding and digesting the subject of civil–military relations, the workshop participants made some policy recommendations that should be passed on to the key actors, as previously defined. The participants were unanimous in their acceptance of the fact that Africa, and Zambia in particular, will always need a military force to defend the state and its people. To this end, the following policy recommendations are made, mindful that we are operating in a liberal democratic environment.

Defence and security agencies serve the interests of the nation, in line with the constitution. It is therefore incumbent upon legislators and the executive to plan and budget for a force of appropriate size. The budget must, however, be open to scrutiny by all stakeholders and transparency must be observed by the relevant authority in the executive. Such a force should be allowed to operate professionally and efficiently.

In order to enhance peace in the country, civil–military relations should be a matter of concern to all, both military and non-military. To achieve this, more public relations offices that are open to the public should be established, such as those already set up by the Zambian Police. The military should very rarely be used for internal disturbances; instead, the police should be the only force engaged for that purpose. Experience has shown that when the military is used for internal disturbances, they tend to exert excessive force, leaving a negative impression of them in the eyes and minds of civil society.

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration

Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) are a necessary consequence after mobilisation, and the burden of DDR should therefore be budgeted for.

The participants also believed that DDR should not be left to the Ministry of Defence alone, but should be shared among all relevant ministries. Clearly,

social workers will be central during the integration phase, which may last a long time.

The participants analysed the resettlement efforts made in the late 1980s at such sites as Kanakantapa and Kambilombilo. The fact that some resettled members opted to sell off their land after working on it should not discourage the government from continuing with resettlement in the future.

Disarmament should be done more thoroughly, as the failure to do so may be contributing to the high rate of armed crime.

Refugees

The participants accepted the fact that refugees will always exist when there is conflict. Helping refugees is a humanitarian obligation, and although there are no Zambian refugees in other countries, Zambia, together with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has chosen to take care of refugees from neighbouring states in the region.

It is important, however, that Zambian women who marry refugees have some legal protection. Such women should be identified and provided with training to equip them with knowledge of their rights or lack thereof. This will help them make better choices. Likewise, the children of refugees should be accorded legal protection by their country of birth until reaching maturity. Participants were mindful that the Zambian government had begun work on this issue, and merely wished to stress concern regarding this matter. Also, those refugees who opted to remain in Zambia and take up residence should be allowed to do so.

Looking after refugees is an extra burden on a country's budget. It is therefore imperative that the UNHCR begin taking care of refugees as soon as possible.