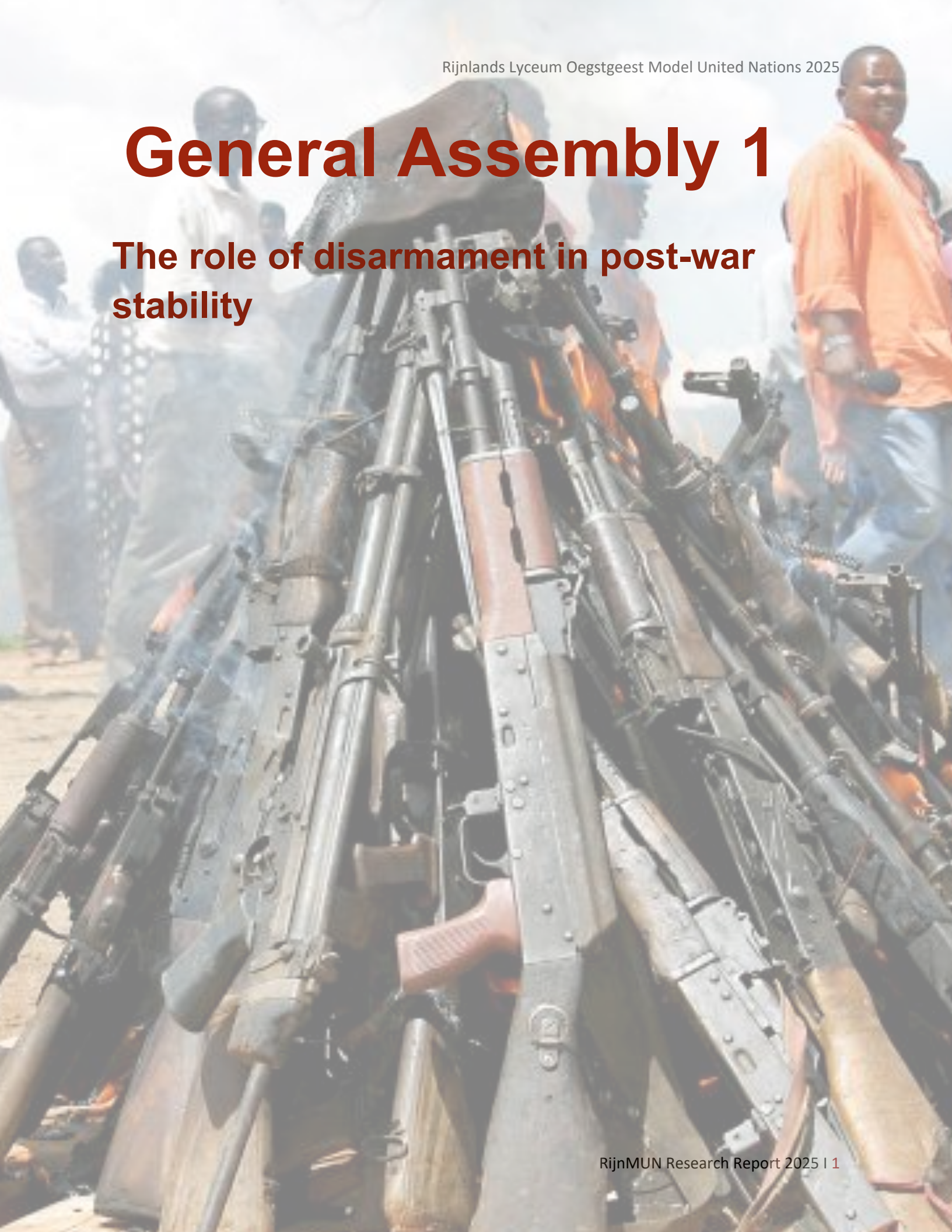


General Assembly 1

The role of disarmament in post-war stability



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Introduction

After a conflict in a region, the greatest danger often arises from the instability that war brings. Ceasefires and peace treaties should halt further conflict for a limited time, but these accords are often very fragile. In the past, it has been shown that about half of post-conflict countries relapse into conflict within a decade. This pressing fact highlights the importance of providing stability and lasting peace in post-war regions, rather than simply postponing the matter.

One of the best tools for providing this stability is disarmament. In post-conflict settings, disarmament is crucial for creating the setting for peace, reconciliation and development, whilst also preventing a re-emergence of violence. When weapons remain easy to access, the chance of creating lasting peace dwindles.

In this research report, the crucial role of disarmament in promoting post-war stability will be examined, with a focus on three key areas: reducing the risk of renewed conflict, fostering trust between nations, and promoting sustainable development.

Key Terms

Disarmament

Disarmament refers to the reduction, limitation and abolishment of weapons. Disarmament may include both voluntary disarmament and disarmament created and enforced by international treaties and operations.

Post-war stability

Post-war stability in this research report refers to the condition in which a country or region that has just emerged from conflict maintains stability through various means, including treaties, functioning institutions and efforts toward reconciliation and development.

Disarmament, Demobilization and reintegration (DDR)

DDR programs are aimed at creating stability by disarming combatants, removing them from military structures, and socially and economically integrating them into society. These programs be a useful tool in creating stability, as downsizing active militaries frees up resources, and creates more trust between the parties.

Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

CBMs are defined by the United Nations as “planned procedures to prevent hostilities, to avert escalation, to reduce military tension, and to build mutual trust between countries.” CBMs can be extremely helpful in avoiding mutual misunderstandings about certain policies and can foster cooperation and trust.

General Overview

As mentioned in the introduction, this research report will focus on three key areas on this topic. This section will address these areas and provide some further information.

Reducing the risk of renewed conflict

Successful disarmament lowers the chances of a return to violence in a post-conflict region significantly. When weapons remain accessible and armed groups are left intact, tensions can quickly spark again. The chance of this happening is especially high in fragile political environments that often appear after a conflict. DDR programs play a crucial role in preventing renewed conflict by removing weapons from circulation and disbanding armed factions, whilst giving the combatants aid in returning to civilian life. When disarmament efforts are lacking, renewed hostilities cannot be so easily prevented, as people still have the weapons and military structures still exist, making it way easier for conflict to spread again. Disarmament programs not only reduce this immediate threat but also give a clear signal to all parties and people involved that the era of conflict is coming to an end, creating a safer environment for peacebuilding and cooperation efforts.

Fostering trust between nations

Independent disarmament efforts and cooperation with international efforts can foster mutual confidence and reduce tensions amongst former enemies, which makes it significantly easier to rebuild political and diplomatic relations. When factions commit to disarmament, they show peaceful intent and hope for a better future, a demonstration which is essential for long-term stability. After all, as has also been shown in the past, a lack of trust between nations previously at war does not create a welcoming environment for reconciliation attempts. Take, for example, the SALT and START treaties implemented during the Cold War. These treaties and the arms control talks and measures they generated helped greatly in preventing the breaking out of a direct conflict between the two parties. Similar approaches will greatly help in post-conflict zones, not only by directly disarming the sides but also by fostering trust.

Promoting sustainable development

Countries that have been affected by conflict often face major issues as a result. These include massive infrastructure damage, disrupted education systems and a weakened economy. Keeping a military economy running whilst the conflict is over costs governments big parts of their budgets. Therefore, disarmament enables governments to shift their resources from the military towards development and reconstruction. Disarmament therefore gives countries the space to focus their assets on rebuilding and improving, instead of keeping militaries running preparing for a possible relapse into conflict.

Major Parties Involved

United Nations Office on Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)

According to their official site: “The Office for Disarmament Affairs supports multilateral efforts aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.” The UNODA is a body of the United Nations focused on supporting the development and implementation of international disarmament efforts.

African Union (AU)

The African Union plays a major part in promoting peace and security on the African continent, partially through major disarmament efforts. It supports DDR programs through its bodies and works together with regional bodies to address the proliferation of weapons in the region.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The ICRC is a major international humanitarian effort network. The ICRC also plays a leading role in the promotion and development of law regulating the use of weapons. These laws do not solely pertain to post-conflict areas. However, better laws for regulating weapons in these areas will greatly help with stability.

World Bank

The World Bank is heavily involved with DDR programs, as well as closely working together with the AU and EU on stability in post-war regions.

Timeline of Key Events

1945	Establishment of the UN, with a primary goal being disarmament and prevention of conflict
1968	The treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) is signed
1991	START I is signed by the US and Soviet Union
1997	The Mine Ban Treaty is adopted
1999-2005	DDR programs are implemented in Sierra Leone and Liberia
2002	The African Union is formally launched
2013	The Arms Trade Treaty is adopted
2021	The treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons enters into force

UN Involvement and Other Treaties

- **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**, 1 Jul. 1968 (No. 14097)
- **UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons**, Jul. 2001, New York, USA
- **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**, 2 Apr. 2013 (No. 52373)
- **Ottawa Treaty (Mine Ban Treaty)**, 3 Dec. 1997 (No. 33124)
- **UN Security Council Resolution on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding**, 20 Jul. 2009 (S/RES/1889)
- **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**, 7 Jul. 2017 (No. 54913)

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

In the past, there have been multiple efforts to address disarmament as a means to create stability in post-war areas. One of the first treaties regarding this topic was the NPT, adopted in 1968. The treaty is primarily aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons; it also promises efforts on nuclear disarmament. Whilst nuclear disarmament is somewhat different to the disarmament which this research report focuses on, this treaty set a great precedent for disarmament efforts worldwide.

In 2001, the UN adopted the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. This program creates a framework for states to control the production, spread and accumulation of small arms. This Program is not legally binding, it has, however, helped coordinate international efforts and provided assistance to provide more stability in post-conflict regions.

The Arms Trade Treaty, which was signed in 2013 builds on the Program by regulating the trade of conventional weapons. It provides legal tools through which states are forced to assess whether their exported arms could be used to fuel conflicts. This Treaty, therefore, acts as a preventative measure in post-war zones.

These efforts give examples of how treaties and programs tackling specific parts of disarmament can make great improvements regarding the stability of post-war regions.

Possible Solutions

To increase the effectiveness of disarmament in creating post-war stability, delegates must build upon existing efforts to create a better, more effective means of disarmament. Delegates must, most of all, work together, as disarmament is a very costly effort.

Delegates can focus on improving financial aid to existing disarmament efforts and improving existing and creating new DDR programs. These efforts should also address the long-term plans, including education, employment opportunities and services to former combatants. Delegates can also focus on creating frameworks for war-affected countries to follow, as opposed to directly creating efforts. These frameworks could be a very useful tool for the countries themselves to find the next steps to take after a conflict. These frameworks are not easily created, however, as they should be specific enough to provide steps and technical help, but also broad enough to be widely applicable.

Most of all, on this specific topic, delegates should remember the focus is not one specific post-conflict zone, but rather the effectiveness of disarmament in these regions as a whole and should research accordingly.

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