

Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis (CPRA) –Pretoria



CPRA Daily Briefings

Week 26

Friday, 13 July 2012

The **CPRA Daily Briefings** are held weekday mornings in the CPRA Pretoria's Situation Room and the Briefing Notes are the minutes of this meeting during which each regional expert of the Programme reports on the latest human security developments in his/her region, followed by general discussions around the table. An intern then compiles a summary of the meeting, which is reviewed by the respective researchers, and a senior researcher edits the report and provides quality control before returning it to the intern to prepare it for dispatch to the mailing list to which you have subscribed.

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**Today's Briefings
Compilation**
Ms Naomi Kok

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Summary of Briefings

Southern Africa

Angola: war veterans threaten to disrupt the upcoming elections if they do not receive their pensions

In Luanda, Angola, war veterans are threatening to protest against the government because they have not been receiving their pensions. The veterans are former members of the liberation movements who fought for independence from the Portuguese from 1961 to 1975 and in the subsequent civil war until 2002. Apparently, these veterans have received a once off payment of approximately 500 USD, but after this initial payment they never received the monthly pensions that have been a preserve of the senior officers.

The veterans have declared that if the government does not respond to their grievances they will disrupt the general elections which are scheduled to take place seven weeks from now. If this materialises it is quite likely that the government will crack down violently on the veterans like it did to quell protests by the disenchanted war veterans last month. The Angolan government faces two major challenges related to providing these pensions. Firstly, the focus on monthly annuities risks fostering an unhealthy lifetime dependence on the state that has to ensure that the pensions it provides keeps up with the inflation rate. Secondly, the government has to ensure that it manages to pacify the veterans, as many of them are still relatively young and have both the physical strength and the capacity to cause instability in the country. Some of these veterans could use their military skills to engage in criminal activity, therefore it is very important not only that they receive pensions, but also that they are successfully reintegrated into society. Another threat is that the sentiments of the veterans resonate with the youth in Angola, as the high levels of unemployment and high cost of living is affecting both these groups.

Throughout Africa, there is a trend of ineffective Demobilisation Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) processes rendering former combatants a threat to stability. Most of these ex-combatants do not have any skills besides fighting and this makes their economic and social reintegration very challenging. First of all, the ex-combatants need to be taught skills that they can use to make the transition to sustainable civilian livelihoods. Secondly, the community has to be sensitised to accept these ex-combatants back into their daily lives.

Most Southern African countries have tried to implement DDR and have failed dismally. However, DDR is context specific and has to be tailor-made for the country in question. Currently, most countries model their DDR on the UN framework for DDR, but this is clearly not working and needs rethinking. The problem in Angola is seen across Africa. There are many rebel movements who are in various stages of DDR. Unfortunately, in some countries, youth is still being recruited to fight in various military movements. Thus, while DDR is something that needs to be addressed urgently, recruitment into militia's or rebel groups also needs to be curbed.

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