

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**EVALUATION OF THE DEMOBILISATION AND
REINTEGRATION PROGRAMS OF
EX-FIGHTERS IN ERITREA**

Submitted by

AMANUEL MEHRETEAB

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Finally, it must be said that I alone am responsible for the opinions expressed in the report and the shortcomings and omissions that there may undoubtedly be.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
ABSTRACT	4
ABBREVIATION	5
1. Introduction	8
1.1 Background	8
1.2 Objectives of the study	10
1.3 Methodology	11
1.4 Definitions	13
1.5 Organisation	14
2. The Sub-Saharan Africa DRP Experience	15
2.1 DRP processes of ex-combatants into civilian life	16
2.2 Risks and potentials	17
2.3 The Post-Conflict Challenge of Reintegration	18
3. Post-Conflict Eritrea	20
3.1 Political overview	20
3.2 Socio-economic situation	20
4. The process of demobilisation	22
4.1 National Strategy and Conceptual Framework	24
4.2 Mandate and set-up of Mitias	25
4.3 Implementation	26
5. Challenges of the Integration Process	28
5.1 Analysis of the research findings	28
5.2 Interpretation of the findings	36
6. Conclusion and Recommendations	48
6.1 Conclusion	48
6.2 Recommendations	48

ABSTRACT

Demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants are complex processes loaded with multiple issues that demand analysis and resolutions. Now it is clearly demonstrated what many ex-combatants in other Sub-Saharan African countries faced - and continue to face - problems of economic and social reintegration once the national liberation movement came to an end. There is much to be learned from this context.

Demobilised ex-fighters in Eritrea face similar problems as other countries do. They have economic, social, and psychological problems as a result of their demobilisation and reintegration process to enter into the mainstream of the society. Economically and socially, they have to adjust to the mores of the society. As demonstrated in the process, it was highlighted that they have difficulty in accepting their civilian identity, and feel they have lost the prestige of being a freedom fighter. Five years have elapsed since the program of demobilisation and reintegration was launched and is a timely endeavour to put this exercise into perspective so that lessons can be drawn.

The case study done in Eritrea demonstrated that demobilisation was a smooth and straight forward procedure for the front was working more or less as a regular army and thus emphasis was made on the much more difficult process -reintegration. But this doesn't mean it has its own flaws, because the main focus of the reintegration intervention was wrongly conceived as only economic and thus social issue was sidelined. Among the key factors for the limited reintegration success gained so far the ongoing stamina and solidarity seen among the ex-fighters tells a lot. That is, their dedication to work and sense of initiative on one side and effective support by the family, community on the other side, the political will of the government of Eritrea seems to be the most important current support safety net put in place.

Said these, post-war context presents particular problems and opportunities which have far more important impact on the reintegration process than understood so far. Apart from the losses in human lives during the protracted war, the heavily damaged infrastructure of the country, the population drain (about one million are living as refugees in neighbouring countries out of which more than 500,000 reside in Sudan) could not be without its negative effects especially on the recovery of the economy and the rehabilitation of the social fabrics. Gaining independence in post-cold war context is not favourable to say the least. Thus Eritrea's independence and nation building can be properly analyzed if put in this context. The world geopolitics is undergoing a mutation which has not yet come to an end with economic globalisation as its hallmark with heavy political effects. In this new world order the values of the arm struggle seem to have no place. But who knows may be in the long run they will prove to be the best weapons in the fight for eradicating poverty and achieving real independence.

ABBREVIATION

ACORD	Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
BICC	Bonn International Centre for Conversion
DRP	Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
ERRA	Eritrean Relief Rehabilitation Agency
ERREC	Eritrean Relief Refugee Commission
GDP	Gross National Product
GOE	Government of Eritrea
PENHA	Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa.
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NDF	Namibian Defence Force
NRM	National Resistance Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
SWATF	South West African Territorial Force
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UVAP	Uganda Veteran Assistance Programme

“The true grit, demonstrated during the war by Eritrean Freedom Fighters is now, to be geared towards the fulfilment of nation building. The fighters have gone through many useful experiences: In defending their country, they have learned to cherish freedom; in tackling assaults, they have demonstrated creativity; in planning and executing missions, they have possessed the art of working together, in roaming the width and breadth of their land, they have familiarised themselves with the people, the terrain, the fauna and flora; in working with the people, they have shared and mastered tools and technologies; in safe-guarding the interests of the citizens, they have learned to manage and to administer. The ex- fighters have learned to plough fields, construct dwellings and plant trees. They have shared the aspirations and tribulations of their country folk and have given hands during harvests and draught. Above all, they have learned to love and live with honest work, day in day out, years in years out. They have indeed used brain and muscle to the service of their land and people (Haile, 1992: 3-5).”

***“DEDICATED FOR THE ERITREAN
MARTYRS WHO BURNED LIKE A CANDLE
TO LIBERATE OUR COUNTRY, AND WHO
ARE ALWAYS DEEP IN OUR HEART”***

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Among the member States of the UN, Eritrea is the youngest. It is one of the smallest among the African countries, and its war of independence was the longest on the continent.

Eritrea is situated along the Southwest coast of the Red Sea, extending for 1094 kms from *Ras Kasar* in the north to *Ras Dumeira* in the *Bab El Mandeb* straight at the Southern entrance to the Red Sea, and it is from this body of water that the country derived its name; in Greek “*erythrea*” means red (PENHA, May 1996). It is bordering in the North and West by Sudan, in the South-east by Djibouti and in the South by Ethiopia. Its land mass, including the *Dahalk* archipelago and islands in the Red Sea, covers 125,000 sq. km. Eritrea is divided into four principal topographic regions:

- a) The central highlands delimited to the east by an abrupt escarpment;
- b) The Western lowland;
- c) The mountainous mass beginning just North of Keren and extending North wards up to Sudan;
- d) The coastal plains extending over the whole length of the country (MOG, 1994: 14-20).

The population of Eritrea, [including the Diaspora created by prolonged drought and war], is estimated to be 3.6 million (ERREC, September 1996). The population is mainly rural and subsistence agriculture is the main economic activity. The Eritrean people are composed of the following nine ethnic groups (by order of size): *Tigrinya, Tigre, Saho, Nara, Bilen, Afar, Hedareb, Beja* and *Rashaida*. There are two religious communities, roughly of equal number: Christians and Moslems.

After 30 years of bitter armed struggle against Ethiopian colonial rule, Eritrea finally became a free country in May 1991. Its freedom was sealed by a referendum in April 1993 where the overwhelming majority of her citizens voted for national independence (99.8%) (Gebremedhin, 1996: 4)

The end of the conflict coincided with the end of the Cold War. As in other conflicts influenced by the power struggle and ideological antagonism between East and West, the collapse of the Soviet Union led to an immediate end to military support to the *Derg* and thus to the victory of the Eritrean Peoples’ Liberation Front in Eritrea (EPLF) and of the Tigray Popular Liberation Front in Ethiopia (TPLF) and the fall of the *Mengistu* regime.

This was also the beginning of a global reduction in armaments and armed forces. I will mainly focus examples on Africa that is between 1981 and 1990. The total number of armed forces rose from 1,131 Million to 1,470 Million, to be reduced to 1,135 Million in 1995. The Derg army counted 240,000 in 1981. In 1990, with 455,000 soldiers, it was the

biggest in Africa, making up for one third of the total armed forces of the continent (Colletta, 1996: 2-27).

More than 300,000 Ethiopian soldiers were fighting against the EPLF armed forces which at that time and through the end of the struggle are estimated to be 95,000. As early as 1992, the Provisional Government of Eritrea decided to reduce the number of combatants of the newly established regular army by 60% which will be 57,000 demobilized freedom fighters at the end of the program (ERRA, 1993: 5). As looked by Colleta (1996), compared to other African countries conducting similar measures (Mozambique: 38,000; Namibia: 43,000; Uganda: 36,000), and taking into consideration both the small number of inhabitants and the fact that it had to be undertaken without any financial assistance from outside, the Eritrean demobilisation programme is the most important of its kind and required the biggest national financial effort.

In order to handle the demobilisation procedure properly and help the demobilised fighters to smoothly reintegrate into civilian life, a national structure mainly composed of not yet demobilised fighters was set up. The advantage of assigning staff from former fighters is chosen because they can understand the cause of their counterparts and they can easily see the plight of their colleagues is in. This makes the task easier for they know from their own experience what problems their colleagues are facing. Last but not least, they are trusted by the demobilized fighters. Said this, they had no experience whatsoever in planning and implementing such a difficult undertaking prior to assignment and had its drawback. Their most important asset was - and still is - a commitment to reintegrate the fighters into civilian society as productive members with ample access to economic activity. In the discussions conducted with the staff it was learned that 'they have convinced themselves that the former fighters and the government would benefit through full participation of all members of society in the development and rehabilitation of the country and this goes hand in hand with the goal they were trying to achieve during the armed struggle (ERRA, 1993: 7).

Demobilisation was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, which started in June 1993, a total of 26,000 fighters [who joined the armed struggle after 1990] were registered and demobilized¹. The second phase embraces 22,000 fighters who had joined the struggle early seventies and February 1990 and were demobilized in 1994. Both demobilization phases were achieved without significant problems. Another 6,000 fighters were progressively demobilised from 1995 onwards.

The subsequent reintegration process was a much greater challenge, not only because of its inherent difficulties, but also because the ex-fighters were not the only ones to be reintegrated into the mainstream of the society. In fact the challenge goes far beyond reintegrating ex-fighters but consists in building a new Eritrean nation which unites the ex-fighters, the Eritreans who return from Sudan, Ethiopia, Arab countries and

¹ The ones who were demobilized in 1993 are known by First Phase demobilizee and encompass all fighters who joined the armed struggle after the fall of Massawa (1990).

industrialised countries in Europe and America and those who stayed in Eritrea under the Ethiopian regime.

In this process the “old way of life,” generally with strong patriarchal and religious traditions confronted the “new ways of life” experienced by the Eritreans in the Diaspora and especially by the people in the areas controlled by EPLF. The fighters are facing unfamiliar social and economic forces. For example; an increasing monetized market economy, competition and consumerism. Women fighters in particular are on the losing side of this particular transformation. This is because of the society’s patriarchal perception and the place of women in the society. Currently, female ex-fighters are more stigmatised than their male counterparts especially after the end of liberation struggle. Today, they are only a very tiny minority among women facing the danger of losing their strategic gains in the dynamics of civil life and under pressure from a generally patriarchal culture (ACORD, 1995: 3). This fear is confirmed by one of the in-depth interview;

In her opinion “three things make it difficult for the demobilised women fighters to reintegrate the civil society: the difficulties of the country’s post war economy, the fact that the society wants them to lose what they have gained during the struggle, and finally: “the bitter feeling is to lose what you have gained and tasted - this is the worst thing of all!”

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this paper is to present the findings of a study undertaken from February to April 1997. The principal objective of this study was to assess the situation of the demobilised fighters and the extent of their economic and social reintegration. This will provide the basis on which to pinpoint the main key factors and draw lessons for successful reintegration and finally give some recommendations for further action.

As Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC) had shown interest in the finding of the study and interested to include the finding in their publications on the demobilization and reintegration experiences, it was agreed that the research could serve to produce dissertation for my MA in Development Studies and at the same time it can highlight the Eritrean experience in DDR and to draw lessons. The entire budget for doing the field work was covered by BICC

Eva-Maria Bruchhaus, former advisor to *Mitias* and my close collaborator from October 1994 to September 1996, offered her assistance mainly in preparing and organising data collection, as well as editing the chapter on Eritrea in the above mentioned BICC study.

1.3 Methodology

The study combines desk and field research. Secondary information has been obtained from documents mainly from two sources:

- Other experiences of demobilisation and reintegration in Africa,
- Basic documents and studies/evaluations conducted by and for *Mitias*.

Primary information was generated from the data bank of *Mitias*² by selecting ex-fighters randomly and with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire [from 238 former EPLF-fighters] distributed all over the country. During my semester vacation in April 1997, I additionally carried out 33 in-depth interviews with individual ex-fighters who are successfully reintegrating into the society.

A) Guidelines

The following parameters were used to measure the success of ex-fighters in their reintegration process into the civilian society;

- Economic reintegration:
 - Ex-fighters who are continuing education and training after demobilisation (as a prerequisite for the following);
 - Steady employment;
 - Self-employment, own business.
- Successful social integration:
 - Strength of kinship and friendship ties;
 - Stability of marital situation;
 - Status in the community and participation in communal affairs and decision making;
 - Capacity to solve problems (acceptance by the community).

The English version of the detailed questionnaire is in annex. Questions 3.29 up to 3.35 were cancelled by ERREC for pure political reasons and therefore were not answered.

B) Choice of the sample

The idea was to fill a questioner of 300 ex-fighters from first phase and veteran fighters. But due to the shortage of time only 238 were able to fill the questionnaire. The sample 300 is 0.55% of the total number of demobilised EPLF fighters (54,000) and it gives fair picture of ex-fighters for it is representative. In order to have good knowledge of the target group the author selected 33 ex-fighters from the sample who are not helped by *Mitias* when they started their business and conducted an in depth interview.

² *Mitias* is a Tigrigna word which means to give community support for some one who is starting from scratch. This name was given to the office who was responsible to reintegrate ex-fighters into the mainstream of the society.

The head office of *Mitias* has the distribution of ex-fighters all over the country. Every ex-fighter has to be registered in his/her *Zoba*³ so that he can have access to the benefits the reintegration office offers. The *Zoba* offices were given quota according to their members and individual ex-fighters were selected from the data bank randomly. Out of this sample, 87 were from first phase, 103 from second phase, 35 were demobilised in 1995 and 13 after 1995. 82 were women ex-fighters forming 34.5% of the sample. Aiming at as even a geographic distribution as possible, 0.44% of all ex-fighters in each '*Zoba*' were interviewed.

C) Choice of interviewers

According to the following criteria two interviewers were chosen:

- Must be ex-fighter,⁴
- Have more than 10 years of service,
- Have completed at least 10th grade of school education,
- Must master both Tigrinya and Tigre,
- Must understand sufficient English to communicate verbally.

Initially pilot interview was conducted by both interviewers and the content of the questionnaire was amended accordingly. The interviewers were hired for two months.

D) Data gathering

After having done half a dozen pilot interviews, the final version of the questionnaire was established. In order to facilitate the data collection, letters were sent to all *Mitias*-representatives in the different *Zobas*, to inform them about the aim and procedure of the data gathering and ask for their support which was readily granted.

Data collection was initially started in and around Asmara, in order to check and correct it easily. Then work was equally shared between the two interviewers: one went to the Eastern and the Southern part of the country, the other to the Western Lowlands, both interviewed the ex-fighters living in the central region.

E) Data processing

Data was processed with "SPSS for Windows" by a knowledgeable person. To speed-up data entry, additional enumerators were hired. I took the filled questionnaire to Leeds, the remaining questionnaires followed one week later.

³ *Zoba* is a *Tigrinya* word meaning regional administration.

⁴ Ex-fighter was put as a pre-condition; this is from our experience of 1993 survey. When we employed some civilian for felling the questioner the fighters were not co-operating in answering the questioner or the civilians were lacking some experience which the fighters took it for granted

F) Data analysing

I analysed the findings from April 1997 to the end of June. In this work I was actively assisted by Prof. Lionel Cliffe and Dr. Carolyn Baylies.

G) Inside view

The outcome of this study is not only the analysis of the data collected the author has also invested his rich experience from nearly two decades of participation in the armed struggle and four years of work as head of the Department for Demobilisation and Reintegration.

1.4 Definitions

The Eritrean struggle for independence is often referred to wrongly, as a civil war. To avoid this I use the term “war” in the sense of conflict between two distinct national entities. Instead of ex-combatant I employ the term “fighter” to translate the *Tigrinya* word *tegadelti* (pl. of *tegadelai* and *tegadelit*), and accordingly “ex-fighters” for the demobilised ones (who remain *tegadelti* in *Tigrinya*). In the Eritrean context are armed forces, who were fighting against the Ethiopian colonisers out of deep conviction to liberate Eritrea.

Disarmament: is the reduction of arms that occurs when demobilised soldiers or freedom fighters hand over their arms.

Demobilisation: This means to lay down arms. The process was carried out by Department of defence while the fighters are still in their units.

Reintegration is a complex business, involving a process in which people who have developed various attitudes and behaviours in diverse circumstances are brought together to form an integrated society.

Mitias: It is a *Tigrinya* word (one of the spoken languages in Eritrea) which means to help community members start a new life. The name “Mitias” is given to an institution whose task is to help ex-fighter to reintegrate to the society on the principle of self-help support.

1.5 Organisation

To assess the general problems systematically this paper is divided into five major chapters.

- Chapter 1:** This chapter includes the introduction which comprises; background, objectives of the study, methodology, definitions, organisation. The section on background tries to give basic introduction about the country.
- Chapter 2:** This chapter describes demobilisation and reintegration program in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. The program of various countries is presented and their experiences examined.
- Chapter 3:** This chapter looks at the Post- Conflict Eritrea. In order to help grasp the issue a political overview and unaccounted of the socio-economic situation will be given.
- Chapter 4:** This chapter shows how demobilisation and reintegration was carried out. It will review national strategy, conceptual framework, institutional set-up and implementation.
- Chapter 5:** This chapter deals with challenges associated with reintegration. Here the finding of the research and their interpretation will be given. The in-depth interviews and questionnaire on demobilisation and reintegration will be attached as Annex 1 and 2 respectively.
- Chapter 6:** This chapter provides conclusion and recommendation.

2. The Sub-Saharan Africa DRP Experience

Demobilisation and reintegration programs (DRP) are complex operations with overlapping and interdependent phases, crosscutting issues, and many actors. This chapter addresses how DRP were carried out in Sub Saharan African countries and tries to identify its pitfalls. This in turn furnishes the basis to evaluate the Eritrean experience of DRP.

The end of Cold War and persistent economic deterioration in many Sub-Saharan countries, have created a climate in which a growing number of governments, whether emerging from internal conflict or at peace, are exploring ways to reduce their military expenditure with a view toward shifting scarce resources to redressing persistent poverty and growing inequality. Although Africa's military spending has declined precipitously from a peak of US \$ 3.2 billion in 1987 to US \$ 297 million in 1994, poverty, inequality, and ethnic discrimination originally fuelled by the Cold War rivalry continued to foment conflicts and undermine the authority of the state (World Bank, 1995: 1-5).

For many African countries, it has become painfully clear that lack of security and reduced fiscal resources caused by civil war represent the primary roadblock to a return to economic and social development. Such conflict has imposed a heavy burden on the continent, which is hosting more refugees and displaced persons than any other region of the world - 20 million, of which 80% are women and children (World Bank, 1993:18-33). Countries recently embroiled in conflict such as Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, and Sudan, have spent between 15% and 40% of their national budgets and between 5 and 10% of their GNP on the military; at the same time, all ranked in the bottom 15% of UNDP's human development index and spent only between 0.6% and 6% of their GNP on priority development sectors (Cilliers, 1995: 13).

In this changing environment, demobilisation and reintegration programs (DRPs) for military downsizing and economic revitalisation constitute a vital part of the continent's transition (Haile, September 1992:3-5). But the transition from war to peace and from economic crises to revitalisation is a fragile process marked by a complex web of underlying political, religious and ethnic friction.

Demobilisation takes place in distinct political and socio-economic contexts. Decisions to demobilise are based on specific military, political and socio-economic circumstances or events. A survey of recent demobilisation cases in Africa shows that they have occurred in more of the following arrangements (BICC, 1996).

Factors resulting in demobilisation:

- ◆ A peace accord between fighting parties
- ◆ Defeat of one of the fighting parties
- ◆ Perceived improvement in the security situation
- ◆ Shortage of adequate funding
- ◆ Perceived economic and development impact of conversion

◆ Changing military technologies and/or strategies

Unfortunately DRP exercises are often initiated from outside and therefore attached with strings of conditionalities. As can be read between the lines, for example in 1991, following World Bank Public Expenditure Review, the government's attention was called to the fact that inordinate defence expenditures were seriously crowding out other sectoral development efforts, particularly in education and health. Finally, the president of Uganda, in consonance with the Financial and Economic Sector Adjustment Program, approached the Bank for technical and financial leadership in demobilising about 50% of the NRA (World Bank, 1995: 220).

2.1 DRP processes of ex-combatants into civilian life

Demobilisation itself is usually conducted under time pressure. The combatants who are to be demobilised are usually brought to assembly points, where they are disarmed. They may be assisted with reorientation and counselling. In Uganda, for example, the ex-soldiers and their dependants went through pre-discharge briefings, providing those details on how to open bank account, how to start income generating activities, environmental and legal issues, family planning, and AIDS prevention (Colleta, 1996: 225-260).

At time of demobilisation, a 'package' in cash and/or kind is usually provided to assist the ex-combatants in the initial stages of resettlement. These may include foodstuffs, civilian clothing, household utensils, building material, seeds or agricultural implements. In Mozambique, the combatants received six months' severance pay at demobilisation as well as additional reintegration subsidies, representing a further 18 months' pay (United Nations, 1995a). Different packages and cash payments have led to considerable differences between countries in the direct costs of demobilisation per demobilised combatant.

Referring to the demobilisation case of Namibia Colleta (1996) cites the World Bank: "the integration of ex-guerrillas into a formal, government-armed force has been a difficult process". The selection process was based on theoretical and practical exams, requiring an education level too high for the often illiterate ex-PLAN combatants; thus, hundreds of ex-PLAN fighters eager to join the NDF had to be rejected due to their failure to meet already lowered entry standard (World Bank, 1996: 149).

In countries such as Angola or Zimbabwe with protracted civil war, the DRP process and choice of who would stay in and leave the armed forces took on political significance; experience in other countries (for example in Cambodia the Khmer Rouge saw little incentive to reduce their power base) suggest that the more ambiguous the conflict and its termination, the more politically charged the context for a DRP since following civil war power often stems from control over armed forces (World Bank, 1993: 12).

A majority of ex-combatants in Namibia felt welcomed by their host communities; however, many ex-combatants have found access to land a serious problem. Indeed, most see their transition to civilian life as a difficult process.

The key factors for successful social reintegration are good relations with family, friends, church, and community, which in effect, constitute the ex-combatants' social capital (World Bank, 1996:13).

Demobilisation and the social reintegration of former combatants should be seen as an integral part of post-conflict peace-building. The assembly, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants into civilian society or a single military or police force, inevitably forms part of peace negotiations, whether the conflict is fought in Bosnia, Cambodia or Angola. It cannot, therefore, occur in isolation, but forms part of a wider peace settlement (Cilliers, 1995: 4-10).

2.2 Risks and potentials

According to Klingebiel et al (1995) demobilisation and reintegration encompass both risks and potentials.

A risk is evident when ex-combatants use weapons as their major means of securing their livelihood. Without any prospects of remunerative employment and a decent life as civilians, former combatants can easily turn into banditry and jeopardise peace in the country. Disarmament and weapons control must hence be carried out cautiously. In many cases the ex-combatants spent long years in combat and do not have any other profession or formal skills. They have been socialised according to military rules and hierarchical structures and have often lost self-initiative. The case is even more complex if reintegrating former freedom fighters is concerned. They have fought for ideals and thus built up great expectations beyond victory. They are easily frustrated when changes do not occur as rapidly as they had expected be it subjectively or objectively. Furthermore former combatants can pose a danger to peace and stability if they fail and embark on pressing their claims or to achieve their ends through the use of force and violence (Klingebiel, 1995: 6).

Demobilisation, however, also offers a new potential: security in a country and if properly harnessed can serve as a cushion to national reconciliation which is necessarily a precondition for sustainable human development. A war-torn society can find new ways to solve arising conflicts. Dedication to reconstruction and recovery can also help pave the way to a better future. The reduction of military expenditure can form part of a peace dividend which the government can invest e.g. in social services. Reducing the significance of the military is also a confidence and security-building measure for a whole region. It can thus reduce tensions between neighbouring countries and enhance political and economic co-operation.

Another risk lies in the fact that in most cases the program is not initiated or resourced by the country concerned. As mentioned before it usually comes as a condition to get

assistance from the donor community or the World Bank. It also happens that the country concerned has no say in the matter. As it happened in Namibia, no short or long term assistance was provided, for demobilisation of combatants was put as a prerequisite prior to independence. The peace agreement was signed by Angola, Cuba and South Africa in December 1988. Significantly, no Namibian party was part of the accord (Woods et al. 1992). So it is not surprising, that neither the UN in its Resolution 435 nor the new government envisaged any assistance to ex-combatant. It was only when former combatants began to voice their disappointment in demonstrations and in media that the government hastily responded and designed a number of ad-hoc measures (World Bank, July 31, 1995).

2.3 The Post-Conflict Challenge of Reintegration

Demobilisation and reintegration are an essential part of the post-war reconstruction process. As pointed out by Sultan Barakat and Ben Hoffman (June 1995: 8), post-war reconstruction is a highly political and ideological issue, because it usually has a much deeper political dimension than reconstruction subsequent to natural disasters.

Conceptually, the three overlapping phases of veteran's demobilisation, reinsertion, and reintegration represent for society as a whole a continuum from a post-conflict political context to a transitional phase of social capital re-formation and eventually to economic reconstruction and development. During this short-term transitional phase, the veteran is in the most vulnerable position for having left his/her military life to settle in most cases in an unfamiliar new environment (World Bank, 1995: 27).

Reinsertion and reintegration are important phases of the transition from combatant to civilian. Reinsertion pertains to the short-term period of approximately six to twelve month after demobilisation. During this phase, ex-combatants face the challenge of establishing a civilian household. The Uganda Veteran Assistance Programme's (UVAP's) "Transitory Safety Net Package" was based on this understanding and included: (1) cash payment to assist a veteran for a period of six months, (2) health care support in severe cases, (3) financial contribution to a child's primary education, and (4) shelter for his/her family to meet most basic needs.

Reintegration refers to a longer-term period of approximately two years during which ex-combatants gradually become "normal" community members, both in social and economic terms (Colletta, 1996: 143). It can be categorised into two interrelated elements: social reintegration and economic reintegration. The former implies acceptance by the family and community, as well as participation in community life while the latter signifies independence from outside financial help. The key factors for successful social reintegration are good relations with family, friends and community, which in effect, constitute the ex-combatants' social capital (World Bank, 1996:13).

Reintegration in general has not received the attention it deserves from the governments concerned. Especially social reintegration appears to have been almost completely neglected. Apart from an appeal to national reconciliation, the governments did little to

ease eventual tensions between ex-combatants and the communities they were to reintegrate, as it was the case in Namibia where former members of SWAFT (South West Africa Territorial Force) fighting along the South African apartheid regime (World Bank, 1996: 148) and having committed atrocities were resolutely rejected.

Human aspects have to be in the centre of demobilisation and reintegration programmes, as a substantial part of any post-war reconstruction programme. As Barakat and Hoffman put it “man is the principal factor in development ... because people are the essential resource for recovery and reconstruction.” (1995, page 10)

3. Post-Conflict Eritrea

3.1 Political overview

Politically, the Government of Eritrea has set up administrative apparatus on national, provisional and local levels and aims at the development of a democratic system based on political pluralism. It has set up a Commission which is drafting a constitution and preparing for national elections (Government of Eritrea, 1994b: 2). Economically, the government has started a wide range of economic reforms including market liberalisation, privatisation and export orientation. Without being pressed by a debt burden like other countries in the region the government is implementing a Recovery and Rehabilitation Programme for Eritrea (RRPE) (World Bank, 1994a: 3) which emphasises rehabilitation of physical infrastructure, the development of productive public enterprises, human resources development and balance-of-payment support (Government of Eritrea, 1994a: 4).

Simultaneously it is seeking to stimulate the process of nation-building by integrating returnees from Sudan and Industrialised countries as well as displaced people and ex-fighters into the multi-ethnic society of Eritrea. The Eritrean government is currently trying to address the development of agriculture and fishing which will lead to the goal of self-sufficiency and self-reliance (World Bank, November 10, 1994).

3.2 Socio-economic situation

Agriculture is the most important economic sector, as approximately 85% of Eritrean lives in rural areas and exists on subsistence agriculture (ERRA, July, 1994). Ministry of agriculture proposed to reintegrate 10,000 ex-fighters in irrigated and rain fed agriculture, and to date around 4500-5000 ex-fighters have settled most of them in western lowland.

The highland which covers about one-quarter of the total countryside, are the most densely populated areas of Eritrea and here about half the population reside. The complicated land tenure system, the overpopulation of the highlands and the overuse of the land limits further agricultural expansion in these areas. The lowlands are the most favourable for increased agricultural development. Most of the land is government owned. This category of land “*dominale*” (Italian word) was created by the Italians in 1909 and 1926 and it means, state owned land (available for lease).

The Italian Decree was effective only in those parts where governments set out to administer it. In all other cases, it remained unendorsed. It is believed that: almost all lowland Eritrea is under the control of village and clan communities, as it is in the Highlands, therefore, here also, access to land is based on community based customs and laws (PENHA, 1996). According Ministry of Agriculture, It is estimated that only 10% of the arable land is presently under cultivation (MOA, 1993: 7-9). Today, according the Decree of Eritrean Government land belong to the Government.

The Government of Eritrea had indicated in its macro-policy (1994) that the agricultural sector of the country is by far the most important employer and provider of livelihood to the majority of the population. Even though currently its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) is small, agriculture holds enormous potential for growth and development (Tesfagiorgis, 1996: 3-8). In addition, the agricultural sector has been severely affected by the protracted war of liberation, by recurrent drought, and by misguided and ill-conceived economic policies of successive colonial governments. The Ethiopian colonial legacy, was established by policy (command economy) in which the private sector was virtually decimated.

The development of the agricultural sector and the preservation of water resources are the most effective ways to address the food security issues in the country. Another potential area of concern is the development of the Eritrean Marine Resources. The fishing sector was in the past neglected due to war and lack of material resources. The Eritrean government is currently trying to address the development of agriculture and fishing which will lead to the goal of self-sufficiency and self-reliance (World Bank, November 10, 1994).

Although Eritrea was well advanced relative to other Sub-Saharan African countries in the 1950s, decades of war, neglect, deprivation, lack of resources, and inappropriate policies prior to 1991, resulted a weakened economy, damaged and dilapidated infrastructure, and a deterioration in human resource base. Eritrea's industrial base was badly damaged during the period of the Ethiopian occupation. Historically, Eritrea had been a nation of skilled people with a wealth of experience in entrepreneurship, commerce, and international trade. At the end of 1930s, some 730 companies producing industrial goods existed in Eritrea. In addition, some 2,200 trading companies were active. During this period, Eritrea also became a successful exporting nation. At the time of the Second World War, when imports from Europe to East African markets were disrupted, Eritrean industries stepped in to supply these markets (World Bank, November 10, 1994). Currently only 38 companies are minimally operational, functioning with old and dilapidated equipment.

Eritrea has inherited obsolete institutions and weak instruments for managing its economic policies. When it was part of Ethiopia, and in the context of the centrally planned economy, the provincial administration in Eritrea had little autonomy and policy making capacity. After independence, the problem was further compounded as many Ethiopian civil servants left Eritrea. Luckily during the liberation struggle, the EPLF developed an effective administrative structure, and this has provided the basis for developing a civil service to serve a peace-time economy. Local community structures have remained intact in many parts of the country (Tesfai Alemseged, 1996: 10-28).

4. The process of demobilisation

- ◆ Eritrea with other neighbouring countries is trying hard to make the Horn of Africa a region of peace and stability. If Eritrea were to maintain a large army, it would send the wrong signal to the neighbouring countries. The recently signed overall agreement encompassing free movement of the people, economic and defence co-operation and free access to the ports for the Ethiopian government is a testimony to the desires and aspirations of the Eritrean Government.
- ◆ Economic and Financial Factors. The EPLF as a voluntary army was maintained through the provision of food, clothing and basic goods and services. In this new era of peace and stability the demands of daily life go beyond the former prerequisites for mere survival. Fighters were demanding financial rewards in the form of salaries. The Eritrean economic situation, however, is incapable of giving a salary to such a large army. It would, furthermore, be more beneficial to the country to have the fighters actively involved in the development of the country rather than inactive and simply collecting salary.
- ◆ Despite existing tensions with Sudan, Eritrea was and is now at peace internally and with its neighbours. Therefore the Government did not see any security concern which would have justified the maintenance of a large army.
- ◆ A large inactive army is inherently dangerous to the promotion of peace and stability in the region. Boredom is a major problem and can lead to unrest. The minor incident which took place in May 1993, when fighters expressed their dissatisfaction with continued voluntary service by demonstrating in the streets of Asmara and occupying the radio station and the airport was a potent reminder of what the future holds if timely preventive measures are not instituted.
- ◆ On a more positive note, fighters who had passed through numerous obstacles and have in the process acquired the stamina for a high degree of discipline and dedication could, if channelled in a positive direction, push forward the development of Eritrea. The ex-fighters, therefore, have an economic role to play and it was and is vital, that they are given opportunities for full participation in civilian society (ERRA, 1993: 7).

Demilitarisation is a slow structural and psychological process, especially for that generation which gave the greater part of its youth and adult years, some more than 20 years - to fight a bitter war. Moving to civilian life and democracy, to open government and the challenges of loyal dissent, with the very real threat of Sudanese fundamentalism at the door and ethnic and tribal fragmentation in neighbouring Ethiopia and Somalia, is not taken lightly (Demes, 1995: 4-5). This narrow path calls for close control for as long as the proper safeguards are not firmly in place. Hyden clearly put the problem in this way: any newly independent nation always feels the need to emphasise unity and uniformity. To avoid falling into that trap without losing control of the process of development is a delicate balancing act (Hyden, 1995:19).

On 9th of July 1993, less than two months after Eritrea's formal declaration of independence, a "Brief Summary of Policy of Demobilisation" was published by the office of the president. Its basic tenets are as follows:

Eritrea's economy cannot sustain the big army (95,000 at liberation) built to confront the army of the Ethiopian military junta.

After 30 years of war and destruction, Eritrea's resource should be channelled to reconstruction rather than defence and armaments.

While certain security concerns require contingency plans and an army, they do not justify the maintenance of the army in its present size, and such plans and army can be mobilised if the situation demands.

The instalment and nurturing of democratic civil institutions, the building of an effective police force and the strengthening of the judiciary should be given priority over enhancing the defence capabilities of the country.

For long-term purposes, only an effective and small army is compatible with the economic resources of the country and its security concerns.

Active and constructive policy and diplomacy with all neighbours and the region as a whole will have the necessary positive effects which in its turn will reduce defence needs and expenditures.

Fighters released from the army and re-absorbed into the civilian society can, once engaged in productive activities, contribute significantly to alleviate the problems faced by their families and dependants which currently constitute a big segment of the population, as well as to the growth of the national economy.

Demobilisation will have a positive impact on long-term political development and stability of the country (Office of the President July 9, 1993).

This statement signalled the beginning of a difficult and expensive program which explicitly touched upon the welfare, pride and dignity of tens of thousands of men and women who had just won, at enormous personal costs, freedom and a place in the world for their country.

4.1 National Strategy and Conceptual Framework

Conscious of the fact that demobilisation can only be successful if it leads to successful reintegration of the ex-fighters into the civilian society, the Eritrean government declared the reintegration of the demobilised EPLF-fighters priority number one among all other priorities (*Mitias*, December, 1994: 5). Therefore starting from the beginning the concept as National Strategy had aimed at double objectives, of 1) demobilisation and 2) reintegration of ex-fighters into the mainstream of the society. The task of demobilisation was entrusted to Ministry of Defence.

A number of considerations were taken into account in selecting individuals for demobilisation: their age and physical fitness, as well as social and family situations, which might condition their continuing services in the army. Individuals whose families or parents sorely needed their support as they had lost several members of the family were also prioritized for voluntary release. Women whose age and physical fitness qualify them to continue in the army were allowed to choose freely whether to stay or not (Weldegiorgis, 1996: 7).

As during the whole time of the struggle each fighter - right from his entry to the training camp - and his/her arms were registered and the records kept up-to-date, the selection was a simple procedure. The fighters to be demobilised were informed, they left their arms with their unit leaders in the barracks and camps and went to get their demobilisation money and a certificate of service. Their personal data was given to the Department for Reintegration of ex-Combatants "*Mitias*". Transport of the fighters to their destination was assured by ERRA. The whole process took only a couple of weeks (ERRA, 1993: 7)

According to Colletta, reintegration takes approximately two years, during which ex-combatants gradually become "normal" community members, both in social and economic term (Colletta, 1996: 143). This is oversimplification of the problem. Only if we see it from Eritrean Experience integration is a long term process which requires different forms of economic as well as social support which will take decades. Otherwise by now the issue of reintegration would have been addressed in Eritrea. It is not a simple process which is achieved when the person is integrated into productive work, enabling him or her to gain a living, and making him or her contribute to national reconstruction and development and thereby increasing the GNP.

Of course, job creation and to be helped to be self-employed are important measures but the task goes beyond that, reintegration has also to cover the non-material needs. It has to view the integration of two different societies who had grown apart; **the fighters' society and the civilian society lived for 30 years on their own.** In fact there is even more than one civilian society, we have a rather homogeneous fighters society facing a multicultural civilian society, shaped by influences brought back from Europe, USA, Sudan, Saudi Arabia ...etc. It would lead too far to go into details, but the question that needs due consideration is: to which cultural patterns do the fighters have to adapt themselves? Or

can we expect that the civilians will take over some of the values which have shaped the fighters vision of the world?

The importance of the fighters as human potential is another aspect which must not be missed in any concept of demobilisation and reintegration - especially in the case of Eritrea. Experience of other DRP program shows that they are very often seen as a problem or as a burden and only rarely are they considered as a very valuable potential for reinvigorating a society which has to rebuild its structure after a long and destructive wars. Even if we take into consideration that as individuals they have lost years of formal education, practical job experience and skill training, access to economic resources, they have benefited from skill training, access to economic resources related to their tasks in the field and they have acquired human qualities like sprit of team work, discipline, perseverance, patience and tolerance which are as useful in times of peace as in times of war (Nubler Irgard, 1997: 21-39).

An example can be taken from the in-depth interview of one among demobilised ex- fighter "Haile" who join the army struggle in 1974 (case study No 1). He was first assigned as a fighter in the front-line. After working for two years, when he reached the rank and file of platoon he was wounded in 19976.. As a result he worked as a public officer for eight years. Then he was shifted to 'logistic department'. In this post he worked for ten years. When he joined the armed struggle he was in the fourth grade and when asked again after 22 years he would reply "I am forth grade". How is his experience to be categorised? Do his skills need to be measured by the parameters of formal categories of education if so they fail us miserably? If we insist in designing programs based only on formal education criteria there will be a lot of resources which will remain untapped (Mehreteab, 1995: 3-11).

4.2 Mandate and set-up of Mitias

According to this concept *Mitias* was set up to offer the demobilised fighters a foundation which would help the individuals to pass through several stages of adjustment and especially from dependence to independence through burden-sharing during the transition period. The mandate reads as follows:

- Carry out studies and investigations concerning the situation of fighters (demobilised and not yet demobilized), with the aim to obtain data which could be used for support measures;
- Raising funds for the various programs such as skills upgrading, credit facilities, settlements based on agricultural development;
- Looking for appropriate areas of training and settlement sites;
- Providing services to ex-fighters to facilitate their reintegration into the civil society, e.g. counselling and referral services, assistance in identifying and selecting income-generating activities through community-level needs assessments, help in obtaining business licences, and providing support and access to different provincial (now *Zonal*) and local authorities (ERRA, 1994:7).

An “Advisory Committee” composed of representatives of ministries, public institutions and national organisations such as the National Union of Eritrean Women, the National Union of Eritrean Youths and Students, The National Association of War Disabled Fighters, the Labour Union, ERRA and the Office of the President was set up to advise *Mitias*, to ensure the commitment of their institutions, shoulder responsibility for needed support measures and to facilitate co-ordination. In order to study the viability of projects and prepare the ground for settlements in targeted areas, the Committee was entitled to set up task forces composed of experts from the concerned ministries and other institutions when needs arise (ERRA, 1994: 3-5).

4.3 Implementation

The demobilisation process was conducted in steps and concerned military as well as non-military aspects.

- All divisions were contacted and an over-all explanation of the content and components of the program were given. All fighters were interviewed and their real intentions and future plans gauged. Although this was completed by the end of 93, it was not possible to process the voluminous data collected, this was only finished in 1996. In order to have a profile of the beneficiaries an additional survey was carried out based on a sample of 1,130 veteran fighters. The intention was to give a clue for the following demobilisation phases.
- Awareness building in the community was carried out on three levels, using mass media (radio, TV and newspapers) and putting emphasis on self-reliance and individual and collective responsibility (ERRA, 1993: 11).

During the work shop held in 1992 to conceptualize the reintegration program it was decided that it should be conducted in phases. The first phase, which started in June 1993, involved 26,000 fighters who joined the EPLF from 1990 onwards, out of whom 4,500 were women ex-fighters. The rationale for their demobilisation was that their reintegration would be easier since their break from civilian society was relatively short. Moreover, most of them would be able to go back to their families and take advantage of family resources. In order to facilitate their reintegration they were given between 1,000 and 5,000 Birr, depending on the length of their stay with EPLF. They were given food rations for a period of six month after their demobilisation (ERRA, 1993:5).

In a follow-up survey carried out six months after demobilisation, it was found out that 40 per cent of the ex-fighters during the first phase of demobilisation were facing various difficulties in reintegration, 44 per cent answered they would need more time to see if they can reintegrate, 14 per cent were finding it to be a very difficult experience to adjust to a civilian environment, and about 4 per cent were in real hardship (Programme Document, June 1994: 9).

One year after the first phase of demobilisation the second round of demobilisation was implemented on June 1994. It concerned veteran ex-fighters who had been away from civilian life for much longer periods. It was expected, given the experience of the first phase, that difficulties in reintegration would be somewhat greater and, therefore, more targeted assistance was required. Every second phase demobilised ex-fighter was given 10,000 Birr. The number which were demobilised during the second phase was 22,000, out of which 8000 were women ex-fighters.

Table 1 Phases of demobilisation

Demobilisation in Eritrea: First and Second phase plus Retrenchment of civil service			
	First Phase	Second Phase	Retrenchment
Demobilisation time	June 1993	June 1994	After July 1995
Target Group	Fighters since 1990	Fighters Prior to 1990	Fighters prior to 1990
No. of Fighters	26,000	22,000	6,000
Male	21,500	14,000	5,000
Female	4,500	8,000	1,000
Cash payment	1,000- 5,000 Birr (Total-100m. Birr)	10,000 Birr (total-220m. Birr)	10,000 Birr (total-60m. Birr)
In kind	food for 6 month, health care	food for 12 month, health care	Base salary of 450 Birr + service multiplied by 10 /year

Source: ERREC (updated).

Another 6000 fighters were demobilised in 1995, during retrenchment measures concerning the public sector, among them were 1000 women. The Government had promised to pay all veteran fighters US 30 per month for the service they rendered. At the time of demobilisation every fighter was given 10,000 Birr which at later stage will be deducted from their service payment. But there is one small group of fighters who were given all their money. These were Ethiopian war prisoners, who fought alongside the EPLF until the liberation of Eritrea. Since there is a democratic government in Ethiopia they asked release from the military to go home. So they got their certificate of loyal service and a sum equivalent to the time they fought alongside their Eritrean comrades in order to enable them to start a new life.

5. Challenges of the Integration Process

5.1 Analysis of the research findings

This chapter summarises the outcome of the field research carried out in Eritrea in February-March 1997. Altogether 238 questionnaires were completed. The data have been computerised and the findings partly analysed. I conducted 33 selected additional in-depth interviews during of April 1997 from which I will chose personal quotations emphasising or illustrating the quantitative results.

34.5% (82) of the ex-fighters who filled the questionnaire are women, 65.5% (156) are men. This corresponds more or less to the proportion to the EPLF. 36.5% belong to the group of ex-fighters demobilised during the first phase, 43.3% to those of the second phase demobilised in 1994, 14.7% in 1995 (during retrenchment of public servants), only 5.5% thereafter.

A) Profile

Most (67, 2%) of the interviewed ex-fighters were younger than 32 years. (21.8% were between 20 and 24 years, 29% between 25 and 28 years, 16.4% between 29 and 32), 28.1% between 32 and 45 years, only 4.6% were older than 45.

From the sample of women 47.6% (39) live in towns, 12.2% (10) live in semi-urban areas, and 40.2% (33) come from the countryside. It is interesting to note that 47.6% women compared to 44.9% men (1.1 : 1) are settled in towns, and that also the number of women living in rural areas is higher (40.2% women compared to 33.4% men, 1.2 : 1) whereas comparatively less women live in semi-urban areas: 12.2% women compared to 21.8% men (1 : 1.7).

The overwhelming majority 209, (87.8%) are Tigrinya, followed by Tigre 18, (7.6%). Bilen, Saho and Afar were represented with 2, 6 and 3 people only. (The Ethnic group distribution at the front was 64% *Tigrinya*, 24.3% Tigre and the rest represents 11.7% (ERRA survey study June 1993)

84.9% said their health situation was good; only 14.7% complained about it. A little more than a third said they suffered from one or the other disability. There is no significant difference between men and women.

Table 2 Sex by year of demobilisation

	1993	1994	1995	After 1995	Total
Female	14 (16.1%)	46 (44.7%)	20 (57.1%)	2 (15.4%)	82 (34.5%)
Male	73 (83.9%)	57 (55.3%)	15 (42.9%)	11 (84.6%)	156 (65.5%)
Total	87 (36.6%)	103 (43.3%)	35 (14.7%)	13 (5.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	27.8	3	.00000

Marital and family situation

A little more than half (57.6%) of the sample were married, more than a quarter (28.2%) were single, 8.4% were divorced, 3.4% lived separated from their spouse, and 1.7% were widowed. There is a significant difference between male and female ex-fighters in the proportion of divorced, living separated and widow(er) s:

- Among 20 divorced, 15 are women and 5 are men,
- Among 8 living separated from their spouse, 7 are women and 1 is a man,
- Among 4 who have lost their spouse, 3 are women, 1 is a man.

Table 3 Marital status by sex

	Female	Male	Total
Single	11 (13.4%)	56 (35.9%)	67 (28.2%)
Married	46 (56.1%)	91 (58.3%)	137 (57.6%)
Divorced	15 (18.3%)	5 (3.2%)	20 (8.4%)
Separated	7 (8.5%)	1 (.6%)	8 (3.4%)
Widowed	3 (3.7%)	1 (.6%)	4 (1.7%)
Total	82 (34.5%)	156 (65.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square **Value** **Df** **Significance**
 Pearson 38.2 5 .00000

Minimum Expected Frequency - .689

Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 -5 of 12 (41.7%)

Among 81 interviewees who are married to a fighter or ex-fighter, 58% are female and 42% are men. Only 3.2% women are married to a civilian, compared to 96.4% men.

Nearly two third of the sample (58.4%) have between one and three children, 10.9% have more than 4 children, while 7.6% have none. The overwhelming majority (80%) of the children are younger than 4 years.

Educational level and skills

Concerning the educational level of women ex-fighters, nearly half, (39) have gone to school between 1 and 5 years, compared to this only 47 (28.1%) 31.1% men have done so. 29 women (35.4%) completed 6th to 8th grade, only 45 men (28.8%) have achieved this. When the grades increase men starts to take over. Between 9th to 12th grades, only 17.1% women (14) had reached that stage comparing to 33.3% men (52). Above 12th grade there is only men-11 (7.5%).

Table 4 Education Level by Sex

	Female	Male	Total
0 - 5	39 (47.6%)	47 (30.1%)	86 (36.13%)
6 - 8	29 (35.4%)	45 (28.8%)	74 (31.1%)
9 - 12	14 (17.1%)	52 (33.3%)	66 (27.73%)
> 12		12 (7.6%)	11 (4.62%)
total	82 (34.5%)	156 (65.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square **Value** **DF** **Significance**
 Pearson 25.9 15 .039
 Cells with Expected Frequency <5 - 14 of 32 (43.8%)

When they were asked where they had acquired the skill they are using now 59.2% answered “before the struggle”, 36.6% during the struggle” (certainly all of the barefoot doctors!), while 4.2% had been able to get a skill training after demobilisation. As expected there is a difference as regards acquiring of skills between men and women: only 41.5% (34) Women acquired their skills before they joined the struggle, compared to 68.6% (109) men. The difference shows even more clearly when it comes to skills acquired in the field: 53.7% (44) women were trained during their stay with EPLF, compared to 27.6% (43) of the men, after liberation 4.9% women and 2.6 men.

Table 5 Origin of skills By Sex

	female	male	total
before struggle	34 (41.5%)	109 (68.6%)	143 (59.2%)
during struggle	44 (53.7%)	43 (27.6%)	87 (36.6%)
after struggle	4 (4.9%)	4 (2.6%)	8 (4.2%)
total	82 (34.5%)	156 (65.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square **Value** **Df** **Significance**
 Pearson 21.55 3 .00008
 Cells with Expected frequency <5 - 4 of 8 (50.0%)

Table 6 Skills they have by Origin of skills

	during struggle	before struggle	after struggle	total
Vocational Trade	44 (31%)	21 (23.3%)	1 (16.7%)	66 (27.7%)
Trading/commerce	11 (7.8%)	5 (5.7%)	2 (33.3%)	18 (7.6%)
Barefoot doctor	18 (12.7%)	5 (5.5%)	1 (16.7%)	24 (10.1%)
Driver	16 (11.3)	4 (4.4%)	2 (33.3%)	22 (9.2%)
Office work	2 (1.4%)	3 (3.3%)		5 (2.1%)
Teacher	3 (2.1%)	3 (3.3%)		6 (2.5%)
Artist	6 (4.2%)	1 (1.1%)		7 (2.9%)
Traditional craft	1 (.7%)	1 (1.1%)		2 (.8%)
Radio operator	7 (5%)	1 (1.1%)		8 (3.4%)
Tailor/Dress making	4 (2.8%)	4 (4.4%)		8 (3.4%)
Hair dresser	1 (.7%)			
No Skill	29 (20.4%)	42 (46.7%)		71 (29.8%)
Total	142 (59.9%)	90 (37.6%)	6 (2.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square **Value** **DF** **Significance**

Pearson 45.2 33 .07638
 Cells with expected frequency < 5 - 38 of 48 (79.2%)

Length of service and rank and file

More than one fourth (¼) of the sample (26.9%, 18 women and 46 men) had spent more than 15 years in the field. 18.5 % (17 women and 27 men) had served between 11 and 15 years, 19.7% (23 women and 24 men) between 6 and 10 years and 34% of the interviewees (14 women and 68 men) had participated in the struggle between 0 and 5 years (mainly 1st phase demobilised fighters).

More than 2/3 of the sample (69.3%) were ordinary fighters, 10.1% were unit leaders (5 women, 19 men), 9.7% platoon leaders (5 women and 18 men), 4.2% rose to the level of company leader (10 men), only 2 men had been battalion leaders.

Table 7 Rank and File by Service rendered

	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	>15	Total
Unit leader	3 (3.7%)	8 (17.1%)	8 (20%)	11 (17.2%)	30 (12.6%)
Platoon		3 (6.4%)	6 (13.6%)	18 (28.2%)	27 (11.3%)
Company			1 (2.27%)	9 (14.1%)	10 (4.2%)
Battalion				2 (3.1%)	2 (.8%)
Ordinary	79 (96.34%)	36 (76.6%)	29 (65.9%)	23 (35.9%)	167 (70.2%)
Total	82 (34.5%)	47 (19.7%)	44 (18.5%)	64 (26.9%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square Value DF Significance
 Pearson 99.1 24 .00000
 Cells with expected frequency < - 27 of 35 (77.1%)

After the end of hostilities 39.2% had been assigned to perform non-military activities. The interviewees cited 16 different occupations, but most of them were working in the Departments of the Provisional Government: education (7.6%), transport (5.9%), health (5.3%), public administration (4.6%) and social affairs (3.4%).

Asked whether they had welcomed the decision to be demobilised, a little more than half of the interviewees answered “yes” (31.7% women and 61.5% men, ratio 1: 3.7). 48.3% of the sample was not happy about the decision, among them comparatively more female ex-fighters (67.1% women and 38.5% men, ratio 1: 1.1). Some years later, when it comes to the question how they find the situation compared to their expectations, comparatively many more women say it is better than expected (67.1% women and 63.5% men, ratio 1 : 1.8), whereas 32.9% have a negative judgement compared to 35.9% men (ratio 1 : 2.1).

B) Economic situation

At the time of the interview 23,5% (28% of the women and 21.2% of the men) were without a job, 11.8% had found employment (11.0% of the women and 12.2% of the men), 10.9% (26) participated in training measures (11.0% of the women and 10.9% of the men) and 52.9% are self-employed (50.0% of the women and 54.5% of the men). Asked how they see their current situation 29.5% answered “

Table 8 Year of Demobilisation and their Current Situation

	Good	Medium	Bad	Total
1993	40 (59.7%)	36 (32.1%)	11 (18.64%)	87 (36.6%)
1994	19 (28.4%)	49 (43.7%)	35 (59.32%)	103 (43.3%)
1995	4 (5.9%)	21 (18.8%)	10 (16.9%)	35 (14.7%)
after 1995	4 (5.9%)	6 (5.35%)	3 (5.1%)	13 (5.5%)
Total	67 (28.2%)	112 (47.1%)	59 (24.8%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	27.53	6	.00012

Ex-fighters undergoing training

Among the 26 ex-fighters undergoing training, about a third (9) are women. 19 will finish school or go to university if they pass their last entrance exam (12 of them are among first phase demobilised), three participate in on-the-job training measures in Keren (See the case study N0 2).

Table 9 what are you doing by help family financially?

	no	yes	total
under training	25 (15.1%)	1 (1.39%)	26 (10.9%)
employed	26 (15.6%)	2 (2.78%)	28 (11.8%)
self employed	57 (34.3%)	69 (95.8%)	126 (52.9%)
jobless	56 (33.7%)		56 (23.5%)
total	166 (69.7%)	72 (30.25%)	238 (100%)

Employed ex-fighters

Of the 33 ex-fighters (14% of the sample) who are employed, among this 18 work in private enterprises, 11 are employed by the government, and 3 have a job with a contractor. They were convinced that they had the necessary professional skills to fit their job, either by training or working experience. Two third (21) got their employment without any outside intervention, 1/3 were helped either by Mitias (6) by their family (3), the remaining benefited from support by a friend, BANA (a share-holding company of female ex-fighters and fighters) or ACORD.

More than half (54.5%) said they were able to help their family financially, 16 of them regularly. 19 out of 33 interviewees who are helping their family were not satisfied with their job, most of them (16) find the salary not sufficient; besides this 2 complained about insufficient number of job offers. 17 had tried to get another job, until the time of the interview without success.

Self-employed ex-fighters

124 of interviewees were self-employed, out of this number 96 (77.4%) are working alone, 4 have a small number of employees, and altogether 24 ex-fighters have joined in group ventures of mainly 2 up to 7 members. Half of the ex-fighters working in groups hold a position in it, mainly as manager. From the 41 women in this group (50% of all women) 31 work alone, 8 in groups and 1 is employer.

Asked where they acquired the skill(s) for their business, 25 (20%) said they needed no skill, they just took the initiative to work. The remaining gave the following answers:

- Work experience (54);
- Training in the field (6);
- "Where there is a will there is a way".

The overwhelming majority (111) feel qualified to run their business. Only 9 think they need more skills, mainly in record keeping and management, but the main shortcoming is lack of capital.

More than half of these who are self-employed (69) started their business without any support. 53 said they were helped by their family. Only small numbers cited other sources: *Mitias* (14), colleagues in the ministries where they were working before they were demobilised (5), from friends (4) and from their spouse's parents (2).

72 of the 124 self-employed ex-fighters are helping their family financially, 66 do it regularly and 17 are also able to help friends and neighbours, most of them only from time to time. 48 replied that they have not yet reached a level which allows them to help others.

More or less the same number (73) said they were satisfied with their business, as against 48 interviewees who answered negatively gave the following reasons:

- Shortage of funds (16),

- Meagre profit (15),
- Lack of market (9).

Unemployed ex-fighters

Among the 56 (23.5% of the sample) who had not been able to find a job or became self-employed, 8 had already taken on the job training. The biggest number (32) had been unemployed since 1996. Only 1 was unemployed since 1993. 20 of these who are unemployed (less than 1/3) are supported by their family, of whom 14 get food and shelter, only two get money. In order to sustain them 29 works occasionally, 12 as casual workers, 10 are engaged in food for work activities, 4 try to earn some income as mobile vendors, one is working as a part time gardener.

Asked what type of work they would like to do if they got the chance, 26 answered they would do any work which provides an income, 9 would like to be mechanics, 4 want to work as drivers, another 4 as carpenters or brick makers, 5 want a permanent job which fits their educational level and 7 said the job must fit their disability. The remaining 2 would like to start a trade if they could get a loan.

These currently unemployed (28) think that they could find a job if they got appropriate training, 10 answered they would need money to start business or another related activity. Most of them are of the opinion that the government should pay special attention to their problem, either by creating jobs, giving loans, or by reviewing the decision to demobilise them.

C) Social reintegration

Many questions asked in economic aspect are relevant for social reintegration. Nevertheless the following findings concern the non-economic aspects which are at least as important.

Family links

The overwhelming majority of the interviewed ex-fighters have their own household: 178 (74.8%). Asked with whom they live they gave the following answers:

- With spouse or spouse and children - 96 (40, 3%),
- Alone - 32 (13.4%),
- With their parents (wife and children) - 41 (17.2%)
- With their children (Dependant) - 6
- With business partners - 4.

The remaining 60 live with parents as dependants. Concerning family members with whom they don't live, 204 interviewees said that they visit their family, 54 (22.7%) do it often, 150 (63%) seldom, the remaining 34 (14.3%) never visit their family. Visits are not the only links, as already mentioned in the chapter on the economic situation, 90 interviewees out of 154 (employed and self-employed ex-fighters) help their family

financially. Nearly half of them (48.7%) ask family members for advice, 71 for business matters (how to improve the business, to find new business ideas, to get a job), 45 in case of personal problems, social and cultural matters were also mentioned. In turn they give advice to parents, mostly in personal matters (60.7%), only 35 (32%) feel competent enough to give business related advice.

Friendship ties

In 153 cases (64.3%) the best friend of the interviewed ex-fighter is said to be an (ex)-fighter, in only 41 cases (17.2%) it is a civilian. The ratio is quite the same for the answer to the question which group of friends is bigger: 147 (61.8%) answered “fighters,” 38 (16%) “civilians”. In order to know in which social strata the ex-fighters chose their friends they were asked to compare their situation with their friends’ living conditions. 53 (22.3%) found their own situation better, 68 (28.6%) said their friends’ situation was better, 69 (29%) considered it as equal, and for 17 (7.1%) it seemed impossible to compare.

The question whether they seek/give advice was also asked concerning their friends. It seems that in comparison to the family members, they were the one who were giving advice on personal matter but now the proportion is reversed: 147 (61.8%) answered that they ask advice from their friends, $\frac{3}{4}$ of them in business matters, $\frac{1}{4}$ in personal matters.

Participation in communal activities and decision making

Asked whether they share their skills with others (a very important principle of EPLF in the field)45% were affirmative, while 53.8% gave a negative answer. They cited 15 different skills, from hairdressing to video repair that they started. The most frequently cited skills, however, were in traditional trades like metal work and carpentry.

More than half (135) said that they don’t participate in communal affairs, while 95 (39.9%) do. Among the ones who are participating in communal activities, about half are doing it in their community of origin, the other half in the present community. 25 (18.5%) are engaged in current affairs of PFDJ, 17 in local administration, 16 in environmental activities, and the remaining 11 in mass organisations. The activities cover a wide spectrum: construction of dams, churches, grain stores, roads, afforestation, soil conservation, different social activities, football, “*ekoub*” (saving clubs). Half of them are enveloped monthly, 18 weekly, and 25 once or twice per year. Only a small number (18, 13.3% of those participating in communal activities are also involved in decision making on the level of the community.

Usefulness of experiences in the struggle

Three fourth (3/4) of the interviewed ex-fighters think that their experiences from the field are useful for they cited 23 different experience in this context of which I give only those which were mentioned most often:

- Knowledge of the culture of the different peoples composing the Eritrean Nation (26),
- Self-reliance and self confidence (29),
- Perseverance and hard work (30),
- Ethics, discipline, motivation, group work, tasking care of others (39),
- Medical knowledge and related skills (28),
- Capacity to solve conflicts, to be an example for others, sense of initiative (14).

5.2 Interpretation of the findings

In this chapter I will interpret the findings of the survey of 238 ex-fighters and illustrate them by some particularly pertinent quotations from the in-depth interviews.

Demobilisation

It is not astonishing that a high female proportion of ex-fighters were unhappy about the decision to be demobilised. Nevertheless the women are more positive - and even more positive than their male comrades - some years later, when it comes to the question of how they find their situation compared to their expectations. As Abeba put it clearly:

She is aware that the position of women in the traditional Eritrean society has not changed much during 30 years of war: **“all that we have left behind when we joined the struggle is still there: regionalism, ethnicism, discrimination of women etc. The patriarchal society will never treat me as equal; they will always remind me that according to their norms my place is in the house. In the field we have reached equality by fighting, by proving our capacity and competence...”** (Case study No 4)

Knowing what patriarchal society is the female ex-fighters were more afraid to leave “the warm house of the EPLF for the cold outside world”, but found out that after all they were able to cope. For men and women alike it was a sharp transition from the difficult but protected life in the field to the peaceful but uncertain existence as an individual civilian.

To those in charge of preparing the fighters for demobilisation it was clear that it would not be easy. As one of them put it in a parable while informing the fighters to be demobilised of the decision taken: “when the mother bird notices that the wings of the young ones are well developed, she decides to convince them to leave the nest, even if she does not know whether the wings will be strong enough to carry them to a safe place. In the same way during the struggle the fighters have developed the necessary strength to overcome difficulties on their way. Now the EPLF has to demobilise them, not knowing whether all of them will be able to cope”. Another high-ranking leader laughed when asked whether he thought he could convince his colleagues to be demobilised and answered:

“We have been able to convince them to be ready to die. Do you think it will be more difficult to convince them to work for themselves?”

Ethnic and geographic distribution

The large proportion of ex-fighters living in towns and semi-urban areas is possibly the effect of sampling procedures (see chapter on methodology), but it corresponds to the fact that, apart from the ex-fighters from peasant and pastoralist origin who went back to their families on the countryside, the majority gathered in or in the neighbourhood of towns where they hoped to find a job, or where they could find customers for their business. The percentage of the sample representing the ex-fighters living in rural areas consists mainly of Tigrinya living in the densely populated highlands and around the towns in the Western Lowlands, whereas the Tigre and other ethnic groups with more or less nomadic lifestyle live scattered in the vast plains and mountains. This also explains the ethnic discrepancy: Tigre, Bilen, Saho and Afar are represented with numbers far below their representation in the EPLF armed forces.

We notice that more women ex-fighters than men have chosen to live in towns 1.1: 1). On the other side the proportion of women living in rural areas is also considerably higher (1.21: 1). It means that they have either preferred to go to bigger towns in order to find a job and escape the control of their family, or chosen to return home to their villages and the protection of the family.

Marital and family situation

Concerning the percentage of married ex-fighters there is no significant difference between men and women, but among the 20 divorced interviewees, we find 3 times more women than men (15: 5), and 4 times more female ex-fighters have lost their spouse. The percentage is highest in the group of separated ex-fighters: among the 8 who live apart from their spouse 7 are women, compared to one man.

The situation in Eritrea differs from other countries with guerrilla warfare insofar as on one side the high percentage of women in the armed forces led to marriages between fighters, whereas on the other hand there was an imbalance between the two sexes as women represented only one third of the total number. Also we have to consider the fact that these marriages were contracted in an atmosphere of imminent dissolution by death of one of the partners and that usually the couple did not live together, as they were assigned to different units in different places and only spent more than a couple of days during common leave. Also there were no material problems they had to bother about, as EPLF took care of everything, even if it wasn't much it was provided. After liberation, when the couple came home, they had to cater for their livelihood. Also problems with in-laws started: whereas the fighters had learned to disregard ethnic and religious differences, their civilian relatives had not reached that stage and often rejected sons and

daughters in law because they did not belong to their ethnic or religious community. Another fact may not be neglected: in cases where the wife was demobilised and the husband remained in the new army, he usually had to join his unit and she was expected to follow him. Indeed many women decided to start their own life as was the case with Abeba (case study No 4) considering all these peculiar circumstances it is even astonishing that we still have happily married ex-fighters.

Among the 81 who are married to a fighter or ex-fighter (59% of all married interviewees), 58% are female and 42% men. It is striking that only 2 women are married to a civilian, compared to 53 men (table page 18). There was no significant difference between the number who preferred a civilian and those who thought an ex-fighter would make a better spouse. Nevertheless the qualities ascribed to ex-fighters spouses are the following: they have a better understanding of the problems, are comrades, are flexible, speak the same language, help a lot - in short "fighters are always fighters".

The fact that 80% of the children are born after liberation is not astonishing. If a couple had a child - or children - during the struggle, it usually was not planned. They saved their wish to have children for post-war times. The baby-boom started 9 months after the battle of Massawa and reached its peak with independence. It is also no surprise that only 12.6% have more than 4 children and about 2/3 only one to three children: in general fighters are very concerned about the future of their children. They want them to get the highest possible education and practise family planning in order to have not more than 2 - 3 children. For the women who have to raise their children alone - be they widows, divorced, separated or single - this is a heavy burden. Unlike during the struggle when children were totally taken care of by the Front, in post-war Eritrea kindergartens are rare, especially in smaller towns and villages. Many female ex-fighters cannot go for training or take up employment, because they don't have anybody to take care of their children - who are mainly between 1 and 5 years old - during their absence. Taking this into consideration *Mitias* with ACORD build a day care centre in Keren where we find a concentration of female ex-fighters with children.

Length of service and rank in the military

If we look at the time the interviewees have spent in the field we have to take into account that the sample was drawn in a way so as to have an equal share of short term and veteran fighters. In the group of those who served between 0 and 5 years, women are a minority (1 : 4.9), and the difference is still more striking for those having joined after the battle of Massawa (February 1990). In all categories of veteran fighters the proportion of women is outstandingly high. If we look at the category which had stayed in the field between 11 and 15 years we notice that the ratio goes as far as 3: 1 (the reason for their demobilisation could be physical fitness). In the category having participated between 6 and 10 years we find (nearly) double women to men (1.8: 1). In the time range between 0-5 the proportion (1: 2.5) women to men.

Table 8 Service by sex

	Female	Male	Total
0 - 5	14 (17.1%)	68 (43.59%)	82 (34.5%)
6 - 10	23 (28%)	24 (15.38%)	47 (19.7%)
11 - 15	27 (33%)	17 (10.9%)	44 (18.5%)
> 15	18 (22%)	47 (30.1%)	65 (27.3%)
Total	82 (34.5%)	156 (65.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square	value	DF	Significance
Pearson	31.10	4	.00000

These strikingly higher numbers of female veteran fighters can be explained by the increasing commitment of women. In the beginning of the armed struggle only a small number of women had joined the ELF and they were mainly performing auxiliary tasks. Only from 1974 onwards, when EPLF came in and proclaimed equal representation of men and women, the situation changed slowly. According to EPLF principle, it starts with awareness rising; continues with organising, and end up by taking arms. The female population were slowly prepared to defend their interest. From 1975 onwards an increasing number of women joined the struggle when they saw that EPLF brought positive changes to their situation, for example access to land. In conclusion I would say that the women joined in the hardest times of the liberation struggle, when the Ethiopian army was 5 to 8 times stronger than the EPLF, whereas in the end, when victory was at hand, more young men decided to give a helping hand in the last blow.

The women still perceive the degree of gender equality practised in the field as an imported achievement which is not taken for granted in the society they return to. As one of the in-depth interviewees put it:

She had not gone to school before she joined the struggle. In the field she got the opportunity to complete 6th grade, and she was able to understand the roots and reasons of the struggle. But that was not all: "I learned that men and women are equal, that you have to unite your forces to be able to win, that you can rely on your comrades instead of your kin's for help to solve your problems." (Case study no 3)

The other thing that is stressed in the in-depth interview by one interviewee is the awareness campaign that was conducted by Mitias which is not continuing. It goes like this:

She regrets that the gender awareness campaigns which were organised during the struggle don't take place anymore, that nothing is done to enhance the importance of gender equality. She also misses the information campaigns about demobilisation and reintegration issue which "Mitias" was carrying out at the beginning of the demobilisation process and asks for their continuation.

About 70% of the sample is an ordinary fighter (which does not mean that they did not have responsibilities) which corresponds more or less to the situation in the field. Among the 30% with rank we have women among the unit leaders (5 women, 19 men), and the platoon leaders (5 women, 18 men). It is not astonishing that women are not among those in high positions of command, (The rank of Battalion and above is held by veteran fighters of 1973 -1975 so only 10 women were able to reach the rank of battalion by the end of the war), but it is interesting to note that the proportion of women as unit and platoon leaders is 1: 3.8, and 1: 3.6 respectively. Also it must not be forgotten that the highest ranks were given to veteran fighters from 1972 - 1974, a time when women had hardly joined.

Not every fighter, man or woman, was sent to the front. According to their capacities and skills, but also according to their health condition, they went to the rear and took up civilian tasks. They worked as barefoot doctors, teachers, secretaries, in local administration, public relations etc. In times of enemy offensives they were mobilised to reinforce the front line. After liberation, and before demobilisation, they were used for a wide range of civil tasks. Among the 238 interviewees 110 (32 female and 78 male) served in the military, whereas the remaining were assigned to health (15), education (18), public administration (11), social affairs (8), transport (14), agriculture (5), logistics (3), trade (9), cultural group (4), relief (2), construction (4) etc. The experiences they were able to collect during and after the struggle should not be neglected.

Level of education and skills

The findings of the survey confirm that ex-fighters are better educated than their civilian counterparts of whom at least 80% are illiterate (Government of Eritrea, 1994b: 2). More than 1/3 of the sample has gone to school between 1 and 5 year, nearly 1/3 has completed 6th to 8th grade. But only a small percentage of the sample has reached 12th grade or more (3.8%). We have to consider that the formal grade achieved does not say much about the real capability.

Concerning the women there is a striking difference between civilians and fighters: usually civilian girls leave school at 12 or 14, in most cases to get married. According to the findings of the sample there is no significant difference between men and women up to 8th grade. In the questionnaire no reference was made concerning the origin of the education, but in the in-depth interviews all the women told me that they got their main education in the field thus confirming my personal experiences. They also seem particularly motivated to continue their school education, I observed that among those who go to evening classes you find more female than male ex-fighters.

The percentage of interviewees who answered that they have no skills (29.8%) seems to be astonishingly high. I assume that many of the interviewed ex-fighters who answered that way don't recognise as skill what they have learnt and practised during the struggle. This is what I conclude from the list of skills named. They represent mainly conventional skills like carpentry, tailoring and dress-making and don't mention for example the work of public officers who were quite numerous.

Nubler argued that: most studies on demobilisation in African post-conflict countries tend to give a minor role to the aspect of utilisation of skills. They conclude from surveys that most ex-combatants have very few or no skills and knowledge (Nubler, 1997: 7 citing ILO, 1995a:1, 5, 11; Klingebiel et al., 1995: 24, 95; World Bank, 1993: 55). As a consequence, little consideration tends to be given to effective utilisation of existing competence and little focus is placed on the human resource development. In addition, it appears that a rather narrow view is taken in terms of skills variety. Reference is made implicitly to (formal) vocational, technical and basic general skills. The world of skills, however, is diverse. Human capabilities and competencies relate to knowledge, abilities, skills, values, attitudes and norms. These are the results of internal learning, learning-by-doing, and the socialisation process in the education and training system, as well as the employment system.

Looking at the percentages of ex-fighters having acquired their skills before - during - and after the struggle, we find that most had been trained in the field (41.5%) and that women had benefited markedly from training (1.9:1). Compared to skills acquired before joining the struggle men had the upper hand (1: 1.7). Skill gained after the struggle also sides to women (1.9:1).

Labour potential and economic activities

Concerning the age of the interviewees we notice that the overwhelming majority are of working age, most of them are even younger than 32 and thus can still be considered as not lagging too far behind their civilian counterparts. As altogether they are better educated than the civilians, they represent a valuable labour potential for the development of the country. Further more the majority say they are in good health. On the other hand, without being incapacitated many of them still suffer from various injuries from the time of the struggle. Some of them have been wounded several times, sometimes in the same battle, but they would never complain and as long as it does not hinder them to do the job they will not mention it.

Also for many of the veteran fighters who have joined the struggle at the age of 20 and who are at present 40 years old, it is difficult to start a new life without professional experience, in a country where the average life expectancy is 46 years. Another fact must be taken into consideration: they are subject to high expectations from their family which had to miss their support for so long and who is now expecting to be taken care of as it is the custom.

Self-employed

124 out of 238 self-employed form the biggest group from the sample. The fact that more than half of the interviewees are self-employed (some of them as employers) is a reflection of the limited possibilities of the labour market.

The high proportion of ex-fighters engaged in self-employment can also be interpreted as a clear sign of self-reliance and sense of initiative. This is also mentioned nearly in all the in-depth interviews:

- **To become self-reliant by working;**
- **To learn to solve problems with the help of friends;**
- **To be frank, speak freely and ask for help when need arises;**
- **To develop self-confidence;**
- **To know the different peoples and regions of the country. Especially counting on one's effort is important (case study No 9).**

In this group we also find the highest percentage of ex-fighters who help their family financially, which can also be interpreted as a sign of success as more or less the same number is satisfied with their situation. This indicates the link between satisfying economic conditions and successful social integration.

More than three fourth of those who are self-employed are working alone. As emphasis was on team work during the struggle, one could have expected more would be engaged in group ventures. However since most of the ex-fighters get help from their families they tend to do it alone, for their relatives do not accept to work in group.

The fact that the overwhelming majority feel qualified for the business, and only 9 admit needing more skills, can be seen as a sign of self-confidence, but also of ignorance concerning the necessary perquisites for successful business management. Lack of capital is certainly a serious handicap which hasn't been sufficiently dealt with at present. Objectively the two - training and capital - are the main factors for successful self-employment.

Nearly it is the same if we see the ratio women and men have started their business, 41 women to 85 men (1:1.1). If they are given money as a start up there is possibility for them to be self-reliant and confront the patriarchal society. For unless they are economically strong they can't confront the patriarchal society and survive the dilemma they are in.

Unemployed

23.5 % of the interviewed ex-fighters is slightly below the estimated general rate of the country (25%). We must be careful to interpret the term “unemployed”, as it does not necessarily mean that they don’t work at all (they work casually and they consider themselves as unemployed) underlined is mine. Many of them try to earn their living as street vendors, or casual labourers, mainly in agriculture during harvest time, but they don’t consider these activities as work. In this group the percentage of women is significantly higher: 28% compared to 21.2% of the men (1.32: 1). We find also proportionally more unemployed among the 2nd phase and later demobilised fighters: 18 unemployed compared to only 5 from 1st phase.

Concerning the solutions they suggest to solve their problem, we can certainly not expect the government to review its decision to demobilise them, but it shows that there are ex-fighters who have developed dependency - that the front should solve their problem.

Table 9 what are you doing by year of demobilisation

	1993	1994	1995	after 1995	total
under training	14 (16.1%)	9 (8.7%)	2 (5.7%)	1 (7.7%)	26 (10.9%)
employment	13 (14.9%)	12 (11.7%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (15.4%)	28 (11.8%)
self-employed	40 (46%)	56 (54.4%)	25 (71.4%)	5 (38.5%)	126 (52.9%)
unemployed	20 (22.9%)	26 (25.2%)	7 (20%)	5 (38.5%)	56 (23.5%)
total	87 (36.6%)	103 (43.3%)	35 (14.7%)	13 (5.5%)	238 (100%)

Chi-square Value DF Significance

Pearson 15.03 15 .44933

Cells with expected frequency <5 - 13 of 24 (54.2%)

Undergoing training

The results obtained should be taken cautiously, because the number of trainee is relatively small and certainly not representative. As trainees usually don’t live at home but in training centre, or near to the training cite, those who were at hand - mainly students - were interviewed. (Recently an evaluation of the over-all on the job training was conducted by ERREC, so I didn’t see the need of detailed study of training conducted).

It is however interesting to note that the sex ratio - 9 women compared to 17 men (1 : 2) - is higher than the sex ratio of the struggle (1 : 3), and that more members of this group are satisfied with their current situation than it is the case for the other groups of activity.

Employed ex-fighters

Only 14% were wage earners, of who two third were in private enterprises. 2/3 got their employment without outside intervention. Only 1/3 is employed by the government. We can see that although *Mitias* has intervened successfully in 6 cases. It is not always possible to help the ex-fighters find a job, but it is impressing they were able to do so in quite a number of cases. In this group again the sex ratio is 1: 2. Apart from *Mitias*, *BANA*, the share holding company of veteran women fighters, is trying to place female ex-fighters. (*BANA* is a private share company formed by 1000 women ex-fighters. Every member buys a share of 1000 - 5000. They have started to invest in different enterprise, and this creates job opportunity for their members.)

Various indicators for successful social integration

We may conclude from the findings of the survey that the social fabric of the Eritrean society is still strong: community and family feel responsible for those of their members who need help. Especially in the in-depth interviews I was told many stories about the support the returning fighter got from his parents and friends, and sometimes even from outsiders. This attitude is fostered by the respect and trust people have for and in the “*tegadelti*” (as the fighters are called in Tigrinya) which would not exist without the good relationship fighters and civilians have developed during the struggle.

Nevertheless we also have to recognise that between civilians and ex-fighters friendship often ends where business, that is competition, starts. For the ex-fighters who have learned to share, not only material things but also knowledge and skills, this means not only a change in attitude, but also to take leave of some of what they call “the values of the struggle”. Some of them have developed strategies to harmonise the two worlds, like the owners of the glass workshop in Keren who invite the neighbouring business people for socialising on Sunday afternoons (case study 1).

The results also show that the main pillar of reintegration is the fighter’s family. Links between ex-fighters and their families as a whole are rather close and contacts quite frequent. Only a small percentage (14.3 per cent) never visits their families and it could well be that they live too far away. The close links are also illustrated by the fact that it seems natural for most of the interviewees to ask the family for advice, mainly in business related matters where they expect the civilians to be more knowledgeable (as for their advice it is appreciated in personal matters which is probably due to the fact that the fighters are known to have developed certain human qualities which are not so common in the civilian society, like conflict solving). In most cases the capital needed to supplement the demobilisation money in order to enable the demobilised fighter to start his/her own business is given by the family. The moral support the family extends to the returning fighter - be she or he demobilised or not - is certainly a not less important help. On the other side the fighters feel responsible for their family. In the in-depth interviews we find many examples of ex-fighters - men and women - who after their return shouldered the responsibility for the whole family. Like the three trainees in brick making and laying we have interviewed in Keren: one of the reasons why they participate

(two women, one man) in the course is to get a job which will enable them to take care of their families (case study No). This is one of problems which give them a bitter feeling: during their absence they were not able to shoulder these responsibilities, now that they are back; they often don't have the means to do it.

Nevertheless during the struggle EPLF has replaced the family for the fighters. As we have been told during one of the in-depth interviews, in a very touching way: Gabriela B.B. came back home to find her father dying and became aware that she was not able to mourn him as she had mourned her martyred comrades: "I discovered that for me comradeship had replaced kin- and friendship" (case study No). So the biological family is only one leg on which the demobilised fighters stands, the other one is the fighters community personified by very close comrades: the best friend of nearly two third of the interviewees is an ex-fighter, and most of them move mainly among ex-fighter friends of equal economic condition.

It might be surprising to notice that more than half of the interviewed ex-fighters don't participate in communal affairs. But if we consider that it is only a relatively short time that they have been demobilised and thus are newcomers in the community and in the civil society as a whole, and that they have to overcome many problems before they are settled, it seems even astonishing that more than 40 per cent are engaging themselves in communal affairs, mainly as members of PFDJ and local councils. 19 per cent of them participate in decision making, again mainly in PFDJ. This might be disappointing to those who think that the former EPLF fighters should play an important role on the political scene of Eritrea, but it seems quite impressive if we consider that it usually takes quite some time to be accepted as a leader, especially for someone who is new in the community as is the case of many ex-fighters.

Sample of the case studies conducted.

Elias Tesfamariam Kidane got very early in the liberation struggle. In 1968 - at the age of 19 - he started working with the ELF. As he was discovered in 1972 he fled to Addis Ababa where he worked in his profession as a blacksmith and earned a good living: 15 Birr/day. But after one year and five months he decided to return to his hometown *Dekemhare* and to join the EPLF which had taken over in the meantime, because - as he put it - "once you have become politically conscious, you never get out of it!"

Until the strategic withdrawal of the EPLF to Sahel, E.T. - who was working in the family's metal workshop in *Dekemhare* - was active in the local section of the Workers' Association. When the Ethiopian army entered the town he decided to leave with his family for the base area under EPLF control in Sahel. One child preferred to stay in Dekemhare with its grandmother. Two of the children were too young to fight, they went to Zero School. The remaining two with their father joined the EPLF armed forces while the mother stayed in the EPLF refugee camp in *Solomuna*.

For nine years he served as a front-line fighter, in 1987 he was moved to the section of maintenance of weapons and armaments where he worked until liberation. In contrast to many other fighters with little education (he had left school after having completed 5th grade) he asked immediately to be demobilised, in order to take proper care of his family

and his metal workshop. In his case there was no objection, as he fulfilled the needed conditions: he was the only remaining child of his parents, 3 brothers had been martyred and another brother - who had taken care of the workshop during his absence - had recently died. (Footnote - craters for voluntary demobilisation: at least one brother/sister killed by the enemy, to be the only support to the parents, to be unfit for military service).

He found the workshop in very bad shape. Most of the equipment had disappeared, he had to start from scratch. Apart from his demobilisation money he had no financial help. His only asset was his professional experience from the time before he went to the field: 8 years in metal work and 2 years as a carpenter. He finds it very difficult to cope with the situation, especially the rough competition to which he is not used. There is no sharing of experience, no mutual help in difficult situations, as it was practised in the field. Instead of professional competence you have to rely on kinship and other relationships, which is also against the rules of the fighters' society, which had tried to eradicate these habits.

He finds the change from the life in the field to the society of civilians very difficult. "As a fighter you had your job to do. Everybody was ready to share with each other the little they had, and everything was taken care of by the Front." These times are past. In normal life this is not possible. **The civil society is like a swamp, you have to move very carefully to avoid the many pitfalls, and you have to do it alone, there is no one to show you the way out.** From the perspective of the fighters the civilians complain about everything, from morning to evening, "They find even the water too thin!" They don't adapt easily to changing situations, whereas the fighters prove to be very flexible. Even though they expected no problems after liberation, they try to cope when they meet them, and do their best to adjust themselves. Nevertheless it is a big change. In the military life you have to be fast, to take quick decisions and measures. In business you have to assess the situation first, you have to weigh the pros and cons and you have to give time before you decide. As fighters usually don't do that they often are not successful, so his advice to the demobilised fighters is: "don't go into business, maximise your potential, that is work hard, get training, improve your skills, and don't count on the service payment (the government has promised to pay each fighter 30 US /month of service). Only the bars will make profit!"

Despite all these difficulties he thinks that he is reintegrating slowly but surely. Whereas his business colleagues don't want to advise him, in order not to help a competitor, his neighbours are more open. 20 of them have joined in an "ekoub", where they contribute 250 Birr/week. He used his share - 5,000 Birr - to buy raw material for his workshop, in order to be ready for eventual orders. He also uses his status as a member of the local council of the Coptic Church (his nickname in the field was "*keshi*") to help them in administration and establish friendly relations with the community. His attitude towards religious beliefs is marked by the principles of the EPLF: "faith is in your heart, it belongs to you, and you must not impose it on others. This is the way to harmony of all religions. Ethics are the same for all; good is good and bad is bad.

He does not count on the government for help: **"they don't have the financial resources, and it is surprising enough that they have found the millions needed to pay the demobilisation money and help the families of the martyrs."** But he misses the non-financial support which the demobilised fighters got before and don't get anymore **"because they are hiding behind heaps of paper, they will never be what they used to be: part and parcel of the people.** And they have to be more open, they have to inform and explain what they are doing, for example in the recent corruption cases (footnote - in Eritrea the word "corruption" is used to describe all kind of financial mishandling). Without proper information gossip will spread and nothing will help against it."

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The process of reintegration entails both the economic and social aspects of life. The former is concerned with the distribution of resources, services, employment and other opportunities that promote the material well-being of the groups. The latter concerns very delicate issues affecting people's values, traditions, capacities, aspirations and prestige. These are invariably based on their political, ethnic, religious and psychological make-up and their respective social position. What has been done until now is promising, but a lot needs to be done, for social reintegration is a complex business, involving a process in which people who had developed various attitude and behaviours in diverse circumstance are brought together to form an integrate society.

The program of demobilisation was home brewed, guided by the national priorities and it always gives emphasis for upgrading internal capacities. Gradually it allows more space for local people to participate and most importantly, it helps in developing the much needed local skills, thus leaving less need to rely on outside help or handouts. Self-reliance lies at the heart of all the issues addressed. Emphasis has been placed on developing internal human and material resource, in order to attain a social and economically viable state.

The EPLF made a great effort to eliminate the traditional social divisions based on religion, ethnicity regionalism and class, as well as harmful traditional practices and norms. To a certain degree, they were successful in emancipating women. But after liberation the efforts conducted to eliminate or minimise the threat of patriarchal society is not meeting the challenge

The egalitarian society of EPLF is slowly changing. This transformation is causing difficulties for fighters who have been used to equal treatment, communal life and common sharing for years. The awareness campaign has started good, but it later didn't continue. This is a short coming that should be filled quickly before creating big problem.

6.2 Recommendations

Ex-fighters generally faced problems of integrating into the civilian society; female ex-combatants faced problems associated with conservative traditional customary belief about the social and marital position of women. Because of the society's perception of the place of women female ex-combatant were more stigmatised than their male counterparts after the liberation struggle. It is true the government is helping them by positive discrimination. But this is not enough. They should organise and form their own association to fight for their right.

The government is giving priority to the issue of ex-fighters with time this will not be the case, and it shouldn't be if we want to create a harmonious society without privileging one group against another. So it is timely to think to form a veteran association who will defend the right of all fighters.

With the limited experience we were had it is good to start with what you have "try and error". But now it is time to evaluate our experience and draw systematic approach and learn from our mistakes. To do this a further study is needed to look on the different actors that are playing in building the new Eritrean Nation.

The tendency to be a bureaucrat and not listen or see the problem of the people is one of the fundamental instruments of failure. The civil society is like a swamp, you have to move very carefully to avoid the many pitfalls. It is very easy to lose respect. But you have to work very hard to win the heart of the people.

Before training profession proper need assessment should be done. to avoid frustration after training.

Issues of Veteran fighters aged greater than 60 must be addressed separately. They can't start from scratch. One possible solution can to start pension. Indeed it is good start that the government have started transport Share Company for veteran leaders of the armed struggle, but it is timely to address the issue of the aged also.

Annex 1 Case Study

Case-study No 1 (Haile Teklemikael Woldemariam)

H.T.W. and his wife Froweini - who is also a demobilised veteran fighter - run a glass workshop in Keren. How did he get the idea? And why had it to be in Kern? “Since 1993 I thought about getting demobilised. At that time I was working with ERRA in Keren, distributing relief goods. But I wanted to be on my own. So I did a market study: I went through the town to find out what kind of service was missing. I discovered that there was not a single glass workshop. So when I was offered a one month leave I went to Asmara and asked the owner of a glass workshop whether I could work with them for three weeks. I spent the remaining week with my family. As for the choice of Keren, you don’t need much money to live here. It has a climate where you don’t need warm clothing, which you would need in Asmara, and I know the place well for having worked here.”

His wife was demobilised before him, in 1994. When it came to decide about the best use of her demobilisation money, they discussed several options: to buy gold, furniture, clothing etc. In the end they decided to invest it into a business, and only then he told her about his idea to open a glass workshop and his short apprenticeship in Asmara. She agreed to his plan and started to look for an appropriated place where to work. After three month search they found it: a quite spacious workshop on the road to Asmara. They spent the 10,000.-Birr for rent (300,- Birr per month), tools and glass.

In the beginning it was very hard. He was still working with ERRA, and his wife- whom he had trained - had to do most of the work. They had no business experience, no reliable client, and no enough capital. At that time the not yet demobilised fighters working in governmental services or institutions did not get any salary, only pocket money was given. At that time the government offered them a small loan with low interest rate. He made use of this offer and together with his sister was able to mobilise Birr 14,000. They had to work very hard and were able to repay the loan after two years.

Asked his educational background he responded grade four, the same as in 1994. He was demobilised in 1996, 22 years after he had joined a combined ELF/EPLF unit. Until 1987 he was fighting in the front-line on and off, for he was wounded several times. As a result of this he was assigned to Logistic Department, Public administration, Trade department, and after liberation to ERRA. His life in the field has changed him a lot, he enumerates the changes one by one: “ I learned to observe and to analyse, to take care of the people, to be dedicated to work and the nation, to be gender aware and understand the situation and problems of women. Besides this I do understand the dangers of regionalism and favouritism.” Contrary to the life in the field, in the civil society differences in ethnic and religious affiliation still play an important role. We have developed the habit of discussing our idea openly and this facilitated good relations and in the meantime built tolerance: “We speak out what we think; we say what is wrong or right. Civilians they are not used to it, and they don’t like it. This creates a barrier to understanding.”

Comparing civilians' and fighters' aptitude for business he sees advantages and disadvantages: the ex-fighters are able to discuss until they reach an agreement, but they don't know how the market works, and they are too naive. To illustrate this statement he tells a personal experience. A customer came to his shop to buy an item in order to replace like the one which is broken. He advised him to take something else which would not brake so easily. A civilian friend who happened to be there told him that he was stupid: "You should sell him what he wants to buy, that is your business. If it breaks, it is his business!"

Concerning the reintegration process in general he sees three main problem: "First the lack of skills, second the lack of patience of the ex-fighters - they don't analyse, they try what comes to their mind and expect quick results, and last but not least they can't handle money, they don't know how to spend it efficiently.

He and his wife have learned the rules of the market the hardest way, and have adapted them to their ideas. As they don't like to give commissions, they have started to socialise, in order to get clients. They have decided to spend 150 to 200 Birr per month for socialising. They don't work on Sundays but instead invite friends and relatives. Business has improved quite a lot. They reach between Birr 1, 500.-2,000.- net profit per month. They have also reorganised the work: he goes to Asmara to buy material, collect the vouchers, does the bookkeeping. She is the vendor and the cashier. Both do the glass cutting and assembling. They earn enough to sustain the small family- they have three children of 7, 5 and 2 years- and take care of his mother. After his father's death and during his stay in the field, it was his big brother who did it, now he has taken over.

What plans do they have for the future? "We are not yet on our two feet. We still have to invest in better equipment and tools to enlarge our business. It is too early to start something new."

Case study No. 2 Yasin Mohamed Jim'er, Amleset Gebremeskel Lebasi, Halima Idris Mohamed

All three are about to finish a training course of 6 months in production of compressed earth blocks, cement hollow blocks and fibre-cement roofing tiles, and in bricklaying. The training takes place in Keren and is organised and funded by ACORD. Altogether 28 ex-fighters are participating.

All three of them are veteran fighters: H.I. has joined in 1982, A.G. in 1983, Y.M. in 1987. What was their motivation? H.I., a Tigre from *She'eb*, was 20 years old when EPLF was active in the area, helping people to cope with various problems, mainly harmful health practices. She was impressed and decided to join in order to take care of people in need, to help them without prejudice and distinction of sex, religion and tribe. A:G. was 26 years old and followed friends who had left before her. Y.M. at the age of 24 lived in Keren, and when fighting started in the neighbourhood he joined the EPLF forces.

Whereas Y.M. had gone to school before, the two women had all their school education until 5th grade in the field. For A.G. this seems to have been a real eye-opener: “I have not only learned to read and write, but also to distinguish between enemies and friends (in the war of independence), I have become politically conscious.”

Both Y.M. and A.G. were front-line fighters. Both had chosen themselves an example to follow: Y.M. was deeply impressed with a battalion commander named Ajib who was martyred in 1990. He had a special way of handling the fighters: instead of giving orders, he made them understand the need of the measures to be taken, so they did it out of conviction. A.G. had come to know and admire a woman platoon leader named Abeba *Habtom*. When she fell in 1988, A.G. decided to follow her foot steps and that is how she became a unit leader.

H.I. did not join the armed forces, she was assigned to Zero-School where she took care of the smaller children, what she did with great dedication, as they were “the flowers of the future Eritrea, designed to replace the fighters.”

What was the biggest change they experienced in the field? For A.G. it was the discovery that men and women are equal which changed her attitude and perceptions for the rest of her life. H.I. thinks that the most important gain was to learn to be tolerant and solve controversies through discussion. The two women wanted to be demobilised. A.G. has been injured and suffers from a piece of metal in her chest. H. I.'s health is not very good either. As for Y.M. he had to leave the army because after liberation he had taken too much liberty, sneaking out of his unit without permission etc. His comrades had warned him that it might take a bad end, but he did not listen. Well, they proved right and he was kicked out for bad behaviour.

Although A.G. wanted to be demobilised, she was scared of it, and she thought she would not be able to cope. Her parents had been quite well-to-do farmers in Mendefera, but when she came back after the war they had become quite poor. They were very happy to find her alive, but they couldn't help her financially. Anyway, as she was alone (she had lost her husband in 1989, during an unsuccessful attempt of the EPLF to capture Dekemhare), she had decided to be self-reliant and to depend on nobody but herself. So she decided to put her demobilisation money to the bank and to learn a trade which would allow her to earn her living. When *Mitias* offered her the opportunity to join the training organised by ACORD, she immediately took it and decided to go wherever she would be offered work.

Y.M. had used his Birr 10,000. - Severance pay to give a loan to a relative who promised him Birr 250.- every month. He paid for 6 months and then stopped it, denying that he ever got the money. As no paper was signed, it is impossible to take him to court. Y.M.'s family is very poor. His father was a school guardian and died while he was in the field, he is in charge of the family now. So he has to get a job which allows him to take care of them: „with the skills I acquire at the ACORD training, I can go anywhere to earn my living! “ The same applies to H.I., as her family is very poor, they spent all her

demobilisation money to cover current expenses. She is also willing to go wherever she is offered work.

At the time of the interview they were about to finish their training. All 28 trainees had decided to form a group and to go to a remote area with returnees needing shelter. They have already discussed the idea with ACORD and got a positive feedback: they will be helped to set up their own contractor business, with two 4-tons trucks (secured by *Mitias*) and a cement mixer to be paid on their income. They think that they will be able to manage their business as well as their life, according to the principles learnt during the struggle and which they want to give as advice to other demobilised fighters: “work hard, be self-reliant, take initiatives and go wherever you are asked to go - don’t count on the government!”

Case study No Gebriela Bokhretsion Berhe

G.B. comes from a well-to-do peasant family in Dekemhare. She is married to a not yet demobilised fighter working at present with the Ministry of Agriculture in Barentu (Gash-Barka). They have three children: the eldest, a seven years old girl, was still born in the field, then comes a little boy of three, and the youngest, also a boy, was just 6 months old at the time of the interview. She lives at present in Adi Quala, her husband’s place of origin, where she is running a small grocery.

After a short period of EPLF presence Dekemhare was recaptured by the Ethiopians at the end of 1978. The soldiers of the Derg came often to collect raw material for the glass factory of *Mai Weshate* and used to harass the civilian population and commit all kind of atrocities. G.B. became increasingly upset, and when after a skirmish in 1981 she saw the dead and wounded fighters of the EPLF lying on the ground, she decided to join the struggle. Until liberation she served as a front line fighter. Contrary to many other women fighters in her condition she accepted to be demobilised without arguing: “the government has decided it for our benefit, so we have to make the best out of it!” She decided to invest her demobilisation money and to work, in order to be self-reliant. So she agreed to her husband’s and his family’s suggestion to open a shop in Adi Quala and to look after her old mother-in-law. The shop was already there: her husband’s brothers and sister living in USA had sent the money to improve their family’s house at which a spare room was added, already with the purpose of be used as a shop. Her demobilisation money was used to buy the equipment and with a loan of Birr 5,000. - From a friend of the family she was able to buy the first goods.

She had not gone to school before she joined the struggle. In the field she got the opportunity to complete 6th grade, and she was able to understand the roots and reasons of the struggle. But that was not all: “I learned that men and women are equal, that you have to unite your forces to be able to win, that you can rely on your comrades instead of your kin’s for help to solve your problems.” She did not know how much she had changed until after liberation, when the fighters got a ten days leave and she came back home to find her father to be dying. She became aware that she wasn’t able to mourn him

as she had mourned her martyred comrades with whom she had shared a common ideal and the hardships of the life in the field: “for me comradeship had replaced kin- and friendship.” She was very disturbed by this discovery for she was afraid of the reaction of her family.

She feels sorry that the values and habits of the field are gradually diluting: “Bits and pieces still remain, but by and large we return to the civilian way of life.” She thinks that the fighters can influence the society by their discipline, their way of working, their commitment. On the other side they also take up civilian habits, for example they start gossiping, instead of using criticism and self-criticism, as they had learned during the struggle. Another trend she dislikes is the progressive reintegration into the traditional family structures. But she is not altogether negative about it: when her mother-in-law died, her neighbours were very helpful; they came to comfort the family and helped with preparing and cooking. Now she does the same when neighbours lose a family member. What about religion, does she believe? She says that it is in her heart, but she does not want to fuss about it.

Is she satisfied with her shop? Yes and no. Yes, because it keeps her busy. No, because there are too many groceries in town, and it does not yield much: Birr 200 to 250 per month, the main part of which she is reinvesting. In the beginning she had a helper, but she could not afford to keep her. As she is alone, it is difficult to go to Asmara to buy supplies. She thinks it would be more profitable to run a shop with building materials, like her best friend in Adi Quala, but that would need much more starting capital. But all in all she thinks that she is able to manage: “Compared to other ex-fighters I am well off, and when I see ex-fighters in a bad situation it hurts me deeply!” When she started she got advice from other shop keepers, now she is advising other ex-fighters who want to open a shop.

What kind of advice does she give to other demobilised fighters? Not to spend money on “glittering things” but to invest it in business. She has some precise ideas about the situation:

“There are many obstacles, the society as a whole is economically weak and it is not easy to find a house, or to get land. Some measures to help the ex-fighters are useless, or incomplete. For example the training of women ex-fighters in embroidery and other handicrafts is useless. And to give loans without training and vice-versa is not a good solution. To help the ex-fighters needs a holistic approach!” She thinks the government should intensify its efforts: “I understand that the government does not have the financial capacity to solve all our problems, but there are a lot of things they could do to help us, and they don’t do enough. So they must be pushed in this direction.”

Case Study No. 4 (Abeba Gebrezgiher Gebreselassie)

Abeba. G. is at present 31 years old, about 1.55 m tall, her weight is certainly not more than 55 kg. When she took over her mother's farm (which had been leased), her farmer neighbours were convinced that she would not be able to manage it, they laughed at her and said "this is no job for a woman!". Actually she had not wanted to go into agriculture. During her life in the field - which she joined in 1980 - she was most of the time working with the EPLF cultural group. After demobilisation in June 1995 her first intention was to go abroad and look for work. She discussed the idea with a friend from the struggle, a comrade of her unit, working now with "Mitias" (footnote - "Mitias" is the name of the unit for reintegration of ex-fighters within the division for rehabilitation and reintegration of ERREC, former department for reintegration of demobilised fighters in ERRA). She convinced her to stay. At the same time she was asked to take over the 5 ha farm in Ala, because she was the only one of the family to be physically able to farm it, as her 2 brothers and one sister are much too young.

She decided to consider it as a challenge, to work hard and show what she was able to do. Her demobilisation money of Birr 10,000 was not enough to rehabilitate the farm, so with the help of "Mitias" she took a loan of Birr 15,000.- from the Commercial Bank, in order to make a down-payment of Birr 13,000 for a motor pump from Ministry of Agriculture worth Birr 21,000. The remaining money was used to rehabilitate the run down farm and to pay some additional labour. She also learned the basics of agriculture and how to use and maintain the motor pump. Nevertheless she thinks she needs much more agricultural training.

She grows maize as a staple food crop, and tomatoes and green pepper for sale. She is quite satisfied with the financial return, even if she finds it difficult to accept that she gets only Birr 1.- for a kg of tomatoes (and the price can go down to Birr 0,30) which the trader resells immediately for Birr 1,75! She thinks that this is exploitation and has to be fought. But the farmers have no storage capacities, they are not organised, and as everybody produces the same items, competition is hard. Something has to be done, but what? Maybe the government could find export possibilities, or set up a cannery. And the producers should agree on a minimum price for the sale of their products, eventually it could be guaranteed by the government. Anyway, the other farmers would not listen to her, not yet - she still has to prove that she is as good a farmer as they are.

But with the result of her first harvest the attitude of her neighbours has changed drastically. They suddenly became very friendly and offered to help her. Some of them showed openly their admiration. One told her: "maybe Mary has made a mistake when she gave you a female sex" (foot note - the Tigrinya believe that St. Mary has the power to determine the sex of a child). Another neighbour went even further by saying "they should take the penis of one of these lazy guys and graft it on this lady!"

In the meantime she has become a real farmer; farm work gives her much more pleasure than housekeeping. She has to work very hard to fulfil both tasks and to raise her 2 children 11 and 6 years old, but she is convinced that she will succeed and does not regret

to have divorced her husband, also a fighter. The reason was that as a member of the new Eritrean Armed Forces he wanted her to stay at home and live from his salary, whereas she wanted to have a job and be financially independent.

She is aware that the position of women in the traditional Eritrean society has not changed much during 30 years of war: “all what we have left behind when we joined the struggle is still there: regionalism, ethnicism, discrimination of women etc. The patriarchal society will never treat me as equal; they will always remind me that according to their norms my place is in the house. In the field we have reached equality by fighting, by proving our capacity and competence. I’m lucky to have my land to cultivate, but others also can work, if they are determined to do so.” In her opinion three things make it difficult for the demobilised women fighters to reintegrate the civil society: the difficulties of the country’s post war economy, the fact that the society wants them to loose what they have gained during the struggle, and finally: “the bitter feeling to have lost what you have gained and tasted - this is the worst thing!”

A. G. thinks that it is a great thing to live in a free country, but that nothing is equal to the life of the fighter’s in the field. She believes that the fighters still are the cream of society, and that they have to preserve and pass the values of the struggle. But in order to enable them to do so their problems have to be addressed.

Case study No. 5 (Josief Gebremeskel Tesfai)

Why did he join the struggle? **“I did not want the enemy to walk in my small beautiful town!”** was his answer. That was in July 1978. After the EPLF had liberated Dekemhare for a short time, it was captured by the Ethiopian army. At that time he still was a teenager. He was the only one of the family to become a fighter. His father had died recently; most of his family went abroad: 3 brothers to Addis Ababa, the remaining three to USA, Italy and Sweden. His mother is also living in Addis, where she owns a big tank truck transporting fuel from Assab to Addis.

After having served as a front-line fighter for two years, his talents in painting were discovered and he was asked to join the EPLF art group. So it was quite natural that he had never thought of becoming a farmer after being demobilised in June 1995. But he had to, because after his grandfather had died there was no one else to farm the family land, a 4 ha plot suited for irrigated vegetable growing. In Eritrea as elsewhere in Africa it is a customary rule that land which is not cultivated for three years will go back to the community and be distributed to another family of the village.

The family gave him Birr 50.000 to start. He bought a motor pump for Birr 23.000, had a well built for another Birr 20.000, the remaining money was used to cover running costs. He had not the slightest idea of farming, and the neighbouring farmers did not show very helpful, so he had to learn by doing. If he asked them, they answered: “Maybe it will work, just try.” So now if he needs advice he goes to see other ex-fighters engaged in agriculture, or consults some of his former comrades now working with MoA.

He is not very satisfied with the results. Three times he has tried to grow tomatoes, three times he has failed: the first crop was destroyed by pests, the second failure was due to lack of water (that's why he got the well improved), the third time the crop was good, but there was no market. So he has decided to go into fruit production. He has set up a nursery with 1.000 orange trees which he is on the way of transplanting, intercropping them with maize as staple food. Vegetable give a much faster result, growing fruit trees needs at least 4 years until you can expect a return of your work and capital invested, but in the long run it is more promising.

If he looks back at his existence as a fighter, he discovers a great change between his former and his present life. In the field he never thought how he would get food etc., everything was taken care of: "You just did what you were supposed to do. Now you have yourself to take care of everything. In the field everybody was working for a common goal, everybody helped each other, now everybody has to lead his own life and fight for himself. You have to enter competition with your neighbours; it is the capitalist world which you knew only from the books, in which you are living now." It will take him time to adjust. But it is also challenging: "I have learnt how to handle money, to keep accounts, how to work hard without losing hope, and to remain honest. But in business it is not helpful to be honest. As fighters if we see bad things, we don't close our eyes and mouth, we speak out, and this has repercussions. The civilians won't speak; they open their mouth when it is too late to act."

He thinks that he should engage in communal affairs. He has already participated in *Baito* meetings, but somehow the way discussions went was not to his liking. Where he would say "yes" or "no", they talk and talk. He has no time to loose, so he left it. Another issue he is interested in is the organisation of farmers and the common fight for better prices. But he feels the other farmers would not listen to him, because he is too young and un-experienced.

He is not yet married, because it isn't the right time. If he were married, he would have children, and how could he bring them up properly in the present uncertain circumstances?

First he must be sure to succeed. If he looks at many demobilised fighters he feels sorry for them: they try a lot of things without prior assessment of the situation and proper preparation. He knows one who has tried 8 different businesses in 3 months time! Most of them go into export/import without any knowledge and experience; they want to be millionaire in a short time. In his eyes this is naive. He wants to advise them to "spoil their hands" - as he did when he went into agriculture - if they want to survive in the long run. He would tell them that nothing will be achieved overnight, that you have to start small and go slowly.

In his eyes the inexperience of fighters in business and their prevailing attitude is a problem, and "Mitias" and the government don't do much to change it. They should discuss about it, publicise examples of success and failure, in order to teach them a lesson and prevent them from repeating the same mistakes. Also they should give them financial

help to start, for example in agriculture where the amount of the demobilisation money - Birr 10.000 - is too small to be meaningful. He thinks that all in all the situation of the demobilised fighters, especially the women ex-fighters, is not promising, and something must be done to change it.

Case Study No. 6 (Meriem Ferej)

M. F. is running a small restaurant in the centre of old Massawa. It belongs to her brother working in Saudi Arabia who is also owner of the business license. As both parents have died quite some time ago, he feels very much responsible for the family, not only of Meriem but also of her sister, widow of a martyred fighter, and her 5 children. So soon after liberation he sent them a taxi in order to earn enough money to sustain them. Unfortunately the driver they had hired was not very qualified: after 25 days of service the car was heavily damaged in an accident he had caused.

At that time Meriem was not yet mobilised and still working with ERRRA, in relief food distribution. She got the usual pocket money, fixed according to the length of service with EPLF, until she was demobilised in November 1994. As a veteran fighter (she had joined the struggle in 1975) she got 10,000.- Birr which she used to get the damaged taxi repaired. It was a pure waste of money, because immediately afterwards the car was involved in two other accidents in which the new driver had no responsibility, but which left the car heavily damaged, beyond repair.

In mid 95 she opened the restaurant. She liked cooking and had just finished a three months course in catering, organised by *Otto-Benecke-Stiftung* for returnees and demobilised fighters. In the beginning it was very successful, the net profit of 6 months of business amounted to Birr 14,000.-. In February 1996 however she was victim of a car accident and had to spend five months in hospital, plus Birr 7,000.-for medicines and medical fees. While she was absent nearly all her clients deserted the restaurant. During the successful period she needed four sheep per day, now one sheep per week is enough. She does not know what to do. Maybe the restaurant - which serves only Muslim food, without alcoholic drinks - would be more successful if she could offer other dishes and beer. But her brother would not allow it. So she thinks of changing the business, either to sell iron ware and building material, or curio objects made from shells which are quite popular in the region. But she would need capital, between 25,000 and 50,000 Birr, and she can't get a bank loan, because the house and the business are in her brother's name. She doesn't see any way out.

Life was so different in the field, where you could count on your comrades. Now when you are in trouble "nobody cares, nobody bothers, and nobody helps! You cannot compare life in the field and now, the only advantage of now is the fact that Eritrea is free." M. is at the end of her thirties, she was very young when she joined in 1975. She says that the life in the field has turned her into a mature person who became aware of essential social issues and problems, like different ethnic and religious affiliations, equality of men and women. What is most important to her is that she has learnt to

analyse contradictions and solve disagreements, “in order to realise harmony as a common ground for understanding.”

As a women fighter and now a demobilised fighter, did she experience any problems in the civil society? No, she has reintegrated quite smoothly, what has helped her most is her ability to rely on herself, and not to loose hope that she will be able to solve her problems.

When she observes other ex-fighters she notices that those who have invested their demobilisation money in some economic activity are doing quite well, but those who have spent it immediately after having received it are in a bad shape now. They have to blame themselves, and nobody else! And she does not agree with the Government’s decision to increase the salaries of the not yet demobilised fighters working in the public sector (footnote: since 1st of January their salary is between Birr 1,000 and 2,000, which is more or less the double of what they received before), because according to her judgement the present economic situation does not allow it.

Case study No. 7 (Solomon Gebremeskel)

S. G. grew up in Addis Abeba, where he went to school up to 12th grade. When he was 15 years old he became for the first time personally aware of the discrimination practised by the *Amhara* leadership against citizens of Eritrean origin. He wanted to join the Technical School in Addis but his application was refused. In 1977 - at the age of 18 - he felt he could not bear it any longer and decided to join the EPLF.

At present he is 38 years old, his health is good, despite an injury of his left leg, which prevents him from running and playing football. He is married since 1991, with two sons of 8 and 4 years respectively. His wife is also a fighter, she is 34 years old. They are together (“happily”, as he underlines) since 1985. He believes that the fact to live with a partner who is also a fighter facilitates life in the civil society, as they have shared the same experiences and practised the same life style. He thinks that a fighter wife is much less demanding than a civilian. Nevertheless he is convinced that he is luckier than anybody else, because he and his wife understand each other “100%”. Unfortunately they cannot live together: his wife has a job as technician in a textile factory, where she is earning 380,- Birr/month. Also the living conditions in the settlements of the Western Lowlands are very hard for small children, so he lives alone for the time being, but they visit each other every couple of months.

He has hardly any contact with the rest of his family scattered between Ethiopia, Ghana and Germany. His father still lives in Addis. He is 70 years old and lost his job in 1992, he is helped by his daughters who stayed in Ethiopia. His mother is more or less paralysed and lives with one of her daughters in Germany, benefiting from the social welfare system. Another sister is working as a college teacher in Ghana, and the only brother he had is “lost” in Germany, since 1974.

He was demobilised in 1994, and he was happy about it, because he wanted to be on his own. He had spent more than 15 years in the field, mainly as platoon leader in the front line. But he also worked in the financial administration at division level, and from 1977 until 1993 he was also teaching literacy to other fighters, that is how he met his wife in the field.

Whereas he never underwent any vocational training before he joined the struggle, he learnt driving, typing, accounting, horticulture and agriculture, mainly by practising and reading, after demobilisation. He has also managed to speak fluently English, by reading and listening to the radio.

Before being demobilised he had already made up his mind: he wanted to go into agriculture. He was looking for a suitable plot in various places: *Agordat, Tokombia, and Shambuko*. Finally he found near Tessenei what he was looking for. To be on the safe side he took two options: one plot of 2 ha on the government owned irrigated cotton farm in *Ali Ghider*, and he also managed to obtain a 20 ha plot near He got 40,000 Birr loan from commercial Bank of which in the meantime he has cleared 13 ha. In 1996 he was able to cultivate 10 ha under irrigation, growing mainly onions, tomatoes and other vegetables, but also fruit trees, for which he has set up his own nursery.

The demobilisation money - 10.000 Birr for him and 10.000 Birr for his wife - was not enough to pay for the compensation. They managed to get some loans from relatives (15.000 Birr) and a friend (5.000 Birr). In the meantime the friend got his money back, but the family will have to wait. He has two regularly employed workers, another two work on a commission base on their own plot on the farm for which they have to give 40 % of the harvest. All four workers are civilians; S. G. believes that they are easier to handle than ex-fighters.

He thinks that he has the necessary qualification to manage an irrigated vegetable farm: he knows a lot about agricultural and horticultural practices, by books and through advice from neighbouring farmers; he is able to drive a tractor and handle all other agricultural tools; during the struggle he has gained experience in accounting, financial and staff management. But he wants to improve his skills and knowledge, until the next rainy season he wants to upgrade his driving licence and learn how to repair motor pumps, by following as an assistant a Sudanese technician who is going around repairing pumps. All in all he is quite satisfied with the output of his vegetable farm, but it could be much better if he could increase his running capital in order to buy more equipment, and if the marketing would be easier.

He is also more or less satisfied with the result of his 2 ha in *Ali Giddier*. With his agricultural skills and the technical support from the farm management he was able to increase his cotton yield continuously: 1995 - 30 quintals/1,4 ha; 1996 - 36 quintals/2 ha; and this years harvest has reached 62 quintals/2 ha, because he got a better positioned plot. He thinks he is lucky, because many settlers are just able to pay the charges with the income of their 2 ha irrigated cotton production (**in *Ali Ghider* both husband and wife get equal share of 2 ha each. "The motto is if gender equality is to be entertained**

women should get equal access to land. The intention is to implement this all over the country”) (bolded is mine).

In *Ali Ghider* he has been elected as member of the committee of the ex-fighters-settlers, in order to represent their interests in discussions with the farm management. Even though their complaints have not all been listened to, he is quite satisfied that since this season they have a say in the price negotiations with the purchasing textile factories. The committee members meet once per week to discuss their problems. S.G. is also the initiator of a “garden association” of 120 members, with view to improve the marketing conditions of their products. They meet once or twice per week, for one hour. He now wants to set up an ex-fighters’ co-operative at *Ali Ghider*, to run some non-farm activities like a bakery, or a retail shop, in order to generate supplementary income.

He thinks that the qualities he has acquired during his life as a fighter, mainly tolerance, perseverance, solidarity and sense of community, as well as interest in social affairs, are very useful for these activities. Furthermore he would like these qualities to be maintained and fostered in all other aspects of civil life, which otherwise is very hard for the ex-fighters being used to a community oriented social culture, and having no experience in business (“being innocent” in business, as he puts it): “we fighters share always, the others share only when there is surplus”.

According to him, the ex-fighters have not yet managed to settle in the civil society, most of them are just struggling for survival, whereas the civilians had time enough to master the tactics of their society. For this reason it is very important to preserve the moral of the struggle, to be united, self-reliant and to help each other as before. It is equally important to go on learning, like his wife who since independence is going to evening class and has just finished 8th grade. In order to allow her to finish her education they have decided to have no more children. As much education as possible is also his objective for his children: they shall go to school to the highest possible level.

Case study No. 8 Simon Negash Gebreab

S.N. grew up in Asmara where he completed Technical School (12th grade plus 2 years). Despite his disability - one of his legs is crippled by birth - he decided to join the struggle in 1990, at the age of 21.

He was appointed at the metal recycling workshop of the Department of Economic Development where he served until he was demobilised in 1993. The following two years he worked in the Western Lowlands, employed by the National Union of Peasants, maintaining pumps, generators and other motorised equipment’s. He would have stayed there without two problems: he was far from his family and suffered increasingly from asthma. So he decided to return to Mendefera where his family is living after his father - a former school teacher - had retired, and to open his own workshop.

He owned altogether Birr 12,000 (his severance pay of 5,000.- plus the savings from his two years employment) which he used to buy the basic equipment. His parents could not

help him financially, but their moral support is equally precious to him. *Mitias* had set up a “*Medeber*” (an area of small workshops, similar to the well known one in Asmara) of 36 workshops near the new bus station of the town, and he rented one of them for a small amount (Birr 25.-/month) at the beginning of 97.

Up to date he just manages to earn Birr 200.- per month, but he is quite optimistic concerning the future. He is convinced that his business will go expanding when he will be known and the bus station will be in full service. As business is still slow he is able to invest his spare time in visiting prospective customers and giving a helping hand wherever it is needed.

As most useful experiences from the struggle S.N. lists the following:

- To become self-reliant by working,
- To learn to solve problems with the help of friends,
- To be frank, speak freely and ask for help when need arises,
- To develop self-confidence,
- To know the different peoples and regions of the country.

Especially counting on one’s own efforts is important: “Without this experience I would have sit and waited until someone offers me a job”, he says. But other experiences make reintegration more difficult, as he explains: “In the field we have learned to reject harmful and useless traditional practices and norms. This can help me to live anywhere, and it made life easy in the areas where fighters have stayed for a long time. But my home area *Seraye* was never a stronghold of the EPLF; it was most of the time controlled by Ethiopian troops. So people have stacked to their traditions and I feel much more a stranger in my original place than I felt in Sahel, or in the Western Lowlands.”

However, he thinks that some experiences and values from the struggle make reintegration more difficult, for example the fact that fighters are used to trust each other without reserve. In civilian life you cannot trust everybody. There are other shortcomings, for example fighters act to quickly without previously studying the situation; they are not used to save and to put money to the bank, so they might loose it. He has learned to do it, and instead of joining a traditional saving club (“*ekoub*”), he puts his money to the bank where he gets interest.

On the other side the civilians also make it difficult for the fighters to start a new life: they are envious and don’t want others to succeed where they were successful, therefore they often don’t give the right advice: “if you get an advice from a civilian you have to check and counter check it!”

What advice would he give to other demobilised fighters? He has four pieces of advice to offer:

- 1) If advice is needed to consult several persons who are knowledgeable;
- 2) Not to be too ambitious;
- 3) To learn how to compromise;
- 4) “And last but not least to be patient as we used to be when we were in the field”

Annex 2

Questionnaire -Demobilisation and Reintegration

(1) Profile of demobilised fighter

- 1.1 Name _____ .
- 1.2 Sex (a) Male _____ (b) Female _____
- 1.3 Origin (a) urban _____ (b) Semi-urban _____ (c) Rural _____
- 1.4 Ethnicity (a) Afar _____ (b) Bilen _____ (c) Hidareb _____
 (d) Kunama _____ (e) Nara _____ (f) Rashaida _____
 (g) Saho _____ (h) Tigre _____ (I) Tigrina _____
- 1.5 Marital status :
 (a) Single _____ (b) Married _____ (c) Separated _____
 (d) Widowed _____ (e) Divorced _____
- 1.6 Number of children :
 (A) None _____ (b) One _____ (c) Two _____
 (d) Three _____ (e) Four _____ (f) > than four _____
- 1.7 Level of education (academic) and origin
 Grade _____ Before _____ During _____ After the struggle _____
- 1.8 Age :
 (a) 18-20 _____ (b) 21-24 _____ (c) 25-30 _____ (d) 31-35 _____
 (e) 36-40 _____ (f) > 41 _____ .
- 1.9 Skills, kind and origin
 Profession _____ Before _____ During _____ After Struggle _____
- 1.10 Number of years of service :
 (a) 1-5 _____ (b) 6-10 _____ (c) 11-15 _____ (d) _____
- 1.11 Position held in the military (rank and file) :
 (a) Simple _____ (b) Unit _____ (c) Platoon _____ (d) Company _____
 (e) Battalion _____ (f) Above Battalion _____
- 1.12 None military occupation: _____
- 1.13 Date of demobilisation:
 (a) 1993 _____ (b) 1994 _____ (c) 1995 _____ (d) 1996 _____
- 1.14 Perception of personal situation at present:
 (a) Good _____ (b) Medium _____ (c) Bad _____
- 1.15 Is it better or worse than expected at demobilisation

(a) Better _____ (b) Medium _____ (c) Worse

Give reasons

2. Economic (Training situation).

2.1 List chronologically all activities since demobilisation and say how you got it and why you left it.

In case of income generating activity continue with last one (on going activity) .

2.2 Which skills do you have? List them and say how you acquired them.

Skill _____ . Origin _____ .

2.3 Do you get any support to enable you to carryout this activity?

(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

(If yes)

(a) Money _____ (b) Advice _____ (c) Other _____

Specify _____

2.4 Who support you?

(a) Family _____ (b) Friends _____ (c) others _____

Specify _____

2.5 Did you get any obstacle to get support?

(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

If yes

Whom did you ask ?

(a) Family _____ (b) Friends _____ (c) Others _____

Specify _____

What reason do they give

In case of negative answer

Whom do you ask?

(a) Family _____ (b) Friends _____ (c) Others _____

Specify _____

2.6 Are you able to help your family financially?

(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

If yes

(a) Regularly _____ (b) Sometimes _____ (c) Rarely _____

2.7 Are you able to help friends and neighbours financially?

(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

If yes

(a) Regularly _____ (b) Same times _____ (c) Rarely _____

(B) In case of training: indicate kind of training.

2.8 How do you get the training opportunity _____

- 2.9 Where there any conditions to be met ?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) no _____
 If yes _____
- 2.10 How long is the training?
 (a) one _____ (b) two _____ (c) Three _____ (d) four _____ (e)>
 Five _____
- 2.11 What do you want to do after training?

- 2.12 If you would have had the choice would you have chosen another training?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
 If yes specify _____

(C) In case of unemployment (no activity).

- 2.13 Who support you?
 (a) Family _____ (b) Friends _____ (c) Others _____
 _____ Specify _____
 How?
 (a) Shelter _____ (b) Food _____ (c) Money _____ (d) Other _____
 Specify _____
 In case of money amount/month .
- 2.14 Do you work occasionally?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
 (If yes) What are you doing? _____
- 2.15 What would you like to do? _____
- 2.16 What would you need for it? _____
- 2.17 Do you know how to get it?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
- 2.18 Have you tried to get it?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
- 2.19 Why didn't you get it? _____
- 2.20 Do you have an idea how to overcome it?

(3) Social situation

- 3.1 Do you have your own household?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
 (If not)
 With whom do you live? _____
 (If yes)
 Are family members living with you?
 (a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
 (If yes)

- How many?
 (a) one ___ (b) Two ___ (c) Three ___ (d) Four ___ (e) > Four ___
- 3.2 How often do you see family members who don't live with you?
 (a) Very often ___ (b) Quite often ___ (c) Seldom ___ (d) Never ___
- 3.3 Do you ask family members for advice?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 (If positive) What kind of advice?
 (a) Personal ___ (b) Business / Work ___
- 3.4 Do family members come to you for advice?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 (If yes) What kind of advice?
 (a) Personal ___ (b) Business /Work ___
 Give an example.
- 3.5 Who is your best friend?
 (a) Fighter ___ (b) Civilian ___
- 3.6 Among your other friends which group is bigger?
 (a) Fighter ___ (b) Civilian ___
- 3.7 How is your economic situation compared to your friends?
 (a) Better ___ (b) Equal ___ (c) Worse ___
- 3.8 Do you ask your friends for advice?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 (If yes) What kind of advice?
 (a) Personal ___ (b) Business /Work ___
- 3.9 Do your friends come to you to ask for advice?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 (If yes) What kind of advice?
 (a) Personal ___ (b) Business ___
- 3.10 Do you participate in communal activities?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 (If yes)
 Which activities? _____
 How often (for each activity)? _____
- 3.11 Can you use your experience as a fighter?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 Which Experience? _____
- 3.12 Do you participate in consultation and decision making concerning communal affairs ?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No ___
 What kind of affair _____
- 3.13 Do you hold a position (s) in political and administrative structures ?
 (a) Yes ___ (b) No _____

3.14 Did you or do you experience any problems during reintegration which are due to your status as a fighter ?

(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____
If so what kind of problem

3.15 Where you able to overcome these problem

(a) Yes _____ (b) No _____

3.16 What advice do you give for other fighters for successful reintegration ?

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