

CONFRONTING THE LEGACY OF WEAPONS IN RICHMOND, KWAZULU-NATAL

This investigation into the weapons recovery process in Richmond finds the tensions that fuelled the conflict between the ANC and IFP in the area during the 1990s still hold peacebuilding in the balance. Contemporary violence has to be understood within the area's history of armed conflict. A key aspect of the research has entailed understanding the extent to which weapons were distributed and played a role in the conflict as well as tracking what happened to these weapons. The report also focuses on the demobilisation and demilitarisation processes directly after 1994 and looks at reasons why these processes failed to disarm and demobilise the Richmond community.

New antagonists have taken up arms since the easing of tension between the ANC and IFP. Conflict flared up again between factions within Self Defence Unit structures, and no-go areas were re-created as defections to the United Democratic Movement gave old hostilities a new banner. Domestic and criminal violence also perpetuate a climate of fear that is stoked by the ready availability of weapons.

Imprisoned for their role in the conflict, ex-combatants held in Pietermaritzburg Prison have initiated a peace process in an attempt to bring sustainable peace to their communities at home. By interviewing these prisoners, as well as police and party representatives, the foundation for the successful implementation of a community weapons collection programme in Richmond have been laid. In addition, the researchers were able to draw on the experiences of a youth recovery initiative in KwaMashu and the Church weapons recovery programme in Mozambique.



'How do you deal with a mass problem of trauma? Levels of substance abuse are very high partly as a result of this trauma. People still fear the unknown... many don't plan or think about the future. They have lost any interest in dreaming and have few ambitions.'

'The accumulation of light weapons, especially assault rifles and hand grenades, leads to large numbers of casualties, which in turn disrupt the economic and social system. One effect of the internal arms race is that stabbings have decreased and shootings have increased with considerable impact on the cost of health services.'

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
PO Box 30778
Braamfontein
2017
South Africa
Tel: +27 11 403 5650
Fax: +27 11 339 6785
<http://www.csvr.org.za>

CONFRONTING THE LEGACY OF WEAPONS IN RICHMOND, KWAZULU-NATAL

by Injobo Nebandla



CONFRONTING THE LEGACY OF WEAPONS IN RICHMOND, KWAZULU-NATAL

**Injobo
Nebandla**

**Violence and
Transition
Project**



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CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION

VIOLENCE AND TRANSITION SERIES

The Violence and Transition Project seeks to examine the *nature and extent of violence* during South Africa's transition from apartheid rule to democracy (Phase 1) and within the new democracy itself (Phase 2) in order to inform a violence prevention agenda. This series comprises a set of self-contained, but interrelated reports, which explore violence within key social loci and areas, including:

Phase 1 (1999-2002)

- ⊕ Revenge Violence and Vigilantism;
- ⊕ Foreigners (immigrants and refugees);
- ⊕ Hostels and Hostel Residents;
- ⊕ Ex-combatants;
- ⊕ State Security Forces (police and military), and
- ⊕ Taxi Violence

Phase 2 (2003-2005)

- ⊕ The KwaZulu-Natal Peace Process
- ⊕ Gun Control in Richmond, KwaZulu-Natal
- ⊕ Kathorus Youth in the aftermath of the 1990s
- ⊕ Community-State Conflict and Socio-Economic Struggles, and
- ⊕ Trauma and Transition, with a focus on refugee women

While each report grapples with the dynamics of violence and transition in relation to its particular constituency all are underpinned by the broad objectives of the series, namely:

- ◆ To analyse the causes, extent and forms of violence in South Africa across a timeframe that starts before the political transition and moves through the period characterised by political transformation and reconciliation to the present;
- ◆ To investigate the role of perpetrators and victims of violence across this timeframe;
- ◆ To evaluate reconciliation, peacebuilding and transitional justice initiatives and institutions, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established to ameliorate future violence in South Africa;
- ◆ To develop a theory for understanding violence in countries moving from authoritarian to democratic rule, i.e. "countries in transition", and
- ◆ To contribute to local and international debates about conflict, peacebuilding and democratisation.

Through the research, we have identified key thematic (and interconnected) 'indicators' that highlight the complex relationship between conflict, transition and democratisation. These include:

- ⊕ Demilitarisation
- ⊕ Institutional transformation
- ⊕ Peacebuilding and reconciliation
- ⊕ Justice and accountability
- ⊕ Poverty, inequality and socio-economic factors
- ⊕ Politics, crime and violence

It is an appreciation of these 'indicators' that underpins our understanding of the relationship between violence and transition, and how, in turn, they impact – positively or negatively – on democratic consolidation. This series strives to understand their impact on the deepening of democracy in South Africa and their intersection with addressing the democratic deficits inherited from apartheid governance. The research also illustrates our limited understanding of the multifarious and evolving relationship between politics and crime, dispelling notions of a 'clean' shift from an era of political violence to one of criminal violence, and raising fundamental questions about the extent to which South Africa can be accurately described as a post-conflict society.

In order to understand – and prevent – violence in South Africa and elsewhere, an ongoing action-research agenda is required. Through this series the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation offers an exploratory, yet detailed, contribution to this process. The Violence and Transition Series aims to inform and benefit policy analysts; government departments; non-governmental, community-based and civic organisations; practitioners; and researchers working in the fields of:

- ⊕ Violence Prevention;
- ⊕ Transitional Justice;
- ⊕ Victim Empowerment;
- ⊕ Peacebuilding and Reconciliation;
- ⊕ Human Rights, and
- ⊕ Crime Prevention.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and they do not necessarily reflect those of CSVR.

The Violence and Transition Series is funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa, Canada.

Copies of the reports can be freely obtained from the CSVR website (www.csvr.org.za)

Series editors: Bronwyn Harris, Piers Pigou and Graeme Simpson

For further information, please contact:

The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
PO Box 30778
Braamfontein
2017
South Africa
Tel: +27 11 403 5650
Fax: +27 11 339 6785
<http://www.csvr.org.za>

CSVr's mission is to develop and implement innovative and integrated human security interventions based upon a commitment to social justice and fundamental rights for people who are vulnerable or excluded. CSVr pursues these goals as essential to our aspiration of preventing violence in all its forms and building sustainable peace and reconciliation in societies emerging from violent pasts – in South Africa, on the African continent and globally.

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
CSVR	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
ITU	Investigative Task Unit
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NCF	National Consultative Forum (now the UDM)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIM	Network of Independent Monitors
NITU	National Investigation Task Unit
SAPS	South African Police Service
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SDU	Self Defence Unit
SPU	Self Protection Unit
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDM	United Democratic Movement
VTP	Violence in Transition Project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Richmond, a small town situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, was the site of intense conflict and political violence between 1989 and 2000. Although political stability has come to the region since 2000, Richmond town and the surrounding areas are still grappling with the legacy of this conflict.

This project explores the options and possibilities for gun collection in the Richmond community, one of the KwaZulu-Natal conflict zones examined in VTP 1. It is closely linked to the VTP 2 KwaZulu-Natal Peace Process research (in many ways it is an additional case study) and it highlights the complexities of community-level research, along with the need for a *process-oriented* approach that is flexible and capable of adapting to community-needs.

This report is based on research conducted over a twelve-month period during which consultations and discussions with a number of roleplayers in Richmond and the province occurred. In many instances this entailed multiple interviews and discussions with individuals and groups of people.

Initially the purpose of the research was to initiate and implement a community-based weapons recovery project, along with the documentation of this recovery process. However, it quickly became clear that the implementation of a weapons recovery process at a community level would be a complex and potentially inflammatory process. Not only would this research require substantial resources and time but it would also need to address broader issues related to peacebuilding. This report notes that recovering weapons in Richmond cannot be separated from other processes that need to occur in the area. Unless the weapons recovery process is part of a broader process of peacebuilding in the area it will not only be unsuccessful but could create serious tensions and even conflict.

Therefore it was decided to refocus the research away from the implementation of a weapons recovery programme to a process of identifying the necessary steps for a successful recovery process to happen. This re-focus has laid the foundation for the implementation of a community weapons collection programme in Richmond. In

addition, the researchers have reviewed a youth recovery initiative in KwaMashu and the Church weapons recovery programme in Mozambique.

Part of laying the foundations for a successful weaponry recovery process has required a review of the history of the conflict. The report looks first at the conflict between the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the African National Congress (ANC) and how, after this inter-party conflict had subsided, internal conflicts, particularly within the ANC, took centre-stage. This conflict subsequently transformed itself into conflict between the ANC and the United Democratic Movement (UDM).

In particular, the report looks at the conflict between Patheni and Nkobheni (IFP strongholds) and Ndaleneni and Magoda (ANC strongholds), which resulted in the displacement of more than 20,000 people. During this period the IFP clearly had the upper hand. The report details the changes that took place after the 'battle of the forest' in 1991 when the ANC was able to push back the IFP and regain control over Ndaleneni and Magoda and then the subsequent carving up of the area into 'no go' areas.

The report addresses how, as conflict began to subside between the IFP and ANC, internal conflict began to surface and how this internal conflict led to widespread intimidation and assassinations. In 1997, after the expulsion of Sifiso Nkabinde from the ANC, the conflict escalated when Nkabinde joined the United Democratic Movement (UDM). The conflict transformed itself into violence between the ANC and the UDM.

This research situates contemporary violence within the area's history of armed conflict. During the height of the political conflict, both the ANC and IFP developed Self Defence and Self Protection Units as part of their armouries. A key aspect of the research has entailed understanding the extent to which weapons were distributed and played a role in the conflict as well as tracking what happened to these weapons. The report also focuses on the demobilisation and demilitarisation processes directly after 1994 and looks at reasons why these processes failed to disarm and demobilise the Richmond community.

Other aspects of the legacy of violence are also examined in the report including the impact of the violence on both the economy of the area and residents themselves, through the residual trauma, mistrust and divisions it has left behind

In 2000, prisoners who were serving sentences for their involvement in the past violence, initiated a peace process and this resulted in the establishment of a five-a-side peace committee in Richmond. Since then there has been relative stability in the area. The report looks at the specifics of this process and the opportunities it presents as well as the challenges this process still faces in bringing sustainable peace to the area. The

research also documents how the political prisoners became a driving force in the research process through their participation in both the research itself, as well as in assisting to resolve tensions that arose during the process.

The interventions outlined in the report include the need to link the disarmament process to development of the area, the need to find an effective means of addressing ex-combatants' needs and their demobilisation, creating an environment conducive to a weapons recovery process, addressing trauma, offering incentives for people to hand in their weapons and strengthening the existing peace process.

The research shows that a vast majority of weapons available in Richmond had at some point been used in acts of violence and before people would be prepared to hand over these weapons, there would need to be agreements reached regarding prosecutions and that these agreements would need to be supported by both victims and perpetrators.

Finally the report focuses on the need for different role players to ensure the development of an integrated process to address these issues, along with the need for local, provincial and national government to participate in this integrated process.

BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT



Richmond is a small town situated approximately thirty eight kilometres from Pietermaritzburg in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. From the late 1980s until the end of the 1990s, Richmond was the site of intense conflict and political violence. This affected not only the lives of its residents but also decimated the economy of the small town. Since 2000, the area has experienced relative stability, but the town and surrounding areas continue to grapple with the legacy that more than ten years of political violence have left behind.

This legacy includes divisions and mistrust between people, economic devastation as a result of the violence, trauma and post traumatic stress amongst a population that has been terrorised by violence and intimidation, surplus weapons that were deployed into the area at different stages during the conflict, lack of faith and trust in the criminal justice system, which for many years fuelled and contributed to the conflict, and the existence of a number of highly organised and trained Self Protection Unit (SPU) and Self Defence Unit (SDU) members who were not successfully demobilised after 1994.

In many ways the Richmond conflict has appeared to observers as a microcosm of the elements that instigated and perpetuated violent conflict in KwaZulu-Natal generally. Equally, the legacy left behind by the violence is not unique to Richmond and many of these problems are experienced in other parts of KwaZulu-Natal, which have experienced similar levels of political violence. For this reason the research conducted in Richmond could provide useful insights and lessons into post conflict demobilisation for other parts of the KwaZulu-Natal province

This report focuses on gun control in the Richmond community in KwaZulu-Natal.



INTRODUCTION

KwaZulu-Natal has historically been the most conflict-ridden province in South Africa (Kentridge, 1990). Unlike many of the other provinces of the country, political violence in KwaZulu-Natal carried on after the 1994 elections, and it has taken a decade for peace processes to take root in the province.

Easy access to, and the availability of, illegal weapons have contributed significantly to the high levels of political violence. The outbreak of political conflict in most areas was immediately preceded by an influx in weapons, and as the conflict became more violent, so the number of guns in circulation increased. (Gun Free South Africa and the Network of Independent Monitors, 1998, p.1)

Since the early 1980s KwaZulu-Natal has infamously been known as the province with the greatest demand for weapons and as a result the province subsequently became a huge illegal armory. While there are no accurate figures available regarding the quantity of illegal weapons in circulation in KwaZulu-Natal, figures for weapon seizures during 1996 give some indication of the extent of the problem i.e. 45,5% of the illegal guns that were recovered nationally by the police were seized in KwaZulu-Natal. Between 1995 and 1998 20,708 guns were seized by police nationally. 9,239 came from KwaZulu-Natal (*Sunday Times*, 2002).

Following the 1994 elections, and particularly after 1996, the KwaZulu-Natal provincial leadership of the ANC and IFP invested considerable energies to build a peace process¹. The peace process faced multiple challenges, not least what to do about the proliferation of weapons left in the conflict's wake.

The continued presence of a large stock of illegal weapons poses a serious threat to KwaZulu-Natal and the country in general, particularly in a context where levels of violent crime remain unacceptably high. Gun violence in South Africa has become a major drain on the countries resources, both in terms of direct service costs, and the diversion of scarce resources from a social and economic development agenda. (Gun Free South Africa and the Network of Independent Monitors, 1998, p.1) The removal of small arms from communities has become a critical component of all post-conflict strategies.

¹ For more information see "Freedom from Strife? An assessment of the efforts to build peace in KwaZulu-Natal" A VTP 2 series report by Injobo Nebandla, Centre for the Study of Violence, December 2006.

This report examines the history of weapons distribution in the community of Richmond in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, a community wracked by violence, in a conflict that intensified after the advent of democracy. The report also explores the current situation with regard to weapons availability and the use of these weapons and their impact on stability in the area.

The report subsequently examines the feasibility of initiating a weapons recovery in post-conflict Richmond.

Methodology

It would be impossible to focus on any programme or strategy to reduce the availability of weapons in Richmond without understanding the historical, social, political and economic conditions in which the proliferation has occurred.

This report primarily addresses ways in which the weapons were distributed and stockpiled during the political conflict in Richmond and looks not only at the current impact these weapons have on the stability and reconstruction of the area, but also at initiatives that have or could be taken to curb the use of these weapons, which are still in circulation or accessible to at least certain people in and around Richmond. From the outset of the research it was impressed upon researchers that the issue of weapons could not be addressed in isolation from other legacies the conflict has left behind. As such, the report also focuses on trauma, peacebuilding and reconstruction in as far as these impact on the ability to deal with the legacy of weapons.

Initially, the research process was intended to link to a community weapons handover project in Richmond. However, during the consultation process it became abundantly clear that for such a project to be successful it would require extensive groundwork with all the key parties before it could take effect. In addition, the process would require certain agreements and buy-in from the authorities and structures beyond Richmond including the National and Provincial Governments.

The research also needed to take into account the fact that the community process does not always adhere to the same timeframes as the research process. In addition the implementation of a weapons recovery project at a community level is a complex programme, incorporating broader issues relating to building the peace process, demilitarisation and development. This requires the investment of substantial resources and time before it is completed.

The research therefore scaled back its immediate objective of implementing a weapons recovery programme to laying the groundwork upon which a comprehensive community-based weapons recovery programme can be initiated. The focus shifted from documenting a process from beginning to end as initially anticipated, to identifying and assessing what issues need to be addressed in order to ensure that a weapons recovery process can occur effectively in a community like Richmond. In this regard, the report also provides valuable generic lessons on factors that can contribute to a successful programme and obstacles that may exist to hinder such an endeavour.

Over a twelve-month period, a research team of four people, two of whom had extensive experience of working in the area and with issues of political violence, conducted and participated in multiple interviews and discussions with over seventy informants individually and in groups.

The Richmond study complements the research undertaken on the KwaZulu-Natal Peace Process (VTP 2) (cf. Injobo Nebandla, 2006) in that Richmond can serve as an additional case study regarding the identification of factors that can and cannot make peace work at a local level. At the same time, Richmond presents a unique set of conditions, in that the conflict continued well into the late 1990s and the peace processes in the area only really got off the ground in late 2001.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, it was essential to develop the confidence and trust of not only the key stakeholders of the area, but also the community as a whole. This meant that the research focused less on formal interviews and more on in-depth discussions and meetings with different stakeholders in Richmond. Given the sensitivity of the issues being considered in some of these meetings, not all of the discussions were recorded. While the research refers to comments made during some of these discussions and meetings it was agreed at the outset not to attribute names to these comments in order to protect the identity of the participants.

The methodology employed by the team was intentionally interactive and was not just to analyse and document but also to engage in processes to address community involvement in weapons recovery.

The research focussed on discussions with the key stakeholders in Richmond, namely the South African Police Service (SAPS), the local council, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) the ANC and the IFP. In addition, a range of other individuals and groups were interviewed. These included; provincial government representatives, representatives of the Five-a-Side ANC-UDM peace process teams involved in peace initiatives in the area, non-governmental organisations, victims, and perpetrators. Extensive discussions were held with individuals who are currently serving sentences in prison for their involvement in the Richmond violence. Over 15 meetings and workshops were conducted with this group. The open participation of prisoners in this research was essential not only because they are the people with the most information about the mobilisation of weapons in Richmond, but also because of the role they are currently playing in the peace process in Richmond.

Addressing the issue of weapons recovery requires an understanding of the conflict that existed in Richmond and the historical role that weapons have played, and in this regard the research involved a review and analysis of documentation, articles, press clippings and reports on Richmond.

The research also drew on lessons learnt from two other weapons recovery projects and programmes; a community weapons recovery project in KwaMashu — an area in KwaZulu-Natal

that has experienced serious political violence — and, the Council of Churches weapons retrieval project in Mozambique.

Towards the completion of the Project, a draft of this document was circulated to different role-players in Richmond who had participated in the research process. A discussion group was also held with the prisoners at the Pietermaritzburg Prison to receive feedback on the document.

The report does not provide a forensic examination of responsibility for the conflict and availability of weapons. The limited available empirical evidence dictates this, especially in a context of considerable uncertainty, and especially as the process is intended to build buy-in and confidence. This requires a delicate balancing act, in order to avoid any assertions of complicity in 'covering up' for those who should be held to account, yet at the same time building and retaining confidence that this is a non-aligned process that does not seek to ostracise and punish.

The response to the draft report was positive and some view it as a potential tool that can be used as part of the process of building peace. In this regard, the report has helped to synthesise a number of issues and recommendations that could be incorporated into a weapons recovery plan for the area.

BACKGROUND TO VIOLENCE IN RICHMOND



The formally 'white' town of Richmond is surrounded by semi-urban and rural areas of Ndaleni, Magoda, Smozemeni, Gengeshe, Nhlauka, Emgxebeleni, Nkobheni and Patheni. Prior to 1994, these (where most of the African population lived) fell under the jurisdiction of the KwaZulu Government and were controlled by hereditary or appointed traditional leaders.

In the Midlands, latent conflicts between traditional leaders and/or apartheid government-appointed officials and their supporters on one side, and the proponents of democratically elected local government on the other came to the boil during the early 1980s. This conflict manifested itself in battles between supporters of the United Democratic Front / ANC and Inkatha (now known as the Inkatha Freedom Party –IFP).

The majority of traditional leaders viewed Inkatha as the party that could guarantee their financial interests in addition to their cultural and political values. In contrast, ANC supporters saw the apartheid state functionaries as artificially propping up systems of traditional and appointed leadership and as a barricade against opposition and the creation of more democratic forms of government. (Network of Independent Monitors and the Human Rights Commission, 1999, pp.5-6)

Prior to 1986, the Natal Midlands had a reputation for being relatively peaceful (Aitchison, 2003). However, in the latter part of the 1980s this conflict spread from the urban conurbations through migrant networks to semi-rural and rural areas such as Richmond where traditional leadership structures had remained largely intact. Traditional leaders had scant resources and large areas to administer. The conflict was exacerbated by persistent and widespread allegations of corruption and mismanagement by these structures.

Between 1987 and 1990 over two thousand people died as a result of fighting in the Natal Midlands. Before 1989, the conflict was invariably referred to as 'faction fighting' between elements in these different areas. The conflict, however, had deep political overtones, and was according to some commentators an 'unofficial war', a struggle for territorial sovereignty between the UDF and Inkatha (Kentrige, 1990). Pietermaritzburg and its surrounding townships, semi-rural and rural areas become the centre of this conflict.

In the late 1980s, conflict developed in Patheni, Nkobheni, Gengeshe and Smozameni, which at this time fell under the administrative jurisdiction of Inkosi Majozi, who had been appointed by the central government in Pretoria as the head of traditional authorities in Richmond. Inkosi

Majozi had initially been resident in Ndaleni, but after 1991 when political conflict divided the area he relocated to Patheni.

Violence in the 1990s — ANC/IFP conflict

In 1990, the violence took on more overtly political overtones when people from Nkobheni attacked a home in Magoda belonging to the uncle of Sifiso Nkabinde who had been one of the key people involved in actively opposing the role played by traditional structures in the area. During the attack, one occupant of the house was injured and one of the attackers was killed and another injured. The assailants also left behind an R4 rifle, which at the time was a standard army issue weapon.

After the attack, a letter was sent to Sifiso Nkabinde by residents of Nkhobheni, demanding the return of the R4 rifle and stating that the weapon was a 'community weapon'. Over the next few months, the conflict and violence intensified; and the fact that people in Ndaleni had not returned the R4 rifle was often cited as one of the pretexts for the escalation of this conflict (H Osborn, 1992).

Following this incident, attacks were launched from Patheni and Nkobheni against residents of the Magoda area who were perceived to be supporters of the ANC. A number of houses in Magoda were burnt and many residents were forced to flee their homes. The attackers who had aligned themselves with Inkatha then established a base in Magoda, which was used to launch further attacks not just on residents in Magoda but also in nearby Ndaleni. During this period, heavy casualties were sustained by the residents of Ndaleni and Magoda and more than 20,000 people fled their homes, many taking sanctuary in makeshift refugee centers in Richmond town (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.17).

By early 1991, the IFP's dominance and control of the area was at its peak. In March 1991, one of the biggest IFP attack forces ever seen in the province had been assembled in the area. Many of these people were armed with R1, R4 and G3 rifles, others with handguns and a few were even in possession of AK47s (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.19).

The events of 29 March 1991, however, were to significantly alter the balance of power in Richmond. On this day, a group of ANC supporters who had previously fled the area returned and ambushed Inkatha forces, killing twenty three IFP members in what was to be popularly referred to as the 'Battle of the Forest'. This group of ANC supporters had allegedly managed to conceal their weapons in the forest and when they returned to the area these weapons were retrieved and used in the ambush (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.17).

Immediately after the 'Battle of the Forest', the ANC was able to regain control of Ndaleni and gradually forced the IFP out of Magoda. In the weeks after this battle it is also alleged (by youth

who had engaged the IFP during the 'battle') that people suspected of supporting the IFP in Ndaleni and Magoda were killed or forced out of the areas.

After March 1991, the surrounding areas of Richmond were carved up into areas dominated by either the ANC or IFP. Magoda, Ndaleni and later Smozameni were ANC strongholds, while Patheni and Nkobheni remained largely under the control and influence of the IFP. These locations constituted no-go areas for political opponents.

Between 1991 and 1993 these areas continued to experience high levels of political violence as the two opposing organisations wrestled for control and influence over Richmond. There were a series of attacks, ambushes and assassinations that occurred during this period and attempts to initiate peace agreements between the two organisations failed.

From the inception of political violence in Richmond, there have been allegations from the ANC and IFP, as well as peace monitors and political analysts that there were subversive elements responsible for fuelling the conflict. These groups pointed to the fact that attacks were invariably launched immediately before planned peace talks, thereby scuttling any peace initiatives in Richmond. Reference was often made to a 'hidden hand', which was instigating violence in order to destabilise the area, and it was suggested that this hidden hand comprised of elements within the state security apparatus and the rightwing (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.9).

Allegations were leveled at the South African Police who were accused not only of taking sides in the violence, but of actively participating alongside those responsible for perpetrating acts of violence. Several policemen were indicted for their involvement in the October 1988 'Trust Feed' massacre. Although, it was rare for allegations to translate into criminal investigations and prosecutions, these allegations continued into the early 1990s.

One notable incident occurred on 23 June 1991. Sixteen people were killed and the bodies mutilated. Witnesses claimed that police 4x4 vehicles had been used to offload the attackers. One survivor claimed the attackers were wearing police camouflage jackets and spoke English. (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.13)

There was also information submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which provided some corroboration to the suggestion that the police played a role in providing logistical support and fuelling political violence in Richmond during this period (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.13).

After 1991, allegations were made by ANC and IFP supporters, as well as community members, that white persons were present at the scene of different attacks that occurred in the area. (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.13) Allegations of organised right-wing involvement also surfaced. A 1996 military intelligence report asserted that AWB (an extreme right wing group) training camps were held in and around the Richmond area between 1992 and 1996. The purpose of these camps, it was alleged, was to train people to fight the ANC and eliminate ANC members in the province. Local police officers from Richmond

were also accused of attending at least one of these training camps where the use of weaponry was demonstrated. (MI Report, 1996) White right-wing involvement preceded this. In 1991, for example, violence monitors came across AWB slogans and graffiti painted on the wall of a house in Magoda that had been burnt during political violence (H Osborn, 1992). Another prominent local rightwing member interviewed by violence monitors claimed that Richmond was a key supply route for illegal weaponry and that a shadowy network had been established to facilitate this route. The same individual also alleged that rightwing elements were involved in the training of IFP members and hiding people who were evading justice (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.13).

Internal party conflict

Conflict in Richmond was further complicated by internal organisational clashes that arose within both the IFP and ANC. In Patheni and Nkobheni a number of IFP members, at least one of whom was a former Caprivi trainee, defected to the ANC from the IFP as a result of this conflict. There have also been suggestions that some of the killings of Inkatha supporters may have been linked to internal conflict (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.13).

Within the ANC's ranks, the Self Defence Units (SDUs) established in the area were torn apart by internal conflict that resulted in the death of a number of ANC supporters including ANC youth leader Mzwandile Mbongwa, who had been central in the establishment of these structures.

All of these different elements to the conflict contributed to Richmond being one of the flashpoints of political violence, and during 1991 the Human Rights Committee recorded the death of more than 148 people as a result of political violence (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.15).

Violence between the ANC and IFP continued following the entrenchment of geographical control over their respective areas. In 1993, a number of attacks were launched against the IFP area of Patheni, effectively scuttling any efforts by the National Peace Accord structures to bring peace to the area. The ANC was consolidating its position and the IFP was losing ground in the process; as one political commentator put it 'the boot was (now) on the other foot and kicking hard' (Claude, 1997).

The slide in the IFP's fortunes continued, and following the celebrated April 1994 elections, in May 1995 during the first local elections, the ANC captured the majority of seats on the Richmond Transitional Local Council and the local ANC leader, Sifiso Nkabinde, was sworn in as Mayor. Not long after this, Nkabinde and his IFP counterpart, Paulos Vezi, began convening joint peace rallies in the area. However, despite the thawing of relations between the IFP and ANC and promises that a new era was emerging, peace and stability for the area was not to be.

Even though the violence between the ANC and IFP appeared to be abating, internal party conflict continued to plague Richmond and elements involved in these conflicts were

implicated in political violence that had spread to surrounding areas such as Impendle (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.15).

A series of programmes were initiated to address problems in Richmond, but none proved successful in bringing about the much needed peace and stability to the area. In 1995, in response to a number of violent incidents, former Minister of Safety and Security, Sidney Mufamadi instructed the South African Police Service (SAPS) Investigation Task Unit (ITU) to probe politically motivated killings and the activities of the Self Defence Units (SDUs) in Richmond. The Midlands National Investigation Task Unit (NITU) later superseded this unit.²

In May 1996 a sub-committee of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Safety and Security Portfolio Committee was established to look at 'the existence, or otherwise, of no-go areas in Richmond'. After the death of provincial ANC youth leader Mzwandile Mbongwa, there were also a number of investigations initiated by the ANC to probe internal party conflict in Richmond.

None of these initiatives were able to adequately address either historical conflict or the evolving contemporaneous tensions and problems experienced by the area.

Police – community relations

Relations between the police and communities in and around Richmond also remained a source of concern. Historical animosities and allegations of partisanship and complicity in the violence had left many in the community doubting the *bona fides* of the police. Rebuilding public confidence in the police remains a national challenge.

In July 1994 in Richmond, an agreement was struck between the local police management and Nkabinde at a Community Policing Forum (CPF) meeting. The agreement effectively forced members of the local detective branch to contact community leaders before entering any area around Richmond. This agreement itself caused tensions, not only within the ranks of the police, but also with some members of the community.

Both the local detective branch commander, Captain Meedling, and Nkabinde, (the key initiators of the agreement) heralded the agreement as a major breakthrough, not only in terms of improving community-police relations, but also as it enabled the police to now enter and investigate crime in areas that had been 'no-go' areas for them since the SDUs had taken control. Several years later, Meedling maintained this agreement was a positive development:

² The Investigation Task Unit was established immediately after the 1994 elections to investigate hitsquad activities in KwaZulu-Natal. The Unit was completely independent from existing police structures, with its own oversight processes and budget. It also reported directly to the Minister for Safety and Security. After its failure to secure a conviction in the trial of Magnus Malan, the SAPS increasingly questioned the validity of having such an independent unit, and finally it was closed down. In order to address problems of political violence, alleged hitsquad activities and police complicity, a National Investigation Task Unit was established within the police service with National SAPS oversight.

I went from a case load of 400 unsolved cases down to 100. The solving rate went up from 20% to 80%. (Captain Meedling, quoted in Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.15)

Not all members of the police or community shared this view. During 1997, fifty-one police officers from Richmond submitted a memorandum to the provincial Safety and Security portfolio committee alleging that Ndaleni and Magoda were no-go areas to them unless Nkabinde or members of the SDU accompanied them. In November 1997, Director Bushy Engelbrecht noted that Nkabinde and some of the SDUs assisted the police in investigating their political opponents while concealing their own role in violence (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.25). Some community members we spoke with shared this view, and they alleged that the police were being used to neutralise any opposition to Nkabinde.

The ITU and NITU refused to adhere to the July 1994 agreement, and in October 1995 six SDU members were arrested by the ITU. These arrests sparked tensions resulting in Nkabinde leading a march to the local police station to demand their release. In March 1996, three SAPS members from nearby Mountain Rise who had been pursuing an escaped suspect were murdered in Magoda. It was alleged that they were mistaken for ITU members, and the killings effectively nullified the 1994 'agreement' between the community and the police.

Expulsion of Sifiso Nkabinde and the escalation of violence

On 7 April 1997, the ANC expelled Sifiso Nkabinde denouncing him as a police informer who had been working for the SAP's security branch since 1988. After his expulsion, Nkabinde convened a press conference, which was attended by IFP strongmen Thomas Shabalala and Philip Powell. This was a remarkable event as former enemies shared a platform to vent their anger at their common enemy, the ANC. Nkabinde did not, however, join the ranks of the IFP, but instead chose to join the newly formed National Consultative Forum, which was later renamed the United Democratic Movement (UDM).³

The launch of the UDM in Richmond created a new carve-up of the area into zones of political influence. Nkabinde's power base in Magoda now became UDM, while areas like Ndaleni and Smozemeni remained loyal to the ANC. The IFP has thus far retained its traditional strongholds in Patheni and Nkobheni. (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.17)

While there were a number of supporters in Richmond, particularly within the SDU, who remained loyal to Nkabinde and were adamant that he was not an informer, there were others who were convinced that he was. They argued that Nkabinde, as Regional Secretary of the ANC, had taken advantage of opportunities that had presented themselves following the assassination of key ANC leaders, such as Reggie Hadebe, Chief Mapulumo and Sikhimbuzo Ngwenya.

Three weeks after Nkabinde's expulsion, on the 29 April 1997, in a show of support for Nkabinde, nine Richmond ANC councillors resigned from the Richmond Council. Only Richmond Mayor Andrew Ravagaloo, his deputy Rodney van der Byl, and two independent councillors refused to support this initiative.

On 22 July 1997, Van der Byl was murdered after receiving a number of death threats. His killing marked an unprecedented escalation in the Richmond conflict, and by July 1998 more than 65 people had lost their lives in the internecine conflict (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.17). Following Van der Byl's assassination in July 1997, local government by-elections gave the ANC 4 out of the 5 seats available, and the ANC's Percy Thompson was appointed as Deputy Mayor.

On 16 September 1997, Sifiso Nkabinde was arrested on 16 counts of murder and 2 counts of incitement of violence. On 30 April 1998, Nkabinde was acquitted on all counts.

In July 1998, ANC Deputy Mayor Percy Thompson was gunned down along with seven others at a tavern in Richmond. By the end of 1998, the number of killed had increased to over 100 people. (*Daily News*, 1999)

Patterns similar to the past ANC-IFP violence began to emerge. The police were accused by both the UDM and ANC of fuelling the conflict (*Natal Witness*, 1998). On 13 August 1998, the National Government intervened and shut down the Richmond police station, transferring all 58 officers staffing the station to other areas. By closing the station, former National SAPS Commissioner, George Fivas acknowledged that the local police had lost the confidence of the community and were to be replaced by a National Intervention Unit, comprised of officers deployed from outside the area. This unit was to be reinforced by a large deployment of the South African National Defence Force. (*Natal Witness*, 1998) After the close of the station and the introduction of the National Intervention Unit it was estimated that on any given day there were as many as 950 security force members deployed in the area (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.1).

The National Intervention Unit helped to establish the 'Richmond Priority Committee', an advisory and consultative body comprising all the stakeholders within the Richmond policing area. Issues that were discussed at these priority committee meetings included:

- Displaced persons;
- Freedom of movement;
- Education;
- Aid donations;
- Employment;
- Counselling.

³ The NCF was a new political party established by former Transkei military ruler, Bantu Holomisa and former National Party cabinet minister, Roelf Meyer.

On 23 January 1999, Sifiso Nkabinde was assassinated outside a Richmond supermarket. According to police reports the three attackers involved in the assassination fired 80 rounds from R4 and R5 rifles (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.17). Later the same day, eleven ANC members were killed in what was believed to be a revenge attack linked to the assassination.

These events, together with the large deployment of security personnel and the arrest of more than 30 individuals allegedly involved in acts of violence, precipitated a dramatic decrease in the violence. Over the next 18 months, the number of violent incidents continued to decline, resulting in the downscaling of security personnel deployed in the area.

In 2001, a peace process was launched in Richmond initially involving local and provincial UDM and ANC structures. Although there had not been any significant violence between the ANC and IFP since the mid-1990s, the peace process was later extended to include IFP representatives from Patheni and Nkobheni.

IMPACT OF THE VIOLENCE



More than a decade of violence has taken its toll on Richmond and its surrounding communities.

The conflict between ANC and IFP supporters in the early 1990s resulted in the displacement of over 20 000 people, most of whom were subsequently accommodated in makeshift refugee centres in and around Richmond, while some others took refuge in other areas of the Midlands. The conflict resulted in many homes and buildings being destroyed. During the subsequent internal party-conflict and conflict between the UDM and ANC, more people fled the area and their homes were destroyed. Since the end of the violence many of the affected people have returned home and must confront the urgent task of development and reconstruction.

Trauma

Richmond and the surrounding areas constitute a relatively small community, and the violence has left few people unaffected. Many residents have witnessed the death or injury of loved ones, they have been forced out of their homes and lived in fear of attacks. During the conflict, levels of intimidation were extremely high and many had a justifiable fear of speaking openly or participating in structures for fear of the repercussions.

These experiences have left a residue of trauma throughout the community that has eroded the social fabric in many families and continues to present a pressing challenge.

How do you deal with a mass problem of trauma? Levels of substance abuse are very high partly as a result of this trauma. People still fear the unknown and some even fear that violence may still return to the area. People live for the sake of living and many don't plan or think about the future. They have lost any interest in dreaming and have few ambitions. (Interview, Local Councillor, Richmond)

The impact of this trauma on development processes in Richmond has been twofold. It has contributed to destructive and negative behaviour, making peace and development processes difficult and volatile. One resident, whose family were killed during the conflict in 1999, stated:

Some times in meetings you will see the effects of trauma. A person may be extremely aggressive and negative or appear simply disinterested in what is being discussed. When you look at the person you can see they are acting that way because of the trauma they have experienced. (Member of Five-a-Side Committee)

Trauma also manifests in the loss of motivation and impacts negatively on people's will and drive to become active participants in improving their situation. A senior politician who was interviewed spoke of his frustration in this regard indicating that sometimes people who want something done or implemented would approach him, but would rarely demonstrate a willingness to take initiative, instead assuming that his assistance would be forthcoming.

During the evaluation of the peace process in KwaZulu-Natal similar patterns in behaviour were experienced in the Shobashobane community

Many people living in Shobashobane just exist from day to day, they do what is necessary to survive but they have not returned to farming on the scale seen before the violence because they are disillusioned. This disillusionment has led to some people sitting back and saying government is responsible for us and they must deliver. (Violence Monitor, KwaZulu-Natal South Coast)

Poverty and socio-economic decline

The situation is further compounded by the high levels of poverty and unemployment experienced in the area, where it becomes a daily struggle to merely ensure that families have enough food on their tables. Socio-economic hardships were exacerbated by the violence, as business and commerce were adversely affected. According to one former police officer involved in investigations in Richmond during 1997 and 1998:

When I went to Richmond during the height of the violence, I felt the impact of violence on businesses in the area. Some had closed down and others were not functioning effectively. It felt a bit like a ghost town. I remember expressing concern to a violence monitor I met and discussing whether some of the businesses that had closed down would ever return to Richmond. I had a strong sense that solving the problems in Richmond would require not only security solutions but would have to be accompanied by the need to seriously address development in the area. (Former MK and SAPS member)

The violence of 1997 and 1998 shattered hopes of rebuilding the area, and scuttled hopes for investment and development.

Prior to the second outbreak of violence in 1997, there were a number of exciting development plans for Richmond. There were even some factories that had expressed interest in relocating to Richmond. Then the violence came and local government was disrupted. Some of the people considering investing in Richmond changed their mind and invested elsewhere. (Former councillor and current chairperson of the Mediators Forum)

Richmond and surrounding locations are closely interwoven. During the height of the conflict it was impossible for the business centre in the heart of Richmond town to remain isolated from the violence. Not only did the violence impact on the ability of people from the surrounding areas to get safely to and from the business centre but the attacks and intimidation occurred

within the business centre itself. During this period, garages, businesses, factories and even banks shut down.⁴ A local councillor stated:

Many of the businesses that stayed in Richmond did so because they had nowhere else to go. Many of those with the option of relocating jumped at the opportunity. (Local Councillor, Richmond)

Residents from surrounding areas such as Patheni and Nkobheni have always relied on an income derived from working on the farms in and around Richmond. Historically, there have been (racial and political) tensions between the communities and the surrounding white farmers, some of whom became involved in the conflict.⁵ In recent years, a number of farmers have sold their farms and some of the new owners are no longer utilising the farms for commercial purposes, which has contributed to a significant reduction in the employment opportunities on the farms.

Undermining development

It is important to recognise that the availability of weapons can pose a serious threat to the success of development initiatives.

The accumulation of light weapons, especially assault rifles and hand grenades, leads to large numbers of casualties, which in turn disrupt the economic and social system. One effect of the internal arms race is that stabbings have decreased and shootings have increased with considerable impact on the cost of health services. (Network of Independent Monitors and Gun Free South Africa, 1998, p.36)

According to the current Mayor of Richmond, Mr Mtolo, since 2000 there have been several new investment initiatives in Richmond and there are plans for the establishment of a new shopping centre in the town. Despite this, there are concerns that these developments have not translated into sustainable employment opportunities. This remains a pressing challenge, particularly with regard to the most disaffected and marginalised groupings in the community.

As a result of the political conflict Richmond has also been adversely affected by major disruptions within local government. At the height of the violence, local government was faced by the mass resignation of councillors, and subsequently the assassination of councillors who subsequently chose to stand or remain in office.

It is only since the violence subsided in 1999 that local government has been able to completely stabilise itself. Considering its violence history and the fact that, like many other local authorities, it faces functional and capacity limitations, it is remarkable that the local council has

⁴ Among the business that closed down during this period were the BP garage, the Tea Estate, Downs Furniture, HL&L timber, Remox Country Craft, Standard bank and ABSA. While there is no empirical data available to link these directly to the violence, a common perception among many people living in Richmond is that violence was a major contributing factor to these closures.

⁵ Some of the AWB activities cited earlier occurred on farms in the area and farmers themselves became victims of the conflict.

been able to achieve any development at all in the Richmond area. This includes the construction of 1,700 houses and the establishment of a five-million rand resource centre. In 2003 Richmond received an award from the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government for service excellence after the municipality was commended by the Auditor General for the best good governance record in the province (*Natal Witness*, 2003).

Despite the positive role currently being played by local government in Richmond, the divisions that have plagued the area over the last decade have adversely affected development. Since the conflict first erupted in 1989 the area became renowned for the existence of no-go areas as Richmond was carved up into areas of different political influence and control. Since 2000, no-go areas have largely disappeared from the Richmond landscape, reflecting improvements in levels of political tolerance. Interviewees confirmed, however, that deep-seated suspicions, divisions and tensions between people residing in the different areas continue to pose serious challenges for development. Several referred to an incident in 2001, when a water project was suspended as a result of sharp differences in the community. There was concern that competition over scarce resources for development could generate conflict along sectoral lines, unless initiatives were sensitive to the historical conflict.

Speaking at Human Rights Day in Richmond in March 2003, then Deputy President Jacob Zuma, referred to the legacy left behind by the conflict stating:

The Richmond conflict left many visible and invisible wounds and traumatised many families. It has distorted family institutions and has left behind widows, widowers and orphans, while many young people languish in jail for serious crimes. The huge task of post-war reconstruction needs to be tackled vigorously. This reconstruction will work if all key roleplayers and communities participate in development (IPT, 2004, p. 6).

Safety and Security

The role of the security forces and police services in Richmond has always been a contentious issue and their complicity in the conflict played a crucial role in perpetuating and fuelling the conflict. Policing structures have undergone a number of significant changes since violence first erupted in 1989 not least of which was the closure of the local station in 1998.

In 2003 the National Intervention Unit handed control of the police station back to a local management structure. The imposition of the NIU in 1998 did alleviate suspicions and hostilities towards the police, but as elsewhere in the country, there remain some community concerns about the level of service delivery provided by the local station. Many of the residents we spoke with acknowledged that relations between the police and community have improved substantially. Not surprisingly, building community confidence in the police remains a work in progress. This is particularly complex in a divided community with so many unresolved crimes. However, given the role the police historically played in the area and the deep-seated suspicion many residents have had towards them, relations remain sensitive.

In the 1990s there were a number of different investigation units involved in addressing political violence in Richmond.⁶ The achievements of these units varied, but more than thirty two people have been successfully prosecuted for their involvement in violence. Despite this, there are many cases of political violence in Richmond that remain unsolved. Many families do not know what happened to their friends or relatives. Unfinished business related to the past is a contested and potentially explosive affair. One woman, whose family members were killed during the conflict, set out the basic dilemma:

Everyone wants peace in Richmond. However, there are many people who want to know what happened in the past and then there are others who would rather not know. For some it is about closure while for others it is about not wanting to reopen old wounds. (Member of Five-a-Side Committee)

While victims of violence have legitimate concerns about dealing with unfinished business, there are many, potentially dangerous, elements that have interests in ensuring that such matters are not revisited.

The role of paramilitary structures

A decade of violence generated opportunities for many young people to actively participate in paramilitary structures. A number of them were not incorporated into official or local demobilisation processes. Coupled with the continued presence of large amount of weapons deployed into the area during the early 1990s, there are deep concerns that these elements can pose a serious threat to long-term stability in Richmond.

The establishment and existence of paramilitary structures played an important role in the conflict that gripped Richmond in the 1990s. Interviewees alleged that at least one IFP member, and possibly more, who had been trained as part of the Caprivi trainees were deployed in Richmond in the late 1980s.⁷ The IFP also sent recruits from Richmond to participate in paramilitary training at the Amatikulu camp in 1992 and, according to IFP official Philip Powel, the training was so successful that a training camp was also established at Elandskop in the Midlands where at least 60 IFP members from Patheni were trained. A year later, the training was also undertaken at the Mlaba camp in the Umfolozi area of KwaZulu-Natal. By this time an estimated 1,200 men from Elandskop and Richmond had been 'informally' part of IFP paramilitary training (Varney, 1997).

A military intelligence report on Richmond also cited the involvement of the AWB in the training of IFP members in Richmond and it was also alleged that IFP paramilitary training continued until as late as 1996 (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.7).

⁶ In 1995 the Independent Task Unit was involved in investigations in Richmond, and subsequently the CIS in 1996, and the NITU in 1997

Many of those trained by the IFP were deployed in the party's Self Protection Units (SPUs). An unpublished TRC report on weapons referred to allegations that some of the IFP trainees may have been engaged in internal struggles occurring within the IFP (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal 1998 pg 20).⁸

For its part the ANC also recruited and trained youth to join the SDUs after Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) took a decision to train and arm ANC SDUs in 1991. Several former SDU members also alleged that the Transkei Defence Force trained members of the Richmond SDUs in the former homeland.

Richmond was one of the first areas in KwaZulu-Natal to establish SDUs and these grew to be a formidable force. During the initial period, SDUs had a presence in the areas of Ndaleni, Magoda and Maswazini. The Richmond SDU was subsequently organised into ten areas, with between 10 and 12 members in each area, some underground, some with intelligence responsibilities. Each area had its own area commander and there was an overall commander for the entire structure. This placed the total number of SDU members at between 100 and 120 people (Interview with political prisoners, Petermaritzburg Prison, August 2005).

Not long after the establishment of this structure, conflict emerged within the SDU, largely centred around access to resources and weapons. The SDU in the Ndaleni area alleged that preference and resources were being given to the Magoda SDU because Sifiso Nkabinde, a key roleplayer in the establishment of the Richmond SDU, was from this area.

The conflict escalated, and allegations surfaced that SDU members were being ambushed by other SDUs. A series of meetings were held to resolve this tension, but they did not succeed in allaying hostilities and divisions. The situation was compounded by allegations that certain SDU members were engaged in internal political leadership struggles within the local ANC structures. Allegations also emerged of the misuse of community resources and that the funds raised for the ANC and development projects were being spent in Magoda at the expense of other areas such as Ndaleni.

In 1993, the SDUs were restructured and Mafani Phungula was appointed as the overall commander. Phungula proposed that SDU members who were young enough should return to school, but this was not carried forward after Phungula was killed at a meeting of SDUs in Magoda later that year.

The death of Phungula and other ANC members escalated tensions both within the ANC and SDU structures in Richmond. In 1994, ANC Youth League member, Mzwandile Mbongwa and four other ANC members were killed in Richmond, allegedly by elements within the SDU. Mbongwa had been a founding member of the SDU structure in Richmond and had also

⁷ In 1986 the South African military under an operation codenamed "Marion" secretly trained 200 IFP members in the Caprivi Strip in Namibia. One of these IFP trainees deployed in Richmond was Soren Njilo who later defected to the ANC.

⁸ Some commentators have pointed to the mystery surrounding the assassination of IFP Richmond leader Ndodi Thusi as an indication of this.

become an advocate for SDU members to return to school. Opponents of Mbongwa justified his death on the basis of rumours circulating within one faction of the SDU that Mbongwa was a police informer. This allegation was strongly disputed by other factions within the SDU who alleged that Mbongwa was the victim of an elaborate set-up masterminded by his political rivals in concert with the police security branch (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.14). Mbongwa's death was a catalyst for intervention by the Provincial and National leadership of the ANC who deployed investigators in the area to address the situation. The divisions within the ANC and SDUs now had distinct geographical boundaries, with the main rivals in Magoda led by Sifiso Nkabinde and Ndaleni consisting of Nkabinde's opponents.

Mbongwa's death was a catalyst, prompting intervention by the Provincial and National leadership of the ANC who deployed investigators in the area to address the situation. These interventions were unsuccessful, and by 1994 the internal divisions in Richmond had begun to impact on other areas in the Midlands including Dambuza and Georgetown.

Following the 1994 elections some SDU and SPU members from Richmond were integrated into the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and SAPS as part of the national demobilisation and reintegration processes. However, the actual number of people from Richmond who were integrated into the police and army was relatively small and most SDUs and SPUs remained outside of this process. As a result, components of these paramilitary structures continued to operate in the area.

According to former SDUs members from Richmond only an estimated 26 members were part of the national military reintegration process. Even after the integration process, several of those who had been successfully integrated, subsequently absconded and returned to Richmond during the outbreak of conflict in 1997.

The absence of a comprehensive demobilisation process for the Richmond SDUs helped to ensure that the internal divisions within the SDU continued unabated. In 1997, following the ANC's expulsion of Nkabinde, the Magoda faction of the SDU transferred its allegiance to the UDM with Nkabinde. These SDU members were to play a central role in the ensuing violence that gripped Richmond between 1997 and 1999.

According to many SDU members we spoke with, when the conflict erupted in 1997, a number of local young people were trained and integrated into respective paramilitary structures that were now squaring off against each other. By 2000, it is estimated that the total number of SDU members in the Richmond areas had risen to between 200 and 250.

Between the late 1990s and early 2000, over 30 Richmond SDU members were successfully prosecuted for their involvement in the violence. These incarcerated SDU members have subsequently become key role-players in the peace process that emerged in Richmond after 2000.

The role of weapons

The conflict in Richmond resulted in large quantities of weapons flooding into the area during the 1990s. Although the exact number of weapons in Richmond has not been quantified, and no detailed and comprehensive record has ever been compiled, it is possible to gain some insight into the volume of weapons in circulation.

Weapons associated with the IFP emanated from a variety of sources.

- In 1986, 3,000 machine guns and automatic rifles (G3s in particular) were supplied to homeland governments by the South African Government. These weapons were meant to be used by the security forces, government officials, traditional leaders and militias. In KwaZulu-Natal these weapons were issued on a permit basis to civilians, thus allowing them to possess these arms 'on behalf of the state'. The South African Defence Force (SADF) also issued guns to homeland governments and individuals during the 1980s, but did not keep any registry of the issued weapons (Network of Independent Monitors and Gun Free South Africa, 1998, p.22).

That some of these weapons found their way to IFP members in Richmond is evident by a number of reports including:

- In the first ever-documented incident of political violence in Richmond, the house of Sifiso Nkabinde's uncle was targeted and the attackers made use of an R4 rifle, which was apprehended by the residents of Magoda during the attack. (Osborn, 1992)
- When a large attack force of the IFP gathered prior to the 'Battle of the Forest', violence monitors noted that many of the people gathered were in the possession of an array of weapons including, R1, R4, G3, handguns and even AK47s. (Osborn, 1992)
- Chief Majosi from Patheni after appealing to Chief Buthelezi for guns left for Ulundi and returned with G3 rifles. (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.19)
- IFP members from Richmond who were sent for training at Amatikulu Camp returned to Richmond with at least 5 G3 rifles (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal 1998 p. 29)
- Philip Powel, the former security policeman who subsequently became the IFP leader responsible for training and deploying SPU structures in KwaZulu-Natal received large consignments of weapons from different sources of the apartheid government in the early 1990s. This included a consignment of semi-automatic weapons from the parastatal Eskom, authorised by the Commissioner of the South African Police, and covert consignments from the police's counter-insurgency unit led by Colonel Eugene de Kock. Some of these weapons were then distributed to SPU members trained at the different

camps around the province (Varney, 1997). It is estimated that approximately 1,200 people from the IFP strongholds of Patheni and Elandkop received training and a number of the people we spoke with believe that many of these SPU members returned to their respective areas with weapons and ammunition.

- The military intelligence report referred to earlier in the report implicated senior rightwing elements in the supply of arms and ammunition to IFP elements in Richmond. (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal 1998 p. 29)

Certain events, documents and reports also shed some light on the extent to which the ANC, and in particular the SDUs in Richmond, had access to weapons:

- According to one MK member interviewed by the TRC, many of the weapons distributed in 1991 to SDU structures in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands went to Sifiso Nkabinde (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal 1998 p. 26). MK supplied AK47s, Stetchkin, Makarov pistols and F1 hand grenades, but this supply of weapons ceased after 1993.
- When tensions arose in the SDU over weapons and resources being issued only to Magoda SDU, Ndaleneni SDU members collected money from residents in the area and purchased at least two AK47s from 'private' sources.
- SDUs in Richmond also managed to obtain at least two R5s and four R4s during a raid by the SDUs on abandoned SADF camps in the area. (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal, 1998 p. 28)
- Nkabinde and members of the Richmond SDUs also obtained weapons from the Transkei, but this was stopped following interventions by the ANC's national office in 1993. (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal, 1998 p. 32)
- Private arms dealers also sold weapons to ANC SDUs in Richmond and it is alleged that they charged R1,800 for an AK47 and R6 for each bullet. (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal, 1998 p. 34)

According to information submitted to the TRC, elements in the SADF supplied arms and ammunition to both IFP and ANC protagonists in Richmond during the early 1990s. A military intelligence report and information obtained during police investigations in Richmond also alleged that police officers sold weapons and ammunition from confiscated stockpiles to the warring factions (Network of Independent Monitors and Human Rights Commission, 1999, p.19).

In 1997, following Nkabinde's expulsion from the ANC and the establishment of the UDM in Richmond, a number of former SDU members interviewed alleged that most of the weapons that fell under the control of the Magoda SDU faction became part of the UDM's weapons arsenal. These weapons remained in the possession of individuals, but were to all intents and purposes 'owned' by specific communities and/or their respective structures.

Processes to disarm Richmond

Following the 1994 elections, the new government instituted a weapons amnesty and called on all former combatants to hand in their weapons. Nationally, some SDU members handed in weapons to SAPS stations and some were able to obtain legal licences for private weapons. In KwaZulu-Natal, where conflict continued in many areas, the number of weapons handed in was negligible. This was, according to several former SDUs, and certainly the case in the Richmond area.

On 1 September 1995, the National Government repealed the permit system under which homeland governments had allowed civilians to legally possess weapons that were handed to them by the respective homeland authorities. Citizens were given until 31 October 1995 to hand in these weapons. A joint Investigation team of SAPS and SANDF officials was established to audit and find weapons not handed in by this stated deadline. Despite this, by March 1996 it was evident that a large majority of the weapons issued under the permit system had not been handed in (Varney, 1997). It is unclear what proportion of the G3s distributed to Inkatha and KLA supporters and officials were subsequently recovered.

According to MK Commander and former SANDF commanding officer, Sipiwe Nyanda, the weapons given to the SDUs were very difficult to retrieve. Although he gave instructions that the weapons should be returned during the integration process and while some were handed in at military bases, many were not recovered (TRC Report on gun running in KwaZulu-Natal, 1998 p. 7).

Subsequent investigations initiated to address political violence and the deployment of large numbers of SANDF and SAPS security personnel to Richmond in the latter part of the 1990s had only a limited impact on the amount of weapons in circulation in the area. Media reports in July 1998 pointed to the fact that the large deployment of security forces in Richmond had only recovered 4 homemade guns and two zip guns and that subsequent 'cordon and search' operations had only yielded 'a handful' of weapons. (*Natal Witness*, 1998) According to some police officials involved with the NIU during 1998 and 1999, Richmond was subjected to extensive search and seizure operations, yet these exercises yielded very modest results.

At the end of 2004 the National Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula announced the introduction of a limited firearms amnesty. The deadline for the handover of weapons was initially set for the 31st of March 2005 and this amnesty was subsequently extended to 30 June 2005. By the end of March, almost 60,000 weapons had been surrendered, including just under 22,000 illegal firearms (Kirsten, 2005, p.28). By the end of June, Nqakula estimated that 80,000 weapons had been handed over in the amnesty period, and approximately 25,000 of these were from KwaZulu-Natal. (*SABC 3 17h00 News*, 29 June, 2005)

In Richmond, the firearms amnesty had little impact on the large number of weapons in circulation in the area and between January and June 2005, a total of 48 firearms had been handed in at the local police station, 42 of which were licensed weapons and a further six that

had been previously licensed (Interview with KwaZulu-Natal SAPS official). None of the illegal weapons used in the previous conflicts were recovered during the amnesty.

Although the amnesty provided indemnity from prosecution for the unlawful possession of a firearm or ammunition, a critical conditionality was imposed, namely to determine whether all weapons handed in were linked to a particular crime. This was to prove a major disincentive to hand over illegal weapons in a number of areas, including Richmond.

You need to understand that Richmond experienced more than a decade of political conflict and it is highly likely that most if not all the weapons have been used in this violence. If people hand in these weapons under the current amnesty what guarantee is there that they will not be prosecuted? (From discussion with former Richmond SDUs currently in prison)

There are daily reminders of the presence of weapons in the Richmond community. Residents regularly hear random gunfire at night:

Often at night and sometimes even during the day you hear gunfire and random shooting, normally it is just people shooting in the air. One day I arrived home and my dog had been shot. I don't think it was intentional and maybe he just got shot when people were randomly shooting. (Member of Five-a-Side Committee)

The Truth and Reconciliation processes in Richmond

Richmond's participation in the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) process was inconsistent. Some victims of the conflict gave statements to the TRC and attended the public hearings. A few people who were involved in perpetrating acts of violence applied for amnesty, particularly those who had already been convicted for these actions. Most perpetrators did not participate, however, for a number of reasons: the IFP's refusal to co-operate with the TRC was complemented by proactive efforts to dissuade its members from applying for amnesty. Despite this, a handful of IFP members who were already in prison did so.

The participation of the ANC SDU was also relatively limited. One former SDU member said he believe that there was no incentive to apply, as there was already peace between the ANC and IFP by 1997. This reasoning appears to relate to concerns that the TRC process would re-open old wounds, which in turn would undermine the fragile peace that existed between the ANC and IPF in the area.

Another limitation of the TRC process was related to the timing and cut off date for offences. Although this had been extended from December 1993 to 10 May 2004, this did not cover many incidents of violence that had occurred after this date. More than 150 politically motivated deaths occurred in Richmond between 1996 and 1999. Many of those who might benefit from dealing with incidents from the TRC mandate period were also implicated in subsequent conflict. As such, many residents (both victims and perpetrators) and structures involved in the violence or efforts to confront it were unable and unwilling to engage the Commission.

The impact of the limited participation in the TRC of perpetrators and victims of political violence in Richmond has meant that there has never been full disclosure of the political conflict that affected the Richmond community. The consequence and end result of this is that there are still many victims with unanswered questions about what really happened to their loved ones and that the political violence machinery that was in place in Richmond has never been fully unravelled.

Contemporary crime and weapons

Since 2000, political violence has largely disappeared from the Richmond landscape, with the exception of some internal tensions within the UDM in the lead up to the 2004 general elections when two homes were burnt down (Interview with local government official). A peace process that was initiated in 2000 has also contributed to the end of no-go areas, with the result that residents, no matter what their political affiliation, are now able to move freely throughout the different areas of Richmond (Interviews with former SDU members and members of the Member of Five-a-Side Committee).

The cessation of political violence has not translated to an end of all forms of violence. Indeed, most people we spoke to referred to the high levels of crime affecting the Richmond area. Local police officials confirmed that violent crime manifested in a number of ways, including muggings, house breaking, theft (including stock theft), domestic violence and crimes committed against women. Interestingly, it was asserted during many interviews that people armed with bush knives rather than guns were responsible for committing most of these crimes. As such, individuals and smaller groups of criminals generally perpetrate crime. Richmond has not experienced the presence and involvement of well-organised gangs in crime as other areas in the province have, such as KwaMashu.

It therefore appears that despite the high number of weapons distributed in the area during the height of the political conflict, these weapons have not yet become a major factor in criminal activities affecting the Richmond area. There are, however, a few unconfirmed reports and some speculation that people in Richmond who are in possession of weapons have hired out these weapons to criminals from outside the area, or have themselves used these weapons in committing crime outside the area.

Although these weapons do not appear to be in use, at least in relation to crime in Richmond, many of the people involved in the peace process expressed concern that unless these weapons are removed from the community there would always remain a possibility that they could be used to either disrupt the peace process, and/or could fall into the hands of criminals or those who might be tempted by the allure of criminal enterprise. In this regard, there are particular concerns about former paramilitary members and other ex-combatants who have not benefited from the demobilisation processes and are faced with difficult socio-economic circumstances.

Although Richmond has not been affected by organised gang activities, indicators of deteriorating conditions have surfaced. There is an increasing problem of drug abuse amongst youth in the area which is unprecedented, and often a precursor and/or accompaniment to gang formation. Drugs provide a lucrative income for organised criminals. The availability of weapons play an important role in increasing the power of gangs, and illegal guns in Richmond could not only pose a threat in terms of gangs emerging in the area but could also become a source of weapons for gangs operating outside the area.

CURRENT PEACE PROCESS



In 2000, a local peace process was initiated in Richmond some time after other processes had got off the ground elsewhere in KwaZulu-Natal. The process initially only involved the UDM and ANC in the area but once established it was broadened to also include local IFP members.

At this time, there were approximately 30 residents from Richmond, from both ANC and UDM camps who were serving sentences in the Pietermaritzburg prison for their involvement in the violence. In prison, the inmates from the two opposing parties had begun to interact with each other. This interaction was to lay the foundations on which the subsequent peace process was to be built.

We as prisoners from both sides of the conflict began to sit down and talk about the conflict. Then we started to ask ourselves, if we as people who had been involved in the violence could sit and talk to each other why shouldn't people in Richmond do the same? As prisoners we were sitting together and talking but in Richmond people from the different political parties would not even greet each other. We then called one of KwaZulu-Natal's senior politicians, Wilies Mchunu, to the prison to discuss the matter with him. (Prisoner on the Committee of Eight)

Following discussions with the ANC's Mr Mchunu, the prisoners established a Committee of Eight consisting of prisoners from both the UDM and the ANC to take the peace process forward and to address any sensitive issues that may arise out of this process. The prisoners also appointed residents from the ANC and UDM in Richmond who would make up a Five-a-Side Committee that would be responsible for taking forward the process within the community.

The Five-a-Side Committee comprised of five ANC and five UDM members. Although some of the committee members were themselves victims of political violence in Richmond, they were also considered by the prisoners to be people who could bring their respective political parties into the peace process.

The Five-a-Side Committee and the Committee of Eight began the dialogue process.

We had joint meetings to discuss what type of Richmond we wanted. It was more of a process than an agreement. We wanted to bring back the culture of brotherhood and a belief in our neighbours. (ANC member of the Five-a-Side Committee)

The initial community response to the peace process and the engagement of the UDM and ANC in the Five-a-Side Committee was uneven, and not altogether positive, with some community

members clearly opposed to this kind of engagement. Deep suspicions and hostilities had to be addressed and the Five-a-Side Committee invested considerable energies in the community, often going from house-to-house explaining and motivating to ensure community buy-in to the peace process

At first some people in Richmond were angry and could not understand why we were talking peace. Members of the Five-a-Side (Committee) then started visiting homes in Richmond to explain the process. In particular we visited the homes of the victims of violence. We also called community meetings to discuss the process. Gradually people started to support the process. Even the victims began to say that they understood the need for peace although some victims still wanted to find out what had happened to their loved ones who had disappeared or been killed. (From discussions with Ndaleni members of the Five-a-Side Committee)

Initially, this process was exclusive to UDM and ANC members, but after approximately 18 months, there were attempts by the Five-a-Side Committee to draw both local government structures and the local IFP into the process.

The peace process in Richmond has also been indirectly strengthened and supported by other projects that have been implemented by an NGO and the Ukhozi FM radio station. The NGO, the Independent Project Trust (IPT) established a project to train community mediators in Richmond and between 2002 and 2004 the IPT trained more than 60 mediators from different wards across Richmond. The project also initiated a Committee of Nine, elected by the mediators from all the different wards to co-ordinate their activities in Richmond. The mediators and the Committee of Nine comprise of members from the ANC, IFP and UDM.

The training of mediators has complemented the existing peace process by providing an important resource that can be deployed to mediate in conflicts that may arise in Richmond. This has undoubtedly improved co-operation and communication between the different political players who interface and work together on this project. One member of the Five-a-Side Committee who is also a member of the mediators Committee of Nine explained:

Although there is no formal relationship between the IPT mediators and the Five-a-Side peace committee, you have some of the same people involved in both the IPT project and the peace process and this works well because it helps build the peace process in Richmond. (Member of Five-a-Side Committee and Committee of Nine)

Ukhozi FM radio station has also made an important intervention that has complemented the peace process in Richmond. In mid-2004, Ukhozi FM brought together a selection of perpetrators and the victims from the Richmond conflict in an attempt to contribute to reconciliation in the area. The proceedings of the meeting were broadcast on the radio, and according to one community member who attended this gathering, this was very significant as it was the first time that victims had been able to confront their perpetrators, and for perpetrators to apologise to their victims (Interview with community member who lost five members of her family during violence in 1999).

In 2004, shortly before the national elections, community members met with prisoners from the Richmond conflict at the Pietermaritzburg prison to discuss the peace process in Richmond.

Issues pertaining to the future of Richmond and the importance of building peace were discussed at the meeting and community members were given a chance to raise their concerns and questions. According to the prisoners who were interviewed for this study, one of the issues raised during this meeting was that some members of the community wanted to know what had happened to all the guns that were used in the conflict and wanted these weapons removed from the community.

Thus far, the peace process has focused on getting the community to support and build peace between the different parties, to promote political tolerance and acceptance, to acknowledge the right of the different parties to exist and to discuss their visions of what kind of Richmond they would want to see emerge from this process. The next step in the process is to implement a formal agreement between the parties that would be endorsed at a joint peace rally to be held in Richmond sometime in the not too distant future.

Although there appears to be broad support for the peace and mediation processes, and conditions on the ground have improved in terms of interactions, security and freedom to move within and between the two communities of Ndaleni and Magoda, the unresolved issue of illegal weapons remains a key challenge. No specific efforts had been made to address this aspect as a critical component of the process (before this research intervention) and given the continuing sensitivities, it has taken some time to stimulate discussion on the issue.

DRAWING ON THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER WEAPONS RECOVERY PROGRAMMES



It is important to examine what lessons can be learnt from other weapon recovery initiatives in other conflict zones. In this regard, this research has focused on two programmes; firstly, in Mozambique where the Council of Churches has been involved in a post conflict weapons recovery programme since 1995, and; secondly, an initiative undertaken by the KwaMashu Youth Organisation in 2001.

The Mozambique Experience

Although the context in which the weapon recovery process in Mozambique has unfolded differs substantially with the situation in KwaZulu-Natal, there are a number of important lessons that can be learnt from the programme initiated by the Mozambique Council of Churches.

The first lesson was the recognition that the official demobilisation processes in Mozambique did not translate into a comprehensive disarmament process. Consequently, it was necessary to introduce complementary processes to address the issue of illegal weapons that remained in circulation in post-conflict Mozambique.

The gap between the number of weapons thought to be in the country and the weapons collected at the end of the peace process was so big it clearly represented a potential for internal and external instability in Mozambique in the post election period. (Chahiu, June 1999, p.16)

Even though Operation Rachel was successful in recovering a substantial quantity of weapons,⁹ it was still necessary to introduce additional weapons collection programmes. The volume of weapons subsequently handed in by communities during the Council of Churches Weapons Recovery Programme, which has been ongoing since 1995, underscores this need. The Tools for Arms Project, popularly known as TAE, is aimed at working with communities to remove weapons from previous conflict zones. The TAE project reported that during 2002 more than

⁹ A joint operation between South African Security Service and the Mozambican authority where the two authorities embarked on a joint campaign in Mozambique to collect and destroy weapons left behind by the civil war. The different phases of Operation Rachel led to the recovery and destruction of more than 400 tons of weapons and more than four million rounds of ammunitions according to Chahiu op cit pg 4

67,000 'articles of war' were collected and that during the month of July more than 500 articles of war were collected in the Sofala province alone.¹⁰

The second lesson gleaned from the Mozambican experience relates to the need for non-governmental organisations that are embarking on weapons recovery programmes to obtain the buy-in and participation of both the central authorities and the affected communities where the weapons are being kept. In the case of the TAE project, the Mozambican authorities allocated personnel from both the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence to work with the project. TAE's church-based origins emphasised a heavy reliance on the participation of communities, relying on them to provide information and support regarding the location of weapons and subsequent agreements to facilitate the recovery process. Community support for the TAE project was achieved through mediation, negotiation and consultation with the affected communities. The project also employed incentives, by rewarding participating communities, not with cash payments, but rather through the supply of items that could improve their lives such as transportation and farming equipment. The TAE project also had access to considerable resources and funding to ensure its success and once the illegal weapons were recovered they were securely stored before being rendered inoperable.

The final lesson from the TAE project in Mozambique was the ability of the programme to take the recovered weapons and turn them into something positive. In Mozambique while most of the recovered weapons are destroyed, a portion of the weapons are used in an 'arms to art' initiative, whereby the artworks produced are sold to help fund some aspects of the project.

KwaMashu Youth Organisation weapons recovery programme

The KwaMashu township is a large urban conurbation situated about 15km from the city centre of Durban. During the 1980s, KwaMashu experienced a considerable amount of political violence, which attracted a large amount of weapons into the area.

After 1994, political violence subsided in KwaMashu, but many weapons were never recovered or handed in to the relevant authorities. In 2000, the KwaMashu Youth Organisation (KYO), an umbrella body comprising of different social, religious and political youth formations, participated in a gun opinion survey in KwaMashu. The outcome of this survey led the KYO to embark on a community weapons recovery programme.

The KYO programme was publicised across KwaMashu through sectoral meetings, media blitzes and a mass rally that was convened to launch the programme. The KYO programme received significant support from the community, local government, provincial political parties and national politicians. The handover of illegal weapons began approximately four months after the programme was initiated. A week later, the KwaMashu Youth Organisation held a press conference where the recovered weapons were handed over to the SAPS and placed in full view

¹⁰ Information obtained during a visit to the TAE programme in 2004

of the media. Among the weapons recovered was a significant amount of ammunition, a rocket launcher and several limpet mines, but few guns were recovered. This reflected the KYOs failure to secure the support of the National Ministry of Safety and Security, as well as the KYOs inability to secure guarantees that individuals handing in illegal firearms would not be prosecuted if their weapon was linked to a crime.

The KYO initiative was conducted with very few resources, which did not allow for the required investment or sufficient motivation and incentives for people to handover their illegal weapons.

Another problem faced by the KYO programme was the presence of gangs in KwaMashu, some of whom had gained access to the weaponry that was available in the area. These gangs rely heavily on these weapons to maintain their power and influence, and were always likely to be a spoiling element in any efforts to rid the community of illegal weapons. Several years elapsed between the end of political violence and the initiation of the weapons recovery programme, which meant that some of the weapons had been in circulation since the 1980s. Consequently, there had been more time and opportunity for these weapons to become secreted into criminal networks, which in turn made the recovery of these illegal weapons that much more difficult.

The KYO programme was successful in creating awareness about the need to remove illegal weapons from the community and generated some cross-party unity to this end within the community. The failure to secure buy-in from the National Ministry of Safety and Security, however, relegated the programme to an awareness and mobilising exercise, rather than an effective weapons recovery programme. Nevertheless, the KYO programme did influence crime prevention agendas in the township and two years later the National Crime Prevention Centre initiated a Crime Prevention Development Programme in KwaMashu that prioritised dealing with the availability of weapons.

CONFRONTING THE LEGACY OF WEAPONS IN RICHMOND



Discussions and consultations with key roleplayers in Richmond highlighted the fact that there remains a need for the implementation of a wide-ranging weapons recovery programme.

Everyone living in Richmond knows about the problem that exists with regards to the weapons. They do not need to be told, what we really need is a comprehensive programme that will remove the weapons from the community.
(From discussions with the Committee of Eight)

Acutely aware of the limitations of other endeavors, many discussants felt that any engagement on this issue should be inclusive and aim to secure a major disarmament of the community. Consequently, many interviewees felt that it was necessary to invest in laying the necessary groundwork before a programme could be implemented.

A number of local conditions were also identified that would impact positively on any weapons recovery programme. These include:

- The establishment of a local peace process in the area that involves both victims and perpetrators. The existence of a peace process and the buy-in and support for a weapons recovery process makes the viability of such a programme more feasible.
- The involvement of perpetrators in the peace process and their support for a weapons recovery process. Many of these people have historically controlled and have had access to the weapons that need to be recovered. Even in cases where some of the perpetrators are serving prison sentences, they not only knew who had access to weapons in Richmond, but also continue to have influence over those that have access to these weapons. Their support and participation increases the potential success of any weapons recovery programme.
- A number of key stakeholders felt the timing of a weapons recovery programme was ideal. The peace process appeared to have been successful in consolidating an end to the political violence. This was still relatively recent and many weapons used in the conflict had not yet been engaged in criminal activities.

The absence of strong gang formations and the fact that the lines between weapons used in political conflict and those used in crime had not become completely blurred, as was the

situation in KwaMashu, makes the timing ideal for the implementation of such a weapons recovery programme. The general view held by many stakeholders was that the longer these weapons were left unfettered in the community, the more likely it was that the weapons recovery process would become more complicated and difficult.

However, despite these positive contextual factors, a number of challenges exist that would need to be addressed before a successful programme can be implemented. These include:

- High levels of unemployment in Richmond and the fact that many of the people who were involved in paramilitary structures have no viable forms of income. Access to weapons can be used to generate an income in the hands of people with the skills to use them. Even though many of these individuals have not engaged in crime, they will still require some form of motivation before handing over their weapons.
- The prospect of criminal prosecution remains a significant deterrent and gun amnesties in South Africa have been accompanied by conditions that weapons will be subjected to ballistic tests to determine whether they are linked to previous incidents of political violence. Former SDU members who are currently serving sentences for political violence in Richmond believe that most of the weapons in the area could be linked to attacks that had occurred during the political conflict. Those in possession of these weapons are unlikely to want to hand them over if they will possibly face criminal prosecution. Any incentives in this regard, however, must be balanced against the need for victims to know the truth and to gain some form of closure for what happened to them and/or their loved ones.
- Violence has had a deep impact on the people of Richmond, leaving a legacy of serious trauma in the community. This trauma has not only hindered initiatives to build trust among the different factions in the community, but also disrupted projects and development processes planned for the area.
- Demobilisation of paramilitary structures in Richmond was unable to secure a broad-based 'buy-in' and was largely ineffective, as it occurred when political violence was still ongoing. According to former SDU and SPU members many of the weapons used in the Richmond conflicts remain in the possession of people involved in paramilitary structures. Ideally therefore, a weapons recovery programme needs to be linked to a further demobilisation initiative in Richmond.
- Efforts must be made to ensure synergy between a weapons recovery process and the related work of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It is important that the gains made in building trust are not broken down by divisions that could emerge if other processes are not sensitively implemented.
- Incentive options should be explored as one of the factors that could be used to motivate structures and communities to participate in a recovery process.

Development and Disarmament

There is no doubt that development initiatives have a better chance of being successful if the community is disarmed and development is sensitive to the historical conflict and tensions that have been experienced. Equally, disarmament and the weapons recovery programme are more likely to be successful if development takes place in Richmond.

The importance of linking the weapons recovery process to development was identified as pivotal by all the roleplayers in Richmond. Successful development in this regard must move beyond a narrow focus on infrastructure development to include an emphasis on human development.

Infrastructure development is important not only in terms of the reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by the violence, but also in terms of encouraging investment to the area. For an area like Richmond, these endeavours should be complemented with the introduction of long-term (i.e. sustainable) income generating and job creation projects that aim to develop Richmond's human resource capacity. A specific focus should be made on ensuring that vulnerable and marginalised groupings benefit from these endeavours, and these should include former paramilitaries and others in possession of weapons. Coupled with other effective deterrents, participation in such projects and programmes could become an attractive alternative to a life of crime.

If the alternatives are not attractive, there are very real possibilities that a life of crime will seem like the only viable alternative:

Why would I now consider taking a relatively low paid job with strict hours when I can now work when I feel like it and earn more money than working the kind of jobs that may become available? (Interview with ex-combatant involved in crime, KwaMashu, April 2001)

There are examples in other parts of KwaZulu-Natal and elsewhere in the country where development has been prioritised as a means of addressing high levels of crime and violence. Examples include KwaMashu, Inanda and Ntuzuma that were identified by President Mbeki in 2000 as priority areas requiring interventions to reduce high levels of crime and violence. This led to the creation of an Inanda Ntuzuma KwaMashu (INK) urban renewal process where development plans and resources have been harnessed as a means of addressing violence experienced in these areas.

While Richmond may not experience the high levels of crime and violence experienced in KwaMashu, it retains an historical capacity for violence following the ending of the conflict in 2000. Consequently, the prioritisation of development in Richmond provides an important opportunity to neutralise this capacity for violence.

Development initiatives must, however, be undertaken sensitively in order to avoid re-igniting historical animosities or generating new ones. Development can be compromised and disrupted by crime and the existence of armed groups. This has happened in a number of

locations, including KwaZulu-Natal where development programmes had to be placed on hold because of the security threats posed by armed groups. The report also cites situations where high crime and violence requires the government to take resources away from development to provide security. (Network of Independent Monitors and Gun Free South Africa, 1998, p.35)

Creating a conducive environment to recover weapons

Retrieving weapons in a post-conflict situation often requires dealing with issues pertaining to who 'owns' these weapons. In this regard, it is important to recognise that many of these weapons are perceived to belong not to the individual physically in possession of the weapon, but to specific geographic areas or groups within the community. Efforts to recover these weapons must therefore ensure the support and buy-in of relevant community groups and structures. The first step in this process is to identify such groups, which a number of interviewees believed was feasible.

A weapons recovery process should examine what options are available to temper fears that the handover would lead to arrest and prosecution. It is speculated that this is one of the main reasons for the small number of illegal weapons handed over in the Richmond community. What, if anything, can be done to allay such fears? Would it be possible, for example, to render weapons inoperable, so ballistic testing would not be able to link specific weapons to specific crimes? What would be the legal implications of such a move?

Special amnesty — an integral component of recovering weapons?

There has been a great deal of debate within KwaZulu-Natal about possibilities of a special amnesty process in the province. Some of the key participants in the KZN peace process have argued that given the limitations of the TRC and the ongoing need to address the legacy of political violence in the province, a special amnesty process should be considered. It is expected that such a process could address the limitations of other processes, such as the TRC, firearms amnesties and various peace initiatives. It could also provide a tremendous relief for the existing criminal justice system that remains incapable of addressing this legacy.

Even when the peace process began to take root in KwaZulu-Natal and political violence abated, the presence of weapons and continuing high levels of violent crime presented a distinct dilemma and destabilising factor for many areas in the province. The accompanying erosion of political 'control' and command responsibility over those that still have access to weapons further complicated matters. This was particularly problematic in communities like KwaMashu where elements within the SDUs became involved in serious crime. In Richmond, however, this shift (from political to criminal) has not transpired (yet) and there remains a realistic opportunity of ensuring it does not happen.

The clear challenge then is to find ways and strategies of unraveling this capacity for violence before it moves beyond mechanisms designed to ensure political accountability. This means being able to reach perpetrators of political violence before the lines between political and criminal acts are firmly crossed. This may not always be possible, as this line may well have been crossed during the course of the political conflict anyway. It is important therefore to recognise that there are likely to be a range of responses to attempts to recover weapons — both positive and negative.

There will always be elements that oppose such developments, those who do not see what tangible benefits such processes can bring. There are very real concerns about possible prosecutions, or initiatives that expose them to other processes of accountability. How will the rights and interests of victims and perpetrators be addressed and balanced, especially if they are at odds with one another? Could a special amnesty provide an opportunity to navigate through these seemingly intractable conditions? Can the appropriate incentives and (potential) punishments be employed to stimulate engagement, even from those who have shown no interest in doing so? A 'carrot and stick' methodology will only be effective if the rewards and penalties are real. The appropriate economic motivations and criminal justice system sanctions must be evident. Such an approach could be woven into a special amnesty process.

To some extent, Richmond provides a concrete example of where the 'carrot and stick' approach may offer a very real solution to demilitarising a community that has until recently been highly mobilised around political conflict. Many of the roleplayers in Richmond have indicated that an effective weapons recovery programme in the area must be tied to an amnesty process.

Even though a special amnesty process may be practical in Richmond, it would not come without drawbacks, and it would be necessary to address these problems in an open and honest manner. These include:

- The rights of victims and survivors: how and the extent to which these rights are addressed within the process. Most interviewees recognised that a special amnesty process should be 'victim sensitive'. In this regard, specific attention should be paid to ensuring the process is fully understood. The process must be transparent, and should ensure that full disclosure takes place. This accords with recommendations made by the ANC in 1997 (*Proposed ANC Peace Package for KwaZulu-Natal*, issued by the African National Congress, 1997).
- An amnesty process must clearly define what constitutes a political offence. Most of the people interviewed for this research recognised those involved in post-94 violence (both victims and perpetrators) as politically engaged, and those incarcerated for their involvement in this conflict as political prisoners.
- Any special amnesty process requires effective co-ordination and co-operation with the criminal justice system. This will facilitate the full disclosure process (and the required

corroboration), as well as provide a necessary sanction for those who eschew the necessary engagement.

- Even though individuals may successfully participate in the process and receive amnesty, there are likely to be some who subsequently become involved in crime and violence. It is therefore necessary to ensure that there are monitoring and support systems in place (linked in with the criminal justice system) that will help to identify these sorts of problems should they arise, and if necessary take the required action.
- Any special amnesty would need to be accompanied by other programmes, which will support and enhance the process. In this regard, resources must be allocated to Richmond in order to develop the area and initiatives must be taken to address the effective demobilisation of SDUs and SPUs. This is important in order to ensure that the gains made by any amnesty process are not jeopardised in the long-term.
- It is essential that a special amnesty does not become the basis around which new divisions emerge in Richmond. This requires that such a process is discussed, accepted and embraced by all the residents of Richmond. As such, an intensive dialogue with the community is necessary, to identify actual and potential obstacles in this regard.

It has become increasingly clear that some form of amnesty process in Richmond is a pre-requisite component for a successful weapons recovery programme. This is essential if the support and co-operation of people who had been involved in acts of political violence is to be secured. Although such a process may ensure indemnities from criminal sanction for heinous crimes, it is important to remember that the bulk of violations relating to the Richmond conflict remain unresolved. An amnesty process with disclosure conditions may in fact be the most pragmatic solution for victims to finally find out what really happened in many incidents. The various options, and their respective 'pros and cons' should be a subject to intense debate amongst all interested parties.

Disarmament and Demobilisation

One cannot separate the question of weapons recovery from demobilisation. In Richmond many of the weapons were distributed through paramilitary structures. Most members of these structures did not participate in formal demobilisation processes, and many still have access to these weapons.

In Richmond there were two groups of ex-combatants; those that were recruited into structures before 1994, during the conflict between the ANC and IFP, and those that were recruited after 1994 during the conflict between the ANC and UDM. Those engaged in these structures span a range of age-groups and many of them left school during the conflict and were consequently unable to complete their schooling.

Ex-combatants from Richmond have not benefited from skills training projects or other interventions designed to assist their rehabilitation and reintegration into civilian life. Even where efforts have been undertaken, these are not sufficient in terms of supporting sustainable integration processes, and have not been able to provide stable employment opportunities.

Every municipality in South Africa is required to develop an Integrated Development Programme (IDP) for their respective councils. In KwaZulu-Natal, the vast majority of IDPs refer, even if just in passing, to historical political violence, and the Richmond IDP is no different in this regard. However, few of these programmes, if any, make specific mention of ex-combatants. This is a significant omission for communities that contain a large number of ex-combatants, such as Richmond. Targeting ex-combatants, however, does not necessarily require distinct programmes for them, but rather a focus on ways of integrating them and their issues into the objectives and implementation of broader development plans. This remains a significant challenge.

Addressing Trauma

There is clearly a need to address the residual effects of trauma left in the wake of violent conflict. Interventions to resuscitate social capital and related capacities can play an important role in addressing reconstruction and development goals.

Richmond's Integrated Development Plan highlights the need to engage those affected by the violence (directly and indirectly) and to tailor healing and empowerment interventions to the needs of specific groups and individuals. Most community members were affected in some way or another, which underscores the need to develop programmes and approaches that can address the broader needs of the community in this regard.

Currently, there are a number of projects in KwaZulu-Natal, such as the Zenani Project, that focus on providing trauma counselling in communities seriously affected by political violence. These initiatives tend to work with small groups of people and are unable to reach a wider audience. This is a significant drawback in situations where so many people are affected.

Trauma affects both victims and perpetrators. In Richmond, most members of the community were adversely affected by the violence and almost all former combatants involved in the Richmond conflict have participated in and perpetrated acts of violence. Many victims and perpetrators are likely to be affected by the residual psychological effects of combat, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Offering incentives

One of the critical factors underwriting the success of the Mozambique Council of Churches weapons recovery programme was the provision of resources that enabled the programme to offer incentives for community participation. These incentives were not in the form of cash payments but rather were farm implements and items intended for improving the lives of the communities and individuals participating in the programme. Although not all participants agreed that this aspect of the Mozambican programme was successful, the principle of including incentives and rewards into the process was widely endorsed.¹¹

Former SDU members from Richmond who are currently incarcerated agreed that it would be necessary to provide incentives for people to participate in a weapons recovery process. There was little support for a cash 'buy-back' scheme for individual participation, as this is based on the premise that the weapon handed over is owned by the individual in possession of the weapon. As indicated above, this is not the case, as weapons belong to 'structures' and/or 'communities'. Even though these weapons remain under the control of individuals and may be accessible to others, former SDU members describe the weapons as being collectively owned, and as such, felt that incentives or rewards should respond to community needs.

The 'arms-to-art' component of the Mozambican program provides an innovative and powerfully symbolic response to the weapon recovery process, and provides income generation possibilities for people participating in the process.

Integration of processes

A comprehensive and effective weapons recovery programme requires engagement and agreement from a range of interested parties, including the relevant authorities. Where possible, weapons recovery programmes should be integrated with the reconstruction and development agenda. The support and buy-in from local, provincial and national authorities in this regard is likely to greatly enhance options for removing illegal weapons from the community.

¹¹ Discussions with ex-combatant groups in Mozambique indicated that there were divided opinions if this aspect of the programme was in fact a success.

CONCLUSION



Richmond represents an area of KwaZulu-Natal that had experienced serious political violence and a massive influx of weapons during the 1990s. Until this research, no efforts had been made to explore the opportunities for a weapons recovery process, or what would be required to lay the necessary groundwork to make such a programme possible.

The introduction of any such endeavour must take into account local factors and specifics that can influence the outcome of such a process. With respect to Richmond, a number of local factors need to be taken into account; the first relates to the timing of a weapons recovery programme. In the past, weapons collection programmes were not successful because continuing political tensions in the area negated full participation in the process. The peace process in Richmond was only implemented in 2000, and initially co-operation and trust between the different role-players was tentative. Five years later, this process has evolved to such an extent that people feel sufficiently secure to embark on a weapons recovery programme. Although political violence subsided in 2000 many of the previous political ties and alliances continue to exist, and certain key people still have influence over those who are in possession of weapons. This provides a window of opportunity, as it is generally accepted that most of these weapons used in the conflict have not (yet) become deployed for criminal endeavours. In a context of difficult socio-economic conditions, however, it is only a matter of time before this becomes an attractive option for some elements.

In short, therefore, the peace process has helped to create the necessary conditions of trust and communication to follow through with additional disarmament processes. This was the case in Mozambique, where subsequent arms recovery processes have successfully complemented initial demilitarisation efforts. The associated timing is critical, in order to take advantage of prevailing political commitments and opportunities.

The second local factor is the development of an inclusive peace process itself, which has encouraged active participation of both victims of, and perpetrators involved in, political violence. Their participation ensures not only access to information about structures affected by the violence, but also allows for specific needs, fears and aspirations to be addressed.

However, this research on Richmond has highlighted that it is not just local factors that need to be understood and addressed to ensure the successful disarmament of a community. It is also necessary to ensure the buy-in and support of the provincial and national authorities, which would in turn require negotiation and implementation of specific agreements and processes

relating to the criminal justice sanctions, truth recovery options, economic reconstruction and development and so on. In addition, these processes must be as inclusive as possible to ensure the involvement of other sectoral interests (i.e. church, business, women and youth groupings, civics etc).

Weapons collection is not a once-off event, but rather a process that should be integrated and linked to community reconstruction and development. It should also be linked to demobilisation processes, which themselves should also not be once-off initiatives. Indeed, demobilisation efforts must reflect needs and realities on the ground. In the case of Richmond, in the wake of the 1994 elections, national demobilisation efforts were never going to have any meaningful impact in a context of ongoing conflict and violence. Several years later, when the conflict has stopped and a peace process is put in place, demobilisation concerns are yet to be addressed.

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2. Natal Witness 25 July 1998
3. Natal Witness 31 July 1998
4. Natal Witness, 14 August 1998
5. SABC 3 17h00 News, 29 June 2005
6. Sunday Times 28 October 2002.

List of interviews and discussions held

Committee of Eight	Political Prisoners, Richmond	Series of discussions and consultations (January to October 2005)
Five a side	Peace Committee	Series of consultations (June/ July 2004)
Meeting with Mayor, Bheki Mtolo	Richmond	July 2005
Meeting Paulos Vezi	IFP Richmond	October 2005
Meetings with Wilis Mchunu	Speaker of the legislative Assembly and Co-ordinator of the five-aside	Series held between November 2004 – October 2005
Meetings with Zweli Mkhize	Minister of Economic Affairs KwaZulu-Natal	Series held between November 2004 – October 2005
Meeting with Prisoners	Political Prisoners, Richmond	September 2005
Meeting with group SDU members	Richmond	August 2005
Meetings with John Jefferies	National parliamentary representative, Richmond constituency	Series held between April and September 2005)
Nonhlanhla Nkabinde	UDM Richmond	May 2005
Mr Gwamande	UDM PMB	Series of meeting June September 2005
Mr Bheki Msomi	UDM Provincial MPP	May 2005
Glenda Cairne	Independent Projects Trust	May 2005
Noma Chiliza	Independent Projects Trust	Series of meeting held between April and September 2005

Mrs Ndabazitsha	ANC Richmond	Series of meeting April to September 2005
Deputy mayor Richmond	Richmond	April 2005
Station commissioner	Richmond police station	June 2005
Agrippa Mhlongo	Co-ordinator mediators committee	May 2005
Meeting Gail Wannenburg	Ex violence monitor NIM	May 2005
Interview ex SAPS officer	Deployed in Richmond in 1996	February 2005
Interview ANC member	Richmond	January 2005
Interview ANC Youth member	Richmond	November 2004
Interview SPU members	Richmond	November 2004
Interview UDM members	Richmond	November 2004
Interview with group of SDU members	Richmond	November 2004
Interview with local councilor	Richmond	November 2004
Interview farmer Richmond	Richmond	November 2004
Interview Hayden Osborn	Ex ECC worker	August 2004
Meeting ex combatants	Mozambique	June 2004
Meeting TAE project	Mozambique	June 2004
Meeting KYO	KwaMashu	April 2004