PEACE CAN BE

President Obama’s chance to help end LRA atrocities in 2012

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“The most important [thing] we want to be free from is the case of the LRA. Peace can be; it can be here. Let us be free.”

- South Sudanese boy displaced by LRA violence, to learn more about his story, visit: theresolve.org/videos
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Executive Summary

In November 2010 President Obama released the first-ever comprehensive White House strategy to address the atrocities committed by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in central Africa. Since then his Administration has taken significant steps to help end LRA violence, most notably by deploying approximately 100 military advisers in late 2011 to help the Ugandan and other regional militaries protect civilians and apprehend senior LRA commanders. This decision has refocused regional and international attention on the crisis and provided a political boost to the African Union’s slowly developing counter-LRA initiative. In addition, the United States has significantly increased investment in civilian early warning programs and continued providing emergency aid to LRA-affected communities.

Increased U.S. and international focus on the crisis has yet to translate into adequate progress in ending LRA violence, however. Following the collapse of the peace talks with the LRA in 2008, Uganda launched military operations in the tri-border region between the Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo), and South Sudan. The operations reduced the group to a core of a few hundred fighters in 2009, but Ugandan forces have failed to capture a senior LRA commander or significantly reduce the LRA’s fighting force in over two years. Furthermore, military forces have failed to protect civilians from LRA reprisal and survival attacks during which the group has killed more than 2,400 people and abducted more than 3,400 others since 2008.

One of the central challenges to the successful implementation of the Obama Administration’s LRA strategy is the breakdown in cooperation among governments in the region. Ugandan forces, which are better trained and equipped than their counterparts in neighboring countries, continue to pursue LRA commanders dispersed throughout the region. The governments of Congo, CAR, and South Sudan have not demonstrated the capability or willingness to succeed against the LRA on their own, but are nonetheless increasingly uncomfortable with the prolonged presence of Ugandan forces in their territories. Congo, where the LRA committed over 75 percent of its attacks in 2011, has already forced Uganda to withdraw its troops from its territory. Information sharing and operational coordination at a local level is often weak or absent altogether.

Meanwhile, Uganda’s resolve to defeat an enemy that no longer seriously threatens its borders is wavering. It has withdrawn more than half of the troops it had dedicated to counter-LRA operations in 2009, and remains reluctant to integrate civilian protection into its operations. Its forces are also accused of sporadic human rights abuses and exploitation of natural resources in the tri-border region. Tense civil-military relations and Uganda’s lack of success against the LRA have damaged the initial welcome it received from host communities and impeded its ability to carry out its core pursuit operations.

By contrast, the LRA has evolved tactically in order to survive in its new operating environment. It evades pursuing militaries by breaking into smaller groups and limiting its use of electronic communications, while still managing to retain cohesion among its senior commanders. In the second half of 2011, the LRA dramatically reduced its attacks, particularly those involving killings of civilians. Regional military forces interpret these trends as a sign that the rebel group’s capacity has been severely decimated. However, the LRA’s proven ability to protect its core commanders and to regenerate itself if given the opportunity should inspire caution. LRA commanders may be intentionally reducing violence against civilians in the hopes that renewed U.S. and regional initiatives lose momentum. If current initiatives fail to break apart the LRA’s command structure, the group will be poised to survive indefinitely and eventually replenish its strength in the tri-border region.

Despite these challenges, leadership from President Obama and the United States has given new momentum to efforts to put an end to the LRA’s predations. However, to realize this promise, the Obama Administration must take several steps to marshal regional governments and international partners into a coordinated push in 2012 to protect civilians and bring rebel commanders to justice. The most urgent is working with the African Union to strengthen regional cooperation, especially to ensure that Congo allows the Ugandan military conditional access to Congolese territory affected by the LRA.

The U.S. must also convince Uganda to renew its commitment to ending LRA violence and protecting civilians. This will require Uganda to deploy more troops and helicopters to the region, and improve outreach with local communities. The U.S. should increase its intelligence and aerial mobility support to the Ugandans, and help repair civil-military relations. Finally, the U.S. must invest more in civilian early warning networks and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs, which can help mitigate the consequences of LRA violence and reduce the group’s capacity to prey on vulnerable civilians.

Achieving these ambitious goals will require continued attention from senior Administration officials with the active engagement and support of the U.S. Congress. The Obama Administration demonstrated such attention in 2011 in securing the deployment of the advisers and by
expanding its institutional capacity to respond to the LRA crisis. But leadership from senior officials at the State Department and USAID remains inconsistent on key complementary pieces of the President’s LRA strategy, such as reinvigorating regional cooperation and accelerating implementation of key early warning and DDR projects.

Given the politicized environment during a U.S. election year and budget constraints facing the federal government, the Obama Administration may encounter domestic pressure to withdraw the U.S. military advisers before they have achieved their objectives. A premature withdrawal would deflate promising momentum from regional governments and U.S. officials to push forward on both military and civilian aspects of the counter-LRA effort. It could also spark Uganda to quickly withdraw its own troops from the tri-border region, which would leave civilians more vulnerable to LRA raids than they were before and gravely set back efforts to permanently end the group’s violent activities.

To prevent such a scenario, the Administration must make decisions about the advisers’ future based on their progress towards achieving clearly defined benchmarks and not on the shifting political currents in Washington, DC. These benchmarks should include progress in regional forces’ protection of civilians and success in dismantling the LRA’s command structure to the point where the group no longer poses a serious threat to civilians.

Pressure from within Congress to cut foreign aid funding also presents a major challenge to the President’s LRA strategy. However, in late 2011 a bipartisan coalition in Congress secured defense funding authorizations that should help the Administration to better address intelligence and aerial mobility constraints facing regional militaries. Congress also directed the Administration to spend $10 million for early warning and DDR projects. It is critical that the Obama Administration follows through and allocates funding for these critical areas.

Even as it seeks to end active LRA violence, the United States must also continue to work with other members of the international community to help affected communities survive and rebuild. Emergency aid and capacity-building for civil society is needed in areas of CAR, Congo, and South Sudan where the LRA has displaced over 465,000 people and is exacerbating communal tensions. The U.S. should also continue its extensive support for economic recovery and reconciliation in northern Uganda, where the LRA originated but has not attacked since 2006. Finally, the U.S. must pressure Ugandan leaders to commit to a genuine transitional justice process and to opening democratic space – or risk that their increasingly authoritarian rule will recreate the same divisive political conditions that sparked the LRA rebellion over twenty-five years ago.

Executive recommendations

President Obama has an opportunity to build on the progress made in 2011 and see his LRA strategy achieve its core objectives in 2012. Support among Congressional leaders – and the U.S. public – for greater U.S. action to stop LRA violence remains strong. But unless the U.S. moves quickly to complement and expand on existing efforts, LRA leader Joseph Kony will likely outlast President Obama and his LRA strategy as effectively as he has outlasted the efforts of four previous U.S. presidents.

This report, reflecting extensive field research conducted by Resolve in central Africa, argues that President Obama should focus on these priorities in 2012 to help end LRA violence and rebuild affected communities:

**Rebuild regional cooperation**

*Directly engage with senior Congolese officials to immediately allow Ugandan forces to resume operations against LRA commanders and groups in Congolese territory;*

*Work with the AU and regional governments to develop a transparent process to regularly review Uganda’s counter-LRA deployments;*

*Support AU envoy Francisco Madeira’s efforts to strengthen his diplomatic clout and help him convene the heads of state of affected countries to improve cooperation on counter-LRA efforts.*

**Work with Uganda on a surge to apprehend LRA commanders and protect civilians**

*Address gaps in Ugandan apprehension operations;*

*Encourage Uganda to dedicate more troops and more helicopters to counter-LRA operations;*

*Fund the deployment of tactical troop transport helicopters and improved communications equipment in order to allow Ugandan forces to rapidly deploy operations to apprehend senior LRA commanders and protect civilians from LRA attacks;*

*Increase intelligence gathering on senior LRA commanders by expanding aerial surveillance capacity and expanding the State Department’s Rewards for Justice Program to reward individuals for information about indicted LRA commanders.*

**Integrate civilian protection into Ugandan operations**

*Task U.S. military advisers with integrating protection strategies into Uganda’s operational planning, reporting alleged military abuses against civilians, and sharing intelligence about LRA activity with civilian early warning networks;*

*Encourage the AU to deploy civilian protection experts to the field to advise Ugandan forces and to develop operational guidelines on accountability and civilian protection;*

*Task U.S. military advisers with helping the Ugandan military to engage with local communities to improve civil-military relations and establish clear mechanisms for com-*
munities to safely raise concerns.

**Scale up investments in early warning networks, DDR, and infrastructure**

Expand civilian early warning mechanisms

*Support a regional early warning network that provides information and analysis about LRA activity to vulnerable communities and helps them develop preparedness plans to respond to LRA threats; (further details page 21)*

Expand mobile phone, high frequency (HF) radio, and road rehabilitation projects in the tri-border region, prioritizing areas heavily trafficked by LRA groups.

**Encourage LRA defections**

*Saturate the tri-border area with “come home” messages that target specific LRA commanders, including expanding the capacity of local FM radio stations and encouraging regional militaries to distribute leaflets;*

*Create a safe environment for Ugandan LRA members to defect through community sensitization programs and by establishing rendezvous points where LRA combatants can surrender directly to military forces;*

*Solicit the assistance of the Sudanese government to encourage high-level LRA officers to defect from the group;*

*Push for a joint communiqué from the leaders of LRA-affected countries declaring that all non-indicted LRA commanders, combatants, and abductees will be granted amnesty and given reintegration support if they defect.*

**Ensure LRA escapees receive reintegration support**

*Support UN-coordinated strategies to return escaped children safely home and develop a similar regional strategy for escaped adults;*

*Increase funding for long-term psychosocial, education, and livelihood support to LRA escapees and war-affected communities;*

*Encourage the Ugandan government to renew the Amnesty Act, grant amnesty to all Ugandan LRA combatants except for International Criminal Court (ICC) indictees, and stop forcibly conscripting former LRA fighters.*

**Help communities recover and rebuild**

*Increase funding for life-saving emergency aid and early recovery programs in the tri-border region;*

*Encourage the national governments of CAR, Congo, and South Sudan to improve civilian protection and build the capacity of local government institutions in LRA-affected areas;*

*Build the capacity of local civil society networks to peacefully resolve communal conflict and to advocate for improved civilian protection responses from their national governments;*

*Promote lasting peace in northern Uganda by supporting economic recovery and transitional justice initiatives and pressuring the Ugandan government to improve democratic governance.*
Methodology

This report is based in part on information collected during a research trip from June-September 2011, in which a Resolve researcher traveled through LRA-affected areas of South Sudan, Central African Republic, Congo, and Uganda. The purpose of this trip was to gain a better understanding of the situation in the region, including local perspectives on how LRA violence can best be ended and the ways in which affected communities can best be assisted.

During this research trip, Resolve interviewed survivors and witnesses of LRA attacks, local government officials, civil society leaders, humanitarian workers, displaced persons, UN officials, self-defense forces, military officials, former LRA abductees, and other members of communities affected by the conflict. In some cases, names and occupations of those interviewed, and the dates and locations of interviews, have been withheld due to the sensitive nature of the issues and the need to protect the privacy and security of interviewees.

Resolve visited the following towns during this research trip:

**CAR:** Bambouti, Obo, Mboki, Zemio, and Bangui

**Congo:** Dungu, Banda, Ango, and Nabiapai

**South Sudan:** Yambio, Nzara, Ezo, Tambura, and Source Yubu

**Uganda:** Entebbe, Gulu, and Kampala

Vehicle stuck on degraded road connecting Source Yubu, South Sudan and Bambouti, CAR, along the main road between the two countries.
Part I: Assessing the LRA today
The LRA’s continued evolution in central Africa

The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA)’s continued ability to survive should not be underestimated. The group has endured over 25 years of Ugandan-led military operations, spurned numerous peace overtures and offers of amnesty, and defied repeated predictions of its imminent demise by Ugandan leaders.1 The critical ingredient in the rebel group’s remarkable history of survival has been the cohesion of the LRA’s senior command structure.2 Within this command structure, LRA founder Joseph Kony has a primary role, retaining absolute power and decision-making authority.3

During the Juba peace talks with the Ugandan government between 2006 and 2008, this cohesion survived a serious threat when Kony killed his second-in-command, Vincent Otti, accusing him of undermining his authority.4 In 2008 Uganda launched military operations against LRA forces in the tri-border region of Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo), and South Sudan following the collapse of negotiations. These operations have also posed a threat to Kony’s power, but senior commanders have effectively adapted themselves to survive military pressure while maintaining a cohesive command structure. To do so, LRA commanders evolved tactically by scattering and becoming highly mobile, em-

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1 For example, in November 2003, Museveni said “Kony and his evil-minded commanders’ days are numbered. I will finish him off, should he not surrender by December.” Five years later, just after the launch of Operation Lightning Thunder in 2008, Museveni declared, “Our forces are closing in on Kony… victory is assured this time.” Yoweri Museveni, “Museveni promises peace by December,” Daily Monitor, November 16, 2003; Yoweri Museveni, “Kony trapped, says Museveni,” New Vision, December 22, 2008.
2 See Appendix D for more on the LRA’s history of adaption and survival.
4 Vincent Otti, a popular and influential commander, was reportedly willing to consider ending the LRA rebellion through the peace talks.
ploying elaborate systems of runners and rendezvous points, periodically “laying low” by reducing attacks on civilians, and retaining iron-fisted control over rank-and-file fighters and abductees.\(^5\)

A. Masters of Survival: How the LRA protects senior commanders

The LRA’s ability to protect its senior commanders is essential to the survival of the rebel group. LRA commanders, most of whom are Acholi from northern Uganda, evade Ugandan forces in part by scattering over a vast operational theater the size of France that is sparsely populated and mostly covered by triple-layer forest cover. They limit their use of satellite phones, but innovative tactics allow them to maintain contact with each other. Commanders often break apart for several weeks before reassembling at rendezvous points that are prearranged or confirmed by “runners” who travel between groups.\(^6\)

In June 2011, for example, Kony reportedly sent six Acholi officers to Congo to summon commanders operating there to the sparsely populated areas of southeastern CAR where he and fellow International Criminal Court (ICC)-indictee Okot Odhiambo have often operated. Several commanders and their groups accepted the call and traveled to CAR in response, including Dominic Ongwen, the third remaining LRA commander indicted by the ICC. Ongwen reportedly had refused to meet other envoys Kony sent in 2009 and 2010.\(^7\)

Such meetings, though rare, help the LRA maintain command coherence and plan future operations, and demonstrate Kony’s continued control over the LRA. Former abductees report that LRA groups sometimes exchange fighters, abductees, and food when LRA groups meet, possibly to help strengthen weaker groups.\(^8\) LRA raiding parties also sometimes bury their goods for later use or take them to other LRA groups that wish to maintain a lower profile, possibly because such groups are sheltering a senior commander.\(^9\)

LRA operational tactics are also key to protecting commanders. When attacked, rank-and-file fighters, mostly lower-ranking Acholi Ugandans, rush to meet oncoming forces while senior commanders and abductees scatter into the forest to escape. This reportedly happened in late 2011, when Ugandan forces attacked the large LRA gathering convened by Kony in southeast CAR but failed to penetrate the LRA’s defenses to capture or kill any senior commanders.

Groups that contain senior commanders often refrain from committing attacks to avoid revealing themselves to military forces, which rely on reports of attacks and debriefs with escaped LRA abductees to pinpoint them. LRA groups also disguise their tracks and take circuitous routes to camps and rendezvous points to escape pursuing militaries or self-defense groups.\(^10\)

LRA commanders are also able to outdistance Ugandan military trackers by forcing abductees to carry looted goods long distances and killing or abandoning those who cannot keep pace, whereas Ugandan military trackers have to carry their own supplies. Abductees also serve as cooks and sex slaves to commanders.

One weakness in the LRA’s command structure lies in its difficulty replacing commanders who defect or who are captured or killed. All of the LRA’s 60-70 officers and a vast majority of its low-ranking fighters are members of the Acholi ethnic group from northern Uganda.\(^11\) Since the LRA has not been active in northern Uganda since 2006, it is not possible for them to abduct new Acholi members.

The LRA is attempting to integrate some abductees from the local Zande population into its fighting force, however. The Zande are the largest ethnic group in the tri-border region and the most common target of LRA attacks and abductions. Though most Zande abductees escape from the LRA at the first chance, some younger recruits are trained as fighters, primarily through forced participation in raids, and remain in the ranks.\(^12\) The Zande abductees have yet to be promoted into command positions, however, providing a window of opportunity for military forces to whittle down the finite pool of core LRA commanders and fighters.

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5 For a detailed account of how the LRA has evolved since the Juba Peace Talks, see Ledio Cakaj “The Lord’s Resistance Army of Today,” Enough Project, November 2, 2010.

6 For example, meetings of smaller LRA groups in Congo were reported near Ngilima in May 2011 and near Bitima in June 2011. UN official, Resolve interview, Dungu, Congo, July 13, 2011.


8 UN official, Resolve interview, Dungu, July 10, 2011.

9 For example, in mid-2011 several LRA groups operating in Garamba National Park were reportedly transporting looted food supplies to another LRA group staying deeper in the park that included a senior commander. UN official, Resolve interview, Dungu, July 13, 2011. A former LRA abductee interviewed by Resolve also reported that LRA combatants buried looted goods for later use. LRA abductee, Resolve interview, Ango, July 10, 2011.

10 LRA groups moving through the forest use several techniques to throw off trackers, including “snake,” in which they loop back and forth and crisscross their own tracks, and “scatter,” in which they move in single file for some time and then spread out to avoid being seen by a path through the woods before moving back to single file. Local self-defense group member, Resolve Interview, Yambio, South Sudan, August 29, 2011.

11 See Appendix C for more on the LRA’s command structure.

12 The LRA reportedly trusts the loyalty of some Zande abductees enough that they send them into villages to purchase food to bring back to the group. Zande former LRA abductee, Resolve interview, Yambio, August 29, 2011.
LRA commanders use strict rules and regulations to integrate abductees and maintain iron-fisted control over rank-and-file fighters. Cultic rituals are meant to inspire fearlessness in battle and prevent disobedience. Kony also repeats the LRA’s goal of overthrowing the Ugandan government to inspire Ugandan combatants, even though the LRA no longer operates in Uganda or shows any signs of returning. More practically, commanders impose severe penalties for disobedience or attempted escape, including beatings and death. Zande recruits are forbidden to speak their native tongue and must quickly learn the Acholi Luo tongue to survive. Senior commanders reward rank-and-file combatants who perform well with increased security and access to food, but promotions are given slowly to ensure loyalty. Senior LRA commanders also restrict access to handheld FM radios, part of a strategy to limit access to information among rank-and-file Acholi fighters and abductees.

These strategies have helped LRA commanders minimize defections from their core of Acholi mid-level commanders and fighters since the launch of Operation Lightning Thunder in December 2008. The LRA’s gruesome atrocities against civilians also discourage its fighters from defecting, because they fear being beaten or killed by fearful and angry local communities in retribution. Individual abductees from CAR, Congo, and South Sudan escape more often, but mass defections are rare, even in LRA groups that are isolated from contact with senior LRA commanders or who are struggling to survive. Notable exceptions include the escape of 17 women and children in September 2011 after their commander, Ochan Bunia, allegedly died of natural causes in the bush. At the current rate of attrition, the LRA may have enough time to train and promote Zande abductees to replace northern Ugandan officers who are killed or captured.

Though regional militaries, including Uganda’s, maintain that the LRA is constantly “in survival mode,” pressure is often lax and commanders are able to stay in makeshift camps for weeks at a time. For example, Caesar Achellam, one of the LRA’s top four commanders, led a group of about 100 LRA members that camped near the confluence of the Vovodo and Chinko rivers in southeast CAR for several weeks in June 2011. At the same time, ICC-indictee Dominic Ongwen reportedly lived in a camp in South Sudan’s Yambio country for several weeks. Though Ugandan forces were able to eventually locate these camps – and clashed with Achellam’s group at least three times – they did not succeed in apprehending or killing any commanders.

B. Trends in LRA activity: The final chapter?

Predicting how Joseph Kony and senior LRA commanders will continue to adapt in order to survive is notoriously difficult. But whatever the plans Kony and LRA commanders have developed, history indicates that they are skilled at evolving to outlast new strategies employed by political leaders or increased pressure from regional militaries.

Little is known about Kony’s plans to adapt to recent U.S. and international attention, or what he discussed or decided during the meeting in late 2011 in southeast CAR with Ongwen and other commanders. After Ugandan forces reportedly attacked the LRA groups gathered there, senior commanders split apart again. Accounts from LRA escapees, which can be unreliable, indicate that LRA commanders may have issued orders to reduce killings of civilians and that they may be afraid of a renewed military offensive given the deployment of U.S. military advisers to the region. It is possible that LRA commanders, while retaining the capacity to perpetrate large-scale attacks, are intentionally reducing violence against civilians in the hopes of outlasting current international attention and military pressure.

LRA attack trends in the second half of 2011 in the lead up to and following the meeting in CAR provide some evidence for this possibility. The number of reported LRA attacks dropped from 203 in the first six months of 2011 to 81 attacks in the latter six months, and the LRA killed 84
percent fewer people over that same period.\textsuperscript{15} The average number of people killed per LRA attack and the percentage of LRA attacks involving a killing also dropped steadily throughout 2011. However, the LRA’s fighting capacity did not significantly diminish in the latter half of 2011. This indicates that LRA attacks could be purposely focused more on looting goods, which draw little international attention, than on killing civilians. In addition, a majority of LRA attacks in 2011 occurred far from the areas in southeast CAR where many LRA commanders, including Kony, are believed to be located, indicating that the senior commanders could be trying to deflect attention away from themselves (see map page 33).

The LRA could also rekindle its relationship with the Government of Sudan in order to help it survive. From 1994 to 2005 Khartoum trained the LRA in communications and military tactics, outfitted it with an arsenal of weaponry and supplies, and gave it safe haven in South Sudan. However, support was largely cut off in 2005 following the end of the civil war there. In 2009 and 2010 Kony sent delegations, at least one led by Achellam, to meet with Sudanese military forces in South Darfur. The Sudanese forces reportedly gave the group only a few minor supplies.\textsuperscript{16}

President Omar al-Bashir has so far withheld support, likely in part because consorting with Kony and the LRA’s other two ICC indictees would damage his efforts to normalize relations with the West and get his own ICC indictment lifted. However, if rebel forces in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile currently threatening regime change gain traction, Bashir could once again use the LRA to destabilize the region and try to maintain power.\textsuperscript{17} South Sudanese officials have repeatedly accused him of doing so already, most recently alleging that the renegade South Sudanese general George Athor was tasked with contacting the LRA at Khartoum’s request before he was killed in December 2011.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15} For more detail on all the statistics included in this paragraph, see “LRA Crisis Tracker: Annual Security Brief 2011,” Resolve and Invisible Children, February 8, 2012.

\textsuperscript{16} “From Promise to Peace: A Blueprint for President Obama's LRA Strategy,” Resolve, September 2010.

\textsuperscript{17} International diplomat, email exchange, September 30, 2011.

\textsuperscript{18} “South Sudan rebel George Athor ‘killed’,” BBC, December 20, 2011.
Part II: A moment of opportunity
The deployment of U.S. military advisers

President Obama’s decision to deploy U.S. military advisers in 2011 to help apprehend LRA commanders and protect civilians demonstrated an unprecedented commitment by his Administration to ending LRA violence. The deployment, and the substantial international press it received, has given a boost of momentum to regional counter-LRA efforts plagued by lack of cooperation and waning commitment from the governments of Uganda, CAR, Congo, and South Sudan. It has also spurred the African Union (AU) and UN to redouble their efforts to address the cross-border threat posed by the LRA.

However, these political opportunities could be fleeting. The advisers are not a silver bullet for regional counter-LRA operations and President Obama could face significant domestic pressure to withdraw them in the coming months from Members of Congress and Administration officials concerned about foreign aid spending and an overstretched U.S. military. However, a premature withdrawal of the advisers would set back regional interest in counter-LRA efforts, leave civilians in the region more vulnerable to LRA attacks, and deflate momentum within the Administration to implement the President’s broader LRA strategy. The U.S. must devise clear benchmarks for evaluating the advisers’ impact on the ground and the risks of premature withdrawal. These benchmarks, not domestic political considerations, should drive the timeline for the advisers’ deployment.

A. Stepping into the fray: Hazardous political dynamics facing the deployment

Though the deployment of the advisers caught many observers by surprise, it stemmed from several years of expanding U.S. engagement in the crisis. This engagement has stretched through both Democratic and Republican Administrations and been spurred on by a vocal bipartisan coalition in Congress that passed the **LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act** in May of 2010. The deployment quickly received bipartisan support from influential Members of Congress, as well as from conservative and liberal opinion-makers and human rights groups. It was also endorsed by the leading Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney. Within the Administration, it has elevated attention to the need to implement the President’s LRA strategy as a whole, including its civilian-led components.

But the deployment of U.S. advisers also brought unprecedented attention to a niche issue previously buffered from increasingly partisan domestic politics. The potential for the deployment to be a political lightning rod in a contentious election year was on display during a high-profile House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing in October 2011 immediately following its announcement. At the hearing, some Members of Congress expressed reservations about sending advisers to help defeat a rebel group that poses no direct national security threat to the U.S. at a time of mounting concern over budget deficits and ongoing military engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya.

Other Members of Congress, even those supportive of the decision, were concerned about the Administration’s failure to consult with them before the move was announced publicly. Senior U.S. State Department and Defense Department officials did little to assuage these concerns during the House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing and subsequent private Congressional briefings, during which they did not provide clear answers regarding the cost, duration, and justification of the deployment. The Administration’s Congressional outreach strategy has remained minimal in 2012, and some Members of Congress who would otherwise support the deployment have grown wary.

The political risks of a failed deployment are likely greater for President Obama than any domestic popularity boost the capture of senior LRA commanders could achieve. This dynamic will result in pressure from within and outside the Administration to withdraw all or some of the advisers within months unless there is clear progress in the success of counter-LRA operations, such as the capture or killing of a senior LRA commander. However, the impact of their work will be nearly impossible to measure in a short period of time, as the advisers will be operating in an unfamiliar environment and tasked with only a consultative role. It will likely take at least six more months before their recommendations can be adequately evaluated and implemented.

The U.S. must continue to ensure the buy-in of regional leaders and governments to the deployment. Uganda welcomed the decision, though it took pains to emphasize that its troops will continue to lead operations and that

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19 This bill required the Administration to develop a strategy to prevent further LRA violence and called for the U.S. to provide increased aid to LRA-affected communities in Uganda, CAR, Congo, and South Sudan.
21 The President’s decision to invoke the War Powers Resolution without clarifying whether it intends to follow reporting requirements rekindled frustration from some Members of Congress over his refusal to request permission for the use of military force in Libya. “Deployment of U.S. forces in Central Africa and implementation of the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act,” House Committee on Foreign Affairs, October 25, 2011.
22 For instance, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), the Republican head of the influential Armed Services committee, expressed concern that the deployment of advisers could inadvertently lead to protracted U.S. engagement, making the comparison to the beginnings of the Vietnam War. John McCain, “Kony: McCain attacks Obama over Uganda deployment,” New Vision, October 17, 2011.
U.S. troops will not participate in combat.23 The CAR and South Sudanese governments welcomed the move, likely more for its potential to strengthen security ties with the U.S. than its likelihood to help defeat the LRA.

However, Congolese President Joseph Kabila claimed that he was not consulted about the deployment and found out about it while surfing the internet.24 The fragility of Congolese politics following the November 2011 elections make it increasingly uncertain that President Kabila will allow Ugandan troops to operate freely against the LRA in northern Congo. The advisers are working primarily with Ugandan troops, so restricting the Ugandans’ movements in Congo will severely impact the effectiveness of the advisers, especially if senior LRA commanders realize northern Congo’s potential to become a safe haven.

B. Preventing a premature withdrawal: The need for clear benchmarks for U.S. advisers

The Administration’s first major review of the deployment, expected to occur in the coming months, will be the first opportunity to assess the efforts of the U.S. military advisers and the prospects for future success. Although this review is too soon to make long-term judgments about the deployment, Administration officials should use the opportunity to refine their criteria for assessing its impact and ensure clear benchmarks are in place for making future decisions about its scope and duration.

Criteria for such assessments should include how well advisers are able to help Ugandan and other regional military forces improve joint operational planning and intelligence sharing. Benchmarks set for the coming year should include helping the regional forces (1) to have greater success in apprehending commanders from the LRA’s core group of 60-70 officers, or pressuring a number of them to defect, (2) to integrate and improve civilian protection strategies into their overall operations, and (3) to ultimately dismantle the LRA’s command structure to the point that civilians are no longer at risk of LRA attack.

Commitment to such benchmarks will lessen the chance that premature declarations of the deployment’s failure or success will unduly influence the future of the operation. The Administration’s assessments of progress towards these benchmarks must take into account that even if Kony and the two other ICC-indicted LRA commanders, Ongwen and Okot Odhiambo, are apprehended, remaining LRA commanders could still pose a significant threat to civilian populations.

24 International journalist, Resolve interview, Washington, DC, October 17, 2011.
Part III. A Surge in 2012

Protecting civilians and bringing LRA commanders to justice

The deployment of U.S. military advisers has given President Obama an opportunity to marshal regional and international partners into a coordinated counter-LRA push in 2012. He should capitalize on the political attention currently focused on the crisis to achieve several key objectives: rebuilding regional cooperation, reinvigorating Ugandan military operations to apprehend senior LRA commanders and protect civilians, strengthening civilian early warning mechanisms, and promoting the defection and the safe return home of LRA combatants and abductees.

A. Rebuilding regional cooperation: A foundation for counter-LRA efforts

Lack of will, discord, and poor coordination between regional governments has allowed the LRA to exploit ungoverned spaces in the tri-border region. CAR, Congo, and South Sudan have little political interest in addressing the crisis, and Congo has forced Uganda to withdraw its forces from its territory. Uganda has significantly scaled back its commitment to counter-LRA operations since 2009, and its lack of visible success in defeating the group has hastened the deterioration of relations with its hosts. The Obama Administration significantly expanded its diplomatic capacity to improve regional collaboration in 2011, but high-level engagement by U.S. officials is still inadequate. Increasingly, U.S. and international diplomats are hoping the African Union’s newly launched Regional Cooperation Initiative (RCI-LRA) can unite regional efforts. But it remains hampered by resource constraints and reluctance by regional governments to prioritize the issue or cede decision-making authority.

1. Deteriorating relations between Uganda and Congo

Tensions between Uganda and Congo continue to be a core obstacle to counter-LRA efforts. These tensions are partly rooted in the Ugandan military’s plunder of natural resources and grievous human rights abuses during its occupation of parts of eastern Congo from 1998-2003. Congolese President Joseph Kabila has ordered draw downs of Ugandan forces in Congo several times since allowing them to re-enter in December 2008, most recently in September 2011 during the run-up to Congo’s contentious presidential elections. In late 2011, most Ugandan forces were barred from Congolese territory and remain-
ing units were strictly confined to their bases. Congolese officials have justified these decisions by downplaying the LRA threat and blaming some reported LRA attacks on Ugandan forces and local bandits.25

Even when Ugandan forces have operated in Congo, tensions at the operational and tactical levels have severely impeded joint operations between Congo and Uganda. The two militaries only sporadically coordinate movements and share information, and Ugandan commanders claim that their Congolese counterparts are reluctant to respond to LRA attacks and arbitrarily deny them permission to pursue LRA groups in certain areas.26

The Joint Intelligence and Operations Center (JIOC) in Dungu, Congo attempts to improve coordination between Ugandan and Congolese forces, as well as UN peacekeepers and U.S. military advisers, but has had limited success. The JIOC lacks the capacity to thoroughly investigate reports of LRA activity or determine the perpetrators of many reported attacks, inhibiting a common understanding of the LRA threat and joint operational planning. Despite the discord in Dungu, Congolese and Ugandan units in more remote areas have conducted some joint operations that successfully engaged LRA groups and even rescued LRA abductees.27

2. U.S. efforts to improve regional collaboration

The U.S. greatly expanded its diplomatic capacity to address thorny regional dynamics in 2011. The existence of a comprehensive U.S. LRA strategy and the deployment of U.S. advisers has strengthened internal interagency coordination and helped U.S. embassies, particularly in Kinshasa, place a greater priority on what was seen previously as a peripheral issue. The State Department appointed staff based in central Africa and Washington, DC dedicated solely to LRA strategy implementation, and the U.S. military assigned LRA-focused liaison officers in all four regional capitals. U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice also helped spur the Security Council to issue statements in July and November 2011 that encouraged regional counter-LRA coordination. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson has raised the issue with regional leaders during his travels to the region, as has newly appointed U.S. Great Lakes adviser Ambassador Barrie Walkley.

The U.S. has also tried to strengthen the capacity of the militaries of CAR, Congo, and South Sudan to respond to LRA violence. This assistance has helped mitigate their discontent that U.S. support in the region is channeled primarily to the Ugandan military, which has caused tensions between Ugandan and host military forces. The U.S. has also attempted to defuse these tensions by assuring the governments of CAR, Congo, and South Sudan that military advisers in the field will liaise with their national military forces, in addition to the Ugandans.

In Congo, the U.S. advocated for the U.S.-trained 391st battalion of the national military to deploy to northern Congo in April 2011 to protect civilians from LRA raids, and contracts two advisers to counsel the battalion. Though initially welcomed by local communities appreciative of the battalion’s professionalism compared to other Congolese forces, the battalion has yet to prove it can actively protect civilians from LRA raids.28 The U.S. has also announced plans to provide “targeted training” to South Sudanese forces that will deploy in LRA-affected areas, and given $500,000 worth of non-lethal supplies to the CAR military forces deployed in the southeast.29

However, this assistance has not been matched by the necessary high-level diplomatic engagement to address lingering regional tensions. Senior officials such as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UN Ambassador Susan Rice need to use their stature to engage regional officials, especially in Uganda and Congo, and press for renewed cooperation. Failure to address these tensions and improve regional collaboration could sabotage the overall success of the U.S. LRA strategy and of the deployment of U.S. military advisers.

3. The African Union: Pawn or power-broker?

US and international diplomats are increasingly turning to the African Union’s RCI-LRA in recognition that an African-led political initiative has the best chance to improve regional cooperation.30 Operationally, the AU proposal calls for a Regional Intervention Force (RIF) to unite the efforts of regional militaries, which would include a center tasked with intelligence analysis and planning joint operations. However, the AU does not have the funds to operationalize its plans, and donor interest so far has been minimal. The European Union, the only interested donor so far, is willing to fund an AU envoy and part of the new regional mission.

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25 Congolese military officer, Resolve interview, Dungu, July 13, 2011.
27 UN official, Resolve interview, Dungu, July 8, 2011.
28 The Congolese government would like the U.S. to train another battalion of troops to be deployed to northern Congo, which U.S. officials have indicated they will consider if the Congolese military fulfills pledges to feed and pay soldiers in the 391st and keep the unit together for a certain period of time. U.S. diplomat, Resolve interview, Washington, DC, November 10, 2011.
30 For a more detailed analysis of the origins of the African Union LRA initiative, see “LRA: End Game?” International Crisis Group.
center, but not direct military operations.31 This has created friction with affected countries, who entertained the AU’s intervention in the hopes it would help fund its expensive military operations.

In November 2011 the AU appointed career Mozambican diplomat Francisco Madeira as “interim” LRA special envoy, a position it sees as key to shuttle diplomacy aimed at improving regional collaboration and buy-in for the RIF. Madeira’s first tour of regional capitals in January 2012 ended with their leaders declaring renewed commitment to address the crisis. During his visits, South Sudan declared its intention to contribute troops to the RIF and land for its headquarters in Yambio, the Ugandan government announced its choice of the commander-in-chief of the RIF, and CAR designated officers to the joint force. Congolese officials also reportedly said they would support some cross-border operations into Congo by the RIF, but said that the modalities for such operations would need to be worked out in advance and be “well-defined, justified, and targeted.”

However, tangible progress in improving collaboration and operationalizing the RIF remains slow and the AU faces myriad challenges ahead. Madeira has yet to prove he has the stature to gain the ear of regional leaders, and the AU must still find funding for its ambitious plans. It also has yet to finalize and approve proposals for how the RIF will function, including how command and control structures will operate, what troops will comprise the force, and how it will ensure accountability for the behavior of participating regional forces. Such efforts are crucial for ensuring that participating military forces improve civilian protection in LRA-affected areas and that national governments consistently place a high priority on ending the conflict.

As it addresses these challenges, the AU and regional leaders must also consider the possibility of deploying troops from outside the four affected countries to assist the RIF’s counter-LRA operations. As of yet, no other African country has demonstrated an appetite for deploying its forces into such a volatile operating environment. The AU, bogged down in its existing initiatives, has not seriously considered the option and the four affected governments would likely be resistant, at least at first. However, no formal “command estimate” to identify the number of troops needed to effectively execute operations to apprehend LRA leaders and protect civilians has been conduct-
ed. This is a critical need should political space open up.32

Recommendations

Securing greater cooperation and prioritization of the crisis from the leaders of CAR, Congo, South Sudan and Uganda is a foundational step needed for counter-LRA efforts to succeed, and should be a core goal of the broader U.S. diplomatic strategy in central and east Africa.

Success in improving regional counter-LRA cooperation can also help achieve broader U.S. diplomatic goals. It can help protect the Obama Administration’s substantial investments in stabilizing Congo and South Sudan, demonstrate the President’s commitment to preventing atrocities, and help set a precedent of collaboration in solving cross-border crises in a region where such examples are all too rare.

To reforge regional cooperation in 2012, President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and other senior U.S. officials should:

Directly engage with senior Congolese officials to immediately allow Ugandan forces conditioned access to areas affected by the LRA;

Work with the AU and regional governments to develop a transparent review process of Uganda’s counter-LRA deployments that holds host countries responsible for allowing Ugandan forces access to LRA-affected areas for defined, renewable periods and holds Uganda responsible for not leaving civilians vulnerable to LRA attacks by suddenly withdrawing forces from the theater;

Utilize the new Great Lakes Special Adviser Ambassador Barrie Walkley to consistently reinforce the importance of improving counter-LRA collaboration with regional governments;

Increase State Department staff positions dedicated solely to implementing the U.S. LRA strategy and maintaining those positions until LRA violence is permanently ended;

Support AU envoy Francisco Madeira by developing a common diplomatic strategy and convening the heads of state of affected countries to increase their prioritization of counter-LRA efforts;

Work with the AU to complete a credible command estimate of forces needed to apprehend senior LRA leaders and protect civilians while exploring the possibility of deploying complementary African forces to the tri-border region with the RIF.

31 The EU is unwilling to directly fund military operations because they are offensive in nature. The EU also questions the AU’s ability to ensure accountability for possible abuses committed by troops under the RIF umbrella. It is also concerned that the AU, whose experience is primarily in classic peacekeeping operations, will have difficulty designing an intervention appropriate for the type of counter-insurgency operations necessary to defeat the LRA. EU official, Resolve interview, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, August 4, 2011.

32 The necessity of such a command estimate was a core recommendation in a World Bank-funded diagnostic study that assessed the conflict and regional and international responses. “Diagnostic study of the Lord’s Resistance Army,” World Bank.
Does Uganda have ulterior motives for its counter-LRA deployment?

Many communities and government officials in the tri-border region fear that Uganda may be directly benefiting from its counter-LRA deployment and therefore unnecessarily prolonging its operations. Indeed, even a low-intensity commitment to counter-LRA operations brings significant political benefits for Museveni. As with the Ugandan deployment to AMISOM, Uganda’s alliance with the U.S. on counter-LRA operations decreases U.S. leverage to pressure Museveni to reduce corruption, open up political space, and respect human rights at home. It also gives Ugandan troops the benefit of training provided by U.S. advisers deployed to the region.

However, contrary to some local suspicions, Uganda is likely not profiting directly from U.S. assistance. U.S. assistance, roughly $1.5 million per month, is spent on logistical services provided by outside contractors instead of direct financial aid that Ugandan officers could easily siphon off. The Ugandan government spends a considerable amount of its own funds to cover the salaries and other costs of its forces that are deployed for counter-LRA operations. Some local communities and government officials allege that Ugandan forces are exploiting valuable teak and other timber, most often along the road between the towns of Obo and Bambouti in CAR, near the border with South Sudan.

The Ugandans have allegedly refused to allow local South Sudanese authorities to inspect passing supply trucks, which officials suspect of carrying timber on the return journey from bases in CAR to the Ugandans’ primary logistics base in Nzara, South Sudan. Other Ugandan trucks traveling this route stop along the way to pick up petty traders and their goods. Prices range from $30 to $80, depending on the length of the trip and the weight of goods the trader carries. Ugandan trucks reportedly carry traders as far north as Wau in South Sudan’s Western Bahr el Ghazal State to conduct business. Many traders and communities appreciate the service, as the insecure and degraded road makes traveling with the Ugandans the only way to move goods across the border. However, they feel that the fees are exorbitantly high and constitute a “business” that distracts troops from their mission.

The Ugandan military maintains that though its own trucks carry traders, they do not charge them fees. They acknowledge that private trucks contracted by the military to bring supplies do charge fees, but maintain that they cannot control this. Even if so, the distinction between the Ugandan military and Ugandan contractors is not recognized within local communities.

The anecdotal evidence available indicates that any exploitation of timber and trade routes by Ugandan troops is not systematic or profitable enough to provide Ugandan commanders with a raison d’être for the military’s deployment. However, these allegations, especially those involving timber exploitation in southeast CAR, are deeply troubling and warrant immediate investigation.

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1. Such concerns were repeatedly raised in Resolve interviews with local community leaders and authorities in Mboki and Obo in CAR, Dungu in Congo, and Yambio and Tambura in South Sudan between June and August 2011.
2. Civil society leaders, Resolve interviews, Tambura, South Sudan, June 18, 2011; Obo, CAR, August 11, 2011; Source Yubu, South Sudan, June 18, 2011; and Bambouli, CAR, June 20, 2011.
3. Local government official, Resolve interview, Tambura, June 17, 2011.
4. Civil society leaders, Resolve interviews, Tambura, June 18, 2011; Obo, August 11, 2011; and Mboki, August 12, 2011.
5. Ugandan military officer, Resolve interview, Obo, August 12, 2011.

B. Coordinated surge: U.S. and Ugandan collaboration to reduce the LRA threat

As President Obama seeks to address Uganda-Congo tensions and support the African Union’s LRA initiative, he should also capitalize on the political momentum generated by the U.S. adviser deployment to work with Uganda on a surge in efforts to apprehend LRA commanders and better protect civilians. The U.S. provided support to the Ugandan military at the launch of Operation Lightning Thunder, and continues to provide significant intelligence aid and approximately $1.5 million per month primarily for fuel and contracted helicopters. Augmenting this support with a few additional measures can dramatically enhance the Ugandans’ prospects for success.

33. The U.S. has disbursed over $40 million in such support to the Ugandan military since December 2008 through the State Department’s Peacekeeping (PKO) account. However, the PKO account is overstretched by other priorities, such as support for the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and funding for Uganda’s counter-LRA initiative may be limited in the coming months. U.S. diplomat, Resolve interview, Washington, DC, November 3, 2011.
A surge by the Ugandan military is not without risks. Operations could provoke widespread reprisal attacks against civilians, as occurred immediately following Operation Lightning Thunder. Even so, the Ugandan military plays an essential role in protecting civilians in areas where it is deployed, and its withdrawal would place civilians at greater risk of LRA attacks and allow the rebel group to rebuild. Moreover, in the short-term, the Ugandan military remains the best option available for apprehending Kony and other top commanders. In the absence of visible prospects for a negotiated agreement, apprehending these commanders can deliver a decisive blow to the rebel group’s cohesion and play a crucial role in broader civilian protection efforts.\\n
An effective surge will require convincing Ugandan President Museveni to dedicate more of his own troops and resources to the regional effort, as well as substantial new U.S. investments in mobility and intelligence-gathering capabilities. Uganda must also improve strained relations with local communities by embracing civilian protection strategies and holding personnel who have committed abuses accountable for their actions.

1. **Uganda’s uncertain drive to defeat the LRA**

In December 2008 President Museveni envisioned a quick and decisive victory over the LRA that would bring several key security and political benefits: negating a serious threat to Uganda’s national security, increasing his popularity in northern Uganda in advance of the 2011 national elections, and reinforcing Uganda’s strategic regional security alliance with the U.S. Uganda initially maintained as many as 4,500 Ugandan troops in counter-LRA operations, even after the catastrophic failure of the operation’s initial bombardment. In 2009, Ugandan troops, working with Congolese forces and the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo (MONUSCO), conducted targeted operations that forced the surrender of senior commander Charles Arop and many combatants in his group. In early 2010, Ugandan forces also killed Bok Abudema (Kony’s third in command) in southeast CAR.

However, Uganda’s commitment diminished as it achieved its core security goals, as well as when the political benefits of defeating the rebel group faded and the difficulty of tracking LRA commanders increased. The Ugandans’ early surge of operations decimated the LRA’s capacity to seriously threaten Uganda’s borders, achieving the first

of Museveni’s core goals. Simultaneously, defeating the LRA became less politically potent at home as northern Ugandans’ priorities shifted from security to post-conflict recovery. Regardless, as Museveni’s popularity grew increasingly tenuous in the run-up to the February 2011 presidential elections, he began to rely more on strong-arm tactics than popularity to win re-election. He even withdrew troops dedicated to counter-LRA operations back to Uganda in anticipation of possible unrest at home.

In addition, since 2008 priorities in the Uganda-US regional security alliance have shifted more decisively to Somalia. Uganda has deployed 6,000 troops and promised as many as 2,000 more as part of the AU Mission in Somalia’s (AMISOM) efforts to defeat al-Shabab. Al-Shabab poses a far more dangerous threat to Ugandan and U.S. national security interests than the LRA, especially following the July 2010 bombings in Kampala, Uganda, that killed 74 people, including one American. Uganda prizes the significant material and training resources the U.S. provides to Ugandan forces in AMISOM. U.S. reliance on Uganda in Somalia also reinforces the regional security lens through which the U.S. primarily sees bilateral relations with Uganda, diverting attention from Museveni’s troubling domestic record of relying on patronage to mollify supporters and violent crackdowns to suppress the opposition.

As Uganda’s commitment to counter-LRA operations has waned, it has steadily withdrawn troops from the tri-border region. It currently has approximately 1,500 troops in the field, one-third of the original force. This withdrawal has contributed to diminishing success in the field, and since Abudema’s death the Ugandan military has not captured or killed any core LRA commanders. The reduced intensity of operations not only allows these commanders to survive, but also gives the LRA an opportunity to integrate Zande abductees into command positions and strengthen the organization’s prospects for long-term survival in the region.

2. **Uneasy civil-military relations**

Like President Museveni, many local communities in the tri-border region hoped that the Ugandan military could quickly and decisively defeat the LRA. Many welcomed the Ugandans when they first deployed, and continue to appreciate the Ugandans’ efforts, especially in towns where their deployments improve local security. But the Ugandans’ lack of success in capturing or killing LRA commanders over the past two years has eroded trust and provoked concern that they are no longer actively pursuing LRA commanders. Such concerns have been

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34 For more on how offensive operations targeting critical vulnerabilities of rebel groups—for example, the LRA’s concentrated command structure—can improve civilian protection efforts, see Max Kelly, “Protecting Civilians: Proposed Principles for Military Operations,” Stimson Center, Spring 2010.

35 Even though it lacks the capacity to pose a serious threat to President Museveni’s regime, the LRA could still retain the capability to send a small team to northern Uganda to commit attacks, which could have humanitarian consequences.

exacerbated by perceptions that some Ugandan personnel are profiting from their deployments.

The Ugandans’ reintegration of former LRA fighters into military units deployed in LRA-affected areas also causes mistrust. Some communities believe the Ugandan military is not defeating the LRA because it is actually cooperating with the rebel group, and no longer draw a clear distinction between the LRA and the Ugandan military. This is especially true in southeast CAR, where some people refer to the two forces generically as “the Ugandans.”

The deployment of former LRA commanders within Ugandan military units can also cause trauma for escaped LRA abductees who may still fear their former persecutors. Ugandan soldiers have largely refrained from committing human rights abuses against host communities, partly due to conditions placed on U.S. military assistance. However, there have been isolated incidents of violence against civilians, including murder, though Uganda’s efforts to hold perpetrators accountable have partially mitigated tension with communities. Other abuses include Ugandan soldiers’ sexual relations with local women, often from poor and vulnerable populations such as refugees, in towns like Obo and Nzara where they have bases. These often exploitative or abusive relations cause tensions with local communities, spark violence between soldiers, and could be linked to rising rates of HIV in southeast CAR. Such incidents tend to increase when soldiers are deployed in specific towns for extended periods, and could increase if Ugandan operations continue to stall and are further prolonged.

Many Ugandan military commanders are aware of these issues, and some are proactive about engaging with local leaders. Ugandan troops also build trust by providing some free medical, transport, and even construction services in towns where they have bases. However, such outreach is often sporadic and hampered by the scarcity of Ugandan officers and soldiers who speak French or local languages such as Lingala, Pazande, and Fulani.

Uganda’s reluctance to integrate civilian protection into its mandate has also strained relations with local communities. Ugandan commanders insist that their mandate and limited capacity necessitate a narrow focus on pursuit operations targeting LRA commanders. However, national militaries and UN peacekeepers in the tri-border region lack the capacity to comprehensively protect civilians from reprisal attacks by the LRA, which were especially frequent in 2008 and 2009. Ugandan forces provide de facto protection in major towns and along roads, which communities in those areas appreciate, but they must do a better job of incorporating civilian protection into operational planning while maintaining capacity to carry out their core pursuit function.

3. Lack of intelligence and mobility

Uneasy relations between the Ugandan military and local communities have a significant impact on the Ugandans’ operational effectiveness. Military planners often rely on local hunters, community self-defense groups, and Mbororo herders in the region for information on LRA activity and movements. Community members are often proactive about sharing information with the Ugandans, but frustration with their ineffectiveness against the LRA and concerns about their motives is making some civilians less willing to share information. In isolated cases, members of frustrated communities in southeastern CAR such as Zemio have even blocked Ugandans’ passage through their towns or informed them that their deployments were not welcome.

The Ugandan military can ill afford such tensions, as existing intelligence and mobility constraints already limit their operational capacity. Though it is the best-equipped military in the region, it has limited rapid response capacity and intelligence gathering networks in LRA-affected areas.
areas. It has no tactical troop transport helicopters, limiting its active pursuit operations and its ability to send out patrols to track reported LRA forces or to scout places such as river crossings where LRA groups are likely to travel. Ugandan units that do get sent on patrols often lack communications equipment for remaining in contact with their commanders.

Uganda’s few helicopters deployed in the tri-border region are used primarily for ferrying commanders and supplies between bases, and even for “rescuing” Ugandan supply trucks that break down on the badly degraded road between its bases in South Sudan and CAR. The Ugandan military has more military helicopters based in Uganda, but does not prioritize counter-LRA operations enough to absorb the high costs of deploying them to CAR or South Sudan.

The Ugandan military’s lack of intelligence on the location, activities, and plans of LRA commanders also makes protecting civilians and pursuing LRA commanders difficult. The LRA can operate undetected because the tri-border region, especially in southeast CAR, is lightly populated and LRA attacks have forced many people into the relative safety of towns, depriving military forces of information gathered by civilians who encounter the group. LRA groups rarely set up permanent camps, are adept at evading pursuing military forces, and can walk dozens of kilometers per day. Regional forces gather much information about LRA movements and internal workings from low-level LRA escapees, but these escapees are deliberately isolated from knowledge of the LRA’s future plans and are often traumatized and disoriented from their time in captivity. Mid-ranking Ugandan LRA members have more valuable information, but few have escaped or been captured in the past two years.

The U.S. has taken some steps to fill intelligence gaps. It finances aerial surveillance flights, which use infrared and other technologies to search for signs of LRA activity. However, flights cover only a tiny portion of LRA-affected territory and planes cannot fly at night, limiting the utility of infrared sensors. Unmanned reconnaissance vehicles could be more flexible and useful in collecting intelligence, but the U.S. does not currently have any deployed to LRA-affected areas.

U.S. military advisers have also set up an intelligence fusion cell in the southeastern CAR town of Obo with CAR and Ugandan forces, greatly decreasing the lag time between the collection of aerial intelligence and its transmission to military planners. The cell also attempts to facilitate information sharing with civilian actors, and a similar structure is planned in Nzara, South Sudan. These cells, along with the JIOC structure in Dungu, provide a cross-border framework for regional militaries to analyze intelligence and coordinate operations that the AU’s RIF should build upon.

In November 2011, the Obama Administration said that it planned to work with Congress to expand its Rewards for Justice Program, in which the Secretary of State publicizes and pays rewards for information that leads to the apprehension of war criminals, to include top LRA commanders. If Congress amends the relevant legislation, it could generate better intelligence on the locations of LRA commanders from local communities and help target apprehension operations. It could also drive a wedge between senior and mid-level LRA commanders and encourage the latter to defect and provide information about the location of their superiors. It is critical that the Administration and Congress work together to pass this expansion as quickly as possible.

Recommendations

In the absence of viable prospects for a negotiated settlement, the U.S. should take advantage of the current window of political opportunity generated by the deployment of the military advisers to assist the Ugandan military in a surge to apprehend LRA commanders and protect civilians. This will require the Obama Administration to succeed in refocusing Uganda’s commitment to decisively defeating the LRA, and will also require increased U.S. intelligence and aerial mobility support.

To help provide logistical and intelligence support, the Administration should utilize an authorization of $35 million included in the 2012 defense authorization bill to support counter-LRA operations by regional military forces. Such support should be used to improve not only offensive apprehension operations, but also to enhance protection of civilians. Its provision should also be conditioned on the Ugandan military respecting human rights and refraining from natural resource exploitation in LRA-affected areas.

In 2012, President Obama should work with the African Union and international partners to:

Address gaps in Ugandan apprehension operations

Encourage Uganda to dedicate more troops and more helicopters to counter-LRA operations, and work with the AU to prevent any sudden withdrawal of troops that leaves civilians at greater risk of LRA attack;

Fund the deployment of tactical troop transport helicopters

[48] Former abductees told Resolve that LRA leaders take precautionary measures to prevent detection by regional forces, such as prohibiting fires or glinting objects, which might give their positions away. Former LRA abductees, Resolve interviews, Yambio, August 27-28, 2011.
[49] The planes carrying out the missions are based in Entebbe, Uganda, meaning most of their flight time is spent flying to and from, and not over, LRA-affected areas. Resolve interview, Entebbe, August 21, 2011.
cers and improved communications equipment in order to allow Ugandan forces to rapidly deploy operations to apprehend senior LRA commanders and protect civilians from LRA attacks;

Encourage the Ugandan military to partner with host military forces, where possible, to conduct targeted, joint operations aimed at capturing or forcing the defection of specific LRA commanders, using the Charles Arop operation in 2009 as an example;

Expand aerial surveillance flights, including night sorties, consider deploying unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicles, and expand the use of phone intercepts as appropriate;

Work with Congress to expand the Rewards for Justice Program to allow the Secretary of State to reward individuals for sharing information on the locations of senior LRA commanders.

Integrate civilian protection into Ugandan operations

Ensure U.S. military advisers and Ugandan commanders share information with local civilian early-warning networks, including through intelligence fusion cells;

Encourage Uganda to deploy troops in towns that are near pursuit operations and at risk of LRA reprisal attacks;

Encourage the Ugandan military to expand its translation capacity in French, Pazande, Lingala, and Fulani;

Encourage the AU to deploy civilian protection experts to the field to advise RIF forces and to develop operational guidelines on accountability and civilian protection for the RIF.

Improve accountability for Ugandan troops

Task U.S. military advisers to monitor the human rights behavior of the Ugandan military;

Ensure Uganda investigates reports of human rights abuses and illegal resource exploitation and holds perpetrators accountable by reemphasizing the human rights conditions placed on U.S. military support;

Task U.S. military advisers to work with the Ugandan military to engage with local communities to improve civil-military relations and establish clear mechanisms for communities to safely raise concerns.

C. Low hanging fruit: The case for investing in early warning and DDR

The deployment of U.S. advisers and improved military and intelligence operations cannot succeed in forcing all LRA combatants from the battlefield or protecting all civilians from rebel attacks. Civilian early warning systems and DDR initiatives can be highly effective methods of mitigating the consequences of LRA attacks and actively reducing the group’s fighting capacity. They are cost-effective and give affected communities an opportunity to proactively respond to the crisis and protect their families.

Recognizing this potential, President Obama prioritized early warning and DDR priorities in his November 2010 LRA strategy. Since 2010 the U.S. has significantly scaled up support for early warning systems, funding high-frequency (HF) radio and mobile phone networks in northern Congo, and rehabilitating roads in the tri-border region.\(^\text{51}\) It is also supporting community-led preparedness plans to help vulnerable civilians in Congo respond to LRA attacks.

Implementation of DDR initiatives has been slower. The U.S. funds reintegration assistance for former LRA abductees in CAR and Congo and also helped secure language in the November 2011 UN Security Council statement encouraging MONUSCO’s cross-border DDR strategy. However, increased U.S. funding and diplomatic engagement with regional governments is needed to make such initiatives more of a priority in 2012.

1. Growing pains: Civilian early warning systems

As LRA attacks in CAR, Congo, and South Sudan intensified in 2008 and 2009, informal local early warning systems sprang up, including self-defense groups and simple word-of-mouth. A cross-border network of HF radios operated by the Catholic Church (particularly in Congo), other religious groups, hospitals, and local businessmen also facilitated the sharing of security information. HF radios are cheap, and their signals travel hundreds of kilometers for other users to pick up. However, only several dozen communities across the region had operating systems, and LRA raiders stole or destroyed others.\(^\text{52}\)

Since 2010, the U.S. and other international actors have tried to augment these informal mechanisms. USAID plans to expand mobile phone service in four towns in northern Congo.\(^\text{53}\) USAID has also funded road rehabilitation projects in LRA-affected areas of Congo and South Sudan, which helps improve information flows to and from remote towns.\(^\text{54}\) The Catholic Church network is also improving contact with remote communities by expanding HF radio distribution. In one project, dozens of remote communities with HF radios check in with the regional hub in Dungu twice daily. This improves centralized infor-

\(^{51}\) See Appendix C for more on coverage of mobile phone, FM radio “come home messaging,” and HF radio networks.

\(^{52}\) For example, during the 2008 Christmas Massacres, the LRA specifically targeted a park station in Nagero, Congo, destroying communications equipment and killing the radio operator and electrician. “The Christmas Massacres,” Human Rights Watch, February 2009.

\(^{53}\) The towns are Bangadi, Niangara, and Doruma in Haut Uele district, and Ango in Bas Uele district. The project also plans to distribute mobile phones and help communities develop preparedness plans.

\(^{54}\) In addition to these efforts, the U.S. embassy in Bangui has helped form a working group to improve information sharing and attention to the LRA crisis in southeast CAR.
The Resolve Crisis Tracker project (lracrisistracker.com) is a joint initiative of Resolve and Invisible Children that tracks LRA activity in the tri-border region and publicizes information via an online map and periodic analysis briefs. Invisible Children also funds efforts by the Catholic Church to expand its HF radio network in northern Congo.

56 MONUSCO facilitated several dozen surrenders during this period in tandem with Congolese community leaders, who were willing to act in part because the LRA was openly trading goods with some locals and only infrequently attacking civilians.


58 Former LRA abductees, Resolve interviews, Ango, Congo, July 7, 2011; and Yambio, August 29, 2011.
Despite their promise, using radio programming effectively is challenging. Current programs cover only one-fifth of LRA-affected areas, and many existing operators and stations are desperate in need of funds and training. Some local community members remain suspicious of “come home” programs broadcast in the unfamiliar native tongue of Ugandan LRA members, Luo, fearing that such messages could inform LRA groups where to attack vulnerable communities. MONUSCO and civil society groups have taken steps to support new radio stations, train radio operators, and ensure they are broadcasting appropriate programs, but such efforts remain underfunded and limited in scope.

MONUSCO has also spearheaded the development of leaflets encouraging defections, which military forces distribute along trails, water sources, and favorite LRA camp spots. In late 2011, MONUSCO and the Congolese military also began experimenting with establishing rendezvous points in northern Congo where LRA combatants could surrender safely directly to military forces, publicizing the meeting points over radio and in leaflets.

Direct outreach to senior LRA commanders is another potentially effective way to encourage defections. However, since Joseph Kony and other senior and mid-level Acholi commanders severed their satellite phone contact with northern Ugandan civil society leaders in late 2008, they have had no known communication with possible mediators. Some civil society leaders have called for renewed contact between the Ugandan government and the LRA, but attempts to initiate this contact have not succeeded. Ugandan officials publicly state that LRA commanders are free to surrender, but neither Uganda nor international donors have an appetite for renewing a formal negotiations process like the 2006-2008 Juba talks. Attempting to contact LRA commanders via the Sudanese government or Sudanese military forces in South Darfur who met with LRA commanders in 2009 could be an opportunity to encourage defections. They might be especially useful in convincing Caesar Achellam, who expressed interest in defecting during the Juba peace talks and who has met with Sudanese armed forces in the past.

3. Peril at every turn for Ugandan LRA escapees

Ugandan LRA combatants who escape face uncertain futures. No concrete legal framework exists for deciding whether those accused of atrocities in the tri-border region should be prosecuted in host countries or returned to Uganda. In most cases, they are quickly returned to Uganda. However, in early 2011 Congolese authorities almost prosecuted two escaped Ugandan LRA commanders in their custody for alleged crimes against Congolese civilians, a move that could have greatly reduced remaining combatants’ willingness to defect. They were eventually transferred to Uganda, but such incidents highlight the legal uncertainty Ugandan combatants face when they escape. It also highlights the tension between affected communities’ desire for justice, and the potential for DDR and amnesty efforts to help bring an end to LRA violence.

Returning to Uganda does not always bring relief from years spent in the LRA. In recent years, Uganda’s Amnesty Commission has lacked the funding to distribute material reintegration packages, and has failed to issue amnesty certificates to dozens of former combatants. In some cases, Ugandan authorities have used the absence of amnesty certificates to pressure ex-combatants to join the Ugandan military and return to the tri-border region and fight the LRA, sometimes with little training and no salaries. Uganda’s conscription of ex-combatants and failure to provide them with amnesty certificates violates their rights and creates disincentives for further defections. Furthermore, the Amnest Act, which has been renewed and amended several times since 2000, is scheduled to expire in May 2012.

LRA commanders in the bush who wish to defect are almost certainly aware of – and discouraged by – Uganda’s treatment of Thomas Kwoyelo, an LRA commander who left the group in March 2009. He applied for amnesty, but the government decided to prosecute him before the International Crimes Division of the Ugandan High Court. Kwoyelo’s prosecution differed starkly from the amnesty granted to Charles Arop, an LRA commander who also returned in 2009, despite the lack of legal basis to distinguish their cases. In September 2011 Uganda’s Constitutional Court ruled that denying Kwoyelo amnesty was unconstitutional, but even though a series of appeals by government lawyers to prevent his release were denied, he remains in custody.

4. Long journey home for local abductees

Central African, Congolese, and South Sudanese civilians who escape from the LRA also face significant difficulties.
in rebuilding their lives. UNICEF, with assistance from other civilian agencies and local governments, coordinates cross-border efforts to provide child escapees with interim medical and psychosocial care and return them to their communities. In mid-2011 UNICEF and the Ugandan military, which often is the first actor to receive escaped children and sporadically transports escaped children to their homes, agreed to standard operating procedures to facilitate a more rapid handover of children and vulnerable women to civilian actors.

Mechanisms for returning adult civilians who escape from the LRA are less developed. MONUSCO facilitates the repatriation of Central African and South Sudanese adults who escape the LRA in Congo, but Congolese adult escapees must often find their way home with no assistance. The Congolese military often keeps LRA escapees in custody in poor conditions for extended periods. In South Sudan, foreign adult escapees are sometimes taken in by local community groups, but some have spent weeks in local jails. The South Sudanese government is reportedly taking steps to allow domestic returnees to benefit from the national DDR commission.

Central African adults trying to return home face a more precarious situation because of poor coordination in CAR. Those who escape in Congo or South Sudan are often routed through CAR's capital, Bangui, hundreds of miles away, instead of being returned directly home. One Central African man interviewed by Resolve who escaped the LRA in northern Congo in 2009 was initially jailed upon returning to Bangui and then spent months in the capital until he found transport home, only to find that his son had died and his wife had remarried since his abduction. At least one adult escapee still languished in a Bangui jail as late as January 2012. MONUSCO is currently working with the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR (BINUCA), which recently appointed an LRA focal point, to improve coordination mechanisms.

Once home, LRA escapees continue to face grave challenges in rebuilding their lives, including social stigma. Some communities have formed local “victim’s associations” or other community groups that assist former abductees and other survivors. In Banda, Congo, one such community group has provided dozens of child escapees with medical and food support and helped them trace their families using a local HF radio. However, such groups are under resourced and in need of capacity building, especially to provide psychosocial services.

International reintegration assistance has been sporadic, especially programs providing long-term medical, psychosocial, and vocational aid. In CAR, U.S. and other donors fund programs providing limited medical and psychosocial care for escapees and support to local victim’s associations in several major towns. In South Sudan, the new child rehabilitation center in Yambio has improved care for recent escapees, but lacks capacity to provide long-term psychosocial and livelihood support. In Congo, UNICEF-funded mobile teams work with victim's associations and other local groups to provide limited psychosocial assistance, and international aid groups are teaming up with the Catholic Church to construct a rehabilitation center for child escapees. However, no support is available for the thousands of Congolese adults who have escaped the LRA.

Recommendations

Expanding on existing early warning and DDR initiatives will require U.S. officials to do a better job of rebalancing the current disparity of resources dedicated to military and civilian responses. President Obama should work with international donors to dedicate at least $20 million in new funds to civilian early warning, DDR, and telecommunications and road projects in 2012. He should direct senior USAID officials in particular to devise a “spend plan” to ensure USAID takes advantage of the Congressional mandate given in the FY2012 foreign affairs budget to dedicate $10 million to such projects.

President Obama should also use some of the $35 million authorized for counter-LRA efforts in the 2012 defense authorization bill for telecommunications and road projects that have crosscutting benefits for both military and civilian aspects of his LRA strategy. In addition to increased funding, President Obama should work with the UN, donors, regional governments, and civil society in 2012 to:

Support a regional early warning network that expands on existing information collection and analysis mechanisms and seeks to:

- Train community-based volunteers to record reported LRA attacks and other incidents using a data collection template consistent across the region,
- Establish civilian early warning centers in all three affected countries that share information about LRA activity on a daily or weekly basis,

67 This is based on the UN’s 2009 Operational Plan for Cross Border Repatriation, Care and Reunification of Children escaped or rescued from the LRA.

68 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Yambio, June 16, 2011.


70 Former abductee, Resolve interview, Zemio, August 9, 2011.


72 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Banda, July 11, 2011.

73 Experience in northern Uganda shows that assistance should also target non-abducted persons in LRA-affected communities, who often face similar challenges, to prevent resentment towards former abductees.
• Develop expertise in regional centers to analyze LRA activity data specifically for early warning purposes,
• Relay relevant information and analysis about LRA activity from regional centers to local communities,
• Help communities develop preparedness plans that include appropriate mechanisms to respond to LRA threats as well as clear expectations within communities for how regional militaries, local authorities, UN peacekeepers, and humanitarian groups will respond to reported LRA attacks.

Expand pilot mobile phone and HF radio projects, prioritizing towns that serve as regional hubs or that are in areas heavily trafficked by LRA groups. Towns targeted for mobile phone expansion should include: Djemah and Zemio in CAR, and Ango, Doruma, and Ngilima in Congo;

Rehabilitate key road arteries, prioritizing cross-border routes (Obo – Source Yubu; Dungu – Yambio) and roads in areas of heightened LRA activity (Zemio – Djemah; Dungu – Ngilima – Bangadi – Doruma).

Encourage defections from the LRA

Fund the expansion of community radio stations, prioritizing: Djemah, Obo, and Mboki in CAR, and Faradje, Banda, and Doruma in Congo, and task U.S. military advisers with expanding mobile radio capacity;

Expand “come home” programs on FM radios that contain news of recent successful LRA defections and target specific LRA groups and commanders where possible;

Sensitize local communities on the importance of safely welcoming defectors, including by getting their input into the content of “come home” radio programs;

Assist UN and regional militaries in establishing and publicizing rendezvous points where LRA combatants can surrender directly to military forces in Congo, and then replicate this model in CAR and South Sudan;

Push for a joint communiqué from the Presidents of CAR, Congo, South Sudan, and Uganda declaring that all non-indicted LRA commanders, combatants, and abductees will be granted amnesty and given reintegration support if they defect;

Solicit the assistance of the Sudanese government to encourage high-level LRA officers to defect from the group, including Caesar Achellam.

Help LRA escapees return home and receive care

Support UN-led efforts to implement its cross-border strategy to return child escapees home safely and quickly, and encourage the Ugandan military to abide by standard operating procedures agreed to with UNICEF. Other national militaries should also adopt these procedures;

Support the creation of similar regional and national strategies for adult escapees that includes standard operating procedures for regional militaries to hand over adult returnees to civilian authorities to get care rather than sending them to jail;

Increase funding for programs that provide child and adult escapees, as well as other affected community members, with consistent, long-term psychosocial, education. Child escapees should also receive vocational support;

Pressure Uganda to respect the letter and spirit of the Amnesty Act by:

• Renewing the Amnesty Act with an amendment to clarify that only ICC-indicted commanders will be prosecuted,
• Immediately releasing Thomas Kwoyelo from custody,
• Promptly releasing non-indicted LRA combatants to the Amnesty Commission and halting pressure on them to rejoin the military,
• Instituting a transparent mechanism for adult former fighters who would like to join the Ugandan military to do so voluntarily after receiving appropriate civilian care.
Part IV. Healing the wounds of war: Helping communities recover and rebuild

LRA atrocities and the marginalization and neglect that have marked the responses of regional government to the conflict for over two decades have had an acute impact on affected communities. In the tri-border area of CAR, Congo, and South Sudan, LRA atrocities have directly terrorized and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. They are also exacerbating existing communal conflicts and tensions between LRA-affected communities and their national governments. In northern Uganda, communities have been slowly rebuilding since the last LRA attack there in 2006, but the Ugandan government remains reluctant to engage in a genuine transitional justice process or to fund the reconstruction of war-torn communities. In the long-term, President Museveni’s increasingly authoritarian style of rule poses an even greater threat to hopes that a lasting peace will take root.

Over the past decade, the U.S. has played a leading role among international donors in addressing the staggering human cost of the conflict. After largely neglecting the crisis in northern Uganda in the 1990s, the U.S. has made recovery there one of its top humanitarian priorities in the region over the past 10 years. It maintains an USAID office in northern Uganda and in 2011 alone dedicated over $102 million to reconstruction, transitional justice, and reconciliation projects there. In the tri-border region, USAID increased non-food assistance from $8.3 million in 2010 to more than $13 million in 2011. It also provides significant funding for food distribution across LRA-affected areas and for humanitarian flights to LRA-affected areas.

A. Displacement crisis: Expanding emergency aid and early recovery programs

The LRA displaced over 460,000 people in the tri-border region in 2011 even though the rebel group has only a few hundred fighters and sharply reduced attacks in the latter half of the year. LRA groups are widely scattered across the region and very mobile, making it difficult for communities to predict the chances for future attacks even if the LRA has reduced activity in their area for several months. When they do occur, LRA attacks can include extreme violence and often target schools, churches, and other places of communal importance. Memories of the large-scale massacres and abductions the LRA committed in the tri-border region between 2008 and early 2010 have created a lasting impression in many communities that reinforces
their fear of returning to homes in vulnerable rural areas.

The massive displacement LRA attacks have caused in CAR, Congo, and South Sudan has primarily affected small farming communities who previously prided themselves on self-sufficiency in the midst of decades of civil conflict and neglect by national governments. LRA violence has forced many people to live in urban areas and become dependent on aid, disrupting livelihoods and straining communal bonds. Others living in remote communities face a daily Catch-22, forced to either risk LRA attacks while hunting and farming in rural areas or to subsist on inadequate humanitarian assistance delivered to nearby towns. Access to clean water, medical care, and schooling are also constant concerns for displaced people in many areas.

Aid agencies are underfunded and often unable to reach displaced populations. The UN’s humanitarian assistance requests for CAR and Congo are often underfunded, limiting food aid and medical care for even the most vulnerable populations. In addition, insecurity along major road routes and degraded roads, overgrown airstrips, and a lack of electricity limits humanitarian access to both towns and many remote communities. The LRA attacked humanitarian actors at least three times in Congo and in CAR in 2011, including the looting of a UN World Food Programme convoy near Banda, Congo in March 2011, and the murder of a government doctor near Dembia, CAR in June. Congolese soldiers, who profit from being used as escorts for humanitarian convoys along insecure roads, are also suspected of being responsible for several attacks on humanitarian actors in Congo in 2011.74

In northern Congo, humanitarian agencies have advocated for MONUSCO to redeploy troops to LRA-affected areas, open up a temporary operating base in Bas Uele district, and increase patrols along primary roads. MONUSCO forces have undertaken some short-term deployments to towns outside of their seven established bases, but have been reluctant to deploy more troops to the region or open up new bases given their limited capacity across the country in Congo’s tense post-election environment.

Recommendations

The U.S. should build on existing U.S. programs to respond to the displacement crisis in the LRA-affected areas of CAR, Congo, and South Sudan. In 2012, President Obama should:

Fund programs to increase access to clean water, health care, education, and adequate food for both displaced persons and host populations in need;

Increase funding for early recovery projects in areas where improved security allows people to return to their fields, including support for items such as seeds and farming tools;

Encourage MONUSCO to facilitate humanitarian access by increasing patrols along major roads and opening a temporary operating base in Ango in Bas Uele district.

B. The LRA ripple effect: Communal conflict in the tri-border region

Less recognized and understood than the LRA’s direct impact on civilians is how prolonged insecurity amplifies existing tensions within communities, creating a ripple effect of discord that could outlast the LRA. LRA violence has worsened relations between Zande farmers and bands of Mbororo herders scattered across the tri-border region, as well as between Zande communities and their respective national governments. It has also sparked the formation of self-defense groups across the tri-border region that play a valuable role in protecting civilians in LRA attacks but could also be a factor in communal disputes.

1. Communal conflict in LRA-affected areas

Tensions between Zande and Mbororo communities, primarily over land use, predate the LRA’s migration to the region but have been greatly exacerbated by LRA violence. Zande often accuse Mbororo herders of collaborating with the LRA because they range deep into rural areas where LRA forces also operate. In reality, Mbororo herders are often targeted by LRA groups that attack them and steal their cattle.75 Ugandan military officials dismiss claims that Mbororo herders collaborate with the rebels, noting that the Mbororo provide them with valuable intelligence on LRA movements, though Mbororo herds sometimes inadvertently trample LRA tracks.76

Tensions between the Zande and Mbororo occasionally result in inter-communal violence. In June 2011, clashes left three Mbororo and one Zande dead in Obo.77 A month later a mob broke into a jail in nearby Zemio and murdered three young Mbororo men accused of collaborating with the LRA. A “committee of the wise” drawn from community leaders has since helped reduce tensions.78 Zande self-defense groups also clashed with Mbororo herders

74 Humanitarian worker, Resolve interviews, Dungu, July 4 & 6, 2011.
75 LRA groups also reportedly hold Mbororo hostage until others return with goods from nearby towns. Former LRA abductee, Resolve interview, Yambio, August 27, 2011.
76 Some evidence that individual Mbororo have assisted the LRA in isolated attacks exists. For example, a group of Mbororo were seen with an LRA group a few days before an attack in the nearby town of Bamangana in early 2011. “LRA attack in Bamangana,” OCHA, February 27, 2011.
77 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Obo, August 10, 2011.
78 Civil society groups, Resolve interviews, Obo, August 10, 2011; Civil society and UN officials, Resolve interviews, Zemio, August 8-9, 2011.
near Tambura in South Sudan’s Western Equatoria State in December 2011, leaving at least one person dead.

The Zande’s relationships with the CAR, Congolese, and South Sudanese national governments are fraught with tension because of these governments’ failure to respond effectively to LRA violence. Regional leaders see little incentive to do so, partly because the Zande are not a core political constituency and are poorly represented in their governments. The LRA also does not pose a significant threat to their rule, as it operates in remote corners of these countries, does not exploit valuable minerals or other resources, and makes no efforts to directly control strategic towns.

Zande-dominated areas in southeast CAR have been somewhat buffered from recent civil conflicts within CAR because they are largely ignored by the different groups competing to control Banjui. But this neglect has also meant that the CAR government has done little to protect civilians from LRA violence over the past three years. With few democratic channels to pressure the CAR government to respond to LRA attacks, Zande communities have had to find other ways to express their concerns. Zande responded to the LRA’s June 2011 murder of southeastern CAR’s only doctor and the destruction of polio vaccinations by holding “silent marches” in several towns, as well as a procession with the doctor’s body in Bangui, calling for the CAR government to take action against the LRA.

Of the three governments, the Congolese government’s response to the conflict has been the most inflammatory. Officials routinely deny or minimize the LRA’s presence in northern Congo and claim that local Zande bandits and Zande LRA escapees are responsible for a majority of reported LRA attacks. These claims anger Congolese communities, and likely contributed to President Kabila’s support throughout eastern Congo has dropped since the 2006 elections, especially in heavily LRA-affected areas such as Faradje and Dungu, where it dropped by 45% and 61% respectively between the 2006 and 2011 elections. These claims anger Congolese community leaders have unsuccessfully petitioned Congolese authorities to allow groups to operate openly.

Local self-defense militias sprung up across the tri-border region following the resumption of widespread LRA atrocities in late 2008 and early 2009. In Congo, the military quickly suppressed local self-defense forces, sometimes violently. However, in 2011 self-defense groups resurfaced around several Congolese towns frequently attacked by the LRA, such as Doruma and Faradje. Some community leaders have unsuccessfully petitioned Congolese authorities to allow groups to operate openly.

Congolese military forces in Bas Uele district have particularly targeted Mbororo herders, systematically stealing hundreds of cattle, imprisoning Mbororo leaders and children, and forcing over 1,000 Mbororo to flee to CAR and South Sudan in 2010 and 2011. Efforts by the African Union to encourage the Congolese government to peacefully engage Mbororo herders, whose legal status in countries across the region is often uncertain, have had little effect.

Tensions also mark the relationship with Zande communities and the Dinka-dominated South Sudanese military forces in Western Equatoria State, dating back to clashes following the end of Sudan’s civil war in 2005. These forces are poorly trained and show little initiative in responding to reported LRA attacks. In January 2010 they responded to a local demonstration in Yambio by shooting and beating people, including many not involved in the demonstration, explicitly citing ethnic tensions as a cause for their heavy-handed response. The South Sudanese military also provoked Zande anger in early 2009 when they forcibly conscripted dozens of men from the town of Ezo and deployed them outside of Western Equatoria after giving them military training and promising they could remain with local self-defense militias to protect the area from LRA attacks.

2. Civilians on the frontlines: Local self-defense groups in the tri-border region

Local self-defense militias sprung up across the tri-border region following the resumption of widespread LRA atrocities in late 2008 and early 2009. In Congo, the military quickly suppressed local self-defense forces, sometimes violently. However, in 2011 self-defense groups resurfaced around several Congolese towns frequently attacked by the LRA, such as Doruma and Faradje. Some community leaders have unsuccessfully petitioned Congolese authorities to allow groups to operate openly.

82 Mbororo leader, Resolve interview, Mboki, August 14, 2011. For more detail on the Congolese military’s abuses against Mbororo herders, see “LRA: End Game?” International Crisis Group.


86 Zande former local self-defense force member, Resolve interview, Ezo, August 27, 2011; Zande traditional authority, Resolve interview, Yambio, August 23, 2011.

87 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Dungu, July 13, 2011.
southeast CAR, self-defense militias conduct active patrols around towns and report information to local officials and Ugandan forces. Local officials often support and even participate in these patrols. Additionally, a diverse mix of Zande, Mbororo, Chadian, and Sudanese civilians cooperates with the Mboki self-defense group.

In Western Equatoria, local self-defense groups, known as the Arrow Boys or Home Guards, are more organized and active. They are critical to civilian early warning mechanisms, gathering information about LRA activity through regular patrols along roads, around towns, and in the bush. They take advantage of relatively extensive mobile phone and road networks within South Sudan to share information about LRA activities, even organizing periodic gatherings for scattered leaders to discuss community protection techniques. They also share information with local authorities, community leaders, and military forces, including Uganda’s.

Arrow Boy groups also actively pursue LRA groups who abduct people from their communities, armed with homemade guns, bows and arrows, spears, and light machine guns that are purchased locally or recovered from the LRA. They succeeded in rescuing abductees from LRA captors at least three times in 2011, sometimes after tracking them for days in the bush. Such operations are important deterrents for LRA raiders, who seek to minimize risks, and are partly responsible for why LRA groups prefer to operate in Congo and CAR.

Arrow Boy groups are closely linked with Zande traditional authorities, who provide them with local legitimacy and keep registries of members. Groups are loosely organized along the same structure as the local government, with an overall commander for each county and captains at more local levels. Many groups also have treasurers and community advisers. Government officials, prominent businessmen, and religious leaders in Western Equatoria

88 Local self-defense force leader, Resolve interview, Yambio, August 28, 2011.

89 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Tambura, June 18, 2011; Local self-defense force leader, Resolve interview, Yambio, August 28, 2011.
are also supportive, and work with traditional leaders to mobilize communities to provide them with food, flashlights, soap, and other supplies.\(^90\)

With this support, Arrow Boys in Yambio and Tambura counties have collaborated with Zande traditional leaders to set up “safe centers” where displaced people can farm land previously inaccessible due to the threat of LRA attack. Farmers make single and multi-day trips to the centers from major towns, but the lack of schools, clean water, and medical care have so far prevented many displaced people from permanently leaving major towns.

While self-defense militias contribute greatly to protecting civilians from LRA attacks, there is a risk that they could be drawn into existing communal conflicts. The Arrow Boys, for example, risk getting pulled deeper into communal conflict between Zande and Mbororo communities, as indicated by isolated clashes already. Ambitious government officials and prominent businessmen could also seek to manipulate Arrow Boys groups for their own purposes. Though not an immediate risk, conflicts could develop between frustrated self-defense militias and national militaries if the latter continues to ignore the crisis, especially in Western Equatoria where there is an existing history of tension.

**Recommendations**

The U.S. can play a positive role in helping to mitigate the ripple effects of LRA violence by supporting programs that build the capacity of civil society and government authorities to prevent communal conflict and improve governance. In 2012, President Obama should:

_Encourage national governments to publicly acknowledge the LRA threat, build the capacity of local government institutions, and hold military forces that commit abuses against civilians accountable;_

_Fund projects that build the local civil society capacity to peacefully resolve communal conflict and advocate with government authorities to improve local civilian protection and governance;_

_Encourage the African Union’s efforts to address outstanding questions about the Mbororo’s legal status in the tri-border region and encourage regional governments to peacefully resolve communal conflicts involving Mbororo._

**C. Consolidating peace: Long-term recovery and transitional justice in northern Uganda**

Northern Uganda has undergone a profound transformation since the end of active LRA violence in 2006 and the Ugandan government’s relaxation of its disastrous policy to forcibly displace people in squalid camps to “protect” them from the LRA.\(^91\) Over 1.5 million displaced people have returned to their homes and civil society groups have taken the lead in fostering reconciliation and healing within and between communities.\(^92\) Northern Uganda’s largest city, Gulu, lies directly on the Kampala-Juba trade route, which has boosted the local economy and helped the region’s poverty rate drop from nearly 61 percent to 46 percent from 2006 to 2010.

The Ugandan government has also improved its human rights record in the North and invested more in rebuilding war-torn communities. However, it has not fully funded its flagship recovery program, the Peace, Recovery, and Development Programme (PRDP), which has been plagued by mismanagement and corruption.\(^93\) Northern Uganda remains the poorest region in the country, and local government capacity to manage the post-conflict transition, including widespread land conflicts involving people returning home, remains weak.\(^94\)

Though neither the LRA nor the Ugandan government signed the Final Peace Agreement negotiated during the Juba peace talks, the Ugandan government committed to implementing transitional justice proposals outlined in the agreement. These included traditional healing mechanisms, a special court to address war crimes, truth-telling and national reconciliation bodies, and reparations for affected communities. The Ugandan government tasked its Justice, Law, and Order Sector (JLOS), which brings together 15 government agencies, with developing a national framework for transitional justice to implement the agreement.

JLOS has little to show for its efforts nearly five years after the agreement was negotiated, however. It conducted nation-wide consultations on the framework only in mid-2011, which some northern Ugandan civil society groups criticized for lacking depth.\(^95\) Many groups also doubt that the Ugandan government will commit to any process that holds top officials and military commanders responsible for abuses committed during the two-decade conflict.\(^96\) Ironically, the government has made the most progress

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90 Civil society and religious leaders, Resolve interviews, Yambio, June 14 & 21, 2011; and Nzara, June 15, 2011.

91 In 2005, a study found that 1,000 people were dying per week in the camps due to the poor living conditions. Adam Branch, “Against Humanitarian Impunity: Rethinking Responsibility for Displacement and Disaster in Northern Uganda,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, June 1, 2008.

92 For example, see reports by the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP).


95 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Gulu, Uganda, July 28, 2011.

96 Civil society leader, Resolve interview, Gulu, Uganda, July 26 & 28, 2011.
on the element perhaps least important to northern Ugandans – setting up the International Crimes Division of the High Court, under which it attempted to prosecute Thomas Kwoyelo.

Even as they have dragged their feet on transitional justice, President Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) have relied on an increasingly authoritarian style of rule to maintain their grip on power. The 2011 national elections in Uganda, though largely peaceful, were not free and fair. They were marred by a lack of an independent electoral commission, intimidating deployments of Ugandan military forces, intimidation of independent media sources, and arbitrary arrest and harassment of opposition supporters. Election observers also noted bribery and widespread irregularities. The government crackdown on the opposition continued during post-election "walk to work" protests in which its forces killed at least nine unarmed people and arrested over 600 others. Military and police forces are often openly partisan in support of the NRM and regularly escape accountability for committing abuses against civilians.

The NRM’s failure to implement transitional justice and economic recovery programs and its reliance on authoritarian rule could threaten the durability of peace in northern Uganda. The LRA rebellion is firmly rooted in Uganda’s post-independence history of cyclic conflict that has featured deep divisions between leaders and communities in the north and south of the country and no peaceful transfers of power. People from western Uganda, including President Museveni, dominate the upper ranks of the NRM and have benefited from the current political system at the expense of those from other regions. This reinforces the patterns of marginalization and regional division that gave rise to the LRA, and could lead to similar rebellions if not addressed in the near future.

Recommendations

President Obama should build on existing initiatives to consolidate lasting peace in northern Uganda. This will require continued funding of recovery programs, but more importantly a delicate balancing of priorities among counter-LRA operations, counter-terror goals in Somalia, and the promotion of democratic, inclusive governance in Uganda. In 2012, President Obama should:

- Sustain support for economic recovery and local reconciliation initiatives in northern Uganda;
- Encourage the Ugandan government to fully fund economic recovery initiatives such as the PRDP, build local government capacity, and put in place adequate institutions to resolve land disputes;
- Encourage the Ugandan government to genuinely implement the mandate for transitional justice by:
  - Developing a national framework for transitional justice that ensures a measure of public accountability for government and military forces accused of crimes in northern Uganda, supports traditional healing and truth-telling mechanisms, and provides reparations to affected communities;
  - Expanding the depth and quality of consultation with war-affected communities on the development of the national framework for transitional justice;
- Pressure the Ugandan government to improve democratic governance by:
  - Allowing peaceful demonstrations and holding police, military, and militia forces accountable for violence committed against demonstrators and opposition supporters,
  - Urging the Ugandan government to appoint an independent electoral commission and ensure it has the resources and freedom to conduct free, fair, and transparent elections in 2016,
  - Ensuring U.S. military assistance does not support the Ugandan military or security service units that are responsible for gross human rights abuses.

100 For more on the root causes of the conflict, see “Behind the Violence: Causes, Consequences and the Search for Solutions to the War in Northern Uganda,” Refugee Law Project, February 2004.
Part V. Conclusion

The US government made significant strides in implementing President Obama’s LRA strategy in 2011, and the deployment of US military advisers provides an opportunity to reenergize counter-LRA efforts. However, Joseph Kony and senior LRA commanders remain a dire threat to peace and stability in central Africa, and have proven they can survive half-hearted regional initiatives aimed at ending the conflict. Facing a challenging domestic political context and continued discord between affected governments, President Obama’s LRA strategy runs the risk of becoming another well-intentioned but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to end the conflict.

To avoid this fate, President Obama must work with Uganda to make a decisive military push to better protect civilians and apprehend senior leaders. He must also work with regional and international partners on creating a parallel surge in civilian-led efforts to improve early warning systems, DDR, and humanitarian aid. Failure on these fronts will leave civilians at continue risk of LRA attack. However, success in finally ending the LRA threat will open up space for long-term healing and recovery in LRA-affected areas, essential to addressing the patterns of poor governance and neglect that gave rise to the LRA and prolonged its survival over the past 25 years.

Part VII. Acknowledgements

This report was written primarily by Resolve’s Director of Policy, Paul Ronan, with additional research and editing by Michael Poffenberger, Kaitlyn Scott, Megan McKenna, Becky Dale and Kenneth Transier as well as other partners, to whom we are very grateful.

We would like to thank all those who made the Resolve research trip to the region from June-September 2011 possible, including our donors large and small. We are especially grateful to the people in Uganda, Congo, South Sudan, and CAR who hosted us. Without their graciousness and support, this research and this report would never have been possible.

We would particularly like to thank the witnesses, survivors, displaced persons, civil society and religious leaders, and other members of the communities deeply affected by LRA violence we visited during this trip for sharing their experiences and opinions with us. We recognize the sensitivity of the issues and are deeply inspired by the courage and resilience of those who spoke with us in spite of the difficult circumstances they face. Resolve understands the necessity of listening to, documenting, and sharing the stories of people affected by the LRA, whose active involvement is essential for lasting peace. We hope that through this report, we can help amplify the voices of those affected by this war and effectively contribute to sustainable peace in the region.

Cover photo: Lindsay Branham of DTJ
Appendix A: 2011 LRA Attack Heat Map
Appendix B: Map of Select Mobile Phone Coverage in the Tri-Border Region
Appendix C: LRA Command Structure

Approximate total force: 300-400  
Approximate number of officers: 60-70

Top Senior Commanders:

Joseph Kony  
Major General, LRA founder and commander in chief, ICC indictee, former member of UPDA, believed to currently be operating in CAR.

Okot Odhiambo  
Brigadier, ICC indictee

Dominic Ongwen  
Brigadier, ICC indictee, believed to be orchestrator of the Makombo massacres, allegedly had little contact with Kony in past 3 years until CAR meetings in 2011. Abducted at age 10.

Nixman Oryanga (aka “Opuk”)  
Brigadier, reportedly intelligence chief before Operation Lightning Thunder, former member of UPDA

Caesar Achellam  
Brigadier, allegedly led delegation to meet with Sudanese military in South Darfur in 2009 to solicit support and supplies for the LRA, former member of UPDA

Former commanders of note:

Ochan Bunia  
Brigadier, reportedly died of malaria in the bush in September 2011, which allowed the escape of 17 women and children

Bok Abudema  
Formerly Kony’s third in command, killed by Ugandan forces in early 2010

Charles Arop  
Senior LRA commander, surrendered in 2009 along with many of his combatants after targeted military operations against him, granted amnesty

Thomas Kwoyelo  
LRA colonel, surrendered March 2009, applied for amnesty but was prosecuted in Uganda’s High Court, remains in custody

Vincent Otti  
Formerly Kony’s second in command, killed by Kony in 2007 for undermining his authority, reportedly supported peace talks, ICC indictee

Raska Lukwiya  
Formerly Kony’s third in command, killed in battle with Ugandan army in 2006, ICC indictee
Appendix D: Defying Predictions - The LRA’s History of Adaptation and Survival

The LRA’s ability to survive Ugandan-led military operations should not be a surprise. The LRA has endured decades of military operations and peace talks aimed at ending its rebellion, and defied countless predictions by regional leaders, especially Uganda’s President Museveni, of its imminent demise. Many of the core members of the LRA, including Joseph Kony and Caesar Achellam, had previous experience with northern Ugandan rebel movements such as the Ugandan Peoples’ Defense Army (UPDA) or Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) in the late 1980s. Both were dominated by Acholi members, which were targeted by Museveni’s government. However, by 1987, Museveni’s forces had defeated the HSM, just 50 miles from Kampala, and integrated much of the UPDA rebel force into the national army.

Kony formed the rebel movement that would become the LRA in 1987. In doing so, he skillfully incorporated experienced fighters from the UPDA into a spirituality-based ideology that borrowed heavily from the HSM and gave him primary power in the organization. In the 1990s, having failed to capture the imagination of most northern Ugandans, the LRA again switched gears. It began systematically abducting children to fill its ranks and allying itself with the Government of Sudan in Khartoum against the Ugandan government and South Sudanese rebel forces. Khartoum provided the LRA with extensive training in communications and military tactics, outfitted the rebel group with an arsenal of weaponry and supplies, and gave it safe haven in South Sudan. With this support, the LRA evolved from a ragtag outfit into a hardened rebel proxy force that reached its peak strength of around 3,000 fighters in the late 1990s.

Between 2002 and 2005 the LRA’s supply lines and most secure bases grew increasingly precarious as Khartoum improved relations with Uganda and negotiated peace with South Sudanese rebels. Again, the LRA showed a remarkable ability to adapt. In 2002, Khartoum allowed Uganda to launch Operation Iron Fist against LRA bases in South Sudan, but LRA commanders gathered in camps scattered, and some returned to northern Uganda to committeral attacks on undefended civilians. However, Ugandan military pressure and defections spurred by the 2000 Amnesty Act, which provided amnesty and reintegration packages to former LRA combatants, caused the LRA to migrate out of South Sudan and northern Uganda between 2005 and 2008. The LRA set up bases in neighboring Congo’s remote Garamba National Park, where it was safe from Ugandan and South Sudanese military forces and far from familiar places to which its increasingly disillusioned Ugandan fighters could escape.

In January 2006 the LRA successfully repelled an assault by the UN peacekeeping force in Congo (MONUC, renamed MONUSCO in July 2010) in which eight Guatemalan commandos died. The LRA then enjoyed nearly two years of undisturbed time to regroup as it participated in the Juba peace talks with the Ugandan government. It survived on subsistence farming in Garamba Park and humanitarian aid facilitated by the Juba peace mediators, and trained new abductees gathered through periodic raids on Congolese and Central African communities. During this time, Kony further consolidated his power over the LRA by killing Vincent Otti, a popular and influential commander, who was reportedly interested in a negotiated peace. When Uganda launched its poorly planned, US-supported Operation Lightning Thunder offensive in December 2008, the LRA reacted in much the same manner as it did after Operation Iron Fist – by scattering into small groups that successfully evaded pursuit from the Ugandan military, and launching retaliatory attacks that left over 865 civilian dead in the ensuing weeks.


103 A 2011 World Bank report estimated 2,000-3,000 fighters during this period, though it notes that some sources cite numbers as high as 10,000. “Diagnostic study of the Lord’s Resistance Army,” The World Bank.
**Appendix E: Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMISOM</td>
<td>African Union Mission in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BINUCA</td>
<td>UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration</td>
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<tr>
<td>DTJ</td>
<td>Discover the Journey</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>HF</td>
<td>High Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Holy Spirit Movement</td>
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<td>IC</td>
<td>Invisible Children</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>JIOC</td>
<td>Joint Intelligence and Operations Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>JLOS</td>
<td>Justice, Law, and Order Sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONUC</td>
<td>United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONUSCO</td>
<td>United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resistance Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>PKO</td>
<td>Peacekeeping Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRDP</td>
<td>Peace, Recovery, and Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCI-LRA</td>
<td>LRA Regional Cooperation Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIF</td>
<td>Regional Intervention Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPDA</td>
<td>Ugandan Peoples’ Defense Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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