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THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY: END GAME?

Africa Report N°182 – 17 November 2011

International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remains a deadly threat to civilians in three Central African states. After a ceasefire and negotiations for peaceful settlement of the generation-long insurgency broke down in 2008, Uganda's army botched an initial assault. In three years since, half-hearted operations have failed to stop the small, brutally effective band from killing more than 2,400 civilians, abducting more than 3,400 and causing 440,000 to flee. In 2010 President Museveni withdrew about half the troops to pursue more politically rewarding goals. Congolese mistrust hampers current operations, and an African Union (AU) initiative has been slow to start. While there is at last a chance to defeat the LRA, both robust military action and vigorous diplomacy is required. Uganda needs to take advantage of new, perhaps brief, U.S. engagement by reinvigorating the military offensive; Washington needs to press regional leaders for cooperation; above all, the AU must act promptly to live up to its responsibilities as guarantor of continental security. When it does, Uganda and the U.S. should fold their efforts into the AU initiative.

The Ugandan army's attempt in December 2008 to crush the LRA, originally an insurgency in northern Uganda but now a deadly, multinational criminal and terror band, by destroying its camps in north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) went badly wrong. Joseph Kony, the group's leader, escaped and quickly organised reprisals that left hundreds of civilians dead in the following months. The U.S.-backed Operation Lightning Thunder became a campaign of attrition, as the Ugandan army began hunting small, scattered and highly mobile groups of fighters in thick forest. It followed them into South Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR) and scored some early successes, but the operation lost steam in mid-2010, allowing the LRA to go on plundering villages and seizing hundreds of captives and new recruits in the tri-border area. As the UN Security Council agreed on 14 November 2011, this must stop.

The reasons for military failure are at root political. Museveni scaled down the operation to pursue other ventures he felt would win him greater political capital at home and abroad. Since the LRA has not been able to operate within Uganda for years and no longer endangers its security, few opposition politicians or community leaders there demand its defeat. Efforts to pursue it in the DRC are dogged by the host's refusal to cooperate and grant access to LRA-affected areas. Uganda invaded in the late 1990s, plundered DRC resources and earned President Kabila's lasting mistrust. As Congolese elections, still scheduled for late 2011, draw near, the army has demanded the Ugandans pull out and, while waiting for the official decision, forbidden them to leave camp. Most LRA senior commanders and fighters are now in the CAR but could return to the DRC at any time and, with the Ugandans restrained, find safe haven. CAR President Bozizé distrusts Uganda's army, envies its U.S. support, has ordered it to withdraw from diamond areas and could hamper operations further unless satisfied his own army is benefiting.

There is no prospect of a negotiated end to the LRA problem, given the collapse of the multi-year Juba process and the lack of any apparent interest on the part of either Museveni or, especially, Kony to go that route again after three more years of fighting. Instead, the AU, under pressure from some member states and the U.S., announced in late 2010 that it would authorise a forceful mission against the LRA and coordinate regional efforts. A year and counting, however, planning has foundered over its inability to reconcile differences with and between key member states and donors. Uganda and the three directly affected countries hoped the AU initiative would open the door to more Western funding for their armies but are little interested in political guidance or civilian programs. The U.S. wanted the European Union (EU), the AU's main donor, to share some of its burdens. However, the EU prefers the AU to act politically and is reluctant to finance the armies. Uganda resists ceding any of its military and policy freedom to the African regional body.

Frustrated with the ineffectiveness of Operation Lightning Thunder, the U.S. announced on 14 October that it would deploy about 100 troops to assist the Ugandan army – a majority to stay in Kampala, the rest to advise in the field. The move is part of a broader ramping up of its political and military engagement against the LRA. It has also offered to train more Congolese soldiers and has given equipment to the CAR army in order to win the operation

political space. The few score field advisers should be able to improve the Ugandans' performance. However, the Obama administration, a year from its own elections, is cautious about testing U.S. tolerance of another overseas military commitment. The deployment, it has made clear, will be short term.

The Ugandan army, even with U.S. advisers, is a flawed and uncertain instrument for defeating the LRA. Due to its record of abuses and failures to protect civilians, the governments and populations of the LRA-affected countries distrust it. That Kony no longer presents a direct threat to its interests leaves room for scepticism about Kampala's political will to see the military job through to the end. But the Ugandan army is also essential, because no one else is prepared to send competent combat troops to do the job. U.S. support, both military and political, is important but may be short-lived. AU money and civilian programs are helpful but cannot stop LRA violence.

Uganda, with U.S. advice and support, should, therefore, lose no time in launching a reinvigorated attack on the LRA, if possible while most of the group's senior commanders and fighters are still in the CAR and before they can return to the DRC's more restrictive operational environment. A key part of the advice the U.S. should press on the Ugandan army is the need to prioritise protecting civilians, provide access to humanitarian agencies and accept stricter accountability for its actions.

At the same time, if this new activism is to succeed, the AU must break its political deadlock and put its initiative in play. Adding the AU to the equation is vital to rally the political commitment of Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan by giving the undertaking clear continent-wide legitimacy. The central elements of the initiative should be appointment of a special envoy to smooth relations between Kinshasa and Kampala and authorisation of a multinational and multi-dimensional mission – what AU planners call the Regional Intervention Force (RIF). This will likely involve only those troop contributors presently engaged against the LRA, primarily the Ugandans, but should introduce a new, common operational and legal framework for the Ugandan and host armies and create new military structures to improve coordination between them. Once the RIF exists, their anti-LRA efforts should be placed under its umbrella.

The AU planners should work closely with the U.S. to ensure that from the start the African organisation's initiative prioritises the same principles as Washington needs to press bilaterally on the Ugandan army. Donors, particularly the EU, should meanwhile fund complementary civilian work, especially to entice LRA fighters to leave the bush. Only such a multi-dimensional approach is likely to bring peace to the tri-border area and begin the slow task of healing the physical and social wounds the long LRA nightmare has inflicted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For mustering and maintaining political will

To the African Union:

1. Appoint urgently a special envoy with a robust mandate to coordinate African and other international efforts against the LRA, including by persuading:
   a) President Museveni to commit more troops and equipment to the military operation while increasing efforts to protect civilians and rendering it more accountable; and
   b) Presidents Kabila (DRC), Bozizé (the CAR) and Kiir (South Sudan) to grant the Ugandan army access to all areas where the LRA is active for six months, reviewable after five months, and to instruct their armies to increase civilian protection.
2. Set up the special envoy's office with sufficient staff, equipment and resources to operate for at least one year.

To the Government of Uganda:

3. Demonstrate full commitment to anti-LRA efforts by accepting a multi-dimensional AU initiative, including a robustly-mandated AU special envoy; committing more troops and equipment to the military operation while rendering it more accountable; and increasing efforts to protect civilians.

To the Governments of the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan:

4. Demonstrate full commitment to anti-LRA efforts by accepting a multi-dimensional AU initiative, including a robustly-mandated special envoy; granting the Ugandan army access to all LRA-affected areas; and ensuring national armies increase efforts to protect civilians.

To the U.S. Government:

5. Support fully the launch of a multi-dimensional AU initiative, including a robustly-mandated special envoy.
6. Maintain pressure on Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan to commit fully to a multi-dimensional AU initiative, including a robustly-mandated special envoy.

7. Be prepared, along with other donors, to scale down military and development assistance if the four presidents fail to demonstrate appropriate commitment.

8. Appoint a special envoy for the Great Lakes region to work with the AU special envoy in mustering political commitment for anti-LRA efforts.

To the EU:

9. Provide funds to the AU enabling it to set up an office for the special envoy with sufficient resources to lead anti-LRA efforts for at least one year and to establish a Regional Intervention Force (RIF).

For launching an urgent military push prioritising civilian protection

To the Governments of Uganda and the U.S.:

10. Intensify promptly military operations against the LRA, prioritising:
    a) increased efforts to protect civilians;
    b) enhanced civil-military relations, including by setting up two-way channels of communication with state authorities and other local leaders, such as church leaders and customary chiefs, and, in the CAR and South Sudan, by working closely with self-defence groups;
    c) enhanced information management and coordination, including by setting up joint intelligence and operations centres with national armies in the CAR and South Sudan; and
    d) strict accountability measures, including by implementing a code of conduct, rules of engagement and investigations of alleged human rights abuses and accusations of illegal exploitation of natural resources.

To the African Union:

11. Finalise the operational and legal framework for a Regional Intervention Force (RIF) that includes the priorities set out in Recommendation 10 above, as well as the standard operating procedures used by the Ugandan army stipulating the quick transfer of women and children LRA escapees to international protection agencies.

For intensifying complementary civilian efforts

To the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the UN Peacebuilding Office in the CAR (BINUCA):

12. Coordinate a region-wide Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR) program, including by:
    a) expanding the communication campaign that encourages LRA fighters to surrender so it covers the whole tri-border region and continue it until LRA groups no longer pose a threat to civilians; and
    b) coordinating efforts of international and national NGOs and church groups in the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan to help former LRA members return home safely and reintegrate into civilian life including through job creation programs and psycho-social care.

To the U.S. Government, the EU, the UN and other donors:

13. Support development and implementation of a region-wide DDRRR program and the repair and improvement of communications and transport infrastructure in the LRA-affected area.

For planning ahead

To the AU and its international partners:

14. Draw up a clear exit strategy that foresees the RIF in operation for one year and review after eight months whether a half-year extension is needed.

15. Plan to maintain and support the RIF and DDRRR operations after Kony and his top commanders are caught or killed, until residual LRA groups no longer pose a threat to civilians.

16. Request RIF participating countries to transfer the LRA leaders against whom the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants (Kony, Odhiambo and Ongwen) to the ICC if they are captured and to hand over other LRA commanders not subject to such arrest warrants to the authorities of their country for prosecution or other appropriate accountability processes.

Nairobi/Brussels, 17 November 2011

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THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY: END GAME?

I. INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is still at large and inflicting grievous harm on civilians. It formed in the late 1980s as a rebel group claiming to fight for the rights of the Acholi community in northern Uganda against the government of Yoweri Museveni. The Ugandan army eventually forced Joseph Kony, the group's mercurial leader, and his followers into southern Sudan where they became for a time a proxy force for the Khartoum government in the Sudanese civil war. That conflict concluded with the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). A year later the LRA began negotiating with Kampala on a peaceful resolution to the Ugandan conflict. Neither side appeared fully committed, however, and the diplomatic effort collapsed in late 2008, when Kony refused to leave the bush to sign the draft agreement.

In December of that year Uganda, with U.S. intelligence support, launched an air and ground assault – Operation Lightning Thunder – on the LRA's camps in Garamba National Park, north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It was supposed to be decisive, but the initial attack failed to kill or capture Kony, and the operation has become a drawn-out campaign of attrition against an ever-moving target dispersed in the densely forested border areas of the DRC, South Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR).[1] After three more years of bitter fighting, neither side shows any interest in attempting to restart negotiations.[2]

Kony, against whom the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued an arrest warrant, now heads a causeless, but lethal and exceptionally resilient band of guerrilla fighters. Its endurance stems in large part from his leadership; he demands a mixture of strict military obedience and spiritual devotion. His fighters evade capture by staying on the move in small groups and only leaving the thick forest to raid villages for food, clothes and prisoners (many of them children).[3] By forcefully recruiting civilians to become porters, sex-slaves or fighters, the original Acholi leaders are able to maintain numbers and continue their violent existence in the bush.[4] But the impact on those who live in the region is devastating. Since 2008, the LRA has killed more than 2,400 civilians, abducted more than 3,400[5] and caused an estimated 440,000 to flee their homes in fear.[6]

The jungle terrain and lack of security forces in the border region have allowed the LRA to move with relative ease between the three countries.[7] In late 2010, the Ugandan army tracked several groups of fighters thought to be led by Kony as they crossed from south-eastern CAR into the DRC.[8] In the first half of 2011, sporadic attacks were reported in the

[1] For more background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°41, *Peace in Northern Uganda?*, 13 September 2006; Report N°124, *Northern Uganda: Seizing the Opportunity for Peace*, 26 April 2007; Briefing N°46, *Northern Uganda Peace Process: The Need to Maintain Momentum*, 14 September 2007; Report N°146, *Northern Uganda: The Road to Peace, with or without Kony*, 10 December 2008; and Report N°157, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, 28 April 2010.

[2] See Crisis Group Africa Report N°157, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, 28 April 2010, p. 14.

[3] For further explanation of the LRA's composition, control system and tactics see Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

[4] In September 2011, the Ugandan army estimated the LRA to number 210-240 fighters. "Procès-verbal de la réunion d'évaluation des opérations contre la LRA", minutes of meeting of the chiefs of staff of Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan, Kinshasa, 30 September 2011. Estimating LRA numbers is difficult because the group is widely dispersed and highly mobile. Frequent abductions, deaths and escapes mean the total is always changing. The number is also highly politicised. The DRC seeking to downplay the threat, says only 30 fighters are left. All LRA officers and an estimated two-thirds of combatants are believed to be Acholi from northern Uganda. The remainder are a mix of Congolese, Sudanese and Central African people. Crisis Group email communication, MONUSCO officer, 8 November 2011.

[5] "Fact Sheet, U.S. support to regional efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army", U.S. State Department press release, 14 October 2011.

[6] "LRA Regional Update: DRC, CAR and South Sudan: June-August 2011", UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Eastern Africa, Nairobi, 30 September 2011.

[7] The map in Appendix A shows LRA attacks in the tri-border region between January and October 2011.

[8] Crisis Group interview, Ugandan army officers, Nzara, South Sudan, 16 June 2011.

CAR,[9] while in the DRC they intensified and spiked in June.[10] In July and August, LRA activity in the DRC significantly decreased, as the Ugandan army picked up the tracks of some 150 fighters moving north west along the CAR-South Sudan border. Defectors later revealed Kony had ordered his commanders in the DRC to assemble in the CAR for a meeting. In early September, LRA attacks were reported as far north as Raja County in Western Bahr al Ghazal State, South Sudan.[11] At the end of the month the Ugandans said Kony and the other two commanders sought by the International Criminal Court, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen, were still in the CAR with the majority of their forces, while some lower-ranking leaders held their positions in the DRC.[12]

Many of the 2011 raids in DRC and the CAR have involved smaller groups of LRA fighters than in previous years, usually less than ten. The UN in the DRC has reported an increase in abductions but a reduction in killings.[13] The attackers have more often released those they abducted after using them to carry booty to a collection point in the forest. Most of those they keep are children.[14] It would be wishful thinking to interpret these trends as a sign of the LRA's disintegration or even weakening. Larger groups have also carried out successful attacks on military outposts in the CAR and the DRC, indicating the group remains potent.[15] The shift in tactics is most likely a prudent measure to avoid confrontation with the better-armed Ugandan army.

With Operation Lightning Thunder ineffective, the African Union (AU) has been consulting the four involved countries and donors since late 2010 on how it can strengthen regional efforts. It has decided to launch an "authorised mission" that includes appointing a special envoy for the LRA issue and setting up new military structures to improve coordination between the armies of Uganda and those of the three countries that unwillingly host the LRA. With these measures stuck at the planning stage, the U.S. announced on 14 October 2011 it would deploy about 100 troops to the region, including several score military advisers who would go into the field to directly assist the Ugandans pursuing the LRA.

This report analyses why Operation Lightning Thunder has not achieved its objectives and the harm the LRA is doing to communities across the region. It assesses why the AU initiative has failed to take off quickly and the implications of the stronger U.S. engagement. Finally, it recommends what Africans and other international actors should do to bring an end to the LRA at last.

[9] In the CAR, attacks were reported in May 2011 around Obo and Zemio, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture including on an NGO car between Zemio and Mboki. Attacks continued in June along the Rafai-Obo axis. Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian workers, Bangui, June 2011.

[10] From January to May 2011, the LRA made 117 attacks and killed 62 people in the DRC. In June alone OCHA estimates it made a further 53 attacks, killed 26 and kidnapped 21 around Bangadi, Ngilima and Faradje. "Rapport mensuel du Cluster Protection en Province Orientale – juin 2011", July 2011; "LRA rebels killed 26 in DR Congo in June: UN", Agence France-Presse, 6 July 2011.

[11] "Procès-verbal de la réunion d'évaluation des opérations contre la LRA", minutes of meeting of the chiefs of staff of Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan, Kinshasa, 30 September 2011.

[12] The Ugandan army estimated LRA numbers at 160-180 in the CAR and 50-60 in the DRC, ibid.

[13] Crisis Group interview, OCHA, Dungu, 3 June 2011.

[14] Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian workers, civilians, Dungu, Bangui and Mboki, June 2011.

[15] On 24 February 2011 an estimated 50 well-armed LRA fighters attacked Bamangana on the border between Haut- and Bas-Uélé Districts, DRC, and burned the Congolese army outpost, killing six of its seventeen soldiers. They took 28 prisoners, but released eighteen later the same day. "Rapport de la mission conjointe du bureau MONUSCO Dungu à Bamangana, 02 au 09 mars 2011". On 13-14 March 2011, twenty to 25 LRA attacked a gendarmerie and CAR army post at Nzako, Mbomou Prefecture. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker, Bangui, 25 June 2011.

II. A HALF-HEARTED OPERATION

Lack of political will has deprived Operation Lightning Thunder of the troops and equipment it needs to stop the LRA. Kony's band has been far away from Uganda for so long that President Museveni no longer sees it as a major threat to his core interests. In mid-2010, he withdrew about half the forces engaged in the hunt so he could pursue tasks elsewhere that he considered more politically important. Since the LRA operates in border areas far from capitals, neither the DRC, the CAR nor South Sudan regard eradicating it as a high priority. Poor cooperation, in the DRC in particular, has severely reduced the mission's impact, but after almost three years of hosting the Ugandans, all three countries increasingly mistrust their intentions.

A. DWINDLING POLITICAL DRIVE

When Uganda launched Operation Lightning Thunder, Museveni believed the political capital that Kony's death and the LRA's demise would bring him both at home and abroad was within reach. He therefore dedicated some 4,500 troops to the mission.[16] But as soon as Kony escaped into the forest and the LRA dispersed, the chances of final victory plummeted. The army took time to adapt to its new mission on unknown terrain and only began to wear down the LRA after six months. It killed and captured senior commanders in late 2009, but in the middle of the following year, with no victory in sight, Museveni ordered a significant drawdown of troops. At its smallest, the force consisted of one battalion, about 500 soldiers. Though it is now back up to about 1,500,[17] international aid workers in the CAR said commanders deployed in mid-2011 were less professional than their predecessors.[18]

The drawdown severely reduced Ugandan ability to track, engage, capture or kill LRA fighters, free abductees and protect civilians. It also undermined efforts to encourage fighters to defect. The UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo, MONUSCO) has expanded and intensified its campaign to persuade LRA members they can leave the bush safely.[19] However, less military pressure and fewer skirmishes mean fighters and their captives have less reason and fewer opportunities to escape, and desertions are down.[20] Museveni's will to invest money and men in a seemingly endless hunt with little hope of success has remained at low ebb.

This lack of commitment appears free of political consequences for Museveni, who is under little domestic pressure to finish off the LRA. Northerners have not seen an active LRA fighter since before the Juba peace talks began in 2006 and no longer regard the movement as a threat.[21] Capitalising on this, Kampala's presentation of the fight against the LRA shifted. In late 2009 and early 2010, the army regularly published the growing kill and capture count. But with little change in the numbers to celebrate subsequently, it has encouraged people to forget about the LRA. In mid-2011, Foreign Minister Oryem Henry Okello said the LRA is "not a force to be reckoned with, they are very far away … and they are no longer a threat to the people of Uganda".[22]

With little risk of censure, Museveni has been free to redeploy troops to pursue other objectives he considers more urgent. Beefing up Uganda's contribution to the African Union Mis-

[16] "Diagnostic study of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)", commissioned by the World Bank for the International Working Group on the LRA, June 2011, p. 11.

[17] Crisis Group telephone interview, EU official, 17 October 2011.

[18] Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian workers, Bangui, 25 and 29 June 2011.

[19] MONUSCO's Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR) program communicates "come home" messages to the LRA by leaflets left in the forest and radio transmissions from the Ugandan Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) in Kampala; Radio Mega in Gulu, northern Uganda; emitters in Dungu and Faradje in the DRC; Radio Zereda, a community station in Obo, CAR; and emitters at Ezo and Yambio, South Sudan. MONUSCO also has a mobile transmitter based in Dungu that is taken to villages for two weeks at a time. The messages are in Acholi, Zande, Lingala, English and French. The Congolese and Ugandan armies leave leaflets in forest areas where LRA activity is common. Crisis Group telephone interview, DDRRR officer, 31 October 2011.

[20] Crisis Group interviews, DDRRR officers, Goma and Dungu, June 2011.

[21] Rapid economic growth in some northern towns encourages the perception that the war is over. Gulu is booming. Even though Kony did not sign and the negotiations consequently collapsed in 2008, the Ugandan government promised to implement the provisions of the draft Juba accords relating to the north that were negotiated with an LRA delegation. Consistent with that promise, the government and donors have invested significant resources in reconstructing the north, in particular through the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PDRP). However, the impact of development projects has been limited by low local capacity, embezzlement at national and provincial levels and the diversion of funds for political ends particularly around the February 2011 elections. Peace and the opening up of markets in South Sudan are stronger drivers behind the growth. See Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., pp. 21-23. Crisis Group telephone interview, Ugandan academic, 10 November 2011.

[22] "LRA no longer a threat to Uganda says minister", Bernama.com, 21 June 2011.

sion in Somalia (AMISOM) presents him with an opportunity to deflect international criticism of his brutal crackdown on a series of opposition protests at home,[23] receive more military aid from Washington and gain political influence in the region. In early 2010, Uganda's share of the 6,300-strong mission was 3,400 troops.[24] In late 2011, it was 4,500 and the government has stated it still intends to boost its contribution by 3,000.[25] The U.S. is keen to support the mission against the Al-Shabaab militia in order to protect Somalia's fragile transitional government and counter the threat of terrorism and Islamist extremism in the Horn of Africa.[26] Museveni wants to benefit from increased U.S. military support, and Ugandan soldiers are willing to earn significantly more money by going to Somalia than they would at home.[27]

Ugandan casualties in Somalia and in Al-Shabaab's 11 July 2010 bombing in Kampala have given Museveni a claim to a stronger role in regional efforts to stabilise the country, including by helping end a political crisis in the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).[28] By doing so, he is consciously competing with Kenya and Ethiopia, which see turmoil in Somalia as both a major security threat and an issue on which they can make their presence felt at the regional level.

Museveni also withdrew troops from the LRA operation because he wanted sufficient manpower at home to ensure that parliamentary and presidential elections in February 2011 went his way.[29] An EU election observer mission said that he used the power of incumbency "to such an extent as to compromise severely the level playing field". Opposition parties said this included the deployment of security forces across the country to intimidate voters. Instances were reported of the army preventing journalists from recording their partisan activities.[30] With the help of such tactics, Museveni was re-elected with 68 per cent of the vote.

Finally, Museveni's decision may have been influenced by the desire to deploy more troops to Uganda's north-eastern Karamoja region.[31] An influx of small arms from neighbouring countries, South Sudan in particular, has made traditional cattle rustling there increasingly violent. Since 2001, Museveni has launched a series of largely unsuccessful attempts to forcibly disarm warriors and herders. These heavy-handed campaigns have provoked strong resistance from Karimojong warriors, local militia and self-defence groups and become an additional reason for them to keep their guns.[32] Museveni is determined to persevere because Karamoja is an issue to which voters, domestic opponents and donors pay attention. The March 2009 appointment of his wife, Janet, as state minister for Karamoja suggests he wants to keep a close eye on the region and firm control of its mineral deposits.[33]

Although fighting the LRA is not a high priority for Museveni, he needs to ensure it does not return to Uganda, which would expose his failure and have political repercussions. With some fighters active in the area of Faradje, north-eastern DRC, a little over 100km from the Ugandan border, that remains a distant but worrying possibility. Maintaining the hunt, even at half-strength, also allows Uganda to obtain additional military assistance from the U.S. Under some domestic pressure to end LRA atrocities, Washington had

[23] "Uganda unrest gathers pace despite bloody government crackdown", *The Guardian*, 29 April 2011; "Amnesty condemns government crackdown on Ugandan dissidents", Voice of America, 1 November 2011.

[24] Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., p. 17.

[25] Crisis Group email communication, AMISOM official, 15 November 2011. Burundi is the only other country to have significant numbers of troops in AMISOM, but Djibouti and Sierra Leone have said they will send some. "Djibouti adds 850 soldiers to peacekeeping force in Somalia", *The New York Times*, 2 November 2011; "Sierra Leone, Djibouti sending peacekeepers to Somalia", defpro.com, 8 November 2011.

[26] Crisis Group interview, international expert, Nairobi, 3 October 2011. AMISOM and armed groups loosely allied to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in April and May 2011 took a number of areas from Al-Shabaab control and in June killed a high-profile al-Qaeda member. "Al-Qaeda bomber Fazul Abdullah Mohammed reported killed in Somalia", *The Guardian*, 11 June 2011. For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°170, *Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support*, 21 February 2011.

[27] The U.S. has offered AMISOM a new package of military surveillance equipment worth nearly $45 million and Uganda a separate package of "military communication and engineering gadgets" worth $4.4 million. "US offers Shs120b to Amisom", *Daily Monitor*, 13 July 2011; "Uganda's latest export?", op. cit.

[28] In June 2011, Museveni hosted the TFG and its international supporters for two weeks of negotiations that produced the Kampala Accords, resolving a dispute on the TFG's mandate and resulting in a change of prime ministers.

[29] In the north, in particular, the army was on high alert to counter election-related violence. "Ugandan army prepares for general election", Demotix.com, 4 February 2011.

[30] "European Union Election Observation Mission, Final Report on the Uganda General Elections, 2011", 10 March 2011, pp. 5, 24, 27.

[31] On the campaign trail in late 2010 in Karamoja, Museveni pledged to bring in more military. "Museveni to deploy more troops in Karamoja", Wavah Broadcasting Services (WBS), 26 November 2010.

[32] See Kenneth Mkutu, "Disarmament in Karamoja, Northern Uganda: Is this a solution for localised violent inter and intra-communal conflict?", *The Round Table*, vol. 97, no. 394 (2008), pp. 99-120.

[33] "Uganda: the hidden treasures in Karamoja", *The Monitor*, 21 November 2010.

by September 2011 spent over $38 million on Operation Lightning Thunder, largely in logistics and intelligence support.[34] There is a risk this steady aid flow has made Museveni more interested in prolonging the operation than finishing the LRA.[35]

The LRA is less of a priority for the DRC than for Uganda. President Joseph Kabila has never seen its presence in north-eastern Oriental province, over 1,000km from Kinshasa, as a threat to his interests. Nor has he apparently felt responsible for the safety of vulnerable citizens, a familiar attitude in a Congolese system of governance characterised by rule for the few. Kabila's security agenda features other more worrying threats. In addition to chronic instability in the Kivus,[36] he fears Congo-Brazzaville and possibly Angola are supporting his opponents.[37] He is also preoccupied with winning a second five-year term in elections planned for November 2011.[38] The LRA's fate is not critical to this, because the elites in Oriental province are keen to keep the ruling party onside to safeguard their growing businesses.

Kinshasa and the Congolese army have consistently downplayed the danger of the LRA so as to argue there is no need to deploy troops to Haut- and Bas-Uélé Districts where it is active.[39] Those the army has sent are ill-disciplined and of low calibre. Reinforcements went in April 2011 only because the U.S. agreed to train a commando battalion (some 500 troops) and insisted it be deployed in LRA-affected zones.[40] For the Congolese government, the LRA problem is just a matter of "public order" that does not require significant military deployment.[41]

President François Bozizé of the CAR is no more committed than Kabila to ending the LRA. Its sporadic attacks in the remote, impoverished south east do not threaten his economic interests or political constituencies. These are mostly in Bangui, the capital, and his home area, the more populated and fertile north west. Like his counterpart in the DRC, he does not appear to feel a responsibility to guarantee the safety of citizens, and he has other priorities, chief among them the need to quell several home-grown rebel groups in the north and east.[42] Even if the CAR was prepared to do more, it has very limited means. The entire active army numbers about 1,500. To deal with trouble in the north in mid-2011, it withdrew some 50 of the 200 troops previously deployed in the south east.[43] The soldiers are poorly trained and equipped. They can do little to increase civilian safety, let alone fight the LRA.[44]

In South Sudan, the LRA does not feature among the newly independent state's top security priorities. Juba is more concerned with cattle-related inter-communal conflict, rebel militia activity, a still insecure and militarised North-South border and renewed war in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states

[34] The U.S. only gives the Ugandan operation assistance in kind, paying contractors for air transport and buying fuel and equipment. It does not give money directly to the army or pay soldiers' salaries. Including its support to other countries, the U.S. has since 2008 spent over $40 million on efforts to end the LRA. Crisis Group interview, U.S. State Department official, Washington DC, 30 September 2011. "Fact Sheet", op. cit.

[35] In July 2011, Ugandan Defence Minister Crispus Kiyonga told parliament of arrears in the operation, appearing to imply that "limited" American support needed to be boosted. "Govt has no money to fight LRA rebels", *New Vision*, 6 July 2011.

[36] Crisis Group Africa Report N°165, *Congo: No Stability in Kivu despite Rapprochement with Rwanda*, 16 November 2010.

[37] Congo-Brazzaville has refused to hand over two men wanted in Congo-Kinshasa for fomenting rebellion. Kabila's government says one also has links to the men who attacked his residence in February 2011. The dispute led Kabila to withdraw his ambassador from Brazzaville. "DR Congo recalls ambassador to Brazzaville", Radio Okapi, 26 March 2011. The DRC's claim to a part of offshore oilfields also claimed by Angola has angered its southern neighbour. "Angola and Congo, bad neighbours", *The Economist*, 6 August 2011.

[38] The elections may yet be postponed again. For the significance of a postponement beyond the constitutional deadline, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°175, *Congo: The Electoral Dilemma*, 5 May 2011.

[39] In June 2011, Congolese army officers said there was only ten LRA fighters left in the country and blamed most attacks on local bandits. Crisis Group interview, Dungu, 4 June 2011. In August, senior military said the LRA had gone completely. "Province Orientale: les éléments de la LRA n'opèrent plus en RDC, selon le général Kifwa", Radio Okapi, 1 August 2011.

[40] "Uganda's LRA rebel chief likely in Central Africa: US", Agence France-Presse, 5 October 2011.

[41] Crisis Group interview, DRC official, Brussels, 25 October 2011.

[42] In June 2011, Bozizé began disarming a rebel group, the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie, APRD), that occupies two zones in the north west. However, in September two groups active in the east, the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix, CPJP) and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement, UFDR), clashed in several towns and villages leaving some 50 dead. They signed a ceasefire in October, but violence and competition for control of the diamond trade will continue to strain relations between rival ethnic groups. For analysis of diamond-fuelled violence, see Crisis Group African Report N°167, *Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*, 16 December 2010.

[43] Crisis Group interview, CAR army officer, Bangui, 26 June 2011.

[44] To understand how political manipulation of the security forces and successive conflicts have left the CAR with such a weak army, see Crisis Group African Report N°136, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, 13 December 2007.

just across that border in Sudan.[45] These take precedence over the LRA's sporadic attacks in Western Equatoria State (WES) in the far south west.[46] The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the rebel movement turned national army, is deployed in WES but it remains an unprofessional force whose soldiers lack training, equipment and discipline. Furthermore, many of the rank-and-file deployed in WES are from the pastoralist Dinka people, who have poor relations with the area's farming tribes. They fought in late 2005,[47] and locals say this tribal animosity is the real reason for SPLA inertia.[48]

B. Regional Mistrust

In the field and capitals, growing mistrust of the Ugandan army is undermining its ability to hunt the LRA. The troop drawdown, reduced activity and insufficient discipline have contributed to deterioration in relations with locals in all three countries.[49] Civilians are frightened and angry that attacks continue while fewer Ugandans do less to protect them.[50] Fear breeds suspicion. Civilians think the Ugandan army, with its helicopters and ample weaponry, should have eradicated the LRA after nearly three years. Seeing those soldiers that are left accepting money to carry civilians in their lorries further undermines locals' trust,[51] as does seeing Ugandans on operation with men they recognise as former LRA.[52] This loss of popular confidence seriously damages the operation, because locals are the single best source of information on LRA activity. Without their cooperation, the hunt becomes blind.[53]

The DRC's deeply engrained suspicion of the Ugandan army's intentions on its soil has become a major hindrance in the fight against the LRA. Uganda's role in the two Congo wars, including supporting rebels against Kabila's government and illegally profiting from the country's natural resources, underlies this mistrust.[54] In 2005 the International Court of Justice ordered Uganda to pay the DRC reparations for violating its sovereignty, but this has not happened.[55] Tension also runs high over border demarcation in the oil-rich Lake Albert basin, where both neighbours are anxious to safeguard future profits.[56] In June 2010, the DRC launched

[45] See Crisis Group Conflict Risk Alert, "Stopping the Spread of Sudan's New Civil War", 26 September 2011.

[46] The UN counted 24 reported LRA attacks in Western Equatoria State (WES) between January and August 2011. "Cumulative figure of conflict incidents reported in 2011 – Status 31/08/2011", OCHA, 31 August 2011.

[47] Dinka herders and Western Equatoria State farmers have regularly been at odds because large herds destroy crops. After the war ended in January 2005, the Bor Dinka refused to leave. In September and October, the Moru of Mundri County tried to force them out. Dozens died, and at least 2,400 fled. In November 2005, displaced Dinka in Yambio and Tambura counties and Dinka in the SPLA fought the local Zande. "Sudan humanitarian overview – Southern Sudan", vol. 1, nos. 2-3, OCHA, September-October and October-November 2005.

[48] Crisis Group interviews, local authorities, self-defence groups, Yambio, Nzara, June 2011.

[49] Crisis Group interviews, local religious and community leaders, humanitarian workers, civilians, Dungu, Yambio, Nzara, Mboki, June 2011.

[50] In Obo, CAR, locals reported fewer Ugandan patrols and a weaker and slower reaction to attacks. In South Sudan, too, Ugandan operations were seen as less proactive, more reactive. Crisis Group interviews, UNMIS officer, Yambio, 14 June 2011; Obo priest, Bangui, 25 June 2011. Lapses in discipline fuel resentment. Ugandan army abuses against civilians in the DRC were reported to Oxfam. "'We are entirely exploitable' The Lack of Protection for Civilians in Eastern DRC", Oxfam, 28 July 2011, p. 4. In South Sudan, Ugandan soldiers have fought with civilians over women. Crisis Group interview, Nzara county bishop, Nzara, 16 June 2011.

[51] An international researcher witnessed this practice in Western Equatoria State, South Sudan. Crisis Group interview, Yambio, 17 June 2011. Civilians also accused the Ugandans of involvement in logging, though this has not been verified.

[52] Crisis Group interviews, civil society representatives, Mboki and Yambio, June 2011. The Ugandan army recruits former LRA fighters to benefit from their knowledge of the group's composition and tactics.

[53] The Ugandans' loss of civilian trust can also reduce their access. In January 2011, the people of Rafai, CAR, prevented soldiers suspected of collaboration with the LRA from crossing a river to enter their town. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker, Bangui, 25 June 2011.

[54] During the second Congo War (1998-2003), Uganda and Rwanda supported rebel factions against the government of first Laurent-Désiré Kabila and, from January 2001, his son, Joseph. The Ugandan army's illegal exploitation of minerals is well documented. See "Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of Congo", U.N. Panel of Experts, S/2001/357, 12 April 2001; S/2002/565, 22 May 2002; S/2002/1156, 16 October 2002; and S/2003/1027, 23 October 2003.

[55] See "Case Concerning Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo v. Uganda", judgment, 19 December 2005.

[56] In August 2007, the Congolese army shot dead a British engineer working for Heritage Oil, the company exploring for oil on the Ugandan side of the border, when his boat allegedly crossed into Congolese waters. Subsequent international pressure led Museveni and Kabila to sign an agreement to establish a joint commission to remark the border. The document also includes provisions for normalising diplomatic relations and cooperating to eliminate each other's rebels. In June 2009, however, Uganda protested "aggression", when the DRC set up a police post at Goli in a contested border area. The still undefined border complicates delicate negotiations over which companies will explore on the Congolese side. See Benjamin Augé, "Border conflicts tied to hydrocarbons in the great lakes region of Africa", in Lesourne and

military operations in north-eastern Ituri District, Oriental province, against the Allied Democratic Forces-National Liberation Army of Uganda (ADF-NALU), a Ugandan rebel group that Museveni's army pushed across the border in 2002.[57] Kabila likely sees the still unsuccessful operation as an extra burden originating in Uganda.

Kabila's attendance at Museveni's inauguration for his fourth presidential term on 12 May 2011 and relatively frequent meetings may speak of a cautious willingness to reap the benefits of good neighbourliness, oil money in particular. But having the Ugandan army roving about on Congolese territory, in some places unaccompanied and with no departure date in sight, is beyond the limit of Kabila's magnanimity.

On the ground, mid-ranking Congolese officers seek to obstruct the Ugandan operation.[58] In part they are following the political agenda set by Kinshasa. In part they are expressing their own frustration at having to keep step with the better-trained and equipped Ugandan army, their former enemies, in their own land. Nor do they want foreigners witnessing, let alone interfering in, their sometimes violent profiteering from civilians.[59]

The Congolese have denied the Ugandans access to certain zones where the LRA is active, including around Banda and Bangadi, Haut-Uélé District, and forbidden them to enter Garamba National Park.[60] In meetings of the Joint Intelligence and Operations Centre (JIOC) in Dungu, in which the Congolese and Ugandans are supposed to share information, the Congolese have on occasion withheld it about LRA activities and denied incidents reported by the Ugandans.[61] They have also provided false information to incriminate the Ugandans. The need to mediate between the two has prevented the JIOC from concentrating on analysing LRA activity.

As part of its campaign to oust the Ugandans, the Congolese claim most attacks are by bandits, while the Ugandans and locals attribute them to the LRA. These competing, politically charged versions make it difficult for the JIOC to reach a sure analysis and decide on the best course of action to recommend. In contrast, lower-ranking Congolese officers in more remote villages have worked with Ugandan soldiers and achieved clear tactical objectives.[62]

The Congolese army and local authorities have ratcheted up a smear campaign to turn locals against the Ugandans,[63] whom they accuse of illegally exploiting natural resources, including ivory, gold and bush meat, and attacking civilians.[64] The Congolese say the Ugandans attribute attacks to the LRA for which they themselves are responsible in order to justify their presence.[65] This makes civilians mistrustful and reluctant to pass on valuable information about LRA activity. Furthermore, Congolese threats and obstruction give the Ugandan army a ready excuse for its own sluggishness. A Ugandan officer said, "it's better for us to go slowly and make concessions to the Congolese army, better to buy time, than cause a diplomatic incident".[66]

The DRC has twice demanded that Uganda withdraw all its troops. In early 2011, it said they must leave by June. This demand was dropped, but on 30 September, at a meeting of the four countries' military leaders to evaluate operations against the LRA, it again insisted on the withdrawal of all Ugandan troops, except intelligence teams. In early October, the Congolese military commander at Dungu, Haut-Uélé District, ordered all Ugandan troops to stop operations and remain on their bases in anticipation of a formal political decision for their departure.[67]

Ramsay (eds.), *Governance of Oil in Africa: Unfinished Business*, Institut français des relations internationales (IFRI) (Paris, 2009).

[57] The ADF became active in 1996 as an Islamist group seeking the downfall of Museveni's government. In the late 1990s it carried out lethal attacks against civilian targets in western Uganda until it was forced across the border into the DRC in 2002. Since then it has formed a loose alliance with NALU, another Ugandan rebel group seeking refuge in the DRC. "Defence & Security Intelligence & Analysis", IHS Jane's, www.janes.com.

[58] Colonel Bruno, the Congolese military commander at Dungu in Haut-Uélé District, reportedly has threatened to shoot down Ugandan planes. Crisis Group interview, Ugandan army officers, Nzara, South Sudan, 16 June 2011.

[59] The Congolese army has a record of human rights violations against civilians. See "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: LRA Attacks and Congolese Army Abuses in Northeastern Congo", Enough Project, 11 March 2010.

[60] Crisis Group interview, Ugandan army officers, Nzara, 16 June 2011; telephone interview, humanitarian worker in Dungu, 4 October 2011. In 2010-2011, the Congolese army repeatedly attacked and stole cattle from Mbororo herders in the Banda area.

[61] MONUSCO set up the JIOC in December 2010 to better orient operations against the LRA. Military staff meet Congolese and Ugandan army representatives three times a week to share and try to corroborate information on security incidents.

[62] Congolese units reportedly have conducted useful joint patrols with Ugandans at Duru. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker formerly in Duru, Yambio, 17 June 2011.

[63] Crisis Group interviews, Dungu territory administrator, Congolese army officers, Dungu, 4 June 2011.

[64] Crisis Group has seen no evidence that would confirm these accusations.

[65] Crisis Group interviews, civil society leader, Congolese army officers, Dungu, 3, 4 June 2011.

[66] A Ugandan officer also said the operation's reduction was at the DRC's demand. Crisis Group interview, Nzara, 16 June 2011.

[67] "Procès-verbal", op. cit. Crisis Group telephone interview, MONUSCO officer, 31 October 2011.

The DRC's mistrust of Uganda has proved infectious. In June 2009 Uganda and the CAR signed a formal agreement, and initially Bozizé readily let the Ugandan army into the country to hunt down the LRA, since his own army was incapable.[68] But in August 2010, he demanded the Ugandans pull out of Sam Ouandja, a village in the north east, fearing they were helping themselves to diamonds there.[69] In September and October 2010, after the Ugandans had left, the LRA attacked several villages in the area.[70] Bangui is also jealous of the Ugandan army's U.S. support. Politicians, therefore, amplify the grass-root suspicion and talk of the Ugandan army as an occupation force. They argue the Ugandans should leave, and Washington should spend its money on the CAR's own army.[71]

Views within South Sudan's government differ as to the wisdom of allowing Uganda to maintain a military presence. However, Uganda was a resolute supporter of the South during its war with the North and remains an important political ally and trading partner.[72] South Sudan thus remains open to hosting the Ugandan operation's main command and logistics base at Nzara, Western Equatoria State.

III. DEEPENING WOUNDS

After almost three years since the LRA left its camps in Garamba Park, communities and inter-communal relations across the DRC/CAR/South Sudan tri-border region are under strain. The group's violence and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people have created a widely reported humanitarian crisis[73] and taken a heavy toll on the region's social fabric. Some communities are fragmenting, becoming dependent on outside help and increasingly militant in defending their way of life. Meanwhile, fear is making communities more suspicious of outsiders. In particular, relations have deteriorated between the Zande, the dominant tribe in the DCR/CAR/South Sudan border area, and the semi-nomadic Mbororo herders. The social wounds will affect the lives of at least the next generation.

A. WITHIN COMMUNITIES

The common, external threat of the LRA has in places brought communities together to rally around the church and customary leaders. Some have responded with initiatives such as community radios and self-defence groups. However, LRA attacks have also either physically broken-up communities or weakened the bonds essential for collective well-being. For their safety, people from smaller villages have moved to larger towns to shelter in the homes of other families. The violence has left thousands, especially those who spent time in captivity, with psychological trauma.[74] Children and young adults in particular have become more aggressive and difficult to live and work with. This and the stigma of having been part of the LRA have made communities, even close family, reluctant to accept returnees, especially if they have killed. Sometimes former captives refuse to go home for fear of rejection. Such problems create resentment and mistrust within and between families and erode communal cohesion, with negative effects on social and economic life.[75]

[68] "CARG confirms the existence of a formal agreement between the FACA and UPDF", U.S. embassy Bangui cable, 6 November 2009, published by WikiLeaks, 25 August 2011.
[69] Crisis Group interview, government minister, Bangui, 24 June 2011.
[70] In September 2010, the LRA attacked three villages near Sam Ouandja taking 42 prisoners. The fighters moved north to Ouande Djalle, where they killed two and burned about 100 homes. They then attacked Kombal, Tiringoulou and, in October, Birao, capital of Vakaga prefecture. Crisis Group interviews, villagers taken prisoner who later escaped, Sam Ouandja, 16 September 2010.
[71] Crisis Group interviews, Central African minister for Haut-Mbomou prefecture, Bangui, 24 June 2011.
[72] For more on South Sudan's relations with Uganda, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°159, *Sudan: Regional Perspectives on the Prospect of Southern Independence*, 6 May 2010, pp. 5-8.
[73] "LRA Regional Update", op. cit.
[74] In Northern Uganda, researchers have documented that LRA captives' psychological trauma has left a mental health legacy. Anett Pfeiffer, Thomas Elbert, "PTSD, Depression and Anxiety among Former Abductees in Northern Uganda", *Conflict and Health*, vol. 5, no. 14 (2011). Pham, Vinck, Stover, "Returning Home: Forced Conscription, Reintegration, and Mental Health Status of Former Abductees of the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda", *BMC Psychiatry*, vol. 9, no. 23 (2009).
[75] Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker, Bangui, 30 June 2011. Studies on the LRA's lasting impact in Northern Uganda give an idea of effects the DRC /CAR/South Sudan border area will likely experience. See Sverker Finnström, *Living with Bad Surroundings: War, History, and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda* (Durham, 2008).

Many communities are too frightened to go to the fields to farm, so lose what little self-sufficiency they may have had. Aid agencies and NGOs have stepped up deliveries of emergency provisions but worry recipients are becoming dependent on handouts and reluctant to farm even when the security situation allows.[76] The inability to farm and sell or exchange produce reduces a community's opportunity to work together for collective benefits. Waiting for outside help is more likely to foster competition between families and individuals.

The self-defence groups that emerged in response to the threat express communal solidarity, and some have been highly effective. But they also cause changes in communities that could be harmful in the long term. In Haut-Uélé District, DRC, they formed in 2008, but the army forcefully disbanded them when it deployed the following year, fearing they would become anti-government militia. In the CAR, they formed in several towns and villages in the south east, but have become increasingly passive.[77] However, in Western Equatoria State (WES), South Sudan, a strong network – the Home Guard (previously Arrow Boys) – emerged in 2008 and continues to grow.

The zeal and endurance of the self-defence groups in WES stem from the Sudanese Zande's more structured and active local governance system, their experience of conflict and the tenacity with which they have had to defend their livelihoods in the past. In colonial times, the British used a hierarchy of chiefs and sub-chiefs from state to village level to organise a successful cotton industry that lasted until the 1970s.[78] The same hierarchy has been critical for legitimising, organising and supporting the self-defence groups.[79] The latter include some former soldiers whom the SPLA forcibly recruited and who gained fighting experience elsewhere in the country.[80] In South Sudan, the Zande have developed a "mentality of resistance" because for many years herds of cattle belonging to the politically and militarily dominant Dinka and more recently the Mbororo have been a threat to their farms.[81]

The Home Guard has largely succeeded in protecting civilians from LRA attack. By repelling raiders when they cross into South Sudan and pursuing them until they release prisoners, it presents a strong dissuasive force. Encouraged by this success, in 2011 the Yambio County Home Guard began creating safe centres in once deserted areas. By providing protection, it enables civilians to go back to their home areas, farm and return to town after a few days to sell their produce.[82] This reduces dependency on aid and boosts the badly hit local economy.

However, as the Home Guard grows in size and stature, communities are becoming more militant and quicker to use force. This carries risks for Zande and minorities alike. Out of appreciation for their work, communities feed the Home Guard.[83] Local politicians also reach into their pockets.[84] But these contributions risk becoming incentives for people to join and stay in the Home Guard irrespective of threat. There is also a danger politicians will win the loyalty of certain groups. The Western Equatoria State governor is reportedly a benefactor of the Home Guard in his hometown, Tambura.[85] The April 2010 elections saw clashes between his supporters and those of his predecessor.[86] If candidates call on indebted Home Guards, it could be worse next time. Some self-defence units aspire to be military-style squads and are

[76] Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian workers, Dungu, Yambio, Bangui, June 2011.

[77] The self-defence group at Bangadi, Haut-Uélé District was particularly strong but also was broken up. Remnants of the groups exist in some places (eg, Kurukwata, Aba and Djabir, eastern Haut-Uélé), used by the army as guides. Crisis Group interviews, civil society representative, Dungu, 3 June 2011; humanitarian workers, Mboki and Bangui, June 2011.

[78] Crisis Group interview, Zande academic, Juba, 13 June 2011.

[79] Crisis Group interviews, Yambio County paramount chief, Yambio, 15 June 2011; Home Guard leaders, Nzara and Yambio, 16 June 2011.

[80] In contrast, the Zande of Oriental province in the DRC did not participate in Jean-Pierre Bemba's rebellion against ex-President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, or the Mai-Mai militia. Crisis Group interviews, Zande academic, Juba, 13 June 2011; Home Guard leaders, Yambio, 16 June 2011.

[81] Crisis Group interview, Zande NGO worker, Yambio, 16 June 2011. During the civil war, Zande cautiously tolerated displaced Dinka in WES, but when it ended, violence broke out between them. In November 2005, Dinka in Yambio and Tambura counties joined with Dinka SPLA there to fight the local Zande. Nzara was divided. Crisis Group interview, missionary, Nzara, 16 June 2011. "Sudan Humanitarian Overview – Western Equatoria", no. 3, op. cit.

[82] The Home Guard in Yambio County has set up five safe centres (Bakewiri, Masumbu, Kidi, Nazerte and Kabate) toward the Congolese border and plan more. Crisis Group interviews, Yambio County paramount chief and Home Guard leaders, Yambio, June 2011.

[83] Over four weeks (April-May 2011) the paramount chief organised Yambio County's village chiefs to collect food and money door-to-door for the Home Guard, raising over 21,000 Sudanese pounds ($7,770) as well as maize, sorghum, flour, groundnuts, oil, salt and honey. Crisis Group interview, Yambio County paramount chief, Yambio, 15 June 2011.

[84] Crisis Group interview, Western Equatoria State information minister, Yambio, 17 June 2011.

[85] Crisis Group interview, NGO worker, Yambio, 17 June 2011. By supporting the Home Guard, local leaders can win approval and respect from many who see it as their only line of defence against the LRA.

[86] Crisis Group interview, Western Equatoria State governor, Yambio, 15 June 2011.

arming themselves with AK-47s as well as homemade shotguns.[87]

B. Between Communities

The LRA's presence also strains relations between communities. Inhabitants of many smaller villages along roads and forest paths have fled to larger ones for protection. There tensions have grown around competition for land and scarce food, especially when aid agencies prioritise the displaced.[88] Those who return may find their land taken by others.[89] Travel between towns is greatly reduced for fear of attack; poor communications infrastructure means communities have less contact with each other, and greater isolation fosters suspicion. In the CAR, some strangers have been accused of being LRA spies, forced away or killed.[90] Under such pressures, it is minorities who suffer. In South Sudan, while most contributions to the Home Guard have been voluntary, one group set up a checkpoint to demand contributions from Congolese refugees going to and from their camp at Makupandu, east of Yambio.[91]

Targeting of minorities can be seen across the region in the worsening relations between the Zande and the seminomadic Mbororo cattle herders. Relations have never been easy, as Mbororo cattle trample Zande crops. To protect their livestock, the herders kill wild animals the Zande would hunt for food and destroy their bee hives. But since the LRA arrived, relations have deteriorated. The Zande suspect the Mbororo of collaborating with Kony's forces, who use cattle routes to find their way through the forest.[92] In South Sudan in late 2010, Western Equatoria State authorities denied a Mbororo request to settle there. They then asked the SPLA and Home Guard to escort the Mbororo to the DRC, the CAR and Sudan's Western Bahr al Ghazal State.[93] Most left voluntarily, but the Home Guard pursued those who refused, killed their cattle and "showed no mercy".[94] Fighting broke out north east of Tambura in which at least two Home Guard and an unknown number of Mbororo died.[95]

In the DRC, the Zande tacitly support army efforts to force out Mbororo.[96] The army has abused civilians regardless of origin or ethnicity. Theft, extortion at illegal barriers and rape have continued and in some areas increased.[97] But since October 2010, soldiers have targeted the Mbororo, knowing they have Kinshasa's approval and that stealing cattle is more lucrative than taxing farmers. Major Mugabo of the 911th battalion (Bear Battalion) reportedly oversaw intimidation, death threats, theft of livestock, money and other possessions, rape and arbitrary arrest against Mbororo around Banda, Bas-Uélé District.[98] In March 2011, the Mbororo decided to flee the DRC to the CAR, where over 1,000 found refuge at Mboki.[99] CAR Zande communities have for years

[87] The Tambura Home Guard has AK-47s and a reputation for using them effectively. Crisis Group interview, NGO working in Tambura, Yambio, 17 June 2011. Home Guard members say they take the assault rifles from the LRA they kill, but communities are also known to buy them collectively. Crisis Group interview, Zande academic, Juba, 13 June 2011.

[88] These pressures put added strain on ethnic divisions. In Niangara (Haut-Uélé District) the majority Ngbetu grew angry when the World Food Programme distributed food to the Zande who had fled there from nearby Nambia. Crisis Group interview, MONUSCO staff, Dungu, 3 June 2011.

[89] Crisis Group interviews, religious leader, customary chief, Dungu, June 2011.

[90] This happened in Rafai. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker, Bangui, 30 June 2011.

[91] The lack of reports of forced contributions elsewhere suggests the self-defence group was targeting the Congolese refugees. Crisis Group interview, NGO worker, Yambio, 17 June 2011.

[92] Escapees also say the LRA make Mbororo go into villages to buy goods for them. Crisis Group interview, civil society representative, Dungu, 3 June 2011.

[93] Crisis Group interview, Western Equatoria State information minister, Yambio, 17 June 2011.

[94] Crisis Group interview, Nzara bishop, Nzara, 16 June 2011.

[95] Crisis Group interview, Nzara County Home Guard coordinator, Nzara, 16 June 2011.

[96] In October 2007, the Congolese interior ministry brought the presence of Mbororo herders in the East to the attention of the AU, which sent a fact-finding mission to the DRC, CAR, Sudan and Cameroon. Its report identified the Mbororo as a source of conflict but recommended "a peaceful approach", including a census, livestock corridors, outreach and national projects to encourage social and economic integration. The Congolese army began harassing the Mbororo when it deployed in the Uélés in 2009. The AU Commission called again in September 2010 for a peaceful response, but in December, Kabila officially decided to expel them, and the army began forcing them into the CAR. "Report on the migrations of Mbororo Nomadic Pastoralists by the Fact Finding Mission Dispatched to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic and Cameroon", PSC/PR/2 (CXIX), Addis Ababa, 11 April 2008; "La commission de l'UA organise une réunion régionale sur la question des pasteurs nomades Mbororos", AU Communiqué, Addis Ababa, 20 September 2010. "President Kabila orders repatriation of Mbororo nomads from DRC", Panapress, 19 December 2010.

[97] Crisis Group interview, MONUSCO head of office, Dungu, 4 June 2011. "'We are entirely exploitable' The Lack of Protection for Civilians in Eastern DRC", Oxfam, 28 July 2011, p. 4.

[98] "Rapport de la mission conjointe", op. cit. A Colonel Jean at Isiro reportedly was also involved in organising the raids and illegal traffic of cattle. Crisis Group interview, Mbororo leader who fled from the DRC, Mboki, 28 June 2011.

[99] By March 2011, Congolese soldiers had stolen some 700 to 1,000 cattle and about 100 horses and donkeys and sold them at Banda, Isiro and Dungu. "Rapport de la mission conjointe", op. cit. The mayor has designated land for the new arrivals to build

tolerated the Mbororo, who in places have become more sedentary, farm and are welcome at markets. The Mboki economy depends on their buying salt for cattle and other supplies. But tensions have grown, at times leading to deadly violence.[100] The Mbororo influx from the DRC and Sudan and the decision of some, deprived of cattle, to cultivate land risks competition with locals.

Those with the power and responsibility to act against the LRA need to realise not just the disastrous humanitarian consequences of its continued existence but also that the longer-lasting social wounds will make stabilising the region all the more difficult.

IV. ENTER THE AFRICAN UNION

In July 2010, the AU summit of heads of state and government requested the AU Commission to consult countries affected by the LRA with a view to "facilitating a coordinated regional action" to mitigate the threat.[101] In October 2010, the AU duly organised a ministerial meeting in Bangui, for Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and Sudan (including the not yet independent Government of South Sudan) to review and consider how to strengthen measures taken against the LRA. The resulting proposals were ambitious, including appointment of an AU special envoy for the issue and joint border patrols.[102] To develop and win support for these ideas, a small group of experts carried out a Technical Assessment Mission to LRA-affected countries from 16 March to 5 April 2011. Using their report, a June 2011 ministerial session agreed to launch an "AU authorised mission" and a "well-coordinated unified regional political process" to defeat the LRA.[103] The plan, in collaboration with Uganda and the three affected countries, is to:

- appoint a special envoy to provide overall political and strategic coordination of operations to counter the LRA;
- establish a Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM), an ad hoc structure with secretariat in Bangui, chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, comprising the affected countries' defence ministers and intended to enhance political and military cooperation;
- establish a Regional Task Force (RTF) to eliminate the LRA, comprising troops from Uganda and the three affected countries, with operational headquarters in Yambio (South Sudan) and tactical sector headquarters in Dungu (DRC), Obo (CAR) and Nzara (South Sudan);
- establish a Joint Operations Centre (JOC) at RTF headquarters for the armies to jointly plan and monitor operations; and
- designate four representatives, one each from Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan, to reinforce the Joint Intelligence and Operations Centre (JIOC) in Dungu.[104]

houses on, but it is not enough. Crisis Group interview, Mbororo leader who fled from the DRC, Mboki, CAR, 28 June 2011.

[100] Crisis Group interviews, traders, Mboki, 27 June 2011. In early May, a hunter from Gougbere, just north of Obo, killed a Mbororo cow. In retaliation, the Mbororo killed a fifteen-year old boy. The people of Gougbere then killed three Mbororo, two adults and a child. Obo State authorities prevented further escalation. Crisis Group interviews, Obo priest, NGO worker from Obo, Bangui, 25, 29 June 2011.

[101] "Decisions, Declarations, Resolution Adopted by the Fifteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union", Kampala, 27 July 2010. A year earlier, the assembly had decided to "renew efforts, including military efforts, to neutralise the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and bring to an end its atrocities and destabilising activities in DRC, Southern Sudan and Central African Republic (CAR)". Paragraph 8 (xi), "Plan of Action", special session on conflicts in Africa, Tripoli, 31 August 2009.

[102] "Conclusions of the Regional Ministerial Meeting on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)", Bangui, 13-14 October 2010.

[103] "Conclusions of the Second Regional Ministerial Meeting", Addis Ababa, 6-8 June 2011.

[104] Ibid.

The July 2011 AU summit (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea) approved this, but the AU Peace and Security Council is still waiting for the Commission to provide concrete "implementation modalities" before it authorises the operation.[105]

A. Pushed to the Fore

The AU decided to join efforts to eliminate the LRA under pressure from both member states and the U.S.[106] While Uganda feared an AU intervention would weaken its control on the operation and was, therefore, a reluctant participant from the start, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan hoped an AU intervention would broaden the pool of donors and beneficiaries. The U.S. encouraged the AU to lead coordination as a way to bring in new donors, the EU in particular, to share the burden. It also hoped an AU banner would invest the operation with greater legitimacy, thereby easing the task of persuading the DRC to tolerate Ugandan forces on its soil.[107]

The EU similarly wished the AU to mitigate political differences, build consensus on the nature of the threat and help develop a common strategy.[108] In July 2011, the UN Security Council welcomed the plan and encouraged the Secretary-General to support the AU Commission in the preparatory process.[109] More generally, donors saw the AU's engagement as an opportunity to pursue the long-term goal of building its institutional capacity in conflict management. This aligned with the principle, popular in Africa and among donors, that Africans should take ownership of and address their own security challenges – "African solutions to African problems".[110]

The AU Commission is a transnational bureaucracy tasked with carrying out the decisions of the African heads of state and the Peace and Security Council. AU decisions are strongly determined by the national interests of member states and the inclinations of donors who supply the money. Leaned on by both, there was little choice but to step up and take the lead on the LRA. Assured of political and financial support and seeing an opportunity to increase its visibility in Central Africa, it seemed like a good idea at the time. But the AU soon found itself in unfamiliar interventionist territory, struggling to reconcile the roles its member states and Western partners expected it to play.

B. On Unknown Ground

The AU's proposed initiative to help end the LRA is unlike any of its previous interventions. Since its birth in 2002, it has sent missions to four countries: Burundi, Sudan, Somalia and the Comoros Islands. Most have resembled UN peacekeeping missions in that forces were deployed to increase security in the wake of civil war, thus facilitating the peace process and helping humanitarian relief.[111] The missions to the Comoros focused on ensuring security during elections.[112] In contrast, the "regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)" seeks to facilitate an ongoing multinational military campaign.[113]

At the political level the AU wants to address the lack of political will of affected member states and mistrust of the Ugandan army. By taking the lead, it seeks to confer on the operation the legitimacy the organisation enjoys by virtue of its pan-African membership and thus make the LRA hunt, though still dominated by the Ugandan army, more palatable to the DRC and the CAR. An AU special envoy for the LRA problem would be meant to reinforce this by encouraging heads of state to cooperate and fully commit. The proposed Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) aims at fostering political consensus among defence ministers. At the military level, the AU wants to make joint activity more effective by improving coordination between the four armies through the JCM and Joint Operations Centre (JOC).

[105] "Press statement of the 295th meeting of the Peace and Security Council", PSC/PR/PS (CCXCV), 27 September 2011.
[106] Crisis Group telephone interview, Western diplomat, 17 October 2011.
[107] Crisis Group interview, U.S. diplomat, Washington DC, 30 September 2011.
[108] Crisis Group telephone interview, EU diplomat, 17 October 2011.
[109] "Security Council Press Statement on Lord's Resistance Army", SC/10335, 21 July 2011.
[110] The EU supports the AU Commission directly through the jointly managed Africa Peace Facility. The U.S., through its Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, prepares soldiers in 25 African countries for AU or UN peace support operations. See also Bjørn Møller, "The African Union as Security Actor: African Solutions to African Problems?", Danish Institute for International Studies, working paper no. 57, August 2009.
[111] The AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was deployed from 2003 to 2004 with some 3,250 troops, mostly South African. The AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) deployed as many as 7,700 troops in Darfur (2004-2007). It has been replaced since 2008 by the UN-AU Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) numbering about 23,000. The AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), deployed since 2007, numbers about 9,000. Paul Williams, "The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities", Council on Foreign Relations, October 2011, p. 15.
[112] The AU deployed its Military Observer Mission in the Comoros (MIOC) in 2004, the AU Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros (AMISEC) in 2006, the Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES) in 2007-2008 and Operation Democracy in Comoros in March 2008. Ibid.
[113] "Press statement of the 295th meeting", op. cit.

Constrained by its limited institutional capacity, insufficient financial support and other commitments, the AU sought to create a new, less onerous kind of intervention.[114] Instead of launching another full peace support operation, like AMISOM, mandated by the Peace and Security Council, it decided to try an "AU authorised mission", thereby avoiding the responsibility of sourcing, supplying and managing troops on the ground. This novel compromise has led to serious ambiguity in the concept behind and legal basis for the military action and the exact allocation of authority and division of responsibilities between the AU and member states in setting up and running better coordination mechanisms.

The LRA initiative also falls outside the AU and donor long-term strategy for countering insecurity on the continent, namely building up the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Under that plan, the five regions of the continent are developing their own standby forces with which to respond to security threats within or outside their zone. The LRA initiative is an ad hoc response to a crisis involving neither the Eastern African Standby Force (EASF) nor the Central African Multinational Force (Force multinationale de l'Afrique centrale, FOMAC).[115] This shows a lack of coherence in the AU's overall approach to resolving conflict in Africa and may help explain the hesitancy of donors to commit funds that otherwise would go to the APSA.

C. Slowed by Conflicting Expectations

As negotiations progressed, it became clear the EU, the AU's main donor, and African member states hold very different views on how the AU should intervene. While Brussels recognises the Ugandan military operation as the most feasible way to stop the LRA, it is unwilling to support directly the military aspects of the AU plan. It does not believe enabling commanders of the four armies to work together at the regional force's headquarters would significantly increase operational effectiveness. It is also concerned by the shaky legal foundation, especially since this, unlike other peace operations, is an offensive military campaign involving search and destroy operations. The AU has not yet shown the EU how it would ensure the armies refrain from illegal activities, strictly respect human rights and spend money in approved fashion. Nor has it planned how to hold them accountable if they do not.[116] However, the EU sees the potential value of greater AU political input through the special envoy. It has already provided funds to set up his office but foot dragging by member states has prevented the AU from using them.[117]

In contrast, Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan envisage the AU primarily as a fundraiser for their armies. When they learned that it did not intend to channel large amounts of money and resources to the operation but would focus on improving coordination, they were disappointed and lost interest in the plan. Uganda, in particular, sees the coordination structures as threatening its control of the military operation and is concerned the special envoy will constrain it politically or try to revive the idea of negotiations with the LRA. It has tried to limit the future envoy's authority over the operation and repeatedly rejected the AU's proposed nominees for the post.[118]

The AU is, therefore, caught between the conflicting demands of its main donor and member states. It must try to satisfy both, because to act it needs both money from the EU and political backing from its members. So far it has been unable to reconcile the two. The EU agreed the AU could apply for funding, but the application included a request for military support. The EU rejected it and requested another.[119] However, the U.S. decision in October 2011 to deploy military advisers to the field has for the moment appeared to push to the side the AU's floundering efforts to invigorate the LRA hunt.

[114] It has identified among its own weaknesses, poor management systems and information technology; inadequate physical infrastructure; lack of professional, motivated staff; inadequate team work; and a weak reputation and reach on the continent. "Strategic Plan 2009-2012", African Union Commission, p. 17. These handicaps have become most apparent when trying to plan, manage and sustain peace support operations. See Arvid Ekengard, "The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS): Experiences and Lessons Learned", Swedish Defence Research Agency, August 2008; Cecilia Hull, Emma Svensson, "AMISOM: Exemplifying African Union Peacekeeping Challenges", Swedish Defence Research Agency, October 2008, p. 35; Paul Williams, op. cit.

[115] The EASF is drawn from the fourteen countries of the Eastern Africa Region; its creation and training are organised by the EASF Coordination Mechanism (EASFCOM) in Nairobi. FOMAC is being developed and managed by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) based in Libreville. For analysis of ECCAS's progress, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°181, *Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (I): Central Africa*, 7 November 2011.

[116] Crisis Group telephone interview, EU diplomat, 17 October 2011.

[117] The EU provided over €1 million for AU use over six months to set up the special envoy's office and other planning purposes. At the end of the period, the AU returned all but 13 per cent, which it spent on the Technical Assessment Mission. Crisis Group telephone interview, EU diplomat, 17 October 2011.

[118] Ibid. In order to keep close control, Uganda demanded, and partner countries accepted, that it should supply the Regional Task Force commander and a senior official to advise the special envoy. Crisis Group telephone interview, Western diplomat, 8 November 2011.

[119] Ibid.

V. STRONG U.S. SUPPORT, FOR NOW

Washington's decision to ratchet up political and military efforts to fight the LRA improves prospects for a more effective military operation. But political resistance in the DRC could frustrate this potential, and political pressures at home could affect how long U.S. forces stay on the ground. Kabila may yet kick the Ugandans out of the DRC to win votes in his November 2011 election. In the U.S., the deployment of military advisers has provoked largely Republican concerns the country could be drawn into a long and costly struggle. With his own election looming in a year, President Obama is under pressure to prove the deployment can bear fruit quickly. If it does not, it will be called into question.

On 12 October 2011, the first team of combat-equipped U.S. soldiers arrived in Uganda. In a letter to Congress two days later, Obama said others would join over the following month to make a total of about 100. More than half will be support and logistics personnel based in Kampala, while a minority will be military advisers expected to deploy in the field to the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan. The forces are to "provide information, advice, and assistance" to partner forces working to remove Kony and high-ranking LRA from the battlefield.[120] Obama emphasised U.S. soldiers will not fight the LRA directly, unless in self-defence. The move is the boldest response yet by the U.S. administration to the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act Congress passed in May 2010.[121] Democrats and Republicans alike strongly supported that bill authorising a more aggressive effort to stop the LRA. One of four main objectives in the White House's November 2010 strategy is the apprehension or other removal from the battlefield of Kony and his senior commanders.[122]

The U.S. seeks to increase the Ugandan army's capacity, not control operations.[123] Its troops will be spread thin among some 1,500 Ugandans but should be able to ensure a more efficient use of resources, more rigorous intelligence gathering, improved analysis and better-planned tracking and offensive operations. They will be able to encourage the Ugandans to be quicker, bolder and more disciplined in their work. The U.S. also intends to set up joint operation centres in the CAR and South Sudan, on the model of the JIOC in Dungu, to improve intelligence sharing and coordination between the Ugandans and host armies in those countries.[124] The absence of such shared intelligence has been a critical gap in past efforts to respond rapidly to LRA movements.

The deployment is only one, albeit important, element in the strengthened U.S. political and military efforts. Washington has also provided equipment to the CAR army and proposed to train a second Congolese battalion for LRA-affected areas.[125] It is likewise looking at ways to assist South Sudan's forces.[126] Providing material assistance to the DRC and the CAR is primarily intended to win political space for the operation rather than significantly boost their contributions to the operation.

While other African and partner countries continue to talk about what to do next, the U.S. has demonstrated determination to end the LRA threat. The deployment of military advisers in addition to an already hefty investment in the Ugandan operation sends a clear message to Museveni that the operation should now enter a more effective, final phase.[127] While the LRA is still not a great priority for the Ugandan president,[128] the renewed possibility of victory may stir greater commitment. On 17 October, an army spokesman said

[120] "Text of a letter from the president to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president pro tempore of the senate", The White House, 14 October 2011.

[121] "Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009", Public Law 111-172 (24 May 2010).

[122] "Strategy to support the disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army", The White House, 24 November 2010. The government had been intending to deploy military advisers since at least early 2011, but it took many months for the Pentagon to approve the mission orders and find suitable, available personnel. The U.S. withdrawal of troops from Iraq has freed up more troops. Crisis Group telephone interview, U.S. State Department official, 31 October 2011.

[123] Crisis Group telephone interviews, U.S. diplomat, 25 October 2011; U.S. State Department official, 31 October 2011.

[124] Crisis Group telephone interview, U.S. diplomat, 25 October 2011. Since August 2011, two U.S. soldiers have participated in the JIOC work in Dungu. This will help to replicate the information management system in the CAR and South Sudan.

[125] On 9 November 2011, the U.S. provided the CAR army with 1,000 uniforms including jackets, trousers, boots, backpacks and mess tins worth about $400,000. "Les FACA dotées par les USA contre la LRA", Radio Ndéké Luka, 9 November 2011.

[126] See Don Yamamoto, principal deputy assistant secretary of state (African affairs), "The deployment of U.S. forces in central Africa and implementation of the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act", testimony, House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington DC, 25 October 2011.

[127] Since December 2008, the State Department has been assisting Operation Lightning Thunder with logistical support, airlift and non-lethal equipment (such as communications technology) and fuel. It has cost more than $38 million, including about $1.5 million per month since mid-2010. The U.S. Defense Department has contributed significantly less in the form of intelligence support. Crisis Group email correspondence, international expert, 4 November 2011.

[128] The Ugandan security forces see the ADF-NALU rebels as a greater threat. Crisis Group interview, Western diplomat, Kampala, 25 October 2011.

Ugandan soldiers had nearly caught Kony in the CAR,[129] the first time in over a year the army has raised such hopes. Regardless of its accuracy, the announcement suggests new enthusiasm for the enterprise.

However, the DRC's intolerance of Ugandan troops on its soil could waste the potential of stronger U.S. support. Kabila's commitment to allowing the Ugandans free movement is far from guaranteed. As already noted, on 30 September, just two weeks before Obama announced the military advisers, Kinshasa again insisted all Ugandan forces other than intelligence units leave its territory.[130] On the demand of the Congolese field commander in Dungu, the Ugandan troops in the DRC stopped all operations. On 18 October, after the U.S. deployment was announced, Kabila said publicly Washington had not consulted his government about the advisers possibly operating in the DRC,[131] an assertion U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson denied the same week.[132] Despite the mixed messages, the U.S. is optimistic Kabila will allow the Ugandans access.[133] He is unlikely to thwart the U.S. plan, but he may only soften his position once the DRC's elections are over.

In Washington, the announcement that the U.S. was sending soldiers to a Central African combat area sparked strong statements of concern, particularly among Republican politicians and commentators. Senator John McCain, the 2008 Republican presidential candidate, said he feared the U.S. would be drawn into a protracted campaign.[134] At a 25 October hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, almost all members, including the Republican chair, agreed Kony had to be stopped.[135] But while some, including the ranking Democrat, strongly supported the move, others expressed concern about the cost of the mission and wanted to know how long it was to last.[136] The Defense Department reassured the committee it would be a "short-term deployment" and that if a review "in a few months" found the advisers were having little effect, they would be withdrawn.[137] Since Obama is up for re-election in November 2012, he will not want to extend the deployment longer than absolutely essential to achieve the result that would have bi-partisan support, namely removing Kony from the battlefield.

[129] "Ugandan troops almost caught wanted LRA rebel leader US troops will help hunt", Associated Press, 17 October 2011.
[130] The DRC made this demand at a Kinshasa meeting of military leaders from Uganda and the three countries affected by the LRA to evaluate joint operations. The MONUSCO force commander and a representative of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) were also present. Crisis Group telephone interview, Western diplomat, 17 October 2011.
[131] "Traque de la LRA: 'Le Congo n'a pas encore été contacté', selon Joseph Kabila", Radio Okapi, 18 October 2011. Kabila may have been seeking to discredit a narrative by an opposition party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, UPDS), that the Western powers support his re-election.
[132] "Traque de la LRA: la mission des militaires américains n'est pas de combattre", Radio Okapi, 20 October 2011.
[133] Crisis Group telephone interview, U.S. State Department official, 31 October 2011.
[134] "John McCain warns Barack Obama of miring US in an African war", *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 2011.
[135] "US insists operation in Africa a limited mission", Associated Press, 26 October 2011.
[136] The departure from the Senate of Senators Brownback and Feingold, who championed the 2010 LRA bill, has allowed more space for critics of strong action against the LRA. However, the majority of complaints at the hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee concerned State Department failure to forewarn and consult key members on the decision.
[137] "The deployment of U.S. forces in central Africa", testimony, op. cit. "Administration officials face sceptical lawmakers on Uganda operation", Associated Press, 25 October 2011. The military advisers will be deployed for six months, with any extension requiring a review. Crisis Group telephone interview, Western diplomat, 10 November 2011.

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

There is an urgent need to stop the LRA, return security to the tri-border region, begin healing social wounds and create conditions in which economic development can take root. Negotiating with the LRA would be preferable to a military solution that entails risk to civilians. However, the lack of genuine commitment of the parties to the Juba talks that failed in 2008 – especially Kony, who walked away rather than sign the draft agreement – the further breakdown of trust since military operations resumed and the apparent unwillingness of both the LRA and the Ugandan government to return to talks make it highly unlikely that this is a practical option.[138] The best, most feasible course of action for removing the LRA threat as soon as possible while causing least harm to civilians has multiple aspects: a U.S.-backed, Ugandan-led military operation under an AU umbrella; AU political direction; and region-wide civilian efforts to persuade LRA fighters to surrender, deliver much needed humanitarian relief and spur economic development.

The divergent political interests and regional mistrust that have crippled Lightning Thunder show that strong political leadership is required to obtain full commitment from the key African actors to work in a complementary and coordinated fashion to defeat the LRA. Pursuant to its Constitutive Act, the AU should take on this responsibility.[139] That it do so is essential to investing the anti-LRA campaign with greater legitimacy for African leaders. The speedy appointment of a special envoy of standing with a clear and strong mandate from the Peace and Security Council is a vital component of its role.

The AU should also seize the opportunity created by the escalation of U.S. support to reinvigorate the military effort. To do so, it needs to authorise the military operation by breaking the deadlock around the Regional Intervention Force.[140] That entity will comprise the four armies already involved, but the AU's contribution can introduce a new, common operational and legal framework that should enable smoother cooperation and greater transparency and accountability. The AU Commission must quickly finalise the planning for a framework that includes an operational concept that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the AU and the four countries and details a military strategy prioritising protection of civilians, good civil-military relations and enhanced information management and coordination.[141] It should also emphasise the importance of ensuring access for humanitarian actors. Once the AU Commission submits a report containing these "implementation modalities", the Peace and Security Council should promptly authorise the RIF.

While the U.S. is strengthening its political and military engagement, it quite properly does not intend to try to lead the anti-LRA effort. It recognises that there is a greater chance of success if there is full buy-in by Africans and that this in turn requires African leadership. The Obama administration also knows that it cannot guarantee it will be able to maintain the most exposed element of its heightened level of support – the advisers deployed in the field – for more than a matter of months. Consequently it hopes its actions will catalyse stronger efforts by other actors.[142] To ensure what it is presently doing does not inadvertently sideline the AU initiative, Washington should support AU political leadership in word and deed and ensure all its interventions, civilian and military, complement those the AU plans to make in the near future.

Nevertheless, bolder military efforts should not be delayed until the AU is ready to play its full role. Kabila's permission for continued Ugandan operations on Congolese soil is not guaranteed, so the opportunity to hit the LRA hard while most of the LRA is in the CAR and the U.S. advisers are available needs to be taken. The U.S. should press the Ugandan and host armies to make a strong push immediately, on the clear understanding that Uganda will render its operation more transparent and accountable. Washington should also ensure that the Ugandan army adopts in advance the principles and practices that the AU is preparing for the RIF's eventual operational and legal framework. This means using its new field advisers to make certain that the Ugandans prioritise protection of civilians, civil-military relations and enhanced information management and coordination.

[138] See Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., p. 14.

[139] Article 3(f) states that it is an AU objective to "promote peace, security, and stability on the continent"; Article 4(h) grants the organisation the right "to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity". Article 4(j) also establishes "the right of Member States to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security". (Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan have done this.) "Constitutive Act of the African Union", adopted by the thirty-sixth ordinary session of the assembly of heads of state and government, Lomé, 11 July 2000.

[140] In July 2011 the AU changed the term Regional Task Force (RTF) to Regional Intervention Force (RIF).

[141] The operational and legal framework should also include a mission plan, code of conduct, rules of engagement, standard operating procedures, status of mission agreement and memorandum of understanding to which the four armies must adhere.

[142] Crisis Group telephone interview, U.S. State Department official, Washington DC, 31 October 2011.

At the same time, the AU and international partners should increase political and financial support for civilian efforts that form an essential complement to the military operation. MONUSCO's Disarmament, Demobilisation, Repatriation, Resettlement and Reintegration (DDRRR) program in the DRC has proved its worth in encouraging LRA fighters to surrender and assisting their return home. It has extended its reach into the CAR and South Sudan, but a coordinated regional program is still lacking. More humanitarian aid and, in particular, economic development is needed to help the inhabitants of the tri-border region survive and start rebuilding their lives.

Finally, the AU should lead regional governments and international actors in planning ahead. Now is the time to establish a clear timescale and exit strategy for the military operation and to plan for how to respond should U.S. support decline or Ugandan forces pull out. Likewise, there should be a clear understanding that if Kony, Odhiambo and Ongwen, the senior LRA commanders against whom there are outstanding ICC arrest warrants, are captured, justice requires that they be delivered to The Hague for trial.

A. Muster and Maintain Political Will

The highest priority for those who want the LRA stopped is to obtain the full political commitment of Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan to a military operation that seeks to eliminate the LRA while ensuring civilian safety. Without this, Kony will be able to reorganise and strengthen his forces again. Since the LRA remains a low priority for all four governments, constant insistence and negotiation are required.

The AU should implement its decision to appoint a special envoy to work at head-of-state level to secure the commitment and cooperation of the four countries. A robust mandate from the Peace and Security Council and the envoy's personal standing should invest him with the authority to speak plainly to Museveni, Kabila, Bozizé and Kiir. The envoy should be an African statesman who speaks English and French and has the record and military experience to earn all four presidents' respect. Once appointed, the envoy should prioritise obtaining Kabila's agreement for Ugandan troops to access all areas in the DRC where the LRA is active. To make this easier to swallow, the envoy should propose access for an initial period of six months, with the need for possible renewal to be reviewed after five months. The envoy should seek similar agreements from Bozizé and Kiir and also press Museveni to commit more troops and logistical support to the operation. International partners, the U.S. and EU in particular, should fully support the AU special envoy, including by pressing Uganda and the other LRA-affected countries to accept his appointment. The EU should provide funds to enable the envoy to set up an office and operate, including through shuttle diplomacy, for at least one year.[143] The office also needs sufficient communications and staff to monitor the military operation, liaise between the four participating countries, Western partners and the UN, including the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), and report to the Peace and Security Council.[144]

The U.S. should work closely with the AU on both political and military matters. Its military and other investments in Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan put it in a strong position to conduct vigorous diplomacy with regional leaders. It should make full use of that position to complement AU efforts. Washington should appoint its own special envoy for the Great Lakes region to collaborate closely with the AU representative in fostering regional political will to defeat the LRA and protect civilians. Western donors – the U.S., EU, UK, France – and the UN should be prepared to scale down military and other aid if the four presidents do not demonstrate that will.

The UN Security Council's 14 November 2011 debate and presidential statement on the LRA was a welcome step-up in its efforts to encourage the political commitment of African leaders as well as more effective military and civilian action on the ground.[145] It should follow this with strengthened efforts throughout the UN system, while individual Council member states should translate rhetoric into action by concerted bilateral diplomacy.

B. Launch an Urgent Military Push Prioritising Civilian Protection

As discussed above, the Ugandan and host country armies, with guidance from the U.S. advisers, should make a con-

[143] Ad hoc EU funding to AMIS created uncertainty about its future, so hampered planning. Ekengard, op. cit., p. 37.

[144] UNOCA, a political affairs office in Libreville, Gabon inaugurated in March 2011, has been mandated to coordinate UN efforts against cross-border challenges including the LRA. Abou Moussa, its head, held a seminar on 10-11 October for the Secretary-General's special representatives in the region at which the LRA led the agenda. A communiqué called on the international community to invest more in stopping the LRA. Transcript, 6601st meeting, UN Security Council, S/PV.6601, 18 August 2011; "L'ONU réclame plus de moyens pour combattre la LRA", Afriquinfos, 13 October 2011.

[145] The Security Council issued a press statement on the LRA issue in July 2011 (SC/10335). Resort to a more authoritative presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/21) reflects the body's heightened concern with ending the LRA.

certed military push to eliminate the LRA while its top leaders and most of their forces are in the CAR and the heightened U.S. political and military engagement lasts. If Kony crosses back into the DRC, political problems with Kinshasa would likely make pinning him down more difficult. The U.S. administration also needs to show quickly that its military advisers are having effect in order to justify their continued presence. This offensive should not await establishment of the AU's Regional Intervention Force, but it needs to be conducted in accordance with the principles and practices that it can be anticipated will be part of the RIF's operational and legal framework.

More robust civilian protection. Protecting civilians is both a moral imperative and crucial for military success. Protecting settlements vulnerable to attack denies the LRA supplies and new recruits and improves relations with civilians, the most important source of information on LRA activity.[146] Since December 2008, the Ugandan army has operated on the basis that its main role is to track down and eliminate the LRA, while host armies are to protect civilians. This division of priorities should continue, also after the RIF is established, but the weakness of local forces means it would be irresponsible of the Ugandans not to protect civilians when they can. U.S. advisers should ensure that Ugandan planning includes robust measures to mitigate the risk of LRA retaliation against civilians.

In anticipation of the heightened military activity that the U.S. advisers' presence should entail, MONUSCO and UNMISS should increase their efforts to protect civilians. MONUSCO in particular should deploy troops to Bas-Uélé and reinforce those already deployed in Haut-Uélé to patrol vulnerable roads and villages. It should also accompany and monitor more operations by the Congolese army. The latter's discipline is notably better when monitored by MONUSCO troops. However, the Congolese government still needs to improve civilian oversight of its forces in LRA-affected areas, enforce discipline and punish and withdraw offenders from the field.

Former LRA captives and combatants must also be protected in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law. The Ugandan army currently has standard operating procedures (SOPs) entailing the quick hand-over of women and children to international protection agencies who look after them and organise their return home. The RIF should adopt the same SOPs so there can be no dispute over the correct procedure.

Improved civil-military relations. All four armies, the Ugandan in particular, need urgently to win and maintain civilian trust. If not, civilians will continue to be reluctant to give timely and actionable intelligence on LRA activity. In addition to protecting civilians from attack, the Ugandan army should keep open two-way channels of communication with state authorities in provincial capitals and other local leaders, including church figures and customary chiefs.[147] It should inform them of its presence and expected movements and of recent security incidents. The U.S. advisers should encourage the Ugandans to be responsive to the security concerns of locals.

The Ugandan army should employ locals as liaisons to host communities. These should have the language skills to explain the army's presence and activities and collect information on the LRA. MONUSCO's civil affairs division uses community liaison assistants (CLAs) for this in the DRC, and some have proved valuable.[148] In all countries the army should build strong ties with humanitarian agencies and NGOs, which are often best informed on security incidents.

In South Sudan and the CAR, the Ugandans should work more closely, including sharing information, with self-defence groups. This is essential to the latter's potential to protect civilians and ensure they do not become a risk to their communities. In addition, local civilian authorities, police and national armies should register all self-defence group members, agree in writing on their specific tasks and plan and monitor their activities carefully to ensure they do not exploit other civilians, especially minorities.[149] The Ugandan and other armies should explain the need to guard, not kill, captured LRA, because they have valuable information.[150] The Ugandan and South Sudanese armies should invite a Home Guard liaison officer to join information-sharing meetings. All armies should also make a concerted effort to engage Mbororo herders, who are more likely than other civilians to have contact with the LRA.[151]

[146] See Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., p. 15.

[147] In Oriental province, state representatives are few, temporary and not local. In hard times, locals turn more readily to church and customary leaders. Crisis Group interviews, church leaders, chief, Wando chefferie, civil society, Dungu, June 2011.

[148] Since March 2011, six CLAs work alongside Moroccan peacekeepers in Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé districts. Crisis Group interviews, civil affairs and DDRRR sections, Dungu, June 2011.

[149] For more details on how the potential of self-defence groups can be realised, see Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

[150] Former LRA abductees have said they were desperate to leave the bush but were too frightened of the Home Guard at Tambura. Crisis Group interview, NGO worker from Tambura, Yambio, 17 June 2011.

[151] See Crisis Group Report, *LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony*, op. cit., p. 11.

Enhanced information management and coordination. Given the LRA's mobility and dispersal, it is a considerable challenge for the four armies to be aware of all attacks and sightings and respond rapidly, either to protect civilians or pursue and engage the fighters. To do so requires an excellent, region-wide communication system allowing rapid and reliable intelligence gathering and, after thorough analysis, dissemination of orders to multiple units to launch coordinated action that makes best use of limited resources. The U.S. military advisers should prioritise setting up a well-oiled communications system and information-sharing mechanisms with local armies so the RIF can more easily act as a united force.

In particular the U.S. should quickly implement its plan to set up joint intelligence and operations centres comprising Ugandan and local armies in the CAR and South Sudan in anticipation of these becoming the RIF's tactical sector headquarters. To ease analysis of often unclear or fragmentary data, all armies should adopt a common format for reporting incidents modelled on that used by the JIOC in Dungu. Translators from the Ugandan and Central African armies should facilitate communication at the joint intelligence and operations centre in Obo. To widen this network, representatives of UN country missions should participate at the centres in both countries.[152] The four armies should improve information exchange and coordination with civilian organisations that deliver humanitarian aid and development assistance. This can be mutually beneficial as these organisations are often well informed on security incidents but need security information, and sometimes escorts, to work.

Greater transparency and accountability. U.S. military advisers in the field should strive to make the operation more transparent by monitoring and reporting all breaches of strict operating standards respecting human rights and humanitarian law. The RIF should engrain these principles in the code of conduct and rules of engagement for all troops that operate under its ambit. The AU can increase transparency by placing its own civilian international humanitarian and refugee law experts inside the RIF, the special envoy's office and the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) to monitor all armies' behaviour. The RIF should have a clear procedure for reporting wrong doing of any kind. A multinational commission in the Joint Operations Centre should be tasked with investigating any allegations of wrong doing by any soldiers, including human rights abuses and attempts to profit from illegal resource extraction, and reporting to the AU special envoy, who should ensure the relevant military and civilian authorities take appropriate corrective action.

C. Intensify Complementary Civilian Efforts

As MONUSCO's DDRRR program expands, its impact grows, but it is still too small and lacks coordination at the regional level. The program includes setting up community FM radios that air messages encouraging LRA members to surrender and local communities to assist those trying to escape. It is the carrot that complements the military operation's stick. These "Coming Home" or "Tough Talk" radio broadcasts cover an expanding area in the DRC, South Sudan and the CAR but still only a fraction of the LRA's area of operation. In addition, MONUSCO is producing leaflets for the UN and the armies of Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan to disseminate in areas that radio messages do not reach. The AU and other international actors should support such efforts and work to improve coordination with and participation by national authorities.

However, there is no comprehensive region-wide system to ensure that all former fighters are returned home safely and those against whom no legal charges are pending are helped, including with jobs and psycho-social care, to reintegrate into civilian life.[153] Given the UN's civilian presence in all three countries, it should take responsibility for organising this.[154] MONUSCO, UNMISS and BINUCA should establish a joint regional system with clear procedures for receiving LRA escapees and rank-and-file combatants and returning them home, when necessary using international and national NGOs or church organisations. This system should include sensitising families and communities on how to help returnees readjust to civilian life.

The AU and international partners should ensure the humanitarian relief effort has sufficient resources to take care of the needy, especially within displaced communities. However, given the risk that communities can become dependent on outside help, donors, UN agencies and international NGOs should concentrate on promoting agriculture and small business to increase self-sufficiency.

Donors should fund the region-wide DDRRR and also support efforts to improve communications and transport infrastructure in the tri-border region. Despite recent U.S. efforts,

[152] In South Sudan, UNMISS should be represented. The UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (Bureau intégré des Nations unies pour la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine, BINUCA) should send its LRA-dedicated staff member from Bangui.

[153] The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides modest funding for child escapees only.

[154] Uganda has already established a system for returning Acholi ex-LRA members to their homes in northern Uganda.

mobile telephone coverage remains very limited.[155] A community's ability to communicate quickly with those outside boosts its security and economic activity.[156] Likewise, donors should invest in repairing roads, thereby enabling access for security forces, cheaper and faster transport of goods and greater social interaction between communities. Urgent repair of the road between Obo in the CAR and Bambouti on the border with South Sudan would give the Ugandan army greater access to the CAR from its logistics hub in Nzara, South Sudan and allow commercial traffic from Sudan to reach Obo, where provisions are scarce.

D. Plan Ahead

African and other international actors need to plan now for both positive and negative outcomes of the anti-LRA efforts. While the chances of ending the LRA are improving, its endurance should not be underestimated. The AU, its member states and donors should plan to maintain the political and operational elements of the regional cooperation initiative for at least one year, with the need to extend for another six months to be reviewed after eight months. It is possible domestic pressure may lead to the withdrawal of U.S. military advisers before the LRA is eliminated. In that case, the Ugandan and partner armies should continue under the RIF's operational framework, using the principles, systems and expertise the advisers will have passed on.

If the RIF captures Kony, Odhiambo and Ongwen alive, the AU and its international partners should press for their transfer to the ICC for trial.[157] With them gone (dead or alive), Museveni may want to withdraw his troops and announce victory. But this could leave many LRA fighters in the bush, some with very little knowledge of life outside the group's brutal world. They would continue to be a threat to civilians. The AU and its international partners should ensure that Uganda maintains some forces in the field to help local armies eliminate LRA remnants. The AU should also ensure that efforts to persuade the fighters to surrender continue until all residual LRA groups no longer pose a threat to civilians. Programs helping former LRA members to reintegrate into civilian life through jobs creation, traditional justice and other reconciliation procedures will need to continue even after there is no more threat.

LRA commanders not subject to ICC arrest warrants should be handed over to the authorities of their native country to decide on prosecution or other appropriate accountability processes.[158] The AU should encourage the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan to take responsibility for healing the social wounds within and between communities in the tri-border region and working with development partners to help civilians put their lives back together.

[155] The U.S., through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is paying for the construction of four mobile phone masts at Doruma, Bangadi, Ango and Faradje in the DRC.

[156] MONUSCO and Invisible Children, a U.S.-based NGO, have helped the Catholic Church increase the number of its high frequency radios in Haut- and Bas-Uélé Districts in the DRC to 26. In each location, a Crisis Committee reports to the station at Dungu twice a day with details on the security situation in its area. Crisis Group email communication, MONUSCO DDRRR officer, 9 November 2011.

[157] Uganda set up an International Crimes Division of the High Court to try individuals who had committed serious crimes during the LRA conflict. In July 2011, in its first case, it charged Thomas Kwoyelo with 53 counts of crimes against humanity. However, in late September the Constitutional Court ruled that under the 2000 Amnesty Act, Kwoyelo was entitled to amnesty like other former LRA combatants. The Amnesty Commission has provided blanket amnesty to more than 26,000 people (not all LRA-connected) since 2000, but the Amnesty Act does not apply to Kony, Odhiambo and Ongwen because the ICC has acted against them. Crisis Group interview, chairman of the Amnesty Commission, Kampala, 12 July 2011; "Uganda orders amnesty for LRA rebel commander", Agence France-Presse, 22 September 2011.

[158] All LRA commanders are believed to be Ugandan citizens. See fn. 4 above.

VII. CONCLUSION

The LRA has long since ceased to present a political case, however distorted, in Uganda where it was born, morphing instead into a multinational criminal and terror band. The harm it has already done, however, will leave scars on large numbers of individuals for the rest of their lives and on families and communities over a wide region for years. That powerful nations have allowed the suffering to go on this long is a tragedy. The U.S. decision to step up its political and military engagement creates an opportunity to end the senseless violence, but to make good on that opportunity, stronger African buy-in is required, especially from the immediately involved states: Uganda, the DRC, the CAR and South Sudan. And for that to happen, the AU must live up to its responsibilities.

The AU should lead by actively encouraging other actors to help with a common goal that it cannot achieve on its own. The U.S., EU and UN have essential parts to play. Each should do so in ways that complement and reinforce AU efforts, in particular to shore up the political will of Uganda, the one nation whose army is in a position to do the essential fighting, as well as of the three states on whose territory the LRA is marauding. If it does not receive this support and the LRA renews its strength, the international community will again have failed many thousands of civilians, and that would be yet another terrible tragedy.

Nairobi/Brussels, 17 November 2011

APPENDIX A

MAP OF LRA ATTACKS IN THE DRC, SOUTH SUDAN AND THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, JANUARY-OCTOBER 2011

Sources: ICG, OCHA, UNHCR, US Dept of State, IFRA (Amélie Desgroppes)

Since many LRA attacks go unreported, this map is not exhaustive.

APPENDIX B

LEAFLET USED TO ENCOURAGE LRA FIGHTERS TO SURRENDER

The UN and the armies of Uganda, the DRC, CAR and South Sudan deposit these leaflets in places where the LRA is active to encourage fighters to surrender.

Front

Translation

MESSAGE TO ALL LRA

What are you fighting for? Why are you moving further and further away from your home?

Do not let the LRA keep you hostage. Do not let them lie to you. Find the courage to escape.

Go as quickly as possible to the UPDF (Ugandan Army), FARDC (Congolese Army), FACA (Central African Army), SPLA (South Sudanese Army) or any authority in the UN (United Nations). These people will protect you and take you home in security and dignity.

Your family is waiting for you. They know you were abducted by force and they want you to come home.

Back

This side encourages LRA members to listen to the radio stations broadcasting similar "Come Home" messages, provides a number they can call if they need help surrendering and shows former LRA fighters in Uganda with their families.

Translation

MESSAGE TO ALL LRA

[Below the flags] This message is from the countries of Uganda, Southern Sudan, Central African Republic, the DRC and the UN.[159]

[159] Source: MONUSCO DDRRR division.

APPENDIX C

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