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The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity

The Answer to the Conflict in northern Uganda

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony's failure to sign a peace deal in early April 2008, after over twenty years of violence, drove a nail into the coffin of peace talks aimed at ending the conflict—a process that has ground to an unsuccessful end. The talks certainly contributed to northern Uganda's current state of relative peace, and created a mechanism to address tensions between the people in the North and the southern-dominated government. Without real leverage or a direct channel of negotiations to Kony himself, the LRA leader has been able to effectively exploit this last year of negotiations, enabling him to successfully morph from a rebel/predator in northern Uganda into a genuine regional warlord. This in turn allows him to stave off international pressure, collect food and money from the mediators and donors, and buy time to abduct, train, and equip new combatants.



To bring an end to the LRA threat in northern Uganda and the surrounding region, the peace strategy must shift from one that relies solely on negotiations to one that develops leverage through military planning, presses Kony to make a choice about his future, and pushes forward a development and security strategy for northern Ugandans to return voluntarily, even in the absence of a peace deal. Otherwise, without a concerted effort to address the regional threat that Kony now poses, no civilian within a four-country radius can rest assured that they will not fall victim to the next LRA attack.



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We can stop genocide and crimes against humanity where they are happening and prevent them from happening in the future through the “3Ps” framework:

Peacemaking: The international community, led by the U.S., must build leverage to directly negotiate with Joseph Kony, and should press for the Ugandan government to begin rapidly implementing its reconstruction and development plan for the North.

Protection: Expand efforts to protect civilians in northern Uganda and throughout the region from LRA attacks, and prosecute human rights abusers in the Ugandan army.

Punishment: Support the International Criminal Court indictments, form a sanctions committee at the UN Security Council, and plan for regional military operations against the LRA.



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