



**enough**

The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity

## Between a Rock and a Hard Place

### LRA Attacks and Congolese Army Abuses in Northeastern Congo

Ledio Cakaj | March 2010

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#### Executive summary

The Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, continues to pose a severe threat to civilians in northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>1</sup> Since the LRA began attacking civilians on Congolese soil in September of 2008 through the end of 2009, it has killed approximately 1,800 civilians,<sup>2</sup> with 300 deaths during December 2009.<sup>3</sup> More than 100 people were killed during January 2010.<sup>4</sup>

Units from the Congolese national army, or FARDC, sent to protect civilians and fight the LRA have shown little interest in either task. Congolese soldiers largely refuse to engage LRA while constantly harassing the local population. Incidents of rape, looting, beatings, and even killings of innocent civilians by Congolese soldier abound. There were 116 reported cases of rapes allegedly committed by Congolese soldiers last October in just one neighborhood near the Congolese army base in Dungu.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Congo, or MONUC, is stretched too thin to adequately protect civilians in the vast region where the LRA operates, often in diffuse cells.

The movement of some LRA elements into Darfur should alarm policymakers and spark revitalized international efforts to deal with the militia.<sup>6</sup> But these efforts should not neglect the LRA's continuing ability to wreak havoc in northeastern Congo. Both the Congolese army and MONUC should urgently prioritize the protection of civilians. The Congolese army should take swift action to deal with abuses committed by its soldiers, prosecuting those who commit abuses with a focus on command responsibility. Moreover, a credible investigation into the embezzlement of U.N.-provided rations and supplies for the Congolese army is urgently required. The misuse of such materials contributes to the army's bad behavior and is an obstacle to more effective efforts to deal with the LRA.

U.N. presence, especially in the areas worst affected by LRA violence, is crucial. Unsurprisingly, LRA attacks happen most frequently in places with no peacekeepers. A promised contingent of Tunisian peacekeepers should be deployed immediately to Province Orientale. The majority of the newly arrived troops should be deployed to Niangara, Ngilima, and Bangadi, with at least some presence in Bas Uele. This force will need rapid response capability, including helicopters and other vehicles. In the meantime, MONUC should conduct frequent and routine joint patrols with FARDC soldiers. Joint patrols help enormously in terms of protection and evidence demonstrates that Congolese soldiers behave better when in the company of peacekeepers.

If the Congolese army can improve its behavior, U.N. cooperation with them should expand to include information sharing and coordinated operations aimed at protecting civilians and neutralizing the LRA. Wherever possible, such cooperation should also be established with the Ugandan army, which is still operating in Congo in pursuit of the LRA. Successful cooperation between Congo's army, MONUC, and Ugandan forces appears to have succeeded in protecting the population of Faradje from attacks last year and compelling the LRA commander, Lt. Colonel Charles Arop, to surrender in November.

Practical steps to improve civilian protection can also contribute to a more coherent regional approach to end the threat posed by the LRA. MONUC's civilian component also has an important role to play. Political affairs officers with the capacity to collect and analyze information on the LRA should be deployed to Dungu. Likewise, increasing cross-border cooperation between U.N. operations in Congo, Sudan, and Central African Republic, or CAR, could help to develop a more holistic strategy, under the aegis of the U.N. Security Council.

### The Lord's Resistance Army in Congo

Attacks by the LRA in northeastern Congo continued throughout 2009. While it is easy to mistake the LRA's operations for mindless violence, the patterns of attacks reflect deliberate tactics on the part of the fighting force as it has reconstituted itself as a regional threat.<sup>7</sup>



Source: U.S. Department of State, Humanitarian Information Unit, USG, MONUC, UN OCHA, UNHCR.

## Attacks, abductions, and a growing humanitarian crisis

Following the LRA's large-scale massacre of some 900 Congolese civilians in December 2008 and January 2009, LRA attacks in northeastern Congo continued throughout last year.<sup>8</sup> The majority of LRA attacks have taken place in and around a "triangle of death" formed by the towns of Niangara, Bangadi, and Ngilima in Haut Uele territory, with some attacks also occurring in neighboring Bas Uele.<sup>9</sup>

The brutality of attacks sharply increased during the final three months of 2009. For the first time in more than a year, the LRA resumed deliberate mutilations, with at least five such cases in December. Enough spoke to a man from Bangadi who was mutilated on December 2, 2009. He said the rebels beat him and cut off his lips and ears in complete silence.

Other particularly brutal practices include burning people alive. A man from Nakwa, a village 9.3 miles south of Bangadi, described such an incident: "The LRA locked our family inside our house and set it on fire, but I was able to force open the door and escape the LRA who came after me."<sup>10</sup> The brutality is intended to send a message of strength to Congolese and Ugandan officials while simultaneously terrorizing Congolese civilians so that they will not disclose LRA's whereabouts or assist people escaping LRA captivity.

Attacks have caused massive displacement and hunger. The United Nations estimates that more than 450,000 people have been internally displaced in Haut and Bas Uele, mostly due to LRA attacks.<sup>11</sup> Another 16,000 Congolese have sought refuge in neighboring countries.<sup>12</sup> As people flee their villages and gather in town centers, concerns about hunger and malnutrition have multiplied. More than 15,000 people have moved within less than a mile of Bangadi center, abandoning their crops for fear of attacks and abductions by the LRA.<sup>13</sup> Although aid organizations have reported severe malnutrition rates in Bangadi and Ngilima, the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies have suspended food aid in some of the worst affected areas after noticing a pattern of immediate LRA attacks just after distributions. "It is against the 'do no harm' principle," said an international aid worker, "but it creates a bizarre situation where by adhering to principled positions we are letting thousands starve."<sup>14</sup>

To safeguard food aid, some military force will need to stay and protect civilians up to two weeks after food is delivered. MONUC officials claim they do not have enough troops on the ground to do this. Aid workers say that based on their past behavior, Congolese soldiers cannot be trusted to protect civilians and might also loot the food themselves.

## LRA's whereabouts and wherewithal

The LRA continues to cause mayhem and suffering far disproportionate to its actual size, making efforts to apprehend the leadership all the more vital. Dominic Ongwen, an International Criminal Court indictee and a notoriously brutal commander, is in charge of LRA operations in Congo.<sup>15</sup> He has at least 200 fighters operating in small groups of 7 to 10. The Dungu groups total about 150 fighters with another 25 to 50 located in Bas Uele. In late 2009, another LRA group, commanded by Lt. Colonel Charles Arop and operating further east in Faradje, surrendered to the Ugandan army. Close to 200 fighters were believed to be CAR, including the units that have



Congolese soldiers receive MONUC food supplies from MONUC logistics base in Dungu.

now crossed over into South Darfur in Sudan. Of this group, approximately 50 were operating under leader Joseph Kony. Maj General Okot Odhiambo and Colonel Okot Odek are also part of this group.<sup>16</sup> The total LRA fighting force as of December 2009 was around 400 people.<sup>17</sup>

The LRA resumed the practice of abducting and indoctrinating children to fill its ranks, a practice that had declined during the first half of 2009. International aid organizations believe that 1,400 people have been abducted by the LRA in the past 18 months. At least 800 remain in captivity. More than two-thirds are children.<sup>18</sup> Children from Central African Republic and Sudan are used to fight in Congo, while Congolese children fight in the neighboring states.<sup>19</sup> Abductions are not limited to children, either. More than 250 people, mostly adults, were reportedly abducted during an attack in Tapili.<sup>20</sup> These large-scale abductions suggest that LRA groups might have settled and need people to farm. In December 2008 when the LRA were based in Congo's Garamba National Park, 300 forced laborers were used to cultivate food in more than 15 square miles of land.<sup>21</sup>

Eyewitnesses describe three LRA bases in Haut Uele that roughly correspond to the “triangle of death”—one north of Niangara, one close to Bangadi, and another base in Ngilima.<sup>22</sup> The bases near Bangadi and Niangara were attacked by Ugandan soldiers in November and December of 2009. Some of the particularly brutal December attacks in Bangadi appear to have been a response to the Ugandan army's actions. The LRA believed that people from Bangadi had informed the Ugandans of their location.<sup>23</sup>

The road from Niangara to Bangadi is of strategic importance to the LRA. North of Bangadi, the road leads across the border into two large forests in neighboring Western Equatoria State of Southern Sudan, the Bire Kpatua and the Mbarizunga Game Reserves. Most of the LRA attacks that plagued this part of southern Sudan during 2009 were launched from these forests by rebels under Ongwen's command. In addition, a parallel path from Bangadi continues northwest into the Ango region of Bas Uele, and continues northward into the Central African Republic.

## Bas Uele: A new safe haven?

Bas Uele is the region to the immediate west of Haut Uele and makes up the northwest corner of Province Orientale. A group of LRA fighters led by Major Kidega Murefu moved west into Ango territory in Bas Uele last summer, attacking civilians along their way, in a deliberate effort to clear the area.<sup>24</sup> By mid-October 2009, more than 2,500 people had fled across the border to CAR.<sup>25</sup> At the end of November, Congolese army troops deployed to Ango were attacked head on by the LRA, a fairly unusual practice that underlines the importance of this territory to LRA.<sup>26</sup>

The events in Bas Uele are significant as they indicate the possibility that the larger LRA groups, including the high command, might relocate to Ango territory if the pressure on the LRA elsewhere increases. Ango is significantly farther west in Congo than where Ongwen's groups are now and immediately south of the large Zemongo forest in Central African Republic. Kony and the rest of the LRA troops, close to 200 fighters, were believed to have been in Zemongo in December 2009.<sup>27</sup>

The move of the LRA in Ango territory is bad news for the military effort to finish off the rebels. Ango is a vast and sparsely populated area with little Congolese and Ugandan military presence and no U.N. troops. The river Uele that runs south of Ango acts as a natural barrier to movement from the south while the porous border with Central African Republic lies to the north. West of Ango is Equateur Province, a hotbed of Congolese rebel activity. Any troops in pursuit of the LRA would have to pass from the east on the Doruma—Ango axis that is easy to monitor. Continuing to hunt the LRA as far as Ango seriously stretches the Ugandan army's supply lines, and could entangle regional security forces in an unending cross-border game of cat and mouse, with the LRA able to move among Congo, Central African Republic, and Sudan.

It is possible that Ango has already been used as a safe haven for LRA leadership. A Congolese girl who recently escaped after spending a year as a wife to one LRA commander told an international aid worker that she had seen Kony in Congo in August 2009, but was unable to say exactly where. "There was a big ceremony," she said, "and a group prayer was held in his honor."<sup>28</sup>

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## The Congolese army: Making a bad situation worse

The Congolese army has almost 6,000 troops in Province Orientale, with headquarters in the district capital of Dungu. Despite this sizeable presence, Congolese troops have utterly failed to protect the local population from LRA attacks. Ngilima, Bangadi, and Niangara have repeatedly been targeted by the LRA despite considerable Congolese army presence in all three places. Many of the people Enough spoke to said that Congolese soldiers were too scared to confront the LRA or simply unwilling to do so. "The FARDC only faces the LRA when they encounter them by accident," said a local aid worker.<sup>29</sup> In Bangadi, repeated LRA attacks have occurred in the town market, less than a mile from a base where about 500 Congolese soldiers are stationed.<sup>30</sup>

## Unpaid and unfed soldiers

The Congolese army lacks both the means and the motivation to protect civilians from the LRA. FARDC soldiers in Haut Uele were not paid for the last four months of 2009 until December 2, when they received only one month's salary.<sup>31</sup> This sparked a protest outside of their base in Dungu, during which one soldier managed to fatally injure himself with his own grenade.<sup>32</sup>

Congolese soldiers maintain that their commanders misappropriate food and money intended for the rank and file.<sup>33</sup> Congolese soldiers were found using counterfeit 500 Congolese francs bills (worth approximately 80 cents) in the Dungu market. It's unclear whether the fraudulent bills were sent from Kinshasa or issued by commanders who pocketed the genuine money sent from the capital, as some soldiers claimed.<sup>34</sup>

Food provided to the Congolese army by MONUC is often sold directly in the market with very little going to the soldiers themselves. As part of supporting the Congolese army, MONUC provides food worth \$1 per day for 6,000 FARDC soldiers. Hardly any soldiers actually receive this amount of food. Troops based in and around Dungu say they receive 30 percent to 50 percent of their rations, while soldiers based further afield in Bangadi reported receiving as little as 10 percent of the rations.<sup>35</sup>

Enough researchers saw hundreds of MONUC-provided sardine cans on sale in the Dungu market. Two market vendors said that they bought the sardines in bulk from the Congolese army but would not provide the names of the sellers.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, a U.N. source described unopened 50 kilogram sacks of flour for sale in the market.<sup>37</sup> It is unlikely that such large amounts were sold by individual soldiers. Many believed that high FARDC officers were involved in the market dealings.<sup>38</sup>

Lack of discipline and training remain two of the biggest problems with Congolese troops in Orientale. These shortcomings are most acute with the so-called integrated troops: former rebel fighters granted amnesty and integrated in the national army. One-third of the 6,000 soldiers in Orientale are former fighters of the National Congress for the Defense of the People, or CNDP, the pro-Tutsi militia from the Kivus formerly led by Laurent Nkunda. These former rebels were supposed to receive military training as part of their integration in the military. Many of the integrated soldiers never had any training as rebels and never received any training or underwent rigorous vetting when joining the FARDC. There are, for instance, many underage fighters within FARDC ranks. In a one-day screening in December of three Congolese army camps, including the headquarters in Dungu, U.N. and humanitarian workers found 37 soldiers believed to be less than 18 years old, with more expected to be found in other camps.<sup>39</sup>



MONUC-provided sardine cans for sale in open market in Dungu.

Integrated soldiers often remain loyal to commanders from their former rebel groups, creating a parallel chain of command within the ranks and sometimes sowing conflict between former adversaries. Reports of in-fighting within the army started just after the arrival of integrated troops in May 2009 when one Congolese soldier beat to death two other soldiers in Niangara on July 18, 2009.<sup>40</sup> Two soldiers were killed by other soldiers last October.<sup>41</sup>

A lack of discipline and training has led to a highly unprofessional force that frequently endangers the local population. Congolese soldiers carry their weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades, bazookas, and grenades in densely populated areas, even when on leave. Eyewitnesses in Dungu reported that on October 5, 2009, a soldier slipped and accidentally launched a propelled grenade 500 meters from the central market.<sup>42</sup> On December 3, 2009, Enough witnessed one soldier attempting to shoot a colleague next to the central market in Dungu. The soldier was restrained by two other soldiers but a great number of people in the market, including children, had to scramble as the soldier kept erratically pointing his loaded gun in all directions in an attempt to shake off the hold of his colleagues.

Instead of sleeping in their barracks three miles from Dungu town, many soldiers instead stay in the town. “It is strange that a force supposed to protect civilians lives in the middle of populated areas and not outside to protect it from attacks,” said a resident of Dungu. “In case of attacks, the soldiers will be better protected than the civilians.”<sup>43</sup> Being in such close proximity to the population increases the potential for abuses against civilians that Congolese soldiers are committing in great numbers.

### Abuses against the population

A U.N. official in Orientale told Enough, “Not a day goes by that we don’t receive complaints about FARDC abuses.”<sup>44</sup> This has prompted Congolese and U.N. authorities to make interagency visits to areas where the complaints originate. During such a visit in September in Bangadi, a community elder and pastor from the local church said, in front of the delegation complete



Congolese soldiers and a civilian walk from FARDC base to Dungu town to spend the night.

with army commanders, that he was likely going to be killed for speaking but that the people of Bangadi were “tired of FARDC crimes against us, they [FARDC] steal, kill, rape our wives and daughters and arrest and jail anyone for no reason. We want them out of Bangadi and we the people of Bangadi are more afraid of FARDC than the LRA because of the attitude adopted by FARDC which are similar to LRA.”<sup>45</sup>

In some time periods, abuses by the Congolese army have been more pervasive than those of the LRA.<sup>46</sup> An aid worker said that there were 116 reported cases of sexual violence, including rape, for the month of October 2009 in Bamokandi alone, 1.8 miles from the big army base in Dungu.<sup>47</sup> Sexual assault, including rape, is also prevalent in Bangadi, Ngilima, and Niangara. A particularly egregious case involved the gang rape of a pregnant woman by five Congolese soldiers near the market of Bangadi on October 8, 2009.<sup>48</sup> A humanitarian organization that collects known cases of sexual violence states that there were 49 cases of sexual assault against minors in Bangadi for the second part of 2009 alone, equally attributed to FARDC and the LRA.<sup>49</sup> In Ngilima, there were on average 10 registered cases of sexual violence every month with 60 percent attributed to the LRA and the rest to the FARDC.<sup>50</sup> An international aid worker specializing in helping victims of sexual abuse noted that for every one woman who admitted to having been sexually abused at least two more people were also abused but were too afraid or ashamed to come forward.<sup>51</sup>

Abuses by the Congolese army against the local population also include killings, beatings, and severe injuries. In Bangadi, FARDC soldiers killed nine people from March to December of last year. The reason, according to residents of Bangadi, was mostly due to civilians refusing to hand over cash or their properties to soldiers. An internal U.N. security report for the month of October 2009 details eight confirmed civilian deaths and four injuries attributed to Congolese soldiers in Haut Uele during that month.<sup>52</sup> A particularly brutal case happened on November 13, 16.7 miles southeast of Dungu, when two FARDC soldiers killed a 4-year-old child and his parents so that they could steal their possessions.<sup>53</sup>

Cases of lootings and forced labor are daily occurrences. FARDC soldiers man checkpoints along the main axis where they charge “tax” to travelers ranging from 1,500 to 3,000 Congolese francs. A representative of a Congolese NGO estimated that instances of FARDC extortions are in the thousands per month. “It is almost an accepted fact by the population,” he said.<sup>54</sup>

People who cannot pay “tax” are forced into manual labor such as collecting fire wood and washing the soldiers’ uniforms and boots. Often, Congolese civilians are kept for days at checkpoints, forced to work for the soldiers. Having no means of transport, Congolese soldiers who have to walk many miles to their postings steal bicycles from the local population and harass the local motorcycle taxi drivers. Fed up with this occurrence, residents of Niangara came out in public protests at the end of October 2009 demanding an end to the theft. Residents of Ngilima, in anticipation of a Congolese army troop rotation, declared December 27 as the “Day without bicycles” and hid their bicycles from the soldiers.<sup>55</sup>

Enough researchers spoke to the FARDC commander in Dungu, General Leon Mushale, about the rampant abuses. He claimed that the problem was isolated: “It is the fault of the man, not of the organization ... we are dealing with the problems on a case-by-case basis.”<sup>56</sup> It is unclear if any FARDC soldiers have been punished for abuses committed against the population. “We have taken up the matter of abuses many times with the FARDC high command,” said an international humanitarian worker, “but all they have done is to relocate the worst people, moving the problem, not dealing with it.”<sup>57</sup>



A MONUC military expert said that the problem lies with the leadership of the FARDC and that commanders can do much more to stop the abuses. Residents of Bangadi directly accused the FARDC commander in charge, Major Nelson Mugaba of Battalion Urse, a former CNDP fighter, of allowing his soldiers to commit abuses against the population with absolute impunity. Residents said that the previous commander of the same FARDC troops was better behaved and that there were fewer FARDC abuses prior to the arrival of Major Mugaba in Bangadi. “During his time in Bangadi, living with the FARDC has been like living with a viper,” said a resident of Bangadi.<sup>58</sup> Interviews in Faradje, Ngilima, and Dungu revealed that the behavior of FARDC soldiers depended to a great degree on the behavior of their troop commander.

### Failure in the fight against LRA

Despite military agreements with the Ugandan army, the Congolese army has spectacularly failed in waging any sort of war against the LRA. Operations against the LRA were supposed to be conducted as part of two military operations. The first, Operation Rudia, was launched in September 2008 in an effort to contain the LRA within Garamba National Park and encourage defections.<sup>59</sup> The second, Rudia II, a joint operation with Ugandan intelligence cooperation, began in May 2009 and continues today. The Congolese army has failed to achieve its objectives under these operations. Some FARDC commanders have also intentionally weakened local self-defense forces, the only native groups that put up meaningful resistance to LRA, thus making life easier for the rebels.<sup>60</sup>

It is no coincidence that the worst-behaved FARDC units tend to dismantle the local self-defense forces, the only people who have the capacity to resist both the LRA and abusive Congolese soldiers. Referred to as Arrow Boys due to their primitive guns that include bows and arrows and locally manufactured guns, self-defense forces comprise civilians who try to defend their communities from LRA attacks. In Bangadi, the self-defense forces were forcibly dispersed when Major Mugaba arrived in June 2009. At least two self-defense force members from Bangadi were killed by Congolese soldiers. One of them, killed in June 2009, was shot in the middle of the Bangadi market with no warning, while at least two other members, including the leader of the force, were beaten up and imprisoned for many days.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, self-defense forces in Ngilima and Niangara were also dismantled by Congolese soldiers. “The self-defense forces were the only people who actually fought the LRA,” said a resident of Ngilima, adding, “without them, we are at the mercy of the LRA.”<sup>62</sup>

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### The role of MONUC<sup>63</sup>

As part of their mandate to protect civilians, MONUC peacekeepers conduct joint patrols with the FARDC.<sup>64</sup> Enough researchers were told by MONUC officials that patrols are conducted in Dungu daily and nightly, although residents of Dungu denied that night patrols took place. MONUC troops in Faradje conduct infrequent joint patrols with the FARDC. Interviews with aid workers familiar with the situation in Dingila revealed that the 15-strong force there does not conduct patrols or any protection activities of any kind. There was no U.N. presence in the areas most affected by LRA violence—Ngilima, Bangadi, and Niangara—as of December 15, 2009.<sup>65</sup>



UN troops on patrol in Dungeni.

While the peacekeeping force is offering some protection and access to areas where it has presence, the lack of troops in the worst-affected areas is troublesome. “Our soldiers are tired and too few to oversee such a huge area,” said a MONUC officer, adding, “We have troops in four places and we provide protection to humanitarian agencies to the degree that we can.”<sup>66</sup> The need for more troops has been evident for some time now. A designated 800-strong force from a Tunisian battalion that was supposed to arrive in June 2009 has not yet arrived. A MONUC military officer said, “It is easy to blame us for not protecting civilians but we don’t have enough soldiers. There are 40,000 troops in Kosovo, but only 17,000 in the entire DRC which is a vastly bigger country.”<sup>67</sup>

MONUC troops can certainly do more with the same number of peacekeepers, however. There is a huge need for better communication with the local population, which is growing increasingly hostile to the U.N. presence in the area.<sup>68</sup> A Congolese civil society leader said that there is frustration at the appearance of U.N. soldiers with guns, armored vehicles, and helicopters sitting in Dungeni while the LRA kills many in nearby areas.<sup>69</sup> More has to be done to ensure that MONUC’s material support to the Congolese army actually benefits the rank and file and does not simply line the pockets of commanders.

MONUC also offers some training to FARDC soldiers in terms of joint patrolling and escorting convoys. But joint patrols are not done frequently despite evidence that overwhelmingly suggests that Congolese soldiers behave much better when on patrol with MONUC peacekeepers.<sup>70</sup> A Moroccan officer in MONUC said that while patrols happen, in many cases they are decided by the head of unit in charge. He said, “Our primary task is to escort humanitarian convoys and protect the humanitarian agencies and NGOs. MONUC troops are not in charge of protecting civilians. The FARDC is in charge of protection.”<sup>71</sup>

The civilian component of MONUC should play a bigger role in tackling the LRA issue. There is no central cell in Dungu gathering and analyzing information on the LRA. The civilian component is scattered in Kisangani and Goma, many miles away from where the attacks are happening. It is surprising that MONUC did not organize such structures earlier, especially following the brutal LRA attacks of the 2008 “Christmas Massacres.”

Finally, the LRA should be regarded as a regional concern and not just a Ugandan problem. The U.N. Security Council should act accordingly and make the LRA a joint issue for the peacekeeping missions in DRC, Sudan, and CAR. There exists little cooperation at the moment between these missions. After at least three years of LRA activity outside of Uganda, one meeting of high U.N. officials from missions in the region gathered for the first time last December to discuss, among other things, how to deal with the LRA. A previous attempt planned for September 2009 failed because no MONUC high officials turned up.

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## Conclusion

With the LRA on the run, and facing escalating crises in eastern Congo and southern Sudan, the U.N. Security Council was content to keep the LRA on the backburner of the international security agenda during 2009. It was assumed that the Ugandan army, quietly assisted by the United States and the Congolese army, would be able to keep the LRA off balance and increasingly unable to cause trouble in one of the most remote areas in the region. Despite tangible progress, especially the surrender of several commanders and their troops, the impact of a resurgent LRA and predatory Congolese army presence in Haut Uele attest to the human cost of this arm’s-length approach to the LRA problem. That some LRA fighters have taken refuge in areas of south Darfur, Sudan controlled by the Government of Sudan is yet another disturbing development that merits urgent international investigation and response.

With the LRA replenishing its ranks and close to being able to establish a relatively safe haven near the borders of Sudan and Central African Republic, and the egregious behavior of the Congolese army effectively aiding the rebels, it’s time to up the ante. MONUC should develop a comprehensive civilian protection strategy that should prioritize more effective use of existing resources, especially greater cooperation with the Congolese army that is more rigorously conditioned. Far greater coordination between the U.N. missions in Congo, southern Sudan, and the Central African Republic is long overdue, and should be encouraged with the authority of the Security Council, which should treat the LRA as the grave threat to regional peace and security that it has repeatedly demonstrated itself to be.

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## Endnotes

- 1 This report is based on a research trip to Haut Uele district in Province Orientale at the beginning of December 2009. For Enough's analysis of the LRA in southern Sudan, see Ledio Cakaj, "The Lord's Resistance Army and the Threat Against Civilians in Southern Sudan," Enough strategy paper (2009), available at <http://www.enoughproject.org/publications/lra-threat-southern-sudan>. For more on the LRA in northeast Congo, see Julia Spiegel and Noel Atama, "Finishing the Fight Against the LRA," Enough strategy paper (2009), available at <http://www.enoughproject.org/publications/finishing-fight-against-lra-strategy-paper>.
- 2 Figures totaled from the United Nations and international NGO reports.
- 3 Based on reports from the president of Niangara, Niangara civil society, and the vicar of Isiro-Niangara, available at [http://www.ademis.org/pop/isiro\\_tapili3.htm](http://www.ademis.org/pop/isiro_tapili3.htm) (last accessed February 8, 2010).
- 4 OCHA, "Rapport hebdomadaire du 29 Janvier 2010," available at <http://www.rdc-humanitaire.net/?Rapport-hebdomadaire-du-29-janvier> (last accessed February 8, 2009).
- 5 Data from an international nongovernmental organization that monitors cases of sexual violence in northeastern DRC. The place is Bamokandi, a neighborhood of the capital of Haut Uele district.
- 6 Enough Project, "Press Release: Lord's Resistance Army finds safe-haven in Darfur," March 9, 2010.
- 7 Often, the attacks in one area are carried out to divert attention from another area or event. Attacks in February 2010 in southern CAR seem to have been carried out partly to deflect attention from a group of LRA moving north.
- 8 Human Rights Watch, "The Christmas Massacres: LRA Attacks on Civilians in Northern Congo" (2009), available at <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/02/16/christmas-massacres-0>.
- 9 Due to geographical positioning with Bangadi situated at the northern tip of the triangle, Niangara in the west, and Ngilima in the east.
- 10 Interview in Dungu, December 8, 2009. He and another person were the only two survivors of a family of 10.
- 11 OCHA, "Humanitarian action in DRC, Weekly report" (2009).
- 12 MONUC/OHCHR Special Report, "Summary of fact finding missions on alleged human rights violations committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the districts of Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé in Orientale province of the Democratic Republic of Congo" (2009).
- 13 Interview with local official, Bangadi, December 7, 2009.
- 14 Interview with aid worker, Dungu, December 3, 2009.
- 15 Ongwen is possibly second or third in command of the entire LRA. It is very likely Ongwen is second in command, especially if Odhiambo is crippled as claimed by the Ugandan army. This is particularly true if Brigadiers Abudema and Ochan Bunia were killed.
- 16 The Ugandan People Defence Force claimed that Brigadier Bok Abudema was killed in Djema, Central African Republic, at the beginning of 2010. Abudema's troops are responsible for a spate of attacks in CAR in February 2010, in the towns of Rafai, Dembia, and Nzako.
- 17 The DRC numbers are based on eyewitness accounts and are estimates. Numbers for CAR are also estimates and based on accounts from former LRA commander Charles Arop and Ugandan military intelligence officers.
- 18 Interviews with MONUC officials and NGO workers, Bunia, Dungu, and Kampala, December 2009.
- 19 At least 30 children abducted in 2009 in Duru and surrounding areas were used as fighters in CAR, according to an international humanitarian worker. This is reminiscent of old LRA strategies when Ugandan children were used to fight in Sudan and Sudanese children were used to fight in Uganda.
- 20 A report from the vicar of Isiro-Niangara puts the numbers of abductees for Tapili alone at 270. Report available at [http://www.ademis.org/pop/isiro\\_tapili3.htm](http://www.ademis.org/pop/isiro_tapili3.htm) (last accessed February 8, 2010).
- 21 Interviews with former LRA fighters, Gulu, September 13 and 14, 2009.
- 22 Based on interviews with formerly abducted people, residents of Bangadi and Ngilima, and international aid workers based in the field.
- 23 Interviews in Bangadi, December 7, 2009.
- 24 Murefu has two groups under him, a larger group believed to be in Banda and a smaller one in Epi.
- 25 OCHA, "Humanitarian action in DRC, Weekly report."
- 26 Interview with eyewitness in Bangadi, December 7, 2009. It is slightly unusual that the LRA would take on an incoming force head on, even FARDC forces.
- 27 It is possible a group of LRA fighters under Colonel Okot Odek has moved north into CAR and possibly into South Darfur in neighboring Sudan.
- 28 Interview with psychologist from INGO, Dungu, December 7, 2009.
- 29 Interview with international aid worker, Dungu, December 4, 2009.
- 30 According to a deployment map Enough researchers saw, FARDC Battalion Urse is deployed to Bangadi. A FARDC battalion has between 500 and 750 soldiers according to FARDC officers.
- 31 Interview with MONUC officers, Dungu, December 6, 7, and 8, 2009.
- 32 Interview with doctor at Dungu hospital, Dungu, December 7, 2009.
- 33 Interviews with FARDC soldiers, U.N. officials, and international aid workers, Dungu, Ngilima, and Bunia, December 2 and 9, 2009.
- 34 Enough interviews with local official, market vendors in Dungu, and FARDC soldier, December 2009.
- 35 Interviews with local officials, FARDC soldiers, and U.N. sources, December 2009.
- 36 Interview with Dungu market vendors, December 4 and 5, 2009.
- 37 Interview with MONUC worker, Dungu, December 4, 2009.
- 38 In interviews with local residents, NGO workers, and U.N. sources, there was a general view that the high command had to be involved or aware of the situation as the trade happened openly.
- 39 Interview with U.N. officials and NGO workers, Dungu, December 4, 5, and 8, 2009.
- 40 Internal annual INGO report, January 28, 2010.
- 41 Internal U.N. report. Synthesis of incidents for October 2009 and December 3, 2009.
- 42 Interviews in Dungu, December 6 and 7, 2009. Also corroborated in an annual INGO report, January 28, 2010.
- 43 Interview in Dungu, December 7, 2009.
- 44 Interview with U.N. official, Bunia, December 2, 2009.
- 45 MONUC Bangadi Field Mission Report, September 24, 2009.
- 46 Based on interviews with victims of FARDC abuses and U.N. and international and national NGOs.
- 47 Interview with international humanitarian worker, December 4, 2009.
- 48 Interview with local aid worker, Dungu, December 7, 2009.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 While the real numbers are much higher, there has recently been a debate among LRA experts about the use of rape by the LRA, which is relatively new. It is possible that FARDC soldiers or Congolese civilians commit rapes pretending to be LRA rebels, although so far Enough has found no evidence to support this claim.
- 51 Interview with aid worker, Dungu, December 4, 2009.
- 52 U.N. synthesis of security incidents for October 2009.
- 53 Internal annual INGO report, January 28, 2010.
- 54 Interview with Congolese head of NGO, Dungu, December 8, 2009.
- 55 Internal annual INGO report, January 28, 2009.
- 56 Interview with General Mushale, Dungu, December 4, 2009.
- 57 Interview with humanitarian worker, Dungu, December 8, 2009.
- 58 Interview with local official, Bangadi, December 7, 2009.
- 59 An agreement between the FARDC and the UPDF was signed in September 2008, and agreements have continued for the past two years. In a meeting among the chiefs of staff of FARDC, UPDF, and FACA in June 2009 in Kisangani, DRC, it was agreed that the FARDC would continue the fight against the LRA with support from UPDF intelligence squads.
- 60 The recently surrendered LRA commander Charles Arop said, "The Congolese soldiers are lazy, afraid, and not security conscious."
- 61 Interviews in Bangadi, December 7, 2009.
- 62 Address by the president of the civil society of Ngilima to the U.N. delegation, Ngilima, December 8, 2009.
- 63 The U.N. mission has close to 1,000 blue helmets in Haut Uele, the majority from a Moroccan infantry battalion, the rest being Indonesian engineers and Bangladeshi air force personnel. There are about 100 peacekeepers in Faradje and another 100 in Duru with a unit of 15 soldiers in Dingila, while the rest are stationed in Dungu.
- 64 United Nations Security Council, "Resolution S/RES/1856" (2008).
- 65 It appears that MONUC squads were sent to Ngilima, Bangadi, and Niangara at the end of December 2009, although this was a temporary solution pending the arrival of reinforcements.
- 66 Interview with Morbat officer, Dungu, December 5, 2009.
- 67 Interview with MONUC officer, Dungu, December 6, 2009. In fact, only the province of Haut Uele (34,363 square miles), where most of the LRA attacks happen and where fewer than 1,000 peacekeepers are based, is nine times bigger than the entire area of Kosovo (3,861 square miles).
- 68 For instance, a quick impact project intended to improve community relations had the opposite effect. The \$20,000 project involved repainting the office of the territorial administrator and was undertaken without consulting the population. This was not a priority for the population, which lacks roads and other basic infrastructure and services.
- 69 Interview with Congolese member of civil society, Dungu, December 8, 2009.
- 70 This was the case in Faradje and Dungu, according to interviews with local residents.
- 71 Interview with MONUC officer, Dungu, December 4, 2009. MONUC's mandate specifically makes the protection of civilians in DRC a priority for the peacekeeping force.

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Enough is a project of the Center for American Progress to end genocide and crimes against humanity. Founded in 2007, Enough focuses on the crises in Sudan, Chad, eastern Congo, northern Uganda, and Somalia. Enough's strategy papers and briefings provide sharp field analysis and targeted policy recommendations based on a "3P" crisis response strategy: promoting durable peace, providing civilian protection, and punishing perpetrators of atrocities. Enough works with concerned citizens, advocates, and policy makers to prevent, mitigate, and resolve these crises. To learn more about Enough and what you can do to help, go to [www.enoughproject.org](http://www.enoughproject.org).

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