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The project to end genocide and crimes against humanity

# Lord's Resistance Army

## Key Terms and People

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### People

**Acana, Rwot David Onen:** The paramount chief of the Acholi people, an ethnic group from northern Uganda and southern Sudan, and one of the primary targets of LRA violence in northern Uganda.

**Bigombe, Betty:** Former Uganda government minister and a chief mediator in peace negotiations between the Ugandan government and the LRA in 2004-2005.

**Chissano, Joaquim:** Appointed as Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General to Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan in 2006; now that the internationally-mediated negotiations with the LRA have stalled, Chissano's role as Special Envoy in the process is unclear.

**Kabila, Joseph:** President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Kony, Joseph:** Leader of the LRA. Kony is a self-proclaimed messiah who led the brutal, mystical LRA movement in its rebellion against the Ugandan government for over two decades. A war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court, Kony remains the "ultimate commander" of the LRA, and he determines who lives and dies within the rebel group as they continue their predations today throughout central Africa.

**Lakwena, Alice Auma:** Leader of the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces, a northern based rebel group that fought against the Ugandan government in the late 1980s. Some of the followers of this movement were later recruited into the LRA by Joseph Kony.

**Lukwiya, Raska:** One of the LRA commanders indicted by the ICC in 2005. He was the third in command after Kony and Otti before he was killed in August 2006 by the Ugandan army. Following the confirmation of his death, the proceedings against Lukwiya were terminated by the ICC.

**Machar, Riek:** The vice president of the Government of Southern Sudan. He was the chief mediator between the LRA and Ugandan government during the Juba Peace Talks.

Joseph Kony, "ultimate commander" of the Lord's Resistance Army/ photo courtesy of Radio France International, taken in the spring of 2008 during the failed Juba Peace Talks.



**Mao, Norbert:** The highest-ranking elected official in Gulu district, northern Uganda.

**Mayardit , Salva Kiir:** The President of Southern Sudan and Vice President of Sudan.

**Moreno-Ocampo, Luis:** Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, or ICC.

**Museveni, Yoweri:** President of Uganda since January 1986. Museveni and his National Resistance Army seized the Ugandan capital, Kampala, and overthrew President Obote's regime, which had committed massive human rights abuses in an effort to crush Museveni's insurgency.

**Odhiambo, Okot:** One of the LRA commanders indicted by the ICC in 2005. Reportedly Joseph Kony's second-in-command following Vincent Otti's death in 2007.

**Ongwen, Dominic:** One of the LRA commanders indicted by the ICC. Before he was abducted by the LRA in the late 1980s at the age of 10, Ongwen was an illiterate orphan who worked on a farm. Believed to be around 32, Ongwen is the youngest person ever to be wanted for crimes against humanity by the ICC.

**Otti, Vincent:** One of the LRA commanders indicted by the ICC and Kony's former deputy. Kony is believed to have executed Otti in November 2007, but because his death has not been confirmed, the ICC has not yet terminated their proceedings against him.

**Rugunda, Ruhakana:** Ugandan Minister for Internal Affairs. He represented the views of the Ugandan government during the Juba Peace Talks.

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## Northern Ugandan Armed Groups, Past and Present

**Lord's Resistance Army—LRA:** The rebel group led by self-proclaimed messiah Joseph Kony. The LRA has committed widespread atrocities—including murder, rape, mutilation, and child abductions—on civilian populations throughout central Africa for more than two decades.

**Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (formerly the Holy Spirit Movement):** A rebel group formed in 1986 by Alice Lakwena, which declared war in the name of fighting evil and impurity and aimed to overthrow President Museveni. Some Holy Spirit fighters later joined the LRA.

**Uganda People's Democratic Army—UPDA:** A northern-led rebellion that fought against President Museveni from 1986-1988. After the UPDA signed a peace agreement with the Ugandan government in 1988, some of the UPDA forces, along with other marginalized northerners, opted to join Joseph Kony's emerging rebel group, which LATER became the LRA.

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## Other Key Actors

**Acholi:** An ethnic group from northern Uganda and southern Sudan, and one of the primary targets of the LRA's violence and predations in northern Uganda. While claiming to defend the rights of Acholis, the LRA in fact focused the brunt of its extreme brutality against its leader Joseph Kony's fellow Acholi people. During the LRA conflict in northern Uganda, the civilian

population—notably the Acholi people—became caught in the crossfire between the Ugandan government and the LRA, and increasingly became alienated from both parties to this conflict.

**Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons—IDPs:** An IDP is a person who has been forced to leave his or her home for reasons such as religious or political persecution, war, or natural disaster, but has not crossed an international border; a refugee is someone who has crossed an international border. While this is a technical distinction, it can often have considerable meaning in international law and in an individual's ability to receive humanitarian assistance. During the LRA conflict in northern Uganda, an estimated two million people were forced from their homes. In northeastern Congo, roughly 180,000 people have been displaced since September 2008 by the LRA's recent predations.

**International Criminal Court—ICC:** A permanent court headquartered in The Hague, with jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed since its inception in 2002. The ICC issued arrest warrants for Joseph Kony and four of his top commanders in July 2005.

**Uganda People's Defense Forces—UPDF:** The Ugandan army. During the 22-year war between the Ugandan army and the LRA in northern Uganda, the UPDF was responsible for its own share of abuses against civilians. In Operation Lightning Thunder, the recent UPDF-led offensive against the LRA in northeastern Congo, failure to adequately protect civilians in the region has once again resulted in further suffering at the hands of the LRA. The Ugandan military recently came under fire from Human Rights Watch for its illegal detention practices.

**Government of South Sudan—GoSS:** An autonomous government for southern Sudan created by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or CPA, in 2005. The GoSS hosted the Juba Peace Talks in Juba, the southern Sudanese capital.

**Sudanese People's Liberation Army—SPLA:** The army of Southern Sudan. The Sudanese government used the LRA as a proxy to fight against the SPLA in southern Sudan. The SPLA participated in joint military operations against the LRA.

**National Congress Party—NCP:** The current ruling party in Sudan's government in power since 1998. The NCP supported the LRA with money, arms, and logistics to fight the SPLA and the Ugandan government.

**Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo—FARDC:** The Congolese army. The FARDC is rarely paid, poorly equipped, ill-trained, and is one of the worst human rights abusers in Congo. Congolese forces participated in the joint military operations against the LRA in northeastern Congo.

**The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Congo—MONUC:** The largest U.N. peacekeeping force in the world today, MONUC has approximately 17,000 military personnel and 3,000 civilians in Congo. Much of the force is deployed in the volatile regions of North and South Kivu, and consequently MONUC has a very limited presence in areas of Congo where the LRA continues to attack.



## Key Locations

- 1. Barlonyo camp:** The internally displaced persons, or IDP, camp where LRA rebels killed more than 330 civilians, mostly women and children, in February 2004.
- 2. Gulu:** A district in northern Uganda and one of the three districts forming the historical homeland of the Acholi ethnic group, also known as Acholiland. Gulu has been the area in Uganda most plagued by LRA rebel fighting.
- 3. Garamba National Park:** A national park in northeastern Congo and the LRA's current base of operations.
- 4. Juba:** The capital of southern Sudan and the location of the peace talks between the Ugandan Government and LRA representatives from 2006 to 2008.
- 5. Kampala:** The capital of Uganda.
- 6. Khartoum:** The capital of Sudan.
- 7. Ri-Kwangba:** A small town in southern Sudan where Kony was scheduled to sign a peace agreement on April 10, 2008. While journalists, international observers, and cultural and religious leaders came to Ri-Kwangba for the signing, Kony failed to appear.

## Relevant Agreements and Negotiations

**Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions:** An agreement signed in May 2007 that supposedly commits both the LRA and the government of Uganda to broad democratic participation and accurate representation, reintegration of combatants, compensation for land expropriation, and redevelopment of northern Uganda.

**Amnesty Act of 2000:** An act passed by the Government of Uganda that allows for rebels to abandon violence and be granted amnesty, without risk of criminal prosecution or punishment for offenses related to the insurgency.

**Comprehensive Peace Agreement—CPA:** A peace treaty signed in 2005 between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudanese government that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War and provided a framework for developing democratic governance throughout Sudan, power sharing, and sharing of oil revenues. If the CPA fails and Sudan returns to war, the Sudanese government will likely resume its support for the LRA.

**Final Peace Agreement:** The term for all of the agreements reached between the Ugandan government and the LRA in the Juba Peace Talks since 2006, including the Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions and other protocols on disarmament and accountability, among other issues.

**Juba Peace Talks:** A series of peace negotiations between the Ugandan government and the LRA that began in 2006 in Juba, Southern Sudan. The talks established a roadmap for ending the conflict between the Ugandan government and the LRA and addressing the root causes of the war. Despite

repeated attempts by international negotiators to lure LRA leader Joseph Kony out of the bush to sign a peace agreement, most recently in April 2008 and again in November 2008, the talks have failed to bring an end to the conflict through the signing of a peace agreement between both parties.

**Peace, Recovery and Development Plan—PRDP:** The Ugandan government’s proposal to aid underdeveloped areas of northern Uganda recovering from the effects of over two decades of war. Although launched in 2007, the PRDP has yet to be implemented, and the residents of northern Uganda have yet to see the benefits of this extensive development program. The estimated budget for the PRDP is roughly \$600 million over three years.

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## Other Useful Terms

**Aboke abductions:** 139 girls were abducted by the LRA from a St. Mary’s College boarding school in Aboke in October 1996. One hundred and nine girls were released after negotiations between the LRA and the head mistress of the college. After this incident, international attention was drawn to the LRA’s insurgency for the first time.

**Christmas Massacres:** A series of events in which the LRA murdered over 400 people in northeastern Congo on and around Christmas day 2008 in retaliation to Operation Lightning Thunder.

**Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration—DDR:** The process by which armed groups are disarmed and dismantled and former combatants rejoin society.

**Mato oput:** An Acholi traditional justice mechanism that cultural and religious leaders in northern Uganda advocate as a way to hold Kony and other LRA members accountable for their crimes. The term translates roughly into “the drinking of the bitter herb.”

**Night commuter:** A term used for the thousands of children in northern Uganda that regularly commuted to town centers to sleep, away from the threat of being abducted by the LRA. Night commuting ceased following ceasefires signed by the LRA and government of Uganda during the Juba Peace Talks.

**Operation Iron Fist:** An operation in which Ugandan forces pursued the LRA into Sudan beginning in 2002 in an effort to conclusively end the LRA insurgency. The mission failed and the LRA responded with brutal attacks on civilians.

**Operation Lightning Thunder:** A joint military offensive by the Ugandan, Congolese, and southern Sudanese militaries against the LRA in Congo’s Garamba National Park. It failed in its primary objective of apprehending Kony and his top commanders, and the LRA retaliated by murdering hundreds of civilians in a series of attacks in northeastern Congo.



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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, Somalia, and Zimbabwe. 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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