

July 2014

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our continued support for robust U.S. efforts aimed at ending the violence perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in central Africa.

Through U.S. support, the regional counter-LRA mission has made significant progress in denting this deadly force. The LRA has lost as much as one-fifth of its core fighting capacity and are losing valuable captives that provide much of the day to day labor for the rebel group. However, we remain concerned that LRA leader Joseph Kony and his senior combatants continue to pose a significant threat to the African Great Lakes Region and retain their capacity to terrorize innocent civilian populations by exploiting broader regional instability.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), the rebel group has targeted civilian areas that have been destabilized by the country's violent civil war. Reportedly ten of the 13 attacks in which the LRA abducted ten or more people in 2013 occurred in areas in CAR under the control of Seleka rebel fighters. In neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo, the LRA have allegedly financed their deadly operations by poaching elephants in Garamba National Park and trafficking the wildlife products to Sudan and elsewhere. Indeed, this regional instability seems to have contributed to a recent increase in LRA attacks and abductions since the beginning of this year.

In May 2010, Congress passed the bipartisan *Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act* (P.L. 111-172) and continues to support the strategy outlined in the legislation. This includes the deployment of military advisers and other logistical and intelligence support to assist regional counter-LRA forces, the expansion of programs to protect civilians and promote defections from the LRA, and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Most recently, the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014* (P.L. 113-66) reaffirmed that commitment stating in the bill's report language, "we believe U.S. military advisers should assist their partners with the full-range of activities short of direct combat...we remain fully supportive of this advise and assist operation."

We urge you to maintain U.S. efforts to end the LRA threat and ensure they are part of a broader strategy focused on promoting security across the region. Kony's method of filling LRA ranks through the mass abduction of children and youth underscores the risk that the group will regenerate if the U.S. and regional governments initiate a premature draw down of counter-LRA operations.

As the Administration assesses progress in countering the LRA and deliberates on the future of U.S. efforts, we urge you to sustain core elements of the current strategy until Joseph Kony and senior LRA commanders are removed from the battlefield and the LRA no longer poses such a severe threat to civilians. In particular, we note the essential role U.S. military advisers deployed in the field play in supporting operations by regional forces, improving information-sharing and civilian early warning networks, and promoting voluntary defections from the LRA.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to working with you to counter the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army.

Sincerely,

[Signatures of members of Congress]