

President Obama: Rapid Action needed on Central Africa Violence Human Rights Watch, Global Centre for RtoP, Enough Project, Genocide Network, Invisible children, Refugees International, Resolve  
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President Barack Obama should move swiftly to implement a strategy released on November 24, 2010, to stop atrocities committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and help affected communities rebuild, a coalition of seven human rights groups said today. The rebel group has carried out one of the world's longest-running and most brutal insurgencies.

"President Obama's team has done an admirable job in formulating a strategy and demonstrating commitment to address the LRA scourge, but the challenge now is to turn this piece of paper into improvements on the ground," said Paul Ronan, Director of Advocacy at Resolve (...)

(...) LRA violence has plagued central Africa for more than two decades, and is on the increase. During the last two years the LRA has killed at least 2,300 people and abducted over 3,000 more, including many children. Another 400,000 civilians have fled the violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), southern Sudan, and Central African Republic. Over that period of time, the LRA has killed and abducted more civilians than any other armed group in the DRC. In 2010 alone, LRA rebels have committed more than 240 deadly attacks.

(...) The Obama administration strategy outlines four primary goals for US engagement with the crisis, including stopping LRA leaders, protecting civilians from LRA attacks, encouraging escape and defection from the LRA, and providing humanitarian assistance to affected communities. It emphasizes an interagency approach and coordination with multilateral and regional partners, and raises the possibility of designating additional personnel within the administration to carry out the strategy (...)

(...) "The LRA attacks are a huge threat to civilians and to regional peace and stability," said Monica Serrano, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. "The international response has been woefully inadequate. The new US strategy is a chance to bring countries together to end the LRA's brutal reign, putting the protection of civilians at the heart of the effort."

The LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act was the most widely supported, Africa-specific legislation in recent US Congressional history. The law was cosponsored by a bipartisan group of 65 Senators and 201 Representatives, representing 49 states. Tens of thousands of Americans, including many young people, mobilized to support the legislation.

The following seven organizations have signed on to this press release:

Enough Project

Genocide Intervention Network / Save Darfur

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Human Rights Watch

Invisible Children

Refugees International

Resolve

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