

Policy Brief: The Lord's Resistance Army and the Responsibility to Protect Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

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Key Messages

- The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has committed **crimes against humanity** across central Africa for more than two decades posing a grave threat to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.
- Regional governments, with the assistance of the international community, have a **responsibility to protect** populations from this threat and to take action to prevent and halt the crimes committed by the LRA
- Recent international efforts to confront the threat posed by the LRA, including African Union and UN Security Council engagement as well as the deployment of military advisors by the United States, are a positive development.
- Engagement must be sustained until the threat is removed. This requires improved efforts to protect civilians, capture senior LRA commanders, and entice low and mid-level fighters to leave the group through disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration programs (DDRRR).

Introduction This brief seeks to clarify how the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) applies to the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and examines the measures that should be taken by regional governments, the African Union (AU), donor governments and the UN Security Council in order to protect populations under threat. Since 2008 the LRA, a non-state armed group operating across a wide region of central Africa, has been responsible for the deaths of more than 2,300 people. In the first eight months of 2011 alone the LRA launched an estimated 240 attacks in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, killing 130 people and abducting 327 more. The LRA has terrorized communities through these attacks and their brutal tactics, which include the deliberate maiming of civilians and forcing child abductees to kill their families. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled their homes in fear of the LRA, leaving an estimated 440,000 people displaced.

The crimes perpetrated by the LRA rise to the level of crimes against humanity, one of the four crimes United Nations (UN) member states committed themselves to protect populations from when they adopted the Responsibility to Protect in 2005. Since the LRA formed two decades ago, regional governments, with assistance from the UN and its member states, have taken steps aimed at ending the threat posed by the group. However, such steps have been insufficient and populations continue to be at risk with LRA attacks taking place on an almost

daily basis. (...)

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