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THESIS

BENDING THE SPEAR: THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

by

Jonathan R. Easter
Benon M. Hatangimana

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Thesis Advisor:	Anna Simons
Second Reader:	T. Bruce Sweeney

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The government of Uganda adopted a highly effective approach to address its ethnic insurgency, now called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA caused widespread devastation in east and central Africa from 1986–2009. The Ugandan counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign against the LRA consisted of a unique blend of direct and indirect methods, and later received assistance from the United States in the form of Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS. By incorporating broad appeals of amnesty for insurgents, local infrastructure investment, and disciplined military action, Uganda was able to solidify its legitimacy in formerly contested areas; the LRA was isolated from popular support and fled the country as a result of these efforts. Former insurgents were reintegrated into society, and the once-restive populations of northern Uganda increasingly supported the government. This reintegration and amnesty was based on traditional reconciliation ceremonies involving an oath called "bending the spear," which was formerly used to join warring clans. This thesis establishes a case study of the campaign against the LRA to describe how it was waged and record lessons learned for the benefit of international security and stability professionals, government officials, scholars, and researchers.

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION STRATEGY AND POLITICAL WARFARE

Jonathan R. Easter
Major, United States Army
B.A., University of Alabama Huntsville, 2005
M.A., Webster University, 2016

and

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

Benon M. Hatangimana
Major, Uganda People's Defense Force
B.S., Makerere University, 1999

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2017

Approved by: Anna Simons
Thesis Advisor

T. Bruce Sweeney
Second Reader

John Arquilla
Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The government of Uganda adopted a highly effective approach to address its ethnic insurgency, now called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA caused widespread devastation in east and central Africa from 1986–2009. The Ugandan counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign against the LRA consisted of a unique blend of direct and indirect methods, and later received assistance from the United States in the form of Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS. By incorporating broad appeals of amnesty for insurgents, local infrastructure investment, and disciplined military action, Uganda was able to solidify its legitimacy in formerly contested areas; the LRA was isolated from popular support and fled the country as a result of these efforts. Former insurgents were reintegrated into society, and the once-restive populations of northern Uganda increasingly supported the government. This reintegration and amnesty was based on traditional reconciliation ceremonies involving an oath called "bending the spear," which was formerly used to join warring clans. This thesis establishes a case study of the campaign against the LRA to describe how it was waged and record lessons learned for the benefit of international security and stability professionals, government officials, scholars, and researchers.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCE	AFRICOM Counter-LRA Control Element (later called SOCFWD-CA)
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AO	area of operations
AOB	advanced operating base, higher headquarters for Special Forces detachments
AU	African Union
AU-RTF	African Union Regional Task Force
CA	Central Africa
CAR	Central African Republic
COFC	combined operations fusion center
COIN	counterinsurgency
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CSO	Conflict Stabilization Operations (a bureau of the U.S. Department of State)
DDR	demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration
DOD	Department of Defense
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDF	Equatoria Defense Front
FACA	Forces Armées Centrafricaines
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Democratique du Congo (DRC)
FM	frequency-modulating (radio)
HF	high frequency (radio)
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Forces
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	internally displaced persons
IGO	international governmental organization

IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MILDEC	military deception
MISO	military information support operations (also called PSYOP)
MONUSCO	Mission de l'ONU (UN) pour la Stabilisation en RD Congo (DRC)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NRA	National Resistance Army (former name of the UPDF)
NRM	National Resistance Movement (political party of NRA)
ODA	operational detachment - alpha (U.S. Special Forces detachment)
OLT	Operation Lightning Thunder
OOC	Operation Observant Compass
PSYOP	psychological operations (also called MISO)
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SOCAFRICA	Special Operations Command - Africa
SOCFWD	Special Operations Command - Forward
SOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SRS	safe reporting site
UBC	Uganda Broadcasting Channel
UN	United Nations
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Force (formerly the NRA)
US	United States
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOF	United States special operations forces
VOA	Voice of America
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Ugandan and American military operations against the rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, ended in April 2017.[1] This effort was widely lauded for its effective, yet humanitarian, approach to a complex conflict by promoting the objective of depleting the rebels' strength through peaceful surrender rather than solely by killing them.[2] This emphasis on defections was largely due to the LRA's use of abducted child soldiers to fill its ranks, along with the recognition that these same child soldiers were trapped within the organization by the brutal indoctrination methods of the LRA's leader, Joseph Kony. But how was this accomplished? The question this thesis intends to answer is, "How did the Ugandan People's Defense Force, with assistance from the United States and other partners, conduct its campaign against the Lord's Resistance Army?"

A. APPROACH

This thesis draws on the experience of the authors, interviews with veterans of the conflict, interviews with representatives of NGOs and individuals who are experts on the LRA and northern Uganda, historical documents, academic journals, and scholarly books. Additionally, the thesis makes use of statistical data from the NGO Invisible Children's LRA Crisis Tracker website and U.S. military records. Priority is given to first-hand accounts and previous interviews with veterans and witnesses of the events in question. The authors traveled to Entebbe, Gulu, Kampala, and Pader, in Uganda; Washington, DC; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and Stuttgart, Germany and interviewed veterans of the conflict from both sides, along with multiple scholars and experts. The identity of the majority of these interviewees, with few exceptions, remains confidential by mutual agreement.

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[1] Zack Baddorf, "Uganda Ends Its Hunt for Joseph Kony Empty-Handed," *New York Times* (April 20, 2017: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/20/world/africa/uganda-joseph-kony-lra.html).

[2] Michael M. Phillips, "U.S. to Rebels: Listen to Mom – Commandos Wage Psychological Battle to Draw Last of Joseph Kony's Troops out of African Bush," *Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2017.

B. SIGNIFICANCE

The results of warfare are devastating to civilians caught between belligerents. In the war in northern Uganda between the LRA, including its predecessors, and the Ugandan government, the line between civilian and combatant was even more blurred than is typical for insurgencies. The widespread use of child soldiers by the LRA, combined with the Ugandan Army's recent status as an insurgent force, made for a muddied mess of ethical norms. However, the overall result was successful from the Ugandan perspective. The LRA was successfully isolated from the local population and forced to flee Uganda; there is no longer any insurgent activity in the north. Development of northern Uganda continues, and the northerners have all but forgotten the original motives for rebellion.

Uganda's amnesty policy toward the former LRA rebels also continues, and thousands of former rebels now live peacefully among the very people they once abused. All of this was completed while executing a mixed approach of kinetic military operations with non-kinetic appeals for defection, blended with a strategy of local reconciliation. The story of how this was accomplished, including the many hard lessons learned along the way, may be of great value to both Uganda and the United States, as well as to security professionals and researchers of other nations. Similar approaches might be adopted in fighting current and future insurgencies to better reconcile former combatants and address underlying grievances.

II. LOCAL HISTORY

Uganda is composed of multiple ethnic groups that speak dozens of different languages. This ethnolinguistic diversity contributed greatly to the complexity of its internal conflicts and played a significant role in the events that led to the development of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Therefore, the full story of the conflict in northern Uganda cannot be told without first examining the Acholi people. This chapter will explain the pertinent beliefs, practices, and history of the Acholi people with regard to the LRA and the war in northern Uganda.

A. THE ACHOLI

According to anthropologists, the Acholi did not exist as a distinct ethnic identity prior to the 18th century. They are part of a larger ethnolinguistic group called the Luo (or Lwo), which has affiliates scattered from the current borders of South Sudan, to Kenya, through Uganda, south to Tanzania.[3] The Luo language and, consequently, that of the Acholi, is unrelated to the Bantu languages of southern Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic (CAR).[4]

1. Precolonial Ethnography

The first records of Western contact with the Acholi people come from the writings of J.H. Speke and Samuel Baker. Baker used the term "Sooli" to refer to people in the region extending from the far north of modern-day Uganda into South Sudan. Ronald Atkinson writes that this name was something more like "Chooli," based on *Shuli*, a name given to a local chief by Arab slave traders from Sudan and Egypt.[5] The local people could not pronounce the "sh" sound and converted it to a "ch" sound

[3] Ronald Atkinson, "The Evolution of Ethnicity among the Acholi of Uganda," *Ethnohistory*, 1989: 22. For a visual representation, see Figure 8 in Appendix B.

[4] Ibid., 26–31.

[5] The Acholi languages does not have a native "sh" sound (International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) /ʃ/), and pronounces the letter *c* as "ch" (IPA /dʒ/).

instead.[6] The name "Acholi" might originate in the Luo statement "*An loco li*" ("I am a human being").[7]

Although the people of these various neighboring chiefdoms did not recognize themselves as belonging to a single ethnic group or polity, the Arabs called them all by the same name for the sake of simplicity. The British adopted a similar approach by forcing the people to adopt a corporate identity as the Acholi tribe under a single paramount chief. This political reorganization was accompanied by new forms of taxation to support the chief's trade with outsiders for goods, such as cattle and firearms.[8]

The *rwot*, or chief, held the highest level of authority in Acholi villages. Among these *rwodi* ("chiefs") the most influential were the *rwodi moo*, the anointed chiefs. The *rwodi moo* did not have direct administrative power over other chiefs, as in the paramount chief construct, but served important customary roles.[9] Before reorganization by colonial powers, the Acholi had more than thirty *rwodi*, each with their own village and shrine. Each *rwot* had a particular *jok*, or spirit, as a supernatural patron.[10]

The Acholi are a highly spiritual people with a long tradition of observance of spirits as the sources of everyday phenomena. The *jogi* (plural of *jok*), were associated with different events and solutions. New problems were associated with strange and foreign *jogi*. There were also spirits of the disturbed dead, called *cen*, which brought misfortune to the living.[11] The *jogi* established the moral order and, through priests, put the *rwodi* in office.[12] Heike Behrend notes that there was a dual role to the *jogi*; the *rwot* could use their power to heal, but also to kill.[13]

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[6] Ibid., 37.

[7] Ruddy Doom and Koen Vlassenroot, "Kony's Message: A New Koine? The Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda," *African Affairs* 98 (1999): 10.

[8] Atkinson, 36–37.

[9] Doom and Vlassenroot, 10.

[10] Ibid., 17.

[11] Heike Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999), 26–27.

[12] Ibid., 15.

[13] Ibid., 16.

The introduction of Christianity in the 19th century did not replace the *jogi*, but rather introduced a plethora of new *jogi* to the Acholi pantheon. The Acholi converted quickly, but their traditional beliefs blended with their new faith. There was *jok Jesus*, a good spirit, among others, as well as *jogi setani*, spirits of Satan. Missionaries described the Holy Trinity through the term *tipu maleng*, and *tipu maleng* came to mean any divine spirit, as well as the Christian Holy Spirit proper.[14] Previous Islamic influence had introduced *jok Alla*.[15] New spiritual healers began to replace the traditional healers, or *ajwaka*. These new healers were known as *nabi* and they adorned themselves with white robes, rosaries, and carried holy water to distinguish themselves from the old *ajwaka*.[16]

Behrend provides an example of the concept of *tipu* and the role of spiritual forces in physical events:

> The enemy's bullet that killed the Acholi was not seen as the real cause of his death. If relatives suspected someone of witchcraft, on the occasion of his burial an *ajwaka* called on the spirit (*tipu*) of the deceased and asked who really killed him. It often turned out that a relative or neighbour who had come into conflict with the deceased had bewitched him and ensured that the enemy's bullet hit him, rather than someone else. Thus, the conflict with an outer, alien enemy shifted inward. It was not so much the [enemy], the external foe, that did the killing; in the end, internal enemies—those closest to the person, relatives or neighbors in Acholi[land]—were considered responsible for the suffering and death.[17]

Perhaps due to a long history of warfare between neighboring villages, the Acholi had elaborate systems of conflict resolution to contain violence and prevent costly acts of retribution. They had many customs of reconciliation, of which the most widely known is *mato oput.* This was a ritual performed by the *rwodi moo* in which two parties, with a mediator, met together and shared a bitter drink made from the bark of the *oput* tree. During the ritual, both parties agreed to forgive one another. This ritual culminated in an oath called *gomo tong*, or "bending the spear," in which both parties agreed to never turn

[14] Doom and Vlassenroot, 17.

[15] Ibid., 23.

[16] Ibid., 17–18.

[17] Behrend, 27.

their weapons on each other again.[18] These rituals, along with the underlying acceptance of reconciliation, played a significant role in the conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan government, which will be described in Chapter III.

2. Colonial History

British colonial rulers adopted a divisive policy of playing different African tribes against one another in order to maintain power. In the case of Uganda, investment in industry and cash crops was concentrated in the south, with the north being used as a source for cheap labor.[19] Even the name "Uganda" originates from the largest kingdom in the south, the Baganda tribe.[20] The British preferentially employed southerners in the civil service and encouraged them in commerce while the northerners were used as the primary source of military recruits.[21] The British policy of indirect rule, a means of maintaining control of the local people through a single paramount chief, further entrenched the corporate identity of Acholi throughout what became known as Acholiland in northern Uganda. Local traditions became Acholi culture writ large, and a sense of common welfare developed as a single paramount chief advocated their needs to the government in Kampala.[22]

Although the Acholi had been promised that they would be able to keep their firearms if they registered with the colonial government, they had their rifles confiscated and burned in the early 1900s. This betrayal established a pattern for government actions in matters of security that reinforced a sense of persecution among the Acholi and would eventually strengthen their appetite for rebellion.[23]

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[18] Doom and Vlassenroot, 11.

[19] Paul Jackson, "The March of the Lord's Resistance Army: Greed or Grievance in Northern Uganda?," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 2002: 29–30 .

[20] Mahmoud Mamdani, "Class Struggles in Uganda," *Review of African Political Economy*, 1975: 29.

[21] Fredrick Odoi-Tanga, "Politics, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Post-Independence Acholiland, Uganda 1962–2006," Ph.D. dissertation (Pretoria: University of Pretoria, 2010), 11.

[22] Ibid., 75.

[23] Behrend, 17.

B. POST-COLONIAL UGANDA

Following independence in 1962, Uganda underwent a series of violent struggles for power. Its first prime minister, who then became president, Milton Obote, was a northerner from the Lango ethnic group. During his administration, Obote placed many northern Ugandans in positions of power within the government. One of them was Idi Amin, from the northwestern Lugbara ethnic group.[24]

Self-declared Field Marshal Idi Amin took power from Obote in a *coup d'état* in 1971. He ordered a large number of Acholi soldiers and officers to report to the barracks in Lubiri, where many were subsequently killed.[25] This event further entrenched a unique sense of Acholi persecution. Amin's regime still incorporated many Acholi in the military and in positions of authority, but those who had previously been loyal to Obote were suspect.

On April 11, 1979, Amin was ousted from power by the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA) with the backing of Tanzania, and Obote was reinstalled as president.[26] However, in July 1985, General Tito Okello overthrew Obote and became the first Acholi President of Uganda. As Doom and Vlassenroot point out, this was the first time that "both political and military supreme positions were held by Acholi."[27]

Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) fought to depose both Obote and Okello, and the UNLA, in what is now known as the Bush War that lasted from 1981–1986.[28] An UNLA operation, Operation Bonanza, which was directed against the NRA, resulted in the deaths of an estimated 300,000 civilians in the Luwero Triangle of central and southwestern Uganda.[29] This event, along with other atrocities, weighed

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[24] Yoweri Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: the Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2007), 36.

[25] Ibid., 41.

[26] Ibid., 110.

[27] Doom and Vlassenroot, 9.

[28] Andrew Rice, *The Teeth May Smile but the Heart Does not Forget* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009), 216–217.

[29] Doom and Vlassenroot, 9.

heavily on the minds of the Ugandan public and Acholi members of the UNLA in particular.[30]

C. A NEW STATUS QUO: RISE OF THE NATIONAL RESISTANCE ARMY

Museveni's NRA succeeded in taking power and he was sworn in as President on January 29, 1986.[31] The Museveni regime in Uganda was unprecedented, since previously the military and government establishments had primarily been run by northerners. Since even before Obote's time as president, the military and police forces had provided a means of economic welfare to families in Uganda's north. By staffing the state's security forces, northerners could gain land, money, and influence, which could then be funneled back to their families. When the NRA, mostly composed of southern Ugandans, upended that system, it inadvertently deprived many northerners of their livelihoods.[32] Families that were once dependent on the state for employment now found themselves dispossessed of jobs and income.[33]

Caroline Lamwaka witnessed the NRA's victory in Kampala and recorded her observations about prevalent attitudes and responses toward northern Ugandans at that time: "in Kampala, northerners were generally lumped together and held responsible for all the country's past problems. There was a great deal of anti-northern rhetoric within the NRA/M, followed by a general wave of anti-northern sentiment among the various ethnic communities in central, southern, and western Uganda."[34] The Acholi were the most numerous tribe in the UNLA, comprising as much as 40% of it, although there were other tribes represented, including Bantu westerners and southerners.[35] Because the Acholi had such a strong identity, were widely known, and thanks to the fact that Tito Okello, the previous president, was Acholi, northerners were often referred to

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[30] Caroline Lamwaka, *The Raging Storm: A Reporter's Inside Account of the Northern Uganda War 1986–2005* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2016), 9–12.

[31] Ibid., 6.

[32] Doom and Vlassenroot, 13.

[33] Author interview with an Ugandan Government Official, Entebbe, Uganda, July 14, 2017.

[34] Lamwaka, 13–14.

[35] Ibid., 13.

ubiquitously as "Acholi" even though there were other northern tribes represented in the UNLA. Therefore, an assumption of Acholi dominance within the UNLA prevailed amongst western, central, and southern Ugandans, and the UNLA itself became labeled as "Acholis."[36] Some Acholi interpreted actions and statements by the National Resistance Movement[37] (NRM) regime as being specifically anti-Acholi, such as blaming the UNLA for the atrocities of the Luwero Triangle during the Bush War without themselves accepting a degree of responsibility for the war, too.[38]

D. REBELLION

Many Acholi feared reprisals by southern Baganda soldiers for the UNLA's killings in Luwero, especially since the NRA had not yet demonstrated that it was different from past regimes, such as Amin's, that had conducted retaliatory purges of rival ethnic groups. At this time, the NRA was still consolidating power throughout Uganda and had not yet reached the north.

UNLA General Bazilio Okello (no relation to the former president) organized resistance elements to block the NRA's advance at Karuma. A group of Acholi elders and representatives of the UNLA reportedly gathered at the Acholi Inn in Gulu to mobilize a defense of Acholi lands. Weapons were issued from the barracks in Gulu to civilians, even to women and girls, and they received rudimentary training on how to hold their positions. These Acholi were soundly defeated by the NRA; at best, they, only managed to slow the NRA's advance. Many former UNLA soldiers then fled to Sudan with their weapons.[39]

The NRA finally reached Gulu in late March of 1986.[40] The NRA's initial arrival was peaceful and many accounts remark on the soldiers' disciplined and respectful

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[36] Ibid., 14–16.

[37] The NRM is the political wing of the NRA.

[38] Ibid., 15.

[39] Behrend, 24.

[40] Lamwaka, 17–19.

nature.[41] But as time went on, elements of the new military offended many Acholi through a series of undisciplined and rash actions.

When the NRA issued a call over Radio Uganda for all former UNLA soldiers to report with their weapons, the Acholi feared another purge.[42] The NRA launched a subsequent house-to-house disarmament of the population, which often included arrests and the seizure of personal property. The local Acholi people perceived these actions as retribution for the UNLA's actions in Luwero.[43] It must have seemed as if the world had turned upside down.

The Uganda People's Defense Army (UPDA) was formed in Nimule, modern-day South Sudan in August 1986. Composed largely of former UNLA soldiers, it launched a guerrilla war against the NRA. It was led by UNLA Brigadier Justine Odong Latek. Sudan offered no official support, but the UPDA would make use of the Sudanese border to launch attacks and traded with Sudanese troops for ammunition and supplies. Local support for the UPDA grew as reports of abuses by the NRA continued, with many Acholi viewing the UPDA as resistance fighters who struggled on their behalf against the new government.[44] In August 1986, the UPDA attacked the NRA position at Bibia near the Sudanese border. This marked the beginning of protracted warfare in northern Uganda.[45]

In interviews, the NRA veterans of this early period of the conflict said that the UPDA rebels and NRA soldiers were relatively equal in terms of capability. Also, there was no clear campaign plan at this stage. According to one NRA veteran, it is difficult to transition from being insurgents to fighting insurgents:

> The NRA had just come out of a five-year bush war and suddenly it was swollen with people and equipment. It's a challenge to switch from

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[41] Ibid., 49; Els De Temmerman, *Aboke Girls: Children Abducted in Northern Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001), 108.

[42] Doom and Vlassenroot, 13.

[43] Lamwaka, 50–51.

[44] Ibid., 60–61.

[45] Michael Ondoga, "The 'Lord's Resistance Army': Wicked Problem," *Monograph* (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2012), 5.

> insurgency to counterinsurgency. It is assumed to be easy, but it is not. Senior leaders had the will [to conduct counterinsurgency], but was it spread across [the ranks]? No, it was not. The software is there, but of the hardware… the equipment… nothing. The economy was at a standstill. The thinking was, 'let's defeat them militarily and then go back to economic development as soon as possible.' So, the army initially expanded from 30,000 to 100,000 [soldiers]. 'Let's use the little resources available and sort out the problem.' The problem was not well understood. We had to work on the people here, change their thinking, and we [NRA] had the wrong thinking. You don't change an attitude overnight by way of force.[46]

E. THE HOLY SPIRIT MOVEMENT

Acholi elders were displeased with the return of former UNLA soldiers who had fought in the Luwero Triangle. According to the elders, rumors of their actions, plunder, murder, and torture, made them impure of heart and brought *cen*, vengeful spirits of the dead, back to their ancestral homes. These *cen* were seen as the cause of the misfortune that had struck Acholiland. According to tradition, the soldiers had to ritually cleanse themselves and appease the spirits of the dead, but failed to do so because they had not returned with any tokens from the corpses of fallen enemies as was required for the ceremony. Thus, they were unwelcome and viewed as spiritually impure.[47]

On January 2, 1985, a young *nabi* known as Alice Auma claimed to be possessed by a *tipu* named *Lakwena*, or "messenger."[48] Alice built an Acholi following known as the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), dedicated to spiritually cleansing the Acholi of their sins and reconciling what was wrong with the world. She became known as Alice Lakwena and said that she spoke on behalf of *tipu maleng*, the Holy Spirit, to her followers and all of Uganda. Behrend explains that

> because the Acholi were so especially sinful, God sent the spirit Lakwena to them (and to no other ethnic group). Their particular sinfulness and guilt was thus not only transformed into a promise of salvation; it also made them God's chosen people, like the children of Israel, thus

[46] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Pader, Uganda, July 10, 2017.

[47] Behrend, 28–29.

[48] Ibid., 23.

legitimizing the claim they would make of leadership of the Holy Spirit Movement.[49]

Alice Lakwena's perception of evil was internal to the Acholi, and particularly concerned the former members of the UNLA. Acholiland was in disarray, she preached, because of the sins of the Acholi. The arrival of the NRA was a physical manifestation of a spiritual problem. She prescribed a series of religious requirements to be fulfilled by her followers, some of which had Biblical origins and others with roots in traditional Acholi beliefs. Initiates of the HSM had to ritually purify themselves using a mixture of Catholicism and traditional ceremonies and then follow Lakwena's 17 commandments to remain pure.

In August of 1986, the same month that the UPDA was formed, Alice said that Lakwena instructed her to stop healing and to form the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) to fight a war against evil instead.[50] Her followers were not to kill directly by aiming at the enemy. Instead, they fired in the general direction of their targets, trusting the spirits to carry the bullets to those who deserved to die.[51] They also threw white stones that Lakwena said would explode like grenades. They believed that bees and snakes would join them in battle and that supernatural forces would even cause the water of streams and rivers to come to their aid. Lakwena painted crosses on the chests of her followers with shea oil,[52] telling them that if they remained pure of heart, they would be bulletproof.[53]

Joseph Kony, Alice's cousin, tried to join but was rejected by Lakwena for having an impure spirit.[54] Kony already had a following at that time, being a charismatic, spiritual young man. One source said that Kony's early followers comprised a prayer

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[49] Behrend, 33.

[50] Ibid., 25.

[51] Ibid., 58.

[52] This is known as *moo ya*, a traditional medicine of the Acholi.

[53] Ibid., 81.

[54] Ibid., 86.

group, gathering to pray for the welfare of Acholi, when the NRA broke it up because it had grown too large.[55]

Alice Lakwena's first engagement, an attempt to capture the city of Gulu, was a failure. After this, two brigades from the UPDA, 70 and 90, joined her forces. The reinforced HSMF attacked the NRA garrison at Corner Kilak between January 14 and 18, 1987.[56] This attack succeeded in driving off the NRA forces, who left behind a large supply of weapons and ammunition. .As a result of this victory, new followers surged to the HSMF and it grew to over 7,000 fighters.[57] Lakwena led the HSMF south to Lira and Soroti and eventually as far as Jinja on the banks of Lake Victoria. There, the HSMF was finally destroyed by the NRA. Disillusioned, Alice fled to Kenya, saying that Lakwena had abandoned her.

Alice's father, Severino Lukoya, picked up where Alice left off. He organized the remnants of the HSMF, calling himself *Wod*, or "Father." Former members of the HSM have said that Severino was part of the HSM trinity. Severino was the father, Kony the *Won*, or "Son," and Alice the *Tipu Maleng*, or "Holy Spirit."[58] Severino earned the name *otong-tong* ("he who chops his victims into pieces"),[59] which is the same name by which the LRA later came to be known in the Central African Republic and South Sudan.[60]

F. JOSEPH KONY AND THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

1. Heir to Lakwena

Joseph Kony began his own Holy Spirit Movement II around February 1987, claiming to have received authority from Lakwena to fight the NRA.[61] Some of Alice Lakwena's followers joined him, as did some members of the UPDA. Kony had an

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[55] Author interview with an Ugandan Government Official, Entebbe, Uganda, July 14, 2017.

[56] Lamwaka, 81.

[57] Behrend, 81.

[58] Doom and Vlassenroot, 20.

[59] Ibid., 19.

[60] Mareike Schomerus, "They Forgot What They Came For," *Journal of East African Studies*, 2012: 131.

[61] Behrend, 85.

apocalyptic vision of an impending genocide of the Acholi, which was a common fear in Acholiland in those days. He believed that the only way that the Acholi could be redeemed was to revitalize their identity and return to traditional practices; he blamed the people for the degradation of the economy in northern Uganda. Kony renamed his movement first the Lord's Salvation Army, then the United Democratic Christian Force before finally settling on the name Lord's Resistance Army.[62]

Kony's beliefs and practices were similar to those of Alice Lakwena, but were less peacefully applied. Kony took on the role of a *rwot* as well as that of an *otega*, or "war leader." An *otega* does not have the authority to go to war without the blessing of the *rwot*,[63] and there has been some controversy about whether Kony ever received such a blessing from Acholi elders, although Kony claimed that he did.[64] For another example of the traditional authority Kony exercised, the *rwodi* typically reserve to themselves the authority to perform cleansing rituals on behalf of ancestors, but Kony did not answer to anyone but himself. He instead performed the cleansing rituals alone. When people were killed, he purified them by himself.[65] New members had to undertake rites of passage to be cleansed of witchcraft. Initiation involved being sprinkled with holy water and shea oil to be transformed into *malaika* (Swahili for 'angels'). Kony would perform these ceremonies wearing a *kanzu,* which is a traditional Islamic white robe worn by those possessed by *jok Alla.*[66] This account from a former LRA child soldier describes the ceremony:

> During the purification ceremony, you took off your clothes, remaining bare chested, and a gun [was] handed to you, before you stepped forward to be anointed. There were lines of people singing. The controller yard took some water, placed the stone in the oil, then poured the water on top, and then put the mixture on your body… The stone was placed in the bottle, water added, and a string tied at the mouth… The ends of the string were tied together and then hung around your neck. During the rituals,

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[62] Doom and Vlassenroot 22–23.

[63] Audrey Butt, *The Nilotes of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Uganda* (London: International African Institute, 1964), 84.

[64] Doom and Vlassenroot, 21.

[65] Ibid., 22.

[66] Ibid., 23.

> only the controller yard spoke, saying, 'Today, you are being anointed with oil in front of the sacred home of Kony, and beginning today, you are a soldier for Kony, not anyone else.' This was repeated on to the next person, and the next, until everyone was done.[67]

Kony claimed to be possessed by multiple spirits, as these were the source of his authority. In addition to his early claims of speaking for Lakwena, there was Silly Silindi, a spirit from Sudan in charge of strategy; Ing Chu, a Chinese spirit who could destroy enemy weapon systems; Major Bianca (also called Jim Brickey and "Who Are You"), an American intelligence officer; and Juma Oris, who was a minister under Amin's regime.[68] These spirits, he said, would inform him when someone was planning to escape or plotting against him. The spirit "Who Are You" became notorious as the one who got Kony's followers killed.

> Joseph Kony imposed fear on the people from very, very early. The fear he imposed was that he would influence what he called the spirit. Even him, he told that whatever you do, [punishment] will be imposed by the spirit. He told that he had the spirits. He said that 'Who Are You' was the one that told, the name 'Jim Brickey' was the real name, and that he was in the camp and can see you wherever you are.[69]

All of this was plausible, given the cosmology of rural Acholi people. Kony's system cleverly meshed with traditional beliefs and instilled obedience through mortal fear.

The LRA's early tactics were similar to those of the HSMF, singing and clapping in battle, not taking cover, and being painted with holy water and shea oil as protection from bullets. However, the LRA did not enjoy the same level of popular support that had initially greeted the UPDA and HSM, and its success against the NRA was limited. Kony was hostile towards the UPDA due to its leaders' lack of faith in his spiritual powers, and so would abduct UPDA soldiers and force them into the LRA when he encountered them away from their units.[70]

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[67] Opio Oloya, *Child to Soldier: Stories from Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 140.

[68] Doom and Vlassenroot, 23.

[69] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[70] Lamwaka, 83–84.

In 1988 the Government of Uganda offered amnesty to any rebel who would lay down arms. The NRA conducted talks with the UPDA leadership and signed the Gulu Peace Accord on June 3, 1988.[71] During the peace talks, government representatives brought northerners to Kampala to see the development taking place there. They showed them new hotel buildings and the airport at Entebbe, in an effort to persuade them that the north could be similarly developed if the rebels would stop fighting.[72] Kony and his LRA rejected amnesty and the results of the peace talks, taking refuge across the border in Sudan.

2. Sudan's Patronage

During this time, nearby Sudan was experiencing its own insurgency. The insurgent Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by John Garang, was highly dependent on external support, especially from Ethiopia. When Ethiopia's Mengistu regime fell in 1991, the SPLA lost its sanctuary in Ethiopia as well as most of its logistical support. The SPLA was then forced to rely more heavily on support from Uganda.[73] Because Uganda's LRA rebels were already operating from safe havens in Sudan, the opportunity was ripe for the government in Khartoum to leverage the LRA against the government in Kampala, which was supporting the SPLA. Therefore, Sudanese employment of the LRA was a measure taken to counter the SPLA in southern Sudan and deter Uganda from supporting them.

Former LRA commanders' accounts affirm that the LRA received direct support from Sudan in the 1990s, to include arms, supplies, and formal military training.[74] Residents of southern Sudan report that they started noticing an LRA presence in 1991 when they discovered that the SPLA had a new, foreign foe. Southern Sudan had a

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[71] Doom and Vlassenroot, 15.

[72] Author interview with John Baptist "Lacambel" Oryema, Gulu, Uganda, July 12, 2017.

[73] Ann M. Lesch, *The Sudan: Contested National Identities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 157.

[74] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

sizeable Acholi community and local civilians initially regarded the LRA as benign. One local civilian noted, "Before they joined the Arabs they were friendly."[75]

The LRA partnered with the Equatoria Defense Force (EDF), a pro-Khartoum counter to the SPLA composed of multiple ethnic groups, including Sudanese Acholi. The EDF was led by Riek Machar,[76] who developed close ties with the LRA high command.[77] Sudan provided the LRA with machine guns, land mines, and rocket-propelled grenades.[78] Official support to the LRA as a proxy force for the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) began around 1993.[79] While the LRA was already attacking the SPLA, it began to openly attack southern Sudanese civilians after 1994, according to international observers.[80]

Kony established a headquarters in Juba, (now the capital of South Sudan) then the Khartoum-controlled regional capital; one of his children was even delivered in a Juba hospital by caesarean section. The LRA also established camps and supply points in locations throughout southern Sudan, including Nabanga and Aru-Kubi.[81] Former LRA commanders recall operational bases at Jubelein, Nisito, and Aruu Junction.[82] One SAF officer reported linking up with a formation of an estimated 10,000 LRA fighters outside of Yei.[83] The LRA had made itself very comfortable in Sudanese territory.

The SAF were careful not to disturb the spiritualist aspect of the LRA because this proved to be a unifying factor for the organization. In contrast to its intentions for the Sudanese inhabitants of the south, the Islamist regime in Khartoum did not seem to care whether the LRA was Muslim, Christian, or animist; it did not represent Sudan directly,

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[75] Schomerus, 126.

[76] Rebel leader and former Vice President of South Sudan.

[77] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[78] Jackson, 30.

[79] Schomerus, 126.

[80] Ibid., 126.

[81] Ibid., 126–127.

[82] Author interview with Former a LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[83] Schomerus, 127.

and its purpose was simply to disrupt the SPLA and the Ugandan government.[84] The military support to the LRA likely came, indirectly at least, from Iran. Because Sudan was the first Islamist regime in Africa, and the second in the world, Iran had an interest in supporting its success, especially given Sudan's goal of expanding its regional influence.[85] Some of the Iranian support Sudan received in the 1990s may have been given directly to the LRA. As one former LRA brigadier recounted, the LRA was trained by Sudan and "some other Arab country. They gave advice. They said, 'do this, don't do this, and we will be behind you.'"[86] To Ugandan rebels, an Iranian military contingent would likely have been indistinguishable from an Arab one, so direct support seems plausible given the nature of Iranian involvement in Sudan at that time.

Sudan established training facilities for the LRA at Ikotosh, Magwii, Pajok, and Teretenya.[87] This training was comprehensive in nature, to include the development of a cadre of LRA medics who were rapidly educated in modern medicine.[88] One former LRA commander we interviewed summarized Kony's reasons for operating in Sudan:

> Kony went to southern Sudan and got more information. In Sudan they are warriors and to get these ammunitions and arms is very easy. He could attack those people and get what he wants, ammunition, guns, the rest…. So he got a very good experience from those people. LRA received military [training], political, support weapons, and intelligence training. Most of the officers received training. The training was mobilized by the Khartoum government. SPLA was supported by UPDF [NRA]; that gave opportunity to LRA to receive support from Khartoum.[89]

Ugandan veterans of this period cite the LRA's support from Sudan as an equalizing factor, negating any relative advantage that the NRA previously had.

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[84] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[85] Peter Woodward, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 48–50.

[86] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[87] Doom and Vlassenroot, 25.

[88] Oloya, 141.

[89] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

G. CONCLUSION

The economic and cultural conditions of Acholiland provided fertile ground for insurgency following the NRA's victory in 1986. Joseph Kony was not the only opportunist who capitalized on this situation, but he was the most persistent. The Ugandan Government's combination of military force and offers of amnesty finished the UPDA and HSMF, but Kony continued to fight. Sudan's intervention by providing support to the LRA proved to be a game-changer by prolonging the conflict and putting the LRA and NRA on equal footing for the next several years.

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III. THE UGANDAN APPROACH TO THE INSURGENCY

With the support the LRA was receiving from Sudan and given the NRA's relative inexperience at counter-insurgency (COIN), Uganda faced protracted war in the north. Over time, the actions of the NRA and the Government of Uganda helped to solidify the government's legitimacy and win the support of the local population. These efforts began, formally, with the launch of Operation North.

A. OPERATION NORTH

Uganda's NRA launched a deliberate counterinsurgency operation in 1991 under the leadership of Minister of State Defense David Tinyefuza. Many local Acholi were arrested and mistreated for suspicion of aiding the LRA during this time. For this heavy-handedness, Tinyefuza was replaced in 1992.

Despite these missteps, the local population sided more and more with the government. Northern leaders encouraged participation in local defense units to assist the NRA against the rebels and there was a high rate of participation as a result.[90] Local Acholi were placed in positions of authority in the local government and in the NRA units assigned to Operation North.[91] The NRA made deliberate efforts to improve its relationship with the Acholi, including civic action projects such as drilling wells.[92] The LRA's support from the Acholi began to wane. According to one former LRA commander:

> In the early days, the population was very supportive of the LRA and leaked information until the UPDF [NRA at the time] began apologizing and showing that it wanted peace with the north, to rebuild, and then the population started changing its mind. Then the population's information to the LRA was cut and turned against the LRA due to the approach the government used. Then they joined hands with the UPDF to bring peace to northern Uganda. The civilian population turned against Kony and he took

[90] Doom and Vlassenroot, 23.

[91] Lamwaka, 104–108.

[92] Ibid., 116.

> revenge. The UPDF provided real information to the population and the people tired of the war and realized that the UPDF could end it.[93]

One UPDF veteran of this period, who was a platoon commander in Gulu from 1989 until 1995, described the discipline of the NRA troops as a major factor in winning the support of the population:

> The most important weapon is the discipline of the forces formed by political education. The soldiers are taught the history of Uganda, of the kingdoms, of the tribal structures, and even the LRA were using it. So you cannot only use the tribal thing; you will fail. You cannot punish one who is opposed [insurgent] and the entire tribe with him. You must punish individually. So these tactics and strategies were applied, but the important one is the discipline. They [soldiers] must be considerate of the victims. Our conduct turned the people against Kony. Kony wanted to start an Acholi war. He wanted a Luo republic, wanted it to go to the Nile. People turned against him. When they said 'no', he punished them. He said, 'these ones are contaminated. Now they are no longer Acholi'.[94]

Following its loss of popular support, the LRA began to rely on a new form of recruitment: the abduction of children. Kony had never been comfortable with LRA troops who had previous military experience. According to one former LRA commander, "Former military men were not easy for him to control because they knew more than him about the military and some were escaping. So, in [the] 1990s he started abducting young people that he could train in his own way."[95]

Kony had practiced abduction of both adults and juveniles from the very beginning of his joining the HSM, but he had never undertaken mass abductions of children. Children offered Kony a blank slate on which to impress his personalized Acholi identity. To them, he could be godlike and unquestionable, thus ensuring him a loyal and devoted following. Many abductees were forced to kill relatives and other children. Girls were forced into sexual slavery, but some also served as fighters.[96] These

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[93] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[94] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Gulu, Uganda, July 10, 2017.

[95] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[96] Oloya, 96; Lamwaka, 303–313. Many of the female abductees reported serving multiple roles, including combat, based on the dynamic nature of life in the LRA as groups split apart and operated independently for long periods of time.

actions destroyed the children's sense of self-respect and connection to their communities, causing them to adopt a new identity as members of the LRA.[97]

Thousands of children were abducted in northern Uganda; the LRA rousted many from their homes during hours of darkness. The abductions of Acholi alone occurred at such high rates that, by 2008, 48.8% of the residents of Acholi communities surveyed by Pham, Vinck, and Stover reported having been abducted by the LRA, including at least 25,000 children. The average length of time for being held captive was 342 days (11 months) for males and 56 months for females.[98] This might reflect escape being more feasible for boys or that their life expectancies were considerably shorter.

As a result of these raids on villages for children, the NRA developed a system of what it called "protected villages." These were camps, mostly grafted onto pre-existing settlements, where the NRA would post defensive positions to protect the civilian population from abduction and raids. One consequence of these displacements into protected villages, also called internally-displaced persons (IDP) camps, was that civilians were forced to abandon their homes and property, leaving them vulnerable. Because most were farmers, giving up their land and livestock deprived them of their previous means of economic support.[99]

Although the practice of displacing civilians into IDPs is generally criticized, the UPDF officers we interviewed defended it as the best option for protecting local villages from the LRA:

> When you remove the fish from water it has to do what? Breathe. So, yes, we applied the Sun Tzu approach to the LRA to remove it from the support of the people. Was it part of the plan to reduce LRA support from the population? Yes, because as you can imagine that feeling [of the parents], children [were] abducted as young as ten. What do you think would have happened if we did not rescue those people?[100]

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[97] Doom and Vlassenroot, 25.

[98] Phuong Pham, Patrick Vinck, and Eric Stover, "The Lord's Resistance Army and Forced Conscription in Northern Uganda," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 2008: 404. .

[99] Chris Dolan, *Social Torture: the Case of Northern Uganda 1986–2006* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 46–47.

[100] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

Or, as another source put it, "At first, the population was against the camps. Then they realized that they could not do without them."[101] During the 1990s Access to these IDPs was controlled by the Ugandan government. Apparently in an effort to control the narrative of the war, the UPDF would organize official trips to the IDPs for foreign media and diplomats.[102]

B. AMNESTY AND REINTEGRATION

1. Origins of the Amnesty Policy

The Acholi people, having lost so many children to the LRA, had a strong interest in seeing them safely returned. This, combined with Acholi cultural practices of reconciliation, motivated a grassroots political appeal to the Government of Uganda to grant amnesty to the LRA. The residents of other parts of Uganda sympathized with the Acholi for the loss of their children and use of their youth as child soldiers, which made gaining political support from their fellow Ugandans a feasible goal.[103]

The concept of granting amnesty to the LRA rebels was rooted in traditional Acholi customs. The ritual of *mato oput* provided for complete forgiveness for an offender and reconciliation with the community, regardless of the severity of the crimes committed.[104] Children, in Acholi tradition, are not held fully responsible for their deeds. Children are only considered *odoko dano* ('morally and socially mature persons') when they are old enough to contribute to society and have children of their own.[105] Thus, the availability of rites of reconciliation, along with general condemnation of the LRA's use of child soldiers, combined to make amnesty an attractive option for Acholi Ugandans.

But the purpose of amnesty was not only to protect children. By providing a pardon to all former insurgents who "renounce rebellion against the Ugandan

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[101] Author interview with UPDF Officer, Pader, Uganda, July 10, 2017.

[102] Jonathan Fisher, "Framing Kony: Uganda's War, Obama's Advisers, and the Nature of 'Influence' in Western Foreign Policy Making," *Third World Quarterly*, 2014: 697.

[103] Author interview with the Uganda Amnesty Commission, Gulu, Uganda, July 12, 2017.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Finstrom, 225.

government," the hope was that the harmful results of the war might be mitigated. "The underlying rationale was that it was much better to forgive the rebels without conditions, so that they come out of the bush (wilderness areas), rather than continue with a war that impacted negatively on their lives and caused much suffering."[106]

Once it established an Amnesty Commission, the Ugandan government conducted extensive sensitization of Ugandan communities, both in the north and elsewhere, thereby building support for amnesty as official policy and also providing for a means of practical reintegration once rebels had returned to their homes.[107] One former LRA member recalls that, "The UPDF [NRA] sensitized the civilian population that those in the bush [LRA] were abducted from you and now they must be seen as your sons and daughters."[108] This sensitization took several years to be completed, but in the end it built support for returning defectors as well as political support for the legal framework of the Amnesty Act. As a result, the Amnesty Act was passed into law by the Ugandan Parliament in 2000.[109] All of the former LRA members we interviewed during the course of our research, along with those interviewed previously in operational settings, reported that the Ugandan amnesty policy was the principal factor enabling their defection.

2. The Reintegration Process

Former LRA returnees were received carefully. The organizations involved in the repatriation process attempted to avoid questioning individuals for at least two weeks in order to ensure they felt comfortable and accepted. The NGOs involved in the process of amnesty and reconciliation - such as the Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO) and World Vision, together with the Ugandan Amnesty Commission - established a child protection unit (CPU) that would collaborate to provide former child soldiers with counseling, short-term material assistance, and religious support based on

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[106] Lamwaka, 392.

[107] Author interview with the Uganda Amnesty Commission, Gulu, Uganda, July 12, 2017.

[108] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[109] Barney Afako,"Undermining the LRA: Roles of Uganda's Amnesty Act," Conciliation Resources (August 1, 2012: http://www.c-r.org/news-and-views/comment/undermining-lra-role-ugandas-amnesty-act).

the returnee's religious preference. The CPU would assist the returnee and family by coordinating with extended family members and cultural leaders for the reconciliation ceremonies to be conducted according to the returnee's wishes.

After these ceremonies were completed and the returnee had been with family members for a period of two weeks or more, the CPU would begin to allow them to be "gently" questioned on subjects of intelligence value.[110] The relationship between the various organizations of the CPU and the Ugandan government was reported to have been very cordial and mutually beneficial. This way, the government maintained an effective and legitimate appeal for rebels to demobilize and return home, as well as access to valuable intelligence on the LRA, while the NGOs were given latitude to provide humanitarian assistance according to their individual mandates. This patience by of the government likely contributed to building trust with the Acholi population, reinforcing the Ugandan regime's legitimacy.

Some LRA defectors were conscripted into service with the NRA, which was renamed the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) in 1995.[111] Those who surrendered or defected to the UPDF away from population centers were sometimes conscripted directly into service as scouts:

> Some were forcibly integrated prior to 2002 because they could not return to their communities. Communities were traumatized, so the defectors would go back to the LRA because they were rejected. We took them in because they had nowhere else to go. Prior to 2002 we needed them because LRA tactics were unique. Former LRA knew when LRA were near.[112]

The UPDF 105 Battalion was a specialized unit composed of former LRA soldiers. The Battalion was employed in tracking the LRA due to its inherent understanding of LRA tactics, and was deployed in pursuit of the LRA until it was decommissioned in 2015 due to administrative difficulties. It was found that many of the

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[110] Author interview with the Uganda Amnesty Commission.

[111] Doom and Vlassenroot, 33.

[112] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Pader, Uganda, July 10, 2017.

105 Battalion's former LRA were in poor health after their lives in the bush and were unable to meet UPDF physical and psychological standards.[113]

3. Advertising Amnesty

The NRA/UPDF disseminated amnesty leaflets and pamphlets from 2000 to 2002. At least one source viewed them as effective, since some rebels reported to the NRA with the amnesty literature in hand.[114] The prominent Acholi radio personality John Baptist "Lacambel" Oryema reported that he prepared leaflets to advertise the amnesty statute and the subsequent Amnesty Act and carried them to rallies in northern Uganda. He also accompanied NRA military convoys into the bush to personally disseminate the leaflets. He reported that he was ambushed more than once while carrying out this mission. He took other initiatives as well:

> I had a small office of information and it would also assist the army [NRA/UPDF]. I encouraged them to approach the rebels in a spirit of forgiveness. I opened a small place with some of my colleagues close to the barracks [NRA 4th Division] to take in the defectors. We would train those boys on what amnesty was all about. There were no NGOs in those days so we did this our own way. I would go to the market and say, 'how many of you have met your children in the bush? I want to see you, one by one.' So, I would give them this small piece of paper called 'Amnesty' and told them 'this is something very important and do not share it with anyone you do not trust.' They would give these leaflets to the youth in the bush. I started talking to wives of those UPDA fighters and started drilling them on what to say to their husbands to tactfully sensitize them. They reported back to me and then I reported back to the government.[115]

One former senior LRA commander describes the effects of amnesty this way;

> What the Ugandan Government did was very effective. It almost coincides with what was said in the Bible, 'feed your enemy.' Those that left the bush and those that remained, their minds were changed to support the government. Those that left, they forgot the LRA with all their hearts.[116]

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[113] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Author interview with John Baptist "Lacambel" Oryema, Gulu, Uganda, July 12, 2017. Lacambel also served as a mediator in the talks between the UPDA and the NRA according to Lamwaka, 146.

[116] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

C. SPEAKING TO THE REBELS

According to Lacambel, there was no radio station in northern Uganda prior to 1996. Instead, a small transmitter was used to retransmit the signal from Radio Freedom, the Ugandan national radio station, from Kampala. Initially there was no programming specifically intended for a rebel target audience broadcast from this station. In 1996, Lacambel approached UPDF spokesman Colonel Bantariza and asked him for access to the signal to support local needs. Bantariza gave Lacambel one hour of airtime a day. Lacambel used a cassette player to transmit pre-recorded messages designed for the LRA rebels and their family members. "That hour was like gold. We were limited by the Ministry of Information to the time they gave us. They [local people] used to call it Radio Lacambel. Then we asked for two hours." The program began airing interviews with former rebels, as well as family members of the abducted. Lacambel named it "Amnesty" around the time that the Amnesty Statute was passed to promote awareness. He noticed that LRA defections increased in response to the program. The UPDF was directly involved in sponsoring Lacambel's Amnesty radio program. Lacambel interviewed UPDF officers so that they could tell their story to the local population and the rebels, confronting Kony's propaganda directly. "So the truth came out," one source said.[117] The UPDF also began leaving small radios in places for the LRA to find.

Lacambel had no previous radio experience, but had worked with his brother, who was a radio technician, in Kampala for a few months. His radio station began in a small room in the Gulu District School. UPDF General Salim Saleh provided training for the initial staff, which began as three people: a receptionist, a disc jockey, and an announcer/ program editor.[118] The station began with a 300 watt transmitter, and gradually upgraded to a 1,000 watt transmitter to better reach rebel groups moving further into the bush. The British High Commission visited the station and witnessed a live broadcast from a young boy who had recently returned from the LRA. The British High Commissioner (Ambassador) was so convinced of radio's effectiveness that he offered to support the radio station's outreach efforts. The British government then sent survey teams to

[117] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Pader, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[118] Author interview with John Baptist "Lacambel" Oryema, Gulu, Uganda, July 12, 2017.

identify a location for a new building, developed estimates for the required equipment, and operational expenses for a new radio station. As a result, Mega FM opened on October 14th, 2002. The station featured a variety of Acholi-language programming to meet a broad set of needs, such as local news, public service information, traditional music, and cultural programming.[119]

D. NGO INTEREST

Aid groups such as the United Nations Children's Fund, International Red Cross, World Vision, and Save the Children were involved in easing the suffering of northern Ugandans from at least the 1990s on. The abduction of the Aboke Girls in 1997 attracted a spate of international attention, increasing donor support to groups already involved in northern Uganda. In 1999 the governments of Sudan and Uganda signed an agreement in Nairobi to cease support for rebels in one another's territories. This agreement, brokered by the Carter Center, foreshadowed a new era in the UPDF's strategy.

The LRA was added to the U.S. list of terrorist organizations in 2001 at the request of the Government of Uganda. In an apparent show of good faith to the international community, Sudan then permitted Uganda to deploy troops in pursuit of the LRA in southern Sudan in 2002. Sudan appeared to have an increased interest in supporting its agreements with the U.S. following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The Ugandan force deployment to southern Sudan was called Operation Iron Fist.[120] Calls for direct intervention by the international community from American and international advocacy groups came later and coincided with involvement in the Darfur crisis in Sudan. The presence of the IDP camps in northern Uganda did attract international attention by concentrating the needs of many in locations that were more accessible to NGO and IGO observers. As awareness of the humanitarian costs of the conflict grew the NGOs Resolve Uganda, Invisible Children, the Enough Project, and the Voice Project became more involved in the region.[121]

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[119] Ibid.

[120] Schomerus, 129–130.

[121] Author interview with Ledio Cakaj, Washington, DC, March 31, 2017.

E. OPERATION IRON FIST

With the amnesty policy serving as the carrot, the new UPDF operations served as the metaphorical stick. The UPDF launched Operation Iron Fist in March 2002 once the Government of Sudan agreed to stop supporting the LRA and to allow Ugandan forces to force the LRA out of their bases in Sudanese territory. Attack helicopters became the preferred weapons platform of the UPDF during this period. UPDF veterans cite the use of the attack helicopters as the most effective means available at the time because they represented a capability that the LRA was not prepared to match or defeat. The UPDF also pursued the LRA more readily than previously, keeping the LRA off balance and constantly fleeing for refuge. Former LRA commanders complained that these new pursuit tactics created great discomfort for them, forcing them to cook food only at night and remain on the move or in hiding during daylight hours. One major impetus for defection, one source said, was hunger.[122]

During this time, Lacambel's radio program, then called *Dwog Paco* ('come home'), began broadcasting messages to individual LRA fighters by name. These messages made use of family members or former rebel comrades of fighters to increase credibility and arouse a sense of nostalgia. One former LRA commander responded to these messages directly, stating that

> these [messages] shook the foundation of the LRA and these commanders started to wonder if they should come out. The minds of many people, even the troops, started to change. We started hearing of many escapes. Those that came before me were calling my name. I called and did the same thing when I came out [in 2004] and called Sam Kolo[123] and told him, he was a brigadier at the time, and he came out. That is the thing, the friend calls you and you believe him.[124]

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[122] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[123] Sam Kolo was formerly the LRA's spokesman.

[124] Ibid.

F. CONCLUSION

By the middle of 2004, more than 5,000 former LRA fighters had defected and applied for amnesty.[125] The Ugandans' three-pronged approach to the insurgency was yielding results: political appeals and reconstruction for northern Uganda, amnesty for rebels willing to surrender, and "military pressure" to pursue the rebels and deny them safe haven.[126]

[125] Janine Clark, "The ICC, Uganda, and the LRA: Re-Framing the Debate," *African Studies*, 69, no. 1 (2010): 145.

[126] Author Interviews with an UPDF Officer, Gulu, Uganda, July 10, 2017.

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IV. INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION

A. THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Uganda is an original signatory of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) Rome Statute enacted in June of 2002, granting the ICC permanent jurisdiction for matters of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. Uganda was also the first state to make a referral to the ICC's criminal prosecutor in December 2003 when President Museveni named Kony and his subordinate commanders. After a period of investigation into Kony's alleged abuse of civilians, the ICC issued warrants for the LRA's five most notorious leaders on July 8, 2005.[127]

According to some former LRA members, the ICC indictments fed into Kony's propaganda that the Ugandan government's Amnesty Act was a ruse designed to lure in Acholi fighters and kill them. As Lacambel summarized:

> To make a man so negative to us listen, you must combine ideas. One of the issues was the injustice. Hearing about imprisonment, hearing about the ICC speeded up the [propaganda] that they would not be free because they already know the level of crimes they committed. They already have their own self-judgments.[128]

Thus, the intervention of the ICC sent a mixed message. It communicated the interest of the international community in the conflict, but also appeared to contradict the Government of Uganda's commitment to amnesty. One advantage to the ICC indictments is that they permitted the authorization of rewards of up to $5 million U.S. dollars for information leading to the arrest or capture of the indicted commanders through the U.S. State Department's War Crimes Rewards Program. This program was heavily advertised and significantly impacted the motivations of regional actors, as will be explained shortly.

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[127] Clark, 141–3.

[128] Author interview with John Baptist "Lacambel" Oryema, Gulu, Uganda, July 12, 2017.

B. PEACE TALKS

Between July 2006 and December 2008, the LRA and the Government of Uganda entered into a series of peace talks in Juba, Sudan.[129] Facilitated by Kony's former ally in Sudan, Riek Machar,[130] these talks consisted of detailed discussions about how the LRA and its leaders would be treated if they surrendered. But Kony was never satisfied, with his ICC conviction being a particular sticking point. According to a former LRA member who was with Kony at the time, Kony said that the obstacle to peace was his own indictment by the ICC. Observers reported that neither Kony nor Museveni trusted each other adequately to ensure the peace talks' success.

In 2005, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between Sudan and the SPLA eliminated the LRA's safe haven in South Sudan and forced Kony to seek other options. As David Munyua describes in his thesis; "because the SPLA was an ally of Uganda, it meant that the LRA had lost control of its ally's [Sudan] sanctuary territory."[131] The Government of Uganda and the LRA signed a cessation of hostilities agreement in August of 2006, but this failed to stop the LRA's violence.[132]

In 2008, after two decades of fighting, the LRA were eventually driven out of Uganda altogether, and took refuge in the rainforests of the northeastern Orientale Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to some former LRA commanders, the success of the UPDF's defection efforts drove this move. "Kony feared to lose even one single soldier," said one, "and he crossed the Nile and fled to the Congo to keep them."[133]

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[129] Dylan Hendrickson and Kennedy Tumutegyereize, "Reflections on the Lord's Resistance Army and the Juba Talks," Policy Brief, Conciliation Resources, 2012, 10. Juba was then a regional capital but is now the national capital of Republic of South Sudan.

[130] Rebel leader and former Vice President of South Sudan.

[131] David Munyua, "Evading the Endgame in an Insurgency Undertaking: the Case of the Lord's Resistance Army and Beyond," Master's Thesis (Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), 22.

[132] Clark, 146.

[133] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

President Museveni attempted to contact Kony by satellite phone at least once, but Kony refused to speak with him.[134] According to Ledio Cakaj's interviews with one of Kony's former bodyguards, Kony feared that if he communicated directly with the Government of Uganda that his location would be identified and immediately targeted with a precision strike.[135]

C. OPERATION LIGHTNING THUNDER

On the heels of the failed peace talks, the UPDF launched Operation Lightning Thunder (OLT) on December 14, 2008 with U.S. intelligence and logistical support.[136] The operation unofficially began with Kony receiving a call on his satellite phone:

> I remember in the beginning of Lightning Thunder that his Excellency himself [President Museveni] wanted to communicate with Kony and Kony refused because there was a serious attack from aircraft that was being launched just after [the call]. And indeed, the first bomb landed within the compound. It was a satellite phone and someone else had taken the call for him, his signaler or someone. And initially, he believed that the call was to distract him from the three attack helicopters [that arrived].[137]

In response, the LRA launched a series of deadly attacks on villages in the DRC's Orientale Province, killing hundreds of civilians in approximately 50 different villages. The UPDF deployed into the eastern DRC in pursuit of the LRA. In November 2011, the African Union (AU) authorized the creation of a regional task force (RTF) composed of soldiers from Uganda, the DRC, South Sudan, and the CAR. This African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) had a mandate to "strengthen the operational capacity of the LRA-affected countries, to eliminate the LRA, create conditions conducive for the stabilization of the affected areas, and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected populations."[138]

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[134] On November 14, 2008.

[135] Cakaj, 198–9.

[136] Cakaj, 207.

[137] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[138] African Union, "The African Union-Led Regional Task Force for the Elimination of the LRA," (November 23, 2015: http://www.peaceau.org/en/page/100-au-led-rci-lra-1).

D. UNITED STATES MILITARY INTERVENTION

International awareness of the resulting humanitarian crisis built slowly in the 1990s and early 2000s and increased greatly after the advent of advocacy campaigns launched by NGOs such as Resolve Uganda (later called the Resolve), the Enough Project, and Invisible Children in 2007. The Enough Project, for instance, was an advocacy-focused offshoot of the International Crisis Group, with connections to the U.S. White House. These groups initially focused on the suffering of northern Ugandans as a result of the conflict and the difficulties of life in IDP camps. However, after 2009, they advocated for U.S. military intervention as the only realistic means of stopping Kony and the LRA.[139] These groups worked together closely on these campaigns; according to one former staff member, they were linked by both a common purpose and by a shared donor base.[140] The staff of the Enough Project confirmed that these three NGOs carefully synchronized their activities to present a unified advocacy campaign to policy makers in Washington, and also to prevent duplication of efforts.[141] The groups also shared a significant degree of influence on the formation of U.S. policy on the LRA conflict.[142]

For example, Invisible Children's campaign, "How it Ends" mobilized political support for U.S. intervention by rallying of over 1,700 activists to attend 400 meetings in the U.S. Capitol Building in June of 2009, the largest lobbying event on an African issue in U.S. history.[143] This campaign continued into 2010, marked by the signing of the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act (Public Law 111–172), emotional advocacy appeals for constituent political support, and culminating in the widely publicized "Kony 2012" social media campaign to maintain public support for the deployment of U.S. Special Operations Forces (USSOF) advisers to "catch Kony."

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[139] Jonathan Fisher, "Framing Kony: Uganda's War, Obama's Advisers, and the Nature of 'Influence' in Western Foreign Policy Making," *Third World Quarterly* 35 (2014): 692–3.

[140] Author interview with Ledio Cakaj. Washington, DC, March 31, 2017.

[141] Author interview with Staff of the Enough Project, Monterey, CA, November 6, 2017.

[142] Fisher, 695.

[143] Amy Finnegan, "Beneath Kony 2012: Americans Aligning with Arms and Aiding Others," *Africa Today* 59, no. 3 (2012): 139.

According to an interview with the staff of the Resolve (formerly Resolve Uganda), the U.S. Strategy to Counter the LRA was developed by these same NGOs, and particularly by the Resolve. When the U.S. Obama Administration was assessing the situation and developing its response, personnel within the U.S. National Security Council asked for input from the Resolve. The Resolve then provided a recommended strategy that was enacted nearly verbatim as official policy.[144] This means that the strategy for intervention in the conflict was designed by the very same group of people who had lobbied for U.S. intervention in the first place. The new U.S. military operation was dubbed Observant Compass to complement the Ugandans' Lightning Thunder.[145]

According to some of the personnel at the Resolve involved in helping to craft this policy, the assumption of U.S. policy makers at the time was that the LRA was a disorganized group of rebels that could be swiftly defeated by using the advanced technology and techniques the U.S. military could bring to bear.[146] Because the U.S. had not fought in an equivalent environment since the Vietnam War era, there may not have been any obvious reason to doubt this assumption. The U.S. Joint Staff published an execution order (EXORD) to deploy an *ad hoc* joint task force of approximately 100 personnel to the "LRA-affected area," including Uganda, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. This task force, then called the AFRICOM Counter-LRA Control Element (ACCE), was headquartered in Entebbe, Uganda because Entebbe had the most useful airport in the region, with outposts in Arua, in Uganda, Djemah and Obo, in the CAR, Dungu, in the DRC, and Nzara, in South Sudan. Each location hosted what was known as a combined operations fusion center (COFC), intended to closely coordinate among U.S. military elements, partner military forces of the AU-RTF, UN agencies, and NGOs in order to promote the

[144] Author interview with Staff of the Resolve, Fort Bragg, NC, June 14, 2017.

[145] Baddorf.

[146] Author interview with Staff of the Resolve.

objectives of OOC.[147] Each COFC's team of advisers partnered with a force from the AU-RTF, which was primarily composed of Ugandans, but also included elements from the DRC and South Sudan, as well as a smaller element from the CAR when it was (intermittently) available.

As the executive arm of Observant Compass, the ACCE task force's objectives, as outlined by the U.S. president's strategy, were the following:

1. Increase the protection of civilians.

2. Apprehend, or remove from the battlefield, Joseph Kony and his senior commanders.

3. Promote the defection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of remaining LRA fighters.

4. Increase humanitarian access and provide continued relief to affected communities.[148]

One notable advantage of these objectives is that they could be validated; efforts to achieve them were observable and measurable (in Chapter V, we will examine how they were measured).

U.S. forces routinely had problems understanding the environment in central Africa in contrast to more familiar, recent operational settings such as Iraq or Afghanistan. The densely-forested terrain, biological threats, distances between resupply points, African languages and cultures, and lack of a common information infrastructure (such as cellular towers) challenged U.S. Special Operations Command's (SOCOM) tried-and-true method of find, fix, and finish.

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[147] James Forrest, "U.S. Military Deployments to Africa: Lessons from the Hunt for Joseph Kony and the Lord's Resistance Army," Joint Special Operations University Report 14–4, August 2014, 33. The COFC location at Arua, Uganda was temporary and collapsed in December 2012. Arua is a major trading center and point of transit from Uganda to the Democratic Republic of Congo, making it an ideal location to receive LRA defectors fleeing the vicinity of Garamba National Park.

[148] White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: Mitigating and Eliminating the Threat to Civilians Posed by the Lord's Resistance Army, April 23, 2012.

The LRA did not routinely use conventional communications systems such as cell phones or satellite phones. When they did, they used them sparingly and observed strict discipline to avoid detection of their radio signals; their communications were conducted within prescribed windows by high-frequency radios, which operated on bands that were no longer employed by U.S. forces. The rainforest also provided two or three canopies of cover that made aerial surveillance difficult. There were very few inhabitants of the area and those that lived there spoke languages that were not commonly understood by the U.S. military's linguists.[149] To reach these villages after LRA attacks took as long as nine hours based on the distances and aircraft available. Finding the LRA was difficult. Fixing them was unlikely. Finishing them appeared nigh impossible.

The collaboration between U.S. advocacy groups and the U.S. government did not stop in Washington. Once the AFRICOM military task force was deployed to execute OOC, it frequently met with personnel from Invisible Children, the Voice Project, the Enough Project, the Resolve, and the Bridgeway Foundation. These relationships primarily flowed through the U.S. Embassy Kampala's Conflict and Stabilization Office (CSO) staff officer, who served as the nexus for the flow of information between the U.S. ambassadors to the five states affected by the conflict (including Sudan), the commander of the ACCE/SOCFWD, the NGOs active in the region, and the UN stabilization missions in the DRC, Central African Republic, and South Sudan. The NGOs provided regional expertise and an acute understanding of the LRA, reinforced by the approaches that the Ugandans had adapted over time.

It should be noted that Operation Observant Compass was conducted with no airstrikes against LRA targets by U.S. forces, and very few direct engagements. The approach remained largely humanitarian, with an emphasis on enabling the Ugandans and other African partner forces to conduct operations far outside the normal range of their support channels. On the U.S. side, this was not easily done.

AFRICOM delegated responsibility for the mission to Special Operations Command – Africa (SOCAFRICA). SOCAFRICA's staff described a process of

[149] Acholi (Luo), Pazande, and Lingala were not languages trained by the U.S. Defense Language Institute.

"constantly requesting permission for complex operations followed by disappointment" and "constant friction with the AFRICOM staff each fiscal quarter as they wanted to shut us down and stop our funding, especially for air contracts."[150] The operation was highly unorthodox in its approach because it strictly limited U.S. actions to enabling AU-RTF partners, promoting defections, and increasing civilian access to humanitarian aid. Former SOCAFRICA staff described how important it was that the design of the operation was relationship-driven; U.S. forces had to rely on the goodwill of local partners to accomplish their tasks, encouraging close cooperation as a result.[151]

This coalition of military forces was assisted by the NGOs in the region. Invisible Children, the Enough Project, Bridgeway, the Resolve, and the Voice Project were involved in increasing the protection of civilians, increasing access to humanitarian assistance, and promoting LRA defections. Many of these NGOs were even led by the same activists who had organized the successful advocacy campaigns to get the U.S. government to intervene in the first place. The NGOs also provided advice to the U.S. mission on cultural matters. One USSOF operator recalled the following:

> We facilitated communication between NGOs on the ground and [the] UPDF … local civilian defense groups in DRC with UN offices doing counter-LRA work. [We] assisted the UPDF in utilizing equipment and techniques for PSYOP, taught them how to use helicopter-borne speakers, helped them [to] plan use of defectors and Gulu-based radio broadcasters for broadcasts, taught them and the NGOs how to better design leaflets and then how to better distribute them [for] airborne dissemination missions, *et cetera*. [We] made sure community programs that were addressing local needs were communicating with their peers across national boundaries, and then nominated and disseminated rewards [to support] those same community programs … in-kind assistance that provided for the direct self-defense needs of those communities, radios and phones, and construction projects for buildings and the like…. All of those efforts made sure that the counter-LRA efforts from many disparate agencies and groups and organizations across national boundaries and IGO spheres of influence cooperated, [and] made sure that the counter-LRA effort was coordinated across the whole region.[152]

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[150] Author interview with a Former SOCAFRICA Staff Member, Monterey, CA, May 24, 2017.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Monterey, CA, September 12, 2017.

Another source, from the NGO Voice Project, described this collaboration similarly:

> There really was a unique spirit of cooperation across the groups, I think dictated by the people involved, very much the shared idea of 'let's get this done, it's too important to care about who gets the credit.' There was a certain generosity and trust as people of character involved set the tone. I know I tried hard to keep things in that vein. [It] was a great collaboration and being a new [organization], I thought that [was] how it generally was and should be, though I've since seen how difficult it is to achieve that kind of cooperation on other projects.[153]

Some NGOs also provided support to the forces of the AU-RTF. The Bridgeway Foundation supported the UPDF units involved in Lightning Thunder with training, night vision optics, medical supplies, and even military working dogs.[154] This support bridged seams between cumbersome U.S. military authorities and the requirements of Ugandan soldiers executing their mission.

E. PROMOTING DEFECTIONS

Once killing or capturing Joseph Kony proved a more difficult task than initially expected, OOC's objective of promoting defections of LRA combatants became the mission's measure of success. Initially, there were no U.S. Psychological Operations (PSYOP) personnel deployed on the mission. As the ACCE staff came to terms with the challenges at hand, the ACCE Commander arranged for a team of two PSYOP soldiers to be loaned to the mission from another command in Djibouti in late 2011. As this team proved its value over time, it increased in size and scope of responsibility and became a permanent presence by December 2013, soon after the task force was re-designated as Special Operations Command Forward – Central Africa (SOCFWD-CA).

The role of PSYOP (also called MISO) in the operation grew more involved as time went on. As successes mounted, the Ugandan and U.S. field commanders grew more confident in employing PSYOP against the LRA in innovative ways. This led them, the U.S. Embassy, and even the partner NGOs to develop a steady stream of interesting

[153] Author interview with Staff of the Voice Project, September 15, 2017.

[154] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Pader, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

ideas. These various activities can be synthesized into five lines of effort, which we will described in further detail below:

1. Broad messaging to LRA fighters to promote defection

2. Broad messaging to surrounding civilian populations to promote the peaceful acceptance of LRA defectors

3. Tailored messaging to promote internal divisions within the LRA

4. Targeted messaging to promote the defection or surrender of specific members of the LRA

5. The development of improved dissemination channels and methods appropriate for the target audiences and the operational environment

1. Broad Messaging

The first line of effort was already being conducted in several ways, but needed to be reinforced. The UPDF had conducted operations to promote defection as early as 1988 to reduce the strength of Kony's forces and weaken the morale of those fighters who remained, as described in Chapter III. These efforts were largely supported by regional FM radio stations which still broadcasted testimonials by former abductees and fighters, as well as appeals by family members of those who were still assumed to be fighting for the LRA. In 2013, the same original radio stations - Mega FM and UBC - were still involved in broadcasting defection messages, but the broadcasts were made over shortwave frequencies so that they could be received by LRA members hundreds of miles from Uganda. To refine these efforts, the PSYOP team worked with the most recent defectors to develop radio messages and interviews with their voices used as proof of life to detractors still within the LRA. The team developed print products from these same defectors using their names and recent photographs on small, laminated leaflets and disseminated them by air over known LRA trails in the jungle.[155] Whenever a new defector reported to the AU-RTF or UN, the team repeated this process to demonstrate

[155] Several examples of these leaflets are provided in Appendix D.

that the defector had reached safety and that the opportunity remained for others to follow. The team even went so far as to disseminate pictures of the defectors feasting or enjoying simple treats they could not get in the bush, such as traditional foods and soda. The LRA by this time was such a small organization that any Ugandan LRA member was well-known to the others, and news of a successful defection spread rapidly.[156]

This effort was not only conducted by the U.S. military, but also by the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), and Invisible Children. Both organizations conducted independent leaflet drops from their contracted aircraft and made efforts to synchronize their targeting and messages with the ACCE/ SOCFWD. The PSYOP team and Invisible Children, in particular, shared photographs and ideas for messages, to include the leaflets themselves, with Invisible Children providing assistance with graphic design and translation. Because these relationships were personality-based, when teams redeployed to bases in the U.S., it was up to their replacements to continue cooperation with the same partners.

Throughout the course of OOC, the U.S. dropped as many as one million leaflets.[157] One U.S. veteran of the operation described this as a "massive littering campaign," but qualified that statement further:

> The goal wasn't just to litter, it was to send a signal to the LRA. Where the leaflets dropped, and we started using crossing points, watering holes, traditional rat lines, *et cetera*, either the foraging [LRA] group commanders had to avoid the area or risk their troops learning of the [defection] program… and if they avoided the traditional places, their soldiers knew something [was different] just by that avoidance. [LRA] commanders had to decide whether to inform Kony and company [that] there were flyers [leaflets] in the area and risk him having them killed for exposure to those things. [LRA] commanders had to decide what to tell their people, and even when they didn't tell their people [about the leaflets], info leaked, and [LRA] commanders had to decide for themselves what to do with the information they had about the defection

[156] David Ocitti, interview with Group of Former LRA, Gulu, Uganda, Provided by Correspondence, October 11, 2017.

[157] Author interview with an AFRICOM Staff Member, Stuttgart, Germany, October 19, 2017.

> from these leaflets; to take advantage of it or risk losing more than they already had.[158]

Another technique the U.S. employed was the use of aerial loudspeaker systems. These loudspeakers were mounted on helicopters and flown over the bush to broadcast messages over a range of approximately one mile on either side of the aircraft. In early 2012, funding and equipment for the mission took longer to materialize and the initial aerial loudspeaker systems were on loan from Invisible Children. These systems were used to broadcast pre-recorded messages as well as live broadcasts from well-known communicators such as Lacambel and former LRA commander Caesar Acellam.[159] One former LRA fighter recalls that

> We heard many messages. Since we were in Garamba [National Park, DRC] we could listen to radios and *Dwog Cen Paco* ['Come Home'] program. Then on helicopter we heard voices of different people who were with us before, we even saw pictures which were dropped using the helicopter. All of them were telling us to come home. Others asked us to put our weapons down. For me, I heard my mother's voice and saw her picture, too.[160]

In 2013, the SOCFWD PSYOP team experimented with the use of loudspeaker systems on fixed-wing Casa 212 airplanes. This proved marginally effective, as the aircraft could only fly slowly enough to allow for 7–10 seconds of audible message, but remained an option for missions when helicopters were not available. This technique was eventually determined to be only marginally effective overall, since by 2016, the SOCFWD had determined that the optimal length of an aerial loudspeaker broadcast from a helicopter in the environment of OOC was 15 seconds.[161]

2. Safe Reporting

This second line of effort was perhaps more challenging. To get a formerly victimized village to the point of willingly, and peacefully, accepting former LRA

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[158] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Monterey, CA, September 12, 2017.

[159] Ibid.; Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[160] David Ocitti, interview with Group of Former LRA, Gulu, Uganda, Provided by Correspondence, October 11, 2017.

[161] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Fort Bragg, NC, June 14, 2017.

defectors was a complex task and required a series of preparatory measures. The first step in sensitizing populations to the idea of receiving LRA defectors was to identify which villages were the most supportive of the idea and also identifiable by the LRA. It is no small thing to ask a population to receive a former fighter with open arms when those same fighters likely maimed, raped, and killed members of that village in the very recent past.

Several of the partner NGOs were involved in sensitization efforts, to try to help the communities to understand the value of receiving defectors. This was especially true of Invisible Children, which sought to convey that by receiving defectors, villages would encourage further defections, which would weaken the LRA and reduce its ability to fight and sustain itself through pillaging. The coalition of military forces and NGOs called the villages that joined this initiative "safe reporting sites" or SRS, and they were usually co-located with AU-RTF contingents or the COFCs. The PSYOP team advertised the location of these SRS through leaflets, radio, and loudspeaker messages broadcast from helicopters. The AU-RTF provided security details to prevent the SRS from being attacked in reprisals. Invisible Children provided a network of high-frequency radio transmitters to the SRS villages and neighboring settlements to both provide early warning of attacks and to alert the community when LRA defectors arrived.

Once defectors arrived at the SRS, the local volunteers (civilian villagers) would contact security forces, who would debrief them. NGOs would provide medical aid and counseling, as well as help to locate the defectors' places of origin and families. The entire process was highly decentralized and ran delicately; it was highly dependent on the goodwill and shared objectives of all parties involved. If a group of villagers attacked defectors in retaliation for their past acts, this had the potential to stifle further defections for months. The system was admittedly fragile, but, in our (and others') assessment, functioned very effectively.

3. Dividing from Within

Promoting internal divisions within the LRA served two purposes. The first is that it weakened the effectiveness of the LRA as an organization by undermining the morale

of its leadership. The second is that it created additional internal pressures on its members that could lead to additional defections or the loss of manpower to internal conflict.[162] The U.S. PSYOP team worked toward these ends by disseminating certain types of information to the LRA. The most prominent was the advertisement of cash rewards programs. Because Kony and his most notorious officers had been indicted by the ICC, the Department of State's War Crimes Rewards Program offered a reward of up to $5 million for information leading to their capture. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) also had a rewards program in place. By advertising these rewards for the capture of an LRA member or information on their whereabouts, the AU-RTF could effectively motivate thousands of people in the area of operations who were familiar with the territory. This was intended to convey a sense of area denial to Kony. It was also a potential means to motivate individuals within Sudan who had access to Kony to give him up.

With the aid of local partners, the ACCE/SOCFWD translated messages advertising these programs into seven languages (Acholi, Arabic, French, Lingala, Pazande, Songo, and Swahili) and used leaflets, radio, and loudspeakers for dissemination throughout the LRA's range.[163] These messages were intended to increase the psychological pressure on Kony and his commanders, to convey the sense that he was being hunted, and make him feel that he could trust no one; for instance, even the Sudanese might give him up for a handsome reward. Interviews with one former LRA commander indicated that Kony was aware of these rewards as early as 2005, and that they caused him to be increasingly concerned over his security and diminished his trust in subordinates.[164]

These efforts were very successful in many respects. Radio chatter indicated that the LRA were concerned by "bounties" for Kony, and residents of surrounding areas sought additional details from the USSOF advisers. In October of 2013 a rural hunter in

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[162] Initial defections provided what psychologists call "social proof" that encouraged later defections.

[163] For more information see Scott Ross, "Encouraging Rebel Demobilization by Radio in Uganda and the DR Congo: the Case of 'Come Home' Messaging," *African Studies Review*, 2016: 38.

[164] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

the DRC, motivated by rumors of these cash rewards, shot and killed an LRA commander whom he caught at a river crossing. The PSYOP team subsequently broadcast the death of this commander over partner radio stations and over Voice of America's (VOA) Africa shortwave network, which led to yet another defection from the deceased LRA commander's group.[165]

4. Targeted Messaging

The fourth line of effort, which aimed targeted messages at specific LRA members, was the most complex. Crafting effective messages for individuals with whom the outside world had had no contact for 5–15 years took a great deal of time and consideration. The U.S. PSYOP team conducted basic character studies of these targets based on known family members or childhood histories and make an inventory of all available media to which the target would be susceptible. For instance, did the target have a wife or mother left behind or who had already returned to Uganda? Was there someone in Uganda whom he trusted? Did he have a favorite musician or teacher? Did he join the LRA for political reasons or had he been abducted? Essentially, the driving question was, what vulnerabilities did the target have that could be exploited to leverage his defection?

The most notable of these targeted efforts may have been the one that targeted former LRA Brigadier Dominic Ongwen, one of the five ICC indictees and one of Kony's most trusted commanders. With extensive assistance from NGO partners and their LRA experts, the ACCE/SOCFWD PSYOP team developed a scheme that took advantage of the fact that Ongwen was known to have been demoted by Kony for insubordination. With this knowledge, the identification of Ongwen's wife and child at home in Uganda, and the potential for Ongwen to claim a large cash reward for information leading to Kony, the team was able to develop targeted appeals designed to get Ongwen to defect to SRS and the AU-RTF forces. In January of 2015, that is exactly what he did.[166]

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[165] See Voice of America, "Aiding Those Who Defect from the LRA," September 3, 2013: https://editorials.voa.gov/a/aiding-those-who-defect-from-the-lra/1742782.html.

[166] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Monterey, CA, September 6, 2017.

Those on the ground in CAR during the time of Ongwen's defection said that his primary incentive to defect was internal pressure from Kony. Ongwen feared for his life and reasoned that he would be safer requesting amnesty from the UPDF. Although, the commander of the SOCFWD at the time said that Ongwen reported that Kony threatened to kill anyone who took leaflets, LRA members collected them anyway.[167] Another USSOF operator added that though Ongwen was not able to read the leaflets he had seen, possibly due to his limited education at the time that he was abducted, he had nonetheless learned where he could go to defect safely.[168]

In 2015 and 2016 as the LRA continued to decrease in strength, the SOCFWD's PSYOP team intensified its use of targeted messages with the aid of a Ugandan NGO known as Pathways to Peace. Through a deliberate targeting process, the PSYOP team passed the names of Ugandan LRA members still believed to be at large to Pathways to Peace. The NGO then conducted what it called "family tracing"; it used known given names, bush names (*noms de guerre*), and any available photographs to search for the fighters' relatives. Once the LRA fighters' families were located, they were recruited to assist with personalized appeals to encourage the fighters to return to home.

These improved, targeted messages resulted in several successful defections, including that of Michael Omona, Kony's signaler,[169] who defected in response to a series of messages crafted specifically for him in 2016.[170] Omona may have defected in part thanks to his privileged access to radio broadcasts given his proximity to Kony, but, according to interviews, Omona credits the content of the messages with influencing his defection.[171]

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[167] Author interview with a Former SOCAFRICA Staff Member, Monterey, CA, May 24, 2017.

[168] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Monterey, CA, September 6, 2017. The same operator was able to leverage a Ugandan radio personality, Christine Lanyero, to conduct an interview of Ongwen after his defection. Lanyero then broadcast the interview over the Ugandan Broadcasting Channel's (UBC) FM and shortwave frequencies. These broadcasts had enough range to reach LRA fighters in the CAR and the DRC.

[169] A signaler in the LRA is the equivalent of a radio-telephone operator (RTO) communications specialist in the U.S. Army.

[170] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Fort Bragg, NC, June 14, 2017.

[171] David Ocitti, interview with Former LRA Members; transcript provided by personal correspondence with the authors, October 11, 2017.

The SOCFWD PSYOP team also coordinated with a Ugandan popular musician known as Lucky Bosmic to develop a song specifically targeting known LRA members by calling out their real names as well as their bush names. This song was developed and distributed to radio stations that were able to penetrate the LRA's area of operations.[172]

5. Radio Infrastructure

The fifth line of effort was the expansion of media infrastructure and access. In the parts of central Africa where the LRA operated, there is very little in the way of civilian technological infrastructure and most villages in the area did not even have cellular phone service. The ACCE PSYOP team identified which media the LRA were most susceptible to in 2012, and found through interviews with former LRA members that radio remained a highly effective medium. However, Kony feared his rank-and-file troops hearing radio messages, and only allowed his officers to listen to radio programs.[173] Despite LRA leaders' overall wariness of messages from the Ugandan government, they would still listen to the radio for information about the outside world and for the occasional bit of music once they had camped for the night or before they began moving early in the morning. Many of them still listened to Lacambel's program, *Dwog Paco*, despite Kony's prohibitions.[174]

With this in mind, the ACCE/SOCFWD sought to improve broadcast radio network coverage to reach LRA-occupied areas and increase access to shortwave frequencies that could penetrate the entire continent of Africa. Thanks to the assistance of the U.S. Embassy in Kampala in 2013, Voice of America (VOA) granted the SOCFWD access to the programming editors for its Africa division. The SOCFWD's PSYOP team then began providing them with scripts that conveyed messages meant for Kony, the LRA, and surrounding populations in the DRC, CAR, and South Sudan. VOA broadcast these messages over its four shortwave frequencies in English, French, Arabic, and Swahili.

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[172] Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Fort Bragg, NC, June 14, 2017.

[173] Cakaj, 355.

[174] Ibid. *Dwog Paco* began penetrating into the CAR and DRC in early 2009.

In 2013 and 2014, the SOCFWD also built new FM radio stations in the Central African Republic to extend the range of clear, FM radio signals that could reach the LRA. These stations were established in remote villages and all of the materials were flown in by air for assembly. Local operators in these villages were identified and trained by NGO partners on how to run a solar-powered radio station, including developing content in the recording studio and how to manage and implement the defection messaging effectively on the station's computerized scheduling system. This training was provided by the NGO Invisible Children after close coordination with the SOCFWD. These stations, in Djemah (2013) and Sam Ouandjah (2014), CAR, used one kilowatt transmitters and omnidirectional antennas mounted on one hundred meter towers to reach the LRA's known operating area, as well as known or suspected ivory smuggling routes.

Existing FM radio stations in Obo and Mboki, CAR, previously established by NGOs such as Invisible Children, were also repaired or enhanced in 2014 with U.S. DOD funding. MONUSCO managed two radio stations in the DRC, supported by the NGO the Voice Project. The Voice Project provided FM stations Radio Okapi in Dungu, and Radio Rhino in the nearby village of Faradje, DRC, with programming content and training for the stations' operators.[175] The ACCE/SOCFWD PSYOP team coordinated directly with these NGOs, and with MONUSCO, to synchronize programming and share supporting programming content. Messages developed by the PSYOP team were often edited by the Voice Project or Invisible Children to enhance their audio quality, while messages developed by Invisible Children were often shared by the PSYOP team with VOA or broadcast during the SOCFWD's aerial loudspeaker missions. Invisible Children even assisted the ACCE/SOCFWD directly with translating messages and with contact information for qualified translators.

F. CONCLUSION

The successes of OOC are not due to USSOF having an inherent understanding of the operational environment. Nor are they because the task was easy, as some veterans of other conflicts might assume. Rather, this operation was successful because the U.S.

[175] Author interview with Staff of the Voice Project.

deployed the right people, identified the right partners, and had the humility to accept sound advice. The techniques employed by the ACCE/SOCFWD were not new to the conflict, but many had been forgotten by the operational UPDF of the day. By reincorporating and amplifying the kinds of appeals that the Ugandans had previously used in Operations North and Iron Fist, the U.S. forces, assisted by a dedicated group of civilian volunteers, improved the overall effectiveness of the combined counter-LRA effort and severely degraded Kony's forces.

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V. DATA ANALYSIS

One aspect of international intervention in the Ugandan campaign against the LRA was an increase in the amount of recorded data pertaining to the conflict. Of the four objectives for AFRICOM's Operation Observant Compass (OOC), objectives one and three have the most readily available quantifiable data: improving the protection of civilians and promoting the defection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of remaining LRA fighters. This chapter will analyze the success of OOC in meeting these objectives.

A. LIMITATIONS

The data available for the following analysis has limitations. The metrics for OOC were not standardized across all returnees, and there is no a reliable means of estimating the numbers of returnees who bypassed the programs that existed to return to their homes (or elsewhere), either successfully or unsuccessfully. This was especially common for those abducted from locations in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where supporting infrastructure to monitor and assist returnees was more limited. There is also no means of accurately accounting for or estimating the number of former LRA defectors who died in the bush before reaching safety, or how many might have been caught by the LRA and executed for attempting to escape. Therefore, the data set itself is limited to the data captured at the time.

Access to LRA returnees varied by location and time period. The security situation at safe reporting sites (SRS) was inconsistent and, in some cases, returnees were turned away despite their attempt to defect, which made it difficult to verify their motives or numbers. In the case of some returnees, there was disagreement between the UPDF and the returnees themselves on whether they defected willingly or were captured by force.

The data we analyzed was collected in two sets. One set incorporates the data from the LRA Crisis Tracker, a website and database managed by the NGO Invisible Children. NGO staff provided high frequency (HF) radios to communities throughout the

LRA's range in central Africa to facilitate communication. The NGO then collected and corroborated reports from these communities on LRA activity, to include LRA attacks, abduction of civilians, civilian deaths, and numbers of returnees, from 2011 to the present (at the time of this writing). We assessed the information in this data set to be particularly useful regarding LRA attacks, civilian casualties, and overall count of returnees. However, for obvious reasons, the NGO HF radio network was not able to track LRA defections to security forces as effectively.

The second data set incorporates data from the Special Operations Command – Forward, Central Africa (SOCFWD-CA) Returnee Tracker. This data was collected from local civilians serving as volunteers at SRS, NGO staff working in those same locations, USSOF teams serving as advisers to the AU-RTF, and from civil society representatives and community security forces in villages throughout the region.[176] The data collected by the SOCFWD was based on access to defectors at SRS and their answers to a standardized questionnaire. These questions focused on the impact of outside influence to returnees' decisions to leave the LRA.[177] All military data were evaluated by intelligence professionals before being recorded, and similar methods were used by the UN and NGOs to verify their data. One limitation of this data is that these questions were not asked of all returnees, as is noted in Table 3 of Appendix A. Another limitation is that the SOCFWD Returnee Tracker focused on reportable defections and did not record all returnees. The SOCFWD staff also had more limited access to the wide range of communities affected by the LRA than did the NGO HF radio network.

This data was frequently shared within the counter-LRA coalition, but the data sets of the LRA Crisis Tracker and SOCFWD Returnee Tracker are not identical based on differing sources and imperfect collaboration over time. However, we determined that both sets are useful in evaluating results of AU-RTF and U.S. operations. We constructed tables for both data sets consisting of monthly totals over a period of 77 months.

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[176] The area affected by the LRA Conflict, often called the LRA-Affected Area, primarily consists of northern Uganda, the Orientale Province of DRC, Western Equatoria State in South Sudan, and the district of Haut-Mbomou in the eastern CAR.

[177] Defectors were asked if they were exposed to leaflets, radio messages, and messages from aerial loudspeakers.

B. DEFINITIONS

Who qualifies as a defector? Invisible Children defined defectors as "adult male combatants who left the LRA willingly." The NGO further qualified this criterion by defining adults as those over the age of 18, and determined that one had to have remained with the LRA for six months to be considered fully indoctrinated and trained as a combatant.[178]

Throughout the duration of OOC (2011-2017), the staff of the ACCE/SOCFWD debated how to count defections.[179] For example, how long did one need to remain with the LRA to qualify as a fighter, and thereby eligible to be counted as a defector? What length of indoctrination was required to reasonably assume that someone had become a "LRA fighter"? Should those kidnapped for a single day as porters qualify as LRA? How might one determine who was a fighter and who was still a captive? If the LRA members killed and carried guns from a young age, then when should children be considered old enough to also qualify as fighters?

For the purposes of this analysis, *returnee* will refer to all who were in captivity with the LRA for any length of time. This definition matches that used by the NGOs Resolve and Invisible Children in development of the LRA Crisis Tracker.[180] The set of returnees includes the sets of *defectors* and *captured* LRA members, as well as individuals who meet the criteria for *returnee* but not for *defector* or *captured*.

Defector as already indicated, is a more ambiguous term. Invisible Children defines defectors as "adult, male LRA combatants," meaning that they are at least 18 years of age and have been with the LRA for at least six months.[181] From 2011 until early 2013, the ACCE counted only male returnees over the age of 14 who had been with

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[178] Staff of Invisible Children, correspondence with the authors, October 24, 2017.

[179] One difficulty with assessments conducted by the U.S. of OOC is that the definition of "defector" changed frequently. The SOCFWD reinterpreted raw data over time and then compared new interpretations to previous results (without applying the new standard universally). Previous evaluations and running assessments of the mission were not reinterpreted once new definitions were established. This inconsistency presents challenges in determining the mission's actual effectiveness.

[180] Invisible Children, LRA Crisis Tracker, October 29, 2017 (Accessed November 11, 2017: https://www.lracrisistracker.com).

[181] Staff of Invisible Children, correspondence with the authors, October 23, 2017.

the LRA a minimum of six months. The reasoning behind this was that a fighter was someone who had to undergo an initiation and indoctrination process to adopt the LRA's values, was willing to fight on Kony's orders, and had a vested interest in the survival of the organization. The ACCE staff's analysts determined that this process should take no less than six months based on historical examples.

In 2013, the age limit for defectors was reduced to 12 years of age and female returnees were counted as defectors if they admitted to serving as fighters. These parameters continued to change over time until February 2014 when SOCFWD-CA (as the ACCE was called beginning in August 2013) began counting all returnees as defectors, including porters abducted for a single day. By February 2017, the command was counting children less than one year old as defectors.[182] Clearly, the mission's performance cannot be measured accurately over time with such different sets of criteria being applied, not to mention the questionable ethics involved when counting noncombatant women, young children, and infants as successful targets of a PSYOP campaign; never mind that the objective given by the U.S. president was to promote the defection of fighters, not of other people affiliated with the LRA.[183]

While the U.S. government provided clear, attainable objectives in the 2011 Strategy to Defeat the LRA, terms such as "defection" or criteria for which LRA members qualified as "fighters" were not defined.[184] Therefore, what now seems evident in hindsight is that there was an incentive to pump up results by inflating the number of defections via new definitions, especially when defections lagged and progress was unclear. OOC was expensive and did not directly address U.S. national security requirements, making it unpopular with AFRICOM; both SOCAFRICA and the ACCE/ SOCFWD often found themselves at odds with a higher headquarters that sought to end

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[182] Special Operations Command – Forward Central Africa, "Returnee Tracker," Administrative Report, Entebbe, June 2017: for example, on Feb 6, 2017 children of 4 years, 2 years, and 2 weeks of age were counted as "defectors"; Author interview with an USSOF Operator, Personal Correspondence, June 21, 2017.

[183] White House Office of the Press Secretary, "Fact Sheet: Mitigating and Eliminating the Threat to Civilians Posed by the Lord's Resistance Army," The White House, April 23, 2012.

[184] Ibid.

the mission. According to one AFRICOM staff member, this conflict motivated the ACCE/SOCFWD to *prove* its effectiveness.[185]

Given such widely varied definitions, and because the data set from the LRA Crisis Tracker uses a consistent set of them, this analysis will employ the LRA Crisis Tracker's definitions in an attempt to make useful comparisons. Therefore,

- *Defector* refers to male combatants who were with the LRA at least six months and were at least 18 years of age.
- *Attack* refers to reports of the LRA attacking civilian settlements of groups. This term is broadly defined and may include looting and damage to civilian property, but we will accept this definition in order to make use of the corresponding data from the LRA Crisis Tracker.
- *Abduction* refers to "one or more persons taken captive against their will by the LRA for any period of time."[186]
- *Capture* refers to any LRA member taken from the organization by force.
- *Civilian death* refers to "a violent act that results in the death of an individual by LRA members and the victim is not known to be associated with an armed group or security force."[187]
- *Leaflet* indicates the number of responses from returnees confirming exposure to leaflets promoting defection from the LRA.
- *Radio* indicates the number of responses from returnees confirming exposure to radio messages promoting defection from the LRA.

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[185] Author interview with an AFRICOM Staff Member, Stuttgart, Germany, October 19, 2017.

[186] Invisible Children and Resolve, "LRA Crisis Tracker: Map Methodology and Database Codebook" January 1, 2015 (accessed November 11, 2017: http://www.theresolve.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Map-Methodology-and-Database-Codebook-v2-2015.pdf).

[187] Ibid.

- *Loudspeaker* indicates the number of responses from returnees confirming exposure to aerial loudspeaker broadcasts promoting defection from the LRA.

C. ASSUMPTIONS

In order to conduct our analysis, we had to make several assumptions. The first is that all of the data provided by both sources is complete and accurate. The next is that data from an event in one part of the conflict area is relevant to events in other regions and to the situation as a whole. For example, an attack by one LRA group in the DRC is assumed to be a factor in LRA returnees in South Sudan during the same month; In other words, we assume that the various factors interact with one another. A third assumption is that January 2011 represents an accurate baseline of LRA data from which to begin this assessment and does not represent an outlier year. The fourth and final assumption is that the data collected by the ACCE/SOCFWD on types of influence (leaflets, radio, and loudspeaker) is indicative of the effectiveness of these media in influencing decisions to leave the LRA.

D. METRICS

In this section we compare OOC's results with its stated objectives. The objective of removing LRA leader Joseph Kony clearly failed. But efforts to promote the defection of LRA fighters, the tertiary objective, have been widely recognized for their effectiveness by news media and NGOs.[188] Anecdotal reports from LRA defectors state that OOC influence efforts impacted their decisions to leave the LRA. Because it is difficult to demonstrate a causal relationship between the U.S. intervention and a change in defection rates given the data available, we considered the total numbers of returnees from the LRA and determined that numbers did increase during the U.S. operation. Some of these returnees were counted as defectors by the ACCE/SOCFWD, as previously mentioned, based on U.S. military definitions that differed from those of the NGO

[188] *60 Minutes*, "Hunting the World's Most Wanted Warlord: Joseph Kony," April 19, 2013 (Accessed November 12, 2017: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hunting-the-worlds-most-wanted-warlord-joseph-kony/1/); Ross, 47–50.

community. In addition to results in promoting defections, there was also a measurable progress in the protection of civilians.

While civilian fatalities as a result of LRA violence decreased after OOC was initiated in 2011, the number of LRA attacks against civilians actually increased slightly. Based on the data from the LRA Crisis Tracker, the rate of LRA attacks increased during the period of observation, as did the frequency of abductions. This trend line for LRA attacks is $y = 0.004x - 15.398$. LRA abductions of civilians also increased during the period of observation, such that $y = 0.0052x - 191.42$. Both trends are illustrated in Figure 1.

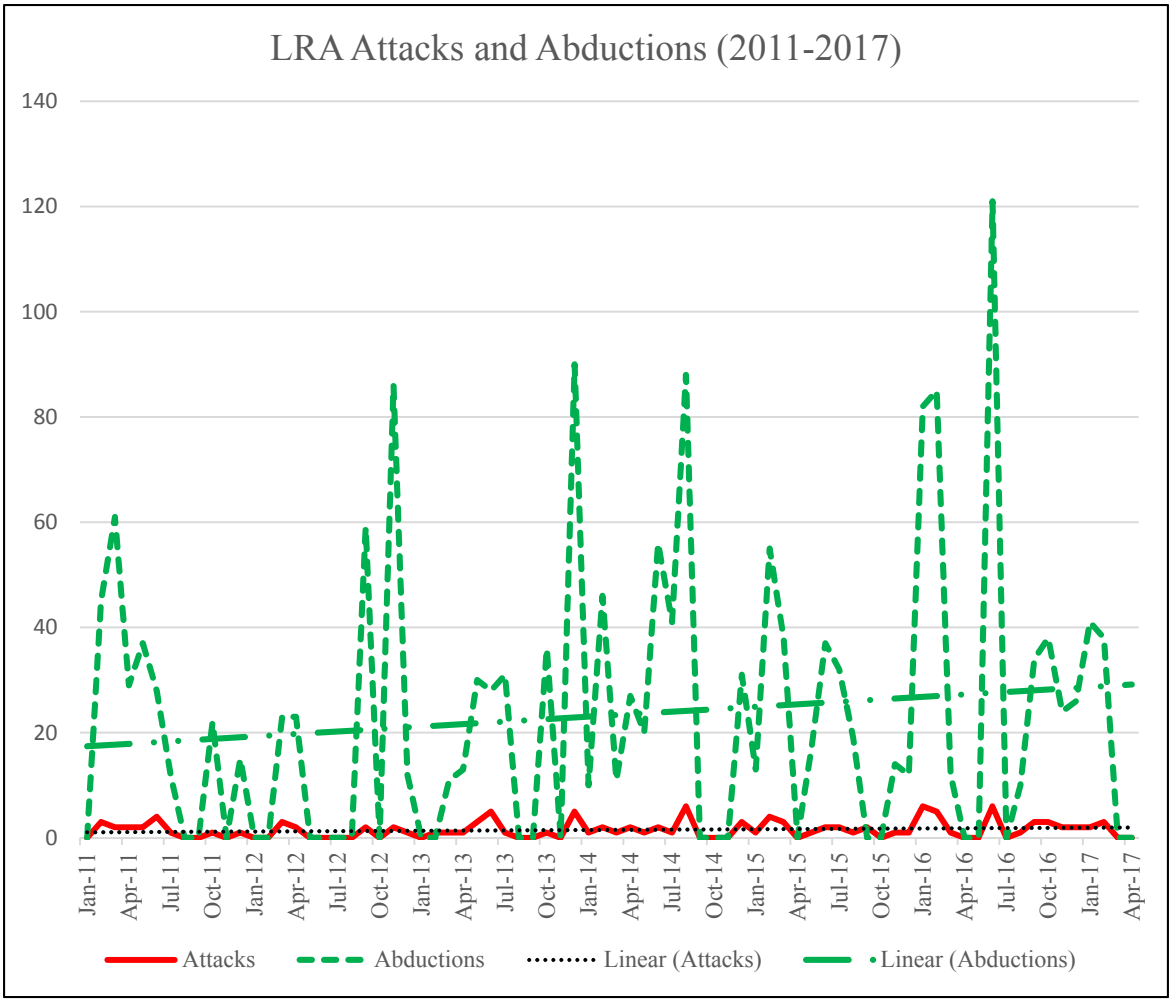

Figure 1. LRA Abduction Trends.

These rising trends in the numbers of LRA attacks and abductions do not reflect success for OOC. However, civilian deaths as a result of LRA attacks decreased over the period of observation, such that $y = -0.0015x + 64.155$. This indicates that while the number of attacks increased, the level of violence decreased. This negative trend in civilian casualties is illustrated in Figure 2.

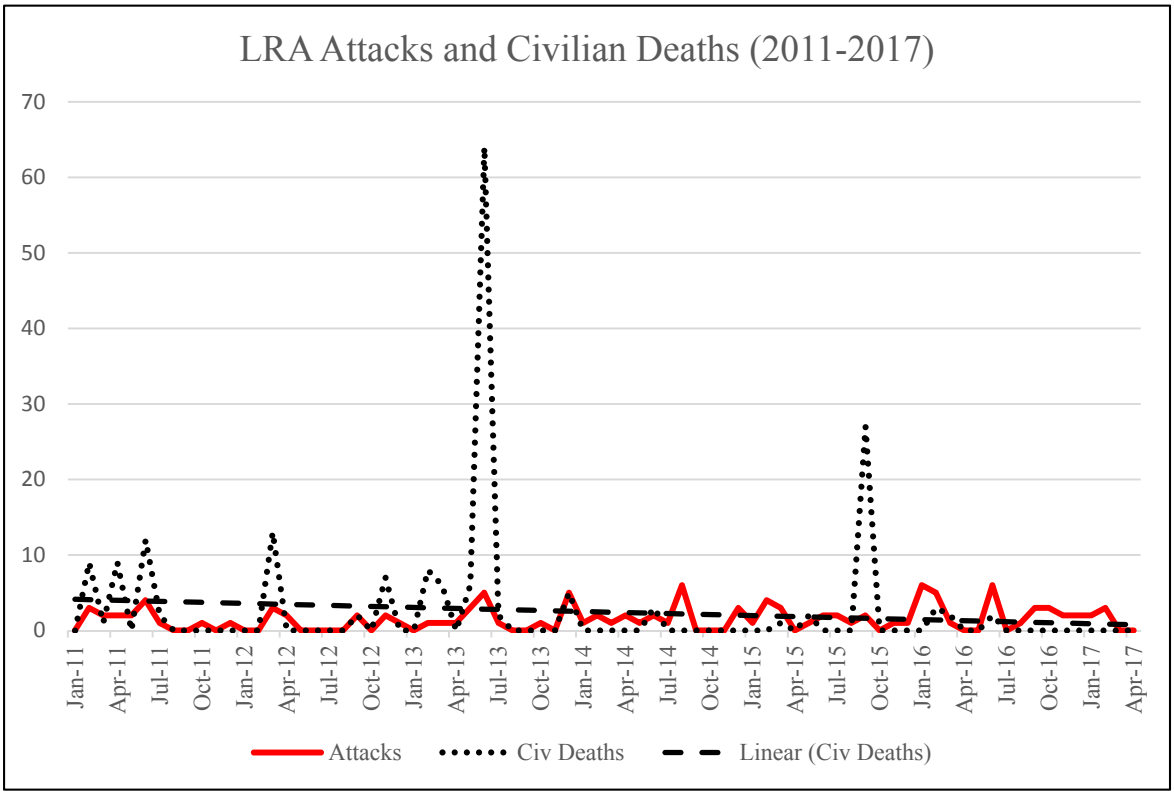

Figure 2. LRA Civilian Casualty Trends.

Due to our assessment of the accuracy of defection-related data in the SOCFWD Returnee Tracker, as well as the fidelity of the returnee and civilian related-data of the LRA Crisis Tracker, we have assembled a new, combined table incorporating the strengths of both sources and derive our data on defections from it.[189]

[189] See Table 4 in Appendix A.

By incorporating these data sets into a new table, we are able to compare monthly totals of all variables, including the influence-related variables of *leaflet*, *radio*, and *loudspeaker*. The trend for monthly totals of LRA returnees proved to be positive, such that $y = 0.0043x - 132.44$. This trend, compared with simultaneous defections, is depicted in Figure 3.

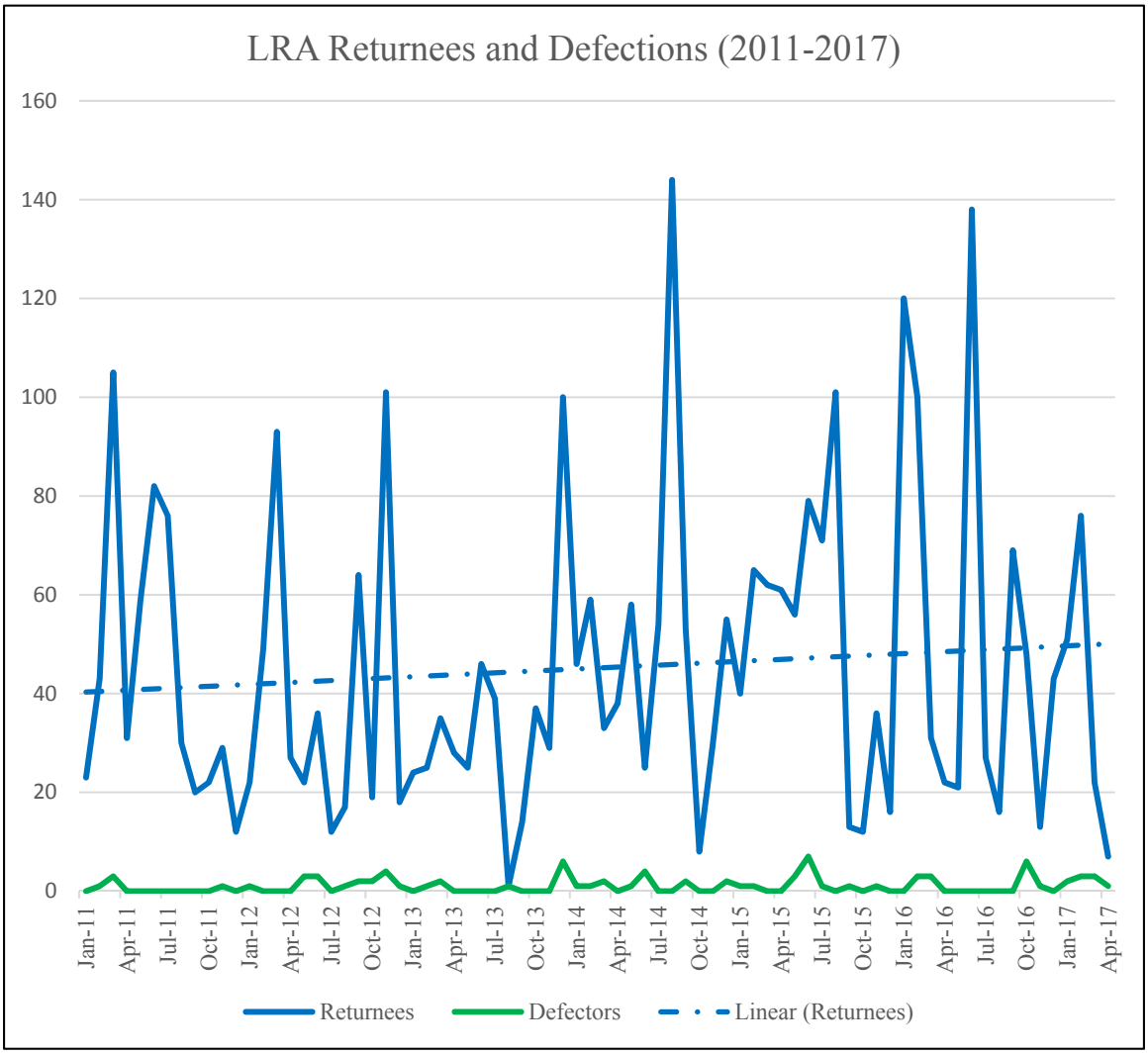

Figure 3. LRA Returnees and Defectors.

Although many of the returnees were LRA members who took part in violent acts, they do not meet the established criteria for *defector* due to age, gender, or too little time

in the LRA. But the trend for *defectors,* even according to the stricter definition preferred by the NGO community, is still positive, such that $y = 0.0004x - 14.762$. This trend is illustrated in Figure 4.

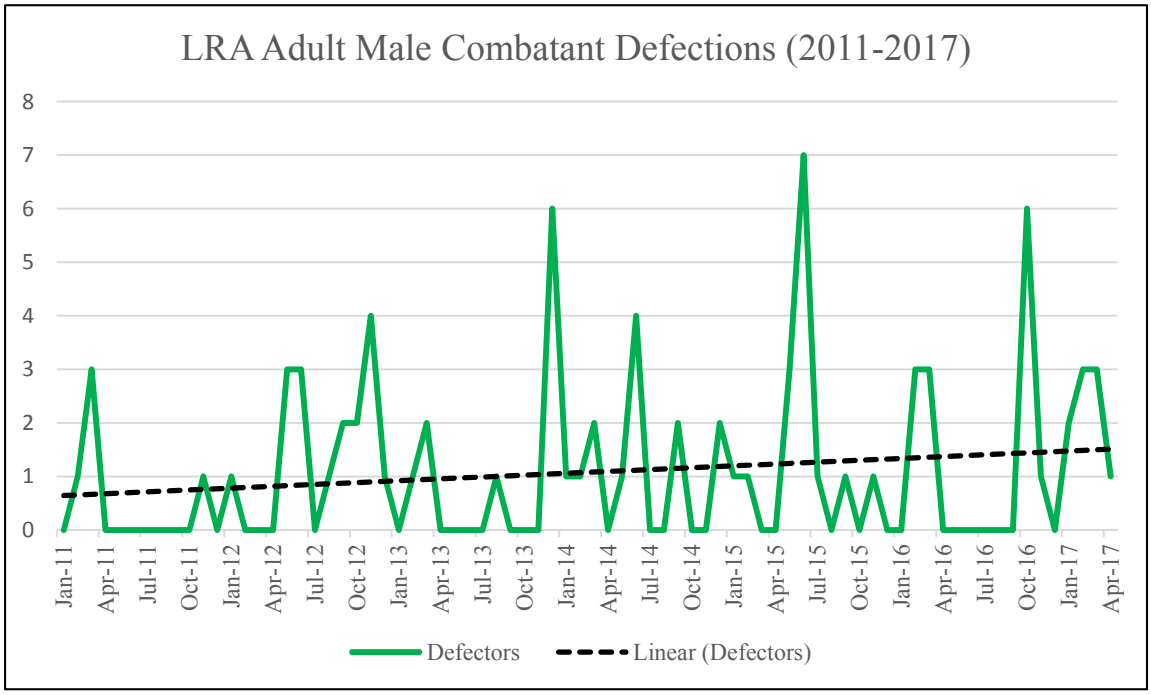

Figure 4. LRA Combatant Defections.

Having established these trends, and noting their similar slopes, we next examined the data for correlation and determined the coefficients of correlation between the various data points with the Equation $r = \frac{s_{xy}}{s_x s_y}$.

Determining the coefficients of correlation between variables yielded high positive correlations between monthly totals of returnees and the numbers of *abductions* (0.797) and *attacks* (0.737). There are also positive correlations with the monthly totals of *defectors* and influence of *leaflets* (0.478), *radio broadcasts* (0.373), and *loudspeakers* (0.299), as well as the variable of *abductions* (0.289). The data in Table 1 summarizes these results.

Table 1. Correlation of Data.

	Returnees	*Defectors*	*Captured*	*Attacks*	*Abductions*	*Civ Deaths*	*Leaflet*	*Radio*	*Loudspeaker*
Returnees	1								
Defectors	0.2092	1							
Captured	-0.1475	-0.0940	1						
Attacks	0.7365	0.1545	-0.0545	1					
Abductions	0.7966	0.2892	-0.0876	0.8535	1				
Civ Deaths	0.0446	-0.0485	-0.0443	0.3484	0.0658	1			
Leaflet	0.1698	0.4784	0.2069	0.2227	0.3277	-0.0423	1		
Radio	0.0552	0.3726	0.2786	0.1724	0.2239	-0.0507	0.6322	1	
Loudspeaker	0.1767	0.2988	0.2558	0.2357	0.2669	-0.0618	0.8965	0.6079	1

E. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

These correlations might be explained in a variety of ways, but one possibility is supported by reports from former LRA fighters who said that opportunities for escape increased during attacks due to the increased confusion, reduced security, and rapid movement. There was also an increased likelihood of being separated from one's group during movement to, and withdrawal from, deliberate attacks. Another likely possibility is that the correlation between returnees and abductions was affected by the abduction of porters. When civilians were abducted and made to carry goods to LRA camps, they were often released afterwards and would therefore be counted as returnees. Based on the definitions from the LRA Crisis Tracker, an abduction can be counted as someone taken against their will for any period of time, and there is likewise no time limit for being counted as a returnee. Ugandan military officers involved in Operation Lightning Thunder have stated that their ideal conditions for promoting defections arose as a result of a combination of pressures: attacking into LRA territory combined with PSYOP conducted to increase the appeal of defection.[190]

The correlations between defectors and the influence factors of *leaflet*, *radio*, and *loudspeaker* are higher than with either the *returnee* or *captured* population. This suggests that these media were effective in promoting defection, or at least in targeting

[190] Author interview with an UPDF Officer, Pader, Uganda, July 10, 2017.

populations capable of escape. Based on the results, leaflets reached the most LRA fighters, with radio and aerial loudspeakers coming second and third.

The data on *abductions*, *attacks*, and *defections* is cyclical in nature. These events appear to have been influenced by rainy and dry seasons. During the rainy seasons, travel through many of these areas is difficult due to flash flooding and muddy ground. These patterns may have also been influenced by AU-RTF operational cycles, but we did not have access to enough data on AU-RTF operations to make useful comparisons. Another point worth mentioning is that spikes in activity corresponded with specific events. The defection of entire groups of LRA resulted in spikes of defections and returnees. A major attack by an LRA group through a populated region resulted in spikes in attacks, abductions, and civilian casualties.

Again, our data analysis indicates that OOC was at least partially successful with an increase in the defection of LRA fighters and a decrease in civilian casualties as a result of LRA attacks. LRA abductions increased during the period of observation, but the high correlation between *abduction* and *returnee* data (0.797) indicates that the majority of these abductees were released after being forced to serve as porters for looted goods. Other than meeting its primary objective of capturing Joseph Kony or removing him from the battlefield, OOC produced quantifiably positive results in promoting defections and increasing the protection of civilians. Even when considering that the SOCFWD and SOCAFRICA's methods of defining defectors result in a much higher count than the LRA Crisis Tracker, OOC was successful at *promoting* the defection of LRA fighters by the same standards accepted by the NGO community.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

The war in northern Uganda had devastating effects on local civilians and the economy. While mistakes were made, especially in the early days of the insurgency, the Ugandan Government's approach proved to be effective. The role of the United States in helping enhance that approach enabled the Ugandans, and the African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF), to effectively neutralize the LRA in the territories that it once used for safe haven.

B. LESSONS FOR FUTURE WARS

(1) Understand the enemy

Uganda's employment of ethnic Acholi communicators, leaders, and soldiers, particularly former LRA and UPDA fighters, provided a significant advantage in fighting the LRA. UPDF veterans have said that these former guerillas helped them to understand guerilla tactics and track the LRA to their camps. Understanding how the LRA thought about Uganda and the NRA also enabled Ugandan and U.S. planners to craft effective amnesty messages. This understanding also eventually led to the decision to guard the local population in IDP camps and deny the LRA its chief source of new recruits.

(2) Provide a third option

In Uganda's case, insurgents were given a "third option" for peace. Much as with the UPDA and HSMF who were offered amnesty in 1988, the members of the LRA were given three options: to continue fighting, die at the hands of the government, or lay down arms and accept amnesty. By presenting rebels with a third choice, reconciliation (no matter whatever form it may take), counterinsurgent forces can weaken the resolve of insurgents that might otherwise be fighting for their lives.

(3) Develop effective appeals

As we have seen with targeted messaging, and even with messages of blanket amnesty, carefully crafted appeals can be highly effective. When under pressure, rank-and-file insurgents will look for diversions. Provide them. Give them a message that appeals to them, even if it consists of a joke, news from home, or pictures of old friends. Opening channels of communication with the insurgents and developing a degree of trust via the integrity of one's media will serve to increase options for use at a later time.

Lacambel communicated with the LRA rebels for over 25 years through his radio program, and is still broadcasting regularly at the time of this writing. His program has been effective in no small part because it was carefully designed to appeal to his target audience. But it also never would have worked if he did not have a firm understanding of the LRA's sensibilities.

(4) Isolate insurgencies from popular support

As one UPDF officer put it in an interview, "A fish out of water cannot survive long." Whether or not it did so entirely by design, the Ugandan government effectively isolated the LRA from popular support. By elevating Acholi leaders in the political arena, providing for development projects, appointing Acholi commanders of garrisons in northern Uganda, emphasizing military discipline, and publicly punishing soldiers and officers who abused the local people, the NRA slowly won the trust of the Acholi population. Kony's reaction to Acholi complicity with the NRA certainly helped to cement that choice, but his reaction reflects the desperation that an insurgent feels when popular support plummets. Without gaining Sudan's patronage, Kony would not have survived according to most of the senior UPDF officers interviewed for this thesis.

(5) Strive for consistency

Be consistent. It takes time and discipline to convince the population and insurgents that government forces are sincere and offer better alternatives. Meanwhile, detractors will seize on any inconsistency as an example of guile. For example, the ICC indictment, while not necessarily a mistake, provided Kony with new ammunition and

propaganda that amnesty was only a ruse. As one former LRA commander recalled, "the problem to bring a guerrilla to the table like this is very difficult. Because they always think that the peace talk is a trick that the government is using to bring them so it got spoiled."[191]

C. TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis has touched on many topics that merit further research. For instance, what other aspects of the story of Uganda's success against the LRA have not been examined in sufficient depth? Which of the approaches and techniques adopted by the UPDF would be applicable elsewhere? What principles, if any, should be incorporated in future campaigns to encourage defection, save human life, and reduce suffering?

For example, are there other active insurgencies or conflicts in locations where similar cultural traditions of forgiveness and reconciliation can be applied? The traditional Acholi customs of reconciliation and "bending the spear" were unique to the Luo people. But the value of amnesty efforts was not lost on the rest of Uganda, nor on the Banda and Zande residents of the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan who agreed to risk their homes and welfare to advertise their villages as safe reporting sites. If this process of sensitization to reconciliation and amnesty is transferable, what are the necessary preconditions? Can amnesty, as a viable means of reconciliation with adversaries, be explained to audiences with stronger traditions of vengeance and atonement?

Is counter-leadership targeting necessary in COIN or counter-terrorism operations? In the case of the LRA, HSMF, and UPDA, the Ugandans defeated the threat posed by these organizations without an emphasis on targeting the leadership. Having accepted amnesty, former HSMF commander Severino Lukoya[192] lives peacefully in his village of Odek, Uganda at the time of this writing.[193] Even with Kony still in hiding in central Africa, the remains of the LRA have no hope of ever returning to Uganda or

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[191] Author interview with a Former LRA Commander, Gulu, Uganda, July 11, 2017.

[192] Alice Lakwena's father and Joseph Kony's uncle.

[193] Author interview with an Ugandan Government Official, Entebbe, Uganda, July 14, 2017.

overthrowing the government in Kampala. All of this was achieved with a policy of amnesty that appealed to the rank-and-file fighters and junior commanders. Without subordinates willing to fight, a rebel leader quickly finds himself redundant.

Are counterinsurgency campaigns more effective in a state's own "back yard"? That is, is there a higher success rate for COIN operations in nearby territories, where military forces are more familiar with the target population's language and customs? Uganda, for example, has been far more successful at addressing its own insurgencies than it has been at fighting Al Shabaab in Somalia. Similarly, the United States successfully defeated any realistic threat from the Ku Klux Klan (to cite just one 20th century "rebellion"), but struggled against insurgencies abroad. Uganda's success against the UPDA, HSMF, *and* the LRA may likewise be characteristic of a broader truism: that effective COIN requires intimate access to the culture of the insurgents. The Ugandans had Acholi within their ranks and in their political system, which, as demonstrated by Lacambel's persistence and devotion, along with the employment of former LRA in the NRA/UPDF, enabled them to understand the mind of their foe.

APPENDIX A. DATA

The data in this appendix were compiled from the LRA Crisis Tracker website and from data provided by the SOCAFRICA in June 2017. Data points were tallied by month for each variable. The three common variables are numbers of *returnees* (all who have returned from service or captivity with the LRA), *defectors* (former members of the LRA who willfully left without threat of physical force), and *captured* (members of the LRA captured by security forces through threat of physical force). The variables unique to the LRA Crisis Tracker are *attacks* (LRA use of force on either civilian or military targets), *abductions* (civilians forcibly taken by the LRA), and *civilian deaths* (civilians killed by the LRA). The SOCAFRICA data contains unique variables which indicate the influence of a particular medium, including *leaflet*, *radio*, and *loudspeaker*. A negative response indicated that these media did not influence a decision to leave the LRA, but a positive response sometimes only indicated that the returnee had been exposed to such media. Both data sets are used in the development of the statistical analysis presented in Chapter V of this thesis, as well as the modified table (Table 4).

Table 2. Monthly Data from the LRA Crisis Tracker.

Month	Returnees	Defectors	Captured	Attacks	Abductions	Civ. Deaths
Jan-11	23	0	0	0	0	0
Feb-11	43	0	0	3	45	9
Mar-11	105	0	0	2	61	1
Apr-11	31	0	0	2	29	9
May-11	59	0	0	2	37	0
Jun-11	82	0	0	4	28	12
Jul-11	76	0	0	1	12	2
Aug-11	30	0	0	0	0	0
Sep-11	20	0	0	0	0	0
Oct-11	22	0	0	1	22	0
Nov-11	29	0	0	0	0	0
Dec-11	12	0	0	1	15	0
Jan-12	22	0	1	0	0	0

Month	Returnees	Defectors	Captured	Attacks	Abductions	Civ. Deaths
Feb-12	49	0	0	0	0	0
Mar-12	93	0	0	3	23	13
Apr-12	27	0	0	2	23	0
May-12	22	3	0	0	0	0
Jun-12	36	2	0	0	0	0
Jul-12	12	0	0	0	0	0
Aug-12	17	1	0	0	0	0
Sep-12	64	0	2	2	59	2
Oct-12	19	4	0	0	0	0
Nov-12	101	4	0	2	86	7
Dec-12	18	1	0	1	12	0
Jan-13	24	0	0	0	0	0
Feb-13	25	2	0	1	0	8
Mar-13	35	0	0	1	11	6
Apr-13	28	8	0	1	13	0
May-13	25	0	1	3	30	6
Jun-13	46	0	0	5	28	64
Jul-13	39	0	0	1	31	2
Aug-13	1	1	0	0	0	0
Sep-13	14	0	0	0	0	0
Oct-13	37	0	0	1	36	0
Nov-13	29	0	0	0	0	0
Dec-13	100	9	0	5	90	5
Jan-14	46	1	0	1	10	0
Feb-14	59	5	0	2	46	0
Mar-14	33	3	0	1	11	0
Apr-14	38	0	1	2	27	0
May-14	58	2	0	1	20	0
Jun-14	25	3	0	2	56	3
Jul-14	54	0	0	1	41	0
Aug-14	144	0	0	6	88	0
Sep-14	53	1	0	0	0	0
Oct-14	8	0	0	0	0	0
Nov-14	30	0	0	0	0	0
Dec-14	55	0	0	3	31	0
Jan-15	40	1	0	1	13	0

Month	Returnees	Defectors	Captured	Attacks	Abductions	Civ. Deaths
Feb-15	65	0	0	4	55	0
Mar-15	62	0	0	3	38	1
Apr-15	61	0	0	0	0	0
May-15	56	0	0	1	17	2
Jun-15	79	1	0	2	37	0
Jul-15	71	0	0	2	32	0
Aug-15	101	0	0	1	19	0
Sep-15	13	1	0	2	0	27
Oct-15	12	0	0	0	0	0
Nov-15	36	0	0	1	14	0
Dec-15	16	0	0	1	12	0
Jan-16	120	0	0	6	82	0
Feb-16	100	1	0	5	85	3
Mar-16	31	1	0	1	12	2
Apr-16	22	1	0	0	0	0
May-16	21	0	0	0	0	0
Jun-16	138	0	0	6	121	2
Jul-16	27	0	0	0	0	0
Aug-16	16	0	0	1	10	0
Sep-16	69	1	0	3	34	0
Oct-16	48	0	0	3	38	0
Nov-16	13	0	0	2	24	0
Dec-16	43	0	0	2	26	0
Jan-17	51	2	0	2	41	0
Feb-17	76	2	0	3	38	0
Mar-17	22	0	0	0	0	0
Apr-17	7	0	0	0	0	0
May-17	48	0	0	2	32	0

Data adapted from Invisible Children, 2017.

Table 3. Data from the SOCFWD Returnee Tracker.

Month	Returnees	Defectors	Captured	Leaflet	Radio	Loudspeaker
Jan-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Feb-11	2	1	0	2	1	N/A
Mar-11	3	3	0	2	2	N/A
Apr-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
May-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jun-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jul-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aug-11	2	0	0	1	1	N/A
Sep-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct-11	7	0	0	0	6	N/A
Nov-11	5	1	0	0	1	N/A
Dec-11	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jan-12	1	1	0	0	1	N/A
Feb-12	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mar-12	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apr-12	1	0	0	1	1	N/A
May-12	3	3	0	0	2	N/A
Jun-12	7	3	0	2	3	N/A
Jul-12	1	0	0	1	1	N/A
Aug-12	3	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sep-12	2	2	0	2	0	1
Oct-12	8	2	1	3	0	4
Nov-12	13	4	0	8	0	3
Dec-12	2	1	0	2	0	1
Jan-13	2	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Feb-13	2	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mar-13	17	2	0	6	4	3
Apr-13	13	0	0	N/A	1	N/A
May-13	5	0	1	1	2	0
Jun-13	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jul-13	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aug-13	2	1	0	1	1	1
Sep-13	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct-13	1	0	0	0	1	0
Nov-13	3	0	0	0	0	2
Dec-13	13	6	0	13	13	13
Jan-14	2	1	0	2	2	2
Feb-14	5	1	0	5	5	5

Mar-14	7	2	0	7	7	7
Apr-14	10	0	2	10	10	10
May-14	3	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jun-14	6	4	0	6	6	2
Jul-14	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aug-14	57	0	0	0	0	5
Sep-14	43	2	0	2	3	1
Oct-14	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov-14	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec-14	11	2	0	0	0	0
Jan-15	14	1	0	14	0	14
Feb-15	12	1	0	7	0	7
Mar-15	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apr-15	3	0	0	0	0	0
May-15	4	3	0	1	0	0
Jun-15	7	7	0	2	0	0
Jul-15	1	1	0	1	0	0
Aug-15	10	0	0	0	0	0
Sep-15	1	1	0	0	0	0
Oct-15	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nov-15	1	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec-15	3	0	0	0	0	0
Jan-16	5	0	0	2	2	0
Feb-16	7	3	0	2	N/A	N/A
Mar-16	31	3	0	5	0	0
Apr-16	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
May-16	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Jun-16	13	0	0	1	N/A	1
Jul-16	4	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aug-16	9	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sep-16	4	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oct-16	10	6	0	4	4	4
Nov-16	2	1	0	2	2	1
Dec-16	3	0	0	1	0	0
Jan-17	4	2	0	1	0	0
Feb-17	13	3	0	1	1	1
Mar-17	7	3	0	2	0	2
Apr-17	2	1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

The data in this table is derived from the OOC Returnee Tracker by employing the criteria described in Chapter V. Values of "N/A" indicate that corresponding data was not available to the ACCE/SOCFWD or irrelevant. Adapted from SOCFWD Returnee Tracker, 2017.

Table 4. Modified Data Table.

Month	Returnees	Defectors	Captured	Attacks	Abductions	Deaths	Leaflet	Radio	Loudspeaker
Jan-11	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb-11	43	1	0	3	45	9	2	1	0
Mar-11	105	3	0	2	61	1	2	2	0
Apr-11	31	0	0	2	29	9	0	0	0
May-11	59	0	0	2	37	0	0	0	0
Jun-11	82	0	0	4	28	12	0	0	0
Jul-11	76	0	0	1	12	2	0	0	0
Aug-11	30	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Sep-11	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oct-11	22	0	0	1	22	0	0	6	0
Nov-11	29	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Dec-11	12	0	0	1	15	0	0	0	0
Jan-12	22	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Feb-12	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mar-12	93	0	0	3	23	13	0	0	0
Apr-12	27	0	0	2	23	0	1	1	0
May-12	22	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Jun-12	36	3	0	0	0	0	2	3	0
Jul-12	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Aug-12	17	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sep-12	64	2	0	2	59	2	2	0	1
Oct-12	19	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	4
Nov-12	101	4	0	2	86	7	8	0	3
Dec-12	18	1	0	1	12	0	2	0	1
Jan-13	24	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb-13	25	1	0	1	0	8	0	0	0
Mar-13	35	2	0	1	11	6	6	4	3
Apr-13	28	0	0	1	13	0	0	1	0
May-13	25	0	1	3	30	6	1	2	0
Jun-13	46	0	0	5	28	64	0	0	0
Jul-13	39	0	0	1	31	2	0	0	0
Aug-13	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Sep-13	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oct-13	37	0	0	1	36	0	0	1	0
Nov-13	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Dec-13	100	6	0	5	90	5	13	13	13
Jan-14	46	1	0	1	10	0	2	2	2
Feb-14	59	1	0	2	46	0	5	5	5

Mar-14	33	2	0	1	11	0	7	7	7
Apr-14	38	0	2	2	27	0	10	10	10
May-14	58	1	0	1	20	0	0	0	0
Jun-14	25	4	0	2	56	3	6	6	2
Jul-14	54	0	0	1	41	0	0	0	0
Aug-14	144	0	0	6	88	0	0	0	5
Sep-14	53	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	1
Oct-14	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov-14	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dec-14	55	2	0	3	31	0	0	0	0
Jan-15	40	1	0	1	13	0	14	0	14
Feb-15	65	1	0	4	55	0	7	0	7
Mar-15	62	0	0	3	38	1	0	0	0
Apr-15	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May-15	56	3	0	1	17	2	1	0	0
Jun-15	79	7	0	2	37	0	2	0	0
Jul-15	71	1	0	2	32	0	1	0	0
Aug-15	101	0	0	1	19	0	0	0	0
Sep-15	13	1	0	2	0	27	0	0	0
Oct-15	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nov-15	36	1	0	1	14	0	0	0	0
Dec-15	16	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0
Jan-16	120	0	0	6	82	0	2	2	0
Feb-16	100	3	0	5	85	3	2	0	0
Mar-16	31	3	0	1	12	2	5	0	0
Apr-16	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May-16	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jun-16	138	0	0	6	121	2	1	0	1
Jul-16	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aug-16	16	0	0	1	10	0	0	0	0
Sep-16	69	0	0	3	34	0	0	0	0
Oct-16	48	6	0	3	38	0	4	4	4
Nov-16	13	1	0	2	24	0	2	2	1
Dec-16	43	0	0	2	26	0	1	0	0
Jan-17	51	2	0	2	41	0	1	0	0
Feb-17	76	3	0	3	38	0	1	1	1
Mar-17	22	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Apr-17	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Values of "N/A" have been converted to 0 for purpose of analysis. This table is adapted from the SOCFWD Returnee Tracker (2017) and Invisible Children (2017) by incorporating the strengths of each.

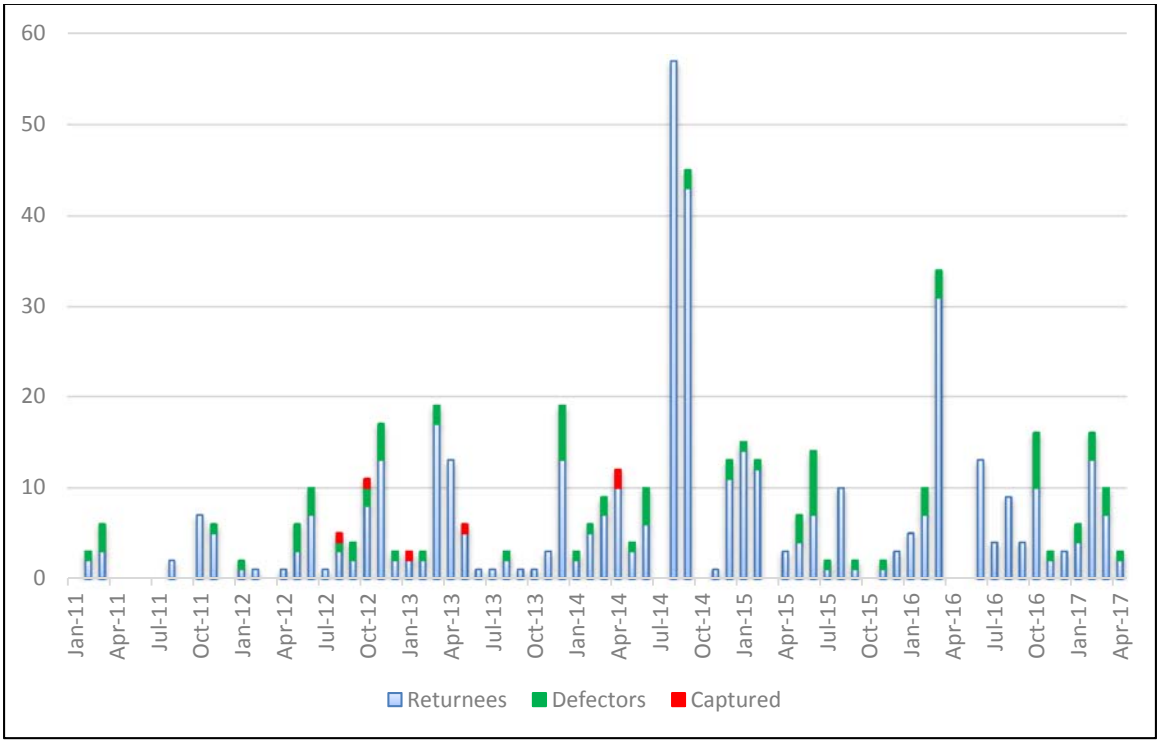


Figure 5. Graph of LRA Returnees 2011–2017.[194]

[194] This graph is based on the thesis' definitions of *returnee*, *defector*, and *captured* as described in Chapter V.

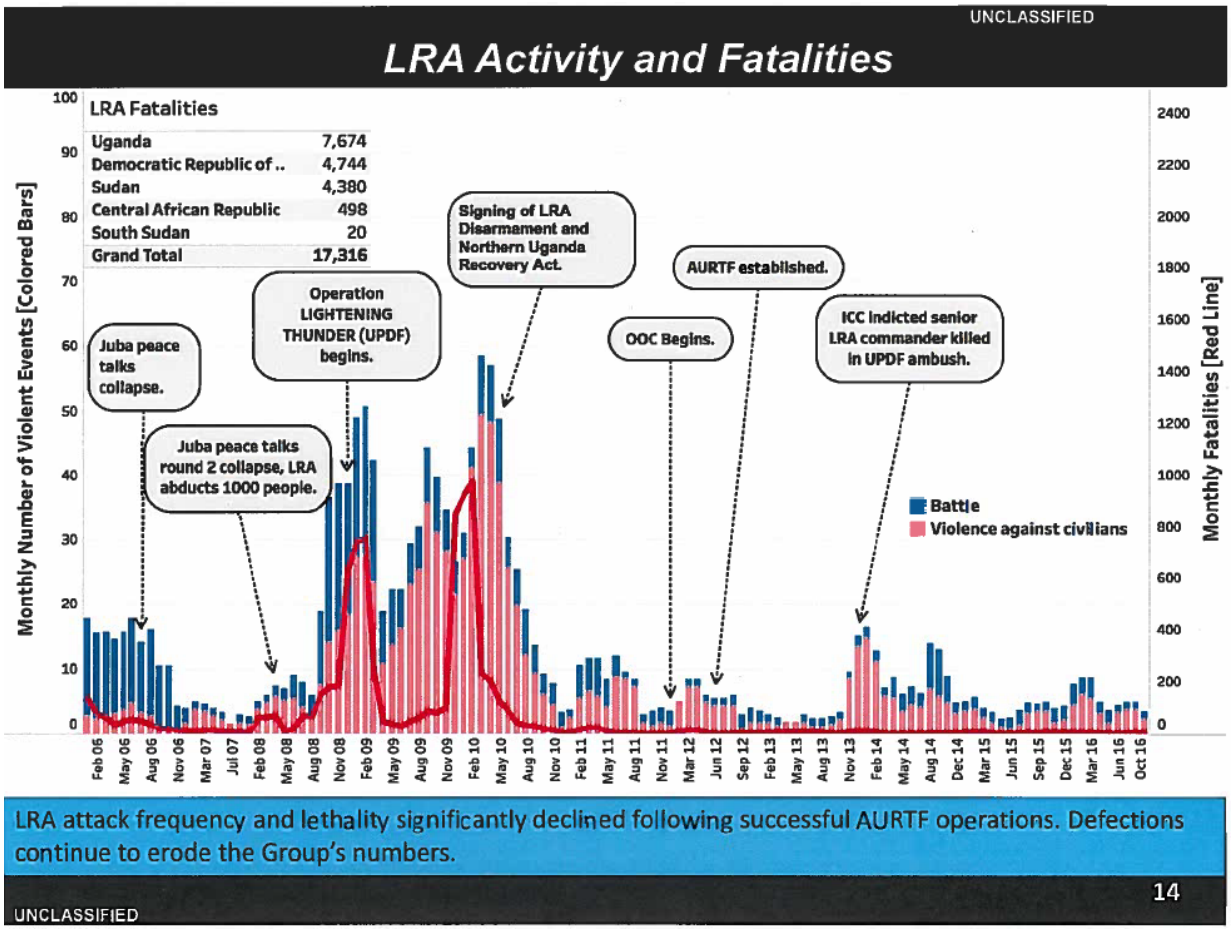


Figure 6. Timeline of LRA Attacks. Source: SOCAFRICA (2016).

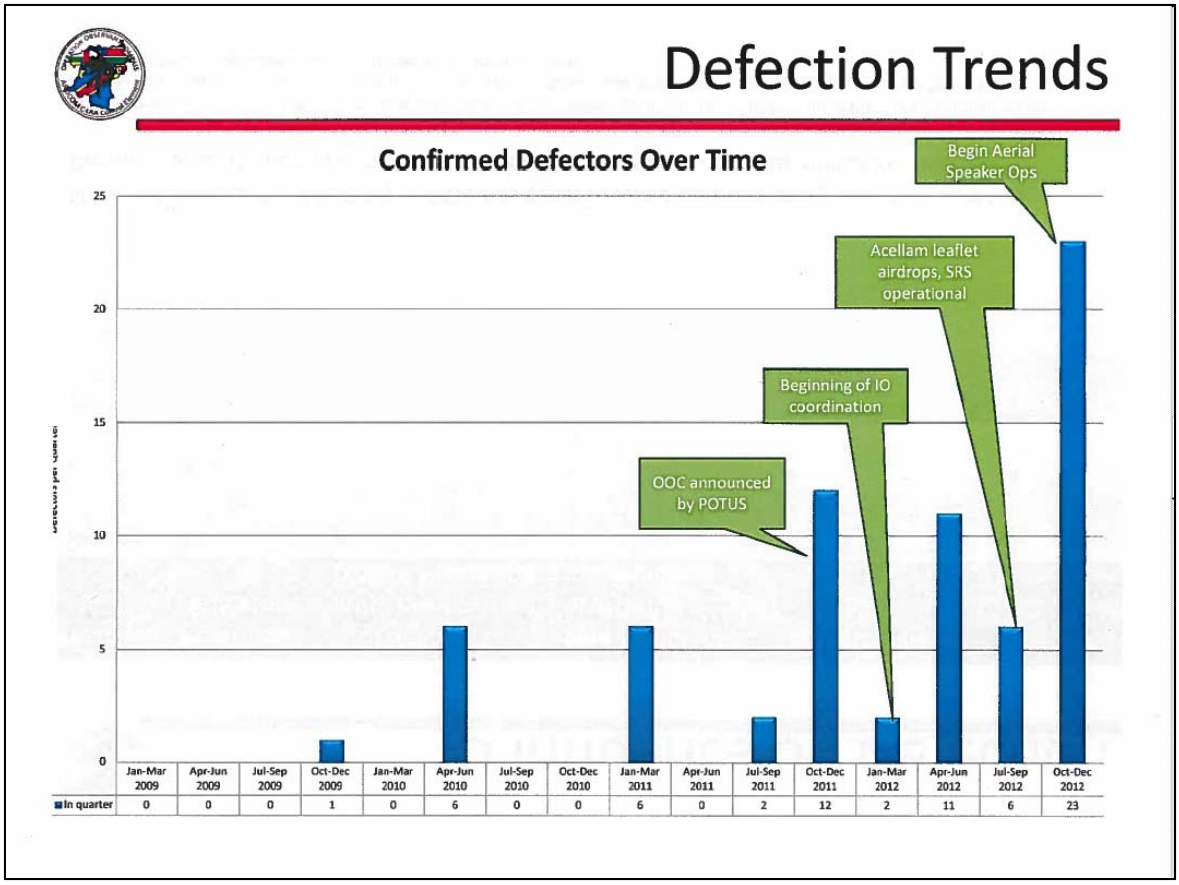


Figure 7. ACCE 2013 Graph of Defection Trends. Source: SOCAFRICA (2013).

APPENDIX B. MAPS

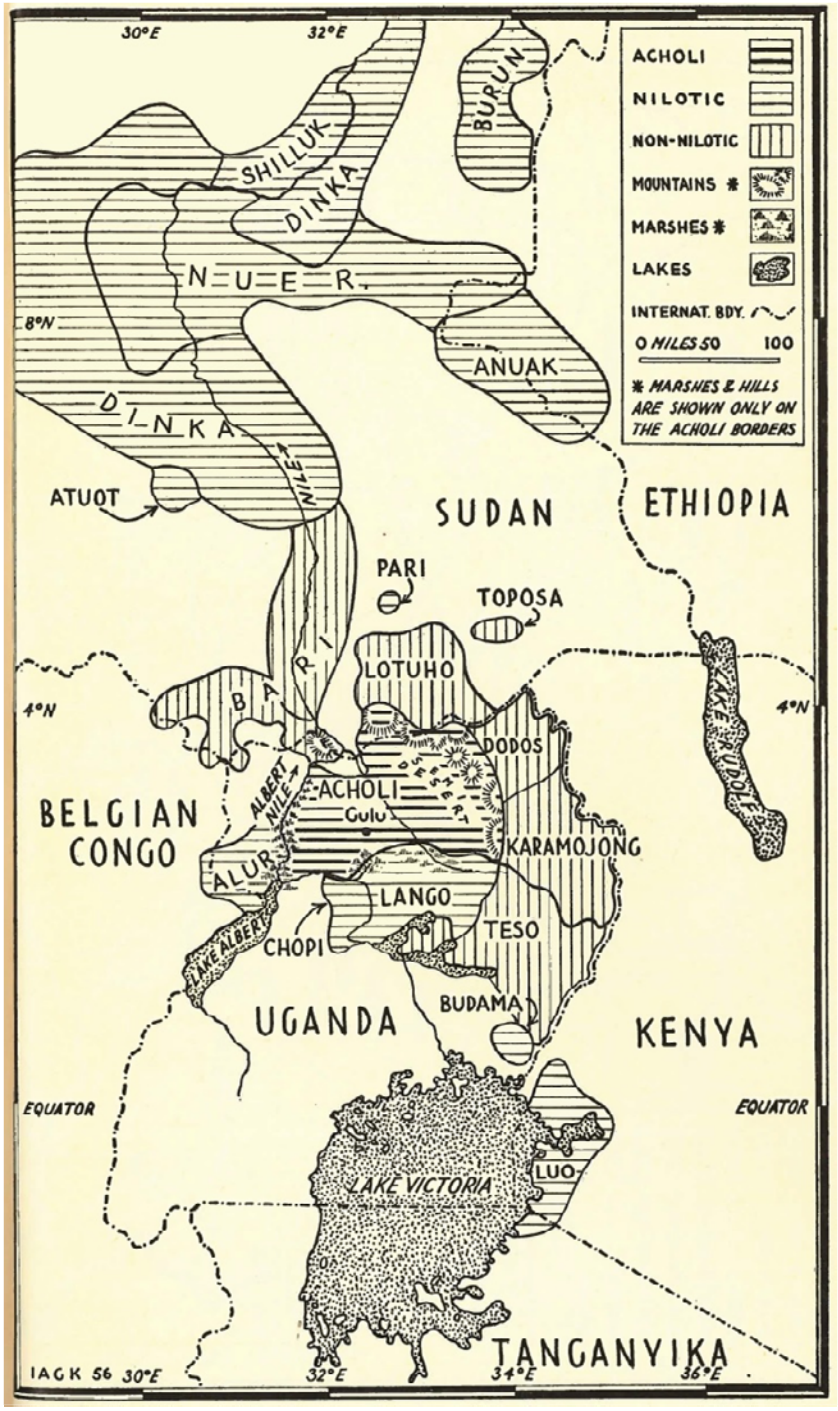


Figure 8. Locations of Ethnic Acholi and Luo Groups. Source: Girling (1960).

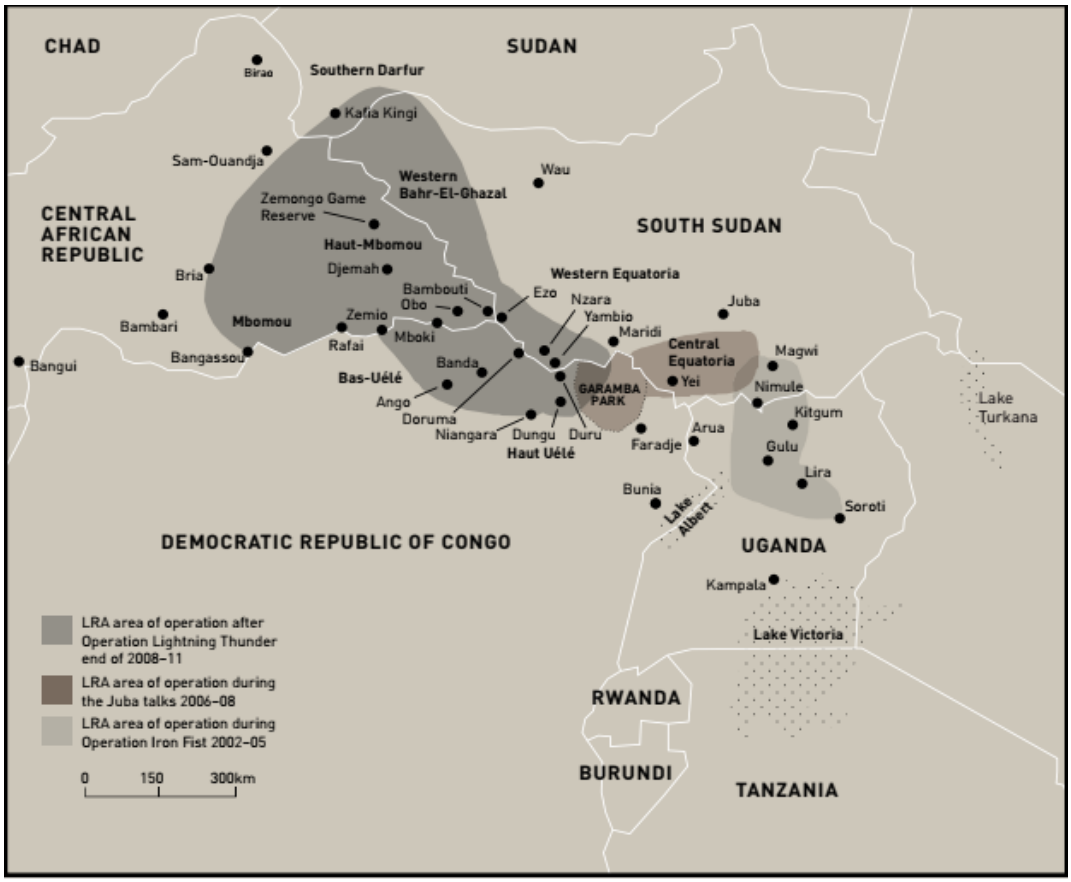


Figure 9. LRA Area of Operation. Source: Conciliation Resources (2012).

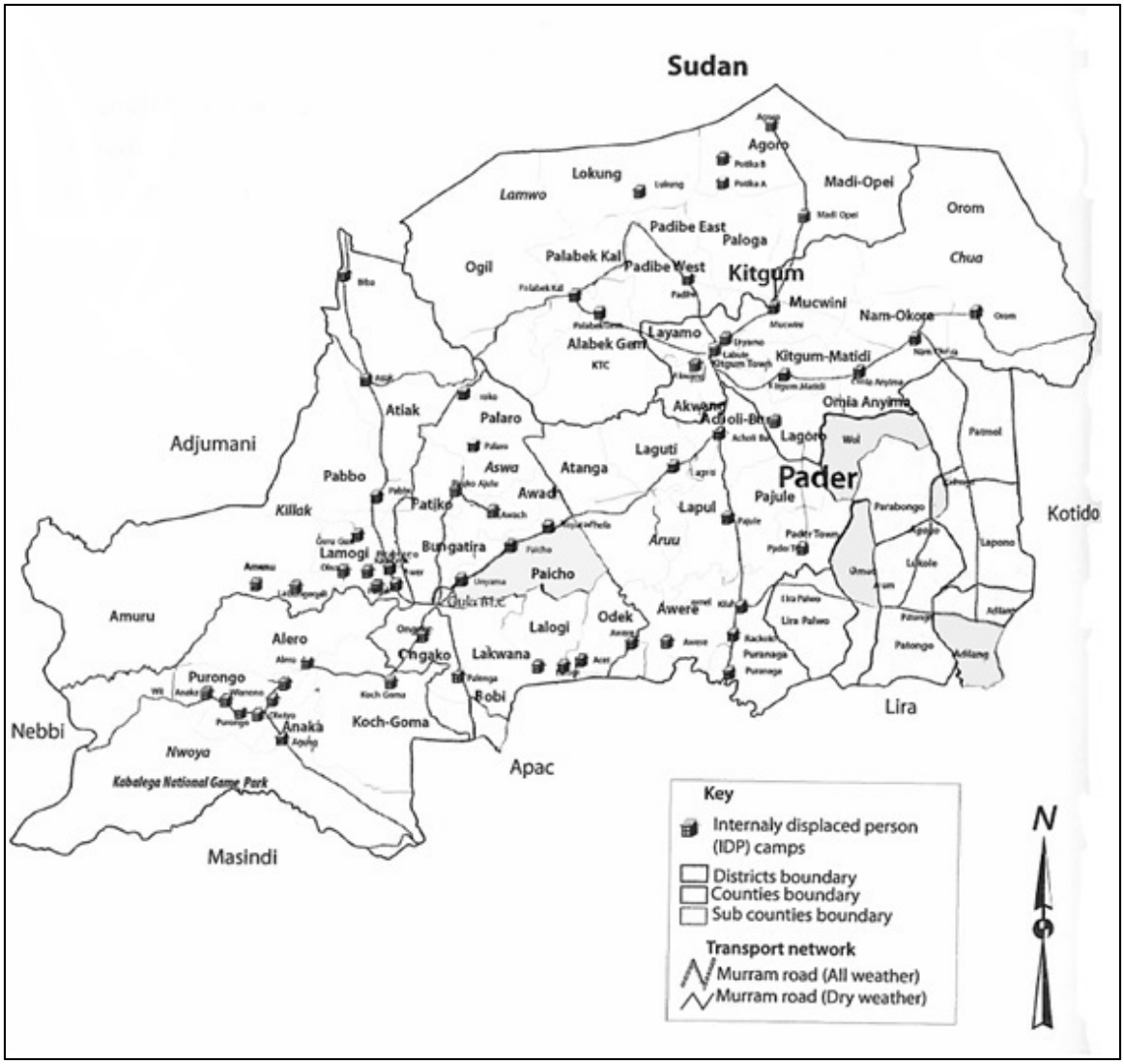


Figure 10. Locations of IDP Camps in Northern Uganda. Source: Lamwaka (2017).

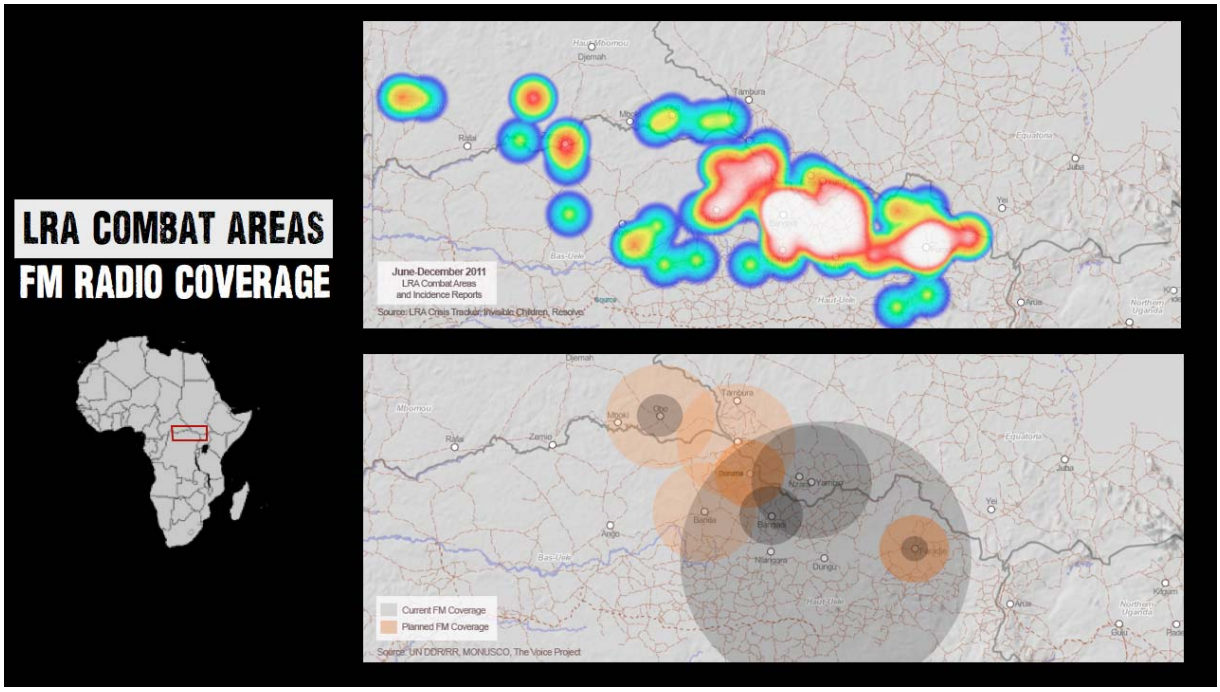


Figure 11. Range of FM Radio Stations Broadcasting DDR Messaging in 2012. Source: Voice Project (2017).

APPENDIX C. ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 12. LRA Returnee Conducting Rite of Return. Source: Pathways to Peace, Gulu (2017).[195]

[195] This ritual is conducted upon return to the family home after a long absence in which wrongdoing is suspected. The returnee steps on an egg because the interior shell of the egg is pure white and has never been touched. Breaking the egg symbolizes moral renewal and reconciliation of past misdeeds.

This bulletin board, like others used during OOC, contains multiple leaflets and other information to familiarize local villagers with the methods used to encourage defections. When LRA defectors arrived carrying some of those same leaflets, this increased the likelihood that the villagers would recognize the event as a defection instead of mistaking it for an attack.

Figure 13. Community Bulletin Board Promoting Awareness of LRA Defections at SRS of Nabanga, South Sudan.

Figure 14. USSOF Conducting Aerial Loudspeaker Operation During OOC.

Figure 15. UN Personnel Broadcasting Defection Messages from Mobile FM Radio Station in Bangadi, DRC. Source: the Voice Project (2017).

Figure 16. USSOF Operator Preparing to Release Boxes of Leaflets During OOC.

Figure 17. SOCFWD Radio Station Construction in Djemah, CAR.

APPENDIX D. LEAFLETS

The leaflets featured in this Appendix are only a small sample of the hundreds of different designs and variations produced during Operation Observant Compass. They were printed with bright colors to cause them to stand out in the forests and savannas where the LRA operated. Some were small, the size of trading cards, to make them easier for LRA members to conceal. Others were larger to make them more visible if they were obscured by natural debris and foliage. All of them were laminated to some degree for longevity and resistance to the elements.

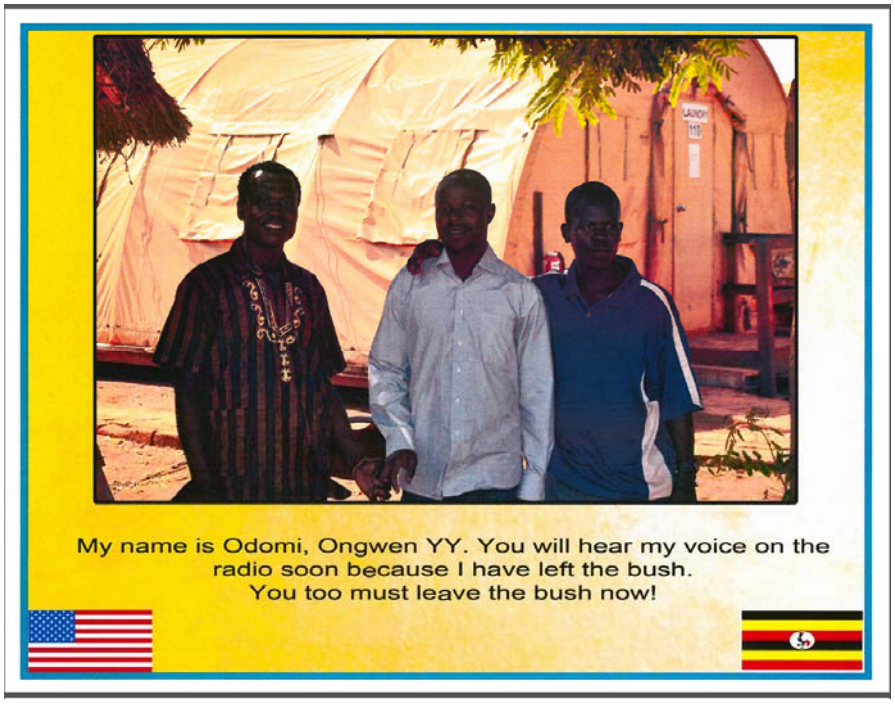


Figure 18. Leaflet Featuring Dominic Ongwen and Other Former LRA Members.[196]

[196] This leaflet is an English translation. The version disseminated was printed in the Acholi language.

Figure 19. Reverse Side of Ongwen Leaflet Depicting SRS Locations in the CAR.

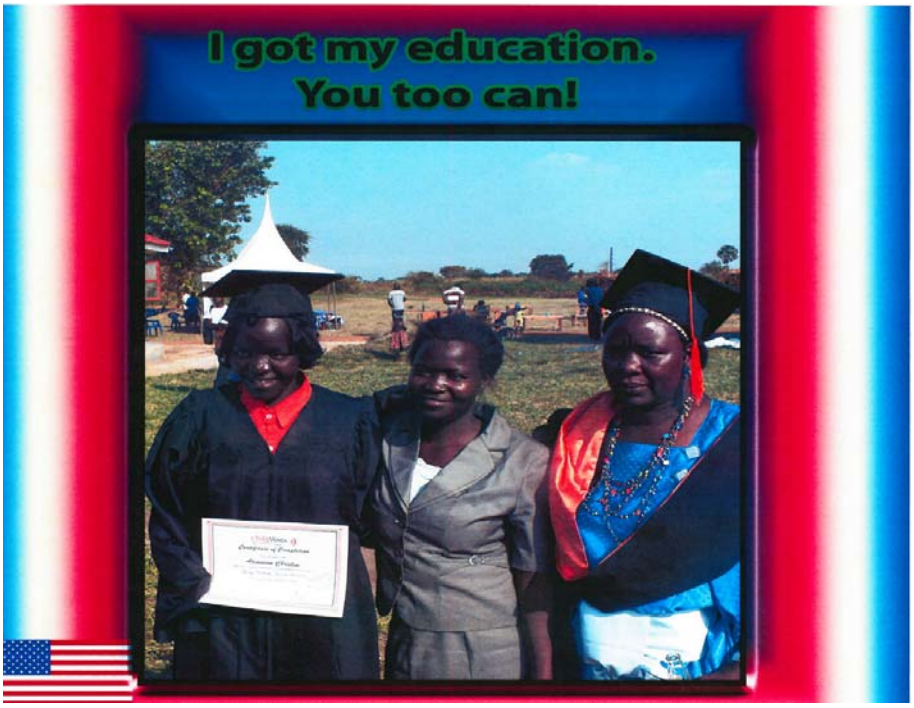


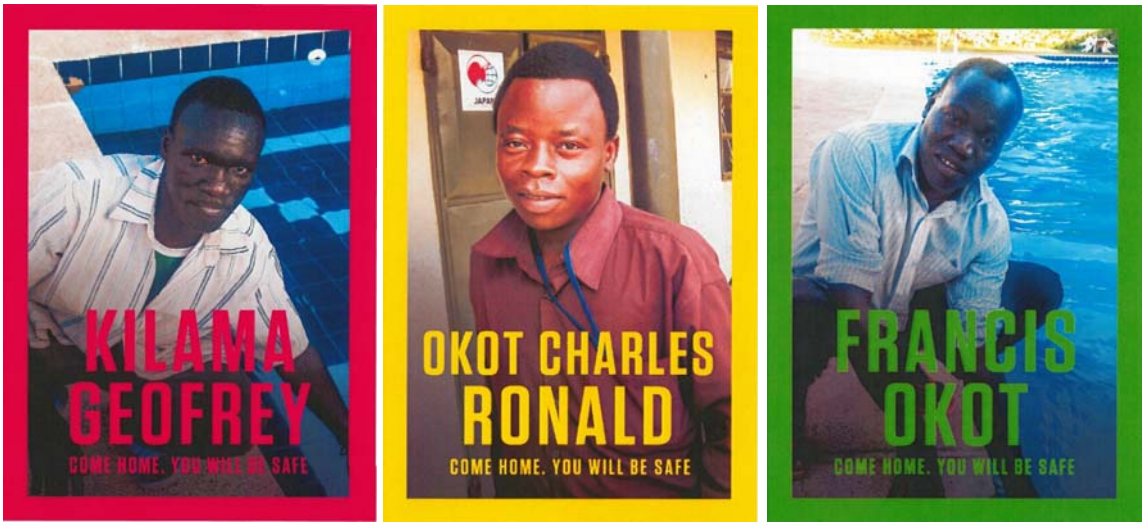
Figure 20. Leaflet Featuring Former LRA Graduating from School in Uganda.

Figure 21. Leaflet Featuring LRA Returnee Families in Northern Uganda.

Leaflets such as this one provided evidence that multiple LRA defectors were still alive as they defected at different times. This was to counteract the LRA's propaganda that LRA who defected would be killed by the Ugandan government.

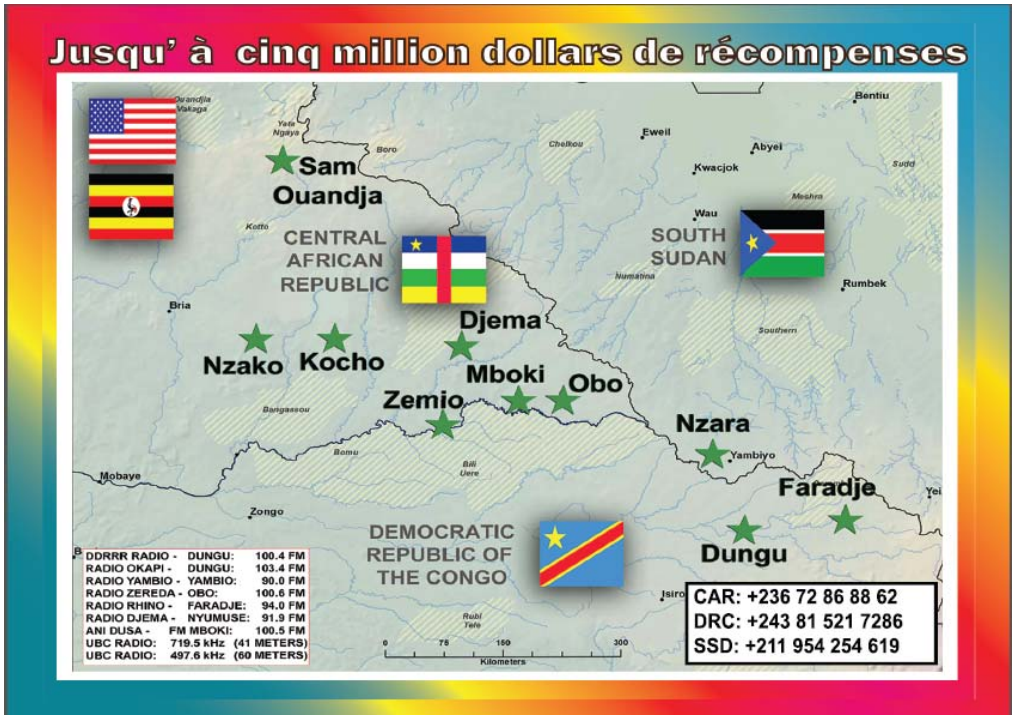
Figure 22. Leaflet Depicting Multiple Former LRA Members.[197]

[197] Acholi language.



These are three leaflets from a series depicting former LRA at home in northern Uganda. The reverse sides featured maps to SRS locations. These leaflets were smaller than most to make them more concealable if LRA fighters needed to hide them.

Figure 23. Small Leaflets Featuring Former LRA.



This leaflet targeted civilian populations in the area affected by the LRA who often spoke French as a common language. Some of the LRA also spoke French, particularly those who were abducted from the CAR and DRC.

Figure 24. Leaflet Advertising Rewards, Radio Station Frequencies, and SRS Locations in the CAR, DRC, and South Sudan.[198]

[198] French language.

MBANO

Gouvernement ya Etats-Unis d'Amérique ezali ekopesa mbongo epai ya bato oyo bakoya na information ekosalisa bato kokanga bato oyo :

Joseph Kony, Okut Odhiambo, mpe Dominique Ongwen. Mbongo oyo ekoki kopesama ekoki kozala ata $5.000.000 (USD). Mbongo wana ekoki kokomisa libota lya yo libota lya mosolo mingi mpo na libela.

Babali oyo bazali babomi (criminels) mpe bakonzi ya ba LRA. Boloko international oyo babengi (Cour Pénale Internationale) ezali koluka bango mpo na mabe oyo ya koboma bato na ndenge ya mabe tango ya bitumba. Soki ozali na information na esika oyo bato oyo bazali, benga numéro oyo, to yebisa moto moko ya gouvernement ya Etats-Unis.

Numéro yango oyo:
+243-(0)81-715-2501
to +243-(0)82-481-9841

United States Department of State
Office of Global Criminal Justice
War Crimes Rewards Program

KONY

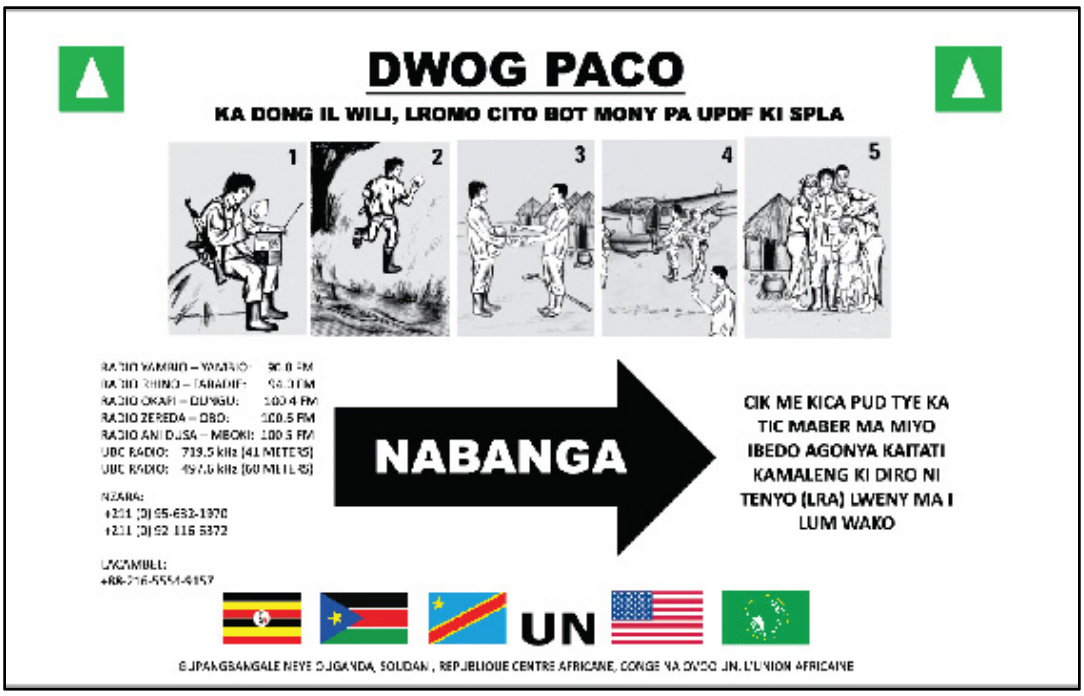
ODHIAMBO

ONGWEN

This leaflet targeted Congolese nationals in the LRA's area of operations to promote awareness of rewards for information on Kony and his senior commanders.

Figure 25. Leaflet Promoting the U.S. War Crimes Rewards Program in the DRC.[199]

[199] Lingala language.



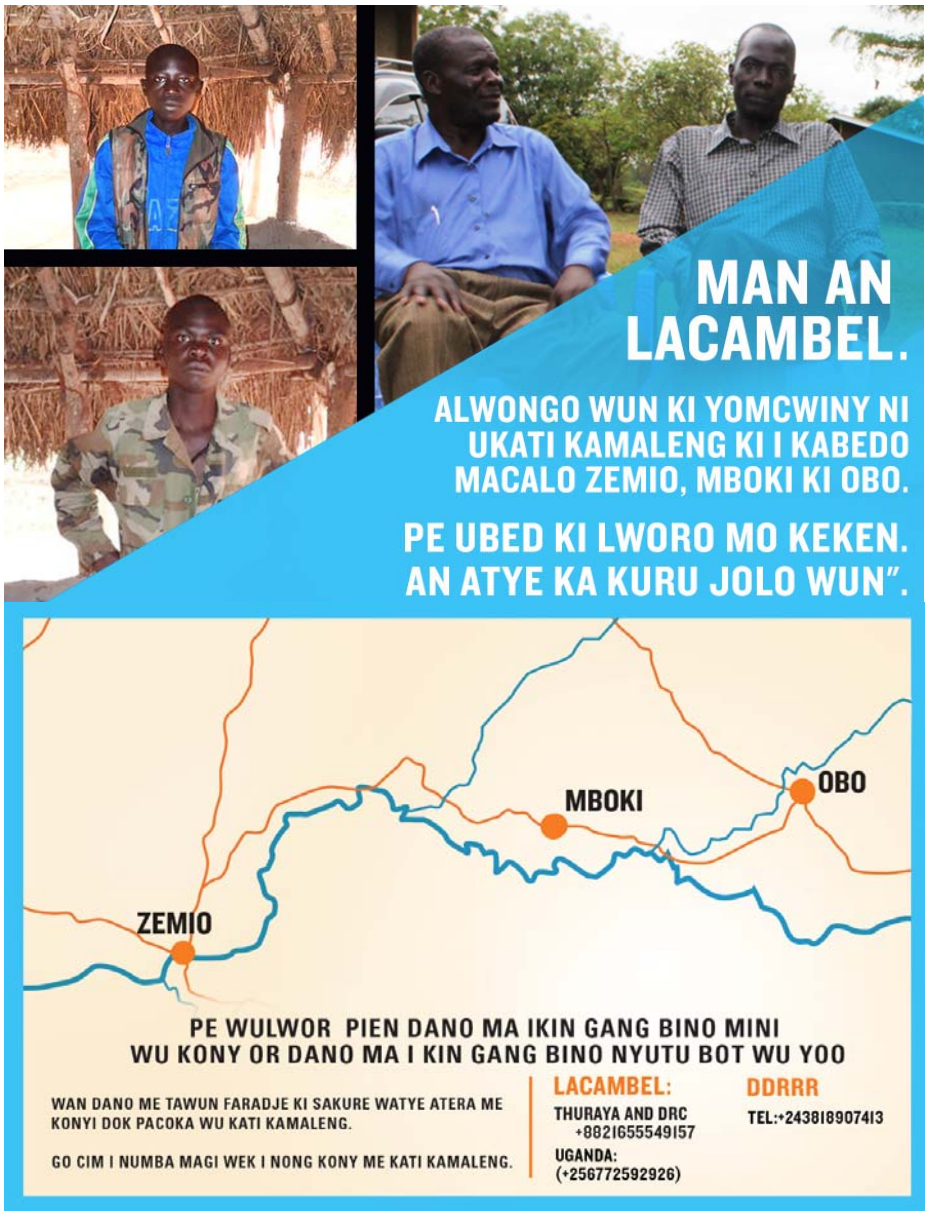
These "billboards" were placed along jungle trails and road sides. They featured frequencies for DDR radio stations, simple instructions for defection, and contact information for civilian volunteers and security forces from the U.S. and AU-RTF.

Figure 26. Small Billboard Directing LRA Members to SRS in Nabanga, South Sudan.[200]

[200] Acholi language.

Figure 27. Leaflet Featuring Former LRA Commanders Caesar Acellam and Binany Otto.[201]

[201] Produced by the NGO Invisible Children, Acholi language.



This leaflet was designed and produced by Invisible Children, but also disseminated by the ACCE/SOCFWD and MONUSCO. The map featuring SRS locations and telephone numbers is the reverse side of the leaflet.

Figure 28. Leaflet Featuring Lacambel, Caesar Acellam, and Other Former LRA Members.[202]

[202] Produced by NGO Invisible Children. This figure depicts both sides of the leaflet. The reverse side shows SRS locations in the CAR and telephone numbers for potential defectors to call. The language is Acholi.

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