

THE CONTINUING HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS IN LRA-AFFECTED REGIONS

HEARING
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TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2012

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,

Washington, D.C.

The commission met, pursuant to call, at 2:30 p.m., in Room B-318 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James P. McGovern and Hon. Frank R. Wolf [co-chairmen of the commission] presiding.

Mr. McGOVERN: Okay, I think we ought to begin even though it is three minutes early, but then I can get my opening remarks out of the way so we can get to the good stuff here. Good afternoon, everybody, and I want to thank you all for being here today for this important hearing on the continuing human rights crisis in the regions affected by the Lord's Resistance Army's brutality.

I want to particularly thank the staff of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and particularly Rupal Matha, Aisha Naseem, and Kate Hixon and Jordan Tama for organizing this hearing, and I want to thank our witnesses for their leadership in working to improve human rights conditions in LRA-affected regions.

This year a video campaign was launched by U.S. NGOs led by Invisible Children, Resolve and the Enough Project to educate Americans in the world about the LRA and Joseph Kony's continuing reign of terror. Millions more people now know that the LRA, led by Joseph Kony, is a vicious group that has wreaked great human suffering across an impoverished swath of central Africa beginning in northern Uganda but now operating mainly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Central African Republic.

It has been responsible for thousands of atrocities including massacres, mass abductions, torture, rape, pillage and forced labor. The LRA's brutality against children has been especially grotesque, and it continues to replenish its ranks through the abduction of children. LRA commanders force these abducted children to become killers, and to mutilate and kill innocent victims in the most horrifying ways.

The LRA remains a grave threat to innocent civilians. While it appears to have been weakened and dispersed as a result of the military campaign against it, the LRA continues to inflict widespread human suffering and to threaten regional stability. Over 400,000 people are currently reported to be displaced due to LRA attacks or the fear of attacks. And the LRA has been responsible for more than 1,000 civilian deaths and some 2,500 abductions since December 2009.

The people of LRA-affected areas in the central African region have suffered far too long. They are waiting for strong, effective action to end the LRA atrocities, and they long to see the safe return of their children and other loved ones who remain with the LRA. But they are not standing passively by. They are also organizing for self-protection and to rehabilitate defecting soldiers who have escaped the ranks of the LRA.

In 2009, along with my good friend, a Republican colleague, Ed Royce of California, I introduced the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act which was enacted the following year. The legislation required President Obama to formulate a comprehensive policy and strategy for LRA-affected regions which the President subsequently issued. I commend the Obama administration's multipronged efforts on this issue including the decision to deploy military personnel to act as advisors in support of regional military efforts to apprehend senior LRA leaders. This deployment though small represents an important U.S. commitment to capture these war criminals.

Much more needs to be done to ensure the removal of the threat posed by Joseph Kony and the LRA, and to provide greater protections and humanitarian relief to LRA-affected communities. Accountability for abuses is particularly important so that Kony and his commanders who are indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity are brought to justice. We must remain committed to countering the LRA even as our attention is drawn to other foreign policy crises.

With that goal in mind, Congressman Royce and I introduced in March, a bipartisan resolution calling for redoubled efforts to bring Kony and his top commanders to justice, and to see the LRA's atrocities permanently ended. Right before the recess the resolution was approved and reported out by the House Foreign Affairs Committee, so I am hopeful that it will soon be considered by the full House.

This hearing today will assess the continuing atrocities committed by the LRA, examine U.S. policy to counter the LRA and evaluate the status of U.S. advise and assist mission and regional military operations. With our first panel of U.S. Government witnesses we will assess the progress of U.S. civilian and military assistance programs including efforts to aid LRA-affected communities, encourage defections, and provide vulnerable communities with early warning systems and other protections.

On our second panel we will hear from several civil society leaders including Father Benoit Kinalegu and Sister Angelique Namaika, who have traveled a great distance from the Democratic Republic of Congo to be with us today. We are extremely grateful to them for making this trip to join us, and for their leadership, commitment, courage and strength.

And before I turn to our witnesses, I just want to say one final comment about that video that kind of went viral. There isn't a junior high school group or high school group or college group that I talk to that when I ask the question, how many of you have seen the Kony video, the vast majority of hands go up. And their question is always, what can

we do? I want to be involved. I want to make a difference. And I urge them to write my colleagues in Congress and support the McGovern-Royce bill, which is a little bit self-serving but nonetheless, I think that is one thing they can do. But to form clubs at their schools and to educate people and raise awareness about this. And I will tell you, the capture of a major LRA leader not too long ago was noticed by a lot of people all across the world, and for these young people, I will tell you, if they can get involved in a human rights issue and actually see Joseph Kony arrested and brought before the International Criminal Court and tried for crimes against humanity and put in jail for the rest of his life, I will tell you that will be an incredible inspiration to these individuals that I think will motivate them to be involved in human rights in general. And I think that would be a really important achievement, as a side achievement in addition to getting Kony.

So I am grateful that you are all here. The first panel is the honorable Donald Yamamoto, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, the honorable Earl Gast, Assistant Administrator for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development, Mr. Gregory Pollock, Director, South and East Africa Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense.

And I am going to begin with Ambassador Yamamoto, who I first met when I traveled to Ethiopia in 2007 to review many of our food security programs, and he was serving there as our ambassador, doing an incredible job. And I am grateful to him, and to all your colleagues at the State Department, USAID and the Department of Defense for taking strong leadership in your coordination efforts to help mitigate and eliminate the threat posed by the LRA.

So having said that, Ambassador, we will begin with you. Thank you.

STATEMENTS OF THE HONORABLE DONALD YAMAMOTO, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE; THE HONORABLE EARL GAST, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR AFRICA, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT; AND MR. GREGORY POLLOCK, DIRECTOR, SOUTH AND EAST AFRICA, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

STATEMENT OF DONALD YAMAMOTO

Mr. YAMAMOTO: Thank you very much, Congressman, and I am very grateful to you and to your colleagues for inviting us here today on this very important subject. And we also want to extend to you our deep appreciation for the efforts you and your colleagues have done especially on the bipartisan legislation, 4077, to expand the State Department's war crimes Rewards For Justice program so that we can use it to target the top LRA commanders as well as other war criminals, and we believe this could enhance our overall efforts to continue to pursue the LRA. Let me also express my deep welcome to Father Benoit and Sister Angelique, and our good friend, Mr. Prendergast, and colleagues.

The State Department regrets that Emmanuel Daba was not able to come to the United States for this important meeting, and we have great respect for the ongoing efforts of civil society leaders across the LRA-affected areas, and despite the great trauma and tragedy, to pursue peace and protection for the people of the region.

The LRA is one of Africa's oldest and most persistent and most violent armed groups, and over the years militaries in the region have weakened the LRA and reduced its numbers. However, the LRA continues to pose a deadly threat to the people of Central Africa, and as you may well know, Congressman, that from January 2009 to February 2012, the U.N. documented about 591 cases of children being abducted by the LRA. And many adults have been abducted as well. While the majority of these individuals escaped or were left behind after a short period of time, the LRA forced many of them to stand witness to unspeakable horrific acts.

The United States continues to pursue a comprehensive strategy to help the governments and people of Central Africa in their efforts to end the threat posed by the LRA and address the impacts of the LRA atrocities. We are pursuing this strategy in close partnership with the African Union, the United Nations and other international partners to maximize our collective efforts. This is a most unilateral effort. We are encouraging all governments in the region to renew and strengthen their collaboration and partnership with the African Union to end the LRA threat once and for all.

To advance these regional efforts, the United States strategy, a small number of U.S. military forces, are advising the national militaries in the region that are pursuing the LRA's top commanders and seeking to protect local populations. The U.S. advisors are providing planning, training and information on operation infusions to support the regional militaries and their ongoing efforts, and the State Department has sent two civilian officers to the region to work alongside the U.S. military advisors. The State Department has also provided support for the regional military contingents involved in the contra-LRA operations. Both the Congo and South Sudan have deployed U.S.-trained battalions to participate in the operations.

The military faces a daunting task in locating, tracking and circling small LRA groups especially in the Triple Canopy Jungle. Even with logistical support, the partner forces have limited capacity to rapidly respond to LRA attacks and sightings. And the lack of communications and road infrastructure in the region creates further challenges. Nevertheless, the militaries in the regions continue to make progress, most recently with Uganda's military capture of senior LRA commander, Caesar Achellam. Achellam has long been considered one of LRA's top five commanders.

Following the news of his capture, two low-level LRA fighters peacefully surrendered to local authorities in the CAR, and State Department officials and U.S. military advisors are working with the Ugandan military, U.N. and nongovernmental organizations to design, print and distribute leaflets encouraging other LRA fighters to defect from the group. And these leaflets have highlighted the recent capture of Caear

Achellam, and include messages encouraging remaining LRA fighters to put down their weapons. We are also working with military advisors and U.N. partners to expand radio broadcasts encouraging LRA members to defect, and with USAID to increase rehabilitation, reintegration and support for those who leave the LRA.

And finally, at the same time as we support efforts to directly address the LRA, we are also seeking to address the conditions that leave communities in this region so vulnerable to predatory groups such as the LRA, and promote long-term development and governance. In the long run, these efforts are just as critical as the military efforts to diminish the LRA. The State Department, AID and others are funding programs to help affected communities employ adaptive strategies and utilize communications technologies including high frequency radios to increase their security. And my colleague, Earl Gast at AID, will provide more details.

In closing, let me reiterate that the United States is committed to supporting the people of Central Africa as they work to end the LRA threat and establish sustainable peace and security. And despite funding constraints and multiple competing priorities on the African continent, we continue to devote significant resources and considerable attention to this effort. We appreciate your efforts, Congressman, and those of your colleagues on this great effort. Thank you so very much.

Mr. McGOVERN: Thank you very much. Mr. Gast, before I go to you, you know what, you are all so popular we have a standing room only crowd here. So I am going to urge people, it is okay if a few of you sit up here on the dais on this side, and there is some empty chairs there. I would rather have you sit down than stand in the hallways. So as long as you leave a few seats here for members if they come, but try to get everybody into here, and there is some chairs over here, and make sure everybody gets in. And people can also sit on the table over there too. I won't tell. I just want to make sure we get everybody in here.

Mr. Gast, welcome.

Mr. GAST: Thank you, Congressman. Are they authorized to ask questions as well?

Mr. McGOVERN: We will see. If my questions don't make any sense then we will yield to them.

STATEMENT OF EARL GAST

Mr. GAST: The Lord's Resistance Army remains among the most persistent perpetrators of human rights violations in the world. It has killed tens of thousands of civilians over the years, and sexual violence is a systematic characteristic of its terror.

Nearly every member of the LRA's ranks was forcibly abducted from his community. These boys and girls are beaten into submission and sometimes required to

commit atrocities against others. Many are killed or wounded during fighting. Others are murdered if they are unwilling to obey orders or try to escape. Gender-based violence, rape and the use of girls as sex slaves is rampant, and survivors continue to suffer long after enduring horrific traumas at the hands of the LRA.

While the LRA has been weakened and driven from northern Uganda, it continues to pose a deadly threat to the communities across the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. In response to the ongoing need, USAID aims to reach at least 240,000 persons with humanitarian assistance including emergency food, relief commodities, primary health care services, livelihood support and psychosocial protection programs.

The protection of civilians is central to the overall U.S. Government strategy to help counter the LRA, because the LRA preys on vulnerable communities. USAID programs ensure that affected children and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence receive appropriate care and support whether that is medical, psychosocial or legal. Protection considerations are even integrated into programs that don't specifically focus on protection. For example, agriculture and food security programs in the LRA-affected areas ensure that women who tend fields are able to organize adequate care and supervision for their children and maintain safety in numbers while they are cultivating their farms.

To address the severe trauma the LRA inflicts on individuals and communities, USAID's support to UNICEF addresses the psychosocial needs of nearly 1,000 children in the Central African Republic, and about 1,100 children in the DRC who have either been abducted or displaced by the LRA. UNICEF also strengthens local networks to protect children and helps reintegrate formerly abducted children into their communities. This work enabled James, a 13-year-old boy from South Sudan who escaped the LRA, to be placed with a foster family and given access to psychosocial care. James is one of many who, as a result of American assistance, has been given the opportunity to become a child again.

I saw one of the many successful reintegration stories for myself just a few weeks ago when I joined Senator Coons on a congressional delegation to LRA-affected communities in northern Uganda, and there I met Ocola Sam. Today he is a community activist, a volunteer who is working with his neighbors to help rebuild and develop the region on USAID financed projects, but not long ago Ocola Sam was himself a spokesman for the LRA. Abducted from his home, he was absorbed into the ranks of other abductees and forced to take part in LRA raids. After Ocola Sam was finally able to escape he received assistance from a USAID financed reintegration program which encouraged his return and reconciliation with his community. He was an outcast at first, but through his unwavering commitment to repudiate his past and rebuild his community he has become a valued member of his village and a college graduate, a model for the progress Uganda has made. Reintegration takes time but the healing process takes even longer.

Development can flourish once security has been assured, but until that time we must be vigilant about protecting civilians and helping them recover from LRA-inflicted brutality. Northern Uganda is becoming a success, but its recovery is still fragile.

Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today and I welcome any questions you might have.

[The statement of Mr. Gast follows:]

Good morning Representatives McGovern and Wolf and members of the Commission. Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remains amongst the most persistent perpetrators of human rights violations in the world. As recently as last month, a UN report found that the LRA continues to commit all six grave violations against children identified by the UN Security Council as war crimes:

- Killing or maiming of children
- Recruitment or use of children as soldiers
- Sexual violence against children
- Attacks against schools or hospitals
- Denial of humanitarian access for children
- Abduction of children

These violations extend to the adult population as well. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed by the LRA over the years, and sexual violence continues to be a systematic characteristic of the LRA's modus operandi. Today, more than 445,000 civilians remain displaced due to the fear that the LRA's brutality has engendered.

Since the early 1990s, Joseph Kony has promulgated a policy of forced recruitment, particularly of children. With the exception of a handful of senior officers, nearly all of the LRA's ranks were forcibly abducted from their communities. Abducted girls and boys are beaten into submission, are sometimes required to commit atrocities against others, and serve as combatants as well as cooks, porters, and spies. Many children are killed or wounded during fighting; others are murdered if they are unwilling to obey orders or try to escape.

Grisly gender-based violence, rape, and the use of girls as sex slaves have also been rampant. Amnesty International held scores of interviews with victims of the LRA in July 2010. In one of the interviews, a 26-year-old mother of two told how she was abducted by the LRA near the village of Obo in the Central African Republic (CAR) with as many as 80 other men and women. LRA fighters took the captives to their base in the forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Upon arrival in the camp, "women were distributed among LRA officers and were subjected to repeated rapes. Women who refused to have sex with the officers were beaten into submission." Those who escape, especially girls and women returning with babies, are often stigmatized by their families and communities, who find it difficult to accept them.

Survivors continue to suffer long after enduring horrific traumas at the hands of the LRA. Abducted by the LRA at age 12, today Jacob says that, still, "we worry. The rebels, when they arrest us again, they will kill us. My brother tried to escape. Then they killed him using a *panga* [machete]. They cut his neck," he said. Now a law student, Jacob remains haunted by the pain of his past. "When you wake up in the morning and you hear that people are still being abducted in Congo, it takes my mind back to the situation when I was abducted," he said.

While the LRA has been weakened, it continues to pose a deadly threat to the communities across the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan. Between January and March 2012, the United Nations recorded 33 attacks, three deaths, and 51 abductions in the DRC, of which 16 were children; in the CAR during the same period, the UN recorded a total of 20 attacks, six deaths and 39 abductions.

As the threat of the LRA has been eliminated from northern Uganda and shifted to the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan, USAID accordingly adjusted its response to address humanitarian needs and supplement ongoing efforts by regional governments and the United Nations. USAID aims to reach at least 240,000 people with humanitarian assistance, including emergency food, relief commodities, primary health care services, psychosocial and protection programs, and livelihoods support. In LRA-affected populations in the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan, the United States' life-saving emergency assistance totaled more than \$18 million in FY 2011.

Insecurity presents a significant challenge to providing humanitarian assistance and promoting development in these areas. Farmers' access to land is limited, and deteriorating road conditions further hamper commerce. That is why we are implementing activities to mitigate the disruption of livelihoods. For example, USAID support to Mercy Corps in Haut Uélé District, DRC, has worked with more than 4,000 families to restore the assets that drive their small businesses and implemented cash-for work activities to rehabilitate community infrastructure. This program enables vulnerable LRA-affected beneficiaries, particularly woman-headed households, to provide for the needs of their families.

To address the severe trauma the LRA inflicts on individuals and communities, USAID support to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) addresses the psychosocial needs of nearly 1,000 children in the CAR and 1,100 children in the DRC who have either been abducted or displaced by the LRA. UNICEF also strengthens local networks to protect children and helps reintegrate formerly abducted children into their communities. USAID funding to UNICEF enabled James¹, a 13-year-old boy from South Sudan who escaped the LRA in Dungu, Haut Uélé Province, the DRC, to be placed with a foster family and access psychosocial care and a place to play with other children. James is one of many who, as a result of our efforts, has been given the opportunity to become a child again.

The protection of civilians continues to be central to the overall U.S. Government strategy to help counter the LRA. Because the LRA preys on vulnerable communities, we are supporting the efforts of regional governments and nongovernmental organizations to reduce the vulnerability of those communities. On June 7, 2012, USAID issued a solicitation for a new three-year cooperative agreement to implement the "Secure, Empowered, Connected Communities program, or SECC, which will help communities to better protect themselves from the threat of the LRA and other armed groups by empowering them to address community security threats and helping them to be better informed and connected with each other and the outside world. The program will focus on the LRA-affected areas of the CAR and will work closely with UNICEF and other stakeholders to prepare communities to receive potential defectors and escapees from the LRA. In LRA-affected areas of the DRC, USAID is incorporating high-frequency radios into community-based protection programs in 24 communities to provide early warnings to conflict and violence. Additionally, USAID is piloting an innovative cell phone tower project that aims to diversify the communications options available for use in early warning systems and humanitarian efforts. This project could be a model for how to introduce low-cost cell phone coverage to remote areas located outside of cellular networks and is expected to be operational by fall 2012.

USAID supports programs in LRA-affected areas that mainstream protection approaches into multi-sectorial initiatives, ensuring that sexual and gender-based violence survivors receive appropriate care, while also seeking to minimize the risk of further atrocities. For example, in LRA-affected areas of the DRC and the CAR, USAID partners provide resources that help health centers refer survivors to facilities that have a comprehensive package of services, including psychosocial, legal, and livelihoods support. In addition, child protection programs screen children for medical and psychosocial needs and refer them to appropriate care.

¹ Not his real name

USAID also integrates protection considerations into its programs in the area—even those that don't specifically focus on protection. Agriculture and food security programs in LRA-affected areas, for instance, ensure that women tending fields are able to organize adequate care and supervision for their children and maintain safety in numbers while cultivating their farms.

USAID has been heavily engaged in LRA-affected areas of Uganda since the late 1980s, and our intervention has evolved over the years to reflect the changing needs and priorities. When atrocities carried out by the LRA made communities unable or afraid to seek assistance, USAID and other donors implemented preventative measures that focused on community awareness, engaging traditional leadership, and ensuring that access to justice was available to all parties. In addition, USAID and others worked extensively to improve policing, jails, and other government functions to better respond to incidents of sexual violence among those displaced by the conflict. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, approximately 80 percent of known survivors of sexual violence receive support.

In 2006, when the LRA was finally driven from northern Uganda, we shifted our programs from relief to recovery. We helped people displaced by the conflict return to their homes and reestablish their livelihoods. Investments in seed distribution programs improved food security, the rehabilitation of water points reduced health risk, and road repairs opened up access to markets, supporting local economies. As a result of these investments, in 2009 we were able to shift our programs in northern Uganda to focus on long-term development.

USAID's conflict mitigation and reconciliation program made significant contributions to the return of peace, recovery and development in the region. An estimated 95 percent of the 1.8 million Ugandans displaced by the conflict have returned to their homes; there has been a significant reduction in poverty in northern Uganda, from 60.7 percent in 2005 to 46.2 percent in 2010; and household consumption expenditures increased by at least 34 percent between 2005 and 2010.

USAID's Northern Uganda Transition Initiative was a critical step in this evolution. This 2008- 11, \$23-million flagship program renovated public service buildings throughout war-affected regions, including government office buildings, schools and teacher houses, health clinics and health clinic housing, markets, boreholes, and police and justice facilities. By partnering directly with government departments and offices, the initiative not only helped communities begin to rebuild, but also increased the visibility of, and confidence in, all levels of government. This effort sent a clear message that peace had returned to the region and the Government of Uganda was now at the helm of the reconstruction process.

To respond to the health needs of residents, USAID helped rebuild hospitals and clinics that were abandoned or destroyed during the conflict. USAID joined forces with the private sector to improve the delivery of health services and designed comprehensive workplace programs to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Our malaria control efforts protect 85 percent of the people in ten northern districts. USAID has improved the conditions for peaceful development by involving communities in education programs. Services include psychosocial support, guidance and counseling, school leadership and governance, peace education, promotion of girls' education, performing arts, and community integration and participation.

USAID has helped nurture this progress by providing medical care and counseling to abductees, promoting reconstruction, supporting transitional justice and reconciliation, increasing opportunities for ex-combatants, and addressing key issues such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, water, and sanitation. In addition, USAID is helping northern Uganda to redevelop its farms; in 2010, agricultural training and projects helped increase the region's crop sales by more than \$7 million. USAID's unique Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure, and Livelihoods program enables local governments to expand basic services to areas with ex-combatants, abductees, and returnees, while at the same time infusing capital into the recovering economy by using labor-intensive methods of construction. In FY 2011, this program supported the construction of 70 boreholes, six schools with latrines and teacher housing, and contracts for 19 farm-to-market roads in four districts. Altogether, USAID supports 432 ongoing projects that are fully aligned with the Government of Uganda's Poverty Reduction and Development Plan that targets the war-affected northern region. This innovative approach to recovery and development continues to strengthen

local government while promoting long term sustainability.

USAID remains committed to promoting stability and economic development in northern Uganda while also addressing the immediate needs of communities in LRA-affected parts of the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan. USAID staff in northern Uganda continues to work to consolidate gains, and broaden our long-term efforts to improve livelihoods and build good governance practices that will solidify peace and security in the region. Our sustained efforts in northern Uganda demonstrate that development can flourish once security has been assured.

Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today on this critical issue, and I welcome any questions you might have.

Mr. McGOVERN: Thank you very much.

Mr. Pollock?

STATEMENT OF GREGORY POLLOCK

Mr. POLLOCK: Congressman McGovern, thank you for this opportunity to update you on the Department of Defense's efforts to assist our regional partners in putting an end to the scourge of the Lord's Resistance Army. As my colleagues noted, approximately 100 U.S. military personnel are now deployed for this operation across the LRA-affected countries. U.S. forces began their deployment to the region in October 2011, and small teams of advisors began relocating to forward operating areas at the end of 2011 and in the beginning of 2012.

While there continues to be a command and control element in Uganda that oversees and synchronizes DoD's counter-LRA efforts across the region and coordinates with the Ugandan efforts at the headquarters level, the bulk of the U.S. advisory effort is now taking place in the field. Small teams of U.S. military advisors are working closely with the Ugandan military and other national military forces in remote locations in the LRA-affected areas of the Central African Republic and South Sudan where the U.S. military advisors have helped establish operations fusion centers to enable daily information sharing and tactical collaboration among the regional partners. The U.S. advisors are also integrating local civilian leaders and NGOs into the work of the partner forces enhancing trust between civilians and military forces and ensuring greater communication and cooperation among the wide array of stakeholders in this effort.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo the U.S. advisors are likewise supporting efforts by the Congolese military and the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC, or MONUSCO, to increase civilian protection and address the LRA threat. The advisors are based at MONUSCO's joint intelligence operations center which serves as the intelligence fusion hub for counter-LRA efforts in the DRC. U.S. advisors are connecting the work of the joint intelligence operations center with that of the operations fusion centers in the Central African Republic and South Sudan to increase cross supporter analysis and regional coordination on LRA movements.

In concert with our embassies in the region, the U.S. military advisors are also coordinating closely with the U.N. in their efforts to promote the defection, disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration, or DDRRR, of former LRA fighters and associated persons. In this respect, U.S. advisors are assisting in the transport of equipment and supplies necessary to develop the communications infrastructure in LRA areas, enabling expansion of FM radio and high frequency early warning networks. U.S. advisors are also working with the U.N. and NGOs to develop culturally relevant radio messages to encourage LRA defections.

As my State Department colleague noted, another significant component of this effort is working with the U.N. and NGOs on the design, printing, transportation and targeted distribution of leaflets to encourage defections. We believe this initiative will encourage further defectors who will provide further information to partner forces who will then be able to stage more effective operations which will encourage further defections and so and so forth.

Despite these considerable efforts there continue to be significant challenges in tracking small numbers of LRA fighters across an area of thickly forested jungle approximately the size of California. However, DoD remains committed to this operation which reflects the importance that the recently approved U.S. strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa places on addressing atrocity risks to help prevent violence and bolstering international efforts to bring perpetrators to justice. DoD will continue to bring all possible resources to bear on this operation without drawing assets away from other presidentially-directed priorities. We will continue to look for creative solutions that can meet the needs of our partner militaries and help them build upon their recent successes including the capture of senior LRA leader, Caesar Achellam.

Although this deployment is on a smaller scale than many DoD deployments in other theaters, we believe our support is helping the partner forces to improve the effectiveness of their operations. The scope of this deployment is consistent with the defense strategic guidance which specifies that we will seek low-cost, small footprint options to achieve our objectives in the continent. Moreover, this deployment is appropriately sized to accomplish the mission which is to advise and assist partner nations in their efforts to counter the LRA threat, not to take direct action against the LRA. The partner militaries in collaboration with the African Union are leading this effort to end the threat to regional stability and civilian well being posed by the LRA.

In closing, I wanted to express the Department's appreciation for Congress' strong commitment to countering the LRA and its support for the efforts of our deployed personnel. We appreciate the thoughtful and cooperative dialogue we have enjoyed with Congress since the passage of the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act, and we look forward to continuing to work with you as this operation moves forward. We are also grateful for some of the specific authorities that the Congress has provided in support of this operation including the Section 1206 authority of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2012.

I would also like to echo my colleagues in voicing DoD support for Congressman Royce's and your legislation, H.R. 4077, which would provide an additional tool to help generate information about the location of LRA leaders, encourage more LRA fighters to defect, and hasten the long-awaited day when we can speak of the LRA as a thing of the past. Thank you very much and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. McGOVERN: Well, thank you very much. I just want the room to know that Congressman Jeff Duncan of South Carolina has joined us as well.

Well, thank you all for your testimony, and I appreciate the collaboration that has come about as a result, I think, of some focus by the United States Congress and by a lot of NGOs, quite frankly, that have kind of raised this issue and made us all aware of the terrible effects of the LRA and Mr. Kony.

Ambassador Yamamoto, where do counter-LRA efforts rank on the list of priorities for U.S. foreign policy in Africa? And we have talked a little bit about the legislation that has passed, but I guess the question is, are current legislative authorities and funding levels sufficient for achieving U.S. policy goals with respect to the LRA? Because ultimately our goal here is to make sure that the war criminals are captured and brought before the International Criminal Court and that the LRA is ended.

And I am just curious, from where you sit, do you have all the tools that you need, and where it is a rank on the list of priorities and foreign policy priorities in Africa?

Mr. YAMAMOTO: Certainly in the priorities of where the LRA stands it ranks very high. And the reason why is because I think we share a common perspective with the U.S. Congress passing the legislation on the LRA and of course the Rewards For Justice, that kind of corresponds to what we have been trying to do over the last few years. And if you look at our budgeting and assistance levels that kind of tells you, and also the focus that we have given to the problem, underscores the commitment we have to this effort. And the reason why is because it is in our national interest. The more that countries like Uganda, CAR and the Congo, and if you talk about this scourge expanding to other countries, those countries then have to devote and dedicate much more of their own personal wealth and budgets to fight this scourge when they could be doing it to promote, which we like to do, democratic values, accountability, women's educations, development of health and education issues.

So those are things that kind of integrate with each other, but for us it ranks as a very high priority within our overall budgeting.

Mr. McGOVERN: And do you or anybody else here, I mean do you have the necessary authority to do what you need to do to accomplish this policy objective?

Mr. GAST: From a development perspective and humanitarian perspective we have resources. That the problem that we have is access and primarily into eastern

Congo into the eastern DRC, and without access obviously it is very difficult to provide services.

Mr. McGOVERN: Mr. Pollock, do you have –

Mr. POLLOCK: Yes, I agree with both of my colleagues. I think on balance we certainly have what we need and we are finding ways to respond to the gaps that we have identified in terms of tackling this problem in the past including in providing support to the UPDF with regard to logistics and movement. In that respect, certainly the Section 1206 authority I believe will come in quite handy. And just again echo the support for the legislation to expand the war crimes program.

Mr. McGOVERN: Okay. Uganda and South Sudanese sources have recently publicly accused the Sudanese Government of renewing its support for Joseph Kony. Are these allegations credible, and what information does the U.S. Government have on the possibility that Sudan is supporting the LRA, and have Sudanese authorities shared information on reported LRA movements within their territory with the U.S. or partner forces engaged in counter-LRA operations? Ambassador?

Mr. YAMAMOTO: Yes, we have investigated the allegations. Obviously several years ago the answer is there were persistent and consistent reports that the Sudanese were providing that assistance and support to the LRA operations. But within the last several years we have not found that credible evidence that that has been done. Now obviously the LRA goes into Sudan, in and out. They have been in Congo. They have been in CAR to seek refuge. But with any information or allegations, we are going to pursue that aggressively. We have been in touch with not only the Khartoum government but also the Juba government and both sides in trying look at exactly where the LRA are, what support and assistance is being provided to them. And if I may add –

Mr. McGOVERN: Has the Sudanese Government been forthcoming in sharing information about LRA activities whether seeking sanctuary or –

Mr. YAMAMOTO: It has been very difficult to get information from Khartoum on a wide range of issues because of the difficulty in our own personal bilateral relationship and also because of the hard issues that we have been discussing with the Khartoum government over issues on Kurdufan, on Darfur, et cetera, but it does not mean that we are not going to continue to pursue those issues and we are.

But Congressman, just one last thing on the other point, do we have the assets and the tools and resources? And the answer is that obviously we could use more, particularly in communications, the issue of rehabilitation and reconciliation, and also pursuit of training and interoperability for the national armies, particularly the CAR and the DRC.

Mr. McGOVERN: Has the Administration kind of put forward a proposal of additional --

Mr. YAMAMOTO: We are looking at the best programs that can meet the needs of these armies. And of course the problem is that the Ugandan forces, CAR, DRC, they are at different levels of development, and trying to get them to the same level is a challenge.

Mr. McGOVERN: But it would obviously be helpful to us if the Administration said we need X, then it is a lot easier for us then to try to fight for it. So that kind of specificity would be helpful.

Let me ask you, whichever one of you guys want to answer this. There has been a lot of talk about the Ugandan military's human rights record, and I would like to get your assessment of the Ugandan military's human rights record in the counter-LRA deployment. To what extent and how are the Ugandan troops able and committed to protecting civilians in LRA-affected areas? Has the Ugandan troops engaged in any illicit natural resource exploitation in LRA-affected areas? And how is the Ugandan military perceived by local communities in LRA-affected areas, and do these perceptions affect its capacity to pursue the counter-LRA mission?

Maybe Mr. Pollock, you might be the best person to take that on.

Mr. POLLOCK: Sure. So I would just say up front that we take very seriously any allegations of illicit activity or abuses by our partner forces. That said, we have heard very few substantiated allegations of any abuses by the UPDF over the last several years. And where there have been validated instances of abuses or illicit activity, the Ugandan Government has taken action and has imposed military justice as appropriate. That said, we are constantly on the lookout. These allegations have been in the air as it relates to these partner forces for a long time, and some of these partner forces have had contentious relationships with the communities they are operating in for many years. We are seeking to assist them in improving their civil-military relations in this respect. But I would just note that our forces are out there with them and promoting a culture where military forces hold themselves accountable and act in a professional manner.

Mr. McGOVERN: Thank you. Let me just follow up with you. In the 150-day review of the advisory deployments what benchmarks were evaluated? For example, are you tracking how many LRA desertions there have been, particularly combatants not just recent abductees, and how many senior LRA commanders have been captured or killed, and when will the next review take place?

Mr. POLLOCK: So I would note that this deployment has been subject to an ongoing review and there are a series of benchmarks we applied including some of the quantitative measures you noted. It is still, I think, in the fairly early going here, so employing simply quantitative measures is probably not adequate to evaluate the success of the deployment to date, but I would just note that the U.S. Government, and certainly my colleagues can elaborate on this to a great degree, are taking a comprehensive approach to this problem. And we measure success in terms of the degree to which we

can enhance the efforts of the partner militaries we are working with to end the threat of the LRA.

Mr. McGOVERN: This is a question on the USAID, I am just trying to understand the challenges that USAID has faced in implementing kind of the LRA related programs in the Central African Republic given that there is no bilateral USAID mission in that country. What steps is USAID taking to address these challenges?

Mr. GAST: The problem of access is not just in the CAR. It is also in the DRC where we do have a very large presence. Unfortunately that entire area bordering with the DRC from the CAR that it is a huge area, and unfortunately there is very little infrastructure in the area and also very few groups that work in those areas. So even if we, ourselves, were able to have a permanent presence there we still wouldn't have the capacity to meet all the needs even if security conditions were met. It would require a significant scaling up of local partners, international NGOs and contractors to help meet the needs in the area.

Mr. McGOVERN: Mr. Duncan, do you have any questions?

Mr. DUNCAN: Thank you. I appreciate Ambassador Yamamoto being here. He testified on this same subject in Foreign Affairs recently, and I was sitting about as close as I am now, being a junior member of that committee as well.

But I guess this is for Mr. Pollock. To what extent is the Ugandan military willing and able to defeat the LRA?

Mr. POLLOCK: Well, I would say that they are quite willing. The Ugandan Government and the Ugandan military has invested a great deal of time, energy and resources into pursuing the LRA.

Mr. DUNCAN: Truly committed to the effort, do you think?

Mr. POLLOCK: I believe so, yes. They are, and they are continuing this effort, very robustly deploying forces a long way from Uganda in an effort to end this threat to regional stability. I do think they are committed.

Mr. DUNCAN: Right. How about the Congolese? Are they willing to allow the Ugandan military on their soil to help defeat the LRA, and are they cooperating? This is a new subject to me so I am very interested.

Mr. POLLOCK: Sure. I would just say –

Mr. DUNCAN: And Ambassador Yamamoto can answer.

Mr. POLLOCK: -- and certainly Ambassador Yamamoto may want to take the first cut at this question because it is in many ways a diplomatic challenge given the historical relationship between the Congolese and the Ugandans.

Mr. YAMAMOTO: It goes to your first question. With Museveni and Kony, there is no love lost between the two. Obviously Museveni takes it as a very personal issue to go after Kony, so I think personally that that is a commitment that he has made. And the money and the troops that he has dedicated to that endeavor, I think, underscores that issue.

As far as the interoperability of all these forces, yes, there are issues that the Congolese have been very insistent on sovereignty issues, and not only the Ugandan troops going into the DRC territory but also on the other side, the Rwandans going to DRC in joint operations against the FDLR. Those have been very difficult in discussions and coordination.

But I think on the LRA portion, what President Kabila has done is that he has said that he is using the U.S.-trained integrated brigade, the 391, to utilize to go after the LRA and remnants of the LRA within the Congo. Now we are negotiating and talking to Kabila to say, you have got to do a little bit more as far as let us say look at other ways and opportunities we can coordinate with the Ugandan troops and the forces, et cetera. So those are issues that we are on negotiations, but let me underscore that President Kabila and President Museveni are dedicated and committed to this endeavor.

Mr. DUNCAN: Yes. Let me ask this. When was the last time Joseph Kony was seen by western media? Because some of the things I have read is that he has been absent. He hasn't been seen or identified by the western world in quite awhile. We are spending a lot of money to try to defeat this gentleman and the LRA. And I guess the second question is, does the LRA continue in absence of Joseph Kony? Let us say he is eliminated in some capacity, does the LRA continue to exist as a political faction or a warring faction?

And it doesn't matter, it is not addressed to one particular person.

Mr. YAMAMOTO: Yes, I will turn to my colleagues too. I think in the case of the LRA, I mean how many core fighters are we talking about, maybe 200 core fighters? You are talking to 800 mostly Congolese, CAR, Sudanese people accompanying the essentially Acholi-based core fighters. And the issue comes in as if you eliminate Kony, we feel and believe that that structure will begin to collapse. That doesn't mean that the fight is over. It is not, because you do have other fighters-

Mr. DUNCAN: Well, is there a second in command that would fill that as we see in an al-Qaeda type organization?

Mr. YAMAMOTO: No, I think in the case of the LRA, and you might also defer to the second group and their expertise on it, but the indications are that it will begin to

collapse, maybe fracture, but that does not mean that the fight is over because you are going to have to go after these local commanders and it would be much easier without Kony. And that is why he may not be seen, but his effect are still felt. And I think that will make our efforts to a reconciliation and really ending this problem much, much easier.

Mr. POLLOCK: If I may just connect this question with your prior question about the commitment of the UPDF. I think the fact that we haven't seen Joseph Kony in some years interacting with western media reflects in part the constant pressure that the UPDF has the senior LRA commanders under. And as my colleagues said, there is a cadre of sort of long-standing leadership at the top of the LRA, and certainly regional stability would not descend instantaneously should they be removed, but we do think that they are critical to sustaining the coherence of the organization, and removing them from the battlefield would have a substantial effect.

Mr. DUNCAN: I have nothing further. I yield back.

Mr. McGOVERN: One final question. What are the main challenges facing the U.S. advisor effort? I mean we all want this to be successful. We don't want to be here 20 years from now talking about the same subject. I mean we want to make sure that our advisors have what they need and that the mission has what it needs in terms of resources. And like anything else, we understand there is a beginning, there is a middle and there is an end. And the end is Joseph Kony is captured, the LRA disperses. Just so I understand, what are the biggest challenges we have for our advisors in making sure that this effort is a success?

Mr. YAMAMOTO: I think that is kind of multifaceted. As far as what we are looking at is, how do we create greater interoperability command and control structures? How do we help give the necessary skill sets to these forces whose skill sets are really very different from each other, and coordination and cooperation is very, very difficult? How do you encourage that so that it enhances their capability to coordinate and go after Kony? And again, the goals and objectives that we have with our special forces unit is really to provide that capacity building. Ultimately it is going to be to the UPDF or the Ugandas and the other forces, the CAR and Congo, to go after Kony and to bring him to justice. And also, not only Kony but also his lieutenants and commanders.

And so the challenges are is the time factor, I mean we need to have a lot of patience. You are talking an area that is huge, I guess the northwest part of the United States, with only maybe a battalion or two of battalions to cover that wide swath of area. A second thing is that is is very difficult to look into the jungle areas and to identify. We could be a mile away and not even know Kony is there because of the vegetation or the landscape and the environment. So there are physical challenges and environmental challenges. But ultimately, I think the greater the capacity of skills we are giving to these forces, I think the more successful they will be over the end.

Mr. McGOVERN: Any other --

Mr. POLLOCK: Sure. I would just briefly amplify Ambassador Yamamoto's comments. I think the challenges have always been the same in terms of dealing with the LRA, and they involve regional coordination, geography and time. In terms of the regional coordination piece, I think our advisors are playing a critical role in this respect being a kind of connective tissue across the various regional militaries in establishing the operation fusion centers where these forces are working together. And to get back to the question about Congo, they are even present in Congo and working with the 391st and other parts of the Congolese military.

On geography, I mean this is a vast stretch of jungle and it is difficult to traverse, but that is where the logistics support that we are providing, I think, comes in. And then time. I think everyone on this panel and everyone on the dais, likewise, appreciate the immense interest that exists now in the LRA and in ending the threat of the LRA and in capturing Joseph Kony and bringing him to justice. But it does take time for our forces out there to build the rapport, to establish the four forward operating bases and then to get into the real meat of this mission, and that is working with the partners to fuse intelligence with their operations. So that strategic patience, I think, is a critical requirement as well.

Mr. McGOVERN: And I just want to be clear. There is no dispute here that progress is being made and that we are, in fact, enabling the people of the region, giving them the ability and the equipment and the training so they can go after Joseph Kony and the LRA, because as you pointed out, Ambassador, this is their fight and we are assisting in that. But we are all in agreement that this policy that the Administration has launched has resulted in the ball moving forward. I hate to use that analogy, but that is the only one I can think of right now. And that what is going to happen is that we are going to hear from the Administration in the not too distant future about some specifics in terms of whether it is equipment or personnel or monies or whatever that currently are lacking that might help, again, in the effort to enable the people of the region to be able to be successful in getting Joseph Kony. That is accurate, right?

Mr. YAMAMOTO: That is accurate.

Mr. McGOVERN: Okay, good. That is all I have. I have no further questions. I just want to thank you all for your collaborative efforts. I really believe that if Joseph Kony could be brought to justice and the LRA could be dispersed, it is not only an important milestone for the people of Africa but it is an important signal to human rights abusers all over the world that when the world community gets mobilized they will be held accountable. And I think that is also a very powerful message that needs to be made clear. So thank you very much.

Mr. YAMAMOTO: Thank you very much.

Mr. McGOVERN: So our second panel, Michael Poffenberger, co-founder and executive director of Resolve, Father Benoit, president of Dungu-Doruma Diocesan

Commission for Justice and Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sister Angelique, coordinator, Mama Bongisa in Democratic Republic of Congo, and John Prendergast, co-founder of the Enough Project.

Mr. POFFENBERGER: Good afternoon, Congressman.

Mr. McGOVERN: Good afternoon, and we will begin with you, Mr. Poffenberger. And we welcome your testimony and thank all of you for all of your great work.

STATEMENTS OF MICHAEL POFFENBERGER, CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOLVE; FATHER BENOIT KINALEGU, PRESIDENT, DUNGU-DORUMA DIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO; SISTER ANGELIQUE NAMAIIKA, COORDINATOR, MAMA BONGISA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO; AND, JOHN PRENDERGAST, CO-FOUNDER, THE ENOUGH PROJECT

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL POFFENBERGER

Mr. POFFENBERGER: Thank you. Yes, before getting started, just to echo the thanks both to you, Congressman Duncan and Congressman McGovern, but also to my copanelists, the grizzled human rights activist down at the other end of the table who is just unrelenting in his pursuit of these objectives, but also two people who are some of the most inspiring people I have had a chance to meet in seven years of working on this issue. And I think it is a privilege to hear about sacrifices that they have been making on behalf of peace in their communities.

As you all know, in the past few months there has been unprecedented attention to this issue. It really started in October with the President's deployment of a hundred U.S. military advisors to regional governments. This move created front page news for an issue that has long dwelled as one of the more neglected human rights crises in our world, and sparked a much needed conversation about what really it was going to take to end a problem that has stretched on now for more than 25 years.

Against all odds this unprecedented peak of attention was itself far surpassed in March with the viral spread of the KONY 2012 campaign and film in which more than a hundred million people watched that film and simultaneously found themselves asking the question how it was possible that so few people could cause such great suffering for so many and for so long. Two million Americans alone signed the campaign pledge calling on American leaders to do more after viewing the film.

Kony's work has long benefitted from the shadows. His strategy is to target the communities on the margins of our world in the areas where governments in the region and the international community as a whole is the least likely and least able to actually respond. And so this kind of attention is well, kind of long overdue for those of us who have been following the issue for a long time. It is also most welcome. Congress in

particular has been seized in the follow-up to this effort and building on the leadership, Congressman McGovern, that you and Congressman Royce and 201, I believe, bipartisan members of Congress showed in sponsoring the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act, has continued to be ahead of the Administration in calling for more action to see this problem solved.

But today with all due respect to the former panelists, I am deeply concerned by the lack of a vision and lack of leadership that has been shown so far to build on the deployment of the advisors with a strategy that is actually capable of solving this problem. I don't think that any impartial estimate of current efforts could conclude that that tools and strategy now in place has a significant prospect for success. But first to comment on the good. The deployment of those advisors, approximately 100, as you heard, approximately half based in Uganda and the rest in four forward operating locations, one in South Sudan, two in Central African Republic and one in the Congo, where they are building collaboratively partnerships with these regional militaries, streamlining the flow of information from the U.S. information gathering efforts directly into the operations on the ground, and providing invaluable advice that can help these militaries improve their efforts to both pursue LRA groups and protect civilians from LRA violence.

But this in itself is not going to succeed and in the very short time frame here before deferring to my colleagues, I just want to highlight a few key areas that I think are in urgent need of attention. First and foremost, the deployment of these advisors has to be complemented with a much more aggressive diplomatic strategy. The Ugandan forces pursuing the LRA have been not allowed access into the Congo where some of the most deadly attacks have been carried out. In 2008 and 2009, in both attacks that were carried out they killed more than 300 civilians in each time, and the violence in Congo has been on the rise.

Even more concerning is the reports, very credible, that Kony himself has received safe haven in areas of South Darfur. And the Administration has made no public gestures, no naming and shaming, no public diplomacy whatsoever to fix these safe haven issues that now occur. And it seems bewildering to me how we could send 100 U.S. military personnel into a theater of operations where a large part of their mandate is to bring to justice LRA commanders who they actually don't have access, the forces that they are advising don't have access into the areas where those commanders are now thought to be hiding.

In addition to the diplomatic piece of it, I think most of the other tools that are needed are on the funding side, and again here Congress has been ahead of the Administration, and I will highlight just a couple of those pieces. In the 2012 Defense Authorization Act, Congress provided an authorization of up to \$35 million to enhance logistics support. The forces now deployed against the LRA don't have any kind of tactical mobility, and conventional forces are at a severe disadvantage in trying to pursue very small, highly mobile disparate groups of LRA across such vast territory. That support, however, that was authorized by Congress has not yet been used by the

Administration. DoD has not taken that authority and actually directed it, implemented it on the ground. So I appreciate that our colleagues from the Pentagon indicated that that authority was helpful, but it would also be helpful if they actually used it.

Similarly, in the State and Foreign Ops bill, Congress has been advocating for increased funds to the nonmilitary aspects of the strategy, which when the President issued his comprehensive LRA strategy in late 2010, we welcomed the degree to which it went to great lengths to demonstrate that you need a multifaceted strategy to combat a rebel group that has evaded the efforts of regional governments for so long, in particular, FM radio broadcasts that can help convince LRA abductees to defect. Very simple technologies like HF radios that can connect communities that are previously in total communication blackout provide valuable early warning information about when they are most at risk of LRA attacks and provide that information back to the military forces that need that information to be pursuing those LRA groups. And again, they have allocated up to \$10 million, and the Administration has indicated it only plans to use \$5 million, which is again a very paltry sum of funds.

And then lastly on the surveillance aspect, there was an authorization to more than double the amount of funds being used to use aerial surveillance tools, which is one of the most important contributions that the United States has made to this effort, to help detect where these LRA groups are moving, figure out where those top commanders are located and direct resources in the appropriate directions. And I think that is an equally essential piece that needs to move forward.

So I would encourage Congress to continue on in these directions, keep pushing the Administration, keep being on the leading edge of this and don't accept the idea that what is happening is enough. The idea that we have time and we just need to let the strategy work, for those who know the region know that you don't have time in these kinds of situations and that if you solve the problem when you have a window of opportunity and the assets arguably are in place in a way now that they never have been before, then geopolitical changes in the region or change of administrations or change in anything could completely close that window of opportunity, and so I would encourage us to continue on as you have advocating for these kinds of steps to be taken. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Poffenberger follows:]

Before beginning my testimony, I want to first thank Representatives McGovern (D-MA) and Wolf (R-VA) for their leadership of the Tom Lantos Congressional Human Rights Commission and for convening this timely discussion. It is also a privilege to sit side-by-side with some of the most dedicated and inspiring peace builders I've encountered in seven years of working on this issue. Fr. Kinalegu's and Sr. Namaika's efforts in areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) are saving lives and bringing new hope to their communities. We all stand to learn much from the enormous sacrifices they have made on behalf of peace.

The past months have witnessed a level of attention to the ongoing crisis caused by LRA atrocities that is unprecedented in the more than 25 years that the crisis has now stretched. In October, President Obama's announcement that the United States was sending approximately 100 military advisers to help bring LRA leader Joseph Kony to justice made front-page news and sparked serious examination of an issue that has never been at the forefront of the public consciousness. This move undoubtedly helped spark renewed

engagement from other actors as well, including the United Nations and African Union, who are due to issue a joint strategy to address the LRA in the coming days.

However, against all reasonable expectation, this peak of attention was dwarfed in March of this year, when the viral spread of the KONY 2012 film exposed the world to the brutality that continues to be the hallmark of the LRA. More than 100 million viewers of the film found themselves questioning how it could be possible that such a small group of people could be allowed to cause such devastation for so long. Two million Americans alone signed a pledge calling on their leaders to do more after viewing the film.

Kony has long benefitted from operating in the shadows. His violence is inflicted on the margins of our world. He targets communities in remote and underdeveloped areas, where mustering a response is both highly challenging and largely unappealing to those with the tools needed to stop him.

In this regard, the spike of attention brought to the dire human rights and humanitarian consequences of LRA activity – while long overdue – is nonetheless most welcome. Congress in particular has been seized of this issue since, and building on the leadership you first showed, Chairman McGovern, in introducing the LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act along with Representative Ed Royce (R-CA), has continued to call for increased resources to help see this situation brought to an end.

But I am deeply concerned at the disconnect between rhetoric and reality on the part of the President and his Administration. Since taking the serious step of deploying military advisers to help apprehend top LRA commanders and protect people from the group's violence, little further progress has been made. No impartial estimate of current efforts could conclude that what is now occurring is likely to solve the problem without additional measures being taken, and yet there seems to be no vision or leadership for doing so at present.

Through the LRA Crisis Tracker, a data monitoring project started by Resolve in partnership with Invisible Children, we recorded 165 separate attacks on civilians carried out by suspected LRA fighters in the first five months of this year. These attacks were carried out in the remote border areas of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan. In the same time period last year, we recorded 157. Though the group may be small in number, they continue to pose a grave threat to civilians. Fear sown by these attacks has forced over 400,000 people in the region into displacement.

Before discussing the gaps in current efforts, I want to first acknowledge what is being done well by the Administration, and the progress that has been made since the adviser deployment in particular. U.S. advisers are helping their counterparts in the region to pursue disparate bands of LRA fighters and protect vulnerable communities. While just over half of the 100 advisers are based in Uganda, where the LRA has not operated since 2006, the rest are deployed to four bases in CAR, DRC, and South Sudan.

In the first seven months of their deployment, the advisers have had a significant impact. They have helped streamline logistical and intelligence support to the Ugandan military forces – now acting under an authorization by the African Union (AU) – that are focused on pursuing senior LRA commanders, largely in southeast CAR. This has led to more intense military pressure on LRA groups and enabled more LRA combatants there to escape. The advisers have established operations and intelligence “fusion centers” in forward operating locations, and have worked with State Department field staff to improve cross-border information-sharing on LRA activity among both military and civilian actors, and to strengthen civilian protection efforts.

In May 2012, Ugandan forces struck the first significant blow to the LRA's senior command structure in over two years by taking Maj. General Caesar Achellam into custody after weeks of tracking him through the forest. Dismantling the LRA's command structure is the key to decisively ending the LRA threat, and Achellam's removal demonstrates that targeted military operations can still be effective as one of several tools needed to do so. Information that Achellam shares will provide Ugandan forces with better insight into the LRA's inner dynamics and strategies, and his departure from the LRA also can be leveraged to encourage the defection of other rebel commanders and combatants.

Yet unless further steps are taken to address shortcomings in existing efforts, Achellam's removal is likely to be a positive outlier in the midst of years of inconclusive military operations instead of an indication that regional efforts are finally turning the tide against the rebel group.

The first and most important step that must be taken is to complement ongoing military efforts with aggressive diplomacy to deny the LRA safe havens. Our latest reports place Kony himself in South Darfur. If these reports are true, Kony is potentially being protected by the Khartoum government, which provided open support for the LRA from the mid-1990's up until at least 2005. Furthermore, due to tensions between the Ugandan and Congolese militaries Ugandan forces are no longer allowed to pursue the LRA in the DRC, creating de facto safe havens in that country as well given the poor track record of the Congolese military.

It would seem unimaginable to send U.S. soldiers on a mission that includes helping bring Kony and other top LRA commanders to justice without a strategy to ensure that the forces they advise can access the areas where those commanders are operating. And yet there is zero indication that the Administration has such a strategy. The President and Secretary of State should be engaging directly with governments in the region and multilateral bodies to address this issue and ensure that the mission can be accomplished.

Additional tools will also be needed if the current efforts are to succeed where past ones have failed. I leave some of the details to my esteemed colleague John Prendergast, but in short, this means dedicating adequate funding to implementing other elements of the President's own LRA strategy, released in November 2010.

This strategy was notable for putting forth a very comprehensive vision for how to address this crisis, utilizing both military and non-military means to end LRA atrocities and close the space in which the group can operate. We applauded this approach, which was missing for many years. But it is only meaningful if it is actually implemented, and so far, the Administration's record in this regard is poor.

It won't take much to have a significant impact, and Members of Congress from both parties have already banded together to make such funds available. In the 2012 budget, Congress allocated funds to address a number of gaps in current efforts, ranging from tactical mobility for military forces to HF radio community early-warning systems to reintegration assistance for people who escape from the LRA. The Administration hasn't taken full advantage of any of those authorizations and allocations. That needs to change.

Congress should also make new funds available to expand aerial surveillance over areas of suspected LRA activity. Regional governments lack the capabilities needed to locate and track LRA groups in such difficult terrain. Timely information about the locations and movements of LRA groups provided by aerial surveillance can help prevent LRA attacks on civilians, enable early warning for civilians at greatest risk, and increase the prospects for bringing Kony and other top LRA commanders to justice. The Senate version of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act calls for an expansion for such efforts; these funds should be included in this year's defense appropriations bill itself to ensure they are actually used.

In the long-term, investments in promoting an end to LRA atrocities and security for communities being targeted by the LRA should be augmented with additional support to reduce the space in which the LRA and other armed groups can operate. This should include expanded funding for road and mobile phone infrastructure, as well as support for economic development and improved local governance institutions in LRA-affected areas. Such efforts can contribute to the effort to defeat the LRA while also addressing the conditions of poverty and marginalization that attract predatory groups such as the LRA to this troubled region in the first place.

Thank you.

Mr. McGOVERN: Well, thank you very much. And we will go to Father Benoit, and I understand you have a translator. So we welcome you here.

STATEMENT OF FATHER BENOIT KINALEGU

[The following testimony was delivered through an interpreter.]

FATHER KINALEGU: I would like to thank and to extend our thanks to U.S. Congress for the effort made since the beginning of this. They have been on our side since the beginning.

Since the beginning of the issue our organization's name, Diocesan Commission for Justice and Peace have always worked in order to promote and explain what the LRA has been doing in the area. The international community and the United States specifically are work together, but I would like to tell you that the atrocity and the action of the LRA in the region continue.

And if I am here today it is to express some recommendation in term of demand. I would like to express to the Congress that if the Congress can press the U.S.

Government in order to push the Congolese Government to recognize the existence of LRA in the Republic Democratic of Congo and also to collaborate with the other governments in the area. Because until now our government has refused to collaborate with other government in the area because of the pride of its own sovereignty. But we people, we are the one who are suffering on the ground.

We are also asking the United States Congress in order to provide a training in order to professionalize the local army and also to train them in the protection of human right. And I do believe that 100 advisors sent in area are capable to do the work. We also would like to ask the United States in order to provide assistance in the building infrastructure of the communication infrastructure and also to create a mobility to create a road, make the road accessible in order for this army to provide assistance in the area.

On the justice side, we know that a warrant arrest has been ordered against Joseph Kony and the higher rank leader. However, some of the commandant or the member of the LRA who have also committed some atrocity have not, their name are not mentioned under this warrant. We will be happy to see these people also respond before the justice is on the atrocity committed.

To finish, I would like to say that more, there is too more and too more we are waiting and eager to see the end to this and to provide peace and justice. On behalf of the population of Congo as I am representing here, I would like to extend my great appreciation to you, and in the meantime to thank you in advance for all the effort that you have done and what you are going to do as well.

[The statement of Father Kinalegu follows:]

My name is Father Benoit Kinalegu, and I am a Congolese priest from Dungu, in the northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo. I am here to testify to the horrors the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

continues to inflict on my community and to discuss steps that must be taken if we are finally to be free from the menace of the LRA.

1. Brief overview of LRA atrocities in Congo

Since the LRA first crossed the borders from Uganda into South Sudan and Congo in 2005, they have committed unspeakable atrocities against civilians in our communities. In one massacre in towns north of Dungeni in September 2008, they murdered 167; in Makombo in a four day rampage in December 2009 they killed 321 and abducted hundreds more;² in Kpanga in February 2009 they murdered 74 mostly elderly and children³ – there are too many atrocities to list. My organization, the Dungeni-Doruma Diocesan Commission for Justice and Peace (CDJP), documented many of them ourselves and helped bring these massacres to international attention. What the numbers cannot convey is the viciousness of the attacks, and the terrible psychological impact they have had on our communities. The LRA do not just kill – they mutilate, rape, pillage, and abduct. They force our children into their ranks and turn them into killers. They use these horrific tactics as a weapon to terrorize, traumatize, and cripple our communities.

The international community, and the United States government in particular, has taken note. Encouraging steps have been taken, including the deployment of U.S. military advisors, which we welcome. But I am here to tell you first-hand that the situation on the ground for our communities remains desperate. The attacks continue and the LRA remains a grave threat, leaving hundreds of thousands displaced and deeply traumatized. The measure of success must be the extent to which civilians can live free from the fear of LRA atrocities, and by that measure much more must be done.

2. Recommendations for the US government

First, we must recognize that the failure to respond to the crisis is in large part a political failure. My government often refuses to cooperate with other regional governments, notably Uganda, and frequently ignores or denies the threat posed by the LRA. Greater cooperation is needed from my own Congolese government to allow the Ugandan army to pursue the LRA in the DRC. U.S. officials have repeatedly encouraged the Congolese government to cooperate with Uganda and other regional governments, but they have not been successful. Consequently, I call on President Obama and Secretary Clinton to personally call President Kabila and urge him to make regional cooperation to stop the LRA a priority.

Second, and in a related point, the U.S. government should support the urgent implementation of the African Union regional initiative, and put pressure on the AU to prioritize civilian protection. The AU initiative has not yet brought any significant changes to Congo because it has not been implemented. Troop numbers remain the same on the ground and there are no AU commanders in DRC. The AU is not fulfilling its intended role to coordinate, facilitate, and mediate between regional governments. Most importantly, it has not developed and implemented a strategy to protect civilians. It will need the full support of the international community if it is to succeed in these difficult tasks. The US government should urge the AU to quickly implement the regional initiative and ensure that the initiative prioritizes protecting civilians as well as capturing top LRA commanders.

Third, communications and road infrastructure must be improved, including in particular cellular telephone infrastructure. Simple communications devices are extremely effective tools for our communities to warn each other of LRA attacks and take steps to protect ourselves. The United States government has funded a series of infrastructure projects for which we are very grateful. Specifically, it has funded a high frequency radio network in Congo that is already having a real impact on the ground, and USAID has plans to fund cellular towers that will further empower communities to protect themselves. USAID is also funding key secondary roads, such as the one from Ngilima to Bayote that will enable military protection of populations that are completely vulnerable today. The US government should urgently increase its funding of such projects and ensure that planned projects are expedited.

² <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/03/28/dr-congo-lord-s-resistance-army-rampage-kills-321>

³ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/05/20/dr-congo-new-round-lra-killing-campaign>

Fourth, armies pursuing the LRA must be professionalized. I call on the United States government to expand its bilateral and multilateral support to improve the capacities of regional armies to protect our communities and pursue the LRA. I have observed that the US trained FARDC battalion in Dungu has had a real impact on the ground – it is an example to replicate. Soldiers must receive their pay and have adequate food, equipment, transport, and means of communication so that their priority remains tracking the LRA and protecting civilians rather than ensuring their own survival by exploiting our communities.

Fifth, all soldiers operating in LRA-affected areas must be trained in human rights and civilian protection. The United States is in a position to provide this training through its advisers on the ground. Untrained regional troops are too often perpetrators of human rights violations themselves, and risk doing more harm than good. Any human rights abuses by armies must be thoroughly investigated and abusers held to account.

Sixth, there must be justice for those most responsible for LRA atrocities. The arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Joseph Kony and the most senior LRA commanders must be acted upon. In addition, there must be some form of accountability for high-level commanders most responsible for atrocities but not indicted by the ICC. Amnesty for rank-and-file LRA is essential to encouraging defections, but senior commanders responsible for so much suffering must face fair and impartial justice. Finally, as my friend Sister Angelique has illustrated, the international community must invest in and support local civil society with training, infrastructure, and equipment so we can rehabilitate members of communities through psychosocial assistance, education, and socioeconomic assistance. Investing in support to civil society organizations in our community is an investment in a sustainable and lasting peace.

Mr. McGOVERN: Well, thank you very much, Father, and thank you for your very important testimony. It is very, very helpful to us and we appreciate very much you being here.

Sister Angelique, welcome.

STATEMENT OF SISTER ANGELIQUE NAMAIIKA

[The following testimony was delivered through an interpreter.]

SISTER NAMAIIKA: My name is Sister Angelique Namaika. I am the coordinator of the organization called Mama Bongisa, which is a Center for Reintegration and Development of those who suffer from the LRA. I am here to share before this panel the kind of work that I have done in order to support women and children victim of the atrocity committed by the LRA and Kony. Before my statement, I would like thank you first for all these international organization who have been instrumental in intervening at the first of the beginning of the issue of providing assistance to women and children.

My testimony will be divided in three main points. The first point is about how the atrocity committed by the LRA have affected the population, and also the deep sentiment that those women and children have for the kind of training that I provided after they get out of the turmoil by the LRA. And thirdly, I would like to share with you the work that I have done and continue to do with the women and children as well as the difficulties encountered during this work.

The population of Dungu have a serious idea and they have in their mind what they have been through and it is difficult for them to forget those atrocity which are on the different ways related to the killing, the kidnaping, the mutilation and the burning of

housing. And based on this, this population has decided to stay in the displaced camp and refuse to return back to their original village until they heard or they have seen the end to the atrocity or the killing or capture of Joseph Kony.

About women's victim, they have this sentiment of joy. I would like to share with you the example of this young lady who is about 14 years old, who has been abducted by the LRA, spent about three years with the LRA and who get out of the LRA region with a six-month baby in her hands. The mother who is affected with the STD, and the child who is completely malnourished. I personally most of the time take this young lady and the child to the hospital in order to receive medical attention. I also help her in order to bake bread and sell in order to create being self sufficient. With this training that she receives she is actually happy and she is able to take care of her child by herself.

My personal comment about this work is very positive because I am very, very happy of the work that I have done. Because those women victims of the LRA, they trust me in what I do, and every time there are other women who join the group in order to receive the training. But these are my capacity. The limited financing capacity that I have, I cannot go further in my work, the reason why I have difficulties to complete perfectly my job. Based on the fact that we are working on the sites, which is that the displaced people live in it, there is a lack of specific structure. For example, there is a lack of structure to provide literacy, also center for orphans, like orphanage, and there is also a lack of material to help women to do a kind of sewing work.

And finally, it is very important to reintegrate those women and children victim of the LRA into the society by providing education, training and also to provide the psychological help and medical help as well. That is what I do in order to provide my assistance with this conflict with the LRA in the area. Thank you.

[The statement of Sister Namaika follows:]

I would like to focus on three main points:

1. How the LRA conflict affects the population of Dungu, DRC
2. Reintegration: Feelings of children and women during and after reintegration
3. Personal impressions of working with the survivors and the problems encountered.

1. How the LRA conflict affects the population of Dungu

Dungu is a small town in North-Eastern Congo not far from South Sudan and the Central African Republic. The population of Dungu has suffered terrible experiences which it will not forget during the LRA conflict – mass killings, abductions, mutilations, rapes, and the destruction of homes, churches, schools and clinics. Children and adults alike will bear the scars of the violence caused by the LRA all of their lives. Because of their trauma, the refugees and child survivors refuse to go back home as long as Joseph Kony is out in the bush and as long as the war is not over. They prefer to die of hunger than to return to their homes and die in the LRA war.

2. Reintegration: Feelings of children and women during and after reintegration

I am the Coordinator of Mama Bongisa Center for Reintegration & Development (CRAD), in Dungu, Democratic Republic of Congo. I came to Dungu in 2003 as part of my mission as a catholic nun, and assisted some of the first women displaced by the LRA and young girls who escaped the LRA in the area. Through Mama Bongisa, I promote reintegration and reconciliation by encouraging communities to welcome the return of escapees. I also provide a wide range of vocational training programs and income-generation activities to promote the economic and social reintegration of abductees. For example, I run four centres that provide sewing and cutting courses to four hundred women. I also oversee a micro-credit program that helps graduates of the vocational training courses start small businesses, and run basic literacy classes in Lingala. There is significant demand for the trainings – many people in the community seek them out and we have had some great successes in reintegrating deeply traumatized former abductees into the community despite the enormous challenges.

For example, I worked with one 14-year old girl who was abducted by the LRA. She had contracted sexually transmitted diseases and had a child after being raped by the LRA. As a result, her family would not accept her into the home because of her illegitimate child. She was trying to support herself by selling goods in the street but was making no profit. Her child was malnourished. When I first spoke to her, she was so desperate that she said even being a captive in the LRA was not this bad. I took them both to the hospital for medical treatment, and provided them with food. I then enrolled her in vocational training courses at Mama Bongisa, where she learned how to bake and how to sew. She now supports herself and her child by selling bread and selling clothes she makes using one of our organization's sewing machines. She is grateful for the help but she still faces many challenges reintegrating – for example, her mother rejects the baby as it was a product of the LRA. She always leaves her baby with me when she goes out of the house because she doesn't trust the baby with her mother. She has introduced me to other child victims so that I can help them, but we have very few resources to assist people to rebuild their lives.

Most of the women in Dungu displaced by the LRA violence are rural and illiterate. Many are from rural areas and were forced to marry and have children very early. As a result, they didn't have the opportunity to go to school. Some of the LRA escapees living in Dungu do not speak the local language, Lingala, which makes it difficult for them to integrate. Thanks to the literacy courses that I provide, these women and girls have learned how to read and write. Thanks to the courses, their interest in education has been kindled. Now they want their training to go beyond literacy. They want a school to be opened to enable them to obtain minimum levels of education and to secure a state diploma.

It is always these women and child survivors who push me to start activities to meet the needs in the community. Even though we do not have enough resources, we do everything we can to relieve them of their trauma and share the burden of their suffering.

3. Personal impressions from working with LRA survivors

In 2008, prior to the arrival of international humanitarian NGOs, I began to help those men, women and children displaced by the LRA, by reintegrating them into society. After this initial experience, I became, for many victims, a person that they would come to for support and I served as an intermediary between them and the humanitarian NGOs.

As a result, LRA survivors now place great trust in me. Many LRA survivors have family disputes after escaping from the LRA. I visit many of them in remote, vulnerable villages far from Dungu. They are apart from relatives and without any material possessions. I am able to listen to their problems and provide them with psychosocial counselling and relief. Their families trust me and know that they are in good hands when I mediate between them to resolve conflicts.

I have also worked on developing emergency relief projects to protect women and children, and received training from international NGOs to provide psychosocial support to women and girl survivors of sexual violence.

4. Problems Encountered in Working with LRA survivors

As I mentioned earlier we provide literacy and sewing courses to LRA survivors. It is an extremely challenging environment as we work in a refugee camp. There is no infrastructure such as tables, chairs, blackboards, or notebooks. We sit down on the ground under the trees to learn how to read and write and sew. I have only 27 sewing machines for the sewing and cutting courses for four hundred women. Yet in spite of the lack of resources and the poor conditions in which we learn, the women continue to come to the courses. There is a great demand.

I also try to take care of children whose parents have been killed by the LRA. There is no formal orphanage in Dungu, and I try to link families with orphans to take care of them, and even take some in myself, but there is only so much we can do without more resources. We are in great need of an orphanage but there is no accommodation, no food suitable for babies, no medical care or clothing, and no money to hire people. I often find myself working alone as most people cannot afford to volunteer because they don't have any source of income.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, my community remains deeply scarred by LRA attacks. Reintegrating those abducted by the LRA into society is extremely important and providing basic education, training and psycho-social counselling to those affected by the LRA is vital. There are many success stories to prove the value of these efforts. However, resourcing for these activities remains woefully low. Unless we successfully heal the wounds of LRA victims, we will never be able to truly defeat the LRA.

Mr. McGOVERN: Thank you. Thank you very much for being here and thank you for your very important testimony. We are very grateful. Last but not least, John Prendergast with the Enough Project.

STATEMENT OF JOHN PRENDERGAST

Mr. PRENDERGAST: Thanks, Chairman McGovern and Congressman Duncan, for showing up and having this commission keep the spotlight on this issue with all of the other issues that we have got out there.

I want to begin my testimony with a hypothetical question. What if all the efforts to bring Osama bin Laden to justice since 9/11 had been concentrated only on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border? What if the U.S. had a reasonable idea of where he was, but instead had focused all of our operations over a hundred miles away from Abbottabad? With that admonition in mind and recalling what my colleague, Michael Poffenberger's comments were about access, I would like to call the commission's attention to this map and the infograph we prepared at the Enough Project, the pink and green map.

[Chart]

Mr. PRENDERGAST: As you can see, the shaded areas, the pink areas, are the LRA's zones of operations as far as we can tell throughout the four countries that the LRA, after leaving northern Uganda, where they are operating and where they have access to or where they have been over the last two years. All told, those areas roughly equal the size of the state of Arizona. Now Greg Pollock from the Defense Department said it was the state of California, so it is somewhere in between those two. Then the hard line that is in this map is the area inside which the Ugandan army operates and has

access to right now. That area is about the size of West Virginia. The Ugandans are the only army at this juncture that are carrying out any kind of offensive operations and sustained operations against the LRA, and they have 900 troops. So that would be an Arizona or California with only a few paved roads and a thick forest cover, and of course the soldiers would have almost no air transport, and be poorly, poorly provisioned. And they are not even allowed into the Congo now, as we heard from the last panel, and they are not allowed access into the far parts of northeastern Central African Republic, the top pink areas, which is where we think Kony is right now.

Now if this military operation is not significantly enhanced then the mission is going to fail. Kony is going to continue to forcibly conscript kids with impunity and reprisal attacks by the LRA will no doubt increase, thus actually further enhancing the vulnerability of civilians to attack in this area. In other words, all this effort if not altered and improved could actually make matters worse for the people of Central Africa if the mission isn't enhanced.

Now Congressmen, this is a winnable war. So I wanted to give five specific things that I think if we step up to the plate now, not just the United States but globally, because the Africans, of course, have put the troops on the front lines, the Europeans have provided some assistance, we need to get everyone to provide a little bit more, these are the five things that I think the United States can do to improve the chances of a successful mission, to put us in the position to even have the chance of success here. First, we have got to deal with this access issue. We are not talking about the access issue that Assistant Administrator Earl Gast was talking about. He was talking about humanitarian access. That is a whole different can of worms. We are talking about the access for the Ugandan troops to actually get into those areas which are red zoned right now. We can't of course get into the areas of Darfur that LRA has allegedly gone in and out of. The Central African Republic has actually told the Ugandans they have to pull back from the northeastern parts of Central African Republic, and they can't get in to Congo. So there are lots of areas that are now red zoned, and the LRA can operate with total impunity.

Now the U.S. is the only country in the world outside of the region that actually has put boots on the ground, and for that they have to be greatly commended. That gives us some credibility in the region and around the world because we are putting our personnel on the line. And so we have got to utilize, I think, higher level diplomacy to go at Kabila and some of the other leaders in the region to ensure that access for troops that are actually searching for Kony and the leadership of the LRA can have that access.

Second, I think better intelligence is needed and needs to be shared. I wanted to give one illustration. There was some recent LRA attacks in the Garamba National Park which is down there, the lowest, the southeasternmost green area on the map. My colleague who works in the region was in visiting with a senior United Nations official. The U.N. official said he had no idea if it was the LRA, if maybe it was the FDLR, maybe it was even South Sudan troops that had committed these attacks. Now if that level of personnel in the international system has no idea who is doing what to whom, we

have got a serious problem. We need to deploy the right amount of ground and air assets to figure out who is who and where they are. Now the best case scenario, off the books, is that if the intelligence that is currently being collected, and we saw those incredible investigative research done by the Washington Post the last few days, if that intelligence is going to be put to use in some specific mission for which all the appropriate assets are going to be put into place, fantastic. We don't have that information, but if that is the case it short circuits all of this stuff. But in the meantime, what we got is all these African troops on the ground in this effort and we have got to have the intel to support them.

Third, I think we have a troop problem. The 900 forces for an area the size of Arizona or California isn't going to cut it for the search and seizure for Kony and the top leaders, neither do we have sufficient support to protect civilians in this much bigger area than the Ugandan People's Defense Force has access to, so we need more of a contribution from the regional governments to civilian protection, and then the appropriate support provision for those folks to protect civilians. And then we need more special forces to conduct the kind of commando operations that will be the only ones unless there is this secret mission being planned, that will be the only ones that will be able to undertake the kind of an attack that is necessary to be able to capture Kony and the other leaders.

Fourth, once the LRA leaders' whereabouts are established and the right troops can be deployed, let us say we have the right troops and they are ready to go, it all becomes moot if there is inadequate transport to the targeted areas. And Michael covered that in his testimony in the sense that we have got to get that money spent quickly so that helicopter support can transport the African troops to the zones when there is a hot lead if we actually know where Kony or one of the leaders are.

Fifth and finally, nonmilitary aspect of a successful campaign are equally important, as Sister Angelique just spoke about. We need a more effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program. We know, we have done these kind of things all over the world. There is no money left. There is no way to entice LRA in the bush to actually come out right now. So that is a really important additional element that needs to be put into place.

In conclusion, the bin Laden mission was ultimately successful because the right assets were collected and aimed at the right location, the right target. The international geopolitical environment and investment is understandably much lower for the Kony mission. But for millions of families on the front lines of the LRA's depredations the stakes are just as urgent. And for U.S. troops that have been deployed out there with bipartisan support, we have simply not yet given them the means to succeed.

I would like to conclude with a thought about political will, and it builds on your opening comment, Congressman McGovern. Usually there is really little to no constituency support for any kind of effort abroad that appears not to be in our core national security interest, but as you pointed out this is different. There is a constituency

of primarily young people all throughout the United States that wants this Congress and this President to do what it takes to end this. And in a contentious and distracting political season, what an incredible gift to successful anti-LRA mission would be, would make for young, first-time voters, just as you said, whose belief in our ability to do good in the world would be validated, and what much bigger gift too to families all over Central Africa who would no longer have to worry about their children being kidnaped by a group that should have been eliminated a long time ago. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Prendergast follows:]

U.S. efforts to end the Lord's Resistance Army, or LRA, are in jeopardy because of a major disconnect between the areas that the LRA is hiding and the areas to which the Ugandan army, the only force willing to undertake operations against LRA units, has access. Other shortcomings in the mission also put its potential success at risk.

The administration has taken some steps to fulfill a core objective of the *LRA Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act*, in particular "to successfully protect civilians and eliminate the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army." However, the deployment of U.S. military advisors to assist national militaries in ending the LRA must be combined with additional "political, economic, military, and intelligence support," as called for in the Act. Five major obstacles facing regional and international efforts to bring an end to the LRA crisis need to be addressed, if U.S. initiatives are to succeed in bringing about the apprehension of LRA senior leaders, the protection of civilians, and the defections of LRA combatants. In particular, the administration should use the authority and appropriations provided by Congress in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 and the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Act of 2012.

ACCESS

The most critical obstacle to apprehending the LRA senior commanders and protecting civilians is that the only army pursuing the LRA is not able to access all of the areas where the group is believed to be currently or could move to. Of the loose regional coalition of national militaries fighting the LRA, the Ugandan army is the most capable army and the only one conducting offensive operations against the LRA. Its inability to access all current and likely areas of LRA operation has resulted in the formation of safe havens for the LRA and could lead to the development of additional refugees.

The first safe haven is the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the Congolese government ordered the Ugandan People's Defense Force, or UPDF, to halt its counter-LRA operations in September 2011. The Congolese government said that this was needed because of the then-upcoming November 2011 elections in Congo. However, the situation has persisted. The UPDF is unable to access parts of the Central African Republic, or CAR, as well. In the Summer of 2010, CAR President François Bozizé asked the UPDF to withdraw from its base in a key area in northeastern CAR, Sam Ouandja. According to recent field research conducted by the Enough Project, the UPDF is still unable to operate there and was ordered by local authorities to leave another critical town in CAR, Zemio in the southeast. Recent intelligence and allegations suggest that one or more LRA groups, including Joseph Kony, have returned to the Darfur region of Sudan. If this is true or if the LRA later moves to Sudan, this would effectively create another area off limits to the UPDF, given the tense relationship between the Ugandan and Sudanese governments. Lastly, in the very likely case that the LRA moves (or has already moved) into the northwestern corner of South Sudan where the borders of South Sudan, Sudan, and CAR meet, it is possible that the Ugandan army will not be able to deploy there as well, given that the South Sudanese government reportedly does not allow the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in that area. In order to effectively conduct military operations against the LRA, the Ugandan army must have full access to areas where the LRA is or is likely to move to.

Second, there is not a sufficient number of capable and committed troops deployed in LRA-affected areas to effectively apprehend the top commanders and protect civilians. The LRA operates in a vast area the size of Arizona that lacks roads and airstrips and is dense jungle terrain. However, the forces currently deployed number approximately 1,700 – hardly enough to carry out both offensive operations to apprehend LRA senior commanders as well as operations to protect civilians and gather on-the-ground information about the LRA throughout that area. Moreover, only approximately 900 are UPDF troops, and Uganda has deployed its most capable forces to Somalia for the African Union mission there. To succeed, the operations against the LRA must have more capable and committed troops. A related problem is that a clear strategy does not appear to be in place for protecting LRA abductees who are likely to be on the front lines during the military operations and protecting civilians from reprisal attacks by the LRA.

INTELLIGENCE

Third, the U.S. military advisors, national militaries, and United Nations peacekeeping missions lack the intelligence capabilities required to obtain reliable information in real-time about the LRA's whereabouts and activity. Two recent examples illustrate this clearly. In late April 2012, it became apparent that the U.S. and the national militaries did not know where Kony was. While the U.S. placed him somewhere north of Djema in CAR, the Ugandan commander leading the UPDF forces pursuing the LRA reportedly asserted he was in Djema, a UPDF spokesman said he was moving into Sudan, and the chief of the Ugandan army placed Kony in South Sudan. And last week, after it was reported that the LRA had attacked park guards in Congo's Garamba National Park, a top official with the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Congo, or MONUSCO, told my Enough colleague that the attack was not the LRA but a Rwandan militia or the South Sudanese army. What is clear is that the military operations cannot achieve their objectives without enhanced intelligence capabilities, including more surveillance aircraft, additional night flights, and human intelligence provided by local communities.

TRANSPORT

Fourth, the national militaries lack transportation capabilities, such as helicopters, to rapidly respond to real-time intelligence. The dense jungle terrain and lack of passable roads make it even more critical that the militaries have sufficient helicopters and other transport. Without these, the national militaries are unlikely to be able to react rapidly to the LRA's movements in order to apprehend the leadership and protect communities. Improvements in the area's road and airstrip infrastructure would go a long way toward improving access for the military operations, humanitarian assistance, and promptly returning combatants who have escaped from the LRA.

DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION

Finally, initiatives to encourage LRA commanders and fighters to leave the group lack sufficient resources and commitment. In large areas of Congo and CAR, there are no FM radio stations broadcasting "come home" messages to LRA combatants and no places for them to surrender. The recent dissolution of Uganda's Amnesty Act, which previously enabled LRA fighters who renounce rebellion to return home, and the trial of a mid-level LRA commander, Thomas Kwoyelo, are discouraging current LRA from escaping. Furthermore, targeted efforts to reach out to commanders encouraging them to defect do not appear to be underway. Military operations to protect civilians and apprehend the LRA's senior commanders must be coupled with robust initiatives to get LRA commanders and rank-and-file fighters to defect.

To ensure that the U.S. military advisors and the military operations against the LRA can succeed, the Obama administration, working with the AU and UN, should urgently:

- 1) Broker agreements between Kampala and Kinshasa, Bangui, Khartoum, and Juba to secure full

access for the Ugandan army to all areas where the LRA is or could become present. Ensure accountability for any human rights violations or natural resource exploitation committed.

- 2) Secure a sufficient number of capable and committed troops under the AU umbrella, including highly trained special forces to apprehend the leadership and additional troops to protect civilians and gather on-the-ground information. Develop and implement a clear civilian protection strategy, particularly for protecting LRA abductees during military operations and protecting communities from reprisal attacks by the LRA.
- 3) Provide enhanced intelligence capabilities to ensure that the U.S. military advisors, the national militaries, and the U.N. peacekeeping missions have reliable, real-time information about the locations and activity of the LRA.
- 4) Provide additional transportation assets, including helicopters, to enable the national militaries to respond rapidly to intelligence leads using the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012 authorization, and improve vital roads and airstrips using the State and Foreign Operations Appropriation Act of 2012 appropriation.
- 5) Maximize efforts to promote defections by expanding the coverage and programming of existing FM radio stations and supporting new stations, establishing additional locations for LRA to safely surrender, and engaging with the Ugandan government and other partners to reinstate amnesty in Uganda and reach out to LRA commanders.

Mr. McGOVERN: Well, thank you all very much for your testimony. I appreciate it very much. And Mr. Poffenberger and Mr. Prendergast, if I were to kind of summarize your testimonies, it is kind of like a kick in the pants to the Administration that they need to step it up. And it is a little bit frustrating to know that some of the issues are not about what they are authorized to do or what there is money to do, I mean it is whether or not they haven't used their authorization, they haven't spent all the money that is available to them right now. And so I mean one of the things that we need to maybe figure out here as a commission is how maybe working with all of you we can kind of come up with a list of specifics that they can do right now, I mean without Congress having to act and pass anything else. I mean there are things they can do right now.

But I guess my question for both of you is, how do we get all the governments in the region to allow military operations in their territory? I mean I understand the issues of sovereignty and people getting nervous and all that kind of stuff, but I mean I guess, how do we resolve that? How do we get everybody together reading off the same sheet of music here?

Mr. POFFENBERGER: I can add a couple thoughts. I am sure John will have more to say. The benefit with the situation of the LRA, with the possible exception of the government of Khartoum, is that historically and at present they don't have friends in the region and nobody stands to gain anything significant by allowing them to continue these kinds of atrocities. I think that the Administration demonstrated real hands-on leadership in how they have managed things internally to get that advisor operation out the door and to keep following this issue closely, but they haven't shown that kind of leadership within the region itself. I don't think it would have to take all that much to do so. We have been calling very specifically for the President and Secretary of State to be engaging directly

with regional heads of state. We have no indication that they have yet done so. Or even to convene a meeting at the upcoming U.N. General Assembly with those heads of state and show that the U.S. is serious about this problem set and that it means a lot to us that they collaborate to address it, and I think that would make an enormous difference.

Mr. PRENDERGAST: The only footnote to that excellent beginning is, is that I think we can do it unilaterally and we can do it multilaterally. And I think going to France and to China, particularly, and going to the United Nations Secretary General and the African Union, the key countries in the African Union, and making joint representations to the governments, to the heads of state in CAR and Congo and Sudan to allow that access, I think that increases the odds dramatically over simply a unilateral effort, one-time effort from a call from one of our leading officials in our government. So I think doing the two-track, the unilateral and the multilateral, gives us the best chance of success.

Mr. McGOVERN: Before we go any further, I just want to acknowledge that Congressman Frank Wolf from Virginia is here.

I don't know, Frank, whether you had any –

Mr. WOLF: I wanted to thank you for having the hearing -- we just got out of a markup on approps -- and thank all the witnesses. All my staff has been here, they will tell me what you said. But I appreciate it and I want to thank you again, Jim, for having the hearing.

Mr. McGOVERN: Mr. Duncan, do you want to –

Mr. DUNCAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am interested in the radios that you mentioned earlier. And I watched some of the videos that are online on the YouTube, setting up the radios. And one thing that struck me when I was watching that is how the LRA would react going into a village where these radio towers, they are constructing these things high enough to get a signal, and so is that not a beacon for attacks, has that been? And that is just something that struck me when I first saw that.

Mr. POFFENBERGER: Well, I would say that the communities themselves are aware of that risk. There is to my knowledge only one case of somebody who operated one of the HF radios having been attacked, and we don't know whether they were attacked because they were an HF radio or they just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. And certainly there is the risk that the LRA could retaliate against communities that are sharing information about their activities. I want to defer that question actually to Father Benoit who runs the early warning radio network in northeastern Congo and can provide a much better answer to that problem. I would say too though that the benefits that these radios can bring are enormous. It is a very low-tech, low-cost intervention that equips these communities with information that is lifesaving at times.

There was an attack in December of 2009, just to illustrate the remoteness of the region that we are talking about, where the LRA went village to village over four days and killed over 350 people. And if those villages at that time had been outfitted with this kind of simple technology they could have provided early warning to each other, but more than that they could have informed security forces in the region that this is what was happening. And instead, it took more than three months for news of that attack of 350 people being massacred to reach any kind of outside audiences or be confirmed in any way through a Human Rights Watch report. And that is the kind of challenges we are up against.

And I want to turn that question to Father Kinalegu.

FATHER KINALEGU: The radio FM center in the order of the project early intervention which I am the initiator. This is the kind of technology that existed before within the missionary services that have been in my country in the past. I would like to reshipe this project in the area based on the fact that many population and family have been dispersed. Because we usually heard about the attack after several days, two weeks or three, the original idea were to install these antenna in all the area, the village, in order to share the information about the attack that is going on in the area which will allow the neighbor village to be prepared when an attack happen in the village next to it. And for we, does allow us in order to alert the local and international community.

And that is why we have put this project in place with the assistance of our partner with, and also our partner of the human right. And today, I can tell you today that if an incident happen the information is dispersed very, very quickly and efficiently. Today, if an incident happen in a very remote village this information can come to the United States the same day. Thank you.

Mr. DUNCAN: Mr. Prendergast, you mentioned that the United States is the only country that has boots on the ground.

Mr. PRENDERGAST: Outside of the African region, yes.

Mr. DUNCAN: And it raised a question with me, why? Why haven't any other countries -- this is a global awareness campaign that has gone on the internet and it has been amazing. I was in a Sonic drive-thru the other day and there was a Kony sticker on something and like in a very rural town in South Carolina. This is a global awareness campaign and so I ask the question, why aren't any other countries stepping up?

Mr. PRENDERGAST: I think it is a geopolitical issue, and that is that we have had two just brutal wars, international wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq over the last decade. And I think the amount of treasure and personnel that nations around the world have committed to those things and the political issues that all of them are facing, most of the troop-contributing countries have very serious economic problems right now internally. It is very difficult to even contemplate the idea of -- it was an incredibly courageous, I think, move for the President to send even a hundred advisors to Africa, and he only

could do it because there is total bipartisan support for the effort to try to bring the LRA to an end. And the Congress, because of your efforts, so much of Congress' efforts over the last decade has solidified that. There isn't that kind of a popular constituency in some of these other countries. We can make the representations and ask for specific support for an enhanced mission if we are willing to do that, taking sort of the diplomatic efforts a step upward. And that is why, Michael slipped it in there and I think we want to highlight what he said, we are calling on the Administration to call for a meeting at the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September of all the nation states, just like President Obama did in 2010 for the South Sudan issue, and was very catalytic in getting everyone, and particularly these Chinese, focused on the need for the referendum in South Sudan to occur on time and peacefully. I think the same kind of effort could be expended to get other nations to participate in this kind of an effort.

Mr. McGOVERN: Yield for a second?

Mr. DUNCAN: Yes, sure.

Mr. McGOVERN: Building on his question, it doesn't have to be military advisors. Sister Angelique talked about the reintegration efforts and stuff like that. Sometimes it is financial assistance. Sometimes it is equipment. And I guess the question is, are we asking? And maybe the way you do it is at this General Assembly meeting at the U.N. when everybody is together, but to make this a center of attention, maybe that is something we could urge the Administration to do. Because look, I think all of us are supportive because we believe that by helping the people of the region go after Joseph Kony and dismantle the LRA, their lives improve, the world is a better place. We don't want to do this just for therapy, and doing it in a halfhearted way where we are doing something but we are not doing nearly enough. What we need to figure out is how we do enough. And I think the gentleman is correct, the world is aware of this in a way they weren't a year ago, and how do we build upon that energy and that support to get some other nations to contribute in a way that there is enough support? Again, it is not only military advisors, there is a whole bunch of other stuff here that is important as well. Surely there must be some way to get more support internationally. But I thank the gentleman.

Mr. DUNCAN: Yes, and I was just sitting here thinking, there is expertise in rainforest or jungle warfare and expertise in combating a lot of the elements that you find in this region.

So I will just end with telling the Sister and the Father there: *Merci beaucoup pour votre disposition et votre courage. Merci.*

Mr. McGOVERN: I took four years of Latin, so if a Roman gladiator walks in here I can translate, but that is about all I can do.

Mr. DUNCAN: And I speak with a Southern accent, so there you have it. I yield back.

Mr. WOLF: Mr. Chairman?

Mr. McGOVERN: Yes.

Mr. WOLF: Thank you. Do we believe, you believe that the Sudanese army, Khartoum, the Khartoum government, knows where Kony is? Do you think they know where he is at this moment?

Mr. PRENDERGAST: I don't think on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. WOLF: Does he check in with them periodically?

Mr. PRENDERGAST: That is what I do not think happens. I do think though there has been, and I would love to hear Michael as well on this, and our colleagues from the region. I do think there has been resupply at times. That the LRA units have crossed the border, we are not sure if Kony was ever part of that, doesn't have to be. He is safe where he is now in far northeast CAR. I mean there is no one even around there to look for him. Units cross over, allegation is they have been resupplied and come back. So the assertion is, and as the prior panel from the USG said, we don't have any smoking gun evidence about it, but we have a lot of anecdotal evidence and a lot of eyewitness testimony from Sudanese in Darfur and folks in CAR on the other side of the border saying we saw this, we saw that. So I don't think in direct answer to your question that they would know at the highest level where he is at any given time, but I do think there has been a level of support given to the LRA that has been sufficient to keep it alive.

And what I really worry about, and I am sure you share this concern, and you have spoken about it in the past especially around the time of the referendum, is that as the situation potentially deteriorates between Sudan and South Sudan that Khartoum is going to see the LRA as one of its tools to undermine stability in South Sudan and we are going to see another reinflation of the LRA's capacity. So that is what I am most concerned about is that potential threat.

Mr. WOLF: The other question, are we not using satellites now to track him or is there not –

Mr. POFFENBERGER: Yes, the areas where the LRA travels are what the military refers to as Triple Layer Jungle Canopy that the satellite imagery is a very limited utility. So what is being done as was actually profiled recently in the Washington Post are these prop planes with geothermal sensing capabilities. But at present it ranges between only one and two of those planes that are active at any time across an area, as has been mentioned, the size of California, and so the utility of how much ground you can actually cover is quite limited.

Mr. WOLF: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McGOVERN: A few last questions, so thank you for your patience. Sister Angelique, you talked about the reintegration of LRA survivors into their communities. What more can the United States and the international community do to assist in the reintegration, and what would be the most helpful assistance that we could provide you to your reintegration work?

SISTER NAMAIIKA: When I mentioned earlier the emergency assistance, those assistance cover the need for a short period of time. And when this assistance comes to the end, those people, those women still in need. And you can see that instead of taking every day, taking the much that is on their shoulder, go and look for a daily work in order to provide for the family needs with the kind of assistance that we need that will help us in order to help these women in order to be self-dependent. I believe if we can provide a kind of assistance to help these women in bakery, micro-credit and also the community agriculture.

And that is the same thing for the children as well. Those who are at little advanced age could be trained professionally. And for those who have reached the age to go to school, if they can receive the kind of assistance in order for them to pay for their tuition, because they don't have this, all their family as well lack this financial support to pay for the school. And also for the baby and orphans, we also need a structure, building structure, be put in place in order to provide an assistance to the specific children. Thank you.

Mr. McGOVERN: Thank you. Father, you had mentioned the African Union's regional effort in countering the LRA and kind of the, I guess, ineffectiveness right now of that effort. Do you believe that the African governments impacted believe that the LRA is a big problem that needs to be dealt with, and if so, what can the United States do to encourage more effective action by the African Union?

FATHER KINALEGU: As of now we can tell you that the existence of the LRA in this area, the African government do not consider this as a challenge. If you consider the geographical structure of the area covered by the LRA, you can tell that this is completely different from each region, each capital. The reason why, the LRA does not considered a threat to their power. We are surprised to hear that the African Union has taken an initiative to combat the LRA. But now if you look at it we cannot see any proof of the progress made in the area because of the conflict and the fact that the government cannot come into agreement to tackle the problem of the LRA. For some, the LRA does not exist. For other, the LRA does not considered a threat to their government, and for some other, the LRA presence does not affect their country because they are not in their country. And the reason why the United States should push African Union in order to intensify the regional diplomacy among the state, and that is the diverse government in the African Union should acknowledge the LRA issue and that they should consider this at the same level and that they should prioritize this issue. We know now we are not taking maybe this seriously, but this is a huge danger for the humanity.

Mr. McGOVERN: Thank you. Let me just conclude here if I can by thanking everybody for your testimony. Father Benoit and Sister Angelique, thank you so much for being here. It means a great deal to this commission, and your testimony is invaluable. And believe me when I say it is important to be able to get testimony face-to-face than get it sent to us in written form or having you being telecast in here somehow. So we appreciate all the time and effort that you made to get here.

And I think I just would close by saying I want to acknowledge the Administration. In my opinion, I agree with Mr. Prendergast that it deserves credit for beginning this process of taking this issue on, and I applaud the steps that they have taken so far. But clearly the steps so far have not been sufficient and that there is much more that needs to be done. And maybe kind of as follow-ups that two action items that we might consider, one, is trying to get another meeting with the Administration group that is dealing with this issue, and some of us in Congress and some of those in the NGO community, to have a discussion sooner rather than later about kind of here is where we think you should do more, here is where how we think you should allocate some of the resources, and certainly you should utilize all the resources that have been given to try to deal with this effort. So maybe that is something we can do in the next few weeks, and hopefully with your help we can figure out who should be in that room.

The second thing is, I think, that maybe in a bipartisan way we can put together a letter to the President and the Secretary of State saying that at the General Assembly meeting at the United Nations in September that we take a leadership role in bringing in the appropriate governments together to make it a priority and to try to see whether we can get some sort of cooperation so that we can better go after Joseph Kony and the LRA and therefore improve the quality of life for a lot of people whose lives have been made hell by the LRA.

So I think maybe those are the two follow-up assignments that I get from this hearing, and if there is anything else please let me know. But I think those are two action items that we can actually do here. I mean one is a meeting, and then the second is a letter to the Administration on the issue of making this an issue at the General Assembly in the United Nations in September.

So with that -- do you have anything else? I think with that thank you very much for your patience and we appreciate very much your testimony. This hearing --

[Whereupon, at 4:13 p.m., the commission was adjourned.]

Written opening remarks were submitted for the record by Congressman Christopher H. Smith

The public interest in combating the horrors of the Lord's Resistance Army, the terrorist group operating in East Africa's Great Lakes region and its leader Joseph Kony, has continued long after the release of the Invisible Children's Kony 2012 video on YouTube in March of this year.

Congressional offices were flooded with inquiries about Kony and the LRA and what our government intended to do about the threat they pose to vulnerable people in East Africa. The Administration's deployment last October of 100 armed military advisers was hailed as a positive step toward ending the LRA threat, but it unfortunately has not yet brought us closer to ending Kony and the LRA's reign of terror on the people of East Africa. LRA bands are still attacking villages, killing residents, kidnapping others and stealing supplies. The lives of too many young Africans still are being ruined by their unwilling involvement with the LRA.

The LRA killed more than 2,400 people and kidnapped more than 3,400 others between 2008 and 2011 alone. This has included people from not only Uganda where this evil organization was created, but also South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. Now operating in small cells, the LRA is more difficult to find and eliminate than ever before. They hide in dense forests, travel in small groups and don't use radios to contact one another. But what makes apprehending their leaders even more difficult is that the countries in which they operate don't cooperate fully with one another.

U.S. support for building the capacity of the national forces that must deal with Kony and his band of terrorists is the most effective means of ridding the world of this scourge. However, the governments in the region must overcome obstacles to their cooperation. Since the LRA doesn't operate significantly in Uganda, that country's military must be able to work with militaries in other countries, and Uganda's previous involvement in the Congo civil war makes them unwanted by that government at this time.

Meanwhile, Congo has more than 20 armed militia groups operating in the eastern part of the country. The LRA, while a serious problem for the Congolese they attack, amount to a smaller threat for that government than the other armed groups. South Sudan is involved not only in a conflict with the Republic of the Sudan, but also has internal conflicts it has to address. The LRA insurgency is yet another burden on an already overburdened new nation. The Central African Republic, where Kony is believed to make his base currently, simply has too weak a military to successfully counter the LRA threat.

The U.S. effort to help end the LRA threat may seem unsatisfying to those who want quick action and a definitive end to this group, but I believe this is our best option in this situation. Absent more coordinated regional cooperation, that is all this is possible.

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD



**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC)
Hearing**

The Continuing Human Rights Crisis in LRA-Affected Regions

**Tuesday, June 19, 2012
2:30 PM– 4:30 PM
B-318 Rayburn HOB**

Please join the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for a hearing on the continuing human rights crisis in regions of Africa affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

For more than two decades, the LRA has committed brutal attacks against innocent civilians in Central and East Africa that have destabilized the region and involved systematic killing, displacement, kidnapping, mutilation and rape. Joseph Kony, head of the LRA, and his commanders have abducted tens of thousands of children to serve as child soldiers and sex slaves, forcing them to commit terrible acts, including the murder of their own families.

In addition to assessing the continuing atrocities committed by the LRA, this hearing will examine U.S. policy, including the impact of the deployment of the U.S. forces provided to help mitigate and eliminate the threat posed by Joseph Kony and the LRA.

The following witnesses will testify:

Panel I

- The Honorable Donald Yamamoto, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- The Honorable Earl Gast, Assistant Administrator for Africa, U.S. Agency for International Development
- Mr. Gregory Pollock, Director, South and East Africa, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, Department of Defense

Panel II

- Mr. Michael Poffenberger, Co-founder and Executive Director, The Resolve
- Father Benoit Kinalegu, President, Dunga-Doruma Diocesan Commission for Justice and Peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Sister Angelique Namaika, Coordinator, Mama Bongisa, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Mr. John Prendergast, Co-founder, The Enough Project

If you have any questions, please contact the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission at 202-225-3599 or tlhrc@mail.house.gov.

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, TLHRC

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, TLHRC