

Joseph Kony's LRA versus the Ugandan Military: Who are the Real Terrorists?

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David Zarembka, Coordinator of the African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams, has posted an extensive commentary on the real situation on the ground in the region. In his very well informed opinion, the military intervention the Kony 2012 campaign demands would do much more harm than good to those it supposedly seeks to rescue.

Excerpts from his Report

“While the LRA is without doubt a terrorist group, the Ugandan Government and Army have committed atrocities that, in relation to Kony’s rag-tag army, exceed anything that the LRA itself has done. [...] For example, the Ugandan army have forced 1.8 million people in northern Uganda into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps where they had to live off the charity of foreign NGOs. Not only do many people die when they are uprooted from their homes, but IDP camps are never healthy places to live and particularly grow up.

The military solution has been tried almost continually since 1986 when Kony began the LRA. It has not only failed time after time, since he still has not been captured or killed, but with the result of increased suffering among the ordinary people.”

“The [Kony 2012] video focuses solely on Joseph Kony himself. While Kony has been a “bandit” in northern Uganda, and then later in South Sudan, northeastern Congo, and the Central Africa Republic, he is only one of many such outlaws that attack, steal, rape, and destroy average people’s homes and towns in order to survive. Thousands of such men exist in this vast, heavily forested, thinly populated region. The LRA is reported to have only about 200 adult fighters plus 1000 to 2000 child soldiers. It seems that LRA itself has actually split into a number of armed groups. So killing or capturing Kony will have little effect on the lives of people in this region since he is but one of many.

“A group from Northern Uganda showed the video to people in Lira, one of the towns greatly affected by the LRA. [...] However, at the Lira screening, the film produced such outrage, anger and hurt that AYINET has decided that in order not to further harm victims or provoke violent response that it is better to halt any further screenings for now. If the subjects of the video have this extreme negative reaction to the video, then I would conclude that there is something seriously flawed with it.

“The video concludes by recommending the violent solution; sending in the military to capture or kill Kony.

There is little understanding of the implication of this recommendation. The military solution

has been tried almost continually since 1986 when Kony began the LRA. It has not only failed time after time, since he still has not been captured or killed, but with the result of increased suffering among the ordinary people.

“The organization, Invisible Children, also seems suspect. From 2003 to 2005 the Save Darfur Coalition did a similar, but much more thorough campaign about the situation in Darfur. They collected lots of money but all of it went back into promoting the campaign and none of it reached Darfur. Invisible Children has had allegations of improper use of the funds that they raised in the past. [...] It seems that this is another incident where the suffering and problems of Africa are being used for the benefit of an American NGO and its leaders.

Full report in PDF format:

<http://aglifpt.org/kenyareports/report176.pdf>

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