

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We appreciate your Administration's continued efforts to implement the strategy to defeat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as outlined in the bipartisan Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act (P.L. 111-72). We believe it is important that the United States remain committed to working with regional forces to protect civilians until the LRA is defeated once and for all.

As you know, the LRA is led by Joseph Kony, a U.S. designated global terrorist and wanted war criminal. Earlier this year, the State Department, through the Rewards for Justice Program, issued a reward for information leading to his arrest, transfer, or conviction. His rebel group has terrorized civilians for nearly three decades, accounting for the deaths of at least 100,000 people and the displacement of more than 400,000, while undermining broader regional stability.

The presence of U.S. advisors as well as U.S. logistical and intelligence capabilities has led to an improved security environment in the region. With this essential U.S. support, local security forces have captured two senior LRA commanders. In addition, nearly 15 percent of the LRA's fighting force has defected. Interviews with recent defectors suggest the group's morale is at an all time low and that many more fighters are considering defecting. As a result, attacks on civilians by the LRA are steadily declining.

Vigorous diplomacy – chiefly from the newly appointed Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo Russell Feingold – will be critical. However, the continued presence of U.S. Special Forces deployed in the field to advise and assist regional African forces is essential to finishing the job. Simply put, there is no substitute for the expertise of U.S. Special Forces.

Ultimately, within the limits of available resources, the scale and duration of the U.S. advisor deployment and counter-LRA mission should be measured against progress in dismantling the LRA's command structure, permanently degrading its capacity to continue regenerating through integration of abductees, and improving protection of civilians from LRA attacks.

In this respect, we urge you to sustain the current U.S. advise and assist counter-LRA mission. We believe that with U.S. support, local governments can defeat the LRA, a goal which reflects our commitment to work to end atrocities wherever they occur.

For more information or to sign on to this letter, please contact the House Foreign Affairs Committee or the Office of Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA).