

THE ENDANGERED CHILDREN OF NORTHERN UGANDA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN
RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 26, 2006

Serial No. 109-177

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations



Available via the World Wide Web: http://www.house.gov/international_relations

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

27-231PDF

WASHINGTON : 2006

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
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THE ENDANGERED CHILDREN OF NORTHERN UGANDA

WEDNESDAY APRIL 26, 2006,

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 o'clock p.m. in room 2200, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher H. Smith (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SMITH. The hearing will come to order, and welcome, everybody.

Due to the fact that there are four votes pending on the House Floor, both Mr. Payne and I hope to give our opening statements, and then we will recess to vote on the Floor and come right back to resume the meeting. I apologize in advance for that delay.

Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to our hearing.

When current Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni overthrew the murderous regime of the late Milton Obote in Uganda in 1986, many had hoped that their nation would finally emerge from the nightmares of the Obote and Idi Amin regimes. Unfortunately, yet another horror lay ahead for the people of northern Uganda.

Many in the Acholi community were alarmed at the sudden loss of power when Obote was overthrown, and Alice Lakwena formed the Holy Spirit Movement to fight for the Acholi people. Despite her promises that her followers would have immunity from the bullets of the Ugandan army, they were defeated 2 years later, and she fled to Kenya.

Meanwhile, Joseph Kony, believed to be her cousin, took up the battle, forming a group known as the Lord's Resistance Army or the LRA. The LRA is often said to be determined to rule Uganda according to the Bible's 10 Commandments. In reality, this group has a philosophy that blends elements of Christianity, Islam and traditional beliefs into the murderous world view that has terrorized Kony's own people and set back development in the north by years, if not decades.

Over the last 20 years, as many as two million persons—an estimated 90 percent of the population of the Acholi area in northern Uganda—have been forced into internally displaced camps. More than 20,000 children have been forced to serve as either soldiers or sexual slaves for the LRA. Those children who have escaped kidnappings by the LRA are forced into the phenomenon known as “night commuting,” in which an estimated 50,000 children walk

miles from the rural areas to towns in order to find relative safety in bus shelters, churches, or even in the streets.

The impact of this war on Ugandans in the north, as reported by the Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda, is almost unbelievable.

The rates of violent death in northern Uganda are three times higher than those reported in Iraq following the allied invasion in 2003. Each month nearly 3,500 Ugandans die from easily preventable diseases, extreme violence and torture. Each day, 58 children under the age of 5 die as a result of violence and preventable diseases. Three times more children under the age of 5 die in northern Uganda than in the rest of the country.

One quarter of the children in northern Uganda over 10 years of age have lost one or both parents. Half of nearly two million internally displaced persons in northern Uganda are children under the age of 15.

About a quarter of a million children in northern Uganda receive no education at all because of displacement and the fact that 60 percent of the schools in northern Uganda no longer function due to the war.

Because of the war in the north, Uganda has developed a lost generation that has grown up in dire circumstances with fear and deprivation as their constant companions. Nearly half of the children in one town are stunted from malnutrition. They likely will never be able to recover.

There is great concern that the Government of Uganda is insufficiently committed to improving the situation in northern Uganda. On at least two occasions when there appeared to be a chance for peace talks with the LRA—one in 1993 and again in 2004–2005—the Government of Uganda launched offenses that ended any chance of peace and yet failed to end the terrorism of the LRA. More recently, the indictment of top LRA leaders by the International Criminal Court, the ICC, has effectively ended further peace efforts.

Because of its inability to end the LRA threat, in 2003 the United States Government began encouraging local leaders in northern and eastern Uganda to raise civilian militias to help protect civilians. Unfortunately, according to a study done by the Alan Shawn Feinstein International Famine center at Tufts University, these militias were hurriedly recruited, poorly screened, and incompletely trained. Furthermore, known criminals are part of these militias, which also contain boys and girls less than 18 years of age.

The Feinstein Center study also reports that there is a widespread perception among individuals and organizations in northern Uganda that the government has malevolent reasons for not ending the war with the LRA. They include revenge against northerners for human rights abuses under previous governments and neutralization of political challenges from the north.

In Uganda elections held earlier this year, Presidential candidate opponent, Mr. Bessigye, won 80 percent of the vote in northern Uganda—a testimony to the government's unpopularity in the north.

I would note parenthetically during a recent trip to Uganda, both my staff and I met with Mr. Bessigye and President Museveni, and raised these issues with both of those men.

Whatever the truth about the Government of Uganda's war effort, it is certainly a fact that not enough is being done to safeguard the endangered children of northern Uganda. With all the attention given to the genocide in Darfur, and certainly all of that is needed, a similar crisis in northern Uganda has been eclipsed in both attention and resources.

Just as we have a moral obligation to rescue the suffering people of Darfur, we have a similar obligation not to ignore the terrorized population of northern Uganda. If the eyes and ears of the world are focused elsewhere, we must redirect them to Uganda's distressed northern population—especially the children. Uganda's future may depend on our efforts.

Regrettably, the phenomenon of child soldiers is not one confined to Uganda or to Africa. It is a global tragedy in which an estimated 300,000 children are involved in as many as 30 conflicts around the world. As in Uganda, children are used by governments or government-supported militias and rebel forces such as the LRA. Utilized for combat, spying, and clearing minefields, these children are often killed or maimed. Even those who escape often find it difficult to reintegrate back into society. They desperately need our help.

To that end, I and some of my colleagues in the House and Senate are planning to shortly introduce legislation to address the issue of child soldiers. This legislation condemns the conscription, forced recruitment, or use of children by governments or paramilitaries in hostilities and urges the U.S. Government to lead efforts to enforce existing international standards to end this horrendous human rights abuse.

The legislation, if it were in effect today, would deny U.S. military assistance to at least seven of the 26 nations believed to be using children in their military forces, and hopefully this legislation will receive strong bipartisan support as it makes its way through the process.

I look forward to our hearing. I am very, very grateful to our witnesses, and we will get into those introductions momentarily, but I would like to yield to my friend and colleague, Mr. Payne.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

When current Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni overthrew the murderous regime of the late Milton Obote in Uganda in 1986, many had hope that their nation would finally emerge from the nightmares of the Obote and Idi Amin regimes. Unfortunately, yet another horror lay ahead for the people of northern Uganda.

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Meanwhile, Joseph Kony, believed to be Lakwena's cousin, took up the battle, forming a group known as the Lord's Resistance Army or LRA. The LRA is often said to be determined to rule Uganda according to the Bible's 10 Commandments. In reality, this group has a philosophy that blends elements of Christianity, Islam and traditional Acholi beliefs into a murderous world view that has terrorized

Kony's own Acholi people and set back development in the North by years if not decades.

Over the last 20 years, as many as two million persons—an estimated 90% of the population of the Acholi area in northern Uganda—have been forced into internally displaced persons camps. More than 20,000 children have been forced to serve as either soldiers or sexual slaves for the LRA. Those children who have escaped kidnapping by the LRA are forced into the phenomenon known as “night commuting,” in which an estimated 50,000 children walk miles from the rural areas to towns in order to find relative safety in bus shelters, churches or even on the streets.

The impact of this war on Ugandans in the North, as reported by the Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, is almost unbelievable:

- The rates of violent death in northern Uganda are three times higher than those reported in Iraq following the Allied invasion in 2003.
- Each month, nearly 3,500 Ugandans die from easily preventable diseases, extreme violence and torture;
- Each day, 58 children under the age of five die as a result of violence and preventable diseases.
- Three times more children under the age of five die in northern Uganda than in the rest of the country.
- One quarter of the children in northern Uganda over ten years of age have lost one or both parents.
- Half of the nearly two million internally displaced persons in northern Uganda are children under the age of 15.
- About a quarter of a million children in northern Uganda receive no education at all because of displacement and the fact that 60% of schools in northern Uganda no longer function due to the war.

Because of the war in the North, Uganda has developed a “lost generation” that has grown up in dire circumstances with fear and deprivation as their constant companions. Nearly half of all children in the northern town of Kitgum are stunted from malnutrition. They likely will never be able to recover what this war has cost them.

There is great concern that the Government of Uganda is insufficiently committed to improving the situation in northern Uganda. On at least two occasions when there appeared to be a chance for peace talks with the LRA—once in 1993 and again in late 2004–2005—the Government of Uganda launched offensives that ended any chance of peace and yet failed to end the terrorism of the LRA. More recently, the indictment of top LRA leaders by the International Criminal Court has effectively ended further peace efforts.

Because of its inability to end the LRA threat, the Ugandan government in 2003 began encouraging local leaders in northern and eastern Uganda to raise civilian militias to help protect civilians. Unfortunately, according to a study done by the Alan Shawn Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University, these militias were hurriedly recruited, poorly screened and incompletely trained. Furthermore, known criminals are part of these militias, which also contain boys and girls less than 18 years of age.

The Feinstein Center study also reports that there is a widespread perception among individuals and organizations in northern Uganda that the government has malevolent reasons for not ending the war with the LRA. They include revenge against northerners for human rights abuses under previous governments and neutralization of political challenge from the North. In the Uganda elections held earlier this year, President Museveni's main opponent Kizza Besigye, won 80% of the vote in northern Uganda—a testimony to the government's unpopularity in the North.

Whatever the truth about the Government of Uganda's war effort, it is certainly a fact that not enough is being done to safeguard the endangered children of northern Uganda. With all the attention given to the genocide in Darfur, a similar crisis in northern Uganda has been eclipsed in both attention and resources.

Just as we have a moral obligation to rescue the suffering people of Darfur, we have a similar obligation not to ignore the terrorized population of northern Uganda. If the eyes and ears of the world are focused elsewhere, we must redirect them to Uganda's distressed northern population—especially the children. Uganda's future may depend on our efforts.

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often killed or maimed, and even those who can escape often find it difficult to reintegrate back into society. They desperately need our help.

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This legislation would deny U.S. military assistance to seven of the 26 nations believed to use children in their military forces: Burundi, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Paraguay, Sudan and Uganda. We hope today's hearing will provide further information to help make this legislation as effective as possible in saving and rehabilitating so many innocent victims.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for us having this important topic that we have been advocating for some time about the severity of it to have a formal hearing, and I think the title is correct; endangered children of northern Uganda, and the situation has been there for a long time.

I want to start from the outset to talk about the region in general, and why this hearing is so important because it focuses on one of the forgotten crises in the world. The truth is that the crisis in northern Uganda is one of the worst humanitarian crisis that exists in the world today.

I want to start my comments though today on another forgotten tragedy, the Rwandan genocide. Twelve years ago this month the murderous militia and their allies in Rwanda began their brutal campaign genocide of killing and maiming the innocent children, including women and elderly. More than a million people were murdered in 100 days while the international community looked the other way. The United Nations Peacekeepers sent to Rwanda to keep the peace left at the height of the Rwandan genocide, leaving behind helpless civilians to be murdered, to be hacked to death.

We are once again reminded of the suffering of the innocent people, as the Chairman even mentioned, in Darfur, Sudan. Shamefully, we have done very little to stop the suffering, the rape, the killing of the innocent.

In January 1994, the commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force, General Delair, wrote to his superiors that the militias in Rwanda intended to kill large numbers of Tutsis and moderate Hutus, and informed the United Nations Peacekeeping Department that he intended to seize the arms and ask for the United Nations protection.

On January 12, 1994, General Delair was told by the United Nations Headquarters that the mandate did not give him the authority to seize the arms cache, and would not provide protection to the informants, and instead he was ordered to provide the information to the President Habyarimana at that time, and the Ambassadors of Belgium, France, and the United States.

Three months later the genocide, the general war began. A month into it the Clinton Administration refused to use the word "genocide," and on April 28, 1994, the Security Council deliberately omitted the word from a resolution to avoid its legal and international obligation. It was a shameful time in the history of this country and of the world.

We said it was important to remember that what happened in Rwanda would never happen again. We never would make the same mistake. But we have heard never again before. We heard it

after the Holocaust. We should have heard it after the Armenian genocide. We should have heard it about Cambodia. We should have heard it about Darfur.

Well, let us remember today's victims in Darfur, and those who would be killed or raped as we debate what to do for them, what type of protection should we do, what sort of sanction should we have. As we met today to discuss the tragedy in Uganda, the victims of Darfur are being portrayed in Abuja, by what is being referred to as the final agreement proposal.

As we have witnessed the deliberate targeting of civilians in Rwanda and Darfur, the LRA has been consistent in its brutal campaign against innocent civilians. The LRA has abducted over 20,000 children, maimed, raped and brutally murdered innocent civilians over the last two decades. I seriously doubt if the LRA ever knows or cares about any government in the Uganda or as any other political agenda. The fact of the matter is that those who are being killed and maimed are innocent civilians, not just in Uganda but also in southern Sudan.

It is not surprising that the protectors and friends of the LRA are the same people committing genocide in Darfur, the National Party of the Government of Sudan.

I understand I have 1 minute left to vote, so I suppose—I am not sure what vote it is, but it may be a critical vote, so I will leave and complete my statement when the Committee reconvenes in about 10 minutes or 15 minutes.

[Recess.]

Mr. PAYNE. We will call the meeting back again. In order to save time, since the Chairman—why don't we all just stay. Those who are standing in the back just stand until the Chairman comes, and then we can decide what his decision is. I understand those standing were asked to leave, but just stand on the side as long as you don't fall on someone.

As I was indicating before, as I sort of reviewed the situation that occurred in Rwanda, and I will just start again saying as we have witnessed the deliberate targeting of civilians in Rwanda and Darfur, the LRA has been consistent in its brutal campaign against innocent civilians.

The LRA has abducted over 20,000 children, maimed, raped and brutally murdered innocent civilians over the last two decades. I seriously doubt if the LRA even knows or cares about any government in Uganda, or has any political agenda. The fact of the matter is that those who are being killed and maimed are innocent civilians, not just in Uganda but also in southern Sudan.

It is not surprising that the protectors and friends of the LRA are the same people committing genocide in Darfur. The government, National Part of the Government of Sudan, the same ones that are perpretrating the disorder.

I am not suggesting that the exit option from this tragedy is the military option. The vast majority of the LRA soldiers are those that abducted children. They are focusing on these innocent, vulnerable people. The leadership of the LRA and those responsible for this tragedy must be held accountable. We cannot allow people to continue to perpetrate this kind of terror on people, and we have to have the special court as we had for Charles Taylor in Sierra

Leone, a special court, the National Criminal Court, someone must hold the leaders of the LRA accountable. They must be brought before justice.

I first traveled to Uganda in 1972. It was shortly after the—actually, it was in February 1973, shortly after the expulsion of the Asians in Uganda. You may recall that on Christmas eve of 1972, Idi Amin, the brutal dictator of Uganda, ordered every Asian to leave the country immediately. It was one of the first exodus of a group of ethnic people anywhere in the world.

I went and met with him, and condemned him because at that time I chaired the World Refugee Committee, and these refugees ended up in London, Great Britain, some went back to India. However, we made it clear that this was wrong, and that it was—and actually, we should have taken, the world community should have taken stronger actions at that time. I happened to be simply Chairman of the World Refugee and Rehabilitation Committee out of Geneva, and did not have any enforcement, but made it very clear that this was wrong.

So I have been involved in Uganda for many, many years, long before coming to the Congress. Back in 1993, I went to Gulu, and met with the former LRA abductees. I met with children back there 12 years ago, 13 years ago, children who had escaped the nightmare but still lived in fear, marginalized in their communities.

We drove from Gulu all the way to southern Sudan, and then met with Dr. John Gurang and the SPLA, the long route, the same route that abducted children of northern Uganda are forced to take on foot, and it was a very, very difficult trip in a vehicle, and can you imagine what these children have to do on foot.

We cannot ignore the victims and engage in a policy of appeasement in order to secure an agreement. We must do more to protect the people of northern Uganda, especially the children both in the IDP camps and in their homes.

We have seen the pictures of the night commuters. No child should go through that. No parent should have to make the decision to send their children alone into a city at night in hopes that they will be safe from attack and abduction so that they can come back home the next day. This is unheard of in the new millennium, in the 21st century.

No child should be forced to kill anyone, not another child, another family member, or anyone. It is simply unconscionable.

I asked John Prendergast to be our witness for this hearing. Unfortunately, he has to attend a family matter. However, we received a short testimony from John, a long-time peace advocate, and mediator Betty Bigombe who was currently in Uganda to help bring this tragedy to an end. According to John and Betty, with a tiny fraction of the resources now being spent in northern Uganda, new initiative with a real prospect of success can now be undertaken. Such an initiative requires a targeted carrot-and-stick strategy with an exit option for the LRA leadership if their calculations to leave the battlefield can be significantly altered.

The decision of the LRA commanders to leave the bush and defect are greatly influenced by the post-defection livelihood opportunities that await them, while amnesty already exists for all non-inducted LRA and small reintegrated packages are provided to ex-

combatants. What remains is to develop a more substantial incentive package for the remaining 50 or so top and mid-level non-indicted LRA commanders. It would also create space between the indicted and the non-indicted commanders.

The top commanders must be indicated. However, if we can give an incentive for the others to go out. As we know, it is a part of the country that has been ignored by the central government which showed in the recent elections, then perhaps we can move in the right direction.

And so the LRA has found a new sanctuary in Garamba National Park in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, still receives support from elements of the Sudanese military intelligence, and unless a reasonable military plan is negotiated and implemented, the LRA will be able to reorganize, to retrain, reequip itself just as it did in 1994, when conventional wisdom similarly held that its days were numbered, only to see it strike back with a vengeance.

There are two primary options for enhancing military pressure. Option one, agreements between the governments in Conchasa, Juba, Conchasa and Campala, and Khartoum and Juba, Conchasa and Campala, to allow for a joint coordinated and cross-border military operation against the LRA positions could be brokered with help from the United Nations or a combination of core group countries. Somehow we have to surround them and get agreements from those governments.

Option two could be a unit which could be inserted into Manuk in the DRC or UNMIS in southern Sudan for a specific time period with a specific limited mandate, focusing on operations against the NRA positions. Applying both the carrot-and-the-stick simultaneously would disrupt the LRA's ability to regroup further, reduce the material conditions of the combatants and provide greater incentive for the non-indicted commanders to defect.

However, as long as the five indicted LRA leaders are still in the bush, a grave threat to the people of the three countries will continue to exist.

Therefore, a specific diplomatic initiative aimed at removing them from the battlefield should be a part of any expanded strategy. Options here are challenging and require creative thinking about trade-offs between justice and peace.

According to John and Betty, the U.S. role in an expanded strategy is clear. President Museveni needs a partner in the search for peace, and a more focused effort by the United States on ending the LRA conflict would provide that partnership. The U.S. has the most leverage to bring to the table great expertise in these matters, and a new Ambassador with a commitment to addressing this issue. The United States also has a major investment in helping to consolidate peace in southern Sudan and is the largest contributor to the largest peacekeeping mission in the world in the Democratic Republic of Congo financially.

The U.S. should therefore name an envoy to work regionally on all aspects of an enhanced strategy and should help lead the effort to craft their reintegration effort for non-indicted LRA commanders.

I would like to thank John and Betty for their tireless effort and encourage them to continue to fight for peace and justice as they do throughout Africa.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Payne.

Mr. Fortenberry.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this hearing today to address a longstanding tragedy of child abduction and enslavement in northern Uganda.

In our review of excerpts of the Human Rights Watch account of children abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda prior to this hearing, one cannot find the words to express the horror and shock at the perpetrators of this rebel movement and what they have done to innocent children. It is bad enough to learn about the brutalities forced upon child soldiers and slaves in northern Uganda, and it is utterly tragic to realize that those fortunate enough to escape from this infernal nightmare often return orphan to ravaged, desolated villages.

I want to commend first and foremost the non-governmental organizations that are working in Uganda to provide support to the victims of LRA atrocities, and I also note with deep sadness that humanitarian workers in Sudan and Uganda have lost their lives in the effort to help displaced populations which continue to suffer the wanton lawlessness that prevails in northern Uganda.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to learning more about the role of Sudan in this humanitarian crisis, and to understand what points of leverage we may employ to help the Government of Uganda stop these atrocities which have permanently scarred the lives of tens of thousands of children. In particular, I want to commend and thank Mrs. Grace Akallo for her courage to appear before this Subcommittee to help guide us toward an end to this dreadful war on children.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you so very much, and my understanding is that you have a group of Georgian parliamentarians with whom you meet, so we thank you for coming because I know they are waiting for you.

Let me now welcome our two very distinguished witnesses, beginning with Mr. Jeffrey Krilla who joined the U.S. Department of State in January 2006, as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human rights and Labor. Prior to joining DRL, Secretary Krilla served as Regional Director for Africa at the International Republican Institute.

In addition, Secretary Krilla also served as a senior aid and attorney in the U.S. Congress for 8 years. During that time he worked, among many other things, for the U.S. House of Representatives and Fill Their Shelves Program, which provides children of southern Africa educational tools.

We will then hear from Mr. Len Rogers who is Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Prior to this assignment, Mr. Rogers had oversight for the Office of Food for Peace. Prior to joining USAID, Mr. Rogers served in the United States Army in Vietnam.

Secretary Krilla, if you could proceed.

STATEMENT OF MR. JEFFREY KRILLA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. KRILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this very timely hearing on the endangered children of northern Uganda.

Before I summarize my remarks, I would ask that my remarks be submitted into the record in their entirety.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. KRILLA. Thank you.

I would like to also start by acknowledging my wife and daughter who have come in today. As a fairly new father, I think today's topic I view through a new lens, and can only now appreciate fully the depths of the horror that the children undergo in northern Uganda. So thank you again for holding this.

Chairman Smith, you recently returned from a trip to Uganda, and Mr. Royce and Mr. Payne I know, and many Members of the Subcommittee have also traveled to the region and know these issues firsthand. Clearly, you do not make a trip to a country where the lives of children are so heavily impacted and return home the same. For that matter, you cannot listen to the moving NGO testimony on northern Uganda or see a movie like *Invisible Children* and remain the same.

We recently held a screening of the film *Invisible Children* in my bureau, and I understand that there may be screenings of the film up on Capitol Hill. For those Members of the Subcommittee who have not seen this movie, I would commend this film to your attention.

The film is educating many people around the world about this conflict and its lasting effects on the children. This issue has understandably struck a cord with the American people. I understand that on the night of April 29 groups of American plan to gather in 136 cities across the country for what is being called "The Global Night Commute." This is a profound act of solidarity on behalf of the children of northern Uganda.

I am new to the State Department, and this is my first official appearance before this Committee as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. However, I have had a longstanding interest in Africa and care deeply about the conditions of the people on the continent.

Prior to joining the department, I served for 5 years as the Regional Director for Africa at the International Republican Institute where I coordinated election observation missions, political party development programs, and civil society programs in Africa. My work in Africa extends back even further to my time as a high school teacher in the segregated Lebowa region of South Africa during the last years of the apartheid rule.

My experiences in Lebowa where I witnessed firsthand the potential resiliency and eventual triumph of the South African people

in the face of brutal oppression continued to influence my work with the people of Africa today.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the people of northern Uganda continue to suffer under a 20-year reign of terror imposed by Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army. Without question, those who suffer the most from the LRA's cruel tactics are the children.

In the 2005 country report on human rights practices for Uganda, something produced by my bureau, we reported on the LRA's sexual exploitation of children, the use of child soldiers, the plight of the night commuter, children who travel long distances from their homes in search of protection from the LRA, and the overall deplorable conditions of the IDP camps in which over 80 percent of approximately 1.5 million occupants are women and children.

I have recently met with the new Ugandan Ambassador to the United States, Perezi Kamunanwire, and the new United States Ambassador to Uganda, Steven Browning, to discuss these very issues. I look forward to close cooperation with them as we work to improve the security and living conditions for the people of northern Uganda.

In February, a member of my staff traveled to Gulu to monitor a DRL-funded project that focuses on building a coalition of civil society organizations in the north, to lobby the local and national government more effectively for their myriad needs.

As you know, Uganda is one of the three countries in which the U.N. has agreed to pilot a new approach to ensuring both more predictable and more robust protection and assistance for internally-displaced persons. That will bring in the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in a protection role, and hence our department's Bureau for Population Refugees and Migration, or PRM.

P.R.M.'s Assistant Secretary of State Ellen Saulray also recently traveled to Kenya and Uganda to study refugee conditions, and the nexus with IDP issues. USAID, PRM and my bureau are all coordinating our efforts.

This summer, I and members of my staff plan to travel to the region for meetings that will address the regional dimensions of the LRA threat as well as what more the international community can do to improve the situation in northern Uganda.

The living conditions in northern Uganda are stark and deserve international attention. Uganda has the third largest IDP population in the world, approximately 200 camps house 1.5 million or more IDPs. Estimates indicate that approximately 1.2 million of these IDPs in the districts of Kitgum, Gulu and Pader.

The IDP camps are heavily congested and some house in excess of 60,000 people. Resources have proven insufficient to provide adequate security, water, sanitation facilities, or health care services to the people who live there. Consequently, the IDP camps have high mortality rates, roughly three times the national average.

Civilians freedom of movement outside of the camps is extremely limited by the LRA threat as well as Ugandan Government policies.

The 2005 country report on human rights practices for Uganda stated approximately 38,000 children have been abducted by the LRA during the past 20 years and forced into roles as soldiers, la-

borers, and sex slaves. An estimated 85 percent of LRA captives are children, and most are between the ages of 11 and 16.

These children are forced to fight as rebels and participate in the killing of civilians, including other children. We know that children suffer higher casualties in battle than adults, and often emerge from conflicts with greater physical and psychological challenges.

In September 2005, the International Criminal Court indicted Kony and several of his commanders on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including enslavement and sexual enslavement, and enlisting children into armed forces and cruel treatment of civilians.

The U.S. Government has also designated the LRA as a terrorist organization.

Last year Rory Anderson of World Vision reported having met an 11-year-old boy in Gulu in the World Vision Center for Children of War who was forced to bite to death and swallow the blood of a fellow child who attempted to escape from the LRA. He was forced to perform this heinous act as a warning so that he himself would not attempt to escape. Truly this is a deeply disturbing story, and yet this is one of thousands of deeply disturbing stories that reflect the lives of the endangered children of northern Uganda.

Due to the threat of LRA abduction, one time as many as 30,000 night commuters traveled from conflict areas or IDP camps to spend the night in shelters, churches or balconies in urban centers with greater capacity to protect them. Recent assessments, including one by the State Department, revealed that due to a decrease in LRA attacks, the number of night commuter children has declined dramatically in the past 6 months to 19,000 or fewer.

However, for even one child to be subjected to nightly separation from his or her community and forced to commute long distances under the threat of violence, abduction or sexual assaults is one child too many.

The United States places a high priority on assisting child victims of conflict throughout the world. In northern Uganda, it is clear that the key to assisting child soldiers and child victims is to continue to focus our diplomatic and programmatic assistance on three key areas: Humanitarian assistance, military assistance to help defeat the LRA, and build the capacity and professionalism of the UPDF and political pressure to urge the Government of Uganda to reach out to the Acholi people and support reconciliation efforts.

The United States is a leading source of humanitarian and other aid for the people of northern Uganda. We provided \$78 million for bilateral assistance in Fiscal Year 2005. The United States was the source of more than 50 percent of the total World Food Program assistance in Uganda in 2005. The U.S. also funds critical programs that address the deep psychological wounds of former child soldiers and child abductees by providing these children with a psycho-social counseling, medical care, vocational training, and opportunities to reintegrate themselves into the local community.

The U.S. has funded child reception centers for children rescued from LRA captivity. U.S. assistance has also supported several overnight shelters where children stay to be protected from LRA

abduction. My USAID colleague, Leonard Rogers, is here to discuss our assistance programs in greater depth.

We have provided the UPDF with more than \$5 million in non-lethal military assistance to combat the LRA, including communication equipment and trucks. We also provide training for the UPDF in the areas of human rights, civil/military relations, military justice, and professional military education, and we continue to urge the Ugandan Government to reach out to the Acholi people through dialogue to support the reconciliation process.

The United States continues to support efforts to promote a dialogue of peace and reconciliation among civilians in northern Uganda. We urge the Ugandan Government to coordinate with the neighboring Governments of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo to end the spread of LRA terror into these countries.

One of northern Uganda's most pressing needs is increased and adequate security, and protection for civilians in these IDP camps and surrounding areas as well as protection for the brave, local and international humanitarian aid workers who risk their lives to provide basic needs. Both the Ugandan People's Defense Forces and the local defense units, or LDUs, which are local militia units composed of volunteers, are assigned to protect IDP camps, and this protection regrettably is inadequate.

The United States continues to urge the Government of Uganda to provide effective protection for civilians by adequately deploying UPDF troops in the region, particularly to enhance the protection of these IDP camps against LRA attacks, and in addition the United States strongly urges the Government of Uganda to investigate and prosecute all violence against civilians by security forces and focus efforts on providing human rights training along with security training to deployed personnel in the region.

The U.S. Government and the international community pay a close attention to human rights abuses by the UPDF and the LDUs. We have documented these abuses, including rape of women and girls by UPDF and LDU security forces, acting with impunity in our recent 2005 annual human rights report.

As I stated earlier, the U.S. provides funding to training UPDF in the areas of civil/military relations, military justice, and human rights in an effort to curb these human rights abuses.

In 2002, the Ugandan Government ratified the optional protocol to the convention of the rights of children, which the State Department worked hard to negotiate. This protocol prescribes minimum ages for military recruitment and participation in conflict. Ugandan law prohibits service in the military by persons under 18 years of age.

In October 2005, the UNICEF Uganda representative, Martin Nogwanja, stated that the UPDF regular force has no child soldiers, and though the UPDF appears to be making a concentrated effort to comply with the protocol, the LDUs continue to have high child recruitments purportedly due to collusion of local officials and lack of doctors present to test the age of LDU recruits.

In another critical area of concern is the NGO registration amendment bill that was approved recently by the Ugandan parliament. The Uganda parliament's passage of this NGO bill is troubling, and sends the wrong message to the international commu-

nity about the country's commitment to address the problems in the north. It requires NGOs and evangelical churches to renew their registration permits annually. Controversial clause allows representatives of the Ugandan internal and external security forces to be members of the NGO board, and the bill gives the NGO board powers to register or deny registry to NGOs opposed to government policy.

Uganda enjoys a vibrant civil society that serves as a mechanism for checks and balances on the government. We will continue to press the government to allow wide latitude in its implementation so that the important work of NGOs in the region is not unduly hampered.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for holding this critical hearing on the deeply troubling situation of the children in northern Uganda. Thank you for the invitation to testify. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor wants to work with this Subcommittee in the weeks and months ahead to help the children of northern Uganda.

We are working with partner organizations such as the International Committee for the Red Cross, Save the Children, World Vision and the International Rescue Committee to provide vital humanitarian assistance. In northern and western Uganda we work with over 70 local and national NGOs to provide counseling, to provide conflict resolution, and encourage economic development in areas affected by conflict.

Through our partnership with NGOs and their humanitarian assistance, through continued dialogue with the Ugandan Government and other governments in the region, and through continued non-lethal military assistance and training, the U.S. Government will continue to develop and implement policies and programs focused on resolving the humanitarian and human rights crises facing children and the general population in the region, and of course work on strategies to resolve peacefully the LRA conflict itself.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Krilla follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. JEFFREY KRILLA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY,
BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chairman Smith, Members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for holding this timely hearing on the endangered children of northern Uganda. Chairman Smith, you recently returned from a trip to Uganda, and Mr. Royce and Mr. Payne and many Members of the Subcommittee have also traveled to the region and know these issues first-hand. Clearly, you do not make a trip to a country where the lives of children are so heavily impacted and return home the same. For that matter, you can not listen to the moving NGO testimony on northern Uganda or see a movie like *Invisible Children* and remain the same. We held a screening of the film *Invisible Children* in my bureau recently and I understand that there may have been screenings of this film on Capitol Hill. For those Members of the Subcommittee who have not seen *Invisible Children*, I commend this film to your attention. This film is educating many people around the world about the conflict and its lasting effects on the children. This issue has understandably struck a chord with the American people. I understand that on the night of April 29th, groups of Americans plan to gather in 136 cities across the country for what is being called the Global Night Commute. This is a profound act of solidarity on behalf of the children of northern Uganda.

I am new to the State Department and this is my first official appearance before this Committee as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. However, I have had a long-standing interest in Af-

rica and care deeply about the African people. Prior to joining the Department, I served for five years as Regional Director for Africa for the International Republic Institute (IRI) where I coordinated election observation missions, political party development programs and civil society programs in Africa. My work in Africa extends back even further to my time as a high school teacher in the segregated Lebowa region of South Africa during the last years of Apartheid rule. My experiences in Lebowa, where I witnessed firsthand the potential, resiliency and eventual triumph of the South African people in the face of brutal oppression, continue to influence my work with the people of Africa today.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the people of northern Uganda continue to suffer under a 20-year reign of terror imposed by Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Without question, those who suffer the most from the LRA's perverse tactics are the children.

In the 2005 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices* for Uganda, we reported on the LRA's sexual exploitation of children, the use of child soldiers, the plight of the "night commuter" children who travel long distances from their homes in search of protection from the LRA, and the overall deplorable conditions of the IDP camps, in which over 80% of the approximately 1.5 million occupants are women and children.

I have recently met with the new Ugandan Ambassador to the United States, Perezi Kamunanwire, and the new U.S. Ambassador to Uganda, Steven Browning, to discuss these issues. I look forward to close cooperation with them as we work to improve the security and living conditions for the people of northern Uganda.

In February, a member of my staff traveled to Gulu to monitor a DRL-funded project that focuses on building a coalition of civil society organizations in the north to lobby the local and national government more effectively for their myriad needs.

As you may know, Uganda is one of three countries in which the UN system has agreed to pilot a new approach to ensuring both more predictable and more robust protection and assistance for internally displaced persons. That will bring in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in a protection role and hence our Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration. PRM Assistant Secretary of State, Ellen Sauerbrey, also recently traveled to Kenya and Uganda to study refugee conditions and the nexus with IDP issues. USAID, PRM, and we are all coordinating our efforts.

This summer, I and members of my staff plan to travel to the region for meetings that will address the regional dimensions of the LRA threat as well as what more the international community can do to improve the situation in northern Uganda.

The living conditions in northern Uganda are stark and deserve international attention. Uganda has the 3rd largest IDP population in the world. Approximately 200 camps house 1.5 million or more IDPs. Estimates indicate that approximately 1.2 million of these IDPs are in the Acholi districts of Kitgum, Gulu, and Pader. The IDP camps are heavily congested, and some house an excess of 60,000 people. Resources have proven insufficient to provide adequate security, water, sanitation facilities, or health care services to the people who live there. Consequently, the IDP camps have high mortality rates (1.54 per 10,000 per day); roughly three times the national average (based on January to July 2005 estimates of 35,000 deaths in Kitgum, Gulu, and Pader). Civilians' freedom of movement outside of camps is extremely limited by the LRA threat as well as Ugandan government policies.

The 2005 *Country Report on Human Rights Practices* for Uganda stated approximately 38,000 children have been abducted by the LRA during the past 20 years and forced into roles as soldiers, laborers, and sex slaves. An estimated 85 percent of LRA captives are children and most are between the ages of 11 to 16. These children are forced to fight as rebels and participate in the killing of civilians, including other children. We know that children suffer higher casualties in battle than adults, and often emerge from conflicts with greater physical and psychological challenges. In September 2005, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted Kony and several of his commanders on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including enslavement and sexual enslavement, enlisting children into armed forces, and cruel treatment of civilians. The U.S. government has also designated the LRA as a terrorist organization.

Last year, Rory Anderson of World Vision reported having met an 11-year-old boy in the Gulu World Vision Children of War Center who was forced to bite to death and swallow the blood of a fellow child who had attempted to escape from the LRA. He was forced to perform this heinous act as a warning, so that he himself would not attempt to escape. I am a father, and this is a deeply disturbing story. And yet, this is just one of thousands of deeply disturbing stories that reflect the lives of the endangered children of northern Uganda.

Due to the threat of LRA abduction, at one time as many as 35,000 child “night commuters” traveled from conflict areas or IDP camps to spend the night in shelters, schools, churches or balconies in urban centers with greater capacity to protect them. Recent assessments, including one by the State Department, reveal that due to a decrease in LRA attacks the number of night commuter children has declined dramatically in the past six months to 19,000 or fewer. For even *one child* to be subjected to nightly separation from his or her community, and forced to commute long distances under the threat of violence, abduction or sexual assault, is one too many.

The U.S. places a high priority on assisting child victims of conflict throughout the world. In northern Uganda, it is clear that the key to assisting child soldiers and child victims is to continue to focus our diplomatic and programmatic assistance on three key areas: humanitarian assistance, military assistance to help defeat the LRA and build the capacity and professionalism of the UPDF, and political pressure to urge the Government of Uganda to reach out to the Acholi people and support reconciliation efforts.

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We have provided the UPDF with more than \$5 million in non-lethal military assistance to combat the LRA, including communication equipment and trucks. We also provide training for the UPDF in the areas of human rights, civil/military relations, military justice and professional military education.

We continue to urge the Ugandan government to reach out to the Acholi people through dialogue to support the reconciliation process. The U.S. continues to support efforts to promote a dialogue of peace and reconciliation among civilians in northern Uganda. In addition, the Northern Uganda Peace Initiative (NUPI) is an American initiative that addresses a peaceful solution to the ongoing civil conflict in the region and seeks to engage the Government of Uganda and the LRA in talks, with the goal of achieving peace and support for national reconciliation.

We also urge the Ugandan government to coordinate with the neighboring governments of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to end the spread of LRA terror into these countries.

One of northern Uganda’s most pressing needs is increased and adequate security and protection for civilians living in IDP camps and surrounding areas, as well as protection for the brave local and international humanitarian workers who risk their lives to provide basic needs. Both the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces (UPDF) and the Local Defense Units (LDUs)—which are local militia units composed of volunteers—are assigned to protect IDP camps. The protection regrettably is inadequate.

The U.S. continues to urge the Government of Uganda to provide effective protection for civilians by adequately deploying UPDF troops in the region, particularly to enhance the protection of IDP camps against LRA attacks. In addition, the U.S. strongly urges the Government of Uganda to investigate and prosecute all violence against civilians by security forces, and focus efforts on providing human rights training along with security training to deployed personnel in the region.

The U.S. government and international community pay close attention to human rights abuses committed by the UPDF and LDUs. We have documented those abuses, including rape of women and girls, by UPDF and LDU security forces acting with impunity in the 2005 annual human rights report. As I stated earlier, the U.S. provides funding to train UPDF in the areas of civil/military relations, military justice and human rights in an effort to curb these human rights abuses.

In 2002, the Ugandan government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Children, which the State Department worked hard to negotiate. The protocol prescribes minimum ages for military recruitment and participation in conflict. Ugandan law prohibits service in the military by persons under 18 years of age. In October 2005, the UNICEF-Uganda Representative, Martin Nogwanja, stated that the UPDF regular force has no child soldiers. Though the UPDF appears to be making a concentrated effort to comply with the protocol, the

LDUs continue to have high child recruitments, reportedly due to the collusion of local officials, and lack of doctors present to assess the age of LDU recruits.

Another area of concern is the NGO Registration Amendment Bill that was approved recently by the Ugandan Parliament. The Ugandan Parliament's passage of the NGO Bill is troubling and sends the wrong message to the international community about the country's commitment to address the problems in the north. It requires NGOs and evangelical churches to renew their registration permits annually. A controversial clause allows representatives of the Ugandan Internal and External Security Forces to be members on the NGO board, and the Bill gives the NGO Board powers to register or deny registry to NGOs opposed to government policy. Uganda enjoys a vibrant civil society that serves as a mechanism for checks and balances on the government. We will continue to press the government to allow wide latitude in its implementation so that the important work of NGOs in the region is not unduly hampered.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for holding this hearing on the deeply troubling situation of the children in northern Uganda. Thank you for the invitation to testify. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor wants to work with this Subcommittee in the weeks and months ahead to help the children in northern Uganda. We are working with partner organizations such as the International Committee for the Red Cross, Save the Children, World Vision and the International Rescue Committee to provide vital humanitarian assistance. In northern and western Uganda, we work with over 70 local and national NGOs to provide counseling, provide conflict resolution, and encourage economic development in areas affected by conflict.

Through our partnerships with NGOs and their humanitarian assistance, through continued dialogue with the Ugandan government and other governments in the region, and through continued non-lethal military assistance and training, the U.S. government will continue to develop and implement policies and programs focused on resolving the humanitarian and human rights crises facing children and the general population of the region, and of course work on strategies to resolve peacefully the LRA conflict itself.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Krilla, thank you very much for your testimony. I would now like to turn to Mr. Rogers.

STATEMENT OF MR. LEONARD ROGERS, SENIOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to appear before the Subcommittee today. If I might, I would also like to submit a written statement for the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

For over 20 years, the people of northern Uganda have suffered the brutal atrocities of the Lord's Resistance Army. An estimated 1.5 million people have been driven from their homes by LRA terror. Families are now forced to live in squalid displacement camps. These camps rarely meet minimum humanitarian standards. As a result, mortality rates are unacceptably high.

The most reliable study we have shows mortality rates among the displaced population average 1.54 deaths per day per 10,000 people. This is over 50 percent higher than the threshold we use to declare an emergency, and more than triple the normal death rate in non-emergency communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

It is tragic that children are especially victimized in northern Uganda. Mortality rates in the camps for children are more than double those of adults—3.18 deaths per day per 10,000 children. But even worse than life in the camps, the LRA's atrocities have had a devastating impact on these children.

Over the course of the conflict UNICEF estimates that 25,000 children have been abducted by the LRA. They are forced to serve as LRA shock troops, and the smallest are porters and the girls are

sex slaves for LRA commanders. Children are forced to kill other children as part of the LRA indoctrination process.

As the reality of what happens to those abducted by the LRA has become known, other children in the community have understandably become terrified. Parents are terrified as well. To protect their children, an estimated 19,000 are sent as so-called night commuters to live in the protection of special camps in the cities of the north. These children hike many miles to and from home each day just to be safe at night from the LRA. This has had a devastating impact on their family life and their schooling.

The United States Government has worked closely with the Government of Uganda to address this crisis. We have been the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to address the many needs of the LRA's victims. We have also worked with the Ugandans in a variety of ways to finally bring this nightmare to an end.

In Fiscal Year 2005, USAID provided \$78 million in relief and development programs to northern Uganda, and we expect to provide a somewhat larger amount during Fiscal Year 2006.

Our Office of Food for Peace provided 79,000 metric tons of U.S. food to the World Food Program to help feed nearly 1.5 million displaced people.

Our Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance provided nearly \$12 million, most in support of desperately-needed water and sanitation projects in displacement camps. USAID's mission in Kapala is significantly increasing HIV/AIDS and anti-malaria programs in the north where malaria and AIDS rank as the two leading causes of death.

However, we have always recognized that more must be done to break the cycle of LRA-led violence and displacement. The Government of Uganda believes the only realistic solution lies through the military, and the United States has provided modest military assistance to the UPDF. We have also encouraged and supported in a variety of ways keeping open options for peaceful resolution of the conflict. The government's amnesty program which allows LRA fighters to return to society has proven successful, and we believe should be strengthened.

It is important to understand, however, that there has never been any concrete evidence that the LRA senior leadership is interested in peace. Now they appear to be on the run with their leaders reportedly forced out of Sudan and into Congo. We believe now is the time to redouble efforts to end this conflict, and we intend to work closely with the Government of Uganda to do so.

For USAID, we intend to pursue the following course:

First, we will reorient our development assistance programs to focus more on the north, especially for malaria and HIV/AIDS programs, and we will continue to play a leading role in providing humanitarian assistance to the internally displaced.

Second, we will work with and support the Ugandan Government in providing improved protection for the internally displaced, including strengthening accountability for UPDF performance around the camps, expanded freedom of movement for the displaced so that they can farm, and voluntary and assisted return of the IDPs to their homes as security permits.

Third, we will work with the United Nations on improving coordination and U.N. performance in the displacement camps. This will require early agreement with the Government of Uganda on appointment of a new U.N. humanitarian coordinator and rapid implementation of a new system to designate lead U.N. agencies for specific responsibilities such as camp management.

Fourth, we will seek ways to further support the Government of Uganda's program for LRA fighters who seek amnesty. This would include strengthening reintegration programs and expanding livelihood opportunities.

Fifth, we will continue to work with the Government of Uganda, the U.N. and non-governmental organizations to assess health and nutritional conditions among the internally displaced so our aid can be properly targeted to address priority problems.

Sixth, we strongly believe non-governmental organizations remain critical to the successful implementation of many humanitarian and development programs in northern Uganda. We will work to ensure open communication with the government and the NGOs, and we trust that all sides can work to resolve issues constructively.

Finally, we will strongly support what we hope will be a transition to peace and security in northern Uganda over the coming months and years. We believe elimination of the LRA and reconciliation between the Acholi people and the Government of Uganda will allow Uganda to fully realize its democratic and economic potential.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to answer questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rogers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MR. LEONARD ROGERS, SENIOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT
ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify at today's hearing. Northern Uganda remains one of the world's least publicized humanitarian emergencies with 1.5 million or more persons internally displaced by ongoing conflict. I have seen first-hand the situation in Northern Uganda, and I can assure you that this is a conflict that merits the close attention of this Subcommittee. Thank you for convening this hearing.

My testimony on behalf of USAID today seeks to summarize key aspects of the humanitarian emergency and our response to it.

LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

The United States National Security Strategy specifically refers to the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as a regional challenge that demands attention. The Strategy accurately states that "In Uganda, a barbaric rebel cult—the Lord's Resistance Army—is exploiting a regional conflict and terrorizing a vulnerable population."

It is clear that Northern Uganda's population continues to live in abject fear of continued attacks by the LRA, whose utter brutality against civilians is well-documented and well-known by this Subcommittee. The LRA has committed widespread serious abuses and atrocities, including the abduction, rape, maiming, mutilation and killing of civilians, including children. The LRA uses children as soldiers, holds children and others in slave-like conditions, and subjects female captives to rape and other forms of severe sexual exploitation. The LRA has abducted some 25,000 children during the course of the conflict, according to UNICEF; other estimates are even higher. Although LRA activities in Northern Uganda have diminished during the recent dry season, LRA combatants reportedly remain in the vicinity of many

displacement sites, and residents are fearful that random LRA attacks and atrocities could resume.

The LRA is a sub-regional issue that must be addressed. The LRA now threaten regional stability not only in Uganda, but in the volatile regions of southern Sudan and eastern Congo. The latter two countries are emerging, we hope, from long periods of warfare with heavy US investment in securing a peace. In particular, it threatens the fragile political situation in Sudan and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Overall, LRA activity in Northern Uganda and southern Sudan limits humanitarian access; blocks trans-border market and logistics routes; and limits agricultural production and trade.

HUMANITARIAN CONDITIONS

Most of the estimated 1.5 million persons displaced during Northern Uganda's conflict continue to live in deplorable conditions, scattered among more than 200 camps. With more than 90 percent of the population pushed from their homes in several districts, population density in Northern Uganda's overcrowded camps is virtually unprecedented even by international emergency standards.

The international relief community depends on measurements of mortality rates to obtain essential information about how well the affected population is surviving and what more needs to be done. Therefore, it was highly significant when a much-anticipated study of mortality levels in Northern Ugandan camps in 2005 found that mortality rates among the displaced population averaged 1.54 deaths per day per 10,000 people, significantly above the commonly used emergency threshold of 1 death per day, and more than triple the normal expected death rate in non-emergency communities in sub-Saharan Africa. Among children under age five, mortality rates in Northern Uganda's conflict zone were even more tragic, averaging 3.18 deaths per day per 10,000 children. These mortality rates translate into more than 900 excess deaths per week among displaced Ugandans.

It is important to note that this mortality data is the product of a study conducted in 2005 under the auspices of the Ugandan Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Population Fund, and the International Rescue Committee. Health experts within the USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) with vast experience in health surveys have examined the Northern Uganda mortality study and have concluded that the survey is methodologically sound and arrives at credible conclusions. A USAID health expert in Uganda earlier this month further examined health conditions in the North, closely reviewed Government of Uganda concerns about the study's approach, and has also concluded that the mortality survey was conducted according to standard practices. Regular measurements of basic health indicators, including mortality rates, are a fundamentally important component in mounting a well-informed, well-calibrated humanitarian response in crisis situations.

I am sorry to report that these grim mortality measurements tend to confirm what USAID has known for some time—that seriously substandard conditions at displacement camps have exacted a deadly toll on Northern Uganda's population. Even when compared to other humanitarian emergencies, Northern Uganda's camps are woefully deficient in the provision of water for drinking and bathing, latrines for adequate sanitation, and basic living space for physical and mental well-being. The uprooted population, deprived of any semblance of normal life, is overwhelmingly dependent on relief deliveries. More than 70 percent of displaced households in Northern Uganda have absolutely no income or earn negligible amounts equivalent to less than \$6 per month, according to a comprehensive survey conducted last year with support from USAID.

These conditions clearly indicate the challenges confronting the Government of Uganda, international donors, and the United Nations.

PROTECTION ISSUES

Mr. Chairman, as you may know, USAID has made a concerted effort in recent years to be more mindful of the serious protection problems confronting many of the needy populations we serve. We know from experience that displaced populations worldwide are particularly vulnerable to physical abuse, sexual exploitation, and other violations of their basic rights. USAID adopted an official policy on assistance to internally displaced persons in 2004 that explicitly acknowledges USAID's responsibility to devise programming strategies within its mandate to try to help vulnerable populations better manage the security risks they face.

In line with this USAID responsibility, we have conducted two on-the-ground assessments of protection issues in Northern Uganda during the past year, including an assessment last month led by the USAID/OFDA Senior Advisor on Internal Dis-

placement and Protection. The United States Government also participated in a recent multi-donor/multi-agency assessment of displacement, under the leadership of the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to refine the international community's approach to internally displaced persons.

USAID's two protection assessments in Northern Uganda found that while displaced Ugandans express appreciation that government soldiers and government-supported local defense units offer some security from LRA attacks, mistreatment of camp residents by some of those same Ugandan government security personnel remains a continuing problem. Citizens in Northern Uganda complain frequently of mistreatment by security personnel, and say that neither the Uganda Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) nor the judicial system offers an adequate mechanism for addressing these complaints. The UPDF has taken strong measures against some perpetrators, and has even executed soldiers convicted of these offenses. However, in other cases there has been no effective action against those responsible.

In the three Acholi districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, where most displacement is concentrated, Ugandan government restrictions limit residents' movements outside the camps to a few kilometers during daylight hours. While tight controls on civilian movement are meant to protect the population and hamper the LRA, many Northern Ugandans report that as a result they are unable to engage in livelihood activities such as farming and trade. Some 40 percent of camp occupants report that they are afraid to use their camp's water point. More than 40 percent state that living in a camp is as dangerous, or more dangerous, than returning to their home.

USAID will work closely with Ugandan officials at all levels to support greater freedom of movement to the displaced population in accordance with the Government of Uganda's national policy on internal displacement, which states that "freedom of movement is a fundamental human right of all Ugandans, including internally displaced persons." Easing restrictions on movement would allow more displaced families to engage in agricultural activities that would improve food security and household incomes, lessen the population's pervasive sense of entrapped dependency, and embolden a percentage of displaced persons to begin returning voluntarily to their nearby homes if and when security conditions permit.

USAID welcomes the Government of Uganda's plans to establish "Civil-Military Coordination Centers" and "Subcommittees on Human Rights Promotion and Protection" to monitor, report, and resolve protection problems and facilitate accountability. USAID will work with the Government of Uganda to help implement such plans effectively. Improved protection and disciplined behavior by government security personnel should be achievable and would build confidence within the displaced population, reduce tensions in camps, increase access to livelihood opportunities, and would serve as an important step forward in fostering reconciliation between the northern population and their national government.

USAID ASSISTANCE TO NORTHERN UGANDA

Mr. Chairman, Northern Uganda has an enormous ongoing need for emergency humanitarian relief as well as long-term development assistance. During the many years of conflict and massive population displacement in the North, the government of Uganda and the international humanitarian assistance community as a whole have failed to respond commensurate to the needs on the ground. USAID realizes that more needs to be done to help the people of Northern Uganda.

That is why the USAID Mission in Uganda, working closely with USAID/Washington, during the past year has developed an action plan for the North which is being institutionalized into a core strategic objective to mitigate the causes and consequences of conflict and will channel additional USAID staffing and financial resources to the affected area. The USAID Mission in Uganda will seek to focus more strategically on increasing access to essential services, enhancing the protection of individuals from physical and psychological violence to the extent possible, advancing peace and reconciliation processes, restoring food security and basic economic activity, and help displaced families voluntarily return home and reintegrate when safe and appropriate to do so. The Agency is determined to make a more significant dent in the miserable human conditions that dominate the daily existence of Northern Uganda's people.

State Department support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration) benefited the internally displaced persons; earmarked funds for that purpose reached \$4 million in FY 05. USAID also provided \$78 million to relief and development programs in Northern Uganda during FY 2005 and hopes to provide a similar or larger amount during FY 2006. The largest component of USAID assistance is food aid. USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) provided 79,000 metric tons in FY 2005 valued at

\$47.6 million and continues to work through the World Food Program (WFP) in FY 2006 to deliver food to nearly 1.5 million displaced persons and more than 160,000 refugees and other vulnerable persons in the North. USAID/WFP has provided 26 percent of the total funding and metric tonnage requested by WFP for 2006, nearly twice the amount provided by the next three largest donor nations combined. In addition to food for general distributions, supplementary and therapeutic feeding, school feeding, and HIV/AIDS programs, USAID/WFP this year will work with WFP to supply three-month return rations to families planning to return home voluntarily from camps, primarily in Northern Uganda's Lira district. USAID/WFP anticipates that food dependency will decline somewhat as more displaced households gain access to farm land to meet a larger proportion of their own food needs.

The second-largest component of USAID assistance to Northern Uganda is non-food humanitarian assistance provided by USAID/OFDA, which has steered the bulk of its support in recent years toward desperately needed water and sanitation projects in displacement camps, as well as health and nutrition programs. In FY 2006, USAID/OFDA has also begun to support small-scale food security programs that will enable camp residents to produce limited amounts of food. USAID/OFDA provided \$11.8 million to Northern Ugandan programs during FY 2005. USAID/OFDA is currently planning a response of \$6–8 million in FY 2006 depending upon circumstances and needs in other countries.

The USAID Mission in Uganda is significantly increasing its support in FY 2006 for HIV/AIDS programs and anti-malarial projects in the North, where malaria and AIDS rank as the two leading causes of death. Through the President's Malaria Initiative, USAID is distributing insecticide-treated mosquito netting to 85 percent of the dwellings in displacement camps. USAID is also funding HIV/AIDS programs targeting the North, as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. This includes funding for the start-up of a \$30 million, five-year program focused on delivery of services for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and Orphans and Vulnerable Children in conflict-affected districts of Northern Uganda.

In addition, USAID is supporting programs ranging from strengthening of governmental decentralization and teacher training, to infrastructure support and long-term agricultural development focused on increasing opportunities for food security and income generation through effective use of food and cash crops. USAID's Northern Uganda Peace Initiative continues to provide technical assistance to promote conflict resolution and reconciliation at local and national levels.

Mr. Chairman, I know that this hearing and indeed this entire Subcommittee has a special interest in the plight of Northern Uganda's endangered children. USAID has initiated a Community Resilience and Dialogue program in recent years that includes assistance for formerly abducted children and adults who have escaped the LRA to reunite with their families. USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and its Victims of Torture fund have contributed toward these efforts during the past six years.

The LRA uses abductions to force children into servitude as fighters, porters, manual laborers in base camps, and—in the case of female abductees—as sex slaves. Many young girls held captive have become pregnant with the children of LRA combatants. These girls and their children face significant challenges trying to reintegrate into communities, a process made all the more difficult by the displacement and destitution still suffered by many of the abductees' families. About 40 percent of the ex-abductees pass through reception centers for several weeks—three such centers are supported by USAID and its implementing partners who provide technical oversight—where programs partially address the traumatized youths' considerable health, nutritional, and psychosocial needs before the children reunite with their families, often aided by family tracing services. Experience has shown that traditional cleansing ceremonies are an important aspect in easing the shame and stigma that many returnees encounter. The USAID Community Resilience and Dialogue program has supported skills training and paid school fees for ex-abductees, provided scholastic materials, and has rehabilitated schools.

USAID continues to provide support to several "night commuter" centers where thousands of Northern Ugandan children walk each evening to spend the night sleeping in safety from LRA attacks. The number of children registering at night commuter centers has declined by about one-third during the past six months, to approximately 19,000. The decline might be a tentative sign that the northern population is gradually gaining a stronger sense of security. However, we know that the numbers of "night commuters" can fluctuate significantly depending on events. Therefore the sad spectacle of parents having to send their children several miles away to sleep safely at separate locations each night is a phenomenon that will likely continue. Many relief workers and child experts are increasingly concerned that

the “night commuting” phenomenon might be producing secondary negative emotional and social effects on some of the children.

The efforts by USAID and its implementing partners have helped thousands of ex-abductees. However, these efforts have by no means been adequate considering the large number of abducted children—unprecedented in any other conflict—and the horrific perversities that the LRA inflicted on many of the children, compounded by the instability that continues to make a return to normal life difficult if not impossible even after children and young adults have managed to escape the grasp of the LRA.

THE WAY FORWARD

USAID is acutely aware that its ability to help bring dramatic improvements to the lives of Northern Ugandans is limited until the LRA conflict ends either by military or political means. Within USAID’s mandate, here is our thinking about the way forward.

Mr. Chairman, more needs to be done in Northern Uganda. In addition to the aid that USAID is providing, other donor countries, UN humanitarian agencies, and the Government of Uganda itself need to do more. Northern Uganda contains, by some independent estimates, the third largest displaced population in the world. It is worth noting that Uganda and its neighboring countries of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo collectively account for nearly four of every ten internally displaced people on this planet. It is also worth noting that the LRA operates in all three of those countries, ruthlessly exploiting the regional instability that it helps to create and sustain. The LRA has ruthlessly earned its place on the U.S. Government’s Terrorist Exclusion List.

First, as mentioned earlier, the USAID Mission in Uganda is making budgetary and staffing adjustments to strengthen its ability to respond in Northern Uganda. USAID must maintain and expand emergency relief efforts while also preparing for a transition to reintegration and long-term development where appropriate. USAID is committed to doing what it can within its budget and mandate. We will be pleased to keep the Subcommittee informed as this process evolves.

Secondly, all USAID relief and development programs in Northern Uganda will make a heightened effort to analyze the population’s protection problems and integrate those concerns into our programming. We know, for example, that improved water programs can help protect displaced populations by reducing their need to seek water at dangerous locations outside of camps. Basic health programs can do a better job of identifying and treating rape victims. Food rations can be distributed in ways that reduce the risk of theft or exploitation. In addition, we are in regular contact with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNICEF as those three agencies become more engaged in monitoring, documenting, and helping to resolve protection and human rights problems in the North. USAID strongly supports UN officials’ new efforts to work with Ugandan authorities to secure greater freedom of movement for camp occupants.

Moreover, addressing the LRA issue is critical to advance U.S. national interests in the sub-region, reintegrate 1.5 million displaced persons, and address the recurring drain on humanitarian assistance funds. USAID believes that efforts to “push” the LRA through military and diplomatic pressure should be complemented by stronger efforts to “pull” non-indicted LRA commanders away from the LRA by persuading them to defect. Many mid-level LRA commanders choose to leave the LRA when opportunity permits, and experience suggests that such commanders tend to bring, on average, groups of about 20 LRA members with them when they defect. According to a recent study about LRA defectors, rebel commanders tend to be more ready to escape and return home when they are confident that physical security, freedom, and livelihood opportunities await them in civilian life in Northern Uganda. Thorough and accurate information about the Ugandan government’s amnesty and reintegration process is the most significant factor encouraging commanders to defect, according to the study entitled “Opportunities for Peace in Northern Uganda” conducted by Conciliation Resources and Quaker Peace & Social Witness. Therefore, more effort is needed to disseminate information about demobilization and reintegration programs for LRA ex-combatants, and specialized support is required immediately to improve those reintegration programs.

Additionally, USAID and the Department of State Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) have closely collaborated to push the UN to improve its global humanitarian response system to make UN agencies better coordinated and more accountable in response to the needs of the internally displaced. Such UN reforms are particularly crucial in Northern Uganda because of the UN

system's weak performance there addressing the needs of internally displaced persons over the years. The UN has appropriately chosen Northern Uganda as a prime location to introduce one of the humanitarian reforms during 2006, known as the "cluster leads strategy", which we believe will make the response by the UN humanitarian community more predictable and the UN agencies more accountable. USAID and State/PRM have fielded two joint assessment teams during the past three months to monitor UN reform efforts and help push the process forward. We believe it is absolutely crucial that UN humanitarian agencies become more effective in the Northern Uganda crisis. That will require agreement with the Government of Uganda and appointment by the UN of a strong humanitarian coordinator.

USAID welcomes indications from the Government of Uganda that it intends to intensify its efforts in the North. The Ugandan government last year unveiled an excellent overall "National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons" that largely remains to be implemented in practice. Helping the Ugandan government activate its displacement policy remains a high priority for USAID, the UN and other major donors.

In March 2006, Ugandan authorities in consultation with bilateral and multilateral partners—including the U.S. Government—prepared an "Emergency Plan for Humanitarian Interventions in LRA-Affected Areas of Northern Uganda" and designated a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) to set performance benchmarks. The JMC includes the U.S. Government, the governments of the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway, and South Africa, and representatives of the World Bank, the UN, and civil society. The Emergency Plan pledges intensified efforts by the Ugandan government to end the conflict in the North and lay the groundwork for reconciliation and ex-combatant reintegration. The Action Plan commits the Government of Uganda to enhance protection of displaced populations and improve camp conditions. It is noteworthy that the new Emergency Plan commits the Ugandan government "to increased funding for interventions identified in the Action Plan." USAID will work closely with the Government of Uganda to take concrete actions which produce tangible results through the JMC and to fulfill its primary responsibility for the protection of its citizens.

In addition, the Government of Uganda in the coming months will finalize a comprehensive National Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for Northern Uganda which USAID hopes will provide an even more detailed picture of the Ugandan government's plans and commitment to the North.

Lastly, access to displaced populations for purposes of assessing needs, documentation and analysis of protection problems, design and implementation of assistance programs, and evaluation of projects is absolutely essential to everything that USAID and its implementing partners are attempting to do in Northern Uganda. Therefore, signs of increased tensions between the Government of Uganda and international relief agencies are troubling and will, we hope, be resolved in a manner that best serves the considerable needs of Northern Uganda's large, vulnerable population.

Plans by the Ugandan military to reduce military escorts for humanitarian relief convoys, for example, are understandable in light of recent security improvements at some locations. However, such decisions should, USAID believes, occur as part of a consultative process that seriously considers the safety concerns of humanitarian agencies in the field, some of whom suffered deadly highway ambushes just five months ago.

The Department of State's testimony refers to recently passed Ugandan legislation that would impose tighter licensing and permit rules on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This has raised concerns among local and international relief organizations that Ugandan officials are seeking greater control over some agencies' information collection and advocacy efforts on behalf of Northern Uganda's conflict victims. USAID believes that the ability to independently collect, analyze and make public information on the humanitarian crisis, subject to principles of political neutrality, impartiality, and accuracy, is essential to providing the most appropriate response commensurate with the scale of the crisis. USAID will work closely with Ugandan authorities to promote a process for strengthening collaboration between nongovernmental organizations and the Government of Uganda, including institutionalized channels of regular communication and adequate representation of NGO viewpoints. The U.S. Government and no doubt other donors would welcome the opportunity to foster dialogue and continued good relations between the Government of Uganda and the organizations working to provide assistance to the Ugandan people.

Mr. Chairman, the Lord's Resistance Army has terrorized the people of Northern Uganda for too long. There are signs the LRA is now on the run. The Government of Uganda and the international community need to step up efforts to end the con-

flict, support the displaced as they remain in camps or as they voluntarily return home, and heal the physical and psychological wounds of this terrible tragedy. Far too many people continue to perish, and far too many survivors are forced to lead a miserable and fearful daily existence. Only the full restoration of peace and security will eliminate the current emergency in the North. Until that time comes, USAID is determined to effectively respond to what remains one of the most overlooked humanitarian crises in the world. Given the complexity of moving forward, we welcome the opportunity to continue working in strong partnership with the Government of Uganda in the future.

I welcome your questions on my testimony or any others you might have for me at this time.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much as well.

Let me just begin the questioning, first of all, to Mr. Krilla if I could. Given the ability of the LRA to cross borders between Uganda, Sudan, and the Congo at will, what role do you think a regional approach might take here—particularly with the U.N. and other nations like ourselves who are very interested in working with Uganda?

Secondly, on the indictment of Joseph Kony by the International Criminal Court; do you see this as a double-edge sword? I would note that Charles Taylor was indicted with the regional court and the pressure of that indictment certainly helped to bring him to what we hope will be justice. But in the former Yugoslavia, Karadich and Malanovich remain even though we have complete access to the former Yugoslavia, have troops deployed, and international peacekeepers all over the former Yugoslavia. Yet these two individuals have still evaded arrest and done so even though Serbia claims it is cooperating.

So my question is, has that indictment perhaps served as a block to a negotiated settlement of some kind? And as far as we know, what was the ICC thinking when they did this without having a viable means of apprehending Joseph Kony?

It seems to me that when you put out an arrest warrant you better have some realistic possibility of apprehending the suspect, and I am not sure that exists currently. Maybe I am wrong, but if you would spend a moment or two on that.

Then the issue you mentioned in your testimony that the UNICEF representative in Uganda says that the UPDF regular forces have no child soldiers. The LDUs continue to have high child recruits. If you could define what high is. How many are we talking about? And does our intelligence back up what the UNICEF representative have said, that the Ugandan UPDF forces do not have child soldiers?

Then if you could, Mr. Rogers, in your testimony you talked about many things, and it is very comprehensive statement and we thank you for it. Both of you have provided very comprehensive statements, but about 40 percent of the abductees pass through reception centers for several weeks, and three of those centers are backed by the USAID. How many centers are there, and how are the ex-abductees tiered?

Obviously, some are more hardened than others. We know that PTSD and other psychological trauma, in addition to all the physical trauma, is sometimes life-long, and I wonder what kind of massive effort is made for the most hardened of these young people who have been killing and raping themselves? Do they escape,

some of them, and again how many are we talking about? And is there a need for us to be funding additional centers?

You say we are helping in a partnership with at least three. Are there some that are going underfunded simply because we have not deployed enough resources?

Then finally on the issue of non-lethal military assistance and training, has that produced positive tangible successes in terms of human rights training for the Ugandan military?

Over the last 30 years that I have tracked this there have been times when military training has not been effective. It has actually been counterproductive, and I can explain it, but how do we gauge this? Is there a good monitoring system to ensure that human rights training really is taking hold?

Mr. KRILLA. Well, I will start off first with a couple of your questions, and perhaps turn over to my colleague for some of the others.

Certainly the international role, the role of the U.N., the situation is bigger than just the U.S. Government solution here, and for the U.S. Government to apply pressure and to weigh in in the region would not be nearly as effective without the kind of international efforts that we share the burden with our colleagues not only in the core group that is working in the region, the U.K., Norway and The Netherlands, but truthfully the entire United Nations in examining the greater region and especially inasmuch as it affects Sudan and the DRC, something that Mr. Payne mentioned earlier in his comments.

In terms of our general strategy of applying—this is in terms of United States Government strategy, and the international aspect of it is applying pressure on the Ugandan Government to reach out to the Acholi people is something that we are doing in coordination with other international—especially the international donors.

The second prong being humanitarian assistance is clearly something that we share the burden with other international partners as well.

Then lastly, the military support through non-lethal assistance and training, although it is something that the United States Government has taken the lead on, certainly in the military coordination the region has done in conjunction with the forces, the MONUC forces in the DRC as well as the UNMIS Forces in Sudan, and I will just touch on that very briefly because Mr. Payne, as I mentioned, did mention it in his opening statement, the idea of trying to coordinate some sort of military response.

I would say that that is true and that could be effective to a point. Certainly those forces there have to make sure that they respect their own mandates. Earlier this year, in January, the MONUC forces in Congo engaged with the LRA in the eastern part of the country. Unfortunately, they suffered some losses, although generally were considered to be an effective encounter for the MONUC forces. I believe eight Guatemalan soldiers were killed at that time, which is very unfortunate, but at the same time they were fulfilling their mission. They were trying to stabilize the region in the eastern Congo.

Similarly, they soldiers that are serving in Sudan are maxed out in their capacities and able to just maintain their mandate in Sudan. So I would hesitate at this time to say that we should ex-

tend their mandate and expect them to be able to cross over into Uganda, but at the same time having them in the region has been very helpful with an insurgency like the LRA that tends to cross back and forth across the borders as easily as they have.

So I think there is an international angle both in terms of humanitarian assistance pressure that can be brought on the government as well as the military forces there. So I think that answers your first question.

Mr. SMITH. On that first question, Michelle Brown from Refugees International makes a number of recommendations, and if you could just add to that answer. She believes there should be support for an appointment of high-level U.N. envoy on the regional crisis, including northern Uganda, who reports regularly to the Security Council. Is that something the Administration would support?

And support for a panel of experts to investigate the sources of support for the LRA, which remains illusive as to exactly where are they getting their money.

Mr. KRILLA. Yes. Well, I will address both of those issues because they are certainly ones that are frustrating us.

Well, the special envoy I wouldn't say so much frustrating as so much of one of the things that we are considering. I brought up this issue not only with our own Ambassador when he was heading out the door, but it is something that the Africa Bureau and my bureau have discussed as something, a tool that perhaps down the road we could explore.

Like other donors, we are frustrated at times by the seeming lack of progress in the efforts to bring peace to the people of northern Uganda. I think there are a number of levers that we are using right now, some of the additional humanitarian assistance we have seen in effect, the slight reduction in the night commuters, and the additional security around the IDP camps is something that I believe in the future will bear fruit and will help out the situation there.

So in terms of the U.N. special envoy, we are certainly examining proposals, but we haven't come to a final decision on that, a final conclusion, but I will work with you and keep you abreast as they develop.

The second issue that you just raised, I am sorry, the special envoy and then?

Mr. SMITH. It was per Michelle Brown, the idea of a panel of experts to look into sources of funding.

Mr. KRILLA. Yes. I think that is—I, myself, have been very discouraged by the lack of a clear path as to where the LRA is getting their support. Up until last year, up until the comprehensive peace agreement was signed in Sudan, there was a very clear connection between the government and Sudan and the support for the LRA, not only serving as a safe haven for LRA troops within the southern enclaves of the government's safe areas there, but also providing direct financial and military assistance.

Now, after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement, the safe havens were no longer offered, and we have not seen, although it is difficult to judge directly where things are coming from, we have not seen a great deal of continuing support. We haven't seen support from the Sudanese Government to the LRA.

The one thing I will say is we believe that with the levels of support pre-January of last year being so significant, the arms caches that existed are ones that they can rely on for years to come, which is a very unfortunate situation, and certainly something that we are continuing to monitor.

Mr. ROGERS. In terms of the number of reception centers, frankly, I am not sure we have a good count on the number of centers. There is sort of a degree of formality to these things. As I said, we estimate that 40 percent of the people come through the formal centers. I will try and get you the number of how many of those formal centers there are for the record.

Obviously, as you suggest, there are various degrees of trauma suffered by these children, and some of them are rehabilitated fairly simply. I think, to be frank, many of the most traumatized, and I have seen kids in Lira and Gulu who were severely traumatized; I think it is going to take a long time, if ever, before they get over this sort of thing.

But having said that, it is amazing to see the capacity of the Acholi people to forgive, and part of the process of helping these kids over the trauma is to go through ritual Acholi cleansing procedures that allow them to see themselves as returning to their society as a worthwhile member, and once they are welcome back into the community, the community helps with the healing process.

So I think we are reasonably encouraged that these centers actually do serve the children well. I think, as I said in the testimony, I think there is capacity for us to do more. We would like to support more centers. We would like to come up with a more robust program for attracting the LRA fighters to come out, and so we are continuing to try and find opportunities to do that. But I think the centers are very worthwhile institutions doing a good job.

Mr. SMITH. Secretary Krilla, did you want to touch on the ICC end of the human rights training?

Mr. KRILLA. I did. If you don't mind me skipping, going to the human rights training first—

Mr. SMITH. Sure.

Mr. KRILLA [continuing]. Because it is something I feel very passionately about.

Certainly in my bureau, the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, we are very supportive of the idea of any sort of professional military training coming, hand-in-hand, coming in conjunction with human rights training as well. We found this to be effective throughout the world as U.S. Government seeks to engage in professionalize militaries and certainly this program which is called the IMET Program, the International Military Education and Training Program, which we provided approximately \$250,000 per year for training of the UPDF includes a large component of civil/military relations, military justice, professional military education, and human rights, which we consider fundamental in the training of the soldiers there.

In terms of the effect, I mean, we have seen this program being very effective throughout the world, and in Uganda, even just in the year or so that this has been up and running, we have been very pleased with the training with the fact that the UPDF is itself

a much more professional force, and the trainers that we have used there have been very pleased with the results.

But that is something, too, I would like to keep you informed of as we see greater benchmarks for that training.

Mr. SMITH. If you could, for the record, elaborate on what that training actually entails, and who it is that we train. Is it the colonels, the sergeants, the upper echelon, the officer corps? That would be very helpful for the record.

Mr. ROGERS. Between the two of us, we will get you that information.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate that very much.

Mr. KRILLA. Well, I would say the training itself is counter-insurgency oriented command and staff training, so it tends to target the higher echelon officers. It is generally non-lethal communications and ground mobility assistance. It is not so much tactics and infantry training as it is communication, command and communications, especially the human rights training that I spoke to earlier, but it tends to directly impact the leadership as they carry out their orders with this ground force.

Mr. SMITH. Does the human rights training also include a package on human trafficking and sexual exploitation?

Mr. KRILLA. Yes, that is part of the training as well. And if you would like, even if we can't cover it in its more comprehensive manner right now, I can get you some more written information—

Mr. SMITH. I would appreciate that, yes.

Mr. KRILLA [continuing]. In response to your question, sir.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Ambassador Watson.

Ms. WATSON. I didn't see the light on.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. I was just reading this story of a young women Acholi, and is she here?

Mr. SMITH. The fourth from the left there.

Ms. WATSON. Okay.

Mr. SMITH. She will be testifying.

Ms. WATSON. Oh, she will be testifying, so I am going to hold my questions until she is able to come up and testify. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Dr. Boozman.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Yes, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this hearing, you and Mr. Payne. I have got to run in a little bit. The House Democratization Committee has a group of Macedonia here, and they are coming by my office.

But I have actually had the opportunity to go to Uganda and see firsthand what is being talked about. I went to Senator Inhofe, and Senator Inslee, and we were able to go to the north and visit with some of the children that were being repatriated, you know, going through the process, and hearing the stories and visiting with these young girls that had borne children at a very early age, and then there was the process of trying to go back to a village that because of cultural norms and things it was very difficult to do many times.

Then I also got to visit with some of the people that were a member of the rebel group that had come back, you know, and been repatriated that way. So I guess my message to you is I will do any-

thing you ask me to do. We just need some direction as to how to solve the problem.

You know, we are blessed. We live in a wonderful country and our great nation, and have tremendous resources, and I guess it is difficult for us to really understand how, you know, the whole world. When I visit with my colleagues in the EU and this and that, and being on the International Relations Committee, we are with these folks, but it is difficult. The whole world condemns this and yet we allow it to go on. You all have done a tremendous job in being involved because the reality is a lot of people, though they condemn it, they don't really care, or we wouldn't allow it to continue.

So I appreciate you being here, and certainly we look to you for guidance as to how to rectify this.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Dr. Boozman.

Ms. McCollum.

Mr. KRILLA. I just wanted to make one comment there.

Mr. SMITH. Sure.

Mr. KRILLA. I think it is critical for hearings like this to be conducted. I think it is great that this issue was raised. I think bringing the spotlight on northern Uganda at this time is so important, and similarly I would say, Congressman, that your trips out to the region are very helpful. I know that you have been out to the region, and Congressman Smith, I know, Congresswoman McCollum has been out there as well.

I think anything that you can do to raise the attention of Americans to these crisis, I mean, we see this kind of situation, we react, and we want to try and solve the problems, and I think it is important for us as diplomats and for our aid organizations to be able to see the support back at home, and I think the more the Americans know about this the more they will feel similar to the comments you made, sir.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you. Ms. McCollum.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I had the opportunity, as it was pointed out, to be in the Gulu area just this year, and it was wonderful in many regards to meet the people in the community working with our NGOs. I was with CARE for awhile, working to make these young children feel that they can come home. Military men that we spoke to that were from the Uganda military, talking about how difficult it is in situations like that. They have been encouraging the children to approach them, but at the same times sometimes when these young children are approaching them, sometimes they are friends, sometimes they are foe, and the heartbreaking stories that everyone had to tell, but at the same time the determination to turn these children's lives around and to bring peace and stability to the region, and from the archbishop to the human rights activists, Betty that I met, it was phenomenal.

But I recently had an opportunity, in fact, just this week, in talking to a parliamentarian, former parliamentarian from Uganda, Norbert Mau, who is now the governor of an encompassed area in Gulu, and he was talking to me about needing help with the people

coming from the IDP camps, and, you know, there is not only the security issue, but there is getting people with ongoing support and help as they reintegrate into another part of their community.

What kind of plans do we have in either working with our NGOs or with government-to-government or government-to-local government in that region to not only offer the security so that the return home can happen, but also to continue the journey to be successful, because counseling just doesn't take place in 6 months and everything is going good because you are going to hit those bumps along the way? So what are our long-term plans over the next—and by long term, I don't mean a generation—what are our long-term plans beyond just the first couple of months where we are interacting with the children who have escaped?

Mr. ROGERS. I will try and take a crack at that one.

Our field mission has worked with the government, and we have developed a long-range plan in anticipation that there is going to be the opportunity for more IDPs to return to their homes, and we have already seen—I think I just saw a report of 100,000 down in the Teso region had begun to repatriate to their homes.

You are absolutely right that security is going to be a problem. We want to be sure that people are not forced out of the IDP camps in a situation where they don't feel secure and are forced to go into an insecure area. So we are working with the government to establish volunteerism as a principal part of the return policy.

Then we have begun to develop some packages of assistance, food assistance to help people get back, farming implements, that sort of thing. It will allow people to get back and started with their livelihoods.

It is fortunate for the people from that region that it is a very productive area. You must remember how beautiful, I don't know whether you were there in the rainy season or not, but it is a very beautiful area of Africa, and very productive agriculturally.

So it is our expectation that the economy can actually revive fairly quickly once the security situation will permit people to get back to agriculture. But we have begun doing some extensive planning ourselves and extensive planning with the government on how that is going to work.

The government is developing, and we expect a more detailed plan to be published shortly on how they intend to assist the transition in the north.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair, if I may. Were you referring to the government because I have served in local government, state government, no national government? What governmental organizations are we working with?

Of course, we have to work with the national Government of Uganda. But are you able to break that down in working with regions?

Mr. Chair, if I might, Norbert Mau is now called Chairman Mall, but he is a really good Chairman Mau. [Laughter.]

Of northern Uganda. Are you going to be working with people at that level, at Chairman Mau's level? He was telling me his constituents, he is about five times the size larger than I am, so it is a fairly good subset. Or do you just work with the national government and hope that things get moved down?

When we are doing bilateral government-to-government, we can follow up on the NGOs, but how are we following up on the government to make sure it is really getting to Gulu?

Mr. ROGERS. Yes, we have been doing most of our planning up to now with the national government, but the AID mission is planning on refocusing to the north, and we have considered the possibility of actually stationing people in the north once security permits. So we do expect to be moving into work with the local governments in the north once the security situation permits.

So far most of our work has been done at the national level.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an important hearing to keep follow up on it, so thank you.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Ms. McCollum. Thank you for your contribution as well and for going there.

Let me just ask one final question with regards to the NGO registration amendment bill that you referenced, Secretary Krilla.

You called it troubling. One, has it been signed by the President because you indicated it passed the parliament, but I am not clear if it was actually signed? And what do you think the genesis of this is? Is it all about control, or is there anything that legitimize its enactment? How can we exert the maximum pressure since friends don't let friends commit human rights abuses. It seems to me the NGOs are really on the front line of providing the necessary help and assistance to people who might otherwise die, be sick, or be abducted.

Putting security forces people on NGO boards could have a severe chilling effect. It could make the LRA as evil as it is less willing to allow some people to get assistance or even target aid workers. I mean, this bill seems to have trouble written all over it. If you could speak to it perhaps.

On the question of the ICC again, do we have a position as a country? Not on the ICC itself, but on the indictment of Joseph Kony?

Mr. KRILLA. Sure. Let me talk about the ICC issue first and then the NGO bill because this is very important as well.

The Kony indictment, you know, this is another example of sort of peace versus justice. What are we looking for here? The LRA, one of the reasons it is so difficult target the LRA is because so many of the members of the LRA, of the actual foot soldiers are victims. These are the child soldiers who have been abducted into serving the LRA leadership, the ones who really need to be bought to justice, and what is in effect a human shield around these perpetrators. So it is very difficult to carry out the war and it is very difficult to get at those five without having other victims included in whatever effort you are trying to make.

So I think the ICC's effort was a way to try and target those five individuals that are most responsible for the atrocities. Certainly the challenge, as we have seen in other countries, is when an indictment comes through it makes them less willing to come forward. However, as we have seen in terms of the LRA, there hasn't been a whole lot of direction or policy. It is difficult to even know what they stand for.

I think it is about power, it is about control, and that is why it has been so difficult to negotiate with them as well because it is not clear what they want out of this whole thing.

So I would say the ICC effort has been part of the Ugandan Government's effort to bring a solution. I think they were very keen on getting these indictments of these five individuals, and I think we should support them in trying to bring them to justice through the levers that we have already explained, and it does definitely complicate things, but at the same time I don't think that if they hadn't come down, I don't think these individuals would have come forward anyway.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chair?

Mr. SMITH. Yes.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. That point, when we met with the bishop and with Betty up there, they were kind of inclined to think that the indictments were counterproductive, because it also kind of trickled over into the layers of if these people are wanted by the international court system, then some of the victims, the child soldiers and that, then they become kind of tainted and branded with this, and they were wondering why we didn't hold off on it because we didn't have anybody in hand to take to court anyway.

So I don't know how much input the citizens of northern Uganda who have been most impacted by the LRA had in any way with what was happening in the capital. Did you hear any of that?

Mr. KRILLA. I would suspect that you are correct. This was the decision that was more of a top down decision in Uganda. The one thing that I will say toward that ends is the Ugandan Government's efforts are sort of two-pronged right now. One is providing amnesty to LRA members who disarm and demobilize willingly while at the same time conducting the war, and talking about going with the five leaders through the ICC and going at the five leaders there.

So the amnesty program is something that is trying to target the victims themselves that are members of the LRA, but the Ugandan Government felt they are going in this direction, and I don't think that I can necessarily speak for the Ugandan Government on this, but as I understand the strategy it was one of trying to provide incentives for the victims within the LRA to be able to leave while at the same time targeting them, but I definitely understand your point, Ms. McCollum.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to make sure that the voices of the citizens in that area who shared it with us as elected officials that they knew that we heard the loud and clear.

Mr. ROGERS. I know Betty quite well, and I agree that her view was that this was counterproductive, but I think there are other people in the north who feel that the likelihood of the senior-most leadership ever coming to peace was very remote as hard as Betty has tried for an agreement. So I think that there are others who feel that this actually sort of clarifies and divides the lines between those who are most culpable and those who can be brought out under an amnesty program.

So I think there are some people who think there is still a chance that the LRA itself can be divided and actually that seems to be the way things might be going, but we will have to see.

Mr. SMITH. Secretary Krilla, would a bounty of U.S. funding on the head of people like Joseph Kony make a difference, you know, the rewards for justice?

Mr. KRILLA. No, I don't know. I could talk to my bureau.

Mr. SMITH. Will you take that back and maybe get back to us?

Mr. KRILLA. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. We have done that for many of these prior individuals in the past.

Finally, Mr. Rogers, if you could, how much in additional spending do you think is needed this year and into 2007 to adequately address the needs of the IDPs? Is there a relatively hard number that we can work from?

Mr. ROGERS. Before I answer that question, or attempt to answer it, I do think it is important for us to answer the NGO bill question because we couldn't do our humanitarian assistance in Uganda in the north without the NGOs. So we recognize their concern with respect to this bill, and we are committed, the Embassy is committed and AID mission in Uganda is committed, to working with the government to see if we can resolve any issue satisfactorily and try and establish better lines of communication than have apparently been there so far.

So the NGO bill is a concern, and we expect to be able to deal with it.

With respect to money, we don't have a firm figure. Obviously substantial additional resources would be necessary in order to bring these displacement camps up to standards. However, there are limitations on what we can do. The fact is that if there weren't a security problem in the north, we would be able to do more than we are currently able to do. So there is a balance that has to be struck between what we can do under current security circumstances and what additional resources we would like to provide.

As I said in my testimony, the United States is the largest donor and certainly we expect other donors to provide their fair share, but the basic point that these displacement camps are substandard by all humanitarian standards that are established is absolutely accurate, and it would require substantial additional resources to bring them up to standards.

Mr. SMITH. Have you seen or detected in President Museveni's post-election a new willingness to try to resolve the issue of northern Uganda?

Mr. ROGERS. We have seen the government effect in a number of its own publications, they did an excellent IDP policy. We think that what is necessary is to work more effectively with the government. They themselves have committed to providing more resources to the north, so it is a question of the government following through on what it said it wants to do.

Mr. SMITH. I appreciate it. Could you provide us the government's Uganda's IDP policy paper.

Mr. ROGERS. Absolutely.

Mr. SMITH. And we will make it a part of the record, without objection and it will be helpful in our contacts as well with the government.

[The information referred to follows:]

Line 1423

THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**THE NATIONAL POLICY FOR
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS**

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
DEPARTMENT OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND
REFUGEES**

AUGUST 2004

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FOREWORD

The Government of Uganda had always addressed the needs of internally displaced persons through provision of humanitarian assistance and overseeing their return, resettlement and reintegration through normal sectoral planning.

The need, however, arose over time for standard coordinated multisectoral, multi-disciplinary procedures and guides for Government Institutions, Development and Humanitarian Agencies in planning and responding to matters of internal displacement of persons. This Policy is intended to address these needs in a significant and effective manner.

The Policy builds on existing international humanitarian law and human rights instruments and relevant national laws. The Policy will play a significant role in raising awareness of the needs and rights of IDPs, mobilising support within the country and from the development and humanitarian community.

Whereas we cannot stop the occurrence of natural hazards and some of the human-induced crises, with collective effort and proper planning, we can reduce their chances of turning into disasters and minimize their impact on the affected population and the economy.

I wish to thank all of those who contributed to the preparation of this policy and urge all those institutions involved in protection and the provision of assistance to the IDPs to adhere to this policy. In so doing we shall go a long way in achieving the much needed improvement in the status and treatment of IDPs.

Lt. Gen (Rtd) Moses Ali

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

PREAMBLE

This Policy establishes the principles which will serve as a guide to Government institutions, humanitarian and development agencies while providing assistance and protection to Internally Displaced Persons in Uganda. The Policy specifies the roles and responsibilities of Government institutions, humanitarian and development agencies, donors and the displaced community and other stakeholders.

Fundamental to this Policy is the recognition that Internally Displaced Persons shall enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under the Constitution and all other laws, as do all other persons in Uganda. They shall not be discriminated against in the fulfilment of any rights and freedoms on the grounds that they are internally displaced.

Internally Displaced Persons have the right to request and receive protection and humanitarian assistance from national and district authorities

In this policy, Government commits itself to:

- i. Protecting its citizens against arbitrary displacement
- ii. Promoting the search for durable solutions to causes of displacement
- iii. Facilitating the voluntary return, resettlement, integration and re-integration of the IDPs
- iv. Ensuring that every person, internally displaced or otherwise receives information relating to this Policy.

BACKGROUND

Large communities in Uganda have, at one time or the other been forced or obliged to flee their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of either natural or human-induced disasters.

From 1979 to the present day (2004), about 7 million people i.e. over 1/3 of Uganda's population have been affected by civil conflict and cattle rustling.

The dictatorial rule of Idi Amin (1971-79) and the subsequent liberation war of 1979, left an estimated 500,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands were either internally displaced or forced into exile. The internally displaced persons ended up living in camps where protection of their human rights, provision of food, medical and social services were grossly inadequate.

From 1981 to 1985 the war in the Luweero Triangle caused significant displacement and loss of lives.

The Uganda People's Army (UPA) insurgency in the North-East followed from 1987 causing immense human suffering especially in Soroti and Kumi Districts, leaving an estimated 300,000 people displaced and many others dead.

In the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced for many years as a result of the "Holy Spirit Movement" rebel group of Alice Lakwena and then later the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of Joseph Kony. In August 2003, LRA incursions into Teso and the Lango sub-regions caused massive displacements, raising the figure to over 1,600,000 people.

The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) insurgency (1994-2001) caused the death of hundreds of people and internal displacement of 150,000 others in the Rwenzori region.

For over a long period of time, Karamajong cattle rustling has caused internal displacement within Karamoja, and from 1994 to date (2004) in the neighbouring districts of Katakwi (88,623 people) and Pader (about 23,000 people).

Natural disasters in particular, landslides and floods have displaced large numbers of people at the slopes of Mt. Elgon, Rwenzori Mountains, the hills of Kigezi, Ankole, the Semliki valley and along the basin of River Nile in the North of the Country.

The trend above shows that at any one time, a number of *gandans* will be in a state of internal displacement and hence the need for this Policy.

Mr. SMITH. I thank you so much, I thank you both for your excellent testimony and your service on behalf of those who are so disadvantaged.

Mr. KRILLA. Thank you, Your Honor.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH. I would like to now welcome our second panel to our witness table, beginning with Ms. Grace Akallo. Ms. Akallo was born in northern Uganda. In October 1996 the rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army attacked her school, St. Mary's College in northern Uganda. For 7 months, Ms. Akallo was held in captivity by the LRA, serving as a child soldier, and given as a "wife" to a senior LRA commander.

After she escaped from the LRA, Grace completed her education. During the past few years, she has traveled the world sharing her story on the plight of child soldiers, including sharing her story on the Oprah Winfrey Show in 2004.

We will then hear from Dr. Ronald Waldman, who is Professor of Clinical, Population and Family Health and Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the Mailman School of Public Health of Columbia University, and founding director of its program on forced migration and health.

Dr. Waldman began his career with the World Health Organization's Global Smallpox Eradication Program in Bangladesh. In addition, he has served as the WHO's emergency response team leader in Aceh, Indonesia, following the tsunami of December 2004, and has written about health care policy in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We will then hear from Ms. Michelle Brown who joined Refugees International in 2000, and currently represents the organization at the United Nations.

Previously Ms. Brown worked for 3 years as an English teacher in Japan. She also worked in South Asia with various women's health organizations and with a women's microenterprise organizations in Cambodia.

Grace, if you could begin with your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF MS. GRACE GRALL AKALLO, FORMER
ABDUCTED CHILD SOLDIER FOR THE LRA, WORLD VISION**

Ms. AKALLO. Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit my testimony for the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, it will be part of the record.

Ms. AKALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the endangered children of northern Uganda.

I am speaking on behalf of World Vision, a Christian relief and development organization that provides on-the-ground assistance to children and families in need, regardless of who they are.

For the past 55 years, World Vision has been serving children and families throughout the world. In Uganda, World Vision has been serving since 1986 with a broad range of assistance including meeting emergency needs; offering direct HIV/AIDS care and prevention education; and leading long-term poverty alleviation efforts in the areas of agriculture, economic development, and water and sanitation; care for orphans and vulnerable children, and more.

In northern Uganda, where I was born and raised, for over 10 years, World Vision has been working to serve through a broad range of intervention, but in particular, they have had a very important ministry to young people like myself. For the past 11 years, World Vision staff have counseled, rehabilitated, and reconciled more than 15,000 formerly abducted children with their families and communities.

Since 1986, a rebel group called the Lord's Resistance Army, or the LRA, led by Joseph Kony, has waged war against the current Ugandan Government, and against us, the children of northern Uganda. Kony has abducted more than 30,000 children, forcing them to serve as soldiers and forced concubines within their ranks.

I was once one of those children. But by God's grace I am alive and with you today.

In October 1996, the Lord's Resistance Army, LRA, attacked St. Mary's college, Aboke, a girls' boarding school in Aboke Town, in Apac District in northern Uganda. They abducted 139 girls—including myself. I was 15 years old at the time.

One of the nuns who ran the school, Sister Rachelle Fassera, followed the rebels into the bush, pleading for our release. The rebels released 109 of my classmates, but the LRA refused to let me go. I was forced to stay, along with 29 others.

I was forcibly marched into southern Sudan. We walked for 4 days and 4 nights. There the LRA had bases that were run and protected by forces allied with the Sudanese Government in Khartoum.

I, and the other girls captured with me were trained to assemble and disassemble, and clean and use guns. We were used as slave labor by the Lord's Resistance Army and Sudanese Government soldiers. We were forcibly given to senior LRA commanders as so-called "wives."

For 7 months, I was held in captivity by the LRA, always looking for an opportunity to escape. I constantly prayed that God would allow me to see my family once more before I died. I desperately wanted to finish my education. But hope seemed distant. I saw two other children who had tried to unsuccessfully escape. They were brutally murdered in front of me as a warning.

One night, we were forced to raid a village, and I was directed to help steal food and water. I fainted from thirst. I woke up hours later, buried alive in a shallow grave. The Ugandan soldiers, along with the SPLA, Sudan People's Liberation Army, attacked the base of the Lord's Resistance Army, allowing me a chance to escape.

I walked for 3 days, living on soil and leaves before I found another group of children who had also escaped. I persuaded eight of them to join me, and we eventually found a group of villagers who took care of us, before helping us to connect with the Ugandan army to return home.

I escaped alive from the Lord's Resistance Army, but five of my classmates died in captivity. The others gradually managed to escape over the past 10 years; some are infected by HIV/AIDS; many of them have children by the commanders who abused them. Ten years later, two of my friends are still held hostage by the LRA.

So I thank God for allowing me to see my family again. I thank him for allowing me to continue on with my education. I went back

to St. Mary's, Aboke, to finish high school, and then I began studying at Uganda Christian University in southern Uganda near the capital city, Kampala.

I have since transferred to Gordon College in Boston, where I am now working on my undergraduate degree in communications. When I finish my education, I would like to work for 1 year, and then continue on to graduate school to study international relations and conflict resolution. I want to be part of the people struggling day and night to try to bring peace in the world.

Thousands of children walk each night by themselves to town as far as 10 miles away. Unfortunately, my story is not uncommon. In fact, it has become so common that abduction is now a fear which daily defines the lives of children who live in the war-affected areas. Because there is no protection for children in northern Uganda, they have to create their own way to cope with abduction. Thousands of children walk each evening by themselves to town as far as 10 miles away to find safety from the LRA. They sleep on the streets of town centers and makeshift camps. These children are now known as "night commuters."

Recently, there has been a decline in the number of attacks by the LRA, so the number of night commuters has been reduced. But just as the LRA kidnapped me in the middle of the night, they usually abduct children under the cover of darkness. Because of this, most children in northern Uganda are now afraid to sleep in their own beds at night.

This war continues because the world ignores our plight. But this war can stop if leaders in the international community take real action to end this crisis. By action, I specifically mean three things: One, high-level engagement by the U.S. Government. Members of Congress, the Administration, and international leaders must use their political influence to pressure the Government of Sudan to stop support for the Lord's Resistance Army. The United States must also use high-level influence to pressure the Government of Uganda to end the war.

Remember, more than 80 percent of the Lord's Resistance Army is comprised of abducted children, people like myself who were stolen in the middle of the night.

Two, U.S. leadership in mobilizing the international community to put global pressure on combatants to protect children and to end the conflict.

Three, provide more resources to help people suffering because of this conflict. Although the number of rebel attacks has decreased in some areas, many of my family and friends are still living in squalid displacement camps. Those who remain in IDP camps continue to need significant humanitarian assistance. In some areas, people have begun to return to their villages, but continued protection and security against the LRA who are still at-large is critical.

It will also be important for the Government of Uganda and the international community to provide returnees with adequate resettlement assistance and support in restoring and developing community infrastructure so that people can begin to rebuild their lives.

We also need support for more psycho-social programs that help all children living in northern Uganda, because all children in the region have been traumatized by this war: Whether they have been

abducted, or watched their brothers or sisters or classmates being abducted, or they are a night commuter, and live in fear of abduction.

If these things are done, I believe the war will end. It can end tomorrow if the world comes together to do these things.

Mr. Chairman, I ask for your help and the help of others to take action to end this war so that my sisters and brothers and all the children of northern Uganda can sleep in peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Akallo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. GRACE GRALL AKALLO, FORMER ABDUCTED CHILD
SOLDIER FOR THE LRA, WORLD VISION

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the endangered children of northern Uganda.

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MY STORY

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One of the nuns who ran the school, Sister Rachelle Fassera, followed the rebels into the bush, pleading for our release. The rebels released 109 of my classmates, but the LRA refused to let me go. I was forced to stay, along with 29 others.

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For seven months, I was held in captivity by the LRA, always looking for an opportunity to escape. I constantly prayed that God would allow me to see my family once more before I died. I desperately wanted to finish my education. But hope seemed distant. I saw two other children who had tried, unsuccessfully, to escape. They were brutally murdered in front of me as a warning.

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So I thank God for allowing me to see my family again. I thank Him for allowing me to continue on with my education. I went back to St. Mary's to finish high school, and then I began studying at Uganda Christian University, in southern Uganda near the capital city, Kampala. I have since transferred to Gordon College in Boston, where I am now working on my undergraduate degree in Communications. When I finish my education I would like to work for one year, and then continue on to graduate school to study International Relations and Conflict Resolution. I want to be part of the people struggling day and night to try to bring peace in the world.

NIGHT COMMUTERS

Unfortunately, my story is not uncommon. In fact, it has become so common that abduction is now a fear which daily defines the lives of children who live in the war-affected areas. Because there is no protection for children in northern Uganda, they have created their own way to cope. Thousands of children walk each evening, by themselves, to towns, as far as 10 miles away, to find safety from the LRA. They sleep on the streets of town centers and in makeshift camps. These children are now known as "night commuters". Recently, there has been a decline in the number of attacks by the LRA, so the number of night commuters has been reduced. But just as the LRA kidnapped me in the middle of the night, they usually abduct children under the cover of darkness. Because of this, most children in northern Uganda are now afraid to sleep in their own beds at night.

ENDING THE WAR

This war continues because the world ignores our plight. But this war can stop if leaders in the international community take real action to end this crisis. By action, I specifically mean three things:

1. *High-level Engagement by the US Government.* Members of Congress, the Administration, and international leaders must use their political influence to pressure the Government of Sudan to stop supporting the LRA. The US must also use high-level influence to pressure the Ugandan government to end the war.

Remember, more than eighty (80%) of the LRA is comprised of abducted children—young people, like myself, who were stolen in the middle of the night.

2. *US leadership in mobilizing the international community, to put global pressure on combatants to protect children and to end the conflict.*
3. *Provide more resources to help people suffering because of this conflict.* Although the number of rebel attacks has decreased in some areas, many of my family and friends are still living in squalid displacement camps. Those who remain in the IDPs camps continue to need significant humanitarian assistance. In some areas, people have begun to return to their villages, but continued protection and security against the LRA who are still at-large is critical. It will also be important for the Government of Uganda and the international community to provide returnees with adequate resettlement assistance and support in restoring and developing community infrastructure, so that people can begin to rebuild their lives.

We also need support for more psycho-social programs that help all children living in northern Uganda, because all children in the region have been traumatized by this war: whether they have been abducted; or watched their brother, or sister, or classmate being abducted; or they are a "night commuter" and live in fear of abduction.

If these things are done, I believe the war will end. It can end tomorrow if the world comes together to do these things. Mr. Chairman, I ask for your help and the help of others to take action to end this war, so that my sisters and brothers and all the children of northern Uganda can sleep in peace.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Akallo, thank you very much for that very passionate and sobering statement, and it truly is a testament that you could be so remarkably poised and strong. It has been a few

years, and I am sure you have worked through an enormous amount of trauma, and when we do get to questions, I would like to just ask you how some of the others might have fared, especially as they were coming out of this——

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Yes?

Ms. WATSON. If you don't mind, could I raise a few questions with her.

Mr. SMITH. Before we go to the others?

Ms. WATSON. Yes, before we hear the others.

Mr. SMITH. Sure.

Ms. WATSON. I have a hearing right next door that they are expecting me in.

Mr. SMITH. Okay. Go ahead.

Ms. WATSON. I want to thank the Chairman for his sensitivity to these humanitarian issues. I have noticed that in other areas too, so thank you so much for this hearing today.

Ms. Akallo, I was reading your story, and all the time I was reading I was thinking how does a human being at any age, any sex, endure, and live to tell about it. What I am very concerned is about the traumatization that the children go through, and the fact that it went on for months and maybe even years, and some are still enduring.

I raise this with USAID all the time about the need for intense psychological, emotional treatment, and so I would like to hear from you the extent to which you think we need to get involved with treatment. Can we reclaim the lives of those young people? Do you feel they will ever be normal again? You have learned to use a gun to kill, and I am wondering how we can really impact on that.

I thought maybe, since you have gone on with your education, you probably have insights that can help us as we try to help you and others like you.

Ms. AKALLO. Thank you. These children are normal. These children need love. These children need peace. These children need concrete future. Just a matter of counseling a child for only 6 months doesn't help. I am going back home, I am going back to a community who does not accept me. I am going back to a community where there is no food.

Ms. WATSON. What is your age now?

Ms. AKALLO. I am 26.

Ms. WATSON. Twenty-six.

Ms. AKALLO. I am going back to a community that is terrible, like I am used to now getting food from the people forcibly, but I am going home, I don't have food. Now, how do I get no more? Again, I need a concrete future. And how I cope with my trauma was because the people who showed me love, the people showed me that I still have a future because these children feel like they don't have a future anymore. When they come back, their future is destroyed. Their mother is killed, their father is killed, their parents—everything is not there, and they feel they have no future.

So how do we get them to know that they have a future? I think through education and giving them skills to live because without that I think I wouldn't be here now.

Ms. WATSON. Are there guardians, are there adults that have taken them in?

Ms. AKALLO. There are adults who have taken them in, but remember this war has been there for 20 years, and for 20 years the adults who are taking them are traumatized already too, and they live in the camps, and they don't have food. Not many people who have comfortable places to take these children, it is always the people, the poor people, who are forced in the camps are the ones who take these children. But how do they take care of them?

Ms. WATSON. Without the resources.

Ms. AKALLO. Yes.

Ms. WATSON. Would you suggest that we strengthen and broaden our programs? I know that you were dealing with an international organization, and I am just wondering if they could supply the resources, the training of other people like you to go out and help the children recapture their lives.

Ms. AKALLO. I think that will be very, very important, but the most important thing is education. That actually makes the children go through their trauma well because they know they have something in the future.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you very much. You are a miracle, and we wish you well in your future. We hope it is really concrete, and we would like to hear from you again.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Ms. Ambassador.

Dr. Waldman.

Ms. WATSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Waldman.

STATEMENT OF RONALD WALDMAN, M.D., PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL, POPULATION AND FAMILY HEALTH, MAILMAN SCHOOL OF POLICY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Dr. WALDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee. I would like to thank you for holding these important hearings, and I would like to take this opportunity to summarize written testimony that I would like to submit for the record.

Mr. SMITH. Without objection, Doctor, your full statement will be made a part of the record.

Dr. WALDMAN. I hope you excuse me. I may be not as strong as Ms. Akallo, but I am rather shaken by her testimony as I am sure we all are. I don't think I have been given the most preferred spot on the agenda today, but I have spent my career trying to capture the experiences of refugees and internally displaced people and others affected by conflict, trying to capture those kinds of experiences that Ms. Akallo has related to us, and to apply them to larger populations. The way we do that is by trying to tell their stories with numbers.

I would like to particularly address today a mortality survey that was conducted by consultants to the World Health Organization in conjunction with the Ministry of Health of Uganda. This survey used internationally accepted methods and was conducted among internally displaced persons in four separate areas of northern Uganda in July 2005.

The areas that were covered by the survey were Gulu Municipality, Gulu District, Kitgum District and Pader District. In all, 3,830 households were surveyed.

The results of the survey showed that both crude mortality rates, meaning deaths in the general population over a given period of time, and childhood mortality rates, those deaths that occurred in children less than 5 years old over a given period of time, were substantially elevated. The time period covered by the survey was from January through the beginning of July 2005, so about 1 year ago.

The mortality rates for the entire region from which the sample was drawn were 1.54 deaths per 10,000 population per day, about 50 percent higher than what has come to be accepted as the emergency threshold of one death per 10,000 per day. For children less than five, the mortality rate was about 3.2 deaths per 10,000 per day, well above the established emergency threshold of two deaths per 10,000 per day.

The threshold itself to which these rates are being compared represents already a two-to-three-fold increase over what the United Nations Statistics Division and others would expect. So we are talking about here about mortality rates approximately five to six times higher than what they might be under normal circumstances in a developing country such as Uganda.

The authors of the study used baseline levels, as I mentioned, of 0.46 deaths per 10,000 per day for the general population, and a little bit more than one death per day for under five. This is important because of something I will come back to in a minute.

When extrapolated from the sample that was interviewed to the entire population of 1.2 million internally displaced people in the four areas, the authors were able to calculate a total of between 22,000 and 30,000 excess deaths. By excess deaths, I mean deaths above the number that would have occurred if those baseline rates that I have given had applied.

So 22,000 to 30,000 in the entire population, and 8,000 to 12,000 excess deaths in the childhood population of those less than 5 years old. If we apply those numbers to the time period covered by the survey, it just means about 900 excess deaths per week in the population of 1.2 million displaced were occurring.

The survey didn't restrict itself to measuring mortality, it also tried to look at what the most important causes of death were, and this is going to be a difficult thing to do because we are asking laypeople to report on diseases that are the causes of death of their relatives, members of their household.

But what is most important to note is that among children and in the general population most deaths are not due to violence. Instead, they are due to common diseases such as malaria, pneumonia and diarrhea, and in all surveys that we have done in conflict areas, with the exception of those done during the Kosovo crisis, this is usually the case. Deaths due to violence are usually relatively small in terms of the direct contribution that they make to mortality.

Most deaths occur because insecurity denies people access to health services. Other results from the survey paint this picture more clearly. Very few children had vaccination cards, meaning

that either people were not able to access vaccination services on a routine basis, or that routine vaccination services were not available.

Similarly, a relatively low proportion of children were sleeping under an impregnated bed net, although malaria was the leading cause of death of children in the area.

In addition, contributing to the situation was that only 10 to 20 percent of the population were able to collect even the minimum recommended amount of water, which according to standards that have been established within the relief community is only 15 liters or about four gallons per person per day.

Epidemiologists I have been working with returned from northern Uganda last week, and in their preliminary report they sum up the situation now as it existed at the time of the WHO Ministry of Health Mortality Survey. They said the availability of health services is fragmented and unevenly distributed across districts and rural town areas. Much of the population in the conflict-affected areas is crowded into some 200 congested IDP, internally displaced person camps, with appalling water and sanitation conditions and poor basic health service.

Access to conflict-affected areas is limited and armed escorts are required in order to reach displaced populations in some areas. As a result, service delivery is erratic, with frequent closings of peripheral health units, the exclusive use of mobile clinics in some areas and a total lack of service provision in others.

The reason I focus on this survey is that for reasons that are not entirely clear to me the results of the survey have become quite controversial. The Ministry of Health has apparently withdrawn its initial acceptance of the survey, and the results have been disputed by government officials in several fora, including at the U.N. Security Council in New York and in the *New Visions* newspaper in Uganda as recently as last week, in the April 21 edition.

The *New Visions* article says that it was really a report on the website of the non-governmental organization OXFAM entitled "Counting the Cost" that upset the Ugandan Government the most. That report uses the survey that I have reported on as the basis for unfavorably comparing the situation to northern Uganda to that in Iraq.

It must be said that surveys such as the one I am discussing here have many limitations because of the lack of accurate population data, which are necessary in order to draw a good sample, and because of the difficulties in the field of going house to house to collect the information in highly insecure areas, such as northern Uganda.

In addition, collecting accurate information depends on the way the questions are formulated, the way in which they are asked, the way that they are understood, and the ability of those being interviewed to recall experiences that they have had and to report them to the interviewers in an accurate way. These conditions are true for every survey of this kind no matter where or under what circumstances they are conducted.

In the report, the WHO investigators are very careful to spell out these limitations and to explain how they address them during the course of the survey. In my opinion, they do an excellent job of this,

and my reading of the full report leaves me to believe that nothing occurred during the design, implementation, data entry or analysis phases of the survey that would falsify the results as they are reported.

Yet the Ministry of Health now claims that the study was not done according to the proposed methodology. In particular, there are claims that people who were not at home at the time of the survey were replaced haphazardly by visitors or by children. This is not the case.

In addition, the questionnaire was written in English and not translated into the Acholi language. This is common practice in Uganda because of the many sub-dialects that exist. The interviewers like to reserve the right to adapt the questions to the most commonly spoken local language.

Thirdly, the Ministry of Health Technical Review Committee felt that the recall of people interviewed was faulty, and they said, "They don't remember major events that took place in their lives." So I would like to point out that if people had in fact recalled more deaths, then of course the mortality rates found by the survey would have been higher than those reported.

Fourthly, they argue that those interviewed thought that they might be compensated monetarily for deaths that occurred, leading to overreporting, but the investigators take pains to point out that they carefully explained to those included in the survey that this was not the case.

Finally, the government has objected to the baseline rate used as the baseline for the calculation of excess deaths but they confuse it with the threshold levels for establishing an existence of an emergency—1 death per 10,000 per day—so their objections on this score are unfounded.

So in summary then, it seems clear that between January and July 2005, the period covered by the survey, both crude mortality and under five mortality rates were substantially elevated among the 1.2 million internally displaced in the four areas surveyed.

I want to say again that these numbers are really a very dispassionate description, an impersonal attempt to describe the situation as it exists. The stories told by people like Ms. Akallo and so many other anecdotal reports that I have heard really give a much more emotional description of the overall situation, but it is important also to have some way to be able to paint the entire picture, the background, the setting on which these events are being played out, and the only way we really have to do that accurately is through these epidemiologic studies. It is important for all of us who do that to make sure that these surveys are conducted in the most accurate and most reliable manner.

I am here to provide my testimony to the fact that I believe that this particular survey, with its limitations, is among the very best that have been conducted under similar circumstances.

The most important intervention by far to reduce mortality would be to put an end to the conflict that has been continuing in the area for more than 20 years. While direct violence was a cause of only about 11 percent of deaths in the overall population and a negligible cause among children, the threat of violence contributes to the overall insecurity of the region, and that threat is primarily

responsible for a major disruption of health services. Until peace is restored, the data that I have reported on tell us that humanitarian assistance offered by either the government health services or by the many national and international NGOs present in the area must be increased so that all internally displaced persons can avail themselves of appropriate primary health care interventions.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Waldman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RONALD WALDMAN, M.D., PROFESSOR OF CLINICAL, POPULATION AND FAMILY HEALTH, MAILMAN SCHOOL OF POLICY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Although it is relatively easy to know when an international emergency is occurring—one can listen to people who are on the spot, or sometimes one just has to watch the news, it is quite difficult to be able to gauge just how bad a situation is. One stark question which can give at least a partial answer is: how many people are dying? For this reason, it has become increasingly common for public health authorities to try to describe the magnitude of a health emergency by determining the mortality rates in a population over a given period of time. Few places where emergencies occur have civil registration systems: no birth certificates, no death certificates, no social security records, etc. To overcome these problems, epidemiologists use mortality surveys—interviews with households—to determine how many deaths have occurred. The number of deaths in a population is compared to the number of deaths that are expected to have occurred during the same period, and the result is reported as “excess deaths”.

In developing countries, according to the United Nations Statistics Division, about 0.3–0.5 deaths occur each day for every 10,000 people. In the mid-late 1980’s, in the wake of a series of public health emergencies that had resulted in very high mortality in Cambodia/Thailand, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan, epidemiologists at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention devised a simple rule of thumb: when mortality was doubled or trebled and reached a rate of more than 1 death per 10,000 population per day, a situation should be considered an emergency, and international assistance should be provided.

Determining mortality rates is both a skill and an art. Samples have to be carefully selected so that rates calculated from those interviewed are truly representative of the population to which they are being attributed. Questionnaires need to be carefully devised so that both questions and answers are clearly understood by interviewers and respondents. Data need to be carefully recorded and analyzed, because misclassifying information can give very skewed results. Designing, conducting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting the results of these surveys is difficult and every step should be carefully discussed and considered.

It is important for those reading and using the results of population-based mortality surveys to consider the circumstances in which they are conducted. Gathering representative data from insecure, conflict-affected areas is tricky business. If one goes only to the ‘safer’ areas, mortality rates (and other important information) will clearly be under-estimated. If surveyors go to all areas, but hurriedly, rushing to complete an interview in the minimum time possible, they will get the data they want, but questions regarding its validity would be legitimate. On the other hand, a properly conducted mortality survey takes investigators to every part of the area surveyed, gives them a chance to look around and to collect ancillary information, and allows them to paint, in their report, a more nuanced picture than that which can be told only through the numbers.

In my estimation,¹ the *Health and Mortality Survey among Internally Displaced Persons in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts, Northern Uganda*, conducted by the World Health Organization with the participation of UNICEF, World Food Program, United Nations Population Fund and the International Rescue Committee in July 2005 is an example of an excellent survey and an excellent report.

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS PRESENTED BY INVESTIGATORS

Every survey has its limitations. In the report of this mortality survey, the authors clearly delineate the problems that they encountered and explained how they attempted to deal with them.

¹I had been consulted on the design and implementation aspects of the survey prior to the survey having been conducted, but not on data issues nor on any interpretation of the results.

First, in any survey that is not a complete census of the population, there are potential “sampling errors”; that is, it is possible that the individuals who are included in the survey will not be representative of the entire population from which they are drawn. The sampling method used for this survey, two-stage cluster sampling, is well recognized and commonly used in mortality surveys—it is not perfect, but it is, at this time, the state of the art.

Nevertheless, in this method, clusters are assigned proportional to the size of the population. In other words, larger IDP camps are more likely to have more clusters sampled within them than are smaller IDP camps. This obviously presupposes that one knows the size of the camps. In N. Uganda, the authors had difficulty establishing exact populations for each camp, and it is possible that the cluster assignment process was somewhat inaccurate. They did, however, use all available information to establish their best estimates of camp populations, and they used information that became available after the survey to validate their results.

In one of the four surveys (Gulu district), almost one-third of the households selected to be interviewed had to be replaced because no one was home at the time of the survey (even after one re-visit)—they were frequently working in their fields. It is hard to know what effect this might have had on the results of the survey, but it is possible that their absence reflected a relatively better security situation which could, in turn, explain the lower (but not low) mortality rates found in this area. On the other hand, it is possible that people had to work because they were poorer, a characteristic associated with higher mortality.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, all surveys that involve interviews are susceptible to “non-sampling bias”, potential errors that are usually more important. Did the respondents understand the questions? Were there incentives for them to answer in one way rather than in another? Did the interviewers understand the answers correctly? Did they record them accurately?

In this survey, the questionnaire was in English, not in the local language. The interviewers apparently insisted on working from English, over the objections of the principal investigators, because of the many dialects of the Acholi language in which they were working. All interviewers were, however, supervised by native Acholi speakers. Other surveys conducted in the northern Uganda have also used English questionnaires and relied upon the interviewers to translate into the appropriate dialects.

Camp administrators were “almost never warned in advance” of the day on which the interviews were held. There was no opportunity for them to bias the answers of household included in the sample, should they have wanted to do so. In addition, interviewees were told clearly that there would be no compensation for reporting deaths. There is no other obvious reason to suspect that there was any over-reporting of mortality. Finally, a recent rebuttal of the survey results published in the *New Vision* newspaper in Uganda a few days ago, on April 21, 2006, objected on the basis that “the respondents had to recall how many household members died in the last six months. That is difficult for people who are illiterate and traumatised. Many people in the camps have little notion of time. They don’t remember major events that took place in their lives.” The investigators used a method that was aimed at eliciting the fullest possible recounting of events for the period of recall (January–June 2005). Should people have forgotten about deaths that had occurred, then they would not have been included in the survey and the reported mortality rates lower, not higher, than the actual rates.

As with the design and conduct of the survey, data entry was carefully controlled using double entry techniques and “range checking” and data analysis was done using appropriate computer programs.

In summary, it is unlikely that any important sampling or non-sampling error could have significantly influenced the results in one direction or another.

OTHER POSSIBLE ERRORS

In November 2005, the Director-General of Health Services of the Ministry of Health appointed a Technical Review Committee (TRC) composed of representatives of the Ministry of Health, the Institute of Public Health, UNICEF, and the World Health Organization. For the most part, their objections of this Committee to the survey report (which had initially carried the imprimaturs of the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, and the International Rescue Committee) are either similar to those discussed by the authors of the report (and outlined above) or of limited validity. They emphasize, for example, the high initial non-response rate in Gulu district, but claim that replacement interviews were conducted on the basis of convenience, that they were done with visitors and children, and that the investigators

were “driven by the desire just to complete the study on time”. This does not appear to have been the case.

The TRC suggests that the baseline crude mortality rate of 0.46/10,000/day that was used as the basis for calculations of “excess” mortality was too low and that a figure of 1/10,000/day should have been used, thereby lowering significantly the number of “excess” deaths. This objection was echoed recently in a speech by a representative of the Foreign Minister to the UN Security Council. The figure used by the investigators is the appropriate one and the objection is based on a misunderstanding of the difference between a “baseline rate” and the “emergency threshold” discussed above—the threshold level already represents a significant increase of mortality above the baseline, not the baseline level itself.

There are objections to the language used in the interpretation of the results, including comparisons, or lack of them, made to the situation in Darfur. These have no bearing on the sampling methods, on the conduct of the survey, or on the presentation of the results, only on their interpretation. Conservatively put, the mortality rates found in the survey represent a significant increase over appropriately-used baseline rates for both crude mortality and under-five year mortality, and they are considerably above the levels commonly used as thresholds for defining a “public health emergency”. The results are only valid for the population from which the sample used in the survey was drawn (the internally displaced in the three districts and one municipality) and only for the time period in question—January–July 2005.

RESULTS

The principal results of the survey, the mortality rates, are presented below, with mortality rates expressed as deaths per 10,000 population per day:

Area	Crude mortality rates	95% confidence interval
Gulu District	1.22	1.00–1.44
Gulu Municipality	1.29	1.04–1.53
Kitgum District	1.91	1.45–2.37
Pader District	1.86	1.53–2.19
Acholi Region total	1.54	1.38–1.71

Area	Under-5 year mortality rates	95% confidence interval
Gulu District	2.31	1.76–2.86
Gulu Municipality	2.49	1.79–3.18
Kitgum District	4.04	3.17–4.91
Pader District	4.24	3.40–5.08
Acholi Region total	3.18	2.18–3.56

These mortality rates are high, exceeding the “emergency threshold” in every case. The overall regional crude mortality rate of 1.5 per 10,000 per day represents, in essence, a near-quadrupling of the baseline mortality rate for Uganda.

Experience in humanitarian emergencies over the past 25 years in all parts of the world has taught that mortality rates in children less than five years old tend to be between 2–3 times higher than those in the general population. Accordingly, the emergency threshold for children has been informally set at 2 deaths per 10,000 children under five years, per day. In Northern Uganda, this threshold is surpassed in each of the four areas surveyed, although in Gulu District and Gulu Municipality, the 95% confidence intervals extend below the threshold. Still, even these lower bounds of the confidence intervals are considerably higher than the baseline under-5 mortality rates (1.14 per 10,000 per day). And in Kitgum and Pader Districts, under-five mortality was exceedingly high.

During the six-month period under study, mortality was fairly constant (approximately equal numbers of deaths were reported to have occurred during each month, except for January, when reported deaths were lower).

In addition to mortality, the investigators also inquired about causes of death. Most conflict-related deaths in a general population have been found to be “indirect” consequences of the conflict itself—that is, they are not deaths due to violence, but

rather increases in usual causes of death—in developing countries, these are usually from relatively common communicable diseases. These increases come about because the insecure environment lowers access to health services—clinics are understaffed and/or under-supplied and not maintained, the population is afraid to travel to the nearest health facility, etc. In Northern Uganda, this is exactly what was found—the leading cause of death in the surveys was malaria, which accounted for nearly one-half of children’s deaths and one-quarter of overall deaths in the survey. Other important causes of death were pneumonia, diarrhea, and a local entity known as “two-langu” of which the clinical description includes diarrhea as a prominent symptom. Violence accounted for 11% of overall mortality, but less than 1% of mortality in children under 5 years old.

CONCLUSION

The mortality survey conducted in northern Uganda in July 2005 was technically sound and the results should be accepted. The limitations expressed by the authors of the survey report should be taken into consideration, but there are no objections raised by either the authors or by subsequent reviewers that are likely to have resulted in serious errors to the crude mortality rates or children’s mortality rates reported.

The sample was drawn from a population of 1.2 million internally displaced living in four areas of northern Uganda. On the basis of an average daily crude mortality rate of 1.54 per ten thousand per day and an average child mortality rate of 3.18 per 10,000 per day, and their accompanying confidence intervals, one can calculate that between 22–30,000 excess deaths occurred in the displaced population during the first seven months of 2005, of which between 8–12,000 were deaths of children. Deaths rates this high, in a population this large, over an extended period of time, represent a true humanitarian emergency and call for major intervention—if national or local authorities are unable, or unwilling, to respond effectively in an emergency of this magnitude, intervention by the international community is usually indicated.

Mr. SMITH. Dr. Waldman, thank you very much for that testimony.

Ms. Brown.

STATEMENT OF MS. MICHELLE BROWN, U.N. ADVOCATE, REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL

Ms. BROWN. I would like to thank Representative Christopher Smith for calling this very important hearing on the crisis in northern Uganda, and for inviting me to speak on behalf of Refugees International.

Please accept my written testimony for the congressional record. I will now give a brief summary.

Refugees International is an independent humanitarian advocacy organization that does not accept any funding from any government or the United Nations. We have been a strong advocate for the Ugandan people displaced by this war for the past 4 years, and I have traveled to northern Uganda on four occasions during this period, most recently in February 2006. Refugees International also traveled to southern Sudan in March 2006, to assess a threat posed by the Lord’s Resistance Army.

The response by the international community and the Government of Uganda to the crisis has clearly failed as evidenced by Dr. Waldman’s explanation about the mortality study. As he said, there are up to 2 million internally displaced people living in camps without access to the most basic services, and as a result almost a thousand people are dying each week.

I have seen many camps during the past 5 years with Refugees International and those in Uganda, if not the worst, are among the worst I have seen.

As one of Uganda's larger donors and as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the United States has a critical role to play in protecting Ugandan citizens from further violence. The Government of Uganda has stated that their military has defeated the LRA. Although attacks on civilians have declined in the past 9 months, the LRA is still active in northern Uganda, and the conflict is now in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Now, the LRA has abducted innocent children and turned them into fighters or sex slaves. They continue to mutilate, kill, and terrorize civilians. Since March 1, 2006, the LRA has killed eight people and has abducted 66. The Government of Uganda has the primary responsibility to assist and protect its displaced citizens, and it has clearly failed.

More than 200 camps in northern Uganda are absolutely horrific. People do not have any access to adequate health care, water, sanitation, education, or protection, and as Grace mentioned, education is a particular concern.

On my last trip to northern Uganda, I visited schools where one teacher would be teaching 150 students, and 150 was a low average. The average approach is up to 400 students.

Refugees International recognizes the challenges that the government faces in providing these services, but Uganda is not a failed state. Indeed, both the Clinton and Bush Administrations have touted it as an African success story.

Given the dependence of the displaced on international humanitarian assistance, recent government threats to expel outspoken NGOs are of grave concern. In recent months, the government has focused a great deal of attention on returning people home from the displaced persons' camps. For people living in the most war-affected districts of northern Uganda, security has not improved sufficiently to allow returns. We are concerned that the Government of Uganda will encourage people to return despite ongoing violence. We urge the government to respect the principle of voluntary returns.

The government has also failed to develop coherent plans to disarm and reintegrate former LRA combatants. Former fighters return to the squalid camps without a way to earn a living, and face difficulty in reintegrating, as Grace so poignantly described earlier. The government should invest more resources in the Amnesty Commission as well as reintegration and reconciliation programs as a way to encourage LRA fighters to escape.

The government has announced that it will strengthen its humanitarian and protection response through an emergency action plan, and by establishing a Joint Monitoring Committee.

Refugees International welcomes this initiative, but we remain deeply concerned about the actual implementation of the agreements. As Mr. Rogers mentioned earlier, in 2004, the government passed an IDP policy. The policy on paper is quite strong, yet it remains to be implemented. In my subsequent trips to northern Uganda after the passage of the IDP policy, I saw no evidence of any change in the government's response on the ground.

The United States must hold Uganda accountable for fulfilling its responsibilities by ensuring that it meets measurable and time-

bound benchmarks. The Joint Monitoring Committee is not a substitute for Security Council engagement either.

The government's response to the crisis in the north has emphasized defeating the LRA through military means without parallel investments in basic services. This military strategy is in effect. The Ugandan military has been unable to defeat the LRA over the past 20 years. It is Refugees International's assessment that the northern Uganda must be settled through mediation. This is no easy task but the war in Uganda will continue of the root causes of the conflict are not addressed.

While the LRA is a main perpetrator of human rights violations against civilians, the Ugandan security force also commits abuses. On my trip in February, the displaced reported some improvements in the conduct of the Ugandan army, but abuses such as rape, intimidation, torture and exploitation were still widespread. As there is no police presence in most camps, the displaced people have little opportunity to report abuses.

Ultimately the government must strengthen the rule of law in northern Uganda, hold human rights violators accountable, and protect displaced people.

The LRA now poses a significant threat to regional peace and security and could undermine fledgling peace agreements in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The LRA was responsible for the deaths of eight peacekeepers in the DRC in January. It is rumored that LRA leaders, Joseph Kony and Vincent Otii are in the DRC now and using Garamba Park as a rear base to launch attacks in Sudan. Despite the presence of the Ugandan military in southern Sudan for the past 4 years, the LRA remains strong and is an increasing threat against Sudanese civilians.

Refugees International traveled to southern Sudan in March 2006, and found that LRA attacks on civilians in the south were impeding humanitarian access, disrupting the return of Sudanese displaced people, and causing new refugee outflows from previously peaceful areas. The United States Peacekeeping Mission in southern Sudan, or UNMIS, does not have the mandate or the resources to intervene proactively to protect civilians from the LRA. UNMIS cannot be expected to do this unless troop levels, logistics, and equipment are dramatically increased.

We are concerned that disgruntled former fighters from the Sudan People's Liberation Army, or SPLA, are joining ranks with the LRA. Also, formerly abducted children who had escaped the LRA in January told me that they believe members of the Government of Sudan are still providing support to the LRA. They described new guns with Arabic inscriptions and Arab escorts for Joseph Kony.

On Refugees International's most recent assessment to Sudan, humanitarian agencies on the ground perceived the elements within the Government of Sudan were still adding support to the LRA.

The U.N. Security Council has started to see the LRA as a regional threat. We urge the United States to lead the Security Council on a regional response to the LRA, and we urge the Secretary General to issue his report according to Resolution 1653 in a timely manner on how the U.N. can address the LRA threat.

The U.N. Peacekeeping Mission in Sudan must have a more robust mandate and sufficient resources to intervene more proactively to protect civilians from the LRA, disarm LRA fighters and capture indicted commanders. Eighty percent of the LRA fighters are abducted children, so the strategy against the LRA must focus on protecting them.

The Government of Uganda is reluctant for the Security Council to become engaged on the situation inside northern Uganda, and supports Security Council action only outside of Uganda. The Secretary General and Security Council will have to cooperate with the Government of Uganda to pursue political and humanitarian objectives inside northern Uganda as well, and we would appreciate the United States' leadership in the Security Council on this.

The United States has neglected the severity of the displacement problem. The United States Agency for International Development should commit increased resources and attention to northern Uganda. Furthermore, the United States has failed to press the Government of Uganda to establish a multi-faceted response that focuses on effective humanitarian response, protection and reconciliation.

The United States considers Uganda a valuable ally in the war on terror, and has provided substantial support to President Museveni in this context. U.S. Government support continues despite the failure of the government's response in northern Uganda. With the LRA threatening instability far beyond the borders of northern Uganda, this approach is no longer tenable as United States interests in peace and stability especially in southern Sudan are now at risk.

The United States must increase its engagement on northern Uganda. As the Chair mentioned, we have several recommendations on this, and I will just reiterate them because we believe they are very important.

Politically and diplomatically the United States should, first, stress the importance to the Government of Uganda of reaching a political settlement this conflict, and provide high-level support to the effort. The United States should hold the Government of Uganda accountable under the Joint Monitoring Committee.

Secondly, the U.S. should request the Secretary General to appoint a high-level U.N. regional envoy who can facilitate political initiatives to deal with the conflict.

Thirdly, the U.S. should support the appointment of a U.N. panel of experts to investigate sources of support for the LRA.

Lastly, the United States should support the strengthening of the U.N. Peacekeeping Missions in Sudan and Congo to ensure that they have the resources to protect civilians from the LRA. The U.S. should also share intelligence with the U.N. to promote effective civilian protection.

To improve the lives of civilians in northern Uganda, the U.S. should, first, allocate the necessary resources to USAID, to increase support to displaced persons and to continue to fund NGOs and the U.N. to provide humanitarian assistance.

Secondly, the U.S. should support comprehensive disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs that emphasize community-based initiatives. It is our assessment that everyone in the

IDP camps is vulnerable and any assistance to formerly abducted people should include assistance to communities as well.

Lastly, the U.S. Government should support peace building and reconciliation programs at the local, regional and national levels to stem the cycle of violence.

Mr. Chair, these recommendations provide the United States Government with a number of opportunities to bring peace to a troubled region and save thousands of lives. It is morally and politically imperative that we take these steps. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Brown follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MS. MICHELLE BROWN, U.N. ADVOCATE, REFUGEES
INTERNATIONAL

NORTHERN UGANDA: URGENT MEASURES NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE LRA THREAT TO
REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

I would like to thank Representative Christopher Smith for calling this hearing today on the crisis in northern Uganda, demonstrating the concern of the House International Relations Committee Sub-Committee on Africa, Global Human Rights, and International Operations about the brutal 20 year conflict that has displaced up to two million people. Refugees International is an independent humanitarian advocacy organization that does not accept funding from governments or the United Nations. Refugees International has been a strong advocate for the Ugandan people displaced by this war for over four years, and I have traveled to northern Uganda on four separate occasions during this period. I visited northern Uganda most recently in February 2006, and my comments are based on my experiences in February. Refugees International also had a team in southern Sudan in March 2006 assessing the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army—or LRA—in southern Sudan.

The response by the international community and the Government of Uganda to the crisis in northern Uganda continues to fail. Up to two million people in northern Uganda are living in camps for internally displaced persons without access to basic services and without protection, and as a result almost 1,000 people are dying a week. As one of Uganda's larger donors and as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the United States has an important role to play in protecting Ugandan civilians and ensuring that their basic needs are met.

Despite the Government of Uganda's statements that the Ugandan military has defeated the LRA, the LRA is still very much active in northern Uganda. The LRA commits acts of extreme violence against the civilian population—abducting children and turning them into fighters or sex slaves, mutilating and killing civilians, and terrorizing them to such a degree that people are afraid to leave the squalid camps and return to their homes. Although the number of attacks on civilians in northern Uganda has decreased in the past nine months as have direct attacks on internally displaced persons camps, the LRA remains a significant threat outside the camps. Since March 1, the LRA has killed eight people and has abducted 66. On Refugees International's assessment mission to Uganda in February 2006, attacks on civilians and abductions had recently occurred in the immediate vicinity of each of the eight camps that we visited.

In response to this violence, the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for the top five commanders in the LRA, which has complicated mediation efforts. LRA violence has taken on an increasingly regional dimension, threatening stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo and southern Sudan. Despite the presence of the Ugandan military in southern Sudan through an agreement with the Government of Sudan since 2002, the LRA remains strong and is an increasing threat to Sudanese civilians, a threat that the Ugandan military has been unable to mitigate in the past four years. Refugees International condemns the LRA and its violent actions towards civilians. We have seen first-hand how the LRA has brutalized and terrorized the population in northern Uganda, condemning up to two million people to poverty and squalor in IDP camps.

In recent months, the Government has focused on people able to leave camps and return to their homes. Returns should be encouraged in areas where security permits, but for people living in the Acholi region of northern Uganda, the area most impacted by LRA violence, security has not improved to the degree necessary to encourage returns. In my interviews with people in camps in northern Uganda, most explained that they will return only when the war ends. We are concerned that the

Government of Uganda will try to demonstrate improvement in the security situation in northern Uganda by encouraging people to return to their homes prematurely. We urge the Government of Uganda to respect the principle of voluntary returns.

The Government of Uganda has the primary responsibility to assist and protect internally displaced persons in northern Uganda, and it has clearly failed in fulfilling its responsibility. Over the course of my visits to northern Uganda, I have seen no indication that the government has taken significant concrete steps to improve living conditions in camps. The response from the United Nations and non-governmental organizations has also been weak, although in the past two years, the UN has increased its presence and programs and NGOs have strengthened their response. But despite some small improvements, I have seen no significant positive changes in the past four years in the living conditions for internally displaced persons, particularly in Kitgum and Pader districts.

The living conditions in the more than 200 internally displaced persons camps in northern Uganda are horrific. The camps are overcrowded and people do not have access to adequate health care, water, sanitation, education, livelihoods and protection. According to international standards, camp residents need a minimum of 15 liters of water per day to meet their basic needs for drinking, cooking, and hygiene. Most of the displaced receive half that. On my recent trip to northern Uganda, I witnessed many classrooms where one teacher was attempting to teach over 100 students. I visited with sick people in the camps who were unable to access appropriate health care, including reproductive health care and HIV/AIDS treatment; estimated HIV/AIDS rates in northern Uganda are higher than the national average. I spoke to men and women with no way to earn a living, and displaced people whose rights had been abused with no access to justice.

Rather than focusing on improving living conditions in camps, the Government's response to the crisis in the north has emphasized defeating the LRA through military means. This strategy has proven to be ineffective, and the Ugandan military has been unable to defeat the LRA over the past 20 years. It is Refugees International's assessment that the conflict in northern Uganda must be settled through mediation which addresses the root causes of the conflict. Obviously, given the numerous failed attempts, this is no easy task. Neither the Government of Uganda nor the LRA seems particularly committed to a negotiated settlement to the conflict, but without dealing with the root causes of the conflict and supporting national reconciliation programs, the war will continue.

The Government of Uganda has used the war in the north to justify consistent increases in its military budget but has not provided adequate financial resources to northern districts for basic services. When I visited the internally displaced persons camps, government officials responsible for working in the camps were usually absent. Teachers and health workers were not showing up for work and district officials were not traveling to the camps to monitor them. For the most part, the UN and non-governmental organizations were providing the majority of assistance available in the camps.

The displaced consistently told us that they believed their government had abandoned them, and many of them believe that there were political motivations behind the Government's weak humanitarian response. Northern Uganda historically has not supported the President in elections, and in this past election, voted overwhelmingly for the opposition. Refugees International recognizes the challenges the Government faces in providing services in such a difficult environment, and equally recognizes the brutality and the security threat posed by the LRA. But Uganda is not a failed state—indeed both the Clinton and Bush Administrations have touted it as an African success story—and could be doing much more. The Government has not devoted the necessary human or financial resources to provide an effective response.

The Government has been widely praised for passing a National Internally Displaced Persons policy in August 2004. This policy clearly outlines the Government's responsibilities for assisting and protecting IDPs in the north. While the policy itself is sound, the Government has not actually implemented it and its response to the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda has not remarkably improved since the policy was passed. The central government does not provide its ministries with the financial and human resources to ensure that the policy is implemented, and district officials lack the resources and capacity to meet the massive humanitarian needs in the north. Given the Government's lack of response to the crisis in the north and the dependence of the displaced on the programs of the UN and NGOs, recent Government threats to expel outspoken NGOs are of grave concern.

The Government has also failed to develop coherent plans to disarm former LRA combatants and reintegrate them into society. Former LRA fighters are returning to the camps without a way to earn a living, often having no choice but to join the

Ugandan armed forces. There are few training programs or educational opportunities available to them, and programs that address the trauma that they have experienced are inadequate. Formerly abducted children, particularly girls and women returning with children, face difficulties reintegrating into their communities and rebuilding their lives. The Government should invest more resources in the Amnesty Commission, as well as reintegration and reconciliation programs as a way to encourage fighters to escape from the LRA.

The Government of Uganda has announced that it will strengthen its humanitarian and protection response, as well as develop a comprehensive approach to ending the conflict, by establishing a Joint Monitoring Committee. Through this Committee, the Government hopes to strengthen its cooperation with the UN, key donors and NGOs. Refugees International welcomes the Government of Uganda's stated intention to strengthen its humanitarian response in northern Uganda and its initiative in creating the Joint Monitoring Committee, but we remain deeply concerned about the actual implementation of the agreements. The Government has committed to improving its response in nine key areas, including increasing Government expenditures to improve basic services in northern Uganda, improving service delivery to reduce mortality rates, and strengthening protection of those displaced by the conflict.

The Core Group of Donors, of which the United States is a member, and other members of the Joint Monitoring Committee, must hold the Government accountable for fulfilling its responsibilities by ensuring that the Government meets clear, measurable and time-bound benchmarks and by ensuring that living conditions for the displaced improve. The Core Group of Donors must ensure that the Joint Monitoring Committee does not follow a similar path as the National IDP Policy. Given the regional implications of the conflict, this new Committee cannot be viewed as a substitute for Security Council engagement and must be pursued as a parallel process.

Throughout northern Uganda, human rights violations against civilians are widespread. The LRA is the main perpetrator of human rights violations, and they continue to terrorize the displaced, particularly when they travel outside the security perimeters surrounding internally displaced persons' camps to gather firewood and water and to access their land.

Human rights violations are also committed by members of the Ugandan military who are there to protect them, as confirmed by the 2006 Department of State Human Rights Report which stated, "UDPF [The Ugandan People's Defense Forces] soldiers reportedly raped women and girls and security forces detained and mistreated suspected LRA collaborators in the camps. Security forces severely restricted the freedom of movement of IDPs and imposed nighttime curfews in many camps." The Department of State Human Rights Report also includes information on civilians killed by security forces and the "precarious" humanitarian situation in displaced persons camps.

As I mentioned earlier, the government's response to the conflict in the north has been predominantly a military one, and the large presence of Ugandan military, which includes the national army, the Ugandan People's Defense Forces, and locally trained militias, or Local Defense Units, in camps where government civil servants are absent has had a detrimental impact on human rights protection. The large numbers of often poorly trained local defense units and the proliferation of arms in the camps is of grave concern and could have negative consequences in the future. Poor humanitarian conditions and a lack of employment opportunities have led to sexual exploitation of displaced women and girls and underage recruitment. Displaced persons told Refugees International that Ugandan soldiers, particularly members of the mobile units, steal, rape, exploit and kill and victims have almost no way to address these violations. There are no police present in most camps, so IDPs have little opportunity to report abuses to civilian authorities.

On my trip in February, however, the displaced reported some improvements in the conduct of the Ugandan army. They reported that abuses were still widespread, particularly sexual exploitation and sexual violence, but many people we interviewed said they had recently developed more trust in the army to protect them. Internally displaced people reported that in recent months more security forces, mainly local defense units, were stationed around the perimeter of camps, and that there were fewer attacks directly on camps. People in some of the camps explained that soldiers escorted them when they travel outside the security perimeter to collect firewood or go to their land. In some camps, a complaints system between the army and camp leadership has been established. These are welcome initiatives. Ultimately, the Government must strengthen its incredibly weak police and judicial capacity in northern Uganda, hold human violators accountable, and fulfill its obligation to protect internally displaced people.

While the LRA has decreased its operations in northern Uganda, the conflict has now spread to neighboring countries and has taken on a regional dimension. For the past six months, the LRA has been present in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and was responsible for the deaths of eight MONUC peacekeepers in January. It is rumored that LRA leaders Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti are in the Democratic Republic of Congo now, and it seems as if the LRA is using Garamba National Park as a rear base to launch attacks in Equatoria in Sudan.

It does not appear that the LRA in eastern D.R. Congo currently poses a significant threat to the civilian population. In Sudan, however, the LRA has sought safe haven in the south for over a decade and LRA attacks on civilians in southern Sudan have intensified over the past six months. Refugees International traveled to southern Sudan in March 2006 and found that LRA attacks on civilians in the south were impeding humanitarian access, slowing the ability of Sudanese refugees and displaced people to return home, and causing new displacement and refugee outflows. The UN peacekeeping mission in southern Sudan, the UN Mission in Sudan, does not have the mandate or resources, or, more importantly, the political will to intervene proactively to protect civilians from the LRA. Unless troop levels, logistics, and equipment are dramatically increased, the UN Mission in Sudan cannot be expected to protect civilians from the LRA.

There is also concern that disgruntled former fighters from the Sudan People's Liberation Army who, now that the war is over, have not received any help reintegrating into their communities could be joining ranks with the LRA. It is also likely that members of the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese Armed Forces are still providing support to the LRA. In February, Refugees International interviewed formerly abducted children in northern Uganda who had escaped LRA captivity in January; they believed that members of the Sudanese government were still supporting the LRA. They cited new guns with Arabic inscriptions and Joseph Kony being escorted by Arabs as the basis for their assertion. The LRA is a serious threat to regional peace and security and could undermine the peace agreements in Sudan and DRC.

In recent months, the UN Security Council has become more engaged in looking at the LRA as a regional threat. We urge the United States to play a leadership role in the Security Council on the issue of the LRA in northern Uganda and the region. The Security Council passed resolution 1653 in January and Resolution 1663 in March. Both resolutions request the Secretary General to make recommendations to the Security Council on ways the UN can mitigate the LRA threat. Unfortunately, the report has been delayed.

It is critical that the Security Council maintain its engagement on the LRA threat both inside and outside Uganda. Refugees International is hopeful that the Secretary General will recommend that the UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan have a stronger mandate and sufficient resources to intervene more proactively to protect civilians from the LRA, disarm LRA fighters and return them to northern Uganda, and capture indicted commanders. Eighty percent of LRA fighters are abducted children, so the strategy against the LRA must focus on capturing them safely and returning them to Uganda. UN peacekeeping forces in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo must protect civilians from further violence. In addition, a high-level Special Envoy who regularly reports to the Security Council should facilitate parallel political initiatives that focus on all countries impacted by LRA violence, as well as encourage increased regional cooperation and dialogue. There is also a need to establish a Panel of Experts to determine the sources of support to the LRA.

The Government of Uganda has expressed its support for military action against the LRA in southern Sudan and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, with the support of the UN, the SPLA, and the armed forces of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government has been reluctant for the Security Council to become engaged on northern Uganda and supports Security Council action outside of Uganda. The Security Council must analyze the threat the LRA poses to the region, including the threat to Ugandan civilians and the Government's ability to respond to the crisis in northern Uganda. The Secretary General and Security Council will have to convince the Government of Uganda to pursue political and humanitarian objectives inside northern Uganda as well, and provide the necessary support to any new initiatives.

Despite repeated government assertions that the war is over, there is no indication that the Ugandan military has defeated the LRA. Instead, the situation is now more serious. The LRA now poses a significant threat to regional peace and security and could undermine fledgling peace agreements in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mediation efforts are stalled, and it is unclear whether the LRA or the Government of Uganda are committed to dialogue. There is no end in sight

to this war, and until the war is over, up to two million people in the north are condemned to a life of terror and poverty in displaced persons camps.

The United States has contributed to the current difficult situation by neglecting the severity of the displacement problem in the north. Indeed, given the severity of the crisis, the U.S. Agency for International Development should commit increased resources and attention to northern Uganda. Furthermore, the U.S. has failed to press the Government of Uganda to establish a multi-faceted response to the disaster focusing on an effective humanitarian response, protection, and reconciliation. The U.S. has been content to consider Uganda a valuable ally in the war on terror, and has provided substantial support to President Museveni and his Government in this context, despite the continuing failure of the Government's response in northern Uganda. With the war and its attendant problems continuing, and the LRA threatening instability far beyond the boundaries of northern Uganda, this approach is no longer tenable as important US interests in peace and stability, especially in southern Sudan, are at risk.

In this context, the US needs to increase substantially its engagement in the northern Uganda problem. On the political and diplomatic front, the US should:

- Stress the importance to the Government of Uganda of reaching a political settlement to the conflict, and provide high-level support to the effort as needed. The Government of Uganda must be more proactive in its support for a mediation process. The US should hold the Government of Uganda accountable for meeting time-bound benchmarks under the Joint Monitoring Committee and significantly strengthening its humanitarian response.
- Support the appointment of a high-level UN envoy on the regional crisis, including on northern Uganda, who reports regularly to the Security Council.
- Support the appointment of a Panel of Experts to investigate the sources of support for the LRA.
- Support the strengthening of the UN peacekeeping missions in the Sudan and the Congo to ensure that they have the resources to protect civilians from the LRA. The US should share intelligence with the UN to promote effective civilian protection.

To improve the lives of civilians in northern Uganda, the US should:

- Demonstrate its commitment to northern Uganda by allocating the necessary resources to the U.S. Agency for International Development to enable it to increase support to displaced persons.
- Continue to fund NGOs and the UN to provide humanitarian assistance in camps for internally displaced persons.
- Cooperate with the Government to implement comprehensive disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs that promote dialogue, reconciliation and community-based initiatives.
- Support peacebuilding and reconciliation programs at local, regional and national levels to stem the cycle of violence.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much for your testimony and work as well.

Let me begin with Ms. Akallo. I would have to agree with Ambassador Watson that you are a miracle and it is a privilege to have you before the Subcommittee today. Just a couple of questions with regards to your captivity.

I think it would be very helpful to this Subcommittee if you could speak to the issue of what it was like with your fellow abductees, the others who had been kidnapped. Were bonds formed? How did Kony and his thugs advance perhaps a child soldier who showed a propensity or a proclivity to do what the master wanted? Did they get moved upwards and then become kind of like part of this chain of command?

The indoctrination, was it done in a way that included drugs? We know it included brutality and cruelty and rape. But were drugs, like with Charles Taylor, involved at all with the young people?

As I said before, I do think that you are remarkably poised having been through an ordeal that few of us can even imagine.

How do the others fair? The estimates from the 2005 country reports on human rights practices puts the number at 38,000 child abductees. That is a large number of young people whose lives have been scarred. I would like to get more information on what we can do to help these transition centers. As was reported earlier by Mr. Krilla, only 40 percent of the abductees go through those centers. How intense are they? Because only one incident can cause PTSD in large numbers of people who only 6 months to several years afterwards realize what it is they have been through. To be subjected to this brutality day in and day out for weeks, months and years is unfathomable, so if you could speak to that issue as well.

Ms. AKALLO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Concerning the training, I can call it training that the LRA go through with the children, the first thing, you are beaten. The beating is to shape you into the enemy. The second thing, you are forced to kill someone, and that is another training. The third thing is you are given a gun and they don't train you. Few people are trained, few people whom they think they can go ahead and do something. Like they would not escape, they feel they cannot escape, are trained. But people like us, like me, I wasn't trained. I was given a gun and I was told, "Hunger will teach you how to do it." I was just told how to dismantle, clean, and assemble a gun, that is all. But sure enough, hunger taught me to shoot because with all that, you can't really seek survival. I wanted to survive, although at some point almost gave up.

But other things that you pass through before you get a higher position; and then after that you are forced to abduct children. So the more you abduct, the more they give you rank. You abduct more, and you kill more, and then you get rank. so when you kill a commander like Ugandan soldiers commanders, you are given more rank. So that is how it went, but first they torture, and then they force you to kill.

And then on the side of the children in northern Uganda, I believe that not only the abducted children are traumatized, even those who have not been abducted because they sleep in the centers, and the way we can help them is to stop the war first, because we are tired. We are tired of the war. We are tired of running away. We are tired of seeing the humanitarian groups coming to help us and yet we can't get enough because someone can't provide for them. It is like we are not in control. It is like we don't know what further holds us. We are depending on people.

In our culture we are used to providing for ourselves. We are used to going to the garden, dig, get food, and eat. We are not used to begging, but now we have been reduced to begging, so we need the war to be stopped, and these children to be thoroughly counseled and given a concrete future, because otherwise this war is still going to continue, because these children are going to say, "Where are we going to get a future?" We used to get food from people, so it is better we go back and do what we were doing before, what we are trained to do.

A 7-year-old child abducted into captivity grows up there until you are 20. What do you think? He knows that—he knows the gun. He doesn't know anything but from the gun.

Mr. SMITH. Do any of the young people ever turn the guns on those who beat them, and on Kony's people? Do any of the young people once they are given a gun ever shoot or try to kill those who have beaten them?

Ms. AKALLO. You cannot kill the person who has beaten you because you are already being threatened. Because Kony uses the thing of the spirit. They said spirits, and so when you enter, they smear you with shea nut oil. I don't know whether you know that. It comes from a tree. So they smear you with that, and they say that is protection.

Then after 2 weeks, they do something, a ritual that will insert you into the army. So during that process they will tell you that you do something, you dead. You think of escape, you are dead. You think of killing anybody, you are dead. We already know your thoughts. He says he knows the thoughts of the children. He already knows what they think.

Mr. SMITH. We do have another vote but I just want to ask you a couple of questions, go to my colleagues, and then if your time permits, we will reconvene the hearing.

Dr. Waldman, if I could just ask you regarding whether or not there is an increase in suicide. You know, with such highly traumatized people, IDPs as well as the abductees, is there any—

Dr. WALDMAN. I don't know of any data that would suggest that there is, no.

Mr. SMITH. And let me just finally ask Ms. Brown, are you satisfied with the Bush Administration's policy on northern Uganda?

Ms. BROWN. It is our assessment that the Bush Administration and the United States Government, because of its close relationship with the government, should be pressuring the Government of Uganda to do more to protect civilians, to meet their basic humanitarian needs, and to more practically seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes, thank you very much. Sorry that I missed your testimony. I will be able—I have scanned through it but haven't been able to read it thoroughly. We had a meeting with Deputy Secretary Zoellick right at the same time on Darfur.

I know that you are a refugee advocate, but I wonder if any of you have any idea, I gave some points about how I thought the situation could be ended. I wonder what your thoughts might be just in a capsule of what you would do if you had the authority. Would you have an all-out military tack? Would you try to get the U.N. forces in Sudan to be Chapter 7? Would you try to appease the LRA and give amnesty to lower-level people and go after Kony? Would you have a more robust Ugandan military to try to have intelligence from NATO or United States or someone to weed them out? What do you think the best—since for 20 years this has been going on, and even though it is a small group, what would you suggest? And any of you could take the question.

Ms. AKALLO. I think it is mine because I believe that, first of all, I disagree with the military thing because it has failed for 20 years. I heard that they are training people. One of the witness was talking here that they have trained the military to help stop the war. But for 20 years, for goodness sake, where is the army?

Mr. PAYNE. All right, let me ask you that question. Do you think that the army has had the will to do that whether the Government in Kampala or in Tibie are serious about a military conquest or not? Or is it just corruption and—I heard that numbers of military that was supposed to be up there, the numbers were inflated because soldiers get paid and therefore the commanders would—you know, the phantom people, the invisible soldiers, the money is made. Do you think it is the fact that they don't have the ability to do it militarily?

I am not a military person, but for 20 years, something has got to stop and maybe that is why I want to hear what you all think of this because—

Ms. AKALLO. I don't think that they don't have ability. I believe that the Government of Uganda has the ability to stop this war, but for some reason, I don't know why they have not stopped it, because Kony doesn't have the weapons that the Government of Uganda has.

Secondly, like there is no protection for the people in northern Uganda. In 2004, February, more than 400 people were killed, although in the newspaper they said it was 200, and then in the memorial ground is put 121, but it was more than 400 people. Imagine the whole camp was burnt and we have the witnesses. I worked with them before. And we don't have protection. I believe that the Government of Uganda could have stopped this war, but right now it is in the critical condition because so many children, the child soldiers, they are forced to go to war.

And I know that peace talks also has failed for some reason, but peace talk, have not been conducted rightly. How can you conduct peace talk plus the army fighting? Can that go together? It can't go!

And the ICC has failed too, because how can you prosecute the five people when they are still in the bush? Will they come back if they hear that? Have they caught them? No, they are still in the bush. If they want, they should first talk peace, real peace, and these people come back and prosecution can go on because we need justice too, because for us who are afflicted by these people, we need justice, but we need them to come back and then they prosecute them. You cannot prosecute someone who is still hiding in the jungle.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes?

Ms. BROWN. I would agree with what Grace as said as well, and it is our assessment that a military solution in northern Uganda can't work. As she mentioned, the war has been going on for 20 years, and the Government of Uganda increasingly use of its military budget without a parallel increase in humanitarian services or basic services. The military budget keeps getting bigger and bigger, and more attention is paid to a military solution, and at the end of the day the LRA is still active in northern Uganda today.

We would admit that a negotiated settlement to this conflict is incredibly difficult. No one knows what Joseph Kony's agenda is. He is just a very difficult man to pin down. But we would also say that the government hasn't supported mediation proactively enough. It seems as if the government is forced into a corner, and

says, okay, we will mediate under pressure, but hasn't proactively come out in support of a peaceful settlement.

In terms of Chapter 7 to the U.N. Peacekeeping Missions, this is difficult because, as we have all said, 80 percent of the LRA fighters are children, so we don't support a military solution on the part of the UPDF because, you know, they are just killing kids, but UNMIS in southern Sudan has to intervene more proactively to protect civilians. I think protection has to be the overriding lens through which we see U.N. engagement, especially U.N. military engagement.

So intervene to protect Sudanese civilians, intervene to capture and repatriate LRA fighters so they can reintegrate into their communities, and capture the indicted commanders, and in the context of this the Ugandan Government has to make reconciliation a priority. Address the root causes of the conflict, discuss with the Acholi people why this conflict has gone on for so long, and try to address the grievances that they have had for the past 20 years.

I mean, as you are probably aware, in the last election the northern parts of Uganda voted overwhelmingly for the opposition, so it is a clear rejection in the north of Museveni's military strategy.

Mr. PAYNE. Dr. Waldman.

Dr. WALDMAN. I don't have much to add. I think you asked the right questions regarding the will of the Ugandan Government to pursue a peaceful solution. I think it is easy once the will is determined to help provide the capacity to be able to provide the necessary services to the population, but in addition, and this has been going on for quite a long time, and although the conflict may have endured for 20 years, northern Uganda has been a depressed area for more than that, and relatively underprivileged area since the days of the British colonization period.

I think it is quite important, as the Chairman intimated earlier, to give a much stronger voice to the local population, and I think that many of the solutions may lie within. I don't think that enough has been done to date to solicit ideas from the population itself.

Let me add one other thing that hasn't been mentioned yet, which is that I think that information of the kind that I summarized is quite important as well, and since this survey was conducted a year ago, there have really been no attempts to repeat the survey or to see exactly in which direction things are progressing. We have heard some reports of fewer incidents of attack by the LRA, some attempts we have heard to repatriate the population without really knowing whether or not the time is ripe for that to occur. I would just like to make a pitch for some investment to be made in the continuation of collecting objective data of this kind to document the humanitarian situation and also to shed more light on the political and even the military situations as well.

Mr. PAYNE. That is me beeping myself.

But that is great. You know, I don't think that Uganda is—I think when democracy came in and we pushed democracy, you know, we didn't do a good job at talking about how it should work in all the parties. I mean, even in our country, rural parts of the United States is not well served as urban parts. You may recall they had the Tennessee Valley Authority because people in that

area didn't have lights, they didn't have telephones. This is, you know, 40–50 years ago in the United States.

So these countries, with the Sierra Leone when the RUF and those people had control of the rural area because they only deal with Freetown, whether it is Cote d'Ivoire, even Liberia, Monrovia, the people in Lawfan County felt no one cares about us out here.

So I think one of the democracy-building and maybe the institutes like IRI and NDI and all those groups that go in for elections could stay there and talk about how do you try to—I know there is limited resources, but how do you go out and reach into those areas that are not served well as we see in northern Uganda and as we have seen in the rural parts of most of the countries, that the governments basically concentrate on the major urban capital, and there is this gruntless in the other areas.

So I really appreciate, I don't know how close we are to our bell. Well, thank you very much. I will turn back over to the Chair.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

I do have some additional questions which I would like to submit to you. We have three votes, regrettably on the Floor, in succession which could take another 40 minutes or so, so I do regret that we cannot continue this dialogue, but I do thank you so much for your testimonies, for your good work, and Dr. Waldman, we will follow up on your suggestion. It was a good one, and we will get back to you as well and let you know what we find out. To all of you, thank you so much.

Ms. Akallo, I will be asking you in a written request if you could just speak to the issue, as to how women and young girls who have had children, how well or poorly are they accepted back into their villages? We will have some additional questions as well, which time regrettably does not permit.

But thank you so much, and the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:59 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X



MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

Ann R. Parry – Public citizen
Letter to be considered for the record
House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations
Wednesday, April 26, 2006
Hearing: The Endangered Children of Northern Uganda

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni was quoted in a New Vision article dated June 28, 2005¹, as stating, “It is not possible for any force to **destabilize** the democracy of Uganda using any force because the UPDF (Uganda People’s Defence Force) has the capacity to **deal promptly** with such forces.”

The 20-year conflict in Northern Uganda has resulted in:

- The abduction of more than 30,000 children, as soldiers and sex slaves for the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). (This number is grossly underestimated due to the lack of birth records in the remote villages of Northern Uganda.);
- Forcing more than 1.7 million citizens into internally displaced people’s (IDP) camps;
- Forcing over 50,000 children (of ALL ages) to commute nightly in to nearby towns to sleep, and avoid capture by the LRA;
- The labeling of children abducted into the LRA’s rebel ranks as terrorists, when they are truly among the victims of this conflict;
- And an estimated 130 people dying per day.

If one considers the aforementioned results of the 20-year war between the government of Yoweri Museveni and the LRA, as well as the countless results not listed, one would not infer the description of “stable democracy.” One would be more likely to describe Northern Uganda as a “destabilized democracy,” something that Mr. Museveni has stated is “not possible.” If the UPDF “has the capacity to deal promptly with such forces,” then what exactly is a prompt time frame? The war in the north has been going on 20 years too long. I do not believe the current Ugandan government intends to end the war in Northern Uganda, or else they would have done so “promptly.”

If the United States does not pressure Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to end this conflict, the war in Northern Uganda will have no end in sight.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann R. Parry

¹ Olupot, Milton. “Museveni Meets Acholi Leaders.” *New Vision Online*. June 28, 2005.
<<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/441902/Museveni>> (24 April 2006.)

RESPONSES FROM MR. JEFFREY KRILLA, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Question:

There are concerns that the local defense units are poorly organized and are themselves guilty of offense against citizens in northern Uganda. What is the administration prepared to do to push the Government of Uganda to conduct more effective oversight of these militias? Is the government negligent in its oversight to this point, or do they not have the capacity to do a better job?

Response:

We want to see an end to all human rights abuses in northern Uganda, regardless of whether they are committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF), or the Local Defense Units (LDUs). We documented abuses by the LDUs in the 2005 edition of our Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

The United States is pressing the Government of Uganda to improve training and address impunity for the UPDF and LDUs in order to decrease the number of human rights abuses committed by Ugandan security forces in the north. The U.S. is helping to increase their capacity by providing funding to train UPDF in the areas of civil/military relations, military justice and human rights in an effort to curb these human rights abuses. The U.S. continues to urge the Government of Uganda to provide effective protection for civilians by adequately deploying UPDF troops in the region, particularly to enhance the protection of IDP camps against LRA attacks. In addition, the U.S. strongly urges the Government of Uganda to investigate and prosecute all violence against civilians by security forces, and focus efforts on providing human rights training along with security training to deployed personnel in the region.

Question:

The United States has signed onto the protocols banning the forced conscription of youth under 18 years, but to what extent have we been able to build a consensus among the major signatories to reduce and eliminate the incidence of child soldiers globally?

Response:

Since the United States signed and ratified the optional protocol banning the use of child soldiers, we have strongly encouraged other countries to sign as well. As of June 2004, 115 countries had signed the optional protocol and 71 countries had ratified it.

The U.S. has also invested resources in preventing the use of child soldiers, reintegrating former child soldiers back into society, and prosecuting human rights violators. For example, in Colombia, the U.S. helped more than 550 former child combatants abandon illegal armed groups and integrate into society, and provided them with basic education. In Uganda, the U.S. Government has provided \$360,000 to the International Rescue Committee to address nightwalkers, or children in danger of forced conscription by the LRA. In Sierra Leone, the U.S. is the largest contributor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a body that has a mandate from the UN Security Council to bring to justice those with "greatest responsibility" for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the issue of child soldiers, committed in the country from 1996 to the war's end in 2002.

The international community must remain vigilant in trying to ensure that the protocol on child soldiers is respected. In Chad, for example, Sudanese rebels have reportedly recruited or abducted children from refugee camps to fight in rebel ranks. The U.S. Government is funding additional security for refugee camps, and has expressed its concerns to parties involved in these conflicts. The U.S. is an active member of the Working Group of the U.N. Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict, created in July 2005, and supports the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy. She is planning a trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the issue of children associated with fighting forces is still a problem.

Question:

According to one study, people in northern Uganda believe the government is trying to punish them for ethnic atrocities from previous regimes or to prevent a leader from

emerging from that region. How much credibility does the Administration place in such speculation?

Response:

The underlying factors of the twenty-year conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda are complex and have varied over time. The conflict has its roots in the spirit movement of Alice Lakwena who opposed the Obote II regime and took on some new characteristics with the 1986 overthrow of then-President Tito Okello, an ethnic Acholi.

The brutal LRA insurgency has cost the nation of Uganda tens of thousands of lives, most of them ethnic Acholi.

We firmly believe that the Government of Uganda's efforts to defeat the LRA are motivated by a sincere desire to rid Uganda of an irrational and brutal movement that has brought about immense suffering to the Ugandan people as a whole. We do not believe these efforts are motivated by a desire to punish the Acholi people for previous events.

Question:

To your knowledge, what kind of pressure is the Administration prepared to use with the Government of Uganda to make every effort possible to bring to a conclusion this extended conflict? Do you believe the Ugandan government has the capacity to bring the war to an end?

Response:

The United States places a high priority on resolving the conflict in Uganda. Toward this end, we have focused our efforts on a three-pronged strategy which includes working with the UN and NGOs to bring humanitarian assistance to the people of northern Uganda, urging the Government of Uganda to reach out to the Acholi people and support reconciliation efforts, and to put an end to the war itself by providing military assistance to help defeat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and build the capacity and professionalism of the UPDP. On the last point, in addition to providing more than \$5 million in non-lethal military assistance to combat the LRA, we are using political pressure to encourage the Government of Uganda to provide police and security forces to protect the Ugandans from the violence they face from the LRA.

The situation in Uganda is grave, and we continue to press for a resolution to the crisis. We are working closely with the Governments of Uganda, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to end the LRA's extended campaign of violence. We hope that the LRA's decision to participate in peace talks with the Government of Uganda brokered by the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) will result in progress. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, at the urging of Sudanese Vice President Salva Kiir, has decided to send a Ugandan government team to join the negotiations beginning July 9. We believe the Ugandan government has the capacity to bring the war to an end with this support from the international community.

