



Malnourished children in an IDP camp
in Gulu, northern Uganda, July 2005.
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Fuelling Fear

THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY AND SMALL ARMS

INTRODUCTION¹

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is a non-state armed group that forces children to fight a war using small arms. The war is directed, for the most part, against the civilian population of northern Uganda. The LRA commits massacres and atrocities, and abducts children, forcing them with extreme violence to become soldiers. An estimated 25,000 to 30,000 children have been abducted since 1987. Some have escaped; others have died through violence, disease, hunger, and exhaustion. Children now constitute between 80 and 90 per cent of the estimated 500 to 1,000 remaining LRA fighters.

In the past 19 years, the fighting has killed thousands of people and displaced close to 1.3 million within northern Uganda. Many more are maimed and tortured in displays of the LRA's strength. Although people are often attacked with knives and agricultural implements, small arms remain the fundamental facilitators of violence. They are used to corral people, preventing them from running away.

The Ugandan army has not been able to defeat the LRA militarily. It fights the LRA with armoured personnel carriers, aircraft, and around 40,000 troops, thereby curtailing some of the LRA's activities and disrupting its supply lines. But, although the LRA has declined in numbers, has few resources, and has difficulty moving equipment, it is able to continue fighting, killing, and abducting. Because it is well equipped with small arms, it is able to attack the local population and the Ugandan army in both Uganda and Sudan.

Small arms are the most suitable weapons for the LRA's operations, and the group consequently uses few larger weapons. The supply and maintenance of small arms is therefore a crucial gauge of the LRA's capacity to continue fighting. The following are among the main findings of this chapter:

- The LRA depends on small arms to conduct its operations.
- The LRA requires few resources other than small arms and people to use them.
- Children are easily captured, indoctrinated, and trained to use small arms.
- Small arms facilitate a deliberate policy of terrorizing the civilian population.
- The LRA acquires small arms constantly and keeps them in good repair.
- Weapons have been cached throughout northern Uganda and southern Sudan.
- Plentiful arms stocks mean the LRA is far from finished as a fighting force.

The chapter concludes that the current military solution to the conflict adds to the small arms problem in northern Uganda. The conflict has led to high levels of armament among the civilian population in the region, levels exacerbated by government and military policies of arming sections of society against the LRA and other armed groups. This contributes to a cycle of small arms, insecurity, and further armament, of which the conflict with the LRA is but a part.

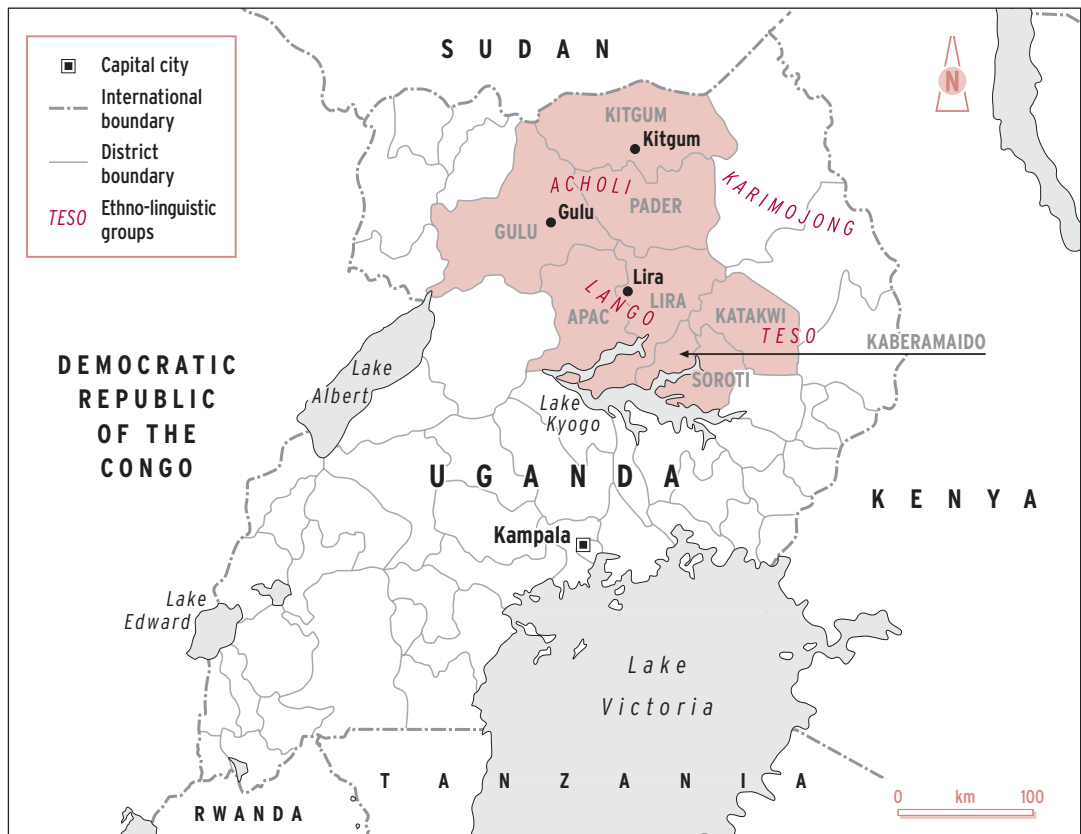
A TROUBLED HISTORY

Ugandan politics is characterized by a deep north–south divide that is the legacy of colonial rule. The crisis with the LRA is rooted in this divide and also deepens it.

Northerners, and particularly the Acholi, constituted the majority of the army under British rule, while southern peoples were favoured in the administration of government. This order prevailed following independence in 1962. Northerners and southerners came to view each other as favoured in one way or another. Successive oppressive regimes in the 1970s and early 1980s, including those of Idi Amin (1971–79) and Milton Obote (1962–71; 1980–85), deepened this divide. The north, and particularly the largely northern Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), was increasingly viewed as repressive.

The final years of struggle against the regime of Milton Obote and his short-lived successors witnessed extreme persecution of the civilian population in the south. The UNLA is estimated to have killed some 300,000 people—a fact that remains fresh in the memories of many southerners (ICG, 2004, p. 2). When the National Resistance Army (NRA), led by Yoweri Museveni, overran Kampala in January 1986 to set up the current political order,² many UNLA members fled north to their Acholi communities in Gulu and Kitgum Districts, or further, into Sudan (see Map 11.1)

Map 11.1 Ugandan districts affected by LRA activity, 1987–2005



The Acholis' fears of reprisals were confirmed when the NRA mistreated the population.³ Former UNLA soldiers formed the Ugandan People's Defence Army (UPDA) in opposition to the newly installed NRA, but the group degenerated into predation and violence against its own Acholi people (Behrend, 1999, p. 25).

The result was that a broad section of Acholi society acquired a number of grievances, which persist to this day. They felt strong opposition to the south; shame over 'their' military defeat; fear of reprisals; guilt over atrocities committed in the south; and high levels of insecurity. The situation was ripe for exploitation by anyone offering a way out of this collective predicament.

By late 1986 a popular uprising had started, centred around a woman named Alice, who claimed to be the medium for a spirit, the *Lakwena*. Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) preached salvation through purification. Soldiers within the movement were told that, once purified, they would be immune from harm in battle. They were taught to walk straight at the enemy without taking cover, a tactic that was to prove extremely successful at first.⁴

The HSM found many recruits in Acholi society, grew in numbers, and proceeded to inflict a series of defeats on the NRA. By January 1987, the Movement had advanced to within 80 km of Kampala. In October and November of that year, however, it was crushed in a series of defeats that government forces inflicted on it in and around Iganga District.

In the shadow of Alice's Holy Spirit Movement, Joseph Kony emerged as a spirit medium around January 1987. His movement, first known as the Lords' Army and later the Lord's Resistance Army,⁵ began to attract a small number of followers from the UPDA and the local population. Like the HSM, it forcibly recruited some members (Behrend, 1999, pp. 179–80). However, over time, abduction became the predominant source of new recruits, because the LRA never achieved large-scale popular support.

Operations to dislodge the LRA, particularly Operation North of 1991, were intended to distance the local population from the group, but had the effect of precipitating attacks on the populace. Government troops forcibly displaced thousands into 'protected' settlements, or camps, and subsequently perpetrated numerous human rights abuses (HRW, 1997, p. 84). While these operations appear to have physically distanced the LRA from the local population, they also generated more intense opposition to the government and army among the Acholis. Moreover, the LRA increasingly operated as if the local population had colluded with the government.

From around 1991, the LRA began large-scale attacks on the ordinary civilian population, including raids on schools and clinics. Fighters massacred, abducted, and tortured people, cutting off limbs, ears, and lips and gouging out eyes (ICG, 2004, p. 6; HRW, 1997, p. 82).

The LRA also began to forge links with the Government of Sudan—Sudan's response to Uganda's support for the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). From 1997, the LRA received Sudanese weapons and ammunition, as well as the use of southern Sudan as a base for operations.⁶ It abducted children and took them to Sudan for training. By 1997, the LRA was believed to field around 5,000 troops, of whom the majority were children (Nyeko and Lucima, 2002, pp. 18–19).

The year 2002 was a turning point for the LRA. Throughout the late 1990s and the first years of the next decade, the LRA had gained much from the poor efficiency of the recently renamed Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF).⁷ However, the Nairobi Agreement of 2002 restored diplomatic relations between Sudan and Uganda, allowed the UPDF to conduct operations against LRA bases in Sudan, and apparently curtailed the bulk of Sudanese arms transfers to the LRA.⁸ Since 2002, LRA fighters have suffered severe difficulties in moving arms and foodstuffs because of intense UPDF operations, such as Operation Iron Fist and its successors.

Abduction became the predominant source of new recruits.



In Obalanga, northern Uganda, 46 bodies are exhumed from the bush for burial in June 2005. The incursions of LRA rebels into Teso sub-region in 2003 left thousands of people dead. © AFP/Getty Images

At first the LRA changed tactics and tried to expand its operations, but by 2003 this had resulted in high levels of disorganization (ICG, 2004, pp. 7–8). This change in circumstances is widely believed to be responsible for a series of peace talks between the LRA and government representatives since 2003. To date, the government has pursued a two-sided strategy of force and negotiation, albeit with more emphasis on the former.

The early months of 2005 saw continued erosion of the LRA's military capacity and the group again changed tactics. The estimated 500–1,000 remaining LRA fighters have dispersed into small groups, often far from contact with centralized command (ICG, 2005b, p. 3).⁹ To date, this tactic has proved effective for attacking and abducting people from the local community, as well as for avoiding costly encounters with UPDF troops.¹⁰

In the latter months of 2005, a further change in LRA tactics was observable. For the first time in 19 years, the LRA launched a series of attacks against international aid agencies and workers, resulting in several deaths. Whether these attacks were a deliberate response to the International Criminal Court's (ICC) issuing arrest warrants for LRA leaders in October 2005 remains to be seen.

It may well have signified to LRA commanders that aid agencies are a part of an international effort that is working explicitly against them and not simply providing aid to the affected population.

The LRA also changed its areas of operation in the latter months of 2005. While the LRA has long operated in southern Sudan, and has mounted attacks there in the past, it has recently done so more frequently. Most notably, it has been active on the west bank of the Nile, south of Juba; it raided Loka and Lainya on the Yei–Juba road, and launched attacks as far west as Yei. The latter represents the first time the group has attacked in Western Equatoria. These attacks have affected commercial access to Juba and NGO operations in the area. In particular, de-mining agencies suspended operations in the area. In September, a large group of fighters also entered Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Attacks in both Sudan and the DRC appear to be on the increase—an ominous sign that the war may be spreading (see Map 11.2).¹¹ In one notable incident in the DRC, in January 2006, eight Guatemalan peacekeeping troops were killed in a clash with LRA fighters north of the town of Bunia (BBC, 2006; MONUC, 2006).

LRA MOTIVES AND ORGANIZATION

The LRA is the outward expression of the motives of Joseph Kony. Its fighters live hand to mouth, wear no trappings of modernity, and have no apparent economic motives. Lower-level fighters have no significant concerns other than to survive their time with the LRA. They take from the local population only enough for subsistence. Senior commanders also appear to have few material incentives. For many of them, 20 years or more of committing atrocities against their own people make the prospect of returning home bleak.

If there is a political project behind the LRA's campaign, it is Joseph Kony's alone. The LRA is an extension of Kony's apparent need to assert his power and to be a major threat to the people and Government of Uganda. Observers note that most major campaigns and attacks occur in response to some statement or action on the part of the government or local population that appears to detract from Kony's claim to potency.¹² The LRA therefore continues its campaign because it is Kony's wish. The group will desist only if Kony agrees to return from the bush, or is killed, or can no longer forcibly recruit and arm abductees.

Unlike the earlier HSM, the LRA has little popular support, so in order to survive it has to abduct recruits. The basis of Kony's control over the LRA is that between 80 and 90 per cent of the LRA's fighters are abducted children aged between 10 and 17 years. The group avoids abducting adults for two simple reasons: it is easier for them to escape and it is more difficult to indoctrinate them.¹³

Children, on the other hand, can be terrorized into becoming effective fighters. Indoctrination is complemented by the fact that small arms are small and light enough for children as young as seven years old to use to deadly effect. The LRA's ability to 'create' new fighters therefore hinges on two factors: the availability of potential abductees and the availability of arms with which to equip them.

The LRA has a simple formula for success in its attacks against government troops—fighters are indoctrinated into obeying absolutely the orders of their commanders, whose authority is backed up by the spirits.

Map 11.2 Uganda and surrounding countries



Between 80 and 90 per cent of LRA fighters are abducted children.

The core tactic is one inherited from the HSM: 'The children just walk straight at the soldiers. In the long grass they are small and difficult to see and they just keep coming. The children are unstoppable and the UPDF usually run away.' 'The most important aspect of training is not learning how to shoot or ambush, but learning how to follow the spirits', explained one former LRA commander.¹⁴

Even for those children who may question the power of the spirits over them, the suffering inflicted upon those who attempt to escape, and the fact that the children themselves are forced to participate in exacting punishment, is a considerable disincentive to trying to desert.

Box 11.1 Abduction as recruitment

There is no set pattern for LRA abductions. They take place whenever the LRA has access to people; some are planned, while others are opportunistic. However, when the LRA attacks to abduct children, it usually does so at night and targets isolated villages and poorly defended camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) outside towns. It does so at night simply because children are concentrated in one place. Children are usually abducted singly or in pairs, but sometimes the LRA is able to round up upwards of 30 or even 100 children when settlements are poorly defended.¹⁵

Indoctrination begins immediately upon abduction. The most comprehensive accounts are from those who have counselled returned children. According to them, the LRA commanders involve the children in atrocities at the place of abduction; as a result, the children feel that they cannot go home knowing what they have done. As one humanitarian worker described it, 'they make them kill family and local villagers who they know. They might, for instance, force them to chop off the arm of a mother or father.'

Most of the children are beaten shortly after they are captured. Often this entails up to 200 hundred strokes of the cane and sometimes severe blows with pangas.¹⁶ The commanders try to instil fear of escape from the start. They make the children kill those who try to escape by beating them with sticks and pangas, and even by biting one another to death. These atrocities are part of a deliberate policy designed to generate the utmost fear of the LRA in the children.

Violence is accompanied by rituals, which are also designed to instil fear in the abductees. The children are anointed with shea nut oil crosses, which they are told contain the spirits. The oil, and the spirits it represents, is said to protect the children from bullets. The children are also told that the spirits will confuse them if they try to escape and that they will walk in circles and back to the LRA, who will then kill them. The fear of being in the LRA is perhaps exceeded only by the fear of being recaptured.

Sources: Interviews conducted in northern Uganda in May 2005.

In a force of mostly abducted fighters, there has never been any question that many wish to demobilize and return to their communities. The fact remains, however, that, despite numerous escapes and captures of fighters, many cannot leave due to the fear instilled in them by the LRA. The problem lies mainly with the leadership and with Joseph Kony in particular.

'The LRA don't control territory, they control people's minds.'

Most recruits have two or three days or one week of small arms training. During this period, all recruits are trained to operate and use an assault rifle, and to dismantle one. Behaviour under fire is simple. Fighters have to obey the commander absolutely under pain of death, firing only at close range when the chance of hitting the enemy is greatest.¹⁷ This is a simple formula, but an effective one.

LRA USE OF SMALL ARMS

While LRA fighters are tightly controlled in their actions, they have great freedom of action in conducting campaigns of violence. As one senior humanitarian official put it, 'The LRA don't control territory, they control people's minds'.¹⁸ LRA attacks are designed to do just that. Most assaults on the civilian population are therefore opportunistic, happening whenever fighters have the chance to attack the local population, and are usually accompanied by extreme brutality. Small arms enable or facilitate all of these attacks and are thus instrumental in the LRA's policies of sowing fear in the region.

The LRA undertakes a number of different activities. It abducts children as potential fighters; abducts local people to carry foodstuffs and munitions; targets vehicles on the roads; attacks poorly defended UPDF positions; assaults IDP camps; and engages UPDF mobile patrols. More often than not, the LRA does several of these things simultaneously. For example, an attack may take place in order to seize foodstuffs, but fighters may also abduct people at the same time to carry their seizure, or kill UPDF troops and take their munitions (Table 11.1).¹⁹

Small arms are essential for the LRA, in contrast to larger weapons, because they enable a high degree of mobility. Most attacks involve only small groups of LRA fighters and usually a maximum of 10 to 15.²⁰ Attacks are fast and the LRA is quick to leave the area before the UPDF can bring in heavy weapons or aircraft to engage the LRA.

Security personnel of humanitarian agencies estimate from analyses of attack frequencies that LRA units may travel up to 50 km in one day. The LRA rely on this mobility to evade the UPDF and usually take the strongest and fittest fighters to attack larger targets because they can get clear quickly before the UPDF can launch a counter-attack. When confronted, the LRA's tactics are to split up into very small groups and disperse into the bush.²¹

Fighters usually refrain from firing at civilians. Humanitarian personnel testify that the LRA most frequently uses pangas and knives to commit atrocities. As one field security officer noted, 'In most cases, they kill people working in their gardens using their own tools'.²²

Small arms are, nonetheless, pivotal in these acts. Atrocities are always committed at gunpoint, which prevents people from running away. Because of civilians' fears of being shot, by and large it is only when fighters engage UPDF troops that they need to fire their weapons. Conserving ammunition, however, may not be a response to acute shortages: the LRA may choose to use farm tools or knives in its attacks simply for the traumatizing effect.

Former combatants report that, when engaging the UPDF, they rarely select automatic fire, but are taught to fire single shots at close range. Even then, former fighters relate how they are ordered to 'fire carefully' so that they might use only up to five rounds in a serious encounter.²³ Automatic fire is used only when attacking the UPDF in earnest, and this is rare. Fighters are taught to conserve stocks and, as one former fighter noted, it is a tactic that is rigidly enforced: 'If fighters lose ammunition, the punishment is death, no question'.²⁴

In some situations there is a great danger of being heard and found by the UPDF.²⁵ Fighters are taught always to keep the safety catch on in tall grass, in case the weapon discharges and alerts the enemy. Although weapons are

Table 11.1 Types of LRA attack and use of small arms

Type of attack	Use of small arms
Road ambush	Shots fired from assault rifles to halt vehicles. Sometimes rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire. Civilians may be attacked with other weapons.
Ambushes in the fields/bush	Assault rifles used to corral people for abduction or attack with tools or knives. Shots rarely fired.
Attacks on IDP camps	Assault rifles sometimes used directly to kill. More often used to corral people for abduction or attack with tools or knives.
Abduction	Assault rifles. Usually used to corral people. Shots rarely fired.
Attacks on UPDF bases	Assault rifles and sometimes light weapons used. Rarely sustained fire.
Attacks on UPDF foot patrols	Assault rifles used to kill troops. Rarely sustained fire.
Attacks on UPDF mobile patrols	Shots fired to halt vehicles and kill troops. Sometimes use light weapons.

Sources: Interviews conducted in northern Uganda in May 2005.

Box 11.2 The human impact of the conflict

Today, around 1.3 million people in northern Uganda live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, some 90 per cent of the population in the region. The camps usually consist of hundreds of huts crammed together with perhaps only a metre between them. They are squalid and disease-ridden, with latrine access in many camps of only ten per cent. Cholera is a major problem.

People who once lived adjacent to their own fields, or 'gardens', now reside in camps many miles away. Some cannot tend their gardens because they are located too far from the camps; others have to walk for at least an hour to reach them. By military order, and for their own safety, people are not allowed out of the camps before 9.00 a.m. They have to return before 4.00 p.m. Tilling, sowing, husbandry, and harvesting therefore can take place, at most, only between 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. On some days, people are forbidden to leave the camps at all because of LRA activity. There is simply insufficient time to grow food effectively, and the majority of people are dependent on food aid.

Schooling is difficult. In some camps the teacher-pupil ratio approaches 1 to 700, forcing the children to stand outside the classroom where the teacher cannot be heard. Around 25 per cent of primary school-age children do not even attend school.

The population lives in constant fear of LRA attack. Fear is a difficult image to capture, and for the most part people going about their daily business display few signs of it. 'Fear is the biggest thing here: fear of the situation and fear of death', noted one local religious leader. Although the UPDF defends camps, people know that the LRA can bypass sentries, enter the camps, and abduct or kill them.

Families send their children into towns at night because they know that the LRA will otherwise abduct them. This 'night commuting' is perhaps the most evident expression of people's fears. In Gulu alone, the number of night commuters increased from 11,000 to 18,000 between mid-March and mid-May 2005. Night commuting across Uganda was estimated to total around 30,000 in March 2005 (USAID, 2005). The children are often unaccompanied and are at great risk, not only from the LRA but from all forms of predation by adults. Promiscuity among the children is rife, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, are commonplace.

Weekly UN security reports detail numerous LRA attacks on various targets. In the two months between the end of May and the end of July 2005, 63 killings and 50 abductions came to the attention of UN staff in Gulu. Many incidents go unreported. Children under the age of 17 constituted the greater part of the abductees. Some are taken as fighters; girls are more often taken to become 'wives' or sex slaves and are raped by LRA fighters. As one senior humanitarian official explained:

A child prepares to spend the night on the streets in Kitgum, northern Uganda, in November 2004. This youngster is one of Uganda's many thousands of night commuters who flee to the towns at night to avoid LRA abduction.

© Chris de Bode/Panos





I have been doing this job, in various places, for 25 years. Psychologically I cannot think of a worse effect on children in terms of terror in their minds.

While reporting is often incomplete, it is clear that every report adds to people's concerns, as local residents made clear in their statements in May 2005:

In 2004, in Pader, the LRA overran the UPDF. They cooked people in pots, ordering the LCs [local councillors] to eat the bodies of the cooked people.

Wednesday or Thursday last week the LRA is alleged to have abducted 129 people on the Lira-Pader border. The person who escaped said that Kony had ordered the LRA to capture 1,000 new recruits.

In Pabbo, they warned people they were coming, then came and killed.

One week ago in Koch Goma, the LRA killed 14 people, even though the UPDF is there. It is only 14 km from here.

Between mid-March and mid-May 2005, LRA activity was reported on every day but one. Although such activity included sightings and reports of looting, more often than not the LRA was involved in some form of violence or abduction. The LRA is thus a constant feature of everyday life in northern Uganda. Fighters appear daily, seemingly randomly, and virtually anywhere in the affected region. No one can be certain of his or her safety at any time.

The human cost is probably impossible to calculate. Thousands have died directly from the fighting. Many others have died of malnutrition and diseases. Some estimates put the conflict-related death toll at 1,000 per week (IRC, 2005). The majority of the northern population is affected, with around 1.3 million IDPs, over 200,000 refugees in Uganda from Sudan, and over 300,000 Ugandan refugees elsewhere. In total, some 25,000 to 30,000 children are estimated to have been abducted by the LRA during the conflict (UNICEF, 2005; USAID, 2005).

Sources: Interviews conducted in northern Uganda in May 2005. LRA attack and activity data derived from a compilation of UN daily, weekly, and monthly security summaries kindly provided by the UN Field Security Office, Gulu.

Box 11.3 The regional trade in small arms

The borders between the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda are porous and allow unchecked small arms proliferation.

Sudan is perhaps the greatest route for small arms transfers in the north of Uganda. Southern Sudan hosts a heavily armed local population, but also routes to Ethiopia and from there to Somalia. Available weaponry may well be on the increase in southern Sudan because of the peace agreement signed between Sudanese government forces and the Ugandan-backed SPLA. Some reports suggest that the SPLA, or former SPLA fighters, trade weaponry in Kitgum, most notably at the Agora cattle market.

To the north-east, the border regions of Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda are the focus of an extensive market for weapons which links many actors in the region and those from further afield. Both the Turkana and Karimojong, which straddle the border between Kenya and northern Uganda, are heavily armed. Together with the Toposa of Sudan, the Karimojong and Turkana participate in a market for arms and cattle in the border triangle between Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda.

In the west, the DRC and Sudan border the West Nile region of Uganda. The region has, in the past, hosted four main rebel groups: the Former Uganda National Army (FUNA), the first Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF), the UNRF II, and the West Nile Bank Front (WNBFB). Arms procured in the DRC and Sudan, as well as those captured from government forces, have been a key element in facilitating the rise of these groups. While these forces are no longer active, small arms still proliferate in the region (RLP, 2004).

Source: Interviews conducted in northern Uganda in May 2005.

usually loaded, when in camp fighters always keep the safety catch of their weapons on, to prevent accidental discharge and potential disclosure of their presence.²⁶

LRA ACQUISITION OF SMALL ARMS

Northern Uganda and its surrounding countries are awash with small arms (Box 11.3). The LRA is able to capture and trade weapons amid this plentiful supply. In many cases, it is able to do so because it is well armed. In short, as has been the case with armed groups elsewhere, arms beget arms (Small Arms Survey, 2005, pp. 186–7).

To judge from the accounts of former LRA commanders, and the number of fighters—around 5,000—fielded by the group in the late 1990s, Sudanese arms transfers to the LRA may have accumulated to tens of thousands.²⁷ These stocks are still accessible to the LRA, despite having been supplied nearly two decades ago. Some fighters report that their weapons were still wrapped and greased from the factory when they received them. Kony's battalion is reportedly equipped entirely with unused weapons from these stocks.²⁸

Northern Uganda is awash with small arms.

In addition to these supplies, however, the LRA continually acquires weapons by capturing them from UPDF troops and from local defence units. According to one former LRA fighter, on average each soldier in the UPDF 'detaches'²⁹ that his unit had overrun was equipped with ten full magazines.³⁰ This equates to around 300 rounds of ammunition per soldier. Even a conservative estimate suggests that the average eight-man mobile detach carries at least 1,400 rounds of ammunition and various weapons.³¹ If an LRA unit of the same size overran a UPDF mobile patrol, for instance, and captured only half of its ammunition, it would gain twice its usual complement of ammunition.³²

The LRA also uses its firepower to capture arms from various communities and to capture cattle, which it then exchanges for arms. One local religious leader reported that the LRA has traded cattle for weapons with the Karimojong in particular. LRA raids into southern Sudan have reportedly netted around 6,000 cattle solely for this purpose. The

LRA trades with the Toposa and Dinka of Sudan, but it also captures weapons in raids. As one former LRA commander noted, obtaining arms in Sudan was easy because 'everyone has a gun.'³³

The LRA's supply of weapons is therefore ongoing and never static. It has a vested interest, not only in targeting the population, but also launching attacks to acquire weapons. This is a common tactic of armed groups that lack regular arms supplies.

LRA HOLDINGS

For the most part, the LRA now uses assault rifles and light machine guns, and uses larger weapons, such as RPGs, only when attacking light armoured vehicles. Even when the Sudanese government supplied heavier weapons, the LRA used mainly small arms because it needed to be highly mobile.³⁴ Current weapon holdings appear to reflect this, with the LRA stocking very few heavy weapons.

The LRA's primary weapons are Kalashnikov derivatives and, most commonly, the Chinese Type 56 assault rifle. However, the Ugandan military uses a number of weapons, and the same types are also used by the LRA. The most numerous after the Chinese Type 56 are Polish and Romanian AKM assault rifles and AK-74 assault rifles from the former Soviet Union. Some observers claim that NATO weapons, such as the Belgian FN FAL and the German G3, are also in service with some rebels, having formerly been in the arsenals of the Ugandan and Sudanese governments (IISS, 2005). However, several sources, including former LRA officers, note that, while the LRA sometimes used NATO weapons such as the G3 when operating in Sudan, it very rarely does now due to the shortage of NATO ammunition in the region.³⁵

There have been reports of some large weapons, and perhaps the largest of these are Russian-designed B-10 82 mm or SPG-9 73 mm recoilless guns,³⁶ which senior Ugandan army officers and former LRA fighters report are in the LRA arsenal.³⁷ There have also been a few reports of the LRA using 60 mm and 81 mm mortars, although reports of the latter have been only for large groups of over 50 fighters.³⁸

The LRA appears to have had access to anti-aircraft defences. While only one interviewee mentioned a 12.7 mm anti-aircraft gun, a number suggested that the LRA had been in possession of SA-7 man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). To date, there have been no reports of the LRA using MANPADS, even though UPDF helicopters operate regularly against the LRA. If the LRA did or does have access to them, it is worth noting that the weapons require quite extensive training and must be stored and operated with some expertise (Small Arms Survey, 2004, pp. 77–97).

Table 11.2 LRA weapon inventory: past and present

Frequently used:

Kalashnikov derivatives (particularly Chinese Type 56/56-2 rifle)
Type 81/RPK light machine gun
PKM light machine gun

Less frequently used:

B-10
RPG
60 mm mortar

Past inventory/rarely used:

FN-FAL/SLR
G3
81 mm mortar
12.7 mm anti-aircraft gun
SPG-9
SA-7

Notes: The LRA also stocks hand grenades and landmines.

Sources: Interviews with a wide range of persons in Gulu and Kampala, 21–27 May 2005.

A former LRA commander made it quite clear that the types of weapons used by the LRA have changed over the years: 'in the old days we used RPGs, 60 mm mortars, and B-10s and SPG-9s.'³⁹ One person, who has been in a position to closely monitor the types of weapon that defecting fighters currently bring with them, claims that now 'Very rarely do we have returns of RPGs . . . Most of their big stuff, such as B-10s, is not functioning.'⁴⁰ In August and September 2005, for instance, there were only two cases of the LRA using RPGs. In both, the targets were UPDF rapid response vehicles.⁴¹

This change to using smaller weapons may have several causes. Despite unsubstantiated claims of continued ammunition supply, most Sudanese arms transfers appear to have ceased following the 2002 Sudan–Uganda agreement.⁴² The LRA may now be more dependent on what it can take from lightly armed UPDF detachments, which usually means assault rifles and light machine guns. Perhaps more important may be the change in LRA tactics, which most commentators in northern Uganda note has shifted from battalion-sized operations to small group actions. Such small groups often do not need, and indeed are unable to carry, heavy weapons.

LRA STOCKS

The LRA has two broad and connected systems in place for storing arms and ammunition. These reflect the two major sources of arms and ammunition that have been available to the LRA over the years: large transfers from Sudan and weapons captured from the UPDF.

Large caches

The LRA buries its weapons.

Fighters report that Sudanese-supplied weapons are buried, either in Sudan or in the far north of Uganda. Former fighters report that these stocks remain under Kony's control, and only he can give the orders to excavate arms and ammunition. The weapons are dismantled and their components stored separately, so that escapees or captured LRA members cannot reveal the location of entire stocks.

The stocks are reportedly still very large and far exceed other caches.⁴³ One former LRA fighter recalls how, in March 2004, his unit was ordered to stop some 5 km from the border with Sudan. Initially only the commanders were allowed to go forward, but later the rest of the unit came to a big hole filled with hundreds of arms and uniforms, and surrounded by the tyre marks of the machine that had excavated it.⁴⁴

Some fighters have described how arms and ammunition have been supplied to them from these stocks while in Uganda. However, for the most part LRA combatants operating further south have their own caches.

Local caches

Local caches are small but numerous, and contain weapons that have been captured from the UPDF or local defence units. Because the LRA has to be highly mobile, it cannot carry arms and ammunition much in excess of those it carries already. Former LRA fighters report how, after successfully attacking UPDF troops, weapons and ammunition are distributed to each member of a unit to replenish stocks.

Responsibility for burying ammunition differs from one unit to another. In some units, once arms have been distributed, the balance is buried by the unit commander or one of the more experienced members of the group. As one junior LRA fighter stated, 'Only the hardened ones who have been there a long time are able to bury the ammunition.'⁴⁵

In other units, each fighter buries captured ammunition on the orders of the unit commander. A former member of an LRA unit recalled, 'Whenever you have a lot of ammunition, you bury it on your own, and you remember where you buried it. When the order comes, everyone goes to fetch the ammunition from where they buried it, and it is distributed.' One described how, after excavating a cache, the fighters would fill three magazines and rebury the balance.⁴⁶

Before being placed in holes in the ground, weapons are greased and wrapped in plastic sheeting. A typical burial contains two assault rifles and is approximately one metre long and 50 centimetres deep.⁴⁷

These observations suggest that there are likely to be large caches of weapons in the far north of Uganda as well as in southern Sudan.

While resupplying from these caches may be interrupted by UPDF operations, fighters also maintain small, local caches throughout the north of Uganda. LRA units are likely to be able to resupply from these with greater ease because they need not transport arms and ammunition over long distances.

The quality of LRA small arms

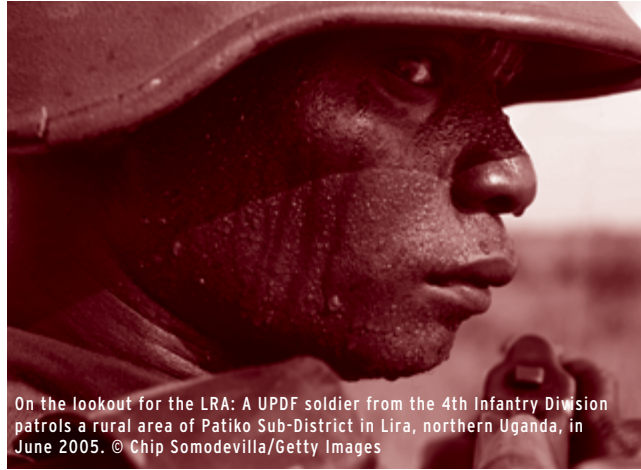
Weapons are a durable commodity, but are subject to environmental conditions that can make them inoperable. LRA fighters, in contrast to many poorly organized armed groups, take good care of their weapons and take basic precautions to ensure they are well maintained and properly stored. Weapon longevity has serious implications for the numbers of weapons available to the LRA. If the group continues to acquire weapons but loses few due to poor maintenance, its chances of making a 'net profit' are increased.

While much of northern Uganda is dry for months, the rainy season brings high levels of humidity that can irreparably damage poorly stored weapons. Weapons rust quickly when wet, and ammunition deteriorates.

LRA weapons, however, are generally well maintained and in good working order, despite being a mixture of ages. Some fighters are issued with brand new weapons, while others are given older weapons. All fighters that were interviewed reported that weapons were always in good working order. A senior Ugandan army official said that he would consider a ten-year-old weapon relatively new, which is a testament to the basic field maintenance skills of the LRA.⁴⁸

As one senior intelligence official noted, 'There have been very few cases whereby LRA weapons have been handed in that are in a poor condition'. Individuals who closely monitor LRA returnees note that, with the exception of light rust on the barrels when it has been raining, the condition of returned weapons is always good. Moreover, the weapons appear to be in sufficiently good condition for the army to find it profitable to send the captured weapons to the small arms factory in Luwero for refurbishment.⁴⁹

Although the LRA does not have access to armourers capable of maintaining weapons to the standards of a conventional army, some reports from the Ugandan army suggest that certain individuals in the LRA perform the function of armourers. One intelligence official noted that the LRA has the capacity to repair weapons found in the bush that are in very poor condition. The incentive to maintain weapons to a high standard is certainly strong because, as one army officer stated, 'The LRA kill their soldiers when they don't look after their guns'.⁵⁰



On the lookout for the LRA: A UPDF soldier from the 4th Infantry Division patrols a rural area of Patiko Sub-District in Lira, northern Uganda, in June 2005. © Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

In the field, fighters perform the normal cleaning and oiling tasks necessary to keep weapons serviceable. Captured UPDF weapons appear to be a good source of oil and cleaning kits, as most soldiers carry them on their person or in the butts of their rifles.⁵¹ However, while some fighters report that they had been in possession of cleaning kits, others report that they often had to improvise. In these cases, LRA fighters clean their weapons with sponges made from mattresses, rags, or any other suitable material to hand. Any long implement that will fit down the barrel of a gun can be improvised to make a pull-through. When oil is not available, the LRA use engine oil, grease, or paraffin, and, if none of these are available, they drain and use the oil from a roasted chicken.⁵²

The LRA received more arms and ammunition than it could use.

These observations indicate that, while the LRA's care of weapons is often rudimentary, it appears to be effective. Weapons are a durable commodity, and more so when properly looked after. Not only are the weapons currently used by the LRA serviceable, but many of those cached are also likely to be so for many years to come.

Alleged ammunition shortages

A number of sources claim that the LRA experiences ammunition shortages. As one senior Ugandan intelligence official noted, 'When the LRA was on good terms with Sudan, and ammunition was not a problem, they would attack with "full fire" [however] ammunition is now conserved'.⁵³ Others note that LRA fighters who have returned carry few weapons and little ammunition, drawing the conclusion that both must be in short supply.⁵⁴

However, it is important to reiterate that the LRA does not consume much ammunition and chooses to conserve it wherever possible. There are also further reasons why the LRA is unlikely to experience damaging ammunition shortages.

Although many fighters return unarmed and without ammunition, this does not mean that the LRA is short of either. Many returnees cache their weapons in case of reprisals. In other cases, fighters abandon their weapons to the remaining members of their units, who then package and bury them for future use.⁵⁵ As one local leader commented:

The [LRA] Brigadiers that have surrendered are open about the fact that weapons are left in the bush. In general, the returnees get very annoyed when we ask them where they have left their guns.⁵⁶

LRA fighters also carry little ammunition anyway, because of their requirement for high mobility. Units will usually carry only the minimum ammunition required for the particular operation they intend to undertake. Junior fighters, who were interviewed separately, claimed they usually carried at most three full magazines, which is around 90 rounds of ammunition. Fighters try to keep at least one full magazine of ammunition on their person, although in times of scarcity fighters can be left with only 10 to 15 rounds. In this case, LRA fighters try to avoid contact with the UPDF until they have located a cache and replenished their ammunition.⁵⁷

The supposed shortage of LRA arms and ammunition is further cast into doubt by claims made by former fighters. As one former LRA commander argued, even though Sudan had stopped supplying the LRA it didn't matter because so much was already stockpiled. Moreover, the LRA had captured much from SPLA and Ugandan government forces in southern Sudan. He summed up by saying that the LRA had received more arms and ammunition from Sudan alone than it could hope to use.⁵⁸ Junior fighters, furthermore, report that LRA stocks in Sudan far exceed those in Uganda. A recently returned LRA fighter commented, 'In Sudan they have more ammunition than they can use, but access has been difficult because the UPDF have been operating with gunships, so they move only a little at a time'. This statement suggests that the most serious difficulty the LRA faces with respect to ammunition is one of movement and resupply.⁵⁹

A LONG ROAD TO STABILITY: SMALL ARMS PROBLEMS IRRESPECTIVE OF THE LRA

The UPDF has launched successive major operations against the LRA since 1991. Today some 40,000 Ugandan army troops are stationed in northern Uganda, most of whom are engaged in combating the LRA.⁶⁰ Not only have these troops provided a source of captured weapons for the LRA, but their presence and associated military policies have made the proliferation of small arms among the civilian population more severe. The pursuit of these strategies is a significant factor contributing to a small arms problem that affects not only the whole of northern Uganda but also surrounding regions.

The military option incorporates government and army policies of arming sections of the civilian population against the LRA. In some instances, issuing arms has been on a small, ad hoc, scale. In 2003, for instance, the military in Gulu town reportedly offered weapons to key local figures. In Teso and Lango Districts, however, arms have been distributed on a much larger scale. The recipients of these weapons are usually local government officials and their bodyguards, but other high-profile officials have been offered weapons. Some have used weapons, or their own armed escorts, for robbery.⁶¹

The formation of armed local defence units (LDUs) has added to the number of weapons in civilian possession. While these units have repelled some LRA attacks, they are also poorly trained and vulnerable to being overrun and losing arms to the LRA.⁶² In addition, members of LDUs receive poor and irregular pay and, as a consequence, some members have simply left and sold their weapons to the local community. A number of UPDF troops have done likewise.⁶³

Although the demand and supply of small arms in northern Uganda is closely related to the conflict with the LRA, the region also experiences high levels of insecurity whose origins lie beyond the conflict. These security problematics encourage general arms acquisition, which further strengthens the LRA's ability to acquire arms through trade and capture. In addition, experience in



People on their twice-daily march from IDP camps to their fields—in constant danger of LRA attack. Kitgum, northern Uganda, November 2005.
© Thomas Morley/Reuters

Box 11.4 Armed violence across northern Uganda

Armed violence and insecurity, fuelled by the proliferation of small arms, is widespread across northern Uganda. The Karamoja region to the north-east on the Kenyan border is particularly affected. While the Karimojong in Uganda and other pastoralist groups in Kenya and Sudan have long practised cattle raiding with traditional weapons such as spears and bows and arrows, the use of small arms is now commonplace. As a result, low-intensity conflicts over livestock have escalated, causing deaths and displacement. In 2004, over 100 people were killed and thousands displaced as a result of armed cattle raids.

Criminality and lawlessness have also increased across the north. Petty crime, the looting of shops and homes, and armed roadside banditry and ambushes are becoming routine as local criminals take advantage of the security vacuum. In Acholi, armed local criminals, or *bookec*, pretend to be LRA rebels. They attack in the manner of the LRA to seize food and other produce, and usually kill if recognized to protect their anonymity.

In Kitgum local officials and the auxiliary police have hired out guns at night to people who use them to commit robberies. Elsewhere, officials have developed private armed militias ostensibly for the defence of dairy farms, but also for political ends.

In other cases, the burgeoning numbers of armed private security guards have themselves been the victims of attack. Very often attacks have been launched by local criminals explicitly to capture the guards' weapons.

Interpersonal armed violence is also commonplace. Women and girls have been singled out as victims of sexual violence and rape by UPDF forces and LDUs. This is often within the IDP camps which UPDF soldiers are responsible for protecting. In purely civilian disputes, there have also been reports of wives hiring armed assassins to kill in revenge for adultery, and weapons used for similar purposes.

In conjunction with the omnipresent threat of LRA attack, these activities have contributed to widespread insecurity among the local population.⁶⁴ Insecurity has led frequently to the acquisition of small arms. In Gulu, for instance, local residents report that most people in town now have access to arms, and the number of weapons circulating is believed to have made the trade in weapons in and around the town an unprofitable business.

Sources: Eavis (2002, pp. 252–3); CSOPNU (2004, pp. 9–11); Patrick (2005); USDOS (2005); interviews conducted in northern Uganda in May 2005.

heavily armed post-conflict societies, such as El Salvador and Liberia, suggest that Uganda's small arms problem will also outlast the conflict with the LRA (Godnick, Muggah, and Waszink, 2002, pp. 10–18; Nichols, 2005).

Across the north of Uganda, small arms are used to steal, rape, intimidate, and settle scores between private individuals and between communities (Box 11.4).

The demand for small arms will certainly not end with the closure of the current LRA crisis. Political instability, in particular, is likely to remain a problem in the near future, of which the March 2006 elections will be a major test. Personal insecurity, the inability of the government to provide for adequate development and respect for human rights, and an absence of the rule of law in many parts of the north, all play their part. The end of the conflict would, however, eliminate a major source of insecurity and a major reason for the high demand for and supply of small arms in northern Uganda.

Uganda's small arms problem will outlast the LRA.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, the findings presented in this chapter suggest that the LRA is unlikely to be short of either arms or ammunition, even though recent UPDF operations have made it more difficult for the LRA to resupply. This observation suggests that a simple equation determines the future of the LRA: if it has weapons it can abduct, and, because it can abduct and arm fighters, it can continue fighting. Solving this equation requires either removing sources of small arms or stopping the LRA from abducting. To date, both approaches have failed.

Since 1991, the government has pursued a twin-track strategy of force and negotiations.⁶⁵ Of the two, the military option is predominant, but has not been particularly successful. Capturing Joseph Kony, killing him, or defeating the

LRA could bring the war to an abrupt end. Yet there is no certainty that the LRA can be defeated, or that Kony can be killed or captured.

The leadership can abduct at will and exerts near-absolute control over fighters through a mix of spiritualism, fear, and violence. It has no respect for the welfare of its troops. Fighters simply subsist—and no more—on the relatively fertile land of northern Uganda. They consequently require few resources other than weapons and ammunition.

Theoretically, the LRA's dependence on small arms is a powerful choke point at which to curtail its activities. In practice, however, supply-side measures to restrict the group's access to small arms are simply unfeasible while the LRA continues fighting.

Stocks of arms and ammunition, formerly supplied by Sudan, remain available to the LRA. The LRA also captures weapons from the numerous UPDF and local defence units. Trade and capture from the heavily armed regions in and around northern Uganda provide another fertile source of arms and ammunition, extending into Sudan and perhaps the DRC.

The LRA also stores its weapons and ammunition with care and observes basic field maintenance requirements that are sufficient to keep its weapons in good order. Taken together with the advantageous supply-side factors, these observations suggest that the LRA is able to maintain stocks in adequate quantities to equip its fighters.

The LRA's prospects are apparently, therefore, as healthy as perhaps they have ever been. Its activities, which appear to have been on the increase throughout 2005, are commensurate with this appraisal. Where the LRA prospers, the population of northern Uganda suffers.

This is not simply due to LRA attacks. The people of northern Uganda suffer from being targeted by the LRA but also from being forcibly displaced into IDP camps. The LRA is not the only armed group that targets people in the region, but it is arguably the most destructive. Its activities, and those undertaken by the government in response, have effectively held an entire society hostage, landless and prone to depredation from a multitude of armed actors.

To compound this reality, the threat posed by small arms grows as the conflict progresses. People seek arms in response to the threat posed by the LRA, in addition to other armed groups. The government and the UPDF have met this demand by distributing arms to the local populace and by forming armed local defence units, thereby adding to a small arms epidemic in the north of the country. This has resulted in a cycle of small arms violence, leading to small arms-induced insecurity and further demand for small arms.

The most urgent response now appears to be to stop the LRA from targeting and abducting from the local population through a concerted effort to bring the war to a close. Yet removing the LRA from the equation will reduce only one crucial part of the security problematique in the region. It will not solve the wider small arms problem. To do so will require responsible small arms policies on the part of the states in the region that have been lacking to date.

The conflict should stand as a powerful reminder that small arms-related problems, when left to fester through poor government policies or an absence of international action, can destroy the fabric of entire societies. ■

The LRA's prospects are as healthy as ever.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HSM	Holy Spirit Movement	SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
ICC	International Criminal Court		(now SPLM)

ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement (formerly SPLA)
IDP	Internally displaced person(s)		
LC	Local Council (Local Councillor)	UNLA	Ugandan National Liberation Army
LDU	Local Defence Unit	UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army	UPDA	Ugandan People's Defence Army
NRA	National Resistance Army	UPDF	Ugandan People's Defence Force
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade (launcher)	WNBFB	West Nile Bank Front

ENDNOTES

- 1 This chapter presents findings from desk research and from interviews conducted in Uganda in May 2005. Among those interviewed were representatives of the Ugandan army and intelligence services, local government officials, and local community and religious leaders. Journalists, humanitarian assistance personnel, Ugandan and foreign non-governmental organizations, and other individuals closely involved with the conflict in the north shared their insights. Former fighters of the Lord's Resistance Army provided much of the detailed information presented herein, and interviews were conducted across a spectrum of the hierarchy, from the highest commanders, through mid-level leaders, to the children that make up the bulk of the organization's ordinary fighters. In addition to those interviewed on a formal basis, many people contributed greatly to this project by providing very valuable personal accounts and observations.
- 2 According to the vast majority of accounts, the political order is likely to be reaffirmed by elections scheduled for March 2006.
- 3 See ICG (2004) and HRW (1997) for details of atrocities committed in the north by the NRA.
- 4 For a rich analysis of the HSM and spiritualism in northern Uganda, see Behrend (1999).
- 5 The LRA was known as the Lord's Army from around late 1987, and the Ugandan People's Democratic Christian Army (UPDCA) from mid-1988. The movement was renamed the Lord's Resistance Army in the early 1990s.
- 6 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 7 The name National Resistance Army was changed to Ugandan People's Defence Forces, following the 1996 presidential elections.
- 8 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 9 Estimates of the total number of fighters vary considerably, from 500 to 1,100 or 2,000 fighters. The ICG (2004, p. 5) listed 5,000 members. An estimate of 500–1,000 is a conservative one. Sources include interviews conducted with Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) officials for the Small Arms Survey and interviews with UPDF officials, Uganda and Sudan, 2005.
- 10 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 21 May 2005, Kampala; interview with a UPDF spokesman, 22 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu.
- 11 E-mail correspondence with a foreign government security sector adviser based in southern Sudan, 14 October 2005.
- 12 Interview with a senior Ugandan intelligence official, 24 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu; confidential interview with a knowledgeable source, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 13 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 22 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a child support worker, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 14 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 15 Data derived from a compilation of UN daily, weekly, and monthly security summaries kindly provided by the UN Field Security Office, Gulu.
- 16 A panga is a large heavy knife, used primarily to cut vegetation. It is synonymous with a machete. Interview with a child support worker, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 17 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 18 Interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu.
- 19 With the exception of a number of incidents in late 2005, the LRA does not explicitly target aid workers in the region. Only one incident, involving the hijack of three vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in early 2004, is notable. In that case the attack was widely believed to have been launched in order to capture the long-range radios commonly installed on aid agency vehicles. It is, as yet, unclear whether recent attacks against aid agency personnel constitute a new long-term trend in LRA operations. Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source, 26 May 2005, Gulu.

- 20 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 21 May 2005, Kampala.
- 21 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 22 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a UN security official, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 22 Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 23 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a child support worker, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 24 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 25 Drinking and smoking are forbidden. As one interviewee noted, this is one of the reasons why the LRA consistently avoids UPDF ambushes, because fighters can smell cigarette smoke from the soldiers. E-mail correspondence with a former LRA abductee, 22 September 2005, Geneva–Gulu.
- 26 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 27 This is based on the observation that the LRA fielded around 5,000 fighters in the late 1990s, and retains many weapons still in stock from those days.
- 28 Interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 29 The smallest detachment of UPDF troops, of around eight soldiers, is known locally as a 'detach'.
- 30 Interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 31 Most mobile detachments consist of around eight troops in a pickup truck. From observations made in Gulu town, it appears that the driver and commander usually sit inside the cab and are armed with assault rifles. The remaining six troops sit behind. Of these, five carry Kalashnikov derivatives and one a light machine gun. Most detachments were similar, although a few were equipped with a multi-shot grenade launcher. Each soldier is equipped with a chest pouch with three pockets, each holding two magazines. It was unclear whether more ammunition was carried in the vehicle. Each detach therefore carries a minimum of around 1,400 rounds of assault rifle ammunition.
- 32 This observation is based on reports that most LRA fighters carry at most three magazines on their person.
- 33 Since the 1980s, the local Acholi and Langi have had few cattle due to Karimojong raids. Although the government is currently trying to restock cattle, this shortage gives credence to reports that the LRA trades cattle for guns with the Karimojong. Moreover, former LRA fighters report extensive raiding against the Dinka in Sudan. Interview with a Muslim religious leader, 25 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a child support worker, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former captain in the LRA, 25 May 2005, Gulu.
- 34 Interview with a UN security official, 24 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a member of an international peace initiative, 23 May 2005, Gulu.
- 35 Interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 36 The Chinese manufacturer Norinco also produces variants of the B-10, known as the Type 65 and Type 65-1, as well as later version, the Type 78. Both the Russian and Chinese variations are commonplace in Africa, and the former is known to be in service with the Egyptian army (Jones and Cutshaw, 2004, pp. 413, 439).
- 37 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 21 May 2005, Kampala; interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 38 Interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu; e-mail correspondence with a knowledgeable source, 22 September, 2005, Geneva–Gulu.
- 39 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 40 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 41 Interview with a child support worker, 26 May 2005, Gulu; e-mail correspondence with a knowledgeable source, 22 September, 2005, Geneva–Gulu.
- 42 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 43 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with former LRA child fighters, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 44 Interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 45 Interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 46 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interviews with former LRA child fighters, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 47 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 48 Interviews with former LRA child fighters, 27 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a UPDF spokesman, 21 May 2005, Kampala.
- 49 Interview with a senior Ugandan intelligence official, 24 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a leading local figure and businessman, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 50 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 22 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a senior Ugandan intelligence official, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 51 Interview with a UPDF spokesman, 21 May 2005, Kampala; interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 24 May 2005, Gulu.

- 52 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 53 Interview with a senior Ugandan intelligence official, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 54 On average around three in ten of the returnees arrive armed. Interview with a leading local figure and businessman, 27 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a child support worker, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 55 Interview with a senior Ugandan intelligence official, 24 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 56 Interview with local religious representative, 24 May 2005, Gulu.
- 57 Interview with a former major in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with former LRA child fighters, 27 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 58 Interview with a former lieutenant in the LRA, 26 May 2005, Gulu.
- 59 Interview with a former LRA child fighter, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 60 In September 2005, large numbers of UPDF troops were relocated to the DRC border, threatening to enter that country and attack the LRA there. It is unclear whether they have since been moved back to northern Uganda. Correspondence with a Ugandan NGO director, September 2005; interview with a senior UN humanitarian official, 25 May 2005, Gulu.
- 61 Interview with a senior Acholi leader, 23 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a leading local figure and businessman, 27 May 2005, Gulu; interview with an humanitarian programme officer, 23 May 2005, Gulu.
- 62 Reports of LRA-LDU encounters in UN daily, weekly, and monthly security summaries kindly provided by the UN Field Security Office, Gulu.
- 63 Interview with a senior Ugandan intelligence official, 24 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a Christian religious leader, 26 May 2005, Gulu; interview with local religious representative, 24 May 2005, Gulu; interview with a leading local figure and businessman, 27 May 2005, Gulu.
- 64 For an overview of the mistreatment of civilians (by both the LRA and government forces) and its impact, see HRW (2005).
- 65 For a concise update of the peace process and associated issues of justice, demobilization, and reintegration, see Rose, Sattarzadeh, and Baines (2005).

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