



LRA CRISIS TRACKER

2012 | ANNUAL SECURITY BRIEF

A publication of

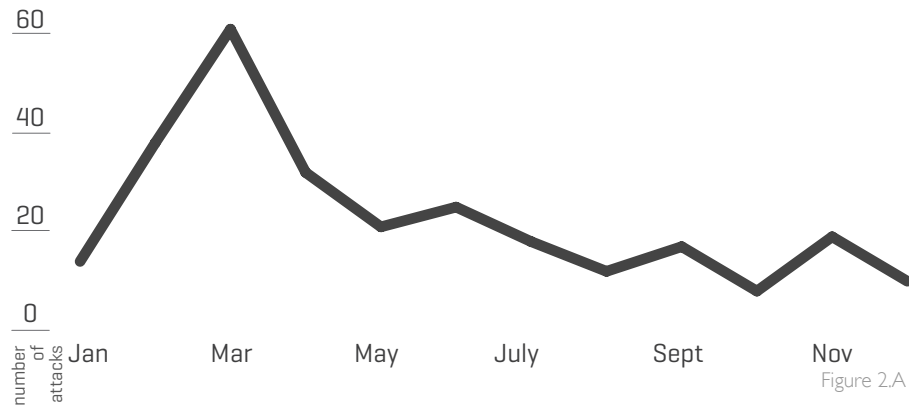
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Executive Summary: 6 Key Trends in LRA Activity

1. LRA violence spiked in the first half of 2012 (191 attacks) and then tapered off in the second half of the year (84 attacks).



This trend is similar to LRA activity patterns seen in 2010 and 2011. These patterns have been influenced by the LRA's tendency to reduce attacks during the rainy season, and indicate that civilians are at increased risk of LRA violence in the first several months of 2013.

See page 6 for more analysis

2. Senior LRA commanders are operating primarily in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Sudanese-controlled Kafia Kingi enclave.

Commanders operating primarily in these areas include International Criminal Court-indictees Joseph Kony, Dominic Ongwen, and Okot Odhiambo. Maj. John Bosco Kibwola and Col. Otto Agweng, two increasingly influential LRA commanders, are also reported to be in CAR or Kafia Kingi. Lt. Col. Vincent Binansio "Binany" Okumu, formerly a personal bodyguard to Kony, was allegedly the ranking LRA commander in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo) for much of 2012. He was killed by the Ugandan military in CAR in January 2013.

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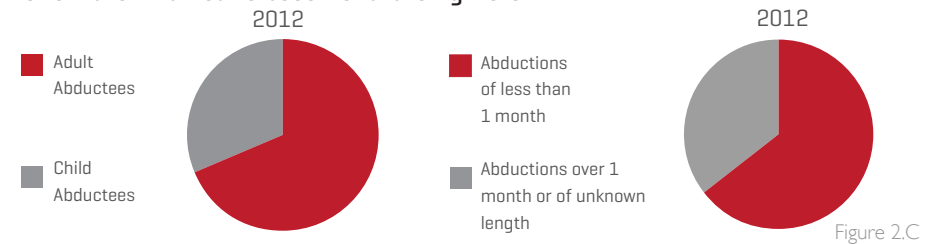
3. The number of Ugandan adult males returning from the LRA increased in 2012.



Though accurately tracking Ugandan returnees from the LRA is difficult, the LRA Crisis Tracker recorded a spike in the number of Ugandan adult males who escaped or were captured in 2012. Because the LRA can no longer actively recruit Ugandans, each Ugandan adult male who returns from the group is a significant loss to the LRA's core fighting force and command structure. Of the **20** who returned in 2012, **15** saw or heard defection messaging in the form of leaflets, FM or shortwave radio broadcasts, or helicopter-mounted speakers. In addition, **8** surrendered to newly introduced Safe Reporting Sites in CAR.

See page 13 for more analysis

4. The majority of LRA abductees in 2012 were adults used as temporary porters, not children trained to become future fighters.



Available data indicates that **69%** of LRA abductees in 2012 were adults and **64%** of all 2012 abductees escaped or were released within one month of their abduction. The preference for temporary adult abductees suggests that instead of seeking to train young children as new fighters, the LRA is in need of strong adults capable of carrying heavy loads of looted goods.

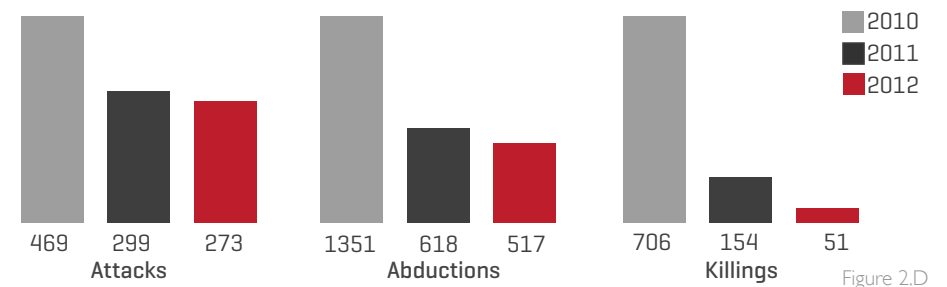
See page 14 for more analysis

5. In 2012, LRA groups committed unusually large and brazen attacks in areas of CAR beyond the reach of Ugandan troops and US military advisers.

These include the massacre of 13 artisanal gold miners on a hunting reserve northeast of Bangassou, an attack on a French uranium mining camp in Bakouma, and the abduction of 97 people in two separate attacks near Fode. LRA groups have directed threats of future attacks at communities in this area. There are few CAR troops deployed in this area and it is largely out of reach for Ugandan troops and US military advisers, who are deployed further east in CAR.

See page 11 for more analysis

6. The LRA is intentionally killing fewer people.



LRA combatants killed a total of **51** civilians in 2012, the lowest figure since 2007. The LRA killed civilians in only **10%** of total attacks in 2012, compared to **30%** in 2011 and **50%** in 2010. Similarly, the average number of people killed per attack has decreased steadily in the past three years: 1.5 (2010), 0.52 (2011), and 0.18 (2012). Though the LRA's fighting force has been reduced since 2010, the drop in killings does not indicate that the group no longer has the capacity to kill civilians or commit large massacres. This trend is also the result of a strategic decision by Kony in mid-2011 to reduce killings of civilians.

See page 9 for more analysis

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Note: All data and statistics included in this report are derived from the LRA Crisis Tracker database. Extensive efforts are made to verify the details of each incident and cross-check as many sources of information for each incident as possible. For more on the LRA Crisis Tracker data collection and verification process, see page 19.

Cover photo: 5 people who escaped from the LRA and reported to a Safe Reporting Site in CAR in November 2012.

Notable Political Context

African Union launches counter-LRA force: In March 2012, the African Union (AU) launched its Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA). The initiative includes a Regional Task Force (RTF), composed of national military forces already deployed in LRA-affected areas, and the work of AU LRA envoy Amb. Francisco Madeira. However, Congo has been slow to assign troops to the RTF and troops from South Sudan and CAR face critical shortages of basic mobility and logistics capacity. Dividing command-and-control authority between the RTF and national militaries has also proved difficult.

M23 rebellion destabilizes eastern Congo: In April 2012, M23 rebels launched offensives in Congo's North Kivu province, briefly occupying the regional capital of Goma in November. The fighting sparked a humanitarian crisis and compelled the Congolese government to redeploy 750 US-trained troops from LRA-affected areas in the Haut Uele district, though some were reportedly redeployed back to Haut Uele. A United Nations (UN) Group of Experts report released in November alleged that Rwanda played a key role in supporting the M23 rebels, and that Uganda provided limited support as well. Both countries denied the allegations.

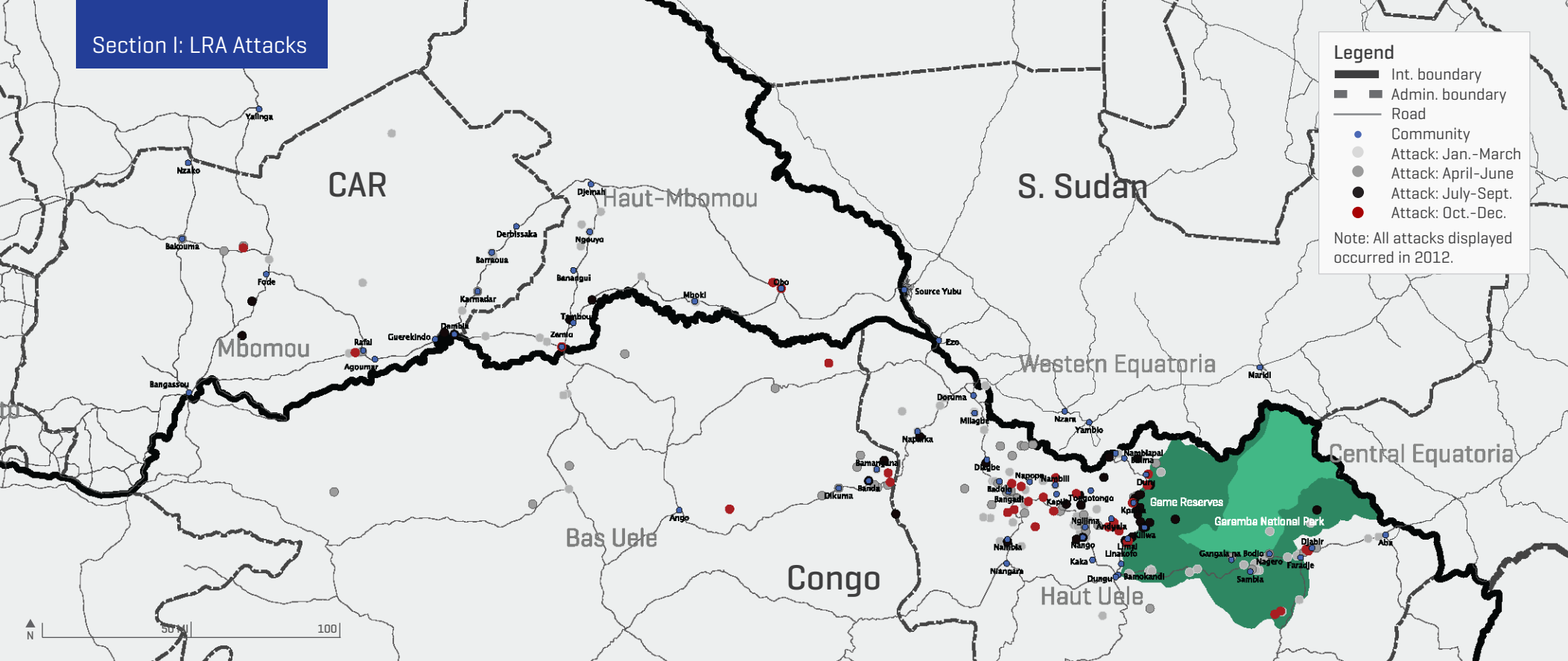
Uganda reconsiders counter-LRA operations: Between 800 and 1,200 Ugandan troops are currently participating in the AU RTF counter-LRA operations. They are deployed in several locations in southeastern CAR, including Obo and Djemah, and maintain several bases in South Sudan's Western Equatoria State. Ugandan troops have not been permitted to operate in Congo since the Congolese government forced them to withdraw in September 2011. In November 2012, in response to allegations it was providing support to M23 rebels, the Ugandan government threatened to withdraw troops from counter-LRA operations and the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia (AMISOM).

President Obama extends US military adviser deployment: In April and October 2012, President Obama extended the deployment of US military advisers tasked with assisting regional counter-LRA efforts. The advisers have forward bases in Nzara, South Sudan, and Obo and Djemah, CAR, where they primarily advise the Ugandan military. The advisers have also expanded defection initiatives by distributing leaflets, organizing helicopter-mounted speaker missions, and working with local communities to establish Safe Reporting Sites.

Seleka rebel coalition threatens CAR government: Seleka, a coalition of four armed groups primarily from northern CAR, occupied several strategic CAR towns in December 2012. Fighting halted before the rebels reached Bangui, and they reached an agreement with President François Bozizé to form a coalition government in January 2013. As of late-January, the rebels had not occupied any towns in LRA-affected areas, and US officials stated that US military advisers would continue their counter-LRA mission there.

Sudan/South Sudan negotiations: In September 2012, Sudan and South Sudan signed a series of agreements aimed at resolving conflicts over oil-sharing, border insecurity, and support for rebel proxies. The two countries have yet to come to an agreement on disputed territories along their common border, including the Kafia Kingi enclave, a disputed area along the border between South Darfur State (Sudan) and Western Bahr el-Ghazal State (South Sudan).

UN launches LRA strategy: In June, the UN Security Council approved a new UN LRA strategy that seeks to support the AU's RCI-LRA and coordinate the activity of UN actors operating in LRA-affected areas. The Council reviewed progress on the strategy in December, noting concern about reports of LRA activity in the Kafia Kingi enclave.



Map 4.A

LRA Attacks Against Civilians: 2012

Notable Attacks

Bilali, Haut Uele, Congo
January 8, 2012

An estimated 30 LRA forces attacked Bilali, Congo. The LRA abducted 2 adults and 9 children, 8 of whom quickly escaped. 1 other child died of injuries sustained during the attack, and 1 LRA member was killed.

Verification Rating: 5, LRA Actor Verification: High

CAWA Hunting Reserve, Mbomou, CAR
March 20, 2012

13 artisanal gold miners were murdered in a hunting reserve northeast of Bakouma, CAR. Employees of the reserve were originally charged with the murders, but Human Rights Watch's research strongly suggests LRA forces were responsible.

Verification Rating: 4, LRA Actor Verification: High

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Bakouma, Mbomou CAR
June 24, 2012

A group of over 30 LRA forces looted the French-owned Areva uranium facility in Bakouma, CAR. The LRA group stole portable computers, food, and clothing. They also killed 2 civilians and abducted 14 others in surrounding villages within days of the Areva attack.

Verification Rating: 5, LRA Actor Verification: High

Zobembari, Mbomou, CAR
September 1, 2012

LRA forces abducted 49 people from Zobembari, CAR, and killed 2 additional civilians during the abduction. All abductees were released or escaped within 2 weeks. This attack included the highest number of abductions of all 2012 LRA attacks.

Verification Rating: 4, LRA Actor Verification: High

Limai, Haut Uele, Congo
November 9, 2012

16 LRA forces abducted 5 civilians 1 km northeast of Limai, Congo, and looted goats, food, and other household items. 3 of the abductees quickly escaped, but 2 young girls remained in captivity. The LRA group ambushed a pursuing force of Congolese soldiers, injuring 2.

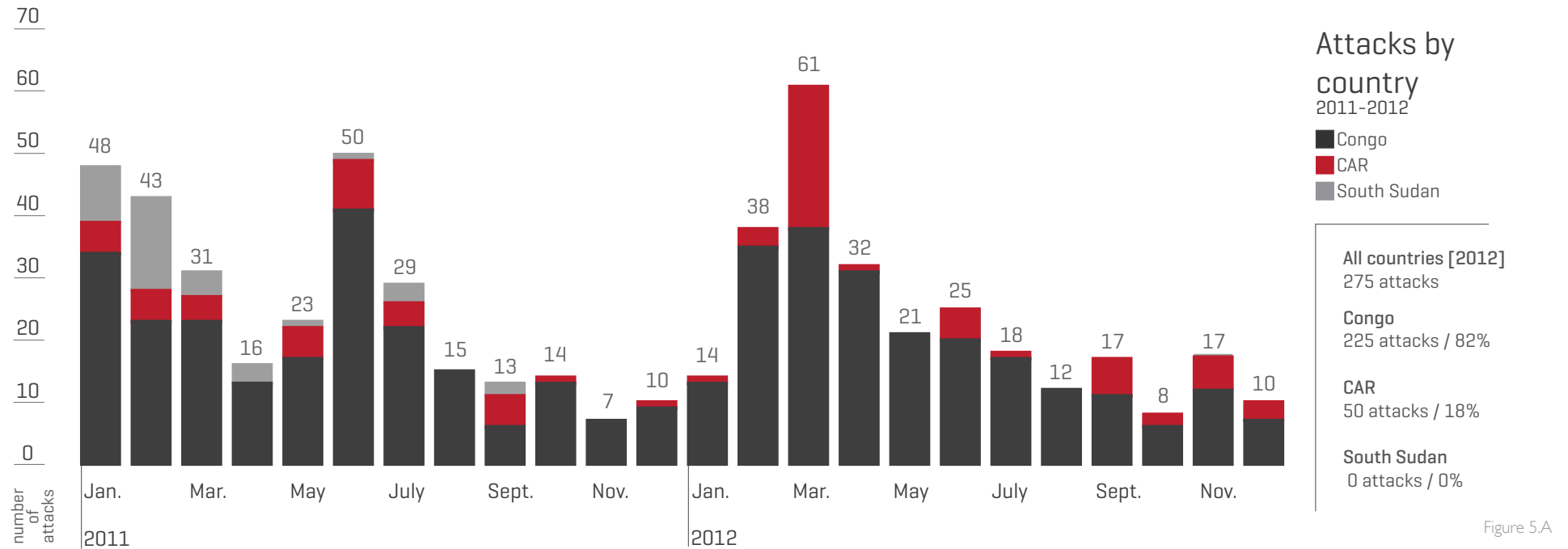
Verification Rating: 4, LRA Actor Verification: High

Fode, Mbomou, CAR
November 22, 2012

LRA forces attacked an artisanal gold mining site and a village northwest of Fode, CAR. They abducted 48 civilians, including 3 young girls, and killed 6 others using guns and machetes. They also looted goods and burned bicycles.

Verification Rating: 3, LRA Actor Verification: High

Country Specific Trends & Attack Comparisons



Attack type breakdown 2012

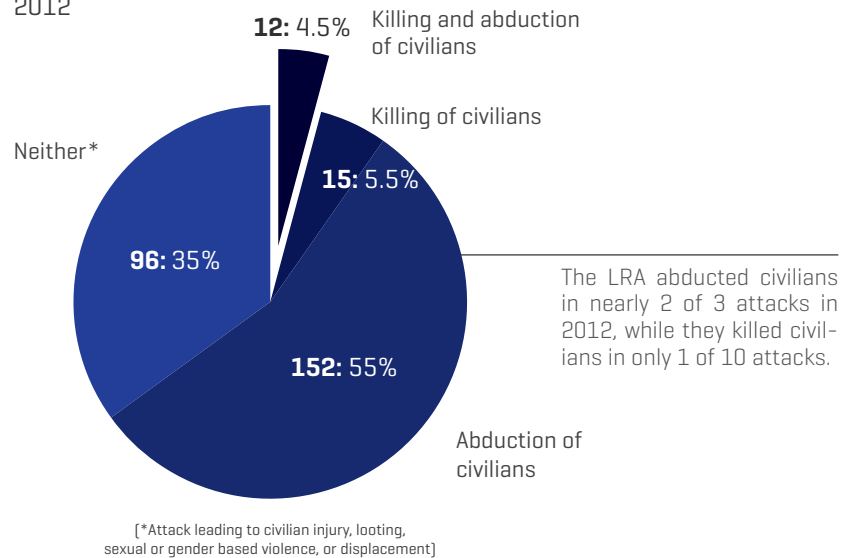


Figure 5.B

Attacks perpetrated by LRA vs. unknown armed group 2012

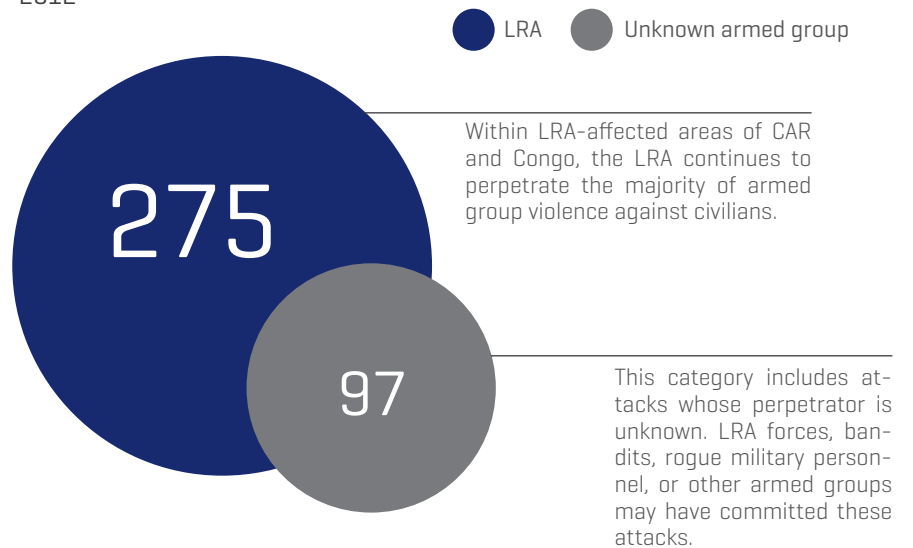
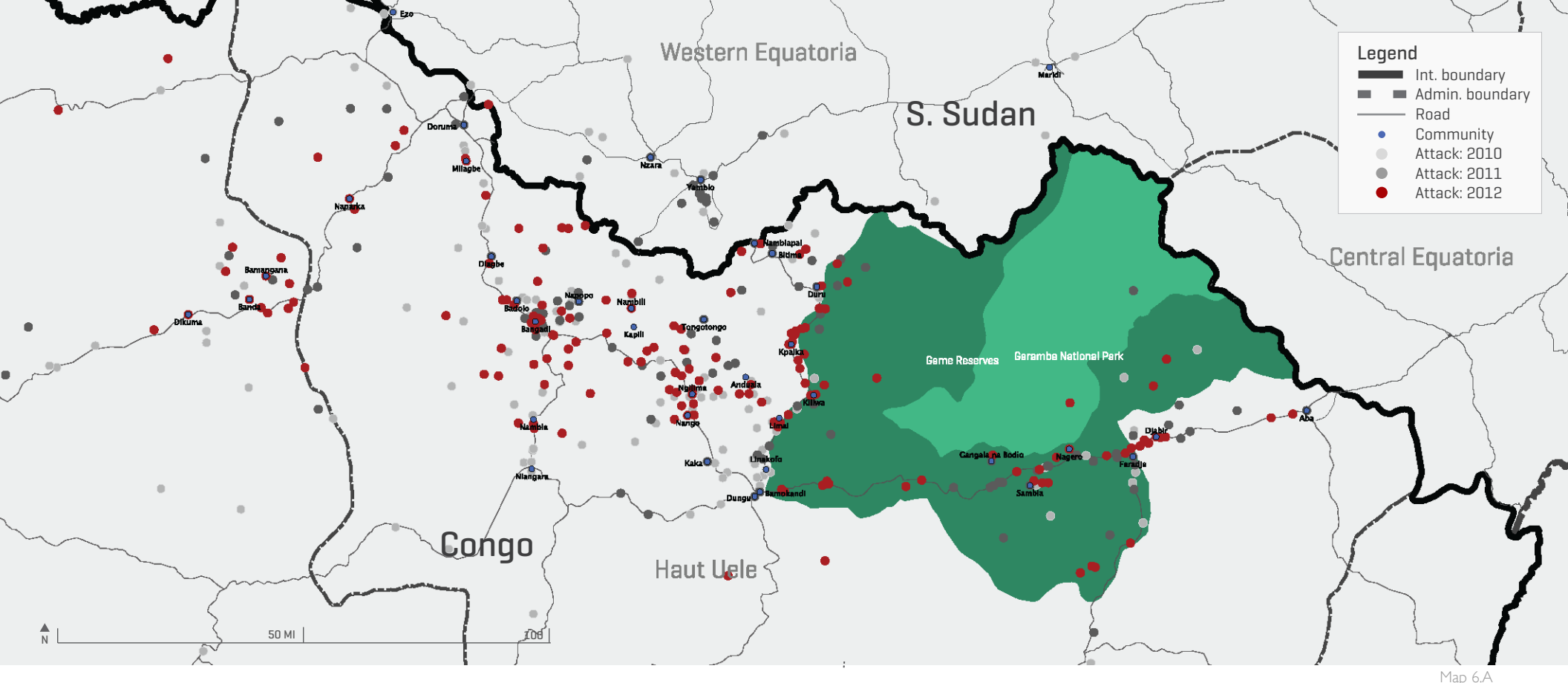


Figure 5.C



Map 6.A

LRA Attacks Against Civilians: 2010-2012

Attack trends remain cyclical, raising concern for 2013

In 2010, 2011, and 2012, LRA attacks consistently spiked from January-June before decreasing in the following six months. This trend is closely related to seasonal precipitation and agricultural patterns, highlighting the risk of renewed attacks that LRA-affected communities face in early 2013.

	Jan.-June	July-Dec.	% change
2010	314	155	-51%
2011	211	88	-58%
2012	191	84	-56%

Figure 6.B

Attacks drop from 2010, remain concentrated in Congo

LRA attacks decreased by 36% from 2010 (469 attacks) to 2011 (299 attacks). Yet, there was only an 8% reduction in LRA attacks from 2011 (299 attacks) to 2012 (275 attacks).

Throughout 2010-2012, a significant proportion (42%) of LRA attacks occurred in a relatively small, densely populated area of Haut Uele district in Congo defined by the Faradje-Dungu-Bangadi-Doruma road and the Congo-South Sudan border.

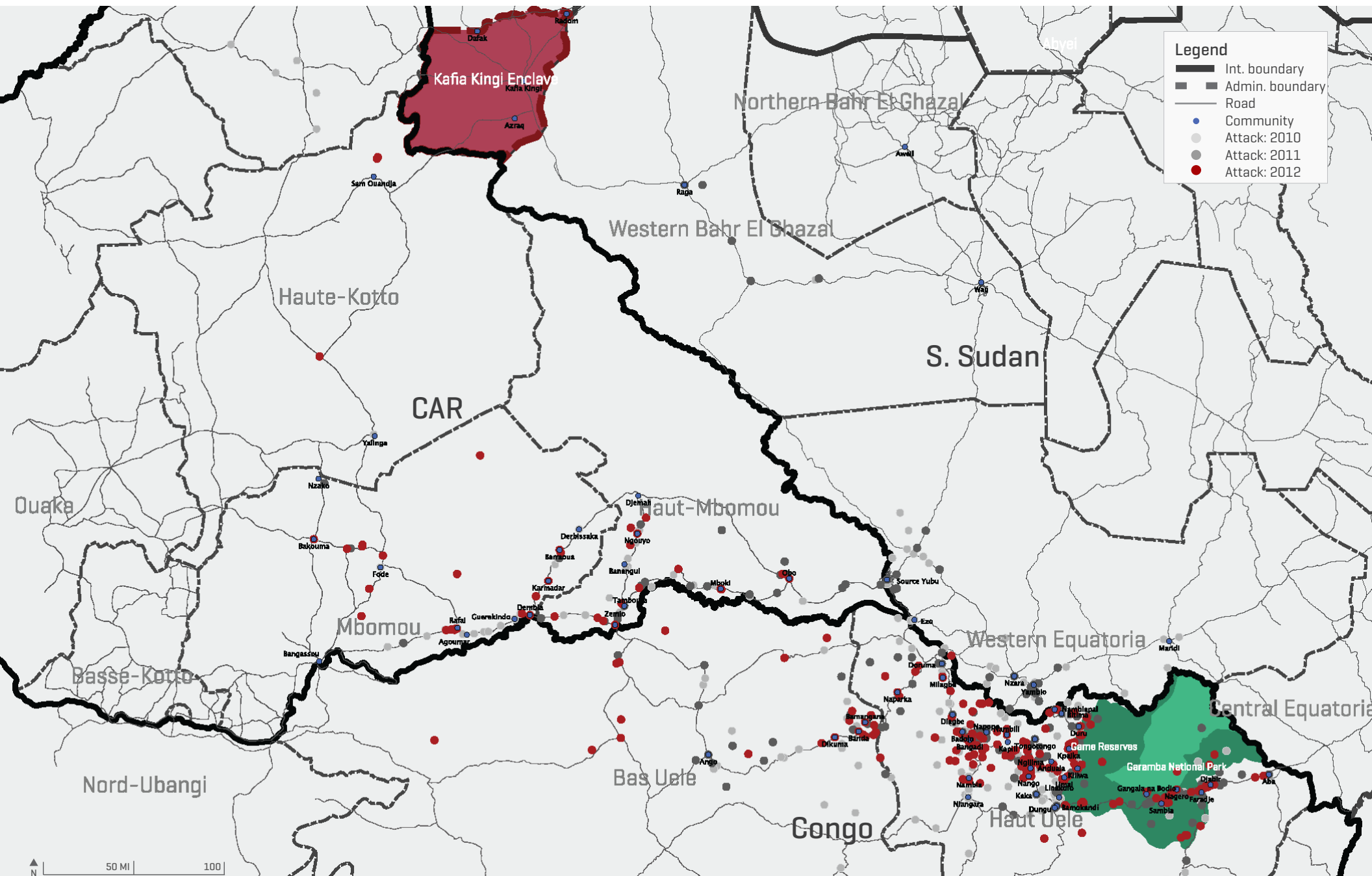
This area includes Congo's Garamba National Park, which LRA groups continued to operate in while attacking communities on its western and southern edges. In April, park rangers destroyed an LRA camp there that sheltered as many as 50 combatants.

Sharp reduction in LRA violence in South Sudan

South Sudan's Western Equatoria State (WES) has a population density and ethnic makeup similar to neighboring areas of Congo's Haut Uele district. Like Haut Uele, WES was targeted by the LRA from 2009 to early 2011. However, no LRA attacks have been recorded in WES since Sept. 2011.

Reasons for the divergent patterns of LRA activity in the two areas are varied. Unlike Haut Uele, WES's road and mobile phone networks have improved significantly since 2009, and active, equipped Ugandan troops maintain several bases there. The WES government has also supported the development of robust, organized self-defense groups, which Congolese officials have suppressed in Haut Uele.

LRA Attacks Against Civilians: 2010-2012



LRA Attacks: Time of Day & Proximity to Major Communities

Relation of LRA attacks to time of day 2010-2012

Figure 8.A displays data marking the time period individual attacks began in Congo. The graph displays data only from the 214 attacks in Congo between 2010 and 2012 for which the time of attack was recorded. There was a total of 783 attacks in Congo during that time period. Attacks from CAR and South Sudan are not included due to the scarcity of available data.

Notes:

A. LRA forces were more likely to attack Congolese communities in the late morning than in the early morning.

B. Congolese civilians were at the highest risk of LRA attacks between 1600 and 2359. 50% of all attacks, 58% of all abductions, and 66% of all killings analyzed in this dataset occurred during that eight-hour timeframe.

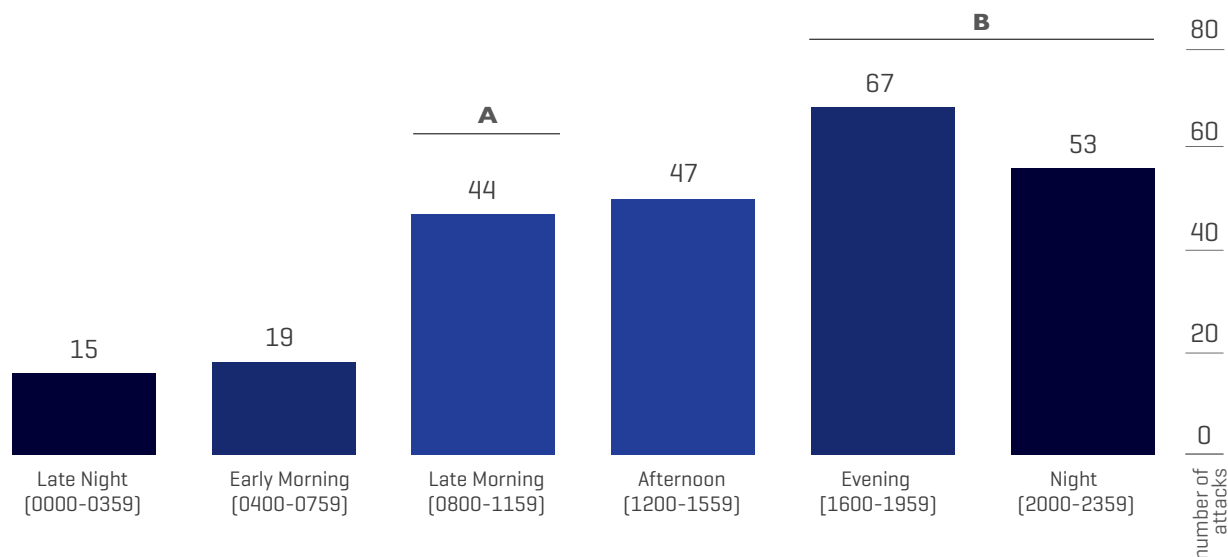


Figure 8.A

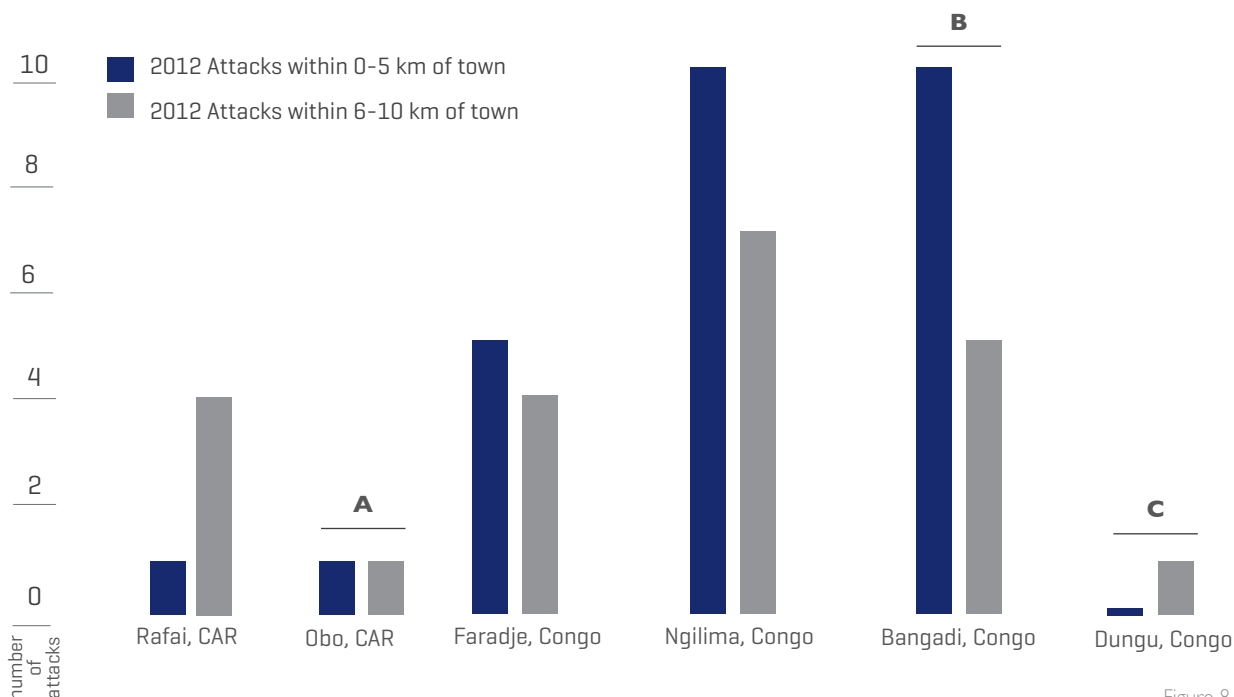


Figure 8.B

Proximity of LRA attacks to major communities 2012

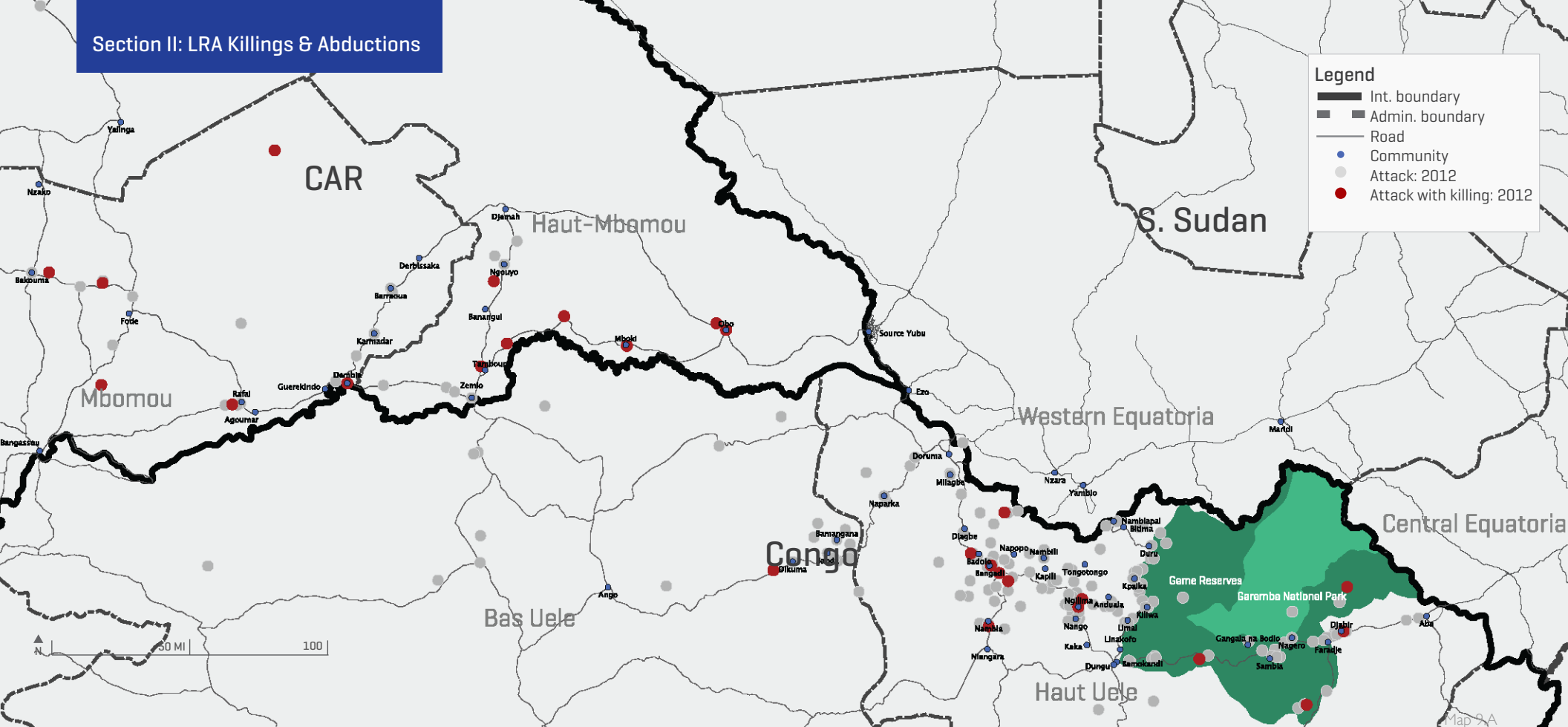
Figure 8.B displays data on the location of LRA attacks in relation to six strategically important communities in CAR and Congo. In total, 49 attacks in 2012 were analyzed.

Notes:

A. In 2012, the LRA attacked twice within 10km of Obo, where the Ugandan military and US military advisers maintain bases.

B. In 2012, LRA forces committed 10 attacks within 5 km of Bangadi, where the UN mission in Congo (MONUSCO) maintains a peacekeeping base.

C. In 2012, the LRA attacked once within 10 km of Dungu, the regional headquarters of MONUSCO. In contrast, the LRA attacked within 10 km of Dungu on at least 30 occasions from 2008-2011.



LRA Killings of Civilians: 2010-2012 Comparison

Killings at historic low in Congo

The LRA greatly reduced total killings in CAR, Congo, and South Sudan in 2012 (see Figure 8.B). This reduction was particularly pronounced in Congo, where LRA forces killed 13 civilians, compared to 113 in 2011 and 506 in 2010.

Though the LRA also committed fewer attacks in Congo in 2012 than in 2010-2011, the killings rate dropped further than the attack rate: the LRA killed an average of 1.1 Congolese per attack from 2010-2011 and only 0.1 in 2012.

LRA killing trends in CAR have been much more erratic. The LRA killed 38 civilians in CAR in 2012, an increase over 2011 (16 killings) but far lower than 2010 (150 killings).

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Drop in killings likely linked to LRA strategy

The drop in LRA killings in 2012 was not precipitated by a proportionate reduction in the LRA's fighting capacity. While estimating the number of LRA combatants is difficult, reports of LRA defections and Ugandan military operations indicate there was a significant but not dramatic reduction in the number of LRA combatants from 2011-2012.

The drop in killings is more closely linked to orders reportedly given by Kony in late 2011 for the LRA to minimize killings. Several LRA defectors reported that Kony gave these orders after summoning LRA commanders to a meeting in southeastern CAR. LRA killings dropped dramatically following this meeting, a trend which continued into 2012.

	2010	2011	2012	2011-2012 % change
Number of LRA killings	706	154	51	-66%
Avg. number of LRA killings per attack	1.5	0.5	0.2	-60%
% of LRA attacks involving killings	50%	30%	10%	-67%

Figure 9.B

LRA Abductions of Civilians: 2010-2012 Comparison

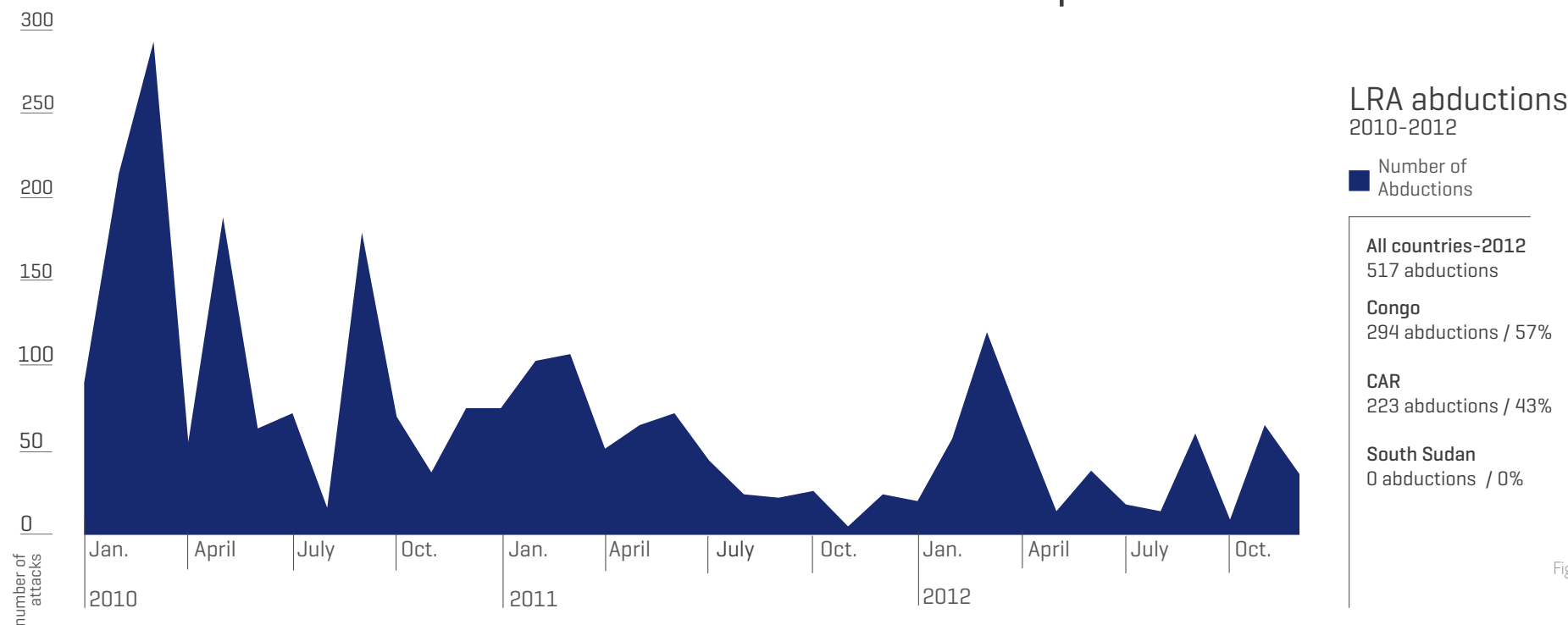


Figure 10.A

Trends in LRA abductions 2010-2012

After a dramatic drop in 2011, abductions stabilized: In 2011 the LRA abducted 618 civilians, a 54% drop from the 1,351 civilians abducted in 2010. However, in 2012 the LRA abducted 517 civilians, only a 16% drop from 2011.

In 2012, abductions peaked from February-April: Of the 517 abductions in 2012, 243 (47%) occurred between February and April, including 120 in March alone.

Abductions declined in the latter half of 2012: In 2012 abductions decreased by 35% in the second half of the year. A similar trend was seen in 2011: LRA abductions dropped by 75% from the first half of the year to the second half. In both 2011 and 2012, the number of LRA attacks also declined in the second half of the year.

Number of civilians abducted per LRA attack 2010-2012

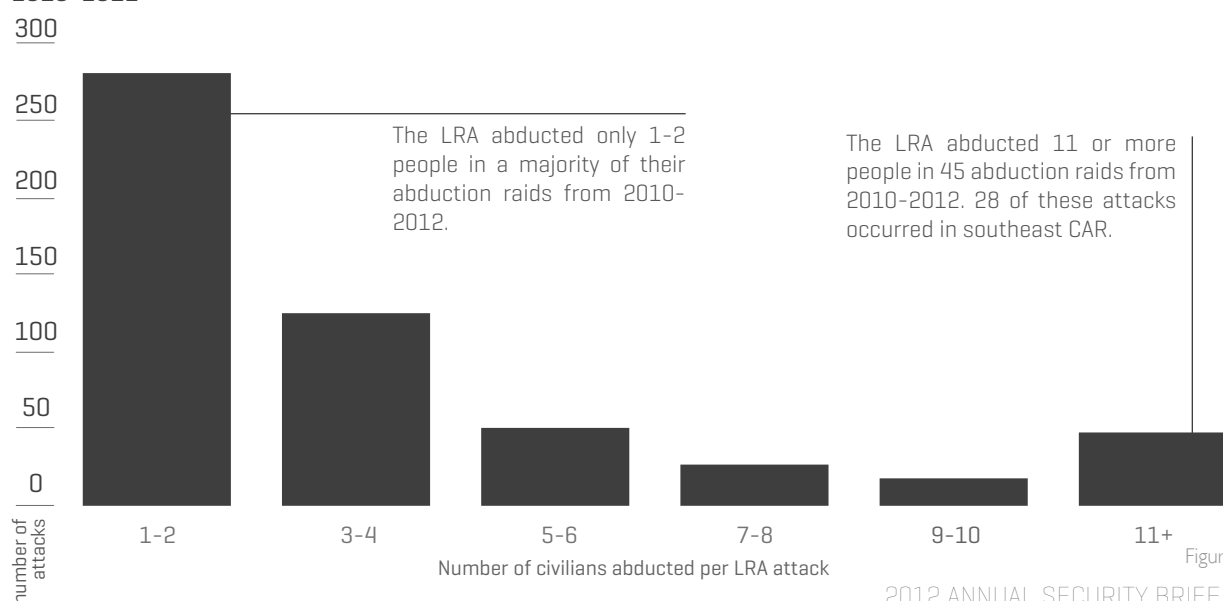
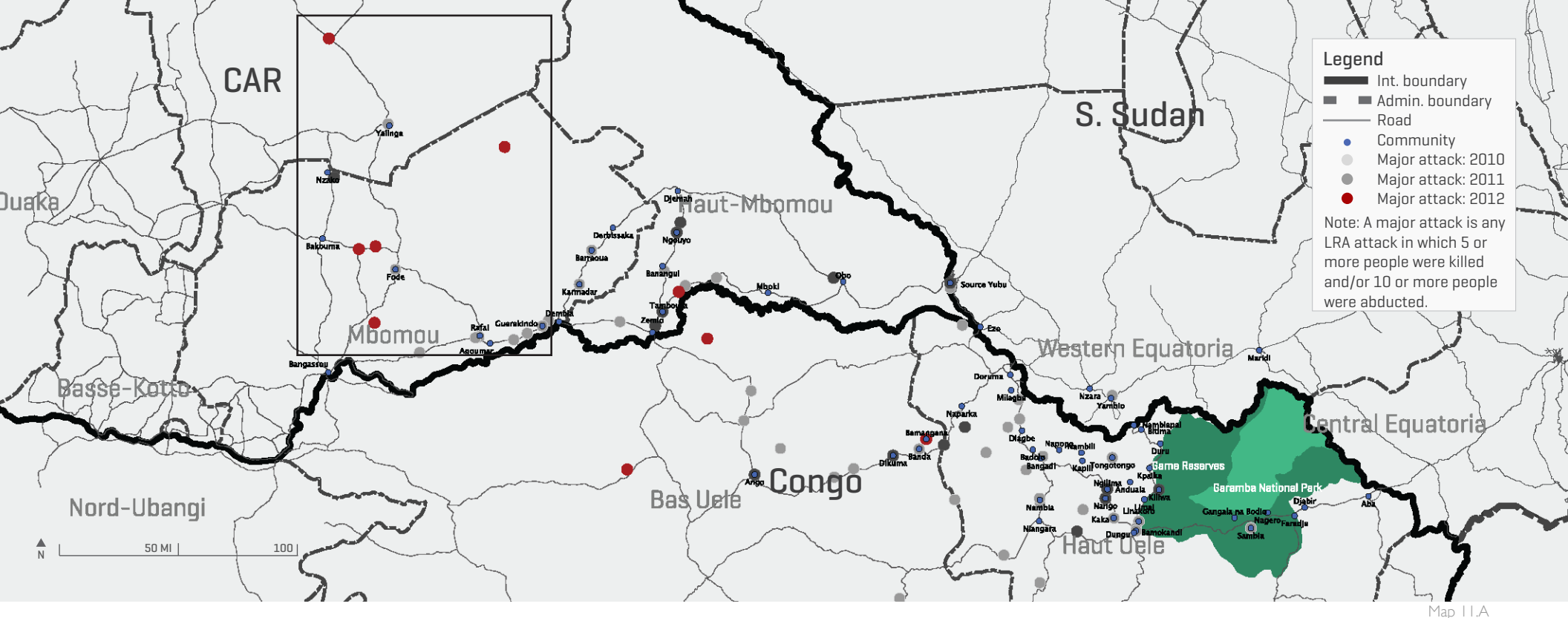


Figure 10.B



CAR Civilians at Elevated Risk of Major LRA Attacks

The LRA has sharply reduced “major” attacks (attacks in which 5 and/or more people were killed or 10 or more abducted) since 2010. This trend has been particularly pronounced in Congo, where major attacks dropped from 29 (2010) to 3 (2012).

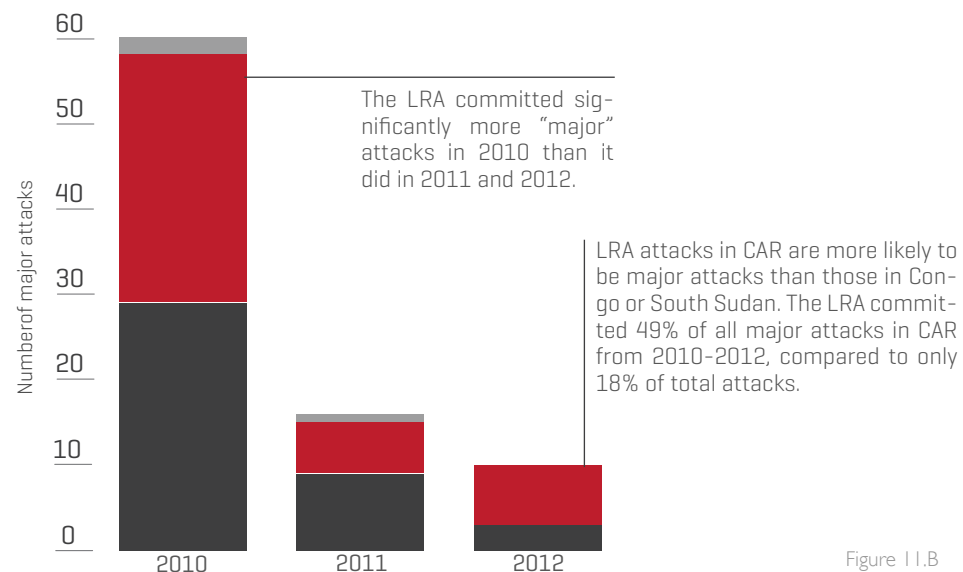
The exception to this trend was an extensive area spreading north and east from Bangassou, CAR, which suffered several brazen attacks by large groups of LRA forces in 2012. LRA groups also committed several major attacks in this area in 2010 and 2011 (see highlight box on map 11.A).

Notably, this area is largely outside the reach of Ugandan troops and US military advisers,

who are primarily deployed further east in Djemah and Obo, areas where major LRA attacks have reduced significantly since 2010.

The commander of the LRA group(s) operating north and east of Bangassou is unknown, though Lt. Col. Opiyo Sam operated there in 2010. Abductees in this area have witnessed large numbers of LRA combatants and behavior such as alcohol consumption and the reckless raping of women and girls.

Such conduct is not historically common in LRA groups, though LRA groups responsible for the Makombo massacres in Congo in December 2009 exhibited similar behavior.



LRA Commander Locations & Command Structure

Kony's continued hold on power

Multiple LRA returnees in 2012 indicated that Kony has been largely successful in keeping the LRA hierarchy cohesive and under his control. Though senior commanders remain scattered across a vast operational theater, they stay in touch via limited use of High-Frequency (HF) radios and satellite phones, as well as by dispatching "runners" who travel between groups.

Such meetings, though infrequent, help Kony maintain command coherence and plan future operations. LRA returnees also report that Kony has consolidated control over the LRA by promoting younger commanders more loyal to him.

LRA loses top commanders Achellam and Binany

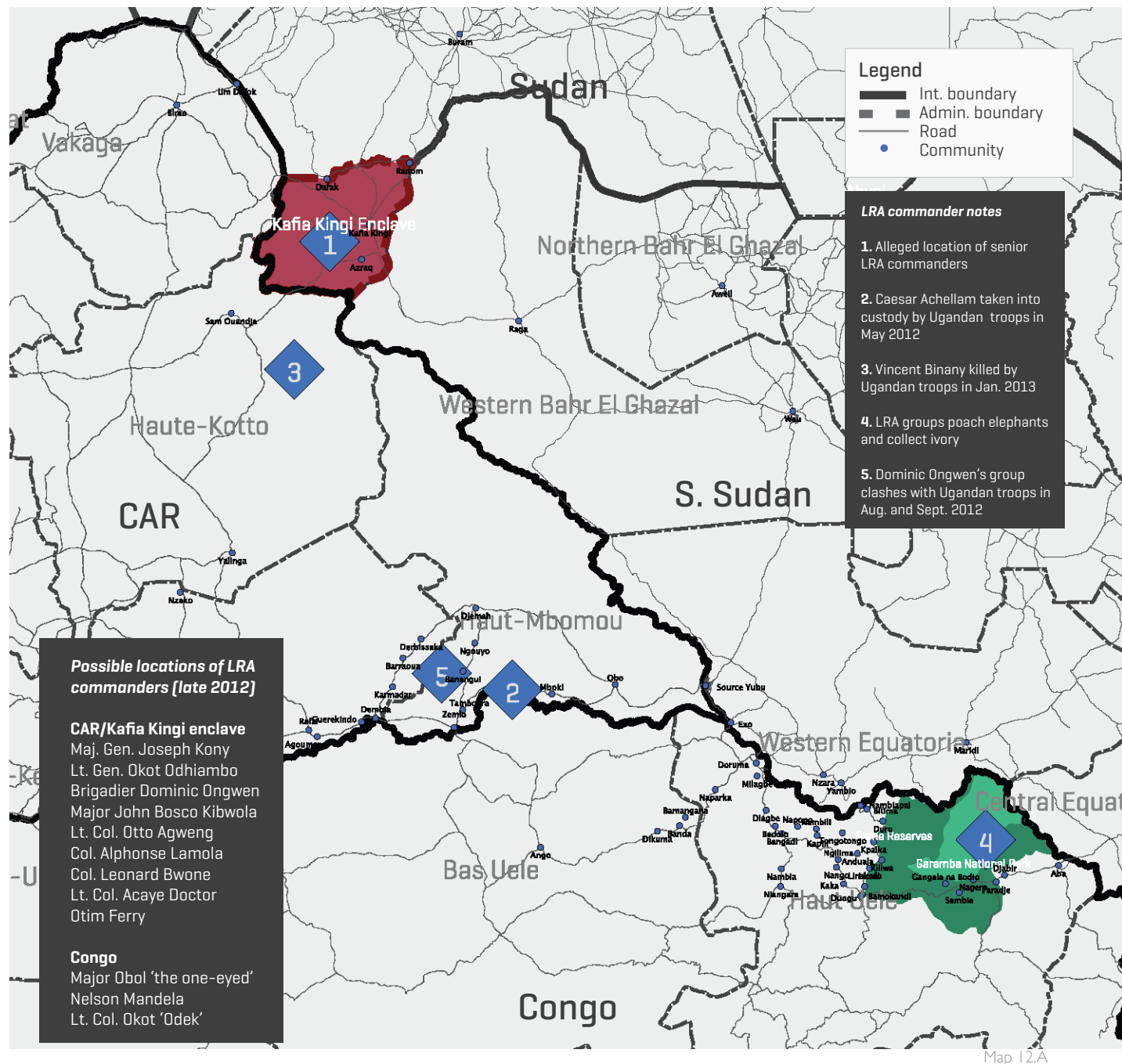
After failing to capture or kill any top LRA commanders in 2010 and 2011, Ugandan military forces took LRA Maj. Gen. Caesar Achellam into custody near the Congo/CAR border in May 2012. In the weeks following Achellam's capture, at least seven Ugandan combatants defected from the LRA, including his bodyguard.

In January 2013, Ugandan forces killed Lt. Col. Vincent "Binany" Okumu, a former personal bodyguard to Kony. Binany was among the group of young commanders promoted by Kony since 2007, and was reportedly in command of all LRA groups in Congo at the time of his death.

Dominic Ongwen's uncertain status

Dominic Ongwen is one of the LRA's most feared commanders, but his status within the LRA is currently unclear. He reportedly refused orders to leave Congo and join Kony in CAR in 2010 before finally doing so in mid-2011.

Since then, Kony has reduced Dominic Ongwen's influence, while awarding additional authority to other commanders in Ongwen's group such as Maj. John Bosco Kibwola and Lt. Okello "Palutaka." However, Ongwen is likely still respected by some LRA commanders and fighters, making his ultimate influence within the group difficult to precisely establish.



Net Conscription & Ugandan Returnees

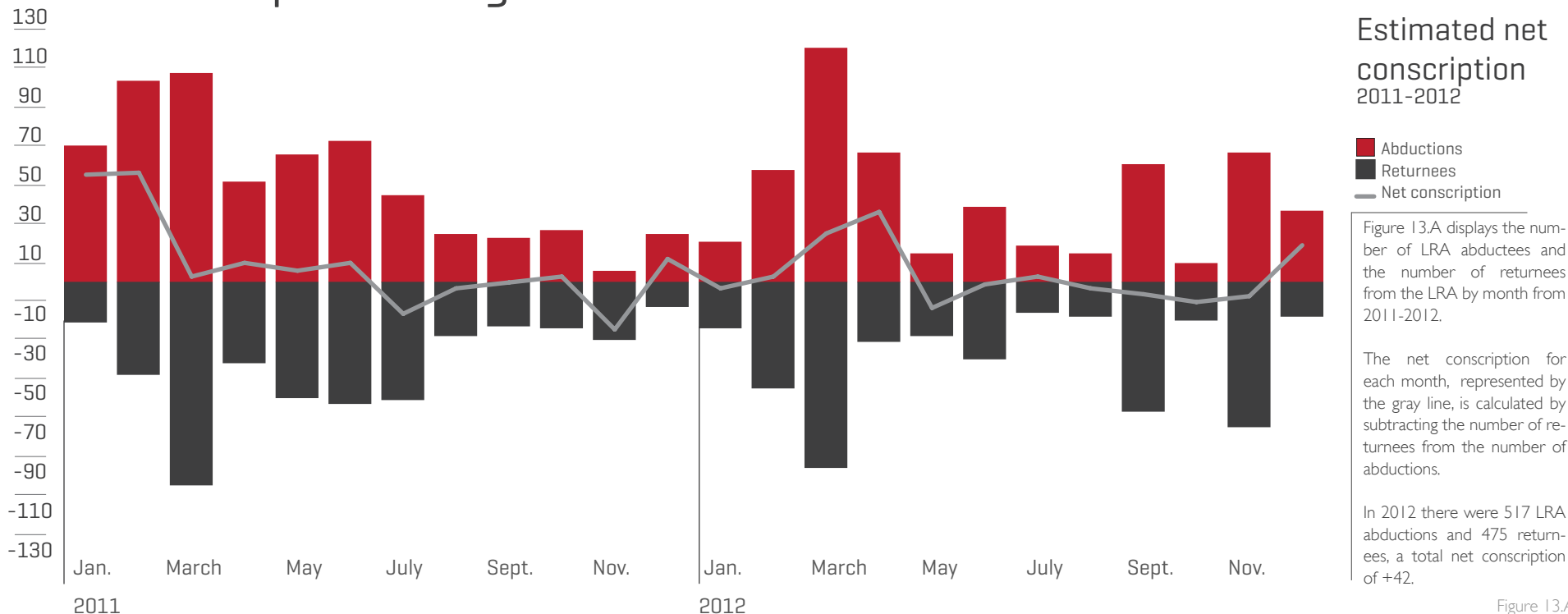


Figure 13.A

Ugandan returnees from the LRA 2010-2012

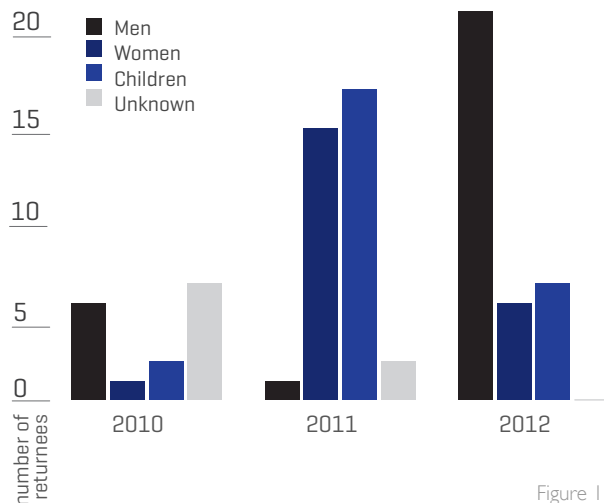


Figure 13.B

Trends in Ugandan returnee patterns 2012

There were 31 Ugandan returnees from the LRA in 2012, including 20 adult male combatants. Though this number is small relative to the total number of returnees in 2012, the loss of 20 Ugandan adult male combatants represents a significant blow to the LRA fighting force, which is comprised almost exclusively of Ugandans.

Of 25 Ugandan adult returnees in 2012 (20 men and 5 women), 21 saw or heard one or more forms of defection messaging either in the form of leaflets, FM or shortwave radio broadcasts, or helicopter-mounted speakers (see Figure 13.C).

11 Ugandans defected to designated Safe Reporting Sites operational in CAR in 2012. In addition, 12 non-Ugandans defected from the LRA to Safe Reporting Sites in 2012.

Number of Ugandan returnees who saw or heard defection messages 2012

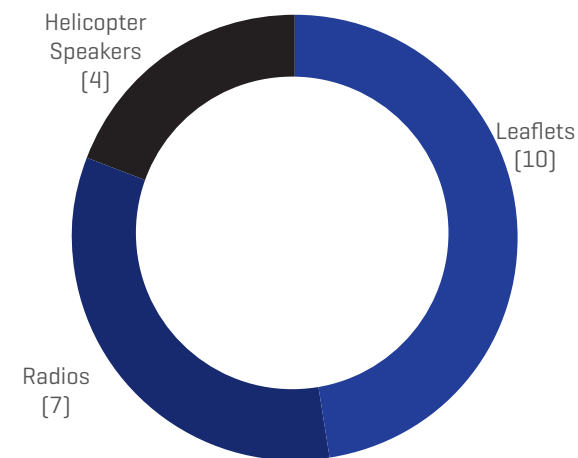


Figure 13.C

LRA Abductees: Future Fighters or Porters?

Length of abduction 2012

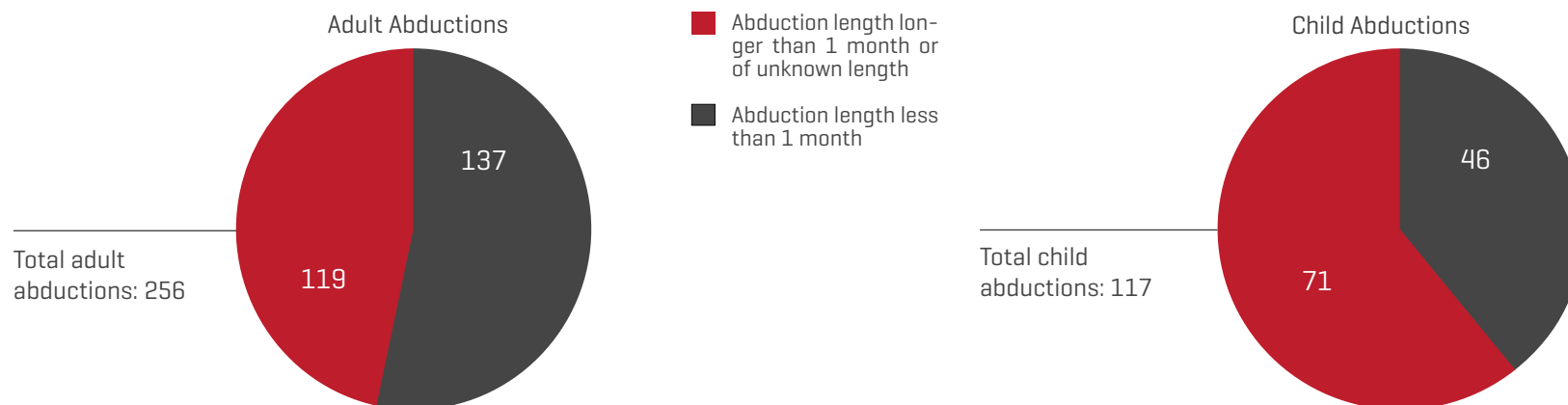


Figure 14.A

LRA abductees primarily porters, not future child soldiers 2010-2012

The LRA has long been associated with the practice of abducting children and forcing them to become soldiers or “wives.” However, several trends in LRA abduction patterns indicate that instead of seeking to train new fighters, the LRA is in need of strong adults capable of carrying heavy loads of looted goods for short periods of time.

Fewer children being abducted, especially in large groups:

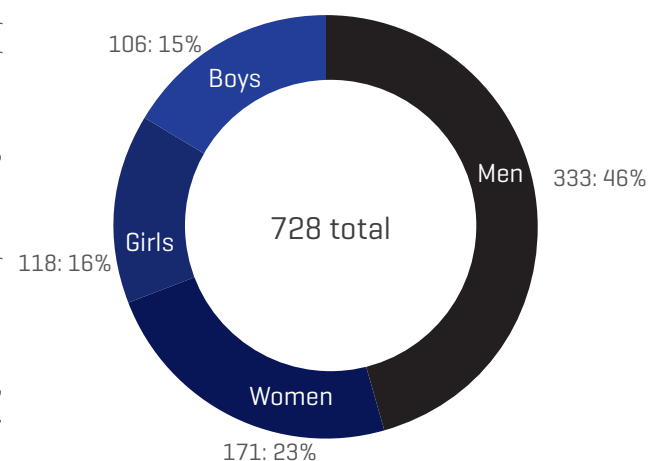
Since the mid-1990s, the LRA has replenished its ranks largely by abducting children, who are more susceptible to indoctrination than adults. The LRA has often abducted children in large numbers, such as the abduction of 65 students in Duru, Congo, in Sept. 2008. However, children have comprised only 31% of all abductees since 2010 for whom age and gender information was recorded (see Figure 14.B).

Most abductees return within one month: Another indication that the LRA is not undertaking large-scale efforts

to train new fighters is that from 2010-2012 over 64% of abductees escaped or were released within one month of their abduction. However, this trend is not consistent across all demographics. Once abducted, women and girls are more likely to stay longer than one month with the LRA, indicating that the LRA may still be targeting them to use as “wives” or domestic servants.

Most fighters remain Ugandans: Due to the isolation of LRA groups, collecting information on their composition is very difficult. However, anecdotal evidence from LRA escapees and defectors indicates that a large majority of LRA combatants and all LRA commanders are from Uganda, where the LRA originated but has not operated since 2006. Relatively few abductees from CAR, Congo, and South Sudan abducted since 2007 have been trained as fighters and none have been elevated to senior leadership or command roles.

Gender & age breakdown of abductions 2010-2012



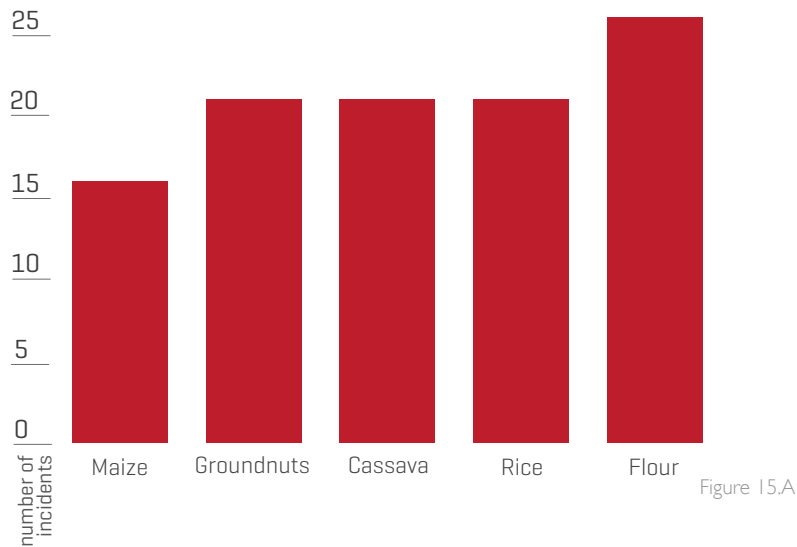
*These numbers do not represent all abducted persons, but only those for whom age and gender information was available.

Figure 14.B

LRA Survival Strategies: Looting Small Communities

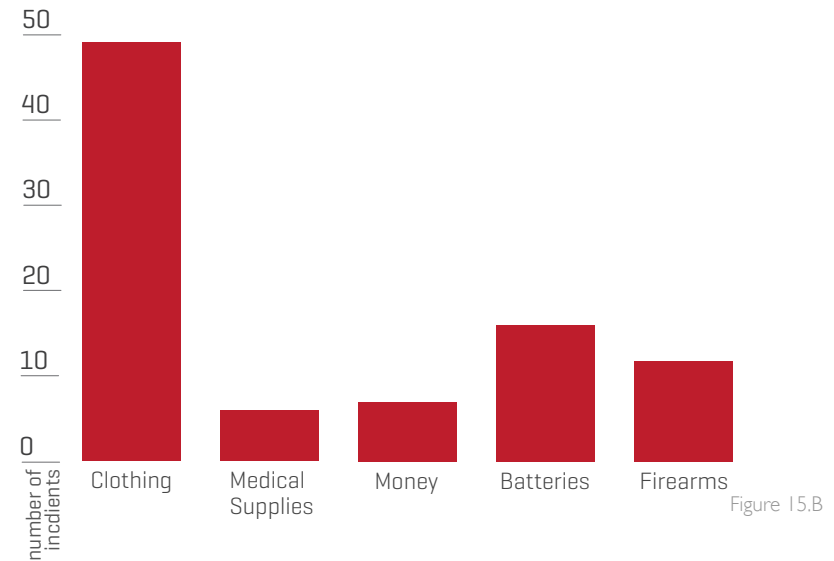
Frequently looted food items 2010-2012

Figure 15.A displays the number of incidents in which specific food items were recorded as looted by the LRA from 2010-2012. The graph displays data from 146 LRA attacks.



Frequently looted non-food items 2010-2012

Figure 15.B displays the number of incidents in which specific non-food items were recorded as looted by the LRA from 2010-2012. The graph displays data from 304 LRA attacks.



Looting small communities remains LRA's primary survival strategy

The LRA has utilized widespread looting as a survival tactic throughout much of its history. Between 1986 and 2005, LRA lootings occurred primarily in northern Ugandan and southern Sudan.

However, LRA lootings dropped dramatically during the 2006-2008 Juba peace talks when most LRA groups were based in Congo's Garamba National Park. Instead, the LRA sustained itself primarily through small-scale farming, supplies provided by the international community as a condition of the peace talks, and trading with nearby Congolese communities. However, these survival strategies were extinguished by the launch of Ugandan-led military operations in December 2008.

Since 2009, LRA groups operating in CAR and Congo have sustained supplies of food, medical goods, and other essentials primarily by looting small villages and farms, a trend that continued in 2012. The LRA looted goods in over 59% of its attacks in 2012, primarily targeting foodstuffs.

The most commonly looted foods were corn (maize), cassava (manioc), and groundnuts. All three foods are relatively durable and have high calorie counts, making them ideal for groups that are frequently moving from place to place.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that LRA forces also periodically loot cattle from Mbororo herders, though such incidents occur in remote locations and often are not reported to international actors. In addition to looting, LRA defectors report that when looted foods are scarce, LRA groups sus-

tain themselves by harvesting wild fruits, vegetables (particularly yams), and hunting animals.

The most commonly looted non-food item between 2010 and 2012 was clothing, including both civilian clothes and uniforms. LRA groups also looted medical supplies during 7 attacks, at least 4 of which included the looting of a health clinic. The most commonly looted weapon was the AK-47.

As noted on page 14, LRA forces often abduct adults for short periods of time to transport looted goods. Such abductees often escape or are released by the LRA within several days or weeks of their abduction.

LRA Survival Strategies: External Support & the Ivory Trade

Alleged support by the Sudanese government

The Sudanese government first began supporting the LRA in 1994, using the rebel group as a proxy in its fight against South Sudanese rebels and their Ugandan allies. It provided the LRA with weapons, supplies, military training, and safe havens in southern Sudan. Sudanese support for the LRA dwindled beginning in 2002, and was reportedly terminated in 2005.

However, since 2010, a number of LRA defectors have reported that the LRA has established a presence in the Sudanese-controlled Kafia Kingi enclave, which serves as a safe haven from AU-authorized troops pursuing the LRA. Defectors report that the Sudanese military has allowed the LRA to maintain a camp near their Dafak garrison since October 2010 and has provided LRA forces there with limited food and medical assistance.

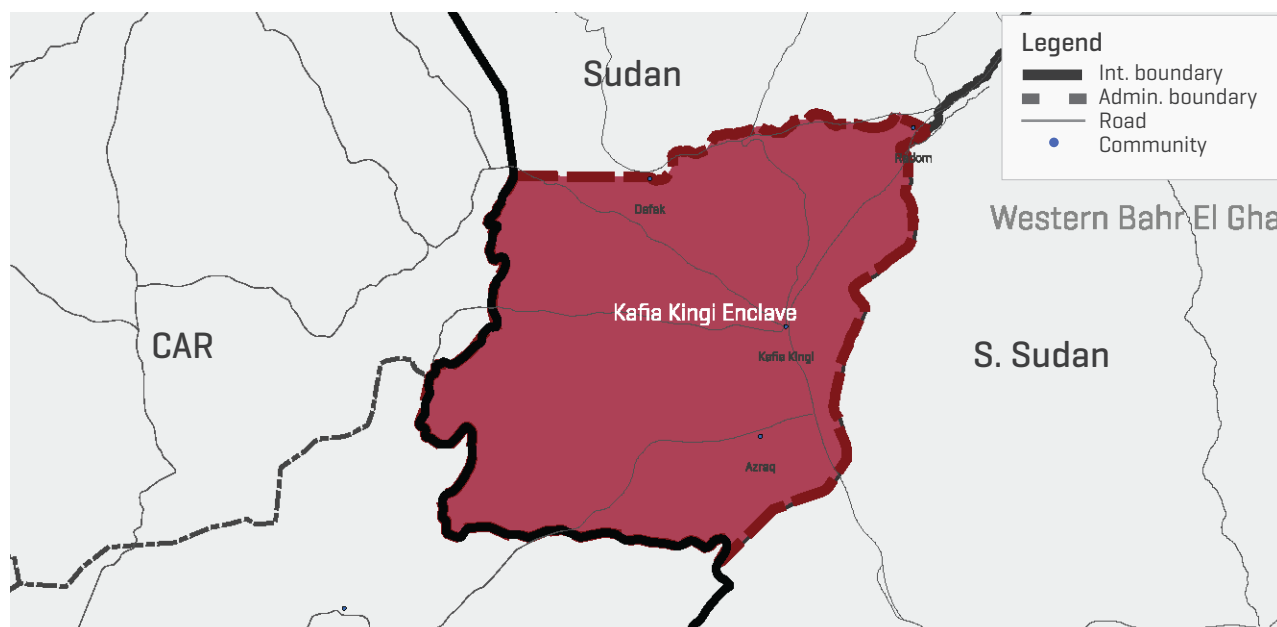
Kony reportedly visited the enclave in October 2010, and then stayed there from late 2011 through at least early 2012. In a December 2012 statement, the UN Security Council “[took] note of the growing concerns regarding the reported LRA presence in... Kafia Kingi.”

Alleged LRA involvement in illegal ivory trade

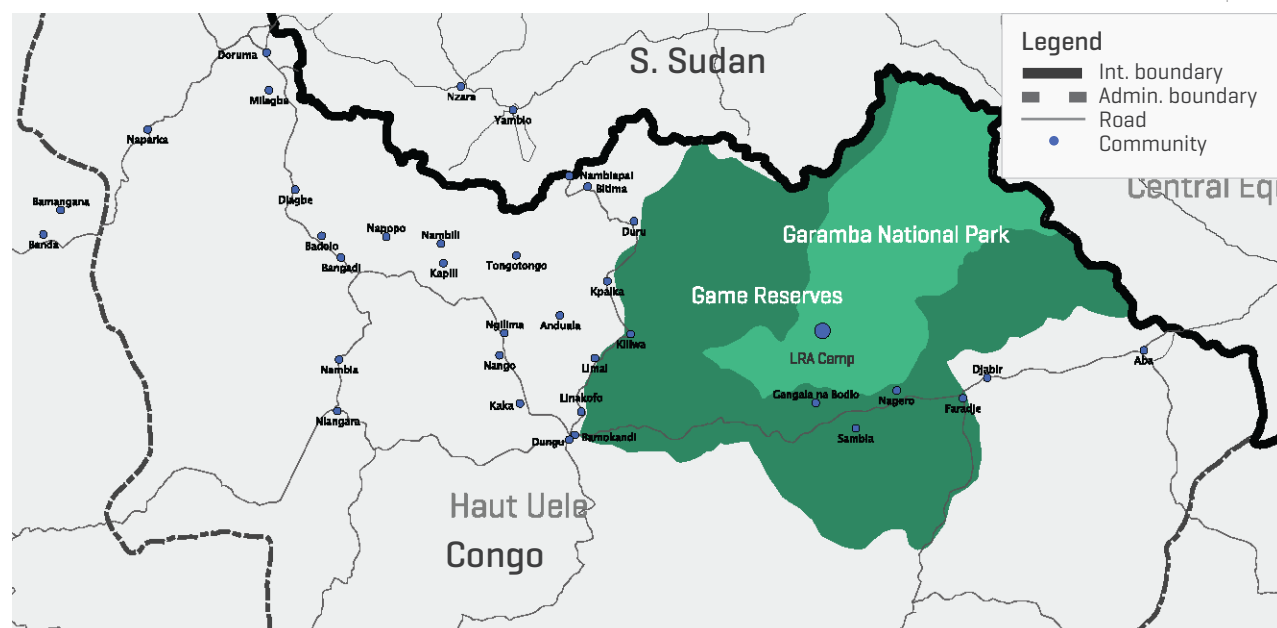
In April 2012, an LRA escapee reported that LRA combatants left Congo's Garamba National Park with 10 elephant tusks after receiving orders from Kony to bring him ivory. In May, park personnel found three dead male elephants and then clashed with suspected LRA forces from whom they confiscated elephant tusks. In January 2013, several LRA abductees who escaped in CAR reported that a helicopter periodically rendezvoused with an LRA group in CAR and gave the rebels food in exchange for ivory.

Garamba park officials believe the LRA is deeply engaged in the illegal ivory trade, and its presence in northeastern CAR and the Kafia Kingi enclave puts the LRA in position to participate in the illegal ivory trading routes that stretch from Congo to Khartoum. However, as of late 2012 no reports of LRA selling or trading ivory were independently confirmed. In December 2012, the UN Security Council urged the UN and AU to investigate “the LRA’s logistical networks and possible sources of illicit financing, including alleged involvement in elephant poaching and related illicit smuggling.”

Invisible Children + The Resolve LRA Crisis Tracker



Map 16.A



Map 16.B

LRA Survival Strategies: Weapons & Attacking Party Analysis

Automatic firearms & machetes: Most commonly observed LRA weapons 2010-2012

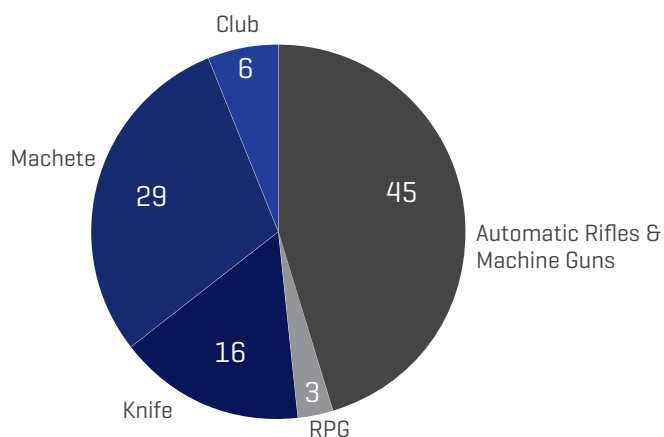


Figure 17.A

Despite a scarcity of comprehensive reporting on LRA weaponry, historical records and testimonies from LRA escapees and eyewitnesses to attacks provide some insight into what weapons LRA groups possess and how they use them.

Figure 17.A displays data on detailed weapons observations, which have been reported in 99 of 1,041 attacks since 2010. Automatic firearms, such as the AK-47 and the PK machine gun, have been observed most frequently. However, anecdotal testimonies from LRA returnees indicate that LRA attackers often lack significant amounts of ammunition.

Automatic firearms were observed in 45 attacks between 2010-2012, compared to

29 for machetes, and 16 for knives.

The LRA obtained much of their current stock of weapons between 1994-2005, when the Sudanese government provided them with automatic firearms, mortars, anti-personnel mines, and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs). This support reportedly ended after 2005, but it is likely that the LRA continues to use automatic firearms supplied by the Sudanese military before 2005.

Since 2010, LRA groups have obtained additional weapons by attacking security forces. For example, LRA forces looted automatic firearms from a military base in Nzako, CAR in March 2011 and AK-47s from a police station in Raga, South Sudan in September 2011.

LRA attacking parties most commonly comprised of 3-4 people 2010-2012

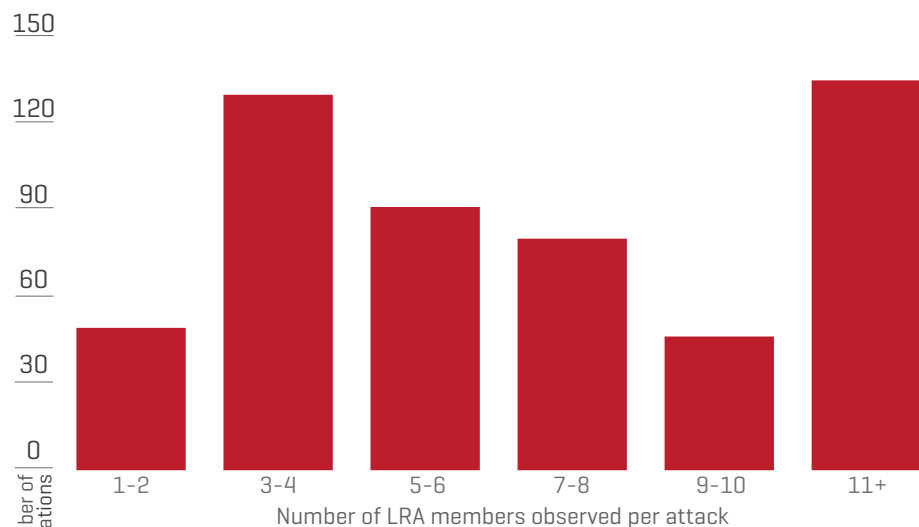


Figure 17.B

LRA rebels are currently scattered into dozens of groups across Congo, CAR, and Sudanese-controlled areas of Kafia Kingi. Expert analysts estimate the LRA contains 150-250 core Ugandan fighters as well as a fluctuating range of 200-400 local abductees and dependents.

The size of these groups varies considerably and is in constant flux. Groups periodically split up and regroup at rendezvous points arranged during previous meetings, by satellite phone or HF radios, or by "runners" who travel between groups. During these gatherings LRA groups exchange fighters, abductees, supplies, and intelligence.

Within individual LRA groups, certain members are assigned to participate in raiding parties on local communities to procure food, supplies, and abductees. Senior LRA

commanders rarely participate directly in such raids, preferring to stay at more secluded campsites and rendezvous points.

Figure 17.B displays data on the size of LRA attacking parties in Congo from 2010-2012. Data was collected from 525 incidents where the size of the party was reported. Incidents from CAR and South Sudan are not included due to the scarcity of available data.

The data demonstrates that in Congo, LRA attacking parties most commonly contained 3-4 people, which could include Ugandan LRA combatants as well as previously abducted non-Ugandans used as translators, guides, and on occasion, as combatants.

11 or more LRA attackers were observed in Congo on 55 occasions from 2010-2012.

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LRA Crisis Tracker Methodology

1 Data Collection

Report sourcing:

- HF radio operators in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic
 - Civilians report activity to HF radio tower operators
 - Over 30 HF radio operators call the Dungu hub twice daily to report armed group activity
 - Activity is entered into a spreadsheet and then sent to data coders.
- UN and NGO reports
- News and media outlets
- Civil society contacts in local communities
- Government sources
- Field research conducted by Resolve and Invisible Children staff

Sourcing coverage: LRA CrisisTracker Database team members make every effort to obtain data from all LRA-affected regions. Due to the remote nature of LRA-affected areas, the sourcing infrastructure available to project administrators is uneven across the geographic area of concern, and data included in the Database is often of better quality in areas with higher NGO and news agency traffic. The LRA CrisisTracker Database does not claim to be a comprehensive record of all LRA or related incidents in the region, but team members make every effort to fill in areas where the data may not be easily accessible.

Note: The majority of the information gathering systems are located in DR Congo, leading to a disproportional amount of LRA reports from DRC. In upcoming months both Invisible Children and CRS, funded by USAID, will expand information gathering systems in CAR, hoping to improve access to information in the region.

2 Data Entry

Database entry: Reports are divided between a team of coders from both Invisible Children and Resolve. Coders determine if the source is reliable or unreliable (See section 4.2.B of the Codebook, Determining the Reliability of a Source). Before an incident is reported, the coder reads through other incidents in the same time range and checks for duplicates.

Verification rating: After an incident is categorized, each incident is given a Verification Rating, which rates the team's confidence in the details of the reported data. Each incident is given a rating of "1" through "5," with "1" being the most unreliable and "5" being very reliable. The rating is based on the trustworthiness of the source, confidence in the identity of the actors involved in the incident, and the degree of detail given in the source report. A verification rating of "2" through "5" is considered adequately verified to be reported publicly, and therefore is included in statistics and analysis (Codebook section 4.2A).

LRA Actor Verification rating: To distinguish between LRA and other armed group attacks, the Crisis Tracker Codebook has a list of LRA Indicators and Non-LRA Indicators. If after reviewing the indicators and other available evidence the data coder determines that the perpetrator of an attack was likely the LRA, the incident is given an LRA Actor Verification rating, 'Low,' 'Medium,' or 'High,' to measure the likelihood of the perpetrator being LRA. (Codebook section 4.2C.) If after reviewing an incident the coder determines that the LRA was not the perpetrator and the perpetrator is unknown, Actor 1 is marked as 'Armed Group' and the incident is not mapped.

3 Data Review

Initial review: Each report is reviewed by a second data coder to catch human errors and duplicate reports. Coders look for incidents that are alike in detail, and have a relatively close time frame and location. These incidents are then investigated to ensure that they are not duplicate reports.

Expert review: IC and Resolve staff with field experience review sensitive incidents immediately and review all incidents every three months. Should this staff member feel an incident was misreported, the incident is corrected and potentially unmapped. External LRA and regional experts are consulted as necessary.

4 Data Mapping & Sharing

Data mapping: After an incident is entered and approved to be mapped, it appears on the LRA Crisis Tracker website. Only incidents involving the LRA or persons formerly abducted by the LRA and given a Verification rating of '2' or higher are mapped.

Data sensitivity: Sensitive information such as specific sources, names, information on security forces, and personal information about minors is not shared publicly.

Data sharing: Data is regularly sent to UN agencies and humanitarian practitioners for comparison and collaboration.

5 Data Revamp

As the database grows and policies are updated to reflect best practices, data coders revisit and "revamp" the data when needed.

With the establishment of the HF Radio Network and expanded reporting mechanisms in the region, incident reporting has become more detailed and the database has been adapted to reflect this. Fields including information

LRA Crisis Tracker Methodology

on age and gender of victims, and goods looted have been added since the beginning of the database. Coders periodically revisit all incidents and reports to include the new details and fields.

6 Data Analysis & Reporting

Crisis Tracker staff analyze data for trends and patterns in LRA activity. For instance, coders look for trends in the age and gender of abducted persons, net recruitment (total abductions- total returnees), and increases in a certain type of attack. Coders also look for new traits and patterns in LRA activity.

Specific areas and provinces are also analyzed for increases or decreases in number and type of attack.

After analysis has been completed and reviewed, it is reported in various Crisis Tracker reports.

Definitions

Attack:

An incident is considered an “attack” in the Brief if LRA activity results in one of the following human rights violations: violence resulting in death or injury, sexual or gender based violence, abduction, looting, or displacement. For detailed definitions of these human rights abuses, please refer to section 4.5 of the LRA Crisis Tracker Map Methodology and Database Codebook v1.6.

Killing:

An incident is regarded as a “killing” if there is a violent act that results in the death of an individual who is not known to be associated with an armed group or security force. Civilian deaths resulting from injuries sustained from an attack are considered a “killing.” Also, if a civilian is killed while in LRA captivity, it is considered a “killing” if it occurs within

one week of the initial abduction. For a detailed explanation of incidents that are categorized as a “killing,” please refer to section 4.5.1 of the LRA Crisis Tracker Map Methodology and Database Codebook v1.6.

Abduction:

An incident is regarded as an “abduction” if it involves one or more persons taken hostage against their will by the LRA for any period of time, including civilians who are abducted and released or escape in the same day. A short-term abduction is considered any abduction that is 72 hours or less in duration. This does not necessarily mean that abductions that are not short-term are long-term as there may not be a report of the abducted person’s return. For a detailed explanation of incidents categorized as “abductions” or “short-term abductions,” please refer to section 4.5.2 of the LRA Crisis Tracker Map Methodology and Database Codebook v1.6.

Returnees:

A “returnee” is considered anyone who escapes, is released, is rescued, or defects from LRA captivity. It also includes all LRA members who are captured. For a detailed explanation of data relating to returnees, please refer to section 4.5.2 of the LRA Crisis Tracker Map Methodology and Database Codebook v1.6.

About The LRA Crisis Tracker

The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative

The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative, formerly Resolve, is a Washington D.C.-based advocacy organization seeking to move US and international political leaders to take the actions needed to see a permanent end to the violence of the Lord's Resistance Army in central Africa and justice to LRA-affected communities. Learn more at theResolve.org.

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Invisible Children

Invisible Children is an international NGO working to assist communities in LRA-affected areas of Central Africa by expanding community-based early warning systems, reaching out to potential LRA defectors and affected communities through FM radio, and rehabilitating formerly-abducted children. Learn more at invisiblechildren.com.

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Further Resources

For a real-time, geospatial look at LRA activity, or to download the data found within the Mid-Year Security Brief please visit the LRA Crisis Tracker Map at: LRACrisisTracker.com.

About the LRA Crisis Tracker

Data reflected in this brief was collected as part of the Invisible Children + The Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative LRA Crisis Tracker, a geospatial database and reporting project which aims to track incidents of violent conflict in areas of Central Africa affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. Through publication of regular reports and open-source sharing of collected data, the LRA Crisis Tracker aims to help overcome the current deficit of relevant and timely information related to the LRA crisis and to support improved policy and humanitarian responses.

In the interest of continually strengthening the LRA Crisis Tracker dataset, The Resolve and Invisible Children welcome new sources of current or historical reports of LRA activity. To contribute information to the LRA Crisis Tracker project, please contact The Resolve at LRACrisisTracker@theResolve.org.

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