



Africa Nonprofit Chore

FACTORS INFLUENCING

LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY



DEFECTIONS

IN CENTRAL AFRICA TODAY

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Solidarity and Integral Assistance to Destitute People

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Acronyms

AG	Armed Group
ANCHOR	Africa Non-profit Chore
AOP	Area of Operation
AU	African Union
AU-RTF C-LRA	African Union Regional Task Force for Counter-LRA operations
CAR	Central African Republic
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DDRRR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Resettlement & Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAPs	Formerly Abducted Persons
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organization
IC	Invisible Children Inc.
ICC	International Criminal Court
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo
OTJR	Oxford Transitional Justice Research
SAIPED	Solidarity and Integral Assistance to Destitute People
SS	South Sudan
UN C-LRA WG	United Nations, Counter-Lord's Resistance Army Working Group
UNOCA	United Nations Office for Central Africa
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USSF	United States Special Forces
WVU	World Vision Uganda



Abstract

The Great Lakes region and its vicinities have been home to some of Africa's most obdurate and debilitating conflicts. Over the last three decades alone, this region has borne the brunt of genocide in Rwanda; civil wars in Burundi, DR Congo, and South Sudan; electoral violence in Kenya; and mass killings and abductions in Uganda, DR Congo, and Central African Republic.

The LRA war is one such conflict that has lasted close to three decades and has caused untold human suffering among communities in at least five countries across east and central Africa.

This study is motivated by the lack of recent data, prevailing low LRA demobilization rates, and the need for resource optimization and coordination of efforts, as identified by the DDRRR Technical Working Group of the UN/AU LRA Focal Points Meeting convened in Entebbe on 8th and 9th September 2015.

The primary objective of the study is to investigate the recent defection influencers upon the remnant of LRA members in order to inform ongoing counter-LRA strategies by local, regional, and international organisations, as well as regional governments. A total of 94 defector responses were analyzed from Uganda, DR Congo and CAR.

The results revealed that pushback factors had a negative relationship with defection. Of all pushback factors, the fear of being killed by LRA during escape, fear of court prosecution, and uncertainty of livelihood options upon returning home were the most influential factors inhibiting defections.

Additionally, pullout factors had a positive relationship with defection. The most influential pullout factors in order of impact were: military confrontation, removal of social privileges, and uncertain source of livelihood while in the bush.

The following recommendations are therefore submitted to key decision-makers as a contribution towards enhancing counter-LRA policy:

1. Continue creatively using defection messaging to discredit Joseph Kony's supernatural abilities among combatants and deliberately manipulate internal tensions within LRA to further weaken the force
2. Clarify legal processes and other standard procedures to be followed by defectors and conduct outreach activities to sensitize all relevant stakeholders in their use
3. Invest in the long-term economic, social, and psychological reintegration of defectors upon their return home
4. Establish consortia of local and regional organizations working with government agencies to ensure coordinated reintegration activities and shared capacity
5. Expand the AU-RTF Area of Operations in CAR, Increase MINUSCA's LRA-related mandate, and strengthen capacity of and collaboration between security actors.
6. Expand the reach of Early Warning System to unreported areas and integrate community focal points in the EWS analysis feedback mechanism
7. Establish usable major road arteries in eastern CAR to facilitate security and recovery efforts.
8. Protect high-value mineral and ivory sources from LRA access as a means to interrupt ammunition supply chains
9. Expand the reach of secure defection locations, build the capacity of the local communities to safely receive LRA defectors, and where viable, install locally operated FM radio stations to enhance sustainable and locally-led demobilization interventions
10. Pursue diplomatic options to allow AU-RTF tracking teams quick access into LRA safe havens located in disputed parts of Sudan and South Sudan



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to Githaiga (2011), the Great Lakes territory of Africa and its vicinities have been home to some of Africa's most obdurate and debilitating conflicts. Indeed, over the last three decades alone, this region has faced genocide in Rwanda; civil wars in Burundi, DR Congo, and South Sudan; electoral violence in Kenya; and mass killings and abductions in Uganda, DR Congo, and Central African Republic

Noteworthy and crosscutting concerns that have dictated the conflicts in the region include, but are not limited to, the prohibited exploitation and trafficking of natural resources, propagation of small munitions and light ordnances, illegitimate armed groups, sexual/gender-based violence, and forced population displacement.

Githaiga (2012) further expounds that despite numerous exertions at resolution, the conflicts endure with overwhelming effects on the human security of populations and the stability of the region. The regional proportions of war in the Great Lakes [as well as its CAR and SS precincts] and their emergent undercurrents call for an unrelenting and collaborative analysis by regional stakeholders in order to inform the implementation of strategies towards sustainable peace in the region.

The role of the Lord's Resistance Army in the existing state of regional human security affairs is arguably very substantial bearing in mind its spell, regional nature, and socio-economic effect on the most vulnerable communities far off from country capitals - and hence merits specific attention towards its prompt resolution.

According to the UN (2013), having spanned 29 gruesome years and counting, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is by far the longest existing rebel force in Africa. It is disreputably known for carrying out mass brutalities against highly susceptible populations including killings, bodily dismemberments, rape, lootings, and abductions. Accounts point to the group having been accountable for more than 100,000 deaths over the course of the entire conflict.

According to UNOCHA (2005), between 1986 and 2007, the LRA conflict caused the internal displacement of approximately 1,700,000 persons in northern Uganda alone. A total of 438,504 LRA-induced displacements in DR Congo, CAR, and South Sudan had already occurred by December 2011 since the group left Uganda in 2006.

According to the LRA Crisis Tracker (2014), from December 2008 to date, the force is estimated to have abducted at least 5,248 and killed 2,318 civilians during the central Africa (DRC, CAR, and SS) phase of its operations alone.

The group's main technique of conscription has historically been through the abduction and obligatory indoctrination of exposed minors. This has often complicated the determination of a common solution towards resolving the armed conflict.

On one hand, the members of the LRA are perpetrators of grievous crimes against humanity and would arguably need to be penalized. On the other hand, it has been contended that the same perpetrators of violence are themselves victims of forced abductions and failure in the constitutional duties of regional governments to protect their citizens. Proponents of this view argue that the alleged crimes of such victims ought therefore to be abdicated lest they be made to suffer a double jeopardy.

During the on-going search for a permanent and effective solution towards ending the LRA conflict, and in light of the complexity that the perpetrators of the LRA conflict themselves double as abducted hostages, a consensus of 'encouraging peaceful defections' has gained prominence, as a true and tested demobilization strategy, among both military and non-military actors. Several civil society and military actors including but not limited to Africa Non-profit Chore (ANCHOR), Invisible Children (IC), Solidarity and Integral Assistance to Destitute People (SAIPED), African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) for Counter-LRA operations, and United States Special Forces (USSF) are actively supporting efforts aimed towards encouraging



peaceful defections of LRA elements through persuasive radio broadcasts, flier (postcard) messaging, and local community sensitization.

These efforts are supplementary and being delivered collaboratively with existing local community protection groups otherwise referred to as Local Defection Committees, Peace Committees, or *Comités Locaux de Protection*¹.

According to Invisible Children (2014), between 2011 and 2013, the organization distributed at least 1.3 million fliers, and broadcast approximately 1,500 hours of radio messaging towards encouraging the peaceful surrender of LRA combatants – costing at least USD 455,000 and USD 1,380,000 respectively. Additionally, sensitization activities aimed at improving community perceptions and responses towards defectors have been carried out in at least six rural LRA-affected communities in central Africa.

According to the LRA Crisis Tracker (2014), due to a combination of both military and civilian strategies, the total population of the LRA is believed to have drastically dropped from approximately 1,500 to 500 including men, women, and children between 2011 and 2013, with the core fighting force estimated to now range between 160-168 combatants.

In his very recent field research entitled 'Tusk Wars: Inside the LRA and the Bloody Business of Ivory', conducted between June-July 2015, Cakaj (2015) even places a lower fighting strength for the LRA - at 120 male combatants, and between 100-120 women and children in 2015.

Although the competence of the residue force to commit mass brutalities has been severely dwindled, their ability to renew in future is considered a strong prospect in light of diminishing international attention and waning funding needed to demobilize the remainder of the force as well as build the local communities' capacity to effectively demobilize and reintegrate the remainder of the fighting force.

It was therefore urgent to identify the key factors influencing defections and release of the remainder of the long-term LRA members in order to inform an effective strategy towards permanently ending the group's ability to cause violence.

1.2 Problem Statement

Over the past half-decade, several defection initiatives have been implemented aimed at peacefully eroding the fighting strength of the LRA from within the force. However, these initiatives have not been tested for their effectiveness or impact since a related study for Northern Uganda by Conciliation Resources, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness was commissioned in 2006.

As a result, counter-LRA defection strategy continues to be erratic and uncoordinated –leading to lost opportunities for funding, and duplication of efforts by partner organisations - among other undesired effects.

According to Ronan (2015), the shortage of harmonization and combined political motivation in the international community's response to the LRA crisis is no more obvious than in the group's sustained ability to easily exploit the Kafia Kingi enclave and adjacent areas of South Darfur.

The end consequence has been the combined difficulty by stakeholders to convincingly bring an end to the LRA conflict even in its current frailest strength state. In light of a markedly dwindling interest and funding towards demobilizing the LRA, there's an urgent need to determine the most prominent reasons influencing the defection of LRA members as a means to inform counter-LRA strategy and advocacy. This study therefore investigates the influence that various factors obtain upon the decision to defect by the remaining LRA members estimated at 120-168 (fighting strength excluding women and children).

1.3 Specific Objectives of the Study

- a) To investigate the pull-out factors contributing towards defection of long-term LRA elements

¹ Local Protection Committees



- b) To examine the pushback factors contributing against defection of long-term LRA elements
- c) To assess the effect of pushback, pull-out, and opportunistic factors on defection of long-term LRA elements
- d) To make inferences of likely reasons why defection rates have plummeted in 2015

1.4 Research Questions

- a) What are the pull-out factors contributing towards defection of long-term LRA elements?
- b) What are the pushback factors contributing against defection of long-term LRA elements?
- c) What are the likely reasons explaining why defection rates have plummeted in 2015?

1.5 Research Propositions

- a) Positive local community interactions with LRA members are the single most impactful factor in encouraging peaceful defections.
- b) Military confrontation' creates opportunities for LRA captives to break free of their group thereby increasing the chances of defections occurring.
- c) The greatest obstacle towards LRA defections is the 'fear of the unknown' subsequent to leaving the group (including the fear of being killed by local communities, lack of economic opportunities at home, and prosecution upon returning home).

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Gulu, Amuru, and Nwoya (Uganda), Dungu, and Ngilima (DRC) and Sam Ouandja, Obo, and Mboki (CAR). The study locations were selected due to the projected high number of LRA defectors living in the areas. Defectors formed the unit of analysis for this study.

1.6.2 Time Scope

The study targeted LRA defectors between January 2013 and March 2016. This period was considered long enough by the researcher to determine the drivers of recent defections.

1.7 Significance of the Study

- In a report by Conciliation Resources, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) based on a field research conducted in 2005 of the northern Uganda phase of the LRA conflict, the provision of Amnesty, obtaining information about home, and the possibility of education ranked among the top most drivers of defection of low to middle ranking LRA commanders.

However, the same studies being quite dated and restricted to northern Uganda alone do not present generalizable findings regarding the current influences of LRA defections. The findings in this study will therefore be significant towards establishing the extent to which defection successes in northern Uganda compare with those under the current unique social, economic, and political contexts of central Africa.

- This study will identify the most effective strategies towards ending the LRA conflict in central Africa, which will be applied towards: Empowering field practitioners to strategically prioritize counter-LRA activities and create new opportunities for resource mobilization and policy advocacy. Moreover, the second UN C-LRA Focal Points Working Group of 2015 in Entebbe identified the urgent need to investigate why LRA defections have waned over the recent past.



1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Pull-out Factors

These are perceptions incentivizing LRA members to leave the group. Theoretically speaking, once the pullout factors outweigh the pushback factors, a defection decision is expected to be made by an individual or group. Once made, an individual may actively or passively seek out for a safe opportunity to escape.

1.8.2 Pushback Factors

These are perceptions preventing or discouraging the members of the group from departing or leaving. It is important to note that this definition contrasts with that used in Conciliation Resources et al (2006) where push factors were implied to mean appealing influences attracting combatants towards defection.

1.8.3 Defection Time

In this study, defection time is used in the context of the duration in months from the date of abduction or recruitment into the LRA and that of defection or surrender.

1.8.4 Short-term, and Long-term Captivity

According to Ronan (2015) short-term refers to defection time lasting less than six months, while long-term captivity is defection time of six months or more. The same connotation is adopted in this study.



2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents theoretical issues that underpin the study topic as well as positions and debates of scholars on issues related to combatant defection strategies.

2.2 Concept of Encouraging Peaceful Defections

The use of persuasive (peaceful) and coercive (forceful) techniques towards demobilizing armed groups has been utilized in the resolution of several conflicts with varying degrees of success.

According to The Guardian (2015), radio-jamming techniques were employed in the face of effective propaganda messaging between North and South Korea in a conflict spanning since 1953 to date. In this case, demobilization or defection messaging may have had the undesired impact of escalating the conflict rather than ameliorating it.

In another case, Castillo (2010) records a more successful outcome of a defection messaging strategy by the Columbian government in utilization of a 'softer' line to dissuade rebels against armed rebellion. He elaborates how the Columbian army successfully applied placards, radio messaging, and festivity decorations to attract armed combatants to demobilize during a campaign appropriately dubbed 'Operation Christmas'.

In the cases highlighted above, it is clear that the success of a defection messaging strategy is very much dependent on both establishing a wide communication coverage as well as ensuring that the messages are appropriately nuanced (contextualized) to appropriately utilize the factors that attract (pull-out) combatants from or drive them back (pushback) towards armed rebellion.

2.3 Push and Pull-out Factors

In their field research collaboration undertaken in the year 2005 and entitled 'Coming Home', Conciliation Resources, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) first investigated the process undertaken by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels to arrive at a defection decision. The study categorized the factors influencing defection decisions of combatants as 'pull' and 'push' factors.

2.3.1 Pull Factors

These are incentives that LRA combatants found appealing or attractive towards encouraging them to voluntarily give up rebellion and defect or demobilize. They are positive in nature. The study obtained the following five key reasons why LRA combatants were attracted towards defecting voluntarily:

2.3.1.1 Amnesty

Conciliation Resources et al (2006) obtained that the promise of amnesty from prosecution of LRA defectors by the Ugandan government ranked as the most compelling factor towards their decision to demobilize voluntarily.

However, in the same year that the study was conducted, the International Criminal Court (ICC) instituted indictments and arrest warrants against the top LRA commanders namely Joseph Kony, Vincent Otti, Okot Odhiambo, Raska Lukwiya, and Dominic Ongwen.

This was later to be used by the LRA leadership to spread harmful propaganda against peaceful defection efforts. Conciliation Resources et al (2006) highlight this by indicating that some fundamental issues needed clarity and thorough contemplation while communicating about the dynamic between the ICC and the Ugandan Amnesty Act.



If there was any semblance of consistency still remaining between the implementation of the ICC arrest warrants and Ugandan Amnesty Act, the War Crimes Division of the government that was founded by an administrative decree rendered the confusion complete.

In *Too Far from Home*, Cakaj (2011) provides detailed accounts of how, mandated by the War Crimes Division, the arrest of Thomas Kwoyelo – a midlevel LRA commander - dealt a resounding blow to defection efforts. Up until the Kwoyelo debacle, defection practitioners had widely understood and communicated that prosecution for crimes committed while still with the LRA was limited to the five ICC indicted commanders. Without intending to do so, the arrest of Kwoyelo may have given the LRA propaganda machinery a new lease of life.

2.3.1.2 Information About Home

Several defectors attested to the feedback they had received, while still in the LRA, about the fate of their defected colleagues having influenced their decisions to denounce rebellion.

2.3.1.3 Possibility of Education

The study further obtained that it was vitally important in 2005 for the LRA to be convinced about opportunities for their education as well as for their children.

2.3.1.4 Possibility of Better Life

Equally important to LRA members was found to be opportunities for better livelihoods after defection.

Indeed, Caldeira et al (2014) determined that successful reintegration of past child soldiers is an essential factor of DDR efforts and paramount for viable peace.

2.3.1.5 Suffering of Home Population

Last but not least, the condition of combatant's home populations was identified to be a split factor in encouraging defections.

Where a combatant's relatives were reported to be suffering due to general livelihood hardships, LRA members generally were inclined towards defecting in order to contribute to their home communities.

On the flipside, where such suffering was caused by deliberate harassment by security or administrative actors towards a combatant's family, they were afraid and therefore dissuaded from defecting – according to the study. Additionally, combatants were dissuaded to defect where they obtained negative feedback about the condition of their defected counterparts. In his study entitled 'Rethinking Socio-Economic Reintegration of Youth in Post-War Northern Uganda', David-Ngendo Tshimba (2014) underscored the predicament of LRA defectors in realizing anticipated livelihood objectives after defection as recently as 2014. In such a case, it is implied that LRA members who obtained such feedback would be discouraged to defect.

2.3.2 Push Factors

Push factors are undesirable aspects that pressure combatants to abandon rebellion. Conciliation Resources and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) obtained the following key drivers for defection:

2.3.2.1 Absence of Food

Combatants' inability to be guaranteed a consistent source of food while in the group was ranked as being the second most important disincentive to continue fighting. This point is further



underpinned by a subsequent research undertaking by Cakaj (2011) entitled 'Too Far from Home' where several of the LRA women returning had mentioned shortage of food and medication as having influenced their defection.

2.3.2.2 Fighting or Dread of Death

The majority of defectors acknowledged trepidation at eventually succumbing to death due to military confrontations as being a key pushback factor influencing their leaving the bush.

Conversely, Cakaj (2011) argues that the fear of death originates from the ability of the LRA group to pursue and execute escaping members. In the same study, he provides an account of a defector whose wife and child were not as lucky in escaping with him. Unlike the defector, his child was killed during the attempted defection and his wife apprehended.

Although the dread of being killed may be applied both as an incentive as well as a disincentive towards defection, there's agreement in the fact that military confrontations provide opportunities for intending defectors to escape with reduced risk of being pursued by the LRA thereby obtaining a net positive effect on defections.

2.3.2.3 Over Walking

In order to evade capture by government security agents in hot pursuit, LRA elements were constantly on the move. Defectors reportedly listed this as a key factor forcing them to demobilize.

2.3.2.4 Infighting

It was not uncommon for tensions to develop within LRA groups often due to disciplinary procedures against errant members or in the leadership's pursuit of total control. This was identified as a factor pressuring members to depart from the group.

2.3.2.5 Civilian Suffering

Some combatants were reportedly empathetic toward communities against whom they had inflicted atrocities and were thus inclined to abandon rebellion altogether.

A study entitled 'Coming Home: Understanding why commanders of the Lord's Resistance Army choose to return to a civilian life', (CR & QPSW, 2006) recommended a multi pronged approach towards messaging the LRA including the use of radio messaging, postcard leaflets, and increasing community interactions with the rebels. However, the study focussed on the northern Uganda phase (pre 2006) of the LRA conflict and may not be in tandem with the present realities in central Africa.

2.3.2.6 Disillusionment with Ideological Stance

According to Cakaj (2011), a number of former LRA combatants defected as a result of cynicism associated with the ideology of the LRA leadership. Countless times, defectors had been told they were headed to take over government power in Uganda and yet there was no real progress in that direction.

2.3.2.7 Termination of Sudanese Government Support

In the LRA Crisis Tracker Annual Report, Ronan et al (2012) indicate the likely termination of support by the Sudanese government towards the LRA in the year 2005. This meant that



weapons, training, and safe havens were no longer being provided and by implication, the LRA would have been weakened.

2.4 Conclusion

2.4.1 Lack of Recent Data

As illustrated above, there have been various studies aimed at understanding the factors influencing LRA members' motivations to either continue in rebellion or defect. However, the most notable of these – by Conciliation Resources, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness– conducted in 2005, and published in 2006, is quite dated.

This research, conducted ten years later, is therefore intended to offer new insights into the motivations of LRA defections.

2.4.2 A Fast Changing Context

Since the above study, there have been several alterations in the context and dynamics of the LRA conflict. These range from the area of operation, personalities of individuals leading the semi-autonomous LRA groups, and the composition of LRA members by age, gender, and origin among others. All these factors arguably impact on the internal dynamics of the group(s) rendering a continuously changing context.

2.4.3 Geographical Scope

Since 2005, the LRA conflict has spread further from Southern Sudan into DR Congo, Central African Republic, and the disputed Kafia Kingi enclave between South Sudan and Sudan. There is therefore a very real regional dimension to the conflict that was not yet consolidated during the 2005 study and needs to be investigated.

This study, for the very first time, gives the defection 'pull-out' and 'pushback' factors a very regional appeal considering that data has been collected from Uganda (Gulu, Amuru, and Nwoya), DR Congo (Dungu, and Ngilima), and Central African Republic (Obo, Mboki, and Sam Ouandja). In so doing, it is hoped that the findings will yield a more effective defection strategy for practitioners and policy makers across the board.

2.4.4 New Interactions with other Armed Groups

There a number of reported interactions between the LRA and other groups whose net effect on the sustainability of the conflict is unclear. These include the Mbororo (Fulani) nomadic herders, the Seleka rebel movement of Central African Republic, and several opportunistic trade partners in poached ivory, and illicit gold and diamond – among others.

While it has not been the intention of this research to focus on the above parameters exclusively, it is anticipated and assumed that all the listed factors will have permeated into the findings of this study.

2.4.5 Low Rate of Defections

Finally, and during the UNOCA LRA Focal Points Meeting held in Entebbe Uganda on September 8 and 9, 2015, the DDRRR Working Group (WG) was tasked with obtaining an explanation as to why the LRA defection momentum was waning consistently. This study identifies emergent incentives towards LRA defections to inform the subsequent technical meetings on counter-LRA efforts.



3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter elaborates the methods to be used in obtaining information that fulfils the research objectives. The methodology comprises of conceptual frame work, research design, area of study, study population, sample size and selection, data collection methods and tools, data process and analysis, limitations to the study as well as ethical considerations.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

Independent variables

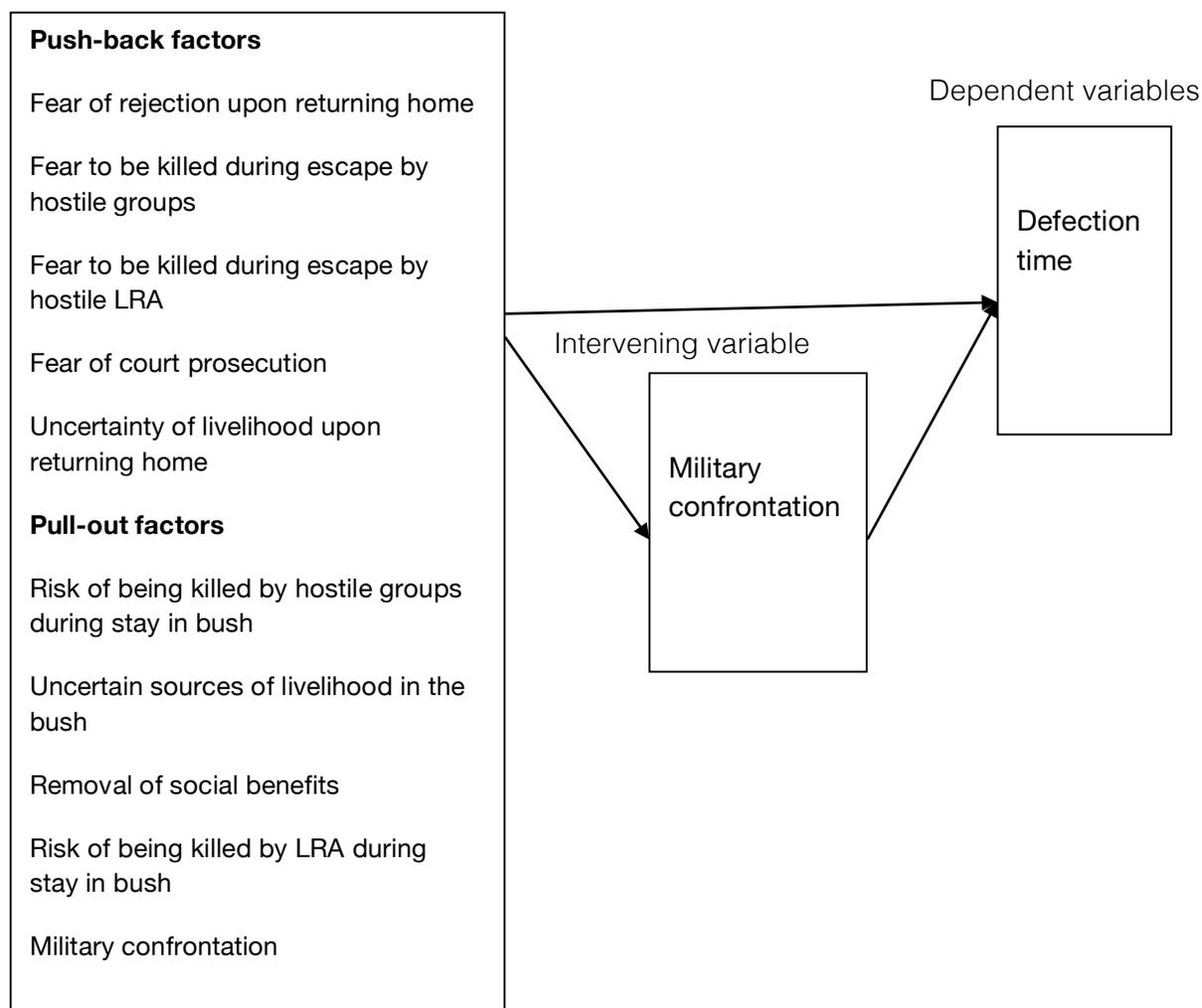


Figure 3-1 Conceptual Framework

Linking independent, intervening and dependent variables was crucial given how difficult defecting from a rebel group is. The study was guided by the perception that pull-out and pushback factors such as fear of rejection upon returning home, fear of being killed during escape by hostile groups, fear of being killed during escape by hostile LRA, fear of court prosecution, risk of being killed by hostile groups, uncertain sources of livelihood in the bush, and removal of social benefits all had an effect on defection time. The pushback and pull-out factors acted as the independent variables of the study which would either affect the defection time directly or through an intervening variable (military confrontation). The study was linked to a dependent variable which was the defection time. Defection time was measured as the difference between the time of joining and time of departing from the LRA. From the above conceptual framework, it is proposed that due to different pushback and pull-out factors different



individuals defected the LRA at different times whenever military confrontation provided the opportunity.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted the cross-sectional study design because data/information from LRA defectors was collected at point in time. The research design also enabled the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the different factors (pull-out and pushback) leading to the delay of the defection time.

3.4 Study Area.

The study area included Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Central African Republic. This was chosen because they acted as the main operational areas for the LRA and were therefore destinations for returned defectors – the unit of study.

3.5 Study Population

The study population was drawn from LRA defectors from Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Central African Republic, including men, women, and children, who returned since January 2013 to 2016. The study attempted to give more prominence in analysis to Ugandan defectors for the following reasons:

- The LRA is highly controlled by male combatants of Ugandan origin who comprise its core commanding force. It is considered that the defection or surrender of this group could deal an effective blow towards the group's ability to regenerate through new abductions since every Ugandan male defection erodes the leadership capacity of the group.
- Ugandan women hold the relevance, firstly, of being privy to information obtained from listening to conversations between their male husbands including radio come-home broadcasts, which they are known to facilitate the conveyance of to lower ranked combatants in the group. Secondly, the women are known to defect or escape along with Ugandan children who would have otherwise later matured into new combatants and - subsequently - commanders in case of boys, or wives in case of girls. Last but not least, the women and children are known to be the groups' source of day-to-day survival, participating in livelihood activities including farming, setting up and dismantling camps – to mention but a few.
- Since the groups' operations are presently outside Uganda's borders, every Ugandan defector is irreplaceable through new recruitments or abductions – unlike the defection of Congolese, South Sudanese, or Central Africans who can be easily replaced from the areas of operation.
- It is not practical, due to safety and logistical reasons, for the researcher to access members of the current fighting force for information. Alternatively, information about the group was obtained from the already returned members of the group in northern Uganda (Gulu, Amuru, and Nwoya), DRC (Dungu, and Ngilima), and CAR (Obo, Sam Ouandja, and Mboki), which the researcher was able to access.

3.6 Sample Size and Selection

3.6.1 Sample Size

Using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula the sample size was calculated as shown below:

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{[d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)]}$$

Where:

S is the sample required

N is the population size estimated at 330 - from Crisis Tracker estimates of the force strength in 2013 (500) and 2015 (160).



P is the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

X is the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level=1.96
 $X^2=3.841$

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).

$$S = 3.841 \cdot 330 \cdot 0.5(1-0.5) / [0.05 \cdot 0.05(330-1) + 3.841 \cdot 0.5(1-0.5)] = 178$$

3.6.2 Sampling Procedure

The study applied non probability sampling procedures of purposive as well as snowball sampling techniques:

3.6.2.1 Purposive Sampling

In the first stage, purposive sampling was applied to filter respondents according to:

Location

Due to the lack of clear contact information on defectors being readily available, specific locations were selected for the study based on locations where recent defectors are known to be available according to information provided by field practitioners.

Age

An age filter was applied in order to eliminate respondents below 12 years, and target adults and older minors considered to be capable of making independent defection decisions.

Validity

A question of the validity of responses arises from whether or not respondents were significantly biased towards portraying themselves positively during the interview. E.g. respondents may have had a conflict of interest in the data on who defected versus who was captured.

Nonetheless, the majority of respondents had spent at least several months out of captivity and therefore would be less inclined to misrepresent the reality – so it was presumed.

All data of subjects who defected, were released voluntarily, or had been captured by the military was considered as if they had all defected because the conditions of their existence in the bush were more or less similar and collectively their responses would be more representative whereas first filtering the data for only pure defectors would not.

Security and Resources

The survey was conducted in Gulu, Amuru, and Nwoya (Uganda), Dungu, and Ngilima (DRC), and Obo, Mboki, and Sam Ouandja (CAR) due to security considerations and logistical limitations prevailing in the field.

Defection Date

Respondents who defected before the year 2013 were eliminated due to the assumption that their responses may not be generalizable with the current crop of LRA members. The logic here was that data from respondents that may have defected earlier may not apply to the more recent cases.

Duration in Captivity

To make a distinction between short-term abductions and long-term, only respondents who spent at least 6 months or more in captivity were selected so as to improve result generalizability with the target group



3.6.2.2 Snowball Sampling

During the second stage of the sampling, selected subjects were used to facilitate the identification of subsequent subjects until the requisite number of respondents had been obtained or until it was no longer possible to do so. This is because defectors generally intermingled with the rest of the local mainstream inhabitants and their identities could only be obtained through fellow defectors.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Primary and secondary data of both qualitative and quantitative nature was collected by the researcher during the study. Primary data was collected using personal structured interviews whereas secondary data was obtained from literature both published and unpublished as reflected below.

3.7.1 Primary Data Collection

Primary data was gathered using self-administered questionnaires and through conducting interviews. The questionnaires data collection method involved use of a set of questions printed in a definite order as proposed by Kothari (2004). The interviews were structured with a set of pre-determined questions and adhered to the order and wording of the questions as well as the instructions.

3.7.2 Secondary Data Collection

In the secondary data collection method, past literature was reviewed with the aim of obtaining relevant information for the study. This was obtained from research reports, performance review reports and policy documents, internet, use of text books and review of other existing materials. This method was preferred because it is a cost effective method of data collection.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using the questionnaire designed in a face to face interview format. This was because of the limited time and resources that was available.

3.9 Data Reliability

A major concern of data unreliability emanated from sampling errors inherent in the snowballing technique as well as the time elapsed from defection date to data collection. Defectors were less willing to provide accurate information to interviewers during the initial days immediately following their return from the LRA.

Interviewer bias was dealt with through incorporating a structured as well as contingency questionnaire section while the reliability coefficient arising from time spent by defector outside the LRA can be computed from previous debriefing reports for random samples drawn for interviews conducted immediately upon return and those of over one year after return using the Kuder and Richardson formula (Zaiontz, 2014).

3.10 Data Validity

It is important to note that several external factors beyond the scope of this study are likely to affect the validity of results.

Notably, the generalizability of research findings is limited to mid and low ranking LRA members and include neither the senior commanders (ICC indicted) of the force nor members of South Sudanese origin for the simple reason that the sample population does not contain these members.

The cumulative effect of defections on the remainder of the group is also likely to affect the validity of these results in predicting the behaviour of remnants of the group. It is likely that as long-term members leave the LRA, the remainder may be incrementally harder to persuade to leave due to the principle of diminishing returns. Conversely, the defections could increasingly



discourage the remainder of the group from staying on – potentially leading to an increased defection momentum. Both of these anticipated effects could potentially affect data validity

3.11 Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data was collected, sorted, arranged, entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) which was used to summarize the coded data to produce required statistics for the study. The data was then analyzed basing on quantitative research techniques in line with the research questions to seek for consistency, accuracy, reliability and relevancy of the information. Uni-variate analysis was conducted using the frequency distribution table to assess and describe the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as their age, gender, duration in captivity, nationality, etc. Descriptive statistics was employed for other variables that are of particular interest to the study for a clearer presentation and measurement of responses. Bi-variate analysis was utilized to identify patterns of associations between the independent and dependent variables. The study propositions were tested using cross tabulations and the chi-square statistical technique. The chi-square is a non-parametric statistical technique used in testing association between two variables. The technique was used in testing the study propositions because the variables involved were largely categorical measured on nominal and ordinal scales.

At multivariate level, factor analysis was used to obtain the most influential variables towards defection.



4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings with regard to the objective and discussion of the study. The findings are presented in percentages, frequency distributions, mean and chi-square values (p-values). A total of 125 questionnaires were issued out against a targeted minimum sample size of 181. The completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Of the 125 questionnaires issued out, 20 were declared invalid while 94 were completed correctly. This represented a response rate of 52%.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

TIME OF JOINING AGAINST FREQUENCY

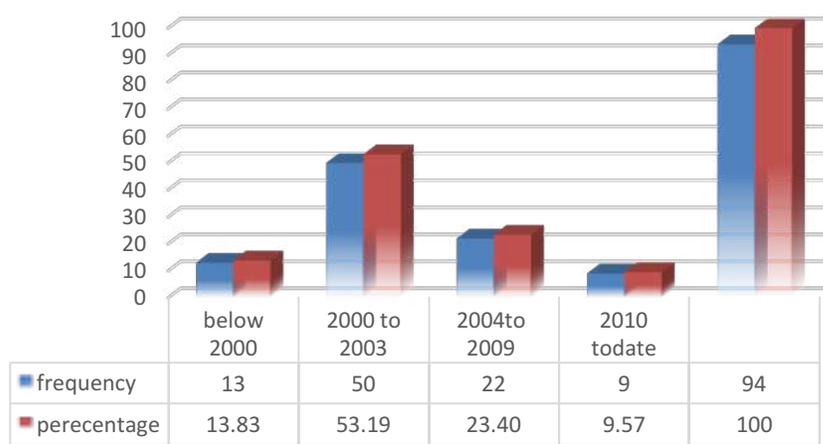


Figure 4-1 Time of joining the rebel group

Results in Figure 4-1 above show that 53.2% of the respondents had joined the LRA between 2000 to 2003, 23.4% between 2004 to 2009, 13.8% joined before the year 2000 and only 9.6% of the respondents had joined from 2010 to date. The results showed that more individuals were recruited in the rebel activities between 2000 to 2003 and the numbers reduced significantly thereafter.

Gender Distribution

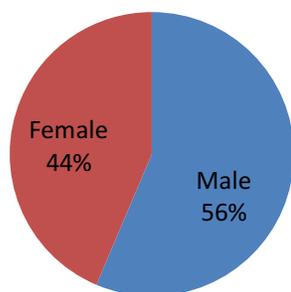


Figure 4-2 Gender distribution of respondents

Findings in Figure 4-2 above show that majority (56%) of the respondents were male and only 44% of them were female.



Age Distribution

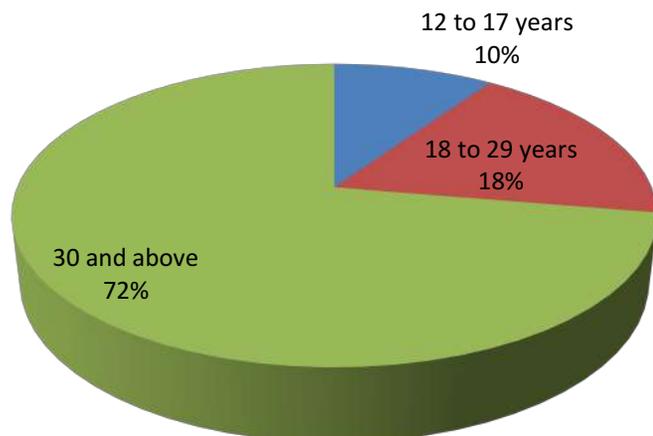


Figure 4-3 Age distribution of respondents

Results from Figure 4-3 above show that majority of the respondents (72%) were between 30 years and above, 18% were between 18 to 29 years, and 10% of them were between 12 to 17 years.

Year of Defection

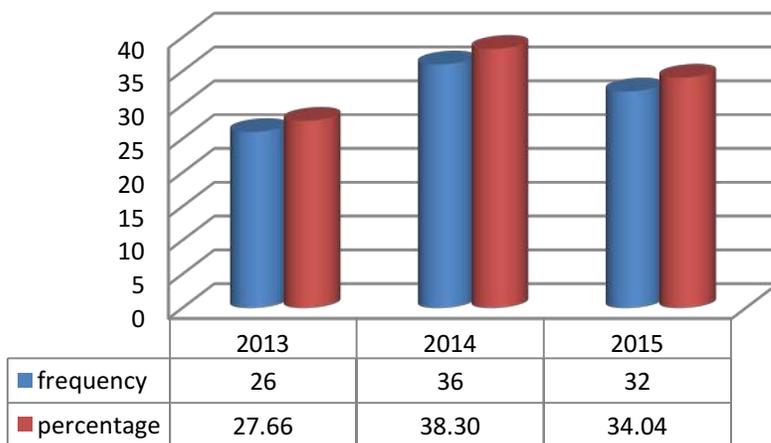


Figure 4-4 Year of defection

Findings in Figure 4-4 above showed that 38.3% of the respondents defected in the year 2014, 34.0% defected in 2015, and 27.7% in the year 2013.



Time spent in the bush

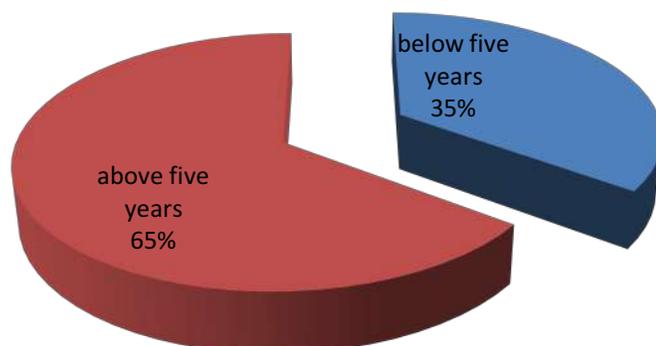


Figure 4-5 Length of time spent with group

Findings in Figure 4-5 above show that majority (65%) of the respondents had spent more than 5 years in the bush before defecting with the rest (35%) of the defectors having spent less than 5 years in the bush.

Manner of return

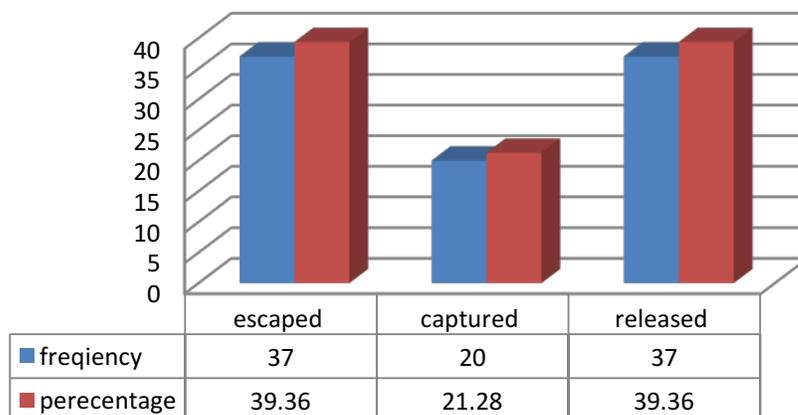


Figure 4-6 Manner of return

Results in Figure 4-6 above show that 39.4% of the respondents had escaped from the LRA, 39.4% had been released voluntarily, while 21.3% were captured by security forces.



Mode of escape

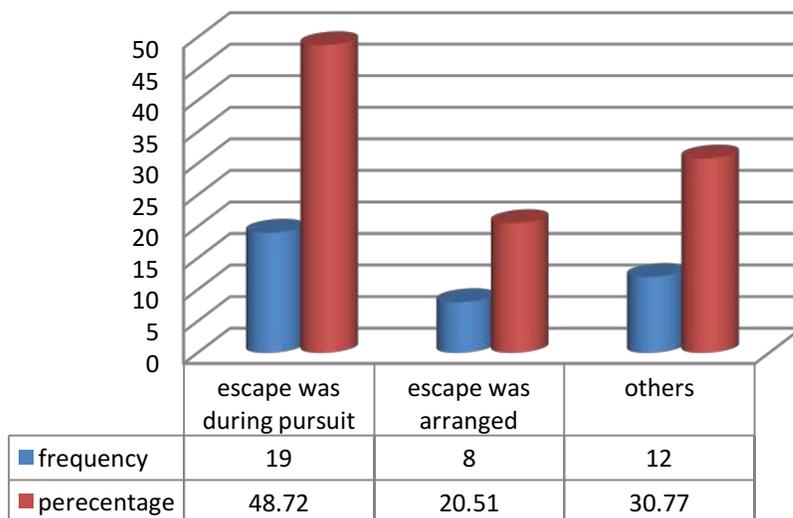


Figure 4-7 Mode of escape

Results in Figure 4-7 above show that majority (48.7%) of the respondents had used military confrontations as opportunities to escape, 20.5% escaped with the help of community members, and 30.8% escaped using other means.

4.3 Factors Preventing Defection (pushback factors)

Table 4.1 Factors preventing defection (pushback factors)

Factor	Mean	Standard deviation
Fear of rejection upon returning home	3.564	1.52
Fear of being harmed/ killed by hostile groups during escape	3.98	1.26
Fear of being harmed or killed by LRA during escape	4.20	1.23
Uncertain livelihood options upon returning home	3.77	1.17
Fear of court prosecution upon returning home	3.32	1.75

Source: primary data, 2015

Results in the Table 4.1 show that on average (mean=3.564, SD=1.52) of the respondents could not defect because of fear of being rejected upon returning home. There was fear of being harmed or killed by hostile groups during escape (mean=3.98, SD=1.26). Fear of being killed by LRA during escape acted as an obstacle for one to defect (mean=4.20, SD=1.23). On average (mean=3.77, SD=1.17) uncertain livelihood options upon returning home was seen as an inhibiting factor towards defection from the bush. Respondents would not defect from the bush because of the uncertain livelihood options upon returning home. On average (mean=3.32, SD=1.75) respondents could not defect because of fear of court prosecution upon returning home.



Table 4.2 Association between defection and pushback factors

Factor	Kendall's tau-b correlation (r)	p-value
Fear of rejection upon returning home	-0.2718	0.0363
Fear of being harmed or killed by hostile groups during escape	0.0000	0.5424
Fear of being harmed or killed by LRA during escape	-0.1148	0.0087
Uncertain livelihood options upon returning home	-0.1252	0.0043
Fear of court prosecution upon returning home	-0.1802	0.0004

Source: primary data, 2015

Results from



Table 4.2 above show that there was a negative relationship between defection from the bush and fear of being rejected upon returning home. The findings were significant at 0.036 level of significance ($r=-0.2718$, $p=0.0363<0.05$). This implied that the more rebels feared to be rejected upon returning home the less they defected.

There was no significant association between defection from the bush and fear of being harmed or killed by hostile groups during escape.

Results further show that fear of being harmed or killed by LRA during escape had a negative association with defection from the bush ($r=-0.1148$, $p=0.0087<0.05$). This implied that the more the fear to be killed by LRA upon escape, the less the defection chances. This is in agreement with Cakaj (2011) who argues that the fear of death originates from the ability of the LRA group to pursue and execute escaping members. In the same study, he provides an account of a defector whose wife and child were not as lucky in escaping with him. Unlike the defector, his child was killed during the attempted defection and his wife apprehended. In this regard, military confrontations provide opportunities for intending defectors to escape with reduced risk of being pursued by the LRA.

There was a negative relationship between uncertain livelihood options upon returning home and defecting from the bush. This implies that respondents who were concerned of uncertain livelihood options upon returning home stayed in the bush longer than those who never had such concerns. ($r=-0.1252$, $p=0.0043<0.05$). Findings were in agreement with Conciliation Resources and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) who argued that it was vitally important in 2005 for the LRA to be convinced about opportunities for better livelihoods after defection.

Fear of court prosecution upon returning home had a negative relationship with defection ($r=-0.1802$, $p=0.0004<0.05$). This implied that the more fear someone had about being prosecuted upon returning home, the less are their chances of defecting. The findings were in agreement with Conciliation Resources and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) who argued that the promise of amnesty from prosecution of LRA defectors by the Ugandan government ranked as the most compelling factor towards their decision to demobilize voluntarily.



4.4 Factors contributing to defection of LRA rebels (Pull-out factors)

Table 4.3 Factors contributing to defection (pull-out factors)

Factor	Mean	Standard deviation
Military confrontation	4.24	1.29
Fear of being harmed/killed by hostile groups	3.9	1.3
Fear of being harmed/killed by LRA	4.15	1.22
Uncertain source of livelihood in the bush	3.97	1.15
Removal social benefits	3.17	1.75

Source: primary data, 2015

Results from the Table 4.3 above show that on average (mean=4.24, SD=1.29) military confrontations have led to defections. Findings further show that fear of being harmed/killed by hostile groups is one of the pull-out factors leading to LRA defections (mean=3.9, SD=1.3). On average (mean=4.15, SD=1.22) fear of being killed by LRA is a pull-out factor positively influencing defections. When there is existence of uncertain source of livelihood in the bush, on average (mean=3.97, SD=1.15) rebels tend to defect. Therefore, uncertain source of livelihood in the bush is a pull-out factor towards defection. On average (mean=3.17, SD=1.75) rebels defected because of removal of social benefits like entertain.

Table 4.4 Association between defection and pull-out factors

Factors	Kendall's taub correlation (r)	P values
Military confrontation	0.2390	0.051
Fear of being harmed/killed by hostile groups	0.2488	0.006
Fear of being harmed/killed by LRA	0.2205	0.054
Uncertain source of livelihood in the bush	0.466	0.0095
Removal social benefits	0.3475	0.0089

Source: primary data, 2015

Findings from the Table 4.4 above show that there was a positive relationship between military confrontation and defection from the bush ($r=0.239$, $p=0.051 \approx 0.05$). Implying that whenever there was a military confrontation more defections occurred among the LRA rebels.

There was a positive relationship between fear of being harmed/killed by hostile groups and defection ($r=0.2488$, $p=0.006 < 0.05$). The implication was that whenever a rebel had fears of being harmed/killed by hostile groups, it increased his/her chances of defecting from the bush.

Fear of being killed by LRA increased the chances of defection by a rebel - implying that rebels who had fears of being killed by LRA (in non-escape situations) were more likely to defect than those who felt no fear of being killed by LRA.

There was a strong positive relationship between uncertain sources of livelihood in the bush and defection ($r=0.466$, $p=0.0095 < 0.05$). The LRA members were uncertain about their source of livelihood, the higher their chances for defection.

A positive relationship exists between removal of social benefits and defection ($r=0.3475$, $p=0.0089 < 0.05$).

Table 4.5 Factor analysis for pushback factors

Factor	Egenvalues	Differences	Proportions
Fear of rejection upon return	1.22234	0.70201	1.8023
Fear of hostile groups during escape	0.52032	0.22032	0.3415
Fear of LRA during escape	0.3	0.4706	0.1969
Uncertain livelihood upon return	-0.1706	0.17799	-0.1120
Fear of court prosecution	-0.34859	0.000	-0.2288

Source: primary data, 2015



LR test: independent vs. saturated: $\chi^2(10) = 80.83$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

Results from Table 4.5 above show that fear of rejection and fear of court prosecutions are secondary push factors to uncertain livelihood options upon returning home, fear of being killed by hostile groups during escape and fear of being killed by LRA during escape. This implies that the two factors can be explained within the three main pull factors that prevent respondents from defecting. This was attributed to fact that the three factors, namely: uncertain livelihood options upon returning home, fear of being killed by hostile groups, and fear of being killed by LRA during escape all have positive egen values compared to negative egen values by the other two factors. The results were significant at 0.05 level of significance since the p-value of 0.0000 is less 0.05. The above results can be further explained by loading plot that explains the most influential pull factor leading to less defection.

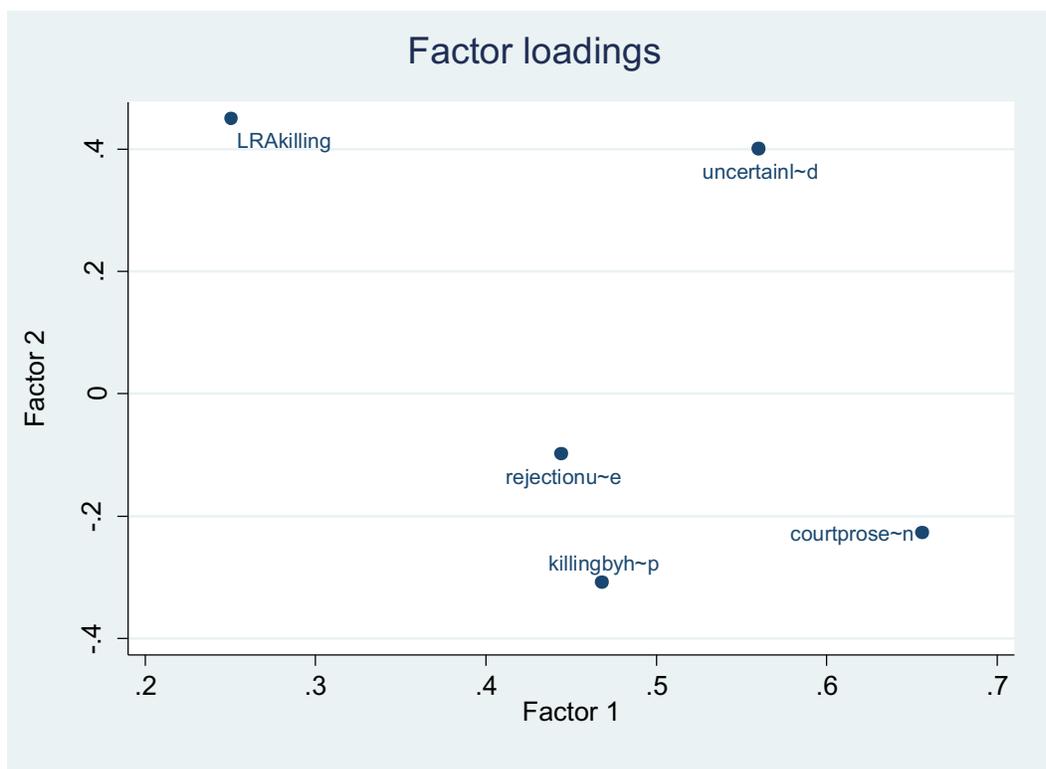


Figure 4-8 Factor loadings for pushback factors

From graph above fear of being killed by LRA during escape is the most influential factor preventing rebels from defecting. It was closely followed by uncertain livelihood options upon returning home.

Of marginal influences are the fear of rejection upon returning home, fear of court prosecution upon returning, and fear of being killed by other hostile groups during defection.

Table 4.6 Factor analysis for pull-out factors

Factor	Egen values	Differences	Proportions
Military confrontation	2.63312	2.5088	1.0911
Risk of being killed by other hostile groups	0.12432	0.14826	0.0515
Fear of being killed by the LRA	-0.02394	0.11779	-0.0099
Uncertain source of livelihood in the bush	-0.14173	0.03681	-0.0587
Removal of social benefits	-0.17854	0.000	-0.0740

Source: primary data, 2015

LR test: independent vs. saturated: $\chi^2(10) = 197.21$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.000$



From Table 4.6 above, results show that fear of being killed by the LRA, uncertain source of livelihood in the bush and removal of social benefits were secondary push factors which could lead to defection from the bush.

This is because they had eigen values that were negative compared to three primary factors that lead to defection from the bush of; military confrontation, and risk of being killed by hostile groups. This implied that most respondents defected because of fear of being killed by hostile groups and others defected during military confrontation. The above findings were significant at 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.000 < 0.05$).

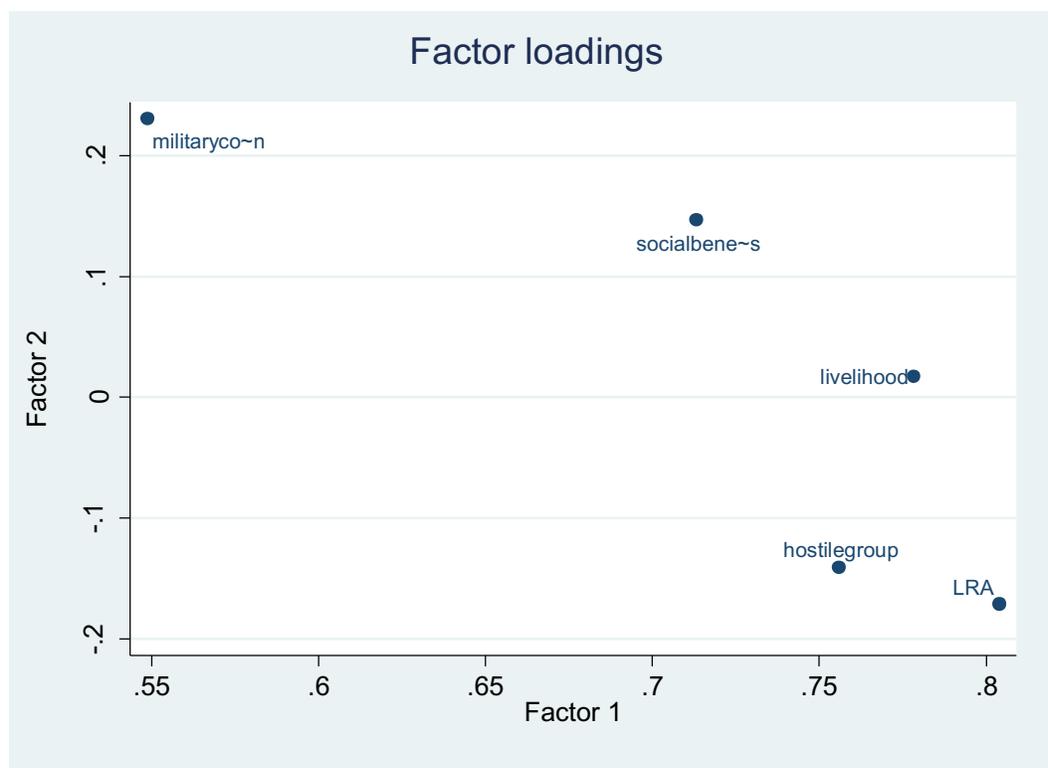


Figure 4-9 Factor loadings for pull-out factors

From the of graph above military confrontation, risk of being killed by other hostile groups, fear being killed by LRA, uncertain source of livelihood in the bush, and removal of social benefits each influence defections to various degrees.

It can be seen from the figure above that military confrontation is the most influential factor in causing defection, followed by removal of social benefits and then the uncertainty of livelihood in the bush. The risk of being killed by other hostile groups and the fear of being killed by LRA (for reasons other than because of defection attempts) led to fewer defections as compared to other factors.

The above findings were in agreement with Conversely, Cakaj (2011) who argues that the fear of death originates from the ability of the LRA group to pursue and execute escaping members. In the same study, he provides an account of a defector whose wife and child were not as lucky in escaping with him. Unlike the defector, his child was killed during the attempted defection and his wife apprehended. Although the dread of being killed may be applied both as an incentive as well as a disincentive towards defection, there's agreement in the fact that military confrontations provide opportunities for intending defectors to escape with reduced risk of being pursued by the LRA thereby obtaining a net positive effect on defections.



5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the findings, as well as the study limitations, in line with the study objectives of;

- a) assessing the pull-out factors influencing the defection of long-term LRA elements,
- b) assessing the pushback factors inhibiting defection of long-term LRA elements,
- c) suggesting explanations for the recent trends of low defection rates, and
- d) proposing recommendations for counter-LRA strategies among actors and sponsors.

5.2 Summary of findings

5.2.1 Pushback factors contributing against defection of long-term LRA elements

Findings showed that LRA rebels were less likely to defect mainly because of the following factors:

- 1) fear of being killed by LRA during escape,
- 2) the fear of court prosecution, and
- 3) uncertain livelihood options upon returning home.

Of less significance in preventing LRA defections were the following factors in descending order:

- 4) fear to be rejected upon returning home,
- 5) fear of being killed by other hostile groups during escape.

The above pushback factors both separately and collectively impacted negatively on the decision to defect by an LRA member between 2013 and 2016, and hence increased the duration of life in the bush.

Some of the findings were in agreement with Conciliation Resources and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) study. Specifically, the previous study obtained that it was vitally important in 2005 for the LRA to be convinced about opportunities for better livelihoods after defection.

Of note from the present study is the fact that fear of rejection upon returning home, and fear of other hostile groups during escape played less of a defection deterrent factor than in 2005. This is likely due to the success of defection-messaging efforts by local communities as well as international organisations during the study period including:

- the increased direct engagement by local communities in encouraging and coordinating defections
- the sustained distribution, through various communication mediums, of nuanced content from local community leaders and defectors in LRA-affected regions including from northern Uganda.

5.2.2 Pull-out factors contributing towards defection of long-term LRA elements

Findings showed that the following factors contributed positively to LRA defections:

- 1) Military confrontation
- 2) Removal of social privileges (e.g. wife, demotion, etc.)
- 3) Uncertain source of livelihood in the bush



These were arguably the most compelling factors causing defections with military confrontations contributing about 50%.

To a lesser degree:

- 4) the risk of being killed by other hostile groups in the community, and
- 5) the fear of eventually being killed by the LRA for reasons other than attempted escape

were the least influential factors in causing defections. However, these factors would contribute a net positive influence on defections when supported by military pressure. This is further explained below.

Cakaj (2011) argued that the fear of death originated from the ability of the LRA group to pursue and execute escaping members. In the same study, he provides an account of a defector whose wife and child were not as lucky in escaping with him. Unlike the defector, his child was killed during the attempted defection and his wife apprehended. Although the dread of being killed may be applied both as an incentive as well as a disincentive towards defection, there's agreement among respondents in the fact that military confrontations provide opportunities for intending defectors to escape with reduced risk of being pursued by the LRA thereby obtaining a net positive effect on defections.

Military confrontation by regional governments and other forces with the rebels therefore provided opportunities for LRA members, who had already made the decision to defect prior, to activate their escape.

Respondents were also more likely to defect because their social privileges had been withdrawn for one reason or another. This usually took the form of removal of a member's wife and children, or demotion where younger fighters were appointed over a more senior one.

Uncertain source of livelihood while in the bush was the third most influential factor contributing to defection. This was probably most manifested in 2013 when the first targeted operations by security forces destroyed LRA farms in DRC and CAR prompting a series of defections and mass releases of women and children.

Overall, pull-out factors impacted positively on the decision to defect by an LRA member and hence reduction in the number of years spent in the bush.

In contrast to the Conciliation Resources, and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (2006) study, which determined that many rebels defected because they risked being killed/harmed by other hostile groups while in the bush, this study established that the fear of other hostile community groups was not a major defection influencer. This was possibly due to investments made in the constructive participation of local community groups including CDCs and CLPs.

5.2.3 Association between pushback factors and defection

Pushback factors had a significant negative relationship with defection from the bush. **Fear of being killed by LRA during escape, fear of court prosecution, and uncertain source of livelihood upon returning home** were the most influential factors preventing rebels from defecting.

5.2.4 Association between pull-out factors and defection

Pull-out factors had a significant positive relationship with defection from the bush. Many rebels defected because of three main pull-out factors, i.e. **military confrontation, removal of social benefits, and uncertain source of livelihood while in the bush.**



5.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.3.1 Fear of being killed by LRA during escape

The study established that the 'fear of being apprehended and killed during escape' remained as one of the most influential factors preventing LRA defections. Members who feared being recaptured and killed during escape were three times less likely to defect than those who did not.

This fear was mostly propagated by the belief that the LRA leader possessed spiritual powers that enabled him to supernaturally perceive the thoughts of other rebels.

Recommendation 1: Creatively use defection messaging to demystify Joseph Kony's supernatural abilities among combatants

While it has been obtained that the LRA will often kill members apprehended while attempting an escape as a means to deter further defections, the alleged ability of the LRA leader to supernaturally predict the thoughts and actions of his followers has exacerbated this fear and therefore contributed further to inhibiting defections.

It is therefore proposed, for defection messaging, to creatively demystify Joseph Kony's ability to read minds or discern the whereabouts of defecting members. This can be done by providing evidence to active LRA members that a number of their colleagues successfully left the bush and are alive and well back home.

While repeat appearances on radio talk shows by defected members of the LRA may serve this purpose incrementally, it has been suggested that live talk shows with a call-in option may be more compelling. This would specifically put to rest the notion that the radio broadcasts voices belong to individuals who have long been executed.

Additionally, defection messaging needs to incorporate recent and older defectors on the same show.

These adjustments to defection messaging can hopefully eliminate an important psychological hindrance to defection.

5.3.2 Fear of court prosecution

The second most compelling reason, according to this study, inhibiting LRA defections, is the concern defectors harbor towards their likelihood of court prosecution upon surrender.

This may have originated from a general lack of information to defectors and/or unclear legal fate awaiting defectors - including but not limited to the scope and jurisdiction of local, national, and international courts.

Unfortunately, all LRA-affected countries except Uganda have not articulated a decent legal framework to address the fate of LRA defectors. In the specific case of Uganda where an amnesty law was enacted and has been in force for several years now, there's not sufficient clarity on the eligibility needs to access this amnesty. Defection messaging has often had the dilemma of how to communicate to combatants persuasively without risking to lose credibility which could arise if defector's expectations were not subsequently met.

For instance, unconfirmed field accounts suggest that some LRA combatants are stuck in the bush – having delinked from their main group for the purpose of defecting - but never having actually surrendered due to the fear of prosecution. Such a group may be one previously associated with Dominic Ongwen - now in The Hague standing trial for at least 70 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during his time with the LRA in northern Uganda.

Another case likely contributing to the LRA's lack of confidence in the legal processes involves Thomas Kwoyelo – a former LRA combatant - who had been issued an amnesty certificate in



Uganda but was arraigned in court by the same government to answer to charges for crimes allegedly committed during his time in the bush.

With no deliberate effort by regional governments to provide information to potential defectors on their eligibility for amnesty or on a clear legal path awaiting their fate, the LRA leadership have not spared the opportunity to further misinform the rank and file to the detriment of defection proponents.

Champions of defection messaging are hence hesitant to encourage defections in light of the unclear legal processes they would be leading defectors into.

Recommendation 2: Clarify legal processes to be followed by defectors and conduct outreach activities to inform all relevant stakeholders about the legal processes involved in reintegrating former LRA members

In order to mitigate against the negative effects of a poorly implemented and communicated legal framework to handle defections, each affected country must clarify and communicate the actual requirements that defectors need to undertake in order to settle back into community. These options then need to be clearly communicated to intending defectors to enable them make an informed decision. The consistency of what is communicated before defection and what the reality is post-defection will influence LRA members' ability to establish trust with defection facilitating groups.

The International Crimes Division (ICD) of the High Court of Uganda, the Amnesty Commission (AC), and the International Criminal Court (ICC) – to mention but a few – ought to invest in disseminating accurate and timely information to all relevant stakeholders regarding the legal goings on.

Further to this, the various legal parties involved need to coordinate better to prevent occurrences such as the double trial of Kwoyelo which only serves to discredit the system in the eyes of potential defectors.

5.3.3 Uncertain source of livelihood upon returning home

LRA defections are still heavily influenced by the concern defectors harbor towards their uncertain source of livelihood upon returning home. It may be argued that the LRA in 2016 is a group managed without a compelling political ideology that would otherwise incentivize the members around a sustained rebellion. All indications to-date suggest a force whose leadership's key essence of staying in the bush is mere survival. This presents an important window of opportunity for accelerated demobilization.

Comparisons between livelihood opportunities subsequent to defection and the current circumstances in the bush therefore become key determinants of the decision by an LRA member to defect.

If a member determines that their livelihood is substantially better subsequent to leaving the bush, they are more likely to gravitate towards defecting. The reverse is true. Furthermore, this finding places a considerable burden upon long term reintegration as a mechanism to break the cycle of conflict. A defector in central Africa is more likely to choose armed rebellion as a long term livelihood option should they find life after defection to be unbearable. Indeed, cases of repeat membership among rebel movements abound CAR, DRC, and SS, but these are beyond the scope of this study.

Among LRA women, their non defection was also substantially associated with the fear of the livelihood of their children either upon their collective return home as in the case above, or when their children remained with the group after the mother's escape. For this reason, a mother was likely to choose to stay in the bush for the sake of their child(ren) even if they were encountered with a safe opportunity to defect alone.



Recommendation 3: Invest in the long-term economic, social, and psychological reintegration of defectors upon their return home

Active LRA members have various channels through which to obtain information about life back home from their interactions with community members as well as come home messaging through radio or fliers. For this reason, group members are able to have an understanding regarding how post-defection life compares with pre-defection life from a livelihood perspective.

Targeting a holistic (economic, social, psychological, and physical health) and sustained reintegration of former LRA members within a supportive community setting presents the best way to implement defection aftercare and hopefully convince undecided LRA members to abandon the bush. However, such deliberate support is thin on the ground.

In the case of northern Uganda where there has been a comparative advantage in the overall reintegration response, several initiatives including PRDP, NUSAF have mostly served the wider community without integrating the unique challenges faced by returnees as well. In attempting to uphold interventions that do not isolate or stigmatize FAPs, it appears that these initiatives have ignored the distinctive challenges faced by defectors altogether!

Previously successful models such as the Self Help Group (SHG) model which utilizes a very light financial investment footprint, engages the local community support structure, as well as prioritizes the development of new returnees into positive community contributors is proposed. The progress of former LRA members must be deliberately monitored and supported within the context of the wider group performance.

Recommendation 4: Establish consortia of local and regional organizations working with government agencies to ensure coordinated reintegration activities and shared capacity

In order to navigate through the wide expanse of ground needed to be covered by reintegration activities in CAR, DRC, SS, and Uganda, there's need to organize resources around civil society organizations in order to effectively leverage capacities around the identification of target groups, utilization of localized and tacit knowledge, and the use of unique organizational capacities.

The issue of coordination arises from the lack of documentation about beneficiaries of previous reintegration services and hence the risk of duplication of efforts. Some organizations which the author contacted during this study were not willing to share reintegration data for confidentiality reasons. Therefore, line government departments ought to assume a more active coordination role aided by their respective supervisory mandates to ensure that necessary data on returnees is compiled and centralized for purposes of a more effective response from stakeholders.

In areas with low government administrative and governance presence – e.g. eastern CAR, the UN and AU need to assume a more active role of coordination among actors to prevent duplication of efforts.

5.3.4 Military pressure

By far, military confrontation was the most influential pull-out factor contributing to the defection of LRA members between 2013 and 2016.

This happened primarily in two contexts:

- a) By creating pressure or anxiety during pursuit
- b) Through creating opportunities for LRA members to defect during confrontations

By implication, occurrences of low defection rates can be traced to low activity or limitation in reach by security forces in LRA areas of operation. The AU-RTF contingents that have historically been effective in tracking and engaging LRA groups may have experienced a waning ability to access LRA hotspots in the region including Bas Uele in DRC, Haut Kotto and Vakaga in CAR, and the Kafia Kingi enclave of the Sudans.



Alternatively, reduced LRA defection rates may be as a result of LRA activity having migrated away from areas experiencing the most military presence. Indeed, more LRA activity was observed in the DRC where there's a very limited engagement by a poorly facilitated FARDC contingent operating under a loose AU leadership. Moreover, other LRA groups have been reported to be active further east and north in CAR outside the easy reach of the AU forces.

Where military confrontation was used effectively, it provided LRA combatants who had already made a prior defection decision with the opportunity to defect while enjoying the least risk of being apprehended by their own LRA group to be disciplined - which often included being killed - as an example to other group members who may harbor their own defection plans.

The largest volume of defections during the study period occurred in the Central African Republic where the most number of military operations have occurred by a Ugandan-led African Union force. According to reviewed LRA Crisis Tracker reports for the period under study, more LRA activity was reported to have occurred in the DRC, although fewer defections were recorded there.

As evidenced by reports from the LRA Crisis Tracker (2015) where LRA elements attacked a mining camp in Sam Ouandja as recently as November 9, 2015, the lack of protection of high-value locations continues to provide a lifeline to the remnant LRA groups who continue to trade in poached ivory and illicit minerals including gold and diamonds.

Last but not least, military presence is of significance in providing a secure environment for the expansion of the early warning radio network to unreached locations for purposes of regular and accurate reporting.

Recommendation 5: Expand the AU-RTF Area of Operations in CAR, Increase MINUSCA's LRA-related mandate, and strengthen security collaboration of both.

In order to scale up the gains made by Ugandan-led and US-aided military activities, stakeholders need to consider expanding the operating area into LRA-affected areas not currently covered by AU tracking teams or MINUSCA field locations in eastern CAR. The recent advance by the UPDF and USSF further north into Sam Ouandja is a welcome development in this regard. Consultations need to continue to explore opportunities for further expansion into presently uncovered parts of Haut Kotto and Vakaga prefectures. Additionally, a revised mandate for MINUSCA should be explored in order to ensure an increased scope in LRA-related activities.

The establishment of strategic bases in Birao, Nzako, and Bria are recommended in order to curtail the LRA's ability to benefit from trading in illicit minerals as well as increase security presence to further contribute towards stabilizing the rest of the CAR.

Recommendation 6: Expand the reach of Early Warning System to unreported areas and integrate community focal points into EWS feedback mechanisms.

The installation of HF radios in remote communities remains - for the most part - the only mechanism for communities to promptly report with each other, security actors, and humanitarian actors on LRA activity. To-date, several of these radio sets have been established, and community members trained in its use, by Invisible Children and Catholic Relief Services in CAR and DRC.

Originally established by the Catholic Church in DRC as a mechanism for diocesan communication, the radio sets were to be later adopted as a security Early Warning System (EWS) by community members supported by humanitarian actors. To-date, the functionality of the EWS has expanded into emergency health, livelihood, and social service utilities.

It is therefore recommended that the EWS network is established to saturate LRA-activity hotspots further north and northwest of currently networked communities of eastern CAR, as well



as along busy axes of Bas Uele in DRC. Furthermore, improvements need to be made to integrate community focal points into the feedback processes of EWS data analyses.

Recommendation 7: Establish usable major road arteries in eastern CAR to facilitate security and recovery efforts.

Up until the time of authoring this report, military and nonmilitary interventions had suffered from an overreliance on an expensive and often very limited availability of airlift capacity to deliver security and other important services to areas affected by the LRA.

In order to scale up the benefits of the AU-RTF and USSF efforts, as well as those of a handful local and international NGO's operating in the region, a crucial role may be identified for capable partners such as MINUSCA to spearhead the rehabilitation of main trunk roads in eastern CAR to be linked with the capital in Bangui as well as other feeder roads to security and commercial centers in South Sudan and DRC.

These roads are a necessity for the performance of administrative functions by the respective governments in the affected regions as well.

Furthermore, consideration ought to be made in the long-term maintenance of roads in DRC to keep them in usable state to continue supporting recovery efforts there.

Recommendation 8: Protect high-value mineral and ivory locations from LRA attacks

Utilizing a concerted approach of military pressure and CSO capacity to protect high-value mineral and ivory locations is specifically recommended in order to further curtail the LRA's livelihood options as well as other armed insurgents and mercenaries.

Numerous reports have indicated the ongoing LRA survival strategy to include the poaching of ivory in elephant habitats of Garamba Game Reserve (DRC) and Chinko Nature Reserve (CAR), as well as the trading in illicit minerals sourced from artisanal mining locations including but not limited to Sam Ouandja and Nzako in CAR. It is understood from previous studies and field consultations that the threat against wildlife and illicit mineral trafficking goes beyond the LRA.

The sheer geographical expanse of the LRA's area of operation, the prevailing low human resource capacity, and the difficult terrain make a blanket security cover unviable in LRA-affected areas. A more strategic approach is suggested to protect locations upon which the LRA rely for economic and military survival. These include the Garamba Game and Chinko Nature Reserves due to their elephant ivory and food farming significance, as well as Nzako and Sam Ouandja due to their role in being a source of gold and diamond supplies to the LRA.

Ensuring that the AU-RTF contingent are working with local leaders and communities to protect these locations needs to be explored. At the time of authoring this report, the AU-RTF had established a base in Sam Ouandja but was not yet able to secure the location enough to prevent LRA raids upon the mines including on December 2nd 2015² and thereafter.

It is believed that securing these locations will limit the extent to which LRA and other armed groups can benefit from these resources from a livelihood and arms resupply standpoint hence further increasing pressure internally within the group to defect in search for more viable livelihood opportunities back home.

In addressing the protection of these high-value locations, accountability mechanisms must be put in place in light of past allegations of resource plunder by some national and regional forces.

² LRA attack incident in which twelve persons were abducted 45km southwest of Sam Ouandja, by the LRA Crisis Tracker.



Recommendation 9: Expand the reach of secure defection locations, and build the capacity of the local communities to receive LRA defectors.

The expansion of the AU-RTF AOP should serve the dual purpose of increasing military pressure to propel defections as well as creating secure reporting locations free of hostile groups that may undertake retaliatory attacks against escaping LRA members.

Once military pressure has created the necessary opportunity for a combatant or other LRA member to defect, the question then arises of the ease with which to safely reach a secure defection location to avoid the otherwise fatal outcome in case of recapture.

Such a decision would be made easier if the opportunity to defect occurred within close proximity to a safe reporting site manned by forces trusted by LRA.

In the case of locations very distant from functional safe reporting sites, including Birao, and Ouadda in CAR, or Bas Uele in DRC, it is conceivable that the lack of secure defection locations in close proximity may have inhibited potential defection opportunities especially for ‘foreign’ defectors. Indeed, a substantial number of Ugandan defectors indicated the ‘long distance from home’ as being the most influential reason causing them to stay in the bush longer.

The distance between current defection sites in the southeast of CAR and LRA settlements in the Kafia Kingi enclave in the northeast, means that defectors would need to trek several hundreds of kilometers in order to access a secure surrender site. This may have resulted in several failed defection initiatives possibly ending up in re-entry of defected members or even entire LRA groups. A case in point is a large group – according to Cakaj (2015) - who reportedly expressed the desire to defect at the wake of the Dominic Ongwen defection in January of 2015. To-date, their whereabouts have not been confirmed.

Once identified, safe defection sites ought to have sufficient security to prevent the opportunity for reprisal attacks by the LRA leadership. There’s also need to continue advertising the existence of these sites to potential defectors.

Establishing additional safe reporting sites beyond the current coverage would mitigate such obstacles and hopefully contribute to increasing the defection rates.

Recommendation 10: Install locally operated FM radio stations in secure defection sites

The proliferation of SW and locally operated FM radios delivering defection-targeted broadcast programming has arguably been the most disruptive assault against the LRA-propaganda machinery with obvious benefits spanning beyond defection.

Foremost, the radios provide necessary programming for sensitization aimed towards converting an otherwise hostile community into defection allies.

Secondly, the radios are used by local communities to persuade LRA members to defect.

In a recent collaboration between Invisible Children and ANCHOR, Radio Mela was installed in Sam Ouandja in mid November 2015. To-date, a number of defections have already been actualized that can be attributed to the project – most notably of Okot Odek, a former bodyguard to the LRA leader.

5.3.5 Removal of social benefits

The study findings established that the removal of social benefits from middle to low ranking LRA members is the second most influential factor contributing to defections. It is now a widely reported fact from defector accounts that, as the LRA gets weaker, Joseph Kony – its leader - has resorted to trusting fewer and fewer members of the group with responsibility. Additionally, this paranoia has led to the continuing narrowing of the group leader’s circle of trust towards his immediate family with his sons consolidating their positions of responsibility in key areas of operations previously allocated to very senior commanders. This ad-hoc reassignment of



leadership responsibility to younger group members at the expense of the older commanders continues to provoke disgruntlement among the rank and file. Cakaj (2015) supports this view and reports of a plummeting group morale having arguably reached an all time low in July 2015 leading to the unprecedented mutiny and an attempt at the assassination of the LRA group leader by seven of his former bodyguards during their successful escape³.

Recommendation 11: Utilize defection messaging to manipulate internal tensions within LRA

The ongoing disgruntlement among LRA members presents a very unique opportunity that ought to be harnessed in order to creatively increase internal tensions between leadership and lower cadres of the LRA needed to further provoke defections.

This must be done using targeted messaging to counter all false communication from the LRA leadership to LRA members which can be updated from the most recent defector debriefing notes regularly.

Caution must be taken to ensure that such messaging does not unnecessarily expose broadcast-hosting communities towards retaliatory attacks by LRA groups. This can be obtained through locating FM radio stations only at sites that have sufficient security by AU-RTF contingents or a mandated and equipped UN force.

Alternatively, utilizing SW radio stations such as the UBC red channel broadcasting from central Uganda and out of the LRA's reach is recommended.

5.3.6 Uncertain source of livelihood while in the bush

The study obtained that LRA members were more likely to defect because of livelihood hardships experienced in the bush. For this reason, it is utterly of importance that active LRA members obtain a positive perception of the options of livelihood at home whose recommendations have already been discussed under subsection 5.3.3 above.

5.3.7 Risk of being killed by hostile groups

To a less significant degree, LRA members are defecting in order to evade the risk of being killed by the various community and other armed groups. The central African (DRC and CAR) LRA-affected region is also littered with several hostile communities and other armed groups. These include the Janjaweed militias, Mbororo nomadic cattle herders of the Fulani origin, South Sudanese poachers, Chadian militias, and several Seleka factions – to mention but a few.

As the LRA becomes weaker in strength, their ability to outfight or defend themselves in a very wide expanse of treacherous jungle becomes slimmer by every defection of a long-term member. Interestingly, the study has established that this fact has not contributed significantly to the decision of LRA members to defect.

This finding is concerning because of the likelihood that LRA groups may be opting to migrate to lower risk locations, including the Kafia Kingi enclave, Bas Uele in DRC, as well as Haut Kotto and Vakaga prefectures in CAR, instead of defecting to avoid these hostile confrontations.

Alternatively, the LRA may be strengthening an already developing symbiotic relations with other local armed groups or even integrating with local criminal gangs as a survival strategy. This could see the groups add to an already growing pool of armed militias and mercenaries destabilizing the region. The concept of LRA local-content recruitment is a new phenomenon requiring further inquiry.

Recommendation 12: Pursue diplomatic options to allow AU-RTF tracking teams access into LRA safe havens located in disputed parts of Sudan and South Sudan

More needs to be done through deploying remote sensing technology and human intelligence capabilities to compile credible evidence towards the LRA's presence in Kafia Kingi. This would

³ *Joseph Kony and mutiny in the Lord's Resistance Army*, by Ledio Cakaj



subsequently inform diplomatic endeavors by the AU Special Envoy on C-LRA with the government of Sudan and South Sudan. Joint verification teams need to be established who have unconditional access to monitor long overdue claims about the existence of LRA and Joseph Kony in areas controlled by Sudan.

Recommendation 13: Intensify community sensitization and facilitate their constructive interactions with LRA members and/or groups

After military confrontations, the second most important method by which defections were initiated is through locally arranged community means. Indeed, safe reporting sites like Mboki in CAR with very active Community Defection Committees that have been widely publicized among the LRA has registered comparatively more LRA defections in the past.

It is therefore necessary to replicate the Mboki model at new frontiers of recently secured locations such as Sam Ouandja. Further opportunities for extending this reach into current hotspots of LRA activity in Bas Uele, Haut Kotto and Vakaga should be considered where sufficient security provisions have been met.

5.4 Research Limitations.

Further inquiry is proposed to clarify a host of key issues.

5.4.1 Proximity effect of Safe Reporting Sites

This study obtained that the long distance to known safe defection locations was a deterrent to LRA defections. However, it is necessary to determine the significance of this through further investigating the relationship between 'proximity to a safe reporting site' (SRS) and 'defection rate'. This could inform the need to expand SRS locations in the area of operation.

5.4.2 Correlation between Military Activity and Defection Rates

The study determined that 'military pressure' was the most influential pull-out factor in causing LRA members to leave the bush. The researcher did not have access to data on the trend of military activity during the period. Further research therefore needs to be conducted to determine the correlation between the low defection rates observed in 2015 and military activity.

5.4.3 Low response rate

The low response rate (53%) affected the generalizability of the study findings. Obtaining a higher number of respondents would require additional resources but may also pose unnecessary safety risks to the data collectors who would need to access further deeper into the LRA area of operation.



Credits

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Appendix I: Data Collection Tool

The following key questions will be included in the two sections of interview schedule. The sequence of the questions asked is deliberate to ensure logical sequence so that questions asked do not bias subsequent ones:

Section I

- Q1: What is your gender?
A. Female B. Male
- Q2: What is your age?
A. Below 12yrs B. 12yrs – below 18yrs C. 18yrs – below 30yrs D. 30yrs +
- Q3: State your nationality
A. Ugandan B. Congolese C. Central African D. Other (specify)
- Q4: State the date of your joining the LRA (DD/MM/YYYY)
- Q5: State the date when you left the LRA (DD/MM/YYYY)
- Q6: State the location of your defection, capture, or release from the LRA
- Q7: Tick what best describes the manner of your departure from LRA below?
A. Escaped B. Captured C. Released D. Other (specify)
- Q8: In case answered (A) in Q7 above, which statement below describes the mode of your escape from the LRA?
A. Escaped during military pursuit or attack
B. Escape was arranged with help of community members (state how?)
C. Other (specify)
- Q9: In case answered (C) in Q7 above, state the possible reasons of your release. E.g. lack of food, poor health, etc.
-

Section II (Tick as appropriate)

The greatest factor(s) preventing my defection (push-back factors) from the LRA was:

- Q10: Fear of rejection upon returning home
1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
- Q11: Fear of being harmed or killed by hostile groups during escape
1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
- Q12: Fear of being harmed or killed by LRA during escape
1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
- Q13: Uncertain livelihood options upon returning home
1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
- Q14: Fear of court prosecution upon return
1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
- Q15: Other (specify)
1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree



Section III (Tick as appropriate)

The greatest factor(s) contributing to my defection (pull-out factors) from the LRA was:

Q16: Military confrontation

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

Q17: Risk of being harmed/killed by other hostile groups

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

Q18: Fear of being harmed/killed by the LRA

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

Q19: Uncertain source of livelihood in the bush

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

Q20: Removal of social benefits (e.g. wife, demotion, etc.)

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

Q21: Other (specify)

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree