



# Northern Uganda

## Faith and Action Kit



**Northern Uganda Faith and Action Kit:  
A Campaign for Lived Solidarity**  
July 2006

Dear Friend,

In the book of Genesis (4:9), Abel asks the Lord, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” And God answers with a clear yes. In the Gospel of Matthew (25:34-46), Jesus tells us further that when we care for the least of our brothers and sisters, we care for God. As people of God, we are thus called to lives of solidarity with the poor and marginalized of our world.

The Africa Faith and Justice Network has encouraged such solidarity for Africa for over 25 years. We represent hundreds of people who have either worked in Africa, are from Africa or aid Africa. On that continent, we have witnessed many crises that have put our sisters and brothers in conditions of poverty and violence. It can easily overwhelm us. But we have found our brothers and sisters tremendously resilient, and when we reach out in solidarity, hope returns. We each can make a difference. We begin by building relationships and connecting community-to-community one at a time. So we invite you to join us at AFJN and Uganda-CAN as we focus on a critical case in Uganda.

In northern Uganda, for the last twenty years, a community of people has been caught amidst a brutal war. More than 30,000 children have been abducted and forced to child soldiering. An entire society – 1.7 million people – has been displaced to the most horrid conditions in which 1,000 people are dying each week.

In a speech before the United Nations in 2004, Archbishop John Baptist Odama said, “We have lost much in this war...what is the future of the Acholi? And think of it, the LRA abducts children to fight the government that failed to protect them in the first place. We need some sanity, as we are fighting the hostages! The government fails to protect them, we as parents fail to protect them, the international community fails to protect them. No more discussion, please, this is an SOS.”

This is an SOS. It is an emergency. For too long, our world’s leaders have overlooked this crisis, preferring to maintain good diplomatic relations at the expense of dying people. Little attention and scarce resources have allowed violence to persist. This needs to stop!

Together, we, as people of faith, can condemn this silence and call for human dignity. Together, we can live and act in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Uganda, advocating for a more peaceful future. We can rekindle hope.

We have created this faith and action kit to help you and your community act now in solidarity with the people of northern Uganda. We hope and pray that you’ll join us that Archbishop Odama’s plea for help is not in vain. Act now. And thanks.

Peace.

Sincerely yours,

Rocco Puopolo, S.X.  
Executive Director, Africa Faith and Justice Network

# Northern Uganda Faith and Action Kit

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Compiled by:

Africa Faith and Justice Network ([www.AFJN.org](http://www.AFJN.org))

TURN ([www.TURNNetwork.org](http://www.TURNNetwork.org))

Uganda Conflict Action Network ([www.UgandaCAN.org](http://www.UgandaCAN.org))

## 20 Years of War in Northern Uganda

“Northern Uganda is the worst neglected humanitarian crisis in the world.”

- Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary General Humanitarian Affairs

For the past 20 years, the people of northern Uganda have been caught in the midst of a war between the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. More than 1.7 million people—eighty percent of the population—are displaced and forced to live in squalid internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. These camps remain vulnerable to attacks by the LRA. Even worse, recent reports by the Ugandan Ministry of Health and United Nations conclude that there are 1,000 excess deaths each week related to camp conditions. The camps, initially designed to protect people, have unfortunately become yet another threat.

The most horrific facet of this war is that children have been the primary victims. More than 30,000 children have been taken from their homes and abducted by the LRA, often brainwashed and coerced to become soldiers and sex slaves. Those that escape or evade abduction are still victimized by insecurity. As many as 35,000 children are forced to walk from their rural homes to sleep in town centers to avoid violence and abduction. Known as “night commuters,” they remain extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.



In addition to producing this deplorable humanitarian and human rights crisis, the ongoing conflict is increasingly a cause of instability throughout the region. The LRA has expanded its area of operations deeper into southern Sudan and, for the first time, into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) displacing more people and adding to the overall instability of the Great Lakes Region.

Amidst LRA terror, the Ugandan government has not put forth the necessary resources or political will to end the war. The dominant military approach has been inadequate to meet the comprehensive needs of peace. The government has failed to protect its population in the north, while successfully dissuading the United Nations Security Council from taking action. The Security Council has remained largely silent on the issue, entrenching the status quo of suffering. The many donor countries of Uganda – the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Netherlands and Norway – have neglected the need for focused international attention and decisive leadership to end this crisis.

## Uganda Prayer and Action Event

Suggestions for a Sunday Night/Wednesday Night **Church Service**, College or Christian School **Chapel Service**, Youth Group or Home **School Event**:

1. Prepare for the service by finding examples of Ugandan or African art, pottery, jewelry, and fabrics and putting them on display in your church. Play Ugandan music (or tune into an East African radio station online) as people arrive. Serve food from Uganda - [www.africaguide.com/cooking.htm](http://www.africaguide.com/cooking.htm). Show a slideshow of photos from Uganda. Teach a traditional East African dance.
2. Spend time in prayer for the people of northern Uganda. Pray as a congregation, in small groups, and have children lead prayers. Project a map of Uganda onto the floor and prayer-walk over each region of the country. Take butcher paper taped to the wall and post pictures and names to create a wailing wall for people to verbalize or write their prayers. Children can also use the wall to draw picture prayers.
3. Invite a member of your congregation that has traveled to Uganda or done missions there to share about their experiences.
4. Provide stationary or postcards and have everyone in attendance write a letter to the president and their congressman, urging them to take action to help end this war.
5. Share a documentary about Uganda, we recommend:  
**“An Unconventional War”**, by the Sentinel Group [www.sentinelgroup.org](http://www.sentinelgroup.org) Documents God’s intervention through answered prayer, following the conflict in northern Uganda from several perspectives. Includes interviews with President Museveni, John Mulinde and many other key religious and political figures.  
**“Invisible Children”**, by three young filmmakers from California [www.invisiblechildren.com](http://www.invisiblechildren.com). Over 1 million people in the USA have viewed this film. It is fast paced and designed for today’s young people.
6. If you don’t have time to watch a full-length documentary, show a variety of short videos or clips from Invisible Children’s website.
7. Hold a candlelight prayer and worship vigil. Songs like “Shout to the North”, “Encourage My Soul” and “In Need” are especially powerful.
8. Express yourself artistically. Get involved with [www.thememoryproject.org](http://www.thememoryproject.org) or a similar organization.
9. Take up an offering to support missions or adopt a congregation in northern Uganda. Email [info@turnnetwork.org](mailto:info@turnnetwork.org) for specifics.
10. Adopt one orphan, a room of orphans or an entire orphanage in northern Uganda; contact Carole Vezey with Favor of God Ministries at [caroleuganda@yahoo.com](mailto:caroleuganda@yahoo.com).

## Prayer

### We Cry Out

*For the people of Uganda, we cry out. We cry out against all that murders life and faith. We cry out against the abductions of children, the kidnapping of innocence, the mutilation and horror, the constant fear and despair, and the barriers to peaceful negotiations. Where there has been hunger, thirst, anger, fear, despair, death, anguish and total hopelessness, pour out Your love and supply all needs. End the bloodshed upon this land. Restore peace among the Acholi people. Unify Your church to stand together in this spiritual battle. Open our eyes to see Your hand as you work in this land. Show us each our part as we together usher in hope for our brothers and sisters in Uganda.*

*For the people of Uganda, we cry out. May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done in the Acholiland of northern Uganda as it is in Heaven. We cry out for peace, clean water, children that can grow up with both a mother and a father, people that can live long enough to see their grandchildren, for healthy crops and good food, school for all children, an economy that is stable and growing, an end to AIDS and disease and a safe place to live for every man, woman and child. Hear our prayers, Lord and rescue your people. In name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.*

## Key Scriptures for Prayer and Meditation

Taken from the New American Standard Bible

### Psalm 91

PROCLAIM this Psalm for the Children of Northern Uganda

(When you are praying this, you may want to literally call out “children of northern Uganda” in the places where the psalmist writes “you”)

[1] He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. [2] I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" [3] For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. [4] He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. [5] You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day; [6] Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. [7] A thousand may fall at your side And ten thousand at your right hand, {But} it shall not approach you. [8] You will only look on with your eyes And see the recompense of the wicked. [9] For you have made the LORD, my refuge, {Even} the Most High, your dwelling place. [10] No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent. [11] For He will give His angels charge concerning you, To guard you in all your ways. [12] They will bear you up in their hands, That you do not strike your foot against a stone. [13] You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down. [14] "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him {securely} on high, because he has known My name. [15] "He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. [16] "With a long life I will satisfy him And let him see My salvation." (Psalm 91:1-16 NASB)

*"Dear Lord, protect these children. Send your angels to surround them and lead them to safety. Rise these children up to be the spiritual giants for the next generation. Protect their heart, their mind, their body, their innocence and their soul."*

### Isaiah 2:3-4

[3] And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [4] And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their **swords into plowshares** and their **spears into pruning hooks**. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. (Isa 2:3-4 NASB, emphasis mine)

*"Oh God, the darkness has actually brought these Acholi soldiers to use crude farm tools in their violence and torture. Lord, transform these weapons of violence into tools for the Harvest and bring this war to an end."*

### Isaiah 62:1-4

[1] For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, Until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, And her salvation like a torch that is burning. [2] The nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a **new name** Which the mouth of the LORD will designate. [3] You will also be a crown of beauty in the

hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem in the hand of your God. [4] It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," And your land, "Married"; For the LORD delights in you, And {to Him} **your land will be married.** (Isa 62:1-4 NASB)

*"Heavenly Father, give the land of Uganda a new name – a name that knows prosperity and peace. Lord, marry the land of the south to the north and heal old wounds from past violence and anger."*

### **Haggai 2:6-9**

[6] "For thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. [7] 'I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD of hosts. [8] 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts. [9] 'The latter glory of this house will be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and in this place I will give peace,' declares the LORD of hosts." (Hag 2:6-9 NASB)

*"Lord, we claim this promise for the land of Uganda. Bless this land and may the glory of the latter far surpass the former. And give peace, oh God, give peace."*

### **Matthew 25:31-40**

[31] "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. [32] "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; [33] and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. [34] "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. [35] 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me {something} to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me {something} to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; [36] naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' [37] "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You {something} to drink? [38] 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? [39] 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' [40] "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, {even} the least {of them,} you did it to Me.' (Mat 25:31-40 NASB)

*"King of Heaven, open our eyes and show us how we are to serve our brothers and sisters in Uganda. Instill in us a sense of the urgency. Father, give us your heart of love and compassion."*



## Litany

To be lead by a group of children

(Drawn from Psalm 22:11, 34:18, Lamentations 2:11-12; 3:22-23; Isaiah 33:2; Psalm 46:1)

Leader: Trouble is near, oh God, do not be far from me

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

Leader: Be close, oh God, for I am brokenhearted

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

Leader: Save me, oh God, for I am crushed in spirit

**People: Lord, hear our prayer**

Leader: My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within

**People: Lord, let it not be so**

Leader: My heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed

**People: Lord, let it not be so**

Leader: Children and infants faint in the streets of the city

**People: Lord, let it not be so**

Leader: Children say to their mothers, "Where is bread and wine?"

**People: Lord, what can I do to help these children?**

Leader: As they faint like wounded men in the streets of the city

**People: Lord, what can I do to help these children?**

Leader: As their lives ebb away in their mothers' arms

**People: Lord, what can I do to help these children?**

Leader: But because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed

**People: For His compassions never fail**

Leader: They are new every morning, new every morning

**People: How great is Thy faithfulness**

Leader: Be our strength every day

**People: Our salvation in time of distress**

**All: Only you, oh God, are our refuge and strength, our ever-present help in time of need**

Leader: You alone, Oh Lord

**People: Uphold the poor and needy.**

Leader: You alone, Oh Lord

**People: Are righteousness and strength**

Leader: You alone, oh Lord

**People: Give healing to the weary**

Leader: You alone, Oh Lord

**People: Will we chase with our praise**

Leader: Eyes have seen, oh Lord

**People: Your mighty hand of justice**

Leader: Ears have heard

**People: Your merciful cry**

Leader: Hearts will know

**People: The coming of Your salvation**

Leader: Feet will run

**People: After you, oh God**

Leader: Come and rescue your children

**People: From the hands of evil men**

Leader: Protect and keep your children

**People: From violence and war**

Leader: Oh, Lord, our strong deliverer

**People: Hear these cries for mercy**

Leader: May the people of Uganda, say

**People: You, alone, are our God.**

## **Organizing a Vigil for Northern Uganda**

*\* Thanks to Sojourners ([www.Sojo.net](http://www.Sojo.net)) for providing this informative text.*

Here are some steps for how to organize a successful and effective vigil:

- Establish a small planning committee. This committee can work within an existing organization, like a local social action or public witness committee.
- Reach out to and network with other churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship in the area to organize and participate in the vigil. An email and a phone call can go a long way. If you decide to organize an interfaith vigil, invite people of each faith to read and pray from their own tradition and talk among the groups about how to be respectful of each tradition. Also consider asking churches and groups that include Ugandans and other Africans.
- It is useful to walk through the space where you intend to hold the vigil. We recommend looking for sites near offices for your Senator and Representative – to see these locations, go to [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov). You may need to apply for and secure a permit in advance of a public vigil. You should begin that process as soon as possible. Call your local police department for more information on obtaining permits. Even if you don't have to secure a permit, the police will likely appreciate a heads-up about your vigil.
- Create a list of necessary equipment: sound systems, megaphones or microphones, candles, programs, sign-in sheets, podium, and signs. You'll need to find someone who can provide these.
- Publicize, publicize, publicize. Consider taking out an advertisement in a local paper or other news source, writing a letter to the editor announcing the event, and listing it in bulletins of local houses of worship.
- Write a press release to local media outlets (TV, newspapers, and radio stations) and follow up with appropriate reporters (see the next sheet on "Publicizing Your Event in the Media" section for details).
- Post and pass out fliers in public spaces like bus stops, subway stations, Laundromats, stores, restaurants, and community centers. Ask permission where necessary.
- E-mail or telephone friends, colleagues, and local leaders the day before the vigil to remind them to attend.

## **Publicizing Your Event in the Media**

*\* Thanks to Sojourners ([www.Sojo.net](http://www.Sojo.net)) for providing this informative text.*

Here are a few ideas for how to best work with the media to ensure maximal coverage of your events for peace in northern Uganda. It's important that your organizing committee realize the importance of engaging the media. The media is an ally in our work to raise attention to this crisis and advocate for more responsible U.S. policy.

### ***Conduct Media Research***

You will want to find out if your local media outlets have printed stories on Africa, and specifically Uganda. Conduct this research on three fronts: print (daily and weekly newspapers, local magazines, and newsletters), radio (your local public radio station and any other stations with talk radio programs), and television (local news stations, including ABC, CBS, NBC, and PBS affiliates). A quick and easy way to find lists of media in your city is to go to [Congress.org](http://Congress.org) and type in your zip code under "Browse Media Guide."

### ***Assemble a Media List***

The next step is to identify specific reporters, producers, and columnists who cover Africa and specifically Uganda for your local news outlets. There are several ways to do this. Visit their Web site and see what past stories and columns have been written. You can also call the newspaper's main switchboard and ask the operator for information. It is good to emphasize that this is a community event, especially if they give little coverage to foreign affairs. Once you have names and contact information, use a spreadsheet tool like Microsoft Excel to compile a list. Be sure to include the reporter's name, media outlet, e-mail address, and telephone number.

### ***Using the Media List***

Once you have a list compiled, you can use the mail merge feature to send press releases, media advisories, or other information via e-mail. Prepare your document to send, send it, and then follow up with phone calls and/or personal e-mails to a few key reporters. Keep the list updated with current e-mails and telephone numbers and add and remove names as appropriate.

### ***Writing a Press Release***

Press advisories should be succinct—about a half a page—and be marked clearly with the words "Press Release." The first paragraph should include who, what, where, why, and when of the vigil. The second paragraph should include a description of the purpose of the event and how it was organized. You might want to include a quote from a spokesperson of the organization in charge of the vigil. Make it clear and to the point. See the included sample press release for an example. Make sure to include two contact names with phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

### ***Follow-Up Calls***

A few days after you send the release, call the reporter to follow up. Ask for the reporter by name, and then tell them who you are and why you're calling. After the reporter answers, ask if he or she has a few minutes to discuss it. Don't assume a reporter has time to talk as they may be on deadline and will appreciate you asking. Offer to call back.

### *Planning a Media Event*

With a media list of local reporters, talk show hosts, editors, and producers, you have a critical tool for generating media at your event. Events should be planned and executed with a goal of catching the media's attention. We have learned two basic rules for planning a media event.

1. **Frame your Message.** Without a clear, concise message, you are challenged to make reporters see your event as newsworthy. Review the included talking points and prep for media interviews.
2. **Keep it Simple.** TV crews and photographers will make a decision to cover an event based on the compelling images they are likely to capture. Think visually and plan for an action to be captured on camera. If you are planning a prayer vigil, several hundred people kneeling in front of city hall is a compelling picture. Make sure your event is short with just the right amount of speakers. A press conference should generally last no longer than 30 minutes. And, you may just plan a short photo opportunity, such as the delivery of petitions to a congressional office or religious leaders meeting with the Senator in his or her local office. By all means, be creative, keep it simple and stay on message.

*Sample Press Release*

**Organization/Church Letterhead here**

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

**Contact: Name, Title/Affiliation, Phone Number, Email Address**

**Headline Centered in Bold**

*Example: FAITH LEADERS CALL FOR ACTION TO END THE CRISIS IN NORTHERN UGANDA*

**Dateline.** The city you are issuing the press release from and the date of release.

*Example: Washington, D.C., – Dec. 14, 2005 –*

**Lead paragraph.** The first paragraph needs to grasp the reader's attention and should contain the relevant information to your message, including who, what, when, where, why.

*Example: Dismayed by the continued neglect of our government to address “the world’s worst neglected humanitarian crisis,” faith leaders from our community will hold a vigil outside Senator [insert name]’s office to call for action...*

**Text.** The text can be up to three more paragraphs, and should develop the ideas more fully and give background on the event, and perhaps include a quote from the organizers.

*Example: Across the country, vigils are being held to challenge U.S. complicity in this crisis, calling for more responsible policy that responds to the poor and victimized of northern Uganda. Religious leaders, humanitarians and citizens of all background will gather in prayer to stand in solidarity with those suffering in Uganda. By their witness, these vigils will urge the Bush Administration and U.S. Congress to act decisively to stop the atrocities in Uganda and build lasting peace in the region.*

“Quote from organizer” and more text...

**WHO:**

**WHAT:**

**WHEN:**

**WHERE:**

**For more information:** a web site *or*

**Contact:** name, title, telephone number

## Writing to Your Political Representatives

### Letter-Writing Tips:

*\*(Find your Representatives' Address and Phone Number at [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org))*

1. Before you begin, choose your contacts. Effective advocates often target those officials who represent them. Those are the individuals over whom you as a voter have the most influence.
2. Preparation is essential; a little time and research go a long way. Learn the background of the person you are contacting: What is their legislative record and general philosophy? How has he/she responded in the past to the war? Be sure to thank them for past leadership if he/she has been active on the issue.
3. Always be polite. Governments don't respond to critical or condemnatory letters.
4. Be sure to include all points, but a good rule is not to write more than one page.
5. Different political officials have different power. Make sure to target requests to the government official you are contacting. UgandaCAN.org has suggested advocacy points on its Web site and also in sample letters included in this packet. Draw further attention to these requests with bullet points or by highlighting.
6. Send letters to elected officials to the district office nearest you. The addresses for the district offices can be found on your elected officials' websites.
7. Personalize your letter. If you have any special interest or link with the situation, mention it. If appropriate, briefly explain who you are and what you do. Explain why ending the war in northern Uganda is important to you. This indicates sincerity, and shows that people with different backgrounds are concerned.
8. If you choose to write via email, make sure to personalize your letter and remember to always include your contact information. This is especially true if you are contacting your legislator; that is the only way your legislator knows if you live in his/her district.
9. Visit the UgandaCAN.org Web site to gain the latest information and legislative opportunities.
10. **Follow up on your letter with a phone call.** Be sure to ask for further information on how the official has followed up on your requests.

## Letter to U.S. President George W. Bush

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500  
(202) 456 1111

Dear President Bush,

I write to you out of concern for the desperate humanitarian and political situation in northern Uganda, where the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is waging a vicious war against the government and people of Uganda. This twenty-year war has led to the forced displacement of nearly two million people and the widespread exploitation of children as soldiers and sex slaves. Each night as many as 35,000 children flee their rural homes for the relative safety of towns to avoid being kidnapped by the LRA.

This crisis has been prolonged by international neglect. Leadership from the United States can drastically improve the lives of people in the region and contribute to sustainable justice, peace and development. I urge you to make the resolution of this horrific conflict a priority for your administration. Specifically, I ask that you:

Instruct Ambassador Bolton to introduce the crisis to the agenda of the United Nations Security Council, as the LRA pose a serious threat to peace and stability in Uganda, Sudan, and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Utilize high-level diplomatic pressure to encourage the government of Uganda to better protect people displaced by the conflict, and to urge the government of Sudan to stop all LRA activities within its borders.

Support a process for political resolution of the conflict, including political and financial backing for the mediation efforts of former government minister Betty Bigombe.

Invest additional resources in improving conditions in the camps for displaced people, where emergency-level conditions currently cause an estimated 1,000 deaths every week.

Mr. President, I firmly believe that high-level engagement and sustained leadership by the United States will help bring an end to this conflict, which traps millions of children and families in despair and threatens ongoing peaceful transitions in Sudan and the DRC. I look forward to hearing from you about your Administration's plans to address the situation in northern Uganda and to make sure that the twentieth year of this deadly conflict is also its last.

Sincerely,



## Letter to U.S. Senator

Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_,

I write to express my deep concern about the extreme humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda. For twenty years, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been fighting to overthrow the government of Uganda. LRA rebels, based in southern Sudan, capture and use children as frontline soldiers and sex slaves more than 25,000 Ugandan children have been abducted for these purposes.

Fear of abduction causes as many as 35,000 children to flee their rural homes each night and take shelter in nearby towns. The conflict has uprooted at least 80 percent of northern Uganda's population. Approximately 1.7 million people live in squalid camps that usually lack food, clean water, and sanitation.

I want to thank you for voting for the resolution (S.Res.366) that was passed on February 2, 2006 that affirmed the importance of international attention to this conflict and designated a week of prayer for the Ugandan victims of the LRA. I echo your sentiments that the international community must bring justice and humanitarian assistance to northern Uganda, two things which are shockingly lacking in the region currently. Up to now, the international community has failed the people of northern Uganda and it will require more than our hopeful sentiments to bring peace and security to the nearly two million terrorized victims of this war. Therefore, I urge you to:

- Hold hearings to further examine the situation and put forth recommendations for US policy action.
- Continue the effort that began in 2004 with the passage of the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act (S.2264) to engage the Bush Administration and leaders in the international community through Congressional letters and phone calls with recommendations for ending this regional crisis.
- Appropriate increased resources to support humanitarian needs to end the conflict.
- Enact legislation addressing the needs and recommendations to end this conflict

Mr./Madame Senator, I look forward to hearing from you about your plans to address the situation in northern Uganda and to make sure that the twentieth year of this deadly conflict is also its last.

Sincerely,

## Letter to U.S. House of Representatives Member

Dear Representative \_\_\_\_\_,

As a concerned constituent in your district, I write to express my deep concern about the extreme humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda. For twenty years, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been fighting to overthrow the government of Uganda. LRA rebels, based in southern Sudan, capture and use children as frontline soldiers and sex slaves more than 25,000 Ugandan children have been abducted for these purposes.

Fear of abduction causes as many as 35,000 children to flee their rural homes each night and take shelter in nearby towns. The conflict has uprooted at least 80 percent of northern Uganda's population. Approximately 1.7 million people live in squalid camps that usually lack food, clean water, and sanitation.

On July 19, 2004, the United States House of Representatives passed the Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act (S. 2264), which recognized the need for increased international attention to the conflict, particularly on the part of the United States government. However over a year and a half later, the war continues and the international community remains largely silent.

Congressman/Congresswoman \_\_\_\_\_, I believe that only through strong and coordinated international action, led by the U.S., can there be an effective response to improve regional security and end the suffering and terror of nearly two million people. The Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act recognized the historically strong bilateral relationship shared by the United States government and the government of Uganda and it is because of this relationship that the United States is in a unique position to act on this matter. Specifically, I ask that you:

- Hold hearings to further examine the situation and put forth recommendations for US policy action.
- Continue the effort that began in 2004 to engage the Bush Administration and leaders in the international community through Congressional letters and phone calls with recommendations for ending this regional crisis.
- Appropriate increased resources to support humanitarian needs to end the conflict.
- Enact legislation addressing the needs and recommendations to end this conflict

I look forward to hearing from you about your plans to address the situation in northern Uganda and to make sure that the twentieth year of this deadly conflict is also its last.

Sincerely,

## Letter to U.S. Ambassador to United Nations

Ambassador John R. Bolton, Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations  
United States Mission to the United Nations  
140 East 45th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Ambassador \_\_\_\_\_,

As you know, for the past 20 years, the people of northern Uganda have endured a conflict involving the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. More than 1.7 million people—eighty percent of the population—are displaced and forced to live in squalid internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. These camps remain largely unprotected and vulnerable to LRA attacks and abductions. The LRA has kidnapped more than 30,000 children from their homes – holding them hostage as soldiers, sex slaves, and bondservants. An estimated 35,000 children commute nightly to sleep in town centers in order to avoid violence and abduction. Nonetheless, these children, known as “night commuters,” remain vulnerable to exploitation and sexual and physical abuse.

This deplorable humanitarian and human rights situation is the result of an ongoing conflict that continues to be a cause of instability in southern Sudan and, now, the broader Great Lakes region. The continued presence of the Lord's Resistance Army in southern Sudan and its recent expansion into the DRC underscores the urgency for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) engagement. We urge you to take a leadership role at the United Nations to place northern Uganda on the UNSC agenda. Specifically, I urge the UNSC to take decisive action by:

- Continuing to encourage and support a regional solution to disarming groups within eastern DRC, Uganda, and southern Sudan. The UNSC should call on all relevant actors to accelerate the deployment of UNMIS and ensure that threats to civilians and disruption of humanitarian aid address the destabilizing presence of the LRA. Continued consideration should be given to the recommendations of the regional Tripartite Commission on disarming groups in eastern DRC.
- Appointing a Special UN Envoy for northern Uganda who will work collaboratively with all local, regional, and international stakeholders to help mediate between all parties to end the conflict.
- Creating a commission of inquiry to investigate and monitor the activities of the LRA, as well as the networks supporting the LRA, and its impact on regional peace and security.
- Calling on all parties to declare an immediate ceasefire; encouraging greater international diplomatic and financial support for on-going mediation efforts, while ensuring a coordinated response to LRA activity in the area.
- Calling on the government of Uganda, in accordance with its national IDP policy, to adopt a security strategy that focuses on protection rather than confrontation, prioritizes civilian and aid convoy protection, and holds protection personnel accountable for crimes they commit.

I firmly believe that high-level engagement and sustained leadership by your government will help bring an end to this conflict, which traps millions of children and families in despair and threatens ongoing peaceful transitions in Sudan and the DRC. Thank you for your action on this matter.

Sincerely,

## Letter to U.S. Secretary of State

Dr. Condoleezza Rice  
United States Secretary of State  
2201 C St. NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice,

I write to you out of concern for the desperate humanitarian and political situation in northern Uganda, where the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is waging a vicious war against the government and people of Uganda. This twenty-year war has led to the forced displacement of nearly two million people and the widespread exploitation of children as soldiers and sex slaves. As many as 35,000 children flee their rural homes for the relative safety of towns each night to avoid being kidnapped by the LRA.

This crisis has been prolonged by international neglect. Leadership from the United States can bring peace to the region. To this end, I respectfully request that you:

- Introduce the crisis to the agenda of the United Nations Security Council, as the LRA pose a serious threat to peace and stability in Uganda, Sudan, and Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Utilize high-level diplomatic pressure to encourage the government of Uganda to better protect people displaced by the conflict, and to urge the government of Sudan to stop all LRA activities within its borders.
- Support a process for political resolution of the conflict, including political and financial backing for the mediation efforts of former government minister Betty Bigombe.
- Invest additional resources in improving conditions in the camps for displaced people, where emergency-level conditions currently cause an estimated 1,000 deaths every week.
- Travel to northern Uganda to see the crisis firsthand and to demonstrate its priority status for the U.S. government.

Your attention to this urgent matter can drastically improve the lives of people in the region and contribute to sustainable justice, peace and development. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

## Northern Uganda Advocacy Talking Points

**Overview:** For the last twenty years, people in northern Uganda have been caught amidst a war between the brutal Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. The LRA has terrorized the local population, abducting more than 30,000 children, some as young as seven, to fill its ranks. The Ugandan government, in response, has confined the population to displacement camps, where appalling conditions cause an estimated 900 deaths each week. The war has been aptly described as "the world's worst neglected humanitarian crisis."

An international response should be aimed at several ends. It should:

- Support efforts to disarm and arrest LRA leadership.
- Identify and cut off sources of LRA funding.
- Promote the return of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) with security.
- Engage a broad political process that includes political mediation, reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants.

### U.S. Policy Recommendations

- Send an envoy of the State Department to work directly to support resolution of the conflict, acting as a liaison between relevant regional governments and militaries.
- Provide political and logistical support to the latest efforts by the Government of Southern Sudan to mediate peace talks between the LRA and Government of Uganda.
- Explore options to provide training and intelligence support to UPDF and SPLA in their military response to the LRA.
- In light of an increasing body of evidence that the government of Sudan maintains its support of the LRA, increase pressure on the government of Sudan to cease all such support.
- Require regular reports to Congress on the humanitarian, security, and human rights situation in northern Uganda.
- Investigate and address the atmosphere of impunity for Ugandan soldiers who profiteer from the war and continue to commit serious human rights violations against the population in northern Uganda.
- Provide more aid money to address the needs of the war-affected population.
- Urge Government of Uganda to put forth plan for secure return of IDPs. Offer financial assistance for implementation of such a plan and dismantling of camps.
- Seek to introduce the issue to the United Nations Security Council.

### U.N. Policy Recommendations

- Introduce and adopt a Security Council resolution specifically dealing with the crisis in northern Uganda.
- Call for the government of Uganda to fulfill its "responsibility to protect" its civilians, and undertake collective international action through the Security Council if the government fails to do so.
- Call for tripartite talks between Sudan, Uganda, and DRC to coordinate an effective response to the LRA's presence in the region. Consider options to coordinate a regional military response to serve ICC arrest warrants on top LRA leadership.

- Urge Government of Uganda to put forth plan for secure return of IDPs. Offer financial assistance for implementation of such a plan and dismantling of camps.
- Expand the mandates of MONUC and UNMIS forces to help the ICC arrest LRA leaders.
- Call on the government of Sudan to end its support for the LRA and to pursue joint military operations with Ugandan and SPLA forces.
- Call on the government of Uganda to hold accountable its armed forces for human rights abuses.
- Send a senior U.N. envoy to contribute to resolution of the conflict and to report regularly to the Security Council on the humanitarian, security, and human rights situation in northern Uganda.

### **Requesting a Meeting at Your Senator or Rep.'s Local Office:**

*\* Thanks again to Sojourners (sojo.net) for providing this helpful text.*

It is important to be short and concise when you call or write your political representatives' office. Particularly in this case, you are writing merely to request a meeting. The same goes for when you call the office. Also, make sure you identify yourself and your group as a constituent from the representative's area.

The chances of securing a meeting are better with more forms of contact. The full contact information for each local office should be available online on the representative's web site.

Your first step should be a call to the local office, asking who arranges the Senator or Representative's schedule when he or she is in the state and how best to contact that person by phone, e-mail or fax. Write down the name and information and ask if that person is available at the moment.

If the scheduler is available, identify who you are and present your request over the phone to him or her. You can send the request via fax and/or email as well—this will help ensure that your request gets through. Try to secure a meeting time or at least a few possible times, over the phone.

If you are not able to get past the front desk, acquire as much information as possible. Send the fax and/or email to the office, to the attention of the scheduler, and then attempt to follow up by phone call later in the day or the next day. Follow up until you are able to schedule a meeting.

Keep in mind that a meeting with the Senator or Representative's staff is also an importance chance to present your concerns, and if a staff member is available to meet with your group, take that opportunity. Your effort to meet with your representative is a significant accomplishment in itself and a meeting with any legislative staff member is very valuable and worth pursuing.

**Sign-Up Sheet for Northern Uganda Advocates**

<u>Name</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Zip Code</u>

## **Ending Uganda's cycle of slavery and revenge**

**By: David Batstone**

*From Sojourners (www.Sojo.net), 7 June 2006*

I spent the past week in northern Uganda. I am conducting field research and interviews for a book I am writing on human slavery.

I hope to be one of many to raise awareness of this tragic epidemic. Criminal activity currently enslaves 27 million people globally, half of which are children under the age of 18, and the trade generates an estimated \$13 billion dollars annually.

Slavery takes a tragic twist in Uganda. Children are abducted and forced to serve in a rebel group calling itself the Lord's Resistance Army. The LRA has snatched up as many as 40,000 children over its 20-year existence.

During my visit to Uganda, I interviewed numerous young people who escaped the LRA and have gained refuge and rehabilitation at World Vision's Children of War Center. Only a few days out of captivity in some cases, the children spoke of unimaginable terror. Some of the children I spoke with had spent eight years in servitude, and many had spent at least four years with the LRA.

Most of the boys are trained to be mass murderers. I realize that language is strong, but it fits. The LRA targets young children because they believe they are more easily molded into trained killers. They learn how to engage in combat with soldiers and are forced to pillage defenseless villages, often leaving countless dead in their wake.

A smaller percentage of the girls are forced to be soldiers. Most of them become sex slaves and domestic servants to the older LRA soldiers. Typically after a village raid, the commanders divide the girls up amongst themselves. Only men of a certain rank have the privilege of owning these young girls.

At the moment most of us who are 21st century abolitionists focus on stopping the captivity and ongoing abductions of children in Uganda. Spending some time there, however, I got a glimpse of an equally daunting task: How do you bring about reconciliation once the terror comes to an end?

World Vision workers in the camp already are starting to address this dilemma. Idah Lagum Lumoro, a counselor and camp director at a World Vision center, shared with me a heart-rending tale of a woman who had her nose, lips, and ears sliced off by the rebels. When she came to the rehabilitation camp, she was horrified to encounter the very rebel soldier who had ordered her torture. In his own defense, the young man claimed that a superior officer in the LRA had commanded him to give the order. Even though civilian witnesses present at the crime confirmed that fact, you can imagine how difficult it was for the woman to forgive this young ex-officer. That story, unfortunately, is not rare. Nearly every child abducted into the LRA has been forced to participate in atrocities. Typically, an abducted child's initiation is to kill a family member, or



perhaps someone from his or her home village. For that reason, after release many of the children fear to return to their home village.

Many of the young girls have given birth to a child. They too do not view a return to their home village because the years of rape have brought them shame.

For that reason, Lumoro and her team of World Vision counselors not only help individual children to restore their lives after they escape. They reach out as well to the communities from which the children have been abducted and against which they might have committed atrocities.

Lumoro explained to me that in the Ugandan culture, when a murder is committed it is not only an offense to a particular family, but against an entire clan. A stipulated restitution must be made. If that restitution is not fulfilled, then a murderous revenge will be sought against another clan. In northern Uganda today, however, nearly 90% of the population lives in internally displaced person's camps and murder has ruled for two decades. It is impossible to balance the score with traditional restitution.

Lumoro asks her Ugandan brothers and sisters to practice forgiveness as an exercise of healing. "If we forgive, and ask for forgiveness, we are set free; then we can walk in unity," Lumoro told me. She presented the choice that Ugandans have to make for the future: "Only in unity can we rebuild our land with peace and development. If we do not forgive, our communities will explode in the future."

When people have been wronged, they often harbor a conviction that they cannot satisfy their hurt until justice (really meaning revenge) can be done. Maybe then, they say to themselves, they can begin to forgive and forget.

Lumoro emphasizes, however, that revenge and forgiveness take us down two distinct roads: "Forgiveness starts with today's enmity; revenge nurses the enmity until it can reach satisfaction in some future opportunity."

"If you want love to take root in your life," Lumoro reminds me, "you can only travel down the road of forgiveness."