Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to support the Administration's efforts to achieve a lasting end to the violence and terror perpetrated by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), under the command of Joseph Kony. We commend the U.S. comprehensive strategy, required by Congress, that not only promotes the apprehension of Kony and other senior LRA commanders, but also the protection of civilians, the defection and reintegration of LRA abductees, and humanitarian relief to LRA-affected communities.

What is sorely lacking, however, is robust regional coordination. To alter this dynamic, **we urge you to work with the African Union and the United Nations to convene a meeting with the heads of state of LRA-affected countries at the upcoming U.N. General Assembly.** With your participation and that of Secretary of State Clinton, such a meeting could play a catalytic role in defusing tensions between these governments and encouraging them to dedicate sufficient resources and troops to protect civilians and apprehend senior LRA commanders.

As you well know, the LRA is a vicious group that has wreaked great human suffering across central and east Africa for over 20 years. It has been responsible for numerous atrocities, including massacres, mass abductions, torture, rape, pillage and forced labor. The people of LRA affected regions have suffered for far too long and are waiting for strong, effective action to end the atrocities committed by the LRA.

The decision to deploy U.S. military personnel to central and east Africa in October 2011 to act as advisors in support of regional military efforts was a positive step, and a demonstration of U.S. commitment to robustly implement the LRA comprehensive strategy. We have been encouraged by the efforts they have made so far, and by the decision in April 2012 to extend their deployment.

However, we remain concerned that lack of cross-border cooperation between the countries affected by the LRA is jeopardizing the ability of the U.S. advisers to achieve their mission. As you know, the Democratic Republic of Congo continues to deny the Ugandan military, the primary partner of the U.S. advisers, access to Congolese territory where LRA violence is most acute. Allegations that Joseph Kony has crossed from the Central African Republic to South Darfur remain unsubstantiated, but contribute to escalating tension between Sudan and South Sudan and, if true, could further hamstring cross-border efforts to apprehend the LRA senior leadership and protect civilians.



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Senior State Department officials have testified before Congress several times since October 2011 that the Administration is engaging with regional governments to address these issues and ensure U.S. advisers are given a chance to succeed. However, the lack of adequate progress on improving collaboration between regional governments affected by the LRA during the last eight months highlights the need for more robust diplomatic engagement by your Administration. The coming months will be a critical period for the work of the U.S. military advisers deployed in LRA-affected areas , and we urge you and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to personally engage with the heads of state of regional governments affected by the LRA to ensure improved commitment and cross-border collaboration on counter-LRA initiatives.

In addition to the reasons stated above, convening a side meeting in New York City during the upcoming U.N. General Assembly with the heads of state of LRA-affected countries would also provide an opportunity to encourage other partner and donor countries to provide both financial and operational resources to support the implementation of the joint U.N. and African Union regional strategy to address the LRA.

Please let us reiterate our support for America's efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army. Continued U.S. leadership will be crucial in ensuring that the comprehensive strategy to support the disarmament of the Lord's Resistance Army is fully implemented so that the regions affected by the LRA's brutality can advance the path to rebuilding lives and communities.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Edward R. Royce
Member of Congress

Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

Brad Miller
Member of Congress

Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Spencer Bachus
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress

Kay Granger
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Aaron Schock
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

John R. Carter
Member of Congress

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

Tom Marino
Member of Congress

Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

Ander Crenshaw
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

John W. Olver
Member of Congress

David Rivera
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Elton Gallegly
Member of Congress

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Tim Griffin
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Ted Poe
Member of Congress

Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

Fortney "Pete" Stark
Member of Congress

Ann Marie Buerkle
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

Tom Latham
Member of Congress

Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Steven R. Rothman
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Mark S. Critz
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Steve Israel
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Laura Richardson
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State
Dr. Esther D. Brimmer, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations
Ambassador Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Representative to the United Nations