Early Warning Network &
The LRA Crisis Tracker

Jean de Dieu Kandape
“We have been forgotten. It’s as if we don’t exist. The government says the LRA are no longer a problem, but I know that’s not true. I beg of you, please talk to others about what has happened to us.”

-- Traditional Chief from Niangara, DRC
February 19, 2010

Source: Human Rights Watch, March 2010
Invisible Children

• Founded in 2005 with a mission to permanently end LRA violence
• Operational in highly remote areas of central Africa
• Our initiatives include:
  • Community-based protection
  • Security reporting & analysis
  • Defection rebel combatants
  • International political advocacy
• Our work is increasingly addressing insecurity and exploitation beyond the LRA (including poaching)
Early Warning Network

- Built upon an existing local network run by Catholic Church
- Designed to address the severe isolation between communities
- Became a way for communities to talk to the “outside world”
- Now a “vertically-integrated” pipeline of information and analysis
How It Works

• **High frequency (HF) two-way, long range radios**
  - Communicate via a shared frequency
  - Multiple radios can communicate at once

• **Managed by Local Protection Committees**
  - Diverse spectrum of community volunteers.
  - Includes at least 2-3 HF radio operators
  - Trained by Invisible Children & partner organizations

• **Requires thorough training** of community volunteers
  - HF radio maintenance
  - Quality information collection & reporting
  - Contingency planning in the event of security threat
Scope of the Network

- About **50 communities** across DRC and CAR.

- In CAR: Combination of HF radios and satellite phones due to insecurity and logistical difficulties

- Currently expanding further into Haute Kotto CAR, and east of Garamba Park

- Would like to add more radios in the **Bas Uele area of DRC** (Bili Uele forest)
Early Warning Reports

• Incidents reported during **twice-daily security calls**
  – All communities on the call hear each report

• Reports aggregated by **hub radio operators**
  – Hub operators clarify and document all reports
  – Morning calls are usually the initial incident reports.
  – Afternoon calls provide additional information and updates.

• Hub operators send reports to **Crisis Tracker analysts**
  – Actionable reports immediately shared with security actors in the field (Military, Park Rangers, Peacekeepers)
  – All vetted reports are translated, shared via an EWN listserv
Early Warning Reports

• **Step 1:** Incidents reported during *twice-daily* security calls

• **Step 2:** Reports aggregated by *hub radio operators* in DRC and CAR

• **Step 3:** Hub operators send reports to our *team of analysts*

• **Step 4:** Vetted reports are distributed daily via our *EWN listserv* and the *LRA Crisis Tracker.*
• Database | Online Mapping Platform | Analysis Publications

• The Core Team:
  – HF Hub in the field level
  – Project Coordinator based in the field
  – 3-4 analysts stationed internationally

• Designed to inform policymakers and practitioners.
LRA Attack | February 29, 2016 | Gongolo, Haut Uele, DRC
2 motorcyclists were looted by 5 LRA forces near Gongolo, DRC. The assailants looted rice, peanuts, phones, money and other non-food items. The assailants were military clothing, 4 of them were armed with AK-type weapons while the 5th assailant had a gun.
Verification Rating: 3 LRA Verification Rating: Low

LRA Attack | February 27, 2016 | Bulumasi, Bas Uele, DRC
6 civilians were looted and abducted by LRA forces near Bulumasi, DRC. The assailants reportedly spoke Sango, Zande, Lingala and Acohoi.
Verification Rating: 4 LRA Verification Rating: Medium
Supporting Wildlife Protection
• The LRA is a poaching actor in DR Congo and uses ivory trafficking as a means to sustain itself

• Communities report poaching information over the Early Warning Network

• The armed groups that pose the greatest threat to human security in the region are all engaged in poaching and wildlife trafficking as a source of revenue which funds more violence
Correlation of LRA poaching & violence against civilians in Garamba, DRC (2012-2016)
Map of LRA Attacks in Garamba Park Vicinity
January 2012–April 2016
Cross-Cutting Best Practices

• Community Participation
  – Requires trust and buy-in.
  – Self-selected, diverse community mechanisms

• “Vertical Integration” of Information
  – “Low-tech” context-appropriate communications infrastructure + “high tech” analysis platforms
  – Have a presence at every level

• Information-sharing must be reciprocal
Fin!

Merci beaucoup,
Asante sana,
Matondo mingi