

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Central Africa

October 14, 2011

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

For more than two decades, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has murdered, raped, and kidnapped tens of thousands of men, women, and children in central Africa. The LRA continues to commit atrocities across the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan that have a disproportionate impact on regional security. Since 2008, the United States has supported regional military efforts to pursue the LRA and protect local communities. Even with some limited U.S. assistance, however, regional military efforts have thus far been unsuccessful in removing LRA leader Joseph Kony or his top commanders from the battlefield. In the Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009, Public Law 111-172, enacted May 24, 2010, the Congress also expressed support for increased, comprehensive U.S. efforts to help mitigate and eliminate the threat posed by the LRA to civilians and regional stability.

In furtherance of the Congress's stated policy, I have authorized a small number of combat-equipped U.S. forces to deploy to central Africa to provide assistance to regional forces that are working toward the removal of Joseph Kony from the battlefield. I believe that deploying these U.S. Armed Forces furthers U.S. national security interests and foreign policy and will be a significant contribution toward counter-LRA efforts in central Africa.

On October 12, the initial team of U.S. military personnel with appropriate combat equipment deployed to Uganda. During the next month, additional forces will deploy, including a second combat-equipped team and associated headquarters, communications, and logistics personnel. The total number of U.S. military personnel deploying for this mission is approximately 100. These forces will act as advisors to partner forces that have the goal of removing from the battlefield Joseph Kony and other senior leadership of the LRA. Our forces will provide information, advice, and assistance to select partner nation forces. Subject to the approval of each respective host nation, elements of these U.S. forces will deploy into Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The support provided by U.S. forces will enhance regional efforts against the LRA. However, although the U.S. forces are combat-equipped, they will only be providing information, advice, and assistance to partner nation forces, and they will not themselves engage LRA forces unless necessary for self-defense. All appropriate precautions have been taken to ensure the safety of U.S. military personnel during their deployment.

I have directed this deployment, which is in the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States, pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. I am making this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148). I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Daniel K. Inouye, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Categories: Communications to Congress : Central Africa, deployment of U.S. military forces, letter reporting

Names: Kony, Joseph.

Subjects: Africa : Central Africa :: Human rights issues; Africa : Central Africa :: U.S. military forces, deployment; Central African Republic : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Congo, Democratic Republic of the : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; South Sudan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Uganda : Lord's Resistance Army insurgent group; Uganda : U.S. military forces :: Deployment.

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