

## Transnational Dynamics of Internal Conflict and Conflict Resolution: Why the Lord's Resistance Army Still Matters to the Great Lakes Region in Africa

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The main purpose of this paper is to examine the current political and military approaches for conflict resolution in the Great Lakes region. The paper focuses on the areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), an armed group led by Joseph Kony. Since 1987, the LRA has been waging war against the Ugandan government's army, the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF). It is estimated that tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or kidnapped in Northern Uganda. However, the LRA's gross human rights violations and atrocities against civilians have not been confined to Northern Uganda but have spread to neighbouring countries, in particular, the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan. The border areas of the DRC, CAR, and South Sudan are practically ungoverned since state authorities do not have the institutional strength to control their frontier regions. Thus, these areas have become ideal locations for the LRA to survive. The Ugandan government has intensified military operations against the LRA after the failure of the Juba Peace Talk in 2008. The Congolese, Central African, and South Sudanese armies as well as UN peacekeepers in the DRC and South Sudan have also engaged in civilian protection from the LRA's attacks. However, several military operations against the LRA have failed to neutralize the organization, resulting in increased civilian casualties. The protracted nature of the LRA conflict urges us to rethink conventional approaches towards conflict resolution and peace-making. From past experience, it becomes clear that military intervention alone cannot resolve the fundamental causes of conflict and restore sustainable peace. The LRA conflict is not an isolated event but is situated within a broader regional and international context. Although the strength of the LRA has diminished, it still constitutes a threat to local people and to regional peace and stability. Thus, more comprehensive strategies and approaches are required to address complex regional issues and enhance regional cooperation among various actors, including states, regional and/or international organizations, traditional and religious leaders, and local communities. This paper argues that the LRA's cross-border dimension should be captured by a borderland analytic framework, and it evaluates two regional initiatives to overcome the current impasse of military operations, initiatives which create new opportunities to restore peace and stability in the region.

## Alternative Citizenship in East African Pastoral Societies

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The concept of citizenship, as a primary nexus defining the relationship between the state and the individual, as well as other components of the framework of the nation-state are now ubiquitous around the world. The states of Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan have maintained a laissez-faire policy toward pastoralist societies in the frontier regions. Thus, East African pastoralists have not sought legitimation and fulfillment of their rights from the state. Instead, pastoral peoples have historically made up moral communities with a political agenda of alternative citizenship at various levels of social groups with common ties to a region, blood, or ethnicity, and have adopted a practice of alternative citizenship between plural national identities.

This presentation describes and analyzes contemporary developments in coping mechanisms for armed conflict after disarmament in the pastoral societies of the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda; the transformation of cattle vigilantes, which has arisen out of recognition of the state's limitations concerning the maintenance of law and order; resolutions of the peace meetings, which have materialized to put an end to forced sedentarization, with civil society organizations based on a group of residents taking the lead to involve formal governance arrangements and other ethnic pastoralists' groups from home and abroad. Insecurity because of the use of small arms has resulted in the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda seeing intensifying levels of armed inter-communal conflict, with raiding of livestock and loss of people's lives since the 1980s. The formal security institutions of the state are unable to provide adequately for the security needs of the communities and, in some cases, state actors have contributed to insecurity. Among the pastoral societies of the Karamoja region, an indigenous and autochthonous group of residents has formed the foundation of the defense and welfare community in accordance with a common ground of understanding based on mutual help and trust. The pastoral societies of the region have realized significant cooperation rooted in the value system that social groups have historically created and operated rather than in their relations to the state.

International organizations and aid agencies in the West have recognized that civic organization is only the practical fundamental for citizenship, which is premised on independent individuals who value a relationship with the state. Modern citizenship is a legal, political, and social category, developed alongside Western representational democracy. Alternative spaces of citizenship in pastoral society lend visibility to identities and interests that are given shape by collective political decision-making, and an action system, premised on direct democracy, which is based on an axis of the oratory required to run an effective meeting; they are, therefore, important spaces for the exercise of citizenship and the realization of rights through a welfare and a defense community for the protection of the weak. This practice of citizenship encourages a shift in emphasis from legal and formal citizenship to forms of creative engagement that challenge the socio-political order.