



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Caroline Berkey

619.562.2799

LRA Crisis Tracker@InvisibleChildren.com



RESOLVE

digitaria

MODERN WEAPONRY: TECHNOLOGY TARGETS ELUSIVE WAR CRIMINAL

Digital Real-time Crisis Map, Built on African Community-Run Radio Network, Exposes Mass Atrocities of Brutal Rebel Group, the Lord's Resistance Army and Joseph Kony's Child Soldiers; Currently, 4 of 5 Incidents of Violence Go Unreported for Months or More

SAN DIEGO, California - September 28, 2011 – As totalitarian regimes around the world fall through revolutions fueled by modern social networks like Twitter and Facebook, a pair of human rights organizations combating injustice in Central Africa, Invisible Children and Resolve, announced today the launch of the LRA Crisis Tracker – a groundbreaking crisis-mapping platform that broadcasts in real time the attacks perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which continues its 25-year campaign of violence against civilians across the most remote areas of Central Africa.

The LRA, a brutal rebel group responsible for Africa's longest-running armed conflict, has murdered and mutilated innocent civilians for more than two decades, across four countries. Their self-appointed messiah, Joseph Kony, uses fear and psychological manipulation to control the regime. The key to the LRA's continued survival has been the kidnapping of children who are conscripted into their ranks, a number that has reached over 30,000 according to UN reports.

The LRA Crisis Tracker makes attack information publicly available through a digital map, a breaking newsfeed, regular data-analysis reports, and a mobile application—all of which can be found at LRACrisisTracker.com. Gathering reports of attacks from a local early-warning radio network supported by Invisible Children, in addition to data sourced from the United Nations, local Non-Government Organizations, and first-hand research, the project immediately becomes the most accurate source of public information on the LRA in existence, resulting in improved efforts to combat LRA atrocities and help communities in need.

“Our successful effort to install an early warning radio network in remote Congo communities was the first step towards filling the void of timely and accurate information about the LRA's movements,” said Invisible Children's Chief Executive Officer Ben Keese. “This melding of old technology with the new will be an enormous breakthrough in the protection of people living in one of the most remote corners in the world.”

The tool was developed in response to what is now known as the Makombo Massacre. In December of 2009, under the command of ICC-indicted war criminal Joseph Kony, the LRA killed 321 civilians in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite the incredible scale and brutality of the violence, the international community did not learn of the massacre until March 2010—three months later.

Michael Poffenberger, Executive Director of Resolve, said, “Not only is this a pioneering tool for activists and policymakers, but community-run protection organizations in Central Africa will directly benefit from regular reports analyzing LRA movement and attack patterns. The response time to LRA atrocities should be three hours, not three months.”

The LRA Crisis Tracker was developed in partnership with award-winning marketing and technology agency Digitaria. The result is a tool that combines empirical data with storytelling, visually-engaging data representation and narrative-rich media.

“As the Arab Spring has shown convincingly, technology can be used as a revolutionary springboard for social change,” said Digitaria’s Chief Technology Officer Chuck Phillips. “But Twitter and Facebook were intended as social tools and adapted as a force for social change. The Crisis Tracker is intended to put a scare into the bad guys from day one.”

The LRA Crisis tracker makes unique use of the cloud-computing platform Salesforce to compile reports of attacks, sent via Invisible Children’s recently installed early warning radio network in communities across the Congo, which are received and aggregated from a hub in northeastern DR Congo. The reports are immediately transcribed into Salesforce, where a customized content management system delivers the information to the mapping system and application.

“Technology is a game-changer in the battle to bring justice to war criminals,” Keesey concluded. “It levels the playing field by empowering the individual, and Invisible Children and Resolve will continue to pursue these technological developments toward greater civilian protection and lasting peace.”

To learn more, please visit LRACrisisTracker.com.

For more information about Invisible Children and its programs, visit invisiblechildren.com or contact:

Caroline Berkey

Phone: +1.619.562.2799

Email: CBerkey@InvisibleChildren.com

For more information on Resolve and its advocacy efforts, visit theResolve.org or contact:

Kenneth Transier

Phone: +1.202.596.2517

Email: kenneth@theResolve.org

INVISIBLE CHILDREN

Invisible Children is an international NGO working to assist communities in LRA-affected areas of Central Africa by expanding community-based early warning systems, reaching out to potential LRA defectors and affected communities through FM radio, and rehabilitating formerly-abducted children. Learn more at invisiblechildren.com.

RESOLVE

Resolve is a Washington D.C.-based NGO advocating to US and international policymakers for an end to atrocities being perpetrated by the Lord’s Resistance Army and in support of efforts toward lasting peace in LRA-affected communities across Central Africa. Learn more at theresolve.org.

DIGITARIA

Digitaria is a digital media agency, and a pioneer in digital marketing and technology. Part of the world’s largest marketing services holding company, WPP, Digitaria has provided innovative solutions to an array of international clients for well over a decade, including Qualcomm, NBC/Universal, Under Armour, the NFL and several of its franchises. Find out more at digitaria.com.



LRA
**CRISIS
TRACKER**

PRESS PACKET



MISSION STATEMENT

The LRA Crisis Tracker is a real-time mapping platform and data collection system created to bring an unprecedented level of transparency to the atrocities of the Lord's Resistance Army. Using information sourced from Invisible Children's Early Warning Radio Network, UN agencies, and local NGOs, this tool allows for better response from governments, policy-makers, and humanitarian organizations. This joint project, developed by Invisible Children and Resolve, marks the first time data surrounding the crisis has been comprehensively aggregated and made publicly available.

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Resistance Army is a deadly rebel group responsible for the murder, abduction, and displacement of thousands of innocent civilians in Central Africa over the past 25 years. Many of their victims are abducted children whom they forcefully conscript into their ranks, or take as sex slaves. Still, due to the lack of transportation and communication infrastructures in areas of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Southern Sudan (S.Sudan), and Central African Republic (CAR) where the group now operates, eighty-five percent of their attacks are never reported publicly.

In response to this void of timely and accurate information on the crisis, Invisible Children and Resolve have developed a system to report, in near real time, incidents involving the death, abduction and violence against innocent civilians in the region.

Utilizing a combination of simple and advanced technologies, the organizations have established a systematic method to communicate these atrocities to the international community. Reports of LRA attacks are gathered through Invisible Children's Early Warning Network of radios implemented in the affected region, in addition to research conducted by the UN and international organizations working on the ground. These reports are made available to decision makers and the general public on an interactive mapping platform, the LRA Crisis Tracker.

The LRA Crisis Tracker will not only provide key information for humanitarian response efforts, but also sheds light on a previous under-reported conflict using engaging multimedia assets to tell the stories of the affected communities and individuals.

METHODOLOGY

Data is collected for the LRA Crisis Tracker from a variety of sources, including reports from regional NGOs, United Nations agencies, Invisible Children's Early Warning System, and news organizations. Each security report is entered into a database and assigned a verification value. Data gathered from any reports deemed to be credible in accordance with an established verification policy are included on the site. The full Map Methodology and Database Codebook, outlining all data entry collection and entry procedures, can be found at LRACrisisTracker.com.

INCIDENT TO INTERFACE

RADIO NETWORK AND INCIDENT REPORTING

When an LRA attack occurs, the incident is reported by communities on Invisible Children's Early Warning Radio Network or through reliable NGOs and UN agencies in the region. All of the incidents collected are recorded at the Invisible Children Congo office in Dungu, DR Congo.

Invisible Children's or Resolve staff in the US then enter the detailed data into Salesforce, a business CRM which has been adapted to serve as a crisis mapping data management system. After being reviewed and scrubbed of sensitive information by site administrators, this database immediately uploads each incident to the LRACrisisTracker.com. The result is the most comprehensive and publicly-accessible database on LRA activity ever assembled.

ENGAGING WITH THE DATA

As soon as an incident is uploaded, the public and practitioners alike can access a comprehensive report at LRACrisisTracker.com, which details total deaths, abductions, injury, displacement, looting, and LRA movements and sightings. This snapshot is a unique look into a remote region where, without HF radios or satellite phones, communication is nearly impossible.

Crisis tracking software is being developed and relied upon by humanitarian actors more frequently than ever before—notably in Haiti, Egypt, and Libya. Inspired by their success, the LRA Crisis Tracker is the first of its kind to document attacks in Central Africa performed by the LRA. It will also build on previous crisis mapping efforts by complementing data with photos, videos, and interviews, enabling activists and international media to hear firsthand from the individuals most affected by the violence.

The goal of the LRA Crisis Tracker is to make information about LRA attacks instantly available in order to facilitate relief to the victim and prevent future attacks. With timely access to this information, organizations on the ground will be able to respond more quickly and effectively to meet the needs of impacted communities. Moreover, this database can inform advocates and policymakers around the world, ultimately influencing the way that international governments allocate funds, deploy peacekeepers and military forces, and provide humanitarian assistance.

STATISTICS

ACCORDING TO THE LRA CRISIS TRACKER

4 out of **5** LRA INCIDENTS
HAVE NEVER
BEEN
REPORTED BY
ANY WESTERN
OR REGIONAL
NEWS SOURCE

21 HOURS*

* frequency with which LRA attacks on
civilians occur on average

132*

* number of innocent civilians the LRA
has **killed** since January 2011

497*

* number of innocent civilians the LRA has
abducted since January 2011

RESOURCES FOR LRA CRISIS TRACKER

LOGOS



LINKS TO LRA CRISIS TRACKER PLATFORMS

Website URL:

www.LRACrisisTracker.com

iPhone application:

[Coming Soon.](#)

CITING

In all references to the LRACrisisTracker, cite as:

*The Invisible Children and Resolve LRA Crisis Tracker,
LRACrisisTracker.com*

CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATIONS



Invisible Children is an international NGO working to assist communities in LRA-affected areas of Central Africa by expanding community-based early warning systems, reaching out to potential LRA defectors and affected communities through FM radio, and rehabilitating formerly-abducted children.

Learn more at www.invisiblechildren.com



Resolve is a Washington D.C.-based NGO advocating to US and international policymakers for an end to atrocities being perpetrated by the Lord's Resistance Army and in support of efforts toward lasting peace in LRA-affected communities across central Africa.

Learn more at theresolve.org



Digitaria is a digital media agency, and a pioneer in digital marketing and technology. Part of the world's largest marketing services holding company, WPP, Digitaria has provided innovative solutions to an array of international clients for well over a decade, including Qualcomm, NBC/Universal, Under Armour, the NFL and several of its franchises.

Find out more at www.digitaria.com

CONTRIBUTORS AND MEDIA CONTACTS



Laren Poole - Co-Founder/President
Adam Finck - Director of Central & East Africa Programs
Sean Poole - Programs Coordinator, Central Africa
Kimmy Vandivort - Executive Assistant
Caroline Berkey - Central & East Africa Programs Assistant
Melanie Zawadi - Administrative Assistant, Dungu

Contact Information:
Invisible Children
1620 5th Ave, Suite 400 San Diego, CA 92101 USA
Phone: +1 (619) 562-2799
Email: LRACrisistracker@invisiblechildren.com



Michael Poffenberger - Co-founder & Executive Director
Paul Ronan - Co-founder & Director of Advocacy
Kenneth Transier - Advocacy Advocate
John Beaton - LRA Crisis Tracker Project Developer
Chelsea Geyer - LRA Crisis Tracker Project Developer

Contact Information:
236 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Ste. 500 Washington, DC 20002 USA
Phone: +1 (202) 596-2517
Email: crisistracker@theresolve.org



Dan Khabie - Chief Executive Officer
Chuck Phillips - Chief Technical Officer
Matt Motsenbacher - Director, Business Development
Tiffany Byrne - Producer
Adam Storr - Creative Technologist
Jonathan Dietz - Software Engineer
Tom Siebert - Vice President, Communications
Matt James - Multimedia Art Director

San Diego Contact Information:
350 Tenth Ave, Ste 1200 San Diego, CA 92101
Phone: +1 (619) 237-5552

