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LRA Crisis Tracker April 2016 Overview

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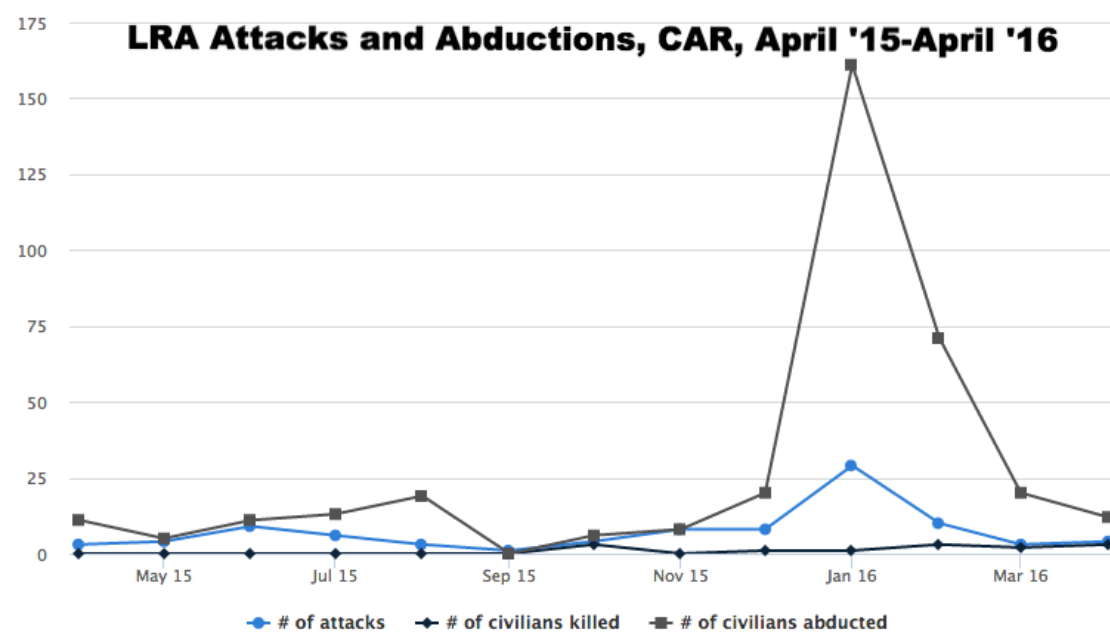
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Overview

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was responsible for 16 attacks on civilians in April 2016, in which they abducted 24 people. In eastern Central African Republic (CAR), LRA attacks and abductions declined for the third consecutive month, though a spate of attacks near the town of Rafai sparked tension between civilians and the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR (MINUSCA). In northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, LRA attacks were concentrated near Garamba National Park, indicating an LRA group may have returned to the park to collect ivory.

LRA violence in eastern CAR continues to decline

After abducting 232 people in eastern CAR between January and February 2016, LRA forces abducted only 20 civilians there in March and 12 in April. All 12 abductions in April occurred in a series of LRA attacks near the villages of Rafai and Agoumar between 17–21 April. Five LRA abductees escaped during the 17 April attack on Agoumar. Following this incident, an angry crowd of civilians confronted a MINUSCA contingent protecting one of LRA defectors who had defected. During the confrontation, an unidentified assailant shot and killed a Moroccan peacekeeper.



The identity of the LRA group responsible for the Rafai and Agoumar attacks has not been confirmed, but there is some evidence it could be the LRA splinter group led by Achaye Doctor. This group has been operating independently of Kony's control since late 2014 in DRC's Bas Uele province, directly south of the Rafia-Zemio-Mboki axis. There have been no reported LRA attacks in Bas Uele since February 2016, indicating that the Achaye Doctor may be surviving by crossing the border to eastern CAR to loot food and supplies and then returning to their camps in Bas Uele. Several of the abductees who escaped near Rafia on 17 April reportedly confirmed their group commander was Achaye Doctor.

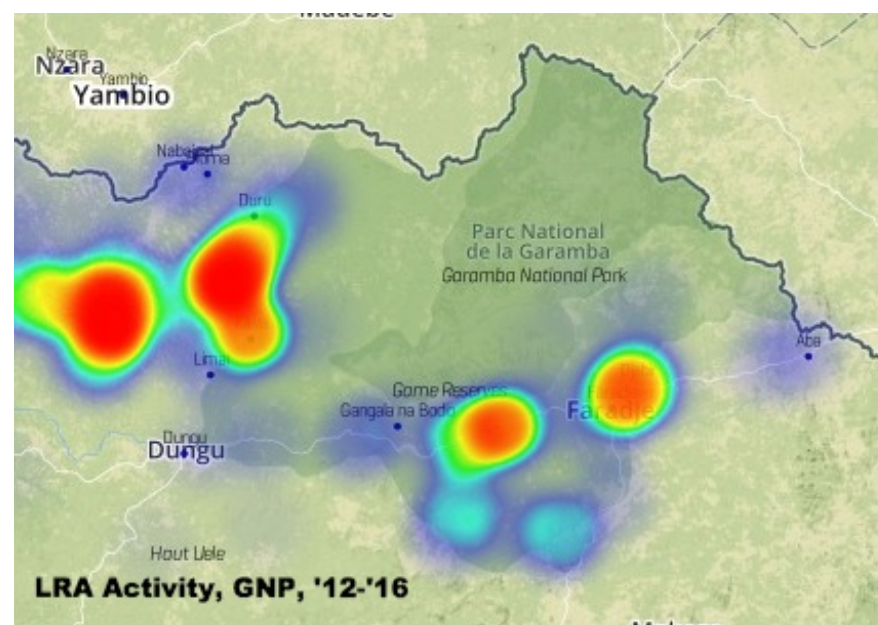
Recent LRA defectors have also indicated that an LRA group led by Aligatch may have also been operating in nearby areas of eastern CAR at the time of the attacks near Rafai and Zemio.

LRA attack patterns indicate poaching group has arrived in Garamba National Park

Though LRA activity in DRC's Bas Uele province has dropped in recent months, LRA attacks in bordering Haut Uele province increased in April 2016, particularly near Garamba National Park. LRA forces committed two attacks to the west of the park on 6 April and 10 April, followed by a series of seven attacks on communities to the south of the park from 20-29 April. Seven men abducted by the LRA near Kpaika on 10 April reported that they were forced to carry looted goods into the Azande hunting reserve, which borders Garamba National Park, to a location near Camp Kiswahili. Camp Kiswahili is a campsite in the Azande hunting reserve that LRA groups first established during the Juba Peace Talk (2006–2008) and have returned to frequently since then.

In the past, similar patterns of LRA attacks have indicated the arrival of LRA poaching groups in Garamba National Park and surrounding hunting reserves. In January 2015, an LRA group led by Aligatch and Ladere attacked the community of Nakale, to the west of the park, before settling into a campsite near Camp Kiswahili. The Aligatch group then committed frequent attacks on communities to the south of the park, including several that have been targeted more recently during the April 2016 uptick in LRA activity.

A Central African boy that defected near Mboki, CAR on 3 May 2016 also reported that an LRA group led by Awila departed the Kafia Kingi enclave in late March or early April to travel to Garamba National Park and collect ivory. It is not clear whether this group may be responsible for any of the LRA attacks reported recently near the park, however, it is clear that there was an LRA group operating in Garamba during the month of April.



Programmatic Updates

Invisible Children expanded its Early Warning Network to include Yalinga, in CAR's Haute Kotto prefecture. Yalinga will now report security information twice-daily into the network as well as integrate regional security information into a local protection plan. In addition to the installation of an HF radio, Invisible Children organized a Peace Committee in the community which supports the peaceful resolution of conflict, establishes a protocol for accepting LRA defectors, and seeks to mitigate risks that the community faces to internal and external threats through dialogue, strategic messaging, and sensitization.

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