

Statement by the President of the Security Council

The Security Council reiterates its strong condemnation of the appalling attacks and war crimes and crimes against humanity carried out by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights. The Council condemns further the LRA's recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, killing and maiming, rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violence, and abductions. The Council demands an immediate end to all attacks by the LRA and urges the LRA to release all those abducted, disarm and demobilise. The Council welcomes the recent progress made with regard to ending LRA war crimes and crimes against humanity in Central Africa and reiterates its resolve to maintain the current momentum until a permanent end to the threat posed by the LRA has been achieved.

The Security Council welcomes the diplomatic efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa and AU Special Envoy on the LRA Issue Francisco Madeira to strengthen regional cooperation and facilitate renewed AU-Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) operations in the region. The Council urges the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in its coordination role, as well as the United Nations political and peacekeeping missions in the region and other relevant United Nations presences to enhance their efforts in support of the implementation of the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the LRA (the UN strategy), as appropriate and within the limits of their mandates and capacities. The Council encourages the Secretary-General to optimise UNOCA's efforts in this regard, including through the use of staff and provision of support to anti-LRA efforts. The Council also calls on the international community to support the implementation of the UN strategy where possible. The Council notes in this regard the meeting of the International Working Group on the LRA (IWG-LRA) co-chaired by the European Union and the United States on 4 October 2013 in Brussels.

The Security Council reiterates its strong support for the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA (AU RCI-LRA), and commends the significant progress made by the AU-RTF. The Council welcomes in particular the AU-RTF's enhanced operations against LRA camps in recent months, which have increased pressure on the LRA command structure and degraded the LRA's capabilities. The Council urges all regional governments to fulfil all their commitments under the AU RCI-LRA and to provide the necessary basic provisions for their security forces. The Council encourages neighbouring states to cooperate with the AU-RTF, in order to end the LRA threat. The Council further encourages all states in the region to take measures to ensure that the LRA is not able to operate with impunity in their territory. The Council notes the importance of continued international support for the AU-RTF's operations, logistics, and headquarters. The Council underlines the need for all military action against the LRA to be conducted in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, as applicable, and to minimise the risk of harm to civilians in those areas.

The Security Council welcomes the steps taken to deliver an enhanced, comprehensive, and more regional approach to the humanitarian situation, including assistance to victims of sexual violence and other attacks and urges further progress in this regard.

The Security Council underlines the primary responsibility of States in the LRA-affected region to protect civilians. The Council welcomes the efforts undertaken by, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of South Sudan, Uganda and the Central African Republic (CAR), in coordination with the African Union, to end the threat posed by the LRA, and urges further efforts from these countries, as well as from other countries in the region.

The Security Council expresses its serious concern that the continued instability and increased security vacuum in the CAR continue negatively to affect counter-LRA operations and to contribute to the reinforcement of the LRA in the country. The Council further notes with concern that LRA attacks in the CAR have reportedly taken place in areas outside of the AU-RTF's principal area of operations. In this regard, the Council emphasises the need for strong coordination and information-sharing between BINUCA, the AU-RTF and the African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic (MISCA) in the context of their protection of civilians activities and counter-LRA operations.

The Security Council welcomes the efforts by the UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in tackling the LRA. In this context the Council encourages further and reinforced efforts by MONUSCO to address the LRA including through improved responsiveness to imminent threats to civilians, training and capacity building of the FARDC, support to the Joint information Operations Centre (JIOC), and implementation of the DDRRR robust programme to encourage and facilitate further LRA defections.

The Security Council notes the mandates of the MONUSCO and the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to help protect civilians in LRA-affected areas and support the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of LRA combatants in their respective countries. The Council urges both missions to enhance cooperation with the AU-RTF in order to coordinate operations, patrols and protection of civilians strategies. The Council encourages MONUSCO and UNMISS to provide appropriate logistical support to the AU-RTF, within their existing mandates and resources, and to cooperate closely with the AU-RTF in response to anticipated protection of civilians threats. The Council also notes the mandate of the United Nations – African Union Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) to cooperate and share swiftly information related to the regional threat of the LRA. In line with the UN strategy, the Council stresses the need for enhanced cross-border coordination, including through the use of common Standard Operating Procedures and swift information-sharing between these missions, as well as among all other relevant actors in the region, to better anticipate LRA movements and imminent threats of attack.

The Security Council takes note of reports suggesting the existence of an LRA base in the disputed enclave of Kafia Kinga, on the border of the CAR and between South Sudan and Sudan. The Council further notes reports of suspected attacks and abductions by the LRA in Western Equatoria, South Sudan and reports of the resumption of LRA activity in the Bas-Uele and Haut-Uele regions in the DRC.

The Security Council encourages the UN, AU and ECCAS, to continue to work together, including through joint field assessments, to further develop and maintain a common operating picture of the LRA's current capabilities and areas of operation, as well as to investigate the LRA's logistical networks and possible sources of military support and illicit financing, including alleged involvement in elephant poaching and related illicit smuggling. The Council notes the conclusion of the Secretary-General in his most recent report on UNOCA and the LRA (S/2013/671) that increased poaching activities have contributed to concerns over security in the CAR and the wider region and are used to finance transnational criminal networks and armed rebel groups, including the LRA.

The Security Council urges MONUSCO, BINUCA, UNMISS, and other United Nations actors in the LRA-affected region to continue to work with regional forces, international actors and non-governmental organisations, as appropriate, to promote a common approach to the promotion of defections and support for DDRRR efforts across the LRA-affected area. The Council highlights the

importance of programmes in support of the release, return and successful reintegration of children abducted by the LRA, in particular those that target community acceptance of such children.

The Security Council encourages the AU-RTF to maintain its operations against all LRA groups, while working with the UN and non-governmental organisations to establish safe reporting sites and provide information to assist LRA who demonstrate a genuine commitment to demobilisation and disarmament. The Council notes reports that small groups of LRA fighters in the CAR are seeking to disarm and surrender. In this regard, the Council urges BINUCA to work with the Transitional Authorities in the CAR to ensure that all efforts to encourage LRA defections adhere to UN LRA DDR Standard Operating Procedures.

The Security Council commends efforts by international donors to provide humanitarian assistance to LRA-affected populations in the CAR, the DRC and the Republic of South Sudan. The Council reaffirms its call for all parties to allow safe and unhindered access for humanitarian organisations to the civilian population, consistent with the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and the UN guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. The Council encourages donors to increase funding for humanitarian and early recovery projects outlined in the UN strategy. The Council also expresses concern about the departure of many humanitarian actors from LRA-affected areas in the DRC and the lack of regular humanitarian access to many LRA-affected communities in the CAR and the DRC, including because of poor infrastructure, and encourages increased UN efforts and international donor support for creating conditions conducive to improved and timely passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel.

The Security Council reiterates its call for the swift and full implementation of the conclusions of the working group on children and armed conflict concerning the situation of children and armed conflict affected by the Lord's Resistance Army. In this regard, the Council encourages those countries affected by the LRA which have not yet done so to establish Standard Operating Procedures for the reception and handover of LRA children to civilian child protection actors.

The Security Council recalls that the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, and Dominic Ongwen on charges of, inter alia, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and forced enlistment of children, have yet to be enforced, and calls upon all States to cooperate with relevant national authorities and the International Criminal Court, in accordance with their respective obligations, in order to implement those warrants, and to bring to justice those responsible.

The Security Council requests that the Secretary-General keep it informed on the activities of UNOCA, the progress of implementation of the Regional Strategy and the efforts being undertaken respectively by missions in the region and other relevant United Nations agencies to that end, including through a single report on UNOCA and the LRA to be submitted before 15 May 2014.