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LRA victims stuck in cycle of fear and flight, says new report

A new report released today offers a revealing insight into the realities of life for those who live side-by-side with one of the most vicious and notorious armed groups in the world, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The report, *A life of fear and flight: The Legacy of LRA Brutality in north-east Democratic Republic of Congo* released today by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and supported by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) focusses on internal displacement in Orientale province, in the north east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

With the recent announcement of this year's UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award winner Sister Angelique, whose work is dedicated to supporting victims of the LRA, the report highlights how in LRA affected areas of the DRC, Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan more than 20% of the population are currently internally displaced.

'Such high proportions are rarely seen in national displacement crises' says Jan Egeland, Secretary General of NRC. 'Such figures are comparable to some of the world's most complex internal displacement crises such as Syria and Colombia'.

Fear as a trigger of flight, and a barrier to returning home

'The LRA have a long history of extreme violence and have committed some of the most horrendous mass atrocities in the world' says Egeland. 'The deeply entrenched fear that this long history of violence has inspired means that today, the mere rumor of perceived 'LRA' activity is enough to cause whole villages to flee in fear of their lives'.

The report further highlights how those displaced in previous LRA attacks are too afraid and traumatised to return home, with 55% of over the 320,000 people currently displaced by the LRA in Orientale province living in displacement situations for up to 5 years.

A drop in violence should not lead to a drop in the provision of aid

'While we have seen protracted displacement situations in other areas of DRC, what makes this particularly unique is the high levels of fear and trauma within these communities' says Egeland. 'It is this extreme fear that is fueling the repeated and protracted nature of displacement'

'The drop in LRA attacks should not be a cause for premature withdrawal of aid' says Egeland. 'Right now, there is an ever-growing need for specialised long-term support for communities affected by LRA, such as trauma counseling and help for former abductees facing stigmatisation. Only in doing so

can we ensure that the displaced can collectively move forward from the horrendous atrocities that have been inflicted on them over the last 30 years, and find peace.’

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About Jan Egeland

Jan Egeland is the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, a position he has held since August 2013. He came from the position as Europe Director of Human Rights Watch. Prior to joining Human Rights Watch, he was the Executive Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

As UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator from 2003 to 2006, Egeland helped reform the global humanitarian response system and organized the international response to the Asian Tsunami, and crises from *Darfur to the Democratic Republic of Congo to Lebanon*.

In 2006, Time magazine named him one of the 100 “[people who shape our world.](#)”

From 1999 to 2002, he was the UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Colombia, and from 1990 to 1997 he was State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He has 30 years of experience from international work with human rights, humanitarian situations, and conflict resolution, and was among the initiators of the peace negotiations that led to the Oslo accords between Israel and PLO in 1993.

About IDMC

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. Through its monitoring and analysis of people internally displaced by conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural or human-made disasters, IDMC raises awareness and advocates for respect of the rights of at-risk and uprooted peoples.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). For more information, visit our website at www.internal-displacement.org

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