

Does Viral Video 'Kony 2012' Help or Hurt LRA Victims?

If you haven't seen it, the idea behind *Kony 2012* is to expose Joseph Kony as the war criminal he is, and to urge action to ensure his capture. Joseph Kony is the leader of the Uganda-based **Lord's Resistance Army** (LRA). Kony's actions have impacted scores of children and families across Uganda, Sudan, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Invisible Children's free documentary went viral in hours, outraging many for a variety of reasons. Some were amazed at the human trafficking and child soldier atrocities Kony has committed that they knew nothing about. Others were affronted by the seemingly easy solution the video submits to its viewers: Capture Kony.

Every Child Ministries (ECM) has been working with victims of Kony's crimes throughout Africa for years. ECM's Lorella Rouster says overall, she thinks the publicity is a good thing: "It will bring attention back to the problem again, first of all, because we tend to have a short attention span as human beings, and people have been excited about helping in northern Uganda. But then we easily forget about it when other problems come along."

Some of the criticism the video has faced is essentially that it's irrelevant. Many are saying Kony's reign, which began 20 years ago, is from a "bygone era."

Rouster, who has seen firsthand the effects of the LRA's wrath, disagrees. "It will take years, or even generations, to even begin to heal the damage that Kony did," she confirms. "So I don't think it's a bygone era, because the effects of it are still so dominant."

Other critics have attacked the seemingly simplistic approach

the Invisible Children video has provided to dealing with a two-decade problem. Rouster agrees that capturing Kony is not all that must be done—in particular, she points out that Kony's second-in-command must be captured as well—but it's a significant step.

"I do believe that if they are able to **capture Kony**, it will be a great encouragement to the people of northern Uganda. It will show them that justice has been done—or will be done—and that people can't do that kind of thing and just get by with it," says Rouster, adding that despite what the video suggests, Invisible Children is working to do more than just capture Kony.

Kony's capture may even open doors to the **gospel**. In the past, ECM has seen victims of the LRA's atrocities cling to Christ. Bringing Kony to justice and therefore offering a chance at peace for many who still fear him on the loose could bring more opportunities for the **Good News**.

The fight for Kony does seem to be a spiritual one at that. Rouster reminds us that Kony is well-versed in demon worship.

"He regularly converses with **demonic powers**, and he openly says that," says Rouster. "So I think that shows the great power that is behind the organization and perhaps explains partially why it's been very difficult to capture him."

Still, Christ is more powerful, Rouster says, and Kony can, therefore, be found.

And Rouster does believe that this video could help. "At least it will keep them from bringing those emissaries that are there—helping them, trying to provide the technique and the know-how to try and capture him—at least it will keep them from coming home before the job is done."

Click below to watch *Kony 2012*. Whatever you think of Invisible Children's approach, pray for God's will to be done

regarding this dangerous man.