

IRD: Lord's Resistance Army Not Christian

Guerrilla fighters accused of atrocities in northern Uganda and South Sudan are not a legitimate Christian group, according to an official with the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD).

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) operates in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and the Central African Republic. Raids by the group on remote locations forcibly take food, money or people who are subsequently enslaved. Churches and aid organizations have worked to alleviate suffering caused by LRA attacks on villages. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has essentially named the LRA's detainment of children as trafficking.

"The LRA has been a destabilizing influence across a swath of central Africa for years, leaving abduction, rape, maiming and murder of civilians, including children, in their bloody wake. Whatever political goals they may have originally espoused, they now exist to perpetuate their own power," says Faith J.H. McDonnell, Religious Liberty Program Director for the Institute on Religion & Democracy "Christians and people of good will across the political spectrum have labored for years to heal central Africa from the damage inflicted by the LRA. Recent statements that this is a Christian group are woefully misinformed."

McDonnell is referencing an Oct. 14 radio broadcast by Rush Limbaugh in which he stated that the "Lord's Resistance Army are Christians. They are fighting the Muslims in Sudan. And [President] Obama has sent troops, United States troops to remove them from the battlefield, which means kill them."

"The LRA rebels are notorious for kidnapping children and

forcing them to become rebel fighters or concubines," McDonnell says. "Their legacy has been over a half-million people in Uganda displaced by the fighting and living in temporary camps."