Useful resources with criticisms of the Invisible Children’s StopKony campaign and information about the conflict in Uganda and Central Africa and its root causes

March 13, 2012

A. Critiques of the Invisible Children and its Kony 2012 campaign

- Visible Children http://visiblechildren.tumblr.com/
- “Unpacking Kony” by Ethan Zuckerman, on My Heart is in Accra - http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/blog/2012/03/08/unpacking-kony-2012/
- “The #Kony2012 Show” by Elliot Ross, on Africa is a Country http://africasacountry.com/2012/03/07/phony-2012-risible-children/
- the visible problem with invisible children http://ilto.wordpress.com/2006/11/02/the-visible-problem-with-invisible-children/ EDIT ON MARCH 7, 2012: This post was originally written in 2006. Makes analogy to images of Sept 11 NYC ... 6 years later.

African critics

- Teju Cole's critique - in 7 Tweets - of Invisible Children & American Sentimentality, on My Heart is in Accra - http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/blog/2012/03/08/teju-cole-on-american-sentimentality-towards-africa/
- African voices respond to hyper-popular Kony 2012 viral campaign http://boingboing.net/2012/03/08/african-voices-respond-to-hype.html

- “#StopKony2012: For most Ugandans Kony’s crimes are from a bygone era” by Angelo Izama, a Ugandan journalist and writer who founded Fanaka Kwawote, a human security Think Tank based in Kampala [http://africanarguments.org/2012/03/08/stopkony2012-for-most-ugandans-kony-2012-video/]


- Anti-Kony video campaign draws criticism in Uganda, by RODNEY MUHUMUZA, Associated Press, March 9, 2012 [http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5h5-eQ_hrT8kaO9J6aNdHs_vx1Zjg?docId=b4eb7776f218494eb51184b6022d2e75]


Here is the best statement we have found on the KONY2012 issue (by Mahmood Mamdani at the Makerere Institute for Social Research) that shows how much of this death and destruction is to blame on Ugandan President Museveni, his military, and his successive blunders (including refusal to offer amnesty to Kony and his leaders when Parliament called for it), and attacks on Ugandans, especially northern Acholi country - actually apparently killing more Ugandans over the years than Kony and the LRA.


Invisible Children’s reply to critics: www.invisiblechildren.com/critiques.html

IC has promised a 10-minute video responding to the critiques, but it is not yet out.

B. Background about historical and current situation in Central Africa

- “Joseph Kony is not in Uganda (and other complicating things)” by Joshua Keating, Foreign Policy - [http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/07/guest_post_joseph_kony_is_not_in_uganda_and_other_complicated_things]


Includes: Response of Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) to the "Lord's


• “For Uganda, Justice is Complicated,” by Salvator Cusimano and Sima Atri, Globe and Mail [Canada] –(including the complex issue of trials)

• Report of the Secretary-General on the Lord’s Resistance Army-affected areas pursuant to Security Council press statement

• Human Rights Watch - How to Catch Joseph Kony (HRW supported sending US troops to Central Africa, but some of their information is helpful.)
  http://www.hrw.org/

• “The Problem with Invisible Children’s ‘Kony 2012’” by Michael Deibert, a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation Studies at Coventry University and author of the forthcoming Democratic Republic of Congo: Between Hope and Despair (Zed Books)
  http://africanarguments.org/2012/03/08/the-problem-with-invisible-childrens-kony-2012-by-michael-deibert/

  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-deibert/how-invisible-childrens-k_b_1334410.html?ref=impact

• Guest blog: US should not repeat Ugandan failures against the LRA, Saturday, October 22, 2011
  http://congosiasa.blogspot.com/2011/10/guest-blog-us-should-not-repeat-ugandan.html This guest blog was written by Ledio Cakaj. He has worked almost exclusively on the LRA conflict for the last three years as a consultant with various organizations. Most recently he was part of an international group of experts looking into possible ways to deal with the LRA.

• Excellent audio interview with Ethan Zuckerman
  http://boston.cbslocal.com/2012/03/10/mit-professor-stopping-kony-is-not-that-easy/

• Critique from 2006: http://ilto.wordpress.com/2006/11/02/the-visible-problem-with-invisible-children/ Chris Blattman, Assistant Professor of Political Science & Economics at Yale. I use field work and statistics to study poverty, political participation, the causes and consequences of violence, and policy in developing countries.

• Critique in 2009 (including photo of IC T-shirts):
  http://chrisblattman.com/2009/03/04/visible-children/
Regarding the actual military realities on the ground:
- important points even if he is associated with Enough and in general supportive of U.S. military involvement

Lancaster is also author of the study on LRA by the International Working Group, available at

Diagnostic Study of the Lord's Resistance Army - TDRP
www.tdrp.net/PDFs/LRA_DiagnosticStudy_1.pdf