**Lord's Resistance Army massacres up to 100 in Congolese village**

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Associated Press in Niangara

May 2, 2010

Guardian.co.uk

Original Source: *http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/02/niangara-congo-villagers-massacre*

Up to 100 people in a village in [Democratic Republic of the Congo](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/congo) are believed to have been massacred by Ugandan rebels, the UN has said.

John Holmes, the UN's top humanitarian official, said that an investigation was under way into the alleged attack, thought to have taken place in February.

In December, Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army killed at least 321 civilians in one of the worst single incidents of its 23-year insurgency. The rebels also kidnapped more than 250 people including 80 children, according to the UN.

Holmes learned of the latest killings on Saturday when he flew to Niangara and met local officials and victims who had escaped. UN investigators said they had spoken to witnesses but had been unable to reach the remote scene in the Haut-Uele district.

"In this district, the Lord's Resistance Army has continued to commit horrific atrocities against civilians, who are now displaced with no prospect of going back home any time soon," he said.

He said the incident highlighted the need for the continued presence of the UN military mission in Congo. Its government wants Monuc, the world's biggest peacekeeping mission, to leave before September next year.

"We are worried by the prospect of a premature withdrawal because Monuc is very important to our humanitarian activities," Holmes said. "If you withdraw that element of stability then other conflicts contained by the presence of Monuc may get out of control and you could find yourself in a much more dangerous situation."

Among recent victims Holmes met was Cornelia Yekpalile, a 23-year-old mother of four, who was mutilated 18 days ago when she went to fields near her village of Kpizimbi, set in dense forest in north-eastern Congo, to collect spinach-like pondu leaves to cook for lunch.

At Niangara hospital, where she is being cared for by Médecins sans Frontières, Yekpalile said she would not be going home when her wounds healed.

"There's no security in the villages," she said. "Here there are soldiers."

She said she had no idea why the rebels hacked off her lips and her right ear. "I was crying for mercy and crying 'Oh my God, oh my God, help me.' They said they would kill me if I carried on making a noise and then they did this," she said, pressing a bandage to a mouth covered in plaster.

LRA rebels have killed 1,600 Congolese civilians and abducted more than 2,500 since September 2008, after peace talks broke down. They have no known agenda except killing and kidnapping people, mainly children, to swell their ranks.

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