



## **Liberia**

### **Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review Regarding Impunity for Past Human Rights Violations**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

and

**Center for Justice and Accountability  
Centre for Civil and Political Rights  
Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia  
Civitas Maxima  
Global Justice and Research Project  
Human Rights Watch  
Secretariat for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia**

**for the 36th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review  
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Information about joint stakeholder organizations is included in Annex I.

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Widespread and systematic violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law characterized Liberia's two brutal armed conflicts that occurred between 1989 and 2003. Although the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommended prosecution of individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, Liberia has taken few steps toward holding anyone to account before a court of law. In a move welcomed by stakeholders to this report, President George Weah in September 2019 sent a letter to the legislature in which he appeared to back the establishment of a war crimes court. A resolution was introduced in July 2019 to the National Legislature to support establishment of a war crimes court and to call on President Weah to request assistance from the United Nations and Liberia's other international partners to foster its creation, which is now pending with significant support. These are important steps, but they will need to be followed up with concrete creation of a court to prosecute grave crimes in accordance with international standards and practice, ensuring that victims have access to a remedy for violations. As growing numbers of Liberian citizens demand justice, impunity for conflict-era crimes should end.

## II. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

### A. 2015 Universal Periodic Review of Liberia

#### 1. *Impunity for past human rights violations*

#### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

2. During the 2015 Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Liberia accepted two recommendations that explicitly address implementation of the TRC recommendations and establishing an accountability mechanism for past human rights violations.<sup>1</sup> The Liberian government also accepted several recommendations regarding increasing the capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights<sup>2</sup>, which was given responsibility for implementing the TRC recommendations, investigating human rights violations, and increasing protections for human rights.
  3. Most of the recommendations made by the TRC have yet to be implemented by the Liberian Government.<sup>3</sup> The State has also taken few steps toward holding to account before courts of law those responsible for atrocities committed during conflict, nor has it implemented legislation necessary to provide victims of these abuses with an effective remedy.
2. *Compliance with international human rights standards*

### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented**

4. The Liberian Government accepted and made meaningful progress on implementing numerous UPR recommendations to ratify and report to international human rights treaties, issue standing invitations to all special procedures,<sup>4</sup> and to bring its Constitution and domestic legislation into compliance with international human rights standards<sup>5</sup> and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.<sup>6</sup>
5. Liberia ratified both the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>7</sup> offered a standing invitation to special procedures in September of 2015,<sup>8</sup> and has maintained a moratorium on the Death Penalty since 2000.<sup>9</sup> The State has not, however, fulfilled its international obligations to prosecute war crimes and serious violations of human rights or to implement the right to a remedy for victims.
6. Further, reprisals against human rights defenders, journalists, and lawyers remain serious problems, especially with respect to actors who speak out against impunity for human rights violations committed during the civil war. There is currently no specific legislation to protect them from prosecution or arbitrary action by State actors such as the police.<sup>10</sup>
7. Widespread and systematic violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law characterized Liberia's brutal armed conflicts from 1989-2003, a period of armed conflict within the TRC's mandate. These abuses included summary executions; large-scale massacres; rape and other forms of sexual violence; mutilation and torture; and forced conscription and use of child combatants.

### **III. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS**

#### **Liberia has not fulfilled its international obligation to hold accountable those who have committed war crimes and serious human rights violations**

8. The TRC report concluded that all warring factions were implicated in serious abuses. The TRC specifically recommended the establishment of the Extraordinary Criminal Court for Liberia, a hybrid international-national chamber to try individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international law.
9. Although the Government of Liberia has taken some steps to implement the TRC recommendations through the Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation launched in 2012, the focus of the Roadmap is "in particular on those recommendations that are most compatible with restorative justice," as opposed to criminal accountability.<sup>11</sup>

10. International law mandates prosecuting serious crimes that violate international law such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and this duty to prosecute lies primarily with domestic authorities.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Liberia has assumed obligations to prosecute serious crimes and implement the right to a remedy for victims of such crimes through ratification and accession to multiple international instruments.<sup>13</sup>
11. In a move welcomed by stakeholders to this report, President George Weah in September 2019 sent a letter to the legislature in which he appeared to back the establishment of a war crimes court.<sup>14</sup> A resolution was introduced in July 2019 to the National Legislature to support establishment of a war crimes court and call on President Weah to request assistance from the United Nations and Liberia's other international partners to foster its creation, which is now pending with significant support.<sup>15</sup> These are important steps, but they will need to be followed up with concrete creation of a court to prosecute grave crimes in accordance with international standards and practice, ensuring that victims have access to a remedy for violations.<sup>16</sup>
12. The few cases seeking accountability for these civil wars-era crimes thus far have all occurred outside Liberia, primarily in Europe and the United States.<sup>17</sup> Liberia has, under President Weah, pledged to cooperate with these investigations and, in 2019, authorized for the first time a foreign government to investigate such a case in Liberia.<sup>18</sup> Further, these cases have complemented accountability efforts by Liberian civil society within Liberia. For example, The Global Justice and Research Project, a Liberia-based and staffed non-governmental organization, has documented war-related crimes in partnership with Geneva-based non-governmental organization Civitas Maxima for use in litigation.
13. A coalition of 76 civil society organizations, the majority based in Liberia, submitted a report for Liberia's review by the UN Human Rights Committee (Committee) in 2018. The report highlighted the government's failure to prosecute crimes committed during the civil war or end impunity, as well as the need for perpetrators of past crimes to be held to account fairly before courts of law. In its Concluding Observations, the Committee noted with concern that "none of the alleged perpetrators of gross human rights violations and war crimes mentioned in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's ] report have been brought to justice and that some of those individuals are or have been holding official executive positions, including in the Government."<sup>19</sup>
14. The Committee recommended as a matter of priority that Liberia "...establish a process of accountability for past gross human rights violations and war crimes that conforms to international standards....The State party should, in particular:

- a. Ensure that all alleged perpetrators of gross human rights violations and war crimes are impartially prosecuted and, if found guilty, convicted and punished in accordance with the gravity of the acts committed, regardless of their status or any domestic legislation on immunities, and remove any persons who are proven to have been involved in gross human rights violations and war crimes from official positions;
  - b. Take all necessary measures to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and consider establishing a well-resourced body, comprising government representatives, the National Independent Commission on Human Rights and civil society organizations, to monitor the implementation of those recommendations.”<sup>20</sup>
15. Following the Committee’s recommendations, the Liberian government promised to immediately respond with their position on implementing the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>21</sup> However, the Liberian delegation has yet to provide a response.

**Calls for accountability from civil society and Liberian public**

16. On January 22, 2018, a coalition of 20 Liberian and international non-governmental organizations, wrote to President George Weah after he took office, calling on him to revisit the issue of justice for past crimes.<sup>22</sup> In recent months, Liberian citizens have increased their calls for justice for civil war era crimes. Fifteen years since the end of armed conflict in Liberia, the call for war crimes prosecutions continues to be a topic of debate in the national legislature and the public.<sup>23</sup>
17. Several prominent leaders have come forward to support renewed calls for justice for civil war-era crimes. These include Leymah Gbowee, who won the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize along with former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who recently spoke in support of renewed calls for a war crimes court in Liberia, stating: “There is no way that we can overlook peoples’ quest for justice; it is a legitimate quest.”<sup>24</sup> In addition, the President of Liberian National Bar Association, Counsellor Tiawan Gongloe called on Liberian law makers to ensure accountability for war crimes over impunity.<sup>25</sup>
18. Religious groups have also expressed their support for justice for past human rights violations. Catholic Bishop Andrew Karnley issued a statement reiterating his support of the TRC recommendations for the establishment of a war crimes court to pave the way for reconciliation in Liberia, stating: “I strongly believe that those who bear the greatest responsibility for gross abuses of human rights in Liberia during the war should face trial.”<sup>26</sup> The Liberian Council of Churches also came forward and called on President Weah to fully implement the TRC recommendations, including those calling for accountability.<sup>27</sup>

19. Remarks by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed at the Liberian National Peace and Reconciliation conference on March 22, 2018 echoed calls from civil society to implement the TRC Recommendations: “It is also critical to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and for the legislature to pass key bills that will support local inclusion and reconciliation. These would be timely measures that would assure Liberians that there is strong resolve to see a conclusion to this process.”<sup>28</sup>
20. To quote one victim, Suzana Vaye, a widow who was profiled in the *Liberian Observer*: “The TRC is not enough; I want the war crimes court to be established here to hold perpetrators who inflicted pains on us accountable for what they did. We do not want recurrence of what happened in this country.”<sup>29</sup> According to Hassan Bility, executive director of the Monrovia-based Global Justice and Research Project: “Justice must be one of the cardinal points of the President’s new agenda. There must be justice for war crimes; otherwise there will be no lasting peace in Liberia.”<sup>30</sup>
21. Between May 2018 and July 2019, civil society groups have led several protests calling for accountability. A coalition of civil society groups and individuals, for instance, marched in the streets of Monrovia on May 8 and May 22, 2018, calling for accountability and demanding the creation of a war crimes court. On November 12, 2018, Liberians advocating for the establishment of a war crimes court marched in the capital Monrovia.<sup>31</sup> Liberian civil society organizations also led mass protests in Monrovia in June and July of 2019.<sup>32</sup>
22. Protestors have called for the prosecution of current government officials involved in civil war-era crimes. Many families of the victims of war-time atrocities attended the protests. Several attendees wore white t-shirts with the name of loved ones lost during the civil war written on them in black ink, in an attempt to draw attention to the imperative of establishing a tribunal.<sup>33</sup>
23. A National Justice Conference on accountability, convened by Liberian civil society groups with support from international organizations, was held in Monrovia in November 2018.<sup>34</sup> The conference marked the first time since the TRC recommendations were issued that members of the government, UN, civil society, and diplomatic missions discussed steps forward in accountability for wartime atrocities.
24. The Liberian Bar Association added its support for a war crimes court in April 2019;<sup>35</sup> the bar association also prepared a first draft of a bill to establish a court.<sup>36</sup> In July 2019, lawmakers attended a legislative conference on accountability organized by local and international groups.<sup>37</sup> The joint committee of Liberia’s House of Representatives then put forward a resolution backing the court, which was immediately endorsed by nine lawmakers, and has since been signed by 42 more.<sup>38</sup> The resolution calls for the full

implementation of recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.<sup>39</sup>

25. The Traditional Chiefs Council backed a war crimes court in September 2019.<sup>40</sup> On September 6, the National Economic Dialogue, attended by 350 Liberians, including members of the government, political parties, youth, and civil society, recommended establishing the court.
26. The groups urged the legislature to move ahead with a law to establish the court and work with President Weah to request assistance from Liberia's international and regional partners in the effort, particularly the United Nations, as well as the European Union, African Union, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Sweden. There should also be greater involvement from nongovernmental organizations with expertise in war crimes courts.
27. President Weah, in a letter to the legislature dated September 12, 2019, wrote: "I ... do hereby call on the National Legislature to advise and provide guidance on all legislative and other necessary measures towards the implementation of the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] report, including the establishment of the Economic and War Crimes Court."<sup>41</sup> During his speech at the UN General Assembly on September 25, 2019, President Weah reported that he was beginning consultation with the Liberian legislature on the creation of a war crimes court and asked the international community for their "unflinching support as we embark upon this important national endeavor."<sup>42</sup>
28. At present, 51 lawmakers have signed on to the resolution supporting the implementation of the TRC recommendations, including recommendations on accountability for war crimes.<sup>43</sup>

### **Concerns regarding freedom of assembly and speech**

29. Many journalists, especially those who criticize the government or express political opinions have been harassed, detained, and fined. It has been reported that, in April 2018, two days before the Press Union of Liberia addressed an open letter to the UN secretary-general voicing alarm at the "pace at which official intolerance for independent journalism and dissent is escalating in Liberia," the entire staff of a Monrovia-based newspaper, Front Page Africa, were arrested and questioned by court officials in connection with a story about associates of the ruling party. Later that same month, Tyrone Brown, a TV and radio reporter was found dead and reportedly had been "thrown from a car after being stabbed twice" by police. As noted by several sources, his murder is emblematic of growing hostility towards journalists, despite assurances by President Weah to defend press freedom. Some international journalists have fled after questions were raised regarding the sincerity of Weah's defense of human rights during Liberia's civil war.<sup>44</sup>

30. President Weah, at a joint press conference on March 22, 2018 with UN Deputy Secretary-General Amin Mohammed, evoked fears and memories of the 1985 brutal killing of journalist Charles Gbenyon when he openly described local journalist and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) stringer Jonathan Paye-Layleh as one person that has been against him even in his (Weah's) advocacy over the years.<sup>45</sup>
31. A serving parliamentarian and critic of the Liberian government, Hon. Koluba, who accused ex-militants of receiving money from Liberia's Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Nathaniel McGill for the purpose of going after people who criticize President Weah, was threatened on April 17, 2019. In a video issued on April 16, 2019, at their National Headquarters on Benson Street, Monrovia, ex-generals threatened to deal with the parliamentarian if he continued criticizing the government: "The same thing we did for Madam Sirleaf for the past 12 years we can do the same thing for President Weah and whosoever that will come after President Weah, we will support that president," said G. Benjamin Taylor, former chief of staff of the former MODEL rebels.<sup>46</sup>
32. Members of the Liberian judiciary also face an increasing atmosphere of unease. Normal court activities at the Temple of Justice on April 18, 2019, came to a temporary halt when several ex-generals from three defunct rebel factions and the disbanded Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) stormed the courtyard in two jeeps, one of them, a white jeep bearing markings indicating it is assigned to the Ministry of State and the other, a black jeep without license plates. They disembarked the vehicles in such military style and fashion that was clearly meant as a show of force and which frightened people, mainly party litigants, and had them scurrying for safety. Later, court staff informed the frightened onlookers that the appearance of the ex-rebel generals at the Temple of Justice courtyard was a result of an invitation from Montserrado County Attorney Edward Kla Martin, who is an employee of the Ministry of Justice.<sup>47</sup>

#### **IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

33. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Liberia:
- Work with the legislature to ensure a war crimes court is established to hold perpetrators of grave crimes committed during Liberia's armed conflicts to account consistent with international standards and practice.
  - Request assistance from the United Nations, and other international and regional partners as needed, to develop a credible war crimes court.
  - Ensure a war crimes court for Liberia includes key elements in order to achieve trials that would be fair, meaningful, and credible:
    - Composition of judicial benches that will have sufficient independence and expertise by including international judges;

- No bars on prosecution on the basis of their cooperation with the TRC;
  - Inclusion of crimes and modes of liability in line with international standards;
  - Fair trial protections;
  - Witness protection and support;
  - Involvement of victims in proceedings; and
  - Outreach and communications that inform the victims and public.
- Establish an independent committee comprised of government officials, a member of the Independent National Commission of Human Rights, and civil society actors from various sectors that is mandated to advise the government on justice and the rule of law. The committee would be chaired by a special presidential advisor and be mandated to establish a roadmap on the way forward for ensuring justice for war crimes and for strengthening the rule of law.
  - Request from international partners adequate support and funding for programs designed to improve Liberia’s judiciary and criminal justice system to ensure victims’ access to justice and the right of the accused to a fair trial.
  - Support efforts by third countries to bring universal jurisdiction cases for civil war-era crimes, including by continuing to fully cooperate with foreign authorities who request authorization to come to Liberia to investigate international crimes.
  - Guarantee protection for human rights defenders inside Liberia against attacks and intimidation, and ensure that those who intimidate or attack human rights defenders are brought to justice.
  - Ensure respect for freedoms of assembly and speech for members of civil society engaging in peaceful demonstrations in favor of accountability and transparency, and for journalists endeavoring to fulfill their important mandate.

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Liberia Addendum 1*, (September 25, 2015), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/30/4Add.1 ¶ 100.150 Deepen the national dialogue to establish an accountability mechanism for human rights violations committed in the past (Argentina); ¶ 100.164 Continue the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to foster national harmony (Senegal)

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Liberia Addendum 1*, (September 25, 2015), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/30/4Add.1 ¶ 100.83 Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights established in 2011, the Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary (Costa Rica); ¶ 100.84 Provide the independent National Commission on Human Rights with adequate resources to assist in discharging its core mandate (Egypt); ¶ 100.85 Take the necessary measures to ensure that the independent National Human Rights Commission fully complies with the Paris Principles (France); ¶ 100.86 Boost the investigative capacity of the National Independent Human Rights Commission and ensure full participation by civil society in its work (Mexico); ¶ 100.87 Strengthen the capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights, providing it with the necessary means to allow it to coordinate human rights monitoring, investigation, and field activities (Portugal); ¶ 100.88 Take necessary measures to develop internal governance procedures in order that the Independent

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National Commission on Human Rights could perform its mandated role, in particular by ensuring adequate funding for the commission (Republic of Korea);

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2017/18: The State of the World's Human Rights: Liberia*. (London, U.K.: Amnesty International Ltd., 2018), 239. Also available at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF>

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review : Liberia Addendum 1*, (September 25, 2015), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/30/4Add.1¶ 100.107 Issue standing invitations to all special procedures (Ghana); ¶ 100.108 Extend a standing invitation to the special procedures, as accepted during the first cycle of the universal periodic review of Liberia, as previously recommended (Latvia); ¶ 100.109 Extend a standing invitation to the special procedures in order to improve its cooperation with the international community in the field of human rights (Turkey); ¶ 100.110 Step up its cooperation with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council by responding positively to the pending visit requests of the special procedures mandate holders without delay (Latvia); ¶ 100.111 Strengthen its cooperation with the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council (Tunisia)

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Liberia Addendum 1*, (September 25, 2015), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/30/4Add.1¶100.43 Conclude the process of revision of its Constitution and national legislation so as to guarantee that they are compatible with regional and international human rights instruments to which the country is a State party (Mexico); ¶100.44 Ensure that the revision of the Constitution is firmly based on human rights and complies with international human rights standards (Czech Republic)

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review : Liberia Addendum 1*, (September 25, 2015), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/30/4Add.1¶100.7 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Spain);¶ 100.51 Fully align its national legislation with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Estonia); ¶100.52 Bring domestic legislation into line to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (Costa Rica);

<sup>7</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “UN Treaty Body Database”, accessed Aug. 8, 2019,

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=98&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=98&Lang=EN)

<sup>8</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Standing Invitations” Accessed Aug. 8, 2019, [https://spinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/SpecialProceduresInternet/StandingInvitations.aspx](https://spinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/SpecialProceduresInternet/StandingInvitations.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, “Liberian, Africa (Western Africa)” accessed Aug. 8, 2019, <http://www.worldcoalition.org/Liberia>

<sup>10</sup> Submission of Information to Special Procedures (May 2019), 12 (on file with authors)

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Committee, *Common core document forming part of the reports of states parties: Liberia*, *supra* note 2, sec. 20.

<sup>12</sup> See Human Rights Commission, *Updated Set of Principles for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity (Updated Principles)*, (Feb. 8, 2005), E/CN.4/2005/102/Add.1, preamble and principle 19; UN General Assembly, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (hereinafter “ICCPR”), 1966, Art. 2(3). See also UN General Assembly Resolution 60/147, preamble and parts VII and VIII, U.N. Doc. A/RES/60/147 (Dec. 16, 2005), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/RemedyAndReparation.aspx>.

<sup>13</sup> This includes: ICCPR, *supra* 4, Art. 2; United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984, Art. 14; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Art. 39; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) of 8 June 1977, 1977, Art. 91; and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 1981, Art. 7. Liberia is also a member of the International Criminal Court, which provides for the prosecution of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by the ICC when national courts are unable or unwilling, since 2004. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998, preamble and art. 17.

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<sup>14</sup> *Liberia: President Backs War Crimes Court*, Human Rights Watch, September 17, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/09/17/liberia-president-backs-war-crimes-court>

<sup>15</sup> Leroy M. Sonpon, III, *House Gets 51 Signatures to Establish War, Economic Crimes Court*, *Liberian Daily Observer*, October 1, 2019, <https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/house-gets-51-signatures-to-establish-war-economic-crimes-court/>

<sup>16</sup> Leroy M. Sonpon, III, *43 Lawmakers Sign for War, Economic Crime Courts*, *Liberian Daily Observer*, September 23, 2019, <https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/43-lawmakers-sign-for-war-economic-crime-courts/>

<sup>17</sup> These cases include: the 2009 conviction of Charles “Chucky” Taylor, the son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, in the US for torture; the 2017 conviction of former rebel commander Mohammed “Jungle Jabbah” Jabbateh for immigration fraud in the United States in relation to his involvement in civil war abuses in Liberia; the trial of former National Patriotic Front (NPFL) Defense Minister Tom Woewiyu in the United States for immigration fraud related to human rights abuses in Liberia; the indictment of NPFL Commander Martina Johnson in Belgium for atrocity crimes in Liberia; the indictment of United Liberation Movement (ULIMO) Commander Alieu Kosiah in Switzerland for crimes against humanity and torture; and the indictment of Agnes Reeves Taylor in the United Kingdom for her alleged role in NPFL abuses in Liberia. A civil suit for torture and extrajudicial killing was also filed in the U.S. against former Armed Forces of Liberia commander Moses Thomas on behalf of victims of the Lutheran Church Massacre in Liberia. *See* Press Release, Human Rights Watch, *Liberia: Make Justice a Priority*, (Feb. 12, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/12/liberia-make-justice-priority>; *see also* Cristian González Cabrera and Nushin Sarkarti, “Using U.S. Courts to Promote Accountability for the 1990 Liberian Church Massacre and Beyond,” *Just Security*, Feb. 26, 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/52970/u-s-courts-promote-accountability-1990-liberian-church-massacre/>.

<sup>18</sup> Civitas Maxima, et al. *The French judicial authorities have investigated in Liberia*, (June 12, 2019) Available online at: [https://www.civitas-maxima.org/sites/default/files/docs/2019-06/the\\_french\\_judicial\\_authorities\\_investigated\\_in\\_liberia\\_120619\\_1.pdf](https://www.civitas-maxima.org/sites/default/files/docs/2019-06/the_french_judicial_authorities_investigated_in_liberia_120619_1.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, *Concluding observations on the initial report in Liberia*, (August 27, 2018), U.N. Doc CCPR/C/LBR/CO/1, ¶10

<sup>20</sup> UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, *Concluding observations on the initial report in Liberia*, (August 27, 2018), U.N. Doc CCPR/C/LBR/CO/1, ¶11

<sup>21</sup> UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, *Concluding observations on the initial report in Liberia*, (August 27, 2018), U.N. Doc CCPR/C/LBR/CO/1, ¶10

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Twenty Human Rights Organizations to his Excellency President George Weah (Jan. 22, 2018), <https://cja.org/letter-george-weah/>; *see also* Letter from Human Rights Watch to President of Liberia George Weah (Feb. 12, 2018), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/12/hrw-letter-president-liberia-george-weah>.

<sup>23</sup> James Harding Giahue, *Nearly 10 Years on the TRC Report Still Dominates Liberian Politics*, *Front Page Africa* June 11, 2018, <http://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/nearly-10-years-on-the-trc-report-still-dominates-liberian-politics/>.

<sup>24</sup> Voice of America, “Daybreak Africa,” accessed May 14, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/4369939.html>, 19:46.

<sup>25</sup> *Starting the Accountability Process: Liberian Lawyers Draft Bill for Establishing War Crimes Court*, *Front Page Africa*, May 23, 2019, <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/starting-the-accountability-process-liberian-lawyers-draft-bill-for-establishing-war-crimes-court/>

<sup>26</sup> Willie N. Tokpa, *Liberia: Catholic Church Bishop Calls for Prosecution of Warlords*, *Front Page Africa* May 8, 2018, <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-catholic-church-bishop-calls-for-prosecution-of-warlords/>.

<sup>27</sup> Preston Gayflor, *Liberia Council of Churches Calls on President Weah to Implement TRC Recommendations*, *Front Page Africa*, Feb. 26, 2018, <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/2016news/liberia-council-of-churches-calls-on-president-weah-to-implement-trc-recommendations/>.

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- <sup>28</sup> Press Release, Secretariat. Confidence-Building, Broader Inclusion Needed to Cement Hard-Won Gains in Liberia, Deputy Secretary-General Tells Peace, Reconciliation Summit, UN Doc. DSG/SM/1147 (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/dsgsm1147.doc.htm>.
- <sup>29</sup> Joaquin M. Sendolo, *Female Victim Pleads for War Crimes Court*, *Liberian Daily Observer*, May 21, 2018, <https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/victim-pleads-for-war-crimes-court/>.
- <sup>30</sup> Press Release, The Center for Justice and Accountability, 20 Human Rights Groups Urge President Weah to Prosecute War Crimes (Jan. 21, 2018), <https://cja.org/10394-2/>.
- <sup>31</sup> *Advocates for War Crimes Court March for 'Justice' in Liberia*, *African Star*, November 12, 2018, <https://www.africanstar.org/advocates-for-war-crimes-court-march-for-justice-in-liberia/>
- <sup>32</sup> Ruth Maclan *Protests in Liberia over George Weah's failure to tackle corruption*, *The Guardian*, Jun 7 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/07/thousands-protest-in-liberia-against-failure-to-tackle-corruption>
- <sup>33</sup> *Liberians March in the streets of Monrovia in Demand for Justice against War and Economic Crimes*, *Front Page Africa*, Aug. 6, 2019, <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/liberia-war-crimes-trial/liberians-march-the-streets-of-monrovia-in-demand-for-justice-against-war-and-economic-crimes/>
- <sup>34</sup> Press Release, The Center for Justice and Accountability, Historic War Crimes Conference in Liberia Brings Justice a Big Step Closer, (November 11, 2018), <https://cja.org/historic-war-crimes-conference-in-liberia-brings-justice-a-big-step-closer/>
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## **Annex I: Reporting Organizations**

### **The Advocates for Human Rights (AHR)**

330 Second Avenue South, Suite 800, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2211 USA

[www.TheAdvocatesForHumanRights.org](http://www.TheAdvocatesForHumanRights.org)

Contact Person: Jennifer Prestholdt

612 341 3302 [jprestholdt@advrights.org](mailto:jprestholdt@advrights.org)

Founded in 1983, The Advocates for Human Rights (AHR) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. As the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States, The Advocates has represented numerous Liberian refugees seeking asylum. From 2006 to 2009, The Advocates worked with the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Liberia to give the Liberian diaspora a voice in the process of investigating human rights abuses during the country's long period of civil conflict and to make recommendations to promote peace and reconciliation. The Advocates continues to work with human rights defenders in Liberia and in the Liberian diaspora.

### **Center for Justice and Accountability**

One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 406, San Francisco, CA 94102 · [cja.org](http://cja.org)

Contact Person: Nushin Sarkarati

USA +1 (415) 544-0444 · [nsarkarati@cja.org](mailto:nsarkarati@cja.org)

The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) is a San Francisco-based human rights legal organization dedicated to deterring torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious human rights abuses around the world through innovative litigation, policy and transitional justice strategies. CJA partners with victims and survivors in pursuit of truth, justice, and redress, and has successfully brought cases against a former Minister of Defense of Somalia's Siad Barre regime, the military officer responsible for the assassination of Chilean activist and singer Victor Jara, and Syria's Assad regime for its targeted killing of war correspondent Marie Colvin.

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### **Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre)**

Rue de Varembé 1, CP 183, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland · [ccprcentre.org](http://ccprcentre.org)

Contact Person: Andrea Meraz Sepulveda

+41 22 332 25 55 · [ameraz@ccprcentre.org](mailto:ameraz@ccprcentre.org)

The Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre) is an independent, non-governmental organisation, established in 2008, dedicated to contribute to the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) through supporting civil society and through connecting key actors engaged to implement the UN Human Rights Committee recommendations at the national level. The Centre also aims at ensuring that the work of the Human Rights Committee is fully taken into account in the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) established by the Human Rights Council.

### **Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia**

Monrovia, Liberia

Contact Person: Adama Dempster, Secretary General

+231-886-510- 059      [adama.dempster78@gmail.com](mailto:adama.dempster78@gmail.com)

The Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia is a non-governmental organization made up of human rights organizations from across Liberia. It was established in 2017 to consolidate human rights advocacy in Liberia to ensure timely redress and change.

### **Civitas Maxima**

Place de la Fusterie 14, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland · [www.civitas-maxima.org](http://www.civitas-maxima.org)

Contact Person: Lisa-Marie Rudi

+4122 346 12 43 · [lisa.rudi@civitas-maxima.org](mailto:lisa.rudi@civitas-maxima.org)

Civitas Maxima facilitates the documentation of international crimes, and pursues the redress of such crimes on behalf of victims who do not have access to justice. Civitas Maxima was established in 2012.

### **Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP)**

Caldwell, Liberia · [www.globaljustice-research.org](http://www.globaljustice-research.org)

Contact Person: Hassan Bility

+231 77 017 9752 · [hassan.bility@globaljustice-research.org](mailto:hassan.bility@globaljustice-research.org)

The Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP) is an impartial non-partisan non-governmental national human rights organization that is free from bias. GJRP strives to ensure justice and accountability for all victims of both Liberian civil wars that took place between 1989-1997 and 1999- 2003. GJRP was established in 2012.

### **Human Rights Watch (HRW)**

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118 · [hrw.org](http://hrw.org)

Contact Person: Elise Keppler

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212 216 1249 · [kepplee@hrw.org](mailto:kepplee@hrw.org)

Human Rights Watch investigates and reports on abuses happening in all corners of the world. We are roughly 450 people of 70-plus nationalities who are country experts, lawyers, journalists, and others who work to protect the most at risk, from vulnerable minorities and civilians in wartime, to refugees and children in need. We direct our advocacy towards governments, armed groups and businesses, pushing them to change or enforce their laws, policies and practices. To ensure our independence, we refuse government funding and corporate ties. We partner with organizations large and small across the globe to protect embattled activists and to help hold abusers to account and bring justice to victims.

**Secretariat for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia (SEWACCOL)**

Tubman Boulevard

Monrovia, Liberia

+231 88 651 1205 [warcimesliberia@gmail.com](mailto:warcimesliberia@gmail.com)

Secretariat for the Establishment of War Crimes Court in Liberia (SEWACCOL), is a civil society organization founded in 2019 to advocate for justice and post war accountability action in Liberia. SEWACCOL focuses on transitional justice advocacy, and is comprised of Liberian advocates that engages with victims and survivors across the country, leading a campaign for the establishment of a war crimes court in Liberia.