

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

JANE W, in her individual capacity, and in her capacity as the personal representative of the estates of her relatives, James W, Julie W and Jen W;

JOHN X, in his individual capacity, and in his capacity as the personal representative of the estates of his relatives, Jane X, Julie X, James X and Joseph X;

JOHN Y, in his individual capacity;

AND JOHN Z, in his individual capacity,

Plaintiffs,

v.

MOSES W. THOMAS,

Defendant.

Case No. 2:18-CV-00569-PBT

**DECLARATION OF MARK HUBAND IN SUPPORT OF
PLAINTIFFS' JANE W, JOHN X, JOHN Y, AND JOHN Z
MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT**

I, Mark Huband, declare under 28 U.S.C. § 1746 that:

I. Personal Background

1. I am an author and former journalist. I was the West Africa correspondent for the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* from 1989 to 1992.

2. I received an undergraduate degree in history from the University of Manchester in 1985 and a post-graduate diploma in journalism from Cardiff University in 1986. After working for several years as a freelance journalist, I moved to Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire in September 1989 to work for the *Financial Times*. I worked for the *Financial Times* until April 1990. I then worked for the *Guardian* from May 1990 to August 1994, initially from Abidjan, and subsequently from Nairobi, Kenya. While working for the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* in West Africa, I travelled to Liberia eight times between January 1990 and July 1992, and reported on, among other events, the first Liberian civil war. I have published two books about that period—*The Siege of Monrovia* (Live Canon, 2017) and *The Liberian Civil War* (Routledge, 1998)—in which I recount the history of the civil war and my personal experiences covering it.

3. After leaving West Africa in July 1992, I became Africa Correspondent for the *Guardian* based in Kenya and subsequently worked as North Africa and then Middle East correspondent for the *Times* of London, and later the *Financial Times* from 1994 to 2000.

4. I currently run a London-based risk and intelligence company that provides risk analysis for corporations and financial institutions.

II. Liberia in 1990

5. I was in the United Kingdom for the holidays when, on December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia ("NPFL") attacked a military outpost of

then-President Samuel Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia ("AFL") in northeastern Nimba County, setting off the first Liberian civil war. Taylor had been training the NPFL first in Libya and subsequently in Burkina Faso for several years before the incursion, drawing support from members of the Mano and Gio tribes that had been marginalized under the presidency of Samuel Doe, a member of the Krahn tribe.

6. I travelled to Monrovia for the first time on January 8, 1990. I immediately went to the Ministry of Information to obtain a press pass, after which I took a taxi to Nimba County to report on the NPFL's incursion. After three or four days in Liberia, I returned to Abidjan.

7. I went back to Liberia in early April 1990 to assess the developments in the conflict, though the Financial Times, my employer at the time, instructed me that my reporting should focus on iron ore production from a mine in the north of the country. I travelled by car to Buchanan, in western Liberia, and arranged to take an iron ore train from there to the mine at Yekepa, in the northeastern county of Nimba. While I was on the train, the NPFL—which by then had control of much of northeast Liberia—attacked the train. I remained with the NPFL unit for three or four days before crossing the border back to Côte d'Ivoire. Several NPFL soldiers whom I had met contacted me shortly after. They told me that they would like to meet other foreign journalists, so I arranged for a group of my colleagues to cross the land border with me later in April. By that time, the NPFL controlled territory throughout Nimba County, with incursions further south into Grand Bassa County.

8. In May 1990, then as a correspondent for the *Guardian*, I went to Freetown, Sierra Leone to report on peace talks between the Government and the NPFL. By early June, the NPFL was getting close to Monrovia, so I arranged to fly from Freetown to Monrovia to cover the troop movements. I landed in Monrovia's Spriggs-Payne Airport on June 10, 1990. The

AFL, under the command of then-Colonel Hezekiah Bowen, still controlled Monrovia when I arrived, but the NPFL was approaching from the east. We did not know it at the time, but in the approach to Monrovia, a faction of the NPFL known as the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (“**INPFL**”) had broken away from Taylor’s command under the leadership of Prince Johnson. The NPFL and INPFL were fighting separately against the AFL, and would later fight against each other.

9. I rented a house with other journalists in Mamba Point, northwest of the city center. Based in Monrovia, I could better track troop movements; my routine was to walk the streets of the city to see for myself what was taking place, and to discuss developments with the residents of the city, government officials, AFL officers, and the few diplomats still in the city. Residents were able to identify developments owing to personally knowing soldiers and others coming from different areas outside Monrovia, many of which were difficult to access as a reporter. I learned to identify the different forces by their clothing: the AFL had a green/brown uniform, while the NPFL usually wore civilian clothes and not uniforms, except for the senior figures, who wore olive green fatigues.

10. The starkest difference between the groups, however, was their manner of fighting, the AFL generally being extremely hostile to reporters. They would patrol during the night to find people they accused of sympathizing with the rebels—especially members of the Mano and Gio tribes—and execute many. Bodies of Mano and Gio residents of Monrovia were later found in the fields around Spriggs Payne Airport and in swamp areas close to the city. The AFL’s elite Special Anti-Terrorist Unit (“**SATU**”) had a particular reputation for brutality. I understood that the SATU’s AFL commanders had given the unit *carte blanche* to commit

atrocities with impunity. My Monrovia sources would tell me that when someone disappeared overnight, the SATU likely played a role.

11. On July 18, 1990, I woke up to find that the battle lines in Monrovia had shifted overnight. I saw that the INPFL had crossed over the People's Bridge (now known as the Gabriel Tucker Bridge) and into the city's north riverbank. The INPFL established its front line relatively quickly, including around Mamba Point, the area where I was staying. The NPFL was still out in the east of Monrovia, near Paynesville. Because of this change in front line, my rented house was now located in INPFL-controlled territory.

12. As the INPFL and NPFL closed in on Monrovia, the AFL concentrated its forces in the city center, in the areas close to President Doe's Executive Mansion, and in the Crown Hill area, including the vicinity of St. Peter's Lutheran Church (the "**Lutheran Church**"). I had the impression that the AFL never earnestly tried to retake the city after the NPFL and INPFL arrived. Rather, their main goal—and a particular charge of the SATU—was to keep the rebels from reaching the Executive Mansion where President Doe was living.

13. Throughout July, the front lines continuously shifted in the west and east of Monrovia. During the night of July 23, 1990, the INPFL reached Monrovia, and in the days that followed, they advanced to the lower end of Crown Hill. The hill itself was a "no-man's land" which neither the INPFL nor the AFL controlled. At the top of Crown Hill, the AFL was in control. On July 30, the AFL launched an offensive into the Mamba Point section of Monrovia. On August 2, Charles Taylor's NPFL pushed further into the city from the east, occupying much of Sinkor district. I understand that on the night of July 29, 1990—the night of the attack on the Lutheran Church—the area in which the church is located was under AFL control. I cannot be

certain whether by July 29, 1990 the NPFL had reached Fifteenth and Sixteenth Streets, nor Spriggs Payne airfield, as I did not have access to these areas.

III. The Lutheran Church Massacre

14. Many Manos and Gios had fled Monrovia by June 1990, scared of what might happen to them if they stayed in the city under AFL control during an INPFL and NPFL siege. Many other Manos and Gios could not leave Monrovia, however, because they had nowhere else to go. Those unable to leave had sought refuge in various shelters, including the Lutheran Church, which the Red Cross and the Lutheran Council of Churches set up as a shelter for those displaced by the civil war.

15. It was widely known that the Lutheran Church held the largest concentration of Manos and Gios in the capital and that it served no military purpose. Before the massacre, I visited the church on July 19, 1990 and observed hundreds of civilians there. I saw no overt military presence in the vicinity of the church at that time. The people seeking shelter there were displaced civilians with no weapons or affiliation to armed rebel groups. Nevertheless, I recall that the church was long suspected to be a target of the AFL. People whom I met when I visited in July told me that AFL soldiers had gone to the church on multiple occasions, shooting into the air and rattling the gates to frighten those inside. I also remember someone worrying that the AFL would “kill them all,” referring to the people sheltering at the Lutheran Church.

16. I first heard about the massacre at the Lutheran Church on the morning of July 30, 1990 from Tahseen, a Liberian fixer with whom I had worked. He came to my house to tell me that AFL soldiers had murdered hundreds of Manos and Gios the previous night at the church in the Sinkor district, which was under AFL control. I also heard the news from Budu Kaisa, a Liberian journalist, who had heard of this event from individuals who had managed to cross the front line from the AFL-controlled area in which the church was located.

17. It was difficult to visit the site of the massacre because it was a mile or more into AFL territory and required that I cross the front line from the area of the city in which I lived. My acquaintance Tahseen said that he could find his way across and report back. He returned two hours later with a report that confirmed the worst fears of the massacre. He said that he had seen at least 600 civilians slaughtered, including women with babies tied to their backs, people who had tried to escape through the windows, and others who had hidden under pews.¹

18. Doctors from St. Joseph's Catholic Hospital sent convoys to the Lutheran Church the next day, July 30. They told me that they estimated there were about 1,000 people sheltering inside the church during the massacre, around 600 of whom had been killed and 150 wounded.²

19. Several months later, I interviewed Jonathan Teah, one of the survivors of the attack, and he confirmed Tahseen's details. He told me that around 200 AFL soldiers arrived at the church just before the 7 pm curfew and entered despite the Red Cross flag on the wall. The AFL soldiers rattled the gates surrounding the church and fired rounds into the air to frighten those inside, causing them to huddle among the pews. Soldiers then shot the door to the church open, took all the food they could find, and raped and killed the woman who had the key to the warehouse of food. Sometime later that night, the soldiers returned, entered the church, and began slaughtering the people inside with knives, and then with guns.³ Other soldiers surrounded the large compound to keep the people inside from escaping.

20. The size and coordination of the operation leaves little doubt that it was carried out by AFL forces. It would have taken substantial effort and a sizeable number of personnel to

¹ MARK HUBAND, *THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR 173-74* (1998).

² *Id.*, p. 175.

³ *Id.*, pp. 174-75.

implement. The attack seemed to be organized; the church compound was around 20 meters wide and 50 or 60 meters deep, and yet the forces were able to stop people from escaping and kill so many people in a short period of time. Given the proximity of the church to the center of the AFL's political power at the Executive Mansion, around 2.5 kilometers away, there is no question that everyone in the entire area would have known of the attack while it was happening or quickly afterward. There is no question Samuel Doe knew about the attack. News spread like wildfire.

IV. Visiting the Lutheran Church

21. Despite the challenges of getting past the front line, I wanted to visit the church myself. On August 12, 1990, two journalist colleagues and I attempted to cross the front line at the top of Crown Hill in central Monrovia, from the INPFL-controlled district in the west into AFL-controlled territory. As we approached AFL territory on foot, soldiers shot into the air as a warning. I presented myself to an AFL soldier who seemed to be in charge. He grabbed my shirt, shouted insults at me, and ordered the three of us to empty our pockets. He seized my pocketknife, pen, notebook, and handkerchief, and he tore my glasses from my face. He ordered us to follow him through the alleyways between a cluster of small huts next to the river. I had difficulty seeing ahead of me without my glasses, and soldiers continuously pushed me with the butts of their rifles.⁴

22. Eventually, the soldiers stopped and ordered us to remove our shirts, shoes, and socks. They told us that they would like to take us behind several tin shacks nearby—where we feared they intended to shoot us, though this was not specifically stated. We refused to follow them. They then loaded us into a taxi and took us to the Barclay Training Center (“BTC”), the

⁴ *Id.*, pp. 183-84.

city-center barracks of the AFL, close to the Executive Mansion, and into the office of Lieutenant Colonel Moses Thomas, the head of the SATU. I knew it was Thomas because he was sitting behind a desk bearing his nameplate. I had been told previously that Thomas was the SATU head; I don't recall if his position was also written on his nameplate. Thomas asked me incredulously whether we had really crossed the front line, and he admonished us that doing so was very dangerous. While we were in his office, President Doe's press spokesman Sellie Thompson joined the discussion and we talked with him. We were then taken to an office along the same corridor, where we were introduced to now-General Hezekiah Bowen, and his deputy, General Moses Wright. Thomas then took us outside to his car to show us what he claimed was damage inflicted on the city by the U.S. military.⁵ We were eventually permitted to leave the BTC and walked back to our residence on Mamba Point, which was only about thirty minutes away by foot, without any further harassment; we did not encounter any INPFL forces on our way back, despite crossing the front line into their territory.

23. I was unable to visit the Lutheran Church in August, and I left Monrovia on August 14, 1990. In October, I returned to Monrovia on a Nigerian cargo ship accompanied by Stephen Smith, the Africa editor of the French daily *Libération*, and the photographer Patrick Robert of *Sygma*, to report on the death on September 9, 1990 of President Samuel Doe, and the war's progress.

24. By late September or early October 1990, the situation in the center of city had become static, owing to the presence of a West African peacekeeping force; when I arrived in the city in October, the areas of control were largely as they had been when I had left in August. The AFL remained in control of the area in which the Lutheran Church was located. This time,

⁵ *Id.*, pp. 186-87.

however, I was able to pass over the front line with the assistance of the recently arrived peacekeeping force—the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (“**ECOMOG**”). On October 10, Major Chris Otulana, a Nigerian ECOMOG information officer, took me, Robert, and Smith to the Lutheran Church.⁶

25. Even several months after the massacre, the bodies of some victims remained. They had shriveled, leaving only piles of rotting clothes on the floor. Skeletons lay in piles under the pews and beside the altar, and limbs of victims who had tried to escape hung from the broken windows. Maggots covered the floor of the church. In the classrooms next door, bodies were rotting into their mattresses and clothes clung to the skeletons of young children.⁷ I saw a Red Cross flag displayed prominently at the front door of the church, and there were no weapons in sight.

26. I would guess I saw several hundred decomposing bodies between the church and classrooms. I understood that some bodies had been buried in a mass grave. The ones we observed in October were left in the church because there was not enough space in which to bury them.

27. After about ten or fifteen minutes inside the church, we heard shooting outside. When we exited the building, I saw a group of around 20 soldiers, who had arrived in two pickup trucks. Their commander was Michael Tilly, an AFL officer (I am unsure whether he had an official rank) and known death squad leader thought to be involved in the massacre. I had seen him before—though had never spoken with him—at Monrovia port in June 1990, and I recognized him immediately. Tilly started yelling at us, demanding to know why we were here

⁶ *Id.*, p. 203.

⁷ *Id.*, pp. 203-04.


at the church. He was clearly upset that we were there; it seemed that he did not want us to see the dead bodies. Otulana calmed him, and we drove off.⁸

28. The Lutheran Church massacre was absolute savagery. What I saw at the church horrified me. It was clear that the AFL's only aim was to kill people, to settle old scores against the Manos, the Gios, or others. The AFL had transformed into a senseless killing machine.

* * *

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on March 1, 2021, in London, United Kingdom.



Mark Huband

⁸ *Id.*, pp. 204-05.