
Liberian citizens and survivors of church attack seek damages from Sharon Hill man (/stories/511344565-liberian-citizens-and-survivors-of-church-attack-seek-damages-from-sharon-hill-man)



PennRecord

by Louie Torres (/author/louie-torres) | Feb. 14, 2018, 1:04pm



PHILADELPHIA – Survivors of a church massacre in Liberia that took place nearly three decades ago allege the man that led the massacre is residing in Pennsylvania and are seeking damages.

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 John Y and John Z filed a complaint on Feb. 12 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania against Moses W. Thomas citing the Alien Tort Statute and Torture Victim Protection Act and other counts.

According to the complaint, the plaintiffs are direct survivors of the St. Peter's Lutheran Church massacre that occurred in 1990 in Monrovia, Liberia. The plaintiffs still reside in Liberia, the suit states.

"The church was a designated Red Cross humanitarian aid center sheltering civilians displaced from the growing violence in Liberia's countryside and in the capital city of Monrovia," the suit states.

According to the complaint, the defendant was a colonel and head of a specialized branch of the government's Armed Forces of Liberia.

"At Thomas's command, these armed forces surrounded the Lutheran Church and, over the course of several hours, indiscriminately shot or hacked to death approximately 600 sleeping civilian men, women and children taking refuge there. The Lutheran Church Massacre was part of a larger campaign of violence against the Mano and Gio ethnic groups by the AFL. Plaintiffs, who survived the Lutheran Church Massacre by hiding under piles of dead bodies, witnessed the slaughter of hundreds of civilians, including their own family members," the suit states.

The suit states he currently resides in Sharon Hill after immigrating to the United States.

"Plaintiffs institute this action against Thomas seeking compensatory and punitive damages for torts in violation of international and domestic law, and seek damages for extrajudicial killing and attempted extrajudicial killing; torture; cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment; war crimes; and crimes against humanity," the suit states.

The plaintiffs request a trial by jury and seek compensatory damages, punitive and exemplary damages, court costs and any further relief the court grants. They are represented by Nushin Sarkarati, Carmen Cheung and Kathy Roberts of Center for Justice and Accountability in San Francisco; Laurence S. Shtasel and James T. Giles of Blank Rome LLP in Philadelphia; and Catherine Amirfar, Matthew E. Fishbein and Sonia R. Farber of Debevoise & Plimpton LLP in New York.

U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania Case number 2:18-cv-00569-PBT

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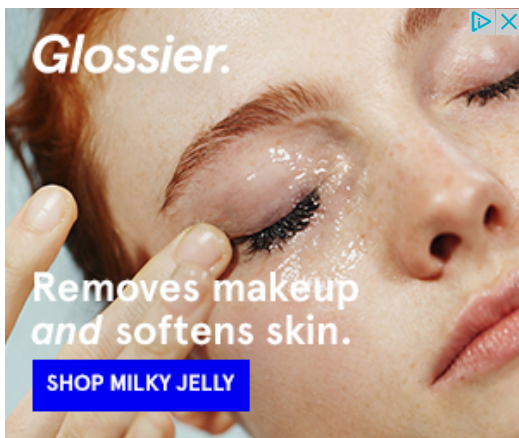
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