

September 20, 2018

His Excellency George Weah President of the Republic of Liberia

Re: Endorsing Accountability for Past Crimes at the UN General Assembly

Dear President Weah:

In anticipation of your participation in September's high-level segment of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, we urge you to show leadership at this global platform by announcing that the Liberian government will develop, with support from the international community, a roadmap to ensure justice and reparations for victims of the gravest crimes committed during Liberia's civil wars.

The UN Human Rights Committee on July 26, 2018, called upon the Liberian government to establish a process of accountability for past war crimes following its first-ever review of the human rights situation in Liberia. The committee expressed "concern that none of the alleged perpetrators of gross human rights violations and war crimes mentioned in the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] report, has been brought to justice."

In its final report issued July 1, 2009, Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for the creation of a war crimes court in the country, and Liberia is obligated under international law to try grave crimes committed. Nonetheless, Liberia has yet to hold a single person to account for past abuses. According to the committee, "such a situation fosters a climate of impunity and fails to achieve transitional justice." The only prosecutions of past abuses are taking place in the United States and Europe.

Liberia's civil wars were characterized by widespread atrocities, including summary executions and large-scale massacres, including at Carter Camp and St. Peter's Lutheran Church where hundreds of civilians were killed in a single night; widespread as well as systematic rape; mutilation and torture; and forced conscription and use of child combatants. Attacks against humanitarian aid centers and murder of international aid workers, such as the death of five American nuns, brought international attention to Liberia's war.

The Human Rights Committee identified measures to provide justice, truth, and reparations for civil war victims as a priority, and Liberia will need to report back on these issues by 2020. Meanwhile, calls for justice by Liberian civil society groups and ordinary citizens, in addition to international organizations, continue to grow.

Several of our representatives attended Liberia's appearance before the Human Rights Committee, and we welcome the pledge by the government delegation during the session that the government would soon issue a public statement on implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations.

By seizing the General Assembly high-level segment to present plans for Liberia to bring justice for the serious abuses committed during the civil wars, you would stand with victims and take an important step to address impunity—which has undermined development and reconciliation in Liberia for far too long—and build sustainable peace for Liberians.

We thank you and stand ready to support you in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Liberian Organizations:

1. Accountability Lab Liberia
2. African Advocacy Network
3. African Career, Education, and Resource, Inc. (ACER)
4. Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia
5. Association of Liberian Journalists in America
6. Better Future Foundation
7. Campaigners for Change
8. Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
9. Center for Social Justice and Human Development (CSJHDEV)
10. Coalition for Justice in Liberia
11. Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc- DATI
12. Economic Freedom Fighters of Liberia
13. ECOWAS Women in Liberia
14. The Emancipation Movement of Liberia Inc. (EMOL)
15. Flomo Theatre Production Inc.
16. Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy
17. Foundation for International Dignity
18. Friends of the Congo
19. Fubbi Foundation for Development and Sustainability
20. Global Justice and Research Project
21. Goba Foundation
22. Holistic Education Advocating Leadership (HEAL)
23. Human Rights Protection Forum
24. Human Rights Monitor Liberia United Methodist Church
25. Independent Human Rights Investigators

26. International Disable Women (IDS)
27. International Justice Group
28. IsraAID – Liberia
29. Liberia – America Friendship Organization
30. Liberia Human Rights Campaign
31. Liberian Diaspora Initiatives (LIDIN)
32. Liberian Human Rights and Welfare Organization
33. Liberia Judicial and Prisons Monitors
34. Liberian Massacre Survivors Association
35. Liberians United for Justice and Accountability
36. Liberia Working Group
37. Love 113
38. The Movement to Establish Peace, Justice and Unity in Liberia (MEPJUL)
39. National Civil Society Council of Liberia
40. National Economic and Social Development Action Committee
41. National Health Workers Union of Liberia
42. National Human Rights Monitor
43. National Street Children Activists Network
44. National Student Movement for the Establishment of Economic & War Crimes Court in Liberia
45. National Teachers' Association of Liberia
46. Operation We Care for Liberia
47. Patriot Crusaders
48. Prison Fellowship of Liberia
49. Research for Documentation on Human Rights
50. Regional Watch for Human Rights
51. Rights and Rice Foundation
52. River Gee County Association in the Americas
53. Rural Human Rights Activists Programme
54. Student Unification Party
55. Tambasons Global Human Services Inc.
56. Transitional Justice Working Group
57. United Liberians Association of Alberta

58. Universal Human Rights
59. Voice of the Voiceless
60. Women Empowerment Foundation of Liberia
61. Women of Liberia Peacebuilding Network
62. Women Solidarity

African civil society organizations outside Liberia and international civil society organizations:

63. The Advocates for Human Rights
64. Africa Legal Aid
65. Amnesty International
66. The Ghana Center for Democratic Development
67. Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law – Sierra Leone
68. Center for Justice and Accountability
69. Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (Malawi)
70. Children’s Education Society (Tanzania)
71. Civitas Maxima
72. Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley – School of Law
73. Human Rights Watch
74. International Federation of Human Rights
75. Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice
76. National Centre For Human Rights and Development (Sierra Leone)
77. No Peace Without Justice
78. Parliamentarians for Global Action
79. Southern African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (Zambia)
80. World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy