

Independent Legal
Representation of
Victims of War Crimes
and Crimes Against
Humanity

**CIVITAS
MAXIMA**

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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© Paolo Pellegrin / Magnum Photos
Monrovia, Liberia. 2006

Sometimes, I do regret having testified. Fear is always with the victims, never the war criminals (...) On that day, I realized that a witness is like a dust-cloth.

You are used to remove dust and, once no longer needed, thrown away (...) But I also tell myself that we were right to testify. (...)

Our monument is not made of stone or concrete. It is the verdict itself.

- SANJA CORIC

Qui répondrait en ce monde à la terrible obstination du crime si ce n'est l'obstination du témoignage?

- ALBERT CAMUS

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Monrovia is besieged by rebels from the LURD, a Liberian rebel group active from 1999 until 2003. Boy selling sweets in the streets of Monrovia.

© Teun Voeten, Liberia, Monrovia, 2003

Reaching Out for Justice



For Civitas Maxima, 2017 was a special and pivotal year which will stand out in our memories for many years to come.

Until 2017, our work on behalf of victims of mass crimes was carried out by lawyers and investigators in cooperation with authorities in several different countries mostly in a confidential manner.

Arrests of alleged perpetrators in 2014, 2015, and 2017, received some notoriety and garnered modest attraction to our profile.

This changed in October 2017 as an unprecedented level of public attention was drawn to us. Mohammed Jabbateh, also known as “Jungle Jabbah,” was tried in a federal criminal court in Philadelphia, PA, for having lied to United States’ immigration authorities about his role during the First Liberian Civil War. The prosecutors presented evidence of crimes he committed in Liberia and it marked the first time that Liberian victims had the chance to testify in a criminal court about atrocities committed during the First Liberian Civil War.

© Yvain Genevay/Le Matin Dimanche

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Civitas Maxima and the Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP) had collaborated since 2014 with the relevant United States’ authorities on this case. This was the first trial of a case we had worked on. It left us questioning our continued role as an organisation mainly comprised of lawyers and investigators. Now that the case had moved to trial, should we speak about it publicly?

We decided to rise to the challenge.

Firstly, we wanted to provide an accurate, unbiased, public record of the trial. Given that “Jungle Jabbah” is a Liberian immigrant and stood accused of lying about committing war crimes in order to reside in the United States, our fear was that facts of this trial – if not properly contextualized – could be used to promote racist or anti-immigration agendas. We also anticipated the risk of fact distortion by people aiming to de-legitimize the victims’ fight for justice by claiming that the Western world was trying an African alleged perpetrator in some form of neo-colonialist effort.

Secondly, we were eager to provide a platform for the thousands of Liberian victims who wanted this trial to take place. Their cries for justice needed to be heard by their leaders and the international community. To date, there has never been justice for Liberian victims of war crimes in their own country.

Thirdly, we also wanted Liberians to see that it was possible for someone accused of crimes related to the civil war to be held accountable, even many years after the fact and despite the refusal to prioritize accountability by political elites.

Moreover, we wanted Liberia and the world to see that “Jungle Jabbah” was tried with due process, had a competent lawyer to defend him, and enjoyed other procedural rights.

Nevertheless, there was a challenge: how to reach out and engage with a large and diverse audience – not only lawyers – in a precise and accurate way and at the same time, keep them interested over several weeks?

By mid-2017, we launched the Liberian Quest for Justice campaign (see p. 30)

We partnered up with dedicated professionals, artists, lawyers, and journalists to produce daily legal monitoring reports, cartoons, videos and updates on the trial.

I believe with this campaign, we created a unique and creative platform for lawyers and laypeople from the African continent and beyond to participate in a meaningful dialogue about trials related to mass crimes.

The campaign was a resounding success precisely because it was a historic and ground-breaking trial to report on. There would have been very little to communicate, had we not had a solid legal case built in court. Acknowledgement should be given to the United States’ prosecutors and investigators who worked on this case: not only did they litigate it successfully but also interacted with victims with great respect.

In this Annual Report, we reflect on some of the most telling and important moments of the “Jungle Jabbah” trial, which was undoubtedly the highlight of 2017 for Civitas Maxima and the Global Justice and Research Project – a watershed moment for all of us.

Leading Liberian actors, in various fields, also enrich this Annual Report with their voices and perspectives on the trial of “Jungle Jabbah,” but also on the global situation regarding justice in Liberia.

Civitas Maxima does not take anything for granted and celebrates any success with great humility. The suffering of victims of mass crimes around the world seems limitless and our work is only helping a comparatively small number of people. In addition, our line of work is very complex and constantly filled with challenges and questions. We will always continue to reflect upon our methodology, never settling on the assumption that we have found the definitive answer.

This past year marks the five-year anniversary of Civitas Maxima. Our journey since our start is encapsulated in this Annual Report (see pp. 14-15). We are very proud of how far we have come and want to thank the victims for their trust. We are humbled by their resilience and strength. We also want to thank everybody who has worked for, volunteered for, and contributed to Civitas Maxima in whichever capacity.

Moreover, we know we would not have been able to accomplish anything without the trust of our donors. They are typically thanked with a short sentence at the end of such reports, but I want to emphasize in this foreword our immense and genuine gratitude. Each one of our donors has, in one way or another, allowed Civitas Maxima to be what it is today: a vibrant and creative legal organization striving to make a difference on behalf of forgotten victims of mass crimes.

Alain Werner
Director of Civitas Maxima

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AW', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

CIVITAS MAXIMA

Our Name

Due to their scale and intensity, international crimes not only violate individual victims' rights but also touch the humanity in all of us. In this context, the Latin term *civitas maxima* – which can be translated as “greatest citizenry” – represents a call to do together, as citizens of the world, what we can to ensure justice for international crimes. Based on the deeply held belief that there are no “others,” it envisages a global cooperation between victims, independent lawyers and investigators, and officials from state authorities regardless of nationality, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation, or other exclusionary factors.

Our Vision

A world where all forgotten victims of international crimes have access to fair and impartial justice mechanisms and perpetrators are held accountable.

Our Mission

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 by:

- collaborating with and building the capacity of local grassroots partners to document crimes in the state where those crimes were committed;
- coordinating a network of investigators and lawyers to help victims gain access to justice and hold perpetrators accountable before foreign domestic or international courts and tribunals however, whenever, and wherever possible, and;
- generating awareness and informed debate around victims' cases, with a view to empower local communities to pursue their own quests for justice.

Monrovia is besieged by rebels from the LURD, a Liberian rebel group active from 1999 until 2003. Government soldiers walk past sign promoting human rights and the Geneva Convention.

© Teun Voeten, Liberia, Monrovia, 2003



Civitas Maxima's Pragmatic and Result-Oriented Approach to Case Initiation



Today's reality holds many challenges for the implementation of Civitas Maxima's vision that all victims of international crimes should have access to fair and impartial justice mechanisms and that perpetrators should be held accountable.

First of all, prosecutions of perpetrators and redress for victims of international crimes are often not available in the country where the crimes were committed. This is primarily due to the nature of these crimes, which are usually perpetrated by state officials and/or with the support or acquiescence of authorities. Ideally, alleged perpetrators of international crimes should, of course, be investigated and prosecuted in the countries where the crimes happened. This is currently not possible for victims in two of Civitas Maxima's three focus countries (Liberia and Ivory Coast) primarily due to the fact that many of those accused of war crimes maintain positions of power in those countries.

Moreover, international tribunals tasked with ensuring criminal justice for international crimes also face many obstacles, including severe limitations to their ability to take on cases and their practical capacity to investigate crimes and enforce judgements. For example, the only permanent body created by states to punish those who commit international crimes – the International Criminal Court (ICC) – has only seen 25 cases being brought, with 8 accused remaining at large (see also our Annual Report 2016 p. 9).

As a result, a significant impunity gap exists today in the criminal justice process for international crimes. Civitas Maxima focuses on addressing this gap through a pragmatic and result-oriented approach to case initiation. Civitas Maxima, in collaboration with local partners, primarily investigates crimes committed in its three focus countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast). Focusing on these three countries, we support "forgotten victims" who have fallen through the cracks of the international justice system for political and other reasons. We seek access to justice whenever, wherever, and however possible.



• **Whenever:** Civitas Maxima takes a long-term view to finding justice for victims. When the alleged perpetrator does not live in a country with fair and impartial justice mechanisms that allow for criminal prosecutions, we nevertheless collect information on the crimes they committed and preserve it. This way, we can assist victims in the future provided the alleged perpetrator travels or relocates or if prosecutions become possible in their country of residence.

• **Wherever:** Sometimes Civitas Maxima discovers that a person against whom we have collected evidence of international crimes is present in a country which has fair and impartial justice mechanisms and laws that provide jurisdiction to prosecute them. In this situation, the bulk of the evidence, including the majority of witnesses, is typically located thousands of miles away from the authorities conducting the investigation. Under such circumstances, we function as the link between the location of the crimes committed and the country in which the alleged war criminals are present. We connect the victims and evidence to the court system in various ways:

- In legal systems that allow for victim participation in criminal trials, we either formally represent the victims or collaborate with lawyers who can do this in their respective countries. This was our methodology in the Alieu Kosiah case in Switzerland and the Martina Johnson and Michel Desaedeleer cases in Belgium (see timeline pp. 14-15), as well as in other confidential cases currently under investigation.

- When the legal system does not allow for victims to participate in the criminal procedure, we collaborate with the investigating authorities as much as they require, assisting them in finding relevant evidence and providing any logistical and other assistance required. We followed this approach, for example, in the Agnes Taylor case in the United Kingdom by providing the initial information that led to the investigation. Similarly, in the Mohammed Jabbateh, also known as "Jungle Jabbah," case in the United States, we collaborated with the authorities on the investigation starting in 2014. We also followed this approach in other confidential cases currently under investigation.

• **However:** Legal systems with jurisdiction over the alleged perpetrators do not always allow for them to be legally charged with the crimes of extreme gravity that they allegedly committed (such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, or torture). In those cases, creative legal approaches are necessary. In the United States, for example, it is rarely legally possible to charge a non-citizen of the United States with international crimes. However, it may be possible to charge them with other criminal federal offenses such as immigration fraud and perjury because they lied about their involvement in international crimes to immigration authorities. This was the case in the "Jungle Jabbah" trial, where Mohammed Jabbateh was criminally convicted of immigration-related crimes (see pp. 20-21). The fact that he was not formally convicted of war crimes, we believe, did not matter much to the Liberian victims who had testified in court. Rather, the significance for them lies in the fact that, for the first time, a leader of a warring faction was criminally tried in connection to atrocities committed during the First Liberian Civil War, and that they had been given a chance to tell their stories. The wider Liberian public celebrated the case as a success in the fight against impunity.

As part of its flexible and creative legal approach in cases where national criminal proceedings are not at all possible, Civitas Maxima may launch civil proceedings (for example claims for monetary damages) against an alleged perpetrator. In other situations, we might also engage with international, regional, criminal, or human rights courts which have jurisdiction.





“We seek access to justice whenever, wherever, and however possible”

To summarize, Civitas Maxima’s approach to case initiation is:

- **... Victim-focused** - Our main focus is to achieve justice for victims, working very closely with them and our local partners, and acting only with their full consent and in their interest.
- **... Pragmatic** - We take a practical approach towards case initiation, pursuing a multitude of available legal avenues that can make it possible for the victims to have their voices heard in court and obtain some form of redress.
- **... Global** - Unlike other organizations, we do not seek justice for victims predominantly in the courts of one country. Rather our focus is on the evidence collection. We follow the evidence wherever it leads and have, in this way, investigated and/or contributed to cases in front of criminal courts in ten countries around the world.
- **... Flexible and Responsive** - Sometimes opportunities arise for us to be involved in investigations related to Civitas Maxima’s focus countries that were not planned or actively pursued. In those cases, we react quickly, mobilize resources to assist those investigations, and are flexible in changing course if this is in the interest of the victims we represent.

We believe that Civitas Maxima’s approach is currently one of the best ways for victims to achieve results in the imperfect system of international criminal justice. We play an active part in the criminal justice process and fill a gap in the current system, which is a significant responsibility that we do not take lightly. As a consequence, we feel committed to reflect on our role and responsibility from a normative and philosophical perspective. We constantly question and re-evaluate whether our approach is, firstly, still in the best interest of the victims and, secondly, serves justice and reinforces the rule of law on a broader scale.

In addition to accompanying our pragmatic approach with critical reflection, it must also be accompanied by proper informative and engaging outreach campaigns. We strongly believe that, in an ideal world, victims should find access to criminal justice in the countries where the crimes were committed. Hence, our pragmatic approach should always entail concrete elements which increase the likelihood for victims to one day have access to justice at home for the crimes they have suffered there. Thus, the Liberian Quest for Justice (see pp. 30-31) is an integral part of our work in Liberia; properly informing the relevant actors as well as the general public about justice efforts undertaken outside Liberia and simultaneously providing a platform to advocate effectively for the end of impunity in Liberia. Moreover, in the age of “fake news,” our outreach work provides factually correct and contextualized information about those cases and the context in which they take place.



© Teun Voeten, Sierra Leone, 2002

A UN vehicle that was destroyed in the civil war lays in a river between Freetown and Bo.



Ganta is a small town, 250 kilometers Northeast of Monrovia, on the border with Guinea. Rebels from the LURD, a Liberian rebel group active from 1999 until 2003, captured the town but were beaten back by President Taylor's government forces. During fierce fighting, the LURD rebels, who had their bases in Guinea, relentlessly shelled the town.

Excited members of government armed forces and militias in a pickup truck. In the back, a piece of anti-aircraft gun.

© Teun Voeten, Ganta, Liberia, June 23, 2003

By the end of '13

CM, in conjunction with its local partners, has documented the stories of approximately 200 Ivorian, Liberian, and Sierra Leonean victims.

CM's annual budget is just over 400,000 CHF.

The first Ebola cases are reported in Liberia.

IICI hosts a week-long international investigation training in Liberia for the GJRP's staff team. Two other similar trainings take place in 2016 and 2017.

CM collaborates with authorities in 3 different European countries regarding its cases in Liberia.

Hassan Bility and another GJRP staff member attend the International Investigator Course at the Institute for International Criminal Investigation (IICI) in The Hague. 5 other GJRP and 3 CM staff members attend this training over the next 4 years.

Emmanuelle Marchand, currently Senior Legal Counsel for CM, joins CM as a consultant, undertaking investigative missions for Ivory Coast project.

CM receives 3 years of funding from Humanity United to document crimes committed against Ivorian victims during the post-electoral crisis in Ivory Coast in 2011.

The United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) start to fund CM

CM signs a formal agreement to work with the GJRP in Liberia, effectively becoming, sister organizations. CM similarly begins work with the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) in Sierra Leone, investigating cases related to blood diamonds.

Alain Werner, as the only staff member, formally creates Civitas Maxima (CM)

GJRP and Alain Werner begin documentation and investigation of international crimes in Liberia.

With the funding received, Hassan Bility creates the Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP) in Liberia, hiring 10 Liberians.

Alain Werner receives funding from the foundation Pro Victimis to document crimes committed during Liberia's Civil Wars, seeking justice on behalf of victims.

Nov '13

Mar '13

Jan '13

Sept '12

Apr '12

Mar '12

May '14

Sept '14

Nov '14

Apr '15

Aug '15

Jan '16

Mar '16

Oct '17

Sept '17

Aug '17

Nov '16

Oct '16

Sept '16

Apr '16

Mar '16

Jan '16

By the end of '17

The Liberian Quest for Justice campaign video reaches over 100,000 views. Over 90% of the campaign's audience is Liberian.

CM with its local partners has documented the stories of almost 600 Ivorian, Liberian, and Sierra Leonean victims.

CM works with lawyers and national war crimes units in 10 countries.

CM's staff team had increased to 15 people and the GJRP now employs 16 staff members in Liberia.

CM has a budget of over 850,000 CHF.

The "Jungle Jabbah" trial in Philadelphia, PA, starts and spans almost three weeks. For the first time ever, Liberian victims are able to testify in a criminal trial about atrocities they endured during the First Liberian Civil War. "Jungle Jabbah" is found guilty on all counts.

CM and the GJRP launch their first campaign, the Liberian Quest for Justice, with the aim of supporting and showcasing the Liberian victims' movement for justice.

CM signs an agreement with *New Narratives*, supporting Liberian journalists in covering the trial of "Jungle Jabbah."

Agnes Taylor, ex-wife of Charles Taylor, is arrested in London, UK. She is charged with 4 counts of torture committed during the First Liberian Civil War. CM and the GJRP provided the initial information to the UK authorities.

Two new foundations begin funding CM.

CM opens a new investigation into crimes connected to the trade of blood diamonds.

CM conducts a field visit to Sierra Leone, informing the victims of Michel Desaeleer's death and the end of the case.

The same day that it is reported that Michel Desaeleer's case would be moving to trial, he commits suicide in prison.

"Jungle Jabbah" is arrested in the U.S. and charged on counts of fraud and perjury for lying to immigration officials about atrocities committed during the first Liberian Civil War. Since 2014, CM and the GJRP had been collaborating with the U.S. authorities on the investigation.

Sierra Leone is declared Ebola free.

Liberia is declared Ebola free.





© Teun Voeten, Sierra Leone, 2000
People washing mud for diamonds in an area near Bo.

Conflict minerals prosecutions: fighting impunity of all perpetrators

“National and international courts must significantly shift the conception of participation and complicity of Western businessmen and their pivotal role in mineral extractions in conflict zones.”

The criticisms raised against the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) case selection for prosecution are well-known. These concerns are related to its limited scope, primarily dealing with investigations opened in African contexts, and above all, against alleged African perpetrators. However, this issue is not new within the framework in which international criminal justice is exercised. Similar objections have been presented with respect to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Although this body has made significant strides towards filling the accountability gap in relation to the crimes committed in Sierra Leone – including the historical and successful prosecution of Charles Taylor – it has also omitted a substantial element in the fight against impunity: the participation of corporations and Western businessmen through the direct and indirect appropriation of mineral resources in armed conflicts.

The problem behind this partialized way of conceiving justice – via mechanisms that do not show the faces of all actors involved – is that through the prosecution of only one side of the responsible parties, a biased message is conveyed within post-conflict societies. It also gives the green light for the commission of human rights abuses, demonstrating that since such acts were not condemned in the past, other perpetrators can similarly get away with their actions.

Many modern conflicts – such as those in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia – have shown a close link between the illegal exploitation and appropriation of natural resources and the eruption of serious armed violence. This relationship is driven primarily by the way these resources contribute to and fuel the warring factions involved in the conflict. A clear consequence of this scenario is the suffering of civilian populations affected not only by the horrors of war, but also as victims of slavery utilized as necessary instruments in the illicit extractions. Inhabitants of the areas surrounding the mines are usually deprived of their liberty and systematically forced to work in the extractive centers under inhumane conditions. The participation of Western businessmen in the illegal exploitation of natural resources must be analyzed within this framework.

In the case of diamonds, illegal trafficking is facilitated by the transportable nature of these stones, effortlessly placed in a pocket and effectively undetected by x-ray technology used in airports. The easy exchange of diamonds has fostered the use of these valuable minerals during armed conflicts as a currency to buy common goods, weapons, and ammunition.

Furthermore, the illegal route of these minerals continues beyond the point of extraction. The implementation of this business structure requires another essential step: the whitewashing of the illicit origin of the diamonds through their placement in the international market. For instance, along the streets of the Diamond Quarter in Antwerp, Belgium – one of the major diamond trade centers in the world – conflict diamonds have traditionally been bought and sold for years without oversight on the legality of their origin. At the same time, their easy transportation and transformation from rough to polished stones have facilitated their use in the black market as a key instrument for money laundering. These irregular practices have been noted in several reports by Panels of Experts of the United Nations, particularly regarding the diamonds’ registration process in Belgium. As a result, multiple companies have been expressly mentioned in these reports as a form of “naming and shaming.”

The international community has gradually become aware of the importance of regulating companies’ activities in conflict settings through binding and non-binding instruments. Several initiatives have been launched on the topics of business and human rights and corporate due diligence concerning the exploitation of natural resources. This has also been accompanied by measures aimed at identifying the legal origin of some mineral resources. In the case of diamonds, the Kimberley Process – launched at the beginning of the 21st century – has attempted to fill this gap by creating a certification scheme intending to validate diamonds as non-conflict stones.

However, there are still numerous concerns about the diamond origin identification process at all stages of the commercialization chain, starting at the point of extraction. In relation to the Kimberley Process,

for example, several experts have indicated that the lack of oversight mechanisms at border customs in particular countries – such as Liberia – undermine the transparency proposed by the certification scheme.

In any case, the efforts of the international community aimed at regulating the exploitation of mineral resources are only one part of the answer in addressing this important problem. Other concrete investigative steps in the framework of criminal justice are essential in the fight against impunity that prevails in the business sector related to illegal mineral exploitation.

For this reason, since its creation, Civitas Maxima has focused a proportion of its resources on the investigation of businessmen who have played an essential role in the illegal exploitation of so-called “conflict diamonds” or “blood diamonds” during the armed conflict in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s. As a result of our work, and after several years of investigation, Michel Desaedeleer – a dual-citizen of the United States and Belgium – was detained in 2015 in Spain based on an arrest warrant submitted by Belgian authorities. He was accused of forced labor, as a crime against humanity, and pillage, as a war crime. These charges were linked to his participation in the trade of “blood diamonds” between the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) armed group and the former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Regrettably, Desaedeleer killed himself in prison before the trial began, ending the criminal investigation against him.

Cases like the one described above demonstrate the complexity behind these types of investigations. Fundamentally, this shows the importance of using the legal classification of pillage as a war crime to label the direct or indirect appropriation of minerals from rebel groups during armed conflicts in exchange for money, ammunition, and other goods, which are factors that fuel the war and atrocities committed against civilians.

Despite the difficulties encountered in building such cases, the investigations of acts committed by these Western businessmen – qualified as war crimes and crimes against humanity – have a considerable temporal advantage. These cases can be initiated at any point during the alleged perpetrators’ lives since these international crimes are not barred by statutes of limitations.

In order to potentiate the deterring effect and avoid chronic repetition of human rights violations, national and international courts must significantly shift the conception of participation and complicity of Western businessmen and their pivotal role in mineral extractions in conflict zones.

In line with these convictions and firm in its commitment to fight against impunity, Civitas Maxima has also been developing other criminal investigations – in confidential procedural stages – against several targets in different countries related to business complicity in the illegal trafficking of mineral resources.

Through these efforts, Civitas Maxima seeks to channel the quest for justice for hundreds of victims who have been waiting to hold all perpetrators accountable for their actions.



Tens of thousands of people, most of them already displaced before and scattered in camps around the city, have sought refuge from the fighting between President Taylor's government forces and rebels from the LURD, a Liberian rebel group active from 1999 until 2003. A few thousands were in the walled compound of the so called 'Greystone' complex, a compound attached to the United States' embassy, when two rockets or mortars exploded. Around ten people were killed and approximately ninety were wounded. It is still unclear if it was the government or rebel forces that fired the rockets or mortars.

This girl has been hit in the head by a shrapnel and was brought by friends and relatives to the nearby emergency clinic run by the organization Doctors Without Borders.

© Teun Voeten, Monrovia, Liberia, June 25, 2003

THE TRIAL OF “JUNGLE JABBAH”



Civitas Maxima's Legal Monitoring

Liberia has been plagued by two civil wars marked by indescribable human suffering. As the wars ended, the country entered a transitional phase marked by peaceful democratic elections. However, there is a continued lack of accountability for grave crimes committed during the conflict. Some victims still live in fear as perpetrators roam freely and hold key positions in governments, thus making any attempt at prosecution virtually impossible. Notably, October 2017 was a milestone for justice as, for the first time, victims of the First Liberian Civil War were able to testify in an open criminal trial.

Mohammed Jabbateh, also known as “Jungle Jabbah,” a rebel warlord from the faction ULIMO (United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy) faced trial in the United States for immigration fraud and perjury. When applying for asylum in 1998, “Jungle Jabbah” contradicted himself several times about his involvement in the war. Between 1999 and 2001, he denied any criminal involvement during the First Liberian Civil War. Noticing the incongruity of information, authorities began investigating. In 2016, “Jungle Jabbah” was arrested and held under pre-trial detention. In October 2017, he faced trial in Philadelphia, PA, in front of a twelve-person jury.

In order to prove that “Jungle Jabbah” had indeed provided false information on his immigration papers, the prosecution had to prove that he was a high-ranking rebel commander and that he had committed war crimes.

Over the course of two weeks, twenty witnesses travelled from Liberia to Philadelphia, PA, to testify about the horrific acts committed by “Jungle Jabbah,” including cannibalism, rape, and slavery. The jury found him guilty on all counts of immigration fraud and perjury, and the judge sentenced “Jungle Jabbah” to thirty years in prison. This is the longest sentence ever received for an immigration fraud charge for a human rights violator in the history of the United States’ Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center.

Civitas Maxima and the Global Justice and Research Project made significant contributions to the authorities’ investigations of “Jungle Jabbah.” In addition, Civitas Maxima coordinated a dedicated team of qualified United States-based attorneys in Philadelphia, PA. This group of individuals consisted of a former prosecutor, who published extensive daily reports on Civitas Maxima’s website from

inside the courtroom. Weekly summaries were similarly produced, highlighting the crucial facts and testimonies presented during the trial. Analyses were also written, detailing the significance of this case as it pertains to aspects of jurisdiction, immigration sentencing in the United States, and war crime prosecutions.

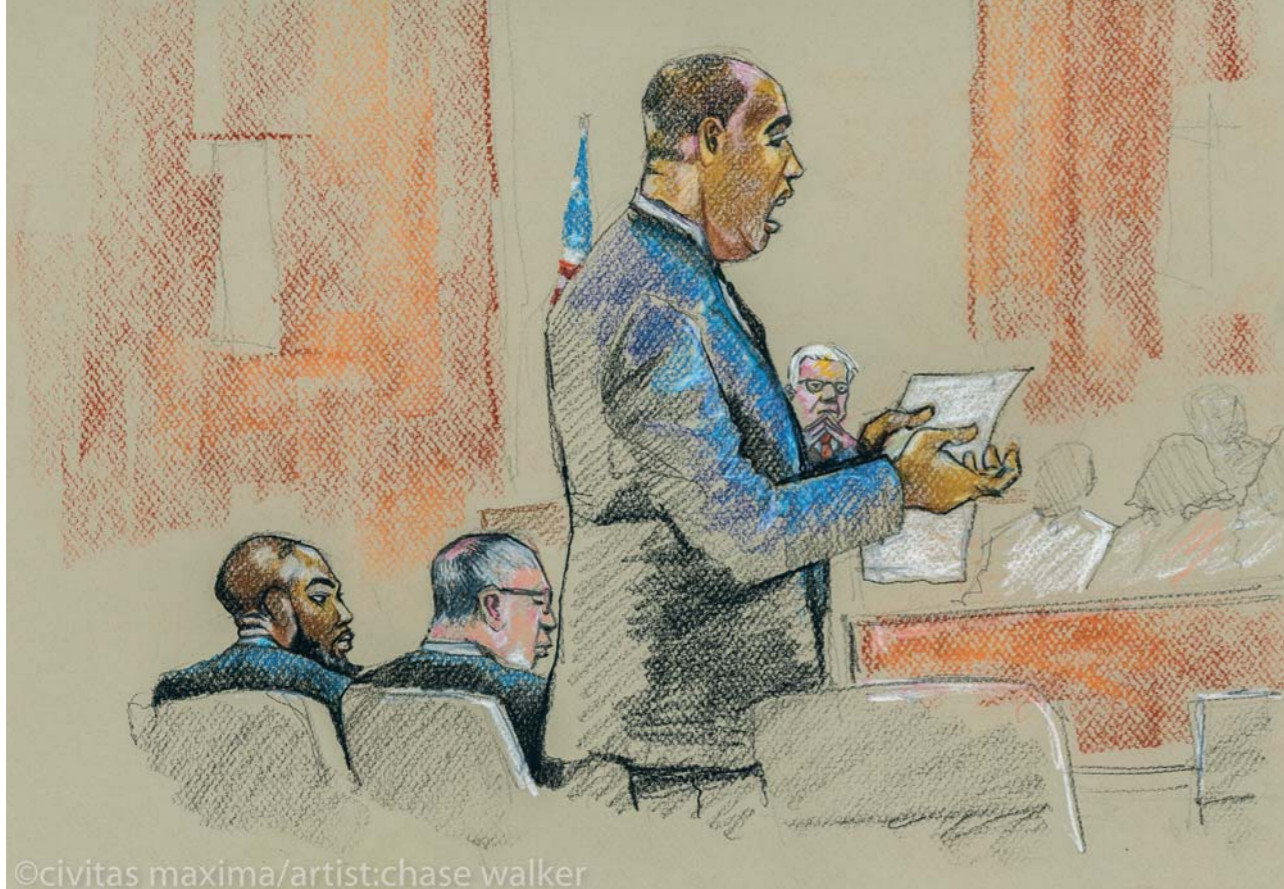
Accompanying the reports, Chase Walker, a Liberian artist residing in the United States who lived through the Liberian Civil Wars, produced soft pastel drawings illustrating the ongoing trial. These drawings were significant in that they were the only images of the trial produced. International media channels widely published the drawings in their news articles, giving visibility to the case and recognition to Mr. Walker, a Liberian artist in the United States. On pages 24-25 of this Annual Report, Mr. Walker tells us of his personal experience.

“Jungle Jabbah’s” trial showed the world that creative avenues can successfully lead to bringing justice to victims of war crimes through collaboration between credible and professional nonprofits and national judicial authorities.



This page contains an interactive way of showing you images. On your smartphone, download the free app Layar, then scan the page and a pop-up box will appear on your screen. By clicking on it, you will be able to see a video we launched as part of The Liberian Quest for Justice outreach campaign.

This design was made together with Nicolás Braguinsky Cascini.



©civitas maxima/artist:chase walker

10/11/17 Legal Monitoring - "Jungle Jabbah" Trial Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

The prosecution showed the witness [10] a photo of a sign that said "Jungle Jabbah Bridge." The witness testified that the sign was put up because "Jungle Jabbah" did so many terrible things that people couldn't forget him, so they named the bridge after him.

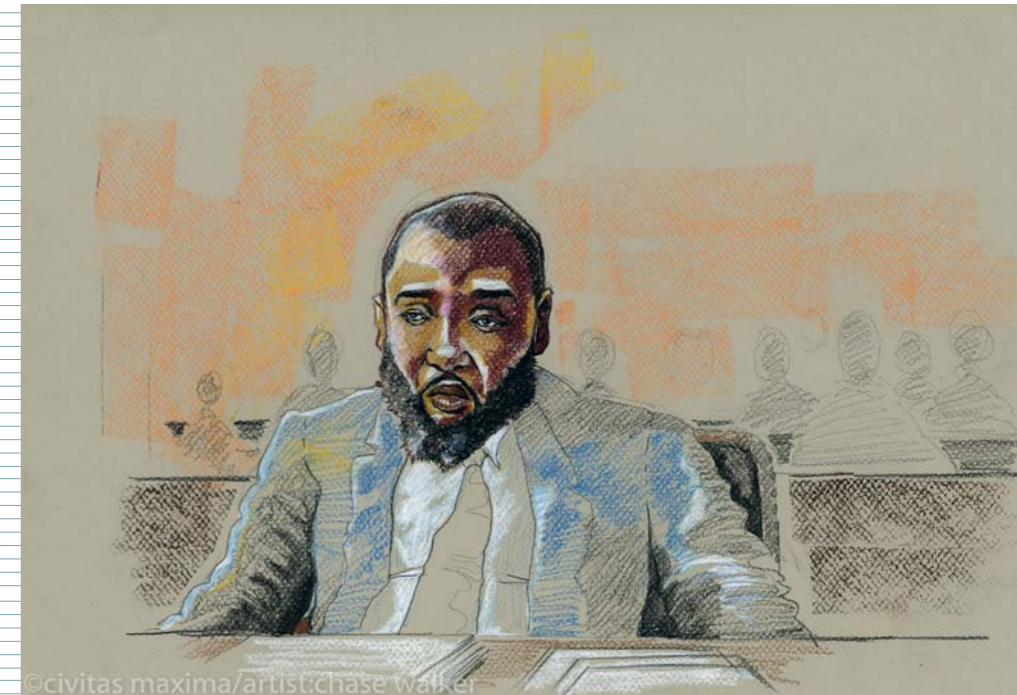
10/03/17 Opening Statements. "Jungle Jabbah" Trial Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

Prosecutor Nelson Thayer:

"You will hear from witnesses who saw acts of almost unimaginable cruelty and brutality committed and ordered by Mohammed Jabbateh"

10/03/17 Witness 2 - "Jungle Jabbah" trial Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

"That very night when I got captured, he [Jungle Jabbah] made me be his wife and he slept with me"



©civitas maxima/artist:chase walker

10/12/17 Witness 19 - "Jungle Jabbah" Trial Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

"We were like slaves. No food to eat, nothing. When we dig the gold Jungle's two soldiers would come and get it, and Jungle would come and get it as well and in return, they would give us nothing (...)"

10/12/17 Legal Monitoring - "Jungle Jabbah" Trial Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

A soldier then brought his [witness' husband] heart to show her [witness 18] (...) One of the soldiers came in and ordered her to cook it. She made the fire and put it in a pot. (...) They told her to "make herself strong" and said that if she didn't cook it they would kill her.

10/03/17 Opening Statements. "Jungle Jabbah" Trial Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

Defense Attorney Gregory Pagano:

"War crimes are like any other crimes, and in war crimes, they dig up graves (...) they did not dig up a single grave to establish that a single person was in fact killed. There is not a single shred of evidence here (...) that any of these people (...) existed"

10/11/17 Witness 11. Direct Examination by Prosecutor L.C Wright. Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

Q: Well, when they gave the order to amputate you, did they amputate you?

A: Yes.

Q: What did they amputate?

A: Maybe because I was complaining.

Q: What part of your body did they amputate?

A: My ear.

04/10/17 Witness 3. Direct Examination by Prosecutor L.C. Wright. Philadelphia, PA, U.S.

Q: (...) You said Jungle Jabbah placed a gun between [the witness' sister's] legs in her vagina.

A: Yes.

Q: Did he fire the gun?

A: Yes, he fired the gun. That's why she started jerking.

The witness stated that her sister was 4 months pregnant.



©civitas maxima/artist:chase walker

“ I told myself I would do something about it when I grew up; but I never knew that I would be in court drawing the faces of people who actually perpetrated these crimes.”



From Dirt to Court Pews

Chase Walker
Visual Artist, Storyteller

I learned to draw in the dirt, under a tree in Monrovia, in the midst of the civil war of 1996. I was a quiet kid, reserved but observant. It was a way to escape the brutal reality surrounding me that I couldn't shake off even if I wanted to. With my sticks and smooth brown sand, I had unlimited canvas at my disposal. The chaos and atrocity afflicted on the country affected everyone from the oldest to the youngest. I remember the adults those days, faces plastered with sadness, grief, and fear. Some, including my Mama, sometimes walked around like zombies. Seeing her like that made me unhappy. I told myself I would do something about it when I grew up; but never I knew that I would be in court drawing the faces of people who actually perpetrated these crimes.

I was excited upon receiving the call to be the courthouse artist for the trial of Mohammed Jabbateh, also known as "Jungle Jabbah," accused of committing heinous crimes against the people of Liberia. I had mixed feelings mostly because I didn't know what to expect. I didn't grasp entirely what was about to happen. I called my mom back in Liberia and told her what was going on. It was hard to say if she was sobbing on the phone or not. She said she was proud of me. I accepted this opportunity with confidence and flew from Rochester, NY, to Philadelphia, PA. I sat at the trial, struggling to keep up with the movements of the subjects that I needed to draw, but at the same time, listening to every word that was said. Some of the testimonies were graphic and repulsive, hard for the mind to even come to terms with.

I occasionally glanced over my shoulder and saw fellow Liberians. Some were there to support him, others were there to see him face the law. It was hard to tell what they were thinking. My eyes danced between the lawyers and Mohammed Jabbateh trying to get a clear view of him. I thought if I could see his face, perhaps I

could tell if he really was guilty or not. But there was no emotion, nothing! My hands moved up and down the paper interpreting his expressionless face with color on brown pastel paper. As if I had traveled through time, I was a boy again drawing what I saw in brown sand. The two lawyers went back and forth, both passionately deliberating. The jury watched in amazement and seemed shocked by some of the testimonies. Hearing about the will of a human being to literally cook and eat another one's heart probably sent chills up their spines as it did with mine.

Periodic silence enveloped the room. The only thing that echoed was my pencil, scratching the surface of the paper. I got a couple of stares, but I tried not to panic. Hands sweating, I drew the pictures telling the stories told in this room that a camera couldn't capture. I was proud of myself. I had come so far.

Thousands of miles from Liberia a boy became a man and told a story in pictures that he never dreamt he could tell.

United States District Court Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Transcript of jury trial before Honorable
Paul S. Diamond United States District Judge
October 10, 2017 Case of USA v Mohammed Jabbateh

101

1 Q When did you report the death of -- when did you report the
2 murder of your father?

3 THE COURT: I'm sorry. Is that the question you want
4 to ask --

5 MR. PAGANO: Yes.

6 THE COURT: -- when he reported it?

7 MR. PAGANO: Yes.

8 THE COURT: Okay.

9 MR. PAGANO: I'll ask it a different way.

10 Q Did you report the murder of your father?

11 A Whether I reported the death of my father?

12 Q Did you report the death of your father to any authority?

13 A No. There were only ULIMO fighters.

14 Q Did you report the rape of your sister to any authorities?

15 A That's what I'm telling. There was all rebel at the time.

16 Q You waited for about 20 years to report this to any authorities?

17 A What?

18 Q You waited for about 20 years to report this to any authorities?

19 A I would tell you that I do not have a specific year to say

20 that I was waiting for, but I was waiting for justice.

21 Q You were introduced to the men at the table behind me in

22 Liberia.

23 A Someone introduced to Mike Gillian right there.

24 Q Let me ask the question this way. Who introduced you to Mr.



Displaced and poor people have squatted run down deserted buildings all over the city.

In a two-story house close to the ocean, approximately 5 extended families (around 60 people) have settled.

Children go downstairs on a wooden ladder stuck in a hole in the floor while torrential rain is pouring inside.

© Teun Voeten, Monrovia, Liberia, June 2003.

Why the Trials and Prosecutions of Perpetrators Matter to Me

Massa Amelia Washington
Liberian Journalist, Human Rights Activist,
and Former Commissioner of the Liberian TRC

Sometime in early 1989, I was visiting three of my childhood friends. I was working as a reporter with the Ministry of Information as the only female in the newsroom in Monrovia, Liberia. Together we decided to form an organization that would meet once a month and work with the less fortunate in the Liberian society. We named the organization “Femme Soixante” (women of the ‘60s) because we were all born in the 1960s.

And so, we were hosting Femme Soixante’s first Christmas party on the night of December 24, 1989, at the home of the organization’s President when it was announced on TV that “war” had been declared by dissidents looking to unseat the government of President Samuel Doe. It was the first time any of us in the room had seen the AK-47 rifle, or the Beretta, but it would not be the last.

In fact, we would become engulfed in a war that would last fourteen years and be one of the most brutal ever recorded. A war that swallowed the rest of our youthful years and left in its wake massive destruction of infrastructure, our value systems, our way of life, over 250,000 dead for a country of just 3 million inhabitants, and considerable mental and psychological scars.

As a journalist, I covered the war extensively, reporting from all sides of the conflict on crimes such as cannibalism, rape, gang rape, sodomy, dismemberment, decapitations, floggings, forced labor, and sexual slavery. I witnessed some of the violence first hand. To cite only one example: I was a first responder at the site of the Lutheran Church massacre on the morning of July 29, 1990. The Church served as a center for the internally displaced and early that morning, over seven-hundred people had been either shot or hacked to death by soldiers loyal to President Doe.

I began working with civil society, women’s and youth groups particularly, calling for an end to the carnage. I wanted accountability for the heinous crimes committed because the perpetrators were emerging as the new lords of the land with political power and blood money that allowed them to be appointed or voted into office. I realized that people like me would have to get seriously involved in seeking justice and setting the stage for when Liberians could truly

address their problems and forge ahead with hopes of genuine peace and reconciliation.

Another motivating factor behind my advocacy for justice was what happened to my brother, Daniel K. Ajavon. Daniel was my stepbrother, born in 1960. Though the oldest sibling, he was the baby of the family due to his disabilities. Daniel was born deaf and intellectually slow. Prior to the war, Daniel was attending a deaf and dumb mission boarding school and only came home during the holidays. We went to see him regularly on his birthdays and other special occasions. I took it upon myself to look out for him and he became very special to me. Daniel wore his flip-flops with his socks and always needed extra pairs that we provided him with. In spite of not being completely like the others, he was very dear to his family and part of our humanity.

During the First Liberian Civil War, up until 1994, Daniel stayed with us in the capital, when his father decided that Monrovia was no longer safe and wanted Daniel to join him in Gbarnga, where he lived. Not long after he went to Gbarnga with his father, a coalition of warring factions that were fighting Charles Taylor, attacked Gbarnga. ULIMO-K rebels entered Gbarnga first and Daniel, who may have been noticed quickly by the rebels as he did not behave like someone of his age, was cut into pieces. His father, step-mother and their entire household were either hacked or shot to death.

It is difficult to express how we felt when we got the news. My family never talked about Daniel, but I could see that we all grieved privately. It was heartbreaking.

I stayed in Liberia for most of the war, fleeing intermittently for safety to countries in the sub-region and returning to Liberia each time I thought the war was ending. However, following the elections of Charles Taylor as President in 1997 and with his armed group the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), now fully and legally in charge of the whole country, former warlords and rebels were emboldened and ruled the country with iron fists. The offices of the newspaper *The Inquirer*, of which I was the news editor, were set on fire twice by agents of the government. The arrest, flogging, and imprisonment of journalists were common during this time. In the wake of mounting safety issues,

“(...) the wave of arrests and prosecutions of perpetrators in Europe and America signals the inevitable collapse of the culture of impunity in Liberia.”



I finally threw in the towel and departed Liberia in 1999. I would return seven years later as a Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), investigating war crimes and making recommendations to ensure that Liberia does not revisit her ugly past.

At some point I travelled to Gbarnga, Bong County, for one week of thematic hearings with the TRC. I tried to locate the place where Daniel might have been killed, in search of his body. Some locals who knew the story well, took me on a dirt highway through a dense forest trail that Daniel and his family took while fleeing the attack. We encountered some skeletal remains scattered about the trail and others along the side of the road. It was impossible to determine whether the remains were Daniel’s. We gathered the bones and buried them in a shallow hole because we did not have proper digging materials and said a prayer for their souls. I returned to Gbarnga and my work at the hearings with thoughts of Daniel resting heavily upon my mind. That night, I dreamt about him: we were kids at home in Monrovia and I was joking with him and he was laughing and nodding his head like he used to.

Nearly thirty years after the outbreak of the war and nine years following the release of the final report of the TRC, nothing has been done locally in Liberia to address the most critical issues. Due to the entrenched culture of impunity, and perhaps Traumatic Bonding mindset of the victims that keep rewarding perpetrators with public office and high-paying jobs, the quest for justice and accountability is colossal. Traumatic Bonding is a psychological counterintuitive variation of the Attachment Theory where victims of abuse or violence developed strong emotional ties to their abusers over time.

The Liberian human rights community is now turning to the international human rights community for assistance. Thus, the wave of arrests and prosecutions of perpetrators in Europe and America signals the inevitable collapse of the culture of impunity in Liberia. Perpetrators of heinous crimes must not be provided with safe havens, anywhere in the world. They must be brought to justice. They must answer for their crimes against our common humanity.

As a long-term advocate of justice for Liberian war victims, I have closely followed the arrests and subsequent prosecutions outside

of Liberia of individuals charged with perpetrating and abetting the violence in Liberia. I specifically followed the Mohammed Jabbateh, also known as “Jungle Jabbah,” case because his name, and the stories of violence and atrocities associated with him, were infamous during the war. I learnt it was the “Jungle Jabbah” battalion of ULIMO-K that entered Gbarnga first and that they were ordered to kill any and everybody they came across in Gbarnga. By attending the trials and being in the same room with “Jungle Jabbah,” fate had placed me in the same space with the possible killer of my brother Daniel. Only this time around, he was not this powerful, vicious, uncompromising rebel commander, who assigned upon himself the power of life and death. This time, he was sitting in the witness box as a nobody, powerless and fighting for his freedom.

It was a powerful experience for me. I am glad Mohammed Jabbateh got the opportunity to defend himself in a court of law, so that he learns and understands that there is something called “the Rule of Law,” that gives people a fair trial when they are accused of having done something wrong. I believe that the verdict and subsequent sentence, rendered justice to Daniel and the many other innocent victims murdered during the war.

Through my work for accountability and justice, I give a voice to Daniel and the hundreds of thousands of victims whose voices were silenced. To be mute would be to betray the trust, love, and confidence placed in me by my brother. Silence is an impossibility.

It has been twenty-nine years since my friends and I established Femme Soixante. At the time, our aim was to give back to our society through humanitarian work with the communities. Today, all of us reside in the United States of America. Some of us continue to brave the odds and continue working for a better Liberia. It is my hope that the tireless quest for justice for Daniel and all other victims, supported by organizations like Civitas Maxima and the Global and Justice Research Project, will ensure that young people, particularly women throughout Liberia, will be able to experience a future free of the turmoil of war. Unlike us, they have not had their lives shattered and I hope they will feel safe to dream big, establish their own version of Femme Soixante, help their communities and give back to Liberia.

The Liberian Quest for Justice



“#HumanRightsDay- To those [whose] relentless efforts to get justice for us #Liberians, you are appreciated more than you will ever know. Everyday I wake up knowing my cries & outrage will not be ignored [because] of people like you. Thank you Civitas Maxima.”

December 10, 2017, on Civitas Maxima’s social media.

The above commenter has undoubtedly been affected by human rights abuses, either as a victim themselves or in close relation to others, during the Liberian Civil Wars which spanned fourteen years. Still today, victims crave justice and accountability as impunity continues to prevail in Liberian society. This comment echoes the sentiments of the over 40,000 Liberians engaged in Civitas Maxima’s outreach campaign: Liberian Quest for Justice. Launched in September 2017 with our Liberian sister organization, the Global Justice and Research Project, our collective efforts aimed to raise awareness and promote an informed debate around criminal accountability within Liberia through creative narratives. Far exceeding our expectations, this campaign catalyzed action from diverse members of both national and international civil societies.

With our Liberian colleagues, we believe that increasing domestic accountability, and consequently ending impunity, is key to achieving sustainable reconciliation. Within their borders, Liberians have never witnessed accountability for war crimes. For the first time, victims of the First Liberian Civil War (1989-1996) testified in a court room during the trial of “Jungle Jabbah” in Philadelphia, PA, in October, 2017. The Liberian Quest for Justice campaign played a key role in providing independent reporting from the courtroom in the United States to the streets in Liberia and around West Africa. This coverage demonstrated that the voices of victims will be heard and that impunity will not prevail.

The campaign consisted of a series of coordinated actions, some corresponding to the core mandate of Civitas Maxima. We provided daily legal monitoring of the “Jungle Jabbah” trial and provided our audience with reliable and unbiased reporting; covering the testimonies, arguments, and verdict (see pp. 20-21). These reports were creatively illustrated to accessibly inform and engage a wider audience.

Visuals, such as cartoons, videos, and infographics were also created highlighting background information to explain the reasons for the trial of “Jungle Jabbah.” Essential in generating interest and mobilizing Liberian civil society concerning the conviction, we launched a campaign video with the talented Argentinian filmmaker Nicolás Braguinsky Cascini. As a response to our over 200,000 video views and 4,000 audience reactions on the video, which included inquiries about the alleged warlord’s trial, we created a short series of videos answering key questions in a concise, artistic, and engaging manner. These videos were published on our social media platforms, with some even reaching over 100,000 views. In addition to our created content, we partnered with *New Narratives*, a collective of independent journalists providing support to African news outlets in order to catalyze social change. Liberian journalists in Philadelphia, PA, reported live from outside the courtroom and provided daily summaries of the trial. Their videos were transmitted on social media through an array of diverse Facebook groups, reaching over 80,000 participants. In Liberia, a reporter published pieces on the trial in *Front Page Africa*; one of the main newspapers in West Africa, which provided insights to Liberian perceptions of the trial.

During the trial, our most important communication channel was Musu’s Diary: a cartoon telling the story of Musu and her brother Varney, who want to bring justice to Liberia in order for their mother, who fled during the war, to be able to return home. The script was written in close collaboration with our sister organization in Monrovia, the Global Justice and Research Project, and the drawings were created by the renowned Swiss-Congolese, Geneva-based, artist, JP Kalonji. Episodes were posted weekly on our social media pages and website. Musu has, as a result, become a symbol of justice for other grassroots organizations which have



*** Questions posed by the public on Civitas Maxima’s social media feeds, that were answered in the format of short informative videos.**

shown interest in using these cartoons for future projects. In addition, many schools in Monrovia have used the diary’s episodes as teaching material. Thanks to our artistic approach in seeking justice, we were rewarded with a grant to conduct a cartooning for justice workshop, which will take place in Monrovia in August, 2018.

Without doubt, we can say great success has been achieved by using different creative tools in our outreach efforts during the “Jungle Jabbah” trial. As more trials are scheduled, we believe it is essential that we keep promoting an informed debate by providing accessible information, through creative outlets and legal monitoring. “Jungle Jabbah” was only Chapter I of the Liberian Quest for Justice.



This page contains an interactive way of showing you images. On your smartphone, download the free app Layar, then scan the page and a pop-up box will appear on your screen. By clicking on it, you will be able to see the five informative short videos we produced.

This design was made together with Nicolás Braguinsky Cascini.



During the Liberian Civil Wars, Musu's mother fled to Ghana and awaits peace to one day return home. When Musu and Varney hear about the "Jungle Jabbah" trial, their hearts fill with hope. They dream that one day their family will be reunited in a country of peace. However, this peace cannot happen without justice and an end to impunity. Musu and Varney determinedly begin a quest to bring justice to Liberia - currently fuelled by a climate of impunity and in a state of fragile peace - fighting the Boogeyman along the way, who represents the fears of the Liberian people.

Artist: JP Kalonji
 Concept and Script: Nathaly Leduc

Episode 1 page 1 of 1



Episode 4 page 3 of 3



Episode 15 page 2 of 3



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This page contains an interactive way of showing further images. On your smartphone, download the free app Layar, then scan the page and a pop-up box will appear on your screen. By clicking on it, you will be able to see all episodes of Musu's Diary.

This design was made together with Nicolás Braguinsky Cascini.

The Liberian Access to Justice Movement

Hassan Bility

Director of the Global Justice and Research Project

When we first began working on documenting war crimes and representing victims in their quest for justice in 2012, my team and I stayed largely undercover. Nobody in Liberia knew what we were doing. We wanted to quietly document crimes and build case files without anybody knowing about our work and potentially trying to hinder us in our mission.

When the first arrests became public, we slowly shifted towards being more publicly outspoken. Many people contacted us to express their support for our work. In 2017, when the “Jungle Jabbah” case went to trial and Civitas Maxima and the Global Justice and Research Project launched the media campaign the “Liberian Quest for Justice,” and as our organization became more outspoken on Liberian radio, the outpour of public support was beyond anything we had expected.

The extraterritorial case of “Jungle Jabbah” and subsequent conviction sparked a grassroots-driven justice movement, demonstrating that the majority of Liberians are yearning for justice. Calls for the implementation of the recommendations of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in favor of setting up a war crimes court are growing louder, more frequent, and more forceful. Even the young generation of Liberians who know of the war only from their parents’ stories are pushing in favor of justice as they see it as an integral part of reconciliation. It is truly a citizens’ movement.

Being a survivor of torture myself and having testified against Charles Taylor in front of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, I knew intimately how healing it was to be granted the right to be heard. I always knew that most Liberian victims wanted justice and that accountability is an important part of moving Liberia forward to build sustainable peace.

However, some might say that there is a paradox in Liberia: on the one hand, the majority of the population is in favor of accountability measures, for example, setting up a Liberian war crimes court. On the other hand, Liberians vote alleged war criminals into positions of power.

Prince Johnson, for example, has been the senator of Nimba County for over ten years and was re-elected three times. He is one of the most notorious former warlords, known for commanding the execution of

the former president Samuel Doe, which is infamously documented in a Youtube video. Similarly, George Boley, a former rebel leader who was deported from the United States because of his involvement in the recruitment of child soldiers and extrajudicial killings, was recently elected to be a district lawmaker in Grand Gedeh County. This effectively makes him part of our national legislative system.

Thus, a part of the Liberian population, albeit yearning for justice, is voting for known war criminals. For an outsider this might seem surprising. How can I confidently say that the overwhelming majority of Liberians want justice when, at the same time people freely elect former warlords like Boley and Johnson? In light of the complexities of Liberia, this is not so strange. I see three main reasons for the elections of former warlords that I outline below. I beg my Liberian readers to excuse my simplification of these complex issues.

1. Tribalism. Complicated ethnic considerations play into our current reality. Many people in counties like Nimba and Grand Gedeh, though not all, feel that the best protection is through electing a notorious leader from their own ethnic group, who is feared by others. At the origin of this protective mechanism are deep scars from the legacy of the fourteen years of civil war in Liberia. This shows that reconciliation has still not been fully achieved and that trauma continues to run deep in our society. I am a firm believer in reconciliation through justice and hope that trials of all factions could help victims on all sides of the tribal divides heal to a certain extent.

2. Fear. The Liberian people who lived through fourteen years of civil war have a deeply instilled fear of rebel commanders. Charles Taylor was famously elected under the slogan “he killed my pa, he killed my ma, I am going to vote for him.” This mentality is still somewhat present in Liberian society today and contributes to the elections of feared former rebel commanders like Boley and Johnson. While some vote for former warlords because of ethnic considerations, as explained above, others do so out of fear of these warlords, who, if not elected, might take up arms again and plunge, at least parts of the country, back into war.

3. Lack of civic and human rights education. Many Liberian people quietly accepted the positions of power that former warlords hold

“Many Liberians believe that access to justice is a privilege. But they need to understand that it is their right.”



© Nicolás Braguinsky Cascini

because they have resigned and accepted this reality. This resignation is partially caused by the fact that impunity was the status quo for so long that our people had lost all belief in the possibility of any form of accountability. Moreover, they did not know enough about the possible ways to find access to justice. This is now in the process of changing, as described above, with our extraterritorial cases reigniting the national accountability discussion.

The “Jungle Jabbah” trial had such a considerable effect on the Liberian population because it showed them, for the first time, that impunity does not have to be the norm. Many Liberians believe that access to justice is a privilege. But they need to understand that it is their right. With the many extraterritorial cases coming up and the overwhelming movement of Liberian victims making their voices heard nationally as well as globally, I strongly believe that we are in the process of changing Liberia. Liberians are only now starting to realize their own strength and power to change things. International law provides tools for them to find justice beyond their borders and pressure their own leaders to establish accountability measures in their own country.

The paradox described above exists because true reconciliation has not yet happened in our country. The way forward needs to be carefully but forcefully paved. Justice and education must be cornerstones of our society, as must be an understanding of other tribes and our respective wounds and traumas. A Liberian access to justice movement is in full force.



theguardian

EX WIFE OF FORMER LIBERIAN PRESIDENT CHARGED WITH TORTURE

Agnes Reeves Taylor, former wife of Charles Taylor, held by Metropolitan police's war crimes unit over torture offences allegedly committed during civil war.

BY KEVIN RAWLINSON
FRI 2 JUN 2017 22.24 BST

Agnes Reeves Taylor, the ex-wife of former Liberian president Charles Taylor, has been charged with four torture offences allegedly committed in the west African country, Scotland Yard said. Agnes Taylor, 51, was arrested by the Met police's war crimes team on Thursday and was accused on Friday of committing the offences between 1989 and 1991. She was charged with two counts of being involved in torture in Gbarnga, in the north of the country, and one count of the same in Gborplay, in its north-east."

Le Monde

DÉCRYPTAGE

« *Jungle Jabbah* » rattrapé aux Etats-Unis par ses crimes au Liberia

Mohammed Jabbateh encourt jusqu'à trente ans de prison pour avoir caché aux services d'immigration les atrocités qu'il a commises lorsqu'il était un chef de guerre.

PAR CHRISTOPHE CHÂTELOT
LE MONDE LE 19.10.2017 À 17H53 • MIS À JOUR LE 19.10.2017 À 20H52

Installé aux Etats-Unis depuis près de vingt ans, Mohammed Jabbateh, 50 ans, originaire du Liberia, coulait jusqu'à l'année passée une vie paisible en banlieue de Philadelphie. Qui pouvait imaginer que derrière ce petit exportateur de voitures d'occasion, au casier judiciaire vierge et décrit comme « pacifique et profondément croyant » par son avocat, se cachait un ancien chef rebelle accusé d'avoir tué, violé et parfois mangé le cœur de ses ennemis ? Les services de l'immigration américains viennent pourtant de faire remonter du passé l'autre facette de sa personnalité, aux temps maudits où il se faisait appeler « Jungle Jabbah », milicien cruel durant la première guerre civile au Liberia (1989-1996), durant laquelle périrent des dizaines de milliers de personnes."

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

LIBERIA: UK ARREST FOR CIVIL WAR CRIMES A STEP FOR JUSTICE

LONDON – The United Kingdom authorities' arrest of Agnes Reeves Taylor in London for her alleged role in torture committed during Liberia's first civil war is a meaningful step for justice, Human Rights Watch said today. Reeves Taylor, the former wife of imprisoned former Liberian president Charles Taylor, was arrested by the Metropolitan Police's War Crimes unit on June 1, 2017, and subsequently charged with torture. Reeves Taylor, who has been living in the UK, is expected to appear before Westminster Magistrates' Court on June 3, said a statement issued by British authorities. She was alleged to have committed the crimes while working with the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by her former husband during his bid to unseat then-president Samuel K. Doe.

The Inquirer

DAILY NEWS philly.com

'Jungle Jabbah's' war: Accused Liberian's own story emerges in court

Federal prosecutors say Mohammed Jabbateh of Delaware County committed murder, rape, and cannibalism under the nickname "Jungle Jabbah" during Liberia's first civil war.

All week, his fellow Liberians have lined up outside a Philadelphia federal courtroom to accuse alleged war criminal Mohammed Jabbateh of acts of unfathomable cruelty. But on Thursday, the jury weighing the 51-year-old East Lansdowne man's immigration-fraud case heard for the first time Jabbateh's own account of the ethnic conflict that ravaged his native countries in the early 1990s. Like many of his accusers, he, too, said he has been persecuted based on his tribal affiliation. Like them, he also saw loved ones raped and gunned down while attempting to escape the chaos. And, he told US immigration officers in 1998, his time during the war could be traced by scars left on his body by torture."



A US Immigration Case Offers a Rare Day in Court for Victims of Liberian War Crimes

Gruesome details of Liberia’s civil wars emerge from a Philadelphia courtroom.

BY ROBBIE COREY-BOULET – 28TH NOVEMBER 2017

“Emmanuel Nimley first met Mohammed Jabbateh, a warlord known as Jungle Jabbah, on a bridge outside Monrovia, the Liberian capital. It was the dry season of 1992, during a stalemate which would ultimately kill tens of thousands of people.

At the time, Nimley was operating a successful transport company, and Jabbateh, a commander in the ULIMO rebel group, had sent aides to Nimley’s office with a business proposition. He wanted to know if Nimley would make some of his truck available to the rebels to move rubber from western Liberia, where Jabbateh’s forces held territory to the Monrovia port.”



WE MUST END IMPUNITY

8TH JUNE 2017

Ongoing efforts by the international community to bring to book perpetrators of war crimes and other hideous abuses in Liberia during the country’s 14-year civil war seem to be making significant progress with reports of the arrest of several high profile actors from the April 12, 1980 military coup to the December 24, 1989 rebel invasion that took several hundred thousand lives.

News last week of the arrest and subsequent appearance in court in London, United Kingdom of Agnes Reeves Taylor, the 51-year-old ex-wife of jailed former Liberian President Charles Ghankay for alleged torture amid current rumor of the probable apprehension of ex-rebel leader Senator Prince Yormie Johnson, clearly indicates that the world is gradually folding the curtains against impunity, particularly war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Several actors from the Doe regime, including ex-army officer Jeffrey Gbatu, who carried out summary executions during that era, have already been arrested and detained in the United States.

Another Liberian warlord, Dr. George SingbeBolay, was deported from the United States few years ago for commanding child soldiers in Liberia. Dr. Bolay, who worked in the government of slain President Samuel Kanyon Doe, is currently in the country, preferring to remain very inconspicuous.

The list of ex-warlords and former generals in Liberia is not exhausted in this editorial, but the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia compiles an exhaustive roster of ex-generals and rebel leaders who committed hideous atrocities with recommendation for prosecution.



The Arrest of Prominent Liberians Abroad Is Stirring Talk of Justice at Home

THE EDITORS | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2017

“On June 2, authorities in the UK charged Agnes Reeves Taylor, the ex-wife of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, with torture in connexion with crimes she allegedly committed during the West African nation’s prolonged period of civil conflict. The arrest makes Reeves Taylor the latest in a series of high-profile Liberians to be arrested in Europe and the United States in recent years. In Liberia, meanwhile, there has been no progress on justice initiatives under President Elle Johnson Sirleaf. Charles Taylor is serving a 50-year sentence in the U.K. for war crimes and crimes against humanity, but his trial dealt with his involvement in the civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone. In an email interview, Aaron Weah, a Liberian researcher who is currently the country’s representative to Search for Common Ground, discusses how recent arrests are being received locally. The views expressed here are his alone and do not reflect those of Search for Common Ground.



FRONTPAGEAFRICA, SEPTEMBER 29TH, 2017

Recalling Horror, Sinje Massacre Survivor Welcomes Former Liberian Warlord Trial in America

JUNGLE JABBAH FACES JUSTICE

“he cannot look in my face and tell me that de doesn’t know about the Liberian civil war... He was a strong commander. Jugle Jabbah cannot say he doesn’t know about the Liberian civil war. He knows about it, but mainly he was stationed in Lofa Bridge in Gola Konneh, the diamond area” Former Town Chief of Sinje and survivor of Sinje massacre



Refugees threatened by an armed rebel. Liberia, 1990
© Patrick Robert/Sygma/Corbis

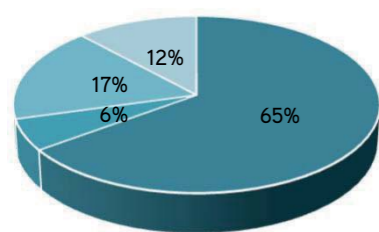
FINANCIAL STATEMENT

2017 FINANCIAL SITUATION

Operating statement for the year ended December 31, 2017*

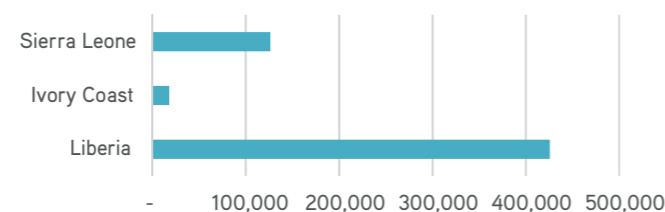
	2017 CHF	2016 CHF
INCOME		
Grants & donations	853,148	480,091
Other income	58,240	104,400 **
TOTAL INCOME	911,388	584,491
EXPENSE		
Programme	-569,583	-547,048
Outreach & Communication	-50,337	-
Management & General	-152,706	-111,131 **
Fundraising	-104,255	-63,086 **
TOTAL EXPENSE	-876,881	-721,265
EARNINGS BEFORE FINANCIAL RESULT	34,507	-136,774
Financial expense	-7,040	-9,162
Financial income	2,822	4,769
INTERMEDIATE RESULT	30,289	-141,167
Allocation to restricted funds	-651,060	-366,829
Use of the restricted funds	646,967	507,068
RESULT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	26,196	-927

EXPENSE



- Programme
- Outreach & Communication
- Management & General
- Fundraising

PROGRAMME



*Based on audited accounts by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC).

**To conform to the presentation adopted in the current year, certain amounts from the prior year have been reclassified.

Acknowledgements

Civitas Maxima is extremely grateful for the support received from the following donors and partners who have contributed towards the advancement of its vision and mission.

Bryan Cave LLP, USA
 Canadian Centre for International Justice, Canada
 Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, Switzerland
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 Katana SA, Switzerland
 New Narratives, West Africa
 The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law, Sierra Leone
 The Center for Justice and Accountability, USA
 The Global Justice and Research Project, Liberia
 The Institute for International Criminal Investigations, The Netherlands
 The Karl Popper Foundation, Switzerland
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 The Sigrid Rausing Trust, United Kingdom
 The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Switzerland
 White and Case LLP, Switzerland



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This design was made together with Nicolás Braguinsky Cascini.

Independent Legal
Representation of
Victims of War Crimes
and Crimes Against
Humanity

**CIVITAS
MAXIMA**

Civitas Maxima in 2017

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Special thanks to those who contributed to this Annual Report: Alexandre Flahault, Noël Harris, Jonina Mignon, Cecilia Seilern, Amy Tan, Rebecca Haley Young