



For Immediate Release:

Liberia: At UN, President Should Back Justice *80 Groups Call for Accountability for Past Crimes*

(New York, September 20, 2018) – [Liberian](#) President George Weah should show leadership at the United Nations General Assembly by announcing his government’s endorsement of justice and reparations for victims of grave crimes during the country’s civil wars, 80 nongovernmental organizations said in a [letter to the president](#) released today.

Liberian, regional, and international groups sent the letter ahead of President Weah’s expected presentation on September 26, 2018 during the high-level segment of the General Assembly in New York. Liberian activists have scheduled a news conference regarding the letter in Liberia’s capital, Monrovia, on September 25 at 11:30 a.m. at the iCampus location.

“When President Weah takes the international stage at UN headquarters, he should support justice for past crimes in Liberia,” said Hassan Bility, executive director of the Monrovia-based [Global Justice and Research Project](#).

Liberia’s civil wars, which spanned 14 years and ended in 2003, were characterized by widespread atrocities by all sides, including summary executions and large-scale massacres. At [Carter Camp](#) and [St. Peter’s Lutheran Church](#), hundreds of civilians were killed in a single night.

Abuses also included widespread systematic rape, mutilation and torture, and forced conscription and use of child combatants.

Attacks against aid workers and foreigners working in Liberia, including the killing of five American nuns, [brought international attention to Liberia’s war](#).

“Liberia has not initiated a single prosecution for the widespread crimes committed against civilians during its wars,” said Nushin Sarkarati, senior staff attorney at the [Center for Justice and Accountability](#).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Liberia in 2009 recommended creating a war crimes court to investigate and try people responsible for grave violations of international law. But the Liberian government has never moved ahead with this recommendation.

“The few cases addressing civil war-era atrocities have occurred outside Liberia, in Europe and the United States,” said Alain Werner, director of [Civitas Maxima](#).

The UN Human Rights Committee on July 26 said that the Liberian government should establish a process to bring about accountability for past war crimes. 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.”

“President Weah should take seriously UN concerns that no perpetrators of war crimes have been brought to justice,” said Adama Dempster, secretary general of the Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia.

[Liberian officials pledged](#) to the Human Rights Committee in July that it would soon issue a public statement about carrying out the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations. The government has yet to do so.

“The UN General Assembly is an ideal moment for the Liberian government to deliver on its pledge to speak up on implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations,” said [Elise Keppler](#), associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch.

Link to the letter is available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/20/letter-president-weah-endorsing-accountability-past-crimes-un-general-assembly>

For more information on civil society efforts to bring justice for Liberia, please see:

<http://coalitionforjusticeinliberia.org/admin.html>

<https://cja.org/10394-2/>

<https://www.civitas-maxima.org/en/outreach>

<http://www.globaljustice-research.org/>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/05/liberia-76-groups-seek-justice-war-crimes>

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