

Dear Friends,

This year has been one of many milestones for justice and of exceptional growth for Civitas Maxima. We would like to share some of our highlights with you and thank you for your support.

February: On behalf of four survivors and their families, the [Center for Justice and Accountability](#) (CJA) filed a civil suit in a Philadelphia court for claims of torture, extrajudicial killing, crimes against humanity and war crimes, against Moses Thomas. A former Colonel in the Armed Forces of Liberia, Thomas is suspected of instigating the infamous [Lutheran Church Massacre](#). The [Global Justice and Research Project](#) (GJRP) and Civitas Maxima investigated the case in partnership with CJA.

May: Over 10,000 Liberians signed a [petition](#) calling on the legislature to establish a War and Economic Crimes Court for the crimes committed during Liberia's civil wars. Civitas Maxima supported this movement through the [Liberian Quest for Justice](#) campaign and supported our sister organization, the GJRP, in their collection of signatures.

April: Mohammed "Jungle Jabbah" Jabbateh, [convicted of immigration fraud and perjury](#) in the United States in 2017, was given the maximum sentence of [30 years](#) in federal prison. Over twenty witnesses were heard during the trial, the majority of them flown in from Liberia to recount, for the first time ever in a criminal court, the crimes they endured during the First Liberian Civil War. Civitas Maxima and the GJRP had collaborated with the authorities on the investigation since 2014 and conducted extensive outreach in connection to the trial.

June: The three-week trial of [Thomas Jucontee Woewiyu](#), Defense Minister and Spokesman for the NPFL – the most brutal faction during Liberia's First Civil War – began in Philadelphia, USA. During his trial, over thirty victims took the stand to testify about crimes allegedly committed under his authority. Woewiyu was found guilty of 11 out of 16 counts of immigration fraud and perjury. His sentencing has been delayed until 2019. Civitas Maxima and the GJRP assisted the authorities in their investigation and conducted extensive outreach in connection to the trial.

August: Civitas Maxima and the GJRP partnered with Livio Silva Müller and Felix Lüth, students from the Graduate Institute in Geneva and the [Liberian Visual Arts Academy](#) on the "[Cartooning for Justice](#)" project. The workshop posed the question "Should war-time crimes be punished in Liberia today?" while engaging a group of young artists, who were encouraged to express their opinions through cartoons. Drawing techniques were taught by [JP Kalonji](#), illustrator of Musu's Diary.

September: [Kunti K.](#) was arrested in France as a result of a complaint filed by Civitas Maxima, alleging he committed crimes against humanity based on extensive investigation in Liberia.

Civitas Maxima established a partnership with [Flomo Theater](#), a Liberian acting troupe that has been active since 1980 and advocates for war-time accountability. The goal of the partnership is to translate the story of [Musu's Diary](#) into a participatory theater roadshow in twenty communities across five counties in Liberia, to be performed in 2019. Musu's Diary is a cartoon series produced by Civitas Maxima about a young Liberian girl who grapples with questions of impunity. By portraying personal stories through art, the project encourages Liberians to use their voices in their own quest for justice.

Olympia Bekou, Civitas Maxima’s Advisory Board Member, Professor of Public International Law and Head of the International Criminal Justice Unit of the [University of Nottingham Human Rights Law Centre](#), conducted data analysis with the GJRP, facilitated by Civitas Maxima. She analyzed all of the statements collected by the GJRP to establish applicable categories (e.g. location of the crime, nature of the crime, type of victim, perpetrator, armed group); identify concentrations and patterns in the types of incidents; highlight connections; shed light on the perpetrators’ modus operandi, build profiles of victims and perpetrators; and uncover gaps and/or issues in the way statements have been collected and propose improvements. Her work made the existing data easier to use and developed tools that will be of great use in the GJRP’s further collection and analysis of evidence.

October: Alain Werner, Civitas Maxima’s Director, visited the University of California Los Angeles and Harvard University to host talks and debates with future lawyers about universal jurisdiction and the challenges of prosecuting war criminals.

November: Civitas Maxima co-hosted the first [National Justice Conference](#) in Monrovia with the GJRP, the Liberian CSO Platform, Human Rights Watch, CJA, Advocates for Human Rights, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The conference welcomed over 100 attendees consisting of human rights defenders, former Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), members of the legislature and representatives of government ministries. The Conference was historic as it marked the first time since the publication of the final Liberian TRC Report that those crucial actors gathered to discuss opportunities and challenges for truth and justice for past crimes in Liberia.

To ensure youths were included in these efforts, we hosted several outreach activities in Monrovia throughout the week including mock trials, a documentary film screening on transitional justice mechanisms, and a [cartooning workshop](#) which produced illustrations on the day of the Conference.

December: Civitas Maxima co-hosted a [side event](#) discussing a pragmatic approach to universal jurisdiction at the International Criminal Court’s Assembly of States Parties in The Hague. The panel featured Karim Khan QC, Carmen Cheung, Legal Director for CJA, and Civitas Maxima’s Alain Werner, all lending their expertise to the 60-person audience. All of these events and activities demonstrate a growing enthusiasm for increased emphasis on justice in Liberia and around the world.

Civitas Maxima is proud of its accomplishments this year and looks forward to maintaining this momentum in the new year. This work would not be possible without your dedicated support. For that, we extend our sincerest gratitude and are excited about accomplishing even more together in 2019!

About CIVITAS MAXIMA

Civitas Maxima (CM), based in Geneva, ensures the coordination of a network of international lawyers and investigators who work for the interests of those who have been victims of international crimes, particularly war crimes and crimes against humanity.

For more information and/or media inquiries:
www.civitas-maxima.org
info@civitas-maxima.org
+41 22 346 1243

About the GJRP

The Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP) is a Liberia-based non-profit, non-governmental organization that documents war crimes and, where possible, seeks justice for victims of these crimes, with the full consent of the victims.

For more information:
www.globaljustice-research.org