



## **PERSPECTIVES OF LIBERIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ON ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

On Tuesday, October 11, 2005, the people of Liberia will vote in national elections. They will choose a President, as well as members of the Senate and House of Representatives. These elections are the first since 1997, when Charles Taylor was elected President during a brief pause in the lengthy armed conflict that began in 1989 when he invaded from Cote D'Ivoire and ended in 2003 when he went into exile in Nigeria.

Among the many issues that will confront the next Liberian government is how to deal with those persons allegedly responsible for past human rights abuses, beginning with Charles Taylor. The approach of a new government to these issues will affect not only Liberia but also other countries in the region such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone, where the United Nations-backed Special Court has issued an arrest warrant for Taylor on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Given the important stakes for justice and accountability, Human Rights First launched a research project intended to help clarify the attitudes of the various Liberian presidential candidates concerning accountability for past human rights abuses – both general attitudes and specific steps needed to address abuses. Beginning in late August 2005, Human Rights First contacted each of the 22 candidates cleared to run for President by Liberia's National Election Commission. (A list of the candidates, along with brief biographies of each, is provided below.) We initially reached out to the candidates via email correspondence and followed up via both email and telephone. We informed the candidates of our purpose in undertaking this survey, outlined its nature, and explained our intention to publish a report in advance of the upcoming elections.

The candidates were asked to respond to 13 multiple-choice questions, of which two invited additional explanation. Fourteen of the 22 candidates responded: Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr., David Farhat, Armah Zolu Jallah, George Momodu Kiadii, George Klay Kieh, John Sembe Morlu, Alfred Garpee Reeves, Varney Sherman, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Togba Nah Tipoteh, Margaret J. Tor-Thompson, William V.S. Tubman, Winston Tubman, and Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee. Some of these candidates also provided supplemental responses to the questions asked. (The details of their responses are provided below.) Eight of the 22 candidates failed to respond: Milton Nathaniel Barnes, Charles Walter Brumskine, Samuel Raymond Divine, Joseph Korto, Robert Momo Kpoto, Alhaji G.V. Kromah, Roland Massaquoi, and George Weah.

Our core objective in undertaking this survey was not to reach any conclusions about the qualifications of particular candidates based on their responses but to use the information gained to better understand the degree of support for various approaches to justice and accountability – and offer an initial guide at what a new Liberian government might seek, including with respect to Charles Taylor. The responses of the candidates indicate broad support for the principle of holding accountable those who committed human rights abuses during the conflict. However, the candidates disagree about the practical steps toward accountability, especially regarding Taylor, that should be undertaken by a new Liberian government.

## KEY FINDINGS

### *Broad Support for the Principle of Accountability and Certain Specific Measures*

The fourteen candidates for the Liberian presidency who responded to the survey express general support for accountability for past abuses. Almost all of the respondents (12 of 14) find it very important to hold accountable those persons who committed abuses during the fourteen years of armed conflict. The exceptions are Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr., who finds it is not important, and William Tubman, who would not answer the question. An overwhelming majority of respondents (12 of 14) further say that justice for victims of abuses committed during the war is compatible with the peace process. The exceptions are Margaret J. Tor-Thompson, who disagrees, and William Tubman, who would not answer the question.

In addition, almost all of the respondents (12 of 14) think it is important to require those persons who committed abuses during the war to admit their crimes before a truth commission, and most candidates who responded (9 of 14) consider this very important. The exceptions are Conneh, who thinks it is not important, and William Tubman, who would not answer the question.

Moreover, almost all of the candidates (12 of 14) indicate support for the law creating a truth commission that was passed by the Liberian national transitional government in July 2005, responding that, if elected President of Liberia, they would support the establishment of a truth commission. The exceptions are George Momodu Kiadii, who is undecided, and William Tubman, who would not answer the question.

The respondents also voice support for the principle that those persons who committed abuses during the war should be prosecuted in court for their actions. A majority (10 of 14) says that the leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for abuses committed during the war should be brought to court and prosecuted. The exceptions are: Conneh, who disagrees; Varney Sherman and Winston Tubman, who are undecided; and William Tubman, who would not answer the question.

Nonetheless, there are serious questions about the ability of the Liberian criminal justice system to undertake the task. Many of the respondents (9 of 14) express little or no confidence in the Liberian criminal justice system to investigate and prosecute the leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for abuses committed during the war. The exceptions are Armah Zolu Jallah, who expresses some confidence, and Conneh, who expresses much confidence.

### *Divided Views on the Scope of Accountability*

It is noteworthy that support drops when a broader scope of prosecution is proposed. Only half of the candidates who responded to the survey (7 of 14) say that all those who committed abuses during the war should be prosecuted in court for their actions. These candidates are: David Farhat, Jallah, George Klay Kieh, John Sembe Morlu, Alfred Garpee Reeves, Togba Nah Tipoteh, and Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee.

With respect to reparations, few respondents (6 of 14) say that those who committed abuses during the war should be required to compensate the victims of such abuses. These candidates are: Jallah, Kieh, Morlu, Reeves, Tipoteh, and Woah-Tee.

### *Holding Charles Taylor Accountable: General Views and Specific Approaches*

When the issue of accountability for Charles Taylor is raised, most of the candidates who responded (11 of 14) say that Taylor should be held accountable for abuses he is alleged to have committed during the war. The same

respondents also say that he should be held accountable for abuses he is alleged to have committed in Sierra Leone. These candidates are: Conneh, Farhat, Jallah, Kiadii, Kieh, Morlu, Reeves, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Tipoteh, Tor-Thompson, and Woah-Tee.

However, when asked to discuss the specifics of holding Taylor accountable, the candidates begin to divide. Only half of the respondents (7 of 14) say that Nigeria should hand him over to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has issued an indictment charging him with crimes against humanity and war crimes. These candidates are: Conneh, Farhat, Kiadii, Kieh, Morlu, Johnson Sirleaf, and Woah-Tee.

Moreover, only half of the respondents (7 of 14) say that, if elected President of Liberia, they would ask Nigeria to hand over Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. These candidates are: Conneh, Farhat, Jallah, Kiadii, Kieh, Morlu, and Woah-Tee.

The disagreements remain when the candidates are presented with the possibility of a prosecution of Taylor in Liberia. Only half of the respondents (7 of 14) say that a Liberian prosecutor should investigate allegations of abuses by Taylor during the war. These candidates are: Jallah, Kiadii, Morlu, Sherman, Johnson Sirleaf, Tor-Thompson, and Tipoteh.

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY QUESTIONS AND CANDIDATE RESPONSES

1. How important is it to hold accountable those who committed abuses during the war?
2. Is justice for victims of abuses committed during the war compatible with the peace process?
3. How important is it to require those who committed abuses during the war to admit their crimes before a truth commission?
4. If elected President of Liberia, would you support the establishment of a truth commission?
5. Should the leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for abuses committed during the war be brought to court and prosecuted?
6. Should all those who committed abuses during the war be brought to court and prosecuted?
7. At present, how much confidence do you have in the Liberian criminal justice system to investigate and prosecute leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for abuses committed during the war? If elected President of Liberia, what steps would you take to improve the Liberian criminal justice system?

Candidate	Question						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.	Not important	Yes	Not important	Yes	No	No	Much confidence
David Farhat	Very important	Yes	Somewhat important	Yes	Yes	Yes	No confidence
Armah Zolu Jallah	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some confidence
George Momodu Kiadii	Very important	Yes	Somewhat important	Undecided	Yes	No	Little confidence
George Klay Kieh	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	Yes	No confidence
John Sembe Morlu	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	Yes	Little confidence
Alfred Garpee Reeves	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response
Varney Sherman	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Undecided	Undecided	No response
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	No	No confidence
Togba Nah Tipoteh	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	Yes	Little confidence
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson	Very important	No	Very important	Yes	Yes	No	No confidence
William V.S. Tubman	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response
Winston Tubman	Very important	Yes	Somewhat important	Yes	Undecided	No	Little confidence
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee	Very important	Yes	Very important	Yes	Yes	Yes	No confidence

8. Should those who committed abuses during the war be required to compensate the victims of such abuses?
9. Should Charles Taylor be held accountable for abuses he is alleged to have committed during the war?
10. Should Charles Taylor be held accountable for abuses he is alleged to have committed in Sierra Leone?
11. Should Nigeria hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has issued an indictment charging him with crimes against humanity and serious war crimes?
12. If elected President of Liberia, would you ask Nigeria to hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone? Why?
13. Should a Liberian prosecutor investigate allegations of abuses by Charles Taylor during the war?

Candidate	Question					
	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>David Farhat</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Armah Zolu Jallah</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<i>George Momodu Kiadii</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>George Klay Kieh</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>John Sembe Morlu</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Alfred Garpee Reeves</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided	No	Undecided
<i>Varney Sherman</i>	Undecided	Undecided	No response	Undecided	No	Yes
<i>Ellen Johnson Sirleaf</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Togba Nah Tipoteh</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided	No	Yes
<i>Margaret J. Tor-Thompson</i>	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
<i>William V.S. Tubman</i>	No response	No response	No response	No	No response	No response
<i>Winston Tubman</i>	No	Undecided	Undecided	No	No	Undecided
<i>Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

## BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF LIBERIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

### *Milton Nathaniel Barnes\**

Mr. Barnes is the candidate of the Liberia Destiny Party (LDP). In March 1999, he was appointed by former Liberian President Charles Taylor to serve as Director General of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation. In September 1999, President Taylor appointed him as Minister of Finance. Mr. Barnes was terminated from his post in July 2002.

### *Charles Walter Brumskine\**

Mr. Brumskine is the candidate of the Liberty Party. A longtime practicing attorney, Mr. Brumskine won a seat in the Liberian Senate as a member of Taylor's National Patriotic Party. He went on to serve as Senate President Pro Tempore until he was forced to resign his post and ultimately flee Liberia in 1999.

### *Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.*

Mr. Conneh is the candidate of the Progressive Democratic Party (PRODEM). Mr. Conneh is the former chairman of the rebel group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). He was also formerly a tax collector and a trader in secondhand cars.

### *Samuel Raymond Divine\**

Mr. Divine is running as an independent candidate. His professional experience has largely been in the banking and financial services sectors.

### *David Farhat*

Mr. Farhat is the candidate of the Free Democracy Party. Mr. Farhat served as Liberia's Finance Minister during the presidency of Samuel Doe.

### *Armah Zolu Jallah*

Mr. Jallah is the candidate of the National Party of Liberia (NPL). He was formerly a senator during the presidency of Charles Taylor.

### *George Momodu Kiadii*

Mr. Kiadii is the candidate of the National Vision Party of Liberia (NATVIPOL). Mr. Kiadii has served as a bishop in Liberia.

### *George Klay Kieh*

Mr. Kieh is the candidate of the New Democratic Alternative of Liberia Movement, otherwise known as the New Deal Movement (NDM). He has served as both Professor and Dean of International Studies at Grand Valley State University as well as Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Morehouse College.

### *Joseph Korto\**

Dr. Korto is the candidate of the Liberia Equality Party (LERP). Dr. Korto has multiple degrees in education and educational administration, and he has served in both teaching and administrative capacities. After a coup in Liberia in 1980, he was appointed chief education officer for Nimba County by the military government. Dr. Korto has also served as President of Union of Liberian Associations in America (ULAA).

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\* Candidate failed to respond to survey.

*Robert Momo Kpoto\**

Dr. Kpoto is the candidate of the Union of Liberian Democrats. He is an orthopedic surgeon, and he has served as Professor and Dean at the A.M. Dogliotti College of Medicine, University of Liberia.

*Alhaji G.V. Kromah\**

Mr. Kromah is the candidate of the All Liberian Coalition Party (ALCOP). Mr. Kromah was appointed Assistant Minister of Information in 1979 and Minister of Information in 1982. He is also a former leader of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO).

*Roland Massaquoi\**

Mr. Massaquoi is the candidate of the National Patriotic Party. Mr. Massaquoi served as the Minister of Agriculture under President Charles Taylor.

*John Sembe Morlu*

Mr. Morlu is the candidate of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), which is composed of the Liberian National Union (LINU), the Liberia Education and Development Party (LEAD), and the Reformation Alliance Party (RAP). Since 1973, Mr. Morlu has worked for the Liberian government in various capacities in the United States, Canada and Asia.

*Alfred Garpee Reeves*

Mr. Reeves is the candidate of the National Reformation Party (NPR). He has served as a bishop of the Victory Temple in Paynesville, Liberia.

*Harry Varney Gboto Nambi Sherman (Varney Sherman)*

Mr. Sherman is the candidate of the Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia (COTOL), which includes the Liberia Action Party (LAP), the Liberia Unification Party (LUP) and the People's Democratic Party of Liberia (PDPL). Mr. Sherman has been a corporate lawyer for twenty-five years.

*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

Ms. Johnson Sirleaf is the candidate of the Unity Party. Currently serving as Chair of Liberia's Commission on Good Governance, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf has functioned as both the Secretary of State of Finance and Minister of Finance for past governments of Liberia. Ms. Johnson Sirleaf has a background in banking and has served in a variety of executive banking positions leading up to her Directorship of the United Nations Development Program's Regional Bureau for Africa.

*Togba Nah Tipoteh*

Dr. Tipoteh is the candidate of the Alliance for Democratic Change. Dr. Tipoteh is an economist, and he has worked with the FAO, UNCTAD, IMF, ECA and World Bank. He has also served in the Liberian government. He was a budget advisor under President William Tolbert and the first Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs under President Samuel Doe.

*Margaret J. Tor-Thompson*

Dr. Tor-Thompson is the candidate of the Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia (FAPL). She has worked as a registered nurse and a Christian educator and author. Dr. Tor-Thompson is the CEO of Woman of Might among Nations (WOMAN) and Voice of Liberia.

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\* Candidate failed to respond to survey.

*Winston Tubman*

Mr. Tubman is the candidate of the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL). He has served as Foreign Minister, Justice Minister and Ambassador to the United Nations for past Liberian governments. Mr. Tubman has also been the United Nations' chief envoy to Somalia.

*William V.S. Tubman*

Mr. Tubman is the candidate of the Reformed United Liberia Party (RULP). Mr. Tubman is the son of former Liberian President William V.S. Tubman.

*George Weah\**

Mr. Weah is the candidate of the Congress for Democratic Change. He is an internationally well-known former soccer player, and he has served as a UNICEF goodwill ambassador.

*Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee*

Dr. Woah-Tee is the candidate of the Labour Party of Liberia (LPL). He is an educator and administrator, and he was sent by former Liberian President William Tolbert to serve as a teacher and ambassador to Bong County's sister-city, Baltimore, Maryland.

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\* Candidate failed to respond to survey.

## QUESTION-BY-QUESTION SURVEY RESPONSES

1. *How important is it to hold accountable those who committed abuses during the war?*

*Very important*                      12 of 14

David Farhat  
Armah Zolu Jallah  
George Momodu Kiadii  
George Klay Kieh  
John Sembe Morlu  
Alfred Garpee Reeves  
Varney Sherman  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Togba Nah Tipoteh  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson  
Winston Tubman  
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*Somewhat important*            0 of 14

*Not important*                      1 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

*No response*                        1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“Even though we should forgive and forget the past, we need to bring those people to justice and we cannot sweep this under the rug and ignore what they did in the past.”

George Klay Kieh:

“In order to establish a society under rule of law, there must be accountability. Liberia has a culture of impunity that must be overcome.”

Varney Sherman:

“But we will insure that we are not going to involve ourselves in a situation like Rwanda, where they put people in jail for years; we are not so much interested in retributive justice as restorative justice.”

Winston Tubman:

“This answer has to be qualified to reflect the fact that accountability doesn’t necessarily mean that a system of witch-hunting will be instituted. We will have to address this issue on the broader basis of moving forward with our peace process while ensuring that the culprits of past misdeeds are not given the opportunity to do so again. The spirit of reconciliation and unity will be our guiding light in this area.”

2. *Is justice for victims of abuses committed during the war compatible with the peace process?*

*Yes* 12 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

David Farhat

Armah Zolu Jallah

George Momodu Kiadii

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Varney Sherman

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Winston Tubman

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 1 of 14

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

George Momodu Kiadii:

“Peaceful assembly and justice is an essential component of the human rights for all of society. The great philosopher John Rawls stated a just society **MUST** be based on two principles of justice: 1) each person would have the most extensive system of rights and freedoms which can be accorded equally to everyone; and 2) economic and social inequalities are only justified if they benefit all of society, especially its most disadvantaged members. In the case of Liberia, victims of abuse have had inequalities throughout their lives, and never to their advantage. Leaders have relished the ability to strip Liberia of its financial reserves and natural resources, while distributing none back to the people. Freedoms of speech, peaceful assembly, and democracy, so key to these principles, have been destroyed, at the expense of the majority of the Liberian people.”

George Klay Kieh:

“The peace process at present doesn’t have a strong element of justice, centering instead on confessions of the perpetrators. I want to see more focus on justice for victims.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“It depends. We should do everything we can do to keep the peace. It’s a fragile peace, and we do not want to upset it. People have a right to express what happened to them, but it should be done cautiously. I have nothing against human rights organizations seeking justice.”

Varney Sherman:

“Because peace is justice; we have to focus on what Liberians really want: reconciliation and restoring relationships, instead of reopening our wounds.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“Only justice will bring about peace.”

3. How important is it to require those who committed abuses during the war to admit their crimes before a truth commission?

*Very important* 9 of 14

Armah Zolu Jallah  
George Klay Kieh  
John Sembe Morlu  
Alfred Garpee Reeves  
Varney Sherman  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Togba Nah Tipoteh  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson  
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*Somewhat important* 3 of 14

David Farhat  
George Momodu Kiadii  
Winston Tubman

*Not important* 1 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“A South African style truth commission ... is not a model that is applicable in every situation [and] is not compatible in this case.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“Whether or not an abuser admits to a crime is not especially germane to the issue.... [M]ost criminals will insist upon their innocence, or blame their crimes on others [such as] society, family, circumstances.”

George Klay Kieh:

“Very important, but not sufficient.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“It is very important to make the attempt, but rare to get any information right away. You must dig it out of them.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“The success of truth and reconciliation in South Africa shows that this is the way forward.”

William V.S. Tubman:

“There is a new trend toward reconciliation.... If somehow we could have a truth organization set up where people can make confessions as they did in South Africa, this might be preferred to the trials. Others argue that if

you commit the crime, you should pay the penalty prescribed by law. This is a judgment that must be discussed when representative government returns to Liberia. It is not something that should be decided beforehand.”

4. *If elected President of Liberia, would you support the establishment of a truth commission?*

*Yes* 12 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

David Farhat

Armah Zolu Jallah

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Varney Sherman

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

Winston Tubman

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 0 of 14

*Undecided* 1 of 14

George Momodu Kiadii

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“There needs to be a process in place to convict those who committed crimes and punishes them for their past abuses. Young people are vulnerable and we must set good examples and rehabilitate the youth.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“It would depend on what a ‘truth commission’ consists of. Getting to the truth of various issues is important in a democracy. But will a truth commission be the best way to arrive at it? What if the members of the truth commission have political leanings or ideological views about the issue being studied? Will that affect the findings? More study on the ramifications of such a commission needs to be looked at to determine its potential efficacy.”

George Klay Kieh:

“Yes, provided it included an element of social justice.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“I support anything to restore the credibility, stability, and unity of Liberia and the Liberian people in their own eyes and the eyes of the international community. It is a fragile situation, so as a leader, I will strive to be level-headed in dealing with anything that could disrupt the peace we now enjoy.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“I have supported it all along, and even now it is an important part of my platform.... It will be of highest priority after I’m elected, because it is important for setting up a justice system, which is indispensable for peace.”

Winston Tubman:

“This needs to be qualified to include a reconciliation aspect. This way, people will harbor no fear of retribution from the general society because of their revelation of personal past misdeeds during our civil crisis.”

*5. Should the leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for abuses committed during the war be brought to court and prosecuted?*

*Yes* 10 of 14

David Farhat  
Armah Zolu Jallah  
George Momodu Kiadii  
George Klay Kieh  
John Sembe Morlu  
Alfred Garpee Reeves  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Togba Nah Tipoteh  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson  
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 1 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

*Undecided* 2 of 14

Varney Sherman  
Winston Tubman

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“Yes, if they are proven to have committed atrocities under international law and our constitution. As president, I take an oath to protect and defend the constitution and laws of Liberia.”

Varney Sherman:

“If they are willing to go before a truth commission, they should not be; if not, they choose to subject themselves to the court.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“Yes, if the abuses are in violation of law, because it’s impossible to have a justice system in which the rule of law is not central. Within truth and reconciliation commissions, there’s an understanding that you are going to tell the truth as best as you can, and only under special circumstances would there be criminal proceedings.”

Winston Tubman:

“This issue has to be decided by a government based on the mandate that that government has from the people in full consideration of the stability of our country and the durability of the peace process. It therefore cannot be decided simply on a “black or white” basis but, instead, on a lot of other factors involved. For instance, prior to the cessation of hostilities during various phases of our civil conflict, agreements were signed that forgave the actors for certain misdeeds in order to get them to forego the path of violence. Now, this has to be reviewed in terms of both moving the country forward and preventing the future outbreak of hostilities in our country.”

*6. Should all those who committed abuses during the war be brought to court and prosecuted?*

*Yes* 7 of 14

David Farhat  
Armah Zolu Jallah  
George Klay Kieh  
John Sembe Morlu  
Alfred Garpee Reeves  
Togba Nah Tipoteh  
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 5 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.  
George Momodu Kiadii  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson  
Winston Tubman

*Undecided* 1 of 14

Varney Sherman

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

George Momodu Kiadii:

“There are many victims of the war who were forced to commit abuses themselves. Individuals such as child soldiers, who are forced into conflict at a young age, should not be held accountable for the acts they commit, but rather given a chance to be rehabilitated and enter society as productive citizens.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“Everyone who committed abuses should be given the opportunity to defend themselves and explain their reason to the victims.”

Varney Sherman:

“There are many things to take into consideration: many child soldiers, who have served the same leaders for ten years, since they were eleven years old.... In general, those who commit abuses, even if just following orders, should have some form or accountability.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“All those who violate the law should be charged in court. This is fundamental.”

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson:

“It would be impossible. You are talking about close to 200,000 people who were rebels. In a perfect world, the answer would be ‘yes’.”

Winston Tubman:

“[It is a] significant fact that a lot of our former combatants who have been accused of committing these abuses were mere children being manipulated and deceived by others. They deserve reintegration and training skills in our new Liberia so that they too can realize that there is a lot that they can offer their country without being pariahs of their particular communities.”

*7. At present, how much confidence do you have in the Liberian criminal justice system to investigate and prosecute leaders who bear the greatest responsibility for abuses committed during the war?*

*Much confidence*            *1 of 14*  
Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

*Some confidence*            *1 of 14*  
Armah Zolu Jallah

*Little confidence*            *4 of 14*  
George Momodu Kiadii  
John Sembe Morlu  
Togba Nah Tipoteh  
Winston Tubman

*No confidence*                *5 of 14*  
David Farhat  
George Klay Kieh  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson  
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No response*                 *3 of 14*  
Alfred Garpee Reeves  
Varney Sherman  
William V.S. Tubman

*If elected President of Liberia, what steps would you take to improve the Liberian criminal justice system?*

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.:

“If elected president of Liberia, I will make sure to employ qualified Liberians in the judiciary system.”

David Farhat:

I would take measures to “ensure that the justice system was independent and fair” by employing “capable, strong and trustworthy” people. The court should be provided with “the means to strengthen its members” so they will have “some incentive to work efficiently and effectively for the people in a just manner.”

Armah Zolu Jallah:

I would protect “the independence of the judiciary,” giving it “control over its own budgetary allocation.” I would “improve the salary of judges and court officials to attract qualified officials of integrity [to] the judiciary. In addition, I desire a “code of conduct of judges so they do not overstep their judicial assignment beyond conferred legislative authority.” I intend to “build on the current restructuring program of the National Police.... [H]igh school graduates will be recruited and trained to be in the service so that they will know the rights of accused, limitations of government, and the role of courts.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“A liberal constitutional democracy, which I feel is essential for Liberia, must have as its foundation a balance of power among the executive branch, the legislature, and a strong independent judiciary. With an established rule of law and an independent judiciary in place, Liberia can then feel safe and secure in participating in the political system and expressing their opinions. Enforcement of the rule of law by the truly independent judiciary will preclude elected leaders from establishing themselves as democratic tyrants. This democracy, and the leaders who abide by it, will reduce the level of corruption and mismanagement and ask for all stakeholders to support anti-corruption and criminal justice efforts. This democracy will be professional and apolitical in its support of the statutes of criminal justice and the people it represents. And, most importantly, through this democracy, the culture of impunity in Liberia will end. I suggest that extremism in the defense of liberty and justice for all is not a vice; conversely, moderation in the pursuit of justice, human rights and excellence is not a virtue!”

George Klay Kieh:

“In order to accomplish this goal, we must have an internationally established war crimes tribunal. The Liberian criminal justice system is part of the problem because it is so inefficient.” As part of my plan, there will be “retraining and higher pay for judges. However, this must be part of a larger effort to establish a democratic culture based on the rule of law, not just for the judiciary, but for everyone in the nation.”

John Sembe Morlu:

“Complete reform of the judicial system to reflect UNBIASNESS which engenders equal rights of all citizens.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“As a leader, I will seek to strengthen the legal system so that we can have full confidence in it. It needs checks and balances and there is no system that is worthy of 100% confidence. After a country goes through what Liberia has gone through, there are many bottlenecks, so it is difficult to pass any judgment. The system has problems because of the trauma suffered, but we have a chance to strengthen the system by appealing to human rights organizations and our allies to send experts to help. I will attempt to strengthen law schools, encourage young men and women to go to school, and get strong jurists to teach them. This will strengthen the court system. Jurists will be trained to be honest and serve Liberia with transparency.”

Varney Sherman:

“[There is] limited capacity after fifteen years of civil conflict. The problem is not with training. I’m a lawyer. The training is fine. The problem is with logistics.”

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf:

“Appoint qualified judges and provide adequate compensation to ensure integrity and independence.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“There needs to be serious reorientation and revamping. Corruption in the court is the general case, from the top to the bottom. The most important thing is for the court to set examples. The Liberian criminal justice system

must not allow the president to intervene illegally; the president must set an example. It's important to make sure the judges are well-trained (through academic institutions as well as on-the-job through workshops and seminars) and well-paid, and that people are elected on the basis of merit instead of political connections. Ultimately, one of the very important things is civic education. The citizenry must be well informed of their rights and duties. The security forces must put special emphasis on the relationship between members of the security forces and the community. This relationship is currently characterized by violence and oppression. People must learn to organize under the law, and this will be a disincentive for those in the criminal justice system to act illegally."

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson:

"I would make sure that the responsible people are prosecuted; that people understand the consequences; send out a clear-cut message that 'we will no longer tolerate crime with impunity'."

William V.S. Tubman:

"The Liberian criminal justice system is a good system because it is taken from American jurisprudence. The problem is the execution of it. If you consider what jurists are being paid, it's not nearly enough and thus there are abuses of the system. The system needs to be overhauled completely. The laws are just laws (based on Liberian and American jurisprudence), but it is very difficult for justice to have a blind eye right now where there is abject poverty and judges are not paid properly and are therefore subject to influence. The first thing I would do to improve the system is to make sure the Chief Justice receives the same salary as the president of Liberia, and grant corresponding increases in the salaries of the justices down the line, allowing them to take care of their families without having to resort to taking bribes. If they accept bribes when properly cared for, they should pay the fullest penalty because they have greater responsibility."

Winston Tubman:

"We will have to retrain those who currently make up the system. Additionally, we will have to heavily invest in training and developing new workers for the system. We will have to constantly educate them on evolving theories and methods within the criminal justice system as a whole. We will also have to review, like we would do all sectors, the salary scale to make it commensurate with the level of results we seek so as to both let workers understand the need and importance of maintaining their jobs and to drastically reduce, if not eliminate, the rate of corruption and bribery currently pervading the system. Also, we would implement a "zero tolerance" policy for bribing or attempting to bribe players (jurors, police, lawyers, judges, etc.) in the system, and will harshly deal with those who violate this policy."

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee:

"Revamp the entire Judicial System—so that Liberia will have more professionally train[ed] judges [and] lawyers with improve[d] conditions of the prisons."

8. *Should those who committed abuses during the war be required to compensate the victims of such abuses?*

Yes

6 of 14

Armah Zolu Jallah

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* *6 of 14*  
Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.  
David Farhat  
George Momodu Kiadii  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson  
Winston Tubman

*Undecided* *1 of 14*  
Varney Sherman

*No response* *1 of 14*  
William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“The problem is, the people may not have the means to compensate the victims; thus the demand is unrealistic. Only if someone has the means can he compensate, but more than compensation, the people involved should be brought to justice and their crimes exposed.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“Due to the complexity of the decision required (e.g., who will be compensated? How much? For what and by whom?), it would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis, if at all. However, any leader (i.e., Charles Taylor) should be brought to justice, prosecuted, and, if found guilty ... stripped of all monies stolen from the people. This money would be used to make reparations to all the people affected by their warring policies.”

George Klay Kieh:

“Yes in principle, but they do not have the capacity to do so, so there would be no practical value of requiring compensation.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“Yes, if they are in the position to do so. If not, this is where the law and government come in to bring them to court. Let them see the wrong they have done, so that when the law punishes them they will only blame themselves.”

Varney Sherman:

“I don’t know, because that could be inconsistent with restorative justice, and many people can’t afford it. Monetary compensation is meaningless. It’s the act of acknowledging and asking forgiveness for their crimes that means something to Liberians; victims cannot be compensated by money.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“Only where applicable by provisions already in the law, not in all cases. It might well be that there will be discussion for new laws and constitutional reform, which would alter these provisions.”

Winston Tubman:

“Our country has been through enough; there is no particular need or mechanism to justly carry this out.”

9. Should Charles Taylor be held accountable for abuses he is alleged to have committed during the war?

*Yes* 11 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

David Farhat

Armah Zolu Jallah

George Momodu Kiadii

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 0 of 14

*Undecided* 2 of 14

Varney Sherman

Winston Tubman

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“Without a doubt; he left the nation without resources, the young people’s minds are messed up.... The government needs to provide the nation with the means to rehabilitate the young people.”

Armah Jallah:

“But a court should also be established that tries those responsible for committing human rights abuses during the civil war in Liberia, not just Charles Taylor.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“Due to the complexity of the decision required (e.g., who will be compensated? How much? For what and by whom?), it would have to be decided on a case-by-case basis, if at all. However, any leader (i.e., Charles Taylor) should be brought to justice, prosecuted, and if found guilty, should be stripped of all monies stolen from the people. This money would be used to make reparations to all the people affected by their warring policies.”

George Klay Kieh:

“[A]nd all warlords in the second civil war [should be held accountable].”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“Yes, if the legal system proves that Mr. Taylor did so. This is a legal matter, not based on my own opinion. Whatever the law says, no matter who is involved, it should be carried out to the letter. As president, I will stand by the decision of the Court.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“The most important thing is for us to deal on a matter of principle, not individuals. The principle is that no one is above the law, and if you violate it, there are provisions for how you should be handled. Let due process proceed.”

Winston Tubman:

“It isn’t as simple an issue as people look at it. The greater good of the country has to be taken into full consideration when addressing such matters.”

*10. Should Charles Taylor be held accountable for abuses he is alleged to have committed in Sierra Leone?*

*Yes* 11 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

David Farhat

Armah Zolu Jallah

George Momodu Kiadii

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 0 of 14

*Undecided* 1 of 14

Winston Tubman

*No response* 2 of 14

Varney Sherman

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“He should be held accountable anywhere where he has committed abuses. If he committed a crime, he should pay for it.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“Any person who has committed crimes in other countries, if prosecuted and found guilty, should be held accountable.”

George Klay Kieh:

“This should be the first start because Sierra Leone was the first to bring charges.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“If proven, let the law take its course.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“For abuses committed anywhere, based on where the abuses were committed, and according to international law as well. The bottom line is that anyone who commits an offense should face the consequences of the law.”

Winston Tubman:

“[T]he atrocities allegedly committed against the Liberian people have to receive at least as much urgent treatment as those allegedly committed against others.”

*11. Should Nigeria hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which has issued an indictment charging him with crimes against humanity and serious war crimes?*

*Yes* 7 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

David Farhat

George Momodu Kiadii

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 4 of 14

Armah Zolu Jallah

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

William V.S. Tubman

Winston Tubman

*Undecided* 3 of 14

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Varney Sherman

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“Nigeria should not keep a criminal and should not condone Taylor’s actions. Though for some reason he seems to have an agreement with the Nigerian government, he should be charged for his crimes.”

Armah Jallah:

“He can be turn[ed] over to an elected government when elections in Liberia are held.”

George Klay Kieh:

“I prefer a war crimes tribunal to a special court, as in Rwanda. This will add U.N. backing in terms of enforcement under Chapter VII [of the U.N. Charter], which requires anyone who harbors someone who committed war crimes to bring them to court.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“I don’t have the details, but I’m sure that before Nigeria allowed Taylor to go into their country, there was some kind of agreement. It would be naïve on my part to say what Nigeria should do without knowing the details.”

Varney Sherman:

“If Sierra Leone has asked them to, they have an international obligation to do so.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“I don’t want to deal with questions of personalities; no one is above the law. What does the law say? What does international law say in this case? Don’t focus on the individual. Let the law prevail, and if people don’t think it’s a good law, let them try to change it. But don’t just adjust the law on the whims and caprices of individuals.”

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson:

“I would like to get my hands on him first.”

William V.S. Tubman:

“Taylor should be given the same rights as Milosevic and others who have been accused of committing atrocities. He should not be tried by a court set up in a specific region where he is accused, but at the international court of justice. Even supposed felons have human rights; he has not yet been tried and found guilty, so I cannot say he has committed atrocities. Why should a new court be sanctioned for this purpose? If he is to be tried, he should be sent to the Hague/ICC. Whether he should be tried is for lawyers to decide.”

Winston Tubman:

“In the absence of a U.N. Charter Chapter VII resolution binding Nigeria to do so, the agreement entered into that led to his voluntary departure from Liberia should be honored.”

*12. If elected President of Liberia, would you ask Nigeria to hand over Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone?*

*Yes* 7 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.

David Farhat

Armah Zolu Jallah

George Momodu Kiadii

George Klay Kieh

John Sembe Morlu

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*No* 6 of 14

Alfred Garpee Reeves

Varney Sherman

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Togba Nah Tipoteh

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

Winston Tubman

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

*Why?*

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.:

“Because he had been indicted by the International Court and bringing [him] to Liberia means that he had been free of all charges.”

David Farhat:

“Without a doubt, because he left the country in total ruins, the youth have gone astray and there are no more resources. He needs to pay for what he has done to the nation and be brought to justice. He may have done Jesus Christ a service but he didn’t do me no service.”

Armah Zolu Jallah:

“Resolutions of the U.N. Security Council are hard laws. The fact that the court was established under the U.N. Security Resolution, I am compelled upon the request of the Sierra Leonean Government or the Court to turn him to exonerate himself of charges. On the other hand, in Sierra Leone, Taylor is already considered guilty before trial. An option would be the Court in the Hague.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“Since August 2000, when the U.N. Security Council adopted resolution 1315 creating the independent special court of Sierra Leone to prosecute persons bearing greatest responsibility for the violations of, and crimes against, international humanitarian law; 13 individuals have been indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, the Council stated ‘CONGRATULATES the Federal Republic of Nigeria for granting asylum to Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, in accordance with the wishes of the African Union, ECOWAS, and the understanding of the international community.’ This is unacceptable to the peace process and the rights of Liberians to the justice they so richly deserve. I am in accordance with Amnesty International, who stated ‘the action by the Government of Nigeria in allowing Charles Taylor to enter Nigerian territory without threat of arrest and prosecution goes against the wish of the international community that impunity for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other grave crimes must come to an end. It denies justice to tens of thousands of African victims of the worst possible crimes in the world and undermines the contribution of the Special Court towards achieving justice, reconciliation and sustained peace in Sierra Leone and the West Africa region.’”

George Klay Kieh:

“I would encourage them to, [because] there needs to be a general principle of the rule of law, not just in Liberia, but in the entire region.”

John Sembe Morlu:

“Liberia, as a founding member of the UNITED NATIONS, should abide by all protocols of the U.N., AND [] RESPECT INTERNATIONAL LAW.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“I will reach out to Nigeria to find out what is going on with my citizen in that country, so that I will be in a better position to make a judgment. I will be very cautious in handling any matter coming out of the war, as I don’t want to offset the peace process.”

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf:

“I would respect Nigeria’s decision to hand him over to an elected Liberian Government. Arrangement would then be made to send him to the Special Court.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“I would not make any request of Nigeria, but would just promote the method of the international court. I would support the demands of the international court, whatever those demands are, because it’s a competent jurisdiction. I will not engage in any special references at all. I will not be party to the breaking down of a proper system. If the court is recognized internationally, and is a competent jurisdiction, then anyone who’s called to go there should go there. Anyone who claims to be a democrat should encourage that because this supports due process of law, and no one is above the law.”

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson:

“Don’t know how they will conduct trials, but there is a need to give retribution and satisfaction to Liberians. Liberia needs to have some closure, some resolution. We need closure and we will find it in our country and then he can move to the next nation.”

Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee:

“Taylor needs to have his fair days in court for the destruction of lives and properties in Liberia and its neighbors.”

*13. Should a Liberian prosecutor investigate allegations of abuses by Charles Taylor during the war?*

*Yes* 7 of 14

Armah Zolu Jallah  
George Momodu Kiadii  
John Sembe Morlu  
Varney Sherman  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
Togba Nah Tipoteh  
Margaret J. Tor-Thompson

*No* 4 of 14

Sekou Damate Conneh, Jr.  
David Farhat  
George Klay Kieh  
Joseph Mamamdee Woah-Tee

*Undecided* 2 of 14

Alfred Garpee Reeves  
Winston Tubman

*No response* 1 of 14

William V.S. Tubman

Some candidates also provided supplemental responses.

David Farhat:

“Liberia does not have the means to conduct an endless investigation ... [but Charles Taylor’s abuses] should be exposed and people should know about what he has done to the nation. If people will provide resources and undertake the task of investigation ... [I] would be happy to support any effort to uncover and publicize what Taylor has done.”

George Momodu Kiadii:

“There should, in my estimation, be a number of prosecutors involved with the investigation of Charles Taylor. A special Liberian prosecutor would be essential, and should be appointed by the President to aid in any investigation by the Special Courts. Such a prosecutor could only lend credibility to the prospect, and necessity, of justice for the Liberian people.”

George Klay Kieh:

“I prefer an internationally appointed prosecutor, for fairness of the process.”

John Sembe Morlu:

“After the Truth and Reconciliation Commission holds hearings and make[s] recommendations to the Administration to set up an investigative body.”

Alfred Garpee Reeves:

“Under the constitution and the legal system, the law says that when a crime is committed, it should be investigated. If the international courts can prove that Taylor or anyone committed abuses against Liberian people, he should be tried in that country. I don’t necessarily think Taylor should be tried in Liberia.”

Varney Sherman:

“Yes, but we don’t need to personalize it. Liberia should investigate all abuses committed during the war.”

Togba Nah Tipoteh:

“There is no need to bring the same name up over and over again. Allegations against anyone should be investigated, including Charles Taylor.”

Margaret J. Tor-Thompson:

“I would not call them ‘allegations;’ I would call them ‘factual abuses.’”

Winston Tubman:

“The issue of only dealing with Charles Taylor goes to the crux of our civil crisis and political instability.... [I]t is very useful and instructive for the world over to remember that Charles Taylor was not the only warlord in Liberia. This issue cannot be dealt with in isolation of other players in the conflict and the greater good of the country.”