



University of  
**Nottingham**  
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

# Report

# Roadmap to Accountability: Overcoming Barriers to Justice

Final Report

Professor Olympia Bekou

March 2021

## Introduction

*'We should not allow our past to define us'*

- Hassan Bility, Director of the Global Justice and Research Project.

In 2020, Professor Olympia Bekou from the University of Nottingham School of Law, was awarded QR funding to deliver the project 'Roadmap to Accountability: Overcoming Barriers to Justice'. The project was delivered by Prof. Bekou in partnership with the Global Justice and Research Project (GJRP), the leading Liberian non-governmental organisation working on mass atrocity. The project has built on previous research into overcoming barriers to post-conflict justice in Liberia, which experienced two violent civil wars between 1989 and 2003 and was delivered with the support of the School of Law's Human Rights Law Centre. It notably built on the Legislative Conference on Accountability for Past Crimes in Liberia, which took place in 2019 with the support of the University of Nottingham and GJRP, and had culminated in the presentation of the 2019 Resolution on the War Crimes Court.

The aim of the current project was to jumpstart efforts towards accountability and justice for crimes committed in relation to the two Liberian Civil Wars, which have stalled in the wake of COVID-19. The focus has been on overcoming those barriers which have so far prevented progress to influence policy makers with the ultimate goal of implementing the recommendations made by the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), including establishing a War Crimes Court. The project has provided support for Liberian led initiatives and has facilitated group agreement among Liberian stakeholders on the next stages of action, including by creating a significant networking opportunity in order to strengthen efforts for justice. It has also deepened the previously existing links between Prof. Bekou and GJRP, as well as other Liberian stakeholders from the legislature, Liberia National Bar Association and civil society.

Split into two phases, the first phase of the project included a series of discussions gathering public opinion from across Liberia throughout February 2021. A total of 150 people were reached through five focus groups in which people from all walks of life discussed those barriers which have so far prevented justice. The second phase of the project took place in March 2021 and culminated in a two-day conference. This brought stakeholders together to discuss how identified barriers can be overcome and the necessary concrete strategic actions. The conference was attended by 48 participants on day one and 50 participants on day two. Representatives from the legislature, political parties, the Liberia National Bar Association, traditional community leaders, women and youth leaders and civil society united in a collaborative effort to construct a Roadmap to Accountability. The conference was reported in the national press and provided demonstrations of unity, with one traditional leader stating:

*"When we talk as chiefs and elders, we don't talk like I'm from Nimba, I'm from Bong, we talk with one voice!"*

## Activities: Phase One

The key objectives of the project were to identify barriers to accountability and the ways in which they can be overcome, inform policy on accountability and the establishment of a War Crimes Court, and produce a Roadmap to Accountability for stakeholders. The Roadmap includes concrete identified actions which seek to encourage the Liberian Government to reprioritise questions of justice and accountability post-COVID-19, and reapply pressure for the 2019 Resolution on the War Crimes Court to be tabled in Parliament. Whilst it was

constructed during the second phase of the project, the Roadmap was informed by and built upon data collected during the first phase.

Working both remotely from Nottingham and with GJRP within Liberia, the two teams have collaboratively delivered the project. Phase one took place between December and February 2021 and involved gathering data which would later inform phase two. Five focus groups were conducted in line with COVID-19 regulations across five Liberian counties (Monrovia, Bomi, Lofa, Bong and Grand Bassa). One focus group was held in Bong County rather than Nimba County as originally proposed due to security reasons in light of a local election process. Each group involved people from all walks of life including community members, traditional community leaders, youth and women leaders, with a total of 150 people taking part. The impact of the groups is much wider, with the discussions continuing back in respective communities and some leaders returning to participate in phase two of the project.



Image: Hassan Bility, Director of GJRP.

The focus groups discussed and identified what they think are the most significant barriers to justice and which have so far prevented substantive progress, identifying five key barriers:

- Lack of political will to implement the TRC recommendations and establish a War Crimes Court
- Lack of coordinated and sustained advocacy campaigns which maintain pressure on the Liberian Government
- Anti-War Crimes Court propaganda from those accused who retain positions of influence and who do not want a justice mechanism to be established
- Lack of public knowledge and clarity around related issues

- The lack of available funding for a War Crimes Court and the implementation of the TRC recommendations. Especially amid limited domestic resources and competing needs.

The groups were highly engaged and developed the discussion beyond the subject areas which were provided as starting points by GJRP. The discussions included debate around what justice and the implementation of the TRC recommendations might look like. Amid consistent calls for the establishment of a War Crimes Court and spirited debate on issues including funding, security and political will, one participant from Montserrado County stated:

*“The perpetrators are still moving and living freely a good life whilst the victims have become servants for them. If you want to catch the chicks around the hen, you need to catch the hen first”.*

Another focus group participant stated:

*“In Liberia people with money and power used their money and positions in government to turn the rights of innocent people to wrong. We will celebrate if the War Crimes Court is established in Liberia to deal with the past”.*

All five groups went on to identify strategic actions which could break down the recognised barriers, including sustained advocacy, outreach and education programmes. The findings from the focus groups informed a draft ‘Roadmap to Accountability’ and accompanying ‘Pledge of Commitment’ which were then developed during phase two of the project.



Image: Venue, Bomi County, GJRP.

## Activities: Phase Two

Phase two of the project took place in March 2021 and culminated in a two-day conference. The conference was held at Boulevard Palace Hotel, 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Monrovia, Liberia on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2021. It brought together stakeholders in order to affirm the previously identified barriers to justice and discuss how they can be overcome, including identifying concrete strategic actions. During the two conference days representatives from the

Legislature, political parties, the Liberia National Bar Association, traditional community leaders, women and youth leaders, civil society, academics and foreign ambassadors united in a collaborative effort to construct a Roadmap to Accountability.

The programme for day one of the conference included opening remarks, discussion of the barriers identified in phase one, and open discussion sessions on specific issues including confirming the identified barriers and the experiences of the participants. To ensure that a range of perspectives were heard the open discussion sessions were each led by a different group, for example, civil society, the Legislature, traditional leaders, and the Liberia National Bar Association. The key barriers to justice which were confirmed as requiring action were:

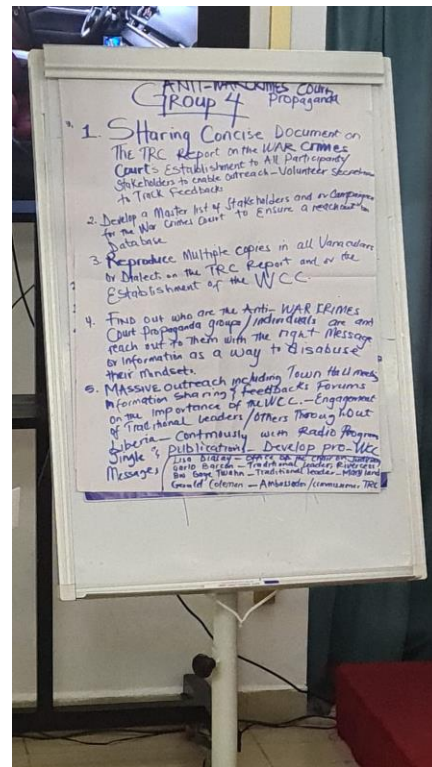
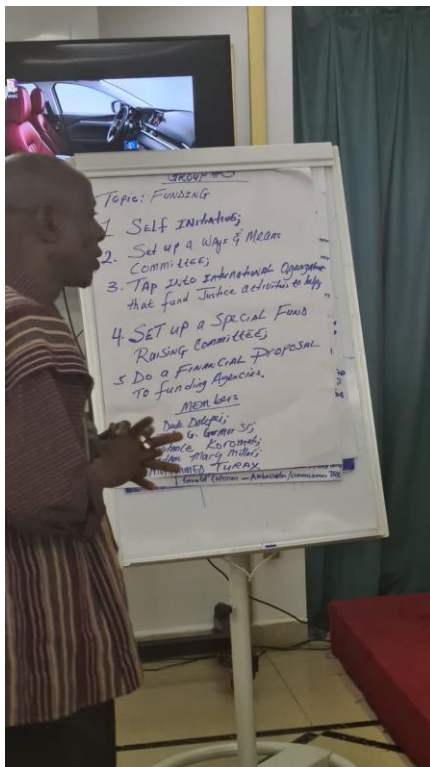
- Lack of political will
- The failure to adopt the 2019 Resolution on the War Crimes Court
- Lack of coordinated and consistent pressure on the Liberian Government
- Anti-War Crimes Court propoganda and lack of public knowledge
- The need to secure funding for a War Crimes Court.

The range of participants present provided lively and informed debated. Commissioners from the TRC made important contributions, including offering technical assistance. They also allayed security concerns around seeking justice, with Commissioner Massa Washington stating:

*'we must not allow fear to drain our hope.'*

The discussion was enriched by foreign ambassadors who spoke on key issues including funding, which could be further discussed on the implementation of the Roadmap to Accountability. Representatives from Sierra Leone were particularly instructive as they were able to share their experience of establishing and operating the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

On day two the attendees broke into smaller groups to debate solutions for the identified barriers to justice, before reuniting to present their findings to the group and collaboratively develop the Roadmap and Pledge of Commitment.



Images: GJRP, Conference Day Two.

The debate raised significant calls for unity and collaboration between the stakeholder groups. Participants acknowledged that all Liberians must be involved in the process to call for a War Crimes Court. It was identified that this requires raising public understanding of the recommendations made by the TRC in 2009, which are yet to be implemented. The TRC produced a comprehensive and multi-volume final report containing recommendations on accountability, including the recommendation for a War Crimes Court, however it is not user-friendly for lay audiences. Producing a concise and accessible document was identified as important and working with TRC Commissioners to simplify the report was viewed as a critical next step. This concise document could then easily be disseminated, including being discussed by traditional leaders with their communities.

It was also noted that the conference was in English and did not include local language interpretation or discussions in local vernaculars, there was therefore no participation from non-English speakers. There were calls to increase accessibility by translating the TRC's recommendations and simplified documents into local languages. The need to include communities who do not speak English by having local language messaging repeatedly arose as the importance of multi-lingual engagement was raised in relation to all of the identified barriers as a way of raising public knowledge. Another inclusive idea was having strong engagement with the media, particularly through developing songs in local dialects which speak on the TRC and the War Crimes Court. It was hoped that such efforts can empower people through information and simultaneously counter misinformation. The need to develop local language engagement with justice initiatives in Liberia is also a potential area for further research and funding as these ideas are implemented.



Image: Conference, Day One, GJRP.

Participants particularly identified the importance of expanding the reach of activism and justice initiatives to areas of Liberia beyond Monrovia. The discussion was enriched by the innovative nature of this project, which included participants from across the country. Going forward there is a determination to ensure that activities are accessible to Liberians across the whole territory, including those who live in rural areas. The participation of traditional leaders from across all the Liberian counties in the conference was especially significant in this regard. Traditional leaders noted that they will speak with one voice and are willing to work collaboratively to achieve justice. They were recognised as vital to community engagement as they are held in high esteem. Outreach across the country conducted with people respected

by communities can increase public engagement and education about key issues. One traditional leader stated:

*'We need to eat with them at the Palava Hut and around the fire heart and discuss the barriers to accountability and what to do as citizens to pressure our leaders'.*

Strengthening advocacy work by increasing coordination through regular meetings and engaging sub-committees to direct activities and establish the next steps was highlighted as a priority. One example is the call for an organised lobby group which can effectively communicate with and pressure Senators and Representatives on issues of justice and accountability. There was a consensus that there is a need for self-help, and that efforts should be Liberian led. Notable issues include the need to make accountability an important issue in relation to elections, with the election and re-election of former warlords also being a cause for concern as a barrier to justice. Accordingly, there were calls for greater voter education around the candidates and party manifestos. Connected with this idea were calls for greater engagement of the Liberian youth with related issues and advocacy campaigns in order to ensure the future of Liberia.

Several legal issues such as the need to pass an act establishing the War Crimes Court were determined to have advocacy based or political solutions. This includes the need to ensure that justice mechanisms are resourced and able to fulfil their mandates: identified strategic actions to secure funding for the War Crimes Court included generating a funding proposal for donors as well as the opening of trust fund which would begin at home before securing international donations.

The discussion around legal challenges was enriched by the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA), including the presentation of the Draft Act to Establish a War Crimes Court by LNBA President, Counsellor Tiawan Gongloe. The Draft Act is a draft statute for the War Crimes Court and can provide clarity around legal issues such as the jurisdiction of the Court, witness protection and the relationship between Liberian and international staff. Notably, this is an updated version of the Draft Act, the first being debated at the 2019 Legislative Conference.

The LNBA also raised associated advocacy issues, including the need to demonstrate support for the Draft Act and apply pressure on law and policy makers in order to get it implemented. Cllr. Gongloe also proposed a self-declared holiday on the day when the Draft Act is presented to the House of Representatives. The full participation of traditional leaders, civil society, students and others would be intended to provide a strong message that the Draft Act is an important issue for the electorate.

## Impact and Knowledge Exchange

The project has had significant impact on the efforts to provide accountability in Liberia. It has provided a critical opportunity for knowledge exchange between people from across Liberia (geographically) as well as between people from different backgrounds. Having been attended by 48 participants on day one and 50 participants on day two the impact of the conference is much broader as stakeholders have variously committed to follow up actions. There is now an agreed Roadmap to Accountability with concrete strategic actions which can be taken (Annex 1). The accompanying Pledge of Commitment was signed on day two of the conference and can now be disseminated for further signatures (Annex 2). There has been a concerted effort to ensure that the conference leads to continued action.

There is support among the Legislature to implement the Roadmap and push to re-prioritise questions of justice and accountability. There has been increasing willingness to speak out on issues of justice, with Representatives openly calling for the establishment of the War Crimes Court.<sup>1</sup> During the conference itself, Hon. Larry P. Younquoi, Representative from Nimba County, stated that he had instructed Hon. Rustolyn S. Dennis to propose a letter for the floor reminding President George Weah to report on the implementation of the TRC recommendations. It is compulsory for the President to provide a report every three months. The conference was also reported in the national press, both in online news and newspapers, as well as the professional websites of stakeholders contributing to the 'jumpstart' effect on efforts to provide justice.<sup>2</sup>

After the conference TRC staff have assembled to construct a concise and simplified version of the TRC report (3-5 pages) under the leadership of Commissioner John H. T. Stewart. The intention is also to translate the document into local languages and broadcast the content over the radio. This would initially begin with broadcasting in Kpelle and Bassa (as the two largest tribes), as well as Gio, Krahn, Mandingo and Mano as groups which were especially affected by the armed conflicts. A steering committee to ensure an increase in awareness and outreach is also being formed by stakeholders including TRC Commissioners and chiefs from across the counties. A significant identified next step is sourcing funding to support the printing of the simplified TRC document.

## Completed Outputs

- Roadmap to Accountability: The Roadmap provides concrete actions for stakeholder groups such as forming organisational links, conducting extensive outreach, coordinating activities to maintain a constant pressure on policy makers.
- The Pledge of Commitment: Sits alongside the Roadmap and is a public confirmation of support for the initiative, it was launched alongside the Roadmap at the March Conference and will be disseminated to garner further support.
- Two blogs:
  - Roadmap to Accountability: Overcoming Barriers to Justice in Liberia (Part One)
  - Roadmap to Accountability: Overcoming Barriers to Justice in Liberia (Part Two)
- University of Nottingham Human Rights Law Centre press: The project page of the International Criminal Justice Unit contains a short piece about the project which can be updated to show ongoing impact of the project.
- Lecture at Washington University in St. Louis, United States.
- This project report.

---

<sup>1</sup> See for example <https://frontpageafricaonline.com/front-slider/rep-dixon-seboes-confronts-fellow-lawmaker-in-chamber-for-allegedly-murdering-family-members-during-brutal-civil-war/>.

<sup>2</sup> See for example: <https://hotpepperliberia.com/barriers-to-war-crimes-court-establishment-identified/> and <http://www.honlarrypounquoi.org/>.



## Annex 1: The Roadmap to Accountability

### Roadmap to Accountability

March 2021

#### Overview

This roadmap outlines a shared strategic approach for encouraging and assisting the Liberian government to re-prioritise the question of accountability and the establishment of a War Crimes Court. The roadmap provides a pathway for stakeholders through barriers to accountability and includes concrete steps which can be taken. It offers a platform for stakeholders to work together and to align both individual and collective efforts in order to strengthen the push for accountability and justice for conflict-related crimes.

The roadmap has been collectively developed with input from traditional community, youth and women leaders, civil society, Liberian lawmakers, representatives of the Liberia National Bar Association, other officials and academics. It was completed following public consultation across five counties and a two-day Conference on Accountability with representatives from stakeholder groups.

#### Contents

Why Use a Roadmap .....	1
The 2021-2023 Roadmap .....	2
Core Principles .....	2
Goal .....	3
Objectives .....	3
Barriers to Overcome .....	3
Strategic Actions .....	4
Pledge of Commitment .....	8

#### Why Use a Roadmap

Over three decades since the start of the First Civil War, Liberians are still waiting for justice. Recommendations on Accountability which were made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including domestic criminal prosecutions and the establishment of an Extraordinary Criminal Tribunal (the proposed War Crimes Court), have not yet been implemented.<sup>3</sup> Whilst proceedings have been brought by other jurisdictions including the United States of America, Belgium, France, Switzerland and Finland, there is no domestic

---

<sup>3</sup> Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Volume Two: Consolidated Final Report* (Republic of Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2009) 268-270.

access to justice. This means that many victims of acts which constitute core international crimes, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, have not had the opportunity to seek or receive justice. Yet the victims have a right to remedy and reparations. Demands for justice for conflict-related crimes should be fulfilled as a matter of urgency in order to realise the rights of Liberians, address the impacts of the two Civil Wars, and to provide a deterrence against repetition.

This roadmap identifies those barriers which have prevented accountability and suggests concrete actions which can be taken by stakeholders to overcome them. It signposts how Liberian law makers, representatives from the Liberia National Bar Association, traditional community, youth and women's leaders, civil society and others can harness their respective powers to achieve accountability for conflict-related crimes.

This roadmap represents the development of a shared strategic approach to achieving accountability and justice for victims. It reflects the collective knowledge and commitment of stakeholders to both individual and collective action. The roadmap builds on previous efforts such as the Legislative Conference on Accountability for Past Crimes in Liberia, which took place in July 2019, and the 2019 Resolution for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia in Parliament.

## The 2021-2023 Roadmap

This roadmap has been created to set out and achieve the objectives of stakeholders seeking justice and accountability for crimes committed during the Liberian Civil Wars. It has been collaboratively developed in light of those barriers which have so far prevented progress. The strategic actions outlined below have been identified as essential. They set out the primary activities for stakeholders and include concrete actions for each stakeholder group.

A Pledge of Commitment accompanies the Roadmap. By signing the Pledge of Commitment individuals and organisations show their support for and affirmation of the core principles, objectives and goals of this initiative. Stakeholders are committing to the strategic actions which they are able to perform in line with their capacities.

## Core Principles

- ❖ **Accountability** to victims of conflict-related crimes is at the core of this roadmap and its strategic actions. The engagement, leadership and meaningful participation of affected individuals and communities is critical.
- ❖ **Sustained** individual and collective strategic action by all stakeholders, and including international partners, is essential to achieve the objectives.
- ❖ **Mitigating risks** by designing activities with an understanding of how social, political and economic factors might individually or collectively pose risks to participants and organisers is paramount.

## Goal

The goal of the roadmap is to encourage and assist the Liberian government to re-prioritise the question of accountability and the establishment of a War Crimes Court. It is intended to create progressive change and end the culture of impunity for conflict-related crimes.

## Objectives

1. **Realise the right to justice:** The victims of conflict-related crimes have the right to justice. Access to justice is a fundamental principle of the rule of law. Without justice there is impunity. When the right to justice is realised the voices of victims can be heard, violations can be challenged and accused individuals can be held accountable. Every individual should have this right realised, regardless of their connections, situation, or economic status.
2. **Implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC):** The TRC recommended an extraordinary criminal tribunal (War Crimes Court), domestic criminal prosecutions, public sanctions, National Palava Hut Commission, the investigation and prosecution of economic crimes, and a reparations programme. Implementing these recommendations through genuine and transparent processes can give Liberians a comprehensive approach to providing justice and accountability.
3. **The establishment of a War Crimes Court:** A mechanism for conducting fair and efficient trials will seek to contribute to ending impunity for crimes committed in connection with the Civil Wars, to realising the right of victims to access justice, and to providing a deterrence against repetition.
4. **Address the wider impacts of the Civil Wars:** Long-lasting socio-economic impacts include education and employment disruption as well as significant physical and mental healthcare needs which must be addressed as part of justice and accountability processes.

## Barriers to Overcome

To achieve the goal and objectives of the roadmap, the following barriers which have so far prevented justice and accountability must be overcome. The barriers have been collectively identified through public consultation between February and March 2021, and a two-day Conference on Accountability as those which pose the most significant challenges to progress.

**1) Lack of political will:** Since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report and recommendations in 2009 there has been a lack of political will to implement them. The current administration has yet to act in spite of positive steps such as the 2019 letter from President Weah to the National Legislature asking for guidance on implementation, and support for accountability demonstrated at the United Nations.

**2) Failure to adopt the 2019 Resolution for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court:** On 18-19 July 2019 Liberian stakeholders and international experts assembled for the Legislative Conference on Accountability for Past Crimes in Liberia. The conference culminated in the joint committee of Liberia's House of Representatives presenting a resolution backing the establishment of a War Crimes Court. The resolution was immediately endorsed by nine lawmakers and has currently been signed by 52 representatives.

**3) Lack of coordinated and consistent pressure on the government:** To date there have been many admirable and determined efforts to bring accountability and justice for conflict-related crimes. These include protests, radio shows, outreach, writing to politicians and the 2019 Resolution. However, these efforts have often been spaced out and conducted by different stakeholders independently of others' efforts. Without coordinating to maximise the impact of activities there has not been sustained momentum and consistent pressure on the Government to act.

**4) Anti-War Crimes Court propaganda:** Those individuals who wish to avoid the establishment of a War Crimes Court have made a concerted effort to misinform the public and otherwise warn people away from the concept. Falsehoods include the idea that such a Court will prosecute former child soldiers, and that it may plunge the country into a new Civil War.

**5) Lack of public knowledge and clarity:** There is a lack of clarity around what an established War Crimes Court might look like, who it might prosecute and who will staff it. By providing clarity on key issues such as the Court's jurisdiction, witness protection, and what trial processes might look like, the stakeholders can contribute to allaying fears and countering misinformation. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity around other Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, such as the proposed reparations programme.

**6) Lack of funding:** There is a question over how implementing post-conflict justice will be funded, including the establishment and operation of the War Crimes Court.

## **Strategic Actions**

Each barrier may be overcome by strategic actions by the stakeholders. These strategic actions have been identified to break down barriers on the road to accountability. By signing the Pledge of Commitment, stakeholders make a commitment to the strategic actions in this section. Pledging this commitment is representative of the collective action to attain justice.

### **Barrier 1: Lack of political will**

There has been a persistent lack of political will to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Reasons include reluctance to begin processes against sitting officials and having other priorities for resources. The Liberian people therefore cannot simply rely on administrations to progress questions of justice and accountability out of good will. Related matters including the establishment of a War Crimes Court must be made central to political campaigns, with evidence of positive action taken. To create the impetus to act,

the question of accountability for conflict-related crimes must become unavoidable for elected officials, lawmakers and the sitting administration.

**Strategic actions:**

- ❖ Strengthen advocacy with planned and strategic campaigns.
  - Agree a plan, determine who will conduct which activities at which times and places.
- ❖ Develop a summary version of the TRC report and translate this into local languages.
- ❖ Encourage communities to mount pressure on their Representatives to officially remind the Executive about its responsibility to report quarterly on progress made in relation to the implementation of the TRC report.
- ❖ Hold a strategic meeting with the President and Legislature on the lack of political will to implement the TRC report.
  - Set up a lobby group to target Senators and Representatives to provide pressure from the top down.
- ❖ Peaceful protest by victims of the Civil Wars:
  - Submit a petition signed by the victims to all foreign Embassies asking them to deny any and all public officials who demonstrate a lack of will to implement the TRC report.
  - Mass sit-in action (civil disobedience).
  - Local dialect messages.

**Barrier 2: Failure to adopt the 2019 Resolution for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court**

In July 2019, stakeholders assembled for the Legislative Conference on Accountability for Past Crimes in Liberia. This culminated in the presentation of the Resolution for the Establishment of a War Crimes Court in Liberia. The Resolution has currently been signed by 52 representatives, however, having passed through the lower House it has not been adopted.

**Strategic actions:**

- ❖ The Traditional Council of Chiefs and Elders should take a definitive stand by inviting the Speaker of the 54<sup>th</sup> Legislature to show cause as to why the Resolution has not been placed on the floor for discussion of the creation of a War Crimes Court in Liberia.
- ❖ Create a means of asking all local government officials from the fifteen counties such as Superintendents, Paramount Chiefs, Clan Chiefs, Commissioners and others to mandate their leaders or law makers to request that the Speaker makes the Resolution an agenda item in a shortest time possible.
- ❖ A nationwide petition signed by youth and student organisations requesting their law makers ensure that the 2019 Resolution be an item for discussion before their next constituency break.
- ❖ Centralise victims and survivors at the front of every advocacy for the creation of a War Crimes Court in Liberia.
- ❖ Rally the support of citizens through the visitation of various district Representatives.

### **Barrier 3: Lack of coordinated and consistent pressure on the government**

Effective coordination between stakeholders is critical to ensure that activities are frequent, ongoing and engage communities across Liberia. Maintain momentum and keep public attention to build the pressure to prioritise the question of accountability and justice, the implementation of the TRC recommendations, and the establishment of the War Crimes Court.

#### **Strategic actions:**

- ❖ The involvement of Traditional leaders: The Chiefs, Elders and other local authorities should lead the process.
- ❖ Translate the TRC recommendations into all local languages to ensure that people can be adequately informed when engaging their law makers.
- ❖ Petitioning: The people must petition their government on the implementation of the TRC report and the establishment of a War Crimes Court.
- ❖ Citizens will demand political parties commit to the establishment of a War Crimes Court by placing it in their party's manifesto.
- ❖ Citizens will request a regular update on progress in implementing the TRC report: it is the law.
- ❖ Raise public awareness and maintain consistent pressure on state actors.
- ❖ Set up a committee to steer pressure groups and hold regular meetings to plan the way forward.

### **Barriers 4 and 5: Anti-War Crimes Court propaganda and lack of public clarity**

Propaganda campaigns by individuals who wish to avoid the implementation of the TRC recommendations and the establishment of a War Crimes Court have contributed to public misinform and misconceptions. Countering falsehoods about the War Crimes Court will be essential to increasing public confidence and clarity around the concept. There is a particular need to increase public understanding of the TRC report, the War Crimes Court, justice processes and other forms of redress. By conducting outreach and generating content for social media, radio, WhatsApp and public spaces the stakeholders can collectively increase public knowledge and simultaneously counter misinformation. Additionally, broadening the awareness, coverage and participation in activism can also build national momentum towards accountability and the establishment of a War Crimes Court.

#### **Strategic actions:**

- ❖ Share concise summary documents on the TRC report and the establishment of a War Crimes Court to all participants.
- ❖ Translate documents on the TRC report and the establishment of a War Crimes Court into all local languages.
- ❖ Conduct a massive outreach program:
  - Outreach should include town hall meetings, information sharing and feedback forums on the importance of a War Crimes Court;

- Engagement of traditional leaders and others throughout the whole of Liberia;
- Continual engagement with radio programs and publications which develop pro-War Crimes Court messages;
- Conduct activities beyond Monrovia.
- ❖ Stakeholders to enable outreach: establish a volunteer Secretariat to track feedback.
- ❖ Develop a master list of stakeholders and campaigners for a War Crimes Court in order to build an outreach database.
- ❖ Strong media engagement including the development of songs in local languages which educate on the TRC report.
- ❖ Reach out to identified anti-War Crimes Court propaganda groups and individuals to engage them with the right message or information as a way to disabuse their mindsets.

## **Barrier 6: Lack of funding**

There are significant concerns around how post-conflict justice will be funded. Planning now for the funding of the War Crimes Court and other justice mechanisms is essential.

### **Strategic actions:**

- ❖ Establish Liberian led initiatives.
- ❖ Open a trust fund to self-help, encourage international participation later.
- ❖ Set up a Ways and Means Committee; clearly define its role.
- ❖ Set up a Special Fundraising Committee; clearly define its role.
- ❖ Construct a financial proposal which can be put to funding agencies.
- ❖ Approach international organisations which fund justice activities for assistance.



## The Pledge of Commitment

We, the undersigned, are combining our energies to encourage and assist the Government of Liberia in re-prioritizing the question of accountability and justice for conflict-related crimes. We are seeking to empower the victims to realise their rights and attain justice for past wrongdoings. In doing this we will assist with the development of Liberia as a progressive and just nation in which the voices of individuals are heard, fundamental rights are realised and individuals accused of serious violations are held accountable.

This pledge represents a shared commitment to implement the recommendations of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including the establishment of a War Crimes Court, and to break through barriers which have so far prevented justice and accountability. Every stakeholder has a vital role both individually and collectively.

Stakeholders including domestic and international partners, donors, international organisations, and civil society wishing to pledge their commitment agree to:

- ❖ Affirm the overall goal, objectives, and strategic actions of roadmap.
- ❖ Develop, adopt and implement organisational policies on accountability and justice if they do not already exist.
- ❖ Make public commitments to at least two strategic actions of the roadmap.
- ❖ Contribute to the collective work of the initiative, including the promotion of and participation in the activities of other partners where possible.

Activities should contribute to transformative change and public education. Progress should be reported to other stakeholders in order to monitor the implementation of the roadmap.

The initiative is intentionally structured to allow increasing participation by a growing number of stakeholders from a range of backgrounds. Collaborative working to draw on and utilise each other's abilities is to be encouraged. Coordinated action between stakeholders in the spirit of mutual respect is essential to implement the roadmap.

The impact of the Roadmap to Accountability depends on the quality of action and dedication of those who pledge their commitment to take strategic actions and meet the objectives. It is important that the number of partners committed to taking action continues to grow. Through collective action Liberians can send a united message to the sitting administration that it is time to provide justice and accountability.

The founding partners look forward to welcoming new groups and individuals to pledge their commitment to action.