a huge improvement from the deaths incurred by the people of Liberia during earlier elections (such as the 1997 elections, which precipitated the Second Civil War, and resulted in over 200,000 deaths). Not only has President Johnson Sirleaf provided for just and fair elections, as well as insured the sanctity of human life therein, she has also spent considerable time fighting for women's rights within the nation. Her efforts for women's rights are vast—including the expansion of females within education and public service positions, equalized suffrage and civil rights, and advanced service to women in the medical field. These accomplishments aided in her reception of the Nobel Peace prize for Furthering Women's Rights in 2011 (Britannica 2013; Keil, 2013).

While her record is generally stellar, President Johnson Sirleaf's tenure in office has not been without a couple of hiccups. In 2009, while serving her first term in office, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (which was charged with prosecuting those who aided in, and/or didn't stop, the Second Liberian Civil War under Charles Taylor) found President Johnson Sirleaf guilty of providing funds to Warlord Taylor (Keil, 2013). Although the ruling was found unconstitutional by the Liberian Supreme Court that same year, the very fact that there is enough evidence to convict President Johnson Sirleaf of the prior stated crime is worrisome in this analysis. Another concern is that, according to public opinion, many citizens of Liberia believe that in order to get a position in the civil service they must belong to President Johnson Sirleaf's unity party; this, of course, suggests that patronage politics are being practiced within the Sirleaf administration (Keil, 2013).

Despite the above, it cannot easily be forgotten that President Johnson Sirleaf served as the Finance Minister for two corrupt administrations during the 1970s and 1980s, and it was in this capacity that she was ordered to provide funds to various individuals, including Charles Taylor (Executive Mansion, 2013). Moreover, patronage still persists within Liberia at the present. After nearly 20 years of civil war and political corruption, only eight years in office are unlikely to eliminate corruption at many levels within the Liberian government. It is important to note once more that Liberia has improved 72 positions in its corruption ranking during Johnson

Sirleaf's tenure—and the corruption rank is predicted to continue to improve (Britannica, 2013). Thus, while some corruption does persist within Liberia, it is seemingly not the result of President Johnson Sirleaf's rule; rather it is simply promulgated by decades of previous corruption.

Conclusion

Hence, it is clear that President Johnson Sirleaf is a prime candidate for the Ibrahim Prize. During her early civil service as finance minister, she stayed true to her ethical belief system, even when that system placed her life and livelihood at serious risk. After fighting for transparent and democratic governance for nearly two decades, President Johnson Sirleaf won a fair and just election for the presidency of Liberia in 2005, and once again in 2011. During her tenure in this office, she has promoted the development of public infrastructure, dramatically curtailed governmental corruption, ruled transparently, and aided in the progression of human rights in both the political and civil societies. Despite a couple of issues within her political past and current presidency, President Johnson Sirleaf has ruled identically to the standards set by the Ibrahim Prize.

In sum, the Ibrahim Prize is an extremely prestigious recognition, and an equally elusive award. Since its premier in 2007, only two individuals have been able to prove themselves as deserving. This is a direct result of the extremely strict expectations of the Prize's founder (Dr. Ibrahim), the Selection Board's ideological standing, and the Ibrahim's Prize's stated practical requirements. Taken together with two case studies (President Chissano and President Mogae, the two past-recipients of the award), the theoretical and practical guidelines of the Selection Board show that a possible, future recipient of the award is the current President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.