



## SENTENCING HEARING FOR MICHAEL CORREA SCHEDULED

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### 1. Who is Michael Correa and what was he charged with?

Michael Correa, a Gambian citizen, [stood trial in April 2025](#) for torturing people in The Gambia in 2006. He was a member of the “Junglers,” a death squad that committed human rights abuses at the direction of former President Yahya Jammeh. Correa and other Junglers beat their victims, put plastic bags over their heads, and used electric shocks while they were interrogated, causing victims severe pain and suffering.

Correa was arrested in Colorado in 2019 for overstaying his visa. He came to the United States on a diplomatic visa in December 2016 after the fall of the Jammeh regime. The visa was originally issued to him so he could attend the UN General Assembly in September 2016. Gambian civil society organizations and a coalition of international organizations, including CJA and Trial International, advocated for the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate allegations that Correa was a member of the Junglers and had engaged in torture. In 2020, the United States government charged Correa with torture and conspiracy to commit the torture of at least six people. In April 2025, [Correa was convicted](#) of torturing five people and conspiring with other Junglers to torture additional victims.

#### 2. What is the status of the case against Correa?

In April 2025, a jury in U.S. federal court [found Correa guilty](#) of torturing five people and conspiring with other Junglers to torture additional victims. His sentencing hearing will take place on August 22, 2025. The sentencing takes place after the trial to give the prosecution, defense, and probation service time to submit their recommendations to the judge.

Correa’s sentencing hearing is scheduled for August 22, 2025, when a judge will hear arguments and testimony to determine his punishment. Before the sentencing hearing, the probation service will prepare a report with recommendations regarding Correa’s sentence, and the prosecution and defense will file their arguments regarding Correa’s sentence in writing. At the sentencing hearing, both the prosecution and the defense will present their arguments on the appropriate sentence. Victims who meet certain legal requirements may also have an opportunity to present victim impact statements either before or during the hearing describing how Correa’s crimes affected them.

After this information has been presented, the judge (not the jury) will decide Correa’s sentence. The judge will likely announce Correa’s sentence at the end of the hearing.



### **3. When and where will Correa's sentencing hearing take place?**

Correa's sentencing hearing will take place in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado in Denver, where Correa was initially found and arrested. The sentencing hearing is scheduled to take place on August 22, 2025.

### **4. What is Correa's possible sentence?**

Correa was convicted of six individual crimes or "counts"—the torture of five people and participating in a conspiracy with other Junglers to torture additional victims. Each of these crimes carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Correa faces a total of up to 120 years in prison. The lawyers for the U.S. government have requested that Correa receive this sentence. Correa's lawyers have argued that his sentence should be lower.

### **5. What happened at Correa's trial?**

Correa's trial took place in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado in Denver. The trial [started on April 7, 2025](#) and [concluded on April 14](#). The jury announced their [guilty verdict](#) on April 15, 2025.

During trial, lawyers for the prosecution and defense presented evidence and arguments to the jury. The prosecution asked seven Gambians, including six victims, to [testify at the trial](#). They also presented evidence from an expert witness, who testified about the history of The Gambia, the political climate during the Yahya Jammeh regime, and the structure of the security forces. Two federal law enforcement officials who had worked on the investigation into Correa also testified. Correa's lawyers did not call any witnesses and Correa decided not to testify in his own defense, which is his right under U.S. law.

The jury found Correa guilty of the charges against him. To establish guilt, the jury must unanimously decide the defendant was responsible for the crimes charged 'beyond a reasonable doubt.' This means that the prosecution had to present evidence of Correa's guilt that was so convincing the jury was virtually certain that he was guilty. The jury unanimously determined that Correa was guilty of torturing five individuals and of conspiring with the other Junglers to torture additional victims.

A more detailed summary of what took place during the trial is available through the daily [trial monitoring reports](#) published by the Solo Sandeng Foundation in partnership with the Stanford International Human Rights & Conflict Resolution Clinic and the International Human Rights Clinic at the University of San Francisco School of Law.



#### **6. What is the jury and how was it chosen?**

The jury in Correa's trial was made up of 12 U.S. citizens who are over 18 years old, reside in Colorado, and understand English. These 12 jurors were selected out of a pool of prospective jurors. The pool was chosen at random from members of the public who fulfill the requirements to be jurors. Before trial, Correa's lawyers and the prosecutors had the opportunity to ask each prospective juror questions. During jury selection, the prosecutors and Correa's lawyers asked to remove some prospective jurors from the pool. This process continued until the 12 jurors and their alternates were selected. Alternates are selected in the event that any of the 12 primary jurors is unable to participate the whole trial. If one of the jurors becomes unavailable for any reason, they are replaced by an alternate.

#### **7. Was Correa required to testify about his crimes?**

Under U.S. law, criminal defendants such as Correa cannot be forced to testify. Correa chose to not testify in his own defense.

#### **8. What role did victims and survivors play in the trial?**

The prosecutor called six victims to testify as witnesses. Other victims, who meet specific legal requirements under the [Crime Victims' Rights Act](#) may have the opportunity to present victim impact statements during the sentencing phase of the case. The Crime Victims' Rights Act gives victims the right to timely notice about developments in the case, and the "right to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding in the district court involving release, plea, sentencing, or any parole proceeding."

#### **9. Will Correa have an opportunity to appeal?**

Yes. After he has been sentenced, Correa can appeal for four reasons: (1) there was misconduct during his trial; (2) the judge made a mistake in handling the case; (3) the jury engaged in misconduct or made a mistake in their verdict; or (4) there was a wrongful conviction or that the sentence imposed is excessive. If Correa files an appeal, his appeal would be decided by judges on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals.

#### **10. Have there been other prosecutions for crimes committed during the Jammeh era?**

Two other individuals have been prosecuted using universal jurisdiction for crimes committed in The Gambia during the Jammeh regime. Another Jungler, [Bai Lowe](#), was convicted in Germany and sentenced to life in prison in November 2023. Former Interior Minister [Ousman Sonko](#) was convicted in Switzerland in 2024 for crimes against humanity and sentenced to 20 years in prison.



#### **11. What is the significance of this case in The Gambia and the U.S.?**

In The Gambia and the U.S., Correa's prosecution represents an important step for justice. The TRRC's final report concluded that Jammeh and 69 of his alleged associates committed crimes against humanity and recommended that they face justice for their crimes. Correa is among the first of these individuals to face prosecution. His prosecution may allow victims to speak out about Correa's crimes and will raise awareness of the human rights violations that took place during the Jammeh regime.

In the U.S., Correa's prosecution demonstrates the importance of universal jurisdiction, which recognizes that crimes like those committed by Correa are crimes against all people, regardless of their nationality. Universal jurisdiction proceedings like Correa's are an important tool to ensure that alleged human rights violators from The Gambia are held accountable wherever they are found. His prosecution, and the prosecution of other alleged human rights violators, is a core part of the U.S.'s obligation to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of international crimes when they are identified on U.S. territory.

#### **12. What role are CJA and TRIAL International playing in this case?**

Victims' groups as well as Gambian and international non-governmental organizations have been working together to hold Jammeh era officials accountable through the "Jammeh2Justice" campaign. In September 2019, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security arrested Michael Correa for staying in the U.S. after his visa expired. A coalition of Correa's victims, Gambian civil society organizations and international human rights organizations, including CJA and TRIAL International, called on the U.S. to investigate claims that Correa was a Jungler and had committed torture. This led to his indictment in 2020.

CJA and TRIAL International provided legal, psychological, and other support to victims – when needed – in preparation for and during the trial. CJA and TRIAL International will continue to support victims following the trial and work with civil society, journalists, and impacted communities to make sure information about the trial and sentencing is available through newspapers, radio, and other media.

#### **13. What role is Gambian civil society playing in this case?**

Gambian civil society has played an instrumental role in advocacy efforts related to Correa's prosecution. Gambian organizations were a part of the coalition advocating for the U.S. to investigate claims that Correa committed torture.

Since Correa's indictment, Gambian civil society organizations, including the [African Network Against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances](#) (ANEKED), the [Solo Sandeng Foundation](#), the [Women's Association for Victims' Empowerment](#) (WAVE), and [Women in](#)



Liberation & Leadership (WILL), have been instrumental in raising awareness about the prosecution and in supporting victims in The Gambia.

In January 2024, alongside several other Gambian civil society organizations, these groups launched the Alliance of Victim-Led Organizations (AVLO), which is dedicated to representing the interests of victims of human rights violations in The Gambia. During Correa's trial, AVLO was actively involved in efforts to share information about the proceedings with victims and other interested parties in The Gambia.