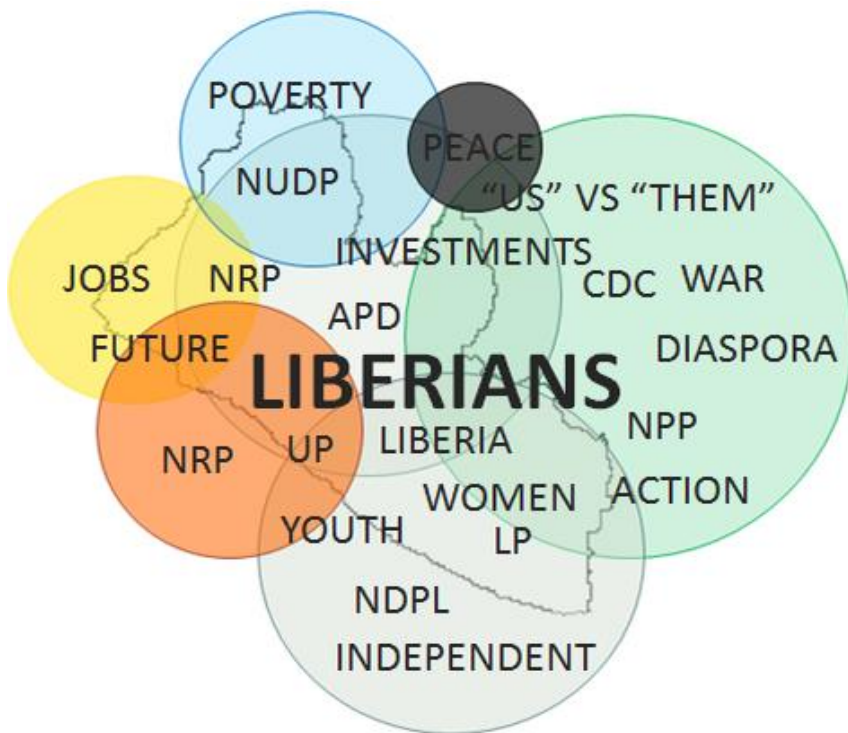




THE KHANA GROUP

LIBERIA'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



TOP 7 CANDIDATES TRENDING FOR 2017

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The Khana Group (TKG) is a leading international development advisory firm focusing on Africa. We combine our knowledge of Africa’s economy with specialized expertise in strategy, operations, program management, and monitoring and evaluation across diverse verticals like agribusiness, energy, and banking.

The Khana Group takes a pragmatic, yet strategic approach by creating partnerships with Governments, Corporations, International Agencies, and NGOs to develop innovative solutions that will foster sustainable growth.

From strategy, operations, private equity, research, and risk management to organizational transformation and leadership development, the team at The Khana Group has extensive client experience with Africa, and other frontier markets, as well as Fortune 500 and Global 1000 companies.

Few of our clients



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The Khana Group (TKG) is pleased to release its inaugural report on ***Liberia's Political Landscape – Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017***. As an international development and corporate consulting firm with specialized expertise in Project Design, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Capacity Development, Strategy, Operations, and Risk Management in Africa, our clients are constantly seeking an understanding of the political and economic landscape of Africa in order to make informed decisions relating to policies, investments and social impact issues.

This in-depth analysis and report is based on independent research commissioned by a client and is being made public by The Khana Group based on the agreement with the client.

The primary goal of this independent report is to ***inform Liberians, organizations and business stakeholders of the leadership projections and trajectory of the country in order to ensure political alignment, risk mitigation, and strategic, as well as operational repositioning for companies and organizations working in Liberia.***

It is our hope that readers find this report helpful and provides them with the necessary insight into Liberia's political landscape.

Sincerely,



Taa Wongbe, Managing Partner
The Khana Group

The Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017 report represents a comprehensive analysis based on a survey of over 2000 Liberians, 20 interviews with Liberians and various stakeholders (non-Liberians included), and general perception based on in-depth research in six (6) counties – Monteserrado, Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Grand Bassa, and Margibi.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: The Khana Group collected initial data from established research from journals, newspapers on Liberian politics and interviews. The results led TKG to develop a list that comprised of 21 potential candidates for 2017.

Based on the list of 21 potential candidates, TKG also surveyed over 2000 Liberians in six (6) counties – Monteserrado, Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Grand Bassa, and Margibi.

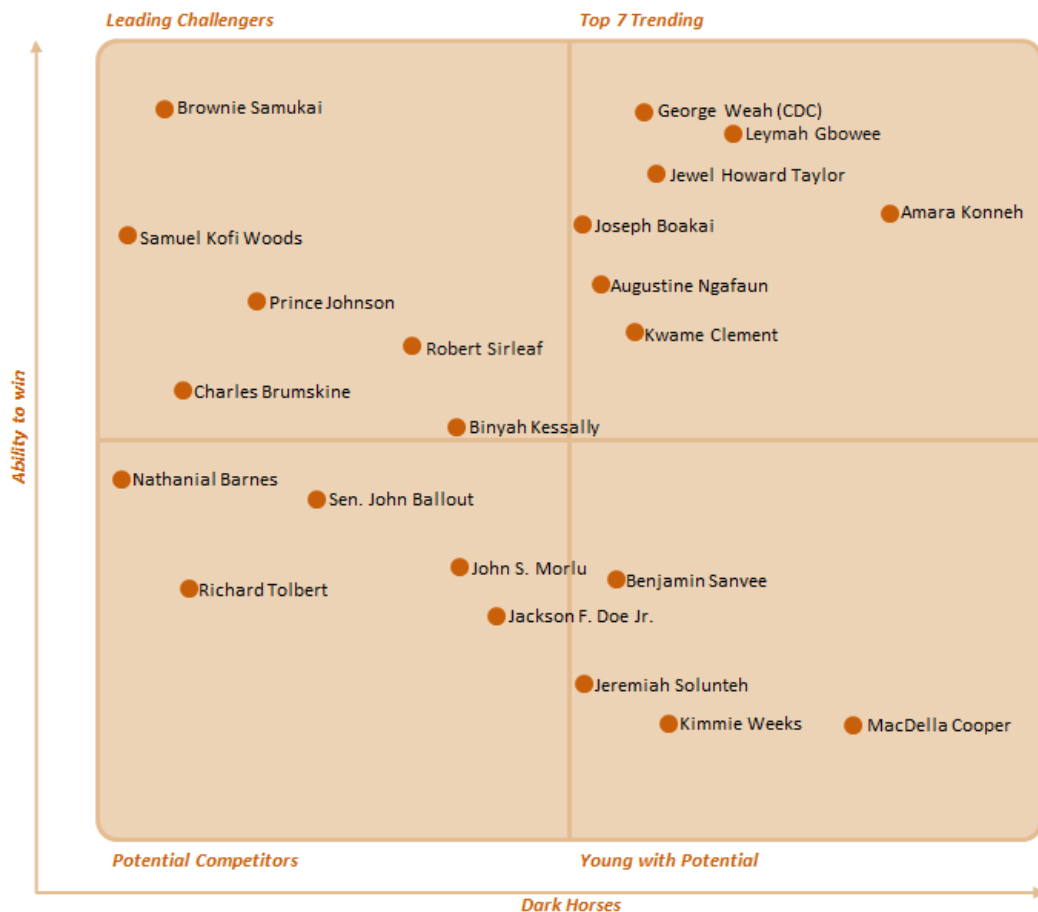
Finally, TKG conducted extensive interviews with 20 non-Liberian business leaders, advocates, and organization heads to understand their perspective on Liberia and who they saw as the next leader in Liberia.



Analysis: TKG analyzed the information gathered through the interviews, the data collected as well as all documentation reviewed. TKG then transformed all qualitative data into relevant categories and ranked the potential candidates which resulted in the “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017”.

Reporting: TKG will now present the results of the analysis. Our goal is to convey the key findings, SWOT analysis and conclusions. ***The results are organized alphabetically by first name.*** As previously stated, this is an independent report based on qualitative data and in-depth analysis.

As stated in our methodology, The Khana Group’s preliminary list consisted of 21 potential candidates. Once analyzed and ranked based on the number of respondents, popularity levels, education levels, competencies and general perceptions, The Khana Group placed the 21 potential candidates into four categories and developed a quadrant to represent the positions of each potential candidate.



ABILITY TO WIN BAR

LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
Candidates that fall within this range will more than likely not win if they continue on the current trajectory.	This represents that there is a possibility for the candidate to win but he/she has a lot more work to do including political alignment with one of The “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017 “.	This represents that the candidate has a high possibility of winning and should be considered a forerunners.



Amara M. Konneh is the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs. Before becoming Minister for both posts, Minister Konneh was the Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs. He also served as Deputy Chief of State in the Office of the President from 2006-2007, where he spearheaded several initiatives that included reforming the management practices at the Ministry of State through a performance improvement program. Minister Konneh studied Public Administration at Harvard University. He holds a graduate degree in Management Information Systems from Penn State University, and an undergraduate degree from Drexel University.

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Extensive educational background, experience and has an overall in-depth understanding of Liberia's economy
- Has successfully led the country's economic turn-around post-conflict
- One of Pres. Sirleaf's closest advisors and a part of her inner circle, who has been instrumental in moving the President's economic agenda forward

WEAKNESSES

- Mr. Konneh had the lowest likeability rating among interviewees. He is viewed as arrogant and tolerated simply because of his close relationship with the President
- If Mr. Konneh chooses to run, his tribal background has been stated as one of his challenges even within his inner circle
- Difficulty with being embraced within the Unity Party grassroots since he is often viewed as an outsider

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to increase his likeability and rebrand himself before 2017
- Opportunity to align himself with the Unity Party grassroots and inner circle
- Opportunity to truly embrace the youth and focus on job creation initiatives. Decreasing the unemployment rate would bolster Mr. Konneh's reputation as a "doer" and a "job creator"

THREATS

- Min. Augustine Ngafaun is a major threat to Mr. Konneh. Most within the Unity Party tend to favor Mr. Ngafaun over Mr. Konneh
- Failure to reduce the unemployment rate would create challenges for Mr. Konneh since many view him as the "owner" of Liberia's economic policy and strategy

BOTTOMLINE

Mr. Konneh needs to increase his likeability, align himself with the grassroots and focus on what matters to Liberians – Jobs!



Augustine K. Ngafuan is the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Before becoming Minister of Foreign Affairs, he served as Minister of Finance where he spearheaded Liberia's HIPC completion which paved the way for full relief of Liberia's external debt of approximately 5 billion USD. Prior to the Ministry of Finance role, Min. Ngafuan served as Director General of the Bureau of the Budget. He holds a Masters of Business Administration Degree in Finance and Accounting from the Rochester University's William E. Simon Graduate School of Business in Rochester, New York and a Bachelors of Business Administration from the University of Liberia.

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Mr. Ngafuan gained significant financial experience as Minister of Finance and now has foreign policy experience through his current role as Minister of Foreign Affairs
- He has the President's ears and is within her core circle of leaders she has been developing for over seven years.
- Interviewees view him as representing the grassroots and "new" in Liberian politics and he has been accepted widely across the board

WEAKNESSES

- Interviewees viewed Mr. Ngafuan as inefficient and general perceptions were that he was removed from the Ministry of Finance because he was ineffective
- No major achievements except the debt relief which Mr. Konneh as well as the President were very involved with
- His grassroots approach and student political affiliations have often left him in crosshairs with various youth groups

OPPORTUNITIES

- Mr. Ngafuan has the opportunity to develop more strategic relationships with the youth outside of his grassroots and college day politics
- Mr. Ngafuan can clearly outline his accomplishments and prove that he can be effective
- Mr. Ngafuan can leverage his current office to create deeper relationships that could help him if he intends to run

THREATS

- Public and private reports of feud with Mr. Konneh will continue to be a threat if Mr. Ngafuan chooses to run
- Any major challenges during his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs will significantly impact Min. Ngafuan if he decides to run

BOTTOMLINE

Mr. Ngafuan needs to show that he is an effective leader. He needs to mend relationships with various youth groups and student political organizations.



George Weah is a international soccer icon turned humanitarian and politician. He is the current Head of the National Reconciliation Commission (since December 2012, following Leymah Gbowee’s resignation in October 2012) and was appointed “Peace Ambassador” by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Prior to becoming Peace Ambassador, Mr. Weah served as Vice Standard Bearer for the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) political party in the 2011 presidential elections and Standard Bearer for the same party in the 2005 presidential elections. Mr. Weah holds a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management from DeVry University in Florida.

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Mr. Weah is still wildly popular amongst Liberians, especially the youth, which makes up 65% of the voting population
- Except for the “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017”, if he decides to run in 2017, there will be no major formidable opposition
- His new appointment as Peace Ambassador could increase his visibility and experience

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of any real experience and understanding of politics, business and governing
- No firm strategy and platform for winning – major focus is on popularity and drawing crowds
- Losing support from within his party
- Lack of money , resources, and independent thinking advisors without motives

OPPORTUNITIES

- Running and winning in the Montserrado Senatorial election in 2014 affords him the opportunity to redefine himself and gain some experience
- Mr. Weah has time from now until 2017 to develop a winning strategy
- Seeking admission in a one-year MBA or MPA program at a reputable institution instead of contesting the Montserrado Senatorial seat could be better for Mr. Weah

THREATS

- Contesting the Montserrado Senatorial seat and losing will severely cripple Mr. Weah’s political career and future
- Major threats come from within his party through breakaways (e.g. The Alternative National Congress (ANC))
- Mr. Weah is a threat to himself. If he stays on the path of the past – a radical message that drives Liberians apart, he will continue on the losing path

BOTTOMLINE

Mr. Weah needs to surround himself with better advisors, gain more in-depth experience either through further education or work experience, and build a winning platform.



Jewel Howard Taylor is the former wife of President Charles Taylor and the current Senior Senator from Bong County. Prior to becoming Senior Senator, Sen. Taylor was Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Liberia (currently Central Bank of Liberia) during her husband’s administration and was also once a financial underwriter at the First Union National Bank of USA. She holds two MBAs. Senator Taylor also holds two Bachelor’s degrees; one in Economics from University of Liberia and the other in banking from American Institute in New Jersey. She also holds a law degree from the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia.

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Mrs. Taylor is quite popular both as former Pres. Taylor’s wife and a senator. While Pres. Taylor was convicted in the Hague, he still remains widely popular in Liberia
- Great educational background and understanding of finance, economics and governing
- Deep legislative experience and international influence

WEAKNESSES

- While her name is an asset, it could also become a liability. The name “Taylor” could haunt her in the general elections
- Like many political parties in Liberia, her political party, National Patriotic Party (NPP), is dormant outside of elections season
- Lack of clear strategy and platform going into 2017

OPPORTUNITIES

- Partnering with one of the “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017” could help catapult her
- Opportunity to rebrand and refocus her agenda in time for the 2017 elections
- Opportunity to develop a clear strategy and platform before 2017

THREATS

- Losing her senatorial seat in 2014 may be a signal of weakness for Mrs. Taylor
- Another female candidate in the race, like Leymah Gbowee ,who is a “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017”, could bring a divide in the women’s votes and hinder Mrs. Taylor chances

BOTTOMLINE

Mrs. Taylor should focus on winning another term as Senator, align herself with two of the “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017” and build a platform and strategy for winning.



Joseph Boakai is currently Vice President of Liberia and has been since January 2006, serving under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Previously he served as Minister of Agriculture from 1983 to 1985. Vice President Boakai has been a civil servant for close to 40 years. He also served as Resident Manager of the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) from 1973 to 1980 and Managing Director of the Liberia Produce Marketing Corporation (LPMC) from 1980 to 1982 and finally, Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC) in 1992. Vice President Boakai holds a Bachelor's in Business Administration, University of Liberia

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Currently the Vice President and has immense experience in governance
- Generally liked by many Liberians and has managed to keep a clean image despite the challenges within the current administration
- Well connected in the inner circles of Liberia and the international community

WEAKNESSES

- Huge generation gap with the current voting demographic in Liberia
- Seen as competent but lazy at times. Interviewees joked that he sleeps during meetings
- His candidacy will be seen as a continuation of the current administration which is becoming unpopular even in the international community

OPPORTUNITIES

- Separate himself from the current administration challenges (Corruption, Nepotism, High Unemployment)
- Opportunity to build deeper relationships with the grassroots
- Opportunity to define key accomplishments

THREATS

- Continuous challenges with the current administration could hinder VP Boakai's chances if he decides to run

BOTTOMLINE

VP Boakai needs to align himself with a younger and more youthful running mate, separate himself from the current challenges in the administration – perceived nepotism, corruption, etc. and build closer ties with the grassroots.



Kwame Clement is a former Liberian news anchor and is host and Managing Editor of The African World, a public affairs television program in the US. He also serves as Chairman of the Liberia Development Group (LDG), a non-profit organization. Mr. Clement is a strong advocate of dual citizenship in Liberia and has made numerous public speeches focused on reconciliation and moving forward to a new stage in Liberia’s development. Mr. Clement holds Bachelor’s of Science in Economics from the University of Liberia, a J.D. from George Washington University and an L.L.B. from the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law.

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Still popular among many Liberians from his time as a broadcaster
- Great educational background and solid private and public sector experiences
- Ability to reach across tribal voting lines and bring people together
- Has been generally fair in criticizing as well as praising the current administration

WEAKNESSES

- Has been out of the country for a long time and is not abreast with the current political landscape
- Little to no political experience since college

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to increase presence in Liberia as he is currently viewed as a stranger and an outsider
- Develop deep relationships with the youth and women
- Opportunity to test his ability to run and win by getting involved in the Montserrado Senatorial election in 2014

THREATS

- Public support of Dual Citizenship in Liberia may come back to haunt him since Dual Citizenship is widely unpopular among the voting demographic living in Liberia

BOTTOMLINE

Mr. Clement should increase his “on the ground” presence, align himself with one of the “Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017” and build deeper ties with the grassroots.



Leymah Gbowee is a peace activist and former Head of the National Reconciliation Commission. Ms. Gbowee is co-winner with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Yemeni women’s rights activist Tawakkul Karman of the 2011 Nobel Prize for Peace, for Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace. Ms. Gbowee is also Founder and President of Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa (in Monrovia), Founder of the Liberia Reconciliation Initiative ,and serves as Board of Director for Gbowee Peace Foundation USA, Nobel Women’s Initiative and PeaceJam Foundation. Ms. Gbowee holds a M.A. in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University.

ABILITY TO WIN



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Nobel Peace Prize winner and activist responsible for leading a women's peace movement to help end the civil war
- Widely popular and liked across all major voting demographics
- Ability to attract international support globally
- No political party alignment is a good thing for Ms. Gbowee who could be seen as an independent and outsider

WEAKNESSES

- Recent public feud with Pres. Sirleaf has negatively impacted Ms. Gbowee
- Inability to make strides with the Peace and Reconciliation process while serving as the head of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission
- When surveyed, women seem to be most critical towards Ms. Gbowee than men

OPPORTUNITIES

- Focus on moving past her experience at the Peace and Reconciliation Commission and foster true Peace and Reconciliation through her organizations
- Rebranding and focusing on things that matter to the general public – Jobs! While peace is critical to Liberia’s future, the unemployment is seen as the major challenge facing the next President

THREATS

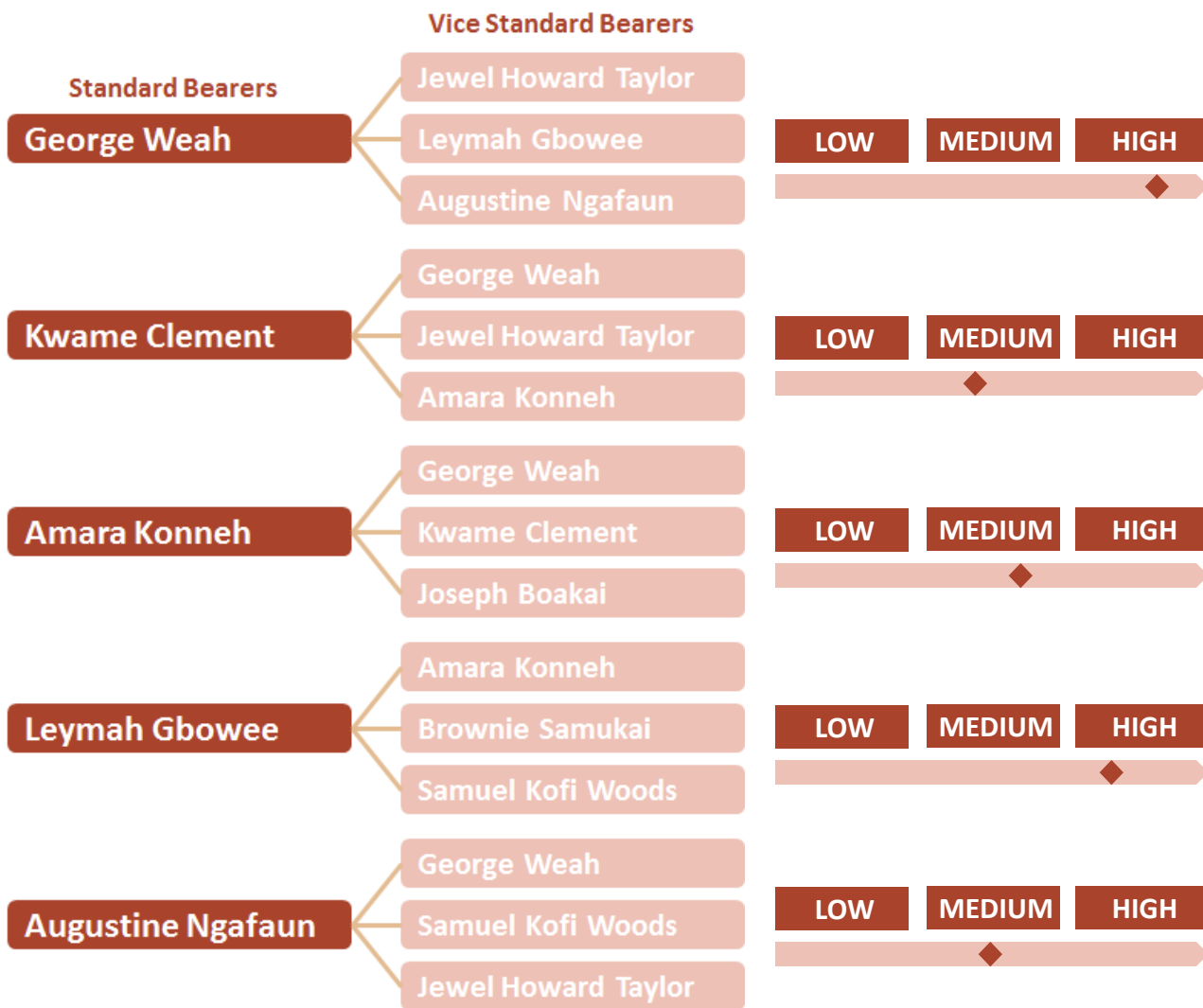
- Jewel Howard Taylor could be a major threat to Ms. Gbowee
- Approximately 30% of people interviewed thought that Ms. Gbowee is not a Liberian national and spends a lot of her time in Ghana and outside Liberia

BOTTOMLINE

Ms. Gbowee should highlight her ability to bring real peace and reconciliation, build deeper ties with women in Liberia, and increase her visibility in Liberia and not just Monrovia.

The Candidate Alignment Matrix shows a candidate’s ability to win if he or she partners and aligns his or herself with one of the 21 candidates researched as part of this study. This analysis also shows their ability to win based on interviews and discussions with respondents.

Note: Responses for the Candidate Alignment Matrix to a potential running mate were only available on the five (5) candidates mentioned below.



Liberia's political landscape appears to be maturing as the country has gone through one peaceful election and also demonstrated through the consolidation of over twenty (20) political parties .

2017 will be a critical and landmark year for Liberia with President Sirleaf (first elected president after the civil war) exiting office, new faces entering the race, and for the first time in over 30 years, Liberia will be going through a government transition process.

There may be ten (10) or more presidential candidates in 2017, however, through this in-depth research and analysis, The Khana Group can conclude that one of the "Top 7 Candidates Trending for 2017" in all likelihood will be Liberia's next President.

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