

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### The Gambia must release four activists jailed for distributing anti-government T-shirts

We the below signed organisations call for the immediate release of four activists jailed over the distribution of T-shirts calling for an end to dictatorship in the Gambia.

One activist, Dr Amadou Scattred Janneh, the country's former Minister for Information and Communication, was yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour for treason. Modou Keita, Ebrima Jallow and Michael Uche Thomas were each sentenced to three years with hard labour for sedition.

The four were arrested in June 2011 after distributing T-shirts made by the NGO Coalition for Change – The Gambia (CCG) calling for an "End to Dictatorship Now".

These men are prisoners of conscience and must be released immediately and unconditionally. Gambia must stop such acts of persecution and allow criticism to be heard in the country.

We further call on the International Community to publicly condemn instances of human rights violations in the Gambia, including arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances which come to their attention, and address such concerns to Gambian authorities.

The imprisonment and conviction of these men is a violation of their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association, contrary to the Gambia's constitution and the country's international and regional human rights obligations, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

President Jammeh is once again proving that he does not tolerate any form of criticism and is ruthlessly persecuting anyone who speaks out against his regime.

Dr Amadou Scattred Janneh, who has American citizenship, was arrested on 7 June for being in possession of the CCG T-shirts. Michael Uche Thomas, a Nigerian, and Modou Keita and Ebrima Jallow, both Gambians, were arrested on the same day, accused of printing the T-shirts.

According to CCG spokesperson Ndey Tapha Sosseh, "The Coalition for Change - The Gambia is an organization with the objectives of ending The Gambia's dictatorship and as well as the climate of fear that has so consumed Gambian society."

The four men were sentenced at the Special Criminal Court in Banjul. Charges were initially brought at the Banjul Magistrate Court on 13 June and the case was later transferred.

Journalists and activists in Gambia, are routinely subjected to human rights violations, such as unlawful arrests and detentions, torture, unfair trials, harassment, assaults and death threats, making it extremely difficult for them to do their work. Several journalists have been harassed, threatened, detained and unlawfully arrested in recent months.

#### Signed

Amnesty International  
Campaign for Human Rights in The Gambia UK  
Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD)  
Gambian Movement for Democracy and Development (GMDD)  
Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC)

Media Foundation for West Africa  
Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP)  
West-Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)