



GAMBIA: STOP THE RULE OF FEAR TAKE ACTION!



DISAPPEARED: EBRIMA MANNEH

Ebrima Manneh has been a victim of enforced disappearance since July 2006. On 11 July 2006 witnesses saw Ebrima, a reporter at the government-owned Daily Observer, being arrested by members of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) at the newspaper's offices. It is believed that he was arrested for trying to print a BBC article that criticized the Gambian government. The government denied any involvement in his arrest and subsequent disappearance. However, in July 2007, he was seen in hospital in the custody of Gambian police. On 19 June 2007 the Media Foundation for West Africa filed an application on behalf of Ebrima at the ECOWAS Community Court. The court ordered the Gambian government to immediately release Ebrima from unlawful detention without further delay and pay US\$100,000 in damages. To date the government has not complied with the order and has denied holding him in custody. Amnesty International reiterated this to the Gambian government at the UN Universal Period Review Session in February 2010. Amnesty International suggested that the government call for an independent investigation of the case. However no action has been taken by the government to date.



DETAINED: EDWIN NEBOLISA NWAKAEME

Nigerian Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme has run Africa in Democracy and Good Governance (ADG) since 2006. He faces charges of "providing false information to a public official." The charges appear to be linked to the organization writing to the Gambian president's daughter in November 2009, nominating her as an ADG ambassador in the context of celebrating 'World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse.' Edwin was first arrested on 22 February by the Immigration Department, but was released three days later. He was rearrested on 1 March and has been detained since. He was taken to court again on 10 March and charged with giving "false information to the office of the president that ADG is a NGO." He pleaded not guilty. His lawyer applied for bail for him but the judge denied it and remanded him in prison. He is currently detained in Mile 2 prison in Banjul, a maximum security prison known for its harsh conditions. Newspapers have reported that the authorities have also seized Edwin's passport and speculate that the police may intend to deport him to Nigeria. Amnesty International considers these charges against Edwin to result solely from his activities as a Human Rights Defender and considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.



IMPRISONED: FEMI PETERS

Femi Peters is a member and campaign manager for the opposition party, the United Democratic Party (UDP). In April 2010, he was sentenced to one year imprisonment and fined D10,000 (USD\$342), for organizing a political rally without a permit. Femi Peters was first arrested in October 2009 for holding a political rally and using a public address system without permission. Femi claimed that the right to hold a political rally is a constitutional right, and that his request for permission was rejected by the police. According to Femi's lawyer, his client was found guilty of violating a colonial law (public order act of 1961 as amended by 2009). The lawyer has appealed the judgement and the appeal is still ongoing. He has been incarcerated in Mile 2 prison in Banjul. Amnesty International considers the conviction of Femi Peters stems solely from his role as a political opponent.

TAKE ACTION!

1. join the campaign online at : www.amnesty.org/en/stop-rule-fear-gambia
and <http://www.amnestyusa.org/gambia>

2. WRITE TO GAMBIAN PRESIDENT YAHYA JAMMEH TO:

- Stop human rights violations and comply with obligations under the African Charter with regard to the right to liberty, freedom from torture, right to fair trial, freedom of expression and association;
- Grant access to all prisoners;
- End incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances, and ensure that security personnel who engage in these practices are brought to justice in fair trials;
- End the harassment of journalists and media organisations.

3. SEND YOUR APPEALS TO:

- a) Amnesty International office in your country, or;
- b) Gambian Press Union
- c) National Union of Journalists

MODEL LETTER:

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern on the human rights situation the Gambia, specifically on the continuing detention of human rights defenders Chief Ebrima Manneh, Edwin Nabolisa Nwakaema and Femi Peters. I would like to call on you for your urgent intervention to resolve these and other similar cases.

Amnesty international believes that Ebrima Manneh, Edwin Nabolisa Nwakaema and Femi Peters, are prisoners of conscience and that they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

Amnesty International believes that the human rights of Ebrima, Edwin and Femi have been violated by the Gambian government and that they should be released without delay.

We thus urge you to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Chief Ebrima Manneh, Edwin Nabolisa Nwakaema and Femi Peters, as they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely on account of their legitimate exercise of freedom of expression;
- Implement the ECOWAS judgement on Chief Ebrima Manneh's case;
- Stop human rights violations and comply with the Constitution of The Gambia and the country's international obligations under the African Charter regarding to the right to liberty, freedom from torture, right to fair trial, freedom of expression and association;
- End incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances, and ensure that security personnel who engage in these practices are brought to justice in fair trials;
- Grant access to all prisoners
- Establish an independent and international commission of inquiry to investigate the whereabouts and fate of victims of enforced disappearance and ensure that those responsible for these human rights violations are brought to justice in fair trials;
- Establish an adequately resourced independent human rights commission.
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Sincerely,

Name:

Country: