

# URGENT ACTION

## ALL GAMBIAN DEATH ROW INMATES TO BE EXECUTED

**Gambian president Yahya Jammeh has announced that all death row inmates will be executed by mid-September. Amnesty International urges the President to immediately retract this call and impose an official moratorium on executions.**

On both 19 and 20 August, in a television address broadcast to mark the Muslim feast of Eid-al-Fitr, President Jammeh announced to the nation that, by the middle of September all death sentences will be “carried out to the letter”, to “ensure that criminals get what they deserve.” If executions are carried out, it will mark the end of a 27-year period without executions.

According to The Gambian government, there were 42 men and two women on death row as of 31 December 2011, 13 of whom had been sentenced during that year. This year, three men have reportedly also received the death sentence, making a total of 47 people currently on death row.

This announcement by the President has caused a great deal of fear and distress to death row inmates and their families. Death sentences, carried out by hanging, are imposed for murder and treason. In The Gambia, death sentences are known to be used as a tool against the political opposition. Furthermore, international standards on fair trials, including presumption of innocence, access to lawyers and exclusion of any evidence obtained as a result of torture, are often not respected.

President Jammeh’s announcement follows the launch in May 2012 of what the President called “Operation Bulldozer” to “rid the country of all criminals”.

### Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urge the President to immediately retract the call for execution of death row inmates;
- Urge the President not to end The Gambia’s 27 year period without executions, which is in line with global trends towards the abolition of the death penalty; and remind the President that no West African country has executed prisoners in recent years;
- Urge the President to immediately impose a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty and commute all death sentences to terms of imprisonment.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 SEPTEMBER 2012 TO:

President of The Gambia  
c/o Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
International Cooperation and Gambians  
Abroad  
Dr Mamadou Tangara  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
4, Marina Parade  
Banjul, The Gambia  
Email: info@mofa.gov.gm  
**Salutation: Dear President**

Minister of Justice and Attorney  
General  
Hon. Lamin A. M. S. Jobarteh  
Ministry of Justice  
Attorney General's Chambers  
Marina Parade  
Banjul, The Gambia  
Email: info@moj.gov.gm  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney General**

**And copies to:**  
Committee on Human Rights  
and Child Protection  
Brima M. Kamada  
ECOWAS Parliament,  
International Conference  
Centre, Garki,  
P.M.B. 576, Abuja, Nigeria  
Email: atoure@ecowas.int  
**Salutation: Dear Chairman**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The resumption of executions in The Gambia would go against the worldwide, regional, and sub-regional trend away from the death penalty. On the regional level, 38 of the 54 member states of the African Union are abolitionist in law (16) or practice (22), more than two-thirds of the countries on the continent.

The Gambia is presently classified as abolitionist in practice, one of 141 states worldwide that have abolished the death penalty in either law or practise, which is equally more than two-thirds of all states.

No West African country has executed prisoners in recent years and the death penalty for all crimes has been abolished in Togo in West Africa, as well as in Burundi, Gabon and Rwanda in the last five years.

In July, Benin became the 75th state worldwide to join the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1989, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

The Gambia is a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. In 2008, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the body monitoring this regional treaty, adopted a resolution calling on States Party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to observe a moratorium on the execution of death sentences with a view to abolishing capital punishment.

During a session of the Commission in Banjul, The Gambia, in May 2011, the Chairperson of the African Commission's Working Group on the Death Penalty in Africa stated that "capital punishment... represents a most grave violation of... the right to life under Article 4 of the African Charter".

The United Nations has also called for a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty in subsequent UN General Assembly resolutions of 2007, 2008 and 2010.

Under international standards, the death penalty can only be imposed for crimes where there is an intention to kill which results in the loss of life. According to the United Nations, this excludes the possibility of imposing death sentences for activities of a political nature, including treason, espionage and other vaguely defined acts described as 'crimes against the State'.

Name: 45 men and two women on death row

Gender m/f: Both

UA: 247/12 Index: AFR 27/005/2012 Issue Date: 23 August 2012