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## **The Gambia: The Gambian government must not carry out any further executions of death row prisoners**

Amnesty International and 66 international human rights organizations and West African civil society groups condemn the execution of nine death row prisoners which took place two weeks ago in the Gambia.

The executions were confirmed by the Minister of Interior on Monday 27 August. They followed a speech to the nation made by President Jammeh on 19 and again on 20 August in which he announced that “all death sentences would be carried out to the letter by mid-September”. The statement from the Ministry of Interior reiterated the government’s intention to carry out further executions.

The prisoners remaining on death row - at least 38 people - are now at imminent risk of execution. Many have been sentenced to death after unfair or politically-motivated trials. Due process safeguards are frequently not observed - many people sentenced to death have not had access to legal advice or have not been able to pursue a proper appeals process.

The executions carried out two weeks ago were done without prior notification to the prisoners, families or lawyers. The government confirmed the executions only after substantial international pressure to do so.

Fears for those who remain on death row have been exacerbated by the fact that family members have been unable to access the prison or to communicate with the inmates since two weeks ago.

The executions, and President Jammeh’s statements about executing all death row prisoners by September, caused an international outcry. The undersigned organizations welcome the statements made by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Union, the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations, as well as, among others, the governments of Benin, Nigeria and Senegal.

The Gambia’s actions are in violation of international standards in relation to use of the death penalty. The executions are also in stark contrast to the trend, both in West Africa and globally, towards ending the use of the death penalty. Since 2000, Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal and Togo in West Africa, as well as Burundi, Gabon and Rwanda, have abolished the death penalty for all crimes. In the last few months alone, the government of Ghana accepted the recommendation of a Constitution Review Commission to abolish the death penalty in the new Constitution, and Benin became the 75<sup>th</sup> state worldwide, and the 10<sup>th</sup> in Africa, to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

The undersigned organizations call on the Gambian government not to carry out any further executions, and to, immediately and publically, commit to an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty in the Gambia with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

The government must also release, if requested by the families, the bodies of the individuals who were executed two weeks ago.

Signed

Access to Justice Law Centre (AJLC) - Sierra Leone  
Action des Chrétiens pour l'abolition de la Torture (ACAT) -Togo  
Actions pour la protection des Droits de l'Homme (APDH) - Côte d'ivoire  
AdvocAid- Sierra Leone  
Advocacy Movement Network- Sierra Leone  
Amnesty International  
Article 19- Senegal  
Association Burkinabé des Femmes Juristes (AFJB) - Burkina Faso  
Association des Femmes Juristes du Mali (AJM) - Mali  
Association Malienne des Droits de l'Homme (AMDH) - Mali  
Association pour la promotion et la défense des droits des femmes (APDF) - Mali  
Avocat sans Frontière - Mali  
Association Semfilm - Burkina Faso  
Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) - Sierra Leone  
Campaign for Human Rights in The Gambia UK (CHRG-UK) - United Kingdom  
Charter 1970 Gambian Diaspora Movement (C70) - United Kingdom  
Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) - Sierra Leone  
Centre for Democracy and Human Rights - Sierra Leone  
Centre d'Information et de Formation en matière de Droits Humains en Afrique (CIFDHA) -  
Burkina Faso  
Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) - Nigeria  
Civil Society Association Gambia (CSAG) - The Gambia  
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) - Nigeria  
Coalition des associations de lutte contre l'impunité au Togo (CACIT) - Togo  
Coalition for Justice and Accountability (COJA) - Sierra Leone  
Commission Justice et Paix - Burkina Faso  
Écoles instruments de paix (EIP) - Côte d'ivoire  
Fédération Internationale des Journalistes (FIJ) - Senegal  
Forum des Organisations Nationales de Droits Humains - Mauritania  
Gas Alert - Nigeria  
Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC) - Ghana  
Human Rights for All (HUMRA) - Sweden  
Human Rights Watch  
International Institute for Child Protection - The Gambia  
Liga Guineense dos Direitos Humanos - Guinea Bissau  
Ligue Ivoirienne des Droits de l'homme (LIDHO) - Côte d'ivoire  
Ligue pour la Défense de la Justice et la Liberté (LIDEJEL) - Burkina Faso  
Ligue pour la Justice, le Développement et le Droits Humains - Mali  
Ligue Sénégalaise des Droits de l'Homme (LSDH)- Senegal  
Mouvement Burkinabé des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples (MBDHP)- Burkina Faso  
Mouvement Burkinabé pour l'Emergence de la Justice Sociale (MBJUS) - Burkina Faso  
Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits d l'Homme (MIDH) - Côte d'ivoire  
Network of Human Rights Journalists - The Gambia  
Network on Democracy and Human Rights - Sierra Leone  
Network Movement for Justice and Development - Sierra Leone  
Niger Delta Catholic Bishops' Forum- Nigeria  
Nigerian Coalition for the Abolition of the Death Penalty (NCADP) - Nigeria  
Organisations des Femmes Actives de Côte d'ivoire - Côte d'ivoire  
Organisation for Development and Human Rights - Sierra Leone  
Prison Fellowship- Liberia  
Prison Watch - Sierra Leone  
Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO) - Senegal  
Rehabilitation and Development Agency - Sierra Leone

Réseau des associations de Lutte contre les armes Légères en Afrique de l'Ouest (RASALAO) - Mali  
Réseau Inter Africain des Femmes, Médias, Genre et Développement- FAMEDEV  
Réseau des Journalistes pour la Sécurité en Afrique de l'Ouest (JRSDAO) - Mali  
Sabi Yu Rights - Sierra Leone  
Save the Gambia Democracy Project (STGDP) - USA  
Sene-Gambian Human Rights Defence League - United Kingdom  
Society for Democratic Initiatives (SDI) - Sierra Leone  
Socio-Economic Rights & Accountability Project (SERAP) - Nigeria  
SOS Esclaves – Mauritania  
Sos Exclusion- Côte d'ivoire  
Syndicat des professionnels de l'information et de la communication (SYNPICS) - Senegal  
The Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS) – Nigeria  
TrustAfrica- Liberia  
West African Bar Association (WABA) - Nigeria  
Women' Action for Human Dignity - Sierra Leone