

URGENT ACTION

GAMBIAN JOURNALISTS RECEIVE THREATS

Journalist Abubacarr Saidu Khan received a death threat on 13 November; this follows an earlier threat against himself and journalist Baboucarr Ceesay. They believe the threats are related to their attempts to peacefully demonstrate and their work as journalists.

On 13 November at around midnight, **Abubacarr Saidu Khan** reported that as he was talking to his brother near their compound gate in Ebo Town, Gambia, a black vehicle without license plates stopped outside. One of the four men in the car yelled, "We have [told] you that we will come for you without any further information. We got information that you are a very stubborn journalist. The next time we meet you your head will be hammered by one of our patriotic killers. Just continue to ignore our warnings."

Abubacarr Saidu Khan – an independent freelance journalist – and **Baboucarr Ceesay** – the First Vice President of The Gambia Press Union (GPU) – also received a death threat by email on 25 October. It said: "You choose to live or die...you... want to destroy the image of the APRC government and our affectionate President...I will come with my team of patriotic killers..."

On 26 October, the journalists reported the initial threat to the Inspector General of Police. Both journalists stated they had police protection from 26 to 27 October. Abubacarr Saidu Khan told Amnesty International that on 26 October, a man was stationed outside his gate, observing his house. Abubacarr Saidu Khan instructed the police officer guarding him to question the man but when the police officer approached him, the man got in his car and drove away. Baboucarr Ceesay told Amnesty International that his family saw people in an unlicensed vehicle parked outside his house on 11 November who refused to disclose their identities when questioned.

Amnesty International spoke to the Inspector General of the Gambian Police on 15 November and raised concerns about the journalists' safety. The Inspector General said the investigations were ongoing, that police were frequently patrolling the area, and that he had advised the journalists to take personal security precautions. The Inspector General also said he was unsure who would be threatening the journalists. He said the State had withdrawn its case by order of the President and he had informed all security forces about this.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urging the police to safeguard the security of Abubacarr Saidu Khan and Baboucarr Ceesay, and conduct a full independent and impartial investigation into all threats made against Abubacarr Saidu Khan;
- Ensuring that those responsible for the threats are brought to justice; and that journalists and human rights defenders can carry out their work without interference, obstacles, discrimination or fear of retaliation.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 DECEMBER 2012 TO:

Inspector General of Police
Yankuba Sonko
Gambia Police Force Headquarters
Ecowas Avenue,
Banjul, The Gambia
Email: policeigp1@yahoo.com
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

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 Minister

And copies to:
Minister of the Interior and NGO Affairs
Ousman Sonko
21 OAU Boulevard,
Banjul, The Gambia
Email: oussonko@yahoo.com
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Baboucarr Ceesay and Abubacarr Saidykhan were arrested on 7 September and charged on 10 September for conspiracy to commit a felony, following a request to hold a peaceful demonstration against executions of death row inmates in the Gambia in August. They were later charged with sedition and released on bail. The charges were finally dropped on 23 October, reportedly on the orders of President Yayha Jammeh.

Journalists, human rights activists and political opponents in the 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.

In December 2004, Deyda Hydara, the former president of GPU and editor of The Point newspaper, was shot and killed in his car while travelling home from work. The murder came on the anniversary of the establishment of newspaper, and three days after controversial media legislation had been passed, which Deyda Hydara had vociferously opposed. No investigation has taken place and no one has been brought to justice.

In July 2006, journalist Ebrima Manneh was arrested and subjected to enforced disappearance for reportedly trying to publish articles critical of the government. His whereabouts are still unknown. In 2008 the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice ordered the Gambian government to release him from unlawful detention and pay him compensation, but the judgment has yet to be enforced.

For more information, see *The Gambia: Charges against journalists over executions demo must be dropped*, 11 September 2012, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/gambia-must-drop-charges-against-journalists-over-executions-demo-2012-09-11>. Also see *Two Gambian journalists receive death threats*, 26 October 2012, <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR27/012/2012/en>.

Name: Baboucarr Ceesay, Abubacarr Saidykhan
Gender m/f: m

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