

# URGENT ACTION

## ANTI-DEATH PENALTY IMAM DETAINED IN THE GAMBIA

**Imam Baba Leigh has been held in incommunicado detention without charge since 3 December. Imam Baba Leigh publicly decried the August executions of nine death row inmates in The Gambia.**

On 3 December eyewitnesses reported seeing two National Intelligence Agency (NIA) officers arrive at the home of **Imam Baba Leigh** at around 10:00pm. The officers informed Imam Baba Leigh that he was being taken to their headquarters for questioning, but they did not provide any further information. Imam Baba Leigh has not been seen since.

His family believe he is being held in detention at the NIA headquarters. The NIA say they have no information regarding the whereabouts of Imam Baba Leigh.

Neither his family nor his lawyer has been able to visit him. Family and friends of Imam Baba Leigh are concerned about his well-being. A member of Imam Baba Leigh's family told Amnesty International: "We are very worried about his condition. We haven't seen him since Monday and have not been able to give him food or medication. We need to see him and know what crimes he has committed."

The incommunicado detention of Imam Baba Leigh without charge is contrary to the Gambian Constitution Article 19 (3), which guarantees the right to be brought before a court of law within 72 hours, and to international and regional human rights law and standards.

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

- Urging the authorities to ensure that Imam Baba Leigh is brought before a court of law as a matter of urgency and charged with recognizable criminal offence or released
- Urging the authorities to allow Imam Baba Leigh immediate access to his family and his lawyer

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 JANUARY 2013 TO:**

Director General of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA)  
 Numo Kujabi  
 National Intelligence Agency (NIA)  
 Headquarters  
 Banjul  
 The Gambia  
 Fax: +220 4225562  
**Salutation: Dear Director**

Minister of Interior and NGO Affairs  
 Ousman Sonko  
 Ministry of Interior and NGO Affairs  
 No.5 J.R. Forster Street (Ex. Fitzgerald Street)  
 Banjul  
 The Gambia  
 Fax: +220 420 1320  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**And copies to:**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Corporation and Gambians Abroad  
 Mrs Susan Waffa Ogoo  
 Corporation and Gambians Abroad  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 4, Marina Parade  
 Banjul  
 The Gambia  
[info@mofa.gov.gm](mailto:info@mofa.gov.gm)  
**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

On the evening of 23 August, nine death row inmates – one woman and eight men – were taken out of their cells and by 24 August they had been executed by firing squad. The executions were carried out in secret and without informing the families, lawyers or respective governments of the prisoners before they took place. The prisoners themselves are believed to not have been told until they were taken from their cells. These executions were the first to take place in nearly 30 years. The bodies have still not been returned to their families or their burial site made known.

Imam Baba Leigh delivers his sermon every Friday at the Kanifing East Mosque, town/province. In September, Imam Baba Leigh strongly condemned the August executions of nine death row inmates stating that the executions were “un-Islamic”. The Imam called for the government to return the bodies of those executed to their families. Imam Baba Leigh has continued over the past few months to criticize the government and speak out against the death penalty in his sermons.

On 7 September two journalists, **Baboucarr Ceesay** and **Abubacarr Saidykhan**, were arrested for seeking a permit to peacefully protest the August executions. They were charged on 10 September with conspiracy to commit a felony. They were later charged with sedition and released on bail. The charges were finally dropped on 23 October, reportedly on the orders of President Yahya Jammeh. The journalists shortly after began receiving death threats.

Journalists, human rights activists and political opponents in the Gambia are routinely subjected to human rights violations such as unlawful arrests and detention, torture, unfair trials, harassment, assaults and death threats. This makes the continuation of their work extremely difficult.

Name: Imam Baba Leigh, Baboucarr Ceesay, Abubacarr Saidykhan  
Gender m/f: m

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