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Second UA: 40/22 Index: AFR 27/7738/2024 Gambia of February 21, 2024

## **GAMBIA DROP CHARGES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER**

In May 2022, the President of Gambia labeled Madi Jobarteh, a human rights advocate, a "troublemaker" for allegedly trying to incite violence in the country. Since that accusation, Jobarteh has faced continuous online threats, harassment, and even illegal surveillance by Gambian officials. They also unfairly arrested and detained him. On November 9, 2023, they formally charged him with several serious offenses, including seditious intent and inciting violence. Amnesty International has raised concerns, suggesting these charges might be politically motivated. They argue that Jobarteh's actions as a human rights defender are being unjustly targeted, infringing on his rights to speak out and associate freely.

### **Write to the President of Gambia urging him to:**

- Immediately drop the unfounded charges against Madi Jobarteh, ensuring he can freely exercise his human rights.
- Quickly and thoroughly investigate all reports of intimidation, harassment, threats, and attacks on Madi Jobarteh and his family. Ensure this investigation is independent, impartial, transparent, and effective, leading to fair trials for any suspected culprits.
- Allow Madi Jobarteh to continue his human rights efforts without fear of retaliation. Respect his privacy, including by returning both his and his daughter's mobile phones.

### **Write to:**

President of Gambia, Adama Barrow

Email: [info@op.gov.gm](mailto:info@op.gov.gm) ; [opgambia@op.gov.gm](mailto:opgambia@op.gov.gm) ; [mcu@op.gov.gm](mailto:mcu@op.gov.gm)

X/Twitter: @BarrowPresident

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Madi Jobarteh, a noted human rights activist from Gambia and former leader of the Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO), also contributes to the Foundation for Legal Aid Research and Empowerment (FLARE). He has recently faced harassment and threats from Gambian authorities. On October 6, 2023, while ill, he received a police summons but couldn't attend. That day, officers, believed to be from intelligence units, forcefully entered his home, questioning him about his Facebook posts and insisting he report to the police once well, which Jobarteh refused.

Jobarteh publicly criticized this harassment on October 8, noting police surveillance around his home. The next day, he was arrested and detained, with the police unlawfully seizing his and his daughter's phones. Only his brother could visit him briefly. Released on bail on October 15, the police retained their phones and later refused to return them.

On November 9, 2023, Jobarteh faced charges including sedition and incitement to violence. His bail was extended until November 23, awaiting the Attorney General's advice, during which time he wasn't required to report for bail. His and his daughter's phones remained confiscated.

This case has caught the attention of UN Special Rapporteurs concerned with human rights defenders, freedom of expression, and privacy. They've [questioned](#) the Gambian government about the legal grounds of Jobarteh's treatment, suggesting the charges and phone confiscation might be attempts to intimidate him and infringe on his privacy rights. The Gambian authorities have yet to respond, ignoring this and [a previous inquiry](#) from June 2022.

This isn't Jobarteh's first encounter with such challenges. On June 30, 2020, after organizing a Black Lives Matter protest and criticizing the government's investigative failures, he was arrested for spreading false information, a charge that was eventually dropped.

***Please take action as soon as possible until April 17, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***