



## **Gambia Civil Society Statement on the Current Situation in Senegal**

### **In Solidarity with the People of Senegal for Democracy**

**Banjul, the Gambia. 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

The Gambian civil society have been keenly following the political events in Senegal especially in the wake of protests by opposition and civil society actors promoted mainly by the trial and now sentencing of opposition leader of PASTEF Mr. Ousmane Sonko on 1st June 2023. We wish to first of all express our heartfelt condolences to the families of those who died in the protests and wish speedy recovery to the injured. In this regard we wish to call for calm within the population and urge the security forces to urgently de-escalate the situation by abiding by the rule of law and restraining their use of force as they seek to maintain law and order.

Senegal and the Gambia share the same historical and sociocultural umbilical cord, and by geography are destined to live side by side for which reasons we all share the same responsibility to care for each another. The destiny of the Gambia and Senegal are therefore intertwined and cannot be separated hence the people of these two sister Republics cannot and must not ignore the prevailing conditions in either society, whether good or bad. This fact has been manifested many times over in various situations that have erupted in our two countries.

In this regard, we the members of the Gambian Civil Society wish for both the Gambia and Senegal nothing other than democracy, good governance and the respect for human rights and adherence to the rule of law. We are pleased to note that Senegal has been a beacon of hope for not only Africa because of its strong democratic credentials over the past two decades but also because Senegal was hugely instrumental in the removal of dictatorship and restoration of democracy in the Gambia in 2017. During our period of dictatorship lasting more than two decades, both the Government and people of Senegal gave invaluable support to Gambian citizens as Senegal was the first port of call for most Gambians fleeing the reign of terror. In Senegal we found home, protection, and comfort.

We note with concern that of recent Senegal, dubbed “Le pays de Dialogue” has seen its democratic space shrinking fast.

To this end we wish to recommend the following urgent actions to all concerned parties including President Macky Sall, Opposition leaders and Civil Society actors in Senegal, ECOWAS and AU in seeking solutions.

1. We call on both sides in Senegal to exercise restraint, sit down and hold dialogue.



2. Government to release all detained opposition figures, activists, journalists and protesters; and grant amnesty to all.
3. Government to Re-open all media outlets and ensure that freedom of expression and freedom of the media are protected.
4. All parties to refrain from doing anything, directly or indirectly that put undue pressure on the justice delivery institutions.
5. Responsible parties to do everything in their power to de-escalate the violent situation in the country in order to bring calm and peace.
6. Engage the key political figures including Mr. Ousmane Sonko in dialogue to seek reconciliation and unity of purpose in the interest of democracy and peace in Senegal.
7. We wish to call on Mr. Ousmane Sonko and other opposition political figures, parties, and movements in Senegal to urgently restrain their supporters and cease protests as a means to give peace a chance and encourage President Macky Sall and the Government to seize advantage of this rapprochement to embark on de-escalation, peace building and strengthening of democracy.
8. We urge the Senegalese Civil Society to remain steadfast and engage positively to ensure that all political leaders and security forces dialogue to find peace and uphold democracy.
9. We urge all Civil Society leaders and Organizations in West Africa especially West African Civil Society Forum (WACSO) to engage their counterparts in Senegal in ensuring that the Government of Senegal, ECOWAS, and the AU undertake urgent efforts to avert the collapse of democracy in Senegal which would have devastating effects across Africa.

The Gambian Civil Society stands in total solidarity with the people of Senegal and for the prevalence and triumph of democracy and human rights. We call on President Macky Sall to recognize and uphold his duty to ensure that democracy and accountable leadership prevail in not only Senegal but also in the Gambia and throughout Africa as a former Chair of the African Union and ECOWAS respectively.



Similarly, we wish to call on the leaders of ECOWAS and the African Union to realize and uphold their historic duties to the ECOWAS Treaty and the AU Constitutive Act and Charter, and to all sub regional and regional instruments that demand the prevalence of democracy and protection of human rights in Africa.

In this regard, we therefore recommend to both ECOWAS and AU to be proactive as follows:

1. Dispatch a joint high-level mission led by the AU Chair Person, President Azali Assoumani of Comoros and the ECOWAS Chair Person, President Umaro Embaló of Guinea Bissau to visit Dakar to have urgent dialogue with President Macky Sall and the opposition leaders to remind them of their duty to uphold the law, defend and abide by democratic norms and standards and protect human rights as a means to ensure the peace and stability of Senegal, West Africa and the African continent as a whole.
2. Remind all opposition leaders to refrain from fueling adverse sentiments and rather seek to urge their supporters to maintain peace and order even when they protest.

In conclusion, the Gambian Civil Society will seek engagements with our Senegalese counterparts in order to enable all of us to play our part effectively and fully in ensuring that democracy and peace prevail in Senegal. In this regard we also call on the Gambia Government to actively engage their Senegalese counterparts to remind them of their sacred responsibility to the promotion and protection of democracy and maintenance of peace and stability.

Signed

**Mrs. Yadicon Njie Eribo**  
**Chairperson, TANGO**