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EFSCRJ Calls for the Immediate Resignation of Emmanuel Joof, Bai Emil Touray and Baboucarr Cham

It is with deep shock and grieve that we noticed a statement by the Gambia Press Union entitled, '*GPU Condemns MCG, NHRC Leaders for Pressuring Journalist to Exonerate Tambadou*'. We share the concerns and lamentations of the GPU that *The Republic's* editor-in-chief Mustapha K Darboe was being pressurized to effectively discredit and disown their own landmark story ([The assets of Gambia's former dictator go for a song](#)) in favour of the former justice minister Abubacarr Tambadou.

To imagine that none other than the Chair of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Emmanuel Joof, the Chair of the Gambia Media Council Baboucarr Cham and the Executive Secretary of the Gambia Media Council Bai Emil Touray, where Cham and Touray are also Commissioners of the Information Commission would undertake such an endeavour is beyond our imagination. We wish to express our total condemnation of this move.

The NHRC and the Information Commission are the foremost human rights institutions in this country. Their role in the protection and promotion of human rights goes to the heart of good governance and democracy hence indispensable in the attainment of national development. Fundamental pillars of good governance and human rights protection are transparency and accountability without which abuse of power, disregard of the rule of law, corruption and violations of human rights would prevail with impunity. On its part, the Gambia Media Council was spearheaded and established by the Gambia Press Union as a self-regulatory body to promote professional standards and ethics in the media. The body's goal is to ensure that the media and journalists abide by the laws and ethics of journalism in fulfilling their constitutional role to society.

It is for this reason that NHRC, the Information Commission, and the Gambia Media Council are crucial institutions in protecting journalists, human rights defenders, and anti-corruption actors as well as keeping the civic space open and safe for freedom of expression, freedom of the media and the right to information which are also indispensable ingredients for transparency and accountability. For that matter, the role and efforts by *The Republic* and the media and journalists in general in exposing corruption and abuse of power are necessary and instrumental in human rights protection. This is why Section 207(3) of the Constitution grants the obligation to the media to hold the Government accountable on behalf of the people.

In this regard, *The Republic's* story published on April 30, 2025, about the way and manner the Jammeh assets were disposed should be welcomed by all especially by the officials of the NHRC, the Gambia Media Council and the Information Commission. We agree with GPU that *The Republic's* story has met all the tenets of journalism, and instrumental in combating corruption, abuse of office and disregard of the rule of law.

To now have the Chair of the NHRC Mr. Joof and the members of the Gambia Media Council and the Information Commission, Messrs Touray and Cham attempt even in the slightest manner to pressure Mustapha K Darboe and *The Republic* to engage in a crisis



management in favour of any subject of their story, more so the lead subject, Abubacarr Tambadou tantamount to direct and blatant interference with all the principles that underpin good governance, democracy, human rights and freedom of the press. Their action is utterly unbecoming of the positions they hold in such institutions, which directly endangers credibility of the press and the safety of journalists.

As a body dedicated to transparency and accountability, we do not think Mr. Emmanuel Joof, Mr. Bai Emil Touray and Mr. Baboucarr Cham have any more legitimacy in whatever form to continue to serve as members of the NHRC, Gambia Media Council and the Information Commission. We therefore demand their immediate resignation from these institutions with immediate effect to ensure that the reputation, credibility, and professionalism of these most important institutions remains intact.

We wish to alert the National Assembly to take the necessary measures to replace these officials in the interest of the public, fairness and for the protection of human rights and freedom of the press.

In this regard, we continue to stand with the GPU in its condemnation of the unethical conduct by these gentlemen. We wish to further call on the Government to act on the investigative report by *The Republic* to open criminal investigations on members of the Ministerial Committee and the process of disposal of the assets stolen by the former Dictator Yaya Jammeh.

2025 – The Year of Transparency and Accountability

