



Ref: EFSCRJ/PR/006/25

**PUBLIC STATEMENT**

10<sup>th</sup> May 2025

**EFSCRJ Calls on Responsible Stakeholders to Ensure and Protect the Rule of Law**

EFSCRJ is deeply concerned at the ongoing disregard of the rule of law and the abuse of human rights being perpetrated by the Gambia Police Force. The arrest and detention of the GALA Protesters on Thursday May 8 was a violation of Section 25 of the Constitution and sections 5 and 6 of the Public Order Act. The youths are protesting legally and legitimately for transparency and accountability in the way and manner the assets of former dictator Yaya Jammeh were sold and disposed of by the Government under the auspices of a Ministerial Committee. An investigative report by *The Republic* published on April 30 has detailed several incidents of abuse of power, disregard of the law and acts of corrupt and conflict of interest perpetrated by public officials and other individuals in the sale and disposal of these assets.

It is 72 hours today and the police continue to unlawfully keep protesters under detention in various detention centres. Several protesters and journalists have been subjected to physical assault by armed police officers. We are hugely concerned at the condition of Ebrima Jallow who was physically assaulted by police officers and is currently hospitalized. On May 9, the Gambia Police Force released a press statement on its Facebook page in which it states,

*“The Gambia Police Force acknowledges the right to peaceful assembly as provided for under the Constitution and wishes to assure the public that it remains committed to upholding such rights within the confines of the law.”*

Despite this acknowledgement, the Police continue to keep innocent youths in illegal detention while laying all sorts of restrictions to prevent more protests which are now gradually growing and engulfing the whole country.

EFSCRJ is therefore hugely concerned with the state of affairs. We hold that there is urgent need to preserve the rule of law and peace and stability in the country which are being threatened due to the actions of the authorities. For that matter, EFSCRJ hereby calls on the following legal stakeholders to assume their lawful responsibilities to guarantee the protection of human rights and maintenance of peace and stability according to law.

1. President Barrow to immediately address the nation as strongly assure citizen that he will act immediately and effectively to ensure an impartial inquiry on the sale and disposal of Jammeh assets.
2. The National Assembly to summon the IGP, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Interior to remind them of their responsibility to uphold the law and maintain order.
3. The IGP to immediately withdraw armed police from the streets and provide only general duty officers to guarantee the free and open demonstration of citizens across the country. The youths have been absolutely peaceful hence there is no justification to deploy armed and riot police in the streets. We urge the IGP to abide by the Guidelines for Policing Public Assemblies developed by the NHRC.



4. The Minister of Justice Dawda Jallow and the Minister of Interior Abdoulie Sanyang to assume their duties to ensure that law enforcement agencies abide by the law and protect human rights.
5. The National Human Rights Commission to engage and urge the IGP and other relevant Government authorities to remind them of their obligation to protect of human rights in line with the law. This includes advising the IGP to withdraw armed police from the streets and further ensure that police officers refrain from excessive use of force.
6. Civil society organizations, political parties and political leaders as well as religious and community leaders and elders of our communities to stand up to and speak out to hold the Government accountable and demand the adherence to the rule of law and protection of human rights.

EFSCRJ remains seized with this matter in fulfilment of our constitutional rights and duties.

We urge the youths of the Gambia and the protesters to preserve the peace and stability of the Gambia and carry out their constitutional rights and duties with utmost sense of responsibility and patriotism.

We demand the immediate and unconditional release of the illegally detained youths now.

### **2025 – The Year of Transparency and Accountability**

