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EFSCRJ Reminds NAMs that The Nation's Destiny Lies in their Hands.

On May 15, 2025, the National Assembly established the *'Special select committee to inquire into the sale and disposal of the assets identified by the commission of inquiry into the financial activities of public bodies, enterprises and offices as regards their dealings with former president Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh and connected matters'*.

In placing the motion on the floor of parliament for the setting up of the committee, the Majority Leader Billay Tunkara said in his preamble that the need for the creation of the came as, *"public concern continues to grow regarding the processes, legal frameworks, and accountability mechanisms involved in the identification, sale and disposal of all assets identified by the Commission."*

The mandate of the committee, among others is, *"to conduct a full, impartial and independent inquiry, and to report its findings and recommendations to this Assembly within a period not exceeding one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date of its first sitting."*

The terms of reference of the committee includes to, *"Inquire into the list of assets identified by the Commission and determine which assets were sold, transferred, or otherwise disposed of."*

The seven-man committee are the following. We regret that there is no woman member.

1. Hon. Abdoulie Ceesay (Chairperson)
2. Hon. Suwaibou Touray
3. Hon. Alhagie Mbowe
4. Hon. Kebba Lang Fofana
5. Hon. Sheriff Sarr
6. Hon. Omar Jatto Jammeh
7. Hon. Madi Ceesay

We need not remind ourselves that the country underwent a 22-year brutal dictatorship. For that matter, the Government rightly set up two fundamental truth telling institutions to enable us to understand how, why, when, and what human rights violations and acts of corruption among other crimes took place in this country. The findings and recommendations of the TRRC and the Jannet Commissions were expected to help the country to undergo a comprehensive constitutional, legal, institutional reforms to usher in a robust democratic dispensation.

After having established the Jannet Commission eight years ago which submitted its final report to the President in March 2019, it is indeed unfortunate that the country has now to go back to the decisions and actions surrounding the Jammeh assets. By now, assets stolen by Yaya Jammeh should have long been sold and disposed of in a manner that served the best interest of victims and the nation. Unfortunately, disregard of law and ethics amidst the lack of transparency and accountability characterized the way these assets were managed.





Thus, the creation of this special select committee is, in the first place a manifestation of the failure of both the Executive and the Legislature in the management of the affairs of the country. On one hand, the Executive failed in ensuring transparent, efficient, and accountable implementation of the Janneh Commission recommendations. On the other hand, the Legislature also failed to ensure that they exercise their oversight role to ensure that the recommendations of the Janneh Commission were efficiently implemented with transparency and accountability.

Due to the gross failure of both branches of government, the Janneh Commission and these assets have turned into sources of conflict, division, and corruption in the land. If not for the arduous work by an investigative journalist Mustapha K Darboe, followed by protests led by GALA and youths of the Gambia, it is clear that both the Presidency and the National Assembly would not have released the list nor set up this select committee, respectively. EF Small Centre hereby condemns in the severest manner the failure of both branches of government for their gross dereliction of duty in the sale and disposal of Jammeh assets.

Now that this special select committee is established, we wish to remind the committee members in particular and NAMs in general that the destiny of the country lies in their hands. How they perform their task in ensuring that this matter is thoroughly investigated and make the right recommendations will determine whether this country continues to live in peace or in conflict. In this regard, we cannot fail but remind NAMs that we are hugely sceptical about them given their track record.

1. In 2020, the National Assembly established the Special Select Committee on the implementation of the State of Public Emergency (COVID). Despite this committee, massive corruption and inefficiency were perpetrated in the use of COVID funds and services yet no one has been held accountable until today.
2. On 26 October 2022, the National Assembly mandated the Select Committee on Health, Disaster, Refugees and Humanitarian Relief to investigate the acute kidney injury (AKI) deaths. Since they submitted their report, if not most, none of the recommendations have been implemented until today.
3. On July 22, 2024, the joint Committee on Finance and Public Accounts (FPAC) and the Public Enterprise Committee (PEC) opened investigations into the Russian oil saga. They were expected to conclude their investigation and report back within 90 days which elapsed on October 22, 2024. Until today, there is no report.

In light of the foregoing, EF Small Centre therefore reminds the seven committee members and all NAMs that they must not fail the Gambia again. Failure to ensure full and complete transparency and accountability on the issue of Jammeh assets has the potential to deepen divisions and generate conflict in this country. Time will be the judge.

We will continue to dedicate our precious time and resources to closely monitor the work the committee which must be transparent, efficient, and professional.

2025 – The Year of Transparency and Accountability

