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EFSCRJ Welcomes Setting up of a Parliamentary Committee on Sale of Jammeh Assets

The EF Small Centre hereby welcomes the decision of the National Assembly to hold an extra-ordinary session on 13th and 14th May 2025 to consider a motion to establish a special select committee to conduct an inquiry into the sales and disposal of assets stolen by the former dictator Yaya Jammeh. We commend the Majority Leader and Member for Kantora Billay Tunkara for proposing the motion, which comes on the heels of the publication of an investigative report by *The Republic*, '*The assets of Gambia's former dictator go for a song*' released on April 30. The report has exposed several decisions and actions by public officials and other individuals that tantamount to disregard of the law, abuse of office and corruption in the way these assets were sold or disposed.

In the wake of the removal of dictatorship in 2017, two crucial truth telling institutions were established. i.e., the TRRC to unearth human rights violations and the Janneh Commission to expose the financial activities of the former dictator. In its final report submitted to Pres. Barrow in March 2019, the Janneh Commission concluded that Yaya Jammeh had amassed in his 22-year rule a total of 281 landed properties throughout the country. These include private residential and commercial properties, islands, forest parks, wildlife reserves and wetlands. The Commission also found that Yaya Jammeh owned two properties, located in Morocco and the United States each.

The Commission also concluded that over D1.06B, over \$304.7M, over 29.4M euros and over 2.2M pounds sterling were directly wasted, misappropriated or diverted by Yaya Jammeh. His wife, Zeinab, on her part siphoned over D3.3M, over \$1.8M and over six thousand pounds sterling.

According to *The Republic*,

"All his assets were forfeited to the State but the process of recovering his loot has been marred with alleged corruption, with officials of the current administration allegedly selling assets to friends, family and themselves at prices only a fraction of their worth. To the public, information about buyers of these assets, amounts at which they were sold, and the circumstances, is left much to speculation despite repeated questions by journalists, activists and lawmakers. "

In response to the publication, the Ministry of Justice issued a press statement on 5th May 2025, stating that,

"All the assets sold so far have been subjected to an audit by the National Audit Office whose report will be submitted to the National Assembly ... Accordingly, a comprehensive report detailing the sales of all forfeited assets – including procedures followed, beneficiaries, sales, and proceeds realised – will be made available to the public in due course."

This statement by the Ministry is coming six years after the creation of a Ministerial Committee which oversaw the process of the sale and disposal of the assets between 2019



and 2020. The Ministerial Committee was chaired by former justice minister Abubacarr Tambadou and included current and former ministers: Hamat Bah (tourism minister at the time and now lands minister), Musa Drammeh (lands minister at the time and now fisheries minister) and Amie Faburay (agriculture minister at the time). During their tenure, the Ministerial Committee never published any report to the public, and apparently there was also no audit of the sale and disposal of these assets.

It is in light of the foregoing that EFSCRJ strongly holds that there is tangible justification for a public inquiry about how these assets were sold and disposed to ensure that law and ethics were followed in the best interest of the nation, and those found wanting held accountable.

These assets are not Yaya Jammeh properties. He stole them from individuals, institutions, companies, communities and from the national coffers. In the process of acquiring these assets, several Gambians and non-Gambians were subjected to gross human rights violations including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual violence, enforced disappearance and summary executions as evidenced in the TRRC Report and the Government White Paper.

Therefore, the matter of these assets goes to the heart of the dictatorship hence their management and disposal are integral in the building of the new Gambia envisaged in the transitional justice program and within the framework of the Never Again mantra.

We welcome therefore the suggestion by NAM Billay Tunkara and urge all NAMs to fully endorse his motion for the setting up of a special select committee. For that matter, we hereby remind NAMs in general and the forthcoming special select committee in particular to uphold the following values and standards in doing this most important work:

1. **Uphold integrity** by adhering to the highest ethical standards.
2. **Ensure transparency and accountability** in their proceedings and make findings available to the public.
3. **Ensure objectivity** by basing findings and recommendations on evidence and facts, and not political bias.
4. **Uphold fairness** by ensuring all stakeholders and witnesses are treated justly.
5. **Uphold professionalism and diligence** by ensuring thorough investigation and leaving no stone unturned.

We wish to remind NAMs that the people of the Gambia expect and deserve nothing other than the truth and the whole truth and tangible results in the interest of accountability.

Once more, we reiterate that the dream of a better Gambia cannot be achieved in the absence of the transparent, accountable, and effective implementation of the TRRC and the Jannet Commission recommendations. This includes ensuring that these assets are not only sold and disposed of properly but also that the proceeds are fully accounted for and go to benefit the country in general and the victims of Yaya Jammeh in particular.

We will continue to monitor both the Executive and the Legislature in this task.

2025 – The Year of Transparency and Accountability