



EFSCRJ Joined Citizens to Demand Accountability and Reliable Utility Services

Today, the Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice joins Gambians across the country in demanding reliable electricity and water services and accountability from the National Water and Electricity Company and all relevant public authorities.

Over the past several weeks, electricity and water supply have become severely limited, leaving families, businesses, hospitals, schools, and entire communities in difficult and often unbearable conditions. The prolonged power outages have disrupted livelihoods, increased the cost of living, damaged businesses, affected education and healthcare services, and imposed significant economic losses on citizens.

EFSCRJ fully supports the demand by Gambians Against Looted Assets (GALA) for NAWEC to resolve the current electricity crisis within ten days. We believe this demand is both legitimate and justified. Access to reliable electricity and water is not a privilege; it is a basic public service which citizens are entitled to receive from institutions funded by their taxes and utility payments.

We reiterate that the energy crisis in the Gambia is not primarily a consequence of inadequate funding, lack of expertise, or scarcity of resources. Over the last decade, billions of dalasi have been invested in the energy sector through government allocations, loans, grants, and support from development partners. At the same time, electricity tariffs and utility charges have continued to increase, generating additional revenue for NAWEC. Yet despite these investments and despite the monopoly position it enjoys, NAWEC has consistently failed to provide services commensurate with the resources at its disposal.

The evidence is overwhelming. Successive audits, parliamentary inquiries, government assessments, and investigative reports have repeatedly identified the same underlying causes of the persistent failures in the energy sector: poor governance, weak leadership, corruption, inefficiency, mismanagement, and the absence of accountability. These problems are neither new nor unknown. The relevant authorities are fully aware of them.

Therefore, the responsibility for resolving the current crisis lies squarely with NAWEC, its line ministry, the State-Owned Enterprises Commission, the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and ultimately the Office of the President. These institutions possess both the knowledge and the capacity to prevent recurring energy crises while laying the foundation for a sustainable, affordable, and nationally resilient energy system.

We are particularly concerned that the Gambia remains excessively dependent on external sources for the majority of its electricity supply. Such dependence is not only costly but also exposes the country to external shocks and vulnerabilities that undermine national energy security. We therefore call for an urgent and deliberate strategy to increase domestic generation capacity and reduce reliance on imported power.

The fact that the country continues to generate only a fraction of its installed capacity demonstrates that the crisis is not fundamentally technical or regional in nature. It is, above all, a governance and management failure. Until these structural weaknesses are addressed,



Gambians will continue to endure recurring blackouts regardless of how much money is invested in the sector.

EFSCRJ therefore calls on all Gambians to support and embrace the ten-day ultimatum issued to NAWEC. Citizens must remain vigilant and prepared to pursue lawful, democratic, peaceful, and nonviolent actions to demand accountability and effective service delivery should the situation remain unresolved'

In this regard, we stand in full solidarity with GALA and all citizens who are exercising their constitutional rights to demand better governance and quality public services.

We further remind all citizens that the Constitution of the Gambia declares that sovereignty resides in the people. Sovereignty is not merely a right; it is also a responsibility. Citizens have both the authority and the duty to safeguard, defend, and preserve the Republic by ensuring that public institutions serve the public interest with integrity, efficiency, and accountability.

The persistence of poor public services, corruption, mismanagement, and weak governance is possible only when citizens are unable or unwilling to hold institutions accountable. A conscious, informed, active, and patriotic citizenry is the strongest guarantee of good governance and national development.

Sixty years after independence, Gambians deserve far better. The resources, talent, and opportunities necessary for national transformation exist. What has been lacking is accountability and the consistent enforcement of consequences for failure. It is therefore time for citizens to reclaim their role as custodians of the Republic and demand the quality of governance and public services that they rightfully deserve.

The Republic Is in the Hands of Citizens to Keep.

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