



Ref: EFSCRJ/PR/004/2026

**PUBLIC STATEMENT**

10<sup>th</sup> July 2026

### **EFSCRJ Raises Alarm Over Growing Lawlessness in Law Enforcement**

The Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice welcomes the recent judgments of the Supreme Court and the Kanifing Magistrates' Court while expressing grave concern over the deteriorating state of constitutionalism, the rule of law, and law enforcement in the Gambia.

On 7 July 2026, the Supreme Court held that the Gambia Police Force violated the Constitution when it unlawfully entered the National Audit Office and forcibly evicted former Auditor General Momodou Ceesay from his office on 15 September 2025. The following day, July 8, the Kanifing Magistrates' Court acquitted and discharged GALA members Kemo Fatty, Alieu Bah, and Omar Saibo Camara after ruling that the Police had failed to establish any case against them following their arrest and prosecution for unlawful assembly and common nuisance.

These judgments are not merely victories for the affected individuals. They are judicial indictments of the conduct of the Gambia Police Force and a warning that constitutional rights and the rule of law are increasingly being undermined by those entrusted to protect them.

The Office of the Auditor General is an independent constitutional institution whose independence cannot be violated by executive fiat or police force. Equally, the right to peaceful assembly is guaranteed by the Constitution, while the Public Order Act expressly recognizes that assemblies not involving a procession or public address system require no police permit. Yet citizens were arrested and prosecuted simply for peacefully protesting an act that the Supreme Court has now declared unconstitutional.

These are not isolated incidents. They reflect a growing pattern of selective law enforcement, abuse of power, and disregard for constitutional safeguards. Over the years, EFSCRJ has documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention, malicious prosecution, police brutality, torture, unlawful killings, and other human rights violations, with little or no accountability for those responsible. Such impunity only emboldens further abuse and steadily erodes public trust in state institutions.

As highlighted in our *State of Human Rights in The Gambia 2025 Report*, despite democratic reforms since 2017, political commitment to constitutional governance remains inadequate. Instead, we continue to witness the increasing politicization and weaponization of public institutions, particularly the Police, against citizens exercising their constitutional rights. This trajectory, combined with corruption, weak accountability, and poor public service delivery, points to an unmistakable pattern of democratic backsliding.

EFSCRJ therefore calls on the President, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, and the Inspector General of Police to honour their constitutional oaths by ensuring that the law is applied impartially, professionally, and without political influence. The Police must return to their constitutional mandate of protecting rights, maintaining public order, and serving all citizens equally under the law.



We equally call on the National Assembly to exercise stronger oversight over law enforcement and the Executive. Parliamentary oversight is a constitutional obligation essential to preventing abuse of power, enforcing accountability, and safeguarding democracy.

Finally, EFSCRJ reminds all public officials that no institution or office is above the law. Public authority is a public trust, to be exercised only in accordance with the law and in the public interest. Respect for human rights, constitutional supremacy, and the rule of law must guide every decision and every action of the State.

The recent judgments should serve as a decisive wake-up call. They demand more than compliance with court orders. Rather, they require institutional reform, individual accountability, and renewed commitment to constitutional governance. Democracy cannot survive where those charged with enforcing the law are themselves found to be violating it. The Gambia deserves a Police Service that protects rights, upholds justice, and commands public confidence through professionalism, integrity, and fidelity to the Constitution.

### **2026 – The Year of Empowerment: Empowered Citizens. Accountable Leadership**

