



Ref: EFSCRJ/PR/007/2026

PUBLIC STATEMENT

27th August 2026

EFSCRJ Calls on Political Coalitions to Publish Their Agreements

As The Gambia moves closer to the December 2026 Presidential Election, the Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice, through its Election Watch Initiative, continues to monitor political parties, candidates and other electoral stakeholders to assess their compliance with the rule of law, democratic norms, transparency and accountability.

In this vein, EFSCRJ has noted the formation of four electoral coalitions for the 2026 Presidential Election:

1. NPP – GDC Coalition, agreement signed on 29 July 2026 at State House, Banjul;
2. UMC – NUP Coalition, agreement signed on 4 August 2026 at Paradise Suites Hotel;
3. Gambia First Coalition, agreement signed on 14 August 2026 at Paradise Suites Hotel; and
4. Coalition 2026, agreement signed on 20 August 2026 at Paradise Suites Hotel.

EFSCRJ notes with concern that, despite the public announcement and signing of these coalition agreements, the substantive contents of the respective Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have not been made publicly available. This lack of transparency is unacceptable given that these agreements concern decisions that will directly determine the political choices available to Gambian voters in the presidential election.

Political parties are public-interest institutions established under the Constitution and the Elections Act to participate in democratic governance and seek the mandate of the Gambian people. Their decisions, particularly decisions concerning presidential candidates, political alliances, power-sharing arrangements, policy commitments, and other matters that directly affect the governance of the country, are therefore matters of legitimate public interest.

The formation of a political coalition is not merely an internal party matter. It is a decision that can fundamentally alter the political landscape and determine who citizens will be asked to support at the ballot box. Citizens have a right to know what political parties are agreeing to on their behalf and what commitments they are making to one another and, by extension, to the Gambian people.

EFSCRJ therefore calls on all four coalitions and their constituent political parties to immediately publish their signed MOUs in full, including any annexes, schedules, or supplementary agreements. Political parties should not ask citizens to vote for political arrangements whose terms they have not been allowed to see.

EFSCRJ further calls on the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Inter-Party Committee (IPC) to promote greater transparency and accountability among political parties throughout the electoral process. While political parties retain their lawful autonomy, that autonomy should not be used to justify secrecy concerning decisions that have a direct bearing on the electorate and the democratic process.

We also call on citizens, voters, the media, and civil society organisations to demand greater transparency from political parties and insist that coalition agreements be made publicly

accessible. Political parties must understand that seeking the people's mandate comes with a corresponding responsibility to inform the people.

Political alliances must serve the public interest, not merely the interests of political elites. The 2026 elections must be an exercise in informed democratic choice. Gambians cannot make informed choices about political coalitions, candidates, and competing visions for the country if the agreements underpinning those coalitions remain hidden from them. EFSCRJ therefore calls for the immediate publication of all four coalition agreements.

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

