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**EFSCRJ Calls on President Barrow to Address the Nation and Declare a National  
Energy Emergency**

The Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice expresses grave concern over the persistent electricity outages affecting the Greater Banjul Area, West Coast Region, and several other parts of The Gambia. The crisis has reached an unacceptable level, disrupting daily life, destroying livelihoods, and undermining the enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

According to NAWEC, national electricity demand has reached approximately 140 megawatts during peak hours because of prevailing high temperatures. The company has also cited constraints on electricity imports, limited local generation and a technical incident affecting a major generating unit supporting imported supply. Consequently, NAWEC has announced load shedding, mainly between 8:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.

These explanations, however, do not provide the public with the full picture. NAWEC has not disclosed its total available generation, the actual supply deficit, the amount currently imported, the identity and capacity of the affected generating unit, the condition of its other plants or a definite timetable for restoring stable electricity. It has also failed to publish a comprehensive and equitable load-shedding schedule identifying affected communities and feeders.

Citizens are paying high electricity tariffs yet are not receiving the adequate, reliable, and quality service they deserve. Families endure long, hot nights without electricity or water. Small businesses lose working hours, customers, equipment, and perishable goods. Hospitals, pharmacies, schools, and essential public services depend on uninterrupted electricity. The poorest households suffer the most because they cannot afford generators, fuel, solar systems, or inverters.

Electricity is indispensable to the enjoyment of the rights to life, health, education, water, work, security, information, and an adequate standard of living. The present crisis must therefore not be treated merely as a technical inconvenience. It is a national governance, development, and human-rights crisis.

The repeated breakdown of electricity supply also exposes serious governance deficiencies within the energy sector. Despite substantial public expenditure and development-partner investment since 2017, The Gambia remains heavily dependent on imported electricity and costly emergency arrangements. Persistent concerns regarding corruption, financial mismanagement, procurement, debt, poor maintenance, weak oversight, inadequate leadership, and the absence of a credible energy-security vision require urgent and independent scrutiny.

The current situation demonstrates a failure to anticipate seasonal demand, maintain sufficient reserve capacity and protect the country against disruptions in regional supply. High temperatures are predictable seasonal conditions therefore they cannot constitute a complete explanation for the collapse of an essential public service. A responsible energy system must forecast demand and maintain contingency arrangements capable of responding to foreseeable pressures.

In view of the scale, persistence, and consequences of the crisis, EFSCRJ calls on President Adama Barrow to urgently address the nation and disclose the true state of electricity

generation, importation, financing, and distribution. The President must explain why the country continues to experience recurrent power crises despite the enormous investments made in the energy sector and repeated assurances that reliable electricity would be secured.

EFSCRJ further calls on the President to declare a **National Energy Emergency** and establish an adequately funded, transparent and time-bound emergency response program. This should be understood as a national policy and operational response to the electricity crisis, supported by extraordinary coordination and accountability, rather than an invocation of constitutional emergency powers to restrict rights.

EFSCRJ recommends the following immediate actions:

1. **Presidential address:** The President should address the nation on the true state of the electricity sector, including available capacity, supply deficits, financial obligations, electricity imports, and the measures being taken to restore supply.
2. **Declaration of a national energy emergency:** The Government should declare electricity supply a national emergency and adopt a time-bound emergency response and recovery plan with clear responsibilities, targets, and deadlines.
3. **Full public disclosure:** NAWEC should publish its installed and operational generation capacity, the status of every generating unit, electricity obtained from each external supplier, outstanding debts, emergency procurement costs, and expected restoration dates.
4. **Equitable load-shedding schedule:** NAWEC should immediately publish and regularly update a detailed schedule showing affected communities, feeders, interruption periods, and restoration times.
5. **Protection of essential services:** Hospitals, health centres, water facilities, schools, markets, security installations, and other critical services must receive priority supply and adequate backup power.
6. **Independent energy-sector review:** The Government should commission an independent technical, financial and governance audit of NAWEC and the wider energy sector, including contracts, procurement, debt, maintenance, investments, and the causes of recurrent system failures.
7. **Consumer protection and compensation:** PURA should investigate whether NAWEC is meeting its service obligations and develop appropriate remedies for consumers who suffer excessive outages, damaged equipment, or billing irregularities.
8. **Support for vulnerable groups and businesses:** The Government should introduce temporary relief measures for low-income households and small businesses suffering severe losses because of the outages.
9. **National energy-security strategy:** The Government must present a credible plan for expanding domestic generation, renewable energy, storage capacity, and system resilience while reducing dangerous dependence on imported electricity.
10. **Regular public accountability:** NAWEC, PURA and the responsible ministry should provide weekly public briefings until stable electricity is restored.

The Government has a duty to ensure that public institutions serve citizens efficiently, transparently, and accountably. The Gambian people cannot continue paying for unreliable electricity while bearing the social and economic costs of poor governance. Citizens deserve the truth, immediate relief, and a sustainable solution.

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