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EFSCRJ Stands with Citizens Demanding Reliable Power and Accountability

The Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice notes with grave concern the growing public frustration over the persistent electricity crisis in The Gambia, which culminated in mass spontaneous protests on the night of 7 September 2026, continuing into the early hours of 8 September.

The protests, which began in Banjul, spread across the Greater Banjul Area and into major towns in the West Coast Region, including Brikama, Farato, Brufut and Kartong. They reflect the deepening frustration of citizens over prolonged power outages that are severely disrupting lives, livelihoods, and essential public services.

EFSCRJ stands with citizens in their legitimate demand for reliable, affordable, accessible, and uninterrupted electricity.

Electricity is not merely a commodity or convenience. Reliable electricity is essential to the enjoyment of numerous human rights and to the functioning of healthcare, education, businesses, water supply, food security, communication, and other essential services. Persistent power failures therefore directly undermine human dignity, livelihoods, and public safety.

The consequences are already serious. Only a week ago, EFSCRJ joined GALA in demanding an investigation into the death of Activist Ebrima Gassama at Brikama Health Centre. Gassama, an asthma patient, died while receiving oxygen when electricity was interrupted. His case highlights the potentially fatal consequences of electricity failures in health facilities.

Businesses, offices, schools, health facilities, and households continue to suffer from outages lasting entire days and, in some cases, multiple days. Water supplies are disrupted, food is spoilt, businesses lose income and essential services are brought to a standstill.

The Government of The Gambia bears the primary responsibility for ensuring reliable, affordable, accessible, and sustainable electricity. This responsibility extends beyond NAWEC to the relevant ministries, regulatory institutions, the Office of the President, and all institutions responsible for oversight and policy in the electricity sector.

As citizens express their frustration and demand utility services, EFSCRJ urges the Gambia Police Force to respect and protect citizens' constitutional right to peaceful assembly. Citizens have a legitimate right to express their grievances over issues that directly affect their lives. We call on the Inspector General of Police to ensure maximum restraint and to refrain from unnecessary or disproportionate use of force, including teargas, that could escalate tensions and provoke violence.

At the same time, EFSCRJ reminds protesters that the right to protest must be exercised peacefully and responsibly. Frustration over electricity failures does not justify violence, destruction of public or private property, hate speech, insults, or inflammatory conduct.

EFSCRJ will continue to monitor the situation and advocate for the protection of citizens' rights, democratic freedoms, efficient delivery of social services, and accountability.

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