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Samasa Building
Kerr Sering, WCR
The Gambia.

Ref: EFSCRJ/PR/012/2026 **EFSCRJ Election Watch** *3rd November 2026*

EFSCRJ Election Watch Calls for Fair and Peaceful Presidential Nominations

As nominations open today for the 5 December presidential election, the Edward Francis Small Centre for Rights and Justice calls on all electoral stakeholders to uphold the law, safeguard the peace and put the interests of the Gambian people first. Nomination determines whose names voters will find on the ballot. Every eligible candidate must have a fair opportunity to stand, and Gambians must be free to support the candidate of their choice.

To The IEC: The Independent Electoral Commission must apply the same rules to every aspirant and give each timely, practical assistance to submit their nomination papers. Every lawful opportunity must be given to candidates to be nominated, on a level playing field in which no one is treated differently or unfairly. Where the IEC identifies a deficiency, it should explain it promptly and give the aspirant every opportunity the law allows to correct it. The Commission should publish the outcome of each nomination with clear reasons for its decisions, and state the process and timeline for resolving disputes, so that candidates and voters can see how the rules were applied.

Political Parties, Candidates and Supporters: Parties, candidates and their supporters must cooperate with election officials and respect the right of their opponents to participate. We urge candidates to set the tone through their own words and conduct. Supporters must be able to accompany their candidate peacefully, and every other candidate must be able to reach the nomination venue and submit their papers without obstruction or intimidation.

The Gambia Police Force and Security Agencies: The Police and all other security agencies must act impartially, lawfully, and professionally. We call on officers to protect candidates, supporters, journalists, observers, and members of the public, regardless of political affiliation. Security arrangements must facilitate peaceful participation. Any restriction must have a lawful basis and be applied fairly.

Public and Independent Media: The media must provide accurate, fair, and balanced coverage. We urge editors and journalists to give all candidates a fair hearing, verify claims before reporting them and explain nomination decisions clearly. Voters deserve reliable and complete information about the choices before them. Public media have a particular responsibility to serve citizens across the political spectrum.

Civil Society, Observers and Citizens: Civil society organisations, election observers and citizens all have a part to play in keeping political debate open and grounded in facts. We urge fellow observers to document concerns accurately, and citizens to challenge hate speech, reject incitement and verify information before sharing it. Every Gambian should be able to question a candidate, express disagreement, or support a rival peacefully and without fear of reprisal.

The Government of The Gambia: The Government must remain neutral, respect the independence of the IEC, and provide the resources and cooperation that electoral institutions need to fulfil their responsibilities. Public funds, vehicles, personnel, and official platforms must never be used to give any contestant an electoral advantage.

To All Gambians: We have a nation to build and keep. Through elections, the people exercise their sovereign right and duty to decide who governs in their name. We owe it to one another to exercise that right responsibly and to defend our fellow citizens' freedom to choose differently. The decisions we make will shape the Republic we share.

EFSCRJ Election Watch will monitor nominations, campaigning, and polling. We wish all Gambians a peaceful, safe, free, and inclusive election in which the freely expressed will of the people prevails.

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

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