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EFSCRJ ELECTION WATCH

THE 2026 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PEACE PACT

What Every Gambian Should Know About the Commitments, Prohibitions and Accountability Mechanisms



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For Public Education

© November 2026

1. Introduction

On 16 November 2026, eight presidential candidates signed the *Peace Pact for the 2026 Presidential Election in The Gambia*, organized by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in partnership with International IDEA.

The signatories are Adama Barrow, Ousainou ANM Darboe, Isatou Touray, Ebrima Tabora Manneh, Almameh Gibba, Lamin J. Darbo, Modou Lamin Sima, and Talib Ahmed Bensouda.



The Pact contains eleven articles covering peaceful campaigning, hate speech, political violence, press freedom, disinformation, artificial intelligence, abuse of public resources, electoral integrity, election results, and dispute resolution.

EFSCRJ welcomes the agreement. However, its success will not be measured by signatures or speeches but by compliance, enforcement, and accountability. Gambians must know what the candidates have promised, what conduct is prohibited, who must monitor compliance and what happens when the agreement is violated.

REJECT HATE SPEECH AND DIVISION!

Political opponents are not enemies.
No election is worth hatred, violence, or division among communities.

Different Choices. One Gambia.

2. What Does the Peace Pact Prohibit?

The Pact establishes clear standards of conduct for presidential candidates, their parties, campaign teams, and supporters.

Hate Speech and Tribal Bigotry — Article 2
Candidates must not engage in or tolerate dehumanizing language, threats of violence, ethnic or religious stereotyping, tribal bigotry, or gender-based discriminatory rhetoric. This includes coded language and humour used to demean communities.

Political Intimidation and Violence — Articles 1 and 4
Candidates must not establish political no-go areas, obstruct opponents' campaigns, organise, or finance violent groups, carry weapons to political events, disrupt rallies, damage property, buy votes or intimidate voters.

Press Freedom and Disinformation — Article 3
Candidates must not harass or intimidate journalists, knowingly spread false electoral information, circulate deceptive AI-generated content, or use fake accounts, bots and troll networks to manipulate public debate. AI-generated campaign content must be clearly labelled.

Abuse of State Institutions and Public Resources — Article 5
Public officials must not use state resources for partisan campaigning. State-owned media and public facilities must be available to candidates on equal and transparent terms. Security agencies must not intimidate, harass, or arbitrarily arrest political opponents, journalists, or election observers.

Religious and Traditional Influence — Article 6
Candidates must not use places of worship, sermons or religious authority for partisan campaigning or claim that supporting a particular candidate is a religious duty.

Electoral Integrity — Article 7
Candidates must not make unsubstantiated fraud allegations, deliberately discredit the IEC through false information, interfere with electoral materials, or obstruct election observers.

Election Results — Article 8
Candidates must not declare victory before the IEC announces the results, present parallel tallies as official results or encourage violence and unlawful protests during the results process.

EFSCRJ Assessment: These provisions establish clear expectations for responsible political competition. No candidate or political party should claim ignorance of conduct expressly prohibited by an agreement they voluntarily signed.

A Peace Pact without compliance is a broken promise. A Peace Pact without monitoring is an empty declaration. A Peace Pact without accountability is merely a ceremony.

3. What Are the Responsibilities of Presidential Candidates?

The Pact places responsibility on candidates not only for their personal conduct but also for their political organisations and supporters.

Candidates Must:

1. **Lead by example** and conduct issue-based campaigns focused on policies, programs, and governance records.
2. **Publicly condemn hate speech** by their supporters, allies, and spokespersons, whether the statements are made in their presence or absence.
3. **Demand retractions and take disciplinary action** against members who persist in prohibited rhetoric.
4. **Correct or remove false or manipulated digital content within 24 hours** of becoming aware of it.
5. **Protect political freedoms and inclusion**, particularly the participation of women, young people, persons with disabilities and minorities.
6. **Respect the IEC and electoral laws**, protect election officials and materials, and appoint trained, peaceful polling agents.
7. **Resolve electoral disputes peacefully**, respect court decisions and refrain from premature victory declarations.
8. **Brief their party structures, campaign teams, and supporters within 72 hours of signing**, using English and national languages.

Importantly, Article 2 makes clear that **silence or applause when political allies engage in prohibited rhetoric is inconsistent with the Pact**.

Candidates therefore cannot simply distance themselves from misconduct after it occurs. They have an affirmative responsibility to prevent, condemn, and correct violations involving persons aligned with them.

ARTICLE 11 – DISSEMINATION AND DURATION

11.1. Within 72 hours of signing, we shall brief our party structures, campaign teams, spokespersons, social media managers and supporters on this Pact, in English and the national languages.

11.2. This Pact remains in force until the IEC has declared the results, any petitions have been concluded and the transition is complete. We commit to a separate Code of Conduct for the Parliamentary Elections of 10 April 2027.

4. Who Are the Moral Guarantors and What Must They Do?

Article 10 establishes a Monitoring Committee comprising:

- Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Eminent Person.
- Alhagie Foday Essa Darboe, President, The Gambia Supreme Islamic Council.
- Most Revd. Bannie Manka, President, The Gambia Christian Council.
- Fatou Jagne Senghore, Civil Society Representative.

International IDEA supports the Committee.



Jainaba Faye (Int'l IDEA) and Joseph Colley (IEC)



Moral Guarantors with the Eminent Person

The Committee is responsible for monitoring compliance, receiving complaints, seeking resolution of violations, issuing public statements where necessary and convening signatories during the campaign and after polling.

EFSCRJ Assessment: The Moral Guarantors must not become ceremonial witnesses to an agreement that is subsequently ignored. Their responsibility is to monitor conduct, respond to violations and hold every signatory to the same standards, regardless of political affiliation or status. Their independence, impartiality, vigilance, and willingness to speak publicly will be critical to the Pact's credibility.

5. How Are Violations Reported and Addressed?

Article 10 establishes a complaints and accountability mechanism.

Action	Requirement
Submission of complaint	Complaint submitted to the Monitoring Committee Secretariat with supporting evidence
Acknowledgement	Within **24 hours**
Response by the party concerned	Within **48 hours**
Initial resolution	Committee seeks quiet resolution
If unresolved	Committee issues a public statement
Follow-up	Signatories cooperate and act on recommendations in good faith

Violence and manipulated media during the final week before polling must receive urgent attention.

The Committee may also convene candidates to address concerns during the campaign and after polling.

ARTICLE 10 – MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

10.1. A Monitoring Committee of the Eminent Person and the Moral Guarantors (Supreme Islamic Council, Gambia Christian Council and a civil society representative), supported by International IDEA shall monitor adherence to this Pact.

10.2. Complaints are submitted to the Secretariat with evidence and acknowledged within 24 hours. The party concerned responds within 48 hours. The Committee seeks quiet resolution first and issues a public statement if that fails. Violence, and manipulated media in the final week before polling, are treated as urgent.

10.3. We shall cooperate with the Committee and act on its recommendations in good faith. It shall convene signatories during the campaign and after polling.

10.4. This Pact is a political and moral commitment and does not limit the law or the powers of the IEC, the security services and the courts.

EFSCRJ Assessment: These procedures provide an important accountability framework. However, the Committee should publicly explain how complaints can be submitted, how decisions are reached and how compliance with its recommendations will be monitored. Quiet resolution must not become a means of concealing serious violations from public scrutiny.

6. How Must Electoral Disputes Be Resolved?

The Pact requires candidates to use lawful and peaceful mechanisms to address electoral disagreements.

Concerns about the IEC, voter registration and electoral procedures should be raised through written complaints, IEC stakeholder engagements, the Inter-Party Committee, the Monitoring Committee, or the courts.

Complaints involving journalists should be directed to appropriate institutions rather than addressed through threats or intimidation.

Political parties may compile their own polling-station results but must not present them as official results or declare victory before the IEC.

Candidates undertake to respect judicial decisions. Those declared losers commit to conceding and urging supporters to accept the outcome, while the winner commits to governing for all Gambians and promoting national reconciliation.

EFSCRJ stresses that peaceful elections do not require abandoning legitimate electoral complaints. Candidates retain the right to challenge irregularities through lawful procedures, including election petitions before the courts.

7. What Sanctions Does the Peace Pact Provide?

This is one of the most important aspects of the agreement.

The Pact provides for several corrective and accountability measures:

- **Public condemnation and retraction** of prohibited statements by political allies.
- **Internal disciplinary or corrective action** against persistent offenders.
- **Correction or removal of false or manipulated content** within 24 hours of awareness.
- **Intervention and recommendations** by the Monitoring Committee.
- **Public statements** where quiet resolution fails.

However, the Pact does not itself establish financial fines, imprisonment, automatic suspension of campaigns or candidate disqualification.

Article 10.4 describes the Pact as a **political and moral commitment** and preserves the existing legal powers of the IEC, security services, and courts. This means that conduct violating electoral or criminal laws may still attract sanctions under those laws, but such penalties are not created by the Pact itself.

EFSCRJ Assessment: The Enforcement Gap
The Pact's principal weakness is its limited enforcement framework. Its effectiveness depends heavily on voluntary compliance, internal party discipline, moral pressure, and public accountability.

The Monitoring Committee cannot substitute for the IEC, police, or courts. Where violations also constitute breaches of law, the responsible institutions must act within their statutory mandates.

ARTICLE 8 – RESULTS AND DISPUTES

8.1. Declaration of results. We recognise that, under the law, the IEC is the only body mandated to declare the results of the Presidential Election. We shall accept the results as announced by the Chairperson of the IEC.

8.2. Parallel tallies. We recognise the right of parties to observe counting through their agents and to compile, publicise their own tallies from polling station result sheets. No candidate, party, coalition or supporter shall announce such tallies as results, declare victory, or claim to have won before the IEC has declared the results.

8.3. Restraint. We shall restrain our supporters from violence, provocative celebrations or unlawful protests during and after polling, and shall call for calm throughout the counting, collation and declaration of results.

8.4. Disputes. We shall resort only to lawful and peaceful means, including the IEC's complaints procedures and the courts, to resolve electoral disputes, and shall respect the decisions of the courts.

8.5. Peaceful transition. Candidates who are declared losers shall concede and urge their supporters to accept the outcome. The winner shall govern for all Gambians and shall pursue national reconciliation and unity.

8. What Should Citizens and Civil Society Monitor?

The Peace Pact belongs in the public domain because its commitments affect the rights and interests of every Gambian.

EFSCRJ urges citizens, journalists, election observers, and civil society organisations to monitor the following:

1. Are candidates and their supporters engaging in hate speech, tribalism, xenophobia, or intimidation?
2. Do candidates publicly condemn and correct misconduct by their political allies?
3. Are political parties disciplining persistent offenders?
4. Are false information and manipulated digital materials being promptly corrected or removed?
5. Are public resources, state-owned media and security institutions being used impartially?
6. Are all candidates allowed to campaign freely throughout the country?
7. Are religious and traditional leaders maintaining political neutrality?
8. Are journalists and election observers operating without harassment?
9. Are electoral complaints being addressed promptly and impartially?
10. Are the Moral Guarantors publicly and consistently monitoring compliance?

These questions should guide independent monitoring and public reporting throughout the election and post-election periods.



9. EFSCRJ's Key Recommendations

To ensure the Pact becomes an effective instrument for electoral peace and accountability, EFSCRJ calls for the following actions:

First, the IEC and International IDEA must ensure wide public dissemination of the signed Pact, including accessible summaries and translations into national languages.

Second, the Monitoring Committee must immediately operationalize its complaints mechanism, publish contact details and procedures, and establish transparent arrangements for receiving, assessing, and resolving complaints.

Third, the Moral Guarantors must act independently and without fear or favour. They should monitor compliance proactively, publicly address serious violations and regularly inform citizens about the implementation of the Pact.

Fourth, all presidential candidates must demonstrate compliance through action. They should brief their supporters, condemn prohibited rhetoric, discipline offenders, and take responsibility for their official and affiliated communication platforms.

Fifth, the IEC, police and other competent institutions must enforce applicable laws impartially. The Peace Pact must complement, not replace, legal accountability.

Sixth, civil society and the media must independently monitor compliance, document violations, verify allegations and educate citizens about the obligations undertaken by the candidates.

10. Conclusion: The Real Test Begins Now

The 2026 Presidential Election Peace Pact provides a useful framework for peaceful political competition, responsible campaigning, electoral integrity, and lawful dispute resolution. Its provisions clearly identify prohibited conduct, establish responsibilities for candidates, and create a mechanism for monitoring and addressing violations.

However, signing an agreement is one thing; honouring and enforcing it is another. The responsibility for compliance rests primarily with the presidential candidates and their political organisations. The responsibility for monitoring rests with the Moral Guarantors, supported by the IEC, International IDEA, and other stakeholders within their respective roles.

The real test will come when candidates or their supporters violate the commitments they have made. Will the candidates condemn misconduct? Will they discipline offenders? Will the Moral Guarantors intervene? Will the responsible institutions enforce the law? These are the questions that will determine whether the Peace Pact makes a meaningful contribution to peaceful, free, fair, and credible elections.

EFSCRJ Election Watch will continue to monitor the conduct of all signatories and electoral stakeholders without fear or favour.

**DON'T JUST SIGN FOR PEACE. STAND FOR PEACE. ACT FOR PEACE.
BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR PEACE!**

SIGNED BY THE CANDIDATES – 16 NOVEMBER 2026

Having read, understood and freely agreed to the contents of this Code of Conduct, we, the Candidates, sign below on this 16th day of November 2026:

H.E. Adama Barrow
National People's Party (NPP)

H.E. A.N.M. Ousainu Darboe
United Democratic Party (UDP)

H.E. Dr. Isatou Touray
Independent

Mr. Ebrima Tabora Manneh
People's Alliance Party (PAP)

Mr. Almameh Gibba
Independent

Dr. Lamin J. Darbo
Independent

Mr. Modou Lamin Sima
Alliance of Progressive Citizens (APC)

Mr. Talib Ahmed Bensouda
United for Nation, Integrity, Transformation and Equality (UNITE)

WITNESSED BY:

H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas
Eminent Person

Mr. Joseph Colley
Chairman, IEC

Imam Alhaji Essa Darboe
President, Gambia Supreme Islamic Council

Most Revd. Bishop Bannie E.F. Manga
Chairperson, Gambia Christian Council

Ms. Fatou Jagne Senghore
Senior Representative of Civil Society

Ms. Jainaba Faye
International IDEA - Gambia

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Source: Peace Pact for the 2026 Presidential Election in The Gambia, signed 16 November 2026, Articles 1–11. This primer presents EFSCRJ's independent analysis for public education and electoral accountability. It should be read alongside the full signed agreement and applicable Gambian laws.

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