

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 49/002/2008

UA 67/08

Intimidation/ fear of enforced disappearance

10 March 2008

SENEGAL/GAMBIA

Yahya Danfa (m)

Yahya Danfa, a Gambian journalist living in Senegal, is at risk of enforced disappearance at the hands of Gambian security agents who are among a delegation attending an international meeting in the Senegalese capital, Dakar. He has been threatened and intimidated since leaving The Gambia.

On two occasions on 10 March, Yahya Danfa's home in Dakar was visited by plain-clothed National Intelligence Agency (NIA) agents. The agents did not find Yahya Danfa, but questioned his neighbours about his whereabouts. State Security agents, including NIA personnel, are attending the summit of the leaders of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, (OIC), a conference involving 57 Islamic states, being held in Dakar on 13 – 14 March.

Amnesty International fears that Yahya Danfa risks being abducted by NIA agents and forcibly returned to The Gambia, where he could be indefinitely detained without charge, tortured or killed.

Yahya Danfa, a former journalist with the independent *Foroyaa* Newspaper, has been harassed since being arrested along side Amnesty International delegates during a research mission on 6 October 2007. He was released without charge on 12 October 2007 but repeated visits to his home and harassment of his family members by agents of the Gambian NIA forced him to flee the country soon after. He has received threatening telephone calls since his arrival in Senegal. His family are in hiding in The Gambia.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International delegates Tania Bernath and Ayodele Ameen, *Foroyaa* Newspaper journalist Yahya Danfa, and their driver Lamin Barrow were arrested in the eastern town of Basse on 6 October 2007 whilst visiting detention centres throughout The Gambia. The four were accused of being 'spies'. After 48 hours in detention both Amnesty International delegates and Yahya Danfa were released on bail but told to remain in the capital, Banjul. All three were unconditionally released without charge on 12 October 2007.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

To the Senegalese authorities:

- urging them to guarantee Yahya Danfa's safety and take all necessary steps to ensure he is not kidnapped whilst he is in Senegal.

To the Gambian authorities:

- urging the authorities not to attempt to capture Yahya Danfa whilst in Dakar;
- expressing concern that Yahya Danfa was harassed and forced to flee The Gambia despite no charges being brought against him;
- expressing concern that Yahya Danfa's family has been harassed and forced into hiding following his arrest;
- urging them to conduct a full, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against and harassment of Yahya Danfa, including the two visits by NIA personnel to his house in Dakar; and to bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:
Senegalese authorities

Senegalese Minister of Interior

Mr Ousmane Ngom
Pl. Washington
Bd de la Republique
BP 4002
Dakar
Senegal

Fax: +221 338210542

Salutation: Dear Minister

Gambian authorities

President and Minister of Defence

Captain (retd.) Alhaji Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh
Office of the President
State House, Banjul
Republic of the Gambia

Fax: +220 4227 034

Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General and Secretary of State for Justice

Mrs Marie Saine Firdaus
Department of State for Justice
Marina Parade
Banjul
Republic of the Gambia

Fax: +220 4225 352

Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

Secretary of State for the Interior

Mr Ousman Sonko
Office of the President
State House
Banjul
Republic of the Gambia

Fax: +220 4223 718

Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Gambia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 March 2008.