

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Gambia: Outrageous statements by President Yahya Jammeh

Amnesty International deplores the statements made by President Yahya Jammeh on Monday 21 September on national television, in which he reportedly stated that he would kill anyone who wants to destabilize the country.

President Yahya Jammeh also specifically threatened human rights defenders, and those working with them, by emphasizing that their security and personal safety would not be guaranteed by the government of Gambia.

Amnesty International calls on President Yahya Jammeh to immediately retract these statements made on Monday 21 September and to affirm The Gambia government's commitment to respect, protect and promote human rights in line with its constitution and obligations under international law.

Amnesty International also calls on the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, and the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Mohammed Ibn Chambas, to condemn the statements made by President Yahya Jammeh in the strongest possible terms.

Background:

In November 2008 Amnesty International released the report *Gambia: Fear Rules* (AFR 27/003/2008). The report illustrates how human rights violations in Gambia are perpetrated by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), army and police against real and perceived opponents of the government on a routine basis. It demonstrates that once people are in the custody of the government, they are susceptible to a whole range of human rights violations including unlawful detention, torture while in detention, unfair trials, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial executions. On 22 July 2009, Amnesty International, along with civil society groups across Africa, organized a day of action to protest continuing human rights violations in The Gambia, including repression of the media.

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