

Mr Yankoba Badjie

Director General of the
National Intelligence Agency
The Gambia

Dakar, 2 November 2014

Re: Concerns about Abdoulie John's case

Dear Mr Badjie,

We write to you on behalf of 26 organizations on the International Day to End Impunity to raise concerns about the case of Abdoulie John.

We call on you to return Abdoulie John's passport and to allow him travel safely in the Gambia.

Impunity takes many forms. Thorough investigations and respect for due process and rule of law are essential for the public to be able to exercise their rights to free expression. Impunity for crimes committed against civil society, journalists and human rights defenders has a chilling effect unduly limiting the fundamental right of free expression.

The case of Abdoulie John demonstrates a culture of impunity which must be tackled. His case is emblematic of the persecution of journalists and human rights defenders who speak out in the Gambia. Like John, many journalists in the past have tried to speak out or be independent and critical.

However many of them have fled the country because of persecution. Those who choose to stay in the country practice self-censorship and avoid covering critical issues for their own safety. This process of intimidation has been used over the past two decades and the persecution of journalists, political opponents, human rights defenders and citizens has continued with total impunity.

In Abdoulie John's case and in practically all other cases of violations involving journalists and human rights defenders, no investigation has been carried out and the perpetrators have not been brought to justice.

On the inaugural International Day to End Impunity, we call on you to take a positive step in promoting fundamental rights in the Gambia by returning Abdoulie John's passport and allowing him travel safely in the Gambia.

Yours sincerely,

ARTICLE 19 West Africa

Cote d'Ivoire

Coalition Ivoirienne pour la Cour Pénale Internationale
Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne (CSCI)
Mouvement Ivoirien des Droits Humains (MIDH)
Observatoire Ivoirien des droits de l'homme (OIDH)
ONG SOS Exclusion
Réseau des femmes pour les droits humains (RFDH)
Réseau Equitas Côte d'Ivoire

Gambie

Coalition for Change the Gambia (CCG)
Democratic Union of Gambian Activists (DUGA)

Libéria

Press Union of Liberia

Nigéria

Institute for Media and Society (IMS)
International Press Centre (IPC)
Media Rights Agenda (MRA)

Sénégal

Amnesty Sénégal
Conseil des diffuseurs et éditeurs de presse du Sénégal (CDEPS)
CICODEV Afrique
Ligue Sénégalaise des Droits de l'Homme (LSDH)
Section Sénégalaise de la Société Internationale pour les Droits de l'Homme
Syndicat des Professionnels de l'Information et de la Communication du Sénégal
Y'en à Marre

Régional/International

Association des Barreaux de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (ABAO)
International Press Institute (IPI)
Institut Panos Afrique de l'Ouest
Forum des Editeurs Africains (TAEF)
Media Foundation for West Africa