



THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC)

National Secretariat, P. O. Box 2858, Kotu (opp. DSTV), The Gambia
Tel: (220) 446 1713 / 446 1717

Email: contact@gm-nhrc.org; Website: www.gm-nhrc.org

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9th May 2026

Open Letter to the IGP & The Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Attorney General's Chambers
Marina Parade
Banjul

The Inspector General of Police
The Gambia Police Force
Police Headquarters
Banjul

**RE: NHRC FACT-FINDING MISSION ON THE ARREST, DETENTION AND CONDITIONS OF
DETENTION OF MEMBERS OF GALA AND THE NEED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH DUE
PROCESS GUARANTEES**

Dear Honourable Minister of Justice
Dear Inspector General of Police,

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) wishes to bring to your attention concerns arising from a fact-finding and monitoring mission conducted by NHRC Investigators on 9 May 2026 at Kairaba Police Station and Kotu Police Station following the arrest and detention of some members of Gambians Against Looted Assets (GALA) who were arrested at the Youth Monument at WestField while commemorating their organisation's first anniversary.

The monitoring mission was undertaken pursuant to the mandate of the NHRC to monitor, investigate, and report on the promotion and protection of human rights in The Gambia, including the rights of persons deprived of their liberty.

During the visits, NHRC Investigators interviewed the detainees, observed detention conditions, and engaged officers on duty at both Police Stations. The findings raise serious concerns regarding compliance with constitutional safeguards and internationally accepted human rights standards relating to arrest, detention, bail, and the treatment of detainees.

The Commission notes with grave concern allegations and observations which indicated that several detainees were arrested without being promptly informed of the reasons for their arrest, contrary to the guarantees provided under Section 19 of the Gambia Constitution 1997. It was further alleged that some detainees were denied timely access to legal counsel, communication with family members, and information relating to bail procedures.

The detainees also informed the Commission's investigators that their mobile phones were confiscated and that they were initially prevented from contacting their lawyers and relatives.

If true, such restrictions would undermine fundamental due process guarantees and the right to legal representation.

Additionally, the NHRC observed detention conditions in the aforementioned Stations that fall below acceptable human rights standards, including overcrowding, poor ventilation, lack of lighting, inadequate sanitation facilities, insufficient bedding, unhygienic conditions, presence of bedbugs and roaches and the absence of gender-sensitive detention arrangements for female detainees. Of particular concern are allegations of solitary confinement being imposed on one detainee without explanation or clear justification. These conditions are contrary to the requirements of dignified and humane treatment of detainees.

The Commission further observed uncertainty on the part of the Police Officers regarding the facilitation of Police bail despite the offences reportedly being bailable in nature. The prolonged detention of certain detainees without clear justification raises concerns regarding compliance with constitutional safeguards relating to liberty and pre-trial detention.

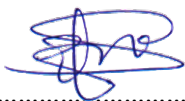
While recognising the duty of the Gambia Police Force to maintain public order and enforce the law, the NHRC reminds the Police that all law enforcement operations must be conducted in strict compliance with the Constitution, domestic law, due process, the rule of law, and The Gambia's regional and international human rights obligations.

In light of the foregoing, the NHRC calls on the Office of the Inspector General of Police to:

1. Ensure that all arrests are conducted in accordance with constitutional and legal safeguards, including promptly informing persons of the reasons for their arrest;
2. Guarantee the detainees immediate access to legal counsel, family members, and communication facilities;
3. Ensure that police bail is considered and facilitated in accordance with the law;
4. Restrict the use of solitary confinement to exceptional circumstances and ensure full compliance with legal and human rights standards.
5. Take immediate measures to improve detention conditions at Kairaba and Kotu Police Stations, particularly with regard to lighting, ventilation, sanitation, bedding, hygiene, and gender-sensitive detention arrangements;
6. Ensure that all officers are reminded of their obligations and held accountable under the Constitution and applicable human rights standards regarding arrest, detention, and treatment of persons in custody.

The NHRC remains committed to constructive engagement and cooperation with the Gambia Police Force in strengthening respect for human rights and the rule of law in law enforcement practices.

The Commission will continue to monitor the situation closely and engage relevant authorities where necessary.



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Chairperson
National Human Rights Commission
The Gambia