



## **THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC) STATEMENT ON THE ONGOING ELECTRICITY CRISIS AND CITIZEN PROTESTS**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is monitoring with grave concern the ongoing electricity shortages affecting many parts of the country and the resultant rising public frustration that has led to sporadic citizen protests in Banjul, Kanifing Municipality and West Coast Region, resulting in the arrest and detention of protesters, destruction of public and private property by protesters and the mobilisation of security forces, including a joint task force comprising The Gambia Police Force, The Gambia Armed Forces and other security forces, in response to the public protests. During its monitoring between 7 and 9 September 2026, the NHRC confirmed the arrest and detention of 20 protesters, including 4 minors, across 3 Police Stations in West Coast Region and Kanifing Municipality.

While the NHRC acknowledges the efforts of the Government in addressing the electricity crisis, access to reliable energy is inextricably linked to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, including the right to health, education, economic livelihood, adequate standard of living, and the dignity of human beings. The prolonged power outage continues to cause economic hardship, disrupt essential medical services in health facilities, and negatively impact the daily lives of people.

Similarly, while the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia and other ratified regional and international human rights instruments guarantee the rights to assembly and expression, NHRC wishes to urge protesters to exercise these rights within the confines of the law and with regard to the human rights of other people.

Reports of vandalism, attacks on law enforcers, pedestrians and road users, and public nuisance during late hours of the night allegedly by protesters are a cause for concern and a risk to the peace and security of The Gambia. Similarly, the NHRC notes with concern the heavy deployment of security personnel in response to the nightly protest and reminds the relevant authorities to ensure measures undertaken to uphold law and order align with the obligations of the State and do not lead to the violation of human rights.

As a statutory body mandated to promote and protect human rights in The Gambia, the NHRC issues the following appeals and recommendations and urges that they are given the utmost consideration:

- The Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mines, the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC), and the Executive to treat this crisis with utmost urgency and communicate a transparent, immediate and long-term sustainable solution to restore sufficient power supply.
- The Gambia Police Force **to exercise maximum restraint**, facilitate the peaceful exercise of the rights to assembly and expression, respect the human rights of the people and strictly adhere to international human rights standards on the use of force.
- **The protesters** exercise their rights responsibly and **peacefully, and within the confines of the law**. The destruction of public or private property and violence undermines the legitimacy of public grievances and infringes upon the rights of others.

Whilst it continues to monitor the situation, the NHRC calls on all stakeholders to undertake constructive engagements to resolve this crisis, ensure accountability, and preserve the peace and democratic stability of our nation.

**Signed**

**The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), The Gambia**