



## PRESS STATEMENT

21 DECEMBER 2022

### **STATEMENT ON ALLEGED FOILED COUP PLOT BY SOME SOLDIERS OF THE GAMBIA ARMED FORCES (GAF)**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) condemns in the strongest possible terms the reported alleged coup attempt by some soldiers of The Gambia Armed Forces (GAF). Two press releases issued by the Government's spokesperson on Wednesday 21 December 2022 confirmed the alleged foiled coup attempt and the arrest of some of the personnel implicated in the plot through a 'swift military operation' conducted on Tuesday, 20 December 2022. The Statement further confirmed the arrest of four (4) personnel and the pursuit of three (3) others who are at large.

We wish to state that it is illegal under the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia for anyone or group of persons to overthrow or attempt to overthrow through unlawful means a democratically elected Government. Members of the security forces in particular must understand that their main role is to protect lives and property, ensure observance of the law, maintain peace and security, defend the 1997 Constitution, and safeguard the territorial integrity of The Gambia, and certainly not to subvert the will of the people or usurp power unconstitutionally. The way and manner in which a democratically elected Government is to be changed are clearly stipulated in the Constitution.

While we commend the authorities in the way this matter is being handled thus far, we wish to encourage and remind the Government and The Gambia Armed Forces of their duty to observe, respect and protect the fundamental rights of the suspects being arrested in this alleged coup plot as guaranteed under Chapter 4 of the 1997 Constitution, particularly section 24; Articles 7, 9, 10

and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and Articles 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

While we continue to monitor the arrest and detention of the suspects and the investigations into this matter, the general public and our security personnel are encouraged to desist from conducts and utterances that will undermine peace and security and the existing framework on constitutional governance in The Gambia. In this vein, we encourage the Government to expedite the Security Sector Reform agenda which was commenced as part of the core pillars of The Gambia's transitional justice framework.

It is only through our collective resolve for rule of law that the ideals of 'Never Again' can find much meaning; and individual observance and respect for constitutional procedures and processes that we can have a society anchored on good governance, democratic tenets and values, and due process.



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Emmanuel Daniel Joof  
Chairperson  
National Human Rights Commission