



*President Barrow
at 2022 SONA*

2022 SONA: Climate Change Claim Fact Check

Claim: During President Barrow's 2022 State of the Nation Address in Parliament, delivered in the presence of the representatives of the international community, Ministers, Parliamentarians and others he claimed that "the international community recognises The Gambia as the only country on track to achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal of 1.5°C by 2050".

FactCheck: Our reporter managed to get hold of The Gambia's "Third National Communication (TNC) --- under the UNFCCC" published in July 2020. The report notes that "The Gambia ratified the UNFCCC in 1994 and became obligated to submit national communications as per [the] requirement of the UNFCCC". Most importantly the report notes that "relative to the year 2000, annual mean temperatures in The Gambia are estimated to increase by 1.7°C to 2.1°C in 2050, and by 3.1°C to 3.9°C in 2100". This indicates that The Gambia is actually not on track to meet its goal to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2050.

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Speaker Rules: 5th Legislature's Unfinished Bills May be Reintroduced

The Speaker of the Gambia's Sixth Legislature has ruled that unfinished Bills of the Fifth Legislature may be reintroduced by the persons in charge and continue from their previous stage in Parliament. Hon Speaker Fabbakary Tombong Jatta made this ruling on 12th September 2022 after a point of Order was raised by the Deputy Majority Leader and member for Old Yundum Hon Abdoulie Ceesay.

Making reference to Standing Order 18 and 32 Hon Ceesay noted that "the Assembly is confronted with a procedural issue wherein the Standing Orders are silent on it". Speaking from a prepared statement Hon Ceesay explained that "we are aware that there were several Bills introduced by the Fifth Legislature. However, some of these bills were unable to complete legislative stages before the dissolution of the said Legislature on the 13th April, 2022. This Assembly (the 6th Legislature) is now confronted with a longstanding parliamentary convention that one parliament cannot bind its successor, especially on Bills".

Stakeholders Host Eventful Three-Day TRRC Workshop

Civil Society Organisations lead by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Women in Leadership and Liberation (WiLL) held a three-day engagement with Parliamentarians focusing on the Report and Recommendations of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC). The stakeholder engagement which started on Friday 16th September 2022 saw statements from the Ministry of Justice, the NHRC Chairperson, Hon Deputy

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2022 SONA Debate Q&A

Parliamentarians of the Sixth Legislature held a debate on President Adama Barrow's 2022 State of the Nation Address asking questions which were responded to by Ministers.

Tanbi Wetlands

Member for Jeshwang, Hon. Sheriff Sarr, asked for clarity on measures taken by the Environment Ministry to protect the Tanbi Wetlands which he says the Gambia is "losing these wetlands, due to cutting down of

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2022 SONA: Climate Change Claim Fact Check

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To verify our findings our reporter made reference to the Climate Action Tracker (CAT), a collaborative independent scientific analysis tool “that tracks government climate action and measures it against the globally agreed Paris Agreement” target to limit temperature rise below 2°C with the ambition of limiting it further to 1.5°C”. The CAT is pioneered by Climate Analytics and NewClimate Institute and “has been providing this independent analysis to policymakers since 2009”. According to the CAT Climate Target Update Tracker published on 9th November 2021 “The Gambia submitted its Second NDC in September 2021”. Most importantly the update indicates that The Gambia’s status changed from “1.5°C Paris Agreement compatible” to “Almost sufficient”.

A publication issued by Forbes in 2021 under the headline “the only country known to be on course to achieve 1.5°C climate target gets off track,” details how The Gambia is no longer “1.5°C Paris Agreement Compatible”. The report highlights The Gambia as “the only country whose plans to tackle climate change were deemed compatible with the goals set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement,” however, it “has lost that status”.

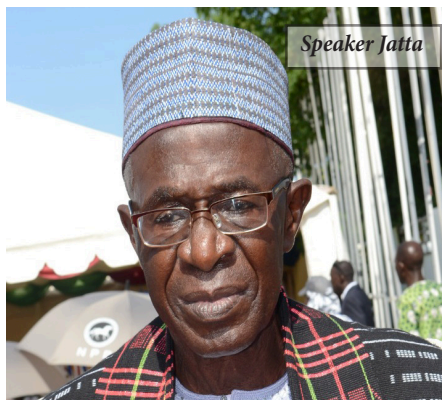
The Forbes report notes that after The Gambia submitted its NDC in September 2021, CAT downgraded The Gambia from “1.5°C Paris Agreement Compatible” to “Almost Sufficient,” a status currently held by eight other countries.

Verdict: This indicates that the President’s claims are False. The Gambia is currently not the only country categorised as “1.5°C Paris Agreement Compatible”. Since September 2021 when The Gambia submitted its NDC its category has been downgraded to “Almost Sufficient” joining a list of eight other countries namely; Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Norway and the United Kingdom.

Therefore, the President’s claims that The Gambia is the “only country on track to achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal of 1.5°C by 2050” is FALSE.

Verdict: False Claim

Speaker Rules: Fifth Legislature’s Unfinished Bills May be Reintroduced



Speaker Jatta

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In an attempt to bring clarity on the way forward with regards to the unfinished Bills of the Fifth Legislature Hon Ceasay invited the “Hon Speaker to invoke [his] discretionary powers under standing Order 8” to advise how the Sixth Legislature should proceed with unfinished Bills of the Fifth Legislature.

Ruling on Unfinished Bills

In response to the point of Order raised by the Deputy Majority Leader, the Speaker made a ruling which he read from a prepared speech. Speaker Fabakary Tombong Jatta during his ruling took note of “the existence of the parliamentary convention” which he declared should “be adapted to suit our local parliamentary context as follows:”

“a. That the National Assembly adhere to the longstanding parliamentary convention to the extent possible in our local context;

“b. That all incomplete or unfinished government Bills or other businesses of the Fifth Legislature may be reinstated or reintroduced in this successor Assembly (the Sixth Legislature) subject to a motion by the person-in-charge;

“c. That, bearing in mind the convention, the respective persons-in-charge of the unfinished Bills or business must table a motion, with notice, before the National Assembly on each of the Bills or businesses requesting for a carry-over;

“d. That a Bill or business agreed to be carried over would be reinstated or reintroduced in the same form in the next ordinary session, at the same parliamentary stage it was prior to the dissolution of the immediately preceding National Assembly;

“e. That the timing of reinstatement or reintroduction of a Bill or business carried over to a successor National Assembly be decided by the

Assembly Business Committee in consultation with the person-in-charge;

“f. That the Standing Orders Committee consider reviewing the Standing Orders on the matter with a view to proposing an amendment to expressly codify this convention before the Seventh Legislature to establish a special procedure for carrying over legislation and other businesses from a dissolved National Assembly bearing in mind this ruling;

“Finally, that the Office of the Clerk immediately notify all the affected persons or bodies regarding this ruling.”

It can be recalled that the first edition of the Gambia’s Parliamentary Newsletter highlights that the Gambia’s Fifth Legislature had approximately 11 unfinished Bills by the end of their term.

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the mangroves by people for construction”.

During President Barrow’s speech he revealed that the government implemented a US\$36 Million adaptation and resilience building project over the past five years.

“Notwithstanding this, The Gambia is vulnerable to the negative impact of Climate Change, as shown by the frequency of windstorms and floods. To mitigate this, the Government developed relevant policy documents and implemented adaptation and resilience building projects amounting to \$36million in the past five years”.

Distribution of Tractors

Member for Foni Kansala, Hon. Alimameh Gibba, questioned the Ministry of Agriculture’s distribution of tractors, adding that his constituency has not benefited from them.

Agriculture Minister, Hon Demba Sabally, explained that the tractors were evenly distributed country-wide, and Foni Is not an exception, stating that there is tractor in Somita and Block villages of Foni.

“So, the Honorable Member for Foni be rest assured that tractors were distributed evenly and in the entire country and definitely Foni was not discriminated,” he said.

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Stakeholders Host Eventful Three-Day TRRC Workshop



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Speaker and Aisha Jammeh on behalf of the Victims on the opening. Numerous Civil Society actors delivered presentations on the various themes of the TRRC including Priscilla Yagu of the Women's Association for Victims' Empowerment (WAVE), Gaye Sowe of Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) and the NHRC Vice Chairperson to name a few. Victims also made presentations during the engagement on the need for Government to urgently implement the TRRC Recommendations. Speaking to Lawmakers and CSO Actors, the Attorney General at the MoJ, Lawyer Hussein Thomasi revealed that the Government allocated D150 million to the Victims in the 2022 Budget as Reparations. Lawyer Thomasi added that it's the "intention of the Government is to have these funds released before December 2022". Lawyer Thomasi also highlighted that "whilst we note that the needs of the victims remain ever present and urgent, the Ministry is working with victims to explore an interim mechanism for administering reparations pending the enactment of a victims Compensation Bill and the Operationalisation of the Reparations Body". The TRRC is an emotional subject for most persons affected. Parliament still has members who are against the TRRC given the fact that it calls for prosecution of former President Yahya Jammeh and others from the previous regime. For most parts the engagement the discussions were cordial, vibrant and engaging. However, there were some altercations that brought the meeting to a halt in about three occasions.

In one incident, Hon Yahya Menteng Sanyang attempted to switch of the microphone of Hon Almami Gibba resulting in a disagreement

between them. Another altercation occurred between a victim and a National Assembly member. While in another instance Hon Gibbi Mballo was adamant that comments made against Hon Seedy S K Njie must be withdrawn by the widow of the late Baba Jobe.

Hon Seedy SK Njie: "We Empathise with the Victims"

Apologies were made by some of the individuals involved in the altercations and Hon Seedy SK Njie took control of the session to bring things to a calm and reiterate the Government's position on the TRRC. Hon Seedy SK Njie highlighted that the National Assembly is "committed to the dictates of the Constitution and other Laws of the Gambia". Hon Njie added that "as members of the National Assembly when we are in session, we are expected to do so cognisant of the standing orders and the Constitution of the Gambia". Reminding all stakeholders of the purpose of the engagement Hon Njie highlighted that "the objectives of this workshop is to enlighten members of the National Assembly on the TRRC Recommendations and way forward. It affects largely or in fact only the victims. The reason why the National Assembly accepted this conclave here of the National Assembly members, the victims and the National Human Rights Commission is not confrontational. It's born out of the belief that together we can forge ahead. I call on everybody who is within the premise of the National Assembly to respect decorum. To respect the standing orders of the National Assembly. To respect people's fundamental rights". "We sympathise with the Victim Center and Victims. That is the hard fact. And then we want to see that the issues of victims as addressed and accepted by the Government in the TRRC and the White Paper is addressed," noted Hon Seedy SK

Njie.

Speaking at the closing of the three-day session Hon Suwaibou Touray noted that "with this workshop it became clear on what is Gender Based Violence". He thanked all the speakers who made presentations "not only on the TRRC but also on the recommendations especially on the implementation which we know money is key. A lot of responsibility lies on the National Assembly to ensure that money is available for reparations to victims". He also thanked the victims for their courage in sharing their experience and their trauma.

Hon Touray enthused that Parliament's "Human Rights Committee shall be very proactive with the Bills and motions that come before us to ensure the process is not derailed or slowed down because of the National Assembly". He reminded the audience that since the motion passed by the Speaker on Bills to be reintroduced all that was left was for the Bills to be reintroduced in Parliament and progress from their previous stage.

September 2022 Overview

The month of September started with an intake of interns from the University of the Gambia attached to various departments and Parliamentarians at the National Assembly and saw Parliamentary Committees conclude their tour of the Country. The 3rd Ordinary Session of the 2022 Legislative Year started in mid September with the 2022 State of the Nation Address by President Adama Barrow and featured debates and questions by Parliamentarians answered by Cabinet Ministers. September saw a very interactive engagement between Parliamentarians and Victims of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission. The Report by Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance and Public Accounts resulted in a resolution from Parliament that all outstanding Imprest must be retired before 31st October 2022. The Speaker also ruled that all Bills of the Fifth Legislature may be reintroduced. The second reading of the Animal Health Bill 2020 and the Gambia Public Buildings and Facilities Authority Bill 2022 were both held in late September.

You Want to Observe the Speaker?



On 12th September 2022 was the opening sitting of the Third Session of the Legislative year 2022 for the Sixth Legislature. During the sitting, some heated exchanges took place between the Speaker of the House Hon Fabakary Tombong Jatta and two United Democratic Party Parliamentarians, Hon Yahya Menteng Sanyang and Hon Sulayman Saho, after the latter rose to challenge the Speaker's ruling to allow all unfinished Bills to be reinstated by all persons in charge. This resulted in two terse exchanges between the Speaker some members.

It all started when Hon Sulayman Saho of Central Badibu rose to address the Speaker on his previous ruling. Hon Saho argued: "Hon Speaker with your permission. The ruling that you made on the motion read by Old Yundum". At which point he was being interrupted. "Wait, Point of Order 52 Notice of Motion. We are not clear. Can you allow me to land please?" he insisted.

Hon Saho proceeded to argue that "though you did a ruling on the motion moved by the Hon member for Old Yundum. We want to ask [for] you the notice of motion and the motion was not seconded and you made a ruling on it. The one that he read. He said it's a motion. No, what was it then? But Point of Order".

According to the speech read by the Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee of the National Assembly Hon Abdoulie Ceesay of Old Yundum (NPP) he rose "on a point of order under Standing Order 18 and 32". Points of Order are not the same as Motions which require a seconder and a vote in favour to pass. In this particular instance, the Speaker made a ruling on a Point of Order raised that the Standing Orders and the Constitution do not give procedural direction on what happens to unfinished Bills of a previous parliament.

Hon Saho continued to argue that "we don't have any procedural issue now and there is no bill that was submitted to this Parliament in the Fifth

Legislature that is before us TODAY that will warrant him to come up with that motion or that recommendation that you ruled on".

In his view even though the "standing order clearly mentions it with a procedural issue" however he questioned "but do we have any Bill before us that warrants us with that proceeding? Today do we have any Bill here? No no!" he exclaimed.

Minority Leader: Should Unfinished Reports of the Fifth Legislature Be Reinstated?

At this stage the Speaker took control of the proceedings urging the Hon member for Central Badibu "you can now take your seat. You've made your point". Speaker Jatta proceeded to give the Minority Leader the floor.

However, in the heat of the moment, as Hon Saho attempted to get the Speaker's attention to address the Chair, the Hon Speaker responded to question him "when the Speaker speaks, you want to observe the Speaker?"

After some brief silence, Speaker Jatta continued to try and reason with the Plenary on the merits of the ruling. In his view "these are gaps that I believe that they [Standing Orders Committee] have identified. And they want us to close our ranks before the situation even arises. Even if there are non-there could be one at the end of our legislature. But there could have been guiding the next parliament as to what to do next. That's what I think I believe what the chairman did. Yes, Hon member for Central Badibu".

Hon Saho took the floor and started by thanking the Speaker for his explanation. However, he argued that "Hon Speaker but we have the Standing Order Committee and I believe if we have a lacuna in our operations then we can refer it to the Standing Orders Committee to work on it to amend it. There is a need for them to amend some of the provisions. But we cannot just come now when the issue is not before us. Now he read it and you just made a ruling on it".

As the deliberations got more agitated Speaker Jatta tried to take control

of the proceedings again. He reiterated that "any Hon member has the right to put a point of order. Without making reference to any of you. And it's the Speaker's responsibility to make a decision on that Point of Order. Which decision cannot be challenged. So, hon members, I think we can proceed. Yes please".

Hon Speaker Jatta Questions Hon Sanyang "you are the New Minority Leader?"

At this point the Hon member for Latrikunda Sabiji, Hon Yahya Menteng Sanyang rose to address the chair, calling the attention of the Speaker. Speaker Jatta called the Hon Minority Speaker to take the floor. However, Hon Sanyang seized the floor saying: "Hon Speaker thank you very much for giving me the floor".

However, Speaker Jatta quickly asked him "Hon member you are the new Minority Leader?". The question drew laughter from Hon members momentarily. This was followed by a spell of brief silence which brought some calm to the Plenary. At the same time the Hon Minority Leader also a UDP member was trying to reclaim the floor to address the Chair. However, in response, Speaker Jatta told him "you were seated" and allowed the Hon member for Latrikunda Sabiji to address the Chair.

Hon Yahya Menteng Sanyang started his address by questioning "I just want to be very clear when Hon Saho made an observation on what you have said. You said nobody can make an observation when the Speaker speaks, nobody should rise on point of order or observation is that the case?"

Speaker Jatta: You were not listening. Hon Sanyang: What? Of course, I was listening.

Speaker Jatta: No, you were not in the hall.

Hon Sanyang: I heard you clearly say that when the Speaker speaks nobody makes observation. Literally, that's what you have said. Even though that was not your exact wording but exactly that's what you have said. When the Hon member made observation, you said are you going to make observation against the Speaker. I want to be very clear. I have to be clear before I take my seat.

Speaker Jatta: Hon member take your seat. (Clerk could be seen calming the Speaker). Speaker Jatta proceeded to give the Hon member for Sami the floor.

Former Majority Leader Urges Youth Minister to Resign Over Wife's Per Diem



Hon Barrow (c) GPN

The Gambia's former Majority Leader called for the resignation of the Minister for Youth and Sports after his wife was reported to have been paid per diem of £2,800 (approx D170k) for a fourteen-day trip to the United Kingdom and Turkey from July to August 2022. Minister for Youth and Sports, Hon Bakary Badjie was also paid per diem of £4,200 for attending the Commonwealth and All Islamic Games.

Hon Kebba K Barrow called for the Youth Minister's resignation on Monday 19th September 2022 during Parliament's debate on President Adama Barrow's 2022 State of the Nation Address. Hon Barrow who won re-election under a United Democratic Party (UDP) ticket was adamant that "the Minister of Youth and Sports should resign".

In his brief argument, Hon K K Barrow as he's fondly called believes that the Minister for Youth and Sports "defrauded the country of over three thousand euros (€3,000) giving it to a wife who is not a member of the delegation and estimate nonresident of the republic of the Gambia, taxpayers' money one hundred and seventy thousand Dalasis (D170,000)".

In his view, Minister Badjie "should be ethical [and] come forward and resign if the President or the Executive does not want to sanction him," said the Kombo South Parliamentarian.

Leaked Letter Highlights D7.5 million Payment

A letter leaked towards the end of August 2022 highlighted that D7.5 million had been paid to the "National Sports Council for onward payment of the Gambia National Olympic Committee (GNOC) being budget support for the GNOC participation in both the commonwealth and all Islamic games scheduled to place in Birmingham, UK and Turkey from July to August 2022".

The letter instructs that payment of £300 per day for 14 days be paid to the Minister for Youth and Sports and

£200 per day for 14 days be paid to his wife Ms Hawa Jobarteh who is not a staff of the Ministry nor a government official.

The letter also instructs two more payments of £200 per day for 14 days, putting them on par with the amount received by the Minister's Wife. The two Government Officials identified in the memo are Deputy Permanent Secretary Mr Musa Mbye and Executive Director of the National Sports Council Mr Marchel Kevin Mendy.

Youth Minister Challenges Government to Investigate Per Diem Saga

Besides not being a staff to be eligible for per diem payments, it was revealed that the Youth and Sports Minister's wife didn't travel to the United Kingdom to attend the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. However, she was still paid for the trip despite not travelling to the United Kingdom.

Speaking to journalist Omar Wally, Minister Badjie confirmed that his wife "was paid [but] she didn't go. Per diems or allowances are not paid after the event they are paid prior to the event". During his interview, Hon Badjie explains that his wife's visa was delayed similar to Gambian Trackstar Athlete Gina Bass.

Given the public outcry, the Minister released a statement responding to the public's concerns. In his letter Minister Badjie claims that he is aware that "some people are disappointed by news making the rounds about me. You do not have to be. I am being wrongly judged. This message is to clarify and clear my name of any wrongdoing". In his view, he "acted in good faith".

"From the onset, neither I nor the Ministry engaged in any clandestine or fraudulent transaction. This process was transparent and that is why the said letter in circulation was not treated with confidentiality," said Hon Badjie.

"Secondly, the inclusion of my wife to the event was not a personal choice. I neither ask from nor did I impose it on any person or authority. It was a privilege extended to me and other invited dignitaries by the Commonwealth Secretariat".

Arguing that he sought advice, Hon Badjie noted that he "made consultations with relevant and competent authorities and have been assured that paying allowance to my wife under the circumstances is justified and not at variance with law or acceptable

practice".

However, he agreed to return the payments after conducting wide consultations "on this issue and [he has] come to the conclusion that the right thing to do is for my wife to refund the entire money paid to her".

A defiant Minister Badjie called for an investigation on the matter and says he's ready to face the consequences if found wanting. He concluded his statement by inviting "the state or any competent authority to launch an independent investigation into my conduct. I have zero doubts about my innocence and I am ready and willing to face the consequences if I am found guilty of any wrongfully".

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Drinking Points for Cattle

Member for Sami, Hon Alfusainey, questioned the Agriculture Ministry's efforts to provide adequate drinking points for cattle. He noted that cattle in Sami roam all the way to Niamina searching for water. Hon Sabally admitted the concern and explained that the Small Ruminant Project has already dug 20 drinking points however the project is in two phases.

"Phase one was to have the boreholes dug, whilst phase two was to erect the rest of the structures," he added.

More Farming Inputs Required

Hon. Omar Darboe, Member for Upper Niumi noted that the President reported a rise in cereal production, however, he noted that in 2021 seeds and other inputs were supplied to the farmers, which led to an increase in cereal production. "This year, our farmers find it very difficult to buy fertilizer due to its exorbitant price. The agriculture Ministry and the government have to work on that," he said.

Drug Abuse

Hon Sheriff Sarr for Jeshwang raised concerns of the excessive drug use in the country. He lamented that the youth are killing innocent Gambians due to drug abuse. Youths are using all kind of illegal substances such as D5 tablets which renders the taker unconscious. He noted that the drug abusers become very aggressive when under the influence.. "There are certain drugs in this country, we have to start controlling

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Lawmakers Demand Compensation for Government's Jabang Demolition Exercise

Two Gambian Parliamentarians have condemned the Government's decision to demolish houses in Jabang believed to be obstructing waterways and causing flash floods during the rainy season. Speaking to Hon Yahya Menteng Sanyang of Latrikunda Sabiji he vowed that he would take all possible action with fellow parliamentarians to order Government "pay adequate and reasonable compensation to those affected". Hon Abdoulie Njai of Banjul Central promised to join his colleague to hold the government accountable for what he called selective justice.

It can be recalled that soon after flash floods affected the greater Banjul and Kombo Area in early August 2022 both the President and the Vice President visited Jabang Estate to assess the extent of the damage on different dates. Jabang Estate is a government-sanctioned project implemented by the Department of Social Security Housing and Finance Corporation (SSHFC). The first warning of the demolition was fired by Vice President Alieu Badara Joof on his site visit when he noted that buildings which are not in compliance should be broken down.

Soon after the visit, the Minister of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs Hon Aba Sanyang visited Jabang "to assess and obtain firsthand information on the level of encroachments on the waterways of the said areas which resulted to unprecedented flash floods," noted their Social Media page. In addition, the post noted that "operational action plans are concurrently being drawn as part of the Ministry's emergency response strategy".

Soon after the visit from the Minister of Lands the order for the demolition was issued via a letter from the Department of Physical Planning and Housing dated 20th August 2022 with the title "notice requiring removal or demolition of building/fence erected without a development permit or declared unsafe". The letter demanded that the buildings or fences should be removed within two days of issuance of the letter failure of which will result in the demolition of the property with the cost of demolition being charged to the owner of the property.

However, affected homeowners have raised concerns that the government sold the land to customers via the

SSHFC, shifting the blame back to the government.

What Physical Planning is Doing is Illegal says Hon Sanyang

Speaking to Hon Yahya Sanyang for Latrikunda Sabiji he expressed serious concerns over the demolition of houses in Jabang. Hon Sanyang believes that what "physical planning is doing at Jabang is illegal and very unfortunate. These are clear signs that the Barrow-led administration has failed Gambians woefully and he [Adama Barrow] and his cabinet should all resign to give way to a decent administration that will respect the plight of Gambians".

Speaking in Defence of property owners Hon Sanyang noted that they "were issued a genuine lease thus they have embarked on their millions worth of projects, only to wake up one day and see those developments reduced or ground by a reckless government". In his view "the government doesn't have any right to demolish any structure without the court's oversight". He urged all "affected property owners to sue the government of the Gambia for damages".

Hon Sanyang opined that the authorities starting with the President should "surely be held accountable and pay adequate and reasonable compensation to those affected. In fact, what feasibility studies has the government informed themselves that those properties are situated on the waterways before demolishing them? Was this based on speculation? Is it a witch hunt?"

Hon Njai Faults Government's Unexplainable Double Standards

Parliamentarian for Banjul Central, Honorable Abdoulie Njai also expressed his concern for the manner in which the demolition exercise was carried out. He first opined that "the process by which this demolition was carried out is unparalleled. I would say I think the Government was very irrational and demonstrated a non-factored outlook on the situation because I don't think many aspects of deracination or ramifications in the aftermath of this decision" have been considered by the government.

In his view, various authorities going around identifying which houses to be demolished without a coherent plan and assessment is really inadequate to address the problem. Hon Njai says "this is not a good show of leadership". The preferred action "should have been a more technical and con-

sultative approach [that] should have been taken towards finding a more progressive and conceptual settlement with regards to this issue [Jabang demolition]" said the Hon member for Banjul Central.

In his view, homes in Jabang "were provided and purchased from SSHFC [which are] all legally required documentation," however, "if this was a real estate private own company there would have been a liberal agreement to this, but these areas were availed by the government themselves which shows an unexplainable double standard which doesn't make any sense".

The Hon member who is arguably the youngest Gambian Parliamentarian revealed that he made additional enquiries on the demolition exercise and found that some affected homeowners have been compensated while others are yet to be compensated.

The Hon member urged the authorities "to stop the irrational blame games and to take responsibility and admit that there are certain lapses within the state system that needs to be looked into". He opined that the blame cannot be placed on ordinary citizens who "went through due process as citizens to acquire these lands and settle down". Raising concern that some affected homeowners may not be able to recover Hon Njai says that the Jabang demolition "is really unfair on their side because these are valuables that sometimes most of the [victims] cannot really replace so, it's quite sad".

Government Halts Jabang Demolition Exercise

It can be recalled that President Adama Barrow intervened to stop the demolition of Jabang properties towards the end of August 2022. This was announced during an interview with the Minister of Information Lamin Queen Jammeh on the popular "Coffee Time" morning radio show with Peter Gomez of West Coast Radio.

During the interview information Minister Jammeh revealed that "President Barrow did not only order for it to stop but also instructed, in the strongest possible terms, that we identify a small group including ministers to go and engage the community of Jabang, to discuss with them, to let them understand the concern of the government and of course the political leadership and assure them that working on [the] legal basis, they will be considered by [the] government for compensation".

NAMs recommend for Gambia to Host PAP ordinary sessions



Hon Mbaw (c) GPN

The Gambia's Representatives at the Pan African Parliament (PAP) have recommended for the Gambia's National Assembly to liaise with the Gambia Government to lobby to host the Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament. Parliamentarians believe that hosting the PAP can help boost the country's economy.

The Fourth Ordinary Session of the 5th Pan-African Parliament took place in Midrand, Republic of South Africa between Monday 27th June 2022. The Gambia's delegates include; Head of Delegation Hon. Alhagie Mbaw (NRP), Hon. Suwaibou Touray (PDOIS), Hon. Sulayman Saho (UDP), Hon. Salifu Jawo (NPP) and Hon. Maimuna Ceesay (Nominated Member).

The main "business" on the agenda was the elections of the new PAP Bureau and the leadership of other structures of the Parliament such as the 5 regional caucuses, thematic (Youth & Women) caucuses and the 11 permanent committees. In addition, adoption of the designed workplans for the aforesaid structures for onward implementation was another activity on the Session's agenda.

During the question and answer session Hon. Suwaibou Touray of Wuli East Constituency asked, "when do we expect the PAP to have Legislative Powers? He was told that the task of the PAP henceforth would be to work towards giving Legislative Powers and oversight functions to the continental legislative body.

His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat (Chairperson of the African Union Commission), flagged that the large number of MPs in this session should not be underscored as it indicated the seriousness of the moment, and the hopes for a definitive solution to the leadership crisis.

He added that the Pan-African Parliament is where the voices of African peoples are expressed, so the actions of the PAP MPs should at all times be

dictated by the noble mission of Article 2 of the Protocol which established the African Economic Community adopted in Libya in March 2001.

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP), is the Third Organ of the African Union, was created in 2004 and comprises 270 MPs selected by their respective Parliaments of the member states in accordance with the provisions of Article 4(2) and (3) of the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament.

Hon Sulayman Jammeh and Co Contribute D40K to 13 Teams in Bundung



Hon Jammeh on the Left (c) GPN

APRC's Hon Sulayman Jammeh of Bundungka Kunda Constituency, his close associate Tijan Touray and the Secretary General of Serrekunda East Sports Development Organisation (SESDO) contributed D40,000 to some 13 football teams in Bundung.

Hon Jammeh contributed D26,000, while his close associate Mr Tijan Touray contributed D13,000 and the SESDO Secretary General contributed D1,000, making it a total of D40,000. The engagement took place at Taku Leggay Skills Centre in Bundung.

The contribution will help raise more funds and provide an initial payment of D2,000 to each of the 13 teams in Bundung. The rest of the money is to be used to generate more funds for the teams who have already commenced the Local Nawettan Season for the Serrekunda East Tournament.

There are plans to engage Gambian Rap Superstar ST the Gambian Dream to venture into a fund raising initiative which will generate more revenue for the football teams in Bundung.

Speaking to the President of SESDO, Modou Yusupha Cham, he informed us that the IGP highlighted that whenever Nawettan starts violence goes down in the country.

Donations are being solicited via Hon Sulayman Jammeh and an Executive Member of SESDO, Malick Jarju at 5939070. Mr Jarju also resides in Bundung.

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them. Lets look at the conditions of our prisons, albeit there are criminal and innocent people therein, their conditions need to be properly looked into and ensure that they are taken care of, while serving their prison terms," he said.

The result effect of not improving their prison condition, he said is one of trauma, which affect them when they leave the prison.

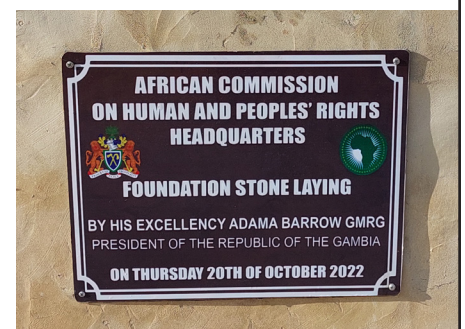
Speaker Overrules Request for President to Attend SONA Debate

Soon after President Barrow's SONA Address just when the Speaker was about to close the proceedings Hon Sulayman Saho of Central Badibu rose to table a Point of Order which would see the President Attend the debate if granted by the Speaker.

Hon Saho, a member of the United Democratic Party argued that "Under Point 24 clause 2, I want to use your humble office [in addition, the Assembly may request the President to attend a sitting of the Assembly for the discussion of a matter of national importance.]" However his request was thrown out by the Speaker.

Human Rights

President Barrow's SONA revealed that the Ministry of Justice "is committed to the construction of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights Headquarters as part of Government's contribution towards hosting the Secretariat. It's purpose is to transform The Gambia into the Capital of Human Rights". GPN can confirm that the Laying of the Foundation Stone for the African Commission Headquarters was erected on 20th October 2022. Although the plaque notes that the President laid the Foundation Stone our enquiries have confirmed that the Minister of Interior laid the foundation stone on behalf of the President.





Voice of the Nation

The Voice of the Nation is a regular column featuring engagements between Parliament and the citizenry. In this edition Parliamentarians crafted an Accountability Road Map together with stakeholders from the National Audit

Office and Leaders of CSOs. Two new Co-Chairs takeover leadership of the Inter Party Committee from Hon Halifa Sallah and Hon Amul Nyassi. The contributions of two Hon Members towards their electorates are also highlighted.

ances to his community. This means his contributions to his community could well be over D745K in 2022 alone.

Accountability Road Map Crafted by Stakeholders

Open Society Platform, Gambia-OSPG meet National Assembly members from the Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) and the National Audit Office to create a renewed Accountability Roadmap on 24th September 2022.

According to the OSPG invitation the stakeholder engagement brought together important stakeholders "to discuss issues related to the audit process, roles & responsibilities of stakeholders" as well as the formulation of "an action plan/communique" to identify "the bigger steps needed such as institutional accountability frameworks by (National Audit Office and Accountant General as well as National Assembly)".

It's anticipated that the event "will culminate into a renewed Gambia Accountability Roadmap that will contribute to timely audit and publication of audit reports for the citizens of the Gambia".

The interactive engagement organised by Open Society Platform, Gambia-OSPG between Parliamentarians from FPAC, the Auditor General's Office and the National Audit Office was highly engaging.

The discussions highlighted numerous issues including the backlog of Audit Reports, NIA/SIS to be Audited and the need for information to be declassified. One of the presentation slide highlights the backlog of Audit Reports should be cleared by February 2023.

The program was well moderated by Muhammed MS Bah and culminated in the preparation of an Accountability RoadMap which will take into consideration all the recommendations put forward from delegates in attendance.



Hon Bah (c) GPN



Hon Touray (c) GPN

Hon Bah and Mr Baldeh Takeover Leadership of Inter-Party Committee

NP Parliamentarian for Basse Constituency, Hon Saikou Bah took over the leadership of the Inter-Party Committees (IPC) as Co-Chair on Friday 23rd September 2022. He shares the Co-Chair of the IPC with Mr Samba Baldeh, Senior Administrative Secretary for the GDC.

Hon Saikou Bah and Mr Samba Baldeh will now replace Hon Halifa Sallah of PDOIS and Hon Amul Nyassi of the APRC.

During the handing-over ceremony which took place at the Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Center, the newly elected Basse Representative assured political party representatives present that he would execute his duties, responsibilities and promote peace and tolerance as Co-Chair during his five-year tenure. The IPC is an umbrella body for all registered political parties in The Gambia. One of its main functions is to foster unity among parties and to promote violence-free elections in the country. Congratulations to the IPC Co-Chairs.

Hon Touray Ploughs Back over D745,000 into Wuli East Electorates

Hon Suwaibou Touray of Wuli East contribution to his Community has been documented in previous editions of GPN.

In June 2022 Hon Touray confirmed that he used his D100K clothing allowance and an additional D10K Committee sittings allowance to implement various projects in his Constituency. Fast forward some months later, in September 2022 Hon Touray has more than quadrupled his June efforts. This time spending his National Assembly Gratuity of D605K from his first term as a Parliamentarian. He managed to get additional funding from two supporters in Karamba Touray and Amara Trawally to invest a total of D635K into a reconditioned tractor to support small-scale Agriculture Projects in Wuli East.

Altogether this means that Hon Touray has invested at least D745,000 back into his electorates through various initiatives in 2022 alone.

In our previous interview with the Hon member, he disclosed that he spends his salary on his family and dedicates his committee sitting allow-

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