



**28th Session of the
Human Rights Council
Item 6**

UPR adoption Gambia, 26 March 2015

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CIVICUS welcomes the decision by the Gambian government to accept several recommendations aimed at improving the environment for the respect of fundamental freedoms including those to fully protect and promote freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly for all without fear of arbitrary detention or harassment and to continue to improve the protection and promotion of human rights.

We are however disappointed that the Gambian government rejected the recommendation to amend legislation to remove restrictions on freedom of expression which has a major impact on human rights defenders and journalists.

We are concerned about the ongoing persecution, harassment and detention of human rights defenders, civil society activists and dissenters in the Gambia which has continued since Gambia's last review.

We are worried about ongoing violations and restrictions on civil liberties, intimidation of journalists and regular suspensions on media outlets and radio stations.

These restrictions have sadly compelled journalists and human rights defenders to resort to self-censorship and some have eventually fled the country to avoid persecution and harassment.

As a result of the above, CIVICUS reiterates calls to the Gambia to take measures to guarantee in all circumstances the full respect of freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

- We call on the government to abolish all legislative provisions which restrict freedom of expression and of the press and create an enabling environment to enhance the work of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society.
- We call on the government to protect and promote freedom of association and assembly for all Gambians without fear of arbitrary detention, intimidation and harassment.
- We request that the government extends a standing invitation to all Special Procedures and improve cooperation with the OHCHR and its human rights mechanisms.
- We call on the government to fully implement all the recommendations it accepted during the 20th Session of the Universal Periodic Review.

Thank you.