

URGENT ACTION

DROP CHARGES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

In May 2022, the Gambian President accused human rights defender, Madi Jobarteh, of being a “troublemaker” who wants to bring violence into the country. Since then, he has been receiving online threats, harassment, and intimidation from the Gambian authorities. He was arbitrarily arrested and detained. On November 9, 2023, he was charged with seditious intention, incitement to violence, false broadcasting and information. Amnesty International is concerned that the charges against Madi Jobarteh are politically motivated as they are based on his activities as a human rights defender, in violation of his rights to freedom of expression and association.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Second Urgent Action 40.22**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

President of Gambia
Adama Barrow
State House of the Gambia
Banjul, The Gambia
Email: info@op.gov.gm
X/Twitter: [@BarrowPresident](https://twitter.com/BarrowPresident)

Gambian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Momodou Lamin Bah
5630 16th Street,
NW, Washington DC 20011
Email: gambiaembassydc@gmail.com

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern about the intimidation, harassment, threats, and attacks against human rights defender, **Madi Jobarteh**. On May 2, 2022, Madi Jobarteh was accused of being “a troublemaker” who wants to bring violence and burn down the country, putting his safety and security at risk. Madi Jobarteh has since faced online intimidation, harassment, threats, and attacks.

On October 6, 2023, four officers raided Madi Jobarteh's house and questioned him about his Facebook posts. They advised him to report to the police station when they left, which Madi Jobarteh refused. Subsequently, police vehicles were seen loitering around his neighborhood. He posted about the incident on Facebook on October 8, 2023. The next day, Madi Jobarteh was arrested and placed in judicial custody. The police also seized his and his daughter's phone and denied access to his lawyer. On October 15, 2023, he was released on a bail bond of 100,000 Dalasis (approximately 1,500 USD). On November 9, 2023, he was charged with seditious intention, incitement to violence, false publication and broadcasting. If convicted, Madi Jobarteh could face up to six years in prison. On November 23, 2023, his case was sent to the Attorney General's office for advice.

I urge you to drop all charges against Madi Jobarteh as they stem solely from the exercise of his human rights. I also urge you to ensure all allegations of intimidation, harassment, threats, and attacks against Madi Jobarteh and his family are promptly, thoroughly, impartially, transparently, and effectively investigated. Finally, I urge you to ensure that Madi Jobarteh can freely carry out his human rights work without any reprisals.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Madi Jobarteh is a Gambian human rights defender. He is the former executive director of the Association of Nongovernmental Organizations in Gambia (TANGO) and is also a member of the Foundation for Legal Aid Research and Empowerment (FLARE).

He has recently been the subject of harassment, intimidation, and threats from the Gambian authorities. On October 6, 2023, he received a call from the police headquarters “inviting” him to their office. As Madi Jobarteh was unwell, he was unable to comply. On the same day, four officers raided his house, and questioned Madi Jobarteh about some of his Facebook posts. They told Madi Jobarteh to report to the nearest police office as soon as he got better, which Madi Jobarteh refused.

On October 8, 2023, Madi Jobarteh made a Facebook post, denouncing the authorities for putting him under unlawful surveillance. The following day, Madi Jobarteh was arrested and placed in judicial custody. The police also seized both his and his daughter’s phones without a warrant. While in custody, Madi Jobarteh’s brother was the only person that was allowed to visit him, and for only five minutes. On October 15, 2023, he was released on bail, but the police kept his and his daughter’s phones and later refused to return them to him.

On November 9, 2023, he was charged with seditious intention, incitement to violence, and false broadcasting and information. His bail was extended to November 23, 2023, when he was informed that his case had been sent to the Attorney General’s Office “for advice” and that he no longer had to report for bail until the Attorney General’s advice. His and his daughter’s phones are still with the police.

This is not the first time that Madi Jobarteh has faced harassment, intimidation, threats, and attacks. On June 30, 2020, he was arrested and charged with false information and broadcasting under section 181A of the Criminal Code. On that occasion, he had stated, during a Black Lives Matter protest he had organized, that the government failed to investigate the killings of three Gambian citizens by police officers. The charges were dropped the following month.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: April 17, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Madi Jobarteh (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr27/5568/2022/en/>