



Committee to Protect Journalists

September 27, 2024

Mr. Adama Barrow  
President of The Gambia  
BANJUL  
c/o Ms. Amie Bojang-Sissoho

Dear President Barrow

The Committee to Protect Journalists, an independent press freedom advocacy organization, is deeply concerned about the arrest of The Voice newspaper journalist Momodou Darboe. Darboe reportedly wrote an article claiming that you were working on an exit plan ahead of the 2026 election.

Darboe and his editor, Musa Sheriff, were arrested on Thursday night, hours after your speech at the United Nations General Assembly, in which you said The Gambia had been recognized as one of Africa's leading defenders of press freedom. You told the gathered world leaders that no journalist has been jailed since you became president in 2017.

Therefore, CPJ learned of the arrests and charges brought against both journalists with profound shock and dismay. Despite Mr. Sheriff's release on bail, the fact that Mr. Darboe remains in custody is a matter of urgent concern.

We have also seen a letter dated September 25 that your lawyers wrote to the newspaper stating that the article was highly defamatory and untrue and made several demands, including an apology and a full retraction.

CPJ believes that journalism is not a crime and that where a newspaper is alleged to have erred, there are other avenues for redress, which your lawyer's letter seems to appreciate. We call on you to take the lead in ensuring journalism is not criminalized in the way that you eloquently elucidated in your U.N. speech and that, unlike during the Yahya Jammeh era, press freedom is defended and protected.

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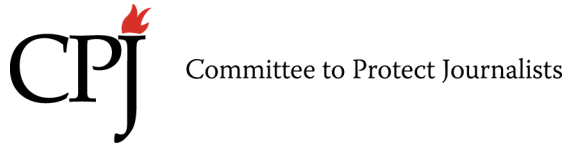
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CPJ, therefore, joins the Gambian Press Union and the Gambian media community in urging you to ensure that Mr. Darboe is released and that the charges are dropped against him and Mr. Sheriff as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gypsy', is written in a cursive style.

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