

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead protesting the conviction of journalist Lamin Fatty.

June 27, 2007
President H.E. Yahya A. A. Jammeh
Office of the President
Private Mail Bag
State House,
Banjul, Republic of the Gambia
Fax: +220 4227 034
Email: info@statehouse.gm

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada is writing to protest the criminal conviction of **Lamin Fatty**.

Lamin Fatty, a reporter for the Banjul-based bi-weekly newspaper *The Independent*, was arrested on 10 April 2006 in the wake of an article on the arrest of a number of alleged coup plotters which erroneously implicated a former government minister. Fatty was held incommunicado for two months, eventually being released on bail on 12 June 2006. During his time in custody it is understood that he was denied access to a lawyer.

Fatty faced charges under section 181 of the Gambian criminal code for publishing "false news". His trial was extremely protracted due to its frequent adjournment, sometimes for apparently trivial reasons.

On 5 June 2007 the Kanifing Magistrates' Court found Fatty guilty as charged and sentenced him to a D50,000 (US\$1,850) fine or by default one year in prison. Fatty was jailed immediately but was released soon after when the Gambia Press Union (GPU), the country's largest journalists' union, paid the fine. It is understood that Fatty has filed an appeal.

PEN Canada welcomes the release of journalist Lamin Fatty on 5 June 2007 but deplores his criminal conviction. Fatty was found guilty of "publishing false news" after two months' detention and a trial that has dragged on for almost a year. He was fined US\$1,850 and jailed but was released soon after following payment of the fine by a local journalists' union. PEN Canada is calling for Fatty's conviction to be quashed.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

Appeals to:

Attorney General and Secretary of State for Justice
Hon. Kebba Sanyang
Department of State for Justice and Attorney General's Chambers
Marina Parade
Banjul, Republic of the Gambia
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Salutation: Dear Secretary of State

H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare
Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union
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High Commission for the Republic of the Gambia
1156-15th Street N.W. Suite 905, Washington, District of Columbia
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Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

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The Embassy of Canada to Gambia
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Tel.: 221 889-47-00
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The Hon. Peter MacKay
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