Africa Speaks as African civil society organisations, we are raising our voices in solidarity with the people of the Gambia who have since the 1994 military coup, which brought Jammeh to power, endured decades of autocracy and systematic human rights violations under his rule, in particular stifling of freedom of expression, association, and assembly in the republic. Journalist, human rights defenders and activists in the Gambia have continued to operate in hostile conditions, have been threatened by reprisals, abductions and experienced other gross human rights violations. Over the years under the Jammeh regime, there has been much outcry from the people of the Gambia for the world to pay attention to the various atrocities inflicted on them.

The people of the Gambia have lived under Yahya Jammeh’s authoritarian rule for two decades, and have done so peacefully. Now, they have now spoken. Jammeh must respect their voice. The deadline for Jammeh Yahya to step down as president of the Gambia has been characterized by Yahya’s recalcitrant refusal to stand aside and allow the will of the Gambian people to be respected.

We applaud The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 647th meeting held on 13 January 2017, the decision on the post-election situation in The Islamic Republic of The Gambia. The Call of African Union the outgoing President, Yahya Jammeh, to respect the Constitution of the Gambia, the ECOWAS and AU instruments, in particular the AU Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, by handing over power, on 19 January 2017, as stated in the Constitution, to the newly-elected President of The Gambia, Adama Barrow, as decided by the people of the country is the underlined statement shows our regional organization become important in solidifying the democratization process in the continent.

We also appreciate the ECOWAS intervention, which is led by The Federal Republic of Nigeria. Indeed Botswana’s announcement no longer recognizing the Jammeh as president of the Gambia is encouraging, and we urge all AU member states to do the same; and also to recognise Adama Barrow as the President of the Gambia as soon as he has been sworn in a legitimately elected president of The Islamic Republic of The Gambia.

With this note, we reaffirm that Africa and Africans will not go back to those dark days of manipulation and subjugation to stay in office without the will of the public. Meanwhile, we stand in solidarity with the people of the Gambian people, in their quest to have their democracy respected without the need for resorting to preventable violence.

Yours In Pan Africanism

Seife Tadelle Kidane
President of Africa Speaks

Pretoria, South Africa.
January-20-2017

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