

# Nna NYANTO

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to the First Edition of Nna Nyanto Newsletter

It is with great pleasure that we extend a warm welcome to the inaugural edition of Nna Nyanto (My Right), the newsletter of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), covering the period from January to June 2023.

In a world where the boundaries between institutions can sometimes blur leaving us with questions about their respective roles and responsibilities, or where the pursuit of justice and the complexities of transitional processes pique our curiosity, we intend to bring you updates that will clear the air. Rest assured that this newsletter has been crafted with you in mind. We are here to dispel any ambiguities and ignite your interest, particularly in The Gambia's transitional justice Processes, with a focus on the critical Implementation Phase of the Government's White Paper on the TRRC Recommendations.

This initiative fills us with excitement as we embark on a journey to reinforce our commitment to the transitional justice process. This is underscored by our pledge to deliver periodic updates on our ongoing initiatives through our quarterly releases.

Your unwavering support and interest in our work is the driving forces behind our dedication to upholding justice, safeguarding human rights, promoting good governance and the rule of law in The Gambia. We extend our gratitude to you for being an integral part of our community, and we anticipate engaging with you in this and all future updates in this series.

look out for forthcoming updates from the Ministry of Justice, channeled via Nna Nyanto. Together, let us collaborate in our shared mission to forge a society that stands unwaveringly for justice and equity, a society where truth and fairness prevail.

To the Gambia, ever true!  
Dawda A. Jallow  
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

SEPTEMBER 2023

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Justice Minister Addresses West African Human Rights Institutions

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African Commission's 75th Ordinary Session Wraps up in Banjul

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VOLUME 1  
ISSUE 1

## WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Attorney General's Chambers and The Ministry of Justice provides indispensable legal services in promoting and protecting rule of law, justice delivery and good governance. The Ministry is headed by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice and deputized by the Solicitor General and Legal Secretary.

The Ministry has six departments and five satellite institutions that provide value added legal services to promote and protect human rights, good governance and a rights-based approach to justice delivery in The Gambia.

### VISION

A credible and model justice system characterized by a decentralized, speedy and accessible justice delivery service that is responsive and accountable to the needs of the Government, partners and the general public; efficient, effective and consistent with the ideals of democracy, good governance and the rule of law; contributing towards sustainable socio-economic growth and development.

### MISSION

To strengthen good governance and equitable justice as a foundation of solid democracy in The Gambia through a cadre of highly trained, versatile and motivated staff that provide responsive legal services supported by adequate resources and strategic partnerships and alliances, with total commitment to the rule of law and respect for peoples' and human rights.

### DEPARTMENTS

Civil Litigation and International Law  
Criminal Prosecutions  
Curator of Intestate Estate  
Legislative Drafting  
Registrar General  
Single Window Business Registration

### INSTITUTIONS

Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat  
Law Review Commission  
National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons  
National Agency for Legal Aid  
National Council for Law Reporting

## Justice Minister Addresses West African Human Rights Meeting In Banjul



Honorable Dawda A. Jallow, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, on Wednesday, 7th June 2023 addressed the opening session of the Regional Consultation of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) in West Africa. The event is organized by the Network of National Human Rights Institutions for West Africa (NNHRI) with support from ECOWAS Commission, the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), and United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWAS), held in the Gambia.

The annual event brought together participants from NHRIs, representatives of the ECOWAS Commission and the UN Secretary-General, as well Civil Society Organizations.

In his remarks, Minister Jallow mentioned The Gambia's transitional justice process, which is creating a historical record of the human rights violations that occurred during the 22 years of dictatorship.

It is also holding those who bear the greatest responsibility accountable, providing reparations for victims of human rights violations and making the necessary legal, policy and institutional reforms to enable the nation to transition to a stronger, more vibrant and stable democracy.

He stated that since the adoption of the principles relating to the status of NHRIs (Paris Principles), which set out the minimum standards for the independence, mandate, funding, and functioning of human rights institutions, NHRIs have been working to ensure that they effectively promote and protect human rights within their countries.

Minister Jallow further reminded the gathering of the importance of the Paris Principles with regard to monitoring human rights violations, providing advice and education, and engaging in advocacy and awareness.

The Minister highlighted that 10 out of 15 NHRIs in West Africa are in compliance with the Paris Principles with "A" statuses. The Gambia is one of them despite the relatively young age of our NHRC. He encouraged other NHRIs to try to meet the same standard.

He concluded by commending the NNHRI for their dedication and commitment to promoting and protecting human rights in the region while reaffirming Gambia's commitment to advancing human rights and dignity for all.





## 10 Things to Know About the TRRC Implementation Plan

- The Plan outlines steps to implement recommendations and identify key implementation stakeholders.
- It promotes the use of gender sensitive, transparent, inclusive and accountable measures to prioritize the most vulnerable victims.
- Establish a Transitional Justice Coordination Mechanism to oversee implementation of TRRC recommendations.
- The coordination mechanism will organize efforts of various stakeholders including government agencies and CSOs.
- It provides a platform for dialogue and consultation between victims, their families and other stakeholders to ensure all voices are heard.
- It includes measures to strengthen access to justice for victims and families.



- A specialized unit will be created at the AG's Chambers to investigate and prosecute cases.
- Provide legal aid and support services for victims and their families.
- Includes measures to reform the security sector to ensure respect for human rights and accountability.
- Will promote reconciliation and healing, including a national reparations program to assist victims and families.

## AfCHPR 75th Ordinary Session Wraps Up In Banjul



The 75th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights was hosted in The Gambia from 3rd – 23rd May, 2023. The event brought together member states of the African Union, representatives from human rights institutions, members of the diplomatic and consular Corps, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations among others.

In his remarks, the Attorney General Dawda A. Jallow said, the session has laid the foundation for discussions to find solid ground to ensure States' commitment to continuously promote, protect and respect human rights. He further stated that this will collectively contribute to the development and realization of Agenda 2063 (The Africa We Want).

Minister Jallow urged member states to pay attention to issues raised during the sessions and expressed gratitude to the Commission for recognizing Gambia's valuable role in hosting the 75th Ordinary Session.

He concluded by calling on the African Union and Member States as well as the African Commission, to stand firm in continuing to address heinous crimes and human rights violations on the continent, with the view for ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights to ensure peace, justice, accountability, good governance and rule of law.

# Reparations Bill for Jammeh Era Victims Validated

The Ministry of Justice in collaboration with stakeholders in the transitional justice process on Tuesday, 21st February 2023 embarked on a two-day validation workshop on the Victims' Reparations Bill. The workshop was attended by the staff of the Ministry of Justice, representatives of the National Human Rights Commission, the American Bar Association, and stakeholders from different Civil Society Organizations working on transitional justice issues in The Gambia.

In his remarks, Minister for Justice Honorable Dawda A. Jallow said the intention of the bill is geared towards providing reparations for the victims of violations recognized by the TRRC and equally new victims that were not identified or heard by the TRRC for one reason or the other.

The bill, once enacted, will establish a fund for reparations and establish a commission for the management of the funds and connected matters. He added that the law will also help guarantee non-occurrence by targeting structural measures such as policies, institutional reforms, strengthening judicial independence, civil society, and victim-led organizations just to name a few.

According to him, the main focus of the government is to adopt measures of psychosocial support and guidance to restore the victims to a situation close to the one they were in before the violations of their human rights.

*"It is only fair that victims of human rights violations are compensated for the wrongs they suffered and to equally ease their burdens, distress, and displeasure of a system that once was against them directly or otherwise"*

Minister Jallow further stated that the victims' reparations bill provides for restitution as a mode of reparation and factors in the necessity for satisfaction which will be achievable through truth-seeking, the search for the disappeared, the recovery and reburial of remains, public apologies, judicial and administrative sanction, commemoration, and memorialization.

*"The government is committed to ensuring life-transforming reparations are provided to victims of these human rights violations"*





## Prevention of Torture Act 2023 Passed by Parliament

The Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice is pleased to announce that the National Assembly has passed the Prevention of Torture Act 2023 tabled by the Minister of Justice. This is a significant development in the country's efforts to promote human rights and uphold the rule of law.

This Act provides the legal framework for the prohibition, prevention and punishment of any form of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in The Gambia. It also provides penalties aimed at ensuring accountability for acts of torture and imposes a duty on all persons to report to relevant authorities while protecting witnesses, victims and persons reporting torture.



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*As we move forward in our journey towards a just and democratic society, we must remain vigilant in the protection of human rights and the rule of law. This act is a critical milestone in that journey, and we are proud to have achieved it.*

**-Hussein Thomasi**

**Solicitor General & Legal Secretary**

The importance of this Act within the transitional justice process cannot be overemphasized and has been a pervasive issue in our country with long-lasting and profound effects. This Act will help to prevent such violations from happening and provide a framework for the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for such heinous acts.

The government wishes to call upon all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the media, and the general public, to support the popularization and implementation of this Act.



## Meet the new Director of Public Prosecutions

Mr. ABDURRAHMAN MAITAMA YUSUF is a distinguished legal professional whose illustrious journey in the field of law is marked by notable achievements and a profound dedication to justice. Graduating from Bayero University Kano, Nigeria, he earned his LL.B. degree in Law in the year 2002. This was followed by his enrollment at the prestigious Nigeria Law School Abuja, where he successfully obtained his BL certificate and was duly called to the Bar in 2004. Displaying an unwavering commitment to academic excellence, Mr. Yusuf returned to Bayero University to attain his Master's degree (LL.M) in 2009.



With an expansive career spanning over 19 years, Mr. Yusuf has significantly contributed to the field of law, specializing in criminal prosecutions and administration. His journey commenced at the Ministry of Justice in Zamfara State, Nigeria, in 2004, where he served as Senior State Counsel. This was but a stepping stone to his subsequent engagement as a Legal Officer at the Federal Ministry of Justice Abuja, Nigeria, in 2005. Demonstrating exceptional legal acumen and dedication, Mr. Yusuf's progression was noteworthy. He ascended the ranks, assuming pivotal roles such as Senior State Counsel, Principal State Counsel, Assistant Chief State Counsel and Chief State Counsel.

Mr. Yusuf's remarkable legal expertise transcended borders when he was seconded by the Federal Government of Nigeria to The Gambia Legal Sector in 2008. This appointment, orchestrated through a bilateral agreement, saw him assuming the role of a Technical Assistant. Throughout his tenure, he successfully concluded numerous cases. His contributions extended beyond prosecution to encompass the provision of legal counsel and the mentorship to emerging legal talents within the ministry for over 14 years.

Notably, Mr. Yusuf's exceptional trajectory led him to the position of Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions at the Attorney General Chambers Banjul, where he presided over the Criminal Division of the Ministry of Justice (Banjul) from 2019.

In August 2023, he was appointed to the substantive position of Director of Public Prosecutions by His Excellency, The President of The Republic of The Gambia.

## Gambia Hosts Four Day Regional Meeting on Transnational Organised Crime



The Ministry of Justice on 12th June, 2023 commenced its four day regional ministerial meeting on combating transnational organized crime focused on the topic Role of the Central Authorities in the Fight against Organized Crime.

Participants included Justice Ministers and actors, focal persons from ECOWAS, United Nations office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), the West African Network of Central Authorities and Prosecutors (WACAP) and representatives from Mauritania and Chad.

The meeting discussed collaboration among countries in the fight against transnational organized crime through the exchange of information and intelligence to effectively address and counter the threats posed by cross-border criminal networks.

Minister Jallow highlighted that the WACAP network plays a critical role in facilitating the exchange of mutual legal assistance requests through informal platforms and focal points.

this has drastically reduced reliance on the lengthy diplomatic channels. He further stated that with assistance from UNODC, The Gambia successfully developed its first Mutual Legal Assistance Bill which was passed by the National Assembly and is awaiting the President's assent.

He expressed gratitude to UNODC for providing the Gambia with the much needed technical and material support, through its WACAP network, saying the Gambia has benefited greatly from training as prosecutors and law enforcement officers were exposed to new skills and knowledge on combating transnational organized crimes.

"The Gambia remains dedicated to fulfilling its international and regional commitment to effectively combat transnational organized crime through thorough investigations, prosecutions and the provision of assistance to countries in need for the prosecution of such crimes" concluded.

## Aji Adam Ceesay appointed as Curator



Ms. Aji Adam Ceesay was appointed as Curator of Intestate Estates. In this role, she is responsible for the collection, management, and administration of the estates of deceased persons. Her office plans to embark on sensitization campaigns on the roles and functions of the curator's office in order to enhance public awareness of their roles and responsibilities.

## Opening of 2023 Legal Year



The Legal year was officially opened on February 5th 2023. The event took place at the High Court Complex in Banjul with President Adama Barrow in attendance.

H.E Barrow expressed delight in presiding over the event, saying the occasion allows his government to review its performance within the legal sector and ascertain possible solutions to address some of the challenges.

## 72 Students Called to the Bar



72 student's of The Gambia Law School were called to the bar upon successful completion of their legal train on February 6th 2023.

The AG advised the graduates to guard the values of the legal profession in order to maintain the respect and dignity accorded to persons who bear the title of a legal practitioner and always be willing to receive advice and guidance from their seniors who have gained significant experience in the practice of law over the years



## Registrar General Commemorates IP Day



The Registrar General, Mr. Abdoulie Colley, joined the world in commemorating Intellectual Property day. This year's theme focused on Women and Intellectual property. The Registrar addressed multiple women entrepreneurs and urged them register their ideas. He also took time to enlightened them on the process of registration promising that his office will provide relevant support throughout the process.

## Mariama Singhateh Wins Legal Practitioner Award



State Counsel, Ms. Mariama Singhateh, was awarded Legal Pratitioner of the Year at the 2023 She Awards. The award recognizes and celebrates female lawyers working on issues of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in The Gambia.

## Highlights of Stakeholder Conference & Donor Roundtable on the TRRC



*President Barrow Addresses Stakeholders*



*UNDP Resident Coordinator Aissata De*



*U.S Ambassador to The Gambia*



*Cross section of victims*



*EU Ambassador to The Gambia*



*Solicitor General giving the closing remarks*

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