

30 Days for Freedom

4 April - 3 May 2014

#FreethePress

WAN-IFRA www.worldpressfreedomday.org

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13 April 2014

Your Excellency,

We are writing as part of the global online campaign '30 Days for Freedom' to call for the release of "Chief" Ebrima Manneh, jailed in Gambia since 7 July 2006.

On July 7, 2006 his family said Mr. Manneh, a senior reporter with the *Daily Observer* newspaper, left for work as normal but never returned home. Witnesses said two plainclothes state security agents arrested him at his office in Bakau. The whereabouts of Mr. Manneh have since been largely unknown for the duration of his incarceration, with conflicting reports from authorities and senior government officials refusing to discuss his case.

His colleagues suggest he was arrested for having downloaded a BBC article critical of Your Excellency. There are serious concerns that the journalist could have died while in prison, with many reports alleging the use of torture in Gambian jails to be commonplace.

Your Excellency, we urge you to provide up-to-date, reliable information to the family of Ebrima Manneh ahead of securing his permanent release from prison. Statements from Your Excellency in 2011 regarding the supposed death of Mr. Manneh, countered by assertions to the contrary by the Minister of Justice just months later, are an immense and unnecessary added pain on the suffering of those close to him.

Your Excellency, your consideration for a free and independent press is on record as being scant at the very best. We encourage you to reconsider and to see a free press as an aide, not a hindrance to the prosperity and development you seek for Gambia. Failing this, we urge you on behalf of human decency and in the name of universal human rights to release "Chief" Ebrima Manneh.

Sincerely,

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The 30 Days for Freedom campaign

Organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum, the '30 Days for Freedom' campaign aims to highlight the plight of imprisoned journalists worldwide in the 30 days leading up to 3 May, World Press Freedom Day.

www.wan-ifra.org / www.worldpressfreedomday.org