



THE ECOWAS COMMISSION ERRED IN RUSHING TO CONGRATULATE THE GAMBIA GOVERNMENT ON GAZETTING A DRAFT CONSTITUTION. GAMBIA FOR ALL PARTY (GFA) OPINIONS.

The partnership between the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and the people of The Gambia is one of the most highly valued, and mutually beneficial relationships between a subregional organization and its member state.

This is evidenced by the pivotal role played by ECOWAS in ensuring that the will of the Gambian people prevailed at the critical juncture of our post 2016 election crisis. The institution also continued to play a vital role in maintaining peace and stability during and after our transition period. No doubt the Gambian people are grateful for ECOWAS' timely intervention.

However, it has not escaped ECOWAS commission's attention that the Gambia's post dictatorship transition has largely stalled for various reasons. Importantly, it has come to pass that President Barrow not only reneged on the agreed 3-year transition period, opting to stay in power for the full term of 5 years. He further went on to put himself up as a post-

transition presidential candidate in the 2021 general elections. This was also against the political agreement painstakingly hammered out at the 2016 coalition negotiations.

There is ample evidence to suggest that President Adama Barrow was a difficult and unreliable partner in furthering Gambia's post dictatorship democratic aspirations. Under his watch and, largely believed with his blessing, the much anticipated and highly regarded 2020 draft constitution was voted against by the Gambian legislature, hence depriving Gambians of an opportunity to dump the much maligned 1997 constitution, which is heavily skewed in favour of the Executive.

Instead of going back to The Gambian people for further consultation on the way forward, the government of President Barrow took its time, and barely two years before the next presidential election, issued a press release informing Gambians about the publication of the 2024 draft constitution in the Official Gambia Gazette. After reviewing the recently gazetted so-called new draft constitution, it turned out to be very different from the 2020 draft, which was painstakingly prepared by the well respected Constitutional Review Commission.

While GFA continues to have great admiration and respect for the ECOWAS commission, we think they acted rather hastily in endorsing the actions of the Barrow administration in this regard.

The ECOWAS commission should have been aware of the potential consequences of executive tampering with the constitution to further an agenda that does not tally with the wishes and aspirations of the majority of its citizens. We all wish to live in a progressive, peaceful and democratic Gambia, with strong institutions, governed by a constitution approved by the majority of Gambian people.

Long Live Gambia
Long Live GFA
GFA Communications
Ma-Jonka House
Kanifing.
18th August 2024