

THE GAMBIA



“The priority of the government is to put in place a new and resilient architecture to uphold the highest standards when it comes to human rights, justice and rule of law. The Gambia’s ratification of the UN Convention against Torture shows our commitment to protecting persons from the heinous crimes of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

It is with these words that the Hon. Abubacarr Tambadou, Attorney General and Minister of Justice of The Gambia, explained his Government’s decision to ratify the *UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)*,¹ at a CTI-facilitated seminar in Banjul in 2018 supporting the Government’s plans for immediate implementation.²

Abuses of the past not to be repeated

One of the priorities of the Gambian Government as it leads the country’s democratic transition is to turn the page on past excesses that had involved arbitrary arrests, detentions without trial, enforced disappearances, torture and other egregious abuses. Gambians want to be assured that these crimes will never be repeated.

That is why the Government launched the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), to deliver truth and justice to the victims and their families, as well as to learn the lessons from the past. It is also why the Government is working to align its constitutional, legal and institutional framework with international justice and human rights standards.

Building confidence in public institutions

The legacy of gross human rights violations calls for institutions, practices and mindsets to change. To this end, the Government has embarked on constitutional and legislative review processes, a comprehensive Security

“States parties in focus” is a series of CTI publications, prepared by the CTI Secretariat, with a view to sharing inspiration and experiences with other States that are considering ratifying the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and/or its Optional Protocol (OPCAT).

Sector Reform, and has been carrying out trainings for its law enforcement, prisons and security agencies on the prohibition and prevention of ill-treatment and on broader adherence to human rights norms. As part of its legislative reforms, the Government is discussing how best to domesticate the Convention’s provisions into national law.

A National Development Plan for 2018-2021 is further guiding Gambian institutions on “restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralization and local governance.”

Advancing the objective of regional universality in Africa

With only three States left to ratify UNCAT in Africa, The Gambia’s ratification constitutes a positive example and a step closer to regional universality.

During a CTI high level side event held in Geneva at the 40th session of the Human Rights Council,³ in February 2019, Ambassador Yusupha Alieu Kah, Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the UN in Geneva, called on the remaining African countries to join the Convention, and to implement it fully, reminding participants of “the need for a collective multilateral approach to ensuring respect for the rule of law”.

For States interested in how the CTI can support ratification and implementation of the Convention, please contact info@cti2024.org.

¹ The Gambia signed UNCAT on 23 October 1985 and ratified on 28 September 2018.

² “Seminar on UNCAT: Dialogue and Cooperation on The Gambia’s post-ratification implementation of UNCAT”, 16-17 October 2018.

³ “Ratifying UNCAT: What benefits for new States parties?”, 25 February 2019.