Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's Refworld website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the Knowledge and Information Management Unit.

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Sources indicate that the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) was founded by Yahya Jammeh (The Gambia 25 Feb. 2016; The Point 10 Nov. 2016). Sources indicate that countries in the region entered Gambia in January 2017 to "oust longtime leader Yahya Jammeh" (Reuters 19 Jan. 2017) or to "compel … Yahya Jammeh to relinquish power to his elected successor Adama Barrow" (AFP 5 June 2017).

Media sources report that, according to the APRC, 51 APRC supporters were arrested on 19 February 2017 in Kafenda village (The Daily Observer 20 Feb. 2017; Reuters 20 Feb. 2017), "a Jammeh stronghold" (Reuters 20 Feb. 2017). The Reuters article further reports that, according to police, the APRC supporters were arrested for "insulting" supporters of the newly elected leader Adama Barrow who were returning from Barrow's inauguration celebration (Reuters 20 Feb. 2017). Similarly, the Daily Observer, the Gambia's "first newspaper … which supports former President Yahya Jammeh and his APRC" (Jollof News 14 Jun. 2017), quotes the police's Public Relations Officer as stating that Barrow's supporters were provoked by one of the arrestees and were assaulted by another one who started "stoning them" (The Daily Observer 20 Feb. 2017). However, the Reuters article quotes the APRC spokesman as stating that the arrestees were "provoked" by Barrow's supporters who "were calling [former President] Jammeh all sorts of names and saying he was a killer" (Reuters 20 Feb. 2017). Similarly, the Daily Observer reports that, according to the APRC, Barrow's supporters started "insulting" the arrestees and Jammeh saying ""APRC are murderers"" (The Daily Observer 20 Feb. 2017). Sources indicate that 26 of the 51 individuals are believed to be juvenile (The Daily Observer 20 Feb. 2017; Reuters 20 Feb. 2017).

A February 2017 article on the same event published in SMBC News, an online news network (SMBC News n.d), indicates that, according to police, 25 of the APRC supporters have been charged, four were released on bail and 19 were "committed to custody" (SMBC News 21 Feb. 2017). Without providing further detail, the February 2017 Reuters article states that the 26 juveniles were "released on bail" (Reuters 20 Feb. 2017). Sources report that the case involving "24 APRC supporters who attacked the coalition convoy at Kafenda" was withdrawn after Inspector S. Sanyang applied, "under section 68 of the Criminal Procedure Code," for the case to be withdrawn on humanitarian grounds (The Fatu Network 14 Mar. 2017; Foroyaa 19 Mar. 2017). The same sources indicate that the Magistrate approved Sanyang's application and discharged "all the accused persons" (The Fatu Network 14 Mar. 2017; Foroyaa 19 Mar. 2017).

Sources report that on 7 April 2017, police arrested 24 APRC supporters and 2 supporters of the United Democratic Party (UDP) at Sibanor village in the Foni Bintang region (The Point 10 Apr. 2017; The Daily Observer 10 Apr. 2017). According to the same sources, the APRC supporters gathered at the compound of Modou Camara [Momodu Camara], the APRC candidate for the National Assembly for Foni Bintang (The Point...
An April 2017 article from The Daily Observer quotes the police's Public Relations Officer as stating that "it is reported that jubilant fans of APRC in their numbers attack[ed] by chanting abusive and foul languages towards the opponents to an extent of stoning in the compounds believe[d] to [belong] to UDP supporters" (The Daily Observer 10 Apr. 2017). The same source quotes Modou Camara as stating that the APRC supporters started celebrating on 6 April 2017 and that the UDP supporters "blocked the way" the APRC supporters were using (The Daily Observer 10 Apr. 2017). Camara further stated that he reported the matter to the police and was told to continue the celebration (The Daily Observer 10 Apr. 2017). The article reports that, according to Camara, the APRC supporters took to the street again on 7 April 2017 to celebrate Camara’s victory, and the UDP supporters again blocked the way they were using, which led to the conflict (The Daily Observer 10 Apr. 2017). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources indicate that a court granted a 5,000 Gambian Dalasis [approximately C$138] bail to the APRC supporters (SMBC News 16 May 2017; Sunu Gambia 16 May 2017).

Agence France Presse reports that supporters of Yahya Jammeh "clashed" with West African forces in Kanilai while protesting over the presence of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) forces in the area on 2 June 2017 [1] (AFP 4 June 2017). A June 2017 article from SMBC News reports that, according to the MP for the Foni Kansala district, Musa Amul Nyassi, the military presence is intimidating the people of the region, who call for its withdrawal (SMBC News 3 June 2017a). According to information on the website of the National Assembly of the Republic of the Gambia, Nyassi is a member of the APRC (Gambia 2017). AFP states that, according to a local resident, 6 protesters were shot by forces of the ECOWAS mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) (AFP 4 June 2017). A June 2017 article published by The Daily Observer states that more than 9 protesters were "allegedly" shot by ECOMIG forces (The Daily Observer 7 June 2017). AFP reports that one person died of gunshot wounds on 3 June 2017 (AFP 4 June 2017). The 3 June 2017 SMBC News article states the following:

Tens of people marching in Kanilai burnt tires, blocked roads leading to [the] village and made their way into Jammeh's abandoned presidential compound pushing over security barricades and passing checkpoints. (SMBC News 3 June 2017a)

Sources indicate that 13 people were arrested in Kanilai (The Daily Observer 5 June 2017; SMBC News 3 June 2017b). Another June 2017 SMBC News article states that at least 25 people were arrested following the incident and that 18 were granted bail of 500,000 Gambian Dalasis [approximately C$13,634], an amount that "most of them" were unable to pay (SMBC News 12 June 2017).

The same article indicates that, according to an APRC militant, an opposition supporter was arrested by police officers over audio and video recordings he sent through WhatsApp "regarding an uproar in his southwestern region" (SMBC News 12 June 2017). The police are reportedly searching for a second man who was sending "reports" through the same platform (SMBC News 12 June 2017). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Without providing further detail, a May 2017 SMBC News article states that there has been "clashes" between "government and opposition supporters ... since the ouster of ... Jammeh" and "[p]rosecutors have
dropped charges against more than 26 opposition supporters this year in 'an effort to foster reconciliation and peace'" (SMBC News 16 May 2017). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Note
[1] In June 2017, media sources reported that ECOWAS extended its military mission in The Gambia for 12 months (Reuters 5 June 2017; AFP 5 June 2017).

References


Reuters. 20 February 2017. Lamin Jaheteh and Nelli Peyton. "Ex-President’s Supporters Arrested as Tensions Flare in Gambia." [Accessed 13 July 2017]


Tips on how to use this search engine.

Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International; ecoinet; Factiva; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; *The Independent*; International Crisis Group; IRIN; *The Standard*; UN – Office of the High Commissioner, Refworld; US – Department of States.