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Gambia : Charges laid against General Lang Tombong Tamba; whether he was convicted; individuals who testified against him, including the position these people occupied and their relationship with General Lang Tombong Tamba (2006 - December 2011)

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Several sources indicate that General Lang Tombong Tamba was convicted twice for the role he played in two attempted coups d'état that took place in 2006 and in 2009 (Europe1 and Reuters 23 May 2011; RNW 23 May 2011; US 8 April 2011, Sec. 1d).

Conviction linked to the 2009 attempted coup d'état

Several sources indicate that General Tamba was one of the eight individuals sentenced to death in July 2010, for having presumably participated in a failed coup d'état in 2009 (RNW 23 May 2011; Europe1 and Reuters 23 May 2011; *Jeune Afrique* 30 July 2010; US 8 April 2011, Sec. 1d). According to Amnesty International (AI), these individuals were arrested in March 2010 and accused of having [translation] "procured weapons, ammunition, material and mercenaries in Guinea, for the purpose of a coup d'état" (13 May 2011). The US Department of State also indicates that these individuals "were accused of ... procuring weapons, and recruiting and training mercenaries in Guinea-Bissau to help them stage a coup," and states that they were arrested in November 2009, but that charges were laid only in March 2010 (US. 8 April 2011, Sec. 1d). The accused reportedly filed an appeal (*ibid.*; *Foroyaa* 9 March 2011; *Daily Observer* 15 April 2011), which was dismissed by the Gambia Court of Appeal on 14 April 2011 (*ibid.*).

According to the online daily newspaper *Foroyaa*, authorities summoned 16 persons to testify against the accused in this matter (9 March 2011), whereas, according to the Banjul *Daily Observer*, 15 witnesses were summoned (15 April 2011). *Foroyaa* adds that there were police and army officers amongst the witnesses, as well as civilians and representatives of four companies, Gamcel, Africell, Comium and Qcell (9 March 2011). Similarly, the Banjul daily *The Point* indicates that the director of information technology at Gamcel, the director of technical services at Comium, and the senior customer service manager at Qcell testified at General Tamba's trial (29 April 2010). During their testimony on April 28, 2010, the three witnesses stated that they had provided the National

Intelligence Agency (NIA) with printed lists of their clients' phone numbers or records of their calls (*The Point* 29 April 2010). Moreover, some regional media note that one person was considered the main witness in the trial (*The Gambia Echo* 22 March 2010; SeneGambia News 24 March 2010). This witness was reportedly a student who lived in Bwiam, a village in the western part of the country (*The Point* 23 March 2010; SeneGambia News 22 March 2010). He claimed that he had been hired by General Tamba to participate in the operation that attempted to overthrow the government (*The Gambia Echo* 22 March 2010), and that he attended three meetings held at the General's residence (*ibid.*; SeneGambia News 22 March 2010). In 2009, the General tasked him with spying on the Farafenni military camp (*The Point* 29 April 2010; SeneGambia 24 March 2010) in preparation for the coup (*ibid.*). Furthermore, General Tamba reportedly took care of him for two years, namely by paying his tuition fees at the Gambia Technical Training Institute (*ibid.* 22 March 2010). Corroborating information on this witness or information on other witnesses at that trial could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to Amnesty International, the proceedings of this trial for treason were [translation] "evidently unfair," because some of the accused and witnesses had been [translation] "tortured" (13 May 2011). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Conviction linked to the attempted coup in 2006

In May 2011, an ad hoc tribunal in Banjul sentenced two former Gambian army officers, including General Tamba, to 20 years in prison for being involved in an attempt to overthrow President Yahya Jammeh in 2006 (Europe1 and Reuters 23 May 2011; RNW 23 May 2011). General Tamba was accused of having known about the coming coup and failing to disclose that information (Afrik.com 24 May 2011; RNW 23 May 2011).

According to an article in the Serrekunda *Daily News*, the prosecution called five individuals, including a major and a captain, to testify at the trial (23 March 2011). Moreover, in October 2010, according to *Foroyaa*, a police officer and a security officer were called by the prosecution to testify (27 Oct. 2010). Corroborating or additional information on the witnesses at this trial could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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.

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