

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES.

Expressing support for a free, fair, and peaceful December 4, 2021, election
in The Gambia.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. COONS, Mr. ROUNDS,
and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was re-
ferred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for a free, fair, and peaceful December
4, 2021, election in The Gambia.

Whereas, in 1965, The Gambia became independent from
Great Britain;

Whereas, in 1970, The Gambia became a republic following
a public referendum, and Dawda Jawara was elected
president and subsequently reelected an additional five
times;

Whereas, from 1970 to 1994, The Gambia was one of Afri-
ca's longest running democracies and home to the con-
tinent's human rights body, the African Commission on
Human and People's Rights;

Whereas, in 1994, President Jawara was forcibly removed
from office in a coup by the Armed Forces Provisional

Ruling Council (AFPRC), led by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh;

Whereas, after two years of direct AFPRC rule that was heavily criticized by the international community, a flawed constitutional reform process occurred and The Gambia scheduled a new presidential election;

Whereas, in the lead up to the September 1996 presidential election, the Jammeh military government outlawed the country's main opposition parties, restricted media freedom, prohibited meetings between rival candidates and foreign diplomats, and used soldiers to attack opposition rallies;

Whereas Jammeh won the 1996 presidential election in a process widely regarded as flawed by international observers;

Whereas President Jammeh won reelection in 2001, 2006, and 2011 in electoral processes marred by political repression, intimidation, and technical flaws;

Whereas Jammeh's presidency saw targeted violence and widespread gross human rights violations, particularly against members of the media, including the murder of editor Deyda Hydera and the disappearance of journalist Ebrima Manneh;

Whereas President Jammeh personally ordered the kidnapping and torture of individuals he accused of "witchcraft" and threatened others over their sexual orientation;

Whereas thousands of Gambians fled into exile out of concern for their safety, becoming refugees in Africa at large and elsewhere;

Whereas the Jammeh government's human rights record was widely criticized by regional and international human rights groups, as well as the United States, European Union, and members of the United States Senate;

Whereas, in December 2016, opposition grand coalition candidate Adama Barrow, who campaigned on the promise of electoral and constitutional reform, won an upset election victory against President Jammeh;

Whereas, immediately after the 2016 election, Jammeh publicly accepted the defeat, but then later rejected the results and refused to depart the presidency;

Whereas Jammeh's refusal to accept defeat was widely condemned, with the African Union refusing to recognize him as president and the Economic Community of West African States deploying an international intervention force to The Gambia;

Whereas, on January 19, 2017, Barrow was sworn in as president at the Gambian Embassy in Senegal;

Whereas, on January 20, 2017, Jammeh and his family departed The Gambia, reportedly stealing more than \$1,000,000,000 from state coffers, eventually to appear in Equatorial Guinea, where he remains in political exile with impunity;

Whereas President Barrow initially agreed to limit his term to a three-year transition ending on January 19, 2020, but later stated his intent to serve the full five-year constitutional term;

Whereas the Gambian Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) was established by an act of the Gambian Parliament to examine abuses committed dur-

ing the Jammeh era and make recommendations as to whom to hold accountable;

Whereas more than 370 victims and former government officials testified at widely viewed TRRC hearings that documented widespread human rights abuses;

Whereas the TRRC's anticipated September 2021 final report submission to President Barrow was delayed; and

Whereas The Gambia will hold the first post-Jammeh era presidential election on December 4, 2021, which will include six presidential candidates: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) congratulates the Gambian people on the
3 successful 2016 presidential election;

4 (2) supports the courageous and necessary work
5 of the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Com-
6 mission to bring accountability, healing, and rec-
7 onciliation to the nation;

8 (3) calls on all parties and presidential can-
9 didates to participate in a free, fair, credible, and
10 peaceful December 4, 2021, presidential election in
11 The Gambia; and

12 (4) expresses the support of the American peo-
13 ple in The Gambia's continued and noteworthy
14 democratic path forward.