



INTRODUCTION

This report offers a summary of activities of the National Assembly of The Gambia spanning from Wednesday, 1st November to Wednesday, 15th November 2023, comprising of two Sittings of the First Extra-Ordinary Session in the 2023 Legislative Year, Committee Sittings and field visits conducted by Committees.

HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY OBSERVATIONS

Below are some highlights of what happened in the National Assembly during the period under review.

Bills

##	Title	Date Presented	Stage of Bill/Paper
1.	The Victims Reparation Bill, 2023	1/11/2023	The Bill was presented and swiftly approved under the Certificate of Urgency provision, necessitating a thorough examination by the Committee of the Whole Assembly.
2.	The Ban From Public Office (TRRC) Bill, 2023	01/11/2023	The Bill was presented and swiftly approved under the Certificate of Urgency provision, necessitating a thorough examination by the Committee of the Whole Assembly.
3.	The Former Presidents Bill, 2023	02/11/2023	The Bill was presented and swiftly approved under the Certificate of Urgency provision, necessitating a thorough examination by the Committee of the Whole Assembly, where each clause was scrutinized.
4.	The Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Bill, 2023	02/11/2023	The Bill was presented and swiftly approved under the Certificate of Urgency provision, necessitating a thorough examination by the Committee of the Whole Assembly

Committee Sittings

- The National Assembly Select Committee on Agriculture conducted a Social Audit on November 6, 2023, focusing on the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture in the Central River Region North & South.
- On November 8, 2023, the Select Committee on Education, Training, and ICT initiated an oversight tour to schools in the Greater Banjul Areas. This tour is part of their ongoing commitment to monitoring and enhancing educational and training institutions, providing valuable insights to the Select Committee and empowering them with firsthand experiences for informed decision-making

- On November 13, 2023, a joint committee comprising Regional Government, Lands, the Ombudsman and IEC, and Human Rights & Constitutional Matters engaged in discussions with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) concerning the Election Bill 2021.
- The Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) collaborated with the National Audit Office for a briefing on the Submission Review, conducted on November 15, 2023.
- The Select Committee on Monitoring of Government Projects, with support from the International Republican Institute (IRI), is actively conducting Social Audit and Public Hearings on the construction of key national infrastructures. The focus is on the Ministry of Transport, Works, and Infrastructure, specifically assessing the construction progress of the 22km Bertil Harding Highway and associated 50km Urban Road Projects.

NAMs Statements

- In his opening statement, the Honorable Speaker expressed gratitude to the National Youth Parliament for delving into crucial and significant issues concerning the youth and the overall development of this great country during their deliberations.
- The honorable Member for Nianija referenced standing orders, emphasizing that, as per the standing orders, no bill should progress through all its stages in less than 9 days.
- During the approval of votes and proceedings, the Honorable Member for Sabach Sanjal emphasized the need to refer to members simply as "Honorable Member" with the constituency, instead of explicitly mentioning their party affiliation
- The honorable Member for Nianija underscored Parliament's legislative powers, asserting that they bear the responsibility of ensuring that legislation serves the best interests of the country. He specifically addressed the significance of the Former Presidents Bill.
- The Honorable Member for Banjul South, Ms. Touma Njie, stressed her role in the Constitutional Matters Committee and expressed disappointment that the Former Presidents Bill, a crucial piece of legislation, was denied proper scrutiny by being brought in under the certificate of urgency.
- The Deputy Speaker stated that it will be recorded in history that they chose to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law within the Office of the President. Those occupying the position will no longer have to dread, among other things, the prospect of destitution and beggary upon leaving office.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- The legislative work during the first week of the First Extra Ordinary Sessions featured the passage of significant bills, notably the Victims Reparation Bill, the Ban From Public Office (TRRC) Bill, the Former Presidents Bill, and the Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Bill.
- Several members of Parliament were absent during the extraordinary sessions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Despite legislative progress, concerns were raised about the swift process of certain bills, urging thorough scrutiny to uphold transparency and prevent potential issues.
- Consideration should be given to concerns about the stipulated timeframe in the standing orders to ensure a more comprehensive and deliberate legislative process.