



PRESS STATEMENT: 03 October 2013

Statement on The Gambia's withdrawal from the Commonwealth

Director of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Michael Lake, has today reaffirmed that the modern Commonwealth is an association of mutual interest amongst equal states, following The Gambia's unexpected withdrawal from the Commonwealth on Wednesday.

Mr Lake said: "The Gambia's abrupt departure from the Commonwealth will be a loss felt by both its people and the wider Commonwealth network.

"The unexpected announcement made on state television by President Yahya Jammeh was seemingly made without recourse to due democratic process and without consulting The Gambia's people or diaspora.

"Far from being a 'neo-colonial institution', the modern Commonwealth operates on a consensus model and its voluntary membership is predicated primarily on a country's commitment to upholding shared values and principles, and developing the circumstances of all peoples of the countries of its members.

"The Royal Commonwealth Society and fellow international organisations will be following developments in The Gambia and carefully scrutinising the separation of powers and freedom from interference by Government of the media, the judiciary and internal security forces."

Notes to Editors

The Royal Commonwealth Society is the oldest and largest civil society organisation devoted to the Commonwealth. Founded in 1868, it conducts a range of events, research and activities aimed at promoting international understanding. The RCS has a global membership and a presence in over 40 Commonwealth countries through a network of branches and Commonwealth societies. The RCS is a registered charity in England and Wales. (226748).

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