

PRESS RELEASE



AFRICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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AFRICAN BAR ASSOCIATION WRITES ECOWAS COMMUNITY PRESIDENT, ASKS HIM TO INTERVENE IN VENEZUELAN DIPLOMAT'S CASE WITH CAPE VERDE

March 31, 2021

The President
ECOWAS Commission
ECOWAS Secretariat
114 Yakubu Gowon Crescent
Asokoro, Abuja.

Your Excellency,

PETITION AGAINST CAPE VERDE ON REFUSAL TO OBEY ECOWAS COMMUNITY COURT JUDGMENT

On behalf of the **African Bar Association (AFBA)**, I send you warm felicitations and best wishes.

Your Excellency, we respectfully bring to your notice for your urgent action the reprehensible conduct of Cape Verde, a member Country of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** in her treatment with contempt and disdain, the judgment of the ECOWAS Community Court in the case of **Ambassador Alex Saab V Cape Verde**.

While the African Bar Association as a body is not directly involved in the case, it has a duty as a professional body of Lawyers who defend the Rule of Law and Constitutionality in the Continent especially in the ECOWAS Sub-region to see that Human Rights and the Rule of Law are respected especially when dealing with Foreigners.

Your Excellency, the African Bar Association received a Petition sometime in **February, 2021** from **Mrs. Camila Fabbri** wife of a Venezuelan Diplomat **Ambassador Alex Saab** who was and still being detained by the Government of Cape Verde illegally without an Interpol Red Notice or any other international arrest warrant. Ambassador Saab we were told in the Petition was in an Aircraft on a humanitarian mission to Iran to get food supplies for the Venezuelan Government and had stopped to refuel in Cape Verde.

The Human Rights Committee of the Association went on to do a thorough investigation which corroborated some basic facts pleaded by Mrs. Fabbri.

Although, the ECOWAS Court which was later approached to enforce Ambassador Saab's Human rights and diplomatic immunity gave an order that the Diplomat in the interim pending the final determination be put under House arrest with access to his Lawyers, Doctors and family members, the Government of Cape Verde refused to obey the legitimate order despite the fact that they were represented in Court by their Legal Counsels and Cape Verde has a serving Judge in the ECOWAS Court.

Your Excellency, the Court delivered judgment on the **15th day of March, 2021** and amongst other reliefs ordered the Government of Cape Verde to immediately release Ambassador Saab and pay him compensation in the sum of **Two Hundred Thousand US Dollars (\$200,000)**.

Your Excellency, more than two (2) weeks after the Court's judgment, the authorities in Cape Verde have failed, refused and or neglected to obey the legitimate order of the ECOWAS Court in which Cape Verde prides itself as a member.

Very respectfully, we find this distasteful and an affront on the authority of ECOWAS which must be decisively addressed in order not to bring the authority to disrepute.

It is the respectful view of the African Bar Association that willful and unlawful disobedience of the Machinery of Justice in the Sub-region back-tracts Africa to the dark ages and does not portray the Sub-region in good light. It is also capable of destroying the Court and making it a laughing stock.

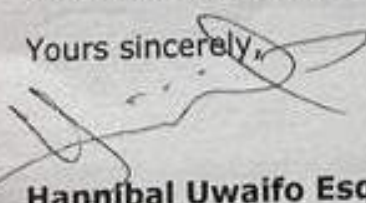
Once faith is lost in the Court, this old long standing respectable organization may be brought to disrepute especially in the eyes of Foreigners who may believe wrongly that our Justice System is unreliable.

Consequently, we request that you use your good office to call Cape Verde to immediately and unconditionally obey the judgment of the Court and release Ambassador Alex Saab forthwith.

Your Excellency, the Rule of Law is the mechanism, process, institution, practice or norm that supports the equality of all Citizens before the Law, secures a non-arbitrary form of Government and more generally prevents the arbitrary use of power.

While thanking the ECOWAS Commission for your quick kind intervention, please accept the assurances of our high regards.

Yours sincerely,


Hannibal Uwaifo Esq. (LL.M, MNIM, MCI Arb)
President