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### Senegal – Arbitrary arrest and detention of human rights defender Pape Alé Niang

On 2 December 2022, human rights defender **Pape Alé Niang** began a hunger strike to denounce his arbitrary arrest and detention at the Sebikotane prison. On 9 November 2022, human rights defender was charged with "disclosure of information likely to harm National Defence", "concealment of administrative and military documents" and "dissemination of false news likely to discredit public institutions". On 6 November 2022, Pape Alé Niang was arbitrarily arrested for the publication of an article on judicial proceedings against the main opposition leader.

[Pape Alé Niang](#) is a human rights defender and investigative journalist. The human rights defender is also the director of the information website Dakar Matin, and is known for this regular articles on Senegalese news – denouncing corruption, bad governance and defending civil and political rights.

On 2 December 2022, human rights defender Pape Alé Niang started a hunger strike, until further notice, to denounce his arbitrary arrest and detention at the Sebikotane prison. The human rights defender also announced that he will refuse any medical care from the prison medical services.

On 9 November 2022, the human right defender was charged by the prosecutor with "disclosure of information likely to harm National Defence", "concealment of administrative and military documents" and "dissemination of false news likely to discredit public institutions". Reportedly, the arrest is linked to the human rights defender's publication on the accusation of rape against the primary Senegalese opponent Ousmane Sonko. No trial date has been scheduled. On 6 November 2022, the human rights defender was arbitrarily arrested and held in the premises of the Urban Security services in Dakar. Pape Alé Niang was then transferred the following day to the Sebikotane prison, located 41 km from Dakar, where he is still detained.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned by the deterioration of the civic space in Senegal, especially the freedom of the press. Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the detention of Pape Alé Niang and the charges brought against him, as it strongly believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his human rights work.

#### Front Line Defenders urges the authorities of Senegal to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Pape Alé Niang and drop all charges against him, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held and charged solely as a result of peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
2. Ensure the psychological and physical integrity of the human rights defender while in detention;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all journalist and human rights defenders in Senegal are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear or reprisals and free of all restrictions, including arbitrary arrest and judicial harassment.