

**Statement of Solidarity of the “Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance”
(MFDC) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic**

Aware of the exceptional seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, we, **the Provisional Committee and the Unified Armed Wings of the Movement of the Democratic Forces of Casamance**, declare the following:

The COVID-19 pandemic affects us all. It indiscriminately threatens our fighters, our communities, our nations and beyond. Even if Africa seems to be less severely affected by the disease than other continents, the economic consequences from preventive measures are devastating for our young nations.

In the spirit of solidarity and responsibility during these exceptional times, we commit to:

1. **Reduce our military operations to support** the authorities and humanitarian organisations in tackling this pandemic,
2. **Respect International Humanitarian Law** by sparing and protecting the civilian population and **guaranteeing the safety** of health authorities, medical personnel and humanitarian organisations in their response to the pandemic and assistance to the most vulnerable,
3. **Promote peaceful co-existence** in cooperation with community leaders to prevent and resolve conflicts through dialogue and mediation,
4. **Actively cooperate with health authorities** by notifying them of the sick showing symptoms of COVID-19 (headaches, fever, cough), so that they are taken care of and are isolated to protect their loved ones. We stand in solidarity with the medical personnel who take significant risks to treat the sick,
5. **Comply with the preventive measures** adopted by the health authorities concerning personal hygiene, limiting non-essential movements or meetings,
6. **Actively promote** preventive measures and other precautions among our communities,
7. **Refrain from spreading rumors** and information from unofficial sources, and refer exclusively to the guidelines of health authorities and the main humanitarian agencies (WHO, IOM, ICRC, HI and MSF).

We ask the Government of Senegal and its partners to be alongside the populations during this difficult period, and the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue to work in its capacity as a neutral intermediary in order to facilitate the flow of health, security and humanitarian aid information between the MFDC and the Senegalese authorities.

We have always fought to protect our communities, let us show ourselves worthy of their trust through this ordeal.

Signed

Lansana FABOURE
Bignona, 16 April 2020