

DAY OF SHAME

“ECOWAS MUST SPEAK UP AND SUPPORT THE SANCTITY OF ECOWAS COURT” – FEMI FALANA

COMMENTS COME AS CAPE VERDE SHOWS CONTEMPT FOR COURT’S DECISION DECLARING ALEX SAAB DETENTION AND EXTRADITION ILLEGAL

In a decision which can only be described as “extraordinary and unprecedented” Cape Verde’s Supreme Court decided that the extradition of Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab could proceed. The decision was handed down in direct defiance of the ruling made by the ECOWAS Court of Justice on Monday.

The ECOWAS Court ruled on Monday that Alex Saab, who was detained on 12 June 2020 on the Cape Verde island of Sal whilst undertaking a humanitarian Special Mission, must be released immediately and the extradition process initiated at the request of the United States, stopped. According to the court’s decision there was no Red Notice in place when Alex Saab was arrested making both the arrest and all subsequent actions illegal.

“This is an extraordinary and unprecedented act of disobedience by Cape Verde. It is a Day of Shame for ECOWAS” commented Femi Falana, SAN, who led Alex Saab’s ECOWAS defense team. “There can be no debate about the binding nature of the ECOWAS Court’s decision on Cape Verde. I call upon members of the ECOWAS Commission to stand up make clear their opposition to the behaviour of Cape Verde. If the Commission wants the highest human rights court in ECOWAS to continue to command the respect of not just the community but all of Africa, then it is imperative that senior officials condemn the actions of Cape Verde. I also call upon the ECOWAS Heads of State to convey their concern and displeasure at the shameful actions of Cape Verde”

“In approving the extradition, Cape Verde is destroying the entire global diplomatic order and the sanctity of diplomatic missions which has been established over several centuries. For the Supreme Court to deliver a ruling which serves no purpose but satisfy the political avarice of others is very disappointing” commented Dr Jose-Manuel Pinto Monteiro who has been leading Alex Saab’s defense team in Cape Verde.

It is now up to the ECOWAS Commission to speak up and preserve the integrity and independence of its own Court. Cape Verde must not be allowed to subvert the judicial organ of ECOWAS without appropriate sanctions.

The defense will now appeal today’s decision to the Cape Verde Constitution Court and is exploring all other legal options to bring an end to the illegal arrest and extradition process being conducted against Alex Saab.