**ALEX SAAB DEFENCE CAUTIOUSLY WLECOMES COURT DECSION TO ALLOW HIM TO MOVE TO CAPE VERDE CAPITAL CITY OF PRAIA**

**DEFENSE TEAM QUESTIONS WHY IT HAS TAKEN SO LONG AND MOTIVES OF TIMING**

The Defense Team of Alex Saab notes that on 1 September the Barlavento Court of Appeal (TRB) granted a request made by Venezuelan diplomat Alex Saab that the site of his detention be moved to Praia from the Island of Sal.

Dr Jose Manuel Pinto Monteiro, head of Alex Saab’s local defence team, has cautiously welcomed the decision and commented *“The Court itself notes that the deterioration of Alex Saab’s health is a matter of concern and needs attention. We have highlighted this from the very outset and question why it has taken the Court nearly a year to recognise this. As long ago as 2 December the ECOWAS Court of Justice took note that Alex Saab was a cancer patient and ruled he should be granted unrestricted access to specialist physicians of his choice. Unfortunately, rather than focus on the humanitarian needs of Alex Saab the Cape Verde authorities decided to politicise a health matter and focussed instead on the jurisdiction of the ECOWAS Court to rule on Mr Saab’s application.*

*The United Nations Human Rights Committee ordered on 8 June and again 16 June that Alex Saab be granted unrestricted access to specialist medical attention and the halting of any extradition, but once again the Cape Verde authorities elected to politicise the matter rather than demonstrate the compassion which the TRB espouses in its decision of yesterday.”*

Whilst the Defense Team cannot speculate on the timing of the TRB’s decision, the basic rational provided in its ruling has been known to everyone, including the Court, for more than a year. The illegal detention of Alex Saab is garnering significant international scrutiny which, along with Cabo Verde’s failure to comply with the decisions of the ECOWAS Court and the United Nations, is having an impact on Cabo Verde’s global reputation. Public opinion in Cabo Verde is very much behind Alex Saab. There is a groundswell of support and many question why Cabo Verde is involved in in the detention of a diplomat and a matter which centres around a clearly political dispute between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the United States.

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