

# Senegalese editor Coulibaly convicted in defamation case

NEW YORK: A magistrate in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, found investigative journalist Abdou Latif Coulibaly guilty of criminal defamation on Thursday, 14 April 2011, in connection with 2010 stories alleging fraudulent transactions between an agricultural business and the government, according to local journalists.



Coulibaly is already appealing a suspended prison term in connection with a separate defamation case.

Coulibaly, editor of *La Gazette*, a private weekly critical of the government, was sentenced to a three-month suspended term, according to local journalists. The magistrate also ordered the journalist to pay 10 million CFA francs (US\$21,500) to Abbas Jaber, chief executive officer of the agricultural business Suneor, who filed the complaint. The charges stemmed from stories alleging irregularities in Suneor's transactions with the government, a claim the company denied. Coulibaly is expected to appeal today's ruling, journalists said.

"A democracy such as Senegal should not be resorting to criminal defamation statutes to jail and silence critical journalists," said CPJ Africa advocacy coordinator Mohamed Keita. "We urge the appeals court to overturn this criminal conviction."

In November 2010, a magistrate handed Coulibaly a suspended two-month prison sentence and ordered him to pay 10 million CFA francs in damages to presidential adviser Thierno Ousmane Sy over stories alleging malfeasance in a mobile telecom deal, according to CPJ research.

*Article published courtesy of [CPJ](#)*