



European Asylum Support Office

EASO Country of Origin Information Report

The Gambia Country Focus



December 2017

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EASO

Country of Origin Information Report

The Gambia

Country Focus

December 2017

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- Norway – Landinfo
- The Netherlands – Office for Country Information and Language Analysis, Immigration and Naturalisation Service

[David Perfect](#), Visiting Professor at the University of Chester-UK, researcher on The Gambia's politics and history since the 1980s, and author of numerous publications on the country -, reviewed this report.

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2012)⁽¹⁾. The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced. To the extent possible and unless otherwise stated, all information presented, except for undisputed or obvious facts, has been cross-checked.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as a generic terminology and not as legally defined in the EU Asylum Acquis and the Geneva Convention.

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

The target users are asylum caseworkers, COI researchers, policymakers, and decision-making authorities.

The drafting of this report was finalised in 27 July 2017. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. The exceptions to this cut-off date were made during the peer-reviewing process completed on 30 November 2017, and are clearly identified in [Bibliography](#). More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the [Methodology](#) section of the introduction.

⁽¹⁾ The EASO methodology is largely based on the Common EU Guidelines for processing Country of Origin Information (COI), 2008, and can be downloaded from the EASO website – COI Methodologies and Guides (<https://www.easo.europa.eu/information-analysis/country-origin-information/coi-methodology-and-guides>).

Glossary and Abbreviations

22 nd July Movement	Youth organisation of the APRC, founded on 22 July 1995. The movement became a mass organisation, and therefore dangerous to Jammeh, so he dissolved it in 1999 ⁽²⁾ .
AFPRC	Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council
AGOA	US African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
<i>Alkalo</i>	Village chief
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GAF	Gambia Armed Forces
GAMBIS	The Gambia Biometric Identification System
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ration
GNA	Gambia National Army
GNG	Gambia National Gendarmerie
GNI	Gross National Income
GPF	Gambia Police Force
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
Green Boys	Youth group that arose from the 22 nd July Movement; they were the military wing of the ruling APRC party, known as <i>Green Boys</i> because green is the party colour of APRC. Jammeh officially dissolved the group in 1999 ⁽³⁾ .
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission

⁽²⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 252.

⁽³⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 192, 252; Washington Post (The), 5 crazy things about the Gambian dictator who just survived a coup attempt, 6 January 2015 ([url](#)); AllAfrica / Daily Observer (The), Gambia: 'GreenBoys' Clarify, 11 February 2007 ([url](#)); Guardian (The), Gambian state kidnaps 1'000 villagers in mass purge of 'witchcraft', 19 March 2009 ([url](#)); Wazaonline, The Gambia's secret torture chambers, 12 March 2010 ([url](#)); Small Arms Survey, *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in The Ecowas Region*, 29 April 2005 ([url](#)), pp. 263-265.

<i>Junglers</i>	Paramilitary unit of ex-president Jammeh (also known as <i>Black Blacks, Black Boys or Ninja</i>). They were known as ‘black’ because they often dressed in black and covered their faces ⁽⁴⁾ .
LBE	Lower basic education
LGA	Local government areas
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
NALA	National Agency for Legal Aid
NDEA	National Drug Enforcement Agency
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NIN	National Identification Number
NYC	National Youth Council
<i>Operation Bulldozer</i>	The Gambia’s zero tolerance campaign to reduce violent crime, launched by Jammeh in May 2012. LGBT persons were specifically targeted by this campaign ⁽⁵⁾
PPP	People’s Progressive Party
<i>Seyfo</i>	District authority chief
SIS	State Intelligence Service
SSE	Senior secondary education
UBE	Upper basic education
UDP	United Democratic Party
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Developments
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America

⁽⁴⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia’s ‘unprecedented’ 2016 Election, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁾ HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)).

Introduction

This report was drafted by the Country of Origin Information (COI) unit of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) and provides a summary of the SEM's findings on selected topics regarding The Gambia.

This report was translated into English. An extended quality review was performed by COI specialists from EU+ countries, by an external expert and by EASO. All drafters and reviewers are mentioned in the [Acknowledgements](#) section.

There are still some gaps in the information. These relate to contradictory or out-of-date information, for example in relation to the administrative structure and military forces. The information about identity papers and civil register records is incomplete. While statements of intent by the new government are well documented, reliable information about concrete implementation measures is often lacking.

A change of course commenced with the election of Adama Barrow as the new President of The Gambia in December 2016, bringing new challenges in terms of the assessment of sources: a large number of publications, especially concerning human rights, have been published or researched under the regime of ex-president Jammeh. It is still difficult to assess the stage that the expected reforms have reached and how long-lasting they will be. Gambian daily newspapers, which have followed the reform process attentively and critically since the change of government, are an important source of information and are given a corresponding amount of space. However, they comment on ongoing developments rather than being able to engage in analytical systematisation. More extensive analyses of the new government policy have yet to be undertaken.

This study therefore merely represents an initial inventory during a period of rapid change when the power relationships are still uncertain.

Methodology

Defining the Terms of Reference

In a 'Country Focus' report, EASO aims to provide information focusing on 'selected topics' of particular relevance for international protection status determination (Refugee Status and Subsidiary Protection) for Gambian applicants. It is not meant to be a general description of the human rights situation in the country, nor a comprehensive overview of all topics at stake in international protection status determination.

The terms of reference (ToR) reflect the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration need for information on:

- General background information on The Gambia (geography, population, ethnic and religious groups, political and judicial systems);
- The human right's situation in The Gambia during the Jammeh administration;
- The developments under the new Gambian administration, particularly concerning human rights. Collecting information

This country focus is largely based on academic publications relating to The Gambia. Research work from various fields such as anthropology and politics, as well as handbooks and

overviews, are the most important sources of information for the General information and State structure and politics sections.

Statistics from the Gambian administration were also an important source of information, with the Gambian Bureau of Statistics periodically publishing a Statistical Abstract. Publications by international or non-governmental organisations and from national, international and diaspora media provided other data. Additional information was obtained from Gambian diplomatic representations in Europe.

All consulted sources are listed in the [Bibliography](#).

The peer-reviewing process of this Country Focus report on The Gambia occurred between 13 September 2017 and 30 November 2017. During that process, information from a limited number of sources was added to the text, with the purpose of complementing or updating the existing draft. These sources and information used are clearly identified by their access dates in the [Bibliography](#).

Quality control

In order to ensure that the authors respected the EASO COI Report Methodology, a quality review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgments](#), and by EASO. In addition, an external reviewer – [Dr. David Perfect](#) –, has also reviewed the report. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report.

Structure of the report

This report is divided into three main chapters: the first provides general background information on topics like geography, population, administration, state structure or the security forces in The Gambia. The second chapter describes the situation of the former government officials, and the third and last chapter provides an insight on the human rights situation under ex-President Yahya Jammeh. Developments since the change of government in January 2017 are available throughout the document.

Map 1



Map 1: CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) ⁽⁶⁾

⁽⁶⁾ CIA, The World Factbook, The Gambia, page last updated 19 September 2017 ([url](#)).

1. Background information

1.1. Geography and climate

The Gambia is the smallest country on the African mainland. With an area of 11,295 km² it is quarter the size of Switzerland or The Netherlands. The country follows the course of the Gambia River for a distance of 375 kilometres and extends into the interior on both sides of the river. The average width of the country is 24 kilometres, but the area around the estuary and the lower river is almost 50 km wide. Apart from the 80 km long Atlantic coastal line in the west, The Gambia is completely surrounded by the Republic of Senegal, which is seventeen times larger. ⁽⁷⁾

The landscape is shaped by the Gambia River, which flows from east to west. It rises in Guinea, meanders in many bends towards the Atlantic and has numerous tributaries, islands and peninsulas. It forms an estuary before flowing into the Atlantic close to Banjul, the capital of The Gambia. The estuary area consists of mangrove swamps. The landscape in The Gambia is generally flat, with the highest elevations reaching less than 60 metres. The gentle gradient means that salt water flows inland for over 150 kilometres. ⁽⁸⁾

Along the Atlantic coast, the climate is oceanic with small temperature differences between day and night and between summer and winter. In the interior the climate is tropical, characterised by a marked rainy and dry season. The rainy season lasts from about June to October and the dry season from November to May. During the rainy season, the river floods the lowlands, leaving behind fertilising silt. The dry period is determined by the *Harmattan*, a dry wind from the Sahara. ⁽⁹⁾

The geographical features are also reflected in the national flag. Red symbolises the sun, blue the Gambia River, green agriculture, white peace and unity: ⁽¹⁰⁾

⁽⁷⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 524.

⁽⁸⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Atlas of 2003 Population and Housing Census, 2006 ([url](#)), p. 8; Transafrika, Gambia, Länderinfo, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁹⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 524; Jaiteh, Malanding S., and Sarr, Baboucarr, Climate Change and Development in the Gambia, 2011 ([url](#)); Transafrika, Gambia, Länderinfo, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Flag of the Gambia, 2 September 2001 ([url](#)); The flag of The Gambia was adopted at independence in 1965. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 171.



Image 1: The flag of The Gambia (© SEM, Division Analysis, Switzerland).

1.2. Recent history

For many centuries, the northern and southern areas along the Gambia River belonged to various Mandinka kingdoms of the Mali Empire.⁽¹¹⁾ Among the European colonial powers, the British, Portuguese and French in particular fought for supremacy over *Senegambia*, the area between the Gambia and Senegal Rivers. Bathurst (which became later Banjul) and surroundings became a British colony, while the rest of the country became a protectorate of Great Britain.⁽¹²⁾ The border between The Gambia, which was originally British, and Senegal, which was then French, was established at the end of the 19th century and remained globally identical apart from some minor adjustments made in the 1970s. The unusual boundary line runs parallel to the Gambia River, a central West African trading route for slaves and goods. For centuries, Senegambia was a centre of the West African slave trade. The British banned the trade in 1807 but internal slave trade continued until the end of the 19th century.⁽¹³⁾

On 18 February 1965 The Gambia gained independence and became a sovereign state of the Commonwealth. Following a referendum in 1970, The Gambia became a republic.⁽¹⁴⁾ The president of the First Republic was the former Prime Minister, Dawda Jawara. He was re-elected five times by 1994.⁽¹⁵⁾

In 1981 Jawara defeated a bloody attempted coup with the aid of Senegalese troops. He then built up his own army and united The Gambia with Senegal in the Senegambia Confederation. This confederation lasted until 1989.⁽¹⁶⁾

⁽¹¹⁾ Sarr, Assan, *Islam, Power, and Dependency in the Gambia River Basin*, 2016, pp. 21-22; Quinn, Charlotte A., *Mandigo Kingdoms of the Senegambia*, 1972.

⁽¹²⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 91; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound, Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa*, 2015, p. 24.

⁽¹³⁾ The borders of The Gambia were defined in 1889 in an agreement between Great Britain and France. Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 2-8, 347, 401; Saine, Abdoulaye, *Culture and Customs of Gambia*, 2012, p. 3; Barry, Boubacar, *Senegambia and the Atlantic slave trade*, 1998, pp. 5-25, 303-314; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Migration, Soninké Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind (The Gambia)*, March 2010, pp. 35-37; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound, Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa*, 2015, p. 24.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Hughes, Arnold and Perfect, David, *A Political History of The Gambia, 1816-1994*, 2006, pp. 175-177.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 524; Perfect, David and Hughes, Arnold, *Gambian Electoral Politics: 1960-2012*, 2013, pp. 79-111.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 524. Hughes, Arnold and Perfect, David, *A Political History of The Gambia, 1816-1994*, 2006, pp. 261-265.

In 1994 Yahya Jammeh came to power in a bloodless military coup. ⁽¹⁷⁾ For two years, the country was run by the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) led by Jammeh. In 1996 Jammeh was confirmed as president in elections and re-elected in 2001, 2006 and 2011. ⁽¹⁸⁾ He and his party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) ⁽¹⁹⁾, have dominated the country ever since. In 2013 Jammeh announced the country's immediate withdrawal from the Commonwealth. ⁽²⁰⁾ In 2015 he declared The Gambia an Islamic Republic²¹. In 2016 he announced the country's exit from the International Criminal Court. ⁽²²⁾

In a surprise result, Jammeh was defeated in the presidential election in December 2016. Instead the opposition candidate, Adama Barrow, was elected as president. Jammeh initially accepted his defeat, but after a few days he contested the result of the election due to alleged irregularities and declared a state of emergency. ⁽²³⁾ The country found itself in a constitutional crisis. ⁽²⁴⁾ International protests, weeks of negotiations and the intervention of troops from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), legitimated by a resolution of the UN Security Council ⁽²⁵⁾, brought the crisis to an end without bloodshed. ⁽²⁶⁾ As the crisis intensified, at least 45,000 Gambians left the country temporarily and sought protection in Senegal. ⁽²⁷⁾ On 19 January 2017 Barrow took the oath of office at the Gambian

⁽¹⁷⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh: An Assessment*, 12 March 2010 ([url](#)), pp. 53-54; Hughes, Arnold and Perfect, David, *A Political History of The Gambia, 1816-1994*, 2006, pp. 280-290; Saine, Abdoulaye S.M., *The Coup d'Etat in The Gambia, 1994: the End of the First Republic*, 1996, pp. 97-111; Sarr, Samsudeen, *Coup d'Etat by the Gambia National Army*, 2007.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 524; Perfect, David, *The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh: An Assessment*, 12 March 2010 ([url](#)), pp. 36-37, 54-56; Perfect, David and Hughes, Arnold, *Gambian Electoral Politics: 1960-2012*, 2013, pp. 79-111; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 36-37.

⁽¹⁹⁾ On the APRC, see Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 31-32.

⁽²⁰⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 92-93; Perfect, David, *The Gambia's Withdrawal from the Commonwealth*, 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 331-333.

⁽²¹⁾ US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 215.

⁽²²⁾ EUISS, *Beyond the ICC exit crisis*, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); Al-Jazeera, *Gambia withdraws from International Criminal Court*, 26 October 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽²³⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 323-337; Hultin, Niklas, et al., *Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election*, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 321-340.

⁽²⁴⁾ Library of Congress, *Gambia: State of Emergency Lifted*, 30 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁵⁾ UN Security Council, *Resolution 2337, Peace consolidation in West Africa*, 19 January 2017 ([url](#)); Kress, Claus, and Nussberger, Benjamin, *Pro-democratic intervention in current international law: the case of The Gambia in January 2017*, June 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 1-11.

⁽²⁶⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 323-337; Hultin, Niklas, et al., *Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election*, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 321-340; Kress, Claus, and Nussberger, Benjamin, *Zur pro-demokratischen Intervention im Völkerrecht der Gegenwart. Der Fall Gambia im Januar 2017*, 25 April 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 213-227; Hartmann, Christof, *ECOWAS and the Restoration of Democracy in The Gambia*, January 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 85-99. NZZ, *22 Jahre reichen Gambias Diktator doch nicht*, 10 December 2016 ([url](#)); BBC, *Gambia's new President Adama Barrow arrives home*, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁷⁾ Estimates suggest that between 45,000 and 76,000 people temporarily sought protection in Senegal. UNHCR, *Senegal: Around 45,000 have fled political uncertainty in The Gambia*, 20 January 2017 ([url](#)); UNHCR, *As Gambia crisis passes, displaced return from Senegal*, 24 January 2017 ([url](#)); Hartmann, Christof, *ECOWAS and the Restoration of Democracy in The Gambia*, January 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 85-99; African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (The), *In Defense of Democracy: Lessons from ECOWAS' Management of The Gambia's 2016 Post-Election Impasse*, January 2017 ([url](#)).

Embassy in Senegal. On 21 January 2017 Jammeh left the country and went into exile in Equatorial Guinea. On 26 January 2017 Barrow returned to The Gambia. ⁽²⁸⁾

In his first statements, Barrow announced that The Gambia would return to the Commonwealth and the International Criminal Court and was no longer an Islamic Republic. ⁽²⁹⁾

1.3. Population, ethnic groups, languages

The Gambia is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. ⁽³⁰⁾ According to the 2013 census, the country had a population of 1.857,181. ⁽³¹⁾ A current estimate puts the population at 2,051,363 in July 2017- of these, 60% are younger than 25. ⁽³²⁾ Life expectancy in 2013 was 61.8 years for men and 66.5 years for women. ⁽³³⁾

58% of the population lives in cities and suburbs. ⁽³⁴⁾ The three local government areas Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama at the mouth of the Gambia River are the centre of business and tourism. In general, they have better infrastructure than the other areas. They also have the country's best healthcare facilities and schools. The Kanifing and Brikama LGAs have the highest population, while the Kanifing and Banjul LGAs are the most densely populated. ⁽³⁵⁾

The capital of The Gambia is Banjul with an estimated population of 31,000 in 2013. ⁽³⁶⁾ Other important cities are Serrekunda and Brikama. Up-to-date official population figures for the cities are unavailable as the censuses collect data for the local government areas and districts but not for the cities. ⁽³⁷⁾

1.3.1. Ethnic groups

The most important ethnic groups in The Gambia are:

⁽²⁸⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Jammeh Leaves Power, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21275-21277; NZZ, Jammeh verkündet Rücktritt, 21 January 2017 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambia's new President Adama Barrow arrives home, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁹⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia. Jammeh Leaves Power, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21275-21277; Voice of America (The), Gambian President Jammeh Says He Will Not Step Down, 20 December 2016 ([url](#)); Africa confidential, Gambia at the cliff-edge, 16 December 2016 ([url](#)); BAMF, Briefing Notes, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)); KAS, <Gambia is back>, La stabilité de la Gambie, un enjeu pour le Sénégal, February 2017 ([url](#)); Africanews, The Gambia will remain in the ICC – President Barrow confirms, 9 February 2017 ([url](#)); HRW, Gambia Rejoins ICC, 17 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁾ World Bank (The), Country Overview, The Gambia, updated 13 February 2017 ([url](#)); Saine, Abdoulaye, Culture and Customs of Gambia, 2012, p. 1.

⁽³¹⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia 2013 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, 2013 ([url](#)), p. 6; Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 1.

⁽³²⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, last updated 27 September 2017 ([url](#)); Church, R.J. Harrison, The Gambia: Physical and Social Geography, 2015, p. 524; Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 1.

⁽³³⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 117.

⁽³⁴⁾ World Bank (The), Country Overview, The Gambia, updated 13 February 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 5.

⁽³⁵⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia 2013 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 7-12; Saine, Abdoulaye, Culture and Customs of Gambia, 2012, p. 7; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 330-331; Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), Table 1.5.

⁽³⁶⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 24.

⁽³⁷⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 534; Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia 2013 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, 2013 ([url](#)).

- Mandinka (also known as Mandingo, Mende, Malinke, including Jahanka), around 34% of the Gambian population, i.e. excluding non-Gambians, in 2013; ⁽³⁸⁾
- Fula (also known as Fulbe Fulani, Peul, including Tukukur, Lorofo), around 24.1%; ⁽³⁹⁾
- Wolof (or Wollof), 14.8%; ⁽⁴⁰⁾
- Jola (also known as Diola, including Karoninka), around 10.5%; ⁽⁴¹⁾
- Serahuli (also known as Serahule, Sarakole and Soninke), around 8.2%; ⁽⁴²⁾
- Serer (or Serere), 3.1%; ⁽⁴³⁾
- Manjago (also known as Manjack), around 1.9%; ⁽⁴⁴⁾
- Bambara, 1.3%; ⁽⁴⁵⁾
- Aku, 0.5%. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

President Barrow is a member of the largest ethnic group, the Mandinka. Ex-president Jammeh is from the Jola ethnic group. ⁽⁴⁷⁾ Many Gambians are of mixed ethnic origin. ⁽⁴⁸⁾

1.3.2. Languages

None of the local languages in The Gambia is spoken exclusively in The Gambia. They are also spoken in neighbouring countries. In the following list of languages, it should be noted that there is not a perfect match between ethnic group and language as a significant part of the population speaks several languages. In urban areas, for example, many people from diverse

⁽³⁸⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp.283-284; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 333-334; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽³⁹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, S. 160; Kasper Juffermans, Caroline McGlynn, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 334; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)). Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 445; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 335; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)). Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 247-248; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 335-336, 353; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴²⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 283-284, 393; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 333-334; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12; Saine, Abdoulaye, *Culture and Customs of Gambia*, 2012, p. 12.

⁽⁴³⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 394; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 337; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 284; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 337; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 51; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 337-338; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 30-33; Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, *A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia*, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 338; Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 12.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 247-248, 283-284; Access Gambia, *President of Gambia – Yahya Jammeh*, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 247-248, 283-284; Access Gambia, *President of Gambia – Yahya Jammeh*, n.d. ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 248; Access Gambia, *Gambian Culture, Tradition & Society*, n.d. ([url](#)); Saine, Abdoulaye, *Culture and Customs of Gambia*, 2012, p. 17.

ethnic groups speak Wolof, which has become a lingua franca. The languages that are most frequently spoken in The Gambia are: ⁽⁴⁹⁾

- Mandinka (including Jahanka) ⁽⁵⁰⁾
- Wolof
- Fula (or Fulfulde, Peul, including Tukolor and Lorobo) ⁽⁵¹⁾
- Serahule (or Soninke Sarakole, Maraka)
- Jola (or Diola, including Karoninka) ⁽⁵²⁾
- Serer (or Serere)
- Manjago (or Mandjak)
- Aku (Creole, based on English) ⁽⁵³⁾

1.3.3. Official language

Official correspondence is conducted in English, which has been the country's official language since the start of the colonial period. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ Following the exit from the Commonwealth, Jammeh announced in 2014 that English would no longer be the official language. However, he did not say when this decision would take effect and which language would take the place of English as the new official language. ⁽⁵⁵⁾ In the media, it was speculated or claimed that Arabic was the new official language. ⁽⁵⁶⁾ English was never formally replaced as the official language. According to information from the Swiss Embassy in Dakar, Jammeh's announcement was not implemented in practice. ⁽⁵⁷⁾

One of the first official acts of the new president, Adama Barrow, in February 2017 was to announce The Gambia's return to the Commonwealth. ⁽⁵⁸⁾

1.3.4. Young population

40% of the population is less than 14 years old; 60% of the population is younger than 25. ⁽⁵⁹⁾ Youth unemployment in The Gambia is high: in 2012 over 44% of the youth aged 15-24 was unemployed. Young people under 25 are more likely to experience unemployment in urban

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 332-352; Leclerc, Jacques, L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde: Gambie, last updated 24 December 2015 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 267-268.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 332, 352, Footnote 3.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 332, 352, Footnote 3.

⁽⁵²⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 332, 352, Footnote 3.

⁽⁵³⁾ Aku Aku is not a native language. Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 333.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 267-268; Leclerc, Jacques, L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde: Gambie, last updated 24 December 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 530; Africa Review, Jammeh to replace English as Gambia's official language, 12 March 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Arabic Online, Arabic and Islam in the Gambia, 10 July 2015 ([url](#)); Leclerc, Jacques, L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde: Gambie, last updated 24 December 2015 ([url](#)); Afrik.com, Gambie : Yahye Jammeh choisit l'arabe comme langue officielle, 25 March 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Swiss Embassy in Dakar-Senegal, written communication with SEM, 20 April 2017.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Telegraph (The), Gambia to rejoin the Commonwealth within months, Boris Johnson announces ahead of trip, 13 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁹⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Church, R.J. Harrison, The Gambia: Physical and Social Geography, 2015, p. 524; Saine, Abdoulaye, Culture and Customs of Gambia, 2012, p. 1.

areas (47%) than in rural areas (44.2%). The unemployment rate is higher among young women (49.4%) than among young men (38.1%).⁽⁶⁰⁾

At state level, the Ministry of Youth and Sports⁽⁶¹⁾ is responsible for matters concerning young people. It has links with the National Youth Council (NYC) and its many youth organisations.⁽⁶²⁾

The primary objective of many children of affluent parents is to study in Europe, the USA or elsewhere (see Section [1.3.5. School system](#)).⁽⁶³⁾

Many young people, particularly those from poorer families, leave school early. In 2013, almost 25% of the youth under 20 had had no schooling at all.⁽⁶⁴⁾ In 2012, about 91% of the 15-24 years had had no vocational training.⁽⁶⁵⁾ A large number of youths spend most of their spare time in so-called ghettos or crews. These terms, borrowed from the gangsta rap culture, describe groups of 10 to 15 men of the same age who gather in open spaces or *vous* (from *rendez-vous*). They give their groups names of dream destinations, European football teams or from hip-hop culture. Most crews or ghettos consist of young people from the same neighbourhood, whereas ethnicity and religion seem irrelevant. Migration is an important topic of conversation.⁽⁶⁶⁾

An alternative to migration abroad for young people without any vocational training is working in tourism along the Atlantic coast. A much-discussed topic here is sex work, in particular the ‘sugar-daddy’ and ‘sugar-mama’ relationships which are based on inequality in terms of age and wealth. For young Gambians, these may be linked with the hope of finding a future in Europe.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Some foreign tourists specifically come in search of sex with children.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Female sex workers are known as *chaggas* and males as beach boys or bumsters,⁽⁶⁹⁾ though this terms can also refer more broadly to young men who try to get in touch with tourists⁽⁷⁰⁾. The people and their traditional leaders or elders regard *bumsters* and *chaggas* as a product of western tourism and as something alien.⁽⁷¹⁾ They are the target of ideological attacks by Islamic circles or the State.⁽⁷²⁾ Homosexual relationships, in particular, have been the focus

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 48.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Access Gambia, Ministry of Youth & Sports, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁶²⁾ Gambia National Youth Council (The), Publications, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁶³⁾ Materu, Peter and Edsand, Hans-Erik, Toward an integrated University of The Gambia, Conceptual Arguments, Rationale and Possible next Steps, Draft, n.d. ([url](#)), pp. 10, 28-38.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Paolo Gaibazzi, New York/Oxford. Bush Bound: Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa, 2015, pp. 122-125; Birzle, Maïke, Erwachsenwerden in Gambia. In: Freiburger Ethnologische Arbeitspapiere 21, 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 21-31; Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 114.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS 2012) Final Report, February 2013 ([url](#)), p. 46.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Wignall, Ross, From Swagger to Serious, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 288-323; Birzle, Maïke, Erwachsenwerden in Gambia. In: Freiburger Ethnologische Arbeitspapiere 21, 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 21-31; Paolo Gaibazzi, New York/Oxford. Bush Bound: Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa, 2015, S. 122-125.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Nyanzi, Stella, Negotiating scripts for meaningful sexuality, September 2008 ([url](#)), pp. 172-173.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ US DoS, 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2017 ([url](#)), p. 177.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Nyanzi, Stella, Negotiating scripts for meaningful sexuality, September 2008 ([url](#)), p. 19; Chant, Sylvia and Touray, Isatou, Women and Gender in The Gambia: Problems, Progress and Prospects, 2013, pp. 429-475.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Georgia Straight (The), Birds flock and gigolos hustle in the Gambia, 12 March 2008 ([url](#)); Brown, Naomi, Beachboys as culture brokers in Bakau Town, The Gambia, 1992.

⁽⁷¹⁾ Nyanzi, Stella, Negotiating scripts for meaningful sexuality, September 2008 ([url](#)), pp. 40, 250, 293, 308-318.

⁽⁷²⁾ Evans, Alice, Sexuality, poverty and gender among Gambian youth, 2010, pp. 201-206; Nyanzi, Stella, Ghettoisation, migration or sexual connection?, 2010, pp. 207-214; Nyanzi, Stella et al., Bumsters, big black organs and old white gold, 2005 ([url](#)), pp. 557-569; Independent (The), Breaking the silence of Gambia’s sex tourism, 20 December 2010 ([url](#)); US DoS, 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, July 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 163-164; Nyanzi, Stella et al.,

of state criticism or repression under the Jammeh regime (see Section [2.4. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender \(LGBT\) persons](#)).⁽⁷³⁾ Homosexuality is mostly seen as unacceptable. Female homosexuality seems to be less known (or more taboo) amongst youngsters than male homosexuality.⁽⁷⁴⁾

At the other end of the spectrum, some Gambian young people feel more drawn to Islamic values and morals, which can lead to role reversals.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The shift towards reformist movements may be understood in part as a response to the malaise affecting Gambian youth.⁽⁷⁶⁾

1.3.5. School system

The structure of the Gambian school system is based on the British system. Children usually start school at the age of seven. They may also be enrolled at Early Childhood Development Centres for two or three years previously, mainly in private institutions but there is also some state or Islamic provision.⁽⁷⁷⁾

This is followed by 9 years of basic education:

- 6 years of primary school: lower basic education (LBE);
- 3 years of middle school: upper basic education (UBE).

Basic education is followed by secondary education:

- 3 years of secondary school: senior secondary education (SSE).

As an alternative to secondary school, students may choose vocational training at a vocational training centre.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Article 30 of the constitution states that basic education should be free, compulsory and available to all.⁽⁷⁹⁾ In practice, however, families have paid school fees for basic education. Primary school did not become free for everyone until 2013, upper basic education (UBE) until 2014 and secondary school (SSE) until 2015.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Families cover the cost of school uniforms, books and food themselves.⁽⁸¹⁾

Bumsters, *big black organs and old white gold*, 2005 ([url](#)), pp. 557-569; Janson, Marloes, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in the Gambia*, 2014, pp. 49-50.

⁽⁷³⁾ Nyanzi, Stella et al., *Bumsters, big black organs and old white gold*, 2005, pp. 557-569.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Nyanzi, Stella, *Negotiating scripts for meaningful sexuality*, September 2008 ([url](#)), pp. 172-173.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Janson, Marloes, *Male Wives and Female Husbands*, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 187-218; Janson, Marloes, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in the Gambia*, 2014, pp. 193-224.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Migration, Soninké Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind (The Gambia)*, March 2010, pp. 241-243; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound, Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa*, 2015, pp. 127-133; Janson, Marloes, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in the Gambia*, 2014, p. 303.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The) in collaboration with the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, *The Gambia National Education For All Review Report*, December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 14-16; Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education, *Education Statistics 2016/2017*, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. vi, 11-92.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The) in collaboration with the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, *The Gambia National Education For All Review Report*, December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 10-11; Gambia (The), Department of State for Education, *Education Policy 2004-2015*, 2004 ([url](#)), pp. 19-25; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 131-133.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution*, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 30, p. 27.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ World Bank Group, *Financial Constraints and Girls' Secondary Education*, December 2016 ([url](#)), S. 5, Footnote 1.

⁽⁸¹⁾ Jollofnews, *Gambia Introduces Free Education In Public Schools*, 8 November 2015; Right to Education Project, *Factsheet. The Gambia*, 2012, pp. 3-7; World Bank Group, *Financial Constraints and Girls' Secondary Education*, December 2016 ([url](#)), p. 5, Footnote 1.

The Jammeh government expanded the school system. According to information from the World Bank, 63% of children attended primary school in 1994, compared with 93% in 2016. ⁽⁸²⁾ It is still the case that fewer children go to school in rural areas than in urban areas. According to official figures for Region 1 (Banjul and Kanifing), in 2017 97.5% of children of the corresponding school age (the Net Enrolment Ratio - NER) attended primary school. In the predominantly rural Region 5 (Central River Region) in the east of the country, this figure was 58.5%. ⁽⁸³⁾ At one time more boys than girls went to school but the ratio is now more balanced or has even reversed: in 2017, the NERs were 91.4% for girls and 84.5% for boys at LBE level. The NER has risen significantly for both sexes in recent years; the equivalent figures for 2014 were 80.6% (girls) and 75.6% (boys) at LBE level. ⁽⁸⁴⁾ For middle school (UBE), the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in 2017 was higher for girls (69.7%) than boys (65.0%). ⁽⁸⁵⁾ The GER for girls is now higher (47.1% in 2017) than for boys (44.5%) at Senior Secondary Education (SSE), although completion rates at SSE were the same (both 37.1%). ⁽⁸⁶⁾

In principle, the language of instruction is English. However, in practice one of the local languages is often used, especially among the lower age-groups. ⁽⁸⁷⁾

There is also an Islamic system which runs in parallel to the secular state school system: in the *daara* children learn the surahs of the Koran by heart. The *madrassas* teach school subjects in addition to Islamic values. ⁽⁸⁸⁾ The working languages in the *madrassas* are English and one of the local languages, as well as Arabic for the recitation of religious texts. ⁽⁸⁹⁾ The State and various institutions from the Gulf states provide financial support for the Islamic schools. According to information from 2014, approximately 15% of children completed their compulsory education in *madrassas*. ⁽⁹⁰⁾ During the Jammeh presidency, there was a significant increase in the number of state schools and *madrassas*: according to information from the Ministry of Education, in 2017 the primary schools included 540 state schools, 301 *madrassas* and 153 other private schools. ⁽⁹¹⁾

Secondary school may be followed by education at one of the four state tertiary education institutions: ⁽⁹²⁾

⁽⁸²⁾ World Bank (The), Gambia, Gross enrolment ratio, primary, both sexes, 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁸³⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 129-36.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 136; Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in collaboration with the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, The Gambia National Education For All Review Report, December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 18-20.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 256.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 366, 373.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 343-344; Njie, Makaireh, The Gambia: An Overview, Trends and Futures, 2015, pp. 141-149; Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 88-92.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The) in collaboration with the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, The Gambia National Education For All Review Report, December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 12, 32, 38.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 343-344.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The) in collaboration with the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, The Gambia National Education For All Review Report, December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 12, 32, 38, Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 88-92.

⁽⁹¹⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Education Statistics, 2016/2017, May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 161.

⁽⁹²⁾ Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The) in collaboration with the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO, The Gambia National Education For All Review Report, December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 14-16; Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (The), Homepage, n.d. ([url](#)); Materu, Peter and Edsands, Hans-Erik, Toward an integrated

- University of The Gambia (UTG), Serrekunda: medicine, natural sciences, agriculture, economics, management, social sciences;
- Gambia College (GC), Brikama: education, agriculture, training courses for teachers and midwives;
- Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), Serrekunda: business, computer science, engineering, education;
- Management Development Institute (MDI), Serrekunda: trade, economics, IT, management, gender studies.

In addition to the state institutes, there are private institutions at university level: the American International University West Africa offers various colleges in the medical sciences. ⁽⁹³⁾

For many people, colleges and universities outside The Gambia are more desirable than those within the country. There is a preference for institutions in the west, especially in Great Britain, the USA and Canada, or colleges and universities in an Islamic environment, for example in Mali. ⁽⁹⁴⁾ Gambians also study in other West African countries, like Ghana, Senegal or Nigeria. ⁽⁹⁵⁾ For some time now, the People's Republic of China has also offered Gambian students university places and scholarships. ⁽⁹⁶⁾

1.3.6. Migration

The Gambia has a long tradition of migration and trade. Senegambia was one of the main transit points for the slave trade to America. ⁽⁹⁷⁾ Like elsewhere in Africa the same ethnic groups live on both sides of the borders. Gambian and Senegalese communities living near the boundary often cross it for trade or visiting relatives. ⁽⁹⁸⁾ Furthermore, considering the length of the border, its porosity is not surprising. This obviously poses a challenge for the control of illegal migration and the fight against trafficking in people and drugs. ⁽⁹⁹⁾

When The Gambia gained its independence from Great Britain in 1965, many well-educated Gambians migrated to the United Kingdom to study and work. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ By the end of the 1980s, after periods of drought and a deterioration of the economic situation, urban migration as well as emigration to Europe and North America had become common coping strategies. ⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Affluent families have increasingly tried to send their children to Europe, the USA or Canada to study. Many of them have not returned once they finished their studies due to the lack of opportunities in their homeland. ⁽¹⁰²⁾

University of The Gambia, Draft, n.d. ([url](#)), pp. 28-38; Gambia College (The) [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 133.

⁽⁹³⁾ American International University West Africa - The Gambia, AIU Health Science Center, n.d. ([url](#)); University World News, Gambia: New medical university for West Africa, 13 March 2011 ([url](#)).

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo Bush Bound, 2015, p. 85; Materu, Peter and Edsand, Hans-Erik, Toward an integrated University of The Gambia, Draft, n.d. ([url](#)), pp. 10.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technologie, Statistics on students under the ACE, November 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁹⁶⁾ Africanews, China waives taxes on Gambian exports, offers 150 scholarships, 31 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Kebbeh, C. Omar, The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast', 15 August 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽⁹⁸⁾ New York Times (The), On Africa's Fluid Borders, My Land Is Your Land, 16 April 2000 ([url](#)).

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Point (The), Italian delegation visits The Gambia, 10 May 2016 ([url](#)); Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia: Porous Borders, October 2014 ([url](#)), Volume 51, Issue 8.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Kebbeh, C. Omar, The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast', 15 August 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Kebbeh, C. Omar, The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast', 15 August 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, Bush Bound, 2015, pp. 44-47.

Gambians without vocational skills or an opportunity to study have also sought work in Europe.

Until the end of the 1980s they would often travel to Europe (mainly to Spain) with a short-term visa and then overstay, hoping to benefit of a periodical legalisation scheme. ⁽¹⁰³⁾ The 1994 military coup that led Yahya Jammeh to power caused an increase of asylum seekers. This incited the United Kingdom and other European countries to introduce visa obligation for Gambian citizens. ⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Contemporaneously legal entry into Europe became more difficult from the mid 1990s with the implementation of the Schengen Agreement and its stricter immigration policies. ⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Nevertheless large numbers of young men continued to migrate to Europe legally or illegally in search of better prospects. In 2013, the Gambia's net migration rate (-2.34/1000 population) was the highest in Africa. ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Immigration to Spain slowed down in 2007 due to the global economic crisis. With an estimated 22 000 nationals residing there in 2012, Spain remained one of the leading destinations for Gambian migrants, along with the United States, Nigeria, Senegal, UK and Germany. ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Gambians who reached Italy by crossing the Mediterranean Sea also often chose to stay in Italy. ⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

In recent years, irregular migration of Gambians to Europe via Senegal-Mali-Burkina Faso-Niger-Libya has risen sharply. ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Young people speak of the *back way*, travelling to Europe by the back door. Europe is known as *Babylon* – a name for the West derived from reggae culture. ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Between 2012 and 2014 the number of Gambians applying for asylum in Europe quadrupled. ⁽¹¹¹⁾ With 11,929 new arrivals the number, Gambians accounted for 7% of the sea arrivals in Italy in 2016. ⁽¹¹²⁾ During the first half of 2017, 4,920 Gambians arrived in Italy and made out 6% of sea arrivals in Italy. ⁽¹¹³⁾ Recently, The Gambia has accounted for the largest percentage of work- or asylum-seekers arriving in Italy of all the African countries, per head of total population. ⁽¹¹⁴⁾ To date, there are no readmission agreements between Italy and The Gambia. The Italian government tried in vain to negotiate one with ex-president Jammeh in 2016. ⁽¹¹⁵⁾

The vast majority of Gambian migrants traveling to Europe 'the back way' are young men. ⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Gambians grow up with society's expectation that they must one day go away and earn

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound*, 2015, pp. 50-51.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Kebbeh, C. Omar, *The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast'*, 15 August 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound*, 2015, pp. 50-51.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Kebbeh, C. Omar, *The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast'*, 15 August 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Kebbeh, C. Omar, *The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast'*, 15 August 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ UNHCR, *Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges*, June 2017 ([url](#)), p. 105.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ IOM, *Abuse, Exploitation and Trafficking: IOM reveals data on the scale of the danger and risks that migrants face on the Mediterranean routes to Europe*, 18 October 2016 ([url](#)); IOM, *Migrants from 15 African Nations Transit Niger en Route to North Africa, Europe*, 23 December 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound*, 2015, pp. 47-50; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Migration, Soninké Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind (The Gambia)*, March 2010, pp. 239-240.

⁽¹¹¹⁾ *African Arguments*, *Between a rock and a hard place*, 4 May 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹²⁾ UNHCR, *UNHCR Update #10*, 16 March 2017 ([url](#)); BBC News, *Can Barrow stem flow of young Gambians heading for Europe?*, 27 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹³⁾ UNHCR, *Italy Sea arrivals dashboard January-June 2017*, 15 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., *Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election*, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 338.

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Readmission agreements constitute an obligation between the contracting states to take back certain groups of persons on request without any formalities. IRIN News, *Meet the Gambian migrants under pressure to leave Europa*, 20 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ UNHCR, *UNHCR Update #10*, 16 March 2017 ([url](#)).

money for the family. Migration has taken on the function of a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. Families are reliant on money transfers from the diaspora. ⁽¹¹⁷⁾ However, some young men remain at home to keep the family safe and maintain the money and trade links with those who have migrated to Europe and Serrekunda/Banjul. ⁽¹¹⁸⁾

Ex-president Jammeh considered migration by young people to be an ‘unpatriotic act’ and accused young people who wished to emigrate of being lazy. He said that the fantasy of a European Eldorado had befuddled the minds of Gambian young people and made them idle. The Jammeh government introduced the Back to the Land campaign to try to motivate young people to work in agriculture. ⁽¹¹⁹⁾

For political observers, the high level of migration and discussions surrounding it were a key factor in Jammeh’s electoral defeat in 2016. ⁽¹²⁰⁾ Adama Barrow identified reducing irregular migration as a priority task for the new government. The aim would be to create work and training opportunities for unemployed young people. While no significant success has been reported to date, the European Union, which has recently provided substantial financial aid to The Gambia, in particular support to youth employment. ⁽¹²¹⁾

The Trafficking in Persons Report by the US Department of State (US DoS) attests The Gambia’s achievements in combating human trafficking, though the country still doesn’t fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The first people identified as victims of human trafficking in four years have been provided for. The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) runs a facility for victims of human trafficking, abandoned children and victims of domestic violence, as well as a drop-in centre for street children. A trafficker was sentenced to life imprisonment. This was the first conviction for a trafficking-related offense in four years. Although The Gambia has implemented training measures for the police and border authorities, the US DoS signals a need for further action: criminal prosecution should be intensified and accomplices in the administration should also be apprehended, there is a lack of formal procedures for identifying victims of human trafficking, and the resources of the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP) should be increased. ⁽¹²²⁾

On the other hand, The Gambia also experiences inward migration: in 2013, 110 705 non-Gambians were recorded as being in the country in the census. Most of these originated from West African countries: Senegal: (44%), Guinea (28%), Guinea-Bissau (6%) and Sierra Leone (5%). ⁽¹²³⁾ Most of the migrants came to Gambia in search for employment, many came through marriage or followed their family. ⁽¹²⁴⁾ Some migrants left their home country because of war or conflict. Most of them are Senegalese who fled due to the independence conflict in the Casamance region. In 2010, between 10,000 and 11,000 Senegalese Casamance refugees

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Telegraph (The), Inside the west African village where every young man is trying to migrate to Europe, 10 November 2015 ([url](#)); Gaibazzi, Paolo, Bush Bound, 2015, pp. 63-67, 74-82, 107-110, 130-132; Gaibazzi, Paolo, Migration, Soninké Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind (The Gambia), March 2010, pp. 217-220.

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, Bush Bound, 2015, pp. 63-67, 74-82, 107-110, 130-132; Gaibazzi, Paolo, Migration, Soninké Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind (The Gambia), March 2010, pp. 217-220.

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Gaibazzi, Paolo, Cultivating Hustlers: The Agrarian Ethos of Soninke Migration, 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 1-2.; Gaibazzi, Paolo, Bush Bound, 2015, pp. 119-121.

⁽¹²⁰⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia’s ‘unprecedented’ 2016 Election’, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 325, 336-40; David Perfect. The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 327.

⁽¹²¹⁾ IRIN News, New Gambia, new migration?, 28 March 2017 ([url](#)); EC, The Gambia youth empowerment scheme, February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹²²⁾ US DoS, 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 175-177.

⁽¹²³⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution, n.d. ([url](#)), (vol. 5), Table B6, p. 26.

⁽¹²⁴⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: National Migration Analysis, n.d. ([url](#)), p. 26.

(including 7,890 registred ones) were living in The Gambia. ⁽¹²⁵⁾ By the end of 2016 there were still appromatively 7,400 Senegalese refugees in The Gambia. ⁽¹²⁶⁾ They often live with host families, who are often their relatives. Refugee camps ar no longer in use. ⁽¹²⁷⁾ The new Interior Minister, Mai Fatty, expressly welcomed refugees from the countries surrounding The Gambia in June 2017. ⁽¹²⁸⁾

1.4. Administrative structure

The Gambia is divided into regions, local government areas (LGA), districts, municipalities, cities and villages. ⁽¹²⁹⁾ There are five regions (known as divisions between 1944 and 2007 and before that as provinces) and one greater area. ⁽¹³⁰⁾

The five regions are as follows (see Map 2: [Regions and districts of The Gambia in 2003](#)): ⁽¹³¹⁾

- West Coast (Western Region until 2010)
- Lower River
- North Bank
- Central River
- Upper River

The Greater Area is:

- The Greater Banjul Area, subdivided into the municipality of Kanifing and the city of Banjul. ⁽¹³²⁾

In 2002 the Local Government Act divided the country into eight local government areas. These often bear the name of the biggest town: ⁽¹³³⁾

- Banjul
- Kanifing
- Brikama
- Mansakonko
- Kerewan
- Kuntaur

⁽¹²⁵⁾ UNHCR, Casamance refugees in The Gambia: self-settlement and the challenges of integration, September 2011 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽¹²⁶⁾ UNHCR, Gambia, Factsheet, November-December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽¹²⁷⁾ UNHCR, Casamance refugees in The Gambia: self-settlement and the challenges of integration, September 2011 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 76.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia promises to be a safe haven for refugees, 24 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹²⁹⁾ The classification into divisions (known as regions since 2007) dates back to the colonial period. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 275, 357; Gambia (The), Local Government Act (Amendments), 17 April 2002 ([url](#)), p.3.; UNDESA, Gambia (The), Public Administration, Country Profile, August 2004, pp. 7-8.; Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, 2012, pp. 178-180.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 123; Saine, Abdoulaye, Culture and Customs of Gambia, 2012, p. 6.

⁽¹³¹⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 330; Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 357.

⁽¹³²⁾ Saine, Abdoulaye, Culture and Customs of Gambia, , 2012, p. 6; Juffermans, Kasper, Local Languageing, Literacy and Multilingualism in a West African Society, 2015, p. 28.

⁽¹³³⁾ Gambia (The), Local Government Act (Amendments), 17 April 2002 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 275; Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia 2013 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, 2013 ([url](#)), p. 9.

- Janjanbureh
- Basse

Confusion may occur, as in colloquial and sometimes even in official usage the local people use the designations regions, administrative regions, divisions, areas, administrative areas and local government areas randomly at times. ⁽¹³⁴⁾ They also use the colonial term ‘province’, pre-colonial terms such as Fuladu (Land of the Fula) or names of the old kingdoms such as ‘Kombo’ and ‘Foni’. ⁽¹³⁵⁾

The eight local government areas are subdivided into districts. The way they are divided up has changed over the years. The 2003 census lists 39 districts ⁽¹³⁶⁾, while the 2013 census lists 43 districts. ⁽¹³⁷⁾

1.4.1. Summary of regions, local government areas, districts

Summary of regions, local government areas, districts. ⁽¹³⁸⁾

Regions	Local government area (LGA)	Districts 2003	Districts 2013
Greater Banjul Area	Banjul (Capital: Banjul)	Banjul South	Banjul South
Greater Banjul Area	Banjul (Capital: Banjul)	Banjul Central	Banjul Central
Greater Banjul Area	Banjul (Capital: Banjul)	Banjul North	Banjul North
Greater Banjul Area	Kanifing (Capital: Serrekunda)	Kanifing Urban	Kanifing
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Kombo North	Kombo North
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Kombo South	Kombo South
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Kombo Central	Kombo Central
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Kombo East	Kombo East
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Foni Brefet	Foni Brefet

⁽¹³⁴⁾ The apparently random use of the individual designations can cause confusion: the website of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) divides The Gambia into seven electoral units and refers to them by the term ‘divisions’ which was abolished in 2007. Gambia (The), IEC, Management, 2017 ([url](#)); The internal handbook of the election observation mission for the legislative election in The Gambia in April 2017 also divides The Gambia into seven administrative units. Some of these have non-official administrative names: 1) AA (Administrative Area), 2) Kanifing AR (Administrative Region), 3) West Coast Region (also known as Brikama AR), 4) Kerewan AR (also known as North Bank Region), 5) Mansakonko AR (also known as Lower River Region), 6) Janjanbureh AR (also known as Central River Region), 7) Basse AR (also known as Upper River Region). The Kuntaur LGA is not included. Its districts are assigned to the Janjanbureh/Central River Region. European Union, STO (Short Term Observer) Handbook, 2017, p. 24; Gambia (The), IEC, Nomination of National Assembly Members 2017, 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Juffermans, Kasper and McGlynn, Caroline, ‘A sociolinguistic profile of The Gambia’, 2009 ([url](#)), p. 330; Juffermans, Kasper, Local Language, Literacy and Multilingualism in a West African Society, 2015, p. 28.

⁽¹³⁶⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Atlas of 2003 Population and Housing Census, 2006 ([url](#)), p. 4.

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia 2013 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, 2013 ([url](#)), p. 13.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Atlas of 2003 Population and Housing Census, 2006 ([url](#)), p. 4.; Gambia (The), GBoS, The Gambia 2013 Population and Housing Census Preliminary Results, 2013 ([url](#)); CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Saine, Abdoulaye, Culture and Customs of Gambia, 2012, p. 7; Statoids, Regions of Gambia, updated 5 November 2015 ([url](#)).

Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Foni Bintang Karanai	Foni Bintang Karanai
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Foni Kansala	Foni Kansala
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Foni Bonfali	Foni Bondali
Western Region	Brikama (Capital: Brikama)	Foni Jarrol	Foni Jarrol
Lower River Region	Mansakonko (Capital: Mansakonko)	Kiang West	Kiang West
Lower River Region	Mansakonko (Capital: Mansakonko)	Kiang Central	Kiang Central
Lower River Region	Mansakonko (Capital: Mansakonko)	Kiang East	Kiang East
Lower River Region	Mansakonko (Capital: Mansakonko)	Jarra West	Jarra West
Lower River Region	Mansakonko (Capital: Mansakonko)	Jarra Central	Jarra Central
Lower River Region	Mansakonko (Capital: Mansakonko)	Jarra East	Jarra East
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Lower Niumi	Lower Niumi
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Upper Niumi	Upper Niumi
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Jokadu	Jokadu
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Lower Badibu	Central Badibu
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Central Badibu	Lower Badibu
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Upper Badibu	Illiasa
North Bank Region	Kerewan (Capital: Kerewan)	Upper Badibu	Sabach Sanjal
Central River Region	Kuntaur (Capital: Kuntaur)	Lower Saloum	Lower Saloum
Central River Region	Kuntaur (Capital: Kuntaur)	Upper Saloum	Upper Saloum
Central River Region	Kuntaur (Capital: Kuntaur)	Nianija	Nianija
Central River Region	Kuntaur (Capital: Kuntaur)	Niani	Niani
Central River Region	Kuntaur (Capital: Kuntaur)	Sami	Sami
Central River Region	Janjangbureh / Georgetown (Capital: Janjanbureh or Georgetown)	Niamina Dankunku	Niamina Dankunku
Central River Region	Janjangbureh / Georgetown (Capital: Janjanbureh or Georgetown)	Niamina West	Niamina West

Central River Region	Janjangbureh / Georgetown (Capital: Janjanbureh or Georgetown)	Niamina East	Niamina East
Central River Region	Janjangbureh / Georgetown (Capital: Janjanbureh or Georgetown)	Fulladu West	Fulladu West
Central River Region	Janjangbureh / Georgetown (Capital: Janjanbureh or Georgetown)	MacCarthy Island (Janjanbureh)	Janjangbureh
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Fulladu East	Basse Fulladu East
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Fulladu East	Tumana
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Fulladu East	Jimara
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Kantora	Kantora
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Wuli	Wuli West
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Wuli	Wuli East
Upper River Region	Basse (Capital: Basse Santa Su or Basse)	Sandu	Sandu

1.5. State structure and politics

1.5.1. Status and constitution

The Gambia gained independence on 18 February 1965 and was accepted into the Commonwealth. The country's official name became 'The Gambia'. A prime minister headed the parliamentary multi-party system of the young state. The head of state of the constitutional monarchy was the British Queen Elizabeth II. ⁽¹³⁹⁾

The Gambia has had three constitutions since independence: 1964 (entered into force in 1965), 1970 and 1996 (entered into force in 1997). ⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

Following a referendum in 1970, The Gambia became a republic within the Commonwealth. The constitutional monarchy changed to a presidential system. ⁽¹⁴¹⁾ The head of state was no longer the British queen but the Gambian president. The First Republic lasted from 24 April 1970 until Jammeh's military coup on 22 July 1994. Following this coup, the constitution was suspended and subsequently repealed. ⁽¹⁴²⁾

The Second Republic started with the entry into force of the new constitution on 16 January 1997. The new constitution strengthened the presidential system. There was no restriction on the president's term of office, even though this has been recommended by the 1995 Constitutional Review Commission, and the system of checks and balances was comparatively

⁽¹³⁹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 98-100; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, pp. 524, 538-539.

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 99-101; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, pp. 538-539.

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Hughes, Arnold and Perfect, David, *A Political History of The Gambia, 1816-1994*, 2006, pp. 175, 346.

⁽¹⁴²⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 99-100.

weak. ⁽¹⁴³⁾ The president held executive and legislative power and could appoint (and dismiss) the judges of the superior courts and many other functionaries (see Section [1.6.1. President](#)). Under President Jammeh, a number of judges were sacked unconstitutionally or forced to resign, for example the Pakistani Supreme Court chief justice, Ali Nawaz Chowhan, in May 2015. ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾

In 2015 Jammeh declared The Gambia an Islamic Republic. ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ This went against the constitution, which defines The Gambia as a secular state. ⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ Following the change of government in early 2017, one of the first official statements by the new President Adama Barrow was that The Gambia was no longer an Islamic Republic and that the constitution would be amended. ⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ The term ‘Third Republic’ has been used colloquially since President Adama Barrow took office. This term is not legally binding as the constitution has not yet been amended. Barrow has made proposals for constitutional reform, such as restriction of the presidency to two terms of office. ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Former politicians and academics have contributed further proposals, while a detailed list of proposals were put forward by six political parties (including the UDP) in July 2017 ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ and the Justice Department has announced that the public will be involved. ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

1.6. Executive

1.6.1. President

The Gambia has been a republic since the referendum in April 1970. The then prime minister, Dawda Jawara, automatically became president. Jawara was confirmed as president in indirect (1972 and 1977) and direct elections (1982, 1987, 1992). ⁽¹⁵¹⁾ After the military coup in 1994, The Gambia did not have a president until 1996 and was governed by the military Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC), led by Yahya Jammeh. ⁽¹⁵²⁾

The Republic of The Gambia has had three presidents to date:

- Dawda Jawara: 1970-1994. Party: People’s Progressive Party (PPP); ⁽¹⁵³⁾

⁽¹⁴³⁾ Jammeh, Ousman A.S., *The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010*, 2012, pp. 4-6.

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 76, Art. 100, Art. 138, Jammeh, Ousman A.S., *The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010*, pp. 118-119; 207-212; Express Tribune (The), *Gambian president sacks Pakistani chief justice*, 13 May 2015 ([url](#)); News24, *Gambian president sacked Supreme Court judges*, 29.06.2015 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 215; African Arguments, *What does Jammeh have to gain by making The Gambia an Islamic Republic?*, 28 January 2016; Lieven, Samuel, *La Gambie s’autoproclame « État islamique »*, 13 December 2015.

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Chapter I, p. 12.

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Voice of America (The), *Gambian President Jammeh Says He Will Not Step Down*, 20 December 2016 ([url](#)); Africa Confidential, *Gambia at the cliff-edge*, 16 December 2016 ([url](#)); BAMF, *Briefing Notes*, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 330.; allAfrica, *Gambia: Govt Announces Robust Institutional & Constitutional Reforms*, 25 July 2017.

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ For the current discussion about amending the constitution, see: Point (The), *Gambia needs new constitution*, 1 June 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), *The 11th Proposal and demands of the opposition for electoral and constitutional reform*, 11 July 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 149, 386; PDOIS, *A Third Republic for a New Beginning, 2017* ([url](#)); Daily News, *The Third Republic of the Gambia: President’s transition guidance notes*, 29 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Gambia (The), *Ministry of Justice [Twitter]*, 11 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 237-241, 346.

⁽¹⁵²⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 36-37.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 237-241.

- Yahya Jammeh: 1996-2017. Party: Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC); ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾
- Adama Barrow: since 2017. Party: United Democratic Party (UDP). ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

According to the 1997 constitution, the president is the head of state, head of government and *commander in chief* of the armed forces. ⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Ex-president Jammeh also took on the role of Defence Minister. ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ President Barrow still heads the Ministry of Defence. ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

The president appoints the vice-president and the ministers (Secretaries of State) and leads them. The president, vice-president and ministers form the cabinet. According to the current constitution, the office of prime minister no longer exists (it was abolished in 1970 when The Gambia became a republic). The cabinet or the president alone can exercise executive power. ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ The ministries and the current ministers are listed on the official website of the Office of the President. ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

The president also appoints five members of parliament, the judges of the superior courts, the regional governors, the district chiefs (*Seyfo*, pl. *Seyfolu*), the chairmen and members of the Public Service Commission, the administrative ombudsman and the head and members of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). ⁽¹⁶¹⁾ The president is directly elected by the people for five years on the basis of a majority of votes. The current constitution does not restrict the term of office. ⁽¹⁶²⁾

President Adama Barrow

Barrow was born in 1965 and grew up in the village of Mankamang Kunda in the Jimara district of the Upper River Region. ⁽¹⁶³⁾ His father is a Mandinka and his mother is from the Fula ethnic group. He is married with two wives, one of whom, Fatoumatta Bah Barrow, is the First Lady of The Gambia. ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ He was a businessman and worked in the real estate sector in Great Britain and The Gambia. He administered the finances of the United Democratic Party (UDP), but otherwise had little involvement in politics. The opposition parties unexpectedly nominated him as the presidential candidate in October 2016 after the founder of the UDP and long-term rival of Jammeh, Ousainou Darboe, was arrested and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Barrow left the UDP to emphasise the independence of his candidacy and stood as an

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 228-231.

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Office of The President, *The President, 2017* ([url](#)); BBC, *Gambia elections: President-elect Adama Barrow's life story*, 1 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 61.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, *Office of The President, 2015* ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, *Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College Students Called on President Barrow*, 20 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 76.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Gambia (The), Office of the President, *The Cabinet, 2017* ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Jammeh, Ousman A.S. , *The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010*, 2012, p. 61; Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 42, 58, 70, 172.

⁽¹⁶²⁾ CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997* ([url](#)), art. 70, al. 3, art. 71, al. 3, art. 73, al. 1; UNDESA, *Gambia (The), Public Administration Country Profile*, August 2004 ([url](#)); Republic of the Gambia: Office of the President, *The Cabinet*, n.d. ([url](#)); Daily Observer, *Dodou Bammy Jagne is New Secretary General*, 1 July 2016 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 63, 76; Voice of America, *Gambia Defends Arrests of Opposition Leader and Supporters*, 18 April 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁶³⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, *The President, 2017* ([url](#)); Jeune Afrique, *Gambie, La fulgurante ascension d'Adama Barrow*, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David. *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 325.

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Gambia (The), Office of The President, *First Lady, 2017* ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 325.

independent. He announced that he would restrict his term of office and would stand down as president after three years as leader of the transitional government. ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ He was elected President of The Gambia on 1 December 2016. Following the constitutional and military crisis, on 19 January 2017 he was sworn in as third President of The Gambia at the Gambian embassy in Senegal. He returned to The Gambia on 26 January 2017. ⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

Ex-president Yahya Jammeh

Yahya Jammeh was born in 1965 and grew up in Kanilai in the Lower River Division. He is from the Jola ethnic group and has married three times. He was a wrestler and an officer in the Gambia National Gendarmerie (GNG) and the Gambia National Army (GNA). ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ He came to power on 22 July 1994 in a bloodless coup and led the military Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council for two years. In 1996 he was elected president in an election which was considered to be far from free and fair. ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ His position was confirmed in 2001, 2006 and 2011. He led his party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), from its foundation in 1996. ⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Jammeh increasingly distanced himself from the west and its values and issued some surprising and bizarre statements. ⁽¹⁷¹⁾ From 2015 onwards he called himself 'His Excellency Sheikh Professor Alhaji Dr. Yahya Abdul-Azziz Jemus Junkung Jammeh Babili Mansa'. ⁽¹⁷²⁾

After losing the presidential election and the ensuing political and constitutional crisis, he left the country on 21 January 2017. Equatorial Guinea, where he went into exile, has not signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. If Jammeh were to be accused of crimes

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, The President, 2017 ([url](#)); Jeune Afrique, Gambie, La fulgurante ascension d'Adama Barrow, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambia's Jammeh loses to Adama Barrow in shock election result, 2 December 2017 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambia elections: President-elect Adama Barrow's life story, 19 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, The President, 2017 ([url](#)); Jeune Afrique, La fulgurante ascension d'Adama Barrow, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambia's Jammeh loses to Adama Barrow in shock election result, 2 December 2017 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambia elections: President-elect Adama Barrow's life story, 19 January 2017 ([url](#)); NZZ, Jammeh verkündet Rücktritt, 21 January 2017 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambia's new President Adama Barrow arrives home, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)); KAS, <Gambia is back>, La stabilité de la Gambie, un enjeu pour le Sénégal, February 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017, ([url](#)), p. 329.

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 228-231.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ Perfect, David and Hughes, Arnold, Gambian Electoral Politics: 1960-2012, 2013, pp. 96-97; Saine, Abdoulaye and Ceasay, Ebrima, Post-Coup Politics and Authoritarianism in The Gambia: 1994-2012, 2013, pp. 151-184, 159-161; Saine, Aboudaye, The Paradox of Third-Wave Democratization in Africa: The Gambia Under APRC-APRC Rule, 1994-2008, 2009, pp. 28-31; Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 525.

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 31, 228-229; Kairouz, Matthieu, Ce jour-là : le 22 juillet 1994, Yahya Jammeh s'empare du pouvoir en Gambie, 22 July 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 326. Jammeh claimed that he was the crowned king of The Gambia and announced that he would remain president for a billion years. Only Allah could end his rule. He developed obscure healing methods and declared that he could cure HIV/AIDS, cancer, tuberculosis, epilepsy and infertility. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 230; Guardian (The), Bitter medicine: how Gambian president claims to cure Aids, 22 February 2007 ([url](#)); JollofNews, Gambia's Jammeh Renews HIV Cure Claim, 19 January 2016 ([url](#)); Cassidy, Rebecca, Contested Status: The Politics of HIV Treatment in The Gambia, 2013, pp. 291- 324.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ For a list of Jammeh's prizes and titles: Gambia (The), State House Online, The President, 2015 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 231.

against humanity or other serious crimes, the country would not have to extradite him. ⁽¹⁷³⁾ Nevertheless, the new government ponders the possibility of an extradition request. ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾

1.7. Legislature

1.7.1. President

According to the constitution, the holder of legislative power is the president, not the parliament. ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Laws passed by the parliament require the president's assent. If the president does not assent, the bill is passed back to the parliament. ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

1.7.2. Parliament

The National Assembly is a single-chamber parliament. ⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ The president directly appoints five members. ⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ The voters elect the other members of parliament on the basis of a majority of votes (until 2012: 48 of the 53 seats; from 2017: 53 of the 58 seats). ⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Parties which take part in elections must be registered. ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Since 2015, parliamentary candidates must pay a deposit in order to stand for election which has been increased twenty-fold. ⁽¹⁸¹⁾

The nine registered parties in 2016/17 (before and after the change of government): ⁽¹⁸²⁾

Abbreviation	Name	Leader (before the change of government)	Party colour	Party symbol
UDP	United Democratic Party	Ousainou Darboe	Yellow	Handshake
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction	Before the change of government: Yahya Jammeh. After the change of government: Interim leader	Green	Palm tree against black background

⁽¹⁷³⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Jammeh Leaves Power, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)), p. 21275; Hartmann, Christof, ECOWAS and the Restoration of Democracy in The Gambia, January 2017 ([url](#)), p. 90; Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 329.

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia may seek Jammeh's extradition from Equatorial Guinea, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)); Standard (The), Jammeh could be extradited if..., 27 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 100; Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, p. 146.

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 100.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Gambia (The), National Assembly of the Republic of The Gambia, last updated December 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 304.

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 88; Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 304.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Gambia (The), IEC, The Gambia National Assembly Election Results, 6 April 2017 ([url](#)); Daily Observer, GMC, NCP, GPDP Win No Seat As UDP Sweeps Parliamentary Polls, 10 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 60; Gambia (The), IEC, How to Register a Party, 2017 ([url](#)); Inter-Parliamentary Union, The Gambia, National Assembly, 11 April 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), Vol. 106, No. 3, p. 329.

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Library of Congress, Gambia: Increased Monetary Deposit Requirements for Election Candidates, 21 July 2015 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 136.

⁽¹⁸²⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), IEC, The Gambia, Registered Parties, n.d. ([url](#)).

		Fabakary Tombong Jatta ⁽¹⁸³⁾		
GDC	Gambia Democratic Congress	Mama Kandeh	Purple	Open calabash in two hands
PPP	Peoples Progressive Party	Yaya Ceesay	Hot pink	Axe and hoe
GMC	Gambia Moral Congress	Mai Fatty (Interior Minister since 2017)	Red	Eight white stars
GPDP	Gambia Party for Democracy and Progress	Sarja Jarjou	Orange	Two elephants
NCP	National Convention Party	Badara Sidibeh	White	Boat
NRP	National Reconciliation Party	Hamat Bah	Blue	White cow
PDOIS	People’s Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism	Sidia Jatta	Brown	Sun with 16 rays

Each party is assigned a colour. This colour is important during the election process: voters cast their votes in the form of a small marble painted in the colour of their chosen party which they place in a container. The ‘drum and marble’ process of voting dates back to the first nationwide election of 1960. ⁽¹⁸⁴⁾

National Assembly elections were held in 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017. Some of the opposition parties boycotted the elections. ⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Until 2012 Jammeh’s party, the APRC, won a

⁽¹⁸³⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Onegambia, Tombong Jatta - Interim leader of APRC The new Government seize all our vehicles [Youtube], posted on 21 April 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), ‘In new Gambia, we will create new responsible opposition’ – Tombong Jatta, 15 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ Gambia (The), IEC, Election 2016, Handbook for Polling Official, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 6, 19-20, 29; Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 125.

⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ The UDP boycotted the National Assembly elections in 2002 and all opposition parties boycotted them in 2012. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 136; David Perfect and Arnold Hughes, Trenton, NJ, Gambian Electoral Politics: 1960-2012, 2013, pp. 97-104.

clear majority of seats (1997: 33 of 45 seats, 2002: 45 of 48 seats, 2007: 42 of 48 seats, 2012: 43 of 45 seats). ⁽¹⁸⁶⁾

Women are under-represented in the parliament: three women were elected in 2012 and 2017. In addition, three of the five people who Barrow was able to appoint directly as members of parliament in 2017 under the constitution ⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ are women. ⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

Following the change of government in early 2017, the voter turnout for the legislative elections in April 2017 was 42.7% - significantly lower than the 59% recorded for the presidential election four months previously. ⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ The coalition of opposition parties which helped Adama Barrow to election victory in the presidential election in December 2016 had collapsed prior to the elections. The UDP, Adama Barrow's party, won the election, gaining 31 of the 53 seats. The former governing party of ex-president Jammeh suffered severe losses and only gained five seats. The other seats were distributed as follows: NRP five seats, GDC five seats, PDOIS four seats, PPP two seats, an independent one seat. ⁽¹⁹⁰⁾

1.8. Judiciary

There are several legal bases for the administration of justice: formal legislation (constitution, enacted legislation), the relevant court rulings (English common law), customary law and Islamic law (Sharia). ⁽¹⁹¹⁾

Islamic law is used in the Sharia courts (Cadi courts) and district courts (district tribunals) in family matters (marriage, divorce, inheritance) relating to Muslims. ⁽¹⁹²⁾ Sharia and customary law are applied in the district courts (district tribunals) and in hearings by village councils. Customary law plays an important role in clan and land disputes. ⁽¹⁹³⁾

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 135-136; Perfect, David and Hughes, Arnold, *Gambian Electoral Politics: 1960-2012* 2013, pp. 97-104.

⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 88; Perfect, David and Hughes, Arnold, *Gambian Electoral Politics: 1960-2012* 2013, p. 104; Gambia (The), IEC, *The Gambia National Assembly election results 6th April 2017*, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 135-136; EU, *Election Observation Mission To The Gambia, Preliminary Statement*, 8 April 2017, p. 2; Swiss Embassy in Dakar-Senegal, *written communication with the SEM*, 20 April 2017; Gambia (The), IEC, *The Gambia National Assembly Election Results 6th April 2017, Nation Voter Turnout*, n.d. ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 327.

⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, *The Gambia, Legislative Elections*, 12 May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21394-21395; Daily Observer, GMC, NCP, *GPDP Win No Seat As UDP Sweeps Parliamentary Polls*, 10 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ Gambia (The), IEC, *The Gambia National Assembly Election Results*, 6 April 2017 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, *Gambia: As Major Voter Apathy Greets Gambia's Legislative Elections, Main Opposition UDP Had A Comfortable Lead In The Polls; PPP, PDOIS And GDC Win Big!*, 6 April 2017 ([url](#)); Daily Observer, GMC, NCP, *GPDP Win No Seat As UDP Sweeps Parliamentary Polls*, 10 April 2017 ([url](#)); Sey, Baboucarr, *Official results: the National Assembly elections official results*, 7 April, 2017; Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 329.

⁽¹⁹¹⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 7; Jammeh, Ousman A.S., *The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010*, 2012, p. 95.

⁽¹⁹²⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 137, 137A; US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽¹⁹³⁾ Jammeh, Ousman A.S., *The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010*, pp. 175-177; Access Gambia, Alkalo (Alikaloo) – Village Chief, 2017 ([url](#)); Daily Observer, *16 Alkalolu Trained on Customary Law*, 22 March 2017 ([url](#)); Saho, Bala, *'Challenges and Constraints: Forced Marriage as a Form of <Traditional> Practice in the Gambia'*, 2016, pp. 190-194.

The court system is as follows: ⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

- Superior courts:
 - Supreme court ⁽¹⁹⁵⁾
 - Courts of appeal
 - High courts
 - Special criminal court ⁽¹⁹⁶⁾
- Lower courts
 - Magistrates courts
 - Sharia courts (Cadi courts)
 - District tribunals
- Martial courts for military matters. ⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

The President of The Gambia appoints the judges to the superior courts, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Attorney General, who is also Justice Minister. ⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Ex-president Jammeh appointed sixteen justice ministers between seizing power in the military coup of 1994 and 2016. ⁽¹⁹⁹⁾

The constitution guarantees all citizens access to an independent justice system and the right to defence. ⁽²⁰⁰⁾ The opposition, human rights organisations and diaspora media questioned the independence of the justice system under Jammeh and criticised the far-reaching powers of the president. They complained about the lack of judges and their corruption, incompetence and partiality, particularly in the lower courts. ⁽²⁰¹⁾

Following the change of government in early 2017, Barrow announced that he would reverse Jammeh's decision to withdraw The Gambia from the International Criminal Court. ⁽²⁰²⁾ He appointed a former special envoy and a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to the highest positions in the Gambian justice system. Aboubacarr Marie Tamberdou became Justice Minister and Attorney General. ⁽²⁰³⁾ Hassan Bubacar Jallow became Chief

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 120; Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, 2012, pp. 93-95.

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ In 1999 the Supreme Court with a Chief Justice and a maximum of 5 judges replaced the Supreme Court from the British colonial period and since then has been the highest court and the final court of appeal. It rules on appeals referred by the appeal courts and actions relating to presidential and parliamentary elections. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 251; Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, 2012, p. 100.

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Since its reinstatement in 1996, the special criminal court has dealt with economic crimes. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 251.

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, 2012, pp.93-95, 103-104; Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 251.

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 84, 134, 138.

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 252-253.

⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 33, 120.

⁽²⁰¹⁾ Crime and Society, A comparative criminology tour of the world, n.d. ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), The Gambian Judiciary Crippled By Lack Of Judges and Magistrates, 27 October 2015 ([url](#)); See also Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 252.

⁽²⁰²⁾ EUISS, Beyond the ICC exit crisis, December 2016 ([url](#)); Africanews, The Gambia will remain in the ICC – President Barrow confirms, 9 February 2017 ([url](#)); HRW, Gambia Rejoins ICC, 17 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁰³⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia: Six new Supreme Court Judges appointed, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia's Attorney General seeks removal of death penalty from justice system, 20 February 2017 ([url](#)).

Justice of the Supreme Court. ⁽²⁰⁴⁾ Barrow declared that these were signs of the independence of the judiciary and steps on the way to institutional and legal reform. ⁽²⁰⁵⁾

Nevertheless, at the end of April 2017 Amnesty International called on the government to carry out reforms and provide more resources in the following areas of the justice system: to strengthen the independence and impartiality of the justice system; to support organisations such as the National Agency for Legal Aid (NALA), the Gambia Bar Association and the Female Lawyers Association Gambia; to ensure that torture is included as an offence in the Criminal Code and to make statements obtained under torture inadmissible in judicial proceedings. ⁽²⁰⁶⁾

Under Jammeh the justice system suffered from great uncertainty because of judges' insecurity of tenure and the tendency of Jammeh to appoint foreign judges rather than Gambians to the Supreme Court. ⁽²⁰⁷⁾ In April 2017 President Barrow appointed six Gambian judges to the Supreme Court. ⁽²⁰⁸⁾

1.8.1. Detention and prisons

The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for prisons. ⁽²⁰⁹⁾ The legal basis for prisons is regulated by Act 18/1953 (Prisons Act). ⁽²¹⁰⁾

There are three official state prisons:

- The Mile Two central prison in Banjul. In 2015 this prison had an official capacity of 450 and housed 817 prisoners. Special facilities include the only wing for women in The Gambia and the security wing. ⁽²¹¹⁾ Prisoners with long sentences were held at Mile Two, and prisoners with a death sentence in the security wing of Mile Two; ⁽²¹²⁾
- The Jeshwang prison near Banjul. In 2015 it had an official capacity of 150 and housed 201 inmates. A special facility is the wing for juveniles; ⁽²¹³⁾
- The prison in Janjanbureh/Georgetown. In 2015 it had an official capacity of 50 and held 88 inmates. ⁽²¹⁴⁾

In addition to the three official prisons, there are prisons or prison cells in many police stations. ⁽²¹⁵⁾ According to information from human rights organisations, during the Jammeh administration the National Drug Enforcement Agency (NDEA) and the National Intelligence

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ allAfrica, Gambia: President Barrow's Statement During the Swearing-in Ceremony of the Chief Justice, 17 February 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia: Six new Supreme Court Judges appointed, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 330; allAfrica, Gambia: President Barrow's Statement During the Swearing-in Ceremony of the Chief Justice, 17 February 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia's Attorney General seeks removal of death penalty from justice system, 20 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ AI, Human Rights Priorities For The New Gambian Government, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 330.

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)), p. 21429; SmbcNews, Gambia: Six new Supreme Court Judges appointed, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Access Gambia, Ministry of Interior, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽²¹⁰⁾ Gambia (The), Laws of The Gambia, Prisons, Act 18 of 1953, L.R.O. January 1990 ([url](#)).

⁽²¹¹⁾ ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), pp. 21-29; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²¹²⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 13; ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), p. 11.

⁽²¹³⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 13.

⁽²¹⁴⁾ ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), pp. 29-34.

⁽²¹⁵⁾ ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), pp. 15-18, 34-35.

Agency (NIA) operated prisons with no legal basis (see Section [1.9.3. National Intelligence Agency](#)).⁽²¹⁶⁾

During the Jammeh regime, The Gambia only allowed sporadic visits to prisons by external institutions.⁽²¹⁷⁾ For example, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was given access to prisoners until 2006 but this then ceased.⁽²¹⁸⁾ In 2014 a UN special rapporteur was able to visit prisons, although on a limited basis. The observer was refused access to the security wing at the Mile Two prison and to secret cells in certain police stations or quarters of the NIA or the NDEA. The UN special rapporteur states in his report that the prisons were overcrowded and that prisoners were detained for many years without trial for minor offences. The sanitary facilities and medical care were inadequate, and food was in short supply and of poor quality. Family members could bring in food for prisoners on remand (awaiting trial), but not for convicted prisoners. There was no employment for political prisoners or those with a long term of imprisonment. The use of solitary confinement of death-row and life-term prisoners in the security wing of the Mile Two prison was considered torture by the UN special rapporteur.⁽²¹⁹⁾ According to various reports, many of the detainees in Gambian prisons were imprisoned for drug-related offences. Many were not Gambians but nationals of other countries.⁽²²⁰⁾

Following the change of government in early 2017, the new Interior Minister with responsibility for prisons, Mai Fatty, and the Justice Minister/Attorney General, Aboubacarr Marie Tamedou, visited the Mile Two prison, accompanied by the press.⁽²²¹⁾ In February and March 2017 around 270 prisoners were amnestied and released. Interior Minister Fatty promised that new detention centres which met international standards would be set up.⁽²²²⁾ It is not known when this will take place.⁽²²³⁾

⁽²¹⁶⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 7; HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 1-2, 9, 25-34, 47-60.

⁽²¹⁷⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)); Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Secret Prisons, 28 February 2010; ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)).

⁽²¹⁸⁾ After a failed attempted coup led by Colonel Ndure Cham in 2006, the ICRC was no longer granted access to prisoners in The Gambia. See the annual reports of the regional office of the ICRC in Dakar: ICRC, Annual Report 2006, 11 June 2006 ([url](#)), p. 152; ICRC, Annual Report 2007, 11 June 2008 ([url](#)), p. 155.

⁽²¹⁹⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 8, 13-15; Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Secret Prisons, 28 February 2010; ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), pp. 21-29.

⁽²²⁰⁾ In 2002 66.7% of inmates were not Gambian nationals. World Prison Brief, World Prison Brief data, Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 13.

⁽²²¹⁾ Fatu Network (The), Interior & Justice ministers unexpectedly visit Mile II Prison, 13 February 2017 ([url](#)); JollowNews, Sickening Pictures Inside Gambia's Mile Two Prisons, 13 February 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), <Conditions at Mile Two Prison poor>, 14 February 2017 ([url](#)); Inside and outside pictures of the Mile 2 prison are available at: Al-Jazeera, A look inside Gambia's infamous Mile 2 prison [YouTube], 18 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²²²⁾ Point (The), Gambia: 98 Prisoners Released From Mile 2 Prison, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)); Reuters, Gambia frees nearly 100 prisoners from Jammeh era, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²²³⁾ Foroyaa Newspaper, Interior Minister Laments on Deplorable Condition of Mile Two Prisons, 10 July 2017 ([url](#)).

1.9. Security forces, army, police

The Gambia Armed Forces (GAF) are responsible for the country's security from external threats. They are responsible to the Defence Minister/President. ⁽²²⁴⁾ The GAF includes the army, the navy and the air force. The national guard (Gambia National Guard) is also part of the GAF.

The state security service, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), is directly responsible to the President. ⁽²²⁵⁾

The Gambia Police Force (GPF) has the task of maintaining security within the country and reports to the Interior Minister. ⁽²²⁶⁾

1.9.1. Gambia Armed Forces (GAF)

The Gambia does not have military conscription. ⁽²²⁷⁾ Men and women can enlist voluntarily at the age of 18. ⁽²²⁸⁾

According to the constitution, the GAF consists of the army – the Gambia National Army (GNA) – the navy and the air force. ⁽²²⁹⁾ Each section of the armed forces has its own commander. Former institutions such as the Gambia Field Force and the Gambia National Gendarmerie (GNG) have been dissolved or transferred into the new structures. ⁽²³⁰⁾

The armed forces are responsible to the Defence Minister/President. In addition to the office of commander-in-chief of the armed forces to which he was entitled under the constitution, ⁽²³¹⁾ ex-president Jammeh also assumed the office of Defence Minister. ⁽²³²⁾ President Barrow still heads the Ministry of Defence. ⁽²³³⁾

The GNA has an estimated strength of 1,000 to 2,500 personnel. ⁽²³⁴⁾ It is divided into two infantry battalions, an engineer's squadron and a Presidential Guard. ⁽²³⁵⁾ The army is based in Yundum, close to Banjul international airport. ⁽²³⁶⁾ Other military bases are documented in

⁽²²⁴⁾ Until now, all Gambian presidents have also been defence ministers during their presidency. Gambia (The), State House Online, Office of The President, 2015 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, President Barrow is Gambia's Minister of Defense, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²²⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Sector 191.

⁽²²⁶⁾ Access Gambia, Ministry of Interior, n.d. ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Sector 178.

⁽²²⁷⁾ Access Gambia, Defence & Military in Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽²²⁸⁾ Access Gambia, Defence & Military in Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽²²⁹⁾ The GAF was established by the Gambia Armed Forces Act of 1985. Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, 2012, p.103; Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Sectors 186-190.

⁽²³⁰⁾ The Gambia Field Force existed from 1958 to 1983. The Gambia National Gendarmerie (GNG) existed from 1983 to 1992. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 168-172.

⁽²³¹⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Art. 61.

⁽²³²⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, Office of The President, 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽²³³⁾ Gambia (The), State House Online, News, Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College Students Called on President Barrow, 20 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²³⁴⁾ According to 2016 official figures, the army has circa 1,900 soldiers. Access Gambia, Defence & Military in Gambia, updated 2016 ([url](#)); The Historical Dictionary of The Gambia puts the strength of the army at 2,500 personnel in 2016. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p.171; accordind to War Resisters' International, Country report and updates, Gambia, last revision 27 July 1998 ([url](#)), the entire Gambian armed forces in 1998 was just 800 personnel.

⁽²³⁵⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 171.

⁽²³⁶⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 170-171.

Fajara, Yundun, Kudang, Farafenni and Basse. There may be others. ⁽²³⁷⁾ Sources disagree on whether the army has a distinct air force or not. ⁽²³⁸⁾ There is a small navy. The army possesses at least a dozen ships and aircraft. ⁽²³⁹⁾ The new army leadership has distanced itself from the past. ⁽²⁴⁰⁾

The existence of a national guard (Gambian National Guard) is not laid down in the constitution. It was legitimised in 2008 in the Gambia Armed Forces Bill. ⁽²⁴¹⁾ The National Guard consists of the State Guard, ⁽²⁴²⁾ the Special Forces and the Guards Battalion. It is estimated that the National Guard was 700 to 1,000 strong during the Jammeh regime. ⁽²⁴³⁾

From fear of conspiracy and coup attempts, ex-president Jammeh replaced the commanders of the armed forces frequently or moved them to different positions and functions. ⁽²⁴⁴⁾ There were several attempted coups against Jammeh. The Historical Dictionary of The Gambia lists the three most serious attempts as follows: ⁽²⁴⁵⁾ the attempted coup in 1994, led by Basiru Barrow, ⁽²⁴⁶⁾ the one in 2006, led by Ndure Cham ⁽²⁴⁷⁾ and the one in 2014, led by Lamin Sanneh. ⁽²⁴⁸⁾

1.9.2. National Intelligence Agency (NIA)

The state security service, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), has existed since 1995, the time of the provisional government without a constitution. Its legal basis was Decree 45/1995. ⁽²⁴⁹⁾ The NIA replaced the previous National Security Service. Its purpose initially was to identify threats within the army. The decree gave the NIA far-reaching powers of surveillance

⁽²³⁷⁾ GlobalSecurity.org, The Gambia Armed Forces, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); Access Gambia, Defence & Military in Gambia, 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽²³⁸⁾ GlobalSecurity.org, The Gambia Armed Forces, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); Transparency International, Government Defence Anti-Corruption Index 2015, The Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)); UK Home Office's Country of Origin Information (COI) Report, The Gambia, 5 November 2013 ([url](#)), p. 8; Gambia (The), Laws of the Gambia, The Gambia Armed Forces, 1990 ([url](#)), p. 10.

⁽²³⁹⁾ For detailed figures and a list of the war materials of the Gambian navy and air force, see: GlobalSecurity.org, The Gambia Armed Forces, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); The Gambia had no Air Force, according to the UK Home Office's Country of Origin Information (COI) Report, The Gambia, 5 November 2013 ([url](#)), p. 8, quoting from the subscription based IHS Jane's Sentinel Security Country Assessments data.

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ Foroyaa Newspaper, GAF Dissociates itself from July 22 Celebration – Military chief say, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁴¹⁾ DefenceWeb, The Gambia, 10 June 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁴²⁾ The state guard guarded strategically important points such as the State House, the Presidential Villa in Kanilai and the Denton Bridge. Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election', 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 324-325.

⁽²⁴³⁾ GlobalSecurity.org, The Gambia Armed Forces, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); DefenceWeb, The Gambia, 10 June 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁴⁴⁾ GlobalSecurity.org, The Gambia Armed Forces, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁴⁵⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 229.

⁽²⁴⁶⁾ Basiru Barrow was killed in 1994 during the coup attempt against the transfer council AFPRC. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 55.

⁽²⁴⁷⁾ Ndure Cham was able to flee to Senegal after the 2006 coup attempt. According to unconfirmed information, he was captured and killed in 2013. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 84-85; SmbcNews, Names of 8 soldiers accused of killing Col Ndure Cam released, 20 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁴⁸⁾ Ex-officer Lamin Sanneh and his group were killed during the attempted coup in 2014. Since then, there have been repeated calls for an investigation of the events. The bodies were exhumed in April 2017. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 379-380; Standard (The), Police exhumed <Bodies> of Lamin Sanneh & Co, 3 April 2017 ([url](#)); Africa Research Bulletin, Bodies Exhumed, 12 May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21403-21404.

⁽²⁴⁹⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 308.

and arrest. ⁽²⁵⁰⁾ The NIA was legitimised in the 1996 constitution and placed under the direct control of the president. ⁽²⁵¹⁾

The NIA headquarters were in Banjul. ⁽²⁵²⁾ According to human rights organisations, the NIA ran its own extralegal detention facilities in Banjul and other places. ⁽²⁵³⁾

Human rights organisations and the opposition repeatedly accused the NIA of crimes such as excessive use of force, illegal arrest, torture and killing. ⁽²⁵⁴⁾ In 2014 a UN special rapporteur was able to visit selected Gambian prisons and speak to witnesses. Access to the NIA detention cells was denied. In his report, the rapporteur states that torture was common practice within the NIA. ⁽²⁵⁵⁾ In April 2016, for example, several people from the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) and youth organisations, who were taking part in a peaceful demonstration in Serrekunda demanding reform of the electoral law, were arrested by the police. Solo Sandeng, National Organizing Secretary of the UDP, died in detention a short time later (see Section [2.7. National Intelligence Agency](#)). ⁽²⁵⁶⁾ Others were seriously injured and tortured, especially by the NIA. ⁽²⁵⁷⁾

The new President Barrow has announced that the accusations against the NIA will be investigated. He had the top leaders arrested: Director General Yankuba Badjie and Operational Director Sheikh Omar Jeng (see Section [2.7. National Intelligence Agency](#)). ⁽²⁵⁸⁾ The organisation has been succeeded by the State Intelligence Service (SIS). The new head of the SIS is Musa Dibba. ⁽²⁵⁹⁾ Barrow decreed that the SIS must in future stick to its constitutional duties and may no longer make arrests. ⁽²⁶⁰⁾ Amnesty International has made further demands for transparency and accountability. ⁽²⁶¹⁾

⁽²⁵⁰⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 308; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 525; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽²⁵¹⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Sector 191.

⁽²⁵²⁾ The headquarters of the NIA in Banjul are shown in: HRW, *State of Fear*, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), p. 20.

⁽²⁵³⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 5-6, 16-20; Africa Research Bulletin, *Gambia – A Turning Point*, 11 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁵⁴⁾ HRW, *State of Fear*, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 1-2, 16-20, 24; HRW, *Gambia, Events of 2016*, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report*, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2015 Human Rights Report*, 13 April 2016 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report*, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2013 Human Rights Report*, 27 February 2014 ([url](#)); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Christof Heyns, 11 May 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 12-13; UK Home Office, *The Gambia, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 5 November 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 9, 11-14; UK Home Office, CPIN, *Gambia: opposition to the government*, December 2015, Re-issued March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 5, 8-10, 18.

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 6-8; Africa Research Bulletin, *The Gambia, Secret Prisons*, 28 February 2010 ([url](#)); ACHPR, *Prisons in The Gambia*, June 2000 ([url](#)), pp. 21-29.

⁽²⁵⁶⁾ AI, *Gambia: Death in detention of key political activist*, 16 April 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁵⁷⁾ AI, *International Report 2016/2017*, 22 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁵⁸⁾ Jollofnews, *Gambia Arrests Head of Intelligence Agency Linked To Killings*, 21 February 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, *Lawyers for Gambia's detained spy chief object special prosecutor appointment*, 29 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁵⁹⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, *The Gambia*, 6 March 2017, available by subscription at: ([url](#)), p. 21317.

⁽²⁶⁰⁾ Jollofnews, *Gambia's Feared NIA Renamed, Stripped Of Powers*, 1 February 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), *NIA renamed SIS*, 1 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁶¹⁾ AI, *Human Rights Priorities For The New Gambian Government*, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

1.9.3. Police

The Gambia Police Force (GPF) has the task of maintaining security within the country and reports to the Interior Minister. ⁽²⁶²⁾ It operates various security departments. Its size is estimated at 5000 men and women. ⁽²⁶³⁾ It has its own prisons at its headquarters in Banjul and at various police stations. ⁽²⁶⁴⁾ The chief of the police is the Inspector General. From 2015 this post was held by Yankuba Sonko. Following the change of government in early 2017, he initially remained in post but was removed in June 2017. ⁽²⁶⁵⁾

During the Jammeh administration, the media and human rights organisations repeatedly reported excessive use of force at demonstrations, abuses and misuse of power by Gambian police units. This criticism was mainly directed at the special units: Serious Crimes Unit, Police Intervention Unit, Task Force Unit and Operation Bulldozer (see Section [3.1. Freedom of the press](#)). ⁽²⁶⁶⁾

There are reports of use of force by the police even since the change of government. ⁽²⁶⁷⁾ A unit has been created within the Ministry of the Interior to investigate accusations of misconduct and human rights violations by police officers. ⁽²⁶⁸⁾

1.9.4. Junglers, Black Boys, Green Boys

The Junglers/Jungulers were a paramilitary unit of ex-president Jammeh. No legal basis for these troops is documented. There are many names for the Junglers: Black Blacks, Black Boys or Ninja. They were known as ‘black’ because they often dressed in black and covered their faces. Most were from the same ethnic group as the president, the Jola. ⁽²⁶⁹⁾ The unit was up to 40 strong and existed since approximately 1996, and was made up of selected fighters from the Presidential Guard. ⁽²⁷⁰⁾ The Junglers were based close to Kanilai, Jammeh’s home village. They are said to have been under his direct command. The opposition and human rights organisations accuse them of many cases of extrajudicial detention, torture and killings. ⁽²⁷¹⁾

After the change of government in early 2017, the new government arrested some members of the Junglers. Others went into exile with Jammeh or fled. ⁽²⁷²⁾ The new government has not yet announced that the Junglers group has been officially dissolved. However, there is no need

⁽²⁶²⁾ Access Gambia, Ministry of Interior, n.d. ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Sector 178.

⁽²⁶³⁾ Interpol, The Gambia Police Force (GPF), 2017 ([url](#)). The website shows Gambian policemen and police officers with their uniforms.

⁽²⁶⁴⁾ ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), pp. 14-18.

⁽²⁶⁵⁾ Poliso Magazine [Facebook], 18 February 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Sectors 178-180; Africanews, Gambian President Barrow replaces Jammeh-era police chief, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁶⁶⁾ HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 2, 16-17, 25-34, 47-60; Point (The), Super Nawettan final ends in fiasco, 24 December 2012 ([url](#)); Point (The), Two police officers sentenced to death, 31 May 2011 ([url](#)); Media Foundation for West Africa, Gambia: Human Rights Violations in 2011, 14 November 2014 ([url](#)); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 7.

⁽²⁶⁷⁾ Foroyaa Newspaper, 7th Day Charity Conducted for late Krubally Whilst Family Claim to Have Been Denied Witnessing postmortem, 21 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁶⁸⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia creates rights unit to probe police misconduct, human rights violations, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia: Police deny negligence in detainee’s death, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁶⁹⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia’s ‘unprecedented’ 2016 Election, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 324.

⁽²⁷⁰⁾ HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), p. 19.

⁽²⁷¹⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 2 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 7; HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 1-2, 9, 25-34, 47-60; Africa Research Bulletin, Gambia – A Turning Point, 11 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁷²⁾ New Vision, Gambia police probing dozens of forced disappearances, 5 April 2017 ([url](#)).

to take this step because, as outlined above, there is no legal basis for this troop. Nevertheless, *Amnesty International* is still urging the new government to disarm and formally disband the Junglers and other paramilitary organisations. ⁽²⁷³⁾

In addition to the Junglers/Black Boys, another paramilitary group existed under Jammeh: the Green Boys. They arose from the 22nd July Movement ⁽²⁷⁴⁾ and were the military wing of the ruling APRC party. Jammeh officially dissolved the 22nd July Movement group in 1999. Many of its members then established as Green Boys since green is APRC's party colour (see [Glossary and Abbreviations](#)). They are said to have been involved in the campaign against witchcraft in 2009 (see Section [3.6. Witchcraft](#)). They are often wrongly confused or equated with the Junglers or the Presidential Guard. ⁽²⁷⁵⁾ According to media reports, some of them enlisted in the army. ⁽²⁷⁶⁾

No information was found on whether the new Barrow government has adopted measures in relation to former members of the Green Boys. Similarly, it was not possible to retrieve information on whether there are people who were members of both the Black Boys/Junglers and the Green Boys. For more information on former government officials, see Section [2. The situation of former government officials](#).

1.10. Economy

In an international comparison, The Gambia is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. The Human Development Index published by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) in 2015 placed it 173rd out of 188 countries. ⁽²⁷⁷⁾ The same source stated that 57.2% of the population were in multidimensional poverty and 31.7% in severe multidimensional poverty in 2013. ⁽²⁷⁸⁾ The Gambia is economically weak even on a West African scale: the annual per capita gross national income (GNI) (2014: 433 US dollars) is less than half that of Senegal, the neighbouring country. ⁽²⁷⁹⁾

The pillars of the economy are as follows: ⁽²⁸⁰⁾

- Subsistence agriculture;
- Cultivation, processing and export of groundnuts (peanuts);
- Tourism;
- Remittances (money transfers) from Gambians abroad;

⁽²⁷³⁾ AI, Human Rights Priorities For The New Gambian Government, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁷⁴⁾ The 22nd July Movement refers to a meeting of the AFPRC on 22 July 1995 at which the youth organisation, the 22nd July Movement, was founded. The movement became a mass organisation and therefore dangerous to Jammeh, so he dissolved it in 1999. Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 252.

⁽²⁷⁵⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 192; Washington Post (The), 5 crazy things about the Gambian dictator who just survived a coup attempt, 6 January 2015 ([url](#)); allAfrica / The Daily Observer, Gambia: 'GreenBoys' Clarify, 11 February 2007 ([url](#)); Guardian (The), Gambian state kidnaps 1'000 villagers in mass purge of 'witchcraft', 19 March 2009 ([url](#)); Wazaonline, The Gambia's secret torture chambers, 12 March 2010 ([url](#)); Small Arms Survey, *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in The Ecowas Region*, 29 April 2005 ([url](#)), pp. 263-265.

⁽²⁷⁶⁾ SmbcNews, EU to help with Gambia's security reform, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁷⁷⁾ UNDP, Human Development Index and its components, Index for 2015, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 24; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 531.

⁽²⁷⁸⁾ UNDP, Human Development Report 2016, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 218; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 345. OECD, *African Economic Outlook 2017 - Gambia*, 22 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 11.

⁽²⁷⁹⁾ UNCTAD, *Statistical Tables on the Least Developed Countries, 2015* ([url](#)), p. 1.

⁽²⁸⁰⁾ World Bank (The), *Country Overview, The Gambia*, updated 13 February 2017 ([url](#)); Europa Publication, *Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 531.

- Industry;
- Trade, export, re-export;
- Foreign financial aid.

Approximately three-quarters of the population work in agriculture. Between 2000 and 2015 the share of gross domestic product (GDP) held by agriculture fell from 36% to 22%.⁽²⁸¹⁾ The structure of the agriculture sector has changed very little since colonial times. There is little diversification. Coarse grains (sorghum and maize) account for half of the cultivated area and groundnuts for a further quarter. Families also grow produce on a small scale for own consumption or retail: rice, sorghum, maize, cotton, manioc and vegetables. Livestock rearing and fishing play an important part in feeding the native population, but contribute very little to GDP (fishing: 2.1% of GDP).⁽²⁸²⁾ Gambian agriculture covers half the country's food requirements. Paradoxically, only half of the cultivable land is used for agriculture. The other half is not exploited.⁽²⁸³⁾ Gambian agriculture is susceptible to flooding and drought. Significant harvest losses were caused by the drought of 2011/12 and the late arrival of the rains in the 2014/15 season.⁽²⁸⁴⁾ One-third of the population do not have guaranteed food security. According to information from the World Health Organization (WHO), between 2014 and 2016 over 200 000 Gambians were forced to rely on humanitarian aid.⁽²⁸⁵⁾

Tourism contributes about 20% of the GDP. It is locally concentrated on the beaches along the Atlantic coast.⁽²⁸⁶⁾ When Ebola broke out in the neighbouring countries in 2014, the number of tourist arrivals in The Gambia fell by 60%.⁽²⁸⁷⁾ The political crisis of 2017 also had a negative effect. The director of the Gambia Tourism Board said that the impact of the unstable situation on tourism was even more devastating than the fallout from the Ebola crisis. The International Monetary Fund's most recent Staff Country Report estimated that in the first quarter of 2017 tourism revenue fell by about a third (\$ 8.8 million) due to the political turmoil.⁽²⁸⁸⁾

Remittances (money transfers) from emigrants to their native country are estimated at around 10% of GDP (2015: 10.5%, 2016: 9.7%).⁽²⁸⁹⁾ They are an important factor in stimulating

⁽²⁸¹⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 531; Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), p. 2; UNCTAD, The fisheries sector in the Gambia, 2014 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽²⁸²⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), Table 3.1, p. 25., Table 2.2, p. 7; Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 532; UNCTAD, The fisheries sector in the Gambia, 2014 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽²⁸³⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 28.

⁽²⁸⁴⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 531.

⁽²⁸⁵⁾ WHO, Gambia – Humanitarian Response Plan 2016, 2017 ([url](#)); OCHA, 2014-2016 Revised Strategic Response Plan, August 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁸⁶⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 419-420; World Travel & Tourism Council, Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2017 Gambia, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 1.

⁽²⁸⁷⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 420.

⁽²⁸⁸⁾ IMF, The Gambia, Country Report No. 17/179, 26 June 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6; Al Jazeera, Doha. The Gambia hoping to revive key tourism industry, 5 February 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Gambia Tourism Board, 2017 Official Country Guide, 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Phoenix. Tourism suffered \$ 4.5M loss over Jammeh's refusal to step down, 9 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁸⁹⁾ IMF, The Gambia, Country Report No. 17/179, 26 June 2017 ([url](#)), Table 7, p. 28; The review 'Africa South of the Sahara' estimated the share of remittances in GDP at just 5.5 % in 2012, while the CIA estimated remittances amount one fifth of the GDP; Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 532; CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)).

the economy. The money is usually invested in small businesses and is spent on consumer goods or house construction. ⁽²⁹⁰⁾

In 2016 the industry contributed 14.5% to the GDP. One-fifth of the population works in the industrial sector, mainly in small businesses. Important industries are groundnut processing and the energy sector. ⁽²⁹¹⁾

Many residents run small retail businesses. In terms of international trade, China and India have partly replaced the EU (particularly France and Great Britain) as the main export destinations in recent years. Groundnuts in a raw or processed form are the main export product. ⁽²⁹²⁾ The country has a few natural raw materials or mineral resources such as uranium, kaolin and salt. There are thought to be oilfields off the coast. ⁽²⁹³⁾

Until 2011, the re-export of goods to West African states accounted for one-third of GDP. The Gambia was then forced to change its customs policy under pressure from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Since then, the revenue from re-exports has dropped. Goods are still smuggled across the Gambia-Senegal border. Inadequate controls make it easy for smugglers to ship some Senegalese agricultural produce illegally through the port of Banjul. ⁽²⁹⁴⁾

The Gambia is a central trading centre in the illegal drugs trade between Latin America and Europe. ⁽²⁹⁵⁾ However, this could change due to the downfall of Jammeh. ⁽²⁹⁶⁾ It is also suspected that methamphetamine is produced in the country. ⁽²⁹⁷⁾ In addition, The Gambia plays a role in smuggling and trading diamonds from Liberia. ⁽²⁹⁸⁾

In 2016 The Gambia was ranked 145th out of 176 countries in the corruption index published by Transparency International. ⁽²⁹⁹⁾

The country is dependent on financial aid from abroad. According to information from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Developments (UNCTAD), in 2013 aid from foreign

⁽²⁹⁰⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 532; African Arguments, *Between a rock and a hard place*, 4 May 2016 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, *Gambia: Election Year 2016: The Gambian Diaspora And The Jammeh Regime*, 26 January 2016 ([url](#)); Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Migration, Soninke Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind*, 2010, p. 204.

⁽²⁹¹⁾ CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 531.

⁽²⁹²⁾ CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁹³⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 524.

⁽²⁹⁴⁾ Thanks to lower customs duties, Gambian dealers imported goods and sold them on at a profit to Senegal or countries without access to the sea. Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound*, 2015, p. 43; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 532.

⁽²⁹⁵⁾ According to US data, cocaine with an estimated value of 2 billion dollars is smuggled through The Gambia every year, along with heroin, cannabis, opium, etc. Novak, Andrew, *Legislative note: the abolition of the death penalty for drug offenses in The Gambia*, 29 March 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 63-65; African Online News, *Gambia makes West Africa's biggest ever drug bust*, 27 July 2010 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, *Gambia to crackdown on drugs peddlers after torching of 2 tons of marijuana*, 26 April 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, *South American drugs continue to flow through the Gambia*, 12 July 2017 ([url](#)); Diarisso, Boubacar and Goredema, Charles, *Illicit drug trading in Dakar, Dimensions and intersections with governance*, August 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 2-5, 7.

⁽²⁹⁶⁾ Sanyang, Edrissa and Camara, Sanna, *The Gambia after Elections: Implications for Governance and Security in West Africa*, 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁹⁷⁾ Maïga, Aïssata and Tompkins, Elizabeth, *West Africa's New Drug of Choice: The Rise of Methamphetamine*, 12 June 2014 ([url](#)); Reuters, *Special Report: West Africa's alarming growth industry – meth*, 27 July 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽²⁹⁸⁾ Bellagamba, Alice, *Solo Darboe, Former Diamond Dealer, Transnational Connections and Home Politics in the Twentieth-Century Gambia*, 2016, p. 280; Small Arms Survey, *Armed and Aimless: Armed Groups, Guns, and Human Security in the Ecowas Region*, 29 April 2005 ([url](#)), pp. 263, 265, Footnote 9.

⁽²⁹⁹⁾ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2016*, 25 January 2017 ([url](#)).

donors accounted for 11% of GDP. ⁽³⁰⁰⁾ Because of accusations of human rights abuses in The Gambia, from 2012 onwards the country was excluded from payments and development programmes from western donors: in 2012 it was excluded from the US African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) programmes; in 2015 the EU refused payment of 163 billion dollars. ⁽³⁰¹⁾

When Jammeh went into exile in Equatorial Guinea early in 2017, he took assets with an unknown value with him. ⁽³⁰²⁾ The media said that the country was ‘almost bankrupt’. ⁽³⁰³⁾ Low harvest yields, anxious tourists and investors and growing national debt all contributed to further deterioration of the economic situation. ⁽³⁰⁴⁾ Foreign donors promised the Barrow government financial support on condition that it would respect human rights and encourage the development of democracy. ⁽³⁰⁵⁾

1.10.1. Currency, inflation

The Gambian currency is the dalasi (Gambian dalasi GMD). A dalasi is divided into 100 bututs. ⁽³⁰⁶⁾ Coins worth 1 butut, 5 bututs, 10 bututs, 25 bututs, 50 bututs and 1 dalasi are in circulation. ⁽³⁰⁷⁾ A new series of banknotes was introduced in 2015. There are notes worth 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 dalasis. The notes from the previous series, including the 25 dalasi note, remained valid. ⁽³⁰⁸⁾

One US dollar was worth around 32 dalasis in 2012, around 41 dalasis in 2014, ⁽³⁰⁹⁾ around 49 dalasis in early 2015, around 42 dalasis in early 2016, ⁽³¹⁰⁾ and around 46 dalasis in July 2017. ⁽³¹¹⁾

⁽³⁰⁰⁾ UNCTAD, The fisheries sector in the Gambia, 2014 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³⁰¹⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 532.

⁽³⁰²⁾ Justice minister Abubacarr Tambadou estimated that the assets which Jammeh had taken with him were worth at least 50 million USD. Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, 14 June 2017, available by subscription at: ([url](#)), p. 21429; Tambadou announced in July 2017 that his Commission would investigate Jammeh’s assets. Foroyaa Newspaper, Gov’t plans to establish another Commission of Inquiry, 21 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰³⁾ World Politics Review, After Helping Solve Gambia’s Political Crisis, Senegal Needs an Exit Strategy, 7 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁴⁾ IMF, The Gambia, Country Report No. 17/179, 26 June 2017, pp. 5-7; OECD, African Economic Outlook, Gambia, 2017, pp. 2-8.

⁽³⁰⁵⁾ World Politics Review, After Helping Solve Gambia’s Political Crisis, Senegal Needs an Exit Strategy, 7 April 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Office of the President, World Bank and IMF Missions Met President Barrow, 5 April 2017 ([url](#)); IMF, IMF Staff Concludes Visit to The Gambia, 13 April 2017 ([url](#)); IMF, IMF Executive Board Approves US\$16.1Million Disbursement Under the Rapid Credit Facility for The Gambia, 26 June 2017 ([url](#)); Daily Observer, UN Pledges US\$3m to Support Gambia’s Peace-Building Initiative, 22 March 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, \$500M invest in Gambia could see seaport expansion, railway link built, 17 May 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Office of The President, Fourth Cabinet meeting focuses on Finance and Economic Affairs, Fisheries and Security matters, 28 June 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, EU will give Gambia another e33M euros before year’s end, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁶⁾ Central Bank of the Gambia, Development of Currency in The Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁷⁾ Access Gambia, Gambia Money Information – Dalasi, 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁸⁾ Banknote News, Gambia new dalasi note family confirmed, 26 April 2015 ([url](#)); Central Bank of The Gambia, Your new banknotes, 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁰⁹⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 536; Exchange-rates, Wechselkurse, GMD in CHF, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)); Central Bank of The Gambia, Inflation Outlook, 9 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁰⁾ Central Bank of The Gambia, Overview, Quarter 1, January – March 2016 ([url](#)), p. 13.

⁽³¹¹⁾ Exchange-rates, Wechselkurse, USD in GMD, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)).

In 2001 the inflation rate was below 5% but in 2003 it rose to the record rate of 17%.⁽³¹²⁾ It was 7% in December 2014,⁽³¹³⁾ 7.49% in December 2016⁽³¹⁴⁾ and 8.8% in January and February 2017, during and immediately after the political crisis following Adama Barrow's victory in the presidential election. The most recent data are for April 2017, when the figure was 8.7%.⁽³¹⁵⁾

1.11. Religion

The constitution of The Gambia prohibits religious discrimination, religious parties and the establishment of a state religion.⁽³¹⁶⁾

1.11.1. Religious affiliation

The overwhelming majority of the population of The Gambia is Muslim (96%).⁽³¹⁷⁾ Most of these are Sunnis and followers of Sufism.⁽³¹⁸⁾ The two main Sufi brotherhoods in The Gambia are the orders of *Tijaniyya*⁽³¹⁹⁾ and *Qadiriyya*⁽³²⁰⁾. A minority belong to the *Mouride* (*Muridiyya*) brotherhood.⁽³²¹⁾ Brotherhoods offer social and political orientation, religious guidance and an organisational framework. They are made up of scholars, families and family associations. The scholars, in particular, follow the teachings of a *sheikh*, or *marabout*. A *caliph* may have authority over the *marabouts* and scholars in the order. The spiritual leaders are often mediators between the followers and local government representatives. The followers may have economic links with each other or be organised into collective farms.⁽³²²⁾

A minority of Gambian Muslims are not followers of the Sufi orders but of reformist paths of Islam which dismiss local Islamic traditions. They include the *Tablighi Jama'at*, the *Salafiyya*, and

⁽³¹²⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 533; Access Gambia, *Economy of Gambia*, updated 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹³⁾ Access Gambia, *Economy of Gambia*, updated 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁴⁾ CIA, *World Factbook. The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁵⁾ Trading Economics, *Gambia Inflation Rate 1962-2017*, June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, *Consumer Price Index*, last updated February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁶⁾ Gambia (The), *Constitution, 1997*, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), pp. 12, 28, 41, 62.

⁽³¹⁷⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, *2013 Population and Housing Census: Spatial Distribution*, n.d. ([url](#)), vol. 5, p. 6; CIA, *The World Factbook: The Gambia*, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), *Gambia Tourism Board, 2015 Official Country Guide*, 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁸⁾ Sufism is a collective term for paths of Islam which are identified as mystical. The Sufis, who dressed in wool (Arabic *suf*), were ascetics who sought to comprehend the inner meaning of the Koran through various meditation practices or ecstasy. From the 12th/13th century onwards, Sufi orders were formed under the spiritual leadership of a *sheikh*. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Sufism*, last updated: 24 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³¹⁹⁾ The Sufi order of the *Tijaniyya* (*Tiġāniyya*) arose at the end of the 18th century in the Maghreb and spread throughout sub-Saharan Africa during the 19th century. There, it developed into the Sufi brotherhood with the greatest influence and the most followers. Ibrahim Niasse (1900-1975) was later responsible for the revival of Sufism in West Africa. Abun-Nasr, Jamil M., *The Tijaniyya: a Sufi Order in the Modern World*, 1965; Robinson, David and Triaud, Jean-Louis, *La Tijāniyya, Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l'Afrique*, 2000; Seesemann, Rüdiger, *The Divine Flood, Ibrāhīm Niasse and the Roots of a Twentieth-Century Sufi Revival*, 2011.

⁽³²⁰⁾ The Sufi order of the *Qadiriyya* was founded by the mystic Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in the 12th century in Baghdad and reached West Africa in the 15th century. Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 351.

⁽³²¹⁾ The *Muridiyya* was founded in Senegal in the late 19th century by Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba and still plays a central role there today. A specific feature of this order is that its followers are organised in and work on collective farms, known as *daara*. Glover, John, *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal, The Murid Order*, 2007; Winkelhane, Gerd and Seesemann, Rüdiger, *Ahmadu Bamba und die Entstehung der Muridiya*, 1993; Centro Studi sulle Nuove Religione, *Un sufismo degli immigrati: i Muridi e i Layennes*, update 23 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³²²⁾ Janson, Marloes, *The Best Hand Is the Hand That Always Gives*, 2002; Seesemann, Rüdiger, *The Divine Flood*, 2011.

the *Ahmadiyya*.⁽³²³⁾ The *Tablighi Jama'at* and the *Salafiyya* are particularly popular among Gambian youth.⁽³²⁴⁾ In recent years the *Tablighi* community has gained a larger number of followers within different ethnic groups.⁽³²⁵⁾ In contrast to the *Salafiyya* striving to reform Muslim society by means of education (creation of *madrassas*, education in Arabic), the *Tablighi* focus on missionary work by lay preaching in English. *Tablighi* probably still outnumber *Salafiyya* but it seems that there is a trend among inquisitive youth to leave the *Tablighi* organisation for the *Salafiyya*.⁽³²⁶⁾

Approximately four per cent of the population are Christian.⁽³²⁷⁾ Most of these are members of the Roman Catholic Church. The diocese of Banjul is the only Catholic diocese in the country. There are also churches and communities of Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Abiding Word Ministries (ABM) and other Pentecostal churches, and various evangelical denominations. There are also small communities of Bahais and Hindus.⁽³²⁸⁾

The relationship between Muslims and Christians is essentially peaceful.⁽³²⁹⁾ Marriage between the communities is possible, but with the observance that according to the sharia it is not allowed for a non muslim man to marry a muslim women. It is not unusual for there to be members of the Muslim and Christian religions within the same family.⁽³³⁰⁾ There are no reports of forced conversions.⁽³³¹⁾

Less than one per cent of the Gambians are followers of animistic religions.⁽³³²⁾ Syncretism between Islam, Christianity and traditional religion is common. Many Gambian Muslims and Christians practice rituals which could be considered animistic. Belief in witchcraft is also widespread throughout Gambia. Hence, many Gambians use amulets (called *jujus*) in order to protect themselves from occult forces. They may also rely on fetishes or consult Marabouts or witchdoctors.⁽³³³⁾

⁽³²³⁾ The Ahmadiyya is a reformist movement within Islam. It was founded by Ghulam Ahmad (died 1908) from the Punjab. A prophetic form of Mahdism is central to its teaching. The Ahmadiyya is controversial in the Islamic world and is banned in some places; Fisher, Humphrey J., *Ahmadiyya: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*, 1963; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 29-30, 214-215; Janson, Marloes, 'How, for God's sake, can I be a good Muslim?': Gambian youth in search of a moral lifestyle, 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁴⁾ Janson, Marloes, 'How, for God's sake, can I be a good Muslim?': Gambian youth in search of a moral lifestyle, 2016 ([url](#)); Maroney, Eric, *Mummy in the Bush – Old and News Islam in Gambia*, May 2011 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁵⁾ Sufi orders keep a critical eye on the community. Janson, Marloes, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in the Gambia, The Tablighi Jama'at*, 2014, pp. 26-29, 39-42, 82-84.

⁽³²⁶⁾ Janson, Marloes, *Islam, Youth and Modernity in the Gambia, The Tablighi Jama'at*, 2014, pp. 20-21, 254; Janson, Marloes, 'How, for God's sake, can I be a good Muslim?': Gambian youth in search of a moral lifestyle, 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁷⁾ US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁽³²⁸⁾ US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)); Access Gambia, *Religion in Gambia*, n.d. ([url](#)); Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, pp. 556-557; Curley, Christine Elizabeth, *Anglican Stagnation and Growth in West Africa: The Case of St. Paul's Church, Fajara, The Gambia*, 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽³²⁹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 357-358; Fredriks, Martha, *We Have Toiled All Night: Christianity in The Gambia 1456-2000*, 2003; Wignall, Ross, *From Swagger to Serious*, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 288-323, 304.

⁽³³⁰⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, S. 357-358.

⁽³³¹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 358; US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³³²⁾ US DoS, *International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015*, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³³³⁾ Access Gambia, *Gambian Muslims & Islamic Practices*, n.d. ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 422-423; Gierczynski-Bocandé, Ute, *Sankt Augustin, Islam und Demokratie in Senegal*, 29 January 2008 ([url](#)), pp. 119-121; Thomson, Steven K., *Christianity, Islam, and 'The Religion of Pouring'*, 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 240-276.

1.11.2. Political dimension of Islam

In 2015 ex-president Jammeh declared The Gambia an Islamic republic. The media, civil society organisations and political opponents protested against this decree by pointing out that it was against the constitution. Jammeh did not explain the consequences of his decision, but said that Christians would still be respected. ⁽³³⁴⁾ Following the change of government in early 2017, one of new President Barrow's first announcements was that The Gambia was no longer an Islamic republic. ⁽³³⁵⁾ Even before assuming office, the newly elected President Adama Barrow declared that Gambia was a secular state, as stated in its Constitution ⁽³³⁶⁾.

During the last years of his regime, ex-president Jammeh and the Supreme Islamic Council associated with him cultivated a close relationship with the Gulf states and a stricter interpretation of Sunni Islam. Gulf states educated Gambian clerics and financed mosques, schools and other projects. ⁽³³⁷⁾ Jammeh and the Supreme Islamic Council declared that believers who, in their eyes, had deviated from Sunni Islam were non-Muslim communities. Sources indicate that the religious freedom of the *Ahmadiyya*, in particular, was restricted. ⁽³³⁸⁾

The proclamation of the Islamic republic, Jammeh's proximity to three controversial members of the Supreme Islamic Council ⁽³³⁹⁾ and the restrictions placed on the *Ahmadiyya* were noted with unease by not only the Christian, but also parts of the Muslim community. ⁽³⁴⁰⁾ Due to public pressure, Jammeh was forced to make some concessions. ⁽³⁴¹⁾

There was contradictory information about Jammeh's relationship with Shiite Islam. It was rumoured that he had bought weapons from Iran and sold them on to the Lebanese Hezbollah. The Gambia officially broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in 2010. ⁽³⁴²⁾

⁽³³⁴⁾ US DoS, International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 215; African Arguments, What does Jammeh have to gain by making The Gambia an Islamic Republic?, 28 January 2016 ([url](#)); Lieven, Samuel, La Gambie s'autoproclame « État islamique », 13 December 2015 ([url](#)); BBC News, Gambia orders female workers <to cover hair>, 5 January 2016 ([url](#)); Global Voices, Signs of Islamic Law Taking Root in The Gambia, 10 January 2016 ([url](#)); Daily Observer, Presidential Adviser Tasks Religious Leaders to Resolve Tallinding, Ahmadiya Deadlock, 31 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁵⁾ Voice of America (The), Gambian President Jammeh Says He Will Not Step Down, 20 December 2016 ([url](#)); Africa confidential, Gambia at the cliff-edge, 16 December 2016 ([url](#)); BAMF, Briefing Notes, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)).
⁽³³⁶⁾ SmbcNews, Barrow to make good on his promise to keep Gambia secular, 28 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁷⁾ African Arguments, What does Jammeh have to gain by making The Gambia an Islamic Republic? 28 January 2016 ([url](#)); African Arguments, New friends, new risks as the Gambia looks East, 16 May 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁸⁾ African Arguments, What does Jammeh have to gain by making The Gambia an Islamic Republic?, 28 January 2016 ([url](#)); African Arguments, New friends, new risks as the Gambia looks East, 16 May 2016 ([url](#)); US DoS, International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2014, 14 October 2015 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Gambia: Ahmadiyya Reacts to Allegations, 2 February 2015 ([url](#)); US DoS, International Religious Freedom Report, The Gambia 2015, 10 August 2016 ([url](#)); Islam in the Gambia [online radio], [website], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³³⁹⁾ Imam Ratib of Banjul, Cherno Kah and the imam of the State House mosque were unpopular within the Muslim community. Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 335.

⁽³⁴⁰⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 335-337.

⁽³⁴¹⁾ BBC, London. Gambia's President Jammeh lifts ban on uncovered hair, 14 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁴²⁾ ISPSW, Strategy Series: Focus on Defense and International Security, August 2012 ([url](#)); Center for a New American Security, Pushback, Countering the Iran Action Network, September 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 13, 20; Small Arms Survey, Rogue Rocketeers, Artillery Rockets and Armed Groups, July 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 34, 47, 51; Africa Confidential, Iranian guns and a king in Banjul, 3 December 2010 ([url](#)); Now News, Hezbollah buying Iranian arms from Gambia, paper reports, 28 February 2011 ([url](#)); CNN, Gambia cuts economic, diplomatic ties with Iran, 23 November 2010 ([url](#)); BBC News, Gambia cuts ties with Iran and orders diplomats to go, 23 November 2010 ([url](#)).

To date, no jihadist terror attacks have been documented in The Gambia. However, due to the porous borders with Senegal, there are concerns about possible infiltration by jihadist terror groups from the Sahel area. ⁽³⁴³⁾

1.12. Media and communication

In an official survey conducted in 2013, 60% of Gambian women and 73% of men aged 15-49 said that they listened to the radio at least once a week. 47% of women and 60% of men said that they watched television at least once a week. 9% of women and 20% of men said that they read newspapers at least once a week. 30% of women and 16% of men used none of the media mentioned at least once a week. Women living in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to listen to the radio at least once a week (63% compared with 56%); to watch television at least once a week (63% compared with 27%); and to read newspapers at least once a week (14% compared with 2%). Similar differences were reported for men. ⁽³⁴⁴⁾

Radio programmes, news websites and television stations can be accessed online in The Gambia. International broadcasters such as the BBC, Voice of America and news websites from the diaspora which were very critical of the Jammeh government are an important source of information. Ownership of mobile phones and use of the internet are increasing. In 2013, 54% of the Gambian population possessed a mobile phone and 80% had access to a mobile phone. ⁽³⁴⁵⁾ The country currently has significantly more mobile phones than inhabitants. ⁽³⁴⁶⁾ Mobile phone services are provided by a number of Gambian providers including Africell (Gambia), Comium Gambia, Gamcel and QCell Gambia. The Gambia Telecommunications Co Ltd (GAMTEL) is the only fixed-line operator. ⁽³⁴⁷⁾ In 2013, 5% of the population had access to a land phone. ⁽³⁴⁸⁾ In 2016, approximately 18.5% of the Gambian population used the internet. ⁽³⁴⁹⁾

1.12.1. Radio

There are approximately 30 radio stations with a Gambian programme; some of these are produced by the diaspora. The stations are available on the internet. ⁽³⁵⁰⁾ At election time, the Jammeh government repeatedly blocked critical radio stations. ⁽³⁵¹⁾ During the first five

⁽³⁴³⁾ Jamestown Foundation (The), Leaving Islamism Aside: The Gambia Under Adama Barrow, 5 May 2017 ([url](#)); Telegraph (The), Will terrorism derail West Africa's fledgling tourism industry, 17 March 2016 ([url](#)); Basel Institute on Governance, Desk study on the capacities and needs of Sahel-zone countries to combat the financing of terrorism, 31 August 2012, pp. 19-21.

⁽³⁴⁴⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 36-38.

⁽³⁴⁵⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Access to Information and Communication technology, n.d. ([url](#)), pp. 16-18.

⁽³⁴⁶⁾ CIA, The World Factbook: The Gambia, 19 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁴⁷⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016. 2015, p. 541; Access Gambia, Gambia Telecoms Companies, n.d. ([url](#)); BuddeComm, Sydney. Gambia – Telecoms, Mobile, Broadband and Digital Media – Statistics and Analyses, last updated 10 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁴⁸⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, 2013 Population and Housing Census: Access to Information and Communication technology, n.d. ([url](#)), pp. 16-18.

⁽³⁴⁹⁾ International Telecommunication Union, Geneva. Percentage of Individuals using the Internet, 2017 URL.

⁽³⁵⁰⁾ Gambia Radio (The), Gambia Radio Stations, n.d. ([url](#)); Live Online Radio, Gambia Radio List, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵¹⁾ During the political and constitutional crisis in early 2017, the government blocked three radio stations: Taranga FM, Hilltop Radio, Afri Radio. Taranga FM had previously been blocked many times. CPJ, Gambia orders three radio stations to cease broadcasting, 5 January 2017 ([url](#)); UK Home Office, CPIN, Gambia: opposition to the government, December 2015, Re-issued March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 14.

months after the change of government, 30 new applications for radio stations were received in the country. ⁽³⁵²⁾

Important radio stations are:

- Gambia Radio & Television Services (GRTS): the state radio and television station. It broadcasts in English, French and some local languages; ⁽³⁵³⁾
- Private stations such as West Coast Radio, Capital FM, Unique FM, Paradise Radio, Afri Radio, etc.; ⁽³⁵⁴⁾
- Diaspora radio broadcasters which are based in Great Britain or the USA (Freedom Radio, Jollofnews Radio, Fatu Network Radio, Gainako Radio, and international radio stations such as the BBC and Voice of America; ⁽³⁵⁵⁾
- Broadcasters with an Islamic message such as Al Falaah FM or the broadcasts from the Supreme Islamic Council, whose website offers recitations from the Koran in Arabic and sermons, instruction and exegesis of the Koran in Mandinka, Serahule, Wolof and Jola. ⁽³⁵⁶⁾

1.12.2. Television

There is only one Gambian television station: the state-run GRTS (Gambia Radio & Television Services). ⁽³⁵⁷⁾ Satellite TV and international broadcasters such as the BBC, Al Jazeera and Premium TV are popular. ⁽³⁵⁸⁾

1.12.3. Newspapers, websites

The printed newspapers have a small circulation. However, this has increased since the change of government. ⁽³⁵⁹⁾ The newspapers' websites have a greater reach than the printed editions. Important newspapers and websites include The Daily News, The Daily Observer, Foroyaa Newspaper, The Point and The Standard. ⁽³⁶⁰⁾ Websites such as Freedom Newspaper which are produced by the diaspora and were extremely critical of the Jammeh government receive considerable attention. ⁽³⁶¹⁾ Jammeh tried repeatedly to block these websites. He also tried to block other communication channels such as WhatsApp, Viber and Skype. ⁽³⁶²⁾ Twitter,

⁽³⁵²⁾ Voice of America (The), Gambian Media Thriving Since Jammeh's Departure, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵³⁾ GRTS, The Gambia Radio and Television Services, Radio, n.d. ([url](#)); Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 541; Access Gambia, GRTS – Gambia Radio & Television Services, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵⁴⁾ The stations can be accessed at: Live Online Radio, Gambia Radio List, [website], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵⁵⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 541; Live Online Radio, Gambia Radio List, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵⁶⁾ Al Falaah FM [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Islam in the Gambia [website], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵⁷⁾ GRTS [website], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁵⁸⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 541.

⁽³⁵⁹⁾ Voice of America (The), Gambian Media Thriving Since Jammeh's Departure, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁶⁰⁾ Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 541; Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 311-313; Access Gambia, Newspapers in Gambia (Online), n.d. ([url](#)); Daily Observer (The), [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Daily News (The), [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Foroyaa Newspaper, [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Point (The), [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Standard (The), [website], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁶¹⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 214, 313; Freedom Newspaper, [website], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁶²⁾ The websites of the diaspora news sites were blocked during 2016. Viber, WhatsApp and Skype were also blocked from August 2016 in the run-up to the presidential elections. Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2016 – Gambia, 14 November 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 214, 313.

Facebook and Youtube are becoming increasingly important methods of disseminating information. ⁽³⁶³⁾

1.13. Healthcare

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is responsible for coordinating and implementing the decentralised, three-tier healthcare system. At the primary level, there were 824 primary health care centres in 2015 which provided simple medical care. For larger initiatives, such as vaccination or awareness raising campaigns, they were supported by 50 second-tier health facilities. ⁽³⁶⁴⁾ The third tier is made up of six general hospitals, a research institute with British involvement (Medical Research Council) and the hospital with the best reputation in the country: the university hospital – the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital – in Banjul (former name: Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital). In addition to the state facilities, in 2015, 55 health facilities were run privately or by NGOs. ⁽³⁶⁵⁾ The majority of the health care facilities are located in the urban area, which means that access to health services is more complex in rural areas. ⁽³⁶⁶⁾ In 2015, three (Lower River, North Bank West and Upper River) from eight health regions had no hospitals. ⁽³⁶⁷⁾

In general all the facilities suffer from a lack of well-trained staff and deficiencies in terms of infrastructure, medical equipment and supplies of certain medicines. In 2015, there were 213 medical officers in The Gambia (1.1 doctor for 10,000 inhabitants). ⁽³⁶⁸⁾ Health is underfunded, especially in the primary and secondary level. ⁽³⁶⁹⁾ Under the Jammeh government, the number of healthcare facilities rose and there were improvements in life expectancy and child mortality. Meningitis, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and measles still represented health challenges. No cases of Ebola were documented in The Gambia during the 2013-16 crisis in West Africa. ⁽³⁷⁰⁾ Thanks to international aid, substantial progress has been made in the battle against

⁽³⁶³⁾ Youtube, Facebook and Twitter were not blocked in late 2015/early 2016. Temporary restrictions were imposed from August 2016 in the run-up to the presidential elections. Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2016 – Gambia, 14 November 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 5-7.

⁽³⁶⁴⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), Table 10.1, p. 93; WHO, Ebola virus disease preparedness strengthening team, Gambia country visit 17-22 November 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 8-10; Gambia (The), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, The Gambia National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2014-2020, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁶⁵⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), Table 10.1, p. 93; WHO, Ebola virus disease preparedness strengthening team, Gambia country visit 17-22 November 2014, 16 December 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 8-10; Access Gambia, General Hospitals in Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)); Barrow, Lamin F.M., Factors that influence access to mental health care service, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 17-18.

⁽³⁶⁶⁾ Barrow, Lamin F.M., Factors that influence access to mental health care service, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 17.

⁽³⁶⁷⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), Table 10.1, p. 93.

⁽³⁶⁸⁾ World Bank (The), Technical Brief: The Gambia, December 2015 ([url](#)); Barrow, Lamin F.M., Factors that influence access to mental health care service, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 18; Blank, Molly and Brackett, Jackie, Travel Report, On-site assessment of healthcare systems and mPharesis integration feasibility in The Gambia, 19 September 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 3-7; Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), Table 10.1, p. 93.

⁽³⁶⁹⁾ World Bank (The), Technical Brief: The Gambia, December 2015 ([url](#)); Blank, Molly and Brackett, Jackie, Travel Report, On-site assessment of healthcare systems and mPharesis integration feasibility in The Gambia, 19 September 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 3-7.

⁽³⁷⁰⁾ WHO, WHO Country Cooperation 2008-2013, Gambia, 2009 ([url](#)), pp. 3-8; WHO, Gambia: WHO statistical profile, last updated January 2015 ([url](#)); Barrow, Lamin F.M., Factors that influence access to mental health care service, 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 17-18; WHO, Ebola virus disease preparedness strengthening team, 16 December 2014 ([url](#)), p. 18; WHO, Global Health Observatory country views, last updated 10 November 2016 ([url](#)); WHO, Humanitarian Response Plan 2016, 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 86-87, 127, 201; Berger, Stephen, Infectious Diseases of Gambia, 2017 ([url](#)), p. 42; Gambia (The), The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), p. 3; McConnell, Bonnie B. and Dabore, Buba, Music and the Ecology of Fear, 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 29-42.

malaria. ⁽³⁷¹⁾ However, with 176 malaria deaths registered in 2015, ⁽³⁷²⁾ the healthcare system in The Gambia still faces significant challenges.

Traditional medicine constitutes often the first point of contact for a significant proportion of Gambian patients, as practitioners are scattered throughout the country and thus more accessible in rural regions. Moreover, they often allow payments in kind or over time options, which are more convenient for poor households. The Gambian authorities strive for a stronger partnership with traditional practitioners in order to improve health service delivery. ⁽³⁷³⁾

There is no social health insurance in The Gambia. Thus, out-of-the pocket expenditure on health is high and constitutes a heavy burden for households. ⁽³⁷⁴⁾

1.14. Transport system

1.14.1. Air travel

Gambia has one airport: the international airport of Banjul (also known as Yundum airport). A number of airlines including Brussels Airlines, Royal Air Maroc and vueling fly directly to Banjul, especially from European and West African destinations. Charter flights from and to Great Britain, Scandinavia and the Netherlands are crucial to tourism. ⁽³⁷⁵⁾ In 2015, 134,560 tourists arrived by air. ⁽³⁷⁶⁾ There are no local airports or domestic flights. ⁽³⁷⁷⁾

1.14.2. Port/river traffic

The port of Banjul is the most important port in The Gambia. Ocean-going ships can travel at least until Kaur (190 km upstream) or even further on until Kuntaur (240 km upstream). ⁽³⁷⁸⁾ There are approximately 20 wharves for small boats along the river Gambia. A journey to the furthest port of Basse in the Upper River Region takes about five days, including loading and unloading. The river is used primarily for the transport of goods. For passengers, there is a boat service once a week from Banjul to Basse as well as excursion boats over shorter stretches. People normally use the roads parallel to the Gambia River. ⁽³⁷⁹⁾

⁽³⁷¹⁾ Catholic Relief Services, The Gambia Nears <Last Mile> of Malaria Elimination, 5 July 2017 ([url](#)); Thompson Reuters Foundation, Gambia on funding drive to become first sub-Saharan nation free of malaria, 12 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁷²⁾ Catholic Relief Services, The Gambia Nears <Last Mile> of Malaria Elimination, 5 July 2017 ([url](#)); Thompson Reuters Foundation, Gambia on funding drive to become first sub-Saharan nation free of malaria, , 12 July 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 95.

⁽³⁷³⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Banjul. The Gambian National Health Policy 2012-2020, April 2012 ([url](#)), p. 41; World Bank, Health and Poverty in the Gambia, 2005 ([url](#)), p.31.

⁽³⁷⁴⁾ Gambia (The), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Banjul. The Gambian National Health Policy 2012-2020, April 2012 ([url](#)), p. 41; Sundby, Johanne, A rollercoaster of policy shifts, September 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁷⁵⁾ Access Gambia, Banjul International Airport Information, n.d. ([url](#)); FlightStats, (BJL) Yundum International Airports Arrival, n.d. ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 419.

⁽³⁷⁶⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Statistical Abstract 2016, March 2017 ([url](#)), p 70.

⁽³⁷⁷⁾ Access Gambia, Banjul International Airport Information, n.d. ([url](#)); GCAA, [website], n.d. ([url](#)); Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 543.

⁽³⁷⁸⁾ Gambia (The), Gambia Ports Authority, Banjul, n.d. ([url](#)); Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, p. 543; Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 177.

⁽³⁷⁹⁾ Gambia (The), Gambia Ports Authority, [website], n.d. ([url](#)); LCA/WFP, Gambia Waterways Assessment, 1 November 2011, updated December 2013 ([url](#)); Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, pp. 524, 543; Gregg, Emma and Trillo, Richard, The Rough Guide to The Gambia, 2016, p. 48.

1.14.3. Rail

There are no railways in The Gambia (and never have been any).⁽³⁸⁰⁾

1.14.4. Road traffic

The country has two main transport routes parallel to the Gambia River: one road on the North Bank and one at the South Bank. The road network is in poor condition. In 2015, the total length of roads was 15,514 kilometres of which 62.5% were paved.⁽³⁸¹⁾ Transit traffic travels slowly and is considered precarious, and the Gambia River can only be crossed by ferry (see Map 3: [Ferries across The Gambia](#)).⁽³⁸²⁾ There are very few bridges over the tributaries of the Gambia: the link to St. Mary Island in the capital Banjul,⁽³⁸³⁾ the link to MacCarthy Island near Sankuli Kunda/Janjanbureh⁽³⁸⁴⁾ and the small bridge near Chamoi⁽³⁸⁵⁾ in the far east of the country.

The plan to build a large Gambia Bridge near Farafenni (*North Bank* region, Kerewan LGA) has been under discussion for decades. The Trans-Gambia bridge would provide a rapid transport link in the north-south direction to Senegal and become part of the Trans-Gambia Highway. More broadly, it would be part of the Trans-West African Highway from Dakar to Lagos.⁽³⁸⁶⁾ The foundation stone was laid in February 2015 and the bridge is currently expected to be finished by 2018.⁽³⁸⁷⁾

A [UN overview map](#) from 2017 shows the border posts and access points.⁽³⁸⁸⁾

1.15. Citizenship and identity documents

1.15.1. Citizenship

Between 1889 and 1965, most residents of The Gambia were British protected persons, although residents of the colony were British subjects.⁽³⁸⁹⁾ British naturalisation acts were passed in 1873 and 1894.⁽³⁹⁰⁾ When The Gambia gained independence in 1965, the British

⁽³⁸⁰⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 531.

⁽³⁸¹⁾ LCA/WFP, *Gambia Road Network*, 01 November 2011, updated December 2013 ([url](#)); Foroyaa Newspaper, <80 percent of our road network are poor> - says Minister Jobe, 7 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸²⁾ NZZ, *Das Chaos in Afrika hat System*, 15 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸³⁾ Access Gambia, *Denton Bridge & Oyster Creek*, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸⁴⁾ Google Maps, *Sankuli Kunda, Gambia* [Extract from satellite map], n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸⁵⁾ Access Gambia, *Roads & Bridges in Gambia*, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸⁶⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 532; African Development Fund, *Trans-Gambia Corridor*, November 2011 ([url](#)); Point (The) Trans-Gambia Bridge Project – what you need to know, 21 May 2014 ([url](#)); World Policy Institute [blog], *The Trans-Gambia Highway: Integration or Isolation?*, 14 June 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸⁷⁾ Point (The), *Foundation stone laid for D4B Trans-Gambia bridge*, 23 February 2015 ([url](#)); Jeune Afrique, *Sans Yahya Jammeh, enfin la paix en Casamance?*, 6 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸⁸⁾ UN OCHA, *Gambia: Roads and border access*, 4 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁸⁹⁾ The protectorate was introduced gradually from 1889 with the *Anglo-French Convention*. The borders between The Gambia and Senegal were defined by 1900. Following the two islands of St. Mary and MacCarthy, the other territories also became a British protectorate in 1894. Curley, Christine E., *Anglican Stagnation and Growth in West Africa: The Case of St. Paul's Church, Fajara, The Gambia*, 2012 ([url](#)), p. 19; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 2-8, 347; Saine, Abdoulaye, *Culture and Customs of Gambia*, 2012, p. 3; Barry, Boubacar, *Senegambia and the Atlantic slave trade*, 1998, pp. 5-25, 303-314; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Migration, Soninké Young Men and the Dynamics of Staying Behind (The Gambia)*, March 2010, pp. 35-37; Gaibazzi, Paolo, *Bush Bound*, 2015, pp. 24-25.

⁽³⁹⁰⁾ Internationales Ehe- und Kindschaftsrecht mit Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht, Gambia, *Das Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht*, 31 March 1999, available by subscription at: ([url](#))

Gambia Independence Act of 17 December 1964 ⁽³⁹¹⁾ governed the retention or loss of British citizenship. The Gambia Independence Order of 29 January 1965 ⁽³⁹²⁾ and the Gambia Nationality and Citizenship Act of 11 January 1965 (entered into force on 18 February 1965) ⁽³⁹³⁾ laid the foundations for Gambian citizenship. Gambian citizenship was granted to: ⁽³⁹⁴⁾

- Any person who was born in The Gambia and who, on the date of independence, was under the protection of the United Kingdom or was one of its citizens and whose father or grandfather was born in The Gambia;
- Any person who was born outside The Gambia and whose father had become a citizen of The Gambia;
- Any woman who married a citizen of The Gambia.

Under the 1970 constitution, Gambian citizenship was granted to: ⁽³⁹⁵⁾

- Any person born in The Gambia since its independence on 18 February 1965 and having at least one parent with Gambian citizenship;
- Any person born outside The Gambia since its independence on 18 February 1965 and whose father held Gambian citizenship.

According to the 1996 constitution (amended 2001) currently in force, Gambian citizenship is granted to:

- Any person born in The Gambia after 1997 and having at least one Gambian parent;
- Any person born outside The Gambia after 1997 and having at least one parent who holds Gambian citizenship. ⁽³⁹⁶⁾

The Gambian Constitution also provides that Gambian citizenship can be granted - upon application – to:

- A person who has married a Gambian citizen and since the marriage has lived in The Gambia for at least seven years;
- A person who has lived in The Gambia for at least 15 years and is:
 - Of full age and capacity;
 - Of good character;
 - Intends do reside permanently in the Gambia;
 - Capable of supporting herself/himself and her/his dependents. ⁽³⁹⁷⁾

Dual citizenship is possible, but only for Gambians who acquire citizenship of another country. It is prohibited for nationals of other countries who become Gambians. ⁽³⁹⁸⁾

⁽³⁹¹⁾ UK Public General Acts, Gambia Independence Act 1964, 17 December 1964 ([url](#)),

⁽³⁹²⁾ UK Public General Acts, The Gambia Independence Order 1965, 29 January 1965 ([url](#)).

⁽³⁹³⁾ Gambia (The), Nationality and Citizenship Act, 18 February 1965, available at: ([url](#)).

⁽³⁹⁴⁾ Internationales Ehe- und Kindschaftsrecht mit Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht, Gambia, Das Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht, 31 March 1999, available by subscription at: ([url](#)); Jammeh, Ousman A.S., The Constitutional Law of The Gambia 1965-2010, p. 72.

⁽³⁹⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 24 April 1970 ([url](#)), Chapter II, pp. 3-4.

⁽³⁹⁶⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, reprinted 2002 ([url](#)), Chapter III, pp. 14-18.

⁽³⁹⁷⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, amended in 2001, Chapter III, [2001] ([url](#)).

⁽³⁹⁸⁾ Gambia (The), Constitution, 1997, amended in 2001, Chapter III, [2001] ([url](#)); UNHCR, UNHCR & IOM - Nationality, Migration and Statelessness in West Africa, June 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 26-28; Access Gambia, GAMBIS, How To Gain Gambian Citizenship, 2017 ([url](#)).

1.15.2. Identity documents and civil register records

Identity cards

All Gambians over the age of 18 are required by law to carry a national ID card with them at all times. Anybody who does not comply with this requirement can be punished by a fine or imprisonment. ⁽³⁹⁹⁾ Applicants must prove their identity in order to obtain an ID card. They must do this by means of a birth certificate, passport, voter's card, registration/naturalisation certificate or attestation by the *Seyfo* (district authority chief) / *Alkalo* (village chief). ⁽⁴⁰⁰⁾

There are two types of identity card in circulation:

- Traditional, non-electronic identity card.
- Electronic identity card with a chip.

In 2009 the Gambian government decided to switch to The Gambia Biometric Identification System (GAMBIS). This system collected data for the electronic identity cards, driving licences and residence permits. ⁽⁴⁰¹⁾

The electronic identity card contains a chip and the 11-digit National Identification Number (NIN) from the GAMBIS system. ⁽⁴⁰²⁾ The first six digits of the NIN are the date of birth. The other digits are made up of codes relating to the place of issue, serial numbers and gender. ⁽⁴⁰³⁾ The government intended to extend the GAMBIS system to passports and birth, death and marriage certificates. ⁽⁴⁰⁴⁾ However, this did not happen. By mid/late 2015 electronic identity cards were no longer available. From early 2016, the traditional ID cards have been issued once again. ⁽⁴⁰⁵⁾

In March 2017 the government announced that it would examine the security concept for national documents. It therefore temporarily stopped the production of both passports and ID cards. ⁽⁴⁰⁶⁾

In addition to the traditional and electronic identity card, another model for ID cards has been discussed: the common biometric identity card for the 15 countries of the ECOWAS. ⁽⁴⁰⁷⁾ The ECOWAS biometric ID card has not been introduced in The Gambia so far, but plans are in high gear for its introduction. ⁽⁴⁰⁸⁾

⁽³⁹⁹⁾ Access Gambia, Work & Residency Permits For Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)); Access Gambia, GAMBIS, 2017 ([url](#)); Jollofnews, Gambia Suspends Production of Passports, 23 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰⁰⁾ Access Gambia, Work & Residency Permits For Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)); Gambia (The), GAMBIS, National ID, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰¹⁾ Freedom Newspaper, Gambia: New Gambian ID Cards Being Rejected By Senegalese Authorities! 25 January 2016 ([url](#)); Access Gambia, GAMBIS. The Gambia Biometric Identification System, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰²⁾ Access Gambia, GAMBIS. The Gambia Biometric Identification System, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰³⁾ IRB, Gambia: Whether the National Identity Number, NIN, is permanent or may be modified, 28 October 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰⁴⁾ Fatu Network (The), The Gambia Returns to the old Identity Cards, 4 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰⁵⁾ Fatu Network (The), The Gambia Returns to the old Identity Cards, 04 January 2016 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Gambia: New Gambian ID Cards Being Rejected By Senegalese Authorities! 25 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰⁶⁾ Jollofnews, Gambia Suspends Production of Passports, 23 March 2017 ([url](#)); Foroyaa Newspaper, Why Government stops issuing National Documents, 27 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰⁷⁾ Point (The), Ecowas to Introduce Common W/African ID Card, Remove Residence Permit, 10 June 2016 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), The Gambia Returns to the old Identity Cards, 4 January 2016 ([url](#)); Foroyaa Newspaper, National ID Card Issuance Commences Today After Eight Months, 6 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁰⁸⁾ allAfrica, West Africa: Ecowas to Introduce Common W/African ID Card, Remove Residence Permit, 10 June 2016 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), The Gambia Returns to the old Identity Cards, 4 January 2016 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Gambia: National ID Card Issuance Commences Today After Eight Months, 6 January 2016 ([url](#)); Gambia Immigration Department, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017.

Passports

There are currently two types of passport in circulation: ⁽⁴⁰⁹⁾

- Machine-readable passports without a chip and without electronically stored data;
- ECOWAS passports with electronically stored data.

There are three types of machine-readable passport without a chip and without electronically stored data: the green standard passport for citizens, the blue service passport and the red diplomatic passport. ⁽⁴¹⁰⁾ Machine-readable passports are valid for five years. ⁽⁴¹¹⁾ The green passport costs 1,000 dalasis. ⁽⁴¹²⁾

The Immigration Department issues the green standard passports for citizens. Applicants must submit two passport photographs, a form and at least one contact telephone number. To prove their identity and Gambian nationality, applicants must produce the following documents: proof of the parents' identity, a birth certificate or a statement signed by the *Alkalo* (village chief) or *Seyfo* (district authority chief) that the passport applicant was born in his/her village or district. ⁽⁴¹³⁾

Since January 2016, Gambians should apply for a biometric ECOWAS passport. Nevertheless it seems that Gambian citizens living abroad could still receive a green passport for some time. ⁽⁴¹⁴⁾ Therefore, they had to entrust a relative in The Gambia to apply for him/her, a new green passport. ⁽⁴¹⁵⁾ Since April 2017, after the new government stopped issuing passports for two months, Gambian nationals have to appear personally at the nearest Gambian Embassy or consulate with relevant supporting documents. ⁽⁴¹⁶⁾ Gambian representations in Europe still extend machine readable passports for a short period (usually up to one year). ⁽⁴¹⁷⁾

Gambian ECOWAS biometric passports with electronically stored data have been available to Gambians since 22 September 2014. The formal requirements for obtaining this passport are: confirmation of payment (3,000 dalasis), proof of identity by means of the national electronic identity card, the voting card or a copy of the birth certificate, signed by the *Alkalo* (village chief) or *Seyfo* (district authority chief). Gambians below 18 years of age must produce a birth certificate, signed by the *Alkalo* or *Seyfo*, and their parents' identity documents. ⁽⁴¹⁸⁾

⁽⁴⁰⁹⁾ Access Gambia, Gambian Passports (Gambia Immigration Department – GID), updated 2017 ([url](#)); Access Gambia, Passports in Gambia (Types), updated 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹⁰⁾ Access Gambia, Gambian Passports (Gambia Immigration Department – GID), updated 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹¹⁾ Diplomatic and service passports are only valid while the holder is working as a diplomat or functionary. Access Gambia, Gambian Passports (Gambia Immigration Department – GID), updated 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹²⁾ Access Gambia, Gambian Passports (Gambia Immigration Department – GID), updated 2017 ([url](#)); 1000 Dalasis entsprachen im Juni 2017 rund 21 Franken. Exchange-Rates, Olathe, Kansas. Wechselkurse. Ergebnisse des Währungsumrechners: GMD in CHF, 27 July 2017.

⁽⁴¹³⁾ Access Gambia, Gambian Passports (Gambia Immigration Department – GID), info from the GID - 2012, page updated 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹⁴⁾ Daily Observer (The), Gambians Urged to Apply for Biometric Passport, 10 December 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Consulate General of the Republic of The Gambia in The Netherlands, Amsterdam, "Renewal Gambian Passports", September 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹⁶⁾ Freedom Newspaper, Gambia: Gambia Lifts Ban On The Issuance Of Machine Readable Gambian Passports, 27 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴¹⁷⁾ Consulate of The Gambia in Switzerland, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017; Embassy Consulate of The Gambia in Spain, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017.

⁽⁴¹⁸⁾ Point Newspaper (The), Gambian passport goes biometric, 23 September 2014 ([url](#)); Kibaaro News, Gambia to kick start new biometric passport, 28 February 2014 ([url](#)).

The applicant must appear in person at the enrolment center in order to capture their Bio data and their photograph. Enrolment centres in Belgium, USA, UK and Nigeria were planned, but it seems that these aren't operational, yet. ⁽⁴¹⁹⁾

Following the change of government in early 2017, the Gambian government stopped producing national identity cards and passports due to allegation that the Jammeh regime had given Gambian identity documents to foreign nationals. In April 2017 it relaxed the rules and announced that it would start producing machine-readable passports again. ⁽⁴²⁰⁾ In July 2017 the Interior Minister, Mai Fatty, stated that there were no further restrictions on the issuing of passports. ⁽⁴²¹⁾

In the past, special passports valid for six months were issued to go on pilgrimage to Mecca. ⁽⁴²²⁾ Currently, pilgrims have to apply for a standard passport. ⁽⁴²³⁾

Civil register records

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is responsible for the registration of births and deaths, while the Ministry of Justice is responsible for the registration of marriages and divorces. ⁽⁴²⁴⁾

In 2004, birth registration was integrated into maternal and child health clinics throughout the country, and public health officers were mandated as registrars. This led to a clear increase of birth registration of children under five – from 32% in 2000 to 55% in 2005. ⁽⁴²⁵⁾ However, late birth registration, mostly when the child is about to enrol in school, was still the most common type of registration in 2012. ⁽⁴²⁶⁾

Local registrars register births and deaths. The documents are archived locally and entries are made by hand. There is no central Gambian archiving or electronic data storage for matters relating to the civil register. ⁽⁴²⁷⁾ For certification of documents and other tasks, the local registrars are in contact with the Registrar of Births and Deaths in Banjul who forms part of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. ⁽⁴²⁸⁾

To register births and deaths, the local registrars interview the applicants or family members and check the plausibility of the statements and the authenticity of the documents. Registration of a birth requires written documents from the clinic, confirmation of the birth by the *Alkalo* (village chief) and the *Seyfo* (district chief) and completion of a legally prescribed

⁽⁴¹⁹⁾ Point Newspaper (The), Gambian passport goes biometric, 23 September 2014 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Consulate General of the Republic of The Gambia in The Netherlands, Amsterdam, "Renewal Gambian Passports", September 2015 ([url](#)); Consulate of The Gambia in Switzerland, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017; Embassy of The Gambia in Spain, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017.

⁽⁴²⁰⁾ Jollofnews, Gambia Suspends Production of Passports, 23 March 2017 ([url](#)); Standard (The), Interior resumes passport issuance, 26 April 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia investigating the issuance of passports, IDs to non-citizens, 22 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴²¹⁾ Point Newspaper (The), Interior minister clears air on passports, ID cards, 10 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴²²⁾ Access Gambia, Passports in Gambia (Types), 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴²³⁾ Embassy of The Gambia in Spain, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017.

⁽⁴²⁴⁾ UNECA, Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in the Republic of the Gambia, September 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴²⁵⁾ UNICEF, UNICEF Good Practices in Integrating Birth Registration into Health Systems (2000–2009), December 2009 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴²⁶⁾ UNECA, Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in the Republic of the Gambia, September 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴²⁷⁾ UNDESA, Statistics Division, Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, January 2014, ([url](#)), p. 41.

⁽⁴²⁸⁾ UNDESA, Statistics Division, Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, January 2014, ([url](#)), pp. 40-41.

form. Registration of a death requires medical confirmation of the death, including details of the cause of death, and confirmation from the *Alkalo*. Registration of deaths is not common in The Gambia. ⁽⁴²⁹⁾ Marriages and divorces are rarely registered. ⁽⁴³⁰⁾

⁽⁴²⁹⁾ UNDESA, Statistics Division, Workshop on the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, January 2014, ([url](#)), pp. 40-41.

⁽⁴³⁰⁾ UNECA, Status of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in the Republic of the Gambia, September 2012 ([url](#)).

2. The situation of former government officials

Steps taken to date by the new administration in relation to functionaries of previous governments indicate a tendency to adopt a cautious approach to judicial investigations into the past, seeking to proceed on a case-by-case basis. However, it is too early to assess as no proceedings have been concluded.

Listed below in note form are members of various organisations who held an important function and whose change of position has been commented on in the literature or the media. The list is not exhaustive.

2.1. Government

2.1.1. Ex-president Yahya Jammeh

A state Commission of Inquiry was established with a three-month mandate to investigate the financial activities of public bodies with regard to their dealings with ex-president Jammeh. It met for the first time on 10 August. ⁽⁴³¹⁾

Several ministers resigned in January 2017: Vice-President Isatou Njie-Saidy, Finance Minister Abdou Kolley, Foreign Minister Neneh Macdouall-Gaye, Trade Minister Abdou Jobe, Tourism Minister Benjamin Roberts and Communications Minister Sheriff Bojang. ⁽⁴³²⁾ President Barrow held a meeting with some of them in February 2017. None of them became ministers in the new government. ⁽⁴³³⁾ It is not known whether any ex-ministers in The Gambia have been the subject of investigations or criminal proceedings. However, criminal proceedings against one ex-minister are taking place in Switzerland:

2.1.2. Sonko, Ousman

Former Interior Minister. He was dismissed in September 2016 for unknown reasons. ⁽⁴³⁴⁾ Criminal proceedings have been instigated by the Attorney General of Switzerland following his arrest in January 2017, due to the strong suspicion that Sonko is responsible for crimes against humanity. ⁽⁴³⁵⁾ In May 2017 the magistrates court in Banjul issued an arrest warrant for Sonko in connection with the enforced disappearance and suspected murder of former

⁽⁴³¹⁾ Daily Observer, 4 Members of Commission of Inquiry Sworn-in, 14 July 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), Banjul. Ex-President Jammeh Commission kick-starts, 11 August 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴³²⁾ Daily Mail Online, Time runs out for Gambia's Jammeh as more ministers defect, 17 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴³³⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, 6 March 2017, available by subscription at: ([url](#)), p. 21318; Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Ruling Coalition Split, 13 April 2017, available by subscription at: ([url](#)), pp. 21357-21358; Jollofnews, Gambia: Barrow Defends Meeting Jammeh's Ministers, 16 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴³⁴⁾ According to the diaspora newspaper Freedom Newspaper, the UN refused to grant Sonko a visa for a meeting in the USA. Jammeh therefore distanced himself from him. Freedom Newspaper, Gambia: Weekend Bombshell: Ousman Sonko Denied US Visa, 25 September 2016 ([url](#)); Sonko's successor as interior minister was Momodou Alieu Bah. Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia: Interior Minister Replaced, 10 October 2016, available by subscription at: ([url](#)).

⁽⁴³⁵⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 263; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Medienmitteilung, Fall Gambia: Bundesanwaltschaft übernimmt das Strafverfahren, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)); Bundesversammlung (Die), Das Schweizer Parlament, Fragestunde Nationalrat, Frage Rutz, Gregor. Antwort der Aufsichtsbehörde über die Bundesanwaltschaft, 6 March 2017 ([url](#)); NZZ, Dringender Verdacht auf Folter, 10 May 2017 ([url](#)).

NIA Director Daba Marenah in 2006. ⁽⁴³⁶⁾ According to Trial International, several people from The Gambia have instituted legal proceedings against Sonko in Switzerland. ⁽⁴³⁷⁾

2.2. Ambassadors

Many ambassadors resigned from their posts or were dismissed during the crisis. Barrow announced in February 2017 that the existing Gambian ambassadors could continue in post in order to provide continuity of the Gambian representation abroad. ⁽⁴³⁸⁾ In July 2017 government circles revealed that many embassies would close for financial reasons. ⁽⁴³⁹⁾

2.3. Regional governors

In spring 2017 Adama Barrow replaced all the regional governors who had been appointed by Jammeh. ⁽⁴⁴⁰⁾

2.4. Central Bank

The Governor of the Central Bank, Amadou Colley, and three senior officials were dismissed in May 2017 without an official statement of reasons. ⁽⁴⁴¹⁾

2.5. Armed forces (GAF)

2.5.1. Badjie, Ousman

Head of the army Ousman Badjie promised loyalty to Jammeh during the political crisis in early 2017. ⁽⁴⁴²⁾ After soldiers from the ECOWAS marched into The Gambia, he urged army personnel not to fight but to welcome the troops with a cup of tea. ⁽⁴⁴³⁾ Following the change of government, Barrow initially left the commander of the Gambian army in post and subsequently moved him to the Foreign Ministry in February 2017. General Masanah Kinteh, former Chief of Defence Staff of the GAF, was appointed as the new head of the army. ⁽⁴⁴⁴⁾

⁽⁴³⁶⁾ AFP, Two charged for 2004 murder of Gambian journalist Hydera, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Askani Senegambia, Gambian Court Issues Arrest Warrant Against the Killers of Journalist Deyda Hydera, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 288.

⁽⁴³⁷⁾ Trial International, Detention extended for former minister Ousman Sonko, last modified 12 July 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), 7 witnesses to testify against Ousman Sonko, 12 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴³⁸⁾ Al-Jazeera, African leaders to visit Banjul to push Jammeh to go, 9 February 2017 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Gambia: <We Take Nothing Personal Against Anyone> President Barrow Tells Reinstated Ambassadors, 22 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴³⁹⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia to relegate, shutdown some embassies, 7 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴⁰⁾ Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 329.

⁽⁴⁴¹⁾ Reuters, Gambia Central Bank Governor, Other Top Bank Officials Fired, 9 May 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), New central bank governors speak, 12 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴²⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Jammeh Leaves Power, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21276-21277; Daily Observer, Army Chief Renews Forces' Loyalty, support to President Jammeh, 4 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴³⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia, Jammeh Leaves Power, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21276-21277; Gambianonet, President Barrow retains no stress army chief, 30 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴⁴⁾ Freedom Newspaper, Masaneh Kinteh Is Gambia's Army Chief of Defense Staff, 26 February 2017 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Gambia: Breaking News: I Am Ready To Serve As A Watchman, 27 February 2017 ([url](#)).

2.5.2. Badjie, Saul

General and commander of the *State Guard*. Presumed to have gone into exile with Jammeh in Equatorial Guinea. ⁽⁴⁴⁵⁾ In May 2017 the magistrates court in Banjul issued an arrest warrant for Saul Badjie in connection with the enforced disappearance and murder of former NIA Director Daba Marenah in 2006. ⁽⁴⁴⁶⁾ Saul Badjie is accused of involvement in the murder of other people, including the murder of Alhagie Mamut Ceesay and Ebou Jobe. ⁽⁴⁴⁷⁾

2.5.3. Bah, Momodou Alieu

Brigadier General. Sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment after the attempted coup in 2006. Pardoned. Appointed finance director of the armed forces. Interior Minister from September 2016 until his resignation in January 2017. ⁽⁴⁴⁸⁾ Finance director of the army for a short time under Barrow. ⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ Dismissed from the army in February 2017 with no reasons given. ⁽⁴⁵⁰⁾

2.6. Elite troops (State Guard, Presidential Guard)

The following members of the Presidential Guard were indicted in May 2017: Malick Manga, Nuha Badgie, Sulayman Sambou, Major Momodou Jarju, Mustapha Sanneh and Michael Jatta. The Justice Department accused them of involvement in the murder of Toumani Jallow and Abdoulie Gaye. Jallow and Gaye had worked in Jammeh's political office but disappeared, presumed murdered, after Jammeh lost the presidential elections in December 2016. ⁽⁴⁵¹⁾

2.7. National Intelligence Agency (NIA)

Nine officers of the NIA have been arrested. Banjul magistrates court brought charges against them in March 2017. ⁽⁴⁵²⁾ The two highest-ranking officers were Yankuba Badjie, former director of the NIA, ⁽⁴⁵³⁾ and Saikou Omar Jeng, former head of operations at the NIA. ⁽⁴⁵⁴⁾

⁽⁴⁴⁵⁾ Fatu Network (The), Gen. Saul Badjie, Jimbe Jammeh, Umpa Mendy, others to go on exile with Jammeh, 21 January 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gen. Badjie, other close aides gone into exile with Jammeh, 21 January 2017 ([url](#)); His family had previously brought Saul Badjie to Senegal, Freedom Radio, As Jammeh's Arrest Is Imminent, Gen. Saul Badjie Evacuates His Wife and Children To Senegal!, 10 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴⁶⁾ Standard (The), Arrest warrant for Saul Badjie, 6 others, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); AFP, Two charged for 2004 murder of Gambian journalist Hydara, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 288.

⁽⁴⁴⁷⁾ SmbcNews, Alagie Mamut Ceesay And Ebou Jobe Are killed, 8 March 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gen. Saul Badjie, Lt. Col. Solo Bojang 'slaughtered' Alhagie Ceesay, Ebou Jobe, 22 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴⁸⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, The Gambia: Interior Minister Replaced, 10 October 2016, available by subscription at: ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ SmbcNews, Jammeh's former interior minister is the new military finance director, 30 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁰⁾ Freedom Newspaper, Gambia: Bombshell Drops At The Army Headquarters, 25 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵¹⁾ SmbcNews, Toumani Jallow, Abdoulie Gaye suffocated to death, 23 May 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The) [Facebook], Please help find Lance Corporal Toumani Jallow, posted 27 January 2017 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Wanted Jammeh Assassin Team Member Sulayman Sambou Now Lives in Portugal!, 21 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵²⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, Security Reforms, 3 April 2017, available by subscription at: ([url](#)), p. 21366; Jollofnews, Gambia: Defence Lawyers Galled At Ex-Spy Chiefs' Detention, 21 March.2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵³⁾ Jollofnews, Gambia Arrests Head of Intelligence Agency Linked To Killings, 21 February 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Lawyers for Gambia's detained spy chief object special prosecutor appointment, 29 May 2017 ([url](#)); a legal scandal erupted following the publication of tape recordings involving Sheriff Tambadou, a member of the prosecuting team and brother of Justice Minister Abubacarr Tambadou, and the wife of Yankuba Badjie. Freedom Newspaper, Gambian President Adama Barrow Refuses To Accept His Justice Minister's Resignation Letter!, 20 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁴⁾ Point (The), Solo Sandeng's remains exhumed as investigation continues, 10 March 2017 ([url](#)).

The other officers were Louie Gomez, Baboucarr Sallah, Yusupha Jammeh, Haruna Susso, Tamba Mansary, Lamin Darboe and Lamin Lang Sanyang. ⁽⁴⁵⁵⁾ According to press information, they were charged on nine counts – one of which was the murder of Solo Sandeng in April 2016 (see Section [2.7. National Intelligence Agency \(NIA\)](#)). ⁽⁴⁵⁶⁾ In March 2017 demonstrators demanded the death sentence for Yankuba Badjie. ⁽⁴⁵⁷⁾ The court handling the case made it clear that the accused must be treated fairly and with dignity and must be considered innocent until judgment was passed. ⁽⁴⁵⁸⁾ The trial was ongoing as of July 2017. ⁽⁴⁵⁹⁾

2.8. Police

2.8.1. Sonko, Yankuba

Inspector General of the police from 2010. Initially remained in post after the change of government. In June 2017 he was moved to the Foreign Ministry without any official statement of reasons. Landing Kinteh was appointed as the new Inspector General of the police. ⁽⁴⁶⁰⁾

2.9. Prisons

2.9.1. Colley, Bora

Governor of the Mile Two prison in Banjul for a short period. Jungler for many years, commander of the camp in Kanilai. ⁽⁴⁶¹⁾ Fled in February 2017. ⁽⁴⁶²⁾ In May 2017 Banjul magistrates court issued an arrest warrant for Bora Colley in connection with the suspected murder of several people, including former NIA Director Daba Marenah in 2006. ⁽⁴⁶³⁾ According to some media sources, Bora Colley was arrested in Senegal. ⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾

⁽⁴⁵⁵⁾ Jollofnews, Gambia: Defence Lawyers Galled At Ex-Spy Chiefs' Detention, 21 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁶⁾ In April 2016 the police arrested several people from the opposition United Democratic Party (UDP) and youth organisations who were taking part in a peaceful demonstration in Serrekunda demanding reform of the electoral law. Solo Sandeng, National Organizing Secretary of the UDP, died in detention a short time later. AI, Gambia: Death in detention of key political activist, 16 April 2016 ([url](#)); Sunugambia, Video: Former NIA's facing charges in the high court, 28 March 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), Solo Sandeng fainted in front of Yankuba Badjie, 9 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁷⁾ Guardian (The), Gambian protesters demand ex-spy chief's execution, 20 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁸⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia: Judge orders NIA9 to be treated with dignity, 3 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁵⁹⁾ Smbcnews, Special prosecutor in NIA9 trial accused of misconduct, 16 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁰⁾ Africanews, Gambian President Barrow replaces Jammeh-era police chief, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶¹⁾ According to Reuters, London, it seems that some biographic details about Bora Colley are confused with those of David Charles Colley. Bora Colley is wrongly named as the long-standing head of Gambian prisons. Reuters, Senegal police arrest former boss of Gambia's notorious prisons, 28 January 2017 ([url](#)); the same confusion occurs in: UK, Home Office, Gambia: Political opinion, Version 2.0, 14 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 30; see also: Fatu Network (The), Jammeh's 'Junglers' Abandon Their Kotu Residence, 29 January 2017 ([url](#)); Kairo News, General Bora Colley Nabbed With Gold, Dollars, 27 January 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Senegal extradites former Gambian military general, 11 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶²⁾ Senego, Le Général Bora Colley se réfugie en Guinée-Bissau, 14 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶³⁾ AFP, Two charged for 2004 murder of Gambian journalist Hydara, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Askani Senegambia, Gambian Court Issues Arrest Warrant Against the Killers of Journalist Deyda Hydara, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 288; Point (The), Wanted, 4 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾ Fatu Network (The), The Nine <Junglers> Arrested, 31 May 2017 ([url](#)); Gambia Echo (The), Senegal Arrest General Bora Colley, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)).

2.9.2. Colley, David Charles

Long-standing head of the prison service and governor of the Mile Two prison in Banjul. Relieved of his post after the change of government in early 2017. Arrested, charged with inhumane treatment of prisoners and causing the death of several prisoners in connection with rotten prison food. ⁽⁴⁶⁵⁾ Released on bail. ⁽⁴⁶⁶⁾ Ansumana Manneh was appointed as the new head of the prison service (Prison Commissioner). ⁽⁴⁶⁷⁾

2.10. Junglers

Some Junglers went into exile in Equatorial Guinea with Jammeh ⁽⁴⁶⁸⁾ while others fled to unknown destinations. An arrest warrant for Sanna Manjang and Kawsu Camara (alias Bombardier) was issued in May 2017 in connection with the murder of Deyda Hydara in 2004 (see Section [3.1. Freedom of the press](#)). ⁽⁴⁶⁹⁾ Sanna Manjang is also accused of other murders. ⁽⁴⁷⁰⁾

According to police information, nine Junglers working for the military police were detained in May 2017. ⁽⁴⁷¹⁾ Criminal investigations are ongoing in connection with the enforced disappearance, torture and murder of several people. The identity of those detained has not been officially revealed. They are thought to be Musa Johnson, Pa Sanneh, Ismaila Jammeh, Omar Alias Oya Jallow, Amadou Badjie and Malick Jatta. ⁽⁴⁷²⁾ They are said to have cooperated and led investigators to graves of their victims. ⁽⁴⁷³⁾ The Junglers had not appeared in court by July 2017. ⁽⁴⁷⁴⁾

⁽⁴⁶⁵⁾ AFP, Ex-head of Gambia's prisons charged over disappearances, 7 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁶⁾ Jollofnews, Gambia's Long Serving Prison Boss David Colley Fired, 24 February 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia fires chief prison warden David Colley, 25 February 2017 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Gambia: Police Charge David Colley and Grant Him Bail, 6 March 2017 ([url](#)); Colley is mentioned as a director of Mile 2 in 1999. ACHPR, Prisons in The Gambia, June 2000 ([url](#)), p. 22; Sidisanneh.blogspot, Three of Jammeh's henchmen, 28 April 2016 ([url](#)); Daily Nation, Ex-head of Gambia's prisons charged over disappearances, 8 March 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia's former prison director charged, released on bail, 6 March 2017 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Minister Mai Fatty's Facebook Briefings, 10 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁷⁾ Freedom Newspaper, Bombshell Drops at the Army Headquarters, 24 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁸⁾ thestar.com, Adama Barrow promises security overhaul in post-authoritarian Gambia, 28 January 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), Jammeh's Junglers Abandon Their Kotu Residence, 29 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁶⁹⁾ Daily Observer, Ex-Interior Minister Has NO Connection With Atrocities Committed – CMC Coordinator, 10 April 2017 ([url](#)); *Gambia: Sanna Manjang Cries, When Jammeh Asked Him If He Was Part Of General Badjie's Camp!*, 28 December 2015 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Malick Jatta, A Gambian Soldier Accused of Killing Journalist Deyda Hydara Arrested!, 27 February 2017 ([url](#)); AFP, Two charged for 2004 murder of Gambian journalist Hydara, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Smbcnews, Gambia issues arrest warrant for Deyda Hydara's alleged slayers, 18 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷⁰⁾ SmbcNews, Sanna Manjang facing multiple murder charges, 20 May 2017 ([url](#)); Daily Observer (The), Sanna Manjang, Others charged for Killing Ndongo Mboob, 23 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷¹⁾ Fatu Network (The), The Nine <Junglers> Arrested, 31 May 2017 ([url](#)); in March 2017 it was reported that 14 Junglers had been arrested. SmbcNews, Senegal extradites former Gambian military general, 11 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷²⁾ Fatu Network (The), The Nine <Junglers> Arrested, 31 May 2017 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Police Detective Source Says Jungullar Malick Jatta Admits, 24 April 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), <Jungler> Malick Jatta Arrested, 27 February 2017 ([url](#)); MenaceToSocietyGang, Malick Jatta, A Gambian Soldier Accused Of Killing Journalist Deyda Hydara Arrested! [Youtube], uploaded 27 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷³⁾ Africa Research Bulletin, Bodies Exhumed, 12 May 2017, available by subscription at: ([url](#)), pp. 21403-21404.

⁽⁴⁷⁴⁾ SmbcNews, Families of purported 'Jungulars' demand their release, 21 July 2017 ([url](#)).

2.11. APRC officials

2.11.1. Colley, Yankuba

Mayor of Kanifing municipal council. Known as an APRC propagandist and for his denunciations of homosexuals (see Section [3.3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender \(LGBT\) persons](#)). Remained in his post as mayor of the municipal council, despite calls for him to be removed. ⁽⁴⁷⁵⁾

2.11.2. Jatta, Fabakary Tombong

President of the National Assembly until its last regular meeting before the legislative elections in 2017. Interim leader of the APRC after Jammeh's departure. ⁽⁴⁷⁶⁾

No attempts by the new government to ban the APRC have been documented.

2.12. Supporters of Jammeh

Around the time of the legislative elections in April 2017 there were incidents when supporters of the UDP, Barrow's party, and supporters of the APRC clashed. ⁽⁴⁷⁷⁾ The new leader of the APRC, Fabakary Tombong Jatta, complained that many supporters of his party had been harassed or arrested on more than one occasion. ⁽⁴⁷⁸⁾ The Ministry of the Interior replied that arrests had only been made when weapons or violence had been used – which Jatta disputed. ⁽⁴⁷⁹⁾

2.13. Uncertain power relationships

Observers assumed that it would take some time for new loyalties to develop within the security forces. ⁽⁴⁸⁰⁾ Troops from ECOWAS were responsible for the country's security after the change of government. Neighbouring Senegal provided the largest contingent of soldiers. Their task was to train and support the Gambian security forces. In June 2017 President Barrow extended the mandate for another 12 months, with the European Development Fund

⁽⁴⁷⁵⁾ Fatu Network (The), Yankuba Colley says Yaya Jammeh Deserves SOME Respect! 15 March 2017 ([url](#)) Sunugambia, Mayor Yankuba Colley Aprc, we have nothing to fear about, 18 March 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), Mayor Yankuba Colley Calls for the Reopening of the Bakoteh Dumpsite, 29 June 2017 ([url](#)); on one media platform the programme manager of the Gambian Association of NGOs, Madi Jobarteh, demanded Colley's replacement; see: Mamostv.com, Opinion - Removal of Mayor Yankuba Colley as per the Local Government Act, 8 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷⁶⁾ Onegambia, Tombong Jatta - Interim leader of APRC The new Government seize all our vehicles [Youtube], posted on 21 April 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), <In new Gambia, we will create new responsible opposition> – Tombong Jatta, 15 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷⁷⁾ Point Newspaper (The), APRC, UDP supporters clash in Sibanor, 10 April 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, UDP, APRC supporters clash in Tallinding, 22 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷⁸⁾ Sunugambia, Fabakary Tombong Jatta, claims that Aprc militants are facing lots of arrest and harassment, 14 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁷⁹⁾ SmbcNews, Opposition demands charges against Kanilai protesters be dropped, 20 July 2017 ([url](#)); Standard (The), FTJ: Kanilai protesters never armed, 6 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸⁰⁾ Jamestown Foundation (The), Leaving Islamism Aside: The Gambia Under Adama Barrow, 5 May 2017 ([url](#)).

providing the funding. ⁽⁴⁸¹⁾ Unlike Jammeh, Barrow did not use the Presidential Guard for his personal protection; instead he used the police and ECOWAS forces. ⁽⁴⁸²⁾

There were early fears that Jammeh's supporters or militiamen would rise up against the new president or launch a coup against him. In Kanilai, Jammeh's home village in the Foni Kansala district close to the border with the Casamance/Senegal region, there were several exchanges of gunfire between ECOWAS soldiers and people who were referred to as demonstrators. ⁽⁴⁸³⁾

In July 2017 rumours spread in the media that 250 to 300 of Jammeh's supporters – reportedly deserters, former security officers, Junglers and people who had gone into exile with Jammeh – had gathered in Mauritania, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau and were threatening The Gambia's security. ⁽⁴⁸⁴⁾ Four soldiers from the Gambian army were arrested on suspicion of mutiny. ⁽⁴⁸⁵⁾ There was a fear that the unrest and rumours were geared towards 22nd July, the anniversary of the Jammeh coup in 1994. President Barrow announced that the government would not mark this day as the coup had been an illegal military action. ⁽⁴⁸⁶⁾ On the anniversary of the coup things remained calm, and army representatives apologised for the military coup. ⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾

⁽⁴⁸¹⁾ ECOWAS, EU to Finance ECOWAS ECOMIG Force in the Gambia, 22 June 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia's President Barrow broadens ECOMIG mandate, 6 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸²⁾ SmbcNews, Four soldiers arrested for suspected mutiny, 19 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸³⁾ Seneweb, Kanilai: Coups de feu entre soldats pro Jammeh et troupes de la Cedeao, 21 April 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Gambia: Three soldiers wounded in Kanilai, 4 June 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, Barrow: What happened in Kanilai will not be tolerated, 4 June 2017 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Gambia Urging Deployment of More Senegalese Troops, Says President Barrow, 16 March 2017 ([url](#)); World Politics Review, After Helping Solve Gambia's Political Crisis, Senegal Needs an Exit Strategy, 7 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸⁴⁾ Jollofnews, Gambian Army <Hostile Elements> Working Against Gov't, 7 July 2017 ([url](#)); Seneweb, 250 soldats de Jammeh menacent le pouvoir de Barrow, 4 July 2017 ([url](#)); Jeune Afrique, Sénégal : L'armée s'interroge sur une possible menace de déstabilisation en Gambie, 5 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸⁵⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia's army, weeding' out ex-President's loyalists, 21 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸⁶⁾ President Barrow [Twitter], 14 July 2017 ([url](#)); Fatu Network (The), Gambia gov't says July 22 will not be celebrated or glorified, 14 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾ SmbcNews, An apology long overdue, 22 July 2017 ([url](#)).

3. Human rights

During the First Republic under Dawda Jawara, The Gambia had a reputation for a high level of commitment to human rights. ⁽⁴⁸⁸⁾ This changed with the Jammeh coup in 1994. After the takeover by the AFPRC and Jammeh's seizure of power, the regime was repeatedly accused of repression of critics and the media and of crimes such as the enforced disappearance of citizens, imprisonment without charge, torture and killings. ⁽⁴⁸⁹⁾ There was talk of a climate of fear. ⁽⁴⁹⁰⁾

In the run-up to elections and during the period around the various attempted coups, the government intensified repression and further restricted press freedom. The UN, numerous countries, the EU and many NGOs criticised the government over many years on account of human rights violations. ⁽⁴⁹¹⁾

In 2015 The Gambia rejected recommendations of the UN Human Rights Council following the Universal Periodic Review. The rejected recommendations related to removal of the restrictions on the right of freedom of expression, ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and abolition of the death penalty. ⁽⁴⁹²⁾

During Jammeh's last year in office, human rights organisations also criticised serious human rights violations such as restriction of freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests, detention and enforced disappearance of opponents, journalists, religious leaders and trade unionists, as well as torture, ill-treatment and neglect in detention. ⁽⁴⁹³⁾

The new President Adama Barrow made it clear that a priority objective of the new government would be to ensure respect for human rights. He said that he did not want to systematically pursue members of the Jammeh regime; it was more a question of establishing the truth and of reconciliation. ⁽⁴⁹⁴⁾ He set up a commission to investigate the fate of people who had disappeared in unexplained circumstances during Jammeh's period of office. In April 2017 the government started investigations in 33 cases. No judgments have been passed to date. ⁽⁴⁹⁵⁾

⁽⁴⁸⁸⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 203; Perfect, David, *The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh: An Assessment*, 12 March 2010 ([url](#)), pp. 57-58.

⁽⁴⁸⁹⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh: An Assessment*, 12 March 2010 ([url](#)), pp. 56-59.

⁽⁴⁹⁰⁾ Perfect, David, *The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath*, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 324.

⁽⁴⁹¹⁾ Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 203-204; US DoS, *The Gambia 2013 Human Rights Report*, 27 February 2014 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report*, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2015 Human Rights Report*, 13 April 2016 ([url](#)); US DoS, *The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report*, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)); UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions*, Christof Heyns, 11 May 2015 ([url](#)); UK Home Office, *The Gambia, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 05 November 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 10-34; UK Home Office, *CPIN, Gambia: opposition to the government*, December 2015, Re-issued March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 5, 17-19; Euractiv, *EU cuts aid to Gambia over human rights concerns*, 11 December 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁹²⁾ AI, *Gambia fails to heed UN warnings on deteriorating human rights*, 26 March 2015 ([url](#)); AI, *Annual Report, Gambia 2016/2017*, 22 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁹³⁾ HRW, *World Report 2017*, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)); AI, *Annual Report, Gambia 2016/2017*, 22 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁹⁴⁾ Al-Jazeera, *Adama Barrow faces test as he returns to The Gambia*, 26 January 2017 ([url](#)); Al-Jazeera, *Adama Barrow pledges truth commission over Yahya Jammeh*, 21 January 2017 ([url](#)); *World Politics Review*, *To Ensure Its Democratic Transition, Gambia Will Need Justice – and Reconciliation*, 2 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁹⁵⁾ BBC News, *Gambia to set up truth commission to probe Jammeh's rule*, 24 March 2017 ([url](#)); *New Vision*, *Gambia police probing dozens of forced disappearances*, 5 April 2017 ([url](#)).

3.1. Freedom of the press

On the World Press Freedom Index 2017, The Gambia was ranked 143rd out of 180 countries with regard to press freedom, based mainly on the conditions in the country under the Jammeh regime. ⁽⁴⁹⁶⁾

Human rights organisations, journalists and opposition voices have reported the following main actions against or infringements of press freedom by the Jammeh government: ⁽⁴⁹⁷⁾

- From 2002 the National Assembly enacted restrictive press laws. Journalists were forced to publish their sources. Anybody who, in the eyes of the government, incited the masses or misquoted or cast aspersions on the government could be punished by imprisonment for six months to three years. The media and journalists, who were already subject to compulsory registration, had to pay prohibitively high fees; ⁽⁴⁹⁸⁾
- Deyda Hydara, publisher of the newspaper *The Point*, publicly criticised the new requirements and was killed on 16 December 2004 ⁽⁴⁹⁹⁾, under circumstances which have not been fully explained. The Court of Justice of the ECOWAS ruled in 2014 that the accused, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA), had failed to carry out a proper investigation but that there was no proof that the government had been involved in Hydara's murder. ⁽⁵⁰⁰⁾ In May 2017 a warrant was issued for the arrest of two former *Junglers* who were accused of killing Deyda Hydara in 2004 (see Section [2.10. Junglers](#)); ⁽⁵⁰¹⁾
- Ebrima Manneh, a journalist with the *Daily Observer*, disappeared in 2006 under circumstances which have not been explained thus far; ⁽⁵⁰²⁾
- Alagie Abdoulie Ceesay, Director of Radio Taranga FM, stated that he had been tortured and beaten unconscious while in detention in 2015; ⁽⁵⁰³⁾
- Government bodies, mainly members of the NIA and *Junglers* (see Section [2.7. National Intelligence Agency](#) and Section [2.10. Junglers](#)), repeatedly attacked editorial offices and printers and completely or partially destroyed them. They threatened journalists or took them into temporary detention. The period of detention could last from half a day to several months. Editorial offices were temporarily or permanently closed. In his book on press freedom in The Gambia, the exiled former publisher of the *Independent*, Alagi Yorro Jallow, provides a detailed

⁽⁴⁹⁶⁾ RSF, 2017 World Press Freedom Index, 26 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁹⁷⁾ AI, Annual Report Gambia 2016/2017, 22 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁴⁹⁸⁾ The following laws were enacted: National Media Commission Act, Newspaper Amendment Act. Criminal Code Amendment Act. Jallow, Alagi Yorro, *Delayed Democracy: How Press Freedom Collapsed in The Gambia*, 2013, pp. 41-44; 58-66; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 526.

⁽⁴⁹⁹⁾ CPJ, Deyda Hydara, *The Point*, Killed in Banjul, Gambia, 16 December 2004, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁰⁰⁾ Jallow, Alagi Yorro, *Delayed Democracy: How Press Freedom Collapsed in The Gambia*, 2013, p. 44; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 526.

⁽⁵⁰¹⁾ *Daily Observer*, Ex-Interior Minister Has NO Connection With Atrocities Committed – CMC Coordinator, 10 April 2017 ([url](#)); *Freedom Newspaper*, Sanna Manjang Cries, When Jammeh Asked Him If He Was Part Of General Badjie's Camp!, 28 December 2015 ([url](#)); *Freedom Newspaper*, Malick Jatta, A Gambian Soldier Accused of Killing Journalist Deyda Hydara Arrested!, 27 February 2017 ([url](#)); AFP, Two charged for 2004 murder of Gambian journalist Hydara, 19 May 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 205-06.

⁽⁵⁰²⁾ Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016*, 2015, p. 526; CPJ, CPJ seeks meeting with Gambian President Adama Barrow, 1 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁰³⁾ *Jollofnews*, Escaped Gambian Journalist 'Arrives' In Senegal, 23 April 2016 ([url](#)); CPJ, Gambian journalist sentenced to two years in prison, 23 November 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 285.

description of dozens of events between 1994 and 2012. ⁽⁵⁰⁴⁾ Offences between 2012 and 2016 are documented in human rights reports; ⁽⁵⁰⁵⁾

- Some organs of the press, notably The Point and Foroyaa, subjected themselves to self-censorship, thus ensuring their survival. ⁽⁵⁰⁶⁾ According to information from Alagi Yorro Jallow, during the Jammeh government up to 2012 approximately 40 named journalists went into exile or sought asylum abroad; ⁽⁵⁰⁷⁾
- The Jammeh government succeeded in hacking the website of the diaspora news site Freedom Newspaper in May 2006. It temporarily detained 43 of its subscribers and informants in The Gambia. Jammeh repeatedly blocked this and other websites which were critical of the government. ⁽⁵⁰⁸⁾ All diaspora news sites were blocked in the run-up to the presidential elections in 2016. ⁽⁵⁰⁹⁾

The new government under Adama Barrow has announced that it will guarantee the independence of the press and repeal the restrictive media laws introduced by the Jammeh government as part of a constitutional review process. ⁽⁵¹⁰⁾ However, to date the following widely criticised restrictions have not been withdrawn, as reported by Amnesty International records in a list of demands: the legal provision in the Criminal Code relating to ‘sedition’ (Section 52, offence of sedition), ‘libel’ (Section 178, criminal libel), ‘spreading false information’ (Section 59 and 181A, spreading false information) and ‘giving false information to a public servant’ (Section 114, giving false information to a public servant). The laws which allow censorship of the internet (Communication Act 2013, Section 173) and the collection, interception and storage of information without judicial scrutiny (Information and Communication Act 2009, Section 173A) are also still in force. ⁽⁵¹¹⁾ In July 2017 the Justice Department announced via Twitter that reform of the media laws had started, but did not give any details. ⁽⁵¹²⁾

There are no indications that the new government has tried to exert pressure on the media or block news sites so far. Rather, it has asked the public to offer sincere criticism of the government's work. ⁽⁵¹³⁾ Security organisations have been trained in how to guarantee the freedom of expression and safety of journalists. ⁽⁵¹⁴⁾ In one case, the new government prohibited publication of a newspaper for a short time: the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)

⁽⁵⁰⁴⁾ Jallow, Alagi Yorro, *Delayed Democracy: How Press Freedom Collapsed in The Gambia*, 2013, pp. 115-141; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 313; Europa Publications, *Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara* 2016, 2015, p. 526.

⁽⁵⁰⁵⁾ CPJ, *Gambian journalist sentenced to two years in prison*, 23 November 2016 ([url](#)); Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016, The Gambia*, 27 July 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁰⁶⁾ Jallow, Alagi Yorro, *Delayed Democracy: How Press Freedom Collapsed in The Gambia*, 2013, p. 68; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, p. 311-313.

⁽⁵⁰⁷⁾ Jallow, Alagi Yorro, *Delayed Democracy: How Press Freedom Collapsed in The Gambia*, 2013, pp. 113-114.

⁽⁵⁰⁸⁾ Jallow, Alagi Yorro, *Delayed Democracy: How Press Freedom Collapsed in The Gambia*, 2013, p. 93; Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 290-291.

⁽⁵⁰⁹⁾ Viber, WhatsApp and Skype were also blocked from August 2016. Freedom House, *Freedom on the Net 2016 – Gambia*, 14 November 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, *Historical Dictionary of The Gambia*, 2016, pp. 214, 313.

⁽⁵¹⁰⁾ Monde (Le), *Gambie: le nouveau ministre de la justice annonce une révision de la Constitution*, 8 February 2017 ([url](#)); Voice of America (The), *Gambian Media Thriving Since Jammeh's Departure*, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹¹⁾ Al, *Human Rights Priorities for the New Gambian Government*, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹²⁾ Gambia (The), *Ministry of Justice [Twitter]*, 20 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹³⁾ Standard (The), *President Barrow vows to protect media freedom*, 23 March 2017 ([url](#)); Monde (Le), *Paris. Gambie : le nouveau ministre de la justice annonce une révision de la Constitution*, 8 February 2017 ([url](#)); SmbcNews, *Barrow welcomes public criticism towards his administration*, 17 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹⁴⁾ In June 2017 the human rights organisation Article 19, supported by UNESCO and the EU, ran training on the safety of journalists for security organisations. Africanews, *Gambian security forces to be schooled on human rights, press freedom*, 31 May 2017 ([url](#)); Voice of America (The), *Gambian Media Thriving Since Jammeh's Departure*, 14 June 2017 ([url](#)).

ruled that the Daily Observer, a newspaper which is close to ex-president Jammeh, could not appear for two weeks in June 2017. However, it was explained that this step was connected with outstanding tax payments. ⁽⁵¹⁵⁾

In March 2017 the Barrow administration announced that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission would be set up within the next six months to investigate the fate of victims of the Jammeh system. The journalists mentioned above – Deyda Hydar, Ebrima Manneh and Alagie Abdoulie Ceesay – were named, among others. In the announcement it was unclear whether the investigation would also include criminal prosecution in relation to the events and financial compensation for the victims' families. ⁽⁵¹⁶⁾ The Commission had not been set up by July 2017. ⁽⁵¹⁷⁾ However, Justice Minister Aboubacarr Marie Tamedou, indicated that a draft bill on the Commission had been submitted to the expert consultation process. ⁽⁵¹⁸⁾

3.2. Death penalty

During the First Republic, the death penalty was carried out in a single case in 1981. ⁽⁵¹⁹⁾ In 1993 the Prime Minister, Dawda Jawara, abolished the death penalty. It was reinstated by the AFPRC under Jammeh for murder and treason. ⁽⁵²⁰⁾

Since then, the death penalty has officially been used to execute seven Gambians, one Senegalese man and one Senegalese woman by shooting in 2012. Ex-president Jammeh had previously announced that all 47 of those sentenced to death at the time should be executed. Following national and international protests, no further death penalties were carried out. ⁽⁵²¹⁾

For a short time, the death penalty was also available for persons carrying more than 250 grams of cocaine or heroin. The death penalty for drug possession and dealing was abolished in April 2011. It was never applied. ⁽⁵²²⁾

The new Gambian Justice Minister and Attorney General, Aboubacarr Marie Tamedou, announced in early 2017 that he was seeking the general abolition of the death penalty. ⁽⁵²³⁾

⁽⁵¹⁵⁾ Media Foundation For West Africa, Update: Pro-Jammeh Newspaper Resumes Operations, 30 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹⁶⁾ BBC News, Gambia to set up truth commission to probe Jammeh's rule, 24 March 2017 ([url](#)); Deutsche Welle, The Gambia: coping with dictatorship's legacy, 10 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹⁷⁾ JollofNews Online, Building The New Gambia With Madi Jobarteh: Six Months Of Adama Barrow, 20 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹⁸⁾ Foroyaa Newspaper, Draft bill on truth, reconciliation and reparations commission concluded, 21 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵¹⁹⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 115; UK Home Office, The Gambia, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report, 05 November 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 15-16; US DoS, The Gambia 2012 Human Rights Report, 19 April 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 2-6, 10, 16-17; HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 29-31; in relation to the constitutionality of the death penalty in The Gambia: Novak, Andrew, The Rule of Law, Constitutional Reform, and the Death Penalty in The Gambia, 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 217-235.

⁽⁵²⁰⁾ Decree No 52 of the Provisional Ruling Council of August 1995 reinstated the death penalty. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 115; Novak, Andrew, Legislative note: the abolition of the death penalty for drug offenses in The Gambia, 2012 ([url](#)), p. 64; Novak, Andrew, The Rule of Law, Constitutional Reform, and the Death Penalty in The Gambia, 2013 ([url](#)), pp. 217-235.

⁽⁵²¹⁾ HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), p. 53; Novak, Andrew, The Rule of Law, Constitutional Reform, and the Death Penalty in The Gambia, 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵²²⁾ The death penalty for drug dealing and possession of drugs applied between October 2010 and April 2011. Novak, Andrew, Legislative note: the abolition of the death penalty for drug offenses in The Gambia, 2012 ([url](#)), p. 63.

⁽⁵²³⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia's Attorney General seeks removal of death penalty from justice system, 20 February 2017 ([url](#)); Africa Review, Nairobi. Minister: Gambia ready to abolish death penalty, 28 March 2017 ([url](#)).

After the first hundred days of President Barrow’s administration, Amnesty International produced a detailed list of demands including concrete steps towards abolition of the death penalty in law and practice. ⁽⁵²⁴⁾ The death penalty has not been abolished to date.

3.3. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons

Ex-president Jammeh denounced LGBT persons in public on more than one occasion. In 2008, on state television, ⁽⁵²⁵⁾ Jammeh gave gay people a 24-hour ultimatum to leave the country, otherwise he would cut off their heads. ⁽⁵²⁶⁾ In 2012 he stated before the parliament that homosexuality was ‘godless’. ⁽⁵²⁷⁾ In 2013 he said that homosexuality was evil and anti-God, anti-human and anti-civilisation. ⁽⁵²⁸⁾ His government would show zero tolerance of homosexuality – as for drugs, corruption, rape and murder. It would use ‘Operation Bulldozer’ against ‘criminals’ who were guilty of these crimes. ⁽⁵²⁹⁾ In 2014 he described homosexuals as ‘vermin’ which the government would deal with in the same way as mosquitoes which carry malaria. ⁽⁵³⁰⁾

Jammeh’s attitude towards homosexuality was shared by the Supreme Islamic Council. Its representatives repeatedly condemned homosexuality. Jammeh urged imams to preach against homosexuality in the mosques. Very few people opposed this publicly. ⁽⁵³¹⁾ Several high ranking government officials in the Jammeh regime publicly asserted they were homophobic (see [2.11. APRC officials](#)). ⁽⁵³²⁾ In December 2014 ex-president Jammeh led a demonstration, presumably organised by the government, against the use of foreign aid to guarantee the rights of gays and lesbians. ⁽⁵³³⁾

Homosexuality has been punishable in The Gambia since 1934. Consensual same-sex relationships were deemed to be ‘against the order of nature’ and can still be punished by imprisonment for up to 14 years. ⁽⁵³⁴⁾

⁽⁵²⁴⁾ AI, Human Rights Priorities For The New Gambian Government, 28 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵²⁵⁾ Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 331.

⁽⁵²⁶⁾ BBC, Gambia gay death threat condemned, 23 May 2008 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵²⁷⁾ ILGA, No Room for Gays, Lesbians – President Jammeh, 24 April 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵²⁸⁾ ILGA, Promoting Homosexuality Is a Declaration of War On Religions, President Jammeh, 25 July 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵²⁹⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2013 Human Rights Report, 27 February 2014 ([url](#)), p. 25; allAfrica, Gambia: Operation <Bulldozer> Launched, 23 May 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵³⁰⁾ For further examples of Jammeh’s hate speeches against homosexuals, see: HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 49-51; Independent (The), The 7 worst things Gambia’s President Yahya Jammeh has ever said about gay people, 14 January 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵³¹⁾ Baba Leigh, leading imam of Kanifing East Central Mosque, was the most popular of the imams who opposed Jammeh’s call to preach against homosexuality. In 2013 he went into exile in the USA, after being detained for 6 months. Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 269-271; allAfrica, Gambia: Homosexuality Should Not Be Encouraged – Says Imam Kuta, 14 December 2012 ([url](#)); Daily News, Imam Touray Condemns Homosexuality, 30 April 2012 ([url](#)); African Arguments, ‘Do more, speak less’, 26 April 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵³²⁾ Fatu Network (The), Yankuba Colley says Yaya Jammeh Deserves SOME Respect! 15 March 2017 ([url](#)); Sunugambia, Mayor Yankuba Colley Aprc, we have nothing to fear about, 18 March 2017 ([url](#)); US DoS, The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)), p. 27.

⁽⁵³³⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, p. 271; UK Home Office, CIG, The Gambia: Sexual orientation and gender identity, January 2016 ([url](#)), p. 18; AllAfrica, Gambia: Thousands March to Say <No to Homosexuality>, 10 December 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵³⁴⁾ Gambia (The), Laws of Gambia, Criminal Code of 1934, Section 144, Unnatural offences; Section 145, Attempts to commit unnatural offences; Section 146, Indecent assault of boys under 14; Section 147, Male indecency; Section 148, Incest by males; Section 149, Incest by females, 1 October 1934 ([url](#)); ILGA, State-Sponsored Homophobia, A World Survey of Sexual Orientation Laws: Criminalisation, Protection and Recognition, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 88-89.

The revised version of the criminal legislation of 2005 explicitly made ‘acts of gross indecency’ between a woman and another woman punishable. These acts between men were already punishable. ⁽⁵³⁵⁾ A 2013 amendment to the law made it possible to punish a man with up to five years’ imprisonment if he wore women’s clothing or worked as a prostitute. ⁽⁵³⁶⁾

The legislation was tightened further in 2014. ‘Aggravated homosexuality’ became a crime which could be punished by life imprisonment. ⁽⁵³⁷⁾

As of 2014, the Gambian Criminal Code contains the following articles which might be used against persons having same sex relations:

- (1) Article 144: Unnatural offences
 - a. Any person who—
 - i. has carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature; or
 - ii. has carnal knowledge of an animal; or
 - iii. permits any person to have carnal knowledge of him or her against the order of nature;

is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for a term of 14 years.
 - b. In this section, ‘carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature’ includes –
 - i. carnal knowledge of the person through the anus or mouth of the person;
 - ii. inserting any object or thing into the vulva or anus of the person for the purpose of simulating sex, and
 - iii. committing any other homosexual act with the person.
- (2) Article 144A: Aggravated homosexuality
 - a. A person commits the offence of aggravated homosexuality where the –
 - i. person against whom the offence is committed is below the age of eighteen;
 - ii. offender is a person living with HIV Aids;
 - iii. offender is a parent or guardian of the person against whom the offence is committed;
 - iv. offender is a person in authority over the person against whom the offence is committed;
 - v. victim of the offence is a person with disability;
 - vi. offender is a serial offender; or
 - vii. offender applies, administers or causes to be administered by any man or woman, any drug, matter or substance with intent to stupefy

⁽⁵³⁵⁾ Gambia (The), Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, No. 3 of 2005, 21 July 2005 ([url](#)), Section 147(2).

⁽⁵³⁶⁾ UK Home Office, CIG, The Gambia: Sexual orientation and gender identity, January 2016, ([url](#)), pp. 11-12; Point (The), Criminal Code Act amended <to reflect political realities>, 17 April 2013 ([url](#)); AI, Gambia: Principal Act raises serious Human Rights Concerns, 07 May 2013 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵³⁷⁾ Gambia (The), Gambia Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2014, 25 August 2014 ([url](#)).

or overpower him or her, so as to enable any person to have unlawful carnal connection with any person of the same sex.

- b. A person who commits the offence of aggravated homosexuality is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life. (...)

(3) Article 147: Indecent practices between males

- a. Any male person who, whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another male person, or procures another male person to commit any act of gross indecency with him, or attempts to procure the commission of any such act by any male person with himself or with another male person, whether in public or private, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years.
- b. Any female person who, whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another female person, or procures another female person to commit any act of gross indecency with her, or attempts to procure the commission of any such act by any female person with herself or with another female person, whether in public or private, is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years.
- c. In this section, ‘act of gross indecency’ includes any homosexual act’.⁽⁵³⁸⁾

The bill closely reflected the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Act.⁽⁵³⁹⁾ After the Ugandan constitutional court declared this invalid in 2014, The Gambia became the only African country with a law on ‘aggravated homosexuality’.⁽⁵⁴⁰⁾ Jammeh attracted severe criticism for it both internationally⁽⁵⁴¹⁾ and in The Gambia itself.⁽⁵⁴²⁾

According to the US DoS Human Rights Report 2013, before the law was tightened in 2014 the provisions on homosexuality in The Gambia had never been applied.⁽⁵⁴³⁾ There were arrests but no charge of homosexuality. There is documentary evidence of the arrest of 18 men and two women in April 2012. They were detained in a bar in the tourist area because some of the men were allegedly wearing women's clothing. They were charged with ‘unnatural offences’

⁽⁵³⁸⁾ Gambia (The), Gambia Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2014, 25 August 2014 ([url](#)); US DoS, The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 26-27; ACCORD, Anfragebeantwortung zu Gambia: Informationen zu Homosexualität, 27 March 2017 ([url](#)), p.5; Rights in Exile Programme, Gambia LGBTI Resources, last updated 1 August 2016 ([url](#)); Gambia (The), Gambia Criminal Code (Amendment) Act, 2014, 25 August 2014 ([url](#)); The Gambia Criminal Code and its amendments can be consulted here: ([url](#)).

⁽⁵³⁹⁾ Republic of Uganda, The Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014, 14 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁴⁰⁾ Library of Congress, Gambia, Parliament Adopts Stringent Anti-Homosexuality Law, 16 September 2016 ([url](#)); ACCORD, Anfragebeantwortung zu Gambia: Informationen zu Homosexualität, 27 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 3; ILGA, State-Sponsored Homophobia, May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 88-89.

⁽⁵⁴¹⁾ UN OHCHR, The Gambia: Zeid criticizes harsh legal amendment, violence and arrests targeting gay men and lesbians, 20 November 2014 ([url](#)); HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 49-57; CEDAW, Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Gambia, 27 July 2015 ([url](#)), p. 10; Global Voices, Signs of Islamic Law Taking Root in The Gambia, 10 January 2016 ([url](#)); SFH, Gambia: Situation der LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex), 28 July 2015 ([url](#)), pp. 3-9.

⁽⁵⁴²⁾ Leader of the opposition Omar Amadou Jallow from the PPP (People’s Progressive Party) publicly criticised the tightening of the law in 2014. In 2017 Barrow made Jallow a minister. Reuters, Gambia leader heralds new dawn for minister jailed 22 times, 19 February 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 223-234, 271.

⁽⁵⁴³⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2013 Human Rights Report, 27 February 2014 ([url](#)), p. 25; UK Home Office, CIG, The Gambia: Sexual orientation and gender identity, January 2016 ([url](#)), p. 15.

and remained in detention until August 2012, when the charges were withdrawn due to lack of evidence. ⁽⁵⁴⁴⁾

According to the US DoS Human Rights Report 2014, at the end of 2014, after the tightening of the law, NIA conducted door-to-door enquiries looking for homosexuals. ⁽⁵⁴⁵⁾ Up to 16 people were arrested by the NIA and mistreated on suspicion of being homosexual, including women and a 17 year-old boy. ⁽⁵⁴⁶⁾ Three of them were detained several weeks and are reported to have been tortured. ⁽⁵⁴⁷⁾

These three men were the first to be tried on the count of ‘aggravated homosexuality’ under the amended Criminal code. ⁽⁵⁴⁸⁾ They first appeared before the magistrates court in Banjul before appearing before the Supreme Court in July 2015. Sources give different accounts, but it seems that at least two of the accused were acquitted. ⁽⁵⁴⁹⁾ The third accused had either already been released on bail or was also acquitted. ⁽⁵⁵⁰⁾

Sources indicate that NIA kept a list of names of gays and lesbians they intended to arrest. ⁽⁵⁵¹⁾ Human Rights Watch documented 30 cases of members of the LGBT community who left The Gambia after the law was tightened in 2014. ⁽⁵⁵²⁾ For Jammeh’s last year in power, Human Rights Watch noted that there were fewer reports of physical abuse and arrests in 2016 despite the continuing high risk of arbitrary arrest and detention. ⁽⁵⁵³⁾

According to the US DoS Human Rights Reports, there is still a high level of societal discrimination against LGBT persons. ⁽⁵⁵⁴⁾ According to the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, hate speech and discriminatory legislation put LGBT persons at great risk of attack, humiliation and being killed. ⁽⁵⁵⁵⁾ There are reports of aggression and sexual violence against LGBT persons, whereas perpetrators often are family members. ⁽⁵⁵⁶⁾

⁽⁵⁴⁴⁾ UK Home Office, CIG, The Gambia: Sexual orientation and gender identity, January 2016 ([url](#)), p. 14; US DoS, The Gambia 2012 Human Rights Report, 19 April 2013 ([url](#)), p. 28; The Africa Report, Homosexuality: The Gambia’s smoke and mirrors, 09 May 2012 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁴⁵⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)), p. 27.

⁽⁵⁴⁶⁾ AI, Gambia: “Aggravated Homosexuality” Offence Carries Life Sentence, 21 November 2014 ([url](#)); Erasing 76 Crimes, 15 were arrested in anti-gay Gambia; all are now free, 1 August 2015 ([url](#)); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez, 16 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 17.

⁽⁵⁴⁷⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez, 16 March 2015 ([url](#)), p. 17.

⁽⁵⁴⁸⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 27; US DoS, The Gambia 2015 Human Rights Report, 13 April 2016 ([url](#)); US DoS, The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)), p. 27.

⁽⁵⁴⁹⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)), p.27.

⁽⁵⁵⁰⁾ BuzzFeed News, This Gay Man Survived Torture In One Of Africa’s Most Horrific Dictatorships, 25 August 2015 ([url](#)); Washington Blade, Gambian men charged under anti-gay law acquitted, 1 August 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁵¹⁾ AI, Gambia must stop wave of homophobic arrests and torture, 18 November 2014 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Gambia: Lesbians Flee to Senegal As Gambia Cracks Down On Homosexuality, 21 November 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁵²⁾ HRW, State of Fear, 16 September 2015 ([url](#)), p. 53; Reuters, Lesbians flee to Senegal as Gambia cracks down on homosexuality, 21 November 2014 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁵³⁾ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017, 2 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁵⁴⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 27; see also earlier Human Rights Reports by the US DoS: The Gambia 2015 Human Rights Report, 13 April 2016 ([url](#)) and The Gambia 2014 Human Rights Report, 25 June 2015 ([url](#)), p. 27.

⁽⁵⁵⁵⁾ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Addendum: Mission the Gambia, 11 May 2015 ([url](#)), p. 18.

⁽⁵⁵⁶⁾ Niang, Cheikh Ibrahima et al., Targeting Vulnerable Groups in National HIV/AIDS Programs, September 2004 ([url](#)); Stahlman, Shauna, et al. Suicidal ideation among MSM in three West African countries, p. 526.

There are no LGBT organisations in The Gambia. ⁽⁵⁵⁷⁾

In view of the prevailing conservative attitudes, the new President Adama Barrow has given a cautious response to the question of where he stands in relation to the Gambian legislation on homosexuality. ⁽⁵⁵⁸⁾ He said that homosexuality was a personal matter, adding that it was not, and never had been, an issue in The Gambia. The priorities for the country were economic and social matters. ⁽⁵⁵⁹⁾

Human rights activists have criticised Barrow, saying that he has not made his position towards the Gambian legislation on homosexuality clear enough. Isatou Touray, the new Gambian Employment Minister and a well-known human rights activist, was asked how the President's position should be understood. She replied that Barrow believed people had a right to whichever orientation they chose. It was a question of the indivisibility of rights and of course everyone had a right to exist. ⁽⁵⁶⁰⁾ Foreign Secretary Ousainou Darboe has supported the repealing of the laws against LGBT individuals, denying the existence of homosexuality in the country. ⁽⁵⁶¹⁾ None of the criticised laws has been amended to date. ⁽⁵⁶²⁾

3.4. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) has been banned in The Gambia since December 2015. ⁽⁵⁶³⁾ Any person who, despite the ban, carries out, requests, incites or promotes mutilation or cutting or provides tools for the procedure will be punished by imprisonment for up to three years and/or a fine of 50,000 dalasi (around EUR 1,000). Any person who knows about mutilation or cutting and fails to report the banned procedure must pay 10,000 dalasi. The sentence for anybody who carries out mutilation or cutting which results in the death of the girl concerned is life imprisonment. ⁽⁵⁶⁴⁾

Despite the ban, it should prove difficult to eliminate the practice in The Gambia soon because FGM/C is deeply embedded in the Gambian society. ⁽⁵⁶⁵⁾ There is also a significant lacuna

⁽⁵⁵⁷⁾ US DoS, The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 27.

⁽⁵⁵⁸⁾ Perfect, David, The Gambian 2016 Presidential Election and its Aftermath, 25 May 2017 ([url](#)), p. 331.

⁽⁵⁵⁹⁾ Point (The), Homosexuality not an issue in Gambia, says President Barrow, 14 February 2017 ([url](#)); allAfrica, Homosexuality Not an Issue in Gambia, Says President Barrow, 14 February 2017 ([url](#)); Devex, The New Gambia: What's on and off the aid agenda, 17 February 2017 ([url](#)); MambaOnline, Relief as Gambia's new president says homosexuality <not an issue>, 15 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶⁰⁾ ACCORD, Anfragebeantwortung zu Gambia: Informationen zu Homosexualität, 27 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 5-6; Devex, The New Gambia: What's on and off the aid agenda, 17 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶¹⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia's Ousainou Darboe supports repealing of anti-homosexual law, 15 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶²⁾ ILGA, State-Sponsored Homophobia. May 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 88-89.

⁽⁵⁶³⁾ The legal basis of the ban is the Amendment Act, sections 32A and 32B of the 2010 Women's Act. The text of the Act uses the term 'circumcision' instead of FGM/C; UK Home Office, CPIN, Gambia: Female genital mutilation (FGM), December 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 18-21; ARC, A Commentary on the December 2016 Country Policy and Information Note issued on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia, 11 July 2017 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 146-147; AfricLaw, Banning female circumcision in The Gambia through legislative change: The next steps, 19 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶⁴⁾ AfricLaw, Banning female circumcision in The Gambia through legislative change: The next steps, 19 January 2016 ([url](#)); Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 146-147; UK Home Office, CPIN, Gambia: Female genital mutilation (FGM), December 2016 ([url](#)), pp. 18-21; US DoS, The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 21-22; Daily Observer, Anti-fgm bill enacted, 29 December 2015 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶⁵⁾ Shell-Duncan, Bettina et al., Dynamics of change in the practice of female genital cutting in Senegambia: Testing predictions of social convention theory, October 2011 ([url](#)), pp. 1275-1283; Ahmadu, Fuambai, Male and Female Circumcision among the Mandinka of The Gambia, approved 2005, printed 2016; Bellemare, Marc F., and Steinmetz, Tara L., All in the Family: Explaining the Persistence of Female Genital Cutting in the Gambia, 27 July 2013 ([url](#)); Chant, Silvia, and Isatou Touray, Gender in Gambia in Retrospect and Prospect, 2012 ([url](#)).

which can be used to bypass the Act: the text of the Act does not explicitly ban cutting which takes place in another country (especially in nearby Senegal).⁽⁵⁶⁶⁾

According to the Gambian Demographic and Health Survey 2013, 75% of all women between the ages of 15 and 49 had been cut in some way. In women above 15, the prevalence of FGM/C varies little by age group.⁽⁵⁶⁷⁾ Statistics show that cutting is done during childhood, with 55% of women reporting that they were circumcised before the age 5, and 28% who were cut between age 5 and 9. Another 7% said they were circumcised between the ages of 10 to 14.⁽⁵⁶⁸⁾ In 2010, 42.4% of girls under 15 had undergone some sort of FGM/C.⁽⁵⁶⁹⁾

The survey shows that FGM/C is more common in rural (79% of women aged 15-49) than in urban areas (72%). The prevalence was highest in Basse (97%) and Mansakonko (94%) and lowest in Banjul (47%).⁽⁵⁷⁰⁾ The main interventions involved cutting and removal of flesh, which correspond to FGM type 1 and 2 according the World Health Organization typology.⁽⁵⁷¹⁾ Cutting is generally performed by a traditional circumciser.⁽⁵⁷²⁾ An older survey (2010) revealed significant differences between different ethnic groups. Rates were highest among the Mandinka (96.7%) and Serahule (97.8%); for Wolof the rate was 12.4%.⁽⁵⁷³⁾

There have been accusations against the new President Barrow, claiming that some of his supporters are involved in illicit FGM/C practices and regard the ban primarily as the previous president's law.⁽⁵⁷⁴⁾ Barrow has promised his full support for implementation of the FGM/C ban.⁽⁵⁷⁵⁾

Two cases of FGM/C practices were reported between January 2016 and June 2017. In the first case, in which a young child died, the court at Mansakonko charged the mother and grandmother. In the second case, the girl's grandfather and a circumciser were arrested but were released on bail. Judgment is pending in both cases.⁽⁵⁷⁶⁾ The human rights organisation Asylum Research Consultancy (ARC) stated that although it could be considered a success that two cases had been brought to court just a few months after the ban on FGM/C, far more evidence has to be gathered to actually convict the perpetrators, and more resources (financial and human) have to be allocated to the competent authorities.⁽⁵⁷⁷⁾ Other

⁽⁵⁶⁶⁾ AfricLaw, Banning female circumcision in The Gambia through legislative change: The next steps, 19 January 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁶⁷⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 221-222.

⁽⁵⁶⁸⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), p. 222.

⁽⁵⁶⁹⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / UNICEF, Banjul. The Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010, Final Report, June 2012 ([url](#)), p. 165.

⁽⁵⁷⁰⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / UNICEF, The Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2010, Final Report, June 2012 ([url](#)), pp. 164-166.

⁽⁵⁷¹⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 221-222; Lien, Inger-Lise, The perspectives of Gambian men on the sexuality of cut and uncut women, 30 December 2016 ([url](#)); WHO, Female Genital Mutilation Fact Sheet, updated February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁷²⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), p. 223.

⁽⁵⁷³⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS / ICF International, The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013, September 2014 ([url](#)), pp. 221-222; Lien, Inger-Lise, The perspectives of Gambian men on the sexuality of cut and uncut women, 30 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁷⁴⁾ Standard (The), Barrow asks Ministers to declare Assets, 23 June 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁷⁵⁾ SmbcNews, Gambia's president to maintain good Jammeh laws, 16 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁷⁶⁾ ARC, A Commentary on the December 2016 Country Policy and Information Note issued on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia, 11 July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

⁽⁵⁷⁷⁾ ARC, A Commentary on the December 2016 Country Policy and Information Note issued on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia, 11 July 2017 ([url](#)), p. 6.

organisations or researchers believe that two cases is too low a number and see this as proof that the relevant state authorities are only implementing the law half-heartedly. ⁽⁵⁷⁸⁾

Civil society organisations which seek to end FGM/C in The Gambia, such as The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (GAMCOTRAP), ⁽⁵⁷⁹⁾ Safe Hands for Girls, Think Young Women, The Girls Agenda, Tostan, YesWeCan Foundation and Foundation Wassu, carry out awareness-raising campaigns ⁽⁵⁸⁰⁾ and also use the media for this purpose. ⁽⁵⁸¹⁾

3.5. Discrimination against the Mandinka under Jammeh

During his time in power, ex-president Jammeh played off the ethnic groups against one another. This stoked existing latent tensions between his own ethnic group, the Jola, and the biggest ethnic group, the Mandinka. ⁽⁵⁸²⁾ The leaders of the main opposition party, the People's Progressive Party (PPP), were originally mainly Mandinka, although this changed over time. ⁽⁵⁸³⁾ As a Jola, Jammeh repeatedly filled key posts in the cabinet, army and *National Intelligence Agency* (NIA) with his own people. In June 2016 he seriously threatened the Mandinka in a speech. This speech was later condemned by the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide. ⁽⁵⁸⁴⁾ Jammeh said the Mandinka were Malians, not Gambians. He would send them back where they came from and send the army to wipe them out. Three politicians who publicly protested against his polemic were detained. ⁽⁵⁸⁵⁾

Adama Barrow and his government have repeatedly spoken out against tribalism. ⁽⁵⁸⁶⁾

3.6. Witchcraft

Following the death of an aunt in 2009, Jammeh brought in professional witch-hunters from Mali and Guinea who would allegedly identify those responsible. ⁽⁵⁸⁷⁾ Hundreds were thrown into prison, ill-treated and forced to drink hallucinogenic substances. Two people are said to

⁽⁵⁷⁸⁾ ARC, A Commentary on the December 2016 Country Policy and Information Note issued on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in The Gambia, 11 July 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 7-10.

⁽⁵⁷⁹⁾ GAMCOTRAP, Main Areas of Focus for GAMCOTRAP, 28 June 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁸⁰⁾ Think Young Women, First National Youth Forum on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), 6-9 October 2014, n.d. ([url](#)); AllAfrica, Gambia: 22 Villages Abandon FGC, Early and Forced Marriage in Urr, 19 January 2016 ([url](#)); Point (The), Zero Tolerance Day to FGM: Rescue our sealed girls, 09 February 2017 ([url](#)); Point (The), TGA wins 10,000 euros grant on FGM, child marriage, 22 June 2017 ([url](#)); Safe Hands for Girls, The Gambia Student Outreach Program, n.d. ([url](#)); Point (The), YesWeCan Foundation sensitises Touba Kuta community on FGM, 13 July 2017 ([url](#)); Tostan, The Gambia, n.d. ([url](#)); Foundation Wassu, Knowledge Transfer, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁸¹⁾ Foroyaa Newspaper, Media Personalities Fighting Against FGM Honoured, 10 July 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁸²⁾ Hultin, Niklas, et al., Autocracy, Migration, and the Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 Election, 13 March 2017 ([url](#)), p. 324.

⁽⁵⁸³⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 283-284.

⁽⁵⁸⁴⁾ UN, L'ONU dénonce la rhétorique incendiaire du Président de Gambie visant un groupe ethnique, 10 June 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁸⁵⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 247-248, 283-284; US DoS, The Gambia 2016 Human Rights Report, 03 March 2017 ([url](#)), pp. 3, 11, 18, 26; Africa is a Country, Yahya Jammeh's tribalism, 26 December 2016 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, The Gambia Is Not A Mandinka Country, 4 June 2016 ([url](#)); Gainako Online Newspaper, Excerpts from Jammeh's anti-Mandinka Hate Speech, 15 June 2016 ([url](#)); BBC, Gambie: <battus> pour outrage à Jemmeh, 21 June 2016 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁸⁶⁾ Point (The), Tribe is not important to me, president-elect Barrow says, 09 December 2016 ([url](#)); Point (The), Gambia: New Gambian Politics Breathes Against Tribalism, 2 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁽⁵⁸⁷⁾ Hultin, Niklas, Leaky humanitarianism: The anthropology of small arms control in the Gambia, 2015 ([url](#)), p. 70.

have died.⁵⁸⁸ It is thought that the Green Boys played a significant role in the witch-hunt (see Section [1.9.4. Junglers, Black Boys, Green Boys](#)). In 2016 Jammeh is said to have used witch-hunters again against alleged magicians. ⁽⁵⁸⁹⁾

When Barrow was in exile in Senegal for a short time during the constitutional crisis, his son Habibu was bitten to death by a dog. There were rumours that Jammeh was behind it and that witchcraft was involved. Barrow did not respond to these rumours and so far has not publicly addressed witchcraft as an issue during his administration. ⁽⁵⁹⁰⁾

⁽⁵⁸⁸⁾ UK Home Office, The Gambia, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report, 5 November 2013 ([url](#)), p. 26.

⁽⁵⁸⁹⁾ Perfect, David, Historical Dictionary of The Gambia, 2016, pp. 444-445.

⁽⁵⁹⁰⁾ Face2face Africa, Eight-year-old Son of Gambian President-Elect Adama Barrow Suddenly Killed, But by Dog? 17 January 2017 ([url](#)); Freedom Newspaper, Gambia Gov't Kills Dog, Which Takes The Life Of President's Son!, 2 February 2017 ([url](#)).

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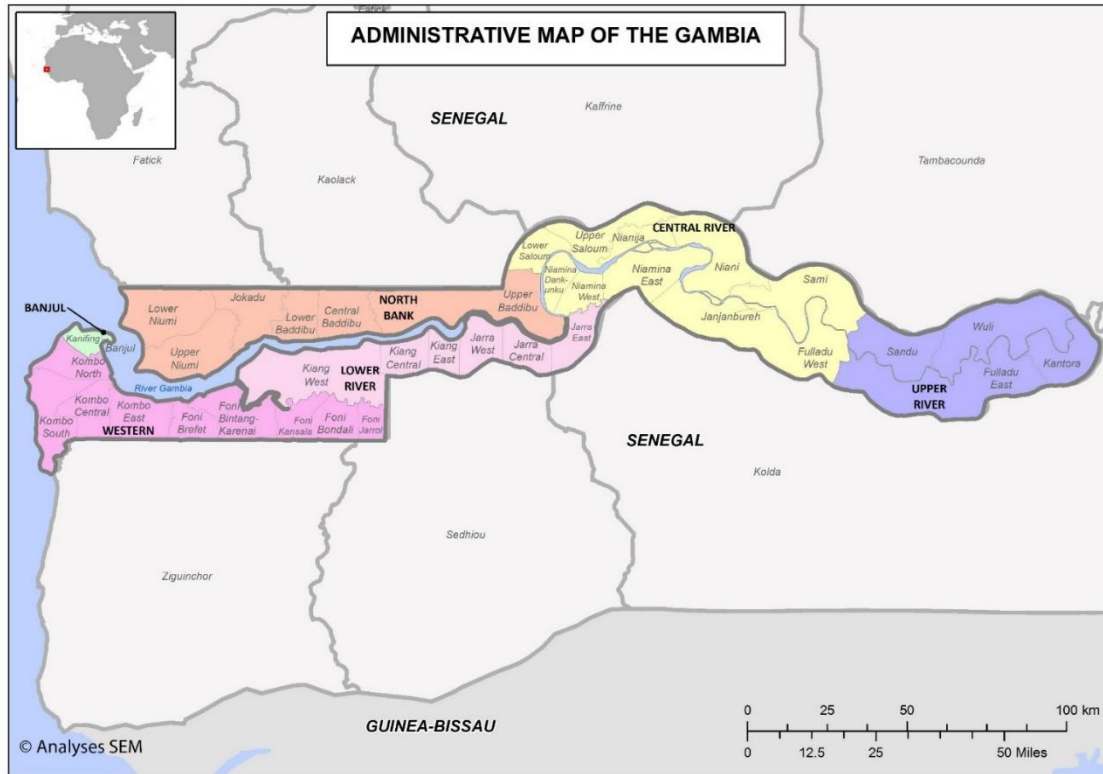
Embassy of The Gambia in Switzerland, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, October 2017.

Swiss Embassy in Dakar-Senegal, telephone interview with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration, 20 April 2017.

Annex 2: Maps

Map 2: Regions and districts of The Gambia in 2003

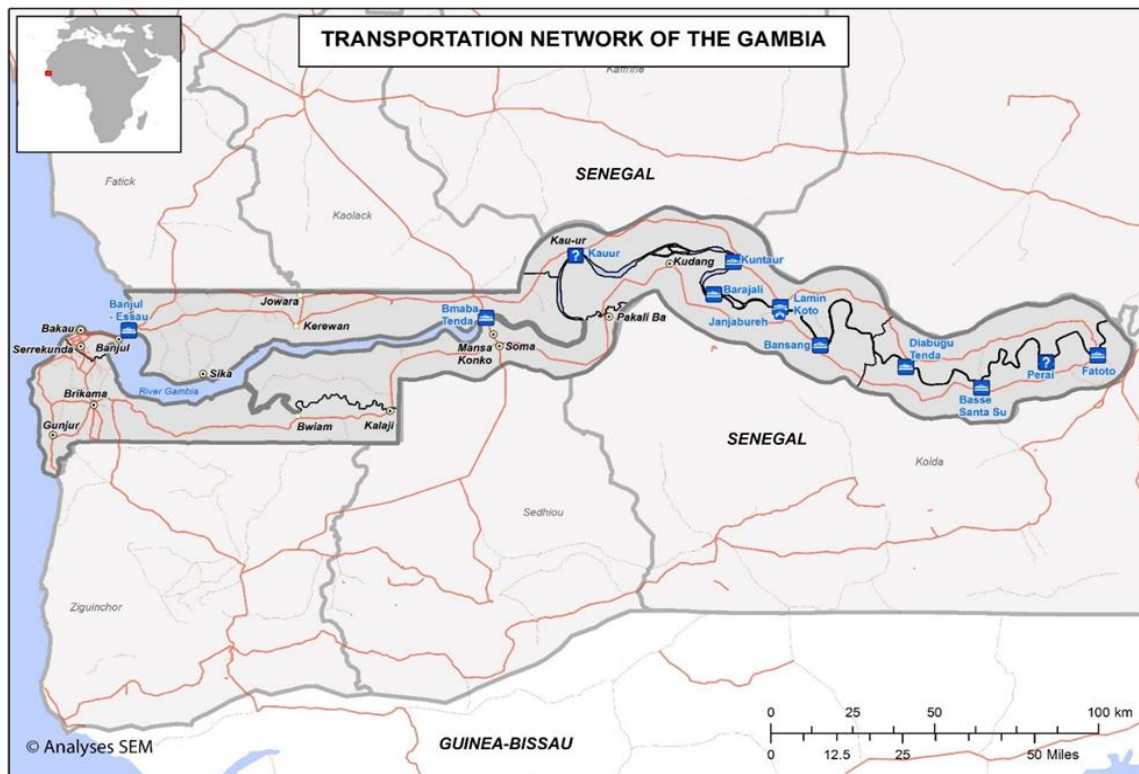
Regions and districts of The Gambia in 2003 ⁽⁵⁹¹⁾



⁽⁵⁹¹⁾ Gambia (The), GBoS, Atlas of 2003 Population and Housing Census, 2006 ([url](#)), p. 5.

Map 3: Ferries across The Gambia

Ferries across The Gambia ⁽⁵⁹²⁾



⁽⁵⁹²⁾ UNDP, Human Development Index and its components, Index for 2015, 2016 ([url](#)), p. 24; Europa Publications, Europa Regional Surveys of the World, Africa South of the Sahara 2016, 2015, pp. 538, 543; Gambia Ports Authority, [website], n.d. ([url](#)); LCA/WFP, Gambia Waterways Assessment, 1 November 2011, updated December 2013 ([url](#)); Gregg, Emma and Trillo, Richard, The Rough Guide to The Gambia, 2016, p. 48.



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