

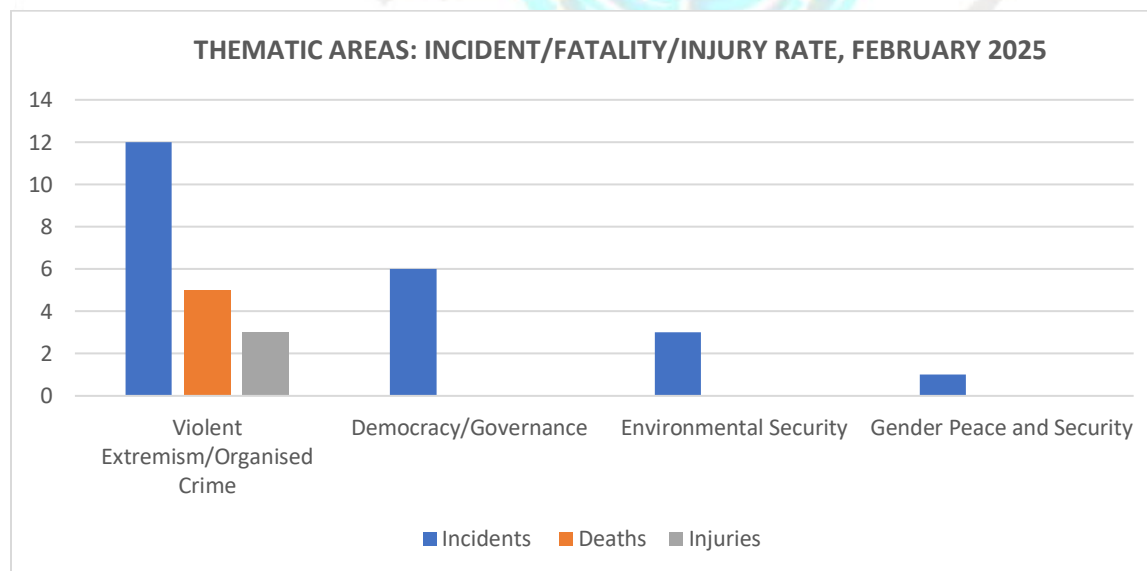


## NEWS MONTHLY BULLETIN (WANEP-THE GAMBIA) (FEBRUARY, 2025)

### INTRODUCTION

In February 2025, 22 incidents were recorded in the *Monthly Conflict Census* from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS). A cumulative fatality of 5 and 3 injuries emanating from murder, violent confrontation, armed robbery, drug seizure and related incidents were recorded in the reporting period.<sup>1</sup>

As illustrated in the thematic graph below, Organised Crime and Violent Extremism recorded the highest number of incidents, with twelve (12), while Democracy and Governance theme recorded six (6) incidents. Also, Environmental Security theme recorded three (3) incidents while Gender, Peace, and Security thematic area recorded one (1) incident. Additionally, Banjul recorded the highest number of incidents, with eight (8) accounting for 36% while the West Coast Region and Kanifing Municipality each recorded five (5) incidents (23%). Also, Lower River Region and Central River Region each recorded two (2) incidents (9%), while North Bank Region, and Upper River Region recorded no incidents.<sup>2</sup>



Source: WANEP NEWS<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>2</sup> WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): [www.wanep.org/news/](http://www.wanep.org/news/)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

During the reporting period The Gambia was marked by a surge in murder, violent confrontations, financial fraud, armed robbery, and drug-related incidents. These incidents underscore the growing complexity of criminal activities and the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in maintaining public safety. The rise in violent crime in The Gambia signals a growing threat to public safety, with homicide, armed robbery and illicit drug-related incidents becoming frequent. This trend reflects the evolving complexity of criminal activities and the challenges faced by law enforcement in maintaining order and ensuring justice. The discovery of murder victims, including a male resident in the Central River Region, and a female in Welligara, West Coast Region, where the circumstances surrounding the deaths remains unclear, suggest gaps in forensic investigation and intelligence-led policing.

One of the most alarming cases was the murder of a male resident, whose body was discovered in Bansang Sukuru Kunda Allatenu, Central River Region in The Gambia.<sup>4</sup> The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear, as the assailants are still at large. Similarly, a female resident, believed to be in her early 50s was reportedly found dead in her bed in Welligara, West Coast Region in The Gambia.<sup>5</sup> The cause of the death is unknown.

Also, a female resident was reportedly arrested by The Gambia Police Force in connection with the alleged murder of her brother in Dippa Kunda, Kanifing Municipality in The Gambia.<sup>6</sup> In a similar but separate incident, a female resident was arrested by the police in connection with the fatal stabbing of her 40-year-old husband following an altercation which resulted in his death in Sinchu Madado village, Central River Region in The Gambia.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, an alarming trend in The Gambia's crime landscape is the increasing occurrence of domestic homicides, highlighting deep-seated social and psychological pressures within households. Two cases were reported in Dippa Kunda, Kanifing Municipality and the Central River Region.

The pattern of crimes reported in the period suggests not only an increase in opportunistic violence but also a potential shift toward more organized and systematic criminal activities, further straining the country's fragile security landscape.

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<sup>4</sup> The Official Page of The Gambia Police Force (2025). Police investigate alleged murder in Bansang, CRR. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/PolisoMagazine> (Accessed February 1, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Kerr Fatou (2025). Police Investigate Alleged Murder In Welligara. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/police-investigate-alleged-murder-in-wellingara/> (Accessed February 1, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Police register 4 homicides in 72 hours. Available at: <https://standard.gm/police-register-4-homicides-in-72-hours/> (Accessed February 3, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Additionally, violent confrontation between staff members and a gang of male resident were recorded in the period, at the Jah Oil fuel station in Banjul. A dispute between staff members and several individuals escalated into a physical altercation, prompting police intervention. The situation grew so volatile that officers were forced to fire a warning shot, resulting in the arrest of two individuals, one of whom sustained a gunshot wound to the leg.

Financial fraud and armed robbery continues to worsen The Gambia's crime landscape. A former employee of The Gambia Revenue Authority was arraigned before the Magistrates' Court in Bundung for allegedly defrauding multiple individuals of nearly 19 million dalasis.<sup>8</sup> The arraignment of a former Gambia Revenue Authority employee accused of defrauding individuals of about 19 million dalasis highlights vulnerabilities in financial oversight within key institutions. Similarly, armed robbery incidents, such as the attack on the ElHella shop in Banjul, where perpetrators stole over D1.2 million and CFA 1.65 million, further reveals the security gaps in the country. The arrest of a suspect linked to a bank robbery, apprehended in Guinea-Bissau and transferred to The Gambia Police Force,<sup>9</sup> underscores the transnational nature of organised crime and the importance of regional cooperation in tackling such threats.

Drug-related offenses remain a significant concern in The Gambia, as demonstrated in the security operation conducted by the Drug Law Enforcement Agency and the Police Intervention Unit in Nyanybolong Village, Foni Binta District. The operation led to the arrest of eight people and the seizure of 200 bundles of suspected cannabis sativa, 20 liters gallon of cannabis seeds, and three unlicensed hunting rifles.<sup>10</sup> The multifaceted nature of organised crime as reported in The Gambia, necessitates the need for a more coordinated and intelligence-driven approach to law enforcement.

## DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The recently conducted by-election in Kiang, Lower River Region, highlights both the challenges and progress in The Gambia's democratic governance. The clash between supporters of the National People's Party (NPP) and the United Democratic Party (UDP) during the Masembah Ward by-election campaign underscores underlying political tensions. However, the peaceful conclusion of the election and President Adama Barrow's congratulatory message to the

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<sup>8</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). GRA ex-staff faces over D5 million fraud charges. Available at: <https://standard.gm/gra-ex-staff-faces-over-d5-million-fraud-charges/> (Accessed February 12, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> The Gambia Police Force Official Facebook Page: Police investigate alleged armed robbery in Banjul and Provide update on Access Bank case. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/PolisoMagazine> (Accessed February 9, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> The Gambia Journal (2025). Foni Drug Raid: DLEAG Seizes Unlicensed Guns, Large Cannabis Stockpile and Arrests Eight. Available at: <https://gambiaj.com/foni-drug-raid-dleag-seizes-unlicensed-guns-large-cannabis-stockpile-and-arrests-eight/> (Accessed February 9, 2025).

opposition leader, Ousainou Darboe, demonstrates commitment to democratic principles.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, the successful retention of the councillorship seat by Bakary Jarjue of the UDP further reinforces the competitiveness of the electoral process, despite partisan rivalries. Governance concerns remain prominent, as the opposition leader of the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC), Mamma Kandeh's criticism of the government's perceived failure to address crime emphasizes growing insecurity, that could undermine public trust in state institutions.

Beyond politics, governance challenges extend to labour rights and public sector accountability. The Medical Research Council Unit (MRC) workers' strike over salary deductions following previous industrial action,<sup>12</sup> raises broader concerns about labour relations and workers' rights. Similarly, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised alarm over the high rate of school dropouts among girls, primarily driven by early marriage and violence, pointing to gaps in policy implementation on child protection..<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, corruption continues to erode public confidence in governance, as evidenced by the ongoing police investigation into an alleged D45.5 million fraud within the Ministry of Health related to government vehicle procurement.<sup>14</sup> These gaps –emphasizes the need to strengthen democratic institutions, enhance transparency, and implement targeted policy reforms critical to sustaining peace, fostering social justice and reinforcing public trust.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

In the reporting period, the WANEP NEWS documented three (3) fire incidents in The Gambia exacerbated by poor environmental management and adverse weather conditions. The devastating fire at Brikama Market, which destroyed several stalls and goods,<sup>15</sup> was partly attributed to the poor state of the market infrastructure, including waste disposal mechanisms, underscoring the risks of inadequate waste management and infrastructure. Similarly, the fire outbreak at The Gambia Transport Service depot was triggered by scrap metal dealers resulting

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<sup>11</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Barrow congratulates Darboe, UDP on Massembeh victory. Available at: <https://standard.gm/barrow-congratulates-darboe-udp-on-massembeh-victory/> (Accessed February 24, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). MRC Gambia Staff Resume Strike Over Alleged Salary Deductions. Available at: <https://foroyaa.net/mrc-gambia-staff-resume-strike-over-alleged-salary-deductions/> (Accessed February 12, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2024). UN raises concerns over school dropout rates of girls in Gambia. Available at: <https://standard.gm/un-raises-concerns-over-school-dropout-rates-of-girls-in-gambia/> (Accessed February 12, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). Gambia's Fraud Squad Investigates \$720,000 Health Ministry Scandal. Available at: <https://foroyaa.net/gambias-fraud-squad-investigates-720000-health-ministry-scandal/> (Accessed February 14, 2025).

<sup>15</sup> Askanwi (2025). Fire Ravages Brikama Sandika Market Leaving Businesses Devastated. Available at: <https://www.askanwi.com/news/fire-ravages-brikama-market-businesses-devastated> (Accessed February 1, 2025).



in the destruction of several to scrapped buses<sup>16</sup>, reflecting both the risks associated with unregulated industrial activities and the lack of enforcement of safety protocols in high risk areas.

## **GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY**

The decline in the prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to 73% in The Gambia, as revealed by Gender, Children, and Social Welfare Minister Hon. Fatou Kinteh,<sup>17</sup> marks a significant step toward promoting women's rights and human security. This progress reflects the collective efforts of the government, civil society organizations, communities, and development partners in raising awareness and implementing anti-FGM initiatives. Despite this achievement, FGM remains prevalent, requiring sustained advocacy, enforcement of anti-FGM laws, and community engagement to further reduce its occurrence.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Gambia government should enhance the capacity of law enforcement agencies by providing specialized training in crime investigation, intelligence gathering, and forensic analysis. Also, the establishment of a centralized crime database and inter-agency coordination mechanisms will improve efficiency in crime detection and prosecution. Additionally, adopting community policing strategies and strengthening regional collaboration will be crucial in addressing transnational crime and enhancing overall public security.
2. To prevent political violence and promote democratic stability, the government should implement civic education programs that foster political tolerance and peaceful engagement. Strengthening the Independent Electoral Council (IEC) and adopting legal reforms that enhance transparency and accountability in governance will build public trust.
3. To mitigate fire-related disasters, The Gambia government should establish strict fire safety regulations in markets, transport depots, and residential areas, including mandatory fire prevention training for officials of The Gambia Fire Services and installation of firefighting equipment. Furthermore, investing in urban planning, waste management, and afforestation programs will reduce environmental risks.
4. While progress has been made in reducing FGM prevalence, the government in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), media should intensify awareness campaigns targeting rural communities and religious leaders

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<sup>16</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Scrap metal dealer blamed for inferno that gutted 11 old GTSC buses. Available at: <https://standard.gm/scrap-metal-dealer-blamed-for-inferno-that-gutted-11-old-gtsc-buses/> (Accessed February 3, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). FGM rates reduces to 73%. Available at: <https://standard.gm/fgm-rates-reduces-to-73/> (Accessed February 6, 2025).

to further reduce harmful practices.

## CONCLUSION

Addressing organized crime and violent extremism, governance challenges, environmental security risks, and gender-related issues in The Gambia requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach. Strengthening law enforcement, enhancing electoral integrity, and enforcing anti-corruption measures will foster democratic stability and public trust. Likewise, improving environmental management and disaster preparedness will mitigate fire hazards and promote sustainable urban development. Furthermore, advancing gender equality through stronger legal protections and community engagement will ensure the safety and empowerment of women. By implementing these targeted policy recommendations, The Gambia can enhance national security, uphold human rights, and create a more resilient and inclusive society.

### CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2025

THEMATIC AREA	NO of Attacks.	VICTIMS	
		DEATHS	INJURIES
<b>VIOLENT EXTREMISM:</b> Boko Haram/ISWAP attacks/Inter-terrorist clash			
<b>ORGANISED CRIME:</b> (Armed-robbery, assassination, armed violence mob attack, arson and cult/gang clash).	5	5	
Abduction		-	-
Cybercrime/Fraud	2	-	-
Extrajudicial killing			
Physical/Armed Assault			3
Herder-Community Conflict			
Illicit Drug Trafficking	1	-	-
Homicide			

(National Early Warning System-(The Gambia)

Suicide			-
<b><u>DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:</u></b>			
Demonstration ( <b>peaceful</b> )		-	-
Demonstration ( <b>violent</b> )			
Strike	1	-	-
Intimidation and Threats		-	-
Arrest/Detention	2	-	-
Road Accident Building Collapse			
Election-Related Violence	1		
Boat Mishap			-
Fire Outbreak + Gas Explosion	3		
<b><u>ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:</u></b>			
<b><u>Pandemic/Epidemics:</u></b>			<b><u>Confirmed/Infected Cases</u></b>
		-	
Wildlife poaching/trafficking			

Flood/Rainstorm			-
<b><u>GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:</u></b>			
SGBV: Sexual Assault/Rape			
Human Trafficking		-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

*Through its National Early Warning System (NEWS), the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP- The Gambia) develops and disseminates a monthly bulletin on Human Security at the end of each month to inform the different actors and / or partners and formulates recommendations to different decision-makers for targeted responses to the given alerts.*

*This monthly monitoring is based on information gathered from the field by the WANEP-(The Gambia) field monitors, and also information gathered from the various national and international media.*

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