

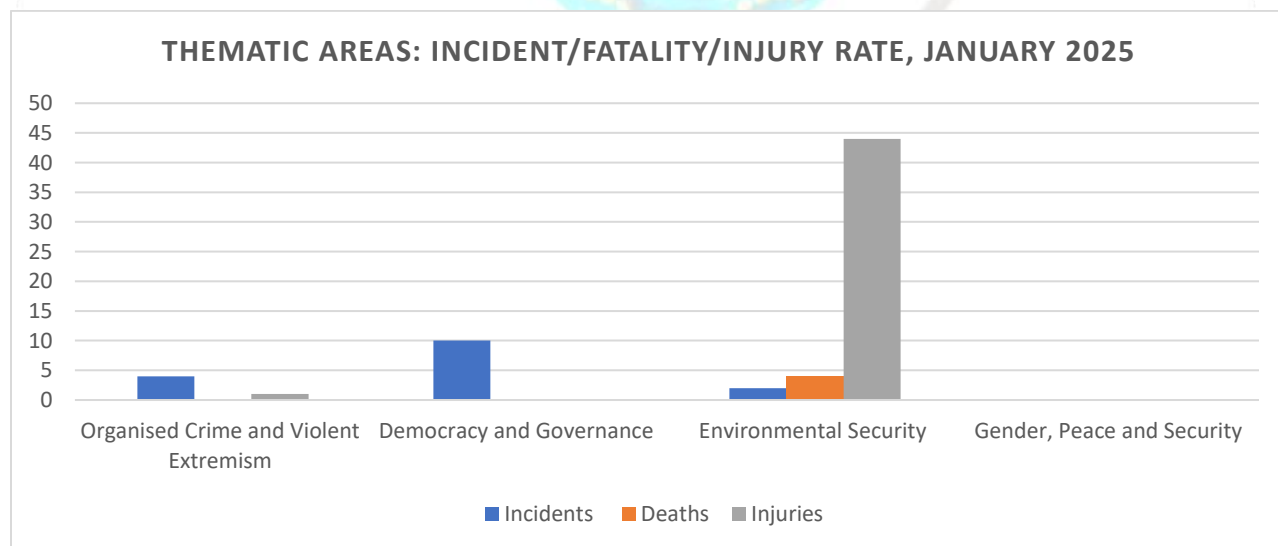


## NEWS MONTHLY BULLETIN (WANEP-THE GAMBIA) (JANUARY, 2025)

### INTRODUCTION

The monthly bulletin examines the current peace and security landscape in The Gambia, focusing on key thematic areas. It provides an overview of incidents recorded in January 2025 and offers recommendations for appropriate responses. In the reporting period, WANEP-The Gambia National Early Warning System (NEWS)<sup>1</sup> documented a total of sixteen (16) incidents, resulting in four (4) fatalities.

As illustrated in the thematic graph below, Democracy and Governance accounted for the highest number of incidents, with ten (10) recorded incidents. Organised Crime and Violent Extremism recorded four (4) incidents, while Environmental Security recorded two (2) incidents. There were no recorded incidents related to Gender, Peace, and Security during this period. The data shows that Banjul recorded the highest number of incidents, with seven (7) incidents (43.75%), followed by the West Coast Region with five (5) incidents (31.25%). Kanifing Municipality and the North Bank Region each recorded two (2) incidents, representing (12.5%), while the Central River Region, Lower River Region, and Upper River Region recorded no incidents.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The Gambia continues to experience incidents that raise concerns about peace and security, highlighting critical vulnerabilities in law enforcement capacity, public safety and the protection of critical infrastructure. A key concern is the rising prevalence of violent crimes, especially armed robbery targeting individuals, businesses and essential service providers. These criminal acts not only undermine public confidence in the country's security structure but also risk escalating into a broader societal fear, which can stifle economic activities and deter potential investors. The attack on The Gambia National Petroleum Company (GNPC), in which a police officer was injured further indicate systemic security gaps and may likely hinder delivery of public services.

Another notable incident involved a 30-year-old truck driver who was charged with reckless driving resulting in the deaths of three individuals in Kafuta village, West Coast Region in The Gambia.<sup>3</sup> While not a direct act of violent extremism, the incident underscores the need for stricter law enforcement and road safety measures, as negligence on the roads can contribute to a broader sense of insecurity. Additionally, in Farafenni, North Bank Region in The Gambia, unidentified armed robbers attacked The Gambia National Petroleum Company (GNPC), injuring a police officer on duty.<sup>4</sup> This brazen attack on a critical infrastructure point signals a troubling escalation in the boldness and organization of criminal activities.

Furthermore, law enforcement agencies made a significant arrest at Siffoe Beach, apprehending a 61-year-old man found in possession of prohibited drugs and an unlicensed pistol in the reporting period.<sup>5</sup> The presence of illicit firearms and narcotics within communities not only fuels crime but also increases the likelihood of violent confrontations. The involvement of drugs and firearms reflects the intertwined nature of organised crime and violent extremism, which can destabilize communities and fuel other criminal activities. These incidents emphasize the urgent need for strengthened security measures, increased surveillance, and community engagement to effectively combat organised crime and violent extremism in The Gambia.

## DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The state of Democracy and Governance in The Gambia reflects a complex interplay of institutional progress, public dissatisfaction, and unresolved systemic challenges. While efforts have been made to strengthen democratic institutions, persistent governance gaps, tensions between the government and civil society, and inadequate public service delivery continue to

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<sup>3</sup> The Point Newspaper (2025). Driver who allegedly killed 3 at Kafuta pleads 'not guilty'. Available at: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/driver-who-allegedly-killed-3-at-kafuta-pleads-not-guilty> (Accessed January 7, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). PIU officer shot as armed robbers attack Farafenni petrol station. Available at: <https://standard.gm/piu-officer-shot-as-armed-robbers-attack-farafenni-petrol-station/> (Accessed January 15, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> The Voice Newspaper (2025). Foreign National Arrested for Drug Possession and Unlicensed Firearm in Siffoe. Available at: <https://www.voicegambia.com/2025/01/17/foreign-national-arrested-for-drug-possession-and-unlicensed-firearm-in-siffoe/> (Accessed January 17, 2025).

undermine confidence in the country's democratic trajectory. A significant issue shaping the governance landscape is the suppression of dissent and concerns over electoral transparency. The arrest of Mr. Mbemba Drammeh, who alleged electoral malpractice in the 2021 presidential election, has sparked debate on the state of political freedoms, particularly the right to freedom of expression and the role of the judiciary in upholding democratic principles. This incident, coupled with the government's rejection of the Afrobarometer survey, which highlighted widespread public dissatisfaction with President Adama Barrow's administration raises concerns about the state's commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizen feedback. Dismissing public perception data rather than addressing governance shortfalls could deepen mistrust between the government and civil society, weakening democratic engagement.

Moreover, the tabling of the Draft Constitution of The Gambia Promulgation Bill 2024 by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Hon. Dawda A. Jallow, presents an opportunity for legal and institutional transformation. However, its success will depend on genuine political will, legislative consensus, and an inclusive approach that ensures diverse stakeholder engagement. Moreover, the delayed implementation of the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) recommendations remains a significant governance concern. With a financial requirement of \$150 million to prosecute perpetrators including the President Yahya Jammeh, address historical injustices and facilitate national reconciliation, questions persist about the government's capacity to mobilize resources and demonstrate political commitment to transitional justice.

At the local governance level, tensions between the central and municipal governments highlight deeper structural challenges in fiscal decentralization and administrative autonomy. The Kanifing Municipal Council and other regional authorities have threatened legal action against the central government over the withholding of annual subventions.<sup>6</sup> Such conflicts not only hinder local development but also expose weaknesses in institutional coordination and financial transparency. The emergence of the National Alliance for Accelerated Advancement (NAFAA), a youth-led political movement<sup>7</sup>, signals a growing demand for political alternatives, particularly among young Gambians. The emergence of this youth movement reflects broader governance discontent and suggests a shifting political landscape that could redefine the country's democratic future.

The challenges in governance are further reflected in the persistent gaps in delivering essential public services. For instance, the shortage of essential medicines drugs in public hospitals<sup>8</sup> and

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<sup>6</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). KM mayor: councils ready to sue gov't over non-payment of subventions. Available at: <https://standard.gm/km-mayor-councils-ready-to-sue-govt-over-non-payment-of-subventions/> (Accessed January 3, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> The Fatu Network (2025). New Political Movement to Join 2026 Presidential Race. Available at: <https://fatunetwork.net/new-political-movement-to-join-2026-presidential-race/> (Accessed January 11, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). Gambia's major hospitals in crisis. Available at: <https://foroyaa.net/gambias-major-hospitals-in-crisis/> (Accessed January 8, 2025).

the lack of operational vehicles for The Gambia Prison Service to transport inmates to court proceedings<sup>9</sup> reveal systemic inefficiencies that directly impact citizens' lives. Similarly, labour protests by Shapoorji Pallonji Mideast workers over low wages and poor working conditions<sup>10</sup> highlight broader economic governance failures and the administration's inability to meet the labour demands. These governance lapses risk exacerbating social discontent and widening inequalities, posing long-term risks to stability and democratic consolidation. The Ghanaian President John Mahama's pledge of support for The Gambia's justice and reconciliation process<sup>11</sup> offers hope for regional collaboration in governance reforms. However, achieving meaningful progress requires a stronger commitment to democratic principles, improved government-citizen engagement, and structural reforms that address the root causes of governance failures.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

The Gambia continues to grapple with environmental and public safety challenges. The recent bushfire in Chamen, North Bank Region in The Gambia which spread rapidly across farmland, poses significant threats to agricultural productivity, livelihoods and food security. The frequency of such fires underscores gaps in fire prevention measures, emergency response capabilities, and community resilience. . Compounding environmental concerns, a tragic accident in Kafuta, West Coast Region in The Gambia, where a truck driver ran into a jubilant crowd of football fans, resulted in four (4) fatalities and forty-four (44) injuries.<sup>12</sup> The incident underscores the environmental risks associated with unregulated public gatherings and inadequate infrastructure, which can exacerbate the impact of such events on communities. These incidents call for enhanced environmental planning and risk mitigation efforts to protect both human lives and natural resources.

## GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Gambia recorded no incidents related to Gender, Peace, and Security in January 2025, signaling a period of relative stability in this critical area. This positive development may reflect the ongoing efforts to promote gender equality, strengthen legal protections for women and enhance community peacebuilding initiatives. However, the absence of reported incidents should not be interpreted as the absence of underlying challenges. Systemic issues such as gender-based violence, discrimination, and the underrepresentation of women in leadership

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<sup>9</sup> The Point Newspaper (2025). Lack of vehicles at prisons hinders court proceedings - Judiciary grapples with criminal justice system. Available at: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/lack-of-vehicles-at-prisons-hinders-court-proceedings-judiciary-grapples-with-criminal-justice-system> (Accessed January 8, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Voice Out Digital Media (2025). Workers from Shapoorji Pallonji Mideast protest over low wages. Available at: [https://voiceoutdigital.com/www.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1168954001899662&id](https://voiceoutdigital.com/www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1168954001899662&id) (Accessed January 16, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Ghana to support Gambia's transitional justice process. Available at: <https://standard.gm/ghana-to-support-gambias-transitional-justice-process/> (Accessed January 20, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Gambiana (2025). Kafuta incident: four victims die, twenty-four hospitalised. Available at: <https://gambiana.com/kafuta-incident-four-victims-die-twenty-four-hospitalised/> (Accessed January 5, 2025).



remain persistent concerns. Additionally, gaps in reporting mechanisms and cultural stereotypes may contribute to underreporting, masking the true scale of gender-related security concerns.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Strengthen Law Enforcement Capacity and Coordination**

The government should invest in advanced training, modern equipment, and improved coordination among law enforcement agencies, including the police, intelligence services, and border control. A specialized task force targeting organized crime and violent extremism should be established to address high-priority threats such as armed robberies, drug trafficking, and firearm possession.

### **2. Enhance Surveillance and Intelligence Gathering**

The Gambia Police Force should implement a nationwide surveillance and intelligence network leveraging modern technology, such as CCTV in high-risk areas and digital crime tracking systems. Community-based intelligence programs should be introduced to encourage the public to report suspicious activities, fostering trust and collaboration between communities and security forces.

### **3. Strengthen Legal and Judicial Frameworks**

The Ministry of Justice should update existing legal laws and frameworks to include stricter penalties for organized crime and violent extremism. Fast-track judicial proceedings for related cases by creating specialized courts or appointing dedicated judges. This will ensure swift justice and serve as a deterrent for potential offenders.

### **4. Address Socioeconomic Drivers of Crime**

The Gambia government should develop programs to address unemployment, poverty, and youth disenfranchisement, which are key drivers of organized crime and extremism. Initiatives such as vocational training, microfinance schemes, and community engagement projects can provide at-risk groups with alternative livelihoods and reduce the appeal of criminal networks.

### **5. Secure Critical Infrastructure and Public Spaces**

The Gambia government should introduce policies to protect critical infrastructure, such as petroleum facilities and public spaces, by deploying well-trained security personnel and conducting regular vulnerability assessments. Public awareness campaigns on safety protocols should also be conducted to minimize risks and promote vigilance in communities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Gambia faces a range of interconnected challenges, from security threats and governance issues to socio-economic and gender inequalities. While progress has been made in some areas, significant systemic challenges such as crime, infrastructure deficits, and strained governance persist. To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is needed, focused on strengthening law enforcement, improving public service delivery, and enhancing governance reforms. By implementing the proposed policy recommendations, the government can create a more secure, equitable, and sustainable environment for all Gambians.

#### **CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR JANUARY 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).	3		
Abduction		-	-
Cybercrime/Fraud		-	-
Extrajudicial killing			
Physical/Armed Assault			1
Herder-Community Conflict			
Illicit Drug Trafficking	1	-	-
Homicide			
Suicide			-
<b><u>DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:</u></b>			
Demonstration ( <b>peaceful</b> )		-	-
Demonstration ( <b>violent</b> )			

Strike	2	-	-
Intimidation and Threats		-	-
Arrest/Detention	1	-	-
Road Accident	1	4	44
Building Collapse			
Election-Related Violence			
Boat Mishap			-
Fire Outbreak + Gas Explosion	1		
<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>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>45</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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