



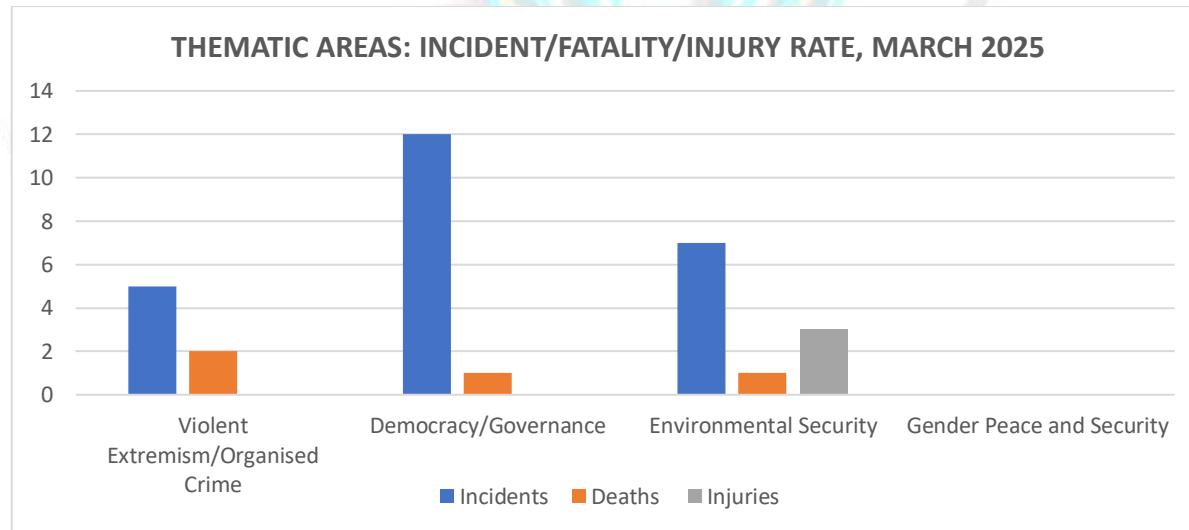
NEWS MONTHLY BULLETIN (WANEP-THE GAMBIA)

(MARCH, 2025)

1. INTRODUCTION

In March 2025, 24 incidents were recorded in the *Monthly Conflict Census* from the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS)¹. A cumulative fatality of 4 and 3 injuries, with cases emanating from criminal attacks, road accidents and other related incidents were recorded in the month.²

As illustrated in the thematic graph below, Democracy and Governance recorded the highest number of incidents with twelve (12), while Environmental Security theme recorded seven (7) incidents. Also, Organised Crime and Violent Extremism theme recorded five (5) incidents, while Gender, Peace, and Security theme recorded none. The Monthly Bulletin reveals key trends. Notably, Organised Crime and Violent Extremism recorded a sharp decline to five (5) incidents from twelve (12) in February 2025, suggesting improved security measure. The absence of incidents under Gender, Peace, and Security may indicate progress or more likely, underreporting due to stigma, limited access to reporting channels or fear of retaliation. Despite the decrease in crime and extremism, high governance-related incidents highlight unresolved systemic challenges requiring targeted interventions.



— Source: WANEP-NEWS³

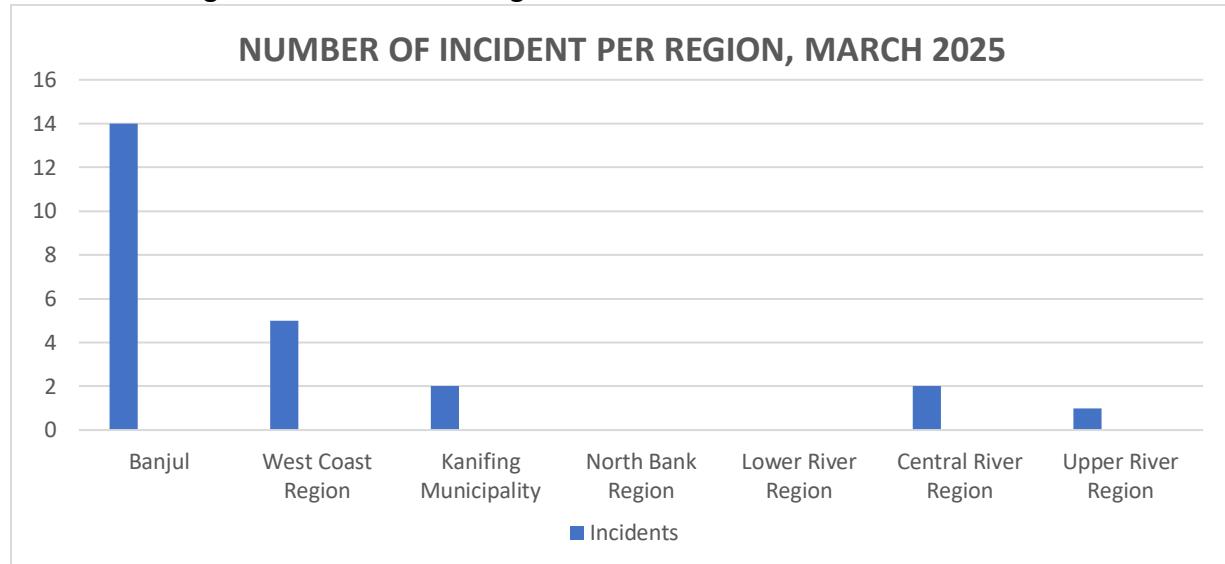
Banjul recorded the highest number of incidents with fourteen (14), followed by the West Coast Region with five (5). Kanifing Municipality and the Central River Region each recorded two (2)

¹ news.wanepsystems.net

² WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): news.wanepsystems.net

³ news.wanepsystems.net

incidents, while the Upper River Region recorded one (1). No incidents were reported in the Lower River Region and North Bank Region.⁴



2. ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Recent criminal activities in The Gambia reveal persistent security vulnerabilities, particularly in law enforcement capacity and public safety. The illegal firearms circulation remains a major concern, as seen in the arrest and remand of a male suspect at Mile II Prison for possessing an unlicensed firearm, a violation of Section 8(2)(a) of the Arms and Ammunition Act⁵. This case highlights ongoing concerns over illegal arms circulation, which fuels violent crime. Additionally, in Brufut Heights, West Coast Region, a case of murder was reported in the month. Evidence of forced entry, coupled with the theft of valuables, including cash and electronics⁶, suggests premeditated violence with possible links to robbery or personal vendetta. The issuance of a bench warrant for the prime suspect a Sierra Leonean national, underscores the transnational nature of some criminal activities.

Also, in the reporting month, a case of child abduction was reported in Brikama Gidda, where a father allegedly abducted his 7-year-old twins.⁷ Such incidents highlight underlying issues of parental disputes and the broader challenge of child protection. Meanwhile, in Ballanghar Kerr Nderry, Central River Region, an attempted armed robbery at a Mauritanian-owned shop was

⁴ WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS):news.wanepsystems.net

⁵ The voice Newspaper (2025). Man in Possession of Unlicensed Firearm Remanded at Mile II. Available at: <https://www.voicegambia.com/2025/03/06/man-in-possession-of-unlicensed-firearm-remanded-at-mile-ii/> (Accessed March 6, 2025).

⁶ The Standard Newspaper (2025). 'Murder' at Brufut Heights Police probe 'killing' and robbing of ex-banker. Available at: <https://standard.gm/murder-at-brufut-heights-police-probe-killing-and-robbing-of-ex-banker/> (Accessed March 11, 2025).

⁷ The standard Newspaper (2025). Missing twins found, 3 suspects arrested. Available at: <https://standard.gm/missing-twins-found-3-suspects-arrested/> (Accessed March 19, 2025).

thwarted by a swift community and police response, resulting in the arrest of one suspect and the death of another.⁸ This incident underscores the effectiveness of community-police collaboration in crime prevention but also reflects the persistent security threats in the region.

3. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The Gambia's democratic landscape remains shaped by institutional progress and ongoing constitutional deadlock. A recent closed-door meeting between President Adama Barrow and opposition leader Lawyer Ousainou Darboe, facilitated by the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, failed to resolve disagreements over the country's draft constitution.⁹ While President Barrow supports the 2024 draft, Darboe insists on reinstating the 2020 version without amendments. The delay in the National Assembly's second reading of the 2024 draft constitution further prolongs the impasse,¹⁰ reflecting deep-seated political divisions and uncertainty over The Gambia's constitutional reforms. Additionally, the exclusion of the Gambian diaspora from voting rights continues to fuel dissatisfaction,¹¹ adding another layer of political tension.

Beyond constitutional debates, governance and financial mismanagement present significant challenges. The Basse Area Council's four-month salary arrears for councillor¹² reflect administrative and financial mismanagement, further straining relations within local leadership. At the national level, lawmakers debated a high-profile \$30 million petroleum deal allegedly involving Russian oil, with allegations over tax evasion and illicit financial transactions.¹³ Meanwhile, The Gambia's deployment of military troops to Sierra Leone for peacekeeping has sparked criticism among National Assembly members¹⁴, indicating potential divisions over foreign policy decisions. The controversy surrounding the takeover of McCarthy Square by the Office of the President has also raised concerns about executive influence over municipal affairs in Banjul.¹⁵

Legal and judicial matters further complicate the national landscape. The Chief Justice's approval of a coroner's inquest into the death of Brigadier General Bora Colley in state custody suggests

⁸ The Gambia Police Force Official Facebook Page (2025). Police respond to armed robbery in Ballanghar. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/PolisoMagazine> (Accessed March 22, 2025)

⁹ Kerr Fatou (2025). President Barrow and Ousainou Darboe Meet to Discuss Gambia's Draft Constitution, No Deal Reached. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/president-barrow-and-ousainou-darboe-meet-to-discuss-gambias-draft-constitution-no-deal-reached/> (Accessed March 3, 2025).

¹⁰ Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). Second Reading of Constitution Bill Delayed Until June. Available at: <https://foroyaa.net/second-reading-of-constitution-bill-delayed-until-june/> (Accessed March 10, 2025)

¹¹ The Standard Newspaper (2025). Diasporans say rejection of voting right 'huge betrayal'. Available at: <https://standard.gm/diasporans-say-rejection-of-voting-right-huge-betrayal/> (Accessed March 6, 2025).

¹² Kerr Fatou (2025). Basse Area Councilors Decry Four Months Without Pay. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/basse-area-councilors-decrys-four-months-without-pay/> (Accessed March 7, 2025).

¹³ Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). Gambian Parliament to Debate \$30 Million Russian Oil Scandal. Available at: <https://foroyaa.net/gambian-parliament-to-debate-30-million-russian-oil-scandal/> (Accessed March 14, 2025).

¹⁴ The Point Newspaper (2025). Minister defends military troops deployment to Sierra Leone. Available at: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/minister-defends-military-troops-deployment-to-sierra-leone> (Accessed March 14, 2025).

¹⁵ The Standard Newspaper (2025). MAYOR says op's action is a 'siege' against Banjul. Available at: <https://standard.gm/mayor-says-ops-action-is-a-siege-against-banjul/> (Accessed March 20, 2025).

increased legal scrutiny over detainee rights. Additionally, the judiciary has dismissed allegations of widespread corruption, even as an Afrobarometer survey indicates that 43% of Gambians perceive the judicial system as corrupt.¹⁶ Further, The Gambia government's confirmation of the deportation of over 3,000 undocumented Gambians from the United States highlights ongoing diplomatic and reintegration challenges of migration policy and international relations.¹⁷

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

The ongoing land dispute between the communities of Berending and Gunjur in the Kombo South District is escalating, with both sides using rival press conferences to publicly assert their claims.¹⁸ This confrontation highlights long-standing tensions over land ownership and resource access, a recurring issue in The Gambia where weak land governance structures often fuel intercommunal conflicts. Without a structured mediation process, the dispute could spiral into violent clashes, disrupting social cohesion and local economic activities.

Beyond land disputes, environmental security concerns extend to public safety risks. The road accident at Manjaj Junction in Kanifing Municipality, involving a BMW vehicle engaged in reckless stunt driving,¹⁹ underscores the dangers posed by of poor road safety enforcement and irresponsible driving behaviors. Similarly, the fire outbreak at Latrikunda Sabiji Market in Kanifing Municipality, which damaged nine (9) stalls, exposes the risks posed by inadequate fire safety measures in commercial areas.²⁰

5. GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

In the reporting period, The Gambia recorded no incidents related to Gender, Peace, and Security, reflecting a period of stability. While this is a positive development, it remains crucial to sustain efforts in promoting gender-responsive policies, enhance support systems for survivors of gender-based violence, and improve data collection to ensure a more accurate representation of gender-related security issues. Additionally, promoting women's active participation in peacebuilding and security sectors remains critical to fostering inclusive governance and long-term stability.

¹⁶ Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). Judiciary Rejects Afrobarometer Survey Findings. Available at: <https://forovaa.net/judiciary-rejects-afrobarometer-survey-findings/> (Accessed March 20, 2025).

¹⁷ The Point Newspaper (2025). Gov't admits delay in identifying 3000 Gambians meant for US deportation. Available at: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/govt-admits-delay-in-identifying-3000-gambians-meant-for-us-deportation> (Accessed March 20, 2025).

¹⁸ The Standard Newspaper (2025). Tension brewing again in Gunjur, Berending land dispute. Available at: <https://standard.gm/tension-brewing-again-in-gunjur-berending-land-dispute/> (Accessed March 3, 2025).

¹⁹ Official Page of The Gambia Police Force (2025). Highway Patrol Team Response to Fatal Road Traffic Accident in Manjai. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/PolisoMagazine> (Accessed March 14, 2025).

²⁰ Paradise TV Gambia (2025).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Gambia government should strengthen law enforcement capacity by increasing funding for police training, intelligence gathering, and cross-border crime prevention. Coordination with ECOWAS and regional security agencies should be improved to address illegal firearms circulation and security threats.
2. The government and National Assembly should prioritize constitutional reforms by fostering inclusive dialogue among political stakeholders to resolve the impasse over the draft constitution. Representatives of civil society groups to be engaged to ensure a participatory reform process.
3. The local council should enhance transparency and accountability in governance by addressing financial mismanagement at municipal levels and ensuring timely salary payments for public officials. Collaboration with anti-corruption bodies and judicial oversight mechanism to restore public trust in democratic institutions. Local governments should strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms by implementing independent oversight bodies and increasing judicial transparency to restore public trust in democratic institutions.
4. The Gambia should establish a national land dispute resolution framework to mediate conflicts between communities such as Berending and Gunjur, thereby preventing potential violence. The Gambia government should develop a structured mediation system in partnership with traditional leaders, the judiciary, and conflict resolution organizations to prevent community-based land disputes.
5. The Gambia Road Authority should improve infrastructure and road safety regulations by enforcing strict traffic laws and maintaining road conditions to reduce accidents.
6. The Ministry of Gender and Social Welfare should enhance gender equality programs by increasing women's representation in governance, security forces, and peacebuilding initiatives. Legal frameworks for preventing gender-based violence should be reinforced alongside improved access to support services for survivors, including shelters, legal aid, and psychosocial assistance. Collaboration with civil society organizations and international partners will enhance the effectiveness of these efforts.

CONCLUSION

The Gambia faces significant challenges across security, governance, environment, and gender-related issues, requiring targeted interventions. Strengthening law enforcement, promoting inclusive political dialogue, and sustaining gender equality efforts are crucial for national stability and development. By implementing these actionable policies, the government will promote peace and security, ensuring sustainable progress for the country and its citizens.

CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR MARCH 2025

THEMATIC AREA	NO of Attacks.	VICTIMS	
		DEATHS	INJURIES
ORGANISED CRIME: (Armed-robbery, assassination, armed violence mob attack, arson and cult/gang clash).	1	1	
Abduction	1	-	-
Cybercrime/Fraud		-	-
Extrajudicial killing			
Physical/Armed Assault			
Herder-Community Conflict			
Illicit Drug Trafficking		-	-
Homicide	1	1	
Suicide			-
DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:			
Demonstration (peaceful)		-	-
Demonstration (violent)			
Strike		-	-
Intimidation and Threats		-	-
Arrest/Detention	1	1	-
Road Accident	1	1	3
Election-Related Violence			
Boat Mishap			-
Fire Outbreak	3		

<u>ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:</u>			
<u>Pandemic/Epidemics:</u>			<u>Confirmed/Infected Cases</u>
Wildlife poaching/trafficking			
Flood/Rainstorm			-
<u>GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:</u>			
SGBV: Sexual Assault/Rape			
Human Trafficking		-	-
Total	9	4	3

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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