



# NEWS MONTHLY BULLETIN (WANEP-THE GAMBIA)

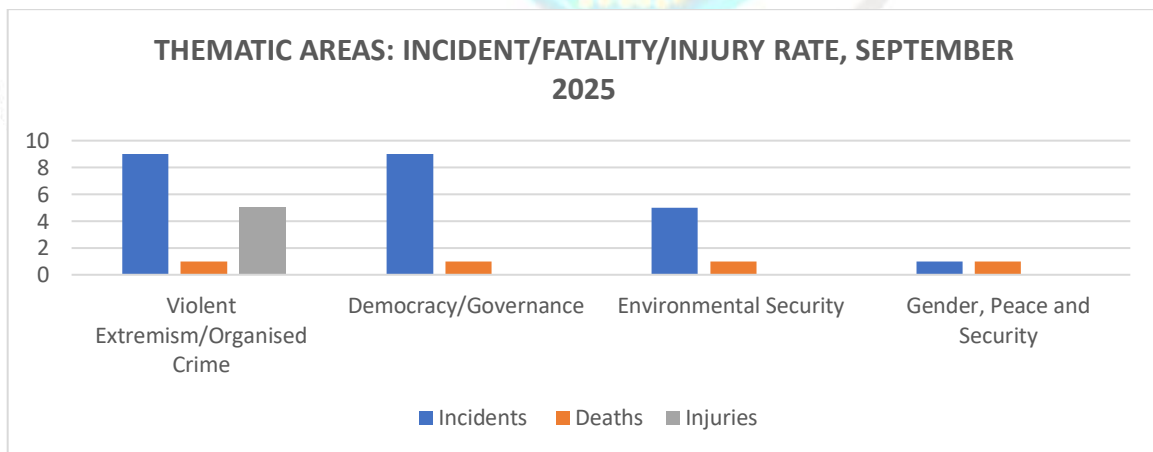
## (September, 2025)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the reporting period, a total of twenty-four (24) incidents were recorded through the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS)<sup>1</sup> as part of the *Monthly Conflict Census*. These incidents resulted in four (4) fatalities and five (5) injuries arising from a range of causes including road accidents, drug trafficking, gang violence, explosion and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).<sup>2</sup>

As depicted in the thematic graph below, the *Democracy and Governance* theme and *Organised Crime and Violent Extremism* theme recorded the highest number of incidents, with a total of nine (9) incidents each. The *Environmental Security* theme accounted for five (5) incidents, while the *Gender, Peace, and Security* theme reported the lowest, with one (1) incident.

Geographically, Banjul reported the highest number of incidents with a total of twelve (12), followed by the West Coast Region with five (5) incidents. The Kanifing Municipality recorded four (4) incidents, while the North Bank Region reported two (2). The Upper River Region recorded one (1) incident. No incidents were recorded in the Central River Region and Lower River Region during the reporting period.

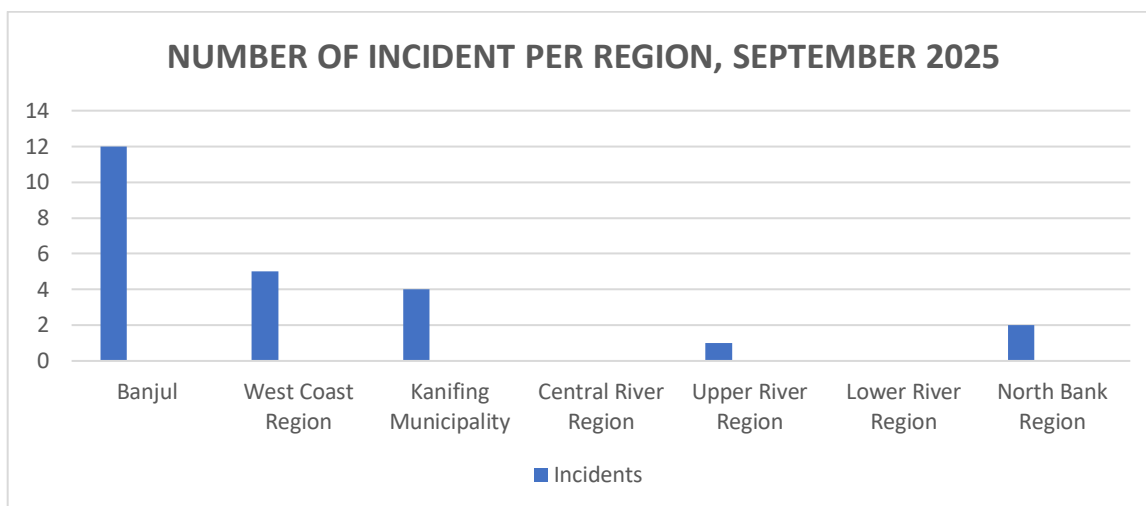


Source: WANEP-NEWS<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [news.wanepsystems.net](https://news.wanepsystems.net)

<sup>2</sup> WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS): [news.wanepsystems.net](https://news.wanepsystems.net)

<sup>3</sup> [news.wanepsystems.net](https://news.wanepsystems.net)



Source: WANEP-NEWS<sup>4</sup>

## 2. ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The reporting period highlights growing challenges to national security and law enforcement in The Gambia, reflecting both domestic and transnational threats. The arrest of 60 foreign nationals allegedly involved in cryptocurrency fraud<sup>5</sup> underscores the country's vulnerability to transnational organized crime, particularly the exploitation of digital platforms for illicit financial activities. The seizures of laptops, mobile phones, and desktop computers reveal the scale and sophistication of these criminal networks, posing potential reputational and financial risks if left unchecked.

Similarly, the Drug Law Enforcement Agency (DLEAG) intensified operations against illicit drug trafficking, resulting in the arrest of both foreign nationals and child offenders, and the seizure of ecstasy pills valued at D40 million<sup>6</sup>. These developments reflect the expanding scope of the narcotics trade in The Gambia, which not only threatens public health but also exposes the country to external criminal infiltration. The suspected drug-related death of a 19-year-old further emphasizes the urgency of addressing the rising illicit drug menace which mirrors similar challenges experienced across neighboring West African states.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> news.wanepsystems.net

<sup>5</sup> Alkamba Times (2025). 60 Foreign Nationals from China & Vietnam Arrested in Tujering Cybercrime Bust Involving Massive Device Seizure. Available at : <https://alkambatimes.com/60-foreign-nationals-from-china-vietnam-arrested-in-tujering-cybercrime-bust-involving-massive-device-seizure/>

<sup>6</sup> Kerr Fatou (2025). DLEAG Seizes D40 Million Worth of Ecstasy Pills in Major Operation. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/dleag-seizes-d40-million-worth-of-ecstasy-pills-in-major-operation/> (Accessed September 18, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Kerr Fatou News Online. (2025). Flash Report.

Meanwhile, domestic security threats continue to compound the broader security landscape, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities within the national security framework. Violent youth gang attacks in Wellingara, West Coast Region in The Gambia<sup>8</sup>, resulted in five injuries and significant property destruction, highlighting escalating urban insecurity and the capacity of armed groups to destabilize communities. The arrest of an individual for cocaine and firearms possession<sup>9</sup> demonstrates the convergence of narcotics and weapons trafficking, reinforcing the nexus between organized crime and violence.

In a bid to restore control over cross-border criminality, the Gambia Immigration Department deported over 100 convicted foreign nationals<sup>10</sup> signaling institutional efforts to enforce immigration law and mitigate external threats. However, the multiplicity of arrests from cyber fraud and drug trafficking to gang violence reveals systemic strains on the national security apparatus requiring enhanced inter-agency coordination, regional cooperation, and preventive measures targeting the root causes of crime, youth radicalization, and transnational threats.

### 3. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The reporting period reflects rising political, religious, and governance tensions that pose significant risks to national stability in The Gambia. The protest by the Mouride community against Imam Kuyateh highlights the fragility of inter-religious relations<sup>11</sup>, where perceived disrespect toward religious groups could rapidly escalate into communal conflict.

Politically, the withdrawal of Talib Ahmed Bensouda from the United Democratic Party (UDP) flagbearer race, coupled with his resignation from a key party role, reveals growing internal divisions within one of the country's main opposition parties,<sup>12</sup> potentially reshaping the political landscape ahead of the 2026 elections. Meanwhile, the amendment to the election bill, which doubles political party registration fees, raises concerns over inclusivity,<sup>13</sup> as smaller parties may face financial barriers that restrict participation, thereby narrowing democratic space. The President's directive to remove the Auditor General following the rejection of a political

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<sup>8</sup> The Point Newspaper (2025). Armed with cutlass and knives; youth gang launches two-day night violent attack in Wellingara. Available at : <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/armed-with-cutlasses-knives-youth-gang-launches-two-day-violent-attack-in-wellingara>

<sup>9</sup> The Point Newspaper (2025). Indian faces 12 criminal charges over cocaine and fire Arms. Available at: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/indian-faces-12-criminal-charges-over-cocaine-firearms>

<sup>10</sup> Kerr Fatou (2025). 101 Foreign Nationals Convicted in The Gambia to Face Deportation. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/101-foreign-nationals-convicted-in-the-gambia-to-face-deportation/> (Accessed September 18, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> Kerr Fatou (2025). Mouride Community Urged to Pursue Dialogue After Police Adjourn Talks. <https://www.kerrfatou.com/mouride-community-urged-to-pursue-dialogue-after-police-adjourn-talks/>

<sup>12</sup> The Point Newspaper (2025). Bensouda bows out from UDP flagbearer race, Darboe calls for respect. Available at: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/bensouda-bows-out-from-udp-flagbearer-race-darboe-calls-for-respect> (Accessed September 8, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Registration for political parties raised to D2 million. Available at : <https://standard.gm/registration-fees-for-political-parties-raised-to-d2m/>

appointment<sup>14</sup> further undermines institutional independence, especially at a time when corruption control and accountability remain central public concerns.

These political developments occur against a broader democratic backsliding and rising social unrest. The Afrobarometer survey findings indicate a 13 percent decline in citizen satisfaction with democracy since 2018, mirroring citizens' frustration with corruption, poor governance, and weakening institutions.<sup>15</sup> The forceful removal of the Auditor General and the arrest of protesting youths at the National Audit Office (NAO), reinforces perceptions of executive overreach and shrinking civic space.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, violent youth protests in Sukuta-Jabang,<sup>17</sup> West Coast Region in The Gambia over land disputes, coupled with the hospital explosion that exposed safety lapses in public health facilities,<sup>18</sup> highlights persistent governance failures in addressing basic needs and community grievances.

Furthermore, the candidacy of activist Fatou Jaw Manneh in the presidential race demonstrates both public appetite for reformist leadership<sup>19</sup> and the potential for increased political contestation in 2026. Collectively, these dynamics suggest that The Gambia is entering a period of heightened volatility, where institutional credibility, political legitimacy, and social cohesion are likely to be tested.

#### 4. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Environmental security concerns continue to escalate in urban areas of The Gambia. The incidents of flooding and weather-related incidents recorded in the month across The Gambia underscore the country's vulnerability to climate change, poor infrastructure planning, and inadequate disaster preparedness. The OIC P1 and P3 road projects in New Jeswang,<sup>20</sup> constructed without proper drainage, have intensified localized flooding, demonstrating how infrastructure gaps can exacerbate environmental hazards. In Banjul, heavy rainfall submerged large areas,<sup>21</sup> disrupting

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<sup>14</sup> Kerr Fatou online TV (2025).

<sup>15</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Gambia's democratic gains drop by 13 percent since 2018 – Afro barometer. Available at: <https://standard.gm/gambias-democratic-gains-drop-by-13-percent-since-2018-afrobarometer/> (Accessed September 19, 2025).

<sup>16</sup> Kerr Fatou (2025). Four Youths Arrested Over Protest Against Auditor General's Removal. Available at : [://www.kerrfatou.com/four-youths-arrested-over-protest-against-auditor-generals-removal](http://www.kerrfatou.com/four-youths-arrested-over-protest-against-auditor-generals-removal) (Accessed September 19, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> Alkamba Times (2025). Youths in Jabang Protest Land Dispute with Tyre-Burning Demonstration Amid Police Clashes. Available at : <https://alkambatimes.com/youths-in-jabang-protest-land-dispute-with-tyre-burning-demonstration-amid-police-clashes/> (Accessed September 19, 2025).

<sup>18</sup> Alkamba Times Newspaper (2025). A young man died of generator blast at Kanifing General Hospital. Available at : <https://alkambatimes.com/fatal-generator-blast-at-serrakunda-general-hospital-kills-young-oxygen-plant-worker/>

<sup>19</sup> The Standard Newspaper (2025). Fatou jaw manneh, why I want to run for 2026 presidential election. Available at : <https://standard.gm/fatou-jaw-manneh-why-i-want-to-run-for-president/>

<sup>20</sup> Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). New Jeswang OIC Road Projects Leave Residents Stranded in Floods. <https://foroyaa.net/new-jeshwang-oic-road-projects-leave-residents-stranded-in-floods/>

<sup>21</sup> Jollof News (2025). Heavy Rains Flood Banjul, Drainage System Blamed. Available at: <https://jollofnews.gm/2025/09/10/heavy-rains-flood-banjul-drainage-system-blamed/>

businesses and mobility, further highlighting the capital's persistent drainage and urban planning deficiencies. Further, the death of a farmer and his horse from a lightning strike highlights the dangers posed by extreme and unpredictable weather events.<sup>22</sup> Hon. Suwaibou Touray's warning regarding climate change resonates with these realities, as rising sea levels, erosion, and irregular rainfall patterns increasingly threaten agriculture, fisheries, and national food security.<sup>23</sup> The erosion in Kerr Jarga which endangers electricity infrastructure, exemplifies the direct impact of climate shocks on community resilience and essential services. These developments reveal the urgent need for climate adaptation strategies, strengthened environmental governance, and investment in resilient infrastructure to safeguard livelihoods and national stability.

## **5. GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY**

The reported death of a three-week-old female infant,<sup>24</sup> allegedly linked to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), highlights the severe public health and human rights implications of the practice in The Gambia. The incident exposes gaps in the enforcement of existing laws that prohibit the practice and highlights persistent cultural and social barriers that continue to place young girls at risk. Beyond this, the incident carries broader implications for gender rights, child protection, and state accountability in upholding international conventions on the elimination of harmful traditional practices.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a. The Ministry of Interior should strengthen inter-agency coordination and intelligence-sharing among security institutions, while investing in specialized training and modern investigative tools to tackle cyber fraud, drug trafficking, arms trafficking and related crimes. Preventive measures should complement enforcement through expanded youth empowerment programs, vocational training, and community-based initiatives to reduce vulnerabilities to drug abuse, gang violence, and radicalization.
- b. To safeguard democratic governance and national stability, the Government of The Gambia should prioritize strengthening institutional independence, promote inclusive political participation, and establish mechanisms for peaceful dialogue. Oversight bodies, including the National Audit Office must be protected from political interference, while reforms to the election

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<sup>22</sup> Jollof News (2025). Lightning strike kills young man and his horse in north bank region. Available at: <https://jollofnews.gm/lightning-strike-kills-young-man-horse-in-north-bank/>

<sup>23</sup> Foroyaa Newspaper (2025). Rising Sea Levels, Erosion Threaten Livelihoods. Available at : <https://foroyaa.net/hon-suwaibou-touray-says-rising-sea-levels-erosion-threaten-livelihoods/> (Accessed September 19, 2025).

<sup>24</sup> Kerr Fatou (2025). Police investigating infant death, allegedly linked to female circumcision. Available at : <https://www.kerrfatou.com/police-investigate-infant-death-allegedly-linked-to-female-circumcision-in-wuli/>



bill should balance accountability with inclusivity to avoid marginalizing smaller political parties. The Government of The Gambia should engage civil society actors, religious and community leaders to promote interfaith tolerance and prevent communal tensions from escalating into violence.

c. The Ministry of Environment and the National Environment Agency should invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, including improved drainage systems, flood defenses, and sustainable urban planning that anticipates extreme weather patterns. Climate change adaptation should be integrated into development policies, with particular attention to agriculture, fisheries, and coastal protection, which are critical to livelihoods and food security. Expanding early warning systems, community-based disaster preparedness programs, and public education campaigns will reduce vulnerability to environmental hazards and enhance community resilience.

d. To address risks associated with FGM in The Gambia, authorities should strengthen enforcement of existing laws while implementing community-based education programs to challenge cultural and social norms that perpetuate the practice. Targeted training for law enforcement, healthcare workers, and social services is critical to ensure early detection, reporting, and protection of at-risk girls. Collaboration with traditional and religious leaders can facilitate societal shifts and promote alternative rites of passage that safeguard children’s health.

CONCLUSION

The reporting period highlights overlapping security, governance, environmental, and social risks that continue to strain The Gambia’s stability. Organized crime, political tensions, climate vulnerabilities, and gender-based threats expose persistent gaps in institutional capacity and community resilience. A coordinated response is crucial to strengthening law enforcement, advancing inclusive governance, integrating climate adaptation, and upholding human rights. By prioritizing prevention, institutional integrity, regional cooperation, and public engagement, The Gambia can reinforce national cohesion and safeguard the well-being of its citizens.

CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

THEMATIC AREA	NO of Attacks.	VICTIMS	
		DEATHS	INJURIES
ORGANISED CRIME: (Armed-robbery, assassination, armed violence mob attack, arson and cult/gang clash).	1		5
Cybercrime/Fraud	1	-	-
Physical/Armed Assault			

Illicit Drug Trafficking	6	1	-
Homicide			
Suicide			-
<b><u>DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:</u></b>			
Demonstration (peaceful)	2	-	
Hate Speech		-	-
Arrest/Detention	3	-	-
Road Accident	1		
Fire Outbreak + Gas Explosion	1	1	
<b><u>ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:</u></b>			
Flood/Rainstorm	3		-
<b><u>GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:</u></b>			
SGBV: Sexual Assault/Rape			
		-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</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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