

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

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**Gunjur/Berending, The Gambia – 7th April 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

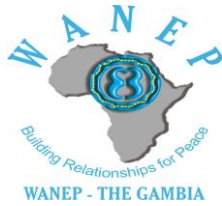
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ESCALATING TENSIONS IN THE GUNJUR–BERENDING LAND DISPUTE: A CALL FOR CALM AND URGENT GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-The Gambia) expresses deep concern over the recent escalation of tensions between the neighboring communities of Gunjur and Berending in the Kombo South District, West Coast Region. The long-standing land dispute has re-ignited and reached a deeply troubling and dangerous stage, posing significant risks to the safety, security, and stability of both communities. What was historically regarded as a protracted disagreement over land ownership has now evolved into an urgent threat to human lives, peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

As part of its commitment to peacebuilding and land dispute management in the Kombo South District, WANEP-The Gambia has implemented several initiatives to de-escalate tensions and promote multi-stakeholder dialogue between stakeholders including citizens of moral authority drawn from the two communities. Under WANEP’s Research and Action for Peace (REcAP) Project, funded by the European Union (EU), we conducted Community Dialogue Sessions and Alternative Dispute Resolution Trainings for residents of Berending and Gunjur, from June 22–24, 2024, and July 12–14, 2024 respectively. These interventions were designed to foster mutual understanding and trust, while creating platforms for constructive engagement and confidence between traditional and religious authorities, as well as other key influencers including Women and Youth leaders involved in the land dispute.

On Sunday, March 22, 2026, disturbing reports emerged alleging that Yaya Darboe, a resident of Gunjur was injured by a group of youths from Berending. This attack has reignited painful memories of past violence linked to the same dispute, including the tragic fatal shooting of Buba Jammeh. These incidents, rooted in unresolved tensions among families from Darboe Kunda, Jammeh Kunda, and Jatta Kunda in Gunjur, underscores the urgent need for a sustainable and peaceful resolution.



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These latest developments are particularly concerning given the recent establishment of a government task force mandated to investigate and demarcate the boundary between Gunjur and Berending. While this initiative was widely welcomed as a step toward clarity and a long-term solution, tensions on the ground remain dangerously high and volatile.

Reports of continued mutual cross-community retaliations have heightened frustration, especially among young people, some of whom are planning demonstrations to express their grievances. While the right to peaceful assembly is fully recognized, there is a growing risk that such actions, if not carefully managed, could further inflame the situation.

We call on the Government of The Gambia and all relevant authorities to:

- **Act swiftly** to ensure the protection and safety of residents of both communities;
- **Expedite** the work of the boundary demarcation task force and communicate its findings transparently;
- Enforce **the law** fairly and without bias against any individuals or groups engaging in violence or incitement.
- **Strengthen community dialogue** and conflict resolution mechanisms to effectively de-escalate tensions.

At the same time, all residents of Gunjur and Berending, particularly the youth, are urged to exercise restraint and refrain from violence, intimidation, or retaliation. Such actions will only deepen divisions, prolong suffering, and undermine the prospects for lasting peace. The path forward must be guided by truth, justice, and constructive dialogue.

This moment calls for calm reflection, responsible leadership from both communities, and a renewed commitment to peaceful coexistence and social cohesion. The future of both Gunjur and Berending depends not on conflict, but on mutual respect, adherence to the rule of law, and a shared determination to resolve disputes through peaceful and lawful means.

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