



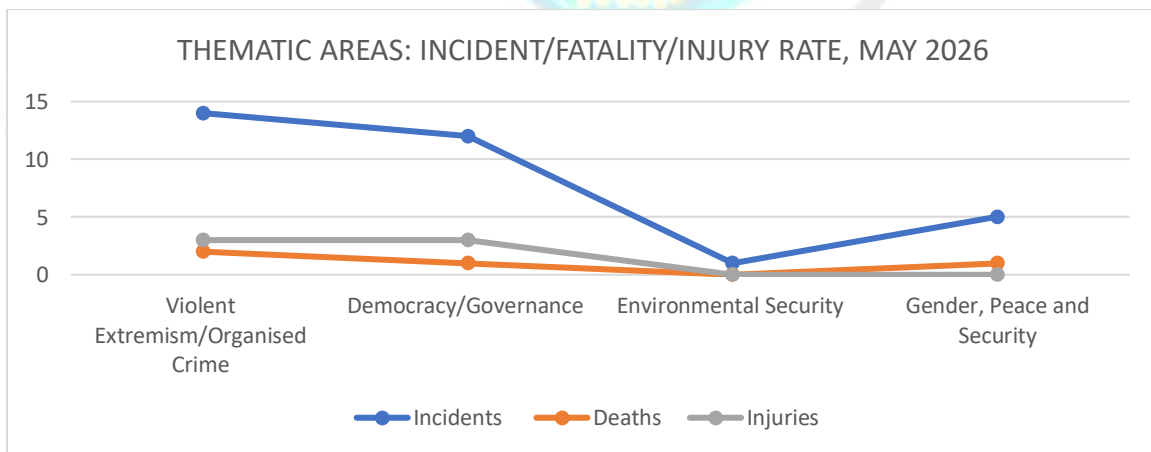
NEWS MONTHLY BULLETIN (WANEP-THE GAMBIA) (MAY, 2026)

1. INTRODUCTION

During the reporting period, a total of thirty-two (32) incidents were recorded through the WANEP National Early Warning System (NEWS),¹ as part of the *Monthly Conflict Census*. These incidents resulted in four (4) fatalities and six (6) injuries, arising from a range of causes including road accidents, murder, drug trafficking and assault reported during the month.²

As depicted in the thematic graph below, the *Organised Crime and Violent Extremism* theme recorded the highest number of incidents, with a total of fourteen (14) incidents, while the *Democracy and Governance* theme recorded twelve (12) incidents. The *Gender, Peace and Security* theme registered five (5) incidents, while the *Environmental Security* theme reported the lowest, with one (1) incident documented.

Geographically, Banjul registered the highest number of incidents with a total of nineteen (19), followed by the West Coast Region with four (4) incidents. The Upper River Region recorded three (3) incidents. The Kanifing Municipality and the North Bank Region recorded two (2) incidents each, while the Central River Region and the Lower River Region reported one (1) incident each.

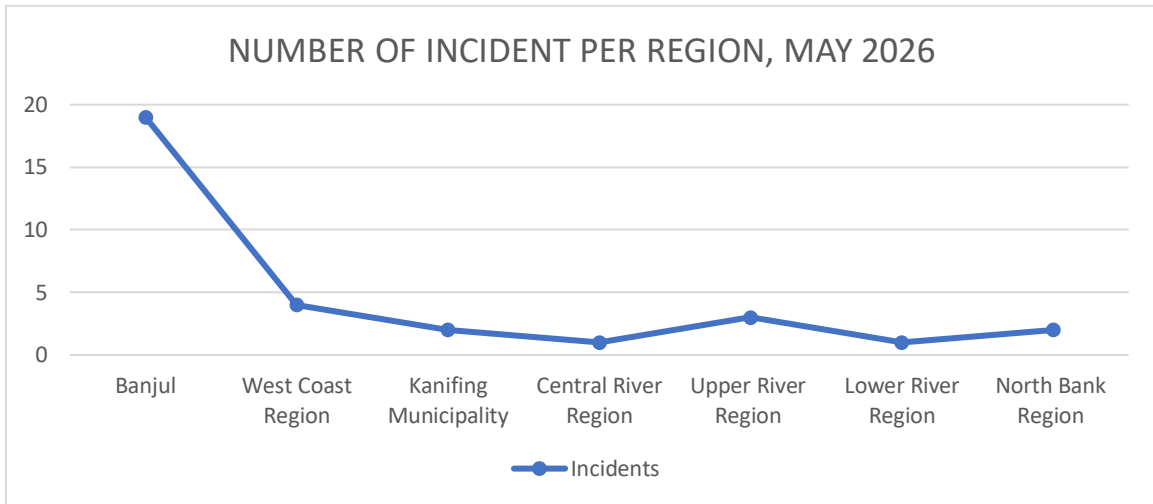


Source: WANEP-NEWS³

¹ news.wanepsystems.net

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

³ news.wanepsystems.net



Source: WANEP-NEWS⁴

2. ORGANISED CRIME AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

The reporting period highlights persistent concerns relating to violent crimes, drug trafficking, fraud, and public disorder, underscoring ongoing security and law enforcement challenges nationwide. In the West Coast Region, the arrest and detention of more than a dozen individuals in Brikama Dirimakolong following the alleged assault of police officers highlights growing tensions between security personnel and sections of the public⁵. Similarly, the violent cutlass attack that took place at the Brikama market that reportedly resulted to two people sustaining seriously injuries before police intervention⁶ are evidence of increasing cases of violent behaviour in public spaces. Likewise, police investigations into suspected murders in Basse⁷ and the unidentified teenage girl found dead further point to rising concerns regarding violent crimes and community safety. The break-in at a voter registration centre in Sanyang also raises concerns over the protection of electoral materials and the vulnerability of electoral processes ahead of the December 2026 polls.

Additionally, the continued arrests and convictions linked to burglary, assault⁸, fraud, drug trafficking, and counterfeit currency demonstrate the persistence of transnational organised criminal activities across the country. The seizure of suspected counterfeit USD 467,000 at the Yerobawol checkpoint and the arrest of a Guinean national with suspected cannabis at the

⁴ news.wanepsystems.net

⁵ Official Facebook page of The Gambia Police Force (2026) PIU Brikama conducts targeted operation in Durumakolong. (Access: 28/04/2026)

⁶ The Standard (2026) Cutlass wielding man injures 2 in Brikama. <https://standard.gm/cutlass-wielding-man-injures-2-in-brikama/>

⁷ Official Facebook Page of The GPF (2026) Police Investigate Alleged Murder case in Basse. Available at: Gambia Police Force Facebook page, cited 10/05/2026

⁸ Kerr Fatou (2026) Senegalese Migrant Worker in Banjul Fined and Ordered to Compensate Victim in Bottle Assault Case. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/senegalese-migrant-worker-in-banjul-fined-and-ordered-to-compensate-victim-in-bottle-assault-case/>

airport⁹ highlight the strategic use of The Gambia as a transit route for illicit activities. Frequent drug-related arrests by DLEAG involving cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy, and other controlled substances further suggest the expanding presence of narcotics networks, particularly among vulnerable youth population. The swift convictions and sentencing by various magistrates and high courts demonstrate the active role of the judiciary in addressing criminality and reinforcing deterrence. However, the recurrence of such incidents signals the need to strengthen community policing, border security, intelligence-sharing, youth engagement programmes, and public awareness raising initiatives to address the root causes of crime and to enhance national security and social stability.

3. DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

There have been growing concerns about irregular migration, political tensions, restriction of civic space, and youth vulnerability. The interception of suspected irregular migrants in Jinack Jatta¹⁰ and the rescue of migrant boats in Nuimi Bakalarr by The Gambia Immigration Department (GID) and the Navy are indicative of the risks associated with illegal migration through the Atlantic route. The prosecution of an alleged migration recruiter under the Trafficking in Persons Act 2007, following a revelation by the Sierra Leone High Commission of a suspected QNET-linked (online marketing platform) trafficking and visa scam network, further demonstrate the increasing sophistication of human trafficking and migration-related exploitation targeting young people. These incidents suggest continued socio-economic pressures, unemployment, and limited opportunities driving vulnerable youths toward risky migration pathways and fraudulent schemes promising overseas opportunities. Furthermore, the Local Government Commission of Inquiry submitted the final report on local governments to the president. President Adama Barrow has assured Gambians that his government will issue a White Paper and implement all accepted recommendations contained in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Local Government Councils and Connected Matters in accordance with the constitution.¹¹ The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of The Gambia Armed Forces reportedly resigned from his position following a series of investigative reports alleging corruption, abuse of office, and unethical conduct involving the country's top military officer.¹²

⁹ Kerr Fatou (2026), Airport Drug Unit Arrests Guinean National with 42 Packs of Suspected Cannabis at Banjul Airport. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/airport-drug-unit-arrests-guinean-national-with-42-packs-of-suspected-cannabis-at-banjul-airport/>

¹⁰ Kerr Fatou (2026) Gambia Immigration Department Intercepts 35 Irregular Migrants in Jinack Kajatta. Available at : <https://www.kerrfatou.com/gambia-immigration-department-intercepts-35-irregular-migrants-in-jinack-kajatta/>

¹¹ Askanwi (2026) Local Government Commission: President Barrow Vows to Implement Recommendations Accepted in White Paper Available at: <https://www.askanwi.com/news/govt-pledges-white-paper-on-local-government-commission-findings-vows-constitutional-implementation>.

¹² Kerr Fatou (2026) Defence Chief Reportedly Resigns Amid Mounting Corruption Allegations. Available at : <https://www.kerrfatou.com/defence-chief-reportedly-resigns-amid-mounting-corruption-allegations/>

Additionally, the period recorded several incidents reflecting rising political and civic tensions within public institutions and communities. For instance, the resignation of an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) supplementary voter registration supervisor in Jarra West over an alleged intimidation during the voter registration exercise raises concerns about political interference and the credibility of electoral processes ahead of the December 2026 Presidential election¹³. Similarly, the arrest of members of Gambia Against Looted Assets (GALA) over alleged authorization disputes¹⁴ highlights ongoing tensions surrounding freedom of assembly and relations between civil society actors and security institutions. At the University of The Gambia, violent clashes between rival student of different political groups resulting to injuries reveal the increasing degree of political intolerance and polarization among youth groups within democratic spaces. Furthermore, the petition submitted to the National Assembly over alleged ethnic and political discrimination¹⁵ points to growing public sensitivity around governance, inclusivity, and abuse of office.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

In the reporting period, the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources reportedly intensified its nationwide crackdown on illegal fishing activities¹⁶, leading to the arrest of a shopkeeper and three foreign nationals in Basse and the Greater Banjul Area, while authorities also seized banned fishing nets during the operation. The incident reflects the government's increasing efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing practices that continue to threaten marine ecosystems, fish stocks, and the livelihoods of local fishing communities. The involvement of foreign nationals in the alleged illegal activities further heightened concerns over cross-border exploitation of The Gambia's fisheries resources and the growing complexity of enforcement challenges within the sector. The operation demonstrates strengthened regulatory enforcement by authorities. However, the persistence of illegal fishing suggests the need for enhanced surveillance, community sensitization, regional cooperation, and stricter penalties to deter environmental crimes and ensure the sustainable management of the country's fisheries resources.

¹³ The Standard (2026) IEC registration supervisor 'resigned' over alleged intimidation. Available at : <https://standard.gm/iec-registration-supervisor-resigned-over-alleged-intimidation/>

¹⁴ Kerr Fatou (2026). GALA Condemns Arrest of 15 Members, Vows Sustained Pressure on Police. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/gala-condemns-arrest-of-15-members-vows-sustained-pressure-on-police/>

¹⁵ The Voice (2026) Citizens Petition Parliament Over Deputy Speaker's Alleged Tribal Remarks. <https://www.voicegambia.com/2026/05/14/citizens-petition-parliament-over-deputy-speakers-alleged-tribal-remarks/>

¹⁶ Hello Gambia (2026) Ministry of Fisheries and water resources stepped-up nationwide fight against illegal fishing. available a: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1CuFxeuH4P/> cited (08/05/2026)

5. GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY

Court proceedings in The Gambia continue to highlight serious concerns surrounding sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against minors, as well as the psychological impact of violent crimes on families and communities. The High Court in Banjul reportedly sentenced two individuals to life imprisonment in separate rape cases involving a 14-year-old girl and a four-year-old child¹⁷, reflecting the judiciary's upholding firm stance against sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2013. The transfer of another rape case involving a Dutch national and a minor to the High Court further underscores the gravity of such offences and the growing number of child protection-related cases before the courts¹⁸. However, the adjournment of a separate rape trial due to the absence of prosecutors raises concerns over procedural delays and the potential impact on timely access to justice for victims. Additionally, the reported death of a woman in New Yundum from shock following emotional distress over her stepson's killing demonstrates the wider emotional and psychological consequences of violent crimes on families and communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Security institutions, including The Gambia Police Force and DLEAG, should strengthen integrated intelligence-led policing and cross-border cooperation to disrupt organised crime networks, while simultaneously expanding community policing and youth engagement programmes in high-risk areas to reduce violent crime, drug trafficking, and public disorder.
- b. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), government institutions, and civil society actors should enhance electoral transparency and protect civic space by ensuring intimidation-free voter registration processes, strengthening safeguards for freedom of assembly, and scaling up public education on safe migration and anti-trafficking awareness to address youth vulnerability and political tensions.
- c. The Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources should intensify sustained coastal and inland surveillance operations in collaboration with regional partners, while enforcing stricter penalties for illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and expanding community-based monitoring systems to protect marine resources and promote sustainable fishing practices.
- d. Government, judiciary actors, and social service institutions should improve coordination to ensure timely prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence cases, while simultaneously expanding survivor-centred psychosocial support services and nationwide awareness campaigns

¹⁷ Kerr Fatou (2026) High Court Sentences Uncle to Life Imprisonment for Rape of Teenage Niece. Available at: <https://www.kerrfatou.com/high-court-sentences-uncle-to-life-imprisonment-for-rape-of-teenage-niece/>

¹⁸ The Voice (2026) Rape Case Involving Minor Moves To High Court. Available at : <https://www.voicegambia.com/2026/05/08/rape-case-involving-minor-moves-to-high-court/>

to strengthen prevention, protect children, and address the wider psychological impacts of violent crime.

CONCLUSION

The reporting period presents a complex security and governance landscape in The Gambia, marked by persistent challenges across organised crimes, democratic governance, environmental protection, and gender and human security. While law enforcement agencies and the judiciary continue to demonstrate strong responses through arrests, prosecutions, and convictions, the recurrence of violent crimes, drug trafficking, illegal migration, electoral tensions, and environmental offences reflects deep-rooted structural and socio-economic drivers that sustain these risks. These include youth unemployment, weak institutional coordination, cross-border criminal networks, and gaps in public trust and civic engagement.

Overall, the bulletin underscores the need for a more holistic and preventive approach that goes beyond enforcement to address underlying causes of insecurity. Strengthening early warning systems, enhancing institutional accountability, improving inter-agency and regional cooperation, and investing in youth empowerment and public awareness are critical to building long-term resilience. A coordinated, multi-sectoral strategy remains essential to consolidating peace, strengthening democratic governance, protecting vulnerable populations, and ensuring sustainable national development.

CENSUS OF INCIDENTS FOR MAY 2026

THEMATIC AREA	NO of Attacks.	VICTIMS	
		DEATHS	INJURIES
ORGANISED CRIME: (Armed-robbery, assassination, armed violence mob attack, arson and cult/gang clash).	3		
Cybercrime/Fraud	1	-	-
Physical/Armed Assault	4		3
Illicit Drug Trafficking	4		-
Homicide	2	2	
Suicide			-
DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE:			
Demonstration (peaceful)	2	-	

Intimidation and Threats		-	-
Arrest/Detention	5		2
Road Accident	1	1	1
Illegal Migration	3		
Election-Related Violence	2		
Fire Outbreak + Gas Explosion			
<u>ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY:</u>			
Illegal fishing	1		
<u>Pandemic/Epidemics:</u>			<u>Confirmed/Infected Cases</u>
		-	
Flood/Rainstorm			-
<u>GENDER, PEACE AND SECURITY:</u>			
SGBV: Sexual Assault/Rape	3	1	
Human Trafficking	1	-	-
Total	32	4	6

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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