



Conflict and Development Analysis The Gambia

UPDATED MAY 2024

Summary

2024 Approach and methodology

The 2024 Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA) report aims to be practical, offering busy readers a user-friendly *aide memoire*. It draws from the tested “Agency neutral” approach developed by the United Nations (UN) Development Group, “Conducting a Conflict and Development Analysis.” CDA is an inclusive and participatory process that takes into consideration the views of all stakeholders — including men, women, young people, Persons With Disabilities and minority groups. A CDA has three main components: A: Conflict analysis assessing the context, conflict factors (drivers) and peace engines; B: Current response mapping and C: Recommendations.

Why update the CDA in 2024? The rationale is to target and maximise the impact of peacebuilding programming. In 2018, the United Nations in The Gambia led an inclusive, participatory, and gender-sensitive CDA process. Given the rapidly changing transitional context, a CDA update was commissioned in 2019. Since 2019, delivery on the democratic dispensation, dubbed “the New Gambia”, has seen progress politically, economically, and socially. However, shifts in national, regional and transnational externalities are threatening The Gambia’s transition to democracy. This CDA process was therefore designed to deliver the following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** State and non-state peacebuilding actors in The Gambia share an aligned understanding of conflict drivers and peace engines.
- **Outcome 2:** State and non-state peacebuilding actors are better informed when designing and delivering evidenced-based, conflict - sensitive programmes that sustain The Gambia’s transition.
- **Outcome 3:** State and non-state peacebuilding actors are better able to track and mitigate risks to peace and development as well as respond to early warning signals.

CDA Approach: Nationally owned and nationwide: As in 2019, the government of The Gambia, under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) again led and chaired the designated Project Team (PT), which comprises of the Department of Strategic Policy and Delivery - part of the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination, and Delivery. Given the need for national and community consultation, as in 2018 and 2019, technical and logistical support was provided by the West African Network on Peacebuilding (WANEP) The Gambia. The PT also included advisers from funding partners like the UN Resident Coordinators Office, UN Development Programme and the World Bank. With the support of a national and an international consultants, the PT conducted the CDA exercise in the following phases: :

- **Phase 1: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** In March 2024, FGDs were held in all the regions of The Gambia (i.e., the Greater Banjul; West Coast; Lower River; North Bank; Central River and Upper River regions). The consultations were held in Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola and Sarahulleh languages. As a results of the learning from the 2019 CDA that women did not speak freely in mixed groups, the FGDs in the 2024 CDA organised separate discussions for male and female..
- **Phase 2: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and stakeholder consultation (March/April 2024).** This approach engaged representatives from the central government, civil society, and the international community. One-to-one KIIs were complemented by a multi-stakeholder consultation on the theme “Leaving Noone Behind”. This included roundtable group discussions with the private sector, women and girls, migration and vulnerable groups, experience of violence and tension. Those consulted included His Excellency Vice President Muhammed BS Jallow, The Gambia Supreme Islamic Council and Gambia Christian Council, The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO), the Women’s Association for Victims’ Empowerment (WAVE), the National Youth Council, National Youth Parliament, TOSTAN, Gambia Federation for the Disabled. and Gambia Network of AIDS Support Societies. Regional experts in transnational threats were consulted. A full list of institutions consulted is annexed to the CDA report.
- **Phase 3: Report drafting, review and validation. (April/May 2024).** Drafting the report was led by the international consultant which was highly consultative. It included: a zero-draft reviewed by the PT, and a validation draft which was scrutinized during four different Banjul workshops with the PT Team, the UN Country Team, high-level government and a multi-stakeholder workshop.

CDA Approach: Conflict sensitive - The process was as important as the final product. The PT recognized members' respective roles as actors within the Gambian context, and the risk of the CDA process itself, i.e. how it could be instrumentalised and become a conflict driver. It also recognized that failure to carry out an inclusive exercise could fuel the perception that the GoG is marginalizing segments of the population. It mapped exclusion and reputational risks as safeguards to mitigate the risks associated with the CDA process. - Annex A. This assessment led to the Delivery Principle: .

CDA Approach: Inclusive and participatory

The 2024 CDA exercise consulted **443 people – 247 (56%) men and 196 (44%) women**. This sample size makes its findings statistically significant. ¹ Details as follows:

- **48** Focus Group Discussions consulted **288** people: **144** men, **144** women.
 - Of these 288, 54 were young people under the age of 25 (37 young women and 17 young men.)
 - Of these 288, 20 considered themselves to be Persons With Disabilities.
- **155** subject matter experts (103 men and 52 women) at the national level from **89** different institutions – government, civil society and faith-based organisations, political parties and international community. See Annex C. Of these 155, two considered themselves to be Persons With Disabilities.
 - **67** of these were consulted through one-to-one KIIs.
 - **45** experts from civil society, government and the international community were consulted through a multi-stakeholder engagement technical event in April 2024
 - **43** new and additional experts took part in the report review and validation events in May 2024.

Conflict analysis: Headline findings

The 2024 CDA used an issues-based analysis methodology which identified what, how and where are different issues **manifesting in violence, tension and instability**. This was the evidence base from which conflict factors (drivers) were diagnosed accurately. In this Summary, this section first highlights a critical criminality dynamic and then presents the seven issues identified during the FGDs and KIIs.

2024 criminality dynamic: The drug kush was reported as a critical concern for citizens during CDA 2024 FGD and KII consultations. However, according to the Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG) kush is one among a complex panoply of substances sold and used. ²

1. Kush was reported as a critical concern throughout the district level FGDs and national-level KIIs. Kush is a cannabis strain which is highly potent and addictive³. FGD reported young people self-harming and being hospitalized, committing crime to fund their habit, or committing murder when high or when family members refused to give them money.
2. Kush represents the tip of the iceberg in terms of drug use and should not crowd out a focus on the broader threat. According to the DLEAG, the consumption of kush within communities may in fact be interacting with users of other drugs. Cannabis ruderalis (skunk) and Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) and other forms of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are new entrants into the local market. Their impact is worsened through a new youth trend in toxic cocktails of drugs mixed with alcohol.⁴

Domestic Issue 1: Economic imperatives are the most critical issue driving violence, tension and instability. They serve as a multiplier effect for other sources of dispute.

Current sources of violence, tension and instability

1. Negative coping mechanisms resulting from economic vulnerability were the most frequently raised issue at the district and national levels. These coping mechanisms included crime, forced sex work, “back way” migration, corruption, drug peddling and abuse.

¹ For the consultation sample size to be statistically significant the CDA needed to consult at least 386 people. This would give us 95% confidence in findings within a margin of error of +/- 5%.

² KII Written inputs, CDA May 2024, The Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG)

³ KII Written inputs, CDA May 2024, The Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG)

⁴ KII Written inputs, CDA May 2024, The Drug Law Enforcement Agency, The Gambia (DLEAG)

2. There was a direct correlation between economic vulnerability and an increased impact / frequency of other manifestations identified by the CDA. These include the withholding of remittances (Issue 2: political polarisation) and contestation over land and climate-insensitive exploitation of natural resources (Issue 4: Land disputes and environmental degradation)
3. Likewise economic interests underpin legitimate business and organised crime's interests in The Gambia, which in turn heightens vulnerability. These include real estate investors' land grabbing and market manipulation (Issue 4: Land dispute) and an array of illicit economies (Issue 6: SOC) including recruitment into supply chains and exploiting economic vulnerability through peddling drugs and get-rich-quick scams.
4. Gambia's strong extended family and community structures have begun to disintegrate under economic pressure of the cost of living. Wives and children are being abandoned and increased levels of gender-based violence are reported, both of which are challenges for men's role as economic providers.
5. Under or unemployment, particularly of youth, impacts their economic resilience, undermines their self-worth and increases the impact of frustration with a system which excludes young people from decision-making. This compels them to take the risk of irregular migration.
6. A lack of social safety nets (social protection) exacerbates the impact of hard times.
7. Climate-induced shocks are increasing and heightening contestation over land and natural resources, and economic vulnerability, e.g. flood damage. (Issue 4: Land disputes)

Potential sources of violence, tension and instability in the next 12 – 24 months

8. Spikes in cost of basic goods or ends to subsidies could further exacerbate the cost-of-living crisis and could lead to popular protests.
9. ECOWAS free movement of goods and people is perceived as a risk, with early signs of xenophobia. This *could lead* to targeted attacks on foreigners. This links to both the influx of kush as well as alleged overfishing and market capture by foreigners from the region and beyond.

Domestic Issue 2: Polarization – political and religious – is undermining the unity of purpose necessary to deliver Gambia's democratic dispensation.

Current sources of violence, tension and instability

1. At the national level, polarization risks at best delaying and at worst derailing the necessary constitutional and legal reforms required to deliver the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) White Paper, implementation Plan and broader National Development Plan.
2. Politicisation of women's rights is already generating tension, especially around the repeal of the FGM Bill.
3. Political division at the local level ranked as the third most frequently cited district FGD issue affecting stability – behind economic vulnerability and family disputes often linked to differing political affiliation. This issue was reported equally among men and women as undermining inter and intracommunity ties, as families no longer attend each other's naming ceremonies or funerals; and access to water points is prevented due to political affiliation. The same can be said as reported to have impacted the willingness of relatives abroad to send remittances to their families..
4. Since the 2019 CDA, four elections have been held, accompanied by an increase in hate speech. The 2021-2023 electoral cycle particularly recorded a spike in hate speech along political and ethnic lines. The NHRC voiced profound concerns regarding what it termed a "tense political environment," citing WhatsApp audio and text messages inciting violence, including physical attacks and threats against the lives and properties of public figures, political leaders, and government officials.
5. In 2024, intra- and inter-religious tensions are escalating. This is resulting in physical violence and undermining social cohesion more broadly. This compares with the 2018 and 2019 CDAs which emphasized positive interreligious relations in The Gambia, largely due to ongoing dialogue between the Gambia Supreme Islamic Council and the Gambia Christian Council. ⁵

Potential sources of violence, tension and instability in the coming 12 – 24 months

6. The need for a new constitution which reflects the aspirations of The Gambia is pressing. In 2020 the new draft constitution failed in the National Assembly due largely to disagreement over the retroactivity of presidential term limits. Similar disagreements may yet appear given political parties' insistence on the return of the original 2020 draft. The reform process also divides along religious

⁵ For a recent example, see: Muslim, Christian councils preach peace amid rising religious tension, *The Standard* newspaper, 10 May 2023 - <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/muslim-christian-councils-preach-peace-amid-rising-religious-tension>

lines: according to the KII's conducted with the Gambia Christian Council, it opposes the new Constitution on basis of its proposed primacy of Sharia over secular concerns. Both political and religious interests could put on hold the constitutional reform and at worst generate civil unrest.

7. The frustration and isolation of returning migrants who feel let down by the European Union and the Gambian state, as well as disenfranchised young people more broadly *could* serve as a ready constituency for those seeking numbers or protest around polarizing political or religious issues.
8. An increase in anti-Western sentiment aligns with KIIs reports of growing affinity especially among Gambian youth with nations in the Sahel region. The formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (ASS) established on 16 September 2023 between the military governments of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso was as a defensive and cooperative effort in response to regional instability and external threats, underlining a commitment to "collective security"⁶ rather than Western military cooperation. "From a people-to-people perspective, there is sympathy for the new governments of Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger for their respective and collective pronounced intentions to redeem their countries" historically looted of their resources and provide more effective protection of their peoples against rebels that have infiltrated their nation."⁷
9. The extent to which Gambian citizens' affinity with ASS and its military leadership is related only to its counter-colonial ideology rather than in support of military rule was not clear from the KIIs and requires further analysis. If the former, it could represent a concern for those working on transitional justice.

Domestic Issue 3: Land disputes remain a significant source of tension

Current sources of violence, tension and instability

1. A lack of secure land tenure undermines citizens' ability to feel truly safe. In a country with a predominantly agriculturally based economy, land ownership equates to economic resilience.
2. The continued lack of normative framework is a barrier to progress. The Gambia lacks a land policy. There is no national mapping of land parcels, no subsequent cadastre for land registration.
3. Since the 2019 CDA land value has skyrocketed, driving speculation. This is increasing land grabbing. Lack of real estate regulation is leading to agricultural land transformed into residential areas and exploitation of economic vulnerability of landowners.
4. Capacity of local government authorities to manage disputes is low, exacerbating frustration. The customary dispute resolution role played by Alkalis is being undermined by pursuit of their own interests manifested by the contestation between the *Alkaaloos* and Village Development Committees.

Potential sources of violence, tension and instability in the next 12 – 24 months

5. Land reform, including the validation and drafting of the much-needed land reform bill and digitalization of records may prove divisive. It will impact several vested interests within government, the private sector and the citizenry. It will also affect customary land practices and structures as such will be both a legal but also emotionally-charged process.

Domestic Issue 4: The social contract is being undermined by the slow pace of reform and in establishing state – citizen dialogue and accountability mechanisms

Current sources of violence, tension and instability

1. The TRRC White Paper set out an ambitious legislative reform agenda encompassing the revision of existing laws and the drafting of new ones. Priority is given to strengthening the Law Reform Commission to ensure that it has the required resources to revise laws that are inconsistent with democratic society, good governance, and the rule of law. However, the country's Law Reform Commission has been largely inactive for over a decade and needs to revitalize to be able to execute its mandate.⁸ Legislative reforms required to operationalize the TRRC prosecution's and reparations functions have been expedited, for example the National Assembly passed a Special Prosecutors Office (SPO) bill and Special Accountability Mechanism (SAM) bill during an extraordinary session on 22 April 2024. However, legislation to put in place an Infrastructure for peace, including the establishment of critical mediation / dialogue mechanisms including the Peace and Reconciliation Commission – has delayed. Security Sector Reform (SSR)

⁶ [Alliance of Sahel States: Challenging Colonial Borders and UN Representation? - Kujenga Amani \(ssrc.org\)](https://ssrc.org/alliance-of-sahel-states-challenging-colonial-borders-and-un-representation/)

⁷ 2024 CDA stakeholder workshop intervention.

⁸ Chief Justice talks tough on law reforms - <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/chief-justice-talks-tough-on-law-reforms> (15 March 2023)

has seen some, if unequal progress. Commitments to establish a National Security Office and establish a Vetting Agency that would help remove from public offices individuals responsible for abuses under the Jammeh regime have advanced, while commitments to restructure the army and enhance the prisons system have been delayed. Outdated or non-existent legislation governing land tenure, Public Order, and electoral reform, including diaspora voting are all long delayed.

2. An honest national dialogue to manage expectations and mitigate tension was a recommendation in the 2018 and 2019 CDAs. Until the February 2024 National Dialogue with the theme “*Preserving the Nation, safeguarding the state and securing our resources*” this conversation appears to have been lacking. While the 2024 national dialogue was welcomed broadly by all political parties’, participants noted that the national dialogue was “a long time coming” and were disappointed at the five-minute length of their interventions.
3. A more structured and regular engagement, with accountable measures against which to report progress, is under discussion and would be an important development. Not least as in FGDs and KIIs “dialogue” was offered universally as a solution: Political parties proposed the need for a political dialogue on FGM and the constitution; The Gambia Supreme Islamic Council and the Gambia Christian Council both recognised the need for inter-faith dialogue. The success, or otherwise, of these dialogues, and associated follow-up could be the difference between these sources of tension being managed and eventually mitigated, versus escalating into civil unrest or community division.
4. The Peace and Reconciliation Commission as recommended in the TRRC report, and its implementation plan will be tasked to facilitate dialogue and mediate to resolve conflicts across the country.. At present this function is lacking. This is a risk. The Peace and Reconciliation Commission is critical not only as a place for national healing, but also as a platform to coordinate a range of currently siloed interventions which could address the polarization affecting Gambian social cohesion today.
5. Constraints for certain segments of civil society were reported. Civil society’s growth and diversification since 2016 is very welcome and ongoing. Concerns raised in October 2023 and echoed in the KIIs noted shock over the overt and covert threatening of media houses, journalists, and activists made during political utterances.
6. Accountability by civil society and not only government is required. Given significant investment made through CSOs, KIIs noted the need for these organisations to be financially transparent.
7. In May 2024 The Gambia’s media freedom ranking dropped from 4th in Africa to 10th in the World Press Freedom Index. “Draconian media laws introduced by the Jammeh regime, which are still in the law books” was cited as one of the reasons for the decline in ranking. While media freedom is critical to the democratic space, misinformation and hate speech were raised by the KIIs. This was linked to Gambians’ lack of experience of freedom of expression during the Jammeh era, to rapid sharing capacities of social media, and a lack of digital literacy and fact checking capacity.

Potential sources of violence, tension and instability in the next 12 – 24 months

- The forthcoming prosecution phase of the transitional justice process may present significant challenges, since prosecutions, especially in relation to the former president and his most senior accomplices, while the former ruling party is an ally of President Adama Barrow. On the other hand, there is also a risk of unmet expectations with the reparations process. Both *could* open old wounds and deepen political rifts. Other critical recommendations that speak to accountability, transparency, protection of civic space, freedom of expression come from human rights mechanisms. Failure to implement these could lead to the perception of government failing to address past and or present violations. This could also lead to increased social tension.
- Without a visible government response to the kush crisis, public trust could be undermined. While as outlined in Criminality above, there is a panoply of drugs being used within Gambian society, kush is the substance most concerning to the population, and therefore against which they are judging the performance of security and justice actors. The use of social media and misinformation can quickly intensify public concern. Clear, consistent communication will be crucial. Addressing the broader drug issue would also address an increase rate of drug-related crime, and the threat to the physical and mental health of Gambian youth, and the country’s future social capital.

Regional Issue 5: Bilateral relations with Senegal

Current sources of violence, tension and instability

- 2023 cross-border tension over Darsilameh-Tranquil elevated the visibility of the Senegalo-Gambian Joint Boundary Commission (S-GJBC). The November 2023 talks between The Gambia and Senegal resolved to return The Gambian and Senegalese soldiers to the pre-2016 border positions; Senegalese and Gambian armed forces to jointly patrol a buffer zone in the area; and S-GJBC would properly demarcate the border within three years. This resolution is currently being implemented and is on track.
- The spillover of the Casamance conflict continues to impact the human security of Gambian communities, while continuing illegal wood smuggling from Casamance continues to undermine the rule of law and democratic governance of The Gambia. However, recent progress in negotiations between *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance* (MFDC) and The Gambian government is considered a positive development.
- At the community level, the seasonal movement of cattle in search of pasture and water, especially across The Gambia's porous border with Senegal, is igniting conflict within communities and causing environmental degradation. The FGDs in the URR particularly highlighted this concern, including the increase in armed pastoralists, accused of cattle rustling and deforestation.
- The issue of territorial integrity was a priority at the March 2024 National Strategic Dialogue hosted by the president. It is a critical point of contestation after ECOMIG's prolonged presence, as multiple polls have indicated that most Gambians are in favour of ending the mission and handing over the responsibility of the country's security to the Gambian defence and security forces.⁹

Potential sources of violence, tension and instability in the next 12 – 24 months

- **Timing of ECOMIG's exit.** ECOMIG retains an important role in accompanying the SSR and TRRC prosecutions. Unless the mandate of ECOMIG is communicated clearly, this may result in tensions. This could be instrumentalised by actors with an anti-ECOWAS agenda. Protests *could* escalate.

Regional Issue 6: Impact of transnational Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) is felt increasingly

Current sources of violence, tension and instability

- The diversification and reach of SOC supplies chain for drugs, fake goods, people trafficking is reported to have increased significantly. These interests fuel / enable corruption, do harm through poor quality goods or drug-related crime.
- In this context, SOC continues to expand illegal wood exports especially from Casamance.
- Porous borders, lax customs controls, and proven networks are reported as enablers. Kush is reportedly brought into the country from Sierra Leone by road via Guinea and from Senegal.

Potential sources of violence, tension and instability in the coming 12 – 24 months

- **Intersection between SOC and Violent Extremism.** In June 2023 the Gambian Minister of Foreign Affairs disclosed to Gambian media that he had learned through conversations with returned migrants that Gambian migrants in Libya were being radicalized and recruited into jihadist movements.¹⁰ While the present evidence is anecdotal on VE, the evidence of SOC is compelling. Globally, the intertwining of transnational SOC and Violent Extremism recruitment, illicit economy supply chains and financing are proven and often lead to violence over control. For example, in Cabo Delgado, northern Mozambique. This trend could emerge in The Gambia.

Regional Issue 7: Policy decisions of wider West Africa and the Sahel Region

The breakdown in relations between ECOWAS with Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Guinea places barriers to much-needed regional cooperation on transnational threats. This includes communication on whether Gambian football fans and returning migrants were barred from entry due to identification of Gambian nationals allegedly fighting for extremist organisations in Mali.

And so? Factors driving manifestations of violence, tension and instability

⁹ Gambians feel less safe but want ECOMIG to leave, Afrobarometer survey shows - https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/news_release-gambians_feel_less_safe_but_want_ecomig_to_leave-afrobarometer-v2-28may21f.pdf

¹⁰ "Gambians may have joined jihadist groups in Libya," *The Standard* newspaper, 26 July 2023 - <https://standard.gm/gambians-may-have-joined-jihadist-groups-in-libya>

In the section above, we asked what issues, where and who is involved in violence and instability and “how” it surfaces in society. The full CDA identified a set of “factors” (**otherwise known as conflict drivers or root causes**) against each issue. These were mapped and grouped into headlines below.

Factor 1	Structural economic barriers and economic incentives at the macro-economic level, including the enabling environment of poor business, which in turn impacts on the provision of effective education to employment pathway for youth. These in turn are impacted by slow COVID-19 recovery efforts and cost hikes in food and fertilizer linked to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
Factor 2	Social norms and patterns of power , underpinning often negative impacts on the voice, choice and control of women, youth and Persons With Disabilities, and therefore their lived experience of violence.
Factor 3	Polarization at the convergence of identity - ethnic, religious and / or political.
Factor 4	Land , including complexity of dual system – statutory and customary.
Factor 5	Pace of reform , particularly land, the constitution, and the establishment of the PRC.
Factor 6	Corruption
Factor 7	Lack of government transparency, accountability and communication encompassing basic services, expectation management and Access to Information.
Factor 8	Climate and environmental degradation including more regular, more severe natural disasters and environmental degradation.
Factor 9	Transnational threats , including SOC and influence of violent extremist organisations.

Status of peace engines Peace engines are actors and factors that might have the capacity to mitigate or manage tensions and may help promote peace and stability. The 2019 CDA reported civil society organisations, National Reforms, Commissions & Committees, Religious and Traditional Leaders and The Media Sector as key peace engines. The importance of these remains in 2024. In this section we assess the current context, including new peace engines which have emerged, or which were not explored in detail in 2019.

Finding 1	The Gambian people are the country’s strongest peace engine.
Finding 2	A decline in “griots” - local networks and contestation between customary peace mechanisms undermines effectiveness. Yet these are important as ever .
Finding 3	Since the 2019 CDA The Gambia has put in place a strong enabling environment for peace. This includes legalization, institutions and the 2024’s CDA .
Finding 4	Delivery of the Implementation Plan to the Government’s White Paper on the Recommendations of the TRRC is a critical peace engine.
Finding 5	At present, the loudest voices – hate speech, polarized views – are the ones grabbing the headlines. A “national conversation” where dialogue and discussion on a vision for The Gambia remains a goal and a powerful peace engine, which should be balanced with an evidenced-based media.
Finding 6	During the CDA KIIs the Gambia Supreme Islamic Council and Gambia Christian Council both expressed willingness to continue inter-faith dialogue and efforts
Finding 7	Political leadership is best placed to tackle polarization and political hate speech. They can lead by example through positive messaging among their constituencies with the support of the inter-party committee at all levels.

Finding 8	“Un-learning dictatorship” and understanding what it means to live in a democracy is work in progress. This includes the rebuilding of trust between the state and civil society – and their role as a watchdog of the government.
------------------	---

Recommendations

Recommendation	Rationale	Specific recommendations
Recommendation 1: The security and peace architecture must continue to use the CDA proactively - to assess the factors driving conflict and adapt policy and programming accordingly	Conflict analysis can risk being launched and sitting on a shelf gathering dust. However, The Gambia’s 2018 and 2019 CDAs bucked this trend by being widely used to this day. Commitment to reviewing and applying the findings and recommendations takes time and investment but ultimately underpins The Gambia’s commitment to a transition to democracy, and “Never Again.” This 2024 CDA is a call to action for a renewed cross-government, international community and civil society effort on conflict sensitivity and do no harm.	Recommendation All government ministries should undertake a conflict sensitivity audit. This would assess the extent to which policies and programmes currently being designed or delivered are in line with the findings of the CDA. This would also include the extent to which they are contributing towards addressing the conflict factors identified and whether their processes risk doing harm. An assessment of how the ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) feed early warning mechanisms should also be included. This would inform the design and delivery of a capacity building package to support MDAs Recommendation UN / Word Bank programme teams should undertake a similar review and align with MDA findings. Subsequently they should update their project conflict and risk tracking matrices, and where needed programme activities, to reflect the findings of the CDA. These conflict and risk tracking matrices should be refreshed on a quarterly basis and where indicators demonstrate programming may be generating negative impacts. The team should consider how and in what way related activities can be modified, or whether they should be stopped.
Recommendation 2: UN RC and the World Bank should build on its Turn Around Allocation and CDA funding partnerships to deliver impactful, programming which addresses conflict drivers through system level challenges.	To address the most prevalent factors driving crime and instability requires structural change - addressing lack of jobs or land disputes for example. Systemic challenges require funding and longevity of a scale such as the newly announced World Bank’s Board \$92.71 million financing for the five-year Gambia Resilience, Inclusion, Skills, and Equity Project (The Gambia RISE Project).¹¹ The PBF is designed to be smaller scale, catalytic and nimble.	Recommendation: The CDA partnership has allowed the World Bank and UN RC (PBF funding) to work to their respective technical strengths. This should continue, through for example (a) scoping of bespoke packages of support for deported migrants under the RISE programme or (b) as proposed in recommendations on land - PBF funds the Ministry of Lands to kick start its real estate regulation activity – something which the World Bank land support is not yet able to finance. By targeting activity which specifically understands and addresses the root causes of the conflict driver, the World Bank’s investment will be more effective, and the UN RC (PBF) multiplier effect for its funding will increase.

¹¹ [World Bank Provides \\$92.71 Million Through The Gambia RISE Project to Enhance Economic and Educational Outcomes](#)

Recommendation 3: Address economic vulnerability through a human security approach	Negative coping mechanisms resulting from economic vulnerability are the main factors driving crime and instability. Increased household vulnerability has caused diseases, malnutrition, domestic violence, and street begging	Recommendation: Human security encompasses economic security, food security, health security environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security. There are needs to increase investments in social safety nets to reduce vulnerability to climate change, economic shocks, protection of human rights
Recommendation 4: Early warning is only as effective as the response which occurs. Government and civil society must effectively communicate community-level reporting to the centre and the centre respond	Both the Office of National Security Adviser and the National Centre for National Early Warning and Response Mechanism Coordinating Centre (NCCRM) are relatively new institutions. There is an opportunity to proactively integrate planning and reporting mechanisms from the start. This will increase effectiveness and vertical accountability from the central to decentralised levels. Moreover, other institutions with capability to track indicators and warnings of unrest / potential tension should be integrated.	Recommendation: Early warning is only as effective as the response. which occurs. Government should prioritize design of a fit for purpose reporting mechanism through which NCCRM can inform decision-making by the NSC. Recommendation: Likewise, community level early warning monitors – particularly women – are critical actors to track and report increased incidences of hate speech, radical ideology or drug peddling. Government should invest time in building capacity to receive, analyse and identify trends which allow government to place the right resources in the right place. The mechanisms to receive this information at national level in a timely manner and agree and operational response are key. Recommendation: The capacity of civil society to advocate with and hold the government accountable for the commitments made in the SSR strategy, particularly local level security should be enhanced. Donor investment and government buy in to listen, hear and respond to these accountability mechanisms should be provided. Recommendation: The early warning capacity of the National Human Rights Commission should be capitalized upon i.e. its ability to track trends in increased polarization / hate speech serving as a barometer for when preventative action should be brought to bear (See peace engine on coalition working)
Recommendation 5: Government must communicate clearly and regularly through a range of media	The reality of financing costs of the past, present and future are now very real. Communication on what government can and cannot do and why has never been more important. The TRRC process gave a common goal and a unifying purpose for The Gambia. While citizens’	Recommendation: Government should design and deliver a new Strategic Communications Strategy. This would be a strategic and public communication plan that provides regular high-level authority messaging to inform the public about reforms and progress. Ideally, this should be done in a coordinated way amongst institutions, to avoid mixed messaging, and in ways that demonstrates coherency and representative

platforms and outreach channels.	concern for economic security and poor basic services remained, between 2017 and 2023 they accepted prioritisation of the TRRC for the "greater good" of the country. In 2024, with the process complete, this common goal and unity of purpose has disappeared.	voices from relevant institutions, who can weigh in on specific steps and timelines of reforms. All such communications should be delivered through carefully considered channels or sources, which must be informed by evidence through consultation processes to identify citizens' media consumption behaviours (especially social media), as well as translated into various languages, to reach across regions, ages, and ethno-linguistic backgrounds. Recommendation: Government should institutionalise the National Strategic Dialogue process kick started in February 2024. This will provide a quarterly forum to meet with political parties, in a public setting. It should agree on milestones for success across technical areas and report regularly and transparently on progress. Recommendation: Government should increase and enhance investments in Open Government as per the TAA milestones in place. This includes transparency of resource allocation and budget management.
Recommendation 6: Coordinated and rapid action to establish fit for purpose dialogue are required. These are needed for a place not only to heal past wounds but also mitigate the polarisation affecting social cohesion today.	Throughout the FGD and KII, "dialogue" was offered as a solution – Political parties proposed the need for a political dialogue on FGM and the constitution. The Gambia Supreme Islamic Council and The Gambia Christian Council both recognised the need for inter-faith dialogue on the aforementioned issues among others. A National Platform (<i>Bantabaa</i>)" is required. In the long term, this "meeting place" will be a role of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission. However, the legal and institutional framework of the PRC is currently being developed, which will set the stage for the establishment of the PRC.. The success, or otherwise, of these dialogues, and associated follow-up actions could be the difference between these latent sources of tension being managed and eventually mitigated,	Recommendation: The drafting and enactment of the PRC Bill should be expedited. April 2024's extraordinary session which passed the Special Accountability Mechanism (SAM) has demonstrated precedent for expediting legislation in support of the TRRC Implementation Plan. Preparatory Technical Assistance to support the PRC's establishment, including the scoping of a decentralised structures should be done in parallel. Recommendation: In the meantime, the government should consider increasing its work with trusted non-state actors to convene dialogue to address polarizing issues. While the work of the MoI is critical towards the establishment of the Infrastructure for Peace, the partisan nature of politics creates challenges for its role as a national mediator. Recommendation: In the absence of the PRC, an inter-faith dialogue space should be established. The Government could consider the role of the National Human Rights Commission, Civil Society and customary leaders, including the council of chiefs as facilitators.

	versus escalating into civil unrest or inter-community division.	Recommendation: Broader programming should be scoped. This could include inter-faith livelihood programmes in deprived areas. Recommendation: At local level, customary practices, including joking relationships and women leaders - Kanyillengo and Bajeni Goh Be – should be called on to reignite local mediation capacity and strengthen the on-going efforts of strengthening Insider mediators in The Gambia. Likewise, youth ambassadors and other peacebuilding networks should be leveraged for sustained continual dialogue and mediation rather than one-off showpiece events.
Recommendation 7: Those with the power to shape the narrative must hold each other to account	Klls across the board worried for The Gambia's current trajectory of polarisation, with issues in the coming year which are fraught with risk. Klls also highlighted the power of political and religious leaders to guide their members and followers. The direction of travel is very much in the hands of these leaders, who have it in their power to be peace engines. Media freedom, be it print or social media, is a critical tenet of democracy but also a driver of hate speech and misinformation, which is increasing exponentially in The Gambia. Likewise, media responsibility for balanced, evidence-based journalism is vital. Journalists are pivotal actors with the potential to fan the fires of hate and polarisation or build public trust.	Recommendation: The Inter-party Committee should intensify its efforts, particularly in preventative action around hate speech. Coalitions with civil society partners to broaden impact should be prioritised. Recommendation: The Inter-party Committee role in mitigating and managing the potential conflict is positive: This could include identification of key contentious sections within the draft constitution bill; facilitation of constructive dialogue and negotiation among stakeholders; and securing commitments from stakeholders to support the passage of the draft constitution bill. Recommendation: Political party leadership should be provided with training in conflict-sensitive voter education techniques to support their outreach to members on a future referendum. Recommendation: Support to the Gambia Media Council and Gambia Press Union on credible, balanced media should be increased. This could include the introduction of a journalist accreditation system.
Recommendation 8: Targeted support to enhance Persons With Disabilities, Women and youth engagement with and in peacebuilding / early warning	To tackle the social norms which exclude women, youth and People With Disabilities from society, behavioural change is required. This is at individual, institutional (state) and community level.	Recommendation: Empower Persons With Disabilities in delivering on their mantra "Nothing about us without us." This could include support to leadership and communications training; advocacy for inclusion on national and local governance and development platforms; and inclusion in national budget oversight and other accountability mechanisms. Recommendation: Advocate for full implementation of The Gambia Women's Act 2015 provisions for special protection for women with disabilities. The government is required to take appropriate measures to ensure the protection of women with disabilities and take specific

		measures to commensurate with their physical, economic and social needs. Recommendation: Ensure the development of the national land policy continually considers and includes mechanisms to address the structural and cultural limitations women face to owning land, particularly inheritance. Recommendation: Continue to build the evidence base and advocate for a quota system for women in political parties. Recommendation: Capacitate men and young boys as the advocate for women. This is critical to addressing the social barriers to women running for office, as well as the physical security and hate speech related challenges. Recommendation: Build the capacity of women in public speaking and decision making. Also build women-to-women networks of support to overcome the destructive combination of “lack of confidence” and “jealousy among the womenfolk.” ¹² Recommendation: Target drug law enforcement and health responses, including the spike in the use of kush A baseline survey on the state of drugs and substances abuse in the country should also be considered. The survey should particularly focus on women, youth and children’s uptake, covering a broad range of drug and alcohol interactions. Recommendation: Heightened focus on youth and digital literacy should be prioritized. This includes understanding how to fact check, what is fake news and how to assess reports critically before forwarding and spreading misinformation across their networks. Recommendation: Scale up the intergenerational dialogues begun by the UNDP in 2023. Scope options on how to institutionalise this practice within communities rather than have it funded by donor partners. This can and should be linked to insider mediator programming eg pairing
--	--	--

¹² CDA Multi-Stakeholder engagement event, April 2024, Women and Girls thematic round table

		senior and junior mediators in intergenerational teams or other joint initiatives. Recommendation: Strengthen the Inter-Party Committee's Youth branch (or similar agency based on detailed delivery partner mapping). IPC youth branch should be a driving force behind youth-led and youth-centred initiatives such as the upcoming constitutional reform process. This could have several strands of activities including (a) support to political parties on real, rather than "transactional" youth engagement including strengthening the IPC youth wings, and inter-party dialogue at youth level (b) support the leadership of political parties to enhance their digital literacy and communication style with young people (c) IEC to engage the IPC youth branch to lead engagement on what democracy means in 2024. Recommendation: Women and youth organisations should be integrated into national early warning mechanisms, including the NCCRM. In the past, the National Youth Council had provided local level early warning services which are reported to the central level... Given the multiple and potential roles of women and youths as agents of change, perpetrators of violence or survivors of violence, it is vital they are brought into the early warning system rather than excluded from it. Recommendation: Women and youth should work at the intersection of issues which are driving violence and tension. 2023 consultations on Youth Peace and Security highlighted intersectionality of YPS and other themes, eg climate action. This theme extends to youth ability to influence on issues such as drug abuse and reducing the pull of backway migration.
Recommendation 9: Land reform and dispute resolution capabilities are underfunded. It must be prioritised politically, technically and financially.	Indeed, land is a structural driver perpetuated by deep-rooted interests that maintain the <i>status quo</i>. Indeed, the land sector is slow to see change and hard to quantify that change when it comes. However, it is a critical issue which impacts Gambian economic, social and cultural resilience. As one KII said "<i>land is everything.</i>"	Recommendation: Support to land reform and regulation in all aspects should be prioritised. Recommendation: UN PBF should focus support on areas where its funds can be catalytic, i.e. address urgent issues, or provide seed funding and pilot new initiatives. For example, support towards expediting the real estate regulation should include drafting of the land reform Bill and a scoping study on land/real estate regulation should be done in parallel..

		Recommendation: Duplication and poor management of land under customary law is exponentially increasing the number of land related disputes and court cases. Technical support to standardize the land management processes at the customary level should continue in parallel with drafting the land reform Bill .
Recommendation 10: Implementation of TRRC recommendations should be holistic	Progress on prosecution and repartitions are pivotal to The Gambia’s peaceful transition. As such, their successful and conflict sensitive implementation should be supported by all means possible. Reconciliation should receive equal attention. It impacts The Gambia’s social fabric, and citizens’ collective resilience to polarising narratives. When considering the enabling environment for successful reconciliation, Government should not only “look back” to the Jammeh era but must also “look ahead” to addressing the issues which are affecting social cohesion today. These day-to-day issues, which affect the very existence of the population, are those which will undermine the “head space” for reconciliation and the maintenance of The Gambia’s rich social networks.	Recommendation: When designing a reconciliation programme, conflict analysis which overlays historic abuses of the Jammeh era with 2024 issues should inform hyper-localised understanding and approaches. Recommendation: Learning from trauma healing approaches applied to inter-and intra-communities in northern Kenya and Somalia may be helpful. Recommendation: Government should take heed of other recommendations such as those from the human rights mechanisms that contribute towards the implementation of the TRRC recommendations and contribute to peace.
Recommendation 11: Improve migration management by mitigating the risks of irregular migration and promote alternatives through regular pathways	Migration management can have an impact on peace and development. . Policies and programmes should be designed to strengthen migration governance to minimise the risks and foster positive impact.	Recommendation: Regular migration contributes significantly to The Gambia’s economy and its citizens’ economic resilience. Bilateral cooperation should continue to be prioritised to facilitate the safe and orderly migration of Gambians. Recommendation: At present, it appears there is a lack of insight on the Serious and Organised Crime supply chains which facilitate irregular migration – limiting the effectiveness of government responses. Government should consider working with regional expert partners to understand this issue and based on evidence work with neighbours. Anecdotal evidence of vulnerability to recruitment into extremist organisations should also be tested.

		Recommendation: Support services for the re-integration of returning migrants should be scaled up and better designated through a referral pathway.
Recommendation 12 (Regional): Responses to The Gambia's increasingly complex drugs market should blend law enforcement and health education.	While in the short-term state and civil society responses must focus on kush – as a critical issue of concern to citizens – in the short to medium term they should respond to youth experimentation with a wide range of deadly drug and alcohol cocktails. Combined law enforcement and health responses can learn from Mauritius. In 2013, it experienced a rapid increase in the access to and use of NPS. Synthetic cannabinoids arrived in the region between 2011 and 2013 in the form of a synthetic drug known as <i>Chimique</i>. While not identical to kush, it is believed that both are synthetic cannabinoids, easily shipped and very cheap to purchase.¹³ The public health impact on Mauritius continues to be severe.	Recommendation: The Gambia can learn from the experience of African neighbour like Mauritius when it comes to addressing kush. A combination of law enforcement and health education is required. It is this health impact which is making <i>chimique</i> less socially acceptable. This provides a potential direction for The Gambia in terms of health education and youth peer awareness raising alongside law enforcement capabilities. Recommendation The Gambian authorities should engage quickly and broadly with regional neighbours to agree on areas of cooperation, including border control and testing of substances to understand drug composition. This will better target responses of public health sectors. Recommendation: For health education on Kush's impact to be successful, the education must be delivered by "credible voices". If it has not done so already, Government should consider mobilising trusted peace youth networks, including the Red Cross and National Youth Council to deliver peer to peer education.
Recommendation 13. Continue to support the Joint Boundary Commission	Lack of clarity over The Gambia – Senegal border is exacerbating national-level tension as well as local land disputes among neighbouring communities, competing for farmland or grazing land. It is also generating "confusion" exploited by those who register for basic services on both sides of the border.	Recommendation: Continue to support the delivery of the joint roadmap towards land demarcation with funding and capacity assistance.
Recommendation 14: ECOMIG's civil-military engagement goes beyond Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and	The 2022 loss of life of ECOMIG soldiers in clashes with MFDC fighters was because they attempted to intercept a truck loaded with timber that had crossed from Casamance into The Gambia. This highlighted their role in tackling	Recommendation: While it is important to build community relations, the provision of food and health services could be viewed as transactional. Lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq stabilisation civil-military efforts have demonstrated that such Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) do not generate real acceptance. To generate genuine change in the balance of power

¹³ [GI TOC- Changing-Tides-The-evolving-illicit-drug-trade-in-the-western-Indian-Ocean.pdf \(globalinitiative.net\)](#)

develops into a more integrated response	Serious and Organised Crime, and their presence in a remote and underserved region. The FGDs highlighted concerns over cross-border illicit trade, including cattle rustling and drugs, there is clearly potential for greater community engagement in the region to improve ECOMIG's HUMIT, ie understanding of local conflict / security dynamics and in so doing improve the effectiveness of its operations.	and thus, trust between ECOMIG and the population, dialogue on local community issues and trends should be considered. This two-way dialogue would allow citizens to see the role ECOMIG plays in their own security. This approach could then be built to train the Gambian Armed Forces as part of the transition plan.
---	--	---

Annex A: Conflict sensitivity and risk mapping for the CDA process

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Safeguarding i) Taking part in consultations could increase security risks or risks of stigma / exclusion. ii) Unacceptable behaviour of CDA delivery team iii) Security of CDA team during consultations	i) 2019 CDA process found women's participation decreased during mixed gender Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). ii) Risk of safeguarding incidents perpetrated by team iii) Security risk including SGBV of staff.	(a) Gendered FGDs will ensure the safe space for full participation of women. Female enumerators will be used for women's FGDs if possible. Given tensions between young and older generations, youth only groups will also be trialled, while not missing opportunity for intergenerational thinking. (b) All staff deployed on the programme were vetted and received safeguarding and ethics training as part of their onboarding. A safeguarding focal point was appointed from WANEP. iii) A detailed security plan was prepared with tailored plans for higher risk locations including the border with Casamance. WANEP deployed staff from the local area, with local networks, language and cultural understanding.
Groups feel excluded	Failure to carry out an inclusive exercise could fuel perception that GoG is marginalising particular segments of the population	Careful balance of ethnicity and geography will ensure one group is not seen as favoured over another. Focus will be given to areas where these coalesce and could generate a trigger include Foni area, understood to be home to Jola communities. Consultations will be held with a broad range of actors including opposition leaders and civil society.
CDA process serves as a trigger for a structural or proximate driver	Neither structural nor proximate factors necessarily generate conflict in and of themselves. A "trigger" is required. The CDA be this trigger if poor communication of its intent or timeframes limits citizens' ability to participate; If the voices of different segments are not heard or if the conclusions of the consultations are considered not reflective of the discussion which was actually held, ie manipulated.	Careful communications will be always used, including of WANEP's enumerators visiting a location to gather perceptions on conflict factors and peace engines. As in 2018/19 a "group dynamics" model was used. This involved collecting responses from a group, rather than individuals. A de-briefing session by WANEP then read back and agreed understanding of the issue discussion and actions agreed. This triangulation ensured consensus and avoided elite capture.
Elite capture or interests affect participation	Interests of leadership in a divisive issue / local conflict driver (a) risks parties to the conflict, refusing to take part in consultations (b) generates perception of partiality	Careful communications will be always used, including of WANEP's enumerators visiting a location to gather perceptions on conflict factors and peace engines. WANEP will use its deep local knowledge of local tensions to understand the key actors involved, ensure communication on the CDA process and tailor consultations in a location where there is known to be alignment of leaderships' interests.

Annex B: Stakeholders: Key Information Interview or multi-stakeholder workshops

	Institution	Type
1	Vice President of The Republic of The Gambia	Govt
2	National Security Adviser	Govt
3	Ministry of Interior	Govt
4	Ministry of Public Service	Govt
5	Ministry of Defence	Govt
6	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Govt
7	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs	Govt
8	Ministry of Lands, Regional. Government & Religious Affairs	Govt
9	Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education	Govt
10	Ministry of Justice	Govt
11	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Govt
12	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources	Govt
13	Ministry of Gender, Children and Women's Affairs	Govt
15	Solicitor General	Govt
16	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency	Govt
17	Gambia Prisons Department	Govt
18	Gambia Police Force	Govt
19	Fire & Rescue Service	Govt
20	Special Adviser on TJ, Ministry of Justice	Govt
21	National Human Rights Commission	Govt
22	Gambia Immigration Department (GID)	Govt
23	Department of Community Development	Govt
24	Independent Electoral Commission	Govt
25	Kanifing Municipal Council	Govt
26	Mansakonko Area council. Chairman	Govt
28	National Council for Civic Education	Govt
29	National Early Warning and Response Mechanism Coordinating Centre	Govt
30	National Human Rights Commission	Govt
31	Ombudsman	Govt
32	Action Aid	Civil Society
33	Activista	Civil Society
34	ADRS	Civil Society
35	African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies	Civil Society
36	Alternative Dispute Resources secretariat (ADRS)	Civil Society
37	Beakanyang	Civil Society
38	Child fund The Gambia	Civil Society
39	EFANET	Civil Society
40	FAWEGAM	Civil Society
41	Female Lawyers Association (FLAG)	Civil Society
42	Future in our hands	Civil Society
43	Gambia Association for Local Government	Civil Society
44	Gambia Federation of the Disabled	Civil Society
45	Gambia Food and Nutrition Association	Civil Society

46	Gambia Media Council	Civil Society
47	Gambia Supreme Islamic Council	Civil Society
48	Gambia Christian Council	Civil Society
49	GAMCOTRAP	Civil Society
50	GAMNAS	Faith leader
51	GFD	Civil Society
52	GI-TOC	Civil Society
53	GPF	Civil Society
54	IEC	Civil Society
55	Institute for Security Studies West Africa	Civil Society
56	Mutopola	Civil Society
57	National Elections Response Group	Civil Society
58	National Youth Parliament	Civil Society
59	National Youth Council	Civil Society
60	Peace Hubs	Civil Society
61	Peace Network	Civil Society
62	TANGO	Civil Society
63	Team Gomm Sabopa	Civil Society
64	The Point	Civil Society
65	TOSTAN	Civil Society
66	University of The Gambia	Civil Society
67	WANEP	Civil Society
68	WAVE	Civil Society
69	Party Leader, NPP	Political
70	Party Leader, GDC	Political
71	Party Leader, PDOIS	Political
72	Party Leader, UDP	Political
73	Speaker of the National Assembly	Political
74	British High Commission	IC
75	ECOWAS	IC
76	European Union	IC
77	Nigerian Embassy	IC
78	United States Embassy	IC
79	International Organisation of Migration	IC
80	UNICEF	IC
81	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	IC
82	United Nations Capital Development Fund	IC
83	United Nations Development Programme	IC
84	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation	IC
85	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel	IC
86	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights	IC
87	United Nations Population Fund	IC
88	World Bank	IC
89	World Food Programme	IC

