Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
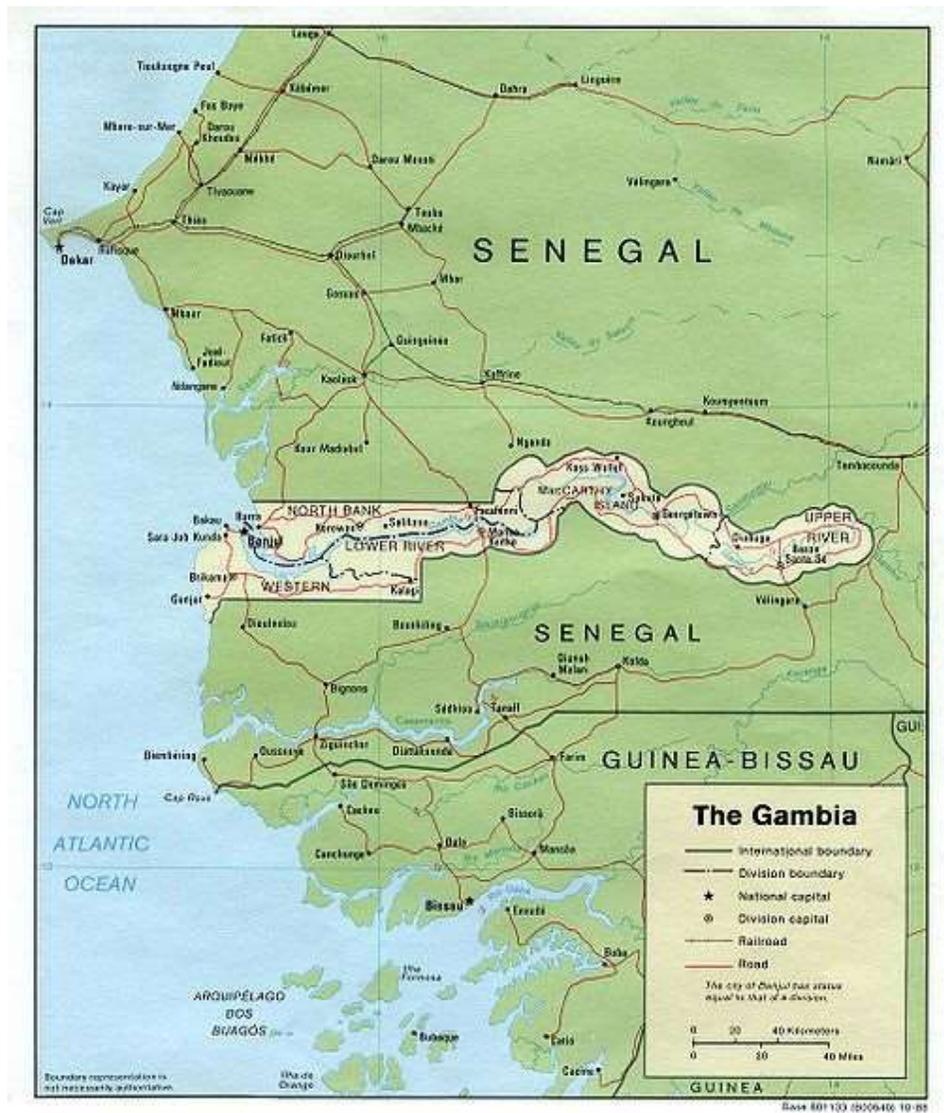
THE GAMBIA

JANUARY 2018

ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

DISCLAIMER:
The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Cover photo accessed under CCO Creative Commons via Pixabay

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AfDB	African Development Bank
APRC	Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CPIA	World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CRA	Conflict Risk Assessment
CRVA	Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DPA	ECOWAS Directorate of Political Affairs
DPKRS	ECOWAS Directorate of Peacekeeping and Regional Security
ECOMIG	ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EWD	ECOWAS Directorate of Early Warning
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation/cutting
GAWFA	Gambia Women's Finance Association
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDC	Gambia Democratic Congress
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPI	Gender parity index
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
ICAF	Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International financial institutions
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IncReps	ECOWARN's Incident Reports
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGA	Local Government Area
MFDC	Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance – Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REWARD	Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SD	Standard Deviation
SitReps	ECOWARN Situation Reports
SNA	Stakeholder Network Analysis
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission
UDP	United Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNAMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDC	Village Development Committee
WTO	World Trade Organization

Message from the President of the ECOWAS Commission

The 15 Member-States of the ECOWAS Community represent a thriving region of the world, with a population of approximately 366 million and a rich human and topographical diversity. From the coastline to the mountain peaks of Fouta Djallon, across the Sahara and the mangroves of the Niger Delta, ECOWAS is home to diverse families, communities, and nations.

Over the last decade, the region has witnessed significant progress in lifting the standard of living for millions. However, along with the richness of natural resources, human capital and great opportunity, there are also challenges to contend with such as natural disasters, pandemics, ethno-sectarian tensions, and security threats caused by extremism and terrorism.

Global developments and changes such as advances in technology, human migration and climate change, have added new levels of complexity, presenting new challenges for strategic planning and preparedness as we look ahead to the future.

This is where Early Warning plays a critical role in helping ECOWAS to understand the changing dynamics so as to strengthen decision making and early response at the regional and national levels. The Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (CRVAs) serve as an important resource in this regard. These reports are useful for strengthening the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework action plans as well as to serve as reference materials for an in-depth understanding of the human security dynamics in our Member States, and for our partners across the region.

I therefore invite national stakeholders, all ECOWAS institutions and our partners to make use of these reports for the entrenchment of peace and progress for the benefit of the Citizens of ECOWAS.

Jean-Claude Brou
President of the ECOWAS Commission

Statement from the Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission

ECOWAS takes pride in finalizing this CRVA report which aims to identify structural vulnerabilities, event driven risks and existing resilience factors in each Member State of the Community. Indeed, this is a remarkable feat towards boosting the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union, with ECOWAS setting the pace for the development of an African-owned data set that can be tapped into to enhance human security analysis and accurate forecasting to assist policymakers to make informed decisions on pressing issues in the region. This information can be used as a baseline for ECOWAS and its partners to inform early warning and response efforts, particularly in this time when Early Warning and Response Mechanism is being deployed at the National level.

The CRVA research leverages ECOWARN data—gathered by Field Monitors—to establish a country baseline for monitoring patterns and trends across human security pillars. By comparing ECOWARN data to other data sets, and complementing quantitative data with qualitative findings, the assessments also help the Early Warning Directorate of ECOWAS to gather more robust data that is rich, reliable and empirical. The resulting findings are more representative in terms of geography, time, and theme for each country and needs to be updated periodically.

ECOWAS will consolidate this achievement by applying the knowledge and skills embodied in the CRVA Manual. My conviction for this emanates from the fact that the training of all EWD staff in the development of the CRVA Index, which marks the climax of transfer of knowledge and skills from the USAID REWARD technical staff to ECOWAS, will allow ECOWAS to independently conduct future CRVAs. Already, the EWD has initiated a process to put to practice the defined methodological framework to conduct Regional Risk and Resilience Assessment in the Lake Chad Basin, thereby serving as the first pillar in implementing the decision of the joint ECOWAS and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to engage communities in peacebuilding processes.

We hope the Member States of our Community take ownership of this report and anchor development and peace initiatives upon it, in addressing the risks and vulnerabilities in their communities. As we decentralize Early Warning and Response to the ECOWAS countries, the Commission stands ready to accompany each Member States in the implementation of the actionable recommendations embodied in the CRVA report.

Finda Koroma
Vice President, ECOWAS Commission

Preface

The ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate has made giant strides in the practice of data driven early warning, through the qualitative and quantitative analysis of incidents and situations from multiple sources, with the added benefit of original data generated through the ECOWARN system. Indeed, the Center's state-of-the-art technological tools places it at a vantage position to monitor and analyze risks and vulnerabilities in the ECOWAS region, cutting across the key areas of human security.

ECOWAS has played, and continues to play, a critical role in the monitoring of threats to human security across the region including the Sahelo-Saharan, Mano River, Gulf of Guinea, Lake Chad and Senegambia conflict systems to improve response for the prevention and management of conflict escalation.

Beyond a narrow focus on violent conflict alone, and consistent with its mandate to promote the socioeconomic and political integration of the sub-region, ECOWAS applies a human security lens with a view towards enhancing the well-being of the population in accordance with the ECOWAS Vision 2020. Thus, this report highlights risks, structural vulnerabilities and resilience factors across five dimensions (demographic, economic, security, governance and rule of law) at the national and sub-national levels.

Each CRVA report represents a myriad of perspectives and experiences from affected stakeholders including community leaders, civil society, administrative officials, security agents, traditional and religious leaders, just to mention a few. In this way, the CRVA report serves as a strategic document to provide an overview of the human security challenges in each ECOWAS member state as well as the social and institutional resilience factors that can help manage those challenges.

We hope that this report will be useful for strategic planning in addressing issues of human security as well as to provide insights to a multitude of stakeholders including policy and decision makers in the public and private sectors for conflict-sensitive engagement within the region.

Dr. Abdou Lat Gueye
Director, ECOWAS Early Warning

Executive Summary

From 2016 to 2019, ECOWAS collected quantitative and qualitative data in the Gambia to better understand the structural vulnerabilities that may exist, and how those vulnerabilities affect the everyday lives of individuals and communities. This research was done in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa (REWARD) project, as part of a broader assessment of the entire West African region. As part of this process, a series of Focus Group Discussions and interviews were conducted in December 2017 in the Gambia to contextualize the findings and to learn more about resilience factors that mitigate risk and promote human security. The purpose of this report is to summarize these insights and perspectives, so that national stakeholders can build on their successes, and also to serve as a baseline for ECOWAS's monitoring of patterns and trends. The report provides an overview of national and subnational vulnerabilities, risks, and resilience factors, as well as conclusions and recommendations.

The CRVA was conducted by ECOWAS to update and expand upon the Conflict Risk Assessment (CRA) 2013-2014 country reports. To better understand the sub-national patterns and trends, the research design began with a desktop study involving a social network analysis based on a survey of peace and security actors in the country and a scoping of experts to be consulted during the fieldwork. This was followed by a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of patterns and trends in escalation dynamics and a quantitative analysis of relative structural vulnerabilities by country and human security pillar.

In the Gambia, higher levels of structural vulnerability were found in the areas of Politics/Governance, Rule of Law, and Security, while moderate levels of structural vulnerability were found in the areas of Economics/Resources, and Population/Demographics.

Challenges included a history of political restrictions and marginalization, ethnic divisions, youth unemployment, gender-based inequities, and access to essential services, as well as social pressures such as early marriage and access to family planning.

However, there were also strong social and institutional resilience factors for effective dispute resolution and peacebuilding in The Gambia. NGOs, civil society organizations, women's neighborhood associations and the media have played a critical role in awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives. Local and traditional leaders are important actors in dispute resolution and are often preferred over the police or court system. Fieldwork participants also highlighted the importance of social resilience factors, namely a culture of religious tolerance, inter-faith and inter-ethnic marriages and practices such as "joking relationships", as well as the heterogenous nature of the society, in mitigating conflict in The Gambia.

These resilience factors were deemed vital, particularly as the CRVA field research was conducted less than one year after the ECOWAS-brokered political transition which brought President Adama Barrow to power. In this context, there remained significant opportunities for building cohesion and resilient institutions within The Gambia. The field research highlighted some of the delicate issues which the Barrow administration had to navigate in this critical period of transition in the "New Gambia" - namely, implementing reforms in the security and judicial sectors, ensuring accountability for past abuses, and providing opportunities for national reconciliation. Securing women's rights and

promoting economic and political empowerment for youth and women was also essential, particularly given the country's large and growing youth population.

The following report aims to provide an overview so that regional and national stakeholders can have a clear picture of the challenges faced by the country, as well as the capacities that can be leveraged and strengthened for the promotion of sustainable security and development in The Gambia.

Though risk/incident data naturally fluctuates and may therefore have changed since the publication of this report, the structural vulnerabilities are reflective of medium- and long-term trends. These reports focus on the identification of structural vulnerabilities and resiliencies, and how they may impact upon events and developments as they occur.

Introduction

Research Process

The CRVA assesses structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risks, and social and institutional resilience factors according to five human security pillars as identified by ECOWAS in a 2016 scoping paper.[1] The pillars are: 1) Economics and Resources, 2) Politics and Governance, 3) Population and Demographics, 4) Rule of Law, and 5) Security. Findings in this report describe how risks flow from vulnerabilities in the context of The Gambia both within and across the five pillars. In recognition of the fact that violent conflict has underlying social, economic, political, and security drivers but expresses itself differently depending on the context, a holistic human security framework was used in this assessment, and will be used for the CRVAs in all ECOWAS member states. Furthermore, the analysis also breaks out gender considerations and external factors as cross-cutting issues that need to be understood for effective early warning and response.[2]

The research was conducted in three main phases: Desktop Study, Field Research, and Analysis and Validation.

Phase 1: Desktop Study

The Desktop Study included a preliminary assessment of structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risks, and social and institutional resilience factors.

For the assessment of structural vulnerabilities, the research used data from dozens of sources, including ECOWARN Situation Reports (SitReps). Drawing on these pre-existing data sets,[3] a CRVA Index was created to measure the relative levels of vulnerability across five human security dimensions in The Gambia.

---
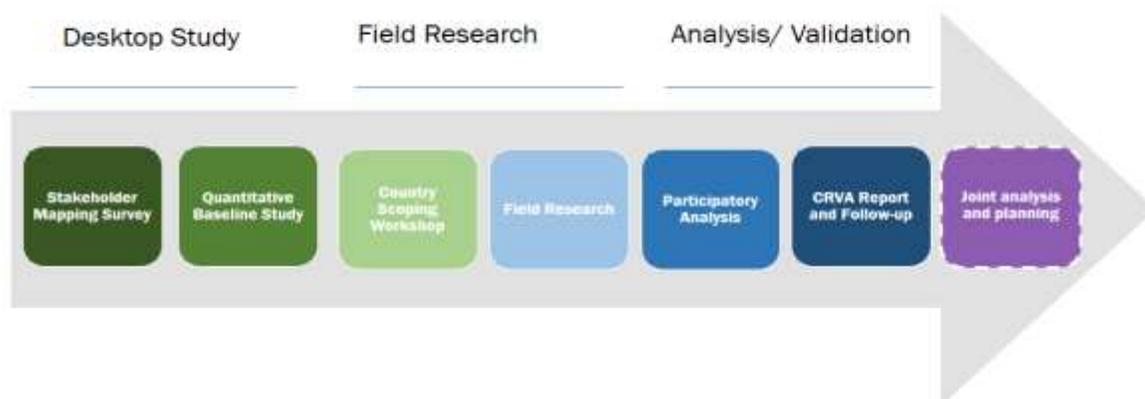
[1] The EWD Scoping Paper was developed by ECOWAS to help inform the CRVA process, with the human security pillars identified based on best practice approaches such as ECOWARN guidelines and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) framework.
[2] EWD Scoping Paper on "Risk Assessment of Five ECOWAS Pilot Countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Burkina Faso"
[3] Data sources used in the development of the CRVA Index include Global Integrity, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Transparency International, Freedom House, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, World Bank, the Center for Security Studies ETH Zurich, Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, Political Terror Scale, United Nations Refugee Agency, Uppsala University, UN Statistics, and Institute for Economics and Peace.

For the assessment of event-driven risks, event data, including from ECOWARN's Incident Reports (IncReps), was triangulated against data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) to estimate the locations and type of conflict issues at the sub-national level over time. Using multiple sources allowed for cross-validation, the filling of gaps, and the ability to identify trends in indicators and sub-indicators using queries and key word searches.

For the assessment of social and institutional resilience factors, a survey was deployed to all of ECOWAS's in-country contacts to learn more about the peace and security actors working to manage and reduce risks and vulnerabilities in the country. Respondents (including representatives of religious institutions, public sector actors, civil society, youth groups, and development actors, among others) were also asked to name organizations that they have partnered with in the last two years on issues of peace and security. Data was then uploaded to a Stakeholder Network Map for quantitative analysis and to identify leverage points, spheres of influence, and social capital. Based on this analysis, key technical experts were identified and were contacted for the next phase of the research.

Phase 2: Field Research

The Field Research began with a scoping workshop in Banjul. Using the Stakeholder Network Map, highly-networked technical experts were convened in a workshop to validate the initial desktop findings and suggest a way forward for the qualitative analysis in the field. The Scoping Workshop was also used to tailor and sensitize the broader research questions and the Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) instruments and questionnaires based on local context. Additionally, the Scoping Workshop also served to attain references and contacts for key actors and stakeholders in the field who would be consulted over the course of the next two weeks during the KIIs and FGDs. Thus, the desktop study

phase informed the research questions that needed further context and validation in the field, as well as the sample of respondents to be engaged (what was asked, where, and to whom).

A team of experts and researchers then conducted an in-country assessment between December 4 and December 11, 2017 with participants from the Central River Region, West Coast Region, and Banjul City Council and Kanifing Municipal Council. The team traveled to the various hotspots identified in the desktop study and validated in the Scoping Workshop to interview key stakeholders affected by violence and with knowledge of local context and capacities. This team included representatives from the ECOWAS Directorates of Early Warning (EWD) and Political Affairs (DPA), as well as participants from USAID and affiliated experts. The KIIs and FGDs conducted during this in-country assessment collected qualitative data and information regarding various perspectives on structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risk factors, and social/institutional resilience factors relating to the different conflict issues across the country. These transcripts have been collated, streamlined to reduce repetition and vagueness, and categorized for analysis and prioritization during Phase 3.

Phase 3: Analysis and Validation

After the quantitative, GIS and survey data was validated and contextualized in the field, and the qualitative data was collected and organized, this report was drafted and was then validated by ECOWAS and USAID. This report will serve as a baseline and resource for more targeted early warning products and analysis/planning towards strategic and operational prevention of human insecurity within the country of The Gambia as well as associated conflict systems more broadly.

Terminology and Conceptual Definitions

In this CRVA report:

"Vulnerability" is defined as any structural factor that has the potential to be a conflict driver. These can include such things as youth unemployment, poverty, inequality, climate, patronage, demographic factors, etc.

"Risk" is defined as any event-driven factor that has the potential to be a conflict trigger. Risk factors can include specific controversies or events such as disasters or elections that may occur.

"Resilience" is defined as any social or institutional factor that has the potential to help mitigate or manage risks and vulnerabilities. These include political, cultural, and community leadership with significant social capital to influence conflict dynamics in a constructive way, including public sector, private sector, religious institutions, civil society, opinion leaders, development workers, etc. Resilience factors can include institutions that play a stabilizing role in the short, medium, or longer term.

The CRVA analysis was conducted according to the framework depicted in the figure below, whereby event-driven risk factors flow out of the structural vulnerabilities (per the red downward arrow) while social and institutional resilience factors mitigate and prevent those risks and vulnerabilities (per the green upward arrow).

For ECOWAS, this framework is useful in that it is aligned with the existing ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), which is a strategic tool to strengthen the human security architecture in West Africa. Key to the ECPF are the categories of *"Operational Prevention,"* or measures applicable in the face of crisis, and *"Structural Prevention,"* or measures that ensure that crises do not arise or re-occur. The CRVA framework is aligned with the ECPF such that identified Vulnerability Factors are to be mitigated by Structural Prevention measures, and Risk Factors are to be mitigated by Operational Prevention measures. This alignment is important for the utility and actionability of this report by users in West Africa.

Economics and Resources	Population and Demographics	Politics and Governance	Security	Rule of Law
Structural and Contextual Vulnerability Factors				
Event-Driven Risk Factors				
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors				

Literature Review

A Human-Centric Approach to Early Warning

In academic literature, the human security lens to conflict early warning is a change from the more state-centric approaches that were in vogue throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Historically, early warning was focused on prevention and mitigation of conflict between states. In the post-Cold War period with a surge in intra-state conflict, early warning was focused on identifying the drivers and impacts of civil conflict on states. At that time, analysis focused on terminology of state "collapse" and "failure," emphasizing impacts to neighboring countries or regions, and perpetuating a comparative paradigm of poverty and limited economic growth and conflict in contrast to more developed countries.[4]

However, as a more interconnected human and global security approach emerged in the 2000s, conceptions of state fragility and conflict analysis evolved in both development aid and policy approaches. As the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) describes, "At a very broad level, fragility is the result of a dynamic interplay between internal factors (including violent conflict, poverty, economic and structural conditions, weak formal institutions), and external factors (including international political economy, regional and global insecurity)."[5] While not discounting the role of the state as a key vehicle for managing and preventing conflict, the human-centric approach looks first and foremost at the impact of demographic, economic, political, and security conflict drivers on individuals and communities as well as the role that a wide variety of social and institutional factors play in preventing conflict. Thus, the human security framework provides a holistic approach to understanding different threats that affect individuals' lives, whether this is through conflict, health, food, environment, or other social, political or economic factors.

The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security outlines a human-centric approach to security in five principles: 1) *People-centered*, with a focus on protecting basic human freedoms; 2) *Multi-sectoral*, encompassing a broad understanding of threats and causes of insecurity; 3) *Comprehensive*, taking into account different types of individuals' security from economic to social; 4) *Context-specific,* emphasizing the need to analyze specific conflict contexts and root causes of insecurity; and 5) *Prevention-oriented,* highlighting locally tailored risk prevention and mitigation measures through early warning mechanisms.[6] This focus on cross-cutting issues and situation-specific analysis and response are central to the CRVA process and broader objectives of integrated conflict early warning and response by ECOWAS and its partners. For the CRVAs, this involves identifying conflict risks, vulnerabilities and resiliencies across the human security pillars of Population and Demographics, Politics and Governance, Security, Economics and Resources, and Rule of Law.

Many indices and development frameworks have emerged for measuring resilience and fragility, from the Fund For Peace's *Fragile States Index*[7] to the African Development Bank (AfDB) and World Bank's *Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA)*[8] and Mo Ibrahim Foundation's *Index of African Governance*.[9] Today, leading international development actors and multilateral

---

[4] "Defining and measuring state fragility: a new proposal", Ferreira, I., The Annual Bank Conference on Africa, June 2015

[5] "Topic Guide on Fragile States", Mcloughlin, C., Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), August 2009

[6] "Human Security in Theory and Practice", Human Security Unit, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations, January 2009

[7] Fragile States Index, The Fund for Peace

[8] Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB)

[9] Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

agencies such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the AfDB have also produced strategies, practice areas, and tools, which seek to address the drivers of fragility. The AfDB, for example, has a 2014-2019 Strategy for *Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa*, with a focus on building member state capacities and focusing on "fragile situations rather than fragile states alone."[10]

As the AfDB Strategy notes, however, "there is no single solution and no predefined 'toolbox' for addressing fragility."[11] Older academic and policy conceptions of "state failure" used analysis centered on "traditional, state-centric conceptions of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression," as outlined in a 2009 paper by the United Nations Human Security Unit. Newer models of analysis have taken on a broader human security lens, which was in "response to the complexity and the interrelatedness of both old and new security threats – from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns. Such threats tend to acquire transnational dimensions and move beyond traditional notions of security that focus on external military aggressions alone."[12]

Thus, a human-centric approach, as opposed to a state-centric approach, is important for analyzing risks and vulnerabilities to society for robust early warning and response mechanisms. Human security provides a holistic approach to understanding different threats which affect individuals' lives, whether through conflict, health, food, environment, or other social, political, or economic factors. As such, the CRVAs seek to draw upon the more dynamic and interrelated aspects of risk and vulnerability, which look at capacities and

pressures within a society with a view to identifying structural vulnerabilities, resiliencies and risks across key human security pillars. As defined by the United Nations General Assembly, "human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people."[13] This approach is also in line with the ECOWAS Vison 2020 which seeks to promote peace, prosperity, and cohesion across the region,[14] and includes a focus on strengthening many human security aspects within member states.

Research Questions

Based on the initial desktop findings, the team developed a set of framing questions broken out by the five human security pillars. These framing questions were not asked verbatim in the field, but rather informed the design of KII and FGD instruments. These instruments included simple, open-ended questions intended to prompt a discussion where respondents could express their opinions, experiences, and perceptions about the ways in which they had been impacted by vulnerabilities, risks, and resilience factors in The Gambia.

Politics and Governance: What role(s) do women and youth play in politics and decision-making? What role(s) do civil society groups, the media and social movements play in politics? To what extent do perceptions of corruption and nepotism in government erode the legitimacy of state institutions and electoral process? To what extent has the transition from Jammeh to Barrow affected perceptions of corruption or governance in The Gambia? What are the public perceptions of the campaign launched to extradite Jammeh to Gambia to face trial for human rights violations? To

---

[10] "Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa, 2014 – 2019", AfDB
[11] Ibid.
[12] "Human Security in Theory and Practice", Human Security Unit, OCHA, United Nations, January 2009

[13] General Assembly resolution 66/290, October 2012
[14] ECOWAS Vision 2020: Towards a Democratic and Prosperous Community, ECOWAS, June 2010

what extent have ethnic or social tensions been affected by the recent political transition? Are there concerns around future elections in the country?

Economics and Resources: To what extent has volatility in commodity prices negatively impacted the most vulnerable groups? To what extent have domestic or international events (e.g. the Ebola outbreak, or the political transition) affected the economy? Has this been a driver of food insecurity or conflict? In what ways do climate change or environmental pressures affect local communities? Are there disparities between urban and rural areas in terms of service provision? What role do women play in the economy? What role do youth play in the economy? What role do illicit economic activities (including cross-border smuggling) play in the local and national economy? What role does natural resource management and land tenure play in social cohesion?

Security: What role do the security forces play in managing or worsening political unrest and criminality? Are they legitimate, representative, and professional? Are there other conflict drivers such as land disputes, succession or inheritance, or resource competition? What role do communities or non-state actors play in security provision? Are there political, communal or sectarian tensions that could pose a threat to security? To what extent have illicit markets (e.g. drug trafficking) contributed to issues of criminality and violence? Are there cross-border, maritime, or transnational threats? To what extent has the recent political transition impacted security in the country? What role does the ECOWAS mission (ECOMIG) play in maintaining peace and security? Given the end of the Jammeh administration, are there concerns around a renewal of conflict involving the MFDC along the Senegal-Gambian border?

Population and Demographics: What impact(s) has migration (both internal and emigration to Europe) had on The Gambia? What role do women play in social, economic, and political life? What role do

youth play in social, economic and political life? Is a disproportionately large population of disenfranchised youth putting a strain on urban resources or public services? Are there tensions or conflicts between religious or ethnic groups? To what extent does geography (ex: rural vs urban areas) affect access to social services and infrastructure? How effective is family planning in terms of access and policy? How prevalent is early marriage, gender-based violence and female genital mutilation (FGM)?
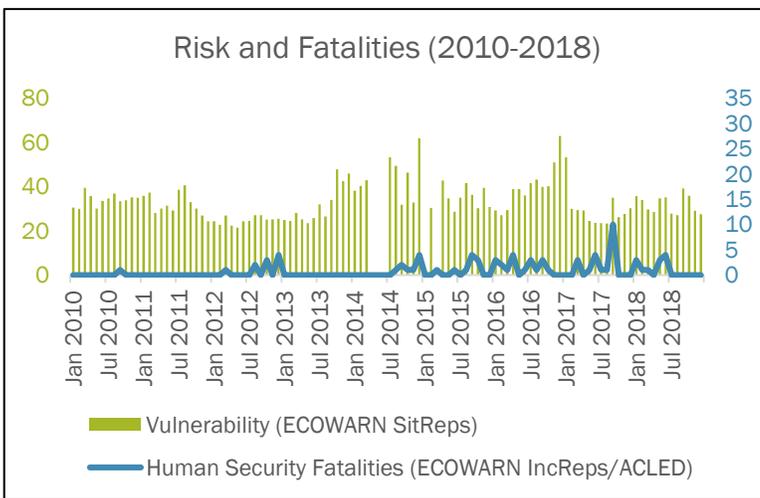
Rule of Law: To what extent is the judiciary independent of the executive? Has this improved since the January 2017 political transition? What role does the judiciary play as regards questions of justice and impunity? Is there access to legal and judicial services throughout the country? To what extent do communities rely on police and security forces to provide justice? To what extent are women's rights protected in practice? Is there reliance on alternative/traditional dispute resolution mechanisms? Do people resort to mob justice? What is the public opinion around the need for reconciliation or accountability following the January 2017 political transition?

Description of the Sample

Data collected and analyzed for this research included hundreds of ECOWARN SitReps, ECOWARN IncReps, ACLED event data, and a scoping survey, as well as transcripts and notes from FGDs and KIIs in the field. Other sources, integrated to form a vulnerability index (the CRVA Index), included Global Integrity, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Transparency International, Freedom House, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, World Bank, Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, Political Terror Scale, United Nations Refugee Agency, Uppsala University, UN Statistics, and Institute for Economics and Peace. A complete breakdown is included in Appendix A.

Above: Heatmap of event data shows hot spots in human security incidents from 2015 - 2018. These hot spots informed the field research which focused on Banjul, Kanifing, West Coast, and Central River.

Risk and Fatalities (2010-2018)

Vulnerability (ECOWARN SitReps)

Human Security Fatalities (ECOWARN IncReps/ACLED)

The graph above shows the trends in risk layered against vulnerability. The y axis on the left (0-80) shows the level of vulnerability with a score of over 60 reflecting higher levels of vulnerability. The y axis on the right (0-35) shows the number of human security fatalities by month.

Relative Vulnerability by Human Security Pillar
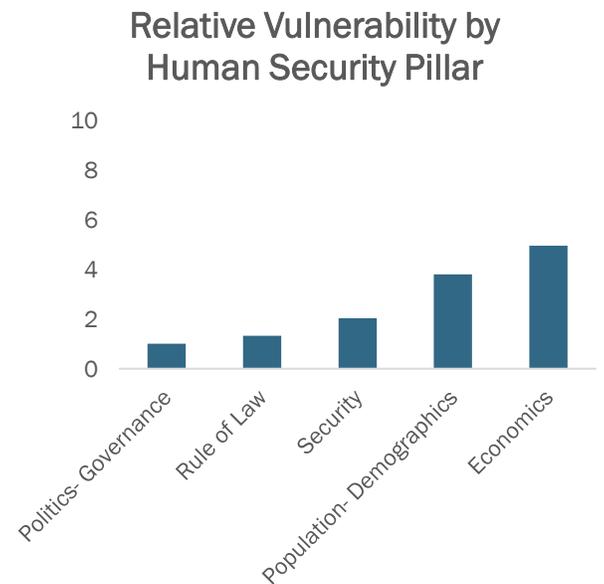
In the graph above, the lower the score in the y axis (0-10), the more vulnerable the Human Security Pillar.

Data Analysis

ECOWARN data shows that in the last seven years, The Gambia was at its most vulnerable in late 2016 during the political crisis which led to the ouster of President Yahya Jammeh in January 2017. Fatalities have remained low during the entire period, however. In 2012 there were several cross-border incidents near the Casamance region of neighboring Senegal. In 2014 there was a coup attempt which caused four fatalities, according to ECOWARN data. Finally, in late 2016 the political

crisis escalated to the point that Jammeh was forced to step down.

The CRVA Index above indicates that in The Gambia, the Human Security pillars that exhibit the most severe levels of vulnerability are Politics & Governance and Rule of Law. These findings were contextualized by respondents in the field who emphasized the impacts of the political transition in January 2017 and lingering concerns around political tensions, governance, and national reconciliation. While Politics & Governance was the

most vulnerable category, the other Human Security pillars were also deemed to be weak as compared to neighboring countries in the region.

In the last two years, GIS event data shows hotspots, patterns, and trends at the sub-national level, including flooding in Banjul as well as political tensions which continued into 2017. Protests and clashes involving ECOMIG around the Foni Bondali area were reported between April and June of 2017.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This report seeks to layer, triangulate, and juxtapose quantitative, GIS, and qualitative data in a way that is accurate, meaningful, and representative. However, limitations to this analysis include the two- year date range for the event and GIS data and the seven-year date range for the ECOWARN SitReps. If there are conflict cycles that fall outside those parameters, there will be constraints on the ability to analyze those patterns in this report. Furthermore, this research sought to ensure representativeness of the sample of stakeholders engaged through KIIs (21 prominent individuals) and FGDs (15 focus group discussions). To the extent that these stakeholders were representative, they added vital contextualization and validation of the desktop research.

Scope and limitations also apply to the use and purpose of the study. The CRVA reports support the objectives of ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). In particular, the CRVA reports identify vulnerabilities across the human security pillars in order to inform structural prevention. Structural prevention, as defined in the ECPF, comprises "political, institutional (governance) and developmental reforms, capacity enhancement and advocacy on the culture of peace." While this report can also be used to inform operational prevention, which includes "early warning, mediation, conciliation, preventive disarmament and preventive deployment using interactive

means such as good offices and the ECOWAS Standby Force," it seeks primarily to identify the key areas of structural vulnerability at the national and sub-national levels for strategic planning by ECOWAS and other partners in the peace and security space. However, inasmuch that operational prevention can be informed by patterns and trends in the event-driven risk factors highlighted in this report, the CRVA should serve as a baseline analysis of dynamics that are closely monitored over time. Thereby, in addition to informing strategic planning on structural vulnerability issues, the CRVA will also inform early warning products such as weekly, monthly, and quarterly situation reports that inform analysts and potential responders as to heightened conflict risk across one or more indicators, and propose recommendations on response. The CRVA reports can also be used as a foundation to inform more detailed case studies around identified risks, vulnerabilities and resiliencies for a country of interest or concern.

While many reports that seek to identify structural vulnerabilities and resilience factors focus almost exclusively at the national level, ECOWAS seeks to support a more decentralized early warning and response infrastructure across the region. As such, the CRVA reports also take into consideration dynamics at the sub-national level. These sub-national factors are critical to consider as they help analysts and potential responders understand the context in which specific events (risks) are occurring, which may be markedly different from the national context. A mapping of sub-national level risks, vulnerabilities, and resiliencies can also help inform strategies for engaging at the local level for structural prevention. In particular, as defined by the ECPF, taking "measures to ensure the crises do not arise in the first place or, if they do, that they do no re-occur."

Finally, as also noted in the ECPF, conflict in West Africa tends to be highly interconnected, which often leads to cycles of violence that cross borders and can keep countries emmeshed for decades.

The CRVA reports, covering all fifteen member states of ECOWAS, are also useful in helping to inform and understand the dynamics of specific regional conflict systems, such as those that occur across the Mano River and Sahel. These regional conflict systems are influenced and interconnected not only historically and culturally, but also share many of the same structural vulnerabilities that give rise to risks and the eventual outbreak of violence, decade after decade. Thus, the CRVA reports present an opportunity to view not only the specific national and sub-national factors that lead to structural vulnerability and heightened risk, they also help highlight the nature of regional conflict systems, and the need for a holistic and systemic lens in both analysis and response.

Country Background

The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in Africa, with an area of only 11,285 square kilometers surrounding the Gambia river.[15] With the exception of a small Atlantic coastline, the country is entirely encircled by Senegal. The Gambia has historically been a regional hub for trade and was colonized at various times by several European entities, most notably the French and the English.

Following The Gambia's independence from Britain in 1965, Dawda Jawara became president of the republic in 1970 after serving as Prime Minister during the late 1960s.[16] The Jawara presidency was one of relative stability, and The Gambia was a multiparty democracy with a free press.[17] In 1981, however, there was an attempted coup by the Socialist and Revolutionary Labour Party and para-military forces led by Kukoi Samba Sanyang, which Jawara defeated in coordination with Senegalese troops.[18] Following the coup attempt, Jawara and Senegalese president Abdou Diouf created the Senegambia Confederation in an attempt to promote mutual security. Disagreements about the extent of unification, however, led to the dissolution of Senegambia in 1989.[19] During the 1980s The Gambia also faced numerous challenges, including a decrease in international aid and food as well as fuel shortages caused by poor harvests that disproportionately impacted rural communities.[20] The government subsequently implemented reforms which improved the economy and led to an increase in foreign assistance provided to the nation.[21] Unfortunately, these reforms did little to alleviate the food insecurity facing rural communities.[22]

In 1994, Jawara was overthrown and exiled in a military coup d'état led by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh.[23,24] Elections were held in 1996 and Jammeh was elected president.[25] Jammeh quickly consolidated power and suppressed dissent, banning political parties until 2001 and cracking down on opposition leaders.[26,27] The Constitution implemented in 1997 included articles that allowed the disregard of human rights in a state of emergency, leading human rights groups to express concern over the rise in arrests and torture of political dissidents.[28]

Jammeh was subsequently re-elected in 2001, 2006, and 2011.[29] During Jammeh's 22 years in power, the political environment was characterized by the suppression of political opposition and widespread corruption. Independent media was stifled, and Jammeh's political party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) maintained near-exclusive access to media.[30] Jammeh also created the National Intelligence Agency, with broad authority to arrest and interrogate citizens.[31] Human rights organizations have documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, torture, forced

[15] "The World Bank in Gambia", World Bank, April 2018
[16] "The Senegal and Gambia Rivers: to 1894", Gascoigne, B., History World, from 2001 [ongoing]
[17] "Let's Go Take Back Our Country", Reid, S.A., The Atlantic, March 2016
[18] "The Attempted Gambian Coup D'etat of 30 July 1981", Hughes, A. The Standard. September 2017
[19] "1982-1989 – Senegambia Confederation", Pike, J., Global Security
[20] "The History of Western Africa", McKenna, A., 2010
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] "The Attempted Gambian Coup D'etat of 30 July 1981", Hughes, A. The Standard. September 2017

[24] "Gambian leader celebrates coup not country", Jahateh, L., Al Jazeera, August 2012
[25] "The Gambia Profile – Timeline", BBC, February 2018
[26] "The Gambia: Democratic Reform Without Human Rights", Amnesty International, December 1997
[27] "The Gambia – Expert Briefing", Janson, M., Africa Research Institute
[28] "The Gambia: Democratic Reform Without Human Rights", Amnesty International, December 1997
[29] "The Gambia Profile – Timeline", BBC, February 2018
[30] "Gambia – New Era for the Media", Reporters Without Borders, 2018
[31] "Gambia: Two Decades of Fear and Repression", Human Rights Watch, September 2015

disappearances, corruption, and impunity during Jammeh's rule.[32]

Presidential elections were again held in December 2016 and Jammeh faced challenges from Adama Barrow of the United Democratic Party (UDP) and Mama Kandeh of the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC). Although the 2016 elections were held with minimal violence, the government and security forces carried out a crackdown against opposition groups in the pre-election period, leading to the death while in custody of a UDP leader.[33] The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) declared Barrow the winner of the 2016 elections with 43.3 percent of the vote, followed by Jammeh with 39.6 percent.[34] Jammeh, after initially accepting the result and conceding on national television, later contested the election and claimed the poll stations had abnormalities.[35,36] This forced Barrow to be sworn into the presidency in Senegal for safety reasons.[37,38] The African Union (AU) announced that they would not recognize Jammeh's presidency[39,40] and the UN Security Council and ECOWAS condemned Jammeh's response.[41] After several attempts at diplomacy, ECOWAS mounted a military mission (the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia – ECOMIG) to enforce the transition of power from Jammeh to Barrow. The pressure and unanimous condemnation by the international community led to Jammeh fleeing to Equatorial Guinea, with $50 million allegedly stolen from the Gambian government.[42,43]

In office since January 2017, President Barrow and the Gambian government now face the challenge of reckoning with the legacy of the Jammeh administration while simultaneously implementing reforms and promoting national unity in a newly-open society. The country must also address systemic issues such as endemic poverty, high rates of youth unemployment and gender-based disparities. While it is too soon to assess their impact, President Barrow has, with the assistance of international partners, introduced a number of reforms which have led to cautious optimism internationally and in the region that the so-called "New Gambia" will enter a period of greater development, security, and respect for human rights.

---

[32] "State of Fear: Arbitrary Arrests, Torture, and killings", Human Rights Watch, September 2015
[33] "The Gambia Profile – Timeline", BBC, February 2018
[34] "Freedom in the World 2017: The Gambia", Freedom House, 2017
[35] "Gambia's Jammeh rejects result of presidential election", Al Jazeera, December 2016
[36] "Gambia's President Contests Election Results After Conceding Defeat", Quist-Arction, O., NPR, December 2016
[37] "As Gambia's Yahya Jammeh Entered Exile, Plane Stuffed With Riches Followed", Searcey, D. and Yaya Barry, J., The New York Times, January 2017

[38] "Adama Barrow sworn in as Gambia's president in Senegal", Al Jazeera, January 2017
[39] "AU to stop recognising Gambia's Jammeh as president", Al Jazeera, January 2017
[40] "Gambia dispute: African Union 'will not recognise' President Jammeh", BBC, January 2017
[41] "Gambia 2017/2018", Amnesty International, 2018
[42] "Gambian ex-president Yahya Jammeh 'stole $50m' from state', BBC, May 2017
[43] "Gambia accuses former president Jammeh of stealing $50m", Al Jazeera, May 2017

National-Level Vulnerabilities, Risks and Resiliencies

Based on desktop research using the ECOWARN and ACLED data sets, surveys of peace and security actors in key regions in The Gambia, field research that included KIIs and FGDs, and participatory analysis by the CRVA field research team, the following national-level risks, vulnerabilities, and resilience factors were identified:

Structural Vulnerabilities	**Politics and Governance** - Weak state institutions - Perceptions of corruption and lack of transparency - Underrepresentation of youth and women in political decision-making - Polarization along ethnic lines **Rule of Law** - Perceived lack of judicial independence - Dichotomy between customary and Sharia law (Khadi Court) - Poor prison conditions - Inadequate protection of women's rights - Poor access to justice for vulnerable populations - Low capacity of the judicial system - Backlog of court cases/trials - Corruption within the court system **Security** - Porous borders - Inadequate resources and training for local security forces - Perceptions of corruption among security forces - History of human rights abuses by security forces - Proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) - Geographic location of the country/Casamance conflict in southern Senegal - Politicization of the security and defense forces along ethnic lines - Poor governance of security sector - Gender-based violence (GBV) **Population and Demographics** - Rural-urban migration - Inadequate access to quality public services, including education and healthcare - Rural-urban disparities in development and infrastructure

	• Early marriage
	• Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)
	• Low rate of family planning
	• Illegal migration
	Economics and Resources
	• High rate of youth unemployment
	• Lack of a diversified economy
	• High prices of basic commodities
	• Illicit economic activities, including cross-border smuggling
	• Poor infrastructure development
	• Environmental degradation and climate change
Event-Driven Risks	**Politics and Governance**
	• Electoral processes
	• Future TRRC process or trial proceedings, should they be perceived to target specific ethnic, political or religious groups
	• Political tensions between ethnic groups
	• Instrumentalization of state institutions for political expediencies
	Rule of Law
	• Mob justice
	• Inadequate protection of women/girls' rights
	• Human rights violations
	Security
	• Social uprising/insecurity by loyalists of the previous administration, especially in the Western region
	• Criminality (illegal logging, narcotic drugs/arms trafficking)
	• Tensions or clashes between pro-Jammeh and ECOMIG forces
	• Withdrawal of ECOMIG forces
	• Election-related violence
	• Resurgence of conflict in Senegal's Casamance region
	Population and Demographics
	• Security threats from "back way" returnees
	• Polarization of group identities along ethnic lines
	• Increased tension between religious groups
	• Loss of manpower as a result of migration
	Economics and Resources
	• Food insecurity
	• Natural disasters
	• Land and resource-based conflicts

	• Conflict between farmers and herders
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	**Politics and Governance** • Political reforms • Efforts at national reconciliation (TRRC) • Youth organizations • Civil society organizations (CSOs) and media outlets • Media and radio programming • Strong popular will for social cohesion • Political transition **Rule of Law** • Local and traditional leaders (alkalos) involved in dispute resolution • Alternate dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms • Justice sector reforms • National Agency for Legal Aid • The use of customary and some provisions of Sharia law **Security** • Security sector reform • ECOWAS Mission in the Gambia (ECOMIG) • The role of civil society • Support from the international community and regional actors • Bilateral corporation with neighboring countries **Population and Demographics** • Culture of religious tolerance, supported by inter-faith marriages and "joking relationships" • Heterogenous nature of the community set up with mixed tribal groups occupying settlements • National policies for family planning and social welfare • Women's associations (yayi kompins) **Economics and Resources** • Tourism • Lower import taxes • Reliance on subsistence farming • Vibrant fishing sector • Remittances from the diaspora community

Politics and Governance (Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	• Weak state institutions
	• Perceptions of corruption and lack of transparency
	• Underrepresentation of youth and women in political decision-making
	• Polarization along ethnic lines
Risks	• Electoral processes
	• Future TRRC process or trial proceedings, should they be perceived to target specific ethnic, political or religious groups
	• Political tensions between ethnic groups
	• Instrumentalization of state institutions for political expediencies

Vulnerabilities and Risks

According to the CRVA Index, The Gambia is most vulnerable in the area of Politics and Governance, with a score of 1.0/10. Over the last two decades, the political environment in The Gambia has been largely characterized by political oppression, corruption and the abuse of human rights.

Elections in The Gambia have historically not been considered free or fair and, under Jammeh, the original two-term limit for the presidency was lifted, allowing him to rule for more than 20 years.[44] A Commonwealth Expert Team monitored the 2011 elections and reported that some members of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) had been removed by the president, affecting the IEC's ability to operate autonomously.[45] They also noted the ruling party had significantly more airtime and that media was pressured to censor itself.[46] ECOWAS condemned the same election and stated they were not valid elections due to the ruling party's role in intimidating Gambians.[47]

In addition to allegations of fraud and intimidation of opposition groups in past elections, the Jammeh administration created high barriers to entry into elections and used state resources to consolidate power for the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) party. For example, Jammeh used state funds to campaign for the APRC, giving them a significant advantage in elections.[48] Furthermore, the Jammeh government suspended independent radio stations[49] and suppressed opposition political activity. During the 2011 elections, human rights activists, reporters, and members of opposition parties were arrested, detained, and charged with crimes.[50,51] Some opposition activists were also disappeared.[52,53] In addition to pre-election crack-downs, the 2015 Elections Act was amended to make political participation more difficult. The fee to run for president increased from 10,000 Dalasi (US$252) to 500,000 Dalasi (US$12,630).[54] The fee to run for the National Assembly increased from 5,000 Dalasi (US$126) to 50,000 Dalasi (US$1,260).[55] All political parties were also

---

[44] "Gambia: Dangerous to Dissent: Human Rights Under Threat in Gambia", Amnesty International, June 2016
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.
[47] "Gambian polls close in election denounced by ECOWAS", BBC, November 2011
[48] "More Fear than Fair: Gambia's 2016 Presidential Election" Human Rights Watch, November 2016
[49] "Gambia: Dangerous to Dissent: Human Rights Under Threat in Gambia", Amnesty International, June 2016
[50] Ibid.

[51] "Freedom in the World: Gambia (The) 2011", Freedom House, May 2011
[52] "Gambia: Dangerous to Dissent: Human Rights Under Threat in Gambia", Amnesty International, June 2016
[53] "Gambia's Leader Vowed to Rule for a Billion Years: A Vote Will Test That", Yaya Barry, J., The New York Times, November 2016
[54] "Gambia: Dangerous to Dissent: Human Rights Under Threat in Gambia", Amnesty International, June 2016
[55] Ibid.

required to be audited annually as well as have a secretariat in each region of The Gambia.[56]

With regard to future elections, the potential politicization of ethnicity was a key concern highlighted by fieldwork participants. Fieldwork participants in Kanifing municipality and the West Coast region reported ongoing tensions between the Jola and Mandinka ethnic groups, in part due to the alignment of politics and ethnic identities during the Jammeh administration. Jammeh comes from the Jola ethnic group and was perceived to have privileged his own ethnic group within the government and upper branches of the military, while President Barrow comes from the majority Mandinka ethnic group who many felt were marginalized by Jammeh.[57] Interviewees expressed concern that political tensions and hate speech in future elections could provoke conflict between the Jola and Mandinka ethnic groups if not properly managed.

Effective governance in The Gambia has also historically been undermined by pervasive corruption and a lack of transparency which continue to be matters of concern, according to fieldwork participants. Transparency International ranked The Gambia 145th out of 176 countries in the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index.[58] Although the government announced in September 2016 that they were taking steps to create a UN Development Programme-supported Anti-Corruption Commission, this initiative has yet to come to fruition.[59] In addition, allegations of vote rigging and suppression of political opposition in The Gambia has historically undermined the perceived legitimacy of the Gambian government.

The Gambian government and security forces have a history of human rights abuses, including suppression of the media, civil society critics, and political opposition groups. Alleged abuses include enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, intimidation, and torture.[60] In April 2016, opposition leader Solo Sandeng from the United Democratic Party (UDP) was beaten to death by Gambian security forces following a public demonstration calling for election reform and other opposition leaders were arrested, beaten, and sentenced to multiple years in prison.[61] Journalists also routinely face harassment and violence, and the Jammeh administration tightly controlled the media environment. Reporters Without Borders ranked The Gambia 143rd out of 180 countries in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index.[62] The recent political transition has raised hopes for improvements in The Gambia's human rights record, and many fieldwork participants reported that freedom of speech has improved since President Barrow took office.

Throughout the country, fieldwork participants reported that women remain underrepresented in political decision-making roles. Women currently hold only 10.3 percent of seats in the National Assembly,[63] and at the end of 2016, five of the 21 members of the cabinet were female.[64] At the local level, only five of the 1,873 village heads were women as of 2014, and there were no female governors or district chiefs.[65] In political parties, women are primarily engaged in working in the women's committees of the political parties or other support roles.[66] However, some fieldwork participants, particularly in the Central River region, noted that women leaders and women's neighborhood associations (known as *yayi kompins*) wield substantial power as voting blocs and that politicians often intentionally seek support from these bodies during campaign periods.

56 Ibid.
57 "New Gambian president Adama Barrow returns home to joyous scenes", Burke, J., The Guardian, January 2017
58 "Corruption Perceptions Index", Transparency International, 2016
59 "Freedom in the World 2017: The Gambia", Freedom House, 2017
60 "Gambia: Events of 2016", Human Rights Watch, 2017
61 Ibid.

62 "Gambia", Reporters Without Borders, 2018
63 "Women in National Parliaments", Inter-Parliamentary Union, April 2018
64 "The Gambia 2016, Human Rights Report", U.S. Department of State, 2017
65 "The Gambia's Women Demand a Seat at the Political Table", Jammeh, S., Inter Press Service, March 2014
66 Ibid.

Gambian youth similarly remain underrepresented in political decision-making, and factors contributing to low youth participation include poor perceptions of candidates and skepticism of the electoral process. This is attributable to a history of election irregularities under Jammeh as well as cultural norms.[67] Youth are often discouraged from formal political participation as public perception dictates that leadership positions should go to those who are older.[68] According to fieldwork participants, however, there are ongoing civil society initiatives to encourage youth engagement in politics, such as the "Not Too Young to Run" campaign organized by the National Youth Parliament and partner organizations.[69]

Finally, given the recent political transition, fieldwork participants discussed the need for a transparent and unbiased Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparation Commission (TRRC) to promote accountability for abuses perpetrated during the Jammeh administration. In addition, several interviewees highlighted the need for civic education initiatives at the local level, particularly among youth.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

The primary source of resilience identified by fieldwork participants in the area of politics and governance were civil society groups carrying out civic education campaigns and promoting greater representation for women and youth in politics. Youth in the Kanifing municipality particularly cited the example of the "Not Too Young to Run" campaign.[70]

---

[67] "Enhancing Youth Political Participation for Africa's Development", Deegan, J., Anti-Corruption International, 2018

[68] "Enhancing Youth Political Participation for Africa's Development", Deegan, J., Anti-Corruption International, 2018
[69] "Gambia: Fact Sheets", YouthPolicy.org, October 2014
[70] Ibid.

Rule of Law (Second Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	• Perceived lack of judicial independence
	• Dichotomy between customary and Sharia law (Khadi Court)
	• Poor prison conditions
	• History of human rights abuses by security forces
	• Inadequate protection of women's rights
	• Gender-based discrimination within customary and Sharia law
	• Poor access to justice for vulnerable populations
	• Low capacity of the judicial system
	• Backlog of court cases/trials
	• Corruption within the court system
Risks	• Mob justice
	• Inadequate protection of women/girls' rights
	• Human rights violations

Vulnerabilities and Risks

According to the CRVA Index, Rule of Law is The Gambia's second-most vulnerable pillar, with a score of 1.33/10. Historically, the country's rule of law institutions have largely failed to ensure accountability and have been undermined by alleged executive interference, corruption, and human rights abuses. Abuses by security forces have rarely been investigated or prosecuted, despite myriad documented cases of excessive force, torture, and maltreatment. Additionally, effective implementation and enforcement of laws remains a problem.[71] Vulnerable populations continue to face limited access to justice due to a lack of court infrastructure in some rural areas and the expenses related to the legal process.

A primary concern expressed by fieldwork participants was the fear of continued executive interference and a lack of judicial independence. Jammeh exerted significant influence over the Gambian court system and rulings, and in the past court decisions have overwhelmingly targeted political opposition leaders, rather than members of the ruling party, with arrests and imprisonment. While some interviewees felt that judicial independence has improved under President Barrow, many participants noted that the executive branch retains the power to appoint judges and is thus a vulnerability. In addition, interviewees emphasized the need to combat corruption in order to improve the independence and functioning of the court system.

Fieldwork participants also highlighted the poor protection of women's rights in practice. In part, this inadequate protection stems from The Gambia's tripartite judicial system which recognizes civil, customary, and Sharia law, and can, therefore, result in conflicting or discriminatory rulings. For example, while the Gambian constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, the constitution explicitly states that this protection does not apply to devolution of property on death, burial, divorce, marriage or adoption; areas which are traditionally under the purview of Sharia law.[72,73] Due to the

---

[71] "The Gambia 2016, Human Rights Report", U.S. Department of State, 2017
[72] "2015 Human Rights Reports: The Gambia", U.S. Department of State, April 2016

[73] "Marriage and Family Life. Gambia, English", UN Women, 2016

reliance on customary and Sharia law, women in The Gambia are often barred from owning or inheriting land.[74] Fieldwork participants also noted a gap in the protection of women's rights regarding issues of gender-based violence (GBV). Domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape are criminalized under Gambian civil law; however, due to the poor implementation of laws and societal stigma these cases are routinely underreported.[75] When cases are reported, victims often choose to settle through mediation by family members or local leaders rather than the court system.[76]

The prison system in The Gambia has historically been marked by overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and human rights abuses. Gambian security forces have been implicated in cases of abuse and torture within the prison system, including "severe beatings with hard objects or electrical wires; electrocution, asphyxiation by placing a plastic bag over the head and filling it with water and burning with hot liquid."[77] Detainees have also faced limited access to legal representation, and attorneys representing political activists were not always guaranteed privacy.[78] However, since taking office, President Barrow has taken several steps to address shortcomings in the prison system. In February 2017, President Barrow released 171 prisoners who were detained without trial.[79] The following month, 100 prisoners were released from prison because the prisons were not up to standard.[80] Former leaders of the National Intelligence Agency, Yankuba Badjie and Sheikh Omar Jeng, have also been arrested for abusing power and overseeing the torture sessions of Jammeh's critics.[81] In interviews with the CRVA field team in Banjul in December 2017, representatives from the Ministry

of the Interior identified prison reform as one of the ministry's top security priorities.

> *"The Truth and Reconciliation Commission worked in other countries like Rwanda. People need to forget what happened and reconcile, or else it would lead to revenge. People are interrelated."*
>
> *- Men's FGD, Brikama, West Coast Region*

Given the history of abuses and impunity within Gambian rule of law institutions, many fieldwork participants highlighted the need for a well-executed process of transitional justice in order to provide accountability and promote social cohesion. On December 13, 2017, the Gambian Parliament approved a bill to establish the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparation Commission (TRRC) which will investigate alleged crimes committed during the previous regime.[82] While many interviewees welcomed the establishment of the TRRC, participants also cautioned that the Gambian government should take care to ensure that the TRRC process is inclusive, transparent, and free from perceptions of ethnic, religious or political bias.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

The primary source of resilience identified by fieldwork participants in the area of Rule of Law was the role of local leaders and district chiefs (known as *alkalos*) in dispute resolution. Fieldwork participants reported that these leaders are

[74] "2015 Human Rights Reports: The Gambia", U.S. Department of State, April 2016
[75] "The Gambia 2016, Human Rights Report", U.S. Department of State, 2017
[76] "2015 Human Rights Reports: The Gambia", U.S. Department of State, April 2016
[77] "Gambia: Sharp deterioration of human rights in 21st year of President Jammeh's rule", Amnesty International, July 2015

[78] "More Fear than Fair: Gambia's 2016 Presidential Election" Human Rights Watch, November 2016
[79] "President Adama Barrow orders release of 171 prisoners", Al Jazeera, February 2017
[80] "Dozens freed from Gambia's overcrowded jails", Daily Nation, March 2017
[81] "The Gambia: Jammeh's spy master Yankuba Badjie arrested", BBC, February 2017
[82] "Gambia: As Gambian Passes Bill For TRRC; AG Tambadou Says "The TRRC Freedom Newspaper

frequently the first points of contact when incidents occur, particularly in non-criminal cases, rather than the police. Participants in the Men's FGD in Banjul also noted that the court system has established Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) processes to handle cases, while the National Agency for Legal Aid and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Secretariat work to increase citizens' access to justice.

Security (Third Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	- Porous borders - Inadequate access to quality public services, including education and healthcare - Perceptions of corruption among security forces - History of human rights abuses by security forces - Proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) - Geographic location of the country/Casamance conflict in southern Senegal - Politicization of the security and defense forces along ethnic lines - Bad governance of security sector - Gender-based violence (GBV)
Risks	- Social uprising/insecurity by loyalists of the previous administration, especially in the Western region - Criminality (illegal logging, narcotic drugs/arms trafficking) - Tensions or clashes between pro-Jammeh and ECOMIG forces - Withdrawal of ECOMIG forces - Election-related violence - Resurgence of conflict in Senegal's Casamance region

Vulnerabilities and Risks

According to the CRVA Index, The Gambia is also highly vulnerable in the area of Security, with a score of 2.04/10. This low score stems primarily from the country's significant refugee flows during the political instability in late 2016 and early 2017 as well as the threat of political violence. During the fieldwork, interviewees also highlighted criminality, gender-based violence (GBV), mistrust between security forces and communities, and the need for security sector reform (SSR) as pressing issues.

During the country's political instability in late 2016 and early 2017, a significant number of Gambians fled the country due to security concerns. According to the UNHCR, as many as 76,000 Gambians sought refuge in Senegal and 3,500 fled to Guinea-Bissau during the political

crisis.[83] The majority of these refugees have since returned to The Gambia.

In addition, The Gambia does have a history of political violence and security force abuses under the Jammeh administration. The Gambian security forces are notorious for their detention of opposition leaders and violence in responding to protests.[84] In addition to state forces such as the Gambian Police Force, Jammeh relied on paramilitary forces known as the "Jungulers" to carry out torture and disappearances.[85] The country has also seen pre- and post-election violence between supporters of the APRC and opposition groups such as the UDP, most recently in the 2017 legislative elections.[86] However, despite international concerns, the December 2016 presidential elections were largely peaceful, with President Jammeh warning all Gambians against violence in

---

[83] "The Gambia: Politically Induced Displacement", UNHCR, January 2017
[84] "Gambia 2017/2018", Amnesty International, 2018
[85] "Gambia: Two Decades of Fear and Repression", Human Rights Watch, September 2015

[86] "Gambia: Breaking News: Post-Election Violence Hits Gambia; As Fighting Ensued Between APRC And UDP Supporters In Foni; Diabugu, Too Is In A Messy Situation!", Freedom Newspaper, April 2017

speeches leading up to the vote.[87] The army supported Jammeh through January 2017, but did not challenge the political transition enforced by ECOWAS.[88]

Peacekeeping troops remain in the country following the January 2017 political transition. On January 19, 2017, 7,000 troops from Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria, as well as naval and air support units, entered The Gambia as part of ECOWAS's Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) also known as "Operation Restore Democracy."[89] Upon the departure of Jammeh on January 21, President Barrow requested that ECOMIG troops stay for six months in order to help establish order.[90] The mandate of ECOMIG was extended for three months in February, though troops were downsized from 7,000 to 500,[91] and in June the mission was further extended for one year.[92] While many fieldwork participants reported that the presence of ECOMIG has improved security in the country, interviewees in the West Coast region described tensions and mistrust between ECOMIG soldiers and local communities. In June 2017, there were reported clashes between ECOMIG forces and supporters of former President Jammeh in the village of Kanilai (Jammeh's hometown) in the district of Foni Bondali.[93] Respondents throughout the country also recommended that ECOMIG forces engage in further trust-building exercises with communities.

The leading security threat identified by fieldwork participants in The Gambia was criminality, including armed robbery, cattle rustling and cross-border thefts, drug trafficking and arms smuggling. Many interviewees attributed the rise in criminality

to the country's porous borders, youth unemployment, and the social and economic disengagement of "back way"[94] returnees. Gender-based violence (GBV), including domestic violence and rape, was also highlighted as a security concern particularly affecting women in The Gambia. While GBV is reportedly widespread, incidents are often underreported and are rarely prosecuted due to a strong culture of silence and social stigmas surrounding the topic.

Fieldwork participants also expressed a low level of confidence in local security forces, citing a lack of presence in rural areas, perceptions of corruption, and inadequate resources, staffing and training. Some interviewees noted that while the overall security situation in the country is relatively calm, this is primarily due to the presence of ECOMIG troops rather than the capabilities of the Gambian security forces. In several regions, interviewees reported that disputes and low-level incidents are first reported to local leaders rather than to the police.

Given the recent political transition, security sector reform (SSR) processes were discussed by fieldwork participants throughout the country. On September 12, 2017, President Barrow launched an 18-month inclusive security sector reform process with the support of the UN, the EU and ECOWAS.[95] Interviewees emphasized the need for transparent and unbiased SSR, particularly given the fact that the army continues to be split between supporters of former President Jammeh and President Barrow. During fieldwork interviews, a representative of the Ministry of Interior identified SSR as one of the ministry's top priorities.

[87] "Gambia's president vows zero tolerance of election violence", Reuters, November 2016
[88] "Gambia's Jammeh agrees to go into exile as regional troops mass", Cocks, T. and Farge, E., Reuters, January 2017
[89] "A New African Model of Coercion? Assessing the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia", Williams, P.D., The Global Observatory, March 2017
[90] "Gambians celebrate new presidents arrival after veteran ruler flees", Jahateh, L., Reuters, January 2017
[91] "Regional Forces Mission in Gambia extended by 3 months", Reuters, February 2017

[92] "West African regional bloc extends military mission in Gambia", Reuters, June 2017
[93] "Jammeh loyalists in bloody clash with ECOMIG forces", Alfa Shaban, A.R., Africa News, June 2017
[94] A term referring to the route taken by illegal migrants to Europe, across the Sahel and Mediterranean Sea.
[95] "Launch of the security sector reform process in the Gambia", United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, September 2017

Finally, although not identified as an immediate issue, concerns remain around the potential effects of renewed conflict in Senegal's Casamance region. The Gambia's border with Casamance has been unstable in the past, with President Jammeh allegedly supporting factions of the separatist Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC). Although the MFDC and Senegal currently have a cease-fire, a renewal of conflict in the area could potentially have spillover effects in The Gambia.[96,97]

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

With the exception of interviewees in the West Coast region, fieldwork participants generally viewed ECOMIG forces as contributing positively to security. In the Central River region, interviewees reported positive and constructive relationships between local police and communities despite logistical shortcomings, which was viewed as a source of resilience. Finally, in the Upper Saloum area of the Central River region, participants in the Men's FGD cited local neighborhood watch groups and civilian patrols as contributing positively to security in the absence of local police.

[96] "The Gambia 2017 Crime and Safety Report", U.S. Department of State, March 2017

[97] "Senegal-Gambia tensions create security and economic risk", Economist Intelligence Unit, July 2016

Population and Demographics (Fourth Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	- Rural-urban migration - Inadequate access to quality public services, including education and healthcare - Rural-urban disparities in development and infrastructure - High rate of youth unemployment - Early marriage - Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) - Low rate of family planning - Illegal migration
Risks	- Security threats from "back way" returnees - Polarization of group identities along ethnic lines - Increased tension between religious groups - Loss of manpower as a result of migration

Vulnerabilities and Risks

As of 2016, The Gambia had a projected population of 1.9 million, making it one of the smallest populations in Africa.[98] According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, 34.4 percent of the population is made up of the Mandinka ethnic group, while smaller ethnic groups include the Fula (24.1 percent), Wolof (14.8 percent), Jola (10.5 percent) and Serahules (8.2 percent).[99] There is also a large immigrant community in Gambia. In 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that 10 percent of the Gambian population consisted of immigrants.[100] Data from the 2003 and 2010 Household Poverty Surveys shows that 38.7 percent of these immigrants are Senegalese and 31.9 percent are from Guinea.[101] To date, the country has never contended with large-scale ethnic conflict; however, in several regions during the fieldwork, respondents reported that the increased saliency of ethnicity during election periods, the politicization of ethnicity by elites, and the perceived favoritism of the Jola ethnic group during Jammeh's rule are detrimental to the country's social cohesion.

In addition, an estimated 96 percent of Gambians are Muslim while 3.8 percent are Christian and 0.2 percent practice indigenous animist religions.[102] Some recent political developments, particularly the declaration of The Gambia as an Islamic Republic by Jammeh in December 2015,[103] have raised concerns of increased inter-religious tensions. However, on the whole fieldwork participants reported positive and peaceful relationships between religious groups, including cases of interfaith marriages.

During the fieldwork, interviewees identified demographic changes, particularly rural-urban migration and youth emigration to Europe, as key vulnerabilities in The Gambia. The country has

---

[98] "The World Bank in The Gambia: Overview", The World Bank, April 2018

[99] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013

[100] "World Migration Report 2018", International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2018

[101] "Immigrants, Skills and Wages in the Gambian Labor Market", AfDB Group, June 2014

[102] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013

[103] "U.S. Embassy in The Gambia: Current Issues", U.S. Department of State, 2016

experienced significant trends of internal rural-urban migration, with the urban population growing from 38.3 percent in 1990 to 60.2 percent in 2016.[104] Fieldwork respondents attributed this rise in urban migration to poor employment prospects in rural areas and disparities in development and the provision of social services, notably healthcare and education. For example, the 2012 Gambia National Health Strategic Plan found that healthcare spending, hospitals, and staffing are disproportionately centered on urban areas, while rural areas often suffer from a lack of quality and accessible infrastructure and health services.[105] Respondents also reported poor road, water and electricity infrastructure as further vulnerabilities.

In addition to rural-urban migration, many youth in The Gambia have reportedly attempted to emigrate to Europe in search of improved employment and educational opportunities. The Gambia has a large and growing youth population, with 46 percent of the population under the age of 15 and a growth rate of 3.2 percent.[106] Across the country, fieldwork participants reported that The Gambia's high rate of youth unemployment (estimated to be more than 40 percent)[107] has resulted in a large number of illegal migrants crossing the Sahel and the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe (the so-called "back way" or "back door" route). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 11,929 Gambian migrants were registered as arriving in Italy in 2016, accounting for 6 percent of all migrants received in Italy that year.[108] A report by the IOM and UNICEF also estimated that Gambians made up approximately 11 percent of unaccompanied minors on the Central Mediterranean route.[109] Respondents expressed concern about the potential threat posed by "back way" migrants who have returned to the country (whether voluntarily or through force), questioning

the country's ability to economically absorb and socially reintegrate these returnees. As one political leader noted, "We need to create job opportunities in the country to deter the youths from leaving and create new opportunities for the returnees. If left unsupported, these desperate returnees may pose a security threat to the country."

"The issues regarding returnees is cross-cutting and beyond just the Ministry of Interior. The issue of returnees, if left unaddressed at the national level, could disrupt the peace and stability in this country. There is a need to properly assess the returnees in terms of health and security needs."

- Representative from the Ministry of Interior, Banjul

Additional demographic concerns raised by fieldwork participants included the prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C), early marriage, an underutilization of family planning and gender-based violence (GBV). Despite laws criminalizing FGM/C and sensitization campaigns which have reportedly helped to decrease the practice in some areas, the overall prevalence of FGM/C remains high. As of 2013, an estimated 75 percent of women in The Gambia had undergone some form of FGM/C and the practice is supported by enduring socio-cultural traditions and norms.[110] The practice of FGM/C is most common in the Basse, Mansakonko and Brikama LGAs, and least common in the Kerewan and Banjul LGAs.[111]

Early marriage was also cited as an ongoing concern. Statistics indicate that 8.6 percent of

[104] "The Gambia: Urban Population (% of total)", World Bank, 2014
[105] "The Gambia National Health Strategic Plan", The Government of The Gambia, October 2014
[106] "Health Nutrition and Population Statistics: The Gambia", World Bank, 2018
[107] "Country Profile: Gambia 2016", UN Economic Commission for Africa, March 2017

[108] "Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean and Beyond", IOM, 2016
[109] "Harrowing Journeys", International Organization for Migration, September 2017
[110] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[111] "The Gambia Multi Indicator Cluster Study (MICS) 2010", UNICEF & Gambia Bureau of Statistics, June 2012

women ages 15-49 married or entered into a union before 15, and 46.5 percent did so before turning 18.[112] Respondents noted that early marriage, which is primarily driven by economic pressures and the desire to mask pre-marital pregnancies, has resulted in high rates of school dropouts, maternal deaths, high infant mortality rates, and teenage pregnancy. Participants also discussed family planning, emphasizing that while family planning services are available, cultural and religious norms often deter women from utilizing these services. As of 2013, only 7.1 percent of women in The Gambia reported using any form of contraception.[113] Rates of contraceptive use among married women were highest in the Banjul and Kanifing LGAs and lowest in the Basse and Kuntaur LGAs.[114]

Finally, fieldwork participants throughout the country highlighted GBV as a key issue affecting the lives of women in The Gambia. Survey data indicates that 41 percent of women ages 15-49 have endured physical violence at least once since age 15, although the actual rate may be higher due to systemic underreporting of GBV.[115] Despite ongoing sensitization campaigns by CSOs and recent legislation such as the Women's Act of 2010 and the Sexual Offence and Domestic Violence Bill[116], GBV persists. Respondents identified a strong culture of silence and societal stigmas around GBV as primary deterrents to reporting and the successful eradication of GBV.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Fieldwork participants identified several social and institutional resilience factors that help mitigate demographic vulnerabilities and risks in The Gambia. In particular, social and cultural resilience factors, such as inter-faith marriages, "joking relationships,"[117] and a culture of religious tolerance, and women's associations (known as *yayi kompins*) were identified as sources of social cohesion. Interviewees also highlighted the role of the media and civil society organizations (CSOs) in sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns around issues such as FGM/C and family planning.

---

[112] "The Gambia Multi Indicator Cluster Study (MICS) 2010", UNICEF & Gambia Bureau of Statistics, June 2012
[113] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.

[116] "Country Policy and Information Note: Gambia Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)", Government of the United Kingdom, December 2016
[117] The "joking relationship" refers to customary ties between various ethnic groups and individuals that involve ritualized joking and mutual obligations.

Economics and Resources (Least Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	• Lack of a diversified economy • High prices of basic commodities • Illicit economic activities, including cross-border smuggling • Poor infrastructure development • Environmental degradation and climate change
Risks	• Food insecurity • Natural disasters • Land and resource-based conflicts • Conflict between farmers and herders

Vulnerabilities and Risks

The Gambia's economy is primarily reliant on the service sector and agriculture, which together employ a majority of the population.[118] The service sector contributed the most to The Gambia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and was the fastest growing in the last decade, with an average of 5.1 percent real GDP growth. In 2015, the agricultural sector contributed to an estimated 21 percent of GDP.[119] Diminished agriculture productivity and reduced crop yield, which has been decreasing since the early 2000s,[120] has resulted in a reliance on food imports, particularly rice.[121] The lack of diversification in the economy leaves the country vulnerable to global and regional shocks, as well as food insecurity due to environmental pressures stemming from climate change or natural disasters.

Foreign sources of income are also critical to The Gambian economy. Personal remittances from diaspora communities are by far the most important of these. The Gambia is one of the top ten remittance recipients by percent of GDP.[122] According to the World Bank, remittances from

international migrants have contributed 18.7 to 21.6 percent of GDP each year between 2014 and 2016.[123]

While The Gambia is expected to experience economic growth and rebound in 2018 due to a peaceful political transition in early 2017,[124] fieldwork participants reported high rates of youth unemployment as a persistent economic vulnerability. As of 2017, the youth unemployment rate was estimated to be 43.9 percent.[125] This lack of formal economic prospects, which was partly attributed to the country's dependence on agriculture, was identified as a primary driver of illegal migration to Europe. Furthermore, the nexus of youth unemployment and security was highlighted as a concern, with participants expressing that youth unemployment has contributed to increased crime and civil unrest.

Women are significant contributors to the Gambian economy; however, due to the lack of diversified economic opportunities, women's economic potential remains unmet, largely restricting them to agriculture and petty trading. Women make up 78 percent of the agricultural labor force in The

---

[118] "Country Profile: Gambia 2016", UN Economic Commission for Africa, March 2017
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] "The Gambia: Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP)", World Bank, 2016

[123] Ibid.
[124] "Gambia Economic Outlook", African Development Bank, 2018
[125] "The Gambia: Development Indicators", World Bank, 2018

Gambia, producing about 40 percent of the country's total agricultural yield.[126] However, as their agricultural outputs are primarily subsistence-based, and the little income acquired from the enterprise is often reinvested into the household, women are largely economically marginalized. Across the country, fieldwork participants identified educational constraints, enduring socio-cultural norms about traditional gender roles, and the inability of women to inherit or own land under customary law as primary barriers to female economic empowerment. In The Gambia's customary land ownership structure, where land is primarily defined by patrilineal inheritance rights, female access to land is mainly determined by a husband's social standing or that of the immediate family.[127] Furthermore, gender discrimination in the sale of land, particularly those administered by traditional authorities, is an additional barrier to women's right to land.[128] While interviewees reported that income-generating and microfinancing opportunities exist, they also held that high interest rates and collateral requirements continue to limit women's access to financing and credit.

Due to an interplay of limited land resources (38 percent of land is considered cultivable),[129] the population's reliance on the agricultural sector, and a steady population growth, land tenure and natural resource management are also critical issues in The Gambia. Land tenure is based on a dual structure of statutory tenure, which governs freehold and leasehold titles, and customary tenure.[130] While both systems interact and customary land has been adopted into the formal legal framework, land and resource-based issues remain widespread. The government's tendency to extend its jurisdiction in recent years,[131] the lack of a regulatory structure that manages customary land administered under district authorities and local chiefs[132], overlaps between land agencies[133], and the differing directives of district authorities and village heads[134] have contributed to land and resource-based competition and conflicts. As one political leader described during the field research, "The issue of land in this country is in a great mess as there are no proper policies to tackle this issue from the first regime. In some communities, people engage in land disputes which sometime result to death. This issue also affects women engaged in vegetable gardening and other farming activities. There is therefore a need for a land commission to tackle this menace."

Poverty and underdevelopment also remain widespread in The Gambia. The 2016 UNDP Human Development Report characterizes 57.2 percent of the population as multidimensionally poor, while an additional 21.3 percent are at risk of falling into multidimensional poverty.[135,136] There is also a significant gap between the incidence of poverty in rural and urban areas. The World Bank in 2010 estimated that 73.9 percent of rural residents lived below the national poverty rate, compared to 32.7 percent of urban residents.[137] There are significant challenges to the provision of infrastructure and quality social services as well. Respondents highlighted The Gambia's poor infrastructure development as an ongoing concern. Interviewees cited expensive water supply, limited health system capacity, and intermittent electricity

[126] "Gender and Women Empowerment Policy 2010-2020", Government of The Gambia
[127] "Tenure and Natural Resources in The Gambia: Summary of Research Findings and Policy Options", Schoonmaker Freudenberger, M., 2000
[128] Ibid.
[129] "Gambia: Geography, Climate and Population", Food and Agriculture Organization, 2005
[130] "Improving Land Sector Governance in the Gambia", World Bank, August 2013
[131] "Tenure and Natural Resources in The Gambia: Summary of Research Findings and Policy Options", Schoonmaker Freudenberger, M., 2000

[132] "Improving Land Sector Governance in the Gambia", World Bank, August 2013
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] "Briefing note for countries on the 2016 Human Development Report: Human Development for Everyone", UNDP, 2016
[136] Ibid.
[137] "World Development Indicators: Poverty Rates at National Poverty Line", World Bank, 2017

as primary issues. Fieldwork respondents described how erratic electricity has impacted businesses, noting that food and perishable goods do not keep as long without proper storage.

During the fieldwork, participants highlighted low salaries, high commodity prices, and the related risk of food insecurity as key economic vulnerabilities throughout the country. Poor agricultural yields, which have impacted the supply of staple goods, and constant price fluctuations were reported as contributing to increases in commodity prices.

"The prices of food commodities are very high with constant fluctuations. This seriously affects many people with most families unable to afford meat and fish. This is compounded by stagnant and poor salaries and the current power outage also affects the ability of people to sustain business dependent on power supply. Things are expensive and fluctuating and this is really affecting people."

- Representatives from the Gambia Democratic Congress, Banjul

Fieldwork participants also identified a number of illicit activities as playing a role in the Gambian economy. Notably, interviewees cited the illegal smuggling of timber from the Casamance region of Senegal to The Gambia as a common illicit enterprise, which is exacerbated by porous borders and a lack of governmental capacity to address the issue. Participants also reported that local authorities in both countries have ties to cross-border smuggling operations. Incidents of illegal fishing and illegal logging were also noted.

Finally, due to its geography and dependence on industries vulnerable to climate change, including rain-fed subsistence agriculture, fishing and tourism, The Gambia is susceptible to the effects of climate change, as well as environmental degradation caused by logging, agriculture, and other human activities. Key environmental concerns raised by fieldwork respondents included deforestation and the depletion of fisheries. The environmental shifts brought on by climate change (including coastal erosion, rising sea levels, and flooding) were described as having serious negative impacts on crop yields, thereby impacting livelihoods and food security in The Gambia. In 2010-2011 The Gambia was affected by the region-wide Sahel drought, which caused a 45 percent drop in crop production and a contraction of GDP.[138] The country was affected by another drought in 2014 which, combined with the Ebola crisis in neighboring countries, also negatively affected its GDP.[139] In coming years, the effects of climate change are expected to result in increased temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, flooding, and droughts,[140] and these pressures pose a serious risk to economic productivity and food security in The Gambia.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Fieldwork participants identified several sources of social and institutional resilience that mitigate economic vulnerabilities and risks in The Gambia. Fieldwork participants highlighted the role of the government, NGOs, and civil society organizations (CSOs) in economic development initiatives. For example, interviewees praised CSO-supported microfinance initiatives as important in the promotion of economic empowerment for women.

---

[138] "The Gambia: Staff Report for the 2013 Article IV Consultation; Informational Annex; Press Release on the Executive Board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for The Gambia", International Monetary Fund, September 2013

[139] "Country Profile: Gambia 2016", UN Economic Commission for Africa, March 2017
[140] "Climate Change and Development in The Gambia", Jaiteh M.S.

External Factors

The Gambia is actively engaged with a number of regional organizations, including ECOWAS and the AU, and also belongs to a number of international organizations such the United Nations (UN), the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Economically, The Gambia is impacted by changes in global commodity prices and the activities of international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and the World Bank Group. The World Bank currently funds projects in the areas of education, health, agriculture, and energy in The Gambia.[141]

In the area of security, The Gambia is a contributor to peacekeeping forces around the continent. With approximately 200 troops engaged in peacekeeping missions at any given time[142], the Gambia has previously participated in the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).[143] Currently, it is exclusively contributing to the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).[144] In addition, ECOMIG forces remain in the country with a mandate until May 2018.[145]

While The Gambia has not experienced a terrorist attack within its borders to date, there are also concerns around the potential for spillover from conflicts in neighboring countries or an influx of refugees, as has been seen with the protracted Casamance conflict in neighboring Senegal. Although Salif Sadio, leader of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) rebel group, declared a unilateral ceasefire in 2014, the presence of multiple MFDC factions and splinter groups and the continued operation of the MFDC rebel group along the east-west border is an issue of concern.[146] Notably, fieldwork respondents in the Banjul municipality highlighted incidents of cross-border theft and drug trade in the MFDC-controlled areas around the Kanilai border. Furthermore, the country's porous borders facilitate cross-border smuggling, particularly timber, and flows of small arms and light weapons (SALW), as well as regional networks of drug and human trafficking.[147,148]

Regional patterns of migration also affect The Gambia, as individuals are drawn to the country from surrounding countries such as Senegal and Guinea. According to the IOM, 10 percent of The Gambia's population are immigrants.[149] Conversely, unemployed Gambian youth account for a high number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe. Data indicates that in 2016, there were 11,929 Gambian migrant arrivals in Italy.[150]

Finally, The Gambia faces pressures from environmental degradation and the effects of global climate change, including changes in rainfall patterns, coastal erosion, and sea level rise.[151] As the country is particularly reliant on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, fishing, and tourism, the environmental shifts brought on by climate change (including flooding and increased coastal erosion) risk having serious negative impacts on crop yields, livelihoods, and food security.

[141] "Projects and Operations", World Bank, 2018
[142] "Fragmented forces: The development of the Gambian military", Dwyer, M., 2017
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] "Gambia: ECOWAS Extends The Mandate of ECOMIG In The Gambia For One Year", Freedom Newspaper, June 2017
[146] "Senegal Profile – Timeline", BBC, May 2018

[147] "Trafficking in Persons Report", U.S. Department of State, June 2017
[148] "Market Analysis Of Plant Based Drugs: Opiates, Cocaine, Cannabis", UN Office on Drugs and Crime, May 2017
[149] "World Migration Report 2018", IOM, 2018
[150] "Mixed Migration Flows in the Mediterranean and Beyond", IOM, 2016
[151] "Climate Change and Development in The Gambia", Jaiteh M.S.

Gender Considerations

A primary vulnerability in The Gambia which emerged in the desktop research and was validated during the fieldwork was gender inequality. On the CRVA Index, The Gambia received an aggregate score of 2.98 on gender-related indicators, which is below the regional average of 4.49. In fact, this score is the fourth-lowest in the ECOWAS region, after Nigeria, Mali and Niger. Despite the existence of gender legislation, women and girls in The Gambia continue to face significant disparities and discrimination in the social, political and economic spheres.

A key issue raised by fieldwork participants in The Gambia was the underrepresentation of women in political decision-making roles. While women are reportedly highly active as voters, activists and supporters of political parties, women's participation in politics is often limited to female sections of political parties or behind-the-scenes roles.[152] Only six members (10.3 percent) of the National Assembly are women, and as of 2014 there were five women out of 1,873 village heads, and there were no female governors or district chiefs.[153,154] Participants in the fieldwork attributed this underrepresentation in politics to women's lower levels of education, barriers to the financing and support needed to campaign for office, and patriarchal cultural and religious norms. However, this underrepresentation in formal political roles is not to say that Gambian women are without political power. As noted above, women are active as voters and supporters, and fieldwork participants in the Central River region reported that women's associations (*yayi kompins*) and women leaders are an important political force and voting bloc during campaign periods.

In the area of economics, women in The Gambia are most often engaged in the informal sector and agricultural production, particularly in rural areas. Women's economic empowerment is often limited by lower literacy and education rates, as well as barriers to financing and credit. As of 2013, the adult literacy rate for women ages 15 and above was only 33.6 percent, compared to 51.4 percent for men.[155] Fieldwork participants reported that some women have benefitted from microfinance initiatives in the country; however, these initiatives continue to be hindered by low literacy rates and a lack of training and education. In addition, a major economic issue raised by fieldwork participants was women's limited access to land ownership under customary law. Given the importance of agriculture to the Gambian economy, as well as to food security, barriers to land access and ownership can have a serious negative impact on women's economic empowerment.

"Women have a vital role to play in the economic development of any country. In The Gambia, they are mainly involved in farming activities and petty trading, e.g. rice cultivation, vegetable gardening, fishing, etc. Some of the women do have access to finance from micro finance institutions but illiteracy is limiting their accessibility of funds. They don't know that such facilities exist."

- Ministry of Environment, Banjul

Women's legal protection varies under the Gambian tripartite judicial system, which recognizes civil, Sharia and customary law, at times leading to conflicting or discriminatory laws. The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, except in the areas specifically covered by Sharia law, including marriage, divorce and

---

[152] "The Gambia's Women Demand a Seat at the Political Table", Jammeh, S., Inter Press Service, March 2014
[153] Ibid.

[154] "GAMBIA (THE) National Assembly: General Information About the Parliamentary Chamber", Inter-Parliamentary Union, April 2018
[155] "Literacy rate, adult male (% of males aged 15 and above)", World Bank, 2016

inheritance.[156] Under Sharia law, the statement of two women is considered equal to one man,[157] there is no legal minimum marriage age,[158] women are considered to be the property of their husbands,[159] and widows have no inheritance rights for their deceased husbands' property.[160] In addition, as noted above, customary law frequently blocks women's access to land ownership. Gambian civil law does offer some protections for women, such as prohibiting sexual harassment, although legal measures are often undermined by poor implementation, lack of enforcement or social stigma.

A leading vulnerability which was highlighted during the fieldwork was the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in The Gambia. Most forms of GBV are prohibited under Gambian law, but GBV remains prevalent and underreported due to social stigma and a strong culture of silence. The Gambia has also banned female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) since 2015, and fieldwork participants reported that the practice of FGM/C has declined thanks to sensitization and trainings by CSOs. However, the overall prevalence of FGM/C in The Gambia remains relatively high. UNICEF reported that the prevalence of FGM/C among girls and women aged 15-49 was an estimated 75 percent between 2004-2015.[161] The practice of FGM/C is most common in the Basse, Mansakonko and Brikama LGAs, and least common in the Kerewan and Banjul LGAs.[162]

Other demographic issues raised by fieldwork participants include early marriage and an underutilization of family planning. Early marriage is fairly common in The Gambia, with 8.5 percent of girls married before age the age of 15 and 46.5 percent married before the age of 18.[163] The Kuntaur, Kerewan, Mansakonko and Basse LGAs

"[GBV] is very prevalent in all sectors of the society. It includes physical, psychological and sexual violence against women and girls. Marital rape is not recognized by the society and the religion. The victims do not always report problems to the Police because they are afraid of the stigma. Counselling centers and shelters are virtually non-existent. A new [type of] violence on the rise is dating violence against girls and young women. Very serious work remains to be done to bring gender-based violence under control."

- Women's Leader, Banjul

have the lowest median ages at first marriage – 17, 17.3, 17.3, and 17.6 years, respectively.[164] In addition, the use of family planning remains low, with only 7.1 percent of women reporting using any form of contraception as of 2013.[165] While fieldwork participants reported that family planning services are commonly available in health clinics and hospitals, a lack of knowledge or religious and cultural norms often deter women from utilizing these services.

In the face of these many challenges and pressures, CSOs and local women's associations (*yayi kompins*) are an important source of resilience and solidarity for women in The Gambia. Fieldwork participants reported that CSOs are involved in sensitization and awareness-raising on a variety of topics, including women's political participation and social issues such as FGM/C. In addition, *yayi kompins* are an important forum for promoting and mobilizing women's political participation as well as economic solidarity. Interviewees in the Central River region reported that local *kompins* maintain rotating funds in which

---

[156] "2015 Human Rights Report: The Gambia", U.S. Department of State, April 2016
[157] "Note of the Situation of Women in Gambia", International Federation of Human Rights, 2005
[158] "Gambia: National Laws", Child Rights International Network, January 2012
[159] "Note of the Situation of Women in Gambia", International Federation of Human Rights, 2005

[160] "2015 Human Rights Report: The Gambia", U.S. Department of State, April 2016
[161] "UNICEF's Data Work on FGM/C", UNICEF, 2016
[162] "The Gambia: Multi Indicator Cluster Survey", UNICEF Multi Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), June 2012
[163] Ibid.
[164] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[165] Ibid.

members contribute a small amount of money each week which can be used to support members in case of unforeseen emergencies. Despite many challenges, women in The Gambia are important social, political, and economic actors who, when given adequate support and opportunities, can make positive contributions to a more equitable and peaceful Gambia.

Sub-National Level Vulnerabilities, Risks and Resilience Factors: Observations by Region

Banjul Municipality
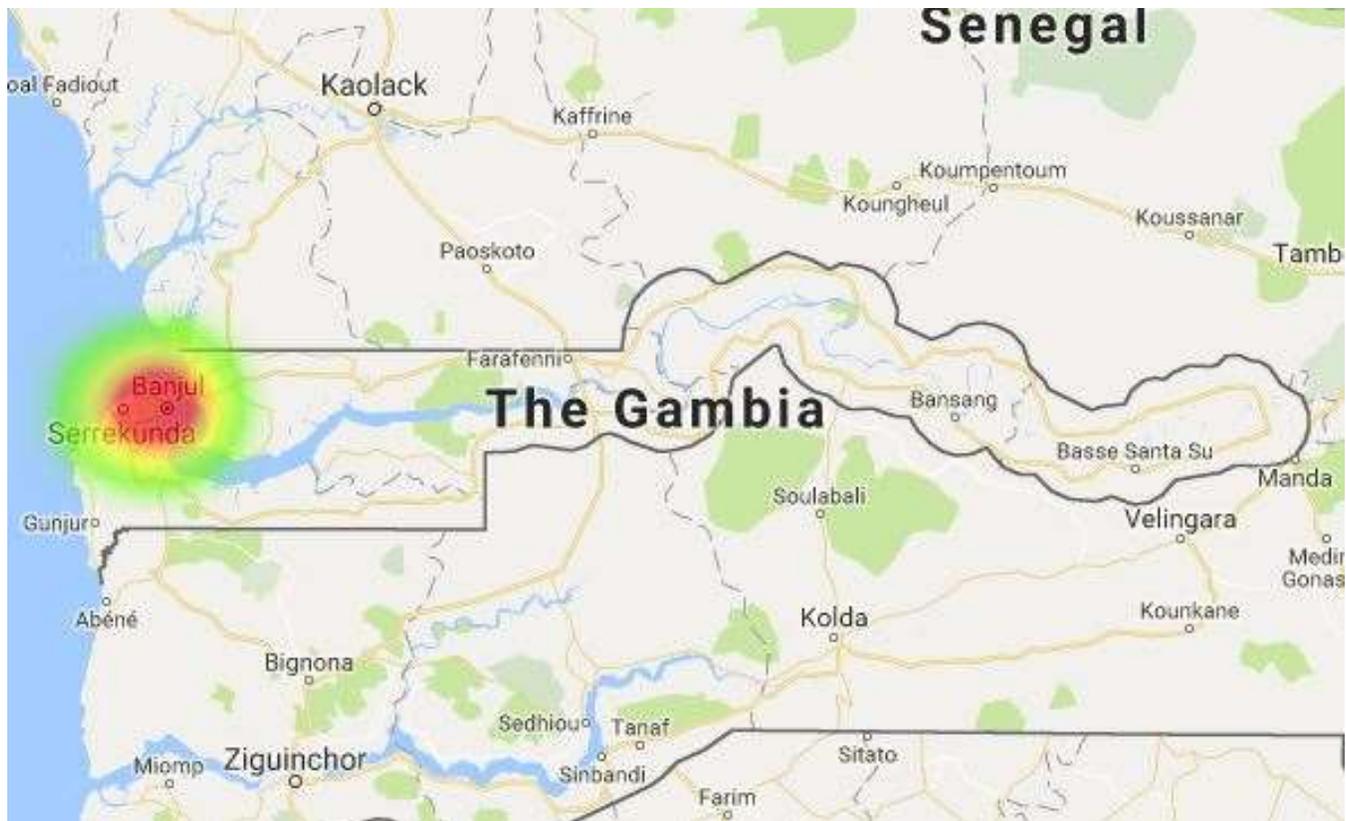
The Banjul municipality borders the Kanifing municipality to the west and the Gambia River on all other sides. According to the 2013 census, the municipality's population was 31,301.[166] The Wolof ethnic group is the largest in the area, with the Mandinka, Fula, and Serere also significant shares of the population.[167] Of those economically active, 42.9 percent are engaged in service, shop, and market sales jobs while 16.1 percent are engaged in trade and crafts professions.[168] As the country's capital, Banjul serves as the country's administrative and financial center and is also a major port and regional trade hub.

---

[166] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[167] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[168] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013

Structural Vulnerabilities	• Underrepresentation of youth and women in politics • Politicization of ethnicity • Nepotism and corruption • Dissonance of the tripartite legal structure • Operational deficiencies in the security sector; delays in investigations, slow response times, and reliance on external security expertise • Economic hardships such as youth unemployment and high fuel prices • Lack of diversified economic activities for women • Absence of a price control system • FGM/C, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy • Land grabbing • Porous borders • Transnational threats, particularly the proximity to the Casamance
Event-Driven Risks	• Migration and emigration • Gender-based violence • Criminality
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	• Security Sector Reform • Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms • Traditional and religious institutions • Government and IGO-funded entrepreneurial programs • Civil society organizations, and advocacy/sensitization campaigns • Inter and intra-ethnic "joking relationships" • Inter-faith marriages

Politics and Governance

Addressing the 2016-2017 constitutional crisis and the subsequent restoration of democracy in The Gambia, fieldwork respondents described how the reinstitution of democratic principles has gradually fostered trust in the political structure. Respondents reported that the administration's respect for civil liberties and its recognition and guaranteeing of human rights have largely done

"When it comes to all elections, people vote on ethnic lines. People in the Gambia will vote based on the ethnic and historical relationships not the competence of the candidates. It is also a threat to our country."

- Men's FGD, Banjul

away with the climate of repression and fear that had defined the nation. As one participant in the Men's FGD stated, "In my opinion, there is more freedom of expression. We don't have to look over our shoulders for fear of repression for speaking our minds. There are a few demonstrations to support the government. We have more freedom." Another described how in the present climate of democratic restructuring and reform, professors are increasingly expressing their opinions about political issues without fear of retaliation and retribution.

However, with the country still facing a legacy of entrenched structural vulnerabilities – some of which predate the Jammeh era – many citizens remain skeptical about the cultivation of new inclusive and sustainable governance. Notably, interviewees cited the politicization of ethnicity, resulting in the organization of politics along ethnic

lines, nepotism, weak institutions, the lack of meritocracy in appointment processes, a male-dominated media industry, logistical deficiencies of media houses, and corruption as principal challenges.

Fieldwork participants in the Banjul municipality also expressed concern with the underrepresentation of youth and women in the political space. Although Gambian youth served as a key voting bloc and actively participated in civic education and engagement during the 2016 presidential elections, the appointment of "old hands" to ministerial positions has sparked disillusionment about the new administration's commitment to youth involvement in politics.

Although respondents reported that there is a growing advocacy for reform by women and CSOs, they also held that the lack of political consciousness, limited support for female candidates, educational and financial constraints, the absence of gender equality legislation, and enduring socio-cultural norms were detriments to female political empowerment. One respondent stated, "Religion and cultural sentiments are drivers behind women's low decision-making roles by subordinating them to men in that regard. Custom and religion have been used to rationalize and perpetuate these different roles to the extent that women themselves seem to have accepted this subordinate position."

Finally, by and large, perceptions about the state of the country's social cohesion were weak, primarily stemming from Jammeh's politicization of ethnicity. As one FGD participant explained, "There was impunity and one man had all the power. So, people were most afraid of him and when the opportunity came for the people to make a choice, the Gambia[n] people in their majority voted to oust him. The state of social cohesion is still fragile, but it is what is also keeping people together. Ethnocentrism is a threat to security. I mean political alliance based on ethnicity."

Rule of Law

In the aftermath of the 2016-2017 constitutional crisis, The Gambia launched a comprehensive Security Sector Reform (SSR) program that aims to strengthen its security and judicial institutions.[169] Institutional reforms, such as the appointment of Gambian citizens as Supreme Court justices, are gradually improving public perception about the judicial system. However, judicial independence remains a primary issue of concern. One participant in the Youth FGD noted, "From the actions of the government, the separation of powers still exists although loyalty to the executive is still an issue."

Additional reforms like the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC)[170] and the reinstatement of wrongfully-terminated government officials under the Jammeh regime were described as evidence of the government's commitment to transitional justice and reconciliation. However, some interviewees cautioned against how the organization of issues along ethnic and religious lines can undermine reconciliation and accountability efforts. As one interviewee expressed, "This is not a government of revenge, rather one that can work for change and healing. I am saying this because there is a tendency for people to be aligned ethnically and religiously on issues… There is a feeling among the

> *"Women are not at the forefront as far as politics is concerned in the Gambia. They are generally considered as entertainers (dancing and singing). They are not given the necessary exposure to understand what politics is all about. Our culture, tradition, and religion affects their role in politics. These are used by most people to undermine their active participation in politics."*
>
> *- Youth FGD, Banjul*

---

169 "Launch of Security Sector Reform Process in The Gambia", UNOWAS, September 2017

170 "Gambia concludes draft bill on truth commission", International Center for Transitional Justice, July 2017

Gambians that this is being done on ethnic and religious basis and that is why the government should constantly communicate to the population its actions to avoid misinterpretations and rumors that could affect the social cohesion."

While some respondents described a general level of confidence in the rule of law framework, particularly citing the country's tripartite legal structure, other participants, also noting the tripartite legal system, expressed feelings of mistrust in the system. For these interviewees, the dissonance between the country's statutory, customary, and Sharia laws proves limiting to women's rights. As one respondent in the Men's FGD noted, "There is [a] dichotomy in the application of laws. We have the constitution, the Sharia law when it comes to inheritance; we have the customary law all clashing in the same space. The application of these laws sometimes undermines women's rights." Although Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms were highlighted as increasing access to justice, respondents reported that delays in the adjudication process, the lack of protective protocols to accompany legal provisions on gender rights, the marginal role of women in national-level conflict management structures and the reliance on customary adjudication processes in cases of gender-based violence were viewed as hampering such efforts.

Security

The restoration of democracy in The Gambia, the presence of ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) forces, and the institution of a Security Sector Reform (SSR) program has largely engendered a changing, positive outlook on the country's security apparatus. Highlights mentioned include promoting trust between citizens and police forces, increasing the number of female officers, and establishing professionalism among security forces. As one participant in the Men's FGD stated, "From experience, there is now a trust between citizens and the police. We had a protest

a few weeks ago and the police was courteous and professional to us. They listen to our grievances. This rarely happened in the past. There are also more female police officers deployed in the interior

"The prison system is rife with corruption. No respect for human rights, political opponents who have disappeared or dead have not received justice and the old wardens who committed these hideous crimes are still there."

- Men's FGD, Banjul

of the country."

Fieldwork respondents also held that the new administration's recognition of human rights, particularly freedom of speech, has gradually dissolved the pervasive climate of fear, generating feelings of security. One participant noted, "In the past, I used to feel unsafe because of the fear [that] I could be arrested for my ideas and opinions which may be against the old regime." However, corruption and persistent operational deficiencies, notably delays in investigations, slow response times and the reliance on the security expertise of Senegal have weakened perceptions about the capacity of the security apparatus to contain threats of insecurity. Additionally, the divide between Jammeh loyalists and Barrow loyalists in the military was cited as a detriment to the attainment of sustainable security. One interviewee described how some military officers were arrested for allegedly plotting against the security of the state.

Key security threats identified by participants in the Banjul municipality included land grabbing, porous borders, illegal logging and the rise in criminality and crime, in particular breaking and entering. Rape was also highlighted as a threat - which was cited as being perpetrated by recently released prisoners. In addition, The Gambia's proximity to the Casamance and the former president's alleged relationship to the region's Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) rebel

group[171] were identified as major concerns for the local population. Interviewees noted that the general climate of lawlessness in the MFDC-controlled areas around the Kanilai border as well as the flourishing drug trade and narcotic enterprise of the area posed threats.

Population and Demographics

Respondents reported that demographic changes, particularly the emigration of youth to Europe and rural-urban migration, were key issues of concern. According to interviewees, youth emigration to Europe is primarily driven by economic hardships and pressures. One participant in the Women's FGD recounted, "Irregular migration (popularly called 'back door' migration in The Gambia) is common among youth and it is driven by poverty, lack of employment opportunities and underemployment... Women also get involved in irregular migration and often sponsor their children to go abroad in the hope of getting financial security and freedom from hardship in the farms." This trend of emigration has contributed to "brain drain" and diminished productivity, adversely impacting the Gambian economy. While interviewees noted that "back door migration" had proven economically beneficial to families of migrants, they also described how the uncertainties of the treacherous enterprise had generated mental health challenges. One fieldwork respondent in the Youth FGD related, "Although some families have benefited economically from migration of their children to Europe, this is affecting a lot of Gambian families whose children died trying to cross the Mediterranean. Some parents have developed psychological trauma with the absence of their children whose whereabouts are unknown to most of them." On the topic of rural-urban migration, participants identified poor employment prospects and rural-urban disparities in social services as primary contributing factors.

Issues specific to children and women were also noted during the fieldwork. Participants highlighted child marriage and the related risks of teenage pregnancy, maternal deaths and school drop-outs, high infant mortality rates. These were partly attributed to poor health infrastructure and child begging, which exposes girls to sexual abuse. The prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV), dating abuse, marital rape, and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) were identified as further vulnerabilities.

> "For gender-based violence, some people believe that some form of violence is due to the love the husband has for the wife."
>
> - Youth FGD, Banjul

Although interviewees noted that gender and child protection units and sensitization campaigns exist, they reported that enduring socio-cultural and religious norms hamper such efforts. The prevalence of stigma, which has contributed to underreported cases of GBV and FGM/C, the lack of counselling centers and shelters, the lack of legislation criminalizing marital rape and other cases of GBV[172] and the fear of societal exclusion were identified as additional undermining factors. Also, unwelcoming attitudes and the limited use of family planning services were identified as further vulnerabilities. Although respondents reported that awareness about the importance of family planning services has increased, they also stated that the side effects of contraceptives and the perception that family planning is a 'western idea' continue to restrict its acceptance in society.

Finally, although fieldwork participants reported that The Gambia's tradition of religious tolerance and inter/intra-ethnic "joking relationships" have promoted social cohesion, one participant held that the country has experienced a rise in religious

---

[171] "Casamance conflict is unhealed sore for Senegal", Lewis, D., Reuters, February 2012

[172] "The Gambia Shadow Report On The Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women", CEDAW, July 2015

tensions. Attributing the rise in religious tensions to the declaration of The Gambia as an Islamic Republic in 2015,[173] the respondent described how there have been attempts to eject Mandinka Christians from certain heterogeneous communities.

Economics and Resources

Perceived economic dominance of foreigners, low salaries, weak enforcement of labor laws, the exploitation of employees in the private and public sectors, high commodity prices, high unemployment rates, the lack of job security, the impact of high fuel prices on transportation fares, and the lack of a price control system were highlighted as key economic concerns in the Banjul municipality. As one participant in the Youth FGD expressed, "The price of food commodities is very high and fluctuates on regulation. With no price control in the country, there is this belief that commodity prices should increase with increasing fuel prices." Fieldwork participants also reported that the continued economic challenges facing the youth, which were partly attributed to the lack of investment in "productive areas", have resulted in significant trends of illegal migration in recent years. One key informant interviewee explained, "Economic hardship in pushing our youth to take risks to cross the ocean to get to Europe. Invest in productive areas of the economy to retain young people in the country."

Fieldwork respondents also expressed concern with the limited role of women in the Gambian economy. For interviewees, limited access to land, the vulnerability of women in business to GBV, the lack of storage facilities for their wares, enduring socio-cultural norms, and educational constraints are key barriers to female economic empowerment. As one participant in the Women's FGD explained, "There is limited scholarship for women to pursue higher education. Scholarships are only restricted to medical and science

programs in The Gambia. Students doing arts, social and management sciences do not get scholarships, making it hard for them to continue their education. Young women get exposed to exploitation from men who promise financial support to their education." Additionally, fieldwork participants reported that the limited economic activities available to women has undermined their economic potential, limiting them to petty trading and agriculture. The structure of the country's small and large-scale business loans was also cited as a contributing factor to poor female economic empowerment. Although perceptions about access to capital were mixed, participants maintained that the prerequisite for collateral by commercial banks, which most women do not have, discourages them from engaging in business ventures. However, government and IGO-funded programs like Empretec-Gambia and private social enterprises like Startup Incubator Gambia, which support entrepreneurship and businesses, were noted as resilience factors.

## Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Despite the vulnerabilities and risks listed above, the Banjul municipality has a number of social and institutional resilience factors that help mitigate these risks. Fieldwork participants particularly identified the role of democratic reforms such as the Security Sector Reform (SSR) program in engendering trust and strengthening police-community relations. Traditional institutions and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms were identified for contributing to dispute resolution and enhancing access to justice. Civil society groups, cited as increasing awareness about female political participation, were also viewed as positive resilience factors.

Social enterprise groups, government and IGO-funded business development programs, were highlighted as advancing the entrepreneurial potential of youth and women. Finally, a culture of

---

[173] "Gambia president declares country an Islamic republic", Reuters, December 2015

inter/intra-ethnic jovial relationships and inter-faith marriages were described as maintaining the country's fragile social cohesion.

Kanifing Municipality
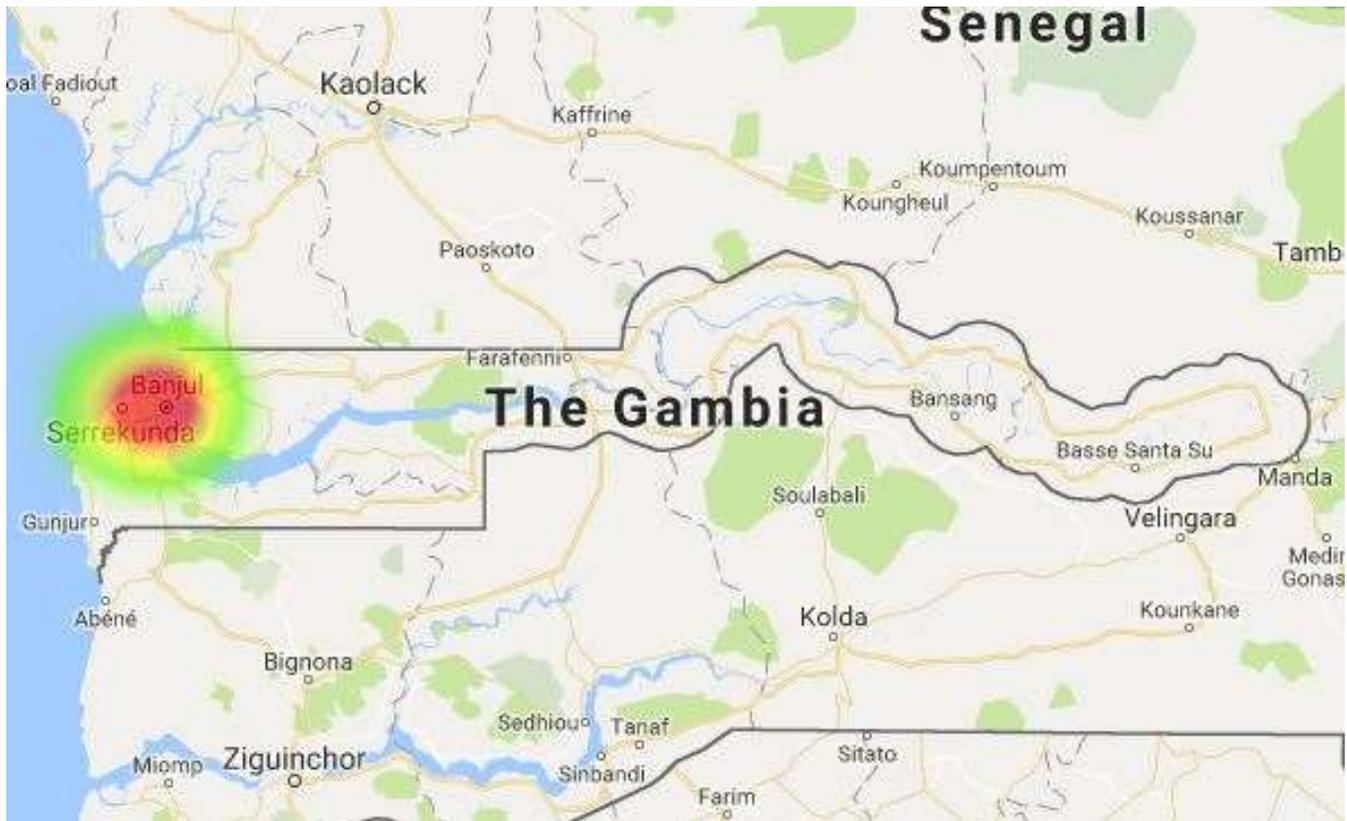
The Kanifing municipality borders the Banjul municipality to the east and the West Coast Region to the south. Kanifing also borders the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the west. As of the 2013 Census, the municipality's population was 382,096.[174] The Mandinka ethnic group is the largest ethnic group in the region, although the Fula, Jola and Wolof ethnic groups also compose a significant portion of the population.[175] Of the municipality's economically active population, 41.8 percent are engaged in service, shop and market sales jobs while 20.3 percent are engaged in trade and crafts professions.[176]

Structural Vulnerabilities	• Underrepresentation of women in political decision-making roles • Perceptions of executive influence and corruption in the judicial system • Gender-based violence (GBV) • Trends of youth migration to urban areas and to Europe • Early marriage and teenage pregnancy • Underutilization of family planning • Rising prices for staple foods • Inadequate access to infrastructure and social services • Barriers to land ownership for women

---

[174] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[175] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[176] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013

Event-Driven Risks	• Criminality, including theft and drug trafficking
	• Elections
	• Withdrawal of ECOMIG forces
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	• Civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs
	• Traditional leaders (alkalos) involved in dispute resolution
	• Active political engagement of youth and women
	• Community policing structures
	• Culture of religious tolerance

Politics and Governance

Given the December 2016 political transition in The Gambia, much of the discussion by fieldwork participants centered around changes made by the new administration and lingering concerns regarding political polarization, future elections, and national reconciliation. Several respondents reported that hate speech and polarization along ethnic lines were exacerbated under the Jammeh administration and expressed concern that future elections could turn violent if the current government is perceived to be biased. The question of whether President Barrow would maintain his position for three years or a full five-year term was also debated. The need for national reconciliation and accountability was similarly highlighted by fieldwork participants, with several interviewees noting that former President Jammeh continues to have supporters who may not support attempts to prosecute Jammeh. Interviewees also called for greater transparency and communication with the public by the current government and emphasized the need for widespread civic education.

"Jammeh's coming will set the country ablaze as some will want him to face justice while others will not want that."

– Men's FGD, Kanifing

Women remain underrepresented in formal political decision-making roles, despite being actively involved in voting and political mobilization. Fieldwork participants noted that women face barriers to accessing the financing and support needed to run for office and are deterred by cultural norms which define politics as a primarily male endeavor. As one female opinion leader explained, "Women's role in politics is limited to supporting men. Though there are some women in decision-making bodies they are very few. This is due to financial constraints, low levels of education, the belief that women are responsible for domestic chores, and [the fact] that women don't support each other."

Rule of Law

Fieldwork participants in the Kanifing municipality expressed concerns around a lack of judicial independence and corruption in the judicial system. It was noted that the ability of the president to appoint judges led to frequent executive interference under the previous administration, and interviewees expressed concern about this possibility in the future. Several participants also called for greater progress on combatting corruption and providing accountability, particularly around cases involving officials from the former Jammeh administration.

Fieldwork participants also reported that dispute resolution in Kanifing takes place primarily through mediation within families or by local community

leaders, rather than the judicial system. As one participant in the Men's FGD explained, "When there is a misunderstanding between members of the community, the *alkalo* [a traditional local leader] is usually the first contact person for redress. If the matter at hand is beyond the *alkalo* then the Chief is involved and then the police. People do not commonly go to the courts for redress as they easily jeopardize social relations."

Finally, it was noted that women's rights are poorly protected in practice, despite the existence of national legislation on issues such as gender-based violence (GBV) and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C).

Security

The primary security concern identified by fieldwork participants in Kanifing was a rise in crime, particularly theft and armed banditry. As one interviewee in the Women's FGD described, "The security [situation] has deteriorated to the level that there are 'no-go' areas for the police. The criminals seem to get bolder by the day." Many participants expressed that trust in the police has deteriorated due to inadequate staffing and resources, slow response times, and a lack of professionalism by security forces. As a result, many communities first report non-lethal incidents to the traditional leader (*alkalo*) rather than the police, or rely on neighborhood watch or community policing groups to ensure security.

"Crime rates are increasing and this time around it is not the government that is culpable but individuals. Cases like murder, abuse of democracy and robbery are on the rise."

- Female Opinion Leader, Kanifing

Fieldwork participants reported that the overall security situation has improved due to the presence of the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG). However, several interviewees called for improved collaboration between ECOMIG, Gambian security forces, and local communities to build trust. Participants also highlighted the need for further security sector reform (SSR) programming, as forces loyal to Jammeh remain in the army and could pose a potential security threat in the future if there is a rise in political tensions.

Finally, gender-based violence (GBV) is reportedly widespread in Kanifing. Participants in the Men's FGD noted that police stations have opened dedicated gender units and the Cadi court (a religious court that applies Sharia law in cases of marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance involving Muslims)[177] settles GBV cases. However, these cases are rare, as incidents are routinely underreported due to a strong culture of silence.

Population and Demographics

According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, nearly one-third (32.2 percent) of the population of the Kanifing municipality is made up of the Mandinka ethnic group. The Fula, Wolof and Jola ethnic groups also comprise 17.3 percent, 14.6 percent, and 16.4 percent of the population, respectively.[178] While ethnic conflict was not an immediate concern, fieldwork participants reported that tensions between ethnic and political groups exist and rise during election periods. Interviewees noted that tensions between the Mandinka and Jola ethnic groups were particularly exacerbated during Jammeh's rule, and Jammeh was accused of privileging his own ethnic group, the Jola, over other groups.[179]

The Kanifing municipality has also been strongly affected by migration including both migration to Kanifing from rural areas and illegal emigration to

---

[177] "Cadi Court", Judiciary of The Gambia, January 2014
[178] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013

[179] "Yahya Jammeh's Tribalism", Sommerfelt, T., Africasacountry, December 2016

Europe through the so-called "back way" following the Western Saharan route in Senegal and the Central Mediterranean route through Libya and Italy.[180] Interviewees reported that emigration is often driven by unemployment and contributes to "brain drain". One participant also noted that youth who are forced to return to The Gambia from Europe could become a threat in the future if they are not economically and socially engaged.

Additional demographic concerns highlighted by fieldwork participants included early marriage, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), and an underutilization of family planning. The median age at first marriage in Kanifing is 20.1 years for women and 29.7 years for men, which is the second-highest in the country after the Banjul municipality. Fieldwork participants reported that cases of early marriage are often driven by economic concerns and contribute to a higher rate of school dropouts among teenage girls.
FGM/C is an ongoing issue as well, despite being outlawed by the Gambian government. As of 2010, 69.5 percent of women ages 15-49 and 31.9 percent of girls ages 0-14 in Kanifing had undergone some form of FGM/C.[181] Finally, while family planning services are reportedly available, interviewees noted that cultural and religious norms often deter women from utilizing these services. As of 2013, 14.6 percent of married women ages 15-49 in Kanifing reported using any form of contraception.[182]

"The Government and NGOs make access [to family planning] easy. The women usually have to take permission from their spouses to use family planning methods. Due to cultural and religious considerations the men usually do not encourage the use of birth control methods."

- Women's FGD, Kanifing

Economics and Resources

"Traders sell goods at any price they want. The prices are always on the increase. The excuse given is that the domestic currency is depreciating, there is no price control and the taxes are too many and high. But sometimes the community thinks that it is because the business sector is dominated by foreigners who have no empathy for the population and are just here to make excessive profits."

- Women's FGD, Kanifing

As an urban area, a majority of Kanifing's population is engaged in trade, sales, or service positions rather than agriculture.[183] Key economic concerns raised by fieldwork participants in Kanifing included rising food prices and inadequate access to infrastructure and social services, particularly healthcare. Interviewees reported that water and electricity supplies are expensive and unreliable, while the municipality's health facilities lack the necessary personnel, equipment and medications. The rising cost of staple food products, which participants attributed to a lack of government price controls, is also creating economic pressures for local residents.
Women in the Kanifing municipality are primarily economically engaged as petty traders. Interviewees reported that women face barriers to accessing financing and land ownership under customary law, which limits their economic empowerment. As one interviewee in the Women's FGD explained, "Land is owned by the family and women do not own land. In terms of inheritance women cannot claim equality with men. Women groups are advocating for the laws to be changed to favour the women more. The women groups are targeting the upcoming review of the Constitution."

[180] "The Gambia: Migration in Africa's 'Smiling Coast'", Omar Kebbeh, C., Migration Policy Institute, August 2013
[181] "The Gambia: Multi Indicator Cluster Survey", UNICEF Multi Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), June 2012

[182] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[183] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Despite the above vulnerabilities and risks, fieldwork participants in Kanifing identified a number of sources of social and institutional resilience. Civil society organizations (CSOs) reportedly play an important role in promoting civic education and sensitization on issues such as family planning and FGM/C. Traditional leaders (*alkalos*) are also key actors in dispute resolution and local governance in the region. Women and youth are actively involved in voting and political life, despite being underrepresented in formal decision-making positions, and participants in the Youth FGD noted that some CSOs are leading campaigns to promote greater youth participation, such as the "Not Too Young to Run" campaign.[184] In the area of security, community policing structures have reportedly helped to curb crime in some parts of the municipality. Finally, The Gambia's culture of religious tolerance was viewed by multiple interviewees as an important source of social resilience.

---

[184] "Definition of Youth: Gambia", youthpolicy.org, October 2014

The Central River region is composed of two Local Government Areas (LGAs): Janjanbureh LGA in the southern portion of the district and the Kuntaur LGA in the northern portion of the district. As of the 2013 census, the Central River region had a population of 226,018.[185] To the north and the south, the Central River region shares borders with Senegal, while the region shares an eastern border with the Basse LGA and a western border with the Mansakonko and Kerewan LGAs. The Fula ethnic group comprises the majority of the population in the region, with the Wolof and Mandinka ethnic groups being the second and third largest in the region, respectively.[186] The Central River region's economy is dominated by the agricultural sector, with 80 percent of the economically active population working in agriculture.[187] The region is known for its rice production and livestock.[188]

---

[185] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[186] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[187] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[188] "Central River Division", The Atlas of The Gambia, December 2008

Structural Vulnerabilities	• Underrepresentation of women and youth in formal decision-making roles • High rate of youth unemployment • Gender-based violence (GBV) • Inadequate staff and resources for police forces • Trends of youth migration to urban areas and to Europe • Rural-urban disparities in infrastructure and inadequate access to social services such as healthcare and education • Early marriage and teenage pregnancy • Underutilization of family planning • Rising prices for staple foods • Environmental degradation and climate pressures
Event-Driven Risks	• Criminality, including theft and drug trafficking • Herder-farmer tensions • Natural disasters, including floods and droughts • Food insecurity
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	• Social cohesion among ethnic groups, supported by social activities and the "joking relationship" • Women's associations (yayi kompins) • Microfinance initiatives • Elders and traditional leaders • Media and civil society organizations • Village Development Committees (VDCs)

Politics and Governance

Fieldwork participants in the Central River region expressed overwhelmingly positive views of the changes made by the Gambian government since the December 2016 political transition and reported that local communities have high hopes for the new administration. Interviewees reported that Gambian society has seen a marked increase in freedom of speech and civil liberties in the past year, and that human rights abuses by government and security forces have declined. However, several interviewees called for greater transparency and accountability in government, noting that the government and its institutions often seem disconnected from local communities, particularly those in rural areas. Respondents also highlighted the need for further civic education and sensitization on political rights at the local level. Youth and women reportedly play an active role in political campaigning and voting in The Gambia but

are less well-represented in formal decision-making positions. Women's associations (*yayi kompins*) are an important political force in The Gambia and political parties seek support from the leaders of these groups during campaign periods. However, this political activity is rarely translated into formal decision-making power, which ultimately limit's women's impact in politics. As one participant in the Women's FGD in Upper Saloum stated, "Decision-making is very important, because it doesn't make sense to say we are

"The country's current political situation has changed something in Gambians. People have their rights and they can exercise that. There is the view that if those rights are continuously respected by the government in power, then there is hope in the future of the country."

- Men's FGD, Upper Saloum

empowered [when] we can't make our own decisions."

Rule of Law

Fieldwork participants in the Central River region reported that dispute resolution for non-criminal cases is primarily handled through mediation by elders or local chiefs (known as *alkalos*) rather than the formal justice system. Some communities, such as those in Upper Saloum, do not have access to a courthouse or other justice system infrastructure and thus rely on alternative mechanisms.

Several interviewees also highlighted the need for a government-supported Truth and Reconciliation Commission and country-wide processes to promote accountability and reconciliation in the post-Jammeh period.

Security

The primary security concern identified by fieldwork participants in the Central River region was criminality, including cases of armed robbery and theft. Several interviewees from Upper Saloum also reported occasional tensions between herders and farmers, while respondents from border areas noted incidents of theft and drug trafficking across the Senegalese border. Gender-based violence (GBV) is also a significant issue facing women in

"GBV is hardly reported. Gambians believe in maslaha and as women we are always asked to exercise patience in our matrimonial homes so that our children can be blessed. We are powerless ... Even if we do want to report the matter to police, few elders would intervene."

- Women's FGD, Upper Saloum

the region. Interviewees noted that despite the prevalence of GBV, reporting rates remain low and there is a strong culture of silence around domestic and sexual violence.

Fieldwork participants generally expressed a positive view of security forces in the region and reported that police have good relationships with local communities. However, interviewees acknowledged that police are routinely understaffed and lack adequate resources. There is also a lack of police presence in some rural areas, and as a result, communities often rely on vigilante or community watch groups to ensure security.

Population and Demographics

According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, the population of the Central River region is predominantly comprised of the Fula, Mandinka, and Wolof ethnic groups. In Kuntaur LGA, these groups account for 41.1 percent, 23.9 percent, and 32.6 percent of the population, respectively. In Janjanbureh LGA, the Fula make up 41.2 percent of the population, while the Mandinka account for 24.6 percent and the Wolof 25.4 percent.[189] Across the region, fieldwork participants reported a sense of strong social cohesion, which is supported by social events that promote intergroup mixing such as football tournaments, as well as the "joking relationship"[190] between various groups.

Key demographic concerns highlighted by interviewees in the Central River region include migration, poor access to infrastructure and social services, early marriage, and family planning. The Central River region has reportedly seen a high rate of rural-urban migration as well as youth migration to Banjul and to Europe. Interviewees attributed the rise in migration to the region's poor employment prospects and development disparities between rural and urban areas.

---

[189] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[190] The "joking relationship" refers to customary ties between various ethnic groups and individuals that involve ritualized

joking and mutual obligations.
"Special Affinities and Conflict Resolution: West African Social Institutions and Mediation" Davidheiser, M., Beyond Intractability, December 2005

Fieldwork participants also highlighted the region's inequality between rural and urban areas, particularly in the provision of infrastructure and social services such as healthcare and education. Interviewees reported that some rural communities lack infrastructure for water and electricity, and poor road conditions affect the ability of farmers to transport their goods to local markets. Access to healthcare was a key concern among fieldwork participants, with hospitals facing drug shortages and patients being forced to travel long distances to access care. As one participant in the Women's FGD in Kuntaur described, "If one is sick in Panchang, we have to travel all the way to Kauur (where the hospital is). Our pregnant women go through the same and this can be very dangerous. One day, a woman in labor was bleeding profusely and when she was rushed to Kauur, she was transferred to Farafenni and one may even lose her life under such circumstances. These [healthcare] facilities must be made available to avoid crisis like this."

Early marriage of girls continues to be a concern in the Central River region. As of 2013 Kuntaur LGA had the lowest median age at first marriage in the country (17.2 years among women ages 20-49). In Janjanbureh LGA, the median age at first marriage was 18.3 years as of 2013.[191] Interviewees noted that early marriage is often driven by a desire for the bride's family to avoid the social shame or stigma associated with giving birth out of wedlock.

Fieldwork participants expressed mixed opinions on family planning, and contraceptive use in the region remains low. Only 4.2 percent of women ages 15-49 in Kuntaur LGA and 5.8 percent of women in Janjanbureh LGA report using any form of contraception (compared to the national average of 9 percent).[192] Relatedly, Kuntaur and Janjanbureh LGAs have the second- and third-highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the country. As of 2013, 26.7 and 26.6 percent of girls ages 15-19 in Kuntaur and Janjanbureh LGAs, respectively, had begun childbearing.[193] Interviewees reported that family planning is often underutilized due to religious and cultural norms, though some noted that the health and economic benefits of family planning are making it a more attractive option for women.

Finally, fieldwork participants reported that the Central River region has seen a decrease in female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) in recent years, largely thanks to sensitization campaigns and trainings by civil society groups. As one participant in the Women's FGD in Kuntaur recounted, "My mother-in-law used to be a circumciser and she had cut many girls within surrounding communities. She has stopped the practice because she is now aware of its consequences and she is in the fore-front of anti-FGM/C campaigns since she received the training." However, rates of FGM/C remain relatively high. As of 2010, 63.4 percent of women ages 15-49 in Kuntaur LGA and 75.9 percent of women in Janjanbureh LGA had undergone some form of FGM/C.[194] Among girls aged 0-14, this number was 34.5 percent in Kuntaur LGA and 45.1 percent in Janjanbureh LGA.[195]

[191] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[192] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[193] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014

[194] "The Gambia: Multi Indicator Cluster Survey", UNICEF Multi Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), June 2012
[195] "The Gambia: Multi Indicator Cluster Survey", UNICEF Multi Indicator Cluster Study (MICS), June 2012

Economics and Resources

The Central River region is economically dependent on agriculture, particularly the production of rice. Fieldwork participants reported that businesses in the region are dominated by foreign nationals, particularly Mauritanians and Guineans, while a majority of the local population is engaged in agricultural production.

Key economic concerns highlighted by fieldwork participants include a rise in staple food prices, taxation, youth unemployment and low agricultural productivity. Interviewees reported that rising prices for staple goods such as rice, oil and sugar have negatively impacted food security in the region. As noted above, the region's dependence on agriculture has also resulted in a lack of formal employment opportunities for youth, which has contributed to a rise in youth migration to other parts of The Gambia or to Europe.

Agricultural productivity is also hindered by the sector's limited mechanization, the region's poor road infrastructure (which inhibits farmers' ability to transport products to markets), the frequent destruction of rice fields by wild animals and environmental pressures. Interviewees reported that cycles of drought and flooding in recent years, as well as deforestation, have negatively affected crop yields and livelihoods.

Finally, women in the Central River region face barriers to land ownership under customary law and often struggle to access financing and credit. Interviewees noted that women in the area have benefitted from microfinance initiatives, including programs operated by Reliance Financial Services,[196] Gambia Women's Finance Association (GAWFA),[197] and others.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Despite the challenges detailed above, fieldwork participants in the Central River region identified a number of social and institutional resilience factors which help to mitigate conflict risks and vulnerabilities. Across the region, interviewees reported a sense of strong social cohesion among ethnic groups, which is supported by frequent social gatherings such as football tournaments and the maintenance of "joking relationships" among various groups. Women's associations (known as *yayi kompins*) are also a source of social cohesion and help provide economic and social support for women in the Central River region. Participants in the Women's FGD in Kuntaur reported that women in some *kompins* contribute to rotating funds which are used to support members in the event of unforeseen costs or emergencies. *Yayi kompins* have also historically played a role in mobilizing women during election periods and continue to be an important political force in The Gambia. Women in the Central River area also receive economic support from microfinance initiatives, including programs run by Reliance Financial Services[198] and others. Elders and traditional leaders (*alkalos*) play an important role in dispute resolution and are often the preferred mediators in local-level conflicts. Media and civil society organizations also play a key role in information-sharing, civic education, and sensitization around issues such as early marriage and FGM/C. Interviewees reported that the recent political transition has resulted in improved freedom of speech and operations for these groups. However, some expressed concern around the potential for the media to contribute to the spread of misinformation or hate speech. Finally, Village Development Committees (VDCs) operate at the local level to address issues of infrastructure and development.

---

[196] Reliance Financial Services Company Limited (Reliance) is a non-bank financial institution, founded by three young Gambian professionals with vast experiences in the financial services sector.
[197] "GAWFA: About Gambia Women's Finance Association", Women's World Banking, 2018

[198] Reliance Financial Services Company Limited (Reliance) is a non-bank financial institution, founded by three young Gambian professionals with vast experiences in the financial services sector.

The West Coast region is composed of the Brikama Local Government Area (LGA). Its population according to the 2013 census was 699,704, making it the most populous region in The Gambia.[199] The largest ethnic group in the region is the Mandinka, although the Fula, Wolof and Jola ethnic groups also make up a significant portion of the division's population.[200] Of the West Coast region's economically active population, 19.5 percent work in agriculture, 20 percent work in trade and craft related professions, while 30.1 percent work in service, shop and market sales professions.[201] Tourism also contributes significantly to the region's economy.[202]

---

[199] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[200] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[201] "2013 Population and Housing Census", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[202] "Western Division", The Atlas of The Gambia, December 2008

Structural Vulnerabilities	- Polarized politics along ethnic lines - Underrepresentation of women and youth in political decision-making - Perceived lack of government transparency - Limited access to justice for vulnerable populations - Perceived lack of judicial independence - Gender-based violence (GBV) - Porous borders - Perceived corruption and lack of training for security forces - High rate of youth unemployment - Mistrust towards ECOMIG troops - Inadequate access to social services such as healthcare - High rates of early marriage and FGM/C - Increased numbers of "back way" returnees - Environmental pressures and climate change
Event-Driven Risks	- Political tensions between ethnic groups - Elections - Criminality - Clashes with ECOMIG - Food insecurity
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	- Inter-marriage and "joking relationships" - Traditional leaders/elders - Alternative Dispute Resolution - Youth organizations - Civil Society Organizations - Media and radio programming

Politics and Governance

The key issues highlighted by fieldwork participants in the West Coast region included a rise in hate speech during election periods, a lack of transparency within the new government and underrepresentation of women and youth in decision-making positions. Interviewees reported that social cohesion is undermined during election cycles due to hate speech, which is often exacerbated by politically biased media outlets. For this reason, some respondents expressed concern about the potential for violence in future elections. In addition, participants reported that tensions between the Mandinka and the Jola ethnic groups are on the rise due to the perception that the Jola (the ethnic group of former President Jammeh) do

not want to participate in the new government. One interviewee also noted that some view the Jola as being rebels from the Casamance region of Senegal, further increasing tensions.

While many participants viewed the political transition in early 2017 as "mark[ing] the rebirth of democracy", some also reported that the new government is perceived as lacking transparency. One participant noted that new government officials have yet to declare their assets and expressed the opinion that many government officials were appointed for loyalty rather than merit. Due to these and similar issues, participants expressed frustration with the perceived lack of change since the end of Jammeh's administration. However, interviewees did report improvements in freedom of speech and girls' education since

Jammeh's administration ended, although some participants felt that "people sometimes abuse [freedom of speech] by infringing on the rights of others."

Women and youth continue to be underrepresented in political decision making in the West Coast region, with one participant noting there is currently only one female councilor and one female parliamentarian from the area. Some participants attributed this underrepresentation to women's low levels of education in The Gambia. However, youth in Brikama noted that education for girls is improving, and youth representation in the National Assembly is slowly increasing.

Rule of Law

Participants in the West Coast region reported that there has not been much substantive change to the judicial system since the end of Jammeh's administration, highlighting a perceived lack of judicial independence and limited access to justice for vulnerable populations. One participant reported that government officials continue to be dismissed without due process, and suspects continue to be detained for more than 72 hours without being charged. Another participant mentioned, however, that while there has not been much change within the judiciary, the recent political transition has allowed for more freedom of speech. Given the relatively low levels of trust in the judicial system, many respondents reported that most disputes are resolved by traditional leaders or elders, with referral to the police if traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution are unsuccessful.

The Women's FGD in Brikama also reported that women are being sensitized to their rights but continue to face high levels of abuse and gender-based violence (GBV). Despite the existence of legislation prohibiting domestic and sexual violence, fieldwork participants noted that incidents of GBV are routinely underreported due to societal stigmas.

Finally, fieldwork respondents highlighted the need for the newly-formed Truth, Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (TRRC) to provide accountability for abuses during the Jammeh administration. However, some participants expressed frustration with the fact that the process does not appear adequately transparent and that some of those involved in the TRRC were also members of Jammeh's government.

Security

The primary security concerns raised by fieldwork participants in the West Coast region are increased political and ethnic tensions, criminality associated with porous borders and "back way" returnees, and the presence of the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) in the region. Many of the participants reported that recent political tension has increased ethnic tensions and tribalism in the region, thereby affecting security. In addition, several interviewees reported that crime has increased due to activity along the Senegalese border and the return of former illegal migrants from Europe. One respondent cited cross-border animal rustling as an issue, but also noted that the National Livestock Owner's Association has been able to effectively address this.

Most participants in the West Coast region expressed concerns around the presence of ECOMIG in the area, reporting that ECOMIG soldiers lack sufficient training, intimidate citizens, and have inappropriate sexual relationships with

"ECOMIG forces visit our markets with guns as if we are criminals. We are not used to seeing guns in town and this is strange. In fact, an ECOMIG soldier once misplaced his gun which was picked by a kid. Only God knows what would have happened if the child was able to pull the trigger."

- Women's FGD, Bwiam, Foni Kansala District

local women. One participant reported that a civilian was killed in a confrontation with an ECOMIG soldier during a march from Kanila to Kanfenda. During fieldwork interviews with ECOMIG representatives, this incident was described as an accidental shooting that was the result of the civilian struggling for the soldier's weapon.

Respondents also expressed the opinion that the ECOMIG soldiers are not all well-trained, mentioning in particular that many of these soldiers visit local women in their homes, leading to increased reports of rape and unwanted pregnancy. Some participants reported that these actions have caused the youth to build up a resistance to ECOMIG, creating the risk of further insecurity. One interviewee also mentioned that, as many of the ECOMIG soldiers are Senegalese, there is a perception that the Senegalese military has been using ECOMIG to remain close to the nearby Casamance region.

Finally, participants reported that there is a lack of adequate training and knowledge, as well as perceived corruption, amongst local security forces. As a result, crimes are often reported and solved at the community level rather than through the police. While one participant from the Women's FGD noted that community relations with police have improved, she also reported that they are perceived as being biased against supporters of the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), saying, "There was one rift between APRC and United Democratic Party (UDP) supporters and the police arrested APRC women, children, pregnant and lactating mothers while nothing of such happened to UDP supporters."

Population and Demographics

According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, the population of the West Coast region (the Brikama LGA), is 39.8 percent Mandinka, 19.7 percent Fula, 18.6 percent Jola and 10.7 percent Wolof, with smaller percentages of Sarahule, Serere, Manjago and other ethnic groups.[203] Participants reported that, while political tensions and hate speech have affected social cohesion, the region has a tradition of ethnic and religious tolerance, including inter-marriage, "joking relationships",[204] and attending each other's ceremonies.

The primary demographic vulnerabilities highlighted by interviewees in the West Coast region are migration leading to "brain drain", a lack of adequate health centers, and issues affecting women. The latter includes female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), early marriage, family planning, and gender-based violence (GBV). Many respondents reported a strong trend of migration to urban areas, particularly among unemployed youth. The Men's FGD noted that this has led to "brain drain", a shortage of skilled workers, and fewer people to work on the farms. Some participants also reported concerns that many emigrants who have returned to The Gambia, referred to as "back way" returnees, have become involved in crime and "may need certain rehab programs before they are fully integrated into society."

"Most often, men disallow their wives to practice family planning here. The reasons given are that family planning is not Islamic and men want many children."

- Women's FGD, Bwiam, Foni Kansala District

---

[203] "2013 Spatial Distribution Report", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, 2013
[204] The "joking relationship" refers to customary ties between various ethnic groups and individuals that involve ritualized joking and mutual obligations.
"Special Affinities and Conflict Resolution: West African Social Institutions and Mediation" Davidheiser, M., Beyond Intractability, December 2005

Access to healthcare was also a concern raised by fieldwork participants. Many participants reported that, while there is a large and accessible hospital in the region, Bwiam General Hospital is becoming more expensive, overcrowded and under-supplied. One participant reported that the overcrowding "has resulted in sometimes putting three to four children with different diseases on one hospital bed at a time." Other participants reported that medications are not consistently in stock and that the hospital lacks adequate staff and supplies.

Participants also highlighted a number of issues affecting women, particularly the prevalence of early marriage, FGM/C and the underutilization of family planning services. While there have reportedly been efforts, such as through radio programming, to sensitize against early marriage, participants noted that it is still common among Fulas and Sarahules. As of 2013, Brikama LGA had the third-highest median age at first marriage among women: 19 years.[205] Relatedly, Brikama LGA has a relatively low rate of teenage pregnancy. As of 2013 13.9 percent of girls ages 15-19 had begun childbearing, compared to the national average of 17.5 percent.[206] Interviewees also noted that, while many women know about family planning due to posters, the radio and hospitals, "It is the men who decide for their wives whether to practice it or not." Among married women in Brikama LGA, 11 percent reported using any form of contraception.[207]

Finally, participants also reported that FGM/C is still commonly practiced in the region. According to the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey, 77.6 percent of women in the Brikama LGA were circumcised,[208] and the practice is deeply entrenched in the local culture. As one respondent said, "It is part of our culture and even tomorrow we will practice it."

Economics and Resources

The West Coast region is largely reliant on agricultural production, mostly at the subsistence level, and petty trading. The main concerns discussed by participants were youth unemployment, the depletion of natural resources, and low rainfall negatively impacting agriculture. One respondent reported that youth unemployment has been contributing to increased poverty, crime, drug abuse and civil unrest. Other participants feel that it has driven youth migration, both to urban areas and out of the country to Europe. Interviewees noted that, while many women and youth are involved in farming, petty trading and skilled and unskilled labor, a shortage of commodities has caused high costs of food relative to earnings. The Women's FGD reported that, while they have access to microfinance services, the interest rates are high.
Participants also reported that the local economy

> *"No employment will increase the migration of young people and therefore, there is need to invest directly in young people."*
>
> *- Development Leader, Brikama*

has suffered from deforestation and overfishing by foreign companies in the region. Several interviewees highlighted the impact of large-scale Senegalese fishing boats in Gambian waters, which reduce the number and quality of fish available for local fishermen. In addition, some participants reported that many of the businesses in the region are owned or controlled by foreign nationals but do not employ many locals.

Interviewees reported that low rainfall has negatively impacted agriculture in the area, which has contributed to the rising food costs mentioned above. Businesses have also been impacted by

---

[205] "The Gambia Demographic and Health Survey 2013", Gambia Bureau of Statistics, September 2014
[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid.

erratic electricity supplies, as perishable goods will not keep as long without proper storage.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Despite the challenges discussed above, the fieldwork participants identified a number of resilience factors that mitigate conflict vulnerabilities and risks. Many of the participants mentioned that ethnic and religious tolerance is high in the region, citing "joking relationships", inter-marriages and attending other's ceremonies as factors that ease political tensions between groups in the region. Traditional leaders and elders are key actors in the management of conflict, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are available to the community. While participants did mention that media is often biased, they also mentioned that some media outlets, in particular radio programming, have been an important factor for sensitization of certain issues, such as early marriage and family planning. Some participants also reported that youth organizations have been helpful in providing civic education.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, The Gambia is most vulnerable in the areas of Politics & Governance and Rule of Law, largely due to a legacy of political oppression, corruption and abuse of human rights under the previous government. As The Gambia moves through this period of transition, President Barrow must focus on building resilient and transparent institutions and implementing reforms, while simultaneously balancing the need to provide accountability for past crimes with the essential task of promoting social cohesion. Fieldwork participants also highlighted a number of challenges which may emerge in coming years to threaten the country's current relative peace; namely, future elections and the potential for perceptions of a biased or incomplete transitional justice process.

While per capita conflict fatalities remain relatively low, The Gambia continues to face security challenges stemming from criminality and cross-border threats such as smuggling and drugs and arms trafficking. Particularly in the West Coast region, the potential of renewed conflict in Senegal's Casamance region is also a source of concern, as a return to active conflict carries a strong likelihood of spillover effects in The Gambia. Interviewees also noted that "back way" returnees could also constitute a threat to security in the future if they are not adequately reintegrated into social and economic life.

With ECOMIG forces expected to remain in the country until May 2019, security sector reform (SSR) is also an immediate priority. In addition to ensuring that both the armed forces reflect equal presentation along ethnic and political lines, fieldwork participants highlighted the need for better training and resources for Gambian security forces. Building trust with local communities must also be a priority during this period, particularly for ECOMIG forces operating in the West Coast region,

where troops have come into conflict with civilians and have been accused of raping women.

The Gambia also faces a number of systemic demographic and economic challenges. The economic potential of the country's large and growing youth population is undermined by a high rate of youth unemployment. Migration, both rural-urban and illegal migration to Europe, is contributing to "brain drain" and depleting the country's workforce for agricultural production, which is a vital economic driver. Poverty and food insecurity continue to affect a large proportion of the population, particularly in rural areas. The potential contributions of women and girls to The Gambia's social, economic and political life also remain largely unrealized due to endemic gender-based disparities and issues such as early marriage and GBV.

However, despite these challenges, The Gambia possesses important sources of social and institutional resilience which encourage optimism in the country's future. By building on The Gambia's sources of resilience, such as local leaders, women's associations, civil society organizations and social mechanisms of religious tolerance, the "New Gambia" may yet move into a period of greater development, peace and stability.

Politics and Governance
- Establish a national education campaign to encourage the political participation of women and youth
- Strengthen the implement effective gender policies
- Support a transparent and inclusive transitional justice process with the aim of providing accountability for past abuses under the Jammeh administration
- Support civic education programs, particularly those targeting youth

- Build and strengthen institutions to enhance accountability and transparency
- Support equitable implementation the findings of the TRRC to strengthen social cohesion

Rule of Law
- Sensitize religious and traditional leaders on the protection of women's rights
- Empower women about their legal rights particularly around land tenure and ownership
- Support initiatives to improve access to justice for vulnerable populations
- Support prison reform initiatives to adhere to international standards

Security
- Maintain bi- and multi-lateral training assistance programs to enhance the institutional and operational capacity of the security forces
- Create synergy among ECOMIG troops, Gambian security forces, CSOs and local communities to build trust for improved security

- Work with regional and international partners to address larger regional trends of insecurity

Population and Demographics
- Support the promotion of culturally-sensitive programming around family planning, gender-based violence (GBV) and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C)
- Invest in girls' education and literacy programs, particularly at the primary through secondary levels
- Invest in infrastructure development and service provision in rural areas, particularly in the areas of healthcare and education

Economics and Resources
- Support and expand microfinance programs and vocational training, particularly for youth and women
- Provide social and economic reintegration support to vulnerable "back-way" returnees
- Assist local farmers with investment in modern and climate-adaptive agriculture

Appendix A: Data Sample

Phase	Dimension	Source	Metric	Sample
Phase 1: Desktop	Resilience	SNA	Survey	25 Peace/Security Actors
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	ECOWARN	SitReps	670 reports
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organize and monitor national elections is/are protected from political interference	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organize and monitor national elections make/s timely, publicly available reports before and after a national election.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	EIU Democracy Index	Electoral process and pluralism	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	EIU Democracy Index	Political Participation	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	EIU Democracy Index	Functioning of Government	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	IDEA	Average Voter Turnout Parliamentary	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Transparency International	Corruption Perception	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	BTI	Political and Social Integration	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Freedom House	Political Rights	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Mo Ibrahim Index	Personal Safety	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UN, ECOWAS, AU	Peace Operations	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	ACLED	Conflict Fatalities per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)

Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UPPSALA	Presence/Conflict with Non-State Armed Groups	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	PTS	Political Terror Scale – Amnesty	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	PTS	Political Terror Scale – State	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	PTS	Political Terror Scale – HRW	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	Refugees by country of origin per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	Refugees by country of origin (difference 2015-2014) per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	IDPs by Country of Asylum per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	IDPs by country of asylum (difference 2015-2014) per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, national-level judges give reasons for their decisions/judgments.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, allegations of corruption against senior level politicians and/or civil servants of any level are investigated by an independent body.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the body/bodies that investigate/s allegations of public sector corruption is/are effective.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the mechanism for citizens to report police misconduct or abuse of force is effective.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	WB Human Rights and Law Report	% of Women on Constitutional Court	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)

Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Does the law mandate nondiscrimination based on gender in hiring?	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Gini coefficient	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Gini WYD	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Income Share Held by Highest 10%	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Population with Improved Sanitation (Urban-Rural Difference)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Population with Improved Water Source (Urban-Rural Difference)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Children under 5 moderately or severely underweight, percentage	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Depth of the food deficit (kilocalories per person per day)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Prevalence of Underweight, weight for age (% of children under 5)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	GDP per capita, PPP (current international $)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Literacy, 15-24, Women	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	School enrollment, primary and secondary (gross), gender parity index (GPI)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, female (%) (modeled ILO estimate)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)

Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Median Age	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Population Growth	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Prevalence of underweight, weight for age, female (% of children under 5)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Contraceptive prevalence, any methods (% of women ages 15-49)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Percentage of women aged 20-24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1: Desktop	Risk	ECOWARN	IncReps	211 (after reducing for duplicates and relevance)
Phase 1: Desktop	Risk	ACLED	Incidents	89
Phase 2: Field Research	Risk and Vulnerability	Focus Group Discussions	Broken out by Men, Women, and Youth	15
Phase 2: Field Research	Risk and Vulnerability	Key Informant Interviews	Prominent individuals and local experts, including gvt officials	21

Appendix B: Vulnerability Index

Index Data Sources

Based on the five human security pillars, a series of indicators were identified based on relevance and measurability. Data sources were then identified from recognized institutions such as the World Bank, United Nations, as well as universities, research institutions, and think tanks. A full list of data sources is attached in *Appendix A.* During selection and testing of the index, the availability of data was assessed to ensure an even distribution of scores.

Process: Calculating the Scores

The index is scored on a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing the highest level of vulnerability, and 10 the lowest level of vulnerability. Each raw data set is normalized and scaled, before being integrated into the indicator and pillar scores.

1. Normalization

An index, by definition, integrates and compares data sets with very different curves and distribution. As a first step, therefore, it is necessary to normalize the data so that it can be properly compared. Without framing the data within the context of the wider group of numbers, its meaning can become skewed. Therefore, the process of finding the mean and calculating the Standard Deviation (SD) of the data set, then using those elements to approximate a normal distribution, can be used to provide this meaning. The Gaussian normalization formula is outlined below.

Where μ is the mean

σ^2 is the variance

$$f(x, \mu, \sigma) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}\,\sigma}\, e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

SD is the quantity calculated to indicate the extent of deviation for a group of numbers as a whole. Normal distribution is then used to find how the variables are approximately normally distributed. In the context of this tool, it will help to understand where countries sit in relation to each other within the group distribution of a particular data set.

For raw data sets that have gaps (e.g. data is unavailable for some countries but not others), country data points are left blank. This ensures countries are not provided with an artificial score, where data does not exist.

2. Scaling

To create an index where countries are scored within a defined range, the data sets must be scaled so the scores can be integrated. This process of scaling transforms the normalized data into a number between 1 and 10, with 10 representing the lowest level of vulnerability. The below formula was applied to standardize

the distribution values from [min, max] to [MIN, MAX], matching the new scale of values both for the highest and lowest edges of the distribution.

$$X = MIN + \frac{(MAX - MIN)}{(max - min)} \times (x - min)$$

3. Aggregation

Each indicator may be made up of either one or multiple data sources. In cases where multiple data sets were used to make up the one indicator, the data sets were each scaled to preliminary index scores (1-10), as outlined in the above steps. The average was then taken of these scores to reach a final index score for that indicator. This process was repeated at the pillar level, first averaging, then scaling the indicator scores.

Appendix C: Additional References

Amnesty International, 'Dangerous to Dissent: Human Rights Under Threat in Gambia', 2016
https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr27/4138/2016/en/

Barma, N.H., Huybens, E. & Viñuela, L. 'Institutions Taking Root: Building State Capacity in Challenging Contexts', World Bank Group, September 2014 http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/978-1-4648-0269-0

Human Rights Watch, 'State of Fear: Arbitrary Arrests, Torture and Killings', 2015
https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/16/state-fear/arbitrary-arrests-torture-and-killings

Jaiteh, M., 'Climate Change and Development in The Gambia'
http://www.columbia.edu/~msj42/pdfs/ClimateChangeDevelopmentGambia_small.pdf

Kodila-Tedika, O., Simplice, A. 'State fragility, rent seeking and lobbying: evidence from African data', International Journal of Social Economics, 2016, Vol. 43: Issue 10
http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/IJSE-11-2014-0234

Masengu, T., 'The Vulnerability of Judges in Contemporary Africa: Alarming Trends', 2017
https://muse.jhu.edu/article/664951

Migration Policy Institute, 'The Gambia: Migration in Africa's "Smiling Coast"', 2013
http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/gambia-migration-africas-smiling-coast

NZAID 'Conflict-Risk Assessment Guideline' 2008 http://www.gaportal.org/resources/detail/nzaid-conflict-risk-assessment-guideline

OECD ' States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence', 2016 http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/states-of-fragility-2016_9789264267213-en#page1

USAID 'Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)', 2008
https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/187786.pdf

Woolcock, M. 'Engaging with Fragile and Conflict-Affected States ', Harvard Kennedy School, August 2014
https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/engaging-fragile-and-conflict-affected-states

World Food Programme, 'Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis', 2016
http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp290335.pdf?_ga=2.209313362.1797620471.1506524907-1532219635.1505749012

Appendix D: Matrix of Vulnerabilities, Risks, Resilience Factors, and Recommendations by Human Security Pillar

THE GAMBIA	Vulnerabilities	Risks	Resiliencies	Recommendations
Politics and Governance	➢ Weak state institutions ➢ Perceptions of corruption and lack of transparency ➢ Underrepresentation of youth and women in political decision-making ➢ Polarization along ethnic lines	➢ Electoral processes ➢ Future TRRC process or trial proceedings, should they be perceived to target specific ethnic, political or religious groups ➢ Political tensions between ethnic groups ➢ Instrumentalization of state institutions for political expediencies	➢ Political reforms ➢ Efforts at national reconciliation (TRRC) ➢ Youth organizations ➢ Civil Society Organizations ➢ Media and radio programming ➢ Strong popular will for social cohesion ➢ Political transition	➢ Establish a national education campaign to encourage the political participation of women and youth ➢ Strengthen the implement effective gender policies ➢ Support a transparent and inclusive transitional justice process with the aim of providing accountability for past abuses under the Jammeh administration ➢ Support civic education programs, particularly those targeting youth ➢ Build and strengthen institutions to enhance accountability and transparency ➢ Support equitable implementation the findings of the TRRC to strengthen social cohesion
Rule of Law	➢ Perceived lack of judicial independence ➢ Dichotomy between customary and Sharia law (Khadi Court) ➢ Poor prison conditions ➢ Poor access to justice for vulnerable populations ➢ Low capacity of the judicial system	➢ Mob justice ➢ Inadequate protection of women/girls' rights ➢ Human rights violations	➢ Traditional and religious dispute resolution mechanisms Justice sector reforms ➢ National Agency for Legal Aid ➢ Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Secretariat	➢ Sensitize religious and traditional leaders on the protection of women's rights ➢ Empower women about their legal rights particularly around land tenure and ownership ➢ Support initiatives to improve access to justice for vulnerable populations ➢ Support prison reform initiatives to adhere to international standards

	➢ Backlog of court cases/trials ➢ Corruption within the court system		➢ The use of Customary and some provisions of the Sharia law	
Security	➢ Porous borders ➢ Inadequate resources and training for local security forces ➢ Perceptions of corruption among security forces ➢ History of human rights abuses by security forces ➢ Proliferation of small arms and light weapon ➢ Geographic location of the country/Casamance conflict in Southern Senegal ➢ Politicization of the security and defense forces along ethnic lines ➢ Bad governance of security sector	➢ Social uprising/ insecurity by loyalists of the previous administration especially in the Western region ➢ Criminality (illegal logging, narcotic drugs/arms trafficking) ➢ Tensions or clashes between pro-Jammeh and ECOMIG forces ➢ Withdrawal of ECOMIG forces ➢ Election-related violence ➢ Resurgence of conflict in Senegal's Casamance region	➢ Security sector reform ➢ ECOMIG ➢ The role of civil society ➢ Support from the international community and regional actors ➢ Bilateral corporation with neighboring countries	➢ Maintain bi- and multi-lateral training assistance programs to enhance the institutional and operational capacity of the security forces ➢ Create synergy among ECOMIG troops, Gambian security forces, CSOs and local communities to build trust for improved security ➢ Work with regional and international partners to address larger regional trends of insecurity
Population & Demographics	➢ Rural-urban migration ➢ Inadequate access to quality public services, including education and healthcare	➢ Security threats from "back way" returnees ➢ Polarization of group identities along ethnic lines ➢ Increased tension	➢ Inter-marriage and "joking relationships" ➢ Heterogeneous nature of the society ➢ National policies for	➢ Support the promotion of culturally-sensitive programming around family planning, gender-based violence (GBV) and female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) ➢ Invest in girls' education and literacy programs, particularly at the primary through secondary levels

		between religious groups	family planning and social welfare	➤ Invest in infrastructure development and service provision in rural areas, particularly in the areas of healthcare and education
	➤ Rural-urban disparities in development and infrastructure ➤ High rate of youth unemployment ➤ Early marriage ➤ Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) ➤ Low rate of family planning ➤ Illegal migration	➤ Loss of man power as a result of migration ➤ Sexual terrorism		
Economics & Resources	➤ High rates of youth unemployment ➤ Lack of a diversified economy ➤ High prices of basic commodities ➤ Poor infrastructure development ➤ Illicit economic activities, including cross-border smuggling ➤ Environmental degradation and climate change	➤ Food insecurity ➤ Natural disasters ➤ Land and resource-based conflicts ➤ Farmers herders conflict	➤ Tourism ➤ Lower import taxes ➤ Reliance on subsistence farming ➤ A vibrant fishing sectors ➤ Remittances from the diaspora community	➤ Support and expand microfinance programs and vocational training, particularly for youth and women ➤ Provide social and economic reintegration support to vulnerable "back-way" returnees ➤ Assist local farmers with investment in modern and climate-adaptive agriculture