



Africa :: Gambia, The

Introduction :: Gambia, The

Background:

The Gambia gained its independence from the UK in 1965. Geographically surrounded by Senegal, it formed a short-lived federation of Senegambia between 1982 and 1989. In 1991 the two nations signed a friendship and cooperation treaty, but tensions have flared up intermittently since then. Yahya JAMMEH led a military coup in 1994 that overthrew the president and banned political activity. A new constitution and presidential elections in 1996, followed by parliamentary balloting in 1997, completed a nominal return to civilian rule. JAMMEH has been elected president in all subsequent elections including most recently in late 2011.

Geography :: Gambia, The

Location:

Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean and Senegal

Geographic coordinates:

13 28 N, 16 34 W

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 11,295 sq km
country comparison to the world: 167
land: 10,000 sq km
water: 1,295 sq km

Area - comparative:

slightly less than twice the size of Delaware

Land boundaries:

total: 740 km
border countries: Senegal 740 km

Coastline:

80 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm
contiguous zone: 18 nm
exclusive fishing zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: extent not specified

Climate:

tropical; hot, rainy season (June to November); cooler, dry season (November to May)

Terrain:

flood plain of the Gambia River flanked by some low hills

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m
highest point: unnamed elevation 53 m

Natural resources:

fish, clay, silica sand, titanium (rutile and ilmenite), tin, zircon

Land use:

arable land: 39.82%
permanent crops: 0.44%
other: 59.73% (2011)

Irrigated land:

50 sq km (2011)

Total renewable water resources:

8 cu km (2011)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.09 cu km/yr (41%/21%/39%)

per capita: 65.77 cu m/yr (2005)

Natural hazards:

drought (rainfall has dropped by 30% in the last 30 years)

Environment - current issues:

deforestation; desertification; water-borne diseases prevalent

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

almost an enclave of Senegal; smallest country on the continent of Africa

People and Society :: Gambia, The

Nationality:

noun: Gambian(s)

adjective: Gambian

Ethnic groups:

African 99% (Mandinka 42%, Fula 18%, Wolof 16%, Jola 10%, Serahuli 9%, other 4%), non-African 1% (2003 census)

Languages:

English (official), Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, other indigenous vernaculars

Religions:

Muslim 90%, Christian 8%, indigenous beliefs 2%

Population:

1,883,051 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 150

Age structure:

0-14 years: 39.2% (male 369,966/female 367,285)

15-24 years: 21.1% (male 196,194/female 201,206)

25-54 years: 32.5% (male 299,837/female 312,864)

55-64 years: 4% (male 36,330/female 38,464)

65 years and over: 3.2% (male 28,722/female 32,183) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 93.5 %

youth dependency ratio: 88.9 %

elderly dependency ratio: 4.6 %

potential support ratio: 21.6 (2013)

Median age:

total: 19.9 years

male: 19.6 years

female: 20.2 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

2.29% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 38

Birth rate:

32.59 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 34

Death rate:

7.38 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 120

Net migration rate:

-2.34 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

Urbanization:

urban population: 57.3% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 3.63% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

BANJUL (capital) 436,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.98 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.96 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.95 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.9 male(s)/female

total population: 0.98 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

360 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 29

Infant mortality rate:

total: 67.63 deaths/1,000 live births
country comparison to the world: 20
male: 73.15 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 61.94 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 64.09 years
country comparison to the world: 176
male: 61.78 years
female: 66.47 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

3.98 children born/woman (2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 41

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

13.3% (2010)

Health expenditures:

5.7% of GDP (2010)
country comparison to the world: 115

Physicians density:

0.04 physicians/1,000 population (2008)

Hospital bed density:

1.1 beds/1,000 population (2011)

Drinking water source:**improved:**

urban: 92% of population
rural: 85% of population
total: 89% of population

unimproved:

urban: 8% of population
rural: 15% of population
total: 11% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:**improved:**

urban: 70% of population
rural: 65% of population
total: 68% of population

unimproved:

urban: 30% of population
rural: 35% of population
total: 32% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

2% (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 30

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

18,000 (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 79

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

fewer than 1,000 (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 77

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne diseases: malaria and dengue fever
water contact disease: schistosomiasis
respiratory disease: meningococcal meningitis
animal contact disease: rabies (2013)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

7.9% (2008)
country comparison to the world: 138

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

15.8% (2006)
country comparison to the world: 49

Education expenditures:

3.9% of GDP (2011)
country comparison to the world: 112

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 51.1%

male: 60.9%

female: 41.9% (2011 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 8.6 years (2008)

Child labor - children ages 5-14:

total number: 103,389

percentage: 25 % (2006 est.)

Government:: Gambia, The

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of The Gambia

conventional short form: The Gambia

Government type:

republic

Capital:

name: Banjul

geographic coordinates: 13 27 N, 16 34 W

time difference: UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

5 divisions and 1 city*; Banjul*, Central River, Lower River, North Bank, Upper River, Western

Independence:

18 February 1965 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 18 February (1965)

Constitution:

approved by national referendum 8 August 1996; effective 16 January 1997

Legal system:

mixed legal system of English common law, Islamic law, and customary law

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Yahya JAMMEH (since 18 October 1996); note - from 1994 to 1996 he was chairman of the junta; Vice

President Isatou NJIE-SAIDY (since 20 March 1997); note - the president is both the chief of state and head of government

head of government: President Yahya JAMMEH (since 18 October 1996); Vice President Isatou NJIE-SAIDY (since 20 March 1997)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#).)

elections: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (no term limits); election last held on 24 November 2011 (next to be held in 2016)

election results: Yahya JAMMEH reelected president; percent of vote - Yahya JAMMEH 71.5%, Ousainou DARBOE 17.4%, Hamat BAH 11.1%

Legislative branch:

unicameral National Assembly (53 seats; 48 members elected by popular vote, 5 appointed by the president; members to serve five-year terms)

elections: last held on 29 March 2012 (next to be held in 2017)

election results: percent of vote by party - APRC 51.8%, independents 38.8%, NRP 9.4%; seats by party - APRC 43, independents 4, NRP 1

note: except for the NRP, all opposition parties boycotted the 29 March 2012 legislative elections

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court of The Gambia (consists of the chief justice and 6 other justices); note - court sessions held with 5 justices

judge selection and term of office: justices appointed by the president after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission, a 6-member independent body of high-level judicial officials, a presidential appointee, and a National Assembly appointee; justices appointed for life or until mandatory retirement age

subordinate courts: Court of Appeal; High Court; Special Criminal Court; Khadis or Muslim courts; district tribunals; magistrates courts

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction or APRC [Yahya JAMMEH] (the ruling party)

Gambia People's Democratic Party or GPDP [Henry GOMEZ]

National Alliance for Democracy and Development or NADD [Halifa SALLAH]

National Convention Party or NCP [Sheriff DIBBA]

National Reconciliation Party or NRP [Hamat BAH]

People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism or PDOIS [Halifa SALLAH]

United Democratic Party or UDP [Ousainou DARBOE]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

National Environment Agency or NEA
West African Peace Building Network-Gambian Chapter or WANEB-GAMBIA
Youth Employment Network Gambia or YENGambia

other: special needs group advocates; teachers and principals

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, C, ECOWAS, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NAM, OIC, OPCW, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMIL, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Baboucarr JARROW
chancery: Suite 240, Georgetown Plaza, 2233 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20007
telephone: [1] (202) 785-1379, 1399, 1425
FAX: [1] (202) 342-0240

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Edward M. ALFORD
embassy: Kairaba Avenue, Fajara, Banjul
mailing address: P. M. B. No. 19, Banjul
telephone: [220] 439-2856, 437-6169, 437-6170
FAX: [220] 439-2475

Flag description:

three equal horizontal bands of red (top), blue with white edges, and green; red stands for the sun and the savannah, blue represents the Gambia River, and green symbolizes forests and agriculture; the white stripes denote unity and peace

National symbol(s):

lion

National anthem:

name: "For The Gambia, Our Homeland"

[▶ PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Virginia Julie HOWE/adapted by Jeremy Frederick HOWE
note: adopted 1965; the music is an adaptation of the traditional Mandinka song "Foday Kaba Dumbuya"

Economy :: Gambia, The

Economy - overview:

The Gambia has sparse natural resource deposits and a limited agricultural base, and relies in part on remittances from workers overseas and tourist receipts. About three-quarters of the population depends on the agricultural sector for its livelihood and the sector provides for about one-quarter of GDP. The agricultural sector has untapped potential - less than half of arable land is cultivated. Small-scale manufacturing activity features the processing of peanuts, fish, and hides. The Gambia's natural beauty and proximity to Europe has made it one of the larger markets for tourism in West Africa, boosted by government and private sector investments in eco-tourism and upscale facilities. In 2012, however, sluggish tourism led to a decline in GDP. Tourism brings in about one-fifth of GDP. Agriculture also took a hit in 2012 due to unfavorable weather patterns. The Gambia's re-export trade accounts for almost 80% of goods exports. Unemployment and underemployment rates remain high. Economic progress depends on sustained bilateral and multilateral aid, on responsible government economic management, and on continued technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors. International donors and lenders continue to be concerned about the quality of fiscal management and The Gambia's debt burden.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$3.459 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 178

\$3.327 billion (2011 est.)

\$3.476 billion (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$918 million (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

3.9% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 83

-4.3% (2011 est.)

6.5% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$1,900 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 195

\$1,900 (2011 est.)

\$2,000 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

Gross national saving:

11.2% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 118

15.3% of GDP (2011 est.)

16.6% of GDP (2010 est.)

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 81.9%
government consumption: 16.1%
investment in fixed capital: 27.8%
investment in inventories: 1.7%
exports of goods and services: 42%
imports of goods and services: -69.6%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 22.3%

industry: 18.3%

services: 59.5% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

rice, millet, sorghum, peanuts, corn, sesame, cassava (manioc), palm kernels; cattle, sheep, goats

Industries:

processing peanuts, fish, and hides; tourism, beverages, agricultural machinery assembly, woodworking, metalworking, clothing

Industrial production growth rate:

-3% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 159

Labor force:

777,100 (2007)

country comparison to the world: 149

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 75%

industry: 19%

services: 6% (1996)

Unemployment rate:

NA%

Population below poverty line:

48.4% (2010 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 2%

highest 10%: 36.9% (2003)

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

50.2 (1998)

country comparison to the world: 22

Budget:

revenues: \$180.8 million

expenditures: \$208.9 million (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

19.7% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-3.1% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 122

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

4.7% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

4.8% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

9% (31 December 2009)

country comparison to the world: 21

11% (31 December 2008)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

26.5% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 7

28% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$212.2 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 173

\$220.5 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$512.2 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

\$487.9 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$374.4 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 179

\$380.3 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$NA

Current account balance:

-\$155.5 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 73

-\$119.1 million (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$104.7 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

\$104.5 million (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

peanut products, fish, cotton lint, palm kernels

Exports - partners:

China 57.3%, India 18%, France 4.6%, UK 4.1% (2012)

Imports:

\$360.3 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 193

\$328.4 million (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

foodstuffs, manufactures, fuel, machinery and transport equipment

Imports - partners:

China 27.1%, Senegal 8.4%, Brazil 8%, UK 6.3%, India 6%, Indonesia 4.1% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$236.2 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 158

\$223.2 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Debt - external:

\$480.6 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 174

\$466.5 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Exchange rates:

dalasis (GMD) per US dollar -

32.0771 (2012 est.)

29.4615 (2011 est.)

28.012 (2010 est.)

26.6444 (2009)

22.75 (2008)

Energy:: Gambia, The

Electricity - production:

240 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

Electricity - consumption:

223.2 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 182

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 197

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 189

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

53,000 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 180

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

100% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 13

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 91

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 170

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 127

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 137

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 115

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 186

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 135

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)
country comparison to the world: 180

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

3,181 bbl/day (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 178

Refined petroleum products - exports:

41.62 bbl/day (2008 est.)
country comparison to the world: 120

Refined petroleum products - imports:

2,913 bbl/day (2008 est.)
country comparison to the world: 168

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 132

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 145

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 101

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 195

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 139

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

291,000 Mt (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 188

Communications:: Gambia, The

Telephones - main lines in use:

50,400 (2011)
country comparison to the world: 163

Telephones - mobile cellular:

1.4 million (2011)
country comparison to the world: 147

Telephone system:

general assessment: adequate microwave radio relay and open-wire network; state-owned Gambia Telecommunications partially privatized in 2007

domestic: combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular teledensity, aided by multiple mobile-cellular providers, is roughly 80 per 100 persons

international: country code - 220; microwave radio relay links to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau; a landing station for the Africa Coast to Europe (ACE) undersea fiber-optic cable is scheduled for completion in 2011; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (2011)

Broadcast media:

state-owned, single-channel TV service; state-owned radio station and 4 privately owned radio stations; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters are available, some via shortwave radio; cable and satellite TV subscription services are obtainable in some parts of the country (2007)

Internet country code:

.gm

Internet hosts:

656 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 179

Internet users:

130,100 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 150

Transportation :: Gambia, The

Airports:

1 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 216

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 1

over 3,047 m: 1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 3,742 km

country comparison to the world: 159

paved: 723 km

unpaved: 3,019 km (2004)

Waterways:

390 km (on River Gambia; small ocean-going vessels can reach 190 km) (2010)

country comparison to the world: 89

Merchant marine:

total: 4

country comparison to the world: 132

by type: passenger/cargo 3, petroleum tanker 1 (2010)

Ports and terminals:

major seaport(s): Banjul

Military :: Gambia, The

Military branches:

Office of the Chief of Defense Staff: Gambian National Army (GNA), Gambian Navy (GN), Republican National Guard (RNG) (2010)

Military service age and obligation:

18 years of age for male and female voluntary military service; no conscription (2012)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 423,306

females age 16-49: 438,641 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 315,176

females age 16-49: 347,017 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 20,508

female: 20,853 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

0.7% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 153

Transnational Issues :: Gambia, The

Disputes - international:

attempts to stem refugees, cross-border raids, arms smuggling, and other illegal activities by separatists from southern Senegal's Casamance region, as well as from conflicts in other west African states

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 9,042 (Senegal) (2012)

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: The Gambia is a source, transit, and destination country for women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking; Gambian women, children, and, to a lesser extent, boys are exploited for prostitution and domestic servitude; women, girls, and boys from West African countries are trafficked to the Gambia for sexual exploitation, particularly catering to European tourists seeking sex with children; some Gambian trafficking victims have been identified in neighboring West African countries and the UK; boys in some Koranic schools are forced into street vending or begging

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - The Gambia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so; the government has sustained its modest anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts, opening some investigations but failing to initiate any prosecutions or to formally identify any victims; a government program was launched providing resources and financial support to 12 Koranic schools on the condition that their students are not forced to beg (2013)