

## The World Factbook



### 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

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#### 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**

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**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**

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**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**

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**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**

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**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)