



**GAMBIA**  
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## 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 A. J. J. 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 2006.

## 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:* 11,300 sq km  
*land:* 10,000 sq km  
*water:* 1,300 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 location 53 m

**Natural resources:** fish, titanium (rutile and ilmenite), tin, zircon, silica sand, clay, petroleum

**Land use:** *arable land:* 27.88%  
*permanent crops:* 0.44%  
*other:* 71.68% (2005)

Irrigated land: 20 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources: 8 cu km (1982)

Freshwater withdrawal *total*: 0.03 cu km/yr (23%/12%/65%)  
(domestic/industrial/agricultural): *per capita*: 20 cu m/yr (2000)

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

Environment - current issues: deforestation; desertification; water-borne diseases prevalent

Environment - international *party to*: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-agreements: 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	Gambia, The
Population:	1,735,464 (July 2008 est.)
Age structure:	<i>0-14 years</i> : 43.9% (male 382,385/female 378,853) <i>15-64 years</i> : 53.4% (male 459,315/female 466,689) <i>65 years and over</i> : 2.8% (male 24,303/female 23,919) (2008 est.)
Median age:	<i>total</i> : 17.9 years <i>male</i> : 17.7 years <i>female</i> : 18 years (2008 est.)
Population growth rate:	2.724% (2008 est.)
Birth rate:	38.36 births/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Death rate:	11.74 deaths/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Net migration rate:	0.61 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2008 est.)
Sex ratio:	<i>at birth</i> : 1.03 male(s)/female <i>under 15 years</i> : 1.01 male(s)/female <i>15-64 years</i> : 0.98 male(s)/female <i>65 years and over</i> : 1.02 male(s)/female <i>total population</i> : 1 male(s)/female (2008 est.)
Infant mortality rate:	<i>total</i> : 68.72 deaths/1,000 live births <i>male</i> : 75.07 deaths/1,000 live births <i>female</i> : 62.18 deaths/1,000 live births (2008 est.)

Life expectancy at *total population*: 54.95 years  
birth: *male*: 53.06 years  
*female*: 56.9 years (2008 est.)

Total fertility rate: 5.13 children born/woman (2008 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 1.2% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - 6,800 (2003 est.)  
people living with HIV/AIDS:

HIV/AIDS - 600 (2003 est.)  
deaths:

Major infectious *degree of risk*: very high  
diseases: *food or waterborne diseases*: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever  
*vectorborne diseases*: dengue fever, malaria, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, and yellow fever  
*water contact disease*: schistosomiasis  
*respiratory disease*: meningococcal meningitis (2008)

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)

Religions: Muslim 90%, Christian 9%, indigenous beliefs 1%

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

Literacy: *definition*: age 15 and over can read and write  
*total population*: 40.1%  
*male*: 47.8%  
*female*: 32.8% (2003 est.)

Government	Gambia, The
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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 UK)
- National holiday: Independence Day, 18 February (1965)
- Constitution: approved by national referendum 8 August 1996; effective 16 January 1997
- Legal system: based on a composite of English common law, Islamic law, and customary law; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations
- Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal
- Executive branch: *chief of state*: President Yahya A. J. J. 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 A. J. J. JAMMEH (since 18 October 1996); Vice President Isatou NJIE-SAIDY (since 20 March 1997)  
*cabinet*: Cabinet appointed by the president  
*elections*: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term (no term limits); election last held 22 September 2006 (next to be held in 2011)  
*election results*: Yahya A. J. J. JAMMEH reelected president; percent of vote - Yahya A. J. J. JAMMEH 67.3%, Ousainou DARBOE 26.6%, Halifa SALLAH 6.0%
- Legislative branch: unicameral National Assembly (53 seats; 48 members elected by popular vote, 5 appointed by the president; to serve five-year terms)  
*elections*: last held 25 January 2007 (next to be held in 2012)  
*election results*: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - APRC 47, UDP 4, NADD 1, independent 1
- Judicial branch: Supreme Court
- Political parties and leaders: Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction or APRC (the ruling party) [Yahya A. J. J. JAMMEH]; 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 N. K. BAH]; People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism or PDOIS [Sidia JATTA]; 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, ICCT, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ITSO, ITU, ITUC, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OPCW, UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNMEE, UNMIL, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Abdul Rahman COLE  
*chancery:* Suite 905, 1156 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005  
*telephone:* [1] (202) 785-1379  
*FAX:* [1] (202) 785-1430

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Barry L. WELLS  
*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

## Economy

## Gambia, The

Economy - overview: The Gambia has no confirmed mineral or natural resource deposits and has a limited agricultural base. About 75% of the population depends on crops and livestock for its livelihood. Small-scale manufacturing activity features the processing of peanuts, fish, and hides. Reexport trade normally constitutes a major segment of economic activity, but a 1999 government-imposed preshipment inspection plan, and instability of the Gambian dalasi (currency) have drawn some of the reexport trade away from The Gambia. The Gambia's natural beauty and proximity to Europe has made it one of the larger markets for tourism in West Africa. The government's 1998 seizure of the private peanut firm Alimenta eliminated the largest purchaser of Gambian groundnuts. Despite an announced program to begin privatizing key parastatals, no plans have been made public that would indicate that the government intends to follow through on its promises. Unemployment and underemployment rates remain extremely high; short-run economic progress depends on sustained bilateral and multilateral aid, on responsible government economic management, on continued technical assistance from the IMF and bilateral donors, and on expected growth in the construction sector.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$2.106 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$653 million (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 7% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$1,300 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: *agriculture*: 32.8%  
*industry*: 8.7%  
*services*: 58.5% (2007 est.)

Labor force: 400,000 (1996)

Labor force - by occupation: *agriculture*: 75%  
*industry*: 19%  
*services*: 6% (1996)

Unemployment rate: NA%

Population below poverty line: NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share: *lowest 10%*: 1.8%  
*highest 10%*: 37% (1998)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 50.2 (1998)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 5% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 25.4% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: *revenues*: \$181.1 million  
*expenditures*: \$163.4 million (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: rice, millet, sorghum, peanuts, corn, sesame, cassava (tapioca), palm kernels; cattle, sheep, goats

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

Industrial production growth rate: -2.3% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 145 million kWh (2005)

Electricity - 134.9 million kWh (2005)  
consumption:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)  
exports:

Electricity - 0 kWh (2005)  
imports:

Oil - production: 0 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - 2,030 bbl/day (2005 est.)  
consumption:

Oil - exports: 41.5 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 2,050 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved 0 bbl (1 January 2006 est.)  
reserves:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)  
production:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)  
consumption:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005 est.)  
exports:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (2005)  
imports:

Natural gas - 0 cu m (1 January 2006 est.)  
proved reserves:

Current account -\$70 million (2007 est.)  
balance:

Exports: \$93 million f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - peanut products, fish, cotton lint, palm kernels, re-exports  
commodities:

Exports - partners: India 36.5%, China 15%, UK 9%, Indonesia 7.8%, France 4.9%, Belgium  
4% (2006)

Imports: \$271 million f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - foodstuffs, manufactures, fuel, machinery and transport equipment  
commodities:

Imports - partners: China 24.3%, Senegal 11.5%, Cote d'Ivoire 8.3%, Brazil 6.7%, Netherlands  
5.2% (2006)

Economic aid - recipient: \$58.15 million (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$142.8 million (31 December 2007 est.)

Debt - external: \$628.8 million (2003 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares: \$NA

Currency (code): dalasi (GMD)

Exchange rates: dalasi per US dollar - 27.79 (2007), 28.066 (2006), 28.575 (2005), 30.03 (2004), 27.306 (2003)

Fiscal year: calendar year

## Communications Gambia, The

Telephones - main lines in use: 52,900 (2006)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 795,900 (2007)

Telephone system: *general assessment:* adequate; a packet switched data network is available; two mobile-cellular service providers  
*domestic:* adequate network of microwave radio relay and open-wire; combined fixed-line and mobile-cellular teledensity approaching 30 telephones per 100 persons  
*international:* country code - 220; microwave radio relay links to Senegal and Guinea-Bissau; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean) (1997)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 3, FM 2, shortwave 0 (2001)

Television broadcast stations: 1 (government-owned) (1997)

Internet country code: .gm

Internet hosts: 6 (2007)

Internet users: 58,000 (2005)

## Transportation Gambia, The

Airports: 1 (2007)

Airports - with *total: 1*  
paved runways: *over 3,047 m: 1 (2007)*

Roadways: *total: 3,742 km*  
*paved: 723 km*  
*unpaved: 3,019 km (2004)*

Waterways: *390 km (on River Gambia; small ocean-going vessels can reach 190 km) (2006)*

Merchant marine: *total: 5 ships (1000 GRT or over) 32,064 GRT/9,751 DWT*  
*by type: passenger/cargo 4, petroleum tanker 1 (2008)*

Ports and Banjul  
terminals:

<b>Military</b>	<b>Gambia, The</b>
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Military branches: *Office of the Chief of Defense: Gambian National Army (National Guard, GNA), Gambian Navy (GN) (2008)*

Military service age and obligation: *18 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2008)*

Manpower available for military service: *males age 16-49: 379,668*  
*females age 16-49: 384,438 (2008 est.)*

Manpower fit for military service: *males age 16-49: 230,202*  
*females age 16-49: 244,480 (2008 est.)*

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: *0.5% (2006)*

<b>Transnational Issues</b>	<b>Gambia, The</b>
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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): 5,955 (Sierra Leone) (2007)*

Trafficking in *current situation*: The Gambia is a source, transit, and destination country persons: for children and women trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation; women and girls, and to a lesser extent boys, are trafficked for sexual exploitation - in particular to meet the demand for European sex tourism - and for domestic servitude; boys are trafficked within the country for forced begging and street vending; Gambian women and children may be trafficked to Europe through trafficking schemes disguised as migrant smuggling

*tier rating*: Tier 2 Watch List - for a second consecutive year, The Gambia is on the Tier 2 Watch List for its failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to eliminate trafficking; The Gambia failed to report any trafficking arrests, prosecutions, or convictions in 2007, and the government demonstrated weak victim protection efforts during the reporting period (2008)

**Information current as of 7 August, 2008**

**SOURCES: The CIA World Factbook**

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