

Briefing Note – 26 January 2017

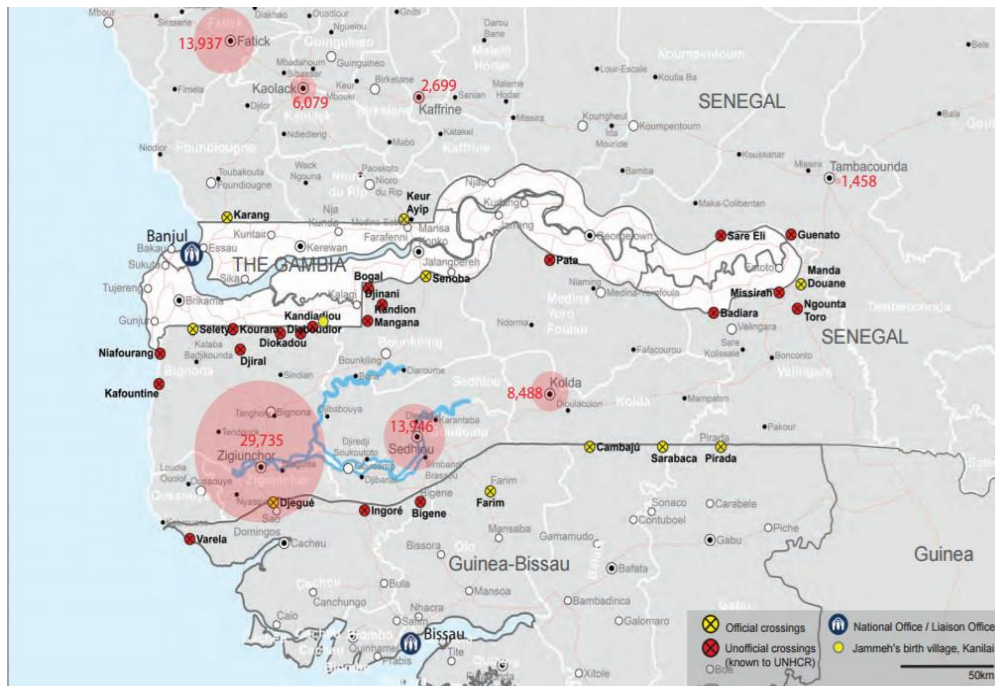
The Gambia

Politically induced displacement



Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

Crisis overview



Source: UNHCR 22/01/2017. See end of the document for enlarged version.

Political uncertainty in the Gambia, due to former President Yahya Jammeh’s refusal to accept the results of the 1 December presidential election, drove thousands of Gambians to flee the country into Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (News 24 25/01/2017). As of 22 January, over 76,000 people have reportedly sought shelter in Senegal since early January (UNHCR 24/01/2017). An estimated 3,500 Gambians have sought safety in Guinea-Bissau since mid-January (UNHCR 24/01/2017). Although some people have already begun to return, an estimated 50,000 Gambians remained in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau as of 24 January (UNHCR 24/01/2017). Additionally, an estimated 150,000 people are internally displaced (United Purpose 22/01/2017).

Key findings

Anticipated scope and scale

As former President Jammeh has stepped down, and the political crisis has ended, further large-scale displacement is not expected from the Gambia. Since the end of the political impasse, Gambians have begun to leave Senegal and return to the Gambia. As of 23 January, approximately 8,000 people have returned to the Gambia.

Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- **Shelter and NFIs:** Displaced persons are likely to need emergency shelter. IDPs are taking shelter in rural areas, which are struggling to cope with the sudden influx of new arrivals.
- **Food:** The high number of displaced persons hosted by host families in Senegal has put a strain on food resources. Several host families have reportedly had to dig into their food reserves to feed the displaced people they are hosting.
- **Protection:** The majority of the displaced are women and children, who are likely to face protection risks.

Humanitarian constraints

No humanitarian constraints have been reported

Limitations

- No information on humanitarian constraints
- Lack of information on the sectoral needs of the displaced populations
- There is no information on coping mechanisms undertaken by displaced populations

Crisis impact

Political uncertainty in the Gambia, due to former President Jammeh's refusal to accept the results of the 1 December presidential election, has driven thousands of Gambians to flee the country (News 24 25/01/2017).

Over 76,000 people have sought shelter with host families in Senegal since early January (UNHCR 24/01/2017). On 20 January, over 45,000 people reportedly arrived in Senegal's Fatick, Kaolack and Kaffrine regions (UNHCR 20/01/2017). Additionally, an estimated 3,500 Gambians have sought safety in Guinea-Bissau since mid-January (UNHCR 24/01/2017). As of 24 January, an estimated 50,000 Gambians still remain in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau (UNHCR 24/01/2017). Approximately 8,000 people have returned from Senegal since 23 January, through different borders, following the resolution of the political crisis (UNHCR 24/01/2017; ECHO 23/01/2017).

Additionally, an estimated 150,000 people are internally displaced as of 22 January (United Purpose 22/01/2017). Most of the people in the capital, Banjul, sent family members – mainly women, children, and the elderly – to relatives in other parts of the country (IRIN 24/01/2017).

Shelter and NFIs: Most IDPs are taking shelter in rural areas, which are reportedly struggling to cope with the sudden influx of new arrivals (United Purpose 22/01/2017). Host families in Senegal reportedly have up to 40 to 50 extra people in their homes, putting pressure on space and resources (UNHCR 20/01/2017).

Food: The high number of displaced persons hosted by host families in Senegal has put a strain on food resources. Several host families have had to dig into their food reserves to feed the displaced persons they are hosting (UNHCR 24/01/2017).

Protection: The majority of the displaced persons are women and children who are likely to face protection risks (UNHCR 20/01/2017). People who are returning by boat to Banjul, are arriving on crowded ferries which are old and unsafe (UNHCR 24/01/2017).

Vulnerable groups affected

Vulnerable groups include women (including pregnant and lactating women) and children. Over 75% of the arrivals in Senegal are reportedly women and children (UNHCR 20/01/2017).

Humanitarian constraints

No humanitarian constraints have been reported.

Aggravating factors

Seasonal information

The rainy season in the Gambia normally lasts from June–October.

Food insecurity

Food insecurity may aggravate the needs of IDPs in rural areas. An estimated 35,000 people in Gambia are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity as of December 2016. Nearly 200,000 are in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity (Cadre Harmonisé 12/11/2016).

Contextual information

Drivers of the current conflict

Presidential elections took place in December 2016. Adama Barrow of the United Democratic Party (UDP) won the elections, defeating former President Yahya Jammeh, who had been in power since 1994.

Despite initially conceding defeat, former President Yahya Jammeh announced in December 2016 that he rejected the results and would mount a legal challenge (BBC News 11/12/2016). On 18 January, on the eve of Barrow's scheduled inauguration, a state of emergency was declared in Gambia, which was due to last until 18 April, but was then lifted on 24 January (Washington Post 24/01/2017). The political crisis prompted thousands of people to flee Banjul to the countryside, and to neighbouring Senegal.

International and neighbouring countries' relationship to the conflict

Former President Jammeh faced considerable international and regional pressure before stepping down on 21 January. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened militarily in the Gambia, as a result of former President Jammeh's refusal to step down. ECOWAS set 19 January as the date the troops would move into the Gambia if Jammeh continued to refuse to step down. ECOWAS troops included troops from Nigeria, Ghana and Mali. On 20 January, two deadlines were set by ECOWAS for Jammeh to step down. On 25 January, the ECOWAS Commission has stated that its coalition force in the Gambia would remain for the next six months (Vanguard 25/01/2017). The first deadline on 19 January was later extended as final diplomatic negotiations took place (Telegraph 21/01/2017).

On 14 January, the African Union warned of serious consequences if former President Jammeh did not step down (Al Jazeera 14/01/2017). On 19 January, the UN unanimously approved a resolution expressing support to President Adama Barrow (ITV 21/01/2017).

Guinea President Alpha Conde and Mauritania President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz engaged in diplomatic negotiations with former President Jammeh, which prompted his departure (France 24 20/01/2017).

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

The Gambian Red Cross, volunteers, and various government agencies including immigration have reportedly been involved in assisting returnees (Sanna Camara 22/01/2017; IRIN News 24/01/2017).

Authorities have sent buses to borders to transport people back home. Ferry services are being provided free of charge as well (UNHCR 24/01/2017)

The Gambia Red Cross is assisting those who return (The Gambia Red Cross 24/01/2017).

Senegalese authorities have delivered and distributed several metric tons of food to the displaced and host families – including rice, oil and sugar. Forty tons of rice arrived in Ziguinchor region in the last week and distribution has started in several villages hosting displaced people (UNHCR 24/01/2017).

International response capacity

UNHCR and Senegalese authorities have deployed joint field missions to southern Senegal's Casamance, bordering Gambia, where they established contingency plans in case of future influxes (IOL 16/01/2017).

Six agencies working on food security operate in the Gambia: Action Aid, Catholic Relief Services, Concern Universal, FAO, The Gambia Red Cross, and WFP. At least four operate in every administrative region. Catholic Relief Services, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO provide nutrition aid in all regions (OCHA 09/01/2017).

Five health agencies work in the Gambia: Child Fund, The Gambia Red Cross, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WHO. At least four work in every administrative region. Only UNICEF provides assistance for WASH, but operates in all regions of Gambia (OCHA 09/01/2017).

Information gaps and needs

- Limited sectoral information on needs. An assessment on needs of displaced populations is yet to be conducted, or the data to be made available.
- There is a lack of information on humanitarian constraints.

Lessons learned

- There is a lack of integrated early warning systems to facilitate early response, and to assist affected populations (OCHA 31/08/2016)

Key characteristics of host population and area

Key indicators	The Gambia	Banjul (City)*	Kanifing*	Mansakonko	Kerewan	Janjanbureh	Basse	Brikaman	Kuntaur
Total population	1,882,450	31,000	382,000	192,000	221,000	127,000	240,000	700,000	99,000
Gender and age distribution of population	49% male 51% female	54% men 46% women	50% men 50% women	49% men 51% women	48% men 52% women	48% men 52% women	48% men 52% women	50% men 50% women	48% men 52% women
Number of children in severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	9,000	128	1,100	252	1,100	1,000	2,400	3,000	1,200
Population density		2,559 inhabitants / sq. km	4,272 inhabitants / sq. km.	396 inhabitants / sq. km	98 inhabitants / sq. km	89 inhabitants / sq. km	116 inhabitants / sq. km	397 inhabitants / sq. km	68 inhabitants / sq. km
Average household size		4.7 people/household	5.7 people/household	9.2 people/household	9.9 people/household	10.6 people/household	14.5 people/household	8.0 people/household	
Under-five Mortality rate	74 children / 1,000 live births								
Annual number of maternal deaths	340								

*: The total population for the urban area of Banjul is around 500,000 people (CIA World Factbook 12/01/2017)

* The greater Banjul area includes Banjul City and Kanifing Municipal Council

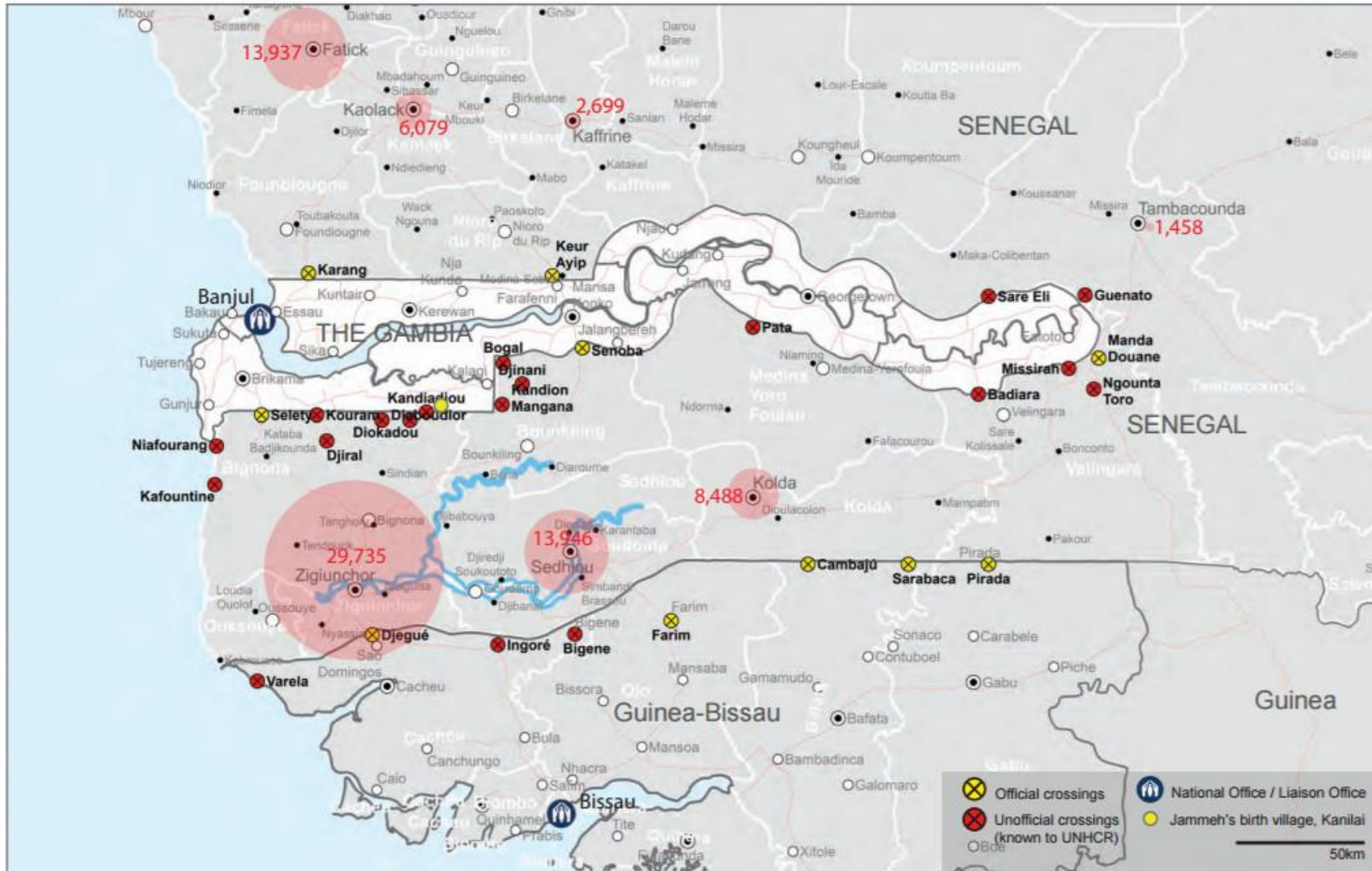
Sources: Census 2013, WHO 2013, WHO 2013, OCHA 04/01/2017, CIA World Factbook, Gambia Bureau of Statistics, WFP , OCHA 04/01/2017

Map of Displacement from the Gambia to Senegal

SENEGAL, THE GAMBIA AND GUINEA-BISSAU

76,342 persons crossed into Senegal

22 January 2017



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Sources: Government, UNHCR

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/gmb>

Source: UNHCR 22/01/2017