

The Gambia

Country Overview

Politics

The Gambia is a presidential republic which is characterized by a strong executive branch and a unicameral legislative body. The judicial system is a mix between English common law, Islamic law, and customary law. The Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) has historically dominated the political landscape in the Gambia during the rule of President Yahya Jammeh.¹ Jammeh was in power from 1994, when he led a military coup that made him president until December 2016, when he lost a reelection bid to a coalition of opposition parties.² President Adama Barrow was democratically elected in 2016.³

Economy

The Gambia is classified by the World Bank as a low-income country, and its small size and lack of economic diversification make it especially vulnerable to shocks in its main industries of tourism, agriculture, and remittance payments.⁴

Social/Human Development

The Gambia has a population of 2 million, with a relatively high growth rate of 2.8 percent annually. The country is primarily comprised of four ethnic groups: the Mandinka/Jahanka (33.8 percent), Fulani/Tukulur/Lorobo (22.1 percent), Wolof (12.2 percent), and Jola/Karoninka (10.9 percent). Islam is overwhelmingly the most popularly practiced religion in the Gambia, with 95.7 percent of the population identifying as Muslim.⁵

The Gambia has notably made progress in its poverty reduction programs, and has seen a reduction in poverty rates from 58 percent in 2003 to 48.4 percent in 2010.⁶ However, these trends may be reversing, as the World Bank estimated that between 2013 and 2016, real per capita GDP may have fallen as much as 20 percent.⁷

The Gambia's literacy rates are notably low, with an overall adult literacy rate of approximately 42.5 in 2012.⁸

The Gambia has traditionally been a largely agricultural society, with 70 percent of the population relying on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihoods.⁹ This is shifting, however, with high rates of rural-



urban migration. 50 percent of the population now lives in urban areas, contributing to rapid urbanization without the necessary infrastructure to support these populations.¹⁰

A significant number of Gambian emigres are skilled workers, and remittance payments are crucial – with over 20 percent of GDP coming from remittances.¹¹ Gambians are increasingly seeking to reach Spain and Italy via informal migration routes.¹²

U.S. Department of State TIP Report Summary (2017)

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2 Watch List

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report, trafficking risk is not found in the Gambia's export supply chain.

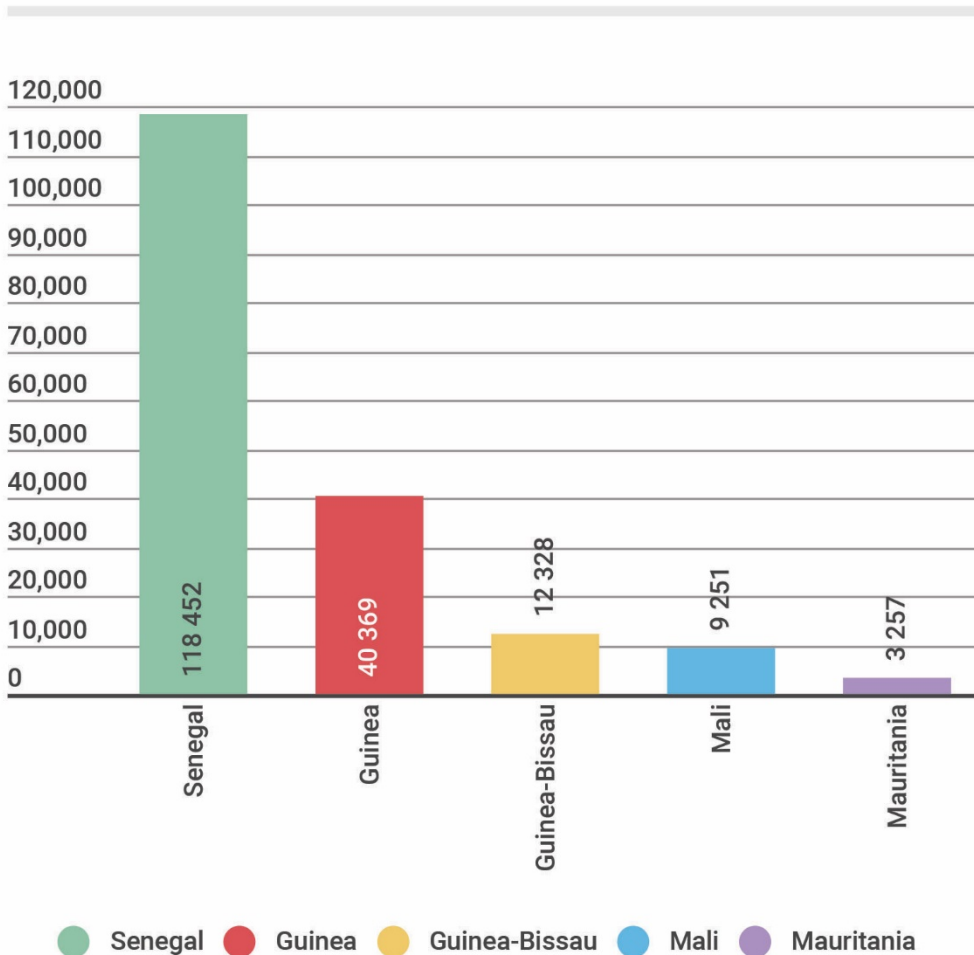
Read the full TIP report at: <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271191.htm>

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

The Gambia experiences a net negative migration rate,¹³ and a total migrant stock of -13,476 in 2012.¹⁴ The main source countries for immigration to the Gambia are Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Mauritania, with the vast majority coming from Senegal (118,452 Senegalese migrants currently live in the Gambia).¹⁵ There were an estimated 7,854 refugees in the Gambia at the end of 2015.¹⁶



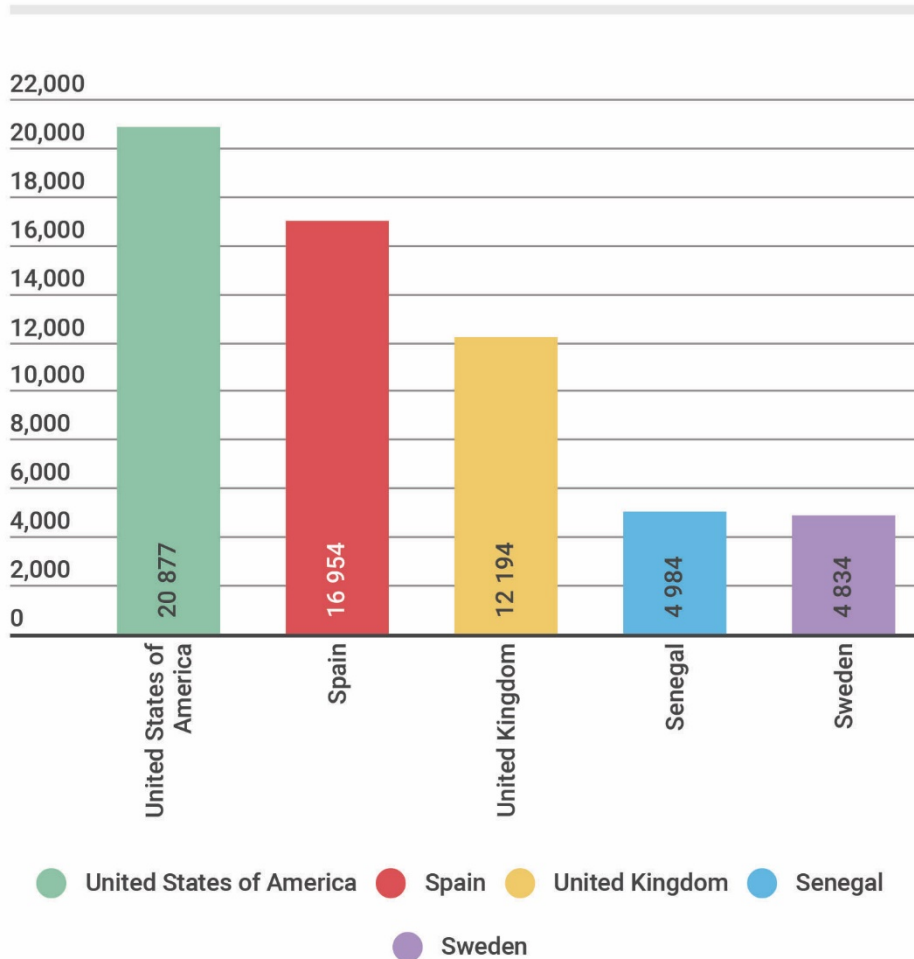
Migrants to The Gambia



The top destination countries for migrants from the Gambia were the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom, Senegal and Sweden.¹⁷ A high number of Gambians migrate without documentation to Europe via Italy and Spain.¹⁸



Migrants from The Gambia



Exports and Trade

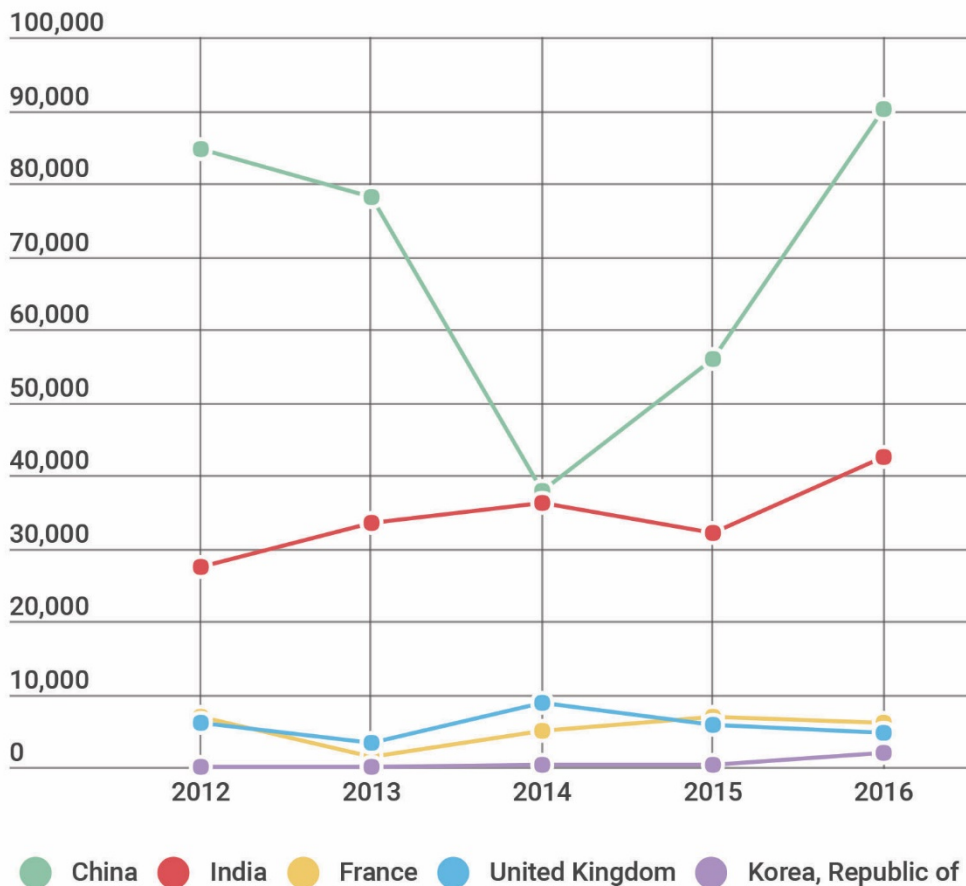
In 2016, Gambia's top exports were oil seeds/nuts (peanuts), cereals/starches, dairy, textiles, and sugar. Timber is also a critical export, although this was not captured by formal trade data due to smuggling.¹⁹ Much of the wood exported to China was reportedly smuggled via the Gambia from Senegal.²⁰



Top Commodity Exports (USD/Thousands)



The Gambia Export Partners (USD/Thousands)



Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers' Rights

Freedom of Association

Workers in the Gambia are able to form unions, strike, and collectively bargain, but civil servants, domestic workers, police officers, and military personnel are barred from these actions. Further, the law



stipulates that the minister responsible for labor matters has the right to exclude any other category of workers from protections provided by the Labor Act (law which provides the rights for unionization, collective bargaining, and striking). The law also requires that a union must have a minimum of 50 workers to register a trade union, that the registrar of unions have the right to examine the financial accounts of workers' associations without cause, and that strikes must be declared in writing at least 14 days prior to taking place.²¹

Working Conditions

The Gambia's minimum wage is GMD 50 (USD 1.09) per day, but minimum wage laws only apply to approximately 20 percent of the workforce. The legal workweek is 48 hours within six days, but there is no legal limit on hours worked per week and no law which prohibits excessive compulsory overtime. Most government employees do not receive overtime pay. The law also does not allow for workers to remove themselves from workplace situations which endangered their health or safety without risking being fired, and authorities did not effectively protect workers from such conditions.²²

Discrimination

The Gambian constitution prohibits workplace discrimination based on race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, sex, property, birth, or other status.²³

Forced Labor

The Gambian constitution and its legal code prohibit forced labor, but enforcement was reportedly insufficient.²⁴

Child Labor

Gambian law prohibits "economic exploitation" of children under 16 and disallows for children under 18 from engaging in hazardous or exploitative labor.²⁵

Civil Society Organizations

While there are some civil society organizations which work on human rights issues in the Gambia, there is some evidence that the government harasses activists who criticize the government.²⁶



Immigration Policies Limiting the Employment Options or Movement of Migrants

Foreign workers in the Gambia are required to pay an annual registration fee of approximately USD 54 and an additional work permit fee of about USD 11. There is also a federally-mandated quota which stipulates that no more than 20 percent of a company's staff may be non-Gambians. Companies are required to pay an annual payroll tax of USD 256.40 for Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) citizens and USD 1,025.64 for all other foreign employees.²⁷

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

Conventions	Status
ILO 29 Forced Labor	In force
ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize	In force
ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining	In force
ILO 100 Equal Remuneration	In force
ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor	In force
ILO 111 Discrimination	In force
ILO 138 Minimum Age	In force
ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies	In force
ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor	In force
ILO 97 Migration for Employment	In force

28

Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

The Gambia scores an 89.4 in the 2016 Fragile States Index (FSI), placing it just above the “warning” category and ranking the country 37 out of 178. The FSI scale goes from 0 (indicating a “sustainable” political system), to 120 (indicating a political system on “high alert”).²⁹ The primary source of political instability in the country surrounds the electoral process.³⁰



Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2016 scores the Gambia as 26 out of 100, where 0 signals “Highly Corrupt” and 100 signals “Very Clean.” The Gambia ranks 145 out of 176 on that index.³¹ The World Economic Forum rates corruption as a 3.9 on their index for rating the most problematic factors for doing business, placing it as a medium-tier factor.³²

Level of Crime and Violence

The U.S. Department of State gives the Gambia a crime rating of medium in its 2015 Crime and Safety Report, with the major drivers of crime cited as a poor economy and food insecurity.³³

State Persecution

Anti-discrimination laws do not apply to the LGBTQ community. There are reports of members of the LGBTQ community fleeing to neighboring countries due to fears of arrest and prosecution.³⁴

There were multiple instances from 2015 of politically motivated arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, torture, and killings at the hands of state security forces.³⁵

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

The Gambia scores in the low human development category, according to the UN Human Development Index (HDI), with a rank of 173 out of 188 countries and a HDI score of 0.452.³⁶

Level and Extent of Poverty

The Gambia has a high level of poverty, with 57.2 percent of the population deemed to be living in multidimensional poverty according to the United Nations in 2016.³⁷

A major continuing challenge to the Gambian economy is the lack of diversified or robust sectors of the economy which provide individuals with financial security and stability. Some of the population is agrarian, but more than half of the arable land in the country is cultivated. Instead, Gambians rely heavily on the tourist industry and remittance payments.³⁸



Degree of Gender Inequality

The Gambian constitution guarantees gender equality in the economic, political, and social spheres. However, the constitutional prohibitions of gender-based discrimination do not apply to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, or devolution of property on death.³⁹

Environmental Factors

Togo experiences periodic droughts, as well as deforestation from slash-and-burn agricultural practices.⁴⁰

Landlessness and Dispossession

The former president was accused of widespread land grabs targeting rural communities to build hundreds of privately owned farms.⁴¹

Use of Export Processing Zones (EPZs)

The Gambia does have Export Processing Zones (EPZs), and they offer investors (who export at least 80 percent of their production) operating within them exemptions from the payment of a variety of different taxes. These incentives are valid for a maximum of ten years.⁴²

Promotion of Emigration/Remittance Economy

The Gambian economy received approximately USD 181 million in 2015,⁴³ and remittance inflows account for one-fifth of the country's GDP.⁴⁴

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Ground Nuts/Peanuts

Ground Nuts/Peanuts Overview

Nearly two-thirds of the agricultural workforce works in the groundnut sector⁴⁵ and they contribute over 20 percent of agricultural GDP in the Gambia. They are grown on over 550,000 hectares. Most groundnuts are exported unprocessed. The climate in the Gambia is suitable for groundnut production, with more intensive activity in north and south bank regions.⁴⁶



Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Ground Nuts/Peanuts

There is little information specifically on labor risk in groundnut production in the Gambia. There is anecdotal evidence that children are involved in agriculture, potentially including groundnut production.⁴⁷



Gift of the United States Government

This report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.

Endnotes

¹ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: Gambia, The*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ga.html>

² BBC News. "Gambias Jammeh loses to Adama Barrow in shock election result." December 2, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38183906>

³ African Economic Outlook. *Country Notes. Gambia*. <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/country-notes/gambia>

⁴ The World Bank. *The Gambia Overview*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/gambia>

⁵ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: Gambia, The*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ga.html>

⁶ The World Bank. *The Gambia Overview*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/gambia>

⁷ The World Bank. *The Gambia Overview*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/gambia>

⁸ Republic of the Gambia. Ministry of Secondary and Basic Education. *National Literacy Action Plan for 2012-2015*. http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/Gambia_01.pdf

⁹ The World Bank. *The Gambia Overview*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/gambia>

¹⁰ African Development Bank. *The Gambia Economic Outlook*. <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/west-africa/gambia/gambia-economic-outlook/>



- ¹¹ The World Bank. *The Gambia Overview*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/gambia>
- ¹² Sieff, Kevin. "Tiny Gambia Has a Big Export: Migrants Desperate to Reach Europe." *The Washington Post*. June 14, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2015/06/14/tiny-gambia-has-a-big-export-migrants-desperate-to-reach-europe/?utm_term=.3f9bb25b41b4
- ¹³ The World Bank. *The Gambia Overview*. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/gambia>
- ¹⁴ The World Bank. *Net migration | Data*. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM?locations=GM>
- ¹⁵ The World Bank. *Net migration | Data*. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM?locations=GM>
- ¹⁶ UNHCR. *Population Statistics - Data - Overview*. <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>
- ¹⁷ The World Bank. *Net migration | Data*. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM?locations=GM>
- ¹⁸ Sieff, Kevin. "Tiny Gambia Has a Big Export: Migrants Desperate to Reach Europe." *The Washington Post*. June 14, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/world/2015/06/14/tiny-gambia-has-a-big-export-migrants-desperate-to-reach-europe/?utm_term=.3f9bb25b41b4
- ¹⁹ International Trade Centre. Trade Map. www.trademap.org.
- ²⁰ Phatey, Sam. "Gambia bans importation of timber." *SMBC News*. September 23, 2016. <https://gambia.smbcgo.com/2016/09/23/gambia-bans-importation-of-timber/>
- ²¹ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ²² U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ²³ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ²⁴ U.S. Department of State. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. *2016 Trafficking in Persons Report: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2016/258770.htm>
- ²⁵ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ²⁶ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ²⁷ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. *Investment Climate Statements for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2016/af/254201.htm>
- ²⁸ International Labour Organization. Normlex. <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:>
- ²⁹ The Fund For Peace. *Fragile States Index 2016*. <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/>
- ³⁰ BBC News. "Gambias Jammeh loses to Adama Barrow in shock election result." December 2, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-38183906>.
- ³¹ Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2016*. https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016
- ³² World Economic Forum. *The Global Competitiveness Report 2015 – 2016*. 2016. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2015-2016/>
- ³³ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Diplomatic Security (OSAC). *The Gambia 2015 Crime and Safety Report*. 2015. <https://www.osac.gov/pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=17638>
- ³⁴ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ³⁵ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>
- ³⁶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Reports*. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GMB>
- ³⁷ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Reports*. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GMB>
- ³⁸ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: Gambia, The*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ga.html>



³⁹ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265258.htm>

⁴⁰ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: Togo*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/to.html>

⁴¹ Phatey, Sam. "Gambian minister accuses ex-president of land grabbing." SMBC Gambia. April 3, 2017. <https://gambia.smbcgo.com/2017/04/03/gambian-minister-accuses-ex-president-land-grabbing/>

⁴² U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. *Investment Climate Statements for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2016/af/254201.htm>

⁴³ U.S. Department of State. Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs. *Investment Climate Statements for 2016: The Gambia*. <https://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/othr/ics/2016/af/254201.htm>

⁴⁴ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook: Gambia, The*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ga.html>

⁴⁵ International Trade Center. <http://www.intracen.org/Boosting-the-value-of-groundnuts-in-the-Gambia/>

⁴⁶ Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA). *Groundnut Production in The Gambia*. April 2013. <https://www.deik.org.tr/Contents/FileAction/4787>

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Labor. Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). *2015 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*. https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/the-gambia#_ENREF_1

