

Human Rights Watch

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/17/gambia-two-decades-fear-and-repression>

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The 81-page report, [State of Fear: Arbitrary Arrests, Torture, and Killings](#), describes the human rights situation in Gambia since President Yahya Jammeh took power in 1994 and ruthlessly repressed all forms of dissent. State security forces and shadowy paramilitary groups carry out unlawful killings and arbitrarily arrest, detain, and forcibly disappear people, causing hundreds to flee the tiny country, best known internationally as a tourist destination. Most of the abuses documented in the report are from 2013 to 2015.

Looking beyond Gambias beautiful beaches, the population lives in a climate of fear in which injustice prevails and accountability for abuses is beyond reach, said Felicity Thompson, West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch and author of the report. The government needs to urgently turn things around by respecting basic rights and prosecuting those who violate them.

The report is based on in-depth interviews with over 35 victims and witnesses of human rights violations, including journalists, human rights defenders, student leaders, political opposition members, religious leaders, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities. Human Rights Watch also interviewed numerous former members of the security forces and paramilitary groups. Many believed they were under surveillance by the intelligence services, and spoke to Human Rights Watch with palpable fear and at great personal risk.



September 16, 2015

[State of Fear](#)

Arbitrary Arrests, Torture, and Killings

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