



# The Gambia



**Background** In the 10th century, Muslim merchants established some of The Gambia's earliest large settlements as trans-Saharan trade hubs. These settlements eventually grew into major export centers sending slaves, gold, and ivory across the Sahara. Between the 16th and 17th centuries, European colonial powers began establishing trade with The Gambia. In 1664, the United Kingdom established a colony in The Gambia focused on exporting enslaved people across the Atlantic. During the roughly 300 years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the UK and other European powers may have exported as many as 3 million people from The Gambia.

The Gambia gained its independence from the UK in 1965. Geographically surrounded by Senegal, it formed the short-lived confederation of Senegambia between 1982 and 1989. In 1994, Yahya JAMMEH led a military coup overthrowing the president and banning political activity. He subsequently won every presidential election until 2016, when he lost to Adama BARROW, who headed an opposition coalition during free and fair elections. BARROW won reelection in 2021. The Gambia is the only member of the Economic Community of West African States that does not have presidential term limits. Since the 2016 election, The Gambia and the US have enjoyed improved relations. US assistance to the country has supported democracy-strengthening activities, capacity building, economic development, and security sector education and training programs.

**Capital** name: Banjul

**Government type** presidential republic

**Area** total : 11,300 sq km  
land: 10,120 sq km  
water: 1,180 sq km

**Climate** tropical; hot, rainy season (June to November); cooler, dry season (November to May)

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

**Population** total: 2,523,327 (2024 est.)

**Population growth rate** 2.16% (2024 est.)

**Ethnic groups** Mandinka/Jahanka 33.3%, Fulani/Tukulur/Lorobo 18.2%, Wolof 12.9%, Jola/Karoninka 11%, Serahuleh 7.2%, Serer 3.5%, other 4%, non-Gambian 9.9% (2019-20 est.)

**Religions** Muslim 96.4%, Christian 3.5%, other or none 0.1% (2019-20 est.)

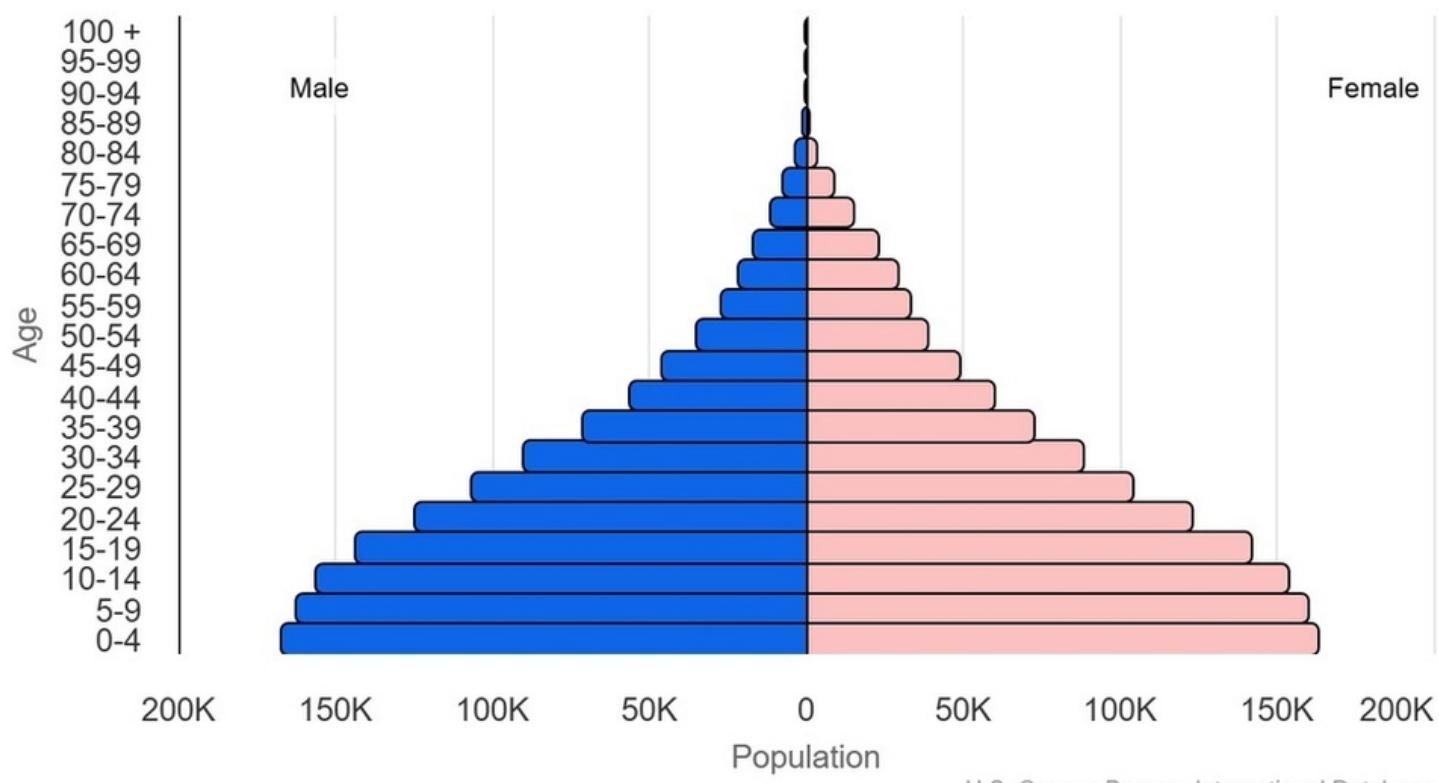
**Languages** English (official), Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, other indigenous vernaculars

**Executive branch** chief of state: President Adama BARROW (since 19 January 2022)  
head of government: Vice President Mohammed JALLOW (since 23 February 2024)

**Legislative branch** legislature name: National Assembly

<b>Diplomatic representation in the US</b>	chief of mission: Ambassador Momodou Lamin BAH (12 December 2022)
<b>Diplomatic representation from the US</b>	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires Robert ANDERSON (since 22 August 2025)
<b>Economic overview</b>	low-income West African economy; agriculture-dominant; high poverty rate; heightened inflation; dependent on foreign assistance and remittances; structural reforms conditioned by IMF Extended Credit Facility program
<b>Real GDP (purchasing power parity)</b>	\$8.365 billion (2024 est.) \$7.911 billion (2023 est.) \$7.549 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Real GDP per capita</b>	\$3,000 (2024 est.) \$2,900 (2023 est.) \$2,900 (2022 est.)
<b>Exports</b>	\$838.409 million (2024 est.) \$717.774 million (2023 est.) \$267.377 million (2022 est.)
<b>Exports - partners</b>	Kazakhstan 92%, Guinea-Bissau 2%, China 1%, India 1%, Greece 1% (2023)
<b>Exports - commodities</b>	packaged medicine, cars, harvesting machinery, refined petroleum, trailers (2023)
<b>Imports</b>	\$1.549 billion (2024 est.) \$1.353 billion (2023 est.) \$829.516 million (2022 est.)
<b>Imports - partners</b>	Kazakhstan 26%, China 18%, Senegal 8%, India 7%, Brazil 4% (2023)
<b>Imports - commodities</b>	crude petroleum, refined petroleum, cotton fabric, iron alloys, rice (2023)

## Population Pyramid

**Gambia, The (2024)**

U.S. Census Bureau, International Database