



GAMBIA

2023 IFRC network country plan

Funding Requirement **CHF 4.7M**

Appeal number **MAAGM002**

In support of the Gambia Red Cross Society



7

National Society branches



60

National Society staff



15,936

National Society volunteers

People to be reached



21,000

Climate and environment



33,000

Disasters and crises

IFRC network multiyear focus

Longer term needs

- Disaster risk management
- Climate change adaptation
 - Community health
- Population movement related needs

Capacity development

- Auxiliary role
- Financial sustainability and resource mobilization
 - Strategic planning

Key country data

Population **2.5M**

INFORM Severity rating **low**

Long-term Climate Risk Index **102**

Human Development Index rank **174**

Population below poverty level **48.6%**

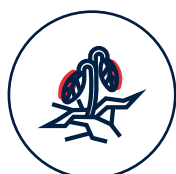
Hazards



Windstorms



Floods



Drought



Food insecurity



Population movement



Civil unrest

Funding requirements

Total 4.7M CHF

Through the IFRC

4.6M CHF

Through Participating National Societies

130,000 CHF

IFRC Breakdown

Longer term needs

580,000 CHF
Climate and environment

1.1M CHF
Disasters and crises

1.4M CHF
Health and wellbeing

146,000 CHF
Migration and displacement

365,000 CHF
Values, power and inclusion

992,000 CHF
Enabling local actors

Participating National Societies

Belgian Red Cross

British Red Cross*

Italian Red Cross*

Netherlands Red Cross

Norwegian Red Cross *

Qatar Red Crescent

Spanish Red Cross



NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The Gambia Red Cross Society was established in 1966 as a national humanitarian organization, auxiliary to the public authorities, particularly to the Ministry of Health as well as to the Medical Services of the Armed Forces, in accordance with provisions of the Geneva Conventions and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1975.

As part of its mandate, Gambia Red Cross complements the efforts of the Government in the following areas: health services, disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and response, empowerment of children and youth, promotion of and capacity development on international humanitarian law, livelihoods, restoring family links, first aid training, and responding to emergencies.

The National Society has a core of trained and available volunteers and staff, and at headquarters level has proficient staff in disaster management; cash and voucher assistance; shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene; emergency assessments; community engagement and accountability; health and care; planning, monitoring evaluation and reporting; protection, gender and inclusion; and finance. The National Society is also equipped with three advanced life support and six basic life support ambulances, manned by paramedics trained in pre-hospital and health care services. The ambulances are strategically positioned to respond to emergencies countrywide, with 24-hour availability.

The Gambia Red Cross has seven branches, one in each of Gambia's seven administrative regions, which allows it to rapidly respond to various local crises and respond to relief needs. The National Society's warehouse capacity allows rapid mobilization of essential household items. Thanks to its three-year agreement with two financial service providers (Afri Money and QMoney), Gambia Red Cross is also able to implement rapid cash-based response to people affected by disasters and crises.

In line with its strategic vision for 2023, the National Society is working across several priority areas to support people in Gambia, primarily to provide prompt and effective response to emergencies and to support the sustainable development of vulnerable communities. Core areas of activity are:

- Dissemination of humanitarian Fundamental Principles and values
- Primary health and care, including first aid, water and sanitation
- Disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery, including food security
- Livelihoods and climate change
- Restoring family links, and support to vulnerable migrants
- Protection, gender and inclusion

IFRC NETWORK ACTION IN 2023

Joint situational analysis

Gambia is a small, fragile country in West Africa. Stretching 450 km along the Gambia River, the country (with an area of 10,689 sq. km) is surrounded by Senegal, except for 60 km along the Atlantic Ocean. The country has a population of 2.4 million (2020). With 176 people per square kilometre, it is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. Most of the population (57%) is concentrated around urban and peri-urban centres (the Greater Banjul Area). The country's economy is supported by its agricultural, industrial, services and tourism sectors. Farming systems in the country have been affected by erratic rains and other factors.

Smallholder, rice, and rain-fed mixed systems are the predominate farming systems in the country.

Gambia is a destination country for migrants from other regions in Africa — the migrant population comprised nearly 21 percent of the total population in 2020, often refugees fleeing from areas of conflict, but also a small number of skilled African migrants. It is also an important transit country for unauthorized migrants from sub-Saharan Africa en route to Europe.

Currently, 20% of the country's GDP comes from remittance inflows, and the only other industry that has a considerable stake in the economy is tourism. Due to its proximity to both the Atlantic coast and Europe, it is

one of the most frequently visited countries in western Africa. While this industry has typically accounted for about 20% of the GDP, it has recently declined due to travel concerns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The increasing population is putting intense pressure on natural resources. Land is subject to multiple demands, to provide food and environmental services. More than half of the population falls below the international poverty line. With poverty, rapid population growth and limited resources, the number of malnourished people has continued to increase. Volatility in food prices affects all the population but adds significantly to the vulnerability of the poor and marginalized, who spend

up to 70% of their income on food items. With the climate variability, poor farmers, mainly women, have the lowest adaptive capacity and are the most vulnerable to short-term shocks. They are also more vulnerable to longer-term changes, not having the resources to invest in the transition to new agricultural technology, to adding value to crops, or to new farming systems or non-farming livelihoods.

In addition to the multiple natural hazards such as windstorms, flooding, drought and degradation of soil, that have affected the country in the past ten years, Gambia is also exposed to violence linked to the conflict over Casamance in Senegal.

Strategic priorities

Climate and environment

The Gambia has a sub-tropical climate with sunshine throughout the year and average temperatures between 29°C and 34°C. The rainy season runs from June to September and sometimes beyond. Over the past few years, the country has experienced extensive downpours causing severe destruction as a result of poor drainage systems, deforestation and felling of trees for new settlements (by new estate developers), causing floods, destruction, and untold suffering. Around 20% of the country is covered by wetlands and swamps, and flood-prone areas are hit by floods each year after heavy rains, subjecting these populations to life-threatening floods and property damage.

According to the World Bank [Climate Change Knowledge Portal](#), in Gambia major climate hazards include torrential rainfall, storms, flooding, drought, cold spells, intra-seasonal-drought, heat waves, sea level rise, and unseasonal rains. Related hazards include limited ability to predict the incidence of some hazards, and the concomitance of multiple and mutually reinforcing hazards. The most serious weather and climate-related hazards are river flooding (almost across the whole country), coastal flooding and water scarcity. The river flooding hazard is classified as 'high' by [ThinkHazard](#), meaning that potentially damaging and life-threatening river floods are expected to occur at least once in the Gambia in the next 10 years. Floods constituted 60% of weather/climate-related hazards in the Gambia between 1990-2014 (storms accounted for 27% of weather / climate-related hazards over the same period). Floods accounted for 96% of average annual monetary loss from all hazards.

Environmental degradation is also a concern. Gambia has been experiencing extreme temperatures, fluctuating rainfall and droughts, and windstorms, all of which degrade land, change grazing patterns, and reduce water supplies for both animals and people. From 2001 to 2021, Gambia lost 688 hectares of tree cover, equivalent to a 15% decrease in tree cover since 2000, and 197kt of CO₂ emissions. In 2021 alone, it lost 19 hectares of tree cover, equivalent to 7.65kt of CO₂ emissions. Between 31 January 2022 and 23 January 2023, 286 fire alerts were reported in Gambia. This is unusually high compared to previous years, going back to 2012. ([Global Forest Watch, Gambia 2022](#)).

For all these reasons, the Government of Gambia, together with Gambia Red Cross and other partners, has initiated various approaches to mitigate the impact of climate change. Amongst those approaches, promoting green growth and tree planting were identified as the most environmentally-sound measures to tackle the country's climate vulnerabilities and reverse the high rates of deforestation.

Main areas of support

The Gambia Red Cross has recognized that climate change has a significant impact on disaster management efforts and poses a significant threat to the efforts to meet the growing needs of the most vulnerable populations. The demands of disaster and environmental risk management are such that concise, clear, and reliable information is crucial. Therefore, the Gambia Red Cross has a series of programmes to tackle climate and environmental crises.

In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, the Gambia Red Cross Ecobrigade Tree Planting and Care Initiative operation was launched. The National Society will continue training volunteers and community members in all aspects of tree planting and care. This is in line with the IFRC Pan-African Tree Planting and Care initiative.

In 2023, with support from the IFRC network, the National Society plans to:

- Increase the self-reliance of individuals and communities, and reduce the impact of climate-related disasters, in targeted disaster-prone areas in all the regions
- Increase the resilience and capacities of people at risk of disasters, reducing their vulnerability, in the targeted geographic areas
- Contribute to enabling communities to predict and, where possible, prevent disasters, reducing their impact, as well as enabling them to respond to and cope with their consequences, using their own resources
- Create disaster risk reduction committees, to ensure community preparedness and response activities are coordinated and implemented well at local levels
- Organize special disaster risk reduction training and workshops for schools and communities, to promote greater awareness and to enable communities to use the knowledge accordingly
- Establish community-based early warning systems for disasters, emergencies, epidemics, and other disasters

Disasters and crises

For real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO page [Republic of The Gambia](#)

Gambia is prone to numerous hazardous events that are exacerbated by lack of capacity in implementing disaster risk reduction measures.

Every year, rains and windstorms are continuing to affect both rural and urban areas. Early warning information and forecasting is provided from the Department of Water Resources. From 30 to 31 July 2022, heavy rains hit several regions of the Gambia, leading to widespread flooding. The most affected regions were Banjul, Kanifing Municipality, West Coast, and North Bank. According to the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), over 1,900 households were affected as of 31 July 2022.

The impacts include destruction of houses, food stocks, toilet facilities and household items. Five children died in the North Bank region.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) results for Gambia indicated that 186,000 people will be under the category food crisis; however, the country will further analyze the latest food security situation, so this number may change.

The Gambia has faced a wave of clashes between the armed rebel group of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) and the Senegalese army in the southern part of Gambia (in the Senegal/Gambia border regions), leading to many deaths and the displacement of more than twenty thousand people in the West Coast Region of the country and surrounding areas in January 2022. To date, the National Society is assisting the internally displaced people and refugees who lost all their food stocks and means of livelihoods (farms and gardens) and who have been without adequate shelter as a result of the conflict.

In January 2022, most health centres in the West Coast Region were operating at a minimum level or not functioning at all, due to the clashes between the MFDC rebels and Senegalese army, depriving thousands of people of access to health care. Additionally, the country is still dealing with COVID-19 cases, as well as polio and malaria, joining its neighbouring country, Senegal, on the list of locations currently affected by epidemics.

Main areas of support

In line with its auxiliary role, the Gambia Red Cross is part of the country's first responders for the multiple disasters and crises that affect the population. Over the past years, the National Society has gained experience in emergency response planning and management. A considerable number of staff and volunteers have been trained and exposed to emergencies, natural disasters and situations of violence in the country. Many training activities have been conducted.

In 2021 and 2022, Gambia Red Cross carried out several operations with support from the IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF). In the 2022 rains, at the onset of the disaster, 200 Gambia Red Cross volunteers carried out rapid assessments in the affected communities. They provided support to the affected households, to relocate where needed and to drain water out of their homes. Gambia Red Cross mobilized essential household items from its warehouse which were immediately distributed to the severely affected households in Kanifing Municipality, Banjul, and West

Coast Region. The materials included mats, blankets, mosquito nets and hygiene kits. The severely affected households were those whose houses were destroyed to the extent that residents could not remain inside them safely because they were completely destroyed or heavily flooded. Further assistance was provided during the response operation.

The Gambia Red Cross aims at increasing its capacity to respond at scale to emergencies in the country, improve its preparedness to various events, and continue to develop improved ways to support affected people. As such, the National Society aims to ensure that it delivers more than 50% of its humanitarian assistance through cash transfers and vouchers, to support communities and local economies, and also to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

In 2023, with support of the IFRC network, the National Society plans to:

- Further strengthen the disaster management capacity of its headquarters and regional branches to ensure effective and efficient response to natural disasters, emergencies and situations of violence, in line with the IFRC Pan-African Red Ready initiative.
- Develop and revise its disaster management policy documents, such as the Disaster Management Strategic Plan and Policy, standard operating procedures and appropriate contingency plans
- Ensure that its disaster management staff and volunteers are well trained on disaster response tools, to enhance the development and maintenance of proper preparedness and response mechanisms, organizational management and other structures and systems for managing emergency response
- Ensure that recently re-activated Emergency Response Teams in all the regional branches are motivated and better organized to respond to disasters or emergencies in a timely and efficient way, in their respective areas
- Ensure that its disaster and emergency response facilities, such as the Emergency Operations Centre and radio communications equipment, are appropriately utilized to the maximum
- Ensure that the Emergency Operations Centre is fully operational and appropriate procedures are adopted

- Ensure proper use of appropriate technology for needs assessments, beneficiary targeting, cash and voucher transfer programming, and for all assistance to people affected by disasters and emergencies

With IFRC support, the Gambia Red Cross will also further explore means to reduce food insecurity and enhance livelihoods diversification, in line with the IFRC Pan-African Zero Hunger initiative. The IFRC will provide support in humanitarian diplomacy, in representation at strategic events and forums for championing the Zero Hunger Initiative, providing resource mobilization opportunities that contribute to the achievement of zero hunger, and learning and documentation for enhancing programming in line with Zero Hunger goals and outcomes.

Health and wellbeing

In recent years, Gambia has improved considerably its health and care services, although COVID-19 and other disease outbreaks have negatively impacted these developments. Gambia is among the countries with high maternal and child mortality rates in the world. It has registered an under-five mortality rate of 54/1,000 live births, 60% of which are attributable to malaria, diarrheal diseases, and acute respiratory tract infections (GDHS 2013). The main causes of mortality in infants (0-12 months) are neonatal sepsis, premature deliveries, malaria, respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases and malnutrition. The maternal mortality ratio is estimated at 433/100,000 live births, the majority of which are due to sepsis, hemorrhage and eclampsia (GDHS, 2013).

In recent years, non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension and heart disease have increased, which could be a serious threat to health, as the population is currently battling with communicable diseases.

Although Gambia has a large freshwater river flowing through most of the entire length of the country, access to clean and potable water is still a major challenge. In Gambia, municipal water supply systems are found in major towns. These systems reach only approximately 60% of the people living within those towns, and the water supply system is erratic. There are no municipal water supplies in the rural areas of the country. Approximately 40% of Gambians obtain their water from unprotected or contaminated water sources. These include open wells, polluted and contaminated water sources such as rivers, ponds and streams. This

contamination is commonly caused by poor sanitation, improper management of river water, use of unprotected water sources, poor personal hygiene, and inadequate waste management systems.

There are no municipal septic systems in Gambia. Despite some urban buildings having septic tanks for sewage collection, there are no mechanisms for treating sewage that is drained from those tanks when they are full, except in the urban areas. Sewage drained from septic tanks is either drained to the open fields or channeled directly into the Gambia River, untreated. Approximately 75% of people in rural areas use pit latrines, whilst others openly defecate in the bush and in the Gambia River. During the rainy season, human fecal matter is washed out from such areas and flushed into areas where people live.

The Government plans to improve the operation and maintenance arrangements for water and sanitation facilities, and to mobilize stakeholders in the water and sanitation sector, so as to improve the governance of water resources and address climate change issues. Despite efforts made by the Government in improving water and sanitation, there are still gaps in providing quality, adequate potable water supply and sanitation for Gambian people.

Main areas of support

As an auxiliary to Government, the Gambia Red Cross will continue to work together with the Ministry of Health in all activities and programmes, to improve access to quality basic health services.

In 2023, with support of the IFRC network, the National Society plans to:

- Strengthen quality health service delivery for the reduction of maternal, new-born, infant, child and adolescent morbidity and mortality and improvement of adolescent and youth health
- Reduce the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, and achieve an enhanced capacity to respond to public health emergencies
- Improve equitable access to safe and affordable water and sanitation, good hygiene practices, and environmental protection for all
- Improve the nutritional well-being of all Gambians, particularly mothers and children
- Benefit the poor and most vulnerable with social safety nets, as part of social and child protection systems
- Enhance inclusiveness and participation of people with disabilities
- Develop a health and water, sanitation and hygiene strategy for its health and first aid programmes, and establish water, sanitation and hygiene capacities at the Gambia Red Cross
- Review the public health emergency preparedness, readiness, and response guidelines, to position the National Society appropriately within emergency response coordination platforms
- Review the epidemic and pandemic preparedness and response plan of the Ministry of Health, to ensure Gambia Red Cross is included in the national plan, strategies, policies and emergency response laws
- Operationalize and strengthen emergency ambulance services (pre-hospital care), particularly during crises
- Address infant and maternal mortality by making available clean delivery kits and ensuring a good referral system is in place
- Develop a comprehensive health programme to meet the growing needs associated with climate change
- Create first aid posts in public places, crossing and border points, to support delivery of first aid services
- Provide training for staff and volunteers in livelihoods (livelihoods recovery activities, agriculture/food production/livestock/poultry, livelihoods diversification, labour market, market links etc.), and including training on access to formal and informal financial services

The fight against COVID-19 will be reinforced through a continent-wide initiative between the IFRC and Africa Centres for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) to invest in building resilient public health security infrastructure in Africa. Under the USD 39 million Saving Lives and Livelihoods initiative funded by Mastercard Foundation, the IFRC and African National Societies are building a programme that aims to ensure that 60% of African people are vaccinated against COVID-19. The partnership between the Mastercard Foundation and Africa CDC will support the procurement and delivery of tens of millions of COVID-19 vaccines and hasten economic recovery on the continent. Under this programme, the Gambia Red Cross will deliver critical risk communication and community engagement activities to vulnerable communities, in support of COVID-19

vaccine uptake. Other programme partners will provide procurement and logistics services to a central warehouse (UNICEF), in-country logistics (World Food Programme), managing COVID-19 vaccination centres (Amref Health Africa and GHSS) and safety surveillance (Akros).

Migration and displacement

In 2020, 139,210 Gambians were living abroad (UNDESA, 2020). Most migrants are Gambian men with low levels of formal education, and most emigrate through irregular channels for employment, education, and family reasons (Government of the Gambia, 2018). In the past, there has also been a significant departure of skilled migrants, including doctors and nurses (Kebbeh, 2013). Within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the main destinations for Gambians are Mali, Senegal, and Sierra Leone; beyond this, the primary destinations are the USA, Spain, and the UK (IOM, 2020).¹

The Gambia is a source country for refugees and asylum seekers. In 2021, there were 11,042 refugees and 5,731 asylum seekers from the Gambia in countries such as the UK, Italy, Germany and the USA (UNHCR, 2022). This official figure does not fully capture the 45,000 Gambians who fled to Senegal during the 2017 political instability, and who have since gradually returned (UNHCR, 2017). Following the 2017 political instability, large numbers of Gambians with an irregular status were also present in Italy and Spain, but this trend decreased from 2019 (IOM, 2020).

Most Gambians use the Central Mediterranean route to arrive in Europe: they board a bus heading to Agadez in Niger or Gao in Mali, where, often with the help of smugglers, they make their way to Libya or Algeria, and then into Europe (IOM, 2017). Some also use the Western Mediterranean route to enter Europe. There are three entry points: the Canary Islands and mainland Spain via boat, and the enclave of Ceuta or Melilla via land transportation (IOM, 2017). Gambians also move along the so-called Atlantic route from the coasts of Gambia to the Canary Islands and Spain (MMC, 2021). Gambians embarking on such journeys face extreme dangers, including death, extortion, confiscation of identification cards, limited access to food, water and medicine, and heightened vulnerability to xenophobia, violence, and various forms of abuse (IOM, 2017).

Owing to its strategic location, Gambia also serves as a transit and destination country for migrants. According

to UN DESA, in 2020, Gambia hosted over 215,000 immigrants, primarily from Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mali (UNDESA, 2020). Migrants in Gambia are employed primarily in sectors such as services and sales, crafts and trade, and agriculture and fisheries. The country is also the destination for a small number of skilled migrants from West African states. In addition, Gambia is a transit country for migrants travelling through northern Africa to Europe.

In 2022, Gambia hosted 4,625 refugees and asylum seekers. They are mostly from neighbouring ECOWAS countries, specifically Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (UNHCR, 2022). Refugees in the Gambia have the right to identification documents, work, access to social amenities and movement within the country; however, these rights are open to inconsistent interpretations with risks of refugees being ill-treated and discriminated against (Zanker, 2018).

The Gambia is a party to several international instruments relevant to migration and displacement, including refugee protection, eradication of statelessness, combating human trafficking and smuggling, and human rights protection. However, the Gambia is not a signatory to key labour migration instruments. The Gambia has ratified and/or acceded to several regional instruments that have shaped its domestic policies. These include instruments governing refugee protection, free movement of persons, eradication of statelessness, and internal displacement.

The government has formulated numerous national policies, plans, acts and strategies to manage various types of human mobility into and from the Gambia. However, it is yet to develop an internal migration or displacement policy. The Gambia has also signed bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding with various European, Asian, and neighbouring African countries (IOM, 2021). This includes a bilateral cooperation agreement with Spain to control irregular migration; a bilateral security cooperation agreement with Italy in 2010 on irregular migration, trafficking, and training for border personnel; a memorandum of understanding with Senegal on the prevention of human trafficking as well as an agreement on preferred entry and stay; and a bilateral labour agreement with Qatar on the regulation of the employment of Gambians in Qatar, covering procedures for migrant recruitment.

¹ The analysis for this section has been supported by the Red Cross Red Crescent Global Migration Lab: <https://www.redcross.org.au/globalmigrationlab/>

Several government ministries oversee the governance of human mobility (IOM, 2021). The Ministry of Interior is responsible for formulating and implementing the country's migration policy, and it developed the National Migration Policy launched in December 2020. The Office of the Vice President is responsible for coordinating migration programmes. The National Coordination Mechanism for Migration, launched in November 2019, ensures inter-ministerial coordination by acting as a central platform to discuss migration issues and oversee the implementation of the National Migration Policy. In addition, the Gambia Department of Immigration under the Ministry of Interior is responsible for enacting immigration policy. It is tasked with controlling movement into and out of the country and enforcing immigration laws, as outlined by the Immigration Act. The Gambia Diaspora Directorate, which was established in 2019 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, is responsible for enacting emigration policy and engaging with the diaspora. These ministries and directorates collaborate with several international humanitarian actors, including Catholic Relief Services, World Food Programme, United Nations Population Fund, International Organisation for Migration, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Main areas of support

Gambia Red Cross is part of the IFRC three-year [Global Route Based Migration Programme](#), which aims to improve the safety and dignity of people on the move along deadly and dangerous land and sea-based migration routes across Africa, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa. The programme aims to support 4.7 million people on the move and people in host communities annually through three operational pillars: (1) improving access to assistance and protection, including through humanitarian service points; (2) strengthening National Society capacities; and (3) local to global humanitarian diplomacy.

In 2023, with support from the IFRC network, the Gambia Red Cross will focus on the following:

- Mapping of actors working on migration/displacement matters and working in synergy with those actors on the protection of migrants
- Ensuring the inclusion of route-based programmes in the assistance and protection of migrants
- Ensuring that programmes target communities along the borders, with a focus on community resilience in the assistance and protection of migrants

- Engaging migrant communities and associations and strengthen referrals for protection measures
- Piloting and scaling-up vocational training and employment and self-employment programmes, targeting internally displaced persons, host communities and returnees, aiming at improving their access to the labour market and income sources
- Advocacy on the development of agreements, policies and legal provisions, as appropriate, with relevant authorities, to strengthen the National Society's auxiliary role in support of vulnerable migrants and displaced persons

Values, power and inclusion

The 2019-20 Gambia Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) found that 9% of women aged 15-49 have experienced sexual violence, while 39% of married women have been subjected to either physical, sexual or emotional violence by their partners. In addition, the survey found that about 51% of women and 35% of men agree that wife battering is acceptable. In addition, nearly three-quarters of women aged 15-49 have experienced female genital mutilation/circumcision, although the practice may becoming less common: 46% of girls age 0-14 are circumcised according to the 2019-20 GDHS, and less than half of women and men believe that female genital circumcision should continue ([UNFPA Gambia Women Empowerment Centre, 22 June 2021](#)).

Gambia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2015. Six years later, in July 2021, the Gambia National Assembly passed the Persons with Disabilities Bill, which was thereafter enforced by President Adama Barrow in August 2021. It is expected that this new piece of legislation will grant the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms to all people with disabilities in Gambia, which has been tirelessly advocated for by the Gambia Federation of People with Disabilities and a range of stakeholders, including the European Union. ([The Gambia: Disability Bill is a key step towards greater inclusion in society](#)).

Main areas of support

In emergency response, the Gambia Red Cross ensures that protection issues are considered and that everyone in the affected areas feels protected, whatever the age, gender, disability status, nationality or minority background. The National Society conducts awareness raising and orientation sessions on protection. To ensure the inclusion of everyone, including all vulnerable groups, engagement with people in the distribution centres is carried out to ensure that all the assistance

is distributed equitably and impartially. Gender roles and needs are considered when setting up distribution points, times and dates, as well as in hygiene promotion activities.

As part of needs assessments and analysis, a gender and diversity analysis is included in all sector responses including food, shelter and household items, livelihoods, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene, to understand how different groups have been affected differently, and which informs any revision of the operational strategy. All sectors seek to meet the IFRC Minimum Standards on Protection, Gender and Inclusion in Emergencies, and work with other sectors to ensure protection, gender and inclusion integration and support in multisectoral assessments.

Community engagement and accountability is also mainstreamed throughout emergency interventions to guarantee maximum and meaningful participation of the affected communities. Feedback and complaints mechanisms are established for beneficiaries of Gambia Red Cross support, so they can provide direct feedback on services delivered. For clarity and for a good flow of information, clear roles and responsibilities are agreed upon with representatives of community leaders and committees. The beneficiary selection criteria are developed with communities and the process clearly communicated to all affected. Hygiene and health promotion sessions are also instrumental in collecting feedback and responding to community concerns, and serve to amend hygiene and health promotion

messaging, as necessary. Consultations are held with communities to determine who will be registered as head of household to receive cash grants.

In 2023, with support of the IFRC network, the Gambia Red Cross plans to:

- Finalize the draft protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy and carry out sensitization of the PSEA policy among the board members, staff and volunteers
- Create gender networks within the branches, in the form of National Gender Educational Camps
- Design community-driven activities through the involvement and participation of community members
- Engage with education officials on the inclusion of protection, gender and inclusion in the school curriculum
- Carry out a media campaign on the importance of ensuring safe, equitable and continuous access to education in humanitarian contexts
- Make sure women and girls have access to safe menstrual hygiene resources during emergencies
- Develop a tool to address prevention of sexual and gender-based violence through community engagements
- Provide psychosocial support to the victims of sexual and gender-based violence

Enabling local actors

The Gambia Red Cross is committed to pursue its institutional strengthening, and has carried out the self-assessment part of the Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (OCAC) process in 2013. The self-assessment part of the OCAC process is intended to capture the strengths and weaknesses of National Societies as a whole in relation to a wide range of organizational capacities.

The IFRC network is committed to support the Gambia Red Cross in its development, and in line with its priorities.

Engaged

- Engage with influential leaders and decision-makers through humanitarian diplomacy

- Promote innovation and change management in strategies, plans and policies
- Upgrade the finances, procurement and logistics system of the National Society

Accountable

- Invest in sustainable income generation projects for the National Society (construction of a multi-purpose house to generate resources at the national headquarters office)
- Develop a resource mobilization strategy and plan
- Organize resource mobilization and income generation activities
- Improve the Gambia Red Cross's partnership agreements with participating National Societies

- Improve the Gambia Red Cross's Cooperation Framework with the ICRC and IFRC
 - Strengthen the National Society's monitoring system and internal control mechanism
 - Establish outpatient clinics at regional branch level to supplement the resource gaps of the National Society
- Trusted**
- Build the human and financial resource capacity of the National Society to integrate and implement the Movement-wide commitments and minimum actions into strategies, policies, procedures, programmes and operations within the national context
 - Develop a clear strategic and implementation plan on visibility
 - Develop guidelines, tools and mechanisms (fraud and corruption policy, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse policy, non-discrimination, harassment, child safeguarding policies) to prevent, manage and address integrity and reputational risks of the National Society
 - Strengthen the capacity of the gender and diversity unit of the National Society
 - Provide vehicles, motorbikes, equipment, and logistics materials to facilitate the operations of the National Society
 - Procure support packages for families of volunteers who are affected or killed during operations, in food provision, educational support, medical support, clothing and shelter support
 - Development of tools to collect and analyze quality social data

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC's support is provided through its country cluster delegation in Dakar, and the Africa regional office in Nairobi. The IFRC also has a migration officer based in the Gambia. IFRC support to the Gambia Red Cross centres on strategic and operational coordination, National Society development and humanitarian diplomacy, including reinforcing the National Society's auxiliary role. It also supports accountability as a cross-cutting theme.

In recent years, the IFRC has supported the Gambia Red Cross through a number of Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) [operations](#) in relation to flash floods, windstorm surge, communal violence and election preparedness. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IFRC, through its [Global Emergency Appeal](#), has supported the National Society in its COVID-19 response.

IFRC membership coordination

The IFRC coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing common priorities; co-developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, of links with development assistance, and of efforts to reinforce National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

Gambia Red Cross is part of the Red Cross Red Crescent Sahel+ Resilience Platform. This Platform, created in 2018, comprises of a steering committee and three technical groups, on food security and livelihoods, migration, and shelter – which convene with designated focal points and technical staff, as part of the overall Resilience Platform. Their ambition is to create a shared understanding and vision among members, to increase communications, information production and capacities, and to shape a collective voice through common advocacy tools and messages.

Participating National Society Support - Bilateral

Name of Partner NS	Funding Requirements	Engaged
Italian Red Cross	CHF 0.13M	

Total

0.13M

Since 2018, the food security and livelihoods technical group, included in the Sahel+ Resilience Platform, is being partially financially supported by the British Red Cross, through a coordinator position and support for parts of the action plan. This thematic group, under the new Action Plan 2022-2024, aims to strengthen the technical, participatory, and influencing capacities in food security, livelihoods, and nutrition of the ten National Societies of Sahel+, including the Gambia Red Cross.

The National Society receives ongoing technical and financial support from a number of participating

National Societies, including the **Italian Red Cross**, **the Netherland Red Cross**, **Qatar Red Crescent**, and **Spanish Red Cross**.

The Gambia Red Cross has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the **Belgian Red Cross** to support the emergency preparedness activities of the National Society.

The **Spanish Red Cross** is present in country and is the main partner of the Gambia Red Cross, and provides support in livelihoods and migration.

Movement coordination

The Gambia Red Cross coordinates closely with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies, to ensure synergies and complementarity of support. This is carried out in line with the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC) principles, and the newly adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#). Supported

by the IFRC and the ICRC, the Gambia Red Cross participates in statutory and cluster meetings, working with its Movement partners to deliver its programmes, address humanitarian needs and coordinate efforts. The ICRC provides support to the Gambia Red Cross from its delegation in Dakar.

Coordination with other actors

The Gambia Red Cross, in line with its auxiliary role, coordinates closely with the authorities. From the onset of disasters, the National Society coordinates closely with the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA). The NDMA has the responsibility of coordinating all disaster-related interventions in the country. At regional level, the Office of the Governor or Mayor and partners including NDMA are responsible for the implementation and coordination of all disaster activities. The Gambia Red Cross is an active member of the National Disaster Management Committee, and attends regular meetings and briefing sessions to ensure a cohesive

and harmonized response is guaranteed. Gambia Red Cross, through its branches, is also a member of the Regional Coordination Groups, participating in meetings and briefings. Joint assessment missions are carried out together with these structures and reports from such missions are shared. The National Disaster Management Committee makes presentations on plans and activity implementation during such forums, to ensure and promote better understanding of implementation of planned activities. The National Society always requests the participation of the National Disaster Management

Agency and other partners in all relevant training programmes.

During emergencies, other humanitarian actors operational in the country, including the UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM and WFP) together with other international and local NGOs, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations, usually play an

active role in responding to the needs of the affected population. The Gambia Red Cross coordinates with these actors through the established platforms.

Outside of emergencies, the Gambia Red Cross also collaborates with UN agencies present in the country, such as UNDP, WHO, WFP, UNFPA and many other humanitarian institutions in the country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [IFRC Global Plan and Country Plans](#)
- [Subscribe for updates](#)
- [Donor response](#) on IFRC website
- [Live Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) data
- Operational information: [IFRC GO platform](#)
- National Society data: [IFRC Federation-wide Databank and Reporting System](#)



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with **192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** and around **14 million volunteers**. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

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