



THE GAMBIA

2026 IFRC network country plan



19 January 2026

In support of the Gambia Red Cross Society



7

National Society branches



473

National Society local units



56

National Society staff



17,889

National Society volunteers

People to be reached in 2026



240,000

Climate and environment



150,000

Disasters and crises



750,000

Health and wellbeing



100,000

Migration and displacement



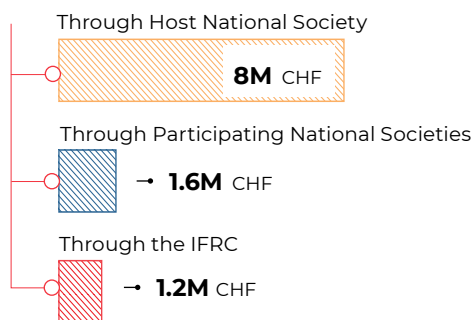
250,000

Values, power and inclusion

IFRC network Funding Requirements

2026

Total 10.8M CHF



Participating National Societies

- Italian Red Cross
- Japanese Red Cross Society
- Kenya Red Cross Society
- Qatar Red Crescent Society
- Saudi Red Crescent Authority
- Spanish Red Cross
- The Netherlands Red Cross

IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:
MAAGM002

Hazards



Droughts



Floods



Disease outbreak



Food insecurity

IFRC network multi-year focus

Longer term needs

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

Capacity development

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

Key country data links

INFORM Climate Change Risk Index **Medium**

Human Development Index rank **170**

World Bank Population figure **2.8M**

World Bank Population below poverty line **53%**



Daily briefing of health teams before administering malaria prevention treatment to children in The Gambia (Photo: IFRC)

Detailed funding requirements

2026

Host National Society IFRC

Longer-term needs

Climate and environment	1M	200,000
Disasters & crises	1M	600,000
Health & wellbeing	2.7M	100,000
Migration & displacement	1.5M	
Values, power & inclusion	300,000	

Enabling local actors 1.5M 300,000

Total 8M 1.2M

Participating National Societies bilateral support

National Society	Year	Funding Requirement	Confirmed Funding	Climate and environment	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration and displacement	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling Functions
Italian Red Cross	2026						-	-	-
Japanese Red Cross Society	2026			-					-
Kenya Red Cross Society	2026					-			-
Netherlands Red Cross	2026						-	-	
Qatar Red Crescent Society	2026							-	
Saudi Red Crescent Authority	2026					-			
Spanish Red Cross	2026	1.6M	1.6M	-	431,000	148,000	924,000	106,000	-

See back page for explanatory note on funding requirements

NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

The **Gambia Red Cross Society** was established in 1966 as a national humanitarian organization, auxiliary to the public authorities, 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, the Gambia Red Cross Society complements the efforts of the public authorities 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 seven branches, one in each of Gambia's seven administrative regions which allows it to rapidly respond to various local crises and relief needs. It maintains its auxiliary role while preserving its independence, neutrality

and impartiality in line with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement, and is supported by a nationwide volunteer base of more than 17,000 volunteers.

The National Society has a core of trained and available volunteers and staff proficient 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.

In 2023, the Gambia Red Cross Society reached approximately 4,390 people through its disaster response and early recovery programmes.



Map of The Gambia Showing the Location of Gambia Red Cross Society Branches

The map does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the IFRC or the National Society concerning the legal status of a territory or its authorities

IFRC NETWORK ACTION

JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Gambia is a small 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). According to the 2024 census, the population remains about 2.4 million, with a youthful demographic and a higher population density estimated at over 250 people per square kilometre. With 176 people per square kilometre, it is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. Most of the population (57 per cent) is concentrated around urban and peri-urban centres (the Greater Banjul Area). Urbanization has continued to increase, with over 60 per cent of the population now living in urban areas. 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 per cent of the GDP, it has recently declined due to travel concerns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overseas remittances from the Gambian diaspora remain a critical economic lifeline, accounting for more than one-fifth of national GDP.

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. Recent estimates indicate that nearly 60 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line, with high food insecurity and inflation further constraining household resilience. 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 per cent 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. Climate change-related hazards, particularly floods, droughts and coastal erosion, are increasingly driving displacement and deepening food and nutrition insecurity, especially in low-lying and urban areas such as the Greater Banjul Area.

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 because of poor drainage systems, deforestation and felling of trees for new settlements (by new estate developers), causing floods, destruction, and untold suffering. Around 20 per cent 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 per cent of weather/climate-related hazards in the Gambia between 1990-2014 (storms accounted for 27 per cent of weather/climate-related hazards over the same period). Floods accounted for 96 per cent of average annual monetary loss from all hazards. The effects of climate change and environment in Gambia are exacerbated by human behaviours such as unregulated or illegal expansion of settlements in arable lands for both for private and economic reasons.

Climate impact has acute food insecurity projections for the 2023 lean season (June–August). Over 300,000 people in the Gambia are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity, an increase of 55 and 43 per cent respectively compared to the 2022 lean season. The food security situation is likely to deteriorate further over the outlook period, due to very high food prices, macroeconomic challenges, localized impacts of flooding in the previous agricultural season in the Gambia. Due to flooding, windstorm, drought and other climate change issues, low crop production, and acute food insecurity is expected to worsen over the outlook period. Several regions have been affected by floods, with serious consequences on livelihoods, while some other agricultural land has been affected by drought

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 per cent 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 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. Climate change-related hazards, particularly floods, droughts and coastal erosion, are increasingly driving displacement and deepening food and nutrition insecurity, especially in low-lying and urban areas such as the Greater Banjul Area.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Gambia Red Cross has recognized that climate change has a significant impact on disaster management efforts and poses a 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. Thus, the goal is to increase the resilience of individuals and communities, reduce the impact of climate change, food insecurity, and enhance livelihoods of vulnerable groups in all the regions of Gambia. The National Society will expand its locally led climate adaptation projects with USAID funding and lead the Early Warning for All (EW4All) initiative.

Planned activities in 2026

- Increase the resilience and capacities of people at risk of disasters, reduce their vulnerability in the targeted geographical areas
- Contribute to enabling communities to predict and prevent disasters while working to reduce their impact
- Create disaster risk reduction committees and ensure that community preparedness and response activities are coordinated and implemented at local levels

- Enhance disaster preparedness and implement early warning systems to mitigate the impact of floods and droughts
- Strengthen the National Society's capacity in nature-based solutions
- Support women in the disadvantaged communities of Kanilai and Kadonko in the West Coast region to boost vegetable production and income

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC support includes technical and financial assistance under the “Scaling Up Locally Led Adaptation and Transforming Humanitarian Response to Climate Change” project, implemented in partnership with the IFRC and the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. Through this and related initiatives, the National Society benefits from training workshops, technical guidance, tools to integrate climate risk into programmes, access to early warning and forecast-based financing mechanisms, and participation in global knowledge-sharing platforms. These efforts collectively enhance preparedness, response, recovery, and locally led adaptation to climate-related shocks.

The IFRC also supports National Societies in addressing climate change and food security through technical assistance, training, and capacity-building opportunities. At the global level, the Global Climate Resilience Platform Fund aims to channel international climate financing towards locally led adaptation

through National Societies, anchored in Climate Action Journeys that enable harmonised and scalable programming.

At the national level, the Gambia Red Cross Society has been working closely with the Directorate of Climate Financing of The Gambia, which collaborates with the Global Shield against Climate Risk. The National Society has actively participated in government-led technical and consultative processes, including the development of the Gambia Climate Prosperity Investment and Financing Strategy. This engagement is expected to continue, strengthening the role and visibility of the National Society in national climate financing and resilience efforts.

With support from the IFRC at cluster and regional levels, the Gambia Red Cross Society is also exploring access to Green Climate Fund resources through the Government of The Gambia, with the United Nations Development Programme as an accredited entity. This would enable the scaling up and long-term sustainability of climate change programming.

In addition, through the IFRC Capacity Building Fund, the Gambia Red Cross Society has implemented a community-based climate resilience and adaptation initiative in Marakissa Village and surrounding communities in the West Coast Region. The project focuses on youth, volunteers, and community members and combines capacity building with practical actions such as agroforestry, tree nursery management, composting, poultry production, and other locally appropriate climate resilience measures, strengthening community resilience and livelihoods.



A Gambia Red Cross Society volunteer uses a QR code system to monitor malaria medication administration during the Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention campaign in The Gambia (Photo: IFRC)



Disasters and crises

For real-time information on IFRC emergencies, visit 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. In the past four consecutive years, the country has experienced chronic and unprecedented natural disasters dominated by flash floods and windstorms. These situations unfortunately affect the underprivileged people living in the rural communities whose circumstances require alleviation.

These recurrent disasters have severe consequences, including loss of lives and injuries, destruction of homes and infrastructure, contamination of water sources leading to water-borne diseases, increased mosquito breeding and malaria outbreaks, loss of crops and livestock, food insecurity, displacement, and family separations, with women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities being the most vulnerable.

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.

Beyond flooding and windstorms, the country is also exposed to other hazards including drought, fire (both domestic and bush fires), disease outbreaks such as malaria, cholera, meningitis and measles, and road traffic accidents, all of which compound humanitarian needs and strain community coping capacities.

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. 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.

In addition, the country has seen a growing number of returning migrants from across Africa and Europe, many of whom lack access to basic services, psychosocial support, healthcare, and sustainable reintegration opportunities, further increasing humanitarian and protection needs.

Multi-year high-level objectives of the National Society

The Gambian Red Cross Society aims to enhance its disaster management framework by developing and revising key policy documents, including the Disaster Management Strategic Plan and Policy, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and Contingency Plans. Efforts will focus on improving disaster prevention, preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery activities while upgrading and ensuring the functionality of facilities such as the Emergency Operations Center and radio communication systems. Community engagement will be prioritized to raise awareness of climate change, support early warning mechanisms like community-based surveillance, and promote readiness for anticipatory action protocols.

These efforts will be complemented by strengthening community-based initiatives to prevent the recurrence of identified hazards, support resilience-building interventions to reduce future risk, enhance coordination with local and international humanitarian partners and stakeholders, and reinforce the capacity of disaster risk reduction structures to effectively address recurrent emergencies and disasters.

Planned activities in 2026

- Develop and revise disaster management policy documents, such as the disaster management strategic plan and policy, standard operating procedures and appropriate contingency plans
 - Ensure that disaster management staff and volunteers are well trained on disaster response tools and enhance the development and maintenance of proper preparedness and response mechanisms
 - Conduct capacity building programmes for staff and volunteers, community-based disaster risk reduction initiatives, and develop robust database and information exchange system
 - Ensure that recently reactivated emergency response teams in all the regional branches are motivated and are organized to respond to disasters and emergencies
 - Coordinate preparedness and response efforts in close cooperation with the Government, UN agencies and other relevant humanitarian actors
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Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Gambian Red Cross Society to 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 strategic events and forums for championing the Zero Hunger initiative, providing resource



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 per 1,000 live births, 60 per cent of which are attributable to malaria, diarrheal diseases, and acute respiratory tract infections. 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 per 100,000 live births, the majority of which are due to sepsis, hemorrhage and eclampsia.

In recent years, non-communicable diseases such as 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 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 channelled directly into the Gambia River, untreated. Approximately 75 per cent of people in rural areas use pit latrines, while others openly defecate in the bush and in the Gambia River. During the rainy season, human faecal 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.

The national health system operates through a three-tier structure—primary, secondary and tertiary levels—delivering services through village health workers, health centres and hospitals, with coordination involving government, civil society and national and international partners; however, over 45 per cent of health financing is externally funded, posing sustainability challenges.

Multi-year high-level objectives of the National Society

The Gambian Red Cross Society's objectives in the coming years are targeted at revitalizing and improving the primary health care system in Gambia during emergencies to maintain access to appropriate health services packages at all times. It will employ evidence-based strategies to establish a balance between health and healthcare, create a culture of health promotion, reduce healthcare related expenditures, and build sustainable and affordable public health infrastructure for communities, especially environmentally sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene ([WASH](#)) services.

The Gambia Red Cross Society has also launched the [Resilient & Empowered African Community Health \(REACH\)](#) programme in partnership with Africa CDC and SANOFI. This initiative aims to mobilize, train, and deploy 2 million community health workers across Africa, enhancing community health systems and resilience.

These objectives further contribute to revitalizing primary health care delivery in underserved communities, strengthening national capacity to prevent, manage and respond to public health emergencies, improving physical

health, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing through health literacy and positive behavior change, and reducing the burden of communicable diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and vaccine-preventable diseases, while addressing risk factors for non-communicable diseases.

- Provide mental health and psychosocial support ([MHPSS](#)) services during disaster and post-disaster situations
- Ensure that community health workforce is mobilized, trained, and deployed for services delivery at the community-level in Gambia

Planned activities in 2026

- Strengthen quality health service delivery for the reduction of maternal, new-born, infant, child and adolescent morbidity and mortality and improve adolescent and youth health
- Reduce the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Improve equitable access to safe and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene ([WASH](#)) practices
- Implement prevention measures at beaches to improve people's knowledge about the role of the National Society as a life-saving service provider
- Contribute to Government efforts in fighting Malaria and promote prevention and protection through community-based interventions
- Develop a WASH strategy for health and [first aid](#) programmes and improve the National Society's WASH capacities

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The **IFRC** supports the Gambia Red Cross Society in promoting health behaviours, addressing stigma, and combating communicable and non-communicable diseases, [mental health](#), [WASH](#) issues, among others. It supports the National Society in training its staff and volunteers in new skills to address health problems within communities and ensures that operations are inclusive and reach vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities. During outbreaks, the IFRC emphasizes the role of local actors and communities in implementing interventions such as the community-based surveillance and early detection.

The **Spanish Red Cross** supports the Gambia Red Cross Society with prevention measures at beaches and provides training and materials to the National Society.



Migration and displacement

Most migrants in Gambia are men with low levels of formal education, and most emigrate through irregular channels for employment, education, and family reasons. In the past, there has also been a significant departure of skilled migrants, including doctors and nurses. 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.

Migration is largely driven by economic hardship, climate change impacts, declining rural livelihoods, youth unemployment, rapid urbanization and land pressure, giving the country one of the highest per capita migration rates in Africa.

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. 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. 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.

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. 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. Gambians also move along the so-called Atlantic route from the coasts of Gambia to the Canary Islands and Spain. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

Despite these frameworks, reintegration remains a major challenge for returnees, compounded by poverty, youth unemployment and limited services, underscoring the need for stronger resilience-building, livelihoods support and community-based reintegration mechanisms.

Multi-year high-level objectives of the National Society

The Gambia Red Cross Society 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.

Planned activities in 2026

- Pilot and scale up vocational training and employment programmes targeting internally displaced persons, host communities and returnees
- Advocate on the development of agreements, policies and legal provisions with relevant authorities to strengthen the National Society's auxiliary role in migration
- Improve access to humanitarian assistance and protection for people on the move along migration routes through the [humanitarian service points](#)
- Increase community awareness about preventing family separation and improving access to [Restoring Family Links \(RFL\)](#) services

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Gambia Red Cross Society to establish an enabling policy framework on migration, enhancing its programmatic planning and its response. This includes supporting return and reintegration dynamics under migration. The IFRC support also ensures that the National Society's humanitarian response includes components such as protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) issues and supports its efforts in capacitating its volunteers and staff to address protection needs throughout the migrant's journeys, including in host communities. It also supports the National Society's cross-border coordination with other National Societies and works to strengthen the multinational coordination mechanisms such as the Sahel Plus Migration Network.



Values, power and inclusion

The 2019-20 Gambia Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) found that 9 per cent of women aged 15-49 have experienced sexual violence, while 39 per cent of married women have been subjected to either physical, sexual or emotional violence by their partners. In addition, the survey found that about 51 per cent of women and 35 per cent 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 become less common: 46 per cent 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](#)).

Going by the different geographical locations in the communities, disasters affect People differently, and this experience can vary depending on different variables: the person's sex, gender identity, age, physical ability, race, nationality, and many other factors can influence how they are vulnerable to, and affected by disasters, conflicts, and crises. These can also affect how they recover from the disaster, therefore protection, gender and inclusion is included in all response mechanisms and recovery, to capture those that might be vulnerable and are left out. Emergencies can also make existing inequalities worse. This can be seen in the increase in incidences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), violence against children and trafficking in human beings during and after emergencies.

Despite progressive legal frameworks, structural and social barriers such as early marriage, limited education for girls, disability-related stigma, and persistent gender-based violence continue to limit equitable access to services, particularly for rural and marginalized communities with reduced access to information, safe participation, and feedback mechanisms.

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

The Gambia Red Cross Society aims to address issues of protection, gender and inclusion (PGI) and demonstrate the National Society's commitment to preventing, mitigating and responding to issues related to violence, discrimination,

and exclusion by strengthening its institutional capacity through programmes. Under community engagement and accountability (CEA), the Gambia Red Cross Society has been integrating meaningful community participation, open and honest communication, and other mechanisms to listen to and act on feedback.

Building on this foundation, the Gambia Red Cross Society seeks to further institutionalize Protection, Gender and Inclusion and Community Engagement and Accountability across all programmes and operations, promote women's leadership and equitable representation within governance and management structures, strengthen safeguarding and ethical conduct systems, and enhance branch and community capacities to deliver inclusive, dignified and responsive humanitarian services that prioritize the safety and empowerment of the most at-risk groups.

Planned activities in 2026

- Finalize the draft protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy and carry out sensitization of the PSEA policy among board members, staff and volunteers
- Create gender networks within 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 (PGI) in the school curriculum
- Carry out media campaigns on the importance of ensuring safe, equitable and continuous access to education in humanitarian contexts
- Develop a tool to address prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) through community engagements
- Provide psychosocial support to the victims of sexual and gender-based violence

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society with both financial and technical assistance to conduct protection, gender and inclusion and [community engagement and accountability](#) initiatives. It supports the National Society in initiatives such as education of displaced children in the country, distribution of learning materials and dignity kits, and ensuring the dignity and protection of vulnerable individuals.

ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

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



Strategic and operational coordination

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Improve the Gambia Red Cross Society's partnership agreements with participating National Societies
- Develop a resource mobilization strategy and plan and organize resource mobilization and income generation activities
- Increase the National Society's coordination with both international and external stakeholders to prioritize humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the Gambia Red Cross Society in its efforts to increase cooperation and coordination with external partners to respond to ever-growing humanitarian challenges in the country. The IFRC also provides technical support for developing the National Society's resource mobilization strategy and in organizing resource mobilization and income-generating activities.



Mariama Bah from Sinthiou Sory, Kombo North, ensures her child receives the second dose of malaria prevention medication during the Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention campaign in The Gambia (Photo: IFRC)



Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Focus on National Society development priorities identified through the IFRC organizational capacity assessment and certification (OCAC) and BOCA
- Promote innovation and change management in National Society strategies, plans and policies
- Invest in sustainable income generation projects for the National Society (construction of a multi-purpose house to generate resources at the national headquarters office and utilization of other landed properties in the regions)
- Develop tools to collect and analyze quality social data
- Strengthen effective governance and leadership by aligning policies and strategies with Movement standards and ensuring a motivated and accountable management structure
- Conduct branch-level assessments to identify gaps and implement tailored development plans that improve systems, structures and long-term sustainability
- Establish and implement transparent cost-recovery and revenue-generation mechanisms to support core services and financial sustainability
- Develop and operationalize youth and volunteer management systems, including coordination, retention, motivation and volunteer insurance
- Strengthen internal communication and coordination across branches to improve efficiency, resource mobilization and service delivery

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC support has been central to strengthening the National Society's governance, operational effectiveness, accountability and long-term sustainability.

A core area of assistance has been governance and leadership development, with continuous technical guidance, mentoring and training for Governing Board members and senior leadership.

This support has strengthened role clarity, accountability and good governance practices in line with the Fundamental Principles and the Statutes of the Movement.

The IFRC has also played a key role in strategic and operational planning, supporting the alignment of National Society priorities with Strategy 2030 and providing technical assistance for the development of the forthcoming Strategic Plan 2026–2030. This process focuses on institutionalizing priorities such as locally led climate adaptation, youth engagement, digital transformation and sustainable service delivery.

In branch and volunteer development, the IFRC has promoted a decentralized approach to National Society development through branch assessments, branch development planning, capacity building for branch leadership and volunteers, provision of volunteer insurance, and support to youth engagement frameworks. These efforts have strengthened local service delivery and community resilience.

Support to financial sustainability and institutional systems has included guidance on cost recovery and financial accountability, integration of core cost recovery into financial manuals, strengthening of logistics and fleet management, digitalization of internal processes, and enhancement of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning systems. The National Society has also benefited from peer exchange, Communities of Practice and regional and global learning platforms.

During major crises—including the COVID-19 pandemic, floods and migration-related emergencies—the network provided emergency funding and technical support while ensuring that long-term National Society development remained a priority. This balanced approach has enabled The Gambia Red Cross Society to respond effectively to emergencies while continuing to build institutional resilience. Continued technical and financial support from the network and partners remains essential to achieving National Society development objectives for 2026–2028.



Humanitarian diplomacy

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- To engage with influential leaders, policy and decision makers through [humanitarian diplomacy](#)
- To create greater humanitarian access and space which will increase visibility for and public understanding of the Gambia Red Cross Society activities and its auxiliary role
- To build more community trust and acceptance of the National Society
- Develop a clear strategic and implementation plan on enhancing the National Society's visibility

- Develop a clear strategic and implementation plan on visibility

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society in increasing its outreach through communications and through effective humanitarian diplomacy. The IFRC supported the National Society in conducting a training of the National Assembly members on the roles and responsibilities of the Red Cross and its auxiliary role. Radio and television programmes have also been conducted to promote the ideals and principles of the Red Cross.



Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- 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 National Society's monitoring system and internal control mechanism
- Integrate integrity risk management into accountability and agility functions and develop policies and mechanisms for ensuring integrity and accountability

- Strengthen the digitalization process of The Gambia Red Cross Society.
- Develop Relevant Policies to govern and guide the Operations of the National Society.

Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC supports the National Society in its efforts to bolster the National Society's accountability mechanisms through financial and technical assistance wherever applicable. It also assists the National Society in improving its IT infrastructure and its digitalization efforts and enhancing its financial transparency.

THE IFRC NETWORK

The IFRC

The IFRC provides support to the Gambia Red Cross Society through its country cluster delegation in Dakar and the Africa regional office in Nairobi. The IFRC also has a migration officer based in Gambia. IFRC support to the Gambia Red Cross Society 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 Society through a number of [Disaster Response Emergency Fund \(DREF\)](#) operations in relation to flash floods, windstorm surge, communal violence and election preparedness.

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.

The Gambia Red Cross Society 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.

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 Society.

The National Society receives technical and financial support from a few Participating National Societies, including the **Italian Red Cross, Kenya Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent, Saudi Arabia Red Crescent, Netherlands Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross** and **Spanish Red Cross**. The Gambia Red Cross Society in 2022 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Belgian Red Cross (French Speaking) to support the emergency preparedness activities of the National Society. The Spanish Red Cross is present in the country and is the main partner of the Gambia Red Cross Society, and provides support in Livelihoods, Migration and Lifesaving (Sea search and rescue).

Movement coordination

The Gambia Red Cross Society collaborates and 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](#).

The ICRC provides support to The Gambia Red Cross from its delegation in Dakar through its cooperation agreement covering restoring family links, communication and humanitarian diplomacy, emergency preparedness and response, institutional support, partnership building, and gender and diversity.

Coordination with other actors

The Gambia Red Cross Society, in line with its auxiliary role, works in close coordination with national and local authorities. From the onset of disasters, it partners closely with the National Disaster Management Agency, which leads the coordination of disaster-related interventions nationwide. At regional and local levels, coordination is led by the Offices of Governors or Mayors, working alongside the National Disaster Management Agency and other partners to implement response activities.

The Gambia Red Cross Society is an active member of the National Disaster Management Committee and relevant thematic sector committees and working groups, including information management (as co-chair), food and livelihoods, shelter and protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, and environment. Through its branch network, the National Society also participates in Regional Coordination Groups, contributing to joint assessments, information sharing and harmonized planning, with assessment findings jointly validated and disseminated.

The National Society actively involves the National Disaster Management Agency and other partners in training programmes aligned with their mandates. During emergencies, coordination extends to humanitarian actors operating in the country, including United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund, International Organization for Migration and World Food Programme, as well as international and local non-governmental, community-based and faith-based organizations, through established coordination platforms.

Outside emergency contexts, the Gambia Red Cross Society maintains strong partnerships with development and humanitarian actors, including the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, bilateral partners such as the United States Agency for International Development, and diplomatic partners including the Chinese Embassy, strengthening preparedness, resilience and long-term humanitarian impact.



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 16 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.

About the plan

The plan reflects the priorities of the host National Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support, for 2026 and subsequent years. It is aligned with IFRC [Strategy 2030](#), representing the collective ambitions of the IFRC membership, and is the result of a joint planning process and will serve for joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

Explanatory note on funding requirements and definitions

- The total funding requirements show what the IFRC network seeks to raise for the given year through different channels: funding through the IFRC, through participating National Societies as bilateral support, and through the host National Society from non-IFRC network sources. All figures should include the administrative and operational costs of the different entities
- Host National Society funding requirements not coming from IFRC network sources can comprise a variety of sources, as demonstrated when reporting on income in the [IFRC network databank](#)
- Participating National Society funding requirements for bilateral support are those validated by respective headquarters, and often represent mainly secured funding
- IFRC funding requirements comprise both what is sourced from the IFRC core budget and what is sought through emergency and thematic funding. This includes participating National Societies' multilateral support through IFRC, and all other IFRC sources of funding
- Figures for the years beyond 2026 most often represent partial requirements that are known at time of publication. Many National Societies have annual internal approval processes for funding requirements, and lower figures do not mean a decrease in funding requirements in future years
- Missing data and breakdowns: data may not be available from all IFRC network members for funding requirements. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under-estimation of the efforts led by all
- Reporting bias: the data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain
- **Definitions:**
 - » **Local units:** ALL subdivisions of a National Society that coordinate and deliver services to people. These include ALL levels (provincial, state, city, district branches, sections or chapters, headquarters, and regional and intermediate offices, as well as community-based units)
 - » **Branches:** A Branch has its roles, responsibilities and relationship with the National Headquarters defined through the National Society's Statutes, including the level of autonomy given, especially in the area of its legal status, mobilising local resources and building local partnerships, and the decisions it makes. It has a local-level decision-making mechanism through its Branch members, board and volunteers, equally defined through the National Society's Statutes

Additional information

- [IFRC network country plans](#) • [All plans and reports](#)
- Data on National Societies on [IFRC network databank](#)
- Live data on active emergency operations on [IFRC GO platform](#)
- Live data on [IFRC-Disaster Response Emergency Fund Response and Anticipatory pillars](#)
- [Evaluations and research bank](#) • [Donor response reports](#)

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