

# THE GAMBIA

## Floods in the Gambia

### CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- On 30–31 July 2022, heavy rains hit the Gambia. Torrential rains and thunderstorms caused flash flooding across the country (Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022; The Point 12/08/2022). According to the country's Department of Water Resources, the amount of rainfall in July–August 2022 has been the highest recorded since 1999 (FloodList 03/08/2022; IFRC 03/12/1999 and 24/01/2000).
- Since 31 July, almost daily heavy downpours have been recorded in Banjul city, North Bank region, and Western region. Heavy rains on 5–6 August worsened the impact of July floods (FloodList 03/08/2022; Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022; VOA 12/08/2022).
- As at 16 August, **flooding had affected more than 40,000 people**, including **11 people who died** and around **5,900 internally displaced** (OCHA 17/08/2022 and 22/08/2022; VOA 12/08/2022; Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022). The most affected areas were Banjul, Kanifing municipality, North Bank region, and Western region (OCHA 12/08/2022; IFRC 08/08/2022).
- As at 16 August, the floods had destroyed or damaged approximately 7,000 houses in the country (OCHA 22/08/2022). Floods had also destroyed food stocks, water points, and sanitation facilities, making the affected population vulnerable to waterborne diseases (Yahoo! News 12/08/2022; OCHA 17/08/2022 and 12/08/2022).
- Urgent needs include **WASH services, health assistance, and emergency shelter and food** (Yahoo! News 12/08/2022; OCHA 17/08/2022 and 12/08/2022).

### ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

Floods in the Gambia have been recorded since 1948. Significant flooding has been recorded in 1988, 1999, 2002, 2010, and 2020. Periods of heavy rains and floods seem to be becoming more frequent (FloodList 03/08/2022; Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022; VOA 12/08/2022). More rain is expected in August–September, with further flooding possible (FloodList 03/08/2022; IFRC 30/12/1999 and 24/01/2000).

### HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

The floods have affected some roads, challenging humanitarian access in some areas. Roads becoming impassable have left an unspecified number of people isolated or stranded (OCHA 12/08/2022; IFRC 08/08/2022; Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022). Another issue challenging humanitarian access is fuel scarcity. Challenges in moving across affected areas, as well as insufficient funding to provide aid, are making data collection impossible, adding constraints to response and response capacities (OCHA 12/08/2022; Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022).

### CRISIS IMPACT

#### Food security and livelihoods

The floods have led to the destruction of food stocks, and flooded land has become unusable for food cultivation, worsening the already dire food security situation in the Gambia (FAO et al. 10/03/2022; The Watchers 12/08/2022). In June–August 2022, about 206,700 people (over 8% of the total population) were projected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse food security outcomes (RPCA accessed 24/08/2022). The impact on food security and nutrition of the latest flash floods adds to the existing challenges on trade and supply chains resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, poor harvest in 2021, the impact of 2021 windstorms, the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, high food prices, and increases in fuel and transportation costs since January 2022 (AllAfrica 06/07/2022; Gambia.com 30/06/2022; WFP 27/04/2022).

The above-average rainfalls have flooded 48,127 hectares (118,924 acres) of land, including cultivated areas, potentially affecting crops and farmers' income (The Watchers 12/08/2022; EC 12/08/2022).



### KEY PRIORITIES

**+40,000**  
PEOPLE AFFECTED

**+5,900**  
PEOPLE INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED

**RISK**  
SPREADING  
OF WATERBORNE  
DISEASES

#### NATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

Government of the Gambia  
The Gambia National Disaster  
Management Agency  
Regional governors  
The Gambia Red Cross Society

#### INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

UN agencies  
(WFP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP)  
International  
humanitarian organisations  
(including the International  
Federation of Red Cross  
and Red Crescent Societies)

## Shelter and NFIs

Floods have displaced at least 5,900 people and destroyed approximately 7,000 houses in the Gambia (OCHA 22/08/2022 Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022). Some of the displaced households are currently sheltering with relatives or host families. A verified number of at least 3,120 people (380 households) are temporarily sheltering in schools, mosques, health facilities, and uncompleted buildings. Affected people who are displaced or have lost their shelters or household items need sleeping mats, blankets, mosquito nets, aqua tabs, and hygiene kits (IFRC 08/08/2022; UN DESA accessed 24/08/2022).

## Protection

Overcrowding in displacement sites or locations and within host families presents a risk of violence against children and sexual and gender-based violence, especially for displaced women and children (IFRC 08/08/2022).

## WASH

The floods have damaged water and sewerage systems, especially in the Greater Banjul Area, putting the affected population at risk of waterborne diseases (Yahoo! News 12/08/2022; Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022). Improper waste disposal has blocked sewerage and water systems. Poor sanitation systems have been leading to cases of diarrhoea and skin rashes in some areas of Tobacco Road in Banjul region since the floods (Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022). There are reports of stagnant waters attracting reptiles in some affected areas, posing a risk to the population (Govt. Gambia 19/08/2022; AllAfrica 15/08/2022).

## Health

Cases of diarrhoea and skin rashes have been reported since the beginning of the floods. The possible spread of COVID-19 and other diseases among overcrowded shelters is also likely, with a need for community sensitisation, prevention, and response to diseases and control of outbreaks (IFRC 08/08/2022).

Some people have experienced trauma and are in need of psychosocial support, with children, the elderly, people with disabilities, IDPs, and the injured having specific needs (IFRC 08/08/2022).

## AGGRAVATING FACTORS

### Poverty and inflation

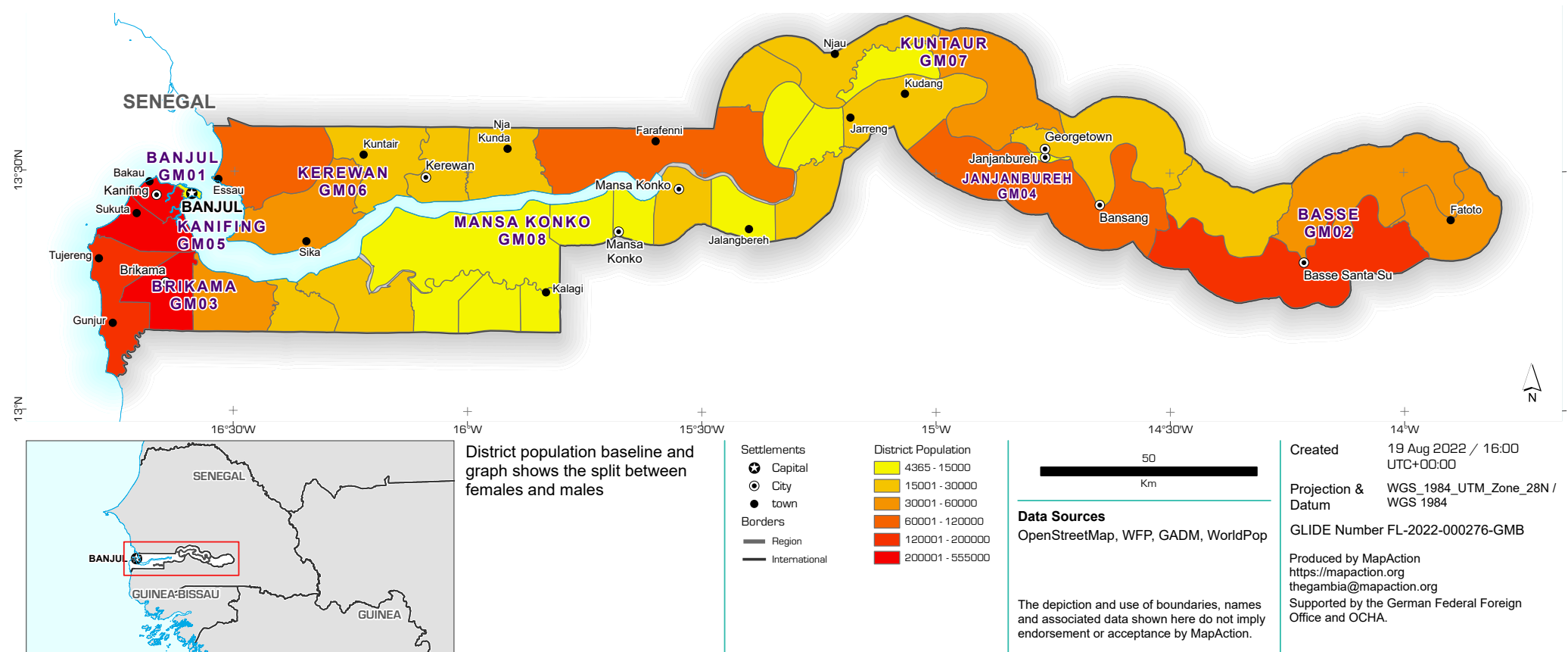
An estimated one million people (half of the total population, est. 2.4 million) live in poverty in the Gambia. 40% of its inhabitants live in rural areas; 74% of this figure live below the poverty line. Farming provides a living for more than 60% of Gambians. Farmers and agricultural workers are among the poor and extremely poor, especially women and young people with limited access to education, economic opportunities, credits and other financial resources, or land (IFAD accessed 24/08/2022).

Since January 2021, headline inflation has been rising. As a result, food prices have increased, affecting households' food security levels. In February 2022, inflation reached 8.3% (WB accessed 24/08/2022).

### Climatic hazards

The Gambia is vulnerable to the impacts of climatic hazards and extreme weather events, including floods, droughts, and heatwaves, as well as climate change. Being a low-lying country also makes it vulnerable to sea-level rise (Reuters 04/08/2022; MapAction 16/08/2022; US News 03/08/2022). 60% of Gambians live from agricultural activities and mostly depend on rain-fed agriculture (IFAD accessed 24/08/2022; MapAction 16/08/2022). In the past ten years, communities have witnessed a reduction in the production of crops, such as rice, because of the impact of phenomena related to climate change, namely the increase in rainfall amounts and temperatures (The Guardian 27/11/2021; ActionAid 05/08/2019; MapAction 16/08/2022).

## GAMBIA FLOODS: POPULATION IN AFFECTED AREAS



Source: MapAction (19/08/2022)