



RIJ

国際難民支援会

Building a  
Future for  
Refugees

# Gambia



Courtesy: UNHCR

## Reasons for Refugee Population:

UNHCR estimates there to be about 12,000 refugees living throughout Gambia. Despite this reported number, a consensus on the actual figures remains elusive, with other sources estimating between 10,000 and 30,000 refugees. Refugees inside Gambia comprise largely of Sierra-Leonans and Senegalese refugees, with Liberians, Somalis, Ethiopians, Rwandans, Iraqis and Eritreans making up the remaining portion. The reasons for their arrival largely stem from the many civil wars and separatist movements throughout the West African region since the 1980s.

## Refugee Communities:

Many of the Senegalese refugees flow back and forth regularly as rebel activities rise up, then die down again. The majority of refugees living in Gambia are not found in refugee camps, but urban areas of Banjul and along the border of Senegal. They are often hosted by Gambian families who are often extended family. Urban refugees face unique challenges to their livelihood and security when compared to those refugees living in camps.

In the urban setting, refugees are adversely affected by the macroeconomic, social and political environment of the city. Also, the urban refugees are not afforded the same assistance from UNHCR and its partners, leaving many to fend for themselves.

## Assistance:

- RIJ funded the installation of easy-to-use water pumps, benefitting over 5000 people; RIJ also funded a project to enhance economic stability and social unity through seed distribution, rehabilitation of wells and gardens, and training in vegetable production
- Several NGOs such as Concern International or The Gambia Food & Nutrition Association assist people who have fled to Gambia

**Number of refugees:**  
11,608 residing in Gambia;  
5,134 originating from Gambia  
[source: UNHCR]

**Number of Internally  
Displaced Persons (IDPs):**  
0  
[source: UNHCR]

## History:

**1965**—Gambia gains independence with Dawda Jawara as prime minister

**1970**—Gambia becomes a republic following a referendum; Jawara elected president

**1981**—Five hundred people are killed as Senegalese troops suppress a coup

**1994**—Jawara is ousted in coup led by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh

**2000**—Nine soldiers and businessmen are charged with treason in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the government

**2006**—Thousands flee to Gambia from Senegal's southern Casamance region to escape fighting between Senegalese troops and Casamance separatists

**2013**—President Jammeh announces Gambia's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, describing it as a "neo-colonial institution"

**2014**—Gambian soldiers foil coup bid when President Jammeh was out of the country