

Gambian Diaspora Constituencies and Estimates of Diaspora Populations

1. Sources of Data on Gambian Diaspora Populations

The main sources of data on the global Gambian diaspora populations are given below.

- 1.1 **United Nations Data:** The Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), estimated the Gambian diaspora population to be 118,485 in 2019¹.
- 1.2 **Statistical Portrait Estimates:** The Gambian economist, C. Omar Kebbeh published 'A Statistical Portrait of Gambians Living Abroad'² in 2017 and 2019, estimating the Gambian diaspora population to be about 140,000. In 2020, he produced an updated reference document entitled 'Statistical Portrait of the Gambian Diaspora: Estimates of Gambians Living Outside The Gambia in 2020'.
- 1.3 **National Development Plan Notes:** The Government of The Gambia and the MSDG project worked together in 2017 on the drafting of the Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21), which estimated the Gambian multigenerational diaspora at 200,000, stating that:

"It is likely that the Gambian diaspora, comprising just migrants and their children who are entitled to Gambian citizenship is over 200,000. This estimate is based, amongst other things, on the following analytical observations:

- *The current number of Gambians abroad is broadly based on national censuses and data from formal institutions. A significant number of Gambian migrants, especially non-refugee irregular migrants, are not featured in censuses or other official data.*
- *In countries like Italy and Germany with the highest numbers of Gambian refugees and asylum seekers, the data on those categories of migrants are comprehensive and reliable, and they are very high. Similarly, in a country like Spain, where residents need to register with government authorities (irrespective of immigration status) in order to access services such as healthcare and education, the number of Gambians recorded is high. This suggests that there is a significant underestimate of Gambian migrants in countries where there is no advantage for irregular migrants to register with authorities.*

¹ Data on Gambia can be found on the UNDESA workbook on migrant stock on the following grid coordinates: 1990: CK, 17; 1995: CK, 300; 2000: CK, 583; 2005: CK, 866; 2010: CK, 1149; 2015: CK, 1432; 2019: CK, 1715.

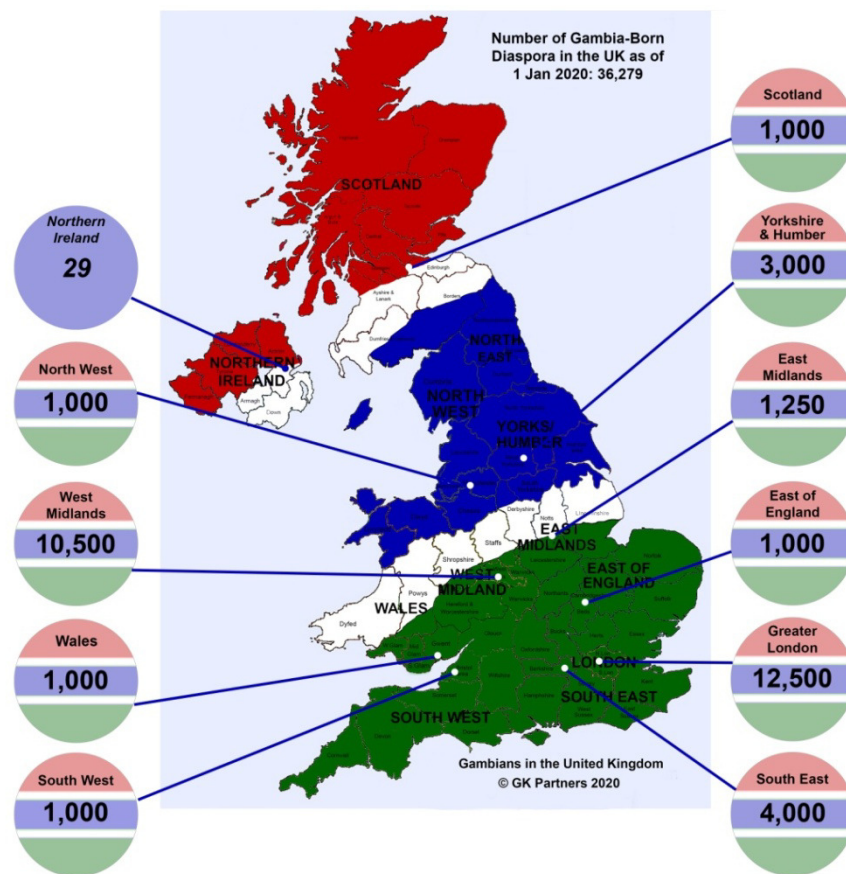
UN DESA (2019), *International Migrant Stock 2019*, (UN Database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2019), New York, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>

²C. Kebbeh, 'A Statistical Portrait of Gambians Living Abroad', 2019, available at: <https://standard.gm/140000-gambians-living-abroad-in-2019/>

- *Migrant data collection in Africa is not as comprehensive or reliable as in Spain for example. The African country with the highest Gambian migrant population is Senegal, registering about 5,000 Gambians, fewer than the number in Sweden. The number of Gambians living in Senegal and other African countries is likely to be much higher than reported.*
- *Most migrant data misses an important part of the diaspora, namely second and third generations. Even if a conservative assumption is made, that 50% of settled Gambian diaspora on average have two children, then tens of thousands of second generation Gambians are missed from diaspora population data.”³*

[Page 238, Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2021)]

1.4 Case Study Analysis: The Gambian professor and former ‘Overarching Expert’ for the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), Gibril Faal, undertook a study on ‘Estimating Diaspora Populations: Case Study of Gambians in the United Kingdom’ in 2020. The study set out a new statistical methodology in line with the recommendations of the GCM, and applicable to all diasporas. This study is also the first comprehensive research and analysis of Gambian diaspora population in a single country. It estimated that in January 2020, there were 36,279 Gambia-born diaspora living in the United Kingdom, comprising 28,720 legally settled since the 1960s; 6,133 family members of Gambians who re-migrated from European Economic Area (EEA) countries (mainly Spain and France); and 1,426 irregular migrants who have not yet regularised their status⁴.



³ Gambia National Development Plan (NDP 2018-2021)

<http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Gambia-National-Development-Plan-NDP-2018-21.pdf>

⁴ See summary of study findings:

http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MSDG-BP-9-Overview-of-the-Gambian-Diaspora-Population-Oct-2020_2.pdf

2. Population Data and Summary of Diaspora Constituencies

- 2.1 Adjusted Population Data:** The UN DESA data gives a global estimate of the Gambian diaspora population, but it tends to underestimate the Gambian diaspora population, and the data for certain countries are demonstrably wrong⁵. The MSDG project reviewed and analysed the UN DESA International Migrant Stock Workbook, and provided adjusted Gambian diaspora population data. This analytical exercise was informed by amongst other things, data from the research sources referred to in this document. The adjusted data will be subjected to further analysis and peer review before being proposed for incorporation in the 'Rules and Regulation on Gambian Diaspora Voting and Representation', to be produced by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC).
- 2.2 Global Demarcation:** The demarcation of the Gambian diaspora constituencies is to be based on population data and review of all the countries and territories of the world based on adjusted United Nations and African Union country classification criteria. The small island and non-island states, principalities, dependencies and other territories not explicitly named in the constituency descriptions are implicitly included by virtue of mention of the relevant sovereign states and geographical regions under which they belong.
- 2.3 Principle of Totality:** Based on the principle of totality, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania deserve representation, even though the Gambian diaspora population in this region is relatively low. Although this region/constituency can be joined up with the Africa region/constituency, the socio-economic and political peculiarities of the region can justify a standalone constituency. The matters that affect the Gambian diaspora in Africa are materially different from the issues in the Middle East, Asia and Oceania.
- 2.4 Summary of Diaspora Constituencies:** The population estimates of the proposed five (5) Gambian diaspora electoral constituencies are summarised below. Diaspora voting and representation is a basic constitutional right and this remains the fundamental justification for the demarcation of diaspora constituencies and the provision of all practical resources and facilities for full diaspora voting and representation. Demarcation also needs to reflect the principles that electoral constituencies are based on 'heads of people, not acreage of land', and the imperative for the totality of representation.

Diaspora Constituency	UN DESA Data (2019)	Adjusted Diaspora Population Estimate
1. Africa	20,602	24,200
2. South and Eastern Europe	32,611	43,600
3. North and Western Europe	39,376	67,600
4. Americas and the Caribbean	25,759	37,200
5. Middle East, Asia and Oceania	137	2,700
TOTAL	118,485	175,300

⁵ For example, UN DESA also estimates that 7,392 Gambians reside in Cote D'Ivoire; despite the relatively high Gambian professionals working at the African Development Bank, consultations suggests that population is fewer than 1,500.

3. Proposed Gambian Diaspora Constituencies

Gambia Diaspora Constituency of: Africa <i>(Using African Union Regional Classifications of 55 Member States)</i>			
	UN DESA Data (2019)	Notes on UN DESA Estimates of Gambian Diaspora Populations	Adjusted Gambian Diaspora Population Estimates
West Africa (15 Countries)			
<p>Cape Verde 5; Ghana 1,851; Guinea Conakry 268; Guinea Bissau 1,638; Ivory Coast 7,392; Liberia 677; Mali 1,399; Senegal 5,630; Sierra Leone 557; Togo 1,069.</p> <p>The other West African countries are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and (The Gambia).</p>	20,486	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omission of Gambian migrants and expatriates in Nigeria; irregular migrants in Niger. • Underestimate of Gambians in Senegal and Guinea Conakry. • Overestimate of Gambians in Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo. 	22,750
East Africa (14 Countries)			
Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omission of: Gambian expatriates, working for international organisations, especially in Ethiopia and Kenya; students Sudan. 	500
Central Africa (9 Countries)			
Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe.	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omission of Gambian trading communities in Congo and expatriates in DRC. 	250
North Africa (7 Countries)			
<p>Egypt 28.</p> <p>The other North African Countries are: Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Western Sahara.</p>	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omission of: irregular migrants in Libya; settled migrants in Mauritania, and students in Morocco. 	400
Southern Africa (10 Countries)			
<p>Namibia 88.</p> <p>The other Southern African countries are: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.</p>	88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omission of: Gambian trading communities in Angola; expatriates in South Africa. • Overestimate of Gambians in Namibia. 	300
TOTAL	20,602		24,200

Gambia Diaspora Constituency of: South and Eastern Europe (Using adjusted United Nations Regional Classifications of European Countries)			
	UN DESA Data (2019)	Notes on UN DESA Estimates of Gambian Diaspora Populations	Adjusted Gambian Diaspora Population Estimates
Southern Europe (16 Countries)			
Greece 47; Italy 14,556; Portugal 115; Slovenia 18; Spain 17,836. The other Southern European countries are: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Holy See (The Vatican), Gibraltar, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino and Serbia.	32,572	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underestimate of Gambians in Spain (INE data is 23,617 for 2020); Italy (Istat data is 17,318 for 2020). Omission of Gambians in Malta. 	43,500
Eastern Europe (10 Countries)			
Bulgaria 10; Czechia 18; Hungary 11. The other Eastern European countries are: Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine.	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omission of small number of Gambians in the Russian Federation. 	100
TOTAL	32,611		43,600

Gambia Diaspora Constituency of: North and Western Europe (Using adjusted United Nations Regional Classifications of European Countries)			
	UN DESA Data (2019)	Notes on UN DESA Estimates of Gambian Diaspora Populations	Adjusted Gambian Diaspora Population Estimates
Northern Europe (10 Countries)			
Denmark 715; Finland 1,045; Iceland 16; Ireland 62; Norway 1,316; Sweden 5,561; United Kingdom 10,767. The other Northern European countries are: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.	19,482	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underestimate of Gambians in UK (ONS data is 20,000 for 2020; MSDG study estimates 36,279). Omission of some of the Gambian irregular migrants. 	45,500
Western Europe (9 Countries)			
Austria 741; Belgium 874; France 2,097; Germany 14,336; Netherlands 909; Switzerland 937. The other Western European countries are: Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Monaco.	19,894	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underestimate of Gambians in German (Destatis data is 15,515 for 2020). Omission of some of the Gambian irregular migrants. 	22,100
TOTAL	39,376		67,600

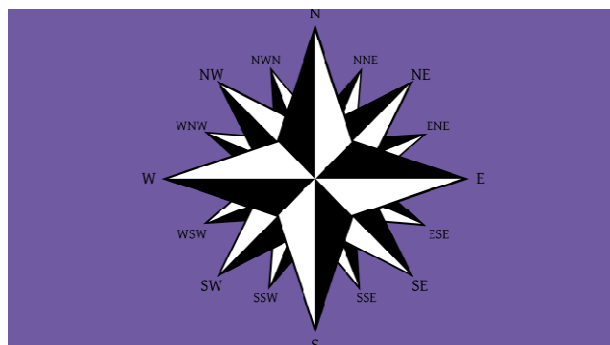
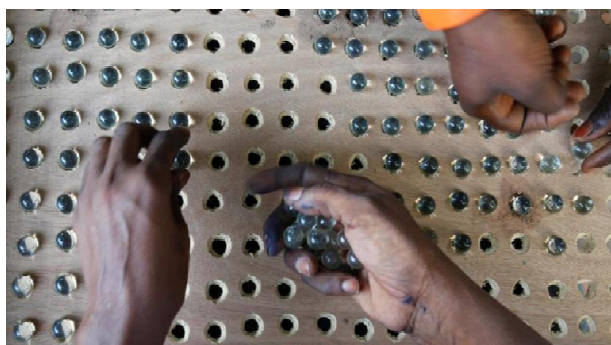
Gambia Diaspora Constituency of: Americas and the Caribbean <i>(Using adjusted United Nations Regional Classifications of the Americas and Caribbean Countries)</i>			
	UN DESA Data (2019)	Notes on UN DESA Estimates of Gambian Diaspora Populations	Adjusted Gambian Diaspora Population Estimates
North America (5 Countries)			
Canada 712; United States 25,007. The other North American countries are: Bermuda, Greenland and Mexico.	25,719	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underestimate of Gambians in the US (26,242 for 2020). Omission of some of the Gambian irregular migrants. 	37,000
South and Central America: (16 Countries)			
Chile 8; Ecuador 32. The other South American countries are: Colombia, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela. The Central American countries are: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are small number of Gambians in South and Central America, mainly expatriates and students. 	100
Caribbean: (24 Islands & Territories)			
The main Caribbean islands are: Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands.	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are small number of Gambians in the Caribbean, mainly expatriates and students. 	100
TOTAL	25,759		37,200

Gambia Diaspora Constituency of: Middle East, Asia and Oceania (Using adjusted United Nations Regional Classifications of Asian and Oceania Countries)			
	UN DESA Data (2019)	Notes on UN DESA Estimates of Gambian Diaspora Populations	Adjusted Gambian Diaspora Population Estimates
Middle East (16 Countries)			
Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Omission of expatriates, migrant workers and students, especially in Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE. 	2,000
Western and Central Asia: (9 Countries)			
The Western Asian countries (not included in the Middle East) are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia. The Central Asian countries are: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are small number of Gambians in Western and Central Asia, mainly expatriates and students. 	20
East and South Asia: (26 Countries)			
The East Asian countries are: China, Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan. The South East Asian countries are: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam. The South Asian countries are: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are small number of Gambians in East and South East Asia, mainly expatriates, students and migrant traders especially in China, India, Malaysia and Taiwan. 	600
Oceania: (8 Countries and other territories)			
Australia 137. The other Oceania countries are: Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and the Micronesian and Polynesian islands and territories.	137	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are small number of Gambians in Oceania, mainly expatriates and students in Australia and New Zealand. 	80
TOTAL	137		2,700

4. Demarcation of Gambian Diaspora Constituencies

To end the disenfranchisement of the Gambian diaspora, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) need to take actions beyond facilitating diaspora voter registration and voting in the presidential elections of December 2021. Pursuant to S26(a)(b), S39(1) and S50(1) of the 1997 Constitution of The Gambia, the IEC needs to demarcate new diaspora constituencies, and produce 'Rules and Regulations' for Gambians in foreign countries to elect diaspora National Assembly Members in the parliamentary elections in May 2022. The National Assembly also needs to amend S88 of the Constitution, which currently limits the number of constituencies to fifty-three (53).

- **S26(a)(b)** states: "Every citizen of The Gambia of full age and capacity shall have the right, without unreasonable restrictions - (a) **to take part in the conduct of public affairs**, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) **to vote and stand for elections** at genuine periodic elections for public office, which election shall be by universal and equal suffrage and be held by secret ballot".
- **S39(1)** states: "Every citizen of the Gambia being eighteen years or older and of sound mind shall **have the right to vote** for the purpose of elections of a President and Members of the National Assembly, and shall be entitled to be registered as a voter in a National Assembly constituency for that purpose".
- **S50(1)** states: "An Act of the National Assembly shall establish a Boundaries Commission which **shall be responsible for demarcating constituency boundaries** for the purpose of elections to the National Assembly".



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