

Strengthening national police structures

Support to the reform process of the Gambia Police Force

What is the initial situation?

Since the fall of the Yahya Jammeh regime, The Gambia has been undergoing a **comprehensive transition to democracy and the rule of law**.

This reform process is having an impact, particularly on the security sector. Underpinning all this is the government's National Security Policy, which envisages efficient, accountable, reliable and effective security services and agencies. Since the governmental transition, the mandate to guarantee internal security is held mainly by the Gambia Police Force. However, the police is not fully prepared for the task at hand, **lacking adequate infrastructure, equipment and human resources** in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The Gambia Police Force does not currently have the planning, staff management or training capacity required to deploy their personnel efficiently. Transparent, professional human resource management is important in The Gambia, not least with regard to the overall transition process, as the old regime was accused of unfair patronage and clientelism in its appointments.

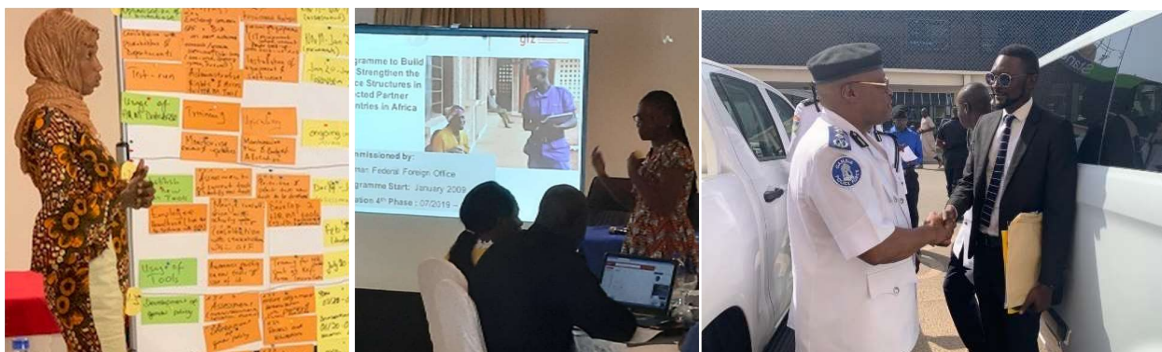
Whilst the population shows some confidence in the police, its public perception is not universally positive. People accuse the police of, for instance, **a lack of professionalism and inadequacies in fighting crime**. These allegations are reflected in **the lack of public confidence in the national police service** and are eroding the new government's legitimate entitlement to the monopoly of power. Although an internal police complaint procedure is in place, it is used only sporadically by the citizens.

Programme title	Programme to build and strengthen the police structures in selected partner countries in Africa
Country component	Strengthening national police structures in The Gambia
Commissioned by	German Federal Foreign Office
Lead executing agency	Ministry of the Interior
Overall term	July 2019 to December 2022
Budget (2019-2022)	Approx. EUR 1.6 million

For one, the system is not fully operational; for another, the public does not fully trust or sufficiently understand the process.

What is the goal?

The Gambia Police Force is strengthened in its reform efforts to enhance its accountability and reliability as well as its efficiency and effectiveness in the areas of human resource management, responsiveness to citizen's needs and accountability, and thus contributes towards the promotion of human safety and security.



Photos left and centre:
Kick-off event of the country component in The Gambia
Photo right:
Handing over vehicles to the Gambia Police Force

Both photos:

Delivering PPE and hygiene products to protect police officers against COVID-19

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How do we work?

GIZ has been supporting police reform processes in Africa on behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office since 2009. The programme is currently implementing **11 country- and region-specific components** on the continent. All processes are devised in close consultation with the partner institutions to meet their respective needs. The activities are based on existing national or international strategies and are implemented complementarily, focusing on compliance with legal standards and especially the **International Bill of Human Rights in police work**. The programme's measures place particular emphasis on **gender equality**. Our partners are given support in the following areas: **infrastructure and equipment, basic training, in-service and advanced training as well as organisational advice**.

The **country component for The Gambia** is advising the police in strengthening their administrative and management capacities in human resource management. Communication between the police and civil society is also to be improved, including through better public relations work. Another focus lies on strengthening the police internal complaint mechanism which deals with police misconduct. It is hoped this will increase public trust in the national police service.

What have we achieved so far?

The Gambia was added to the programme as a partner country in mid-2019. The cooperation kicked off with a participa-

tory workshop involving all implementing partners that resulted in the drawing up of joint operational plans. The first tangible measures are currently at the planning stage. Initial steps to provide equipment have also taken place.

In other countries, the programme can draw on achievements in the fields of activity on which the country component for The Gambia is focused. For instance, human resource management in the Ivorian police service has been successfully strengthened such that staff can now be deployed in a more targeted way. The police's public relations work has already been improved in many country components.

What more do we want to do?

The Gambia Police Force is to be supported in the development and use of a digital database through the procurement of equipment as well as training activities. New human resource management tools are also set to be introduced, focusing particularly on supporting women.

The programme will also be advising the police on formulating and implementing a public relations strategy. Formats for ongoing dialogue between the police and civil society are being developed with the involvement of the national media. There are also courses intended to train police officers in dealing with the media and the general public.

The police internal complaint mechanism is being strengthened with the provision of new equipment and the development of standard operating procedures. It is hoped that staff training and public involvement will help to build public trust in the police to the extent that it will be seen as a strong and transparent actor that obeys the law.

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