



The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

The Gambia




United Nations
Peacebuilding

JUNE 2020

PBF Investments in

TOTAL APPROVED  **\$16 M**

CURRENT PORTFOLIO  **\$14.6 M**

Focusing on

-  Transitional Justice
-  Security Sector Reform
-  Good governance
-  Resolution of Land Disputes
-  Women and Youth Participation
-  Climate Security

Partners



World Food Programme



PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

Following the forced departure of the defeated President Jammeh in 2017 after his initial refusal to recognize the results of the 2016 ballot, The Gambia commenced a process of peaceful transition, including the nomination of a new Government. Moving quickly to demonstrate the benefits of democratic and accountable governance, the Government sought the accompaniment of the United Nations and the international community in support of a reform agenda that included overhauling the country's institutions, laying a new foundation of respect for the rule of law, addressing past human right abuses, promoting national reconciliation and opening the public space.

PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

The PBF was an early responder to the transition priorities in The Gambia, approving a first package of \$3.1 million in 2017 of critical interventions to support transitional justice and the establishment of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC), security sector assessment and reform, and strengthened coordination in the President's Office.

The Fund supported the nation-wide consultations on the set up of the TRRC and provided guidance to the Government in the operationalisation of the Commission, including for the set-up of the secretariat and the training of the commissioners. The Fund facilitated the establishment of the Commission in October 2018. Regarding the Security Sector Reform (SSR), the PBF focused on strengthening the Government's capacity to provide strategic coordination of the SSR process. The Government was supported to complete an assessment of the security sector, identifying key threats and gaps in the security architecture, providing the foundation for planning of needed reforms.

Following the declaration of The Gambia's eligibility to the PBF in September 2018 by the UN Secretary-General, an additional package of \$7 million in

support was approved, furthering assistance to transitional justice and human rights, and also providing support for resolution of targeted land and natural resource conflicts, strengthened engagement of youth and women in political decision making, and for better management of challenges regarding de-stigmatisation and psycho-social needs of the returning migrants and their host communities.

At the end of 2019, the PBF approved a third support package for The Gambia of \$5.5 million to: (i) enable more accountable and inclusive governance and to promote inclusive citizen engagement with the institutions and leaders, (ii) better understand and start to address climate change related conflicts, and (iii) support enhanced access to justice of the most vulnerable with a specific focus on community policing and effective responses to sexual and gender-based violence. In 2020, the PBF is considering further support in the areas of SSR, youth empowerment and reintegration of returnees to the country, while taking into consideration how the current pandemic impacts peacebuilding gains and needs.

PEACEBUILDING FUND IMPACT

PBF support has helped catalyze critical peacebuilding processes in a very short period, helping ensure that the country did not collapse into violence during this fragile transition period. Thanks in part to PBF assistance, the Gambian Government has made commendable progress in sustaining peace, particularly in the areas of transitional justice, constitutional review, security, judicial and civil service reform and economic development.

Most notably, the transitional justice processes and the TRRC, in particular, have generated considerable public interest and popular participation of victims and their families, witnesses and perpetrators to public hearings, statement-taking, investigations and outreach activities. Over 35,000 Gambians have been directly engaged in the context of community-led outreach missions on the transitional justice process, including among the diaspora. The TRRC is, according to experts quoted by to the New York Times, the "most accessible truth commission in history." The PBF also facilitated the establishment and operationalization of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), paving the way increased respect for and awareness of human rights in The Gambia. With regards to SSR, the country's first National Security Policy was launched in June 2019 following an inclusive dialogue. The PBF support also contributed to enhancing the Government's coordination capacity of the sector including through the establishment of the Office of the National Security Advisor and the support to an SSR International Advisory Group with other partners, including ECOWAS and EU. The Fund has also been supporting increased participation of women and youth in political decision-making which culminated in ten major parties formally committing to this goal in 2019. Finally, with the support of the Fund, the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration was launched in 2019 as the basis for a coordinated and strategic approach on migration governance.

KEY FIGURES REGARDING THE TRRC*



12 public hearing sessions held



219 witnesses testified (including **45** women witnesses, **34** alleged perpetrators)



1200 statements collected (**965** from men, **235** from women)



35,000 Gambians engaged in community outreach on transitional justice



90% of Gambians from a 1,200 sample felt that TRRC is performing very well or well (from a 2020 perception survey)

*by April 2020

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT

Following the peaceful transfer of power in January 2017, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has helped to maintain international attention on the situation in The Gambia and to encourage coherent and coordinated support to the government's peacebuilding priorities. In 2019, the PBC convened two meetings, with briefings from the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of The Gambia, during which the Commission expressed support for challenging reforms in the areas of security, transitional justice, constitutional review, human rights, women and youth empowerment, press freedom and anti-corruption, all of which are being supported by the PBF. The PBC will continue to use its convening power to sustain the international community support for The Gambia, including helping the country address the impact of COVID-19 on ongoing reform processes related to the sustaining peace agenda.

ABOUT THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The Fund may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. The Fund works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to peacebuilding opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.