

**INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNANCE, DEVELOPMENT MIGRATION
& MOBILITIES (IGDMM)**

IGDMM

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MIGRATION AND MOBILITIES

2026 MIGRATION OUTLOOK (Q 1)

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2026 MIGRATION OUTLOOK (Q1)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The global and regional migration systems are currently experiencing unprecedented pressure. This independent report by the IGDMM identifies a critical shift in regional mobility dynamics characterized by rising irregular departures, high-mortality humanitarian crises at sea, and an accelerating international deportation pipeline. Our findings suggest that despite heightened enforcement, the "Hope Deficit" remains a primary driver for Gambian youth, fueled by stagnant domestic economic indicators.

2. KEY FINDINGS & DATA ANALYSIS

A. Irregular Departures and Enforcement

The Republic of The Gambia continues to witness a high volume of attempts at irregular migration. On April 3, 2026, the Gambia Immigration Department (GID) intercepted 62 potential migrants attempting to navigate irregular channels¹. This reflects a persistent reliance on high-risk mobility strategies despite increased border surveillance.

B. Frontline Humanitarian Crises

Tragedy remains a hallmark of the irregular route. On January 1, 2026, a shipwreck occurred at Jinack, resulting in 4 confirmed fatalities. While maritime authorities managed to rescue over 102 individuals, 39 survivors required immediate hospitalization due to the severity of the incident². These figures underscore the lethal nature of the current migration system and the urgent need for enhanced maritime protection.

¹ <https://gid.gov.gm/62-Would-Would-be-Migration>

² <https://gid.gov.gm/62-Would-Would-be-Migration>

C. The European Deportation Pipeline

Pressure is mounting on the Gambian diaspora. Current intelligence identifies over 10,000 Gambians flagged for return across the European Union. This process has been accelerated by the establishment of new offshore "Return Hubs" and specific bilateral actions. For instance, a recent deportation operation in Germany targeting 25 Gambian nationals has sparked significant human rights concerns and highlights the hardening of EU return protocols³.

D. Domestic Push Factors

The drive toward irregular migration is inextricably linked to the domestic labor market. Youth unemployment in The Gambia remains alarmingly stagnant at 41.5%. The failure of the local economy to absorb the burgeoning youth population remains the primary driver of irregular outflows⁴.

3. THE IGDMM SYSTEMS RESPONSE

The IGDMM does not merely report data; we operationalize it to create safer mobility outcomes. Our strategic response focuses on :

- **The Compass Framework:** We are neutralizing the "Hope Deficit" by equipping Gambian youth with technical legal facts and Systems Literacy, allowing them to navigate global mobility with dignity rather than desperation.
- **Diplomatic Negotiation:** We leverage these metrics to engage the Gambian Government and international partners, including the German and EU Embassies, to negotiate return protocols that are more dignified and centered on human rights.
- **Evidence-Based Action:** By providing literacy to the next generation, we move from reactive crisis management to proactive, strategic mobility.

³ <https://alkambatimes.com/germany-to-deport-25-gambians-amid-human-rights-outcry/>

⁴ <https://motie.gov.gm/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/National-Employment-Policy-2022-2026-3-1.pdf>

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