

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email [Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca).

2 October 2015

### GMB105330.E

Gambia: People's Progressive Party (PPP), including structure and leadership; treatment of members and supporters of the party by authorities (January 2015-September 2015)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Overview

The *Political Handbook of the World 2015 (PHW)* describes the PPP as "moderately socialist" (*PHW* 2015, 520). Sources state that the PPP served as the ruling party in Gambia for nearly three decades under President Dawda Jawara (*ibid.*, 517; AU n.d., 2). According to sources, the Jawara government was overthrown in 1994 in a coup led by the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) and Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh (*ibid.*, 3; Diasporium 12 Sept. 2015; *PHW* 2015, 517). According to *PHW*, presidential elections were held two years later in September 1996 and Jammeh was elected for a five-year term as the head of the newly formed Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) (*ibid.*, 507).

Sources state that President Jammeh won a fourth term in 2011, though there were allegations of election irregularities (Freedom House 28 Jan. 2015, US 25 June 2015, 1). According to a report on the 2011 Gambian presidential election produced by the Expert Team of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 53 countries including those that formed the British Commonwealth of Nations in the past (The Commonwealth n.d.), the political parties in Gambia are:

- Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC);
- Gambia Moral Congress (GMC);
- Gambia Party for Democracy and Progress (GPDP);
- National Alliance for Democracy and Development (NADD);
- National Convention Party (NCP);
- National Democratic Action Movement (NDAM)
- National Reconciliation Party (NRP)
- People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS);
- People's Progressive Party (PPP); and
- United Democratic Party (UDP).

(The Commonwealth 24 Nov. 2011, 7)

According to the same source, for the 2011 election, the IEC (Independent Electoral Commission of the Gambia) "received and accepted nominations for three presidential candidates on 10 November 2011":

- Yahya Jammeh, leader of the APRC
- Ousainou Darboe, leader of the UDP

- Hamat Bah (former leader of the NRP) leading the United Front (a coalition of four political parties - NRP, GPDP, NADD and PDOIS). (ibid., 7-8)

Sources state that the majority of the opposition parties boycotted the 2012 parliamentary elections (AFP 29 Mar. 2012; *Africa Review* 9 Mar 2012; AU 30 Mar. 2012, 3) with only the National Reconciliation Party (NRP) participating and winning one seat (ibid.). According to sources, the UDP, GMC and PPP established a coalition, named Gambia United for Change (GUC), to challenge President Jammeh in the 2016 Presidential elections (*PHW* 2015, 520; Panapress 16 Dec. 2013).

### 1.1 Leadership and Structure

According to sources, Omar Jallow is the leader of the PPP (*The Point* 12 Jan. 2015; Diasporium 12 Sept. 2015; *PHW* 2015, 520). Sources also describe Bakary B. Darboe as a PPP "leader" (ibid.; Kairo News 28 Mar. 2014). *PHW* describes Omar Jallow as the Secretary General, after having replaced Dawda Jawara in 2002 (*PHW* 2015, 520). Further information on the membership numbers and structure of the PPP could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

### 2. Treatment of Members and Supporters by Authorities

Information on the treatment of members and supporters of the PPP, including incidences of violence, could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information may be useful.

Sources state that the government targets political opponents, journalists and activists in Gambia (Diasporium 12 Sept. 2015; Human Rights Watch 16 Sept. 2015). Human Rights Watch further states that [t]hose detained for political reasons, including those perceived to support the opposition, who criticize the president or who highlight the current administration's policy failures, ... are often subjected to torture or other ill-treatment. (ibid.)

According to a UN news release on an investigation by the UN Special Rapporteurs on Torture, Christof Heyns and Juan Mendez, in November 2014, there were "reports of extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances against those who are deemed to be opponents of the regime" (UN 7 Nov. 2014). According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014*, there were "numerous reports of politically motivated disappearances during the year" (US 26 June 2015, 2). Freedom House states that "[t]he government's repression of opposition leaders and journalists continued in 2014, intensifying in the run-up to the 2016 presidential elections" (Freedom House 28 Jan. 2015). According to Human Rights Watch, reporting in 2015, "there are several opposition parties in Gambia, but opposition leaders and party members are frequently arbitrarily arrested and jailed" (16 Sept. 2015).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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