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INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: SUMMARIES  
OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AFRICAN AND ADJACENT TERRITORIES

Gambia

In accordance with the statement of the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 27 September 1961, the Government of the United Kingdom has transmitted to the Secretary-General the following political and constitutional information on the Territory of Gambia.

This information, which was received on 6 April 1962, is herewith submitted to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.<sup>1/</sup>

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<sup>1/</sup> In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1700 (XVI) of 19 December 1961, this information is also submitted to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

## GAMBIA

### POPULATION

Gambia is a strip of territory, only 4,000 square miles in extent, on either side of the Gambia river in West Africa. The latest estimate of the population is 283,761. The population is African, except for a few hundred Europeans, Syrians and Lebanese.

### CONSTITUTION

The present constitution of Gambia dates from 1960, and followed discussions between the British Government and representatives of the local population. Prior to 1960, the Constitution provided for an Executive Council composed of 5 official members and at least 6 appointed members, while the Legislative Council consisted of the Governor as President, a Speaker, 4 official members, 3 nominated unofficial members and 14 elected members. As the result of the constitutional talks in 1959, the Legislature was enlarged, direct elections were for the first time extended to the whole Territory and the Executive Council was reorganized to include a greater number of elected members of the House of Representatives as ministers. During 1961, the first Chief Minister of the Gambia was appointed to co-ordinate the full range of ministerial activity.

The main features of the present Constitution are as follows:

#### Governor

The Governor (at present Mr. John Paul) is the Queen's representative and head of the administration. As such he is required to consult the Executive Council and normally follows its advice, although he has discretion to do otherwise in certain special circumstances. His assent is required to laws passed by the House of Representatives and is normally given.

## Executive Council

The Executive Council is the principal executive body of the Territory. Its composition, under the Chairmanship of the Governor, is as follows:

Mr. P.S. N'Jie	(Chief Minister)
Mr. Seyfu M'Baki	(Minister of Works and Services)
Mr. M. Baldeh	(Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources)
Mr. H.S. Janneh	(Minister of Communications)
Mr. E.D. N'Jie	(Minister of Education and Social Welfare)
Mr. A. Camara	(Minister of Health and Labour)
Mr. K.G.S. Smith	(Civil Secretary)
Mr. P.A. Gore	(Financial Secretary)
Mr. M.H. Orde	(Commissioner for Local Government)
Mr. H.S.S. Few	(Attorney-General)

All the above, except the last four, are local inhabitants.

## House of Representatives

The Gambia Legislature is uni-cameral and consists of a House of Representatives under the Chairmanship of the Speaker (Sir James Mahoney). The Legislature has power to make laws for all aspects of the Territory's internal affairs and controls its budget. The House of Representatives has 34 members, of whom 27 are elected, 2 are nominated and 4 are officials. All members of the Executive Council are members of the House of Representatives.

### ELECTIONS

The last election for the House of Representatives took place in May 1960. Nineteen of the members were elected on a basis of universal adult suffrage and eight by the Chiefs in Assembly. The results of the elections were as follows:

People's Progressive Party . . . . .	9
United Party and allied Independents . . . . .	7
Others . . . . .	3

No single party had a majority and a Coalition Government was formed. The leader of the United Party (Mr. P.S. N'Jie) later won the support of three other members, thus giving him a majority; he was therefore appointed Chief Minister in March 1961.

## JUDICIARY

There are two separate judicial systems in Gambia: in the Colony (i.e., Bathurst and the surrounding district) there is a Supreme Court, two Magistrates' Courts and a Court of Requests. In the Protectorate (i.e., the remainder of the Territory) there is a High Court with subordinate Courts and district tribunals. Both the Supreme Court of the colony and the High Court of the Protectorate are presided over by the Chief Justice of Gambia. Appeal from the Supreme Court and the High Court to the Gambia Court of Appeal. There is also the Mohammedan Court which exercises jurisdiction in causes and matters between, or exclusively affecting, Mohammedan inhabitants of the Territory.

## Local Government

Bathurst has a Town Council consisting of 15 elected members, 4 nominated members and one official member. Its responsibilities comprise the normal range of local government functions such as street lighting, supervision of markets, sewers and cleansing services, etc. The adjacent town of Kombo St. Mary also has a Council with similar powers. It has 20 elected members, 6 nominated members and one official member. Outside Bathurst and Kombo St. Mary, the Territory is divided into thirty-five districts, each with a district authority. In the last few years, these districts have been combined into six groups, each of which has a central Treasury, and the Gambia Government is in the process of establishing six area councils based on these Treasuries. The area councils will be composed partly of Chiefs and partly of members elected by universal adult suffrage; they will gradually take over the executive functions of the various district authorities and their powers will be extended.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE

There is a Public Service Commission composed of five Gambian Members with the Civil Secretary as Chairman to advise on appointments, promotions etc. Many of the senior posts in the administration are held by Gambians, including Accountant-General, Collector of Customs, Registrar General, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Clerk of the Courts and Senior Medical Officer.

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

At a Constitutional Conference held in July 1961, agreement was reached between the British Government and representatives of the Territory that a new constitution should be introduced in 1962, giving the Territory internal self-government. Officials will no longer be members of the Executive Council which will be responsible for all matters, except external affairs, internal security, defence and the public service. The first elections under the new constitution will be held in May 1962.

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