

## ENTRY INTO THE GAMBIA

### **Eligibility**

For one to enter and reside in the Gambia he or she must be:

- a) A person who possesses special immigration status;
- b) In possession of a valid pass or permit
- c) A dependent of a person who falls within the provisions of paragraph (a)

### **Requirements**

1. A valid passport with a Visa (if not exempted from the requirements of being in possession of a valid visa for entry in the Gambia)
2. Employment contract
3. International certificates of health valid for such entry
4. Entry Clearance (if applicable)
5. Visible means of sustenance

Note: Visa for entry into the Gambia can be obtained from all Gambian Embassies, missions and consulates abroad or any accredited representative of the Government of the Gambia or from the Immigration officers at the various gazetted port of entries of the Gambia i.e. Visa on arrival.

ECOWAS Citizens do not need a visa for entry into the Gambia. Presentation of a valid travel document issued by a competent authority suffices.

### **Visa**

Generally, securing a visa to the Gambia is one of the requirements in order that entry may be permitted to a visitor. The grant of a visa, however, is no guarantee that the recipient will be allowed in the country for which it is issued. The visa is issued subject to compliance with the immigration laws on arrival, and the final authority for entry depends on the immigration officers at the port of arrival.

A visa must be endorsed or affixed in a valid passport, bearing the names of the holder, stipulating its validity, number of journey(s) and the issuing authority.

Currently, the visa system in the Gambia is a sticker and by endorsement. The visa rubber stamp endorsement is done in the Gambia while some of our foreign missions often use stickers affixed in the passport of a visitor.

### **Entry and Exit Requirements**

Immigration officers are charged with the responsibility of profiling people coming into and going outside of The Gambia. All passengers intending to travel to and from The Gambia

should have valid traveling documents; fulfill all entry/exit requirements including Visa, Clearance & Return Tickets for first time travelers.

The Immigration procedures are as follows in both disembarkation and embarkation:

### **Disembarkation procedures**

- All passengers coming into the Gambia should have a valid PCR certificate within 72hrs of arrival which is verified by the Ministry of Health.
- All passengers should fill disembarkation card on arrival.
- All passengers are to pay a Securiport fee\* of D1000 equivalent of 20 USD except for Diplomats, Minors of 2yrs and below are also exempted.
- All passengers are to be profiled in person and enrolled in the Integrated Immigration Control System (fingerprint, Iris & data page of the traveller's passport)
- The arrival passengers are distributed as Gambians, ECOWAS, Diplomats/UN passports and others
- Visa can be acquired from all Gambian Embassies and some Consulates abroad as well as Visa upon arrival at the border.
- Clearance – All countries that require Entry clearance to enter the Gambia should have a copy of the approved entry clearance valid for 30 days for entry into the Gambia and the host to present the original copy of the approved clearance on or before the arrival of the passenger or traveler.

Note: the KIOSK System is meant for users of the Biometric passports.

### **Embarkation Procedures**

- All passengers are to pay Securiport fee\* of D1000 equivalent of 20USD except for Diplomats, and Minors of 2yrs and below are also exempted. All passengers proceed to the Airline securities for check-in procedures, boarding cards & security checks
- Upon receipt of the boarding pass, all passengers are to fill the Embarkation card and proceed to the Immigration Counters for embarkation procedures (profiling), which include the Electronic Gate system for the Biometric passport holders. Priority is given to Diplomats, UN Passport holders, persons with disabilities and passengers travelling with minors.

\*Airport fee is not mandated by GID

Note: All Civil Servants of grade 8 and above working with the Gambia Government, Gambia Government Parastatals are required to present an approved travel Clearance at the port of Embarkation before boarding.

## **VISA APPLICATION AND PROCESSING CHANNELS**

Visa application channels are means through which Gambian visas can be processed and obtained.

The available visa application channels are;

- a) Gambian embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad: All visas issued by Gambian authorities for the purpose of travelling and entry are processed and obtained at Gambian embassies, High Commissions and Consulates abroad. However, this does not supersede any instruction or embargo that may be generated to refuse, refer, cancel and deny any applicant in his/her individual capacity or authority.
- b) Recognised ports of entry (visa on arrival): This is a visa application process that allows certain holders of passports of other nationals to obtain a visa upon arrival at the port of entry in the Gambia. An immigration officer at any port of entry could act in the capacity of the Director General of Immigration to perform immigration functions (Sec. 2(5)) of the 1965 Immigration Act Cap: 16.02. The delegation of immigration functions includes the issuance of visas upon request by any person in a prescribed form.

## **VISA EXEMPTION**

I. This consideration for entry into The Gambia is for nationals who do not require a visa. Citizens from the list below are not required to acquire a Gambian visa to enter the country due to the visa abolition agreements in force, guided by certain entry conditions.

- ✓ AU CITIZENS
- ✓ ECOWAS CITIZENS
- ✓ COMMONWEALTH CITIZENS
- ✓ UAE AND TURKISH CITIZENS
- ✓ TOURIST ON CHARTERED FLIGHTS AND TOUR OPERATORS
- ✓ SCHENGEN/EUROPEAN UNION CITIZENS INCLUDING THE UNITED KINGDOM AND SWITZERLAND
- ✓ NORDIC STATES
- ✓ BALTIC AND BALKAN STATES
- ✓ DIPLOMATS AND CONSULAR CORPS
- ✓ HOLDERS OF CONVENTIONAL CARD FOR REFUGEES
- ✓ WORKERS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS; UN, AU, EU, IMF ETC

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Be in possession of a valid travel document to enter The Gambia
- ✓ Must enter The Gambia through a recognised entry point
- ✓ Must have visible means of sustenance while in the country

- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Free entry for maximum of 90 days before a community citizen can engage in any gainful employment or establish business

II. International Organisation: Holders of official travel documents from the following international organisations can visit The Gambia visa-free with certain entry conditions.

- ✓ United Nations (UN) and its specialised agencies
- ✓ African Union Commission (AU)
- ✓ ECOWAS Commission
- ✓ African Development Bank

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Must possess a mission order or visa waiver
- ✓ Must hold official travel document or visitors pass/ laissez-passer
- ✓ Visa-free entry

III. Reciprocal visa waiver agreement: Foreign nationals in possession of valid travel documents can travel to The Gambia visa free based on bilateral and multilateral agreements on the principle of reciprocity in observance of certain entry conditions as stated below.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Be in possession of a valid travel document to enter The Gambia
- ✓ Must enter The Gambia through a recognised entry point
- ✓ Must have visible means of sustenance while in the country
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants

IV. Non-reciprocal visa waiver agreement: Nationals of the 27 EU member states including Great Britain and Switzerland, Tourists on Chartered Flights and Tour Operators holding diplomatic, official/ service or ordinary passports can travel to The Gambia visa free and are not required to be in possession of clearance either.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Be in possession of a valid travel document to enter The Gambia
- ✓ Must enter The Gambia through a recognised entry point
- ✓ Must have visible means of sustenance while in the country
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants

Note: It is worth noting that visa waiver agreements are not permanent as diplomatic ties change from time to time. Therefore, foreign nationals are advised to follow updates on latest

visa waiver agreements and entry requirements from various channels. However, The Gambia Immigration Department through the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of The Gambia at any given time has the prerogative to determine and or change the entry requirements or conditions of foreign nationals intending to travel to The Gambia regulations and the unfolding security situations.

## **MANDATORY VISA**

All nationals who are required by regulation must be in possession of a valid visa to enter The Gambia. This type of visa is issued to individual citizens or organisations that do not fall in the exemption category and intend to travel to The Gambia for official or personal visits.

## **VISA CATEGORIES AND TYPES**

I. Single-Entry Visa (SEV): This is a visa valid for one journey or single entry into The Gambia. Holders of this visa are prohibited from engaging in any gainful activity or employment without the prior approval of the Director General of Immigration.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Invitation letter from a family or friend in The Gambia, with a copy of the national document of the host or residence permit
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Return ticket or its equivalent in cash
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in the Gambia

II. Multiple-Entry Visa (MEV): A multiple-entry visa enables the holder to travel to the Gambia more than once within its validity period. Holders of this visa are prohibited from engaging in any gainful activity or employment without the prior approval of the Director General of Immigration.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Invitation letter from a family or friend in The Gambia with a copy of the national document of the host or residence permit
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Return ticket or its equivalent in cash
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants

- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia

III. Transit Visa (TV): A transit visa is issued to transit passengers who wish to enter The Gambia with an onward ticket to their final destination. Transit can be direct or indirect.

I. Direct transit; this happens when a passenger temporarily stops within the precinct of the entry point without a change of conveyance with an onward ticket to the intended destination. Such a passenger will not be required to pay a visa as he/she is confined within the precinct of the airport, not beyond 48 hours. They are issued with transit pass.

II. Indirect transit; this happens when a passenger stops within or outside the precinct of the entry point beyond 48 hours, and waits to connect with another conveyance to reach the intended destination. Such passengers are required to pay for a single-entry visa whose validity does not exceed seven (7) days.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Transit passengers must possess an onward ticket to the intended destination or its equivalent in cash
- ✓ The traveller must have a boarding pass and or departure stamp showing his or her port of departure
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds to handle transit expenses
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia

## **CLASSES OF VISAS & CODES**

Tourist Visa (GMB1): A tourist visa is a single-entry visa issued to persons who travel to The Gambia on their own initiative for tourism. This class of visa is issued to foreign nationals who do not fall in the visa exemption category to enhance their travel to The Gambia as tourists aboard commercial flights.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds to handle tourism expenses
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia
- ✓ Medical certificate confirming the traveler is free from communicable diseases and deemed mentally fit by medical authorities at any port of entry
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants

II. Business visa (GMB2): This class of visa is issued to foreign nationals who wish to visit or travel to The Gambia for business purposes such as meetings, conferences, professionals, contract negotiation, marketing, sales, job interviews, trade fairs and investment.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ A request authorising the need for a planned business activity in the Gambia
- ✓ Business registration certificate
- ✓ Financial statement
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Return ticket or its equivalent in cash
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia

III. Student visa (GMB3): This visa class is issued to foreign nationals who intend to travel to The Gambia to pursue education or its related fields. Holders of this visa include students, scholars and course participants and are prohibited from engaging in any local employment except when they change their status for the rightful employment eligibility.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Letter from an approved institution in the Gambia
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Return ticket or its equivalent in cash
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia

IV. Journalist visa (GMB4): This is a single-entry visa issued to those who wish to visit The Gambia for media coverage and journalism. This type of visa is issued only to journalists and media practitioners, subject to the prior approval of the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services (MIMBS).

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Approved clearance from the MIMBS through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Ministry of Interior (MOI)
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Return ticket
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds

- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia

V. Religious visa (GMB5): This category of visa is issued to religious officials who wish to visit The Gambia for religious services such as preaching, religious seminars or conferences. This category of visa is issued to religious clerics to perform religious services only, and it does not give any right to engage in gainful or economic activity. It is subject to the prior clearance of the relevant religious authority.

Entry conditions/requirements;

- ✓ Approved clearance from the relevant Ministry and or religious authorities
- ✓ Passport valid for at least six (6) months with at least two (2) blank visa pages for endorsement
- ✓ Return ticket
- ✓ Evidence of sufficient funds
- ✓ Must not be in the category of prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Hotel reservation or host's full address and contact in The Gambia

#### ENTRY CLEARANCE AS A REQUIREMENT

Entry clearance is a security control mechanism meant to streamline and regulate foreign nationals coming into The Gambia. The entry requirements at ports of entry in The Gambia are not only regulated by visas, but also by entry clearance, issued to persons before travelling to The Gambia. It covers foreign nationals where Gambian Embassies or Consulates are not present and do not fall within the visa exemption category. Entry clearance requires a host to take up immigration responsibilities in a prescribed form before issuance. However, travelers who do not fulfil the entry requirements for reasons which may include being diagnosed with communicable diseases or deemed mentally unfit by medical authorities at any port of entry, may be refused entry as provided for in **Section 13 (1b) of the 1965 Immigration Act.**

#### REVOCATION/CANCELLATION OF VISA OR ENTRY CLEARANCE

Foreign nationals issued with a Gambian visa or entry clearance to travel to The Gambia may be subjected to cancellation or revocation if the persons fall within the following categories, as stated below in line with Section 6 (3) of the 1965 Immigration Act.

- ✓ Appearance on the suspect index
- ✓ Prohibited immigrants
- ✓ Imposters/fraudsters
- ✓ Those engaged in criminal activities

