



CENTRE FOR LAW
AND DEMOCRACY

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[The Gambia: Progress on Access to Information](#)

The Gambia is one of a declining number of African countries that still does not have a law giving individuals a right to access information held by public authorities, or a right to information (RTI) law. However, there is some movement on this issue with the preparation of an Access to Information Bill for The Gambia, including with the participation of the Gambia Press Union. The Centre for Law and Democracy has prepared an Analysis of the Bill, which scores 116 out of a possible total of 150 points on the [RTI Rating](#), which would put it in a very respectable 16th place out of the 124 countries around the world whose laws are currently assessed on the Rating.

“It is very encouraging that a right to information law may be on the horizon for The Gambia,” said Toby Mendel, Executive Director, CLD. *“We hope that our analysis can help ensure that the Bill is as strong as it can be and that progress continues until it is adopted into law.”*

Some of the particular strengths of the Bill are its broad scope, especially in terms of public authorities covered, independent and effective system of appeals, and strong rules on protections and sanctions. Areas for further improvement include:

- Strengthening the guarantees for the right of access.
- Amending the procedures for making and processing requests for information so that they are more user-friendly and comprehensive.
- Removing the unfettered power of the Minister to expand the regime of exceptions.
- Introducing more effective promotional measures to support implementation.

CLD encourages those responsible for developing the draft to introduce these and the other improvements recommended in our Analysis it before it is formally put forward for legal adoption. We also offer our support for this process.

The CLD Analysis and the Bill are available at: <https://www.law-democracy.org/live/the-gambia-progress-on-access-to-information>.

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