

MMC NORTH AFRICA - SEPTEMBER 2018 - 4MI SNAPSHOT

Algeria: A new route to Libya?

According to 4Mi data collected in Libya¹, 6% of the total 1,331 respondents interviewed in 2018 crossed through Algeria. This compares against 1% of the 1,165 respondents interviewed in 2017 (between May and December 2017).²

Although it is too early to identify an increasing trend from these statistics, similar observations were reported by other sources that noticed more people using the Algeria route starting from 2017.³

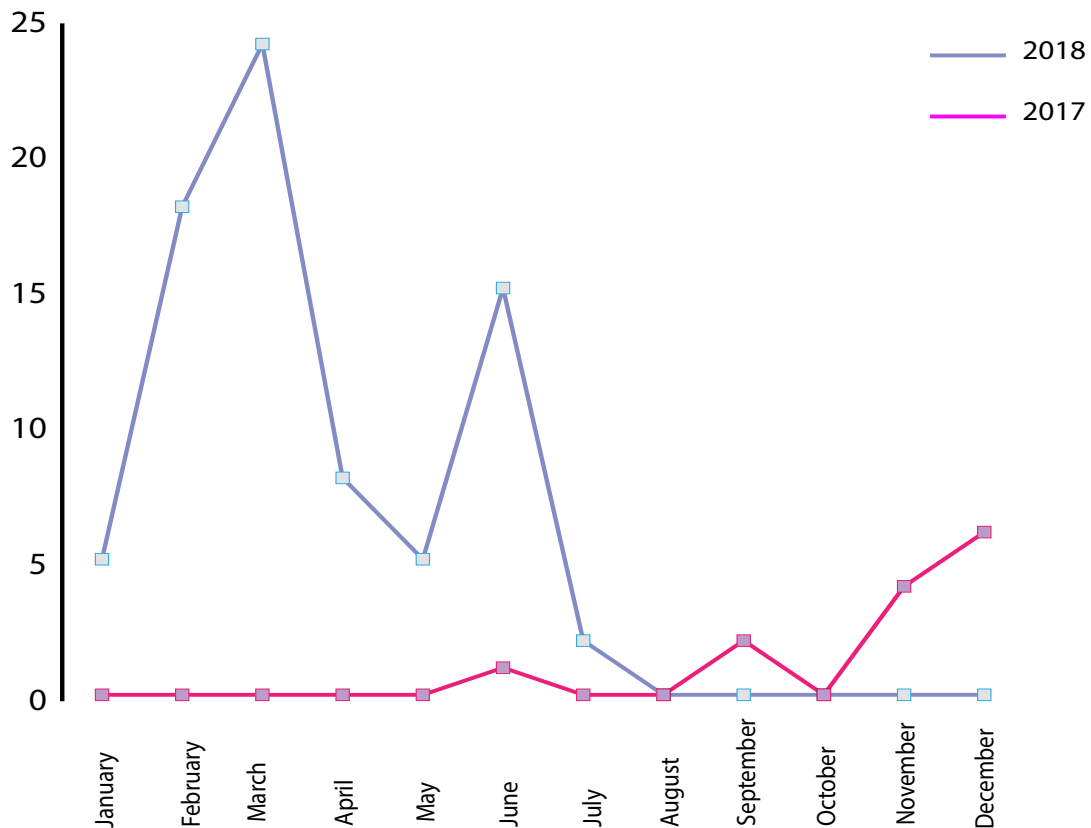


Figure1: Use of the Algerian route by 4Mi respondents interviewed in Libya

1 4Mi is a qualitative data collection tool that supports protection monitoring. 4Mi is based on non-randomized purposive sampling of the refugee and migrant population and as such cannot be considered representative of all people based or transiting through Libya and its findings cannot be viewed as conclusive evidence. 4Mi ensures long-term and continuous data collection and as such is best able to provide an indication of possible changes in patterns concerning mixed migration movements.

2 This paper is based on data collected by 4Mi from 5 May 2017 to 4 July 2018. A total of 2, 496 interviews were conducted during this time-period, of which 1,165 in 2017 and 1,331 in 2018.

3 REACH-UNHCR report. April 2018. Mixed migration routes and dynamics in Libya: The impact of EU migration measures on mixed migration in Libya. Available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lyb_so_mixed_migration_routes_and_dynamics_in_libya.pdf

It yet remains to be seen whether such observations predate a shifting of routes and whether these movements describe a momentary or a longer-term phenomenon.

It may be possible that the Nigerien government's recent crack-down on smuggling networks is deterring passage through Niger, which until now has been the principal access point into Libya. As of early 2017, the enhanced deployment of security forces and patrols along this route is likely rendering transit increasingly risky and costly for smugglers wanting to reach Libya, many of whom may now be exploring alternative itineraries. According to some estimates, the introduction of these measures has accounted for a 95% drop in crossings through Niger compared to last year.^{4 5}

In the meantime, contrasting information is emerging whereby as refugees and migrants continue to transit through Algeria, there have been alarming reports of grave human rights violations, including inhumane and arbitrary deportations and forcible expulsions in the Sahara desert.⁶

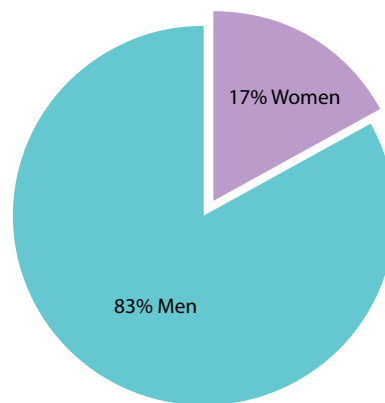
This short snapshot seeks to use 4Mi data to obtain a preliminary insight of mixed migration flows transiting through Algeria while en route to Libya, looking specifically at demographics, routes travelled and protection risks faced by refugee and migrants during the journey. Given the data and sample size limitations, further monitoring and data collection will be required to corroborate the observations put forth in this document.

Profiles and numbers of refugees and migrants:

A total of 90 people, including 83% men and 17% women, reported having passed through Algeria during their Journey to Libya between May 2017 and July 2018.

Of these, 50% were married, 47% were single and 3% were widowed. Moreover, 88% of respondents were between 20-40 years of age.

Turning to nationality, the majority of respondents, 97%, were from Western African countries, while the rest were from Cameroon, Chad and Congo.



4 TeleSur. Migrants taking Niger route to Europe falls 95%, says EU. 16 July 2018. Available at: <https://www.telesur.net/english/news/Migrants-Taking-Niger-route-to-Europe-Falls-95-Says-EU-20180716-0022.html>

5 Olivier Laurent, Siobhan O'Grady. Thousands of migrants have been abandoned in the Sahara. This is what their journey looks like. 28 June 2018. Washington Post available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/06/28/thousands-of-migrants-have-been-abandoned-in-the-sahara-this-is-what-their-journey-looks-like/?utm_term=.143a9b3c72d5

6 Human Rights Watch. Algeria: Inhumane treatment of migrants. 28 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/28/algeria-inhumane-treatment-migrants>

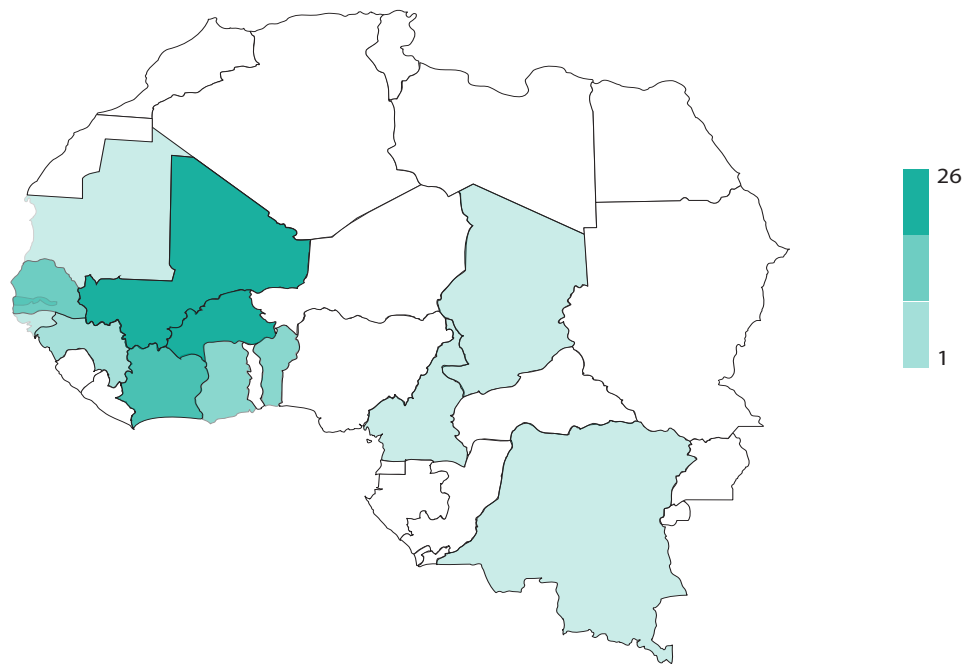


Figure2: Nationalities of respondents

The Malian-Algerian Route:

Mali is the main access point into Algeria, which is reached primarily from Burkina Faso, or for a minority of respondents, from Guinea.

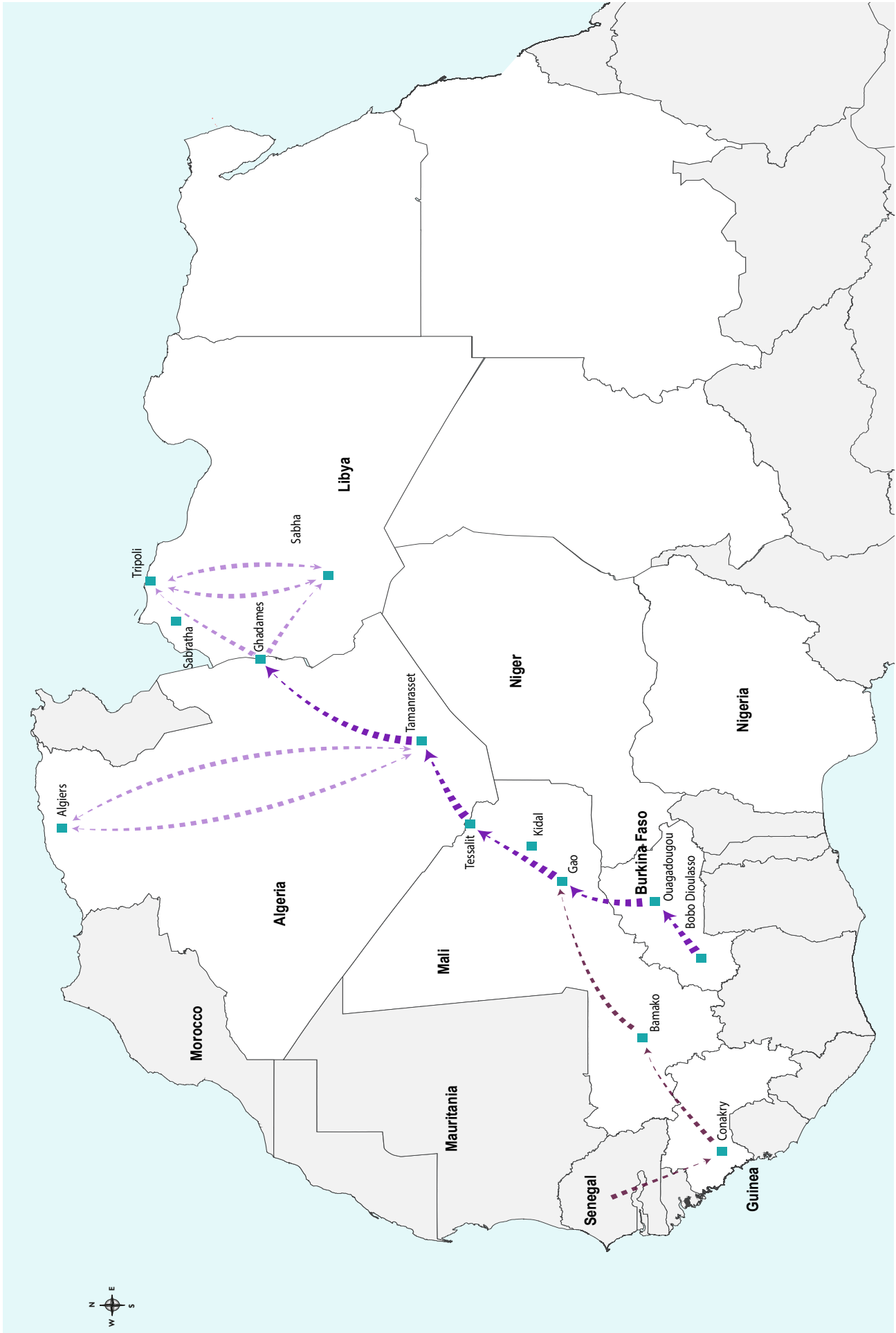
In Mali, most respondents transited through the main cities of Bamako and Gao before proceeding to border towns of Kidal and Tessalit from where they crossed into Algeria.

In Algeria, refugees and migrants reported stopping in 2 main hubs: Algiers (mentioned by 28% of respondents) or the southern town of Tamanrasset (mentioned by 83% of respondents).

Stops in these hubs mainly serve to arrange the next stretch of the journey. Most people mention either having to wait for money transfers from family or friends to pay travel costs (98%) or having to look for a smuggler to arrange transportation forward (94%). 30% of respondents also report having had to stop because the onward route was blocked by authorities.

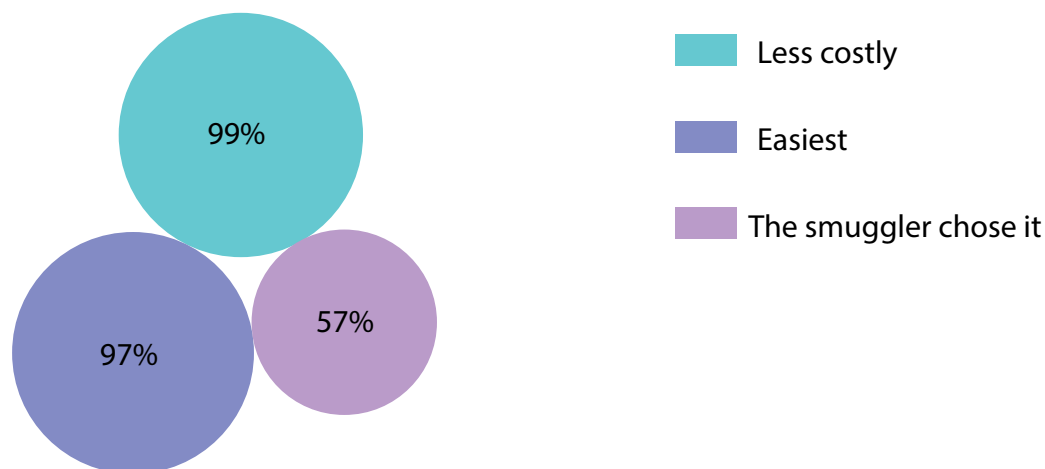
In several cases, respondents also reported being prevented to leave because of ill health or injuries or arrest (11% of respondents), while several were left stranded after being abandoned by smugglers (6% of respondents).

In this context, Tamanrasset is the main staging point in Algeria for refugees and migrants wanting to enter Libya. Most respondents reported travelling from Tamanrasset to the Libyan border town of Ghadames and then towards Sabha, Sabratha or Tripoli.



Why the Algeria route to Libya?

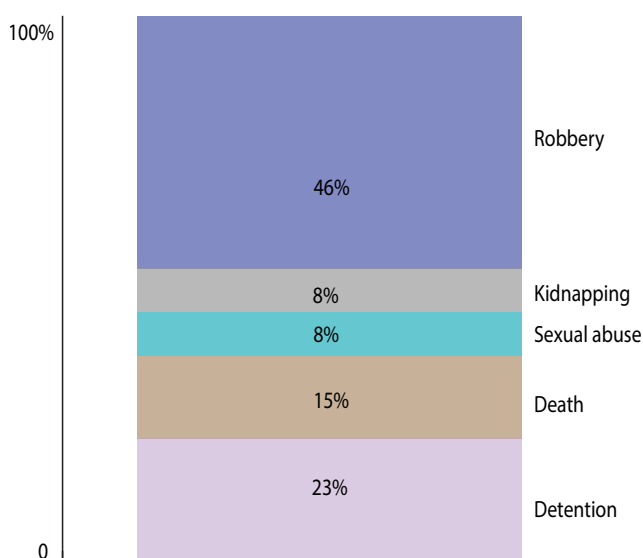
3 Main reasons for choosing the Algeria route:



Each step of the journey is normally arranged through a smuggler responsible for providing a broad range of services, beyond the transportation to places of destination. Services included: accommodation to refugees and migrants during the journey (reported by 92% of respondents), provision of key travel documents (reported by 60% of respondents), recruitment of clients to smuggle (reported by 49% of respondents) as well as transportation and safe transit across borders (reported by 71% of respondents).

Transportation to and across Algeria mainly involved a mix of cars and trucks combined with parts of the journey conducted on foot (as reported by 98% of respondents). Other common means of transportation included the public transport, cited by 56% of respondents.

Protection Risks



The majority of the protection incidents (77%) took place in Tamanrasset and mainly concerned robbery and detention cases (9 cases). In addition, 1 kidnapping and one death case took place along the Algerian border. All protection incidents were reported by male interviewees except for 1 death incident encountered by a female respondent.

Figure3: Protection Incidents