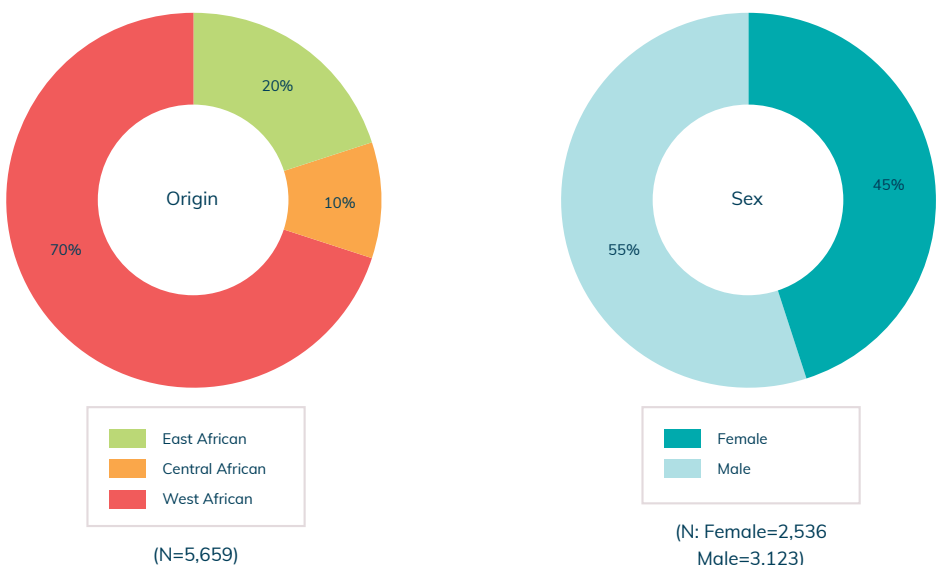


Profiles

This snapshot analyses findings from a 4Mi survey of 5,659 refugees and migrants in Libya, conducted between May 2017 and October 2019. Some 70% of respondents originate from countries in West Africa, while 20% are from East Africa and 10% from Central Africa;¹ 45% are women and 55% are men. The analysis focuses on reports of physical abuse within and along routes to Libya. This snapshot follows a [recent snapshot from MMC North Africa](#) on protection incidents, with a focus on sexual abuse.

Figure 1: Distribution of sex and origin country in the 4Mi sample

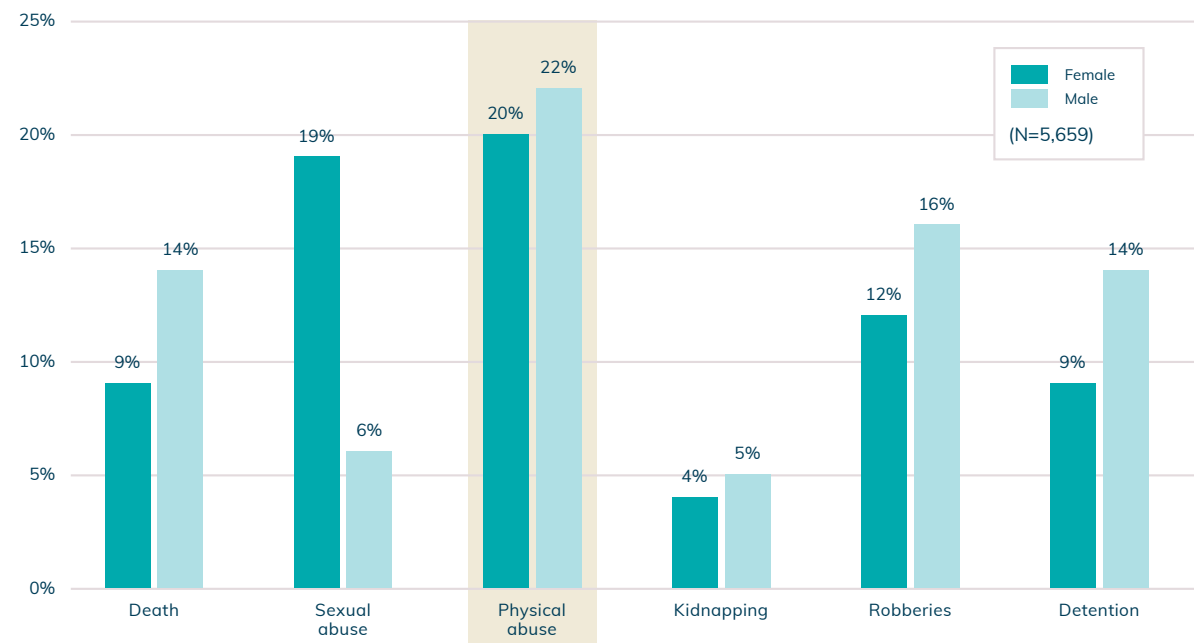


¹ This snapshot adopts the UNDESA classification of regions, with the exception of Sudan, which is included in East Africa. Regions are defined as follows: East Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda; West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo; Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe.

Physical abuse is the most common protection incident

The recent protection snapshot revealed that 44% of respondents encountered one or more protection incidents during their journey. Figure 2 shows the share of respondents experiencing and/or witnessing different protection incidents, disaggregated by gender. More specifically, it shows that physical abuse is the most prevalent protection incident reported by both men and women, at 22% and 20% respectively. The second most-cited protection incident is robbery (14%) followed by detention, death and sexual abuse, each at 12% for the whole sample.

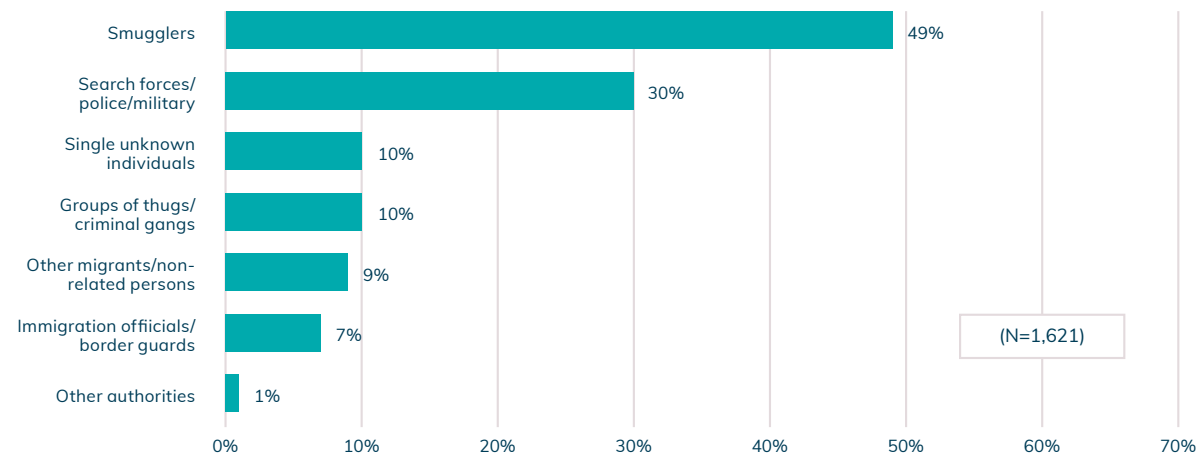
Figure 2: Protection risks by category and sex



Smugglers are the most frequently cited perpetrators

Figure 3 shows the reported perpetrators of physical abuse. Smugglers are most commonly cited as perpetrators (49%), followed by security personnel (30%). This finding is largely in line with the snapshot on sexual abuse, indicating that perpetrators are often the same, regardless of protection incident. More generally, the data presented here highlight that there are a multitude of perpetrators, including official institutions, fellow migrants, criminal gangs and smugglers.

Figure 3: Perpetrators of physical abuse²



This is further supported by qualitative data collected in the 4Mi survey. Many respondents confirm that smugglers are common perpetrators alongside security forces and border guards. A 32-year-old man from Ghana stated “There are a lot of human rights violations through the route and both the smuggler and the security border guard are committing offences on a regular basis...”

He suggested that fellow refugees and migrants who do not have enough money to bribe the security guards and the police are particularly vulnerable:

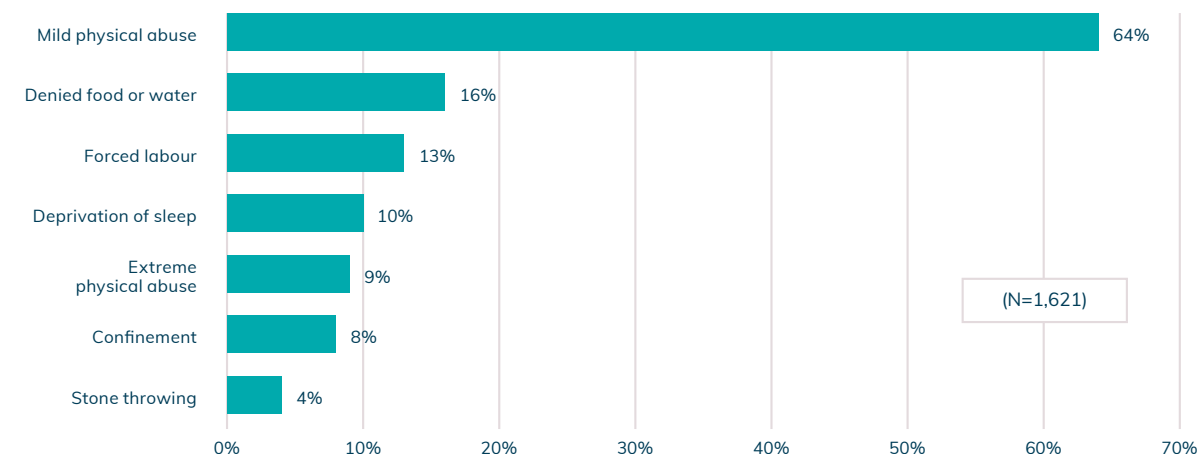
“that’s why is not advisable to embark on this journey without enough cash to settle the security because the way they normally mistreated the migrants who don’t bribe them is extremely bad. I was also a victim and many of us who don’t have money to bribe were seriously beaten by the police...and the female migrants were also sexually harassed by the police”

² Note that the total sum exceeds 100% as the respondents can choose multiple perpetrators.

Extreme physical abuse, forced labour and torture constitute a large share of reported cases

Figure 4 details the nature of the reported cases of abuse. Overall, the data indicate that many of the reported incidents are serious human rights violations. The most commonly reported incident is mild physical abuse (64%), defined as incidents of slapping, beating and whipping. Some 16% of respondents report being denied food or water, and 13% cite experiencing forced labour. As many as 9% of all cases of abuse constitute “extreme physical abuse”, which includes burning, gunshots and torture.

Figure 4: Nature of abuse³



A 20 year-old man from Nigeria explains how he was beaten and forced to work to settle the smuggler fee:

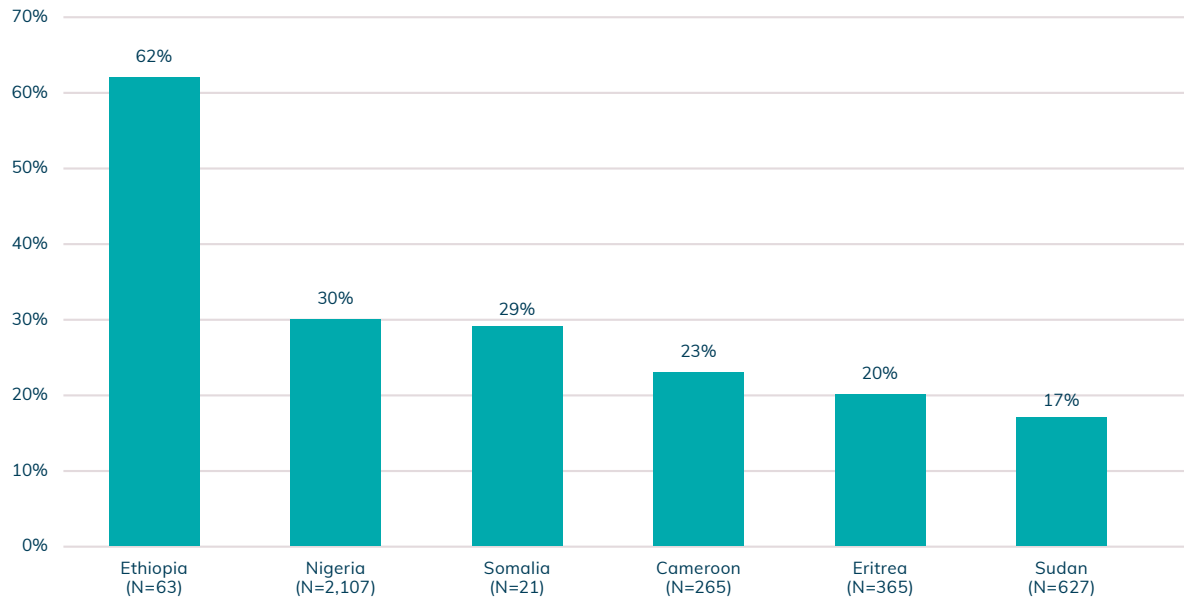
“He (the smuggler) started to treat me badly every day. He ordered his Ghetto boss to give me six strokes of cane every morning until I find solution on how I’m going to pay the balance. When the suffering was too much for me, I talked to his friend to beg him on my behalf and his friend did so. The man told him to send me to Tripoli here so that his friend that will receive me will find me work and collect the balance from me.”

³ Note that the total sum exceeds 100% as the respondents can choose multiple perpetrators.

Ethiopians appear to be particularly vulnerable

Figure 5 shows the prevalence of physical abuse, disaggregated by nationality. 4Mi data suggest that East Africans are particularly vulnerable to protection incidents overall, but there is not a large difference when it comes to physical abuse. The share of both West Africans and East Africans who have experienced physical abuse is 21%, while it is 18% for Central Africans. While 4Mi data do not allow for perfect comparison across nationalities due to the non-representativeness and different sample size for different nationalities, the data suggest that Ethiopians are particularly vulnerable; 62% of Ethiopians have experienced physical abuse, followed by Nigerians and Somalis (30% and 29%), and Cameroonians (23%)⁴. Given the limitations of comparison, this is worthwhile to explore further as more data become available.

Figure 5: Incidents by nationality



⁴ Note that the size of the 4Mi sample varies across nationalities, comparisons between nationalities might therefore be misleading.

Most reported incidents took place in Libya

Respondents report 1,621 cases of physical abuse, the majority of which occurred in Libya (1,273 cases), followed by Niger (301 cases) and Egypt (12 cases). These data align with reports by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN support Mission in Libya which detail human rights violations in Libya.⁵ Even if we account for the fact that refugee and migrant respondents move along different routes, and hence different countries of transit, incidents in Libya far exceed those of the total incidents across all the transit countries. This is further supported by the [Mixed Migration Review](#) (2019 p.74), which suggests that Libya is the most hazardous country when it comes to physical abuse, for refugees and migrants.⁶

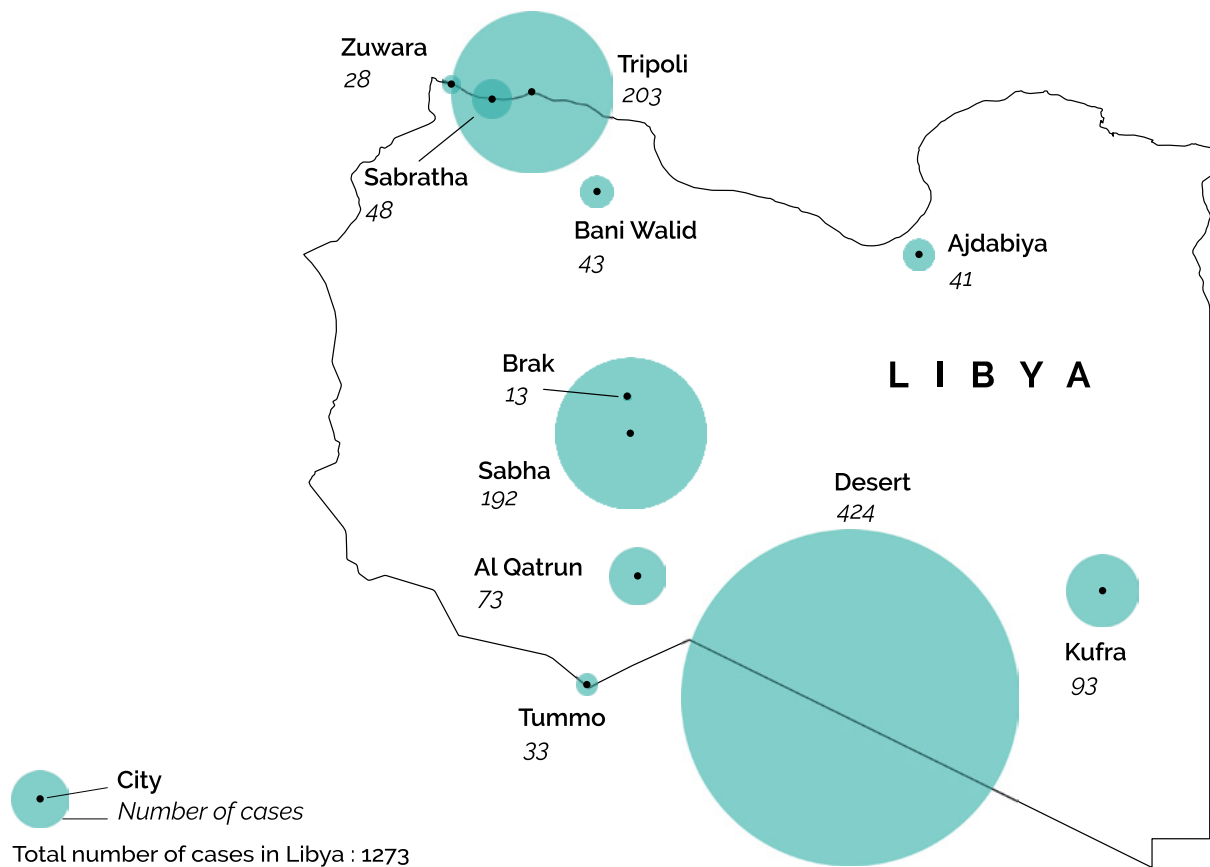
Figure 6 further explores incidents of physical abuse within Libya. While the location of 4Mi interviews will have an influence on the locations of reported incidents, meaning comparisons should be treated with caution, some 424 out of the 1,273 incidents (33%) reported to have taken place in Libya occurred in the desert. This supports a 2018 UNHCR report⁷ suggesting that the desert is a particularly dangerous place along mixed migration routes.

⁵ UNSML, UNOHCHR (2016) "Detained and Dehumanized" Report on the human rights abuses against migrants in Libya". Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/LY/DetainedAndDehumanised_en.pdf

⁶ The Mixed Migration Review (2019 p.74) considered 4Mi data from West Africa, North Africa and East Africa.

⁷ UNHCR (2018) Desperate Journeys


Figure 6: Incidents in Libya⁸



Total number of cases in Libya : 1273

Conclusion

This snapshot has analysed protection risks within and en route to Libya, with a focus on physical abuse. The data indicate that physical abuse is the most common protection incident faced by refugees and migrants, and that many face severe cases of physical abuse, including torture and forced labour. Smugglers and security forces are the most common perpetrators. Most incidents of physical abuse take place within Libya; the desert, Tripoli and Sabha are the most common reported locations of incidents.

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The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field monitors are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa, East Africa and Yemen, North Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

Sample sizes are clearly indicated and represent a limited section of those on the move. The findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make any inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at www.mixedmigration.org/4mi

⁸ Note that the data is largely driven by point of interview, comparisons between locations should therefore be treated with caution.