

MMC North Africa

QUARTER 4 2019

A photograph of two men on a boat. The man in the foreground is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and has his hand to his forehead in a gesture of distress or exhaustion. The man behind him is also in a white shirt, looking out at the sea with his hands clasped near his face. The background shows a vast blue sea under a clear sky.

Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the North Africa (NA) region. The core countries of focus for this region are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to some of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

The Mixed Migration Centre is a global network consisting of seven regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. For more information on the MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel - often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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Taha Jawashi (2017)

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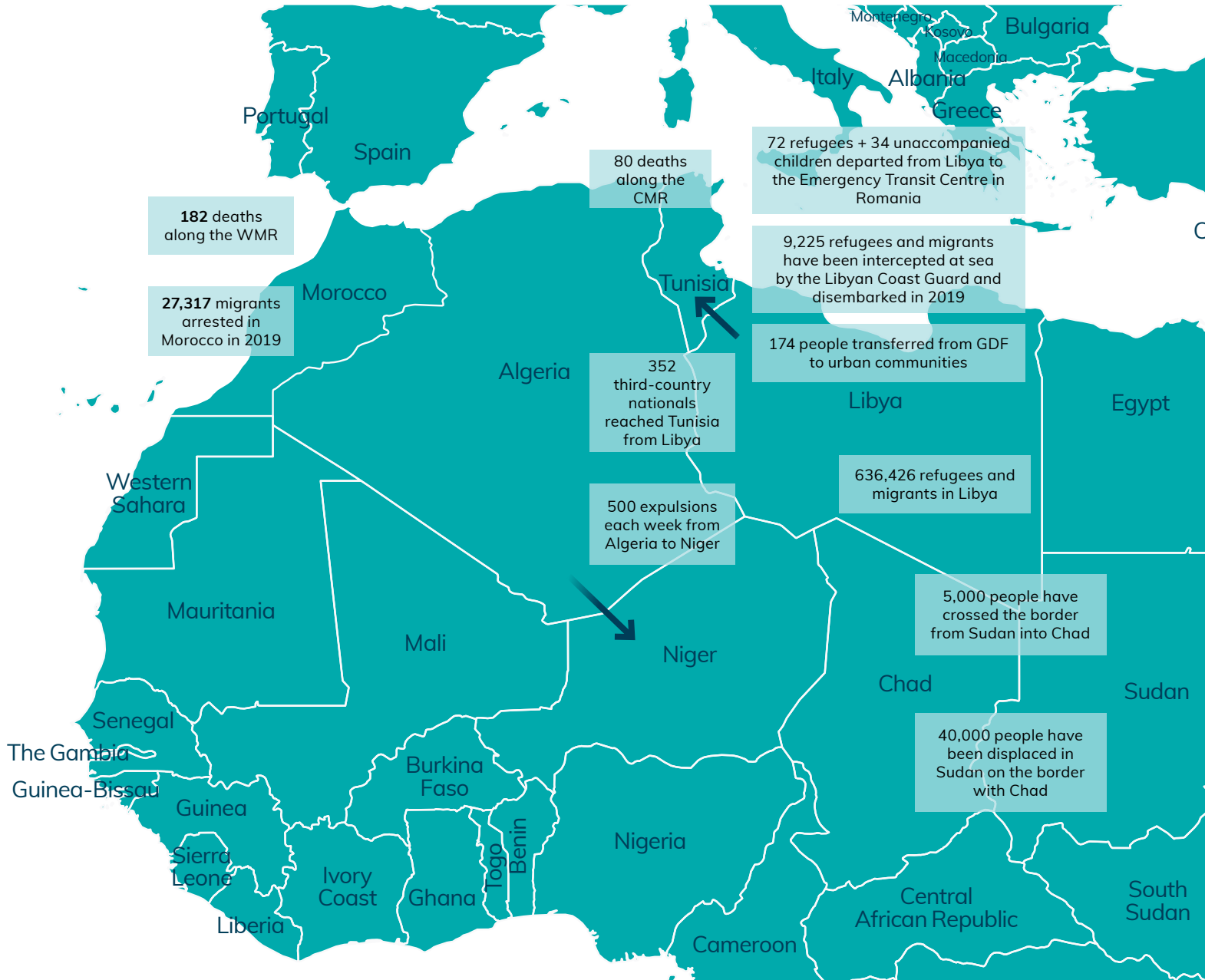
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa

Quarter 4 - 2019

Key Updates

- Between October and December 2019, [UNHCR](#) reported the **deaths or disappearances** of 80 refugees and migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) and 182 refugees and migrants along the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR).
- **Security has increased along the Tunisia-Libya border** after an escalation in conflict in Libya, and in anticipation of the consequences for migration. In late December, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that Ankara will send troops to Libya in early 2020, at the Government of National Accord's (GNA) request.
- In early December the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) and the UN Security Council](#) expressed concern over the **deteriorating humanitarian situation** in Libya, and called for the closure of migrant detention centres.
- The [Gathering and Departure Facility \(GDF\)](#), a transit centre for evacuating the most vulnerable out of Libya, is overcrowded, **holding nearly double its intended capacity of 600** people following the July airstrike on Tajura, and the October arrival of refugees and migrants from Abu Salim.
- In early December, the [EU Observer](#) reported that **refugees and migrants were paying to be detained in Libya**, in hopes of resettlement to Europe
- [In December](#), it was announced that **Morocco would receive €101.7 million** from the European Union (EU) to curb irregular migration and human trafficking.

Regional Overview*



This data covers the period from October to December 2019 unless otherwise noted.

*Arrows on the map only relate to key updates and do not represent mixed migration flows within and out of North Africa

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Mixed migration from North Africa to Europe

[UNHCR](#) reports that irregular arrivals in Europe between 1 January and 30 November 2019 totaled 125,317, compared to 141,472 in 2018. Of these, 102,162 were by sea, and the remaining 23,155 were by land. North Africans were among the most common nationalities to arrive in Europe via the Mediterranean, with Moroccans accounting for the third most common nationality (8,049; 6.4%), Algerians fifth (5,286; 4.2%), and Tunisians the ninth (3,544; 2.8%).

Libya continues to be a key point of departure for those seeking to reach Europe. As of 31 December 2019, [UNHCR](#) reported that the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG) rescued/intercepted a total of 9,035 people in different locations along the Libyan coast and [IOM](#) reported that 9,225 individuals were intercepted. Over the same period last year, the LCG intercepted 15,235 refugees and migrants at sea. This group was composed of men (80%), women (6.9%), and children (9.6%).¹ The nationalities of refugees and migrants most frequently intercepted by the LCG included Sudanese (3,298), Malian (709), Ivorian (543), and Somali (507). Refugees and migrants were largely intercepted off the coast of Tripoli (3,788), followed by Al-Khums (3,561) and Az-Zawiyah (791).

Between October and December 2019, along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), 80 refugees and migrants were reported dead or missing, which accounts for approximately 11% of CMR deaths and disappearances in 2019. Along the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR), 182 migrants were reported dead or missing in the last quarter of 2019, accounting for more than 36% of all WMR deaths and disappearances this year ([UNHCR](#)).

Overall, 2019 saw a decrease in the number of refugees and migrants who died or went missing on the Mediterranean in 2019 as compared to the previous year: 1,319 relative to 2,265 in 2018, cites [UNHCR](#). However, when examining refugee and migrant deaths and disappearances as a share of arrivals, we see that the rate has in fact increased. This suggests that Mediterranean crossings became more deadly in 2019. Along the CMR approximately 65 refugees and migrants died or went missing for every 1,000 who arrived in Europe in 2019, up from 55 in 2018. Along the WMR, this figure rose to 19 from 14. If one looks at the share of deaths and disappearances split across the three main routes, we see that the most precarious route was the CMR (57%), followed by the WMR (38%) and the Eastern Mediterranean Route (5%).

¹ Approximately 3.5% escaped upon disembarkation and are not included in IOM's demographic breakdown.

Mixed migration within and from Libya

[IOM](#) and [UNHCR](#), respectively, estimate that there are currently 636,426 refugees and migrants residing in Libya, of which 46,395 are refugees and asylum seekers. This represents a slight increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers (45,653) reported by [UNHCR](#) in early October 2019 and a slight decrease in the total number of migrants (from 609,491 to 590,031) reported by [IOM](#) in June-July 2019.

The landscape of the migrant detention sector in Libya has evolved over the last quarter. In late November, [UNHCR](#) announced that with its broader urban assistance package now in operation, it will phase out food catering at the Gathering and Departure Facility (GDF) in 2020. The UN refugee agency established the GDF as a transit centre for detained refugees who had been identified for evacuation to third countries in December 2018. Following the July airstrike on the Tajura detention centre and the closure of the Abu Salim detention centre in late October, the GDF has been overcrowded, holding nearly double its intended capacity of 600 people. UNHCR's decision to cede management to Libya's Department for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) comes as the GDF is no longer able to carry out its function as a transit centre, evacuating the most vulnerable from Libya. [UNHCR](#) said it will continue to advise individuals who enter the GDF about their options and their eligibility for the urban assistance package, which includes primary health care, registration and cash assistance. A total of 174 individuals previously hosted at the GDF have been transferred to urban communities as part of nine separate UNHCR operations between October and December 2019.

Additionally, in early December, the [EU Observer](#) reported that people were paying to be detained in Libya, in hopes of resettlement to Europe. According to UNHCR, given the increase in conflict and insecurity in Libya and xenophobic attacks against sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants in Tripoli, some refugees and migrants felt safer within detention centres.

Increased tensions in Libya have led to an increase in internal displacement in the last quarter of 2019. Armed fighting in the southern areas of Tripoli since April 2019 and the escalation of insecurity in Murzuq since August continues to destabilize Libyan communities. Between October and December, the number of IDPs rose to 343,180, which represents a 14% rise since the end of September. Through a round of key informant interviews, [IOM](#) estimates that 97% of IDPs were forced to move because of the deterioration of the security situation. Two-thirds of interviewees highlighted that they moved to new locations based on the perception of better security in these areas. The top three regions hosting IDPs include Tripoli (78,948), Misrata (37,217), and Almargeb (29,250).

Movements from, to and through Tunisia

UNHCR reported that 158 third-country nationals arrived in Tunisia in [October](#) (8 by land and 158 by sea), and 194 third-country nationals arrived in Tunisia in [November](#) (9 by land and 185 by sea). In total in 2019, sea arrivals (including interceptions and disembarkations) have more than doubled what was observed in 2018: in 2018, 290 individuals were recorded as arriving by sea, and as of 30 November, 724 of the individuals referred to UNHCR reported arriving by sea in 2019.

Additionally, according to the [UN refugee agency](#) the profiles of refugees and migrants arriving in Tunisia have changed considerably since the previous year. The main origin countries of refugees and migrants in Tunisia included Ivorians (44% in 2019 versus 9% in 2018), Eritreans (8% in 2019 versus 16% in 2018), Guineans (8% in 2019 versus 5% in 2018), and Malians (6% in 2019 versus 2% in 2018). Of the 1,038 refugees and migrants profiled by UNHCR in Tunisia between 1 January 2019 and 30 November 2019, 86% had transited through Libya, and the vast majority of them (97%) had experienced some form of violence or abuse (torture, ill-treatment in detention, sexual and gender-based violence, etc.) while in Libya.

As a consequence of the deteriorating security situation in Libya, the [spokesperson for the Tunisian Ministry of the interior](#) announced that Tunisia had mobilized military forces to its southeastern land and sea borders. The enhanced security was reportedly in order to monitor the increase in arrivals of Libyans and other refugees and migrants, to prevent the infiltration of armed groups, and to better anticipate any potential humanitarian emergencies.

This increased securitization has already directly impacted refugees and migrants. In October, [more than 10 migrants](#) were intercepted by the Tunisian National Guard at the Fériana border with Algeria, and in November, [20 sub-Saharan refugees and migrants](#) were arrested in Tunisia for attempting to cross the Ben Guerdane border with Libya. Additionally, [in November](#), the Tunisian National Guard arrested 33 Tunisians suspected of a projected sea-crossing attempt to Italy.

Securitization in Morocco

In the last quarter of 2019, Morocco also saw the continued securitization of its borders. Moroccan security forces made a total of [27,317 migrant arrests](#) in 2019 and the [government](#) claims it thwarted 57,000 attempted Mediterranean crossings. [In October](#), police apprehended 23 Moroccan nationals along the shore of Rabat's Bouregreg river, who were allegedly planning an irregular crossing of the Mediterranean and thought to be involved in human trafficking. [In November](#), authorities raided five houses as part of its efforts to curb irregular migration, found 75 migrants of different African nationalities, and made 11 arrests. Additionally, [in December](#), Moroccan authorities apprehended three people for their suspected involvement in irregular migration and smuggling.

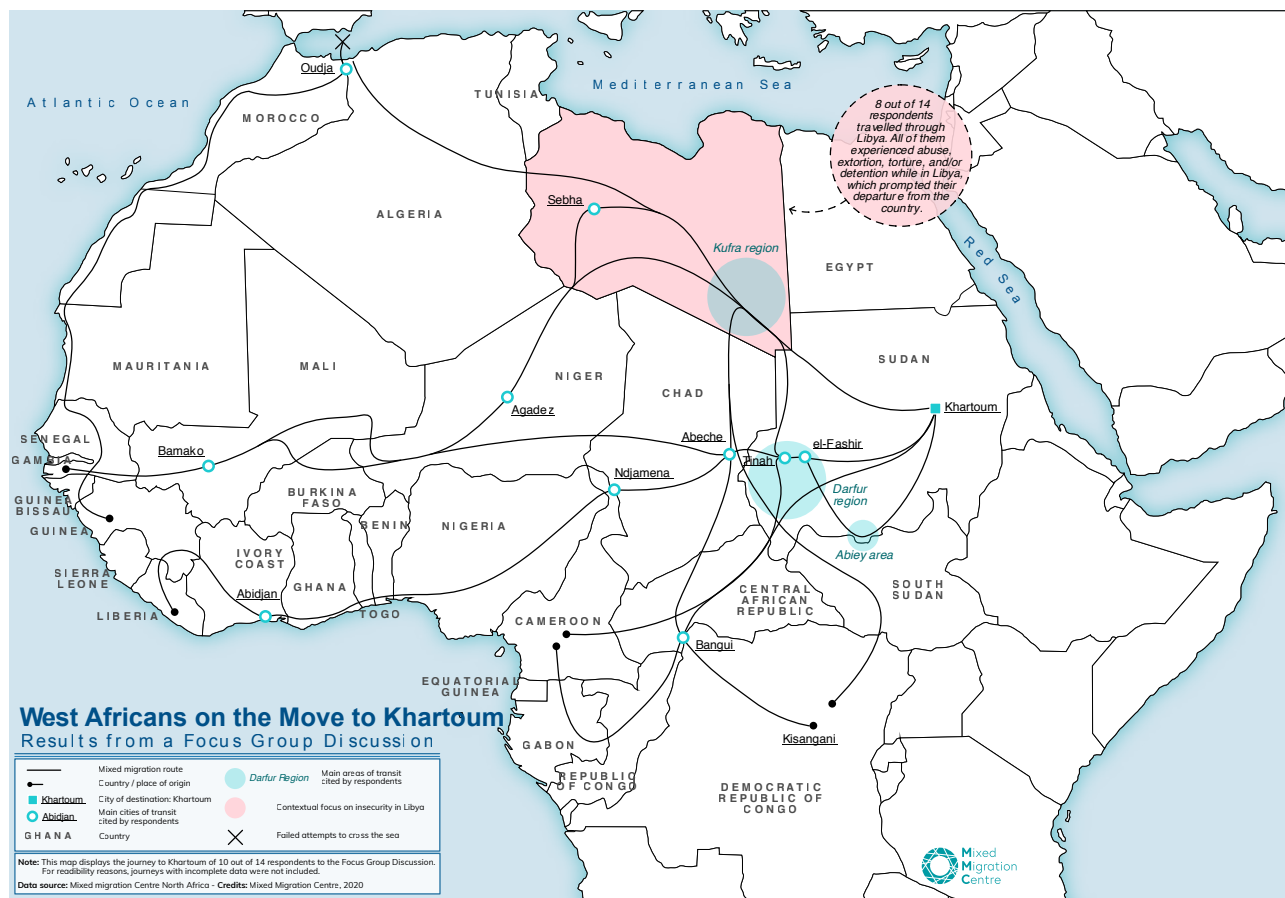
Thematic focus: West African refugees and migrants in Khartoum

The following thematic focus synthesizes the key findings of a focus group discussion (FGD) conducted by MMC with 14 refugees and migrants on their mixed migration journeys. The refugees and migrants are all members of the West African Community Network (WACN) in Khartoum. The WACN was established in February 2019, with an initial membership of 10 people. At the time of the FGD in November 2019, the network had more than 200 members, and as of January 2020, it is estimated that this has grown to 350. The members of the network have very different stories and experiences, ranging from more forced and acute to more 'voluntary' but nevertheless highly precarious journeys to Sudan.

Leaving West Africa

The respondents of the focus group represented 8 origin countries including Liberia (4 individuals), Cameroon (2), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2), Côte d'Ivoire (2), Senegal (1), Sierra Leone (1), Guinea-Conakry (1), and Nigeria (1). Many left their origin countries because of issues of governance, conflict, livelihoods, the deaths of family members, and/or the search for a 'better life.' Specifically, respondents from Liberia and Sierra Leone cited the Ebola outbreak of 2015 and the impact this had on their families. Moreover, when discussing the factors shaping their migration and forced displacement decision-making, respondents noted the increased insecurity in Anglophone Cameroon, which had led one respondent to be detained for 8 months, conflict between the government of Senegal and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MDFC) in southwestern Senegal, and violence in Côte d'Ivoire. Others described leaving their origin countries in part because of the influence of peers who had already successfully undertaken the journey to Europe. None of the respondents had Khartoum in mind as a destination at the time of their departure and few had the aspiration to migrate to Europe via Libya. Instead, the majority went to nearby countries looking for livelihood opportunities and engaged in stepwise migration, ultimately to Sudan. Figure 1 reveals a map of their journeys.

Figure 1



Migration journey through Libya

Eight of the 14 West African refugees and migrants who participated in the focus group said they had travelled through Libya before reaching Khartoum. While in Libya, all eight respondents had experienced abuse, torture and/or detention, which prompted their departure from Libya and movement to Sudan. The Senegalese respondent described being captured and marked (scarred) by members of a Libyan militia, the Sierra Leonean migrant cited physical abuse in Sabha, an Ivorian was detained following the interception of his boat by the Libyan Coast Guard, while a Liberian migrant noted arrest by police and detention before expulsion to the Chadian desert after an attempted sea crossing.

A few respondents also reported having exhausted their resources in Libya, either through failed crossing attempts or extortion, and this being another factor prompting their exit from the country to Sudan. In one instance, the respondent from Sierra Leone explained his decision to leave Libya in terms of being unable to move onward (towards Europe) and his unwillingness to return to Sierra Leone. While in Libya he met a group of Sudanese migrants who similarly felt unsafe and unable to remain in Libya and who had also had direct experiences with physical violence and detention in Libya. He accompanied them on their return journey to Sudan.

Future in Sudan

In Khartoum, the West African refugees and migrants noted that they face language barriers and a lack of legal documentation. These factors limit integration and movement for fear of being arrested or detained. For example, the respondent from Senegal explained that if a refugee or migrant is captured in Sudan, the individual is detained for 6 months and is then deported to the desert, from where they must find their way back to their origin country. The WACN member from Ghana cited paying for papers at an immigration office in el-Fashir. Without documentation, WACN members explained they are unable to work and unable to use their skills.

Based on their lack of freedom of movement and access to livelihood strategies, FGD participants did not see Sudan as offering them a viable future. Specifically, WACN members requested accommodation, health and medical care, schooling for their children, further schooling for youth and adults, and vocational skills and computer training. Moreover, the refugees and migrants requested resettlement from Sudan, as many of them feel trapped in the country. They are unable or unwilling to return to their origin countries, some for fear of persecution. At the same time, they did not want to attempt the journey through Libya again, perceiving it as too dangerous. From their perspective, the only viable option for their futures is to be evacuated and resettled.

Highlighted new research and reports



[Hunger, displacement and migration - A joint innovative approach to assessing needs of migrants in Libya](#)

IOM and WFP | November 2019

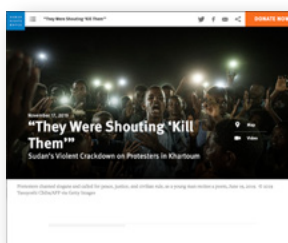
In Libya, IOM and WFP conducted joint analysis combining face-to-face and web-based interviews. The study captured a varied sample of both female and male migrants from various age groups originating from 36 countries. Almost two-thirds of interviewed migrants originated from neighboring countries in Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, including Algeria, Egypt, Niger, Chad and Sudan.



[Sea rescue NGOs: a pull factor of irregular migration?](#)

Migration Policy Centre | November 2019

The argument that maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) operations act as a 'pull factor' of irregular seaborne migration has become commonplace during the Mediterranean 'refugee crisis'. This claim has frequently been used to criticize humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) conducting SAR off the coast of Libya, which are considered to provide "an incentive for human smugglers to arrange departures" (Italian Senate 2017: 9). This policy brief scrutinises this argument by examining monthly migratory flows from Libya to Italy between 2014 and October 2019. It finds no relationship between the presence of NGOs at sea and the number of migrants leaving Libyan shores. Although more data and further research are needed, the results of the analysis calls into question the claim that non-governmental SAR operations are a pull factor of irregular migration across the Mediterranean Sea.



["They were shouting "Kill Them"". Sudan's violent crackdown on protesters in Khartoum](#)

Human Rights Watch | November 2019

In this report released in November, the US-based rights group called on Sudan's transitional authorities to commit to "genuine accountability" for the violence perpetrated against protesters in June.



[Libya Migrant Vulnerability and Humanitarian Needs Assessment](#)

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix | December 2019

This report presents analysis and findings on migrant vulnerability and humanitarian needs in Libya, via use of DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) and Mobility Tracking Multisectoral Location Assessments (MSLA). The findings are based on 13,228 quantitative interviews conducted via FMS with migrants between January and August 2019, and 2,312 key informant interviews conducted between June and July 2019.



[From Sub-Saharan States to Tunisia: A quantitative study on the situation of migrants in Tunisia: general aspects, pathways and aspirations](#)

Forum Tunsien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES) | December 2019

This study seeks to better identify the pathways of migrants in regular and irregular situations through collecting data about individual and group pathways of migrants, their places of residence, jobs, family situations and their access to social and health care services. It also aims to identify the available

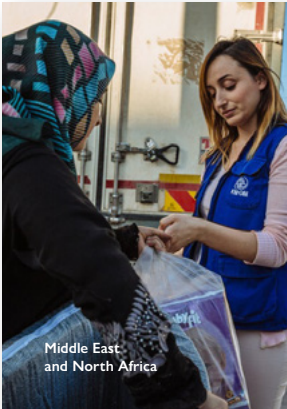
resources and obstacles faced by migrants. More generally, the aim of this study is to better understand the reasons that pushed these individuals to leave sub-Saharan countries towards northern African countries, and more specifically towards Tunisia. Why are these people leaving their homeland? Who are they and who is supporting them?



[The Situation of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Region of Medenine](#)

D. Naima Fekih | December 2019

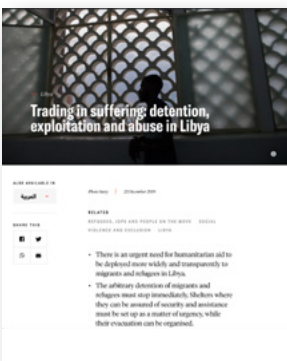
This report analyzes the situation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the region of Medenine through qualitative interviews with the governor of Medenine, representatives of international and national agencies and organizations such as IOM, UNHCR, the Tunisian Council for Refugees, the Tunisian Red Crescent, the Arab Institute for Human Rights, along with refugees and migrants. This work aims to find an answer to the different questions surrounding the migration and to provide the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights with information about the migration context.



[Migration Initiatives 2020 - Middle East and North Africa](#)

International Organization for Migration (IOM) | December 2019

Migration Initiatives 2020 illustrates to Member States, governments, partners, the private sector and readers the planned interventions and global funding requirements of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for 2020. Migration Initiatives 2020 is structured around the Migration Governance Framework, which outlines the six essential principles and objectives for facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration through planned and well-managed migration policies. Accompanying the overview of IOM's planned actions for 2020, the publication showcases IOM's regional- and country-level priorities and the funding needs to meet the growing operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage socioeconomic development through migration and uphold the well-being and human rights of migrants.



[Trading in suffering: detention, exploitation and abuse in Libya](#)

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) | December 2019

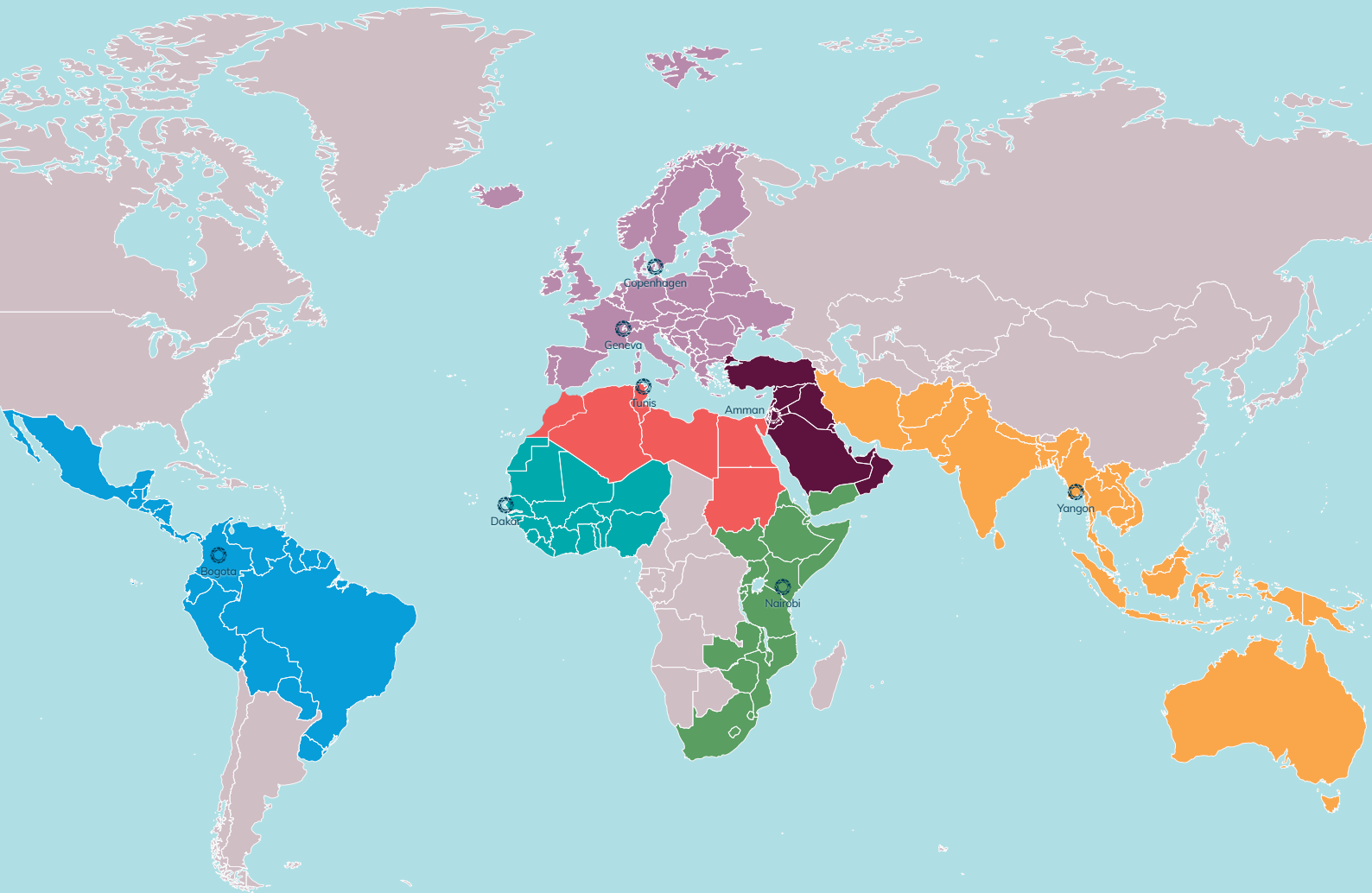
In this interactive photo story, Médecins Sans Frontières seeks to document the lives of detained migrants and refugees in Libya.



[Weathering the Storm. Charting new courses in the Mediterranean](#)

Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) | December 2019

This report provides analyses, policy recommendations, and new approaches to critical issues facing the enlarged Mediterranean region today. Structured along four thematic sections – shared security, shared prosperity, migration, culture and civil society – the report focuses on a selection of key topics, highlighting both challenges and developments stemming from a region that is undergoing profound transformations. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the prospects and policy options for Mediterranean countries.



The MMC is a global network consisting of seven regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

The MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and global and regional MMC teams are hosted by the DRC offices in Amman, Copenhagen, Dakar, Geneva, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Yangon.

For more information visit:
mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

