



**MMC West Africa**

**QUARTER 4 2021**

# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa



This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the West Africa (WA) region. The core countries of focus for this region are Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any 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 six 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](https://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.

#### **Front cover photo credit:**

Jean-Baptiste Joire (2017)

Women watching boats in Joal-Fadiout, Senegal, February 2017.

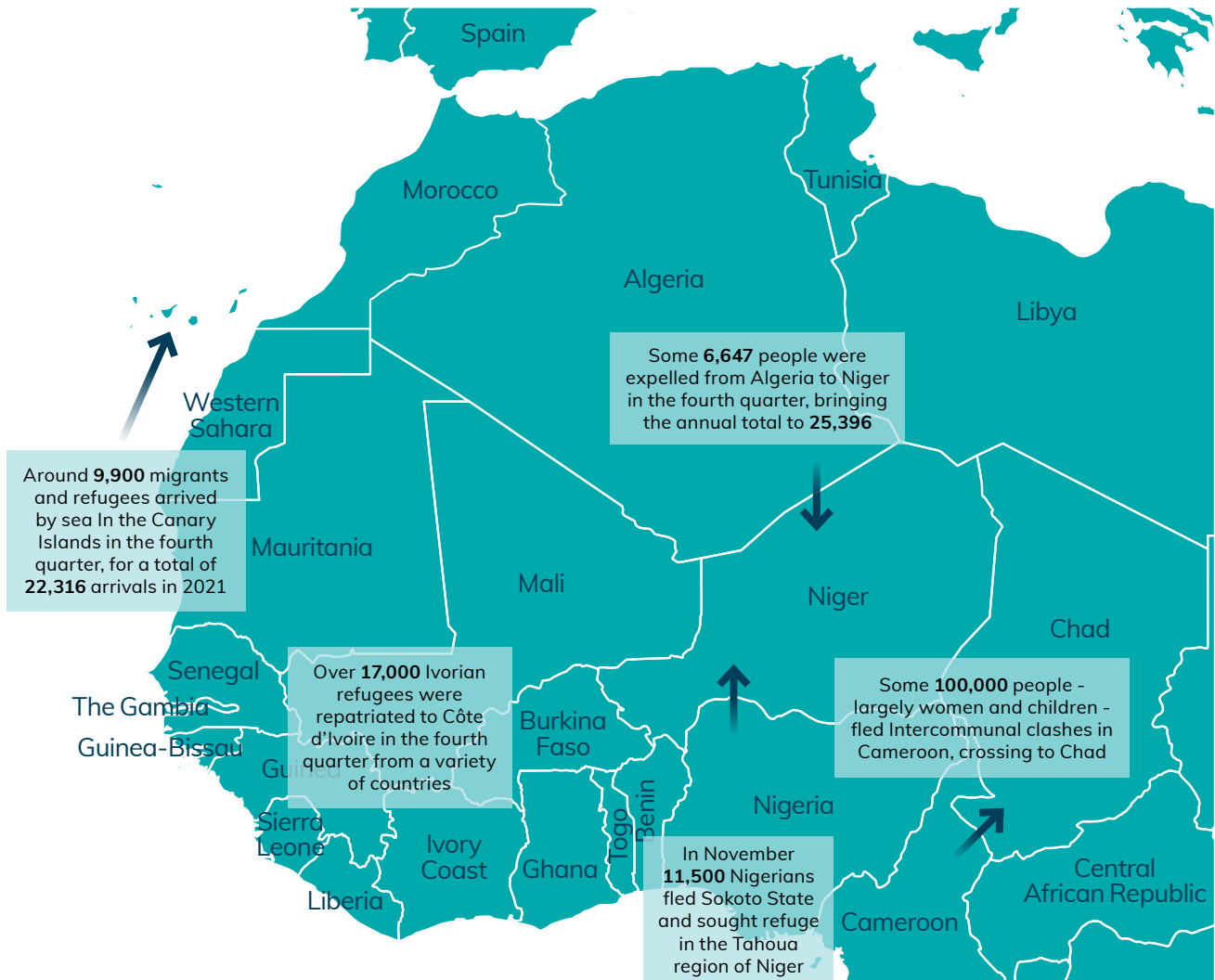
# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa

## Quarter 4 - 2021

### Key Updates

- **Nigerian refugees in Niger's Tahoua region:** Violence by groups of armed bandits in the vicinity of Sabon Birni in Nigeria's Sokoto state spurred [11,500 Nigerians](#) to flee to Niger's Tahoua region in November. They joined 3,500 other Nigerian refugees in the region who had been there since September.
- **Voluntary repatriation to Côte d'Ivoire:** Some [17,118 people](#) were repatriated to Côte d'Ivoire from neighboring countries, mainly Liberia, from the beginning of October through 23 December. Increased repatriations coincided with the decision by UNHCR to end refugee status for people from Côte d'Ivoire, which will take effect at the end of June 2022.
- **Cross border displacement from Cameroon:** An estimated [100,000 people](#) from the Far North region of **Cameroon** arrived in **Chad** in December following clashes between [herders and fishermen](#) related to competition over scarce water. The overwhelming majority of these refugees were [women and children](#).
- **Canary Islands arrivals and deaths in 2021:** The Atlantic Route continued its prominence in 2021, with approximately [22,316 arrivals](#) in the Canary Islands, very similar to the total for 2020 ([23,023](#)). However, the number of deaths on this route was higher than in 2020, with estimates ranging from [955](#) to [4,404](#) (compared to [850](#) to [2,170](#) in 2020).
- **Expulsions from Algeria to Niger:** According to the [NGO Alarme Phone Sahara](#), in the fourth quarter of 2021 approximately 6,647 refugees and migrants were expelled from Algeria to Niger. Alarme Phone Sahara estimates that [25,396](#) refugees and migrants were expelled from Algeria to Niger in 2021, an increase over the 2021 estimate of 22,631.
- **High Commissioner for Human Rights in Niger:** In remarks made at the conclusion of her visit to **Niger** in December, the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) expressed concern over mistreatment and expulsion of refugees and migrants into Niger on the part of neighboring countries. She also emphasized that the human rights of migrants and refugees must be upheld in all circumstances, even while seeking to combat human trafficking and smuggling, and stated the support of the UN for revising Niger's Law 2015-36 on the smuggling of migrants.

## Regional Overview\*



\*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration flows within and out of West Africa.



# Mixed Migration Regional Updates

## West Africa region

As of 30 November, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in **Burkina Faso** was [1,501,775](#). While official [figures](#) did not yet reflect these movements, the sub-prefect of Tougbo in Cote d'Ivoire reported that in November nearly [3,000](#) people from Burkina Faso arrived in their community.

For the second time in two years, violence targeting the [Goudoubo refugee camp](#) in northern Burkina Faso (Sahel region) has caused refugees to vacate the camp. Following attacks by armed assailants in late October and early November, Goudoubo's [13,000 inhabitants](#) left the camp. The majority moved to Dori, which hosted [10,872 refugees](#) as of 31 November, straining local resources.

In **Mali**, internal displacement has increased steadily, more than [doubling](#) in two years from 187,000 people as of 30 September 2019 to [401,736 people](#) as of 31 December 2021. This can primarily be attributed to [worsening security](#) in the center of the country (Segou, Mopti, Douentza) and in Timbuktu region. Additionally, almost 4,500 additional Malians were recorded as refugees between the end of [August](#) and the end of November, bringing the number to some [158,958](#). MINUSMA documented seven cases of sexual assault against migrants occurring in late September in Timbuktu region. These were perpetrated by armed smugglers against four men and three women.

Nigerians crossing into **Niger** to escape violence in northwest **Nigeria** in recent years have primarily gone to the [Maradi region](#), which hosts at least 80,000 Nigerian refugees (of whom 71% were biometrically registered). However, in November, violence by groups of armed bandits in the vicinity of Sabon Birni in Nigeria's Sokoto state spurred [11,500 Nigerians](#) to flee to Niger's Tahoua region. They joined 3,500 other Nigerian refugees in the region who had been there since September.

An estimated [100,000 people](#) from the Far North region of **Cameroon** arrived in **Chad** in December following clashes between [herders and fishermen](#) related to competition over scarce water. This outbreak of violence followed on earlier resource-based inter-communal conflict taking place in August which displaced around [23,000 people](#) in Cameroon and into Chad. As was the case with this earlier displacement, the overwhelming majority of refugees in the December displacement were [women and children](#).

Building on a trend of increasing voluntary repatriation of refugees to **Côte d'Ivoire** in the third quarter of 2021, the fourth quarter saw a particular uptick, with [17,118 people repatriated](#) from the beginning of October through 23 December. That brought the total number of Ivorian refugees repatriated in 2021 to 22,445. Increased repatriations coincided with the decision by UNHCR to end refugee status for people from Côte d'Ivoire (see below), which will take effect at the end of June 2022.

## Policy and legal updates

In remarks made at the conclusion of her visit to Niger, the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) highlighted the importance of Niger as a crossroads for migration within the region. She expressed concern over mistreatment and expulsion of refugees and migrants into Niger on the part of neighboring countries. While praising Niger for welcoming asylum-seekers and refugees, she also noted that the human rights of migrants and refugees must be upheld in all circumstances, even while seeking to combat human trafficking and smuggling. In that regard, she stated that:

**“The UN system stands ready to support Niger in revising Law 2015-36 criminalizing the illicit smuggling of migrants to ensure its full compliance with international standards.”**

This law had previously come under criticism in a [report](#) issued by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of migrants following a visit to Niger in 2018. The report noted a variety of flaws with the law and its implementation and stated that it did not always align with international human rights standards and principles.

During the last quarter of 2021, there were multiple instances of law enforcement and prosecution related to human trafficking and smuggling along the Central Mediterranean Route. Several members of a [migrant smuggling network](#) operating between Niger and Europe were arrested in October in the Nigerien cities of Zinder, Agadez and Maradi following a joint operation carried out by police officers from **Niger, France and Spain**. In November police in **Italy** arrested [40 people](#) suspected of involvement in a smuggling/trafficking network stretching from Nigeria to Germany. The group had forced 41 Nigerian women into prostitution and an additional nine into begging after enticing them to Italy with the promise of jobs. In December, a [court](#) in **Nigeria** sentenced a smuggler to a seven year prison term and payment of a two million naira (4,820 USD) fine. He was found guilty of attempting to smuggle two underage girls from Nigeria to Libya.

Following on a recommendation made by various **West African states** in the [Abidjan Joint Declaration](#), [UNHCR](#) confirmed that as of 30 June 2022, there would be “a general cessation of refugee status for Ivorian refugees.” According to UNHCR, there have been “fundamental and durable changes” to the political and security situations. For those Ivorian refugees still in need of international protection, it will be possible to apply for an exemption to the cessation of status. UNHCR has also elaborated a [strategy](#) to facilitate “comprehensive solutions” for Ivorian refugees, including support to voluntary repatriation and effective reintegration and the granting of permanent residency in host countries. As outlined above, voluntary repatriation increased substantially during the final quarter of the year.

In mid-October **ECOWAS members** participated in three days of consultations evaluating progress made under the [Global Compact on Migration](#) (GCM) to date. Participants identified the free movement of people and goods and combating human trafficking as priority areas of focus.

Following an August meeting which issued a [communiqué](#) detailing recommendations for durable solutions, on 12 November the governments of **Mali** and **Burkina Faso** and **UNHCR** opened the 11th meeting of their [Tri-Partite Commission](#) on the voluntary repatriation of Malian migrants living in Burkina Faso.

At the end of November, the governments of **Niger** and **Libya** signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) that seeks to provide more regular and secure migration pathways for Nigeriens in Libya, who comprise 20% of the more than 600,000 international migrants in the country. The MoU aims to effectively provide work visas and respond to the needs of Libya's labor market.

## Mixed migration from West Africa towards North Africa and Europe

### Western Mediterranean and Atlantic Routes

According to UNHCR, as of 31 December 2021, there had been an estimated total of [43,197](#) arrivals to Spain by land (Ceuta and Melilla) and sea (Spanish mainland, Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, Ceuta and Melilla)<sup>1</sup> – a 3% increase over the 2020 total ([41,094](#) as of 27 December 2020). This route has typically been predominantly used by people from North Africa and from West Africa.

### Arrival numbers similar, but more deaths on the Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands in 2021

In 2021, the Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands remained prominent in terms of irregular arrivals to Spain, continuing a 2020 trend. In 2021, approximately [22,316 people arrived](#) in the Canary Islands, very similar to the total for 2020 ([23,023](#)). As in 2020, the fourth quarter of 2021 saw the largest number of arrivals, however this was only about 60% of the number of people who arrived in the same quarter last year (approximately 9,900 in 2021 and 15,900 in 2020 over the same period).<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, this quarter was characterized by steady flows<sup>3</sup> of sea arrivals to the Canary Islands. In several instances throughout the quarter, arrivals and rescues at sea spiked. In mid-October [1,070 people](#) arrived in just two days. In the second week of November, at least [1,400 people](#) were rescued at sea over the course of seven days.

Even more important was the increased estimated death toll for refugees and migrants making this crossing. While inherently difficult to document deaths at sea, IOM put the figure for the Atlantic crossing to the Canary Islands at some [955](#) in 2021, compared to [850](#) in 2020. This is based on official records, news reports and data from other NGOs, and is acknowledged to be a [likely underestimate](#). Drawing on analysis of SOS calls from boats in distress, Spanish NGO *Caminando Fronteras* estimated that deaths along this route numbered some 4,404 in 2021. This includes at least [205 children](#), and is more than double their estimate of 2,170 in 2020.

Reporting by [El País](#) found that the majority of departures through the beginning of November 2021 took place from Morocco and Western Sahara (72.5%), followed by Mauritania (23.5%) and Senegal and the Gambia (4%). Estimates of nationalities have emphasized the prominence of [West Africans](#) among arrivals,

1 These figures do not include arrivals in Ceuta from 17-18 May, when approximately [8,000-9,000](#) people entered the Spanish enclave.

2 Based on analysis of UNHCR Spain Weekly Snapshots available at [UNHCR Operational Data Portal for Spain](#).

3 *ibid.*

in addition to Moroccans. There has been increased feminization of the route in comparison to 2020, with [women](#) comprising 15% of arrivals on the Canary Islands in 2021 (as of 15 November) compared to 5% in 2020. According to an [advisor](#) on migration to the vice-president of the Canary Islands, “it is beginning to be relatively normal to see canoes with 22 men and 16 women, mostly from Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali and Nigeria.”

### **Some improvements, but challenges remain on the Canary Islands**

Reporting from [El Pais](#) and the [New Humanitarian](#) indicates that while reception conditions on some islands – for instance [Lanzarote](#) – remain problematic, overall the situation of humanitarian reception has improved. This is attributed to reduced pressure of arrivals in the fourth quarter of 2021 compared to 2020, greater preparedness on the part of authorities and the ability to transfer some people from the Canary Islands to the Spanish mainland. Equally, while some hostility towards refugees and migrants remains, expressions of anti-migrant [xenophobia](#) have decreased, due both to better management of arrivals and an improving economy on the islands.

Better management of arrivals has also been recognized by [Human Rights Watch](#), although it emphasizes that Spain’s underlying philosophy “remains focused on preventing arrivals, rather than opening safe and orderly migration channels.” Multiple sources have also pointed to remaining challenges of reception on the islands, particularly related to the situation of minors; respect for the [72 hour limit on police custody](#) for new arrivals; and mechanisms to identify and protect persons with particular [vulnerabilities](#), such as LGBTQ people, women who have been subject to gender-based violence, and in fact women in general. Additionally, following a period of closure, the [Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros](#) (Center for Internment of Foreigners) of Barranco Seco, which holds people prior to deportation – has resumed operations. As of early November, it held two people from Senegal and 15 from the Gambia.

### **Smuggling ring busted in the Canary Islands**

In early October, Spanish authorities arrested 16 Senegalese nationals who allegedly helped smuggle at least [113 people](#) from the Canary Islands to the Spanish mainland and elsewhere in Europe. These individuals – all of whom were living in Spain [legally](#) – are suspected of providing refugees and migrants with false documents and information on how to evade detection while using them. For an additional fee the group is also accused of providing accommodation in sub-standard conditions for those waiting to be smuggled onwards. Along with other contraband, authorities seized more than 20 forged passports and 46 files of documents needed for regularization of sub-Saharan African nationals. It is estimated that the group had profits of more than 200,000 euros.

### **Refugees and migrants repelled in Morocco**

As mentioned above, almost [three quarters](#) of Atlantic Route departures in 2021 occurred from the coasts of Morocco and Western Sahara. The quarter saw multiple reports of activities by the Moroccan authorities that resulted in arrest or interception of candidates for the Canary Islands crossing from sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, in just four days in mid-November, the Moroccan coast guard and navy picked up a total of [331 refugees and migrants](#) making the journey to the Canary Islands or further north to the Spanish mainland. Approximately 248 of them were from sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> While these news reports did not give specific nationality breakdowns, consistent monitoring over time has pointed to the predominance of citizens from West Africa among those of sub-Saharan African origin on this route.



[Maroc Hebdo](#) has reported on arrests and interceptions of refugees and migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in and around Tarfaya (Morocco) and Laâyoune (Western Sahara),<sup>5</sup> two coastal towns relatively close to the Canary Islands. It attributes these to a “new strategy” and “intensified efforts” on the part of local authorities in the region to combat these migration attempts, as well as human trafficking. For instance, in Laâyoune from 17-24 November 320 persons attempting to migrate were arrested or intercepted, and boats and gasoline were seized. Other examples of sub-Saharan Africans being blocked in Morocco were seen in [Melilla](#) at the beginning of October, with 700 people prevented from entering this Spanish enclave following attempts to scale its border fence.

## Central Mediterranean Route

As of 26 December 2021, Italy had tallied [66,140 sea arrivals](#) over the course of the year, a 94% increase over 2020 (34,113). Two West African countries – Cote d’Ivoire (6%) and Guinea (4%) – were reflected among the top 10 nationalities of arrivals.

## Southbound mixed migration

### International activities related to evacuation and return

Two evacuation flights carrying vulnerable asylum seekers from Libya to Niger took place in the final quarter of the year under the auspices of UNHCR’s **Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)**. They went forward after the Libyan government lifted the ban on humanitarian flights that had stalled ETM evacuations to Niger for more than a year. An evacuation flight carrying [172 people](#) took place in early November and another occurred at the end of December, carrying [177 people](#).

The resumption of humanitarian flights has also allowed IOM to restart **Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR)** operations from Libya. In late October, a flight returned [127 Gambians](#) to Banjul, and in early November [91 Nigeriens](#), including [60 children](#), were assisted to return. Some [10,000](#) other migrants in Libya have requested VHR.

IOM also carried out **Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR)** operations during the quarter. In October, [110 Malians](#) stranded in Chad were assisted to return via charter flight, as well as [105 stranded Nigeriens](#) in November.

## Expulsions from Algeria

According to the NGO *Alarme Phone Sahara*, in the fourth quarter of 2021 approximately 6,647 refugees and migrants were expelled from Algeria to Niger. Multiple deportation convoys took place in [October](#), [November](#) and [December](#). Some 3,527 Nigeriens were returned in “official” convoys to Agadez, and “unofficial” convoys deposited some 3,120 others of primarily West and Central African origin in the desert

<sup>5</sup> Laâyoune is located in the disputed territory of the Western Sahara. Western Sahara has been on the [United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories](#) since 1963.

near the border, an area known as “point zero.” There were also notable numbers of [Chadians](#) (201) in the expulsion of 12 November and of [Sudanese](#) (181) in the expulsions of 8 and 21 December. A Sudanese man was reported to have died after being left at “point zero.”

All told Alarme Phone Sahara estimates that [25,396](#) refugees and migrants were expelled from Algeria to Niger in 2021, an increase over the 2021 estimate of 22,631. It also has reported that deportees from Algeria often face [document checks](#) by the Nigerien authorities. Given that identity papers are frequently seized by Algerian forces in the course of expulsion, deportees may be subject to fines of up to 25,000 CFA (43 USD).

# Thematic Focus: Sexual and Reproductive Health and youth refugees and migrants in urban centers

As part of its partnership with UNFPA on the project Youth Migrants in Urban Centers, in August - October 2021 the MMC carried out qualitative research looking at the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of young refugees and migrants in transit in the Central Sahelian capital cities of Bamako (Mali), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Niamey (Niger). Key findings presented below are drawn from 81 qualitative interviews conducted with young refugees and migrants (58) and key informants (23).

The 58 youth who participated in the research included 33 women and 25 men between the ages of 15 and 24,<sup>6</sup> of whom slightly less than half had at least one child. The countries of origin most often cited by youth in this study were Nigeria, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and the Central African Republic. Other countries of origin represented in the study were Togo, Guinea, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Liberia. In terms of religion, 33 participants were Christian, 22 Muslim, two reported having no religion and one was animist.

This study focused on sexual and reproductive health as a factor of migration and as a category of protection incident experienced along the route and in transit cities where participants were staying at the time of interview. It also examines needs and puts forth recommendations on how to improve policy and programming in this regard. Although not representative, these qualitative inputs bring forth perspectives which are not always easy to capture with quantitative data. It gives voice to young refugees and migrants on sensitive questions related to sexual violence and physical abuse, sex as a tool for mobility, and SRH needs and barriers to addressing them.

## SRH and gender-based violence as a factor of migration

Drivers for migration reported by study participants were frequently complex and multidimensional. The majority of participants spoke of economic considerations as a factor in their decision to depart; conflict and the search for educational opportunities were also frequently mentioned as drivers. The study also revealed that some young people decided to leave their country of origin for reasons related to SRH and gender-based violence (GBV). These girls and women mainly reported that GBV had occurred at work, in the community or within the family. Some of them said that they left their country of origin because of an unwanted pregnancy. Two key informants also mentioned forced marriages as a reason for girls to leave home. One young male participant shared that he had left his country because of the violence he experienced when his family discovered his sexual orientation.

**“In our family, if a girl gets pregnant, her father doesn't allow her to stay at home. They chase her away.”**

**Female from Benin, 23 years old, interviewed in Ouagadougou**

<sup>6</sup> Nine participants were between 15 and 18 years of age.

**“There are some who don't get married, as soon as they hear that they are going to get married, they run away.”**

**Health provider, SRH specialist, Bamako**

Several women explained that it was specifically violence against women during armed conflict that pushed them to leave their country.

**“There is insecurity there (...) women are raped (...) I am a woman too, I am obliged to leave my country to be safe.”**

**Female from Central African Republic, 24 years old, Ouagadougou**

## Physical and sexual violence en route and in urban centers

While difficult to draw conclusions about frequency of protection incidents on the basis of this study, it nonetheless suggested that young people were somewhat more susceptible to physical and sexual violence while en route than in transit cities.<sup>7</sup> Young male participants more often spoke of experiencing physical attacks, but a few cases of sexual violence among young male migrants were also detected during the study. Two key informants also spoke of a high rate of sexual violence among male migrants who had crossed into North Africa (particularly Algeria and Libya). Multiple female participants were survivors of sexual violence, some having been victimized more than once. Sexual violence/attempts in migrant shelters were reported by several female participants in Mali who later moved to other shelters.

**“I was in a center, where a man also tried to rape me. He was the man in charge of welcoming migrants and refugees in the center. After bringing me food, at night, he came to my room and wanted to have sex with me, but I refused, I said that if he didn't get out I would scream and alert people and then he left the room (...) there were others who complained about his behavior.”**

**Female from Cameroon, 16 years old, Bamako**

According to several participants, some acts of physical and sexual violence were committed by the security forces.

**“When we arrive at the border, the fact that we don't pay what the police ask for, or very often the assaults, that's what I've seen (...) that's what the women and children endure (...) they are physical assaults.”**

**Female from Sierra Leone, age 16, Bamako**

<sup>7</sup> This echoed perceptions shared by young refugees and migrants in an earlier quantitative survey carried out as part of the Youth Migrants in Urban Centers project. When asked about perceived risks for minors en route, 52% of study participants cited physical violence and 34% cited sexual violence. When asked about perceived risks for minors in the city of interview, physical and sexual violence were cited by 32% and 28% respectively.

**“I was beaten, raped, then deported to Niger... by the Algerian police. (...) that's how I had my child.”**

**Female from Niger, 24 years old, Niamey**

Study participants also spoke about how sexual violence against women and girls can lead to a chain of additional risks and negative impacts on SRH in the longer term. For instance, they are susceptible to STIs and other infections as well as unwanted pregnancies which could result in maternal mortality. These outcomes can be particularly risky in a region with limited health infrastructure, and given the additional challenges raised for people on the move who may not know where or how to get care.

## Negative SRH outcomes

Youth and key informants reported that negative SRH outcomes are common among refugee and migrant youth; the most frequently cited are unwanted pregnancy, infections (STIs, HIV, and other non-sexually transmitted infections), sexual violence (already described in the previous section), sex work, and abortion. Other examples described by participants include: maternal mortality, child abandonment or infanticide, and untreated STIs that lead to more serious health problems.

**“There are often young girls who try to give birth on the street (...) if they are not accompanied, they can give birth with all the risks, the bleeding, which can even lead to their death. There have been cases of migrant women dying on the streets from infections.”**

**Doctor and SRH specialist, NGO, Bamako**

Unsafe abortion is present in the discourse of youth participants and key informants, often attributed to the economic hardship and social stigma that young migrant girls face.

**“When they get pregnant, some of them have abortions, (...) maybe some of them have parents who may not accept.”**

**Female from Benin, 24 years old, Niamey**

**“Clandestine abortion with all the risks that it entails, often after childbirth (...) the child is killed or thrown away... the stigma will become even greater at this level.”**

**Traditional practitioner, Ouagadougou**



## Sex work and survival sex

Sex work and survival sex were seen as an important element of the coping mechanisms and/or livelihoods practices used by youth (primarily female) in transit cities. This is often explained by the lack of means to meet daily needs (rent, food, personal care, etc.) and the financial needs to continue to the destination or return to their country of origin. The description of one young woman exemplifies the way in which such a transaction can meet needs and further the journey:

*“He made the proposal to me. First, he told me if we manage to sleep together, he'll send me straight to my destination and then he'll pay for everything I need because he likes me and then he'll give me food, [then] he'll give me at least 5000f. So, it suits me, I accepted (...) He treated me well and then we came [here].”*

**Female from Benin, 24 years old, Ouagadougou**

## Key barriers to accessing SRH services and products

Lack of financial resources and information were the barriers to accessing SRH services and products most frequently mentioned by youth and key informants in the study. In addition, conservative culture, age-related stigma, discrimination by health personnel, sexual violence testing as part of GBV management practices, lack of youth- and migrant-friendly services, inadequate services to ensure safe abortion within the law, and Covid-19 were all cited as significant barriers to accessing SRH services and products. Other notable barriers included fear and shame felt by the study target group.

*“Whether it is at the public level, the periphery or the private sector, consultation fees are charged, so this too can constitute a financial barrier.”*

**Pediatrician, Ouagadougou**

*“I have nothing to eat (...) We'll forget about it [a method of contraception].”*

**Male from Liberia, 24 years old, Niamey**

Lack of knowledge about SRH was a recurring theme in interviews with migrant and refugee youth. And consistently, it was clear that migrant youth do not generally seek health services until they have a problem, for example, to treat an infection, obtain maternal health care, etc.

*“It is a taboo to talk about sex even with one's child; therefore, the child misses this education at the base.”*

**Key informant, public institution related to youth, Niamey**

## Recommendations and enabling factors for better SRH outcomes among young refugees and migrants

Youth participants reporting positive experiences with SRH services spoke of free services and products, positive and confidential reception at health facilities, treatment or care that was well suited to the issue (such as effective treatment for an STI), and proximity to their neighborhood with little waiting time. Other best practices mentioned by key informants were referral systems and services that apply youth- and migrant-specific strategies.

This research highlighted the needs to remove financial barriers to SRH services but also to adapt them specifically to the needs of youth and of youth migrants in transit in cities. The quality of service provided should be improved, including by training all health structures to respond to basic SRH needs without discrimination or stigmatization. Referral systems for GBV and psychological support should also include SRH services.

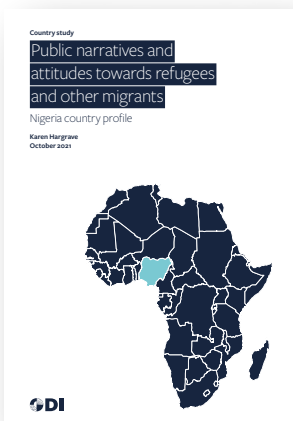
# Highlighted New Research and Reports



## [Canarias, un año después](#)

### El País | December 2021

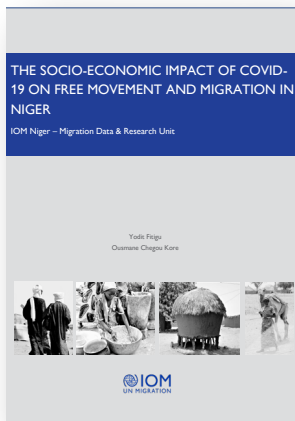
This in-depth article combines analysis, photographs and info-graphics to chart the evolution of the Atlantic Route and the situation of refugees and migrants in the Canary Islands from 2020 through 2021. It documents the state of arrivals, reception and accommodation, as well as the situation of minors and those refugees and migrants who are building lives on the island. Challenges clearly remain in relation to these areas, particularly regarding the identification, protection and care of minors. However, the reporting reveals a shift from the crisis conditions of 2020 – characterized by untenable humanitarian conditions, obstacles to asylum application, over-utilization of police custody, flagrant overcrowding during the pandemic, etc. – to a somewhat more stabilized situation in 2021, even as the numbers of arrivals have been consistent.



## [Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants: Nigeria country profile](#)

### Overseas Development Institute | October 2021

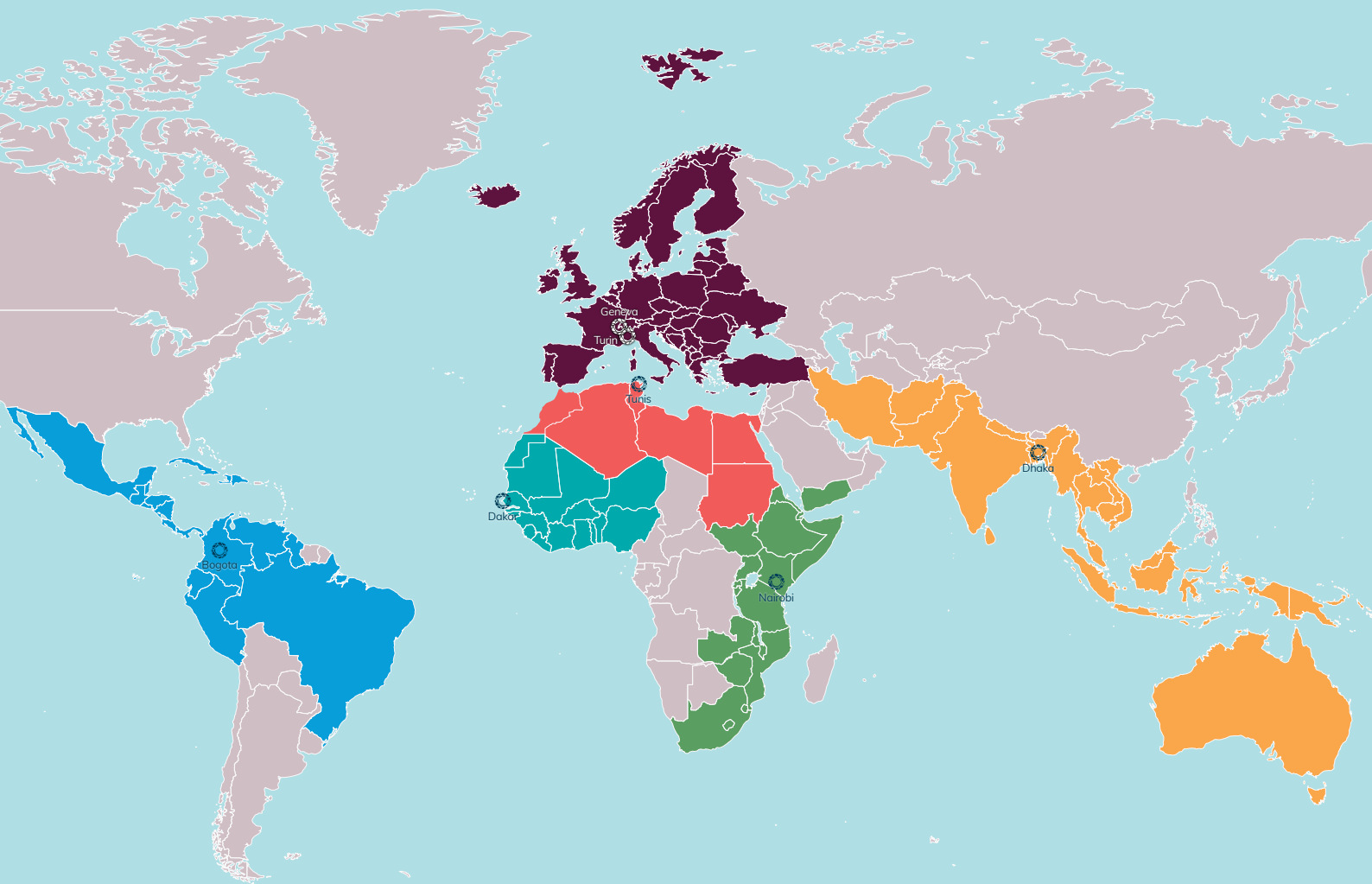
Based in a literature review and polling data, this country study charts Nigeria's experience hosting refugees and migrants, examining the historical dimensions, current population dynamics and policy, public opinion and prevailing political, civil society and media narratives. A prominent narrative related to refugees and migrants in public discourse saw Nigeria as a country of welcome; a countervailing – though not widespread – narrative saw particular groups (especially irregular migrants) as problematic. Overall, immigration is not prominent in national discourse, with polling data suggesting that this is not considered a priority issue for the country. However, attitudes differ based on location and demography, and appeared less open among younger people and those with more education. And, while the majority of surveyed Nigerians were positive about the impact of immigrants on development in the country, just under half supported prohibition of or strict limitations on immigration.



## [The Socio-economic Impact of COVID-19 on Free Movement and Migration in Niger | L'impact socio-économique du COVID-19 sur la libre circulation et la migration au Niger](#)

### **International Organization for Migration | November 2021**

This study examines the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on migration and the well-being of migrant households and communities in Niger. To do so it draws on a household questionnaire administered to 329 households across 13 departments, DTM flow monitoring data, key informant interviews and focus group discussions conducted among returned migrants. Among other findings, the report revealed that since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, 77% of surveyed households indicated that they received remittances less frequently than before. The majority of households also reported a drastic reduction in the monetary amount of remittances received. Over half of households reported their socio-economic situation has been negatively impacted by the pandemic.



The MMC is a global network consisting of six 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). Global and regional MMC teams are based in Geneva, Turin, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Dhaka.

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