

This document is a compilation of data collected by IOM from Frontex as well as the Italian, Spanish, Greek and Maltese interior ministries on migratory movements from Africa to Europe between 2017 and 2021.

IOM works closely with a wide range of actors, including government and non-government partners, to collect and compile this data on a quarterly basis. This

document presents the situation of migrant arrivals in Europe based on data for 2021 from the point of view of movements from West and Central Africa (WCA).

The data compiled in this report covers the period from 2017 to 2021 (January to December) and is available on <https://migration.iom.int> and www.missingmigrants.iom.int. Some data on nationalities are only partially available.

ARRIVALS TO EUROPE

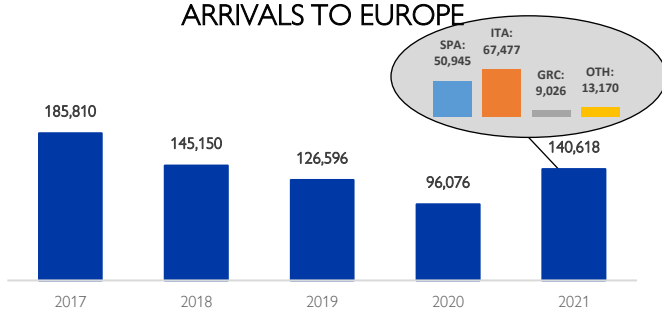


Fig.1 - Number of irregular migrant arrivals (by sea and land) to Europe, and share of migrants from West and Central Africa (2017-2021)

Arrivals to Europe (2017-2021): Between 2017 and 2021, 694,250 migrants arrived irregularly in Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta and Cyprus by sea and land (Fig.1). Total number of arrivals in Europe decreased over the period of 2017-2021 and the main destinations vary from year to year. Of these arrivals, **an estimated 187,335 individuals (27 per cent) were nationals of countries in West and Central Africa (Fig.2).** Between January and December 2021, **27,648 nationals** from West and Central African countries arrived in Europe

An increasingly important route to Europe crosses the Atlantic Ocean from African coasts to the **Canary Islands (Spain)**. Large numbers of migrants have attempted to reach these islands since mid-2019. **In the twelve months of 2021, 22,316 migrants reached the Canary Islands aboard 542 boats, a slight drop from the 23,023 migrants who reached the islands aboard 745 boats during the same period in 2020.**

Nationalities of West and Central African migrants: Using the known nationality data (Fig.3), **20 per cent** of irregular arrivals to Europe in 2021 (until December 2021) are from West and Central Africa nationals compared to **21 per cent** in 2020. Of the West and Central African migrants irregularly arriving in Europe, the most common nationalities recorded were nationals from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Mali. These four nationalities represent more than **54 per cent** of all irregular migrants arriving from West and Central Africa to Europe (Fig.4). However, most data from Spain for 2020-2021 is not disaggregated by nationality and only show a category called "Un-identified sub-Saharan" which skews this proportion. In 2020-2021, only **76 per cent** of arrivals to Europe have matching nationality data, the **23 per cent** remaining are unknown.

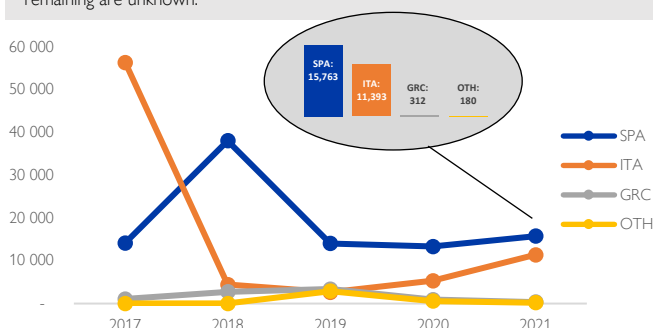


Fig. 5 - Main arrival countries of West or Central African nationals arriving irregularly by sea in Europe, 2017 to 2021

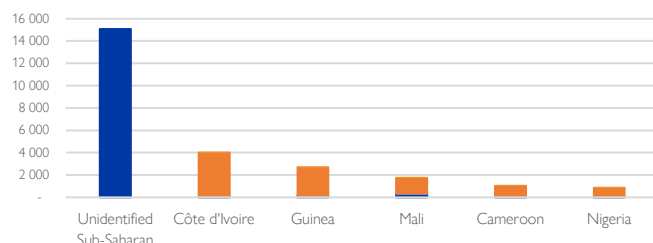


Fig. 5 - Main arrival countries for nationals from West or Central Africa (2021)

NATIONALITIES

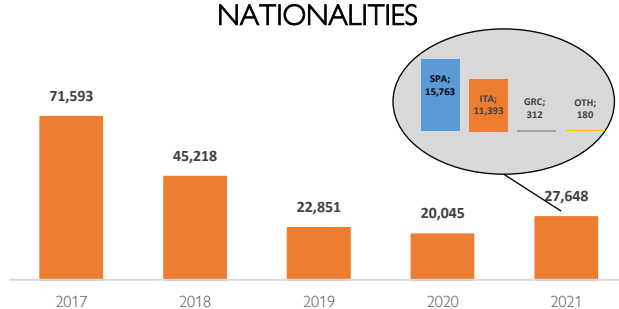


Fig.2 – Number of West and Central African nationals that arrived irregularly in Europe (by sea and land), 2017-2021

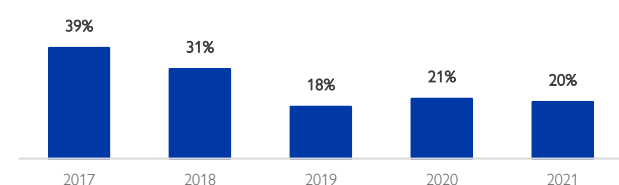


Fig. 3 – Proportion of WCA nationals among all documented** irregular arrivals in Europe

Destination Countries: Migrants from West and Central Africa continue to predominantly favour Italy and Spain (Fig.5). Of the **27,648 nationals** from West and Central African countries who arrived in Europe in 2021, **57 per cent** went to Spain, **41 per cent** to Italy, **1 per cent** to Greece and **1 per cent** to Cyprus and Malta.

Notably, the main destination countries of WCA arrivals varied according to nationality (Fig.6). Nationals from Mali used to head to Spain, but now they are almost evenly matched on routes to Italy and Spain. Nationals of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon, favour Italy as their destination country. However, the data is incomplete given the category "unidentified sub-Saharan" provided for arrivals in Spain.

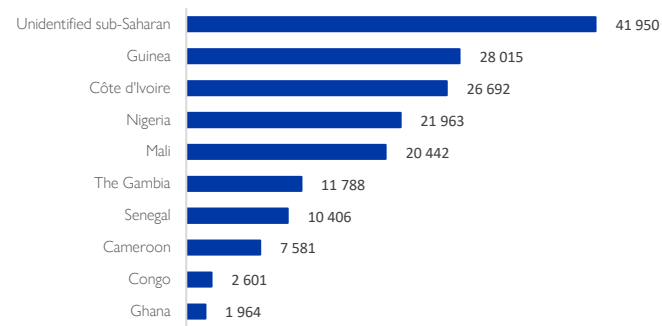


Fig.4 – Primary nationalities of people arriving irregularly from West or Central Africa in 2017 - 2021

SOURCES: National authorities and IOM, Hellenic Coast Guard, Italian Ministry of Interior, Maltese Ministry of Interior - National Security and Law Enforcement, Frontex, Spanish Ministry of Interior (www.migration.iom.int) * Data for 2021 covers the period up to 30 June 2021 (January – June 2021). This data will be regularly updated in future publications. ** Proportion of WCA irregular arrivals to Europe in Fig.3 is computed based on known arrivals (80 per cent of all arrivals in 2017-2021) and as such doesn't provide an exhaustive picture of nationalities of arrivals

Many travel accounts collected from migrants report disappearances or deaths along the migratory routes between West and Central Africa and North Africa or at sea while attempting to cross the Mediterranean, the Sahara or on the route to the Canary Islands. The death or disappearance of men, women and children along these routes is a daily reality.

IOM, through its Missing Migrants Project (MMP), collects and consolidates information on migrants who have died or gone missing during their migratory journeys. The data collected within the framework of this project are used to inform indicator **10.7.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals** ("Number of migrants who died trying to cross borders by sea, air or land") and also contribute to the **Goal 8 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** ("Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants"). This project is essential for a comprehensive response in reducing the risks associated with migratory movements and addressing the needs of families of missing migrants.

The data available on migrants who have died or are gone missing are incomplete due to the hazards of irregular journeys, including the remoteness of migratory routes in the WCA region. In addition, a lack of official data on missing migrants means that hard-to-access eyewitnesses are often the only source of information on migrant deaths. The data presented in this report is mostly collected by IOM missions and the authorities following search and rescue activities. Many other cases of deaths or disappearances on the migratory routes likely go unreported. The data presented in this report are therefore not entirely exhaustive and probably underestimate the reality of these deaths and disappearances along the migration routes from West and Central Africa toward North Africa and Europe.

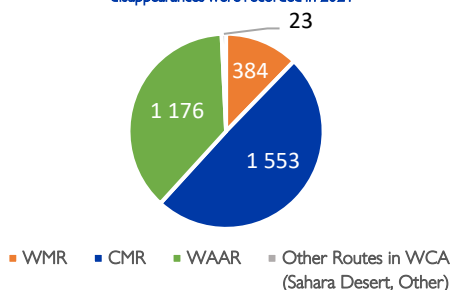
CMR: Central Mediterranean Route

WMR: Western Mediterranean Route

WAAR: West African Atlantic Route

Other Routes: Other Routes in West and Central Africa (Sahara Desert, Other).

Migration route along which migrant deaths and disappearances were recorded in 2021



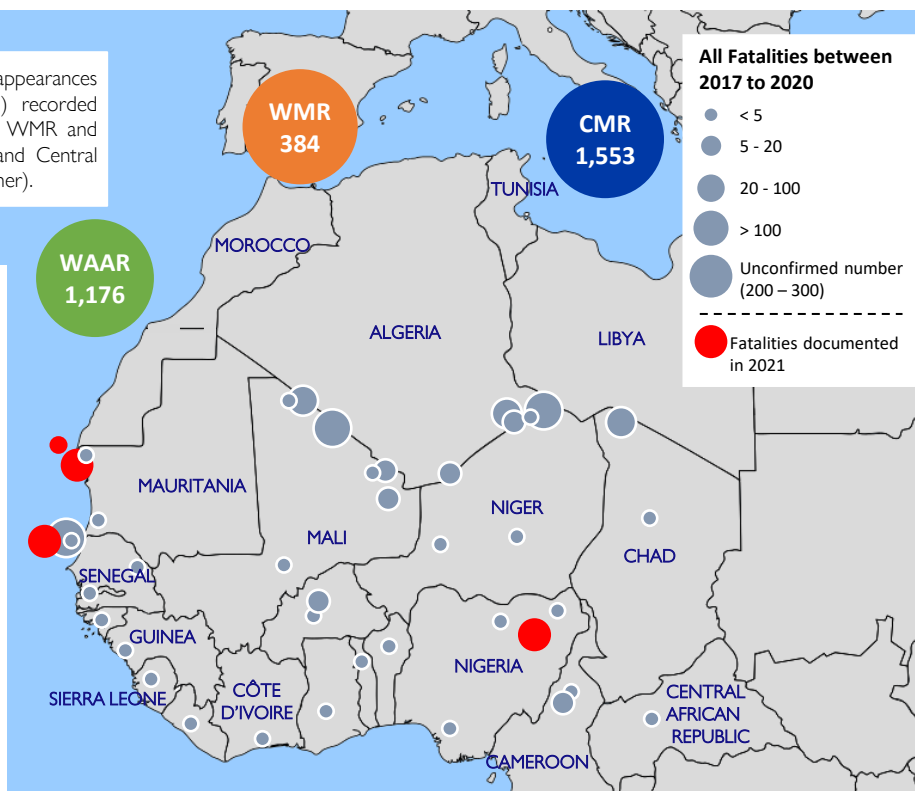
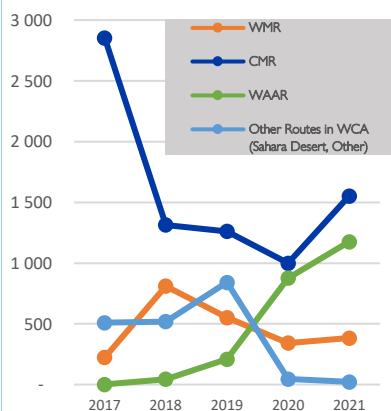
In total, **3,136** people disappeared while trying to cross the Mediterranean and the Atlantic between January and December 2021. Disappearances are mainly linked to suspicions of drowning, dehydration or hypothermia. In most cases of death or disappearance, the nationality of individuals is unknown.

	DROWNING	VEHICLE ACCIDENT	SICKNESS	LACK OF FOOD, WATER, SHELTER	ACCIDENTAL DEATH	UNKNOWN
CMR	1,532	4		13		4
WAAR	782		1	393		
WMR	369			5	2	8
Other Route		23				

3,136

Total deaths or disappearances (January-December 2021) recorded along the CMR, WAAR, WMR and Other Routes in West and Central Africa (Sahara Desert, Other).

Number of deaths and disappearances of migrants by migratory route from West and Central Africa, 2017-2021



NOTE ON SOURCES AND METHOLOGIES:

The existing data on deaths and disappearances of migrants in West and Central Africa have certain limitations. Information on incidents involving the death or disappearance of migrants is scarce. There is little disaggregated information available or the **precise location of their death or disappearance**. IOM's **Missing Migrants Project** is the only public and freely accessible database on the deaths or disappearances of migrants. In Africa, MMP data comes from different sources, including **IOM data, government data, as well as information provided by NGOs and the media**. Until 2020, interviews with migrants conducted as part of the **Mixed Migration Center's 4Mi** initiative were a key source of data. However, 4Mi stopped collecting data on dead and missing migrants along migratory routes in 2020. This explains the decrease in reported deaths and disappearances from 2020 onward.



© A migrant being assisted by an IOM staff member in Seguedine. © IOM 2017