COVID-19 — FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY
Evolution of Mobility Flows from January to March 2020 – West & Central Africa

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

Publication date:
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Introduction and Methodology

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected mobility in West and Central Africa in the form of various travel disruptions, restrictions and bans, which often leave migrants stranded. This report provides key information on the magnitude and types of changes to mobility observed in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

The Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) is a tool of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) which records movements crossing areas of high density mobility (areas of departure, transit and destination). FMR gathers data on the numbers, profiles of travellers crossing these strategic transit points. To better understand the ways and the extent to which the COVID-19 crisis is impacting mobility in the region, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working to analyse Flow Monitoring data collected at 35 key transit points in West and Central Africa between January to March 2020 (using 2018 and 2019 data as barometers of comparison).

Volume of flows

The volume of travellers registered across the West and Central Africa region witnessed a **28 per cent decrease** between **January and March 2020**. The decrease registered by the FMR from January to February was of 4%, while the decrease from February to March 2020 was of 29%. The decrease of movements observed between January and March 2020 was sharper than that observed over the same period in 2018 and 2019, during which period flows dropped by 4 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively.

Weekly flows

A weekly analysis of registered movements shows a striking acceleration in the decrease in flows over the second half of the month of March: between Week 10 and Week 13, the number of travellers observed weekly dropped by 79 per cent. This coincides with the period during which countries in the region started imposing travel bans and enacting border closure measures. There's a decrease of 18% between Week 10 and Week 12 (last week of full Flow monitoring point coverage, Week 13 saw FMPs in Chad and Burkina Faso closing).
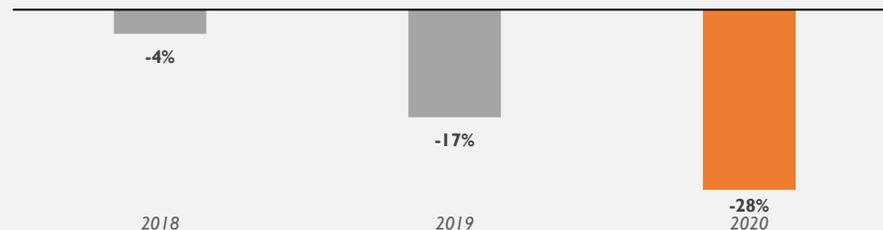
Country analysis

Analysis of flows in February and March show that Niger witnessed the largest diminutions in flows over these two months (decrease of 86%), followed by Guinea (70%) and Mali (63%)
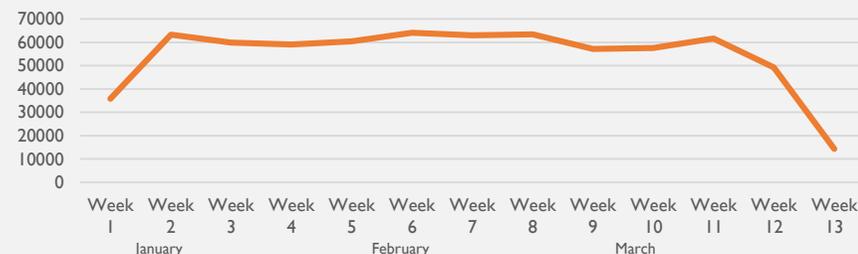
-28% CHANGE IN FLOWS OBSERVED FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2020

I. VARIATION IN FLOWS FROM JANUARY TO MARCH, BY YEAR

- 2018: -4%
- 2019: -17%
- 2020: -28%

II. WEEKLY NUMBER OF OBSERVED INDIVUALS AT FMPs

Week 1 (January), Week 2, Week 3, Week 4, Week 5, Week 6 (February), Week 7, Week 8, Week 9, Week 10, Week 11 (March), Week 12, Week 13

III. VARIATIONS IN FLOWS BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND MARCH, BY COUNTRY**

Burkina Faso (W10 - W12)	Cameroon (W10 - W13)	Chad (W10 - W13)	Guinea (W10 - W13)	Mali (W10 - W13)	Niger (W10 - W13)	Nigeria (W10 - W13)
-19%	-25%	-3%	-70%	-63%	-86%	-47%

** Flow Monitoring activities were suspended in Chad and Burkina Faso on Week 12 and in Senegal on Week 13. Data for these countries are not available beyond those dates
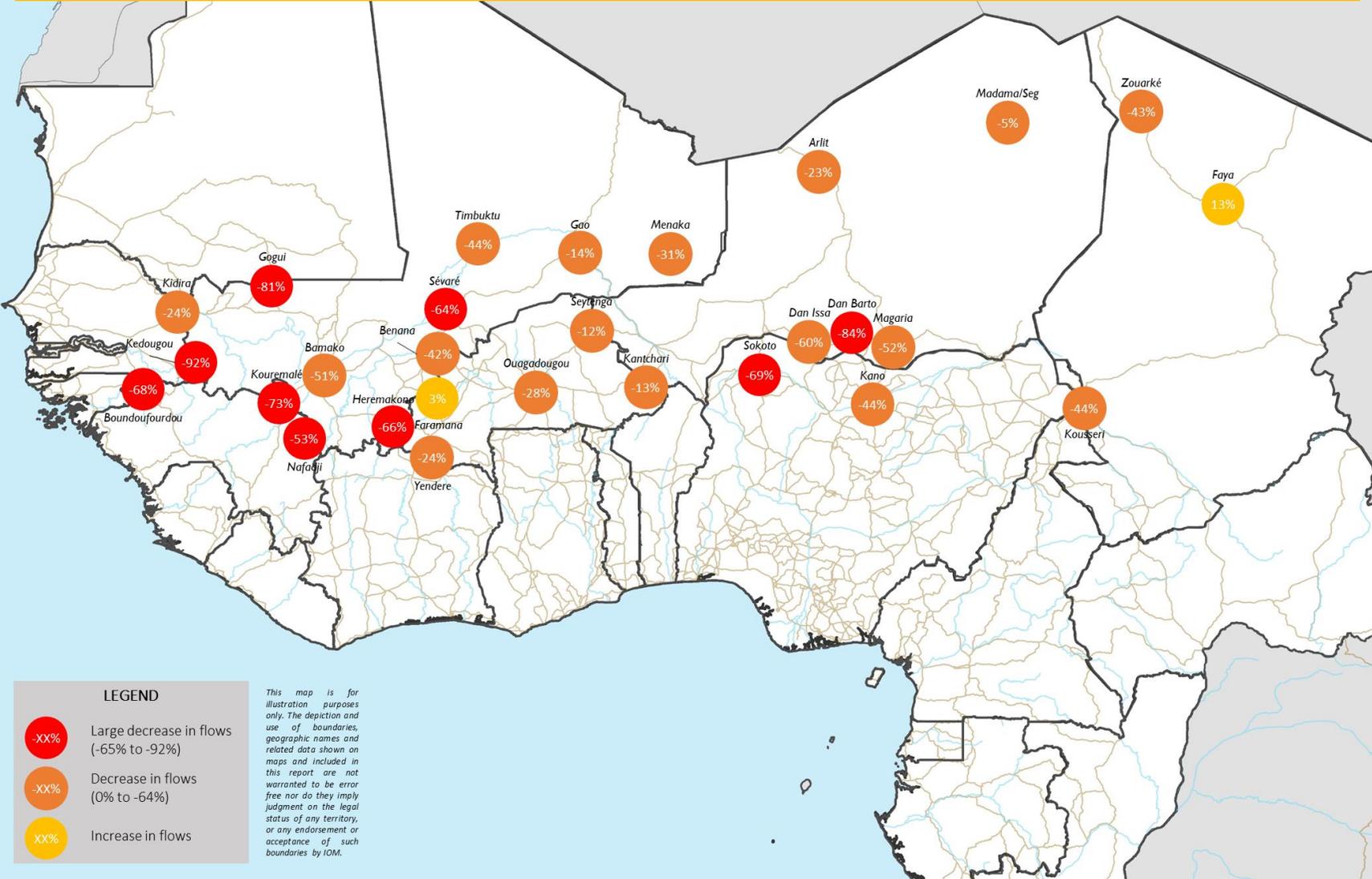
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This map illustrates the variation in volume of flows between January and March 2020 at Flow Monitoring Points across West and Central Africa (WCA).

This map should be reviewed along with the Mobility Restriction overview provided by DTM on the migration.iom.int website, which provides a daily update of mobility restriction measures. Further decrease in cross-border flows is expected as most countries in WCA have closed their borders and restricted internal movements.

This situation has led to an estimated 8,000 migrants being stranded while attempting to cross borders from one country to another, or being quarantined after entering a country. Stranded migrants are in a difficult situation with nowhere to go and anxiously waiting for borders to re-open in order to go reach their destination. Events reported by DTM can be found at the following address: migration.iom.int

EVOLUTION OF MOBILITY FLOWS FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 2020, BY FMPs

Map data points:
- Madama/Seg: -5%
- Zouarké: -43%
- Arlit: -23%
- Faya: 13%
- Timbuktu: -44%
- Gao: -14%
- Menaka: -31%
- Gogui: -81%
- Kidira: -24%
- Sévaré: -64%
- Seytenga: -12%
- Dan Issa: -60%
- Dan Barto: -84%
- Magaria: -52%
- Sokoto: -69%
- Kedougou: -92%
- Bamako: -51%
- Benana / -42%
- Ouagadougou: -28%
- Kantchari: -13%
- Kano: -44%
- Boundoufourdou: -68%
- Kouremalé: -73%
- Heremakono / Faramana: 3%
- Kousseri: -44%
- Nafadji: -53%
- Heremakono: -66%
- Yendere: -24%

LEGEND

- **-XX%** (red) Large decrease in flows (-65% to -92%)
- **-XX%** (orange) Decrease in flows (0% to -64%)
- **XX%** (yellow) Increase in flows

This map is for illustration purposes only. The depiction and use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown on maps and included in this report are not warranted to be error free nor do they imply judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries by IOM.

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This section highlights the main countries of departure and arrival of migration flows in March 2020. The movements presented on the map may be an indication of large movements of migrants leaving countries of habitual residence or countries of work and heading back to their country of origin.

The figures presented in the table below compare the proportion, by country, of incoming individuals observed in 2020 who entered in in March against departing individuals observed in 2020 who left the country in March.
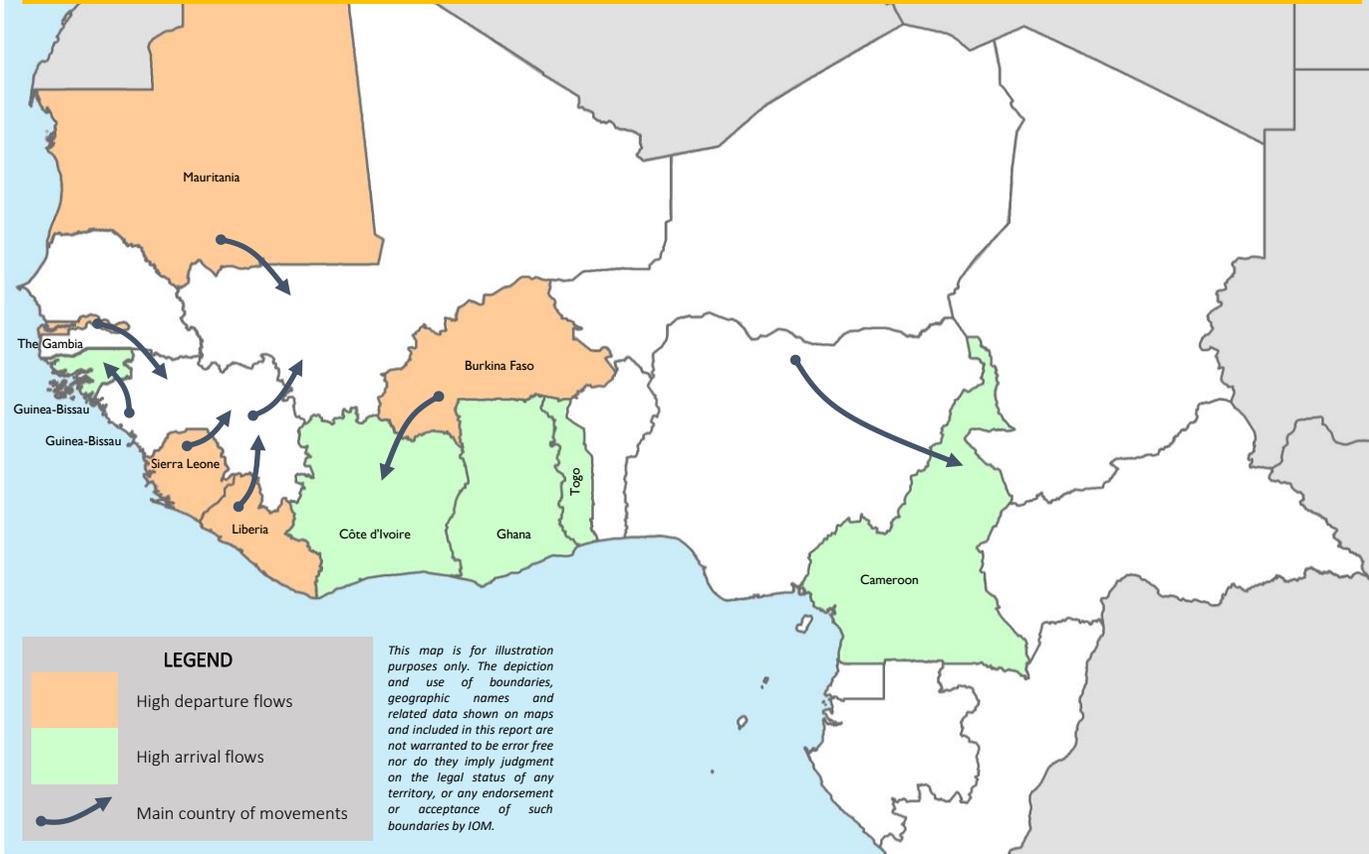
Main countries with proportion of departure higher than proportion of arrivals in March 2020:

- Burkina Faso
- Gambia (The)
- Liberia
- Mauritania
- Sierra Leone

Main countries with proportion of arrival higher than proportion of departure in March 2020:

- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Guinea-Bissau
- Togo
- Cameroon

COUNTRIES OF HIGH VOLUMES OF DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL, MARCH 2020

LEGEND

High departure flows

High arrival flows

Main country of movements

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CÔTE D'IVOIRE	Departing	Arriving
January	54%	41%
February	29%	35%
March	17%*	25%**
	100%	100%

* Can be read as: Of all individuals observed departing from Côte d'Ivoire this year, 17% were observed in March

** Can be read as: Of all individuals observed arriving in Côte d'Ivoire this year, 25% were observed in March

BURKINA FASO	Departing	Arriving
January	37%	48%
February	35%	30%
March	28%	22%
	100%	100%

CAMEROON	Departing	Arriving
January	28%	30%
February	45%	39%
March	27%	31%
	100%	100%

GHANA	Departing	Arriving
January	53%	50%
February	28%	13%
March	19%	38%
	100%	100%