



COVID-19 — FLOW MONITORING REGISTRY

Publication date:
February 2021

Mobility Trends – January-December 2020 – West & Central Africa

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected mobility in West and Central Africa in the form of various travel disruptions, restrictions and bans. This report provides key information on the magnitude and types of changes to mobility observed regionally 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, provenance and destinations 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 Registry data collected at key transit points in West and Central Africa between January and December 2020 (using 2019 data as barometers of comparison). This report focuses on Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria data, as these are the only countries with active FMPs throughout the January and December 2020 period.

Volume of flows: The number of travellers registered at FMPs across the West and Central Africa region witnessed a 6 per cent increase between 2019 and 2020 in Chad, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. However, there are distinctions between types of flow: cross-border movements witnessed a 9 per cent decrease while internal movements grew by 43 per cent. Chart I illustrates the changes in daily flows observed at FMPs between January and December 2020, as compared to the daily average in observed flows during the same period in 2019. It shows a sharp decrease of flows from March to May 2020. However, since May 2020, flows fluctuated and progressively increased, reaching volumes higher than in 2019. Monthly flow variations, depicted in Table 1, show a similar trend.

Weekly flows: A weekly analysis (Chart II) of recorded movements shows a striking acceleration in the decrease in flows over the second half of the month of March: between Week 12 and Week 13, the number of travellers observed weekly dropped by 69 per cent. This coincides with the period during which countries in the region started imposing travel bans and enacting border closure measures. From Week 13 to Week 18 (April), the number of individuals observed at Flow Monitoring Points in stabilized. From Week 19 to 37 (May to September), the number of individuals observed at FMPs rose consistently, although stark fluctuation were recorded in late July and early September. Since then, flows continued to rise substantially until the end of the year. This increase may be explained by multiple factors, including seasonal movements (return of students at the start of the school year, movement of seasonal labourer to mining sites and farming areas)

Types of flows: Cross-border movements and internal movements (Chart III) were both affected by COVID-19 mobility restriction measures. Data collection between April and June 2020 shows a rapid resurgence in internal flows as internal mobility restrictions were eased or lifted in June 2020. Cross-border movements also witnessed increases over April-June. From July, cross-border flows increased significantly, driven mainly by sharp increases in transboundary movements observed at Arlit, Niger (July), Kano, Nigeria (September), Gao, Mali, Dan Issa, Niger (October) and Heremakono (December). Flows across the Niger/Nigeria border had a strong impact on movements variations in 2020.

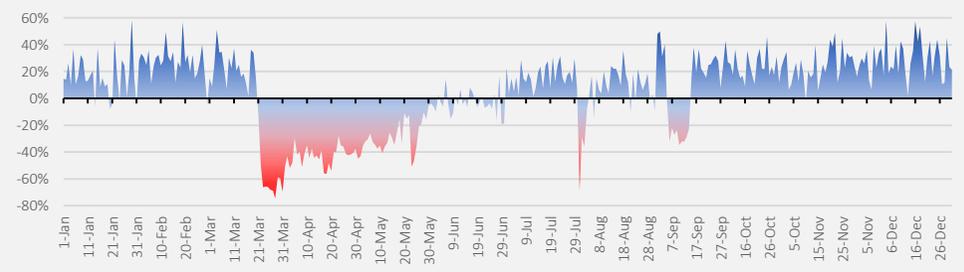
-9%

CHANGE IN **CROSS-BORDER FLOWS** OBSERVED BETWEEN 2019 AND 2020

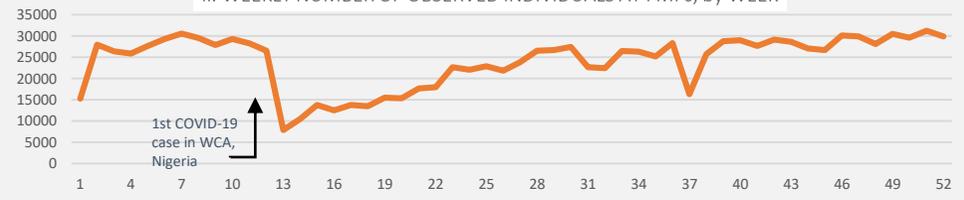
+43%

CHANGE IN **INTERNAL FLOWS** OBSERVED BETWEEN 2019 AND 2020

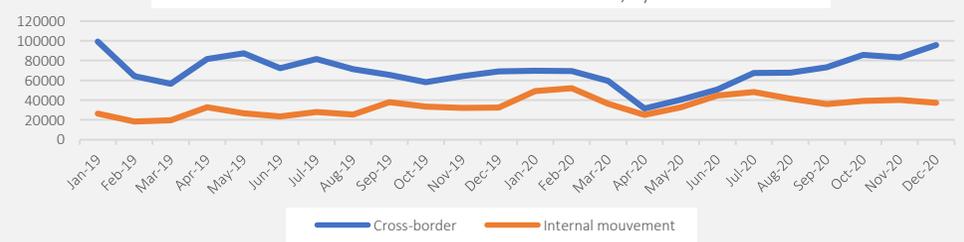
I. MOBILITY TRENDS IN WCA FMPs (BASELINE FROM JAN-DEC 2019)



II. WEEKLY NUMBER OF OBSERVED INDIVIDUALS AT FMPs, by WEEK



III. COMPARISON CROSS-BORDER vs INTERNAL FLOWS, by MONTH 2019-2020



MONTHLY VARIATION (COMPARISON BETWEEN 2019 AND 2020 FIGURES)

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	2019-2020
-5%	47%	25%	-50%	-36%	0%	5%	13%	5%	37%	28%	31%	4%



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When quoting, paraphrasing, or in any other way using the information mentioned in this report, the source needs to be stated appropriately as follows: "Source: The International Organization for Migration [Month, Year], Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)"

This report is produced by DTM Regional Support team for West and Central Africa through funding support from:





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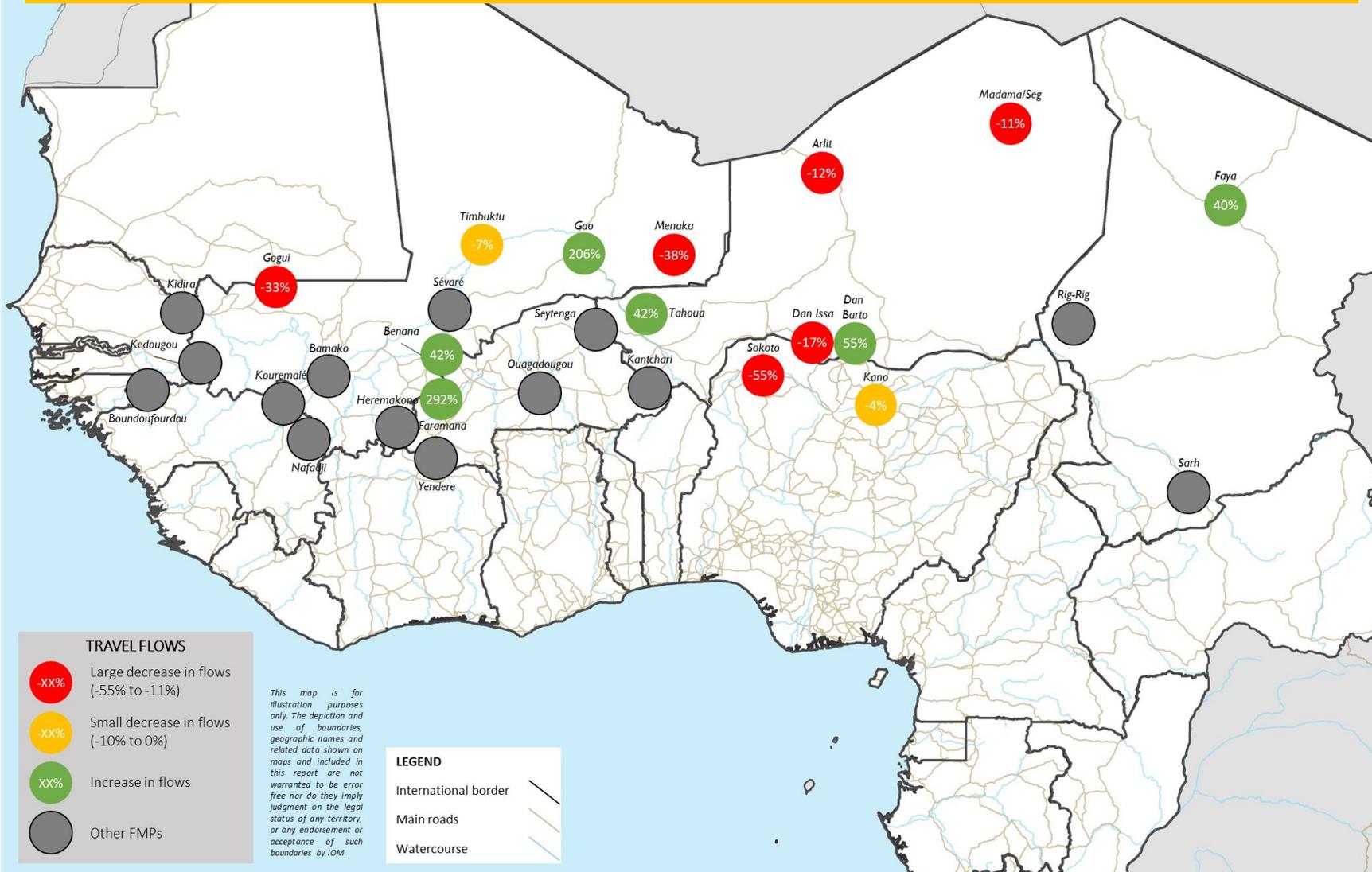
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EVOLUTION OF MOBILITY FLOWS FROM 2019 TO 2020, BY FMP

This map illustrates the variation in volume of flows from 2019 to 2020 at Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) across West and Central Africa (WCA). The sharp increases seen in Gao (increase of 206% in flows registered in 2020 compared with 2019) and Heremakono (increase of 292%) overlap with seasonal migration to mining sites (Gao) and agricultural areas (Heremakono).

This map should be reviewed along with the [Mobility Restriction](#) overview provided by DTM on the migration.iom.int website, which provides regular updates of mobility restriction measures. Despite the fact that flows have restarted in West and Central Africa, many borders across the region are still officially closed to international travels (particularly by land routes)



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