REGIONAL MOBILITY MAPPING
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA
JUNE 2020
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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Photo credit: Young gold minor, Guinea, 2019 © IOM Bérénice Boukaré

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About this report

The development and implementation of policies and programmes in West and Central Africa promoting safe, orderly and humane migration require a better understanding of human mobility in the region.

Human mobility in the region take many different forms. Transhumance, seasonal migration conducted during the harvesting season, travel during religious festivities, tourism, economic migration to North Africa and Europe, the search for employment in the mining industry, forced displacements due to conflict, natural disasters or climate-related migration, rural exodus, are all examples of movements observes in West and Central Africa and show the many faceted nature of mobility in the region.

This document is an attempt to provide a dynamic and regularly updated portrait of mobility within, from and to West and Central Africa region, using data collected by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The maps contained in this document are not only meant to inform on ongoing mobility patterns, but also provide information to support direct programming (protection of migrants, management of transhumance flows, support to safe returns of displaced people) and policy.

Data sources

Data sources for the information displayed in this document are provided at the bottom of each page. When reference is made to IOM data, the data was collected from: 1) Flow Monitoring, 2) Mobility Tracking, 3) Interviews with individuals who benefited from voluntary returns and reintegration programs (AVRR), 4) Search and Rescue activities conducted in Niger and 5) Interviews with IOM Key Informants, 6) Missing Migrants Project.

Further information on the data collection methodologies and on the activities referenced throughout the report is available in the following documents:

- Migration Data collection activities in West and Central Africa – Factsheet
- Internal displacement Data collection in West and Central Africa – Factsheet
- Products and Publication activities in West and Central Africa - Factsheet
- Assistance to Voluntary Return and Reintegration – Factsheet
- DTM Monthly Regional Report - Report

Other data presented in this document is provided by the Ministries of the Interior of Spain, Italy and Greece, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

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An estimated 9.5 million migrants live in the WCA region. The largest registered migrant communities in the region are currently living in Côte d’Ivoire (2.6 million) and Nigeria (1.3 million) (UNDESA).

82% of immigrants living in West and Central Africa are from another country in the region.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS
Regional Mobility Mapping in West and Central Africa • June 2020

DETAILS: THIS MAP PRESENTS THE STOCKS OF IMMIGRANTS REGISTERED IN EACH COUNTRY OF THE REGION.
SOURCES: (1) REGION AS COVERED BY IOM REGIONAL OFFICE. (2) UNDESA MIGRANT DATABASE 2019

Disclaimer: The maps in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Representations and the use of boundaries and geographical names on these maps may include errors and do not imply judgment of the legal status of a territory, nor official recognition or acceptance of these boundaries by IOM.

LEGEND
- COUNTRY BORDER
- WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION (1)
- MAIN ROADS
- NUMBER OF MIGRANTS PRESENT IN COUNTRY (2)

COUNTRY BORDER
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION (1)
MAIN ROADS
NUMBER OF MIGRANTS PRESENT IN COUNTRY (2)

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LEGEND
- COUNTRY BORDER
- WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION (1)
- MAIN ROADS
- NUMBER OF MIGRANTS PRESENT IN COUNTRY (2)
An estimated 11.9 million individuals from West and Central Africa currently live outside their country of origin. The countries with the largest numbers of emigrants (or diasporas, nationals living abroad) are from Burkina Faso (1.6), Nigeria (1.4 M), Mali (1.3 M).

66% of emigrants from WCA countries are living in another WCA country.
An estimated 80 to 90% of migration flows in West and Central Africa are internal to the region.
Intraregional mobility mainly takes place along two MAIN EAST-WEST AXES and are then distributed over ancillary routes.
Intraregional mobility is largely driven by employment opportunities in labour intensive areas. Favoured destinations for labour migration vary depending on the season.
TRANSHUMANCE, a form of pastoralism which sees herders and their livestock migrate on a seasonal basis between complementary ecological areas, from areas with scarce grazing lands and water sources to areas with more abundant pastures and water, is a common occupation across West and Central Africa which contributes significantly to human mobility in the region.
Inter-regional migration routes taken by migrants regularly shift according to changes in migration legislation, policies and controls. However, the routes themselves do not evolve much.

Migrants heading to North Africa or Europe travel along three main migration routes:

1. Western African
2. Western Mediterranean
3. Central Mediterranean
Travellers moving within West and Central Africa, headed for North Africa, and migrating to Europe showcase significant differences in age, marital status, education level and employment status prior to travel (in their country of habitual residence). The unemployment rate of travellers also varies according to the nature of the movements and the intended destination: migration to a country in West and Central Africa is more likely to be conducted in response to concrete job opportunities than migration to Europe or North Africa. *The profile of travellers (individuals crossing IOM Flow Monitoring Points) by intended destination presented on this page is based on data collected during Flow Monitoring Surveys conducted with over 27,000 travellers across the region between January and June 2020. Further information on methodology is available at the end of this document.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTENDED DESTINATION</th>
<th>AGE (average)</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
<th>EDUCATION LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EUROPE</strong></td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>Male: 92%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 8%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dis. 1%</td>
<td>Married 11%</td>
<td>Married 42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single 88%</td>
<td>Single 49%</td>
<td>Single 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wid. 0%</td>
<td>Other 0%</td>
<td>Other 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTH AFRICA</strong></td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>Male: 90%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 10%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dis. 1%</td>
<td>Married 19%</td>
<td>Married 34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single 80%</td>
<td>Single 43%</td>
<td>Single 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wid. 0%</td>
<td>Other 1%</td>
<td>Other 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WCA</strong></td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>Male: 82%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dis. 2%</td>
<td>Married 53%</td>
<td>Married 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single 44%</td>
<td>Single 21%</td>
<td>Single 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wid. 1%</td>
<td>Other 5%</td>
<td>Other 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After dropping in 2018 and 2019, arrivals to Europe from West and Central Africa stabilized in 2020. In 2018-2020, Spain was the main arrival country for migrants using both the Western African and Western Mediterranean routes. Migrants often travel along perilous and isolated routes, oftentimes crossing the desert and making dangerous sea crossings to reach Europe.
Migrant and refugee arrivals to Europe have changed significantly between 2015 and 2020. In 2015, an estimated 857,363 migrants and refugees reached Greece, with only 1% originating from West and Central Africa (WCA). The share of migrants from WCA amongst arrivals to Greece then steadily increased, reaching 9% in 2018, before dropping back to 5% in 2019. Arrivals of WCA nationals in Italy were stable in 2018-2019 (respectively 20% and 21%) but have dropped significantly since 2016 (60% of arrivals in 2016 were WCA nationals). The share of WCA nationals amongst migrant and refugee arrivals to Spain witnessed some fluctuations between 2015 and 2020, and witnessed a sharp decreased between 2018 (71% of all arrivals in Spain, the highest observed in the 2015-2019 time period) and 2019 (43%) and 2020 (40%).
The regions of origin of migrants heading to North Africa or Niger (with the intention to leave the region) are varied. This data is based on a question on regions of origins asked to IOM migrants assisted to return upon their return in their country of origin.

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Nearly 7 million individuals are currently internally displaced across West and Central Africa, including more than 6.4 million displaced by conflict and insecurity, to which an additional 550,000 were displaced by natural disasters (floods, landslides...) (4). The regions of origin of migrants assisted to return and areas of ongoing conflict, violence and insecurity do not necessarily overlap.
IOM is assisting migrants stranded who wish to go home. In 2017-20, nearly 102,825 migrants benefited from IOM assistance, often conducted through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative on Migrant Protection and Reintegration, a comprehensive programme to save lives, protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa.
NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This section provides additional details on data sources used in this report.

FLOW MONITORING METHODOLOGY

This report presents an analysis of 27,000 surveys conducted with mobile populations in the West and Central Africa region between January and June 2020. These surveys are part of IOM DTM’s Flow Monitoring activities, which gather information on the numbers and characteristics of travellers observed in high mobility areas of origin, transit and destination. Surveys are conducted at Flow Monitoring Points on a sample of travellers on a daily basis (travellers may or may not be nationals). The purpose of these surveys is to collect more in-depth information on travellers, such as their nationalities, educational and vocational backgrounds, reasons for departure and intended destinations.

Page 10 presents cross-border movements based on the Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR); Page 11 presents a regional analysis of the intended destination of travellers as provided by respondents to Flow Monitoring Surveys.

METHODOLOGY: At Flow Monitoring Point (FMP), enumerators collect information on the number, frequency and defining features of individuals transiting through a particular location. Prior to the establishment of an FMP, areas of high mobility are identified following discussions with national and local actors. The locations at which FMPs are set up, key points of transit such as border points or coach stations, are then identified based on participatory mapping of main migration routes conducted in partnership with national and local authorities. As of 30 June 2020, more than 30 FMPs are active in eight countries of the West and Central Africa region (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal).

Data is collected at FMPs using two main tools: Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) and Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS). The FMR includes direct observations at places of entry, transit or exit, as well as interviews with key informants (including transportation workers, housing workers, and migration officials) to assess movement trends, routes, and countries of origin and destination. The FMS entails more detailed individual surveys to profile people on the move, including education levels and skills/employment; drivers of migrations; and needs, risks and vulnerabilities. This document presents an analysis of surveys conducted using the FMS tool. A similar methodology is used in other regions (Horn of Africa and Europe) to allow for comparative analysis of flows and individuals’ characteristics.

LIMITS: The data presented on Page 11 is based on surveys conducted with travellers at FMPs in Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and Chad during the timeframe indicated. The data should not be generalized and does not present a full picture of inter- and intra-regional migration, but rather a snapshot of migration flows at specific locations. For example, while IOM aims to establish Flow Monitoring Points at locations with high transit flows (based on information from key informants), flows are changing and FMPs can only provide a partial picture.

DATA ON RETURNS THROUGH ASSISTED VOLUNTARY AND HUMANITARIAN RETURN PROGRAMMES

Data collected on the regions of origin of migrants provides details on individuals assisted in voluntary or humanitarian return by IOM. It is based on databases from Libya and Niger that have been aggregated and uses nearly 100,000 entries dating from 2016 to 2020.

It does not necessarily present the origins of all migrants moving in WCA and focuses on a very specific migrant population (those trying to move to other regions).

EXTERNAL SOURCES

ARRIVALS IN ITALY, GREECE AND SPAIN: data presented on arrivals to Europe is taken from figures provided by Greek, Italians and Spanish national authorities. However, the complete nationality breakdown of migrants is not available; only the top 10 nationalities of arriving migrants is provided. Therefore, nationality figures presented are likely fragmented.

IDMC: the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centers is the world’s definitive source of data and analysis on internal displacement and provide regular data on internal displacement through its Global internal displacement database and report.

UNDESA: the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides regular update on its migrants’ stocks. Data presented does not reflect all migration stocks in each country and are likely underestimating total migrants’ population in the region.
DATA SOURCES

IOM FLOW MONITORING POINTS (migration.iom.int)

IOM (AVRR)

IOM NIGER (regions of origins)

IOM NIGER (Search & Rescue)

NATIONAL WORKSHOPS ON CAPTURING DISPLACEMENT AND MOVEMENTS DATA (Capo Verde, Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Togo and Benin)

IOM ITALY, IOM SPAIN, IOM GREECE

IOM COUNTRY OFFICES (labour intensive areas)

MINISTRIES OF INTERIOR (Spain, Italy, Greece, Niger)

UNDESA (migrant stock database)

ACLED (security incidents)

OECD (transhumance)