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ORGANIZED CRIME



**Clingendael**  
Netherlands Institute of International Relations



# Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean Piecing Together the Shifting Dynamics

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## **DISCLAIMER**

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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The photograph on the front cover was taken by Jerome Veyret in Niger.

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

‘Monitoring the Political Economy of Human Smuggling in Libya and the Greater Sahara’ is a project funded under the North Africa window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. Its goals are to create an expansive research facility that provides the EU and its partners with up-to-date monitoring and analysis of migration patterns and human smuggling dynamics in Libya and the Sahel (Niger, Chad and Mali). This takes the form of monthly briefs and regular in-depth, longform research studies such as this one. The project is implemented by a consortium that consists of the GI-TOC and the Clingendael Institute.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AVR</b>	assisted voluntary return
<b>AVRR</b>	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (programme of the IOM)
<b>CFA</b>	West African francs
<b>CNDH</b>	Conseil National de Droits de l'Homme (Morocco)
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>FGM</b>	female genital mutilation
<b>FTDES</b>	Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux
<b>GADEM</b>	Groupe Antiraciste de Défense et d'accompagnement des Etrangers et Migrants
<b>GI-TOC</b>	Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime
<b>GDF</b>	Gathering And Departure Facility
<b>GNA</b>	Government of National Accord
<b>ID</b>	identification
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IOM DTM</b>	IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix
<b>LCG</b>	Libyan Coast Guard
<b>LNA</b>	Libyan National Army
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MFA</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>Moi</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>MoU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>RSF</b>	Sudanese Rapid Support Forces
<b>UAM</b>	unaccompanied minor
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNSMIL</b>	United Nations Support Mission in Libya

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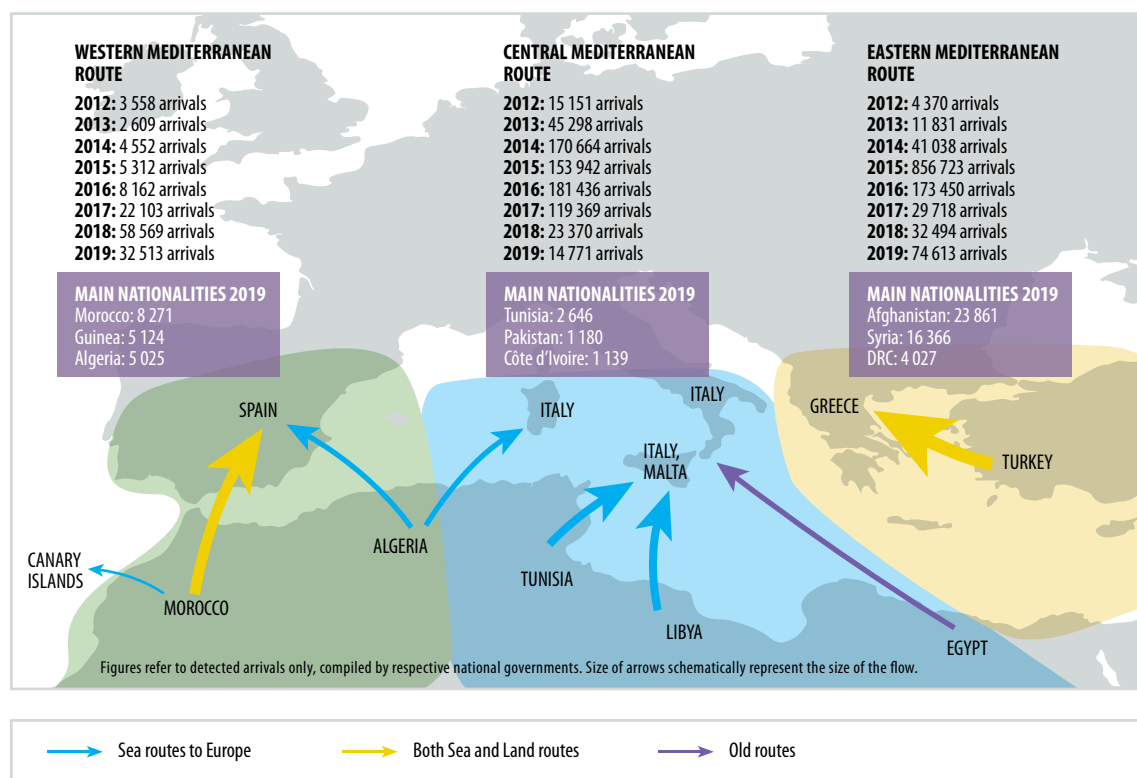
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# A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The overall objective of this study is to gain an updated and nuanced understanding of how the dynamics of migration through the Western and Central Mediterranean have shifted between 2015 and 2019, and whether changes in one affect the other. The study was launched in June 2019 and the report was drafted in February 2020. Due to the unexpected pressures of the COVID pandemic, the review of the report by the EU and its subsequent publication were not completed until September 2020. The map below sets out the three Mediterranean routes and the number of arrivals along each route between 2012 and 2019.

#### Movements through the three Mediterranean routes, 2012–2019



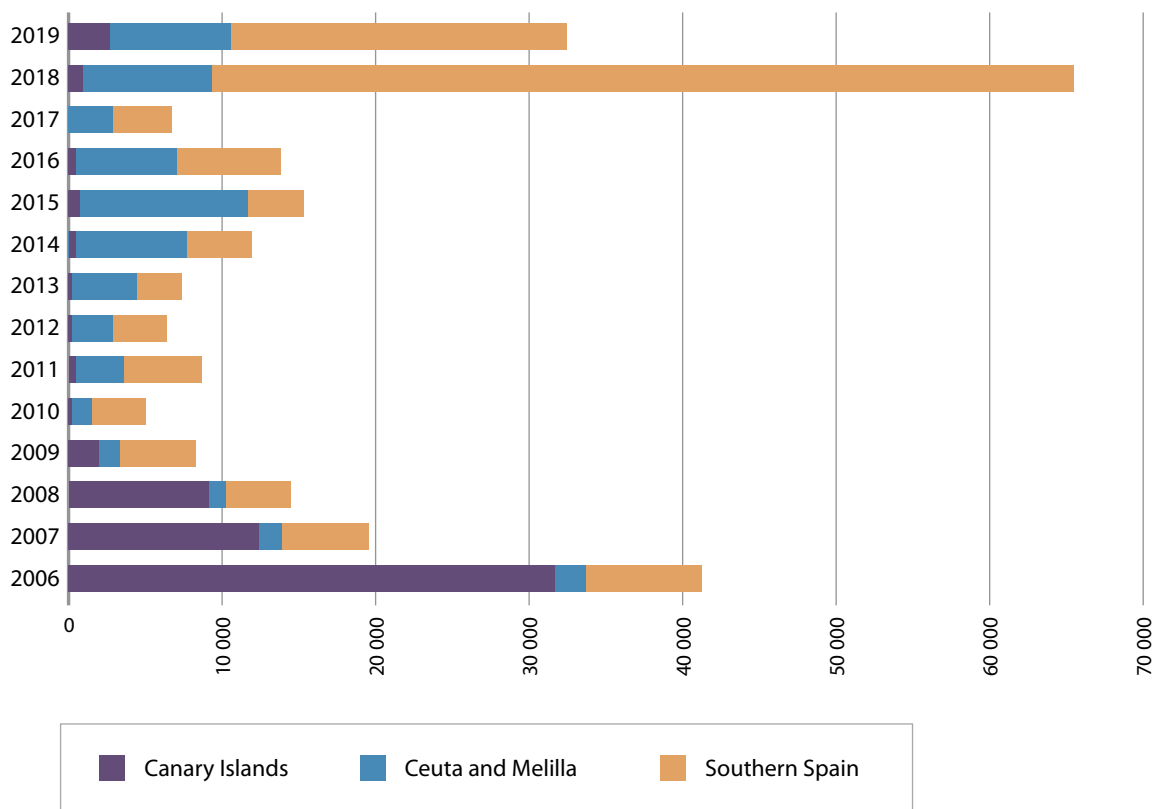
The number of irregular arrivals through the Mediterranean has been relatively modest, rarely exceeding 200 000 arrivals in total per year across all three routes. In 2019, for the third year since what has been called the 2015 'crisis', the number of arrivals fell significantly, coming to a total of 121 897 across the three routes. Between 2017 and 2018 there was a 23% decrease, which was almost exclusively due to fewer arrivals through the Central Mediterranean. Between 2018 and 2019 there was a 12% decrease, which was accounted for by fewer arrivals through the Central and Western Mediterranean. The ping-pong effect between the three routes demonstrates that the flows are dynamic and agile. Moreover, irregular arrivals through the Mediterranean make up a very small proportion of overall immigration to Europe. In 2017, there were approximately 4.5 million migrants in Europe (all types of migrants) and just over 170 000 irregular arrivals through the Mediterranean.

The groups using the Central and Western Mediterranean routes are mainly comprised of men, while the demographics of the Eastern Mediterranean route are very mixed, with almost an equal share of men, women and children. The Western Mediterranean route is mainly followed by West Africans and the Central Mediterranean by a combination of people from West, East and Central Africa. Asian populations have also used both of these routes. The migrants who travel along the Eastern Mediterranean route tend to originate from refugee-producing countries, such as Afghanistan, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Iraq in 2019. Since 2017, the percentage of North Africans (Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians, Libyans) has increased across all three Mediterranean routes. The economic and political instability in North Africa has been a driver of this migration.

### The Western Mediterranean route

The Western Mediterranean route was the most important route to Europe in 2018, but it was surpassed by the Eastern Mediterranean route in 2019. In 2018 and 2019, the majority of irregular arrivals in Spain were by boat to the south. Movements to the Canary Islands had dominated the landscape from 2006–2008, and land movements into the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla had dominated the landscape from 2013–2016. Boat movements into southern Spain began to increase in 2016 and have dominated the landscape since then, as shown in the graph below.

Irregular arrivals in Spain according to location of arrival



The majority of movements into southern Spain arrive in Andalusia and involve crossing the Strait of Gibraltar from Tangier and surrounds, or crossing the Alboran Sea from the stretch of coast between Tangier and Nador. Departures from Algeria towards Spain are minimal but increasing as smugglers and migrants look for new routes in the face of increasing controls in Morocco. Movements into the enclaves traditionally involved hundreds of young men storming the fences. In 2013, migrants started moving to the enclaves by boat. A trend that saw Arabs (mainly Syrians and North Africans) moving into the enclaves with 'rented' passports emerged in the same year. Many of those entering through the enclaves today are not captured in the official statistics. Arrivals in the Canary Islands are low but increasing. The main country of origin is Morocco and the majority of journeys start in Morocco. The next most common departure point for the Canary Islands is Senegal.

Oujda, which was traditionally the main arrival point into Morocco, has decreased in importance as an entry point because of increased hostility both at the border and inside the city. Morocco's reorientation towards Africa, which has involved visa exemptions for West Africans and increased flights from West Africa to Morocco, has made flying to Morocco cheaper and safer than moving by land with smugglers.

While the total number of arrivals in Spain increased in 2017 (by 170% when compared to 2016) and 2018 (160% when compared to 2017), a corresponding increase was not seen in Morocco. This is likely explained by a number of factors. Firstly, there has been an increase in Moroccans moving along the routes to Spain. In 2017, Morocco became the first country of origin for arrivals in Spain. It remained in first place until 2019, moving from 19% of all arrivals to 25% in that three-year period. Since 2017, there has also been an increase in Moroccan minors moving towards Europe, with a parallel increase in trafficking networks that facilitate the movement of these children. New smuggling modalities have also emerged resulting in some groups transiting Morocco immediately without spending any time in the country. For example, since 2017, a new dynamic has emerged where middle-class and qualified African migrants are smuggled to Europe through Morocco to fill labour-market gaps in European countries. They are regularized by their European employer on arrival. There has also been an increase in assisted voluntary returns (AVRs) from Morocco, which means that while an increased number of migrants entered the country, an increased number were also leaving the country to return home.

The human-smuggling and cannabis-smuggling industries became linked in 2017. Smugglers in Morocco – referred to as chairmen – tend to be West Africans who operate in small networks, while Moroccans are only involved in specific logistical roles. The crossing from Morocco to Spain cost on average around €2 000 in 2019, with some variation depending on the modality of smuggling. The price has doubled since 2017, when it was closer to €1 000. There has been an increase in the arrest of smugglers in Morocco in 2019, motivated by joint Moroccan-Spanish efforts within the framework of cooperation on security measures to counter transnational crimes.

The majority of asylum seekers in Spain do not arrive irregularly through the Mediterranean. In 2019, there were no sub-Saharan nationalities in the top 10 nationalities of asylum seekers in Spain and the top five nationalities were all South American, none of whom arrive through the Mediterranean. There were 9 000 persons of concern under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Morocco in 2019, with Syrians making up the largest caseload. A new profile of asylum seekers, which has been increasing since 2017 in Morocco, is African mothers who move with their daughters and apply for asylum on the grounds of female genital mutilation (FGM).

### Between the routes

Routes through Niger have changed significantly since the new anti-smuggling law N°36 was passed in 2015. Not only have routes become more fragmented, but journeys also became more clandestine and new routes emerged from Zinder (controlled by Tebu smugglers) and Tahoua (Tuareg smugglers). The use of private vehicles became more common due to increased controls on public transport. Journeys also became more expensive.

A significant flow of migrants trying to reach Libya from Niger are now doing so via Algeria. The main movement from Niger to Algeria is through Arlit-Assamaka-Tamanrasset (Tuareg smugglers). The routes from Algeria to Libya move from Tamanrasset to the border and cross the border from Djanet to Ghat or Debdeb to Ghadames. The displacement of the Niger-Libya route to Algeria also caused more movements towards Morocco. Migrants who wish to move from Algeria to Morocco do so from Ghardaïa-Maghnia-Oujda. There are deportations from Algeria to both Niger and Mali.

Movements through Mali are minimal given the insecurity in central parts of the country, and are mainly comprised of Malians or Arabs (Syrians, Palestinians, Yemenis) who are trying to move from Mauritania to Morocco via Mali and Algeria. West Africans are more likely to move from Bamako to Niamey via Burkina Faso. Sometimes they move from Bamako to Burkina Faso and then back into northern Mali, as a way to avoid the instability in the centre of the country. The routes begin in Gao and move north over the border at Bordj Badji Mokhtar, In-Khalil or Timiaouine..

### The Central Mediterranean route

The Central Mediterranean Route was the route to Europe with the least traffic in 2018 and continuing into 2019, being surpassed by both the Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes. This is despite the fact that it had been the most prominent route to Europe between 2012 and 2017, with the exception of 2015 when the Eastern Mediterranean route witnessed an exceptionally high number of arrivals.

In 2017, Italy signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Libya that involved incentives for the Government of National Accord (GNA) and certain tribal groups to engage in greater counter-smuggling work. Investments were made to build the capacity of the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG) and a controversial code of conduct was introduced for NGO-run search-and-rescue ships, which led to the majority of them having

to shut down their operations. By 2018, departures from Libya had dropped significantly (a total of 12 977 migrants arrived irregularly in Italy on boats that departed the Libyan coast in 2018, compared to 108 409 in 2017). Arrivals into Libya from Niger and Sudan also decreased significantly as a result of counter-smuggling and border-security initiatives in both countries.

Departures continued to drop in April 2019 as a result of the war in Tripoli, with only 345 departures being recorded – compared to 3 581 in April 2018 and 12 884 in April 2017. In May, departures picked up again and occurred all along the coast, both to the east and west of Tripoli, including from Garabulli, al-Khoms, Zawiya and Zliten. Throughout the rest of 2019, departures from Libya dropped again. By the end of 2019, a total of 4 122 arrived in Italy on boats that departed the Libyan coast, constituting the lowest number of departures since 2011.

In addition to the decrease in arrivals, the departure and arrival points along the Central Mediterranean route have been shifting, as has the composition of the flow. Malta re-emerged as a prominent arrival point in 2018 (totalling 1 190 individuals across the entire year) after decreasing from 2 008 arrivals in 2013 to 23 in 2017. In terms of the composition of the flow, from 2014–2017, there was a notable decrease in East Africans and an increase in West African migrants arriving in Italy. In 2018, Tunisia emerged as the first country of origin, which continued into 2019. Some 20% of all arrivals in 2019 were children, making up 26% of Tunisians, 57% of Somalis and 64% of Guineans.

In terms of departure points, between 2012 and 2017, the proportion of boats that arrived in Italy departing from the Libyan coast rose from 40% to 91% of all arrivals. In 2018 it dropped to 56%, and by the end of 2019 it was only 38%. In 2018 and 2019, Tunisia represented the second most important departure point for boat journeys to Italy, moving from 1% in 2016 to 32% in 2019. Arrivals from Algeria, Turkey and Greece to Italy also increased in 2019. There were no departures from Egypt between 2017–2019.

Boats departing from the Tunisian coast are mainly comprised of Tunisian migrants (90% in 2017 and 70% in 2019). Historically, the majority of Tunisian migrants came from the poorest parts of the country. After 2014, however, there have been larger numbers of young, tertiary-educated Tunisians. Many of them are sent back from Italy within 48 hours through a readmission agreement between the two countries. In addition to Tunisians arriving in Italy, there are also Tunisians who travel to Morocco to take boats to Spain. A series of reforms in Tunisia in the late 1980s led to increased levels of education in the country. However, low productivity rates and a structural mismatch between the demand and supply of labour meant there was no corresponding increase in the number of jobs. While creating high unemployment rates locally and driving outward migration, this phenomenon has also created a demand for unskilled foreign labour in Tunisia. The number of foreign nationals in Tunisia increased by 52% between 2004 (35 192) and 2014 (53 490) and the biggest increase was seen in the sub-Saharan category. Land arrivals from Libya to Tunisia have been increasing since 2018, and migrants have been undertaking these journeys without smugglers.

The main migrant communities in Egypt include East Africans (Sudanese, South Sudanese, Somalis and Eritreans), Arabs (Yemenis, Syrians, Iraqis and Libyans) and Asian communities (Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Filipinos). The most rapidly growing populations are the South Sudanese, Yemenis and Eritreans. Yemenis arrive on medical visas that they obtain in their home country, and most have financial means to open businesses in Egypt. Some treat Egypt as a transit country to access the Western Mediterranean route. They fly from Egypt to Nouakchott, then move by land to Morocco via Mali and Algeria before finally taking a boat to Spain.

There are three main entry points into Egypt: the southern border with Sudan, the western border with Libya and Cairo International Airport. The Sinai and the northern coast of Egypt constitute the two exit points, although at the time of writing there were zero movements from these points. There are instances of migrants being apprehended at the southern border and even some cases of refoulement. The border between Egypt and Libya is officially closed for everyone except Egyptians, who can cross the border with the right justification – such as pre-arranged employment. Detention for undocumented migrants is not uncommon in Egypt.

### Key takeaways

- While the overall numbers of irregular migration to Europe have been decreasing progressively since 2015 and are modest for the most part, the migratory pressure is still great as smugglers and migrants look for new routes and new modalities of smuggling that will allow them to evade controls.
- As movements off the coast of Libya became challenged, other departure points increased in prominence – specifically within the Central Mediterranean route.
- While there is a link between the decrease in arrivals in Italy and the increase in arrivals in Spain, the real increase in Morocco came through the airport at Casablanca. This was facilitated by visa exemptions and increased flights that resulted from Morocco's political reorientation towards Africa.
- A sizeable proportion of the migrants who are flying into Morocco today are highly qualified or middle class. They are smuggled to Europe immediately for pre-arranged jobs and are regularized on arrival.
- The profiles of migrants along the three different Mediterranean routes have generally taken their cue from the geography. However, migrant profiles have become more varied in recent years.
- There has been an increase in North Africans on all three routes (particularly Moroccans, Tunisians and Algerians); a dynamic that is likely to increase with time.
- Certain nationalities in need of asylum are blocked by restrictive migration policies and have turned to exotic routes. These include Yemenis and Syrians.
- As migrants try to adapt to the circumstances by attempting new geographies, smugglers quickly adjust to meet the demand created by migrants.



# **B. BACKGROUND AND METHODS**

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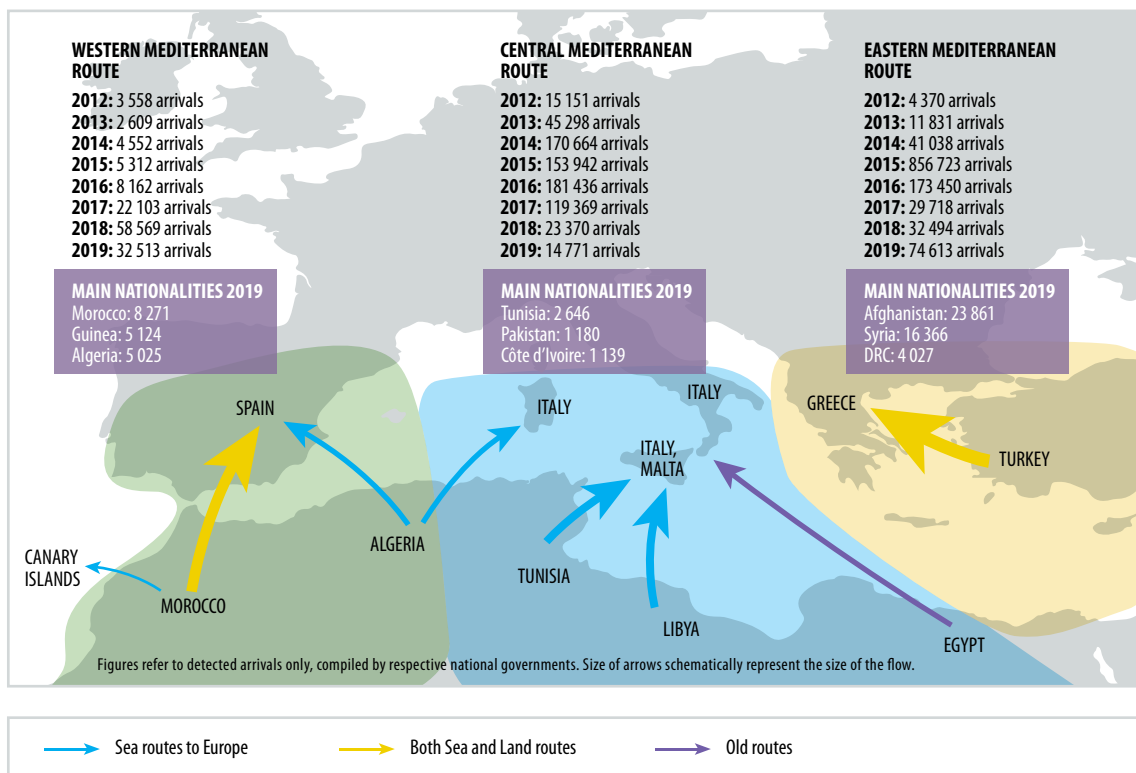
# 1. INTRODUCTION

**Migration to Europe is not a new phenomenon.** Movements through the three Mediterranean routes have carried migrants and refugees in search of stability and safety since the establishment of the European Union (EU). After 2011, as North African departure countries began to transition politically and economically, the characteristics of these flows began to change.

**As Libya became increasingly unstable and descended into civil war,** migrants who had been living and working in the country started to look for ways to escape, and flows through the Central Mediterranean increased year on year. In 2015, an unprecedented number of asylum seekers and refugees moved towards Europe as a result of intensified conflict in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result, the Eastern Mediterranean route increased in prominence and close to a million refugees moved to Germany. An agreement between the EU and Turkey in 2015 curtailed this movement, and the Central Mediterranean route became the most prominent route to Europe once again in terms of traffic.

**A new government in Italy decided to take a different approach to the Mediterranean issue;** on one hand frustrated by the lack of European solidarity, and on the other, spurred by an anti-migration sentiment. An MoU signed between Italy and Libya in 2017 led to a number of controversial initiatives, which significantly decreased the number of migrants moving through the Central Mediterranean. In parallel, increased counter

**Map 1:** Movements through the three Mediterranean routes, 2012–2019



smuggling and border security in Niger and Sudan also decreased the number of migrants entering Libya from the southern and eastern border. By 2019, the number of arrivals in Italy was lower than it had been since 2012.

**At the same time that arrivals in Italy started to decrease, arrivals in Spain increased.** The Western Mediterranean route became active after years of consistently low numbers of arrivals. Was increased difficulty in moving through the Central Mediterranean causing the Western Mediterranean route to rise to prominence again? Was it a displacement of routes, or a completely new set of dynamics? These are some of the questions that this study seeks to answer, while also providing an update on the patterns of migration to Europe through the Mediterranean.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to gain an updated and nuanced understanding of how the dynamics of migration through the Western and Central Mediterranean have shifted since 2015 and whether changes in one affect the other. More specifically, this study considers the following factors and questions:

- **Routes:** What are the current paths of travel along the Western and Central Mediterranean routes, including smuggling hubs, departure points, arrival points and locations of risk? Why did the routes evolve and which further shifts could be anticipated?
- **Numbers and profiles:** How have the numbers and profiles of arrivals shifted along the Western and Central Mediterranean routes, and how can these changes be explained?
- **Smuggling:** What are the different smuggling dynamics across and along the routes – including main actors, methods, prices and modus operandi? How have they varied in recent years?
- **Links between the routes:** How are the two routes linked, and which decision-making factors do migrants use when choosing between the routes?

### 2.2 Approach

**This study was conducted using a qualitative approach, based on primary field research that spanned three research modules and resulted in 240 in-depth interviews.** The methodology was route focused and, as such, involved interviews in eight countries, namely Morocco, Mauritania, Spain, Niger, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt and Malta.

The study was launched in June 2019 and the report was drafted in February 2020. Due to the unexpected pressures of the COVID pandemic, the review of the report by the EU and its subsequent publication were not completed until September 2020.

The various research modules are as follows:

- Secondary research encompassing all existing literature and data on the topic;
- In-depth interviews with migrants; and
- Key informant interviews with authorities, smugglers, members of armed groups, community leaders and project implementers.

**The primary data that was collected for this study was combined with open-source secondary data** from Frontex, UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Eurostat and the ministries of interior of Spain, Italy and Greece. The primary data was used to create all the maps in this report, to flesh out the routes and smuggling systems and to build the analysis. The secondary data was used to create a statistical framework.

### 2.3 Literature review

**An exhaustive review of existing literature and data was conducted at project outset** and alongside the other modules to help frame the primary research modules and to ensure that the study complements existing research efforts. A full bibliography is presented in Appendix 1.

### 2.4 Fieldwork

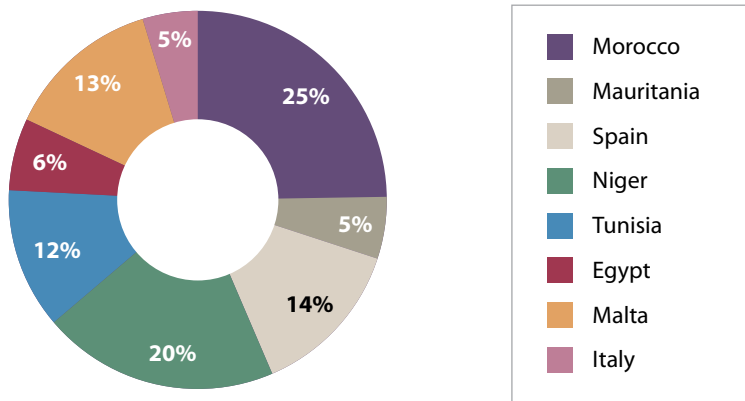
Fieldwork ran from June to September 2019 and culminated in **a total of 149 in-depth interviews with migrants and 96 key informant interviews (totalling 240 in-depth interviews)** across eight countries.

#### 2.4.1 In-depth interviews with migrants

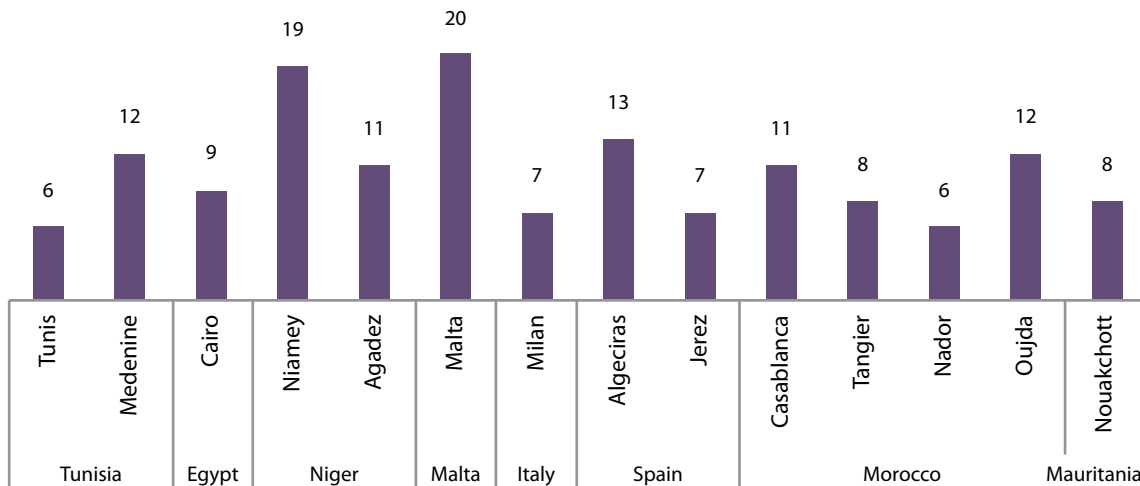
A total of 149 in-depth interviews were conducted with migrants across 14 locations in eight countries. The distribution of the sample across the eight countries is presented in Figure 1 below. As can be seen, the sample is almost evenly split between the two Mediterranean routes: Morocco, Mauritania and Spain for the Western Mediterranean route; Tunisia, Egypt, Malta and Italy for the Central Mediterranean route, and Niger for both. The fieldwork locations within each country of fieldwork are presented in Figure 2 below.

The sample of migrants spans 24 countries of origin from West, East, North and Central Africa, as well as the Middle East (see Figure 3). West Africans, as a group, represent the greatest share of the sample, at 62% (see Figure 4). The gender distribution of the sample is 21% female migrants and 79% male migrants.

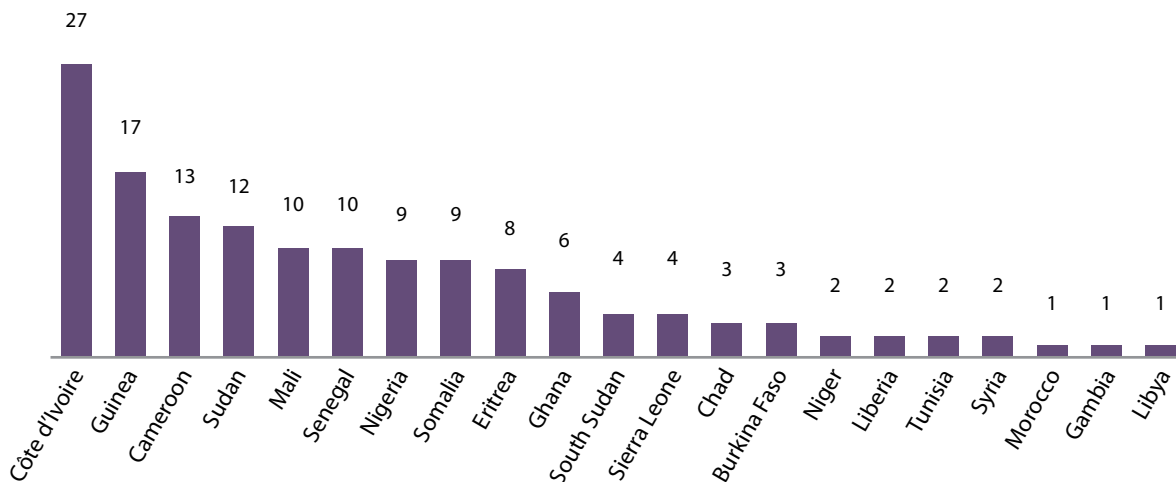
**Figure 1:** Sample of migrants according to country of fieldwork

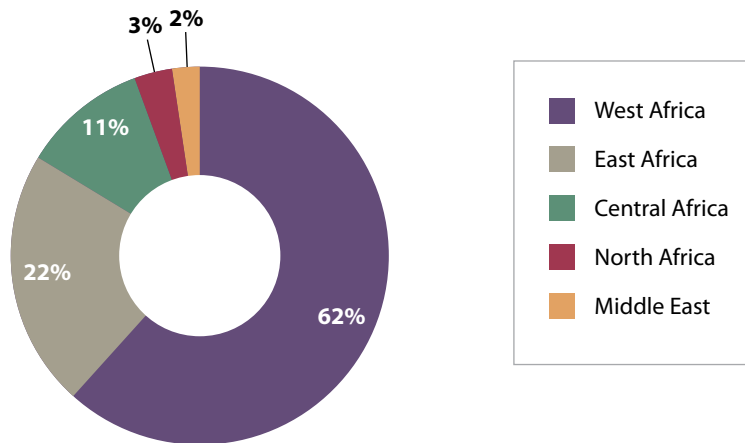


**Figure 2:** Sample of migrants according to city of fieldwork



**Figure 3:** Sample of migrants according to country of origin



**Figure 4:** Sample of migrants according to region of origin

#### 2.4.2 Key-informant interviews

**A total of 95 key-informant interviews were conducted across the eight countries of fieldwork.** Key informants included:

- EU delegates;
- Programme implementers from international organizations, local and international NGOs, church groups, aid agencies, embassies and activist groups;
- Smugglers;
- Local academics;
- Local authorities; and
- Migrant community leaders.

A full list of key informants interviewed is presented in Annex 2.

# **C. ACROSS THE CROSSING POINTS: THE MACRO PICTURE**

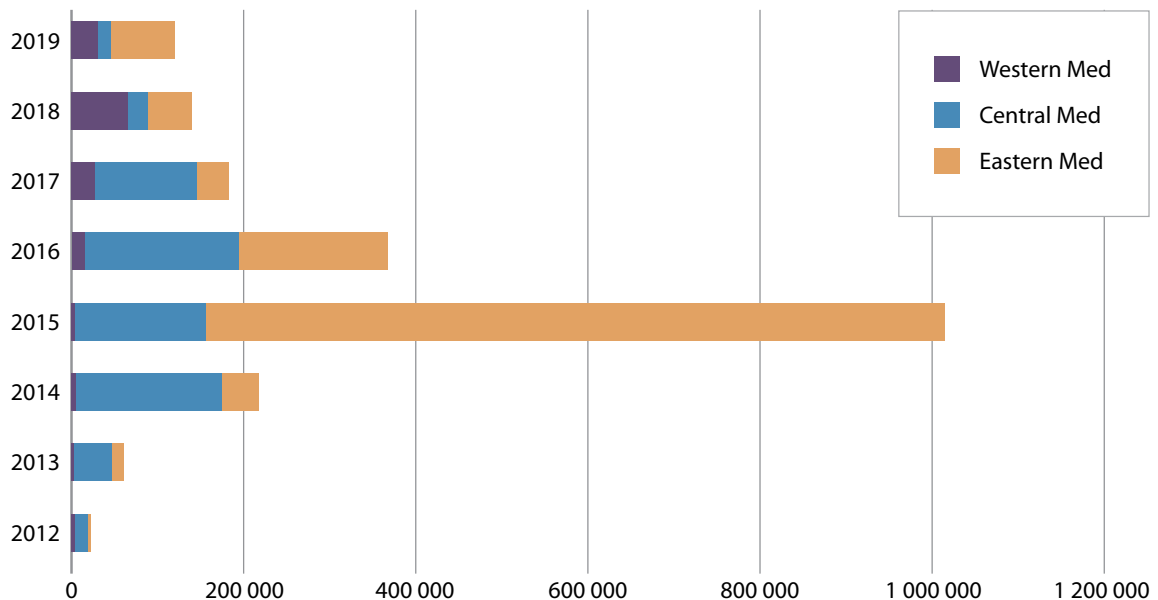
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## 1. THE ROUTES

**The number of arrivals in Europe through the three Mediterranean routes has been rather modest for the most part**, as can be seen in Figure 5. Other than 2015, when a total of 1 014 257 migrants and refugees arrived in Europe, and the year before and after when the flows adjusted, the total numbers have rarely surpassed 200 000. Across 2012 and 2013, the number did not even reach 100 000. In 2019, for the third year since what has been called the 2015 ‘crisis’, the number of arrivals fell significantly, coming to a total of 121 897 across the three routes. Between 2017 and 2018 there was a 23% decrease, which was almost exclusively due to fewer arrivals through the Central Mediterranean. Between 2018 and 2019 there was a 12% decrease, which was accounted for by fewer arrivals through the Central and Western Mediterranean.

**The proportion of total arrivals that has been represented by each of the three Mediterranean routes** is also depicted in Figure 5. Between 2012 and 2015, the number of arrivals along the Western Mediterranean route was almost negligible, never exceeding 5 000. The arrivals through the Central Mediterranean dominated the landscape between 2014 and 2017 with the exception of 2015, when migration politics in Germany and increased movements from conflict zones towards Europe led to an exceptional increase along the Eastern Mediterranean route.

**Figure 5:** Arrivals in Europe via the three Mediterranean routes, 2012–2019



Data source: Respective national governments

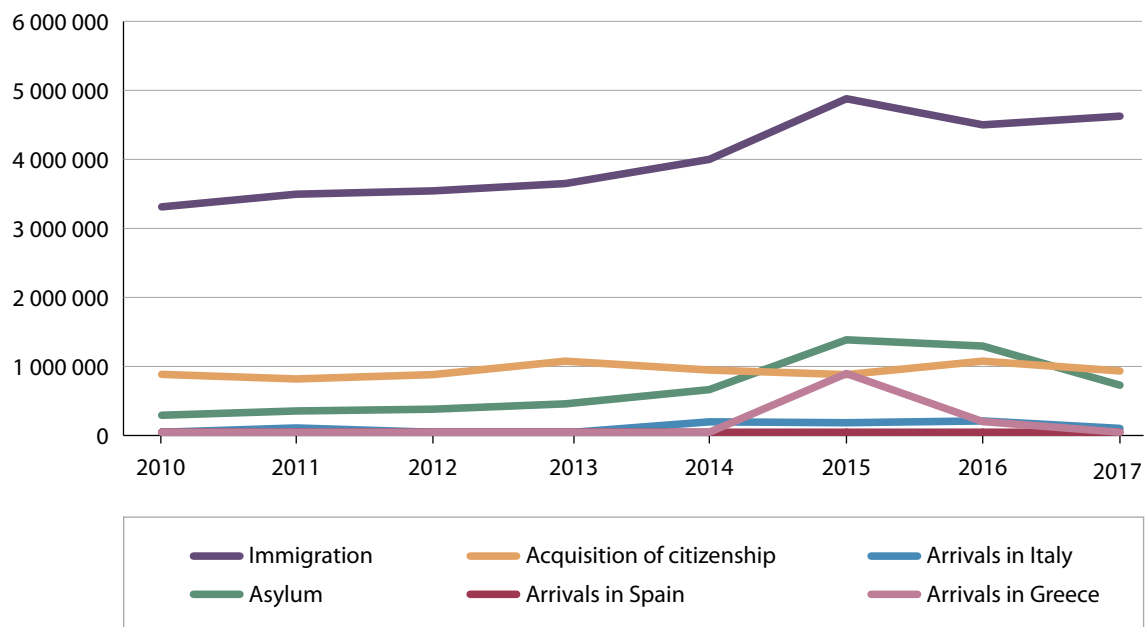


**The domination of the Central Mediterranean route through these years is a reflection of the situation in Libya.** As the country became more unstable, movements from Libya to Italy increased, both because poor internal security enabled illicit markets like human smuggling to flourish and because Libya became less and less viable as a migration destination. More recently, migrants have sought to escape brutal detention and abuse in Libya.

**Since 2017, as Europe stepped up efforts to address irregular migration through the Central Mediterranean, the other two routes picked up.** By 2018, the Western Mediterranean exceeded the other two and by 2019, the Eastern Mediterranean route moved to first position. The ping-pong effect between the three routes demonstrates that the flows are dynamic and agile, and that new routes open up when others are blocked.

**Moreover, the irregular arrivals through the Mediterranean make up a very small proportion of overall immigration to Europe.** Figure 6 charts arrivals to Spain and Italy against the overall numbers of immigration, asylum and naturalization (acquisition of citizenship) in Europe between 2010 and 2017. When compared with the other data sets the irregular arrivals seem negligible, although the politicization of boat migration to Europe would have one believe that the issue is more serious than it actually is.

**Figure 6:** Total immigration, asylum and irregular arrivals in Europe, 2010–2017



Data source: Eurostat

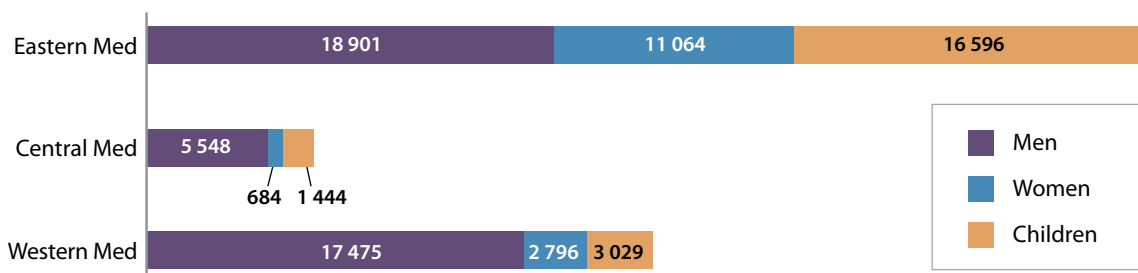
## 2. DEMOGRAPHICS

**The migrant groups who move along the three routes have very different characteristics, both in terms of demographics and nationality.** Figure 7 charts the demographics of each route for 2019. It demonstrates that groups using the Central and Western Mediterranean routes are mainly comprised of men, with the Central Mediterranean route demonstrating the lowest number of women and children. This is likely a reflection of the level of risk involved along this route, particularly in the case of Libya. The typical profile is young single men, or men who travel without their families. The Eastern Mediterranean route displays very mixed demographics, with an almost equal share of men, women and children. This is reflective of the fact that the majority of individuals moving along this route are asylum seekers, fleeing their country of origin and travelling with their families. Not only is there a high absolute number of children on the Eastern Mediterranean route (greater than the total number of arrivals through the Central Mediterranean in 2019), but children also represent 35% of the total number of arrivals through this route in 2019.

**Children accounted for 17% of all arrivals into Europe in 2019, compared to 19% in 2018 and 23% in 2017.** While the proportion has been decreasing; one out of six arrivals was still a child in 2019. In 2018, 55% of child arrivals were boys and the main source countries were Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Morocco and Turkey, together accounting for 71% of the total number.<sup>1</sup>

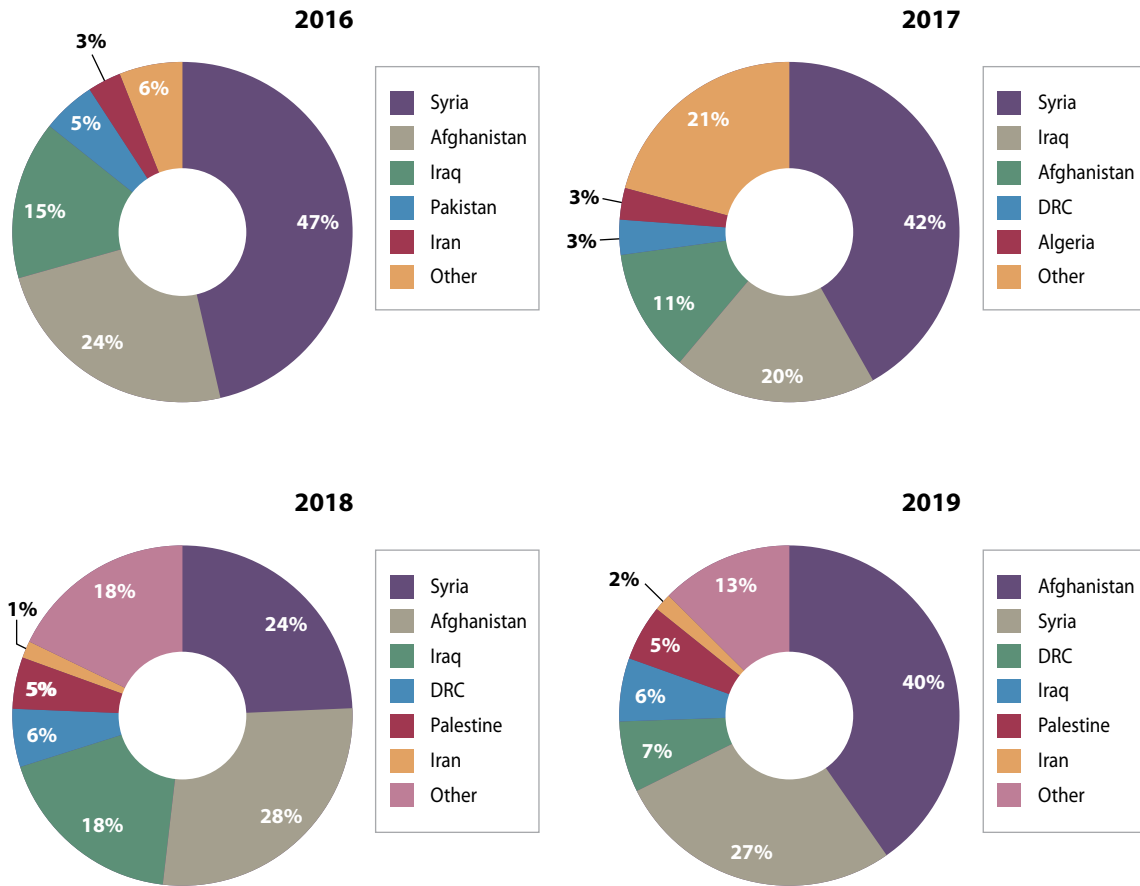
**As will be demonstrated in the sections on the Western Mediterranean and Central Mediterranean routes, the composition of the migrant flow moving through these two routes has shifted over the years.** However, for the most part, the Western Mediterranean route is followed by West Africans and the Central Mediterranean by a combination of West Africans, East Africans and Central Africans. There have also been Asian populations moving through both routes, including Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, although they were traditionally more likely to move through the Central Mediterranean. The migrants who use the Eastern Mediterranean route tend to come from refugee-producing countries. In 2019, the top four nationalities along this route were Afghanistan, Syria, DRC and Iraq. The nationality of arrivals from 2016 to 2019 is charted in Figure 8. As can be seen, there has been little variation over the four-year period.

**Figure 7:** Demography of arrivals on the three Mediterranean routes, 2019



Data source: Frontex

**Figure 8:** Arrivals along the Eastern Mediterranean route by nationality, 2016–2019



Data source: UNHCR

### 3. NORTH AFRICANS

**All routes have recorded use by North Africans.** Figure 9 charts the arrival of North Africans (Tunisians, Algerians, Moroccans, Egyptians and Libyans) across the three Mediterranean routes between 2014 and 2019. After a drop between 2015 and 2016, the numbers increased again between 2016 and 2018. In 2019, the number of North Africans arriving irregularly in Europe dropped again, as did the total number of arrivals.

The diagram delineates the dispersion of North Africans across the different routes, showing that:

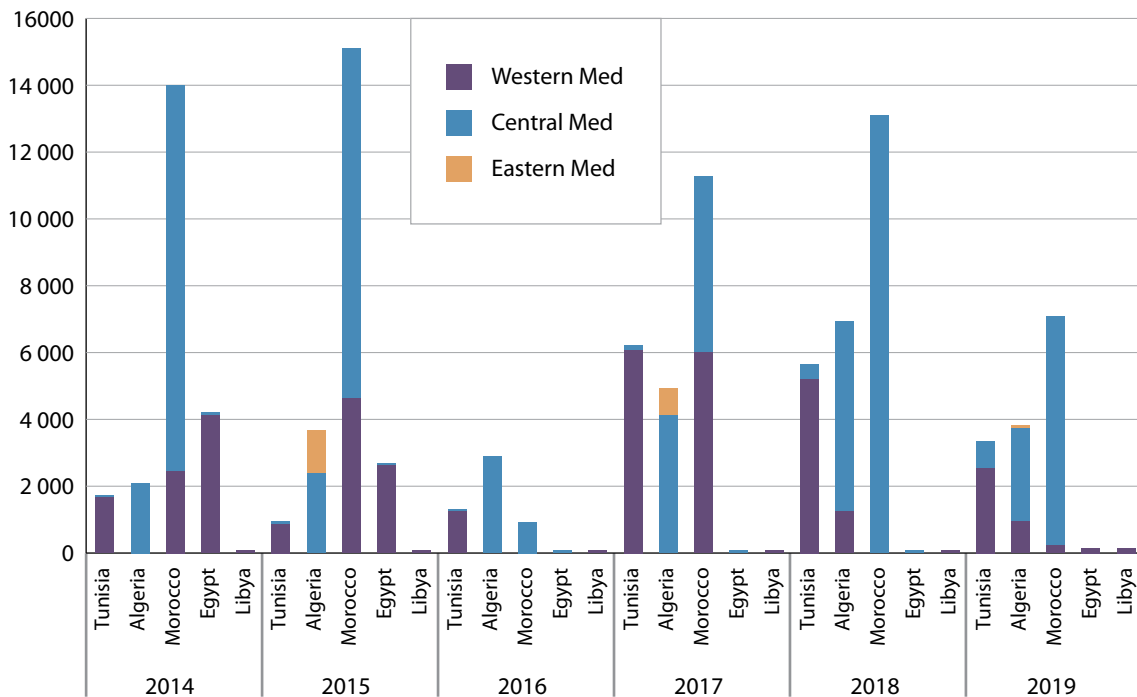
- **Tunisians travelled almost exclusively along the Central Mediterranean route until 2016.** Since 2017, the number of Tunisians moving along the Western Mediterranean route has been increasing, meaning that they are now taking boats from Tunisia as well as Morocco.
- **Algerians have been moving mainly through the Western Mediterranean** but appeared along the Eastern Mediterranean in 2015, when many felt it would be easier to enter Europe through Greece during the crisis year. In 2019, Algerians showed up again on the Eastern Mediterranean route, albeit in very low

numbers – with a total of 40 arrivals in Greece over the entire year. Between 2016 and 2019, Algerians have also shown up on the Central Mediterranean route. It is important to note that Algerians arriving in Spain and Italy have departed almost exclusively from the Algerian coast.

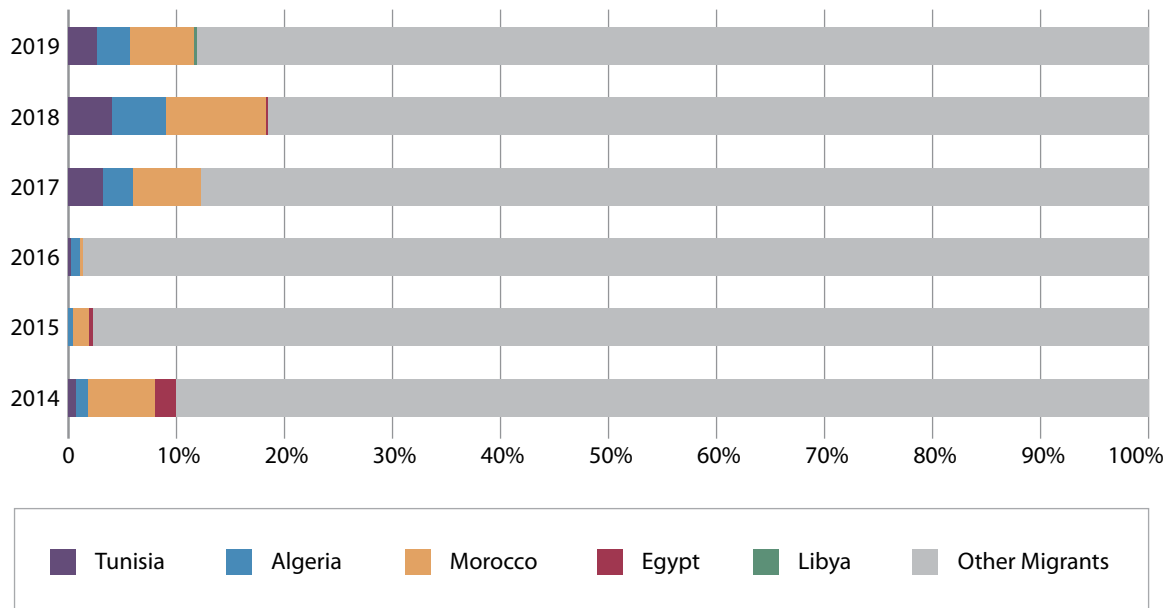
- **Egyptians have travelled almost exclusively on the Central Mediterranean route**, with departures from both Egypt and Libya. The numbers of Egyptian arrivals have progressively decreased over the last four years, with only 137 recorded in 2019.
- **Moroccans have been seen on both the Central and Western Mediterranean routes**, although predominantly along the latter. This means that in addition to the boat departures from Morocco to Spain, Moroccans have also been boarding boats to Italy. It would be safe to assume that those travelling along the Central Mediterranean route departed from the Libyan coast, given that their numbers along this route declined significantly after 2017.
- **Finally, a very small number of Libyans**, never exceeding 100 individuals per year, travelled along the Central Mediterranean route to Europe.

**While the absolute number of North Africans arriving irregularly in Europe dropped from 2017–2019 compared with 2014–2015, their proportion of total arrivals was increasing**, as shown in Figure 10. That is, the decrease in total arrivals over 2017–2019 was greater than the decrease in North African arrivals, leading to North Africans representing a greater percentage of overall arrivals. In 2014, North Africans represented 10% of all arrivals into Europe, 1% in 2015, 1.4% in 2016, 12% in 2017, 19% in 2018 and 12% again in 2019.

**Figure 9:** Arrivals of North Africans in Europe until Oct 2019



Data source: Respective national governments

**Figure 10:** North African arrivals in Europe as a percentage of all arrivals

Data source: Respective national governments

**The economic and political instability in North Africa has been a driver of this migration trend.** While unemployment rates are high in North Africa, with Tunisia at 15.5%, Algeria at 11.1% and Morocco at 9.8% in 2019,<sup>2</sup> youth unemployment rates are even higher. The International Labour Organization and the World Bank estimated that in 2019, the unemployment rate among youth (15 to 24 years of age) was at 30.8% in Algeria, 21.9% in Morocco and 34.8% in Tunisia.<sup>3</sup> All three countries have young populations, with 39% under 24 in Tunisia,<sup>4</sup> 70% under 30 in Algeria,<sup>5</sup> and 45% under 24 in Morocco.<sup>6</sup>

This means that youth unemployment will continue to escalate, and North African countries will have to create new jobs just to maintain the youth unemployment rate at its current level. There are also structural issues that increase unemployment rates, such as the mismatch between the demand for labour and the supply of labour. These are explored in the section on Tunisia.

**Political pessimism is also rife in these countries.** A survey conducted by Gallup in Tunisia in 2019 found that more than 60% of Tunisians have no confidence in their government and 79% feel that corruption is widespread within the political class.<sup>7</sup> Morocco is experiencing class tension spurred by recent economic growth that only benefited certain segments of the population and increased inequalities between different classes. The influx of poor migrants in Morocco has also led to tensions with poor communities. The political crisis in Algeria of February 2019, which led to the ousting of Bouteflika, was ongoing at the time of writing. Here, citizens are demanding the establishment of a younger civilian democratic system.

# **D. THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE**

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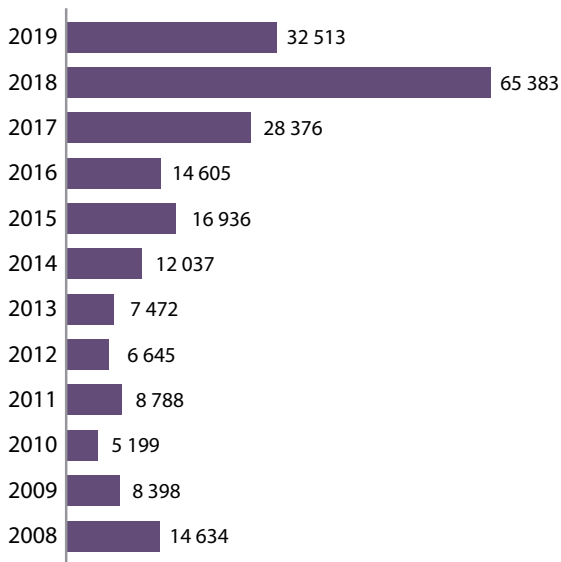
## 1. THE EVOLUTION OF THE FLOWS

**The Western Mediterranean route generally refers to the route from North Africa to Spain.** It encompasses a sea passage from North Africa to the Spanish southern coastline; a second sea passage across the Strait of Gibraltar from Tangier to Tarifa; a land route through the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla as well as a sea passage from Morocco and Mauritania to the Canary Islands.

**The Western Mediterranean route emerged as the most important route to Europe in 2018, surpassing both the Central Mediterranean and Eastern Mediterranean routes,** as can be seen in Figure 12. By October 2019, the Western Mediterranean route had become more important than the Central Mediterranean route in terms of total arrivals, but less important than the Eastern Mediterranean route.

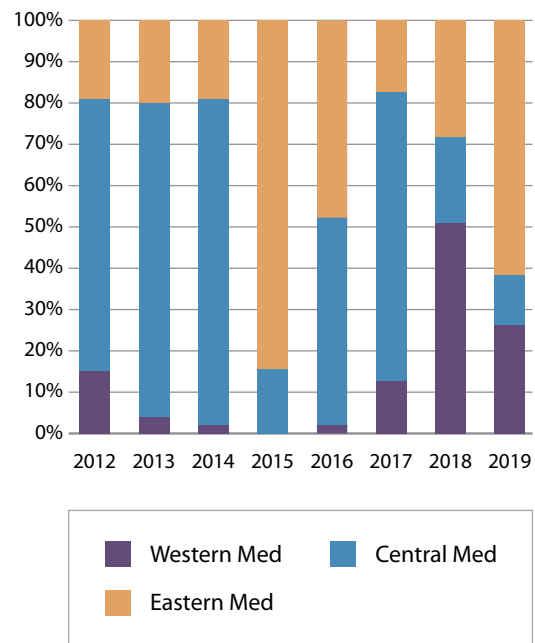
Figure 11 charts the total number of irregular arrivals (land and sea) to Spain from 2008–2019 (until October) in absolute terms. As can be seen, the number increased between 2016 and 2018, far surpassing the previous record of 20,000 that was set in 2006. By end of 2019, the total number for the year is almost equal to the 2017 number and far higher than the average of the past 10 years but more than 50% less than the 2018 number.

**Figure 11:** Total sea and land arrivals in Spain per year until Oct 2019



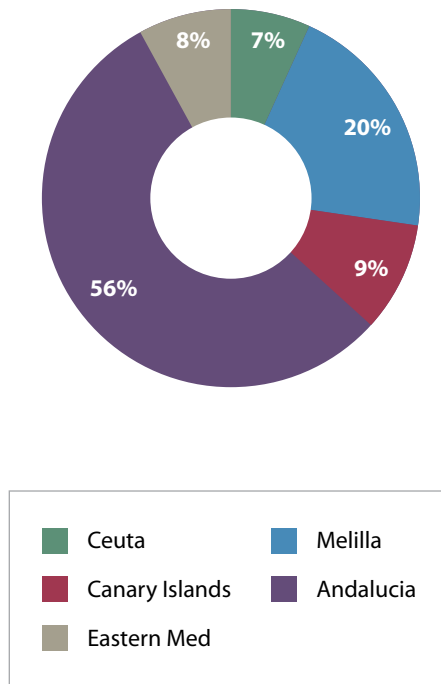
Data source: UNHRC Spain, Spanish Ministry of Interior (Moi)

**Figure 12:** Arrivals in Europe according to Med route



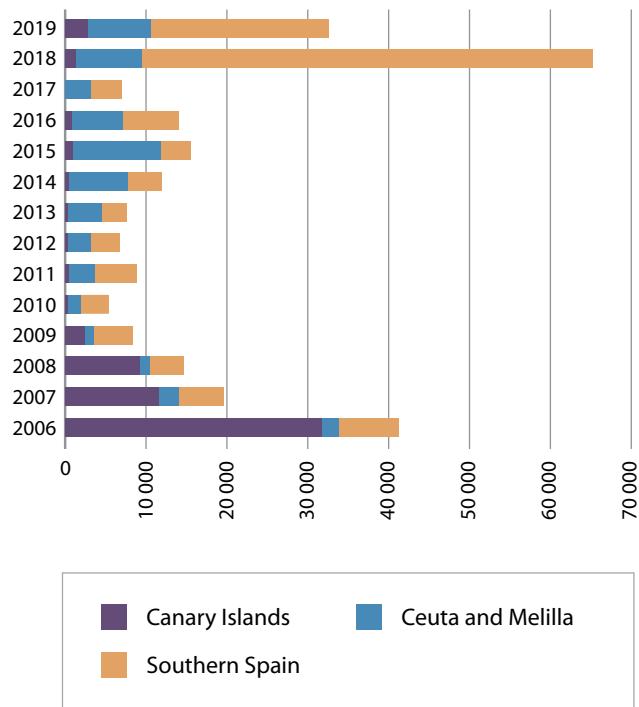
Data source: Respective national governments

**Figure 13:** Location of irregular arrivals in Spain until Oct 2019



Data source: UNHCR Spain

**Figure 14:** Irregular arrivals in Spain according to location, by year<sup>8</sup>



Data source: UNHCR and Amnesty International

**In addition to the number of arrivals in Spain increasing, the arrival points have also shifted.**

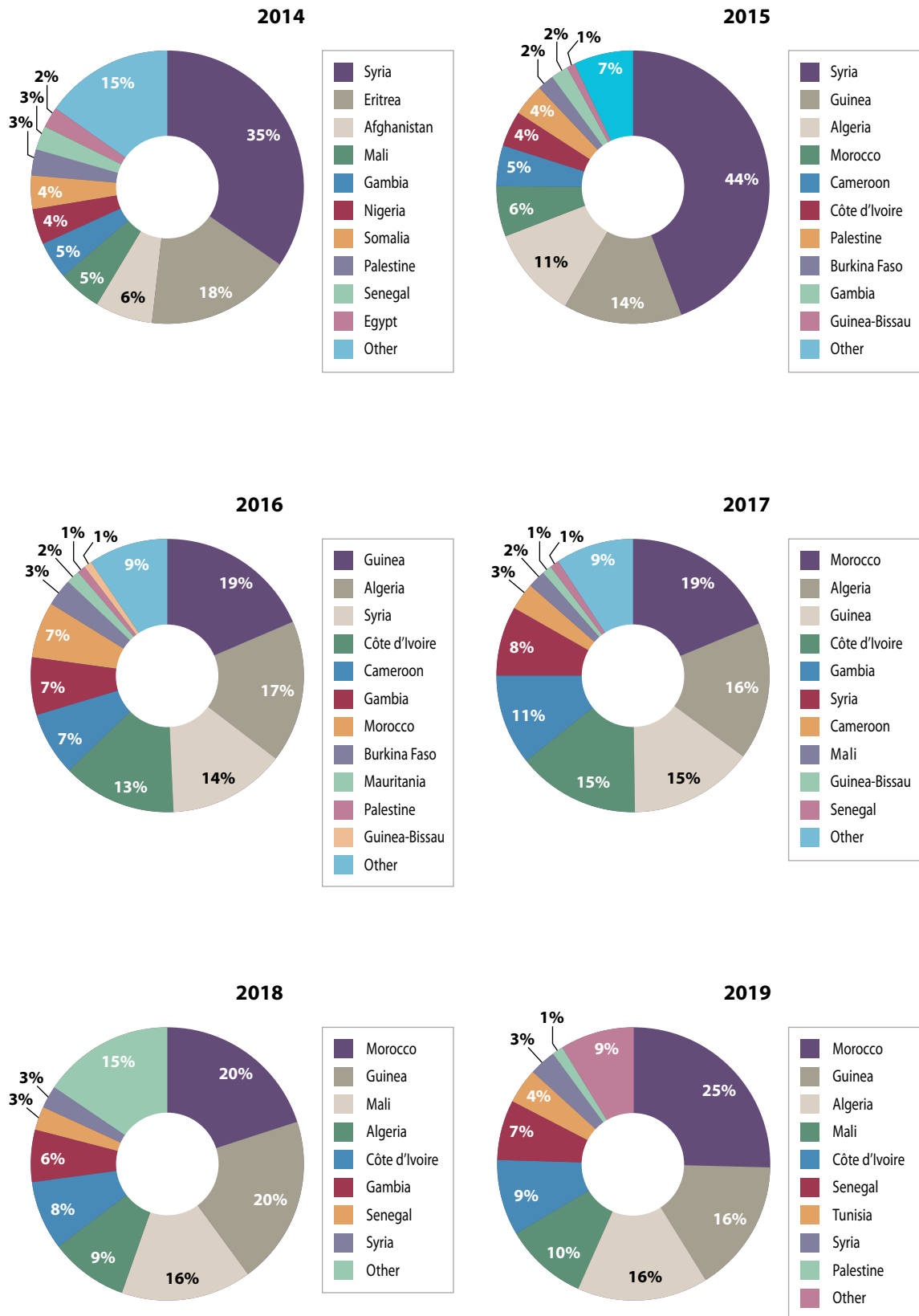
Figure 13 charts the location of arrivals for 2019 and Figure 14 charts irregular arrivals according to location per year from 2006. The ‘southern Spain’ cohort in Figure 14 refers to Andalusia and Eastern Mediterranean combined. ‘Eastern Mediterranean’ is the official terminology adopted by the Spanish Mol to refer to the eastern stretch of coast in southern Spain. It should not be confused with the Eastern Mediterranean route that moves from Turkey to Greece. The data demonstrates that in 2018 and 2019, the majority of irregular arrivals in Spain were by boat to the south. This constitutes a shift from previous years where movements to the Canary Islands dominated the landscape between 2006–2008, and land movements into the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla dominated the landscape from 2013–2016. The boat movements into Southern Spain began to increase in 2016 and have dominated the landscape since then.

**The majority of those who arrived in southern Spain in 2019 entered through Andalusia (56% of all arrivals into Spain and 88% of all arrivals into southern Spain).**

Boats that arrive in the Eastern Mediterranean<sup>9</sup> typically depart from Algeria, not Morocco. The departures from Algeria are increasing but still minimal. In 2019, arrivals into the Eastern Mediterranean accounted for 8% of arrivals into southern Spain. The routes between Morocco and Spain will be described in greater detail in the section on routes.



Figure 15: Irregular arrivals (land and sea) in Spain by year according to nationality

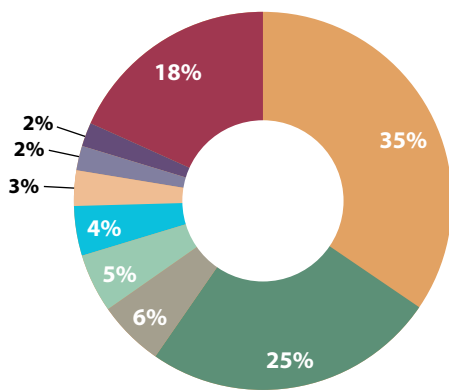


Data source: UNHCR Spain

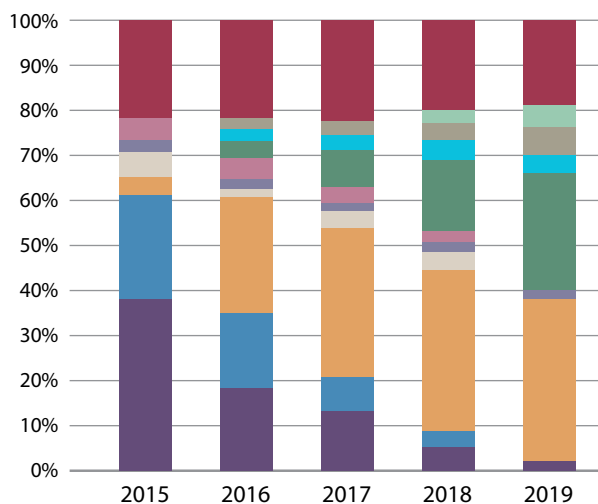
**The composition of the nationalities that make up the flow has also shifted.** Figure 15 charts irregular arrivals to Spain by nationality between 2014–2019. In 2014, nationalities that had traditionally travelled along the Central Mediterranean route started to appear on the Western Mediterranean route. This includes East Africans such as Eritreans and Somalis, as well as Egyptians, who rerouted as a result of the increased instability in Libya that year. Afghans have traditionally travelled along the Eastern Mediterranean route, but appear as the third most important country of origin for arrivals in Spain in 2014. By 2015, the composition had shifted back to include mainly West Africans and North Africans, with the addition of Syrians and migrants from Palestinian territories. By 2017, Moroccans constituted the first country of origin, a trend that has continued until 2019. The proportion of the total flow that Moroccans represent has increased from 19% in 2017 to 25% in 2019.

**The asylum statistics in Spain, when analyzed according to nationality, paint a different picture. As Figure 16 shows, in 2019 there were** no sub-Saharan nationalities in the top 10 and the top six nationalities were all South American, with the exception of the Syrians. This is because the majority of asylum seekers in Spain do not enter the country through the Mediterranean. In fact, the irregular migrants who arrive via the Western Mediterranean route represent a very small proportion of all irregular migrants in Spain. Figure 17 charts the nationality of asylum seekers in Spain between 2015–2019. The big increases in this period occurred amongst South American nationalities, particularly Venezuelans and Colombians. These patterns correlate with a deteriorating political and economic situation in both countries during this time.

**Figure 16:** Nationality of asylum seekers in Spain, 2019



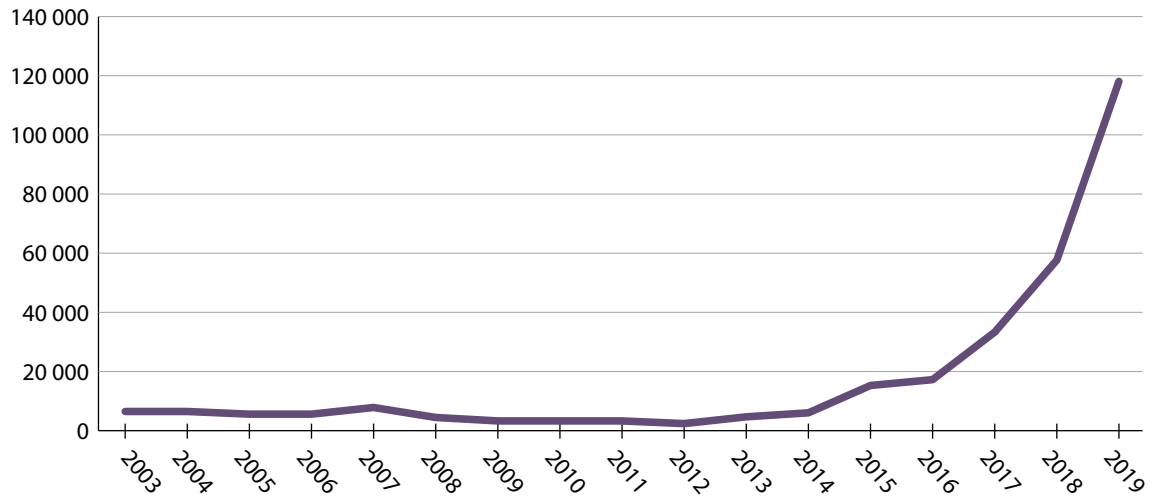
**Figure 17:** Asylum seekers in Spain by nationality, 2015–2019



Data source: Spanish Mol

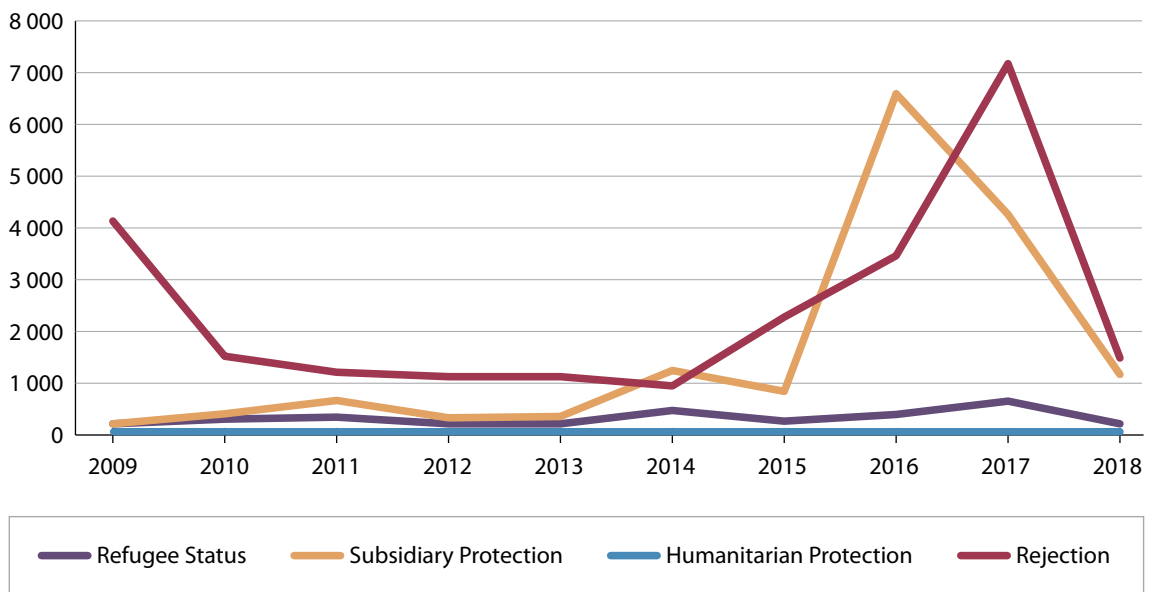
Data source: Spanish Mol

**Figure 18:** Asylum applications in Spain by year



Data source: Spanish Mol

**Figure 19:** Evolution of the types of protection granted in Spain



Data source: Asylum Information Database of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles

**Although the majority of asylum seekers in Spain do not enter the country through the Mediterranean, asylum applications in Spain have also been increasing since 2014, with an accelerated increase since 2016.** Figure 18 shows that between 2003 and 2015, the total number of asylum applications never exceeded 10 000. By 2018, it had climbed to 55 570 and by 2019, it reached 120 000.

**However, the number of rejections on asylum claims also increased in parallel.** Figure 19 charts the evolution of the types of protection granted to asylum seekers in Spain between 2009 and 2018. It demonstrates that refugee status and humanitarian protection have remained fairly stable over the period, but the biggest increase was seen in the number of rejections and subsidiary protection.<sup>10</sup>

**The increased movements along the Western Mediterranean route in 2018 led to even greater cooperation between Morocco and Spain.** This form of collaboration on migration management between the two countries dates back 15 years. In parallel, as of December 2019, the EU approved in total €244 million to support border control and the fight against criminal networks facilitating migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Morocco.

## 2. MOROCCO

**While Morocco has traditionally been a transit country for Mediterranean migration, its role as an origin and destination country has been increasing.** The number of Moroccans attempting to cross into Spain irregularly through the Mediterranean is on the rise. Increasing difficulty in accessing Spain from Morocco has transformed the latter into an inadvertent destination country for a portion of migrants.

**According to the 2014 census, out of a total population of 33.8 million in Morocco, 0.25% were foreigners living in the country** (a total of 84 001 individuals). According to the Moroccan government, the two regularization campaigns of 2014 and 2017 led to approximately 50 000 people being regularized in total.<sup>11</sup> This figure should be added to the total foreign population statistic, on the assumption that all regularized individuals remained in the country.

**The number of irregular migrants in the country is harder to gauge.** The Moroccan Ministry of Interior (Moi) estimates that the number is between 20 000–50 000, while other estimates cite 80 000 individuals. The Moroccan government announced that it had intercepted at least 55 000 separate irregular crossing attempts in 2017<sup>12</sup> and 89 000 in 2018.<sup>13</sup> By May 2019, the government announced that it had thwarted over 30 000 attempts at irregular migration since the beginning of the year and increased interceptions at sea by 30%.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.1 Foreign policy and migration

Morocco's evolving foreign policy has had bearing on its migration policy. Under King Mohammed VI, the country reoriented towards Africa from Europe and launched a number of business and diplomatic initiatives to promote trade and Morocco's standing as a dominant player in the region. This included Morocco being readmitted into the African Union (AU) in 2017 (see Focus box 1) and applying to join the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the same year. By 2018, the African Development Bank estimated that 85% of Morocco's outward foreign direct investment was focused on sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>15</sup>

### Focus box 1: Morocco and the AU

Thirty-three years after it made a decision to withdraw from the continental organization, Morocco was readmitted to the AU in January 2017. In 1984, Morocco had left the AU after the body decided to recognize the independence of Western Sahara, also known as Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and admit it as a member state. Morocco annexed Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, in 1975 and was in violent dispute with the Polisario Front, a Western Saharan independence movement, until a UN brokered ceasefire in 1991. Morocco still contends that the territory is under its control.

**This reorientation has required Morocco to strike the right balance between its strategic interests with both continents, Europe and Africa,** and this is reflected in its migration policy. For example, while the two rounds of the regularization campaign did not result in a huge number of regularizations compared to the total migrant population in the country, they did have a strong influence on Morocco's positioning towards West Africa and consequently on its readmission into the AU.

**During this period, Royal Air Maroc's flight network was also expanded into the region at competitive rates, positioning Casablanca as a regional hub.** This was accompanied with visa exemptions for nationals from Algeria, Tunisia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Congo, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire. Not only did this facilitate trade and business between Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa, but it also positioned Morocco as a gateway for US or European companies wishing to access West Africa.

**When the increased flights began to impact irregular migration flows into the country, Morocco instated a requirement for pre-registration** for nationals from the Republic of the Congo, Guinea Conakry and Mali. This decreased the number of sub-Saharan Africans arriving into the country and demonstrated Morocco's reliability as a counter-smuggling partner for Europe. The requirement was imposed in October 2018 and requires nationals from these three countries to fill out an online form at least 96 hours before travel.

## 2.2 Legal and normative framework

**In 2013, Morocco instigated a number of changes to its migration laws and policies. The impetus for this came from the 9 September 2013 thematic report on the situation of migrants in Morocco,** which was submitted by the Conseil National de Droits de l'Homme (National Council for Human Rights, or CNDH) to His Majesty King Mohammed VI. It led to the creation of four inter-ministerial committees related to the regularization of irregular migrants in the country; the status of refugees in the country; law reform in relation to migration; and a renewed commitment to regional and international cooperation on migration. It also led to the adoption of the 2014 National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (*Stratégie nationale d'immigration et d'asile*), making Morocco the only country in Africa that has an articulated migration policy.

### 2.2.1 Asylum

**While Morocco signed the 1951 refugee convention, it has not yet passed a national asylum law. In the absence of such a law, the UNHCR has been registering refugees in the country since 2003 and is permitted to do so in their office in Rabat only.** As 30% of the asylum seekers in Morocco arrive by land through Algeria, there is a referral mechanism in place where migrants who arrive in Oujda are received by the *Centre Assistance Juridique* (Legal Assistance Centre), under the *Observatoire National du Développement Humain* (National Observatory for Human Development). Here, migrants are given information and the opportunity to apply for asylum. Those who would like to register are subsequently transported to Rabat.

**Registered asylum seekers are provided with a document that will prevent their deportation.** During periods of large-scale arrests and deportations of irregular migrants in Morocco, registrations with the UNHCR increase due to this protection. When an asylum seeker is eventually recognized as a refugee by the UNHCR they are referred to the national *Bureau des Réfugiés et Apatriés* (Office for Refugees and Stateless Persons), an inter-ministerial commission that decides whether to grant a refugee card. The refugee card regularizes the refugees and allows them to apply for residency.

### 2.2.2 Regularization campaigns

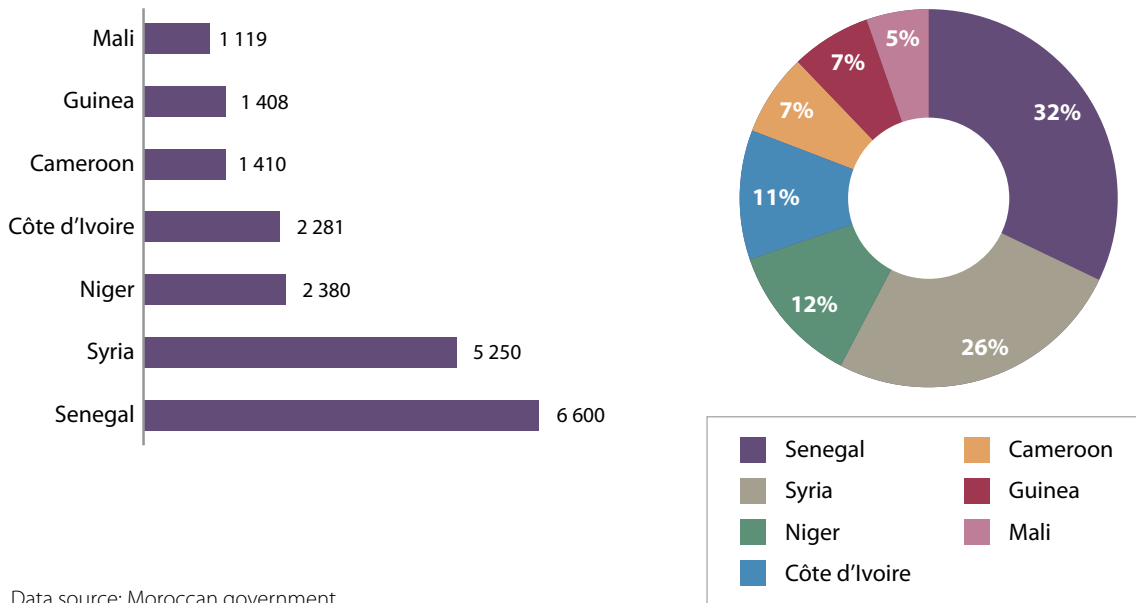
**At the end of 2013, a campaign was launched for the exceptional regularization of foreigners with an irregular administrative status in Morocco,** and applications were accepted into 2014. Under this campaign, offices were set up in each prefecture and province of the Kingdom (83 in total) to validate applications for regularization. Foreigners with an irregular administrative status in Morocco qualified for regularization if they fit into one (or more) of the following categories:<sup>16</sup>

- Migrants married to a Moroccan national;
- Migrants married to a foreigner living in a regular situation in Morocco;
- Children of marriages involving the two above-mentioned scenarios;
- Migrants in possession of a valid work contract;
- Migrants who have lived in Morocco for five years or more; or
- Migrants suffering from a serious disease.

**Under the 2014 campaign, 25 000 applicants were granted the *carte d'immatriculation* (registration card), which grants the right to work and provides access to basic services.** It is valid for one year (and in some cases, for three years) and is renewable. The *carte d'immatriculation* is a requirement to apply for a *carte de séjour* (residence permit) which is valid for 10 years.

**In 2016, the Moroccan government launched a second campaign for regularization.** While the Moroccan authorities have not released any specific statistics for the second campaign, they have confirmed that the same number of foreigners were regularized in each of the two campaigns. The recognition rate across both is 85%.

**Figure 20:** Migrants regularized in Morocco in 2014 by nationality



Data source: Moroccan government

### 2.3 Profiles

**The typical migrant profile in Morocco is a single sub-Saharan African man of 28 years – but this profile is shifting.** The share of women is increasing, with female migrants accounting for 20% of the total migrant population in 2019. There has also been a shift towards higher levels of education, with a tertiary education rate of 20%. The number of Moroccans moving towards Europe has been increasing, which is influenced by the fact that Libya is no longer a viable option for employment for Moroccans.

**While the total number of arrivals in Spain rose over 2017 and 2018, a corresponding spike was not seen in Morocco.** This is likely explained by a number of factors, including the increase in Moroccans on the routes to Spain; new smuggling modalities, which see some groups being led through Morocco immediately; and the increase in AVRs from Morocco.

#### 2.3.1 Sub-Saharanans

**Since 2017, a new dynamic has emerged whereby middle-class and qualified African migrants are transported to Europe through Morocco to fill labour-market gaps in European countries.** New smuggling routes have emerged to facilitate the movement of this profile. This involves a ‘door-to-door service’ that includes flying into Casablanca (thanks to visa exemptions for select West African countries), and then being moved to the coast immediately to board speed boats to Spain. The entire journey is completed in a matter of days. The majority of people who move in this way remain undetected by authorities, and it is likely that they are not accounted for in Spain’s official arrival statistics. Once in Spain, many are transported further north into other European countries, particularly France and Germany, where there is a job waiting for them. Once they arrive, they are regularized through the help of the employer.

**Particular profiles observed during fieldwork include Ivorian nurses being transported to Paris to work in the health industry, and Gambian engineers being transported to Germany.** It is not only highly qualified sub-Saharan African migrants who are moving to Europe via this door-to-door service, but also members of the North African middle class. These dynamics are described in greater detail in the section on smuggling. It should be noted that a trade in passports from visa-free countries has emerged for migrants who do not benefit from visa exemptions.

**In terms of the typical profile of low-skilled sub-Saharans moving through Morocco, all these journeys begin in Nador and are facilitated through a pay-as-you-go smuggling model.** The main changes in this area include a decrease in English-speaking migrants (from Nigeria, Cameroon and Sierra Leone) and an increase in French-speaking migrants (Guineans, Ivorians, Senegalese and Malians) – but particularly Guineans and Malians. The decrease in English-speaking West Africans may be caused by more of them adopting the door-to-door service and moving through Morocco undetected, or it may reflect a general decrease of these nationalities on the routes. It is also possible that the numbers have not decreased, but that these communities are moving deeper underground in Morocco and service providers have less and less access to them.

**Finally, there is also a flow of West Africans who come to Morocco to study.** The visa exemptions for select West African countries were mainly instated to facilitate the arrival of these international students. Many of them continue to live in Morocco after their studies are completed, but tend to do so irregularly because they are unable to renew their residency (*carte de séjour*). This trend is particularly evident among Burkinabe migrants in Morocco.

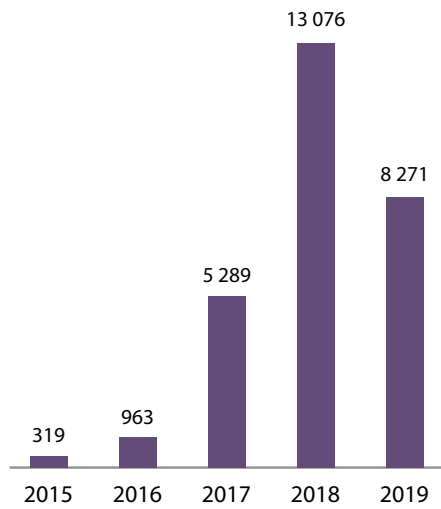
### 2.3.2 Moroccans

**The percentage of Moroccans within the total number of migrant arrivals in Spain has been on an upward trend since 2016, moving from 6% in 2015 to 25% in 2019.** While the total number of Moroccans arriving in Spain decreased between 2018 and 2019 (see Figure 21), so too did the overall number of arrivals, leading to a slight increase (3%) in Moroccans in percentage terms (see Figure 22). At the end of 2018, the Moroccan Mol announced that it had prevented 89 000 separate attempts at irregular crossing throughout the year, and that almost a third of the migrants were Moroccan.<sup>17</sup> Practitioners in the field observe a link between the increase in Moroccans moving to Spain, and Libya becoming more dangerous. Libya has traditionally been an important destination for Moroccan labour migrants. As the country became more dangerous, it was only natural that these migrants would seek other destinations.

**Since 2017, there has also been an increase in Moroccan minors moving towards Europe.** Families send their minors irregularly to Spain to create a foothold in Europe for the family, given that minors will not be sent back until they are of age. These are typically young boys who travel with their fathers until Spain, after which the father will return home. In other cases, the children are trafficked and there has been a parallel increase in trafficking networks that facilitate the movement of Moroccan children to Europe. According to the NGO

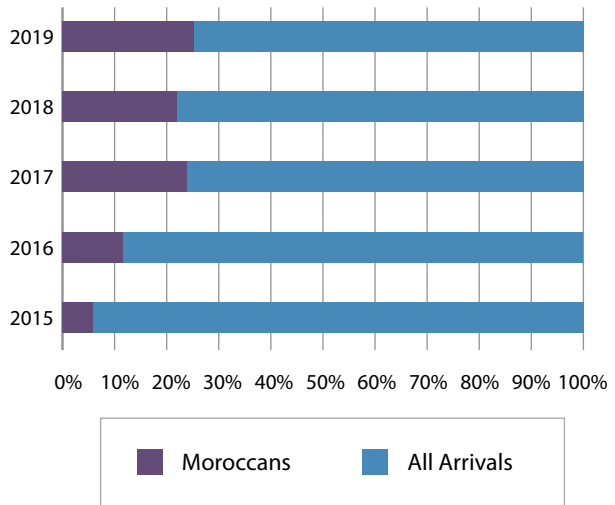


**Figure 21:** Moroccan arrivals in Spain



Data source: Spanish Mol

**Figure 22:** Moroccan arrivals in Spain against all arrivals



Data source: Spanish Mol

GADEM (Groupe Antiraciste de Défense et d'accompagnement des Etrangers et Migrants), Moroccan children have also been arrested by authorities in Nador and deported to the south as part of the government's efforts to decrease migratory pressure on the coast.<sup>18</sup>

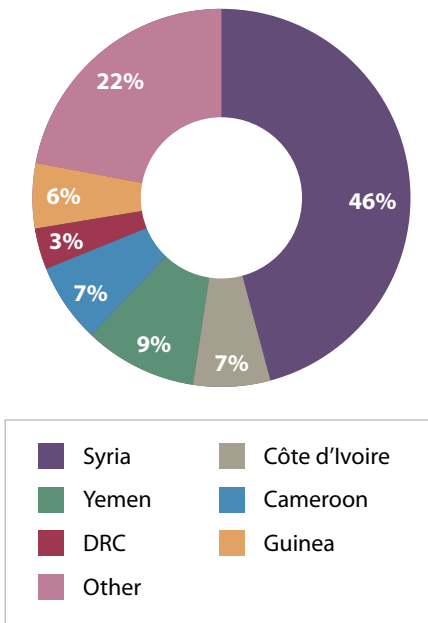
### 2.3.3 Other nationalities

**There is also a flow of Asian migrants arriving in Morocco, mainly from the Philippines and Bangladesh, and other unusual nationalities like Brazilians.** The Filipinos and Bangladeshis do not appear on boats arriving in Spain; they usually go to Morocco to work. In fact, most of them travel to Morocco with a pre-organized job. This is usually in the domestic-help sector, and these arrangements are often facilitated through government programmes in their home country. However, many of them end up in exploitative situations in Morocco. There is also a small flow of Brazilians who come to Morocco, not to transit to destinations in Europe but to move to other countries. However, they are vulnerable to drug-trafficking networks in Morocco.

### 2.3.4 Asylum seekers and refugees

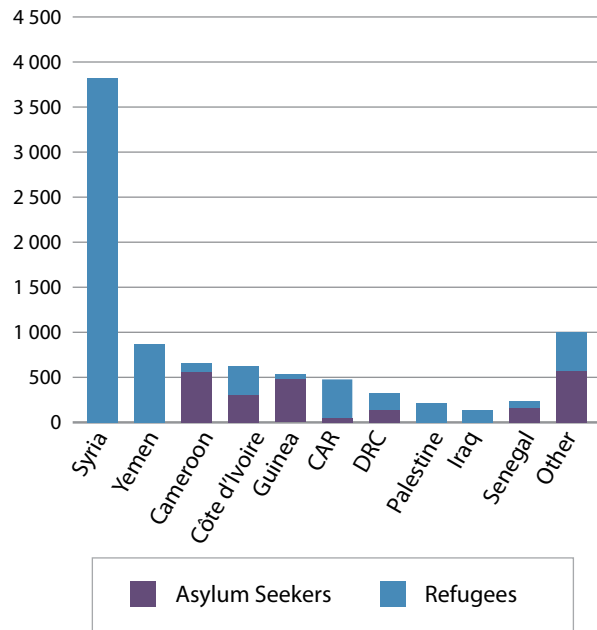
**There are 9 000 persons of concern under the mandate of UNHCR in Morocco, of whom 7 000 are refugees and the remaining 2 000 are asylum seekers. Syrians make up the largest caseload,** numbering 38 000 as of April 2019 (see Figure 24) and representing 46% of the total as of February 2019 (see Figure 23). Syrians are recognized as refugees on a prima facie basis by UNHCR, which is why there are no Syrian asylum seekers within the population of concern. The next three largest communities of refugees are the Yemenis (9%), Ivorians (7%) and Cameroonians (7%). Yemenis are also granted prima facie refugee status, but the Cameroonians have a high proportion of asylum seekers (close to 90%) and Ivorians just under 50%.

**Figure 23:** Population of concern in Morocco, Feb 2019



Data source: Data from UNHCR, Morocco

**Figure 24:** Population of concern by status and country of origin, April 2019



Data source: Data from UNHCR, Morocco

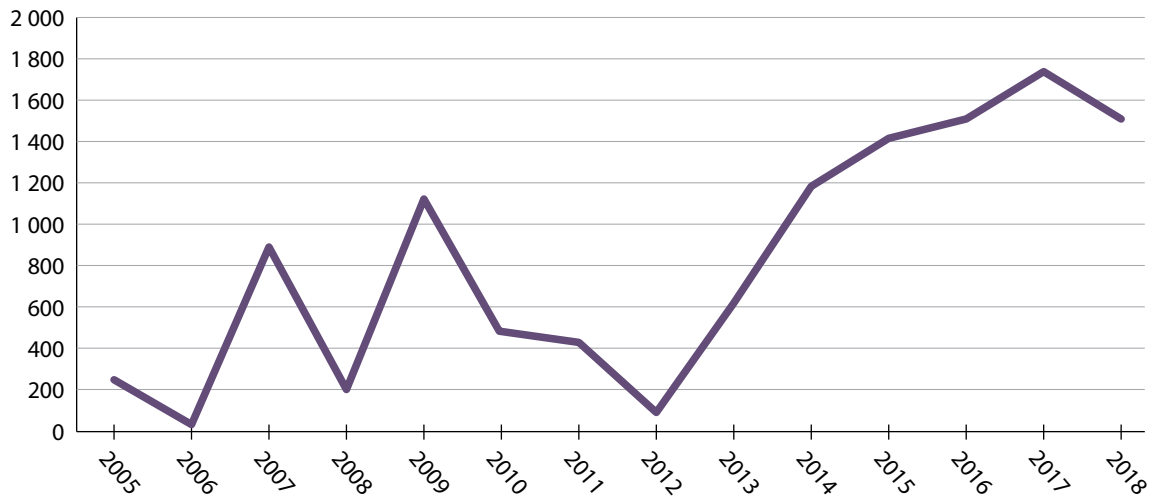
**Since October 2018, there has been a new trend of Arab refugees arriving to Oujda by land and being moved to Spain within days.** The communities are Yemenis, Syrians and Palestinians. They are moved to Nador from Oujda and then into Melilla in one of two ways: either with the use of false Moroccan passports, or through smuggling networks that bribe authorities on either side of the border.

A new profile of asylum seekers that has been increasing since 2017 in Morocco is African mothers, who move with their daughters and apply for asylum on the grounds of evading FGM. This is the area of asylum law that has changed the most in the last 10 years. The daughter is granted asylum on the grounds of FGM, and the mother is granted asylum for opposing cultural norms.

### 2.3.5 Assisted voluntary returns from Morocco

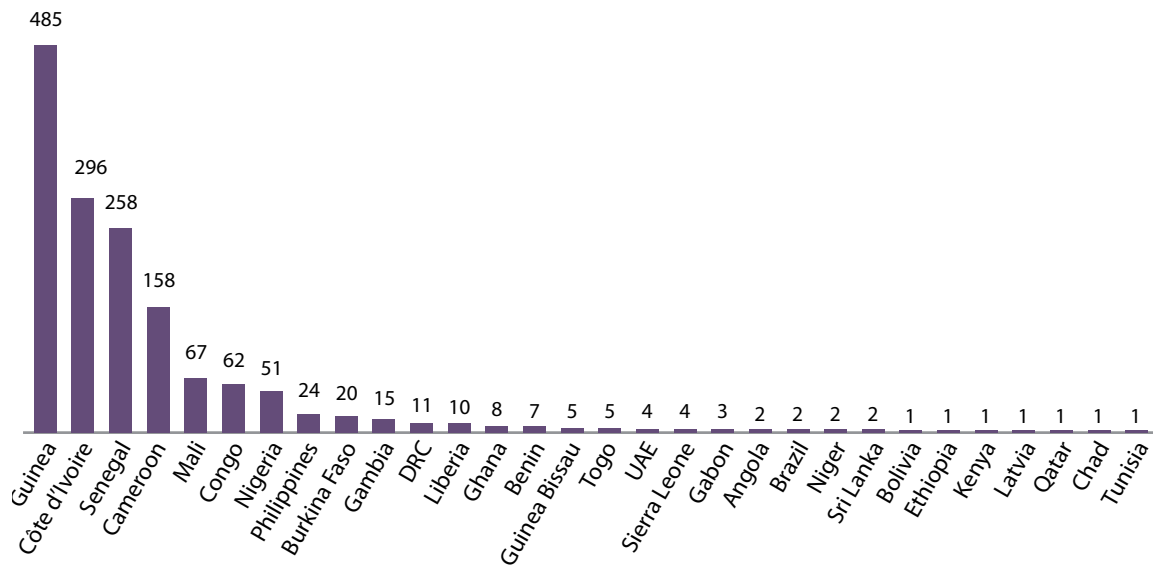
**The number of beneficiaries of IOM AVR programmes has also been on an upward trend since 2012,** as shown in Figure 25. Although there was a slight drop between 2017 and 2018, the 2018 number is still 13 times higher than the 2012 number. The number of beneficiaries that IOM is able to assist through its AVR programs is not always based on demand but also on financial resources available, yet an increasing number of migrants have been departing Morocco through these programmes. This could be one of the factors that helps explain why the increase in migrant arrivals in Spain was not matched by a corresponding increase of migrants in Morocco. Figure 26 charts Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) beneficiaries by nationality for 2018. It shows that the top nationalities are all West African.

**Figure 25:** IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration beneficiaries, Morocco



Data source: IOM Morocco

**Figure 26:** IOM AVRR beneficiaries by nationality, 2018



Data source: IOM Morocco

## 2.4 Deportations and expulsions from Morocco

Since June 2018, police operations have taken place in northern Morocco, where migrants are put on buses and sent to the south of the country with the intention of decreasing the migratory pressure on the northern coast. These operations have taken place especially around Ceuta and Melilla and in Tangier, Tetouan, Nador and Oujda. They coincided with a decrease in the number of arrivals in Spain in the second half of 2018 and in 2019.

**Migrants targeted by these operations are usually gathered in the police station in Tangier**, where they are fingerprinted and identified. From there, migrants have been taken to Tiznit (south of Agadir), Agadir, Beni Mellal, Casablanca, Dakhla, Errachidia, Safi, Fes, Kenitra, Oujda (and from there, on to Algeria), Marrakech, Rabat and Settat. According to human-rights group GADEM, the migrants are not dropped off inside the cities but on the outskirts – and usually without information, food or water.<sup>19</sup>

**While these practices have been occurring since 2014, civil-society actors have observed an increase since the summer of 2018.** In August of that year, 6 500 people were arrested or displaced, including minors, pregnant women and toddlers. Between September and October of 2018, 142 migrants were arrested and detained in Tangier police station, 10 of whom were minors. Arrests occurred in the neighbourhoods of Branès, Boukhalef and Mesnana. Police forces raided houses as well as the streets, and used drones to control the forest in Mesnana.<sup>20</sup>

**Migrants who have been intercepted at sea by the Moroccan Coast Guard can also be deported south.** They are often provided with a sandwich and a drink, and put on a bus headed south. The bus driver does not drop everyone off in the same spot, but rather distributes them across different locations to avoid creating large groups of migrants. Migrants and smugglers reported that sedating drugs are put inside the sandwiches to prevent the migrants from protesting or rioting.

**Moroccan authorities regularly dismantle the camps that migrants establish in the south and deport migrants home from there.** The migrants typically become stranded in the south because they cannot afford to travel north again. As a result, camps developed in Agadir and Tiznit, but they are regularly dismantled by Moroccan authorities and the migrants are deported home. Moroccan authorities stated that 5 700 migrants were deported in 2018. As a point of reference, IOM AVRR beneficiaries numbered 1 708 in the same year.

## 2.5 Drivers of migration

**In general terms, migrants view Morocco as a transit country and very few irregular migrants enter the country to stay.** Of course, many of them become stranded and Morocco becomes an inadvertent country of destination – but this is rarely the intention. Migrants choose to travel through Morocco and along the Western Mediterranean route for obvious reasons: it is safer than Libya, there are routes to Spain that do not involve a sea crossing and it can be cheaper than the Central Mediterranean route if journeys are made from Tangier or into the enclaves. The lack of widespread extortion practices in Morocco (unlike Libya) also makes this route cheaper, the distance by sea is shorter and therefore potentially safer, and more recently, Spain has become easier to access than Italy.

**However, finding work in Morocco is not easy and this made Libya a more attractive transit country in the past, when it was more stable.** When migrants struggled to find work in Morocco, they often crossed the border into Algeria and worked there for a time, before returning to Morocco. Since 2018, the border between

these two countries has been reinforced and undertaking these cross-border movements has become too risky. Migrants in our sample who were or had been working in Morocco reported being employed in low-skilled jobs such as construction, daily labour and the hospitality industry for men. Women reported working in domestic roles or the service industry (in services like hairdressing and massage), and often had an easier time finding work. Begging has increased among migrants in Morocco, but this is usually only undertaken by men.

**A new dynamic that has emerged since 2015 is sub-Saharan Africans coming to Morocco to work in call centres**, which is a growing industry in the country. These migrants report that if they manage to find such a job, they will be able to secure a residence permit. Having a residence permit in Morocco makes it easier to apply for a Schengen visa.

**It is now cheaper to travel through Morocco for many nationalities.** In recent years, Morocco repositioned itself towards Africa and provided visa-free travel for nationals from a number of West African countries. Coupled with the expansion of Royal Air Maroc into the region, it became much easier to travel to Morocco than Libya. Flights from most West African capitals to Casablanca are cheaper than travelling overland through Mali, Algeria, Niger or Libya. It is also much safer and quicker.

**Moreover, migrants report that if they are intercepted at sea or arrested by authorities in Morocco, they are typically deported to the south of the country** instead of back home or to a neighbouring country. This decreases the level of risk, but also the financial burden of returning to the coast if one has been displaced by authorities. This seems to be uncommon among female migrants, with very few women in our sample reporting deportations to the south.

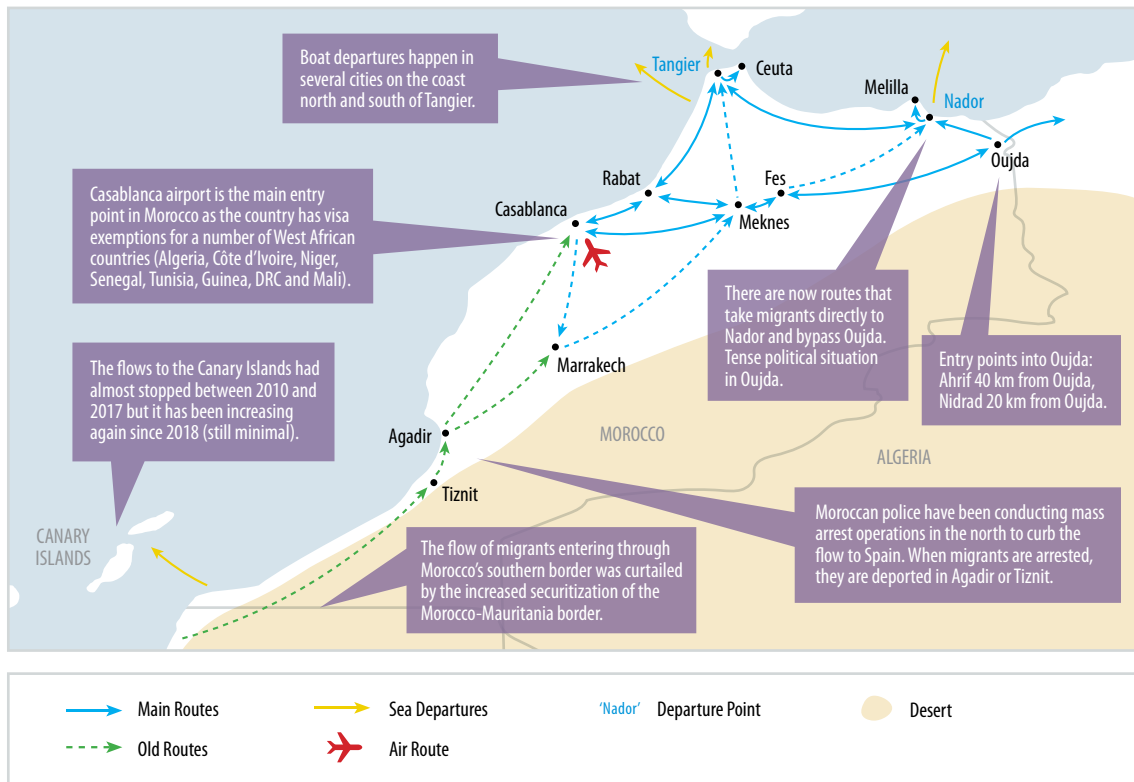
## 2.6 Routes of travel and the conditions of the journey

### 2.6.1 Routes to Morocco

**Traditionally, migrants moving to Morocco through Algeria would enter via Oujda (Morocco), by crossing the border at Maghnia (Algeria).** From Oujda, they would move to Nador, from where they would begin their journeys to Spain, whether it be via sea or land (see Map 2). However, the context in Oujda has changed over the last two years, both because of political changes in Algeria as well as increased border control between Morocco and Algeria. In 2018 Algeria stepped up its border control with Morocco – not only to address increased irregular migration flows through the country, but also to prevent the smuggling of gas and contraband. Morocco set up fences along the Algerian border to stop migrants from crossing from one country to the other. This made it difficult for migrants to enter Morocco, and also made it difficult for migrants to go back to Algeria from Morocco to work when they ran out of money.

**The context in Oujda has also changed.** Migrants used to live in camps that they created in Oujda, but since the summer of 2015, the Moroccan police started to step up their search and identification of irregular migrants in the city. This led to the establishment of migrant ghettos in Oujda. Run by smugglers, the

Map 2: Routes through Morocco



ghettos accommodate migrants and keep them hidden from authorities. Migrants typically pay between €50–100 per week to stay in the ghettos. For women, the price can be up to €150 per week. Migrants have also reported pushbacks over the border, back to Algeria.

**New smuggling networks have emerged that move migrants straight to Nador from the Moroccan border, bypassing Oujda altogether.** This is a response to the increasingly difficult context in Oujda, as well as the increase in Arab migrants moving through the area. Since 2018, more Arab migrants – such as Syrians and Yemenis – started moving into Oujda. These migrants tend to have greater economic means than the sub-Saharan groups.

**Smugglers also started to avoid Oujda and move migrants over the border at different points in the vicinity of Oujda.** This includes Ahfir, which is 40 kilometres from Oujda, and Nidrad, which is 20 kilometres from Oujda. Crossing the border between Algeria and Oujda can cost sub-Saharan migrants between €100–200, and up to €1 000 for Arabs, particularly when they are moved directly to Nador. The price can climb to €350 for women, especially if they are pregnant. It is quite common for female migrants moving through this area to be pregnant, as there is a lot of forced prostitution in Maghnia, which is the corresponding town on the Algerian side of the border. Women also risk rape when they cross the border through the desert.

**Previously, migrants also entered Morocco from Mauritania in the south.** This route involved moving along the coast from Nouakchott to Nouadhibou in the north of Mauritania. From there, they would move into Bir Gandouz and then Dakhla in the contested region of Western Sahara, then to Laayoune in Morocco. Increased militarization of the border between Morocco and Mauritania has completely curtailed this movement. Now migrants who wish to move to Morocco move from Mauritania into Mali, then Algeria and over the border into the Oujda region.

**As a result of the increased difficulty, migrants are more likely to fly into Casablanca than travel to Morocco by land.** Migrants who enter via Oujda today are those who cannot fly into Morocco, such as Arabs who require visas for Morocco, or migrants who changed their mind along the way and re-routed to Morocco. This includes, for example, the flow of young sub-Saharan men who become stranded in Niger following increased difficulty in crossing into Libya, and after many attempts decided to move to Morocco via Algeria instead.

### 2.6.2 Routes from Morocco to Spain

**There are two main ways in which migrants move from Morocco to Spain:** to the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla (either by land or sea) and by sea into Southern Spain – either by crossing the Strait of Gibraltar (from Tangier and the surrounds) or the Alboran Sea (from the stretch of coast between Tangier and Nador). As already discussed in the introduction to the Western Mediterranean route, in 2018 and 2019 the majority of irregular arrivals in Spain were by boat to the south of Spain. These movements began increasing in 2016, and have dominated the landscape since then. Movements to the Canary Islands dominated the landscape between 2006–2008, and land movements into the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla dominated the landscape from 2013–2016 (see Figure 27).

**Since 2017, there are two modalities whereby migrants move through Morocco to get to Spain: the traditional pay-as-you-go system and a door-to-door service.** The latter involves flying into Morocco, being moved to the coast very quickly and then crossing the sea by speedboat or jet ski. All pay-as-you-go journeys begin in Nador and include land crossings or sea journeys into the enclaves, or sea journeys into southern Spain.

#### Door-to-door service

**The trend of flying into Morocco, instead of moving by land, started in 2017 and was prompted by two particular developments:** as part of Morocco's strategy for re-entering the AU, visa exemptions were created for passport holders from Algeria, Tunisia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, Congo, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire. (A pre-registration requirement was instated in late 2018 for nationals from the Republic of the Congo, Guinea Conakry and Mali.) Secondly, Royal Air Maroc's network was expanded into the region at competitive rates, positioning Casablanca as a regional hub. Today there are over 20 flights coming into Mohammed V International Airport in Casablanca from African capitals.

**Flying into Morocco is now cheaper than moving by land for most Africans.** For example, a flight from Conakry costs approximately €600, whereas moving by land with a smuggler can cost up to €1 000 and migrants moving by land face a great deal of risk in Mali and Algeria. Most migrants who intend to move to Europe now fly to Morocco.

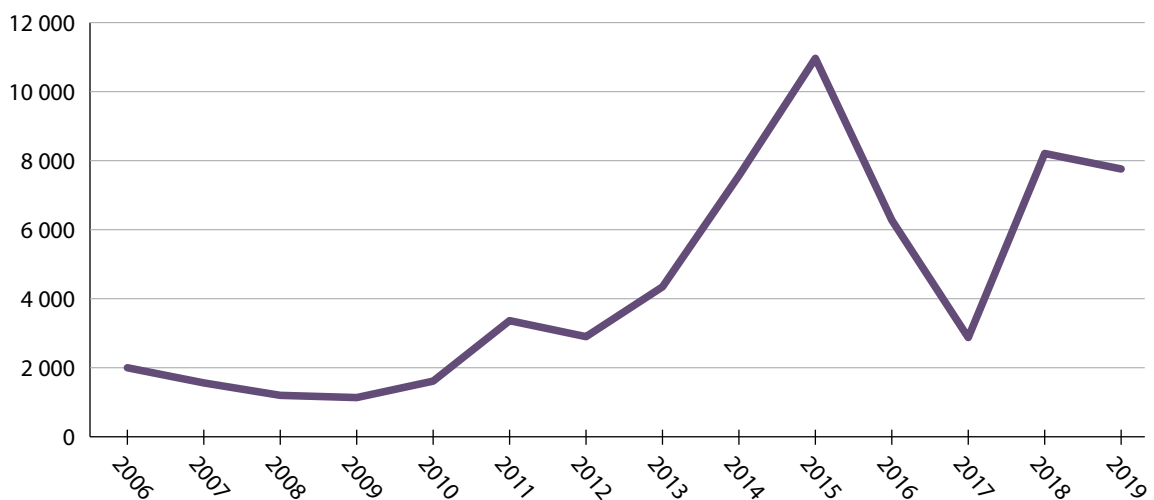
**Since mid-2018, there has also been an increase of migrants flying from origin to Casablanca with Tunis Air, involving a transit in Tunis.** Flights with Tunis Air tend to be cheaper than Royal Air Maroc, and transiting through Tunis allows nationals from countries that need pre-registration to avoid this requirement.

**Migrants moving to Morocco through this modality connect with a smuggler from origin and when they land in Casablanca, a driver is waiting for them at the airport.** The smuggler sends the driver a picture of the migrant by WhatsApp. The migrants are immediately taken to a guesthouse. They are then moved across the sea at night on speedboats or jet skis, which usually evade authorities. Sometimes the migrants are transferred from the speedboats to dinghies when they reach Spanish waters.

#### Entering the enclaves

**As seen in Figure 27, movements into the enclaves increased between 2013–2016, dropped over 2016 and 2017 and picked up again in 2018.** Traditionally, migrants moved into the enclaves by storming the highly reinforced border in large groups of over 100 men. This allowed some men to pass as authorities would not be able to stop everyone. In 2013, a trend started emerging whereby migrants used boats to cross into the enclaves, going out to sea from the Moroccan side of the border and then returning to land on the Spanish side.

**Figure 27:** Irregular arrivals to Ceuta and Melilla, 2006–2018



Data source: Data from UNHCR and Amnesty International



In 2013, an additional trend formed where Arab migrants would rent passports from Moroccans and cross into Melilla by pretending to be Moroccan. (Moroccans can enter the enclaves for three months at a time with no visa requirement.) This led to the flows into Melilla becoming more important than those into Ceuta.

**Melilla remains the main enclave entry point.** In 2019, there were 1 965 arrivals in Ceuta compared to 5 890 in Melilla. Since 2017, the flows into the enclaves have become less important when compared to sea movements into southern Spain. However, the number of people who come through the enclaves is increasing. It should be noted that many of those entering through the enclaves today are not captured in the official statistics. This is because the majority are Moroccans, or individuals pretending to be Moroccan by using a Moroccan passport, which means they are not counted as irregular migrants. This implies that the data may be somewhat skewed.

**It has since become almost impossible to storm the fences, and most movements into Melilla and Ceuta occur by boat or – in the case of Melilla – by crossing the border with a Moroccan passport.**

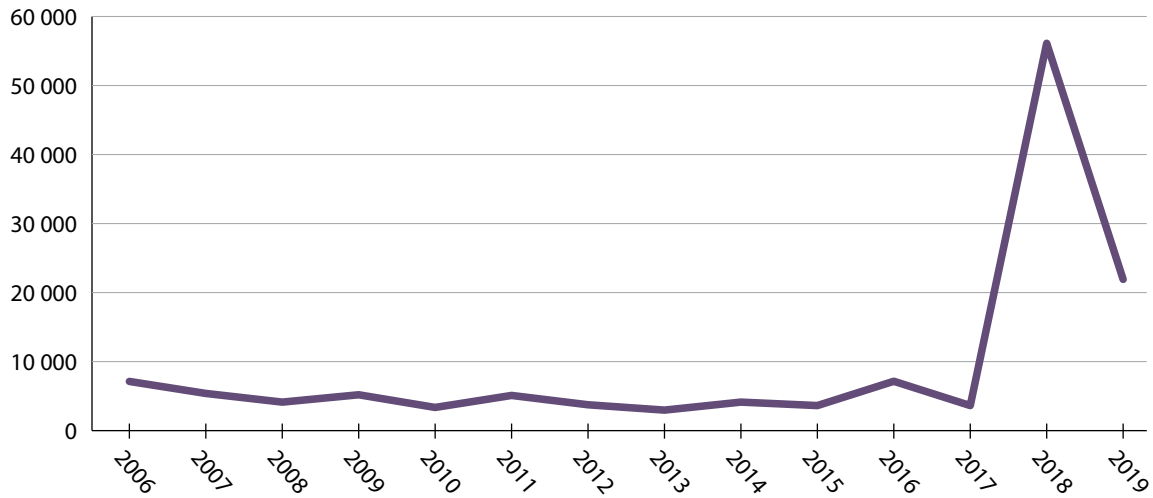
Smugglers arrange the passport for Arab migrants. The smuggler in Morocco only organizes the crossing over the border. Once migrants cross the border, they need to find a new smuggler on the Spanish side or they ask for asylum when they meet the Spanish border officials. The crossing costs between €800–1 200; an increase from €500 because it has become more and more difficult. There is also a third modality referred to as kamikaz among migrants, it entails storming the fence with a car. It is quite rare for now, but effective.

**The few continued attempts to storm the fences are usually undertaken by Malians.** In July and August 2018, there were two attempts to storm the fences in Ceuta. On 26 July, 700–800 migrants stormed the fence together and 602 managed to pass into Spain. On 22 August, between 200 and 300 tried to jump the fence and 119 successfully entered Ceuta, running to the Temporary Reception Centre for Migrants. The following day, 116 persons were readmitted into Morocco. According to human rights group GADDEM, these expulsions could be considered as refoulement because the individuals were not given sufficient time to apply for asylum.<sup>21</sup>

### Boat journeys into southern Spain

**As can be seen in Figure 28, movements into southern Spain dropped in 2006 and remained fairly stable, never exceeding 9 000 individuals per year until 2017. Since 2017, numbers have increased greatly,** moving from 3 864 individuals in 2017 to 56 061 in 2018. In 2019, the numbers dropped to 21 950, but so did overall numbers of arrivals. Movements into southern Spain include boat journeys from Tangier and its surrounds, across the Strait of Gibraltar, and movements between Tangier and Nador across the Alboran Sea (see Map 3).

**Movements from Nador and its surrounds are more expensive than moving from Tangier,** averaging around €2 500 per crossing. Movements from Tangier are for migrants with little financial means and typically cost about €300 for the crossing. This is because the distance between Tangier and southern Spain is smaller (see Map 3), averaging between 14–30 kilometres, depending on where migrants depart

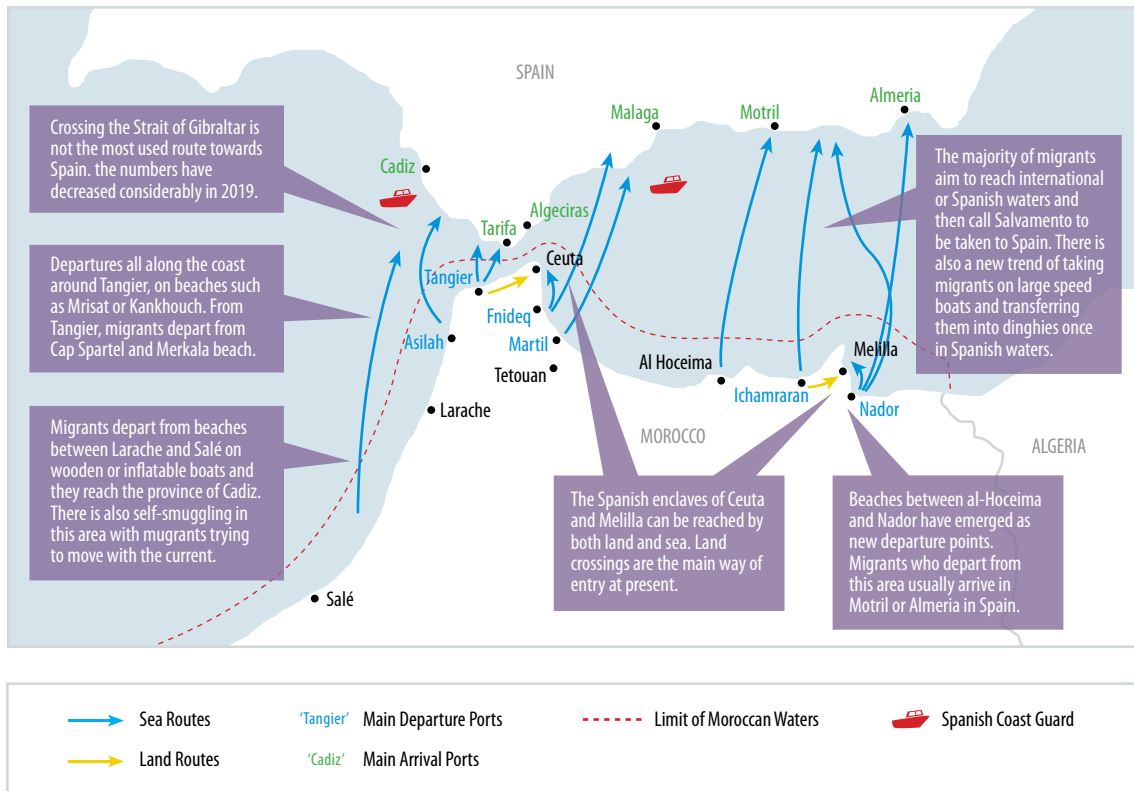
**Figure 28:** Irregular arrivals into southern Spain, 2006–2018

Data source: Data from UNHCR and Amnesty International

from exactly. The chance of success is also lower. Given the short distance, it is also possible for migrants to traverse this part of the sea with a paddle boat and without a smuggler. Conversely, boat movements from Nador and its surrounds require a boat/dinghy with an engine, given the larger distance. Moreover, there is a large distance between Nador city and the forest, where migrants wait for their boat journeys, and the distance from the forest to the coast is also significant. Therefore, movements from Nador entail greater logistics and require a smuggler.

**The routes from Nador and its surrounds have not changed much, although the departure points are less concentrated** than previously (in order to avoid detection) and are spread across the coast between Nador and Tangier. The new departure points are between El Hoceima and Nador, and departures from this area arrive in Almeria and Motril in Spain, following the ferry routes. Movements into Melilla by sea also depart from Nador, as shown on Map 3.

**Most migrants who intend to move by boat from Nador and its surrounds wait in the forest close to Nador.** There are over 14 migrant camps in the forest, usually established according to nationality. Some migrants choose to live in Nador city, instead of waiting in the camps in the forest. They live in poor neighbourhoods such as Publao, Blanco and Zacancan, even though Moroccans are forbidden from renting homes to undocumented migrants. There are tensions between migrant and host communities, given that Moroccans living in these neighbourhoods are also very poor. As explained previously, there is also a flow of Arab migrants who move directly to Nador after crossing into Morocco from Algeria. They are led into Melilla with borrowed passports, without waiting in the forest.

**Map 3:** Sea routes from Morocco to Spain

**There are numerous departure points around Tangier. To the west of the strait, south of Tangier, migrants depart from points between Salé and Larache and arrive in Cadiz province in southern Spain.** The majority of movements in this area are made with wooden or inflatable boats.<sup>22</sup> Self-smuggling also occurs in this area, with migrants using fishing boats and most often makeshift boats. These are mainly Moroccan migrants. As it is the Atlantic side of the coast, they try to move with the ocean current.

**Migrants who depart from points between Tangier and Ceuta arrive between Tarifa and Algeciras in Spain.** In this area, migrants depart from beaches such as Misrat or Kankouch and typically use inflatable boats or dinghies. There are also movements by jet ski in this area, as the distance to be traversed is quite small and can be done quickly with a jet ski. There is self-smuggling in this area too, mainly by sub-Saharan Africans with little economic means. They move with recreational rubber boats, with one or two people rowing. Sometimes migrants who use their own boats ask a smuggler to provide them with a Moroccan middleman to bribe the police, and the migrant will pay for this service. This type of middleman is referred to as 'Ali' regardless of the man's actual name (e.g., 'Do you know an Ali?'). As the coast guard uses large navy boats, they have little way of stopping these rubber boats other than by sinking them.

**In the vicinity of Tangier, there are also departures from Fnideq and Martil,** which arrive in Spain's Malaga province, and movements from Asilah, which arrive in Spain's Cadiz province. The overland crossing into Ceuta also begins from Fnideq.

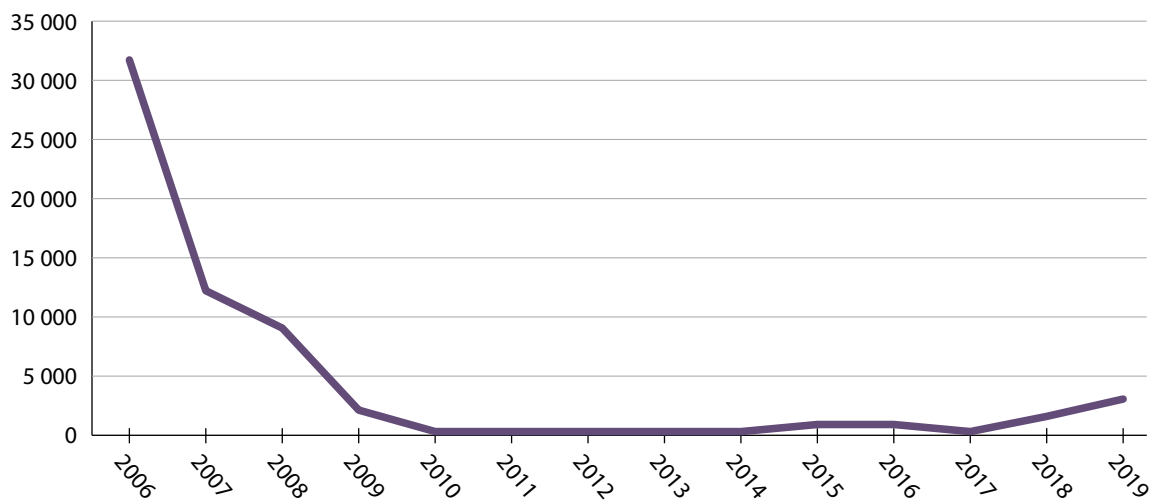
**There is a forest next to Tangier, much like in Nador. However, unlike Nador, most migrants don't wait in the forest, they move towards the forest when the journey has commenced.** Before the start of their journey, they hide in ghettos established by smugglers called *tranquilos*, which tend to be located in the neighbourhoods of Mesnana and Boukhalef in Tangier. Those making sea movements from Tangier and its surrounds are mainly irregular migrants and Moroccans. There are few registered refugees in this area.

### Boat journeys to the Canary Islands

**The Canary Islands constituted the main entry point into Spain for irregular migrants before 2006.**

In fact, in 2006, the number of arrivals into the Canary Islands hit a record of 31 678, prompting the Spanish government to renew its commitment to addressing irregular migration. Since then, the number of arrivals has dropped, hitting 196 in 2010 and remaining below 1 000 until 2017. In 2017, the number of arrivals was only 113; the lowest figure since the numbers were first recorded. This led many to believe that the movement was close to being eradicated. In 2018, however, the number rose to 1 144, which is the highest it has been since 2010. In 2019, the number had increased again to 2 700.

**Figure 29:** Irregular arrivals to the Canary Islands, 2006–2018



Data source: Data from UNHCR and Amnesty International

**In 2019, Frontex detected 867 illegal border crossings of Moroccans and seven by Ivorians.** In 2018, more nationalities were observed: there were 902 detections of Moroccans, followed by 128 Senegalese, 93 Gambians, 24 Guineans, 11 Malians, eight from Guinea-Bissau and four from Algeria.<sup>23</sup> While these numbers only reflect detections at border-crossing points and not the total number of people who arrived at the Canary Islands, it does suggest that Morocco constitutes the main country of origin for arrivals at the Canary Islands. In our sample, it was intimated that Moroccans travelling to the Canary Islands do so to join family members who live there.

**Historically, departure points for the Canary Islands have been on the Western African coast between Senegal, Mauritania and Morocco.** In 2018, Frontex observed that a little more than half of the irregular arrivals had departed from Morocco, while the rest left mainly from Senegal.<sup>24</sup> Departures from Morocco are concentrated around the stretch of coast between Laayoune and Tarfaya, which is the area closest to the archipelago. The cities of Cape Boujdour, Dakhla and Lagouira in Western Sahara have also been departure points. From Senegal, departures move from the coastal cities of Fann, N'Gor, Saint-Louis or Ziguinchor. The majority of migrants embarked on small wooden boats, but some rubber dinghies have also appeared on this route more recently.

### 2.6.3 Risks

**Forced prostitution:** This is common in Maghnia, the Algerian town that borders Oujda. Migrants typically need to stop here for a period of time before they can continue, in order to find a new smuggler and anticipate the right conditions for the onward journey. Smugglers often tell women that if they come and stay in their house, they will feed them. However, once the women arrive they are locked up and forced to prostitute themselves for food. After some time, they are released and allowed to continue their journey. Many of the female migrants in Oujda are consequently pregnant.

**Extortion:** This has become commonplace in Nador and is an increasing trend. Migrants are typically kidnapped and extorted, which can also involve rape and/or torture. Migrants in our sample reported that they are sometimes extorted by police in Nador. This typically occurs when they have family in Europe, and the police officers ask them to call their relatives. Cases of extortion have also been reported in Algeria, particularly close to the Nigerien border. It seems to be mimicking the situation in Libya, as these dynamics were not commonplace in these areas before they were reported in Libya. There are also reported cases where migrants move within the door-to-door service and, upon their arrival at Casablanca airport, are met by a driver who falsely claims that he works with the smuggler. These men typically kidnap the migrants and extort them.

**Bribery:** Migrants report all along the route the possibility of paying off police and other officials to be able to continue moving. Migrants and smugglers also reported cases of paying off the coast guard to be allowed to continue, and these cases were reported commonly. The price is always reported at around €5 000, and must be paid by everyone on the boat in order for it to continue. Smugglers who provide a more high-end smuggling services factor this into the price and, in that way, ensure a successful journey to Europe.

**Deceived by smugglers:** Migrants report that smugglers sometimes know that the boat journey cannot succeed, but still send it out anyway and charge migrants for it. Migrants have coined a term for such a situation, calling it *fouma fouma*. Migrants also report being extorted by their smugglers in Mali and Algeria.

**Migrants deceiving migrants:** A new business model has developed where migrants who are stranded in Morocco after many unsuccessful attempts to cross into Spain pretend to be a smuggler and call friends at home to encourage them to come to Morocco. Once they arrive, the stranded migrant will accommodate them and feed them and charge for that, even though he has no way of getting them to Spain.

### 2.6.4 Smuggling

**The migrant-smuggling industry in Morocco has shifted in a number of ways since 2017, including greater alignment with the cannabis-smuggling industry.** Morocco is now the world's largest exporter of hashish. It produces approximately 40 000 tonnes of hashish per year for European markets (constituting 70% of European hashish), all of which transits through Spain to reach other markets. The movement of the hashish from Morocco to Spain has been difficult to detect and control for authorities on both sides. Since 2017, the same networks have also started transporting migrants.

**Other changes include new smuggling dynamics to accompany an emerging profile** of qualified/middle-class migrants, who are moved to Europe for pre-arranged professional jobs. Also, while self-smuggling began to appear in the early years of the last decade, a hybrid approach has emerged since 2017. This approach sees migrants choosing to arrange their own journeys, but then paying a smuggler for a particular contribution, such as paying bribes or dealing with authorities. Migrants moving through the land border still have some autonomy.

**There has been an increase in the arrest of smugglers in 2019, motivated by joint Moroccan–Spanish efforts** within the framework of cooperation on security measures to counter transnational crimes. For example, a number of arrests were made in May 2019 in Nador, which included at least 10 individual smugglers and the seizure of multiple rubber boats, boat engines, vehicles, electronic devices and mobile phones.<sup>25</sup>

#### Dynamics of smuggling

**Smugglers in Morocco, referred to as chairmen, tend to operate in small networks with few Moroccans visible at the top of the hierarchy.** The chairmen are typically West African, particularly from Senegal, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon. Moroccans typically work for the chairman to fulfil specific roles and tasks, usually logistical. They are often drivers, provide cars or dinghies, or are asked to interface with the police if they appear. For example, the cars and drivers who transport migrants in Oujda or in the forest in Nador are referred to as 'taxi-mafia', and are almost always Moroccan.

**Migrants moving with smugglers from Tangier into southern Spain are moved from the forest to the coast by a middleman called the *clochard*.** The *clochard* is typically a young Moroccan man with a low socio-economic status who is accustomed to illicit or clandestine situations. The *clochard* accompanies migrants to about 300 metres from the beach and hands them an inflatable boat. The migrant group will then begin the journey on their own.

**There is always a 'captain' among the group; a migrant who is accustomed to boats and seafaring** (usually Senegalese) and is tasked with navigating the boat. In the past, captains were allowed to travel for free. However, when migrants realized that they would not have to pay if they steered the boat, many started asking for this role even when they didn't have the skills. As a consequence, smugglers now charge the

captains too. However, if the migrants are intercepted and returned to Morocco, the smuggler usually allows the captain to travel again for free.

**Departures always occur in the evening in order to avert undesired attention.** Migrants are forbidden from taking any metal objects with them so as to avoid radar detection. Contrary to what one may imagine, having pregnant women on boats is seen as desirable. Migrants report that if they are intercepted by the Moroccan Coast Guard and there is a pregnant woman on board, it is more likely that the boat will be allowed to pass after some convincing.

**As explained previously, smugglers have established ghettos in Oujda in order to keep migrants safe in the face of increased police raids.** Migrants typically pay between €50–100 per week to stay in these ghettos, which are established on ethnic lines. For women, the price can increase up to €150 per week. The ghettos are called *tranquillos*, and are also established in Tangier, where migrants reported paying similar prices. There is a *chef de ghetto* who runs the *tranquillo* and takes care of day-to-day tasks. He works for the chairman, who usually owns a number of *tranquillos*.

### Economy of smuggling

**There are generally two types of payment options for journeys from Morocco to Spain: *arrivée payé*, which is payment on arrival, and *tué pour tué*, which is payment at departure.** For *arrivée payé*, the migrant usually puts the amount in a bank account and hands the smuggler the bank card. Once the migrant arrives in Spain, s/he will provide the smuggler with the pin number for the card. On the other hand, *tué pour tué* is less expensive but riskier, because the chairman has no incentive to ensure that the migrant makes it to their destination. There are also cases of chairmen taking the payment and disappearing.

**The crossing from Morocco to Spain costs on average around €2 000**, with some variation depending on which modality is adopted. The price has doubled since 2017, when it was never greater than €1 000. Migrants who travel on paddle boats usually move within a *tué pour tué* modality and pay around €400 for the crossing to Spain (common for departures around Tangier). Moving with an engine-powered boat is usually within an *arrivée payé* modality, and usually costs around €2 500 (common for departures around Nador). There is an *arrivée payé* option for paddle boats too, which is priced at approximately €1 500. Crossings that also include intra-European movements can cost up to €8 000.

Crossing the border between Alegria and Oujda can cost sub-Saharan migrants between €100–200 and up to €1 000 for Arabs, particularly when they are moved directly to Nador. The price can also climb to €350 for women, especially if they are pregnant. Most West Africans in our sample (including nationals from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Liberia, Cameroon, Mali and Nigeria) reported paying approximately €1 000 in total to move from their home countries to Morocco, although few of them are travelling by land now.

# **E. BETWEEN THE ROUTES**

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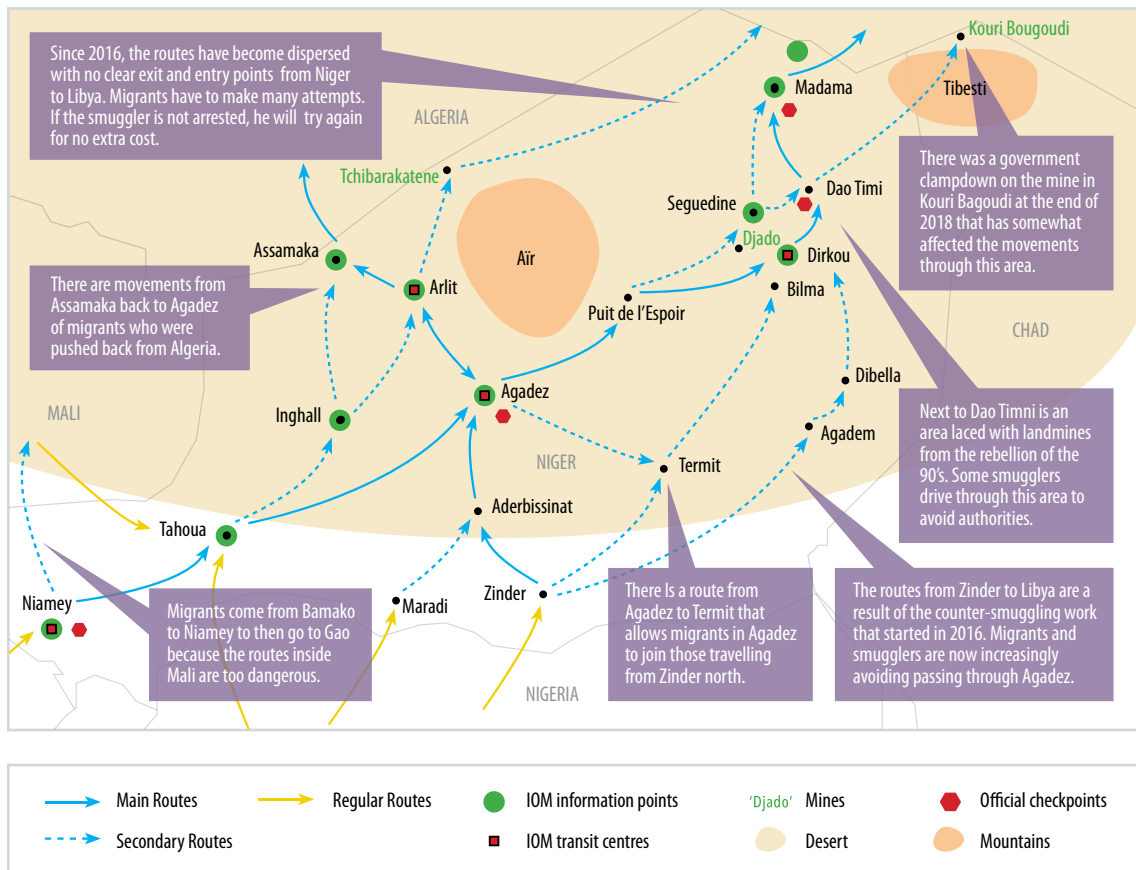


# 1. NIGER

**The routes through Niger have changed significantly since the passing of the anti-smuggling law No. 36 in 2015** (see Focus box 2 for more information). The law has led to the arrest of hundreds of smugglers and facilitators, and the confiscation of more than 500 vehicles. While it has been deemed a success by many in the region and in Europe, from a protection perspective, the implementation of this law is concerning because the criminalization of human smuggling has pushed the migration business underground and made routes riskier. During the first 18 months following the law becoming enforceable in mid-2016, 38 migrants died in the desert every month, versus 11 each month in the previous 18 months.<sup>26</sup>

According to an investigation by the Clingendael Institute, the new law has also been responsible for an upsurge of banditry in the region. Migrant smugglers began trafficking the synthetic opioid tramadol between Nigeria and Libya along new less-controlled migrant routes. Some also left Niger to join or re-join militias in Libya. Since 2017, possibly a hundred Tuareg as well as Tubu migrant smugglers joined their respective ethnic militias in Libya, taking taxes on roads or fighting in community conflicts, or they became mercenaries for one of northern Libya's rival powers. Possibly another hundred Tuareg migrant smugglers joined armed groups in Mali.<sup>27</sup>

**Map 4:** Routes through Niger



**The main change that has resulted from the law is that smuggling and trafficking in Niger have become far more organized.** These activities were always organized at the local level, but since the implementation of the law, more professional criminal organizations have developed and they have become organized in a regional context. There are also fewer Nigeriens involved in the business and more regional players, with profits distributed among fewer people. The routes have also become more fragmented: there are no clear exit points from Niger to Libya; convoys move in all kinds of directions to avoid authorities; and Zinder and Tahoua have become departure points as more convoys try to avoid hubs such as Agadez. The journeys have also become clandestine, with drivers only moving at night. There has been a decrease in arrivals at the traditional hubs, like Agadez and Seguedine, as a result, in favour of more conspicuous routes and itineraries. In 2016, there were 350 arrivals per day in Agadez, but this dropped to between 60 and 120 per week in 2018; Seguedine experienced 290 000 arrivals over 2016, which dropped to 33 000 in 2017.<sup>28</sup>

#### Focus box 2: Anti-smuggling law No. 36 (2015), Niger

In 2015, Niger passed anti-smuggling law No. 36 to support European partners in their efforts to curb the migratory movements to Europe. As the majority of sub-Saharan migrants moved through Niger to get to Libya from where they would board boats to Europe, it was decided to focus some of the anti-smuggling work here. The law classifies migrants as victims of rights abuses committed by smugglers, intends to simplify the investigation and arrest of smugglers, and highlights particular needs for women, children, the disabled and the elderly.

Between mid-2016 and April 2018, more than 280 drivers, car owners, intermediaries and ghetto owners housing migrants were arrested, and 300 to 500 vehicles were confiscated by Niger's security forces. During the first half of 2017, almost 10 000 migrants were sent back to the border or expelled from Niger. This law has also resulted in a de facto ban of all travels north of Agadez, in violation of the freedom of movement of ECOWAS nationals. The economic impact of the law has also been devastating. According to Crisis Group, the commune of Dirkou alone is losing 20 million West African francs (CFA), approximately US\$30 000, in revenue per month.<sup>29</sup>

Following a visit to Niger in October 2018, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants expressed grave concerns about the 2015 law: 'Although the alleged objective of the law is to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants and to protect the rights of migrants, the law allows the detention of migrants subject to illicit trafficking, without specifying the reasons for this detention, which is a serious concern.'<sup>30</sup>

## 1.1 Routes via northern Niger

**Map 4 charts all of the current routes through Niger. The new routes to Libya begin in Zinder and Tahoua,** and while there are routes to Agadez from both starting points, there are also routes that move north to Libya while avoiding Agadez altogether. The route from Zinder keeps close to the Chadian border as it moves north, and the route from Tahoua keeps close to the Algerian border. There is also a route from Agadez to Termit, which allows migrants in Agadez to join those travelling from Zinder north. As described earlier, there are no clear exit points over the Nigerien border into Libya. Instead, smugglers try all different points along the border to avoid being intercepted. Whether migrants move directly north from Zinder or still travel via Agadez, they tend to pass through Dirkou and then Dao Timi before heading to the border.

**During fieldwork, smugglers reported that they are more commonly using privately owned vehicles to transport migrants within Niger now,** instead of migrants taking buses for part of the journey, because of the increased controls on public transport. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM) team also found that in February 2019, 68% of all movements towards the borders in Niger were made by private vehicle. By November 2019, this had dropped slightly, but was still at 56%.<sup>31</sup>

**Migrants pass through checkpoints on their way out of Niger, which they either avoid or pay bribes to cross.** There is a military post at Dao Timi where soldiers check passengers' papers and remove non-Nigeriens from vehicles moving north to the Libyan border. Migrants who have travelled through the checkpoint (some drivers avoid the checkpoints altogether) reported paying between CFA 1 000 and 5 000 (approximately €5–20) in bribes at the checkpoint. There is a similar control at Madama. The travel time between Agadez and Dirkou is approximately 15 to 20 hours and from Dao Timi to Madama is approximately five hours. It takes approximately one day to travel from Madama to the Libyan border and another day to move from the border to Sebha (three to three-and-a-half days from Agadez or Zinder to Sebha). Migrants report that if they have their ID<sup>32</sup> with them, they pay less at the checkpoints. They further report that they still travel in convoys to the border, but once they cross into Libya, the cars move in different directions depending on which smuggler the driver is connected to. The routes from Tahoua that move along the Algerian border are controlled by Tuareg smugglers, and the routes from Zinder and/or Agadez towards Madama are controlled by Tebu smugglers. These smugglers transport migrants to the border, then they hand them over to Libyan smugglers to transport them further into Libya.

**After the implementation of the law in 2016, many smugglers were arrested or their cars were confiscated. Migrant convoys were prevented from crossing the border into Libya unless they were Nigerien.** This is mainly because the authorities have no basis for stopping Nigeriens who are moving through their own country, but also because Nigeriens move to Libya for seasonal work and do not make onward movements to Europe – and are thus not the target of the law. There is a new trend of smugglers filling their convoys only with Nigerien passengers and transporting the non-Nigeriens by motorbike to

about 30 kilometres outside of Agadez. Once the convoy passes the authorities and exits Agadez, they slip in the non-Nigerien migrants among the others. There has been a significant increase in the transportation of Nigeriens to Libya. In some cases, smugglers also try to pass migrants off as miners being transported to the gold mines in the north of the country. In 2019, the arrest of smugglers had decreased.

**The increased patrols, arrests and confiscations mean that smugglers have to increase their attempts before they can successfully move migrants into Libya, which makes the journey more expensive.** Some migrants who were interviewed for this study had been in Agadez for years and had made over 10 unsuccessful attempts. If a migrant convoy is unsuccessful but the smuggler is not arrested, he allows the migrants to move with him again at no charge. However, smugglers have increased their prices to account for these increased difficulties. Also, if smugglers have to make several detours during the journey in order to avoid authorities, they ask migrants to pay more than what had been agreed to at outset. The increased prices, coupled with the increase in failed attempts, mean that migrants often deplete their financial resources in northern Niger. This places them in a precarious and vulnerable position, particularly because there are few avenues for income generation in the area, other than working for the smuggler. It also creates tension with the host community. The increased costs can prevent migrants from being able to afford a journey from Niger all the way to Italy, which is one of the ways in which migrants try to address their vulnerability to arbitrary detention within Libya.

**Prior to the anti-smuggling law, migrants would pay €80–150 to move from Agadez to Sebha.<sup>33</sup> Now the prices vary according to nationality and are more expensive.** As authorities are not targeting Nigeriens, they are still paying relatively low prices, ranging from €100–200 to move from Agadez to Sebha. Other West Africans reported paying €300–500, depending on the number of attempts, detours made and the smuggler with whom they are moving.

**In the spring of 2019, during the war in Tripoli, there was no evidence of decreased movements into Libya from northern Niger.** In fact, the data shows an increase in movements from April onwards, which may have been an attempt to exploit decreased border security that resulted from the conflict. However, as will be seen in the section on Libyan routes, the availability of smugglers became strained in southern Libya because most of the armed groups had sent their men to fight in Tripoli. So even if migrants and smugglers were attempting to take advantage of the war to travel into Libya more easily, they were likely to become stranded in the south. After May, the numbers dropped again.

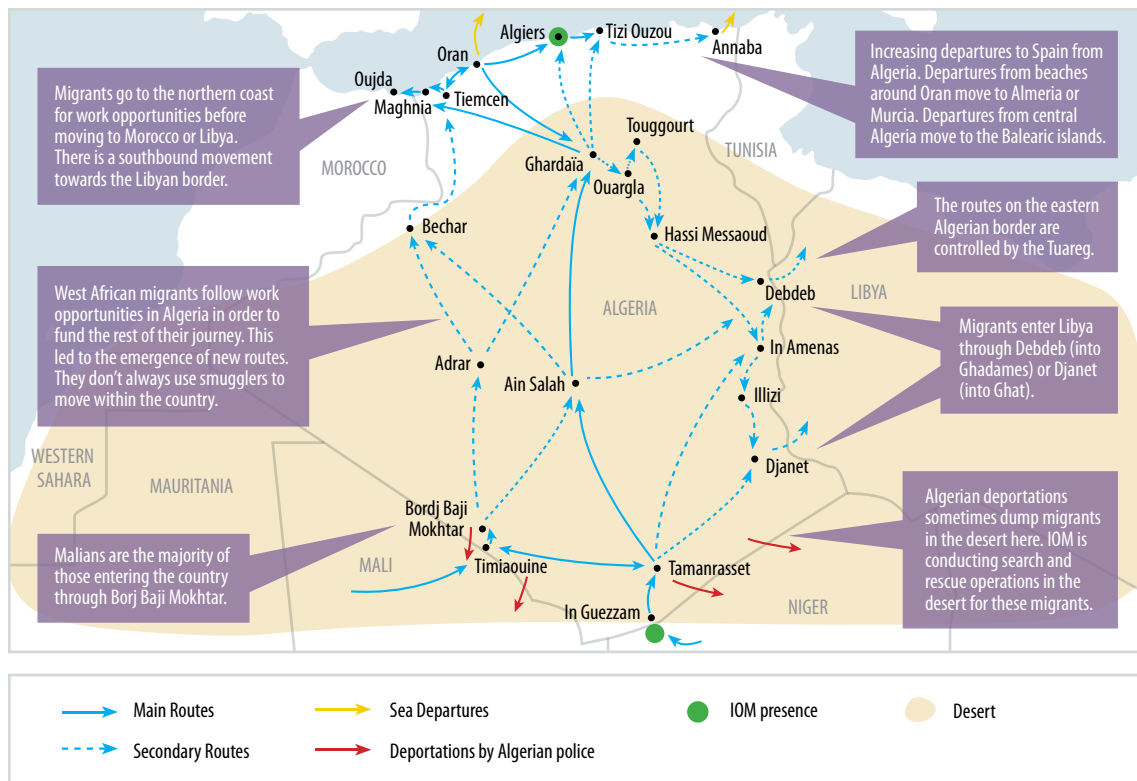
## 2. ALGERIA

### 2.1 Routes via Algeria

IOM's DTM has found that the majority of movements through Madama (Libyan border) are inflows, whereas the majority of movements through Arlit (Algerian border) are outflows.<sup>34</sup> This was verified by our fieldwork, where we found that the majority of migrants trying to move north to Libya were now attempting to do so via Algeria due to increased difficulty in exiting from northern Niger. The inflows at Madama are migrants returning from Libya; in most cases, they are escaping from Libya.

As can be seen from Map 4, the routes to Algeria from Niger move via Arlit. That is, migrants move from Agadez to Arlit and then from Arlit to Assamakka. From Assamakka, they cross the border into Algeria. If migrants travel with a smuggler, some of them will negotiate a journey from Arlit to Tamanrasset, in Algeria. Others negotiate journeys from Arlit to the other side of the border. There are also migrants who make the journey without a smuggler and use public buses. Once migrants cross into Algeria, they often need to use smugglers to get to Tamanrasset as Algerian transport companies refuse to sell bus tickets to migrants without documents. Some migrants end up having to work in small towns close to the border to earn enough money to pay a smuggler to move them to Tamanrasset and onwards, not having been aware of the need to do so before departure from Niger.

Map 5: Routes through Algeria



**The journey from Arlit to Tamanrasset with a smuggler is made using pickup trucks. This route is dominated by Tuareg smugglers, as the south-western border region between Algeria and Niger is Tuareg territory on both sides.** The Tuareg smugglers either take migrants to Tamanrasset or all the way into Libya. For the journeys to Libya, smugglers move from Tamanrasset directly to the border, crossing at Djanel into Ghat. The journey from Arlit to Tamanrasset usually takes 15 to 20 hours, and most of the drivers will do it all at once, avoiding all of the checkpoints along the way. They typically drop migrants off just before Tamanrasset and advise them to walk into Tamanrasset in order to avoid the authorities. There is a small village on the Algerian side of the border called Din, and this is where the Nigerien Tuareg smuggler hands the migrants over to an Algerian Tuareg smuggler to transport them within Algeria. The driver is also changed.

**Migrants moving from Tamanrasset to the Libyan border also cross this border by foot.** Smugglers don't cross the border by car because of the Tassili N'Ajjer mountain range, and also because there is only one border post here and thus it is easy to control. Therefore, migrants are abandoned on the Algerian side of the border and have to cross the border by foot through the mountains in the Wadi Tinakare to Barket in Libya. Some smugglers provide a guide to help the migrants make their way through the desert. The guides are also Tuareg and are able to navigate the desert. A car waits for them on the Libyan side, facilitated by the Libyan network of Tuareg smugglers.

**There is also a route that reaches Libya from the north at Debdeb. This allows the migrants to move directly to the coast once inside Libya** and avoid too much exposure to detention and militia. While they are faced with a number of risks inside Algeria also (explained below), the situation within Libya is far worse. This journey typically starts in Ouargla in Algeria. Smugglers take migrants to the border, where they wait in holding locations until enough migrants amass. They are then led over the border on foot with the aid of a guide. There is typically a car waiting for them on the Libyan side of the border, which takes them to Zintan (routes from Zintan are presented on Map 9).

**In terms of prices for the journey to Algeria and within Algeria,** migrants typically pay CFA 20 000–40 000 (approximately €30–50) from Arlit to Assamakka; 50 000–70 000 Algerian dinar (approximately €360–500) from Assamakka to Din (the closest village on the Algerian side of the border) and 10 000–14 000 Algerian dinar (approximately €75–100) from the Algerian border village to Tamanrasset. For the journey from Ouargla, migrants pay for a journey all the way to Italy, which is charged between €500–800. Migrants report that they have more negotiating power when it comes to the routes within Niger. They are also able to negotiate payment (or at least part payment) on arrival, whereas they are asked to make full payment on departure when moving through Algeria.

**As Malians are able to enter Algeria without a visa, there has been a big trade in false Malian passports for over a decade in Algeria.** A passport is typically sold at CFA 25 000–30 000 (approximately €40–45) and the smuggler typically hands 30 to 50 real passports to the migrant and asks him to choose the one that

he thinks looks most like him. However, because this practice has been going on for some time, Algerian authorities have now learnt that smugglers are using this tactic and have become suspicious of Malian passports, also making it difficult for Malians.

**Before 2012, migrants also moved from Mali to Algeria – starting in Bamako, then moving to Sevarré, Gao, Kidal and, finally, Tamanrasset.** This route is less popular now because the conditions of the road have deteriorated. It used to take one day, but now the journey takes between five and seven days and is quite dangerous. There is, however, a route from Mali into Algeria via the In-Khalil border crossing point that moves up to Ain Salah, but this is a very minor route in terms of traffic and almost only followed by Malians (see section on Mali for more information).

**While migrants had previously worked quite happily in Algeria, today they face a range of risks.** It is estimated that between 25 000 and 100 000 undocumented migrants, mainly from Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, live in Algeria. Most work in the agriculture and construction industries, where the demand for labour is particularly high.<sup>35</sup> Some of the migrants in our sample had lived in Algeria for up to eight years, working in the construction sector. They explain that everything changed in 2015. Some of the risks that migrants face in Algeria today include extortion by Algerians who are attempting to profit from the increased irregular migration through their country.

**There are also no Western Union offices or banks or informal hawala<sup>36</sup> networks that will allow undocumented migrants to send money home.** As a result, migrants are forced to work with smugglers to transfer money. The smugglers create their own hawala system through their intermediaries in countries of origin. However, they keep half of the money that migrants want to transfer as a fee for their services, thereby creating further vulnerability for migrants.

### Focus box 3: IOM search and rescue operations for stranded migrants, Niger

Since October 2016, IOM, in collaboration with the Direction Générale de la Protection Civile, has been undertaking search-and-rescue operations for migrants in distress in the Agadez region. These operations are performed both proactively and reactively in response to distress calls received, and once migrants are picked up, they are taken to the nearest safe urban centre. The missions are undertaken around Agadez, Arlit, Assamakka and Dirkou. The migrants are often mentally and physically stressed, suffering from trauma, dehydration and/or physical wounds. In February 2019, IOM conducted eight rescue operations, which resulted in 1 534 rescued migrants. Of those, 1 308 were transported to Arlit. The rescued migrants represent a spectrum of nationalities: 30% from Mali, 27% from Niger, 19% from Guinea, 5% from Cameroon, 4% from Côte d'Ivoire, and 2% from Burkina Faso, Benin, Sierra Leone and Gambia each.<sup>37</sup>

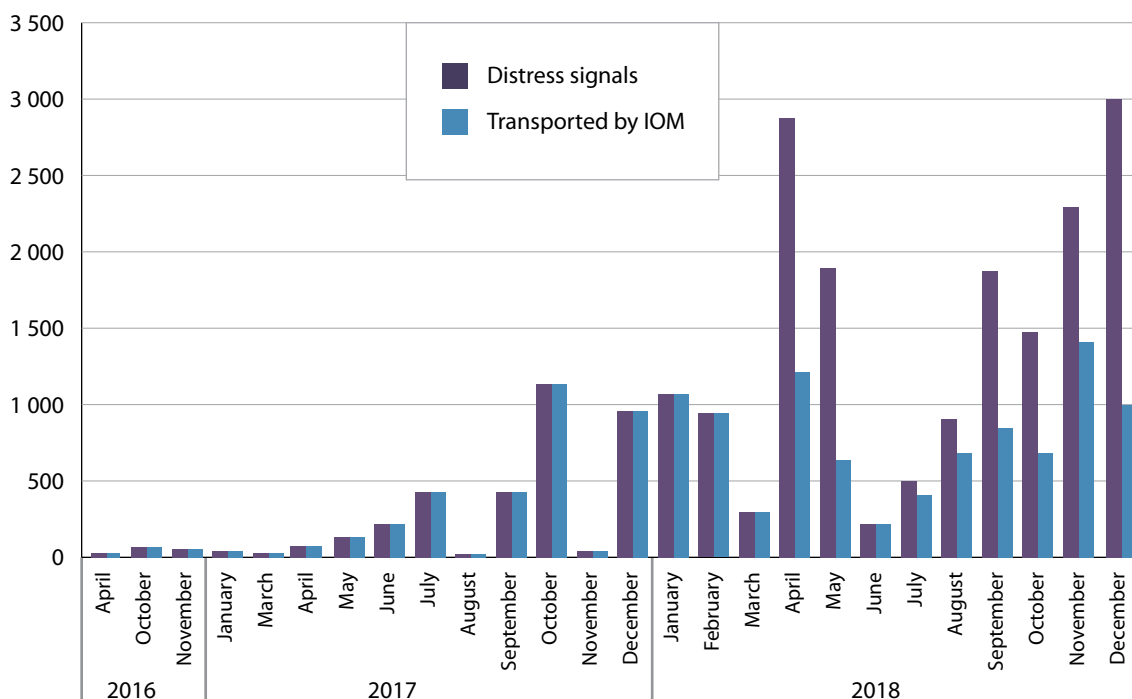
### 2.1.1 Deportations from Algeria to Niger

**One of the greatest risks faced by migrants in Algeria is being deported back to Niger.** In 2014, a bilateral agreement was made between Niger and Algeria that enables undocumented Nigerien migrants in Algeria to return to their home country as part of a voluntary programme. As a result of this agreement, the Algerian government returns Nigeriens to Assamakka. Third-country nationals, however, are typically abandoned in the desert between the two borders or at the Malian border. A 23-year-old Gambian man interviewed in Niamey said:

‘The Algerian police dropped us in the middle of the desert with bread and water. They said: your country is in this direction and they left. It was nighttime, we walked until morning to Assamakka. We were 300 people.’

**IOM has a rescue service to search for migrants who are abandoned in the desert** (see Focus box 3 for more information). Sometimes, migrants make distress signals that IOM responds to. IOM also has its own search-and-rescue operations for migrants who cannot make distress signals. Figure 30 shows the number of migrants picked up by IOM in search-and-rescue operations against the number of distress signals received. As can be seen, in December 2018, IOM transported 1 000 migrants and had received a total of 3 000 distress signals. The chart also demonstrates that IOM’s capacity to respond to all distress signals in 2018 was compromised because of the large number of requests that came in.

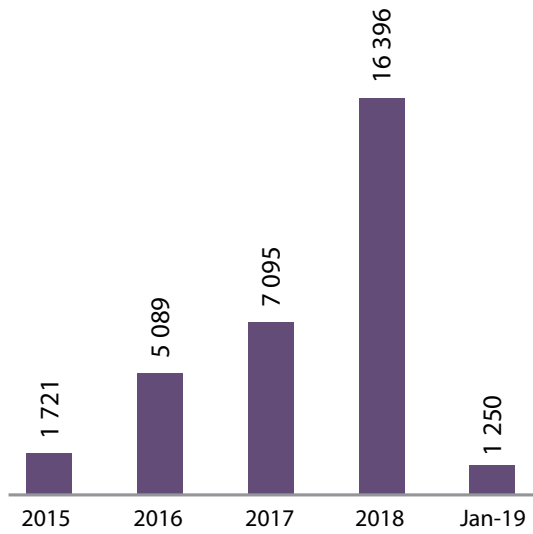
**Figure 30:** Migrants transported by IOM search-and-rescue operations against distress signals



Data source: IOM Niger

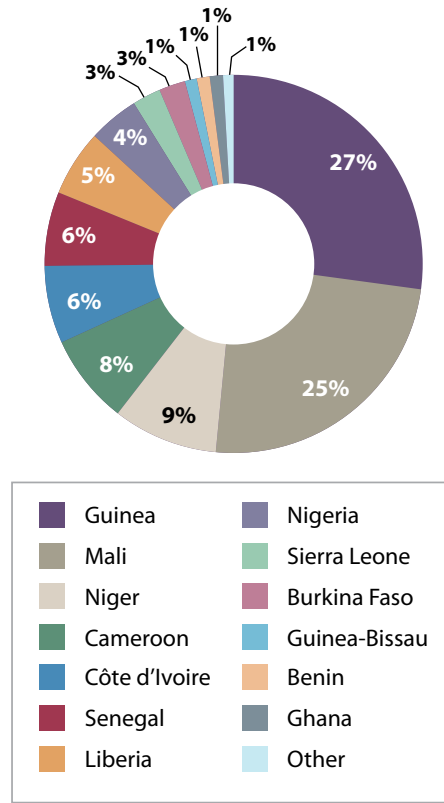


**Figure 31:** IOM AVR from Niger, 2015–Jan 2019



Data source: IOM Niger

**Figure 32:** IOM AVR beneficiaries by nationality, 2018



Data source: IOM Niger

**Once migrants are picked up in the desert, they are transported to Assamakka and Arlit by bus.**

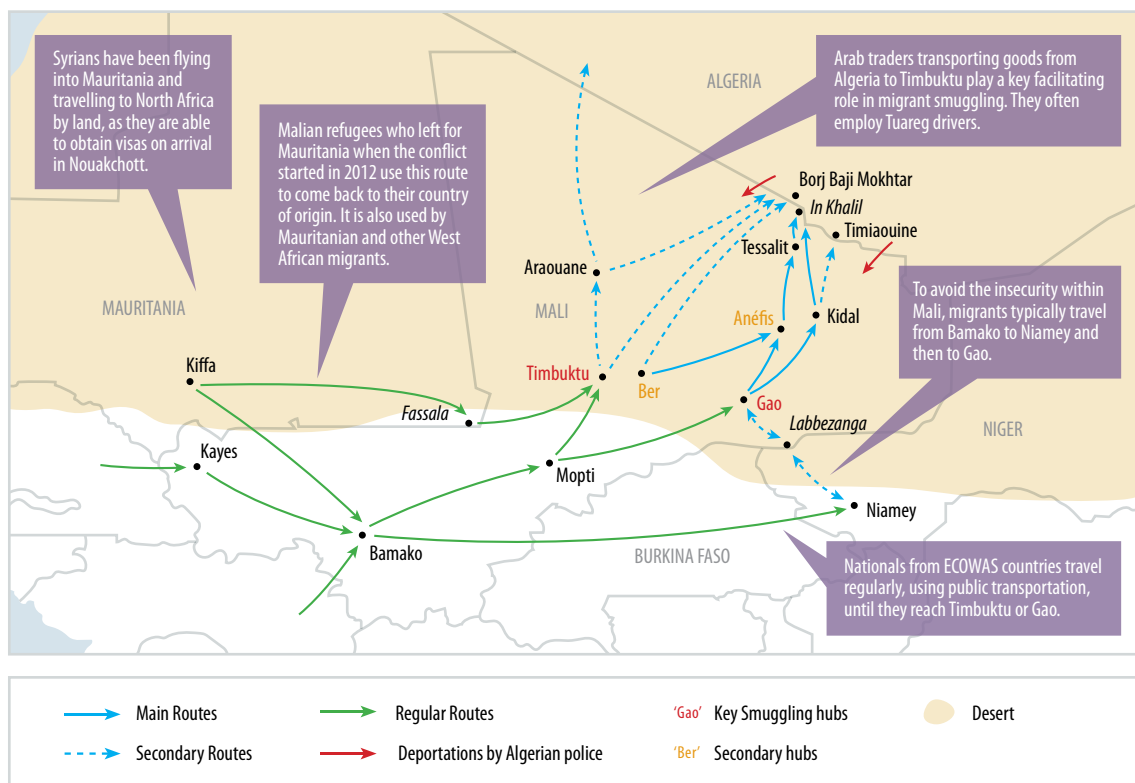
Migrants spend a few days at IOM’s transit centre in Arlit to be identified and are given health checks. They are then transferred to Agadez, where IOM has a centre to assist migrants. Migrants can choose to participate in an AVR programme through IOM if they wish. Those who have their travel documents can continue to Niamey for return, and those who do not need to wait in Agadez until travel documents are sourced for them through the embassy. All the women, children and old people are returned by air because of their vulnerabilities. Chadians are also returned by air because of the dangers presented by Boko Haram. Most others, however, are transported home by bus. Figure 31 shows the total number of migrants that IOM assisted with AVR programmes in Niger between 2015 and January 2019. As can be seen in Figure 31, the number of returns from Niger has been increasing since 2015, which is when the anti-smuggling law was passed. It should be noted, however, that these returns are not sustainable, as the vast majority of migrants who returned home with IOM assistance went back to Niger to try again. Figure 32 shows IOM AVR beneficiaries in 2018 by nationality. As can be seen, the vast majority of the beneficiaries were West African.

### 3. MALI

**The movements through Mali are minimal given the insecurity in Central Mali and the risks that this creates for migrants.** The routes are mainly followed by Malians or migrants who wish to move to Morocco from Mauritania (for example, Yermenis).<sup>38</sup> As that border is now closed, migrants move through Mali and Algeria and cross into Morocco from Oujda. The main route through Mali involves moving from Gao to Bordj Badji Mokhtar in Algeria through the official border crossing points of In-Khalil or Timiaouine. The movement through In-Khalil is more common, as it is possible to make this movement without a transit in Kidal, which is quite unstable.

**From Gao to In-Khalil, migrants pay between CFA 50 000–200 000 CFA (€75–300) depending on the smuggler and the nationality of the migrant.** Malians are charged lower rates than non-Malians and Malians from the north are charged the lowest rates. Migrants can incur additional costs on these routes, as some smugglers tax migrants and there are many cases of kidnapping, robbing and extortion by bandits in the region.

**Map 6:** Routes through Mali



**There is also a route from Niamey to Gao that became more prominent after the anti-smuggling law in Niger complicated movements within that country.** However, it never became a major route, given the instability in Mali. The Ménaka region, which the Niamey-Gao route traverses, is highly volatile and characterized by intercommunal violence, jihadist activity and conflict between armed groups for control of the region. Migrants are more likely to move from Bamako to Niamey via Burkina Faso. There has been a very small number (almost negligible) of migrants moving from Niamey to Gao through the Ménaka region with the intention of accessing Algeria via Mali. However, the numbers have been almost negligible and are decreasing. There have also been cases of migrants moving from Bamako to Burkina Faso and then back into Mali, as a way to avoid the instability in Central Mali.

There are also less prominent routes that move from:

- **Timbuktu directly to Bordj Badji Mokhtar**, bypassing In-Khalil. This journey typically costs CFA 200 000–300 000 (€330–€500) for non-Malians.
- **Timbuktu to Araouane** and then directly north to the Algerian border. Migrants who enter Algeria through this route move to Reggane on the Algerian side of the border. It is 160 kilometres to the border and then 380 kilometres to Reggane.
- **Ber directly to Bordj Badji Mokhtar**, by passing In-Khalil. Ber is approximately 50 kilometres east of Timbuktu and this route traverses about 700 kilometres to get to Bordj Badji Mokhtar. Migrants pay between CFA 100 000 and 200 000 (€150–€300) on this route.

**Starting in June 2018, there was an increase in both inflows and outflows through Gogui, (Mauritania) from Mali.** The majority of migrants moving through Gogui have Spain as their destination and move from Gogui to Mauritania or Morocco. The Gogui route became the main route towards Morocco before it registered a decrease in August 2019 (–31%). There was a further decrease in October and November 2019. In February 2020, IOM DTM reported that 79% of migrants identified at Gogui were from Mali and 12% from Cote d'Ivoire.<sup>39</sup>

**Forced expulsions from Algeria to northern Mali began in March 2018.** Migrants are typically arrested in the north of Algeria, in cities such as Algiers or Oran. These cities are not on the migration trail, but rather they are locations where migrants go to find work. The Algerian police conduct raids on construction sites and mines, looking for undocumented workers. The migrants are then gathered in transit centres until enough have amassed for a movement to the border. They are then escorted by police on buses to Bordj Badji Mokhtar and asked to walk the 25 kilometres desert trail to In-Khalil. Unlike the 2014 agreements between Niger and Algeria, Mali and Algeria have not created a bilateral agreement for expulsions.

# **F. THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE**

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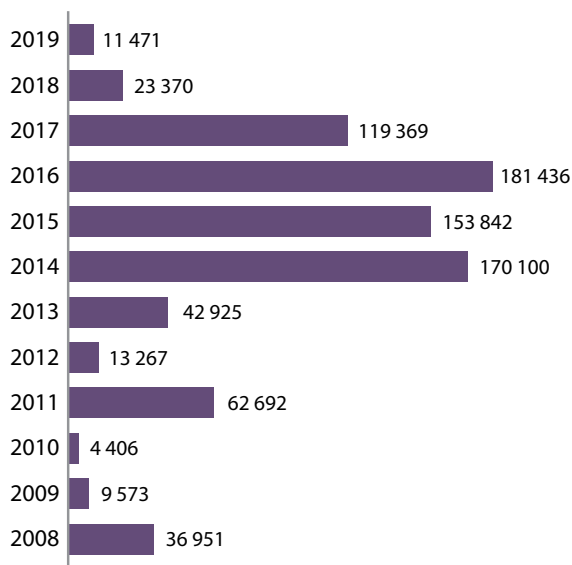
## 1. THE EVOLUTION OF THE FLOWS

**The Central Mediterranean route generally refers to the route from North Africa to Italy and Malta.**

Libya has traditionally been the main departure point for crossing the Mediterranean along this route. Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria have also served as departure points at particular moments in time, with the number of departures from Tunisia coming very close to the number of departures from Libya in 2019. Since 2018, departures from Turkey and Greece that arrive in Italy have also been increasing, albeit still minimal.

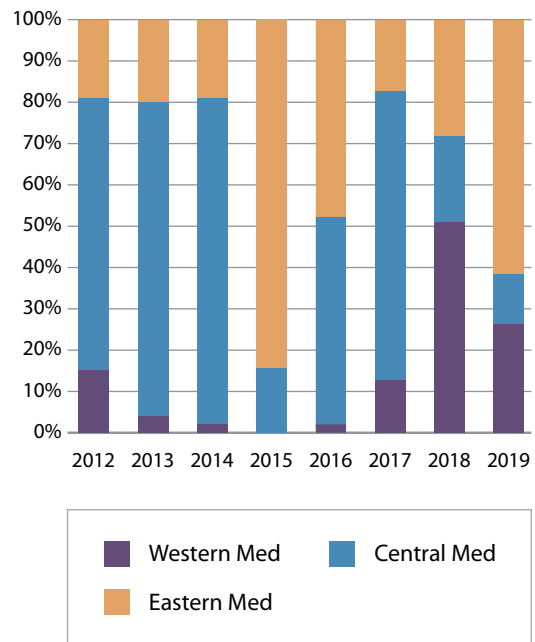
**The Central Mediterranean route emerged as the least important route to Europe in 2018 and continuing into 2019,** being surpassed by both the Western and Eastern Mediterranean routes in terms of traffic, as can be seen by Figure 34. This is despite the fact that it had been the most prominent route to Europe between 2012 and 2017, with the exception of 2015 when the Eastern Mediterranean route witnessed an exceptionally high number of arrivals. Figure 33 charts the total number of irregular arrivals to Italy between 2008–2019 in absolute terms. It demonstrates that arrivals peaked in 2011, which was the year of the Libyan revolution when many migrants and refugees in the country fled the instability by taking boats to Italy. The numbers dropped again in 2012 and 2013, which coincides with years of relative stability in Libya. In 2014, the year of the first Libyan Civil War, arrivals in Italy picked up again and peaked

**Figure 33:** Total sea and land arrivals in Italy per year



Data source: Italian Mol

**Figure 34:** Arrivals in Europe according to Mediterranean route



Data source: Italian Mol

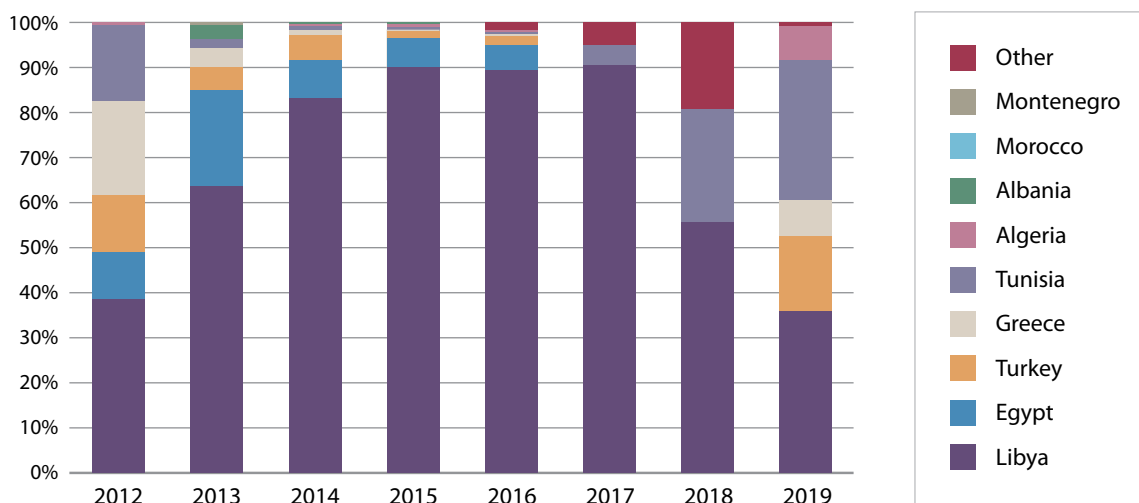
at over 170 000 individuals. The numbers remained high through to 2017, never dropping below 100 000 arrivals, until they dropped to just over 23 000 in 2018. By the end of 2019, only 11 471 migrants had arrived in Italy by boat, which is the lowest since 2010.

### 1.1 Departure points

**Figure 35 charts sea arrivals in Italy according to country of departure in percentage terms.** Between 2012 and 2017, the proportion of boats that arrived in Italy departing from the Libyan coast was increasing. In 2012, just under 40% of arrivals in Italy departed from Libya. While this was not a majority, Libya did represent the largest share compared to other departure countries. In 2013, this increased to 63%; 83% in 2014; 89% in 2015; and 91% in 2017. In 2018, the proportion dropped to 56%, and by the end of 2019 only 38% of departures had come from Libya.

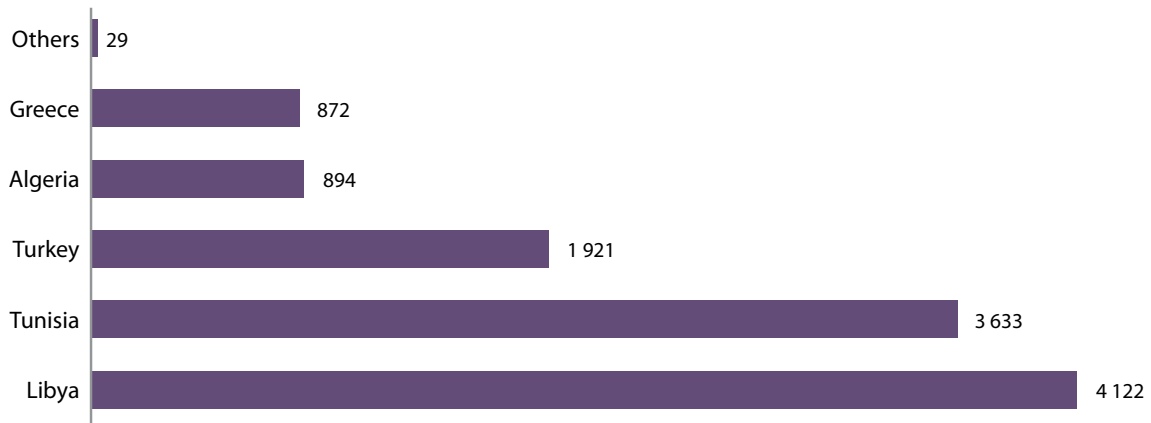
**The drop in departures from Libya in 2018 and 2019 coincides with a number of initiatives designed to decrease movements to Italy.** In 2017, Italy and Libya signed an MoU around migration management; a code of conduct was introduced for NGO search-and-rescue boats in the Mediterranean; and the LCG’s capacity was reinforced – all coinciding with a dramatic drop in the number of migrant arrivals in Italy. Sensing an imminent end to the political status quo, militia leaders in Libya began trying to launder their reputations by accepting incentives to serve as law-enforcement partners of third countries, which led to a decrease in smuggling activity. It should also be noted that in addition to the drop in the number of arrivals in Italy, these factors also coincided proportionally with an increased death rate at sea, with one death for every 38 arrivals in Europe from Libya being detected in 2017, compared to one death for every 14 arrivals in 2018. Increased counter-smuggling and border-security initiatives in Niger and Sudan also coincided with this drop.

**Figure 35:** Sea arrivals in Italy according to country of departure (percentage terms), 2012–2019



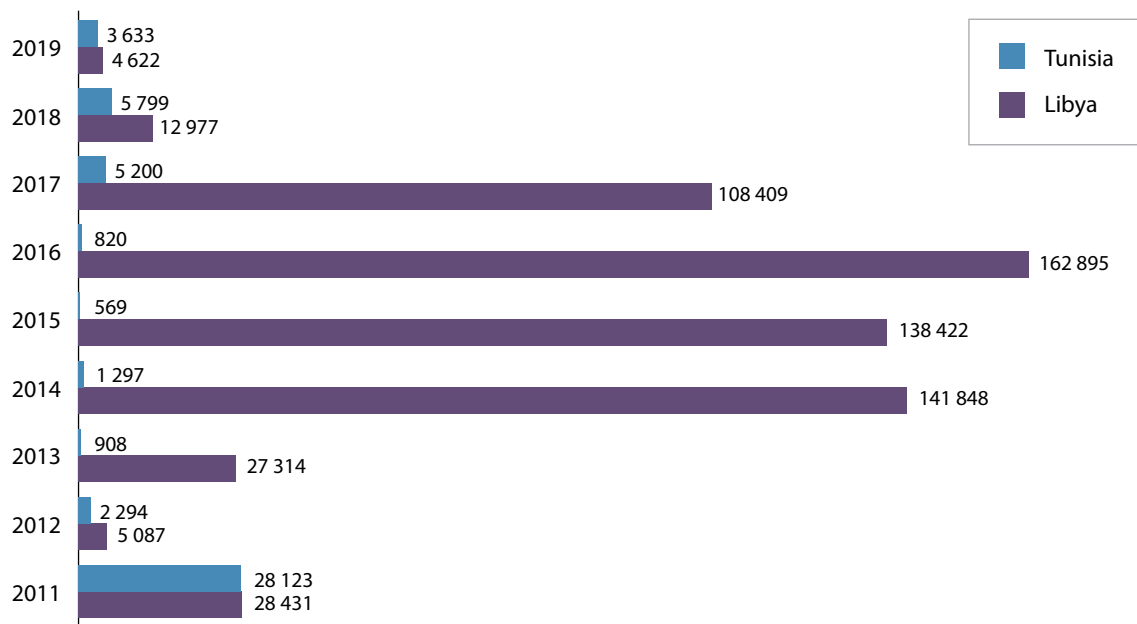
Data source: Italian Mol

**Figure 36:** Sea arrivals in Italy according to country of departure (absolute terms), 2019



Data source: Italian Mol

**Figure 37:** Boat arrivals in Italy that departed Libya and Tunisia



Data source: UNHCR

**Figure 36 charts arrivals in Italy in 2019 according to country of departure in absolute terms.** After Tunisia and Libya, Turkey represents the next most important departure point, then Algeria and Greece. Departures from Turkey and Greece became close to negligible after 2014, picking up again in 2017. Departures from Algeria were almost non-existent before 2019. The majority of the migrants who reached Italy by sailing boats from Turkey spent around €5 000 per person. They explained that they had access to the smuggling networks before their departure and agreed on the route, method and fee before starting the journey.<sup>40</sup>

**In 2018 and 2019, Tunisia represented the second most important departure point for boat journeys to Italy**, when departures from Tunisia had been almost negligible since 2012 (see Figure 37, Tunisia represented in blue). Boat departures from Tunisia moved from 1% of arrivals in Italy in 2016 to 4% in 2017 and then 25% in 2018. Prior to 2017, Tunisian authorities – in their efforts to monitor irregular migration through their country – were able to stop most irregular migrants before they reached the coast, thereby almost eliminating the departures from Tunisia. Since 2017, departures from the Tunisian coast have involved mainly Tunisian migrants, which has been harder for authorities to address. By the end of 2019, Libya was still the main departure point along the Central Mediterranean route with 4 622 departures, but Tunisia comes very close with 3 633 departures. It should be noted that in December 2019, 55% of departures came from the Libyan coast and 20% each from Turkey and Greece. Departures from Tunisia only accounted for 2% of arrivals.

**Boat departures from Egypt (represented in blue) in Figure 35 first started to pick up in 2013** when Syrians living in Egypt began making direct sea crossings from the Egyptian coast in response to worsening socio-economic conditions in Egypt. After October 2013, however, direct sea crossings from Egypt to Italy subsided in favour of travel to Libya to make the sea crossing from that country's coast. After March 2014, as stability in Tripoli began to deteriorate, the number of boats departing Egypt gradually grew again, almost reaching the peak levels of the previous year. By the end of 2014, arrests by Egyptian authorities of individuals who were attempting to depart the country irregularly became more commonplace and direct sea departures from Egypt to Italy almost disappeared. By the end of 2016 however, flows had shifted again. The Egyptian route became popular with Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis and Sudanese seeking to avoid the chaos in Libya and travelling from Khartoum to Aswan or Cairo in Egypt before heading to El Hamam, Damietta or Alexandria on the coast. The Egyptian government stepped up its arrests again, and at the time of writing, not a single boat departure had been recorded off the coast of Egypt since 2017, with Egypt positioning itself as a reliable partner for Europe in the Central Mediterranean.

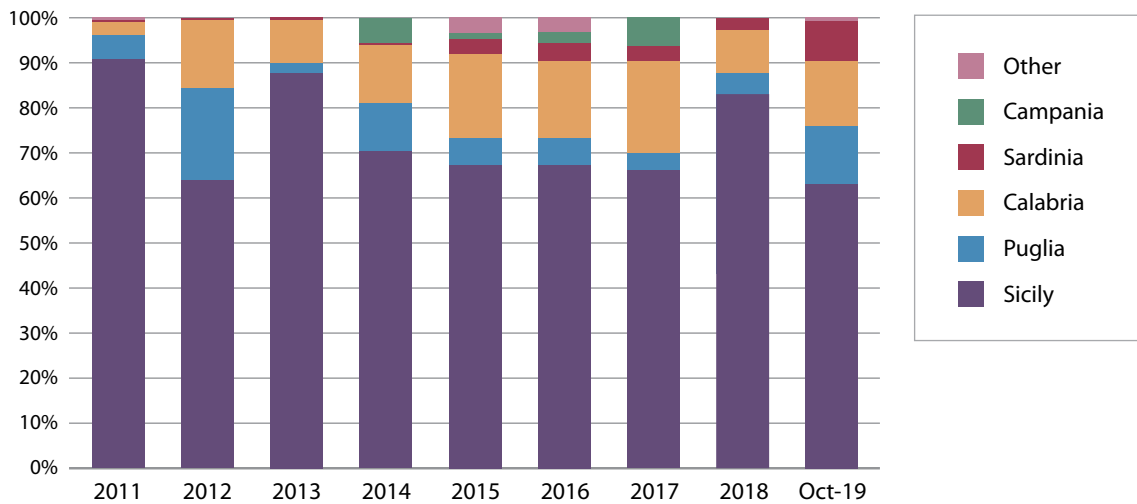
## 1.2 Arrivals in Italy

**There are five main arrival points in the south of Italy: Sicily, Puglia, Calabria, Sardinia and Campania.**

Figure 38 charts arrivals in Italy according to the location of arrival for the years 2011–2019 (up to October). Sicily represents the main arrival point for the period covered (represented in purple), never dropping below 60% of all arrivals. In absolute terms, arrivals in Sicily peaked in 2016 when there was a total of 122 962 arrivals (even though 2016 does not represent the highest proportion in percentage terms). Boats arriving in Sicily mainly depart from Libya and Tunisia. Those arriving in Lampedusa are now exclusively coming from Tunisia.

**Boats arriving in Sardinia are departing from Algeria (represented in red).** The proportion of boats arriving in Sardinia has been negligible over the period covered. In 2019 (by October), however, it moved to 10% of the total. This is because the overall number of arrivals in 2019 was quite low, increasing Sardinia's share of the total. In absolute terms, however, 2019 only saw 872 arrivals in Sardinia, when there had been 5 209 in 2015; 7 450 in 2016; and 3 759 in 2017.



**Figure 38:** Sea arrivals in Italy according to location of arrival

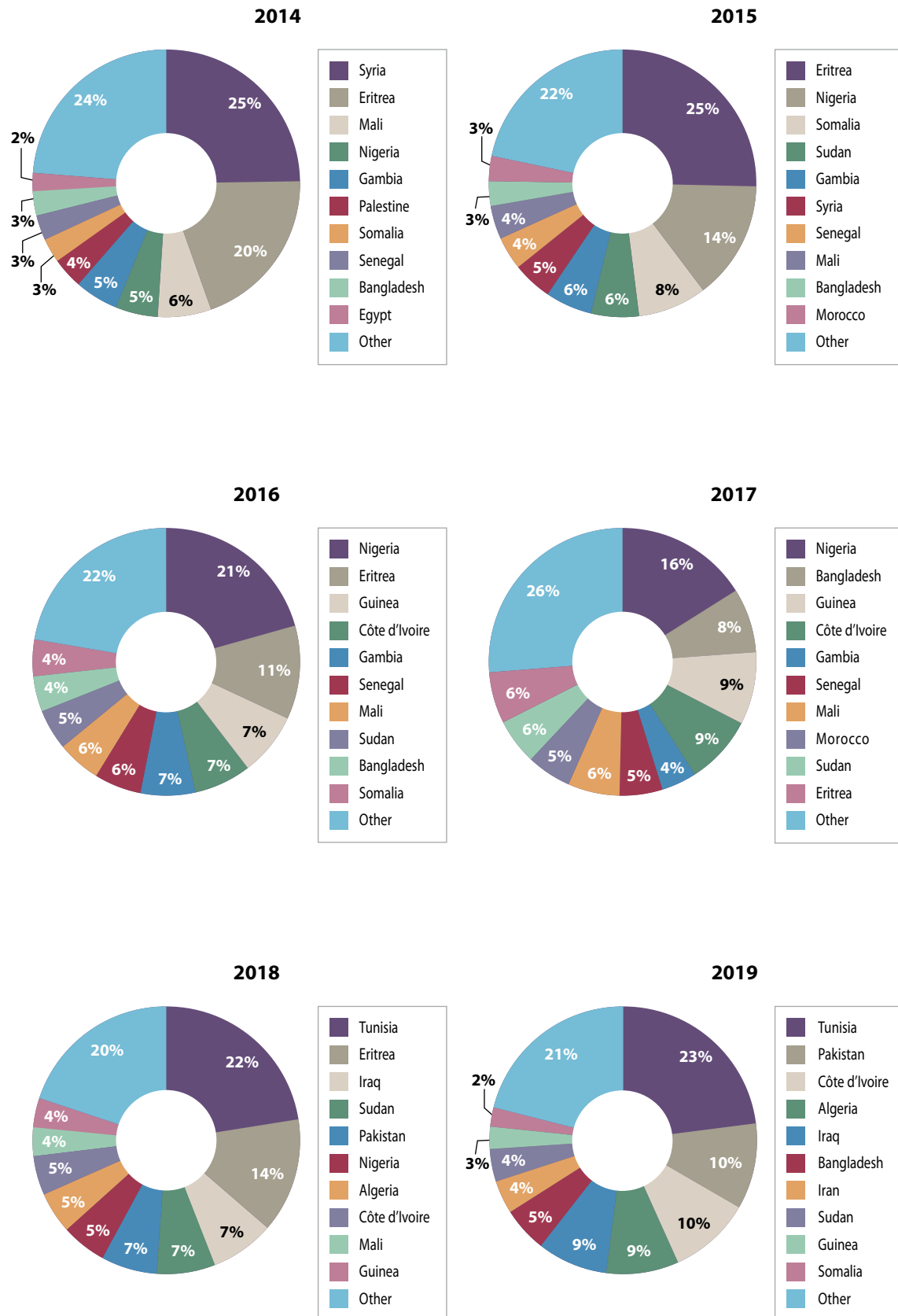
Data source: Cittalia, UNHCR and Italian Mol

**Boats arriving in Puglia (represented in blue) generally depart from Albania or Greece.** Puglia's share of the total has remained fairly consistent, ranging between 5–10%, with the exception of 2012 where it was closer to 20%. In absolute terms, however, 2012 only saw 2 719 arrivals in Puglia, whereas the big years were 2014 (17 565 arrivals), 2015 (9 160 arrivals) and 2016 (10 807 arrivals).

**Boats arriving in Calabria (represented in yellow) tend to depart from either Libya or Turkey,** which explains why Calabria has generally represented the second most important location of arrivals after Sicily. The big years for Calabria were also 2014–2017, with a peak at 30 610 in 2016 and 28 973 in 2015.

**The composition of migrants travelling along the Central Mediterranean route has also shifted over time. Between 2014–2017, there was a notable decrease in East Africans and an increase in West Africans.** Figure 39 plots the nationality of sea arrivals in Italy between 2014 and 2019. It shows that Eritreans moved from 23% of arrivals in 2013 to 11% in 2016 and 3% in 2017. Somalis moved from 8% in 2013 (and third most prominent country of origin) to 4% in 2016 (and 10th most prominent country of origin). The number of Somalis arriving in 2017 was so negligible that they didn't show up in the top 10 of nationalities. By contrast, Nigerians became the most important country of origin in 2016 and 2017, their numbers having steadily risen since 2013. The top seven nationalities in 2017 were all from West Africa, with the exception of Bangladesh.

Figure 39: Irregular arrivals to Italy per year according to nationality



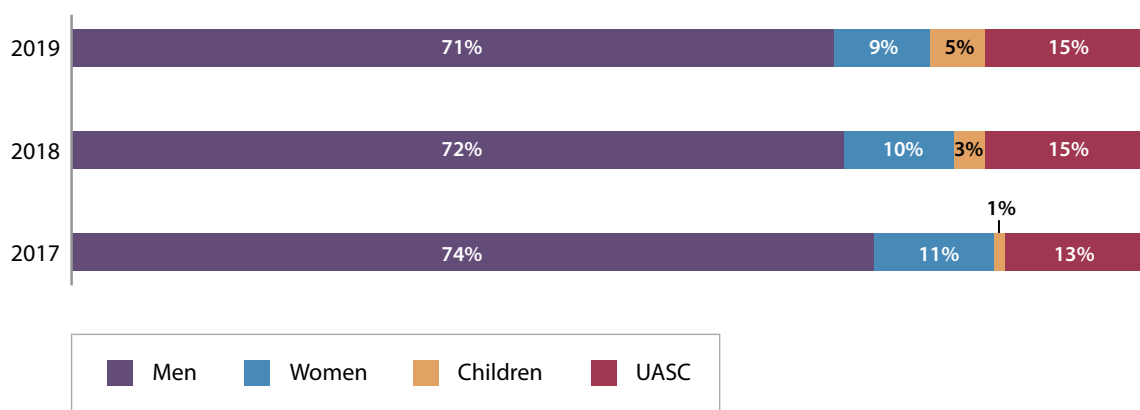
Data source: Italian Mol and UNHCR

**In 2018, the composition shifted again. Tunisia emerged as the first country of origin of migrant arrivals in Italy** for the first time since 2012, and Eritreans moved back up to the second place. Iraq emerged as the third most important country of origin after not appearing in the top 10 of nationalities since 2010 and Sudanese migrants re-emerged in fourth place. Traditionally, Sudanese migrants have been more likely to move to Libya for employment opportunities, rather than to board boats to Europe. The worsening instability and human-rights context in Libya, coupled with the political transition in Sudan, may have contributed to their growing numbers on boats to Europe. Finally, Algerians represent the other surprise in 2018. Almost all Algerians who arrived in Italy in 2018 had departed from the Algerian coast.

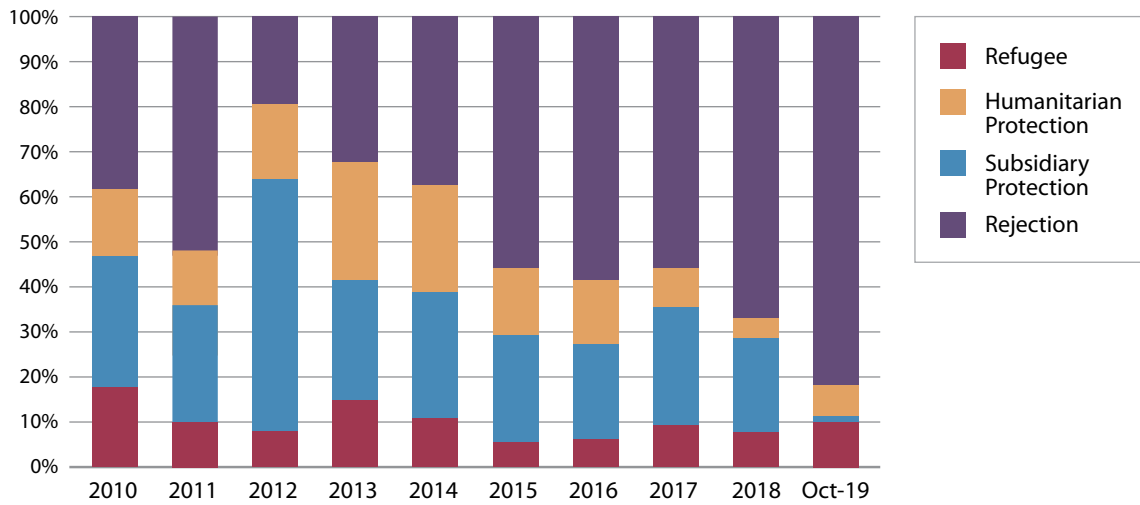
**By 2019, Eritreans have dropped out of the top 10 entirely. The remaining nationalities do not differ greatly from 2018**, except for two new additions: Iranians, who traditionally travelled along the Eastern Mediterranean route and are most likely arriving in Italy on boats that departed Turkey or Greece, and Somalis who reappeared again in 10th place.

**In terms of the demographic composition of the flow**, in 2019, 71% of migrant arrivals in Italy were men, 9% were women, 5% were unaccompanied and separated children, and 5% were accompanied children. The demographics of arrivals have shown almost zero variation from 2017–2019, as seen in Figure 40. However, there is some variation amongst nationality: 26% of the Tunisians that arrived in Italy in 2019 were unaccompanied and separated children, 57% of Somalis (the total number of Somali arrivals in 2019 was 116); and 64% of Guineans.

**Figure 40:** Sea arrivals to Italy by demographics, 2017–2019



Data source: UNHCR

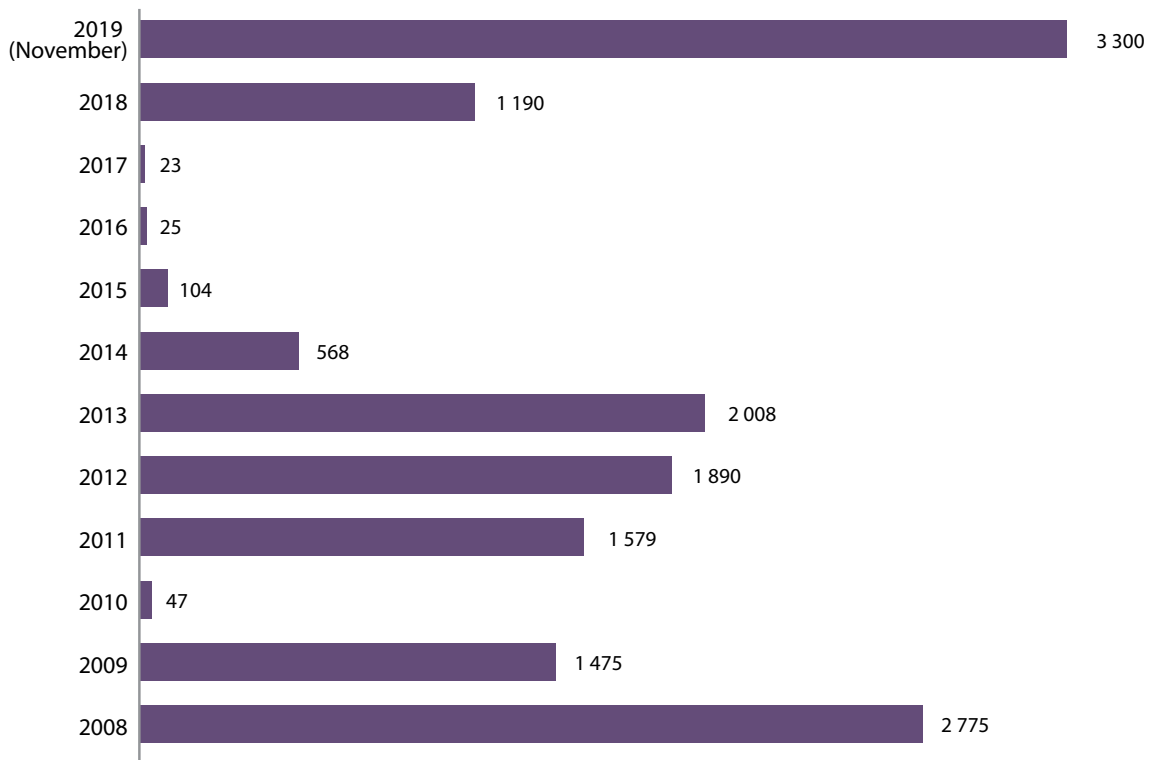
**Figure 41:** Asylum applications in Italy according to type of protection granted, 2010–Oct 2019

Data source: Italian Mol

**The number of asylum applications in Italy has been on an upward trend since 2010.** In addition to asylum seekers from Africa who arrive by boat through the Mediterranean, other prominent nationalities that arrive by air include El Salvador, Peru, Albania and Venezuela. Figure 41 plots asylum applications in Italy according to type of protection granted between 2010 and 2019. Rejections have progressively increased between 2013 and 2019, making up 81% of all applications by 2019. However, the granting of refugee status has remained fairly stable. What has decreased dramatically is the granting of humanitarian protection, which is a national form of protection.

### 1.3 Arrivals in Malta

**In addition to 11 471 arrivals in Italy in 2019, there were also 3 300 arrivals in Malta.** Figure 42 charts boat arrivals in Malta between 2008 and November 2019. In the years prior to 2014, Malta received the largest number of irregular migrants of any industrialized nation in the world, when analyzed in terms of the per-capita ratio. In 2014 arrivals decreased dramatically, however, dropping to 568. The average per year, since 2002, had been 1 500 individuals, with some years experiencing a significantly lower number of arrivals (2003 and 2010) and some years significantly higher (2008). The drop in 2014 was mainly due to the effects of Mare Nostrum, which bolstered Italy's search-and-rescue capacity in the Mediterranean and meant that migrant boats rarely made it into Maltese waters. After 2014, the numbers remained sombre, dropping as low as 23 in 2017, and were comprised mainly of medical emergencies that were air lifted from the search-and-rescue zone. Numbers picked up again in 2018 (1 190 arrivals) with a 5 000% increase between 2017 and 2018.

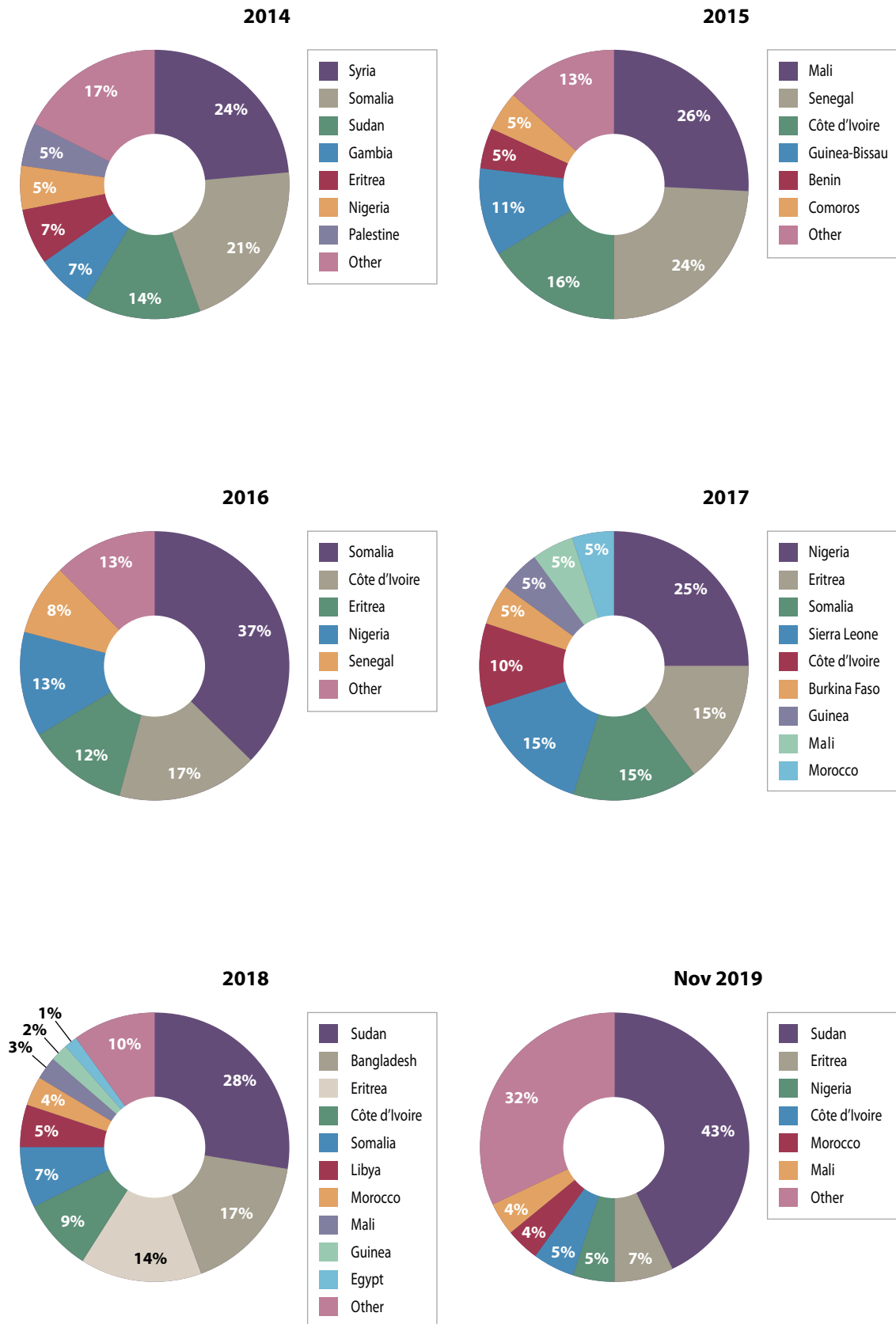
**Figure 42:** Irregular arrivals in Malta, 2008–2019

Data source: UNHCR

**The increase in 2018 can be attributed to a combination of factors that include the decreased search-and-rescue capacity in the Mediterranean.** That is, Italy's policy changed, the EU withdrew many of its naval missions from the central Mediterranean, and after 2017, NGO search-and-rescue boats operated with great difficulty. This also had an impact on the coordination of search-and-rescue activities, making it unclear which secure port of disembarkation migrants should be taken to and requiring a new ad-hoc agreement after each rescue. It is also due to smugglers in Libya moving their departure points along the coast to avoid interception by the LCG and to avoid authorities on land. As smugglers moved further west along the coast, boats started arriving in Malta, or becoming stranded in Maltese waters.

**The main nationalities of arrivals in Malta have historically been Eritreans, Nigerians and Somalis.** There has also been an increase in Sudanese and West African arrivals between 2017–2019. The number of Sudanese arrivals in Malta is proportionally higher than elsewhere in the Central Mediterranean. The overrepresentation of East Africans in Malta is because the departure points on the Libyan coast that lead to arrivals in Malta are in East Tripoli, which is where East African communities congregate. Also, once communities became established in Malta, other migrants started to follow the networks. In the open centres in Malta, the main nationalities are Sudanese and South Sudanese, Nigerian, Gambian, Chadian, Somali and Eritrean. There are also some Libyans, Bangladeshis and a few Syrians. Figure 43 charts arrivals in Malta by nationality from 2014–2019.

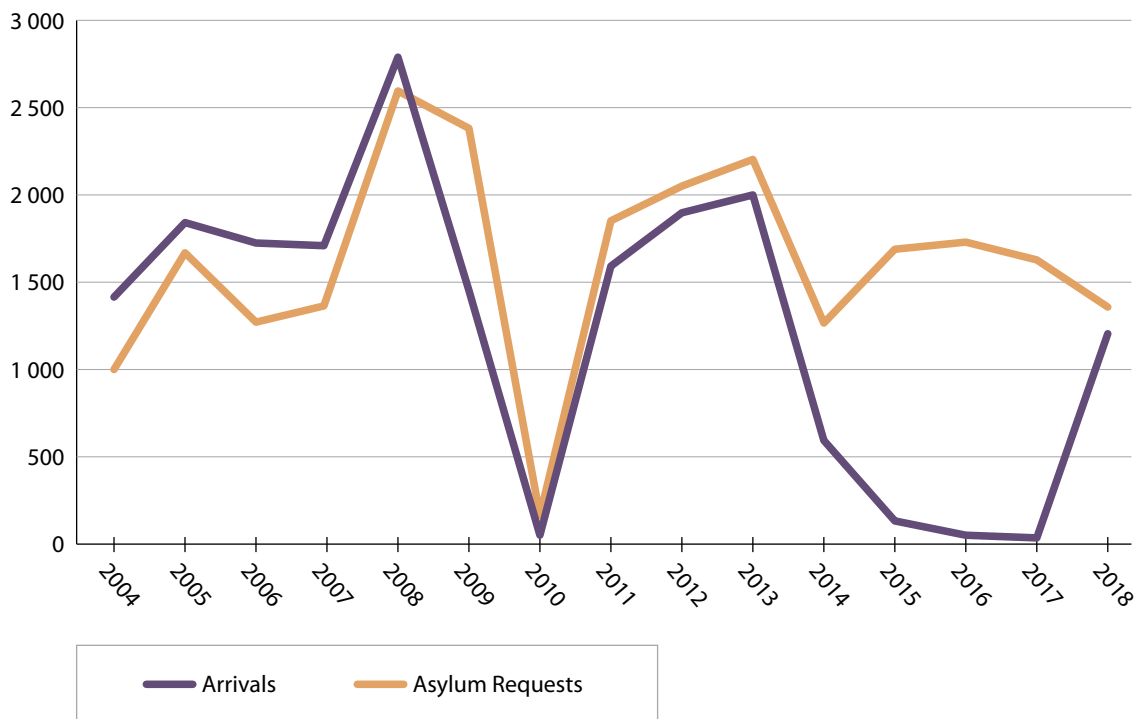
Figure 43: Irregular arrivals in Malta by year according to nationality



Data source: Italian Mol and UNHCR

**The rates for asylum applications in Malta have remained fairly stable since 2014, even though the overall numbers of arrivals dropped.** This is most likely explained by a few factors, one of which is the reality that asylum seekers do not always apply for asylum as soon as they arrive. However, another likely contributor is the fact that even though boat arrivals dropped, there were still migrants arriving in Malta from other EU countries, such as Italy and Greece. There is a continuing trend of migrants who have been granted asylum in Italy moving to Malta, either to reunite with family members or to follow a perception of better job prospects in Malta. While they arrive in the country regularly and with the ferry, many do eventually overstay their visas and some end up working without permits in Malta, usually as daily labourers. Figure 44 charts asylum applications in Malta against overall arrivals.

**Figure 44:** Asylum applications in Malta against arrivals, 2004–2018



Data source: UNHCR

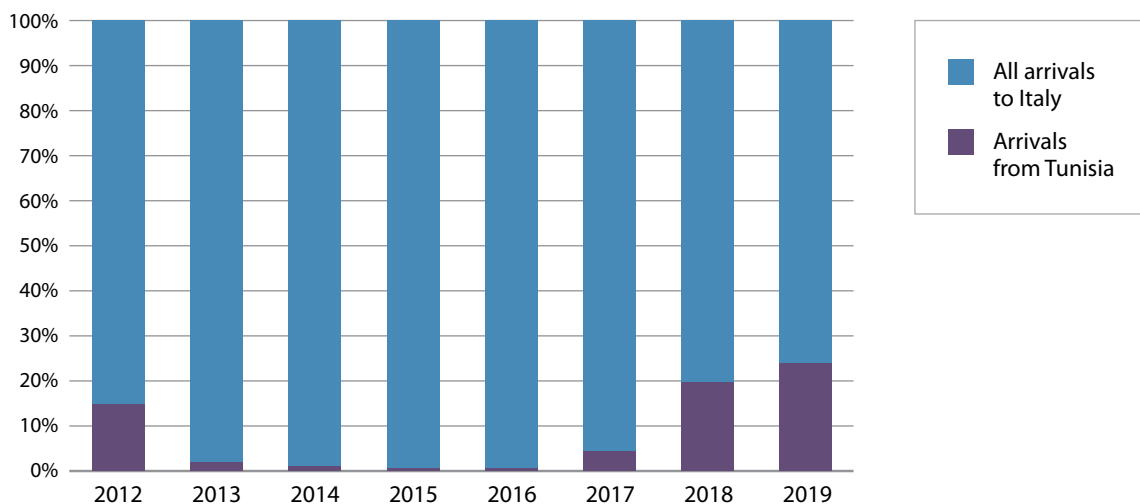
## 2. TUNISIA

**Tunisia finds itself implicated in the mixed migratory flows through the Mediterranean in four ways:** through rescues at sea by the Tunisian Coast Guard of boats that had departed the Libyan coast; through direct departures from the Tunisian coast; through migrants who cross the border into Tunisia from Libya; and through Tunisians who travel on boats to Europe that departed the Moroccan coast.

**After the surge of irregular boat departures from the Tunisian coast in 2011 as a result of the Arab Spring, Tunisia's role as a departure point for the Central Mediterranean route progressively decreased until 2016.** From 2016, it started to increase again. Figure 45 demonstrates that between 2008 and 2011, the proportion of boats that arrived in Italy, which had departed the Tunisian coast, increased from 21% of all arrivals to 45%. By 2013 it had dropped to 2%, then down to 1% in 2014, 0.6% in 2015 and 0.7% in 2016. In 2017, boat departures from Tunisia started to increase again, rising to 5%, then 22% in 2018 and 32% in 2019.

**When the same data is presented in absolute terms** (see Figure 46), we see that the number of arrivals in Italy that had departed the Tunisian coast increased in absolute terms in 2014, even though it decreased as a proportion of all arrivals. This is due to the fact that the overall numbers of arrivals in Italy increased in that year. The same pattern is observable between 2017 and October 2019: departures from the Tunisian coast decreased in absolute terms, but increased in terms of the proportion of all arrivals in Italy that they represent.

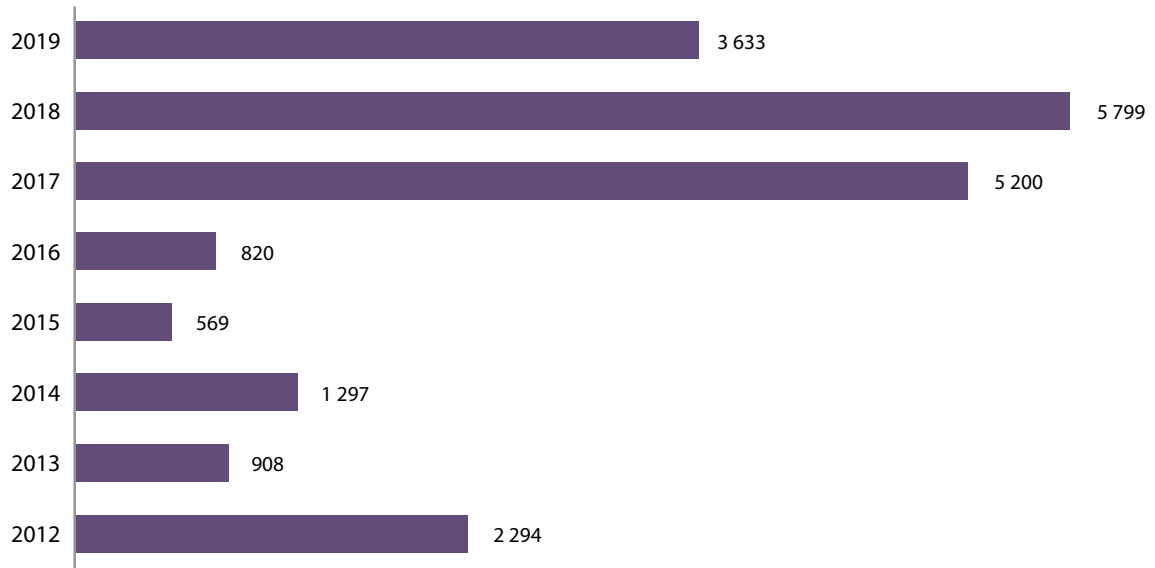
**Figure 45:** Boat arrivals that departed Tunisia, as a proportion of all arrivals in Italy, 2012–2019



Data source: Italian Mol, Eurostat and UNHCR

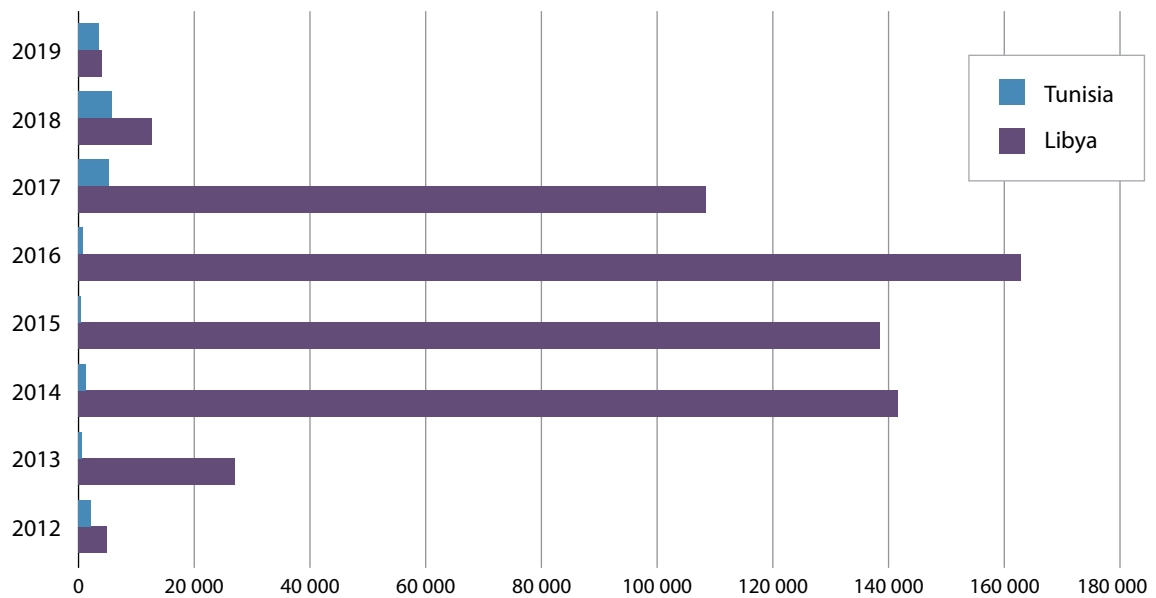


**Figure 46:** Number of irregular arrivals in Italy that departed the Tunisian coast, 2008–2019



Data source: Italian Mol, Eurostat and UNHCR

**Figure 47:** Arrivals in Italy according to departure from Libya and Italy, 2011–Oct 2019

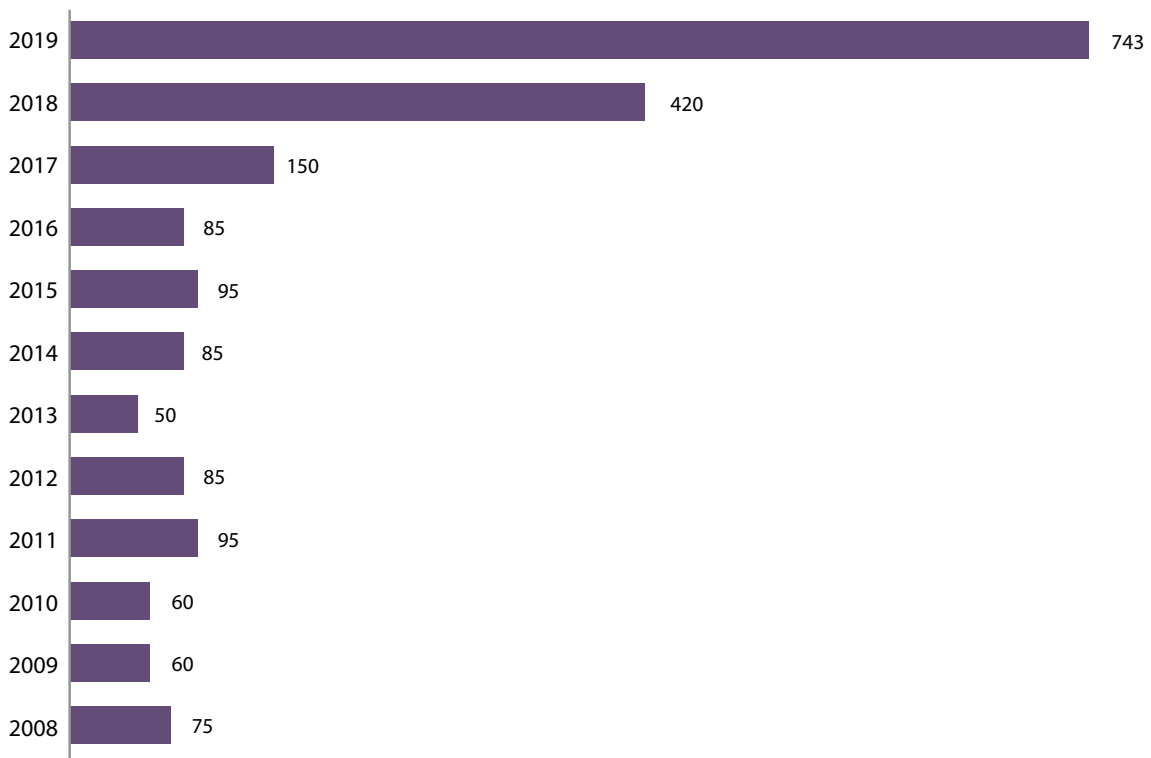


Data source: UNHCR

**Figure 47 charts the number of individuals who arrived in Italy on boats that left Tunisia and Libya between 2012 and 2019.** While they experienced almost the same number of departures in 2011, departures from Tunisia progressively decreased until they accounted for less than 1% of the flow in 2016. Departures from Libya progressively increased until they accounted for 90% of the flow in 2016. Between 2016 and 2019, departures from Libya decreased, moving to 56% of the flow in 2018 and 29% of the flow by October 2019. Over the same period, departures from Tunisia increased, moving to 25% of the flow in 2018 and 35% of the flow by October 2019. By October 2019, boat departures from Tunisia accounted for a greater percentage of arrivals in Italy than boat departures from Libya.

**In addition to Tunisians who are entering the EU irregularly via Italy, there are also Tunisians who travel to Morocco to take boats from the Moroccan coast to Spain.** These figures are presented in Figure 48 and demonstrate that between 2008 and 2016, there were fewer than 100 Tunisian arrivals in Spain per year. Between 2016 and 2017, the number increased by 280%, and between 2017 and 2018 it increased by 175%. By October 2019 there had been 743 Tunisian arrivals in Spain. This is most likely because the cost of taking a boat from Morocco to Spain is much cheaper than a boat journey departing the Tunisian coast. The risk of arrest is also higher in Tunisia.

**Figure 48:** The number of Tunisians that arrived by boat in Spain, 2008–2019



Data source: Italian Mol, Eurostat and UNHCR

## 2.1 Legal and normative framework

**Tunisia's national migration strategy was created in 2015, but is yet to be validated at the political level.** It is articulated around five key areas:<sup>41</sup>

- Reinforce the governance of migration management;
- Guarantee the rights and interests of Tunisian migrants;
- Reinforce migration's input to socio-economic development at the local, regional and national levels;
- Promote legal and orderly migration and prevent irregular migration;
- Protect the rights of all migrants including migrant labourers, asylum seekers and refugees in Tunisia.

### 2.1.1 Asylum

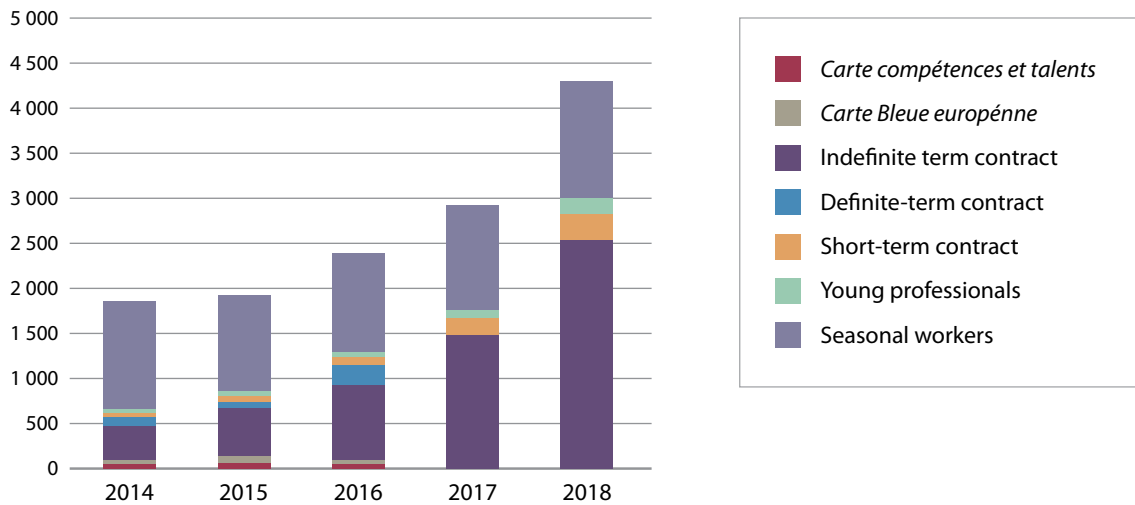
**The Tunisian constitution recognizes the right to political asylum only.** The Tunisian asylum law was developed in 2013, and then amended in 2016 through the combined efforts of the UNHCR and the Ministry of Justice. The amended law was presented to the Tunisian government for comments and validation, and has not since progressed. Refugee status determination is conducted by UNHCR on behalf of the Tunisian government. Registered refugees have the right to remain in Tunisia and to access government services. They do not have the right to residency but can apply for nationality if they are married to a Tunisian. According to UNHCR, there have been no cases of refoulement from Tunisia.

### 2.1.2 Reception

**In terms of the reception of irregular migrants in Tunisia,** if they are picked up at sea, they are registered by the coast guard and sent to the Tunisian Red Crescent for further processing. They are subsequently hosted in centres operated by IOM or UNHCR, depending on their intentions, for two months. If they are not applying for asylum, they have two months to consider their options and can either return home or stay illegally.

### 2.1.3 Regular migration of Tunisians

**There are agreements for the regular migration of Tunisians between the Tunisian government and the governments of France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany.** An agreement was also signed in February 2019 with Malta but has not yet been ratified. France is the only country that has a general migration policy for Tunisia. The other European countries mentioned have measures for the migration of Tunisians within specific projects and articulated around specific labour market needs. Under these measures, Tunisians require only one document to be signed by the future employer in Europe in order to gain their visa. The Swiss and French governments signed alongside repatriation agreements – that is, contracts of employment for Tunisians have been increased in exchange for easier readmission of irregular Tunisian migrants.

**Figure 49:** Labour flows between Tunisia and France, 2004–2018

Data source: Embassy of France in Tunisia

**The agreement between Tunisia and France has led to increasing Tunisian migration to France:** there were 1 800 contracts of employment in France in 2013; 5 200 contracts in 2018; and by the end of 2019 it is projected to reach 6 500. Tunisian engineers constitute the profile with the highest rates of success under this agreement, with 3 000 engineers having been granted visas out of a total of 6 000 visas so far in 2019. The next major profile is health professionals who are hired in Parisian hospitals.

**There is a history of bilateral migration agreements between France and Tunisia.** In 2008, the agreement was also tied to the readmission of Tunisians and Tunisian control of irregular migration from its country. This agreement resulted in 9 000 regular Tunisian migrants in France officially, but the figure is closer to 12 000 if one counts the clandestine Tunisians who were already in France and who became regularized under the agreement.

#### 2.1.4 Readmission of Tunisians

**Tunisia and Italy signed a readmission agreement in 2011, which allows the Italian government to send home within 48 hours any Tunisians who arrived irregularly** without requiring proof of identity. An average of 40 migrants are deported per week. There is a flight from Palermo to Tunis every Wednesday for repatriations. There is a trend of Tunisian migrants in Sicily leaving the reception centres on Tuesday nights in order to avoid repatriation and returning on Thursday. The Italian government provides €3 000 per migrant deported, but this money is given to Tunisian authorities and not to the migrants themselves. When the deportees return to Tunisia, they are imprisoned for up to 15 days for departing the territory illegally. In 2016, 66 such flights were arranged and a total of 1 907 Tunisians were deported. In 2017, there were 64 flights and 1 907 Tunisians were deported.

**In terms of overall numbers for readmission;** in 2011, the number of forced returns to Tunisia increased by 359% compared to 2010 (from 2 535 to 9 105 returns) and by 133% between 2016 and 2017 (from 2 940 to 3 905).<sup>42</sup>

## 2.2 Profiles

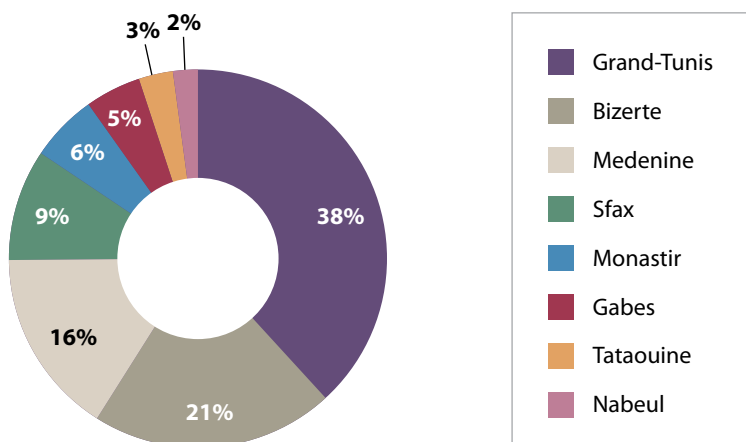
**Tunisia is mainly a country of origin with more than 12% of the population migrating abroad.** In 2017, there were 1.4 million Tunisians living abroad, including first-, second- and third-generation Tunisians.<sup>43</sup> The majority are residing in the EU and mainly in France, made up mostly of men in the working age group. More than 200 000 Tunisians have been naturalized in Europe.

### 2.2.1 Irregular migration of Tunisians to Europe

**In terms of the irregular migration of Tunisians to Europe, historically most came from the poorest parts of Tunisia,** predominately from the south of the country in the region bordering Algeria. The migrants were usually young men who had recently finished school.

**After 2014, the profiles started to shift, however. Greater numbers of young, tertiary-educated Tunisians appeared on the boats,** most of whom were unemployed or underemployed. The number of women on the boats also started to increase after 2014, the majority of whom are also educated and unemployed/underemployed. Tunisia has a 15% unemployment rate, and most of the unemployed have university degrees. Finally, the number of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) on the boats is also increasing. In 2017, there was a total of 696 Tunisian minors on the boats, 135 of whom were girls. In 2018, the total figure increased to 1212, 108 of whom were girls. Figure 50 charts the city of origin of Tunisian irregular migrants who were intercepted in 2017. The majority came from Grand-Tunis and Bizerte.

**Figure 50:** Cities of origin of Tunisians arrested for irregular migration, 2017



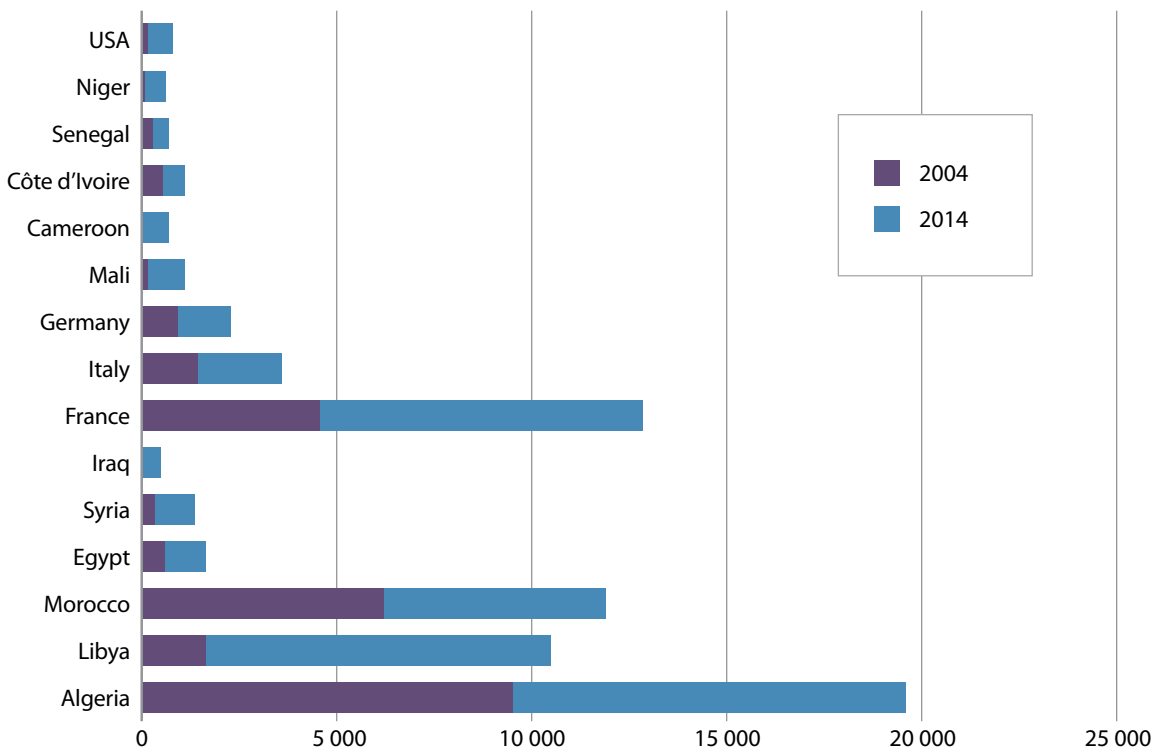
Data source: Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES)

### 2.2.2 Migration inflows to Tunisia

**Migration inflows into Tunisia have been increasing.** A recent study found that the number of foreigners in Tunisia increased by 52% between 2004 and 2014. The increase is dominated by Arab nationals, mainly Libyans and Algerians, but the number of non-Arab nationals more than doubled in the same period.<sup>44</sup>

**The number of foreign nationals in Tunisia increased by 52% between 2004 and 2014.** Figure 51 charts the number of foreign nationals in Tunisia by nationality, and compares the figures at the end of 2004 with those at the end of 2014. As a category, Arab nationals (from Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Syria and Iraq) make up the greatest foreign population in absolute terms, with the biggest numbers being seen among Libyans and Algerians. The biggest increase between 2004 and 2014, however, was seen among the sub-Saharan category (from Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Niger), with the number of migrants increasing by 149% (more than doubling).

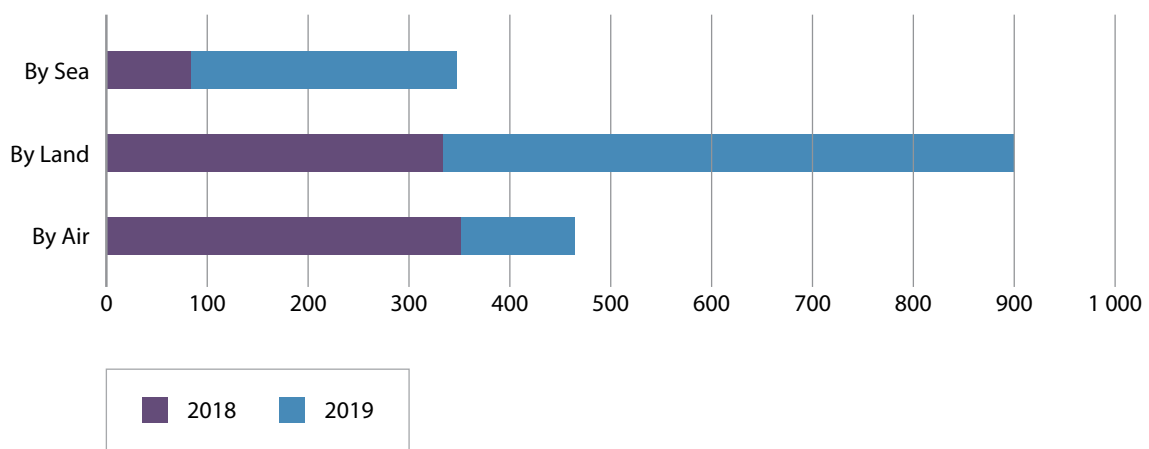
**Figure 51:** Foreign population in Tunisia 2004–2014, by nationality



Data source: European University Institute

**There are three types of inflows into Tunisia:** those who come to Tunisia to work or study; those who travel to Tunisia in order to cross the southern border into Libya; and those who enter Tunisia by crossing the land border from Libya. The flow of migrants accessing Libya from Tunisia is mainly comprised of Ivorians and is a decreasing trend. The flow of migrants entering Tunisia from Libya by land has been increasing and the composition of the flow has been changing. In terms of those who come to Tunisia to work or study, some arrive regularly by plane (an increasing trend), as most West African countries do not require visas for Tunisia. It is estimated that there are 6 500 international students in Tunisia.

**Figure 52:** Entry points into Tunisia, 2018–2019

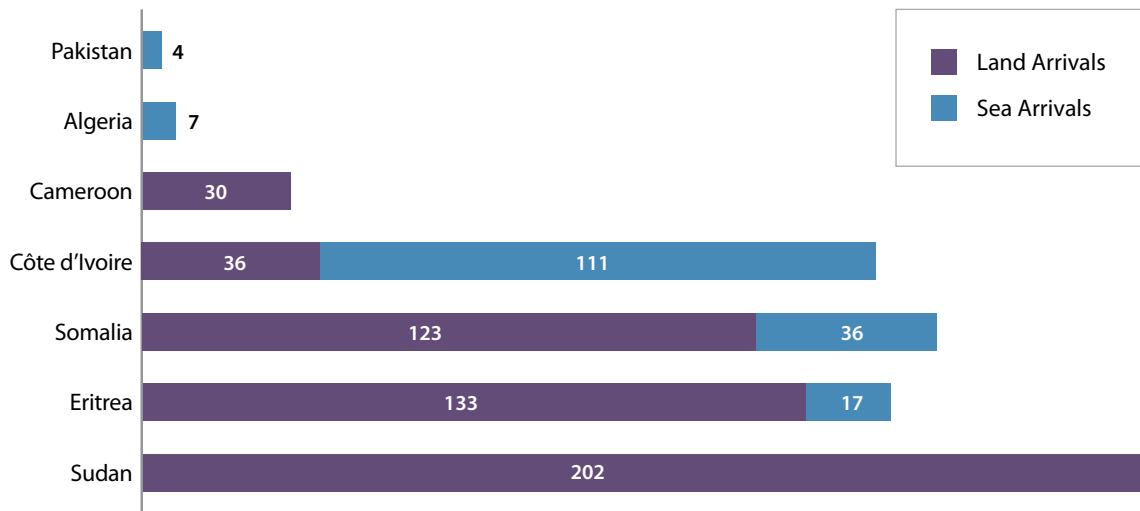


Data source: UNHCR Tunisia

**Land arrivals from Libya to Tunisia have been increasing over the past year.** Until 2018, the arrivals from Libya were mainly individuals who had departed that country by boat and who were subsequently rescued at sea by the Tunisian Coast Guard, before disembarking in Tunisia. Between January and June 2018, however, land arrivals started to increase, with a total of 643 individuals arriving from the Libyan border in that period. As can be seen in land arrivals far surpassed air arrivals in 2019, when they had been almost equal the year prior. While sea arrivals remain low, the increase in 2019 has been significant.

**In October 2018, a shift was observed among the nationalities arriving from the Libyan border.**

Prior to then it had been mainly West Africans, while from October onward it was a majority of East Africans. In December 2018, there was a surge of Eritreans and fewer Somalis and Sudanese. In May 2019, the nationalities changed again, with only 12 Eritrean arrivals and an increase in Sudanese and Somali nationals (191 arrivals in May in total). Figure 53 charts the land and sea arrivals in Tunisia, according to nationality, from January to June 2019.

**Figure 53:** Land and sea arrivals in Tunisia by nationality, Jan–June 2019

Data source: UNHCR Tunisia

### 2.2.3 Tunisia as a departure point

As a departure point for the Central Mediterranean route, boats departing the Tunisian coast are mainly comprised of Tunisians – but not exclusively. Prior to 2018, it was 90% Tunisians but in 2019, it decreased to 70%. In May of 2019, 75 migrants (64 from Bangladesh, one Sudanese, nine Egyptians and one Moroccan) were rescued by an Egyptian commercial ship. They were stuck for 18 days off the Tunisian coast before authorities let them dock in Zarzis.<sup>45</sup>

**The population of concern in Tunisia has been increasing over the last five years.** Figure 54 charts the number of individuals registered by UNHCR between 2015–2019 and shows a 450% increase between 2018 and 2019 and a 4 000% increase between 2015 and 2019. The population of concern in Tunisia is majority Syrian. Figure 55 charts refugees and asylum seekers registered by UNHCR in Tunisia from 2016–2019 by nationality. While it shows that the majority has been Syrian for each of the four years, the rates of Syrian registrations increased slightly in 2017 and 2018. Newcomer Syrians tend to come from Algeria and typically live between Algeria and Tunisia. The East African nationals (from Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea) mainly arrived over 2017 and 2018, with only small numbers of Sudanese arriving in the years prior (and 15 Somalis in 2015). The number of Ivorian registrations started to grow in 2017, peaking in 2018. Conversely, all Iraqi registrations occurred in 2015 and 2016 – albeit at very low numbers.

Figure 56 charts UNHCR registrations for the period from January to August 2019. It confirms that Syrians still represent the majority, but East African registrations are increasing.

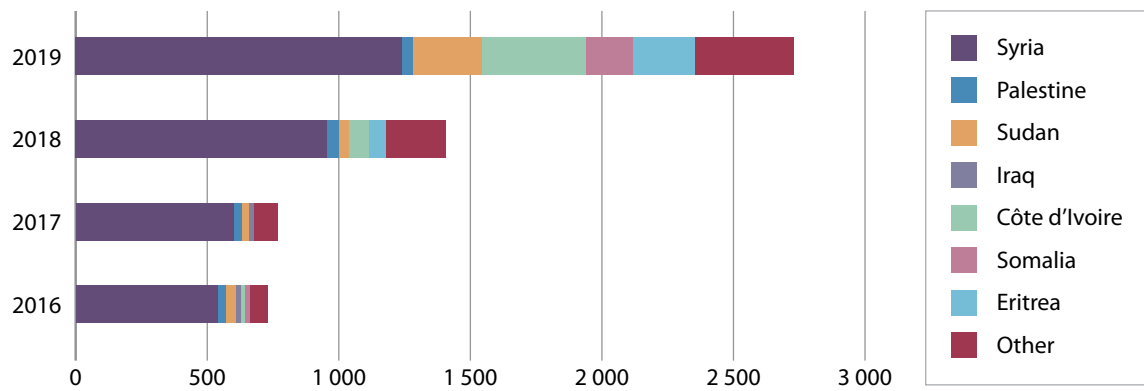


**Figure 54:** Number of individuals registered by UNHCR, 2015–2019



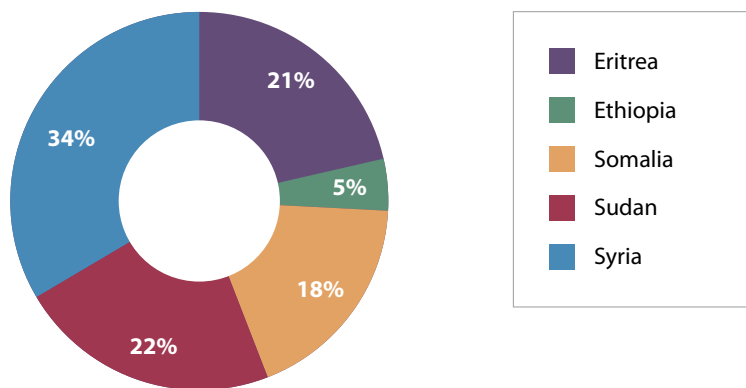
Data source: UNHCR

**Figure 55:** Population of concern in Tunisia, by nationality and year



Data source: European University Institute

**Figure 56:** Individuals registered by UNHCR between Jan and August 2019 by nationality



Data source: UNHCR Tunisia

## 2.3 Drivers of migration

**The main driver of migration for Tunisians is economic, mixed with a decreasing sense of optimism in the future of the country.** Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES) conducted a nationwide survey in 2016 to scope the will to migrate amongst Tunisians. They conducted 1 200 interviews across six regions of the country and found that 54% of the population is considering migrating abroad. This constitutes an increase: before the revolution, the figure was 34% and during the revolution it was 31%. This is mainly explained by economic reasons, as well as decreasing optimism about the future of the country and increasing disappointment in the impact of the revolution.

**A series of reforms in Tunisia in the late 1980s led to increased education rates in the country, without any corresponding increase in jobs.** These reforms included the introduction of compulsory schooling until the age of 16, the introduction of vocational training curricula and courses, and efforts to increase access to education for the population. This led to a significant increase in the gross enrolment rate in secondary and tertiary education and an improved literacy rate, which climbed from 48% in 1984 to 79% in 2014.<sup>46</sup> The challenge, however, is that unemployment has continued to grow in Tunisia. A university degree not only fails to guarantee employment, but in fact, increases one's risk of unemployment. The current unemployment rate for individuals with advanced education is a whopping 42%, while it drops to 18.5% for intermediate education and 10% for basic education.<sup>47</sup>

**The lack of sufficient job creation is produced by low productivity rates as well as a structural mismatch between the labour supply offer and the economy's labour demands.** That is, as levels of tertiary education among the local labour force increased, the economy was unable to move beyond low-skilled activities that attracted low wages. This led to a structural mismatch between labour market demand for unqualified personnel and the local supply of skilled, educated workers.<sup>48</sup>

**This structural mismatch in the Tunisian labour market, while creating high unemployment rates locally, also creates a demand for unskilled foreign labour in Tunisia.** This then acts as a driver for sub-Saharan migration to Tunisia. That is, where skilled Tunisians migrate to Europe to look for jobs, unskilled sub-Saharans migrate to Tunisia to fill the local void.

**The educational reforms that began in the late '80s have also increased educational standards in Tunisia to a point where this too acts as a driver of sub-Saharan migration.** Some sub-Saharans believe that by migrating to Tunisia, they could increase their educational and skill offering to a point where it would facilitate their migration to a third country more easily.

**Visa exemptions for West African nationals can also act as a driver of sub-Saharan migration.** Nationals from Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Benin and Madagascar currently do not require visas for Tunisia.<sup>49</sup> This allows migrants from these countries to enter Tunisia regularly and to fly into the country instead of moving with smugglers. It should be noted, however, that while these nationals can enter the

country for three months at a time without a visa, they do not have the right to work unless they apply for a work permit. So while many of them enter the country regularly, they become irregular with time.

**Rumours and misinformation can encourage migration.** For example, asylum seekers who come to Tunisia from Libya tend to be driven by false information from smugglers who tell them that they can very easily be resettled from Tunisia to Europe. Most are disappointed when they arrive because actual resettlement numbers are lower than imagined, and resettlement processes take much longer than expected.

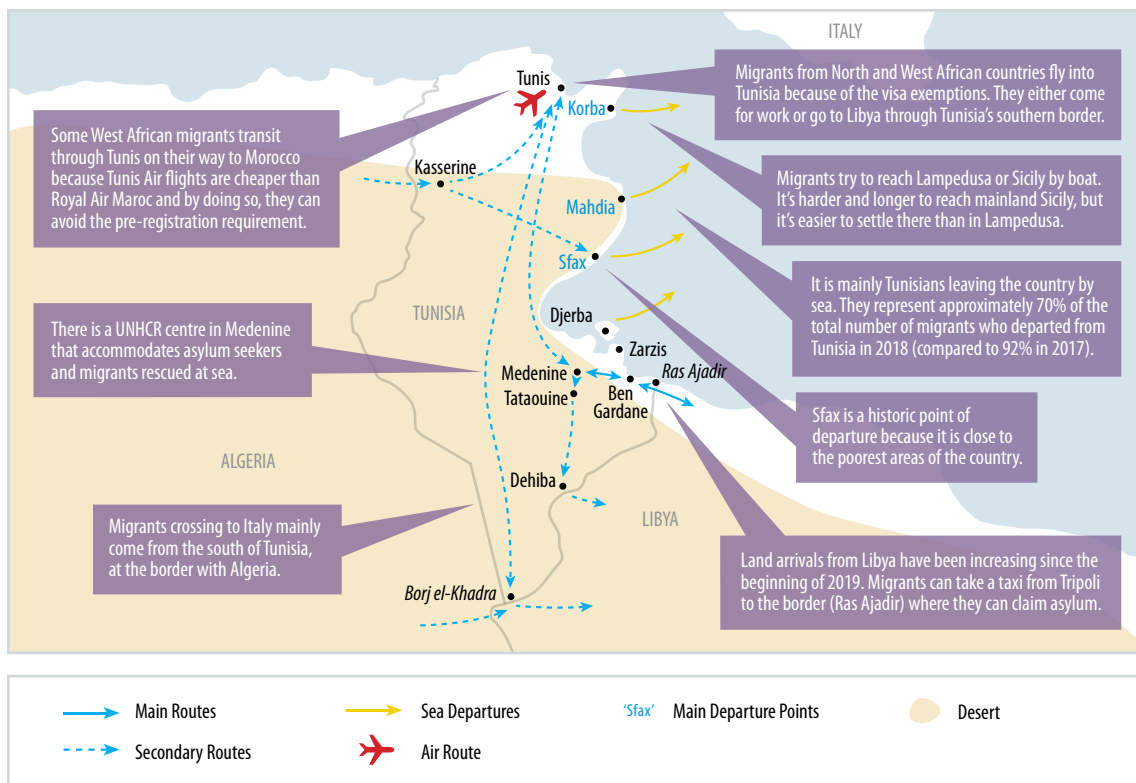
**Enforcement penalties for migrants who overstay their visas can act as a driver for irregular migration from Tunisia.** In 2015, the Tunisian government started to enforce such penalties at 20 Tunisian dinars (approximately €6) per day, to be paid on departure from the country (capped at 3 000 Tunisian dinars).<sup>50</sup> Depending on how long the migrant has overstayed, it can be cheaper to exit the country irregularly with a smuggler than pay the fine.

## 2.4 Routes and smuggling

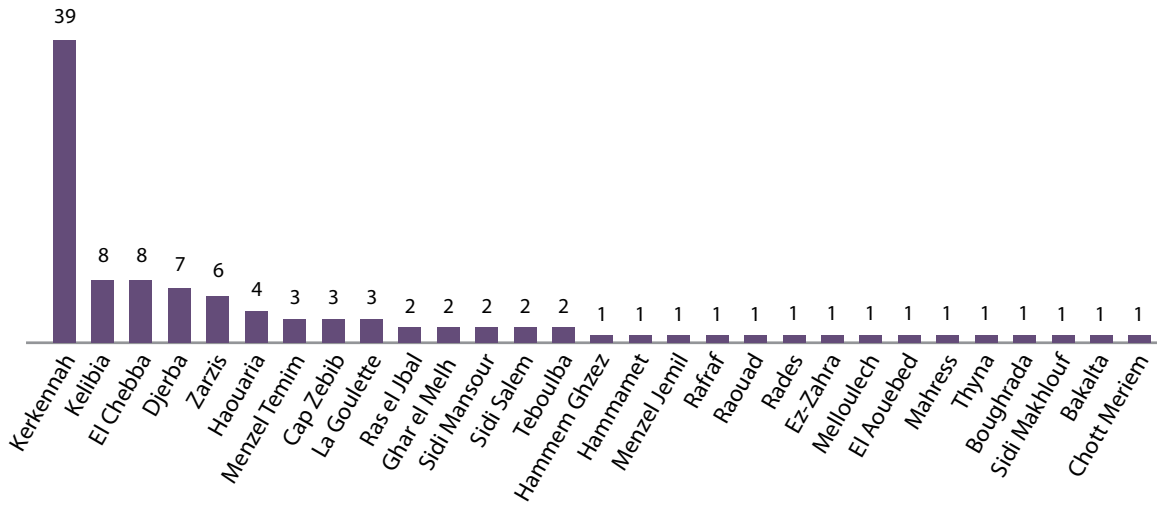
### 2.4.1 Boat journeys across the Mediterranean

**Historically, Sfax was the main Tunisian departure point for boat journeys across the Mediterranean** and mainly because of its proximity to the poor areas of the south, such as Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid and Kairouan. Figure 57 charts Tunisian boat departures by city of departure for 2017, according to a mapping exercise

Map 7: Routes through Tunisia



**Figure 57:** Tunisian boat departures by city of departure, 2017



Data source: FTDES

**Table 1:** Nationalities of intercepted migrants, Tunisia 2017<sup>51</sup>

Nationality	#
Tunisia	2 907
Nigeria	72
Côte d'Ivoire	50
Gambia	21
Sub-Saharan Africa	14
Maghreb	14
Morocco	13
Senegal	11
Mali	11
Burkina Faso	8
Sierra Leone	4
Benin	4
Ghana	3
Guinea Bassau	3
Cameroon	3
Gabon	3
Guinea	2
Togo	1
CAR	1
Algeria	1
Comoros	1
Unknown	31

Data source: UNHCR

conducted by FTDES. It demonstrates that the main departure points were around Kerkennah, Kelibia, Chebba, Djerba and Zarzis. In 2019, the departure points were concentrated around Sfax, Mahdia and Korba, as shown on Map 7, and the boats were destined for Lampedusa.

**Table 1 sets out the nationalities of intercepted migrants in 2017.** While 92% of the intercepted migrants were Tunisian, a number of North African and sub-Saharan African nationalities were also represented. All of the sub-Saharan migrants were from West African nations. The North African migrants were Algerian and Moroccan; there were no migrants from Egypt. In 2019, the proportion of Tunisians on boats that departed the Tunisian coast decreased but was still high at 70%. Sub-Saharan migrants reported that they are still more likely to travel to Libya from Tunisia and take boats from the Libyan coast. This is not only because it is cheaper from Libya but also because sub-Saharan migrants feel unsafe on Tunisian boats. They reported that if there is a problem at sea, the Tunisian smugglers are likely to throw the sub-Saharan Africans overboard.

**Since 2018, the number of people on boats has been decreasing while the price of the journey has been increasing.** Previously, each boat that departed Tunisia carried between 60–120 people. Since the beginning of 2018, and in the face of increasing deportations from Italy, smugglers reduced the number of people aboard each boat so that the number is closer to 60. The price of the journey also increased in recognition of the increased difficulties: before 2018, the price was between 2 000–4 000 dinar (approximately €600–1 200) but has now increased to 4 000–7 000 dinar (approximately €1 200–2 200).

## 2.4.2 Smuggling dynamics from the Tunisian coast

### Smugglers

**There are currently two types of smugglers that operate along the Tunisian coast. The first is those whose engage in human smuggling purely for business purposes.** They gather migrants, find boats and captains and manage all other required logistics. After 2017, these networks became more professionalized by creating links with corrupt authorities and by becoming more organized. The pyramid of these networks is so compartmentalized now that those at the bottom of the chain rarely know who sits at the top. Despite the greater organization, these networks are still quite small and operate in specific geographies. These networks are all headed by Tunisian smugglers.

**The second type of smuggler is Tunisian fisherman who have been working in these waters for some time.** Their dire economic situation is often what motivates them to also engage in human smuggling. Fishermen will hide migrants on their fishing boats and transport them to Italian waters before transferring them to dinghies. It is mainly Tunisians who move using this modality.

**Finally, there has also been an increase in self smuggling along the Tunisian coast.** This is where groups of young Tunisians will buy their own dinghies, engines and GPS trackers and undertake the journey on their own. The logistics and know-how required is more complicated than these young men realize: they often don't know the sea or how much gas is required, and the majority of the deaths at sea occur amongst this group.

Self-smuggling off the coast of Tunisia, while increasing, has not yet reached the level of self-smuggling off the coast of Morocco.

### Boats and prices

**The typical boats departing Tunisia are called *harka*.** Previously, each of these boats carried between 60–120 people. Since the beginning of 2018, and in the face of increasing deportations from Italy, smugglers reduced the number of people aboard each *harka* so that the number is closer to 60. The price of the journey also increased in recognition of the increased difficulties: before 2018, the price was between 2 000–4 000 dinar (approximately €600–1 200) but has now increased to 4 000–7 000 dinar (approximately €1 200–2 200).

**The ‘VIP *harka*’ refers to more sophisticated vessels, such as yachts or speedboats.** These journeys average around 10 000 dinar per person (approximately €3 000). The Tunisians who travel within this modality are typically wealthy and many of them are trying to leave the country to evade pre-existing problems with the law. This modality started to emerge in 2016–2017.

**The captain on the *harka* is referred to as the *harrak* and is usually the owner of the boat.** The *harrak* usually travels on board with the migrants, disembarks them one kilometre from the coast and asks them to swim to shore. Then the *harrak* will return to Tunisia with his boat. If the entire boat is intercepted and taken to Italy, the *harrak* will pretend to be a migrant too and return to Tunisia through a 48-hour deportation.

**The middleman who advertises the smuggling services and gathers the clients is referred to as the *wassit*.** The *wassit* typically rents a location where he can gather the migrants. When a sufficient number have amassed, he will hand the convoy over to a *harrak*.

### 2.4.3 Land routes

**The non-Tunisian migrants enter the country through three routes:** a land route through the south, a land route from the Libyan border, and by air through Tunis Carthage Airport. The land route from the south enters Tunisia through the Borj el-Khadra crossing point along the Algerian border (see Map 7). The movement of irregular migrants through this route is minimal. Some migrants who enter the country through Tunis Carthage Airport make movements by land to the south in order to move into Algeria or Libya, although this movement is also minimal. There are also sub-Saharan migrants who fly Tunisair to Casablanca in order to travel along the Western Mediterranean route to Spain, with a transit in Tunis. This is typically because Tunisair offers cheaper flights than Royal Air Maroc, and flying through Tunis allows migrants who come from countries that require pre-registration for entry into Morocco to circumvent this regulation.

**Migrants who move from Libya to Tunisia generally do so without the aid of smugglers.** They typically travel with taxis from Tripoli and are dropped off at the border. They then cross the no-man’s land on foot and ask for asylum when they reach the Tunisian border. Migrants who enter Tunisian from Libya are detained

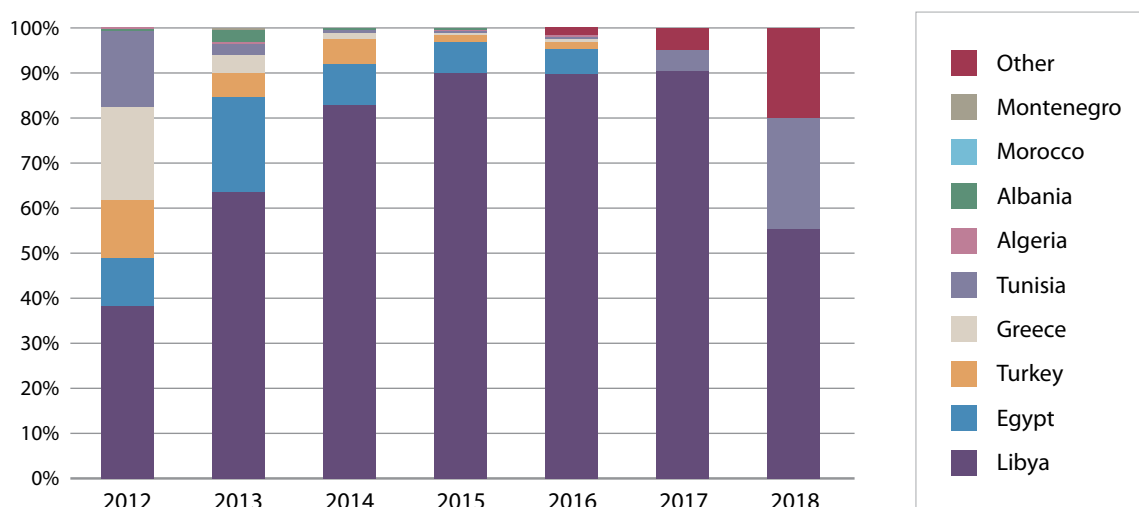
for 15 days on arrival by police for security reasons (including asylum seekers), before being handed over to the Tunisian Red Crescent to start their asylum application. Some asylum seekers who were in possession of refugee cards from Libya were spared the 15-day detention period.

### 3. EGYPT

**In September 2016, a boat capsized off the coast of Rosetta, Egypt, reportedly carrying around 450 people. This tragedy became an impetus for the Egyptian government to recommit itself to addressing the irregular migratory movements through the country.** It led to the adoption of a 10-year national strategy on irregular migration (2016–2026); the adoption of Anti-smuggling Law No. 82 (2016), which is the first of its kind in the region and which has provisions in line with the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; and the adoption of an anti-trafficking strategy and action plan to facilitate the implementation of the anti-trafficking law that was passed in 2010. The National Coordinating Committee for Combatting Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Persons was also created as an inter-ministerial coordination committee, and includes 27 national institutions and ministries.

**The Egyptian government’s recommitment also took the form of greater controls on the northern coast, with the intention of curtailing irregular boat departures from Egypt,** including arresting individuals who were attempting to depart the country irregularly. As can be seen in Figure 58, 10% of the arrivals in Italy in 2012 departed the Egyptian coast. This increased to 21% in 2013, dropped to 9% in 2014, 7% in 2015 and 6% in 2016. There have been no recorded departures off the coast of Egypt between 2017 and the end of 2019.

**Figure 58:** Sea arrivals in Italy according to country of departure, as a proportion of the total



Data source: Italian Mol and UNHCR

### 3.1 Legal and normative framework

**The Arab Republic of Egypt is signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. However, Egypt has maintained reservations** to four of the five welfare provisions in the convention: rights to personal status, rationing, public relief and education, and social security. Egypt is also signatory to the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

Egyptian legislation related to refugees is fragmented:

- **Employment:** Although Egypt did not enter a reservation to Article 17 of the 1951 Convention (wage-earning employment), in practice it is almost impossible for a refugee to obtain a work permit.
- **Education:** Despite its reservation in relation to primary education, Ministerial Resolution No. 24 of 1992 allowed children of recognized refugees from Syria, Sudan and Yemen to attend public schools in Egypt. In August 2019, the government declared that all refugee children will be allowed to attend public schools in Egypt.
- **Residency:** The Ministry of Interior's Decree No. 8180 of 1996 provides that refugees can receive a three-year temporary residency permit, but this is not being implemented because of a ministerial decision to provide refugees with six-month residency permits instead.
- **The Four Freedoms Agreement:** while this agreement with Sudan should guarantee Sudanese nationals in Egypt the same rights as Egyptian nationals, it has been left largely unimplemented.

**Egypt's 1954 MoU with UNHCR lists voluntary return and resettlement as the preferred durable solutions, and makes no mention of local integration.** The MoU entrusts UNHCR to, among others, conduct registration and refugee-status determination; facilitate resettlement and voluntary repatriation of refugees; and to help, within the limits of the funds received, the most destitute refugees residing in Egypt. As of July 2019, some 247 808 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered with UNHCR in Egypt,<sup>52</sup> approximately a 10% increase compared to July 2018. Due to constraints on UNHCR funding, a minority of the most vulnerable receive assistance beyond registration.

**UNHCR in Egypt has a general waiting time of three months for an appointment for registration.**

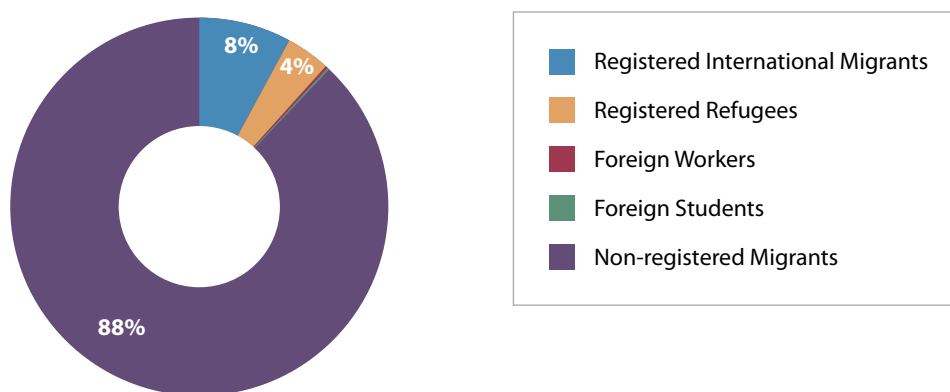
The purpose of the refugee card is to prevent refoulement. Once a refugee card has been issued by the UNHCR, the refugee must then apply for residency from the Egyptian government. The residence permit can take up to three months to be processed and has a duration of six months (renewable), which begins from the date when the application was lodged. This means that one's residency permit is almost expired by the time it is granted.



**In addition to refugee registration, migrants can register with the Mol in Egypt, which allows migrants to regularize their stay but does not give them the right to work.** (It also gives them status as a migrant rather than a refugee). To be eligible, migrants must provide a rental agreement. It generally takes less than three months for this type of status to be processed. As refugee registration takes longer, there is more of an incentive for asylum seekers to register with the Mol. Moreover, migrants and asylum seekers in the country can be arrested if they are found to be without status, thereby providing a further motivation for asylum seekers to register through the quicker Mol process. There have also been cases where individuals with refugee cards were arrested because they did not yet have a residence permit. They were released following UNHCR intervention.

**Figure 59 charts migrants in Egypt according to their registration status.** While it shows that a whopping 88% remain unregistered, it also demonstrates that the proportion of migrants who are registered with the Mol (8%) is double those who are registered as refugees (4%).

**Figure 59:** Migrant communities in Egypt according to status, July 2019



Data source: IOM Egypt

**The abovementioned dynamics also mean that the refugee statistics in Egypt are distorted and explains why countries of concern, such as Syria and Palestine, appear in foreign-worker statistics** (see Figure 61 below). There are currently 250 000 people registered under the 1951 convention in Egypt, but the government claims that there are 5 million foreigners in the country living in refugee-like conditions. Most analysts in the country concede that 5 million is an overstatement that would include expatriates who are working regularly in the country, and who are not in refugee-like conditions. However, there is consensus that the number of refugees in the country is higher than what the government has registered. In addition to the registration dynamics described above, another reason for this is that the Egyptian government labelled certain communities as ‘brothers and sisters’ – such as the Libyans and the Sudanese – out of a sense of generosity and shared culture.

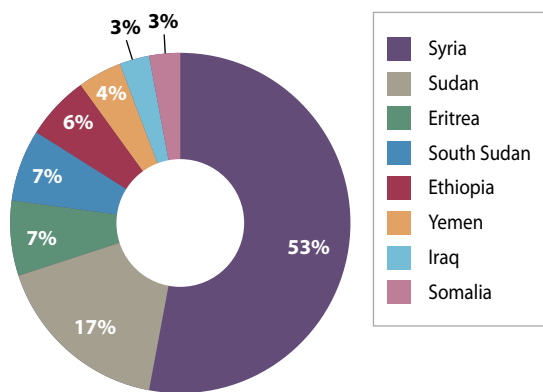
**To apply for a work permit in Egypt, one needs to provide the authorities with a national Egyptian ID card or a valid passport in the case of foreigners.** This requirement precludes refugees from being able to gain work permits. Even for migrants, work permits are only granted for skilled positions, which are generally filled by expatriates, and when strong justifications are provided as to why a foreigner is needed for the role. The result is that most migrants who manage to work in Egypt do so on the informal employment market, with no guarantees or rights.

### 3.2 Profiles

**The main migrant communities in Egypt include East Africans (Sudanese, South Sudanese, Somalis and Eritreans), Arab communities (Yemenis, Syrians, Iraqis and Libyans), and Asian communities (Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Filipinos).** The growing populations are the South Sudanese, Yemenis and Eritreans. There has also been an increase in UAMs across all nationalities, with the exception of the Syrians. Finally, there is a flow of regular migrants who come to Egypt to study at the Al-Azhar University (a historic migrant community), most of whom arrive regularly but become irregular over time.

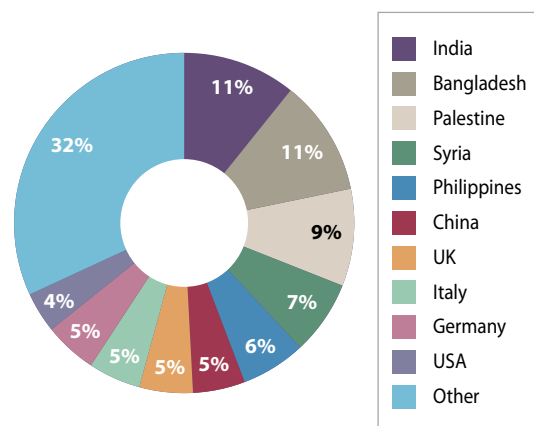
**There is also a Libyan community in the country that does not show up in any of the statistics,** mainly because they don't register and tend to enjoy some rights by virtue of the generosity of the Egyptian government towards them. A study by Save the Children in 2015 estimated that there are 400 000–600 000 Libyans in the country. Figure 60 charts the registered refugees in Egypt as of July 2019, and Figure 61 charts the foreign workers in the country.

**Figure 60:** Registered refugees in Egypt, July 2019



Data source: IOM Egypt

**Figure 61:** Foreign workers in Egypt, July 2019



Data source: IOM Egypt

### 3.2.1 Yemenis in Egypt

**Even before the conflict began in Yemen in 2014, Yemenis were one of the biggest migrant communities in Egypt.** They came as students on scholarships and there was also a tradition of Yemenis who would travel to Egypt for medical treatment. Yemenis tend to be relatively well received by the Egyptian population. The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) estimated that there were 1.6 million Yemenis in Egypt in 2019 and UNHCR data shows 9 600 registered refugees as of July 2019 (see Figure 60). The Yemeni population in Egypt is stable for the most part, with little onward movement.

**Prior to 2014, Yemeni nationals did not require a visa to enter Egypt. After 2014, this changed for Yemenis between the ages of 16 and 50.** Most Yemenis enter Egypt today with a medical visa, which can be obtained by taking a hospital-provided medical certificate to the Egyptian embassy in Yemen or to the MFA in Egypt (on someone's behalf). The medical visa is issued in 15 days and hospitals in Yemen will issue medical certificates for \$500, a practice that is turning into a growing business.

**Once Yemenis arrive in Egypt on a medical visa, they can then apply for asylum – although some choose to register with the Mol instead** given the dynamics described above. There is also a portion of the Yemeni population that chooses not to register with the UNHCR, because they side with the government at home and don't want refugee registration to prevent them from returning home once the conflict ends (a dynamic that has also been shared by some Syrians).

**The majority of Yemenis who came to Egypt had financial means** to purchase medical certificates for the visa and flights to fly to Egypt. Given the lack of assistance in Egypt, financial means also allows them to invest in businesses on arrival, which enable them and their families to live in Egypt. Those without financial means tend to move to Djibouti or Somalia, where camps have been established for displaced Yemenis. There is also a limited movement of Yemenis entering Egypt by land by transiting through Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan. Yemenis who wish to move to Europe try to do so via Turkey by transiting through Iran. There is also a small movement of Yemenis to Ecuador, from where they try to cross into the US.

**For a hitherto small minority of Yemenis, Egypt acts as a transit country for Spain or Russia.** Yemenis who are trying to enter Europe through Spain move from Egypt towards Morocco in order to follow the Western Mediterranean route to Spain. This movement is described in further detail in the section on routes. Yemenis can also enter Georgia with medical visas that are obtained in the same manner as the Egyptian medical visa. However, as there is no Georgian embassy in Yemen, they first come to Egypt to apply for the Georgian visa through the embassy in Cairo. Then they fly from Egypt to Georgia and from Georgia they move to Russia.

### 3.2.2 Syrians in Egypt

**Syrians comprise the largest refugee community in Egypt, with 130 000 Syrians registered as refugees, comprising 53% of the country's total refugee population.** They tend to receive the best treatment out of all the refugee communities, although they were initially better accepted. This is because in recent years, the economic prosperity of Syrians in Egypt – many of whom have opened successful businesses – has started to create some tension with the local population. The majority live in Cairo, but there are also communities in Damietta. They have created Syrian schools for their children with the agreement that the students can complete their exams in Egyptian schools and thereby receive official credits for university access.

**There are generally three types of Syrian communities in Egypt: those who came in the early years of the Syrian conflict, those who come more recently via Sudan, and those who fly directly into Egypt today.** Those who arrived in the early years of the Syrian conflict generally came with money. They rented apartments and lived off their savings, expecting to return to Syria soon. As the conflict at home dragged out, they started to run out of money and then registered with UNHCR. This dynamic has also been seen in other countries in the region that host Syrian communities, as well as among the Yemeni population in Egypt. Those who arrive today via Sudan fly into Khartoum, as Sudan is still visa free for Syrian passport holders, and make their way to Egypt by land. Their journeys are described in detail in the smuggling section.

**According to UNHCR registration data, the majority of Syrians arriving in Egypt today fly directly into the country.** They are able to obtain entry visas into Egypt (typically a three-month tourist visa) with the payment of a US\$2 000–3 000 bribe. This type of visa is organized by smugglers with whom the refugees connect from Syria. The smuggler typically waits for them in the airport and provides the visa on arrival, usually abetted by state officials. Once they arrive in the country, they convert the tourist visa into a refugee card or some other type of registration.

**The cost of living in Egypt is lower than in Lebanon, Jordan and even Sudan, which acts as a driver of migration for Syrian communities who continue to move to Egypt.** Syrians interviewed in Egypt explained that if they sell all of their assets in Syria, they would be able to open a factory in Egypt, which would allow one person to support an entire extended family. In fact, many Syrians went to Egypt, opened up businesses and then brought over the rest of their family. The majority of those arriving in Egypt today are joining family. In addition to the affordable cost of living, language and religion also play a role in decision making.

**There is almost no onward movement for Syrians from Egypt.** Syrians do not undertake the dangerous journeys that other nationalities are more willing to accept; they only tend to leave if they are going home or through a resettlement.

### 3.2.3 Eritreans in Egypt

**As of July 2019, approximately 17 000 Eritreans are registered as refugees in Egypt.** Initially, Eritreans were coming to Egypt in order to move into Israel. They faced horrific cases of trafficking and kidnapping in the Sinai, and there were also allegations of migrants being shot close to the Egyptian-Israeli border.<sup>53</sup> In 2013, Israel erected a fence along the border and ended the movement.

**Between 2013 and 2017, the majority of Eritreans came to Egypt to board boats to Italy,** but this has waned in response to the curtailment of boat movements from the Egyptian coast. Smugglers in Egypt are still telling migrants that they can take them out on a boat from Alexandria in order to meet, and join, boats that departed the Libyan coast and which are headed to Italy.

**Since 2017, there are Eritreans who come to Egypt with the intention of moving on to Libya to board boats from the Libyan coast.** This subset tends to comprise of young risk-takers who access Libya via Egypt, instead of moving directly into Libya from Sudan, in order to avoid the desert crossing between Omdurman (Sudan) and Kufra (Libya) and to avoid the heavy controls on the Sudanese-Libyan border. However, the number of Eritreans entering Egypt and the number of Eritreans moving from Egypt to Libya has been decreasing over the last two years.

**Eritreans enter Egypt via Sudan:** the ones who stay in Sudan tend to have been there a long time, whereas the ones who come to Egypt fear ill treatment in Sudan, or are afraid of Eritrean spies in the refugee camps in Sudan. The lack of long-term stability in Sudan, in terms of naturalization and rights for refugee communities, also pushes Eritreans out of the country and on to Europe. The Eritrean community in Egypt is the largest resettlement group. This also acts as a driver of migration to Egypt for some, although they are usually disappointed by how long a resettlement process can take. There is also a small group of Eritreans who come from Saudi Arabia to Egypt today, given the increased difficulty for migrant communities in the Gulf. This group tends to travel to Egypt with the intention of staying.

**Eritreans also represent the largest group of UAMs in Egypt** and always have, although the ages have been decreasing in recent years from school leavers of 17 to 18 years of age, to high-school students of 15 to 16 years.

### 3.2.4 Other East Africans in Egypt

**The Sudanese community comprises the second largest group of registered refugees in the country,** totalling approximately 43 000 individuals at July 2019. Most analysts believe that the actual number of Sudanese in the country is closer to 2–3 million individuals. Most Sudanese enter Egypt regularly by way of the Four Freedoms Agreement, which was signed in August 2004 and which guarantees freedom of residence, work, movement and ownership for Egyptians in Sudan and Sudanese in Egypt. However, in early 2018, Egypt requested that an amendment be made to some of the clauses, including restricting the entry of Sudanese

citizens to Egypt.<sup>54</sup> The Sudanese travel to Egypt by land (using buses) through Aswan along with other East African migrants who enter irregularly, unlike the Sudanese. There is also a movement of Sudanese by plane from Khartoum to Cairo.

**As of July 2019, there are approximately 17 000 South Sudanese registered as refugees in Egypt.**

Most of them travel to Egypt by land through Aswan, along with the other East Africans, but there is also a movement by plane from Juba to Cairo and from Khartoum to Cairo. South Sudanese women and the elderly do not require visas to enter Egypt. There is almost no onward movement from Egypt, as the majority of these South Sudanese migrants do not have the financial means for it. They tend to wait in Egypt for a resettlement or for things to improve at home.

**The number of Somalis in Egypt started to increase when the war began in Yemen.** Somalis had been seeking asylum in Yemen for the most part of the last 20 years and needed to find a new place of refuge when the war broke out. When they realized that Egypt would not provide assistance for refugees to the same extent as Yemen, the news travelled back to Yemen and the movement slowed to the point of being almost non-existent. It is estimated that there are currently 7 000 Somalis in the country. They arrive irregularly from Sudan through the southern border. From Yemen to Sudan, they typically travel by boat from Port Sudan with smugglers, costing between US\$500–700. This journey is dangerous and migrants report that there are usually deaths along the way. Migrants also reported that there is sometimes ill-treatment from the Sudanese border officials.

### 3.3 Drivers of migration

**The lack of access to jobs and the job market in Egypt causes people to move on, both in the case of Egyptians and migrant workers.** Egyptians have historically constituted one of the main countries of origin for migrant workers in Libya. The current instability in Libya has thus created great economic pressure for Egyptians who now have fewer avenues for overseas employment. The economic downturn in the Gulf that began in 2014 and worsened in 2017 has only added to an already grave situation, as the Gulf Cooperation Council countries were also places of employment for Egyptians. This causes Egyptians to search for new host countries and employment markets, and new income-generating activities in Egypt. Egyptian labour law is angled towards expatriates who are documented, and overlooks refugees who contribute through the informal labour market – unless they can afford to open their own businesses.

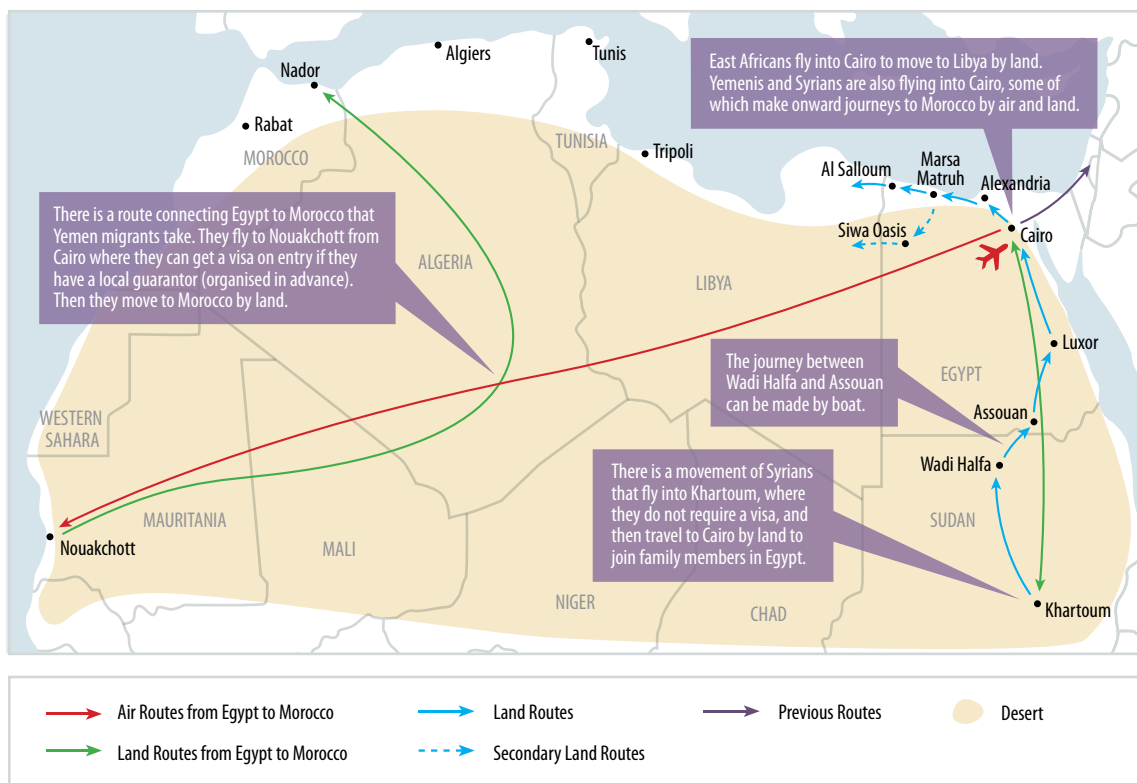
**Resettlement opportunities have also acted as a driver of migration, with some communities coming to Egypt in the hope that they will be resettled soon.** However, many who come with this intention end up stranded. There are refugee arrivals from 2002 who are still waiting and telling themselves that it must be their turn soon. The current quota for resettlement from Egypt is 4 000 refugees per year. The main nationalities who are being resettled are Eritreans and Syrians.

**The challenges that migrants and refugees face in Egypt, which are often shared by the local population, also act as drivers of onward movement.** For example, refugees do not have the possibility to naturalize on the long term in Egypt, and this lack of long-term stability pushes them on to find a more stable future elsewhere – particularly if there are children involved. This dynamic was also apparent among Syrian communities in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, who eventually made onward movements to Europe because of the same lack of long-term security. There are also other challenges, such as being precluded from the formal labour market as a refugee or migrant; the state of the economy; and the education system. Qualified Syrians have been unable to resume their professions in Egypt because their qualifications were not accepted. For many, this also motivated onward movements.

### 3.4 Routes and smuggling

There are three main entry points into Egypt: the southern border with Sudan, the western border with Libya and Cairo International Airport. The Sinai and the northern coast of Egypt constitute the two exit points, although there have been zero movements into the Sinai between 2014 and 2019 and zero movements from the coast of Egypt between 2017 and 2019. These are all shown in Map 8.

Map 8: Routes through Egypt



### 3.4.1 Sudanese border

**The border with Sudan is the main entry point into Egypt.** As it lies in the desert, it is an extremely porous border with traditionally a lot of traffic. According to the Four Freedoms Agreement, Sudanese nationals do not need a visa to cross this border into Egypt, and up until the Sudanese Revolution, they did travel into Egypt visa free. After the revolution, however, authorities started requiring documentation. Since then, the flows over this border have become more limited.

**Now there are cases of migrants being apprehended at the southern border and even some situations of refoulement here.** The government does not conduct or allow any registration of asylum seekers or foreign nationals at the border with Sudan, and requires that all registrations be affected in Cairo. This means that individuals can be arrested for irregular entry when they cross into the south, in which case the only options are return or detention. During the summer of 2018, there were also cases of Sudanese activists being returned to Sudan at the request of the Transitional Sudanese Government: an action that amounts to refoulement.

**Detention for undocumented migrants is not uncommon in Egypt.** Migrants are held in police stations. They report relatively good conditions, although the police station does not provide food for detainees and the migrants require someone to bring food for them. Sometimes migrants are abused by other detainees, especially in the case of children – who are not typically separated from adults. UNHCR in Egypt does not have access to all places of detention but ad-hoc agreements with particular police stations, such as Alexandria and Damietta. Observers believe that there is a sizable number of migrants detained in Aswan for irregular entry over the southern border – without having been given the chance to apply for asylum, given the requirements to register in Cairo. In other locations, refugees who are in possession of a UNHCR registration card have been released from detention. This led to some migrants registering as refugees simply in case of detention. Smugglers are often waiting outside police stations for clients to be released.

**The smugglers who transport migrants from Khartoum to Cairo do not separate the nationalities, in contrast to other geographies.** There is a handover from Sudanese smugglers to Egyptian smugglers at the border. While the smugglers in Egypt are all Egyptian, the smugglers in Sudan are Sudanese as well as other nationalities, particularly Eritrean and Ethiopian. The passengers typically pay for their journey through an insurance office in Khartoum, which means the payment is not handed over until the migrant arrives safely at their destination. Migrants reported that they had, however, been extorted at this border.

**The Syrians are an exception to these dynamics.** There is a flow of Syrians who fly into Khartoum because of the visa exemption, and then move to Egypt by land. While they also travel through Aswan with smugglers, and although they follow the same route as other East African migrants travelling to Egypt, they pay higher smuggling fees and enjoy better journeys. They also travel alone and do not meet other nationalities along the way. While Syrians will not be refouled back to Syria if picked up at the border, they can be deported back to Sudan.





### 3.4.2 Libyan border

**The border between Egypt and Libya is officially closed for everyone except Egyptians who can move across the border with the right justification**, such as a pre-arranged job. While the number of Egyptians moving into Libya dropped to almost zero during the 2019 civil war in Libya, there are still some Egyptians who move into the country, even without jobs. There is also a flow of East Africans who choose to move to Libya via Egypt instead of crossing directly from Sudan, who make the crossing over this border. They do this to avoid the desert crossing between Libya and Sudan, but there are more controls on the route via Egypt. The Egyptian government is also arresting individuals who cross this border irregularly, although they are not held in custody. For more detail on movements over this border, see the Libyan section.

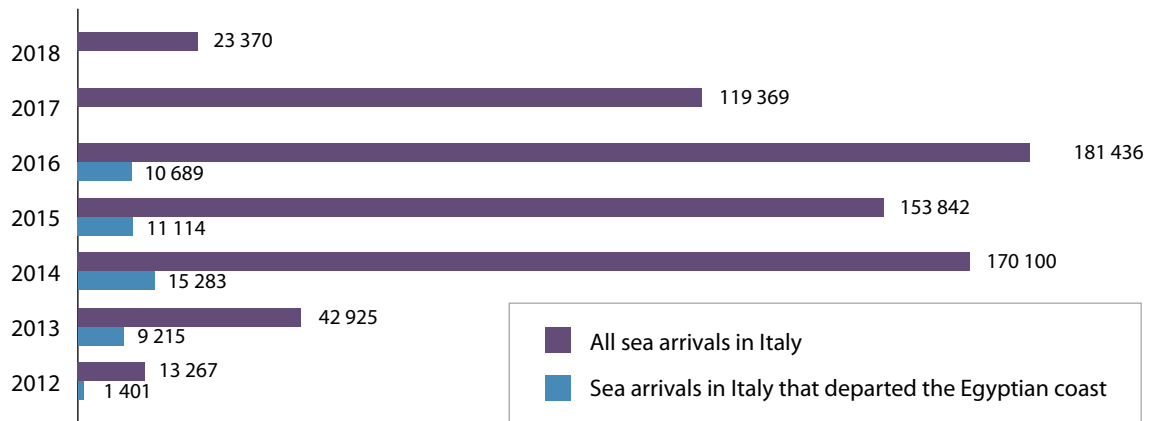
**Traditionally there has been traffic in both directions across this border** – particularly between 2014 and 2017, when migrants and refugees crossed from Libya into Egypt to board boats from the Egyptian coast whenever the security deteriorated in Libya. In fact, there was a ping-pong effect between the two countries during those years. Migrants would move back and forth between Libya and Egypt depending on security conditions and where they felt they would be more likely to successfully take a boat to Europe.

### 3.4.3 The northern coast of Egypt

**The journey to Italy from Egypt is longer than from Libya. In the most favourable conditions, it can take up to two days.** For this reason, the vessels departing from the Egyptian coast have always been much larger than those departing from the Libyan coast, and were typically big fisherman boats. While the vast majority of the boat departures from Egypt were destined for Italy, some departures were also destined for Greece – especially when the Egyptian government started clamping down on the irregular departures. Smugglers rerouted towards Greece in an effort to avoid authorities. There was also a time when smugglers moved the departure points along the coast and instructed migrants to tell authorities that they had departed from Libya when they arrived in Italy.

**As discussed in previous sections, the proportion of arrivals in Italy that departed the Egyptian coast moved from 10% in 2012 to 21% in 2013, to 9% in 2014, 7% in 2015, 6% in 2016 and 0 in 2017.** When we look at the departures off the Egyptian coast in absolute terms, the numbers were increasing until 2014, even though Egypt's proportion of the total was decreasing. This is because the total number of arrivals increased greatly in 2014, as demonstrated in Figure 62.

**The sudden and lasting eradication of irregular departures from Egypt was not a result of the anti-smuggling law, but due to a government decision to completely address the issue.** Egypt is a country where the government has authority over the entire territory, unlike Libya, and thus has the ability to address illicit markets. Some observers have argued that the government's ability to completely eradicate the issue implies that there must have been some collusion between the smugglers and authorities that has now been stamped out. However, evidence that Egyptian smugglers instructed migrants to report departing from

**Figure 62:** Sea arrivals in Italy that departed the Egyptian coast against all sea arrivals in Italy

Data source: Italian Mol

Libya to authorities in Italy implies that the situation may be more nuanced than we know. Perhaps the issue has not been completely stamped out, but rather decreased dramatically and moved further underground. The evidence gathered for this report is not able to give a definitive answer to such a question.

**It should also be noted that the smuggling industry in Egypt is still active.** Refugee communities are filled with smugglers and there are networks in place that ensure a lasting trend. That is, they may not be active on the northern coast at the moment, but they are active in other forms of smuggling. If the demand for boats to Europe increases again, they will be ready to meet that demand. In 2019, Egyptian police identified two networks, one of which was active in seven governorates and operated through 54 brokers. This network moves migrants to Libya by boat and 30 Egyptians, two Sudanese, one Ethiopian and one Somali were arrested. The second network operated in upper Egypt and specialized in moving Egyptians to Jordan and then to Turkey by plane. Refugees also reported that smugglers come into their communities sometimes and advertise boat journeys to Europe for a fee. They charge refugees between US\$2 000–3 000 and ask them to wait in a holding location, when there is in fact no boat departing.

### 3.4.4 Cairo International Airport

**Cairo Airport has become a hub for smuggling with the use of fake documents.** There are a few modalities that were observed during fieldwork. The first is Asian populations, who are smuggled through Egypt with the use of fake visas. Typically, they plan a journey between home and Europe with a transit in Cairo Airport. If the transit is less than six hours there is no immigration control, and this allows the migrants to keep moving through. After three to four interceptions by authorities in Cairo, the movement stops for a few months and then resumes again. There are also exotic routings, such as Egyptians travelling to Brazil, where there is no visa requirement for them, with a transit in Europe. When they arrive in the European airport, they approach immigration officials and claim to be Palestinian and in need of asylum. Finally, there are cases of Egyptians being granted

genuine visas by European embassies on the basis of fake documents. In such cases, the migrant travels directly to the airport of another European country – not the one from which the visa has been issued.

**Yemenis have also been making onward movements from Egypt through Cairo International Airport.**

They enter Egypt with medical visas, as explained in the profiles section. When they wish to move on to Europe, they attempt to do so through the Western Mediterranean route, given the lack of departures from Egypt and the extremely high level of risk in Libya. To reach Morocco, they first fly from Cairo to Nouakchott, where they can obtain entry visas on arrival. For such an entry visa, they require a local guarantor. This is organized in advance through smuggling networks who provide a guarantor (referred to as the *sheikh*) in exchange for US\$300. The *sheikh* then accommodates them in Nouakchott for five days and charges US\$500 for this period. After five days, a smuggler arrives and moves them by land through Mali and Algeria, and then into Morocco. Once inside Morocco, the smuggler takes them to Nador, from where they cross into Spain. The land journey through Mali and Algeria is priced at US\$2 000, the crossing from Algeria into Morocco is priced at US\$1 500 and the crossing into Spain is priced at US\$800.

## 4. LIBYA

**Historically, Libya has been an attractive destination for sub-Saharan African migrants.** Libya is a resource-rich country with one of the strongest GDP per capita rates in Africa, but with a small local population. Under the previous regime, certain industries suffered from a lack of labour supply, which increased demand for foreign labour in the form of migrants. Libya's geographic location, its relatively weaker border management and the employment opportunities that existed in the country, which allowed migrants to make money for their onward journeys, made it a perfect platform for those aiming to reach Europe.<sup>55</sup>

### 4.1 The development of smuggling dynamics in Libya post-2014

**In the years immediately following the revolution, as the political stability in Libya started to deteriorate, the smuggling landscape also started to shift.** By the end of 2012, the smuggling networks in Libya became more transnational in nature because movements to Europe had increased during the revolution. Well-connected operators began to converge on Libya, better linking its smuggling business transnationally. Libyan coastal smugglers, who had been closely monitored and controlled by the regime, started to take part in better organized networks.<sup>56</sup>

**The composition of migrants entering the country had also changed.** While Syrian refugees had started to move into Libya by the end of 2011, they started to move to Europe by boat from Libya for the first time in 2013. Prior to that, these refugees remained in neighbouring countries to Syria, so that when the situation improved at home, they would be able to readily move back. Once they realized that things were not going to improve soon, coupled with increased destruction of assets in Syria, they started to board boats to Europe.<sup>57</sup>

**This resulted in a large increase in flows through the Central Mediterranean (170 664 arrivals in Italy in 2014, compared to 45 298 in 2013), and a sudden increase in migrants with greater economic means,** as Syrians were generally in a more favourable financial situation than sub-Saharan Africans. Simultaneously, as the political situation worsened in Libya and more militia groups started to vie for control of territory, financial means became an increased concern for such groups. Many of them turned to migrant smuggling as an income-generating activity and turned their attention to the Syrian community. The marketing of smuggling services emerged during this time, particularly on social media, along with the targeting of different groups of migrants through different packages of services. For instance, ‘safer’ journeys were advertised in exchange for an increased passage price. These were not actually safer but just a ploy to extract more money from Syrians.

**By 2015, instability had worsened in Libya, and Syrians started to be scapegoated in the crisis. At the same time, movements along the Eastern Mediterranean route towards Germany started to increase** and the Syrians in Libya, or Syrians who would have previously travelled via Libya, started to reroute via Turkey and Greece. This led not only to a slight decrease in migrants moving through Libya (153 942 arrivals in Italy in 2015, compared to 170 664 in 2014), but also, more importantly, to a decrease in potential revenue from each individual migrant. Militia groups had to find new sources of revenue and turned to the establishment and maintenance of migrant detention centres. These centres were profitable for such groups, because they allowed them to create the market for smuggling services. That is, by gathering migrants together in one space and then sending a smuggler inside to offer his services, they could effectively control the smuggling market, or at the very minimum, receive a share of smuggling profits. With time, many of the groups started to cut out the middleman and to engage in smuggling directly.

**In the second half of 2017, at a time when boat crossings would usually be at their peak, there was a dramatic drop in the number of migrants crossing to Europe from Libya.** This drop coincided with a number of factors, including the MoU that was signed between Italy and Libya in February of that year. Italy’s multi-dimensional strategy engaged Libya’s GNA, as well as several municipalities and tribes in key locations along the smuggling route around the broad theme of ‘development aid for migration control’. Investments were also made to build the capacity of the LCG, including fast boats and surveillance equipment being deployed to units operating along Libya’s western coast.

**In addition, a code of conduct was introduced by the Italian government in June 2017 for NGOs that provide migrant rescue functions in the Mediterranean.** This led to the majority of NGOs operating in these waters shutting down their operations, with most migrants being intercepted by the LCG instead. This resulted in a far higher number of deaths at sea. In 2017, one death was recorded for every 38 arrivals in Europe from Libya. In 2018, this rose to one death for every 14 arrivals. In parallel, Operation Sophia (see Focus box 4) contributed to the capacity building of the LCG through training programmes that aimed to promote lifesaving rescue at sea. Figure 63 charts interdictions by the LCG against the estimated number of departures from Libya between 2016 and September 2019.

**Figure 63:** Estimated departures from Libya against interdictions by the LCG, 2016–Sept 2019

Data source: UN Panel of Experts on Libya

**The increase in LCG interceptions at sea pushed up the number of migrants in detention in the country,** as the migrants were routinely sent to detention centres after disembarkation. There was also a decrease in migrant smuggling from Libya. Militia leaders, sensing an imminent end to the political status quo, attempted to launder their reputations by accepting incentives to serve as international donors' law-enforcement partners. As migrant-smuggling revenues decreased, trafficking inside migrant detention centres increased as an alternative source of income. The number of centres in the country also increased.<sup>58</sup>

#### Focus box 4: Operation Sophia

Operation Sophia (formally European Union Naval Force Mediterranean is a Common Security and Defence Policy operation focused on disrupting the business model of migrant smugglers and human traffickers, and contributing to EU efforts for the return of stability and security in Libya and the Central Mediterranean region. Initially launched in 2015, Operation Sophia is part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration. The mission's core mandate is to contribute to the EU's efforts to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean. The operation has other supporting tasks such as training the LCG and Libyan Navy, conducting the monitoring of the long-term efficiency of the training and contributing to the implementation of the UN arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya. The operation also conducts surveillance activities and gathers information on illegal trafficking of oil exports from Libya, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. On 25 July 2017, the EU Council extended Operation Sophia's mandate until 31 December 2018. On 21 December 2018, the EU Council extended the operation's mandate until 31 March 2019. On 29 March 2019, Operation Sophia was again extended until 30 September 2019, temporarily suspending the deployment of the naval assets. On 26 September 2019, Operation Sophia was extended for another six months, until 31 March 2020.<sup>60</sup>

The LCG has been at the centre of much controversy. In 2016, a **Médicines Sans Frontières search-and-rescue boat was attacked by a Libyan speedboat** and two officers from the Dallah coast guard were involved.<sup>59</sup> In 2017, the Panel of Experts identified that the head of the Zawiya sector of the LCG and other members were directly involved in sinking migrant boats using firearms. This led to sanctions against Abdal-Rahman Milad (alias Bija) in 2018.

## 4.2 The recent conflict in Libya and impact on migration

In late January 2019, the **Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Marshal Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive to take control of southern Libya**, and Sebha specifically, from the internationally recognized GNA and its allies (see Table 2 for an overview of non-state actors in the country and their allegiances). The LNA's overt objectives were ostensibly to remove terrorists and Chadian rebel groups from the south and to secure the southern border. The strategic target was, in fact, the securing of important oil fields in the southwest. The LNA aligned with local Arab tribes against the Tebu for a period of time, although the relationship between the LNA and the Tebu has since improved.

**Table 2:** Main non-state actors in Libya, 2019

Militia Name	Head	Location	Allegiance
<b>Kani Battalion</b>	Muhsin Halifa al-Kani (dec.)	Tarhouna	LNA
<b>106 Brigade</b>	Khaled Haftar	Benghazi	LNA
<b>Rada Special Deterrent Forces</b>	Abdul Rauf Kara	Tripoli (Mitiga)	GNA
<b>Steadfastness Front (Jabhat al-Somood)</b>	Salah Badi	Misrata	GNA
<b>Al-Nasr Brigade</b>	Mohammed Kushlav	Zawiya	GNA
<b>Zawiya Refinery Coast Guard</b>	Abd al-Rahman Milad (aka al-Bija)	Zawiya	GNA
<b>Anas al-Dabbashi</b>	Ahmed al-Dabbashi	Sabratha	GNA
<b>Al-Wadi Battalion</b>	Musab Abu Grein (aka The Doctor)	Sabratha	LNA
<b>301 Brigade (aka Halbous)</b>	Mohamed al-Haddad	Misrata	GNA
<b>12th Infantry Brigade</b>	Mohammed Bin Nayl	Brak al-Shati Shwayrif	LNA
<b>Tripoli Revolutionary Brigade</b>	Haithem Tajouri	Tripoli (East)	GNA

Militia Name	Head	Location	Allegiance
<b>Nawasi Brigade</b>	Mustafa Qaddour	Tripoli	GNA
<b>Zintan Military Council</b>	Osama al-Juwaili	Zintan	GNA
<b>Subul al-Salam</b>	Abd al-Rahman Hachem	Kufra	LNA
<b>Sebha Military Zone</b>	Ali Kanna	Sebha	GNA
<b>Southern Protection Force</b>	Abu Bakr al-Souki	Fezzan	GNA
<b>Bunyan al-Marsus Forces</b>	Mohammed al-Ghasri	Misrata-Sirte	GNA
<b>Abu Salim Central Security Force</b>	Abdulghani Kikli (aka Ghneiwa)	Tripoli (Abu Salim)	GNA
<b>73rd Brigade (formerly Khalid Bin Walid Brigade)</b>	Yousef Hussain Salah	Umm al-Aranib	LNA
<b>Derna Protection Force (formerly Derna Mujahideen Shura)</b>	Ateyah al-Shaari	Derna	GNA/ Islamists
<b>West Zawiya Anti-Crime Unit</b>	Hatim al-Ghayeb	Surman	LNA
<b>107 Brigade</b>		Surman	LNA
<b>Sabratha Security Room</b>	Omar Abd al-Jalil	Sabratha	LNA
<b>Kufra Military Zone</b>	Belqasim al-Abaj	Kufra	LNA
<b>Al-Jmail Security Directorate</b>		Al-Jmail	LNA
<b>Desert Shield</b>	Ibrahim Shahat Wahli	Murzuq	LNA

Soon after, the LNA prepared its attack on Tripoli, which was launched on 4 April 2019 and crushed all hopes for a deal on a new national unity government, which was in discussion. A National Conference backed by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) was meant to be held in Ghadames in mid-April, with high hopes that Haftar and Prime Minister Fayeaz al-Sarraj would come to an agreement. However, before it could take place, Haftar mobilized a large number of forces to the capital, thus prompting the GNA to declare a general alert in response. A timeline of events that followed the 4 April offensive is presented in Focus box 5.

**Focus box 5: Timeline of the main events since the offensive on Tripoli on 4 April 2019**

**4 April:** LNA forces (106 Brigade) entered and secured Gharyan, a vital access point to Tripoli. On the same day, militias from Misrata mobilized and declared a war against the LNA's advance on the capital. When Haftar's men tried to secure the 'Gate 27' checkpoint on the coastal road west of Tripoli, they were defeated by forces from Zawiya, Janzour and Zintan and 150 men were taken prisoner.

**5 April:** After the defection of the Kani Battalion in Tarhouna, the LNA started advancing rapidly towards southern Tripoli, taking control of a number of key locations in Gasr Ben Gashir, Ain Zara and Tripoli International Airport.

**7 April:** The GNA declared Operation Volcano of Rage, which aimed to drive LNA forces away from the territories that they had succeeded in capturing. The fighting was characterized by the indiscriminate use of air power and the shelling of densely populated areas and civilian infrastructure.

**May:** Fighting was concentrated around Tripoli International Airport, Ain Zara and Gasr Ben Gashir. The GNA coalition placed pressure on LNA forces by retaking some small territories that they had previously captured. Outside Tripoli, on the western coast, the precarious balance remained unchanged compared to April. Not only was the war affecting the lives of Libyans but also migrants, especially those in detention centres near the front lines.

**26 June:** The GNA coalition retook Gharyan, which was a major blow for the LNA and a turning point in the war.

**2 July:** Airstrike on the Tajoura Detention Centre that killed 50–60 migrants and injured more than 100. Responsibility for the attack was assigned to the LNA, although they denied involvement.

**25 July:** Some 1 000 members of the Sudanese Rapid Support Forces (RSF) arrived in Libya to support LNA troops in the south and to free them for fighting in Tripoli.

**29 July:** Ghassan Salamé, head of UNSMIL, proposed a three-point plan for peace to the United Nations Security Council that involved: (1) A truce between the GNA and the LNA; (2) An international meeting of countries implicated in the conflict to stop the fighting; and (3) A Libyan meeting similar to the originally planned Libyan National Conference.<sup>61</sup>



**1 August:** Interior Minister, Fathi Bashagha, ordered the managers of the Misrata, Tajoura and al-Khoms detention centres to start the process of registration in order to transfer the migrants ahead of the closure of the centres.

**September:** Escalation of violence after the deaths of the leaders of the Kani Battalion (Mohsin al-Kani, Abd al-Azim al-Kani and Abd al-Wahab al-Magri).

**13–14 November:** Mayors from western cities (Warshefana, Zawiya, al-Jmail, Ajelaat, Riqdalain, Batin al-Jabal, Niqat al-Khoms and al-Haraba) met in Hamamet in Tunisia to discuss avenues for ending the conflict and improving relations with the cities of Sabratha and Surman, which are pro-LNA.

**November–December:** Bilateral deal between Turkey and the GNA including provisions for launching a quick reaction force upon Tripoli's request.

**12 December:** Haftar announced a 'Zero Hour' operation which involved the redeployment of forces in Tripoli and an escalation in clashes.

**15 December:** Meeting of senior commanders from Misrata to declare a general mobilisation in response to the LNA's offensive.

**A significant number of people, both Libyans and migrants, were affected by the conflict.** In July 2019, IOM DTM identified approximately 104 875 Libyans being displaced to coastal areas such as Abu Salim, the centre of Tripoli, Tajoura, Zliten and Garabulli, among others.<sup>62</sup> As the conflict was characterized by the indiscriminate use of airpower and the shelling of densely populated areas and civilian infrastructure, it significantly increased the vulnerability of migrants in Libya; both in urban areas and in detention centres, and especially in locations close to the front lines. According to a survey by IOM, migrants in Tripoli and surrounding urban areas suffered particularly from a lack of health services; non-food items; water, sanitation and hygiene; and food.<sup>63</sup>

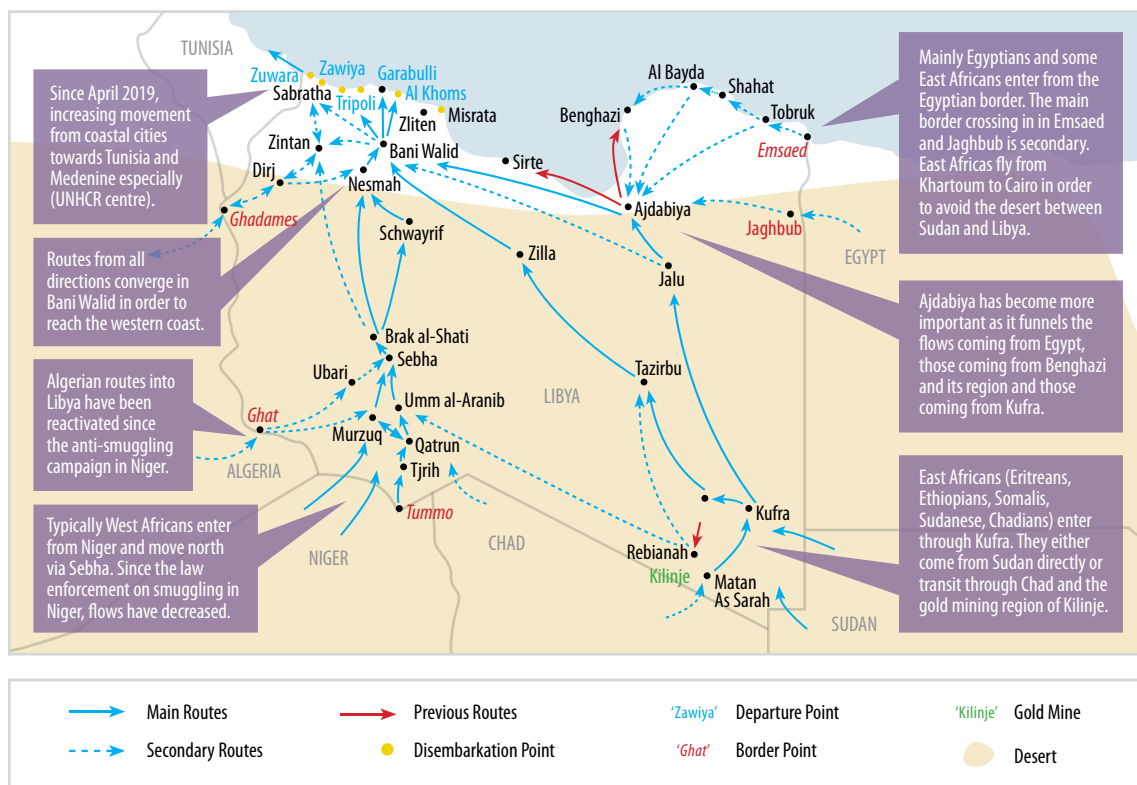
**Migrants in detention centres were at the greatest risk. In July 2019, IOM estimated that about 2 498 migrants are detained in Tripoli<sup>64</sup> out of an estimated 5 500 migrants in Libya<sup>65</sup> in general.** The centres of Gasr Ben Gashir, Abu Salim and Ain Zara in Tripoli, run by the Directorate for Combating Illegal Immigration, were in the middle of some of the most intensive combat. On 2 July, two airstrikes hit the Tajoura detention centre where more than 600 migrants were being detained, killing between 50 and 60 of them and injuring at least 100. Haftar and his forces were blamed for the attack and the international community called for inquiries. The LNA claimed that they had targeted a military base close to the detention centre and that the explosion that killed the migrants happened 17 minutes after the first airstrike. They accused local forces loyal to the GNA of fabricating the incident in order to turn the international community against the LNA.

Some migrants were evacuated to other detention centres but many of them pleaded to be evacuated out of the country rather than relocated to other centres. UNHCR was involved in moving migrants from refugee-producing countries away from centres near the front lines to the Gathering and Departure Facility (GDF) in Tripoli, as well as to Niger and Italy through the Emergency Transit Mechanism. As of 6 December, there were 1 150 migrants in the GDF and the UNHCR managed to release 1 780 refugees and asylum seekers from detention centres.<sup>66</sup> The GDF came under incredible pressure given limited resources, the large number of migrants and refugees seeking haven there, and the UNHCR's limited leverage over the centre and its management.

### 4.3 Routes and smuggling

There have traditionally been four main migration routes into Libya, but in recent years the routes have been shifting. Traditionally, the four routes were as follows: one that comes from the east via Sudan, which is followed by East African migrants; two that come from the south via Niger and Chad, which are followed by West and Central Africans, respectively; and one that comes from the west via Algeria, which is followed by West Africans. These four routes are presented in Map 9. The increased focus on counter-smuggling in northern Niger since the adoption of the new smuggling law in late 2015, and increased counter-smuggling activities in Libya since 2017, have led to the routes shifting.<sup>67</sup>

Map 9: Routes through Libya



### 4.3.1 Routes through the south

**The routes between Agadez and Sebha are controlled from Agadez. That is, Tebu and Tuareg smugglers in Niger who organize the crossing of the southern border into Libya have networks that extend all the way to Sebha.**

The Tebu control the routes to Sebha via Qatrun, and the Tuareg move migrants to Sebha from Ghat via Ubari (see Map 9). The Tuareg smugglers either move migrants from Ubari to Tayouri, a southern district of Sebha controlled by the Tuareg, or to Adiri, which is a small Tuareg territory to the west of Sebha. Migrants are gathered in holding locations in Qatrun, Ubari, Murzuq, Brak al-Shati, Umm al-Aranib and Sebha where they are asked for payment to continue journeys north (extortion). These holding locations are managed by West Africans who are a part of the smuggling network. Most of them have been living in Libya for long periods of time. In Sebha, the smuggling was controlled by members of the Awlad Suleiman tribe. A significant portion of the Awlad Suleiman is part of the LNA alliance and were indispensable in Haftar's strategy to take over the region in early 2019.

**As a result of the extreme risk of arbitrary detention, kidnapping and extortion in Libya today, most migrants choose to address their vulnerability by travelling from Niger to Italy through one network.**

They make a deal with the original smuggler in Niger, agreeing on a price for the entire journey. A part is paid in advance in Niger, and migrants commit to paying the rest on arrival in Italy. The original smuggler then connects with others along the route and when money is handed over by the migrant at the end, everyone is paid their share. In order for everyone to receive their share, the migrant needs to make it to destination. This becomes an incentive for the smugglers to keep the migrants safe from detention, which is why most migrants choose to move through Libya in this way.

**As there is a break in the control of networks in Sebha, this is where most migrants change networks.**

There have been some cases of smugglers who are joined in a transnational network fighting among themselves, with the migrants bearing the brunt. For example, there have been cases of drivers taking migrants to Sebha to connect them with the next smuggler in the network, but because they had not been paid, they sold the migrants to detention centres in order to recuperate their losses. Migrants systematically reported that when they were taken to holding locations in Sebha, the staff separated the migrants who had paid in advance from those who had not yet paid the entire fee. The latter were charged lower extortion prices because they needed to arrive at the destination for the smugglers to be paid.

**The routes from Sebha to the north are controlled by local groups.**

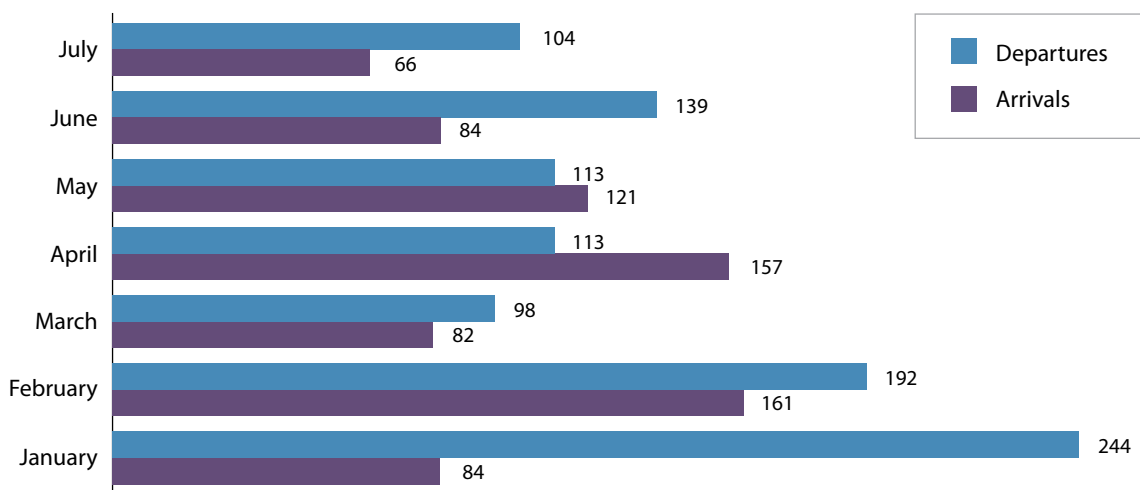
Smugglers from the Magarha tribe control the routes that move from north Sebha/Brak al-Shati to Shwayrif. These smugglers then relay with the Warfalla and Awlad Buseif smugglers from Bani Walid, for the stretch between Shwayrif and Bani Walid. The journey from Sebha to Bani Walid is sometimes made in trucks that are used to transport goods and vehicles, and it generally takes two days. Sometimes migrants wait in holding locations in Bani Walid until the smuggler has enough people to start the journey to Tripoli or al-Khoms, whereas others move straight through.

When migrants get close to Tripoli, they are often taken to a village just outside of the city and sent in small groups or one-by-one to avoid the attention of authorities or armed groups. Sometimes migrants bypass Tripoli altogether, and move directly to coastal points both to the west and east. Migrants pay between €300 and €500 for the journey from Sebha to Tripoli. Migrants reported that when they are stopped at checkpoints along the way (most drivers avoid the checkpoints, but sometimes they don't manage to escape all of them), they are asked to provide the name and number of their smuggler. The men at the checkpoint call the smuggler and some of the migrants are let go as a result, presumably because the smuggler pays off the checkpoint staff.

**Focus box 6: Current state of Libya's land borders**

Libya has six neighbours: Egypt and Sudan to the east, Chad and Niger to the south and Algeria and Tunisia to the west. Libya shares two land borders with Algeria, two with Tunisia, and one land border with the other four countries. At the time of fieldwork, only the border with Egypt and the two borders with Tunisia were considered open. Sudan, Niger and Chad closed their borders in 2013 and converted them to military zones. This was done in an effort to prevent terrorist groups within their borders from being able to send or receive arms or other resources across the border (Darfur's Harakat al-Adl wa'l-Musawah in Sudan and Boko Haram in Niger and Chad). During the Sudanese protests that began in December 2018, the Sudanese border was effectively open, as all of the border officials were occupied with the internal security. The two Algerian borders were closed because of the Algerian government's concern that the conflict in Libya might spill over. The Algerian government says that it will reopen the borders on confirmation that the border crossing points are controlled by Libyan government entities and not armed groups.

**Figure 64:** Estimated arrivals and departures to Sebha, Jan–May 2019



Data source: IOM DTM<sup>68</sup>

**The conflict in Tripoli that began in April 2019 affected migration flows in the Fezzan.** Travelling beyond Shwayrif had become very difficult for both Libyans and migrants as the main routes through Gharyan and Bani Walid were front lines at different points throughout 2019. Tribesmen in the south were also busy with the conflict in Tripoli, which affected the availability of smugglers in the south. Figure 64 charts estimated arrivals and departures to and from Sebha between January and May 2019. It shows that the overall number of arrivals and departures dropped in March and remained relatively lower than previous months until July. It also demonstrates that departures dropped below arrivals over April and May.

**In April 2019, Mohamed Bin Nayl, head of the 12th Infantry Battalion, had been holding meetings with elders and smugglers from the Magarha tribe** who dominate in Shwayrif, to dissuade them from engaging in smuggling activities.<sup>69</sup> This is likely to have affected the decreased movements from the Fezzan. In May, there were reports that the flow was resuming at a low level because smugglers were facing fewer risks on the routes north of Sebha, where the Magarha tribe further consolidated its control. The Magarha tribe's control of the route towards the coast also led to an increase in price for some migrants, with some West Africans reporting that they paid €5 000 to reach Bani Walid from Niger, compared to the previous price of €1 000.

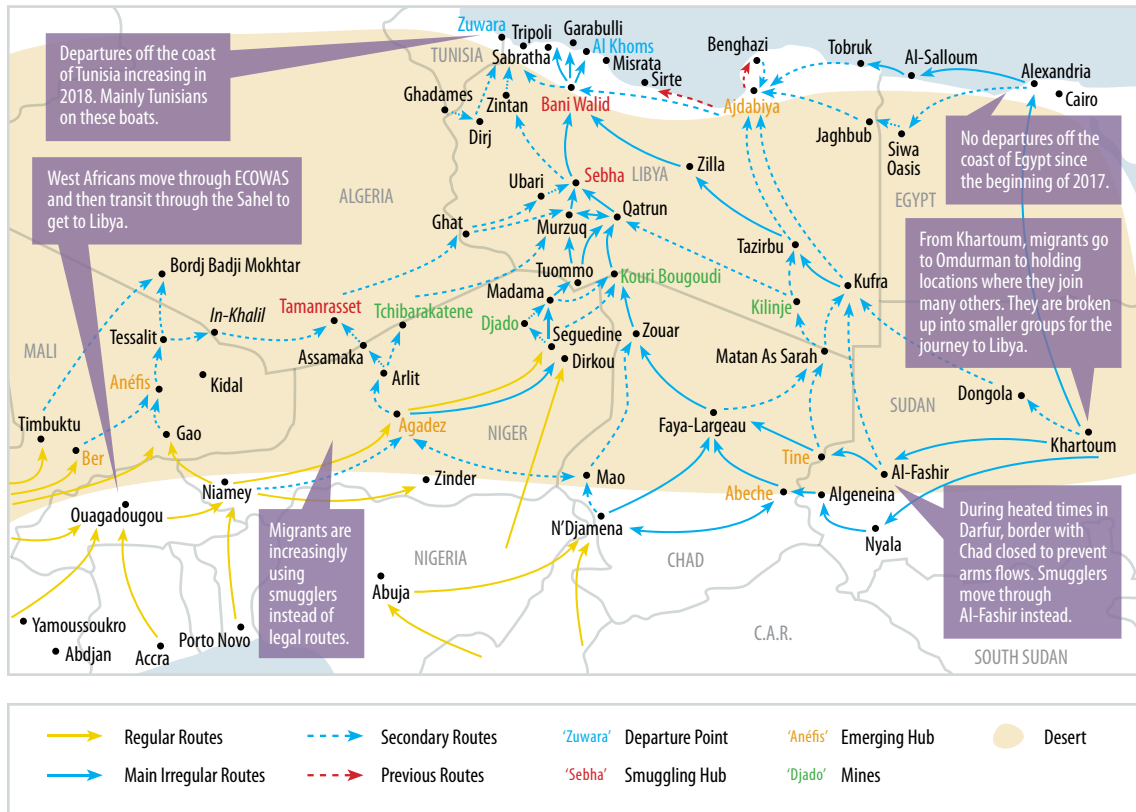
#### 4.3.2 Routes from the east

**There are three entry points in the east of Libya:** one that arrives from Sudan into Kufra and is typically followed by East Africans (Sudanese, Eritreans, Ethiopians and Chadians), one that arrives from Chad into Kufra, that can be followed by West and East Africans; and one that arrives from Egypt into Tobruk, which is typically followed by Egyptians and sometimes East Africans. These routes are represented in detail in Map 10.

**When migrants arrive in Kufra, they are typically transferred from the handover points, where the exchange is made between the Sudanese and Libyan smugglers at the border, to farms and warehouses** in the industrial zone of Kufra and the Kufra Agricultural Project. After two to three days, they are moved north to either Ajdabiyah or Zillah, from where they are eventually transferred to Bani Walid. Transfers north are conducted by land through trucks that have the capacity for approximately 20 individuals. The road between Kufra and Ajdabiyah needs military protection. This is provided by armed groups who are paid for this service. According to the 2018 report of the Panel of Experts, Subul al-Salam escorts convoys of migrants travelling from Kufra to Ajdabiyah for 10 000 dinar per pickup. The al-Zany Brigade provides protection for convoys travelling from Kufra to Bani Walid (through Jaghub and Tazirbu) for 13 000 dinar per pick up.<sup>70</sup> The journey by truck takes about 10 days and three days by Hilux. The smuggling business in Kufra is headed by armed groups who are affiliated with the LNA, particularly Subul al-Salam.

**The security situation in Kufra remained fairly stable during the conflict of 2019.** The Subul al-Salam militia, which is of Zway majority, was challenged by Tebu tribes for control of the region. When Subul al-Salam sent men to Tripoli to join the offensive there, Tebu smugglers felt that there was an opening for them to challenge the group in Kufra. There were reports of migrant convoys coming under attack by Tebu armed groups between Tazirbu and Zillah.

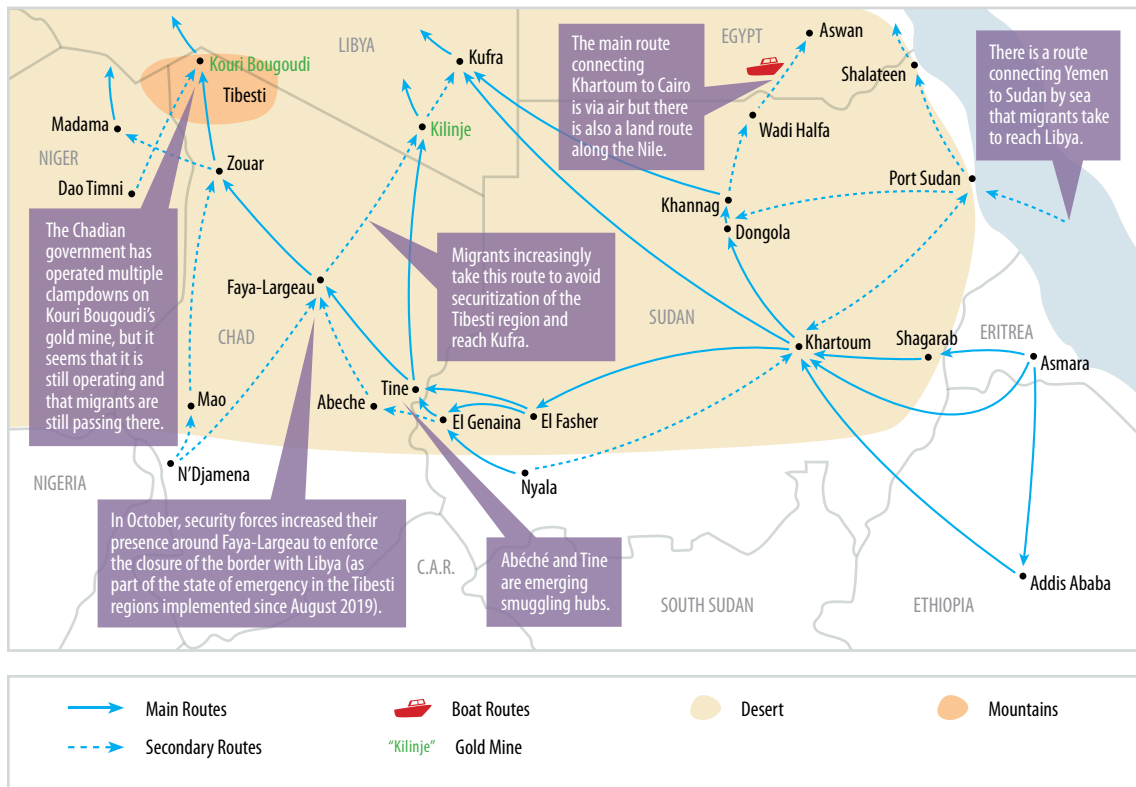
Map 10: Routes to Libya



There is also a smaller movement of migrants moving to Ajdabiyah from the Egyptian border via Tobruk and Shahat (see Map 10). This route is followed by Egyptians, as well as East Africans who travel to Khartoum, Cairo and then Libya in order to avoid the desert crossing between Sudan and Libya. Migrants are typically transported until close to the al-Salloum border crossing point in Egypt (Emsaeed on the Libyan side), then dropped off just before the border and asked to walk into Libya, which takes about nine hours. Once they arrive in Libya, a car will be waiting to move them to Tobruk. It takes 10 days to move between the border and Bani Walid, passing through Shahat, al-Bayda and Benghazi on the way.

According to IOM DTM data, the flow of migrants entering Libya through Kufra was not affected by the conflict in Tripoli that began in April 2019. In fact, IOM DTM records an increase in migrants entering Kufra in April and May, when compared to the first quarter of 2019. This may have been affected by the unrest in Sudan that eventually led to the overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir and that required the RSF to deploy to Khartoum, thereby leaving the border more porous. There was a drop in arrivals in Kufra in June of the same year. This may have been caused by the increase in violence in Sudan during the first weeks of June 2019, when over 100 protesters were killed and many more injured.

Map 11: Routes to Libya from the east



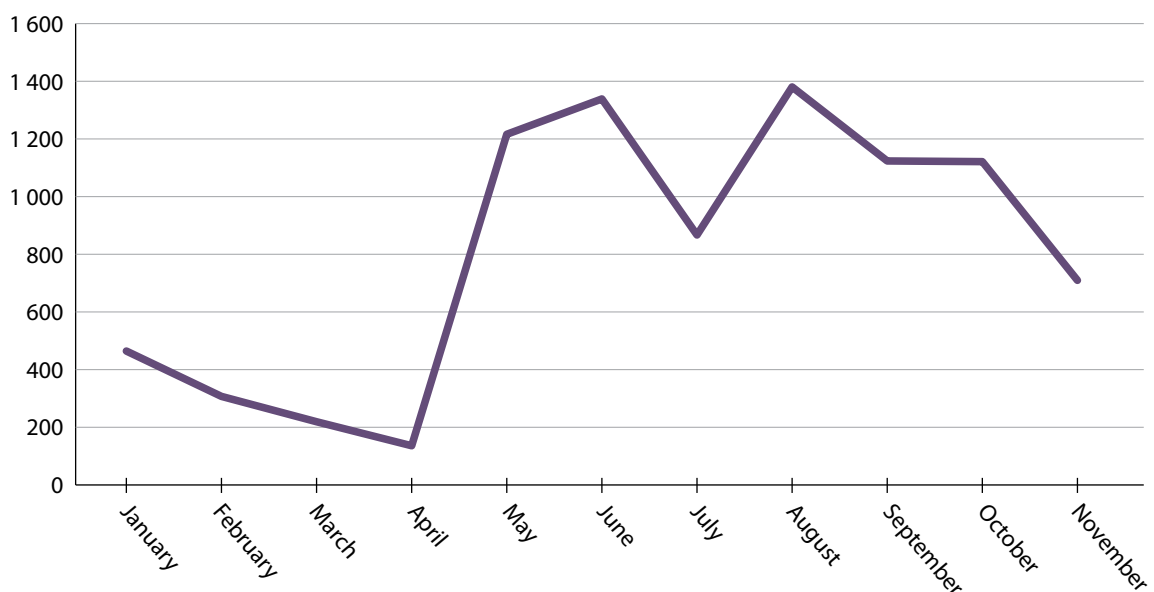
**There is also a flow coming from Chad into south-eastern Libya through two main routes:** the first one moves from Zouar in Chad through the Tibesti mountains before entering Libya, and the second one moves from the north-east of Chad into the Kufra region of Libya (see Map 11). Both these routes begin in Faya-Largeau (Chad) and are followed by Chadian migrants who are sometimes joined by other West and East African migrants. Since the 2015 anti-smuggling law in Niger made movements through that country more complicated, some migrants have started to move to Chad from Niger – while some others travel through Nigeria or Cameroon directly into Chad to reach the Tibesti mountains.<sup>71</sup> There is also a route from Dao Timi in northern Niger that enters Libya by crossing through the Tibesti mountains in Chad. This is typically followed by migrants who wish to stop in the Kouri Bougoudi goldmine, or smugglers who want to avoid Nigerien authorities by giving them the impression that the migrants are moving towards the mine and not Libya. The Nigerien government clamped down on the gold mines in the Tibesti region in 2018. This decreased the movements through Chad, although not eliminating them. Since the start of the conflict in Tripoli in April 2019, the flows started to increase again. Smugglers reported that some migrants were hoping to be recruited as mercenaries in the war.

**There is also a flow of migrants who move from Sudan into Libya via Chad** (see Map 11). Prior to the increased border security between Sudan and Libya, migrants moved from Dongola (Sudan) into Kufra (Libya). However, as border security between Sudan and Libya increased, smugglers started to re-route. The most prominent route from Sudan into Libya now starts in Darfur and moves via Chad. There are two routes from Darfur: one that passes through West Darfur and the town of al-Junaynah specifically, and one that moves through al-Fashir in North Darfur. Both these routes move over the border into Chad, and migrants join Chadians and West Africans in Faya-Largeau. There is a joint military control along the Chadian-Sudanese border, and when tensions increase in Darfur, security is stepped up along the border in order to prevent the flow of arms. In such times of increased border security, smugglers avoid trying to cross the Chadian border and instead move migrants directly north into Kufra from al-Fashir, travelling along the Chadian border. While the route from Sudan into Libya via Darfur and Chad had become the most important route between Sudan and Libya in 2017, the Sudanese Revolution of 2019 affected the situation at the borders. Most border officials, including the RSF, became occupied with internal security and the border security between Sudan and Libya became looser. This decreased the importance of the Sudan-Chad-Libya route.

#### 4.3.3 Departures from Libya

**At the beginning of 2019, the departure points for Italy were all located on the western coast, particularly around Zuwara, Zawiya and al-Khoms.** The departure points on the coast of Zuwara were at Abu Kammash, to the west of Zuwara (close to the Tunisian border). On the coast of Zawiya, most dinghies were departing from al-Mutrad or al-Harsha. Departures shifted to al-Khoms when the Kaniyat started to police smuggling in Garabulli.

**Figure 65:** Interceptions by the LCG, Jan–Nov 2019



Data source: UNHCR

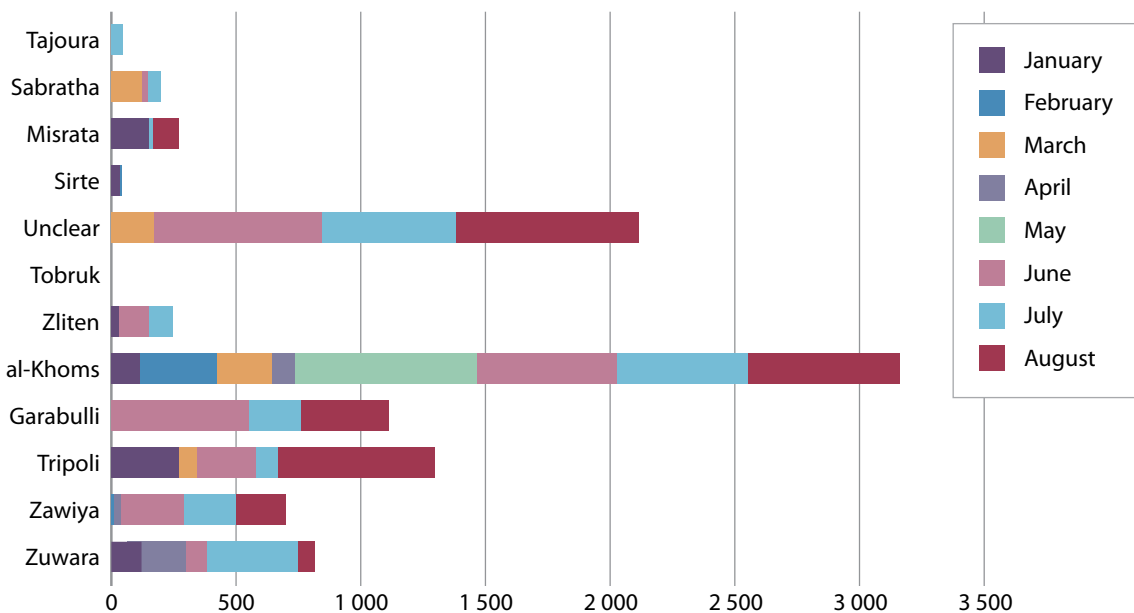


**Departures dropped significantly in April 2019 as a result of the war in Tripoli, with only 345 departures being recorded, compared to 3 581 in April 2018 and 12 884 in April 2017.** The coastal road connecting embarkation points in Garabulli and al-Khoms to warehousing sites in Bani Walid, Shwayrif and Nesma were places of military mobilization in April. This means it became dangerous to transport migrants to the coast.

**In May, departures picked up again and occurred all along the coast, both to the east and west of Tripoli – including from Garabulli, al-Khoms, Zawiya and Zliten.** Just under 2 000 departures were recorded in May 2019. While it is an increase from April, it is still a fraction of previous years (4 200 in May 2018 and 25 700 in May 2017). Interceptions by the LCG also picked up after April, moving from 130 interceptions in April to 1 336 in June and 693 by November, as shown in Figure 65. Smugglers started to plan many departures at the same time in order to overwhelm the LCG. Unfortunately, such tactics create a greater risk for migrants, particularly in a context of decreased search and rescue in the Mediterranean and increased politicization of migration at the European level. There were also two separate cases of migrants refusing to be picked up by the LCG after being intercepted in the spring of 2019. Throughout the rest of 2019, departures from Libya dropped again, below what they had been in previous years, reaching 130 by December.

**Figure 66 charts departures from the coast of Libya between January and August 2019,** as observed by the GI-TOC. It demonstrates that al-Khoms has experienced the greatest number of departures during this period and Garabulli, Tripoli, Zawiya and Zuwara remain prominent also.

**Figure 66:** Approximate number of departures from Libya by departure point, Jan–August 2019



Data source: GI-TOC

# **G. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The findings of this report have shown that while the overall numbers of irregular migration to Europe have dropped, migratory pressure is still great.** Movements through the Central Mediterranean became more difficult after 2017 – in parallel with greater counter-smuggling work in Libya, Niger and Sudan, and militias being co-opted by the GNA to police smuggling in Libya in response to Italian influence. In parallel to the decrease through the Central Mediterranean, movements through the Western Mediterranean increased. Then as Spain stepped up its efforts to address the increased movements through the Western Mediterranean, movements through the Eastern Mediterranean route increased in 2019.

**Within the Central Mediterranean route specifically, as movements off the coast of Libya became challenged, other departure points increased in prominence.** Departures off the Tunisian coast outnumbered Libya during certain months of 2019, settling at second place by the end of the year. Departures from Algeria have increased in the direction of both Italy and Spain, albeit still being minimal, and departures from Turkey and Greece have both increased in the direction of Italy. The number of arrivals in Italy has still dropped exponentially, despite the new departures. However, whether the opening up of these new departure points will eventually lead to the creation of new routes and new flows is to be seen.

**Increased controls have made the journeys more clandestine, more dangerous and more expensive.** The extortion of migrants has been growing across the region. Not only is extortion rife inside unofficial detention centres in Libya, but the report also details emerging trends of extortion in Morocco and Algeria. It is committed by smugglers, other migrants, thugs, tribal groups and in some cases, local authorities at border regions. Forced prostitution along the routes continues to be rife. The vast majority of female migrants entering Morocco through Oujda arrive pregnant due to sexual exploitation on the other side of the border. While the proportion of UAMs among overall arrivals to Europe has dropped slightly over the past three years, it is increasing among certain nationalities. In the case of Tunisians, the number of UAMs doubled between 2017 and 2019, representing 26% of all Tunisian arrivals in Italy in 2019. A concerning 57% of Somalis and 64% of Guineans who arrived in Italy in 2019 were also UAMs. The situation in the Sahel also shows that although the overall numbers of arrivals in Europe have dropped, the migrants have not stopped trying. Many of them have been getting stuck in a loop of failed attempts across various routes further south.

**While there is a link between the drop in arrivals in Italy (Central Mediterranean) and the increase in arrivals in Spain (Western Mediterranean), a number of diverse factors contribute to this shift in numbers.** After the 2015 anti-smuggling law was passed and then implemented in Niger, movements from northern Niger to Libya became extremely difficult after decades of mobility. In parallel, detention in Libya became rife and unavoidable, with the majority of migrants being re-detained and extorted numerous times, leading to high levels of trauma and extreme financial difficulties as a result of multiple ransom payments. Consequently, a large number of migrants became stranded in Niger; either because they were blocked from moving forward, or because they had escaped Libya and returned to Niger – traumatized and destitute. The young sub-Saharan men who found themselves in this predicament, most of which are

uneducated, started moving to Algeria instead. Some tried to enter Libya from Algeria's western border, although that movement is still quite limited. Some stayed in Algeria to work – but under precarious conditions, including raids of urban areas and construction sites by police and deportations back to Niger and Mali. Others moved to Morocco from Algeria to try their luck on the Western Mediterranean route.

**However, the displacement of migrants from Niger to Algeria and then Morocco does not seem to have caused the major increases along the Western Mediterranean route.** Controls and increased deportations from Algeria prevented many from being able to cross the country, heightened border control between Morocco and Algeria made crossing into Oujda very challenging, and a rise in controls and risks along the way commonly led to migrants running out of money, which frustrated their plans.

**The real increase in Morocco came through the airport at Casablanca.** Morocco's political reorientation towards Africa led to an expansion of Royal Air Maroc flights and a new set of visa exemptions for a large number of West African nationals. This made it cheaper to fly into Morocco than follow the land routes. By doing so, migrants were able to cut down their travel time and minimize their exposure to risk, which has been increasing in Mali, Algeria and Morocco. Flying into Mohammed V Airport is also cheaper than paying a smuggler to move by land to Morocco.

**Some proportion of the migrants who are flying into Morocco today are highly qualified, or middle class,** and they are smuggled to Europe immediately for pre-arranged jobs, with European employers regularizing the migrants once they have arrived. This demonstrates a demand for migrant labour among EU member states which cannot be fulfilled completely through existing regular migration pathways, and is instead facilitated by smugglers. This indicates an opportunity for the EU and the Member States to work with employers in Europe who demand foreign labour, and to pilot strategic migration schemes that will create legal pathways for a demand that already exists, while at the same time, undermining an income source for smugglers.

**The profiles of migrants along the three different Mediterranean routes have generally followed the geography:** West and North Africans along the Western Mediterranean route; West, East, North and Central Africans along the Central Mediterranean route; and Arabs and Asians along the Eastern Mediterranean route. However, the profiles have varied in recent years, such as East Africans appearing on the Western Mediterranean route, Central and North Africans on the Eastern Mediterranean route and Asians (Iraqis and Iranians) on the Central Mediterranean route. This demonstrates that migrants will try their luck in different geographies if they are blocked on one route.

**There has also been an increase in North Africans on all three routes and this is a dynamic that is likely to increase with time** given the young populations in North Africa and the economic and political challenges these countries are facing. In Tunisia, overqualified graduates exceed the needs of their labour

market and are moving to Europe to look for jobs, while sub-Saharan Africans are going to Tunisia to fill the demand for low-skilled labour. This also indicates an opportunity to work with North African countries to develop their migration, education, and labour market policies strategically.

**Certain nationalities in need of asylum are blocked by restrictive migration policies and have turned to exotic routes in consequence.** The report has detailed the movements of Syrians who fly into Khartoum – given that Sudan is the only country in the region that still allows visa-free entry for Syrian passport holders – and then travel to Cairo by land with smugglers to join family in Egypt who can support them financially. The report also detailed the movements of Yemenis who fly into Egypt with medical visas, which are purchased in Yemen for a price, then fly to Nouakchott with a visa on arrival that is organized by a smuggler in advance, only to travel to Morocco by land through Mali and Algeria so that they can take a boat to Spain and claim asylum.

**As migrants try to adapt to the circumstances by attempting new geographies, smugglers quickly adjust to meet the demand created by migrants.** All across the region, migrants have demonstrated that after initial unsuccessful attempts to cross to Europe, they easily found a different network to move with, which is a testament to the high availability and flexibility of different smuggling networks. The big changes in smuggling dynamics along the routes to Europe include an increase in smuggling by air since 2017 – particularly in Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia. While much of this is facilitated by visa exemptions (as in the case of Morocco), allowing migrants to begin their journeys regularly and connect with smugglers later in the journey, the report also highlights growing collusion between smugglers and state officials in places like Egypt and Mauritania. There has also been an increase in self smuggling in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, with much of this being undertaken by locals in each country. This trend provides further testimony to the ever-changing and expanding concept of smuggling. Finally, there has been an increase in the use of speed boats and yachts from Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, making detection more difficult and pointing to increased sophistication in the face of increased control.

Given the main findings of this report, the following recommendations are suggested:

#### Labour migration schemes

1. The new flow of qualified and middle-class migrants, who are smuggled to Europe to fulfil pre-arranged jobs and then regularized on arrival, points to an opportunity for the EU and its member states. This group of migrants could provide an immediate cohort of beneficiaries for a pilot labour migration scheme. Such a scheme would fill existing and already identified gaps in European labour markets with already identified labour migrants, provide legal pathways for these qualified migrants, and undermine the business of smugglers. The experience of European countries with Tunisia (where increased contracts of employment for Tunisians in Europe were granted alongside easier readmission of irregular migrants back into Tunisia), could potentially be extended to other countries and rolled out within such a scheme to create a comprehensive approach to labour migration.

2. The Tunisian example has also shown that there is a good availability of labour mobility schemes for Tunisians in Europe, which most young people in the country are unaware of. This indicates an opportunity for greater communication and visibility of initiatives, so that they are in the reach of young Tunisians who may be considering boat migration instead.
3. The Tunisian model of labour mobility schemes could be rolled out to other North African countries. Through the existing schemes, Tunisians require only one document to be signed by a future employer in Europe in order to gain their visa. Extending similar programmes to other countries in North Africa could be one way to stem the increase in risky boat migration from these countries to Europe. If such schemes are informed by labour market assessments in European countries, they can be matched to precise labour market gaps.
4. There is also an opportunity to work with North African governments in developing their migration policies and strategies so that they can attract the labour they require from sub-Saharan Africa. Examples include the case of sub-Saharan migrants working in call centres in Morocco, and the Tunisian economy's difficulty in finding low-skilled labour to match local demands.

#### Protection of migrants

5. An increase in risks along the various routes, such as emerging trends of migrant extortion across the region, points to a need for improved protection mechanisms. While cooperation with African countries has been successful in terms of border protection, cooperation on migrant protections mechanisms has been less successful and it is recommended that this continues to be extended. Extortion could present the starting point, particularly since the report has identified the collusion of local officials in some border regions.
6. The high rate of female migrants who arrive pregnant in Morocco, as a result of forced prostitution along the way, indicates that the exploitation of women along the routes remains rife. In this particular example, there is an opportunity to address a specific need in a specific location. It is recommended that health services be increased along the Moroccan and Algerian border to cater to the needs of such women and greater research be conducted to determine the best way to access these women.

# H. APPENDICES

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## 2. LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

#	Name	Location	Organization	Title
<b>Morocco</b>				
1	Anne Simon	Rabat	EU Delegation to Morocco	EUTF Programme Manager
2	Manuel Rodriguez Diez	Rabat	EU Delegation to Morocco	European Migration Liaison Officer
3	Jean-Pierre Sacaze	Rabat	EU Delegation to Morocco	Head of Sector
4	Bawele Tchalim	Rabat	IOM	Programme Manager, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
5	Bettina Gambert	Rabat	UNHCR	Senior Protection Officer
6	Adrian Gnägi	Rabat	Swiss Embassy	Deputy Director of Cooperation
7	Mouloud el Kamel	Rabat	SDC	Migration Programme Manager
8	Mohammed Khachani	Rabat	Association Marocaine d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Migrations	Secretary General
9	Camille Denis	Rabat	GADEM	Director General
10	Anonymous	Nador	Local NGO	
11	Anonymous	Nador	Local NGO	
12	Anonymous	Nador	Local NGO	
13	Anonymous	Nador	Local NGO	
14	Abdeslam Amakhtari	Nador	Asticude	President
15	Shekib Sbaibi	Nador	Asticude	Migration Manager
16	Azzouz Boulagdour	Nador	Organisation Marocaine des droits de l'homme	Legal Assistant for Asylum Seekers and Refugees
17	Imane ECHCHIKHI	Oujda	Maroc Solidarité Médico-Sociale	Project Officer: Social Assistance
18	Ibtissam ELOUARDI	Oujda	Maroc Solidarité Médico-Sociale	Project Officer: Nurse
19	Abderazak Ouaim	Oujda	Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains	Coordinator of the Centre for Legal Assistance
20	Smuggler (driver)	Casablanca	n/a	n/a
21	Smuggler (driver)	Casablanca	n/a	n/a
22	Smuggler (boat captain)	Casablanca	n/a	n/a

#	Name	Location	Organization	Title
<b>Mauritania</b>				
23	José Luis Suarez Salazar	Nouakchott	EU Delegation to Mauritania	EUTF Program Manager
24	Benoit Guyon	Nouakchott	EU Delegation to Mauritania	Expert on Internal Security
25	Lisa Godde	Nouakchott	IOM	Information Management Officer
26	Laura Parker	Nouakchott	IOM	Protection Officer
27	Fadela Novak-Irons	Nouakchott	UNHCR	Deputy Representative
28	Rachel Bernhard	Nouakchott	ICRC	Head of Delegation
29	Binta Baba Sy	Nouakchott	Caritas Mauritania	Project Manager for Migration
30	Sozic Dupuy	Nouakchott	Red Cross France	Chief of Mission
31	Luis Pedro Lobo Albagnac	Nouakchott	Save the Children	Head of Mission
32.	Jean Luc Imhof	Nouakchott	Terre des Hommes	Head of Delegation for Mauritania and Senegal
33	Geraldine Choquel	Nouakchott	GRDR	Regional Director for Rural Development
34	Ange Binde	Nouakchott	Coordination General des Ivoiriens de la Disapora, Mauritanie	Vice President
35	Gnanté Valentin	Nouakchott	Coordination General des Ivoiriens de la Disapora, Mauritanie	Representative
36	Luc Brahousa	Nouakchott	Coordination General des Ivoiriens de la Disapora, Mauritanie	Cultural Attaché
37	Joueu Sopoude	Nouakchott	Coordination General des Ivoiriens de la Disapora, Mauritanie	Communications Officer
38	Dr Ousmane Wagué	Nouakchott	University of Nouakchott, al Asryia	Lecturer / Coordinator, Land and Territorial Governance Master's Program
39	Anonymous	Nouakchott	Ivoirian Community Leader	Ivoirian Community Leader
<b>Spain</b>				
40	Teresa De Gasperis	Madrid	Asociación Comisión Católica Española de Migración	Programme Manager
41	Lucia Prieto Rios	Madrid	Action Contra la Faim, Spain	Production Deputy director
42	Pilar Alba Diaz	Madrid	La Fundación Cruz Blanca	Programme Manager
43	Isabelle Fernandez Malaval	Madrid	Karibu, Amigo del Pueblo Africano	Anthropologist
44	Angel de la Aleja	Madrid	Mbolo Moy Dole	Co-founder & Cultural Animator



#	Name	Location	Organization	Title
<b>Libya</b>				
45	Lucia Santucciono	Tunis	EU Delegation to Libya	Programme Manager EU Trust Fund
46	Nille Gry Olesen	Tunis	EU Delegation to Libya	Political Officer
47	Othman Belbeisi	Tunis	IOM Libya	Chief of Mission
48	Tassilo Tepper	Tunis	IOM Libya	Programme Coordinator, DTM
49	Marcello Giordani	Tunis	ICMPD Libya	Project Coordinator
50	Urwah Alhabahbeh	Tunis	UNSMIL	Corrections and Human Rights Officer
51	Ayla Bonfiglio	Tunis	Danish Refugee Council	Regional Coordinator, North Africa
52	Sylvain Alister	Tunis	Swiss Embassy	Delegate for Migration
53	Francesco Mascini	Tunis	Dutch Embassy	Regional Coordinator, Migration, Maghreb/Sahel
<b>Tunisia</b>				
54	Isabel Sohm Mohedano	Tunis	EU Delegation to Tunisia	EUTF Programme Manager
55	Paola Pace	Tunis	IOM Tunisia	Deputy Chief of Mission
56	Janvier Zigo	Tunis	IOM Tunisia	Project Officer: Humanitarian Assistance and AVRR
57	Mehdi Limab	Tunis	IOM Tunisia	Project Officer: DTM
58	Caludia Pretto	Tunis	IOM Tunisia	Consultant (Research)
59	France Lau	Tunis	UNHCR Tunisia	Acting UNHCR Representative
60	Donya Smida	Tunis	ICMPD Tunisia	Head of Office
61	Mervin Joullie	Tunis	Mercy Corps	Deputy Regional Director, Africa
62	Matt Herbert	Tunis	ISS	Consultant
63	Romdhane Ben Amor	Tunis	FTDES	Communications Manager
64	Stephane Darmas	Tunis	Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration, Tunis	Director
65	Sherifa Riahi	Tunis	Terre d'Asile Tunisia	Director
66	Aymen Maatoug	Tunis	El Hiwar El Tounsi TV network, Tunisia	Journalist
67	Lotfi Abdelkebir	Medenine	IOM Tunisia	Shelter Coordinator, Medenine
68	Yahya Rebei	Medenine	UNHCR Tunisia	Senior Field Protection Associate, Medenine
69	Wajdi Ben Hamed	Zarzis	IOM Tunisia	Head of Office, Zarzis

#	Name	Location	Organization	Title
<b>Egypt</b>				
70	Ville Suutarinen	Cairo	EU Delegation to Egypt	Program Manager
71	Laure Grazi	Cairo	IOM Egypt	Liaison Officer
72	Andrea Dabizzi	Cairo	IOM Egypt	Head of Migrant Protection and Assistance Unit
73	Junaid Arshad Khan	Cairo	IOM Egypt	Project Officer: Migrant Protection and Assistance Division
74	Franz Prutsch	Cairo	IOM MENA Regional Office	Senior Regional Immigration and Border Management Specialist
75	Lorenza Rossi	Cairo	IOM MENA Regional Office	DTM Regional Coordinator and Data Focal Point
76	Karim Atassi	Cairo	UNHCR	Representative, Arabic Republic of Egypt and the League of Arab States
77	Silja Rezk	Cairo	UNHCR	Reporting Officer
78	Maura Morandi	Cairo	UNHCR	Reporting Officer
79	Aymeric Salamone	Cairo	UNODC Regional Office for MENA	Border Management Specialist
80	Faisal Hegazy	Cairo	UNODC Regional Office for MENA	National Project Officer on human trafficking and smuggling (former)
81	Aspasia Plakantonaki	Cairo	UNODC Regional Office for MENA	Programme Coordinator (Anti-human trafficking and migrant smuggling)
82	Corrine Henchoz Pignani	Cairo	Swiss Embassy	Director of Cooperation
83	Christopher Eades	Cairo	St. Andrew's Refugee Service	Executive Director
84	Nancy Baron	Cairo	Psycho-social Services and Training Institute in Cairo	Director

#	Name	Location	Organization	Title
<b>Malta</b>				
85	Laura Maciulskaitė	Malta	IOM	AVRR Project manager
86	Laura Bartolini (IOM Italy)	Malta	IOM	DTM focal point
87	Tobias Metzner	Malta	ICMPD	Regional Portfolio Manager for the Mediterranean
88	Fabrizio Ellul	Malta	UNHCR	Communication/Public Information Associate
89	Marloes Arbouw	Malta	Hal Far Outreach	Founding Partner
90	Tamara Gerbens	Malta	Hal Far Outreach	Founding Partner & Project Manager
91	Dominik Kalweit	Malta	Kopin	Vice Executive Director
92	Marc Tilley	Malta	Independent	SAR NGO Humanitarian Advisor
<b>Niger</b>				
93	Robert Lankenau	Niamey	Mercy Corps	Country Director
94	Rahamatou Daouda Halidou	Niamey	IOM	Senior Protection Assistant
95	Nikolaas Swyngedouw	Niamey	IOM	Protection Officer
96	Hamidou Manou Nabara	Niamey	ONG JMED	President

### 3. NOTES AND REFERENCES

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**GLOBAL  
INITIATIVE**  
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL  
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