FRONTEX
EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Joint Report 2017

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Cover photo shows the AFIC meeting in Warsaw on 26–28 September, when Frontex launched a project to develop the capacity of AFIC countries to work on joint intelligence analysis of crime. This project will focus on training experts and setting up AFIC Risk Analysis Cells (RACs). It is funded by the European Commission. © Frontex, 2017 - Monika Jankowska. All rights reserved.

DISCLAIMERS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Table of contents

List of abbreviations used

4 Mi	Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AFIC	Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community
AI EIO	Amnesty International European Institutions Office
AIRE Centre	Advice on Individual Rights in Europe Centre
BCP	border crossing point
CCME	Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
COD	Democratic Republic of the Congo
CoE	Council of Europe
COM	European Commission
CMA	Coordination of Movements of the Azawad
CFA franc	Central/Western African franc
DCIM	Libya's Department for Combating Illegal Migration
DPAF	Senegal's Air and Border Police Directorate
DST	Niger's Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire
DTM	IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix
EaP-RAN	Eastern Partnership Risk Analysis Network
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States (*Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*)
ECRE	European Council for Refugees and Exiles
EU	European Union
EUCAP Sahel	European Union CSDP Mission in Niger
EU CSDP	EU Common Security and Defence Policy
EUNAVFOR Med	European Naval Force Mediterranean
EUR	euro
Europol	European Police Office
EU SatCen	European Union Satellite Centre
FDS	Niger's Defense and Security Forces
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency
FRAN	Frontex Risk Analysis Network
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency

GATIA	Imghad Tuareg and Allies Self-Defense Group (*Groupe Autodéfense Touareg Imghad et Alliés*)
GNA	Libya's Government of National Accord
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JNIM	Group for Support of Islam and Muslims
JO	Joint Operation
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service Europe
LNA	Libyan National Army
LYD	Libyan dinar
MMTD	Multi-Mode Threat Detector
MS	EU Member State
MSU	mobile scanning unit
NAPTIP	Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
NCA	United Kingdom's National Crime Agency
NEMA	Nigeria's National Emergency Management Authority
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OCG	organised crime group
OSCE ODIHR	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PeDRA	Processing Personal Data for Risk Analysis
PICUM	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
PISCES	Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System
RAC	risk analysis cell
RAU	Risk Analysis Unit
RFI	Request for Information
RMMS	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
Sahel G5	Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad
THB	trafficking in human beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
USD	United States dollar
WB-RAN	Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network

Executive summary

As in the past few years, migratory movements from the ECOWAS region towards the EU and the growing insecurity in parts of the Sahel region have dominated the agenda of policy-makers in Europe and Africa throughout 2017.

Central Mediterranean

The Central Mediterranean remained the main entry route to the EU, as approximately 93% of illegal border-crossings reported at the EU's external borders in the first nine months of 2017 were registered on this route.

However, the irregular migration flow started to slow down starting from mid-July 2017 and the decreasing trend continued until the end of September, when only about 5 600 arrivals were reported. This represents a significant decrease compared with the same period of the previous year when the number of arrivals totalled approximately 12 600. Importantly, the decreasing number of departures translated into a marked decrease in reported fatalities.

While this downward trend mainly resulted from the developments reported from the main departure areas in Libya and its territorial waters, the flow of migrants transiting Niger has also been curbed over the course of 2017. This was directly associated with a wide set of law-enforcement measures implemented by Niger whose aim is to control irregular migration of ECOWAS migrants going into Libya or Algeria without valid documentation.

However, some bus companies operating connections between the main transit hubs in Niger (and Mali) have adapted to these measures, in some cases offering dedicated services for migrants who do not possess proper documentation.

For instance, some bus drivers drop undocumented migrants off on one side of the border or before reaching a known check point, directing them to private vehicles which bypass these points, before picking them up again on the other side.

In order to stop this practice, the authorities in Niger informed the main bus companies that bus drivers agreeing to do that would be facing prosecution for facilitating irregular migration. Bus companies will also be held liable in such cases.

Western Mediterranean

The situation on the Western Mediterranean route was quite different: a sharp increase of over 120% in the number of illegal border-crossings compared with the same period in 2016 was reported by Spain. The increase was most marked in the period June-July 2017 and was mainly associated with the arrival of large groups of Moroccan migrants aboard high-capacity boats capable of transferring large numbers of migrants.

It is worth mentioning that the migratory pressure on this route is even higher than the statistics indicate given that the Moroccan authorities prevented several thousand people from crossing the sea toward the southern coast of Spain. In other words, if it was not for patrolling activities of the Moroccan police and a high level of cooperation between Spain and Morocco, many more people would be successfully reaching Spain with the use of illegal means.

Limited availability of legal travel channels

In response to the 2015 migration crisis, the European Commission proposed to develop a new legal-migration policy.[1]

However, the 2016 visa issuing policies of EU Member States (excluding the United Kingdom and Ireland) in relation to the nationals from the African continent in general and West Africa in particular show an opposite trend when compared with the stated goal of 'attracting more visitors'.

More precisely, West Africa is the region with the highest visa rejection rates in the world. Moreover, while in 2015 the overall rejection rate for airport transit visas (type A) and short-term visas (type C) stood at 32%, this number rose to 35% in 2016. By contrast, the overall EU average rejection rate for citizens of all non-EU countries was at the level of 8% in 2016.

Typical migrant smugglers

Migrant smuggling along the routes leading through Niger and Libya tends to be carried out by two types of smugglers. The first, and most prolific, are those that specialise exclusively in the transport of people in Toyota pickup trucks. As a rule, these smugglers belong to the Toubou tribe (in particular those who inhabit southern Libya, rather than Niger and Chad) and are involved in the entire trip from Agadez to Sebha in Libya.

The other type of smugglers transporting people along this corridor are the ones engaged in dual-smuggling operations: smuggling both people and goods. They are primarily truck drivers who

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1 A EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION, COM(2015) 240 final

supplement their income by offering migrants a ride on top of the goods or in the cab of the truck. For the most part, these drivers are Arabs from Libya who belong to the Gaddafa, Warfalla and Magarha tribes; some of them also have homes and families in Niger. The Magarha in particular are involved in smuggling people along the route from Sebha in Libya to the coast of that country.

Nigerian traffickers in human beings

The process of trafficking Nigerian (mostly female) victims into the EU depends on the nature and structure of the criminal network. Nigerian trafficking networks are usually made up of cellular structures, highly reliant on extensive networks of personal contacts in the EU.

The networks comprise a large number of members, each responsible for a particular stage of the trafficking process (i.e. recruitment, travel documents procurement, transportation, victims' supervision in the destination country).

Growing insecurity in some parts of the Sahel

The number of fatalities recorded in Mali rose dramatically after May 2017. In June 2017 alone, a total of 185 casualties were reported, compared with an average of only 74 per month recorded between January and May 2017.

The security situation in northern Burkina Faso has been deteriorating rapidly since January 2017. Targeted killings, assassination attempts, attacks on schools, western targets and complex attacks against military and police forces have been reported.

Strengthening of the AFIC

While the authorities of AFIC partner countries have demonstrated willingness to enhance border security and mitigate cross-border crime risks (see Chapter 11), there are still many capacity issues that need to be addressed.

In response, Frontex, supported by the European Commission, is launching a three-year capacity-building project with an overall objective of contributing to the reduction in illegal immigration attributable to migrant smuggling, and strengthening regional cooperation between AFIC partner countries.

1. Introduction

The Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) was set up in 2010 to provide a framework for regular knowledge and intelligence sharing in the field of border security between Frontex and African countries. The concept of this collaboration was broadly based on the model of the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) and the two already established regional risk analysis networks (the Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network – WB-RAN and the Eastern Partnership [formerly called Eastern Borders] Risk Analysis Network – EaP-RAN).

Figure 1. **The initial geographical focus of AFIC on West Africa, parts of the Sahel region and Morocco is being gradually extended to the east and north of the continent**
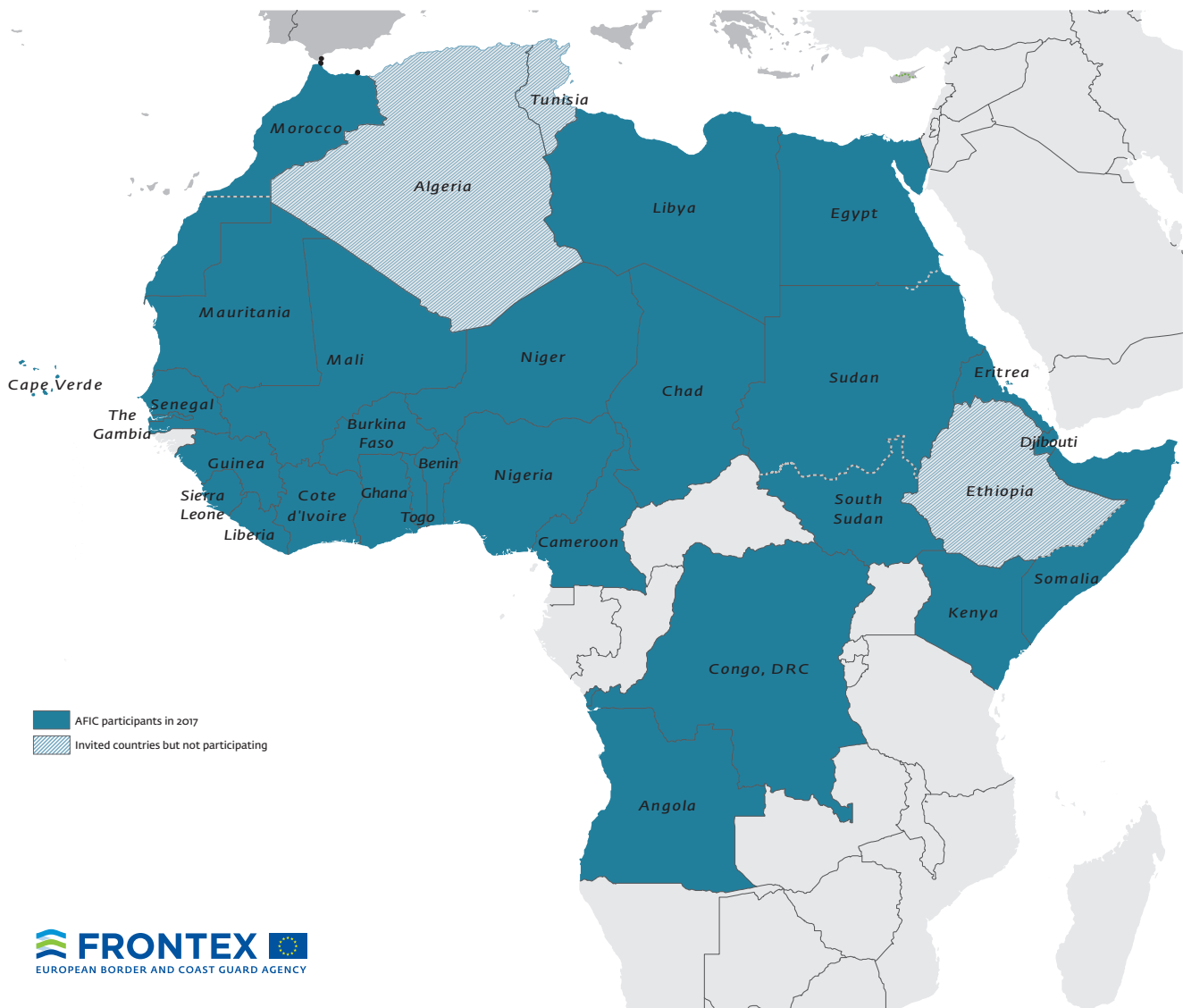
Different regional risk analysis networks and communities managed and supported by the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit

While the basic principles of the AFIC (e.g. informal nature, expert-level participation, flexibility, cooperation based on mutual benefit and trust among participants) remains unchanged, it has now reached a certain level of maturity. This is mostly evident in the Community's capacity to generate analysis and knowledge, build trust among its participating partners, expand geographically and extend its product portfolio.

More precisely, since May 2016 the AFIC has been issuing a monthly report. The AFIC monthly has given an additional impetus to information exchange, raised the profile of the Community in the relevant fora and helped to promote the Frontex concept of regional approach to risk analysis.

The Community has also gained more visibility among other stakeholders in the region, in particular several regional initiatives, such as the Rabat and Khartoum Processes and the Sahel G5.

These developments and a growing recognition of the Community (already echoed in the 'EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling' (COM(2015) 285 final)) has further positioned the AFIC as an unparalleled platform for information-sharing and joint analysis with third countries in Africa.

Testimonials

'The AFIC has transformed tremendously in the course of the years', says Laud Kwasi Ofori Affrifah, Head of Enforcement and Intelligence at the Immigration Service of Ghana, 'It started as an informal group of several countries sharing information on migration, with particular focus on the South-North route, that is the migration movements from sub-Saharan countries to the Mediterranean Sea and then to Europe. The AFIC is now going much beyond tackling ordinary migration issues, with our information-sharing covering broader security-related areas, such as trans-border crime, terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking. Our interest in terrorism, triggered by what happened in Mali, Niger, Libya, Nigeria or Cameroon, has been exacerbated by the 2017 attacks in Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso'.

'Initially, all AFIC meetings were held in Europe', says Edward Sharpe, Policy Advisor to the Liberian National Security Agency. 'In order to get more buy-in from our leaders, we requested such meetings to be held in Africa. Over the last couple of years, we had the AFIC members gather in Senegal, Morocco, Ghana and Mauritania. All meetings were opened by very high-profile figures and covered all the hot topics at stake: illegal migration, arms, terrorism, drugs'.

2. Methodology

As in previous years, this issue of the annual AFIC Joint Report was prepared by the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit (RAU) drawing extensively on the knowledge generated by the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community within the scope of its regular activities. These included workshops, field visits, regular information exchange and replies to Requests for Information (RFI).

Other relevant sources, among others reporting from Frontex Joint Operations, the IOM, ACLED, UNHCR, RMMS, were also consulted and taken into consideration. A draft of this report was reviewed by the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights[2] and its comments have been reflected in the final report.

Joint analytical work in 2017

The first AFIC workshop of 2017 on African soil took place on 1–2 March 2017 in Niamey, Niger. It was opened by the Frontex Executive Director, Fabrice Leggeri. The event was covered by the local media, which ran several interviews given by Niger's Minister of Interior, the General Director of National Police of Niger, the EU Special Representative for Sahel and the Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Niger. The opening was also attended by representatives of different Nigerien authorities.

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Figure 2. **A panel discussion during the AFIC workshop in Niamey**

Last year's first AFIC workshop, the fifth event of this kind held in Africa, was structured around the presentation of the *Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Joint Report 2016* followed by four panel discussions, each chaired by an AFIC country representative. In the discussions, special attention was given to further development of the AFIC as outlined in the 2016 Joint Report. The workshop also included a field visit to the IOM's Transit Centre in Niamey, where AFIC participants had the chance to talk to migrants and observe the work of IOM first hand.

The second AFIC Workshop took place on 23–25 May 2017 in Casa África in Las Palmas. Altogether, 65 experts from 25 African countries, the EU and international organisations participated in the event. The workshop was opened by Frontex and the Spanish authorities, namely the Director General of Casa África, the

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1   The forum is comprised of 15 members. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are explicitly mentioned in the Frontex Regulation and considered permanent members. The Council of Europe (CoE), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) have renewed their membership by an exchange of letters between Frontex and the executive management of the three organisations following an invitation from the Frontex Management Board. In addition, nine civil society organisations have been selected on the basis of a public and open call for expression of interest to become members. These are: the Advice on Individual Rights in Europe Centre (AIRE Centre), Amnesty International European Institutions Office (AI EIO), Save the Children, European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Jesuit Refugee Service Europe (JRS), Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), and the Red Cross EU Office.

Mayor of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the Delegate of the Spanish Government in the Canary Islands, and the President of the Autonomous Government of the Canary Islands.

The participants had the opportunity to listen to two keynote speeches – one devoted to 'security perceptions: from risks to opportunities' and the other on 'the Cairo Center for Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa'. Moreover, for the first time operational discussions on criminal networks operating in Africa were held with selected AFIC countries as a separate session organised by the Spanish authorities and Europol.

The third AFIC workshop was held on 26–28 September 2017 at Frontex Headquarters in Warsaw, gathering representatives of 21 AFIC partner countries and a number of EU institutions and CSDP missions. The participants discussed border management and security, ways of building better awareness of the situation at the African borders and exchanging information on migratory movements.

During the AFIC meeting, Frontex launched a new project called 'Strengthening of the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) as an Instrument to Fight Serious Cross-Border Crimes Affecting Africa and the EU'.

The workshop was also used to gather additional input for the current report. Special thanks are due to all AFIC partner countries and different EU CSDP missions participating in the workshop for all their efforts and contributions.

3. Central Mediterranean route

3.1. A sharp upward trend until June 2017 and a sharp decrease starting in July 2017

The Central Mediterranean route remained the main entry point to the EU, as approximately 93% of all illegal border-crossings reported at the EU's external borders in the first nine months of 2017 were registered in this area. It is worth highlighting the sharp month-on-month increase in the number of detections in the first half of 2017. For instance, while roughly 4 500 detections were recorded in January, the number soared to nearly 11 000 detections in March and 24 824 detections in June. In total, 105 142 detections were reported on this route in 2017 by the end of September, which represented an overall increase of nearly 19% compared with the corresponding period of 2016. This rising number of illegal border-crossings was mainly associated with irregular migrants originating from West African, Eastern African and Horn of African countries, as well as Bangladesh.

However, the month of July 2017 saw the lowest number of irregular migrant apprehensions (10 161) compared with the number reported in the same month in 2014–2016 and the decreasing trend continued until the end of September. In that month, only roughly 5 600 arrivals were reported, which represents a significant decrease compared with July 2016, when the number of arrivals totalled roughly 12 600.

During the period under consideration, the majority of migrants arrived from West, Central and Horn of African countries and, to a lesser extent, from Asia and North Africa. Many were in need of international protection or had other humanitarian needs as victims of trafficking or unaccompanied children. Since the beginning of 2017, the number of refugees and irregular migrants from Asian, North African and Middle Eastern countries (such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, Syria and Iraq) detected on this route has been increasing.

3.2. Possible changes in the areas of departure

A change in the migration trend from Libya was first observed in mid-July 2017 (Week 29). The change was mostly driven by the following developments reported in the Central Mediterranean, mainly related to Libya.

The declining trend first emerged after the Libyan Passport, Citizenship, and Foreigners Affairs Department had decided to stop issuing visas upon arrival to nationals of some key countries of origin (see box on page 13).

In addition, the Libyan National Army (LNA), controlled by Gen Khalifa Haftar, have tightened their control over some locations on the western coast of Libya. This might have contributed to the decrease in the number of migrant boats departing from Sabratah.

As shown in Figure 4, a high number of incidents and migrants was reported in Week 28 (10–16 July), which coincided with intensified activities of one specific militia (reportedly by the Dabbashi brigade). Later clashes between the militias established in Sabratah and the LNA also contributed to the drop in the number of departures from the nearby coastal areas over the next few weeks.

Although the weather was not always suitable for navigation in Weeks 29–32, even in the periods of good weather conditions no departures from the above-mentioned coastal area of Sabratah were reported, which suggests that there must have been other factors bringing about the reduction in the migration flow.

Furthermore, in late August 2017 Sabratah's mayor, Hassen Dhawadi, said that his town was clamping down on migrant-smuggling by mounting

Figure 3. **Central Mediterranean migration flow in 2016–2017**
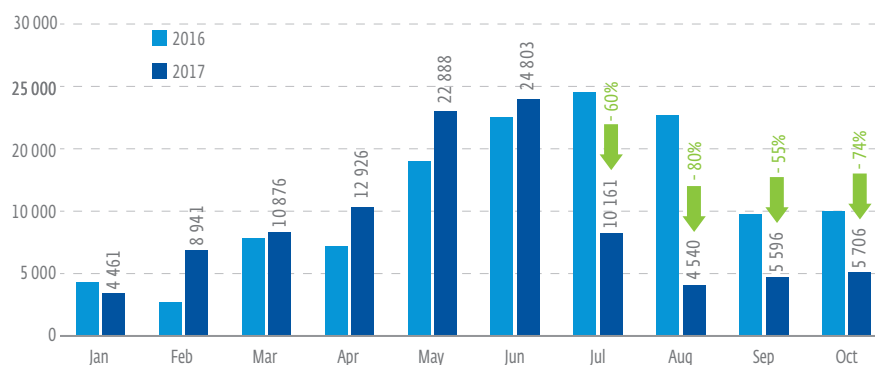
Source: Frontex data as of 22 October 2017

armed patrols. Dhawad also stated that an armed group, led by its commander Omar Abdul Jalil, had been deployed by the 'Operations Room Fighting IS'. The crackdown was agreed with local tribes and was being coordinated by Sabratah municipality and local security forces.

A similar phenomenon was already observed back in 2015 when the local authorities in Zuwarah decided to ban the departure of boats from the coastal areas and, consequently, the smuggling networks established departure points in the area of Sabratah.

Another factor which contributed to the decreasing trend in departures from Libya in 2017 are the activities of the Libyan Coast Guard in Libyan territorial waters, mainly in the areas of Sabratah and, to a lesser extent, Tripoli and even Misratah.

As migrants were no longer able to depart, several thousand of them became stranded in coastal Libya. This has also led to overcrowding of migrant centres in Libya and alleged forced labour, beatings, torture and rape.

According to information available in open sources, the Libyan Coast Guard intercepted more than 1 500 migrants within one month – between mid-July and mid-August 2017. These detections and interceptions show that the facilitation networks are still operating. However, this also shows that the Libyan Coast Guard is much more active not only in Tripoli, but also in other areas, such as Sabratah and Misratah.

Following an announcement by the Libyan authorities prohibiting foreign vessels from operating in Libya's declared search and rescue zone without authorisation, two NGOs decided to withdraw their vessels from the area due to the presence of Libyan Coast Guard vessels, which they considered a threat to their security.

The Libyan Coast Guard is now increasingly acting in line with the abovementioned declaration.

Finally, it is possible that following a set of law-enforcement measures implemented by Niger, the flow of migrants transiting Niger and going to Libya has slowed down in 2017 (for more details see

Visas issued on arrival at Mitiga Airport in Libya no longer valid for Egyptians, Moroccans, Sudanese, Syrians or Bangladeshis

On 8 May 2017, the Libyan Passport, Citizenship, and Foreigners Affairs Department (Ministry of Interior – GNA) banned the issuing of visas-on-arrival to Egyptians, Moroccans, Sudanese, Syrians and Bangladeshis at Mitiga International Airport (MJI). It should be stressed that most migrants who arrive in Libya by air pass through Mitiga airport. At the same time, the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) launched a campaign whose aim was to tackle irregular migration in Benghazi. It was associated with the fact that dozens of irregular migrants were found hiding out on farms, in workshops and shops in the Suluq, Al Fuwayhat and Al Hawwari areas of western Benghazi.

Figure 4. **A high number of incidents was reported in Week 28; however, the number of incidents involving migrants that departed from Libya towards Italy sharply decreased over the next few weeks. Moreover, while a decrease was reported in the number of incidents from the area of Sabratah, an increase was observed in the Tripoli area and eastwards**
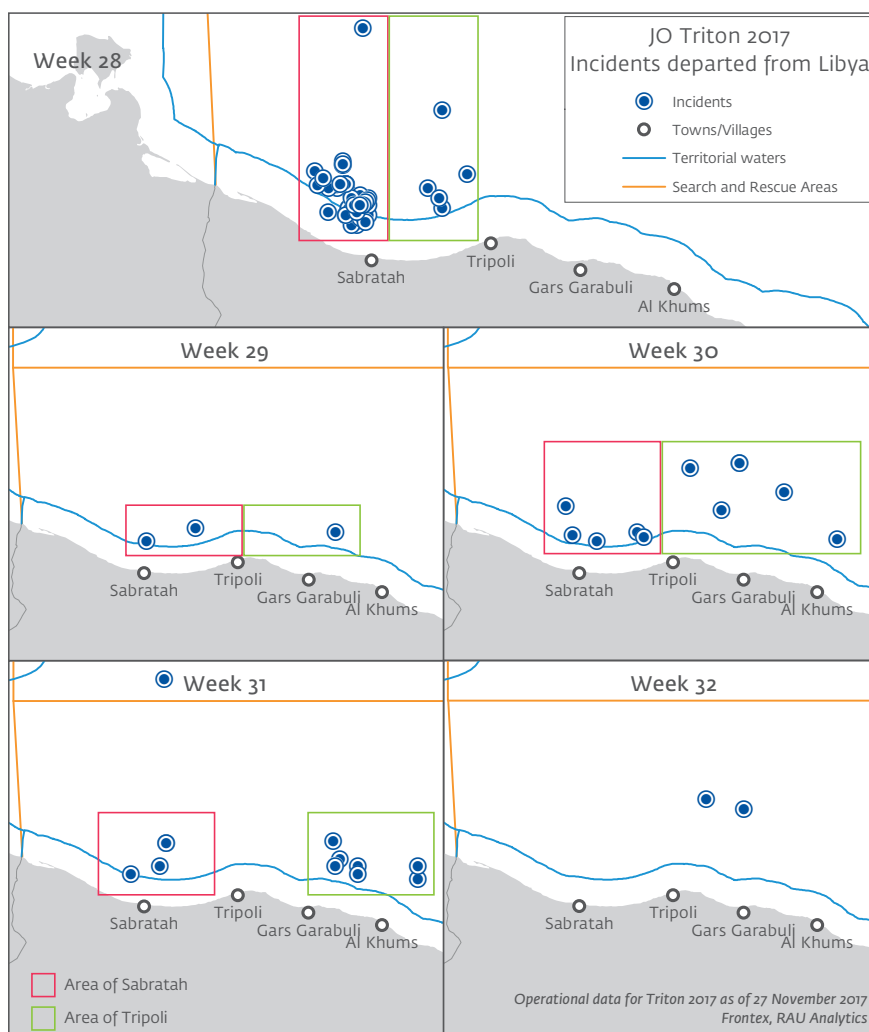
Section 10.1. on law-enforcement measures in Niger).

This assumption is somewhat corroborated by the findings presented in the IOM's 'DTM Libya's Migrant Report' (Round 9 of March-April 2017), in which the UN Migration Agency states that it has observed 'an increase in the number of people transiting through Algeria'. In addition, the report also states that 'while the majority of Malian migrants surveyed in 2016 had reported travelling through Burkina-Faso and Niger (34%), the main route recorded in the present reporting period was through Algeria (87%).'

Additionally, according to the same IOM report, migrants who departed from Ghana were more likely to travel through Burkina-Faso, Mali and Algeria (28%). The movements of migrants from Senegal and Nigeria show a similar pattern, namely an increase in the use of routes through Algeria, rather than Niger, to reach Libya.

However, despite these indications, migrants interviewed in the context of the JO Triton continue to name Agadez as the main transit area for West and sub-Saharan migrants on their way towards Libya.

According to information gathered through the debriefing activities, approximately 22% of the migrants who have arrived in Italy in 2017 from West and sub-Saharan countries used Algeria

as an alternative route to reach Libya, while the rest mentioned that Agadez was the main transit hub used to reach Libya.

Bearing all that in mind, it should be noted that only a small minority of migrants are interviewed and that a reference to locations is made based on migrant statements and not hard data (e.g. GPS location history stored on a phone). Many migrants had also been travelling for an extended period of time and might have transited Agadez before the security measures were introduced.

Lastly, the Nigerien authorities assess that Niger is still used as a transit country; however, the numbers of migrants passing through are probably much lower compared with 2016. Moreover, migrants have started using routes located away from the city of Agadez (see box above).

New routes reported by Niger

The Tahoua-Agadez national road: Taza-Amokoye-Damboutan (transit point where migrants change to other vehicles)–Tagigalte-Gharo-Egawane-Ibrahamdadi-Bargate–Azanague–Birmami-Boussanga–Albada-Bifaraya-Inabangarette-Alkassara-Assamaka-Inguizame-Tamanrasett.

The Tahoua-Agadez national road: at the fork of Tchintabaraden road migrants take the road of Ibécétane–Chimiguirie–Akarama–Azelik, which leads to two different roads:
■ Either Azelik-Chimagaskare-Agzarmakarame-Louberate-Berkousaya–Albada–Birfaraya-Inabangarette-Assamaka-Inguizame-Tamanrasett; or
■ Azelik-Tiguida-Farekasse-Inabangarette-Assamaka-Inguizam-Tamanrasset.

Dan Issa (border with Nigeria)–Maradi–Dakoro–Abalak–Akarana–Azelik, where migrants take one of the two roads described above (this road is mainly taken by Cameroonians).

The Tahoua-Agadez National Road: the fork of Tchintabaraden-Kao-Tchinta-Egawane-Ibrahamdadi-Bargate-Azamague-Birmani-Boussanga-Albada-

Bifaraya-Inabangarett-Alkassar-Assamaka-Inguizam-Tamanrasset (this road is mainly taken by Nigeriens and some Nigerians posing as Nigeriens).

Migrants reach Tahoua by bus, mini bus, Toyota 4x4, motorbike or on foot in order to avoid the FDS units.

From Tahoua to Tamanrasset, Algeria, migrants are transported in a Toyota Hilux or by bus.

The cost of transport from Tahoua to Tamanrasset varies from 120 000 to 150 000 CFA francs (from EUR 180 to 230).

In June 2017, 41 women were transported from Tahoua for an amount of 1 789 000 CFA francs. The women were sold to another smuggler for 600 000 CFA francs. The convoy was then intercepted in the area of Egawane, where the smuggler and the facilitator were arrested.

It has been observed that this *modus operandi* of traffickers is very lucrative. It is used to transport migrants in both directions.

Source: Niger representative in AFIC workshop in Warsaw, 26–28 September 2017

3.3. Fatalities

The estimated number of fatalities at sea remains high (according to IOM data, 2 639 as of 1 November 2017; according to UNHCR data, 2 496 dead or missing persons were reported on the Central Mediterranean route in January–September 2017[3]).

In 2017, as in the previous year, migrants have lost their lives at sea mainly as a result of sailing aboard unseaworthy vessels (particularly due to the widespread use of cheap inflatable boats with soft flat bottoms, which are regularly overcrowded and not suitable for long sea travel), or the capsizing of small overcrowded wooden vessels.

The majority of deaths have occurred only a few nautical miles from the Libyan coast shortly after the boats' departure and in many cases bodies have not been recovered.

3   *https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/60155*

3.4. Supplying boats for the human smuggling business in Libya

Wooden boats – possibly built locally

During the debriefing activities, it turned out that some of the migrants were pointing to a specific place near the coastal village of Sabratah (western Libya) as a possible location where wooden boats used to smuggle migrants to Italy are manufactured by criminal networks.

12-metre-long inflatable rubber dinghies imported from China

The most common type of vessel used by the people smugglers operating in Libya is an inflatable rubber dinghy, which is approximately 12 metres in length and has an outboard engine. This vessel can be used for a limited number of activities since, due to its small size, it should not transport a heavy load and it is not suitable for fishing. Hence, the usage of this type of rubber boat in Libya is mainly associated with the smuggling of migrants.

The migrants interviewed during debriefing activities rarely provide any information on the construction or assembly of rubber boats.

As reported in open sources, 'China is the main source of rubber dinghy imports in Malta, whether for sale here or for transhipment through the Malta Freeport: between 2012 and 2016, a

total cost value of EUR 1.3 million was imported in rubber dinghies, a total of 5 092 pieces, working out at an average of EUR 256 each. The standard cost of the Alibaba boats retail at between USD 800–1 100.'[4]

Slavery in Libya: a new phenomenon?

A recent CNN documentary 'People for sale' brought to light alleged slave trade of migrants in Libya. However, the phenomenon, which is generating significant international concern, is not new and has been reported by Frontex since 2014.

Trafficking in human beings is a very lucrative business, which involves revenue brought in by smuggling networks that transport migrants from one country to another, as well as that generated by migrants who spend months or even years in transit countries collecting money to continue their journey.

In these transit countries, local employers, aware of migrants' desperate situation, offer them jobs on a temporary basis and make them work in very poor conditions knowing how limited their options are as regards earning money.

According to information obtained from the debriefing interviews, when migrants run up debts with people smuggling networks, they are forced to remain in smuggling networks' safe houses until they pay off the debt. In some cases, they are 'sold' to Libyan nationals and trapped in forced labour for a long period of time. This selling or transferring of migrants is often organised by the same authorities that control prisons and places of internment of migrants.

Some migrants receive a low salary for their work, which they subsequently pay the smugglers. However, some of them are not paid at all for the work they do for a period of time that can range from a few weeks to a few years, depending on how skilled they are. Migrants are forced to work until their 'owners' decide that they have earned enough money for their passage to the EU. Commonly, migrants are not allowed to leave the place of work and the smugglers threaten to torture them if they try to escape.

All in all, despite the local authorities' efforts aimed at investigating it thoroughly, the trafficking in human beings will continue unless the national authorities decide to take measures against this illegal activity.

In June, this type of vessel, called 'inflatable refugee boat', was available for purchase on the website 'Alibaba' (based in China); the name is a clear reference to the fact that criminal networks operating in Libya use these boats to smuggle migrants.

4   www.maltatoday.com.mt, 'Made in China: 'Refugee boats' available on Alibaba.com' 24 April 2017

4. Western Mediterranean route

During the first **ten months of 2017,** over 17 348 irregular migrants were reported on the Western Mediterranean route (land – as of 30 September – and sea detections), which represents a sharp increase (of over 120%) compared with the same period in 2016. Moreover, these figures already surpass the total number of irregular migrants reported for the entire year of 2016. The sea route from the northern coast of Morocco and Algeria towards Spain showed a 310% increase, while the number of attempts to storm the fence in the area of the two Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla increased by 385%. In turn, the number of apprehensions reported in Ceuta and Melilla (sea detections) dropped by 73%.

Compared with other routes (Central and Eastern Mediterranean), the Western Mediterranean remains the primary route used by migrants with limited financial means. However, in 2017 the fees charged by facilitators for crossing the Alboran Sea have increased compared with previous years. This 'price' increase registered on the Western Mediterranean route might have resulted from the higher demand for smuggling services, which was associated with an increasing number of sub-Saharan migrants stranded in the northern part of Morocco (Tangier, Nador).

The interceptions followed the pattern observed over the past five years; it showed a continuous increase and a high number of apprehensions during the period May–October, when the weather conditions are favourable for sea crossings. The sharp increase in the number of migrants reported in the period June–July 2017 was mainly associated with the arrival of large groups of Moroccan migrants who departed from the western coast of Morocco aboard high-capacity boats, capable of transferring large groups of people.

It is worth mentioning that the actual migratory pressure on this route is even higher than the statistics indicate, considering the high number of interventions reported by the Moroccan authorities with regard to migrants prevented from crossing the sea towards the southern coast of Spain. In 2016, the Moroccan authorities responsible for combating irregular migration arrested a total of 250 people smugglers, detected 13 247 migrants from third countries and seized 3 134 fraudulent travel documents.

As regards the attempts to storm the fence in the area of Ceuta and Melilla, a significant increase in the number of apprehensions in the area of these two Spanish exclaves was observed in 2017. The main advantage of this *modus operandi* is that it does not incur any costs so migrants can make multiple attempts at scaling the fence. Also, clandestine entry to the Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla by hiding in vehicles remains the most common *modus operandi* as regards illegal border-crossing. For example, on 16 June 2017 a group of nine migrants managed to enter Melilla by driving through the border at high speed; a Policia National officer and a member of Guardia Civil were injured as a result of this incident.

Also, in 2017 Morocco launched the second stage of an operation aimed at regularising the situation of irregular migrants, but official sources did not specify the number of migrants targeted in this new phase of regularisation process. The long-term impact of the operation on the volume of illegal immigration, albeit positive, is difficult to assess precisely.

Figure 5. **Migrants heading towards Gourougou Mountain in Nador (Morocco)**

Figure 6. **On 16 June 2017, nine migrants managed to enter Melilla by speeding through the border**

Figure 7. **A migrant hiding in a car's glove compartment at the Melilla BCP**

4.1. *Modi operandi* and nationalities

Since the beginning of 2017, four main departure areas have been identified on the sea route from North Africa towards Spain:

1. The area between Larache and Kenitra on the western coast of Morocco, from where mainly Moroccan migrants are transferred aboard wooden boats or large inflatable boats to the western part of the Strait of Gibraltar. The involvement of a local smuggling network with links to smuggling networks operating in the northern part of Morocco should also be pointed out.

2. The Tangier area, from where migrants can be easily transferred using Jet Skis, toy boats and inflatable rubber boats, because of the short distance between the two continents. This departure area is used by both Moroccan and sub-Saharan migrants, but they never travel in the same boats.

3. The area between Al-Hoceima and Nador, used mainly by sub-Saharan migrants departing aboard large inflatable boats.

4. The area between Oran and Mostaganem, used by Algerian migrants leaving aboard fibre or wooden boats. Most departures from this area are reported in July-October, when weather conditions are most favourable for navigation.

As regards nationalities, three main groups can be identified among the migrants who managed to reach the Spanish territory: Moroccans, Algerians and sub-Saharans.

The most common *modus operandi* used by Moroccan migrants involves crossing the Strait of Gibraltar aboard toy boats or inflatable rubber boats. Nevertheless, they are constantly searching for faster and more secure ways of reaching the Spanish coast undetected. This is the reason why an increase in the number of incidents involving the transfer of migrants aboard Jet Skis has been reported

Figure 8. **Irregular migrant apprehensions on the Western Mediterranean sea route, 2013–2017**
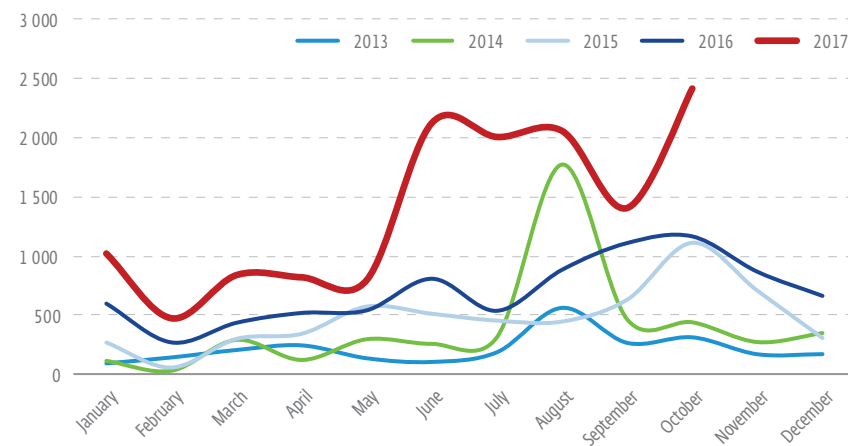
Source: Frontex data

Figure 9. **Irregular migrant apprehensions on the Western Mediterranean route: sea, land and Ceuta and Melilla sea**
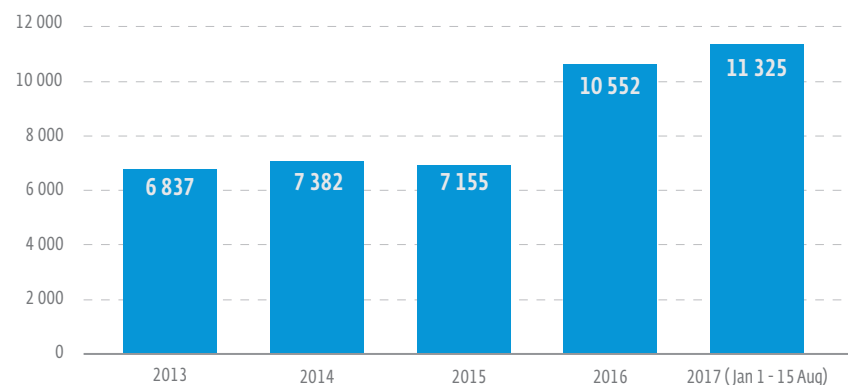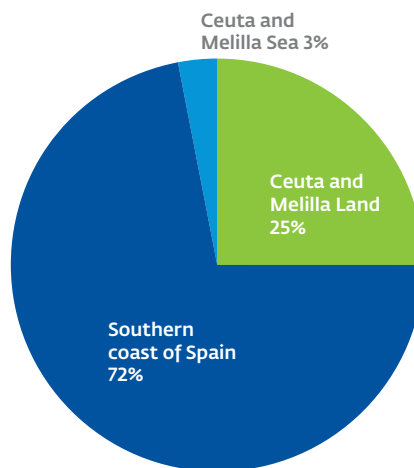

Source: Frontex data

in 2017. The main advantage of this *modus operandi* is speed, as migrants can reach the Spanish coast in less than 30 minutes and the maritime assets have almost no chance of intercepting them. The increase was observed both in terms of the number of incidents and the number of passengers transported aboard one Jet Ski. Most cases detected in 2017 involved 2–3 migrants aboard one Jet Ski, as most of the models used were three seaters. The rising number of arrivals can also be attributed to a new *modus operandi*, reported in June in the south of Spain, consisting in the use of powerful speedboats which can transport a large number of migrants in a short period of time.

With regard to sub-Saharan migrants, they tend to spend between a few months and a couple of years in Morocco, where they join local communities according to their nationality, language, tribe or religion. In these communities, those interested in further migration can share information about people smugglers, places of departure and *modi operandi*, and organise their departures together, which includes the acquisition of boats used for the sea crossing. The time of departure usually depends on the weather conditions and information about the patrolling activities of the Moroccan authorities. The most common place of departure is the area

close to Gibraltar, where the distance between Morocco and Spain is the shortest, or the area Al-Hoceima-Nador, where they can use the services of local people-smuggling networks.

As the migration flow from unstable countries of origin in Africa persists, the patrolling activities of the Moroccan police and the high level of cooperation between Spain and Morocco are two of the main pillars of preventing and curbing illegal immigration towards the EU in general and Spain in particular.

Figure 10. **Irregular migrant apprehensions on the Western Mediterranean route: sea, land and Ceuta and Melilla sea, 1 January–15 August 2017**

Ceuta and Melilla Sea 3%

Ceuta and Melilla Land 25%

Southern coast of Spain 72%

Source: Frontex data

Figure 11. **Top nationalities detected at the Spanish sea borders, 1 January–27 October 2017**

MAR 21%

Others 17%

GMB 10%

GIN 12%

CIV 16%

DZA 18%
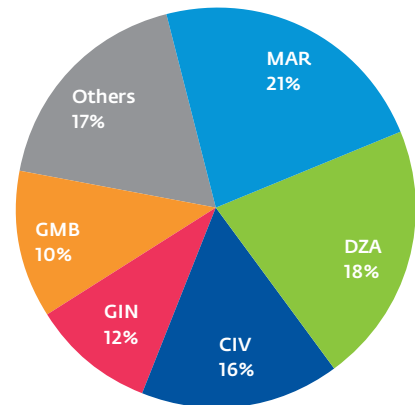
Source: Frontex data – land as of 30 September and sea as of 27 October

5. Profiles of migrants

Frontex regularly conducts voluntary interviews with migrants arriving in the EU using irregular routes. Their personal accounts provide a unique insight into illegal immigration from Africa to Europe.

The migrants' stories featured in this chapter were chosen from among more than 5 000 interviews conducted by Frontex in different operational areas of Italy, Greece and Spain.

These profiles are regularly shared with AFIC partners in *AFIC Monthly* reports. The story of a Guinean migrant presented below is a typical case, largely representing the experience of many who have travelled on the same route.

Guinean male aged 21

The interviewee departed from Conakry, the Guinean capital city. He decided to leave his country for two main reasons. Firstly, he was unemployed and he was seeking better economic conditions. Secondly, he decided to convert to Christianity and his Muslim family did not support his decision.

As he was unemployed, he did not have the means to travel. Fortunately, one of his friends offered to cover the costs of the journey; he also arranged everything with a Guinean facilitator based in Conakry. His *modus operandi* was to contact his friend at different stages of the journey and he, in turn, would ask for instructions from the Guinean facilitator in Conakry and pay for the next leg of the journey.

From Guinea to Mali and onwards to Niger

The interviewee left Conakry in July 2016 in a Renault minivan driven by a Guinean facilitator. On the way, they collected other would-be Guinean migrants in several towns, namely Kindia, Mamou and Labe. After a week, they reached a Malian border town of Kouremale and they continued their journey to Bamako. Once there, the interviewee was dropped off at an unknown bus station, where he was instructed to contact a Malian national who was linked to the facilitator.

The man gave him a bus ticket to Arlit (Niger) and a yellow fever vaccination card together with a Laissez Passer (printed with his name, stamped but without a photo) which he was told would facilitate his transit though Mali and Burkina Faso. After a two-day-long journey on a bus operated by RIMBO Transport, the interviewee reached Ouagadougou and spent another three days travelling to Niamey. From there, he took a bus operated by the same company to get to Arlit, which he reached three days later, passing through Agadez. Upon arrival, the interviewee contacted the Guinean facilitator in Conakry and he was picked up from the bus station.

### Crossing the Sahara to reach Algeria and then Libya

Three days later, the interviewee and another 18 migrants were collected by a white Toyota pickup truck driven by a Nigerien man and transported to Guezzam (Algeria). According to the interviewee, they drove non-stop and were able to avoid patrol cars. Moreover, the driver seemed to be well aware of the patrolling patterns. When they arrived in Algeria, they travelled to a safe house in Tamanrasset. There, he was instructed to look for another associate of the Guinean facilitator, who took him with some other migrants to Debdeb at the border with Libya. Subsequently, the interviewee travelled to Tripoli and finally, after reaching Sabratah, he was transported to a fenced compound, which was managed by a Gambian national and was housing more than 300 migrants.

On 12 November 2016, a group of 120 migrants, including the interviewee, was taken on foot to a beach (an approximately 20-minute walk, slightly towards the east of the camp) and loaded onto a 10-metre-long white rubber boat, which set sail at about 23:00 hrs. However, just 30 minutes later the migrants were intercepted by two armed Libyan civilians on a speed boat and were escorted back to the shore.

A group of armed Libyans was waiting on the shore and transported them to an illegal prison located in Sabratah. The migrants were held in separate rooms, each holding 30 persons, and were subjected to beatings aimed at convincing their families to pay LYD 3 000 (EUR 1 900) for them to be released. Since he did not have the money to pay and no one to ask for help, the interviewee was kept prisoner and forced to work. After about three months, he 'bought' his freedom and the Libyan who benefited from his work was instructed to pay for his transport back to Sabratah. Moreover, following his release, the same Libyan national gave the interviewee about LYD 600 (EUR 390) as payment for the work he did while being imprisoned. Once he returned to Sabratah, the interviewee turned to the Gambian middleman, to whom he paid the entire amount for the sea crossing. He spent about seven weeks in a shelter located in the city before his departure was organised.

Figure 12. **Age most often declared by Guinean nationals during interviews**
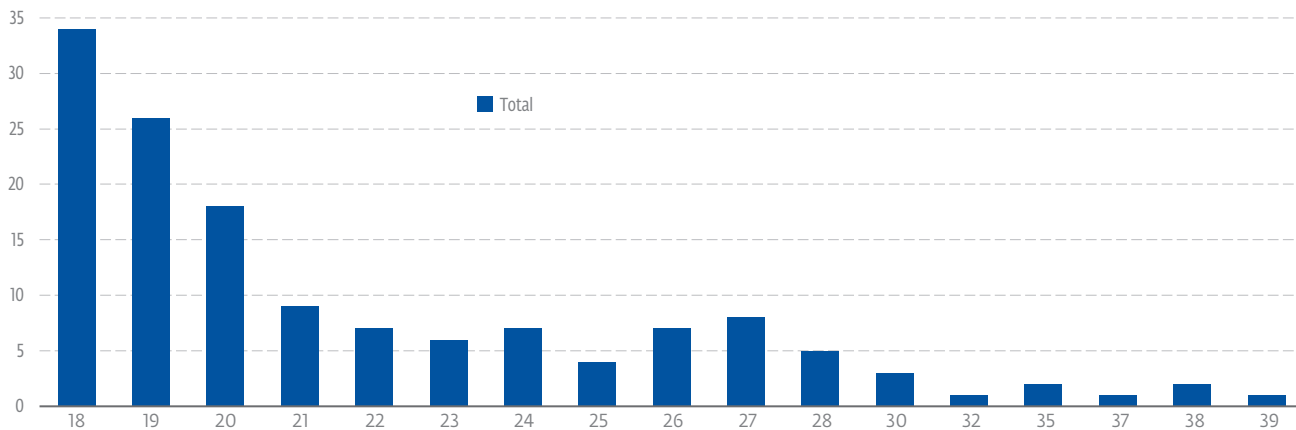
Source: PeDRA as of 30 August 2017

Figure 13. **Main push factors declared by Guinean nationals during debriefing activities**
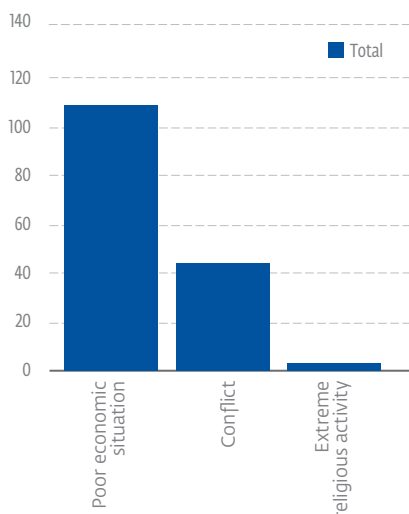
Source: PeDRA as of 30 August 2017
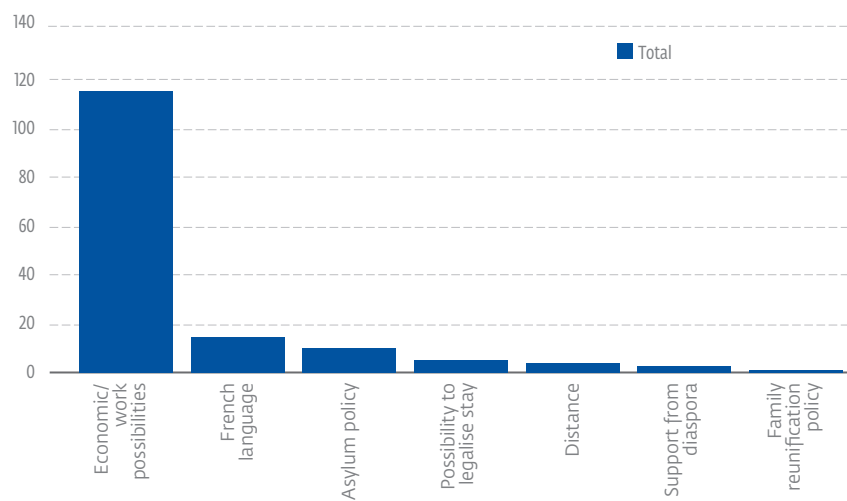
Figure 14. **Main pull factors declared by Guinean nationals during debriefing activities**

Source: PeDRA as of 30 August 2017

The trip to Italy

On 19 March 2017, 125 migrants (including the interviewee) were taken to a beach where seven armed civilians were waiting for them. They boarded a 10-metre white rubber boat, powered by a 50 HP engine and carrying fuel supply of 120 litres. At about 06:00 hrs, the boat was rescued by the Spanish vessel *Canarias* (EUNAVFOR MED).

Guinean migrants' profile

The story of the 21-year-old Guinean is one of many that are collected by Frontex during debriefing activities. The interviews, when aggregated, can provide a general migrants' profile. As for those originating from Guinea, the data retrieved from the latest 144 interviews were analysed. The vast majority of Guinean nationals who were interviewed were male (142 males against 2 females) and aged between 18 and 30. As regards their marital status, most were unmarried (116).

In the sample under consideration, the vast majority declared that their desired country of destination was Italy (42), followed by France (27) and Germany (8). The top three reported countries correctly represent the overall trend in terms of the desired destination country for Guinean migrants. The aggregated data and the analysis of interviews can provide a general picture of the reasons behind their departure. It should not come as a surprise that poor economic prospects represent a significant push factor and encourage more persons to migrate to third countries. In fact, 114 of the interviewees originating from Guinea stated that the poor economic situation in their country was the main push factor. Hence, it is hardly surprising that the majority of interviewed migrants (117) were hoping

Figure 15. **Main stops or transit hubs located along the route from Guinea to Italy or Spain. The size of the bubble represents the relative importance of these towns in regard to the entire route**
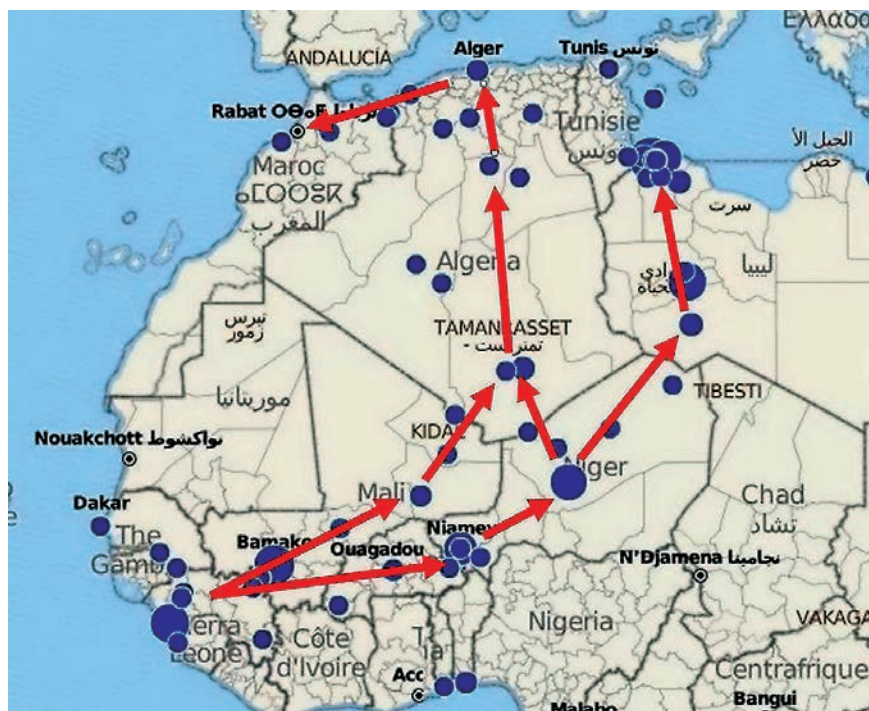
Source: PeDRA as of 30 August 2017

to find better economic/work opportunities in the EU. Moreover, ongoing conflicts in the region acted as second most often registered push factor (44), while some interviewees (4) also mentioned extreme religious activity. In terms of pull factors, the possibility to speak French in the destination country as well as the asylum policy (recognition rate and social benefits extended to asylum seekers) were most commonly declared in the analysed sample.

Routes used

The information collected during debriefing activities also helped identify the main routes used by Guinean migrants to reach Europe's shores. It is worth

highlighting that the vast majority of Guinean migrants reached the EU/Schengen area travelling on well-established land routes. The most frequently used ones run either through Mali and Algeria or through Mali/Burkina Faso and Niger. It should be pointed out that these routes lead through well-known migratory hubs, such as Agadez, Niamey in Niger and Bamako in Mali. However, in the vast majority of the analysed cases, the routes that the migrants used converged in Libya, particularly in the area around the southern town of Sabha. Once there, the Guinean migrants headed toward the Mediterranean coast from where they subsequently departed.

6. Profiles of smugglers

6.1. Smugglers operating on the route between Niger, Algeria and Libya[5]

Migrant smuggling along these routes tends to be carried out by two types of smugglers. The first, and most prolific, are those that specialise exclusively in the transport of people in Toyota pickup trucks. These smugglers almost always belong to the Toubou tribe (in particular those who inhabit southern Libya, rather than Niger and Chad) and are involved along the entire trip from Agadez to Sebha in Libya.

Due to the unstable security situation in southern Libya, Toubou smugglers may not always be able to guide migrants north as far as Sebha, as the de facto borderline fluctuates. Before reaching Sebha, or even before crossing into Libya, Toubou smugglers in Niger hand their migrants over to smugglers operating in southern Libya.

The other type of smugglers transporting people along this corridor are the ones engaged in dual-smuggling operations, i.e. smuggling both people and goods. They are primarily truck drivers who augment their income by offering migrants a ride on top of the goods or in the cab of the truck. For the most part, these drivers are Arabs from Libya who belong to the Gaddafa, Warfalla and Magarha tribes; some of them also have homes and families in Niger. The Magarha in particular are involved in smuggling people along the route from Sebha to the coast of Libya.

6.2. Typical examples of real-life smugglers: ethnic background and motivation[5]

1. A Toubou man from southern Libya, aged 37

He works independently as a Toyota driver, smuggling migrants between Agadez and Dirkou (Niger) and the Libyan towns of Sebha, Qatrun and Murzuq. He considers the activity illegal and would rather have a different occupation provided it would produce a comparable income. As for the payment, some passengers are charged in advance, while some are allowed to pay later.

2. A Toubou man from southern Libya, aged 27

He smuggles migrants from Agadez and Dirkou (Niger) to Sebha, Qatrun and Murzuq (southern Libya). He has been working as a smuggler for six years: the first three years learning the ropes while helping a relative, three driving his own car. He accepts payment in advance as well as on credit. He considers the activity illegal and would rather be

Figure 16. **A tentative monthly income statement of a successful smuggler in Agadez during high season**
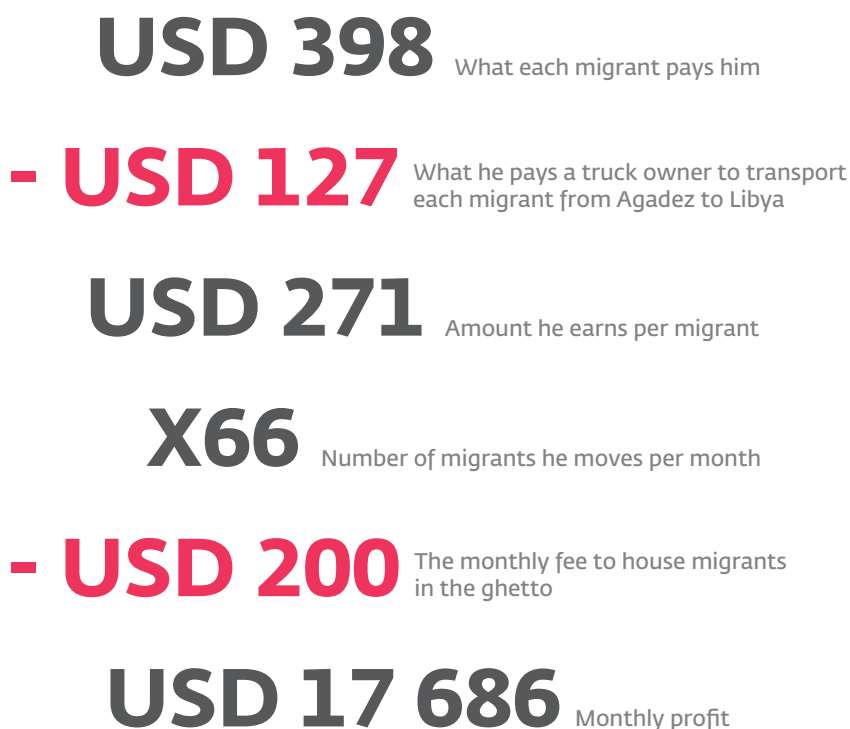
USD 398 What each migrant pays him

- USD 127 What he pays a truck owner to transport each migrant from Agadez to Libya

USD 271 Amount he earns per migrant

X66 Number of migrants he moves per month

- USD 200 The monthly fee to house migrants in the ghetto

USD 17 686 Monthly profit

Source: Malia Politzer, Emily Kassie, "Niger – Smugglers' paradise", Huffingtonpost.com

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[5] 'The Niger-Libya corridor: Smugglers' perspectives', ISS paper 299, November 2016,

a shopkeeper in a city if he could make the same amount of money.

3. An Arab from Gaddafa tribe in southern Libya, aged 68

He drives people and goods in his lorry between Agadez (Niger) and Sebha (Libya). He finds 'clients' in each town on his own. He has been a smuggler for 28 years, he does not consider it illegal and does not want to do anything else. He enjoys his job.

4. A Warfalla Arab from southern Libya, aged 54

He drives migrants in the two Toyota pickup trucks he owns, which he and a colleague of his drive in tandem. He has been a smuggler for 14 years. He works primarily between Agadez (Niger) and Sebha (Libya). He loves his job, he does not consider it illegal and does not want to stop.

5. A Tuareg man from Zinder, Niger, aged 45

He is able to operate as a smuggler along the Niger-Libya corridor in collaboration with persons from the Toubou tribe. He works along Zinder–Agadez and Agadez–Sebha routes. He started smuggling migrants in 2009 once he realised how much money there was to be made. He does not think his job is illegal and does not want to stop.

6. A Toubou man from southern Libya, aged 36

He works as far south as the Nigerien border with Nigeria but primarily along the route from Agadez in Niger into southern Libya. He was introduced to this line of work by his Toubou friends. He does not want to stop as he enjoys the money and lifestyle. He thinks the government would be foolish to try to stop the migrant flows.

7. A Senegalese man, aged 47

He works as a recruiter in Agadez and gathers sub-Saharan Africans as they arrive in Agadez and 'sells' them to Toubou smugglers. He initially came to Agadez as a migrant and made two unsuccessful attempts to reach Europe from Libya. He gets paid by smugglers per referral and sends money back home to his family in Senegal. He does not consider his job as illegal.

8. A Tuareg man from southern Algeria, aged 45

He started smuggling migrants into Algeria from Zinder and Agadez (Niger) in the 1990s. He would drop them off in Tamanrasset, southern Algeria. He had an arrangement with the local authorities according to which they would sell Nigerien travel documents to migrants from Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Senegal to make it easier to travel. He thinks every security agent is getting rich off the migrant smuggling trade.

9. A Gambian man in his mid-thirties[6]

He used to be a government contractor who helped build middle schools. However, after the World Bank abandoned the project that funded his contract, he decided to leave the Gambia to find work in Europe. On his way north, he met other migrants making the same journey, loaning money to those who did not have the funds to pay for transportation. He soon realised he had a knack for managing people and negotiating business deals. He now operates in Agadez and can earn up to USD 17 000 per month during high migration season.

[6] Source: Malia Politzer, Emily Kassie, 'Niger – Smugglers' paradise', Huffingtonpost.com

6.3. Smugglers in Eritrea

Almost all smugglers in Eritrea operate within well-established networks active both in Ethiopia and Sudan. People smugglers use the following *modi operandi:*

- Hiding migrants in tanker trucks;
- Hiding migrants in empty spaces in the cargo area of lorries;
- Hiding migrants inside containers which are in transit to Sudan;
- Guiding migrants to cross the border (mainly to Ethiopia) either on foot or by camel;
- Transporting migrants in 4x4 Toyota vehicles, mainly along the north-eastern route leading to Sudan, where smugglers can easily escape in case they are being chased by border guards.

According to the Eritrean police force data, between December 2016 and August 2017, 468 persons were smuggled to Sudan via the western and north-eastern routes; 146 individuals were smuggled to Ethiopia along the southern route; 44 smugglers were arrested in connection with these criminal activities.

© The Eritrean authorities

Figure 17. **A tanker truck used by smugglers to transport migrants across the Eritrean-Sudanese border (top) and the inside of its tank where three dead bodies were discovered by the police during vehicle interception (bottom)**

6.4. The role of bus companies

A recent study by the Danish Refugee Council[7], based on 235 interviews of ECOWAS migrants in Mali and Niger, indicates that 34% of interviewees managed to reach their transit points in Niger and Mali without any legal documentation. According to the authors of the report, this testifies to the porosity of the borders in the ECOWAS region, the prevalence of corruption or the lack of border management capacities.

The same study suggests that roughly seven out of ten migrants from the ECOWAS region use public buses to reach the main transit hubs in Mali (Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu) and Niger (Agadez). This is hardly surprising as previous AFIC annual reports described this phenomenon extensively.

According to a recent report by Clingendael[8], bus companies operating in West Africa have become very adept at transporting migrants across borders in the region, in some cases offering migrants dedicated services.

Eyewitness accounts indicate, for instance, that bus companies may let undocumented migrants get off on one side of the border, directing them to private vehicles which transport them around the border posts, before meeting them again on the other side.

In order to put a stop to this practice, the authorities in Niger informed all bus companies operating connections to Agadez that bus drivers agreeing to drop off

SONEF bus company – the main transport provider in the region

- 80% of the bus routes operated by the company run between the Malian cities of Bamako and Gao, and Niger
- Two bus stations in Bamako
- The safest bus company – no attacks were registered against SONEF
- The subject of an investigation into money laundering
- Possible facilitation of undocumented ECOWAS travellers

Challenges in data collection regarding passengers

- Lack of standard operating procedures regarding border checks and data collection within BCPs
- Lack of IT equipment at BCPs
- Limited presence of Internal Security Forces at the BCP Labbezanga (the Malian-Nigerien border)
- Limited coordination and contact between BCPs and central level authorities
- Porous borders

Source: EUCAP Sahel Mali

migrants before reaching control points would be facing prosecution for facilitating irregular migration. Bus companies will also be held liable in such cases.

This measure is likely to further decrease the attractiveness of Agadez as the key smuggling hub in Niger for migrants from the ECOWAS region. This, however, will have a further negative impact on the local economy, which heavily relies on the arrival of migrants.

7 Before the Desert: Conditions and Risks on Mixed Migration Routes through West Africa, Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi) in Mali and Niger, Danish Refugee Council, West Africa Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, July 2017

8 Irregular migration and human smuggling networks in Niger, February 2017

7. Trafficking in human beings from Nigeria

7.1. The inhumane business of human trafficking from Nigeria
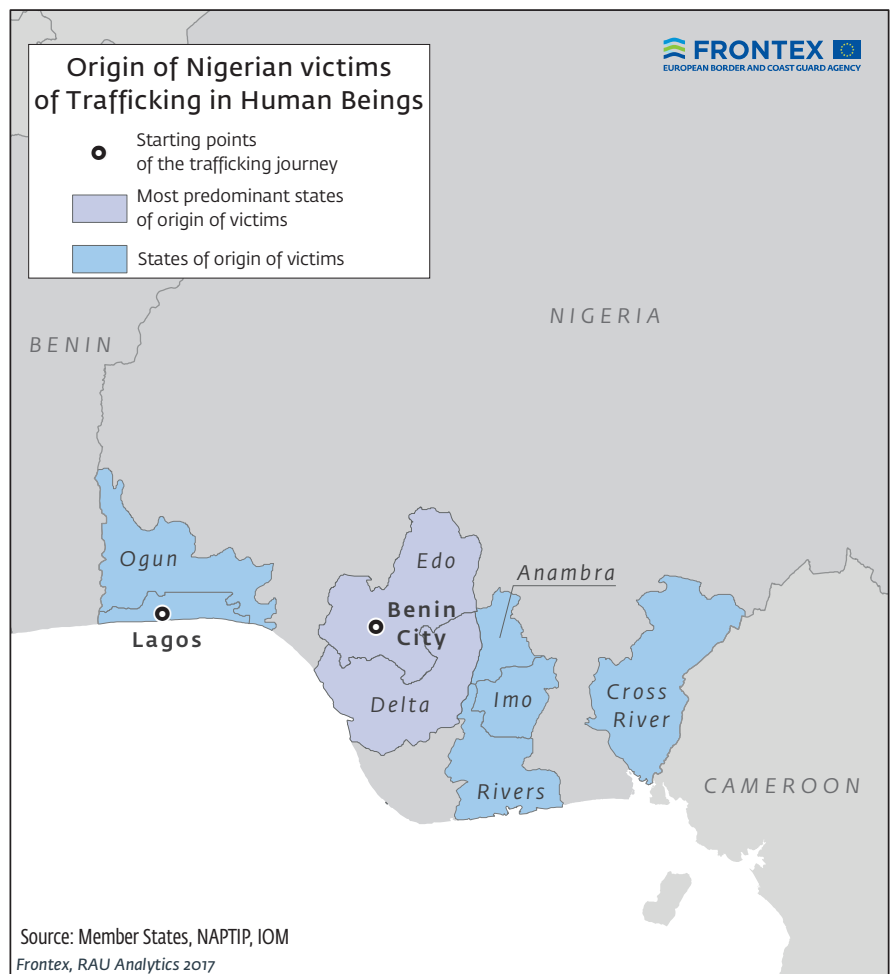
Every year, thousands of Nigerians venture out of their homes and risk a dangerous sea crossing in search of a better life in Europe, only to be sold into prostitution and used as a commodity. Nigeria currently ranks as one of the top countries of origin of THB victims in Europe.

Typical profile of victims

Victims are mostly women and young girls aged between 13 and 24, who are trafficked to Europe, Morocco, the Middle East or elsewhere in the region. They typically originate from poor communities, where high levels of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and deprivation prevail. Moreover, as they come from large families, typically older siblings are encouraged to migrate to Europe in pursuit of a better life to support their family back in Nigeria.

Victims' origin

Edo State, and particularly its capital city of Benin and surrounding rural areas, has long been an important recruitment hub for human traffickers in Nigeria. Recruitment, however, extends further afield, to states such as Kano and Kaduna in North-West; Borno in North–East and Kogi and Plateau in North Central. In the south, Lagos and Ogun (south-west), Imo, Osun and Anambra (south-east), as well as Delta, Awka Ibom, Cross Rivers and Bayelsa (south–south) have also become important states of victim recruitment.

Origin of Nigerian victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

- Starting points of the trafficking journey
- Most predominant states of origin of victims
- States of origin of victims

Source: Member States, NAPTIP, IOM
Frontex, RAU Analytics 2017

Recruitment

Recruitment usually occurs in local communities, in places such as schools, markets, workplaces and churches, and in the home environment. Traffickers seek out victims and lure them with false promises of study opportunities abroad or legal, well-paid jobs in Europe as hairdressers, babysitters, shop workers, waitresses or cleaners. Traffickers also recruit victims by directly negotiating with their families who are promised a better future for their children on the European continent. In other instances, victims initiate contact with traffickers, entranced by the glamorous accounts of life in Europe posted on social media by fellow Nigerians.

While some victims may know that they will work as prostitutes in Europe, they do not understand the actual amount of 'debt' to be repaid to traffickers and are unaware of the exploitative conditions of work and the coercion that may ensue. The great majority, however,

genuinely believes that a brighter future as a student or employee in a legitimate business awaits them in Europe.

Consolidating the exploitation – juju

Upon recruitment, victims are subjected to a juju ritual, whereby a juju priest administers an oath in which the victim's body parts such as nail clippings, blood or pubic hair are used. By taking the oath, the victim promises to pay back her debt and to never disclose her traffickers' identity nor cooperate with law-enforcement authorities. The juju ritual is therefore used to consolidate the exploitative relationship and it acts as an effective mechanism of control and restraint over victims, as the great majority believes that breaking the oath can bring about harm, madness, loss of limbs or even death. The fear of the juju curse keeps victims submissive and compliant without the need for constant supervision or use of physical violence by the traffickers.

Routes

Traffickers extensively utilise the irregular route across the Mediterranean, currently used for migrant smuggling, to send their victims to Europe. From Nigeria, victims are mainly transported overland via Niger (and sometimes Algeria) to Libya, where they are subsequently put on rubber boats heading towards Italy. The journey to Europe is fraught with danger and it can take months or even years to reach their destination, as victims are locked up in connection houses along the Nigeria–Libya route, raped and forced into prostitution to pay for the first leg of the journey; many get pregnant in the process.

Upon arrival in Italy, victims are instructed to contact their traffickers who organise the last leg of their journey towards other parts of Italy or Europe. Within the EU, women are taken to their final destination, mainly by plane or train, where they are placed under the

control of their Madam or further sold to another trafficker, who will benefit from their sexual exploitation.

When travelling by plane, victims are taken to main cities in Nigeria, such as Kano, Lagos and Abuja, where they generally stay for a period of a few weeks until their travel documents are ready. From there, they are flown to main international airports in cities such as London, Barcelona, Madrid, Frankfurt or Amsterdam, which function as gateway to Europe. Nigerian organised crime groups (OCGs) also use air transit to traffic their victims, particularly through Turkey, Morocco, Dubai and the United Kingdom. The need to procure travel documents and the higher risk of detection make air travel a more expensive option, with victims incurring debts that can go up to EUR 60 000 or more.

Nigerian networks are particularly known for their proficiency in the use of fraudulent documents and taking advantage of the international protection provisions to facilitate victims' entry into the EU. Especially prominent within document fraud is the use of fraudulent business, study and tourist visas; genuine, look-alike or stolen passports of EU Member States; genuine and fake Italian and Spanish residence permits, as well as forged admission letters, marriage certificates and scholarship papers.

In Europe

Nigerian victims are currently exploited across Europe, primarily in countries such as Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

When they reach their destination country in Europe, Nigerian women are subjected to humiliating and exploitative conditions and deprived of their liberty. They are held in debt bondage, owing their traffickers huge sums of money and are forced to prostitute themselves for small amounts of money.

The debt is further increased by additional costs incurred for accommodation, food and clothing, and may take between four and ten years to repay. When reaching the end of their debt, some victims are offered exoneration from the remaining amount (around EUR 3 000 or EUR 4 000) in exchange for the recruitment of a new victim; the network thus benefits from the replacement of an older victim by a younger one. Older victims are then left with very few options – they can either remain in Europe illegally and continue working as prostitutes, or return to Nigeria without any means. That is why they often join the network that have exploited them for years.

Anatomy of OCGs in Europe and the role of 'madams'

The process of trafficking Nigerian victims into the EU depends on the nature and organisation of the criminal network. Nigerian trafficking networks are usually cellular structures, highly reliant on extensive networks of personal contacts in the EU. The networks comprise a large number of actors, each responsible for different stages of the trafficking process (i.e. recruitment, travel documents procurement, transportation, supervision over victims in the destination country).

'Madams' or 'mamans' – former Nigerian victims-turned-traffickers for economic gain – are often key players within the criminal network. Some madams supervise the entire trafficking process or even 'own' victims themselves. They are generally established in the destination country, from where they operate. Some madams travel to Nigeria to directly recruit new victims and accompany them throughout the journey to Europe, whereas others commission traffickers in Nigeria to recruit women and young girls for whom they act as sponsors, financing their travel-related expenses, which they are expected to repay once in Europe. Within the criminal network, madams also play an important role of monitoring victims and ensuring that they pay their debts.

Smaller Nigerian trafficking groups are loose networks based on family ties, where the whole trafficking process is supervised by one individual.

Challenges

With former victims becoming madams themselves, human trafficking from Nigeria has become a self-sustaining business generating high profits while being difficult to detect. The fact that victims are unaware of future exploitation or unwilling to cooperate with authorities make early identification and prevention of human trafficking an extremely difficult task. Nevertheless, European

Trafficking patterns and routes from Nigeria

- Nigeria (Kano) – Saudi Arabia (Middle East) – trafficking for prostitution and begging
- Nigeria – Niger – Libya – Europe – trafficking for prostitution
- Nigeria – Ghana – Burkina Faso – Mali – Morocco – Europe – trafficking for prostitution
- Nigeria – Morocco – the Middle East – trafficking for prostitution
- Nigeria – Cote d'Ivoire – Burkina Faso – Mali (no longer only a transit but also a destination country)
- Nigeria – Cameroon – Gabon and Equatorial Guinea – trafficking for domestic and agricultural labour

The Central Mediterranean remains the preferred route to Europe but routes such as the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan have seen increases recently, largely due to the crisis affecting these regions and the availability of organised transportation offered to migrants by the authorities of the Western Balkan countries.

Exploitation to destination countries

Sexual exploitation remains the number one form of exploitation for external trafficking, as people trafficked within the country are mostly victims of forced labour. As regards the gender of victims of sexual exploitation, females are in the clear majority of victims, trafficked both internally and externally. Data for 2003–August 2017 show that out of the total number of rescued victims, 32% were male and 68% were female.

Number of victims rescued

A total of 11 388 victims of human trafficking were rescued and rehabilitated in various shelters of the NAPTIP across the country since its inception.

Source: NAPTIP

Source: NAPTIP

Frontex, RAU Analytics 2017
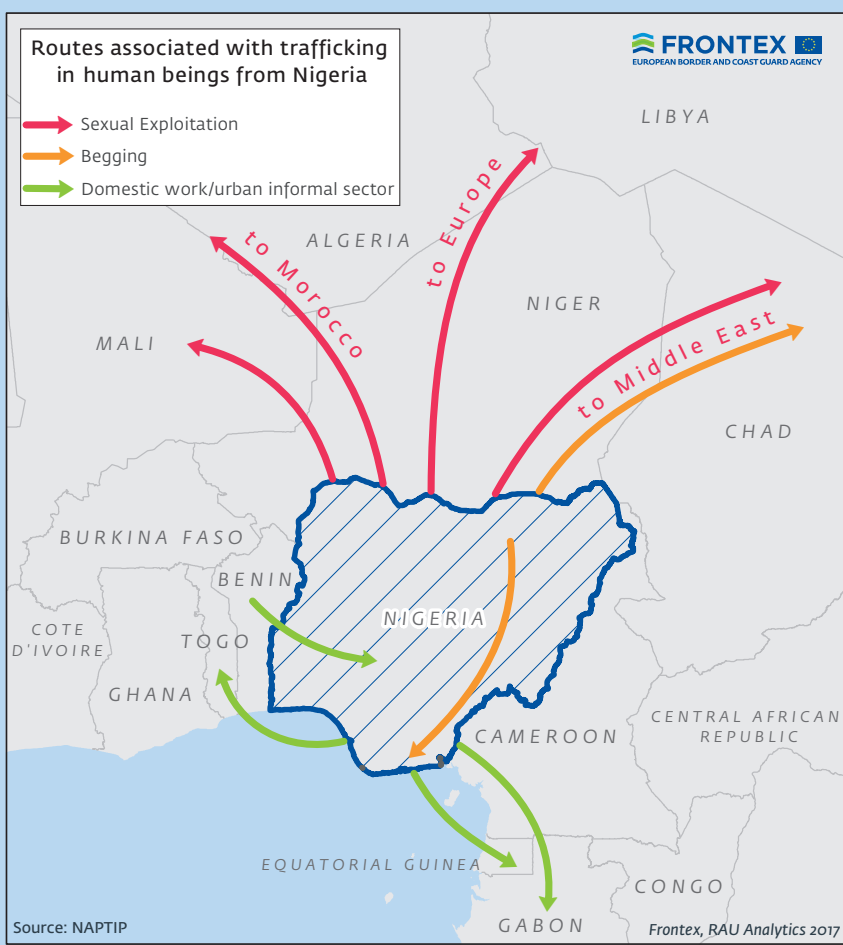
countries are stepping up their efforts to tackle the threat more effectively. The measures adopted include, among others, improved cooperation between European countries and NAPTIP, enhanced profiling of Nigerian victims and perpetrators, the launching of EU projects aimed at suppressing human trafficking for sexual exploitation from Nigeria and Europe-wide operations at airports and seaports.

7.2. Cases reported by NAPTIP

57 victims of human trafficking

On 7 October 2016, 57 victims of human trafficking (31 female and 26 male), aged between 12 and 40, were intercepted in the joint operation of the operatives of Nigeria Immigration Service and their Nigerien counterparts. Some of the victims had previously crossed the border travelling along irregular routes with the intention to reach Agadez in Niger en route to Libya and finally – Europe. None of the 57 victims were in possession of valid travel documents for their trip.

41 victims of human trafficking

41 victims of human trafficking (14 female and 27 male) were intercepted in Niger by Nigerien Security Personnel and handed over to Nigeria Immigration Service. On 11 November 2016, they were taken over by NAPTIP.

Further investigation revealed that they were aged between 18 and 45. They had previously crossed the Nigerian border travelling along illegal routes. They tried to reach Libya through Agadez hoping to ultimately cross to Europe.

Repatriation of 140 Nigerian nationals from Libya

The repatriated Nigerians had been recruited by means of deception and coercion and trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Some of the

Figure 18. **The operatives of NEMA and NAPTIP with one of the returnees from Libya**

Figure 19. **Returnees from Libya**

returnees came with children they had as a result of sexual activities they were forced to engage in during their stay in Libya.

They had arrived in Libya along dessert routes leading from Benin–Kano (Nigeria)–Agadez (Niger)–Ghuathron to Shabha–Tripoli (Libya).

The rescue of 36 Nigerian victims and the arrest of four traffickers

On 16 February 2017, a joint operation launched by Malian Security Forces in collaboration with the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) resulted in capturing 40 Nigerian girls in a few Malian villages. Further investigation revealed that 36 of those girls were victims trafficked from Nigeria to Mali for the purpose of prostitution. The remaining four girls were the perpetrators who lured other females into prostitution by promising them lucrative jobs in other parts of the world.

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) visited Mali to plan the girls' repatriation. The girls, who were camped in the neighbourhood of Falaje in Bamako, the capital of Mali, were being taken care of by the NCA with some support from the Malian authorities.

The intelligence report indicates that there are over 5 000 teenage Nigerian

prostitutes in different towns and villages in Mali.

Repatriation of 161 Nigerian nationals from Libya

A group of 161 returnees comprising 143 adults (49 male and 94 female), nine children and nine infants arrived at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Ikeja, Lagos and were received by the Joint Operations Team, which included NAPTIP Officers.

Persons trafficked to Libya for the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation are recruited by means of deception and coercion. The returnees were potential victims of trafficking and irregular migrants. Many were traumatised as a result of abuse they experienced in Libya.

Humanitarian return of 171 Nigerians from Libya

A group of 171 returnees consisting of 158 adults (49 male and 109 female), seven children (five male and two female) and six infants (one male and five female) arrived at Murtala Mohammed International Airport and were met by the Joint Operations Team. They were all profiled by the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria's National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Afterwards, three returnees were moved to a NAPTIP shelter for further profiling.

8. Legal travel channels and document fraud

8.1. Decreasing availability of legal travel channels between Africa and the EU for most nationals of the AFIC region

West Africa is the number one region of the world as regards visa rejection rates. Moreover, while in 2015 the overall rejection rate for A and C type visa[9] stood at 32%, it rose to 35% in 2016. By contrast, the average overall EU rejection rate was at the level of 8% in 2016.

The reasons for this development are not entirely clear. At the time, the main conclusion was that for most persons who fit the profile of an irregular migrant it was practically impossible to travel to the EU legally.

Not much has changed since. In fact, in 2016 legal travel channels became even less attainable for the majority of nationals of AFIC partner countries (see Fig. 23).

For example, the already very high visa rejection rate of 40% for Nigerian nationals rose to 47% in 2016. Hence, Nigeria became the country that registered the highest overall visa rejection rate, closely followed by Afghanistan, Eritrea, Guinea and Sudan. Incidentally, the rejection rates for all of those countries were well above 40%.

The situation is similar with regard to the number of A and C type visa issued. In most cases, the number of visas issued to nationals of AFIC partner countries in 2016 either stayed the same or even decreased compared with 2015 (e.g. 12% less for Nigerians).

In *per capita* terms, the picture is even more telling as the visa issuing rates for Nigerians are practically negligible, with only 26 visas issued for every 100 000 inhabitants. By contrast, the rate for Algerians is 1 265 visas for every 100 000 inhabitants.

It seems that each EU Member State assesses visa applications from Nigeria according to its own criteria. Namely, while Portugal refused two-thirds of all visa applications submitted in 2016, Switzerland rejected 'only' 23%.

However, in France, Italy and Germany, which issue 72% of all A and C type visas to Nigerians, the rejection rates reached between 43% and 53%.

Figure 20. **Visa rejection rates for nationals of countries in the AFIC region**

Source: Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States
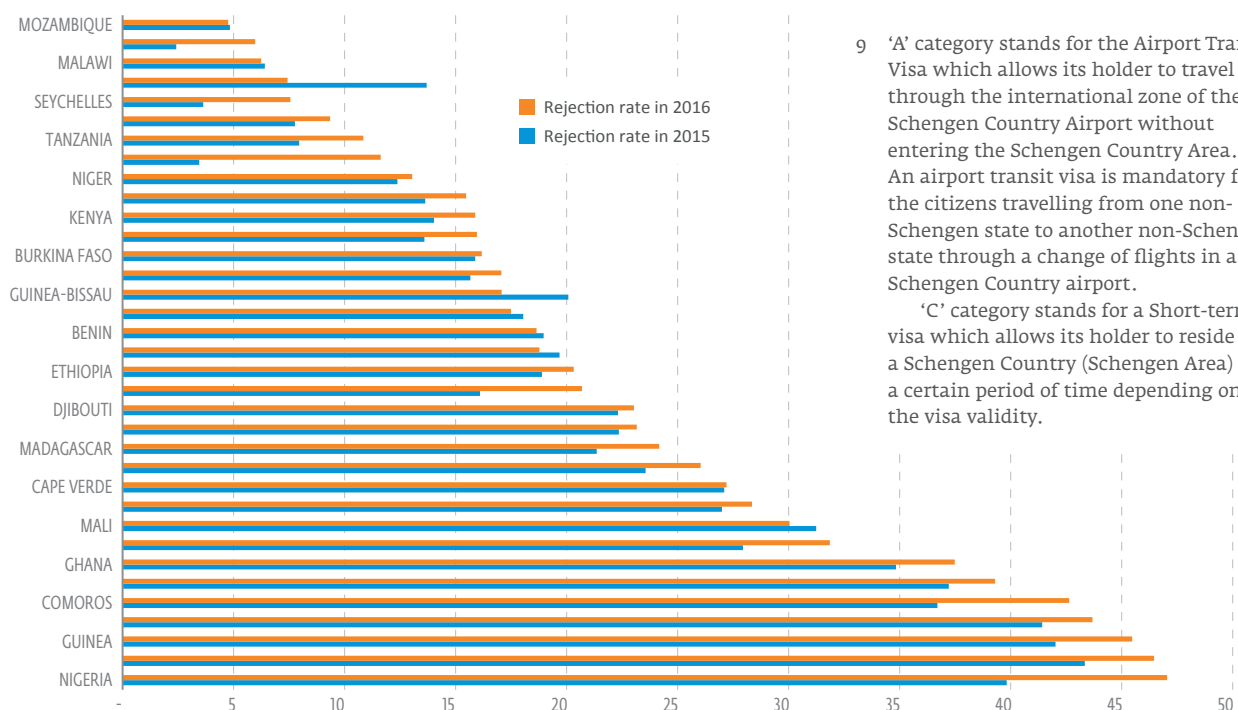
9 'A' category stands for the Airport Transit Visa which allows its holder to travel through the international zone of the Schengen Country Airport without entering the Schengen Country Area. An airport transit visa is mandatory for the citizens travelling from one non-Schengen state to another non-Schengen state through a change of flights in a Schengen Country airport.

'C' category stands for a Short-term visa which allows its holder to reside in a Schengen Country (Schengen Area) for a certain period of time depending on the visa validity.

Conclusions

This short analysis of visa rejection rates suggests that the visa policy of EU Member States towards some key migrant-producing countries in the AFIC region has in fact become stricter.

Paradoxically, tightening the visa policy could increase the pool of Africans considering illegal immigration to the EU as evidenced in relevant surveys[10] suggests that 'contrary to the initial objectives, restrictive immigration policies for entering host countries deter potential legal migrants more than their illegal counterparts'.

8.2. Legal travel channels within Africa expanding beyond Morocco and Tunisia

According to the statement issued by the Prime Minister Youssef Chahed on 22 August at the 'Tunisian African Empowerment Forum' held in Tunis, Tunisia plans to become a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) by the end of the year. The Tunisian announcement comes only a few months after the June 2017 ECOWAS conference in Monrovia when Morocco's request to join the community was agreed in principle. During the same conference, Tunisia was granted an observer status.

This plan is part of a re-positioning effort that aims to boost economic and cultural relations of the country with other partners on the continent, beyond North African states. The Tunisian authorities also made the decision to open two new embassies in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Nairobi (Kenya).

Additionally, economic ties should be established through the upcoming opening of five trade offices in various Eastern, Western and Central African countries. Furthermore, through these diplomatic efforts, the Tunisian

10 'Barcelona or Die': Understanding Illegal Migration from Senegal, Linguère Mously Mbaye

Figure 21. **Visa rejection rate for Nigerians in 2016**
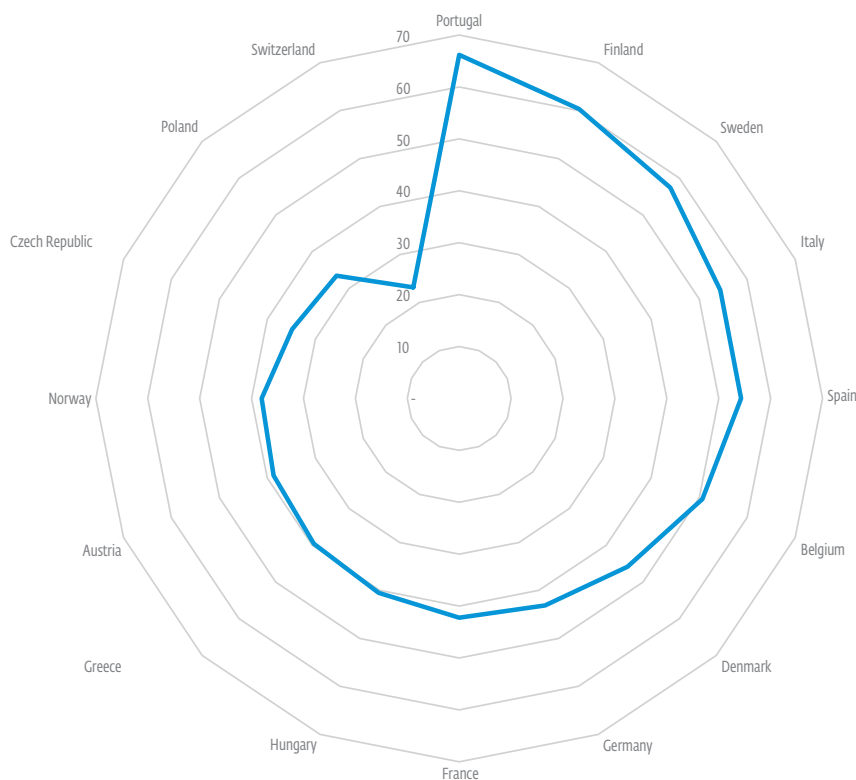
Source: Complete statistics on short-stay visas issued by the Schengen States

authorities strive to attract more African students to the country.

Tunisair is expanding its offer across Africa

Importantly, the Prime Minister Chahed also announced that Tunisair will start operating a number of new flights over the next four years. They will include connections with Sudan, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo (COD), as well as Nigeria, Guinea and Benin, which are Member States of ECOWAS.

Tunisair has been expanding its African network at a fast pace recently. Flights to Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Burkina Faso are already part of Tunisair's offer. Some of these nationalities as well as those associated with the new destinations announced by the company are well represented among migrants detected in the Central Mediterranean. In addition, countries such as Mali and Niger have been identified for

years as transit countries for migrants who try to reach the Central Mediterranean route via Libya.

Outlook

The nationals of ECOWAS Member States enjoy freedom of movement within the ECOWAS zone for a 90-day period without the need for a visa.

In view of the ongoing changes in Libya and considering this potential new legal travel channel, there is a risk that Tunisian and/or Moroccan smugglers will adapt their offer in the near future and expand their services to accommodate larger numbers of irregular migrants who want to eventually move to the EU.

Nevertheless, both Morocco and Tunisia will reserve the right to refuse entry to travellers from the ECOWAS region that do not fulfil other conditions of entry given the state of play regarding the ECOWAS free-movement protocols.

9. Increasing violence in Mali and Burkina Faso

9.1. Mali – gradual return of instability

Mali saw a dramatic rise in the number of reported fatalities after May 2017. In June 2017 alone, a total of 185 casualties were reported compared with an average of only 74 per month recorded between January and May 2017. This increase in reported fatalities is the result of at least two separate factors.

The first is a trend of rising ethnic violence between various groups primarily situated in the Mopti area (located in the inner Niger Delta region of Mali), which has led to a cycle of reprisals starting in February 2017.

The second is the Group for Support of Islam and Muslims' (JNIM) continued attacks on both hard and soft targets, including assaults on a resort frequented by foreigners in Bamako and a Malian army post in Bintagoungou.

The low-level conflict between the government and rebel groups, in particular between the Imghad Tuareg and Allies Self-Defence Group (GATIA), a militia generally seen as aligned with the government, and the Coordination of Movements of the Azawad (CMA), the main rebel coalition, in the north also contributed to the significant rise in the number of fatalities.

In July 2017, clashes around Kidal between the groups that had signed the 2015 peace agreement resulted in additional heavy losses for pro-government forces given that at least 50 persons belonging the GATIA group were reported dead.

Assessment

The long-awaited installation of interim authorities in northern Mali, which took place in the first quarter of 2017, represented a big step forward in implementing the 2015 peace agreement signed between the Malian government, Tuareg separatists, and pro-government militias.

However, the escalation in jihadist attacks[11] in the wider region (e.g. Burkina Faso) and the deepening inter-ethnic and sectarian conflicts in central Mali (mainly between the ethnic groups of Peul and Bambara youths, who are the ethnic majority) all led to a gradual collapse of the status quo.

These developments are likely discouraging migratory movements across the north of Mali (through Gao) towards Algeria, making Niger a safer alternative, despite the increasing law-enforcement measures against migrant smuggling put in place there.

Figure 22. **A dramatic rise in the number of fatalities reported in Mali in 1 January–29 July 2017 compared with the entire 2016**
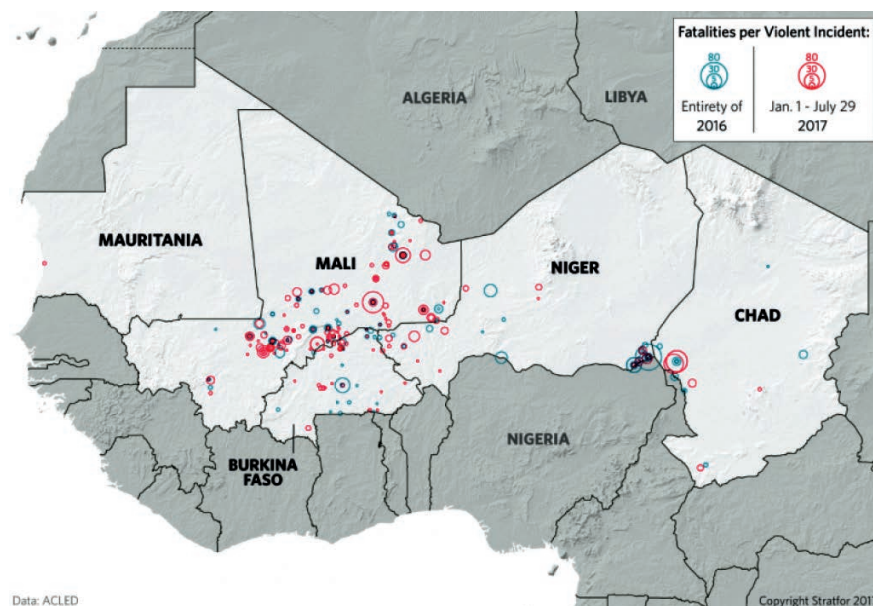
Data: ACLED

Source: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, Stratfor

9.2. Burkina Faso

Security in the north has deteriorated in 2017

The security situation in northern Burkina Faso has been deteriorating rapidly since January 2017. Targeted killings, assassination attempts, attacks on schools

11 The fusion of Al-Qaeda-linked Malian jihadist groups in March 2017 increased their capacity in northern and central Mali, and along the borders with Burkina Faso and Niger.

and complex attacks against military and police forces have been reported.

Ansarul Islam, which was created in December 2016 and which has links to the Ansar Dine movement in Mali, is suspected to be behind those attacks.

Armed assault on a cafe carried out in the capital

On 13 August 2017, two gunmen attacked a cafe in the capital, Ouagadougou, leaving 18 people dead and 20 others wounded. The assailants, who arrived on a motorcycle, attacked the Aziz Istanbul Patisserie Cafe and then barricaded themselves in the building. Security forces fought and eventually killed the two assailants.

Al Qaeda militants conducted a similar armed assault in January 2016 close to the Cappuccino Cafe and Splendid Hotel, killing 30 people and wounding at least 56 others. Hotels and cafes frequented by foreigners are popular targets for militant organisations. The Aziz Istanbul Patisserie Cafe was reportedly full of tourists and foreigners at the time of the attack, offering a tempting target.

Even though no organisation has claimed responsibility for the attack, al Qaeda and Islamic State-aligned groups operate in the region. Al-Mourabitoun, the al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb unit headed by Mokhtar Belmokhtar that was responsible for the 2016 attack, has since renamed themselves Jamaat Nusrat al-Islamwal Muslimin, which translates to 'The Group for Support of Islam and Muslims.' The group is known to operate across the Sahel region from Libya to Mauritania carrying out kidnappings and armed assaults. Belmokhtar's group has conducted operations in Algeria, Niger, Mauritania and Mali.

Mali: President halts referendum on constitutional changes

Speaking on state television on 19 August 2017, the Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita said that he had shelved plans for a referendum on constitutional reforms that ignited regular street protests.

The constitutional changes would have given extra powers to the president, created new regions, established a new Senate chamber and given ethnic Tuaregs in the north a degree of autonomy by officially labelling their desert provinces with the Tuareg name 'Azawad.'

Source: Stratfor Situation Report, Mali: President Halts Referendum On Constitutional Changes, 19 Aug 2017

10. Operational reports of AFIC partners

10.1. Law-enforcement measures against facilitators and would-be migrants continue in Niger

In the first half of 2017, more than 7 800 migrants of different nationalities were refused entry at the borders of Niger. This represents a very high refusal rate of 20 persons per every 1 000 travellers compared with the overall number of recorded entries[12] into Niger (366 000). By contrast, the refusal rates in the EU are often 20 times lower.

This high number is mainly associated with stricter entry requirements for ECOWAS nationals who can no longer enter Niger without a valid travel document.

Moreover, 1 726 irregular migrants of different nationalities were intercepted inland and were returned to the borders by the authorities.
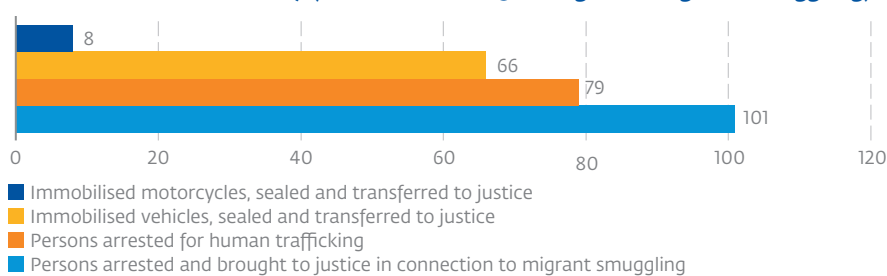
Importantly, the authorities were also able to secure convictions for more than 85% of the arrested persons, which reflects the high quality of investigations.

Altogether, over a dozen international migrant-smuggling networks were dismantled during this period.

The data above reflect some of Niger's successes in fighting migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. They are the outcome of implementing the law against the smuggling of migrants, which entered into force in 2015, and creating the Division of Special Investigations inside the Directorate of the

12 Please note that these are only those passengers that have travelled through official border control posts (BCP). Niger's borders, however, are extremely porous and many more individuals are likely entering and exiting the country through unofficial BCPs.

Figure 23. **Statistical data regarding arrests and confiscated vehicles during the first six months of 2017 (based on the 2015 law against migrant smuggling)**

- Immobilised motorcycles, sealed and transferred to justice
- Immobilised vehicles, sealed and transferred to justice
- Persons arrested for human trafficking
- Persons arrested and brought to justice in connection to migrant smuggling

Source: DST Niger, Frontex Liaison Officer in Niger

Territory Surveillance (DST), with regional branches in Niamey, Zinder and Agadez.

In the first half of 2017, the DST also reported that a total of 1 242 migrants were abandoned by smugglers. There were also 31 confirmed migrant deaths in the desert during this period. These figures testify to the risks faced not only by migrants but also the authorities as crossing the desert can be very dangerous or even deadly (in August 2017 at least three police officers died in a routine mission after being caught in a sandstorm).

10.2. Migration issues and cross-border crime in Kenya

The challenges of tackling the flow of migrants faced by Kenya are numerous: porosity of the borders, uncontrolled access, underdeveloped border infrastructure in some areas, huge refugee camps near the borders, etc.

The phenomenon of international migration affects the countries of origin, transit and destination and so well-protected borders are critical to both

national and global security. Hence, migration should be properly regulated and controlled by the state authorities. In the case of Kenya, border-security activities are diverse and include efforts to prevent crime, maintain safety in border areas, protect natural resources and facilitate legitimate movement of goods. They are also meant to help fight terrorism, illegal migration and drug trafficking.

Terrorism remains the most important security threat in Kenya, both at a regional and national level. It is well known that Kenya's refugee camps have been used as safe havens to harbour operatives and plan attacks. Kenya also faces other serious security threats associated with human trafficking, drug trafficking, the smuggling of goods, ethnic and inter-community conflicts, regional instability, poverty, cybercrime, organised crime, presence of large groups of refugees, common use of stolen/fraudulently obtained passports/forged visas, and proliferation of weapons.

Of the total of 2 438 incidences, repatriations account for the largest share, with 42.5% reported at Moyale Border Point, followed by Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), representing 10%

of the total. There were 486 persons re-fused entry and 187 arrests made. Most of these incidents were reported at JKIA.

Table 1 shows the top 20 nationali-ties (out of 215) of persons who crossed the Kenyan borders in the fourth quar-ter of 2016 (between October and Decem-ber 2016). These persons' biometric data were registered in the Border Manage-ment System (PISCES).

In an effort to address the threats to the Kenyan borders, appropriate meas-ures will be taken in the near future. In this regard, a legislative review of Coun-ter Terrorism and Border Management will be performed and more funding for border operations and development will be allocated. The issuance of passports and visas will be enhanced with secu-rity features in order to ensure efficient border control in the fight against or-ganised crime.

The use of technology and intelligence in migration management and more ef-ficient law enforcement is expected to have a significant impact on border se-curity. Moreover, common terrorist pro-files and alert lists have been established as a means of fighting terrorism.

10.3. Efforts of the Moroccan authorities to combat irregular migration and drug trafficking

According to information provided by the Moroccan authorities during the AFIC workshop in Niamey on 1–2 March 2017, the national strategy to fight irregu-lar migration rests on three main pillars:
1. regularisation process for migrants;
2. legislative reforms;
3. fight against criminal networks

In 2016, the Moroccan authorities respon-sible for combating irregular migration arrested 250 people smugglers, detected 13 247 migrants from third countries and seized 3 134 fraudulent travel documents.

Moreover, the Moroccan government subsequently announced the second

Table 1. **Top 20 nationalities at Kenya's BCPs**

Country	Travel Event				Total	
	Arriving		Departing			
Kenya	109 067	17.30%	109 968	17.40%	219 035	34.70%
United Kingdom	24 152	3.80%	22 710	3.60%	46 862	7.40%
United States	22 272	3.50%	23 145	3.70%	45 417	7.20%
Uganda	19 912	3.20%	17 307	2.70%	37 219	5.90%
India	13 359	2.10%	19 751	3.10%	33 110	5.20%
Tanzania	13 832	2.20%	12 042	1.90%	25 874	4.10%
South Africa	7 601	1.20%	8 637	1.40%	16 238	2.60%
China	6 292	1.00%	5 919	0.90%	12 211	1.90%
Germany	5 007	0.80%	4 915	0.80%	9 922	1.60%
Netherlands	4 581	0.70%	5 004	0.80%	9 585	1.50%
France	4 622	0.70%	4 715	0.70%	9 337	1.50%
United Nations Organization	3 694	0.60%	4 871	0.80%	8 565	1.40%
Canada	4 187	0.70%	4 238	0.70%	8 425	1.30%
Nigeria	3 999	0.60%	4 238	0.70%	8 237	1.30%
Ethiopia	2 709	0.40%	4 435	0.70%	7 144	1.10%
Australia	3 243	0.50%	3 508	0.60%	6 751	1.10%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3 275	0.50%	3 296	0.50%	6 571	1.00%
Rwanda	3 422	0.50%	2 998	0.50%	6 420	1.00%
South Sudan	2 964	0.50%	2 961	0.50%	5 925	0.90%
Burundi	2 601	0.40%	2 934	0.50%	5 535	0.90%

Source: Kenyan AFIC member

Figure 24. **Main BCPs in Kenya**
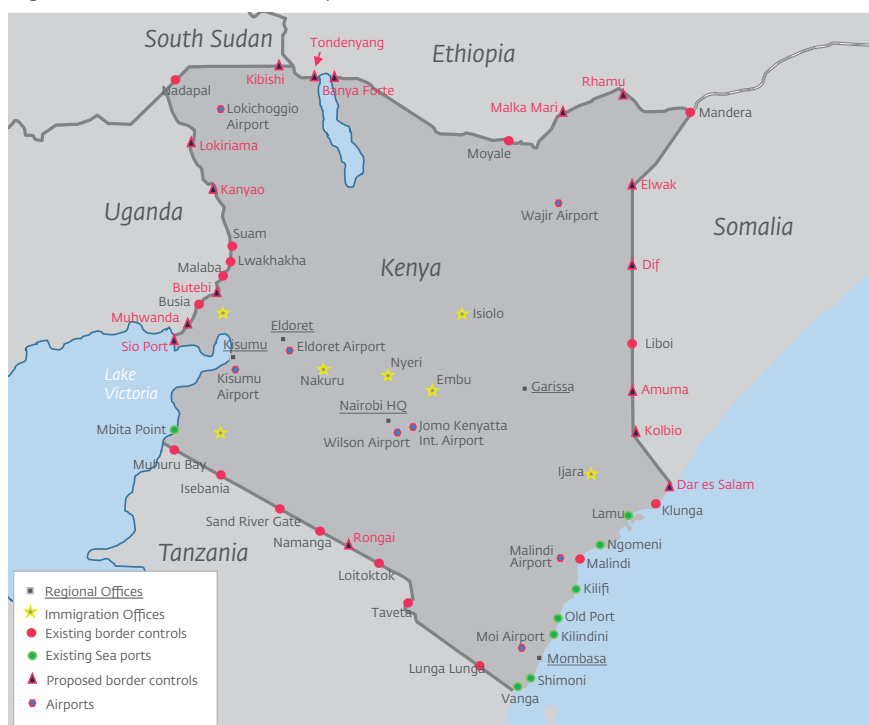
regularisation process and as of 8 March 2017, a total of 18 281 applications were received.

National strategy to fight drug trafficking in Morocco

According to information provided by Morocco during the AFIC workshop in Niamey on 1–2 March 2017, the national strategy to fight drug trafficking involves several parties in the field (General Directorate for National Security, Royal Moroccan Gendarmerie) and consists of different long-term measures. As a result of the efforts taken by the Moroccan authorities since 2003, the area where illicit cannabis is cultivated has decreased by 65% and cannabis production has fallen by 74%. Such drop in cannabis production in terms of quantity means that while in 2003, 3 070 tonnes of cannabis were produced, it was reported that 805 tonnes were produced in 2016. The Moroccan authorities arrested 101 320 persons in 86 206 cannabis-related cases in 2016.

In line with information collected during police investigations and interviews with the arrested persons, the main countries of destination for cannabis are Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal and Germany. Cannabis is transported on the European continent mainly through the sea route, via Spain (Cadiz, Algeciras, Malaga, Almeria, Murcia and Canary Islands) and Portugal.

New *modus operandi*

It is important to highlight a new *modus operandi* – using small planes to traffic cannabis from Morocco to Spain. Most smuggling attempts of this kind were foiled as a result of good cooperation between the authorities of the two countries.

As regards hard drugs, cocaine from Latin American enters Morocco via Casablanca Airport with drug smugglers using commercial flights. In 2016, the Moroccan authorities seized 128 kg at the borders, 1 632 kg in various operations; they also arrested 48 drug smugglers, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Morocco and Guinea (Conakry).

A constant increase in the amount of seized ecstasy was also observed, especially in 2016. The number of seized ecstasy pills rose from 200 in 2010 to 12 505 in 2015 and reached a peak of 481 646 in 2016; in turn, in January 2017 their number already exceeded 230 000.

The effectiveness of operations carried out by Morocco has improved notably as a result of enhancing the detection and control measures, increasing the number of investigations and improving international cooperation. This is mostly reflected in the number of drugs seized in recent years.
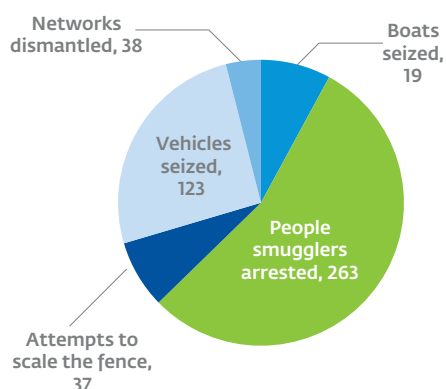
The most recent seizure of cannabis took place on 13 May 2017 in Tangier-Med Port during an operation carried out by the Moroccan authorities; they thwarted an attempt to smuggle 995 kg of hashish, which were hidden inside a lorry heading towards Europe.

10.4. Senegal creates mobile scanning units: a step towards the necessary modernisation of border surveillance

Control of the border areas has become a major national security challenge for the Sahel-Saharan countries. Porosity of their borders is one of the main vulnerabilities and one of the factors that facilitate terrorism and transnational organised crime.
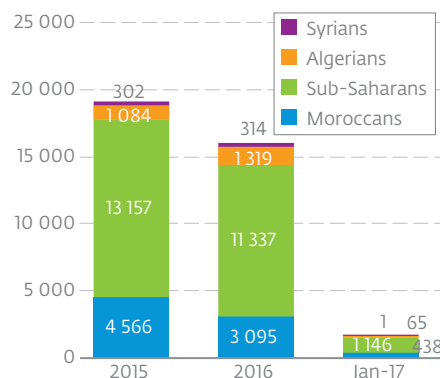
In Senegal, both the National Police and the National Gendarmerie are in charge of border surveillance. The Air and Border Police Directorate (DPAF) is primarily responsible for border police and has nine border areas and 31 border posts. At the same time, the National Gendarmerie operates in the areas between border-crossing points where several forms of trafficking and irregular migration occur.

Figure 25. **Efforts by the Moroccan authorities in combating irregular migration in 2016**

Networks dismantled, 38
Boats seized, 19
Vehicles seized, 123
People smugglers arrested, 263
Attempts to scale the fence, 37

Source: Moroccan AFIC member

Figure 26. **Numbers of migrants apprehended by the Moroccan authorities in 2016**

Syrians
Algerians
Sub-Saharans
Moroccans

2015: 302 / 1 084 / 13 157 / 4 566
2016: 314 / 1 319 / 11 337 / 3 095
Jan-17: 1 / 65 / 1 146 / 438

Source: Moroccan AFIC member

© The Moroccan authorities

Figure 27. **Interception of a fast rubber boat transporting cannabis**

Senegal, fully aware of the security issues that were uncovered by the investigations related to the terrorist attacks in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Grand Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire), has decided to use technological resources in order to make the surveillance of its borders more efficient.

In this framework, three mobile scanning units (MSU) have been set up. Deployed throughout the national territory, each MSU is based on technical and logistical solutions which give it a full mobility and a considerable autonomy.

The main element of the MSU is the HCVM e35 truck that produces X-rays which penetrate the surface to be inspected (trucks, containers, cars) and are transformed into an image. The latter is sent to a remote van for analysis via a Wi-Fi network. Each MSU is also equipped with two Multi-Mode Threat Detectors

(MMTD) which detect and identify residues of particles and vapours emitted from a wide range of illicit substances (explosives, narcotics, chemical and radiological agents).

In terms of mobility, each MSU can be supported by two 30-seat buses, three Land Cruiser pickups, a medical ambulance and a 2 000-litre tank truck for refuelling when deployed in remote areas.

As a deployed unit, the MSU has a mobile base consisting of a command post, an infirmary, a mobile kitchen and twenty tents.

The validation of the MSU concept was preceded with a three-month experimental phase, which had shown encouraging results with the seizure of eleven weapons, 150 kg of Indian hemp, cash denominated in euro and US dollar worth 65 million CFA francs (approximately EUR 99 000) and 7 000 boxes of counterfeit cigarettes.

10.5. Togolese authorities dismantled an international network producing counterfeit travel documents

On 31 March 2017, the Togolese authorities dismantled an international network involved in forgery of official travel documents (passports, identity

cards and visas). The network, which was run mainly by Ghanaians, operated from South Africa and Ghana. The forged travel documents were produced in South Africa, while the distribution, which brought substantial profits, was coordinated from Ghana.

In the context of this operation, security services arrested three individuals from Accra, who were in possession of forged passports and national identity cards of the Republic of Lesotho[13]. They planned to go to Israel via Lomé travelling with Ethiopian Airlines. A Togolese national, who was connected with the network working as a recruiter, was also arrested.

Thousands of passports from different countries, such as South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi, Japan, Malta, South Korea, etc. were manufactured and distributed. Once the fake passports were ready, they were sent to the recruiter in Togo by DHL Express. The Togolese recruiter, possibly assisted by accomplices in the immigration services, arranged to have the passports stamped so that there would be no doubt about their authenticity.

Recently, the Togolese authorities have observed an increase in the use of fraudulent documents by the criminal networks involved in irregular migration in the region. The computerisation and interconnection of the main international borders have considerably enhanced the capabilities for the detection of false documents. However, there are still major difficulties, particularly with regard to the authentication of non-electronic passports as well as visas.

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Figure 28. **Buses and pickups**

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Figure 29. **HCVM e35 truck**

13 The Kingdom of Lesotho is an enclaved, landlocked country in Southern Africa completely surrounded by South Africa

10.6. Chad's efforts in tackling cross-border crime

For many years, cross-border crime has been a neglected problem in Africa, particularly in the developing countries. This was also the case of Chad, where several forms of violence with links to different types of crime occurred in both urban and rural areas.

Thus, in 2015 the Government of Chad implemented a policy to tackle this issue in view of the urgent need to combat cross-border crime and as a response to the terrorist attacks of the Boko Haram sect.

Additionally, several meetings and high-level conferences took place in the framework of cross-border security, particularly with neighbouring countries. Crime is not a new phenomenon given the decades of wars that the country has waged since its accession to independence. Despite the drastic measures taken by the Chadian government, insecurity and crime still exist in urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the intensity differs in large urban centres, the countryside and border regions with Libya and Sudan.

The main strategies proposed by the Chadian authorities have largely focused on strengthening the border security with neighbouring countries, preventing and detecting risk factors, in particular terrorism, drug trafficking, the trafficking of stolen cars and the smuggling of goods along the border with Sudan, Niger, Mali as well as the transit of migrants from the Horn of Africa towards Libya. To better manage these factors, the Chadian government has established safe stabilisation areas along the land borders as well as in potentially risky areas.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting the **decision of the Chadian authorities to reopen a BCP at the border with Libya**. The announcement followed the decision made in early January 2016 to completely close the 1 000-km-long land border with Libya and to declare the areas near the border military operation zones due to pressing security concerns. The reopening of the BCP is likely to have a limited impact on the flow of migrants from the Horn of Africa towards North African shores as the presence of Chadian security forces in the border area with Libya remains significant.

10.7. Sudanese authorities are strengthening measures to control their border with Libya

According to several reports, the Sudanese authorities have significantly strengthened their military presence in the north-west of the country, mainly at the Libyan border. These measures, together with the deployment of the 2 000 members of the Rapid Support Forces who had already been reinforcing the regular Sudanese army forces (estimated at several thousand) at the border, are aimed at preventing any possible incursions into their territory from Libya.

At the same time, Sudanese media are reporting that identical measures have been taken by the Egyptian authorities to tighten the control of their border not only with Libya but also with Sudan, which is not surprising given the latent tensions between the two countries.

Overall, the enhanced surveillance measures implemented at the borders between Sudan and Libya as well as between Egypt and Sudan, combined with the reinforced monitoring of the border between Libya and Egypt, are likely to have an impact on the volume of irregular migration flows in Libya.

It is worth noting that even before these measures were implemented, the Sudanese authorities had already been tackling the issue of irregular migration head-on. As a result, in the period between May 2016 and May 2017 the Sudanese authorities managed to:

- apprehend and repatriate many Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis, Bangladeshis, as well as some people of other nationalities; prosecute 45 smugglers and confiscate 58 vehicles;
- apprehend more than 100 smuggling brokers from Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia and Bangladesh;
- noticeably reinforce security measures around 12 refugee camps in eastern Sudan.

The Sudanese authorities claim that the current decrease in the number of Horn of Africans arriving in Italy is directly linked to the implementation of the abovementioned measures.

FRONTEX

EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY