

## Experiences of female refugees & migrants in origin, transit and destination countries.

A comparative study of women on the move  
from Afghanistan, East and West Africa

SEPTEMBER 2018



**‘No choice but to keep  
going forward...’**

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Cover photo:

From: IDP camps & DACAAR in Chamtala

Afghanistan, June 2008

Date: 25 June 2008

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<sup>1</sup> IOD PARC is the trading name of International Organisation Development Ltd [www.iodparc.com](http://www.iodparc.com)

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://appro.org.af/>

# The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC)

The MMC was established in February 2018. It brought together existing regional initiatives – hosted or led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration issues into a new global network of mixed migration expertise.<sup>3</sup>

The MMC is a leading source of independent and high-quality data, information, research and analysis on mixed migration. Through the provision of credible evidence and expertise on mixed migration, the MMC supports agencies, policymakers and practitioners: to make well-informed decisions; to make a positive impact on global and regional migration policies; to contribute to protection and assistance responses for people on the move; and to stimulate forward thinking in the sector responding to mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights, protection and recommendations for assistance.

The MMC is part of and governed by DRC. While its institutional link to DRC ensures MMC's work is grounded in operational reality. It acts as an independent source of data, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration for policymakers, practitioners, journalists and the broader humanitarian sector. The position of the MMC does not necessarily reflect the position of DRC.

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<sup>3</sup> This includes RMMS East Africa & Yemen, RMMS West Africa, the Mixed Migration Platform (MMP) in the Middle East, the Global Mixed Migration Secretariat (GMMS) in Geneva and programmes of the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi).

# Notes on terminology and definitions

## Terminology

In its publications and presentations, MMC follows the language used in 'the United Nations 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants', at present the only internationally adopted document on both refugees and migrants. MMC therefore uses 'refugees and migrants' when referring to all those in mixed migration flows, unless referring to a particular group of people with a defined status within these flows.

## Understandings and definitions

### **MMC works with the following understanding of mixed migration.**

Mixed migration refers to cross-border movements of people including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses, as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly and wholly or partially assisted by migrant smugglers.

## Smuggling and trafficking with reference to mixed migration

### **Smuggled migrants**

Those who travel under the control of smugglers with whom they enter into agreements voluntarily. Smuggled migrants are assisted by smugglers in moving by land, sea and air to cross international borders irregularly. They may be refugees and/or other migrants (but not trafficked persons – see below).

There is ample evidence that certain, but not all, smugglers can be perpetrators of a wide range of human rights violations including murder and/or gross negligence leading to serious human rights abuses or deaths of refugees and other migrants in their charge. Smuggled migrants may become victims of trafficking during their journey.

### **Victims of trafficking**

Overlaps: victims of trafficking may be international migrants who have been smuggled migrants or may be refugees. Fleeing refugees are vulnerable to traffickers. Equally, migrants and refugees who are being smuggled are often vulnerable to different forms of exploitation that subsequently render them victims of trafficking.

Differences: not all victims of trafficking are international migrants, refugees or smuggled migrants. Some people are trafficked for exploitation and profit within their country of origin. Others become victims of trafficking while never intending to travel internationally, typically having been deceived and/or coerced by traffickers.

Formal, international definitions of human trafficking and human smuggling and discussions concerning their differences are easily found on the internet and other sources. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime offers full definitions, elaborations and legal backgrounds on both.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For human smuggling: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/smuggling-of-migrants.html>; and human trafficking: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html>.

# Authors' note

## Understanding the 4Mi data and visuals

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) operates in five core regional set-ups: Eastern Africa & Yemen, North Africa, West Africa, Middle East & Eastern Mediterranean and Asia. The 4Mi data analysed in the report includes data from four of these regions, namely Eastern Africa & Yemen, North Africa, West Africa and Asia.

For Asia region 4Mi interviews only include surveys with Afghans. The data comprises of two datasets: The 'Afghanistan Internal dataset' and the 'Afghanistan External dataset'. The 'Afghanistan Internal dataset' comprises interviews with Afghan women who are still in Afghanistan but in the process of migrating abroad. The 'Afghanistan External dataset' comprises interviews conducted with Afghan women who have migrated and were interviewed in Indonesia, India, Germany and Denmark. To ensure a rich dataset both were included and throughout the findings and in the visualisations it is clearly highlighted which dataset is being discussed.

The North Africa region includes data collected in Libya and the visualisations from this region is marked as 'Libya'. Together with the data from Eastern Africa & Yemen region and West Africa region it includes interviews with women from Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Somalia.

## Acronyms

4Mi	Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative
APPRO	Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
IOD PARC	International Organisation Development Ltd
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MMC	Mixed Migration Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# Executive Summary

This research report mainly builds on data collected between June and October 2017 through the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) including 1,062 surveys collected by 4Mi field monitors. The 4Mi data includes interviews with women from Afghanistan, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Somalia. It is the first piece of research drawn from 4Mi that compares women's migration experiences across different regions as it compares Afghan women on the move with women from East and West Africa. The 4Mi data is complemented with 29 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted in December 2017 with Afghan women and secondary research on West and East African women.

This report examines women's migration experiences in origin, transit and destination countries. The focus is on Afghan women who are in the process of migrating from Afghanistan, in transit in Serbia or who have settled in Germany as their destination, and who have travelled along the East Mediterranean route. The research also examines, through primary data from 4Mi, the experiences of Afghan women, in India and Indonesia; and East and West African women who migrated along the Central Mediterranean route through Libya. It draws on secondary literature to contextualise women's migration experiences.

The aim of this research is to act as a pilot for gaining a better understanding of women's migration experiences compared across regions, their protection needs along the way and how their journeys may or may not differ. This report contributes to filling gaps in knowledge about women's migration journeys, suggesting further areas where research is needed, and offers analysis that may inform current and future programmes to assist and protect those on the move.

The research questions that this report addresses can be summarised as follow:

**Drivers of migration:** what are the main reasons for migration among females from Asia, East Africa and West Africa? How do women's reasons for migrating differ between the regions?

**Expectations:** what are women's expectations of the journey and of the destination country?

**Information:** how do women refugees and migrants access information on options for migrating and on possible support and services along the way?

**Smuggler and trafficking networks:** How do different female refugees and migrants from Asia, East Africa and West Africa? enter irregular migration?

**Transport modalities:** What are the different modalities of travel? How are they similar and/or different when compared across geographical locations and migration routes?

**Protection:** What are the main protection issues female refugees and migrants from the regions face along migration routes? Who are the perpetrators of abuse? And what are the differences and similarities in protection concerns along the migration routes?

The report illustrates: challenges that women refugees and migrants face during their journeys; and migration drivers including insecurity and violence, particularly in Afghanistan and East Africa, and the search for better economic opportunities, which predominantly drives West African refugees and migrants. Other factors influencing women's migration decisions include social norms, domestic violence and – particularly for Afghan women – discrimination along ethnic lines. For respondents in East Africa, the predominant factor is to join family abroad.

Access to information is key in migration decisions and the report provides mixed patterns of evidence. Social media and the internet are important sources of information, but women with access to these may not always be fully aware of the modes of travel, length of journey, and inherent risks and dangers. Diasporas and networks of family and friends are important sources of information across regions, although women's ability to contact them diminishes as the journey progresses and depends on the smugglers they are with. Within Afghanistan, for example, women report being able to access social media and to contact relatives. However, women who have already left their country of origin across the regions have lower levels of access to means of communication.

While most women are aware of the role of smugglers and for the most part use them at some point in their journey, the extent to which women are aware of the dangers of using smugglers, and how the women view them – whether as a travel agents, smugglers or traffickers – also varies. The 4Mi data suggests that most smugglers are not honest and do not always deliver on what they have promised for the price they have stated across the regions. Respondents in East Africa, in particular, were more likely to view their smugglers as criminals. This finding is supported by qualitative interviews conducted with Afghan women for this research and the broader literature, with women having little recourse if smugglers do not deliver on their promises.

The report sheds light on the range of abuses women refugees and migrants face; and the limited knowledge of and access to assistance and protection they have. It is common for women to face abuses across regions. In Libya, in particular on the desert stage of the journey, levels of human rights abuses are acute. The risk of abuse is closely linked to mode of travel, with women refugees and migrants who travelled by plane reporting lower levels of abuse and exploitation. This is illustrated by the relatively low frequency and types of abuses that Afghan respondents interviewed in India and Indonesia reported.

The protection concerns the report raises highlight the need for concerted efforts to ensure women are aware of their options for accessing assistance; and to work towards being able to provide this assistance and to pair these efforts with advocacy and programming changes.



From: *Photos from Afghanistan 2006*  
Photo by: Charlotte Østervang

# Introduction

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) commissioned consultancy company IOD PARC to undertake this research. The research mainly builds on data collected between June and October 2017 through the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in East Africa, West Africa, North Africa and Asia. It includes 1,062 surveys collected by 4Mi monitors in the field. The data is complemented by 29 interviews conducted in December 2017 with Afghan women and secondary literature on West and East African women. It is the first piece of research drawn from 4Mi that compares women's migration experiences across regions.

The aim of this research is as a pilot to gain a better understanding of women's migration experiences compared across regions, their protection needs on the way, and how their journeys may or may not differ. In the past few years, the number of women known to be migrating has increased, as has recognition that they face gender-specific challenges.<sup>1</sup>

## Methodology

The research framework was developed during the inception phase. The framework included a strategy for analysing 4Mi data from four datasets for Afghanistan, Libya, East Africa and West Africa; the design of an inquiry matrix to frame the research questions; and preparation of data collection tools and a list of stakeholders to be engaged in the research process.

The **data collection and analysis** phase consisted of three related and overlapping processes: analysis of the 4Mi datasets; qualitative data collection with migrant women and validation exercises with key stakeholders in Afghanistan, Serbia and Germany; and an in-depth literature review to contextualise and complement findings.

The findings in the report draw on 4Mi data from the period June–October 2017.<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the 4Mi datasets identified key patterns among women respondents within each geographical dataset, and among women respondents globally to establish comparisons and common issues. The datasets were organised, processed and visualised in consultation with MMC. The table below details survey responses per dataset.

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1 Danish Refugee Council (2017) "Mixed Migration in West Africa: Data, Routes and Vulnerabilities of People on the Move, Extended Summary," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat: West Africa; Europol (2016) "Migrant Smuggling in the EU," Europol Public Information, Netherlands.

2 4Mi data is collected from people on the move by field monitors, who are local individuals present in key migration hotspots and who have networks in, and knowledge of, those locations. The monitors use a customised mobile phone app to submit real-time survey data.

Table 1: 4Mi survey responses per dataset

Dataset	Number of responses
Afghanistan (Internal – collected within Afghanistan)	233
Afghanistan (External – collected outside Afghanistan)	147
West Africa	360
East Africa	82
Libya	240
Total	1,062

As the table above indicates, two datasets with Afghans are included. The 'Afghanistan (Internal) dataset' comprises interviews with Afghan women who are still in Afghanistan but in the process of migrating abroad. The 'Afghanistan (External) dataset' comprises interviews conducted with Afghan women who have migrated and were interviewed in Indonesia, India, Germany and Denmark. To ensure a rich dataset both were included and throughout the findings and in the visualisations it is clearly highlighted which dataset is being discussed.

The 4Mi datasets from West Africa, Libya and East Africa include interviews with women from: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Somalia.

The 4Mi findings are complemented by results from qualitative interviews with Afghan migrant women in Afghanistan, Serbia and Germany. It was necessary to conduct these additional interviews due to the limited existing literature and data on this group and hereby the need to fill a knowledge gap. The qualitative data collection included interviews with migrant women and key stakeholder/expert interviews in each data collection country to validate findings from these interviews. The approach was inductive to allow the profiles and experiences of women to emerge without pre-supposing characteristics or trends based on current knowledge of migration processes.

A single selection criterion was applied for interviewing Afghan migrant women in each country: in Afghanistan, the criterion was that they had already started their migration journey within the country; in Serbia, that they had the intention of continuing their journey; and in Germany, that they had the intention of settling there. The report draws on quotes from Afghan women interviewed to illustrate the findings. An overview of the women interviewed is provided in Annex 1 (including the code for each interviewee cited in the report).

In addition to interviewing Afghan women, three key stakeholder/expert interviews were conducted (two in Germany and one in Serbia) to validate the findings emerging from the interviews.

The literature review provided an overview of the main known migration trends across the routes of interest, emerging knowledge about women's migration and protection concerns specific to women. It also examines knowledge and protection concerns common to women and men; concerns related

to smuggling and trafficking networks; and how information circulates to facilitate or hinder migration processes.

The **final reporting phase** of the research process consisted of compiling the findings into this research report, which also includes recommendations for DRC programming.

**Table 2: Qualitative interviews with Afghan women refugees and migrants per country**

Interview location	Number of interviewees
Kabul, Nimruz and Herat, Afghanistan	10
Belgrade, Serbia	6
Berlin, Germany	13

## Limitations

The research team faced several limitations in conducting this assignment, which are detailed below and include mitigation strategies.

- The consulting team at times faced difficulties accessing Afghan women and therefore had to try different ways of getting in contact with relevant interviewees.
- The data 4Mi collected offers a snapshot of surveyed refugees and migrants and their experiences at the time of data collection in specific locations. The data is not representative: all findings derive from the surveyed sample and should therefore not be used to make any inferences about the total population of any mixed migration flow.
- The number of 4Mi responses per dataset varies, hence two-part data visualisations are used to investigate the integrity of emerging trends (see figures below).
- The structure of the 4Mi questionnaire survey follows a logical sequence of single- and multiple-choice questions, where follow-up questions may be offered depending on the answer to an initial question. The 4Mi survey questions are organised in relation to a standardised global survey template, but some regional differences are apparent. Where a regional dataset is missing from a chart, it is either because the question is absent from that survey or the responses are not directly comparable.

- Findings from the 4Mi datasets differ in terms of migrant groups and between men and women. It is important to highlight that the gender, nationality, age and location of the monitors themselves may have a bearing on the results of the 4Mi surveys insofar as their own profiles could have influenced the migrant cohort interviewed (e.g. potentially having better access to members of their own community compared to other communities) or on the responses of surveyed refugees and migrants (e.g. where a male monitor interviews a woman migrant on abuses she experienced during her journey).
- Most Afghan survey responses recorded outside Afghanistan were collected in India and Indonesia from women who had mostly travelled by plane. This mode of transport is likely to reduce the frequency of exposure to abuse and to certain types of violations. In considering the findings, this bias in responses ought to be kept in mind. It is specifically highlighted where most relevant in the text, as it is not representative of the experiences of women who travel by land routes.

# Profiles of women refugees and migrants from 4Mi datasets

The table below provides an overview of the two most commonly received responses to identify women’s profiles from the 4Mi data across the datasets analysed for this research. Where responses are similar across datasets, columns are merged to indicate similarities.

Table 3: Top two most common responses by women refugees and migrants to profile questions in 4Mi

Profile Questions		Afghanistan (Internal)	Afghanistan (External)	East Africa	West Africa	Libya
Age	1st	26–30 years				
	2nd	21–25 years				
Nationality	1st	Afghan		Ethiopian	Nigerian	
	2nd			Somali	Burkinabe and Guinean (50%/50%)	Cameroonian
Religious background	1st	Shia Islam		Sunni Islam		Protestant Christianity
	2nd	Sunni Islam		Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholic Christianity	
Occupation	1st	Unemployed				Service industry
	2nd	Refused	Student		Labourer	Student
Education level	1st	No education	Secondary or high school		Primary school	
	2nd	Secondary or high school	Primary school		Secondary or high school	Vocational training
Marital status	1st	Married		Married and single (50%/50%)	Single	
	2nd	Single		Divorced/separated	Married	Married and divorced/separated (50%/50%)

## Women's profiles: in-depth qualitative interviews

The material below summarises the profiles of Afghan women who participated in in-depth qualitative interviews for this research in Afghanistan, Serbia and Germany.

- Age: the average age of women who participated in in-depth qualitative interviews in Afghanistan was 31. Interviews in Serbia and Germany included women in their 40s and 50s. The literature notes the growth of a new group of Afghan refugees and migrants who could be defined as urban families. These are mixed sex family groups, with some education and awareness of the risks of migration, who nonetheless choose to migrate due to security threats and loss of economic stability in Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>.
- Religious and ethnic background: membership of sectarian communities is linked with ethnic background in Afghanistan. Hazaras are typically Shia; and Uzbeks, Tajiks and Pashtuns are predominantly Sunni. Women from Hazara and Tajik backgrounds are most likely to migrate. Hazara women are also more likely to economically contribute to their households. They are from the poorest ethnic group in Afghanistan<sup>2</sup>. In-depth interviews in Afghanistan included four with Hazara women, four with women from Tajik backgrounds and two with Pashtun women. In Serbia, interviewees were mostly Tajik (three out of five), with one Pashtun and one Hazara. In Germany, interviewees were mostly Tajik (six women) and Shia (five women). Two women interviewed in Germany were Pashtun. Some interviewees reported inter-marriage with other ethnic groups, particularly between Tajiks and Pashtuns.
- Occupation: most of the women who participated in in-depth interviews were unemployed and dependent on their husbands or extended family. Two women out of the 13 interviewed in Germany were working. None of those interviewed in Serbia were working. Of the women we interviewed in Afghanistan, five out of 10 were employed and contributed to household finances.
- Education: out of the 10 women interviewed for this research in Afghanistan, only one was illiterate. Most interviewees had secondary and bachelor levels of education. These levels were starkly different from those of interviewees in Serbia, where all the interviewees were illiterate. In Germany, 10 out of 13 women were illiterate.
- Marital status: for in-depth qualitative interviews conducted in Afghanistan, six women were married, four were single and one was divorced. In Serbia, four women were married and one was a widow. In Germany, 12 of the 13 migrant women interviewed were married. These interviews highlight that marital status alone is not an indication of whether migrant women are travelling alone or as part of a family group. Some women were with their husbands and/or children. Others had undertaken part of the journey as a family and continued alone.

1 A. Donini, A. Monsutti and G. Scalettaris (2016), "Afghans on the move: Seeking Protection and Refuge in Europe," Global Migration Research Paper No. 17, Geneva: The Graduate Institute.

2 Danish Refugee Council (2017) "Afghan Displacement Summary Special Issue on Women July 2017," Monthly Migration Movements.



From: Kabul, Afghanistan, October 31st, 2011:  
Refugee camp of Charahi Qaber. Assignment from DRC.

# Findings

This section explores the research questions in detail by analysing cross-regional migration trends with women from Afghanistan, East Africa and West Africa, with a focus on migration drivers, including migrants' expectations about journeys; sources of information; smuggler and trafficking networks and financing patterns; women refugees' and migrants' transport modalities; and protection issues encountered and assistance accessed during women's journeys. The analysis is based on the 4Mi datasets; in-depth qualitative interviews with Afghan women; and the literature review. Where relevant, direct quotes from interviewees on their migration experiences are provided and attributed with codes (for anonymity), with a list of the women interviewed and the code ascribed to them set out in Annex 1. The data visualisations presented are developed from the 4Mi datasets.

## 1. Migration drivers

There is seldom a single driver in migration decisions. The decision to migrate is taken in a specific context and at a particular moment in time. While the decision to migrate may be taken for predominantly economic reasons, for example, it is not uncommon for people on the move to then be forced to move or to face discrimination and persecution in transit countries. The opposite is also common, with refugees stuck in transit countries<sup>1</sup> without the economic means to continue their journeys<sup>2</sup>. Specific events may sometimes seem like opportunities; for instance, the opening of a humanitarian corridor in the Western Balkans and the German border in 2015. Furthermore, the availability or absence of legal pathways for mobility influence decisions on whether to migrate irregularly or not.

The 4Mi data, qualitative interviews with women and the literature highlight that the most common migration drivers for women from Afghanistan, East Africa and West Africa combine violence, insecurity and economic considerations. However, replies to 4Mi survey questions on what would need to improve to influence a decision not to migrate highlight a wider range of drivers that include personal liberty, particularly for Afghans and East Africans, family and marriage situations, social status and education.

Migration can often be a choice of necessity based on lack of opportunity and poor conditions in origin countries<sup>3</sup>. Between 58 and 85 percent of women who took the 4Mi survey across these regions highlighted that they would not have undertaken the journey had the factors they reported as migration drivers been better at home. As 4Mi has reported, sub-Saharan African women's role as independent economic actors is often overlooked in the analysis of their migration intentions and patterns<sup>4</sup>.

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1 Heaven Crawley, Franck Düvell, Katharine Jones, Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona (2016), "Destination Europe? Understanding the dynamics and drivers of Mediterranean migration in 2015," Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG).

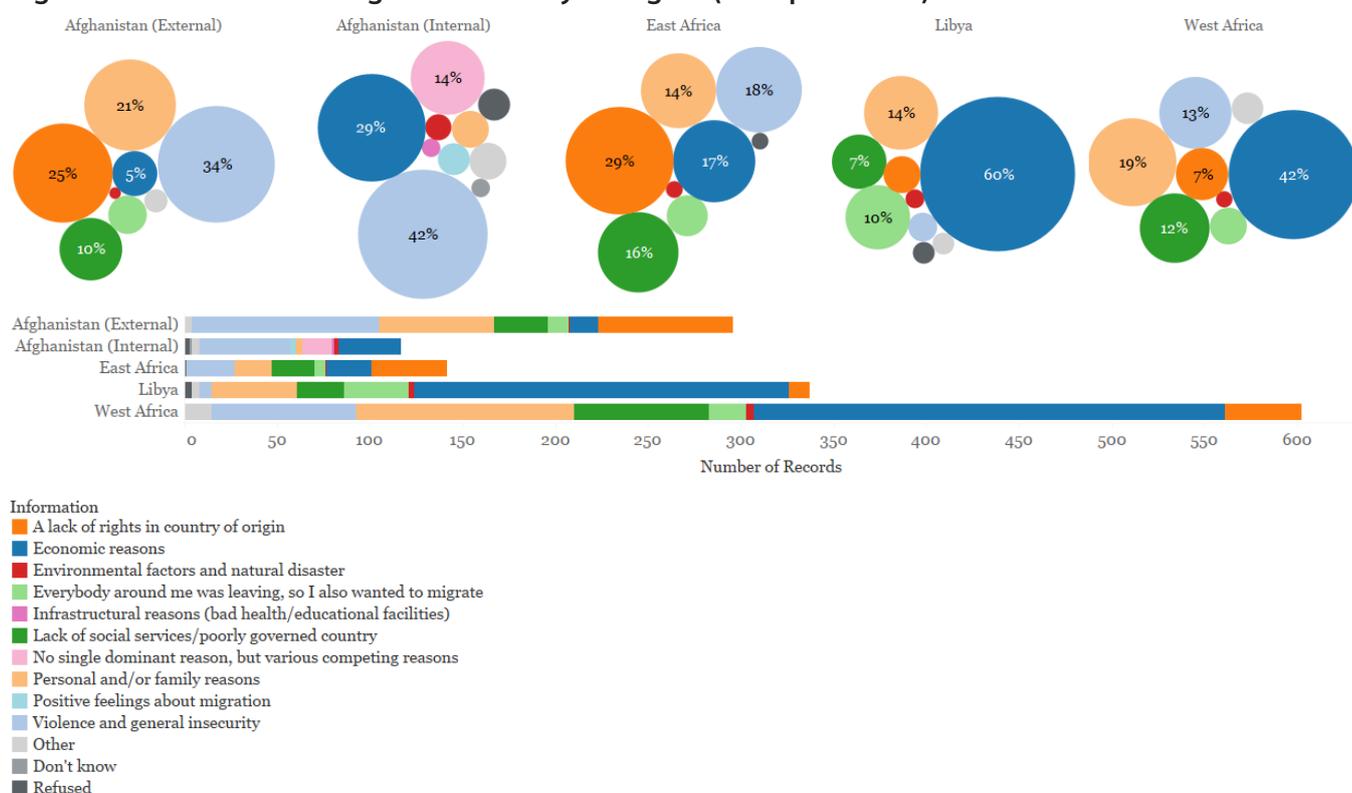
2 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Hidden Figures: Women on the Move in Libya – Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in Libya, Mali, and Niger," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat 4Mi.

3 E. Kofman (2003), "The Economic and Social Aspects of Migration," Women Migrants and Refugees in the European Union, Brussels: OECD and EU.

4 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Invisible Labour: Women's labour migration to Libya," 4Mi Maghreb.

There is little background literature on the main migration drivers for women from Afghanistan. Initial research MMC conducted has indicated that migration drivers include mainly political and economic reasons<sup>5</sup>. The International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Afghanistan Migration Profile identifies additional migration drivers including violence and insecurity; increasing opportunities to pursue an education abroad; and human trafficking<sup>6</sup>. Men predominantly feature in most of these categories as well as women who have higher levels of education and socio-economic backgrounds. Women are specifically mentioned in the IOM profile as having been trafficked, particularly for the purposes of forced marriage, forced prostitution and domestic service in neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Iran and, to a lesser extent, in India. 4Mi's question concerning drivers elicited a range of responses, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Reason for leaving home country or region (multiple choice)**



In-depth interviews conducted for this research highlight that women's migration drivers vary more than aggregated data would suggest. In-depth qualitative interviews conducted in Afghanistan highlight that a variety of reasons influence decisions, but political insecurity is the main one, which the 4Mi findings support. Five of the Afghan women interviewed in Afghanistan for this research were in employment and were either the sole breadwinner in the family or contributed to household expenditure. Despite having access to employment, they deemed the security situation untenable. Only one woman interviewed in Afghanistan identified lack of a job as the main reason for deciding to leave.

5 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Afghan Displacement Summary Special Issue on Women July 2017," Monthly Migration Movements.

6 IOM (2014), "Afghanistan Migration Profile," Kabul: International Organization for Migration Afghanistan.

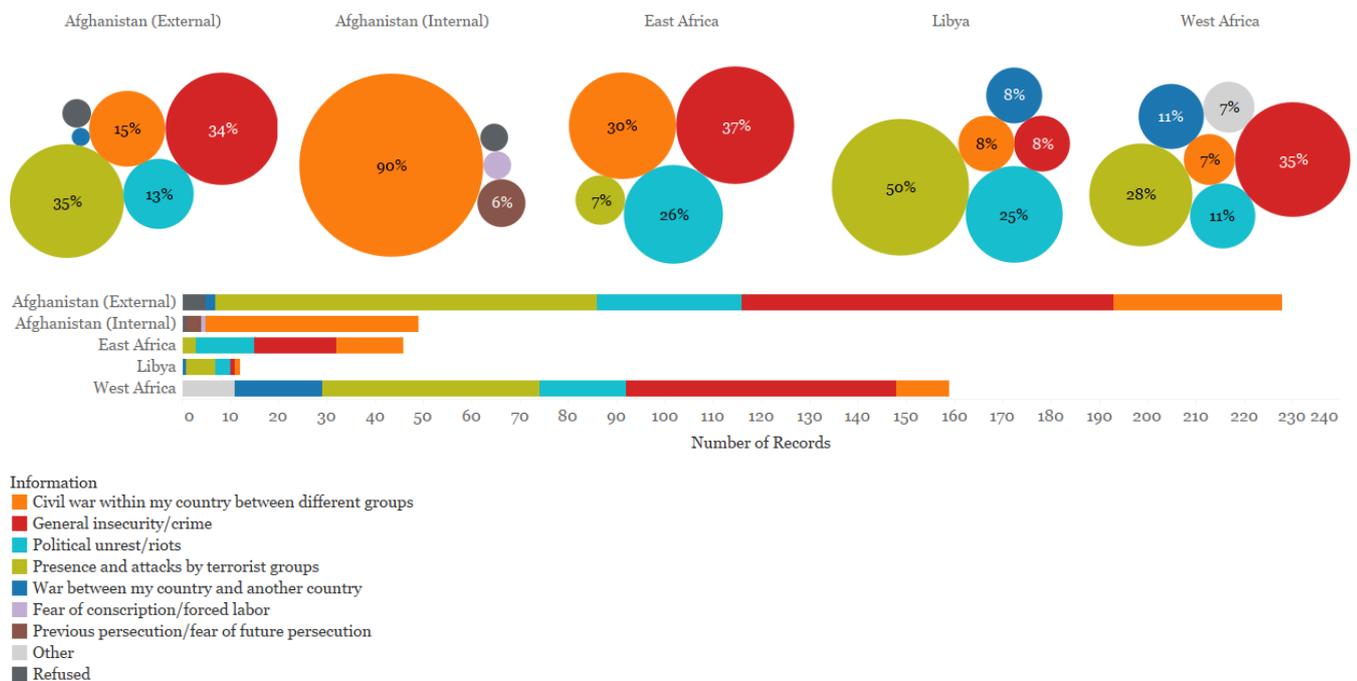
*'There are many reasons that have made me decide to migrate. There is insecurity, discrimination and harassment against women in Afghanistan. In addition to that, we do not have job security and our posts are not guaranteed. At any moment the activities of the organisation where I work could be stopped. I do not leave Afghanistan because of economic problems but insecurity, harassment, disability and misbehaviour, which adversely affect my psyche.'* (A1)<sup>7</sup>

*'I leave Afghanistan because of economic and social problems. I was working on different projects but during travels we face various violence. We want to go to another that has less problem than Afghanistan or at least so our children have a better life in the future.'* (A6)

The category 'A lack of rights in country of origin' in Figure 1 above includes fear of conscription, which is important to Eritreans in particular. In East Africa, 29 percent of respondents indicated that lack of rights in their home country was a migration driver, while the majority of Eritreans (over 60 percent) chose it as a driver of their migration. For Eritrean women, a major reason for migrating is to escape indefinite conscription into national service.<sup>8</sup>

Insecurity and violence are also noticeable in 4Mi datasets for other regions, although the nature of insecurity differs. In Libya, despite the small number of responses identifying violence and insecurity as drivers, the concern is related to attacks by terrorist groups and political unrest. In East and West Africa, insecurity and crime are reported as being more general, with high scores also for civil war in the East Africa and Afghanistan (Internal) datasets.

**Figure 2: Violence and insecurity migration drivers (multiple choice)**



<sup>7</sup> For ease of reading in some cases the flow of text in the quotes throughout the document has been slightly altered, while leaving the meaning of the quote intact and staying as close as possible to the authentic sentence.

<sup>8</sup> BBC News (2017), "Eritrea Country Profile". Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13349078>; CIA (2017), "Eritrea," The World Factbook. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html>; Amnesty International (2015), "Just Deserters: Why indefinite national service in Eritrea has created a generation of refugees," Amnesty International Ltd.

The predominant concern with political instability is also highlighted as a migration driver in secondary research on women migrating from East Africa, particularly Eritrea and Ethiopia, and West Africa. Research undertaken for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Libya, however, highlights that women refugees and migrants from Eritrea and Ethiopia are often also victims of kidnapping for ransom, including from refugee camps; or migrate under false promises of employment to then be trafficked or sold into prostitution<sup>9</sup>.

Afghan women interviewed for this research cited political instability and persecution by the Taliban as reasons for leaving Afghanistan. The Taliban is recognised as continuing to be a destabilising force in the country and the region. The 4Mi findings are consistent with the accounts of women who participated in qualitative interviews who highlighted ethnic discrimination as a driver for migration. 4Mi findings suggest that 68 percent of women surveyed outside Afghanistan also reported ethnic discrimination.

*'I leave Afghanistan because of insecurity. There are explosions and suicide attacks everywhere. Besides, the air is polluted, and my daughter is sick. When I go to the hospitals, they do not pay attention to her. Therefore, I decided to leave Afghanistan and go to a country where healthcare is advanced and there are options for treatment.'* (A3)

*'My reasons for migrating are the existence of discrimination because of ethnicity, restrictions in this province that we live in and lack of facilities.'* (A5)

However, the experiences of Afghan women who participated in in-depth interviews in Serbia and Germany illustrate that the difficulties they faced were not only in Afghanistan. Some of the women lived in Iran for many years before deciding to move to Europe. Their reasons for migrating were influenced by difficulties they faced in that country as Afghans, such as lack of access to education for their children; changes in policies affecting work and access to earnings and business holdings; and an inability to secure residence permits. Research on migration drivers from Iran confirms that Afghans face instability in the country in relation to their legal status<sup>10</sup>. Afghans who arrive in Europe often recount having spent, on average, three and a half years in Iran before undertaking their onward journey<sup>11</sup>.

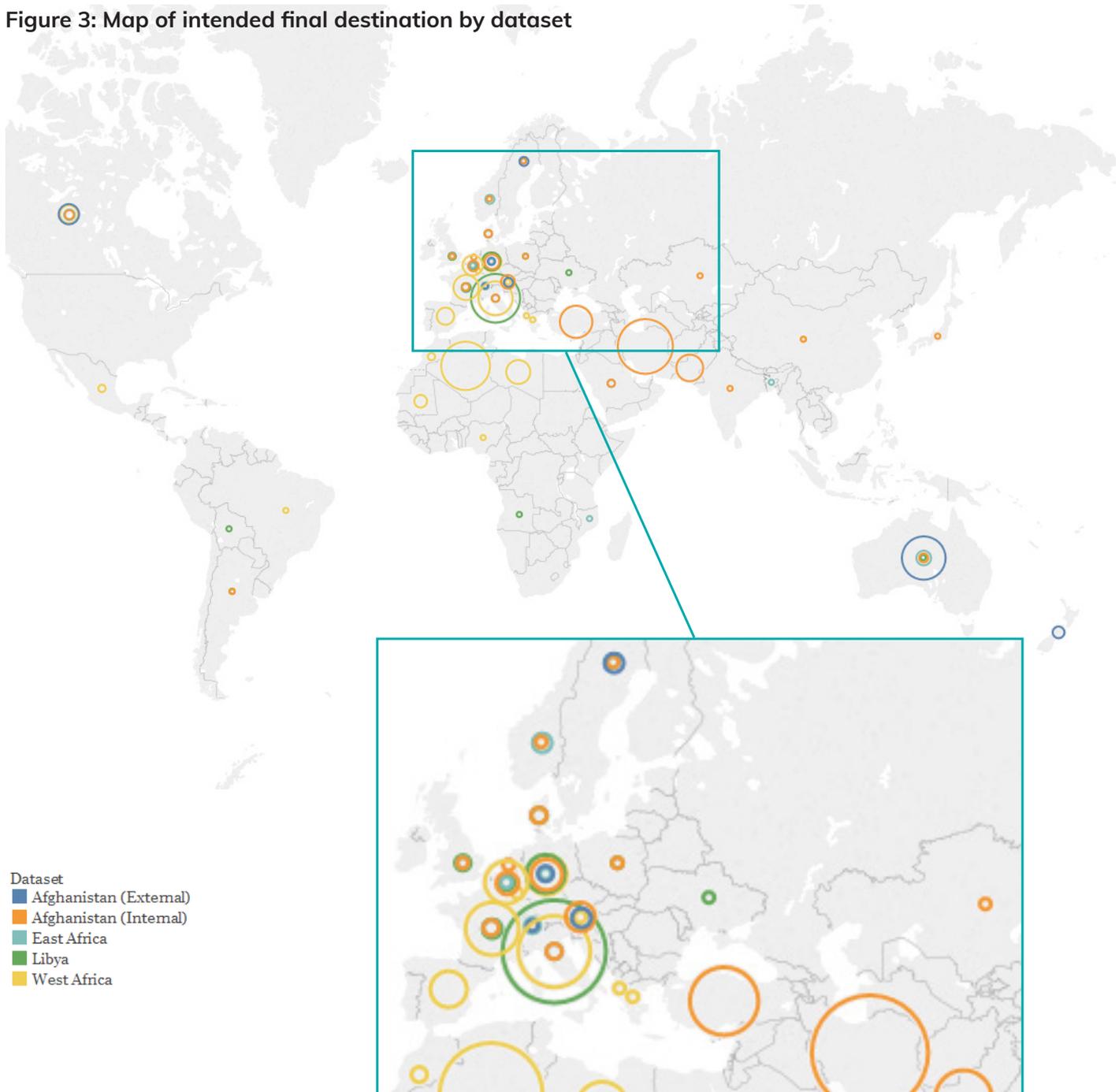
The 4Mi data certainly suggests that women's intended journeys, across datasets, show a variety of destinations regionally and further afield, as can be seen in Figure 3. Their reasons for wanting to migrate to particular countries offer insights into the multiple and complex nature of migration decisions. In all regional datasets, between 19 and 27 percent of respondents said they had migrated in search of better living standards. Freedom from oppression represents 20 percent of responses for Afghans surveyed outside the country and 11 percent of East Africans. Qualitative interviews with Afghan women in Serbia and Germany convey these broader reasons for migrating, in particular linked with seeking access to better services and educational opportunities for their children.

<sup>9</sup> Altai Consulting (2013), "Mixed Migration: Libya at the Crossroads, Mapping of Migration Routes from Africa to Europe and the Drivers of Migration in Post-revolution Libya," Altai Consulting for UNHCR.

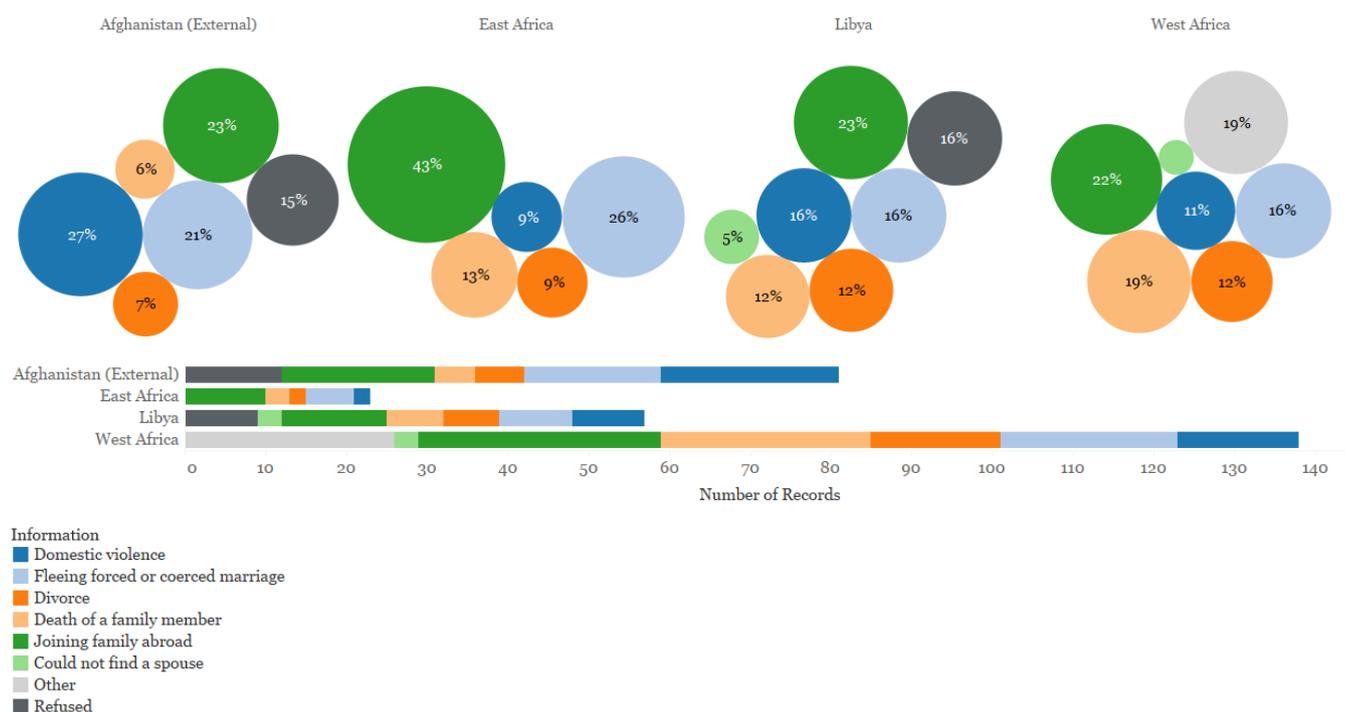
<sup>10</sup> Heaven Crawley, Franck Düvell, Katharine Jones, Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona (2016), "Destination Europe? Understanding the dynamics and drivers of Mediterranean migration in 2015," Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG

<sup>11</sup> Heaven Crawley, Franck Düvell, Katharine Jones, Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona (2016), "Destination Europe? Understanding the dynamics and drivers of Mediterranean migration in 2015," Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG).

Figure 3: Map of intended final destination by dataset



Afghan women who participated in interviews recounted a series of migrations within the region, between Afghanistan and Pakistan and Iran. They decided to migrate to Europe after facing difficulties living in Pakistan and Iran. For example, one woman travelled with her disabled husband to Pakistan to work, where colleagues repeatedly sexually harassed her. She and her husband decided to return to Afghanistan, then later to travel to Europe. Other women also recounted leaving Afghanistan for Europe to escape a forced marriage and repressive social norms.

**Figure 4: Personal and/or family migration drivers (multiple choice)**

Fleeing a forced marriage was evident in 4Mi data across all regions, but particularly in datasets for Afghanistan (External) and East Africa. Domestic violence was also significant and highest in the Afghanistan (External) dataset. Women in this dataset predominantly travelled by plane. They are therefore likely to come from a higher socio-economic background than women travelling by land routes. They can potentially defy social norms if they are not economically dependent on immediate or extended family.<sup>12</sup> In this dataset, 38 percent of women reported being single.

Economic reasons also feature prominently in the 4Mi data, particularly for West Africa and for surveys collected in Libya<sup>13</sup> corresponding well to previous research undertaken by DRC that suggests that West African women travel to Libya in the hope of finding a job.<sup>14</sup> The 4Mi data for West Africa, East Africa and Libya contains ranges between 33 and 37 percent of women respondents stating they did not earn enough, thereby suggesting they were in some sort of employment. However, it is not clear from the responses how or whether not earning enough is linked to lack of economic opportunities, unemployment or loss of livelihoods.

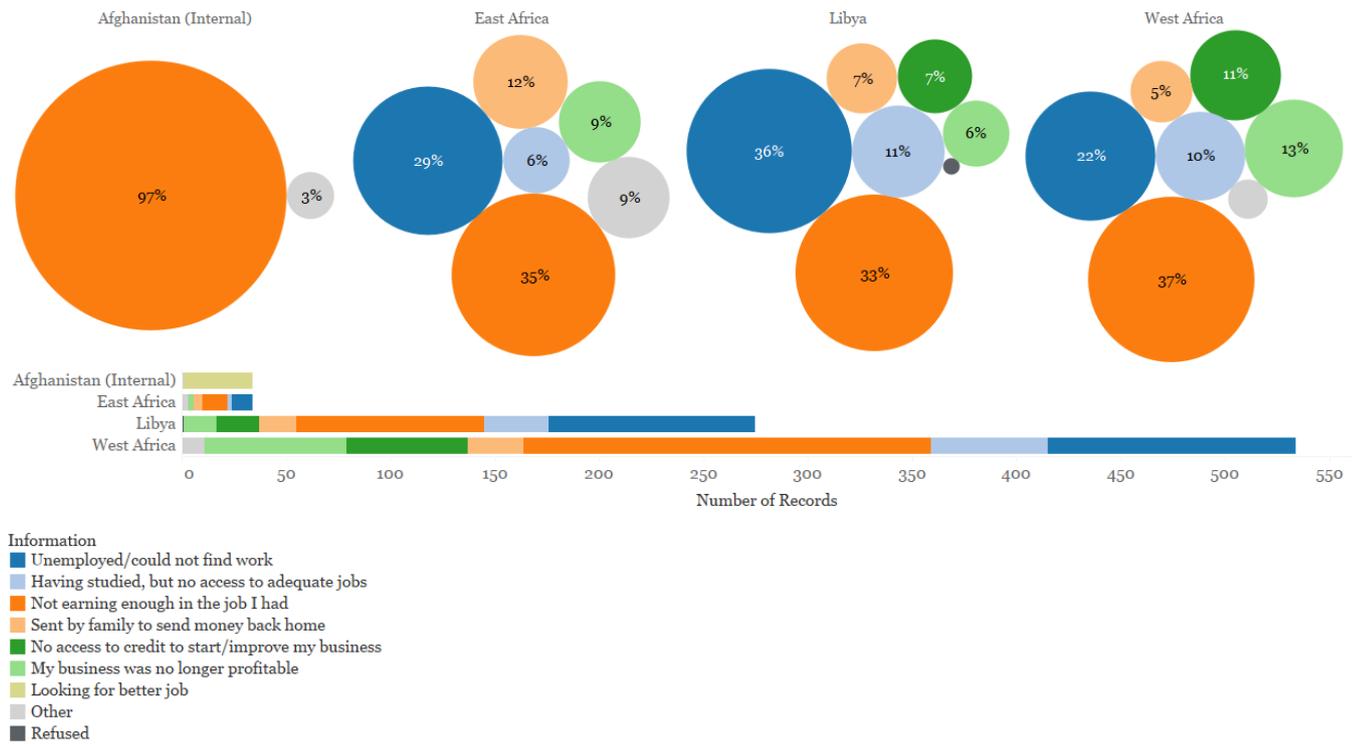
Of the four regions, the 4Mi West Africa dataset for this research has the highest percentage of women with advanced degrees (13 percent). The main area where an improvement would have influenced their decision to stay in their country of origin was in financial circumstances. This is also significant in the Libya dataset, where most migrant women respondents were West African.

12 I. Ruysen and S. Salomone (2018), "Female migration: A way out of discrimination?," *Journal of Development Economics*, January: 224–241.

13 No survey data is available for the Afghanistan dataset collected outside the country.

14 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Invisible Labour: Women's labour migration to Libya," 4Mi Maghreb.

Figure 5: Economic migration drivers (multiple choice)



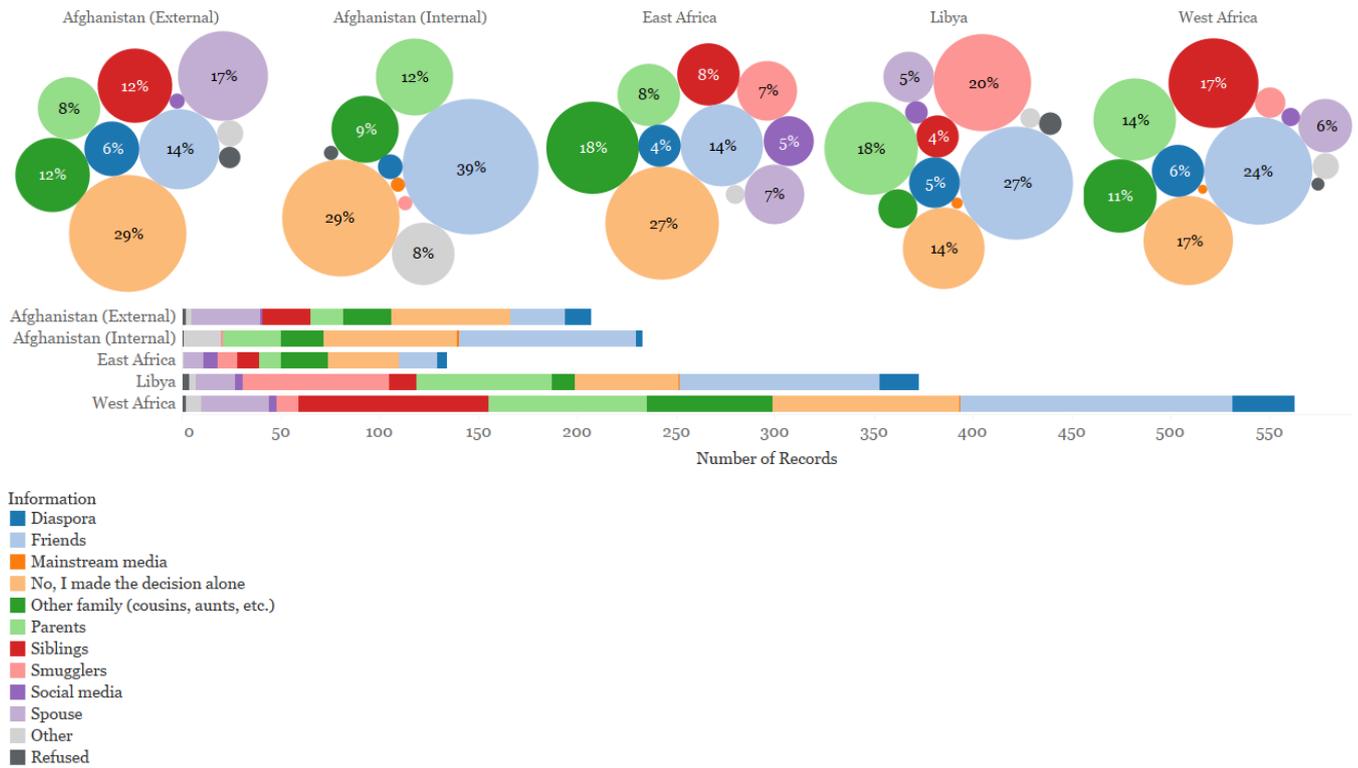
Stagnation in many African economies, combined with violence and insecurity in some countries, particularly in East Africa, accounts for the fact that lack of economic opportunities and loss of livelihoods are key migration drivers. Once people have migrated, the pressure to send remittances back home is strong, and many people rely on migration to survive, even if they have not migrated themselves. A worsening economic and security situation will mean people undertaking migration with little to no resources to start the journey and pressure to provide for their family weighing on them. Of a sample of African refugees and migrants interviewed in Germany, 93 percent were sending remittances ‘back home’, with the majority stating they did so out of a sense of responsibility.<sup>15</sup>

In analysing migration drivers, it is important to take stock of the extent to which women have agency in the decision to migrate. The qualitative interviews conducted with Afghan women for this research offer a mixed picture. Some of the women reported being able to take the decision independently. For instance, women who state having a source of income and/or being the family breadwinner. Others recounted persuading their husbands to travel as a family or their fathers to allow them to undertake the journey. Research on women migrating from West Africa suggests that an increasing number are travelling alone and deciding to do so as independent economic actors.<sup>16</sup> In the 4Mi data, responses from women stating they made the decision on their own range between 14 and 29 percent.

15 Jonathan Tetteh and Samuel Opoku Oladayo Nathaniel Awojobi (2017), “Remittance, Migration and Development: Investigating African Diaspora in Germany,” *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development* 6: 32–38.

16 Danish Refugee Council (2017), “Invisible Labour: Women’s labour migration to Libya,” 4Mi Maghreb; Danish Refugee Council (2017), “Mixed Migration in West Africa: Data, Routes, and Vulnerabilities of People on the Move,” Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat West Africa.

Figure 6: Third-party encouragement to migrate (multiple choice)



In West Africa, nuclear and extended families also play a role in encouraging women to migrate; and friends are an influencing factor for Afghan women’s 4Mi responses within the country. Afghan women who participated in in-depth interviews highlight that family members of others who have undertaken the migration journey sometimes influence information flows in communities. For East and West African women, the decision to migrate came after their husbands undertook the journey. The men were then responsible for arranging their wives’ journeys.<sup>17</sup> Of those who said they had been encouraged to migrate, joining family abroad accounted for 43 percent of responses in the East Africa dataset; and 23 percent in each of the Afghanistan (External), Libya and West Africa datasets. Family pressures also influence the decision to go back, with expectations at home sometimes determining decisions to return, despite traumatic or difficult migration journeys.<sup>18</sup>

The 4Mi Afghanistan dataset includes the highest percentage of women over 40 years of age across the regions (24 percent of Afghan respondents). Qualitative interviews with Afghan women suggest that sometimes the decision to migrate is taken as a family. Family members start the journey together and may separate on the way. Separation is reportedly sometimes linked to childbirth. Pregnant women may continue alone for a chance to give birth in the intended country of destination or to facilitate later applications for family reunification.

17 Altai Consulting (2013), “Mixed Migration: Libya at the Crossroads, Mapping of Migration Routes from Africa to Europe and the Drivers of Migration in Post-revolution Libya,” Altai Consulting for UNHCR.  
 18 N. Kleist (2017), “Disrupted migration projects: the moral economy of involuntary return to Ghana from Libya,” *Africa* 87: 322–342.

The 4Mi data suggests that the influence of diasporas is low, whereas it emerges as a more significant influence in qualitative interviews and in the literature,<sup>19</sup> in addition to smugglers and social media. These three sources of information are discussed in greater detail below.

## Women's expectations<sup>20</sup>

As illustrated above, migration drivers usually combine economic, security, political, social and personal considerations. The decision to migrate, however, tends to bring various elements together, one of which is expectations of what the destination country will offer. Given the timing of this report, Afghan refugees and migrants, in particular, saw the opening of a humanitarian border along the Western Balkans and of Germany's borders in 2015 as an opportunity to seek asylum and escape the situation in Afghanistan or conditions they faced in Iran.<sup>21</sup> For the central Mediterranean migration route, the power vacuum left by the conflict in Libya has allowed less-controlled smuggling and trafficking networks to proliferate.

People who decide to migrate do not always have a defined intended destination. For instance, for some Afghans the intended destination is Europe in a broad sense.<sup>22</sup> However, qualitative interviews conducted with women for this research suggest that there is generally an intended country of destination at the time of departure, because of the opportunities the country is perceived to offer for better living conditions – including refuge – and responding to information from people who have already undertaken journeys. Women in Afghanistan expressed their desire to go to Turkey or Germany. Women in Serbia had also intended to travel to Germany. The general trend is for Afghan refugees and migrants crossing from Turkey, either by land to Bulgaria or by sea to Greece, to want to continue their journey north to Germany or to Scandinavian countries.<sup>23</sup>

Data from the 4Mi datasets for Libya and West Africa suggests that in nearly all cases the intended country of destination did not change along the journey. For East Africans, it changed in nearly one-third of cases, although there were only just over 40 responses to this question in the survey for this dataset. Sometimes changes are not the choice of the refugees and migrants (discussed in greater detail in the later sections). However, there are also instances of intentions changing once refugees and migrants reach destination countries; such is the case for women who migrated to Libya to work there, but decided to continue onwards to Europe because they did not find opportunities, faced severe difficulties and were unable to return home.<sup>24</sup> Despite intended destinations sometimes being defined, therefore, it is relevant not to assume that migration journeys are 'linear, singular uninterrupted journeys or flows of people heading toward Europe'.<sup>25</sup> Migration instead often happens as a series of separate journeys that converge in specific places such as Libya or Turkey.

19 Ruta Nimkar (2018), "Split Loyalties: Mixed Migration and the Diaspora Connection," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat: Danish Refugee Council.

20 The 4Mi dataset for Afghanistan for this section only includes responses collected outside the country. There is no data on this section from 4Mi surveys administered in Afghanistan.

21 J. Bjelica (2016), "Deciding to Leave Afghanistan (2): The routes and the risks," Deciding to Leave Afghanistan, Afghanistan Analysts Network.

22 L. Linke (2016), "Deciding to Leave Afghanistan (1): Motives for migration," Deciding to Leave Afghanistan, Afghanistan Analysts Network.

23 IOM (2017), "Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, The Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Survey April 2017," DTM, International Organization for Migration; IOM (2017).

24 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Invisible Labour: Women's labour migration to Libya," 4Mi Maghreb.

25 Heaven Crawley, Franck Düvell, Katharine Jones, Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona (2016), "Destination Europe? Understanding the dynamics and drivers of Mediterranean migration in 2015," Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG).

The 4Mi datasets offer interesting cross-regional comparisons on whether women intend to migrate temporarily or permanently. Nearly 70 percent of Afghan women were looking to stay in the destination country permanently. Similarly, only 22 percent of respondents in the East Africa dataset declared their stay as temporary. For the West Africa dataset, 55 percent of women were intending to stay temporarily; most of these women were looking to stay between one and five years before returning to their country of origin. Where Afghan women were looking to stay temporarily, their intention was in most cases to migrate onwards to another country.

As outlined above, women are often searching for stability, education for their children, escape from social norms and better economic opportunities. But what are their expectations about how to access these?

- The intention to **apply for asylum** is highest for Afghan women whose responses were recorded outside of Afghanistan, followed by respondents in East Africa.
- Responses from Libya and West Africa are highest for belief **in the likelihood of finding a job within six months of arrival**. Domestic work was the most common type of employment suggested by respondents in East Africa, West Africa and Libya. Afghan women interviewed outside the country were more likely to want to set up a business or find office work, although many refused to answer this question.
- The intention to apply for **family reunification** was most commonly expressed by women interviewed for 4Mi in the East Africa and West Africa datasets.

**Figure 7: Perceived likelihood of finding a job at destination country within six months of arrival**

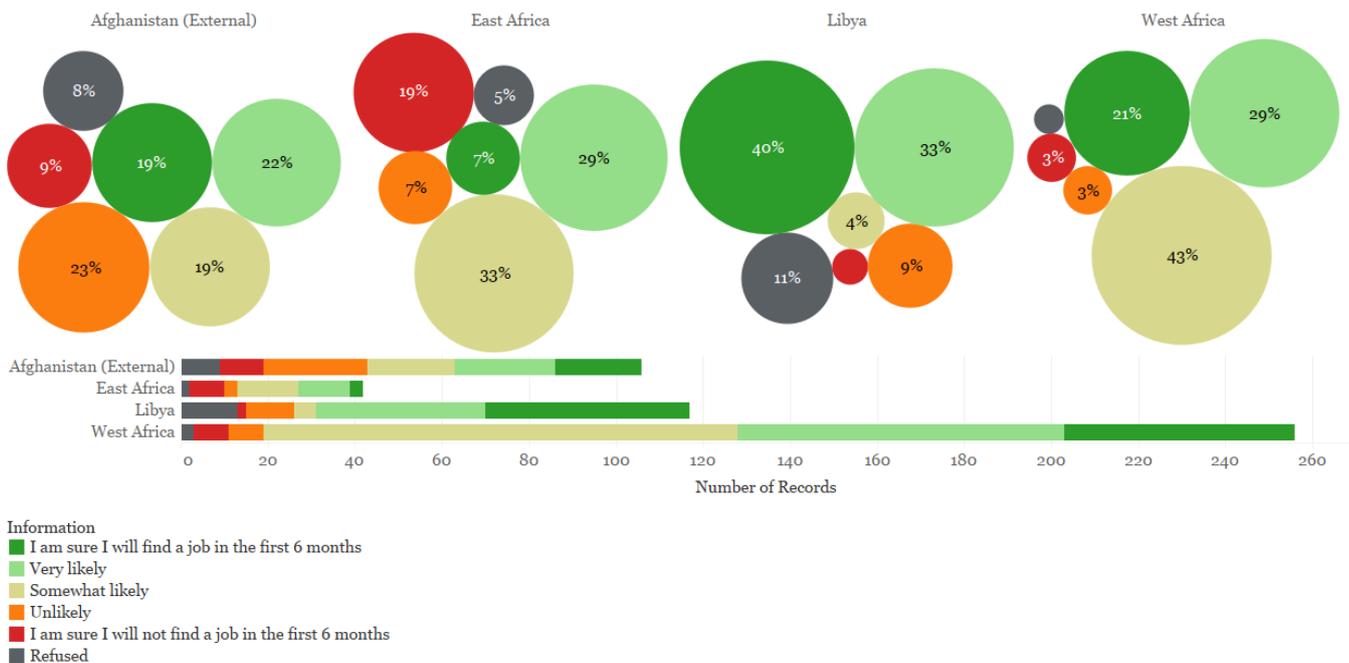
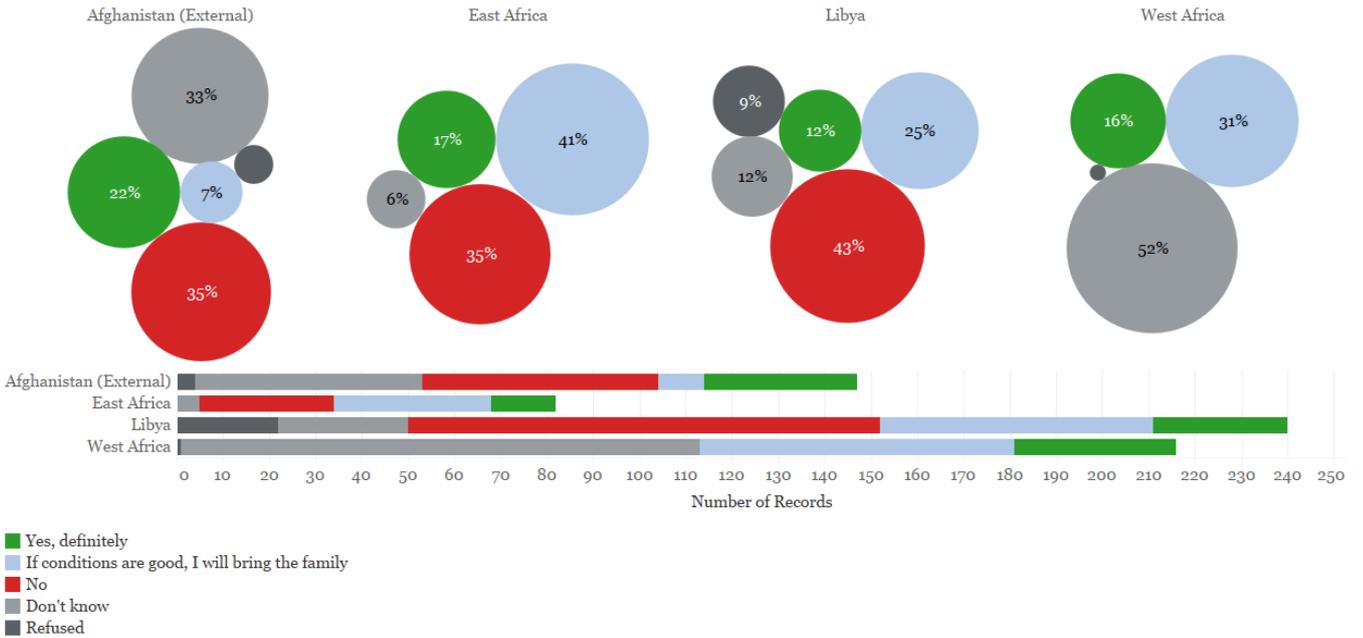


Figure 8: Intention to apply for family reunification in the destination country

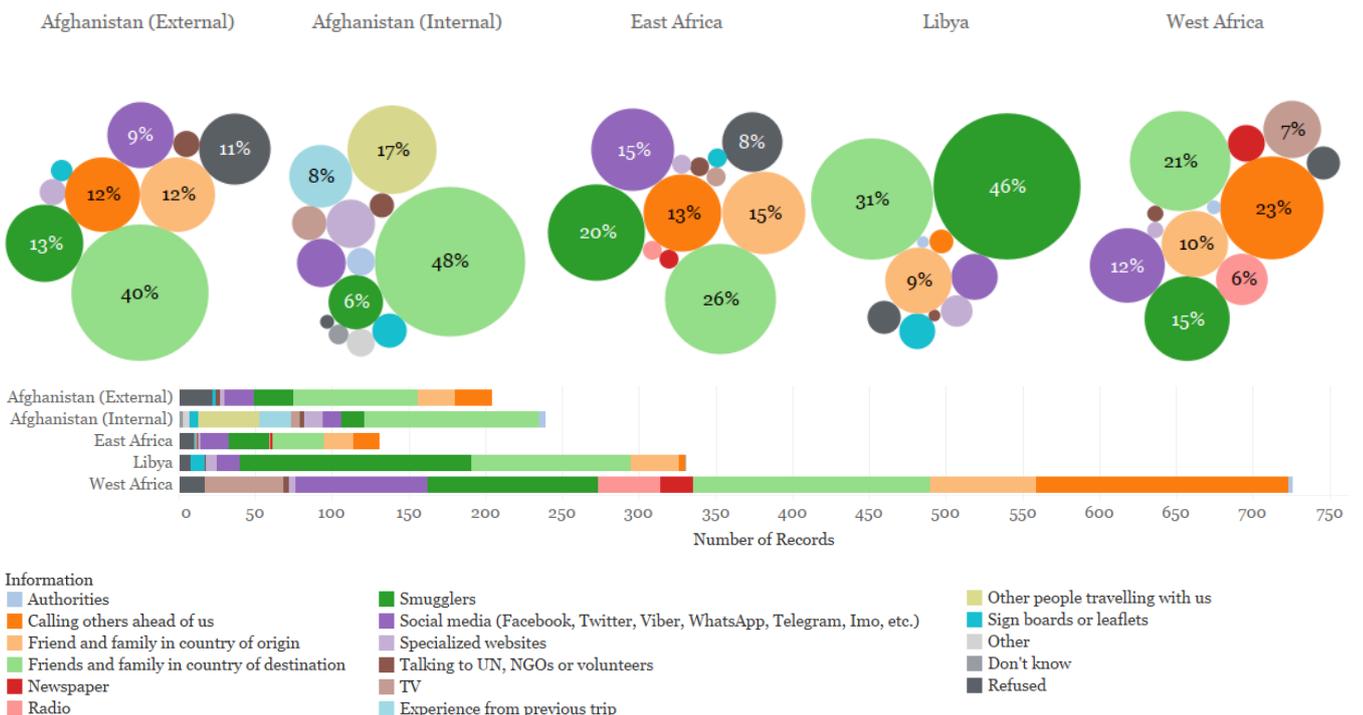


## 2. Refugees' and migrants' sources of information

As the 4Mi data shows, friends and family are the single biggest source of information for women in all regions, except for female refugees and migrants interviewed in Libya. This finding is supported by the qualitative interviews conducted for this research with women in Afghanistan, Serbia and Germany. Almost all the women interviewed indicated that they had gained information about migration from friends or family who had already undertaken a journey.

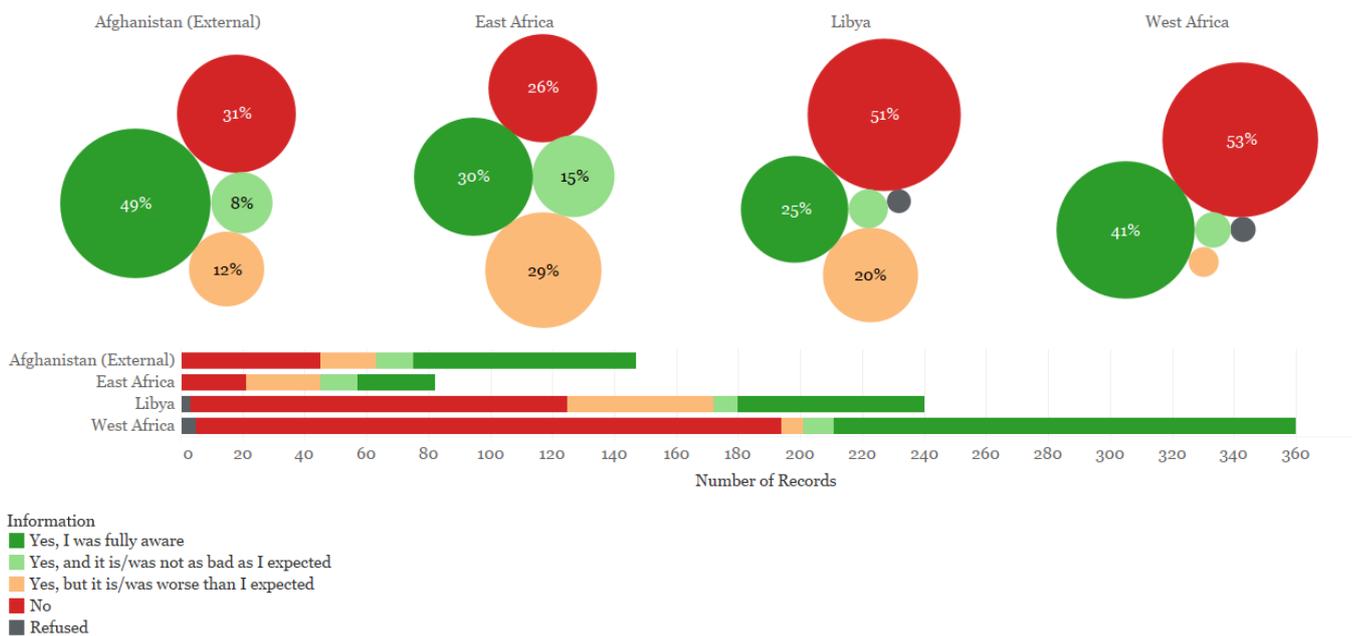
*'Our relatives were sending good pictures and we thought that everything is very good, and the smuggler was never telling the bad parts but only good things to convince the people to undertake the journey. They benefit from people's lack of information.'* (G5, G6, G7, G8 and G9)

Figure 9: What was your first source of information on migration (including routes, destinations, costs and risks) before departure? '(multiple choice)



For sub-Saharan African women the picture is mixed, although the data indicates these groups still rely heavily on information from friends and family, and from other refugees and migrants. As Figure 9 shows, the role of smugglers seems to be fairly limited at 15 percent (West Africa) and 20 percent (East Africa). This does not correlate with responses in Libya, where 46 percent of women indicate smugglers were their primary source of information. Similar to Afghan women, the literature indicates a mixed picture among African women. Some are aware of what the journey involves or what they might need to do to finance it, particularly women from West Africa. Others have a low understanding of what the journey might involve, its length, the risks and the cost.

**Figure 10: Before you started your journey, do you feel you were aware of all the risks of migration? (single choice)**

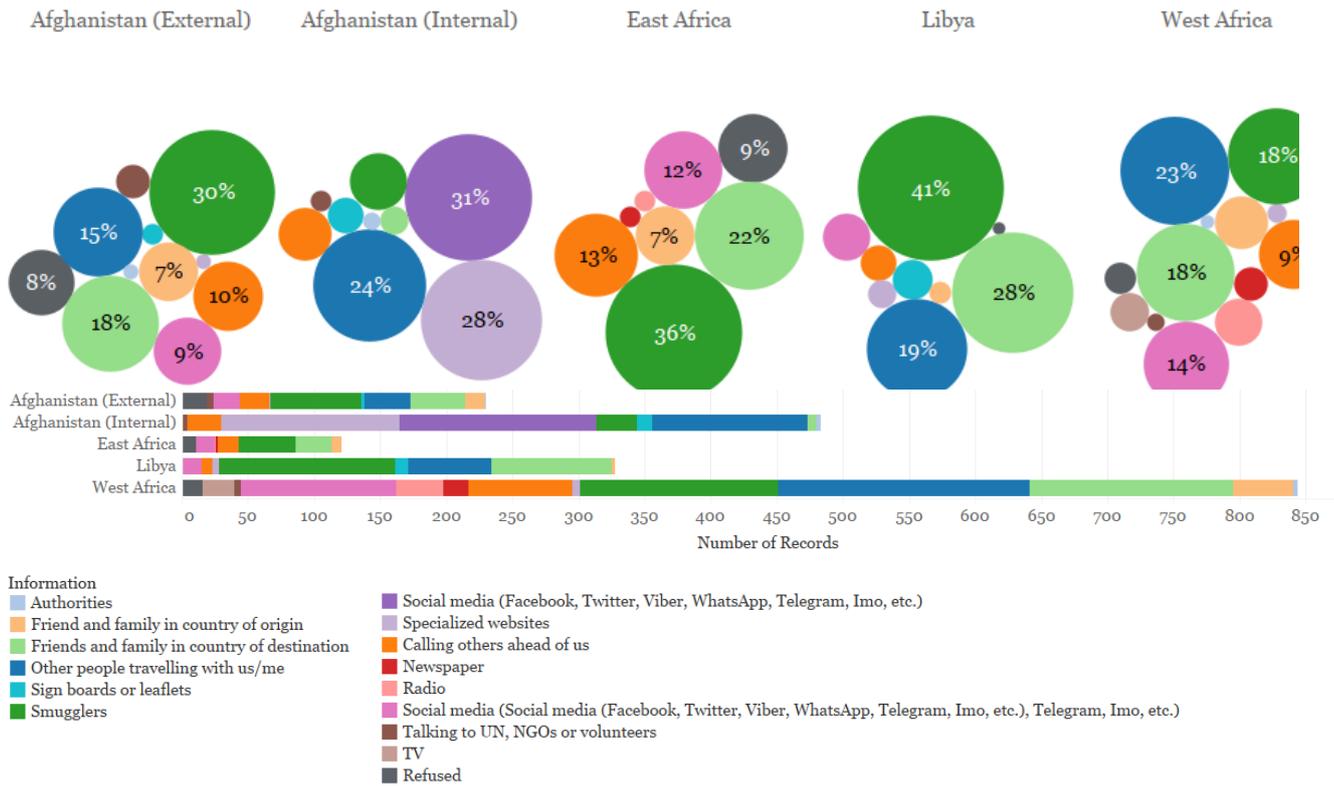


As the data in figure 10 illustrates, women are not necessarily unaware of the risks of migration, with 41 percent of respondents in West Africa indicating they were fully aware of the risks. However, depending on the region, up to 53 percent of women are not aware of the risks of migration. Some women are clearly being given misleading and inaccurate information about the journey. Others are aware of the hardships, yet still plan to migrate. Much of the information that women receive through their personal networks leads them to undertake journeys on dangerous migration routes: across the Sahara to Libya; overland from Afghanistan to Turkey; and ultimately on small boats attempting to cross the Mediterranean.

*'My aunt and uncle say that the journey to Turkey is easy, then from Turkey to Greece, two days and nights you have to hike. To reach the border of Greece, there is a lake in the way and everyone should pass the lake using a cord that the smuggler provides for them, and if the migrants have a baby, they should attach their babies on themselves while passing the lake, which is very dangerous. If the police come to the scene, family members could be separated and some of them may be left behind. Sometimes there is the risk of... drowning in the lake.'* (A7)

*‘Those who have already travelled say that the smugglers do not practise what they promise at the beginning; for instance, they do not provide sufficient food, water, clothing, transportation and health services, whilst they promise the best of them before the journey starts. And at the end smugglers take all of their money, despite all the problems faced during the journey.’ (A3)*

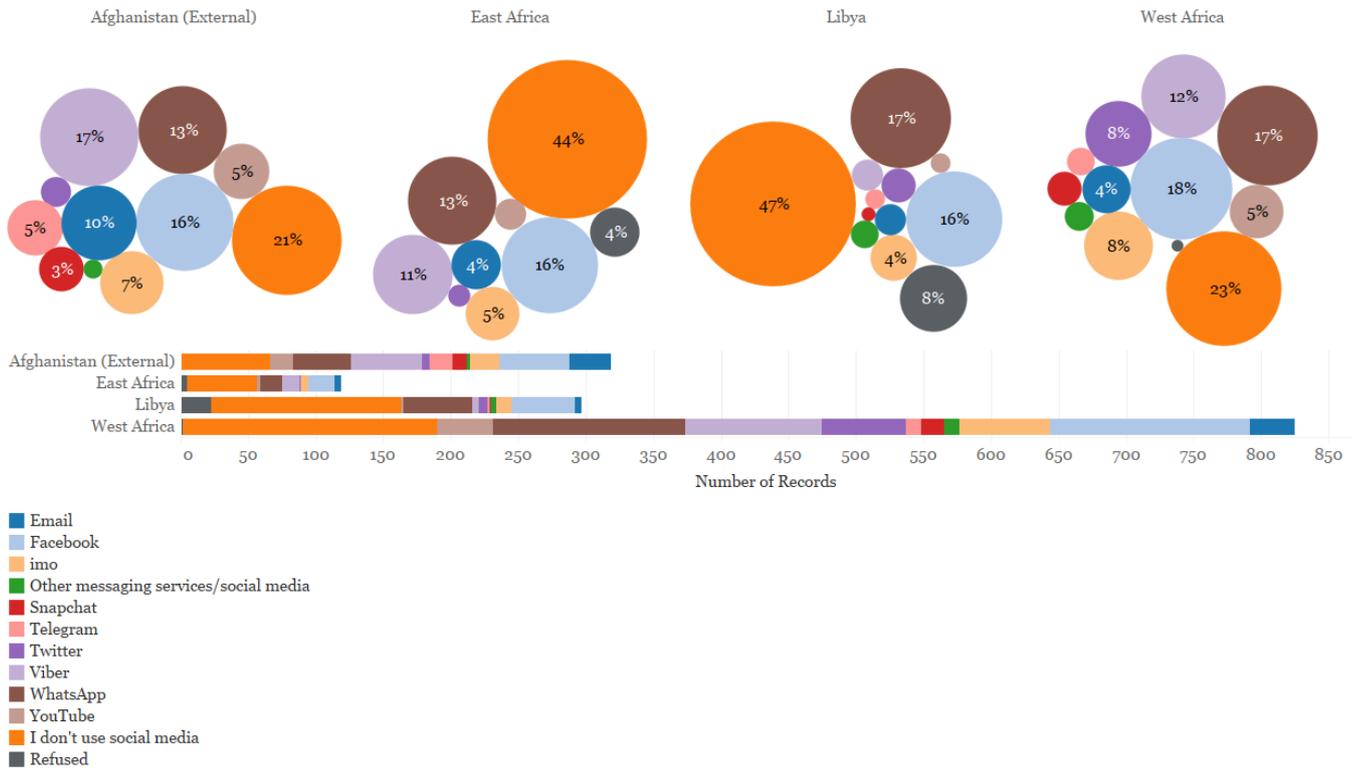
**Figure 11: Access to information during migration journey (multiple choice)**



Women on the move in East and West Africa tend to rely on smugglers or other people travelling with them and continue to interact with friends and family in the country of destination. According to the 4Mi data, Afghan women who have started their journey and are still in Afghanistan are the most likely to use social media and the internet. This is likely to be because they have access through their local phone providers. However, data from the Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia does not indicate that they widely used social media during their overland journeys to Europe. All of them stated that they felt their lives were in the hands of the smugglers. This strongly indicates that access to information was not a factor during the journey itself. Once they had left Afghanistan they – or their families – had little control over what happened to them.

*‘I cannot believe that I could make such stupid mistakes and put all money and our life in the hands of a stranger. Like, from Turkey to Bulgaria seven times we walked 12 hours in the mountainous jungle to reach Bulgaria, but every time we were caught by police and sent back and every time we walked 24 hours in the jungle going and coming. Now we are waiting for the winter to finish. If we do not hear from the Hungarian government by then, then we will go to try again. It was full of problems, it is almost two years since I left Afghanistan, but still, I have not reached my destination.’ (S3)*

Figure 12: Use of social media/ICTs during the migration journey (multiple choice)



Similarly, access to a phone or a smartphone is not common for respondents from Africa who also tend to reply on smugglers for information throughout their journey. Access to a phone provides access to the internet and enables women to speak with friends and family who have gone before or with the family and friends they have left behind. Without a phone, women have no access information except what smugglers tell them. This leaves them vulnerable to abuse and with little control over what happens to them on the move. Access to a smartphone while migrating can mean the difference between life and death, allowing refugees and migrants control and agency over difficult decisions they have to make on their journeys. Mobile communications are increasingly recognised as an enabling factor for migration journeys.<sup>26</sup>

Across all regions, use of social media varies and is likely to depend on conditions in the women’s country of origin. Refugees and migrants from Eritrea, for example, would be unlikely to access social media in Eritrea due to the repressive government. Where social media is used, it is largely to communicate with friends and family, and with smugglers – again indicating the lack of access to reliable information that women face, even those with access to the internet.

Survey responses from Afghan women collected outside Afghanistan and responses from West Africa, indicate that they used social media to post pictures during their journey. The Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia corroborated this. Several stated they had seen pictures from friends and family, as well as information on the journeys of other refugees and migrants and their experiences. However, the reality or accuracy of these images and posts was not discussed.

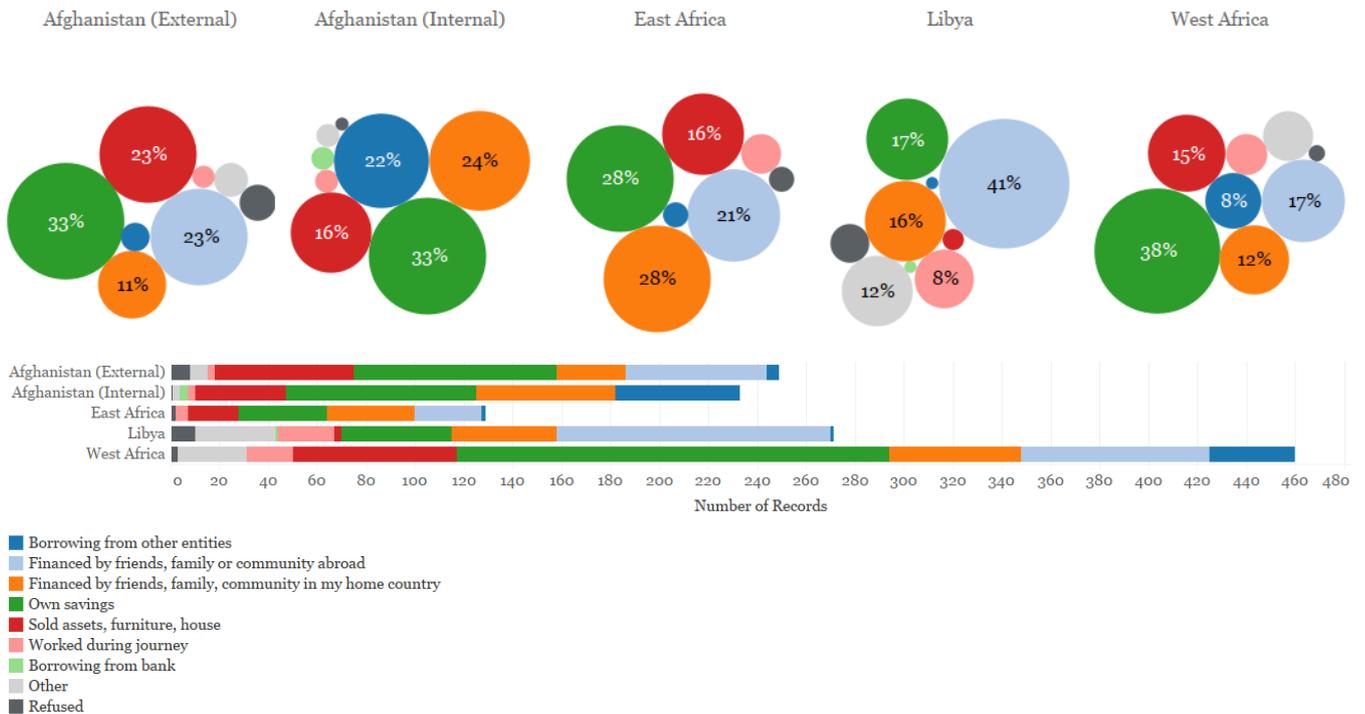
26 Rianne Dekker and Godfried Engbersen (2014), “How social media transport migrant networks and facilitate migration,” *Global Networks* 14: 401–418

The use of social media is also common to support communications between refugees and migrants and diasporas.<sup>27</sup> This information shows that the concept of ‘connected refugees and migrants’ and ‘digital migration’<sup>28</sup> is an area that deserves further and more in-depth study, to better understand how social media is being used by refugees and migrants on the move, and how it could be used to greater effect to provide protection and assistance.

### 3. Smugglers and finance

Smugglers are a key component of the migrant experience and an area that is difficult to research given the illegal nature of the process. However, publications have sought to shine a light on their role,<sup>29</sup> along with data gathered from refugees and migrants themselves. The role of smugglers is being reimagined, whether as travel agents, ‘saviours’ or traffickers, often with thin lines between these roles. These roles should be explored in greater detail, as smugglers’ influence continues to grow.

**Figure 13: How was this journey primarily financed? (multiple choice)**



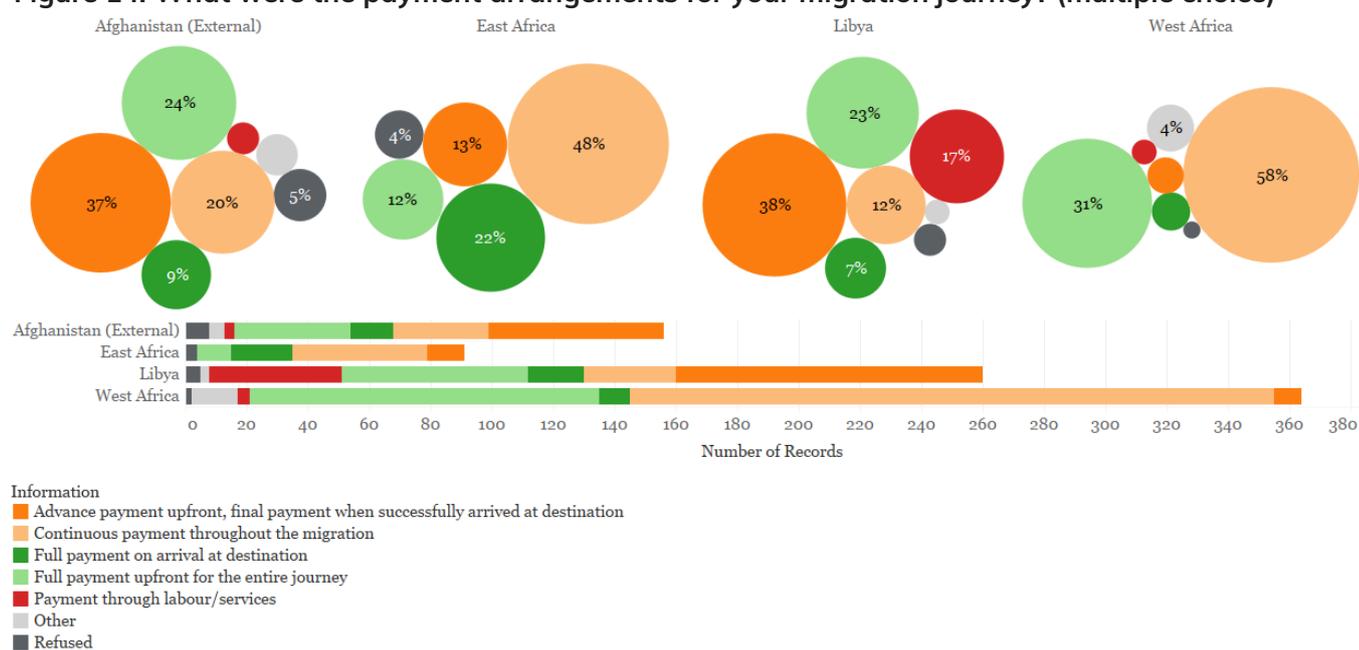
For women in all regions, except those interviewed in Libya with 4Mi, around 30 percent of respondents indicated they had financed their migration journey with their own savings.<sup>30</sup> Friends and family were also significant providers of funds and the local community, which was particularly

27 Ruta Nimkar (2018), “Split Loyalties: Mixed Migration and the Diaspora Connection,” Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, Danish Refugee Council.  
 28 Koen Leus and Sandra Ponzanesi (2018), “Connected migrants: Encapsulation and cosmopolitanization,” *Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture* 16: 4–20.  
 29 Peter Tinti and Tuesday Reitano (2016), *Migrant Refugee Smuggler Saviour*, London: C. Hurst & Co.; S. Plambach (2018), “Sex Work on the Other Side of the Sea,” *Africa is a Country*. Available at: <http://africasacountry.com/2018/03/sex-work-on-the-other-side-of-the-sea/>.  
 30 This question is multiple choice and women may have had other sources of finance in addition to their savings

strong among women in East Africa and those inside Afghanistan. For women interviewed in Afghanistan, Serbia and Germany, their migration journey was almost entirely financed by their immediate and extended family.

The cost of migration is expensive. It is often unknown at the start or difficult to control, particularly once women have paid smugglers, including for additional services such as fake documentation. Women's journeys can cost between €5,500 and €60,000 at the extreme end of the scale, with Nigerian women being charged the highest amounts.<sup>31</sup> This financial stress makes migrant women even more vulnerable and leaves them with few choices to make money, sometimes leading to sex work as the only route open to them.

**Figure 14: What were the payment arrangements for your migration journey? (multiple choice)**



For women in East and West Africa, 48–58 percent of all respondents indicate that the migration journey was paid for in stages, throughout the journey. This is much lower for those in Libya. The same would apply to the data collected from Afghans who have already left the country, who are more likely to have undertaken single air journeys than long land-based ones, at least in relation to those in India and Indonesia. The data from the Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia does not add to this, largely because the women were not responsible for arranging payment for the journey, which a male family member generally did.

Libya was the only region to have any level of women working through labour or services to pay for their migration journey. This is a worrying finding, because vulnerable women with few options to earn money legitimately are often forced in the sex industry. Additionally, further concerns about finance – and protection – relate to recent information about African refugees and migrants being sold as slave labour at markets in Libya. They are held in facilities and ‘rented’ out for labour and sexual exploitation, often held to ransom unless they have relatives able to pay for their way release and onward migration.<sup>32</sup>

31 S. Plambech (2018), “Sex Work on the Other Side of the Sea,” Africa is a Country. Available at: <http://africasacountry.com/2018/03/sex-work-on-the-other-side-of-the-sea/>.

32 Peter Tinti and Tuesday Reitano (2016), *Migrant Refugee Smuggler Saviour*, London: C. Hurst & Co.

## The migration journey

Smugglers clearly play an important role for migrant women during their journeys, in all country contexts. As shown by the 4Mi data, if smugglers are not involved in the start of a journey, there is a high chance they will be involved at later stages of the journey. In Libya, 64 percent of all respondents indicate that a smuggler was involved at some point of the journey. This has significant implications for women’s control over the route and protection concerns they may face, their economic situation and the pressures they may encounter.

**Figure 15: Who helped you start your migration journey?**



For Afghan women refugees and migrants still in Afghanistan, 50 percent of responses indicate that a smuggler helped them to start their migration journey. This fits with the interviews with migrant women in Germany and Serbia, where all the interviewees indicated they had used a smuggler for all or part of their journey. However, the majority indicated that they had little contact with smugglers before the journey started. This is to be expected, as Afghan women usually face censure for engaging with men outside of their immediate family.

Within the 4Mi data there is a clear difference for those outside Afghanistan, who indicate that friends and family were the largest single factor in helping them to start their migration journey, probably because these women travelled by a different route – mainly by air – and 4Mi interviewed them in India and Indonesia. Their experiences are likely to be very different from those of women still based in Afghanistan, who are potentially contemplating more dangerous land routes and would have greater need to use a smuggler. All the Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia had travelled along the more dangerous land route, primarily by foot, car and boat under the control of a smuggler.

Among African women it is also clear that friends and family play a big part in starting a migration journey, although the nature of that support is not explicit. Whether it is financial, related to planning, or physical support is unclear. Literature exploring the experiences of women migrating from Cameroon indicates that family members usually arrange initial contact with ‘travel agents’ or smugglers. The family usually pays these people. Women are expected to pay their families back, once they were in Europe and sending remittances home.<sup>33</sup> It is also worth noting that women are expected to pay these debts to their families or smugglers regardless of the success of the migration journey, often pushing them into greater vulnerability and multiple migration attempts.

A relatively high number of respondents in West Africa indicate that they started the journey without the aid of a smuggler or anyone else. This could be due to the ease of travel between ECOWAS countries, initially at least; and the ease of leaving countries such as Nigeria, where bus travel is common and women can travel alone. Women in East Africa, Libya and inside Afghanistan are least likely to indicate that they started the journey alone. As has been discussed for Afghan women, this is due to the nature of Afghan society, which makes it very difficult for women to do anything alone or without a male relative. For some countries in East Africa, in particular Somalia, the same is true.

The lower figures in Libya for women indicating they started the journey alone could be due to the difficulties of the journey, even from West Africa. The figures show that without support women might be less likely to reach Libya, implying that women with no support to start their migration journeys are less likely to be successful in their migration. A key informant interviewed in Germany noted that women in Eritrea would always need to be smuggled irregularly, just to leave Eritrea, as well as for onward journeys. Male family members would be most likely to arrange this, so the role of smugglers and the assistance needed from male friends and family is implicit at the outset. This is also true for women in other regions, including Afghanistan and Libya.

Once women have started their journeys, the use of smugglers increases in every region’s dataset. Almost double the number of respondents in East Africa indicate they used smugglers during rather than at the start of their journey. This could be because the journey is harder than women were expecting and smugglers were necessary. Also, once on the move women are more likely to come into contact with smugglers and hear about smugglers from other refugees and migrants. The role of friends and family decreases as women progress in their journeys, making it difficult to rely on those networks. This was true in all cases except for interviews with Afghans. For Afghan women, support from family and friends remains stable throughout their journeys, indicating strong familial, religious and ethnic connections that bind Afghan communities together.<sup>34</sup>

Whether women use one smuggler or many varies across regions. Women in Libya note they used only one smuggler (91 percent), but women from West and East Africa are more likely to have used two or more smugglers. The Afghanistan (External) dataset was small (under 30 responses), and evenly split between one or two smugglers, but most women in this dataset travelled by plane. However, this does not correspond with the interview data of Afghan women refugees and migrants in Germany and Serbia, which is due to the mode of travel. Most of the women who participated in

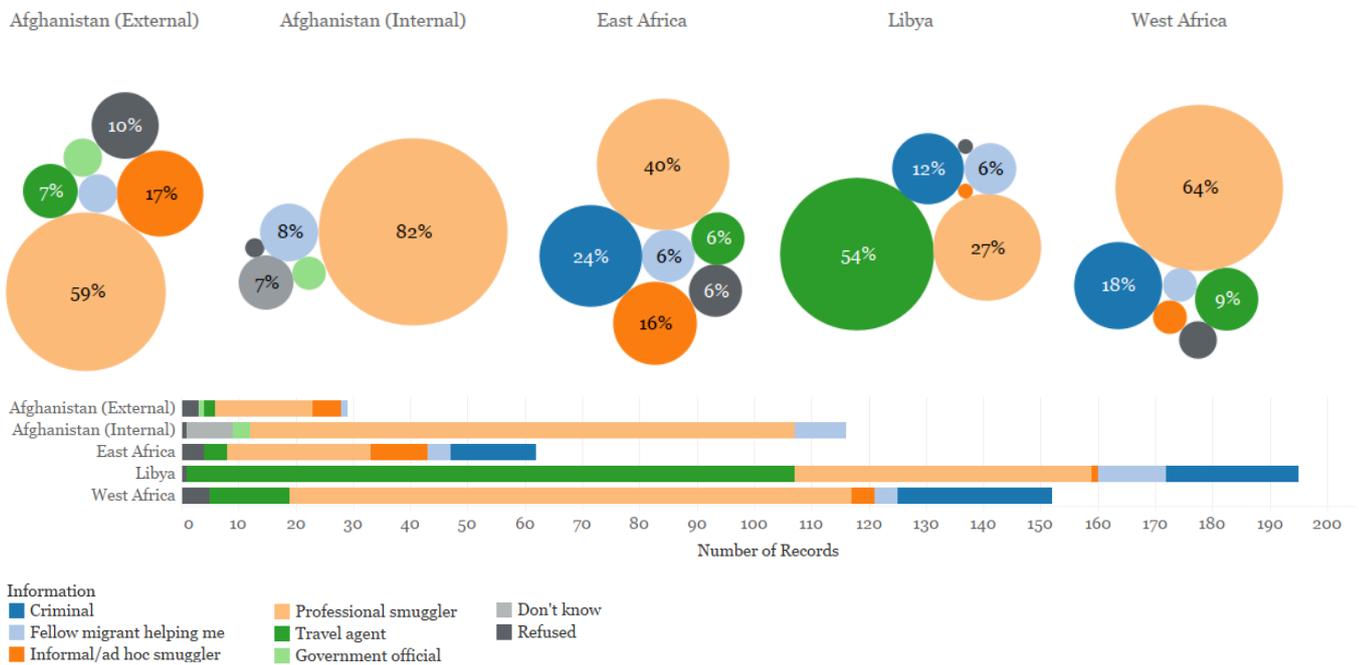
33 J. A. Maybritt (2017), *Why aspiring migrants trust migration brokers: the moral economy of departure in Anglophone Cameroon*, *Africa* 87: 304–321

34 A. Donini, A. Monsutti and G. Scalettari (2016), “Afghans on the move: Seeking Protection and Refuge in Europe,” *Global Migration Research Paper No. 17*, Geneva: The Graduate Institute.

qualitative interviews travelled by land through Iran, Turkey and Greece to reach Europe. They report multiple and different smugglers at different points in their journey.

*'The man who organised the travel arrangements was introducing us to other smugglers in each country and in different spots. We were relying on the word of the smugglers. If they could hurt you and create more problem for you then, how you could trust the smugglers? We had no choice and we did not want to create more problems and we tried our best to be as obedient to smugglers as we could. We were sold off as slaves from one person to another person and usually, there was one smuggler among the group who was passing the news to them and was doing coordination, but we never knew who the man was. There were no facilities or facilitation, we were as blind persons following the smugglers.'* (G4)

**Figure 16: How would you describe your smuggler?**



For those inside Afghanistan, 82 percent of respondents describe their smuggler as a 'professional smuggler'. Given the high rate of Afghans leaving the country, smugglers and smuggling networks have proliferated and routes for migration and for smuggling opiates from Afghanistan overlap. This trend<sup>35</sup> is not uncommon in smuggling, where smugglers capitalise on existing contraband routes and criminal practices to also move people across borders.<sup>36</sup>

The qualitative interviews with Afghan women in Germany and Serbia support this data. None of the women interviewed indicated any issues or problems finding or contacting smugglers. The 10 women interviewed in Afghanistan did not anticipate any problems accessing smugglers and irregular routes to Europe. How the smugglers treated them and the conditions under which they travelled would benefit from further research, however. During the interviews, Afghan women told of harrowing and negative experiences using smugglers.

35 J. Bjelica (2016), "Deciding to Leave Afghanistan (2): The routes and the risks," Deciding to Leave Afghanistan, Afghanistan Analysts Network.

36 Europol (2016), "Migrant smuggling in the EU," Europol Public Information, Netherlands.

*'It was the most difficult memories of our life that cannot be forgotten, it was very costly, and it made us very vulnerable. We trusted the man who was a cheater and I think all smugglers are the same, there are no good and bad among them. They all are bad.'* (S6).

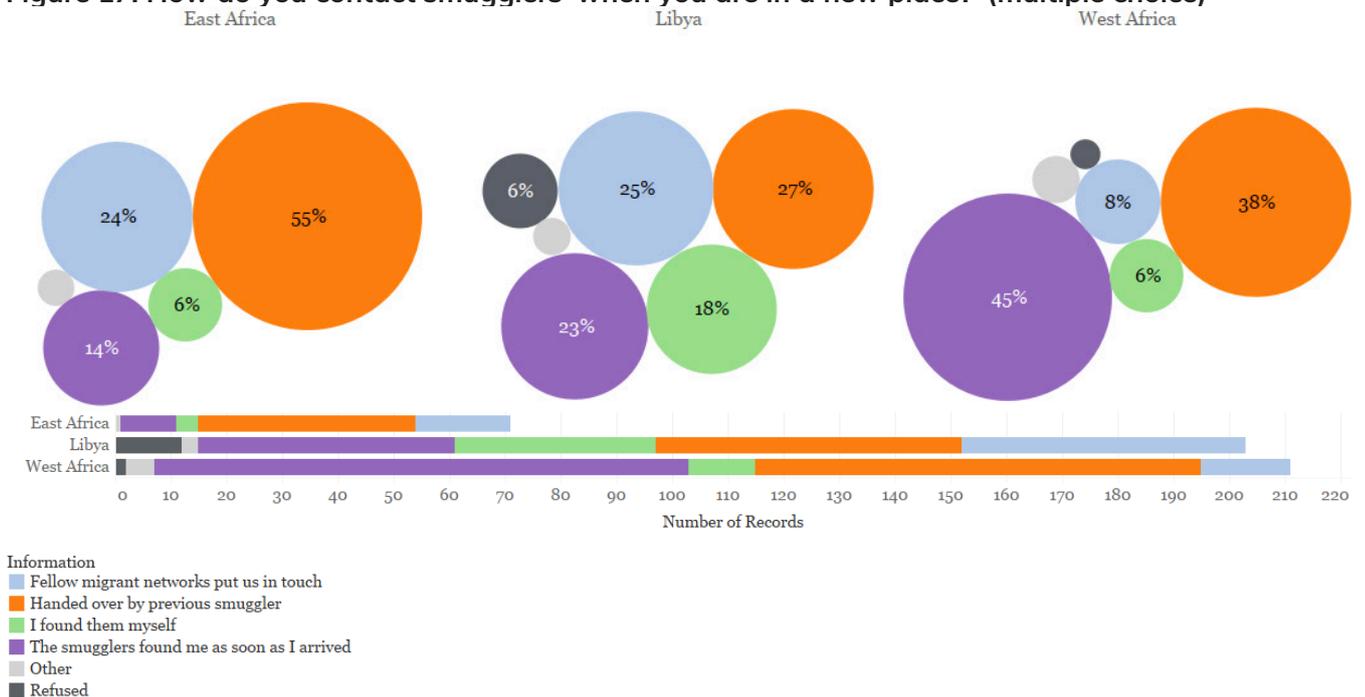
*'We were moving in hilly jungles to cross the border from Iran to Turkey. We had to spend the night there. My daughter was [seriously injured] she was dying, and I was begging the smuggler and he said because of one person I am not able to put you all in danger. With great difficulty, we reached Turkey and kept in a big hall without any help... my daughter survived but still she has problems... [Now we are in Serbia] many times I asked the camp doctor, but they have no [time or] attention to us.'* (S6)

Responses from Libya were the only ones in which most people described their smuggler as a 'travel agent'. Smugglers were most often described as criminals in East Africa (24 percent of responses). Eritrean respondents aged over 40 years were more likely than others to define their smuggler as a criminal. This is an area that would benefit from further research and investigation.

In all regions, transit across borders was the main reason for accessing a smuggler (18–35 percent), along with providing accommodation (18–39 percent). For women in Libya, arranging accommodation was the biggest single reason for using a smuggler (39 percent). This reflects the nature of travel in Libya, particularly for women who are less able to travel alone and openly, because of the question of protection.

Low numbers of refugees and migrants rely on smugglers to provide documents (less than 7 percent across all regions). However, transportation to holding places was high for East and West Africans in particular. The interviews with Afghan women in Germany and Serbia correspond with much of the 4Mi data. Women indicate that smugglers enabled them to cross borders and travel, largely by land, but also that they were frequently kept at holding places until political or seasonal weather conditions improved.

**Figure 17: How do you contact smugglers' when you are in a new place? '(multiple choice)**



In West Africa, smugglers seem to find women as soon as they arrive in a new location (45 percent). This could indicate how big a business smuggling is in Nigeria and illustrates the predatory, or at least very competitive, nature of smuggling networks throughout Africa. Many respondents also indicate that they were handed from one smuggler to another, something that the Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia also mentioned. One of the dangers of being passed from smuggler to smuggler is the lack of control that women – and indeed all refugees and migrants regardless of gender – have over their journey.

A significant number of women report finding a smuggler themselves. The 4Mi datasets show that African women, particularly in Libya, are active in finding a smuggler themselves. In Libya, 18 percent of respondents indicate they found a smuggler themselves and 25 percent through migrant networks. Migrant networks account for 24 percent of responses in East Africa, but only 8 percent in West Africa. This trend was not found among Afghan women who took part in qualitative interviews for this study, where male family members identified smugglers.

Regarding payment of smugglers, the 4Mi data illustrates that for those currently in Afghanistan the most common way to guarantee payment of a smuggler is through an unofficial intermediary, known as a hawala, something also common in Libya and East Africa. The interviews with Afghan women in all locations corroborate this information. The vast majority stated that family and friends of the family would contact smugglers through their wider social network. West African respondents indicate that there was no method used to guarantee payment (41 percent) or that payment was guaranteed in the country of origin. Women could be placed in a vulnerable situation in a strange country, having completed part of their migration journey, but potentially without funds to pay their smuggler.

Research about Nigerian women being more likely than others to end up working in the sex industry is likely to relate to this fact, in addition to wider problems that force women in this situation. However, it is not always the stereotypical smuggler or trafficker who forces women into this situation. Some Nigerian women in Libya and Europe recruit other women.<sup>37</sup> Some women choose to work as sex workers to fund their migration journeys and should not always be assumed to be victims of trafficking.<sup>38</sup>

## Smugglers and misleading information

The 4Mi data indicates that refugees and migrants feel they were misled by smugglers 60–80 percent of the time. This figure highest in East Africa, with 87 percent feeling they were somehow misled, again indicating the high rate at which Eritreans are smuggled and potentially trafficked. In the Libya dataset, 17 percent of respondents indicated that they felt the smugglers had not misled them, with 39 percent for West Africa. Women in the Afghanistan (External) dataset indicated they did not feel they were misled in 38 percent of responses, but numbers are low for this dataset. They mostly include 4Mi data from interviews conducted in India and Indonesia where air travel is a common mode of travel. Risk factors differ from those women refugees and migrants experience making the journey by land.

<sup>37</sup> Ben Taub (2017), "The Desperate Journey of a Trafficked Girl," *The New Yorker*, New York.

<sup>38</sup> S. Plambech (2018), "Sex Work on the Other Side of the Sea," *Africa is a Country*. Available at: <http://africasacountry.com/2018/03/sex-work-on-the-other-side-of-the-sea/>.

The 4Mi data shows minimal differences between regions, apart from the Afghanistan (External) dataset. It outlines that the main areas where smugglers misled refugees and migrants were in relation to routes (10–28 percent); costs (10–25 percent); conditions (15–21 percent); and safety and security (5–18 percent).

The interview data from Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia illustrates that almost every woman interviewed felt that smugglers misled them, primarily about the ease of the journey and the services they would provide.

*'The smuggler was connected to my husband by a family friend who had experience with him, but they both were big liars. The man did not tell us about the hardship of the journey.'* (S6)

*'We faced a huge amount of problem as we were almost all family members... and the smuggler took from us €14,000 for the journey to Italy, but he dropped us off in Bulgaria. We faced many difficulties when we reached Bulgaria and we were kept hostage... The man [smuggler] put a gun on the head of my son and told us to tell our family members in Afghanistan to send him money. We said we have no one behind and the man started beating us up and we were kept there for four nights and we had nothing to eat just water from the toilet we could get. My husband was weak and sick. On the fourth day his condition got worse and we all started crying and shouting and I was begging to call an ambulance as he would have died. The man was terrified as we were a big group and all were shouting. So, he put us in a car and dropped us off in a park. Still, my husband's condition was very bad and we cried in the park after the man left and then we were begging the police and the police called an ambulance. Thank God he survived and we could take a sigh of breath.'* (S4/S5)

Evidence from secondary sources and literature also indicates that smugglers significantly mislead women from sub-Saharan Africa. Even when smugglers did not deliver on their promises they would still demand payment.<sup>39</sup>

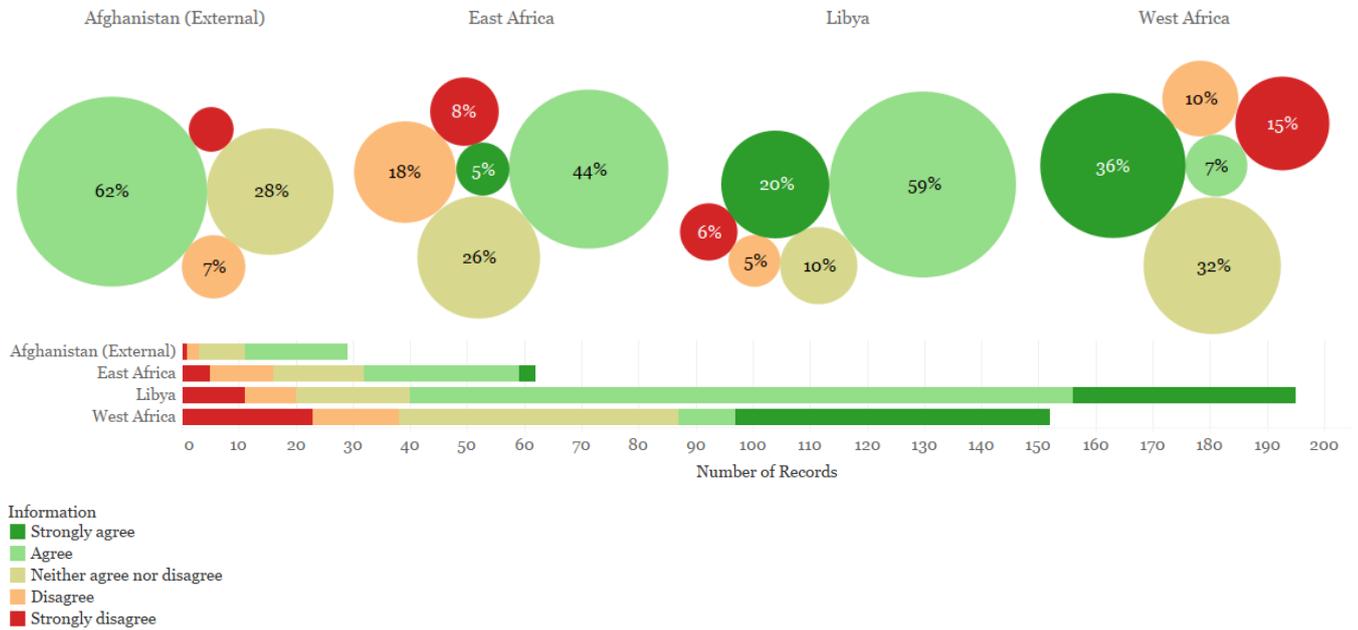
Sometimes dealing with smugglers arranged through family connections can be complex. Relationships with those left back home need to be managed and the middleman who arranges migration journeys needs to save face. Case studies of four women attempting to migrate from Cameroon indicate strongly that:

*Relations between aspiring migrants and migration brokers are embedded in broad social networks that unfold over time periods that extend beyond one-off departure attempts. Consequently, the key question is no longer why aspiring migrants trust migration brokers, but why they have so few other means to realize their [migration] aspirations.*<sup>40</sup>

39 N. Kleist (2017), "Disrupted migration projects: the moral economy of involuntary return to Ghana from Libya," *Africa* 87: 322–342.

40 J. A. Maybritt (2017), "Why aspiring migrants trust migration brokers: the moral economy of departure in Anglophone Cameroon," *Africa* 87: 304–321.

**Figure 18: Extent of agreement with the statement ‘Smugglers I used helped me achieve my goal of migrating to another country’**



Given what is known about the difficulties of migration journeys, they are still often the only options open to refugees and migrants given the lack of legal pathways for migration. Many people perceive smugglers as the only potential facilitators of migration and the only way for them to have a chance of reaching their chosen destination.

Figure 18 illustrates that almost 80 percent of women in Libya who have used a smuggler either agree or strongly agree that smugglers helped them to achieve their goal of migrating to another country. This is likely to be higher, as Libya is often their intended final destination. However, the figures are 49 and 43 percent for women in East and West Africa and 62 percent for the Afghanistan (External) dataset although keeping in mind that it’s a small dataset.

In West Africa, however, 25 percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that smugglers helped them migrate. This could indicate that smugglers often left them in holding places and they did not successfully migrate to their preferred destination. Ultimately, the term ‘successful’ could mean different things to different people. It is an area that would benefit from further investigation.

Refugees and migrants may be helped by a smuggler who also violates their human rights and abuses them. However, without other options migrant women may still be forced to choose these ‘successful’ smugglers as their only route to Europe. An important point to note regarding this question is that it does not consider the abuses, kidnapping or trafficking that may have been part of the journey women have undertaken. Section 5 on protection issues outlines the context and concerns about abuses women face during their migration journey, successful or not.

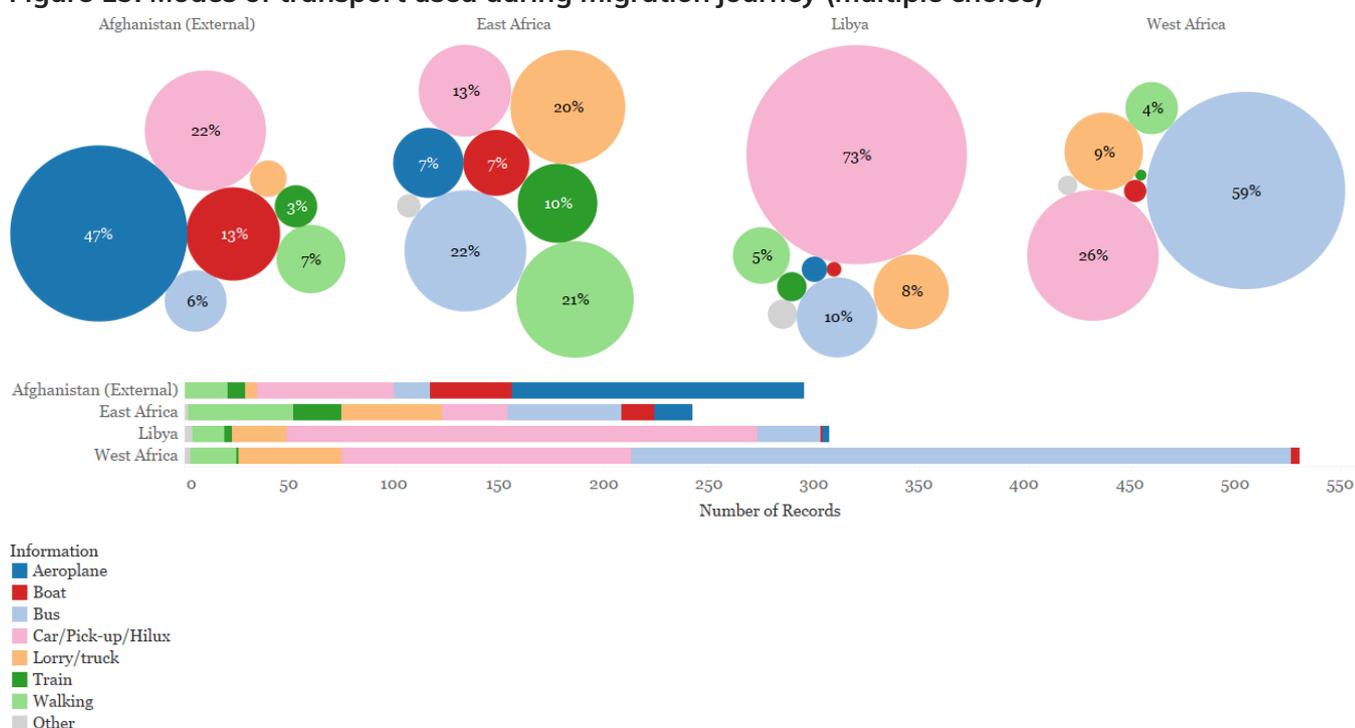
## 4. Travel modalities

A combination of factors determine the routes and transport options refugees and migrants choose. Ability to pay is a strong determinant of the mode of transport they will rely on, as well as being a contributing factor in the route smugglers offer them if they are relying on irregular journey options.<sup>41</sup>

### Transport

According to the 4Mi data, modes of transport differ significantly between datasets, particularly between the Afghanistan (External) dataset, Libya and West Africa. The main modes of transport covered in the 4Mi survey include plane, boat, bus, car, lorry, train and walking.

**Figure 19: Modes of transport used during migration journey (multiple choice)**



For the Afghanistan (External) dataset, for which most responses are recorded travelling east towards India and Indonesia, the main mode of transport was by plane (47 percent). This makes direct comparisons difficult between women in Afghanistan, given that they will be considering multiple routes of migration, and women travelling west, where most travel is overland.

In general, Afghans travelling to Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and onwards to Europe are more likely to use land routes compared to refugees and migrants travelling east. Travelling by plane is likely to reduce risks and protection concerns, but is also linked to higher financial capacity to pay. Plane journeys recorded in the Afghanistan (External) dataset may only account for part of the journey and the onward journey could continue using other modes of transport.

<sup>41</sup> Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Hidden Figures: Women on the Move in Libya – Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in Libya, Mali, and Niger," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat 4Mi.; N. Majidi, V. Vorst and C. Foulkes (2016), "Seeking Safety, Jobs, and More: Afghanistan's Mixed Flows Test Migration Policies," Migration Policy Institute.

Interviews conducted with Afghan women in Germany and Serbia indicate almost all the women undertook their migration journey by land. They either went to Iran first or directly to Pakistan, before continuing to Turkey, Greece and onwards to Serbia and Germany. These journeys are also documented in the literature.<sup>42</sup> The modes of transport the Afghan women interviewed (Annex 1) used were travelling on foot, by car and, when they reached the Mediterranean, by boat. At least half of the women interviewed stated they had not expected to travel on foot so much and were not prepared for the harsh conditions and long marches they were forced to undertake.

*'They were harsh with all, but as women were walking slower than men and they were remaining behind the group and the smugglers were cursing those who remained behind. We witnessed that they put a gun to the head of some to push the others.'* (G7)

The dangers of the Mediterranean crossing are well documented for those who undertake overland migration journeys from Afghanistan and those from East and West Africa across the Sahara region to Libya. However, women are more vulnerable than men. Although more men still migrate than women, for every five men who drown in the Mediterranean, six women also drown.

Reasons for drowning or dying at sea include exhaustion, dehydration, bad or extreme weather, hunger and lack of swimming skills. For women in particular, risks also include: being placed below decks, with children, by male family members for protection, although this is a more dangerous place if a boat sinks; suffocation from toxic exhaust fumes; or drowning by incoming water. Women are more likely to have responsibility for children and more likely to drown while attempting to rescue children – the more children they have, the greater the risk of death. Women sometimes wear heavier clothing that pulls them underwater and some are pregnant.<sup>43</sup>

The Afghan women interviewed in Germany and Serbia share uniformly negative experiences of their journey by boat. This illustrates the lack of concern that smugglers have for the lives of the people they smuggle and the uniquely dangerous position migrant women are placed in, with no choice but to keep going forwards and risking death.

*'The smuggler told us it is a journey of 45 minutes on the boat, but he overloaded the boat with 50 people. My husband was saying it will be broken, but the smuggler took out his gun and pointed at him that if we were not moving he would have killed us. Two children were killed on the boat one was two years old and the other was one year old. So, in between the boat was broken and we were about to drown, but one Arab guy was with us and the border police saved us and they sent us back to the camp from where we had come to cross the water. We spent 19 days in jail and after we were released my husband was begging the smuggler to take us through the jungle not from across water anymore. The smuggler demanded US\$2,500 per head.'* (S6)

42 T. Ruttig (2017), "Afghan Exodus: Afghan asylum seekers in Europe (3), Case study Germany," Afghanistan Analysts Network; M. Safi (2017), "Afghanistan: Current Migration Patterns and Policy Challenges." In: B Stiftung (ed.) Escaping the Escape: Towards Solutions for the Humanitarian Migration Crisis. Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 109–120.; IOM (2014), "Afghanistan Migration Profile," Kabul: International Organization for Migration Afghanistan.

43 J. Freedman (2016), "Engendering Security at the Borders of Europe: Women Migrants and the Mediterranean 'Crisis,'" Journal of Refugee Studies 1: 568–582.

For East African 4Mi responses, there was a more even spread between modes of transport by bus, on foot or by lorry or truck. East African respondents also had the lowest percentages cross-regionally for travel by car. The percentage of people travelling on foot is significant in this dataset, being fraught with difficulty in terms of physical ability, exposure to risk and length of time one is physically travelling. Additional risks exist for Eritrean refugees and migrants who face challenges leaving their country, including detention, torture and abuses, but who may have no other option but attempting to leave.<sup>44</sup>

Travel by bus was the most common mode of transport in West Africa (59 percent of responses), significantly higher than in other countries. This accords with other reporting, which indicates that West Africans at the start of their journey have easy access to visas and public transport networks within the ECOWAS region. This changes as they approach the Sahara region and attempt to cross into Libya. Then, other modes of transport are needed, in addition to knowledge of the difficult terrain in the Sahara Desert and reduced infrastructure and communications options.

In Libya, the main mode of transport for 73 percent of respondents was by car, which is private. Modes of transport pose higher protection concerns for women refugees and migrants. Women are more likely to be travelling as part of an organised journey with smugglers or traffickers. Travel by car renders them invisible. They are not traversing public spaces and can be transferred easily between smugglers and traffickers, with smugglers also providing accommodation for women.<sup>45</sup>

## Migration routes

In Libya, smugglers have the greatest influence over routes travelled, with 52 percent of 4Mi respondents indicating the smuggler chose the route, the highest percentage for this option across regions. This matches closely with an IOM report on women in Libya,<sup>46</sup> which emphasises the dangers that women are exposed to due to the lack of control and choice they have over their migration route.

As Figure 20 shows, a significant percentage of respondents in the East Africa dataset indicate smugglers chose the routes (28 percent), which is higher than for West Africa (10 percent) but lower than Libya. Other reasons given in this dataset include that it was the easiest route, it was recommended by friends and family, and price and security considerations. This links closely with modes of travel, considered below, where there is more than one route to migrate north and out of East Africa and multiple considerations come into play.

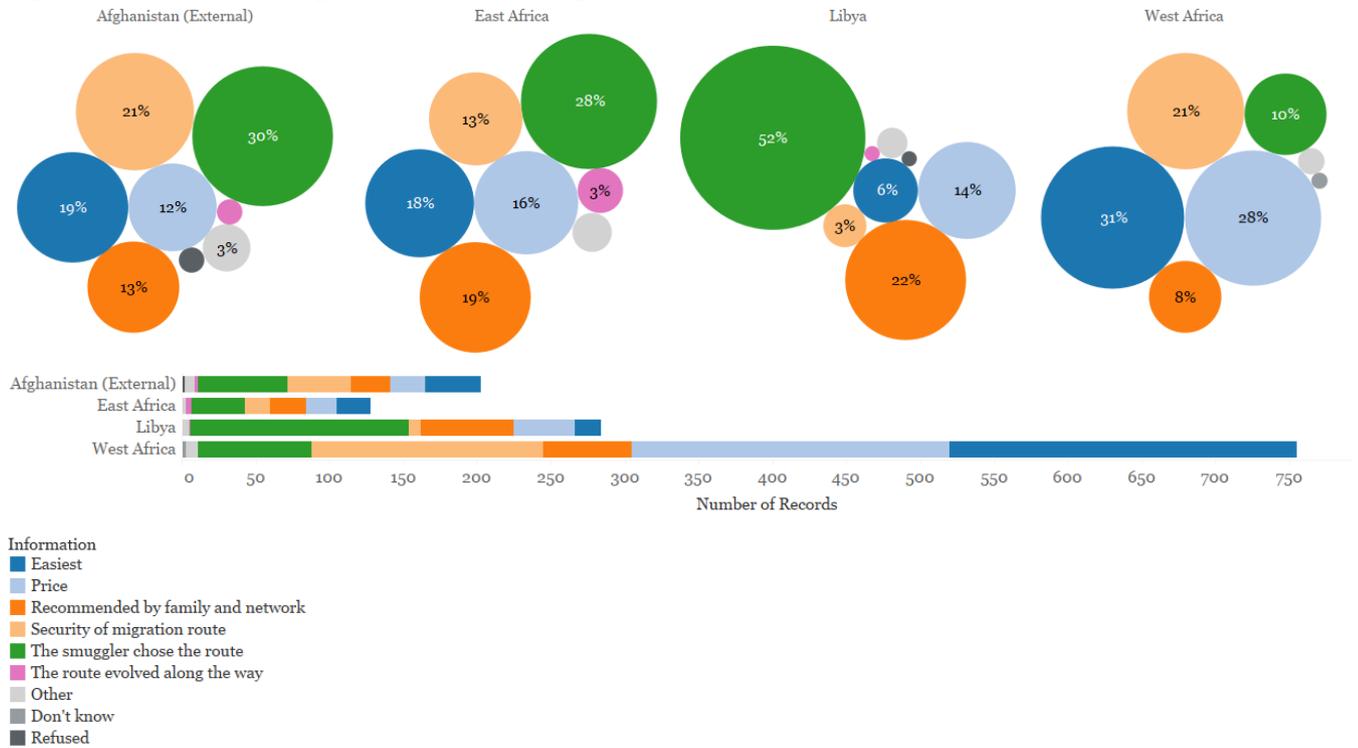
44 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Human Smuggling – No victimless crime: Voices from those on the move," RMMS Briefing Papers, Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat East Africa and Yemen; Amnesty International (2015), "Just Deserters: Why indefinite national service in Eritrea has created a generation of refugees," Amnesty International Ltd.

45 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Hidden Figures: Women on the Move in Libya – Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in Libya, Mali, and Niger," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat 4Mi.

46 IOM (2017), "Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, The Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Survey April 2017," DTM, International Organization for Migration.; IOM (2017), "Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, July 2017," DTM, International Organization for Migration; Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Hidden Figures: Women on the Move in Libya – Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in Libya, Mali, and Niger," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat 4Mi

In the Afghanistan (External) dataset, 30 percent of respondents indicate the smuggler chose the route. As was the case for West Africa, security is also a key factor (21 percent). Ease of travel, price and recommendations from friends and family are also considerations, again showing multiple factors at play and different routes available.

**Figure 20: Choice of migration route per region**



In the interviews with Afghan women in Serbia and Germany indicated a heavy reliance on smugglers, but that family and friends play a predominant role in refugees' and migrants' choices of migration routes, too. Refugees and migrants also rely on social media for information on the easiest migration routes, those routes which are most likely to be successful and on changing conditions along routes. Facebook is cited as one of the sources refugees and migrants use for information.<sup>47</sup>

Of the 13 Afghan women interviewed in Germany, seven explicitly stated that their reason for migrating to Germany was because they were aware the border was open, mostly because of friends and family already in Germany. Of the remaining women, one woman stated she was going to Germany as her son was there. Four stated that their intended destination country had been Sweden or England, but they decided to go to Germany during the journey as they were informed it was easier and cheaper to get there. One woman did not know where they were going, as her husband simply told her where to go.

This interview data illustrates how Germany's move to welcome refugees in 2015 influenced decisions of families across the world. It also shows how social media provided real-time updates of a fast-moving political situation, particularly changes in law enforcement officials' practices in transit

47 L. Linke (2016), "Deciding to Leave Afghanistan (1): Motives for migration," Deciding to Leave Afghanistan, Afghanistan Analysts Network; Europol (2016), "Migrant smuggling in the EU," Europol Public Information, Netherlands.

countries and the opening and closing of borders along the Western Balkans route.

*'We decided to come to Germany as the borders were open and my sister was living there.'*  
(G3)

*'Germany was our destination as the border was open and they welcomed migrants.'* (G10)

Social networks can be a source of support or exploitation for refugees and migrants. On the one hand, certain social ties, such as 'kinship, national, linguistic, religious or ethnic ties'<sup>48</sup> are sources of solidarity between refugees and migrants and other agents. These include smugglers and transporters and even law enforcement officials. However, smugglers and traffickers also tap into their social networks to find clients. Additionally, once refugees and migrants are resident in a particular country or region, due to the role friends and family play in influencing migration routes and destinations, it is likely that those routes and destinations may continue for the foreseeable future. For Afghans in particular:

The continued conflict and displacement of Afghans over three generations has resulted in the adoption of a variety of **coping strategies**, including a high level of mobility combined with a dispersion of family members, and thereby of risks, and a corresponding increase of opportunities. Even if the actual knowledge of particular situations or environments, such as European asylum systems, is often incomplete and patchy, a practical ability to adapt and a **collective knowledge** on how to succeed allows Afghans nevertheless to overcome sometimes highly adverse circumstances.<sup>49</sup>

In the case of Libya, smugglers are likely to heavily determine the choice of migration route. However, as discussed previously, once in a chain of smugglers most refugees and migrants have little control over their route. While routes remain financially viable to smugglers – and refugees and migrants are willing to pay – the same routes will be followed. However, smugglers have also proved adept at finding new routes and ways of accessing Europe. The speed at which smugglers and smuggling networks took advantage of a lack of state control in Libya to expand operations there from 2012 onwards demonstrated their global reach.<sup>50</sup>

## Reasons for transit stops

The 4Mi data indicates that refugees and migrants do not always have funds to finance their journeys. This is either because they may have agreed on a staged journey and/or payment with the smuggler at the outset; or because the terms of travel change along the way. It is not uncommon for refugees and migrants to report that once in the hands of smugglers, they have been forced to pay additional funds for their journey. At times, this will involve being held against their will and forced

48 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Mixed Migration in West Africa: Data, Routes, and Vulnerabilities of People on the Move," Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat West Africa.

49 A. Donini, A. Monsutti and G. Scalettaris (2016), "Afghans on the move: Seeking Protection and Refuge in Europe," Global Migration Research Paper No. 17: 35, Geneva: The Graduate Institute.

50 IOM (2016), M. L. McAuliffe and F. Laczko (2016), "Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: a Global Review of the Emerging Evidence Base," Available at: <http://www.deslibris.ca/ID/10090956>

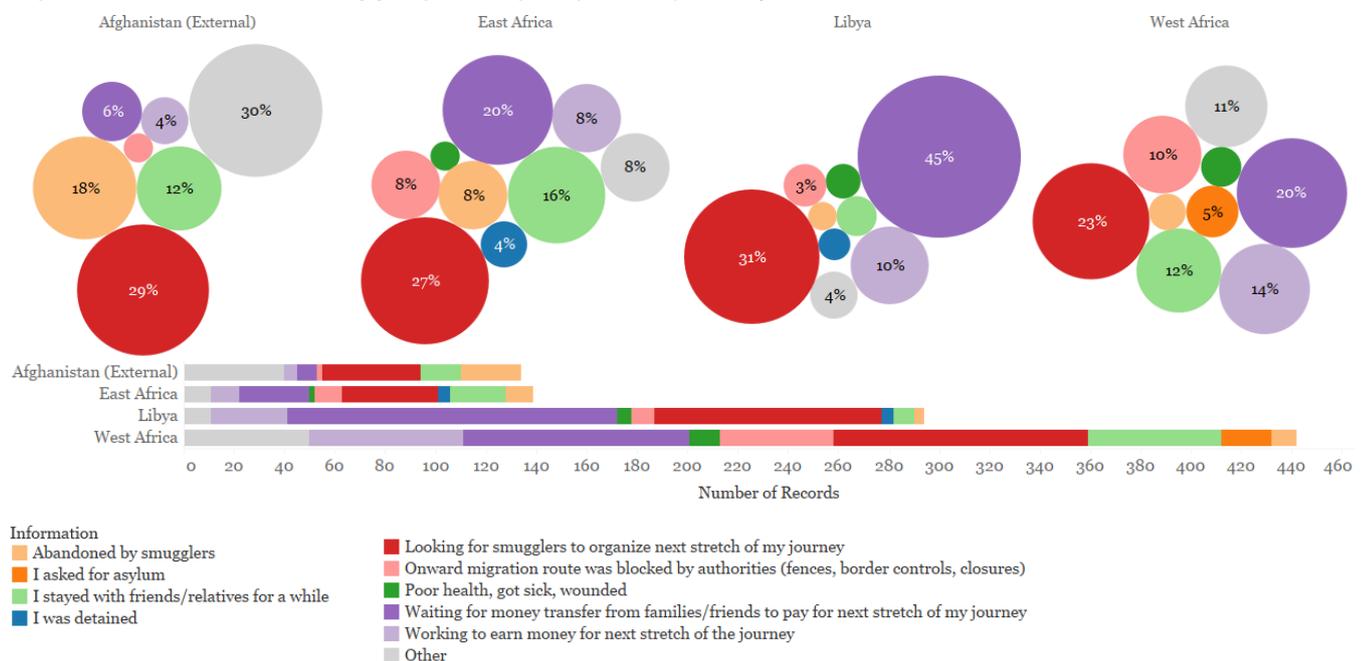
to work;<sup>51</sup> or being kidnapped and tortured to extort a ransom from their family in their country of origin.<sup>52</sup> In Libya, there are also reports of organ trafficking.<sup>53</sup>

In the Libya dataset, 45 percent of women respondents indicate refugees and migrants are waiting for money transfers from friends and family. This again shows African women’s vulnerability to potentially being trapped in Libya and forced into sex work and/or other exploitative practices. This percentage is significantly higher than for other regions, where responses were 20 percent or lower. Several briefing papers report similar findings; as does a DRC report on women on the move in Libya. According to the report, 15 out of 73 women interviewed in Libya worked to finance their journey on the way:

4Mi monitors in Agadez also observed that female migrants worked as street vendors in Agadez while waiting to be taken northwards. Many migrant women and girls reportedly also work in the sex trade in Agadez.<sup>54</sup>

Looking for smugglers is another reason for stopping in certain locations across datasets, ranging from 23 to 31 percent of all responses (see Figure 21). Europol (the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation) has identified 230 locations where smuggling occurs, which include smuggling hotspots in Libya and Turkey, as well as locations in Europe.<sup>55</sup> In the Afghanistan (External) dataset, 18 percent of respondents report having been abandoned by smugglers. This figure is less than 8 percent across the other regions.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 21: Reasons for stopping during migration journey**



51 Danish Refugee Council (2017), “Mixed Migration in West Africa: Data, Routes, and Vulnerabilities of People on the Move,” Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat West Africa; J. Bjelica (2016), “Deciding to Leave Afghanistan (2): The routes and the risks,” Deciding to Leave Afghanistan, Afghanistan Analysts Network.

52 IOM (2017), “Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, The Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Survey April 2017,” DTM, International Organization for Migration.

53 Ibid.

54 Danish Refugee Council (2017), “Hidden Figures: Women on the Move in Libya – Insights from the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in Libya, Mali, and Niger,” Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat 4Mi.

55 Europol (2016), “Migrant smuggling in the EU,” Europol Public Information, Netherlands.

56 Some 30 percent of Afghanistan’s external responses were ‘refused’, a significantly higher number than for other regions.

## 5. Protection concerns

*'It is a journey of life or death and survival only depends on luck.'* (G13)

People on the move whose journeys depend on smugglers, and particularly those who end up in the hands of traffickers, are highly likely to experience vulnerability and abuse and will need protection and assistance along the way. IOM's Flow Monitoring Surveys for April and July 2017 detail refugees' and migrants' reported exposure to violence and abuse along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes, with kidnapping (including for ransom), physical and sexual assault and death among the most commonly reported incidents.<sup>57</sup> Reports of violence are consistent along both routes, although abuses in Libya are more acute than elsewhere; for example, the sale of refugees and migrants in open slave markets and offers of cash in exchange for – or being forced into providing – blood, organs and body parts.<sup>58</sup> Some abuses are common to men and women refugees and migrants, such as physical violence, kidnapping and forced labour. However, women are more likely to end up in trafficking. They are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, being forced into prostitution and arranged marriages. Interviews conducted by organisations including IOM and Médecins sans Frontières record many women arriving in Europe – in particular, those travelling along the Central Mediterranean routes through Libya – as having experienced abuses against them, including rape by multiple perpetrators, at times resulting in pregnancy.<sup>59</sup>

Looking across specific violations and incidents, 465 of the 1,062 respondents experienced protection concerns during their journey. A total of 240 respondents were exposed to multiple incidents, with 123 respondents indicating three or more incidents of different types during their journey. The types of abuses that 4Mi has documented correspond with findings from other research and the qualitative interviews conducted for this report. They include death, physical and sexual abuse, being asked for bribes, refugees and migrants being kidnapped or held against their will, and robbery.

Women who participated in qualitative interviews for this research described the difficulties they faced during their journeys, which they undertook by land and sea from Afghanistan to Serbia and Germany. Some of the hardships they described included being exposed to the elements (rain and snow) and crossing difficult terrain (mountains, forests) or having to swim. One woman, for example, lost some of her toes due to frostbite. Some of the groups of refugees and migrants in which women were travelling had also been caught – either in Iran or Turkey – and were sometimes held in detention. Research by other organisations suggests this routinely happens in the Western Balkans, too.<sup>60</sup> Afghan women interviewed for this report corroborated that they had witnessed or been subjected to violence and abuse by law enforcement officials.

57 IOM (2017), "Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, The Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Survey April 2017," DTM, International Organization for Migration; IOM (2017), "Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, July 2017," DTM, International Organization for Migration.

58 Oxfam (2017), "'You aren't human any more': Migrants expose the harrowing situation in Libya and the impact of European policies," Oxfam Media Briefing; Amnesty International (2015), "'Libya is full of cruelty': Stories of Abduction, Sexual Violence, and Abuse from Migrants and Refugees," London: Amnesty International Ltd.

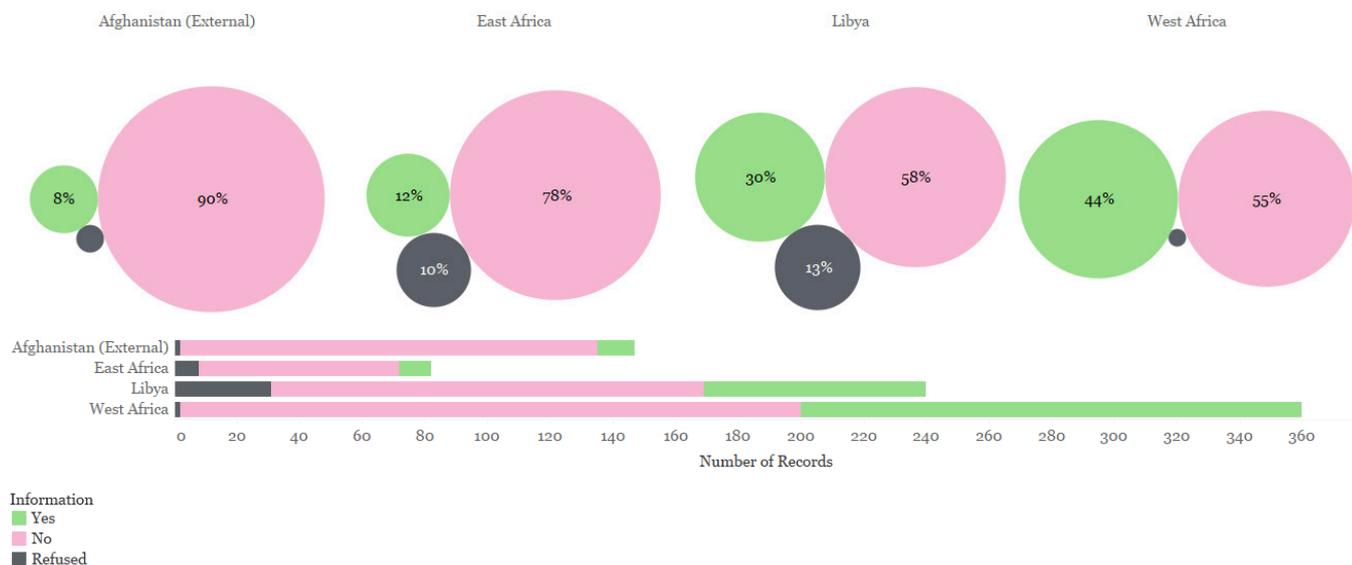
59 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Human Smuggling – No victimless crime: Voices from those on the move," RMMS Briefing Papers, Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat East Africa and Yemen.

60 Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, Oxfam (2017), "A Dangerous 'Game': The pushback of migrants, including refugees, at Europe's borders," Joint Agency Briefing Paper, April; Oxfam (2016), "Closed Borders: Programme Report on the impact of the borders closures on people on the move, with a focus on Women and Children in Serbia and Macedonia," September 2016.

*'One of the very bad experiences we had was crossing the Iranian border to Turkey. We were caught by police and they kept us for 12 hours standing in the rain and cold weather. They took money from smugglers after 12 hours; they let us go at midnight in a dark jungle. Our clothes were wet, and children were shivering and there was no way to warm up. We asked the Turkish police to let us burn our coats as the children were near death, but they did not allow us.'* (G2)

Law enforcement and border control officials are facilitators of, and at times complicit in, smuggling and trafficking. Corruption is common. According to Europol, in 2015 the estimated criminal turnover from 'migrant smuggling to and within the EU' was €3–6 billion. Consular and embassy staff are suspected of providing visas,<sup>61</sup> which may explain the reported variation in prices depending on the routes and services smugglers offer.

**Figure 22: Did you have to give government officials gifts, services or bribes during your journey?**



The 4Mi data suggests that demands for bribes, gifts and services from government officials are highest in West Africa and Libya. Previous research undertaken by DRC reports the collusion of police and military in trafficking along the East Africa route; for instance, in Egypt and Sudan.<sup>62</sup>

The Afghanistan data reports low levels of demands for bribes, however keeping in mind that most of the 4Mi respondents interviewed outside of the country were travelling by plane, thereby potentially reducing their likely exposure to demands for bribes and in general protection concerns. Qualitative interviews with Afghan women for this research suggests, as illustrated by the quote above, that people travelling by land routes face great protection concerns.

Women travelling alone are more vulnerable to abuse than when they travel with family or partners, or when their family or partners arrange the journey for them. IOM reports that women are held for

61 Europol (2016), "Migrant smuggling in the EU," Europol Public Information, Netherlands.

62 Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Human Smuggling – No victimless crime: Voices from those on the move," RMMS Briefing Papers, Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat East Africa and Yemen.

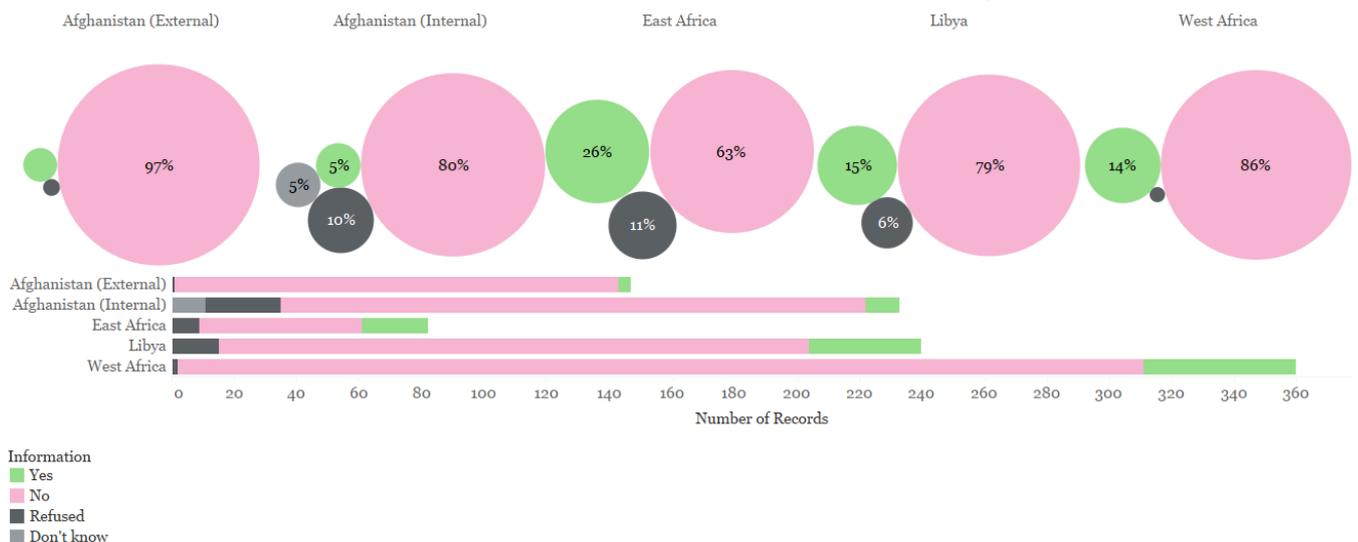
ransom when travelling along the Central Mediterranean route, predominantly in Libya, and they face a higher risk of sexual exploitation, bonded labour or trafficking if payments are not made as demanded.<sup>63</sup> East African women who participated in the 4Mi survey reported higher percentages than other regions for non-sexual physical assault and for being robbed. The Afghan women who participated in this research recounted experiences of smugglers taking advantage of them travelling alone to demand payments from the family they left behind in Afghanistan, suggesting similar patterns along the Eastern Mediterranean route; as well as smugglers robbing them.

*Most of them [smugglers] were Iranians, Turks, and Kurds and they had Afghan people as translators with them. They had a very bad attitude and when he came to know that I was alone, he was pressuring my husband and brother to send more money and they were putting me under great pressure threatening to take away my sons from me and divide us into two groups instead of travelling together.’ (G4)*

Sexual exploitation and abuse are rife along the migration routes examined for this research. Refugees and migrants experience it at the hands of traffickers, smugglers or local agents involved in facilitating journeys. But it is also reported in detention facilities in Libya;<sup>64</sup> and reception centres in Europe, such as in Germany.<sup>65</sup> Data collected in Italy indicates that Nigerian women are a sizeable group trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Some of them arrived in Europe pregnant and speak of rape in Libyan detention centres or forced prostitution in that country.<sup>66</sup>

The 4Mi data, although showing lower percentages of reported sexual assault or harassment, corroborates that these abuses happen (see Figure 23) and that the mode of travel can influence experiences of abuse. While 97 percent of Afghan women interviewed outside Afghanistan, who mostly travelled by plane, reported no experiences of sexual assault or harassment, there is strong evidence that refugees and migrants travelling along land routes face routine abuses.

**Figure 23: Sexual assault or harassment experienced on migration journeys**



63 IOM (2017), “Analysis: Flow Monitoring Surveys, The Human Trafficking and Other Exploitative Practices Prevalence Indication Survey April 2017,” DTM, International Organization for Migration.

64 Danish Refugee Council (2017), “Invisible Labour: Women’s labour migration to Libya,” 4Mi Maghreb.

65 European Parliament, Policy Department C: Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs (2016), “Reception of Female Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the EU: Case study Germany,” European Parliament.

66 Altai Consulting (2013), “Mixed Migration: Libya at the Crossroads, Mapping of Migration Routes from Africa to Europe and the Drivers of Migration in Post-revolution Libya,” Altai Consulting for UNHCR.

Witnessing death on migration journeys is also not uncommon. In the qualitative interviews, Afghan women indicated that deaths occur due to conditions during the journey, which include lack of access to food and medical services, or to injuries sustained while travelling. Deaths also happen at the hands of smugglers and law enforcement officials.

*'Another bad experience was that a baby child of 7–8 months was crying a lot while we sat on the boat. The smuggler took the baby from her mother and dropped her into the water and we saw the sinking baby and no one said anything. We were a large group of people and did not want to get caught by the police, we needed to cross the river silently. The smugglers were beating men and women, especially women who were not used to walking long distances and would fall behind. The smugglers were abusing and insulting the migrants.'* (G4)

*'It was a horrible experience. I was pregnant, and I had to save my children and my elder daughter's life. I had no choice, but it was a journey of life and death. When I was seeing dead bodies on the way, I was disappointed with the situation, but we had no way to return. We were afraid that the smuggler would kill us. I pursued the journey for survival but under normal condition it was not possible. When I reached the Greek border, my baby girl was born and after a while I was moved to Germany. Now I am here with my eight-month-old baby girl and my family is still stuck in Greece. I have got a residential permit with my baby girl and we have a house to live and money, but my whole family is away from me and the German government has denied them residential permits. We have appointed a lawyer to fight our case, but I don't know how long it will take.'* (G3)

Refugees and migrants who travelled through Libya, whose journeys originated in East or West Africa, also shared stories for other research of witnessing death caused by hunger, drowning, suffocation, starvation, excessive physical abuse or being shot.<sup>67</sup>

## Access to assistance

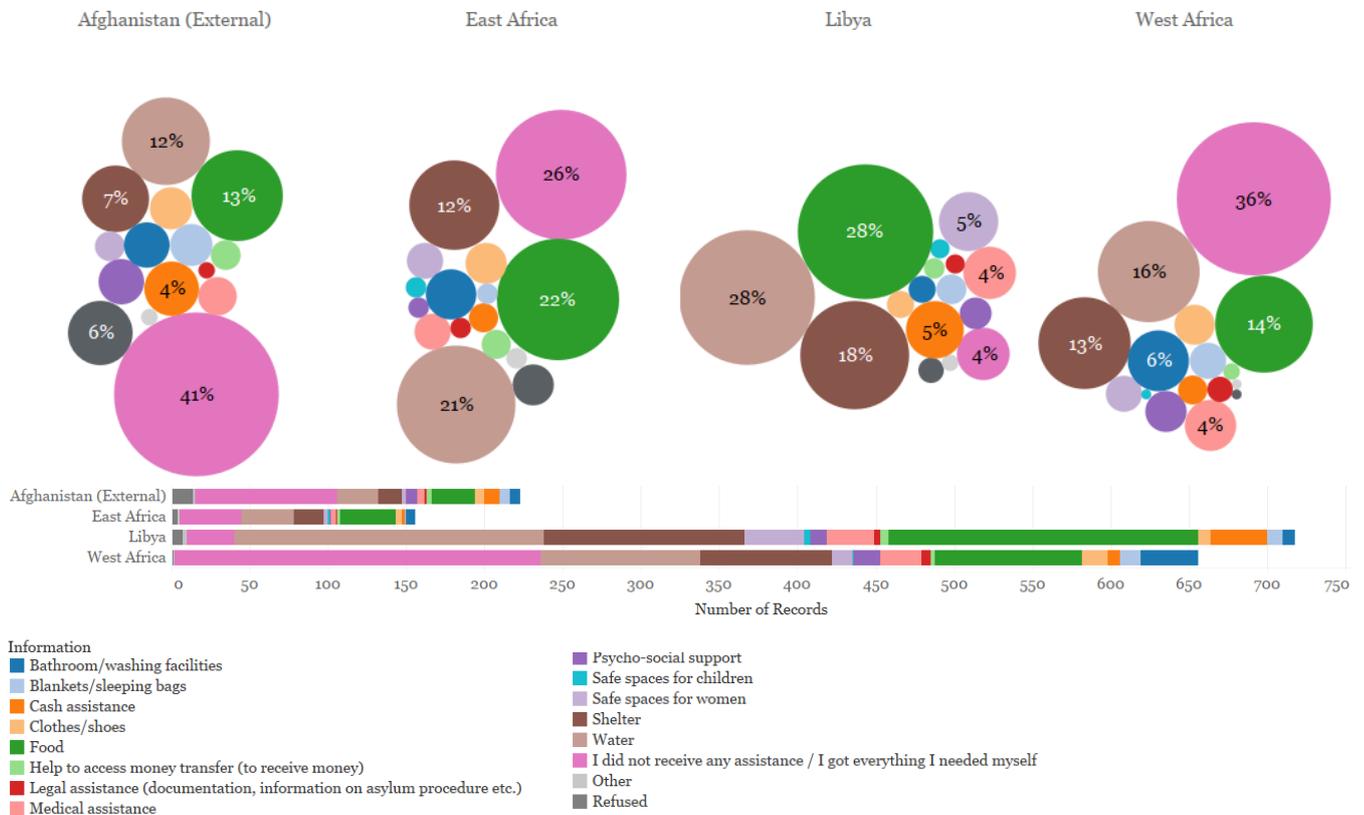
The volume of abuses faced by people on the move highlights the need for protection and access to services. However, the predominant pattern is for women not to have access to or to be denied services along their migration journeys. The 4Mi data suggests that a sizeable proportion of the women who took part in the surveys did not have access to assistance.

Figure 24 is significant because it highlights the unsatisfied needs of people on the move: for instance, it indicates low percentages for access to bathroom and washing facilities, blankets and sleeping bags, and clothes and shoes. Even though percentages for the provision of food, shelter and water are slightly higher than for other categories, these are nonetheless low: none of them are above 28 percent. Access to legal and medical assistance and psycho-social support are almost

<sup>67</sup> Danish Refugee Council (2017), "Human Smuggling – No victimless crime: Voices from those on the move," RMMS Briefing Papers, Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat East Africa and Yemen; Heaven Crawley, Franck Düvell, Katharine Jones, Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona (2016), "Destination Europe? Understanding the dynamics and drivers of Mediterranean migration in 2015," Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG); V. Squire (2017), "I never thought to come in Europe': unpacking the myths of Europe's 'migration crisis'," openDemocracy. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/beyondslavery/vicki-squire/i-never-thought-to-come-in-europe-unpacking-myths-of-europe-s-migration-c>.

negligible. These are all types of assistance that women taking the 4Mi survey indicated would have been helpful during their journeys.

**Figure 24: Types of assistance received during migration journey**



The Afghan women interviewed for this research confirmed difficulties in meeting basic needs and accessing services, ranging from lack of access to food and clothing to being denied medical treatment.

*'We spent more than four months in jail in Turkey. We were in a big room where 90 people were accommodated. Men and women were mixed up and everyone was sleeping on each other. We were not allowed to go to the toilet except once every 24 hours and there were no facilities for monthly periods, no pads or any help. I was taking dirty clothes and those clothes were full of insects.'* (G7)

*'We were moving in hilly jungles to cross the border from Iran to Turkey. My daughter was bitten by a snake and she was dying. I was begging the smuggler and he was not able to put everyone in the group in danger because of one person. We reached Turkey with great difficulty and they kept us in a big hall without any help. I was asking everyone for a doctor who could help my daughter, there was no one to support. We took pictures of her foot and took it to a pharmacy to give us some medicine. They charged us €300 for an injection and two tablets.'* (S6)

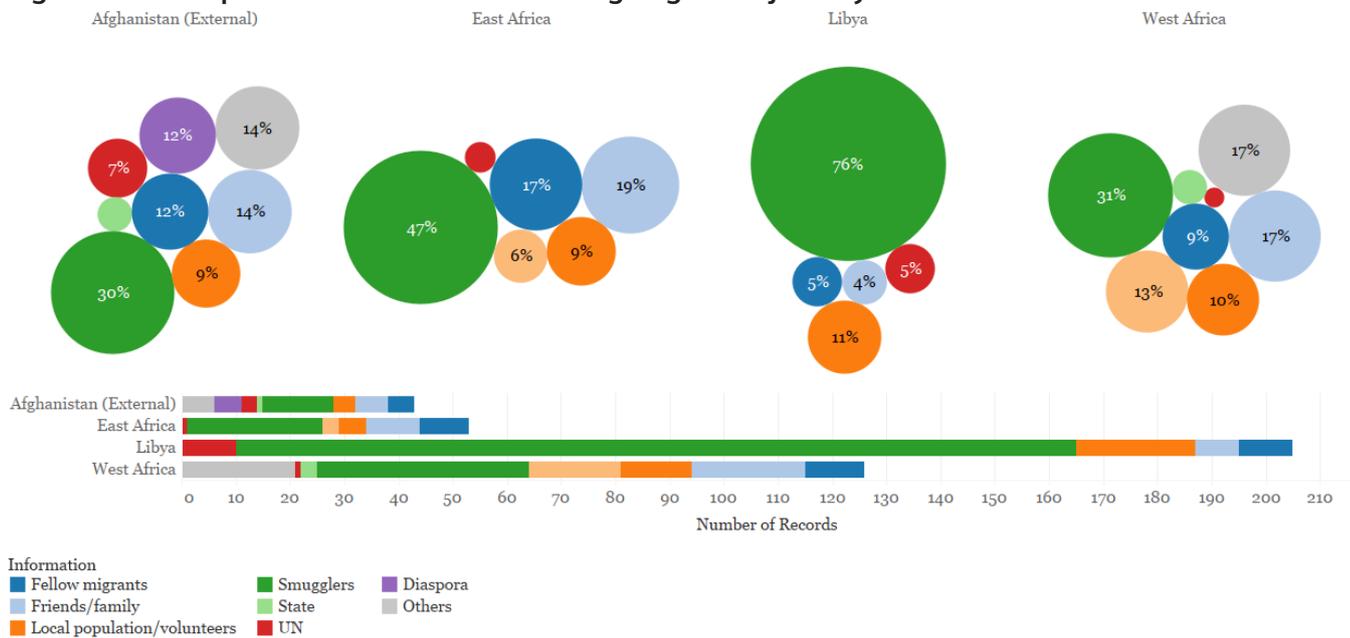
Difficulties in accessing services can be experienced because of unavailability of services or products, being denied access to them by smugglers or traffickers, or discrimination in locations where refugees and migrants are. There is evidence that the ethnic and religious background of refugees and migrants will determine whether they are more likely to face discrimination. Ethnic-Hazara

Afghan refugees and migrants report discrimination in Iran based on their background.<sup>68</sup> There are instances of refugees and migrants being denied treatment in hospitals and private clinics or being forced to wait longer than other patients because of their background and appearance.

The women who took part in qualitative interviews for this report in Serbia and Germany had no access to assistance during their journeys. Those who were interviewed in Afghanistan had no knowledge about how they would access assistance if they needed it.

The 4Mi data suggests that smugglers dominate refugees' and migrants' access to services. This is particularly the case in the Libya dataset, where 76 percent of women list smugglers as the main providers of assistance. The West Africa dataset suggests more varied sources of assistance, including friends and family, local people and volunteers.

**Figure 25: Main providers of assistance during migration journeys**



The 4Mi data collected from Afghan women outside Afghanistan is similarly varied and includes assistance received from the diaspora, which does not emerge in other datasets. The more varied assistance types Afghans report also raises questions of how access to them relates to the mode of travel. The Afghanistan (External) dataset was predominantly collected from women who travelled by air. Few women report assistance from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the UN. The highest score for NGOs is in West Africa (13 percent) and for the UN in the Afghanistan (External) dataset (7 percent).

68 Heaven Crawley, Franck Düvell, Katharine Jones, Simon McMahon and Nando Sigona (2016), "Destination Europe? Understanding the dynamics and drivers of Mediterranean migration in 2015," Unravelling the Mediterranean Migration Crisis (MEDMIG); Altai Consulting (2013), "Mixed Migration: Libya at the Crossroads, Mapping of Migration Routes from Africa to Europe and the Drivers of Migration in Post-revolution Libya," Altai Consulting for UNHCR; Oxfam (2017), "You aren't human any more: Migrants expose the harrowing situation in Libya and the impact of European policies," Oxfam Media Briefing.

# Conclusions and policy and programmatic recommendations

This report focuses on comparing migration experiences in origin, transit and destination countries among women from Asia, West, East and North Africa. It is mainly based on data collected with the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) between June and October 2017 including 1,062 surveys that provides a wide-ranging and unique insight into the experiences that refugee and migrant women face. While this data itself is rich, it has been supplemented and correlated with, and challenged by, external literature; and additional 29 in-depth interviews with Afghan women in Afghanistan, Serbia and Germany at various stages of their journey.

The report sought to address the following research questions:

**Drivers of migration:** what are the main reasons for migration among females from Asia, West, East and North Africa? How do women's reasons for migrating differ between the regions?

**Expectations:** what are women's expectations of the journey and of the destination country?

**Information:** how do women refugees and migrants access information on options for migrating and on possible support and services along the way?

**Smuggler and trafficking networks:** How do different female refugees and migrants from Asia, West Africa, East Africa and North Africa enter irregular migration?

**Transport modalities:** What are the different modalities of travel? How are they similar and/or different when compared across geographical locations and migration routes?

**Protection:** What are the main protection issues female refugees and migrants from the regions face along migration routes? Who are the perpetrators of abuse? And what are the differences and similarities in protection concerns along the migration routes?

The aim of the research is to contribute to a better understanding of women's migration experiences compared across regions, their protection needs along the way and how their journeys may or may not differ. The below provides concluding remarks on key findings in the report focused around three predominant topics; migration drivers, access to information and protection needs. The concluding remarks are followed by a set of policy and programmatic recommendations for practitioners. Finally, two recommendations are provided on how to strengthen advocacy to bring forward the voices of women on the move and work towards strengthen gender-sensitive programmes in countries of origin, transit and destination.

## Migration drivers

The main migration drivers emerging from this report are insecurity and violence, particularly in Afghanistan and East Africa; and searching for better economic opportunities, most predominantly among West African refugees and migrants. Other factors influencing women's migration decisions include social norms, domestic violence and discrimination along ethnic lines, particularly among Afghan women; and joining family abroad, most predominantly among respondents in East Africa.

**Recommendation 1:** stakeholders need to advocate for and secure that access to protection and quality asylum procedures are gender sensitive. Migration experiences of women often differs from those of men and it is therefore paramount that protection and asylum procedures are able to properly account for the experiences of women and their needs. For example, this includes ensuring that officials conducting asylum determinations have received adequate training, women have access to female interpreters and that protection activities consider gender-specific issues.

**Recommendation 2:** Gender-specific needs should be considered when building programmes aiming at offering alternative paths to migration for concerned women. For example, there is a need to address lower levels of access to the labour market in a context as Afghanistan or underemployment in West and East African contexts. In addition, stakeholders need to examine how their policies and programming could provide better access to livelihoods; this implies a need to focus on social inclusion as well as livelihood development to foster long term opportunities for potential refugees and migrants.

**Recommendation 3:** stakeholders should participate in advocacy campaigns to lobby for solutions to financial problems that can drive women into prostitution. Debt reduction, job creation for men and women and opportunities for loans and financing to start businesses would present migrant women with alternative access to employment (outside of the often-abusive sex industry).

## Information

As the 4Mi data illustrates, in addition to the interviews conducted with Afghan women, responses are significantly mixed on access to accurate information. There is a definite need for independent accurate advice about the conditions of travel along smuggling routes, particularly overland, and the living conditions in the intended country of origin and explanation about asylum procedures. While acknowledging that access to women on the move and sharing of information can be challenging, this research indicates that women refugee and migrants are more likely to rely on information from people who have migrated previously. This is common for women across the regions explored in the report.

**Recommendation 4:** Stakeholders should continue and increase focus on working with communities of women who have migrated to a certain destination country and in transit and origin countries to create a platform for them to share their stories and experiences as to of what to expect when undertaking migration journeys irregularly. For example, women's reliance on social media could be capitalized on as a channel/platform to not only convey messages on migration journeys and opportunities to access protection, but also as a potential platform for women to share their migration experience and have their voices heard.

## Protection

The 4Mi data provides information on the kinds of abuses women refugees and migrants face across the regions explored in this report. Abuses include physical and sexual assault, kidnapping, detention by militias and law enforcement officials, robbery and death. All types of abuse are reported across the datasets. In addition to that, the qualitative interviews with Afghan women and the literature on the topic highlighted additional protection concerns.

The evidence from Libya suggests the most serious abuses take place there, with physical and sexual abuse also common along the East and West Africa migration routes. Generally, land routes pose the greatest protection concerns. The most common concerns reported by Afghan women interviewed in Indonesia and India, who mostly travelled by plane were demands for bribes.

**Recommendation 5:** stakeholders needs to make sure that women refugees and migrants on the move have better access to specialised assistance, which can include gender-based violence shelters and provision of maternal and child health, psycho-social and medical support. The focus should be on the geographical areas that has been identified as hotspots where abuses are known to take place and/or along common migration routes.

**Recommendation 6:** Stakeholders should increase their coordination efforts for the provision of timely and effective protection and assistance services to women on the move, by establishing a comprehensive referral mechanism on services available. These efforts could be implemented in origin, transit and destination countries. In addition, they could include comprehensive capacity building of security and law enforcement officials.

## Advocacy

Findings in this report, as well as recommendations outlined above, clearly calls for concerted advocacy efforts to bring forward the voices of women on the move and work towards strengthen gender-sensitive programmes in countries of origin, transit and destination.

**Recommendation 7:** stakeholders should support advocacy campaigns to eliminate the use of detention as a migration management tool and concurrently focus on immediate improvement of conditions for women in detention centres. This should include advocacy work to ensure that detention centres can respond to specific gender-based needs and requirements and also ensure that law enforcement officials abide by international norms and regulations on the detention of refugees and migrants.

**Recommendation 8:** Finally, stakeholders should engage in advocacy efforts to increase the possibilities for women to migrate regularly, either within regional blocs or at international level. Such efforts will contribute to fewer women choosing to migrate in irregular ways, which often lead to substantive abuses and risks on route.



From: Photos from Afghanistan 2011  
Photo by: Eric Gerstner

# Annex 1 & 2: Overview of interviews with women

## Women interviewed in Germany and Serbia

Interview code	Age	Nationality/ethnicity	Marital status	Main driver of migration	Use of smugglers	Modality of travel
<b>Women interviewed in Germany</b>						
G1	42	Afghan, Pashtun	Married with children	Previous threat of forced marriage and resulting threat of honour killing or kidnap of family member	Smuggler organised travel in a mixed family group with another family group	Overland to Iran then Turkey by road, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G2	46	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Security/ threats from Taliban on family	Smuggler organised travel with family, in a large group of over 50 refugees and migrants	Overland to Iran then Turkey, travelled by car or on foot
G3	37	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Family member escaping forced marriage	Smuggler organised travel in a family group with over 50 other refugees and migrants	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G4	36	Afghan, Pashtun	Married with children	Family violence and threats from extended family over business dealings	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G5	28	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Family violence and threats from extended family over business dealings	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G6	42	Afghan, Shia	Married with children	Religious/ family matter	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G7	32	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Security/ threats from Taliban	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G8	35	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Security/ threats from Taliban	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G9	31	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Husband's decision	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G10	28	Afghan, Shia	Married with children	Husband's decision	Smuggler organised, with a family group, and other refugees and migrants	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G11	37	Afghan, Shia	Married with children	Personal decision to protect children	Smuggler organised, travelled alone with children and with a group of other refugees and migrants	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G12	22	Afghan, Shia	Engaged	Personal decision for a better life	Smuggler organised, travelled alone but in a large group of refugees and migrants	Overland to Iran then Turkey, by boat to Greece, mostly on foot
G13	36	Afghan, Shia	Married with children	Husband's decision	Smuggler organised, with a family group and other refugees and migrants	Unknown
<b>Women interviewed in Serbia</b>						
S1	45	Afghan, Tajik (previously resident in Iran)	Married with children	For children's education	Smuggler organised, in a large group of refugees and migrants	Overland from Iran to Turkey, Greece then Serbia, on foot, by car and boat
S2	52	Afghan, Shia (previously resident in Iran)	Widowed, with children	For children's education	Smuggler organised, in a large group of over 1,000 refugees and migrants	Overland from Iran to Turkey, Greece then Serbia, on foot, by car and boat
S3	32	Afghan, Pashtun	Married, no children	Husband's illness, and sexual harassment	Smuggler organised, in a group of 30–40 refugees and migrants	Flight to Turkey, then on foot to Bulgaria then Serbia.
S4/S5 (mother and daughter)	56 and 28	Afghan, Tajik (previously resident in Iran)	Both married with children	Education of children and quality of life	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran, then Turkey, Greece and Serbia, on foot, by car and boat
S6	33	Afghan, Tajik	Married with children	Threats to family over money/ business	Smuggler organised	Overland to Iran, then Turkey, Greece and Serbia, on foot, by car and boat

## Women interviewed in Afghanistan

Interview code	Age	Nationality/ethnicity	Marital status	Main driver of migration	Use of smugglers	Modality of travel
<b>Women interviewed in Kabul</b>						
A1	35	Hazara	Single	Political insecurity, safety, chance for a better life	No, just started the journey.	To migrate legally, with help from the UN, to Canada
A2	38	Tajik	Married with children	Unemployment, poverty, family problems	Previous bad experiences with smugglers and illegal migration, was deported from Iran back to Afghanistan	To migrate legally
A3	30	Tajik	Married with children	Insecurity, safety, better healthcare for sick family members	No, but have heard realistic stories from refugees and migrants about the problems	To travel legally to Iran, then illegally to Turkey, ideally by plane
A4	35	Hazara	Divorced with children	Insecurity and safety	Yes, returned from Iran (reasons unclear), initial plan was to go to Sweden	Unsure if wants to undertake the journey again
<b>Women interviewed in Herat</b>						
A5	25	Hazara	Single	Discrimination and restrictions	No, but sister has, will follow the same route she has to reach Germany, knows it is not an easy route	To travel legally to Iran, then illegally to Germany, via Turkey and Greece, using smugglers
A6	28	Hazara	Married, no children	Economic and social problems	No, but aware of the risks of being turned back at borders, and from friends who have migrated the risk of drowning in small boats	To travel legally to Iran, then illegally to Turkey using smugglers, then either to Europe or Canada
A7	32	Tajik	Married with children	Safety and Security	No, but have been told the journey is easy, 2 days' hike and a lake to cross	To travel illegally using smugglers to Turkey, then Greece, then Europe.
<b>Women interviewed in Nimruz</b>						
A8	27	Tajik	Single	Economic reasons, lack of jobs	No, will rely on a smuggler	To travel illegally using smugglers from Pakistan to Iran, Turkey, Greece then Germany
A9	27	Pashtun	Married with children	Security and lack of jobs	No, but have heard smugglers might not always tell the truth and there may be some problems such as lack of food and walking long distances	To travel illegally using smugglers from Pakistan to Iran, Turkey, Greece then Germany
A10	30	Pashtun	Married with children	Security and lack of jobs	No, but aware of some problems, such as walking long distances, and lack of food/water	To travel illegally using smugglers to Iran, then Turkey, Greece and Germany

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