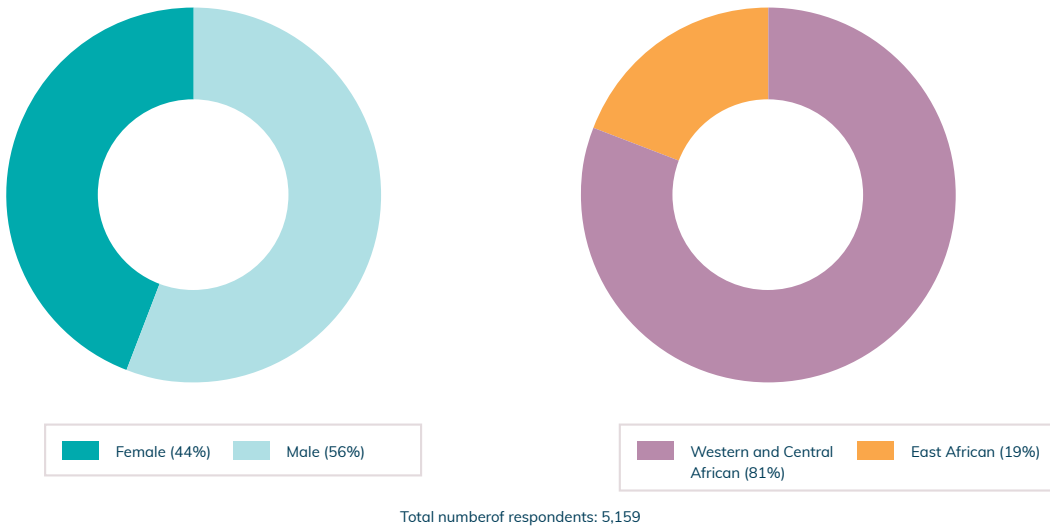


Profiles

This Snapshot analyses findings from a 4Mi survey of 5,219 refugees and migrants in Libya, conducted between May 2017 and June 2019. Some 81% of respondents originate from countries in West or Central Africa, while 19% are from East Africa;¹ 44% are women and 56% are men. The analysis examines protection risks within and along routes to Libya, with a focus on sexual abuse. See also MMC's recent snapshot on Protection incidents and assistance from West Africa [here](#).

Figure 1: Distribution of sex and origin in the 4Mi sample

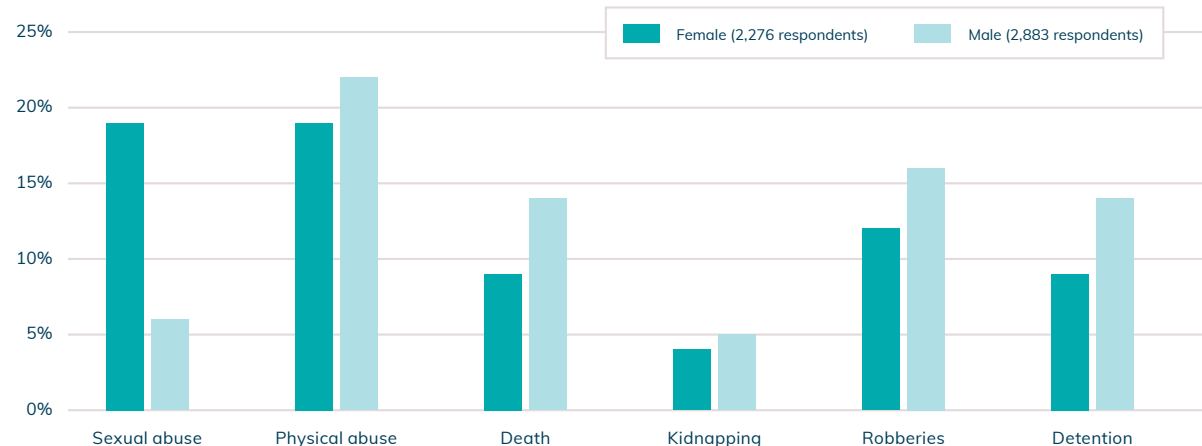


¹ This snapshot adopts the UNDESA classification of regions, with the exception of Sudan, which is included in East Africa. Regions are defined as follows: East Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda; West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo; Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe.

Greatest protection risks faced by women: sexual abuse and physical abuse

4Mi data reveal that 44% of respondents encountered one or more protection incidents during their journey. Figure 2 displays the percentage of refugees and migrants experiencing and/or witnessing different protection incidents, disaggregated by gender. More specifically, it shows the prevalence of sexual abuse, physical abuse, deaths, kidnapping, robbery and detention. Physical abuse is the most prevalent protection incident reported by both men and women, with 21% of the total sample answering "Yes" to the question "Did you experience any physical abuse or harassment (of a non-sexual nature) during your journey?" The second most-cited protection incident reported is robbery (14%) followed by detention, death and sexual abuse, each at 12%. However, when considering only female respondents, sexual abuse (19%) appears to be the most common protection risk, alongside physical abuse (19%). Additionally, when examining female youths (18-24 years old), the prevalence of experiencing or witnessing sexual abuse was similar to the full female sample (18%). The result is generally in line with the findings from the recent protection snapshot from West Africa.

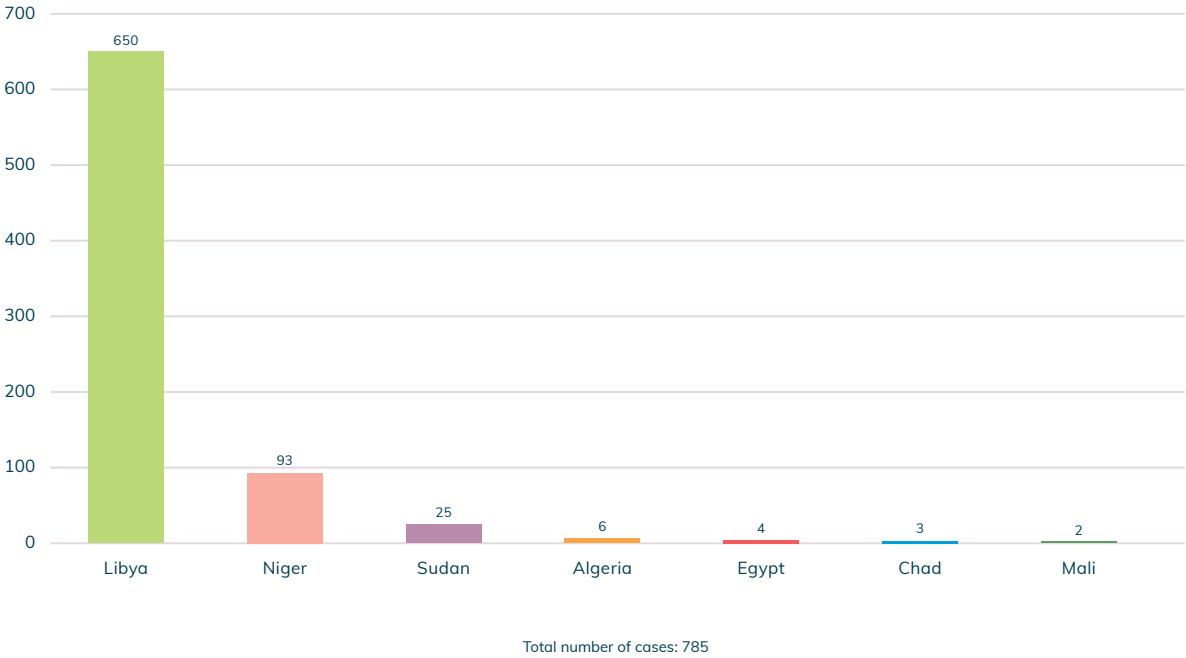
Figure 2: Protection risks by category and sex



Most reported incidents of sexual abuse took place in Libya

Respondents report 785 cases of sexual abuse, the majority of which occurred in Libya (650 cases), followed by Niger (93 cases), and Sudan (25) (see Figure 3). These data align with reports by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN support Mission in Libya which detail human rights violations in Libya.² Even if we account for the fact that refugee and migrant respondents move along different routes, and hence different countries of transit, incidents in Libya far exceed those of the total incidents across all the transit countries.

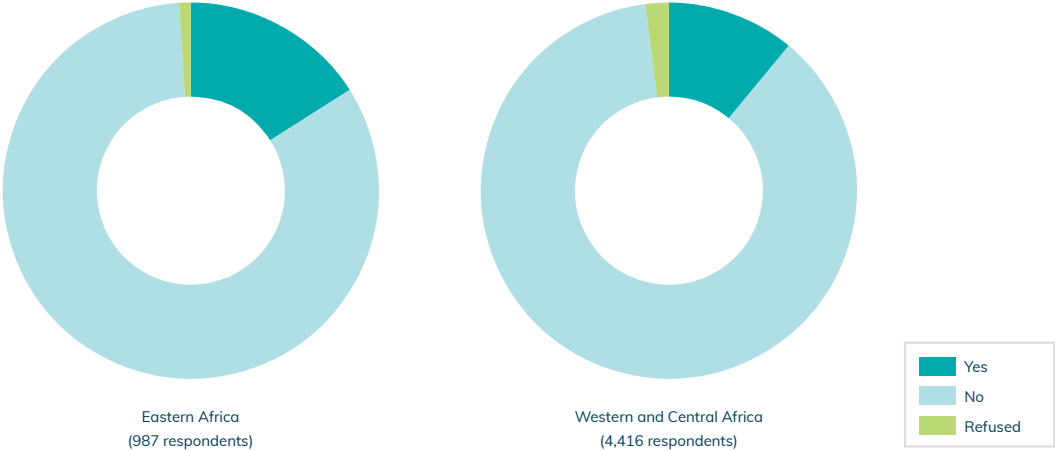
Figure 3: Incidents of sexual abuse by country



Sexual abuse is most frequently reported by East Africans

Figure 4 shows the prevalence of sexual abuse, disaggregated by region of origin. A larger share of East African respondents have witnessed or experienced sexual abuse than West and Central African respondents, at 16% and 11%, respectively.³ To explore the reasons for this difference is beyond the scope of this snapshot; however, this might suggest that East Africans are more vulnerable to protection risks, or that the Eastern Route towards Libya, through Sudan, is more perilous, or a combination of both.

Figure 4: Percentage of people experienced or witnessed sexual abuse by origin



³ A t-test suggests that the difference is statistically significant at the 5% level.

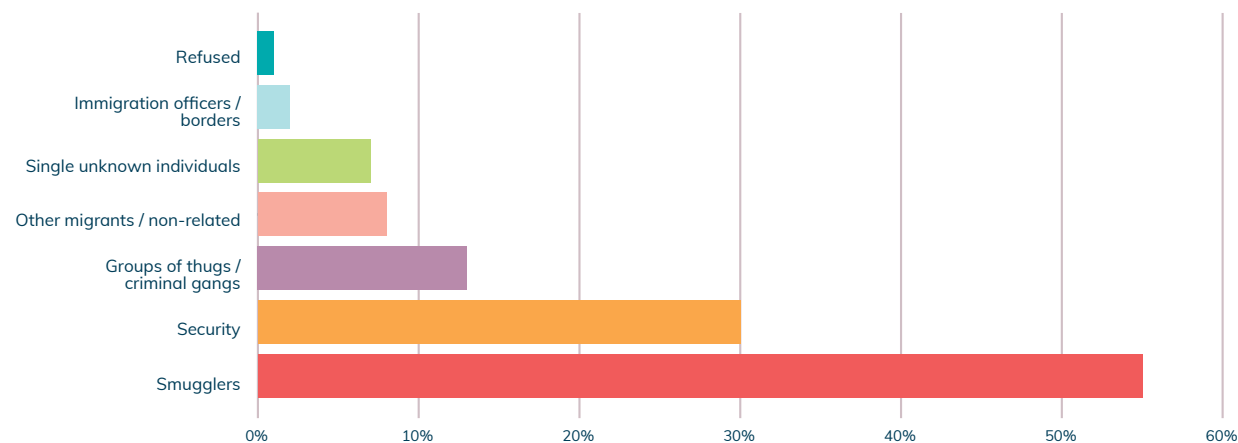
Smugglers are the most frequently cited perpetrators

Figure 5 displays the reported perpetrators of sexual abuse. Smugglers are most commonly cited as perpetrators (55%), followed by security personnel (30%) and criminal gangs (13%). This finding contrasts with the finding in the West African snapshot, where security forces and border officials are more often cited as perpetrators compared to smugglers. This might suggest that the smugglers used to travel to and through Libya are more abusive, and that the migrants and refugees along this route are more dependent on smugglers. More generally, the data presented here highlight that there are a multitude of perpetrators. A respondent states:

“The way the desert security guards were sexually harassing the female migrants is extremely bad, especially those female migrants who have no money to settle the security (fee). The security (guard) will go as far as touching the sensitive part of the female bodies, in order to check if they are hiding money.”

(31-year-old Nigerian man who witnessed sexual abuse by security guards)

Figure 5: Perpetrators of sexual abuse⁴



⁴ Note that the total sum exceeds 100% as the respondents can choose multiple perpetrators.

Conclusion

This snapshot has analysed protection risks within and en route to Libya, with a focus on sexual abuse. The data indicate that a significant number of refugees and migrants face several protection risks along their journey. The analysis suggests that women are particularly exposed to sexual abuse, with approximately 1 in 5 female respondents having experienced or witnessed sexual abuse. Within the 4Mi sample, East Africans are significantly more exposed to sexual abuse. Furthermore, the perpetrators of the abuses are comprised of a multitude of actors, the most frequently cited of whom are smugglers and security personnel.



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The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field monitors are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa, East Africa and Yemen, North Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Sample sizes are clearly indicated and represent a limited section of those on the move. The findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make any inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at www.mixedmigration.org/4mi