

**MMC North Africa**

**QUARTER 1 2022**

A photograph of two men on a boat. The man in the foreground is wearing a white t-shirt and has his hand to his face, looking distressed. The man behind him is also in a white t-shirt and is looking out at the sea with his hands clasped. The background shows a vast blue ocean under a clear sky.

# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the North Africa (NA) region. The core countries of focus for this region are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to some of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

The Mixed Migration Centre is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. For more information on the MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit [mixedmigration.org](https://mixedmigration.org) and follow us at [@Mixed\\_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

### **MMC's 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 a range of 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.

#### **Front cover photo credit:**

Taha Jawashi (2017)

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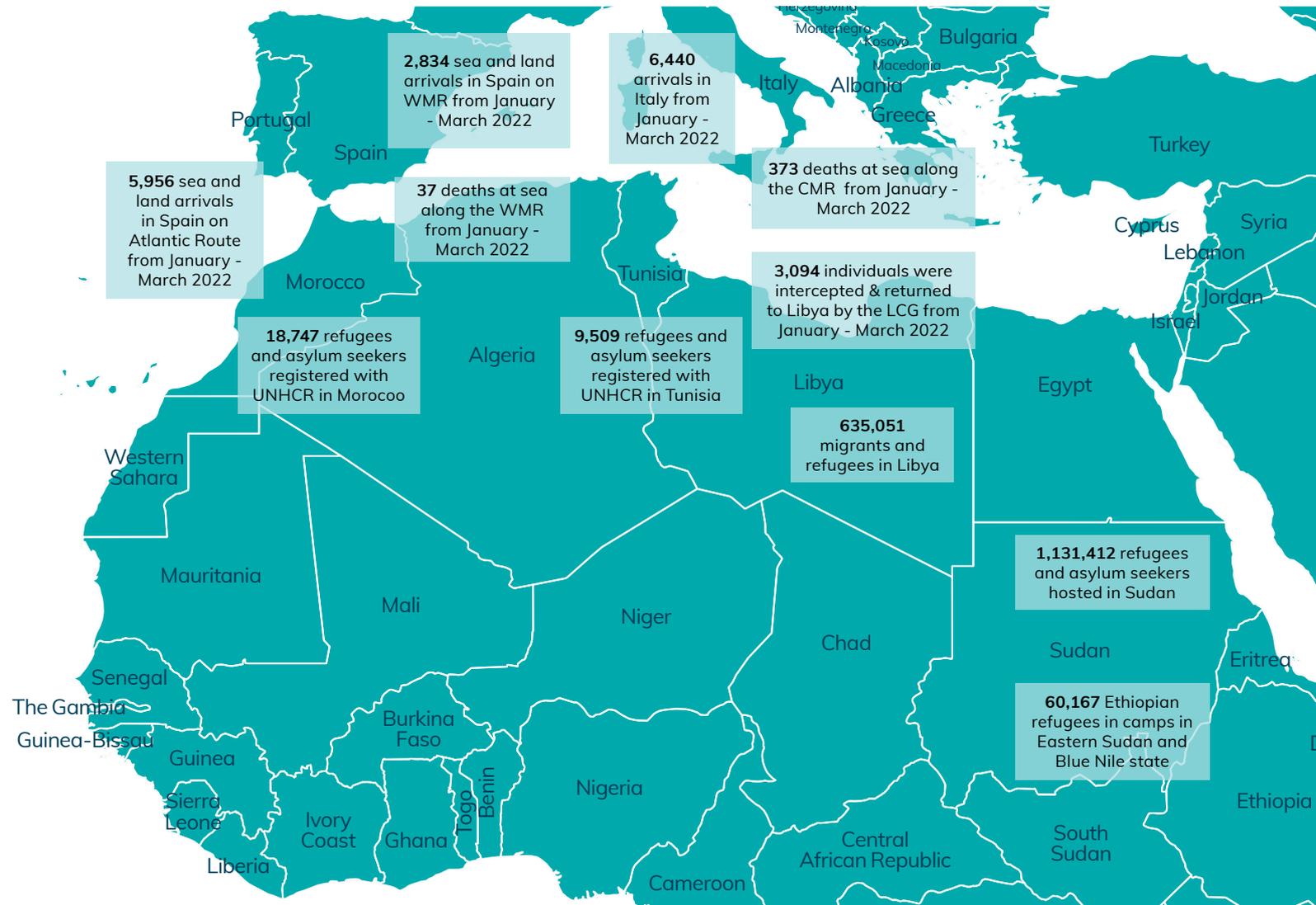
# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa

## Quarter 1 - 2022

## Key Updates

- **Land and sea arrivals to Italy and Spain from North Africa** through the Central (CMR) and Western Mediterranean Routes (WMR) **increased by 13%** compared to the same period in 2021.
- Data from [the Spanish Ministry of Interior](#) show **an increase of land and sea arrivals in the first two months of 2022 of 73.2%** compared to the same period last year. According to the Ministry's figures, more than 98% of these arrivals were registered by sea, with most arrivals registered at the Canary Islands.
- According to the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), in Q1 of 2022 **3,094 refugees and migrants were intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG)** and returned to Libya.
- **410 refugees and migrants** were reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean in Q1, of which 373 were along the CMR and 37 along the WMR. This marks a slight increase compared to the same period in 2021.
- In March, media reported on [Germany's](#) announcement that it would no longer participate in the support and training of the LCG in Libya, carried out by the European Union (EU) since 2016, citing cases of mistreatment of intercepted and returned migrants and "unacceptable behaviour" by authorities.
- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) [warn](#) that combined effects of conflict, economic crisis, and poor harvests are significantly affecting people's access to food and will likely double the number of **people facing acute hunger in Sudan to more than 18 million people** by September 2022, having the potential to impact on erupting and resource-driven conflicts and forced internal and cross-border displacements.

## Regional Overview\*



\*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration patterns within and out of North Africa.

# Mixed Migration Regional Updates

## Mixed migration from North Africa to Europe

### North African arrivals in Europe

From January – March 2022, [IOM](#) reports that 15,469 refugees and migrants entered Spain (by sea or land) and Italy (by sea) through the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes (CMR and WMR), indicating an increase in arrivals of 13% compared to the number of arrivals in the same period of 2021 ([MMC](#)).

Arrivals in Italy through the CMR in Q1 decreased compared to the same period last year. [UNHCR](#) reported 6,440 arrivals from January 1st – March 31st, 2022, compared to 7,419 arrivals in January – March 2021 ([MMC](#)). For the months of January and February, North Africa remained a top region of origin of people on the move along to Italy, with Egyptians (the most common nationality) representing 25.3% of arrivals, followed by Tunisians (3rd, 12.6%) and Sudanese (9th, 2.2%). Moreover, according to [UNHCR](#) data, one in three sea arrivals in February 2022 was Egyptian. This marks an increase compared [to the same period](#) in 2021, when Egyptian nationals accounted for 4% of arrivals and ranked 9th.

On the WMR to Spain, [UNHCR](#) data reveal that Q1 saw an increase of 57% compared to the same period in 2021 (from 6,651 to 2,834). Moreover, data from [the Spanish Ministry of Interior](#) show an increase of arrivals in the first two months of 2022 of 73.2% compared to the same period last year. According to the Ministry's figures, more than 98% of these arrivals are by sea (7,184) and most were recorded at the Canary Islands. The Ministry cites a total of 5,496 individuals have arrived in the Canary Islands since the beginning of the year in 115 boats, an increase of 3,155 migrants more than a year ago. [UNHCR](#) published a slightly higher figure of 5,956, marking an increase of 79% compared to the same period last year.

### Departures on the CMR and WMR

[UNHCR](#) finds that the largest share of refugees and migrants crossing the CMR and arriving in Italy in January – February 2022 had departed from Libya (69% up from 61% in Q1 of 2021), followed in the region by Tunisia (20%, down from 30%) and Algeria (1%, down from 3%). Approximately 65% of those leaving Libya originated from two countries, namely Bangladesh and Egypt. The vast majority of those leaving Tunisia was Tunisian, while almost one in four came from Côte d'Ivoire.

### Interceptions and rescue operations in the Mediterranean

According to [UNHCR](#), up to January 2022, 1,721 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees were disembarked following 21 interception and rescue operations. Looking at year-end figures, in 2021, 32,425 migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees were returned to Libya and disembarked over 235 operations. The number of returned migrants, asylum seekers and refugees represented a 178% increase compared to the same period in 2020 (11,520 individuals). [IOM](#) finds that in Q1 (up to March 28th, 2022) at least 3,094 migrants were intercepted by the LCG and returned to Libya.

Multiple rescue and interception operations were carried out by the Tunisian Coast Guard at sea and at the Tunisian coast over the course of Q1. Notably, at [the beginning of February](#), the spokesman of the Tunisian National Guard reported that over 163 migrants, mainly Tunisian nationals, were intercepted off the coast of the Governorate of Sfax in route to Italy.

In Morocco, national media continued to report over the course of Q1 on interceptions carried out by the Moroccan authorities, including a group of [40 migrants](#) on the Atlantic Ocean after they had spent nine days at sea on their way to the Canary Islands. Two of them were found dead. The survivors were reported to be young Moroccans, mostly originating from the inland city of Beni Mellal. On February 23rd, 2022, another boat capsized on the Atlantic Route, resulting in 3 migrants drowning and 47 rescued. Earlier on in January, [63 individuals](#) were rescued by Moroccan authorities after Alarm Phone had raised the case in distress.

## Dead or missing refugees and migrants

From January – March 2022, [410 refugees and migrants](#) were reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean, of which 373 along the CMR and 37 along the WMR. This marks a slight increase compared to the same period in 2021 (387). Several shipwrecks continued to be reported around the region. On February 27th, a boat sank off the coast of the Libyan town of Sabratha. “About 50 people were on board the boat, none of them survived,” Alarm Phone cited on its [Twitter account](#). A few days later, [IOM](#) said that at least 70 migrants have gone missing at sea and are presumed dead off the coast of Libya over the first two weeks of March.

In Tunisia, [IOM](#) announced that at least 25 people died after a boat sank off the coast of Nabeul on March 18th – 19th, with several bodies found along the coast of Cap Bon. “The identification of the bodies is underway. According to the information available, they are migrants of Syrian and Tunisian nationality”, as stated by IOM’s Facebook page, adding that the boat was carrying about 60 people. [In late February](#), 9 bodies were recovered according to the Tunisian Ministry of Defense. Their boat capsized near Mahdia, in eastern Tunisia. The bodies of the victims, reportedly from several African countries, were recovered by units of the Tunisian Navy and Coast Guard.

In the same context, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Observatory highlighted in a [statement](#) an increase of migrant drownings in the Mediterranean, stating a lack of legal and humanitarian considerations in the protection of migrants and asylum seekers. The Observatory called on EU countries to work with origin and departure countries in launching official rescue missions, “instead of providing financial and logistical support to help some source countries intercept asylum seekers and encourage dangerous refoulement practices.” according to the statement.

In Algeria, a [local media](#) source reported in early January that at least 17 migrants drowned after embarking from Oran towards the Spanish coast of Almería. Among them were reportedly a Syrian minor, five Moroccan nationals, including a young girl from Oujda, and 11 Algerians. According to the [latest figures from the Spanish NGO Centro Internacional para la Identificación de Migrantes Desaparecidos](#), at least 487 individuals, including 413 Algerian nationals, disappeared after leaving Algeria in 2021, marking an increase compared to 2020 when 291 people disappeared.

On March 12th, 2022, at least [44 people](#) drowned off the coast of Tarfaya (southern Morocco) while they were trying to reach the Canary Islands. There were 61 people on board, including women and children. Early in January, [27 people](#) went missing on the Alborán Sea on the WMR towards Spain after departing from Nador. Moroccan, Algerian and Spanish authorities launched search operations without success.

## Political migration dialogues

### EU recognizes mistreatment of returned migrants in Libya

In a confidential report obtained by the [AP](#), as cited, the EU recognises that Libyan authorities have used “excessive force” against refugees and migrants and that some interceptions in the Mediterranean were carried out in violation of international laws. The report was led by Stefano Turchetto, the head of Operation Irini, and submitted to EU officials in January. While the report highlights that the political context in Libya has hampered the LCG training programme supported by the EU, it also details an excessive use of force conducted by the LCG. Specific reference is made to an incident during the interception of a migrant boat at sea on September 15th, 2021. The LCG, according to the report, used tactics “never seen before and not in accordance with [EU] training and international regulations.” No further details were given. While asked to comment on the incident, Frontex reported to AP that it had documented the case and filed a ‘serious incident report’. However, Frontex reinstated that the EU remains committed to training Libyans and building their capacity to manage a large Search and Rescue zone in the Mediterranean (SAR), according to AP.

In this context, at [least three petitions](#) have been filed with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Libyan and European officials, human traffickers, and militia members for crimes against humanity. The NGOs UpRights, Adala pour tous, and Strali directly accuse the Italian and Maltese authorities of being complicit of crimes against humanity while supporting the LCG, providing them with equipment, maintenance and training since 2017. The three organisations add that Italy and Malta have additionally coordinated operations with these same coastguards to ensure the return of migrants to Libya and deter others from embarking on the CMR towards Europe.

Recently, reacting to these developments, [Germany](#) announced that it would no longer participate in the training of Libyan coastguards, which has been supervised by the EU since 2016, citing cases of mistreatment of migrants and “unacceptable behaviour” on behalf of the authorities.

## Mixed migration in Libya

### Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Libya

As of January 31st, 2022, [IOM](#) estimates that there are at least 635,051 migrants in Libya, with 58% located in the West, 29% in the East, and 13% in the South. This number represents an increase when compared to the same period in 2021 (571,464). IOM identifies the main migrant nationalities in Q1 2022 to be Nigerien (25%), Egyptian (18%), Sudanese (18%), Chadian (13%), and Nigerian (5%).

[UNHCR](#) estimates that, as of March 1st, 2022, 42,528 refugees and asylum seekers are registered in Libya. Compared to reporting in Q4 of 2021, this represents a slightly increasing trend (42,489).

## Crackdown and arrests end refugee protest in Tripoli

On January 10th, 2022, Libyan security forces violently ended a refugee protest in Tripoli that had been going on since October 2021, arresting more than 600 individuals and detaining them in Ain Zara detention centre, as [reported](#). In a call for protection from abuse and evacuation to third countries, refugees had launched the protest campaign in a direct response to events happening in the neighbourhood of Gargaresh in October, when over 5,000 people were arrested and detained in detention centres. Those who escaped or not detained formed a 'protest camp' outside of UNHCR's Community Day Centre, which shut its doors permanently in December citing the security situation blocked the delivery of adequate protection assistance and support to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers.

## UN investigates reports of migrant mass graves in Libya

In Q1, an article published by [Reuters](#) detailed how UN investigators have uncovered further evidence of human rights violations against migrant detainees in Libya and are seeking to verify reports of mass graves thought to contain the corpses of migrants in Bani Walid.

In its [report](#) released on March 28th, 2022 and based on some 120 interviews between October and March, the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya (FFM), established by the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) stated there is a solid belief that secret detention centres violate international human rights and humanitarian law. Violations include intimidation and harassment of activists, attacks on the judiciary, and abuse towards vulnerable groups, including migrants. Moreover, several migrants told the UN Fact-Finding Mission that there were "mass graves" in Bani Walid, with one testifying that he had buried three bodies in one of them. When asked to comment, the Mayor of Bani Walid acknowledged that there had been abuses of migrants in the past, but said the situation had improved in recent years.

## Mixed Migration in Tunisia

### Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Tunisia

As of February 28th, 2022, [UNHCR](#) reported that there are 9,509 registered refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia, of which the top nationalities are Ivoirian (37%), Syrian (27%), Cameroonian (5%), Sudanese (5%) and Guinean (5%). The number represents a 17% increase compared to the last quarter. Greater Tunis<sup>1</sup> (4,374), Sfax (2,204), and Médenine (1,220) continue to host the largest refugee and asylum seeker populations ([UNHCR](#)).

1 Greater Tunis includes the four governorates Tunis, Ariana, Ben Arous and Manouba.

## Refugee protests in southern Tunisia

Following cited budget constraints and a consequent reduction in assistance from UNHCR in Tunisia, refugees and migrants organised protests in front of the UNHCR premises in Zarzis, southern Tunisia, in the month of February, demanding evacuation and citing “inhumane” living conditions in the country, according to [reports](#). Amid a political crisis and a struggling economy, livelihood opportunities for refugees and migrants in Tunisia have taken a hit. With assistance to vulnerable cases now being reduced or removed due to budget constraints, UNHCR acknowledged in a statement shared on [Twitter](#) that refugees, as well as migrants and vulnerable people of concern in general, are facing considerable challenges in Tunisia, particularly due to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Four migrants found dead in western Tunisia

On March 3rd, 2022, regional authorities reported to [AFP](#) the discovery of the bodies of four migrants in western Tunisia, not far from the border with Algeria. The regional governorate representative of Health said the “three bodies were found on Wednesday [March 2nd] and another five days ago in Haïdra, in the governorate of Kasserine,” near the Algerian border. Aged between 20 and 35, the migrants, all men, were from sub-Saharan Africa and one of them, the only one carrying an identity document, was a national of Côte d'Ivoire, according to the same source. They arrived in Tunisia after crossing the border with Algeria. The bodies were transferred to the hospital in Kasserine for an autopsy, “but they most likely died from cold and hunger,” added the regional government representative. Recently, humanitarian actors in-country have noted the increase in refugees and migrants coming from Algeria intending to cross the border into Tunisia.

## Mixed Migration in Sudan

### Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Sudan

As of February 28th, 2022, [UNHCR](#) reported that Sudan hosted [1,131,412](#) refugees and asylum-seekers, of which 61% live in urban and rural settings, and 39% are hosted in camps. This assumes an increase in those living in camps compared to Q4 (30%) of 2021 ([MMC](#)). The main countries of origin remain South Sudan (799,911), Eritrea (128,996), Syria (93,482), Ethiopia (73,335), and the Central African Republic (27,867). The main hosting states are Khartoum State (306,374), White Nile State (275,569), and Kassala State (109,416). Moreover, according to [UNHCR](#), as of February 28th, 60,167 Ethiopian refugees affected by the Tigray crisis remain in Eastern Sudan and Blue Nile state.

### Worsening food crisis looming in Sudan

The combined effects of conflict, economic crisis, and poor harvests are significantly affecting people’s access to food and will likely double the number of people facing acute hunger in Sudan to more than 18 million people by September 2022, [warn](#) FAO and WFP. When asked about the current situation, the WFP Representative and Country Director in Sudan detailed that “there are already worrying signs that access, cost, and availability of food is decreasing for most people in Sudan, pushing more people into poverty and hunger.”

In recent months, the number of people displaced by the conflict in parts of Darfur and Kordofan regions has increased. This insecurity has eroded livelihoods, damaged farms, and caused widespread unemployment. The depreciation of the Sudanese pound (SDG), as well as rising food and transport prices, makes it harder for families to provide food. Besides that, the war in Ukraine is causing further increases in food costs as Sudan is dependent on wheat imports from the Black Sea region. The disruption of the flow of grain to Sudan will lead to higher prices and make it more difficult to import wheat. Evidence from earlier research suggests that difficulties in accessing staple foods including wheat and bread could lead to and impact resource scarcity-driven conflicts, and internal cross-border displacements.

## Mixed Migration in Egypt

### Arrests of Sudanese refugee activists

On March 27th, 2022, Human Rights Watch (HRW) communicated that the Egyptian police arbitrarily arrested at least 30 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in raids in December 2021 and January 2022 and subjected some to forced physical labour and beatings. HRW quoted three Sudanese refugees and a member of a Cairo-based civil society organisation as citing that police officers in civil clothing arrested the Sudanese at their homes, in cafes and on the street between December 27th, 2021, and January 5th this year. The following day, the police released all Sudanese who had been detained. "Egypt's attorney general should investigate the arbitrary arrests and mistreatment of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers and hold those responsible to account," said HRW's Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa. On March 29th, [local media](#) stated that a security source denied reports circulating regarding the alleged mistreatment of Sudanese refugees in Egypt by security authorities.

## Mixed Migration in Morocco

### Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Morocco

At the end of January 2022, [UNHCR](#) reported that there are 9,379 refugees and 9,386 asylum seekers present in Morocco from more than 48 countries of origin. The majority of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco remain Syrian nationals (5,099), followed by Guineans (2,762), Ivoirians (1,934), Cameroonians (1,467), Senegalese (1,261) and Yemenis (1,119). According to a [local source](#) referencing to UNHCR year-end figures for 2021, Rabat continued to host the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers with a figure of 1,398, followed by Casablanca (953), Oujda (870), Nador (677), Marrakech (514), Fez (492), Meknes (446) and Kenitra (429). These 8 cities hosted 62% of the total number of refugees and asylum seekers present in Morocco in 2021.

### Portugal and Morocco sign migration agreement

Portugal and Morocco have signed an [agreement](#) that sets out the legal arrangements for Moroccans to come and live and work in the EU Member State. The agreement is part of both countries' efforts to deter irregular migration and human trafficking. The Portuguese Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the

agreement will allow “the recruitment, hiring and immigration of Moroccan workers, guaranteeing them the same rights and duties as Portuguese workers.” Showcasing a more liberal approach to immigration, migrants seeking to enter the European Union are increasingly turning to Portugal after Mediterranean countries like Spain, Italy and Greece began fortifying their maritime borders in recent years. At the end of last year, [Portuguese media](#) reported on already observing a small increase in boat arrivals in southern Portugal from Morocco.

## Mixed Migration in Algeria

### Algeria suspends repatriation of nationals from Spain

According to the Spanish newspaper [ElConfidencial](#), quoting Algerian official sources, Algeria has suspended without delay the repatriation of its nationals without visa arrangements from Spain, reportedly to put pressure on Spain for its changed position on the Western Sahara issue.<sup>2</sup> On March 19th, 2022, Madrid allegedly supported for the first time in public the position of the Moroccan authorities on the sovereignty question of the Western Sahara territory, diverging from Algeria’s standpoint on this topic. Until now, large numbers of returns of Algerians from Spain were carried out by the ferry company Trasmediterránea. This followed an increase in the number of Algerians arriving in Andalucía, southern Spain, in 2021, according to [El País](#), when the Spanish Ministry of the Interior urgently signed an agreement with the ferry company.

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2 Western Sahara has been on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories since 1963.

# Thematic Focus:

## Arrests of West and Central African students in Tunisia

### Reports in media and from civil society

In February, the French newspaper [Le Monde](#) reported, while citing student and worker associations in Tunisia, an increase in acts of racism and targeted arrests of West and Central African students across student cities in the country. Since the beginning of 2022, around 300 students have been arrested and detained for several hours according to estimates by associations, the paper reports. These students mostly benefit from scholarships within bilateral cooperation frameworks between Tunisia and a large number of countries in Francophone West and Central Africa. The President of the Tunisian Association for the Support of Minorities (ATSM), stated that these actions could lead to a sharp decrease in the numbers of sub-Saharan students and asked Tunisian authorities to respect the privacy of minorities in Tunisia and to treat them according to legislation. In 2018, Tunisia adopted a law on the elimination of all forms and manifestations of racial discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

Mahmoud,<sup>4</sup> an interviewed Senegalese student of Economics and Political Science residing in Ibn Khaldoun, a neighbourhood of Tunis, was stopped and arrested by the police. He explained: "I saw four police vehicles. One of them stopped me and an officer pushed me into the van. Inside, I took out my documents: passport, consular card, and student card. They then took me to the police office. I wonder what I did to get arrested." Once in the police station, students' saliva and fingerprints are taken, according to reports. "Our students are taken to police stations where they are maltreated [...] and overall subjected to humiliating treatment," stated the President of the Association of African Students and Trainees in Tunisia (AESAT). Other associations and NGOs, including ATSM, have denounced these "arbitrary arrests" at a [press conference](#) organised in collaboration with AESAT on February 10th in Tunis.

AESAT pointed out that the number of such arrests has particularly intensified since early 2022, mainly targeting students and those enrolled in traineeships. In an intent to map the arrests across Tunisia, the association reports receiving notifications of a great number of arrests in Tunis and Ariana, while to a lesser extent in Sousse and Mahdia, adding that among the arrested individuals some had valid residence permits while many other students were in the administrative process of receiving this document. On this matter, according to local NGOs, having or renewing a residence permit is a challenge for many African students. In a study carried out by [Terre d'Asile Tunisie](#), 68% of interviewed students (out of a total of 75) stated that they had encountered problems in obtaining their residence permit due to delays, bureaucracy, and a lack of orientation on this administrative procedure.

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<sup>3</sup> See [here](#).

<sup>4</sup> Pseudonym.

Questioning the reasoning behind these recent events, the President of AESAT [stated](#) that “given that our students in Tunisia have been abiding by Tunisian law, and following the recent country’s health protocols,” they do not understand why these arrests are targeting migrant students. While no reports on official explanations have surfaced in the media, AESAT as well as [Terre d’Asile Tunisie](#) mentioned that when arrested migrants questioned the procedure, the police in charge claimed they were “carrying out a census.” At the same time, the practices could suggest that authorities are trying to assess the number of students overstaying their student visa and/or with an expired residency permit.

## Context and history of African students in Tunisia

Since the 1970s, Tunisia has been hosting students from a variety of mainly West and Central African countries with scholarship programmes granted through bilateral cooperation. This presence has been reinforced since the 2000s with the installation in Tunis, in 2003, of the office of the African Development Bank (BAD), and the opening of private universities around the same time.<sup>5</sup>

However, in parallel with Tunisia’s socio-political unrest during and following the Jasmine Revolution in 2011 the number of African students fell. [Between 2010 and 2016](#), the estimated figure dropped from 12,000 to 4,600, while it had increased back to around 7,000 by 2020. Multiple reasons could be sought behind this drop. While the political and economic instability in Tunisia in recent years has indeed led some students to change their intended destinations of education to, for example, Morocco, reports on difficulties encountered by African students in Tunisia might also deter their peers.

An [MMC study on the economic lives of refugees and migrants in Tunisia](#) found that West and Central African students often have to turn to informal work to cover their living expenses. Grants offered by educational institutions are often not aligned with the costs of living or university fees. This, combined with the fact that international students cannot legally be employed in Tunisia,<sup>6</sup> forces many to engage in finding informal employment, exposing them to rights and protection violations in irregular work environments. While distinct in status from those who migrate to look for employment opportunities or seek international protection in Tunisia, MMC research has shown that West and Central African students often report on encountering similar risks to protection violations, being employed in the same irregular sectors as refugees and migrants in the country. Moreover, education channels might also be accessed by those with vulnerability to protection risks and displacement histories in countries of origin, as qualitative interviews carried out by MMC in Tunisia point towards. In this context, asylum seekers might consider international study opportunities in Tunisia as a way of safely and legally entering the country and enrolling in education, while they also intend to apply for asylum. However, in doing so they face legal challenges in Tunisia, as asylum applications will likely take time whereas student residency permits will expire upon graduation. This leads to a phenomenon of mixed statuses over time while falling in and out of regularity.

<sup>5</sup> Mazzella, S. (2009). [Etudiants africains dans les universités privées tunisiennes : nouvelle figure de l’étudiant “international”](#).

<sup>6</sup> Also see Terre d’Asile Tunisie (2020). [L’accès au travail des migrants en Tunisie. Du cadre juridique à la pratique](#).

# Highlighted New Research and Reports



## [Losing hope: Why Tunisians are leading the surge in irregular migration to Europe](#)

### **Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime | January 2022**

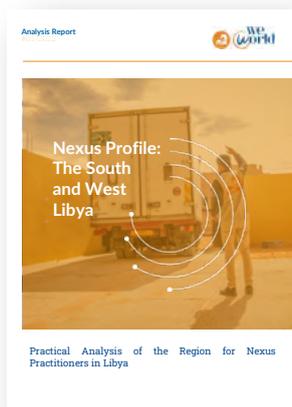
This report begins by detailing the increase in irregular migration from Tunisia to Europe in 2020 and 2021. It next assesses the dynamics that led to this surge, including uncovering those who are facilitating refugees and migrants' boat journeys from Tunisia to Europe. The report explains the structure of human smuggling networks along the Tunisian coast, and the broader means through which irregular migrants embark from the country. Finally, a situation overview is given of the security forces responsible for border control and laws salient to irregular migration, along with Tunisia's migration policies in general.



## [How the EU's militarisation fuels smuggling networks between North Africa and Spain](#)

### **Alarm Phone | March 2022**

This study sheds light on the effects of borders on smuggling businesses between North Africa and Spain in different regions in the Western Mediterranean and on the Atlantic route towards the Canary Islands. It underlines that irregular border smuggling does not limit to individual smugglers and travel agents, but is rather embedded in structural issues. According to the report, these issues are linked to a lack of legal pathways and the structure of the EU's border policies, pushing migrants to resort to centralised and often exploitative smuggling networks. Moreover, it is also argued that smuggling networks thrive through capitalist structures in which state officials and local populations enrich themselves.



## [Nexus Profile: The South and West Libya](#)

### **WeWorld-GVC | January 2022**

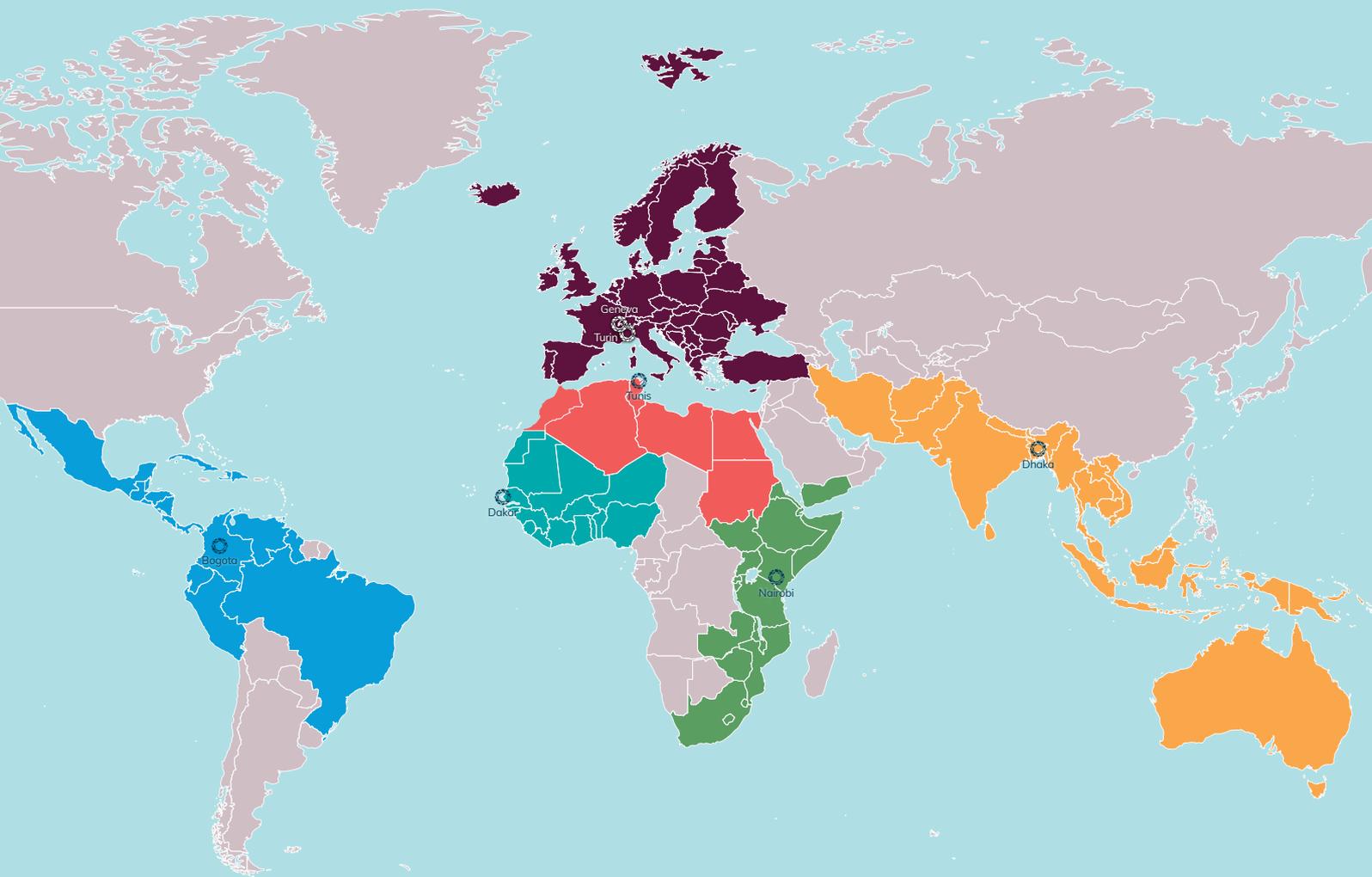
The report presents an overview of Libya's population's most relevant issues and needs from a political, economic and social point of view. It can provide orientation for an integrated approach in order to build a credible and durable response to the needs of all populations in Libya, including refugees and migrants, breaking the cycle of continuous, protracted crises and reducing risks, vulnerabilities and threats communities face on a regular basis. While encompassing the dimensions of the crisis on a national level, the Nexus Profile has given particular attention to the region surrounding the city of Sebha, which has been selected as the pilot location by the Libya Nexus Working Group strategy.



## [Annual Report on Irregular Migration – Tunisia 2021](#)

### **Le Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES) | March 2022**

The report attempts to provide an overview of how a socio-economic crisis, popular protests, the COVID-19 pandemic and securitisation policies have impacted migration movements to, in and from Tunisia. It is argued that the current complicated socio-political situation in Tunisia combined with the securitisation of migration will likely continue to impact and influence irregular mixed movements towards Europe.



The MMC is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

The MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Global and regional MMC teams are based in Geneva, Turin, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Dhaka.

**For more information visit:**

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