



MMC North Africa

QUARTER 3 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 forehead, looking distressed. The man behind him is also in a white t-shirt and has his hands clasped near his face, looking out at the sea. 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, Libya, Morocco, 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.

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and a small global team in Geneva. For more information on MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit 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 engaged in mixed migration 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. Mixed migration describes refugees and migrants traveling along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often traveling irregularly, and wholly or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

Front cover photo credit:

Taha Jawashi (2017)

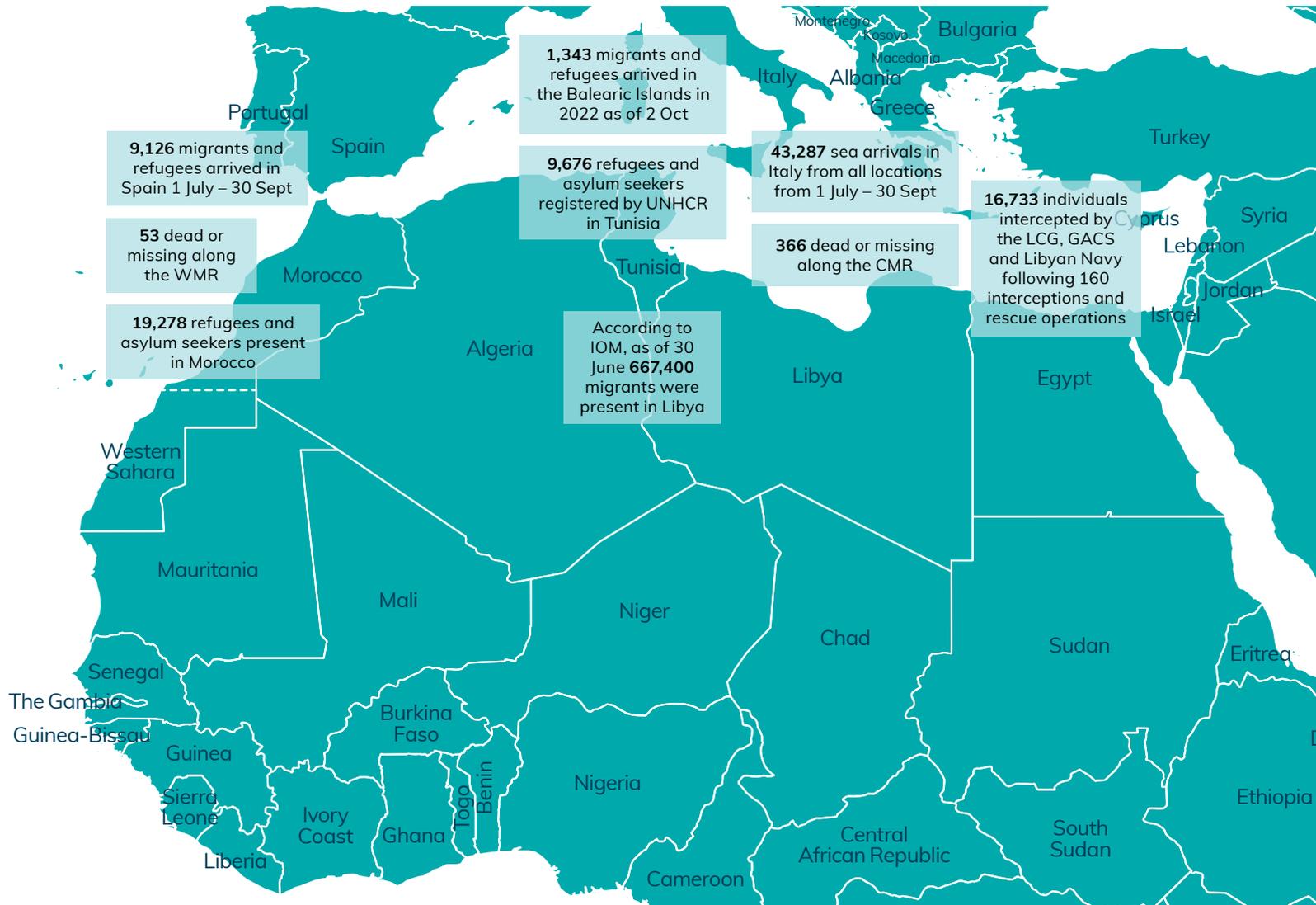
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa

Quarter 3 - 2022

Key Updates

- **Aftermath of Melilla:** Following the [deaths](#) of dozens of refugees and migrants attempting to enter the Spanish enclave of Melilla on 24 June, there have been a variety of [prosecutions](#) of migrants as well as investigations into the incident.
- **Increased cooperation between Morocco and the EU:** Just days after the Melilla incident, European Commissioner for Home Affairs met with the Moroccan Minister of the Interior in Rabat. They announced a “[new operational anti-smuggling partnership](#).” In August, the EU finalized an [agreement](#) to support the government of Morocco with 500 million euros over 2021-2027 – an increase of nearly 50% (343 million) from the previous period – to prevent irregular migration.
- **Interceptions at sea and returns to Libya:** According to [UNHCR](#), as of 4 October 2022, 16,733 refugees and migrants were disembarked on Libyan soil following 160 interception and rescue operations during the year. A 30 August [report](#) of the UN Secretary-General published in August 2022 stated that “Returns to Libya often violated the principle of non-refoulement,” with migrants facing a variety of human rights abuses upon return to Libya. The report also underscored that “The United Nations stands ready to assist in the development of a predictable regional disembarkation and solidarity mechanism on both coasts of the Mediterranean.”
- **Expulsions from Algeria:** During the quarter, multiple rounds of expulsion of refugees and migrants took place from **Algeria** to **Niger**, with the NGO Alame Phone Sahara (APS) estimating that at least [4,747 people](#) were expelled from Algeria to Niger during August and September.
- **Central Mediterranean Route trends:** [UNHCR](#) reported 43,287 arrivals in Italy from 1 July – 30 September 2022, a substantial increase compared to [22,826 arrivals](#) in July – September 2021. Tunisians and Egyptians constituted the top [nationalities](#), representing 22% and 21% of arrivals, respectively.

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 Europe¹

North African arrivals in Europe

Central Mediterranean Route

Arrivals

UNHCR reported 43,287 arrivals in Italy from 1 July – 30 September 2022, a substantial increase compared to [22,826 arrivals](#) in July – September 2021. August was the month with the greatest number of arrivals to Italy in 2022, with [16,816 sea arrivals](#) in that month alone.

As in the [previous quarter](#), North Africa remained a top region of origin of people arriving by sea in Italy. Tunisians and Egyptians constituted the top [nationalities](#), representing 22% and 21% of arrivals, respectively, followed by Bangladeshis (16%). According to the Forum tunisien des droits économiques et sociaux (FTDES, the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights), over [2,000 Tunisian minors](#) have arrived in Italy via maritime routes since the beginning of 2022. The representation of [Egyptians](#) in arrivals to Italy from [January to August 2022](#) increased significantly compared to last year (9% in 2021 to 21% in 2022).

Departures

UNHCR reported that from January to August 2022, the largest share of refugees and migrants arriving in Italy had departed from Libya (52%, up from 46% during the same period in 2021), followed in the region by Tunisia (28%, down from 37%) and Algeria (1%, down from 2%). Departures also occurred from Turkey (17%, up from 13% in the same period in 2021) and Lebanon (2%, up from 0).

UNHCR [noted](#) a growing trend of departures from Eastern Libya to Italy, consisting primarily of Egyptian nationals including unaccompanied minors. According to [UNHCR](#), almost all Tunisian nationals began their maritime journeys from Tunisia, whereas most Egyptians and Bangladeshis embarked from the Libyan coast.

Between January and August 2022, Frontex [recorded](#) 52,900 irregular entries into Europe via the Central Mediterranean Route, an increase of more than 34% compared to the same period in 2021. In contrast, Frontex indicated irregular entries into Europe via the Western Mediterranean Route decreased by 25% from last year. The increase of arrivals through the Central Mediterranean Route is part of what Frontex [stated](#) is the highest number of irregular entries into Europe overall (188,200) during the January-August timeframe since 2016. According to the [agency](#), while Tunisian nationals were the most prevalent (30%) in registered crossings on the CMR in July, Egyptians constituted the largest group overall on this route and are increasing in number, primarily through smuggling routes from Libya.

¹ Note that information on interceptions and rescue operations as well as shipwrecks and other situations of distress at sea are not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of these phenomena.

Over the course of one weekend in September, approximately [1,000](#) people arrived in Italy. According to [InfoMigrants](#), Italian state radio reported that close to 50 boats arrived on Lampedusa and that most individuals “departed from the coasts of North Africa, for example from Libya or Tunisia” en route to European shores.

Western Mediterranean Route and Atlantic Route (arrivals to Spain)

According to the [Spanish Ministry of Interior](#), as of 30 September, 23,197 refugees and migrants had arrived irregularly in Spain via land and sea in 2022. This was a decrease of 19% on year-to-date arrivals compared to 2021, making Spain the only portal to Europe that showed a [reduction](#) in arrivals to date in 2022. This is largely accounted for by reductions in arrivals along the Western Mediterranean Route, as arrivals to the Canary Islands had only decreased slightly ([5%](#)) compared to 2021. Frontex [reported](#) that irregular arrivals to Europe via the Western Mediterranean Route decreased by 25% from January to August compared to the same period in 2021, and that a [majority](#) of the arrivals “came from Morocco.”

In August, El País [reported](#) that arrivals to Spain from Algeria had decreased by 50% in 2022, though the Balearic Islands have seen an increase in arrivals from 740 people as of 8 August 2021 to 877 as of 8 August this year. This continues a trend of [rising arrivals](#) to the Balearic Islands in recent years – from 507 in 2019 to 2,402 in 2021. According to [UNHCR](#), there have been 1,343 arrivals to the Balearic Islands in 2022 as of 2 October. The report quoted a source from the Ministry of the Interior as saying that diplomatic tensions between Spain and Algeria have not had an impact on migratory movements nor border management.

This quarter saw multiple attempted arrivals to Spain via personal watercraft (jet-skis) and paddle watercraft (kayaks). According to [CanalSur](#), Spain’s National Guard has recorded incidents of individuals using jet-skis to attempt to transport migrants one or two at a time from Morocco to Spain via the Strait of Gibraltar. Similarly, Frontex has [asserted](#) that smugglers use jet-skis to attempt to facilitate “simultaneous departures” on the Western Mediterranean Route. [InfoMigrants](#) reported that Moroccan authorities found 257 individuals, most of them sub-Saharan African, on kayaks and swimming in the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean.

In terms of arrivals to Spain’s Canary Islands along the Atlantic Route, data from the end of the third quarter show that the rate of arrivals in the Canary Islands has been slowing. At the end of the third quarter of 2022, Canary Islands arrivals stood at [12,506](#), comparable to those seen at the end of the third quarter in 2021 (13,118). By contrast, arrival figures at the end of the second quarter 2022 were [26% higher](#) than in 2021, and at the end of the first quarter they were [71% higher](#) than in 2021.

Interceptions and rescue operations in the Mediterranean

According to [UNHCR](#), as of 4 October 2022, 16,733 refugees and migrants had been disembarked on Libyan soil following 160 interception and rescue operations by the Libyan Coast Guard, the General Administration of Coastal Security (GACS) and the Libyan Navy.

The NGO Alarm Phone [reported](#) that in the first half of 2022, from 1 January to 30 June, the organization received alerts about 216 boats in distress in the Central Mediterranean. According to their reports, more than half of these vessels (112) arrived on European shores. Many of the boats that did not reach Europe

were intercepted and returned to either Libya or Tunisia or rescued by NGO vessels; others were rescued by the Italian coastguard or merchant vessels, while at least seven of the boats in contact with Alarm Phone shipwrecked. In the same period (as of 15 June), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) [recorded](#) 19 occasions when an NGO vessel carrying rescued people (3,716 total among these 19 cases) waited more than a day to receive authorization to dock, and in 12 of these cases, vessels had to wait for one week or longer to make port.

According to a Tunisian National Guard spokesman, Tunisian authorities had prevented [20,018 people](#) from crossing maritime borders in 2022 as of 10 September, as reported in InfoMigrants. Of these, 12,466 were nationals of various sub-Saharan African countries and 7,552 were Tunisian. Though Tunisians are the most highly represented nationality in arrivals to Italy this year, this figure suggests that nationals of sub-Saharan African countries are intercepted at greater rates. A similar dynamic appears to be at play in terms of departures from [Libya](#), with certain nationalities disproportionately affected by interception. According to [InfoMigrants](#), the Tunisian National Guard also reported carrying out a “pre-emptive operation” that same month, arresting five individuals who allegedly intended to facilitate a departure from Sousse.

In Morocco, [national media](#) continued to report over the course of the third quarter on maritime patrolling carried out by the Moroccan authorities, based on a source in the military. Between 22 and 30 August, the Royal Moroccan Navy operating in the Mediterranean Sea [announced](#) that it had rescued 743 people in three days, including nationals of Yemen, Sudan, Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and various sub-Saharan African countries.

Dead or missing refugees and migrants

From July to September 2022, [615 refugees and migrants](#) were reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean, 366 along the CMR and 53 along the WMR.

In August, a group of Tunisian mothers of missing migrants [demonstrated](#) in Zarzis, calling on authorities to investigate the whereabouts of their children, some of whom have been missing since 2011. [InfoMigrants](#) quoted a fisherman who was present at the protest and lamented the lack of support from authorities in such investigations: “No one supports [fishermen] in the rescues we do. But the Tunisian authorities pocket the money from Europe to manage the migrant problem, and particularly the situation of people at sea.”

Human Rights Watch [stated on 13 September](#) that “The European Union has abdicated its responsibility to ensure search and rescue in the Mediterranean. No EU ships actively patrol anywhere near where most boats enter into distress.”

Mixed migration in Libya

Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Libya

As of 30 June, IOM estimated that there are at least [667,400 migrants](#) in Libya, with 56% located in the west of the country, 31% in the east, and 13% in the south. This number represents the continuation of a slight increase when compared to the previous quarters (649,788 in [Q2](#) and 635,051 in [Q1](#)). IOM identifies the main migrant nationalities to be Nigerien (24%), Egyptian (20%), Sudanese (18%), Chadian (13%), and Nigerian (5%).

UNHCR reported that as of 1 September, some [43,000](#) asylum seekers and refugees were registered in Libya, mainly from Sudan (17,452), Syria (16,481) and Eritrea (4,606). This represents a decrease compared to the previous quarter (45,521). In contrast, the number of registered refugees and asylum seekers had previously increased from the first quarter to the second (42,528 in Q1).

In a July report, [IOM](#) released information on victims of trafficking identified in the course of its protection activities in Libya. Of 11,713 migrants supported with specialized protection services between July 2020 – 2022, 1,614 were found to be victims of trafficking, of whom 1,018 were male and 596 were female. Women were proportionally more at risk of trafficking given the overall [gender breakdown](#) of migrants in Libya which skews heavily male. The main nationalities of these people were Nigerian, Somali and Sudanese, and the main forms of exploitation to which they were subjected were kidnapping for extortion, forced labor and sex trafficking.

Documentation of rights violations

A [joint report](#) published in September by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the Libyan Anti-Torture Network (LAN) on extrajudicial killings in Libya found that of 581 documented cases between January 2020 and March 2022, 118 were non-Libyan nationals of other countries, though these numbers are likely underestimated. The report claims that the “high prevalence of torture and killings in Libya greatly exceeds the limited documentation capacity” for such incidents.

A [video](#) showing the abuse of a 15-year-old Sudanese national in Libya, filmed by the armed individual inflicting the violence, was circulated via WhatsApp following his kidnapping on 30 August. The boy’s family was seeking asylum and had registered with UNHCR in Libya. The audio indicates the armed individual was seeking a ransom from the boy’s family. According to the [Associated Press](#), the boy’s father was also kidnapped, and both his and his son’s whereabouts remained unknown at the time of reporting.

Migrants and refugees who have experienced violence in Libya continue to call attention to these practices and their implications. For instance, [InfoMigrants](#) quoted a Sudanese national, currently in Tripoli, as telling the Agence France-Presse (AFP) that “there are no human rights in Libya”; however, InfoMigrants also quoted a Libyan official’s statement to AFP that arrests are conducted according to established procedures. In his 30 August [report](#) to the Security Council (S/2022/655), the UN General-Secretary stated that “Returns to Libya often violated the principle of non-refoulement. Migrants and refugees returned to Libya systematically and routinely faced the risk of death, disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture,

ill-treatment, gender-based violence, exploitation and other human rights violations and abuses by both State and non-State actors.” He emphasized that “the rights of refugees and migrants, including women, children and victims of trafficking, must be upheld” and that “arbitrary detention is prohibited under international human rights law.”

Migrant raids as part of larger crackdown

Libyan authorities [reportedly arrested](#) an unspecified number of non-Libyan nationals on 15 August in a raid on their homes in Tripoli. The Libya Observer [tweeted](#) that “dozens” of individuals were detained. InfoMigrants reported authorities indicated in a statement that legal action would be taken against them without providing further details. According to [InfoMigrants](#), these raids are “part of an ongoing crackdown on migrants living in Libya,” where public sentiment against migrants has worsened as they are frequently blamed for difficulties faced by the country.

There have been a series of significant raids and arrests targeting migrants and refugees over the past year. More than [5,000](#) migrants were detained in October 2021 following a security operation in the area of Gargarish, in which one person was reported to have died. Authorities violently arrested more than 600 individuals in January 2022, ending a refugee protest ongoing since the previous October. This year has also seen [reports](#) of 300 individuals arrested in the western part of the country in May; at that time [AfricaNews](#) reported that security officials stated they had detained 3,000 migrants in the preceding three months.

Migrant deaths in Libya

On 13 August, [InfoMigrants](#) and the [Associated Press](#) reported that Libyan authorities confirmed the deaths of at least 15 people in the desert near the border with Sudan. The [Libya Observer](#) reported 20 deaths. According to InfoMigrants and the Associated Press, representatives of the Department for Combating Irregular Migration (DCIM) based in Kufra indicated that the group consisted of Sudanese nationals migrating into Libya and that nine people survived, with two individuals missing. According to these press reports, DCIM representatives did not confirm the cause of death but noted that the vehicle used ran out of fuel and that the group had insufficient food and water.

As reported in [VOA News](#), the UN Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has denounced the killing of 15 migrants whose bodies were found in early October on a beach near the Libyan city of Sabratha. According to a UNSMIL statement, “While the exact circumstances remain to be determined, the killings reportedly resulted from clashes between rival traffickers.” The UN mission also called on Libyan authorities to investigate the incident and ensure that justice is done. According to Libya’s Public Prosecutor, quoted on 11 October in local media source [Alsharq Alawsat](#), security forces have arrested several people in relation to the incident. They are also said to have raided six sites where migrants are being held, releasing [159 migrants](#) and confiscating boats, weapons, survival kits and other equipment.

UN Security Council renews authorization for ship inspections

On 29 September, the UN Security Council adopted [resolution 2652 \(2022\)](#) renewing for another 12 months the authorization established in [resolution 2240 \(2015\)](#) for Member States to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya “that they have reasonable grounds to suspect are being used for migrant smuggling or human trafficking from Libya.” The adoption of this resolution follows a [report](#) published the month prior, in which the UN Secretary-General called upon the international community “to offer more resettlement opportunities and humanitarian evacuations of refugees from Libya.”

Mixed Migration in Tunisia

Latest figures on refugees in Tunisia

As of 31 August, [UNHCR](#) reported that there were 9,676 persons of concern (refugees and asylum seekers) in Tunisia, of which the top five [nationalities](#) were Ivorian (36%), Syrian (28%), Sudanese (6%), Cameroonian (5%), and Guinean (5%). Grand Tunis² (4,683), Sfax (2,096), and Médenine (1,085) continue to host the largest refugee and asylum seeker populations.

Tunisian migration towards Europe on the rise

A recent [report](#) by FTDES shows that the number of Tunisian nationals who arrived in Italy has increased by 11% in the period between January and August 2022, and as in 2021, Tunisians are the top [nationality](#) of arrival in Italy. Some areas of Tunisia have been particularly impacted by outward migration; according to estimates by a sociology professor at the University of Tunis, some [12,000 people](#) have left from the Governorate of Tataouine since the beginning of the year (roughly [8% of the population](#)) due to a combination of [factors](#) including a culture of migration, specific recent history and prevailing migration drivers that affect Tunisia in general (see below).

While the profile of those making the journey remains largely [male](#), there has nevertheless been an [increase](#) in women, children and families attempting the journey to Europe. In the last quarter several high profile cases – including a well-known [football player](#) and the [deputy mayor](#) of Skhira, Sfax have made the journey. High skilled migration to Europe is significant as well, and there have been increasing departures of highly educated Tunisians from [sectors](#) such as engineering and medicine, with an estimated [1,000 medical doctors](#) leaving Tunisia every year.

Drivers of migration are multifaceted, with socio-economic factors prevalent. A recent report from the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime ([GI-TOC](#)) highlights that lower- and middle-class Tunisians are impacted by high inflation rates and disrupted access to livelihoods. In an interview with [Mediapart](#), the head of the Tunis Center for Migration and Asylum (Cetuma) says “ Those who have the means anticipate the future for the sake of their children, and the poor migrate to survive. Migration has

² Grand Tunis includes the four governorates Tunis, Ariana, Ben Arous and Manouba.

become the only horizon for Tunisian society.” He links the surge in departures of Tunisians to governance challenges related to the unavailability of reliable health, education and vocational training systems resulting from ineffective tax management and an economic system which does not distribute wealth fairly. In an interview with [Reuters](#), the spokesperson of the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) stated "The bad economic situation is no longer a sole reason for rise of illegal journey toward Italy... There is also a stifling political crisis and a decline in freedoms, in addition to social tension and loss of hope among Tunisians."

Tunisians on the Balkan route

According to a report published by [Meshkal](#) in September, the Balkan route has surged in importance for Tunisians and other nationalities in the Maghreb. According to FTDES figures reported in [Al Araby](#), there were 3,635 Tunisian arrivals to Europe through the Balkan countries between 26 July 2021 and 8 July 2022. The [journey](#) involves flying to Istanbul and Belgrade to finally cross Serbia's border to a country in the Schengen zone. Exemption from [visas](#) to enter Turkey and Serbia facilitates entry. Contact with [smugglers](#) is established before departure from Tunisia or upon arrival to Serbia. The [Balkan route](#) is perceived as a safer alternative to maritime routes due to increased interceptions in the Mediterranean sea and deportations from Italy. However, [lethal accidents](#) along the borders with Hungary have resulted in deaths and serious injuries among migrants, including [Tunisians](#).

Mixed Migration in Morocco

Latest figures on refugees in Morocco

As of the end of June, [UNHCR](#) reported that there were 9,785 refugees and 9,493 asylum seekers present in Morocco from more than 42 countries of origin. Most registered refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco remain nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic (5,251), followed by Guinea (2,786), Côte d'Ivoire (1,370), Yemen (1,195), the Central African Republic (1,113), and Cameroon (1,085).

Accord with Niger

On 1 August, **Niger** and **Morocco** signed a [memorandum of understanding](#) intended to strengthen their cooperation in combatting human trafficking. The agreement was signed by Morocco's *Commission nationale de coordination des mesures de lutte et de prévention contre la traite des êtres humains* (National Commission for the Coordination of Measures to Combat and Prevent Trafficking in Human Beings) and Niger's *Commission nationale de coordination de lutte contre la traite des personnes et le trafic illicite de migrants* (National Commission for the Coordination of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants) and *l'Agence nationale de lutte contre la traite des personnes et le trafic de migrants* (National Agency for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants). The [collaboration](#) is meant to facilitate an exchange of experience and best practice in this area.

The aftermath of the 24 June incident in Melilla

Following the [deaths](#) of at least 23 and as many as 37 individuals who attempted to enter the Spanish enclave of Melilla on 24 June, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles [reported](#) that Moroccan authorities had arrested 77 migrants and refugees. While many of the migrants and refugees allegedly involved have been prosecuted and sentenced, there have been no reported prosecutions of law enforcement officers whose violence led to the deaths. According to the Nador branch of the nongovernmental *Association marocain des droits humains* (AMDH; in English the Moroccan Association for Human Rights), [at least 77](#) individuals have been identified as missing following the tragedy.

Prosecution

On 29 June, Reuters [reported](#) that Moroccan courts would prosecute 65 individuals – many of whom are Sudanese nationals – for their participation in the attempt to enter Melilla. According to Reuters, the charges against them include “igniting fires, attacking security forces and facilitating illegal border crossings.” On 19 July, a judge in Nador – a Moroccan city near Melilla – [sentenced](#) 33 people to 11 months in prison. Quoted in the [New York Times](#), a lawyer for the defendants raised questions about the process, saying that “all [the defendants’] statements had the same language; they were copy pasted” and stating that the sentence would be appealed. On 22 September, AMDH Nador [posted](#) that the Court of Appeals in Nador sentenced 12 of these individuals - all Sudanese nationals - to three years in prison. On 29 September, AMDH Nador [reported](#) that the same court sentenced 15 more individuals from the group initially sentenced in July – from Sudan and Chad – to three years in prison and a fine of 500 Moroccan dirhams. On 6 October, a [third group](#) of 18 individuals - from Sudan and Chad - received a three-year prison sentence on appeal. The appeals rulings more than tripled the initial sentences.

On 4 August, an [additional 14 people](#) were sentenced to eight months in prison and fined 2,000 Moroccan dirhams. InfoMigrants [reported](#) that the individuals were arrested the day before the attempted crossing in June and included one Libyan, one Cameroonian, one Chadian, two South Sudanese and nine Sudanese nationals. On 18 August, AMDH Nador [reported](#) that an additional 13 individuals from Sudan, South Sudan and Chad were sentenced to two and a half years in prison and a fine 10,000 Moroccan dirhams. In their Facebook posts, AMDH Nador indicated both groups intend to appeal their sentences.

Investigations

The preliminary results of an [investigation](#) by the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) in Morocco released on 13 July determined the primary cause of the deaths that occurred at the crossing to be “mechanical asphyxia,” or suffocation involving some type of physical force, as well as “jostling and falling from the top of the fence”. CNDH’s report on their preliminary findings claimed that allegations of absent medical care and the use of lethal weapons by law enforcement constitute “fake news.”

In contrast, AMDH Nador’s investigative [report](#) released on 20 September stated that “the decision [by law enforcement] to violently attack the asylum seekers once they arrived at the barrier, who were not armed with stones and truncheons, is undoubtedly the main cause behind the very heavy death toll, injuries, arrests and repression” that occurred. The report alleged that later in the day after the attempted crossing, Moroccan authorities placed “nearly 500 asylum seekers” present at the crossing on “deportation buses” to various regions of Morocco. According to the report, some of the individuals were injured and all were abandoned without food or medical care. The [report](#) further states that Spanish authorities used tear gas and rubber

bullets against individuals remaining on Moroccan territory, and that in the two hours following the beginning of the crossing attempt and ensuing violence, no medical care was deployed to tend to the wounded.

Experts from the UN International Independent Expert Mechanism (IIEM) to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the context of Law Enforcement [announced](#) their own investigation in July to assess legislation and law enforcement practices in both countries against applicable human rights standards in order “to provide both governments with concrete recommendations to end this cycle of deadly encounters of Africans with law enforcement.”

On 21 September, the [Spanish Minister of the Interior](#) declared that “there was no massacre” in Melilla and that the violent actions of the authorities were “proportionate.” He noted that the events of 24 June remain [under investigation](#) by the State Attorney General of Spain. That same day, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) [were denied access](#) to Morocco to speak with survivors of the tragedy.

EU support for border management in Morocco

In the aftermath of the incident in Melilla, 74 Spanish civil society organizations [signed a letter](#) to the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, condemning EU border externalization and securitization policies and urging further investigation.

On 8 July, the Spanish Minister of Interior and the European Commissioner for Home Affairs met with the Moroccan Minister of the Interior in Rabat. In a [joint press release](#) following the meeting, the European Commission and Morocco announced a “new operational anti-smuggling partnership” including “support for border management, enhanced police cooperation (including joint investigations), awareness-raising on the dangers of unlawful migration and enhanced cooperation with EU agencies responsible for home affairs.”

In August, [El País](#) reported that the European Union finalized an agreement to furnish the government of Morocco with 500 million euros over 2021-2027 – an increase of nearly 50% (343 million) from the previous period – to prevent irregular migration. The funding package includes financing for forced returns, law enforcement and opposition to “mafias” – the latter of which the Spanish Prime Minister [blamed](#) for the violence – as well as integration and protection programs for refugees in Morocco.

More deaths in Melilla

Several bodies were found near Melilla in recent months although they do not appear to be related to the tragedy in June. In August, AMDH Nador [tweeted](#) that two bodies were discovered near the commercial port of Melilla. Speaking with [InfoMigrants](#), a representative from AMDH Nador cited exclusionary policies, poverty and challenges in Morocco’s educational system as among the drivers that prompt youth in particular to attempt dangerous sea routes from the neighboring towns of Nador and Béni Ensar into Melilla. In September, AMDH Nador posted on [Facebook](#) that another body was discovered just south of Melilla’s port.

Border reinforcement and returns of minors in Ceuta

El País [reported](#) that on the night of 27 August, two separate groups of about 100 people each attempted to enter the Spanish enclave of Ceuta. According to the article, one group consisted of sub-Saharan individuals who approached by land from the Moroccan town of Belyounech and the other of Moroccans who attempted to cross into Ceuta by sea via the Tarajal border zone. The Spanish Guardia Civil (National Guard) warned Moroccan authorities of the presence of the groups, who in turn stopped them from advancing.

The same month, the district attorney of Ceuta released a [summary](#) of its investigation into local authorities' expulsion of Moroccan minors in August 2021, which led to the opening of a file for a possible crime of prevarication. According to [El País](#), up to 1,400 accompanied and unaccompanied minors entered Ceuta in May 2021 among the estimated 10,000 – 14,500 people who crossed into Ceuta that month. The summary highlights the “arbitrariness and lack of control” on the part of the city government and the executive in returning children and adolescents who arrived in May of last year, based on the paper's reporting. [El País](#) reported that the Public Prosecutor's Office is now initiating criminal proceedings against the two politicians accused of the forced return of 34 unaccompanied minors.

In September, Morocco World News [cited](#) Spanish news agency EFE's reporting that the Spanish government plans to establish a new entry and exit system (EES) in Ceuta along the Tarajal border. The Tarajal entry point was [reopened](#) on May 17 following its two-year closure due to COVID-19. According to the [European Commission](#), the EES collects biometric data, among other information, “to prevent irregular migration and help protect the security of European citizens.”

Young migrant woman from sub-Saharan Africa shot by Moroccan authorities

In September the NGO Caminando Fronteras was joined by eight other NGOs in denouncing the reports of Moroccan gendarmes [shooting](#) at migrants bound for the Canary Islands, in an attempt to prevent them from boarding an inflatable boat on Morocco's southern coast. This [group](#) was comprised of 29 people from sub-Saharan Africa and six from Morocco, among whom were 15 women and two children. One young woman was killed in the gunfire, and others were injured, three seriously. Additionally, several young men were hit by a car as they fled the shooting.

While the [Moroccan government](#) had not confirmed the incident several days after it occurred, [Infomigrants](#) reported that a local Moroccan [media source](#) framed the incident as “warning shots” fired in order to halt a human smuggling operation. In their [statement](#), the nine NGOs point to the “absence of control and supervision mechanisms for police actions,” which “perpetuates the impunity of the use of force against communities on the move,” while highlighting the context of European and Spanish migration externalization in which this incident occurred. They also refer to the events at Melilla just a month and a half before. This shooting also recalls a 2018 [incident](#) in which the Moroccan navy opened fire on a migrant boat attempting to reach Spain via the Strait of Gibraltar, killing one young Moroccan man and injuring three other passengers.

Mixed Migration in Algeria

Diplomacy and migration

In late August, the president of France made a 3-day [visit](#) to Algeria. Beyond the [energy supply agenda](#), the visit was also an attempt to put an end to months of tensions between the two countries triggered by disagreements over migration management, among other issues. In fall 2021, France reduced the numbers of visas granted to Algerian citizens by 50 percent in response to Algeria's reluctance to accept the return of its [undocumented nationals](#). The [decision](#) was described as an "unfortunate act which brings precariousness and uncertainty to a sensitive area of cooperation" by the Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs as quoted by TV5Monde.

At a [press conference](#) held during the visit, Macron said: "We want to assume this selective and positive mobility of students, entrepreneurs, political leaders, researchers, cultural or sports actors, while also being more rigorous in the fight against illegal immigration." The visit was concluded by a [joint statement](#) in which the Algerian and French presidents spoke of a "renewed partnership" and the beginning of "a new era." The statement specifies that "the two parties agree to initiate a reflection to build concrete and operational solutions able to meet their respective expectations so that the movement of people between the two countries is organized and supervised..."

A local media source, [TSA](#), reports that Algeria has agreed to provide consular passes for its undocumented nationals pending deportation from France, a step welcomed by France. A [visit](#) by the French prime minister is expected in the beginning of October to further discuss issues related to gas, visas and the deportation of Algerian nationals among others.

Expulsions from Algeria to Niger

During the quarter, multiple rounds of expulsion of refugees and migrants took place from Algeria to Niger, with the NGO Alarme Phone Sahara (APS) estimating that at least [4,747 people](#) were expelled from Algeria to Niger during August and September.

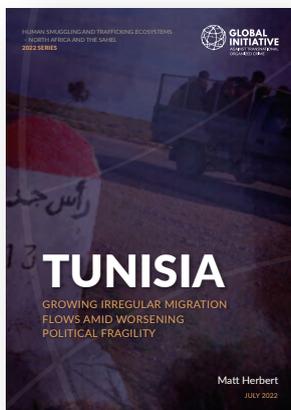
"Official convoys" of Nigériens

In early September, some [847 people](#), primarily from Niger, were deported from Algeria and brought to Agadez. This group included 40 women and 74 unaccompanied minors; the latter group was taken charge of by the [Direction régionale de la promotion de la femme et de la protection de l'enfant](#) (Regional Directorate for the Promotion of Women and Child Protection) which will ultimately help return them to their homes. APS published slightly lower numbers (822) for this convoy, and also documented the [expulsion](#) of 736 Nigériens on 16 August and 1,016 Nigériens on 19 September.

“Unofficial convoys” of non-Nigeriens

On [17 September](#), a group of some [669 people](#), almost all from West and Central Africa, arrived on foot in the northern Nigerien town of Assamaka after they had been left in the [desert](#) near the Algeria-Niger border – the typical modus operandi for the expulsion of non-Nigeriens. The [group](#) was primarily comprised of Malians (286) and Guineans (166), and in addition to a variety of other West African nationalities, it included nationals of Sudan, Chad, Mauritania and Cameroon. There were also [14 women and five children](#) among those who were expelled. APS also documented similar [expulsions](#) occurring earlier in the quarter: 730 people on 14 August and 774 people on 2 September.

Highlighted New Research and Reports

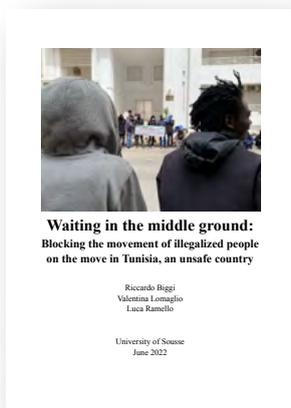


[Tunisia: Growing Irregular Migration Flows Amid Worsening Fragility](#)

Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime | July 2022

In July, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime published a brief as part of its 2022 series on human smuggling and trafficking ecosystems focused on North Africa and the Sahel. The paper investigates the surge in irregular migration of Tunisians towards Europe in 2021. The report is based in content analysis of open-source data relevant to human smuggling and trafficking and semi-structured interviews with a variety of key informants

and stakeholders, among them smugglers, migrants, political and security representatives and community members. The brief provides a description of increasing departures from Tunisia, as well as analyzing migration methods and routes. The surge coincides with political changes announced on 25 July 2021 by President Kais Saied and the further deterioration of the economic situation in the country.



[Waiting in the Middle Ground – Blocking the movement of illegalized people on the move in Tunisia, an unsafe country](#)

Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux | August 2022

Beginning in February 2022, more than 200 refugees and asylum seekers staged a protest in front of UNHCR, first in Zarzis and then in Tunis, to demand immediate resettlement to a safe country. It is in the context of this sit-in that three researchers affiliated with the University of Sousse conducted an ethnographic study. Based on an analysis of qualitative and secondary data

collected in the field over a period of three months, the authors question whether Tunisia can be considered a safe country for refugees and asylum seekers. The report makes the argument that due to human rights violations and racism, particularly towards black migrants, Tunisia should not be given this status. It also contends that the categorization of Tunisia as a safe country is part of the European strategy to block people in North Africa to prevent their migration to Europe.

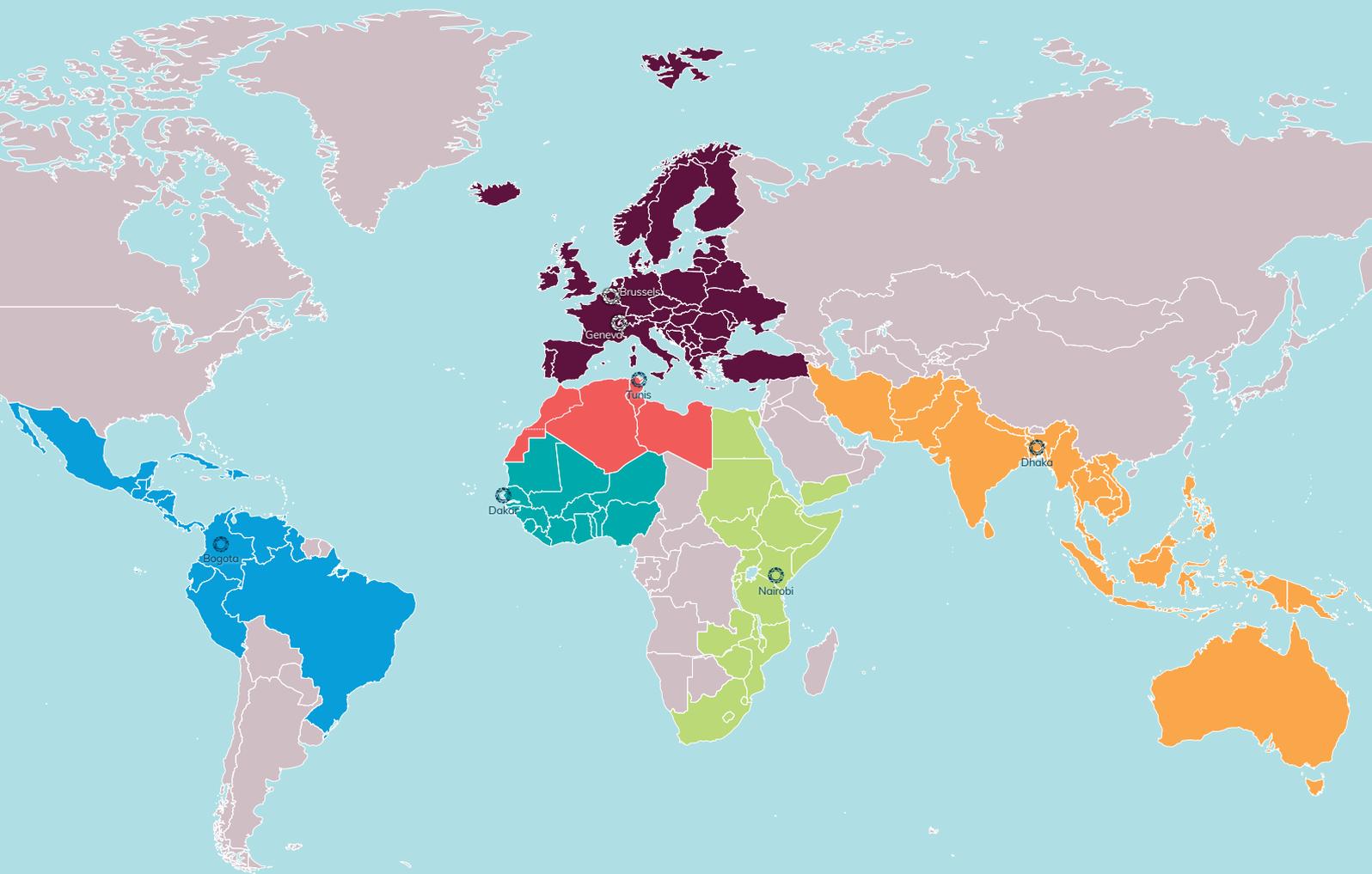


[What's behind the deaths at Morocco's land border with the EU?](#)

The New Humanitarian | September 2022

This article, published in The Humanitarian in early September, looks back at the events that took place in Melilla on June 24 during which more than 2,000 refugees and migrants attempted to enter the Spanish enclave and dozens lost their lives. The article begins by examining diplomatic relations between Morocco and Spain and the role that they played in the tragedy. It also analyzes the responses of the two countries involved, and that of Europe more broadly.

It details the conclusions reached by the various investigations into the incident – and also explains why many consider them insufficient. Finally, the article looks at the "post-Melilla" situation faced by migrants and refugees who are in or may wish to transit Morocco. This analysis particularly highlights the "fight against migrant smuggling" narrative that drives stakeholder responses and guides migration policies.



MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and a small global team in Geneva.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. 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. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

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

For more information visit:
mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

