



MMC North Africa

QUARTER 4 2023

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 in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Geneva and Brussels. 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)

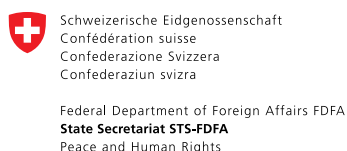
MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"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 migrants travelling along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly, and wholly or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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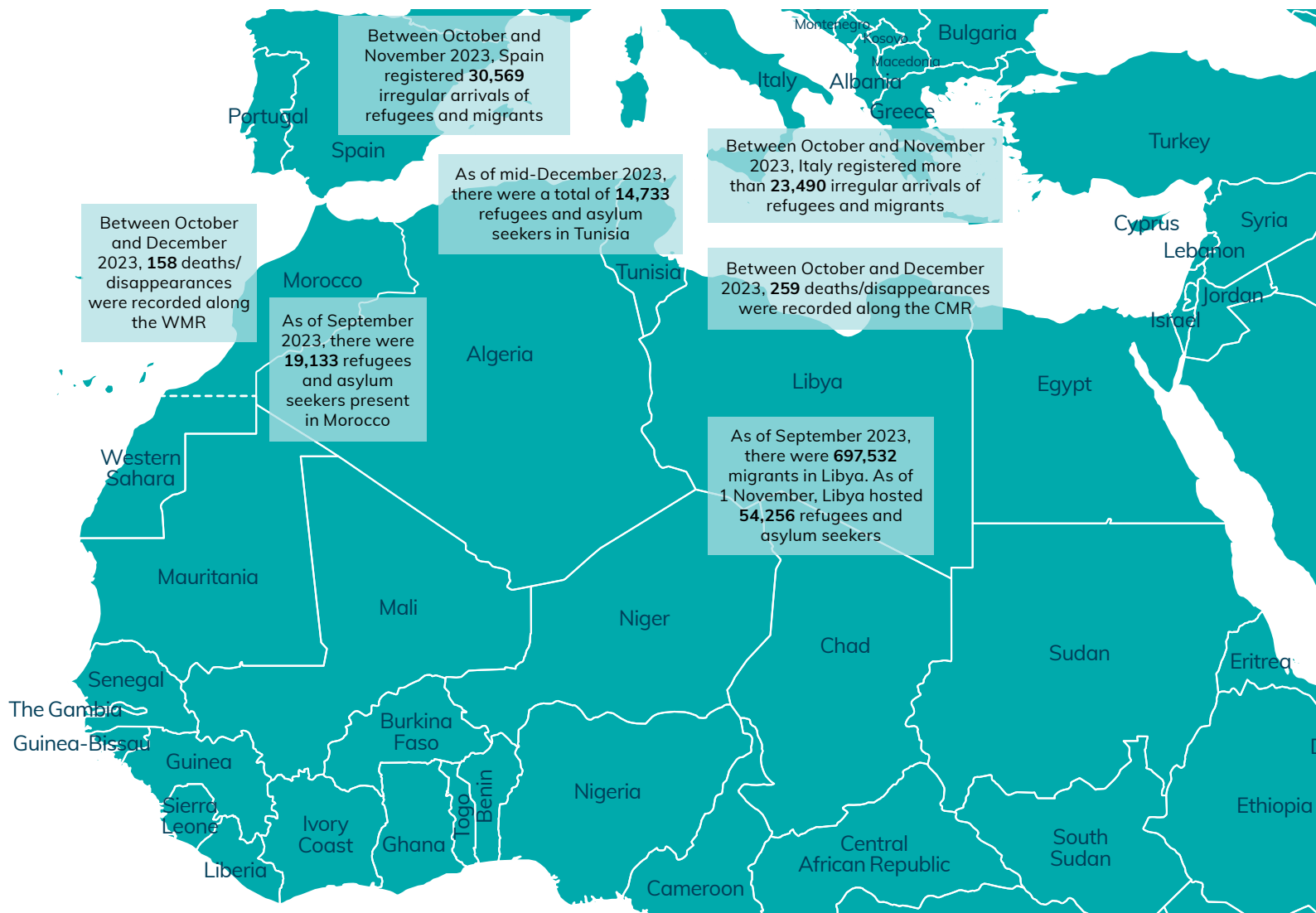
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: North Africa

Quarter 4 - 2023

Key Updates

- **Libya and Bangladesh [signed](#) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate labour migration procedures on 25 October:** The agreement [aims](#) to streamline the legal procedures, facilitate the regular entry, and ensure the repatriation of Bangladeshi migrants in Libya. The MoU reflects Libya's potentially new approach, under the Government of National Unity, to formally [integrate](#) some categories of migrants into the domestic economy.
- **A collaborative [investigation](#) reveals a concerning collaboration between European authorities and the Tareq Bin Zayed (TBZ) armed group in Libya:** European authorities allegedly share GPS coordinates of distressed boats with TBZ, leading to forced returns of boats carrying refugees and migrants to Libya. Refugees and migrants intercepted and detained by TBZ [report](#) experiencing abuse, including torture, forced labour, and ransom payments.
- **Continued expulsions from Tunisia to the Algerian and Libyan borders:** The World Organisation Against Torture (Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture – OMCT) [reported](#) a surge in arbitrary arrests and expulsions from July to October. At least [8,500](#) refugees and migrants have been forcibly taken to the borders with Libya and Algeria. According to the [report](#), these operations were conducted with violence that could constitute “acts of torture and mistreatment.”
- **Clashes erupted in November between Tunisian authorities and Sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants in Sfax, Tunisia:** The [clashes](#) erupted when National Guard agents [attempted](#) to destroy makeshift boats used by refugees and migrants to reach Europe, prompting a violent confrontation.
- **During a visit to Rabat, the [German](#) Interior Minister agreed to enhance readmission cooperation with Morocco:** Morocco has [agreed](#) to repatriate its citizens denied permission to stay in Germany, as outlined in a declaration of intent signed by both Interior Ministers. However, a comprehensive EU-wide readmission agreement with Morocco remains elusive.
- **French National Assembly [rejected](#) a resolution aimed at terminating the 1968 agreement between France and Algeria:** on the movement, employment, and residence of Algerian nationals and their families. The agreement, criticized for granting privileges to Algerian nationals, had sparked [contentious](#) debates. The rejection comes after heightened discussions in the second quarter of 2023.

Regional Overview*



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

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Mixed migration from North Africa to Europe

Western Mediterranean Route & Atlantic Route (arrivals to Spain)

According to [UNHCR](#) data, as of 31 December there had been 57,538 irregular arrivals of refugees and migrants to Spain. This compares to 31,763 in 2022 – an increase of 81% – and is the [highest](#) number of arrivals since 2018. Most of these arrivals were on the Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands (40,330). Mainland Andalucía received 9,683 arrivals, while Ceuta and Melilla together accounted for 1,135 and 638 arrivals respectively. The eastern coast of Spain registered 3,577 arrivals while the Balearics registered 2,175. The fourth quarter of 2023 saw a particular [increase](#) in arrivals, with 30,569 people reaching Spain, compared to 14,194 in the [previous quarter](#).

In the Canary Islands, the [number](#) of arrivals in October alone reached almost 16,000, which is the highest monthly total recorded. Spanish authorities [reported](#) that emergency accommodations for around 3,000 refugees and migrants will be established in military barracks, hotels, and hostels. The top [three countries of origin](#) of arrivals in the Canary Islands were Morocco, Senegal, and Guinea.

Central Mediterranean Route (arrivals to Italy)

As of 31 December, [UNHCR](#) data indicated that Italy had received more than 157,300 irregular sea arrivals over the course of the year, marking an increase of almost 50% from the 105,131 arrivals recorded in 2022. In the fourth quarter of 2023, there were more than 23,490 arrivals, a 65% decrease from the previous quarter, which saw 68,302 arrivals. As of November, the [top three countries of origin](#) of arrivals were Guinea, Tunisia, and Côte d'Ivoire. This marks a shift from the [previous year](#) when the predominant nationalities among sea arrivals in Italy included Egyptians, Tunisians, Bangladeshis, Syrians, and Afghans. However, it is worth noting that in [November](#), most arrivals in Italy were of Bangladeshi, Syrian, Egyptian and Pakistani descent.

Tunisia [maintains](#) its position as the primary point of departure for sea arrivals in Italy, registering a total of 97,306 departures in 2023, followed by Libya with 52,034 departures.

Interceptions and pushbacks in and around the Mediterranean

According to [InfoMigrants](#), Morocco's Royal Armed Forces (FAR) and law enforcement services intercepted over 87,000 refugees and migrants in 2023. Most of these individuals were of sub-Saharan African origin. During the fourth quarter, interceptions of refugees and migrants attempting to reach the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla by the Moroccan army have been documented. According to [Alarm Phone](#), on 17 November alone, nearly 1,000 individuals attempted to cross into Ceuta via the land border with Morocco. Most of them were intercepted by the Moroccan armed forces, resulting in numerous arrests. Alarm Phone [condemned](#) the "violence from both the [Spanish] Guardia Civil and the Moroccan Auxiliary

Forces,” asserting that many individuals ended up in hospitals. On [31 December](#), more than 1,100 refugees and migrants were also apprehended during operations carried out by Moroccan officials. A [reported](#) 175 refugees and migrants were apprehended in Nador in Morocco, close to the border with Melilla, reportedly coming from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Yemen.

As of the end of November, Tunisian authorities had [intercepted](#) nearly 70,000 refugees and migrants who were trying to cross the Mediterranean to Italy thus far in 2023. This figure represents an [increase](#) of more than 123% from the same period in 2022 (31,297 interceptions). According to [InfoMigrants](#), foreigners comprised 78% of those intercepted in this period. This marks a notable increase from the previous year when 59% of those departing from Tunisia were foreigners.

As reported in the [Libya Update](#), over 17,000 refugees and migrants were intercepted and returned to Libya in the course of 2023.

Dead or missing refugees and migrants¹

As of 4 January 2024, The IOM [Missing Migrants Project](#) reported that at least [28,667](#) refugees and migrants had been recorded as dead or missing in the Mediterranean since 2014. In [2023](#), at least 2,917 people lost their lives or were missing at sea in the Mediterranean. Specifically, this comprised 2,498 deaths recorded in the Central Mediterranean, 333 in the Western Mediterranean, and 86 in the Eastern Mediterranean. According to [Médecins Sans Frontières](#) (MSF), 2023 has been the deadliest year on the Central Mediterranean route since 2017.

[Missing Migrants Project](#) data showed that during the fourth quarter of 2023, there were 435 recorded dead or missing refugees and migrants in the [Mediterranean](#) overall, marking the lowest number of fatalities in comparison to the previous quarters, (529 in the third quarter, 1,489 in the second quarter, and 588 in the first quarter).

As the Missing Migrants Project itself acknowledges, these figures are likely a substantial underestimate. Zeroing in on the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean Routes specifically, numbers from the NGO [Caminando Fronteras](#) are substantially higher, with at least [6,618 refugees and migrants](#) having lost their lives at sea during migration attempts to Spain. Most of these deaths, totalling 6,007, were recorded along the Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands. According to [Caminando Fronteras](#), 2023 stands as the deadliest year since the organization began documenting data in 2007.

¹ Numbers in this section drawing on IOM's Missing Migrants Project (MMP) are based on MMC calculations made accessing the MMP website on 5 January 2024.

Mixed migration in Libya

Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Libya

According to the latest available estimates from the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix ([DTM](#)), there were some 697,532 migrants in Libya as of September 2023. This represents a decrease compared to the [previous quarter's](#) figure of 705,046 migrants. The primary countries of nationality of these migrants were Niger (26%), Egypt (22%), Sudan (18%), Chad (11%), and Nigeria (5%). Most of these migrants (56%) are located in the West of the country, followed by the East (31%) and South (13%).

As of 1 November, [UNHCR](#) reported a total of 54,256 refugees and asylum seekers in Libya. This represents an increase from the [previous quarter's](#) figure of 49,713 individuals. Sudanese nationals make up more than half of this population (52%), followed by those from the Syrian Arab Republic (23%) and Eritrea (16%).

Libya formally engages with migrant-sending countries

On 25 October, Libya and Bangladesh [signed](#) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance regular migration of Bangladeshis to Libya. The MoU, signed by Libya's Tripoli-based Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation and the Bangladeshi Minister of Expatriates Welfare and Employment, [enables](#) Libya to organize and register Bangladeshi workers, streamline their legal procedures, facilitate their regular entry, and ensure their repatriation to their home country. There are approximately [23,563](#) Bangladeshis in Libya, constituting around 3% of the total migrant population. The Libyan Minister emphasized that the agreement facilitates data exchange between the two countries, helping to ensure compliance with legal processes and to guarantee access to Libya's social security system for the workers involved.

It is noteworthy that between 28 November and 5 December, [516](#) detained Bangladeshi citizens were repatriated from Libya. As reported by the [Libya Observer](#), the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated during a weekly press conference that the repatriation process is ongoing as they seek to return all Bangladeshi citizens detained in Libya. The previous repatriations were conducted with the support of the embassy and direct cooperation with the IOM.

The migration diplomacy with Bangladesh appears to be part of a wider effort – and a shift in approach – as the Libyan authorities are now showing a willingness to formally integrate migrants into the domestic economy. The Tripoli-based authority, under the Government of National Unity (GNU), will explore the establishment of [similar MoUs](#) with additional countries in the Sahel and Sahara. In line with this approach, in November the GNU hosted a conference titled “A Safe Mediterranean, a Stable South.” The conference focused on regular migration avenues in Libya and featured [representatives](#) from twenty Arab and African countries, European ambassadors, and international officials. In an interview with [Agenzia Nova](#), the Libyan Minister of Labor and Rehabilitation disclosed the GNU's aim to regularize the foreign workforce and emphasized the central and crucial role of the European Union (EU) and Italy within the framework of this Libyan project.

Renewal of humanitarian corridor from Libya to Italy

On 20 December, Italy [committed](#) to evacuating 1,500 refugees and individuals in need of international protection from Libya to Italy over the next three years through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This new MoU was jointly signed by the Italian Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, UNHCR, the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches (FCEI) in Italy and [other organizations](#). It builds upon the commitment initiated by Italy in 2017 in an initial protocol which facilitated the [arrival](#) of 1,300 individuals.

The primary [focus](#) of this initiative is to assist individuals who fled their home countries and found themselves stranded in Libya. UNHCR, along with partners, will be responsible for selecting individuals and prioritizing them based on their protection needs. UNHCR [urges](#) other countries to emulate Italy's example by instituting similar mechanisms. The president of the FCEI [emphasized](#) that such interventions should not be viewed merely as acts of charity but rather as practices that should guide European policies.

MSF briefing note on abuse in Libya detention centers

A [briefing note](#) by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), published on 6 December, highlights the dire conditions in Abu Salim and Ain Zara detention centers in Libya. The report documents instances of sexual and physical violence, including systematic strip and intimate body searches, rape, and high levels of physical violence against detained men. It also mentions reports of forced labour, extortion, and other human rights abuses. According to the [briefing note](#), the detainees suffer from inhumane conditions, lack of access to necessities, and arbitrary detention without procedural safeguards or legal counsel. The report calls for urgent action to address these issues and protect the rights of detainees. MSF urges the cessation of arbitrary detention in Libya and advocates for the release of all refugees and migrants from detention. The organization emphasizes the importance of providing them with substantial protection, secure shelter, and regular and secure routes out of Libya.

Examining Frontex's involvement in Mediterranean pullbacks

A recent collaborative investigation conducted by [Al Jazeera](#), [Lighthouse Reports](#), the [Syrian Investigative Reporting for Accountability Journalism](#) (SIRA), [Malta Today](#), [Le Monde](#), [Daraj Media](#) and [Der Spiegel](#) has brought to light a discernible pattern of cooperation between European authorities, specifically Frontex and the Maltese government, and the Tareq Bin Zayed (TBZ) armed group in Libya.

Among other points, the [investigation](#) reveals a practice wherein European authorities share GPS coordinates of distressed boats with the TBZ group, which subsequently engages in [pullbacks](#), forcibly returning both boats and refugees and migrants to Libya. While Frontex and Malta assert that they share coordinates to aid refugees and migrants in distress, evidence suggests that alternative and safer options could have been chosen. In several instances, merchant ships or NGO vessels were closer to the migrant boats than the TBZ vessel. Refugees and migrants intercepted and detained by TBZ [report](#) experiencing abuse, including torture, forced labour, and ransom payments.

Even though the European Union formally distances itself from the TBZ militia, the [investigation](#) indicates that Frontex is fully cognizant of the nature and operations of this group. According to the [European Council for Refugees and Exiles](#), the collaborative findings cast doubt on the European Commission's (EC) commitment to the "do no harm" principle in Libya.

Mixed migration in Tunisia

Latest figures on refugees and migrants in Tunisia

According to [UNHCR](#) data, as of mid-December 2023, there were a total of 14,733 refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia. The primary nationalities were Sudanese, Syrian, and Ivorian. This year witnessed a 500% [increase](#) in newly registered individuals compared to 2022.

The governorates with the [largest populations](#) of refugees and asylum seekers were Greater Tunis (6,504), Medenine (4,473), and Sfax (2,045). Changes have been seen in the location of this population compared to the [first quarter](#) of the year when Greater Tunis hosted 5,116 refugees and asylum seekers, followed by Sfax (1,515) and Medenine (620). The most notable shift has been observed in [Medenine](#), where the population has increased more than sevenfold, from 620 in the first quarter to 4,473 in the fourth quarter. MMC on-the-ground research has confirmed a growing arrival of refugees and migrants from Sudan and South Sudan in Medenine, potentially accounting for this increase and contributing to the overall rise in the number of newly registered individuals documented by [UNHCR](#).

Diplomatic tensions over return of €60 million from EU touch migration cooperation

Tensions between the European Union (EU) and Tunisia escalated in [October](#) as Tunisia chose to return €60 million in budget support provided by the EU. Contrary to initial [reports](#) linking these funds to a larger €127-million tranche associated with the EU-Tunisia [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) on a "strategic and global partnership," also known as the "migration deal,"² the director of the Tunis office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, cited in [InfoMigrants](#), clarified that the returned funds are distinct from the migration pact. According to Tunisian [officials](#), the €60 million was initially designated under the country's post-COVID recovery plan as part of an existing agreement and had not been disbursed earlier.

Despite [evidence](#) that the returned funds are unrelated to the migration deal, they have become popularly associated with it. Amidst the heightened tensions, the Vice President of the European Commission [reiterated](#) the EU's commitment to advancing the MoU with Tunisia, emphasizing that the recent development does not hinder the ongoing collaboration on the agreement. In fact, as detailed in a November news [article](#), the European Union (EU), in adherence to the MoU on migration, had already supplied essential spare parts for

2 On 16 July, the European Union (EU) and Tunisia signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) on "a strategic and global partnership" that covers various areas of cooperation. In the context of migration cooperation, the collaboration extends to various aspects. These include enhanced coordination in maritime search and rescue operations, stricter control of borders, and efforts to disrupt smuggling networks in Tunisia. Additionally, the memorandum facilitates the return and readmission of Tunisians who have irregularly entered the EU, while also creating more pathways for regular migration and seasonal employment.

the Tunisian coast guards to ensure that six ships would remain operational, and there were plans to repair an additional six before the end of the year. The president of the European Commission shared these details in an undated [letter](#), obtained by [Statewatch](#), addressed to the European Council, outlining the provision of support and vessels to coast guards in Tunisia (and Libya).

Furthermore, in [response](#) to questions from Members of the European Parliament regarding the progress of the agreement's implementation, the President of the European Commission underscored the EU's commitment to providing both vessels and comprehensive support to bolster the capabilities of the Tunisian coast guard. This encompasses the supply of IT equipment, mobile radar systems, advanced thermal imaging cameras, and sonar technology. Despite ongoing efforts in an EU-funded [project](#) to enhance the Tunisian Coast Guard's institutional framework and educational content by integrating human rights principles and the rule of law, the Coast Guard remains extensively involved in refugee and migrant [interceptions](#). Notably, [Human Rights Watch](#) (HRW) had previously reported that the Tunisian police, military, and national guard, including the coast guard, have committed serious abuses against refugees and migrants, putting the lives of people in distress at sea at further risk.

Clash between Tunisian authorities and sub-Saharan African migrants in El Amra, Sfax

Throughout the year, an escalation of [violence](#) against refugees and migrants has been observed in [Tunisia](#), particularly in [Sfax](#), with this quarter witnessing a continuation of similar events. On 24 November, [clashes](#) occurred between Tunisian authorities and sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants in the coastal village of El-Hamaziah, near El Amra, Sfax. This area served as a [refuge](#) for refugees and migrants, with some independently seeking shelter there, while others were left there by security forces after being forced out of Sfax in a [security operation](#) in September. El Amra and the nearby hamlets, including El-Hamaziah, are well-known [departure points](#) for individuals seeking to embark on journeys to reach Europe.

The incident occurred when Tunisian National Guard agents attempted to [destroy](#) makeshift metal boats used by refugees and migrants to reach Europe. In response to the targeted destruction of their boats, a group of refugees and migrants threw stones at the agents, leading to a brief but violent altercation. According to [local media](#), twenty sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants and two Tunisians suspected of assaulting security forces were arrested on 28 November.

Since the clashes in El Amra, Tunisian authorities have conducted daily raids in the olive groves occupied by refugees and migrants. The alleged focus was on locating a [weapon](#) taken from authorities during the altercations. The [search](#) for the firearm has led to widespread destruction of migrant tents by authorities. On-the-ground reports from [Le Monde](#) revealed that buses were stationed outside the El Amra National Guard post, where sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants were observed being assembled. A National Guard official disclosed to the [newspaper](#) that these individuals would be taken to the Libyan or Algerian border, signalling a perpetuation of [expulsion](#) practices that intensified in July 2023.

Continued expulsions from Tunisia to the Libyan and Algerian borders

In December 2023, World Organisation Against Torture (Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture – OMCT) issued a [report](#) highlighting human rights violations against refugees and migrants in Tunisia from July to October 2023. The report expressed concern over the heightened violence linked to forced expulsions of refugees and migrants towards the borders with Algeria and Libya. Notably, the month of July 2023 emerged as a critical juncture, marked by a surge in arbitrary arrests, detentions, and forced displacements. The [report](#), supported by numerous interviews, confirms that ‘refoulement’ (push back) and ‘rétention’ (pull back) operations on the Tunisia-Libya and Tunisia-Algeria borders occurred repeatedly in July and August. According to the OMCT report, there is consensus among interviewees that these operations were conducted with violence that could “constitute acts of torture and mistreatment.” Despite international [condemnation](#) and persistent [concerns](#) echoed by human rights organizations, Tunisia appears to be [continuing](#) to expel refugees and migrants.

Other reports further corroborate this trend of expulsions. The [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC) reported the arrival in Libya of approximately 1,200 refugees and migrants from Tunisia in the second week of October alone, and anticipated such arrivals to continue in the coming months. This data aligns with information from international humanitarian sources reported by [France 24](#) which alleges that since summer, a minimum of 5,500 refugees and migrants have been forcibly returned to the border with Libya, and approximately 3,000 to the border with Algeria.

According to an [InfoMigrants](#) investigation into the practice of expulsion from Tunisia to Libya, refugees’ and migrants’ accounts detail arbitrary arrests, often occurring at sea or in remote areas, followed by their forcible transfer to the Libyan authorities at the desert border. According to the investigation, the refugees and migrants are sometimes taken to detention centers in Libya, where they are exposed to the [well-documented](#) risks of torture and abuse. Despite Tunisian authorities’ [denial](#) of these allegations, a growing body of testimonies challenges their claims. The [Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights](#) (FTDES) urged the Tunisian government to halt the expulsions to the borders and instead relocate refugees and migrants to safe areas where their humanitarian needs can be addressed.

Italy and Tunisia sign a deal on the recruitment of Tunisian workers in exchange for the return of irregular migrants

In the [first quarter](#) of 2023, Italy expressed its willingness to welcome more Tunisian regular migrants “if Tunisia is ready to take back irregular migrants,” during a visit by Italian Interior and Foreign Ministers to Tunis in [January](#). This commitment was formalized on October 20 when Italy [signed](#) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on regular migration pathways for Tunisian workers. Under the MoU, an annual quota of 4,000 qualified Tunisian workers will have the opportunity to work in Italy with non-seasonal contracts. According to a local Tunisian news [outlet](#), the Italian foreign minister emphasized Italy’s need for a regular and qualified labour force during a meeting with the Tunisian president. He reiterated Italy’s dedication to the agreement, underlining the shared vision between Italy and Tunisia in addressing irregular migration.

Mixed migration in Morocco

Latest figures on refugees in Morocco

As of September 2023,³ [UNHCR](#) reported that there were 19,133 registered refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco, hailing from over 50 countries of origin. This represents a slight decrease compared to the same period [last year](#) (19,437). The majority of registered refugees and asylum seekers in Morocco [originate](#) from Syria (5,685), Guinea (2,517), Yemen (909), Cameroon (757), and Côte d'Ivoire (1,270).

Germany's migration diplomacy with Morocco

In October, the German Interior Minister [visited](#) Rabat with the primary objective of strengthening readmission cooperation. Morocco, which currently has over 3,000 irregular migrants in Germany, had historically shown reluctance to repatriate its citizens. However, in a shift of orientation, Morocco has now [agreed](#) to accept back its citizens who have been denied permission to stay in Germany. This commitment is outlined in a declaration of intent signed between the German Interior Minister and her Moroccan counterpart. Under the terms of this agreement, the Moroccan government agreed to accept temporary identity documents issued in Germany for individuals being returned, indicating a willingness to facilitate deportations. In return, Germany has offered to [facilitate visas](#) for Moroccan regular workers.

The EU is also attempting to improve migration cooperation with Morocco by sending a [migration liaison officer](#) to Rabat. Among his duties would be to smooth the way for readmission of deported Moroccans. However, a comprehensive EU-wide readmission agreement with Morocco remains elusive, possibly due to insufficient incentives for Rabat.

Frontex Executive Director visits Morocco

In December, the Executive Director of [Frontex](#) visited Morocco in continuing efforts to enhance dialogue and cooperation with Morocco's border management authorities. This visit is part of the ongoing collaboration between Frontex and Morocco within the [Frontex-Morocco Comité Mixte](#), initiated in 2019. By bringing together senior managers and staff from Frontex and Morocco, the committee aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and discussion on relevant technical aspects of border management. The annual meeting serves as a platform to delineate a collective [roadmap](#) for collaborative activities.

As a "[key partner](#)" of the European Union, the [strategic focus](#) for cooperation between Frontex and Morocco in 2024 encompasses a variety of areas, including joint efforts in risk analysis, knowledge exchange, the sharing of best practices regarding return and reintegration, addressing cross-border crime, enhancing coast guard functions, and collaboratively safeguarding vulnerable populations at the borders. The Rabat trip was the Executive Director's first mission outside of Europe. As reported by [Frontex](#), during the visit, he acknowledged Morocco's pivotal role as a "crucial partner in Africa."

³ No reliable more recent data available.

Mixed migration in Algeria

Continued expulsions from Algeria to northern Niger

According to [Alarme Phone Sahara](#) (APS), the Algerian government's continued expulsion of a significant number of individuals to Niger is alarming. Between 26 July and 18 October, a total of 5,012 people, including 3,477 individuals in the first 18 days of October alone, have been expelled from Algeria. This brings the cumulative number of individuals expelled from Algeria to Niger since the beginning of 2023 to 24,698. APS is advocating to "restore freedom of movement in the Sahelo-Saharan region and establish secure migration pathways," and for the immediate cessation of these expulsions, urging an end to mass deportations, chain expulsions, and any human rights violations in the Sahelo-Saharan region.

French National Assembly rejects resolution to denounce 1968 Franco-Algerian agreement

On 7 December, the French National Assembly [rejected](#) a resolution seeking to terminate the [1968 agreement](#) between France and Algeria on the movement, employment, and residence of Algerian nationals and their families. In the [second quarter](#) of 2023, a contentious debate over this agreement intensified, culminating in the recent rejection. The agreement, which has long been the [subject](#) of scrutiny, provides privileges to Algerian nationals in France. Critics [argue](#) that the terms of the agreement are considered too favourable to Algerians, with privileges such as accelerated procedures for a ten-year residence permit contrasting with lengthier processes for other foreign nationals. According to [Africa News](#), the authors of the rejected resolution further criticized the Algerian authorities for their reluctance "to cooperate effectively with France on expulsions by issuing consular passes." The argument was made that preferential treatment should not be granted considering these concerns.

Thematic Focus: Exploring the unique migration context of Sousse, a city of welcome and transit

Introduction

In this thematic focus we take a closer look at the unique migration context and profile of Sousse, Tunisia's third-largest city. It is based on and excerpted from the forthcoming research report titled "[City of Welcome and Transit – Migrants' and Refugees' Livelihoods and Migration Projects in Sousse, Tunisia](#)," a joint effort by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), the Tunisian civil society organization Association Tunisienne Awledna, and the University of Edinburgh.⁴

Sousse is a city with a migration profile that is fairly distinct in Tunisia. While playing host to migrants from a multitude of backgrounds and diverse experiences, it nonetheless has two primary migrant populations: foreign students,⁵ mainly from West Africa and Arab countries, and Sub-Saharan African migrant workers. In this thematic focus, we examine the roles played by the city's municipality and civil society in managing migration, and we shed light on the challenges confronting refugees and migrants in the city.

Sousse's distinctive migration governance landscape

Sousse has a reputation as a migrant-friendly city, with over a decade of dedicated migration management efforts made by the municipality. Among other things, Sousse has participated in transnational [city networks](#) advocating for the decentralization of migration governance and peer to peer exchange. It has leveraged partnerships with international organizations in relation to migration, and has actively pursued strategies to enhance livelihoods for refugees and migrants, for instance by connecting Syrian refugees with Tunisian business partners. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic served as a turning point, prompting the municipality to establish a multi-stakeholder committee for migration governance, leading to strengthened networks, collaborative efforts between CSOs and local authorities, and the building of trust between the municipality and refugee and migrant populations.

Sousse's approach to migration governance is particularly notable in the absence of a national migration and asylum policy in Tunisia. It is also significant given the recent outbreak of [anti-migrant](#) hostility in

4 The research report's data were gathered as part of the "Make Them Count! Supporting Civil Society Action to Improve Refugees' and Migrants' Livelihoods in Sousse" [project](#). Funded by the MADAR (Maghreb Action on Displacement and Rights) Network Plus, this one-year study was undertaken in partnership with migration experts from the MMC, an anthropologist from the University of Edinburgh, and the Association Tunisienne Awledna, a Tunisian civil society organization that supports refugees and migrants in Sousse. By drawing on 200 4Mi surveys, twenty semi-structured interviews with refugees and migrants, additional interviews with other key informants including local NGOs and the Sousse municipality, and two focus group discussions, the research sheds light on the experiences shaping the lives of refugees and migrants in the city.

5 The city has established itself as a center for academic talent, with leading public and private universities that attracted 920 [foreign students](#) in the 2018/2019 academic year. Notably, Sousse hosts a migrant population with higher educational qualifications compared to cities such as Tunis and Sfax. Most of the 4Mi respondents surveyed in Sousse for this study were highly educated, with 48% having secondary or high school education, 21% holding university degrees, and 17% having vocational training.

[Tunisia](#), and particularly in [Sfax](#). In this context, Sousse emerged as a pivotal destination for refugees and migrants seeking refuge from escalating violence and discrimination. Many moved to Sousse, seeking safety and economic opportunities, thereby contributing to the city's image as a welcoming location in a turbulent period.

Challenges and coping strategies

Despite its largely progressive approach to migration governance, Sousse municipality has faced severe limitations due to the absence of a dedicated budget for migration governance. This financial constraint hinders the municipality's independent initiatives and restricts its ability to address the root causes of precarious livelihoods for refugees and migrants. Furthermore, the absence of national migration policies and asylum frameworks also limits the municipality's scope for providing support and dealing with structural challenges such as restricted access to documentation and formal employment.

Qualitative data and secondary sources highlight the challenges posed by limited access to the formal labour market in Sousse, compelling many refugees and migrants, including students with residency permits, into the informal economy. This not only complicates livelihoods and onward migration plans,⁶ but also heightens the risks of exploitation and trafficking. The restricted access to the formal labour market also impacts highly skilled individuals, as job opportunities within Sousse's informal economy often do not align with their generally high qualifications. In response to limited access to formal employment, the qualitative data suggested that refugees and migrants in Sousse have often shown resilience through entrepreneurship, leveraging their skills in support of innovative business ideas. Nevertheless, many refugees and migrants remain in the informal sector.

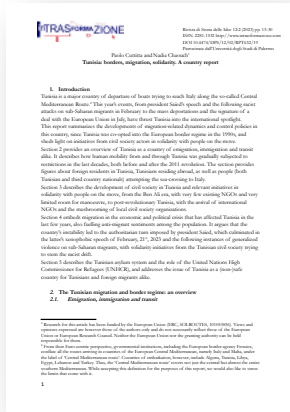
It is also worth noting that despite the relative safety of Sousse compared to other locations in Tunisia, interviewed refugees and migrants reported an increase in document control by Tunisian authorities, including checks in public spaces. While these measures could be seen as routine procedures, this heightened scrutiny takes place in a context of increased insecurity for refugees and migrants in Tunisia, and may presage a more challenging environment in Sousse going forward.

Conclusion

While the municipality of Sousse has taken progressive measures and established strong partnerships with CSOs, it also faces structural constraints. The absence of a dedicated migration governance budget is a limiting factor, as is the lack of a national migration and asylum policy. With the recent surge of anti-migrant violence, particularly in Sfax, many refugees and migrants have moved to Sousse in search of safety and livelihood opportunities. As the city grapples with these changes, the trajectory going forward remains uncertain, but it is hoped that Sousse can continue to build on its potential as a city of welcome.

⁶ Nearly all 4Mi respondents (99%) surveyed in this study expressed an intention to work in Sousse to save money for further travel.

Highlighted New Research and Reports



[Tunisia: borders, migration, solidarity: A country report](#)

Intrasformazione: Rivista Di Storia Delle Idee | Oct 2023

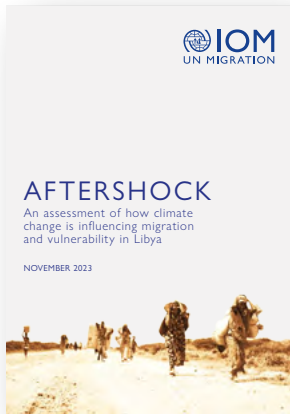
This report delves into Tunisia's multifaceted role as a country of origin, transit, and immigration, scrutinizing the repercussions of European border externalization policies. Emphasizing Tunisia's gradual integration into the European border regime, the report underscores the role played by local and international civil society organizations in advocating for freedom of movement and solidarity with refugees and migrants. It contends that European border externalization has exacerbated racist sentiments and exclusionary policies within Tunisia. Critiquing the EU's approach, the report suggests that rather than curbing irregular migration, these policies have fostered prejudice and exclusion in Tunisia. The authors call for a reassessment of externalized border control strategies and a renewed commitment to human rights and solidarity.



[Beyond borders, beyond boundaries: A Critical Analysis of EU Financial Support for Border Control in Tunisia and Libya](#)

The Greens/European Free Alliance | Nov 2023

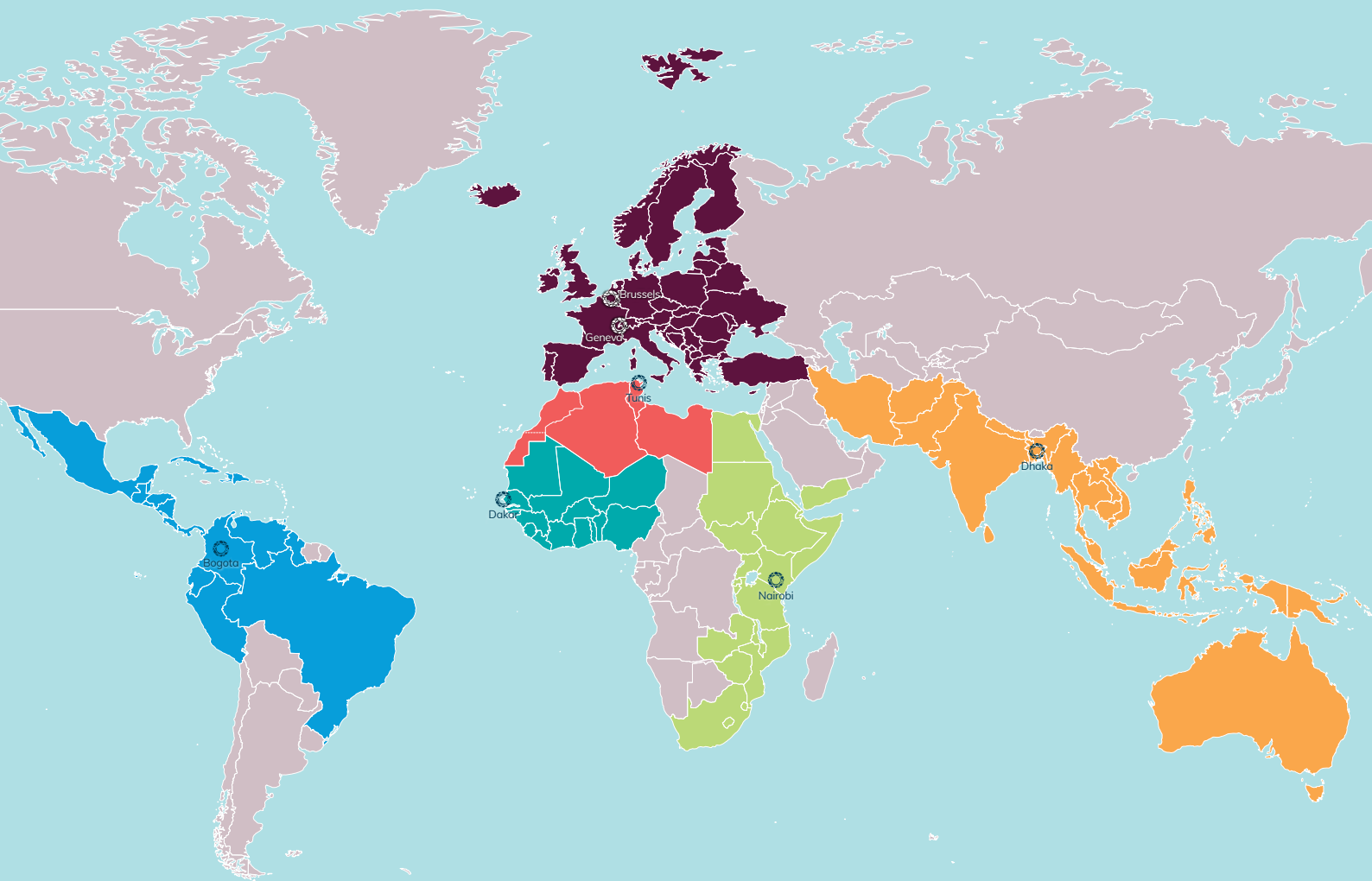
This report examines the European Union's financial support for border management in Tunisia and Libya, offering a thorough examination of the allocated funds aimed at enhancing border control capacities in both countries. It unveils an alarming surge in abuses against refugees and migrants, presenting evidence that many of these violations, perpetrated by Tunisian and Libyan authorities, occur within the context of border management activities funded by the EU. The report also presents recommendations for furnishing a framework for comprehensive solutions. The report advocates for a reevaluation of the EU's approach, calling for a human rights assessment before further funding, reassessment, and suspension of ongoing programs in case of violations. Meaningful engagement with civil society, transparency, and an active role for the European Parliament are also proposed to ensure accountability. The report warns that without these reforms, the EU's border regime will perpetuate devastating human costs and compromise its values.



[Aftershock: An assessment of how climate change is influencing migration and vulnerability in Libya](#)

IOM DTM Libya| Nov 2023

This study draws on data collected from interviews with over 3,400 migrants in Libya during September and October 2023. The findings reveal that climate change acts as a threat multiplier, intensifying vulnerabilities for migrants in both their countries of origin and in Libya. Climate-related events negatively impact local economies, particularly those dependent on agriculture, indirectly driving migration. About a quarter of migrants had faced climate-related shocks like droughts or floods before migrating to Libya. These shocks significantly contribute to vulnerability and human mobility, impacting income, livelihoods, food security, health, and housing. In Libya, this could translate to increased debt, unemployment, and diminished access to basic services for many migrants. Recommendations include enabling safe and regular migration, leveraging labour migration for climate adaptation, improving data on climate-related impacts on migration, and adopting protection- and people-centered approaches in policy and program design to address varying forms of climate-induced human mobility.



MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels.

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 mixed migration 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 the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

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