



MMC West Africa

QUARTER 4 2023

Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa



This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the West Africa (WA) region. The core countries of focus for this region are Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any 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

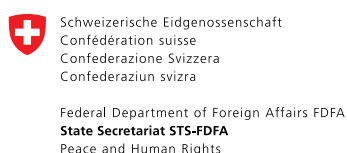
"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people engaged in mixed migration have a range of legal statuses 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 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:

Jean-Baptiste Joire (2017)

Women watching boats in Joal-Fadiout, Senegal, February 2017.

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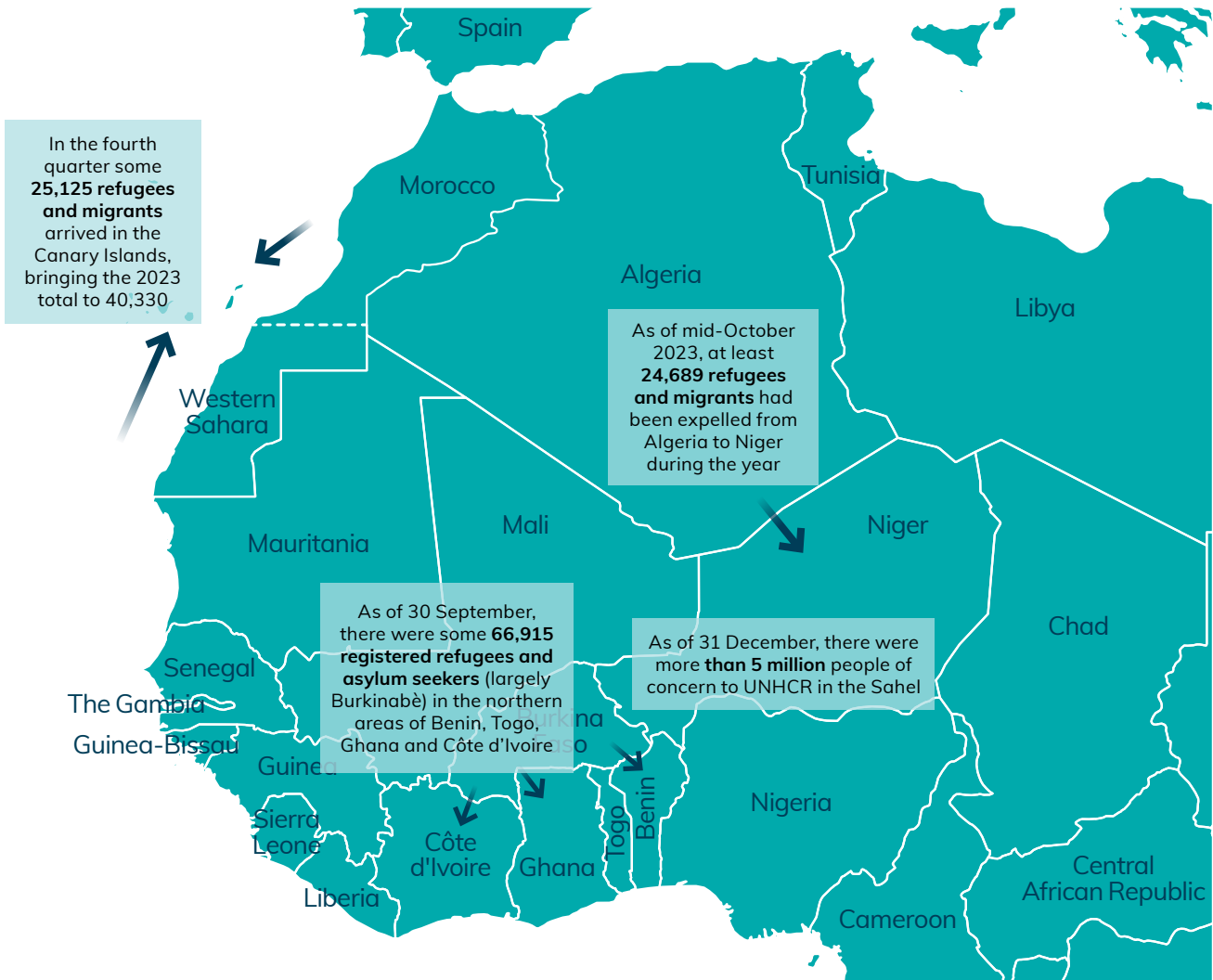
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa

Quarter 4 - 2023

Key Updates

- **Regional displacement on the rise in 2023:** As of 31 December, there were more than 5 million people of concern in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania) according to [UNHCR](#), compared to 4.1 million people in [2022](#) and 3.6 million people in [2021](#).
- **Northbound migration increases as Niger's military government abrogates law 2015-36:** Following a [coup](#) in July 2023, Niger's new military government announced, on 25 November, the [abrogation](#) of the disputed Law 2015-36 which criminalized the 'illegal smuggling of migrants' in Niger. Northbound migration through Niger has been [picking up](#) since the abrogation of the law.
- **Canary Island arrivals surge:** In the [fourth quarter](#) some 25,125 refugees and migrants arrived in the Canary Islands via the Atlantic Route. This compares to 3,163 arrivals during the fourth quarter of [2022](#), an increase of 694%. In total, [UNHCR](#) recorded 40,330 total arrivals in 2023 on the Canary Islands as of 31 December, which represents an increase of 157% over 2022.
- **New route for West Africans to the Americas via Nicaragua:** As a new version of the West Africa to Latin America [route](#) has recently flourished, with migrants flying to Nicaragua before continuing overland, the number of refugees and migrants from [African countries](#) caught irregularly entering the United States at its southern border increased more than fourfold from 13,406 in 2022 to 58,462 in 2023. People from Mauritania (15,263) and Senegal (13,526) alone accounted for almost 50% of this total, and Guineans were the fourth most represented nationality at more than 4,000 arrivals.
- **Continuing expulsions from Algeria to Niger and Mali:** According to [estimates](#) made by the NGO Alarmphone Sahara, as of mid-October at least 24,689 refugees and migrants had been expelled from Algeria to Niger in 2023, and the reception conditions for stranded migrants in northern Niger remained very challenging. The quarter also saw expulsions of migrants and [refugees](#) from Algeria to [Mali](#).

Regional Overview*



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

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

West Africa region

As of 31 December, there were more than [5 million people of concern](#) in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania) according to UNHCR, [compared to](#) 4.1 million people in 2022 and 3.6 million people in 2021. Numbers of refugees and asylum seekers [increased](#) from around 1.1 million in December 2022 to over 1.6 million as of December 2023.¹

Sahel crisis spillover to coastal countries

Burkina Faso's continued humanitarian and security crisis has worsened since 2019, leading to more than [2 million](#) internally displaced people and thousands displaced towards the coastal countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin. According to [UNICEF](#), the northern regions of the coastal countries now live under constant threat of spillover from the Central Sahel conflict, with 882 security incidents reported between January 2021 and October 2023. In addition to [cross-border displacement](#) primarily from Burkina Faso, the growing insecurity has led to [internal displacement](#) in the northern areas of the coastal countries. [According to IOM](#), as of 30 September 2023, there were 66,915 registered refugees and asylum seekers in the northern areas of the coastal countries, compared to 54,929 people as of 31 July. The largest number is found in [Côte d'Ivoire](#), which as of 31 December hosted 36,535 registered asylum seekers, with an additional estimated 7,850 non-registered arrivals.

Increasing numbers of West Africans attempting to reach the US via Central America

According to the [New York Times](#), the number of refugees and migrants from African countries caught entering the United States at its southern border increased more than fourfold from 13,406 in 2022 to 58,462 in 2023. People from Mauritania (15,263) and Senegal (13,526) alone accounted for almost 50% of this total, and Guineans were the fourth most represented nationality with more than 4,000 arrivals. As migration routes to Europe have become more strictly [surveilled](#), and therefore even more [dangerous and deadly](#), travelling to the United States via Central America has emerged as an increasingly popular alternative. While not a new [phenomenon](#), this route has recently evolved with increasing numbers of migrants and refugees entering Nicaragua by plane. As Nicaragua is not a country with strict [visa protocols](#) for many African nationalities, those who can afford the expensive plane journey fly there and continue their journey northward overland. Social media has been an important factor in the increasing popularity of this route with people [raising awareness](#) and [providing information](#) to others via platforms such as TikTok and WhatsApp.

¹ UNHCR Sahel Crisis Coordination [platform](#) was accessed on 15 January 2024 and reflects figures displayed at that time (current as of 31 December 2023).

Policy, diplomacy and legal updates

Niger's military government abrogates anti-smuggling Law 2015-36

Following a [coup](#) in July 2023, on 25 November Niger's new military government announced the [abrogation](#) of the controversial [Law 2015-36](#), which criminalized the 'illegal smuggling of migrants' in Niger. The law was adopted by the Nigerien parliament in 2015 amid [EU pressure](#) to reduce the numbers of migrants transiting through Niger's Agadez region on their way to Libya. The law had been widely [criticized](#) by civil society actors, not least because it drove the migration industry [under the radar](#), resulting in smugglers using alternative routes to avoid detection and exposing migrants to higher risks and higher prices.² The law was also [disliked](#) by the Nigerien military, who previously benefitted from bribes paid along northern migration routes. Before its abrogation, the ECOWAS [court](#) was reviewing the legality of the law.

On 25 November, General Abdourahamane Tiani, the President of Niger's National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland, [announced](#) the retroactive dissolution of the law, including an [amnesty](#) for all prisoners charged under the law. It has been [reported](#) that this decision was taken in response to the EU's condemnation of the military coup, as well as the demands to reinstate President Mohamed Bazoum. The EU Commissioner for Home Affairs, as quoted in [France 24](#), said she regrets the decision to repeal Law 2015-36 and is concerned about the consequences. Nigerien civil society and locals in Agadez, on the other hand, have [welcomed](#) the abrogation of the law as it allows for [safer transit](#) north of Agadez and greater [economic opportunities](#) in a poor region whose livelihoods were previously rooted in the passage of migrants.

According to multiple news sources, northbound migration through Niger has been [picking up](#) since the abrogation of the law, with the [mayor of Agadez](#) stating that departures have tripled. In December, an MMC key informant in Agadez had [observed](#) that some smugglers who had been operating in a clandestine manner were once again carrying out their activities openly. InfoMigrants [reports](#) that military leaders are now offering to escort migrants and smugglers in convoys across the desert, in return for money – as had been the [practice](#) prior to Law 2015-36 – which should also serve to make the journey safer. Nevertheless, some smugglers continue to take clandestine routes because they do not fully trust the new system, [according to](#) the President of the Regional Council of Agadez.

Twenty-seven Senegalese civil society organizations denounce European and North American visa processes

On 28 November, 27 Senegalese civil society organizations and NGOs published an [open letter](#) to the ambassadors of France, Belgium, Canada, South Africa, Spain, USA, Germany, and Italy, calling for a reform of visa application procedures for Senegalese citizens. In the letter, the organizations laid out the difficulties Senegalese citizens face when applying for a visa to these countries. The letter states that the current regulations make it almost impossible for Senegalese people to visit their families, attend conferences, or

² For an extensive analysis of law 2015-36, see article: [The criminalization of mobility in Niger: the case of Law 2015-36 | Asile \(asileproject.eu\)](#)

simply come as tourists to visit European or North American countries. The letter underscored the disparity in visa access faced by citizens of Senegal:

“It’s understandable that, in an increasingly insecure world, a state should put in place fairly sophisticated procedures to ensure that people entering its territory cannot endanger the lives of its citizens. But when the visa applicant’s journey is made up of misunderstandings, vexations and even humiliations, it can only fuel the feeling of rejection felt by visa applicants, whereas the citizens of these countries live peacefully and fraternally on Senegalese soil.”

The letter called for reform to the current system which is characterized by long wait times for appointments, expensive processes and a lack of transparency. Specific [suggestions](#) for improvement included the introduction of e-visas, an end to the outsourcing of visa processes to external service providers and the provision of a clear reason in the case of rejected applications. The CSOs called on the Senegalese government to address these difficulties in their diplomatic exchanges with the respective countries. This message was reinforced with a [protest march](#) in Dakar on 17 December drawing attention to the difficulties.

Mixed migration from West Africa towards North Africa and Europe

Western Mediterranean and Atlantic Route (arrivals to Spain)

As of 31 December, there had been [57,538 irregular arrivals](#) of refugees and migrants to Spain during the year. This includes irregular arrivals by sea to the Canary Islands, by land and sea to Ceuta and Melilla, and by sea to the Spanish mainland and Balearic Islands. This compares to 31,763 arrivals in 2022 – an increase of 81% – and is the [highest](#) number of arrivals since 2018.

Western Mediterranean Route

According to [UNHCR](#) figures, during the fourth quarter of the year 5,444 refugees and migrants arrived irregularly to Spain by land or sea along the Western Mediterranean Route, a decrease of 12% compared to the third quarter. As of 31 December, arrivals along this route in the final quarter of the year were slightly higher (9%) than during the [same period](#) in 2022. Reporting from the NGO Alarm Phone indicated that in the fourth quarter, some thousands of refugees and migrants seeking to enter the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla were met with pushbacks and/or detention (for more information see the [Q4 North Africa QMMU](#)).³

Atlantic Route

2023 marked the [highest number of arrivals](#) ever along the Atlantic Route from Western and Northwestern Africa towards the Canary Islands. This route has been [active](#) since the 1990s – reaching a peak in [2006](#) before falling largely dormant until 2020 when more than 23,000 arrivals were [recorded](#).

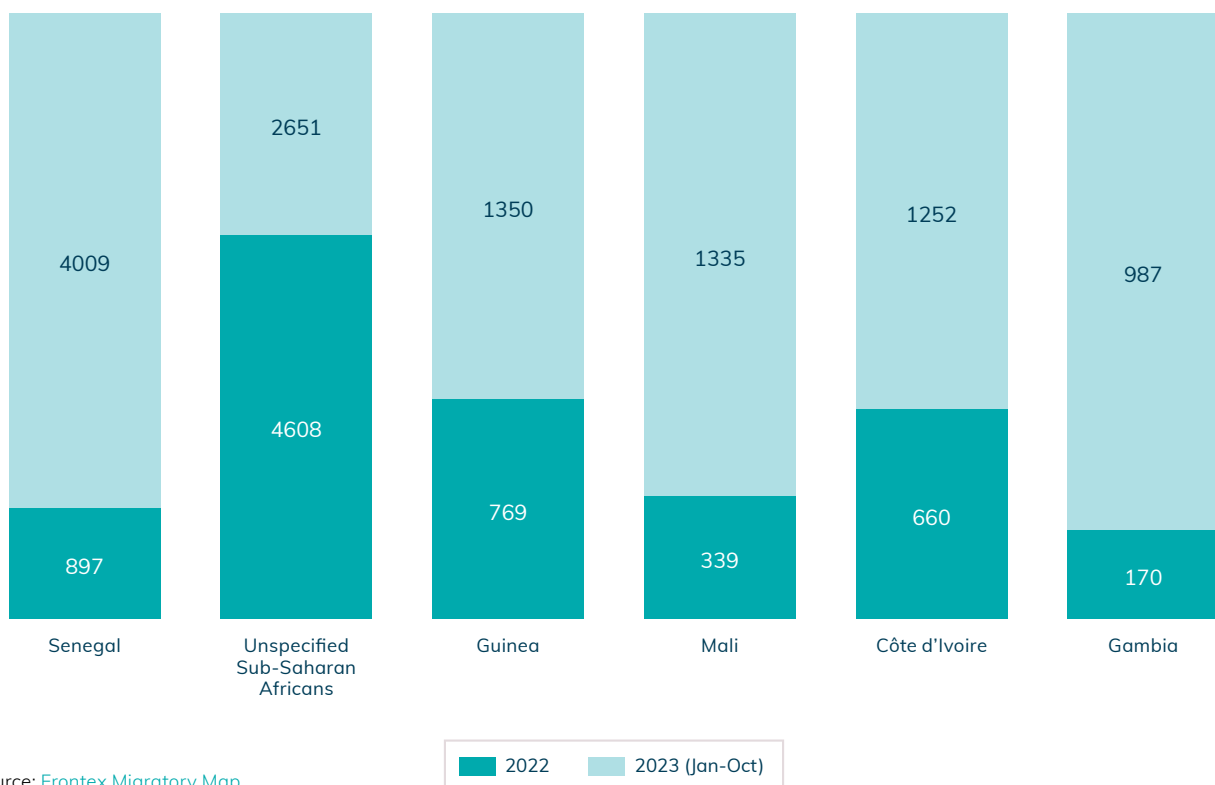
³ This analysis is based on the following tweets from the NGO Alarm Phone from [19 November](#) and [3 January 2024](#).

In the [fourth quarter](#), some 25,125 refugees and migrants arrived in the Canary Islands, compared to 3,163 arrivals during the fourth quarter of [2022](#), an increase of 694%. In October alone almost [16,000 refugees and migrants](#) reached the Canaries, which is the highest monthly total ever recorded. In total, [UNHCR](#) recorded 40,330 total arrivals in 2023 on the Canary Islands as of 31 December, which represents an increase of 157% over 2022.

On 13 October the Spanish Ministry of Migration declared a [situation of emergency](#), an administrative mechanism intended to expedite processes and speed funding for a response, as the volume of arrivals had placed the Canary Islands’ reception system under pressure, and resulted in increased tensions. Later in the month, Spanish authorities stated they would establish [emergency accommodation](#) for around 3,000 refugees and migrants in military barracks, hotels, and hostels according to reporting from Reuters. Transfers of refugees and migrants from the Islands to the [Spanish mainland](#) were also proceeding apace, helping to keep [reception facilities](#) on the Canary Islands from being completely [overwhelmed](#), as they had been in 2021.

Frontex figures show the top [three countries of origin](#) of arrivals in the Canary Islands as Morocco, Senegal, and Guinea, with [West African](#) migrants predominating overall.⁴ Compared to 2022, the numbers of Guinean and Ivorian nationals on the Atlantic Route almost doubled and the numbers of Senegalese,⁵ Malians and Gambians more than quadrupled (see graph below).

Figure 1. West African nationals on Atlantic Route



Source: [Frontex Migratory Map](#)

4 Data accessed on 16 January 2024 covering the period January – October 2023 showed 2,651 people categorized as “unspecified sub-Saharan Africans.” Following MMC observations from the [recent years](#) we assume the majority of these people are from West Africa.
 5 For a more in-depth exploration of Senegalese departures on the Atlantic Route, see the Thematic Focus on page 13.

IOM's Missing Migrants project recorded [914 deaths](#) on the Atlantic Route in 2023, compared to 559 in 2022.⁶ The number of deaths and disappearances is estimated to be much [higher](#) as many boats go [missing](#) in the Atlantic Ocean. According to the Spanish NGO [Caminando Fronteras](#), the Atlantic Route remains the most deadly active migration route in the world. The NGO [reports](#) that in 2023, at least 6,007 migrants have died while attempting to reach the Canary Islands, compared to [1,784 people](#) in 2022. The numbers of recorded deaths on the Atlantic Route in 2023 are thus higher than in [2021](#) (4,016) and 2022 (1,784) combined.

Spanish Minister of Interior visits Mauritania and Senegal

In light of these increased arrivals along the Atlantic Route, the [Spanish Minister of Interior](#) visited Mauritania and Senegal in October. These visits marked his fifth mission to Mauritania and his third to Senegal since 2018. Migration policy was an important focus of the Spanish EU Council [presidency](#) (held from July-December 2023), and he was joined in his trip to Mauritania by the Vice-President of the European Commission. As quoted on the [official website](#) of the government of Spain, the Interior Minister emphasized the need for cooperation with origin and transit countries "in the fight against the mafia gangs that traffic in people." Underscoring the importance that Spain puts on this type of migration diplomacy, the Interior Minister, as quoted in [InfoMigrants](#), [stated](#) that during 2023 some 40% of irregular departures had been prevented through collaboration with African countries, including Morocco, Senegal, Mauritania and the Gambia. This meant the arrival in Spain of 27,000 fewer migrants in 2023.

Visit to Mauritania

In their [visit](#) to Mauritania, the Spanish Minister of Interior and the Vice-President of the European Commission met with the president of Mauritania to discuss migration cooperation in the context of increased activity on the Atlantic Route. According to a Spanish government [news update](#) regarding the visit, cooperation in aerial, land and maritime patrolling on the part of Mauritanian authorities and Spanish security forces had prevented 7,000 migrants from reaching the Canary Islands, a model of cooperation that Spain would like to extend to other countries.

Visit to Senegal

According to [El Pais](#), the sole agenda item for the Interior Minister's visit to Senegal was the deterrence of sea departures from Senegal.⁷ During the visit, the Interior Minister [announced](#) the delivery of six surveillance drones to Senegal to assist the Senegalese government in preventing departures from its coast. This is on top of the 38 Spanish [security personnel](#), four boats, one helicopter and 13 all-terrain vehicles permanently based there, and an airplane which has been patrolling the Senegalese and Mauritanian coasts since mid-October.

⁶ Numbers drawing on IOM's Missing Migrants Project (MMP) are based on MMC calculations made accessing the MMP website in early January 2024.

⁷ For a more in-depth exploration of Senegalese departures on the Atlantic Route, see the Thematic Focus on page 13.

Deportations of Senegalese nationals from Spain were also [reported](#) to be an important part of the conversations between the Spanish Minister of Interior and his Senegalese counterpart. While a key priority for Spain, returns are a sensitive and unpopular subject in Senegal given the importance of migration and remittances for its people and economy. Despite continuing efforts on the part of Spain, the Senegalese government has been [reluctant](#) to accept dedicated deportation flights, and in the past, [scheduled flights](#) of this type have been cancelled at the last minute. However, a week before the Spanish mission to Dakar, on 24 October, a [charter flight](#) from Barcelona via Tenerife brought around 30 migrants back to Senegal. While the Spanish Interior Ministry is said to expect such flights to occur consistently going forward, it is not clear that Senegalese authorities have agreed to this. According to the Senegalese NGO [Boza Fii](#), another deportation flight was planned for 24 November but did not take place.

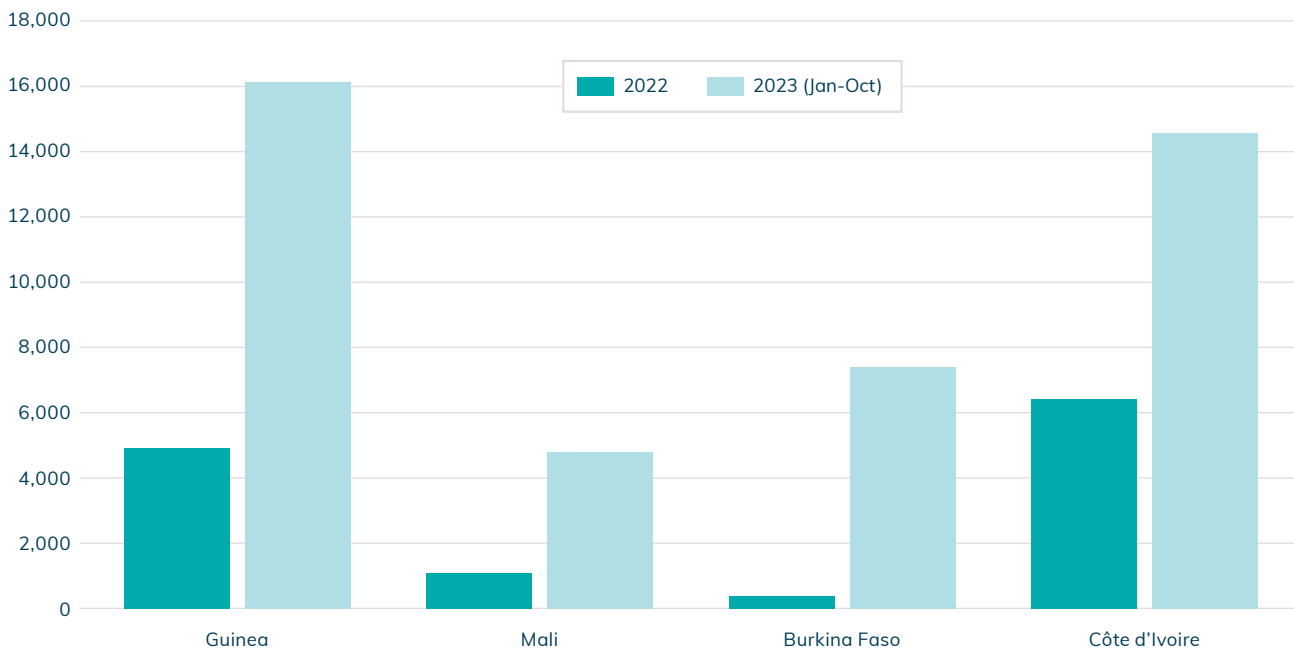
Senegalese measures to deter departures

While not necessarily cooperating fully with every European request, as the reluctance over deportations demonstrates, the Senegalese government is trying to crack down on departures. As reported in local news source [Le Quotidien](#), the Senegalese president questioned various high-level defence and security personnel as to how so many migrants could pass their surveillance undetected in spite of all the resources at their disposal. He was said to be questioning not only their competence, but also their integrity. The possibility of complicity has also been raised in reporting by [El Pais](#); among Senegalese migrants who have made it to the Canary Islands, stories of bribing local authorities to turn a blind eye to departures are common. On 8 November the Senegalese president called for [emergency measures](#) to combat departures which would include security, economic and social initiatives by various government ministries as well as the military. This comes on top of the government's announcement of a 10-year [National Strategy to Combat Irregular Migration](#) in July 2023.

Central Mediterranean Route (arrivals to Italy)

As of December 31, [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 2023, the number of Guinean nationals arriving in Italy by sea [tripled](#) compared to 2022 and constituted the most represented nationality (12%) followed by Tunisians (11%) and Ivorians (10%). Nationals from Burkina Faso (6%) and Mali (4%) were also among the most common countries of origin on the CMR in 2023. This continues the shift observed in the [first half of the year](#), with a larger share of nationals from West and Central African countries arriving in Italy than in recent years. However, it is worth noting that in [November](#), most arrivals in Italy were from Bangladesh, Syria, Egypt and Pakistan.

Figure 2. West African Nationals on CMR

Source: [Frontex Migratory Map](#)

Southbound mixed migration

Returns and evacuations within and to the West Africa region⁸

Emergency Transit Mechanism (EMT)

As of 31 October, [3,812 people](#) have been evacuated through UNHCR's Emergency Transit Mechanism from Libya to Niger since its inception in 2017.

Assisted Voluntary Returns (AVR)

On 10 October 2023, [IOM](#) restarted their AVR program from Niger following a temporary break. More than 500 stranded migrants were assisted to return to Cameroon, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. AVR operations had been affected by the [closure](#) of airspace and certain borders following Niger's [coup](#) on 26 July.

Furthermore, in October 2023 ECOWAS published a [press release](#) stating its commitment to safeguarding the well-being of stranded migrants in Niger. In collaboration with IOM, ECOWAS set up a voluntary repatriation plan to return 212 migrants from Niger to Nigeria and Guinea. This follows an [ECOWAS mission](#) to Niger carried out in September 2022 where the delegation [denounced](#) the frequent expulsions from Algeria and [issued](#) a series of recommendations, [underscoring](#) the necessity for better management of migration between ECOWAS and Maghreb states.

⁸ This overview does not necessarily capture all return activity within the region.

Continued expulsions from Algeria to Niger and Mali

For several [years](#), the Algerian government has been regularly and consistently expelling refugees and migrants to Niger. During the fourth quarter of the year, multiple such expulsions took place from Algeria to the desert border regions with both Niger and Mali. According to [estimates](#) made by the NGO Alarmphone Sahara, at least 5,012 people had been expelled from Algeria to Niger between 26 July and 18 October 2023, bringing the annual total of expulsions to at least 24,689 as of mid-October. Humanitarian conditions for expelled migrants [stranded](#) in Niger have been particularly [difficult](#) in 2023, with the situation remaining [precarious](#) – not least due to delays in AVR processes – with refugees and migrants protesting on several occasions.

In December 2023, the local newspaper Maliactu [reported](#) on the expulsions of Malian migrants to the Malian-Algerian border zone. According to the newspaper, the Algerian police took their valuables and clothes and left the migrants in the desert without money, food or medical supplies. UNHCR also reported on [Malian refugees](#) who were prevented from entering Algeria/expelled by authorities; as of October some 1,530 expelled Malian refugees had made their way to Assamaka in northern Niger, and UNHCR is observing more and more Malians going directly to Assamaka without first seeking to enter Algeria.

Thematic Focus:

Drivers of migration from Senegal – a civil society perspective

Sea departures from Senegal along the Atlantic Route have surged in 2023, continuing strong in the fourth quarter. According to [Frontex](#) data, from January-October 2023, at least 4,009 Senegalese nationals arrived by sea to the Canary Islands, compared to 897 arrivals in [2022](#), constituting an increase of 347%. The most recent figures from [IOM](#) show that in July and August, 45 boat departures from Senegal were observed, an increase of 114% compared to the months of May and June 2023. The Senegalese navy also [reported](#) that they intercepted 3,838 migrants off the coast of Senegal during the second half of October alone. Reporting from [Senenews](#) in early November indicated that several pirogues were leaving the Senegalese coast every day.

Drivers of migration: a civil society perspective

In the [last QMMU](#), we explored Senegal's migration context and trends – both current and historical – looking at various factors which may be behind the recent increase in departures from Senegal at a moment that is both [politically and economically](#) fraught. In order to better understand how the Senegalese civil society perceives the current dynamics, the MMC spoke to two representatives from migration-focused CSOs in Senegal: Badara Ndiaye, Director of DIADEM (Diaspora Development Education Migration) and the West African Platform of the civil society organization MIGRAFRIQUE, and Saliou Diouf, President of the NGO Boza Fii. Both agree that the recent uptick in boat departures from Senegal is the result of multiple factors – both longstanding and more recent – and while not exhaustive they highlighted some factors they consider to be influencing this trend:

Route specific factors:

One reason for a shift towards departures from the Senegalese coastline is the **prices of the migration journey itself**. According to Diouf, while it costs between 1,000 and 2,000 Euros to take a boat from Morocco to the Canary Islands, from Senegal it costs between 400 and 600 Euros.

Diouf also emphasized that **other routes to Europe may be seen as less attractive**. Recently the climate for migrants in North Africa has become increasingly hostile following [remarks](#) by the Tunisian President on irregular migrants in February 2023. Since then, [violence and discrimination](#) against sub-Saharan African refugees and migrants, as well as Black Tunisians, have been on the rise. At the same time, [reports](#) about devastating conditions in detention facilities for migrants in Libya, as well as pullbacks and aggressions by the [Libyan coastguard](#), have been widely known for years.

Economic factors:

Additionally, **economic instability after the Covid-19 pandemic, rising prices, as well as high domestic unemployment** make it hard for people to earn a living in Senegal, creating migration pressure as people

seek better livelihood opportunities abroad. While economic factors are not a new driver of migration from Senegal, Ndiaye sees the Covid-19 pandemic as a particular turning point, dating the change in migration dynamics in Senegal to that period.

Both Ndiaye and Diouf spoke of the **challenges currently facing Senegal's artisanal fishing industry** which is a crucial source of livelihood for many people on and near Senegal's coast. In the last decades, Senegal has signed several fishing agreements with among others the [EU](#), [China](#) and [Russia](#), which have led to a reduction in fish stock. Additionally, the situation is exacerbated by the fact that many [unregistered](#) vessels fish in Senegalese waters. As described by Ndiaye, this means [local artisanal fishermen](#) often do not catch enough fish to make a living, nor is there enough fish to feed people in their villages, further increasing migration pressure. According to Diouf:

“We’ve reached a point where people are desperate. People do not even try anymore to find solutions. The fishing contracts that were signed in Senegal [...] make the situations in the fishing zones more and more difficult and people are no longer able to earn a living [...] It was the fishermen who were the first to leave. This year we’ve seen a lot of departures, because they are organized by the people who know the sea. [In some villages] there are no more captains, everyone has left.”

Equity factors – disparities in opportunities for mobility:

Ndiaye observes an underlying sense of injustice exemplified by two phenomena at play: **on the one hand, Europe further closing its borders and on the other, African countries demanding regular pathways to re-open these borders**, especially as many [European countries](#) face shortages of labour due to their ageing populations. It is very difficult for Senegalese citizens to obtain a [visa](#) to go to Europe in a regular manner (see p.3), whereas [European citizens](#) often do not require visas to enter Senegal. Ndiaye points to the inherent imbalance here, which he believes has been breeding growing discontent and is increasingly part of the discourse in Senegal. According to Ndiaye, this is not a viable model for cooperation:

“Europe cannot take our fish and our qualified young people and to all the rest they say: no you are not welcome, you cannot get a visa, you cannot even come to visit your friends.”

Despite these diverse factors shaping migration dynamics, both the Spanish and Senegalese governments have reacted to the rise in arrivals in the Canary Islands with a primarily security-oriented approach focused on deterring migration (see p. 9 and 10 for more detailed discussion).

Considering the complex array of drivers highlighted by Senegalese civil society in this thematic focus, however, it is worth asking whether such an approach is the best way to address these factors.

Highlighted New Research and Reports



[African intermediary cities as actors and partners in urban migration governance – case study of Saint Louis, Senegal](#)

Equal Partnerships | November 2023

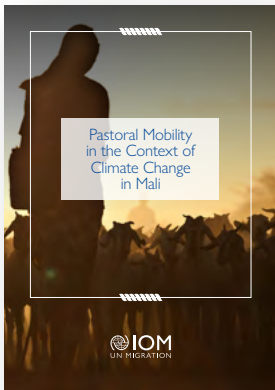
This report presents the findings of a case study on partnerships for urban migration governance in the intermediary city of Saint-Louis, Senegal. It finds that the city serves as a point of arrival, transit, residence, and return to a wide range of mobile populations. City governance is often focused on potential and return international migration, while other forms of human mobility are largely absent from policy making. The report recommends the strengthening of local actors, the involvement of civil society and religious leaders, as well as a holistic approach to urban migration governance.



[Podcast: The stories behind Europe's unmarked migrant graves](#)

The Guardian | December 2023

This podcast episode discusses the stories of migrants who died during the dangerous journey to reach Europe and the fact that many of them are buried in unmarked graves. The episode focuses on migration from West and North Africa towards Spain's Canary Islands. Working with forensic scientists from the International Committee of the Red Cross and other researchers, NGOs and pathologists, the Guardian and other reporters set out to count Europe's unmarked migrant graves – the largest number of unnamed gravestones since the Second World War.



[Pastoral mobility in the context of climate change in Mali](#)

IOM | December 2023

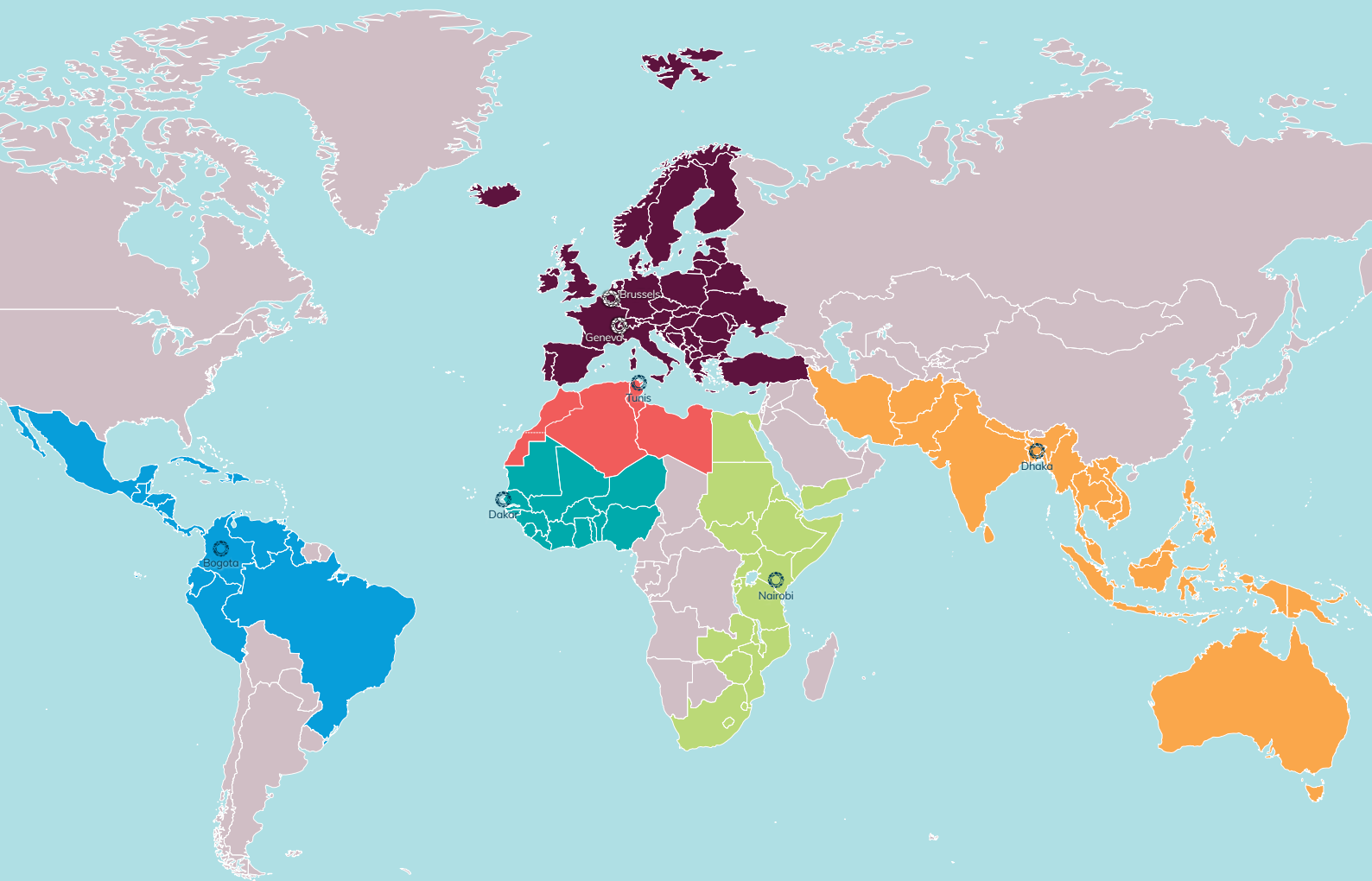
This report takes a close look at how climate change-related factors are altering pastoralists' mobility behaviours in Mali. Insecurity, shifting environmental conditions, tighter restrictions on cross-border movements and changes in agricultural policy have all had effects on transhumance mobility patterns in West and Central Africa, making them more unpredictable. The study finds that climate-induced factors have significantly changed mobility patterns and strategies of pastoralists in Mali, resulting in alterations to departure dates during transhumance periods and different itineraries. Furthermore, the routes are becoming less predictable due to environmental degradation and uncertain rainfall. Respondents in the study strongly disagree with the statement that they will be able to maintain their usual transhumance routes in the future.



[After Watching 10 Migrants Die at Sea, He Now Pleads: 'Stay'](#)

New York Times | December 2023

This New York Times article tells the story of Moustapha Diouf, co-founder of the Senegalese organization the Association of Young Repatriates (AJRAP), who survived a migration journey to the Canary Islands 17 years ago. Since then, he has dedicated himself to convincing Senegalese youth to stay in Senegal. Facing economic hardship, fishing communities like his hometown Thiaroye-sur-Mer continue to suffer, and convincing young people to stay amidst limited job opportunities and economic challenges is difficult. To improve the situation for young people in Senegal, Diouf co-founded the nonprofit AJRAP to provide alternatives for young people, providing them with vocational training. The reality, however, is that there are not enough jobs for the large proportion of young people in the country, and Diouf explains how this makes his job increasingly difficult.



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.

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.

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