



# 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 Senegal, Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and the coastal countries. 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 Copenhagen, Geneva, and Brussels. For more information on MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit [mixedmigration.org](https://mixedmigration.org) and follow us at [@Mixed\\_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

### MMC's understanding of mixed migration

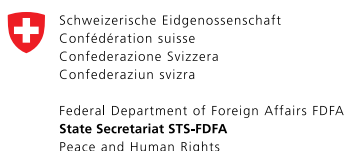
"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people engaged in mixed migration have a range of legal statuses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

#### 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 2 - 2024

### Key Updates

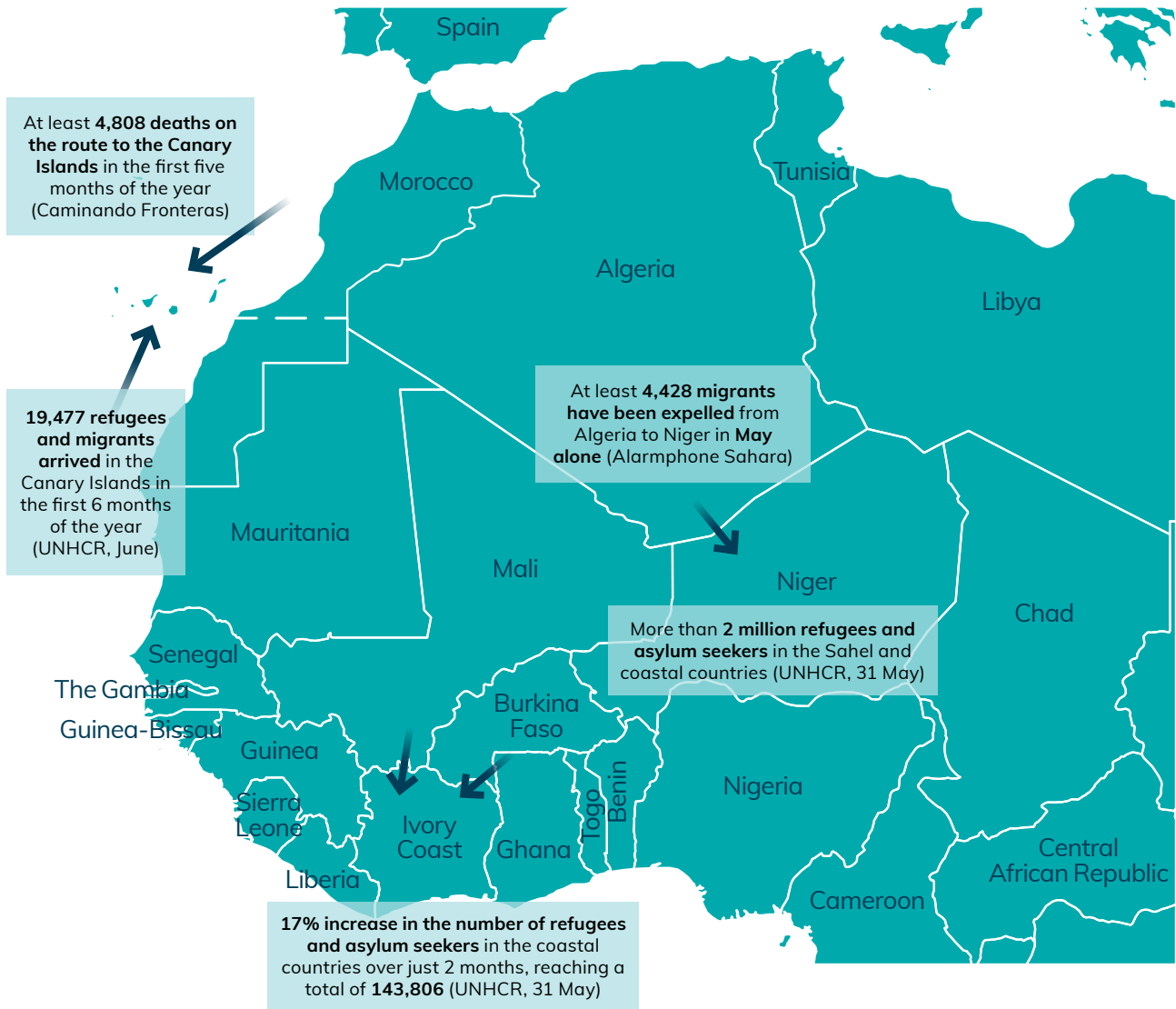
- **The Atlantic route to the Canary Islands confirmed as the deadliest migratory route in the world:** More than 5,000 people [died](#) in the first five months of 2024 trying to reach Spain, according to the Spanish [NGO Caminando Fronteras](#). The Atlantic Route accounted for at least 4,808 deaths during the same period, which amounts to 95% of all victims recorded on migration routes to Spain in 2024.
- **Regional displacement continues to rise in the first half of 2024:** As of 30 June 2024, there were more than 5.5 million people of concern in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania) according to [UNHCR](#).<sup>1</sup> The number of refugees and asylum seekers has [increased](#) to more than 2 million by May 31,<sup>2</sup> which is the highest number ever recorded by UNHCR in the region. This compares to more than 1.7 million at the end of the first quarter of 2024.
- **Investigation by [Lighthouse reports](#) reveals migrants were systematically abandoned in desert areas in Mauritania:** The investigation [uncovers](#) how migrants have been systematically expelled to remote desert areas in Mauritania, but also in [Morocco and Tunisia](#). Furthermore, it [reveals](#) that Spanish authorities supported Mauritania with sea interceptions by funding equipment and training personnel, while also providing vehicles used for migrant deportations and participating in the inspections of Mauritanian detention centers.
- **Côte d'Ivoire has announced a [plan](#) for the voluntary return of Burkinabe refugees amidst ongoing discussions on return conditions and pending disclosure of specific process details:** This follows [recent tensions](#) between Burkinabe and Ivorian authorities over political disputes and [border incidents](#).
- **Increased sea interceptions of migrants by Senegalese authorities:** During the second quarter of 2024, intensified [interceptions](#) by the Senegalese coastguard have been recorded. In the period from [7](#) to [17](#) May alone, Senegalese authorities reported the interception of 718 migrants bound for the Canary Islands.<sup>3</sup>

1 UNHCR Sahel Crisis Coordination platform was accessed on 8 July 2024 and reflects figures displayed at that time (current as of 30 June 2024).

2 They include refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

3 MMC calculations based on reports on X by the Senegalese Navy between [7 May](#) and [17 May](#), 2024.

## Regional Overview\*



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

# Mixed Migration Regional Updates

## Northbound mixed migration

### Western Mediterranean and Atlantic Route

As of 30 June, the [Spanish Ministry of Interior](#) reported 24,898 irregular arrivals to Spain this year.<sup>4</sup> This figure represents an increase of 96% from the 12,704 arrivals recorded during the same period in 2023.

According to [data](#) collected through IOM's Missing Migrants Project (MMP), at least 156 migrants have gone missing on the Atlantic Route in the first 6 months of 2024.<sup>5</sup> This compares to 211 deaths during the same period in [2023](#). However, IOM acknowledges that these numbers represent an underestimation, as many deaths remain undocumented. On the other hand, the Spanish NGO Caminando Fronteras [reported](#) at least 5,054 victims on migration routes towards Spain in the period between 1 January and 31 May, including 4,808 victims on the Canary Islands route only.

The Atlantic Route remains the busiest migration route to enter the European Union despite a slight slowdown in arrivals this quarter. UNHCR [reported](#) 19,477 arrivals in the Canary Islands for the period between 1 January and 30 June 2024, an increase of 170% compared to the same period last year. Frontex [reports](#) that the first five months of the year saw a rise of 303% compared to the same period last year, while the 18,000 arrivals recorded in 2024 as of 31 May represents the highest total for this period since Frontex began collecting data in 2011. However, this quarter [recorded](#) 6,180 arrivals, which is 46% less than the 13,297 in the first quarter of the year, and slightly above the 5,100 arrivals [reported](#) in the second quarter last year.

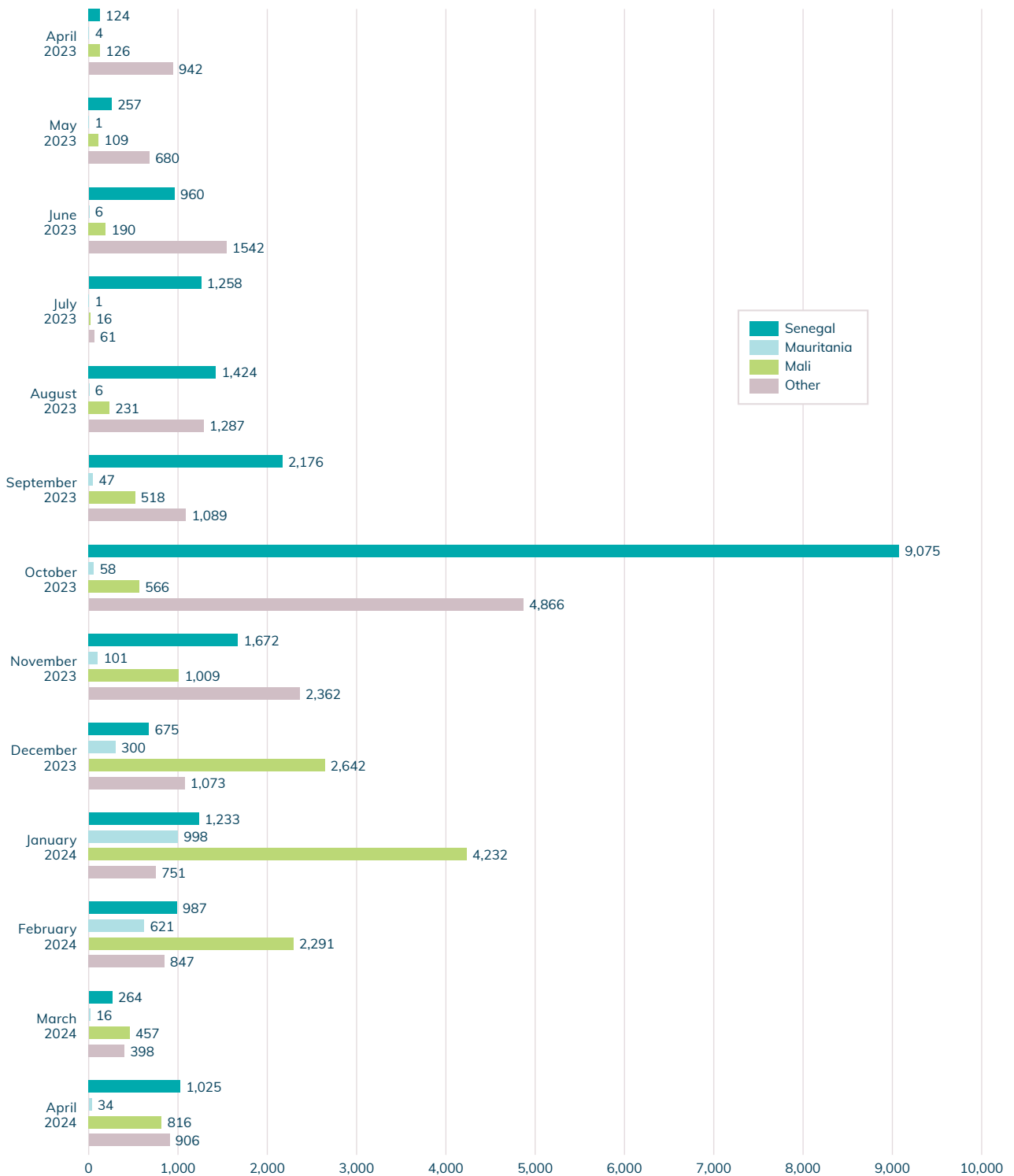
Overall, in the first five months of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, arrivals to the Canary Islands from various nationalities increased, such as Malians, Mauritians, and Senegalese, with Moroccans being the only group to decrease. According to the [latest Frontex numbers](#) from April 2024, Senegalese nationals comprised the largest group arriving via the Atlantic route during April (37%), followed by Malians (29%) and Guineans (9%). Following a decline in Senegalese arrivals in March to only 264 arrivals (during Ramadan period), the numbers rebounded in April. However, both Malian and Mauritanian arrivals have decreased significantly since the beginning of the year.<sup>6</sup> This decrease can be attributed to the [recent](#) EU-Mauritania migration joint declaration. Signed in [March 2024](#), the deal comprises a package of EUR 210 million to be used for migration management, humanitarian aid and opportunities for youth.

4 All data provided by the Spanish Ministry of Interior covers the period from 1 January to 30 June 2024. Therefore, comparisons to 2023 from the same source refer to the same timeframe (1 January – 30 June 2023).

5 Data were consulted on 1 July.

6 While arrivals of Malian nationals reached its highest level with 4,232 in January, it dropped to 457 in March before increasing slightly to 816 in April. Equally, the numbers of Mauritanian nationals arriving via the Atlantic Route decreased this quarter. While January 2024 witnessed a record high of 998 Mauritanians arriving via the Atlantic Route, the numbers declined to just 16 arrivals in March 2024. In April 2024, Frontex recorded 34 Mauritanian arrivals.

**Figure 1. Atlantic Route, arrivals to the Canary Islands by country of nationality between April 2023 and April 2024**



## Central Mediterranean Route (arrivals to Italy)

According to [UNHCR](#), as of 30 June, Italy registered 25,804 irregular arrivals, representing a 61% decrease compared to the same period last year (65,519 arrivals). UNHCR [indicates](#) that 56% of the people reaching Italy via sea departed from Libya, followed by 40% from Tunisia, and less than 1 per cent from Algeria (160 people). Among these [arrivals](#), Bangladeshis constituted the largest group at 21%. Syrians followed with 15%, Tunisians with 14%, Guineans comprised 9%, and Egyptians 7%.

Compared to [last year](#), there has been a decrease in the number of West African nationals arriving via this route. For instance, in the same period in 2023, Ivorians made up 15% and Guineans 12% of arrivals in Italy. This [year](#), Ivorians represent 3% of arrivals, while Guineans account for 9%. This decrease can be partly explained by increased interceptions on Tunisian shores. While these interceptions target [both](#) Tunisians and non-Tunisians, they disproportionately affect sub-Saharan African migrants. For example, [78%](#) of interceptions in 2023 were sub-Saharan African migrants.<sup>7</sup>

## Mixed migration within and to the West Africa region

As of 30 June 2024, there were more than 5.5 million people of concern<sup>8</sup> in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania) according to [UNHCR](#). Among them, the number of refugees and asylum seekers has [exceeded](#) 2 million, which is the highest number ever recorded by UNHCR in the region and compares to more than 1.7 million in [February 2024](#). UNHCR attributes the increase primarily to the ongoing crisis in Sudan, which has severely impacted Chad, the [largest host country in the region](#), with over 1.2 million registered asylum seekers and refugees.

## Rising numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in coastal countries

The deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in central Sahel continues to generate refugee movement towards coastal countries. According to the latest UNHCR figures, there was an estimated total of 143,806 refugees (50,168) and asylum seekers (93,638)<sup>9</sup> in the coastal countries of [Côte d'Ivoire](#) (52,936), [Ghana](#) (23,142), [Togo](#) (48,015) and [Benin](#) (19,713) as of 31 May 2024. This compares to [122,858](#) recorded refugees and asylum seekers as of March 2024, representing a 17% increase in only two months.

In the [Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan](#) led by WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM, the projected refugee population in the northern regions of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo is estimated to reach 202,000 this year.

<sup>7</sup> Although the demographic distribution of interceptions this year is not yet available, Tunisian authorities [reported](#) a 40% increase in interceptions between January 31 and May 2024 compared to the same period last year.

<sup>8</sup> These figures represent the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, refugee returnees, internally displaced people (IDP) and IDP returnees, as reported either by national authorities or UNHCR, in central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger), Chad and Mauritania.

<sup>9</sup> MMC calculations based on UNHCR data for Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Benin and Togo as of 31 May 2024.

## Humanitarian situation worsening for refugees in Mauritania's Hodh El Chargui region

The humanitarian crisis that has affected Mali since 2012 has had significant repercussions on neighbouring countries, including Mauritania. Since 2012, tens of thousands of Malians have fled to Mauritania for safety due to instability and violence in their country. The recent increase of insecurity in Mali in 2024 has led thousands more Malians and Mauritians previously residing in Mali to seek refuge in Mauritania. [According to UNHCR](#), increased arrivals of Malian refugees were observed between January 2023 and April 2024, bringing the total number of refugees to over 200,000, adding to the already overcrowded Mbera Refugee camp that houses 102,000 refugees and [exceeding](#) its initial capacity of 70,000.

Overall, Hodh El Chargui region hosts more than 200,000 refugees and asylum seekers as of April 2024, according to [UNHCR](#). This number includes the 95,000 new arrivals added to the 105,000 refugees already registered. A recent [report](#) of the “Famine Early Warning Systems Network” notes that the influx of refugees increases the pressure on the already strained sources of food, employment, and livelihoods in the region. UNHCR also [notes](#) how the relatively scarce employment opportunities in the region pose challenges for migrants and Mauritians alike. In response to the humanitarian emergency, the European Union [announced](#) on 27 May the release of a new aid package of EUR 200,000 as part of the “Disaster Response Emergency Fund” to be deployed through the Red Cross (IFRC).

## New report reveals the expulsion of Fulani refugees from Ghana

According to [UNCHR](#), Ghana hosts more than 15,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Burkina Faso who have fled insecurity in the Central Sahel. Being a semi-nomadic community, the historically marginalised Fulani have been [increasingly targeted and recruited by jihadist groups](#) that continue to spread in Burkina Faso. As a result, Fulani communities have become trapped between the [recruitment by armed groups](#), thereby threatened with death, and local authorities and militias who see them as jihadist sympathisers, thus discriminating against them.

A new [publication](#) by “The New Humanitarian” reports on Fulani rights groups [accusing](#) the Ghanaian government of expelling Burkinabe Fulani refugees and asylum seekers. Fulani asylum seekers reported having significant difficulties in being recognised as refugees and face a higher risk of expulsion. In [July 2023](#), Ghanaian authorities conducted raids in small towns and villages across northern and central Ghana, detaining hundreds of Fulani and forcibly returning them to Burkina Faso, [according](#) to local officials and Fulani rights groups. In reaction, UNHCR [published](#) a press release calling for the end of forced returns to Burkina Faso, while the Ghanaian government has [denied](#) the accusations. The expulsions stopped in August 2023, but the Ghana Refugee Board has still not registered any Fulani arrivals, reports the [article](#). In May 2024, the government [inaugurated](#) a newly renovated border post in Namoo, at the border with Burkina Faso, with the goal of enhancing national security by “preventing transnational crime and irregular migration”.



## Migration business thrives again in Agadez, Niger

Continuing a [trend](#) that could be observed since the abrogation of the anti-smuggling law 2015-36 in November 2023, Agadez has [reconsolidated](#) its position as the main point of departure for northbound migration from Niger to Libya and Algeria. In April 2024, IOM [recorded](#) 109,297 migrants leaving the country, which is an increase by 42% compared to [March 2023](#).<sup>10</sup> Cross-border movements from Niger towards Libya increased by 6% between March and April 2024, while those towards Algeria decreased by 22% compared to March 2024. IOM attributes this decline to changing climate conditions caused by the extreme heat wave and expulsions of migrants from Algeria to Niger.

[Reports](#) highlight the revival of the transport business for smuggled goods and people in the Sahara. The news agency Africanews [documents](#) how convoys of migrants leave on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the direction of Libya and Algeria, bringing the number of migrants having passed through Agadez since the abrogation of law 2015-36 to more than 5,000. According to the NGO [Alarmphone Sahara](#) (APS), approximately three to five groups depart from Agadez to Libya each month, with each group consisting of around 2,000 people. At the same time, the NGO continues to [report](#) on [migrants](#) they come across during patrol missions who were abandoned in the desert on their way to Libya. With [temperatures](#) up to 48° Celsius, the risk of getting lost without medical assistance and access to food or water whilst crossing the desert, remains a dangerous undertaking.

## Increased sea interceptions in Senegal and rise of departures from Mauritania

In the period from [7](#) to [17](#) May alone, Senegalese authorities reported the interception of 718 migrants bound for the Canary Islands.<sup>11</sup> In addition, on 3 June, another boat that left from the Gambia, carrying 219 migrants, before being [intercepted](#) close to Dakar. The intercepted migrants were [reported](#) to be primarily from Senegal and other countries in the West Africa region. Even though it remains uncertain whether the interceptions reported by the Senegalese authorities encompass all those that have been carried out, they still account for the highest number of [interceptions](#) since November 2023. They also exceed the total number of interceptions recorded between December 2023 and April 2024, which amounted to 269, according to [AFP](#).

Recent [observations](#) by the NGO Caminando Fronteras noted a rise in departures from Mauritania, which correlates with increased interceptions in Senegal. These interceptions are part of a broader [context](#) of rising emigration from Senegal to the Canary Islands, a trend particularly notable since July 2023 (see graph above). In October 2023, following a [visit](#) from the Spanish Minister of Interior, the Senegalese government issued emergency measures, including increased coastal patrols to intercept migrants. This increased security presence has likely contributed to the shift in departure points from Senegal and the Gambia to Mauritania.

<sup>10</sup> IOM data for April 2023 were not published, thus year-to-year comparisons are made between March 2023 (76,774 recorded migrants leaving the country) and April 2024 (109,297). Based on MMC calculation.

<sup>11</sup> MMC calculations based on reports on X by the Senegalese Navy between May 7 and May 17, 2024.

## Intercepted and expelled Senegalese migrants sound the alarm on dire conditions in Western Sahara and Niger

Two cases of Senegalese migrants calling on their government for repatriation have been reported in May 2024. In Western Sahara, 18 Senegalese migrants, who had been intercepted at sea by Moroccan authorities, were [reported](#) to have started a hunger strike to protest against their [detention conditions](#) in Bir Gandouz, Western Sahara, according to [The Continent](#). After three weeks, [reports](#) revealed that the migrants were transported first to the Mauritanian border, and then to the Senegalese border. In Niger, [reports](#) have [surfaced](#) about [Senegalese migrants](#) stuck in Assamaka following expulsions from Algeria. According to [RFI](#), they launched a call to the Senegalese authorities asking for repatriation, after being blocked in the north of the country for several weeks in precarious conditions.

## Return migration

### UNHCR's Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)

According to the latest [UNHCR figures](#), between 1 January and 30 April 2024, 495 individuals were evacuated from Libya to Niger through the [ETM](#). As of 30 April, 339 evacuated refugees and asylum seekers were still in Niger, among which 143 are awaiting decisions on their resettlement cases or interviews. Established in 2017, the [ETM Niger](#) evacuates refugees and asylum seekers in vulnerable situations from Libya to Niger. Upon arrival in Niger, they are registered and await resettlement to third countries.

### IOM's Assisted Voluntary Returns and Reintegration Programme (AVRR)

During the second quarter, repatriation flights to countries in the West Africa region continued. On 16 May, 151 migrants were [returned](#) from Libya to Ghana, and in the beginning of June, 134 migrants were [returned](#) from Libya to Ghana. Furthermore, on 28 May, 173 Beninese migrants were [returned](#) from Tunisia. IOM's [AVRR Programmes](#) repatriate stranded migrants, irregular and regular migrants, asylum-seekers and migrants in vulnerable situations to their country of origin. According to IOM, as of 30 May, throughout the year, 3,424 migrants have been returned from Tunisia through the AVRR Programme.

### Continuous expulsions from Algeria to Niger

According to [Alarmphone Sahara \(APS\)](#), Algeria carried out the expulsion of at least 4,428 individuals to the Niger border in the month of May alone. This brings the total number of expulsions to at least 14,328 during the first five months of the year. According to [APS](#), the expulsions frequently occur under harsh conditions, leading to injuries, trauma, and even death with eight people dying between 9 and 13 May alone. Some of the expelled migrants had previously been [expelled from Tunisia](#) to the Algerian borders in similar conditions, with no adequate access to food and water.

As reported in the [first quarter](#), diplomatic tensions between Algeria and Niger have heightened due to these expulsions. On 3 April, Niger summoned the Algerian ambassador to express its disagreement with what it described as deportations “[with violent nature](#)”, and [blaming](#) Algeria for contributing to heightening the humanitarian, financial, and security challenges for Niger through these expulsions. In a reciprocal move, Algeria [summoned](#) the Nigerien ambassador on 6 April. While Algeria’s coordination on migration issues with its eastern neighbours, Tunisia and Libya, is increasing, its cooperation with southern states, Mali and Niger, remains stalled, highlighting [Algeria’s growing isolation](#) in the region.

## Niger establishes committee for repatriation of Nigeriens in need abroad

On 16 April, the Nigerien government issued a [decree](#) establishing an Interministerial Steering Committee for the repatriation of Nigeriens in need abroad. The program targets individuals experiencing homelessness, begging and harassment in neighbouring countries such as Côte d’Ivoire, Algeria and Burkina Faso. It aims to organise and facilitate their return, arrival, and reintegration in Niger. According to local [news](#) sources, the Committee’s responsibilities will include the identification of Nigeriens eligible for repatriation, the coordination of return and reception operations, and the social reintegration of returnees. Similar repatriation actions were previously implemented in [2022](#), involving the return of Nigeriens from Dakar, Abidjan, and Accra, though they were sporadic in nature. The new committee will be tasked with making these efforts more systematic, though there are lingering [concerns](#) about the resources allocated to its mission.

## Recent investigation uncovers Mauritania’s expulsion practices with support from Spain

A [new](#) year-long investigation by Lighthouse Reports in cooperation with the [Washington Post](#), [Enass](#), [Der Spiegel](#), [El Pais](#), [IрпиMedia](#), [ARD](#) and [Le Monde](#), uncovers how migrants are systematically abandoned and expelled to remote desert areas in Mauritania, Tunisia, and Morocco. In Mauritania, the investigation documents collective arrests as well as expulsions towards the border with Mali where migrants are left without access to food and water in a desert area, while being exposed to the risk of armed groups operating in the area. Furthermore, a leaked UNHCR document from 2023 disclosed interviews with more than 300 migrants who were deported from Mauritania to Mali, and a document of the European Parliament speaks of “abusive and collective expulsions to Senegal and Mali”.

The [report](#) suggests that the European Union and its member states are aware of the human rights violations allegedly committed and are also involved in supporting them through funding equipment and training personnel.<sup>12</sup> The [investigation](#) reveals that Spanish security forces operating in Mauritania regularly visited detention centres and allegedly photographed and reviewed lists of migrants before they were forcibly transported to the Malian border. The [report](#) reveals that vehicles used by the Mauritanian authorities for collective arrest campaigns and migrant deportations were purchased with Spanish funding. Furthermore, Spain is also actively [aiding](#) in sea interceptions, having its Guardia Civil [deployed](#) in Mauritania.

12 For more information on the reports on Tunisia and Morocco, see North Africa QMMU.

In [response](#) to the investigation, Spain's Ministry of Interior has not commented on their knowledge of expulsions to the desert or the use of vehicles with the support of Spanish funds. The Spanish cooperation agency FIIAPP [negated](#) knowledge of the expulsions and said that "Spanish police officers [...] in Mauritania had never witnessed any actions by the Mauritanian police that violate human rights," as well as denying having photographed migrants in detention centres.

## Côte d'Ivoire announces plan for the return of Burkinabe migrants

The Ivorian authorities [introduced](#) a planned process for the voluntary return of Burkinabe refugees to Burkina Faso on April 24. According to the latest [UNHCR](#) estimates, Côte d'Ivoire currently hosts more than 50,000 Burkinabe asylum seekers in the North of the country. According to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council in Côte d'Ivoire, [discussions](#) on conditions for return have been held, although many Burkinabe decide to return on their own. The new plans should create the conditions to assist Burkinabe wishing to return. However, details [regarding](#) the specific process and criteria for refugee selection have not yet been released. This announcement takes place in a context of [recent tensions](#) between the Burkinabe and Ivorian authorities over political disagreements and [border crossing incidents](#).

Last year, the UNHCR issued a ban on forced returns to Burkina Faso, emphasising the principle of non-refoulement. The situation has since [deteriorated](#), and is described as "one of the world's most neglected displacement crises" by the [Norwegian Refugee Council](#). Thus any negotiations around returns to the country should be carefully assessed in order to ensure the safety and voluntary will of the migrants wishing to return.

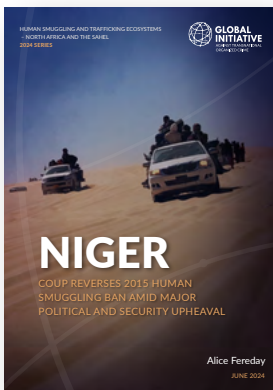
# Highlighted New Research and Reports



## [Mali: Human smuggling resilient amid major political and security upheaval](#)

### GI-TOC | May 2024

This report is part of the 2024 series on migration, human smuggling, and human trafficking dynamics in West and North Africa. Taking a close look at recent developments in Mali, the report finds that despite the major security and political shifts in the last years, major changes in smuggling dynamics have not yet been observed. Structural drivers of migration, such as economic pressures, have been intensifying in 2024 due to Mali's isolation from international and regional partners and growing insecurity throughout the country. Furthermore, while Mali's transitional authorities have succeeded in buttressing their security presence in some areas, their efforts to promote economic growth or deliver key services have met with limited success. If these challenges persist, they could further fuel the migration of Malians to northern Africa or Europe in search of better opportunities.



## [Niger: Coup reverses 2015 Human smuggling ban amid major political and security upheaval](#)

### GI-TOC | June 2024

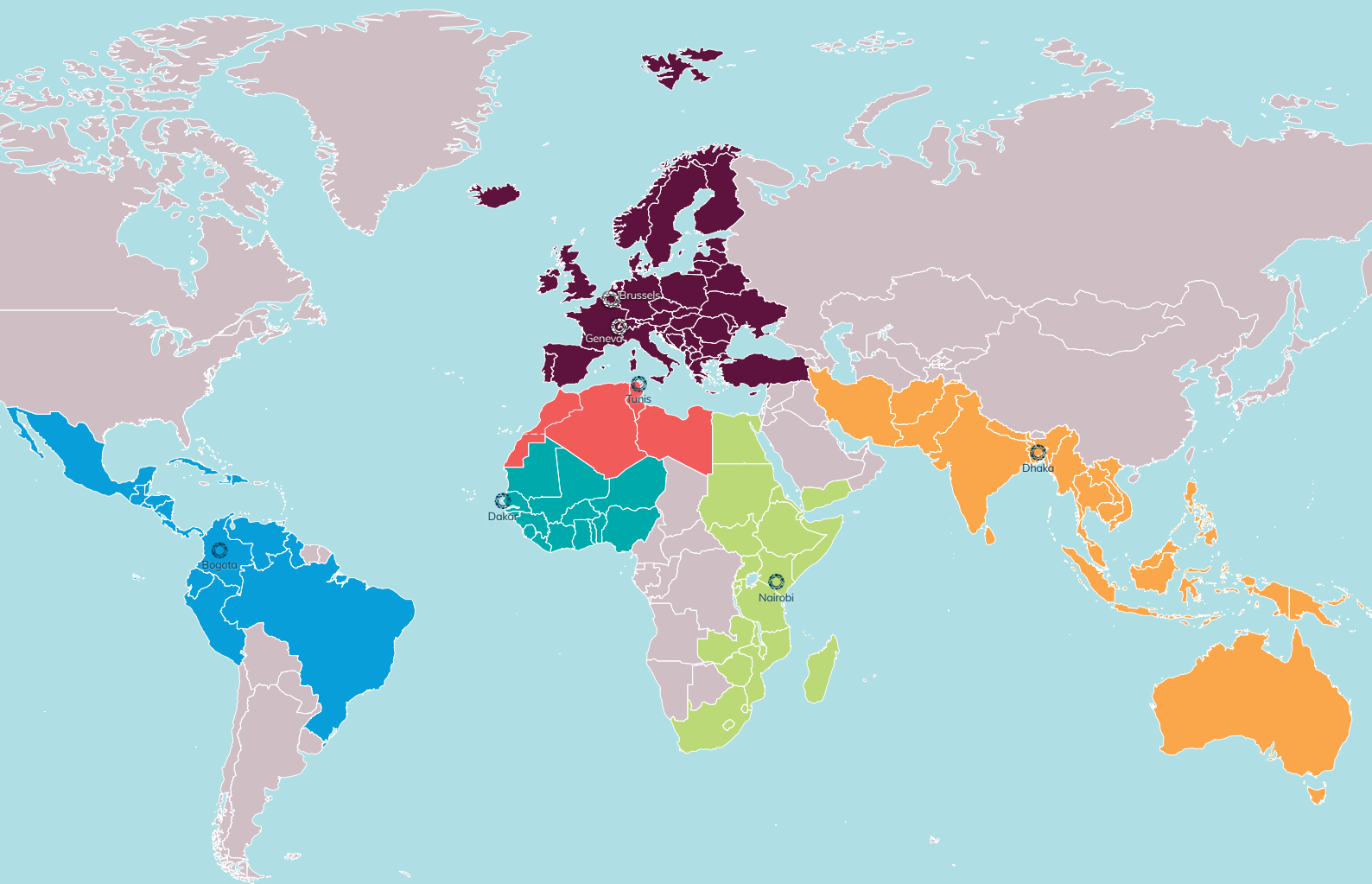
As the report above, this report is part of the 2024 series on migration, human smuggling, and human trafficking dynamics in West and North Africa. It examines developments in human smuggling in Niger after the military coup of July 2023 and the repeal of the anti-smuggling law 2015-36. Northbound smuggling routes have become generally safer for migrants, as smugglers no longer need to take dangerous bypass routes. Nevertheless, these shifts are taking place in the context of regional tensions and political upheaval following the coup, the effects of which have had an impact on human smuggling. There is little clarity at present about what will happen regarding mobility, and in what timeframe and a negotiated compromise may yet emerge between Niger and its fellow AES members and ECOWAS, either on mobility or more broadly. Migration dynamics in Niger will remain in flux in the short to medium term, as the industry adapts to rapidly evolving regional geopolitical and security developments and Niger's domestic situation.



## [Libya, Tunisia, and Niger as Case Studies for Counter-Productive Anti-Migration Policies: Sustaining Abuses and Criminality](#)

### **Middle East Institute | May 2024**

Anti-migration policies in Libya, Tunisia, and Niger have had dire consequences, as highlighted by the more than 25,000 migrant deaths in the Mediterranean since 2014, a staggeringly high figure that does not fully capture the extent of the tragedy. The report discusses how the European Union's externalisation of border controls to third countries has led to widespread human rights violations, bolstered criminal networks, and failed to achieve the intended goal of reducing migration. The narrative of "stabilization" promoted by international aid, notably to create a framework to justify anti-migration policies, has proven ineffective at addressing migration issues, as evidenced by political instability and violence in the region. Moreover, the EU's focus on security-centric initiatives has exacerbated the plight of migrants, leading to increased deaths and abuses along migration routes. EU-funded initiatives have a track record of supporting authoritarian regimes and criminal networks, ultimately undermining efforts to address migration challenges.



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 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 the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

For more information visit:  
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