

This report presents data collected by IOM as well as the Italian, Spanish, Greek and Maltese Ministries of the Interior on migration flows and routes leading from West and Central Africa (WCA) to Europe during the 2017-2020* period.

IOM works closely with a diverse range of actors, including government, non governmental and civil society partners to gather and compile key data on migration to Europe on a quarterly basis. The data presented in this document covers the

period from 2017 to 2020 (up to June, except for some nationality data which dates from March 2020).

Raw data is available online at the <https://migration.iom.int> and www.missingmigrants.iom.int websites. Some numbers on nationalities of migrants are only partially available and are incomplete; the breakdown of migrant nationalities may therefore be skewed and partially inaccurate.

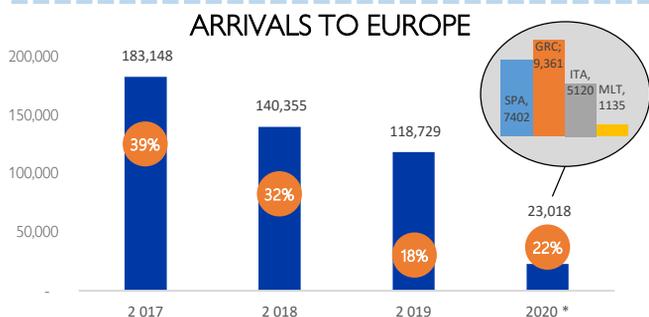


Fig.1 – Numbers of arrivals (by sea and by land) to Italy, Spain, Greece and Malta and share of arrivals originating from West and Central Africa

Between 2017 and 2020*, 465,250 irregular migrants arrived in Europe (both by land and by sea) (Fig.1), including over 119,000 individuals (25 per cent of arrivals) from West and Central Africa (WCA). (Fig.2). The largest number of arrivals to Europe from WCA were Guinean, Ivorian and Nigerian nationals: these three nationalities represented 54 per cent of arrivals from the WCA region (Fig. 3).

Arrivals in Europe have decreased over the period 2017-2020* and the main destinations vary from year to year. Migrants from West and Central Africa continue to predominantly favour Italy and Spain (Fig.4). Out of 5,105 West and Central African nationals who arrived between January and May 2020, 18 per cent went to Italy, 65 per cent went to Spain, 14 per cent to Greece and 4 per cent to Malta.

The destination country of choice of migrants travelling to Europe often depends on the migrant's country of origin (Fig. 5). Countries of arrival for migrants from Togo, Chad, The Gambia, or Sierra Leone for instance, are split relatively equitably between the four countries (Spain, Greece, Italy, Malta). Migrants from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Senegal or Mali, on the other hand, favor some routes and countries of arrival over others. This may be explained by the greater ease with which migrants can reach a particular country and the closer mobility networks between two countries. Thus, Guinean and Senegalese nationals tend to take the migration routes leading to Spain, while Congolese nationals reach Europe almost exclusively via Greece.

Outside of continental Europe, the Spanish Canary Islands are also an important destination for irregular migrants from WCA. Since mid-2019, a growing number of migrants attempt to travel the Canary Islands, albeit in smaller numbers than the Spanish mainland. From January to June 2020, 2,700 people reached the Canary Islands on board 87 clandestine vessels, compared to 462 migrants aboard 43 boats over the same period in 2019.

As far as current trends are concerned, Greece seems to be favoured by more and more migrants from West and Central Africa, although Italy, which hosts 45 per cent of the region's migrants, and Spain (49 per cent) remain the two main destinations.

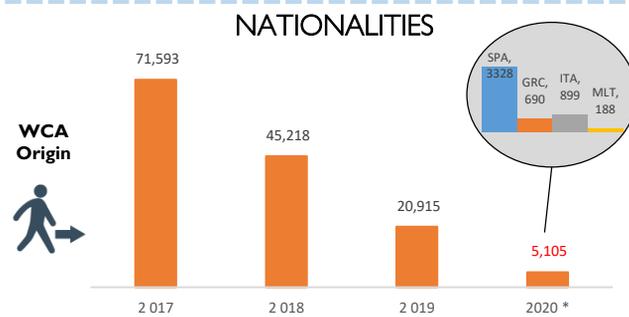


Fig.2 – Numbers of arrivals to Italy, Spain, Greece and Malta originating from West and Central Africa

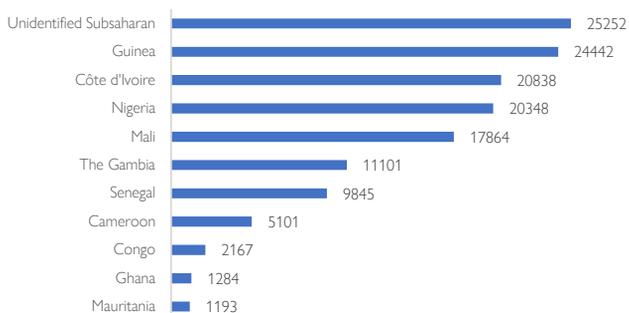


Fig.3 – Main nationalities of migrants from West and Central Africa who arrived in Europe in 2017 - 2020*

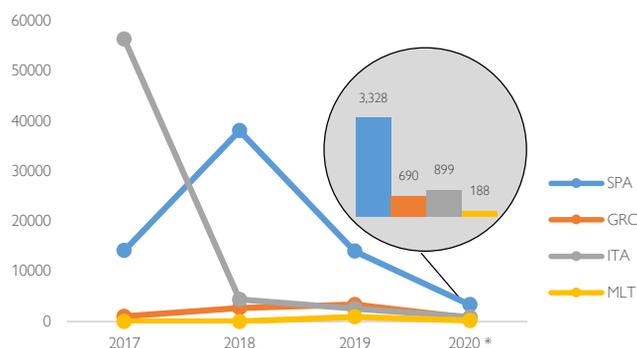
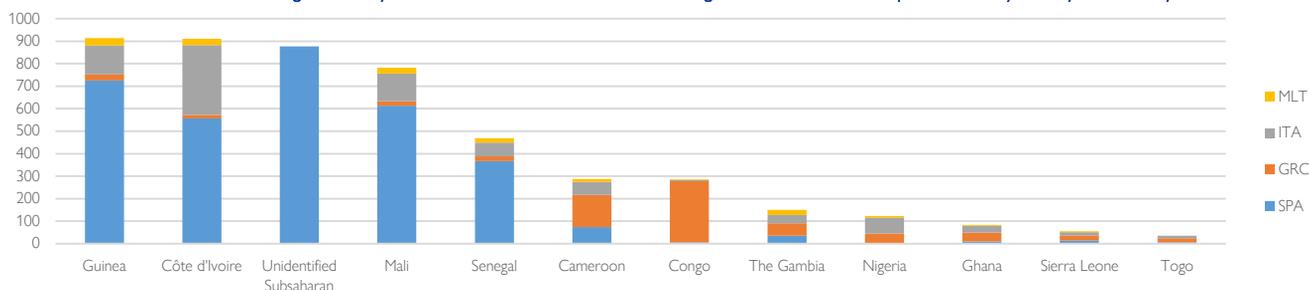


Fig.4 – Primary destination of West and Central African migrants who arrived in Europe in 2017 - 2020*

Fig.5 – Primary destination of West and Central African migrants who arrived in Europe on 2020*, by country of nationality



SOURCES: National authorities and IOM, Hellenic Coast Guard, Italian Ministry of the Interior, Maltese Ministry of the Interior - National Security and Law Enforcement, Spanish Ministry of the Interior (see. www.migration.iom.int) (2017-2020*).

***DISCLAIMER:** Data for the year 2020 covers the period up to 30 June 2020 (January – June 2020). This data will be regularly updated in future publications.

Tragic tales are often told of migrants from West and Central Africa dying or disappearing during their migration journey to Europe, whether on their way to North Africa or at sea, during the crossing over the Mediterranean to continental Europe or on their way to Canary Islands. Daily, men, women and children die of dehydration, asphyxiation or drowning on their way to Europe, a reality which reflects the hazards which migrants face along migration routes.

Migratory routes leading from West and Central Africa to Europe are often perilous and hazardous and incidents leading to the death or disappearance of migrants are numerous. IOM's [Missing Migrants Project](#) collects information on dead or missing migrants during their migration journeys. The gathered data also feeds into Indicator 10.7.3 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Number of people

who dies or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination). The Missing Migrants Project is an essential tool in the global response to reduce risks along migration routes.

In West and Central Africa, the following incidents were recorded:

- In 2019 : **906 dead or missing migrants (485 incidents)**;
- In 2020* : **35 dead or missing migrants (21 incidents)**

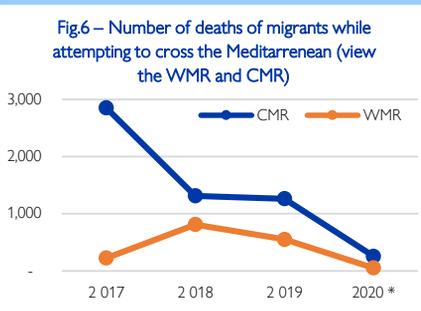
In 2020*, incidents were reported in Chad, Niger, Senegal and Mauritania. In 2019, several other countries witnessed incidents leading to the death or disappearance of migrants, including Mali (310), Burkina Faso (164), Côte d'Ivoire (51), the Central African Republic(17), Nigeria (5) and Cameroon (4).

NUMBER OF DEAD OR MISSING MIGRANTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (January - June 2019)

NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA: 240	
Central Africa: 16	West Africa: 224
NUMBER OF RECORDED DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN WCA: 448	
Central Africa: 19	West Africa: 429
Adult men: 13 (69 per cent)	Adult men: 158 (37 per cent)
Adult women: 0 (0 per cent)	Adult women: 88 (21 per cent)
Boys under 18 years old: 5 (26 per cent)	Boys under 18 years old: 21 (5 per cent)
Girls under 18 years old: 1 (5 per cent)	Girls under 18 years old: 10 (2 per cent)
30 survivors rescued in WCA	
	Sex Unknown: 152 (35 per cent)

NUMBER OF DEAD OR MISSING MIGRANTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (January - June 2020)

NUMBER OF RECORDED INCIDENTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA: 21	
Central Africa: 7	West Africa: 14
NUMBER OF RECORDED DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN WCA: 35	
Central Africa: 12	West Africa: 23
Adult men 9 (75 per cent)	Adult men: 11 (50 per cent)
Adult women: 3 (25 per cent)	Adult women: 4 (18 per cent)
	Boys under 18 years old: 0 (0 per cent)
	Girls under 18 years old: 1 (5 per cent)
21 survivors rescued in WCA	
	Sex Unknown: 7 (27 per cent)



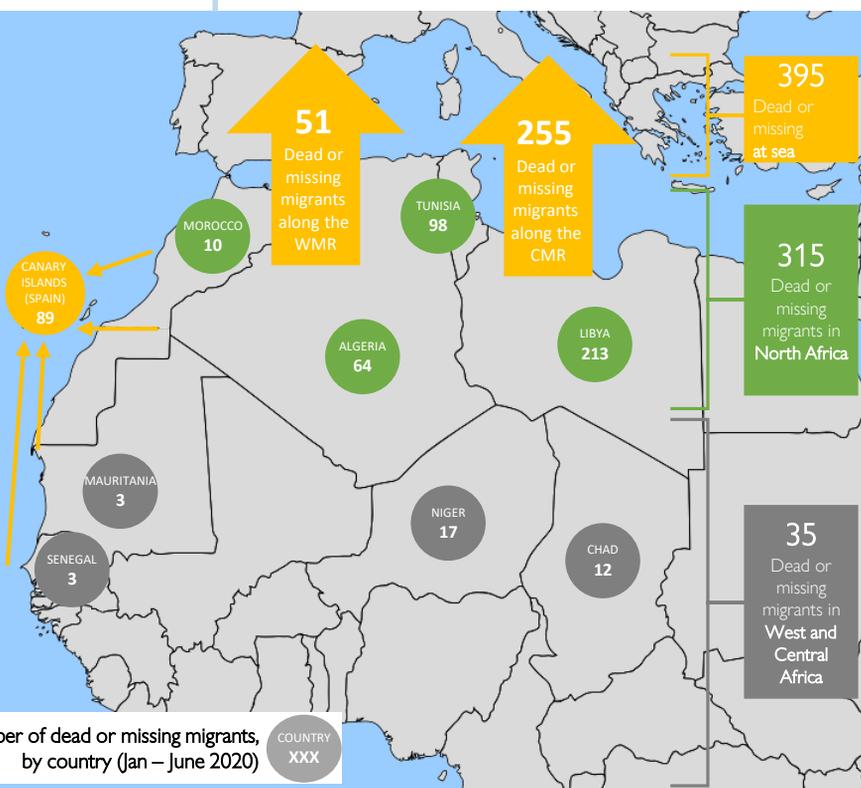
CMR: Central Mediterranean Route
WMR: Western Mediterranean Route

Mauritania: 1 incident – 3 drowned while attempting to cross a river from Senegal (June 2020).

Sénégal: 1 incident – 3 dead following a car accident (January 2020).

Niger: 12 incidents – 17 dead (causes of deaths: illness and lack of access to medical care, starvation, stabbing, car accident (January – June 2020)

Tchad: 7 incidents – 12 dead (causes of deaths: illness and lack of access to medical care, starvation, dehydration, lack of adequate shelter, car accident (January – May 2020).



Number of dead or missing migrants, by country (Jan – June 2020)

NOTE ON SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY:

Existing data on the deaths and disappearances of migrants in West and Central Africa displays substantial limitations. Information about incidents involving the death or disappearance of migrants is sparse, few and far between. Little information known about the **sex and age** of missing migrants, or about the **precise location of their death or disappearance**. In addition, there is no uniform or harmonized number of missing migrants, nor any data on families of missing migrants who are still anxiously searching and waiting for news about their loved ones. IOM's [Missing Migrants Project](#) is the only public and freely accessible database relating to the death or disappearance of migrants. In Africa, MMP data primarily comes from interviews with migrants conducted in the framework of the **Mixed Migration Centre's 4MI initiative**. Other data sources include **IOM data, government data, as well as information provided by NGOs and the media**. In 2020, 4MI stopped collecting data on dead and missing migrants along migration routes. This explains the stark decrease in reported deaths and disappearances in 2020.

* **DISCLAIMER:** Data for the year 2020 covers the period up to 30 June 2020 (January – June 2020).

