XCHANGE
RESEARCH ON MIGRATION

Central Mediterranean Survey:

Mapping Migration Routes & Incidents

Contents

About Xchange

At Xchange, we believe in the power of data to transform how the public perceives human migration. Xchange was established to investigate and document human movement across countries of origin, transit, and destination, through on-the-ground engagement with all stakeholders - above all, migrants themselves. We seek to provide policy makers, state bodies, non-governmental organisations, and the general public with accurate data on migration informed directly by our field research.

We believe that through the exchange of migration-specific research and data, we can generate greater awareness of the phenomenon of human migration. Our goal is to cast a spotlight on the gaps in information found along main migratory routes for the benefit of all, not in the least migrants themselves.

About MOAS

Founded in response to the October 2013 humanitarian disaster off the coast of Lampedusa, in which some 400 men, women and children drowned, MOAS aimed to provide a model for a civil society response to the unfolding crisis.

Having been established in 2014 as an independent humanitarian organisation, it was the first search and rescue (SAR) NGO of its kind in the Mediterranean. Our maritime operations were designed to provide desperately-needed SAR services to people attempting dangerous sea crossings while fleeing violence, poverty and persecution.

In September 2017, MOAS shifted operations to South East Asia, where the MOAS team are working to provide aid and medical care to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh through our specialist field clinics known as 'Aid Stations'.

The Central Mediterranean Survey: Foreword

A note from the Director, Chris Catrambone

The Central Mediterranean Route is the most active sea crossing in the world for migrants and refugees fleeing violence, poverty and persecution.

This is something we know only too well at MOAS, which was founded in response to the October 2013 humanitarian disaster off the coast of Lampedusa, in which some 400 men, women and children drowned. Established in 2014 as an independent humanitarian organisation, MOAS was the first search and rescue (SAR) NGO of its kind in the Mediterranean.

The Central Mediterranean Route; the main maritime route in which MOAS SAR operations were conducted, is also the focus of the research you are about to read from the Xchange Foundation. The team joined us during our mission in 2017, determined to trace back and fill in serious gaps in our knowledge of this migration route.

MOAS had already been operating for three years at that point. We had been rescuing men, women and children who were packed, hungry and petrified, onto rubber dinghies, or close to suffocation in the holds of wooden boats. Some were found lying among the dead or dying bodies of family members and fellow travelers.

What we now know, is that this was just one dangerous chapter in their journeys.

Through extensive data collection, Xchange has been able to help us reveal through first-hand accounts, the extent of human resilience and perseverance. We now know that migrants and refugees have managed to traverse hundreds of miles of dangerous terrain and negotiated with people offering services with no guarantee of safety or reaching the next stage in their long journey. We also know of grievous human rights abuses committed against them and others, many having witnessed fellow travellers being killed by smugglers and militias, or by being abandoned in the harsh desert environment.

The Central Mediterranean Survey shows, once again, the power and importance of data to tell stories and to help us unearth the experiences and journeys that are missing from our knowledge of human migration.

Key Concepts & Definitions

Asylum seeker:[1] IOM defines "asylum seeker" as a person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments.

Forced labour:[2] The International Labour Organisation defines "forced labour" as all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily.

Forced migration: Migration as a result of coercion or threat, including to life and livelihood, which can arise from natural or man-made causes.

Gender-based violence (GBV): UNHCR defines gender-based violence as "any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys." [3]

Incident: For the purposes of this survey, an incident (main incident) refers to an event, either witnessed or experienced, which involves violation of human rights or crime. A secondary incident refers to any event, also witnessed or experienced, which is dangerous and may lead to death but is not classified as a human rights violation (such as dying from dehydration in the desert), or which is a direct consequence of a main incident, such as degrading treatment while being detained.

Inhuman and degrading treatment:[4] "Inhuman Treatment" is treatment or punishment which causes intense physical or mental suffering. "Degrading Treatment" means treatment which is extremely humiliating, and which is used to create fear and break moral or physical resistance. Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

Irregular migration:[5] According to IOM, irregular migration is "Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries." However, there is no universally accepted definition of the term.[6]

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1   IOM, Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law Series No. 25 (2011) pg 5 available at: http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/iom.pdf

2   ILO, Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour (Entry into force: 01 May 1932) available at: http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/definition/lang--en/index.htm

3   UNHCR, Sexual and Gender Based Violence available at: http://www.unhcr.org/sexual-and-gender-based-violence.html

4   Council of Europe, European Convention on Human Rights (1950) available at: https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

5   IOM, Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law Series No. 25 (2011) pg 5 available at: http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/iom.pdf

6   Not to be confused with 'illegal migration' which tends to be used with regards to cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

Labour migration: The movement of persons within the country of residence, or from one State to another, for the purpose of employment.

Migrant:[7] IOM defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of moving residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

Migrant in transit:[8] There is no legal definition of a migrant in transit – OHCHR acknowledges they may include refugees, asylum seekers, economic or climate migrants – they fall under different forms of international protection. However, they are all vulnerable to the same human rights violations while in transit.

For the purpose of this report, the term "migrant" refers to all people on the move encountered in this research, including refugees, economic migrants, asylum seekers, unaccompanied or separated minors.

Migrant smuggling:[9] Article 3 of the UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air defines "migrant smuggling" as the "procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident." Smuggling, contrary to trafficking, does not require an element of exploitation, coercion, or violation of human rights.

Mixed migration:[10] Is a complex migration flow containing various types of migration motives and migrants including asylum seekers and refugees (forced migrants), economic migrants, climate/environmental migrants, stateless persons, unaccompanied migrants, trafficking victims.

Refugee:[11] The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as "an individual who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence who is unable or unwilling to return due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on his or her race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group."

Slavery:[12] "Slavery" is described by Anti-Slavery International as the act of being owned and controlled by an 'employer' through mental and physical abuse, or threats of abuse. Article 1 of the League of Nations Slavery Convention of 1926 first defined slavery as "the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised". Nowadays it is described as incorporating all activities of child slavery, forced and early marriage, forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking and descent-based slavery.

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7   IOM, Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law Series No. 25 (2011) pg 61 available at: http://www.epim.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/iom.pdf

8   OHCHR, Situation of Migrants in Transit (2016) pg 7 available at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/StudyMigrants/OHCHR_2016_Report-migrants-transit_EN.pdf

9   United Nations, Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea, and air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against transnational organized crime (2000) available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/middleeastandnorthafrica/smuggling-migrants/SoM_Protocol_English.pdf

10 Mixed Migration Hub (MHub), 'What is mixed migration?' available at: http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/member-agencies/what-mixed-migration-is/

11 UNHCR, Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees (2010) available at: http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10

12 David Weissbrodt and Anti-Slavery International, Abolishing Slavery and its Contemporary Forms, OHCHR (2002) available at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/slaveryen.pdf

Torture:[13] Article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is the internationally agreed legal definition of torture:

"Torture means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions."

Trafficking:[14] Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines "Trafficking in Persons" as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. (Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.) Trafficking in persons can take place within the borders of one State or between different States.

Unaccompanied minor:[15] UNHCR defines an unaccompanied minor as "a person who is under the age of eighteen, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier and who is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so."

UNHCR:[16] The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which assists and protects refugees worldwide, striving to "ensure that everyone has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to eventually return home, integrate or resettle." The organisation also provides emergency assistance (water, shelter, non-food items, healthcare, etc.)

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13 *UN General Assembly, Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1465 (10 December 1984) pg 85 available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a94.html*

14 *United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2004) available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf*

15   *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Geneva, Guidelines on Policies and Procedures in dealing with Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum (February 1997) available at: http://www.unhcr.org/3d4f91cf4.pdf*

16 *UNHCR, What we do available at: http://www.unhcr.org/*

Introduction

The Mediterranean is home to three primary maritime routes that migrants use to reach Europe: The Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR), via Turkey and Greece, the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR), from Libya to Italy[17], and the Western Mediterranean Route (WMR), from Morocco to Spain.[18] The CMR is the most active channel to Europe, and the key route for migrants travelling from Sub-Saharan Africa.[19] Migrants travelling this route hail from varying countries of origin and have wide ranging motivations for taking these dangerous journeys. The routes themselves change constantly based on the dynamics of the smuggling networks in the region, and as a result, these mixed migration flows are complicated to track and map effectively.

The Mediterranean region – the CMR in particular– accounts for the most migrant deaths recorded globally.[20] Since 2014, the CMR has accounted for 88% of all migrant deaths on the Mediterranean routes[21] and in 2016 and 2017, 90% of all maritime migrant deaths in the Mediterranean region (4,581 deaths in 2016 and 2,853 in 2017) occurred there.[22] Now, in 2018, despite a 74% decrease in refugee and migrant arrivals to Italy, the rate of deaths has more than doubled: there was one death for every 14 who crossed from Libya to Italy successfully during the first three months of the year.[23] This number excludes the vast numbers of migrants that perish en route to Libya in the desert, whose bodies may not be recovered for weeks, if at all. IOM's Missing Migrants Project recorded more than 1,700 migrant deaths in 2017, with over 690 reported in the Sahara Desert -numbers are likely to be only a fraction of the reality.

> " I spent three days in the Mediterranean Sea. The water was cold. No fishermen, no one to rescue us. The friends I travelled with from Nigeria all died in the water.
>
> *Chinara, Nigeria* "

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17 However, boats have been recorded to leave from Egypt, Tunisia, or Algeria.

18 The irregular crossings to Spain include land crossings into the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

19 However, in the first three months of 2018 arrivals to Italy remained significantly lower than previous years with increased numbers arriving into Greece from Turkey as well as Spain. IOM reported a 79% decrease in arrivals for the same period in 2017 and 12% of arrivals during 2016. It is also worth noting that in 2018, arrivals to Italy ranked third – behind both Spain and Greece, two and a half times more arrivals than Italy. See: IOM, Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 28,368 in 2018; Deaths Reach 636 (25 May 2018) available at: https://www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-reach-28368-2018-deaths-reach-636

20 IOM, Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 69,574 in 2017; Deaths: 1,569 (30 May 2017) available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iom.int-Mediterranean%20Migrant%20Arrivals%20Reach%2069574%20in%202017%20Deaths%201569.pdf

21 Mixed Migration Hub (MHub), The Central Mediterranean Route: The Deadliest Migration Route (March 2018) available at: http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/The-CMR-The-deadliest-migration-route.pdf

22 See: Missing Migrants website: https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean

23 UNHCR, Desperate Journeys (March 2018) pg 4 available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63039

Reliable statistics on migrant deaths and disappearances are extremely difficult to find.[24] The importance of solid data on migrant arrivals, deaths, and those missing cannot be underestimated; however, these figures represent much more; each migrant death or disappearance is a missing loved one. It is for this reason that since 2014, search and rescue (SAR) Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) like Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS) have been collectively responsible for the rescue of over 100,000 lives in the Central Mediterranean[25] and 41% of those rescued at sea in 2017.[26]

In 2016, Xchange established a presence on The Phoenix, the MOAS SAR vessel patrolling the Central Mediterranean Route for migrant boats in distress. Through our exposure to those rescued on board, we uncovered incredible stories of resilience that we could not ignore. In 2017, we returned to the Phoenix to conduct interviews with migrants who wished to share their stories with us.

For this survey, an "incident" is defined as an event or abuse of some kind which was considered serious or meaningful enough by the migrants themselves.

Through our work, we became increasingly aware of the gaps in public and policy awareness of what hardships are experienced on a migrant's journey to Europe.[27] One thing is clear: migrants will continue to leave their homes in search of safety and better livelihoods for themselves and their families, despite the risks. With this in mind, the report aspires to shed light on the individual journeys of the migrants we met, with the following dual objectives:

1. Conduct a cross-border analysis by collating and mapping the mixed migration trends and routes which led migrants to Libya and to cross the Mediterranean.
2. Document and categorise abuses reported by respondents in order to detect patterns and migrant vulnerabilities in different migration hubs.

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24 *IOM, 6,000 Migrant Deaths Recorded in 2017, 'Only a Fraction of the Real Number' Worldwide: GMDAC (23 Feb 2018) available at: https://reliefweb.int/report/world/6000-migrant-deaths-recorded-2017-only-fraction-real-number-worldwide-gmdac*

25 *MIxed Migration Hub (MHub), The Central Mediterranean Route: The Deadliest Migration Route (March 2018) pg 2 available at: http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/The-CMR-The-deadliest-migration-route.pdf*

26 *Other EU interventions on the CMR comprised mostly of naval military activities and by Frontex operations. The remainder of the rescues were conducted collectively, by the Italian Coast guard, Italian Navy and other Italian authorities (26%), Operation Triton deployed by Frontex (13%), commercial vessels (10%) and EUNAVFOR Med vessels (9%). The remaining 1% was conducted by the Libyan Coast Guard. See: UNHCR, Desperate Journeys (March 2018) available at: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63039*

27 *On remote desert journeys, bodies cannot always be identified, they may not be recovered for weeks, if at all. IOM's Missing Migrants Project recorded 1,120 people deceased or missing globally while migrating in 2018, 636 migrants in the Mediterranean alone this year. In 2017, there were more than 1,700 migrant deaths, with over 690 reported in the Sahara Desert. See: IOM and GMDAC, Fatal Journeys, Vol 3 Part 2 Improving Data on Missing Migrants (2017) available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/fatal_journeys_3_part2.pdf*

For the purpose of analysis, the data on journeys obtained in this survey was classified into the four following routes according to the description given by respondents:

1. The Sudanese Route

2. The Nigerian Route

3. Mixed West African Routes

4. Asian Routes

Likewise, data obtained on 'incidents' was categorised into primary and secondary incidents.[28] Primary incidents included experiencing or witnessing kidnapping/ arbitrary arrest/ detention; human trafficking; slavery; extortion; physical abuse; torture; rape; robbery; fraud; injury by gunfire; killing; death. Secondary incidents included inhumane conditions in prisons, compounds or camps; inhumane treatment in transit and/or in travelling vehicles; threats to life; attacks; trauma; humiliation; racism; lack of access to asylum or protection mechanisms.

The data collected for this report therefore captures aspects of the complex and arduous journeys that migrants from diverse backgrounds may endure en route to Europe. This report merely casts a magnifying glass over the complex and dynamic migration patterns that converge in the CMR; it is not representative of the 'migrant story' as a whole - each story is unique. For a broader, more representative picture of the migration context, consistent monitoring and analysis is necessary.

During August-September 2017 we collected over 100 testimonies from migrants on board the MOAS Phoenix. This is what we found.

28 *Primary and secondary incident categories were created in order to analyse the type and frequency of abuses across routes. Primary incidents were categorised as such due to their direct nature; secondary incidents were categorised as such, not to diminish their importance or impact on the respondent, but because they were often noted contextually in respondent interviews, as indirect abuses or a consequence of other incidents.*

Context

Human smuggling and trafficking

The respondents to our survey had restricted access to regular legal routes to Europe and therefore lacked the ability to migrate safely and regularly. As a result, respondents sought passage through smuggling networks. The smuggling business that transports migrants to Libya is dynamic as well as ruthless, and as evident in this survey, smugglers have increasingly taken advantage of vulnerable irregular migrants to maximise profits by imposing high prices, restricting freedom of movement, using unsafe transport, selling migrants to third parties to be exploited, and holding migrants for ransom.[29]

Across the African continent, where most of our respondents' journeys took place, human smugglers constantly adapt to, and influence, local and regional politics and economies.[30] However, human smuggling networks form only one link in the chain amongst formal and informal state actors, criminal gangs, armed groups, and local communities whose local economy has become entwined with these irregular migration routes. Most networks consist of independent, often family owned entities with complex alliances.[31] Although each network operates differently, most appear to have a range of individuals fulfilling various roles within the wider network, including coordinators and organisers, recruiters, transporters, and additional service providers, such as forgers of passports, and other official documentation.[32]

Whilst fluid in nature, smuggling networks have varying degrees of professionalism and complexity in organisation, coordination and modus operandi, depending on the geographical location, opportunities, routes and clientele. For example, across many West African routes Individual smugglers often operate from local hubs, handling one segment of the journey, and then hand migrants over at borders to other smugglers, forming larger loosely organised transnational chains.[33] Within these structures, migrants often pay individual

> "
> I was in a pickup with 30 people when a group of gangs dressed as military took us to an empty house. They beat us and took all our money. The next day we were taken to Sabratha to a different gang, who took phones and the rest of the money. This second gang handed us to a third gang dressed as military, who locked us in a camp very close to the beach.
>
> *Victoria, Cameroon, incident location Sabratha (Libya)*
> "

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29 IOM, *Countering Migrant Smuggling (Global Compact Thematic Paper)* pg 1 available at: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Counter-Smuggling.pdf

30 Deanna Davy, *Unpacking the Myths: Human smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa* (for Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS)) (December 2017) available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/RMMS%20BriefingPaper6%20-%20Unpacking%20the%20Myths.pdf

31 UNODC, *Smuggling of Migrants: A Global Review and Annotated Bibliography of Recent Publications* (2011) available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Smuggling_of_Migrants_A_Global_Review.pdf

32 UNODC, *Smuggling of Migrants: A Global Review and Annotated Bibliography of Recent Publications* (2011) available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Smuggling_of_Migrants_A_Global_Review.pdf

33 Altai Consulting and IMPACT Initiatives, *Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing dynamics and protection challenges* (February 2017) available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lby_report_mixed_migration_trends_in_libya_may_2017_0.pdf

smugglers and intermediates as they go from one hub to the next. These single-service providers do little more than transport migrants to the adjacent hub and often have roots within the local community rather than the migrant communities they serve and often have little knowledge or connections along the rest of the routes. The single service demand is further facilitated by free mobility within the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOW-AS) region, weak border controls and visa-free programmes between several West African and North African nations.[34] As a result there appears to be less demand in more specialist and organised services.

Contrary to this, as migratory flows from the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Asia have significantly increased over the years, routes from these regions towards Europe have been dominated by highly integrated human smuggling networks, often with offshoots in migrants' countries of origin. The increase in demand, logistical and organisational ability, and financial capital to procure sea, land or air transport, false documentation, and to pay bribes, means that migrant smuggling networks can offer a wide variety of services. This includes "pre-organised stage to stage" smuggling, with minimal stop-overs and payment transactions. [35] Smuggling of migrants may then occur through step by step journeys coordinated by key individuals that are in frequent communication with each other.[36] Sophisticated networks like this frequently bribe and collude with corrupt government officials, local militias, and armed groups, to secure passage or to further exploit migrants.[37]

> "
> I was taken to a place by a woman who offered me work selling things. In this place I was detained and discovered that I was lied to. I discovered that it was being used as a brothel with girls being forced to work without their consent.
>
> *Ginikawa, Nigeria,*
> *incident location Tripoli (Libya)*
> "

Whilst migrant smuggling generally involves consent in the sense that a service is requested in exchange for payment, many migrants who begin their journey voluntarily can become victims of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation along the way. Contrary to human smuggling, trafficking is committed for the purpose of exploiting the trafficked person by means of force or other forms of coercion, fraud, deception and abuse of power.[38] Whilst there is a clear legal definition between human smuggling and trafficking the de-facto reality is far more blurred.

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34 OECD, 'Can we put an end to human smuggling?' Migration Policy Debates (December 2015) available at: https://www.oecd.org/migration/Can%20we%20put%20an%20end%20to%20human%20smuggling.pdf

35 Altai Consulting and IMPACT Initiatives, Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing dynamics and protection challenges (February 2017) available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lby_report_mixed_migration_trends_in_libya_may_2017_0.pdf

36 Deanna Davy, Unpacking the Myths: Human smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa (for Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS)) (December 2017) available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/RMMS%20BriefingPaper6%20-%20Unpacking%20the%20Myths.pdf

37 Luigi Achilli, Irregular Migration to the EU and Human Smuggling in the Mediterranean. The Nexus between Organized Crime and Irregular Migration (2016) available at: http://www.iemed.org/observatori/arees-danalisi/arxius-adjunts/anuari/med.2016/IEMed_Med-YearBook2016_Irregular%20Migration%20Mediterranean_Luigi_Achilli.pdf

38 IOM, Countering Migrant Smuggling (Global Compact Thematic Paper) (2017) available at: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Counter-Smuggling.pdf

Libya

North Africa acts as a regional hub for mixed migratory movements –those fleeing war and conflict, poverty, discrimination, or lack of economic opportunities. Although popular belief is that all migrants intend on travelling onwards to Europe, in fact only 20-35% migrants on the move across West and East Africa towards North Africa, continue to Europe; many travelling the trans-Saharan route claim Libya or Algeria as their final destinations.[39] The majority of irregular trans-Saharan migration is in fact circular, intra-African migration, and often for economic purposes. However, Libya also demonstrates its importance in the migrant story, as the final stopping point for those who make the maritime crossing to Europe. All respondents to our survey entered Libya using various smuggling networks. The country was also the location in which respondents experienced the most incidents of human rights abuses.

Libya has been a destination country for migrants and refugees across the African continent since the 1970s.[40] Until the outbreak of civil war in 2011, Libya was perceived as a relatively economically stable country with good links to the Middle East. The breakdown of the state's governing structures combined with the rise of militarisation in the country marked a crossroad for the human smuggling market; developments and changes happened fast, based on the relationship dynamics of the tribes and militia.[41] Thus, the environmental, socio-economic and political realities fuelling the migratory flows, as well as high levels of political instability in Libya and countries in the region, have resulted in a vibrant multi-million transnational human smuggling industry which plays a central role in the facilitation of irregular migration and its routes.[42]

In the Post-Gaddafi fragmentation of Libya there was a liberalisation of the human smuggling market and better access to financial infrastructures such as Hawala, which allowed established Libyan human smugglers, armed groups and militias to internationalise their networks.[43] Additionally, coastal smuggling networks underwent extensive changes. Due to increasing demand, more risks were taken at the expense of the migrants making the crossing, resulting in higher numbers of deaths.[44] This was, in part, due to the declining quality, as well as frequent overloading, of the vessels used for these journeys.[45] The inferior vessels were packed with migrants and sent out to sea with no intention to reach European shores. Smugglers would typically give migrants on board a satellite phone, GPS tracker, and occasionally, lifejackets, small rations

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39   Fransje Molenaar and Floor El Kamouni-Janssen, Turning the tide: The politics of irregular migration in the Sahel and Libya, CRU Report, Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations (February 2017) available at: https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/turning_the_tide.pdf

40   REACH and UNHCR, Mixed migration routes and dynamics in Libya: The impact of EU migration measures on mixed migration in Libya (April 2018) pg 1 available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_lyb_so_mixed_migration_routes_and_dynamics_in_libya.pdf

41   Mark Micallef, The Human Conveyor Belt: trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya (March 2017) pg 9 available at: http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf

42   UNODC, Smuggling of Migrants: A Global Review and Annotated Bibliography of Recent Publications (2011) available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Smuggling_of_Migrants_A_Global_Review.pdf

43   Mark Micallef, The Human Conveyor Belt: trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya (March 2017) available at: http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf

44   Mark Micallef, The Human Conveyor Belt: trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya (March 2017) pg 42 available at: http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf

45   Whereas prior to the revolution, the vessels smugglers used were more seaworthy fibreglass skiffs or wooden fishing boats, the higher demand for smuggling resulted in a shortage of boats. As a result, vessels were sourced from elsewhere, and usually of much lower quality; rubber dinghies began being sourced from Tunisia or even as far as China. See Mark Micallef, The Human Conveyor Belt: trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya (March 2017) pg 43 available at: http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf

of food and water, with the instruction to launch a distress call once outside Libyan waters.[46] If there was a response to the signal, it would not necessarily guarantee the migrants on board a passage to Europe.

As of May 2018, there were 184,612 internally displaced (IDPs) Libyans and 52,031 registered refugees and asylum seekers in the country.[47]

Migrants both on the ground in Libya and intercepted at sea by the Libyan authorities are often transferred to national detention centres, where serious human rights abuses have been reported. The lack of a migration framework in Libya has given effective control to state and non-state actors within migrant detention centres.[48] Migrants are vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and placed there regardless of their immigration status. Foreigners residing in Libya who have not legalized their stay within a period of two months after entry are considered "illegal migrants" and subjected to penalties, including "detention with hard labour or by a fine not exceeding 1,000 LYD."[49] Conditions at detention facilities are often appalling; as demonstrated in the Incident Analysis, migrants may be held for prolonged periods without judicial review, in grossly overcrowded holding cells, all the while subjected to torture, beatings, forced labour, sexual violence, and a lack of food and clean water.[50]

Libya is party to the 1969 Organisation of African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.[51] In addition to this, the Libyan interim constitutional declaration of 2011 gives right to claim asylum in the country.[52] However, UNHCR is currently responsible for registering asylum seekers and determining refugee status as the country has not yet enacted national legislation in this regard, nor are there the necessary structures for a functioning asylum system.

46 Mark Micallef, *The Human Conveyor Belt: trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya* (March 2017) pg 43 available at: http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf

47 UNHCR, *Libya Flash Update* (18 May 2018) available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Libya%20Flash%20Update%2018%20May%202018.pdf

48 Current laws criminalise irregular entry into Libya and fail to differentiate between migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of trafficking. Consequently, all migrants without appropriate documentation face detention in facilities run by the Department for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM). See: Xchange Foundation, *Libyan Detention Centers: A Legal Analysis* (2017) available at: http://xchange.org/map/Libya_DC.html

49 According to Articles 6 and 11 of Law n°19 of 2010 on Combatting Illegal Immigration available at: https://security-legislation.ly/node/32174

50   See also: Amnesty International, 'Libya: Shameful EU policies fuel surge in detention of migrants and refugees' (16 May 2018) available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/libya-shameful-eu-policies-fuel-surge-in-detention-of-migrants-and-refugees/

51 Organization of African Unity (OAU), *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa* ('OAU Convention'), 1001 U.N.T.S. 45 (10 September 1969) available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b36018.html

52 Article (10) Libya: *Draft Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Stage of 2011* [Libya] (September 2011) available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e80475b2.html

Methodology

Sampling & Data Collection

In 2017, Xchange conducted a cross-sectional survey to obtain first-hand data from migrants aboard the MOAS SAR vessel, The Phoenix, in the Central Mediterranean Sea. The face-to-face interviews were conducted by a Senior Researcher on four different SAR missions from May to July 2017 using a purposive (non-probability) sampling technique. Only migrants travelling through the most transited routes and who had arrived into Libya no more than four years prior to the interview were chosen.

This survey sought to identify:

1. Current migratory routes across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and;
2. Incidents experienced by migrants on the move.

Moreover, there was no specification applied with regards to the interviewees' immigration status; the term "migrant" is used throughout the whole report to refer to anyone (e.g. refugee, asylum seeker) intending to reach Europe through crossing the Mediterranean. The Senior Researcher aimed to include a diverse group of participants to capture a broad picture of the migratory routes and a variety of potentially experienced or witnessed events or incidents, reaching a sample size of 117 migrants.[53]

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53 *The sample size was initially meant to be 200. See Limitations below.*

The questionnaire included questions regarding the migrants' demographic profiles, push or pull factors, types of journeys and routes, time and cost of travel, countries and locations crossed, most significant incidents witnessed since departing from their home countries, as well as their future aspirations.

More specifically:

Migratory routes: 1. Personal data including age, nationality, sex; 2. Record of the route used from home country (including all transit hubs), journey time frame, cost, type of transport etc.

Human rights violations: 1. Personal data including age, nationality, sex of victim; 2. Perpetrator of the violation; 3. Date of violation; 4. Location of violation; 5. Geo-location of incidents (coordinates); 6. Description of violation in the form of an audio testimony and post-transcript.

The primary incidents considered in this report are: Kidnapping, Arbitrary Arrest/Detention, Human Trafficking, Slavery, Extortion, Physical Abuse, Torture, Rape, Robbery, Fraud, Injury by Gunfire, Killing, Death

The use of a mobile survey application allowed the data to be collected offline and uploaded to the server after each mission at sea. During the interview the respondent was provided with a detailed map of Africa to identify the transit hubs and thus allow the researchers to subsequently reconstruct the respondent's routes. The raw data was cleaned and analysed eight months later.

All interviews were conducted with informed consent, in a separated and comfortable area (on the bridge of the vessel) to ensure privacy and preserve the dignity of the respondents. The principle of confidentiality was also explained to all respondents before the interview. Within this report, every participant was provided with a pseudonym reflective of their country of origin and gender to protect their identity.

Limitations

Data collection was intended to span over six separate missions onboard The Phoenix SAR vessel. However, due to the premature termination of the MOAS missions, data collection was terminated after the fourth mission. It was therefore not possible to interview all the intended nationalities in the original project design, as certain nationalities are known to cross the Mediterranean Sea later in the year (e.g. Eritreans) and were not present during the missions Xchange were on board. As a result, far fewer interviews were collected than intended: the sample size was restricted to 59% of the target (200). In addition to this, and to ensure high quality data and analysis for the report, some respondents' data were not used as the data collected was not sufficient to reconstruct their full routes.

Since migrants were taken onboard 25 miles off the Libyan coast, the interviewer often had less than one day to conduct the surveys until disembarkation in Italy. Hence, the limited resources (i.e. one male enumerator and no female enumerator).

The conditions aboard the vessel was usually overloaded with typically more than 400 migrants during each SAR operation. During the time the interviews took place, mobility and access to the areas where migrants were allocated were restricted.

To facilitate interviews, interpreters were used. However, this increased the length of the interviews and might have also influenced the level of details and accuracy of the testimonies. Moreover, 16% of the incidents were recorded with no information on country of origin of the respondent thus limiting the precision of findings.

Furthermore, for practical reasons, the interviewer asked for the major incidents - not all incidents. Incidents such as extortion, which typically occurs in multiple stages of the route, were not systematically collected, allowing the migrants to primarily focus on those events they thought were most important/relevant. Hence, even though extortion is mentioned throughout the report, its frequency of occurrence is most likely higher than presented.

With regards to data quality, several factors may have prevented an interviewee from openly sharing their feelings. Some respondents may not have wished to disclose serious and traumatic incidents experienced during their journey, particularly those of sexual nature. Therefore, the figures for sexual abuses are likely to be greater than reported here due to the stigma and culture of shame around the subject and the social costs of disclosure.

Overall, the findings presented in this report should be interpreted with caution and as outcomes of a mere snapshot, not as a broadly representative picture of all-migrant movements in the Central Mediterranean Sea.

Migrant Profiles
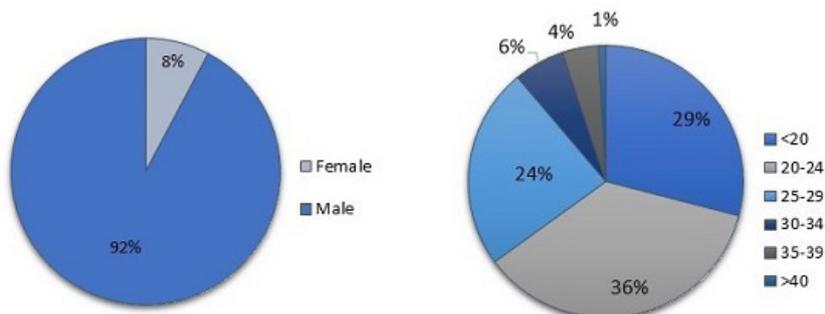
Respondents by gender

Respondents by age

Overall, the survey sample consisted of 117 people of various nationalities; 108 men and nine women. Only 12 respondents were not from the African continent. The reasons for fewer female respondents may include, the fact that fewer females usually make such journeys as well as the limited number of female enumerators available to the Senior Researcher to conduct interviews with women. [54]


Respondents by Nationality
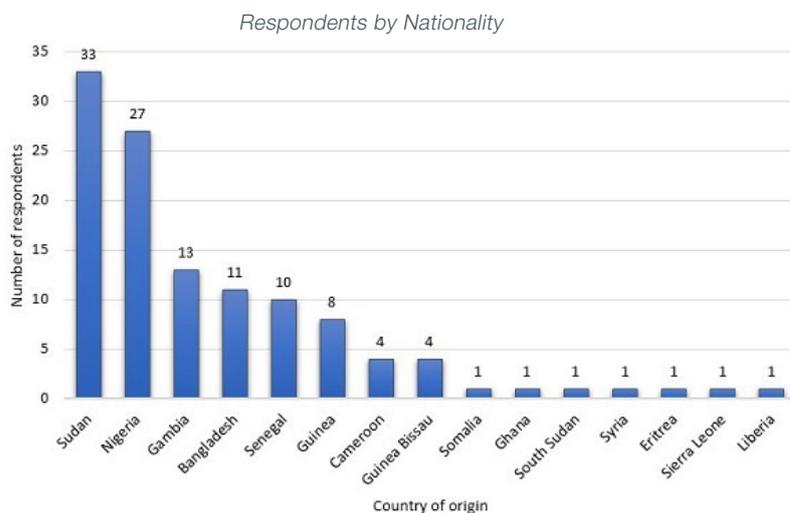
The majority (51% of the total of respondents) came from Sudan and Nigeria (60 respondents), whereas 40% came from other various African countries. Bangladeshis were also highly represented in the sample (9.4%).

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54 Altai Consulting and IMPACT Initiatives, *Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing dynamics and protection challenges* (February 2017) pg 15 available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lby_report_mixed_migration_trends_in_libya_may_2017_0.pdf

Why did you leave your home country?

|	
■	Economic Reasons/Poverty
■	War/conflict
■	Other
■	Regular violence
■	Political reasons
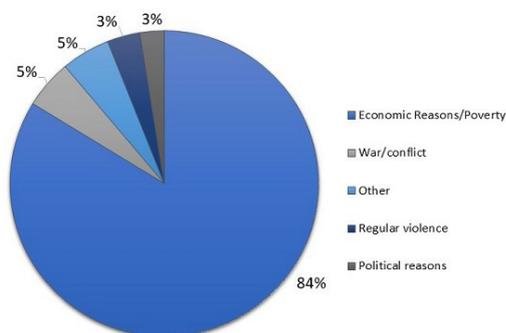
*Regular violence refers to any type of violence that causes insecurity in non-conflict situations.

Although a few respondents (5%) had unique reasons for leaving their country (e.g. seeking a better education system or wanting to become a professional football player), most respondents (84%) were pushed to leave due to poverty and economic instability to improve their own and their families' wellbeing.

The majority of the respondents were asked if this was their first attempt to cross the CMR. Interestingly, for 12% of the sample it was not their first attempt. However, this was the first attempt for all respondents from Sudan, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Somalia, South Sudan, and Liberia. There were eight respondents in total who tried to cross twice, one Senegalese who tried to cross for the 3rd time and one Senegalese and one Gambian for whom it was the 4th documented attempt. However, it is not uncommon for migrants to have attempted the crossing more than four times.[55] Three in four respondents (74%) were travelling alone, whereas the remainder had at least one person accompanying them, i.e. a family member or a friend.

Place of departure


|	
■	Sabratha
■	Sabasirine
■	Cambo
■	Al Maya
■	Zawiya
■	N/A

Type of boat

■	Dinghy
■	Wooden

_____
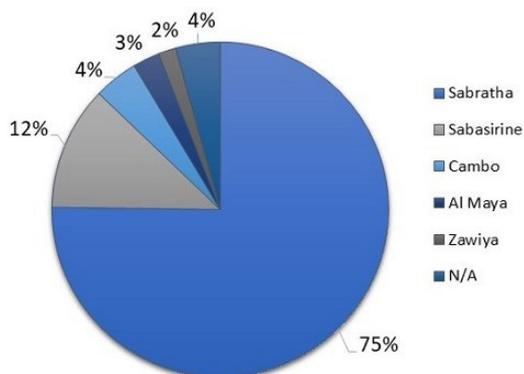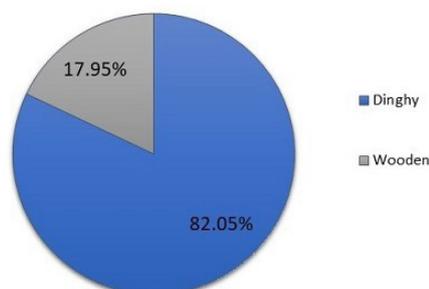
55 *Anecdotal evidence during data collection confirms this.*

Ideal destination in Europe
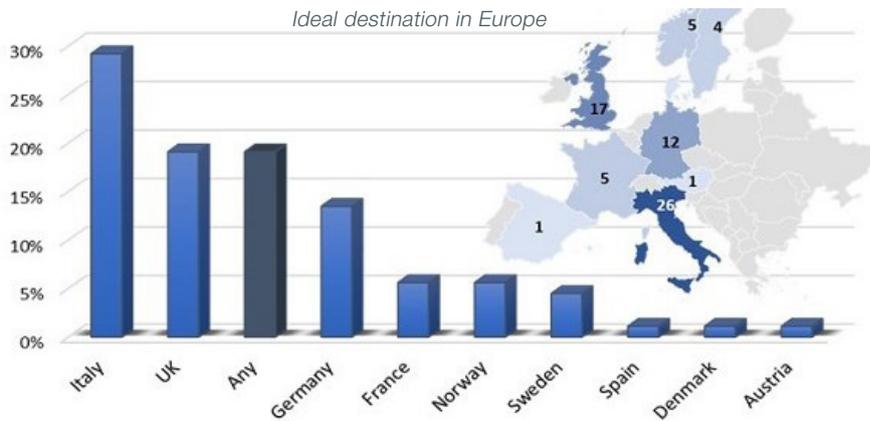
The majority of respondents departed from Sabratha, at the coast of Libya. They were smuggled using either a wooden boat (18%) or a dinghy (82%). The dominant usage of rubber dinghies illustrates the changing smuggling dynamics in Libya due to increased demand, whereby cheaper vessels are bought and imported from abroad.

With regards to their short-term aspirations, 89 respondents (76%) were asked which European country they wished to live in. 29% stated Italy as their preferred destination. One in five (19%) wanted to go to the UK and one in five (19%) did not show a preference.

*Are you intending to return to your home country?*
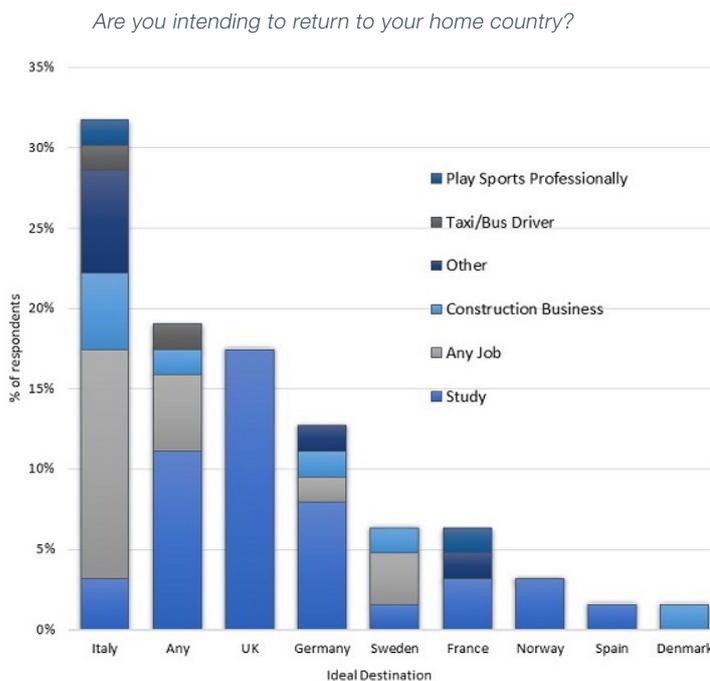
Migrants were also asked what their aspirations were once in Europe. 63 of 89 of migrants (70%) had specific plans. The remaining 26 (30%) did not provide any information. Almost half reported that they wanted to study (e.g. English, Law, Medicine, Agriculture) to improve their employment chances and support their families back home. Notably, everyone wishing to go to the UK, Norway, and Spain had the intention to study. One in four migrants did not have a specific job in mind at the time of the survey.

Expectations by ideal destination in Europe
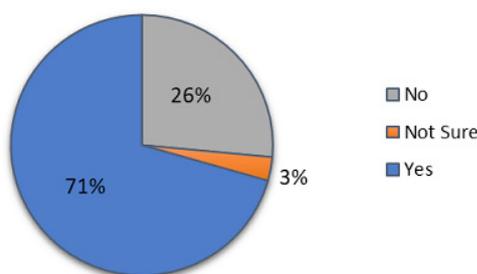
Are you intending to return to your home country?
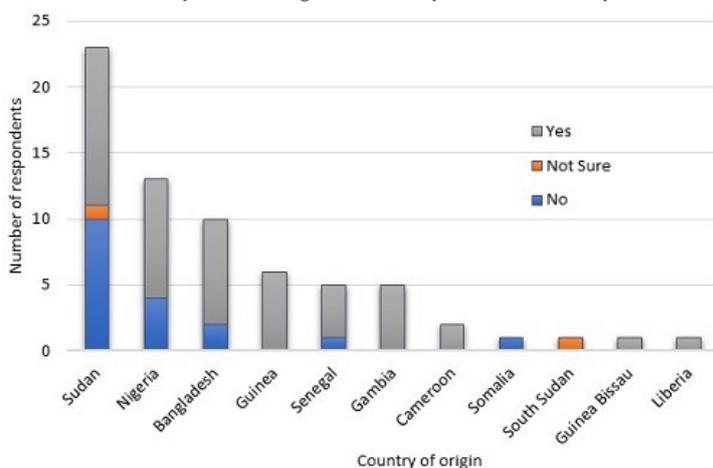
60% of the sample were asked whether they had the intention to return to their home country in the future. 48 (71%) intended to return, 18 (26%) did not, and two (3%) were undecided. Split by gender, eight of the nine female respondents and seven in ten (68%) male respondents had the intention to return. This indicates that, unlike popular belief, many migrants wished to improve their lives and contribute to their family's wellbeing with increased education and economic opportunities abroad, with most intending to returning.

One in three (34%) reported having family living abroad. However, there was no relationship identified as to whether having family abroad affected the respondents' decisions to return. Both those who have family abroad (76%) and those who do not (68%) intended to return to their country of origin.

Routes Analysis

One of the survey's primary objectives was to track the routes that individual respondents took before embarking at the Libyan coast to Italy. While the project scope was to cover multiple African routes towards Libya, limitations in terms of access to migrants during the mission on board a vessel — and as detailed in the Limitations — meant that we could not cover all the target nationalities anticipated. [56] Therefore, the routes are not representative, but rather a snapshot of the migrants we sampled.

During the survey, each respondent reported a detailed and chronologically ordered list of transit hubs they had taken during their journey.[57] It comes as no surprise that the most transited hub before entering Libya, was Agadez (Niger). Agadez is a major hub for West and Central African migrants on the move towards Libya, and often onwards to Europe.[58] From our survey, a substantial 61 of 117 (52%) migrants, from five different countries of departure, transited the Nigerien city during their journeys.
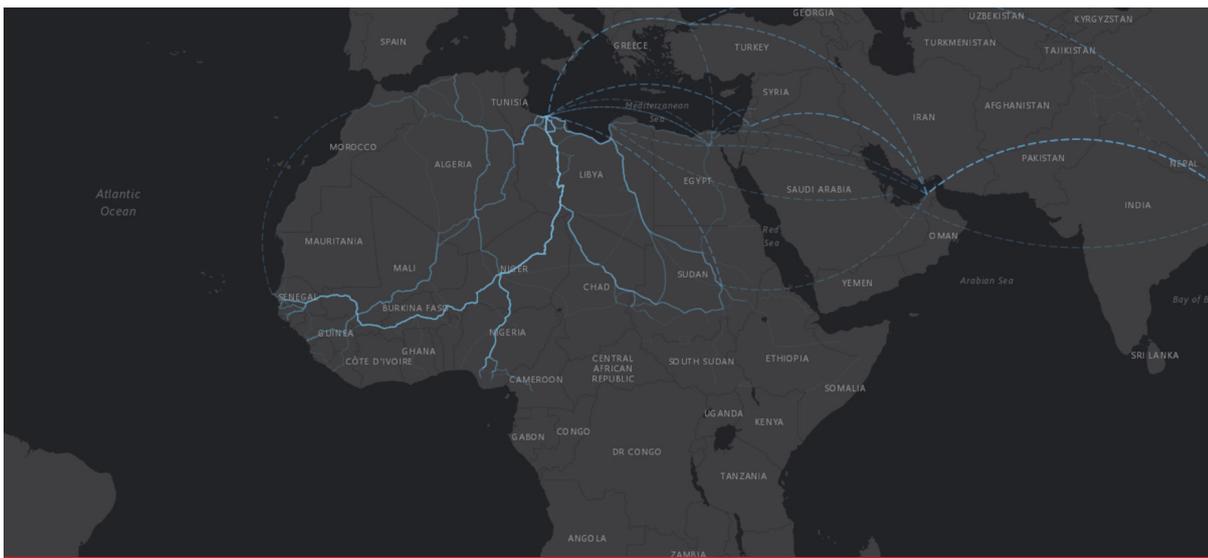

56 During the data collection the target sample size of 200 interviews was not reached, thus the data represents only part of the intended sample group.

57 In alphabetical order: Abeche, Abri, Abu Jubaiha, Abu Simbel, Abuja, Addis Ababa, Adrar, Agadez, Ajdabiya, Al Jawf, Al Khanak, Al Qadarif, Alawenat, Alexandria, Al-Fashir, Algiers, Anambra State, Arlit, Ash Shwayrif, Aswan, Asyut, Baddibu, Bamako, Bani Walid, Banjul, Baria, Barisal, Barra, Bauchi State, Benghazi, Benin, Benin City, Birnin Konni, Bissau, Bito, Bo-bo-Dioulasso, Bordj Bou Arréridj, Brikama, Cairo, Casablanca, Casamance, Conakry, Coyah, Dakar, Damascus, Dankunku, Darfur, Debdeb, Delta State, Dhaka, Dirkou, Dongola, Dormiu, Dubai, Ed Al Bara, Edo State, El-Obeid, Farafenni, Fatick, Gao, Gaoua, Geneina, Gereida, Gadamis, Ghardaia, Gondar, Guezzam, Harar, Illizi, Imo State, Istanbul, Jalu, Amman, Juba, Jufra, Kabkabiya, Kanchari, Kano, Kaolack, Kayes, Khartoum, Kidira, Kimgya (Gold Mines), Kouremale, Kouri Bougoudi (Gold Mines), Kufrah, Lagos, Largeau (Faya), Louga, Madama, Malakal, Malha, Mandiana, Marsa Matruh, Metemma, Misurata, Mizdah, Motta, Mulano, Murzuq, N'Djamena, Nialé, Niamey, Nouadhibou, Nyala, Oran, Ouagadougou, Ouargla, Qatrun, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Renk, Rivers State, Rosso, Sabasirine, Sabha, Sabratha, Sandare, Serrekunda, Shagarab I (Refugee Camp), Sikasso, Sirte, Tahoua, Tamanrasset, Tambacounda, Tazirbu, Thiès, Timiauine, Tina (Sudan, Chad), Tobruk, Tripoli, Um Al Aranib, Wad Madani, Wadi Halfa, Yundum, Zalingei, Zaria, Zawiyah, Zinder, Zintan

58 Luca Raineri, Routes of Trans-Mediterranean Migration (2017) available at: https://www.foodandmigration.com/en/chapters/routes-of-trans-mediterranean-migration/

Altai Consulting and IMPACT Initiatives, Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing dynamics and protection challenges (February 2017) pg 38 available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lby_report_mixed_migration_trends_in_libya_may_2017_0.pdf

TRANSIT HUBS REPORTED

3   72
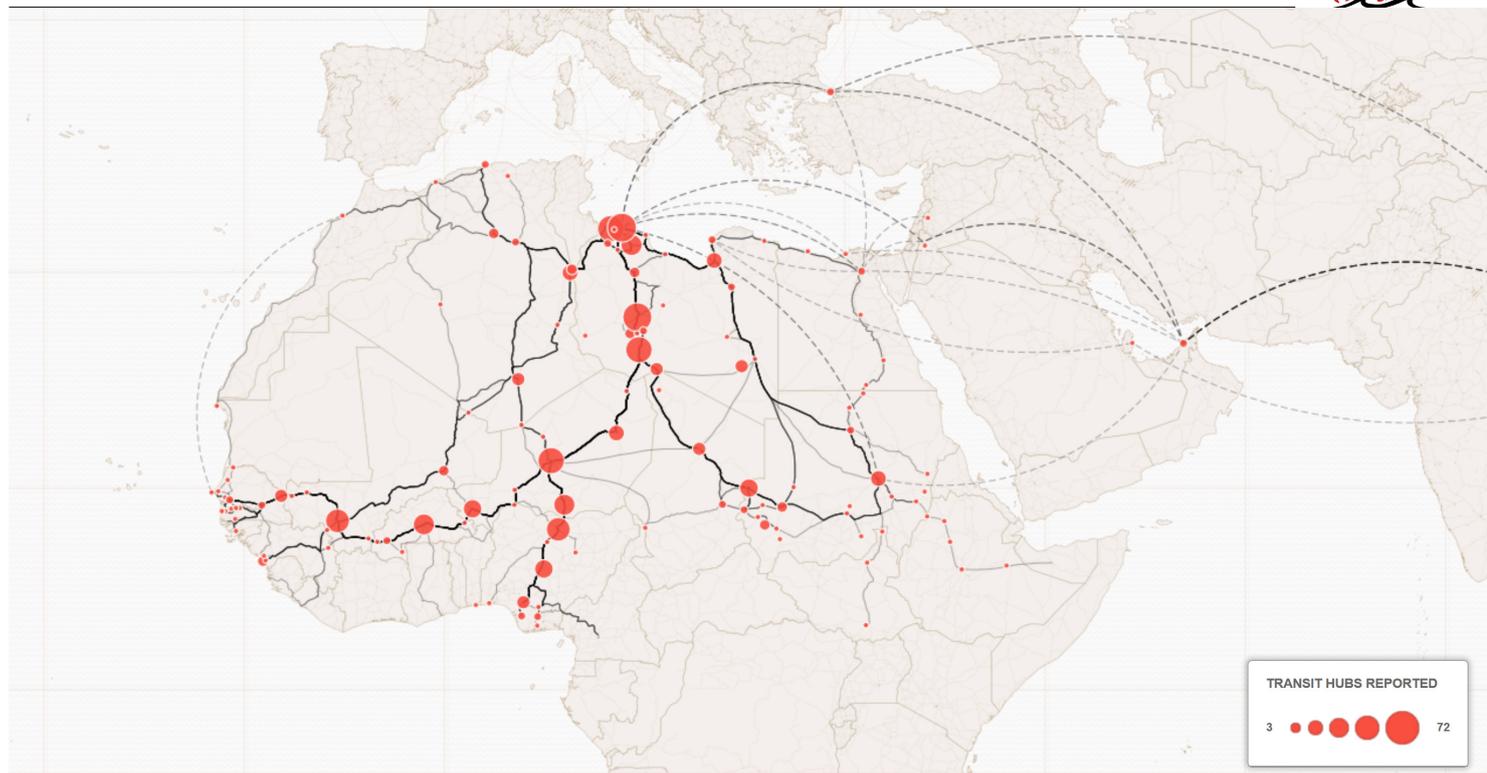
Year of departure from home country
(% of respondents)
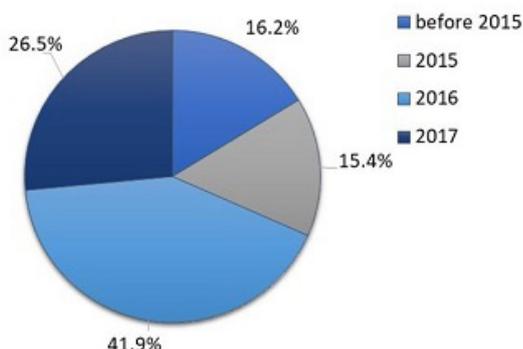
Year of crossing the Libyan border
(% of respondents)

16.2%   ■ before 2015
26.5%   ■ 2015
    ■ 2016
15.4%   ■ 2017
41.9%

10.3%
10.3%
43.6%
35.9%
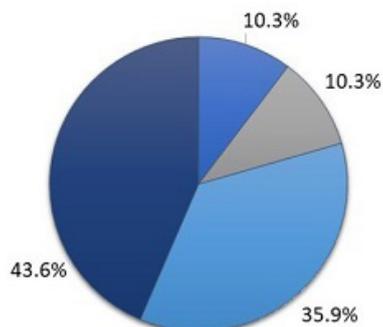
Most respondents (42%) left their home country during 2016. However, not all migrants crossed the border into Libya during the same year they left their home country. The median time spent travelling to reach Libya was one full month (31 days). However, 20% of the sample (23 individuals) reported spending at least one year elsewhere until they reached the Libyan border. This reflects the varied type of journeys and smuggling networks used; many migrants' journeys are multi-stage, where they may spend periods of time working to earn money for the next part of their journey; others may not have intended to go north to Libya and onto Europe at all but were left with no choice due to conflict, or a lack of economic opportunities.

This is also reflected in the time that migrants spent within Libya, which ranged between 11 days and four years and three months. The median time was 9 months and 26 days. The average time was one year and 15 days. As also demonstrated in the Incidents Analysis, some respondents intended Libya as their destination country, usually for economic purposes; others spent long periods there to earn money only for the next stage of their journey; other respondents were trapped in forced labour or interned in detention centres or prisons.

*Average price per trip depending on the currency (in EUR)*
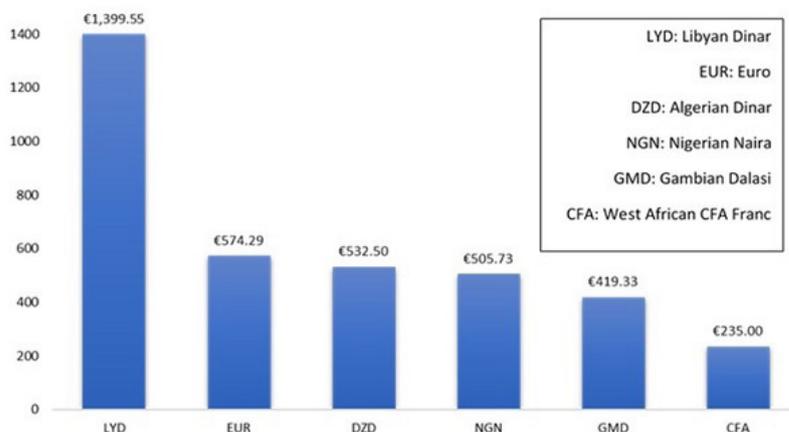
The cost of a journey to Libya and onto Europe cannot be generalised as it depends on a multitude of factors, including the status of the individual migrant concerned, country of origin, route taken, smugglers employed and their network dynamics, as well as the political climate of the countries they transit. When respondents were asked in what currency they paid for their trip to Europe, 71% reported paying in Libyan Dinars. This indicates that many respondents were likely to be self-funded until they reached Libya, where they then paid for the maritime journey to smugglers. Five per cent paid in Euros, while one tenth of respondents stated that they were too afraid to report anything related to money for fear of reprisals from smugglers. One person worked in exchange for the next leg of the journey. A few West Africans paid for their whole trip in advance in their own currency. Those who paid in Libyan Dinars spent more than double the amount that others paid.[59] This could be due to the type of smuggling method used; those who paid in currencies other than Libyan Dinars did so in advance (two respondents mentioned bank transfers from Guinea or Gambia).

59 *Exchange Rates used for comparison (at the time the analysis took place): LYD*0.609, CFA*0.0015, DZD*0.0071, GMD*0.017, GNF*0.00009, NGN*0.0022, SDG*0.045.*

Average price of trip by nationality (in EUR)
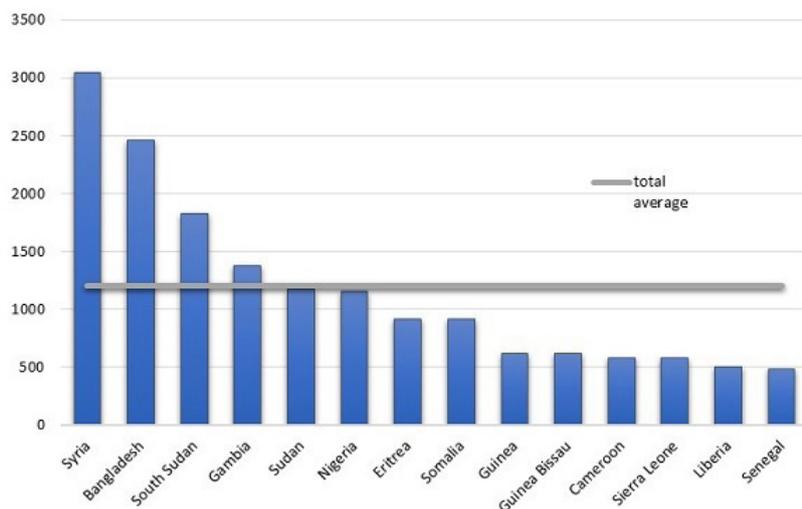
The average cost of the trip stood at 1206 EUR per person. The median cost was 914 EUR. By nationality, we can see that respondents from Syria and Bangladesh paid more. This is unsurprising, as reports indicates that Syrians, known to have larger savings due to economic prosperity before the Syrian war, often pay superior, smoother, and safer passage to Europe, with prime plac- es for their families reserved on less densely saturated boats.[60] Bangladeshis, travelling by plane, pay higher prices to be taken from Dhaka to Dubai or Istan- bul, and onto Libya, often via "agencies" with the promise of work -a scenario which has also been regularly reported in Gulf countries.[61]

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60 Paul Kingsley, 'Libya's people smugglers: inside the trade that sells refugees hopes of a better life' The Guardian (24 April 2015) available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/24/libyas-people-smugglers-how-will-they-catch-us-theyll-soon-move-on

61 Lizzie Dearden, 'Bangladesh is now the single biggest country of origin for refugees on boats as new route to Europe emerges' The Independent (5 May 2017) available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-migrants-bangladesh-libya-italy-numbers-smuggling-dhaka-dubai-tur-key-detained-a7713911.html
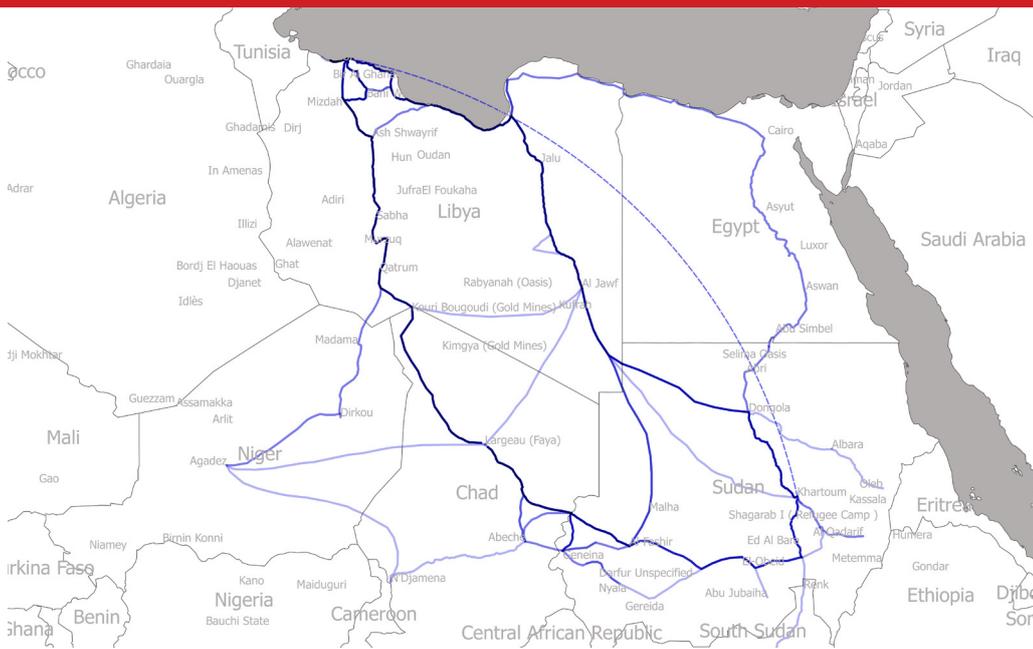
The Sudanese Route

Average total length of journey by land: 3,835 km (3,870 km including journey from South Sudan)
Median total journey length by land: 3,487 km (3,498 km if we include the South Sudanese)

18 of the 33 Sudanese respondents (54%) —mostly from Darfur—transited Chad before entering Libya. Eleven entered directly to Libya via the so called Motallat ("triangle" in Arabic), a desert region where the Sudanese, Libyan, and Egyptian borders meet.[62]

Tina, a town located a few kilometres from the Sudanese-Chadian border was the main crossing point into Chad with 90% of those interviewed transiting this bordering hub. Many of those travelling the Chadian route reported having passed through or worked in Kouri Bougoudi Gold Mine, located in the Aouzou strip, a piece of land long at the centre of territorial conflict between Chad and Libya, before crossing the Libyan border towards Qatrun.[63]

Those who entered Libya directly from Sudan, transited the Sudanese capital Khartoum and Dongola city in the north, before heading west towards Kufrah, the largest district in Libya. The median length of time for a migrant on this route to reach Libya was 21 days.

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62 *According to anecdotal evidence from the respondents to this survey, the Chadian route is considered safer than crossing the Sudanese desert towards Kufrah in Libya.*

63 *Jérôme Tubiana and Claudio Gramizzi, Tubu Trouble: State and Statelessness in the Chad– Sudan–Libya Triangle (June 2017) available at: https://sahelresearch.africa.ufl.edu/files/Chad-tubu-state-statelessness. pdf*
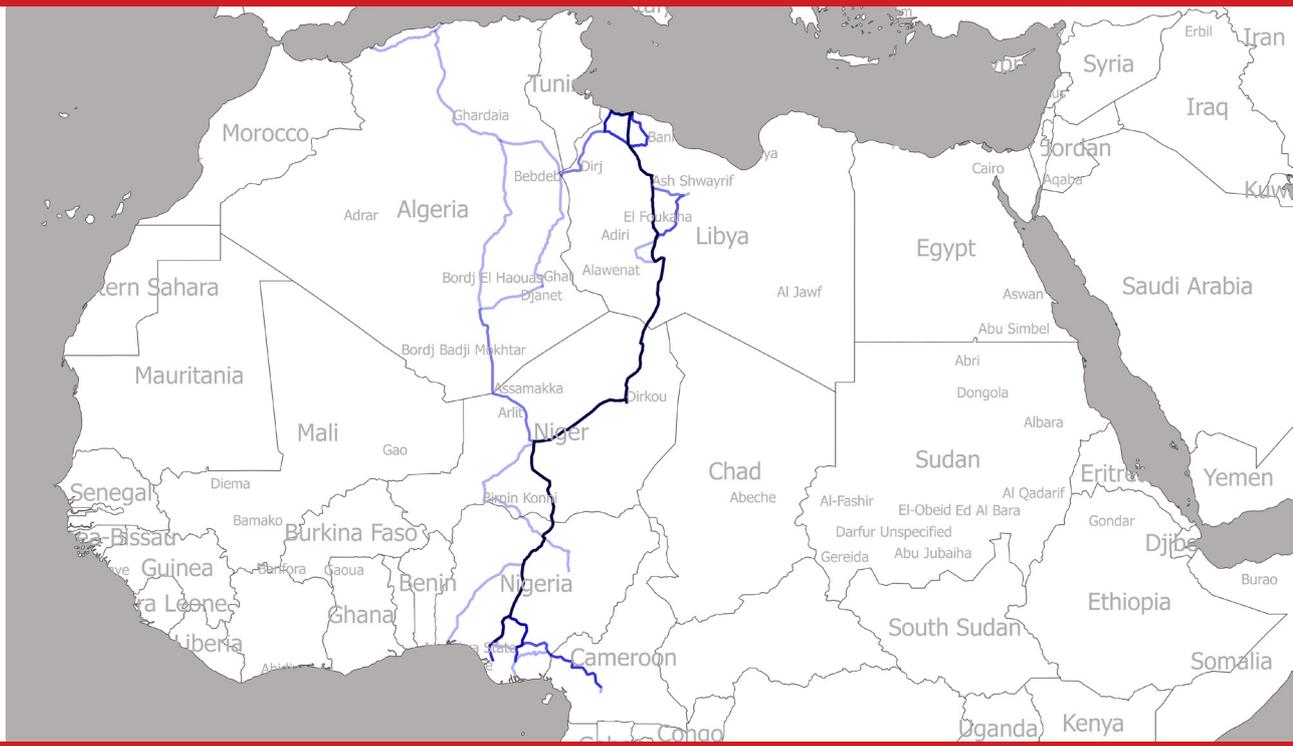
The Nigerian Route

Average total length by land: 3,935 km

Median total length by land: 3,909 km

25 of 27 Nigerian respondents were from the southern states of Edo, Imo, Delta, Rivers, Anambra, and Lagos. Southern states, Edo State in particular, [64] have in recent years become known for trafficking young girls and women into the sex trafficking industry in Italy.[65] Only one respondent was from the north (Bauchi state)[66] and another one from central Nigeria (Abuja). Beside the Nigerians, four respondents from Cameroon reported having crossed into Nigeria before joining this route.

The Nigerian Route shows regularity in terms of transited hubs: Kano, a north-western Nigerian city close to the Niger border with regular bus services to Niger, was transited by all respondents before entering Niger. Once the Nigerian-Nigerien border was crossed, all respondents headed north to Zinder in Niger before arriving at the last urban centre before the most popular migration hub in Africa, Agadez.[67] Most respondents crossed the Ténéré Desert, in the south-central Sahara towards the Libyan border, and then reported having transited Qatrun and Sabha (78%), oasis cities in southwestern Libya. Following the route north towards the Libyan coast, some respondents mentioned having transited Ash-Shwayrif and Bani Walid en route to the country's capital, Tripoli.

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64 European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Country of Origin Information Report: Nigeria Sex Trafficking of Women (October 2015) pg 13 available at: https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/public/BZ0415678ENN.pdf

65 IOM, Human Trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route: Data, Stories and Information Collected by the International Organization for Migration (2017) pg 13 available at: http://www.italy.iom.int/sites/default/files/news-documents/IOMReport_Trafficking.pdf

66 Bauchi State is known to have been affected by jihadist militant organisation, Boko Haram (which is mostly confined to the northern states and commonly perceived to be the major root cause of migration from Nigeria).

67 Altai Consulting and IMPACT Initiatives, Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing dynamics and protection challenges (February 2017) pg 38 available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_lby_report_mixed_migration_trends_in_libya_may_2017_0.pdf
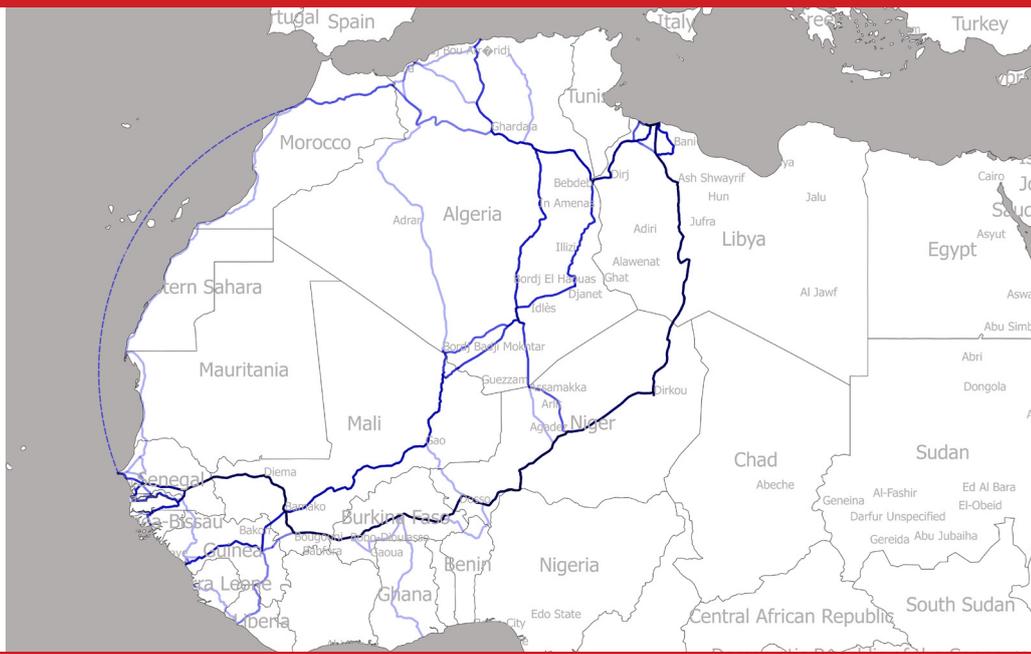
Mixed West African Routes

Median total length by land: 6,031 km

Guineans: Average length by land: 6,294 km
Median length by land: 5,940 km

Senegalese: Average length by land: 6,268 km
Median length by land: 6,011 km

Gambians: Average length by land: 5,697 km
Median length by land: 6,017 km

Bissau-Guineans: Average length by land: 6,174 km
Median length by land: 6,071 km

The Mixed West African Route included respondents travelling from diverse West African countries of origin, including Gambia, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Guinea. Patterns emerge from the data on these routes, but they are not concrete nor generalisable. In total, 38 respondents transited through the Mixed West African Route to reach Libya.

35 respondents from various West African countries of origin passed through Mali via the capital, Bamako. Of these, 27 respondents transited Burkina Faso (Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou), as well as Niger (Niamey and Agadez) before entering Libya. After crossing the Libyan border, respondents typically headed north east towards Qatrun before reaching the coastal cities of Tripoli and Sabratha. However, four of the 27 respondents did not enter Libya from the south, and instead transited through Algeria before entering Libya from Debdeb.

> " Tuareg rebels kidnapped us for 'a few' days and took our food, water and all our money. We met the Arabs who took us to Algeria and kept us for 5 days. We were weak and couldn't do anything to help ourselves.
>
> *Abdoulaye, Guinea,*
> *incident location Kidal (Mali)*
> "

The remaining eight (of 35) respondents went straight from Mali to Algeria (without transiting Burkina Faso or Niger) via the Niger River course, towards Gao and then north to Kidal region.[68]

One respondent (of the 38) travelled through Burkina Faso and Niger to Libya without crossing through Mali; one respondent flew to Casablanca (Morocco) and then continued through Algeria; one respondent travelled through Mauritania to Morocco and onto Algeria.

Typically, those migrants who crossed Algeria passed through Timiaouine in the country's southwest once they crossed the border and then moved north-east towards the mountainous oasis city of Tamanrasset before reaching Debdeb, and then Gadamis, an oasis Berber town, on the Algerian-Tunisian-Libyan border. Six of the West African respondents reported having worked in Northern Algerian cities to finance the last part of the journey to the Libyan coast and the Sea crossing.

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68   *The Kidal region is home of Tuareg insurgent groups that began fighting a campaign against the Malian government for independence of northern Mali in 2012. This area has been reported as highly dangerous by a number of respondents. For more on this see: Aljazeera, Explainer: Tuareg-led rebellion in north Mali (3 April 2012) available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/03/201232211614369240. html*
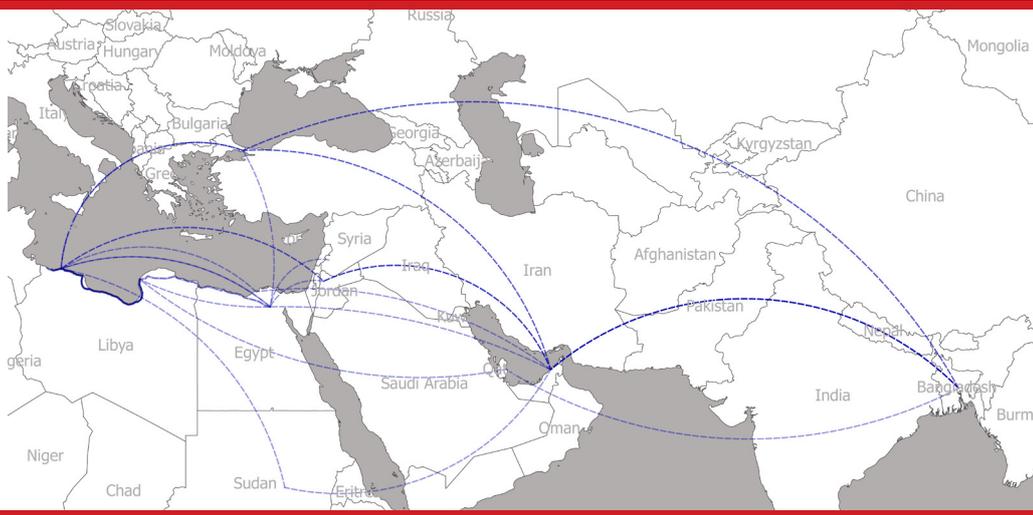
Asian Routes

Average total length flown: 10,016 km

Median total length flown: 9,646 km

In total, there were 12 individuals interviewed from the Asian continent and one from the Middle East:[69] one respondent from Syria and 12 from Bangladesh. In recent years, the number of South Asian migrants arriving in Italy along the CMR have increased.[70] All respondents (11) to our survey from South Asia were of Bangladeshi origin. Bangladeshi respondents typically travelled in two, three, or four stage journeys from Dhaka (Bangladesh) to Libya via different airports. The respondents' first stops were, in order of frequency: Dubai (UAE) (seven respondents), Istanbul (Turkey) (two respondents), Amman (Jordan) or Doha (Qatar) (one respondent in each). From there, three respondents flew to Libya, whereas the remaining eight flew to Cairo (two individuals), Amman (two individuals), Istanbul (two individuals), Alexandria, or Sudan (unspecified airport); from Istanbul one individual made an extra stop in Cairo before entering Libya.

Eight of the 11 Bangladeshi respondents entered Libya via Tripoli Airport; two respondents landed in Benghazi; whereas there was one who did not specify at which airport in Libya he landed. From Dhaka to Libya, their journeys lasted from one to four days.

It is worth noting that almost all Bangladeshi respondents (10) entered Libya at least one year before the interview took place, indicating that these respondents worked in Libya prior to departure. This was the first maritime journey for all respondents except for one, for whom this was the second attempt.
All Bangladeshi respondents wished to go to Italy; two mentioned that they did not intend on returning to their home country. All but one Bangladeshi respondent was not travelling alone.

The single Syrian respondent left his country in 2013, flying from Damascus to Egypt, and then travelled by car to Libya, a journey which lasted two weeks.

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69 In this report, the Syrian respondent was not included in the mapping process due to the lack of data on the transit hubs.

70 IOM, Mediterranean Migrant Arrivals Reach 53,386 in 2017; Deaths: 1,309 (5 December 2017) pg 2 available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IOM_Med.pdf

> "
> I was working when four Libyan gangs attacked me with guns; they threatened to shoot me if I didn't give my money and mobile phone; I gave them everything. They tried to kidnap me, but many people came over and the kidnappers thinned away.
>
> *Salim, Bangladesh, incident location Tripoli (Libya)*
> "

Incidents Reported
362 Incidents

Developed by Xchange.org | Pablo Gallego, © CARTO
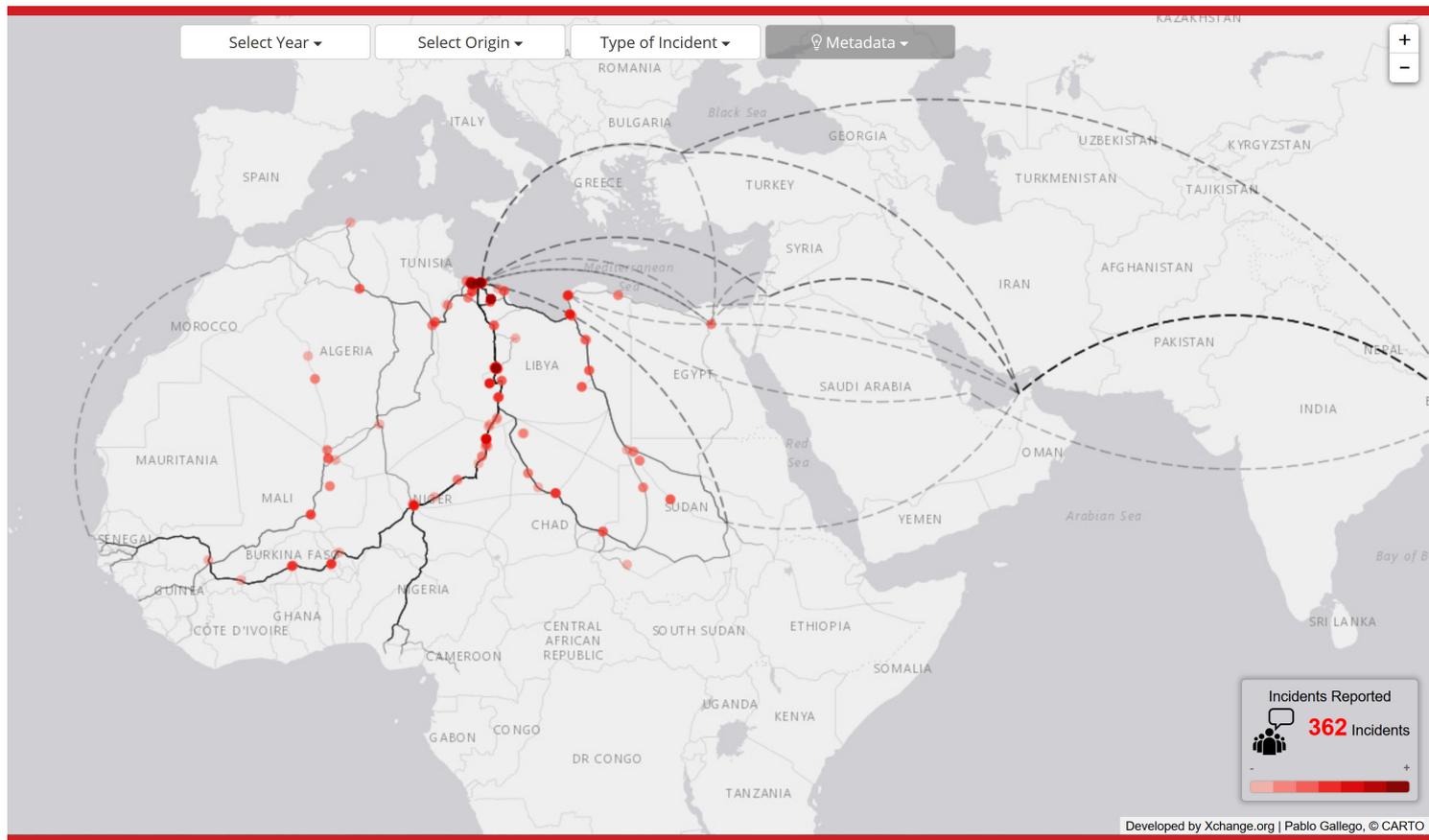
Incidents Analysis

The survey data comprised of 114 testimonies including 362 primary incidents. This analysis attempts to dissect the available information in these testimonies to aid the reader to form a picture of the often-dangerous incidents respondents experienced in transit.[71] It is important to note, however, that these incidents do not occur in isolation; they happen simultaneously and throughout the entire journey, as the maps show.

Each incident is considered separately and uniquely so as not to undermine its weight and severity. Most respondents (69%) recorded more than one incident in their testimony. All respondents interviewed had either suffered themselves (73%) or witnessed (27%) a variety of all the primary incidents at some point during their journey.

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71 There is no legal definition of a migrant in transit – OHCHR acknowledges they may include refugees, asylum seekers, economic or climate migrants – they fall under different forms of international protection, however they are all vulnerable to the same human rights violations while in transit. See: OHCHR, Situation of migrants in transit (2016) available at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/StudyMigrants/OHCHR_2016_Report-migrants-transit_EN.pdf

Most frequently, respondents experienced detention and extortion; they were likely to suffer physical abuse if they were men, and rape if they were women; many were robbed or pressured into forced labour; often, respondents were held for ransom, or even witnessed killings and deaths of other migrants. During their journeys, respondents also faced harsh travelling conditions and inhumane living conditions; many suffered medical complications from dehydration, exhaustion, lack of food, and poor hygiene.

The four incidents experienced or witnessed most frequently across all routes were:[72]

- Arbitrary Arrest/Detention;

- Extortion;

- Kidnapping;

- Physical Abuse.

These seem to have been experienced or witnessed to a larger extent by migrants travelling the Sudanese Route and the Mixed West African Route.[73] However, there was a general feeling of chaos and lawlessness on all the routes taken by respondents. Incidents took place, not only at check-points, prisons, and compounds, but also at markets, streets, camps, places of employment, and in transport vehicles. This means that, irrespective of which route was taken, or the duration of the journey, respondents faced a continuum of violence and exploitation from beginning to end, at the hands of smugglers, government officials, gangs, insurgent groups, and abusive citizens.

The most dangerous country location for our respondents, was Libya and its borders (271 incidents). This is unsurprising, considering that all

The primary incidents considered in this research are:

- **Kidnapping,**

- **Arbitrary Arrest/Detention,**

- **Human Trafficking,**

- **Slavery,**

- **Extortion,**

- **Physical Abuse, Torture,**

- **Rape,**

- **Robbery,**

- **Fraud,**

- **Injury by Gunfire,**

- **Killing, Death.**

©F

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72 However, it is not possible to state with absolute certainty the most frequently experienced abuses by route, as all our respondents faced multiple categories of incidents during their journey.

73 It is worth noting that there was more data available on incidents from respondents on these two routes, and so this does not reflect clearly the possible reality that other routes may also experience them in equal or higher amount.

routes, including those from Asia, converged in Libya, and more specifically, towards the same hubs leading to the Libyan coast. Additionally, as detailed in the Context, Libya's breakdown in governance and border control since the revolution has created a hotbed for migrant smuggling and abuse. Respondents may take months or even years from when they first leave home to board a boat at the Libyan coast, most spending long periods of time in Libya, leaving them more vulnerable to abuse. "Hotspots" for abuses were located primarily in pre-departure coastal cities Sabratha and Zawiya, and the capital, Tripoli, where respondents were often held before being transported to the coast. Bani Walid and Sabha were common to three routes out of four.[74]

Following this, Niger was second most dangerous (32 incidents), then Algeria (16 incidents), Chad (12 incidents), Mali (11 incidents), Burkina Faso (10 incidents), Sudan (8 incidents), and Egypt (2 incidents).[75]

Number of incidents by location of occurrence (top 15)

Location	Incidents
Tripoli area (incl. Tajura)	55
Sabratha-Sorman-Zawiya area (incl. in the sea)	54
Sabha area (incl. detention center Aligeto)	49
Bani Walid	40
Agadez area (incl. desert to Libya)	15
Madama area (incl. Dirkou, desert in between)	15
Sabasirine	8
Ajdabiya	8
Faya-Largeau area	7
Murzuq	7
Qatrun area	6
Benghazi	6
Ouagadougou	5
Gadamis-Debdeb area	5
Zintan	5

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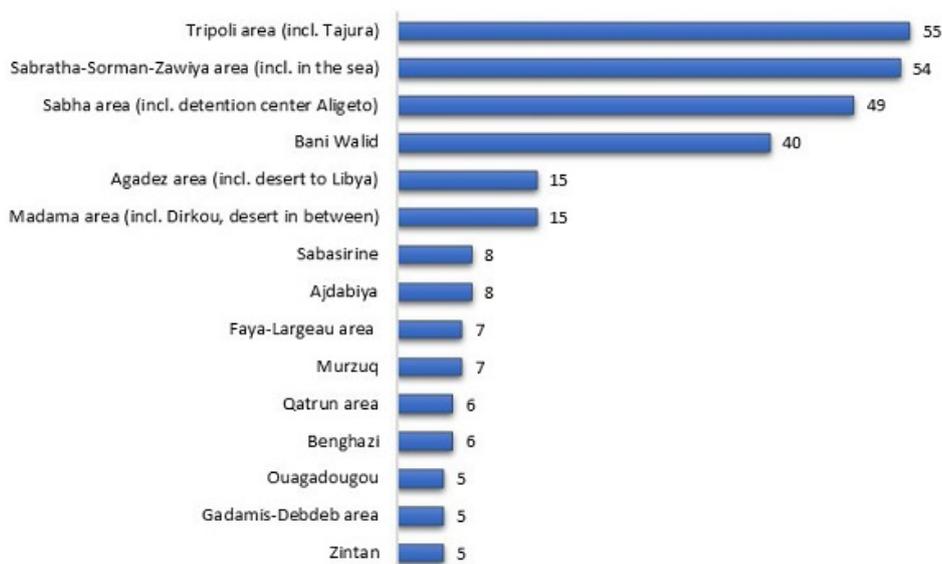
74 According to a 2017 UNHCR report, places such as Bani Walid have increased in popularity as a smuggling hub; routes and hubs have changed considerably since 2013. See: UNHCR, Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges (February 2017) available at: http://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/595a02b44/mixed-migration-trends-libya-changing-dynamics-protection-challenges.html?query=libya

75 It is worth noting, however, that most of respondents hailed from West Africa.

Number-nature of incidents by most mentioned locations

Legend:
- Tripoli area (incl. Tajura, Medina)
- Sabha area (incl. detention center Aligeto)
- Agadez area (incl. desert to Libya)
- Sabratha-Sorman-Zawiya area (incl. in the sea)
- Bani Walid
- Madama area (incl. Dirkou, desert)
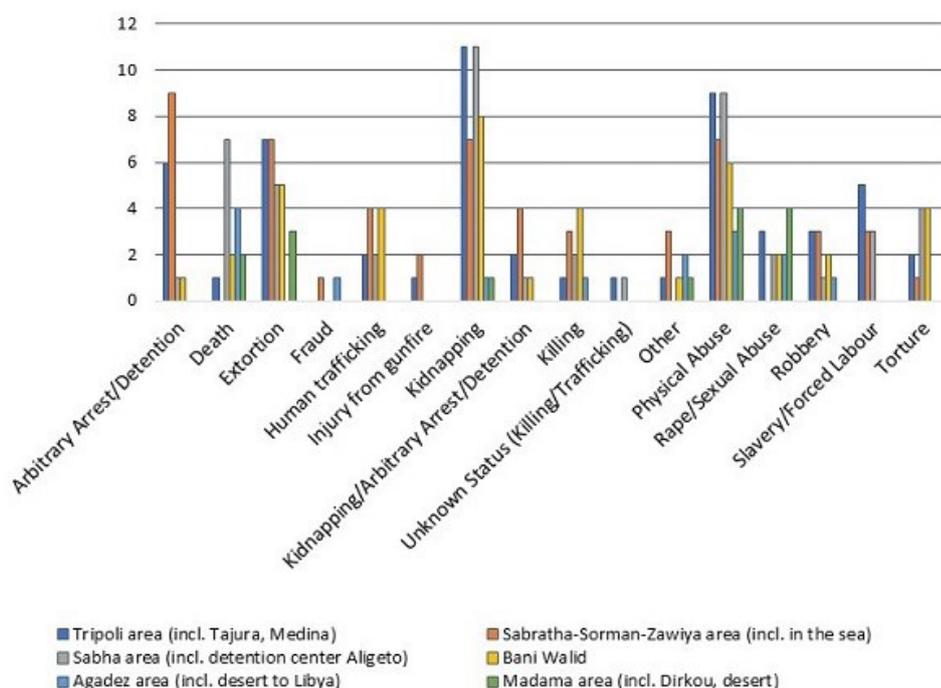
As evident in the graph,[76] of all incidents, kidnapping occurred most frequently to respondents. This incident occurred primarily in Tripoli and Sabha, Libya. During these incidents, respondents were held for periods of time, for money, or trafficked to other gangs. Bangladeshi respondents explained that they were attacked, kidnapped or extorted while they were working in Libya. Most of these incidents took place in Tripoli or Benghazi.

Similarly, respondents described extortion as well as physical abuse across all locations, frequently across all routes and locations. However, both occurred most frequently in Tripoli, Sabratha-Surman-Zawiya, and Sabha. Extortion and physical abuse occurred at the hands of government officials, gangs, Libyan civilians, and smugglers. However, often, respondents could not tell who they were abused by, as many stated that perpetrators were imitating officials by "dressing up as" police officers.

High numbers of arbitrary arrest/detention (and uncertain cases of kidnapping/ arbitrary arrest/detention) occurred at the coastal towns of Sabratha-Sur-man-Zawiya, as well as Tripoli, indicating that respondents may have been detained at their final stops during their land journey due to heavier border or

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76 In this analysis, "death" is the outcome of either malnutrition, disease, starvation, dehydration, accidents, or trauma resulting in terminal injury of a migrant, whereas "killing" refers to death caused deliberately by an attack from another individual (i.e. murder or homicide).
  "Fraud" is the deliberate deception to secure unfair or unlawful gain or to deprive a migrant (victim) of their rights. Here, the specific purpose of fraud is monetary gain.
  The term "kidnapping/ arbitrary arrest/detention" is used to refer to an incident where the perpetrator detaining the respondent is unclear.
  The term "unknown status (killing/trafficking)" is used when the status of a migrant (victim) after being taken by the perpetrator is not known.

I was on my way to the Bangladeshi embassy when I got kidnapped by four men and taken into a car. They took me to another part of the city in a building under construction. They asked for a ransom of 4000 Dinar. They called a friend of mine asking him for ransom. I got beaten several times with an iron pipe.

Mohammed, Bangladesh,
incident location Tripoli (Libya)

I was kept for twenty days without food and water with the kidnap-per (dressed as police) demanding ransom from my friends and family.

Munir, Sudan,
incident location Tubruk (Libya)

police presence, or after being intercepted during the maritime segment of their journey. Up to August last year, around 8,000 of the estimated 400,000 migrants in Libya were detained in approximately 30 official detention centres in Libya, with many more in unofficial ones.[77] This may shed light on why there were more reports of deaths witnessed in these locations; detained migrants are more likely to suffer from medical complications, severe long-lasting psychological issues or chronic illnesses or even disabilities caused by malnutrition, a lack of hygienic WASH facilities, or unattended wounds from torture.[78]

As a result of incarceration, other incidents often took place, including a slave trade emanating from prisons:

"

"When they take you to the prison, one Arab man can come and will ask for someone to work. The Arab Libyan men will buy a man from the prison and you become a slave to that man and work for him for free."

Sawalo, Gambia, incident location Tripoli (Libya)

"

"

"I was kidnapped by force and taken to a compound to work there without receiving any pay as a slave."

Bilal, Sudan, incident location Murzuq (Libya)

"

"

I was travelling through Surman on the way to Sabratha when the vehicle I was traveling on was stopped. I was arrested by people pretending to be police. They detained me for three months, and I was released after paying 2,900 Dinar.

Idrissa, Guinea Bissau, incident location Surman (Libya)

"

Slavery and racial discrimination in Libya have become an unprosecuted norm. Migrants in Libya are extremely vulnerable to abuse, particularly in Libya where racism is ubiquitous;[79] male respondents were sometimes made to work on construction sites or farms while females were drawn into the sex trade. Evidence surfacing from recent investigations shows active slave markets and slave auctions in Libya, including in Zuwara, Sabratha, Gadamis, Zintan – locations featured on routes taken by migrants who took the survey.[80]

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77 *See: Amnesty International, 'Libya: Shameful EU policies fuel surge in detention of migrants and refugees' (16 May 2018) available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/libya-shameful-eu-policies-fuel-surge-in-detention-of-migrants-and-refugees/*

78 *Italy and the Libyan Coastguard made an agreement last year whereby the latter was entrusted by the former to intercept any migrant-filled boats leaving for Europe and take them back to Libya. This means most likely sending them back to detention facilities where human rights abuses are being committed, which led to outrage from various human rights organisations and the European Court of Human Rights.*

79 *Global Detention Project, 'Libya immigration detention profile' available at: https://www.globaldetention-project.org/countries/africa/libya*

80 *IOM, 'IOM Learns of 'Slave Market' Conditions Endangering Migrants in North Africa' (4 November 2017) available at: https://www.iom.int/news/iom-learns-slave-market-conditions-endangering-migrants-north-africa*

Tebu and Tuareg tribes in the south-west of Libya, most of whom had been employed by the military during Gaddafi's reign and who subsequently ended up unemployed, also joined the slave trade. Respondents mentioned "Tuareg rebels" who kidnapped, attacked and/or extorted money from them.[81]

Five incidents, with no specific trend of place, recorded cases of racism shown by Libyan Arabs towards African migrants. Certain cases specifically indicate that they were refused healthcare and/or medical attention while travelling, or were asked for high amounts of money in return which they could not afford:

> "
> I arrived in Bordj and got sick, an illness lasting three months. I tried to access healthcare, but the doctor said that I had to pay because I am not Arabic.
>
> *Moses, Liberia, incident location Bordj (Algeria)*
> "

> "
> We were taken to a field and made to work at gun point. We were fed once a day and beaten like slaves.
>
> *Abdul Kareem, Sudan, incident location Ajdabiya (Libya)*
> "

Others were beaten and/or experienced violence due to their race:

> "
> In Sabha, 'black' people were targeted by Asma boys to be kidnapped to be held for ransom.
>
> *Kelechi, Nigeria, incident location Sabha (Libya)*
> "

> "
> In the desert near Agadez, Tuareg transport people…rob their money, beat and abandon them in the desert…
>
> *Daouda, Guinea, incident location Agadez (Niger)*
> "

Many migrants within Libya face multiple barriers to any form of public healthcare due to discrimination as well as a lack of means of transportation, or distance to public medical facilities. Resultant health issues or disability from untreated medical issues, only increases their vulnerabilities.[82] Additionally, travelling long distances to access medical facilities increases migrants' vulnerabilities to kidnapping and robbery.[83]

Torture had been experienced frequently by respondents. Most cases of torture were recorded in two specific locations: Bani Walid and Sabha, with two cases at the Sabha Detention Centre. This demonstrates the total lack of protection

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81 Karl Vick, 'Libya's Migrant Economy Is a Modern Day Slave Market' Time (21 October 2016) available at: http://time.com/4538445/libyas-migrant-economy-is-a-modern-day-slave-market/

82 REACH, Refugees and Migrants' Access to Resources, Housing and Healthcare in Libya: Key Challenges and Coping Mechanisms (December 2017) available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_lby_report_merf_december_2017_0.pdf

83 REACH, Refugees and Migrants' Access to Resources, Housing and Healthcare in Libya: Key Challenges and Coping Mechanisms (December 2017) pg 4 available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/reach_lby_report_merf_december_2017_0.pdf

and human rights for migrants in Libyan detention centres.[84] Torture also occurred at the hands of kidnappers. Often, respondents were forced to phone/video-call their families while the torture took place, with the perpetrators demanding a ransom. Methods of torture recorded by respondents included beatings with electrical cables, wooden sticks, iron pipes, hammers or other tools, smashing fingers/nails, sexual abuse, burning, denial of food and medical treatment, and humiliation.

It is worth noting that some accounts refer to minors being used as kidnappers and torturers.[85]

Cases of rape or sexual violence were recorded in all locations apart from Sabratha.[86] Often, rape and sexual violence occurred at detention centres and check points or crossings. This demonstrates total abuse of power of authorities and smugglers, where sexual abuse is used as a form of extortion; migrant women are at their mercy, so that they can proceed with their journeys. Unwanted pregnancies and long term physical and mental health issues often result from such abuses.

> "
> In Madama, I was stopped by the military who demanded a bribe. If the migrants refused to pay... people were sent to 'deal' with them. Girls were targeted and taken at night to be raped. The men were beaten using sticks and pipes.
>
> *Tayo, Nigeria, incident location Madama (Niger)*
> "

> "
> ...my family and I were captured and beaten. We were detained, and in this place the kidnappers took women out individually and raped them. I was not taken because I was pregnant, but I feared that I would be. Myself and everyone else were powerless. I was kept in this prison (locked house) for two months before being released.
>
> *Hassana, Nigeria, incident location Tripoli (Libya)*
> "

> "
> While I was kidnapped and taken to a garage, I saw how smugglers set fire to a woman and killed her. I witnessed a migrant trying to escape through a window which prompted the captors to shoot him dead, another was tortured using rocks and electricity.
>
> *Aziz, Sudan,*
> *incident location Bani Walid (Libya)*
> "

> "
> The people who arrested them were young (around 15 years old) with weapons and used methods of torture if the prisoners did not/could not pay (using electricity and other methods).
>
> *Abu Hanifa, Sudan,*
> *incident location*
> *Bani Walid (Libya)*
> "

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84 Global Detention Project, Libya Immigration Detention Profile (February 2015) available at: https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/libyahttps://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/libya

85 United Nations General Assembly Security Council, Children and armed conflict (25 August 2017) available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2017/821&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC

86 However, this does not exclude the fact that rape and sexual violence were likely to have taken place in multiple locations. Few women were interviewed for the survey, while others may have been unwilling or unable to talk of their ordeal, with the trauma of the experience still recent and stigma surrounding rape high.

Although unclear due to the fine line between smuggling and human trafficking, the latter was present on all routes. Various testimonies refer to it:

> " When I arrived at the checkpoint in Ajdabiya, I was requested to pay money. We said we could not pay so we were captured and sold to farmers. "
>
> *Abdul Kareem, Sudan, incident location Ajdabiya (Libya)*

> " I was raped by multiple smugglers during the crossing.
>
> *Chichima, Nigeria, incident location Sabha (Libya) and other various locations* "

Though evidence of human trafficking was not clearly found in the testimonies of migrants taking the Bangladeshi route[87] yet the nature of the Bangladeshi journey – travelling via various flights to Libya- indicates potential incidents of trafficking; respondents may have purchased flights via agents with the promise of finding work but were instead kidnapped and forced to pay more money for entry to Europe irregularly.

The desert

Desert journeys require special consideration, as most respondents' journeys included long periods transiting the harsh and dangerous desert environments in which many incidents (61) occurred. A significant number of these incidents were committed by rebels, smugglers, and the Libyan military. Respondents described incidents where smugglers abandoned them in the desert when they saw military or police approaching, effectively leaving them to die. Rebel or militia groups sometimes captured or attacked travelling convoys of migrants even shooting and wounding/killing migrants.

29 respondents (17% of the total number of narrated incidents) recorded incidents happening in the Sahara Desert, one in three (31%) in Niger, one in four (26%) in Libya, one in five (20%) in Chad, and the remaining incidents in Sudan, Algeria, and Mali.

The desert also naturally poses more dangers of dying from harsh environmental conditions, including dehydration, starvation, and exhaustion. This is demonstrated by the fact that the most witnessed incident in the desert was death (11 incidents, almost half (48%) of the total number of incidents of witnessed death). The most experienced incidents in the desert were arbitrary arrest/detention (eight incidents) and physical abuse (eight incidents). Many testimonies also mentioned being attacked and/or kidnapped by Tuareg rebels in the desert who sometimes handed them over to Libyan rebels. These once nomadic tribes seem to have become part of a smuggling chain which delivers hundreds of migrants through dangerous desert terrain to the more central and busier hubs in the north.[88]

> " Military shot the migrant car thinking we were rebels.
>
> *Jamal, Ghana, incident location Niger-Libya Checkpoint (Duruku)* "

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87 *Bangladeshi migrants were more reluctant to speak in detail than African migrants and hence the underrepresentation of incidents happening to them must be taken into consideration.*

88 *Stratfor, 'The Tuaregs: From African Nomads to Smugglers and Mercenaries' (2 February 2012) available at: https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/tuaregs-african-nomads-smugglers-and-mercenaries*

Conclusion

In 2017 Xchange set out on the MOAS SAR vessel, the Phoenix, with the intention of shedding light on the individual journeys of the migrants we met, with the following dual objectives:

1. Conduct a cross-border analysis by collating and mapping the mixed migration trends and routes which led migrants to Libya and to cross the Mediterranean.

2. Document and categorise abuses reported by respondents to detect patterns and migrant vulnerabilities in different migration hubs.

The study employed a qualitative research approach; a Senior Researcher interviewed rescued migrants in four separate SAR missions with the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. All our respondents had restricted access to regular legal routes to Europe and therefore lacked the ability to migrate safely and regularly, instead using dangerous smuggling networks. Overall, the survey sample consisted of 117 people of various nationalities (108 men and nine women), most of whom came from the African continent. The most represented countries of origin were Sudan, Nigeria, and Gambia; Bangladeshis, however, were also highly represented in the sample. Most respondents (84%) were pushed to leave due to poverty and economic instability, seeking to improve their own and their families' lives.

The liberalisation of the human smuggling market in Libya has allowed established Libyan human smugglers, armed groups and militias to internationalise their networks, drawing in migrants from across the African continent and beyond. As our data demonstrates, the most dangerous country location was Libya and its borders. Many respondents spent long periods of time within Libya, between 11 days and four years and three months. "Hotspots" for abuse were located primarily in pre-departure coastal cities Sabratha and Zawiya, as well as the capital, Tripoli. Niger (Agadez), as the most transited hub before entering Libya, was the second most dangerous location. Following this, the majority of incidents outside Libya and Niger were recorded in hubs in Algeria, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso, Sudan, and Egypt.

As the data demonstrates, regardless of which route was taken, or the duration of the journey, respondents faced a continuum of violence and exploitation at the hands of smugglers, government officials, gangs, insurgent groups, and citizens. Our respondents to the survey experienced a multitude of human rights abuses, including detention and extortion, physical abuse, rape, robbery, and forced labour; they were kidnapped and held for ransom, and many were tortured to extort money from their families; they constantly witnessed the dehumanisation and deaths of other migrants, and they were frequently detained in intolerable and inhumane conditions in prisons and detention centres. On their journeys, they faced harsh travelling environments in the desert which for many resulted in medical complications from dehydration, exhaustion, lack of food, and poor hygiene.

Interviewees frequently spoke of other migrants on their journey who were taken away and "never came back". These migrants might have managed to escape, or they may have been trafficked, lost in the desert, or left for dead. The possibilities are many and highlight the fact that many migrants continue to be unaccounted for and much more research is needed to fill the information gaps on this part of migrants' journeys.[89]

The present report is not representative of the "migrant story" as a whole but rather an insight into the perilous journeys of migrants on the move. However, keeping the migrant "voice" at the centre of the data is of paramount importance in all such studies. Retrospective, in-depth studies of the migrants' experiences could uncover many more events of abuse and possibly become the basis on raising awareness and solving part of the problem, including identifying more smuggling networks, finding the perpetrators, and even predicting future movements and incidents. Interviewing those with secure immigration status in Europe is an important step which could provide researchers with richer qualitative data on their experiences and could prove to be valuable sources of information.

Equally, longitudinal studies following the migrants' journeys since their departure from Libya and documenting their everyday lives and/or struggles in Europe could provide a better understanding and a holistic picture of who these people are, what they have been through, what their aspirations were and whether they have changed over time, and their level of integration and acculturation in the host countries. Longitudinal data could inform all national, European, and international policy making and be the basis for better future strategies on improving both the migrants' and the local populations' lives.

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89 *The MIgrant Project, 'Migrant death toll likely higher in Sahara than Mediterranean: UN' (26 October 2017) available at: https://www.themigrantproject.org/migrant-sahara*

Project funded by **moas.eu**

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