About

• MHub is undertaking field surveys with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers along key migratory routes to build up a body of data over time and to map country and regional level mixed migration trends.
• This snapshot presents early survey findings of the profiles, intentions and experiences of those moving in mixed migration flows who have recently arrived in Italy in the last year.
• Though these findings cannot be considered statistically representative of the migration population, they do provide key insights into the migration process.

Key Findings

These findings are based on 122 interviews conducted between 3 March and 24 June in reception and transit centres in Turin, Asti and Rome.

Pre-Departure Plans

• 80% of respondents did not originally intend to come to Italy. Among these, the majority came to Italy after finding a lack of safety and security in Libya, and around 25% plan to transit through the country.

Expectations

• Two-thirds of respondents did not expect the journey to be as it was. If aware beforehand of what it would be like, 52% would still have migrated, 44% would not, and 4% were uncertain about what they would do. This suggests the importance of awareness of possible risks as many would have made different choices.
• Ethiopian, Gambian, Senegalese and Togolese are more likely to regret their departure compared to Eritreans, Ivorians and Malians.

Information Access

• 57% of respondents did not seek any information about their journey before departing; 35% spoke with friends, relatives, and migrants abroad, and 8% used social media networks (Facebook, Twitter etc.).
• Amongst those who informed themselves through social media networks (8%), two-thirds were not surprised by the difficulties of the journey and knew what to expect. On the contrary, amongst those who got information by talking with other people, only one out of ten was prepared and informed about the possible risks of the journey.
• Eritreans reported having known about the journey and its risks before departure, with the majority of respondents having searched for information before leaving.

Abuses and Risks

• The cost of the journey varied greatly and depended upon the route taken, nationality of the respondent and their capacity to pay. Eritreans paid the most – more than Ethiopians, even if the route was the same. Many paid up to 12,000 USD for the journey from Eritrea to Italy. The ransom requested to be freed ranged from 1,500 USD to 5,000 USD.
• Some Eritrean respondents reported that in the Sahara desert en route to Libya, smugglers took migrants’ mobile phones, good quality clothes, necklaces and documents. If migrants were found to have saved American or European telephone numbers, they would be forced to pay more than agreed on the assumption that they could ask for money from relatives or friends abroad.
• 90% have suffered from three to nine different kinds of abuses on their journey. Only the sole respondent who had avoided Libya by crossing from Egypt to Italy did not report suffering any abuse.

Onward Movement

• All Eritrean and Ethiopian respondents plan to join the EU Relocation Program, and/or to apply for asylum in other countries. In particular, 32% hope to go to Holland, 24% to Germany, 8% to Great Britain, and 24% to Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, and France.
Quotes from Respondents

"We were 50 people travelling through the Sahara desert all packed on one jeep. A group of bandits kidnapped us, and kept us with them for 3 months. Could you imagine how it feels like not to wash yourself, not to brush your teeth, not to change any of your clothes for 90 days? I got beaten so many times. If you refuse to be raped, you got beaten so bad." - Female respondent from Nigeria at the ACSE centre in Rome, Italy, 8/6/16

“When I was in Eritrea, my friends used to tell me ‘don’t come to Europe, it is dangerous’. But such advices do not work at all: we decide to leave even if we know to have 50% of chances of dying, and 50% of chances of success.” - Male respondent from Eritrea at the Transit Centre in Rome, Italy, 21/6/16

"Here I am good, as I arrived safe and sound. But when I think back to my wife, who is still in Eritrea, I feel very worried. I am afraid for her. After I left, the national security officers went to our house to interrogate her about my disappearance. I have not heard from her for a while, and I don't know where she ended up and if she is still alive." - Male respondent from Eritrea at the Transit Centre in Rome, Italy, 15/6/16

“Some of the people who were travelling with us in the desert died, as they fell out of the jeep. And we left them in the dunes as if they were animals.” - Female respondent from Eritrea at the Transit Centre in Rome, Italy, 24/6/16

“They put you in a detention centre and give you a telephone. As long as the money does not arrive, they detain you. I could not pay, so they kept in terrible condition for 4 months. Every morning, before lunch and every night, they would beat me. Sometimes, they forgot to give me food, or they used to throw it from the window – as I was one of their dogs. I was so slim that I could not walk anymore. They wait for you to die for hunger or for beating.” - Male respondent from Eritrea recounting experiences in Libya at the Transit Centre in Rome Italy, 9/6/16

Routes

• All respondents arrived by boat from the Libyan coast with the exception of one Eritrean woman who came by boat from Egypt. 67% left from Tripoli, 10% from Zuwara, and the remaining 23% came from Sabratah or Garabulli on the Tripolitania coast, or Ajdabiya in Cyrenaica.

• The main route taken by respondents to reach Libya was through Niger and was exclusively used by those coming from West and Central African countries. 90% of respondents passed through Niger, specifically Niamey and/or Agadez.

• The average length of the journey through Niger and Libya was 17 months

• The average cost for migrants on this route was 470 USD (based on 82 respondents that took this route)

• Most often buses were taken to Niger (82%) and jeeps were used to reach Libya (73%)

• The second most common route was through Sudan, mainly used by those originating from the Horn of Africa. 100% of respondents from the Horn took this route and transited through Khartoum or Kassala.

• Less common routes reported were through Algeria (10% - Malian, Ghanaian and Guinean) or through Egypt.

Photos from the Field