



Monthly Trend Report

Covering mixed migration to, through & from **NORTH AFRICA**

About: MHUB is the regional knowledge hub and secretariat for the North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force, comprising of DRC, IOM, OHCHR, MMC, Save the Children, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNODC. It promotes a human rights-based approach to ensure the protection of people moving in mixed and complex flows to, through and from North Africa.

Terminology: Throughout this bulletin the terms migrant, refugee and asylum seeker are used together to cover all those comprising mixed migration flows. If the original source specifies a particular category, the relevant term will be used.

Scope: This bulletin covers mixed migration trends in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia, Spain, Greece and Italy.

Sources: Data is drawn from a wide variety of sources, including government, civil society and media.

HIGHLIGHTS



REGIONAL

Africa: Movement Should Be Safe for Migrants - Not Profitable for Smugglers

As government closed borders to hinder the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, migration decreased. But now, as borders reopen, it is expected to resume and grow. Enhanced focus on border control and shrinking opportunities for legal migration have intensified the demand for [smugglers](#) and driven the market to professionalise, therefore putting vulnerable people's lives at risk. In Africa, 7500 migrant deaths were recorded between 2014 and 2019. Furthermore, of the 19 000 migrants who died trying to cross the Mediterranean, Africans counted for a significant portion and these are likely to be notable underestimates.

Pandemic poses fresh challenges for vulnerable migrant workers in Middle East

Locked in rooms, forced to work without pay and thrown into the streets, these are the poor treatments - revealed by recent media reporting - that some migrant workers in the Middle East have suffered since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to fears regarding the spread of the pandemic, employers are telling them that their services are no longer needed, resulting in the loss of their incomes and livelihoods. Struggling to pay rent and to buy food, they are now relying on the support of community networks and humanitarian assistance. However, many of them remain within the household of their employers, and their working conditions are likely to have worsened as "they are being required to perform more tasks, particularly in relation to cleaning, and working [longer hours](#) with less time off" said Mr. Cholewinski, senior migration specialist at the ILO's Regional Office for Arab States.

LIBYA

Maritime updates

According to IOM [data](#), 1,362 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers were rescued and disembarked in Libya in August. Of those who were saved in August, 69 were female, 1,170 were male, and 86 were children.

Ghanaian Migrants Stranded by Libya Conflict, COVID Return Home

118 Ghanaian migrants who had been stranded in Libya for five months due to Covid-19 restrictions and the ongoing conflict in the country have been repatriated by IOM. The migrants had been working in Libya for many years and had no plans to return home, said IOM spokeswoman Safa Msehli. However, throughout the five-month period, conditions in the capital Tripoli had become significantly [difficult](#) she said. "Due to the severity of the conflict, as well as the COVID-19 situation mobility restrictions, [migrants] found themselves out of jobs, out of income, and had been stranded in the city and decided to go home," she added.

At least 55 migrants died off north African coast this week, says UN

55 people died this week off the coasts of north Africa underlying the grim reality of the migration crisis in this area. Late on Wednesday, the UN said that 45 people, including five [children](#), died when the engine on their boat exploded off Libya, resulting in the country's deadliest shipwreck this year. At the same time, near the Canary Islands, Spanish authorities confirmed having found 10 migrants' bodies in a semi-submerged boat.

MOROCCO

COVID-19: Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco Struggle to Survive

Many sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco are struggling to access jobs – formal or informal – as the situation is now even more uncertain, and it is particularly challenging for those with irregular status. “If we went out to find jobs, the first thing they will ask about is the Moroccan [residency] card. If you don’t have it, they will not give you the job. And when you call some organisations and cry for help, they don’t show any interest,” said laments Ibrahim, a migrant from Mali. Like many other migrants with irregular status in Morocco, Ibrahim is living in a state of insecurity and fear, and he can easily fall into exploitation, therefore, leaving him with only one last survival plan: [Begging](#).

Irregular Migration Route to Spain Redirects Through Morocco to Canary Islands

For migrants, Morocco is both a transit and destination country. For many years, the government has strengthened its approach to fighting human [trafficking](#) and irregular migration, and Morocco is also a key partner of the EU in its efforts to reduce human trafficking and irregular migration via the Mediterranean sea. Of the EU countries, Spain and Portugal have struck agreements with, Libya, Turkey and Morocco to control the borders in the Mediterranean and decrease irregular migration. These measures resulted in the closed-off of commonly-known routes for those passing through North Africa and trying to reach Europe. For this reason, the Canary Islands have become once again a pathway of choice for irregular migration routes to Spain.

TUNISIA

‘Entire families are arriving at our shores’: Covid drives Tunisian exodus

According to the interior ministry, Tunisians departing from points along Tunisia’s coast constitute now the largest group of national arriving in Italy pushing its reception centres to the limit. 1,277 arrivals from Tunisia were intercepted by Italian authorities in the first six months of 2019, and this number rose to 6,628 this year. So far Tunisia’s brush with Covid-19 has been light compared to other countries as only 1,678 cases of the virus had been detected, resulting in 51 deaths at the time of writing. However, a potential second wave is looming and for an economy trying to recover from the conditions that led to its 2011 revolution, the combined effect of the lockdown, the loss of its tourism season and the global economic downturn is proving [devastating](#).

GREECE

Arrivals to Greece by sea

456 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Greece by sea in August. This figure represents an increase of 44.3 % in arrivals by sea from the previous month of July.¹

ITALY

Arrivals to Italy by sea

5,326 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Italy by sea in August. This figure represents a decrease of 24.6 % in arrivals by sea from the previous month of July.²

Italy sends army to migrant centers after more COVID cases

In a hotspot on the island of Sicily south of the Italian mainland the number of migrants that have tested positive for Covid-19 has risen to 73. The prefect has asked for a [military](#) presence, which has been granted in order to ensure compliance with quarantine measures; therefore, the army will arrive on Monday, August 17.

¹ Last seen the 21.09.2020

² Ibid.

Countering Italian Government, Governor Shuts Migrant Centers

Nello Musumeci, the governor of Sicily, issued an order stating that all migrations should be transferred out of the island's reception centres to the mainland ones. He justified this measure saying that it is not possible to preserve the health measures necessary to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. This order effectively closed ports on the island to the arrival of all kinds of migrants vessels including charities vessels.

1,400 migrants on Lampedusa, arrivals continue

On Lampedusa, there are currently 1,400 migrants and refugee as hundreds arrived in small boats last week. For several weeks, migrant reception facilities on the Italian island have been [overcrowded](#). They were seven landings on Thursday night alone, and 276 refugees reached the island in only eight hours. Earlier on the same day, 250 had already arrived on six boats. The port authority and finance police intercepted most of the boats before reaching the shore.

SPAIN

Arrivals to Spain by sea

2,675 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Spain by sea in August, which represents an increase of 1.2 % from figures of July.³

Arrivals to Spain by Land

74 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers [arrived](#) in Spain by land in August, which represents an increase of 45.1 % from figures of July.⁴

81 Algerian migrants reach Murcian coastline on Friday and Saturday

On Friday, the steady flow of irregular migrants from Algeria entering Spain via Pateres continued as six boats containing 81 migrants were detected off the Murcian coastline. The EU uses the term [irregular migrants](#) to refer to these migrants, and the Spanish media tend to call them "sin papeles"- without paperwork -entering the country illegally. Other refers to them as illegal migrants. The term irregular migrant is used in order to convince that they are not refugees but economic migrants. In this case for Algeria, entering Spain and the EU in a illegal way without documentation or passports and without any legal right to enter the EU as Algeria is not a EU member and as there is currently no agreement between the two countries.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

MULTIMEDIA & EDITORIALS OF INTEREST

[Migrants and refugees are being forgotten in the COVID-19 response. This has to change](#) – World Economic Forum

This article from the World Economic Forum emphasises on the importance to include migrants and refugees in Covid-19 relief plans and underlines the vital role they are playing in our societies.

[Could migration be a solution to the climate crisis?](#) – The World

This article refers to Sonia Shah's book, "The Next Great Migration," in which she describes migration as an adaptive strategy.

[Missing people and the desperate search by those left behind](#) – Institute for Security Studies

This article gives an overall overview of the number of people that are going missing every year and the plight that it brings on to families. It also describes mechanisms that could be implemented to better identify the number of missing people.

[Once a Destination for Migrants, Post-Gaddafi Libya Has Gone from Transit Route to Containment](#) – Migration Policy Institute

This article explains the shift of migration flows from Africa and Middle East to Libya and the country's stance on migration since the 2011 downfall of Muammar Gaddafi.

RESEARCH OF INTEREST

[The impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants: data and observations from MMC's 4Mi program](#) – Mixed Migration Centre

This article seeks to synthesise and contextualise MMC initial findings to highlight what we currently know both about the increasing precarity of people's day-to-day circumstances and how the pandemic affected their journeys.

[Left Out and Left Behind: Ignoring Women Will Prevent](#) – CARE

This report highlights the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which are exposing the existing flaws in food systems, many of which stem from gender inequalities and the unfair treatment of women and girls.

[Middle East And North Africa — Tracking Mobility Impact: Point Of Entry Analysis](#) - IOM

This Middle East and North Africa (MENA) report summarises mobility restrictions at airports, land, and blue border crossing points resulting from the mitigation measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.