

This document is a compilation of data collected by IOM from the Italian, Spanish, Greek and Maltese interior ministries on migratory movements from to Europe between 2017 and 2020.

IOM works closely with a wide range of actors, including government and non-government partners, to collect and compile this data on a quarterly basis. This document presents the situation of migrant arrivals in Europe based on data for 2020 (with the exception of certain data related to nationalities dating from

September 2020) from the point of view of movements from West and Central Africa (WCA).

The data compiled in this report covers the period from 2017 to 2020 (up to December) and is available at <https://migration.iom.int> and [www.missingmigrants.iom.int](http://www.missingmigrants.iom.int). Some data on nationalities are only partially available and probably do not give the full picture of the situation.

## ARRIVALS IN EUROPE

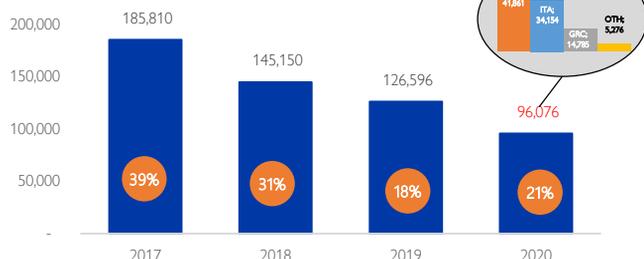


Fig.1 - Number of irregular migrant arrivals (by sea and land) to Europe, and share of migrants from West and Central Africa (2017-2020)

## NATIONALITIES

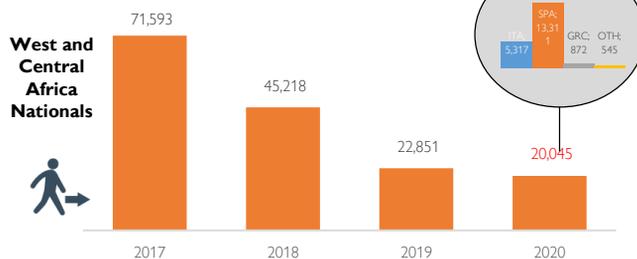


Fig.2 – Number of West and Central African nationals arriving irregularly in Europe (by sea and land), 2017-2020

Between 2017 and 2020, 535,632 migrants arrived irregularly in Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta and Cyprus by sea and land (Fig. 1), of which 159,707 individuals (29%) were nationals of countries in West and Central Africa (Fig.2). Of West and Central African migrants arriving in Europe, the most common nationalities recorded were Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Mali. These four nationalities represent more than 54 per cent of all irregular migrants arriving from West and Central Africa to Europe (Fig.3).

Arrivals in Europe decreased over the period of 2017–2020 and the main destinations vary from year to year. Migrants from West and Central Africa continue to predominantly favour Italy and Spain (Fig. 4). Between January and December 2020, 20,045 nationals from West and Central African countries arrived in Europe, of which 66 per cent went to Spain, 27 per cent to Italy, 4 per cent to Greece and 3 per cent to Cyprus and Malta.

In 2020, the main destinations by country of origin varied according to nationality (Fig.5). Thus, nationals from Mali and Senegal tended to favor movements to Spain, while nationals from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria or Ghana were more likely to travel to Italy. Most Congolese and Cameroonian nationals reached Europe through Greece.

Beyond these routes which lead to continental Europe, another important path to Europe lies in the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean from the West and Central African coastline to the Canary Islands (Spain). An increasing number of migrants have tried to reach these islands since mid-2019. In 2020 alone, 23,023 migrants reached the Canary Islands on board 745 boats, a stark increase from the 2,687 migrants who reached the islands on board 129 boats in 2019.

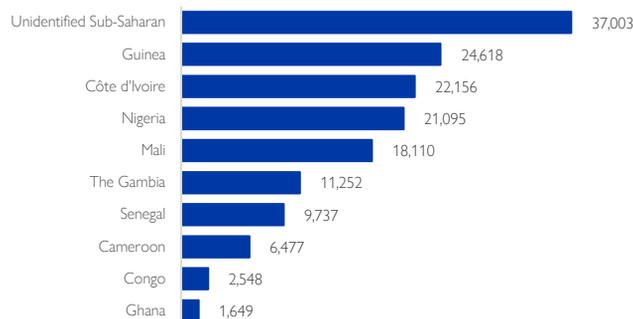
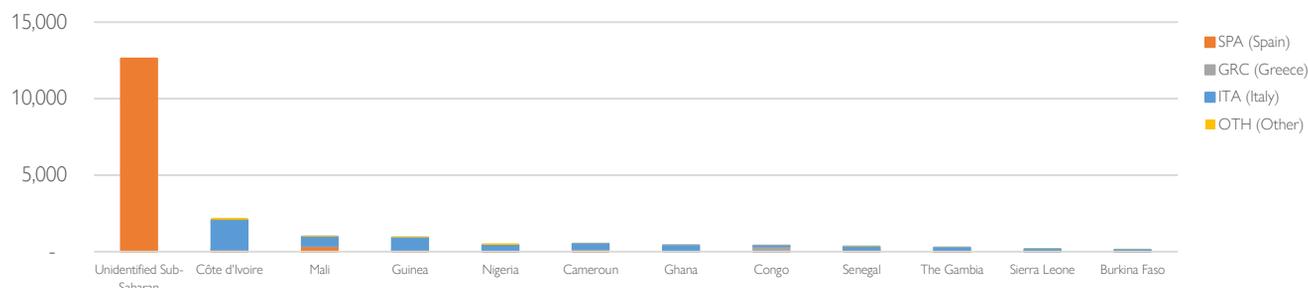


Fig.3 – Main nationalities of individuals from West or Central Africa who arrived in Europe in 2017-2020



Fig.4 - Main destinations for nationals of West or Central Africa (2017 - 2020)

Fig.5 - Main destinations for nationals from West or Central Africa (2020)



**SOURCES:** National authorities and IOM, Hellenic Coast Guard, Italian Ministry of Interior, Maltese Ministry of Interior - National Security and Law Enforcement, Frontex, Spanish Ministry of Interior (Cf. [www.migration.iom.int](http://www.migration.iom.int)) (from 2017-2020).

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Identifying information: When quoting, paraphrasing or in any way using information mentioned in this report, the source should be indicated as follows:

"Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), (month, year)".

Many travel accounts collected from migrants report disappearances or deaths along the migratory routes between West and Central Africa and North Africa or at sea while attempting to cross the Mediterranean, the Sahara, or on the road to the Canary Islands. The death or disappearance of migrant men, women and children along these routes is a daily reality.

IOM, through its Missing Migrants Project, collects and consolidates information on migrants who have died or gone missing during their migratory journeys. The data collected within the framework of this project are used to inform indicator **10.7.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals** ("Number of migrants who died trying to cross borders by sea, air or land") and also contribute to the **Goal 8 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)**. This project is essential for a comprehensive response in reducing the risks associated with migratory movements

and the needs of families of missing migrants.

The data available for the WCA region are incomplete. The data presented in this report are mostly collected by IOM missions and the authorities following search and rescue activities. However, it is not excluded that other cases of deaths or disappearances on the migratory routes will go unreported. The data presented in this report are therefore not entirely exhaustive and probably underestimate the reality of these phenomena.

**CMR:** Central Mediterranean Route  
**WMR:** Western Mediterranean Route  
**WAAR:** West African Atlantic Route

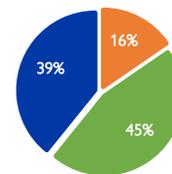
MAIN CAUSES OF DEATHS / DISAPPEARANCES IN 2020

Routes	3 Main Causes of Deaths / Disappearances	Number of migrants
WAAR	Presumed drowning	627
	Unknown (presumed dehydration, hypothermia)	108
	Drowning	82
	Others	32
WMR	Presumed drowning	262
	Drowning	53
	Unknown (presumed dehydration, hypothermia)	11
	Others	9
CMR	Presumed drowning	744
	Drowning	199
	Unknown	16
	Others	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,168</b>

Boat crossings and associated incidents increased along the West African coast in 2020. Shipwrecks and other maritime accidents affecting migrants have been reported off the coast of Senegal (Mbour, St-Louis) Mauritania (Nouadhibou, Nouakchott), Morocco (Tan-Tan, Tarfaya, Plage Blanche de Guelmim) and Western Sahara (Dakhla, Laâyoune). Other shipwrecks and wrecks were observed off the Canary Islands (including Gran Canaria, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Tenerife, El Hierro).

A total of 2,168 people disappeared while trying to cross the Mediterranean or the Atlantic. Disappearances mainly related to suspected drownings, dehydration, hypothermia.

In addition to these events, other cases of death and disappearance were recorded on the roads of West and Central Africa (47) and North Africa (98). The reasons given for these deaths within the continent in these two regions are mainly linked to lack of access to medical care, difficult travel conditions or lack of adequate shelter, road accidents or finally to dehydration.

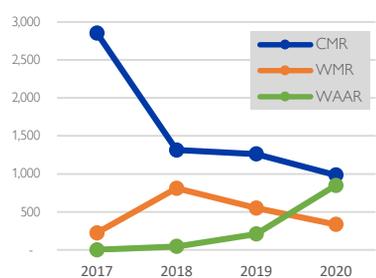


■ WMR ■ CMR ■ WAAR

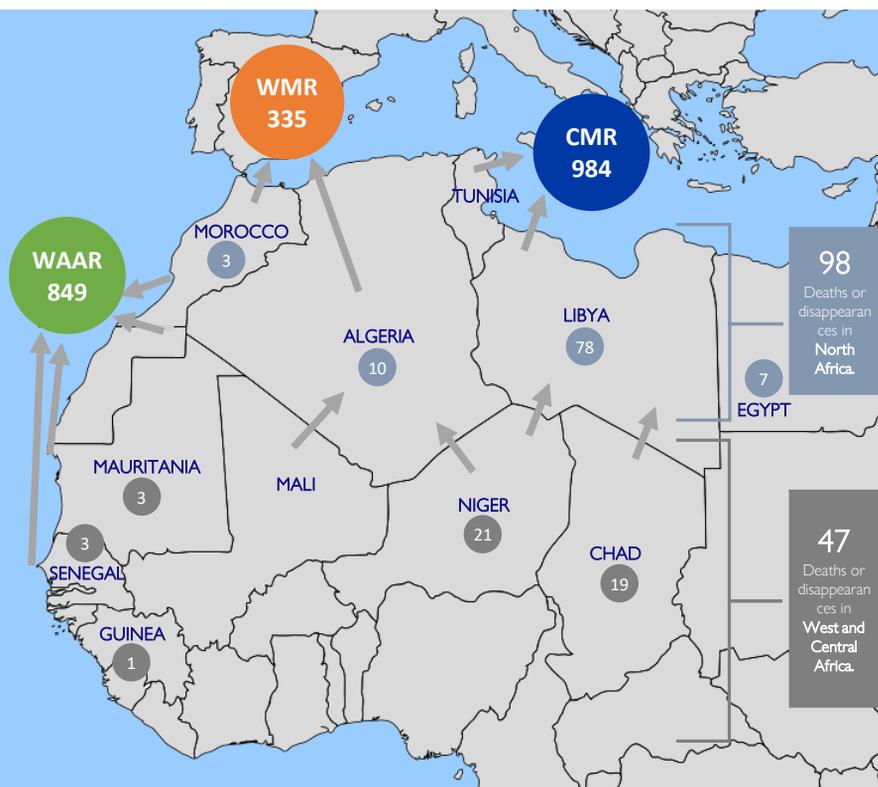
2,168

Total deaths or disappearances recorded on the routes of the Central Mediterranean (CMR), the Western Mediterranean (WMR) and the West African Atlantic (WAAR).

Fig.6 - Number of deaths of migrants who made the crossing to Europe by WAAR, WMR and CMR.



# deaths or disappearances of migrants by migratory route, Jan. - Dec. 2020



NOTE ON SOURCES AND METHOLOGIES:

The existing data on deaths and disappearances of migrants in West and Central Africa have certain limitations. Information on incidents involving the death or disappearance of migrants is scarce. There is little disaggregated information available or the **precise location of their death or disappearance**. IOM's **Missing Migrants Project** is the only public and freely accessible database on the deaths or disappearances of migrants. In Africa, MMP data comes from different sources, including **IOM data, government data, as well as information provided by NGOs and the media**. Until 2020, interviews with migrants conducted as part of the **Mixed Migration Center's 4MI initiative** were a key source of data. However, 4MI stopped collecting data on dead and missing migrants along migratory routes in 2020. This explains the decrease in reported deaths and disappearances in 2020.



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