

MOBILITY IN THE CHAD-LIBYA-NIGER TRIANGLE

August 2019 - September 2020



Photo (cover page): Migrants
leaving from Agadez (Niger) to Libya
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DTM

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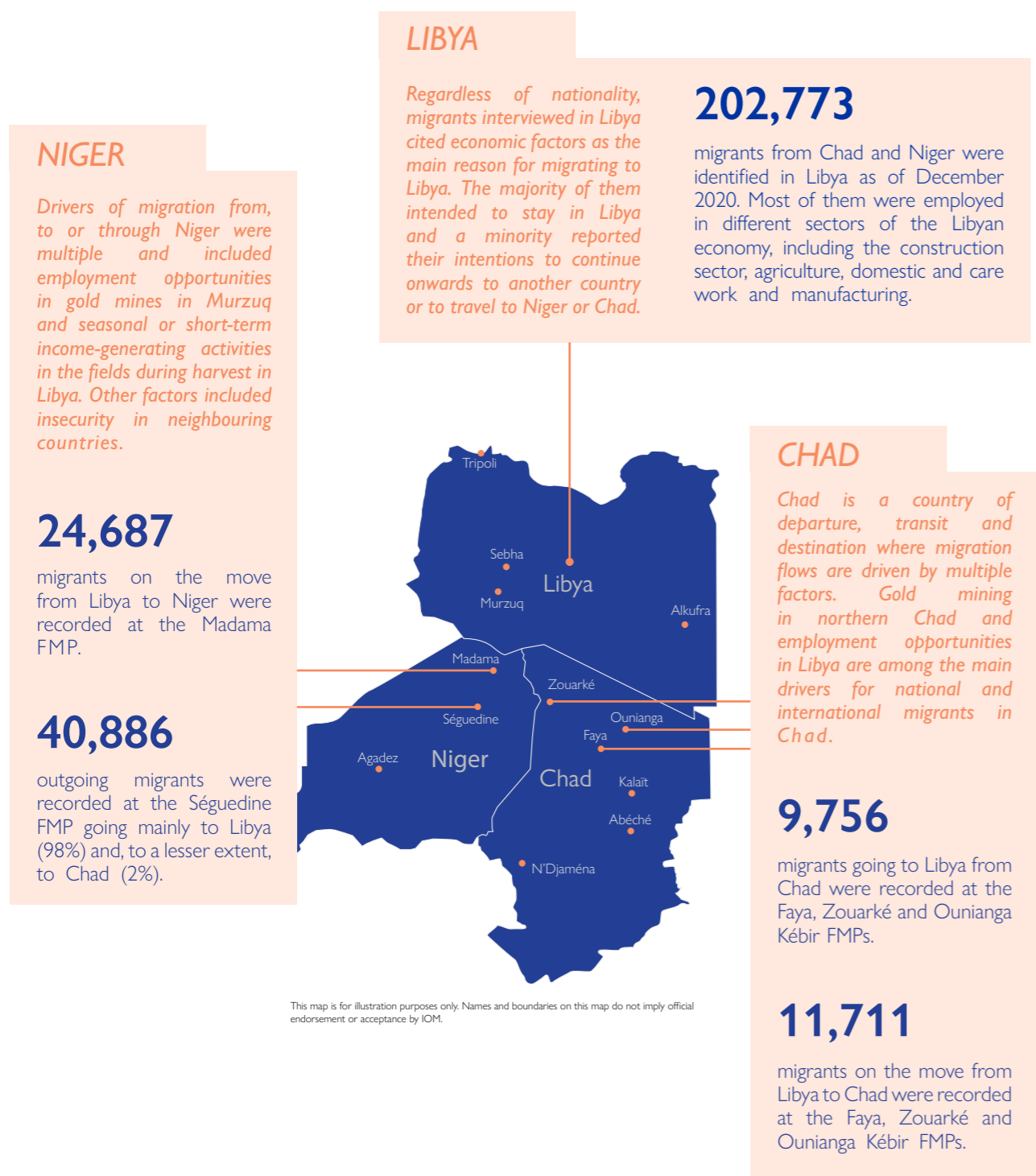
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

4Mi	Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative
ASM	Artisanal and small-scale mining
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENACT	Enhancing Africa's Response to Transnational Organised Crime
FMP	Flow Monitoring Point
FMR	Flow Monitoring Registry
FMS	Flow Monitoring Survey
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NFIs	Non-Food Items
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
UNSMIL	United Nations Support Mission in Libya
WHO	United Nations World Health Organisation

KEY FACTS & FIGURES

August 2019 - September 2020



INTRODUCTION

For centuries, human mobility and migration across the Sahel and Sahara regions have been central to trade, cultural and social exchanges. Cross-border movement and deep-rooted circular migration patterns have also been a means to seek economic opportunities or temporary labour to cope with uncertainty, shocks and environmental challenges, such as food shortages due to extreme weather events, such as droughts or flooding.

To varying degrees, Chad, Libya and Niger have all been countries of origin, transit and destination for migration along the trans-Saharan and trans-Saharan routes. Migration patterns and routes between the three countries have been heavily influenced by cultural and geographical proximity, trade, tension and conflict as well as border management policies. Following the discovery of oil in Libya in the 1960s, the Northern African nation became an appealing destination for migrants, particularly from neighbouring countries, seeking livelihood opportunities on a temporary, regular or long-term basis. Starting in the 1990s, as a result of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's open-door and visa-free policy for most Sub-Saharan Africans, the proliferation of conflicts and a number of severe droughts in Western Africa and the Horn of Africa, Sub-Saharan nationals began to migrate to Libya in greater numbers. As a result, Libya has been hosting large groups of migrants from neighbouring Niger, Egypt, Sudan and Chad.

Since the mid-1990s, migration across the Sahara between the Sahel and the Maghreb has increased and diversified. Individuals from more diverse nationalities have started migrating and migrants' motivations have broadened to not only include trade and work, but also religion, education, entrepreneurship and transit.

Being at the crossroads between West, Central, East and North Africa, historically Niger and Chad have been important hubs for trade, cultural exchanges and social mobility. In the 1990s and 2000s, in a context of political instability and economic crises in the West African region, Niger, a country of emigration and immigration, became a country of transit for migrants from Western Africa. Agadez, being the last city in the north of the country before crossing the Sahara, became an important regional hub for migrants travelling north towards Libya (and Algeria).

While Chad has long stood at the historical crossroads of Sahelian migration, especially for migrants from Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea, the intensification of gold mining in the northern part of the country in 2012 became an important driver for national and international migration. In 2015-16, boosted by anti-smuggling operations in Niger (and Sudan), Chad became an important destination and transit node for migrants from Western African countries, such as Senegal, Mali and Liberia. Some migrants started travelling through Chad to reach Libya while others, attracted by gold mining opportunities in northern Chad, began to stay in these areas.

“
To varying degrees, Chad, Libya and Niger have all been countries of origin, transit and destination for migration along the trans-Saharan and trans-Saharan routes.
”

1 OECD (2014). An Atlas of the Saharan-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security, available at https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/agriculture-and-food/an-atlas-of-the-sahara-sahel_9789264222359-en#page1 (accessed December 2020).

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Securitisation of migration

Stricter border restrictions in Niger, starting with the adoption of the [law 2015-36](#)¹⁴ criminalising migrant smuggling in 2015, as well as increased controls in Western Libya, led to a decrease in the overall number of migrants reaching Libya via Niger, and an increase in the number of migrants reaching Libya via Chad in 2018.

As a result of the [securitisation of migration](#)¹⁵ – a focus on security to stem migration – actors, such as migration facilitators, transporters and smugglers, have adapted and new actors have emerged. [New migration routes](#)¹⁶ developed, which are more scattered and pass through more isolated and hazardous parts of the country that are prone to vehicle breakdowns, encounters with bandits and known for the threat or presence of unexploded ordnances. The [longer, more dangerous and more expensive journeys](#)¹⁷ have been [linked](#)¹⁸ to a surge in the number of reported deaths in the desert and have led to greater exposure to human rights abuses and hardships for migrants. Access to health facilities and supplies on the journey is [difficult or not possible at all](#)¹⁹.

At the same time, tension over the control of gold resources has been contributing to pervasive insecurity and violence in parts of north-western Chad, northern Niger and southern Libya. For example, escalating violence in the Chadian regions of Tibesti and Borkou prompted the government of Chad to clamp down on gold mining and [closing its border](#)²⁰ with Libya in March 2019. Since then, migrants trying to reach the gold mining areas of northern Chad or to cross the Chadian border to reach Libya mostly use clandestine routes, which increase their risks of being smuggled or trafficked.

COVID-19 and mobility

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted mobility flows in [West and Central Africa](#)²¹ as well as in [Libya](#)²² as the air and land transportation routes and borders have been closed and curfews and travel bans implemented. In West and Central Africa, cross-border transhumance activities have been severely [affected](#)²³ by market and border closures, which disrupted trades and livelihoods and impacted food and Non-Food Item (NFI) prices. Moreover, in the context of mobility restrictions, more cross-border movements to gold mining areas are irregular and as a consequence, migrants often face difficulties leaving gold mining areas and returning home, leaving them in a vulnerable situation.

Furthermore, as a result of stricter security measures and the intensification of [controls](#)²⁴ targeting migrants in an irregular situation and including [interceptions](#)²⁵ in eastern and south-eastern Libya, some migrants were collectively expelled to remote areas in northern Niger and Chad.

A number of migrants have [reportedly](#)²⁶ been collectively expelled from several regions of Libya and quarantined in the border post of Ounianga Kébir in Chad since the start of the pandemic. Many of the migrants and returnees entering Chad were in situation of [extreme vulnerability](#)²⁷, and had to follow isolation measures and border management controls because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Niger, some stranded migrants spent months in [IOM transit centres](#)²⁸ in Niamey and Agadez before being able to return home.

In parallel, the significant unemployment rate in Libya that followed strict mobility restrictions has contributed to both exacerbating the [vulnerabilities](#)²⁹ of migrants, such as those working in the informal economy, and a [decrease](#)³⁰ in the number of migrants in Libya. By October 2020, an estimated 75,000 migrants had left Libya following the beginning of the pandemic.

Beyond human mobility, the pandemic and the loss of income-generating activities have also [affected](#)³¹ remittance flows. Between Libya and Chad, for example, remittance flows -- an [economic lifeline](#)³² for many households, especially in rural areas -- have [decreased](#)³³ significantly. The decrease in remittances received in the West and Central Africa region has in turn negatively [impacted](#)³⁴ levels of access to food, housing and education. A forthcoming IOM Niger study on remittances found that around three in four Nigeriens surveyed (74%) reported a positive change in their well-being -- including higher quality food consumption and nutrition, better access to health care and improved overall socio-economic status -- because of remittances received from a family member abroad.

Purpose

This report explores the context, scale and nature of migration dynamics between Libya, Chad and Niger with a focus on cross-border migration between August 2019 and September 2020.

By taking stock of the patterns and trends that characterize the diversity of trans-Saharan migration this report aims at generating knowledge and evidence to contribute to the design of informed and responsive migration policies and programmatic responses to migration challenges as well as emergency assistance to vulnerable migrants.

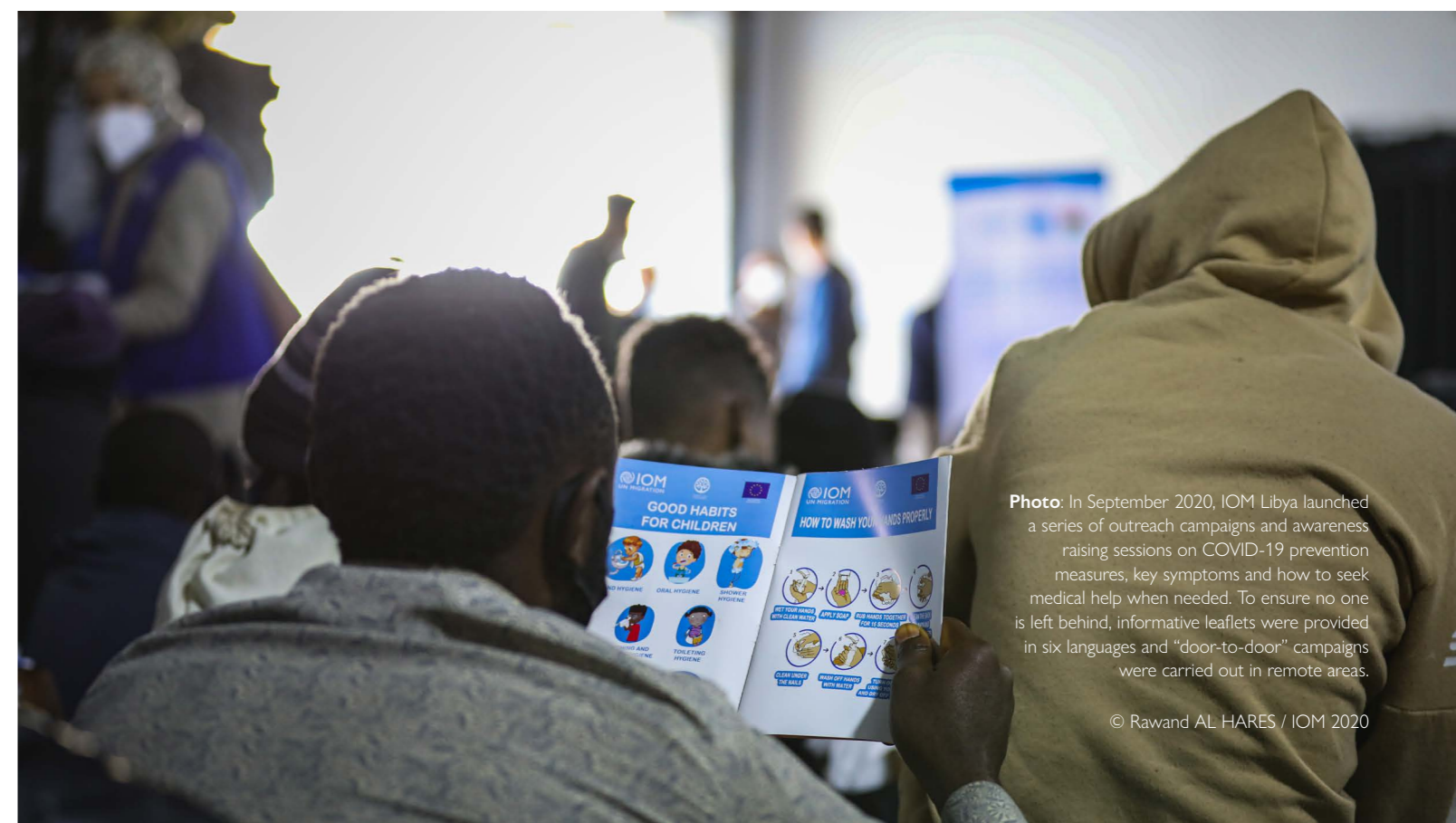


Photo: In September 2020, IOM Libya launched a series of outreach campaigns and awareness raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention measures, key symptoms and how to seek medical help when needed. To ensure no one is left behind, informative leaflets were provided in six languages and “door-to-door” campaigns were carried out in remote areas.

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METHODOLOGY

This report presents findings of the analysis of IOM Chad, Libya and Niger's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data collected between 1 August 2019 and 30 September 2020. The analysis is based on data collected on cross-border migration flows between at least two of the three countries in the Chad, Libya and Niger triangle. It also includes nationals of surveyed countries who stated their intention to migrate at the time of survey to a different country within the triangle.

This report utilizes data collected via different regular DTM data collection activities. Data on cross-border migration flows were collected through Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) that are located at key transit locations along major migration routes. In addition, the report also utilizes data collected on seasonal migration through key informants in Libya in November-December 2020 and migrant mobility tracking data collected in 2020.

IOM defines migration as “the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State”

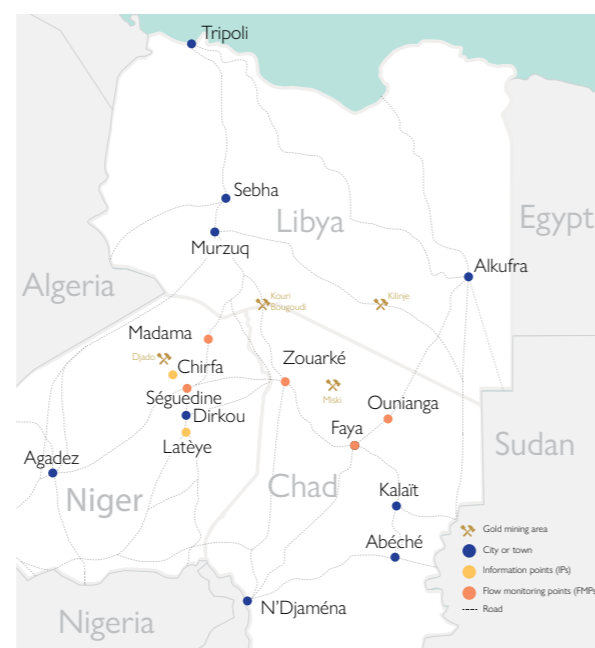
Analysis of migrant routes along with other aspects of migration, including migrant vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs is based on the micro-level data collected through quantitative interviews with migrants via Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS). This report is based on a total of 13,644 individual interviews, of which 8,416 were conducted by DTM Libya, 4,826 by DTM Niger and 402 by DTM Chad. Individual interviews included questions on socio-demographics, employment status, living arrangements, basic needs, such as food and NFIs, WASH and access to services, such as education and health care.



13,644

individual interviews were conducted with migrants traveling within the Chad, Niger, Libya triangle

Fig 1 Flow monitoring points in Niger and Chad tracking movement within the Niger, Chad, Libya triangle



Note: There were between 24 and 47 active FMPs in Libya throughout the reporting period, which are not represented on this map. The majority of FMPs in Libya were located in the southern regions which border Chad and Niger. This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Limitations

Data and monitoring flow

The fixed location of FMPs and limited time during which data is collected may introduce some biases. For example, one individual may be counted multiple times as some FMPs are on the same routes. However, one cannot be interviewed twice. As such, the data collected at FMPs is an estimate and primarily represents an indication of the magnitude of migratory flows at a specific geographic location. However, this report combines data from a significant number of individual interviews and on-site observations, which allows for a more comprehensive picture of migration dynamics between the three countries and migrants' profiles. The repeat modality of the data collection also allows for the analysis of trends over time.

Categorisation and types of migration included

Data on internal migration within any of the three countries was not included in the report but, data on returning migrants was included in the analysis. Returning migrants were classified based on stated 'intended final destination' at the time of survey, which may change over the course of the migration journey.

DTM Libya does not collect data on cross-border movement of Libyans, hence there is no data on Libyan returnees in this report.

Flow Monitoring

Flow monitoring is a data collection exercise carried out by IOM's global Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) teams to track population mobility and gain a better understanding of the profiles of populations on the move, mobility patterns, trends and flows. IOM enumerators collect data at Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) using a mixed-method approach that include flow monitoring registry (FMR) and flow monitoring surveys (FMS).

Through direct observation and semi-structured interviews with key informants (such as community leaders, bus or truck drivers or migrants), enumerators collect quantitative data on the estimated number of migrants crossing at FMPs, origin and intended destination, modes of transport as well as demographic information through FMR.

Through individual interviews with a sample of travellers passing through FMPs, the FMS allows for a better understanding of migrant profiles, basic needs and migration history, background and intentions.

Mobility Tracking

Mobility Tracking is a data collection exercise used by DTM to identify overall population figures (including migrant stocks) along with basic demographics, vulnerabilities and priority humanitarian needs via key informant interviews conducted at regional and municipal levels.

As part of Mobility Tracking, the Multi-Sectoral Location Assessment (MSLA), through key informant interviews, helps provide regular updates on sectoral baseline data on the specific needs of mobile populations as well as gaps in service provision.

The regular and continuous implementation of the MSLA aims to support both strategic and operational planning of humanitarian programming.

PART 1: ROUTES & FLOWS

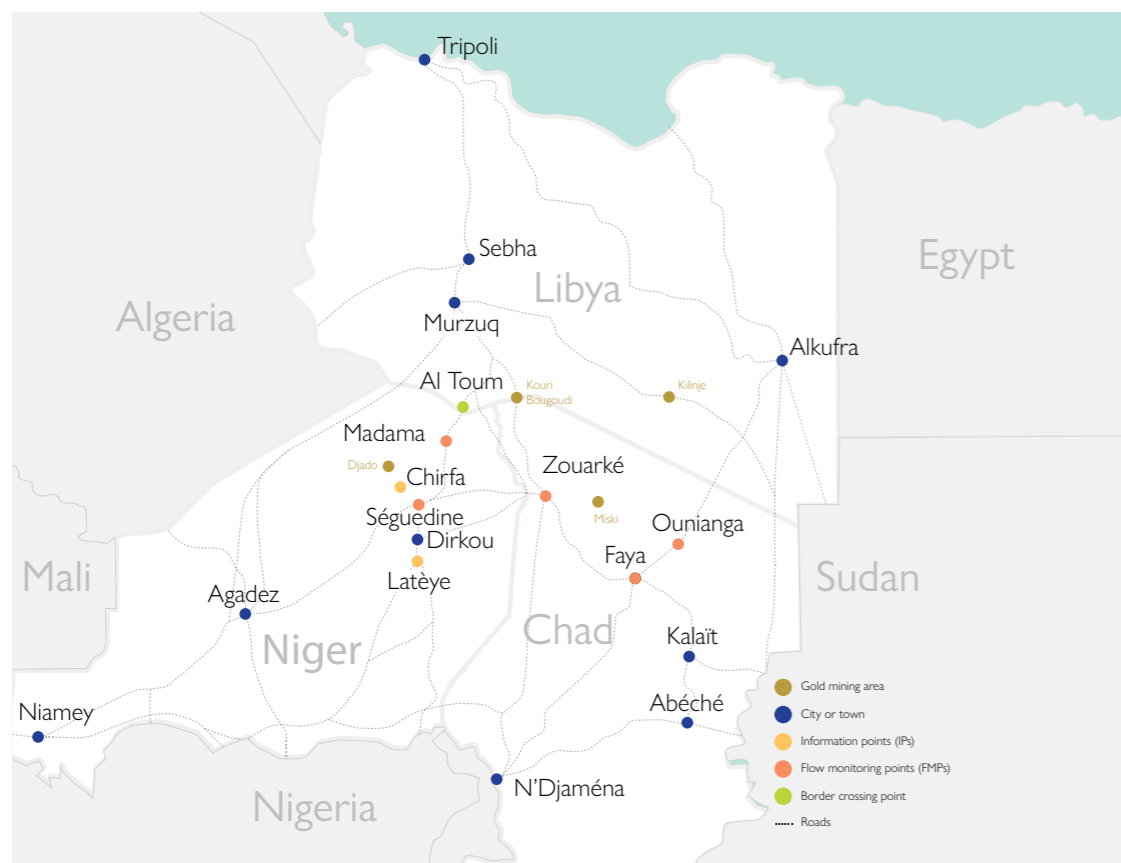
Libya shares over 4,300 km of land borders with six countries. Between August 2019 and September 2020, aside from a small number of migrants entering via Tunisia (2%) and Algeria (3%), the bulk entered through Niger (48%), Egypt (20%), Sudan (15%) and Chad (10%). There were [574,146 migrants](#) identified by DTM in Libya in September 2020 and more than two-thirds were nationals of neighbouring countries: Niger (20%), Egypt (17%), Chad (15%) and Sudan (14%).

Overall, more than half of the migrants (58%) interviewed in Libya either departed from or transited through Chad and/or Niger before entering Libya.

Amongst them, all were from Sub-Saharan Africa and nearly all were from West and Central Africa. Only twelve migrants were from Northern Africa, namely Sudan and Egypt (<1%).

There are two primary migratory routes to Libya from Sub-Saharan Africa: through Sebha in the south-west, which is the main entry point for those transiting or coming from Niger (and Algeria) and Alkufra in the south-east, which is the main entry point for those coming or transiting through Chad (and Sudan).

Fig 2 Main routes travelled by migrants transiting through Niger, Chad or Libya

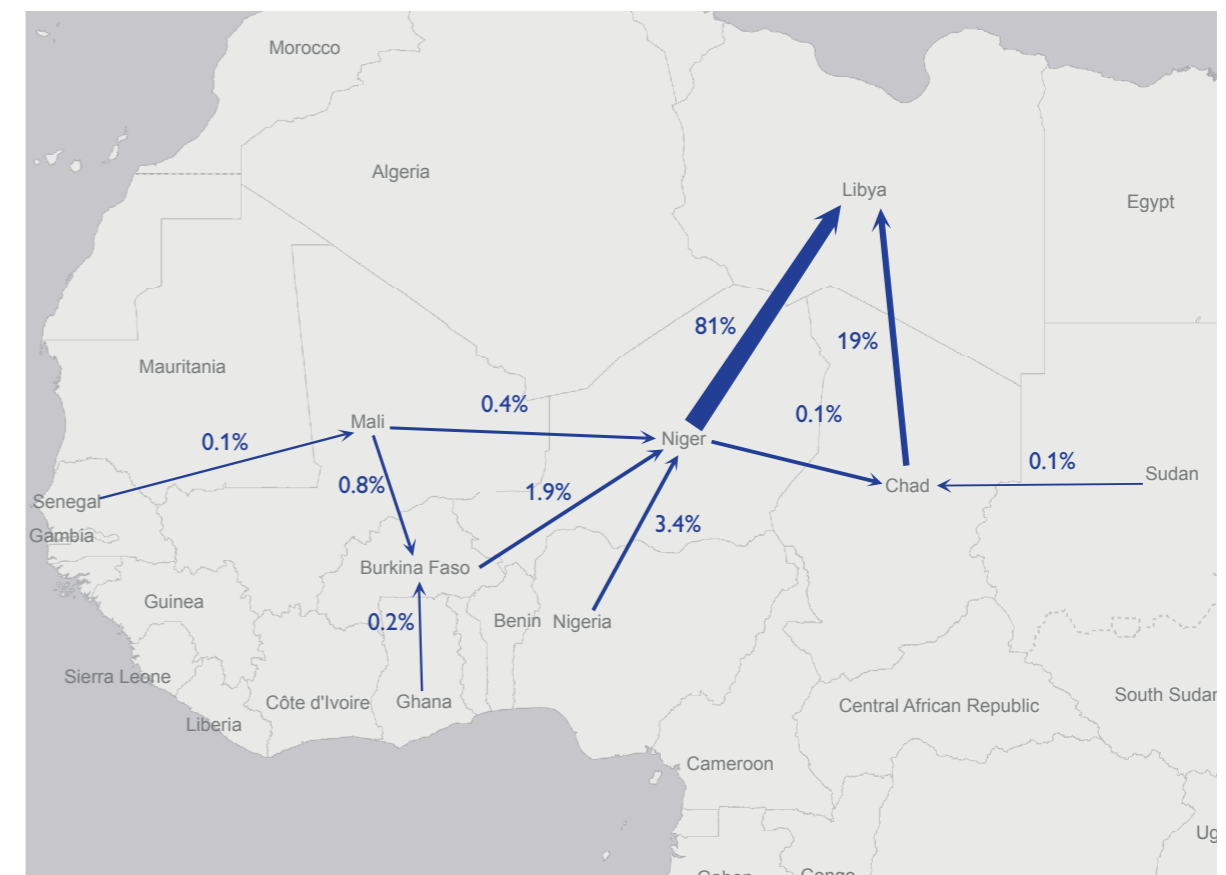


This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The majority of migrants interviewed in Libya reached Libya via Niger (81%), while nearly a fifth entered through Chad (19%) (Fig 3). Niger is the main entry hub for migrants from West and Central Africa partly due to its [relative](#) stability compared to neighbouring countries. In Niger, migration flows [split](#) in Agadez, which sits on the southern edge of the Sahara desert from where migrants go either to Libya or Algeria. Migrants on their way to Libya usually opt to pass through Dirkou, Séguédine, Madama and Al Toum. Since the implementation of the law criminalising the smuggling of migrants in 2015, however, a multitude of informal routes bypassing patrols and armed bandits (a frequent occurrence on the main migration routes in the north of Niger) have developed.

Migrants reaching Libya from or via Chad have historically travelled first to Faya, then to Ounianga Kébir and Alkufra (in Libya). A newer route, which developed as a result of growing insecurity in and around Alkufra, travels west to the Kilinje mountains (also a gold mining area) and to the Fezzan region in the south-west of Libya. Alternative routes have also developed towards the gold mining area of Kouri Bougoudi traveling from Faya to Zouarké.

Fig 3 Proportion of migrants by route travelled to reach to Libya via Chad and Niger



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

35 IOM (2020). Libya's Migrant Report (September - October 2020), available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/libya---migrant-report-33-september-october-2020> (accessed December 2020).

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NIGER

During the reporting period, a total of 40,886 outgoing migrants going mainly to Libya (98%) and to a lesser extent to Chad (2%) were recorded at the Séguédine FMP. A total of 24,687 individuals on the move from Libya to Niger were recorded during the same period. On average, during the reporting period, 55 per cent of flows were outgoing while 45 per cent of flows were incoming³⁸ from Libya.

The majority of migrants (90%) transiting through the Séguédine FMP were nationals of Niger. Nigerians (4%) and Chadians (2%) were the second and third most common nationality groups. The remaining migrants were nationals of other Western African countries, including Mali (1%), Côte d'Ivoire (<1%) and Ghana (<1%).

The analysis of monthly flows of cross-border migration shows that the main factors influencing mobility patterns during the reporting period were insecurity, border patrols, the search for income-generating activities (such as gold mining, trade, pastoralism and agriculture) and border closures and restrictions implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19. A significant decrease in the number of migrants transiting through Niger coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Drivers of migration through Niger for nationals and foreigners are multiple. Throughout the reporting period, and in line with previous trends, they included employment opportunities in the gold mines of Murzuq, seasonal or short-term income-generating activities in the fields during harvest in Libya, for example, as well as other factors such as insecurity in neighbouring countries. Overall, migration dynamics in Niger have been and remain influenced by the impact of the enforcement of the 2015 migration law.

The main events that shaped human mobility through Niger during the reporting period are summarized on the timeline in Figure 4.

CHAD

During the reporting period, a total of 9,756 migrants going to Libya were recorded at the Faya, Zouarké and Ounianga Kébir FMPs. A total of 11,711 individuals on the move from Libya to Chad were recorded during the same period. On average, flows from Chad to Libya represented the largest cross-border flows of migrants interviewed at Faya, Zouarké and Ounianga-Kébir FMPs. Among migrants interviewed in Chad (Faya, Zouarké and Ounianga-Kébir) who intended to cross Chadian borders, 82 per cent were heading to Libya and 17 per cent to Niger.

The analysis of monthly flows of cross-border migration highlights the increased number of collective expulsions from Libya as well as pushbacks from gold mining areas in northern Chad, to towns further south, such as Faya³⁹. During the reporting period the number of individuals who were either collectively expelled from Libya or pushed back from gold mining areas in northern Chad increased⁴⁰ from 7 to 23 per cent in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the first quarter, according to DTM Chad data.

The COVID-19 pandemic also led to a decreased number of individuals travelling to or transiting through Chad. By May 2020 the average daily number of travellers observed in Northern Chad had decreased by 58 per cent⁴¹ compared to February. In comparison, across the West and Central Africa region, the volume of travellers registered decreased by 28 per cent⁴² in March compared to January 2020, a variation which was consistently lower than for the corresponding period of time in 2019 (variation between March and January of -17%) and in 2018 (variation between March and January of -4%).

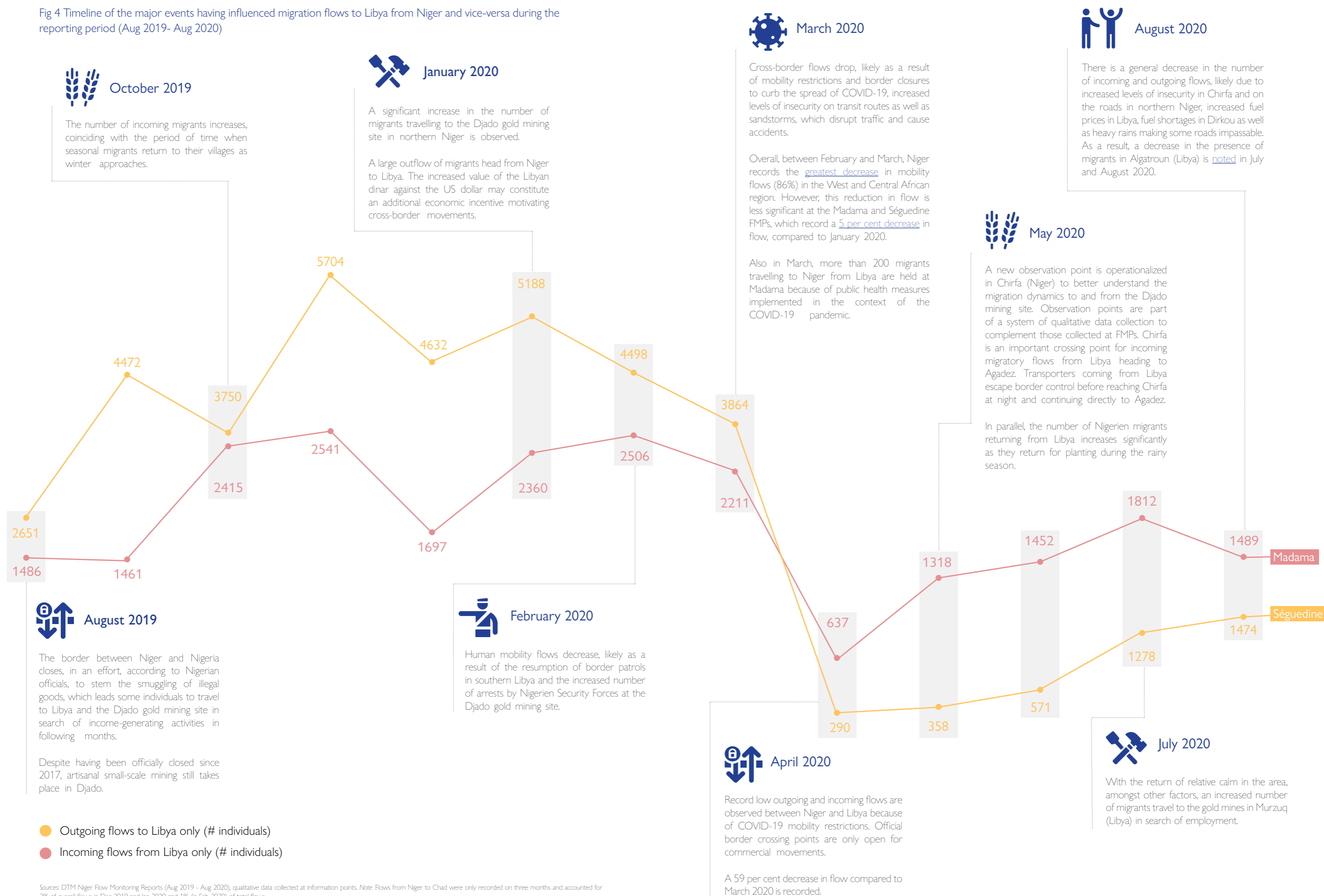
The main events that affected human mobility through Chad are summarized on the timeline in Figure 5.



Photo: IOM assists migrants in Ounianga Kébir in Northern Chad. © IOM

39 IOM (2019). Urgent Humanitarian Assistance Needed for Thousands Stranded Migrants and Nationals Amid Tensions in Northern Chad, available at <https://rodakar.iom.int/news/urgent-humanitarian-assistance-needed-thousands-stranded-migrants-and-nationals-amid-tensions> (accessed April 2021).
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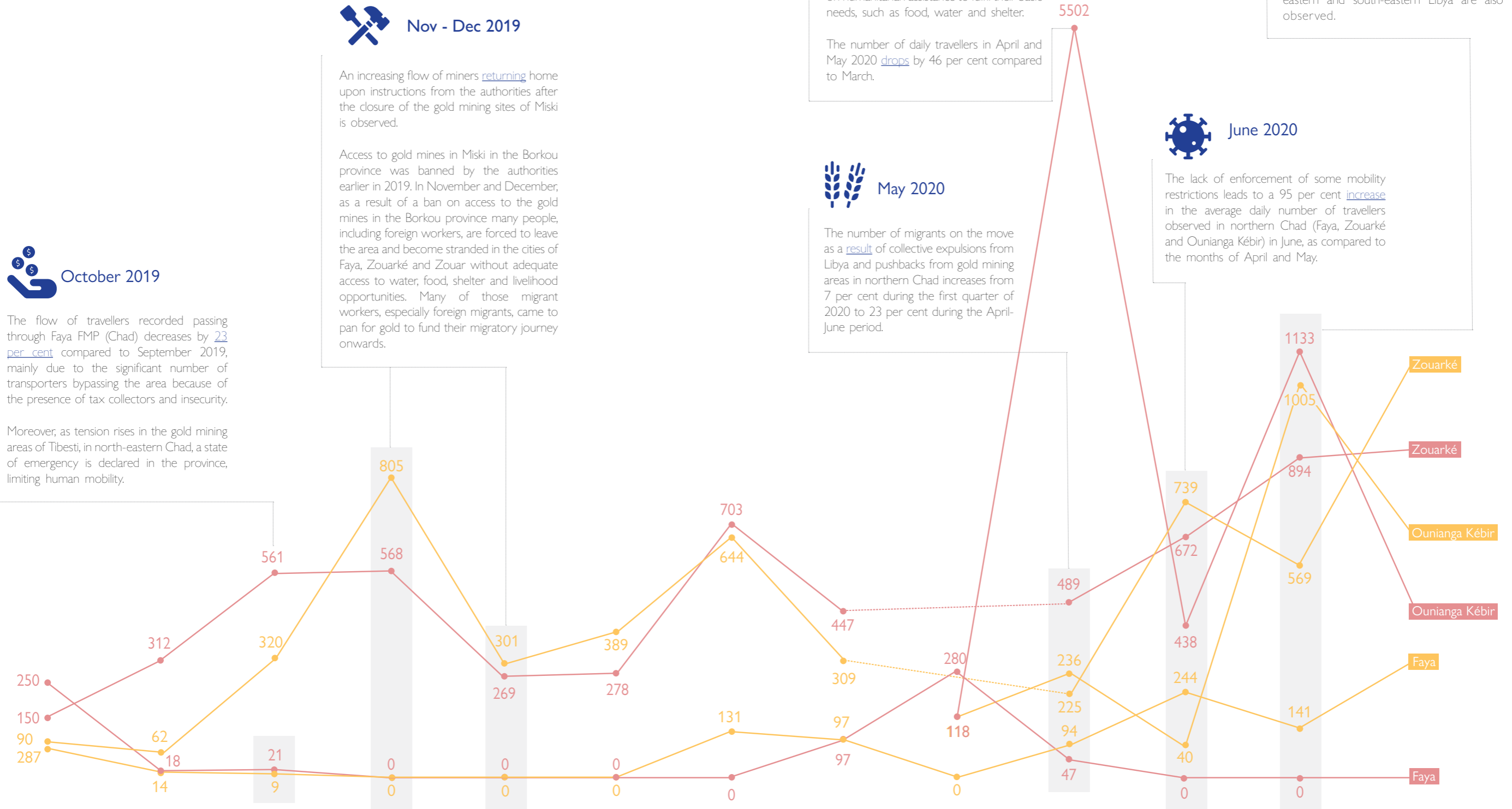
Fig 4 Timeline of the major events having influenced migration flows to Libya from Niger and vice-versa during the reporting period (Aug 2019- Aug 2020)



Sources: DTM Niger Flow Monitoring Reports (Aug 2019 - Aug 2020), qualitative data collected at information points. Note: Flows from Niger to Chad were only recorded on three months and accounted for 2% of overall flows in Dec 2019 and Jan 2020 and 1% (in Feb 2020) of total flows.

Fig 5 Timeline of the major events having influenced migration flows to Libya from Chad and vice-versa during the reporting period (Aug 2019- Aug 2020)

- Outgoing flows to Libya only (# individuals)
- Incoming flows from Libya only (# individuals)
- ⋯ No data collected



Sources: DTM Chad Flow Monitoring Reports (Aug 2019 - Aug 2020). Note: No data was collected at Zouarké FMP in April 2020. The Ounianga Kébir FMP was operationalised in April 2020.

PART 2: MIGRANT PROFILES

This analysis is based on individual quantitative migrant interviews conducted by DTM at Flow Monitoring Points in Niger, Chad and Libya between September 2019 and August 2020. In Libya survey locations also included residential areas and migrant accommodations.

Migrants interviewed in Libya were generally younger and less educated than those in Niger or Chad (Fig 6). Nearly nine in ten migrants (89%) in Libya were below the age of 36 compared to 68 per cent in Chad and 79 per cent in Niger.

More than half (56%) of migrants interviewed in Libya had not completed primary school, compared to 41 and 12 per cent of migrants in Chad and Niger, respectively. A greater proportion of migrants interviewed in Libya (65%) than in Niger (25%) or Chad (31%) were single. There were also fewer women surveyed in Libya (2%) than in Chad (9%) and Niger (8%) and fewer migrants surveyed in Libya arrived with their family (15%) than those surveyed in Niger (82%) or Chad (59%).

This is in line with previous [trends](#)⁴³ and is likely indicative of the more stable and circular trade and seasonal migration [patterns](#)⁴⁴ between Niger, Chad and Libya. The findings of a DTM Libya in-depth [study](#)⁴⁵ on circular migration highlights that most seasonal migrant workers arrive in Libya without their families. Most arrive in Libya at the end of the agricultural season, between March and May, and return to their countries of origin between October and December, which coincides with the end of the lean season and the beginning of the next agricultural season. In these cases, migration is predominantly a [livelihood strategy](#)⁴⁶, which allows a household to increase its income through remittances. A total of 26 and 35 per cent of migrants from Niger and Chad surveyed in Libya, respectively, reported sending remittances.

Overall, slightly fewer migrants interviewed in Libya reported sending remittances after the start of the pandemic (24%) compared to prior (26%). A recent DTM Libya [study](#)⁴⁷ on remittances based on a survey conducted in November and December 2020 among migrants from diverse nationalities in Libya showed that nearly half of migrants (47%) reported that the monthly amount of money they have been sending home since March 2020 has reduced, mainly due to insufficient earnings (91%). This is confirmed by a forthcoming IOM Niger study, which found that 73 per cent of households surveyed reported a reduction in the amount of remittances received because of the pandemic. In lower- and middle-income countries the flows of remittances have been [associated](#)⁴⁸ with poverty alleviation as well as improved nutritional outcomes, higher education spending and reduced child labour.

Moreover, a greater proportion of migrants in Libya reported their intention to remain in the country (or abroad) for longer periods of time than travellers interviewed in Niger or Chad. For example, 40 per cent of migrants interviewed in Libya reported their intention to stay in the country of survey for longer than a year, compared to 17 per cent in Chad and none in Niger (Fig 6). The majority of seasonal workers in Libya [work in agriculture](#)⁴⁹ near the border between Libya and their countries of origin.

Trade and seasonal work have shaped well-established circular migratory patterns between Niger and Libya. However, between 2016 and 2019, an increased number of Nigeriens seeking economic opportunities chose to migrate to Algeria rather than Libya given the increased insecurity in the country, which also curtailed livelihood opportunities.

Fig 6 Socio-demographics profiles of migrants interviewed in Niger, Chad and Libya



43 IOM Niger (2020). Migration Trends from, to and within the Niger, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/niger-migration-trends-and-within-niger-2016-2019> (accessed December 2020).
 44 IOM (2014). Assessment of Priorities for the Development of Libya's Migration Policy: A Strategic Vision, available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/libya_rapid_assessment.pdf (accessed November 2020).
 45 IOM Libya (2021). Circular Migration to Libya, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/libya-circular-migration-libya-2020> (accessed May 2021).
 46 ICLD (2019). Trans-Saharan Labour Emigration from Niger, available at <https://www.local2030.org/library/606/Trans-Saharan-labour-emigration-from-Niger-Local-governance-as-mediator-of-its-underlying-causes-and-consequences.pdf> (accessed December 2020).

47 IOM Libya (2021). Labour Migration to Libya Remittances Amidst Conflict and Pandemic, available at <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/labour-migration-libya-remittances-amidst-conflict-and-pandemic> (accessed April 2021).
 48 World Bank (2020). COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens, available at <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/989721587512418006/pdf/COVID-19-Crisis-Through-a-Migration-Lens.pdf> (accessed December 2020).
 49 IOM Libya (2014). Assessment of Priorities for the Development of Libya's Migration Policy: A Strategic Vision, available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/libya_rapid_assessment.pdf (accessed March 2021).

Key informant interviews conducted by DTM in November and December 2020 in Libya, for a [study](#)⁵⁰ on [circular migration](#)⁵¹ highlight that among migrants from Chad in Libya, 15 to 28 per cent are engaged in circular migration. An estimated 12 to 34 per cent of migrants from Niger in Libya are engaged in circular migration.

Sectors of employment in Libya

More than two-thirds of Nigeriens (68%) and more than half of Chadians (58%) in Libya were employed in sectors that are considered to generally pose higher [risks](#)⁵² to health and safety and provide less protection against violence, exploitation and abuse, such as the construction sector, agriculture, domestic and care work and factories and manufacturing. A significant percentage of Nigeriens and Chadians reported being employed in high-risk sectors in their country of origin (61% and 68%, respectively). A secure livelihood has multiple [benefits](#)⁵³, including financial stability but also psychosocial impacts, such as enhanced well-being, richer social networks, greater independence and a sense of pride or dignity.

Migration journey

More travellers surveyed in Libya (94%) reported having travelled with a group of individuals other than their family than those in Chad (42%) or Niger (44%) and fewer were with their families (15%) than those interviewed in Niger (82%) or Chad (59%). This is likely because the majority of migrants who cross the Sahara, one of the world's most [dangerous](#)⁵⁴ migration routes, [require assistance](#)⁵⁵ to reach their destination.

While neither migration facilitators, nor smuggling, are inherently [violent](#)⁵⁶, literature suggests that a set of factors, including stricter border controls and migration enforcement as well as a lack of legal pathways for migration, may lead to the emergence of often unequal, exploitative and violent interactions between migrants and migration facilitators.

Traveling with migration facilitators is therefore associated with greater [vulnerability](#)⁵⁷ to violence, exploitation and abuse.

According to 15,983 surveys conducted by the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in 2018 and 2019, the desert from Niger to Libya was the [primary location](#)⁵⁸ where protection related incidents, such as deaths, physical violence and kidnapping, were reported by migrants traveling on the Central Mediterranean route.

An analysis of the data collected by IOM during the reporting period shows that a total of 42 per cent of migrants interviewed in Libya reported having been aware of the risks they could potentially face during their journey. A greater proportion of Chadian (46%) than Nigerien migrants (39%) reported having been aware of the risks involved in the process of migrating to Libya.

Among those who were aware of the risks they could face during their migration journey, the majority of migrants reported being aware of the threat of robbery (64%), detention (64%) and transportation accidents (e.g. on land and at sea) (50%). Fewer reported having been aware of the risk of forced labour (29%), physical violence (21%), deportation (15%) or sexual violence (1%).

Drivers of migration

The vast majority of migrants interviewed in Libya reported having travelled for economic reasons (94%). A greater proportion of migrants from Chad (8%) and Niger (6%) reported having travelled because of war, conflict, limited or no access to food, or the impact of slow onset environmental degradation (e.g. droughts) than migrants from other countries (3%).

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A total of 26 and 35 per cent of migrants from Niger and Chad surveyed in Libya, respectively, reported sending remittances

50 IOM Libya (2021). Circular Migration to Libya, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/libya-circular-migration-libya-2020> (accessed May 2021).
51 Circular migration as defined by IOM is a form of migration in which people repeatedly move back and forth between two or more countries.
52 IOM (2019). IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance For Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avm_handbook.pdf (accessed January 2021).
53 Ibid.
54 IOM (2020). "No one talks about what it's really like" - Risks Faced by Migrants in the Sahara Desert, available at <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ch12-no-one-talks-about-what-it-really-like.pdf> (accessed November 2020).
55 UNODC (2014). Smuggling of Migrants from West Africa to Europe, available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/Reports/TOC_TAWestAfrica/West_Africa_TOC_MIGRANTS.pdf (accessed January 2021).
56 IOM (2020). Migrant Smuggling in the Libyan Context: Re-examining the Evidence, available at <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ch18-migrant-smuggling-in-the-libyan-context.pdf> (accessed December 2020).

57 IOM (2019). IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance For Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avm_handbook.pdf (accessed January 2021).
58 UNHCR (2020). On this Journey, No One Cares if you Live or Die. Abuse, Protection, and Justice Along Routes Between East and West Africa and Africa's Mediterranean Coast, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/operations/5f2129b4/journey-cares-live-die-abuse-protection-justice-along-routes-east-west.html> (accessed December 2020).

PART 3: IMPACT OF COVID-19

Intended migration destinations

Migrants interviewed in Libya

The majority of migrants interviewed in Libya during the reporting period intended to stay in Libya. A minority reported their intentions to continue onwards to Europe (15%), to travel to Niger (8%) or to Chad (1%) (Fig 7).

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have influenced migrants' intentions. More specifically, fewer Chadians reported that they intended to migrate to Europe after the start of the public health crisis (15%) than prior (24%) (Fig 8). Conversely, more Chadians reported their intention to remain in Libya (77%) after the start of the pandemic than previously (63%). In the contrary, a greater proportion of migrants from Niger reported that their intended country of final destination was in Europe after the start of the pandemic (13%) than before (9%). There was no significant difference in the migration intentions of migrants of nationalities other than Nigerien and Chadian between before or after the start of the pandemic.

A recent [Mixed Migration Centre \(MMC\)](#)⁵⁹ study found that migrants who intend to travel to Europe are 33 per cent more vulnerable to different types of protection violations in Libya compared to those seeking to remain in Libya or migrate to a non-European country. This finding, according to MMC may be in part explained by the fact that those who attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea are generally willing to take more risks and those who fail are often detained upon return to Libyan shores.

Fig 7 Intended final destinations of migrants interviewed in Libya (Sep 2019 - Sep 2020)

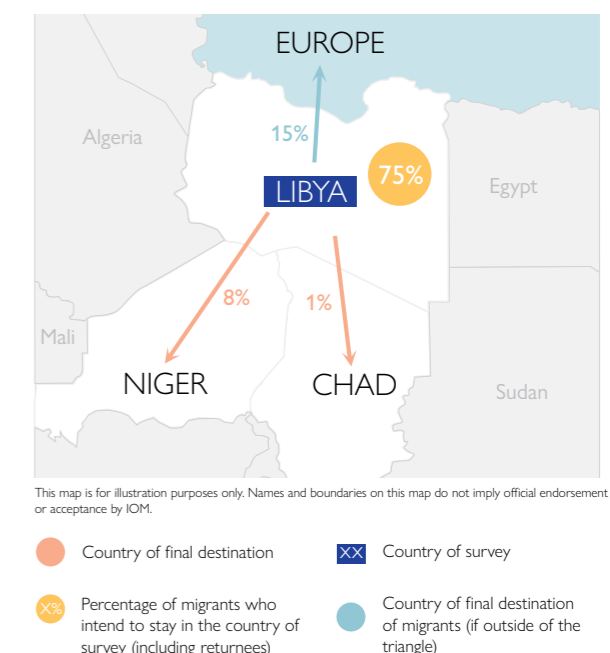
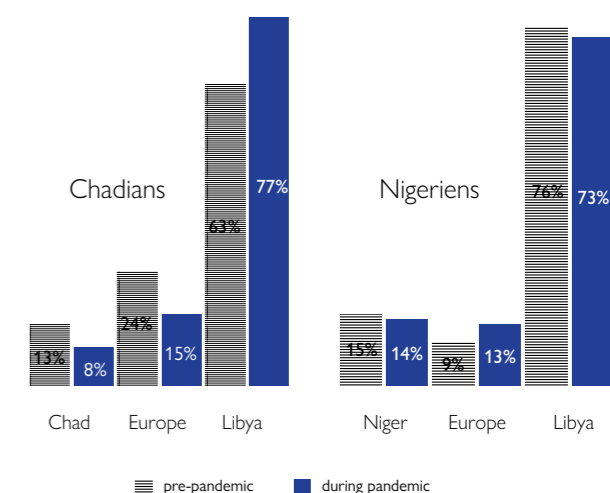


Fig 8 Comparisons of migrants from Chad and Niger surveyed in Libya about their final destinations during and pre-pandemic



59 Mixed Migration Centre (2020). A Sharper Lens on Vulnerability (North Africa), available at http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/144_Vulnerability_Study_North_Africa.pdf (accessed December 2020).

Migrants interviewed in Niger

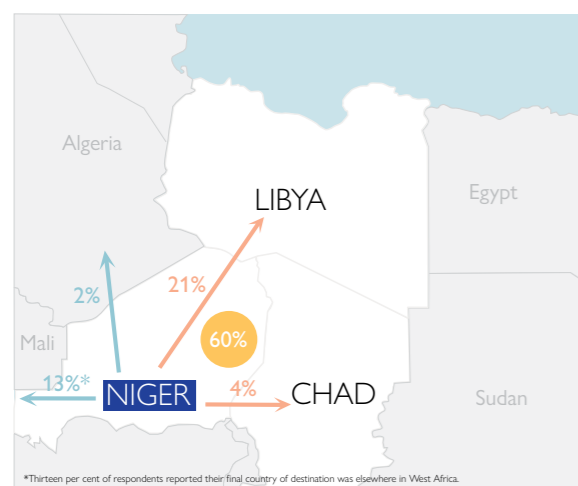
The majority of migrants interviewed in Niger during the reporting period intended to stay in Niger. A minority reported their intentions to continue onwards to Libya (21%), other countries in West Africa (13%), Chad (4%) or Algeria (2%) (Fig 9).

More than half of migrants (58%) interviewed in Niger were returnees traveling back from Libya.

With the arrival of the pandemic, the percentage of migrants interviewed in Niger who reported their intention to continue onwards to Libya dropped from 26 to 15 per cent after March 2020 with a greater proportion of migrants reporting their intention to stay in Niger after the start of the pandemic (66%) than prior (55%).

A different trend emerged among female migrants during the pandemic. Fewer women reported their intentions to travel to Chad after the start of the public health crisis (1%) than prior (6%) while a similar proportion reported their intention to migrate to Libya both before and during the pandemic (5% and 6%, respectively). Similar to male migrants, a greater proportion of female migrants reported their intention to remain in Niger after the start of the pandemic (36%) compared to before (29%).

Fig 9 Intended final destinations of migrants interviewed in Niger (Sep 2019 - Sep 2020)



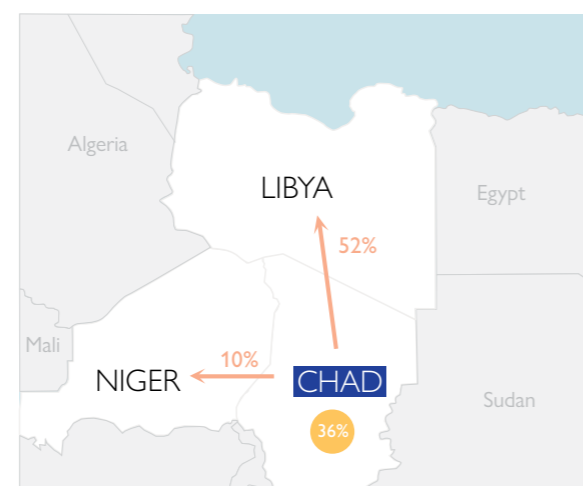
Migrants interviewed in Chad

The majority of migrants interviewed in Chad during the reporting period intended to travel to Libya (52%). More than a third (36%) reported their intentions to remain in Chad while a minority (10%) stated their intentions to travel to Niger (Fig 10).

Nearly a quarter of migrants interviewed in Chad were returnees and were traveling back from Libya (54%) or Niger (46%).

More than three times as many migrants reported their intentions to travel to Libya after the start of the pandemic (68%) compared to prior (20%). In contrast, fewer migrants reported they intended to travel to Niger after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (7%) compared to prior (15%). Similarly, fewer respondents reported their intention to stay in Chad after the start of the pandemic (21%) compared to prior (58%).

Fig 10 Intended final destinations of migrants interviewed in Chad (Sep 2019 - Sep 2020)



Reasons motivating destination

Migrants interviewed in Libya

In all cases, regardless of nationality, migrants cited the appealing socio-economic conditions and, to a lesser extent, their social networks – family, relatives, or co-nationals – in the country of intended destination as the reason for choosing their country of final destination.

Fewer Nigerien and Chadian migrants who intended to stay in Libya reported that appealing socio-economic conditions motivated their choice after the start of the pandemic (48% and 49%, respectively) compared to pre-COVID-19 (55% and 52%, respectively) (Fig 11).

At the same time, a greater proportion mentioned that social networks and joining friends, relatives or family was the main reason for choosing their destination after the start of the pandemic compared to prior. A total of 22 percent of Chadians and 24 percent of Nigeriens reported that social networks were the main reason

for choosing their destination prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 26 and 29 percent, respectively, after March 2020.

This appears to confirm the impact of the deteriorating socio-economic conditions⁶⁰ in Libya on migration dynamics. Social networks appear as a coping strategy in times of shock or stress on which people on the move can rely⁶¹ on for an array of services, including finding safety and a livelihood. As such, the mobility restrictions implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19 such as border closures, lockdowns, physical distancing and curfews have had a significant impact and continue disrupting migrant's coping mechanisms by, for example, halting the movement of people, goods and money thereby increasing socio-economic vulnerabilities.

60 IOM (2020). Libya - COVID-19 Mobility Tracking 3 (June 2020), available at <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/libya-covid-19-mobility-tracking-3-june-2020> (accessed December 2020).
61 World Bank (2020). (Im)mobility and Social Networks: The Impact of COVID-19 on Critical Coping Mechanisms for Urban Refugees, available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/immobility-and-social-networks-impact-covid-19-critical-coping-mechanisms-urban-refugees> (accessed December 2020).



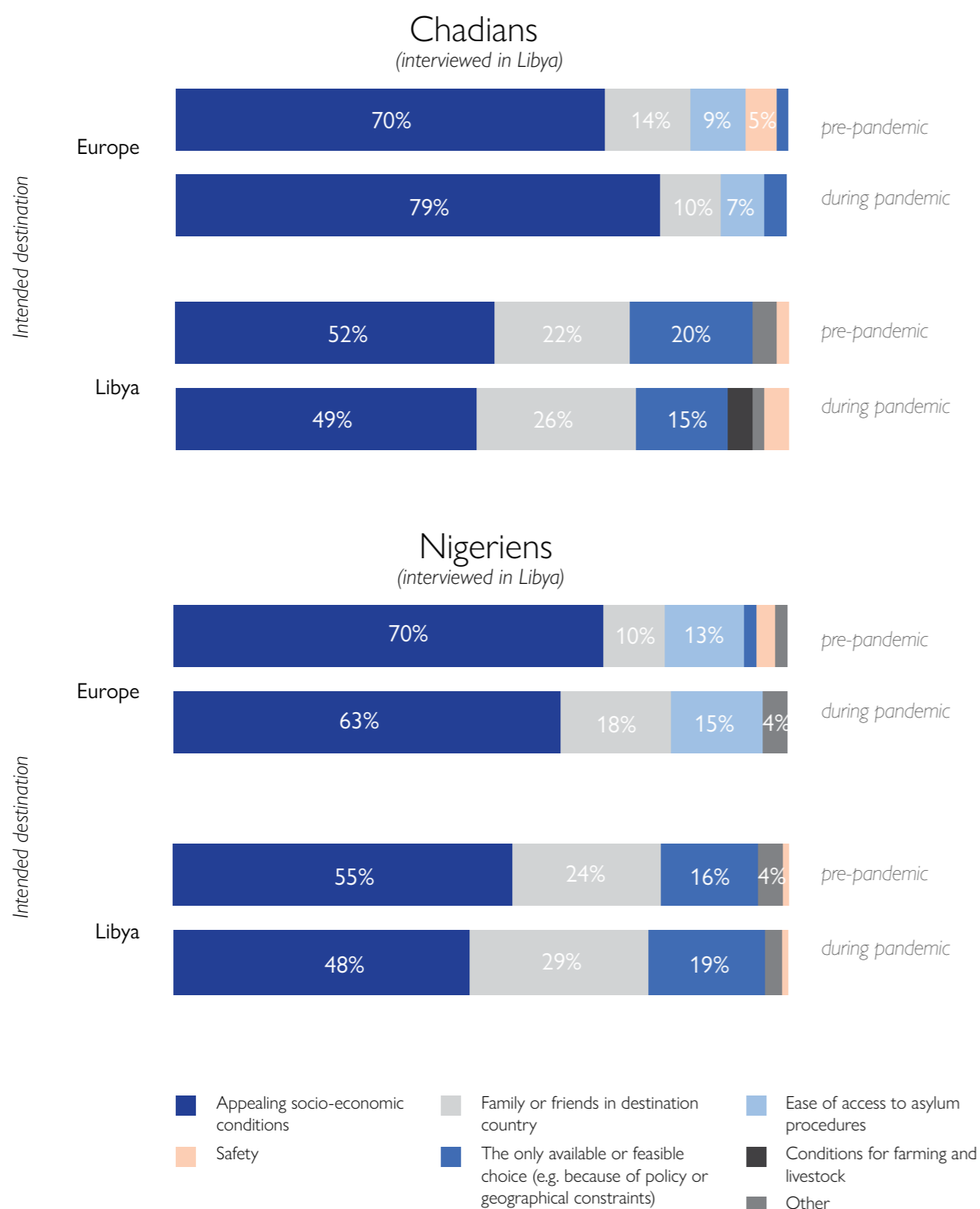
Photo: An IOM-supported lorry carrying African migrants from southern Libya reaches Chad. © IOM 2018

This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

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- Country of final destination
- XX Country of survey
- XX% Percentage of migrants who intend to stay in the country of survey (including returnees)
- Country of final destination of migrants (if outside of the triangle)

Fig 11 Comparisons of migrants from Chad and Niger surveyed in Libya about their final destinations during and pre-pandemic



Migrants interviewed in Chad

The majority of migrants interviewed in Chad (55%) reported that economic reasons were the main factor motivating their journey. A minority reported that they were on the move to join relatives or to attend a family event (13%), because they were fleeing violence or conflict (6%) or to access services (2%). A greater proportion of migrants reported being on the move for economic reasons after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (75%) compared to prior (22%).

Migrants interviewed in Niger

The majority of migrants interviewed in Niger (94%) reported being on the move because of economic reasons. A minority (5%) reported being on the move because they were fleeing war, conflict or violence. A similar proportion of migrants reported that economic reasons were the main factor motivating their journey pre COVID-19 (93%) as well as after the start of the pandemic (94%).

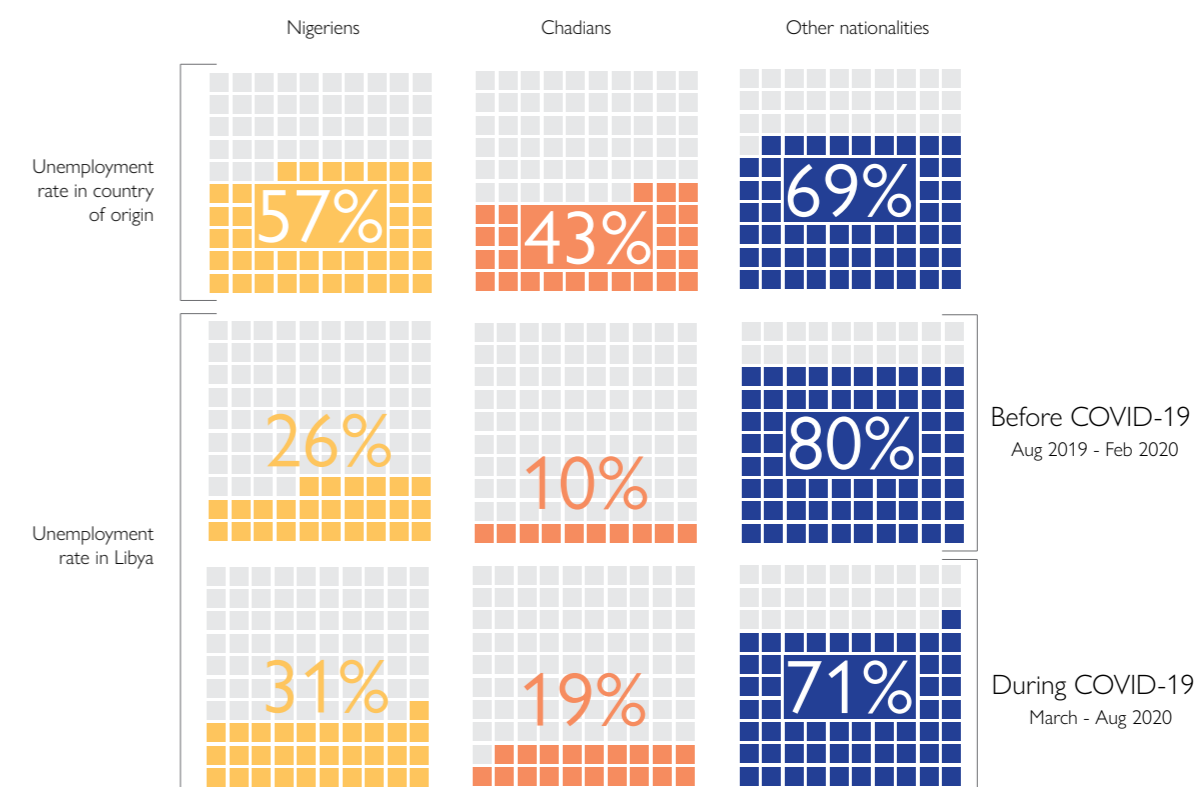
Employment Rate

Migrants interviewed in Libya

Based on interviews conducted in Libya, overall, migrating had a net positive impact on the employment status of all migrants. Fewer Nigeriens and Chadians were unemployed in Libya than in their country of origin, regardless of the pandemic (Fig 12). A total of 57 percent of Nigeriens and 43 percent of Chadians reported being unemployed in their country of origin, compared to 28 percent and 14 percent, respectively in Libya. However, the unemployment rates of both migrants from Niger and Chad rose after the start of the pandemic, which is likely the result of a combination of factors including a reduction in labour opportunities for migrant workers, tightened security controls and mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pre-migration unemployment rate of migrants of other nationalities was lower than when in Libya. The majority of these migrants, which constitute six per cent of the overall sampled population of migrants in Libya, were from Nigeria (56%), Mali (21%) and Burkina Faso (14%) while a minority were from Ghana (3%), Sudan (3%), Senegal (2%), Guinea Bissau (1%) and Benin (1%).

Fig 12 Employment rate of migrants interviewed in Libya per nationality in their countries of origin and in Libya (pre-COVID-19 pandemic and during the pandemic)



The overall unemployment rates for migrants from Chad and Niger in Libya was significantly lower than migrants from other nationalities in Libya. This is likely the result of a combination of factors, amongst which is that migrants interviewed who were from Niger and Chad had on average been in Libya for longer than migrants from any other nationalities.

A recent [IOM publication](#)⁶² highlights the strong correlation between the ability to find income-generating activities and duration of stay in Libya. Analysis of the data collected during the reporting period reveals that fewer than a fifth of migrants from Niger (13%) and Chad (19%) reported having been in Libya for less than six months compared to more than four fifths of migrants of other nationalities (81%). Moreover, the greater employment rates of Chadian and Nigerien migrants may also point to the benefits of being part of a wider community or a co-ethnic network through which one can find support. A recent [DTM Libya study](#)⁶³ on migrants' social networks found that the majority of migrants interviewed (64%) had found their current employment through their social networks, mainly through migrants from their own country (36%) and to a lesser extent through Libyans (18%).

Migrants who have arrived in Libya more recently are at an increased risk of a range of vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs, such as lack of access or inability to secure [adequate housing](#)⁶⁴ as well as [food insecurity](#)⁶⁵. In addition, a greater proportion of migrants from other nationalities than Nigerien or Chadian reported incurring debts to migrate to Libya (69%) compared to migrants from Niger (46%) or Chad (52%). Having debt is associated with increased vulnerability as it represents an increased challenge to repay debt while meeting one's own immediate basic needs. In addition, the external pressure of repaying debt may include being pressured or coerced, which constitutes an indicator of [vulnerability](#)⁶⁶ to abuse and exploitation.

The unemployment rate after the start of the pandemic reportedly dropped for migrants of other nationalities. This is likely influenced by the average length of stay in Libya which was shorter for unemployed migrants

interviewed prior to the start of the pandemic compared to after. Among the sample of migrants interviewed of nationalities other than Nigerien or Chadian, nearly all (99%) migrants who reported being unemployed had been in Libya for less than six months prior to the start of the COVID-19 health crisis, compared to 78 per cent following the public health crisis.

In addition to the duration of stay in Libya and indebtedness, unemployment is one of the main [risk factors](#)⁶⁷ that can exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs, such as [food insecurity](#)⁶⁸. Limited access to employment or means of earning wages may increase migrants [vulnerability](#)⁶⁹ to exploitation or abuse as it increases their likelihood to have to resort to unsafe, illegal or criminal work or work where conditions are not adequate or for lower wages.

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Migrants who have arrived in Libya more recently are at increased risks of lacking access to adequate housing as well as food insecurity
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62 IOM (2020). Labour Migration Dynamics in Libya, available at <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ch24-labour-migration-dynamics-in-libya.pdf> (accessed January 2021).
63 IOM Libya (2020). Libya — Closely Knit: An Assessment of Migrants' Social Networks in Libya, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/libya---closely-knit-assessment-migrants-social-networks-libya-january-2021> (accessed January 2021).
64 IOM Libya (2020). A Long Way from Home - Migrants' Housing Conditions in Libya, available at <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/libya---long-way-home---migrants-housing-conditions-libya-23-nov-2020> (accessed January 2021).
65 IOM Libya (2020). Migrant Emergency Food Security Report, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/migrant-emergency-food-security-report-may-2020> (accessed December 2020).
66 IOM (2019). IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance For Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avm_handbook.pdf (accessed January 2021).

67 IOM (2019). Migrant Vulnerability and Humanitarian Needs Assessment, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/libya-migrant-vulnerability-and-humanitarian-needs-assessment> (accessed January 2021).
68 IOM Libya (2020). Migrant Emergency Food Security Report, available at <https://migration.iom.int/reports/migrant-emergency-food-security-report-may-2020> (accessed December 2020).
69 IOM (2019). IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance For Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse, available at https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avm_handbook.pdf (accessed January 2021).

MISSING MIGRANTS IN THE DESERT

Crossing the Sahara Desert is among the world's most [perilous migration journey](#). At the same time, stricter border controls and the implementation of new legislation as well as the most recent mobility restrictions and border closures implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19 have forced migration facilitators and smugglers to adopt new migration routes, which traverse more remote and dangerous parts of the Sahara, that are known for the threat or presence of unexploded ordnances and where vehicle breakdowns and encounters with bandits are more frequent. As a result, a surge in the number of reported deaths in the desert has been observed and migrants face greater exposure to human rights abuses and hardships throughout their journeys, which are longer, more dangerous and more expensive.

Yet data on migrant deaths and disappearances is scarce and many deaths are believed to go unrecorded. In this context, the [Missing Migrants Project](#) tracks deaths of migrants to provide more comprehensive data, identify most vulnerable groups and help assess the impact of immigration and border policies and management. Such analysis may inform efforts to enhance national emergency preparedness efforts, search and rescue activities while ensuring the protection of vulnerable migrants.

IOM's Missing Migrant Project has so far recorded nearly [2,000 deaths](#) in the Sahara since 2014, a figure that is likely an underestimation.

In a feasibility assessment conducted by IOM Libya in 2019 in three locations - Murzuq, Ubari and Ghadames – for the potential implementation of Search and Rescue (SAR) activities in the desert, the implementing partner Voluntas Advisory proposed three prongs that holistically address the demonstrated needs and local dynamic:

- *Prong 1: SAR Capacity Development* – IOM should provide capacity support to local partners to monitor the Sahara and provide rescue assistance, as originally intended.
- *Prong 2: Humanitarian Assistance within Communities* – IOM should simultaneously provide humanitarian assistance within the communities via local organizations to meet local needs and promote community buy-in.
- *Prong 3: Awareness and Education of Legal Framework* – IOM should include a component to improve the awareness of migrants' legal rights among local communities and migrants themselves. This will help address some of the exploitation concerns for migrants.

In 2021, IOM Libya intends to initiate a study on missing migrants in the desert. In addition, a number of capacity building interventions targeting national authorities are planned in order to enhance their search and rescue capacity in desert area.

GOLD MINING

Since the early 2010s, gold mining has [intensified](#)⁷⁰ in the region that straddles Sudan, Libya, Chad, Niger, Algeria and Mali. Illegal and artisanal gold mining [developed](#)⁷¹ into an informal industry attracting both internal and foreign labour migrants, a boom partly fuelled by the strong trading prices of gold.

Being located in remote locations where there often is limited (legitimate) state presence, the gold rushes in the Chad-Niger-Libya triangle have been a [driver](#)⁷² for the development of criminal operations. For example, migration facilitation networks have reportedly profited from the economic boom by developing satellite services such as food provision, mining equipment supply and transportation. Moreover, established networks of smugglers and traffickers have been [known](#)⁷³ to introduce migrants to artisanal and illegal mines, where conditions are sometimes unlawful and inhuman.

A total of 5 per cent of migrants from Chad and 1 per cent of migrants from Niger reported working in the mining sector in Libya. Less than 1 per cent of Nigerien and 3 per cent of Chadian migrants reported having worked in the mining sector prior to migrating. This could be an underestimation of the actual number of migrants who worked in mines as mine owners and workers are often [stigmatized](#)⁷⁴ as often they are suspected of being rebels or jihadists who use mining as a financing mechanisms for illicit or criminal activities and training ground.

Mining when illicit and unregulated or poorly regulated is considered a [high-risk](#)⁷⁵ livelihood sector.

Chad

In addition to drawing migrant workers, artisanal gold mining areas in north-western Chad and along the border with Libya are also [transit hubs](#)⁷⁶ on the migratory routes of West and Central Africans heading north to Libya. Starting from 2013, new routes, which were initially used by gold miners heading towards Kouri Bougoudi, a goldfield which [spans](#)⁷⁷ around 50 kilometres of the Chad-Libya border, were developed. Vehicles heading to the gold mines were eventually also used not only for the transport of miners but to carry migrants heading towards Libyan borderlands, mainly in search of job opportunities.

In some cases, migrants work in gold mines to fund their onward journey, while for other migrant workers, livelihood opportunities in gold mines have acted as an [alternative](#)⁷⁸ to economic migration and an [incentive](#)⁷⁹ to remain on site as opposed to continuing their journey onwards to Libya. For other migrant workers gold mines are their final destination from the get-go. The Miski and Kouri Bougri gold mines in Chad, for example, have [attracted](#)⁸⁰ migrant workers from West, North and Central Africa as well as the Horn of Africa. An estimated [25,000 to 150,000 workers](#)⁸¹ moved to the area of Tibesti in the years following the intensification of gold mining activities, bringing business opportunities for the local population through the provision of services such as catering, lodging, transportation of miners and supplies. In 2013, for example, an [estimated](#) 40,000 gold miners moved to Miski, a town of approximately 300 local families at the time.

However, partly as a result of limited legitimate state presence and the remoteness of the majority of gold fields, tensions rose between the mine managers and the host communities over natural resources competition, fuelled by the development of criminal and smuggling activities. Since August 2018, a clampdown on artisanal gold mining, the escalation of military activity and the Government of Chad's decision to ban access to gold mining sites has led to a reduction in migratory flows at the Kouri Bougoudi site.

Niger

In northern [Niger](#)⁸², the mining industry attracts workers from Niger and foreigners from mainly [Sudan, Libya, Chad and other West African countries](#)⁸³. Traditionally, gold mining attracts internal and international migrant workers during the dry-season and they generally return to tend to agricultural activities during the rainy season (between June and September in a typical year)⁸⁴. Between [100,000 and 400,000 individuals](#)⁸⁵ are estimated to be employed in artisanal and small-scale mining in Niger. The gold found in the Djado plateau, which lies on the main migratory route from Agadez to south-western Libya, is of higher quality and easily extracted with only shovels and metal detectors and no mercury or cyanide processing⁸⁶.

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In northern Niger, the mining industry attracts workers from Niger and foreigners from mainly Sudan, Libya, Chad and other West African countries.

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Gold production in the Agadez region is markedly different from mining operations to the south in Tillabéri. There are few women involved directly in mining work in the Agadez region and a larger share of the mining sites are informal, falling outside of officially permitted boundaries without official state presence and often with limited transparency with respect to environmental and safety standards⁸⁷.

As a result of security concerns and due to [escalating violence](#)⁸⁸, the Djado artisanal goldfield, the largest in Niger at the time, was closed at the beginning of 2017. Despite its formal closure, gold mines in Djado have continued to operate employing foreign and internal migrant workers until it reopened at the [end of 2018](#)⁸⁹.

In Niger, an [OECD study](#)⁹⁰ highlights that the economic boom associated with gold mining allowed investment in infrastructure, and renewed economic activity in ancillary sectors, such as hotels, which in turn can favour stability in mining regions, particularly in isolated rural areas. However, other [reports](#)⁹¹ highlight that the gold rush is linked to increased banditry, arm trafficking as well as local conflicts and tensions. Moreover, whilst these mining sites provide alternative livelihoods to local populations as well as migrant workers, labour conditions in the artisanal mining sector are dangerous. Extended working hours are common in pit mining, often leading to drug abuse through the use of tramadol. Workers lack protective equipment leading to accidents and injuries due to the use of explosives that in turn lead to chemical exposure. There is limited access to health care with health centres often located tens of kilometres from mining sites. In addition, practices that violate human rights, such as forced labour, sexual violence and child labour have been [reported](#)⁹².

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CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report highlights the dynamic nature of cross-border mobility in the Chad, Niger and Libya triangle and the risks involved.

Several factors have affected migratory patterns and trends over the reporting period. Insecurity on migratory routes, with the increased threat of banditry and accidents, has made the journey riskier, which has led to a reduction of migratory flows through the Niger, Libya and Chad triangle. Migration dynamics have also been heavily influenced by the recent gold rush in northern Niger and Chad as well as southern Libya.

Overall, this report outlines the different profiles of migrants traveling between the Chad-Niger-Libya triangle. A greater proportion of migrants surveyed in Libya were younger, less educated, male, single and traveling without their families than migrants surveyed in Niger or Chad. However, the main reason behind migrants' journey in all three countries were economic in the majority of cases.

Mobility restrictions and border closures coupled with the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly limited the number of livelihood opportunities available and migrants' ability to travel making it less appealing and riskier to migrate.

The pandemic has also led some migrants to attempt to return home. At the same time, the loss of income can and has limited some individuals in funding their journey onwards or home, which has resulted in many migrants being stranded, often in situation of increased vulnerability. IOM continues to advocate for the development of humanitarian corridors to assist with the voluntary return of stranded migrants and migrants stranded hosted in transit centres.

While the number of travellers decreased at the beginning of the pandemic, mobility in the region has resumed. Although it is difficult to predict how long it will take to overcome the challenges associated with the current pandemic, the detrimental impact on mobility is expected to be temporary. However, as of early 2021, with fewer income-generating opportunities available and a drop

in remittances received, some individuals on the move within the Chad-Niger-Libya triangle will struggle to meet their basic needs in the short- and medium-term. It is therefore critical for IOM operations in all three countries to monitor migration flows and the vulnerabilities and needs of those on the move.

Migration routes travelling through the Sahara remain dangerous, yet little is known about the number of people on the move losing their life in the desert. Information sources are scarce, and access remains difficult, while the ability to monitor and verify is limited because of its remote nature and the additional challenges posed by the pandemic. Hence, there is a need for more research related to monitoring casualties along the migration routes in the three countries, with a focus on desert border areas, in order to better understand the causes of deaths and identify vulnerable groups as well as to define modalities to address this issue.

To limit the immediate impact on the most vulnerable and to address the vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs of people on the move across the triangle, any programmatic interventions should be age- and gender- sensitive and should aim to consider the specific conditions of migrants and risks involved, which are heavily influenced by migratory intentions, employment status, length of stay in country, context and logistics of migration as well as the security environment.

IOM also continues to advocate for the continued cooperation around migration with and between the governments of the Chad-Niger-Libya triangle and to this end recommends to:

- Scale up joint data collection, flow monitoring and analysis between the three IOM missions to strengthen coordination.
- Promote dialogue among relevant institutions with migration functions and law enforcement agencies of the three countries to enhance joint efforts in the field of Humanitarian Border Management (HBM) to more effectively prepare for and manage crisis-induced

Photo: In August 2018, the Government of Chad stopped all mining activities in Miski and Kouri Bougri, two of the country's major gold mining sites. This sudden decision led to thousands of migrants relocating to Zouarké and Zouar, affecting the resources available to local populations and leaving local authorities unable to provide immediate assistance. For years, IOM Chad's core activities have been focused on community stabilization and emergency support for displaced and returning Chadians. © IOM 2018



displacement and mass movements. Activities carried out under this umbrella should include cross-border meetings, capacity building activities and the development of national standard operating procedures and operational plans at points of entry to protect vulnerable migrants as well as the provision of protection services and support to stranded migrants while maintaining and strengthening the security of states and borders.

- Contribute to building a foundation for Search and Rescue Operations (SAR) in the desert to be conducted by relevant authorities by enhancing favourable environment of social cohesion between host communities and migrants; strengthening coordination mechanisms between national/local authorities of the three countries; enhancing health system in border areas; advocating for the establishment of a referral system in line with international human rights standards with joint efforts from relevant authorities of the three countries.
- Strengthen social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between local communities, authorities and migrants through the implementation of community-based activities aimed at improving access to basic services and reinforcing the relationship between communities, state institutions and security forces.

Medium- to long-term recommendation

- When feasible, the establishment of a joint systematic integrated border management could be considered. Activities carried out under this umbrella should include capacity and trust building exercises to improve collaboration between community and police forces and to address issues related to cross-border crime, and trafficking in person, in particular.

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tracks and monitors population movements in order to collate, analyse and share information to support the humanitarian community with the needed demographic baselines to coordinate evidence-based interventions.

To consult all DTM reports, datasets, static and interactive maps and dashboards, please visit:

DTM Chad

 dtm.iom.int/chad

 [@iomchad](https://twitter.com/iomchad)

DTM Libya

 dtm.iom.int/libya

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