

INTRODUCTION

Within the West and Central Africa (WCA) region, the **Sahel** stretches from Mauritania to Chad, separating the Sahara desert on the North, from tropical coastal countries to the South. Overall, within the African continent, it spans from the Atlantic Ocean on the West to the Red Sea on the East, separating the desert from the savanna. **Migratory routes within the WCA region inevitably cross the Sahel and - throughout their journeys - migrants are facing multiple risks along these routes.** This report compiles information from different data and research activities held within the region in the objective to **highlight the diverse dynamics, profiles and risks migrants are facing while travelling on the WCA routes through the Sahel.** This dashboard covers the period until September 2023 and is based on information from (1) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data on mobility trends and population flows; (2) Missing Migrants Project (MMP) data on arrivals to Europe and the Canary Islands, migrant deaths and disappearances; (3) Data on migrants seeking Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) to and within the WCA region; (4) Expulsions of migrants from other regions to WCA, especially from Algeria and Libya; (5) Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) data on the mobility of transhumant populations throughout the Sahel; and (6) Solutions and Mobility Index (SMI) indicators of stability within the Sahelian region.

MIGRATORY ROUTES THROUGH SAHEL



MIGRATORY ROUTES THROUGH SAHEL TO EUROPE

THE WESTERN ATLANTIC ROUTE

Migrants travel from the region to the coasts of West Africa where they embark on boats to the Canary Islands of Spain. This route, already active in 2006, saw an increasing number of movements in 2023. The risks, deaths and disappearances following shipwrecks are also on the rise along the Atlantic coasts.

THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

The Western Mediterranean Route to Europe finds its different origins within sub-Saharan African countries, Northern Africa, and the Middle East. Migrants' extremely dangerous path through the Sahel and the Sahara desert leads them to the Algerian and Moroccan coasts where they embark on boats towards Spain's mainland.

THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

The Central Mediterranean Route finds its roots across different countries in the Sahel and crosses the Sahara desert to the coasts of Libya and Tunisia, towards Italy or Malta. It is mostly chosen by sub-Saharan Africans, whose identified deaths and disappearances are largely observed along this route. It is known as the deadliest route to Europe from the region.

PROFILES AND TRAVEL MODALITIES

Profiles of migrants registered at flow monitoring points within WCA in 2023 *



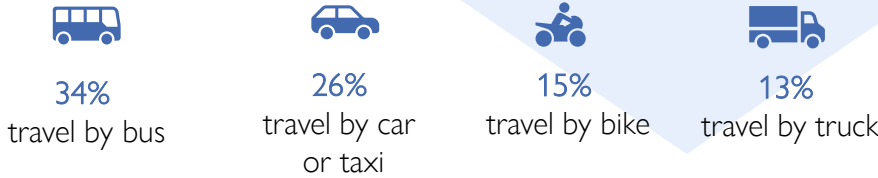
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE MAJORITY OF SURVEYED MIGRANTS **



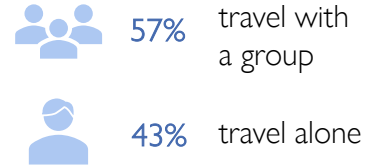
SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE MAJORITY OF SURVEYED MIGRANTS **



PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION OF REGISTERED MIGRANTS *



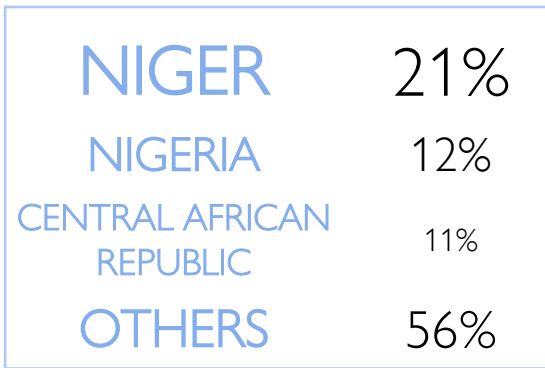
MODALITIES OF TRAVEL **



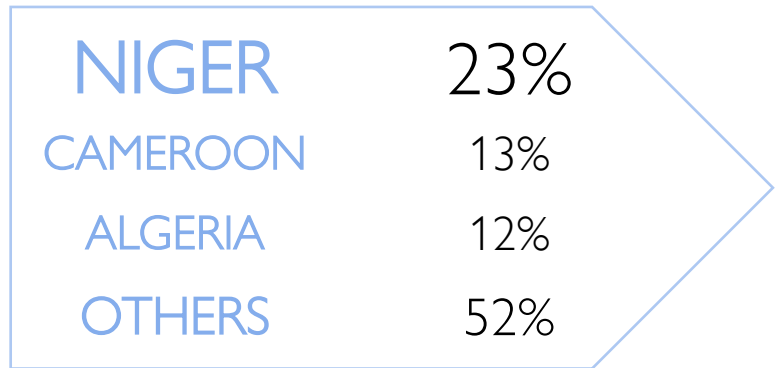
* Analysis based on data collected in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Niger between January and September 2023.

** Analysis based on data collected through 42 601 interviews in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Niger between January and September 2023.

WHERE FROM? **



WHERE TO? **



ARRIVALS TO EUROPE THROUGH SAHEL

14,976

migrants arrived to the Canary Islands between January and September 2023.

THE WESTERN ATLANTIC ROUTE

11,564

migrants arrived in Spain (mainland) between January and September 2023.

THE WESTERN MEDITERANEAN ROUTE

134,403

migrants arrived in Italy or Malta between January and September 2023.

THE CENTRAL MEDITERANEAN ROUTE

MIGRATORY ASPIRATIONS

The large majority of surveyed migrants at Flow Monitoring Points between January and September 2023 mentioned **travelling for economic reasons (77%)** and 11 per cent for marriages or family reunifications. For those travelling for economic reasons, **56 per cent were looking for a job or another livelihood opportunity**, 27 per cent were travelling to conduct business and 10 per cent were commuting for work or shopping. **Thirty-five per cent (35%) of the surveyed migrants planned to stay a day or less** in their intended destination, 20 per cent were not planning to return and 19 per cent did not know how long they would stay there.

Analysis based on data collected through 42 601 interviews in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Niger between January and September 2023.

ASSISTED VULNERABLE MIGRANTS *

30% of assisted unaccompanied or separated children were from Guinea.

69% of assisted victims of trafficking were from Nigeria.

42% of migrants with health-related needs were from Nigeria.

Category	Female	Male	Total
Migrants assisted in their voluntary return	4,317 (22%)	15,274 (78%)	19,591
Assisted unaccompanied/separated children	40 (30%)	95 (70%)	135
Assisted victims of trafficking	724 (84%)	136 (16%)	860
Migrants with health-related needs assisted	528 (44%)	669 (56%)	1,197

** Analysis based on data from assisted voluntary returns provided between January and September 2023.*

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURNS *

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

GUINEA	24%
MALI	20%
NIGERIA	18%
OTHERS	38%

RETURNS FROM

NIGER	44%
LIBYA	22%
TUNISIA	8%
OTHERS	26%

EXPULSIONS OF MIGRANTS

12,912

is the number of migrants expelled from Algeria to the Niger side of the border in 2023, of which 2,099 took place between July and September.

11,916

Nigerien returned to Niger on official convoys from Algeria between January and September 2023.

741

migrants expelled from Libya to Chad between January and September 2023.

MISSING OR DECEASED MIGRANTS

1,713

Number of **missing** migrants reported within the region between January and September 2023 on the different routes to Europe or Northern Africa.

1,440

Number of **deceased** migrants reported within the region between January and September 2023 on the different routes to Europe or Northern Africa.

CRISIS AND DISPLACEMENT

LAKE CHAD BASIN

- 3,108,010 IDPs (52%)
- 2,098,298 Returnees former IDPs (35%)
- 277,805 Returnees from abroad (5%)
- 465,881 Refugees (8%)

The conflict in this region impacts Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria with an estimated total of **5,949,994** individuals affected by September 2023.

LIPTAKO GOURMA, CENTRAL SAHEL AND COASTAL COUNTRIES

- 2,627,130 IDPs (88%)
- 349,078 Refugees (12%)

The region includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo with an estimated total of **2,976,208** individuals affected by September 2023.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

- 488,866 IDPs (13%)
- 2,125,798 Returnees former IDPs (54%)
- 513,037 Returnees from abroad (13%)
- 795,757 Refugees (20%)

The conflict in the region includes the CAR, Chad, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan with an estimated total of **3,923,458** individuals affected by September 2023.

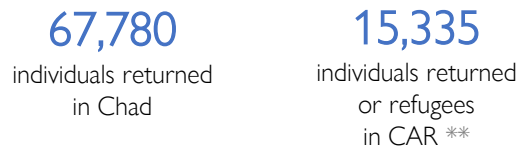
NIGERIA NORTH-WEST NORTH-CENTRAL (NW-NC)

- The crisis in NW-NC Nigeria is affecting a reported total of **1,190,293** IDPs in Nigeria and **18,129** IDPs in Niger by June 2023.

CAMEROON NORTH-WEST SOUTH-WEST (NW-SW)

- The crisis in NW-SW Cameroon is affecting a reported total of **980,807** individuals (IDPs and returnees) by August 2022.*

SUDAN CRISIS IMPACT ON CHAD AND CAR BY SEPTEMBER 2023

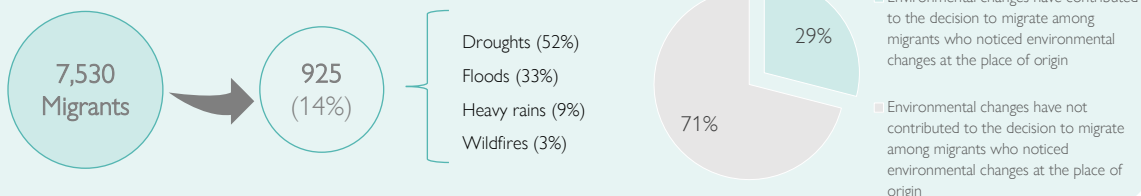


* Figures reported in Cameroon HNO 2023, data collected in August 2022. ** Impacted individuals in CAR by Sudan crisis (15,335) already included in CAR detailed part, not double-counted in the total figure.

THE DIFFERENT CRISES IN WCA ARE AFFECTING AN ESTIMATED TOTAL OF **15,106,669** INDIVIDUALS BY SEPTEMBER 2023, OF WHICH **7,995,235** ARE IDPs.

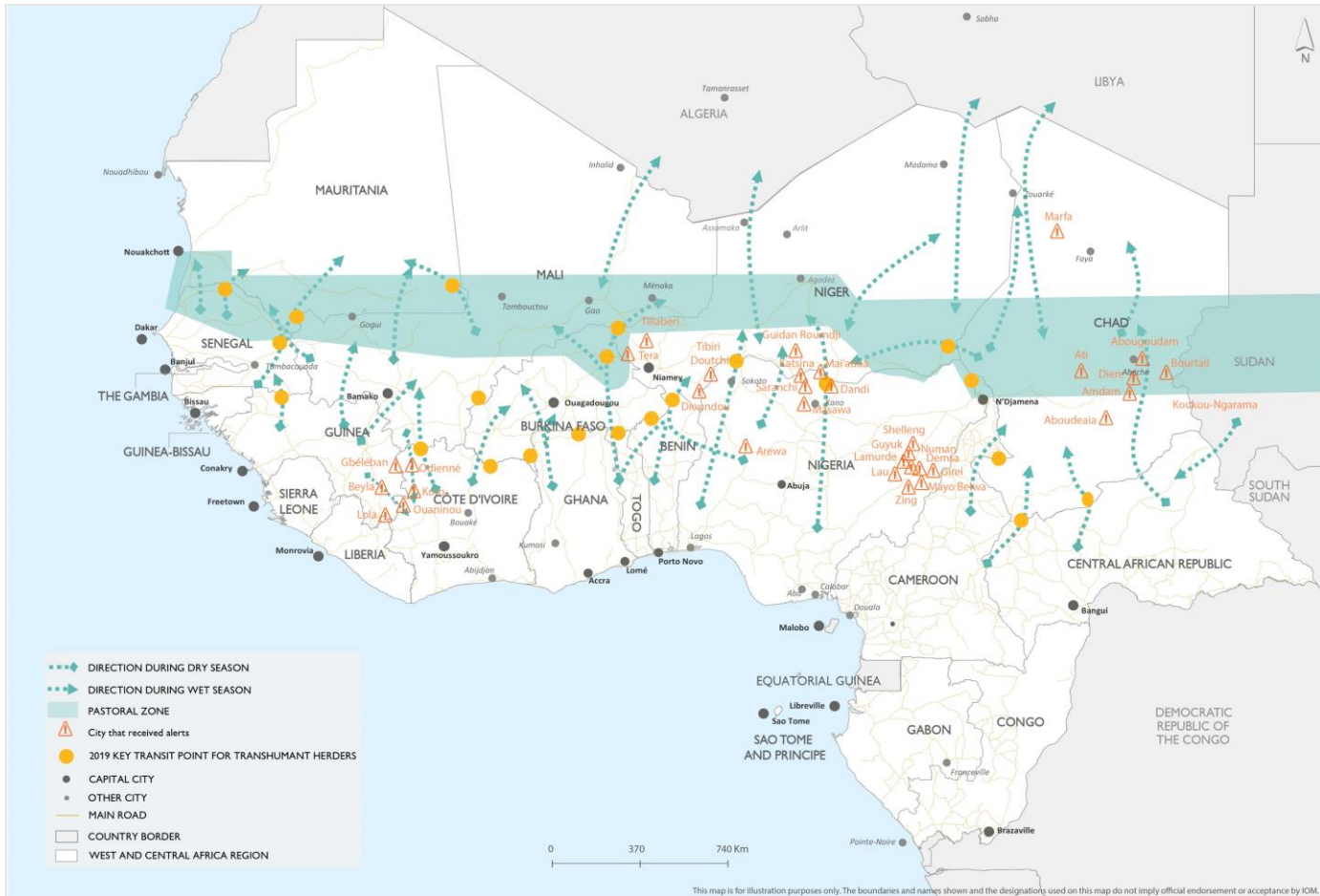
ENVIRONMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

Among 7,530 individuals surveyed in Niger between January and June 2023, 925 (14%) noticed environmental changes at their place of origin. The main environmental changes reported were droughts (52%), floods (33%), heavy rains (9%) and wildfires (3%). Of these 925 individuals, 29 per cent declared environmental changes or disasters have impacted their decision to migrate.

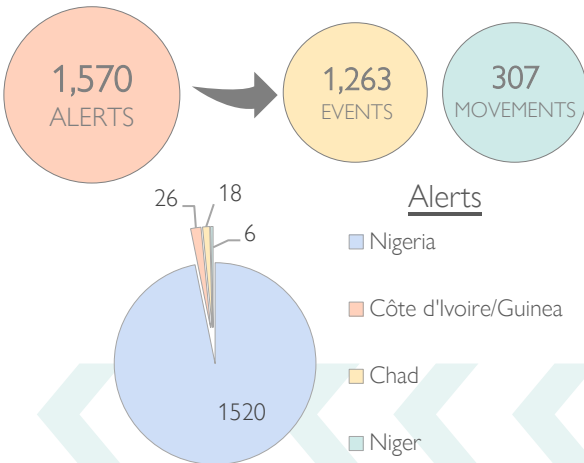


TRANSUMANCE IN THE SAHEL

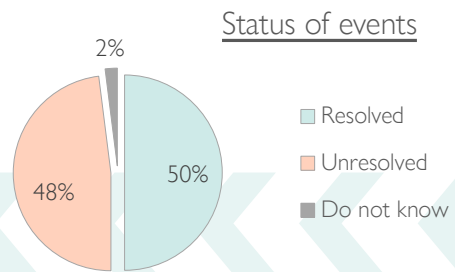
Cross-border transhumance is a longstanding traditional pastoral practice in Africa where herders migrate seasonally with their livestock in search of grazing land. In the Sahel and coastal countries of West Africa, a region characterized by long dry seasons, livestock mobility is an important livelihood adaptation to increase resilience to climatic and economic vulnerabilities and risks. In recent years however, climate change, environmental degradation disasters, exponential population growth, urbanization, land privatization, changes in farming practices, and insecurity have affected transhumance patterns, routes and periods as well as relations with other communities. These changes have resulted in increasing competition over natural resources and have exacerbated tensions. For instance, a recent IOM study in Mali found that 15 per cent of herders surveyed had to change their initial itinerary, including 8 per cent facing difficulties in accessing water or pasture. Respondents also mentioned wildfires, decrease of pastoral spaces as issues affecting their mobility. Through the **Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) Early Warning System**, IOM contributes to the mitigation of conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities.



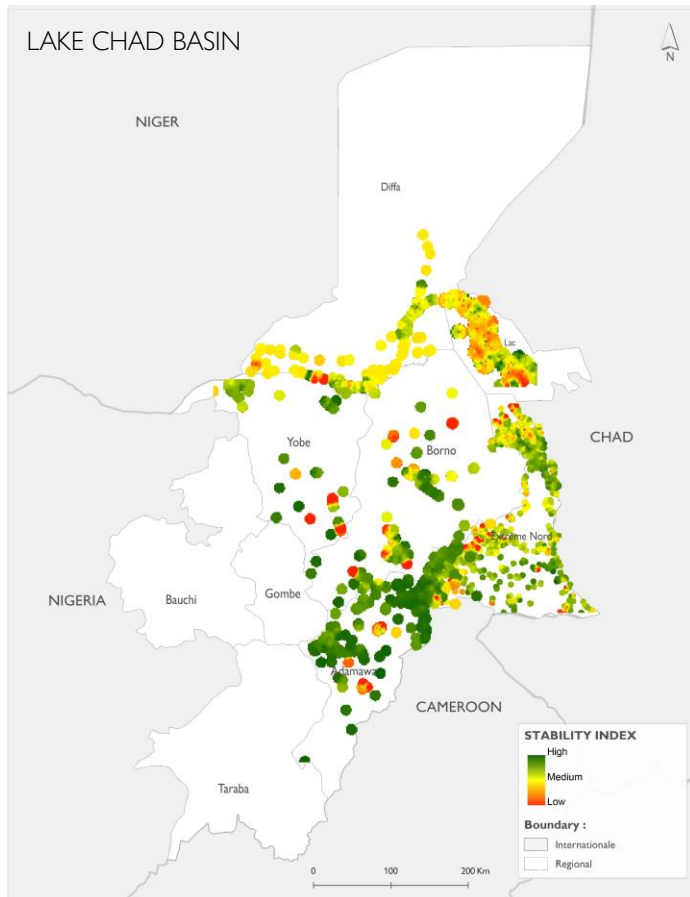
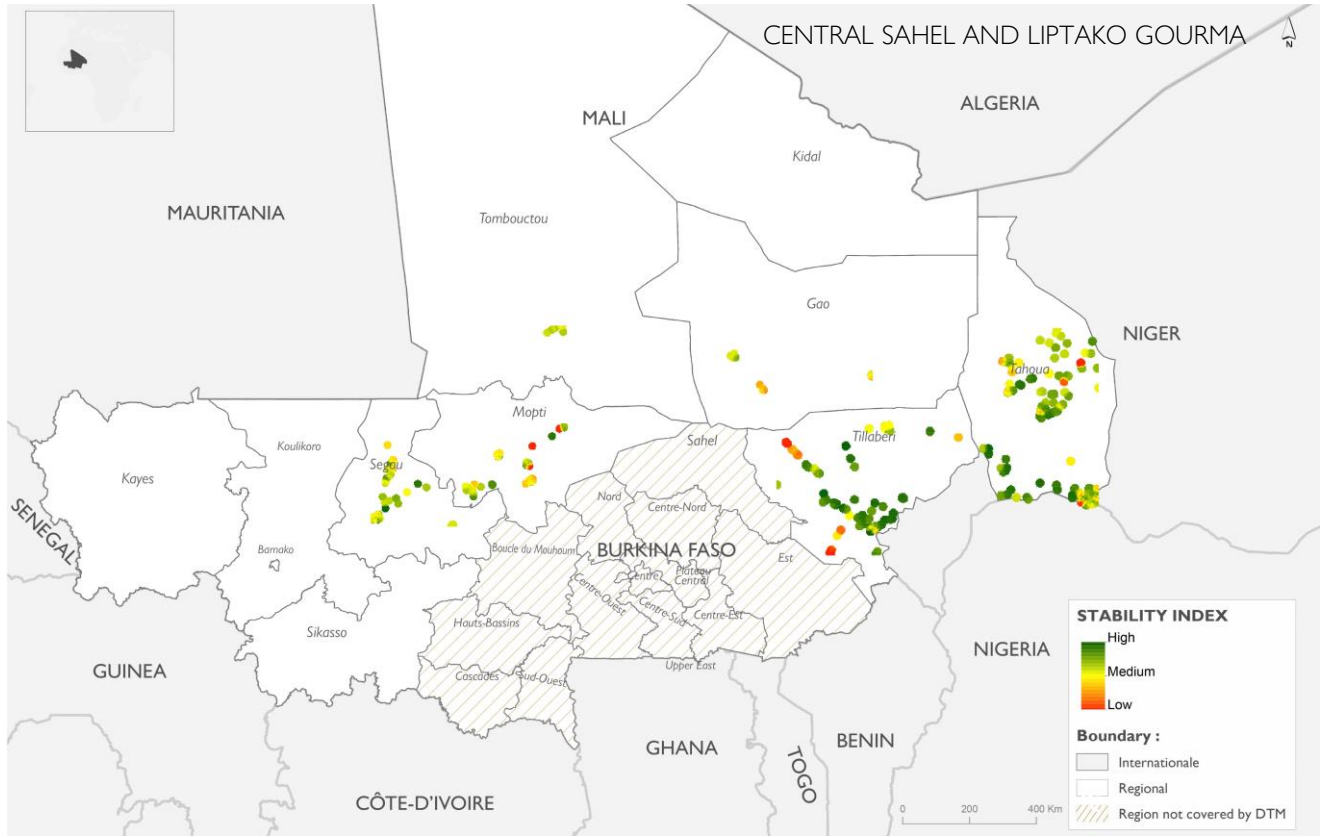
This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.



Between January and September 2023, a total of 1,570 alerts have been reported through IOM's TTT Early Warning Mechanism in Chad, Côte d'Ivoire/Guinea, Niger and Nigeria. These alerts included 1,263 events and 307 movements. Among the reported events, 618 were resolved by local actors.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND MOBILITY IN THE SAHEL



IOM implements within Sahelian countries the Solution and Mobility Index. This assessment allows to evaluate the stability of living conditions in the Central Sahel and Liptako Gourma region and the Lake Chad Basin by calculating a **Stability Score** for each displacement-hosting location, identifying **pockets of stability** and instability and thereby prioritizing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programs.

As of September 2023, for the Central Sahel and Liptako Gourma region, Mali had an average Stability Score of **64/100**, and Niger of **78/100**.

For the locations in the Lake Chad Basin, as of September 2023, Cameroon had an average Stability Score of **77/100**, Chad of **48/100***, Niger of **70/100** and Nigeria of **90/100**.

* The Stability Score for Chad was calculated using a different methodology. For Chad, the principal component analysis was used, whereas the logistic regression method determined the score for the other countries (the scores were rescaled to a 0 to 100 range).