

## 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 between January and March 2024 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

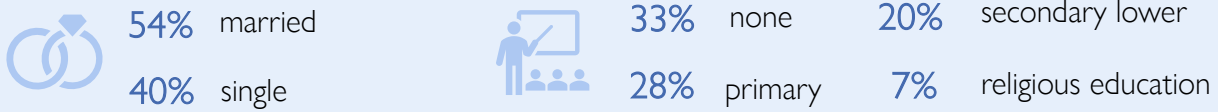
The Central Mediterranean Route finds its roots across different countries in the Sahel and crosses the Sahara desert to the coasts of Libya and Tunisia, towards Italy or Malta. It is mostly chosen by sub-Saharan Africans, whose identified deaths and disappearances are largely observed along this route. 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 between January and March 2024\*



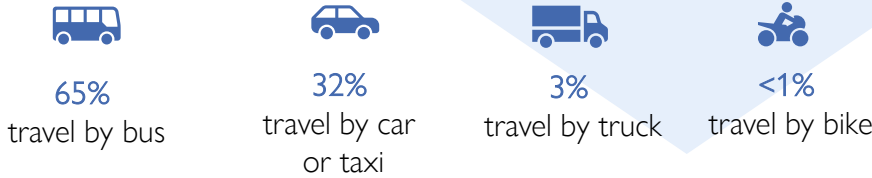
### SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE MAJORITY OF SURVEYED MIGRANTS \*\*



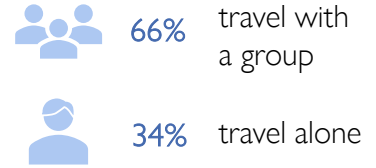
### SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE MAJORITY OF SURVEYED MIGRANTS \*\*



### PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION OF REGISTERED MIGRANTS \*



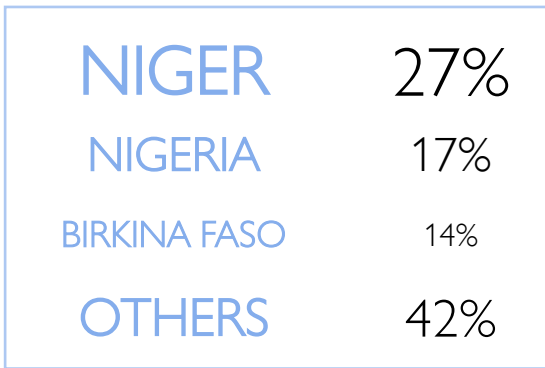
### MODALITIES OF TRAVEL \*\*



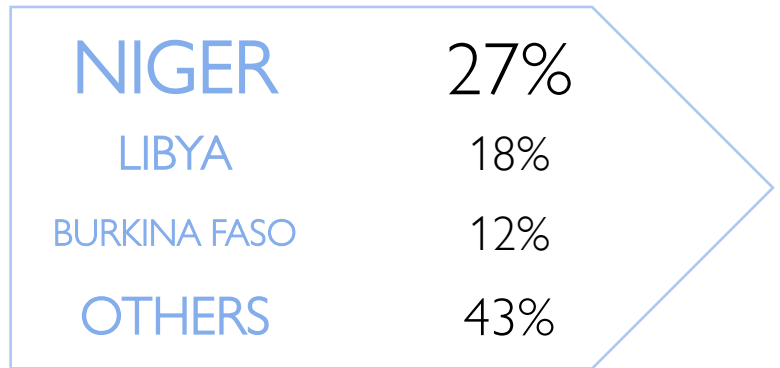
\* Analysis based on data collected in Burkina Faso, Chad, Central African Republic, Mali and Niger between January and March 2024. The travel modality analysis is based on data collected in Burkina Faso, Niger, Central African Republic, and Chad between January and March 2024.

\*\* Analysis based on data collected through 14,276 interviews in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali and Niger between January and March 2024..

### WHERE FROM? \*\*



### WHERE TO? \*\*



## ARRIVALS TO EUROPE THROUGH SAHEL

13,191

migrants arrived at the Canary Islands between January and March 2024.

THE WESTERN ATLANTIC ROUTE

805

migrants arrived in Spain (mainland) between January and March 2024.

THE WESTERN MEDITERANEAN ROUTE

11,440

migrants arrived in Italy or Malta between January and March 2024.

THE CENTRAL MEDITERANEAN ROUTE

## MIGRATORY ASPIRATIONS

The large majority of surveyed migrants at Flow Monitoring Points between January and March 2024 mentioned **travelling for economic reasons (74%)** and 11 per cent for marriages or family reunifications. For those travelling for economic reasons, **61 per cent were looking for a job or another livelihood opportunity**, 19 per cent were travelling to conduct business and 11 per cent were engaged in agro-pastoral activities. **Thirty-four per cent (34%) of the surveyed migrants planned to stay two weeks or less** in their intended destination, 19 per cent were planning to stay between three and six months, and 17 per cent were planning to stay between two and three months. **Flows observed were mainly internal to WCA, at 88 per cent.** Indeed, only 12 per cent of travelers intended to leave the region during this period.

*Analysis based on data collected through 14,276 interviews in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Mali and Niger between January and March 2024.*

### ASSISTED VULNERABLE MIGRANTS \*

**64%** of assisted unaccompanied or separated children returned from North Africa.

**71%** of assisted victims of trafficking were from Nigeria.

**53%** of migrants with health-related needs returned from Libya.

Category	Female	Male	Total
Migrants assisted in their voluntary return	1,901 (16%)	10,107 (84%)	12,008
Assisted unaccompanied/separated children	32 (28%)	82 (72%)	114
Assisted victims of trafficking	194 (83%)	41 (17%)	235
Migrants with health-related needs assisted	102 (30%)	240 (70%)	342

*\* Analysis based on data from assisted voluntary returns provided between January and March 2024.*

### ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURNS \*

#### COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

<b>GUINEA</b>	24%
<b>MALI</b>	20%
<b>NIGERIA</b>	13%
<b>OTHERS</b>	43%

#### RETURNS FROM

<b>NIGER</b>	41%
<b>LIBYA</b>	16%
<b>TUNISIA</b>	15%
<b>OTHERS</b>	28%

### EXPULSIONS OF MIGRANTS

**4,288**

is the number of migrants expelled from Algeria to the Niger side of the border between January and March 2024.

**7,712**

Nigerien returned to Niger on official convoys from Algeria between January and March 2024.

**206**

migrants expelled from Libya to Chad between January and March 2024.

### MISSING OR DECEASED MIGRANTS

**325**

Number of **missing** migrants recorded on routes within WCA, to Northern Africa and to Europe between January and March 2024.

**270**

Number of **deceased** migrants recorded on routes within WCA, to Northern Africa and to Europe between January and March 2024.

## CRISIS AND DISPLACEMENT

### LAKE CHAD BASIN

- 3,149,325 IDPs (52%)
- 2,172,439 Returnees former IDPs (36%)
- 292,369 Returnees from abroad (5%)
- 427,794 Refugees (7%)

The conflict in this region impacts Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria with an estimated total of **6,041,927** individuals affected by March 2024.

### LIPTAKO GOURMA, CENTRAL SAHEL AND COASTAL COUNTRIES

- 2,636,880 IDPs (87%)
- 409,994 Refugees (13%)

The region includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo with an estimated total of **3,046,874** individuals affected by March 2024.

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

- 520,060 IDPs (13%)
- 2,196,858 Returnees former IDPs (54%)
- 528,521 Returnees from abroad (13%)
- 789,822 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 **4,035,261** individuals affected by March 2024.

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

- The crisis in NW-NC Nigeria is affecting a reported total of **1,092,196** IDPs in Nigeria and **18,697** IDPs in Niger by March 2024.

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

- The crisis in NW-SW Cameroon is affecting a reported total of **977,329** individuals (IDPs and returnees) by September 2023.

### SUDAN CRISIS IMPACT ON CHAD AND CAR BY MARCH 2024

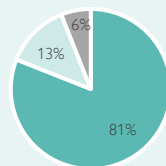
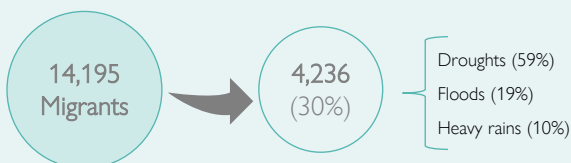
<b>144,015</b>	<b>41,795</b>
individuals returned in Chad	individuals returned or refugees in CAR *

\* Impacted individuals in CAR by Sudan crisis (20,521 returnees and 21,274 refugees) already included in CAR detailed part, not double-counted in the total figure.

THE DIFFERENT CRISES IN WCA ARE AFFECTING AN ESTIMATED TOTAL OF **15,356,299** INDIVIDUALS BY MARCH 2024, OF WHICH **7,934,882** ARE IDPs.

## ENVIRONMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

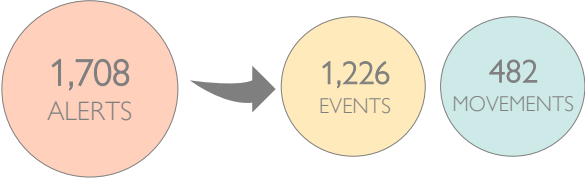
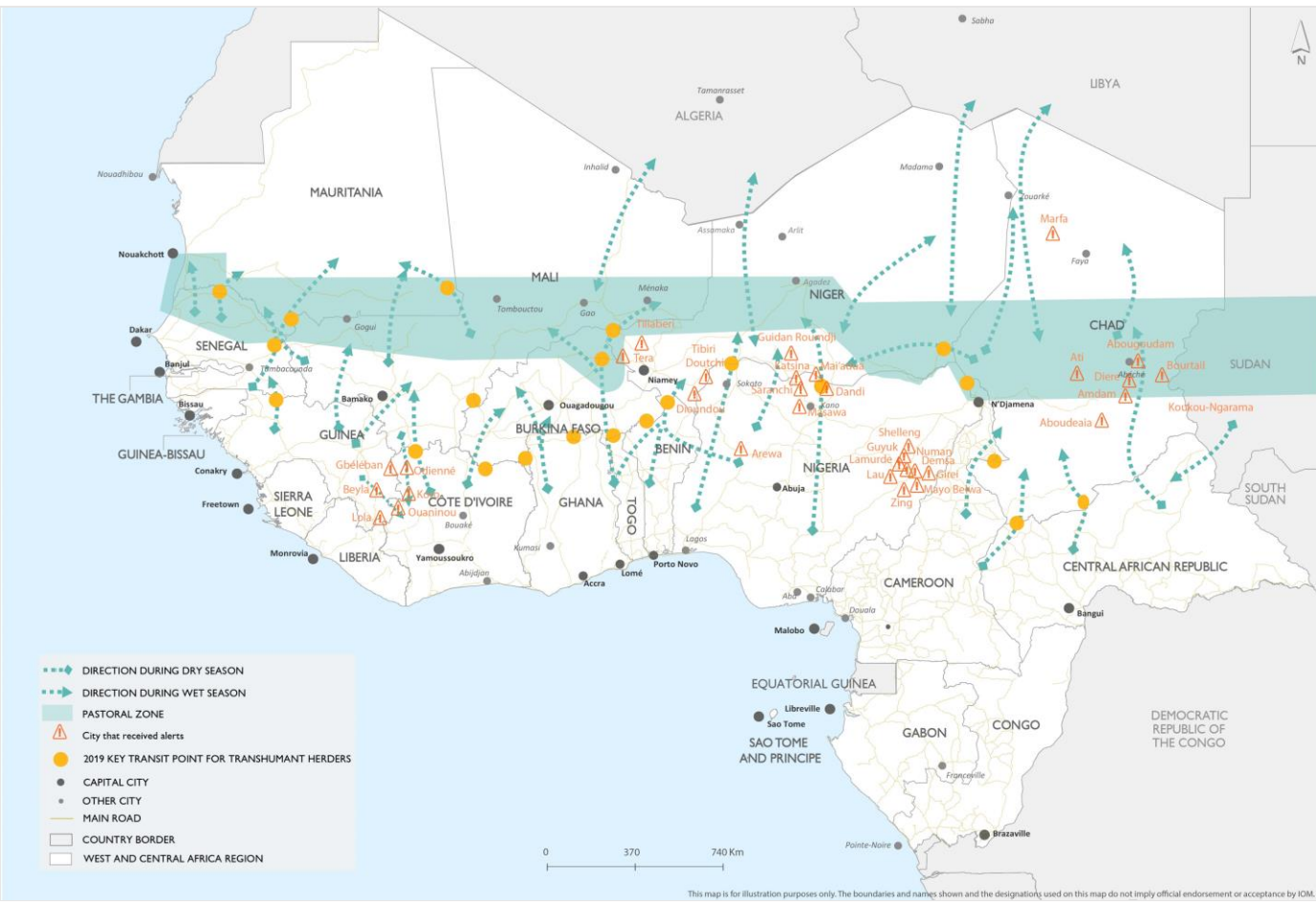
Among 14,195 individuals surveyed in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic between January and March 2024, 4,236 (30%) noticed environmental changes and/or a disaster at their place of origin. The main environmental changes reported were droughts (59%), floods (19%), and heavy rains (10%). Of these 4,236 individuals, 3,431 (81%) declared environmental changes or disasters have impacted their decision to migrate.



- Environmental changes have contributed to the decision to migrate among migrants who noticed environmental changes at the place of origin
- Environmental changes have not contributed to the decision to migrate among migrants who noticed environmental changes at the place of origin
- Do not know/Do not answer

## TRANSUMANCE IN THE SAHEL

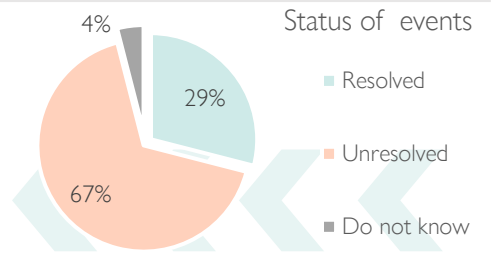
**Cross-border transhumance** is a longstanding traditional pastoral practice in Africa where herders migrate seasonally with their livestock in search of grazing land. In the Sahel and coastal countries of West Africa, a region characterized by long dry seasons, livestock mobility is an important livelihood 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. For instance, a recent IOM study in Mauritania found that 65 per cent of herders surveyed had to change their initial itinerary, and 53 per cent changed their time of transhumance due to the climate changes impacts on water and pasture resources. These changes have resulted in increasing competition over natural resources and have exacerbated tensions. Through the **Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) Early Warning System**, IOM contributes to the mitigation of conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities.



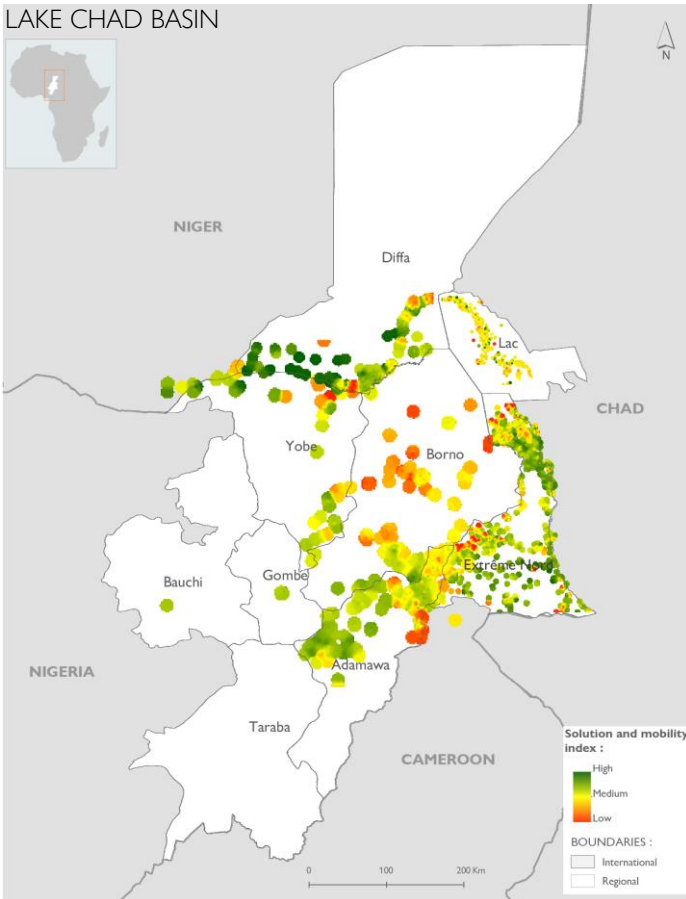
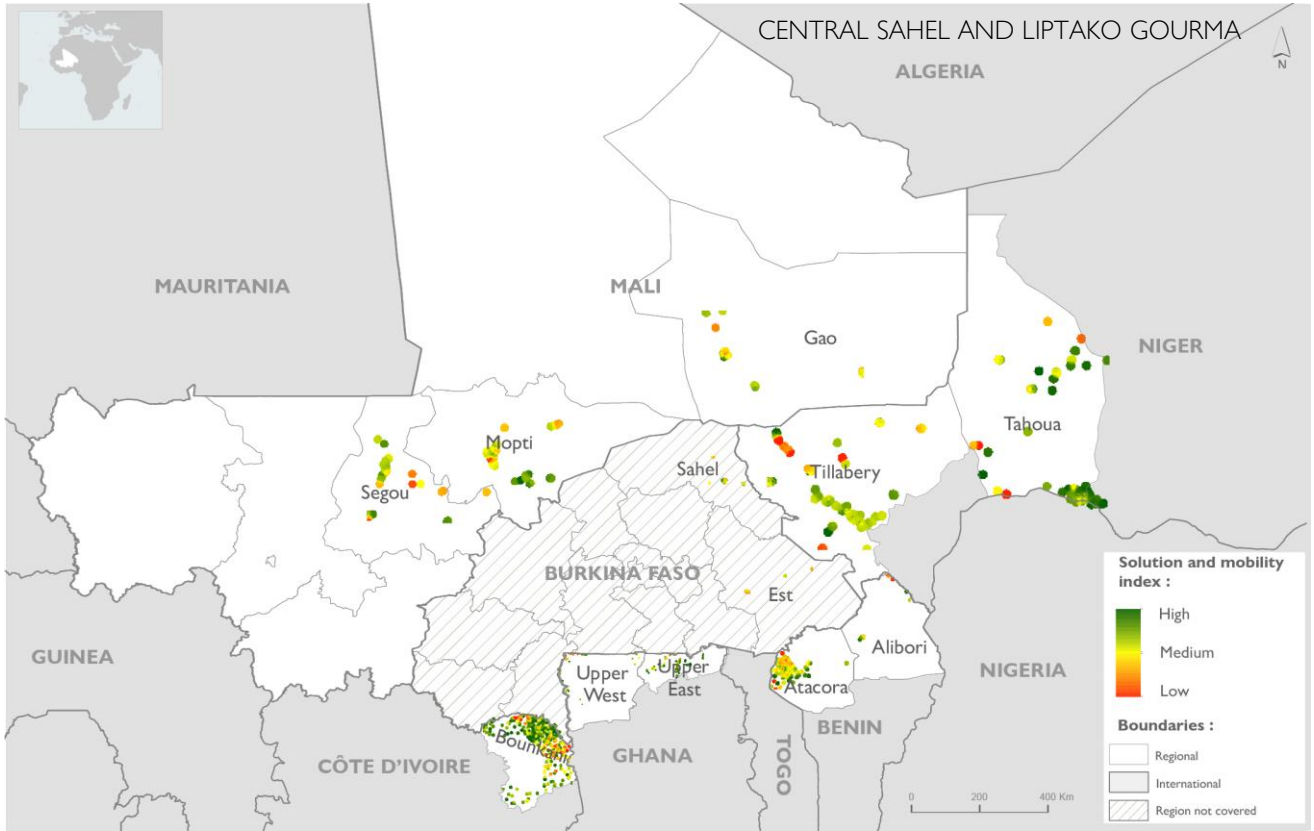
Between January and March 2024, a total of 1,708 alerts have been reported through IOM's TTT Early Warning Mechanism in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria. These alerts included 1,226 events and 482 movements. Among the reported events, 29 per cent were resolved by local actors during the period of reporting.

Types of alerts by country

Country	Events	Movements	Total
Burkina Faso	14	6	20
Mali	47	17	64
Niger	9	0	9
Nigeria	1,156	459	1,615
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,226</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>1,708</b>



## 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 March 2024, for the Central Sahel and Liptako Gourma region, Burkina Faso had an average stability score of **44/100**, Mali of **64/100**, and Niger of **65/100**.

For the locations in the Lake Chad Basin, as of March 2024, Cameroon had an average stability score of **77/100**, Chad of **55/100**, Niger of **73/100** and Nigeria of **90/100**.

In the coastal countries affected by the Central Sahel crisis, in March 2024, Côte d'Ivoire had an average stability score of **73/100**, Ghana of **93/100**, and Benin of **54/100**. In the Central African Republic, the average score was **74/100**. The covered localities within the Maradi region in Niger had an average score of **88/100**.