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GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE
DISPLACEMENT
TRACKING MATRIX

FLOW MONITORING SURVEYS WITH MIGRANTS TRAVELLING THROUGH ALBANIA

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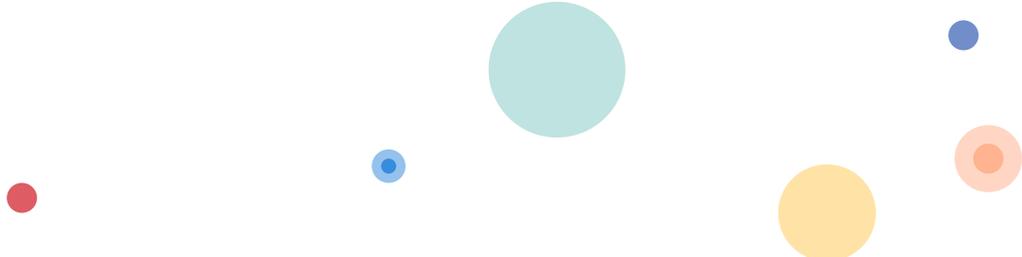
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the second round of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) implemented in Albania. The data was collected across Albania from 8 June to 3 September 2023, with a total of 128 individual respondents.¹

FMS provides a snapshot of the profiles, experiences and needs of migrants transiting through Albania. The survey asks questions on demographics, education and employment backgrounds, the circumstances of the migration journey and migration factors, as well as future intentions.

- More than half (51%) the respondents were single adult men between the ages of 18 and 29. Nationals of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and the Syrian Arab Republic made up 67 per cent of the sample. More than one-third of respondents (34%) had completed at least lower secondary education and over one-fifth (23%) were employed prior to leaving their countries of origin.
- Most respondents (93%) were travelling in a group. Of those travelling in a group, 83 per cent did so with non-family members, 14 per cent of the total respondents reported travelling with facilitators and only 3 per cent reported travelling with relatives.
- One quarter of the sample lived in a country other than their own country of origin for at least a year, prior to arriving in Albania.
- Germany (35%), France (15%), and the UK (14%) were the most frequently cited countries of intended destination.
- The three main reported drivers of migration were economic reasons (66%), war and conflict (34%), and limited access to services (11%).²
- During their journey, 20 per cent of the respondents reported at least one problem, ranging from robbery, financial problems, theft of documents, health problems as well as a lack of food and shelter. More than one-tenth (10%) of the respondents noted that they had experienced some form of physical violence on their journeys.
- Most migrants transit through Albania after long journeys, often having witnessed or experienced significant hardship and traumatic events. The most frequently cited needs during their journeys relate to a lack of shelter and accommodation, which was cited by 13 per cent of all respondents as their primary need, while hunger was reported by 9 per cent of respondents.
- More than one-quarter of the respondents (28%) reported the estimated cost of the journey to be between 2,501 and 5,000 USD per person. More than three-fourths of the respondents (79%) reported having paid for the journey with their own money.
- Less than half (45%) of the respondents have considered returning to their country of origin at some point during their journey

¹ The term “respondents” refers to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as the reference population is made of persons travelling along mixed migration routes. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the report.

² Multiple answers possible.

1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2015, the Western Balkan (WB) region has emerged as a major crossroads for migrants and refugees³ attempting to reach the European Union. From 1 January to 30 November 2023, authorities in Albania registered 4,756 migrants on arrival, which is a 59 per cent decrease when compared to the same period in 2022. To better grasp these changes and to improve assistance to migrants, IOM started conducting FMS in Albania in 2022.

This report contains findings from the DTM FMS conducted by IOM field staff between 8 June to 3 September 2023. Field staff surveyed a total of 128 individuals⁴ in Korçë, Shkodër, Tirana and Gjirokaster, Kukes and Durres. The first section presents the baseline profile of the population interviewed, followed by a section on the migrants' travel experience up to the location where the interview took place. The report then highlights respondents' experiences of violence, exploitation and abuse during the journey. The last section looks at the respondent's views on their return intentions.

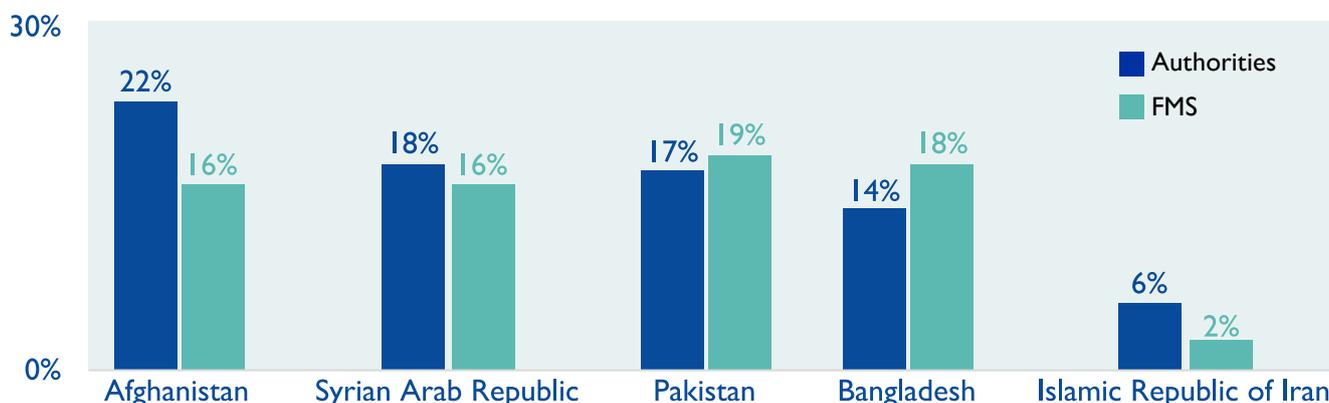
2 MAIN PROFILE, REASONS AND INTENTIONS OF MIGRANTS TRAVELLING THROUGH ALBANIA

2.1 SAMPLE SIZE AND MAIN NATIONALITIES

The main declared nationalities of respondents were Pakistan (19%), Bangladesh (18%), Afghanistan (16%), Syrian Arab Republic (16%), Morocco (13%), Somalia (6%), Algeria (6%), Palestinian Territories (2%), Nepal

(2%), and smaller shares of people from Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Libya. In 2022, the two main declared nationalities were the Syrian Arab Republic (41%) and Afghanistan (22%).

Figure 1. Nationality of respondents compared to main registered nationalities by authorities in Jan-Sep 2023



Source: Albanian Border and Migration Police / FMS ALB 2023 (n=128)

³ Mixed migration movements are those in which different categories of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation.

⁴ Two other migrants met by enumerators stated that they had already participated in the FMS before, and hence were not asked the remainder of the questions after the initial ones.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Men represent the vast majority (98%) of the sample, followed by women (2%).⁵ The median age of respondents was 25, with the youngest person interviewed being 14 years old and the oldest 46 years old.⁶ Seven children between 14 and 17 years old were interviewed, all of whom were boys from Afghanistan. Eighty-eight per cent of male respondents and the 2 women were between 18 and 29 years old. Eighty-four per cent of respondents declared they were single, followed by 16 per cent who were married. The majority of the respondents (88%) reported having no children. Of those who said they had children, 88 per cent declared at least one child left in the country of origin, and 13 per cent had children travelling with them.⁷

The two women in the sample and most (93%) of the male respondents said that they were travelling with a group of people.

The most commonly spoken languages were Arabic (53%), Farsi (17%), Urdu (13%), followed by Bengali (10%), Kurdish, Pashto, and Punjabi (3% each), Nepali and Sindhi (2% each), Hind and Balochi (less than 1%).

One respondent from Afghanistan declared being internally displaced before leaving their country of origin.

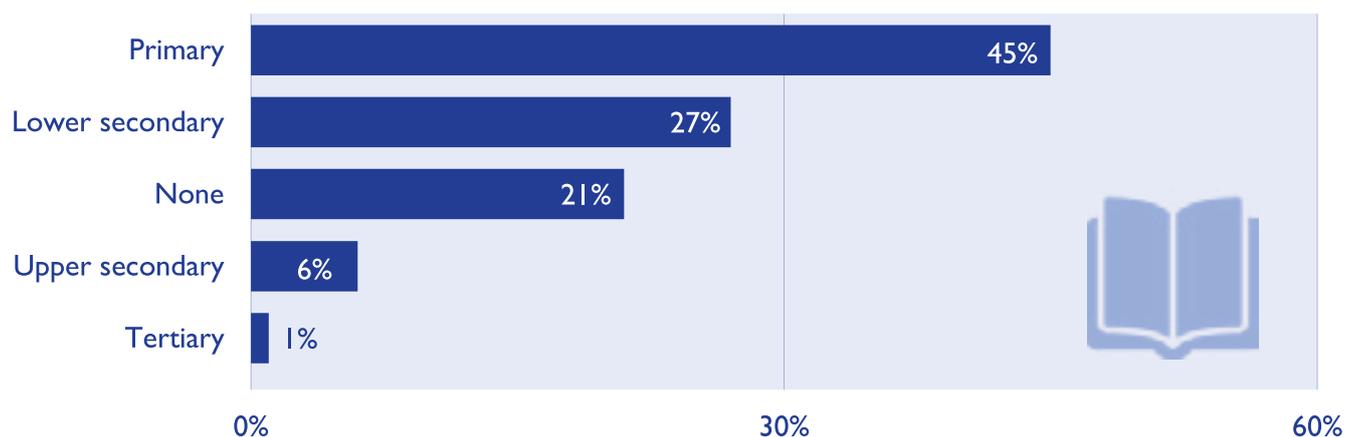
2.3 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Education

More than two-fifths of respondents (45%) reported having completed primary education, compared to 28 per cent in 2022. Twenty-seven per cent reported having completed lower secondary education, followed by 21

per cent who reported no education and 6 per cent reported having completed post-secondary education. One respondent had completed tertiary education.

Figure 2. Highest level of educational attainment



Source: DTM ALB FMS 2023, n=128

Among respondents with at least upper secondary education, the most frequently reported fields of study

were business (33%), arts and humanities (22%), services (22%), education (11%), and social sciences (11%).

⁵ The questionnaire includes one question on sex and one question on gender self-identification, both including the possibility of declining to specify for the respondent. No respondents declared "other" or "non-binary" when surveyed.

⁶ Children below 18 years of age require the signed informed consent of the parent or legal guardian prior to being interviewed.

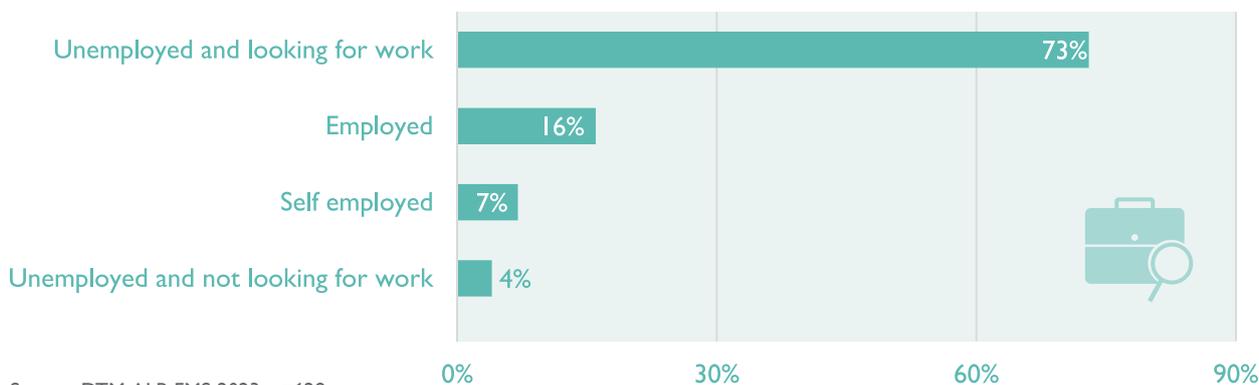
⁷ Respondents can have more than one child; therefore, the percentage does not sum up to 100.

Employment status before departure

Almost three-fourths (73%) of the respondents reported that they were unemployed and looking for a job prior to leaving their country of origin, compared to the 52 per cent in 2022. Sixteen per cent of respondents had been

employed, followed by 7 per cent who were self-employed and 4 per cent of respondents had been unemployed and not looking for work.

Figure 3. Share of respondents by employment status before departure



Source: DTM ALB FMS 2023, n=128

Among respondents who declared they had been employed before leaving their country of origin, the most frequently reported jobs were skilled manual labour (30%), followed by elementary occupations (23%), craft and related trade

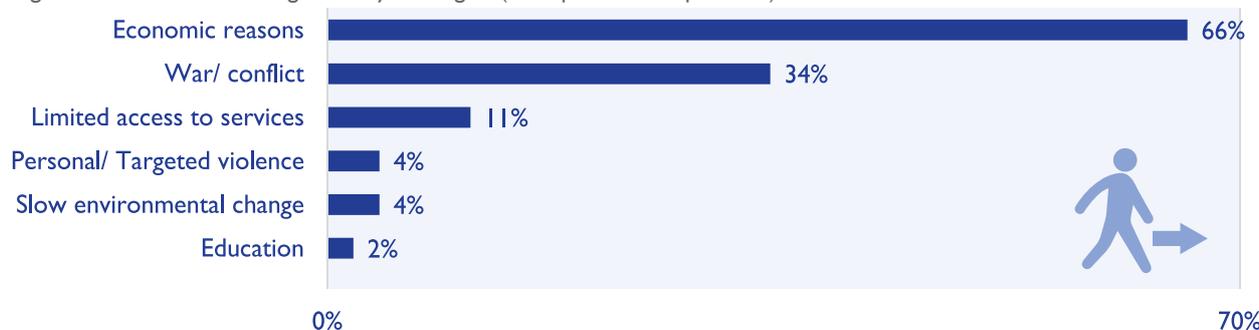
workers (17%), plant and machine operators (10%), managers (7%), armed forces, associate professionals, service and sales workers and other occupations (3% each).

2.4 REASONS FOR LEAVING THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Interviewees were asked to mention the two main reasons for leaving their countries of origin.⁸ Figure 4 shows the main reasons. In 2023, the most frequently cited reason was economic, which was mentioned by two-thirds (66%). In 2022, the primary motive for leaving the country of origin was war and conflict, which was reported by 62 per cent of respondents whereas in 2023, this dropped to 34 per cent. This change could be explained by the fact that more nationals of the Syrian Arab Republic were interviewed in 2022 than in 2023.

When looking at the three main nationalities, nationals of Afghanistan cited war and conflict as the main reason for leaving (91%), while for nationals of Pakistan (88%) and Bangladesh (87%) the main migration driver was economic. Four respondents (3%) from the three main nationalities reported personal/targeted violence as the main reason for leaving their country of origin.

Figure 4. Reason for leaving country of origin⁹ (multiple choices possible)



Source: DTM ALB FMS 2023, n=128

⁸ The list of options included in the questionnaire were: sudden onset natural disaster (e.g., flood, storm, landslide, earthquake); slow environmental change (e.g. livestock died due to drought, loss of agriculture due to drought/poor rainfall, sea level rise destroyed homes/assets, reduced fish stocks); war/conflict; personal/ targeted violence; limited access to services (basic education, health care, water, food, accommodation, transportation); economic reasons; education (higher levels) or training; marriage, family reunification or family formation; contagious diseases related reasons.

⁹ Respondents are able to choose multiple options. The total therefore does not add up to 100 per cent.

2.5 FACILITATION

Just under one-fifth (19%) of respondents reported that someone helped them organise the journey. This is a smaller proportion in comparison to 2022, when 26 per cent reported that someone helped to do so. Of these, half of the respondents in 2023 said they had been helped by a recruitment agency to organise the journey, followed by a quarter who said that they had been helped by family, friends

or the community of origin. Three respondents declared that an employer in the country of destination helped to facilitate the journey. In 2022, 42 per cent of those who were helped in the organization of the journey were helped by family, friends or the community of origin. One third reported they were helped private individuals or by an employment agency.

2.6 MODE OF TRAVEL

Most respondents (93%) stated they were travelling with a group of persons, while the rest were travelling alone.¹⁰ The majority of those in groups were travelling with non-family members (83%), while 14 per cent of respondents reported having travelled with facilitators, which is higher compared to 8 per cent who reported this in 2022. None of the female

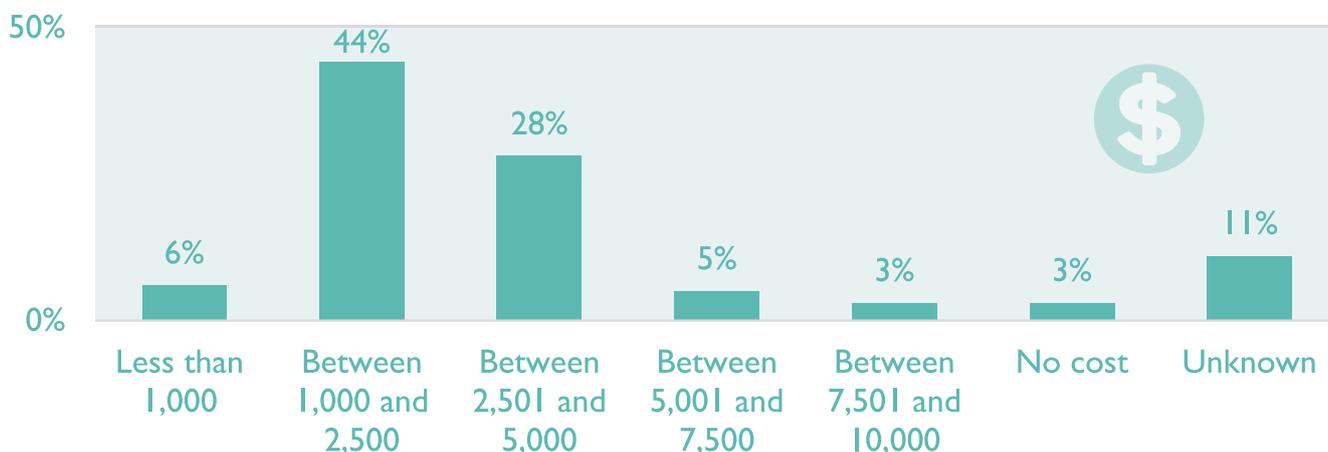
respondents were travelling alone, compared with seven per cent of the men.

The majority (86%) of those who travelled with facilitators reported some form of violence, abuse or exploitation.

2.7 COST OF JOURNEY

Figure 5 below provides a breakdown of the cost of the journeys from the country of origin to Albania.

Figure 5. Cost of journey from country of origin to country of interview



Source: DTM ALB FMS 2023, n=128

Half of the respondents reported having paid for the journey in cash instalments, followed by 22 per cent who reported unknown methods of payment, 16 per cent paid per leg of journey, 6 per cent said they would have to pay upon arrival, 5 per cent paid through *hawala*¹¹ instalments, and 2 per cent paid the full amount in advance.

When asked whether they would have to repay all or part of the travel expenses upon arrival at their intended destination, most of the respondents (66%) replied no, while more than a quarter did not respond. Only eight per cent answered positively which is almost three times less compared to the previous round of FMS, when 26 per cent answered positively.

¹⁰ The question “Who are you travelling with (with whom did the respondent start the journey)?” presented two options namely a. Alone, b. With a group. If b (with a group), a follow-up question followed “The group was made of, a. Non-family/non-relatives, b. Family/Relatives, c. Facilitators (agents/employer/smugglers).”

¹¹ Hawala is an informal money transfer system in which money is passed on through a network of brokers (who are known as hawaladars) without the actual/physical movement of cash. It is the transmission of money in ways other than the regular banking routes and hence sometimes called underground banking.

2.8 PROBLEMS DURING THE JOURNEY

Interviewees were asked about a list of specific incidents and problems they could have faced during the journey. Eighty per cent of the respondents did not report problems during the journey, while 20 per cent reported at least one.

Four per cent of respondents declared they had been robbed, out of which three said it occurred in Albania and two said it occurred in transit countries (Greece and Türkiye).

Two male respondents declared they had suffered theft of documents while in transit.

Thirteen per cent of respondents reported having experienced a lack of shelter at some point during the journey and 53 per cent reported that this happened in transit countries, while 47 per cent reported this had occurred in Albania. The most cited countries where migrants did not have shelter or a place to sleep were Greece (eight respondents) and Türkiye (one respondent).

Three respondents (2%) reported having had health problems during the journey, mainly injuries related to the journey. One occurred in transit locations (Greece).

Less than one-tenth (9%, or 11 people) of respondents also reported having had financial problems to cover basic needs for the onward journey, of which only one respondent said it happened in a transit country (Greece) while the remaining 10 respondents said it happened in Albania.

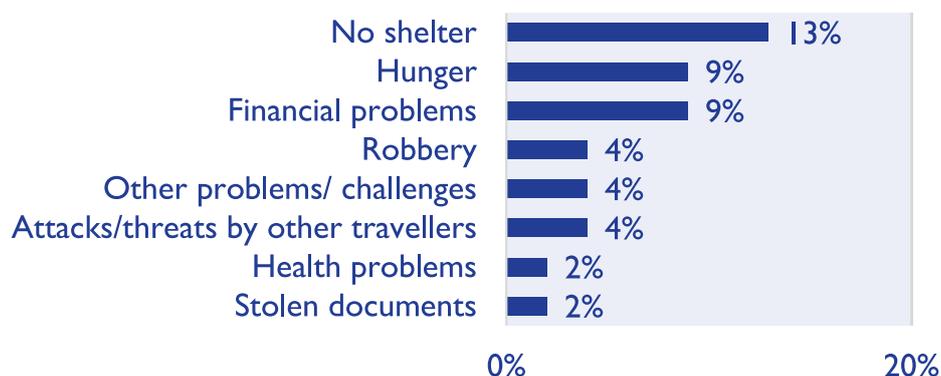
Less than one-tenth (9%) of respondents said they suffered from hunger, either in Albania (half of them) or in one of the previous transit countries (Greece and Türkiye).

Five respondents (4%) declared they were attacked or threatened by other travellers, of whom four of said it happened in Albania and one said it happened in a transit country (Türkiye).

Five respondents (4%) reported facing other problems.

More than one third (35%) of migrants surveyed said they suffered from hunger, 48 per cent of whom mentioned that it happened in transit countries, while 52 per cent declared it happened in Albania. The countries in which migrants said they suffered from hunger were Greece (90%) and Türkiye (3%).

Figure 6. Share of respondents reporting problems



Source: DTM ALB FMS 2023, n=128

Respondents were also asked if they had been readmitted¹² to another country during their journey by the authorities of transit countries. Thirteen per cent answered

positively, of whom more than two-thirds (69%) reported it happened between one and five times. Two respondents reported it happened more than ten times.

¹² The survey asks migrants questions about whether they have been readmitted from one country to another. Migrants may or may not know the difference between formal readmission procedures and push backs and may use or understand those terms interchangeably. Findings on readmission should therefore not be understood to definitively mean pushbacks.

2.9 MAIN NEEDS

Respondents were asked what their main unmet needs were at the time of the interview. The most frequently reported need was for general information (48%), followed by food (22%), clothes and shoes (12%), transportation support (11%), immediate accommodation (10%), financial support (4%), psychological counselling, legal counselling

and services (3% each), communication with others at origin and elsewhere, personal safety and security, personal hygiene and sanitary supplies (2% each) and long term accommodation (2%). One respondent reported needing medicines and one person needed documentation and registration support.

2.10 COUNTRY OF INTENDED DESTINATION

Germany (35%), France (15%), and the United Kingdom (14%) were the three most frequently cited countries of intended destination. Italy dropped from 21 per cent in 2022 to 10 per cent in 2023.

The final intended destination countries differed for the three main nationalities (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan). For Pakistani, the main intended destinations were United Kingdom (35%), Italy (26%), Belgium and Germany (17% each). For Bangladeshis the top three intended destinations were Germany (52%), the Netherlands (17%), and Italy (13%). For Afghans, the top three intended destinations were Germany (57%), United Kingdom (24%), and Italy (14%).

As to why migrants specifically chose the country of destination, 66 per cent stated that this was due to ease of access to asylum procedures. This was followed by 22 per cent who declared that it was because of appealing socio-economic conditions, 3 per cent declared that it was because they had relatives in the country of destination, and 2 per cent stated that this was because of an established network of co-nationals. One respondent declared it was the only available or feasible choice due to political or geographical constraints. More than half of the respondents (55%) said that they had extended family members in the countries of intended destination

while six per cent had immediate family. Forty-six per cent had extended family members, while nine per cent had immediate family members in some other European countries (other than destination country). Most of the relatives and immediate family members in Europe were in Germany, France (27% each), the United Kingdom (15%), Belgium (13%), Netherlands (9%), Italy (6%), Denmark, Sweden and Norway (2% each).

Most (52%) of the respondents said they had no information on asylum or how to obtain documents to stay regularly in the intended country of destination, while 15 per cent said they had information on this and 33 per cent did not reply.

Of the total number of respondents who declared that they had family members in the country of destination, 32 per cent declared that they had not previously attempted to reunify with their family members through legal procedures. Of these, 76 per cent stated they did not have information on family reunification in the country where their relatives lived. Over two-fifths (44%) of respondents preferred not to answer this question, and 23 per cent did not know.

¹² Hawala is an informal money transfer system in which money is passed on through a network of brokers (who are known as hawaladars) without the actual/physical movement of cash. It is the transmission of money in ways other than the regular banking routes and hence sometimes called underground banking.

3 VULNERABILITY TO VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

The questionnaire also included a module which gathers data on migrants' vulnerability and the forms of abuse, violence and exploitation they may have experienced or witnessed during the journey. More specifically, the survey includes eight questions that aim to capture information about whether the respondent, during their journey:

1. Worked or performed other activities without receiving the expected payment
2. Was forced to perform work or other activities against your will
3. Was approached by someone offering a marriage (to you or close family member – child or sibling)
4. Was kept at a certain location against your will (by persons other than the authorities of the country)
5. Had experienced any form of physical violence
6. Was forced to travel or to move
7. Was lied to, tricked, manipulated, indebted, given false promises, or otherwise deceived in order to get to travel/move?
8. Had access to travel documents during the journey?

These questions relate to an event, that might indicate exposure to human trafficking, exploitation and abuse practices, physical and sexual violence, experienced by the respondent. The experiences described in these questions do not aim to identify cases of human trafficking as defined by international and national legal instruments. If interviewers came across respondents who requested further support, they referred these cases to the relevant protection actor.

Overall, 13 per cent of all respondents answered "yes" to at least one of the indicators of violence, exploitation and abuse based on their own experience.

Thirteen per cent of male respondents answered "yes" to at least one of these indicators, compared to one female respondent out of two.

The reported experiences of violence and abuse took place mostly in Türkiye, Albania, and Greece.



LABOUR EXPLOITATION

Six per cent of respondents reported they had worked or performed other activities during their journey without receiving the expected payment. Four of these cases took place in Greece, and other four in Türkiye. The employment sectors where this happened were the service sector and the textile industry.



FORCED LABOUR

One respondent reported having been forced to work or conduct activities against their will. This happened in Saudi Arabia.



OFFERS OF AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE

Two male respondents (2%) reported they had been approached by someone offering a marriage. They reported that this had happened in Greece.



BEING KEPT AT A CERTAIN LOCATION AGAINST THEIR WILL

Five male respondents reported they had been held in a location against their will by persons other than official authorities during their journeys. Four reportedly happened in Türkiye and one in Albania.



EXPERIENCED SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Ten per cent of the sample had experienced some form of physical violence during their journey, which is as high as in 2022. The most frequently cited country was Greece (54%), Türkiye (23%), and Saudi Arabia (8%). Albania was not cited in this round compared to 58 per cent of respondents in 2022.



FORCED TO TRAVEL OR MOVE

Only one respondent reported being forced to travel or to move. This allegedly happened in Afghanistan.



LIED, TRICKED, MANIPULATED, INDEBTED, GIVEN FALSE PROMISES, OR OTHERWISE DECEIVED INTO TRAVELLING OR MOVING

Three per cent of respondents noted that they been lied to, tricked, manipulated, indebted, given false promises, or otherwise deceived into moving or travelling. This was reported to have happened in Greece, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye.



TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Twenty per cent of respondents reported that they never had documents with them during the journey. Less than five per cent (5%) of respondents noted that they had documents during the journey, while nine per cent reported having had their documents stolen, seven per cent reported having lost documents during journey, and one per cent reported having someone else's documents. Over half (58%) preferred not to answer on this question.

4 RETURN INTENTIONS

Almost half (45%) of respondents reported they had not considered returning to their country of origin during their journey so far, 38 per cent did not know an answer to this question and 13 per cent preferred not to answer on this question.

Out of five respondents who considered returning, three indicated to be too tired to continue the journey and two indicated xenophobia and discrimination.

Among those who had not considered returning, most people (70%) merely stated that they were not interested in returning while others mentioned security concerns. Instead, the majority (79%) planned to continue the journey to their intended country of destination, followed by 21 per cent who plan to travel to another country.

5 METHODOLOGY

FMS in Albania were conducted as part of DTM activities in the Mediterranean that started in October 2015 and are conducted within the framework of IOM's research on populations on the move, through the Mediterranean and WB Routes to Europe. The data collection involves direct interviews with migrants and the collation of statistical data on arrivals and migrant presence in- and outside of reception, collected by national authorities and IOM staff. Regular updates on arrivals are available on [DTM Flows to Europe Geportal](#).

FMS in Albania were conducted by IOM field staff between 8 June and 3 September 2023 in the TRCs where IOM operates in Albania as well as in key transit locations outside of reception where migrants are known to be present. A total number of six enumerators (one woman, five men) with language skills in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Dari, Farsi and Pashto were trained by IOM.

The survey is designed to profile third country (non-European) nationals who are moving to Western Europe by land and by sea through the WB route. Only migrants aged 14 and above are approached and the questionnaire is proposed only to migrants and refugees who have arrived in the country of the survey no more than one year prior to the interview. IOM requires the written consent of the parents or legal guardians of potential survey respondents under the age of 18.

The FMS questionnaire was available in e-format in Kobo (English, French, and Arabic) and in paper forms translated into Arabic, English, Farsi, French, Pashto and Urdu. Respondents were selected through a simple random sampling method by IOM field staff. Those who consented to be interviewed were provided the questionnaire. The interviews were anonymous and conducted one-on-one with respondents, in safe spaces, at the time of the data collection. Migrants could decline to respond to individual questions or to interrupt the interview if they wished to do so.

5.1 SAMPLING

The reference population consists of migrants in Albania above the age of 14. IOM Albania used a non-random sampling procedure, attempting to reflect the general

demographic profile of the migrants present in the country in the covered period.

5.2 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

DTM's FMS baseline module captures data on the demographic profile of the respondents, their education and employment background, the circumstances of their migration journey and migration factors, their place of origin or their last country of habitual residence, and their future intentions with regards to the country of destination.

The second FMS module contains questions that refer to experiences of exploitation, violence and abuse that may amount to human trafficking. The module was developed

together with IOM's Protection Division's experts and gathers information on events and practices, experienced directly by the respondent or by their family member(s), or that are witnessed by the respondent during the journey.

The third module contains questions related to return intentions. As outreach activities on the existence and functioning of AVRRC were run by IOM in the country, this module of the FMS asks respondents questions on the intention to return to the country of origin and awareness.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

The data presented in this document are representative of the individuals surveyed in the covered locations and during the indicated timeframe. The data should not be generalized and should not represent a full picture of regional migration, but rather one of mixed migratory flows in the specific locations monitored in Albania during the covered period.

It should also be noted that a lower percentage of women of the total migrants in Albania were interviewed, for several reasons, including the fact that there are fewer female enumerators, women tend to be less willing to be interviewed, and that they are more difficult to approach when travelling with male family members. Furthermore, women are more likely to travel in families who tend to organize private accommodation and may therefore be less visible in the locations covered by the data collection.

