

This document is a compilation of data collected by IOM from FRONTEX as well as the Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Maltese interior ministries on migratory movements from Africa to Europe between 2017 and 2023\*\*. IOM works closely with a wide range of actors, including government and non-government partners, to collect and compile this data every quarter. This document presents the situation of migrant arrivals in Europe based on data between 2017 and 2023\*\* from the point of view of movements from West and Central Africa (WCA).

\*\* Data for 2023 covers the period up to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (January – June 2023). These publications regularly update this data and are available on <https://dtm.iom.int/europe/arrivals?type=arrivals> and <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>. Some data on nationalities are only partially available.

### IRREGULAR ARRIVALS TO EUROPE

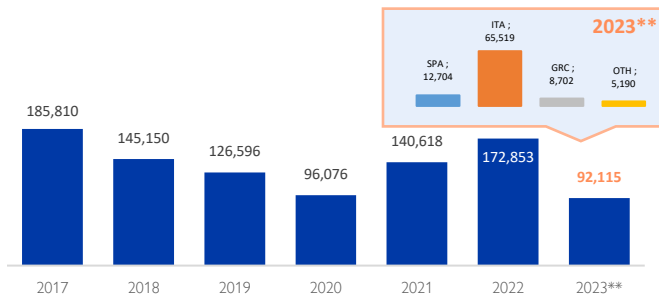


Fig. 1 - Number of irregular migrant arrivals (by sea and land) to Europe, and share by country of destination (2017-2023\*\*)

**Irregular arrivals to Europe (2017-2023\*\*):** Between 2017 and 2023\*\*, 959,218 migrants arrived irregularly in Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta, and Cyprus by sea and land (Fig.1). The total number of arrivals in Europe decreased from 2017 to 2023\*\* and the main destinations vary from year to year. Of these arrivals, **an estimated 251,336 individuals (26%) were nationals of countries in West and Central Africa** (Fig.2). Between January and June 2023, **34,567** nationals from West and Central African countries arrived in Europe.

An increasingly important route to Europe crosses the Atlantic Ocean from the African coasts to the **Canary Islands (Spain)**. In the six months of 2023, **7,213** migrants reached the Canary Islands aboard 150 boats, a drop from the **8,741** migrants who reached the islands aboard 193 boats during the same period in 2022, representing a decrease of 17 per cent of migrants (1,528).

**Nationalities of West and Central African migrants:** Using known nationality data, **38 per cent** of irregular arrivals in Europe in 2023 (up to June 2023) are from West and Central African nationals (Fig. 3), compared to **17 per cent** at the same period in 2022. Among West and Central African migrants arriving irregularly in Europe between 2017 and 2023\*\*, the most frequently recorded nationalities were from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Cameroun. These four nationalities represent more than **70 per cent** of all irregular migrants arriving from West and Central Africa to Europe (Fig.4). On this date, all migrants have been disaggregated by their nationality for the arrivals which took place in 2023\*\*.

### NATIONALITIES

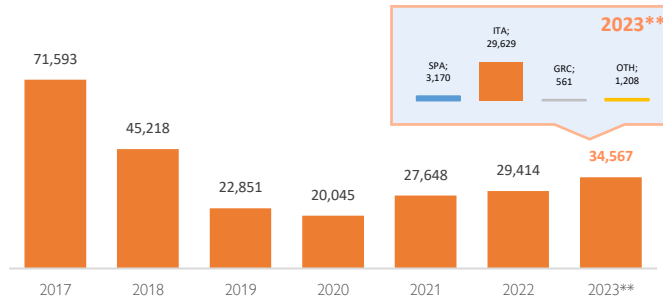


Fig. 2 – Number of WCA nationals who arrived irregularly in Europe by sea and land (2017-2023\*\*)

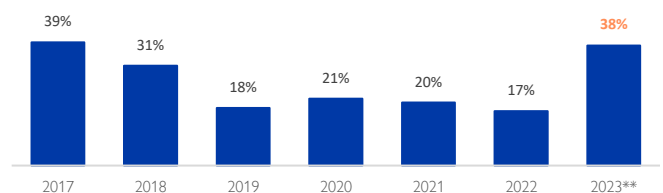


Fig. 3 – Proportion of WCA nationals compared to all informed irregular arrivals\* in Europe (2017-2023\*\*)

**Destination Countries:** Migrants from West and Central Africa continue to favor Italy (Fig.5) as a destination. Of the **34,567** nationals of West and Central African countries who arrived in Europe in 2023\*\*, **86 per cent (or 29,628 migrants) went to Italy, 9 per cent (or 3,170 migrants) to Spain, 3 per cent (or 1,208 migrants) to Cyprus or Malta, and 2 per cent (or 561 migrants) to Greece.**

In particular, the main destination countries for WCA nationals vary according to nationality (Fig.6). Nationals of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Cameroon, Mali, The Gambia, and Burkina Faso mainly prefer Italy as a destination. Nationals of Senegal continue to favor the roads to Spain. Nigerians prefer to travel to Cyprus or Malta.

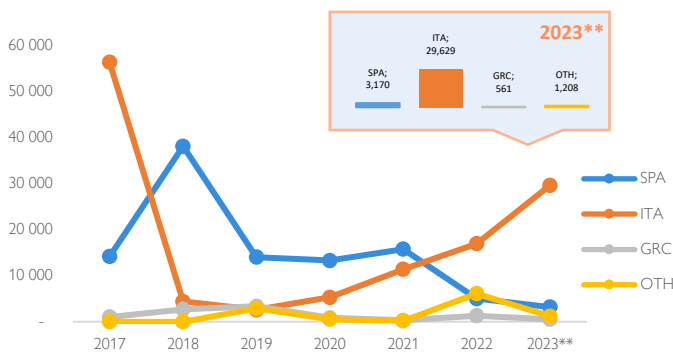


Fig. 5 - Main destination countries in Europe for irregular migrant arrivals from West and Central Africa (2017-2023\*\*)

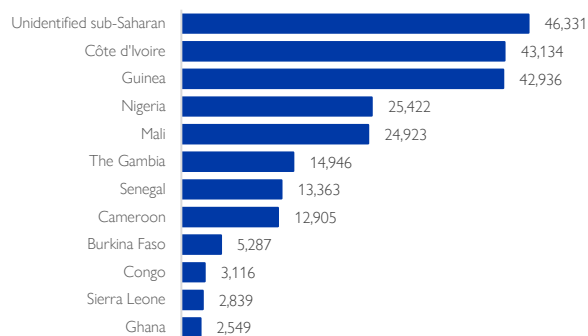


Fig. 4 – Primary nationalities of irregular migrant arrivals from WCA (2017 - 2023\*\*)

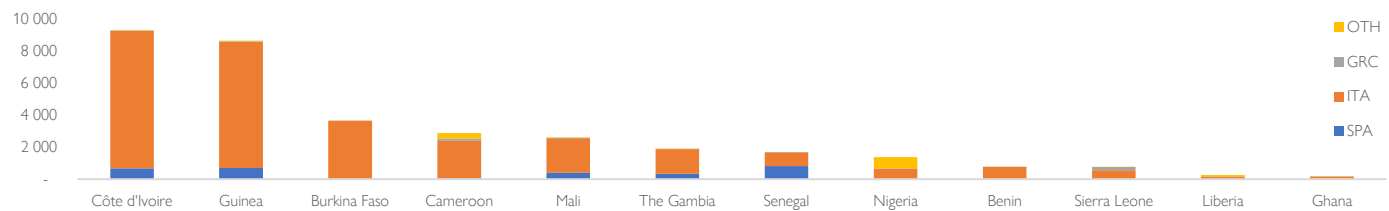


Fig. 6 - Main destination countries for nationals from WCA, by nationality (2023\*\*)

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

\* Proportion of WCA irregular arrivals to Europe in Fig.3 is computed based on known arrivals (80 percent of all arrivals in 2017-2023\*\*) and as such doesn't provide an exhaustive picture of nationalities of arrivals.

\*\* Data for 2023 covers the period up to 30 June 2023 (January – June 2023). This data will be regularly updated in future publications.

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

IOM, through its Missing Migrants Project (MMP), collects and consolidates information on migrants who have died or gone missing during their migratory journeys. This project is essential for a comprehensive response in reducing the risks associated with migratory movements and addressing the needs of families of missing migrants.

The data available on migrants who have died or have gone missing are incomplete due to the hazards of irregular journeys, including the remoteness of migratory routes in the WCA region. In addition, a lack of official data on missing migrants means that hard-to-access eyewitnesses are often the only source of information on migrant deaths. The data

presented in this report is mostly collected by IOM missions and the authorities following search and rescue activities. Many other cases of deaths or disappearances on the migratory routes likely go unreported. The data presented in this report is therefore not entirely exhaustive and probably underestimates the reality of these deaths and disappearances along the migration routes from West and Central Africa towards North Africa or Europe.

\*\* Data for 2023 covers the period up to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (January – June 2023). This data will be regularly updated in future publications and is available at <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>. Data on nationalities is only partially available.

CMR: Central Mediterranean Route  
WMR: Western Mediterranean Route  
WAAR: West African Atlantic Route  
Other Routes: Other Routes in West and Central Africa (Sahara Desert, for instance).

In total, 2,191 migrants disappeared while trying to cross the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the Sahara Desert between January and June 2023\*\*. Disappearances are mainly linked to suspicions of drowning, dehydration, or hypothermia. In most cases of death or disappearance, the nationality of individuals is usually unknown.

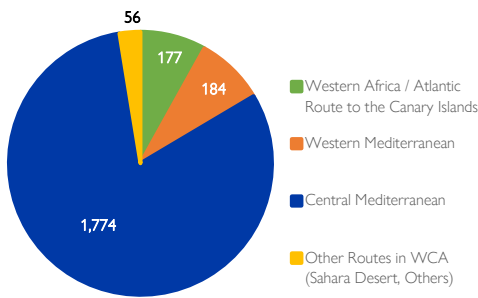


Fig. 7 - Migratory route along which migrant deaths and disappearances were recorded in 2023\*\*

	Drowning	Lack of food, water, shelter	Mixed or unknown	Violence	Vehicle incident	Sickness	Accidental death
CMR	1,752	14	4	-	-	3	1
WAAR	165	9	1	2	-	-	-
WMR	182	2	-	-	-	-	-
Other Routes	-	2	11	3	35	3	2

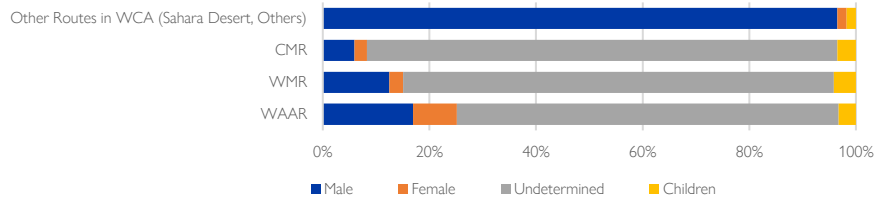


Fig. 8 – Breakdown by gender and age of migrants who died or disappeared on the roads in 2023\*\*

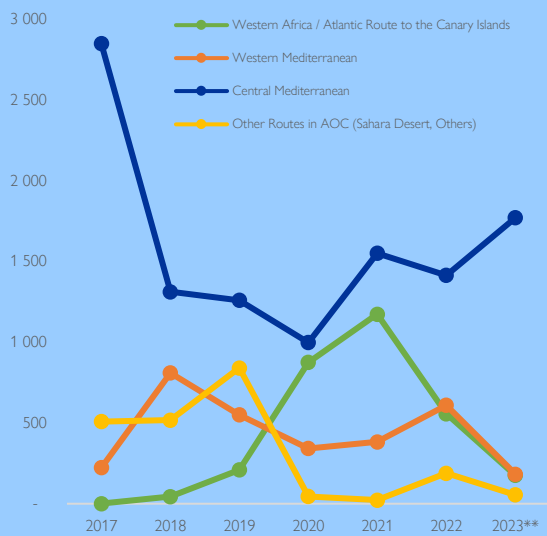
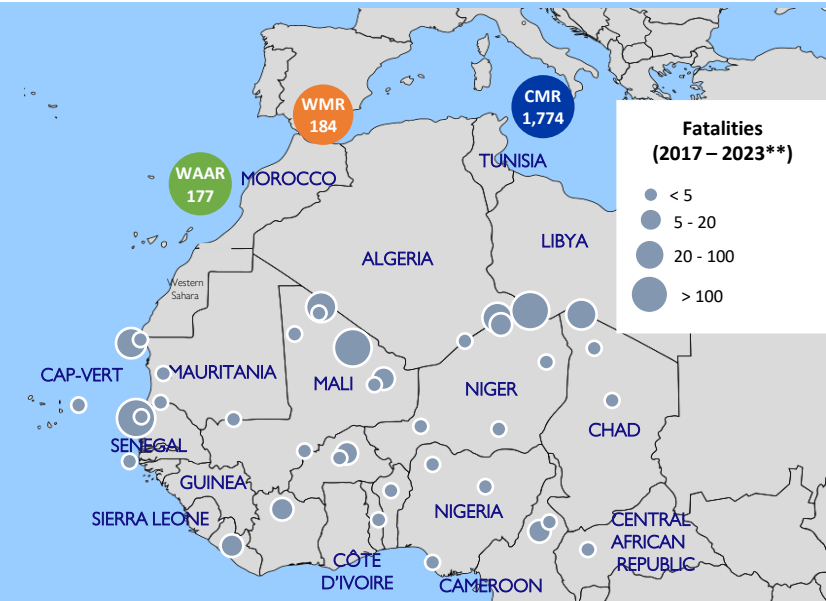


Fig. 9 – Number of migrant deaths and disappearances by migratory route leading from West and Central Africa to Europe (2017 - 2023\*\*)



2,191

Total deaths or disappearances (January – June 2023) recorded along the CMR, WAAR, WMR, and other routes in West and Central Africa (for instance through the Sahara desert, northern Mali and Niger, towards the border with Algeria).

NOTES ON SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES:

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