

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 2024. 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 2024 from the point of view of movements from West and Central Africa (WCA).

## IRREGULAR ARRIVALS TO EUROPE

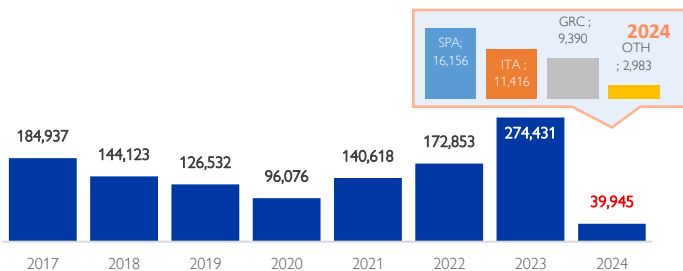


Fig.1 - Number of irregular migrant arrivals (by sea and land) to Europe

**Irregular arrivals to Europe (2017-2024):** Between 2017 and March 2024, 1,179,515 migrants arrived irregularly in Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta, and Cyprus by sea and land (Fig.1). The total number of arrivals to Europe is slightly higher in the first quarter of 2024 with 39,945, compared to the first quarter of 2017 (the reference year of this report) when 33,706 migrants arrived irregularly. From 2017 to March 2024, an estimated 335,689 people (28 per cent) were nationals of West and Central African countries (Fig.2). Between January and March 2024, 14,877 nationals from West and Central African countries arrived in Europe, representing 37 per cent of all arrivals in the first quarter of 2024.

An increasingly important route to Europe crosses the Atlantic Ocean from the African coast to the Canary Islands (Spain). In the first quarter of 2024, 13,115 migrants reached the Canary Islands (on board 201 boats), an increase of 502 per cent (+10,937 migrants) compared to the 2,178 migrants who reached the islands on board 51 boats in the same period in 2023.

**Nationalities of West and Central African migrants:** Using known nationality data, 37 per cent of all irregular arrivals to Europe in the first quarter of 2024 are from West and Central Africa (Fig.3), compared to 39 per cent in 2023. Among West and Central African migrants arriving irregularly in Europe between 2017 and March 2024, the most frequently recorded nationals were from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal. These four countries account for over 54 per cent of all irregular migrants from West and Central African countries arriving in Europe (Fig.4). At this time, all migrants were disaggregated by nationality for arrivals that took place in 2024.

## NATIONALITIES

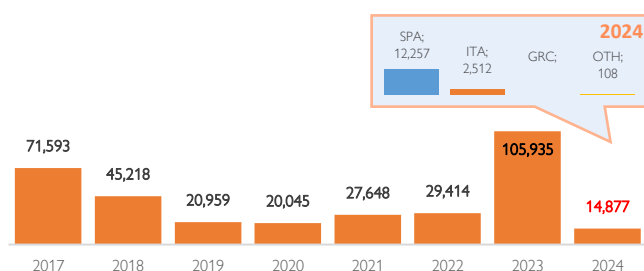


Fig.2 – Number of West and Central African nationals irregularly arrived to Europe (by sea and land), 2017-2024

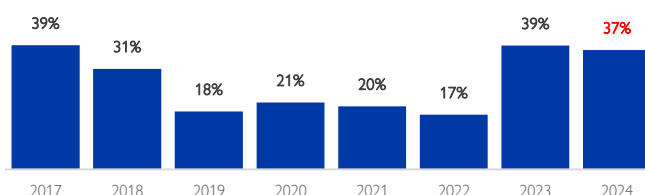


Fig.3 – Proportion of WCA nationals among all reported irregular arrivals to Europe (2017-2024)

**Destination countries:** Migrants from West and Central Africa continue to favor Spain as a destination (Fig.5). Of the 14,877 nationals from West and Central African countries who arrived in Europe in the first quarter of 2024, 82 per cent (or 12,257 migrants) headed to Spain, 17 per cent (or 2,512 migrants) to Italy, and 1 per cent (or 108 migrants) to Cyprus or Malta.

In particular, the main destination countries for WCA nationals vary according to their nationality (Fig.6). Nationals from Mali and Senegal favor routes to Spain, while Guineans, Cameroonians, and Ivorians tend to go more to Italy.

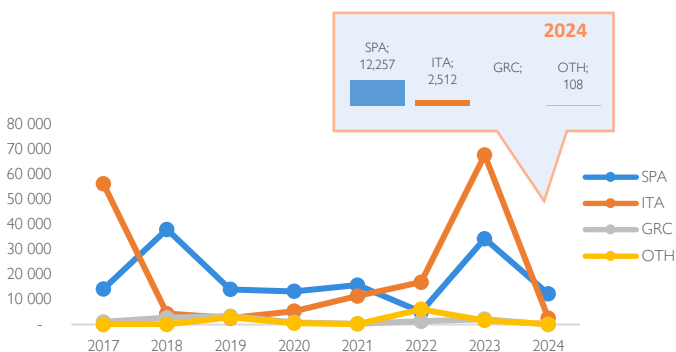


Fig.5 - Main destinations Countries for irregular migrant arrivals from West and Central Africa (2017-2024)

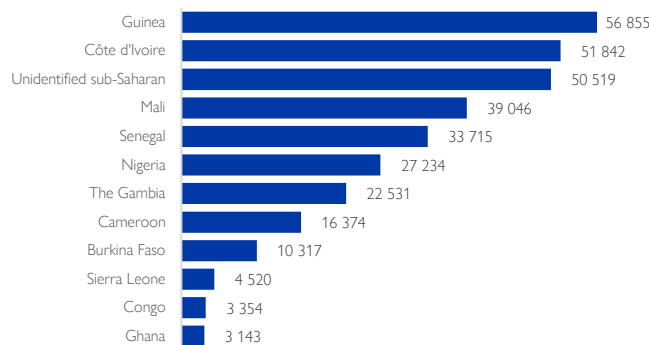


Fig.4 – Primary nationalities of irregular migrant arrivals from West or Central Africa (2017 – 2024)

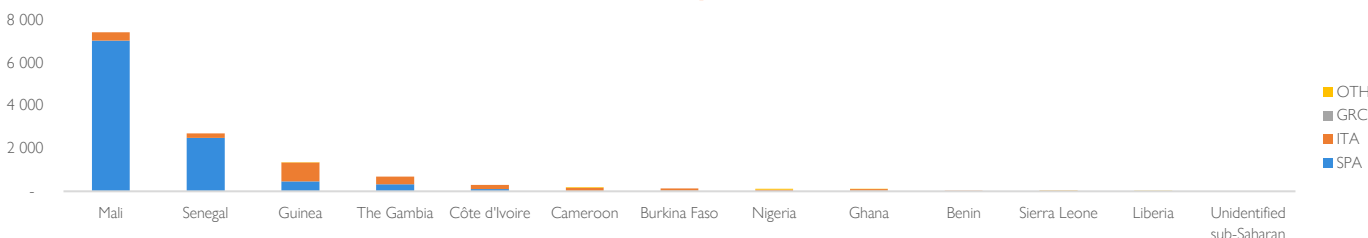


Fig. 6- Main destination countries for nationals from West or Central Africa, by nationality (2024)

**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)).

- NOTES:**
- OTH refers to the countries of Cyprus and Malta.
  - Data for 2024 covers the period up to March 31st, 2024 (January - March 2024).
  - These publications regularly update this data and are available on <https://dtm.iom.int/europe/arrivals?type=arrivals> and <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.

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 2024 covers the period up to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 (January - March 2023). 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, 689 migrants disappeared while trying to cross the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, and the Sahara Desert between January and March 2024.**

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.

|              | Drowning | Lack of food, water, shelter | Mixed or unknown | Violence | Vehicle accident | Sickness | Accidental death |
|--------------|----------|------------------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|----------|------------------|
| CMR          | 316      | 60                           | 1                | -        | 5                | 1        | -                |
| WAAR         | 31       | 83                           | 5                | -        | -                | -        | -                |
| WMR          | 95       | -                            | 1                | -        | -                | -        | -                |
| Other Routes | -        | 3                            | 66               | 1        | 21               | -        | -                |

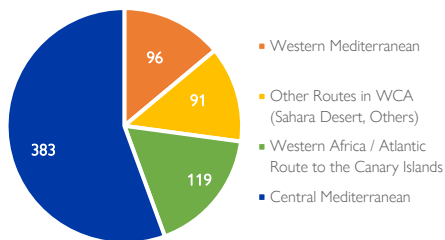


Fig.7 - Migratory route along which migrant deaths and disappearances were recorded in 2024.

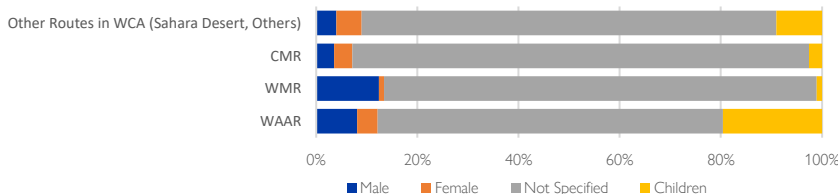


Fig. 8 – Breakdown by gender and age of migrants who died or disappeared on the roads in 2024

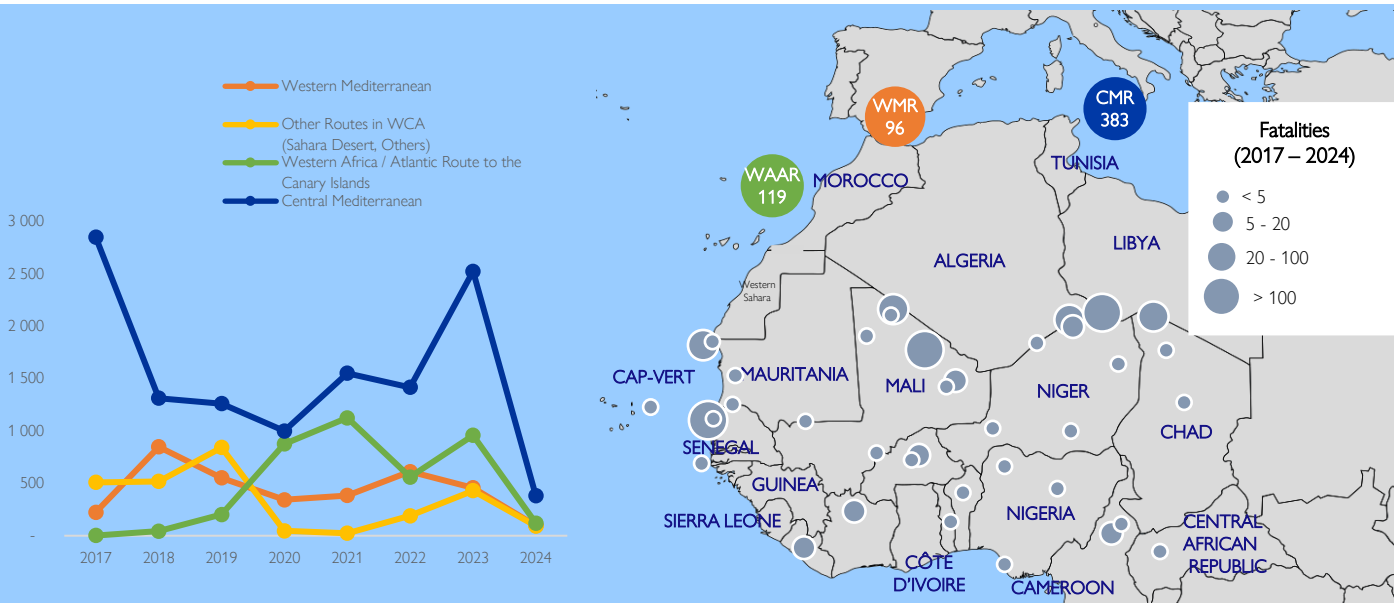


Fig.9 - Number of migrant deaths and disappearances by migratory route leading from West and Central Africa to Europe (2017-2024)

689

Total deaths or disappearances (January – March 2024) 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.