

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 on a quarterly basis. This document presents the situation of migrant arrivals in Europe based on data for 2021 from the point of view of movements from West and Central Africa (WCA).

* Data for 2023 covers the period up to March 31, 2023 (January – March 2023). This data is regularly updated in these publications and is available on <https://dtm.iom.int/europe/arrivals?type=arrivals> and <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>. Some data on nationalities are only partially available.

ARRIVALS TO EUROPE

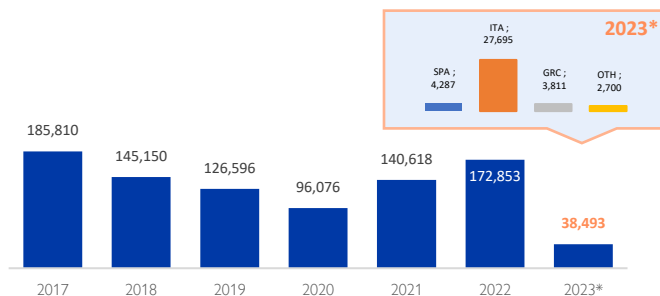


Fig. 1 - Number of irregular migrant arrivals (by sea and land) to Europe, and share of migrants from West and Central Africa (2017-2023*)

Arrivals to Europe (2017-2022): Between 2017 and 2022*, 905,596 migrants arrived irregularly in Italy, Spain, Greece, Malta and Cyprus by sea and land (Fig.1). Total number of arrivals in Europe decreased over the period of 2017–2022* and the main destinations vary from year to year. Of these arrivals, an estimated 234,093 individuals (26 per cent) were nationals of countries in West and Central Africa (Fig.2). Between January and March 2023, 17,324 nationals from West and Central African countries arrived in Europe.

An increasingly important route to Europe crosses the Atlantic Ocean from African coasts to the Canary Islands (Spain). Large numbers of migrants have attempted to reach these islands since mid-2019. In the three months of 2023, 2,178 migrants reached the Canary Islands aboard 51 boats, a drop from the 5,940 migrants who reached the islands aboard 123 boats during the same period in 2022, a lower increase of 63 per cent of migrants (3,762).

Nationalities of West and Central African migrants: Using known nationality data, 45 per cent of irregular arrivals in Europe in 2023 (up to March 2023) are from West and Central African nationals, compared to 17 per cent in all of 2022 (Fig. 3). Among West and Central African migrants arriving irregularly in Europe during all these years, the most frequently recorded nationalities were nationals of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria and Mali. 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 nationalities are disaggregated by nationality.

NATIONALITIES

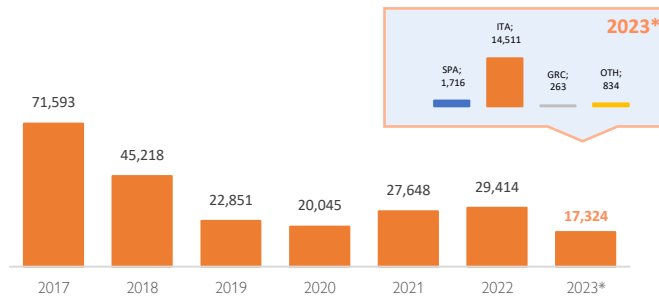


Fig. 2 – Number of West and Central African nationals arrived irregularly in Europe (by sea and land), 2017-2023*

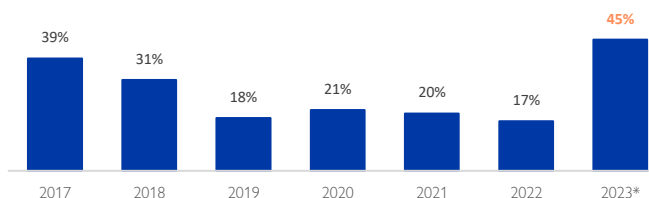


Fig. 3 – Proportion of ressortissants AOC par rapport à l'ensemble des arrivées irrégulières informées** en Europe, 2017-2023*

Destination Countries: Migrants from West and Central Africa continue to favor Italy and Spain (Fig.5). Of the 17,324 nationals of West and Central African countries who arrived in Europe in 2023*, 84 per cent (or 14,511 migrants) went to Italy, 9 per cent (or 1,716 migrants) to Spain, 5 per cent (or 834 migrants) in Cyprus and Malta, and 1% (or 263 migrants) in Greece.

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

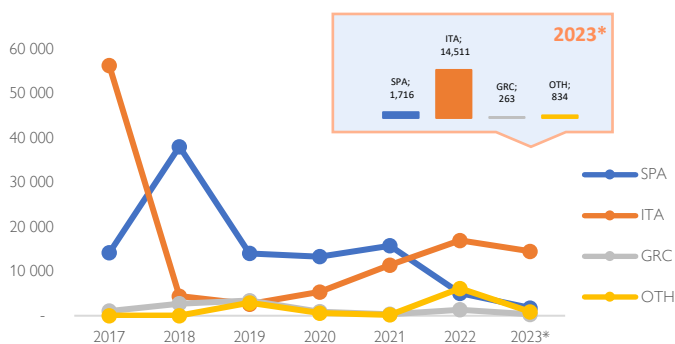


Fig. 5 - Main destinations Countries for irregular migrant arrivals from West and Central Africa (2017-2023*)

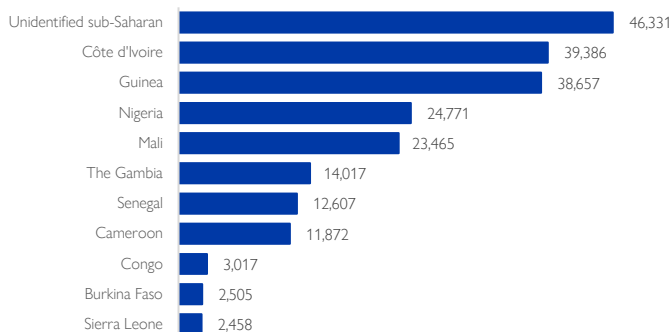


Fig. 4 – Primary nationalities of irregular migrant arrivals from West or Central Africa in 2017 - 2023*

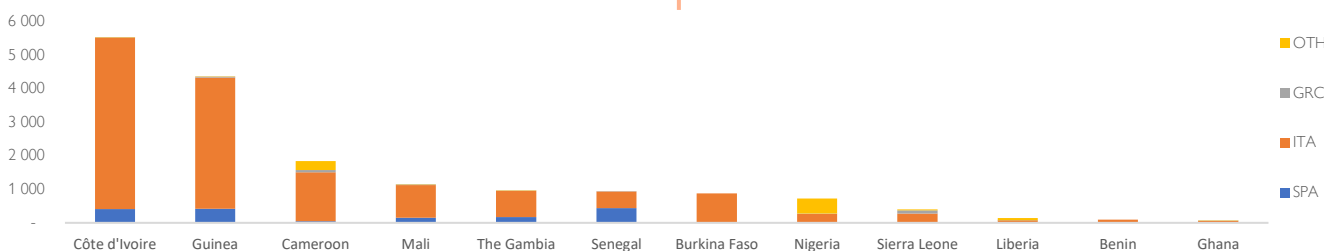


Fig. 6- Main destination countries for nationals from West or Central Africa, by nationality (2023*)

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).

* Data for 2023 covers the period up to 31 March 2023 (January – March 2023). This data will be regularly updated in future publications.

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

Many travel accounts collected from migrant's 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 are 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 are therefore not entirely exhaustive and probably underestimate the reality of these deaths and disappearances along the migration routes from West and Central Africa toward North Africa and Europe.

Data for 2023* covers the period up to March 31, 2023 (January – March 2023). These data will be regularly updated in future publications. And is available on <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>. Some data on nationalities are 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, 532 people disappeared while trying to cross the Mediterranean and the Atlantic between January and March 2023. Disappearances are mainly linked to suspicions of drowning, dehydration or hypothermia. In most cases of death or disappearance, the nationality of individuals is unknown.

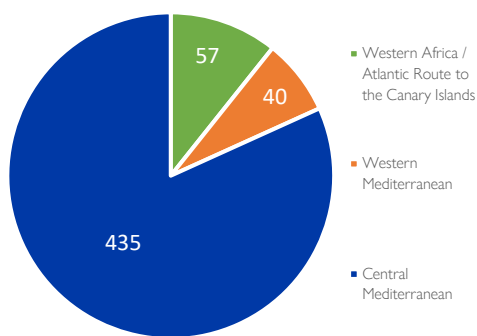


Fig.7 – Migratory route along which migrant deaths and disappearances were recorded in 2023*

	Drowning (Presumed)	Lack of food, water, shelter	Mixed or Unknown	Violence	Vehicle accident	Sickness	Accidental death
CMR	420	12	1	-	-	1	1
WAAR	48	9	-	-	-	-	-
WMR	40	-	-	-	-	-	-

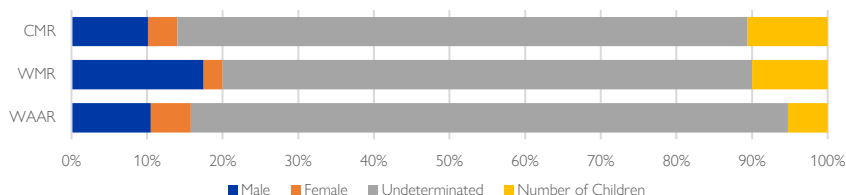


Fig. 8 – Breakdown by Gender and Vulnerability of migrants who die or disappear on the roads in 2023*.

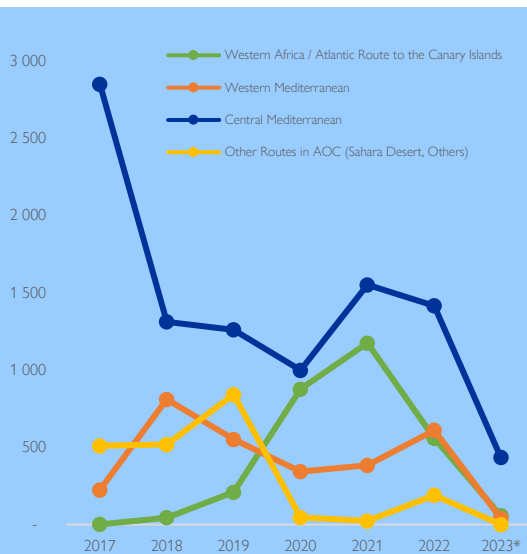
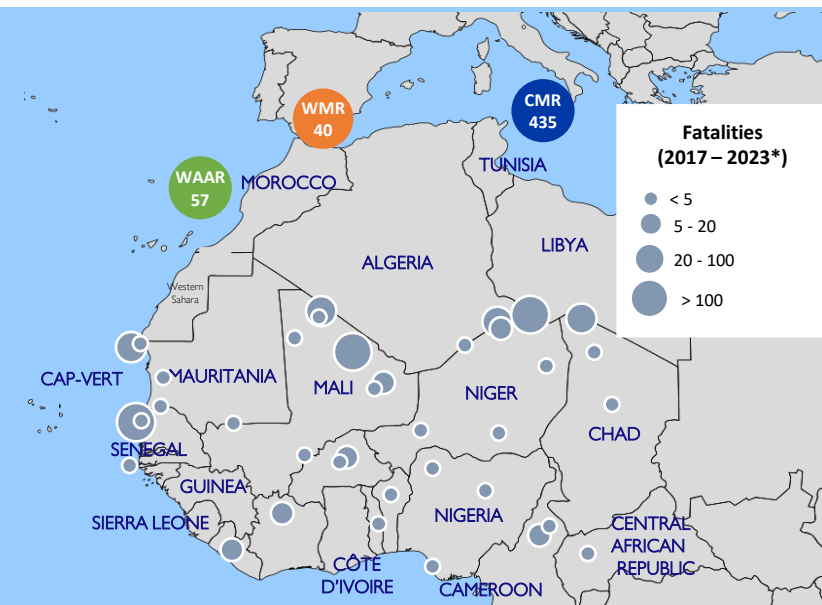


Fig. 9 – Number of migrant deaths and disappearances by migratory route leading from West and Central Africa to Europe, 2017-2023*



532

Total deaths or disappearances (January – March 2023) recorded along the CMR, WAAR, WMR and Other Routes in West and Central Africa (Sahara Desert, Other (In northern Mali and Niger, towards the border with Algeria, in other regional centres, etc.)).

NOTES ON SOURCES AND METHOLOGIES:

The existing data on deaths and disappearances of migrants in West and Central Africa have 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 were 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.