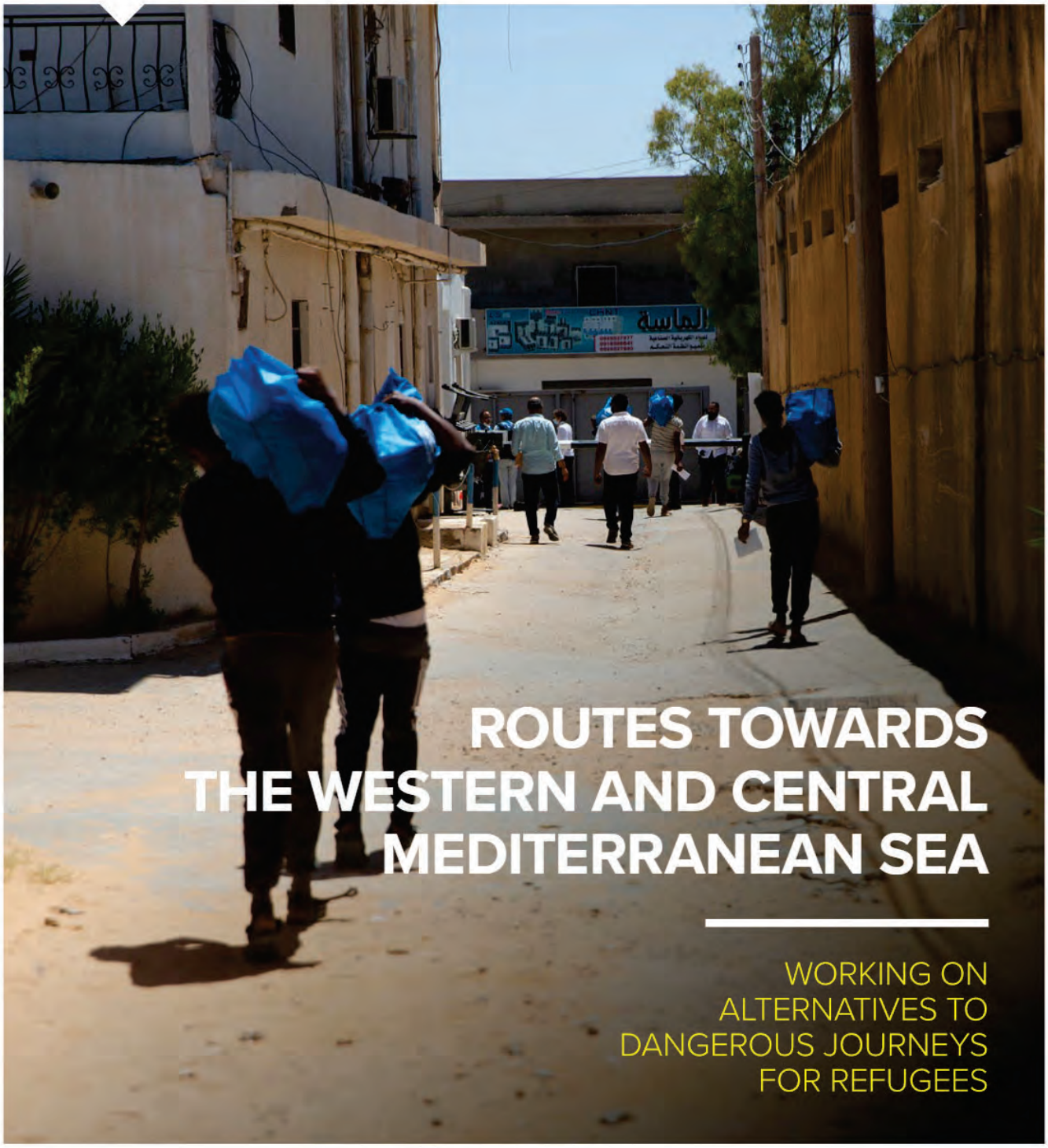
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



ROUTES TOWARDS THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN SEA

WORKING ON ALTERNATIVES TO DANGEROUS JOURNEYS FOR REFUGEES

UNHCR's Updated
Risk Mitigation Strategy and Appeal

January 2021

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WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

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Key Figures

At least **1,064** people are believed to have died or gone missing while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from North Africa in 2020

34,154 people arrived by sea to Italy in 2020, almost 3 times more than 2019

808 direct humanitarian evacuations from Libya to Italy since Nov 2017

1,567 refugees resettled from Libya since Nov 2017

209% increase in sea departures from Algeria in 2020 as compared to 2019

310% increase in sea departures from Tunisia in 2020 as compared to 2019

58% increase in sea departures from Libya in 2020 as compared to 2019

23,023 arrivals in Canary Islands, Spain, in 2020, 753% increase from 2019

An estimated **480** people are believed dead or gone missing in the Atlantic coastal waters in 2020

3,876 refugees and asylum-seekers evacuated from Libya to Niger and Rwanda since Nov 2017

Based on 4Mi survey data in 2018 and 2019.

See UNHCR and MMC, *On this journey, no one cares if you live or die*, July 2020.

At least **6,100** people affected by SGBV along the routes in 2018 and 2019

18%

increase in persons of concern to UNHCR in the West and Central Africa region in 2020

At least **1,825** people believed to have died along land routes from East and West Africa to Libya and Egypt in 2020

Based on 4Mi survey data in 2018 and 2019, as well as additional open sources.

UNHCR and MMC, *On this journey, no one cares if you live or die*, July 2020

3,961 new arrivals from Eritrea to Eastern Sudan in 2020, including 331 UASCs

55,000 refugees from Ethiopia fled to Sudan in Nov and Dec 2020 due to clashes in Tigray region

Introduction

The dangerous irregular mixed movements of refugees and migrants across the Sahara Desert towards and through North African countries as well as via the sea routes to Italy, Malta, and Spain continue to take a devastating toll on human life.

In 2020, some 1,550[1] refugees and migrants were reported dead or gone missing in irregular movements at sea from West and North Africa to Italy, Malta and Spain. While some 524 of these losses occurred as people tried to cross the sea from Libya, often on overcrowded inflatable boats which sometimes capsized or deflated, a further 201 people, majority West African, drowned trying to cross the sea from Tunisia. Also, as the number of people trying to cross to the Canary Islands from West and North Africa increased, so too did the number of deaths and people gone missing with at least 480 reported in 2020. In addition, many others died along land routes through the desert, in detention centres, or in the captivity of smugglers or traffickers. A joint report by UNHCR and the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) published earlier this year indicated that some 1,750 people may have died along the land routes to and through Libya and Egypt between 2018 and 2019, an average of at least 72 deaths* a month. At least a further 85 deaths have been recorded along land routes in 2020,* including 30 people killed by traffickers in Mizdah, Libya, in May.* It is however important to note that many more deaths are likely to go unrecorded.

UNHCR and MMC *On this journey no one cares if you live or die* July 2020

Based on media reports, incidents recorded in IOM's Missing Migrants database, and additional open source reports.

AP, *Shooting at smuggling warehouse in Libya kills 30 migrants*, 28 May 2020

Extrajudicial killings, being left to die in the desert, torture including to extract ransoms, gender-based violence and exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage and other gross human rights abuses are among the many risks faced by people as they travel from West Africa or the East and Horn of Africa to and through North Africa.*

UN Security Council, *Implementation of resolution 2491 (2019)*, 2 September 2020

1 Dead and missing figures are compiled from a variety of sources. The methods and reliability of which can vary. While every effort has been made to ensure that all available information is verified, figures on dead and missing at sea represent an estimate. Triangulation of information and sources is performed on a continuous basis. Therefore amendments in figures may occur, including retroactively.

The joint report by UNHCR and MMC* highlighted these multiple risks, reflected some of the key locations where they are more acute, and noted that refugees and migrants face the possibility of violence from multiple actors along the route.

AP, *Shooting at smuggling warehouse in Libya kills 30 migrants*, 28 May 2020

For example, according to survey data presented in the report, the main perpetrators of gender-based violence against asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants are human traffickers and smugglers, while law enforcement authorities, security forces, police or military as well as border guards or immigration officials were reported to be primarily responsible for the incidents of physical violence, especially in West Africa. Criminal gangs, often operating with the protection of armed groups, are also responsible for some of these abuses.

> *"From Somalia, I was with other people leaving. I travelled from Somalia to Ethiopia in a car. Then I stopped in Addis Ababa. I spent five days there, and from there I found smugglers and I travelled to Sudan. To cross the border, I did not have to give a lot of money. After I arrived in Sudan, immediately we went to Khartoum. We spent a few days also there, then we found smugglers to take us from Sudan to Libya through the desert. From Sudan to Libya, they told us that we did not have to pay any money [prior to departing].*
>
> *I spent only six days in the desert, some people spend much more time like one month in the desert. I was lucky. When you are crossing through the road, you find dead people who were killed. People who died of dehydration. Sometimes you spend 24 hours without water. All of these things happen. The worst was seeing people on the side of the road who had died of dehydration, lack of water. I witnessed this. Because although the Libyan drivers have water, if you ask them to give you some water, maybe they shoot you because they have guns. So you do not ask."*
>
> Unaccompanied Somali boy who arrived in Malta

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UNHCR Associate Protection Officer Tamara Saade explains the emergency cash assistance system to a Syrian refugee at a community centre in Naudecheft as part of financial aid for urban refugees during the COVID-19 lockdown.

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DEVELOPMENTS IN 2020

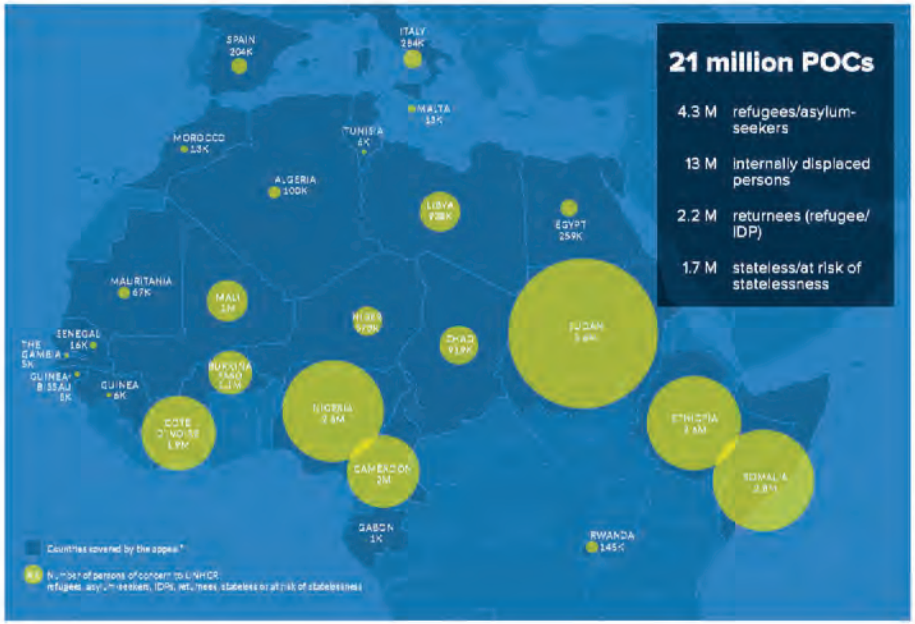
UNHCR, COVID-19 Platform: Temporary Measures and Impact on Protection, no date

Measures taken by several States to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, such as border closures*, and the global decrease in remittances from diaspora communities due to the impact of the pandemic may have temporarily interrupted or delayed some movements. However, many smugglers were quick to adapt and to offer alternative ways to bypass official controls by using different routes with adapted criminal business models.

During 2020, people continued to embark on these dangerous journeys from their countries of origin for many different reasons. Primary movements from countries of origin are often due to very limited life prospects and thus people migrate in search of better economic, social or educational opportunities elsewhere. Among them are many who have been lured by attractive offers from traffickers about opportunities in Europe or people fed misinformation by smugglers about the ease of the journey. Sometimes diaspora groups abroad encourage people to embark on these journeys by concealing the risks involved and by financing the costs. Lack of efficient and inclusive access to family reunification procedures or to other legal migration pathways from the countries of origin constitute in this regard a driver for some of these movements. Other people are forced to flee from persecution, conflict, and violence in their own countries to find refuge in countries that will welcome them, grant them asylum, and protect them.

Some people, however, may leave their countries of origin due to a combination of persecution, insecurity, and economic factors, making it challenging for States with weak asylum and migration management systems and capacities to identify persons in need of international protection and to process requests for entry, stay, or possible return of migrants.

MAP 1 • **Countries covered by the appeal and number of persons of concern to UNHCR in these countries**



Persons of concern to UNHCR are those whose protection and assistance needs are of interest to UNHCR. This includes refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless people, internally displaced people and returnees.

Regardless of the reasons why people undertake these journeys, all face similar risks of gross human rights abuses along the routes. For its part, UNHCR is seeking to mitigate these risks by strengthening cooperation with countries of asylum, transit, and destination in order to provide better protection and solutions for asylum-seekers, refugees, and other persons of concern to UNHCR* through this strategy. Similarly, UNHCR continues to engage with countries of origin to create conditions for dignified and sustainable return and reintegration of refugees and IDPs and working with communities, to try to address some of the triggers of departures including those not relating to international protection needs. Simultaneously, where possible and appropriate, UNHCR will engage with countries of origin for voluntary repatriation and reintegration of refugees while also investing in communication with home-based communities on initiatives such as "Telling the Real Story" in order to prevent smuggling and trafficking of human beings.

UNHCR, *In 12 months Sahel violence displaces more than 765,000 in Burkina Faso*, 21 February 2020

UNHCR, *UNHCR warns of mounting needs in Sahel as forced displacement intensifies*, 16 October 2020

UNHCR, *Nigeria violence sees 23,000 refugees flee into Niger in last month alone*, 12 May 2020

UNHCR, *UNHCR expands aid as Ivorian refugee numbers top 8,000*, 10 November 2020

UNHCR, *Clashes in Ethiopia's Tigray region force thousands to flee to Sudan*, 11 November 2020

The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 has seriously affected the wellbeing and resilience of entire populations both in countries of origin, as well as in countries along the routes which host refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants. Due to continuing insecurity and conflict, notably in the Sahel but also in other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, mass forced population displacement continues unabated* and countless individuals and communities have lost their homes and livelihoods, and the most vulnerable have started to sell their belongings to survive. Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camp settings seem to be less affected than those living in urban areas where resilience efforts have been brutally interrupted. A report providing analysis of measures taken by States to control the pandemic also highlighted the fact that refugees and asylum-seekers are not always included in national responses in terms of access to medical services, documentation, food distribution/public assistance, and social safety nets.*

In 2020, significant secondary movements of asylum-seekers and refugees from the countries to which they had initially fled continued in a context where the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 has been significant. For instance, it is estimated that the loss of livelihoods or income for refugees in North Africa varied from 90% of refugees in Morocco* to 60% of refugees and migrants in Tunisia.* Some 60% of all surveyed refugees could not even meet half their basic needs. Many were selling their possessions to buy food (40%), taking loans (26%), unable to pay rent (22%), moving to less secure shelter (11%), taking their children out of school (10%)*, and resorting to begging (8%).[1] As noted in a recent UNHCR report on education and COVID-19, refugee learners who stopped attending school during lockdowns are less likely to re-enroll especially female refugee learners, contributing to an already noteworthy gender gap in access to education among persons of concern to UNHCR.[2] The available data does not, however, give a clear picture of what the impact of this will be in terms of possible changes in the mobility decisions of asylum-seekers and refugees. Data is also lacking for IDP populations, such as those displaced in the Sahel.

Mixed Migration Centre, *The impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants in Tunisia – a focus on employment and livelihoods: 4Mi snapshot*, July 2020

UNHCR and IOM, *COVID-19 and mixed population movements: Emerging dynamics, risks and opportunities*, May 2020

Haut-Commissariat au Plan, *Enquête sur l'impact de Covid-19 sur la situation socioéconomique et psychologique des réfugiés au Maroc*

Seven million refugee children were impacted by school closures during the 1st phase of the pandemic.

UNHCR, *Don't let COVID-19 pandemic derail refugee education*, 23 September 2020

1 A recent survey undertaken by UNHCR Tunisia revealed that an overwhelming number of asylum-seekers and refugees (93%) reported having no income while 40% were at imminent risk of eviction. A significant majority of these households also reported no longer being able to afford basic necessities (98%), including food and medication.

2 According to an internal UNHCR report "24 million are of school age. Their access to education is limited, with 4 million unable to attend school. Some 1,645,000 refugee (PoC) children and youth who were in school in 29 countries before the pandemic are currently not attending due to (temporary) closures. As noted in a recent UNHCR report on education during COVID-19, "The post-lockdown blackout for refugee girls is particularly grim. By analysing UNHCR data on school enrolment, the Malala Fund has estimated that half of all refugee girls in school will not return when classrooms reopen [...]. For countries where refugee girls' gross secondary enrolment was already low, more than 90 percent are at risk of dropping out for good. That is a chilling prediction, which would deprive an entire generation of refugees of their right to learn." UNHCR, *Coming Together for Refugee Education*, Report, September 2020, pp. 5-6, https://www.unhcr.org/5f4f3a2b4.

"I left my country with a friend because of the insecurity situation in Guinea. We passed through Mali, Algeria and finally arrived to Morocco. The travel was very hard. It took me two years to arrive in Spain. My friend continued to Algeria directly but as I did not have enough money, I worked in Mali and then Algeria for several months. Many times, they did not pay me for the work done. I finally found back my friend in Morocco in the forest next to Nador. Early one morning, we left for Spain.

There were too many people in the boat. Some of us refused to cross the sea like this, but we did not have any other choice, the smugglers were threating us with long knives and would not have returned our money back. After hours on the boat, it began to break. People were screaming, praying. There were women and children. Everything went fast. People were in the water. I could hold on to the rest of the boat. I tried to help my friend but I could not reach him. I saw him taken away by the current. I saw a woman with two children in her arms drowning. When I am sleeping, I see them..."

—Guinean man who arrived in Spain

Insufficient data exists to measure the scope and volume of secondary movements of refugees, asylum-seekers or migrants from their country where they first sought refuge or moved to. Available information is often anecdotal or otherwise relies mainly on verification exercises regularly undertaken by UNHCR to determine whether refugees and asylum-seekers are still living at the address where they resided when they registered with UNHCR or Government partners, or whether they may have moved onwards.

Available data from countries along the routes leading to North Africa shows significant variations in this respect. It is for instance estimated that most of the 59,500 Malian refugees registered in Niger have remained in Niger even if many experienced displacement and relocations during 2020 due to security problems in Niger. UNHCR also considers based on focus group discussions with refugees that the vast majority of the 157,000 Nigerian refugees remained in the Diffa and Maradi regions of Niger. However, it is important to note that, while continuous registration takes place, no verification of these two refugee populations in Niger took place since 2018. 162 of the 389 Nigerian refugees who returned home in 2020 fled to Niger again along with 619 of the Malians out of the 4,152 who opted for return. It is also believed that significant numbers of the new arrivals in 2019 and early 2020 among Eritrean asylum-seekers in Sudan and Ethiopia continued their onward journey to reach Egypt or Libya.* Data for the month of August 2020 suggests that 30% of the persons apprehended while crossing the western border of Egypt to go to Libya had previously registered with UNHCR Cairo. Data based on biometric checks undertaken by UNHCR between January to June 2020 indicates that a total of 4,215 individuals known to UNHCR in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region had since moved onwards. Within the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, most of those moving onwards remained within the region (74%), with 26% moving out of the region. However, checks are not systematically made or technically possible when people leave the region. Partial data from UNHCR regarding unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) shows an onward rate of 43% from the reception camp in Shagarab, eastern Sudan, over period of a year.

*The data is not precise as Ethiopia changed its registration policy for newcomers in January 2020. For eastern Sudan, 43% of the UASCs moved onward in 2019 and the percentage went down to 39% between January and March 2020. However, not all newly-arrived Eritrean UASCs register with the competent authorities. Some move onward before the registration at Shagarab camp.

© UNHCR / S. CHERKAOUI

[illegible]

This data must however be taken with some caution, as some of these refugees and asylum-seekers are no longer in contact with UNHCR in the country of first refuge but may have moved to another location within that same country. Other refugees move onwards from the country of first refuge and sometimes approach UNHCR in different countries. In this case, as they are registered, their biometric details are captured, which also enables UNHCR to be informed about previous registration with UNHCR in another country.

The motives for these secondary and often dangerous movements are rarely pre-planned nor do they arise out of personal convenience. Challenges cited by refugees in some asylum countries include under resourced registration and RSD systems, particularly in remote areas, and lack of legal access to employment and means of making a livelihood as well as the legal and officially recognized documentation that would facilitate access to State's public services or reside legally.* In addition, UNHCR-issued certificates often do not lead to the issuance of a residence

*Registration backlogs in most countries covered by this appeal have substantially increased during the first phase of the pandemic leading to long waiting times for asylum-seekers to register with UNHCR, to be issued documentation and attend – where applicable – an individual refugee status determination interview. Indicators for selected countries are for Tunisia, a 42% increase for Q3 with almost 2,000 persons awaiting registration. In Mauritania, the backlog has increased by 76% between March and October 2020 with 6,200 persons awaiting registration in urban areas.

permit by the host country and affects access to services, or work or study authorization. Where States are not able or not willing to assume their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, UNHCR has to continue to step in with limited resources leading to some of these backlogs to service asylum-seekers and refugees.

Other key factors for secondary movements include:

- **the lack of shelter assistance during the period of the refugee status determination process;**
- **the lack of effective and inclusive access to family reunification procedures;**
- **the lack of access to secondary or tertiary education;**
- **the lack of skills development activities for people between the ages of 15 and 24;**
- **the lack of access to livelihoods; and**
- **the lack of foster care family systems for unaccompanied or separated children.**

Others may also move because of conflict, human rights violations, or other targeted protection-related incidents in the country to which they fled.

Programmes which deliver protection and improve wellbeing have a major and stabilizing impact on the life of asylum-seekers and refugees both *in situ* and on the move, and their absence as well as the lack of effective protection and assistance can directly encourage them to consider dangerous journeys, which would expose them to heightened risk of gross human rights violations. In summary, the lack of programmatic responses to address the protection, assistance, and long-term solutions needs of asylum-seekers and refugees in countries of asylum and transit will contribute to people being increasingly willing to explore options elsewhere, including those presented by smugglers or traffickers. However, such programmatic responses also require increased political will to strengthen or develop enabling laws and regulations to guarantee the legal status of refugees on their territories and that will enable the exercise of basic rights, such as the right to decent work.

Data gathered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirms that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on patterns of mobility along the routes to and through North Africa that for some continue to Italy, Malta or Spain. Movement fell dramatically on all parts of the route in the second quarter of 2020 as lockdowns and border closures were imposed. Subsequent developments have been more varied. In Libya, the total number of refugees and migrants in the country has slightly reduced, with limited new arrivals, continuing expulsions,[*] and ongoing departures towards both Europe and elsewhere in Africa.[*] In July, more people travelled from Libya to Niger than vice versa, a reversal of the typical pattern over the last four years.[*] In the Sahel region, a sharp decline in April 2020 has been followed by a surge in movement and monthly entries to Mali, predominantly from Burkina Faso, reached the highest level ever recorded by IOM in November.[*]

These journeys are increasingly taking place along irregular routes, including new ones, where, for instance, IOM has documented thousands of people each week bypassing closed border crossings to enter Mali from Burkina Faso.[*] Data from MMC's 4Mi monitoring in West Africa and North Africa, suggests that these dynamics are leading smugglers to charge higher fees and use more dangerous routes.[*] In addition, around a quarter of 4Mi respondents in West Africa have been unable to continue their journeys due to lost income, suggesting potential for resurgent movement as economic activity recovers.[*] Movements to West African coastal States are not yet fully tracked, but indications are that considerable numbers of nationals of conflict-affected Sahel States are

OHCHR, Press briefing note on Libya, 23 April 2020

IOM, Niger – Flow Monitoring Report 37 (July 2020), August 2020, p3

IOM, Burkina Faso – *Rapport sur le suivi des urgences 12* (17-23 Août 2020), 28 August 2020

Mixed Migration Centre, *West Africa: How the Pandemic Reshapes Migration*, 7 September 2020

IOM, *Libya – Migrant Report 32* (July-August 2020), September 2020.

IOM, Mali – *Flow Monitoring Report 58* (November 2020), December 2020

Mixed Migration Centre, *Covid-19 Global Thematic Update #1: Impact of COVID-19 on migrant smuggling*, 1 September 2020, pp4-5

UNDESA, International migrant stock 2019: Country profiles

resident in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire,[2] and to a lesser extent, Ghana,[3] suggesting the possibility of continued movements this way.

In East Africa, movement to and from Ethiopia is still below the levels recorded in February 2020 but steadily increasing, with almost 5,500 departures in August and 1,931 arrivals (mostly returning Ethiopians) from Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia.[3] Overall, IOM data suggests that COVID-19 restrictions have had a major effect on human mobility dynamics and that irregular movements have decreased as an overall trend but have increased in specific locations, mainly due to conflict and insecurity. It is to be expected that movement patterns will shift again, possibly back to their original tracings, as, or if, border closures and other COVID-19-related restrictions are eased.

IOM, Ethiopia – Flow Monitoring Dashboard 11 (August 2020, September 2020)

Developments in the security situation in the Sahel region and the growing number of newly arriving returnees in countries such as Niger and Ethiopia or people expelled from neighboring countries to Niger also need to be followed closely. In the Central Sahel, 46% of respondents to a UNHCR protection monitoring survey conducted between May and September 2020 said their community did not have the capacity to welcome new people.[4]

The unprecedented increase in the numbers of IDPs in some countries in the Sahel in 2019-2020 and the low capacity to respond to the huge needs will further increase pressure on already scarce resources and services, and is likely to push more people to move onward in search of protection. In addition, while in the past, many nationals of Sahelian countries have sought protection in a neighboring country, the current multi-faceted dynamics of the conflicts in the Sahel may encourage affected populations to seek protection in larger numbers beyond their sub-region, either in North African countries or in coastal States of West Africa. In Mali, reports from the field suggest that some armed groups are becoming increasingly involved in the smuggling and trafficking of refugees and migrants in Northern Mali, although this may not be their main source of income.

SEVERE PROTECTION RISKS – SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

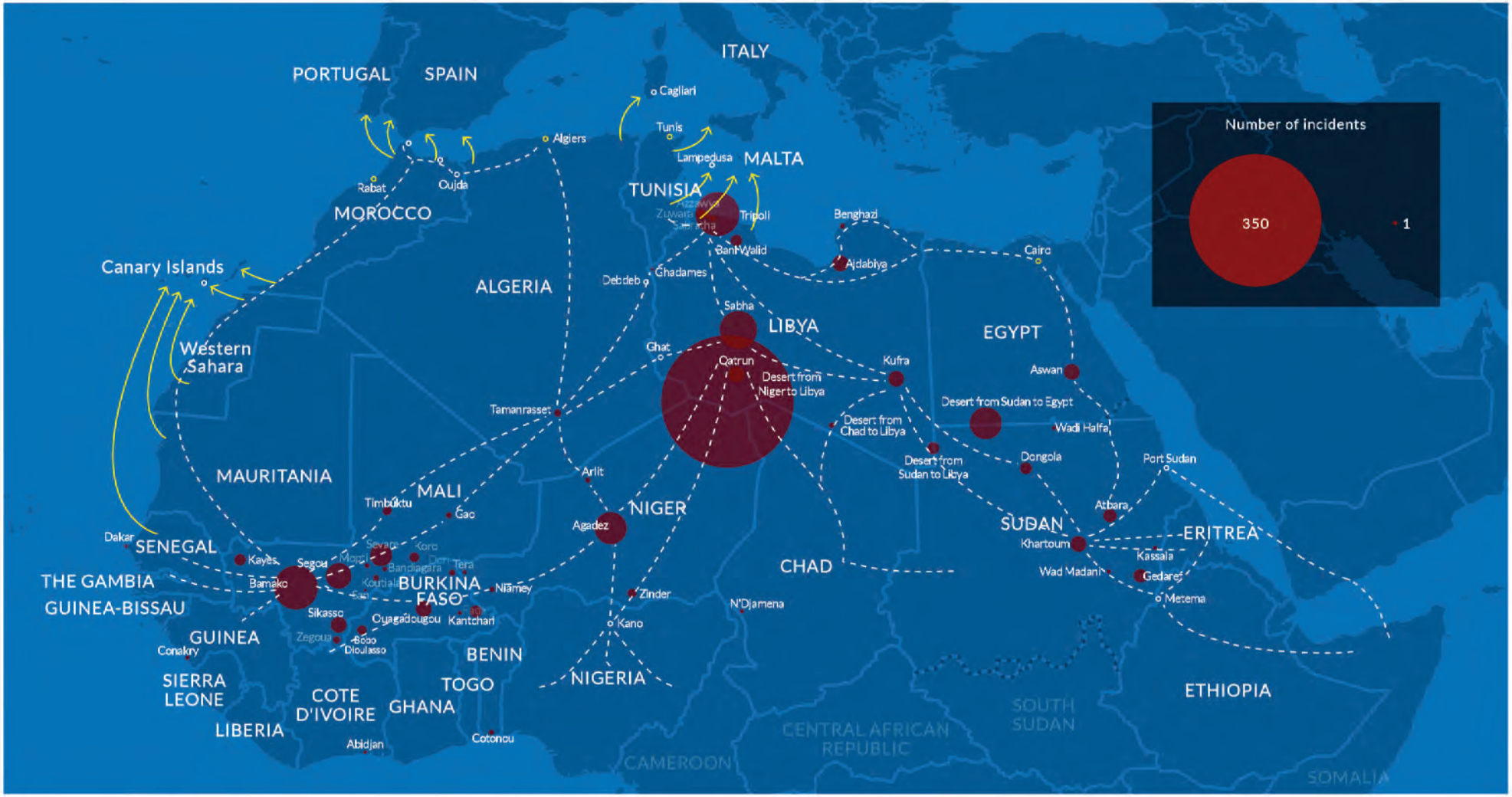
Those traveling to North Africa usually often have to resort to the services of smugglers at least once during their journey, especially for crossing the Sahara Desert. Data presented in the joint report by UNHCR and MMC this year indicated that the desert crossing was where many deaths, as well various forms of abuse occur, including sexual and gender-based violence.

Some of those using the services of smugglers become victims of trafficking, including in the event they are unable to pay their smuggler upon arrival in Libya. Others have been trafficked from their country of origin, with some believing they are to be provided with jobs in Europe but instead end up in situations of sexual exploitation. Kidnap for ransom, including by other smugglers or traffickers, is also common along different parts of the route and people who have been held for ransom have told UNHCR and partners about horrific experiences of torture, sexual violence, starvation, and witnessing deaths.

In the absence of effective international protection, assistance, the possibility for a durable solution and viable livelihood and self-reliance opportunities in the countries to which they have fled and with very limited access to safe and legal pathways still being available, many choose to undertake these journeys, despite the risks. Some, believing the narrative of smugglers or traffickers regarding the availability of employment opportunities or the relative ease of the journey, may end up in situations

INTRODUCTION > Severe Protection Risks

MAP 2 • Routes within Africa towards North Africa and Europe, and abuses along the route



The data on abuses is based on 15,983 surveys conducted by 4Mi monitors in 2018 and 2019 along routes between East and West Africa and Libya and Egypt. The map includes only the primary locations that people reported incidents took place and excludes incidents that reportedly occurred in people's country of origin. The map indicates the cumulative number of deaths, incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, physical violence, and kidnapping reported by respondents to have occurred in the locations depicted.

For further details, please see UNHCR and MMC, *On this journey, no one cares if you live or die*, July 2020.

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"We left Eritrea in early March and there were three young men who travelled with us but we did not know who they were. When we got to the border, the smuggler called someone and told them to come with a car. Three men came and asked us to board and immediately our smuggler disappeared from the scene. All of us were blindfolded and the car drove off. We were taken to a house where they started beating us and asked us to call our families, demanding for [over $6,000]. Our families said they could not afford the money.

My friend and I were tied up and we were raped in front of the young men. They continued doing this for five days. One night, my friend and I asked to go outside to answer a call of nature and we quickly jumped over the wall. The traffickers were in hot pursuit but we found a large tree where we hid for several hours before climbing down to continue with our journey. We walked barefoot because the traffickers had taken away our shoes as soon as we got to the house where they had confined us."

—Eritrean woman interviewed in Sudan by Telling the Real Story

The Irish Times, Inside the smuggler's warehouse: Africa's 21st-century slave trade, 11 April 2020

of sexual exploitation or held for ransom, including as a result of traveling on a 'go now, pay later' basis as agreed with smugglers.[7] Diaspora communities may also play a role in encouraging people to undertake such journeys, despite the risks, given what they perceive as the lack of alternatives.

In addition to efforts to hold perpetrators of abuses against refugees and migrants along the routes accountable, more needs to be done in terms of programmatic activities that address the key protection, assistance, and solutions gaps highlighted above that contribute to people being willing to risk these journeys. Addressing this requires meaningful and legally-based socio-economic inclusion in their country of first refuge effectively backed by international support.

In the context of protracted and entrenched refugee and IDP situations, coupled with new waves of forced internal and cross-border population displacement, and increased food insecurity, host States and the donor community face significant challenges. In response, donors have tended to earmark their contributions for the more stable and more visible populations of concern such as refugees, IDPs and stranded migrants in camps or settlements.

However, more needs to be done to respond to the phenomenon of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants on the move so as to better address how to manage this challenge in an orderly, legal, and safe manner, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The present appeal is submitted to draw more light on the programmatic activities which can have a direct impact on reducing dangerous irregular movements, while strengthening protection systems along the routes leading to North African countries and the Mediterranean Sea.

An Eritrean child who was living in Sudan reunites with his mother in Italy after eight years apart.

© UNHCR/ITALIA

Achievements 2019 – 2020

In October 2017, following the establishment within UNHCR of the Office of the Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean Situation in order to strengthen UNHCR's response along the route, UNHCR launched its Central Mediterranean Risk Mitigation Strategy,* with an update released in June 2019.*

UNHCR, *Routes toward's the Mediterranean*, June 2019

UNHCR, *Central Mediterranean Route: Working on alternatives to dangerous journeys*, October 2017

The strategy outlined a cross-regional approach with partners to develop activities in some key countries of origin, countries of transit, and countries of destination across North and Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe as a means of strengthening responses along the whole route. Progress in the implementation of the strategic objectives set in 2017 was identified in the following areas:

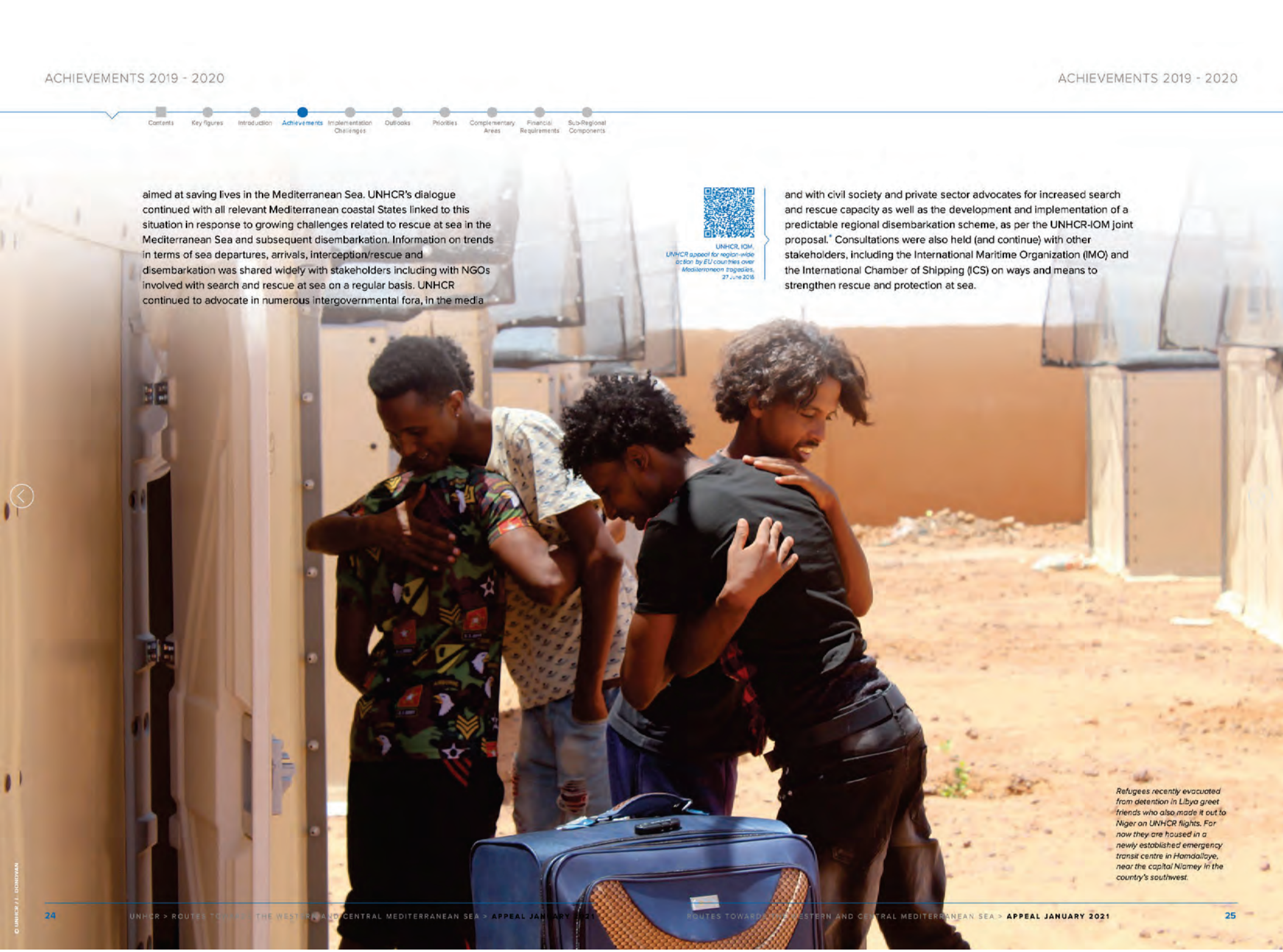
- **Improved coordination, information sharing, and advocacy in UNHCR's response**

The Office of the Special Envoy has facilitated and supported UNHCR's cross-regional coordination, dialogue, and advocacy on key protection and solutions challenges, including to better understand and address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as in response to the massive new waves of forced displacement in the Sahel region. At the same time, it has maintained an essential focus on secondary movements of persons of concern to North Africa and Europe as well as enhanced UNHCR's efforts

ACHIEVEMENTS 2019 - 2020

aimed at saving lives in the Mediterranean Sea. UNHCR's dialogue continued with all relevant Mediterranean coastal States linked to this situation in response to growing challenges related to rescue at sea in the Mediterranean Sea and subsequent disembarkation. Information on trends in terms of sea departures, arrivals, interception/rescue and disembarkation was shared widely with stakeholders including with NGOs involved with search and rescue at sea on a regular basis. UNHCR continued to advocate in numerous intergovernmental fora, in the media and with civil society and private sector advocates for increased search and rescue capacity as well as the development and implementation of a predictable regional disembarkation scheme, as per the UNHCR-IOM joint proposal.* Consultations were also held (and continue) with other stakeholders, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) on ways and means to strengthen rescue and protection at sea.

UNHCR, IOM, *UNHCR appeal for region-wide action by EU countries over Mediterranean tragedies*, 27 June 2018



Refugees recently evacuated from detention in Libya greet friends who also made it out to Niger on UNHCR flights. For now they are housed in a newly established emergency transit centre in Hamdallaye, near the capital Niamey in the country's southwest.

© UNHCR / J. DONEVAN

- **Improved identification and assistance to persons in need of international protection along the route**

The expansion of UNHCR's outreach, including the provision of services, directly or through partners, to persons moving along the routes towards Libya, Morocco and Algeria led to an increase in the number of people identified as in need of international protection. For example, in collaboration with partners outside the capital cities, people of concern were identified and given assistance in Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia as a result of UNHCR and partners' expanded presence. In addition, a project with the National Red Cross Society in The Gambia to enhance identification and referral of persons of concern was also launched in 2019. In Libya, UNHCR managed to reach a limited number of persons of concern in the East and parts of the South through local partners.

UNHCR, *Déclaration ministérielle et conclusions de Bamako*, October 2018

UNHCR continued to facilitate the Bamako* and Abuja* Protection Dialogues and Plans of Action and has recently launched the Bamako process to facilitate effective implementation of its agreed recommendations. Moreover, UNHCR and DRC have rolled out a comprehensive new Protection Monitoring system, Project 21, which has been adopted by many partners in the Central Sahel. The system aims at collecting protection data allowing regional analysis, programming, advocacy, and communication as a common standard for the West and Central African Protection Working Group enabling UNHCR and its partners to coordinate their protection responses. In parallel, monitoring and outreach along the mixed movement routes in both Niger and Chad continues through national NGO partnerships, in cooperation with State authorities. UNHCR also started a project with Washington University in St. Louis to map and identify protection networks in North Africa to enhance their capacity to facilitate the disclosure of international protection needs by refugees in mixed movements with a special focus on people with specific needs.

Abuja Action Statement: Reaffirmation of the Commitments of the Abuja Action Statement and their Implementation, 28-29 January, 2029, Abuja, Nigeria

- **Better coordination with partners on specific protection responses**

As part of improved coordination with partners in response to specific protection situations, UNHCR held a protection dialogue with IOM in November 2019 to strengthen the identification of Malians in need of international protection or voluntary repatriation as a means of enhancing cross referrals. One outcome of that meeting was an interagency and cross-regional initiative aimed to improve access to Best Interest Procedures for children at-risk in mixed movement settings which involves UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and key NGO partners such as Save the Children. The reporting period also saw the (re-) activation of Mixed Migration Working Groups or Task Forces or related Issue-Based Coalitions at regional or country level. UNHCR also launched its first Mixed Movements Learning Programme, as well as the Trafficking Learning Programme, in the MENA region for its staff and partners.

- **Increased access to resettlement**

UNHCR, *Central Mediterranean situation: UNHCR calls for an additional 40,000 resettlement places*, 6 September 2017

As of 31 December 2020, twenty-one (21) resettlement countries had pledged more than 53,000 resettlement places in response to UNHCR's initial appeal in 2017 for 40,000 resettlement places from fifteen (15) priority countries along the Central Mediterranean route.* The Priority Situations Core Group under the current co-chairs of Ireland and Sweden played a catalytic role in this endeavor. Through innovative approaches to case processing while adhering to health protocols in the context of a global pandemic, a total of 9,497 refugees were submitted for resettlement and 3,834 departed in 2020. From September 2017 to December 2020, the cumulative resettlement figures from Central Med Priority Countries amount to 52,813 submissions and 33,189 departures. In addition, as of 31 December 2020, 320 refugees had been submitted for resettlement after being evacuated from Libya to the ETM established in Rwanda in 2019, resulting in 203 departures. COVID-19 has delayed the implementation of pledges by most States, however, resettlement programs and other solutions have nonetheless continued to provide safe alternatives to dangerous irregular movements.

The 15 countries of asylum include: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia

The 21 resettlement countries include: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States

- **Improved access to family reunification**

In parallel, a pilot project was launched in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and Libya to facilitate the access of refugees to family reunification procedures. From mid-2019 through July 2020 the project has thus far benefited directly 759 refugees, mostly through Best Interest Procedures for unaccompanied children seeking to reunite with parents and by connecting families in third countries to pro bono legal assistance to assist them with complex family reunification applications. The project has also helped to identify key obstacles to accessing family reunification for certain locations and nationalities.

UNHCR, *Live Learn and Participate*, October 2018

- **New initiatives to strengthen protection for children and youth at risk**

New initiatives were introduced through the multi-country fundraising appeal Live, Learn & Participate (LLP).* This $13.3 million appeal aims to improve access to alternative care, notably family-based care,

ACHIEVEMENTS 2019 - 2020

Refugee and host community children show their support for UNHCR's anti-trafficking campaign at Wad Sharifa camp in east Sudan.

developmental/educational opportunities, livelihood opportunities for youth and access to solutions in key countries of asylum. Activities were mapped with key operations to fill crucial gaps when responding to children and youth in mixed movement settings, with the aim of increasing access to quality services and preventing dangerous secondary movement. At present, around 30% of the activities covered under the appeal have been funded by private and government donors with several other fundraising applications outstanding.

- **Increased efforts to address abuses of refugees and migrants**

As part of its efforts to advocate for better responses to address abuses against refugees and migrants along the routes, in July, UNHCR and MMC issued their joint report highlighting the multiple locations where most abuses are being reported, including prior to refugees and migrants reaching Libya, the different perpetrators along each section of route, and highlighting some developments with regards to providing protection and increasing accountability for perpetrators. The report calls for increased measures by States on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea to cooperate in order to hold the major perpetrators of abuses accountable. At the same time, UNHCR has strengthened its cooperation with national authorities and is currently reviewing its efforts to support consistent and proactive access to justice for victims of abuses in some key locations. UNHCR is also currently mapping the availability of protection services for victims of abuses in key locations along the route as a means of assessing how gaps may be addressed.

- **Increased efforts to communicate effectively with people potentially considering dangerous journeys**

The "Telling the Real Story" (TRS) initiative continues in East Africa' (Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia) and West Africa (Nigeria) which facilitates intra-community dialogue and engagement with diasporas to help counter misinformation on irregular journeys and provide information or referrals to assistance. Over 250,000 persons have been reached in 2019 -2020 through direct face-to-face engagement and an additional 1 million through radio shows, along with over 15 million through social media. TRS has closely monitored the constantly changing smugglers' narratives and effectively adjusted its messaging targeting those most at risk. For example, in Somalia, thanks to the counter-narrative and engagement of parents and neighbors, smugglers faced difficulties pitching their promises of a brighter future to children. Smugglers consequently decided in 2019 to target children and youth directly, which TRS is now seeking to address by providing children with relevant and trustworthy information on education and employment prospects. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the TRS project was adapted to also provide accurate information to refugees and host communities on protective measures to avoid stigmatization of refugees. In addition, communication with communities as part of UNHCR's Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) measures was enhanced with new activities in Libya and Tunisia in 2020.

UNHCR, Telling the Real Story

© UNHCR / M. ALALEM

A survivor of an attempted sea crossing drinks fluids and recovers after disembarking from a Libyan Coast Guard vessel in Tripoli in September 2020.

Implementation Challenges: 2019 – 2020

While UNHCR operations made positive progress in the areas outlined above, a number of implementation challenges continued to be experienced within this period.

- **Growing insecurity and limited access in parts of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan and Somalia**

Deteriorating security conditions and conflict caused new internal and cross-border displacement in the Sahel region and across many Sub-Saharan countries in 2019–2020. In several transit countries, in addition to insecurity, lack of access negatively impacted the delivery of humanitarian assistance, limiting the ability of UNHCR and partners to provide protection and assistance along key routes, mixed movements hubs in border areas and in refugee/IDP sites and locations where persons of concern to UNHCR were in dire need and exposed to heightened risk. Large numbers of IDPs in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan and refugees in Burkina Faso were left without humanitarian assistance as a result of lack of access, as well as limited resources and capacities. In

parallel, targeted attacks against humanitarian workers claimed the lives of more than a dozen persons since 2019. Restrictions affecting freedom of movement aimed at limiting the spread of the COVID-19 virus also created additional challenges in accessing vulnerable refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs. The weakened protection environment and oversight also led to returns of refugees in adverse circumstances, in particular to Mali.

- **Measuring the volume of mixed movements**

While mixed movements of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants along land routes continued in 2020, quantifying them became very difficult due to limitations in access, "soft" and "hard" border closures to contain the spread of the pandemic, the development of alternative new routes proposed by smugglers and human traffickers to circumvent control measures imposed by States, and the suspension of registration activities by Governments or UNHCR, or changes in registration policy (e.g. Ethiopia). This led to a significant increase in registration backlogs e.g. almost 6,000 persons awaiting registration in Mauritania, 267,000 persons in Sudan and 8,500 in Egypt.

- **Fluctuating sea departures**

In parallel, sea departures fluctuated between 2019 and 2020 with a slight reduction of arrivals in Spain (except for the Canary Islands) and Malta and an increase in arrivals in Italy. Departures from Algeria, Tunisia and Libya increased respectively by 209%, 310% and 58% in 2020, compared to 2019. UNHCR reissued its call for a regional disembarkation mechanism on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea and updated its position regarding returns to and disembarkation in Libya.*

*UNHCR, UNHCR Position on the Designations of Libya as a Safe Third Country and as a Place of Safety for the Purpose of Disembarkation Following Rescue at Sea, November 2020

- **Conditions in Libya**

In Libya, the dire situation in detention centres coupled with a challenging working environment hampered the swift identification of persons in need of international protection and their access to durable solutions. UNHCR announced it was suspending operations at the Gathering and Departure Facility, which opened in Tripoli in December 2018. The GDF was set up as a facility with the potential to save lives. It was intended to bring vulnerable refugees – for whom solutions out of Libya had been identified (including evacuation to emergency facilities in other countries and resettlement/ family reunification in third countries) – to a safe environment, pending their departure from Libya. However, UNHCR announced on 30 January 2020 it would suspend operations due to militia training taking place on land adjacent to the GDF, which jeopardized the safety of refugees, asylum-seekers, staff and partners. UNHCR had also expressed serious concerns for peoples' safety after three mortar shells fell close to the GDF, with fragments landing near a warehouse inside the complex several weeks earlier. Allowing UNHCR restricted access and only to specific nationalities continued to be the policy of the competent Libyan authorities. The suspension of resettlement and evacuations between March and July 2020 prevented more refugee departures to the Emergency Transit Mechanisms (ETM) in Niger and Rwanda, to Italy, and to resettlement countries.* Additional assistance activities (including food and cash assistance) were extended to 10,157 refugees in Libya between January and September 2020 (700% increase compared to same period in 2019). In parallel, the banking and cash liquidity crises in Libya affected the implementation of the cash assistance programme.

Evacuations from Libya to Niger and Rwanda resumed respectively in September and November 2020

> *"The journey was not easy, you are always afraid of being robbed, raped, killed or beaten. But above all, what I feared most was that traffickers, authorities or other traveling companions might discover about my sexual orientation. Being gay, migrant and black can end very badly in many of the African countries that I crossed."*
>
> —Senegalese man who arrived in Spain

© UNHCR / M. ALALEM

Abdulmajeed and his wife Halima Suleiman, refugees from Darfur, sit with their newborn daughter Afnan and teenage daughter Afnan at home in Tripoli, Libya.

"Our water was finished ... Life was not easy, there was no food, nothing at all to eat. They carried us very far into the desert which was littered with dead bodies. When anybody was unable to walk, they left the person and continued their journey. There was no other choice than to continue. We struggled to follow them through the desert."

—Nigerian woman interviewed by Telling the Real Story in Malta

- **Limited assistance in North Africa**

Very limited levels of assistance[1] coupled with unpredictable or lack of access to basic rights, in particular the right to work, and the variable and often insufficient inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in national response plans during the COVID-19 pandemic in North African countries led to increased problems and challenges for these communities. Most do not benefit from legal documentation issued by the host countries, but instead hold certificates provided by UNHCR offices, which are seldom universally recognized or respected by law enforcement and administrative authorities. Many faced evictions and had to move to less safe shelters. Others sold their belongings to try to leave by boat to Europe, alongside nationals of some of these North African countries.

- **Underfunding of voluntary repatriation**

Voluntary repatriation movements which could also positively contribute to decreasing secondary movements remained under-funded while insufficient attention was paid to creating conditions to make return in safety and dignity possible to areas of origin and return. Despite some progress made in previous years with returns to Sudan, Chad, and Somalia, there remained significant additional efforts to be made, most notably in reintegration programming in the context of and supported by coherent sustainable development initiatives at local community (and provincial) level. Efforts to encourage refugees stranded in Libya (or Niger, following expulsions from Libya) to consider the option of humanitarian evacuation to their country of previous admission as refugees have not yet yielded significant results. But these efforts need to be supported with a strong reintegration component to increase the options in terms of available solutions.

1 **Algeria:** Cash assistance is provided to approximately 11% of the refugee population for an average of 12 months. However, it has been reported that more than the 50% of the needs remain uncovered.

Mauritania: Cash assistance is provided to 4% of urban refugees (130 out of 2,984). Three quarters of the POCs with specific needs are assisted following recognition. One quarter of POCs receive punctual assistance.

Morocco: Cash assistance is provided to approximately 11% of the refugee population for three to six months covering an average of 50% of their needs. This equates to some 700 extremely vulnerable refugees assisted each month while there are an additional 700 highly vulnerable individuals in need of cash assistance.

Tunisia: Cash assistance is provided to 16% of the POCs and 8% get shelter assistance.

Egypt: Cash assistance is provided to 17% of the POCs.

- **National refugee and other legislation**

Several countries, notably across North Africa but also in other regions, have not yet adopted national laws on asylum and refugee protection which legislate for core rights including those covering access to essential services as specified in the 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention on the Specific Problems of Refugees in Africa. However, even where and when national asylum laws are adopted, the rights they afford need to be reflected in other relevant national laws covering health, education employment and welfare in order to ensure and facilitate meaningful and legal-based socio-economic inclusion of refugees in their host countries and communities. Momentum in this direction is all the more important as UNHCR seeks to catalyze support to States within a Humanitarian- Development-Peace framework of cooperation toward implementing SDGs, specifically in refugee hosting areas. In this regard, additional engagement is also needed from States through the Asylum Capacity Support Group developed under the Global Refugee Forum[*] to assist in a sustainable manner States along the routes to develop their asylum systems in a way that provide adequate responses to asylum-seekers and refugees.

UNHCR, Asylum Capacity Support Group

- **Limited financial resources to implement all activities**

Positive strides were made in expanding UNHCR's outreach and communication with communities, provision of services, family reunification and resettlement, to mention just a few key areas. However, a lack of financial resources significantly constrained the implementation of important activities identified in the 2017 Risk Mitigation Strategy and its updated version of June 2019. These include the further improvement of outreach through local partners, community-based organizations and outreach volunteers along the routes, the development of adequate reception systems for asylum-seekers and victims of trafficking in key transit countries, as well as programmatic interventions for refugee children and youth, in particular in camps and settlements. This resource gap was further aggravated by reduced World Food Programme food assistance in several countries, limited access to education and income-generating opportunities, for example in Chad, Mauritania and Sudan, resulting in further increased risks of dangerous secondary movements. More generally, even though donor contributions at country and regional level were supportive and appreciated, the levels of unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions did not provide UNHCR with the required flexibility to effectively respond everywhere to crucial needs.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES: 2019 – 2020

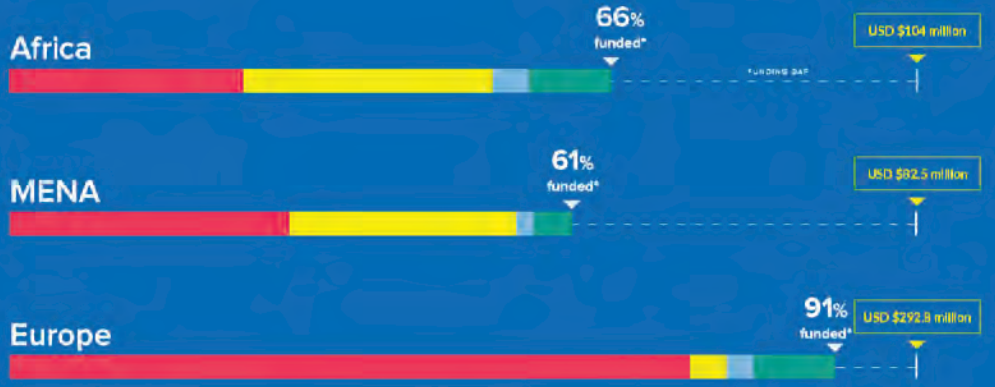
FUNDING LEVELS FOR UNHCR CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN SITUATION IN 2019-2020

– INDICATIVE FIGURES

GRAPH 1 • **FUNDING** | AS OF 5 JANUARY 2021

UNHCR's 2020 financial requirements: **USD $479.3 million**

81% funded*



A teacher employed by NRC teaches in the Guidan Roumdji school in the Maradi region, Niger, host to 70,000 Nigerian refugees, in September 2020.

Outlook for 2021

	PEOPLE
Burkina Faso	1.1 M
Ethiopia	2.6 M
Mali	1 M
Niger	572 K
Nigeria	2.8 M
Somalia	2.8 M
Sudan	3.6 M

The scale of forced internal and/or external displacement in some West and East African* countries and its protracted nature require innovative and robust approaches to tackle root causes and implement approaches that support solutions where the people are.

Until this happens in an effective and sustained manner that is led by States and supported cohesively by the international community through humanitarian, development, and peace action, many refugees and asylum-seekers and IDPs will continue to seek safety and international protection through primary and secondary movements, while others including migrants will try to seek a better life, hoping to find work or educational opportunities elsewhere. The degradation of the security situation in the Sahel region and the increased pressure on services due to the increased number of persons displaced by the conflicts may cause more external displacement and movements, not only to countries further North, but also to coastal States in West Africa.[1] Similarly, the situation in Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic may cause additional internal and external displacement. In parallel, with the end of the 13 year UN-AU peace-keeping mission (UNAMID) in Sudan's Darfur with a complete withdrawal by 30 June 2021, the situation will require close monitoring in terms of protection of civilians. In Tigray,

1 Western Sahel (Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Mauritania) Total IDPs, refugees and asylum-seekers as of Dec. 2019 = 2.96 M; and as of Dec. 2020 = 3.72 M; an increase of 26%.

Ethiopia, the recent conflict has created further internal and external displacement. It is too early to say at this stage whether the humanitarian response will be commensurate to the needs of those displaced by the conflict, and whether some of the refugees arriving in Sudan may continue their journey towards Libya or Egypt.

North African countries are likely to witness an increase in the number of arrivals of asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants, whether as a final destination or in transit onwards to Europe. As in 2020, they will also continue to see departures of their own nationals (i.e. Algerians, Egyptians, Moroccans and Tunisians) predominantly as economic migrants due to ailing economies trying to cope with the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, post-COVID recovery and potential disillusion among the youth after elections. Sea arrivals from North African countries to Europe will continue with fluctuations in numbers, depending on several factors, such as: the situation in countries and the region, weather conditions, the affordability of the journey, the rescue and interception capacities of coastal States, the availability of alternative safe and legal entry mechanisms to European Union (EU) Member States, and the continuation of the impunity many human smugglers and traffickers enjoy. The future use of sea routes will also depend on the availability of credible alternatives to address root causes in countries of origin and provide access to rights for populations through: (i) the de facto implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; (ii) socio-economic inclusion and participation in countries of asylum, transit, and destination in North Africa or Europe, by ensuring that conditions of entry, stay, and employment of refugees and migrant workers are governed by clear and fair legal frameworks, in line with efficiently implemented international standards.

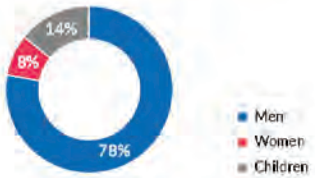
It remains to be seen whether countries in Europe receiving sea arrivals will put in place efficient border entry procedures and receive support from other EU Member States on relocations and returns to countries of origin for persons found not to be in need of international protection or with no other legal basis to remain. This will be influenced by ongoing political debates in coastal States in southern Europe and by future agreement among EU States on the new Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the European Commission (EC) in September 2020. These could also influence the long-awaited comprehensive migration/asylum management systems needed in North African countries.

Political instability coupled with low-level armed conflict in several key transit and host countries have the potential to increase irregular secondary movements and/or eventually cause backflows to countries of previous asylum or transit and/or to countries of origin. Mass expulsions of migrants and refugees as witnessed from Libya and Algeria to neighboring countries in 2020 and an evolving patchwork of pendular cross-border movements, particularly in countries in the East and Horn of Africa may also continue. The tightening of border controls across the African continent initiated in the wake of the COVID-19 response may remain in place in some States as the pandemic persists into 2021. This might still trigger additional shifts in the routes employed by smugglers where existing circumstantial evidence points to new routes being used such as increased departures from the Western Sahara territory and from Senegal to the Canary Islands.

Providing migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers with accurate information about the dangers associated with irregular land journeys or sea departures in the hands of criminal networks of smugglers will not, in isolation, prevent irregular mixed movements from occurring. If awareness-raising campaigns are not accompanied by robust programmatic activities that address the key protection, assistance, and solutions needs at all stages of the displacement cycle and all locations along the routes, then there will be no counter-narrative, strategy, or concrete action to combat the impetus for irregular mixed movements and the associated gross human rights violations, such as the exploitation and horrific abuses perpetrated by smugglers and traffickers. This approach applies equally to the implementation of programmes under the Global Compact on Migration as it does for the Global Compact on Refugees where the fight against trafficking in human beings is concerned. Without State-led comprehensive inter-agency leadership of humanitarian and development programmatic responses, those persons hesitating to take a decision to engage in irregular movements will have nothing to dissuade them or to guide them toward safer and sustainable legal alternatives in the communities where they are.

The age and gender composition of mixed movements along the routes is not expected to change, with fewer women than men embarking on these

GRAPH 2 • **DEMOGRAPHICS OF SEA ARRIVALS IN ITALY, MALTA AND SPAIN**
JANUARY - OCTOBER 2020



dangerous journeys. As per data from January to October 2020, 78% men, 8% women and 14% children disembarked in Italy, Malta and Spain. The nationality breakdown will likely remain the same along each route depending on developments in countries of origin and countries of first asylum. The use of the Libya route by non-African migrants or refugees (e.g. Bangladeshis) will depend on the will of relevant transit States to combat the smuggling or human trafficking associated with such movements. The Western Mediterranean and Canary Islands routes may see more people fleeing conflicts and persecution requiring international protection in the mixed movements.

The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the mobility of IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants may vary from country to country and depending whether they are in camps or urban situations. It is not yet clear whether current trends of refugees selling their belongings and those of their families to survive and the decreased volume of remittances from diasporas will be factors which drive movements towards countries where the conditions of safety and dignity and living standards are perceived to be better. The socio-economic consequences of the pandemic may also create the conditions for social tensions, discontent, and political unrest, especially in the most vulnerable food crisis and climate affected countries. Tensions may be further triggered or aggravated by sustained restrictions on movement, use of excessive force in ensuring lockdowns, spikes in food and commodity prices, and/or loss of income. If access to grazing or agricultural land and water is affected by restrictions on freedom of movement, and/or livestock is depleted, this may fuel further intercommunal conflicts in some regions leading to internal displacement or refugee flows.

OUTLOOK FOR 2021

Stimulus measures and social protection schemes may neglect remote areas – such as those where refugees are often hosted – in favor of large urban centres which are considered to bring more complementary political benefits, popular legitimacy, and support. Social unrest may facilitate the spread of more organized criminality, leading in turn to further displacement in and from countries and regions such as Nigeria, the Central Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, northwest Sudan and southern Libya. Cross-fertilization between criminal groups and extremist armed groups witnessed through 2020 can also lead to renewed attacks, including on aid agencies, building on anti-foreigner sentiments.

As seen on a small scale during the relections in 2020, election-related violence will also remain a risk in 2021 with Eighteen elections forseen in the African continent, some taking place in very fragile countries. Regardless of whether these go ahead or are postponed, there is a risk that election-related violence could result in the flight of people both internally and externally into neighboring countries. In this context over 24,000 Ivorians have fled their country to Liberia and other neighboring countries as of December 2020.

Some political conflicts may degenerate into armed conflicts affecting neighbouring countries, such as in Tigray (Ethiopia), but peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts may pave the way for sustainable solutions in other countries (e.g. Sudan and South Sudan).

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Abdou, from Chad, and Rony, from the Central African Republic, both refugees living in Niger, arrive at Charles de Gaulle Airport with scholarships to study at 3A School of Responsible Business and International Development in Lyon in September 2020 thanks to the joint efforts of the non-profit organisation Forum Réfugiés-Cosi, UNHCR, the French Embassy in Niger and the 3A school.

Priorities for 2021

UNHCR, Central Mediterranean Route: Working on alternatives to dangerous journeys, October 2017; and UNHCR, Routes to/and the Mediterranean, June 2019.

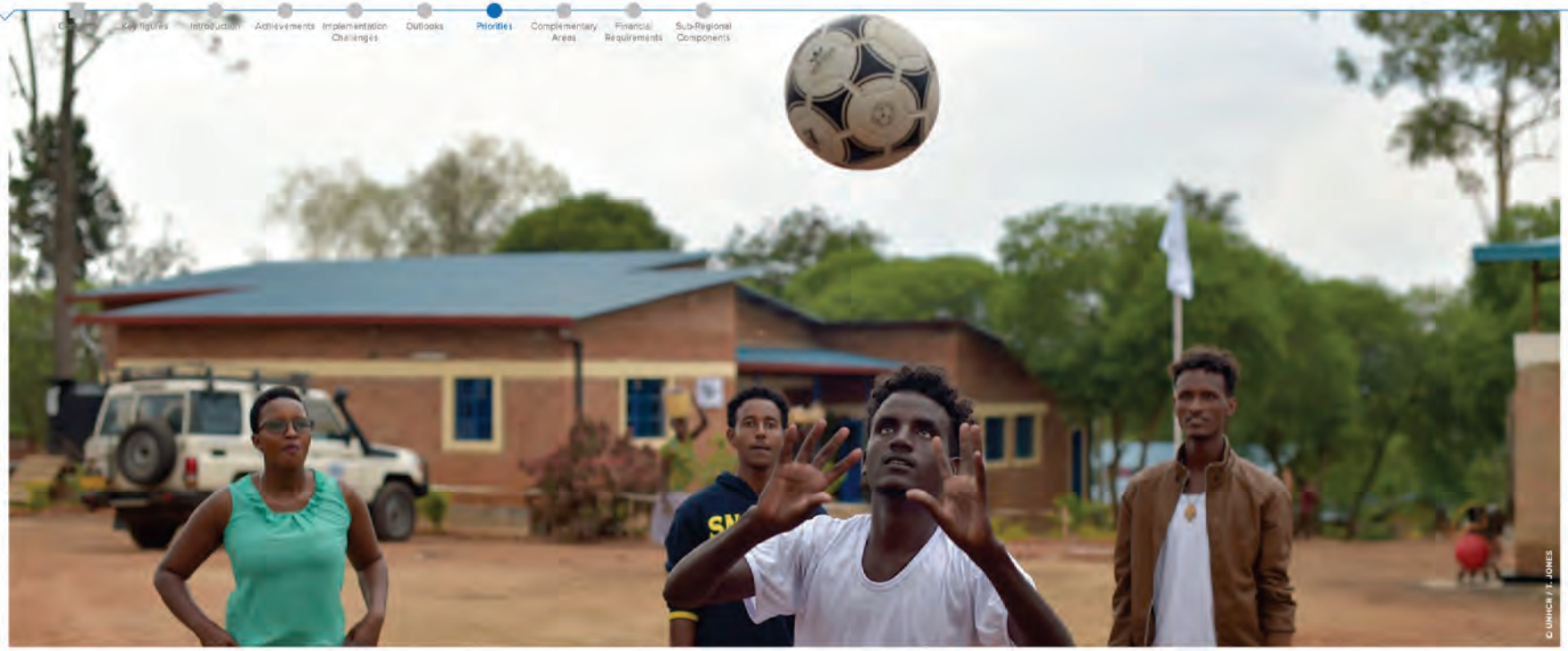
As noted previously, this strategy updates the regional strategy released in October 2017 and its subsequent update in June 2019.* Because of the funding gaps noted above, which may continue in 2021 with the global economic contraction and its impact on Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets, UNHCR Regional Bureaus and individual operations will likely be obliged to deprioritize several key interventions that are essential for furthering refugee protection and access to solutions within their operating programme budgets, even if these needs are included in UNHCR's Global Appeal*.

UNHCR Global Appeal 2021 Update

Some of these gaps are in major refugee hosting operations, where implementing protection and assistance programmes can serve to reduce secondary movements and their associated risks. Considering some of the achievements since 2017, funding trends, feedback from refugee communities during consultations on needs and gaps, and mindful of operational realities and experiences, UNHCR has identified the following target activities for stepped-up advocacy and critical support:

1 Enhance outreach, identification, referrals and assistance along key routes: UNHCR will seek to strengthen monitoring and community-based outreach jointly with partners outside capital cities, and strengthen protection, assistance and referrals for quality service delivery (such as food, shelter, health, psycho-social support, transportation, and assistance

PRIORITIES FOR 2021



© UNHCR / T. JONES

A group of refugees play volleyball at the Gashora Emergency Transit Centre in Rwanda following their evacuation from Libya.

to victims of trafficking[7]) and solutions along key routes. This will strengthen the identification of people with international and other protection needs, including victims or persons at risk of trafficking, and survivors of other abuses, and improve their access to multi-sectoral services, protection, and solutions tailored to their specific needs.

[7] UNHCR, IOM-UNHCR Framework document on developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the identification and protection of victims of trafficking, June 2020

2 Provide education services for refugee children, vocational training for refugee youth, and support to foster care families. This applies to both camp and urban environments in countries with high rates of dangerous secondary movements.

3 Additional resourcing to implement and/or strengthen individual case processing in remote locations to reduce existing backlogs will help remove a push-factor for secondary movements. Some asylum-seekers have to wait for extended periods of time without assistance, registration and documentation by States and/or UNHCR in order to access protection services or other support. This includes pre-registration, registration, documentation, best interest determination, refugee status determination and resettlement interviews and processing, as well as protection interviews, services and referrals for victims of trafficking. Extending such protection services to persons of concern to UNHCR in a faster way in these remote locations will encourage more asylum-seekers to avail themselves of the existing options where they are. In addition, enhanced registration capacity will provide greater clarity on patterns and reasons for secondary movements. Lack of funding for such activities could result in larger backlogs and more incentives to move onward.

4 Provision of cash-based assistance to vulnerable refugees based on risks and needs in urban settings and support to livelihood activities in camp situations with high rates of irregular secondary movements. This assistance will be provided in parallel with renewed efforts with States to promote the inclusion of refugees into the national development systems that would ensure and protect the dignity, rights, and aspirations of refugees while improving their resilience.

5 Active facilitation of family reunification. Access to this complementary pathway for refugee women, children, including Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASCs), remains difficult along the routes. The plan is to expand the current pilot project in Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, and Sudan to include other areas with large numbers of family reunification cases within the region as well as in countries not covered by this appeal in the Middle East, specifically in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel. Building off the success of the family reunification project in the Central Mediterranean region, global Memoranda of Understanding with key family reunification partners who provide legal and travel assistance will be finalized in 2021. This will ensure that more persons of concern have access to this rights-based pathway in line with UNHCR's *Three Year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways and the Global Compact on Refugees.*" Through further advocacy with States, UNHCR will continue to try and remove structural barriers to family reunification, which disproportionally impact refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR, *The Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways...*, June 2019

6 Enhance use of the two Emergency Transit Mechanisms (ETMs) in Niger and Rwanda for asylum-seekers and refugees evacuated from Libya by accelerating all aspects of processing to ensure greater efficiency. Develop humanitarian corridors with Italy and other countries for life-saving evacuation of vulnerable refugees from Libya and enhance the use of other complementary pathways.

7 Expand people-to-people and digital Communication with Communities along all the routes. Continue to invest in and strengthen UNHCR's Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) through enhancing Communication with Communities (CwC) methodologies and systems including the "Telling the Real Story" initiative. In the context of UNHCR's global policy and governance framework on APP and CwC the Office of the Special Envoy is collaborating with the Regional Bureaus for MENA, WCA, EHAGL and RBE in their work to develop and implement CwC strategies, action plans and toolkits including handbooks and visual and social media platforms. UNHCR will also further develop the pilot platform "Knowledge Base" in Libya, and Tunisia to disseminate information on available protection services as well as complementary legal pathways to solutions. In parallel and specifically, as part of strengthening "Telling the Real Story", additional testimonies will be sought on the West African routes to further inform people about the risks related to the route via the Western Sahara territory, Mauritania, and Morocco to Spain as well as on alternatives to irregular onward movements. The CwC strategies and associated Toolbox will be implemented across all relevant offices/ operations along the routes to use via help.unhcr.org.

PRIORITIES FOR 2021

8 Building broad partnerships to mobilize efforts to prevent and protect refugees and asylum-seekers from falling victim to trafficking and other serious crimes. This includes strengthening their identification and referral to appropriate services and procedures", systematic assessment of possible international protection needs, the immediate protection of victims, and measures to support access to justice, including advocating for perpetrators to consistently be held accountable.

Please see UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *The 10-Point Plan in Action, 2016 Update*, December 2016, Chapter 5, *Mechanisms for Screening and Referral* and Chapter 6, *Differentiated Processes and Procedures*

9 In addition, UNHCR will continue to support Member States to implement the Global Compact on Migration, including some of its objectives such as Objective 5 to "Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration" and Objective 21 to "Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration." UNHCR will do so as a member of the Executive Committee of the UN Migration Network.

© SOS MEDITERRANEE / F. GASSERIN

The Ocean Viking, crewed by the SOS Mediterranee NGO, rescued 180 shipwrecked refugees and migrants, but was refused disembarkation in Italy or Malta in June 2020.

Complementary areas of priority advocacy efforts

While UNHCR operations will focus on the items listed above, in addition UNHCR will continue to enhance its advocacy on the following issues:

- Advocacy and engagement for increased rescue-at-sea capacity involving states, commercial shipowners, private/NGO boats and the implementation of a Regional Disembarkation Mechanism jointly proposed with IOM that ensures a consistent and predictable response to rescue and disembarkation without delay in safe countries along the Mediterranean Sea, the non-criminalization of rescue efforts and the provision of technical assistance to States of disembarkation where needed.
- Increased advocacy support and dialogue between sending and receiving States in returning/receiving persons found not to be in need of international protection after a fair procedure.
- Advocacy to increase access to resettlement and complementary pathways from the countries along the Central and Western Mediterranean routes to ensure a comprehensive regional protection response, reduce secondary movements, and avoid the creation of pull factors towards Libya, Niger, Tunisia, and Morocco as the main points of departure and countries of destination.

Financial Requirements 2021 for Highlighted Activities

Given funding patterns over the past several years UNHCR is concerned that the following activities, which are included in the 2021 budget for the Mediterranean situation, may have to be de-prioritized. While reiterating its appeal for the entire budget, UNHCR is drawing attention to these elements here as integral to the implementation and success of the overall programme.

USD $100 million

TABLE 1 • **FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS 2021 FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES** | USD

REGION/OFFICE	BUDGET REQUIRED
Europe	5,800,000
East and Horn of Africa	22,942,773
North Africa	26,070,527
West and Central Africa	43,291,200
Office of the Special Envoy	1,980,000
TOTAL REQUIREMENTS	100,084,500

GRAPH 3 • **FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS 2021 FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES** | BY REGION/OFFICE

© UNHCR / S. CHERKAOUI

Sub-Regional Components

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

Mohamed, 17, who left Mali with his parents 6 years ago, at school in Goudoubou refugee camp in Burkina Faso in February 2020.

The West and Central Africa region is characterized by significant human mobility, both for socio-economic reasons and due to forced displacement from conflict, violence and persecution. Movements driven by socio-economic factors have long been in the focus of the public debate, while the presence of persons in need of international protection in mixed movements has been less visible principally due to insufficient data. Since 2015, however, monitoring and research has considerably increased, leading to a wider recognition of the forced displacement component of mixed movements. Moreover, the accentuation of conflict in the Sahel has not only led to massive internal displacement and refugee outflows but has also threatened asylum space within the region. Combined with the risk of spill-over of the conflict into coastal countries, these factors are likely to fuel further forced displacement within and beyond the region in the coming years.

	INCLUDING (AS OF DECEMBER 2020)
Refugees	1.4 M
IDPs	6.4 M
Persons at risk of statelessness	1.7 M
Returnees	1.3 M
Others of concern	138,000

The West and Central Africa region currently hosts 10.9 million persons of concern to UNHCR.* This is a 18% increase compared to the beginning of 2020, mainly due to the surge of displacement in the central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger). Other major drivers of displacement in the region are the Lake Chad Basin crisis, the continued instability in Central African Republic, the North-West and South-West crisis in Cameroon, and conflict in Darfur giving rise to an influx of Sudanese refugees into Chad. In addition, the region is host to several smaller refugee populations, often in protracted situations, as well as a small number of individual cases needing international protection due to factors such as political affiliation or sexual orientation.

While most forcibly displaced populations originating from West and Central Africa are being hosted within the region itself, host communities are

overstretched due to the scale of displacement and governments, faced with their own domestic development challenges, struggle to provide protection, basic services, and livelihood opportunities to the displaced and their hosts. Moreover, growing insecurity in zones of first refuge acts as a push factor leading to irregular onward secondary movements. However, lack of protection, limited access to health and education services, and the absence of livelihood opportunities are the principle basis of irregular movements of forcibly displaced. Such movements are ongoing despite the risks involved.

In this regard, West and Central African countries continue to be important countries of origin and transit for mixed movement flows towards North Africa, Europe and the region itself. For many, regional free movement agreements through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) allow travel on public transport up to Gao, Mali or Agadez, Niger without the need to resort to smugglers. Yet others, especially women and children in fragile zones, such as parts of Nigeria, may already fall into the hands of smugglers at the time of departure. While bribery demands by some law enforcement agents are recurrent throughout the region, risks of physical violence, SGBV, kidnapping, and death increase in the northern zone of the West Africa region, where persons on the move across conflict zones often have to resort to smugglers and may fall victim to traffickers.

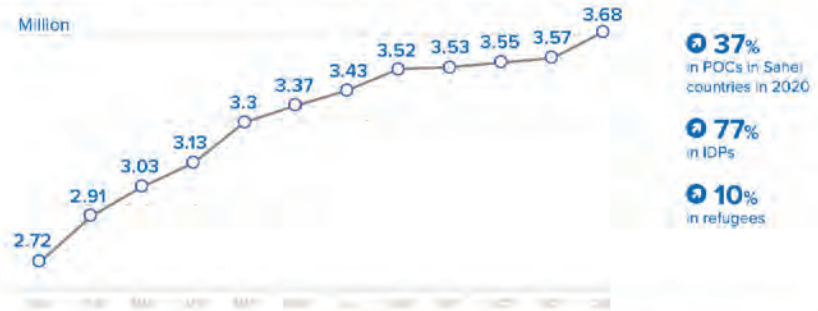
The overall magnitude of mixed movements within this region remains difficult to quantify due to visa-free, public transport-based movement within the ECOWAS region and some North African countries, and due to the clandestine nature of secondary movements of people who leave the region. Nevertheless, data from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix suggests that numbers remain considerable despite a relative decrease over the last few years. In Niger alone, IOM's flow monitoring has observed almost 202,500 outgoing persons of various nationalities in 2019 and over 70,600 persons in 2020 as of July.* The actual number of persons is likely to be significantly higher, considering those who did not encounter DTM monitors. Moreover, EU asylum statistics suggest that in 2017-2019, over 300,000 persons from West and Central Africa requested asylum in the EU. This

IOM: DTM Population Flow Monitoring – Niger, page 3 July 2020

GRAPH 4 • **EVOLUTION OF PERSONS OF CONCERN TO UNHCR IN SAHEL COUNTRIES**

MAURITANIA, MALI, NIGER, BURKINA FASO, CHAD

Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees (refugees and IDPs), and others of concern



37% in POCs in Sahel countries in 2020

77% in IDPs

10% in refugees

MAP 3 • **Routes through West and Central Africa to Europe**

represents about 15.8% of the total requests. In the same time frame, out of 315,110 first instance decisions made regarding asylum applications from nationals of West and Central African countries, 21% received a positive decision. Through Chad, the West and Central Africa region is also connected to routes from the East and Horn of Africa, with Sudanese fleeing to Chad, and often undertaking secondary movements from there. Overall, over 29,600 Sudanese nationals submitted asylum requests in the European Union from January 2017 to December 2020, out of which 58% received a positive first instance decision.

Since 2019, a growing number of persons are taking the Western African Maritime Route. Movements through this route, which were frequent in the past (notably in 2006), consist in crossing from the coasts of Morocco or Mauritania to the Canary Islands, Spain. However, journeys are also often organized from the coast of Senegal and include several intermediate steps and periods of transit. According to IOM, in the month of September 2020, over 60 sea departure events from Senegal were reported, while within one week, in November 2020, three shipwrecks happened involving boats which departed from Senegal with enormous loss of human life.

To effectively respond to the risk of refugees and asylum-seekers engaging in irregular movements within West and Central Africa towards North Africa, the following operations and regional activities require urgent funding:

TABLE 2 • FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES 2021

WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION | USD

USD $43.29 million

COUNTRY	BUDGET REQUIRED
Burkina Faso	2,900,000
Cameroon (MCO) [Multi Country Office]	4,707,600
Chad	2,980,000
Cote d'Ivoire	1,000,000
Mali	4,900,000
Niger	7,945,000
Nigeria	10,558,600
Regional activities	7,800,000
Senegal (MCO) [Multi Country Office]	500,000
TOTAL	**43,291,200**

COUNTRY / ACTIVITY	BUDGET REQUIRED
BURKINA FASO	**2,900,000**
Enhancing outreach, assistance and services delivery (food, shelter, MHPSS)	1,600,000
Improving self-reliance and livelihood	900,000
Supporting case processing in remote locations	400,000
CHAD	**2,980,000**
Communication with Communities	235,000
Education services for refugee children	950,000
Information Management	270,000
Support case processing in remote locations and family reunification	25,000
Livelihood activities	1,500,000
COTE D'IVOIRE	**1,000,000**
Communication with Communities	50,000
Data collection and analysis	50,000
Enhancing outreach and services delivery in remote locations	150,000
Promoting sustainability of return	300,000
Supporting case processing in remote locations	450,000

COUNTRY / ACTIVITY	BUDGET REQUIRED
MALI	**4,900,000**
Active facilitation of access to family reunion	60,000
Communication with communities	300,000
Data collection and analysis	390,000
Education services for refugee children	1,000,000
Enhancing outreach and services delivery in remote locations	1,300,000
Reinforcement of the national healthcare system	675,000
Support for case processing in remote locations	325,000
Support to host families	140,000
Support to livelihood activities	710,000
CAMEROON (MCO)	**4,707,600**
Capacity enhancement (Cameroon, Gabon)	100,000
Communication with Communities	320,000
Study on mixed movements	300,000
Establishment of partnerships	300,000
Facilitation of family reunion	160,000
Support for case processing	3,527,600
NIGER	**7,945,000**
Infrastructure in the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) centre	1,600,000
Mental health and psychosocial support	530,000
Communication along the routes	500,000
Education services for refugee children, vocational training for refugee youth, support to foster care families	130,000
Enhancing outreach and service delivery in remote locations	2,250,000
Support for case processing in remote locations	2,900,000
Support to livelihood activities	35,000
NIGERIA	**10,558,600**
Communication with Communities along mixed movement routes (TRS)	558,600
Enhancing outreach and service delivery	4,500,000
Enhancing outreach and service delivery for IDPs in the North East	5,500,000
SENEGAL (MCO)	**500,000**
Assistance to survivors at sea in Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau	200,000
Capacity-building on international protection	100,000
Create a network of partners to identify and refer persons in need of international protection	150,000
Communication	50,000
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	**7,800,000**
LLP*	5,200,000
The joint cross-border project with key regional stakeholders	800,000
Developing a harmonized refugee protection framework within ECOWAS countries	100,000
Expansion of the TRS (Mali, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire)	1,700,000
TOTAL	**43,291,200**

	USD
Chad	2.2 M
Côte d'Ivoire	1 M
Mali	1.5 M
Regional Bureau	500,000

© UNHCR / Samuel Otieno

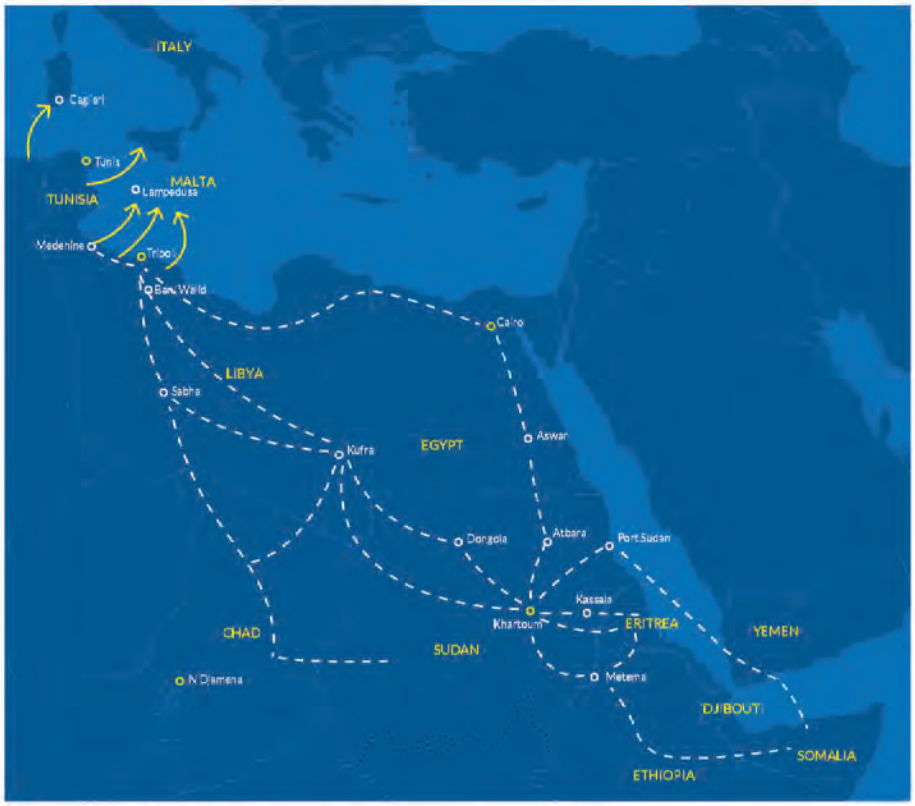
A family of Ethiopian refugees, fleeing clashes in the country's northern Tigray region, rest after crossing the border into Hamdayet, Sudan in November 2020.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGION

The East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region remains one of the most unstable and complex sub-regions in terms of movement on the continent with both protracted and new displacements driven by instability, national and localized conflicts, and human rights violations. The region experiences chronic poverty and extreme climatic variability, all of which also lead to different forms of mobility and displacement. The sub-region is host to many refugees displaced from Burundi, Eritrea, Somalia, and South Sudan, among others, which represent some of the largest displacement crises in the world and currently has the highest resettlement needs globally. Countries in the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region currently host 4.7 million refugees, the majority of whom are women and children, as well as 8.8 million IDPs. Cumulatively, the region is hosting 13.5 million persons of concern to UNHCR as of December 2020. While some countries have continued to show great generosity towards displaced populations, the region has also witnessed a progressive tightening of asylum regimes, and the inability or unwillingness of authorities and host communities to maintain asylum space and a sustained response in the face of protracted situations.

While voluntary return to the country of origin is often cited as the durable solution of choice for the largest number of refugees, it is also the most difficult to realize. Local integration in the host country and resettlement to third countries

MAP 4 • **Routes through East and Horn of Africa Region to Europe**



are politically important elements in maintaining a 'balance' between the various solutions and contributing to equitable responsibility-sharing and in adopting a comprehensive approach to durable solutions. However, a 50% reduction in the resettlement quota for the region between 2019 and 2020 and the shrinking of the asylum space has raised concerns regarding the international community's commitment to responsibility-sharing.

The scope, magnitude and complexity of mixed movements in the East, Horn and Great Lakes region remains significant, as sporadic conflicts, chronic poverty and climate change engender secondary movements. Displacement

Ethiopian refugees report obstacles to reach safety in Sudan as numbers approach 50,000 (1 December 2020)

Statement attributable to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on the situation in Ethiopia's Tigray region (1 December 2020)

from and within the Tigray region, Ethiopia, which began in November 2020, may be creating potential risk of onward movements across the eastern African routes affecting both Ethiopian nationals and Eritrean refugees.* As the situation remains very fluid, activities planned under this appeal take into consideration programmatic activities included in UNHCR Regional Appeal for the Ethiopia Emergency Situation (Tigray) on 23 December 2020.* Persons of concern to UNHCR, form part of the population moving in mixed flows, including unaccompanied children, both within the region and *en route* to North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, or South Africa. Dangerous secondary movements are undertaken particularly by Eritrean, Somali, Ethiopian and South Sudanese nationals.

ETHIOPIA EMERGENCY SITUATION (TIGRAY) UNHCR REGIONAL APPEAL (January - June 2021)

Moreover, asylum statistics suggest that in 2017-2019, just over 147,000 persons from East/Horn of Africa requested asylum in the EU+ area.* This represents about 7% of the total requests in this region in this period. In the same time frame, out of 167,400 first instance decisions made regarding asylum applications from nationals of East and Horn of Africa countries, 63% were granted international protection.*

This includes the then 28 EU Member States as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

Based on Eurostat data for nationals of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

Opportunities exist in the humanitarian/development nexus where UNHCR has made recent strides to involve more diverse actors in the response to displacement. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) has been piloted in six operations in the region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Rwanda, and Uganda). Globally, up to $2.2 billion will be available for a dedicated window for refugees and host communities over the next three years from the World Bank. The financing is part of the recently approved 19th replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA19), the World Bank's fund for the poorest, that will run from July 2020 to June 2023. Such development financing will address the long-term development needs of both populations, complementing humanitarian responses, and will also contribute to prevention efforts and resilience building in countries of origin.

There is also an increasing focus on issues related to forced displaced, mixed movements and statelessness on the part of regional actors, including the Inter-governmental Authority on Development, the East African Community, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Such actors can play an important role in addressing the structural causes of displacement and statelessness, and in facilitating coordinated responses at the regional level.

As operations continue to be affected by the unprecedented COVID-19 situation and its possible implications, the regional socio-economic, political and security situation overall is expected to be equally negatively impacted. The foregoing, coupled with social, security and political instability may contribute to increased movements in search of asylum and secondary movements in the region and beyond, as a result of restrictive asylum systems, lack of socio-economic opportunities and prospects for durable solutions.

TABLE 3 • FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES 2021

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGION | USD

USD $22.94 million

COUNTRY	BUDGET REQUIRED
Ethiopia*	11,208,356
Rwanda	8,600,000
Somalia	2,323,055
Sudan	811,362
TOTAL	22,942,773

Within the $11.2 million for Ethiopia, the requirements of $4 million highlighted for Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region are already included in the Ethiopia Emergency Situation Appeal

COUNTRY / ACTIVITY	BUDGET REQUIRED
ETHIOPIA	**11,208,356**
Cash-based assistance	5,498,356
Communication with Communities	200,000
Coordinating to strengthen access to asylum, legal and material support	400,000
Education services	970,000
Enhancing outreach and services delivery in remote locations	400,000
Family reunion	630,000
Strengthen child protection	910,000
Support for case processing	600,000
Promote access to safe, quality education in the camps, with adequate COVID-19 prevention mechanisms	700,000
Livelihood activities	900,000
RWANDA	**8,600,000**
Access to legal assistance and legal remedies improved	86,000
Camp management and coordination refined and improved	43,000
Civil registration and civil status documentation strengthened	43,000
Community mobilization strengthened and expanded	86,000
Donor relations and resource mobilization strengthened	25,800
Food security improved	2,580,000
Health status of the population improved	1,290,000
Level of individual documentation increased	43,000
Logistics and supply optimized to serve operational needs	301,000
Natural resources and shared environment better protected	25,800
Nutritional well-being improved	86,000
Operations management, coordination and support strengthened and optimized	688,000
Peaceful co-existence with local communities promoted	86,000
Population has optimal access to education	86,000
Population has optimal access to reproductive health and HIV services	43,000
Population has sufficient access to energy	86,000
Population has sufficient basic and domestic items	602,000
Population lives in satisfactory conditions of sanitation and hygiene	258,000
Potential for resettlement realized	86,000
Potential for voluntary return realized	25,800
Protection of children strengthened	258,000
Public attitude towards persons of concern improved	51,600
Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained	86,000
Reception conditions improved	86,000
Risk of SGBV is reduced and quality of response improved	258,000
Self reliance and livelihoods improved	258,000
Services for persons with specific needs strengthened	86,000
Shelter and infrastructure established, improved and maintained	860,000
Supply of potable water increased or maintained	86,000
SOMALIA	**2,323,055**
Cash-based assistance	300,000
Communication with Communities	100,000
Coordinating to strengthen access to asylum, legal and material support	50,000
Education services	529,495
Enhancing outreach and services delivery in remote locations	207,160
Support for case processing	136,400
Livelihood activities	1,000,000
SUDAN	**811,362**
Communication with Communities (CwC) along all the routes	160,000
Education services, vocational training, support to foster care families	439,362
Enhancing outreach and services delivery in remote locations	82,000
Provision of cash-based assistance	130,000
TOTAL	22,942,773

© UNHCR / [illegible]

A Nigerian asylum-seeker being hosted in temporary accommodation in Sfax on the west coast of Tunisia after being rescued at sea in May 2020.

NORTH AFRICA REGION

Irregular mixed flows continue to affect North African countries as movements to North Africa, within North African countries and Europe continued in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic increased the vulnerability of persons of concern to UNHCR in mixed movements. Mobility restrictions and stricter border management polices reduced access to international protection for people of concern, while contributing to delays in disembarkations and sometimes access to those disembarked. Most persons of concern to UNHCR involved in these movements were men, but women and children made up approximately 22% of the population.

Trafficking and smuggling-related risks, rising xenophobia, detention, pushbacks, and access to safety during disembarkation, access to those disembarked after rescue or interception at sea remained a problem in several North African countries which was exacerbated by the measures put in place to contain the spread of the pandemic. People with specific needs and diverse profiles such as children, people with disabilities and persons with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are exposed to additional protection risks.

In 2020, UNHCR strengthened coordination and joint advocacy together with partners on the need to uphold the principle of non-refoulement, identify alternatives to detention, and improve coordination on disembarkation procedures. UNHCR initiated two research projects on communication with communities (CwC) and access to asylum and protection for victims and persons at risk of being trafficked, exploited, and abused in North Africa, while developing a learning Programme on Trafficking and Smuggling. Operations receiving mixed movements continued supporting registration, refugee status determination, and resettlement and evacuation activities. Considerable efforts were also made in detention monitoring and assisting individuals in need of international protection through cash-based and community-based interventions. Efforts are being pursued to encourage all countries to strengthen their rescue at sea capacity and post-disembarkation procedures.

In Egypt, most refugees and asylum-seekers were already very vulnerable prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, when seven out of ten refugee households in Egypt faced difficulties in meeting their basic needs. The vulnerability levels of refugees have been further compounded by the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. UNHCR aims to strengthen its support through cash assistance, education support for refugee children, and support to foster care families. In Libya, the effect of COVID-related restrictions has also been felt greatly by already vulnerable refugee households, where families rely on cash income from informal sources. Due to curfews and movement restrictions, many were unable to work. UNHCR strengthened its outreach to refugees and also launched a new joint programme with WFP to provide emergency food baskets targeting 10,000 food-insecure refugees and asylum-seekers.

SUB-REGIONAL COMPONENTS > North Africa region

Through regular verification exercises in the MENA region, it is estimated that at least 15% of refugees and asylum-seekers do not stay in their country of first arrival. Within this region, secondary movements are due to a variety of reasons related to the profile of refugees and asylum-seekers; or inadequate assistance, services and/or rights within countries of first arrival. As a result, people take the risk to pursue their journey irregularly towards another North African country and beyond. For some countries of first asylum, the percentage is significantly higher.

For many on the move, North Africa is the destination region. For others, North Africa represents a transit hub for attempting to undertake dangerous journeys to reach the Canary Islands or across the Mediterranean Sea to reach southern Europe. These mixed movements are however not unidirectional; many asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants also move to other countries in their region of origin where regional mobility agreements exist. While mixed movements to Libya may have decreased due to increased conflict within Libya, border closures and other measures implemented to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, various monitoring reports indicate that the number of people on the move has not significantly diminished, although access to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or Libya may take more time.*

During 2020, 54% of the persons who left by sea from North African countries were citizens of these countries. Moreover, asylum statistics indicate that in 2017-2019, almost 108,200 citizens from North African countries requested asylum in the EU+ region. This represents about 5% of the total requests. In the same time frame, out of 78,600 first instance decisions made regarding asylum applications from nationals of North African countries, 15% were granted international protection.*

Based on Eurostat data

UNHCR and IOM, COVID-19 and mixed migration movements: Emerging dynamics, risks and opportunities, May 2020

UNHCR and MMC, On this journey, no one cares if you live or die, July 2020

TABLE 4 • FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES 2021

NORTH AFRICA REGION | USD

USD $26 million

COUNTRY	BUDGET REQUIRED
Algeria	627,662
Egypt	2,184,017
Libya	19,263,446
Mauritania	526,444
Morocco	1,373,094
Tunisia	2,095,864
TOTAL	**26,070,527**

COUNTRY/ACTIVITY		BUDGET REQUIRED
ALGERIA		**627,662**
Access to primary health provided/supported	70,000	
Cash-based assistance (Multipurpose cash including for hygiene and sanitation needs)	122,662	
Early childhood and primary education provided	50,000	
Law and policy developed or strengthened	10,000	
Referral mechanism established	60,000	
Risk of SGBV is reduced and quality of response improved	30,000	
Risks related to detention reduced and freedom of movement increased	15,000	
Self reliance and livelihoods improved	10,000	
Services for persons with specific needs strengthened (Psychosocial counselling and support)	40,000	
Shelter and infrastructure established, improved and maintained	90,000	
Staffing and associated costs (ABOD)	130,000	
EGYPT		**2,184,017**
Basic needs and essential services	714,000	
Community empowerment	217,660	
Education	320,512	
Registration	285,000	
Staffing and associated costs (ABOD)	646,845	

COUNTRY/ACTIVITY		BUDGET REQUIRED
LIBYA		**19,263,446**
Distribution of emergency cash to PoCs released from detention centers and cash to vulnerable refugees in urban settings	997,631	
Expansion of Community-based Protection (CBP) and outreach activities, protection monitoring, prevention and response to SGBV, child protection (including activities under the BluePrint initiative) and Communication with Communities (CwC)	3,355,044	
Humanitarian evacuation flights to Niger, Rwanda and other countries	1,445,954	
Procurement and distribution of Core Relief Items (CRI)	496,704	
Provision of primary health services, psychosocial services and procurement of medicines	1,611,208	
Provision of ready food parcel to food-insecure refugees	2,500,000	
Provision of services and assistance to PoCs with disabilities	302,858	
Registration, Refugee Status Determination and issuance of documentation	1,750,970	
Shelter and infrastructure established, improved and maintained	334,537	
Staffing and associated costs (ABOD)	6,468,540	
MAURITANIA		**526,444**
Access to and quality of status determination procedures improved	213,814	
Quality of registration and profiling improved or maintained	37,440	
Staffing and associated costs (ABOD)	275,190	
MOROCCO		**1,373,094**
Cash-based assistance to vulnerable refugees	200,000	
Education services for refugee children, vocational training for refugees	150,000	
Enhancing (directly or through partners) outreach, assistance and services delivery (food, shelter, MHPSS)	60,000	
Family reunion	30,000	
Livelihood	123,964	
Staffing and associated costs (ABOD)	809,130	
TUNISIA		**2,095,864**
Access to the territory improved and risk of refoulement reduced (profiling, counselling, advocacy, training)	150,000	
Cash-based assistance for basic and domestic items	243,000	
Reception conditions improved (temporary shelter, psychosocial support)	577,707	
Staffing and associated costs (ABOD)	1,125,157	
TOTAL		**26,070,527**

Asylum-seekers tell a UNHCR officer about the ordeal of their journey to Europe via Libya. They were finally allowed to disembark in Lampedusa.

SOUTHERN EUROPEAN REGION

Refugees and migrants continue to attempt to use different, and at times, more dangerous routes to reach Europe. The number of arrivals to Europe through the Mediterranean* and Canary Islands routes recorded in 2020 have however decreased by 23% compared to 2019. This is due in part to temporary measures restricting access to territory or border closures in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Mediterranean routes include (Eastern: to Greece and Cyprus, Central: to Italy and Malta, and Western: to Spanish mainland and enclaves)

As far as Central and Western Mediterranean routes* are concerned, some 55,300 people arrived to Italy, Malta and Spain by land or sea in 2020, representing an overall increase of 24% compared to 2019. Sea arrivals to Italy in 2020 nearly tripled when compared to 2019, representing approximately 64% of all sea arrivals via the Mediterranean to Italy, Malta, and Spain in 2020. The composition of nationalities also changed significantly with Tunisians forming the largest group of sea arrivals to Italy in recent months. The arrivals in Spain and Malta through these two routes decreased in 2020 compared to 2019. In Spain in particular, arrivals via the Western Mediterranean route (by sea and land, excluding the Canary Islands route) have decreased by 37%*. However, in 2020, a total of 23,023 individuals arrived to the Canary Islands via the Atlantic route, which represents a significant increase (nearly 8 times) compared to 2019.

The Central Mediterranean route includes sea arrivals to Italy and Malta. Western Mediterranean route includes sea and land arrivals to Spain, excluding the Canary Islands.

This calculation includes land arrivals to Spain which amounted to 6,345 in 2019 and to 1,535 in 2020.

Of those crossing to Europe from Libya, approximately one third were likely in need of international protection, based on Eurostat data for international protection granted in Europe in 2019. In addition, other people using this route are likely to need temporary protection or have other specific needs given their personal circumstances or experiences during the journey, including in Libya. Among these are victims of trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, or unaccompanied children. As of mid-year, a quarter of all arrivals to Europe from Libya were children, almost 90% of whom were unaccompanied.

The reception conditions and asylum capacity in first line States remain under severe strain. There continue to be significant challenges in efficiently addressing the basic needs of arrivals and processing their asylum applications to ensure that those not requiring international protection are quickly identified and returned as a means to disincentivize further arrivals from those without international protection needs. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded the situation given the difficulty of implementing necessary physical distancing and other preventive measures in reception centres, some of which are severely overcrowded. States were also forced to adapt their national procedures for disembarkation, putting in place offshore and onshore quarantine spaces, such as in Italy. The lack of a coordinated European response to rescue at sea and disembarkation also continued to pose serious challenges, and increased risks associated with crossing the central and west Mediterranean Sea. UNHCR will continue to advocate for a strengthened search and rescue capacity in the western and central Mediterranean Sea, and for the lifting of administrative barriers for NGOs to carry out search and rescue operations or for commercial ships to disembarked to places of safety and without delay the people they have rescued.

UNHCR will strengthen monitoring of reception conditions at points of entry, individuals' profile and potential protection needs (i.e. country of embarkation, nationality, age, gender and specific needs) to ensure timely and accurate data is collected and shared internally and externally to strengthen decision-making, advocacy and protection in relation to these mixed movements. This engagement will assist Italy, Malta and Spain to improve the identification of people who may need international protection, and work with partners to strengthen the identification and referral of unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking, and others who may need temporary protection or have other specific needs. UNHCR will continue to support the improvement of reception conditions, especially to enable persons of concern to comply with health measures. Specific attention will be placed on ensuring alternatives to detention and facilitating access to asylum procedures. It will also support countries in enhancing reception capacity and conditions, in strengthening fair, and efficient asylum procedures to ensure access to international protection for those in need, the safety of host communities and to ensure effective return procedures for those found not to need international protection. UNHCR continues to advocate for a comprehensive, well-managed response to address mixed movements, including a predictable regional disembarkation mechanism built on a common and more coordinated approach to search and rescue and disembarkation grounded in solidarity and responsibility-sharing, as introduced in the proposed EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

In Italy, Malta and Spain, UNHCR will continue focusing its efforts on supporting those arriving by sea and ensure they can easily access relevant information on the asylum system and available services in a language they can understand. UNHCR will also engage with asylum-seekers in an age, gender and diversity sensitive manner through enhanced participation, ensuring their voices are considered in communication mechanisms to channel their feedback and suggestions on services received. UNHCR will also continue working with government partners, other UN agencies, NGOs and civil society actors to strengthen child protection, as well as prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, including by facilitating survivors' access to multi-sectoral services.

TABLE 5 • FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES 2021

SOUTHERN EUROPEAN REGION | USD

USD $5.8 million

COUNTRY	BUDGET REQUIRED
Italy	3,000,000
Malta	1,000,000
Spain	1,300,000
Regional activities	500,000
GRAND TOTAL	**5,800,000**

COUNTRY / ACTIVITY	BUDGET REQUIRED
ITALY	**3,000,000**
Communications with Communities (CwC)	500,000
Data collection and analysis	200,000
Support fair and efficient asylum procedures	800,000
Support for improved access to protection services	1,000,000
Support for provision of adequate reception conditions	500,000
MALTA	**1,000,000**
Communications with Communities (CwC)	200,000
Data collection and analysis	50,000
Support fair and efficient asylum procedures	300,000
Support for improved access to protection services	225,000
Support for provision of adequate reception conditions	225,000
SPAIN	**1,300,000**
Communications with Communities (CwC)	150,000
Data collection and analysis	50,000
Support fair and efficient asylum procedures	500,000
Support for improved access to protection services	600,000
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	**500,000**
Advocacy	330,000
Data collection and analysis	170,000
TOTAL	**5,800,000**

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN SITUATION (OSE)

In 2021, the Office of the Special Envoy will continue to:

- Support Regional Bureaus and Country Offices in the development, review and implementation of coherent and coordinated national and cross-regional/cross-border strategies on protection in mixed movements. OSE will assist them in communication and advocacy, resource mobilisation, data collection and analysis related to protection of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR as well as the drivers and risks of dangerous journeys, including in secondary movements. It will also represent the Office in a number of key forums related to the management of mixed movements.
- Advise and support in the development innovative routes-based initiatives on key priorities, such as for example, rescue at sea and disembarkation, family reunification, complementary pathways, protection of UASCs and youth on the move, and the prevention and response to human trafficking, in line with the GCR approach and UNHCR's Strategic Directions. In particular, OSE will ensure the cross-regional coordination and facilitation of the Live Learn and Participate project and its Family Reunification component.
- Propose programmatic interventions to relevant UNHCR Regional Bureaus and external stakeholders whenever these could contribute to strengthened protection along the Central and Western Mediterranean routes including through the prevention of dangerous journeys (including secondary movements). It will also assist relevant UNHCR Country Offices to ensure the effective functioning of corporate cross-Bureaus activities, such as current/future Emergency Transit Mechanisms (ETM) through the existing Task Team or other ad-hoc coordination meetings necessary to address critical incidents.

TABLE 6 • FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES 2021

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY | USD

USD $1.98 million

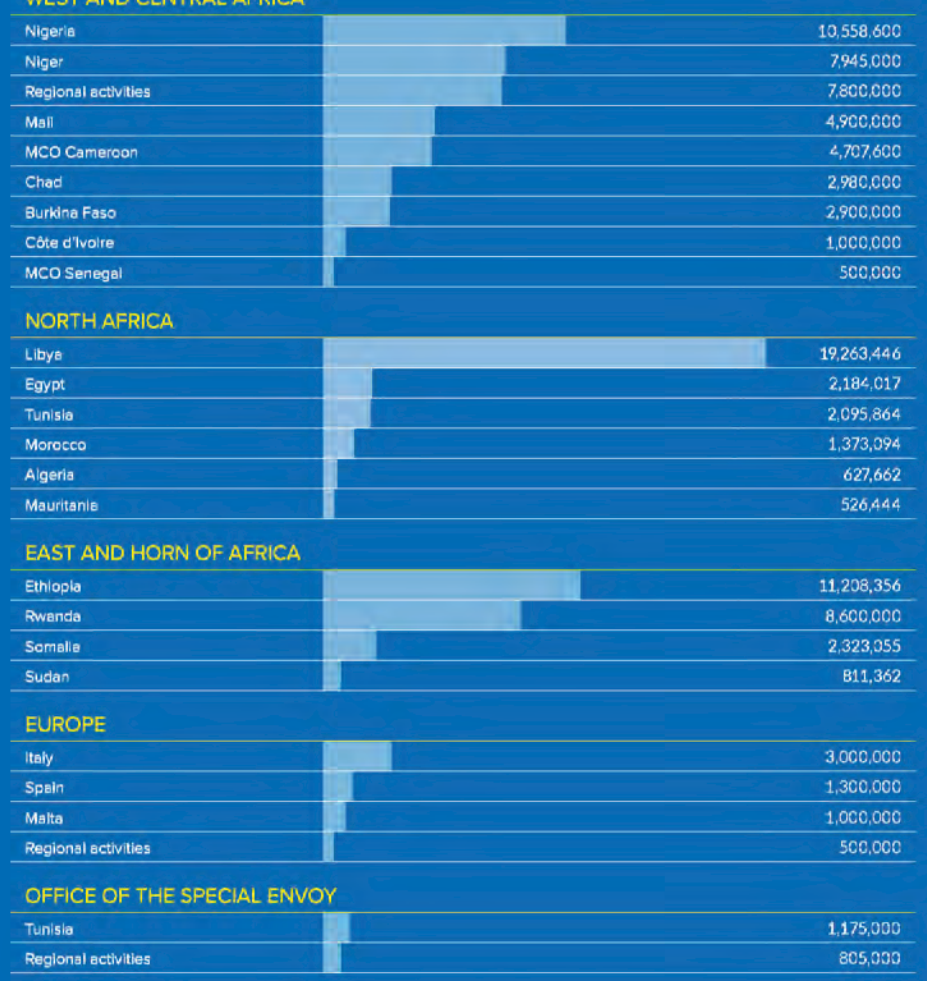
COUNTRY / ACTIVITY		BUDGET REQUIRED
TUNISIA		1,175,000
Admin and Coordination costs	900,000	
Data management	275,000	
REGIONAL ACTIVITIES		805,000
Support to operations (family reunion, CwC, advocacy)	805,000	
TOTAL		1,980,000

TABLE 7 • OVERALL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES BY REGION/COUNTRY | USD

REGION / COUNTRY	BUDGET REQUIRED	
EUROPE		**5,800,000**
Italy	3,000,000	
Malta	1,000,000	
Regional activities	500,000	
Spain	1,300,000	
EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA		**22,942,773**
Ethiopia	11,208,356	
Rwanda	8,600,000	
Somalia	2,323,055	
Sudan	811,362	
NORTH AFRICA		**26,070,527**
Algeria	627,662	
Egypt	2,184,017	
Libya	19,263,446	
Mauritania	526,444	
Morocco	1,373,094	
Tunisia	2,095,864	
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA		**43,291,200**
Burkina Faso	2,900,000	
Chad	2,980,000	
Cote d'Ivoire	1,000,000	
Mali	4,900,000	
MCO Cameroon	4,707,600	
MCO Senegal	500,000	
Niger	7,945,000	
Nigeria	10,558,600	
Regional activities	7,800,000	
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY		**1,980,000**
Regional activities	805,000	
Tunisia	1,175,000	
GRAND TOTAL		**100,084,500**

SUB-REGIONAL COMPONENTS

GRAPH 5 • OVERALL FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES BY REGION/COUNTRY | USD



UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this Situation in 2020 as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with softly earmarked and unearmarked funds. UNHCR has drawn from these funds to cover underfunded prioritised activities, enabling important help to be provided to refugees and other populations of concern.

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS[1] | USD

Sweden 88.2 million | **Private donors Spain** 83.4 million | **United Kingdom** 45.7 million | **Norway** 41.4 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 41.3 million | **Private donors Japan** 40.1 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **Germany** 25.9 million | **Japan** 23.8 million | **Private donors Italy** 20.2 million | **Private donors Sweden** 18.3 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **France** 14 million | **Private donors USA** 10.8 million | **Italy** 10.6 million

Australia | Austria | Azerbaijan | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | South Africa | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS[2] | USD

United States of America 353.3 million | **Private donors Australia** 13.1 million | **United Kingdom** 13.1 million | **Canada** 9.1 million | **Germany** 6.7 million | **Sweden** 5.7 million | **Private donors Germany** 3.3 million | **Switzerland** 2.9 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 2.6 million | **France** 2.5 million | **Finland** 2.2 million | **Private donors Lebanon** 2.1 million | **Private donors USA** 2.1 million

Czechia | Denmark | Iceland | IGAD | International Organization for Migration | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Joint SDG Fund | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Morocco | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Slovenia | UN Peacebuilding Fund | United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security | World Food Programme | Private donors

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS

European Union | Italy | Austria | Education Cannot Wait | Netherlands | Switzerland | Denmark | France | Afghanistan | European Economic Area | United Kingdom | Japan | Spain | Norway | Luxembourg | Monaco | Canada

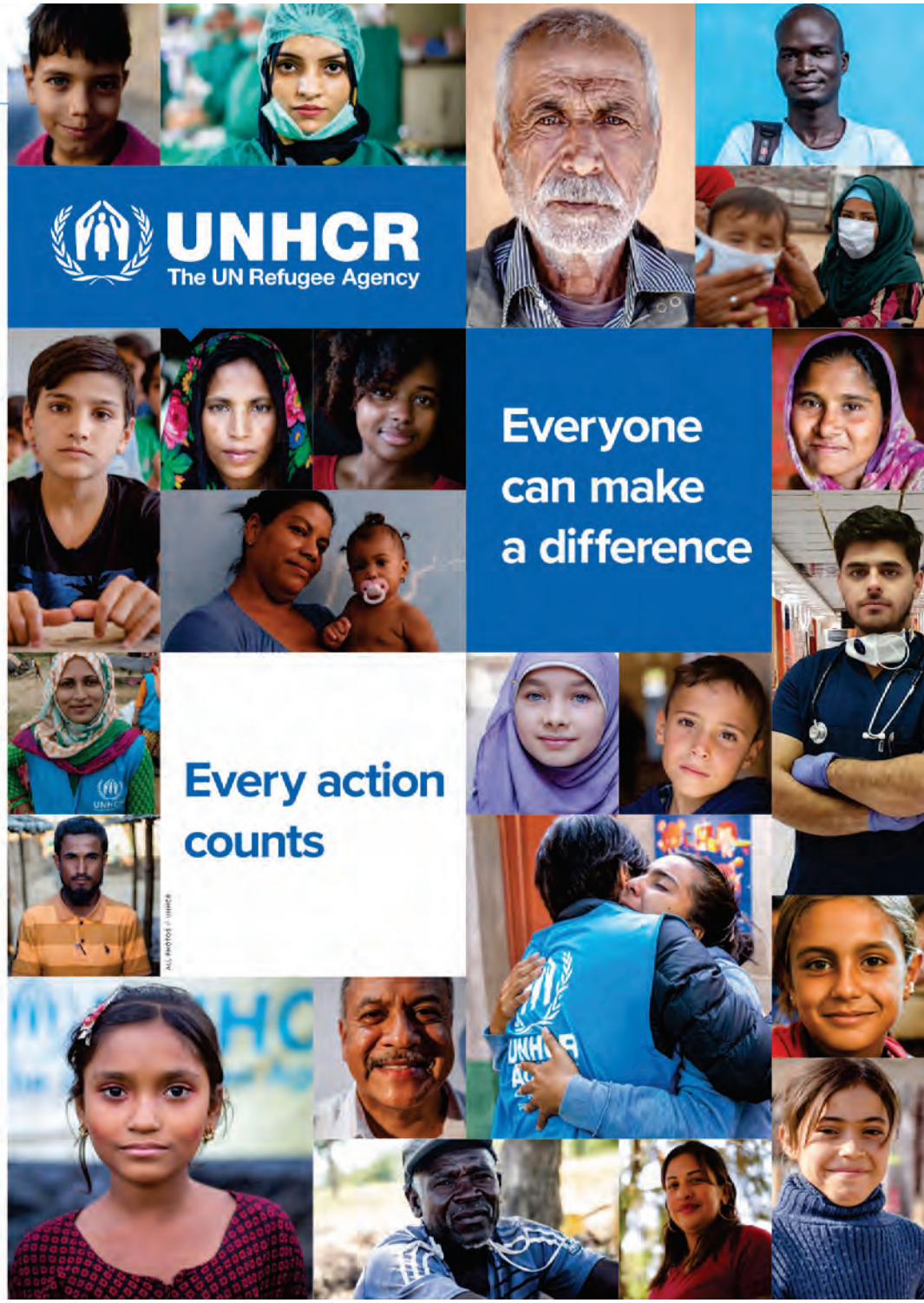
And from private donors:

UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe | Unilever (UK) | Muslim World League | Latter-day Saints Charities | Comic Relief | Fast Retailing Co. Ltd. (UNIQLO) | The World We Want Foundation | Fondation BNP Paribas

1 Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contribution $10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

METHODOLOGY: Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritised activities. This funding update includes an indicative allocation of funds so as to accurately represent the resources available for the situation. The contributions earmarked for the Central Mediterranean Route Situation are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions listed above. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking. Adjustments relate to programme support costs and carry-over.

2 Due to their earmarking at a related region, sub-region, country or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for the Central Mediterranean Route Situation. Where a donor has contributed $2 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.



ROUTES TOWARDS THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN SEA

WORKING ON
ALTERNATIVES TO
DANGEROUS JOURNEYS
FOR REFUGEES

January 2021

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organisation dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution. We lead international action to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

We deliver life-saving assistance, help safeguard fundamental human rights, and develop solutions that ensure people have a safe place called home where they can build a better future. We also work to ensure that stateless people are granted a nationality.

We work in over 130 countries, using our expertise to protect and care for millions.

Cover photo:
Some of the 200 asylum-seekers released from Zawiya Al Nasr detention centre in Libya in May 2020 are received at UNHCR's office in Sarraj, Tripoli, where they are given food baskets, hygiene kits and medical checks.

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UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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