

Routes Monitor

Methodological note

September 2026 Update

1. Purpose and Scope

Routes Monitor is an analytical platform that consolidates non-personal, aggregated data and protection-focused analysis on mixed movements along selected routes. It brings together long-standing UNHCR datasets and official government reporting in an interactive, route-level dashboard that supports protection-sensitive analysis, programming and interpretation of change over time.

The platform applies a route-based lens to movement dynamics across different segments of a journey. It does not collect new data or monitor individuals. Instead, it systematizes existing datasets and links quantitative trends with route-specific protection analysis, thematic reports and supporting resources.

Routes Monitor is under continuous development. Coverage, features and analytical components may be expanded or refined as source data, methodological guidance and operational needs evolve.

2. Geographic Coverage

Coverage varies by route and indicator, depending on data availability, reporting practices, operational access, monitoring systems and validation processes. Routes Monitor consolidates the best available information from monitored routes into a common analytical framework to support route-based analysis of mixed movements. Nevertheless, coverage is not uniform across all geographical areas, movement corridors or modes of travel, and the availability of route-level information may vary over time. Figures should therefore be interpreted as indicative of movements observed through available monitoring and reporting systems rather than a complete measure of all movements occurring within a region. Absence of data does not imply absence of movements.

3. Core Indicators and Definitions

3.1 Total Movements

Total movements represent the combined volume of recorded maritime and land movements captured through monitored routes. The indicator is calculated as the sum of maritime movements and land movements recorded across monitored routes. As coverage varies across routes, countries, and movement types, and land movement data are currently available only for selected route segments, total movements should be interpreted as an indicative measure of mobility along monitored routes rather than a complete measure of all cross-border movements occurring within a region. Figures may be revised as additional information becomes available.

3.2 Land Movements

Land movements reflect cross-border movements recorded or estimated along monitored land routes. Coverage currently varies across routes and countries, and land movement data are not yet available for all routes included in Routes Monitor. Consequently, figures should not be interpreted as representing all land movements occurring within a region. Land movement figures are provisional and may be revised as additional information becomes available.

3.3 Maritime Movements

Maritime movements represent sea crossings and other waterborne movements recorded along monitored routes. For the Mediterranean and West Africa Atlantic routes, maritime movements are estimated through reconstructed departures derived from arrivals in destination countries and disembarkations in relevant coastal or transit countries. For the South and South-East Asia Route, maritime movements are derived directly from validated incident-level monitoring records. Because methodologies differ across regions, maritime movement figures should be interpreted within their route-specific context.

3.4 Arrivals

Arrivals refer to individuals recorded or estimated as entering a country or territory along a specific route, by sea or land depending on the context. Arrival figures reflect the point at which people are registered, reported, observed, or otherwise documented as entering a location along that route. They should be interpreted as a measure of entry rather than as evidence of final destination, settlement intention, or the completion of a journey, as onward movement may subsequently occur. Where the term new arrivals is used, it refers to persons recorded or estimated as arriving during a defined reporting period, in accordance with the methodology of the underlying data source. Depending on the route and indicator, arrival figures may be based on official government reporting, UNHCR operational monitoring, registration systems, route-based movement estimates, or other validated sources.

3.5 Disembarkations

Disembarkations are defined in UNHCR's glossary as: the operational process by which persons, including refugees and migrants, are transferred from a vessel to a place on land. This definition can include transfers following rescue operations or interceptions at sea and acknowledges that not all disembarkations occur in locations meeting the criteria of a place of safety. UNHCR recalls that only disembarkation in a place of safety is consistent with relevant international law standards.

3.5 Departures

Departures represent estimated or directly observed movements from a point of embarkation or departure. For the Mediterranean and West Africa Atlantic routes, departures are analytically reconstructed using arrivals and disembarkation data and should be interpreted as estimated maritime movements rather than directly observed departures. For the South and South-East Asia Route, departures are derived directly from validated maritime incident records.

3.6 Dead or Missing

Dead or missing persons refer to individuals reported to have died or gone missing during a movement event along a monitored route. Figures are compiled from operational reporting, official sources, partners and other verified information. Reported figures likely underestimate the true number of incidents and affected individuals.

4. Data Sources and Methodology

4.1 Mediterranean Routes (Western, Central and Eastern) and West-Africa Atlantic Routes

A. Arrivals

Arrival figures for these routes are based primarily on official government reporting from countries of arrival in Europe. UNHCR country and regional offices have historically consolidated these datasets under the regional page [Operational Data Portal \(Europe Sea Arrival\)](#).

- **Greece:** Hellenic Police / Hellenic Coast Guard
- **Italy:** Ministry of Interior / Italian Police
- **Spain:** Ministry of Interior (including sea arrivals and arrivals to the Canary Islands)
- **Malta:** Migration Police
- **Cyprus:** Immigration Police / Asylum Service

Nationality breakdown: publicly available Frontex data on detected border crossings.

Arrival data may be updated more frequently at the country level than on regional or route-level aggregates. Updates should not be considered final and may be subject to change, including retroactive revisions.

B. Disembarkations

Disembarkation figures for these routes are based primarily on official government reporting, most commonly published by national coast guard authorities, with varying levels of frequency depending on the country and operational context. UNHCR keeps track of these figures closely and complements them through its own field monitoring and the review of other publicly available sources, including verified media reporting and partner information. Countries with disembarkation data include: Türkiye, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania.

C. Departure Figures

For these routes, departures are analytically reconstructed through triangulation of:

- Recorded arrivals in European destination countries
- Recorded disembarkations in relevant coastal or transit countries
- Contextual operational analysis

In practice, this means that departure figures reflect the total outward movement observed along a route segment, as inferred from both arrival and disembarkation reporting. Where disembarkation data are unavailable for a given period, reconstructed departures may reflect arrivals only for that segment.

4.2 South and South-East Asia

Data on the South and South-East Asia Route is based on UNHCR monitoring and operational reporting, as reflected in the UNHCR [Operational Data Portal \(ODP\) Myanmar Situation Page](#) and presented in UNHCR's Route-Based Snapshot publications.¹

A. Maritime Movements

Maritime movement figures for the South and South-East Asia (SSEA) Route are derived from incident-level monitoring conducted by UNHCR and partners and published through UNHCR's Operational Data Portal (ODP) Myanmar Situation page. Maritime movements represent the total population recorded in validated maritime incidents along the Bay of Bengal-Andaman Sea corridor. Figures are reported on a monthly basis and reflect the best available information at the time of reporting. As with all route monitoring data, figures are provisional and may be revised as additional information becomes available.

B. Land Movements

Land movement figures represent estimated cross-border movements of refugees from Myanmar and are compiled and triangulated by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) using multiple sources, including government records, UNHCR operational data, partner reporting, media reports and interviews with refugees and people on the move. Sources include proGres data for arrivals in Bangladesh and Malaysia as well as UNHCR operational datasets for arrivals in India, and Government and partner data reported on arrivals in Thailand, as well as information collected in Myanmar. Figures are reported quarterly and should be interpreted as indicative estimates rather than exact counts. As registration may occur several months after arrival, trends may be affected by registration delays and retrospective updates. Quarterly trend analysis excludes approximately 39,100 movements to Thailand for which the year of arrival is unavailable.

C. Reporting Frequency and Visualization

Maritime movements are reported monthly, while land movements are reported quarterly. To preserve methodological consistency, Routes Monitor presents maritime and land movement trends separately where appropriate. Quarterly land movement estimates are represented using the final month of each reporting quarter for integration into the platform's common time series structure. These values should be interpreted as quarterly observations and not as monthly movement counts.

5. Thematic Pages

5.1 Main Nationalities

Nationality figures represent the nationality composition of people recorded across monitored routes and are calculated using both maritime and land movement datasets, depending on the route and movement type selected. Figures are presented over the selected reporting period and should be interpreted as indicative of the nationality composition observed along a route rather than as exact population counts.

For the Mediterranean and West Africa Atlantic routes, nationality information for maritime movements is primarily derived from arrivals and disembarkation datasets. For Spain, nationality breakdowns are

¹ Route-based snapshots for the South and South-East Asia route can be accessed in UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific page: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/rbap>

based on Frontex nationality information associated with detected border crossings, while for other routes nationality information is compiled from official government reporting and route-specific operational monitoring. Maritime movement estimates rely on the same nationality composition observed within the underlying arrivals and disembarkation records.

For the South and South-East Asia (SSEA) Route, nationality data for maritime movements are derived from incident-level monitoring and operational reporting associated with maritime departures and arrivals along the Bay of Bengal-Andaman Sea corridor. Nationality information for land movements is derived from cross-border movement estimates compiled and triangulated by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) using government data, operational records, partner reporting, media reports, and interviews with refugees and people on the move.

To support cross-route comparison, nationality information is consolidated into a common route-level dataset that combines maritime and land movement sources while preserving the underlying route-specific methodologies. As reporting frequencies differ across sources, nationality figures reflect the reporting period associated with the underlying movement data. Maritime nationality data are generally available on a monthly basis, while some land movement datasets are reported quarterly. Nationality distributions should therefore be interpreted as indicative of the observed composition of movements captured through Routes Monitor rather than a comprehensive representation of all movements occurring within a region.

5.2 Protection at Sea

This page brings together key UNHCR resources, guidance, publications, and operational information related to protection at sea. It serves as a central entry point for understanding mixed movements by sea, protection risks faced by refugees and migrants, and UNHCR's response along major maritime routes. The page also provides access to dedicated visualizations on **Disembarkations** and **Dead or Missing Persons at Sea**, where users can explore trends, route-specific analysis, and related indicators through interactive visualizations. These thematic pages complement the resource library by providing evidence-based insights into protection conditions and outcomes along monitored maritime routes.

5.2.1 Disembarkations

Disembarkation figures are compiled from official government and UNHCR and partners operational monitoring. The page presents disembarkation trends by route, country and reporting period. Disembarkation data are also used as an input to the estimation of maritime departures and movements presented elsewhere in Routes Monitor.

5.2.2 Dead or Missing at Sea

Figures on dead or missing persons at sea are compiled through triangulation of multiple sources, e.g., reports from survivors and affected families collected by UNHCR staff, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) [Missing Migrants Project](#), government authorities, including coast guards and navy vessels, civil society and humanitarian organizations, verified media reporting.

In the context of Asia and the Pacific, UNHCR documents dead or missing persons at sea maritime incidents involving Rohingya refugees along the Bay of Bengal–Andaman Sea corridor which is published in reports and a dashboard in a dedicated page on the [Operational Data portal](#).

The indicator Mortality Rate (%) is calculated as the cumulative number of people reported as dead or missing divided by the cumulative number of maritime departures during the selected year and period. The indicator is presented as a year-to-date (YTD) rate and is capped to the latest month for which departure data are available. This indicator is based on reported incidents and should be interpreted

with caution, as both departures and deaths/missing figures may be revised retrospectively as additional information becomes available.

Due to reporting constraints, access limitations, and verification challenges, figures represent conservative estimates and may understate (or in some cases overstate) the actual number of incidents.

6. Data Limitations

Data presented in Routes Monitor reflects the best available information at the time of publication and may be revised as additional information becomes available. Users should consider the following limitations when interpreting the data:

- Reporting delays, retrospective corrections and periodic revisions may affect historical figures.
- Coverage and reporting practices vary across routes, countries and movement types.
- Different indicators rely on different methodologies, including direct operational reporting, incident monitoring, triangulated estimates and analytical reconstruction.
- Some datasets may be affected by registration delays, which can influence the timing and interpretation of trends.
- Access constraints, verification challenges and incomplete reporting may result in underreporting or incomplete coverage of certain movements, incidents or population groups.

Figures should therefore be interpreted as indicative of trends, patterns and relative scale rather than definitive counts.

7. Relationship with Other Tools and Datasets

The Routes Monitor operates within a broader ecosystem of displacement data actors. It builds on publicly available government statistics, UNHCR sources and complements national and regional monitoring systems by structuring these data through a route-level analytical perspective.

The dashboard does not incorporate data from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The Routes Monitor provides a global route-based analytical layer that enables comparative analysis on a series of standard indicators along the same route.

In addition to consolidating governmental and UNHCR operational datasets, Routes Monitor also links to complementary analytical resources, including route-specific protection monitoring reports and thematic UNHCR publications. These resources provide essential qualitative and contextual analysis and strengthen its protection-sensitive interpretation of movement dynamics.

By organizing nationally reported data into a consolidated route framework, the platform supports greater coherence in interpreting trends across entire journeys, while remaining complementary to other actors' monitoring tools and methodologies.

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Version as of September 8th, 2026