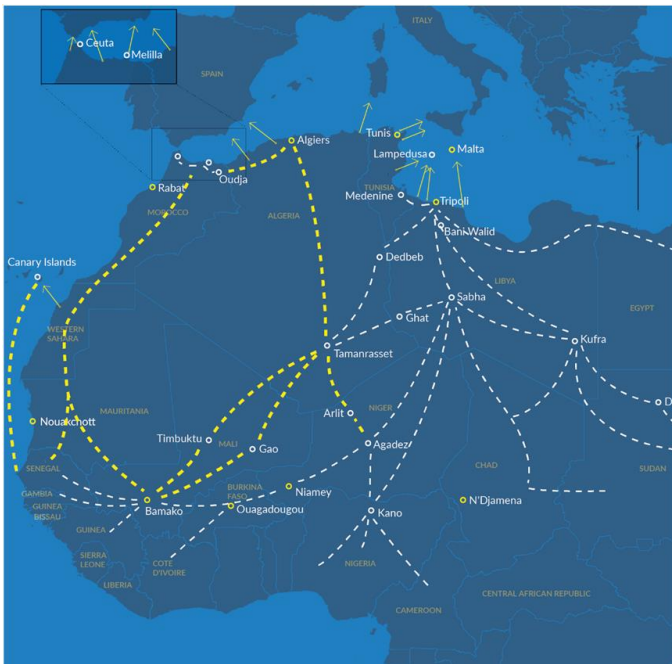


## MIXED MOVEMENTS IN WEST AFRICA

This update covers the period **May-June 2019** and provides an overview of regional and country trends as well as of programming and advocacy work undertaken by UNHCR Operations in the field of Mixed Movements. It includes contributions from: RRWA; Burkina Faso; Chad; Liberia; Mali; Niger and Nigeria.



### Introduction

The scope, magnitude and complexity of mixed movements in West Africa continued to increase significantly, as intensifying conflicts, violent extremism and large-scale violence engendered unprecedented secondary movements. In West Africa, persons of concern to UNHCR, including refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness, remain largely invisible among people moving within mixed flows, both within West Africa and *en route* to Europe.

On 26 June, UNHCR called for \$210 million to address deaths and abuses on Central and Western Mediterranean route. The situation in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Libya, Mali, Nigeria and Niger is triggering significant internal and cross-border displacement which could eventually lead to secondary movements towards North Africa and onwards to Europe via the Central Mediterranean or Western

Mediterranean routes. Despite the efforts of UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations, risks and abuses along the route continue to rise. The appeal seeks primarily a comprehensive programme of support that prevents people from falling into the hands of smugglers and traffickers.

Documenting the scale and nature of risks and abuses along travel routes is challenging. For many, the crossing of the Mediterranean is just a final step of a much longer and often very dangerous journey that has included passing through areas of armed conflict, crossing deserts, and for some, being held for ransom and tortured, or trafficked for sexual or labour exploitation. Evidence suggests that refugees on the move across West and North Africa are at risk of death, extreme physical abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, kidnapping, robberies and detention. Refugee protection in the context of mixed movements is part of UNHCR's core mandate and should be mainstreamed into the regular activities of the operation.



UNHCR's Regional Representative for West Africa, Liz Ahua, at the opening of the « case culturelle » in Demet, Senegal. Photo: UNHCR

## Part I: Highlights / Important events

### BURKINA FASO:

- A follow-up committee on the recommendations of the Dakar 2017 colloquium on asylum and migration was set up this June. This committee will monitor the implementation of the activities of the national action plan resulting from these recommendations using a concerted timeline.
- Under the leadership of UNHCR and in the spirit of getting closer to affected people, a single UN office opened in Kaya in the North Central region.

### COTE D'IVOIRE:

- **Regional Strategic Meeting on Statelessness:** From 6 to 8 May 2019, the UNHCR Regional Representation for West Africa (RRWA) and the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) jointly organized the second regional preparatory meeting in the run-up to the High-Level Segment on Statelessness (HLS), which will be held in Geneva on 7 October 2019. The HLS provides an important opportunity, both to Member States and the ECOWAS Commission itself, to redouble efforts to end statelessness in the region by 2024, in line with the objectives of the Abidjan Declaration and the Banjul Plan of Action. The meeting was opened by the ECOWAS Representative in Ivory Coast, Ambassador Babacar Carlos MBAYE, and UNHCR Representative Mohamed TOURE. ECOWAS was represented throughout the meeting by the Head of Division, Social Affairs. UNHCR's Head of Statelessness Section at DIP also attended. The workshop brought together 50 participants from the sub-region and beyond, including 14 Government Focal Points as well as UNHCR Heads of Offices, Senior Protection Officers and UNHCR Statelessness Focal Points.

### GUINEA:

- Regarding the **eradication of statelessness**, the National Assembly adopted on 9 May 2019 the new Guinean civil code which removed all the deficiencies related to nationality issues in the Republic of Guinea. The text is pending promulgation by the President of the Republic for its entry into force.

### MALI:

- On 13-14 June, UNHCR Mali and the Regional Representation for West Africa organized an **internal Protection and Solutions** meeting in Bamako focusing on the Mali situation. The meeting brought together UNHCR Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Algeria, the Regional Representation for West Africa, and the Bureau of Africa to review the current protection situation in the countries affected by the Mali situation and to agree on key issues. Also discussed during this event were the arrests and expulsions from Algeria, including the need to monitor assistance for the Voluntary Return of Malians in Niger and Algeria, given the current situation in Mali. The collaborative technical level meeting forms a solid basis to prepare for the strategic **Sahel Protection and Solutions Dialogue** to be hosted by the Government of Mali in Bamako on 10 and 11 September 2019. The five key themes identified to be discussed at the Dialogue include: a) humanitarian access and the physical protection of civilians; b) access to asylum with the framework of mass displacements of refugees and mixed movements; c) protection within the framework of the UN Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism; d) the search and implementation of solutions; and e) access to documents related to civil status, identity and nationality. The updated [UNHCR Position on Returns to Mali](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5d35ce9a4.html) is now available online at: [www.refworld.org/docid/5d35ce9a4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5d35ce9a4.html).
- UNHCR Mali signed a partnership with the Ministry of Malians living Abroad to sensitize persons in mixed movements on the risks of irregular migration. A work plan for six months (July to December 2019) was drafted to implement the project in Bamako, Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao, Sikasso and Kayes.
- UNHCR Mali has signed a partnership for 6 months with *le Comité International pour l'Aide d'Urgence et le Développement* (CIAUD) Canada to implement border monitoring in the context of mixed movements.

### NIGER:

- On 19 June, a new evacuation operation from Libya brought 131 persons to Niger. During the month of June, the transfer from Niamey of refugees evacuated from Libya to the new ETM transit centre in Hamdallaye continued while the most vulnerable cases remain in Niamey. Today, over 1,100 people are residing in the

new centre. Improvements at the centre are ongoing, including the installation of offices, sports facilities and improvement of WASH facilities.

**NIGERIA:**

- Development of a Strategy on Asylum & Migration 2019-2021'
- "Tell the Real Story" (TRS) project in Nigeria weekly episodes were aired in Benin City. Celebrity engagement to support TRS radio shows and stimulate online conversations on trafficking in persons.

**Part II: Short Overview****BURKINA FASO:**

The political and socio-economic context was marked by an upsurge in attacks by unidentified armed groups that have contributed to increasing the number of internally displaced persons estimated at over 200,000 at the end of June 2019. As part of the fight against terrorism, on 11 May the Government launched a military anti-terrorism operation called "Ndofou" which means "uproot" in the Fulfulde language in the northern, central north and Sahel regions.

**CHAD:**

Authorities prohibited a march scheduled by the opposition on 24 June, despite recent pressure (including by diplomatic representatives) on the Government to allow peaceful assembly in view of the upcoming legislative elections (no date decided yet). Opposition in Chad is fragmented: opposition parties reacted differently to the ban, with some parties calling to protest anyway while others decided to abide by the ban.

**MALI:**

The political context was marked by the political agreement between the president's coalition and opposition groups signed on 2 May 2019. This agreement aims to reduce the political and social tension so as to allow discussions which will lead to reforms. A committee composed of political and civil society personalities was established to conduct an "inclusive political dialogue". On 25 June, the triumvirate received the roadmap from the Malian President.

In view of the continued insecurity in Mali and other forms of human rights abuses, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2480 on 28 June to extend MINUMA's mandate for another year with the view of supporting the Malian Government in addressing the deteriorating security situation that is now also affecting increasingly central and southern parts of the country.

**NIGER:**

Niger has developed into a major hub for mixed movements northwards to Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean, but is also receiving increasing southward movements with people fleeing Libya or being deported from Algeria. In **Agadez**, UNHCR has invested in strengthening the national RSD system. As of the end of June 1,587 people, mainly Sudanese nationals returning from Libya, have been identified as in need of international protection, and were registered by UNHCR in Agadez. 126 persons are unaccompanied or separated children.

The **Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM)**, established in 2017 has received 23 evacuation flights from Libya to Niger (one more since the last report), carrying a total of 2,913 refugees and asylum-seekers. UNHCR is looking for durable solutions for evacuees, notably in the framework of resettlement to third countries. 1,649 evacuees have been resettled and 297 departures are pending. Their profiles mainly include survivors of torture or other forms of violence in the country of origin and/or transit countries (e.g. Libya) and others with compelling protection needs; unaccompanied children and women and girls at-risk. As of June 2019, more than 1,000 refugees had been transferred to the new centre in Niamey, completed with the support of the EU Trust Fund.

**NIGERIA:**

At the state level, the Edo State Government passed a new anti-trafficking law and provided additional resources to combat trafficking, while Delta and Ondo states established anti-trafficking task forces. The Government also convicted significantly more traffickers than during the previous reporting period and initiated prosecutions against seven government officials allegedly complicit in trafficking.

TRS Nigeria continues to plan joint stakeholder events and activities to reach out to Edo state indigenes to support attitudinal changes that promote regular migration and prevents trafficking in persons.

### Part III: Activities carried out during the aforementioned period

#### RRWA:

##### National level:

- Altogether **267 vulnerable persons were identified and referred to protection and essential services** in The Gambia and Senegal in collaboration with National Red Cross Societies through mapping of existing services and establishment of community-based referral mechanisms on most important mixed movement routes. Data collection enabled more accurate assessment of protection profiles of people moving within mixed flows on those routes. In collaboration with the Mixed Migration Centre protection needs in mixed flows in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger were analysed monthly.
- In June, UNHCR's Regional Representative for West Africa, at the invitation of authorities, participated in the inauguration of the opening of the **"Good Neighbor Cultural Box"** in Demet, near the border with Mauritania. UNHCR prospected the **"Good Neighbor Cultural Boxes"** in Diawara and Sylla in the Senegal River Valley at the invitation of the Senegalese National Commission of Management of Frontiers (CNGF) for possible UNHCR support based on its mandate. The project of the cultural boxes is to create physical spaces for cross-border populations to meet in order for them to participate through continued dialogue to find solutions to concerns affecting the community.



UNHCR and the Gambian Red Cross Society (GRCS) training on the identification of persons of concern in mixed movement situations. Photo: GRCS

##### Regional level:

- Efforts to strengthen community-based protection, outreach and referrals in Sahel region for persons of concern in mixed flows advanced with the development of a **UNHCR-IFRC training curriculum** aimed to enhance the understanding of protection in the context of mixed movements, and the ability of the two Organizations to efficiently collaborate and establish referral mechanisms in such situations in the West Africa region based on their respective mandates and approaches.
- UNHCR strengthened the public communication on its role in mixed movements through development of visual sensitization material for country offices. In addition, the French version of the **UNHCR 10-Point Plan in Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration** was shared with donors, partners and UNHCR offices in the sub-region to present the various key areas of intervention to strengthen the protection of persons with international protection needs involved in mixed flows.
- UNHCR contributed to the drafting of the **ECOWAS Mixed Migration Strategy** being developed by the UN Mixed Migration Working Group.
- In June 2019 the R-UNSDG endorsed the **TORs for the UN Regional Network on Migration** and adopted a UN Migration Network Workplan including the development of a regional knowledge platform. As a Member of the Executive Committee of the UN Network on Migration at the global level, UNHCR is closely engaged in the process of establishing the network at the regional level.

**BURKINA FASO:****Monitoring, identification and profiling:**

- Five monitoring missions were conducted at the borders in Seytenga, Faramana, Koloko: During these monitoring sessions, 15 Malians, 2 Ivorians and 4 Guineans indicated Niger as their destination. The reasons given are of an economic and family reunification nature.
- Monitoring in transport companies to track movements to and from Niger continued: A slowdown in departure movements and some cases of return were noted. Nevertheless, at the bus station in Dori, one Chadian and one Togolese were looking to get to Niamey;
- Registration of new Malian asylum-seekers, mostly children and women, in Ouagadougou were noted (141 people). These asylum-seekers, all from the Dogon ethnic group, come from the region of Mopti following community conflicts.

**Coordination and partnership with stakeholders:**

- Organization of a meeting as part of the update of the MoU between UNHCR and UNICEF: The new MoU has been adapted to the operational context of the current year taking into account the asylum and migration aspects.
- Organization of a series of meetings presenting the asylum and migration project in Dori and Seytenga with the aim of explaining the project and asking for support from partner services: a meeting was held with the administrative and security authorities (officials of the Prefecture, the Town Hall, the Police, the Gendarmerie and the Social Service) on 12 June in Seytenga seeking their support in the implementation of the project.
- Participation in a workshop organized by Save the Children to present the national report on migration trends of Children and Young Migrants (LSM) in the Hauts Bassins and Cascades regions for the period covering August 2018 to June 2019. The report was prepared by the Directorate for the Fight against Violence against Children of the Ministry of Women of National Solidarity, Family and Humanitarian Action. Of a total of 2,773 records collected, 2,279 were entered and synchronized. The report states the following: a) Migration trends are mainly observed among young people who have no level of education, i.e. 40.04% of the registered target; b) Several nationalities were recorded in the migration flows, mainly from Burkina Faso 72.75%, Mali 22.86% and Côte d'Ivoire 2.90%; c) the reasons for mixed movements are essentially of an economic nature. Also 4% of these movements are due to reasons of conflict and 5% for reasons of early marriages; d) about 70% of children and young people surveyed do not have identity documents.
- A meeting with the Regional and Provincial Directorates in charge of Humanitarian Action was also held on the same subject. These authorities have taken cognizance of the asylum and migration project and their support has been requested for the effective implementation of the activities, in particular on the management of the Transit Centre where asylum-seekers and vulnerable migrants identified are supported pending profiling;

**CHAD:**

UNHCR continues to monitor mixed movements across Chad through 100 relays across in the country. This allows to have a better understanding of the phenomenon and to identify people in need of international protection. From January to May 2019, 6,782 people on the move were interviewed. The vast majority of people interviewed are young Chadian men; 161 were refugees and 401 asylum-seekers. People in need of international protection were referred to the Chadian government's agency, the National Commission for the Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees (CNARR).

In June 2019, UNHCR and IOM jointly facilitated the readmission to Chad of 19 Sudanese refugees who had moved onward to Niger and Tunisia. This is the biggest group readmitted since the start of this activity in 2018, with 36 refugees readmitted so far in total.

Together with the CNARR, UNHCR organized awareness-raising sessions on the danger of irregular migration and safe alternatives in schools and universities in the capital N'Djamena and in southern Chad. 1,434 pupils and students participated from the provinces of N'Djamena, Lai and Pala. Magistrates, research professors and women leaders contributed to the debates. Participants learned about protection in mixed movements and about the legal framework of migration and asylum in Chad. They showed particular interest to the issue of trafficking and protection of refugees.

**LIBERIA:**

A key issue for the operation remains the indecisiveness of many refugees between repatriating and integrating. Despite an enhanced voluntary repatriation package since May 2019, which includes assistance for food and accommodation, and cash for essential items, the majority of refugees continue to be undecided and there continues to be a risk that refugees move on to another country to seek asylum.

**MALI:**

A meeting was held on 7 May, between UNHCR and IOM within the framework of advocacy to improve on partnership. The objective was to finalize the draft of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding the identification and referral of Persons of Concerns to UNHCR in mixed movements.

The protection monitoring of persons in mixed movement carried out by UNHCR's partner, *l'Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel* (AMSS) identified 3,060 persons in Bamako, Mopti, Tombouctou and Gao in May and June 2019. These persons are from Guinea, Sierra Leone, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Gambia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Liberia, Comoros Island, Benin, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Togo, Chad and Niger.

Among these people, 2,339 were identified in outflow and 810 in inflow (130 expelled and 680 voluntary returns from Algeria). 99 women were identified in these mixed movements. In June, a Sierra Leonean at risk of persecution was identified in Timbuktu in the inflow from Mauritania. He presented a forged asylum-seeker certificate from Mauritania.

From May to June 2019, 135 unaccompanied or separated children from Guinea, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Comoros Island, Cameroon and Nigeria were identified in the context of mixed movements. In Timbuktu, children with specific needs were referred to IOM, *la Direction Régionale pour la Promotion de la Femme de l'Enfant et de la Famille* (DRPFEF), and *l'Association pour le Soutien aux Populations Démunies et Lutte Contre l'Exclusion* (ASPOLDCE) for assistance and protection responses. No UAM/SC was identified as persons of concern to UNHCR.

A total of 94 sensitization sessions were organised in Mopti, Tombouctou and Gao in May and June 2019. These sessions gathered 1,082 persons on mixed movements among them 882 men and 200 women. The topics of sensitization sessions were on the "consequences of irregular migration and statelessness", the "risks and consequences of clandestine mixed movements", the "unavoidable risks linked to mixed movements on clandestine routes" and the "human rights violations related to mixed movements and UNHCR's mandate".

The trend in inflows (southbound movements) since the end of 2018 has increased in returns of people anticipating arrests, detentions, deportations to the border, human rights violations, and destruction of property as well as physical violence. Others, however, choose to continue to travel northwards by changing routes. Thus, since the resurgence of the deportations by Algeria, people are increasingly moving towards Morocco either via Algeria where they already resided, or from Mali to Morocco via Mauritania (Bassikounou). Various reasons explain these returns of the sub-Saharanans from Algeria: the hardening of migration policies in Algeria and in Morocco, the prevention and the reduction of the risks related to trafficking in human beings, etc.

**NIGER:****AGADEZ:**

- Psychosocial activities for children and women are being implemented in Agadez. Among these: creative drawing, logic games, and storytelling. An average of 300 people participate weekly to these activities, the majority of them children.
- From 16-18 May, a sensitization campaign was organized in Agadez by INTERSOS and UNHCR on the importance of education. 161 out of 171 unaccompanied children and young single men (18/19 years old) participated. Sensitization sessions on the same issue continued in June and targeted 282 people, 145 out of which were children (78 girls and 118 boys).
- In the context of the research of durable solutions, a mission of Forum Réfugié COSI visited Agadez and held discussions with both UNHCR and persons of concern. The aim was to sensitize on the complementary legal
-

- pathways offered to asylum-seekers and refugees (such as family reunification, student visa, private sponsorship, humanitarian visa).
- On 24 June, 18 Sudanese were voluntarily readmitted to Chad, their country of first asylum. As per the end of June 2019, there were 38 cases of readmission registered– out of which 32 were Sudanese, 3 Nigerians and 3 Central Africans within the Mixed Movement situation.

#### ETM

- The most vulnerable refugees remain in guesthouses in the capital city. Construction and development of a transit facility in Hamdallaye is ongoing. The site is thus operational, while the construction of permanent facilities continues. This includes additional latrines and showers, office spaces and interview rooms, a kitchen area, sports facilities, as well as the installation of additional Refugee Housing Units to accommodate more refugees at the centre. A specialized team of psychologists has made an analysis of profiles. They have collected direct testimonies of 1993 persons who have transited through Niamey or the centre in Hamdallaye.
- UNHCR and its partners continued monitoring and follow up activities both at the ETM centre and in the remaining guesthouses in Niamey. Particularly relevant were the actions undertaken in order to identify and assist the SGBV survivors and individuals with specific needs. Medical and psychological counselling was also offered.

#### NIGERIA:

- Launch of the “Tell the Real Story” (TRS), a UNHCR sensitization campaign reaching out to Somalis, Eritreans, Sudanese and Nigerian women and men while in countries of asylum, transit and origin. It is centred on community testimonies. Since going live in February 2016 in Ethiopia and Sudan, TRS testimonials have totalled over 24 million visualizations and 5 million comments. Over 45,000 persons have been directly reached in gatherings and individual counselling.
- TRS Nigeria engaged 2 celebrity influencers from the Nigeria Nollywood film industry
- TRS Testimony Screening and Town hall Sensitization Meetings with the Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT). TRS testimonies were screened alongside drama performances.
- Testimonies also screened at the opening ceremony for the International Conference on Edo Women organised by the Institute for Benin Studies, Centre for Gender Studies, University of Benin
- Social media engagements and interventions targeting Nigerian diaspora in the EU with the creation of a Facebook page. (Posts, videos, photos and links are inclusive of UNHCR Nigeria, TRS Nigeria field activities, and the activities of other partners including NGOs, and relevant government agencies)
- The weekly Radio show reaches an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 people every week.

## Part IV: Way Forward / Forthcoming Activities

**BURKINA FASO** : Training of state and non-state actors on the emergency psychosocial care of migrants and asylum seekers on the move in Bobo-Dioulasso and Banfora; Establishment of a new exchange framework with road transporters in the framework of the asylum and migration project; Follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the DAKAR Symposium on Asylum and Migration; Continued protection interview activities for new asylum seekers in Bobo.

**MALI**: Conduct/raise awareness activities on the risks related to irregular migration in collaboration with the Ministry of Malians living Abroad. Improve identification and assistance to associative groups as well as people with specific needs and individual beneficiaries in income generating activities in Mopti and Gao. Capacity building of UNHCR’s partner CIAUD on topics regarding border monitoring.

**LIBERIA**: Dialogue with refugees, including those opting for local integration, in relation to livelihoods activities. With the aim of discouraging refugees from leaving Liberia for another asylum country, the office will continue to follow-up with the youth to support their self-reliance and integration in Liberia. However, the preferred durable solution for

Ivorian refugees, which comprise the vast majority of refugees in Liberia, remains voluntary repatriation. The enhanced volrep package is currently being used as the central element of sensitization on the benefits of returning to Cote d'Ivoire.

**NIGER:** RSD processing is a priority in the Agadez region, in close collaboration with the Niger authorities. For the ETM, the needs remain high as people under UNHCR's mandate are still in detention in Libya. UNHCR is working with resettlement countries to improve the fluidity of the process of departures for resettlement. Processing of all cases is ongoing.

**NIGERIA:** TRS Nigeria will work with various stakeholders to organise sensitization events to mark World Day against Trafficking in Persons in July 2019. The project has already identified the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) as a co-host for the event.

## Part V: Knowledge and Sharing

### RRWA

- **UNHCR Appeal, Routes Towards the Mediterranean, Reducing Risks and Strengthening Protection, June 2019**, available at: [https://www.unhcr.org/partners/donors/5d1327ab7/unhcr-appeal-routes-towards-mediterranean-reducing-risks-strengthening.html?utm\\_source=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=here&utm\\_campaign=](https://www.unhcr.org/partners/donors/5d1327ab7/unhcr-appeal-routes-towards-mediterranean-reducing-risks-strengthening.html?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_content=here&utm_campaign=)
- **Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: West Africa:** <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/70614>
- **Migration et santé déterminants sociaux et santé des migrants :** [https://medecinsdumonde.be/system/files/publications/downloads/MdM%20rapport\\_enquete%20Migrant\\_FA\\_JUIN\\_2019\\_DEF\\_LOWRES\\_FR.pdf](https://medecinsdumonde.be/system/files/publications/downloads/MdM%20rapport_enquete%20Migrant_FA_JUIN_2019_DEF_LOWRES_FR.pdf)
- **Players of many parts: The evolving role of smugglers in West Africa's migration economy.** Mixed Migration Centre, May 2019 [http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/065\\_briefing-paper-smugglers\\_wa.pdf](http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/065_briefing-paper-smugglers_wa.pdf)

### For further information:

**Simone Schwartz-Delgado**, Senior Regional Protection Officer, Asylum & Migration, UNHCR Regional Representation for West Africa, Dakar, [schwartz@unhcr.org](mailto:schwartz@unhcr.org)