SPAIN PROFILING OF NEW ARRIVALS

> INTRODUCTION

In 2023 UNHCR conducted a profiling of new arrivals by regularly collecting and analyzing data about the profiles of persons arrived in Spain by sea and land. The report reflects the trends of the two routes to Spain, the Western Mediterranean and the Northwest African Maritime. Notably, during the second half of 2023 there was a significant increase in sea arrivals in the Canary Islands on boats departing primary from Senegal and Mauritania, affecting the nationalities and profiles of the arrivals.

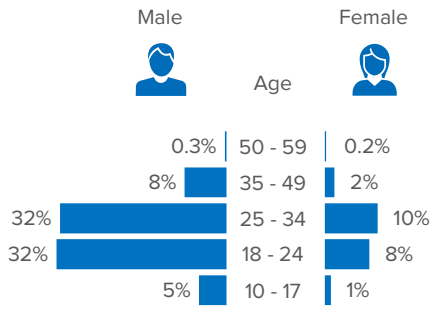
METHODOLOGY Interviews were conducted by UNHCR in the Canary Islands, Ceuta, Melilla and Andalusia and in Almeria, Madrid and Murcia by its partners. The profiling targeted people arrived in Spain between January 2022 and December 2023. Respondents were selected considering the most numerous nationalities of arrival in Spain as well as a representative share of age and gender (655 men, 183 women, 47 unaccompanied boys, 10 unaccompanied girls). All information collected is strictly anonymous and respondents were informed that their answers would have no impact on their asylum requests or assistance received. Data reported below as declared by respondents.

895
Persons interviewed

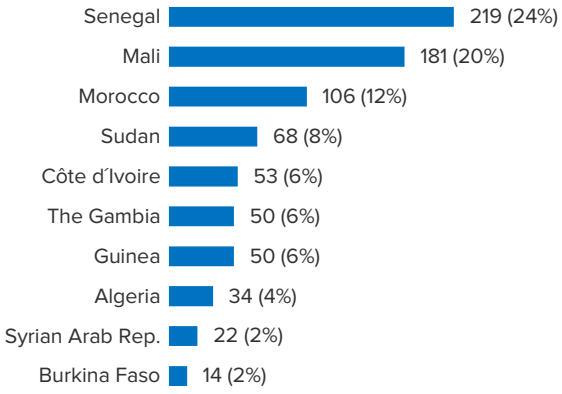
193
Are women and girls

66%
Arrived in Canary Islands

Age and gender breakdown

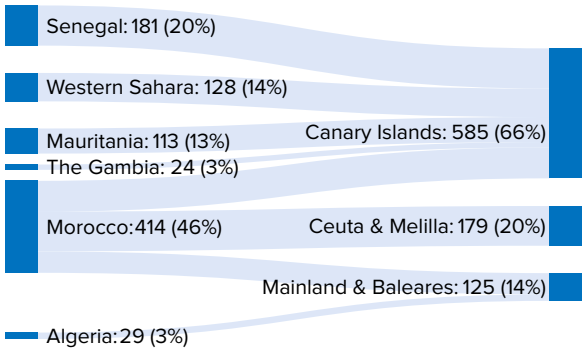


Most common nationalities



Most common specific needs*

Point of departure and place of arrival



Note: Totals do not sum up to 895 due to 6 missing values

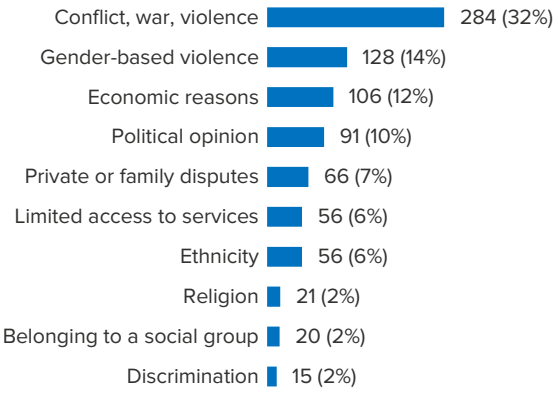
* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can go over 100% when added

> LEAVING THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

The reasons respondents gave for leaving their countries of origin often involved multiple and complex factors. Reasons related to international protection needs were particularly significant for some nationalities and profiles, such as those from Mali, Sudan Syria or Burkina Faso. Among the 284 respondents who cited conflict, war or violence as the main reason for leaving, the vast majority were Malians (57%), followed by Sudanese (10%), Syrians (7%), Senegalese (5%), Yemenis (4%) and Burkinabe (4%). Out of the 162 respondents who cited economic reasons (106) or limited access to services (56), the majority were Moroccans (42%), followed by Senegalese (28%). Fear of persecution for ethnic reason was cited mainly by Sudanese respondents, fear of gender-based violence (GBV) by Ivorian women, and political reasons by Senegalese individuals.

Additionally, 74% respondents said that no one influenced their decision to leave their country. Among the 199 respondents who stated that family or friends influenced them, 29% were women and 13% were unaccompanied children.

Main reason to leave the country of origin



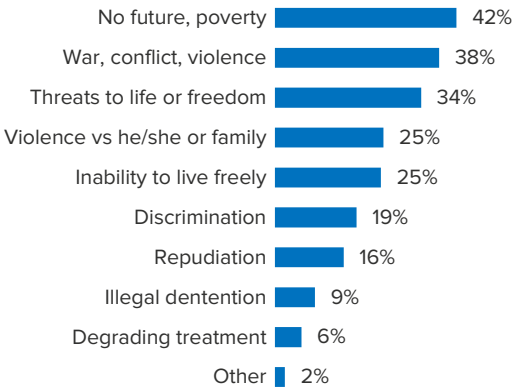
"I left Mali last September 2023 because life has no value there anymore. Even Bamako is no longer safe."

Malian man, 25 years old from Bakhounou (Koulikoro region)

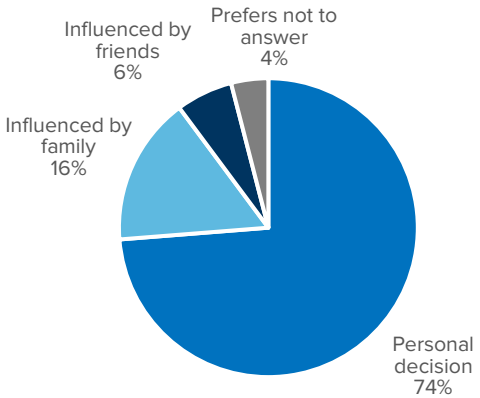
"Now in Sudan a small terrorist groups of five-six people cause terror, sow fear and rape at will."

Sudanese man, 21 years old from Khartoum (Dar Hamid)

Consequences of return to country of origin*



Who influenced the decision to leave



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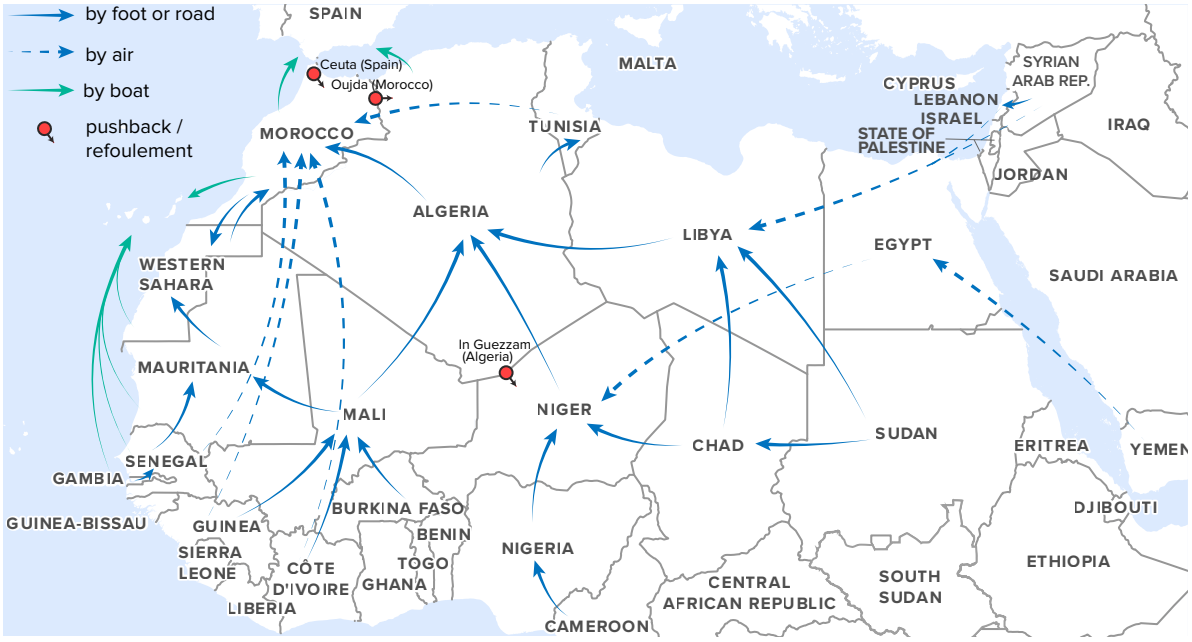
> JOURNEY

Main routes



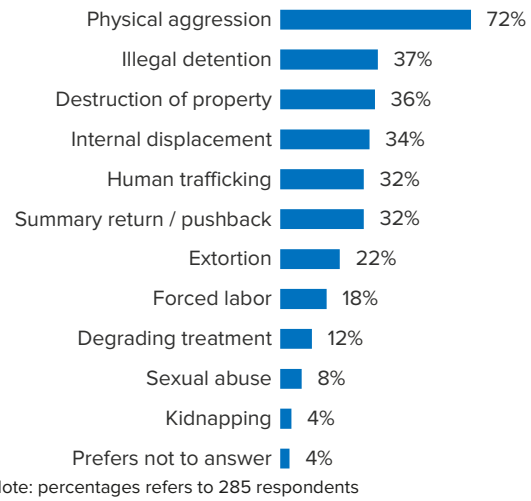
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

A significant share of the respondents started or passed through North African countries before arriving in Spain, mostly Morocco (59%), followed by Algeria (33%) and Western Sahara (16%). Regarding West African countries, a notable number of respondents started or passed through Senegal (32%), Mali (28%) and Mauritania (21%). An important share (9%) passed through Niger.

Around 32% suffered at least one kind of violence along the route, with physical aggression being the most recurrent type. Pushbacks affected 32% of the respondents who suffered violence, most of them being Sudanese, Malian and Syrian men who eventually entered Ceuta through the land border. Incidents experienced along the route by refugees and migrants have a profound impact, including physical dangers and health-related risks. Additionally, human rights abuses like killings, physical aggression and sexual assault are prevalent. Many refugees and migrants reportedly suffer from severe psychological trauma after witnessing violence, personal harm, or separation from relatives and friends. As a result, upon arrival they required urgent medical and psychological care to address the emotional trauma they endured.

> *"I left Sudan in December 2020 due to the lack of security, ethnic conflicts, and constant danger. The Massalit in Darfur are persecuted. My journey took me through Chad (three days), Niger (one month), Algeria (one year), Morocco (one year) and finally Spain through Ceuta, where I want to claim asylum."*
>
> Sudanese man, 24 year old from Geneina, Darfur (Massalit ethnic group).

Reported incidents along the route*



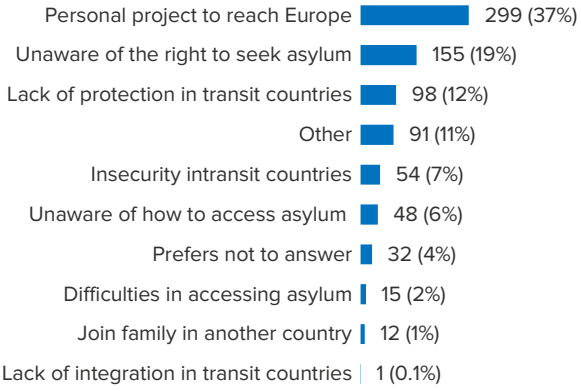
Note: percentages refers to 285 respondents

* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can go over 100% when added

> ACCESS TO ASYLUM AND FUTURE PLANS

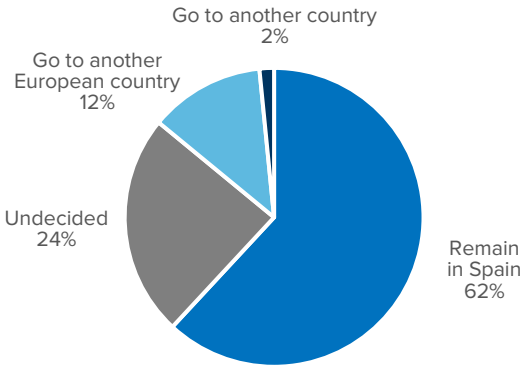
Only 9% of those interviewed sought asylum in the transit countries. While persons arriving in Spain by sea and land are very often reluctant to report in which other country they have sought asylum for fear that it will affect their asylum claim in Europe, some of them mentioned Morocco, Algeria and Libya, followed by Mauritania, Lebanon or Chad. The majority of those who sought asylum before arriving in Spain were nationals of Sudan (33%), followed by Mali (20%) and Syria (15%).

Reason for not applying for asylum on the route



Note: percentages refers to 805 respondents

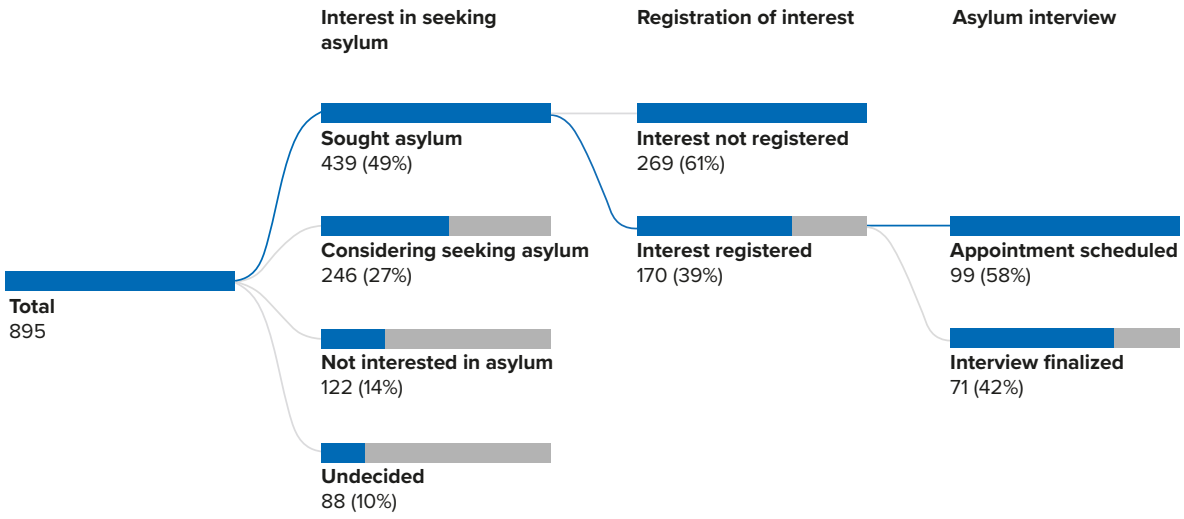
Future plans



Responses on access to asylum in Spain show two realities specific to Spain as a destination country: the protection component of mixed movements arriving by sea and land and the serious obstacles to access the asylum procedure in the country, where it can take several months for people to access to the asylum procedure. Out of the total respondents who wanted to seek asylum only 16% had been able to formalise their asylum claim through an interview.

On their plans for the future, and despite the fact that respondents were interviewed within their first months of arrival in Spain, a large majority (62%) had already decided that they wanted to stay in Spain, while 24% had not yet decided and 14% wanted to move to another country.

Apply for asylum in Spain



> FOCUS ON: WOMEN AND GIRLS

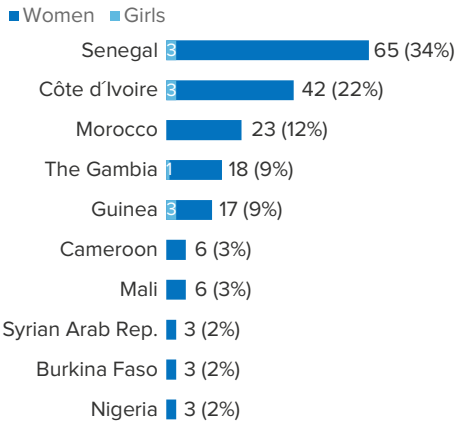
The breakdown by gender and age shows the specific profile of women and girls arriving in Spain. Overall, although fewer arrive by sea and land, a larger proportion of them have specific needs (93% compared to 38% of male respondents). Most frequent needs referred to gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, woman at risk and single mothers. The proportion of women nationals from Côte d'Ivoire arriving in Spain is higher than that of men, as indicated by the profiling. The second half of the year witnessed a significant increase in the arrival of Senegalese and Malian women and therefore, the document reflects their responses. Fear of GBV as the main reason for leaving their country was clearly the top one among women and girls.

193
Women (183) and girls (10) interviewed

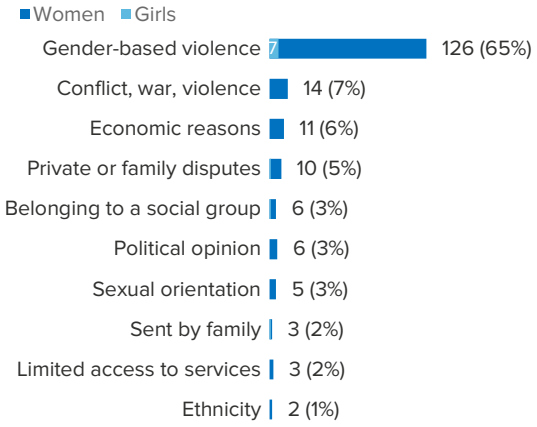
65%
Left due to gender-based violence

28%
Suffered violence along the route

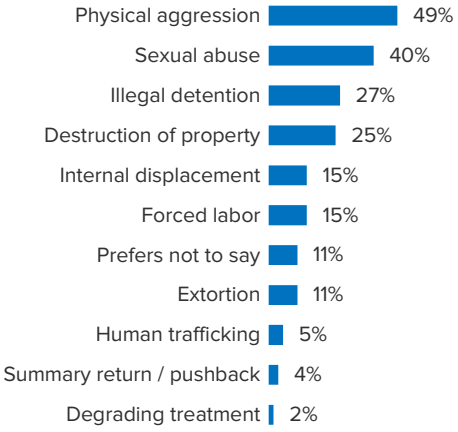
Most common nationalities



Main reason to leave the country of origin

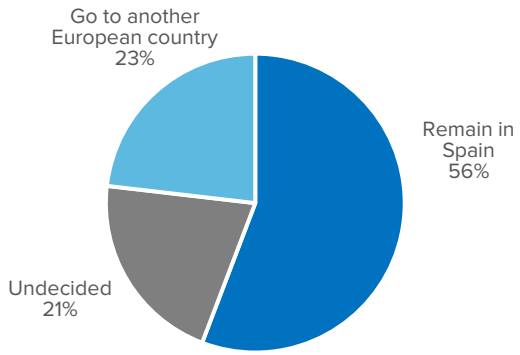


Incidents along the route*



Note: percentages refer to 55 respondents

Future plans



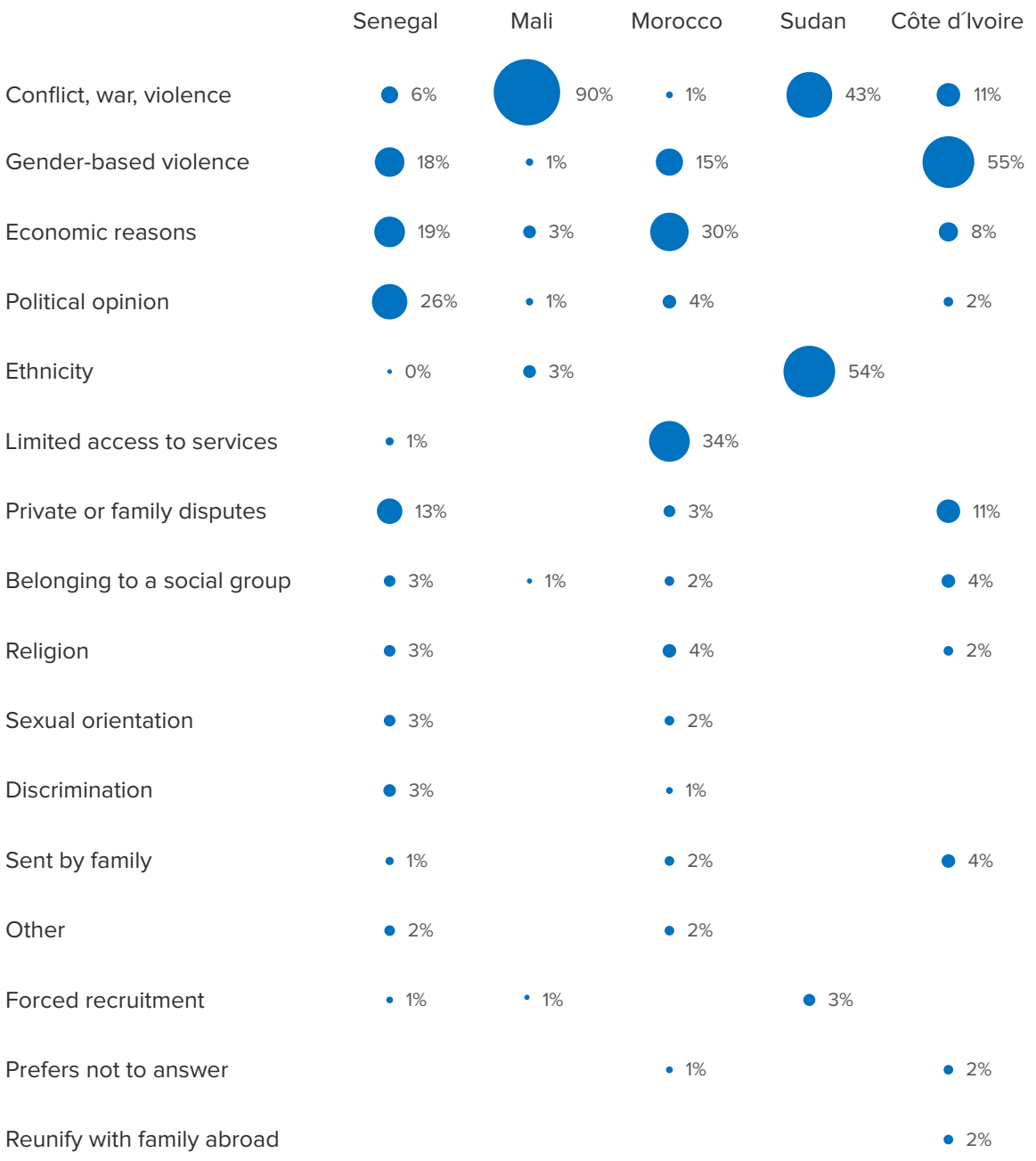
"I left Gambia due to violence perpetrated by my ex-husband. I was mistreated and beaten by him. In addition, his family intended to subject my baby daughter to genital mutilation. I wanted to protect her. We both took a boat from Gunjur, made a brief stop in the coast of Senegal, and then continued into El Hierro, Spain. We are both applying for asylum so we can enjoy protection in Spain."

Gambian woman, 23 years old

* Multiple responses were possible, so percentages can go over 100% when added

> FOCUS ON: REASON TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (TOP NATIONALITIES)

The breakdown by nationality of main reasons given by the respondents for leaving the country of origin confirms the higher protection component of some nationalities and reflects the mixed nature of movements by sea and land to Spain.

"I fled Mali because of the clashes between the Dogon and the Peul. I went to work in Mauritania with the fish where I spent one year. I had a residence permit, but renewing it was too expensive. One day they came to the place where I was working and took me to the police."

Malian man, 21 years old from Segou