

MIXED MOVEMENTS ARRIVAL TRENDS: 2026 Q2

This report presents the latest trends and patterns in mixed movements towards Europe, based on UNHCR's monitoring across key routes. Behind the figures are people driven to move by conflict, persecution, insecurity and lack of opportunities, often undertaking dangerous journeys in search of safety and protection. By analysing data on arrivals, routes and profiles, the report sheds light on how movements are evolving over time, as well as the risks faced along the way. It is intended to support a better understanding of these dynamics and to inform timely, protection-sensitive responses.



**Mediterranean + Western Africa
Atlantic routes**

43,315

South Eastern Europe¹

5,000

AT A GLANCE

Overall trend: Seasonal rise, but movements remain well below 2025. In the first half of 2026, more than 43,000 arrivals were recorded, 37 per cent fewer than in the same period in 2025. Arrivals increased from around 19,000 in Q1 to nearly 25,000 in Q2, reflecting the typical seasonal rise, especially on the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes. Despite this increase, Q2 arrivals remained 35 per cent lower than in Q2 2025, when nearly 38,000 arrivals were recorded.

Western Africa Atlantic routes: arrivals increase, but remain below 2025 levels. In the first half of 2026, around 3,700 arrivals were recorded, including just over 2,000 in Q2. While Q2 arrivals were 9 per cent higher than in Q2 2025, they remained 53 per cent below the 2025 quarterly average. Arrivals from Mali continued to decline, while Senegal returned as the leading nationality.

Western Mediterranean: Increasingly Algerian and only route running above the 2025 mid-year levels. By mid-year 2026, around 8,500 arrivals were recorded on the Western Mediterranean route, 25 per cent more than in the same period in 2025. Algerian nationals accounted for more than half of Q2 arrivals, up from around one third in Q1, and were the only major nationality to increase in absolute terms.

Central and Eastern Mediterranean: becomes the highest-volume route. By Q2 2026, the Eastern Mediterranean became the highest-volume route, with nearly 17,000 arrivals, compared with around 14,500 on the Central Mediterranean. This mainly reflects lower arrivals on the Central Mediterranean, where arrivals in the first half of 2026 were less than half the level recorded in the same period in 2025, rather than a major increase on the Eastern Mediterranean. By mid-year, no single

nationality clearly dominated the Eastern Mediterranean route, with Bangladeshis, Afghans and Sudanese each accounting for around 22 per cent of arrivals.

South-Eastern Europe: Arrivals remain close to 2025 levels. Around 2,800 arrivals were recorded in Q2 2026, 24 per cent more than in the previous quarter. However, the around 5,000 arrivals recorded in the first half of 2026 remained broadly in line with the same period last year. Arrivals were recorded through Albania, Bulgaria and North Macedonia as part of mixed refugee and migrant movements.¹

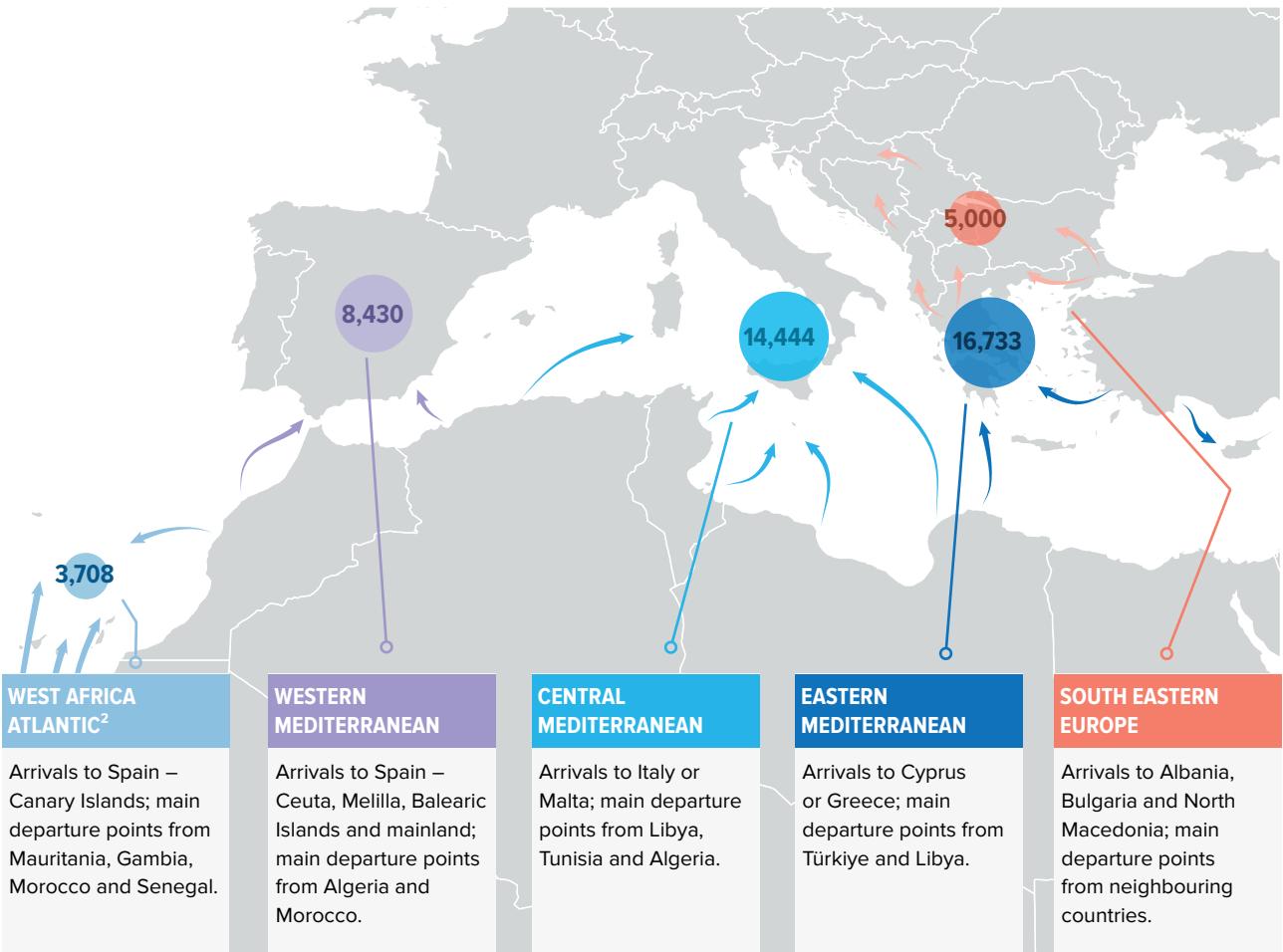
Unaccompanied and separated children: represented 12 per cent of arrivals in Q2 2026 (excluding Spain), slightly below Q1. This reflects a higher share of adult men among Q2 arrivals, at 78 per cent, compared with an average of around 70 per cent over the past five years.

More than 1,600 people lost their life or went missing² on Mediterranean and West Africa Atlantic routes in the first half of 2026, compared to more than 3400 in H1 2025. While this represents a decrease of more than 50 per cent in absolute terms, it largely tracks the significant decline in overall movement, particularly the Central Mediterranean.

¹ The region includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

² Source : IOM Missing Migrants Project – Q2 2026.

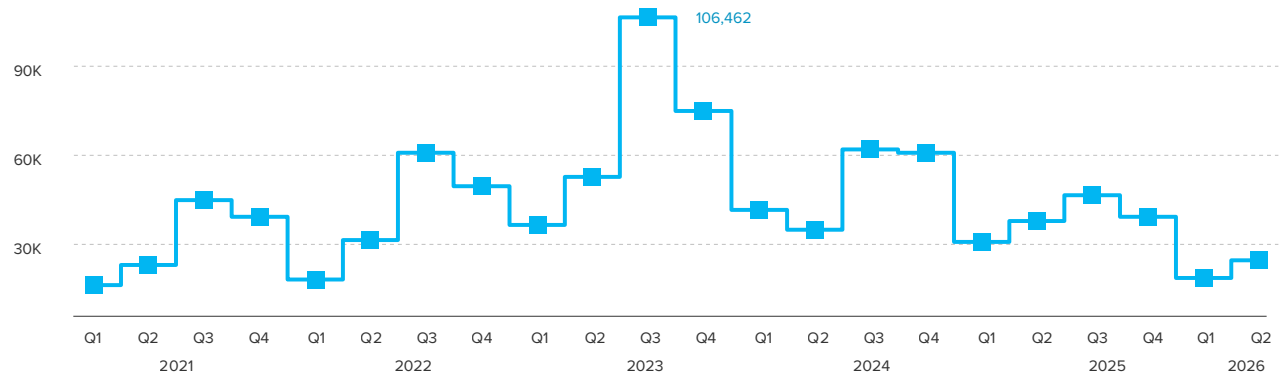
ARRIVALS BY ROUTE



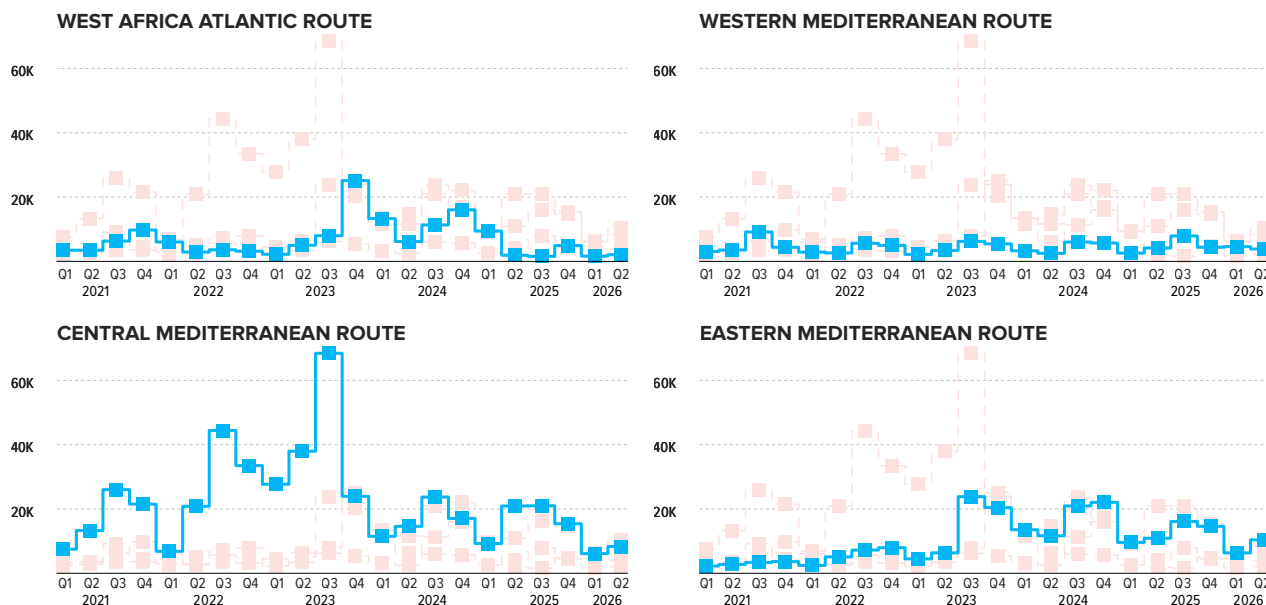
Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
*Serbia and Kosovo (S/RES/1244 [1999]).

TOTAL ARRIVALS BY QUARTER IN THE LAST 5 YEARS

Mediterranean and Western Africa Atlantic Routes



TOTAL ARRIVALS BY QUARTER AND ROUTE IN LAST 5 YEARS



What Q2 2026 is showing?

By mid-year 2026, more than 43,000 arrivals had been recorded on the Mediterranean and Western Africa Atlantic routes, 37 per cent fewer than during the same period in 2025 (close to 68,700). Arrivals increased from around 19,000 in Q1 to nearly 25,000 in Q2, a 32 per cent rise. This is broadly consistent with the usual seasonal increase between the first and second quarters, when crossings on the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes tend to rise ahead of the summer peak.

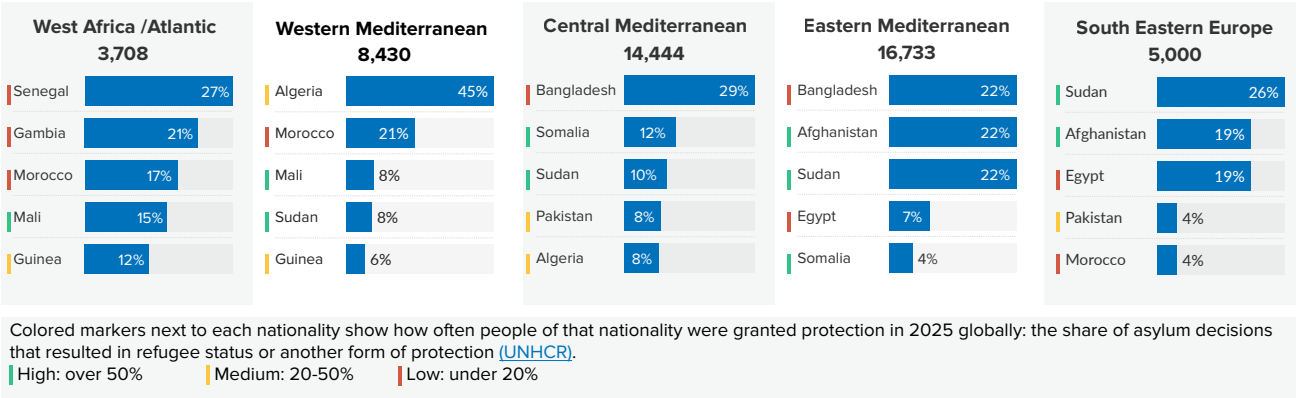
Behind the overall trend, route dynamics differed considerably. On the Central Mediterranean route, arrivals rose by 36 per cent between Q1 and Q2 2026, compared with a 126 per cent increase over the same period in 2025. The Eastern Mediterranean route recorded a sharper quarterly increase of 64 per cent, compared with 14 per cent in 2025. This shift appears to reflect both reduced departures from parts of North Africa and changing movement patterns, while smuggling networks adapted by opening a new route from eastern Libya towards Crete.

The Western Mediterranean route moved against the broader seasonal pattern, with arrivals falling by 16 per cent in Q2 2026, compared with a 62 per cent increase in Q2 2025. However, this decline was followed by a sharp increase in crossings to Ceuta in late July.

Arrivals on the Western Africa Atlantic route also increased, from 1,600 in Q1 to 2,000 in Q2 2026. This contrasts with the trend seen in 2025, when arrivals fell sharply from 9,400 in Q1 to 1,900 in Q2, following strengthened cooperation and security measures with countries of departure.



Who arrived on these routes in Q2 2026?



AGE GENDER BREAKDOWN

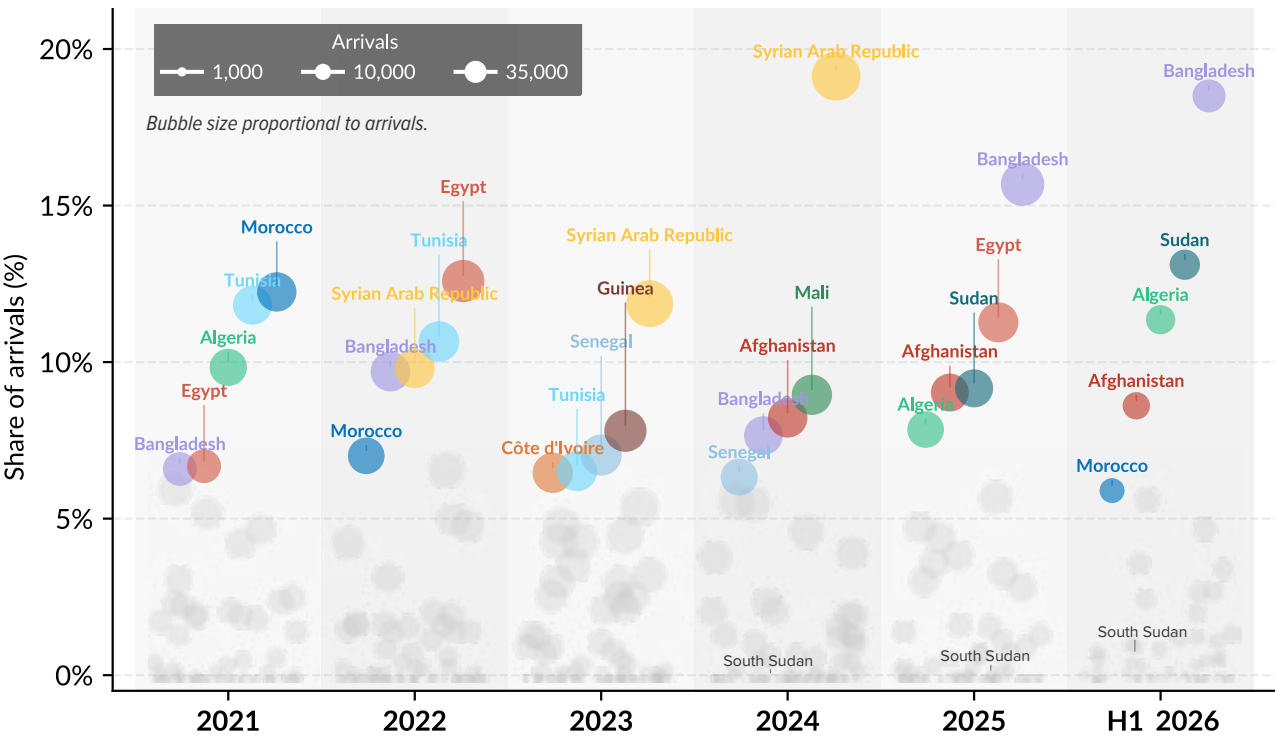


In Q2 2026, men accounted for 78 per cent of arrivals, above the average recorded in recent years. This raised the share of men among arrivals in the first half of 2026 to 75 per cent, the highest mid-year level recorded in recent years.



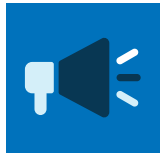
Top 5 Arrivals by Nationality and Year

Mediterranean and West Africa/Atlantic Routes



Key Nationalities Highlights

NATIONALITY	HIGHLIGHTS
 Afghanistan	The overall number of Afghan arrivals declined, from 6,200 in the first half of 2025 to 3,700 in the same period in 2026. Afghanistan remains one of the three main nationalities on the Eastern Mediterranean route, with arrivals broadly level with those of Bangladesh and Sudan by mid-year 2026.
 Algeria	Returned to the top three nationalities across all routes by mid-2026, accounting for 11 per cent of arrivals, up from 6 per cent and seventh place in the first half of 2025. Algerian nationals accounted for more than half of arrivals in Q2 2026, up from around one third in Q1, and were the only major nationality to increase in absolute terms from Q1 to Q2.
 Bangladesh	Bangladesh continues to be the leading nationality overall (19% of all arrivals), and its share of total arrivals has increased. However, arrivals of Bangladeshi nationals were lower in absolute terms, with around 3,300 fewer arrivals recorded in the first half of 2026 compared with the same period in 2025.
 Eritrea	Arrivals declined sharply. Eritreans ranked third among nationalities on the Central Mediterranean route in 2025 (nearly 7,600 arrivals) but accounted for little more than 600 arrivals in the first half 2026.
 Mali	Arrivals of Malian nationals continued to decline sharply, from nearly 18,000 in 2024 to around 7,500 in 2025 and 1,600 in the first half of 2026. Movement patterns also shifted: while most Malian arrivals previously used the West Africa Atlantic route, by mid-2026 the Western Mediterranean had become the main route.
 Somalia	Somali movements have increasingly shifted from the Eastern to the Central Mediterranean. The Eastern Mediterranean accounted for 64–92 per cent of Somali arrivals during 2021–2023, but the Central Mediterranean became the main route in 2025 and accounted for more than two thirds (68 per cent) of Somali arrivals in the first half of 2026.
 South Sudan	South-Sudan has emerged as a nationality to monitor. Arrivals rose from 90 (0.1% of all-routes) in first half of 2025 to 550 (1%) in H1 2026. While numbers remain relatively small, arrivals have increased steadily since Q3 2025.
 Sudan	Sudanese arrivals increased substantially, from around 3,900 in the first half of 2025 to more than 5,600 in the same period of 2026, making Sudan the second leading nationality overall. Increases were recorded across all three Mediterranean routes: around 40 per cent on the Eastern, 30 per cent on the Central, and nearly fourfold on the Western Mediterranean.
 Syria	Syrian arrivals continued their multi-year decline, against a changing context and increased returns to Syria. In the first half of 2026, less than 600 Syrian arrivals were recorded, representing just 1.4 per cent of all arrivals, compared with around 12 per cent during 2021–2024.



Voices from the people on the move

“ *I feel safe. I have friends. I am happy here.* ”

Matin, a 20-year-old refugee from Afghanistan, came to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2023.

MATIN'S JOURNEY: FROM FEAR TO BELONGING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Matin was 15 when he fled Afghanistan in 2020, unable to endure Taliban attacks, being shut out of school, and constant fear for his life. He travelled with smugglers to Iran, then continued alone. After three years in Türkiye without identification documents, he moved on through refugee camps in Greece, Albania and Montenegro, arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 2023. Nine months later he was granted subsidiary protection status, giving him the right to stay legally and access healthcare, education and work.

Through a project funded by UNHCR and Catholic Relief Services, working with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, local institutions and civil society organisations, refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina gained the same access as nationals to public employment schemes. Matin found work sorting textiles at a warehouse in Sarajevo. The job gave him stability: he rents an apartment near work, decorated to reflect both his Afghan roots and his new home, and sends money to his parents and three younger siblings still in Afghanistan. With support from UNHCR and CRS he attended driving school and recently passed his test, which he says has given him more freedom to explore the country.



Matin sorts through textiles and clothing at a local factory in Sarajevo. With support from UNHCR, Catholic Relief Services and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, refugees like Matin have the same rights to employment as local citizens.

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