



## Burkina Faso

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**Context:** There has been rapid deterioration of the security situation in the north of Burkina Faso in 2017, according to a short [ACAPs note](#) published in March. Attacks ranging from targeted killings, village and school incursions and attacks against military positions have taken place in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso over the [past 3 months](#).

Attackers have particularly targeted [teachers and schools](#) in the Sahel, resulting in the closure of a large number of schools as [teachers move south](#). In March, [UNICEF reported](#) that within the Sahel region, all schools are closed in the Soum province, and up to 75% are closed in the neighbouring province of Oudalan, effecting over 72,584 students. Health centres are also closed in Soum, depriving around 39,000 people of access to basic health services, including 7,300 children under 5. While the insecurity has resulted in the displacement of populations south, the scale remains unclear.

**Migration related programming:** In March, [IOM opened](#) two new boreholes in the rural commune of Béguédo in Central East Burkina Faso. IOM installed the boreholes as part of a project that aims to address the livelihood concerns of residents, as IOM has identified this as a one of the causes of people migrating. According to IOM, this region of Burkina Faso is the country's largest migration area.

On the 28 and 29 of March IOM hosted a training on [Good Media Practices](#) in Ouagadougou. The workshop examined issues related to the media coverage of migration, including the importance of protecting the privacy of subjects, particularly in the case of vulnerable migrants, victims of trafficking and refugees.

**Refugees in Burkina Faso:** As of 31 March, there were [32,972 refugees](#) in Burkina Faso, an increase of 431 persons since February. The majority of [refugees \(55%\)](#) are children under the age of 18.

In March, UNHCR launched its 2018-19 strategy for Burkina Faso at [a workshop](#) attended by government and UN officials in Ouagadougou.

## Cote d'Ivoire

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**Arrivals of Ivoirians in Europe:** According to the [latest available information](#), in January and February 2017, 1,918 migrants and refugees from Cote d'Ivoire arrived in Italy by sea via the central Mediterranean route, including 320 unaccompanied children. This represents 12% of total sea arrivals in Italy for January and February, and is more than double the 734 Ivoirians who arrived in Italy by sea during this period in 2016.

**Humanitarian Repatriation:** On 3 March 2017, [IOM assisted](#) a number of migrants from Cote d'Ivoire to return home from Tunisia. The Ivoirians, along with migrants from Senegal, Guinea and Chad had crossed into Tunisia from Libya by foot in mid-February, fleeing insecurity. On 21 March, [IOM assisted](#) an additional 150 Ivoirians to return home from Libya.

**Refugees in Neighboring Countries:** As of 31 March, there were [29,505 Ivorian refugees](#) in neighboring countries, including 16, 310 Ivorian refugees in Liberia, representing a decline of 1048 since 28 February, and 6,489 Ivorian refugees in Ghana, representing a decline of 4,468 since 31 December 2016. According to the latest available information, as of 28 February, there were 2,129 Ivoirian refugees in Togo, and 4,577 in Guinea.

**Voluntary Repatriation:** On 29 March, the government of Cote d'Ivoire organised the [voluntary repatriation](#) of [113 Ivorian refugees](#) from Mali and WFP set up a [new transit center](#)

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in the northern Cote d'Ivoire to receive returnees from Mali.

## Guinea

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**Arrivals of Guineans in Europe:** According to the latest available information, in January and February 2017, [2,000 Guineans](#) arrived in Italy by way of the central Mediterranean route, including 359 unaccompanied children. This represents 16% of all arrivals in Italy by sea during this period and is a significant increase from the 763 Guineans who arrived in the first two months of 2016 and the 179 who arrived in 2015.

**Humanitarian repatriation:** On 14 March, [IOM assisted](#) 98 Guineans to return home for Libya to Conakry. Due to insecurity at the time of repatriation in Tripoli, IOM was unable to repatriate the final 51 persons planned for this flight.

**Refugees in Guinea:** As of 31 December, there were [4,577 Ivorian refugees](#) in Guinea.

## Liberia

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**Refugees in Liberia:** As of 31 March, there were [16,310 Ivorian refugees](#) in Liberia, representing a decline of 1,048 since 28 February. In total, UNHCR has assisted 21,396 refugees to return to Cote d'Ivoire from Liberia since the resumption of repatriation on 18 December 2015.

## Mali

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**Context:** [According to UNOCHA](#), the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in Mali, with a climate of insecurity persisting in the north of the country and spreading south. This is resulting in an increase in the number of people suffering from food insecurity and has led to further displacements in early 2017, including an increase in the number of Malian refugees in neighbouring countries after an overall decline in 2016. Although there has been some progress in the [implementation of the peace agreement](#), with the launch of mixed patrols in some areas and interim authorities installed in three of five regions in the north, the Quarterly Secretary-General Report published in March, commented that security sector reform and the restoration of state authority in the central and north regions remains limited.

Among other incidents in March, Ansar Eddine, the Front de libération du Macina, Al Mourabitoun and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb [announced on social media](#) a joint alliance under a new armed group, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims. On 5 March, assailants attacked a Malian military post in Boulikessi, Mopti region, near the border with Burkina Faso, killing 15 soldiers and injuring 5 others. [On 6 March](#), unidentified individuals attacked a post of the gendarmerie of the Niger, near the border with Burkina Faso and Mali, killing five gendarmes. There were [also reports](#) of several attacks against local and international humanitarian aid workers in early March in Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti, with one person killed and several injured.

In the context of the deteriorating humanitarian space, [MSF published a report](#) in March examining the incursion of military and political actors into the humanitarian field in Mali. MSF points to the conflation of the humanitarian response with the political agendas of stabilisation pursued by major foreign actors in Mali, and argues for the need to maintain a separation of political and military operations from humanitarian actors or risk drawing humanitarian actors into the conflict and undermining their ability to operate safely and effectively.

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**Malian Arrivals in Europe:** According to the [latest available figures](#), in January and February 2017, 645 Malians arrived in Italy by sea via the central Mediterranean route, including 74 unaccompanied children. This represents a slight decrease when compared with January and February 2016, when 793 Malians arrived in Italy by sea.

**Mixed Migration monitoring mechanism in Mali:** RMMS West Africa's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative ([4Mi](#)), conducted in-depth interviews with 92 migrants in northern Mali in March, the majority in Gao and Tombouctou. Although this data should not be considered representative of the migrant population in these areas, 18 of those interviewed were women, 74 were men and they ranged in age from 18-62. Half indicated that they were either married or separated/divorced. The majority of those interviewed were from Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea, and most indicated that they intended to migrate to countries within the region or to North Africa (70%).

In March, 4Mi recorded a number of protection related incidents in Mali, including eight instances of physical and verbal abuse by police, security forces and gangs, including one case of extreme physical abuse reported to have occurred in Bamako. Four people indicated that they had been robbed while on the move in Gao, Sikasso and Bamako. Six people reported that they had been detained at border points while on the move, with one claiming to have been held for ransom by security forces or police. Two people witnessed children being detained alongside adults and seven witnessed unaccompanied children traveling alone and in groups.

Almost half of those interviewed claimed to have given a bribe to an official while traveling, an average of three times, with some reporting to have given bribes more than 10 times during the journey up until Mali. Bribes ranged from 1,000 CFA (1.5USD) to 40,000 CFA (65 USD). Those who indicated that they were detained by security officials at borders for attempting to enter a country illegally (7%) reported giving much higher bribes to officials. One woman indicated that she had been forced to have sex with officials as a bribe.

**Humanitarian repatriation:** On 2 March, [IOM assisted](#) 163 Malian migrants (151 adults, seven children and five infants) to return home from Libya. On 16 March, it was reported by [the media](#) that the Malian government had repatriated 30 Malians from Niger by bus. The repatriation follows the Malian Foreign Minister's visit to Agadez, in Niger. According to media reports, the repatriated migrants were met by the minister in Agadez after they had recently returned from Libya. The Minister subsequently gave instruction that they should be assisted to return home to Mali.

**Action plan to prevent children in conflict:** In March, the Coordination des Mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA), a coalition of armed movements signatory to the Algiers Peace Accord, signed an [Action Plan](#) with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use, sexual violence and all other grave violations against children.

**Malian Refugees in Neighbouring Countries:** [According to UNHCR](#), as of 31 March, there were 142,977 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries in the region, including 60,154 in Niger (lasted available figures from 31 December 2016), 49,851 in Mauritania, and 32,972 in Burkina Faso.

This represents an increase of [474 refugees](#) in [Burkina Faso](#) since February and an increase of 955 since December 31, 2016. [In Mauritania](#), UNHCR registered over 800 new Malian refugees in March, with newly arrived families reporting that they were fleeing violence and armed groups, particularly around the areas of Gundam and Niafunke.

**Internal Displacement:** According to the [latest available information](#), as of 28 February, there were 45,766 IDPs in Mali, an increase from the 35,353 IDPs recorded in January, and

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the 36,690 recorded in October 2016. The majority of IDPs are located in the regions of Segou (10,794), Menaka (10,381) and Timbuktu (9,109). In March, [IOM released](#) a statement claiming that internal displacement could be ended in Mali in 2017 if there is no resurgence in communal violence and armed conflict. IOM called on groups to foster stability and peace to avoid further displacement and encourage the return of those still displaced.

## Niger

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**Labour migration in Niger:** In February, there was a significant increase in the number of migrants and refugees [recorded by IOM](#) traveling south through Séguédine in Niger, after the government closed a gold mine in Djado and workers returned to their places of origin. Although IOM recorded 25,458 migrants traveling south through Séguédine in March, the large numbers of people returning from the closed mine largely eschews the number of migrants and refugees arriving from Libya. Although IOM estimates that the majority of those returning from the mine site are Nigerien, other nationalities are likely to be represented in the movements.

**Departures from Niger:** In February 2017, [IOM recorded](#) 6,329 people travelling from Niger to North Africa, a slight increase from the 4,084 recorded in February 2016. In Séguédine, the main transit point for those traveling to Libya, IOM recorded 4,277 refugees and migrants in February, largely consistent with the 4,447 refugees and migrants recorded traveling to Libya in January.

In Arlit, the main transit point for those traveling to Algeria, IOM recorded 2,052 refugees and migrants in February, again largely consistent with the 2,077 recorded in January.

**Arrivals in Niger:** In February 2017, [IOM recorded](#) 1,781 migrants and refugees arriving in Niger from Algeria, a decrease from the 2,470 arriving via Arlit in January. The majority of those arriving in Niger are Nigeriens, followed by Malians, Guineans and Cameroonians.

**Mixed Migration monitoring mechanism in Niger:** RMMS West Africa's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative ([4Mi](#)), conducted in-depth interviews with 57 migrants and refugees in Niger in March. The migrants and refugees, interviewed mainly in Agadez and Niamey, were from every country in ECOWAS with the exception of Sierra Leone and the majority were from Cote d'Ivoire (21%) and Nigeria (17%). Although the data should not be considered representative of migrants and refugees traveling through Niger, in March 4Mi interviewed 6 women and 51 men ranging from 18 to 37 years old, with an average age of 25. Reflecting the high mobility patterns in West Africa, of those interviewed, almost 80% considered that "a lot" of people were migrating internationally from their place of origin.

In March, 50% of those interviewed indicated they had migrated for primarily economic reasons, while 14% indicated no single reason, and 7% said they were moving for political reasons, including persecution. In contrast to those interviewed in Mali, 65% indicated that when they left home they were aiming to migrate to Europe, while 25% indicated they were heading to a country within north-west Africa, and the remaining 10% indicated they were traveling to other countries outside of Africa.

In March, 4Mi recorded a number of protection incidents in Niger, including four people who indicated they had witnessed migrant deaths in Agadez, reportedly from lack of access to healthcare. A woman reported being the victim of a case of multiple sexual assaults in Agadez, and people reported 24 cases of, in some cases multiple, physical assault or harassment, by smugglers in Agadez, Borno and Zinder, by security forces and police in Kadouna and Kantchari, and host community members in Niamey and Bamako. 72% indicated that they had given a bribe to an official during their journey to Niger, with an

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average bribe of 7,500 CFA (12USD).

**Joint meeting between Spain, France and Niger:** The President of Niger met with the French interior minister and Spanish minister for home affairs [in Niamey in March](#), to discuss efforts to combat terrorism, organised crime and the management of migration through Niger. During this meeting, the director generals of police in Spain, France and Niger signed a Protocol on Joint Investigation Team in Niger. The Joint Investigation Team (ECI Niger), headed up by Spain, allows Spanish, French and Nigerian police officers to work together to manage migration and fight against human trafficking.

**Executive Director of Frontex visit to Niger:** In March, the Frontex Executive Director met with Nigerian Authorities [in Niamey](#) to discuss the deployment of the Agency's first liaison officer in Niger, scheduled for later in the year, and cooperation in areas affecting border management and security. He also opened the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) workshop, which took place in Niger's capital of Niamey.

**Refugees in Niger:** According to the latest available figures, as of 31 December, there were [60,154 Malian refugees in Niger](#), and, as of 3 March, [106,162 Nigerian refugees](#) in Niger.

**Forced Displacement in Diffa Region:** Despite a drop in the number of attacks by Boko Haram in recent months, the [security situation](#) remains a challenge in the Diffa region of Niger, with ongoing military operations by Nigerian Defence Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force restricting humanitarian access into some areas. As of the 3 March, there were [242,000 displaced persons](#) in the Diffa region, with 106,162 Nigerian refugees, 15,423 Nigerian returnees (i.e. people returned to the Diffa region from Nigeria) and 120,956 IDPs.

## Nigeria

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**Context:** In Northeast Nigeria, a greater number of synchronised attacks against military, roadsides and small villages were recorded [in March](#), reportedly due to elements of Boko Haram regrouping after being forced out of strongholds in Sambisa forest. Increased military operations against Boko Haram in northern Borno State also led to increased incursions into Niger. In Adamawa and Borno States, government authorities put IDP camp closures on hold until security conditions are conducive to return. UNOCHA reported that more than [50,000 people](#) are at risk of famine between June and August in three northeast states of Nigeria unless adequate measures are taken. The ongoing insecurity and attacks have prevented farmers from growing crops for three consecutive years, [IOM reports](#) that food remains the predominate unmet need among the IDP population.

**Arrivals of Nigerians in Europe:** In January and February 2017, [1,289 Nigerians arrived](#) in Italy by sea, a decrease from the 1,618 who arrived during the same period in 2016. In 2016, 37,551 Nigerians arrived in Italy by sea, accounting for some 22% of arrivals in Italy by sea. In 2016, arrivals of Nigerians to Europe peaked from June through the October, with an average of 5,500 Nigerians arrivals in Italy each month during this period. In 2016, the average the [acceptance rate](#) for Nigerian children in Europe was 37%, with 63% of claims for asylum by Nigerian children rejected.

**Forced return on Nigerian Refugees:** In March, [UNHCR reported](#) that Cameroon had forcefully repatriated 2,075 asylum-seekers from Cameroon to Bank and Gambaru in Nigeria, despite the numerous exchanges between UNHCR and military and administrative authorities at local, regional and capital levels. UNHCR further claimed that some of those forcefully repatriated by authorities were later found to be Cameroonian, who, lacking identity documents, were deported by mistake. According to [media reports](#), the Cameroon Government denies having forced Nigerian refugees to return to Nigeria.

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These repatriations have occurred in the context of the recent signing of the tripartite agreement on the return of Nigerian refugees between [UNHCR, Cameroon and Nigeria](#) in early March. The agreement is a legal framework setting out the modalities for the voluntary return of the more than 85,000 Nigerian refugees in the Far North region, of whom approximately 62,000 live in Minawao camp. The [Agreement stipulates](#) that repatriation, which is a voluntary decision, will only take place once conditions are conducive for their return in safety and dignity.

**Humanitarian repatriation:** On 7 March, [IOM assisted](#) 171 Nigerian migrants (76 men and 95 women, including 13 unaccompanied minors) to return home from Libya by air. In addition, on the 23 March, [IOM assisted](#) a further 159 Nigerian migrants to return home from Libya.

**Refugees in Neighbouring Countries:** As of 31 March, there were [8,649 Nigerian refugees](#) in Chad and 94,157 refugees in Cameroon. During the month of March in Cameroon, UNHCR [registered 2,783](#) new arrivals from Nigeria. Many of the new arrivals showed signs of malnutrition, dehydration and fragile health. According to the latest available information, as of 31 December, there were 105,491 Nigerian refugees in Niger.

**Internal Displacement:** As of 31 March, there were [1,832,743 displaced persons](#) in Nigeria, representing a decrease of 4% since February. In March, IOM reports that 56% of the IDP population are under the age of 18. A marked decrease of 49,467 was recorded in Maiduguri, as people returned home to the towns of origin, often in search of livelihood opportunities.

**IDP Vulnerability:** On 22 March, [five suicide bombers](#) hit three locations in Northeastern Maiduguri city, killing three people and injuring 20 others. The area where the bombings occurred serves as an important hosting point for thousands of IDPs in informal settlements and has been targeted repeatedly by suspected Boko Haram attackers.

## Senegal

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**Arrivals of Senegalese in Europe:** According to the [latest available information](#), in January and February 2017, 1,215 migrants and refugees arrived in Italy by sea via the central Mediterranean route, largely consistent with the 1,168 who arrived in January 2016. In January and February 2017, arrivals included 168 unaccompanied children.

**Gambian displacement:** As of 2 February, the [Senegalese Red Cross](#) estimated that there were still 9,898 displaced people in the regions covered by the Red Cross in Senegal. Red Cross reports that despite many of the estimated 45,000 people displaced into Senegal from Gambia in January having returned, some remain in Senegal, in some cases without the means to return home. Red Cross is also supporting host populations in areas surrounding the Gambian border, as the sudden influx of people caused significant strain to host communities.

## Other Regional Information

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**EU Partnership Framework:** In March, the [EU published](#) the 'Third Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration'. The report examines progress made in the implementation of the Partnership Framework since December, with a particular focus on the Central Mediterranean route. It also outlines first steps in the implementation of the actions agreed under the Malta Declaration in February. While the EU claims some progress in supporting law enforcement authorities to prevent irregular transit and the smuggling of migrants, particularly in Niger, the return of migrants from Europe to West Africa by the EU is proving challenging.

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**Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe 2016:** In 2016, over 34% of the 100,000 children who arrived in [Europe were unaccompanied](#). On the Central Mediterranean Route, 92% of the 28,223 children arriving were unaccompanied, double the number of unaccompanied children the year before. In comparison, 8% of children arriving in Greece in 2016, were unaccompanied. The percentage of boys amongst the children arriving in Italy tends to be higher than amongst the children arriving in Greece, and they tend to be slightly older. 75% of children interviewed by UNHCR in Italy exhibited a unique set of risk factors linked to human trafficking indicators. Out of 25,546, only one unaccompanied child was relocated from Italy in 2016, along with 191 accompanied children (4%).

**Reintegration Projects:** [IOM announced](#) in March that it was launching 20 EU funded community-based reintegration projects for over 3,000 returning migrants in five countries of origin, including Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Guinea Conakry and Cameroon. In 2016, IOM assisted over 4,800 migrants to return from Libya to their countries of origin.

**Humanitarian repatriation:** On 9 March, [IOM conducted](#) its first humanitarian repatriation from Libya to Gambia, assisting 141 Gambian men to return home.

**Migrant deaths and disappearances in 2016:** In 2016 there was a [27% increase](#) in the recorded deaths of migrants and refugees worldwide compared with 2015, including an 35% increase in the number of deaths recorded in the Mediterranean and a 60% increase on the central Mediterranean route.

In 2016, many more people embarked on trips from North Africa across the Mediterranean in winter compared with previous years, as indicated by the 49,393 arrivals to Italy in October–December 2016, compared to only 21,772 in the same period in 2015. While in past years' rough conditions at sea have deterred people from making the crossing in winter, interviews with migrants and refugees in Italy indicate that smugglers in Libya have been forcing migrants on to board boat with threats or acts of violence.

In addition, in 2016, 169 migrant deaths were recorded on the western African route between mainland Africa and the Canary Islands, double the 84 recorded in 2015.

**West African arrivals to Europe:** According to the [latest available information](#), between 01 January and 28 February 2017, 13,439 migrants and refugees arrived in Italy by sea, a 48 per cent increase from the number of people who arrived in the first two months of 2016. In January and February 2017, some 64% of arrivals were from West African countries, with arrivals from Guinea accounting for 16% of total arrivals during this period.

**Deaths at Sea:** In March 2017, [305 migrants and refugees](#) lost their lives or went missing in the Mediterranean sea. Between January and March 2017, 793 migrants have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean, a slight increase from the 749 lost at sea during the same period in 2016.

**IDPs in Libya:** In March, [IOM identified](#) 294,436 IDPs in Libya, the majority of whom were displaced in 2015 and 2016 by the threat of conflict and armed group presence. Little is known about the IDP population in Libya due the difficulty of gaining access to affected populations. However, IOM reported that, of those identified in March, the majority were between the ages of 19 and 59 and 59% are located in the west of Libya.

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## News, Reports, Books

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[Alexander Betts, Paul Collier \(March, 2017\) 'Refuge: Transforming a Broken Refugee System' Penguin Allen Lane](#)

This book demonstrates how the recent "refugee crisis" in Europe offers an opportunity for the reformation of the international refugee system to deliver humane, effective and sustainable outcomes in both Europe and countries bordering conflict zones. Arguing that refugees need more than material aid, the authors point to research demonstrating that refugees can deliver tangible economic benefits if given the opportunity to work and continue education in their adopted countries.

[Haddy Sarr \(March, 2017\) 'Straddling Two Worlds: Highly Skilled Migrants from Senegambia and Switzerland' Migration Policy Institute Feature Article](#)

This article examines the parallel and contrasting experiences of highly skilled migrants from 'Senegambia' and Switzerland, each working in the other's country. By problematizing dominating narratives framing African migrants in Europe as 'illegal' and 'unskilled' the article sheds light on the human reasons behind the practices of skilled migrants in Senegal and Switzerland, including family ties and value systems, and explores the migrants transnational activities (i.e. remittances and citizenship) as an example of the similarities and contrasts between these groups.

[Gil Loescher \(March, 2017\) 'UNHCR's origins and early history: agency, influence, and power in global refugee policy' Canada's Journal on Refugees](#)

This article assesses the role and functions of UNHCR during its formative years and explores its agency, influence, and use of power in global refugee policy, arguing that this early period in UNHCR's history contains important lessons for the practices of the Office today.

[Kieran Guilbert \(March, 2017\) 'No Country for Young Men' Senegal's villages deserted for dreams of Europe' Multi-media article](#)

This multi-media article examines the context in Senegal inspiring many young men to migrate internationally, including to Europe.

[Help Age International \(March, 2017\) 'Older People in Situations of Migration in Africa, The Untold Migration Story' Policy Paper.](#)

This briefing tells the untold story of older people in the context of migration in Africa. Highlighting that older people are often invisible to policy makers and development planners, despite their centrality to the migration and displacement chain as migrants and refugees themselves, as returnees and as funders of younger people's migration journeys. The paper explores policy options and calls for more thorough research to improve understanding of the capabilities and needs of older people in situations of migration in Africa.

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The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) West Africa is an independent unit hosted by the Danish Refugee Council which aims to enhance the protection of people on the move in mixed migration flows in West Africa, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. RMMS West Africa distributes this summary to agencies, academic institutions, donors, embassies, journalists, government officials, international and multinational organisations and related non-government organisations. Data is sourced from a wide variety of collaborators, partners, international and local organisations, media outlets and individuals in the region. RMMS West Africa makes independent editorial decisions as to what sections and what data is included in this summary.

If you would like more information about RMMS West Africa please visit our website at [www.westafrica.regionalmms.org](http://www.westafrica.regionalmms.org)

\*The term migrant/refugee is used to cover all those involved in mixed migration flows (including asylum seekers, trafficked persons, economic migrants, refugees). If the caseload mentioned refers only to refugees or asylum seekers or trafficked persons it will be clearly stated.

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