May 2017

RMMS
West Africa
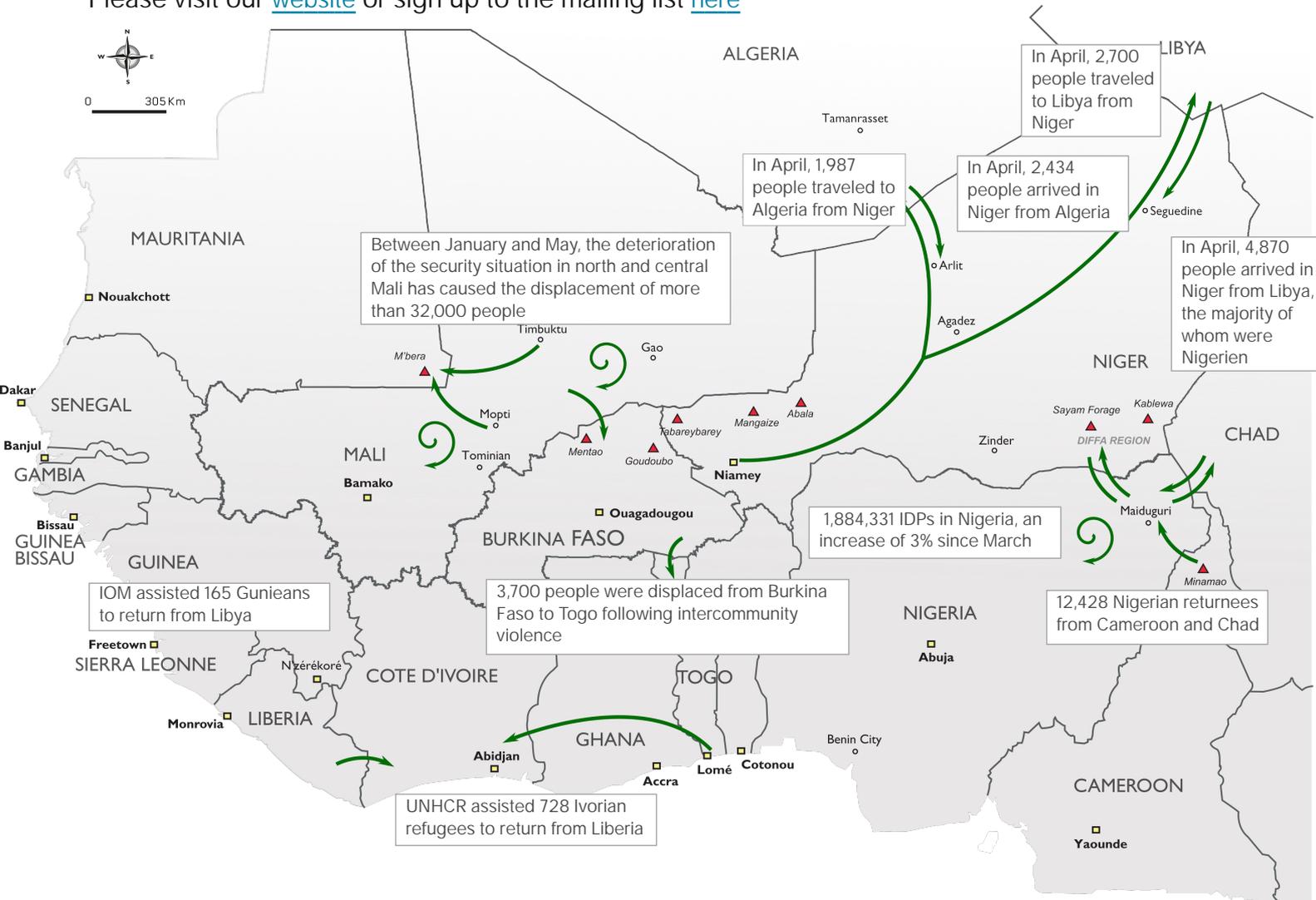Regional Mixed
Migration Secretariat

West Africa
Monthly Mixed Migration Summary

Covering mixed migration events, incidents, trends and data for the West Africa region. Please visit our website or sign up to the mailing list here

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ALGERIA

LIBYA

Tamanrasset

In April, 2,700 people traveled to Libya from Niger

In April, 1,987 people traveled to Algeria from Niger

In April, 2,434 people arrived in Niger from Algeria

MAURITANIA

Seguedine

Arlit

In April, 4,870 people arrived in Niger from Libya, the majority of whom were Nigerien

Nouakchott

Agadez

NIGER

Between January and May, the deterioration of the security situation in north and central Mali has caused the displacement of more than 32,000 people

Timbuktu

Gao

M'bera

Dakar

SENEGAL

Mopti

Tabareybarey   Mangaize   Abala

Sayam Forage   Kablewa

DIFFA REGION

CHAD

Banjul

GAMBIA

Tominian

MALI

Mentao
Goudoubo

Zinder

Bissau

GUINEA BISSAU

Bamako

Niamey

Maiduguri

GUINEA

Ouagadougou

1,884,331 IDPs in Nigeria, an increase of 3% since March

Minamao

IOM assisted 165 Gunieans to return from Libya

BURKINA FASO

12,428 Nigerian returnees from Cameroon and Chad

NIGERIA

Freetown

SIERRA LEONNE

N'zérékoré

COTE D'IVOIRE

3,700 people were displaced from Burkina Faso to Togo following intercommunity violence

Abuja

TOGO

Monrovia

LIBERIA

GHANA

Benin City

Abidjan

Accra

Lomé   Cotonou

CAMEROON

UNHCR assisted 728 Ivorian refugees to return from Liberia

Yaounde

Highlights in May

• The Italian Ministry of Interior announced an agreement between Niger, Chad and Italy, in which the three countries agree to cooperate on issues related to border security and migration. The countries agree to enhance cooperation in the fight against terrorism and human trafficking with a view to ensuring border security, and Italy will fund the construction of migrant 'reception' centres in Niger and Chad.

• UNHCR opened a new office in Agadez in order to provide information and support to asylum seekers and refugees moving in mixed movements through Niger.

• Officials from ECOWAS, along with UNHCR, adopted the world's first action plan to end statelessness. The plan aims to end statelessness in the West African region by 2024, through legislation around statelessness, guaranteeing freedom of movement within the region and improving access to proof of nationality papers.

• According to IOM, a large majority of migrants and refugees detained in detention centres in Libya are West Africans. In the detention centre of Trig al Seka, for example, 90% of the 570 detained migrants are from West Africa, mostly from Nigeria (270), Senegal (140) and Gambia (47)

Burkina Faso

Context: In May, the security situation remained precarious in northern Burkina Faso with a number of attacks against civilians across the region. A spokespersons for Operation Barkhane, reported that they had discovered a cache of weapons and ammunition in Mali, just across the border from Burkina Faso. According to the spokesperson, 20 terrorists were killed or captured during the operation.

Despite an above average harvest gathered in 2016 food security conditions remain fragile in the Sahel and northern regions of Burkina Faso, areas that host large numbers of Malian refugees.

ECOWAS training on the Free Movement Protocol: In May, ECOWAS hosted a training in Ouagadougou with over 30 government officials, aimed at improving their capacities and co-ordination for the full implementation of the 1979 Free Movement Protocol. The training was based on a new training manual on free movement developed by ECOWAS with support from IOM.

Displacement in Burkina Faso: In May, intercommunity violence surrounding a land dispute in Burkina Faso's centre-east province caused the displacement of 3,700 people across the border into Togo. The displaced people took shelter in a number of primary schools and have received assistance from the Togolese Red Cross and local authorities. As of 30 May, efforts were underway to facilitate their return.

Refugees in Burkina Faso: As of 30 April, there were 33,056 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso.

Cote d'Ivoire

Context: In May, former rebel fighters in the national army mutinied for a second time this year, following indications that the governments would not honour a financial agreement made with mutineers in January 2017. Mutineers blocked roads and fired shots in the air in Bouake, Abidjan and six others cities across the country. On 15 May, the government reached a financial deal to end the mutiny. Four people were killed during the mutiny.

Forum on the Ivoirian Diaspora: The second Forum on the Ivoirian Diaspora was held in Abidjan in May, hosted by the Ivoirian Minister of African Integration and Ivoirians Abroad. The forum addressed the issues of Ivoirians migrating irregularly to Europe, as well as ways to better engage with the diaspora.

Arrivals of Ivoirians in Europe: Between January and May 2017, 5,657 migrants and refugees from Cote d'Ivoire arrived in Italy by sea via the central Mediterranean route including 731 adult women and 980 unaccompanied or separated children . This represents 11% of total sea arrivals in Italy during this period, and an increase of 152% from the 2,242 Ivoirians who arrived in Italy by sea between January and May in 2016.

Refugees in neighboring countries: As of 31 May, there were 27,892 Ivoirian refugees in neighboring countries, including 14,683 in Liberia and 6,607 in Ghana. According to the latest available information, as of 30 April, there were 2,108 in Togo and 4,494 in Guinea.

Repatriation of Ivoirian refugees: In May 2017, UNHCR assisted 728 individuals to return to Côte d'Ivoire from Liberia. In total, between January and May, UNHCR assisted 3,762 Ivoirian refugees to return to Cote d'Ivoire from countries around the region.

Since the end of the political crisis in 2011, over 260,000 persons have been repatriated to Cote d'Ivoire from 26 countries across Africa, Europe and Asia, nearly 200,000 spontaneously and 64,634 persons through voluntary repatriation facilitated by UNHCR.

Guinea

Arrivals of Guineans in Europe: Between January and May 2017, 5,960 Guineans arrived in Italy by way of the central Mediterranean route, including 1,221 unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) . During this period Guineans made up 10% of the total arrivals to Europe. The number of Guineans arriving in Italy between January and May 2017 has doubled when compared to the same period in 2016.

Guinean UASC in Italy: According to an assessment of unaccompanied and separated (UASC) Guinean children in Italy, published by REACH in May, Guinean children represent 7.8% of the total UASC population in Italy. Of those assessed, 76% indicated their caretakers were still in Guinea, while 35% indicated they had worked before worked before arriving in Italy. 79% of children indicated that they had made the decision to leave their country of origin, and 80% chose their final destination, but only 41% of children indicated that they had thought about the risks before considering to migrate. On average children took one year and two months from leaving Guinea to arrive in Italy, and 94% of children travelled alone.

Refugees in Guinea: According to the latest available figures, as of 31 March, there were 4,494 Ivoirian refugees in Guinea.

Humanitarian repatriation: On 4 May, IOM assisted 165 Guineans to return home from Libya, including 13 women and 152 men. The group also included five unaccompanied children and one infant. Of those repatriated by IOM, 95% had been detained in detention centres in Tripoli before being assisted to return home.

Liberia

Refugees in Liberia: As of 31 May, there were 14,683 Ivoirian refugees in Liberia, representing a decline of 777 refugees since March. From the beginning of 2017 to the end of April, UNHCR has assisted 2,891 Ivoirian refugees to return to Cote d'Ivoire from Liberia, bringing the total number of assisted returns to 22,734 since December 2015. In 2017, UNHCR plans to repatriate 15,000 Ivorian refugees from Liberia.

Mali

Context: In May, a number of security incidents and attacks took place in Mali, including an attack launched by the jihadist coalition group Ba Moussa against the governmental forces (FAMA) in the Ségou region, killing nine soldiers and the kidnapping and the release of four members of the Malian Red Cross in the Mopti region. On 23 May, an attack against MINUSMA killed two peace keepers, and injured another. On 9 May, the Malian government agreed with Chad and Niger to strengthen judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism and cross-border crime. The French president also visited Mali in May, shortly after being elected, to reaffirm France's commitment to supporting the Malian government.

Between January and May, the deterioration of the security situation in north and central Mali has caused the displacement of more than 32,000 people, while ECHO reports that 3.8 million people in Mali are food insecure and 600,000 require immediate emergency food assistance.

In the context of increased military engagement in Mali, an IRIN report published in May explores how dialogue might be more effective to fostering peace in Mali than the deployment of more foreign troops.

Malian arrivals in Europe: Between January and May 2017, 3,150 Malians arrived in Italy by sea via the central Mediterranean route, including 431 unaccompanied children. This represents an increase of 20.5% from the 2,614 Malians who arrived in Italy by sea between January and May in 2016.

Malian Refugees in Neighbouring Countries: As of 31 May 2017, there were 144,206 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries in the region, including, 50,996 in Mauritania, 33,056 in Burkina Faso and 60,154 in Niger (last available figures for Niger from 31 December 2016).

Internal Displacement: As of 30 April 2017, there were 58,985 IDPs in Mali. This represents an increase of 32% from the 44,762 IDPs recorded in February. This increase of 14,223 IDPs was caused by violence in the Gourma Rharous area.

The majority of IDPs are located in the regions of Timbuktu (22,328), Segou (10,794) and Menaka (10,381).

Niger

Context: Due to the insecurity in the border areas of Mali and Burkina Faso, the Nigerien authorities declared a state of emergency in departments along the Burkina Faso border in March. Between February and May, 34 attacks have been recorded in the region, with the government closing down several markets and placing restrictions on vehicle traffic.

In Diffa region, on the border with Nigeria, insecurity continues, with 29 attacks on civilians by Boko Haram reported between January and May 2017 . The month of May also saw a significant increase in the number of security and protection incidents recorded in Diffa region, with 99 incidents reported in May compared with 55 in April .

Departures from Niger: In April 2017, IOM recorded 4,687 people traveling from Niger to North Africa. The number of recorded migrants and refugees traveling through Arlit to Algeria has decreased when compared with April 2016, from 6,615 people in 2016 to 1,987 people in 2017. In April 2017, 2,700 people were recorded traveling through Séguédine on their way to Libya, a significant decrease compared with the 28,888 people who were recorded in April 2016. The EU reports that migrants and refugees are using alternative routes to travel around Séguédine due to increased security presence by Niger security forces in the region.

Arrivals in Niger: In April 2017, IOM recorded 7,304 people arriving in Niger from North Africa, including 2,434 people arriving from Algeria through Arlit, and 4,870 arriving via Séguédine from Libya. The majority of those recorded arriving in Niger from Algeria were from Niger (28%) followed by Mali (10%) and Nigeria (9%). The majority of those recorded arriving via Séguédine were from Niger (90%) .

Migrant vulnerabilities: In May, a Nigerien military patrol rescued 40 migrants and refugees from the desert in Northern Niger, after they had reportedly been abandoned by their smugglers on their way to Libya.

UNHCR presence in Agadez: In May, UNHCR opened a new office in Agadez in order to provide information and support to asylum seekers and refugees moving in mixed

movements through Niger. The office aims to inform those seeking asylum of the procedures in Niger, and assist them should they wish to claim asylum. UNHCR is also setting up joint referral mechanisms between IOM, UNHCR and the Government of Niger, as well as other key actors, to facilitate access to international protection for asylum seekers identified in the mixed migration movements in Niger. UNHCR notes that despite receiving relatively few claims for asylum, the processing times for asylum applications in Niger are excessive, taking an average of 19 months. UNHCR is supporting the government to improve the quality of the decisions taken, as well as the processing times. According to sources in the field, so far only Libyan nationals, often with family links in the Agadez region, have applied for asylum via UNHCR's presence in Agadez.

Managing Migration to Europe: In May, the Italian Ministry of Interior announced an agreement between Niger, Chad and Italy, in which the three countries agreed to cooperate on issues related to border security and migration. The three countries agreed to enhance cooperation in the fight against terrorism and human trafficking with a view to ensuring border security, including through the strengthening of communication between border control forces. In addition, Italy will fund the construction of migrant 'reception' centres in Niger and Chad, and support the management of such centres already existing in Libya.

Refugees in Niger: As of 30 April, there were 106,146 Nigerian refugees and, according to the latest available figures, 60,154 from Mali in Niger (latest available figures for Mali from 31 December 2016).

Malian refugees are recognised on a prima facie basis in Niger, and according to UNHCR enjoy a favourable protection environment, with the right to settle, work and access basis social services.

Forced Displacement in Diffa Region: According to UNHCR, the security situation in Diffa is becoming more precarious, as insurgent groups lacking means of subsistence engage in criminal activity, often targeting wealthy individuals in the region. The increased number of protection incidents in May (99) compared with April (55) was related to a re-grouping of armed groups after several defeats at the hands of the Nigerien military in March and April. Protection incidents recorded in May include nine kidnappings, 12 incursions, six murders and 10 cases of SGBV. As of 30 April there were 106,146 Nigerian refugees, 127,299 IDPs and 14,546 in the Diffa region of Niger.

Voluntary relocation and return: Between January and May, 4,060 people left the Sayam Forage camp in the Diffa region and 3,086 then returned to the camp after visiting their places of origin. Reasons for leaving the camp included returning home to verify state of homes and businesses, as well as searching for work in areas of origin. In addition UNHCR registered 1,798 new arrivals in the camp. On May 2017, 10,225 persons were living in the Sayam Forage camp, including 9,732 refugees and 523 returnees. 16,512 persons were also living in the camp of Kablewa, including 15,809 IDPs.

On 29 May, an operation to relocate up to 2,500 refugees from Diffa, Toumour and Kablewa to Sayam Forage began and will continue until at the 14th of June. 1,200 persons from Diffa, 700 from Toumour and 600 from the camp of Kablewa have requested to be relocated to Sayam Forge camp.

Between January and May, 11,749 IDPs returned to their villages of origin. According to UNHCR the primary obstacle to returns is ongoing insecurity, the destruction of homes and property, and homes now occupied by others in areas of origin.

Nigeria

Arrivals of Nigerians in Europe: Between January and May 2017, 9,286 Nigerians arrived in Italy by sea, including 599 unaccompanied children. During this period Nigerians represented the highest ranked nationality among arrivals, accounting for more than 15% of the 60,228 migrants and refugees who arrived in Italy by sea. When compared to the same period in 2016, arrivals of Nigerian to Italy by sea has increased by 22%. Overall 10% of arrivals in Italy by sea between January and May were adult women, however, 30% of Nigerian arrivals were women (2,800).

Humanitarian Repatriation: In May, IOM assisted 418 Nigerians, including eight children, to return to Nigeria from Libya in two separate flights.

Refugees in Neighbouring Countries: As of 31 May, there were 204,977 refugees in countries neighbouring Nigeria, with 90,981 Nigerian refugees in Cameroon, 106,146 refugees in Niger and 7,850 in Chad.

Returns of displaced persons: As of 28 May, UNHCR registered a total of 12,428 Nigerian returnees from Cameroon and Chad . According to UNOCHA, as of the 29 May, local authorities predict that in the upcoming weeks, an additional 78,000 refugees could return from Cameroon.

In May, NRC raised concerns over the strain that large numbers of refugee returns are putting on communities in Northern Nigeria. Returnees are often returning to areas that lack basic services, such as sanitation, water, housing and infrastructure and often find that homes they fled are now occupied by different people, fuelling tensions within communities. NRC is calling on the state to strengthen the mechanisms to resolve land and property disputes.

Internal Displacement: According to IOM, as of 31 May, there were 1,884,331 internally displaced persons in the six north-eastern states of Nigeria, representing an increase of 3%, or 51,588 persons, since March. The key reason for the increase in IDP numbers compared with March is the return of Nigerians from Cameroon, as well as recent attacks by Boko Haram. According to IOM nearly 70% of IDPs in Nigeria have been displaced at least twice since the start of the crisis.

In May, the National Emergency Management Agency in Nigeria announced that the planned closure of IDP camps in Borno by the original deadline of 29 May was not feasible, due to recent developments in the conflict with Boko Haram. A spokesperson for the Agency highlighted that IDPs were welcome to return voluntarily, as temporary camps have been set up in liberated areas to house returning IDPs before they move back into the communities.

Senegal

Arrivals of Senegalese in Europe: Between January and May 2017, 3,935 migrants and refugees from Senegal arrived in Italy by sea via the Mediterranean route, an increase of almost 53% compared with the same period in 2016. Arrivals during this period in 2017 also included 491 unaccompanied children.

Other Regional Information

Plan to End Statelessness in West Africa: In May, officials from ECOWAS, along with UNHCR, adopted the world's first action plan to end statelessness. The plan aims to end statelessness in the West African region by 2024, including through legislation around statelessness, improving the use of data, guaranteeing freedom of movement around the region and improving access to proof of nationality papers. The plan aims to help more than one million people without nationality gain identity papers in West Africa

Protection risks for migrants and refugees in Libya: In May, Germany's foreign minister spoke out against migrant camps in Libya commenting that 'the camps existing on the ground already show horrible and catastrophic conditions, and the idea to set up camps... would be an utter disregard of the circumstances for the people'. According to media reports, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court is examining whether to open a formal investigation into crimes against thousands of vulnerable migrants and refugees in Libya.

Highlighting the complex political developments taking place in the Mediterranean as the EU moves to stem the flow of migrants, in May, there was an altercation between the Libyan coast guard and Sea-Watch, an NGO rescue ship patrolling just outside Libyan waters.

Migrants and refugees in Libya: According to IOM, the large majority of migrants and refugees detained in detention centres in Libya are West Africans. In the detention centre of Trig al Seka, for example, 90% of the 570 migrants detained are from West Africa, mostly from Nigeria (270), Senegal (140) and Gambia (47).

West African arrivals to Europe: Between January and May 2017, 60,228 migrants and refugees arrived in Italy by sea, a 265% increase compared with the same period in 2016. West Africans accounted for some 55% of arrivals to Italy by sea during this period, with more than 15% of the total arrivals from Nigeria, 11% from Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea respectively, 8% from Gambia, 7% from Senegal, and 5% from Mali. In May, 22,993 migrants and refugees arrived in Italy.

In May, around 100 people entered the Spanish enclave of Melilla in North Africa after forcing their way across razor-wire border fence with Morocco. Spanish and Moroccan police officers drove back another 200 people who had tried to climb the 6m high fence.

Deaths at Sea: It is estimated that between January and May 2017, 1,562 migrants died or went missing in the Mediterranean. In May, 2,187 migrants were rescued between Libya and Italy, an increase of 78% from May (474 migrants) .

EU asylum context: Figures released by the EU in May show that the member states of the EU granted protection status to 710,400 asylum seekers in 2016, more than double the number of 2015. Over half of those granted asylum were Syrians (57%) followed by Iraqis (9%) and Afghans (9%). In Italy, the majority of those granted protection (13% or 4,610 persons) were from Nigeria.

The overall recognition rate of Nigerian asylum claims in the EU in first instance decisions in 2016 was 21.7%. Of the 5,695 Nigerians who were found to be in need of international protection in 2016, 1,105 (19%) were granted refugee status, 1,070 were granted subsidiary protection status (19%) and 3,520 (62%) were granted humanitarian status. For Malians, the overall recognition rate was 32%, with 304 (9%) Malians granted refugee status, 1,375 (42%) granted subsidiary protection status, and 1,620 (49%) granted humanitarian status. Finally,

the recognition rate for Gambian asylum seekers in the EU was 29.8% in 2016, with 370 (12%) granted refugee status, 260 (9%) granted subsidiary protection status, and 2,380 (79%) granted humanitarian status.

In May, Italy announced plans to build new detention centres in order to detain migrants who are refused protection status before they are deported. Italy has closed similar centres in the past due to difficulties in proving nationality of migrants and delay in deportation leading to extended detention periods and protests.

News, Reports, Books

Niklas Hultin et al (2017) 'Autocracy, migration, and The Gambia's 'unprecedented' 2016 election' African Affairs, Volume 116 (463)

This briefing reflects upon the 2016 election in Gambia and assesses arguments for ex-president Jammeh's loosening grip on power, and explanations of his 'unprecedented' defeat. The authors argue that migratory trends, such as elite 'brain-drain', 'Green-card' Diversity Visa Lottery (DVL) applications, and refugee and asylum claims, deeply shaped the electorate's composition and choice in December 2016. Migration narratives are thus a meta-category encapsulating frustration, anger, and shame with Gambia's international reputation.

Nataliia Gladkova and Valentina Mazzucato, (2017) 'Theorising Chance: Capturing the Role of Ad Hoc Social Interactions in Migrants' Trajectories', Population, Space and Place, Volume 23 (2)

This research article explores the role of chance encounters in influencing the way migration trajectories take shape. Based on interviews with African migrants in Ukraine, the analysis suggests that how people deal with chance is an influential factor in the ways people migrate from the Global South to the Global North.

Amnesty International (2017) 'Shut down for speaking out: human rights defenders at risk in West and Central Africa'

In this briefing Amnesty International documents the mounting danger faced by those defending human rights in West and Central Africa. According to Amnesty at least 87 human rights defenders and 48 journalist have been arbitrarily arrested in West Africa since 2014, with human rights activists and protesters facing ever-higher levels of persecution, intimidation and violence.

Aoife McCullough, et al (2017) 'Understanding trajectories of radicalisation in Niger' Overseas Development Institute Research report

This research, carried out in October 2016, examines why people become radicalised in Agadez, the northern part of Niger. The authors argues that radicalisation is a dynamic process, where individual and structural factors interact to produce the potential for radicalisation. In Niger, local people stressed structural factors such as poverty, inequality and rising materialism as reasons why people join extremist groups.

*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.