

Mixed movements in West and Central Africa

April - June 2022



As internally displaced persons (IDPs) and locals learn to build eco-friendly homes for themselves in Kaya, Burkina Faso, where more than 1.9 million are forcibly displaced, the number of IDPs detected in mixed cross-border onward movements increase. © UNHCR/Anne Mimault

This update provides a brief overview of key mixed movements **trends** reported in West and Central Africa and **response** by UNHCR and partners to protection risks associated to mixed flows. Covering the period from April to June 2022, this issue includes contributions from [Burkina Faso](#), [Chad](#), [Gabon](#), [The Gambia](#), [Mali](#), [Niger](#), [Nigeria](#) and [Senegal](#).

Mixed movements refer to situations in which individuals are moving together using the **same** routes and means of transportation, but for **different** reasons. Find out more in *UNHCR's 10-Point Plan in Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Movements* available [online](#).

Key trends

Relying on a network of community-based focal points, UNHCR and partners monitor mixed movements along key routes to inform programming, including by collecting data on areas of origin and protection needs of persons on the move.

In [Burkina Faso](#), a long-standing country of origin of migration where more than [1.9 million persons](#) are currently forcibly displaced within the national borders due to the Sahel crisis, 3,702 persons on the move were detected by monitors, including 20% of women, 17% of girls and 18% of boys. These flows comprised 423 asylum-seekers from Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Benin intending to reach

Côte d'Ivoire, Italy, Niger and Togo, or Burkina Faso as a final destination. Confirming an emerging trend, 2,602 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in cross-border onward movements to Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali, Guinea, Ghana, Benin, Senegal, Togo and Nigeria were identified. These movements included 20% of women, 19% of girls and 18% of boys. In parallel, onward movements of refugees from Mali and Niger, including towards Cameroon, were also reported.

In [Chad](#), 2,293 persons were identified in mixed movements across the country, including 105 refugees and 124 asylum-seekers. In three camps located in the East near the border with Sudan,

refugee community leaders estimated that over 3,000 refugees had left their camps within the last 12 months, primarily to seek economic opportunities in the North of the country, Libya, Mali, Niger and Egypt. Overall, a [million of individuals](#) are forcibly displaced in Chad, where food insecurity led to a [declaration of emergency](#) in June, fueling long-standing mixed flows of migrants and refugees, including to Libya and Niger.



In Chad, a Sudanese graduate teacher hopes for chance to continue her studies. © UNHCR/Colin Delfosse

In [Mali](#), a country of origin, transit and return of mixed movements, including to Europe, a total of 2,147 persons on the move were reported by community-based monitors, representing a 38% increase compared to the first trimester of 2022. Arrivals primarily originated from Burkina Faso (33%), Niger (9%) and Mali (3%).

In [Niger](#), 2,967 refugees and asylum-seekers were identified in mixed flows in Niamey, including refugees from Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. In Agadez, where mixed movements from West, East and North Africa meet, 2,600 asylum-seekers and refugees are currently registered as of 17 June 2022, including 89% of Sudanese. 15% of these individuals have specific needs associated to their young age, separation from relatives or experience of exploitation, torture and trafficking in persons.

In the North of [Nigeria](#), where more than [1,600,000 persons are internally displaced](#), trafficking in persons to Algeria and Mali affected men, adolescent boys and girls lured in Maiduguri, Borno State, by fraudulent promises of employment abroad and exploited for the purpose of mineral extraction and

organ harvesting. Victims of trafficking in persons, primarily adolescent girls and women, were also identified *en route* from Borno and Yobe States to Algeria, Libya and Mali for the purpose of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and forced labour. Considered as an emerging trend referred to as *Aruba*, 140 victims of trafficking were detected as they were trying to reach Algeria and Mali for the purpose of illegal gold mining. Internal trafficking was also observed in Nigeria, where boys and girls fell victims to forced labour from the North East to the Middle Belt and the South East. According to [public sources](#), 24 children were trafficked by individuals posing as religious teachers from Adamawa State to Plateau State. Recruitment of children into the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a local group formed to support Nigerian security forces in the fight against Boko Haram, and other armed groups continued to be reported, amidst efforts to put an end to this [practice](#).

In [Senegal](#), public sources reported a shipwreck along the coast of the Casamance region. According to [IOM](#), a total of 140 passengers intended to reach the Canary Islands in Spain, including 75% of Senegalese. While 90 persons were rescued, 15 persons were confirmed dead.

Throughout the [region](#), more than 1,000 onward movements of refugees registered in West and Central Africa were detected so far in 2022 by UNHCR's Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) in other countries in the region but also beyond, including Libya. The majority of these refugees were first registered in Chad and Burkina Faso, from where they departed in mixed onward movements to *inter alia* reunite with family members, access other protection systems, secure durable solutions and seek economic opportunities. It is assumed that the vast majority of onward movements, pendular or more permanent, remain undetected by registration systems, including due to the freedom of movement in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

In [Europe](#), [sea and land arrivals to Spain](#) during the first six months of 2022 increased compared to the same period in 2021, with a total of 14,275 arrivals

recorded, including 62% via the Canary Islands, an augmentation of 32% compared to the same period in 2021. In Melilla, the main nationalities of arrivals so far in 2022 have been Sudan (35% of all arrivals), followed by Mali (29%) and Burkina Faso (10%).

Response

UNHCR seeks to reinforce access to protection along West and Central African routes, including for unaccompanied children and victims of trafficking in person, as well as enhance pathways to durable solutions for refugees, stateless persons and IDPs as a meaningful alternative to risky onward movements.

Identification and referral

In [Gabon](#), 44 persons in mixed movements, partly originating from Borno State, in Nigeria, including children and persons with visual impairments, were detected by the authorities and referred to the National Commission for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR for screening. While no refugees and asylum-seekers were identified, the children were assisted by UNICEF. These referrals were facilitated by the newly established UN Working Group on Mixed Movements currently chaired by UNHCR. In support to this identification and referral mechanism, 18 staff from the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice and the National Commission for Refugees were trained by UNHCR on international protection in the context of mixed movements. In addition, a protection-sensitive border screening tool was jointly produced by the same stakeholders, to be complemented by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) currently under development.

In [Mali](#), 9 persons on the move, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and South Sudan were identified and referred to the relevant services. To enhance identification and referrals, the capacities of community-based monitors based in Kayes were strengthened during a training session.

Between January and May 2022, 87% of Malian asylum-seekers in Spain were [recommended for international protection](#) by the local asylum authorities.

In Agadez, [Niger](#), 21 unaccompanied children, including a number deported from Libya, were registered by the national asylum authorities and 6 were referred to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to facilitate the restoration of family links. In Niamey, the National Eligibility Commission granted international protection to 130 applicants, including asylum-seekers detected and registered in Agadez in the context of mixed movements. To strengthen identification and referrals, UNHCR developed a module on international protection for law enforcement officials to be inserted in their training curriculum and trained 60 stakeholders, including civil society representatives, on protection in the context of mixed flows.



2,600 asylum-seekers and refugees were registered in Agadez, Niger, as of 17 June 2022. © UNHCR/Romain Pichon-Sintes

Protection frameworks and systems

In [Cote d'Ivoire](#), one of the three countries in West and Central Africa without national legislation regulating asylum with Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe, a draft bill on asylum was adopted by the Government. In a country of origin, transit and destination of mixed movements, a robust

national asylum system offers a meaningful alternative to risky onward movements for persons in need of international protection.

Communication with communities



In Chad, the national Red Cross Society discussed protection risks en route and alternative to risky onward movements with persons on the move and communities of origin and transit of mixed flows. © Croix Rouge Tchad

In [Chad](#), more than 5,000 individuals, including persons on the move and from communities of origin and transit of mixed flows, were reached by UNHCR and the national Red Cross society through thematic discussions on protection risks *en route* and alternative to dangerous onward movements and the screening of a short film produced by local artists on the same issues. As an illustration, in the Guilmey refugee camp in N'Djamena, 32 students, including 12 girls, participated in a discussion on mixed movements facilitated by Red Cross staff and volunteers. Persons on the move in bus stations and local markets were specifically targeted in Abeche, Adde and Ati.

In [Nigeria](#), UNHCR and partners engaged with communities on the prevention and response to trafficking in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States, by strengthening existing traditional community structures. Thematic discussions were facilitated by partner Caritas in 63 schools, reaching a total of 15,000 students in Edo and Cross River States. In addition, UNHCR and Caritas partnered to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices pertaining to trafficking in persons in 10 local government areas in Edo and Cross River States, reaching 555 respondents via questionnaires, key informant interviews and focus group discussions

Response to specific needs

As a total of 40 incidents of trafficking, including men, women, girls, and boys, mostly IDPs, refugees or IDP/refugee returnees, were reported in April and May 2022 in Adamawa and Borno States, [Nigeria](#), survivors were referred to relevant services and actors, including the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Borno Women Development Initiative (BOWDI), Heartland Alliance International and IOM. To enhance identification and referrals, 29 Caritas employees were trained on trafficking in persons, and referral pathways to case management, psychosocial counselling, livelihood support, and material assistance were reinforced. Community identification and referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking in persons were strengthened in 15 of the 20 communities covered by Caritas.



More than 100 participants came together in Dakar on 10-12 May 2022 to monitor the implementation of the 2018 Niamey Declaration on trafficking in persons and smuggling. © UNHCR

As a follow-up to the [2018 Niamey Declaration](#), the UNHCR [Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa](#) participated in the inter-governmental *Third Regional Conference of Directors General and Senior Commanders of Internal Security Forces and Senior Justice Officials on the fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons* (10-12 May 2022). With more than 100 persons in attendance, including representatives from 18 States (countries of origin, transit and destination of trafficking and smuggling), Frontex, IOM and the UN Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC), UNHCR was provided with the opportunity to present its mandate with regard to trafficking in persons and share good

practices in the region of identification and referral mechanisms and tailored services for victims. Recommendations are currently under finalization.

Solutions

As a durable solution to protracted displacement and a meaningful alternative to risky onward movements, more than 16,122 Ivorian refugees have so far [opted](#) for assisted voluntary repatriation to [Cote d'Ivoire](#) in 2022.

Between January and June 2022, 265 refugees departed on resettlement from [Niger](#), including 147 evacuees through the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM). Since 2017, more than 3,000 vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers were evacuated via the ETM from detention in Libya, where they had arrived within mixed movements.

Coordination

On 1 July 2022, resulting from intensive consultations between the two organisations, the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director-General of IOM finalized a *Framework of Engagement* for the two organisations, putting forward areas of enhanced collaboration on mixed movements, durable solutions for IDPs, and data. UNHCR and OIM colleagues are invited to use this *Framework* with the view to strengthening coordinated and joint efforts for greater impact, while respecting each other's areas of responsibilities and mandates.

In [Burkina Faso](#), UNHCR participated in the third meeting of the Mixed Movements Working Group,

bringing together the authorities, UN entities, the Red Cross movement and civil society members.

In June 2022, the regional UN Network on Migration for West and Central Africa came together in [Dakar](#) to reflect on the recent [International Migration Review Forum](#) held in New York on 17-21 May 2022 as the primary intergovernmental global platform for Member States to assess and deliberate on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM). As a way forward and based on the [Progress Declaration](#), the regional Network agreed to focus on joint advocacy and support to country-based UN Networks on Migration as key priorities. As a member of the Executive Committee of the UN Network on Migration, UNHCR is committed to supporting the implementation of the GCM. While this Compact does not cover refugees, nor does it primarily deal with mixed movements, a number of issues covered by the GCM equally affect refugees and migrants and a number of measures covered are to be implemented in a context of mixed flows.



Members of the Executive Committee of the UN Network on Migration, including UNHCR, encourage States and other relevant stakeholders to submit pledges to advance the implementation of the GCM. © UN Network on Migration (link to [video](#))

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