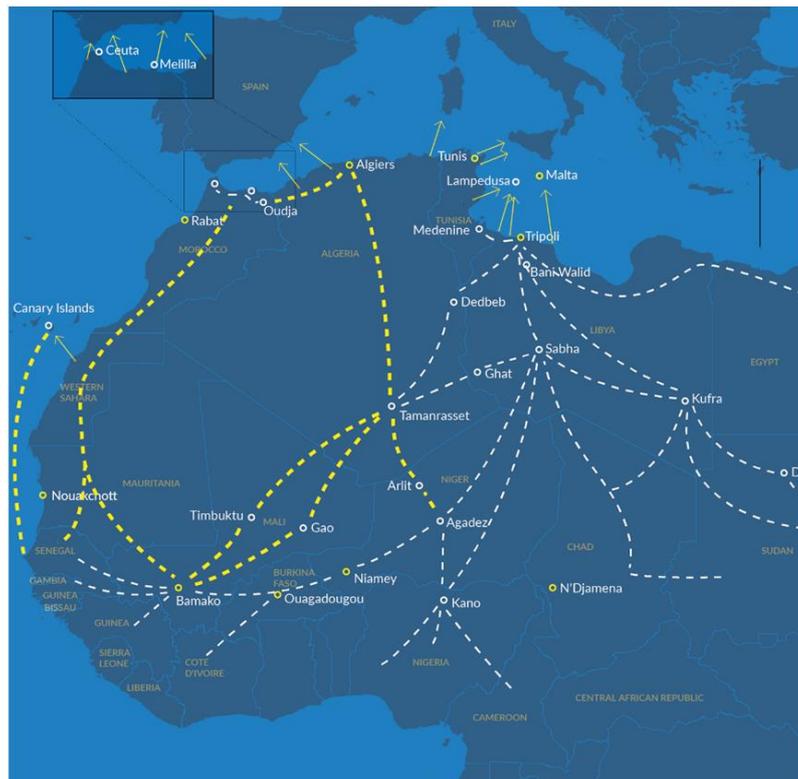


MIXED MOVEMENTS IN WEST AFRICA

This update covers the period **March-April 2019** and provides an overview of regional and country trends as well as of programming and advocacy work undertaken by UNHCR Operations in the field of Mixed Movements. It includes contributions from: RRWA; Algeria; Burkina Faso; Chad; Ghana; Liberia; Mali and Niger.



Introduction

The scope, magnitude and complexity of mixed movements in West Africa continued to increase significantly, as intensifying conflicts, violent extremism and large-scale violence engendered unprecedented secondary movements. In West Africa, persons of concern to UNHCR, including refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness, remain largely invisible among people moving within mixed flows, both within West Africa and *en route* to Europe.

Until the root causes and triggers of displacement are addressed in many countries in nearby regions, people will continue to seek safety and protection. Forced displacement from Mali, northern Nigeria, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and western Niger could contribute to onward movement towards Europe via the Central Mediterranean or Western Mediterranean routes.

Documenting the scale and nature of risks and abuses along travel routes is challenging. For many, the crossing of the Mediterranean is just a final step of a much longer and often very dangerous journey that has included passing through areas of armed conflict, crossing deserts, and for some, being held for ransom and tortured, or trafficked for sexual or labour exploitation. Evidence suggests that refugees on the move across West and North Africa are at risk of death, extreme physical abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, kidnapping, robberies and detention. Refugee protection in the context of mixed movements is part of UNHCR's core mandate and should be mainstreamed into the regular activities of the operation.



For every death in the Mediterranean there are at least two in the Sahara, unknown and anonymous"

Alessandra Morelli, UNHCR Niger



UNHCR's proactive engagement in the context of mixed flows does not imply an extension of **UNHCR's mandate** but derives in fact directly from the exercise of its protection mandate. The complex phenomenon of mixed movements in West Africa therefore requires UNHCR to adopt a multi-functional and multi-dimensional response, embracing the Organization's longer-term strategic thinking, linking humanitarian and development approaches and engaging non-traditional donors.

Part I: Highlights / Important events

RRWA:

- **Regional Strategic Planning Meeting 2020-2021:** Operations in West and Central African countries identified UNHCR's engagement in the context of mixed movements as an integral component of protection strategies across the region and all operational contexts.
- **Launch of UNHCR – Gambia Red Cross** partnership for better identification, information and referral of persons of concern to UNHCR within mixed movements.
- The **French translation of the 10 Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Movements** is now available online ([link here](#)).
- **ECOWAS' Ambassadors Retreat** in Nigeria, with Mixed Movements on the agenda (16-17 April, Uyo, Nigeria) [Outcome document here](#).
- Update of the 2014 UNHCR Position on Returns to Mali.
- An ambitious and innovative agreement with IFRC Sahel Cluster covering the development of joint tools and training, monitoring, evaluation and learning, research, and the sharing of expertise.



UNHCR West Africa @UNHCRWestAfrica · Apr 15

"Collaboration with @ecowas_cedeao is key to raise awareness + enhance the protection of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, victims of trafficking & those with specific needs in the mixed migration flows in the region" @ILYZAHUA, our Regional Rep 6/6



BURKINA FASO:

- The **challenging security environment does not favour the implementation of the ETM project in the short term**. The Government has communicated, in writing, the postponement of this project.

MALI:

- Technical discussions ongoing with the *Ministère des Maliens de l'Extérieur et de l'Intégration Africaine* to **develop a joint action plan** on activities to raise awareness of mixed movements.
- **Advocacy efforts ongoing for the establishment of a reception and accommodation centre** for those who are transiting through Tombouctou.
- **Capacity building of monitors in Gao** on the various tools and themes relating to the improvement of protection monitoring for persons under UNHCR mandate in mixed flows.
- A Technical meeting (13-14 June) in preparation of the **Mali Protection Dialogue** scheduled to take place in Bamako in July.

Part II: Short Overview

BURKINA FASO:

The context was marked by security incidents throughout the country. 14 provinces were declared in a state of emergency. Incidents mostly consist of armed attacks by unidentified individuals and community conflicts, and resulted in the displacement of over 160,000 IDPs (30 April 2019). 954 schools have been closed, impacting 146,000 children. More than half of the closed settlements are located in the Sahel region (UNHCR has two refugee camps in this region), which is severely hit by violence. Some teachers have been threatened, others kidnapped or even killed (3 teachers murdered, March '19). 18 health facilities closed and nearly 250,000 people no longer have access to or have limited access to health services. Transfer of patients is more difficult due to the lack of ambulances. This situation is exacerbated by movement restrictions related to curfews and other administrative decisions, particularly in the Sahel and in the East. These incidents have an impact on some awareness activities, identification and orientation of persons of concern to UNHCR in mixed flows in Burkina Faso.

CHAD:

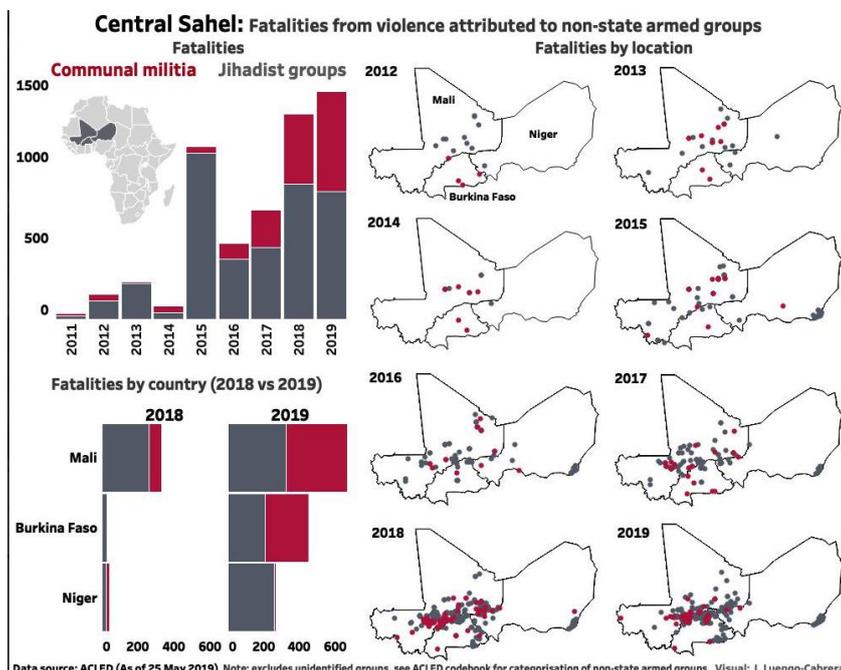
According to mixed movement monitoring conducted in 2018, the majority of people on the move in Chad are young Chadian men. The top three reported intended destinations include Libya (36%), Chad (30% notably the goldmines in north Chad) and Europe (13%). Of the almost 20,000 persons interviewed through 198 relays in Chad, over 30% could be in need of international protection: 5% were registered refugees; 18% asylum-seekers and 8% expressed the wish to seek asylum.

GHANA:

Perennial ethnic clashes and disputes over scarce fertile land continue in various areas including the Mamprugu traditional area and in Chereponi District of Northern Ghana between the Konkomba and Chakosi tribes. Killings and burnt homes have driven internal displacement and cross border movement of Ghanaians into Northern Togo.

LIBERIA:

In an effort to ensure full political participation in decision-making and to resolve long-standing land issues over land ownership, the Government has signed the *Local Government and the Land Right Acts* into law. Liberia's economy is still in the state of recovery from the shocks of the 2014 Ebola crisis, and the vacuum created in the foreign currency market sparked by the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission to Liberia in 2018. Unemployed youth comprise mostly of individuals who survived the civil war and who have not had access to education. UNHCR believes that this group will consider leaving Liberia unless they get jobs or livelihoods to support themselves. UNHCR does not have evidence that refugees recognized in Liberia are moving onwards to other countries. Ivorian refugees (an estimated 9,030 persons) comprise 98% of the total refugee population in Liberia. They are assisted through two key durable solutions: voluntary repatriation and local integration. There are 71 individuals of other nationalities who were recognized as refugees.



MALI:

The overall security situation in Mali, particularly in the center and north of the country, remains volatile and unpredictable including attacks against the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA), MINUSMA, Barkhane and inter-communal conflicts in Ogossagou, causing more than 150 civilian casualties. Humanitarian partners conducted a rapid needs assessment in the area to address the situation of vulnerable people in Ogossagou. The Burkina Faso Embassy in Mali informed of the presence of Burkinabe refugees in Bamako fleeing growing insecurity in the country. UNHCR conducted a rapid assessment on the site in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees (CNCR) and a biometric registration exercise started in April 2019.

NIGER:

Niger has developed into a major hub for mixed movements northwards to Libya, Algeria and the Mediterranean, but it is also receiving southward movements with people fleeing Libya or being deported from Algeria. In **Agadez**, UNHCR has invested in strengthening the national RSD system. As of the end of April 1,559 people, mainly Sudanese nationals returning from Libya, have been identified as in need of international protection, and were registered by UNHCR in Agadez. 125 persons are unaccompanied or separated children. A new Humanitarian Centre was opened to accommodate and screen those seeking international protection. Over 1,300 asylum-seekers are now

accommodated at the centre, while the most vulnerable (about 200 people) are accommodated in 3 guesthouses in the town.



Niamey, Niger ©UNHCR/John Wendle

In April, UNHCR and the competent Nigerien authorities carried out a joint mission to Agadez to diffuse tensions (asylum-seekers concerned about length of time taken to process applications), as well as a second mission to examine the manner in which protection screening was taking place, in order to speed up the Refugee Status Determination processing. Since its establishment in 2017, the **Emergency Evacuation Transit Mechanism (ETM)**, has received 22 evacuation flights from Libya to Niger, carrying a total of 2,782 refugees and asylum-seekers, of which 1,521 are still in Niamey. The remaining have been resettled to third countries. Their profiles mainly include survivors of torture or other forms of violence in the country of origin and/or transit countries (e.g. Libya) and others with compelling protection needs. Many are

unaccompanied children and women and girls at-risk. With the support of the EU Trust Fund, a new transit centre is being completed near Niamey to host the evacuees while they await resettlement to third countries. More than 600 refugees have been transferred to the new centre, as of end April 2019.

Part III: Activities carried out during the aforementioned period

RRWA:

National level:

- **Joint monitoring mission of project between UNHCR and Senegal Red Cross Society** for the identification, information and referral of persons of concern to UNHCR within mixed movements.
- **Transition to Kobo for the protection monitoring conducted by Red Cross volunteers in Gambia** as part of the UNHCR – Gambia Red Cross Society project for the identification, information and referral of persons of concern to UNHCR within mixed movements.
- **Training of 52 Red Cross volunteers and staff members in The Gambia** as part of the UNHCR - Gambia Red Cross Society project.

Regional level:

- **Joint development of protection monitoring tools with IFRC to be used by Red Cross volunteers** as part of national projects between national Red Cross societies and UNHCR for the identification, information and referral of persons of concern to UNHCR (process ongoing).
- Training of senior border guards and police officials from 20 North and Sub-Saharan African countries in refugee protection principles, and humanitarian and human rights in Cairo, Egypt, as part of the ITEPA programme.
- Submission of 2020-2021 COP for the new multi-country office for Benin, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Togo.

ALGERIA:

Arrest and deportations from Algeria:

- There was an increase in April of arrests and removals of nationals of sub-Saharan countries in an irregular situation from Algeria to the borders with Niger and Mali (over 2,700 individuals, mostly nationals from Niger and Mali).
- Since January, over 8,000 persons have been deported to Niger and, to a lesser extent, to Mali. A cross-regional coordination system is in place between UNHCR Algeria, Mali and Niger. UNHCR identified 193 persons of concern registered with UNHCR Algeria (173 asylum-seekers, 20 refugees) who were arrested. Among them, 110 were deported to the border with Niger (107 asylum-seekers, 3 refugees), while 19 refugees were released following UNHCR advocacy.

BURKINA FASO:**Monitoring, identification and profiling:**

- Monitoring of transport companies to Lome, Cotonou and Niger. There was a strong tendency to return nationals from Guinea, Liberia and Ivory Coast who had been expelled from Algeria. It is proposed to survey Ouagadougou, as a starting point for the destinations of Lomé and Cotonou, which could be the alternative route to that of Niger.
- Assessment of protection needs in the village of Kiri (Bobo-Dioulasso), of 36 asylum-seekers (12 households) from Mali.
- Protection interviews conducted in Goudoubo with 72 individuals (19 households) registered as asylum-seekers from northern Mali. 46 persons were new arrivals (mainly from Tessit, Gossi, Timbuktu and N'Tillit) and 19 are cases of family reunification. The applicants indicated widespread insecurity in their places of origin and the need for reunification with family members living in Burkina Faso.

Coordination and partnership with stakeholders:

- Participation in a validation workshop of the action plan to fight against human rights violations in the Sahel region, organized by the *Direction Regionale des Droits Humains et de la Promotion Civique du Sahel*: the workshop highlighted actions taken by UNHCR and its partners in the promotion of peaceful coexistence between refugees and host populations in the Sahel region and the provision of information on the awareness-raising activities vis-a-vis defence and security forces on the rights and duties of refugees.
- Hosting of a working session with the *Centre d'Information et de Formation en Droit Humains (CIFDAH)* on the finalization of the 2019 -2021 action plan of the recommendations of the Dakar symposium and the setting-up of a clinic in Ouagadougou.
- As part of assistance to PoCs, the Red Cross, through its project of assistance to migrants along road-humanitarian action, provides medical and psychosocial support to migrants in transit.

Reception of asylum-seekers (transit center): The construction of a transit centre at the Sytenga border post, under UNHCR's mandate in mixed flows is expected to be completed by end June '19.

Advocacy / legal interventions / capacity building: Hosting of a community sensitization session on peaceful coexistence in Dori with 207 people, including 10 refugees. Participants included: religious and customary leaders, representatives of women and youth as well as mayors and prefects of the Bani, Gorgadji, Falagountou and Sampelga communes. Participants made the following recommendations: initiate similar frameworks of consultation in other communes with designated leaders who will be trained and equipped to contribute to the improvement of peaceful coexistence.

Migration flow analysis and recommendations: March was marked by increasing returns from Libya and Algeria to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Guinea. (according to DTM / IOM in Burkina Faso, Feb. '19).

CHAD:

In April 2019, UNHCR Chad and UNHCR Niger facilitated the voluntary return to Chad of four Sudanese refugees and three Nigerians refugees who had moved onward to Niger after initially seeking asylum in Chad. Since readmission activities began in December 2018, a total of 18 refugees have been readmitted to date in Chad. As conflict escalates in Libya, the expulsion of 36 Chadians from Libya was recently observed. They returned to their village of origin in Chad with the support of their families and IOM. During the same period, the number of candidates for readmission to Chad increased in Niger: 21 refugees who initially sought asylum in Chad and then moved onward to Niger contacted UNHCR Niger to be readmitted to Chad. The current situation in Libya could trigger an increase in the number of refugees requesting readmission to their first country of asylum.

MALI:

- Mixed Movements Unit hosted technical discussions with the Technical Advisor-focal point of the *Ministere des Maliens de l'Exterieur et de l'Integration Africaine (MMEIA)* for the development of a joint action plan on awareness-raising activities in the context of mixed movements. Validation pending.
- As part of the monitoring of the protection of people on the move carried out by the partner *Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel (AMSS)*, 1,276 people on the move were identified (Guinea Conakry, Sierra Leone, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, The Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia, Comoros, Benin, Mauritania, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic, Togo, Niger and Ghana) of whom 1,045 people in the

outflows, 231 in the inflows (63 expelled from Algeria and 168 voluntary returns from Algeria). 20 women of various nationalities were identified in Timbuktu in mixed flows by the AMSS partner as part of the monitoring of the protection of people on the move. 42 unaccompanied and / or separated children were identified (34 in Timbuktu and 08 in Mopti) in the mixed flows (Guinean, Gambian, Malian, Burkinabe, Nigerian, Ivorian, Ivorian and Sierra Leonean). UNHCR and its partner, AMSS, delivered capacity-building to Mixed Movement monitors on the mandate of UNHCR, protection monitoring, SGBV, child protection, human rights, and Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Arrangements (MARA), the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), 48 awareness-raising activities hosted reaching 515 people in transit (inflows and outflows). 293 people received information on: human rights; the risks protection linked to irregular mixed movements; the dangers of irregular mixed movements and statelessness; the consequences and dangers of irregular movements and the dangers on the road; human rights violations linked to mixed movements and the importance of identity documents and UNHCR's mandate.

Livelihoods:

- Partner Stop-Sahel continues to monitor five individual beneficiaries of funds for income-generating activities.
- In Timbuktu, the selection matrix for groups to assist in 2019 has been finalized. In collaboration with partners *Agence de Développement Economique et Sociale* (ADES) and *Direction Regionale du Développement Social et de l'Economie Solidaire* (DRDSES), UNHCR has registered approx. 90 groups of which 12 will be retained in line with the matrix.
- The Sahel 21 / TSF partner finalized the implementation strategy as well as the various identification tools and evaluations of the activities of the former groupings / associations in collaboration with UNHCR.

Key trends identified: There has been an increase in outflows since the beginning of the year. Despite this increase, in March (1,045 people in outflows), there was a slight decrease compared to the previous month (1,215 people). With regard to inflows, the trend since end 2018 has identified an increase in the voluntary returns of persons anticipating arrests, detentions, deportations, violations of basic human rights, destruction of property and physical violence. Others, however, choose to continue their journey, by changing routes. Thus, it has been observed since the resurgence of expulsions from Algeria, many people are moving to Morocco either via Algeria (where they formerly resided), or from Mali to Morocco via Mauritania. According to several sources, since June 2018, the following route has been observed: Tamanrasset-Tin-Zawaten (Algeria) - Agadez (Niger) and Burkina Faso and Mali for expulsions from Algeria. In Timbuktu, the migratory routes currently used in incoming and outgoing flows are: Bordj Badji Mokhtar (Algeria) -In-Khalil - Timbuktu (Mali); Timbuktu-Inafarak-Bordj Badji Mokhtar (Algeria); Boni-Ber-Bordj Badji Mokhtar (Algeria); Sevare-Timbuktu-Ber-Bordj Badji Mokhtar (Algeria) and Timbuktu-Lere – Bassikounou/ (Mauritania) -Morocco. As part of the Timbuktu Regional Protection Cluster's advocacy on issues of protection for people on the move in Timbuktu, a meeting initiated by UNHCR Timbuktu was held between UNHCR, OCHA and MINUSMA. MINUSMA has suggested financing the construction of a reception center for migrants in transit in Timbuktu. UNHCR fully supports the implementation of this project to reduce the protection risks faced by people on the move through Timbuktu, has contacted IOM to take the lead of the project. The project is being drafted by IOM and is expected to be submitted to MINUSMA shortly.

NIGER:**AGADEZ:**

- 4 refugees from Sudan were voluntarily readmitted to Chad, their first country of asylum.
- Evaluation mission on children's education was conducted by UNICEF in Agadez, involving UNHCR and others. A plan of action is underway.
- Training unit from the Regional Directorate for Primary Education (DREP) visited the Humanitarian Centre in Agadez, to assess the education needs and draft the ToRs to support the presence of 4 voluntary teachers on the site.
- Joint UNHCR/DGEC-MR (General Directorate for Civil Status, Migration, and Refugees) mission was conducted in Agadez to enhance the dialogue between authorities, host community, and asylum-seekers.
- UNHCR Deputy Representative went on a joint mission to Agadez with the General Director of Civil Status, Refugees, and Migration to accelerate the ongoing refugee status determination process of asylum-seekers in Agadez.

- Verification exercise completed among the Nigerian population in one of the Agadez ghettos, concluding that 19 families (66 individuals) had departed their countries of origin. UNHCR and IOM began a first joint profiling exercise of the Malian population deported from Algeria and hosted in the IOM transit centre in Agadez.
- UNHCR's partner INTERSOS launched its activities in support of the education of unaccompanied children (UACs) in Agadez. Upcoming activities include the construction of two classrooms in the Humanitarian Centre with the support of the local community and a sensitization campaign on the importance of education for the UACs.
- Additional land has been granted to UNHCR by the local Nigerien authorities in order to expand and improve the Humanitarian centre.

ETM

- At end April, total number of persons evacuated from Libya to Niger to 2,782.
- At end April, Niger was hosting 1,521 evacuees (178 out of which are unaccompanied minors), while 1,248 were already resettled and 359 are pending departure.
- The UNHCR Niger Representative attended the Core Group meeting of resettlement countries, held in Paris. This was particularly pertinent with regards to the current situation in Libya, the urgent need to evacuate vulnerable refugees, and advocacy to speed up the resettlement process from Niger, where the ETM reception facilities have reached full capacity.

Part IV: Way Forward / Forthcoming Activities**RRWA:**

- Mali Protection Dialogue in Bamako takes place on 3 and 4 July 2019.
- Participation in the launch of the 'Cases Culturelles' project in eastern and northern Senegal. This project is an initiative led by the Government of Senegal, with a view to promoting good neighbourliness and preventing violent extremism along border areas. The 'cases' could also be harnessed as monitoring points and information-sharing hubs for those in mixed flows.
- Joint research with IFRC on access to services in The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to inform advocacy and operational responses notably through establishment of "humanitarian service points" by the IFRC across the region. A similar research based on the same TORs and the same methodology but covering other countries (i.e. Guinea, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) will be launched simultaneously by the IFRC.

BURKINA FASO: Monitoring and profiling at bus stations and at different border crossing points to identify and guide those who may be within UNHCR's mandate and in mixed flows in transit through Dori and Seytenga. UNHCR will pursue the establishment of Transit Centre for persons covered by UNHCR's mandate transiting through Seytenga, and organize conference-debate at the *Institut National de Formation Professionnelle en Travail Social de Gaoua and Ouagadougou* on the international protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in mixed migratory flows.

LIBERIA: Dialogue with refugees, including those opting for local integration, in relation to livelihoods activities. With the aim of discouraging refugees from leaving Liberia for another asylum country, the office will continue to follow-up with the youth to support their self-reliance and integration in Liberia.

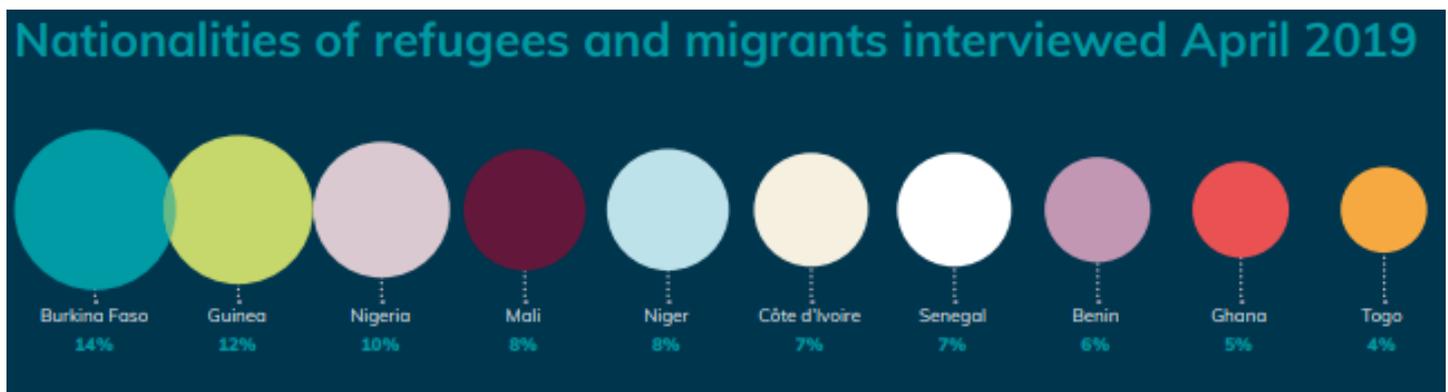
MALI: Identification and validation of Income Generating Activity (IGA) groups for livelihoods' assistance. A refresher training session on mixed movements held for partners, notably those who serve as monitors in Timbuktu and Bamako.

NIGER: In the Agadez region, UNHCR must continue strengthening cross-border coordination to support refugees coming from neighbouring countries. RSD processing must be prioritised and expedited in the Agadez region, in close collaboration with the Niger authorities.

Part V: Knowledge and Sharing

RRWA

- [4Mi Update West Africa](#), April 2019: In April 2019, the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) conducted 534 in-depth interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa. 168 people were interviewed in Burkina Faso (in Bobo Dioulasso, Dori and Kantchari), 191 in Mali (in Ber, Gao, Kayes, Mopti and Timbuktu), and 175 in Niger (in Agadez, Diffa, Niamey and Tillabery).



- [Europe Monthly Report](#) (March 2019). Most common countries of origin among migrants and refugees who arrived in Spain along the Western Mediterranean Route are Guinea, Morocco, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire.
- COP 2020/21 - Tips for Programming on Mixed Movements: An integrated planning approach ensures Asylum & Migration activities are complementary and reinforce the intended impact, eventually leading to better overall protection outreach and outcomes.

BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso conducted a study in September 2018 on the secondary movement intentions of refugees from Camp Gouedoubo and Mentaou. A total of 915 people including 391 women and 524 men were surveyed. The results of the survey show that 773 refugees, of which 524 out of 14248 living in both camps are in secondary movement. The main reasons mentioned are: economic reasons / work; insufficient assistance and insufficient protection.

NIGER

- Refugee evacuations from Libya : <https://unhcniger.tumblr.com/post/184295716429/refugees-evacuated-from-libya-locked-inside-with>
- Minor developments and policy changes – Agadez: <https://unhcniger.tumblr.com/post/183746067584/minor-developments-and-policy-changes-may>

Recent Press Coverage:

- [Info Migrants – Sport as Therapy for refugees evacuated from Libya:](#)
- [UNHCR – UNHCR evacuates refugees from Tripoli to Niger amid hostiles](#)
- [The New Humanitarian - Asylum-seekers in Agadez](#)
- [Africa News – Eritrean government wants citizens home from Libya](#)
- [De Volkskrant – Evacuations to Niger and need for more spaces](#)
- [Al Jazeera – Migrants flee to Niger as fighting intensifies in Libya](#)
- [The New Humanitarian – Rising Militancy in Niger](#)

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