**FRONTEX**

EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

# Africa-Frontex
# Intelligence
# Community
# Joint Report

# 2016

**AFIC**

Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community

A COMMON EFFORT
PLUS FORT ENSEMBLE

**FRONTEX**

# Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Joint Report 2016

Frontex official publications fall into four main categories: risk analysis, training, operations and research, each marked with a distinct graphic identifier. Risk analysis publications bear a triangular symbol formed by an arrow drawing a triangle, with a dot at the centre. Metaphorically, the arrow represents the cyclical nature of risk analysis processes and its orientation towards an appropriate operational response. The triangle is a symbol of ideal proportions and knowledge, reflecting the pursuit of factual exactness, truth and exhaustive analysis. The dot at the centre represents the intelligence factor and the focal point where information from diverse sources converges to be processed, systematised and shared as analytical products. Thus, Frontex risk analysis is meant to be at the centre and to form a reliable basis for its operational activities.

Cover photo shows a group of African migrants a few nautical miles south of the Sicilian coast after being rescued in the framework of the Frontex-coordinated Joint Operation Triton in February 2015.
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**CAVEAT**
Please note the report was originally finalised in October 2016, therefore all the presented data and figures reflect the situation up to the end of September 2016. The original data scope was not extended when the report was made public in April 2017; however, the analysis remains valid.

## List of abbreviations used

| | |
|---|---|
| **ACLED** | Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project |
| **AFIC** | Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community |
| **AI EIO** | Amnesty International European Institutions Office |
| **AIRE Centre** | Advice on Individual Rights in Europe Centre |
| **ALUG** | Analytical Layer User Group |
| **AQIM** | Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb |
| **BCP** | border crossing point |
| **CCME** | Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe |
| **COD** | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| **CoE** | Council of Europe |
| **COM** | European Commission |
| **Daesh** | Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant |
| **DST** | Niger's Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire |
| **DTM** | IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix |
| **EaP** | Eastern Partnership |
| **EaP-RAN** | Eastern Partnership Risk Analysis Network (formerly Eastern European Borders Risk Analysis Network) |
| **EASO** | European Asylum Support Office |
| **ECOWAS** | Economic Community of West African States |
| **ECRE** | European Council for Refugees and Exiles |
| **EDF-RAN** | European Union Document-Fraud Risk Analysis Network |
| **EPN** | European Patrols Network |
| **EU** | European Union |
| **EUNAVFOR Med** | European Naval Force Mediterranean |
| **EUR** | euro |
| **FLM** | Macina Liberation Front |
| **FRA** | Fundamental Rights Agency |
| **FRAN** | Frontex Risk Analysis Network |
| **Frontex** | European Border and Coast Guard Agency (formerly European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union) |
| **GDND** | Togo's General Directorate of National Documentation |
| **GDSN** | Togo's General Directorate of Seal and Nationality |
| **GIS** | Ghana Immigration Service |
| **ICAO** | International Civil Aviation Organization |
| **ICJ** | International Commission of Jurists |
| **ICT** | information and communications technology |
| **ID** | identification document |
| **ILO** | International Liaison Officer |
| **Interpol** | International Criminal Police Organization |
| **IOM** | International Organization for Migration |
| **JO** | Joint Operation |
| **JRS** | Jesuit Refugee Service Europe |
| **MIDAS** | Migration Information and Data Analysis System |
| **MINUSMA** | United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali |
| **MNJTF** | Multinational Joint Task Force |
| **MNLA** | National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (*Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad*) |
| **MS** | EU Member State |
| **MRCTDs** | Machine Readable Convention Travel Documents |
| **NAPTIP** | Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons |
| **NDMO** | Ghana's National Disaster Management Organization |
| **NSC** | Ghana's National Security Council |

| | |
|---|---|
| NGO | non-governmental organisation |
| OSCE ODIHR | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights |
| PICUM | Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants |
| PISCES | Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System |
| POI | point of interest |
| RAU | Risk Analysis Unit |
| RFI | Request for Information |
| RMMS | Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat |
| SAC | Schengen Associated Country |
| Sahel G5 | Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad |
| THB | trafficking in human beings |
| TOCU | Sierra Leone's Transnational Organised Crime Unit |
| TU-RAN | Turkey-Frontex Risk Analysis Network |
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNODC | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| UMCC | Benin's Unité Mixte de Contrôle des Conteneurs |
| US | United States of America |
| USSF | Benin's Unités Spéciales de Surveillance des Frontières |
| USD | United States dollar |
| WB-RAN | Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network |

# Executive summary

### AFIC consolidation, geographical expansion, product portfolio and support from the European Commission

In 2016, the AFIC successfully extended its geographical coverage and now also includes several countries from East Africa. Moreover, the Community implemented one of the recommendations from previous annual reports and started issuing a new monthly report during 2016.

It also strengthened a sense of African ownership of the Community by organising two workshops in Africa, conducting expert field visits in the continent (Aflao border post between Ghana and Togo and new airport in Nouakchott) and capturing greater attention from the key policy makers in Europe and Africa.

### Irregular migration in the Central Mediterranean at record levels

In 2015 and early 2016, the irregular migration issue dominated the political agenda of the EU as hundreds of thousands of migrants and people in need of international protection started to move via Turkey, across Greece and the Western Balkans, towards their desired destination countries, such as Germany, Sweden and Finland.

However, after the crisis in Greece was addressed with a set of measures and agreements, starting from March 2016, the Central Mediterranean once again became the main entry point for thousands of migrants.

Between 1 January and 31 August 2016, some 117 000 irregular migrants were intercepted in the Central Mediterranean, which represents a very sta-

ble trend in relation to the same period in 2015, when around 116 000 migrants were apprehended.

In 2016, Egypt became an alternative to Libya as the departure point towards Italy for migrants from Horn of African countries and Sudan (nearly 12 000 in January–August 2016).

The number of migrants arriving from West and Central African countries continued to increase in relation to the same period last year. West African migrants mainly came from Nigeria, the Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Senegal and Mali.

### Shift from land to sea in the Western Mediterranean

In the first half of 2016, the trend on the Western Mediterranean land and sea routes followed a different pattern, i.e. an almost 55% rise in the apprehensions on the sea route and a decrease of nearly 43% in detections of illegal border-crossing at the land borders.

As regards clandestine entries to the Spanish territories, an increase in the number of migrants detected hiding in cars and trucks (often in secret compartments constructed for that purpose by the smuggling networks operating in Morocco) was also noted.

### Shorter distances, more profit for Libyan smugglers

Human smugglers in Libya capitalise on the fact that they need to provide less fuel and basic supplies for the migrants to make it to Europe as the average length of the sea crossing is constantly decreasing due to the presence of EU maritime assets. Moreover, it should be noted that, as in the case of rubber dinghies, the average number of migrants per boat also

increased in 2016, further boosting the profits of Libyan smugglers.

#### From Agadez in Niger to Libya

Agadez remains the key transit hub for migratory movements towards Libya with many smuggling networks operating in the city. The networks' structure is hierarchical with the so-called ghetto boss at the top. He owns one or more ghetto compounds where migrants are lodged, as well as a number of vehicles (either stolen or purchased) – typically white Toyota Hilux cars and military-style cargo trucks from Libya.

The ghetto boss may sometimes act as the driver, but typically he is responsible for logistics and financial arrangements to keep the entire network operational.

#### Southern Libya

The rival tribes of Toubou and Tuareg have been in sporadic armed conflict with each other over portions of southern Libyan territory, natural resources, and control of smuggling routes. As a result, the Toubou tribesmen control the traffic flow across Libya's southern border from their capital in Murzuq, while the Tuareg control the Algerian border region.

### Document fraud

In 2015, there were almost 3 000 AFIC country nationals detected with fraudulent travel document in the EU/Schengen area, i.e. 6% less than in 2014. The above mentioned figure comprises detections both at the EU's external border as well as on the intra-EU/Schengen movements.

Data from the first half of 2016 show that this downward trend continued. However, the rising trend of illegal border-crossings in the Central Mediterranean involving AFIC country nationals is likely to translate into an increased demand for fraudulent EU travel documents used for secondary movements.

**Counter measures by AFIC countries**

Togo has been tackling the phenomenon of document and identity fraud for more than a decade and could certainly serve as an example of good practices in the AFIC region. The country has put in place an integrated centralised document issuance system that enables the authorities to limit opportunities for fraudsters and criminals to use and produce forged documents.

Taking into account the clauses of the ECOWAS protocol, the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) developed a preventive strategy aiming to curb the current migration trend. The GIS set up a Migration Information Bureau that organises information campaigns across the country to alert potential migrants to the dangers of irregular travel.

In Kenya, in response to security threats at the border with Somalia (attacks by al-Shabaab), the authorities increased the number of military patrols and security operations at the common border, while also building walls at certain sections in order to prevent terrorist movements/infiltrations.

Between 1 August and 31 October 2016, the authorities in Niger reported at least 55 vehicles seized and almost 1 700 migrants intercepted without travel documents at various checkpoints between Niamey, Agadez and Dirkou.

The authorities also introduced limits of movement for the nationals of ECOWAS. Namely, all passengers from ECOWAS countries are now systematically driven back to Agadez if they are detected above Séguédine-Dirkou line.

## Other topics

This report provides an update on developments regarding regional security threats and cross-border criminality. It also offers an overview of alternative routes through Mali and provides examples of geospatial analysis.
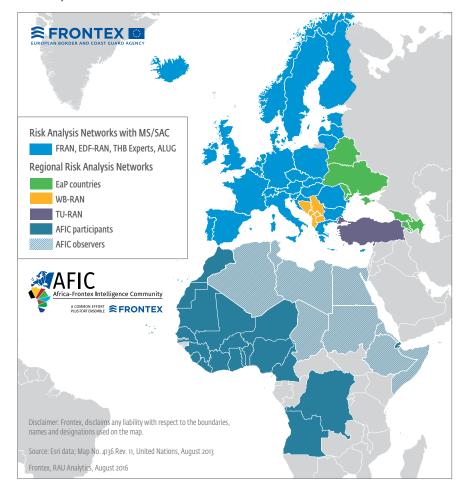
# 1. Introduction

The Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community (AFIC) was set up in 2010 to provide a framework for regular knowledge and intelligence sharing in the field of border security between Frontex and African countries. The concept of this collaboration was broadly based on the model of the Frontex Risk Analysis Network (FRAN) and the two already established regional risk analysis networks (the Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network – WB-RAN and the Eastern Partnership [formerly Eastern European Borders] Risk Analysis Network – EaP-RAN).

While the basic principles of the AFIC (e.g. informal nature, expert-level participation, flexibility, cooperation based on mutual benefit and trust among participants) remain unchanged, it has now reached an enhanced level of maturity. This is mostly evident in the Community's capacity to generate analysis and knowledge, build trust between its participating partners, expand geographically and extend its product portfolio.

It also strengthened a sense of African ownership of the Community by organising two workshops in Africa (see Chapter 2. Methodology), conducted expert field visits on the continent (Aflao border post between Ghana and Togo and new airport in Nouakchott) and captured further attention from the key policy makers in Europe and Africa.

The Community has also gained more visibility among other stakeholders in the region, in particular several regional initiatives such as the Rabat and Khartoum Processes and the Sahel G5.

These developments and a growing recognition of the Community (already echoed in the 'EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling'; COM(2015) 285 final) has further positioned the AFIC as an unparalleled platform for information-sharing and joint analysis with African countries.

Figure 1. **The initial geographical focus of AFIC on West Africa, parts of Sahel and Morocco is being gradually extended to the eastern and northern part of the continent**
*Different regional risk analysis networks and communities managed and supported by the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit*

# 2. Methodology

As in previous years, this issue of the annual AFIC Joint Report was prepared by the Frontex Risk Analysis Unit (RAU) drawing extensively on the knowledge generated by the Community within the scope of its regular activities. These included workshops, field visits, regular information exchange and replies to Requests for Information (RFI).

Other relevant sources, among others reporting from Frontex Joint Operations, the IOM, ACLED, UNHCR, RMMS, were also consulted and taken into consideration. A draft of this report was reviewed by the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights[1] and its comments have been incorporated in the final report.

**Workshop discussions**

The two workshops in Africa, one organised in Ghana (March 2016) and the other in Mauritania (June 2016), were structured in the form of panel discussions.

As a sign of greater engagement by the African partners themselves, all panel discussions were chaired by a different African country. Both workshops were also attended by several EU Member States' ILOs.

Each chairing country prepared a short opening statement about the topics discussed while other panellists later provided a structured response. Frontex moderated discussions that followed.

Irregular migratory movements, cross-border criminality and regional security/terrorism threats continued to dominate the discussions and information exchange during 2016.

Both AFIC events in Africa generated a great deal of interest among local authorities, the EU Delegation and local media. The workshop in Accra, Ghana, was opened by the new Ghanaian Minister of the Interior Prosper Bani. In his opening deliberations, the minister even proposed that 'AFIC members look into the future and transform the Community into a global body of immigration and border-control agencies.'

1   The forum serves as an independent body which advises the Agency's Management Board as well as its Executive Director on all fundamental rights matters. The forum is comprised of 15 members. The European Asylum Support Office (EASO), the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are explicitly mentioned in the Frontex Regulation and considered permanent members. The Council of Europe (CoE), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) have renewed their membership by an exchange of letters between Frontex and the executive management of the three organisations following an invitation from the Frontex Management Board. In addition, nine civil society organisations have been selected on the basis of a public and open call for expression of interest to become members. These are: the Advice on Individual Rights in Europe Centre (AIRE Centre), Amnesty International European Institutions Office (AI EIO), Caritas Europa, European Council for Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Jesuit Refugee Service Europe (JRS), Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), and the Red Cross EU Office.



Figure 2.  **Opening panel with Ghanaian Minister of the Interior Mr Bani delivering his speech**
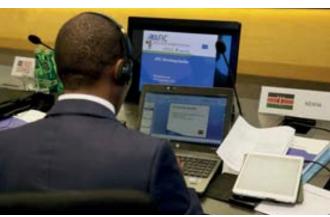
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Figure 3. **AFIC Workshop held on 19–21 September 2016 at Frontex Headquarters in Warsaw**

The opening ceremony in Mauritania was attended by several government ministers and the EU Special Representative for Sahel Mr Angel Losada.

The opening speech was delivered by the Minister of the Interior and Decentralisation Mr Ahmedou Ould Abdallah. The minister emphasised the importance of the AFIC for regional security and stressed Mauritania's commitment to this common endeavour. Both Mr Losada and Mr Abdallah praised the AFIC as an example of an effective cooperation model.

# 3. Irregular migratory movements affecting AFIC countries and EU Member States

In 2015 and early 2016, the irregular migration issue dominated the political agenda of the EU as hundreds of thousands of migrants and people in need of international protection started to move via Turkey, across Greece and the Western Balkans, towards their desired destination countries, such as Germany, Sweden and Finland.

It was, therefore, hardly a surprise that the Central Mediterranean route was somehow eclipsed by the human drama occurring elsewhere in the EU.

However, after the crisis was addressed with a set of measures and agreements, from March 2016 the Central Mediterranean once again became the main entry point for thousands of migrants.

## 3.1. Routes in Africa

### 3.1.1. Niger

**From Agadez in Niger to Libya**

Niger can be considered the main transit country for large-scale smuggling activities across the Sahara desert towards the North African coast. Among the many hubs located in the country, the city of Agadez is by far the most important with numerous well organised networks capable of providing the infrastructure and facilitation services for transiting migrants (see Fig. 4).

The moment migrants arrive at the bus station in Agadez, they become part of the thriving market of human smuggling services. The ghettos in Agadez provide migrants with housing, often based on their country of origin or ethnicity,

while they wait for the trip to the border. Running a ghetto is regarded as one of the few business activities which can be highly profitable in Agadez, alongside artisanal gold mining and smuggling itself. Already in 2013, there were an estimated 70 ghettos in Agadez; considering the volume of current migrant flows, it can be assumed that far more were operating in 2016. Ghettos are typically red mud-walled and gated compounds. Once there are enough migrants in one compound to fill a truck, the ghetto boss communicates with a driver to pick up the group and move across the border.

The ghetto boss is at the top of the network's hierarchy and owns one or more ghetto compounds where migrants are lodged, as well as a number of vehicles (either stolen or purchased) – typically white Toyota Hilux cars and military-style cargo trucks from Libya. The ghetto boss may sometimes act as the driver, but typically he is responsible for logistics and financial arrangements to keep the entire network operational. Most networks in Agadez enjoy the support of the local community.

Other components of the smuggling operation include chasseurs, fixers, and

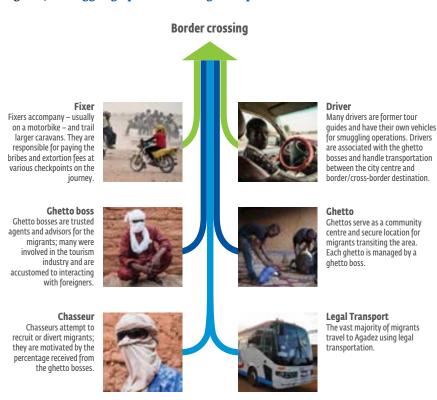Figure 4. **Smuggling operations in Agadez: process flow**



**Border crossing**

**Fixer**
Fixers accompany – usually on a motorbike – and trail larger caravans. They are responsible for paying the bribes and extortion fees at various checkpoints on the journey.

**Driver**
Many drivers are former tour guides and have their own vehicles for smuggling operations. Drivers are associated with the ghetto bosses and handle transportation between the city centre and border/cross-border destination.

**Ghetto boss**
Ghetto bosses are trusted agents and advisors for the migrants; many were involved in the tourism industry and are accustomed to interacting with foreigners.

**Ghetto**
Ghettos serve as a community centre and secure location for migrants transiting the area. Each ghetto is managed by a ghetto boss.

**Chasseur**
Chasseurs attempt to recruit or divert migrants; they are motivated by the percentage received from the ghetto bosses.

**Legal Transport**
The vast majority of migrants travel to Agadez using legal transportation.

Source: DigitalGlobe, *Niger: The Sojourn State*, October 2016

drivers. Chasseurs serve as facilitators and attempt to recruit arriving migrants into the compound of their boss from the bus station, especially if the arriving migrants do not already have the contact information of a particular smuggling network. Once in the ghetto compound, travel arrangements and money transfers are made. The fixers travel behind the smuggling convoy and are known to pay off officials at checkpoints on behalf of their boss.

**Monday convoys from Agadez to southern Libya**

After a sufficient number of migrants is gathered, they are dispatched either in large weekly or smaller daily convoys heading towards Libya. Toyota Hilux cars or large military-style trucks are used for transportation and carry both smuggled goods and migrants.

It was observed that smugglers tend to move between Agadez and the Libyan border on Mondays, when the weekly military convoys usually leave to provide supplies to bases in northern Niger. The presence of the military offers additional protection to the smugglers.

Once the military convoy leaves Agadez, it heads just south of the Aïr Mountains to a military checkpoint in Toureyet. From Toureyet, the convoy heads to Dirkou, where the vehicles carrying migrants must continue by themselves through the desert relying on their knowledge of the region.
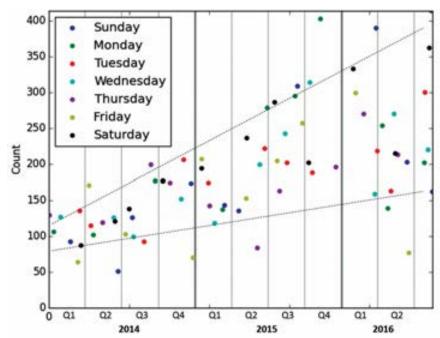
Often, migrants in Dirkou are required to wait several days to be transferred to vehicles operated by a new smuggler who can take them to Madama. In Madama, they have to bypass a military checkpoint in order to make it to the Tumo border post between Niger and Libya.

French and Nigerien military presence in the area has contributed to some smugglers' preference to use the Salvador Pass, located close to the northern tip of the Nigerien border; however, most smugglers travel to al-Wigh and then to al-Qaturm en route to Sabha.

Figure 5.  **Satellite imagery showing tracks diverting off the main road while approaching Madama, a settlement at Niger's northeast frontier with Libya**



Source: DigitalGlobe, *Niger: The Sojourn State*, October 2016

Figure 6.  **The number of trucks transiting Agadez increased steadily**
*GeoHIVE: time series of trucks in Agadez (2014–2016)*



Source: DigitalGlobe

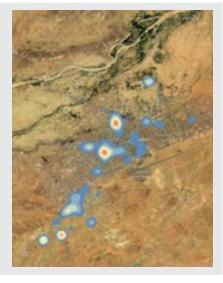Figure 7. **A clear increase in truck activity in Agadez area can be observed in Q1 2016**

*Presence of trucks in Agadez: heat map comparison between Q1 2014 and Q1 2016*



Source: DigitalGlobe

**More trucks, buses and migrants moving through Agadez, mostly towards Libya**

The AFIC Joint Report 2015 already pointed out the importance of Agadez as the main transit hub in Niger and this was valid also for 2016. Furthermore, IOM's *NIGER Flow Monitoring Points* (issued from March 2016) provides ample information in this regard, reporting a steady weekly flow through Agadez of between 5 000 and 17 000 migrants per week en route towards Libya.

Unsurprisingly, a GeoHIVE crowd-sourcing campaign, which used Digital-Globe imagery to tag trucks in Agadez over time, suggests a likewise increase. The campaign was intended to find a correlation between vehicle activity in Agadez and known smuggling trends. A random sampling of imagery for each quarter since January 2014 was analysed by 260 participants. Over the course of eight days, the campaign tagged nearly 14 000 trucks; data accuracy was subsequently evaluated through CrowdRank®, a DigitalGlobe proprietary algorithm.

The campaign and time series analysis depict a noticeable increase in truck presence and movement within Agadez over the past two years; this coincides

with the increased transit of migrants through the city.

There are also more and more bus companies operating in Niger. In 2016, at least 15 reputable private and government-owned bus operators were identified in the country.

This proliferation of bus operators and the mentioned increase in truck presence within Agadez give migrants many options for national, international, and interurban transport. The bus companies include: SNTV, SOTRUNI, SONEF, Rimbo, SONITRAV, Air Transport, EHGM, Nijma

Transport, GIAS 13 Transport, Azawad, Africa Assalam TV, 3S TV, SOTRAV SOUNNA, Star TV, and STM Ténéré.

Migration through Libya (see Section 3.1.3) is far more common than through Algeria, due to increased security and frequent arrests that occur at the Algerian border. Inadequate Libyan border security, unpatrolled desert expanses, and the comparatively shorter trip across the desert (3 to 6 days from Agadez to Sabha) make the crossing easier.

Niger has been tightening the security at its border with Algeria over the past few
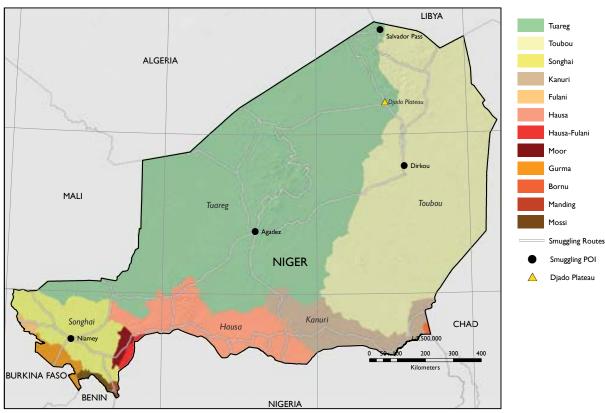
Figure 8. **Altered routes following the construction of a wall at the Algerian border with Niger**



Trans-Saharan Border Crossing between Algeria and Niger

Trans-Saharan Border Crossing between Algeria and Niger

Source: DigitalGlobe, *Niger: The Sojourn State*, October 2016

Figure 9. **Ethnic boundaries in the region extend beyond national borders, greatly facilitating cross-border smuggling activities**

*Ethnicity and tribal landscape of Niger*



Source: DigitalGlobe, *Niger: The Sojourn State*, October 2016

years in order to disrupt organised crime and smuggling activities. The tightening includes the militarisation of the border through zoning, monitoring sites, and patrolling (see Fig. 8). Security forces on the Nigerien and Algerian side have been cooperating to intercept migrants; mass arrests have been publicised as a means of deterring illegal border-crossing. Figure 8 depicts a newly-built wall at a section of the Algerian border and how it changed the routes.

As in previous years, the route through Arlit into Algeria tends to be used by poorer migrants and is more dangerous than that leading through Libya. Due to the danger involved and the likelihood that migrants choosing to travel through Algeria for financial rea-

sons are more vulnerable, these migrants are more likely to be taken advantage of or to become victims of trafficking.

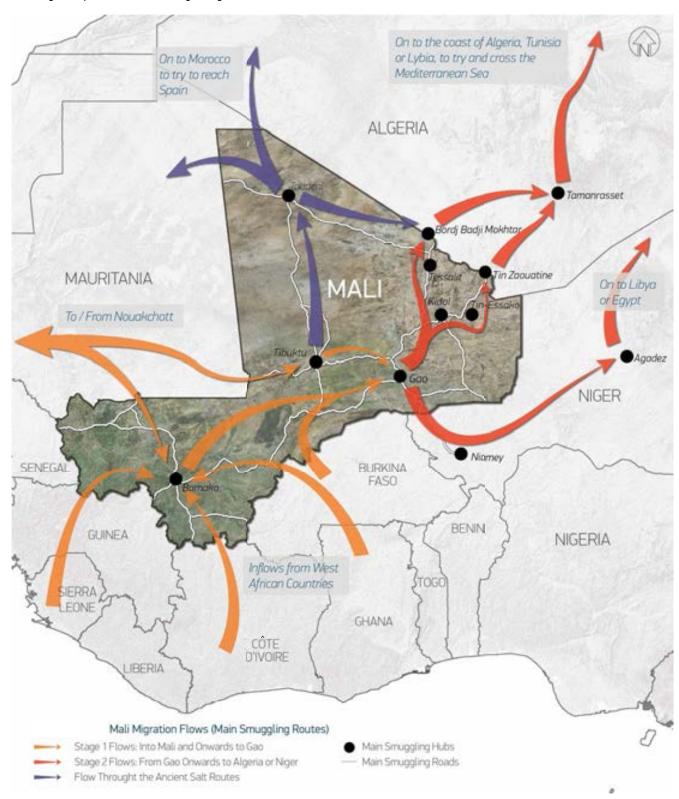**Involvement of the major ethnic groups in human smuggling**

Transportation is most commonly provided by Tuareg, Toubou and Arab tribesmen who have been operating across the Sahara for generations. It should be stressed that the territories occupied by these ethnic groups extend across country borders, which means that tribesmen are capable of providing the necessary transport connections for movement of people and goods across the desert.

### 3.1.2. Mali

With illicit migration patterns showing no signs of slowing down, Mali continues to serve as an alternative transit hub. Available reporting indicates that there are at least three primary routes for individuals leaving the country. Reporting further indicates that there are multiple routes and methods that migrants use to get to the North African coast. As regards Mali, smuggling operations mostly take place once migrants reach Gao.

Prior to reaching this point, many migrants travel using legitimate means, whereas those travelling out of Gao usually travel via well-established smuggling routes (historically utilised for weapons, drugs and cigarettes).

Figure 10. **Mali remains an important transit country on the way to Europe**
*Main migration flows and routes running through Mali*



Source: DigitalGlobe, *Migration for Ransom, Human Smuggling Facilitation in Mali*, 2016

### Smuggling networks in Mali

Similar to Niger, the human smuggling networks operating in Mali also appear to be based on an intricate web of individuals and groups linked together by financial gain and deeply rooted business relationships. These networks are comprised of a mix of violent extremist groups, disenfranchised ethnic minorities, political players, and entrepreneurs all vying for a bigger portion of the profits. The smuggling networks in Mali and its neighbouring countries have similar structures and the area of influence of any given group extends across borders, ensuring the success of the network as a whole.

Within this industry, the opportunistic structure and competition amongst networks lead to the victimisation of migrants who are treated as commodities. The form of exploitation which voluntary migrants are exposed to both en route and upon arrival in their destination varies greatly, ranging from financial extortion (i.e. bribes or 'taxes'), through trafficking (for sexual exploitation or otherwise), to debt bondage.

Before migrants reach Gao, they begin to receive 'sales pitches' from individuals advertising their facilitation services. 'Coaxers' bribe the bus drivers to stop so they can board the bus about 20 kilometres outside of Gao. Once on board, they make it clear to everyone that they have been sent to take care of the migrants' onward journey. Some travellers may have bought tickets from Bamako all the way to Niamey or Arlit but they have to change buses in Gao, which is another opportunity for the coaxers to try and convince them that they have a better way for them to get across the desert.

Migrants usually meet facilitators at markets, which function as prime facilitation hubs in cities such as Kidal and Gao, as they are located in the centre and offer anonymity. Coaxers who recruit migrants to choose particular smugglers or ghetto bosses frequently exploit migrants' ignorance of the local language and geography. Female migrants run a risk of be-

ing sold into prostitution. Migrants who prefer to continue on their own travel by bus to Niger, where they meet similar facilitators touting alternative routes.

### Extremist groups and their involvement in human smuggling

The informal relationship between extremist groups and ethnic minorities is enhanced by the shortcomings in regional services and security provided by the official Malian government. In some places, violent extremist groups are seen as the primary providers of security and they collect protection fees in the form of taxes on goods being smuggled through their areas of influence.

For the extremist groups, payoffs and 'taxes' have become a source of revenue and function as the motivator for maintaining control over the area. Collecting 'taxes' is a steady source of income and requires less effort than other forms of extortion, such as kidnapping for ransom. Radical groups still make money from the drug and arms trade but they discovered that gaining profit from human smuggling activities is more morally acceptable for the local population. The 'taxes' extorted for transiting the territory controlled by extremist groups often depletes migrants' funds, leaving them unexpectedly stranded in Mali.

As of August 2016, the primary extremist and criminal groups with associations to human smuggling in Mali are AQIM, Ansar Al Dine, Al-Mourabitoun, Macina Liberation Front (FLM), and the National Movement for the Liberation of Alzawad (MNLA). AQIM's primary source of income remains kidnapping and extortion, but this model has been adjusted also to profit from human smuggling.

### Pit stops in facilitation hubs

Local businesses in each facilitation hub help to provide shelter and basic necessities for migrants who are delayed, stranded or sent back from the borders. The disenfranchisement, poverty and lack of opportunities faced by the residents of northern Mali are likely to breed empathy with migrants moving through the area. Irregular migration is accepted and encouraged as a journey to a better life, thus making it more likely for residents who would not engage in arms or drug smuggling to get involved in human smuggling activities.

As in Agadez, the extent of local involvement in smuggling networks results in a higher level of difficulty in identifying routes, hubs, or key players and makes it almost impossible to effectively put an end to such activities.

Migrants who failed to cross the border take up temporary residence in

Figure 11. **Satellite image of SONEF Bus Station in Bamako, Mali**

facilitation hubs while they are earning money to continue their journey. Migrants often consider it shameful to return to their country of origin because their communities may have made huge economic sacrifices to collect funds for their journey. Often entire families get stuck in Mali, squatting in designated spaces alongside their fellow countrymen. They face serious challenges, as the language barrier hinders their social integration. Individual migrants and whole families may spend protracted periods stranded in Malian cities, which exposes them to a growing risk of malnutrition, disease and victimisation.

### 3.1.3. Libya

#### Southern Libya

Historically, most of the trade and smuggling traffic across the ancient caravan trading routes in the Saharan desert has been operated by two nomadic groups,

namely the Tuareg and Toubou tribes. It should be emphasised that these ethnic groups also play a crucial role in the movement of migrants across Niger's borders.

Indeed, the majority of drivers are either Nigerien or Libyan and, since they were born in the area, they know the terrain extremely well. For example, smugglers driving from Dirkou to Sabha are almost exclusively from the Libyan Toubou tribe.

The Tuareg and Toubou groups dominate the local human smuggling business thanks to the fact that their clansmen are spread on both sides of the border.

The two rival tribes have been in sporadic armed conflict with each other over portions of southern Libyan territory, natural resources, and control of smuggling routes. As a result, the Tuareg control the Algerian border region, while the Toubou tribesmen control the smuggling routes across Libya's southern

border from their stronghold in Murzuq in southern Libya.

Since the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, Libya's border security posts along the border with Niger have largely remained unprotected. The void has since been filled along most of the border by Toubou militia members, who have established control over most areas providing access to southern Libya. The Toubou are a nomadic group who live in a harsh environment and their allegiance to Niger is fragile as they show disregard for national law.

The Toubou control the smuggling routes up to Sabha in Libya, where migrants are transferred to the Arab Awlad Suleiman tribe. Although the two tribes have had a tumultuous relationship, they are currently cooperating due to the financial incentives each tribe has in maintaining smooth smuggling operations.
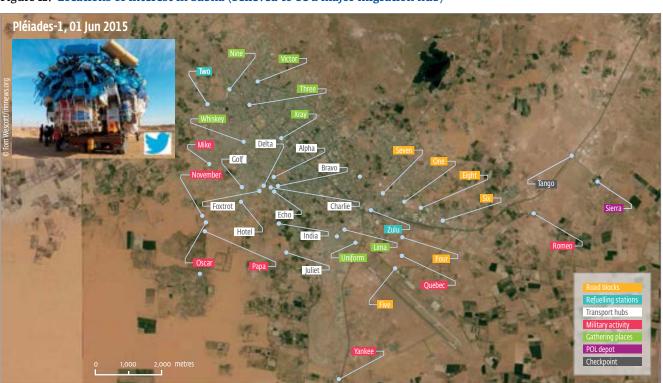
Figure 12. **Locations of interest in Sabha (believed to be a major migration hub)**



Source: EU SATCEN, Pre-Frontier Monitoring: Period from 15 March 2016 to 1 June 2016

## Sabha hub

Given the ongoing turmoil in Libya, it is very difficult to obtain any credible information from areas in the south of the country. Therefore, an analysis of satellite imagery in and around the city of Sabha was attempted to identify the current level of activities that could be linked to smuggling and irregular migration from Niger towards Libya's coastal regions.

Figure 12 provides an overview of the locations which were analysed during the monitoring period from 15 March 2016 to 1 June 2016. These locations were categorised according to the main type of activity occurring in the area: transport hubs, military compounds, gathering places, road blocks, refuelling stations and a petroleum, oils and lubricants depot (POL depot).

The analysis of the main transport areas shows indications of possible smuggling activities in at least ten sites in the Sabha area. The imagery confirms very dynamic vehicle activity in these locations changing on a daily basis with the arrival and departure of trucks.

## Libyan coast

The militia's 'commanding officer' in the region is the head of the network. Some militia members are Sudanese nationals who liaise with networks operating in Khartoum in order to facilitate the transfer of migrants through Libya and further on to Italy. The network uses a number of safe houses to accommodate the migrants before they are sent to Europe by sea. These safe houses are located in Sabratha and usually belong to one of the network's members.

On a more general note, gathered information suggests also that high-ranking officers of different Libyan military formations may be linked to the smuggling of irregular migrants from the western coast of Libya towards Italy. More specifically, military officers between the ranks of Lieutenant and General are believed to be involved at different stages of the smuggling operations. This alleged involvement seems to be confirmed by information gathered by Frontex during migrant interviews.

### 3.1.4. Migration flows from the Horn of Africa to the EU

In 2016, irregular migration flows of nationals from countries of the Horn of Africa to the EU followed an overall decreasing trend compared with 2015. While these flows amounted to just over 70 000 individuals in 2015 (nearly 34 000 in the first half alone), they hardly exceeded 21 000 individuals in the first six months of 2016. The decrease can be mainly accounted for by the lower numbers of apprehended Somali and Eritrean nationals. The number of Sudanese detected in the first half of 2016 increased by 20% and the number of Ethiopians by 18%, compared with the same period in 2015.
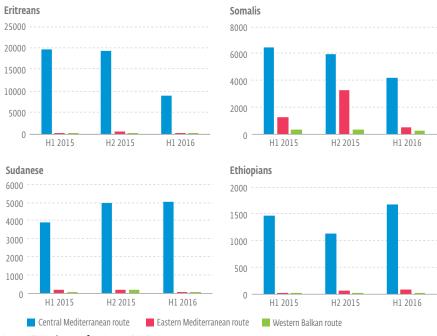
As evidenced by Figure 13, in 2015–2016 an overwhelming majority of the migrants from the Horn of Africa reached Europe on the Central Mediterranean route, with the exception of Somalis, who used the Eastern Mediterranean route to a larger extent than other regional nationalities. This is especially true for the second half of 2015, when 34% of Somali migrants were detected on the Eastern Mediterranean route.

The overall decrease in the number of migrants from the Horn of Africa observed in the first half of 2016 on the Central Mediterranean route can be explained in several ways, which should be seen as complementary rather than competing.

First, it is worth noting that in 2015 most of migrants from the Horn of Africa used Libya as their last country of departure towards Italy. However, Libya is losing its appeal among Horn of Africans, many of whom are Christians, due to the protracting instability and the

Figure 13. **Central Mediterranean route remains by far the most commonly used pathway to Europe for Horn of African nationals**
*Detections of Eritreans, Somalis, Sudanese and Ethiopians in 2015–2016, by half-year periods and top routes*



Source: FRAN data as of 11 August 2016

presence of Daesh in some of the transit areas. Many Horn of African migrants are in fact opting for Egypt as a departure country. In the first half of 2016, the number of those reaching Italy from Egypt increased by ~230% in relation to the same period of 2015. The main nationalities were Sudanese, Eritrean and Somali.

According to the information gathered through debriefing activities, many of the migrants stated that whilst travelling on the Central Mediterranean route they applied for refugee status in Sudan and Egypt hoping to avoid being repatriated to Eritrea or Somalia.

The debriefed migrants also stated that they avoided being arrested and returned by the Egyptian authorities since they were in possession of a refugee status document. In this regard, it should be emphasised that according to the information provided by the migrants, it takes about three months to obtain refugee status. However, a high number of Horn of African migrants who applied for this status after arriving in Egypt (through Sudan) led to delays in the processing of their applications. As a consequence, migrants may be temporarily stranded in transit areas. Thus, the decrease in the number of Horn of African nationals apprehended on the Central Mediterranean route could be directly related to this very delay.

## 3.2. Profiles of African migrants

### 3.2.1. Gambians

**A typical journey from West Africa to Libya – the story of a Gambian who arrived in Italy in July 2016**

Nationals of the Gambia are among the top three nationalities of those who arrived in Italy from Libya in 2016. In fact, their numbers increased during the first seven months of 2016 by 45% compared with the same period of 2015. More than 7 000 Gambians had already completed the journey from the Gambia to Italy in the first seven months of 2016.

A typical migration movement from the Gambia is illustrated by the below described journey of a Gambian migrant interviewed by Frontex in Italy.

**Bad economic situation, advice from relatives and peer pressure**

The interviewee was born and lived in a small village where he was working as a taxi driver, earning around EUR 42 per month (in the local currency). His decision to move towards Italy was prompted by advice of his cousin (living in Germany) and the fact that one of his friends who was willing to leave towards Italy pressed him to do so.[2]

Unsurprisingly, the interviewee tried to obtain a Schengen visa but his application was rejected. It should be stressed that visa rejection rates for West African countries range from 30% to 50%.

**Using regular bus lines and paying bribes**

His journey started in March 2016 on a regular bus. He bought tickets from Brikama in the Gambia to Niamey in Niger for which he paid EUR 140 in the local currency. As the direct line bus to Niamey was leaving in two days, he accepted an offer from the bus company to take him to Bamako in Mali and from there to Niamey in Niger (for the same price).

The ride to Bamako lasted for 25 hours. When he arrived at Bamako bus station, the interviewee was approached by individuals who offered to sell him a Senegalese ID card, which allows for an easier access to Burkina Faso and prevents possible return from this country. In fact, there is a return agreement between the

2  According to the Frontex Consultative Forum, these reasons do not apply to all citizens from the Gambia. Some of them do leave their country because of persecution.

Gambia and Burkina Faso. The interviewee rejected the offer since he knew that paying small bribes at the Gambian-Burkinabe border instead would allow him to cross, thus reducing the risk of being returned.

When the bus entered Burkina Faso, it was stopped at every checkpoint where everybody had to get off the bus and pay mandatory bribes from EUR 3 up to EUR 30 in the local currency. The amount was based on the nationality of the passengers and on the fact whether they were in possession of valid travel documents or not.

Once in Niger, he travelled from Niamey to Agadez on a regular minibus, paying around EUR 40 in the local currency. In Agadez, however, having run out of money, he spent two weeks waiting for his family to wire EUR 150 for the trip to Libya. From Agadez he travelled towards the Libyan border in a pickup truck, together with other 26 people, mostly from the Gambia, Senegal and Mali. They were stopped at three checkpoints manned by Nigerien authorities. All were searched for weapons and had to pay bribes of up to the equivalent of EUR 20 in Libyan dinars. The driver deliberately drove directly through each checkpoint, even though he could have easily bypassed them. At the Libyan border, each migrant had to give another bribe (of around EUR 25) to be allowed into Libya.
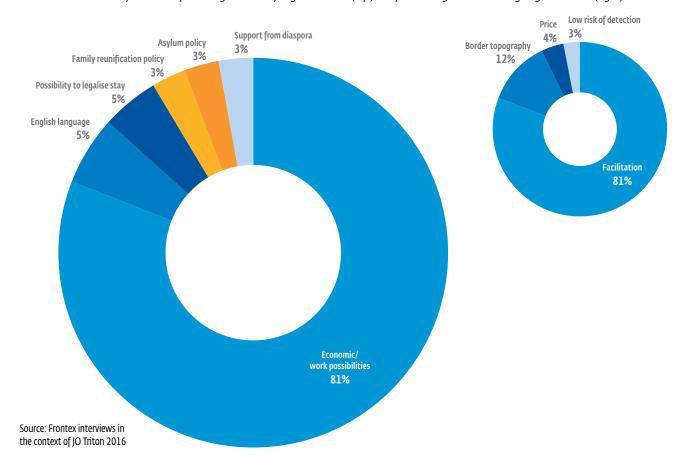
### 3.2.2. Eritrean and Somali migrants

Between January and June 2016, 9 382 Eritrean and 5 000 Somali irregular migrants were detected while they attempted to reach the EU, in great majority across the Central Mediterranean route and, to a lesser extent, across the Eastern Mediterranean one.

The improved weather conditions in March 2016 led to an increase in the number of migrants from Eritrea and Somalia detected on the Central Mediterranean route, in line with the patterns observed in 2014 and 2015. A similar rise

Figure 14.  **Most interviewed Gambians in Italy chose the route through Agadez and Libya because of well-established facilitation services, favourable border topography (easy to cross borders), low cost and low risk of detection. Their decision to choose the EU was largely driven by economic opportunities**

*Main reasons declared by Gambians for leaving the country to get to the EU (left) and for choosing the route through Agadez in 2016 (right)*



Source: Frontex interviews in the context of JO Triton 2016

was observed with regard to Eritreans in April and May 2016, before a noticeable decrease (from 4 299 to 2 515 detections) was observed in June. By contrast, the number of detections of Somalis remained stable between March and May 2016 (slightly above 1 000 detections per month) but sharply declined in June 2016 (600 detections).

**Khartoum remains a key transit hub**

The information obtained from interviews conducted with Somali and Eritrean migrants suggests that the same routes via Khartoum and the same people smuggling networks are used to reach Libya from Sudan. A certain number of Somali and Eritrean migrants, however, prefer to travel from Sudan to Egypt in order to depart African shores from Alexandria.

The average cost for a Somali migrant who would try to reach Italy via Alexandria is between USD 4 000 and 5 000. Migrants from the Horn of Africa using Egypt as their last departure country are choosing the land route from Somalia or Eritrea to Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and from there on to Khartoum (Sudan).

**Alternative routes through Nairobi, Khartoum, Tehran and Dubai**

An alternative route to reach Khartoum (Sudan) runs through Nairobi (Kenya) and South Sudan. Once in Khartoum, the migrants travel in groups of 50–60 people, using a land route to Aswan (Egypt) aboard Toyota pick-up trucks. According to information from migrant interviews, migrants taking this route sometimes use counterfeit Sudanese passports to cross the Egyptian-Sudanese border, since it is easier for Sudanese nationals to enter Egypt.

Aswan has been confirmed as one of the main transit points on the route from the Horn of Africa to Egypt. For this leg of the journey smugglers charge migrants about USD 600. From Aswan migrants use public transport to reach Cairo. Once there, they contact smuggling networks which charge between USD 2 000 and 3 000 for the transfer to a safe house near Alexandria. From there they are transported to Italy by boat.

Somali migrants who choose to reach Europe via the Eastern Mediterranean route travel more and more by air from Hargeisa or Mogadishu (Somalia) to Tehran (Iran) via Dubai (UAE), before reaching the Turkish border by car and crossing it on foot, with the assistance of Iranian smugglers.

Once in Turkey, migrants reach Istanbul by public transport. When they get there, they use Turkish smuggling networks to reach the points of departure, namely Izmir, Bodrum and Antalya before sailing to Greece and then to Italy (or directly to Italy). On this last leg of the journey, migrants travel in small groups in order to avoid being detected by the Turkish, Greek or Italian authorities. The smugglers come from Eastern European countries or, to a lesser extent, Greece.

**Nationality swapping**

The information provided by the newly arrived Eritrean migrants does not suggest any changes in the approach of the Eritrean government as regards their status. Generally, Eritrean migrants when debriefed do not offer much information

regarding the camps they transited on their way to Europe. It should also be noted that screening activities in Sicily revealed that many Ethiopian and Sudanese migrants claimed to be Eritrean to increase their chance of being granted asylum.

### 3.2.3. Ethiopian and Sudanese migrants

Between January and June 2016, 1 780 Ethiopians and 5 113 Sudanese irregularly reached the EU, in great majority across the Central Mediterranean route and, to a lesser extent, across the Eastern Mediterranean one. Additionally, despite the dire situation in war-torn South Sudan, one migrant of this nationality was reported on the Western Mediterranean route in January 2016. This number is as negligible as that reported in 2015 (12 South Sudanese migrants, all detected on the Western Mediterranean route).

In contrast to what was observed with regard to Somalis and Eritreans, improved weather conditions since March 2016 resulted in a steady increase in the number of Ethiopian and Sudanese irregular migrants detected on the Central Mediterranean route. For Sudanese, the monthly increases ranged between 30% and 50% while it showed more fluctuation in the case of Ethiopians.

As regards the route followed by Ethiopian migrants, they travel from different locations in the country to the border area of Metema (land border between Ethiopia and Sudan). Once in Metema they are approached by locals who offer

people smuggling services to Khartoum (Sudan), Libya or even all the way to Italy, depending on how much the migrants are willing to pay for the trip. At night, people smugglers gather migrants in the outskirts of Metema before helping them to cross the border to Sudan illegally. Once on the other side, they are transported in trucks to Khartoum, where they either end their journey or continue being smuggled to Libya, mainly through Ajdabiya, depending on their agreement with the smuggling network.

According to information gathered during interviews, the price paid for people smuggling services from Metema to Italy ranges from USD 3 000 to 3 500 per person. Migrants have to pay a part of the total amount after each leg of the trip, i.e. upon arrival in Khartoum (Sudan), Ajdabiya (Libya), Tripoli (Libya) and Italy.

Information provided by Ethiopian migrants suggests that in order to avoid road checkpoints between Ajdabiya and Tripoli some people smuggling networks use a scout vehicle that monitors the route.

Interviews with various nationalities indicate that some migrants who used the Khartoum route were smuggled through Sudan or Chad directly to Sabha (Libya) in order to avoid Ajdabiya. The fact that troops from the internationally recognised Government of Tobruk were confronting Daesh groups in the areas of Benghazi and Ajdabiya forced people smuggling networks to look for safer alternative routes.

## 3.3. Entry to Europe

### 3.3.1. Italy – Central Mediterranean route

Between 1 January and 31 August 2016, 117 000 irregular migrants were intercepted in the Central Mediterranean, which represents a very stable trend in relation to the same period in 2015, when 116 000 migrants were apprehended.

This number is still almost double that of the previous record of 2011, i.e. the year of the Arab Spring. The alarming trend started in 2014, coinciding with the launching of the Italian 'Mare Nostrum' operation.
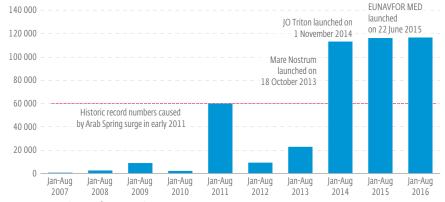
The majority of migrants detected on the Central Mediterranean route are African country citizens. No substantial increase is visible in the detections of persons coming from the Middle East (there is no evidence of a shift from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Central Mediterranean route).

In 2016, Egypt became an alternative to Libya as the departure point towards Italy for migrants from the Horn of Africa and Sudan. Indeed, this route is safer and cheaper for migrants than that leading through Libya. Nevertheless, the latter country remains the main departure point on this route.

Most of the incidents on the Central Mediterranean route involve boats departing from the Libyan coast towards Italy. However, it should also be pointed out that the migration flow from Egypt towards Italy continued to surge in 2016 (1 January–14 August), compared with the same period of 2015.

From 1 January to 14 August 2015, a total of 6 021 migrants were apprehended while trying to reach Italy from Egypt. During the same period in 2016, this number increased by ~96% to 11 801, confirming Egypt as the main alternative route to Italy. This route is mainly used by nationals from the Horn of Africa, Sudan and Egypt, due to the efficiency and enhanced coordination of the smuggling networks operating in Egypt. Another factor here is the fact that Libya has been

Figure 15. **Maritime arrivals from Africa to Italy continue at historic highs**
*Comparison of historical data on illegal border-crossing on the Central Mediterranean route in 2007–2016 (January-August)*



Source: Frontex data as of 23 September 2016

beset with instability, which makes the country unsafe and thereby less attractive for Horn of African migrants and persons seeking international protection.

**Fatalities increasing despite more operational resources**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is regularly updating its 'Missing Migrants Project' that tracks fatalities among the migrants. The majority of fatalities occur in the Central Mediterranean, which saw a year-on-year increase of 21%, i.e. 3 054 in 2016 (as of 25 September) from 2 622 in 2015 (30 September).

The death toll is constantly growing despite the proliferation of the EU's and EU Member States' operational efforts in the Central Mediterranean, i.e. JO Triton, Mare Sicuro[3] and EUNAVFOR Med Operation Sophia and the rise in the number of NGOs' vessels operating

[3] Mare Sicuro (Safe Seas) was launched on 12 March 2016 by the Italian Navy (Marina Militare) to surveil the seas off the Libyan coast as part of a security and counter-terrorism effort. The assets deployed have also been used for search-and-rescue purposes at the request of the Rescue and Coordination Centre in Rome.

in the area. This is related to the fact that there are often multiple detections made at the same time, which complicates search and rescue efforts.

Moreover, human smugglers capitalise on the fact that they need to provide less fuel and basic supplies for the migrants to make it to Europe as the average length of the sea voyage is constantly decreasing (see Fig. 16) due to the presence of EU maritime assets. This also impacts the quality of the rubber dinghies, as the smugglers increasingly use cheaper and flimsier ones. As a result, the expenses that human smugglers incur are lower, thus allowing them to make a greater profit per boat.

Migrant deaths are mainly caused by rubber dinghies sinking. In some cases, the migrants attempt to take out the water leaking into the dinghy, which may lead to the involuntary puncturing of the rubber and cause its deflating and sinking.

Moreover, the wooden planks used to reinforce the floor of the rubber dinghies are so roughly cut that, on several overcrowded boats, they broke under the migrants' weight and punctured the rubber causing the boat to sink. Smugglers have also increased the number of migrants crowded onto each dinghy, thus

## Increasing number of Egyptians

In the first half of 2016, the number of Egyptians arriving in Italy by boat increased by about 580% in relation to the same period of 2015, to the effect that Egyptians are now one of the top ten nationalities detected in the Central Mediterranean. It should be noted that most of the Egyptian migrants arriving in Italy are unaccompanied minors (~64% of the total). Arguably, this could be a consequence of the effectiveness of the bilateral agreement between Italy and Egypt, which allows the Italian authorities to return adult Egyptian migrants using a fast-track procedure.
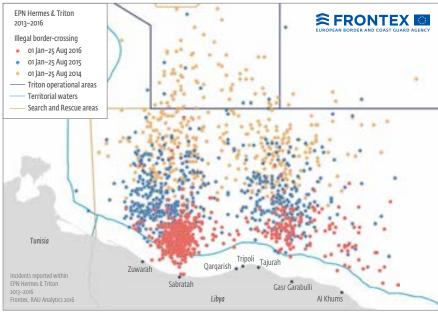
For this reason, most of the Egyptians arriving in Italy try to conceal their true nationality and claim to be Syrian, Palestinian, Moroccan or Libyan in order to avoid being returned to Egypt. During the screening phase, the expertise of Italian screeners and cultural mediators enables the Italian authorities to identify Egyptians who pose as nationals of other Arab countries.

Figure 16.  **Over the past three years the rescue/detection of migrants has been moving closer to Libyan shores**
*Locations of incidents reported in the Mediterranean Sea in the framework of the JO Hermes and Triton in 2013–2016*



Source: Frontex

raising the average number of persons aboard from 100–115 reported in 2015 to 130–150 in 2016. By increasing the number of migrants per boat, smuggling networks are clearly putting the lives of the migrants at an even greater risk.

On the other hand, when it comes to wooden boats, most of the fatal incidents are either caused by asphyxia and suffocation aboard overcrowded vessels or their capsizing. Most wooden boats departing from Egypt collect migrants from a number of locations along the Egyptian and/or Libyan coast on the way to Italy. Once on the high seas, smugglers force

the migrants sailing on different vessels to transfer to a bigger wooden/iron fishing boat, also known as a 'mother boat'.

If the migrants show reluctance to be transferred to the 'mother boat' because there is not enough room for all of them to sail in safe conditions, they are forcibly transferred by the smugglers who, due to the fact that migrants are highly vulnerable on the high seas, leave them no choice but to go aboard the 'mother boat'.

Most of the incidents leading to death of migrants sailing aboard wooden boats were related to overcrowding. Moreover, it should be noted that, as in the case of rubber dinghies, the average number of migrants per boat also increased in 2016, compared with 2015. Wooden boats carried an average of 298 migrants between 1 January and 31 July 2015, while the average number of migrants per boat in the same period of 2016 was 324.





Figure 17.  **Overcrowded and partially deflated rubber boat made of thin fabric**



Figure 18.  **Capsizing of a wooden boat**

### 3.3.2. Spain – Western Mediterranean route

**Situation in the Spanish exclaves of Ceuta and Melilla**

In the first half of 2016, the trend on the Western Mediterranean land and sea routes followed a different pattern, i.e. an almost 55% rise in the apprehensions on the sea route and a decrease of nearly 43% in detections of illegal border-crossing at the land borders.[4]

In the case of Ceuta and Melilla, the continuous cooperation between Spain and Morocco helped to reduce the number of irregular migrants, forcing many sub-Saharans to change their *modus operandi* and take the sea route towards Spain. In fact, several actions taken by the respective border authorities reduced the number of attempts at scaling the border fence. During the first seven months of 2016, the Spanish authorities recorded 2 863 attempts, compared to 6 208 attempts recorded in all 2015.[5]

As regards clandestine entries to the Spanish territories, there was an increase in the number of migrants detected hiding in vehicles (often in secret compartments specially constructed by the smuggling networks operating in Morocco). In fact, 271 detections were made from 1 January to 1 August 2016, compared with 231 detections in the whole of 2015.[6] An increase was also observed in the number of migrants who successfully entered the territory of Ceuta and Melilla using the maritime route as 421 migrants (from 1 January to 1 August 2016) were detected, compared with 209 in the whole of 2015.

In addition, Morocco continued to dismantle migrant makeshift camps located in different forests around the cities of Ceuta and Melilla. In 2016, the Moroccan Gendarmerie carried out many actions of this kind. On 22 July, the Moroccan authorities arrested seven sub-Saharan migrants suspected of deliberately setting fire to a forest on Mount Gurugú allegedly to divert attention from their planned attempt to cross illegally into Melilla.

Figure 19. **The number of sea detections on the Western Mediterranean route increased considerably in 2016**

*Overview of historical data on detections on the Western Mediterranean route in 2013–2016 (January-July), by border type*



Source: FRAN data as of 15 August 2016



Figure 20. **One of makeshift camps dismantled in Morocco**

**Health risks: Algeria's view**

The public health risk is inherent in migration phenomena. As reported by Algeria, many migrants who entered the country clandestinely were found carrying various tropical diseases. For instance, 150 cases of malaria (of which five proved fatal) were detected among migrants in the northern part of the country. It is worth noting that the Algerian authorities are fully committed to providing afflicted migrants with the necessary medical care before repatriating them.

4  FRAN data
5  According to data provided by the Spanish Guardia Civil
6  Idem

## 3.4. Document fraud in relation to AFIC countries and AFIC country nationals

In 2015, there were almost 3 000 AFIC country nationals detected with fraudulent travel documents in the EU/Schengen area, which is 6% less compared with 2014. The above mentioned figure includes detections both at the EU's external border as well as on the intra-EU/Schengen movements.

Data from the first half of 2016 show that this downward trend persisted. However, the increasing trend of illegal border-crossings in the Central Mediterranean involving AFIC country nationals is likely to translate into an increased demand for fraudulent EU travel documents for secondary movements.

Almost 70% of all document fraud cases involving AFIC country nationals was detected on entry to the EU/SAC from third countries (see Fig. 21).

In the first half of 2016, a drop in the number of detections on the routes between Lagos and Italy, the UK and between Spain and Morocco was noticed. On the other hand, in line with increasing number of illegal border-crossings into Italy, the number of detections on intra-EU/Schengen movements started to increase.

AFIC country nationals mostly opted for using someone else's authentic passport issued by an AFIC country and containing a genuine EU residence permit. They also tried to abuse authentic EU passports, predominately issued by France, Spain, Italy and Belgium.

On intra-EU/Schengen movements, the use of French, Italian, Spanish and Belgian passports and ID cards was most common.

### 3.4.1. Main routes involving last departure airports in AFIC countries

Dakar international airport (Senegal) became the most common last departure airport of document fraudsters arriving from AFIC countries in the EU/Schen-gen area in 2016. Dakar, along with Casablanca airport (Morocco), saw the fastest increase in such detections. Indeed, after a 30% increase recorded in 2015, a significant rise can be expected also in 2016. Apart from Senegalese, the most detected document fraudsters arriving from Dakar were Sri Lankans and Guineans.

Casablanca international airport was the second most reported last departure airport from Africa towards the EU/Schengen area. The most targeted destinations were Lisbon, Milan, Rome and Frankfurt, mostly chosen by Moroccan, Senegalese, Ivorian, Ghanaian, Sri Lankan and Congolese nationals.

Whilst the number of document fraud cases from Lagos (Nigeria) increased steeply at the beginning of 2015, mostly due to increased detections at Rome Fiumicino, this trend reversed after *Alitalia* withdrew its Accra–Lagos–Rome service at the end of March 2015. London Heathrow also reported a 55% decrease compared with 2014.

Nigerian nationals were the most reported offenders abusing fraudulent travel documents on the routes from La-gos towards the EU. The first half of 2016 saw a further decrease on the routes from Lagos to the UK and almost no detections on connections to Italy were recorded.

Air routes originating in AFIC countries were also used by non-AFIC country nationals. At the same time, however, nationals of AFIC countries were detected on transit routes via Turkey and the Russian Federation, rather than just on the direct flights from AFIC countries to the EU/Schengen area.
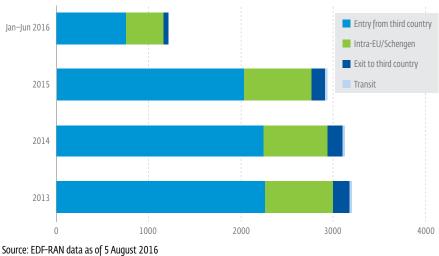
### 3.4.2. Most detected AFIC country nationalities using fraudulent documents

**Moroccan nationals** represented the biggest group abusing travel documents. There were almost 950 Moroccan nationals detected with fraudulent documents in 2015, i.e. 15% more compared with 2014. In the first half of 2016, the situation remained stable and comparable to the first half of 2015, when fewer than 400 Moroccans with fraudulent documents were detected.

The vast majority of Moroccans with fraudulent documents was detected on

Figure 21. **In January–June 2016, around 70% of all document fraud cases was detected on entry to the EU/SAC from third countries**

*Detections of AFIC country nationals detected using fraudulent documents, by travel type in January 2013–June 2016*



Source: EDF-RAN data as of 5 August 2016

entry to the EU/Schengen area from third countries, in particular from Morocco to Spain in Ceuta and Melilla. Ferry routes between Morocco (Tangier) and Spain (Tarifa and Algeciras) were used to a certain extent in 2015, as well. The latest findings, however, show a significant decrease in detections on the above mentioned ferry connections. A certain amount of Moroccan nationals was detected also on air routes between Casablanca and Rome Fiumicino or Istanbul Atatürk airports and many other EU destinations. Nevertheless, even here, the number of detections dropped significantly in the first half of 2016.

Most of the detections involving Moroccan nationals on intra-EU/Schengen movements were reported between Greece and Italy, France and the UK, however, the overall figure was very low.
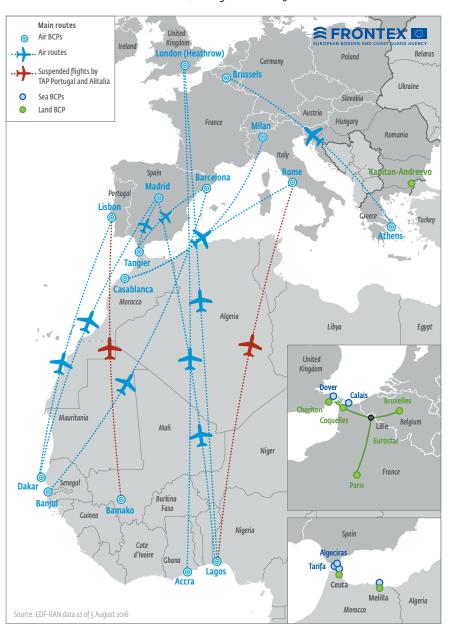
Moroccan nationals were often using Spanish and, to a lesser extent, also French, Belgian and Italian documents (ID cards, residence permits, passports) or Moroccan passports. Most of the abovementioned documents were abused by Moroccan impostors, using genuine documents of someone else.

**Nigerian nationals** formed the second biggest group reported for document fraud in the EU/Schengen area. In 2015, around 520 Nigerians were detected with fraudulent documents, representing a 34% decrease compared with 2014. A declining trend was also observed in the first half of 2016, mostly because a very low number of detections was reported from Italy. This mostly resulted from the suspension of flights between Rome and Lagos (Nigeria) and fewer detections reported by the UK and Spain.

Whilst the number of Nigerians attempting to cross the EU's external borders with fraudulent documents was decreasing, detections on intra-EU/Schengen movements remained stable. This was connected with a high number of Nigerians illegally crossing the EU's external borders via Central Mediterranean sea with or without documents, to subsequently use fraudulent EU documents on the secondary movements to-

wards their desired final destinations. It is important to add that the number of detections involving Nigerian nationals on the intra-EU/Schengen movements for the first time exceeded the number of detections on entry to the EU/Schen-

gen area from third countries. Most of the Nigerians on the intra-EU/Schengen movements intended to reach the UK and Ireland.

Nigerian nationals often used authentic Nigerian passports (sometimes also

Figure 22. **After the Lagos-Rome and Bamako-Lisbon connections were closed, a visible displacement of document fraud users to other airports in the region was observed, with Dakar becoming the most reported last departure airport**
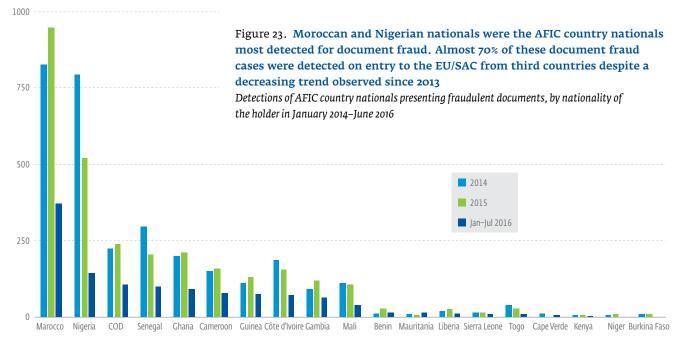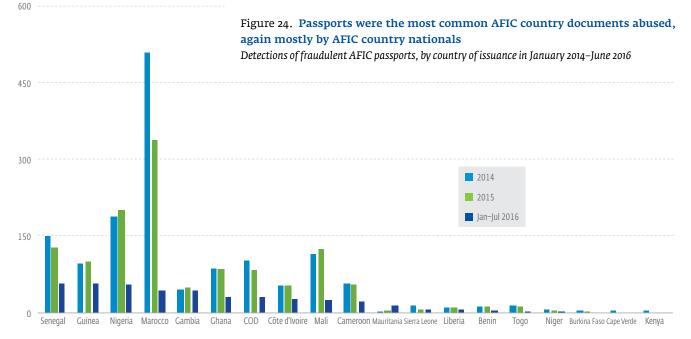
*Main routes used by AFIC country nationals detected using fraudulent documents on flights from third countries towards and within the EU/Schengen area in 2015 and 2016*

Figure 23. **Moroccan and Nigerian nationals were the AFIC country nationals most detected for document fraud. Almost 70% of these document fraud cases were detected on entry to the EU/SAC from third countries despite a decreasing trend observed since 2013**
*Detections of AFIC country nationals presenting fraudulent documents, by nationality of the holder in January 2014–June 2016*

Source: EDF-RAN data as of 5 August 2016



Figure 24. **Passports were the most common AFIC country documents abused, again mostly by AFIC country nationals**
*Detections of fraudulent AFIC passports, by country of issuance in January 2014–June 2016*

Source: EDF-RAN data as of 5 August 2016

EU residence permits) as impostors. Nigerians also used a wide range of fraudulent Italian travel documents.

**Congolese (the Democratic Republic of the Congo – COD) nationals** were often spotted on arrival from third countries but also on the intra-EU/Schengen movements. EDF-RAN members reported a total of 225 Congolese nationals detected with fraudulent documents in 2014 and 239 in 2015. Figures for the first half of 2016 do not show any significant changes in the trend.

Unlike Nigerian, Moroccan and Senegalese nationals, Congolese nationals often targeted the EU/Schengen area from countries other than their country of origin. Taking 2015 and the first half of 2016 into consideration, most of them were detected on entry to the EU/Schengen area

## Document fraud in Ghana

According to the Ghanian authorities, there are well-organised crime groups responsible for producing documents and/or facilitating air travel to Europe.

Most of the document fraud in Ghana involves:
- Forged biodata pages of Ghanaian and Indian passports;
- Counterfeit embarkation/disembarkation stamps (Ghana, Togo, Nigeria and Malaysia);
- Forged visas (Ghana, India, Schengen and Canada).

The travel routes where these fraud cases occurred are Europe, Asia, Americas and the Gulf Countries.

Most of the arrested persons were Ghanaian, Nigerian, Guinean, Syrian, Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani nationals.

## Document fraud in Sierra Leone

**Case 1:** A Sierra Leonean national was arrested at Freetown International Airport (Sierra Leone) on 23 April 2016. The individual, holder of a Sierra Leonean passport, attempted to travel to Spain via Casablanca (Morocco). For that purpose, he used a Schengen visa issued to another Sierra Leonean national, whom the suspect tried to impersonate. The suspect was charged and remanded pending trial.

**Case 2:** A Nigerian national was intercepted at Freetown International Airport on 1 June 2016. The individual was planning to travel to Canada via Brussels (Belgium). He attempted to board a SN Brussels Airlines flight using a forged Canadian residence permit. The suspect was remanded pending trial and the case was handed over to the Transnational Organised Crime Unit (TOCU) for further investigation.

## Document fraud in Kenya

In terms of document fraud cases, Kenya is mostly confronted with the use of forged passports from Middle Eastern countries, especially Yemen, Syria and Lebanon but also forged refugee documents. These perpetrators are generally prosecuted and then expelled from the territory.

Kenya also took steps towards enhancing the security features of its travel documents by introducing e-passports for their own citizens and Machine Readable Convention Travel Documents (MRCTDs) for the recognised refugees residing in the country. Both document types comply with ICAO standards.

from the Russian Federation, in particular from Moscow airport of Sheremetyevo and Vnukovo to Germany, Estonia and Latvia, followed by arrivals from Nigeria (recently dropped to zero due to the suspension of flights between Rome Fiumicino and Lagos), Morocco and Senegal. On intra-EU/Schengen movements, most Congolese nationals were reported moving both between France and the UK, and between Greece and France, Belgium, Germany.

Congolese nationals were often detected presenting fraudulent Congolese passports combined with Belgian and French counterfeit residence permits.

**Senegalese nationals** ranked fourth among the AFIC country nationals abusing travel documents. The overall number of detections dropped from 300 cases in 2014 to 200 in 2015. The number of detections in the first half of 2016 remained relatively stable. Senegalese were mostly detected on entry to the EU/SAC from

third countries, in particular from Dakar (DKR). However, many last departure places were reported as unknown. Most of the Senegalese attempted to reach either Spanish international airports of Madrid (MAD) and Barcelona (BCN), the Portuguese airport in Lisbon (LIS) or French international airports. Recently, some detections were observed on arrival from Casablanca (CAS) as well. On the intra-EU/Schengen movements, these were mostly reported between France and the UK.

They were often detected travelling with their national passports (using someone else's genuine documents as impostors or documents with altered biodata pages), French authentic passports and ID cards, Italian counterfeit ID cards and residence permits.

**Ghanaian nationals** ranked fifth among AFIC country nationals reported within the EDF-RAN for abusing travel documents. No visible shift in the num-

ber of document fraud cases was observed in relation to 2014. In 2014 and 2015, there were 200 Ghanaian nationals detected, on average, with fraudulent documents and this trend continued in the first half of 2016. Ghanaian nationals, however, were involved in slightly more cases on intra-EU/SAC movements than on arrival from third countries.

Most detections involving Ghanaian nationals were thus detected on the air routes between Italy and Germany or on the land/sea routes between France and the UK. On entry to the EU/Schengen area from third countries, most Ghanaians arrived in Italy, Spain or the UK from Accra airport (ACC).

Ghanaian nationals were often detected presenting authentic Ghanaian impostor passports accompanied by related authentic Italian and German residence permits or counterfeit Italian ID cards.

### 3.4.3. Most abused travel documents issued by AFIC countries

On the whole, there were approximately 1 560 fraudulent travel documents issued by AFIC countries reported within the EDF-RAN in 2014. This figure decreased by 14% and reached 1 340 cases in 2015. This decrease was also visible in the data for the beginning of 2016. The declining trend in the use of fraudulent travel documents, in particular passports issued by AFIC countries, is mostly caused by a steep decrease related to Syrians who used authentic Moroccan passports in 2014 and at the beginning of 2015. With the change of main migratory routes, the number of Syrians attempting to cross the EU's external borders between Spain and Morocco decreased accordingly.

The most abused AFIC documents were Senegalese, Guinean and Nigerian passports. The number of abused Malian passports decreased as a result of the closure of the air connection between Bamako and Lisbon.

### 3.5. Preventive measures by AFIC countries

#### 3.5.1. Combating document and identity fraud across the AFIC region

Document and identity fraud is closely knit with the phenomenon of irregular migration across the AFIC region. Therefore, AFIC partners strive to curb this type of fraud through a series of measures that aim to address the issue at different stages.

Togo has been tackling the phenomenon of document and identity fraud for more than a decade and could certainly serve as an example of good practices in the AFIC region. The country has put in place an integrated centralised document issuance system that enables the authorities to limit opportunities for fraudsters to produce and use forged documents.



Figure 25. **Three types of Togolese passports**



Figure 26. **Sample Togolese certificate of nationality**

The General Directorate of National Documentation (GDND) under the Ministry of Security has been tasked with the production and the issuance of all travel and identity documents.

In addition, the GDND also deals with producing and issuing most of other official documents, including residence permits, driving licences, car registration documents, police badges, etc. In parallel, the system of issuing certificates of nationality is also subject to a modernisation process. In this respect, the General Directorate of Seal and Nationality (GDSN) under the Ministry of Justice set out to ultimately register all Togolese citizens.

Togo has enhanced efforts to ensure efficient border control, both at airports and the main land BCPs. This system is connected with relevant Interpol and security services' databases as well

as with the national database of travel documents, which limits the use of forged Togolese documents. In addition, any travel document is automatically checked against surveillance lists and passengers are registered with their biometric data (pictures and fingerprints). High-quality standards among the staff are being maintained through regular training sessions and the enforcement of anti-corruption measures.

Other AFIC partners attempt to address the challenges posed by document and identity fraud. Burkina Faso, for instance, resorts to using a biometric national ID card and a machine-readable passport. The country also contemplates the introduction of an e-passport and it has already installed at BCPs the IOM-developed border management information system known as the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS). These efforts are unfortunately undermined by obsolete (not computerised) registers of births, marriages and deaths as well as by legal shortcomings allowing the intervention of intermediaries within the document issuance process. To a certain extent, Mali is faced with similar problems in its efforts to curb document and identity fraud.

The country envisages the implementation of biometric passports, a connection with relevant Interpol databases, the installation of MIDAS at BCPs as well as the development of the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) at Bamako airport.

In the case of Ghana, the authorities are addressing document and identity fraud by introducing biometric passports, birth and death certificates, and more effective arrest and prosecution of offenders.

The country's main civil registries include the Registrar General Department and the Births and Death Registry. The Registrar General Department are in charge of the registration of marriages (customary and ordinance) and companies. Whereas the Births and Death Registry is also responsible for the registration of births and deaths in the coun-



© Ghana Immigration Service

Figure 27.  **Ghanaian returnees from Libya**

try as the name suggest. These registries have their own security features embedded in various documents used to safeguard identity fraud.

### 3.5.2. Ghana

**Preventing irregular migration through the Central Mediterranean route from Ghana's perspective**

Although they are not among the primary nationalities of migrants who attempted to enter Europe via the Central Mediterranean route in 2016, Ghanaians are well-represented among the migrants who have been identified by IOM as currently residing in Libya.[7] A very small number of these migrants return to Ghana from Libya. Between January and May 2016, the Ghanaian authorities recorded a total number of 1 558 'returnees'.[8]

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7   Third nationality after Niger and Egypt – data for March–April 2016 – Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Libya, Round 3, IOM. So far IOM has identified through the DTM tool almost 235 000 migrants residing in Libya, but assesses that the total number of migrants currently in Libya amounts to between 700 000 and 1 million.

8   Ghana Immigration Service, presentation at the AFIC Workshop in Nouakchott, Mauritania, 31 May–2 June 2016

The ECOWAS protocol allows citizens of member states to enter other ECOWAS member states visa free and to stay as a visitor for the period of up to 90 days. Thus, Ghanaian nationals who travel to a transit country that is an ECOWAS member state, such as Togo or Niger, travel legally as long as they do not overstay or attempt to enter other states illegally.

Migrants departing Ghana follow either the northern route through Burkina Faso and Mali or the eastern route through Togo and Benin. Both routes lead migrants to Niger and further on to Libya, but the eastern route is currently favoured.

Taking the clauses of the ECOWAS protocol into account, the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) developed a preventive strategy aiming to curb the current migration trend. The GIS set up a Migration Information Bureau that organises information campaigns across the country to alert potential migrants to the dangers of irregular travel.

Furthermore, the GIS focuses more specifically on the region of Brong Ahafo from which most of the migrants come. It established a migration consultation centre in Sunyani, the main city of the region, created with the support of the IOM and the EU.

The IOM has also been providing return support through covering tuition fees for those seeking education and pay-

ing for apprenticeship for those desiring to become technicians.

Furthermore, the GIS strives to develop pre-departure strategies ensuring that only Ghanaians in possession of a valid passport and able to justify their travel with a reasonable purpose effectively depart the country.

In addition, the Ghanaian Border Patrol Unit makes sure that travellers only make use of legal BCPs. It is also worth noting that the Ghanaian authorities promote collaboration between sending and receiving countries.

The National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO) also pays transportation fees to returnees who are subject to mass repatriations (since these individuals usually come back empty-handed), to help them reach their families.

### 3.5.3. Nigeria

**Trafficking and smuggling of Nigerians into Spain**

According to data provided by the Nigerian National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), it is estimated that about 2 000 Nigerians were smuggled into Spain in 2015. The kingpins of the involved criminal networks are reported to be Nigerians with a residency status (or even citizenship) in Spain or other EU Member States. Practically all victims were women aged between 14 and 30 years and destined to be coerced into prostitution. Most were recruited in the southern and south-eastern parts of the country.

The *modus operandi* used by traffickers to attract and entrap their victims is very much in line with the one described in the AFIC Joint Report 2015. Victims are deceived and lured through false promises of lucrative employment or enhanced education opportunities in the country of destination. In addition, both traffickers and victims seem to believe that ref-

ugee status and care are to be granted by the Red Cross at any stage of the journey. Traffickers further mislead their victims by telling them that the Red Cross offers additional privileges to pregnant girls and nursing mothers. This manoeuvre aims at enabling the traffickers to impregnate their victims, which offers them a means to further pressurise them. The traffickers usually recommend that their victims tell the authorities that they are in search of employment or education opportunities, or even apply for political asylum in the event that they are detected in the EU.

The route followed by the smugglers and their victims passes through Burkina Faso, Mali and Morocco before reaching Spain. Spain should be regarded mainly as a country of destination but also, to some extent, as a transit hub. Other countries of destination within the EU are: Italy, Germany, the UK, France, the Netherlands, Ireland and Finland.

It is worth noting that a small proportion of the Nigerians smuggled into Spain are 'freelance' migrants who pay EUR 3 000–4 000 for the journey while those who are trafficked for prostitution

purposes are forced to pay EUR 40 000–50 000 to their madam[9] to regain their freedom.

### 3.5.4. Kenya

Kenya remained a transit but also destination country mostly for nationals of the East African Community. The main routes across the country lead northwards towards Egypt, from where migrants hope to reach the EU or Israel, as well as eastwards towards Djibouti and Yemen (even though this route is less appealing to migrants due to the raging conflict in Yemen). At times migrants apply for asylum as a way to temporarily legalise their stay while preparing for onward movements for which they sometimes pay USD 1 000–3 000 to facilitators.

In order to tackle these issues, Kenya implemented measures to enhance border and migration management capacities (enhanced border control and regional cooperation, increased reception capacities, use of ICT tools for better monitoring migration, etc.).

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## Nigerian THB victims travelling to the Russian Federation on student visas

According to some Moscow-based NGOs focusing on preventing human trafficking, around 2 000–3 000 Nigerian girls – many from poor and remote villages – are brought to the Russian Federation every year for prostitution. Criminal groups appear to be taking advantage of Russian student visas, which are not easy to obtain as universities must provide supporting documents for the applications. Nigerians come to the Russian Federation officially to study but then disappear into the sex business for years and the authorities are unable to track them. Nigerian girls are lured by a promise of a well-paid job in the Russian Federation allowing them later to reimburse the costs of the visa and the journey (estimated at the level of USD 40 000). Surprisingly, even illiterate teenagers were being trafficked to the Russian Federation on the basis of student visas. The Head of Mission at the Nigerian Embassy in Moscow indicated that the number of Nigerians trafficked for sex to the Russian Federation has been growing over the past few years.

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Additionally, in response to security threats at the border with Somalia (attacks by al-Shabaab), the Kenyan authorities increased the number of military patrols and security operations at the common border, while also building walls at certain sections in order to prevent terrorist movements/infiltrations. Moreover, during their activities, the authorities also detected a number of Foreign Terrorist Fighters who joined al-Shabaab either from the EU (i.e. from the UK or Scandinavian countries) and from the United States.
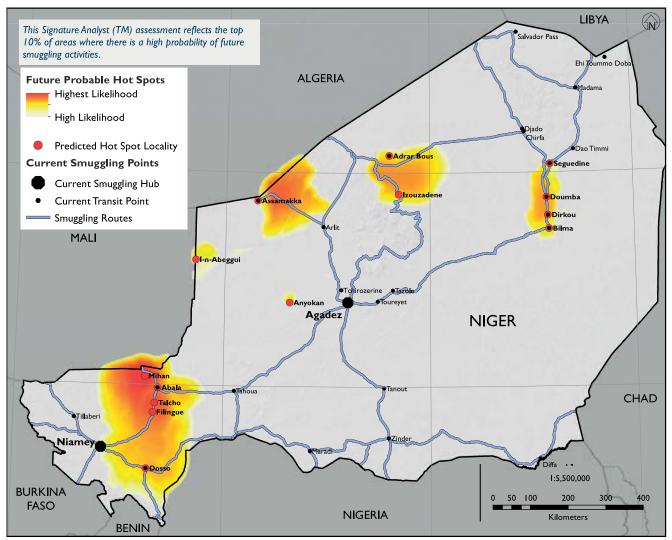
Drug trafficking cases were also reported by the authorities, as Kenya is either a destination or transit country for such products. Drug seizures occurred in Kenyan high seas or on ships docking in the Mombasa port.

### 3.5.5. Niger

Between 1 August and 31 October 2016, the authorities in Niger reported at least 55 vehicles seized and almost 1 700 migrants intercepted without travel documents at various checkpoints between Niamey, Agadez and Dirkou.

More precisely, the measures taken by Niger consist in reinforced road controls and limiting movement of ECOWAS country nationals. The first measure implies the reinforcement of existing checkpoints and the enhancement of the effectiveness of the regional offices of the DST (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire). The second measure puts restrictions on the movement of ECOWAS country nationals. Indeed, passengers from these countries are systematically driven back to Agadez if they are detected above the Séguédine-Dirkou line.

**Figure 28.** **Areas with the highest probability of future smuggling activities: potential smuggling hubs and major transit hotspots**



Source: DigitalGlobe, *Niger: The Sojourn State*, October 2016

**Likely future smuggling hubs and major transit hotspots**

Given the measures taken by the authorities in Niger, transit routes and migrant hubs are likely to change in the future. In trying to predict these changes, a software tool has been used (e.g. Signature Analyst) and the known smuggling hubs and transit points have been highlighted in order to train the model.

As depicted in Figure 28, hotspots were identified along the current smuggling routes. Any future change to the smuggling hubs will most likely occur as a result of pressure from local or regional authorities. Furthermore, attempts to patrol, police or eradicate smuggling in one transit point may result in a shift to a neighbouring town or village along the same route.

Any potential future hubs and transit points will likely be close to traversable paths and secondary roads, as well as water wells. Highlighted areas along Niger's border with Mali are also logical, considering Algeria's increased efforts to secure its borders. Assamakka, along the Algerian border, may also grow into a smuggling centre as migrants attempt to take the Algerian route in the hope to bypass the Trans-Sahara Highway border wall.

### 3.5.6. Morocco

Morocco set up a national strategy to combat cross-border crime. Part of the strategy is related to the fight against irregular migration. The country has developed a four-pronged approach aiming to reinforce the protection of shores and land borders, the maritime surveillance, the internal surveillance as well as to ensure the modernisation of BCPs.

The protection of 3 446 kilometres of shores alone mobilises some 13 000 staff. These measures come on top of the burden of monitoring 1 400 kilometres of land border that remains under strong migratory pressure.



Figure 29. **X-ray container check in Tangier**

The modernisation of BCPs aims at combating both document fraud and illegal border-crossings. For these purposes, BCPs have implemented profiling techniques and have been equipped with modern detection instruments (including container scanners and biometric tools).

Maritime surveillance is conducted by the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie and Royal Navy, while internal surveillance is intelligence-based and aims at preventing and deterring irregular migration. Forests that serve as hideouts for irregular migrants are also monitored.

This national strategy led to a drop of 92% in 2016 in the number of migrants arriving from Morocco on the shores of Europe compared with 2005 (55% in 2015). 95 criminal networks active in the trafficking of human beings were dismantled in 2015 (3 075 since 2002). In 2015, 35 484 attempts to migrate irregularly were thwarted (of which 28 211 involved foreign nationals) and 38 attempts to storm the fences protecting Melilla and Ceuta exclaves were foiled. By the end of August 2016, 23 541 attempts to migrate irregularly were thwarted (18 870 involved foreigners), 32 criminal networks were dismantled and 23 attempts

to scale the fences surrounding the exclaves were foiled.

It is worth underlining that Morocco has also made significant efforts to regularise the situation of numerous migrants staying illegally in the country as well as to foster their integration into society or to encourage their voluntary return.

## 3.6. Persistent issues and vulnerabilities affecting migratory movements from West Africa to the EU

### 3.6.1. Lack of proper implementation of ECOWAS free-movement protocols still a hindrance to regional integration and mobility

A study on intra-regional labour migration in ECOWAS published in July 2016, conducted by a team of researchers at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, revealed that ECOWAS member states still apply many restrictive policies to protect their economies.

## Africa Visa Openness Report 2016

African countries are in general more closed off than open to one another, making travel within the continent difficult:

- Africans need visas to travel to 55% of other countries;
- Africans can get visas on arrival in 25% of other African countries;
- Africans do not need a visa to travel to 20% of other African countries.

Global comparisons show that North Americans (US and Canadian citizens) have easier travel access to the continent than Africans themselves. North Americans require a visa to travel to 45% of African countries, can get visas on arrival in 35% of African countries and do not need a visa in 20% of African countries.

Free movement of people is not a reality across Africa. Central Africa and North Africa are the most closed off regions.

In the top 20 most visa-open countries, only one is in North Africa and none are in Central Africa. 75% of countries in the top 20 most visa-open countries are in West Africa or East Africa.

Source: Regional Integration and Trade African Development Bank

## Example of a local initiative: Dissuading young Somalis from migrating to Europe

*Tahribi*, the Arabic word for 'smuggle' has come to mean illegal emigration in the Somali language. According to a researcher at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, the flood of young people attempting to leave for Europe is considered a national disaster for Somaliland.[*]

This goes against the common assumption that families encourage emigration as a way of broadening their sources of income. In fact, what the researcher suggests is that, in Somaliland, young men leave on their own without their family's approval or knowledge.

Consequently, parents are trying to dissuade their children from dangerous irregular migration to Europe by buying them second-hand cars that can be converted into taxis. These cabs are now very much visible everywhere in Hargeisa, Somaliland's capital. They are known locally *as hooyo ha tahriibin*, which roughly means 'my son, do not *tahriib* (emigrate).' In fact, by spending between USD 2 000 and 3 000 on a second-hand car, families hope to give their children a source of income and, therefore, a reason to stay.

[*]  Somaliland, officially the Republic of Somaliland, is a self-declared state internationally recognised as an autonomous region of Somalia. The government of Somaliland regards itself as the successor state to the former British Somaliland protectorate, which as the State of Somaliland united as scheduled on 1 July 1960 with the Trust Territory of Somaliland (the former Italian Somaliland) to form the Somali Republic. Somaliland lies in north-western Somalia, on the southern coast of the Gulf of Aden.

In practice, this means that the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment along with the Supplementary Protocols continue to be only partially applied.

This finding contrasts with the study's affirmation that ECOWAS member states are determined to promote intra-regional movement and prevent harassment at the borders.

The issue seems to largely result from a lack of communication among different authorities in individual ECOWAS member states. The study recommended the deepening of dialogue with national authorities to ensure the application of all phases of the protocol and the related national laws.

Finally, the study states that there is the need to transform the role of border control and security officials into that of migration management agents.

### 3.6.2. Unrealistic expectations regarding life in Europe

Migration from West Africa to Europe is also a cultural phenomenon and not just a livelihood strategy. The decision to migrate is often based on false expectations and many migrants leave West Africa without a concrete project or a precise idea of what they can expect once they arrive in Europe.

According to the Frontex Consultative Forum on Human Rights, there are also those who leave West Africa because they are in need of international protection, or for other purposes, such as family reunification.

Migrants in Europe are also reluctant to share news of their desperate circumstances in fear of being seen as failures, especially by their families, who often make large financial sacrifices to get them there. Migrants increasingly use social media platforms to present their migration experience as a success story, while in fact their living conditions in the EU are at times desperate.
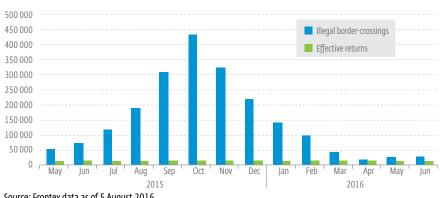
### 3.6.3. Very limited number of returns of irregular migrants to West Africa

It seems that the overall situation regarding effective returns performed by EU Member States did not change significantly. As indicated by Figure 30, despite the massive irregular movements into the EU (blue bars), the number of people effectively removed from the EU remained flat at around 15 500 on average per month between May 2015 and June 2016 (green bars). In addition, the monthly figures did not show any rising trend at the beginning of 2016, when many of the migrants or asylum seekers who had arrived in 2015 became eligible for return (due to a failed asylum claim or irregular stay).

By looking at a particular example of irregular migrants from West Africa whose asylum recognition rates are very low, this point becomes even clearer. Namely, during the period between March and June 2016 there was a gradual decrease in the number of effectively returned persons from West Africa. At the same time, the arrivals from West Africa on the Central Mediterranean route (Libya-Italy) grew exponentially.

Figure 30. **Effective returns remained basically at the same monthly level ever since the migration crisis started in 2015**
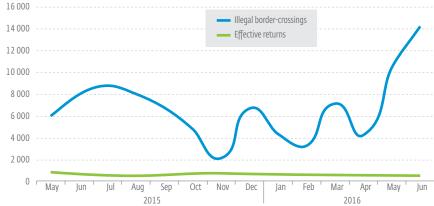*Monthly developments with regards to effective returns and illegal border-crossings as reported by FRAN members*



Source: Frontex data as of 5 August 2016

Figure 31. **Monthly detections of illegal border-crossing by migrants from West Africa increased significantly in the first half of 2016; however, no increase was recorded in the number of effectively returned West African countries' citizens**
*Monthly detections of illegal border-crossing by West African migrants and effective returns of West African country nationals in May 2015–June 2016*



Source: Frontex data as of 5 August 2016

# 4. Regional security threats

## 4.1. Focus on Boko Haram

Following the creation of the task force and increased commitment by the four most affected regional countries (Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon) to counter its actions, Boko Haram found itself increasingly embattled throughout 2015 and in the first half of 2016.
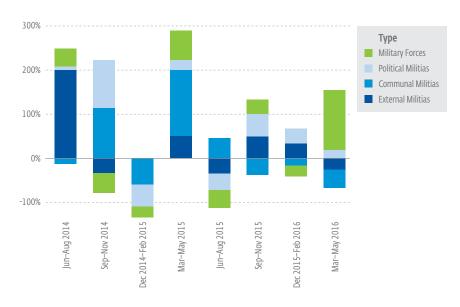
In this context, according to ACLED data, the number of violent events related to the group's activities rose from below 300 during 2014, to roughly 362 in 2015 as a result of more actions being conducted against it at the regional level, but also due to its attempts to expand/ redirect focus or hold on to previously conquered territory. Tragically, along with the increase in the number of violent events, the number of fatalities also surged from about 5 000 in 2014 to over 8 000 in the following year.

This impacted the group as apparently it reduced its capacity to produce fatalities in civilian-oriented violence. Specifically, in the first half of 2016, although the number of incidents targeting civilians remained high, the number of reported fatalities decreased, most likely as a result of the group's refocusing on more remote and less populated areas in an attempt to avoid direct military confrontation with the authorities.

Moreover, its initial tactics of confronting government forces militarily and holding on to territory proved detrimental to the group, resulting in a high number of fatalities in general and also in its ranks (see Fig. 34 – September 2014–March 2015). In consequence, the militants apparently refocused to hit-and-run or controlled-retreat tactics, which yielded less casualties and offered the opportunity to remain active even though at a smaller scale.

Figure 32. **The number of violent conflicts involving political militias decreased, suggesting that the conflict in Libya become less fragmented**
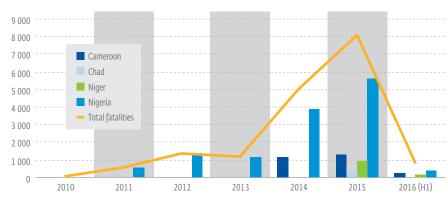*Change in the number of parties engaged in Libya by type, in June 2014–May 2016*



Source: ACLED Conflict Trends (No. 49), Real-Time Analysis of African Political Violence, June 2016

Figure 33. **The number of fatalities soared as Boko Haram attempted to hold on to its territory/resist counteractions by the military forces of the countries of the region**
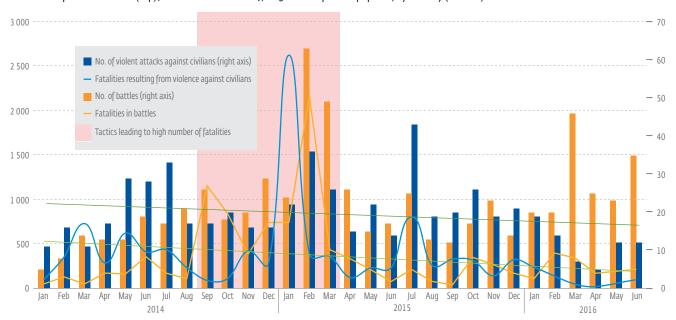*Number of fatalities associated with violent events involving Boko Haram in 2010–2016 (H1), by country*
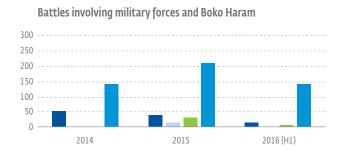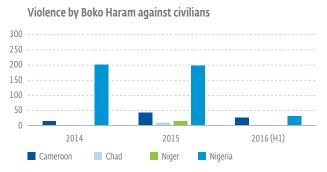


Source: ACLED data as of June 2016

Figure 34. **Due to increased military responses, the group's ability to perform attacks on civilians slowly diminished (top).**
**Most events took place in Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger (bottom)**
*Number of battles and violent attacks against civilians and fatalities in each such event involving Boko Haram and the military forces of Nigeria, Niger,*
*Chad in all of these countries (top); Violent attacks in 2014, 2015 and the first half of 2016, by country (bottom)*



Source: ACLED data as of June 2016

Nevertheless, the group showed flexibility as it was able to shift focus and exploit vulnerabilities by projecting terror on soft targets by mounting surprise attacks against military forces through hit-and-run tactics.

**Fewer options available for Boko Haram due to a better coordinated response in Nigeria**

Cameroon and Nigeria, together with UNHCR, signed an agreement on 12 June 2016 to facilitate the repatriation of 80 000 Nigerian refugees present in Cameroon's Extreme North due to attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria's north-eastern Borno State.[10]

Previous attempts to agree upon an orderly repatriation of up to 300 000 refugees from Cameroon to Nigeria had been unsuccessful, leading to forced repatriations by Cameroonian authorities, which often complained that Boko Haram militants may have hid-

10 http://dailypost.ng/2016/06/13/fg-unhcr-cameroon-sign-agreement-to-return-nigerian-refugees/

den among refugees with the intention of committing terrorist attacks in Cameroon. The agreement, which was reached when Cameroon's president visited Nigeria in early May 2016 to discuss ways to improve bilateral cooperation, points to the increase in coordination between Cameroon and Nigeria in their efforts against Boko Haram, lowering the threat posed by the Islamist militant group in the Cameroonian-Nigerian border region.

## Apparent shift of focus to Nigeria-Niger border areas

Joint operations between Nigerian and Cameroonian forces under the umbrella of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), previously a rare occurrence, increased significantly, leading to Boko Haram losing more than 95% of territory it previously held in north-eastern Nigeria. Since February 2015, Boko Haram has come under significant pressure from the combined forces of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.

Boko Haram, however, was attempting to reduce the impact of its recent losses of territory in north-eastern Nigeria by demonstrating the capability of attacking military posts in neighbouring countries.

On 4 June 2016, Daesh and its affiliated news agencies released statements and video footage of an attack carried out by Boko Haram in Bosso (Niger), north of the Borno State (Nigeria). The attack targeted a military base hosting Nigerien and Nigerian military forces, resulting in 35 soldiers killed and 70 soldiers wounded. Moreover, militants looted the base taking weapons and supplies and withdrew several hours later. Boko Haram's last significant attack against a Nigerien military target occurred in April 2015 on a Lake Chad island.

On 7 June 2016, Daesh published its second statement in less than a week concerning a Boko Haram operation. This statement covered an attack in northern Nigeria, also close to the border with Niger (Kanamma, Yobe State, Nigeria). According to the reports, militants attacked a police station and military base, killing seven security force personnel and seizing two 4x4 vehicles and assorted weaponry. Photos released two days later depicted the 'spoils' of the attack, seemingly validating the claims of seized weapons and vehicles.

Interestingly, the second attack occurred along the border with Niger, and also in the same general area as Bosso (Niger). Earlier in 2016, Boko Haram violence in Yobe State was mainly confined to the southern portion of the state, near reported former strongholds in Gujba and Gulani local government areas. At the same time, violence in Borno State followed a similar pattern, being mainly confined to the southern part of the state. However, on 18 April, Boko Haram militants launched a massive assault on Nigerian security forces in Kareto, which is located in the north.

The attacks did not seem to indicate a resurgence of Boko Haram's military capabilities to levels seen prior to March 2015, when it controlled towns and established a caliphate in Borno State, applying the maintain-and-expand tactics.

Nevertheless, the reported developments indicate a significant militant presence in the Nigeria-Niger border area, while the attacks like the ones in Bosso, Kanamma, and even Kareto may be a sign of increasing activity in this area. With this in mind, the group's capability to command resources despite pressure and setbacks elsewhere indicates continued security risks posed by the Daesh-affiliated militants.

## The situation in Mali

The overall trend described by ACLED data appears encouraging, especially considering that the first six months of 2016 were characterised by a relative stability. The total number of violent events registered between January and June 2016 remained below the levels seen in each first half of the previous four years (with the exception of 2014, which was the calmest since the beginning of the insurgency in 2012).

Importantly, some observers on the ground reported that the improvement of the security situation could result in the re-opening of some migrant smuggling routes connecting northern Mali to Algeria. These routes would enable migrants to reach Libya without passing through Niger.

Nevertheless, groups such as AQIM have always attempted to integrate with local communities in the Sahel, in order to expand their support base. For this reason, they turned to various ethnic groups exploiting local grievances to create new recruitment drives. These tactics is likely to prove more advantageous for militant groups, as the population levels in ma-

## Boko Haram media tactics – propaganda points

The media releases appeared to contain propaganda points that served to highlight advances made by Boko Haram despite a period of territorial losses over the previous 12 months. For example, the attack in Bosso (Niger) demonstrated the group's ability to gather an attack force, thus countering other narratives that the recent regional actions reduced it to a scattered and decimated force.

Moreover, the ability to carry out a major operation in Niger confirmed the group's commitment to cross-border operations and was meant to prove it was a West African militant group not confined to Nigeria.

The reporting about weapons capturing fit into the narrative as it served as a suggestion that the group was expanding its capacities and resources (a me-

dia tactic used in the past) countering narratives of it being weakened by concerted regional actions.

Indeed, a growing number of the group's attacks in the preceding 12 months were conducted in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, although this was as much a reflection of the increasing pressure it was facing in north-eastern Nigeria as of a rise in capabilities and operational scope.

## Fences flourish in some AFIC countries as response to security threats

Some fences have been in existence for decades. However, some AFIC countries have more recently taken to the building of new fences to tackle migratory activities and security threats such as organised crime, drug smuggling or terrorism. Thus, a glance at the whole region shows the existence of some friction points or areas of conflict where the construction of fences is seen as a solution to the regional threats.
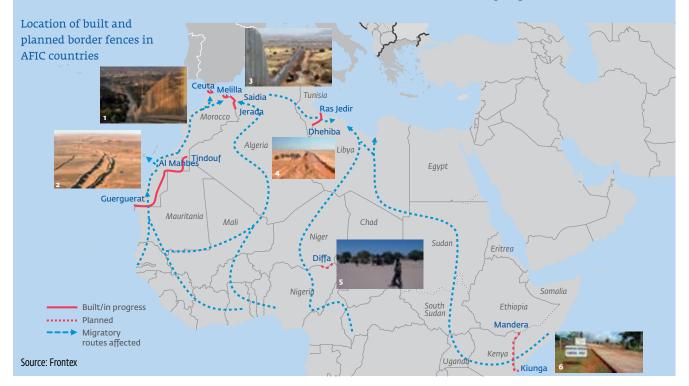
1. **Ceuta and Melilla:** The well-known fences which separate the only two Spanish exclaves in Africa from Morocco. These two fences come under constant migratory pressure as they are stormed by migrants (mainly sub-Saharans) trying to reach Spanish soil. The Moroccan authorities maintain an effective cooperation with the Spanish authorities in preventing illegal border-crossing from Moroccan territory.

2. **The Moroccan Wall (berm):** A 2 700-kilometre fence built by Morocco between 1980 and 1987 as a response to the conflict with Sahrawis and their claims to obtain the independence of Western Sahara. This corridor is heavily protected by land-mine fields and surveillance towers. Due to its path along the Moroccan borders with Algeria and Mauritania, this artificial border also affects the migratory movements to the northern shores of Morocco towards Spain.

3. **Fence between Morocco and Algeria:** According to the Moroccan authorities, this fence (covering just 140 kilometres of the border) is being constructed as a means to counter smuggling, trafficking and terrorist activities as well as to curb the irregular migration flows from Algeria. Thus, the reinforcement of the border between Morocco and Algeria might significantly reduce the flow of migrants trying to reach Libya or the EU via Morocco.

4. **Fence between Tunisia and Libya:** After several attacks and terrorist infiltrations of Tunisian territory by Daesh, the authorities of this country decided to build a 170-kilometre fence along its border with Libya to tackle the terrorist threat and other security risks. This increase in surveillance, troops and the construction of the fence also affects the migratory movements.

5. **Fence between Niger and Nigeria:** In September 2015, media reported on the presence of US soldiers helping with the construction of a fence in the area of Diffa, south-eastern Niger, at the border with Nigeria. According to the information, it is being built to neutralise the terrorist infiltrations of Nigerien territory by Boko Haram.

6. **Fence between Kenya and Somalia:** As Niger intends to build a fence to prevent Boko Haram's infiltrations of Diffa region, Kenya also plans to begin the construction of a 700-kilometre fence between the villages of Mandera and Kiunga along the border with Somalia in order to curb the terrorist infiltrations by the terrorist group al-Shabaab.

Location of built and planned border fences in AFIC countries



Built/in progress
Planned
Migratory routes affected

Source: Frontex

## Terror threat levels rise in Ghana

In March 2016, Ghana's National Security Council (NSC) disclosed that the country was facing a credible terrorist threat following deadly attacks in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire.

According to the Council, on the basis of information from the intelligence agencies and allied partners, it had determined that there was a credible terrorist threat to all countries in the sub-region.

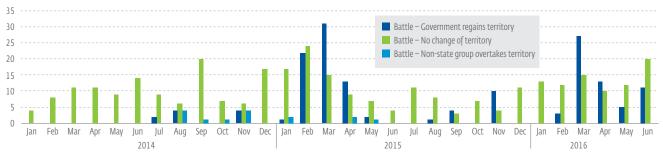jor cities in the Sahel continue to grow while economic growth and job opportunities remain limited.

## Militant shift of focus in response to stronger security

The downward trend of violent activities in Mali can be mainly linked to the fact that ever since 2014 the jihadist militias' capacities were severely limited by the government and international actions in the country and Sahel region in general (i.e. UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali – MINUSMA, operations Berkane and Serval).

In this context, it is worth noting some actions conducted by AQIM at the end of 2015 and in early 2016 highlighted its intention to act outside the traditional strongholds in northern Mali and Algeria, likely due to increased difficulties created by the ongoing security operations.

One attack was carried out in November 2015, against the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako (Mali), where 170 people were taken hostage and 21 killed. The following attack was perpetrated on the Cappuccino Café and Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), where other 170 hostages were taken and 30 persons were killed. More recently, in

**Figure 35.  Increased coordination leads to government forces regaining territory from Boko Haram**

*Battles by type in Nigeria (Boko Haram-only held territory in Nigeria) in January 2014–June 2016*



Source: ACLED data as of June 2016

**Figure 36.  Overall decreasing trend of violent events in Mali can be observed despite periods of recurring attacks and violent clashes; Nevertheless, the detections of illegal border-crossing to the EU by Malians were on the rise**

*Number of violent events in Mali by type, in January 2014–June 2016*



Source: ACLED data, FRAN and JORA data as of 12 July 2016

March 2016 the group claimed responsibility for an attack in the touristic town of Grand Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire) which resulted in 19 fatalities.

The terrorist group stated that the attacks were perpetrated as a response to the affected countries' participation and support for the security operations in Mali and Sahel (MINUSMA and French-led military operations Berkane and Serval) and threatened other similar actions in West Africa.

Military and security experts also catalogue these events as a shift of focus by AQIM forced by hardships in its traditional operation area rather than an increased capacity to capture new territories.[11] The perceived expansion of Daesh and its affiliates in Africa is another highly motivating factor for AQIM to shift its strategy and carry out attacks on targets which attract publicity (in order to attract more adherents, increase cooperation with other regional terrorist groups and reduce deflections to Daesh).

Apparently, the choice of soft targets and the low number of fatalities in relation to the hostages taken could be interpreted as a lack of experience by the perpetrators. However, this could also represent an attempt by the group to separate itself from the bloodier tactics of Daesh while still gaining publicity.

Similarly, the porosity of the ECOWAS borders can be a factor facilitating the extremists' movements through the region and, consequently, also easing the group's preparations (e.g. the Grand Bassam attack was carried out by fighters who entered Côte d'Ivoire from Mali driving Niger-registered vehicles).

11  https://janes.ihs.com/
TerrorismInsurgencyCentre/
Display/1771713

# 5. Cross-border criminality: drug trafficking

## 5.1. Morocco as a hub for cannabis trafficking towards the EU and local markets

Drug smuggling represents the most profitable activity for organised crime groups active in northern Morocco. As long as the smuggling of hashish is considered as a 'low-risk high-profit' business, the smuggling of migrants will always be perceived as a secondary activity. In fact, the proceeds from drug smuggling are significantly higher than those obtained from people smuggling.

For example, the selling price of a kilogram of medium-quality hashish is around EUR 600 in Morocco but it increases to about EUR 1 400 once delivered to the southern coast of Spain. As a general rule, the farther the drug is transported, the higher the price becomes (e.g. in northern Spain or France the selling price of one kilogram is around EUR 2 200).

Hashish is transported from the Moroccan coast on different types of vessels: inflatable boats, speed boats with three or four outboard engines, fishing vessels, jet-skis and even aeroplanes. In the event of a possible interception by the Spanish authorities, the drugs are thrown overboard and dumped into the water. For this reason, hashish is often discovered in bundles floating on the sea surface.

Although small quantities are seized almost on a daily basis, during the eight-day period between 2 and 10 September 2016, more than 31 000 kg of hashish were confiscated by the Spanish authorities in cooperation with Frontex-deployed assets in four different incidents. The biggest seizure of 14 480 kg on a leisure boat was made at the moment the drugs were being transferred from several fast boats coming from Morocco.

From the beginning of the Joint Operation Indalo on 26 July till 31 August 2016, 38 841 kg of hashish were seized with an estimated street value of EUR 60 million.

## 5.2. Cocaine and heroin

Cocaine trafficking via Africa continues to maintain its importance as the main stop-over towards the EU market. Likewise, illicit production and distribution centres have emerged in Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Guinea and Nigeria. Heroin and cocaine criminal networks are also targeting the growing African middle class to raise the consumption of these narcotics and boost the proceeds from the African market.

The largest quantity of cocaine seized in West African countries was reported by Cape Verde, followed by the Gambia, Nigeria and Ghana. Africa continues being supplied with cocaine departing from Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Chile. UNODC reported that the African country most frequently mentioned (by other African countries) as a country of departure or transit concerning shipments of cocaine within Africa was Nigeria, followed by Ghana, Mali and Guinea.



© Frontex

Figure 37. **Fast boats used to transfer hashish from Morocco spotted during the JO Indalo**

## 5.3. Drug trafficking cases reported by AFIC partners

### Benin: Indian hemp and prescription drugs

Benin is facing various challenges in the field of narcotics. Its proximity to Nigeria brings about insecurity in the border area. More specifically, local populations living in the vicinity of the border are keen to grow and consume Indian hemp. Benin's authorities have established border surveillance special units (*Unités Spéciales de Surveillance des Frontières* – USSF) dedicated to combating drug trafficking. These dedicated units can boast some successful operations, including the seizure of two tonnes of Indian hemp carried by Nigerian nationals in Iwoyé near the border with Nigeria in 2016.

Another source of concern for the Beninese authorities in the field of narcotics is the abuse of Tramadol, an opioid pain medication. To address this phenomenon, a dedicated unit has been established to monitor the flow of containers in the port of Cotonou. In the first half of 2016, this unit (*Unité Mixte de Contrôle des Conteneurs* – UMCC) managed to seize more than 62 tonnes of Tramadol. Another success of the UMCC was the detection and seizure of 70 kg of pure cocaine on 4 August 2016.

### Cape Verde: Gold and currency smuggling

Gold smuggling is an illegal activity that is becoming more and more frequently detected by Cape Verdean border authorities. Cape Verde's legislation requires to obtain a ministerial authorisation in order to be allowed to travel with a quantity of gold exceeding the value of EUR 5 000. In many cases, travellers are detected at the airport carrying a quantity of gold that exceeds the authorised limit. In most cases, the offenders are Senegalese or young Cape Verdean women.

Gold is usually hidden inside the luggage, in electronic devices or under clothes. The most frequent destination of the offenders is Dakar and further on Dubai. The likely consequence for the offender is the confiscation of the gold, usually seized by customs, and the imposition of a fine.

Travelling with hard cash (i.e. more than EUR 9 000) requires a permission from the national bank. However, cases violating this requirement are reported on a regular basis. Individuals involved in this type of offence are usually local businessmen as well as Nigerian, Chinese and Portuguese nationals. Money is often hidden inside a suitcase, under clothes or even inside food. Offenders usually travel to Dakar, Lisbon or Boston. The amounts detected can be substantial (i.e. four seizures of around USD 500 000 were made). If the origin of the money is legal, the person is merely fined. Otherwise, the money is confiscated.

### Reported by AFIC experts from Senegal

In November 2015, the Senegalese authorities uncovered a case in which a Ghanaian man wanted to smuggle 66 pellets of cocaine amounting to 0.91 kg, on a Turkish Airlines flight from Dakar to Istanbul. The arrest was made after a tip-off, and a urine test that confirmed suspicions that the man was carrying drugs in his stomach.



© Beninese authorities

Figure 38. **Seizure of two tonnes of Indian hemp in Iwoyé by the USSF**
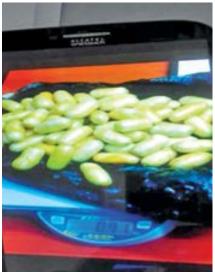


© Senegalese authorities

Figure 39. **About one kilogram of cocaine seized by the Senegalese authorities in November 2015**

Figure 40. **Shipment consisting of three tonnes of cannabis seized by the Togolese authorities in July 2016**

### Reported by AFIC experts from Togo

On 23 July 2016, a truck transporting timber logs was intercepted and after searching activities three tonnes of cannabis carefully hidden in different packages were seized by the Togolese authorities.
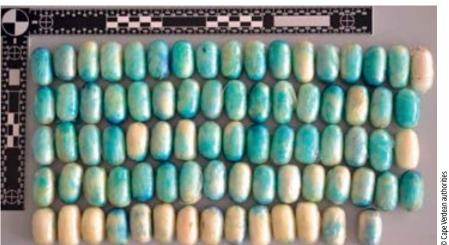
### Reported by AFIC experts from Cape Verde

A 30-year old Cape Verdean female was arrested arriving on a TACV Cabo Verde Airlines flight from Bissau to Praia in December 2016. She carried fifteen 200-millilitre bottles labelled *Oléo Amêndoas Doce*

(Portuguese for 'sweet almond oil'), which were found to contain cocaine. The woman was arrested and put in preventive custody pending court proceedings in Praia.

Figure 41. **Three litres of cocaine seized by Cape Verdean authorities in December 2015**

Figure 42. **Cocaine pellets seized by the Cape Verdean authorities in February 2016**





Figure 43. **Two suspects arrested for smuggling cannabis seized by the Sierra Leonean authorities in January 2016**

On 8 February 2016, a citizen (aged 40) of Guinea Bissau, a resident of Sao Paulo (Brazil), was arrested after he arrived on a TACV Cabo Verde Airlines flight from Recife (Brazil) to Sal-Praia (Cape Verde). He was detected carrying almost 0.9 kg of cocaine in his stomach. In this specific case, the suspect was arrested and put in preventive custody pending final court trial in Praia.

## Reported by AFIC experts from Sierra Leone

On 29 January 2016, two Sierra Leoneans, both from the northern part of the country, were arrested on the Liberian side of the border with 33 bundles of cannabis. The two suspects are alleged to have travelled from northern Sierra Leone, and crossed through the Mano Kpende River on the Sierra Leone side of the border into Liberia.

**FRONTEX**
EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

Plac Europejski 6
00-844 Warsaw, Poland

T +48 22 205 95 00
F +48 22 205 95 01

frontex@frontex.europa.eu
**www.frontex.europa.eu**