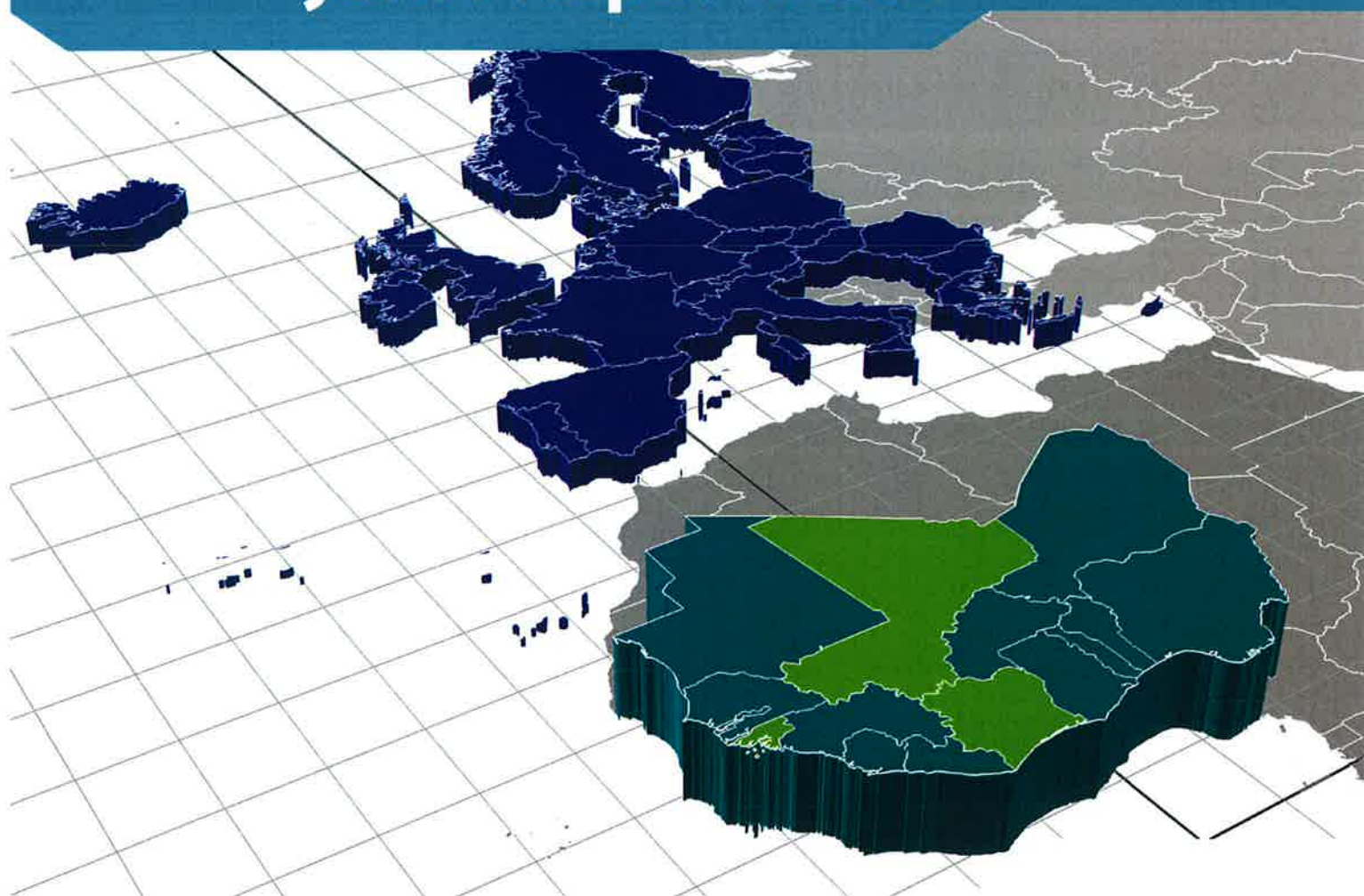


Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Joint Report 2012



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Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community Joint Report 2012



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Executive summary

Cross-border criminal activities and people smuggling

As in other regions of the world, cross-border criminality in West Africa can be largely divided into two main groups: smuggling of people and illicit trade. Illicit trade is often driven by factors such as considerable cross-border price differentials and differences in the legal status of particular products, level of taxation of excise goods, as well as local, regional and global demand for smuggled goods. In many cases, locals participating in illicit trade consider their activity as legitimate given the lack of other economic opportunities.

Additionally, most borders in West Africa are highly porous and difficult to patrol. This further facilitates illegal cross-border flow of goods and people both in the region and en route towards Europe.

The phenomenon of possible links between human smuggling and various cross-border criminal activities in West Africa is therefore very complex and not easy to analyse. What is clear, however, is that both extend beyond the regional borders and thus require concerted efforts by more than one country in Africa and Europe. It is therefore vital to look at the entire chain of criminal activities from the source countries, through various transit countries until the final destinations of people and illicit goods.

From the AFIC* point of view, human smuggling seems to be linked with trafficking in human beings, as smuggled persons may end up as victims of trafficking on arrival at their destination. Moreover, some groups that engage in smuggling of migrants are

also engaged in illicit drug trade as well as document forgery.

The use of migrants as drug mules on flights to the EU departing from West African airports constitutes the most important connection between illicit drug trade and people smuggling to the EU. Migrants are able to finance their journey or obtain forged documents in exchange for accepting to carry illicit drugs during their journey.

There is also a clear collusion of interest between various groups that use the same smuggling routes for illicit goods and migrants. Namely, some groups in Sahel or the Niger Delta benefit from collecting protection payments due to their strategic control along these routes.

Changes in the traditional illegal migration routes from West Africa to the EU

The trend of arrivals on the Canary Islands has been on a constant decrease since 2008. Effective counter-measures taken jointly by Spain, Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal in the field of intelligence sharing, surveillance, effective returns, as well as extensive Frontex-coordinated activities along the West African coast are the main reasons for the decrease. In fact, in 2012 only a negligible number of irregular migrants arrived on the islands. At the same time, the migratory flow through Mauritania and Morocco towards Spain gained in importance.

Regardless of this partial shift, the AFIC partners stress that the pressure in the source countries persists; local push factors have not changed and the facilitation networks

* The Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community

The non-disclosed text contains information on migration trends within a Third Country and was obtained via bilateral cooperation with that Third Country. Its disclosure would undermine the future cooperation with such country. In this regard the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the third indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards international relations.

remain active. The revival of migration flows towards the Canary Islands is unlikely as long as the described effective counter-measures remain in place. Importantly, several thousand sub-Saharanans have been discovered in cities along the West African coast; they are believed to be en route to Spain.

Maritime arrivals in southern Spain and the two Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla have demonstrated a relatively stable trend in the recent two years with the exception of a spike during the initial stages of the Arab Spring in 2011. Given the difficulties related to reaching the Canary Islands, many groups of sub-Saharanans have settled both in Morocco and Algeria with the intention to ultimately reach mainland Spain.

Facilitation networks have adapted their operations (shifting departure points) and the type of services offered (type of boats) to these migrants in order to circumvent new or additional measures put in place by the Spanish, Algerian and Moroccan authorities.

In any case, the attractiveness of the land route via Mauritania towards Morocco and Algeria started to grow in 2011 with the war in Libya and has continued during 2012. Namely, as a result of the insurgency in northern Mali, the inland route over Gao, Tamanrasset into Libya, and ultimately towards the Italian Pelagic Islands has become very dangerous.



On the other hand, transiting through Turkey before illegally entering the EU in Greece seems to be gaining in popularity also for would-be migrants from West Africa. Namely, arriving in Turkey by air from different departure airports in Africa is increasingly made easier by the constant expansion of Turkish Airlines' network in Africa.

The option of flying to Turkey and subsequent illegal entry to the EU in Greece is normally faster, safer, and much cheaper than the more traditional land and sea migration routes. It is therefore not surprising that in the first seven months of 2012 alone, there were more Nigerian nationals detected for illegal border-crossing in Greece than in Spain and Italy combined.

Emerging issues related to Asian migration in Africa

Countries in West Africa are not usual destinations of choice for migrants coming from beyond the region itself. This is clearly the case for nationals of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, China and Bangladesh (Asian migrants), whose numbers in West Africa remain relatively modest at best and difficult to ascertain precisely.

However, with growing investments by Chinese and, to a lesser extent, also Indian companies, more Asian migrants are now a much more common site in West Africa, in particular Nigeria. The novelty of this phenomenon and especially the fact that many of those who initially come for the short term only to work with a Chinese or Indian company then decide to stay, legally or illegally, and even bring their families along, is a source of concern for the authorities in the region.

Furthermore, Chinese migrants seem resourceful and opportunistic, and readily engage in a variety of legal and illegal businesses. It is generally felt that this phenomenon is not under control and does not always contribute in a positive way to the society.



The non-disclosed text reveals some features and shortcomings of a given Third Country's border control system. Its disclosure would undermine the operational and tactical features of that Third Country's border surveillance activity. In this regard the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.



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Pakistani nationals, especially radical preachers, are of concern for several West African authorities due to their possible involvement in radicalisation, typically in deprived rural areas.

1. Introduction

The Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community 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 following the two already-established regional Risk analysis Networks (Western Balkans Risk Analysis Network, WB-RAN and Eastern Borders Risk Analysis Network, EB-RAN)..

A conference initiating this network with selected African states from West and North Africa as well as Immigration Liaison Officers based in some African countries, took place in Madrid on 14 and 15 April 2010. Participants

to the conference agreed to name this network the Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community, in short AFIC.

Following this conference, Frontex organised a workshop for African delegates to provide an introduction to Frontex, in particular in the field of risk analysis, and initiate discussions on the exchange of information on border security. Frontex also organised a thematic conference at the end of 2011 to test the ability of the community to work together.

As an outcome of these discussions and experiences made, it was agreed to create more opportunities for joint analytical work and finally to deliver a joint product in the course of 2012.



2. Methodology

In 2012, the following AFIC countries participated in the joint effort through workshops and drawing up the first Joint Report: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Representatives came from different authorities, including Ministries of Interior, National Polices or Gendarmeries, Immigration Services, or agencies fighting trafficking in persons like NAPTIP in Nigeria.

In its first workshop in 2012, the AFIC decided to adopt a thematic approach and structure its work around three topics:

- Links between human smuggling and other types of cross-border crime activity (including the issue of porosity of borders);
- Changes in traditional migration routes; and
- Emerging issues in migratory movements from Asia to West Africa (with focus on main nationalities, for example: Chinese, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians).

The workshop also developed a data collection plan to guide the work to be done independently by each participant before the next workshop. Most countries reported difficulties when answering the questions due to lack of systematically collected data, or the difficulties in obtaining data/information collected by other services.

The contributions from African partners were complemented by information from Frontex-coordinated Joint Operations, Frontex Risk Analysis Network and European Document Fraud project. Open sources were also consulted to provide contextual information.

A first draft was discussed at the second workshop that took place in Madrid in September 2012. In addition to joint work done during the workshop, some countries also provided written contributions. The final report, which comprises and reflects all inputs, was drawn up by Frontex.

3. Links between smuggling of migrants and other cross-border criminal activities

3.1. Introduction

Many criminal activities in West Africa (see Fig. 1) involve or are directly dependent on cross-border flows. This chapter aims to describe the most relevant (for AFIC partners and/or EU Member States) criminal or illicit undertakings and to identify possible links with people smuggling towards the EU. However, before addressing the issues of such connections and describing the most common cross-border criminal activities, several explanatory remarks about people smuggling towards the EU are needed.

Firstly, people smuggling should be defined as 'the facilitation, transportation or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border, in violation of one or more countries' laws, either clandestinely or through

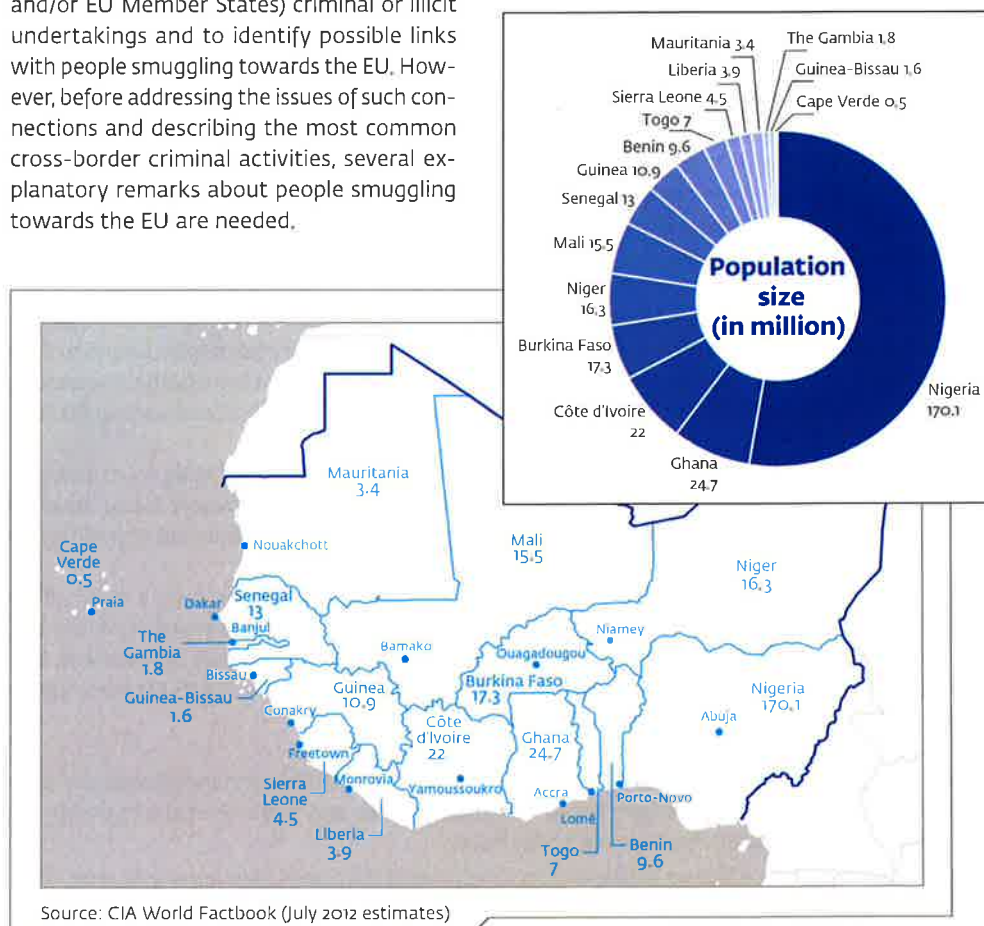


Figure 1. General map of the AFIC partner countries and respective population size



deception, such as the use of fraudulent documents'. In addition to facilitating the initial illegal entry, Frontex also considers attempts to fraudulently legalise stay once already at the destination of choice (e.g. sham marriages, fraudulent work permits, student visas scams, etc.) as an integral part of people smuggling activities. People smugglers capitalise on possessing certain specialised knowledge, assets

or methods that are not commonly available. While financial gain is the primary incentive for smugglers, they may also act on other motives (e.g. family or clan networks).

Secondly, criminal and/or financial penalties for detected smugglers are usually much less severe than in the case of other cross-border crimes. This reduces personal risks for smug-

Cross-border movement of people under ECOWAS free-movement provisions

The existence of the ECOWAS free-movement provisions facilitates legitimate movements. However, the provisions remain limited to mutual abolition of visa obligation between the ECOWAS members. They do not yet include, the right to reside, work or open a business in another ECOWAS country.

Furthermore, many would-be migrants from the ECOWAS region are not aware of possible visa-free travel or cannot afford to pay legal fees for travel documents or different permits, and opt for irregular entry channels instead. ECOWAS Member States reserve their full right to refuse entry to anyone from the ECOWAS region on the basis of their national legislation, which can differ enormously between ECOWAS countries. In some ECOWAS Member States, border control officials enjoy an absolute discretion to refuse entry to would-be migrants without the need to explain their reason or process the case.

In some cases ECOWAS nationals even experience routine intimidation and harassment by border control officials. For example, between Badagry (the exit point from Nigeria to Benin) and Noe (the entry point from Ghana to Côte d'Ivoire), there are an estimated 120 border posts and security check points, forcing individuals crossing these borders to switch intermittently from one official language to the other and exchange currencies several times across borders.

ECOWAS is aware of the uneven implementation of its protocols on free movement and is stepping up its information campaigns and training for immigration officials in a bid to increase legal mobility of people along the main migration corridor in West Africa (Lagos-Cotonou-Lome-Accra-Abidjan-Ouagadougou-Bamako-Conakry).

For example, an ECOWAS information workshop for government officials and non-state actors was held at the end of June 2012 in Accra, Ghana. The participants called on ECOWAS Member States to ensure effective implementation of the regional free movement protocol by reducing and ultimately eliminating 'harassment, corruption and extortion by border agents.' One of the main recommendations was for ECOWAS Member States to consider installing security cameras at border posts to counter this problem.

Free movement of goods, services and persons within the region will also be further enhanced once the construction of five Joint Border Posts along the Abidjan-Lagos, Cotonou-Niamey and Dakar-Bamako regional corridors is completed (under the ECOWAS/EU Partnership agreement).

Sources: Regional Integration in the ECOWAS Region: Challenges and Opportunities, The Africa Portal backgrounder series, January 2012, Promoting integration through mobility: free movement and the ECOWAS Protocol, Research Paper No. 150, UNHCR, ECOWAS Press release N°: 175/2012

glers and makes smuggling a more socially acceptable practice than, for example, illicit drug trade. Furthermore, even if detected on entry to the EU at land or sea borders, smuggled migrants may still reach their destination.

Thirdly, while movements of people within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS region) can be irregular in nature (see text box on ECOWAS free-movement provisions), would-be migrants often solicit smuggling services only when contemplating irregular migration beyond the region of West Africa itself (to the EU, the Persian Gulf, North America). These services come either in pay-as-you-go arrangements with a chain of smugglers involved or as full-package deals including transport from the country of origin to the desired destination.

Fourthly, smuggling of people by land and sea from West Africa to final destinations in the EU involves transit through several countries in Africa and Europe, which requires coordinated mitigation measures (as it extends across many legal jurisdictions). Moreover, smugglers tend to regularly change their methods, *modi operandi* and entry points in response to counter measures implemented.

3.2. A brief overview of the most common cross-border criminal activities

As in other regions of the world, cross-border criminality in West Africa can be largely divided into two main categories: smuggling of people and illicit trade. Illicit trade can be further classified into six main nonexecutive categories*:

- Trafficking in human beings;
- Smuggling of natural resources and wildlife: crude oil (bunkering), cocoa, gold, minerals, vital commodities or crops, ivory, horns of rhinoceros and/or other protected species;

- Smuggling of excise goods: cigarettes (genuine or counterfeited) or fuel;
- Drug trafficking;
- Smuggling of stolen cattle, stolen vehicles, toxic wastes, weapons, firearms and ammunition;
- Maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

Illicit trade is often driven by factors such as considerable cross-border price differentials and differences in the legal status of particular products, taxation of excise goods, as well as local, regional and global demand for smuggled goods. In many cases, locals participating in illicit trade consider their activity as legitimate given the lack of other economic opportunities. Additionally, most borders in West Africa are highly porous and difficult to patrol with border control authorities often suspected of corrupt practices (see text box on ECOWAS free-movement provisions). This in turn further facilitates illegal cross-border flow of goods and people both in the region and transiting towards Europe.

3.2.1. West Africa's porous borders

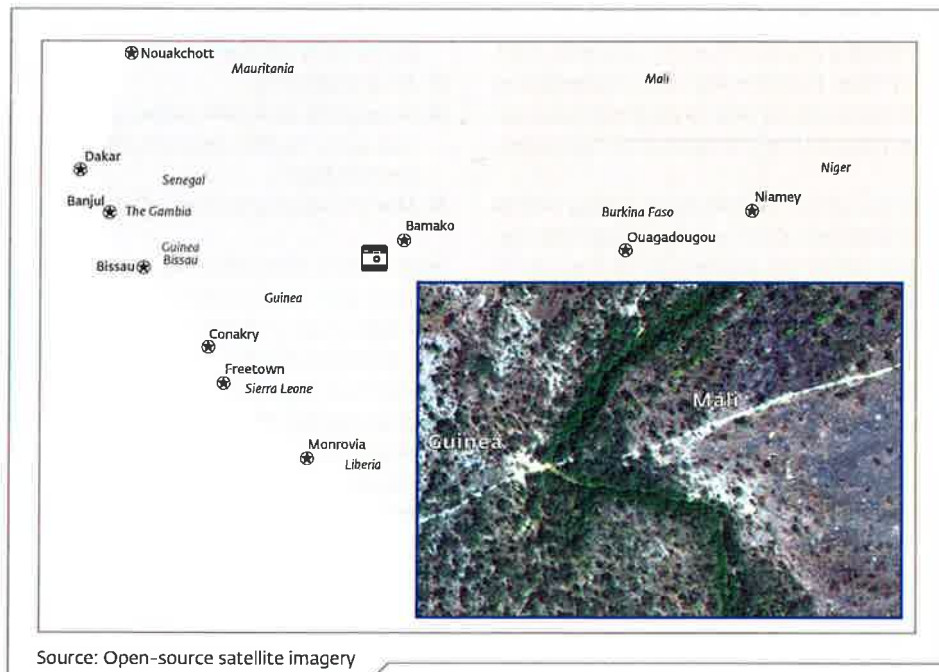
Border security and border management in general have a relatively low priority for governments in West Africa. According to some estimates, roughly three-quarters of all borders on the African continent are not or only very poorly demarcated (see Fig. 2). In other words, countries in West Africa often do not know where exactly their state borders are, which means that the borders are not properly monitored, patrolled or controlled.

Borders in West African countries also cut through a wide variety of difficult terrains: from the desert areas of Sahel to the mangrove creeks in the coastal areas of the Gulf of Guinea. The climate, with a marked wet season across most of West Africa, also makes some border areas inaccessible for several months.

* The list is based on AFIC African partners' written contributions to the present Joint Report, Frontex in-house data (Joint Operations, ad hoc reports) and relevant open-source reporting.



The non-disclosed parts on this page reveal some features and shortcomings of a given Third Country's border control system. Its disclosure would undermine the operational and tactical features of that Third Country as regards border control activity. In this regard the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.



Source: Open-source satellite imagery

Figure 2. Many border sections between West African countries are not guarded or patrolled: the photo shows a trail between Fatakou (Guinea) and the city of Balankomana (Mali) towards Bamako cutting the river delineating the Guinean-Malian border

Small number of official border-crossing points in Sierra Leone (958 km of land borders and 402 km of sea borders)

There are only three official class A crossing points in the country: Mano River Bridge and Koindu crossing points on the border with Liberia and Gbalamuya crossing point on the border with Guinea. There are, however, numerous other informal crossing points, most of which are simple footpaths through which motorbikes and people can traverse.



Source: Sierra Leone's written contribution to the Joint Report 2012

In addition, weak public service infrastructure in many border areas, chronic understaffing, low number of official border control posts (BCPs) measured against the extensive length of land borders and a general lack of technical means for surveillance all contribute to high permeability and porosity of land borders in West Africa.



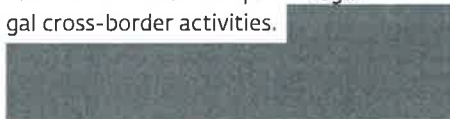
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While the high porosity of land borders facilitates uncontrolled cross-border flows of people and illicit goods in West Africa, many communities view the porosity as an essential part of their daily social and economic life. Namely, given the origin of land borders in West Africa, border areas are often dividing territories of established cultural and ethnic groups. Several AFIC partners were also reporting on the collusion between traffickers and local populations creating a sense of borderless territories.

In the case of maritime borders, the lack of effective surveillance clearly provides additional opportunities for drug smugglers, illegal fishing and the piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Most African countries also do not possess sufficient capacity to board suspicious ships at high seas or even systematically check for illegal and dangerous goods in their ports. As a result, drug smuggling is often carried out using offshore drops or container shipments.

These challenges are very difficult to address. However, the border porosity issue should not be overestimated. Geographical barriers also act as natural barriers between countries and limit the volume of both legal and illegal cross-border activities.



Example of effective cooperation at sea borders – Mauritania cooperating with Spain

In 2008, a Joint Investigating Team (ECI) based in Nouadhibou (Mauritania) was established to tackle the migratory movements towards Spanish territory coming from sub-Saharan countries, especially towards the Canary Islands. This team has 5 Spanish National Police officers and 5 Mauritanian Police officers.

In May 2012, the Mauritanian DSPCM (Delegation for Fishing Surveillance and Sea Control) of Mauritanian Ministry of Fishing and Maritime Economy and the Spanish authorities renewed the MOU that foresees the inland deployment of ECI and also joint maritime and aerial patrols in Mauritanian national waters for the purpose of tackling illegal migration and cross-border crimes.



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exploited en route or in the destination country. As these debt/labour obligations incurred by migrants are easily enforceable by criminal groups, it can be profitable for smugglers to finance such migration.

3.2.2. Trafficking in human beings

Factors underlying trafficking in human beings include limited economic opportunities, disparate socio-economic conditions, regional imbalances and violence. The line between people smuggling and human trafficking in the case of West Africa is therefore often blurred as a prospective migrants may often end up as victim of trafficking once in destination country. This was emphasised by Senegal during the second AFIC workshop as they noted that a number of Senegalese women smuggled to North Africa are ultimately exploited.

For example, unconfirmed reports suggest that smugglers working on the route through the desert from Gao to Algeria used to confiscate migrants' passports and force the migrants to work for them, sometimes for months, in remote locations such as Kidal and Tessalit. This assumption not corroborated yet by Frontex in-house information, but if accurate it would an illustration of the blurry line between smuggling of migrants and trafficking of persons.

Likewise, when irregular migration is financed by smugglers themselves (debt-financed migration), migrants often find themselves ex-

In West Africa, trafficking in human beings usually takes place in the context of the extended family, tribal, and religious affiliation, where children are often placed outside their biological family with the objective of securing better education and working opportuni-

'Anchor children'

The minors detected in southern Spain were accompanied by Nigerian women who declared to be their mothers; however the DNA tests carried out excluded parenthood. When confronted, the irregular migrants stated that they were instructed by smugglers to carry the minors during the sea crossing and falsely declare the maternity in order to benefit from the Spanish immigration law on family reunification. The main objective is to be granted with legal documentation that will allow the free movement within the EU area and to sponsor immigration for 'family members' who are still abroad.



Sub-Saharan migrants (including pregnant women and suspected 'anchor children') staying in a temporary settlement in the Oujda mountains (eastern Morocco) before an attempt to cross to Europe (evidence collected by the Spanish authorities in the framework of JO Indalo 2012)

Source: Frontex, Weekly Analytical Report, JO EPN Indalo, 28 September 2012

ties for them. Parents' ignorance of the risks involved in entrusting their child to other persons is exploited by traffickers. Traffickers of children are both women and men, and in many cases they are relatives of the victims.

Trafficked girls and young women are primarily destined for either domestic servitude or forced prostitution in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. As an example, Nigerian and Italian authorities estimate that there are 10 000 to 15 000 Nigerian prostitutes in Italy. The dismantlement of a criminal group trafficking in minors bound for sexual exploitation in the EU in Mauritania in 2011 serves as another example. This trafficking enterprise was operated by a Congolese national.

Frontex-led Joint Operation EPN Indalo 2012 revealed that a growing number of pregnant* Nigerian women or those with infants are being detected on arrival in Spain from Morocco. The reasons for this increase are probably linked with the fact that Spanish authorities refrain from initiating return procedures for pregnant women. Another possible explanation is a growing popularity of the so called 'anchor children' *modus operandi* (see box). These women are believed to be later forced into prostitution.

Frontex operational information also suggests that while still in Morocco, some of the women and older girls are coerced into prostitution or, less frequently, forced into domestic servitude. Most sub-Saharan African migrants reach Oujda, Morocco, generally via Algeria. Some of the female migrants in Oujda are subsequently forced into prostitution once they reach Europe. Trafficking is organised in the country of departure, often with the assistance of family members, and some networks in Africa have linkages in Europe. Most female sex trafficking victims are Nigerian and Malian.

Trafficking in children

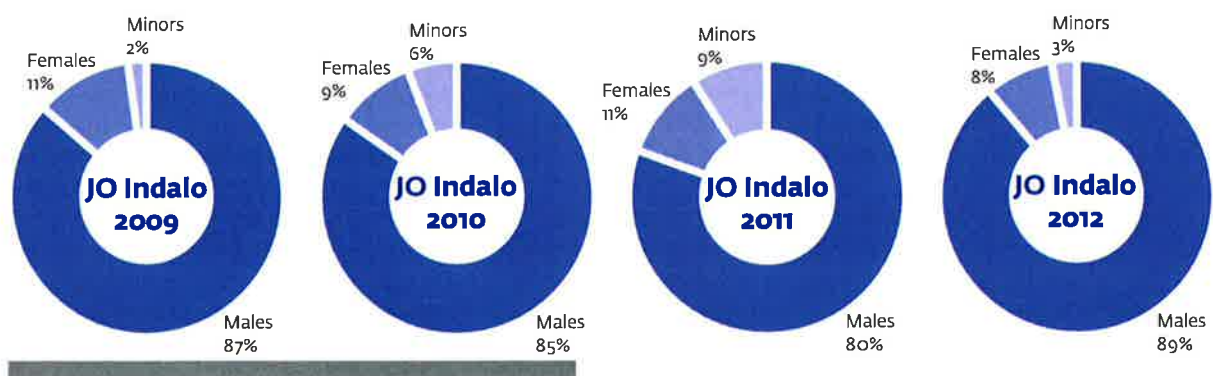
Accurate statistics on this phenomenon are notoriously difficult to obtain. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates the number of trafficked children, especially girls, for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation in West and Central Africa at around 200 000 to 300 000 each year.** Togo was able to provide national data, which sheds some light on the magnitude of this phenomenon when compared to the country's overall population of 6.7 million: in 2006, 2 537 children were registered as victims of trafficking, and 3 365 in 2007,

* Most of the pregnant women were between the fifth and ninth month of pregnancy.

** UNICEF 2001

*** It is noteworthy to specify that the timeframe of these operations differs from one year to another: 2009 (from 14 Sept to 16 October – 50 days), 2010 (from 4 June to 31 October – 118 days), 2011 (from 9 May to 20 December – 226 days) and 2012 (from 16 May to 31 October).

Figure 3. Proportion of women and children among the irregular migrants coming from selected West African countries intercepted in the framework of the JO Indalo





'Baby harvesting'

A more unusual case was a 'baby harvesting' case reported orally by Burkina Faso during the second AFIC workshop: a pregnant woman from Burkina Faso who was supposed to travel illegally from Libya to Italy and give birth to a baby to be sold to a local couple. She was finally charged with human trafficking back in Burkina Faso.

This non-disclosed information relates to the operational details of the operation and its release would undermine the effectiveness of future endeavours and, by extension, the public security. It is thus covered by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).



followed by a slightly decreasing trend in following years.

In conclusion, in West Africa child trafficking is the most commonly observed type of regional trafficking in human beings with little or no link to illegal migration to the EU. In contrast, the smuggling of African women to the EU appears to be closely linked to trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

3.2.3. Drug trafficking

Cannabis

Although the lack of data regarding drug use is particularly acute in Africa, it is widely acknowledged that cannabis is the most commonly consumed drug in West Africa. It is mainly grown in Ghana and Sierra Leone and widely trafficked within the extended region. The *modi operandi* used by traffickers are very similar to the ones used in the EU.

There are, however, some indications that cannabis from West Africa might be increasingly smuggled out of the region and towards North Africa (possibly going to Europe). Senegalese authorities reported one case of a well-established oil transportation company



Figure 4. At the beginning of October 2012, Moroccan customs officials seized several tonnes of cannabis resin in the port of Agadir hidden in a container of frozen octopus bound for the southern Spanish port of Algeciras

that was prosecuted for smuggling 1.3 tonnes of cannabis discovered hidden in an oil lorry en route from Dakar to Bamako.

The EU is nevertheless primarily affected by cannabis produced in and trafficked from Morocco. The seizure of roughly 30 tonnes of hashish so far in 2012 during Frontex-led Joint Operation Indalo at the southern Spanish coast is the latest confirmation of this assessment. The estimated value of the seized drugs is around EUR 41 million.

Cocaine

Cocaine remains the second most commonly used illicit drug in Europe (after cannabis). According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)'s 2011 Annual Report, Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal, and to some extent Belgium, appear to be the main points of entry to Europe for cocaine. Within Europe, reports frequently mention Germany, France and the UK as important transit or destination countries. The UK estimates that 25 to 30 tonnes of cocaine are imported into the country each year. While exact figures are not avail-

able, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates suggest that 13% of all cocaine exported from South America and destined for Europe in 2010 went via West Africa.

West Africa appears as a major transit area for cocaine en route to the EU, a phenomenon that started in the early 2000s when Latin American drug cartels gradually developed transit activities along the coast of West Africa. The cartels found local partners in Nigerian organised crime, mostly from Edo State.

More recently, an increase in shipments of cocaine arriving via Guinea Bissau was reported. According to the World Drug Report 2012, cocaine trafficking in West Africa is estimated to generate some USD 900 million in annual profits for criminal networks, which is almost 10% of the annual GDP of Guinea-Bissau.

Benin and Togo continue to play a key role in the transit of drugs through ports and airports, while Côte d'Ivoire is emerging as an increasingly important transit country. The use of West Africa as a transit point for cocaine destined for the EU has resulted in large seizures of cocaine in West Africa, as well as increased seizures of shipments in Europe originating from Africa. For example, in 2011 Benin alone managed to seize 200 kg of cocaine at Cotonou port and an additional 450 kg in the city.

Available information suggests that most of the cocaine that comes to West Africa by boat is subsequently transported in smaller shipments by air to Europe. According to historical data from 2006 to 2008, 200 kg of cocaine were seized at EU airports on flights coming from Benin. Data collected by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) showed that by the end of 2008 the phenomenon was widespread and concerned most West African countries (see Fig. 5).

Apart from using regular flights and air mules (see box), cocaine is usually split up and distributed by criminal gangs that transport the drugs to Europe using speedboats, trans-Sahara lorries and even light aircraft. Information provided by AFIC partners further corroborates this notion. Namely, coastal countries in West Africa (mostly Ghana, Benin, Guinea and Senegal) are entry points for shipments from Latin America, while countries in the Sahel region (Mali, Mauritania and Niger), are mostly used as transit en route to the EU.

An X-ray of the abdomen of a 'drug mule'

A mule is someone who is paid, coerced or tricked into transporting drugs across an international border but who has no further commercial interest in the drugs. The amount of drugs is always small and smuggling is done by hiding in a vehicle, luggage or clothes, strapping the drugs to one's body, or using the body as container. The latter is most common for smuggling by air. In some cases, mules have been discovered with up to 2kg of cocaine pallets inside their bodies (see photo).

© The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), 2012



There are also many so called 'self-employed couriers' who derive benefit from the sale (or use) of the drugs upon arrival at their destination.



The non-disclosed text refers to the information obtained via bilateral cooperation with a Third Country. Given its sensitive nature, releasing it would hinder the trust building process with that country. The non-disclosure is therefore justified under the third indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards international relations.

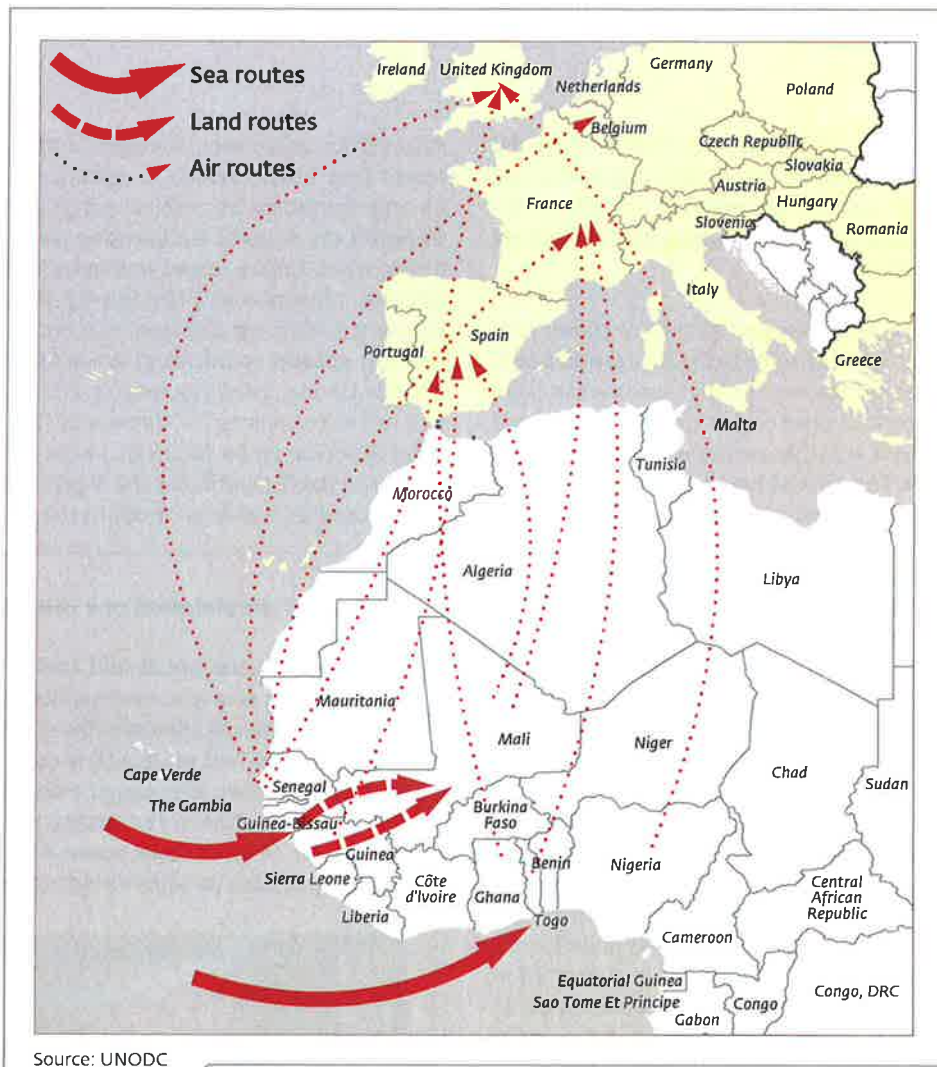


Figure 5. Main cocaine routes from West Africa to the EU, from 2005 to 2008

Worryingly, growing importance of West Africa as transit area for cocaine en route to Europe (or the US), resulted in increased consumption of cocaine in Africa itself. This is most likely because major drug smuggling organisations usually pay their local network in product, not in cash.

as final destination. This is also indicated by a recent (June 2012) seizure of more than 6 kg of amphetamine hidden in art paintings on a flight bound to Malaysia at Niamey airport (Niger). There are also sporadic reports of heroin transiting through West Africa, but the level of the traffic appears much lower than that of cocaine trafficking.

* Often referred to as ATS

Amphetamine-type stimulants*

** Report of the Regional Dublin Group for West Africa, Council of the EU (ref. 9778/12), 11 May 2012

There is growing evidence to suggest that criminal organisations involved in amphetamine smuggling exploit West Africa in a similar way to cocaine traffickers, but with Asia

The current situation shows that the transit in West African countries of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine is on a strong upward trend.**

The non-disclosed text contains information on cross-border crime obtained via co-operation with a Third Country. Releasing it would undermine the protection of public interest as regards to public security and international relations. It thus cannot be disclosed, pursuant to exception set forth in the first and the third indents of Article 4(1)(a).

AIRCOP and the West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI)

To address the increasing use of air mules some AFIC partners will join a project called AIRCOP that should establish effective communication and exchange of operational intelligence between Senegal, Brazil, Cape Verde, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Airports participating in the programme will have units of no more than 20 people operating around the clock. This USD 3.2 million project is financed by the EU, Canada, UNODC, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and Interpol.

In May 2012, The U.S. government has identified approximately USD 60 million in existing and new U.S. assistance to support the West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI). Programming under WACSI will be aligned with the five pillars to focus efforts such as:

1. Technical assistance and capacity building;
2. Technical assistance drafting anti-TOC laws and policies;
3. Investing in elite counter-narcotics units, operational training and equipping of accountable institutions;
4. Technical assistance to build the capacity of prosecutors and judges;
5. Drug demand reduction and raising public awareness.

Links with people smuggling



Furthermore, the latest outcomes of the Frontex-led Joint Operation Indalo on the southern Spanish coast revealed that Moroccan prospective migrants use the very same means of transportation as drug dealers: jet-skis and speed-boats, which suggests that available resources are used for both

criminal activities, even there is not a direct connection.

There are also reports of very large quantities of cocaine being transported across the desert both from west to east (Mauritania to the Niger and Libya) and from south to north, sometimes hundreds of kilos at a time. The routes used by these convoys are the same as the routes used for the smuggling of migrants, but traffickers transporting large quantities of narcotics are unlikely to simultaneously transport numerous migrants because this would trigger attention and slow down their journey.

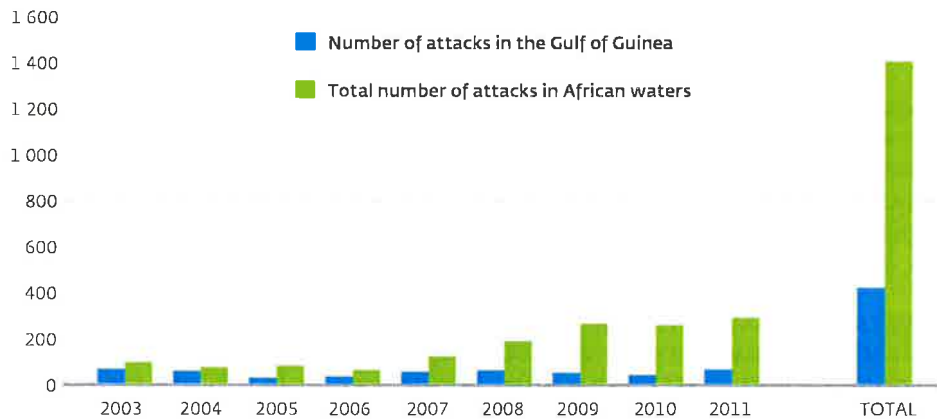


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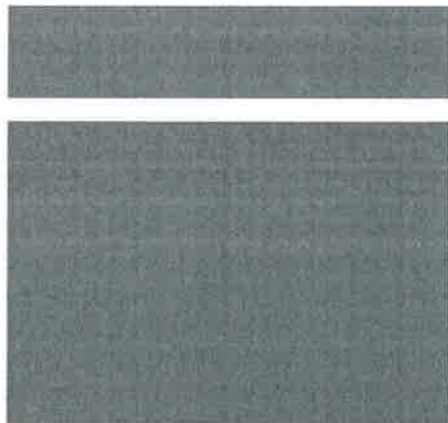


Figure 6. Piracy-related attacks in the Gulf of Guinea in relation to attacks in African waters overall, 2003–2011



Source: IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Annual Reports 2003–2011 (in: Piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea: Nigeria as a Microcosm – Al Jazeera Centre for Studies / 12 June 2012)

The non-disclosed text contains information on cross-border crime obtained via co-operation with a Third Country. Releasing it would undermine the protection of public interest as regards to public security and international relations. It thus cannot be disclosed, pursuant to exception set forth in the first and the third indents of Article 4(1)(a).



In summary, the use of migrants as drug mules on flights to the EU departing from West African airports constitutes the most important connection between illicit drug trade and people smuggling to the EU. Migrants are able to finance their journey or obtain forged documents in exchange for accepting to carry illicit drugs during their journey.

3.2.4. Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Character and frequency of incidents

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has emerged as an issue of significant concern to West African countries and the international community as a whole. While the number of attacks has varied from year to year and there has been no obvious escalation in the frequency of incidents (see Fig. 6), there has been a worrying evolution in the methods employed and targets chosen by pirates.

Previously, pirates primarily targeted cargo vessels anchored in harbours or close to shore looking for cash and valuable cargo. However, pirate attacks in the last 2 years increasingly focused on oil tankers and other vessels transporting large amounts of petroleum. Nigerian pirates are the most common perpetrators and these groups specifically target tankers to steal either petroleum or raw oil in order to sell it on the vast black market for petrol in West Africa. In this region piracy and petrol smuggling are closely linked activities carried out by highly sophisticated criminal groups.

Until recently, most incidents of piracy were restricted to Nigerian waters, but increasingly pirate gangs have expanded their range of operations to target vessels in waters previously unaffected by this problem. From 2003 to 2010 Benin experienced almost no pirate activity (only 2 incidents in 7 years); however, in 2011 there were 20 registered incidents related to piracy. This dramatic increase in activity has largely been attributed to Nigerian pirates venturing further out to sea in order to attack ships.

Pirate gangs are exhibiting increasingly violent behaviour in their attacks and have at times resorted to lethal force towards crew members of target vessels. Pirates use automatic weapons (mostly AK-47s) and there have been reports that the gangs also have access to heavy weaponry.

The presence of pirate gangs in the region is tied to a number of factors including existence of areas controlled by militant groups, a booming black market, the widespread proliferation of small and light weapons (SALWs) as well as a lack of maritime patrolling and interdiction capacity by the Gulf of Guinea countries. The growth of the oil industry in the region, particularly in Nigeria, has increased the number of potential targets, while the widespread reliance on smuggled fuel in West Africa has provided a large and accessible market for smuggled petrol.

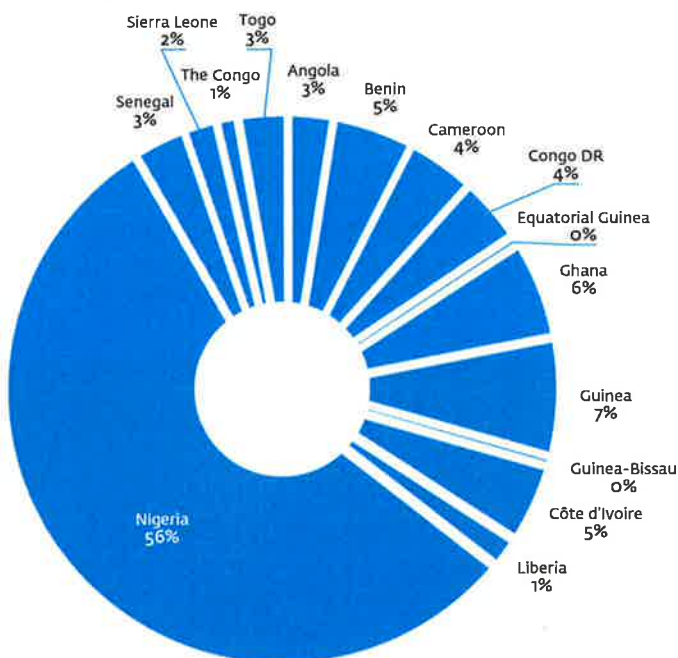
Links with other cross-border criminal activities

In the Gulf of Guinea region, militant groups work with larger criminal networks to launch attacks on vessels traversing the Gulf. Proceeds of the sale of the stolen petrol are shared by the militant groups, which carry out the attacks, and the criminal networks, which provide intelligence and take care of the logistical arrangements to smuggle and sell on the stolen petroleum. Piracy feeds di-

rectly into the proliferation of cross-border criminal activities and is inter-linked with the fuel smuggling across the region.

However, unlike Somali piracy, where some pirates are also directly involved in smuggling of migrants across of the Gulf of Aden towards Yemen, no such direct involvement has been noted in the case of the Nigerian pirates. Still, the Gulf of Guinea is both a major transit route for oil tankers moving between international markets and an oil-producing region. As such, the impact of piracy in this region not only detrimentally affects regional economies reliant on the revenues generated by the oil industry, but also the wider international community, which is dependent on the reliable transport of fuel and petroleum.

Figure 7. **Percentage distribution of piracy-related attacks in the Gulf of Guinea, 2003–2011**



Source: IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Annual Reports 2003–2011 (in Piracy and maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Nigeria as a Microcosm – Al Jazeera Centre for Studies / 12 June 2012)



3.2.5. Crude oil theft and smuggling

Nigerian oil companies estimate that 7% of the daily crude oil output in Nigeria is stolen. Oil theft in Nigeria refers to the siphoning of crude oil from corporate mainlines to vessels prepared for oil transportation or to small stealth oil refineries distributing oil to small vessels. Smugglers are often Niger Delta militants who tap unguarded pipelines in large areas under their control.

Illicitly refined oil (diesel and petrol) is sold further within Nigeria or smuggled, for example through the border with Cameroon. Some reports indicate that smugglers who are carrying fuel to Cameroon manage to do so by corrupting local border control authorities.*

In response to the growing insurgency, the Nigerian Federal Government changed its focus in January 2012, from fighting the militants in the Niger Delta to combating the sources of their incomes, namely oil theft, illegal refining, pipeline vandalism and other crimes referring to Nigeria's oil production. The Nigerian Army announced in June 2012 that it managed to destroy over 3 000 illegal small refineries and similar number of larger containers with crude oil and refined products, as well as transport means, speedboats, pumping machines and power generators.

3.2.6. Fuel/petrol smuggling

Subsidised legally produced fuel from Nigeria is cheaper than in Togo and Benin (see Fig. 9). It is legally bought in Nigeria and transported by vessels to the coasts of Togo and Benin (the journey takes up to 13 hours). After the delivery to the coast of Benin and Togo, the fuel is put into smaller plastic containers and carried by local smugglers.

As a consequence, various border areas of the Nigeria-Benin border became hubs for fuel smugglers, transporting poor quality fuel farther inland. Some sources indicate that the smuggling route is going further from Togo and Benin via Ghana, Burkina Faso, ending in Mali. Furthermore, UNODC reports underline that a large proportion of stolen Nigerian oil is refined in Ghana, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire.**

The fuel is also transported by bigger vessels to the coast of Togo and Benin. These illegal shipments are now increasingly targeted by Nigerian pirates in the Gulf of Guinea.

Smuggling of subsidised Nigerian fuel has been growing constantly since the 2008 spike in global oil prices. Importantly, at the end

* (1) http://www.voanews.com/content/nigeria_bunkering_niger_delta_oil_market/1337346.html; (2) <http://www.punchng.com/feature/unemployment-resort-to-illegality-in-ndelta/>; (3) <http://allafrica.com/stories/20110270559.html>

** http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/West_Africa_Report_2009.pdf



Figure 8. Shell oil-pipeline, Utorogun, Nigeria

Closure of Nigeria-Cameroon border

After the series of terrorist attacks in Nigeria, it closed the border with Cameroon on 1 May 2012. Although the closed and wire-fenced border, gangs dealing with oil smuggling still conduct their activities. As a result of the closed borders the price of smuggled fuel rose from EUR 0.50 to 0.73 per litre. The regular price in Cameroon is EUR 0.87, which still makes the smuggling profitable.

Source: Open sources

of 2011 Benin's finance minister stated that almost 80% of the fuel consumed in Benin was illegally smuggled from Nigeria. Scientific analysis of fuel samples taken in Benin confirmed that it came from Nigeria.

According to available estimates, Benin's illicit trade in subsidised fuel from Nigeria amounts to around 245 million litres per year with an estimated profit of USD 23 million. For comparison, this is roughly the annual expenditure for Benin's educational system.

According to open-source reporting, smuggled Nigerian subsidised fuel, popularly known

as 'zoa-zoa,' is sold everywhere across the northern region of Cameroon. It is both cheaper and more readily available than legal fuel refined in southern Cameroon.

Links with other cross-border criminal activities are quite numerous given that fuel smuggling in West Africa is well organised and highly lucrative. While smuggled fuel is cheaper and thus more affordable for most of West Africans, it also encourages maritime piracy and other forms of smuggling and undermines sustainable economic development in West Africa.

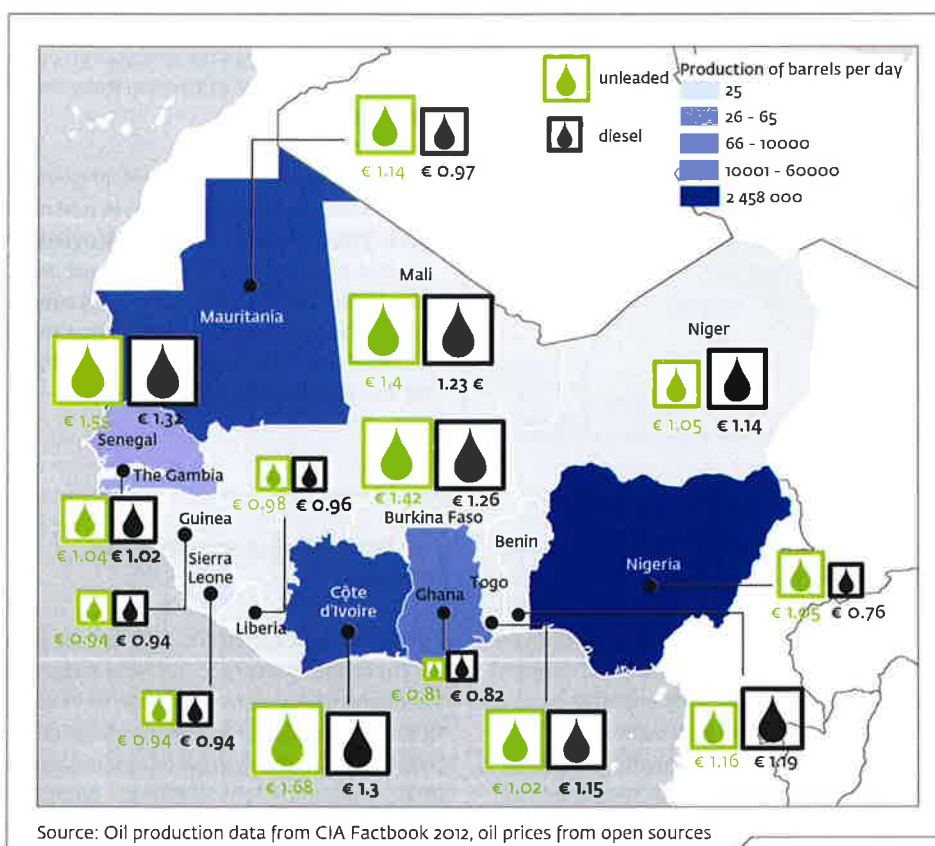


Figure 9. Price differential between subsidised Nigerian fuel and other countries in West Africa is driving fuel smuggling



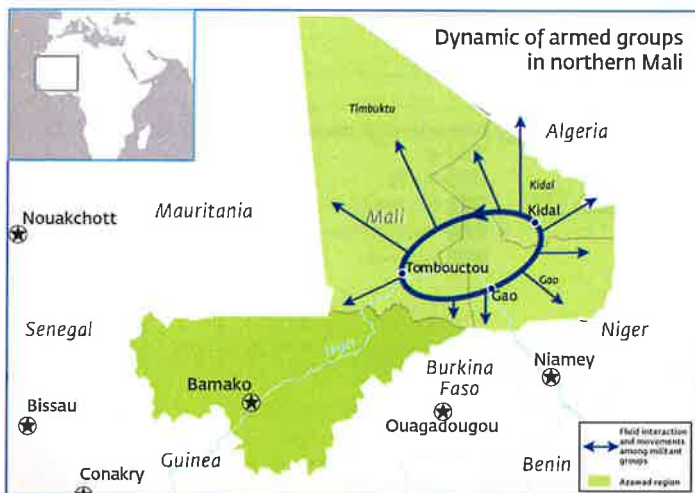
Armed rebellion in Mali and associated proliferation of different armed groups

According to recent report from Stratfor*, since the March 2012 coup in Mali and the Tuareg rebellion, three main militant armed groups have exploited the resultant power vacuum to establish bases in the country's north. They are al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Ansar Dine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, known commonly as MUJAO.

AQIM appears to be the dominant group. Its relationships with Ansar Dine and MUJAO are deep and interconnected. In fact, according to Stratfor, it is often unclear where one group ends and another begins. Furthermore, the leadership among the three groups appears to be interchangeable.

Ansar Dine's activity is focused most heavily in Mali's Kidal region given that the group consists primarily of ethnic Ifoghas (Tuareg tribe), while AQIM and MUJAO operate in Mali's Timbuktu and Gao regions further towards the border with Algeria.

AQIM focuses on state targets, such as army outposts and government personnel, or foreign government targets (e.g. embassies and diplomatic personnel) and regularly conducts kidnappings to finance their activities or to free their members through prisoner exchanges.



Source: Stratfor

In contrast, other Tuareg militant groups in Mali are more nationalistic and the scope of their activities tends to be limited primarily to defending their smuggling routes and the autonomy of the territory under their control.

There are also many pro-central government armed groups operating in northern Mali. Those include: National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Azawad, The National Front for the Liberation of Azawad and The Republican Movement for the Restoration of the Azawad.

* 'Jihadist Groups Active in Northern Mali', 2 October 2012

Fuel smuggling and oil theft are also very dangerous activities for those involved. There are numerous reports about deaths caused by fuel explosion while refining, pumping or transporting. In one such accident the death toll was more than 100 people after a lorry tipped over and exploded. Likewise, in border city Dembo (Cameroon) up to 15 people died after a lorry loaded with smuggled fuel exploded on the road.

3.2.7. Smuggling of weapons and firearms

A 2008 study for UNIDIR, summarises well the challenges presented by the widespread smuggling of weapons and firearms in West Africa. While ECOWAS countries have committed not to import, export or manufacture Small Arms and Light Weapons, weapons of varying types pervade West Africa. Semtex explosives can be purchased in Nigeria, and in 2012 Nigerian authorities seized more than 600 kg of the material as well as deto-

Nigerian authorities seized a large shipment of illegal arms from Iran at Lagos port in late October 2010

According to open sources, weapons ranging from 107 mm rockets, mortars and small arms ammunition were found at Lagos port in October 2010. The 13 shipping containers originally arrived at the port in July 2010. Weapons were hidden among other goods labelled as building materials. The number and type of weapons involved in the shipment were notable as the arsenal could provide a standoff capability permitting a well-trained force to carry out significantly destructive attacks from kilometres away without requiring line-of-sight targeting.

Source: Stratfor



nators. Millions of Kalashnikovs flooded gun markets following the Cold War.

In West Africa, Small Arms and Light Weapons are cheap and therefore the most commonly used weapons in feuds, local wars, human rights abuses and crime. They have had a devastating impact on development, governance and everyday life for West Africans. Contributing factors to their proliferation include lax arms control legislation and enforcement, porous borders, transnational arms dealers and the trade in valuable commodities.

Weapons arrive and circulate in West Africa in a number of ways:

- Nigeria's porous borders on both land and sea allow gun-smuggling from elsewhere in Africa. Illegal arms dealers from both Africa and Europe supply small arms to the Niger Delta region and are paid with the proceeds of stolen oil.
- During armed conflict, there is a continual circulation of arms between factions, as arms are captured and stolen by all sides. Small arms also circulate through raids on police and military armouries, leakage from stockpiles and the desertion of soldiers.

- Locally manufactured firearms constitute a major problem. Blacksmiths have a significant role in the manufacture and circulation of firearms in Ghana, and this trend is spreading to other states in the sub-region.
- When one conflict ends, small arms are recycled or sold on for use in new or ongoing conflicts or crime.
- A thriving trade in mercenary services in the region aids the circulation and proliferation of small arms. This trade is driven by high youth unemployment and the potential profits to be made from the illegal trafficking of minerals.

Niger and other AFIC countries, reported an increase in smuggling of weapons following the fall of Gaddafi in Libya. The looting of Libyan stocks has increased the availability of arms in the Sahel region, from Mauritania to Egypt. This is likely to benefit groups controlling contraband routes in the desert and taxing illegal activities ranging from smuggling of cigarettes to trafficking in human beings.

The smuggling of small arms is likely to increase insecurity in West Africa, starting from these vast desert areas where government control is notoriously difficult and eventually



reaching the more inhabited and developed coastal regions as this illicit trade grows. Consequently, other criminal activities, including smuggling of migrants, are also likely to thrive in such environment.

3.2.8. Cocoa smuggling

Cocoa smuggling has been an increasingly significant concern for authorities in Côte d'Ivoire. A combination of lower prices for the crop paid out to farmers and delays in the shipping of produce at Côte d'Ivoire's two main ports has seen many Ivorian producers of cocoa turn to smugglers for the illegal transport and sale of their harvest in Ghana (see Fig. 10).

Ivorian farmers can fetch up to 25% more per kg for their cocoa in Ghana; however, there are import restrictions in place. The transport

and sale of the produce is arranged by businessmen in Ghana, who organise lorries for the smuggling of cocoa across the Ivorian-Ghanaian border and orchestrate the sale of the produce to wholesale companies for further distribution. The border between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana is more than 550 kilometres long and difficult to patrol allowing for easy passing of smugglers from one side of the border to the other.

While individual farmers provide the actual produce, smuggling of cocoa is usually operated by sophisticated networks linking Ivorian farmers to legitimate export businesses. Lorries move Ivorian cocoa close to the border, where they are unloaded and transported across the border on motorbikes in smaller 60 kg batches. Once in Ghana, the Ivorian cocoa is re-packaged as cocoa from Ghana and sold on. Middle men or smugglers take up to

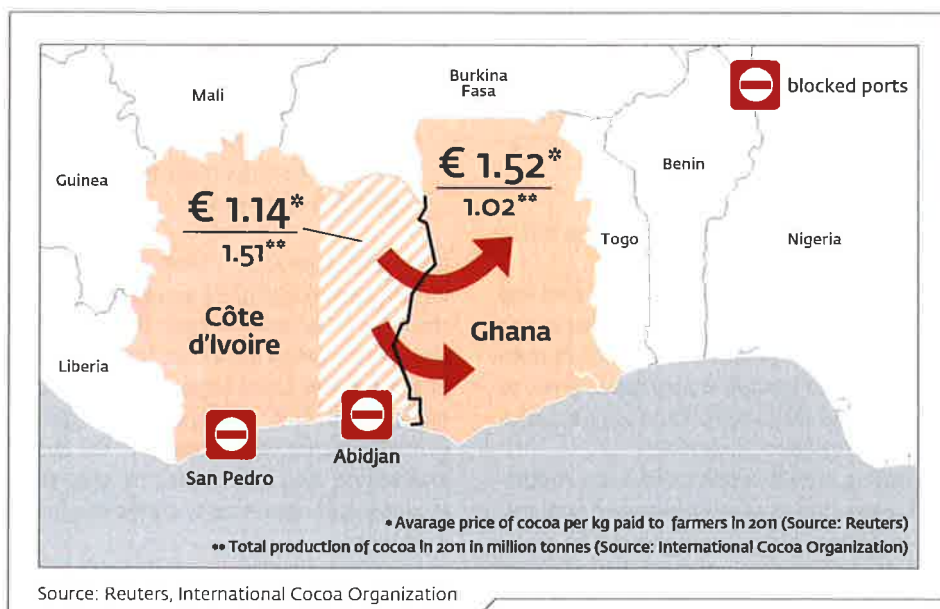


Figure 10. Cocoa smuggling in West Africa is driven by price differential: smuggling from Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana increased during 2010 and 2011 due to significant price differentials and the blockade of two main Ivorian commercial ports

an estimated 20% of the wholesale price per kilo (EUR 0.15).

Smuggling of Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa beans is mainly directed towards Ghana, but also affects Liberia, Togo and Guinea. Open-source estimates suggest that as much as 200 000 tonnes of cocoa were exported illegally during the record 2010/11 harvest alone. This could yield up to EUR 30 million profit for smugglers involved in this activity. It is not clear, however, if proceeds that are generated by smuggling of cocoa are used to finance other illicit activities.

Impact

Importantly, while the smugglers, middle men and farmers all benefit from higher payouts per kilo, the state of Côte d'Ivoire is losing a significant amount of revenue income from sales tax. Recent civil conflict in Côte d'Ivoire, insecurity and a brief halt of all cocoa exports has left many farmers reliant on illicit sale of their produce via smugglers and entrenched a business model involving smuggling to Ghana.

The Ivorian government has recently introduced a fixed price for cocoa resulting in a rise in prices lifting them to current levels. However, the current price differential of cocoa between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana still makes the smuggling a cocoa a profitable enterprise. The ease of smuggling and porous state of the border also raises broader security concerns. The emergence of a shadow economy dealing in smuggled cocoa beans is a concern for both Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire as associated phenomena such as corruption weaken state institutions and hinder economic growth.

3.3. Conclusions

An inquiry into possible links between people smuggling and other cross-border criminal

activities in West Africa is very challenging. While case-based and sometimes anecdotal information suggest that links exist, it is often very difficult to establish the exact nature of those links. This is further exacerbated by the fact that smuggling of migrants is usually done in stages and without a clear hierarchical order between groups or individuals providing their services.

Furthermore, as the contribution from Burkina Faso succinctly pointed out, very few criminal structures have been formally identified in West Africa. This should be a starting point when studying the involvement of one group in several cross-border criminal activities.

Therefore, what constitutes a link between smuggling of people and other cross-border criminal activity remains a matter of debate and definition. Apart from the obvious common element of movement across borders, all forms of cross-border criminality profit from weaken public institutions and high levels of corruption. Putting these contextual matters aside, possible specific links can be clustered into the following four groups:

- (a) **Direct personal links:** The same person or a group of persons are involved directly with two or more different cross-border criminal activities. For example, boats carrying both irregular migrants and cannabis drug are sometimes detected on route from Morocco to Spain. 'Drug muling' to the EU in exchange for forged travel documents is another clear example.
- (b) **Opportunistic ad hoc links:** For example, pirates in the Gulf of Guinea can offer small boats for rent to smugglers who are transporting migrants to larger 'mother ships' offshore. These types of links are often very fluid and difficult to detect. Likewise, a person can solicit services of smugglers at the beginning only to become a victim trafficking in human beings on arrival at their destination.



- (c) **Financial links:** People smugglers make 'protection' payments to armed groups who control a certain portions of the route (e.g. northern Mali) and are engaged in illicit trade in areas under their control.
- (d) **Collusion of interest:** While there might be no personal, financial or opportunistic links between people smugglers, crude oil smugglers or drug smugglers in West Africa, all three groups might use the same routes, entry points and actively benefit from or fuel corruption at regional borders. Likewise, terrorist/extremist organisations might use smuggling services for clandestine travel to the EU without the knowledge of the smugglers involved.

Taking into account these four groups of possible links, this Joint Report clearly revealed that there are compounding factors that benefit various types of cross-border crime in the West Africa region. In particular, there is a clear collusion of interest between various groups that use the same smuggling routes for illicit goods and migrants. Some groups in Sahel or the Niger Delta also benefit from collecting protection payments due to their strategic control along these routes.

There is some congruence of the routes used by smugglers of human beings and the areas under the control of groups involved in smuggling of arms, and might be opportunistic links between the two activities. However, the groups involved in smuggling of weapons appear to be different from the groups organising the recruitment and smuggling of migrants from the coastal area of West Africa to the EU.

Direct personal links between smuggling of migrants and other criminal activities appear limited to some forms of trafficking in human beings and drug smuggling. These two criminal activities require investment and sophistication, e.g. the provision of travel documents, and as such the direct personal linkage between smuggling of migrants and drugs is likely to be more common at air borders than at land or sea borders.

In the case of other criminal activity such as maritime piracy or cocoa smuggling, the link to people smuggling groups or individuals is at best sporadic and opportunistic, probably limited to border areas that are not effectively monitored or patrolled by border control authorities.

4. Changes in the traditional irregular migration routes from West Africa to the EU

4.1. Introduction

According to the World Bank, West Africa is likely the region with the world's most mobile population. Different surveys suggest that the main reasons that migrants leave their countries are to pursue economic opportunities, followed by studying abroad, family reasons and different regional conflicts. Economic/labour migration is therefore a livelihood-coping strategy of choice. This is also evident in the importance of remittances for the economies of respective West African countries.

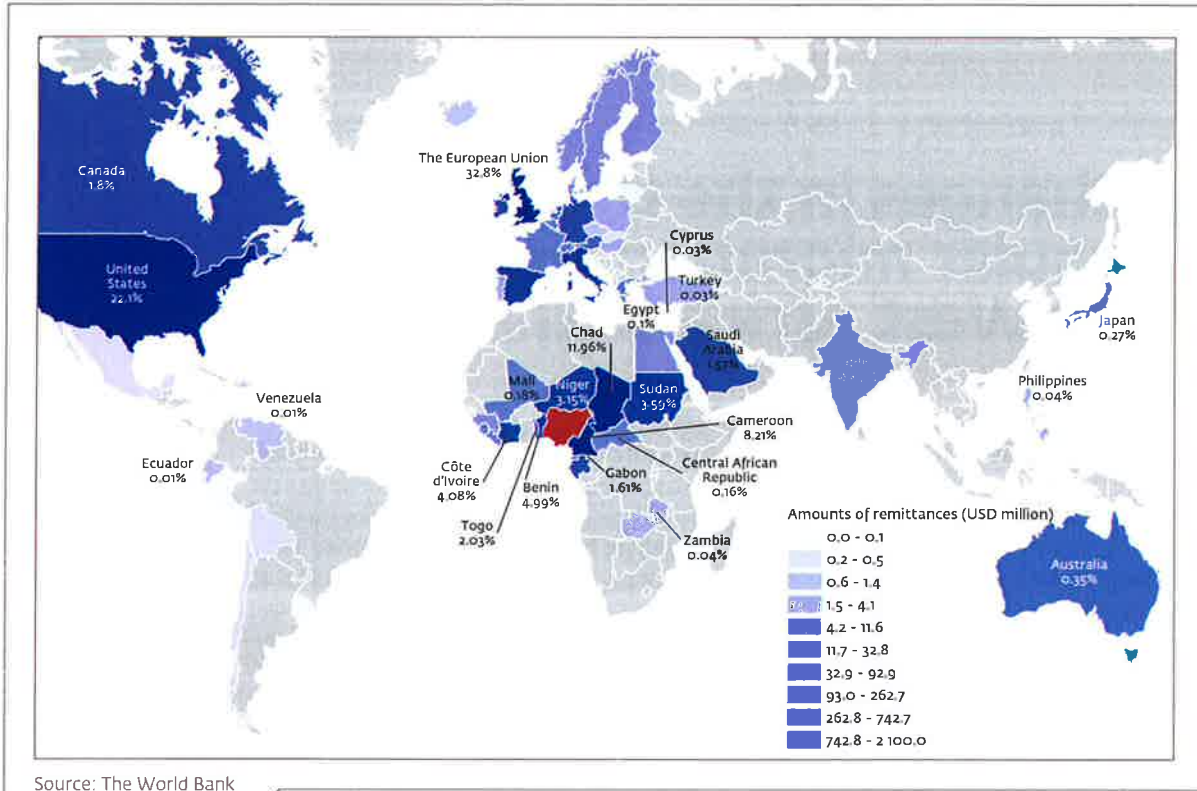
While estimates vary, it is likely that less than 40% of migrants from West Africa migrate beyond the region itself. There are major differences between AFIC countries in this respect. A World Bank survey from 2009 indicated that roughly nine out of ten migrants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Niger migrate within the region. Sierra Leone, Togo, Mauritania and Liberia saw over 70% of their population migrated within Africa. Around half of migrants from Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal move beyond the region itself. The top destination for most of the above was the US, followed by several EU Member States. In the case of Nigerian migrants for example, one-third of remittances in 2010 were generated in several EU Member States, hence indicating the importance of migration towards the EU (see Fig. 11).

Available data from consular authorities of EU Member States (excluding the UK and

Ireland) and Schengen Associated Countries clearly suggest that obtaining a valid visa to travel legally to the EU is not an easy undertaking for nationals of AFIC countries. Furthermore, issuing visas in per capita terms is almost 50 times lower for AFIC country nationals (only 84 visas per 100 000 inhabitants) compared to nationals of the Russian Federation or 10 times lower compared to nationals of Algeria (for comparison see chart in Fig. 12). West Africa is also the region with the highest visa-rejection-rates, as numbers of visas applied for remain significantly higher than the numbers of visas issued to AFIC country nationals.

This observation leads to a simple conclusion that irregular travel channels are an attractive alternative for many West Africans, who either use fraudulent documents to cross air borders or attempt illegal border-crossing along different traditional land and sea routes. As such, overall irregular flow from West Africa to the EU is significantly influenced by factors such as:

- (a) availability (or lack thereof) of legal travel channels;
- (b) advice from relatives or friends already present in the EU;
- (c) information or rumours about availability of income-generating activities in destination EU Member States or benefits afforded to asylum seekers;
- (d) level of access to facilitation/smuggling services (e.g. fraudulent documents);
- (e) likelihood of crossing external borders of EU Member States without being refused and/or returned.



Source: The World Bank

Figure 11. Remittances flows in 2010 – the case of Nigeria

These observations seem to be supported by both Frontex operational information and different studies, which suggests that the most constant push factors (such as poverty) do not directly determine the actual size and location of illegal flows from West Africa towards the EU.

Therefore, in order to understand the context in which changes in the traditional land and sea routes from West Africa to the EU occur, this chapter provides also an outline regarding available legal travel channels, air routes from West Africa to the EU and associated document fraud.

4.2. Legal travel channels

In 2011, around 270 000 AFIC-country nationals applied for visas in EU Member States or SAC (excluding the UK and Ireland). This represented only 1.9% of all applications for visas (total number of visas applications was

around 14.4 million). Of that number, some 184 000 AFIC country nationals were granted EU short stay visas. The overall visa rejection rate for AFIC country nationals in 2011 was almost 32%, much higher than the overall EU rate of 6%. In addition, while 184 000 visas issued to AFIC country nationals represented only 1.4% of the EU total in 2011 (more than 13 million visas issued), the share of AFIC country nationals in the overall number of rejected visa applications was almost eight times higher. In fact, one out of ten of all visa rejections were issued to the nationals of AFIC countries. Compared to other regions of the world, West Africa stands out both in terms of the low absolute number of visas issued and the extremely high rejection rates.

As shown in Figure 13, Nigerians and Senegalese nationals accounted for more than 40% of all visas issued to AFIC country nationals in 2011. Niger was the country with the lowest visa rejection rate amongst AFIC countries;

however, the number of visas granted to nationals of Niger was below 5 000 (9% of just 5 035 visa applications were rejected). In the case of Guinea, more than 4 out of 10 visa applications were rejected.

As presented by Figure 14, most visa applications were submitted at consular authorities of those EU Member States with the most numerous or fastest growing legal diaspora communities from AFIC countries (France, Italy, Spain, Germany and Portugal). France was the top choice, followed by Germany, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

4.2.1. Perception of irregular migration risk through the visa rejection rates

Differences in how irregular migration risk is assessed by consular authorities of EU Member States can be shown through respective visa rejection rates for AFIC country nationals. As shown in Figure 14, Member States' individual rejection rates during 2011 were ranging from 13% in Romania to 55% in the Czech Republic. In fact, countries with the highest visa rejection rates were also issuing the lowest number of visas to AFIC countries nationals. Unsurprisingly, the same EU Member States

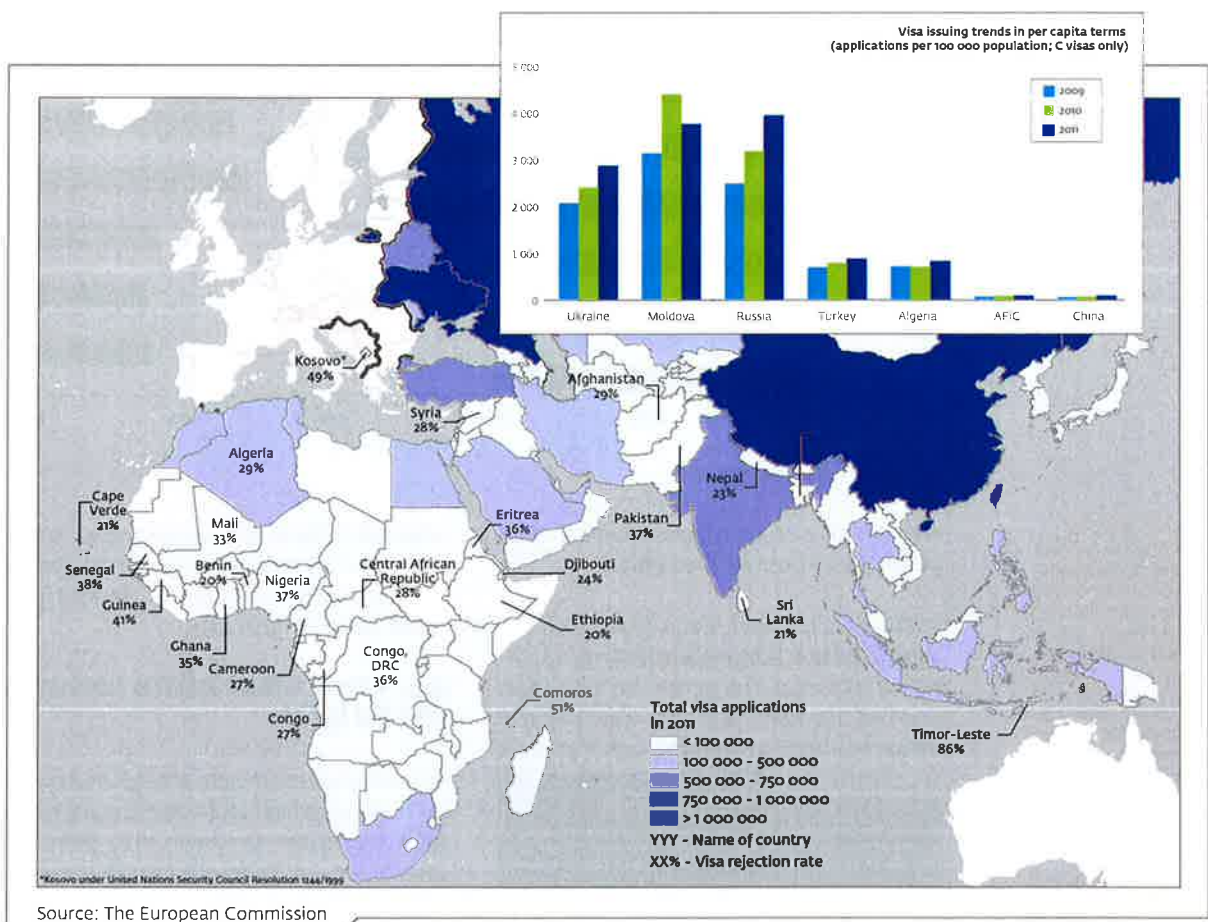
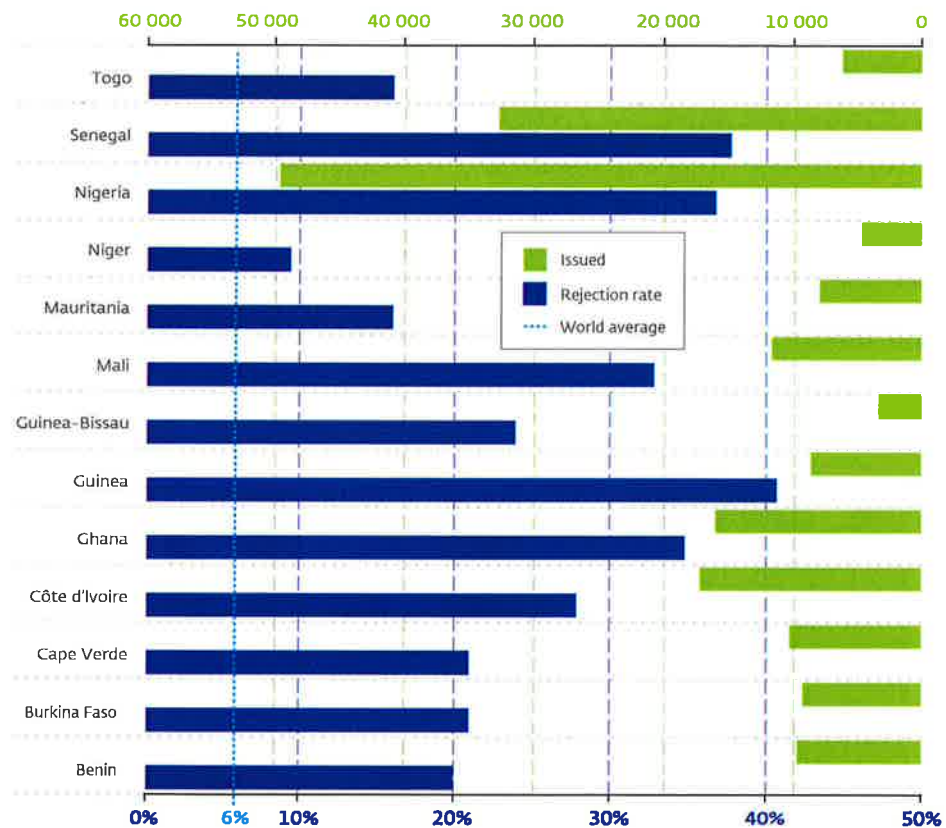


Figure 12. European visa-issuing trends and rejection rates in 2011



Figure 13. Number of visas issued and rejection rates for AFIC country nationals, 2011



Source: The European Commission

The non-disclosed text refers to relevant information obtained by intelligence on *modus operandi* used for migrant smuggling and it is reasonably foreseeable that its disclosure could harm the implementation of future measures to counter this type of cross border crime during operations coordinated by Frontex. In this regard the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.

were also hosting the lowest number of legal residents from AFIC countries.

In these EU Member States (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Poland), a number of investigations in the last two years revealed that many Nigerians were trying to obtain residence permits through marriages of convenience.



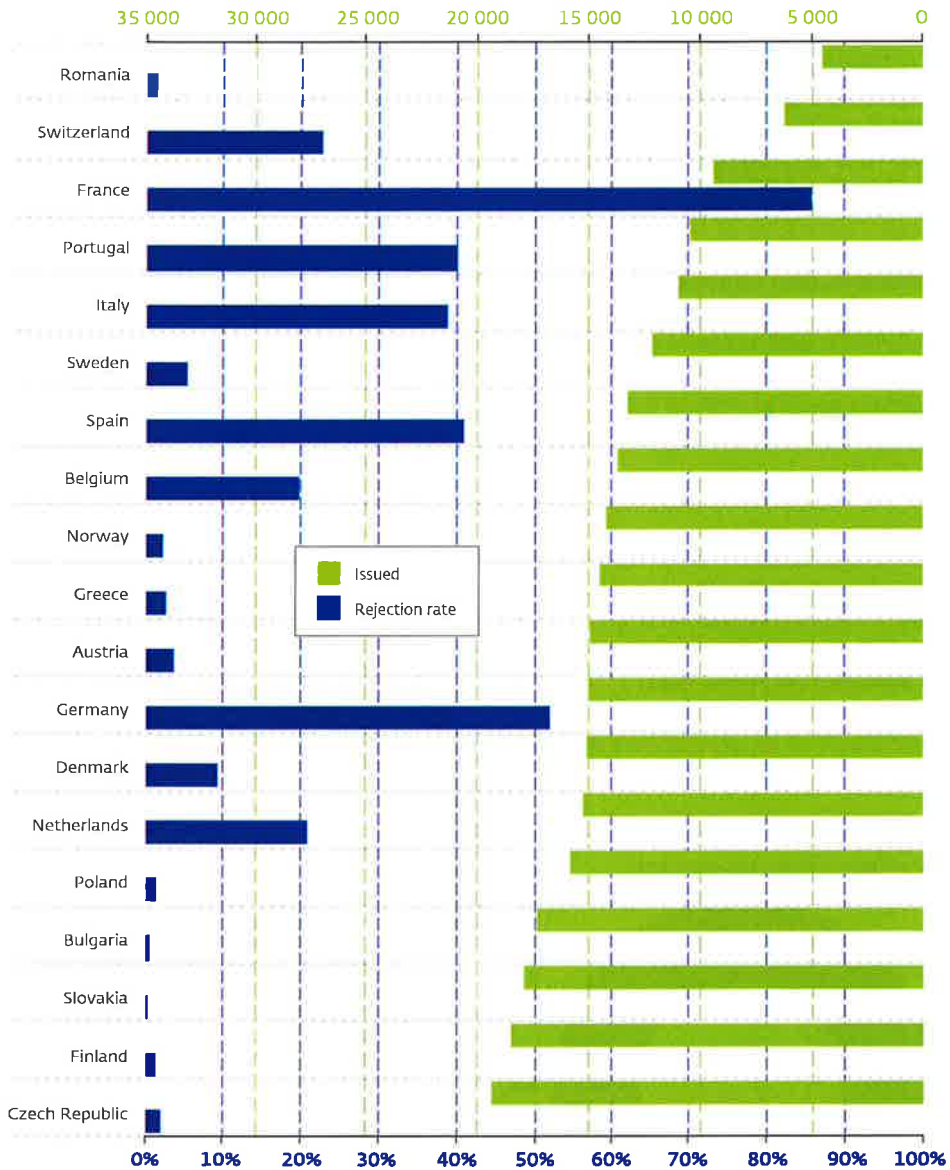
In the case of Finland, AFIC country nationals were also detected abusing student visas. In

response, Finland announced the introduction of stricter procedures and more checks prior to issuing a student visa starting from the school year 2012/2013.

4.3. From West Africa towards the EU by air

Air routes have some advantages compared to routes over land and sea. They are much safer and faster; however, they often involve the need for fraudulent documentation, sometimes already at visa issuing stage (fraudulent breeder documents). In addition, it can be prohibitively costly and carries a high

Figure 14. Short-term visas issued and respective rejection rates for AFIC country nationals in 2011



Source: The European Commission

return risk if detected on entry to EU Member State airports.

During the first nine months of 2012, Frontex operational information concerning refusals

of entry suggested that, similarly to visa issuing trends, more than half of all refusals were linked to only three AFIC country nationalities: Nigerians (1 078), Senegalese (387) and Ghanaians (332). With more than 1 000 re-



Student visa abuse in the UK

The authorities in the UK have introduced several measures during 2012 to reduce the extent of student-visa abuse. Up to 50 000 people may have entered Britain to work rather than study in the first year after the 2009 change in the way how the government exercised control over student migration to the UK.

In doing so, the authorities identified educational establishments where a significant proportion of student visa applicants lacked a good standard of English and were probably not attending lectures. In one such case of an educational institution more than 1 500 Nigerians who had come to the UK on a student visa were given 60 days to leave the country.

The non-disclosed text refers to relevant information obtained by intelligence on *modus operandi* used for migrant smuggling and it is reasonably foreseeable that its disclosure could harm the implementation of future measures to counter this type of cross-border crime during operations coordinated by Frontex. In this regard the text is not disclosed pursuant to the exception laid down in the first indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security.

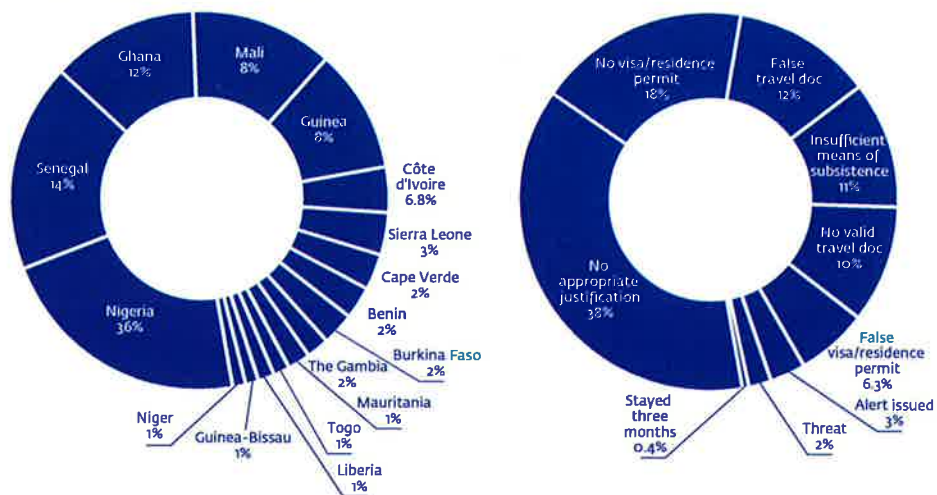
the purpose of their intended stay, leading the border control authorities of EU Member States to assume that the travellers were likely to overstay. Other important reasons included lack of valid visa (usually synonymous with visas cancelled at the border) or insufficient means of subsistence. Furthermore, more than one quarter of refusals were due to document fraud, a subject described in more detail in the following section of this report.

Irregular AFIC country nationals were mainly departing from their respective countries. In the case of Nigerians, more than 70% departed from airports in Nigeria (mainly Lagos) while the rest attempted to enter from other airports in the region (mostly Accra and Abidjan). Roughly 8% of irregular Nigerians, Ghanaians and Senegalese departed from Casablanca in Morocco and Istanbul in Turkey

refusals, Nigerians were featuring particularly high, so much so that they were the top refused nationality at external air borders of EU Member States during this period (according to available operational data).

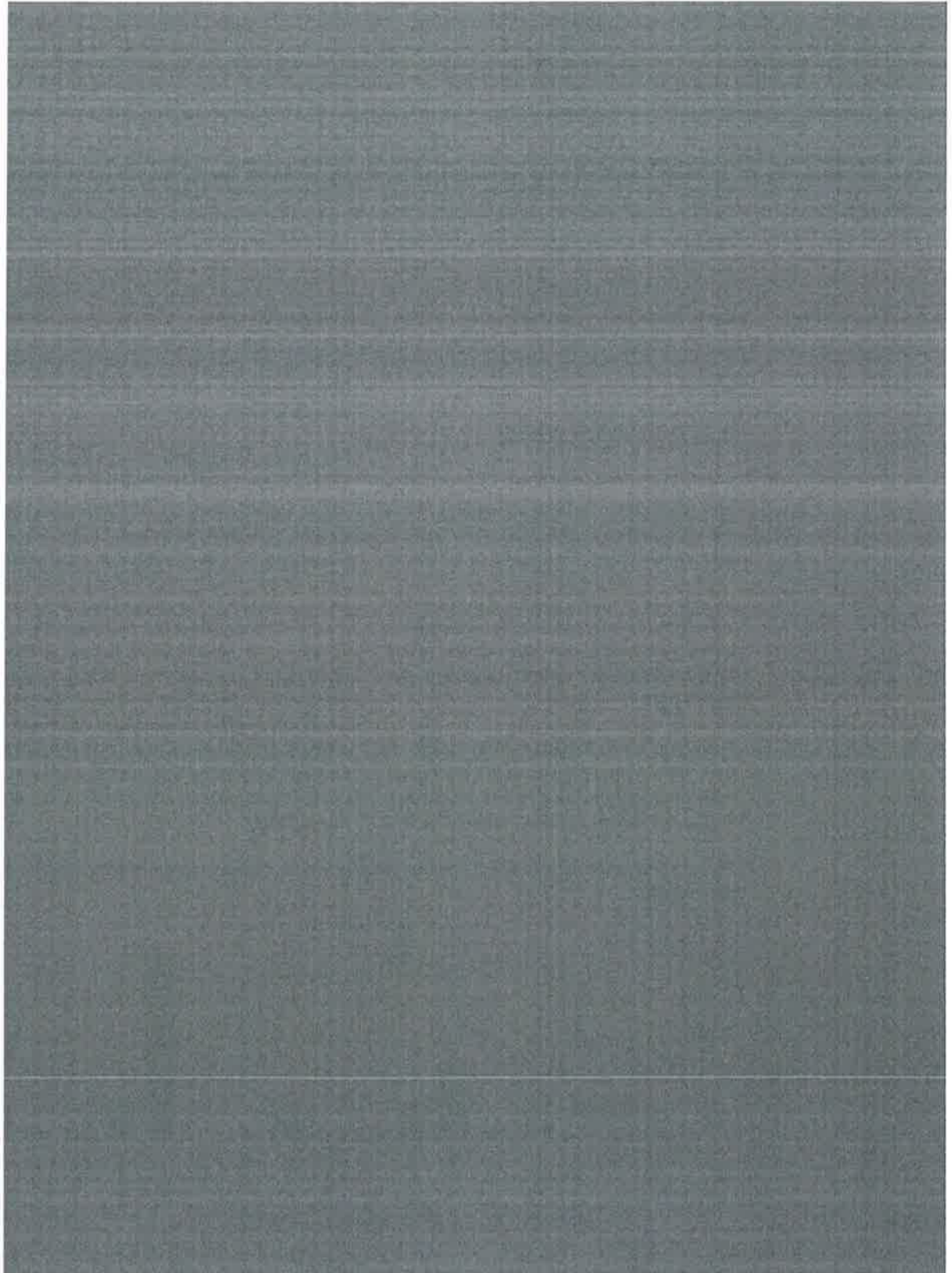
Almost 40% of all refusals were due to the fact that travellers were not able to justify

Figure 15. Refusals of entry issued to AFIC country nationals by nationality (left) and reason for refusal (right), Jan-Aug 2012



Source: Joint Operations data as of 1 October 2012

The non-disclosed parts on this page contain sensitive information obtained via co-operation with Member States and Third Countries. Its release would thus significantly hinder international relations and is therefore covered by the third indent of Article 4(1)(a).





Refusals of entry were issued mostly by those EU Member States that host large legal diaspora communities of nationals from AFIC countries and have direct air links with AFIC countries. Linguistic and historical reasons are probably also associated with the choices given that English-speaking AFIC country nationals mostly targeted the UK, while French speakers tried to enter France at Paris (CDG) airport.

4.4. Document fraud

In the period from January to August 2012, Frontex European Union Document-Fraud data (EDF) show that AFIC country nationals accounted for 12% (or 815) of all detections of the use of fraudulent documents* on entry to or within the EU and Schengen area. This compares with AFIC nationalities representing 4% of the total number of nationalities detected with fraudulent documents (151).

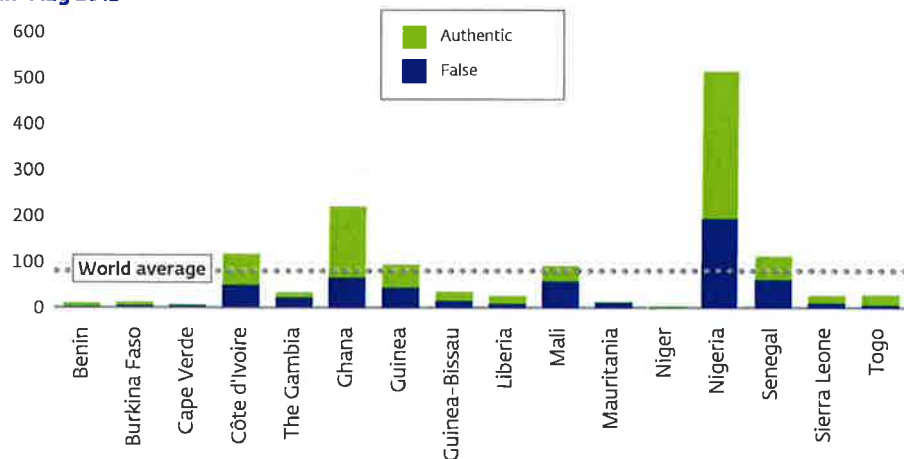
There was much variation in the extent to which AFIC country nationals were detected with fraudulent documents, with an average of 100 detections per AFIC nationality be-

tween January and August 2012, compared with the world average of 85 detections per nationality. Together, these summaries suggest that, on average, AFIC country nationals were more likely to be detected using fraudulent documents than other nationalities, at least during this reporting period. However, this effect may be due to more stringent checks performed on flights arriving from the region, rather than a higher propensity to document fraud.

Document fraud by AFIC country nationals was most commonly reported on entry to the EU/SAC from a third country during which the majority of document fraudsters attempted to use counterfeit documents (58%) such as residence permits, ID cards and stamps, although passports were by far the most commonly detected document. Overall, 41% of detections were authentic documents used by impostors, which clearly signals that smuggling organisations and would-be migrants themselves have ready access to genuine documents, either stolen or provided by existing legal diaspora communities in Europe or by compatriots in countries of origin.

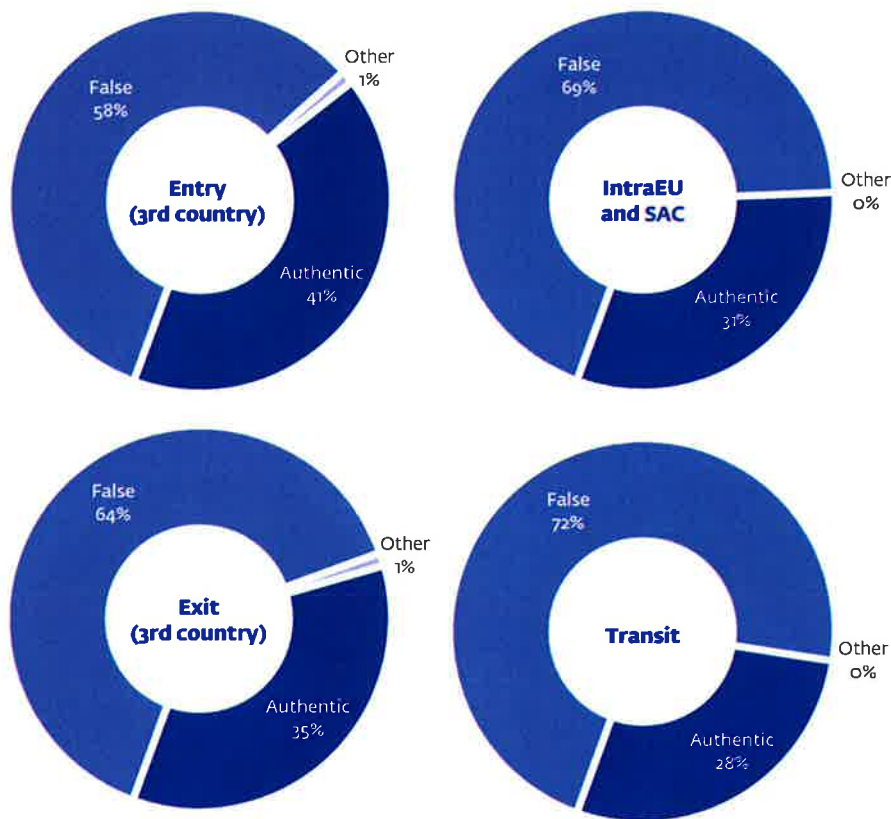
* Fraudulent documents defined as: Authentic documents (impostors or fraudulently obtained) or false (counterfeit or forged) documents

Figure 17. **Detections of fraudulent documents used by AFIC country nationals by type of fraud, Jan–Aug 2012**



Source: EDF data as of 1 October 2012

Figure 18. **Detections of fraudulent documents used by AFIC country nationals by direction of travel and type of fraud, Jan-Aug 2012**



Source: EDF data as of 1 October 2012

Travel type refers to whether the document fraudster was detected crossing the external border of the EU/SAC from a third country, whether they were embarking on intra Schengen travel or simply transiting through the EU/SAC from one third country to another.

The use of false (rather than genuine) documents was the most common type of document fraud in all directions of travel (entry/exit/transfer) and accounted for 63% of all registered incidents of document fraud by AFIC country nationals. The use of authentic documents by impostors was also frequently detected (37% of all cases). There was some variation across directions of travel and the method of document fraud used; on entry to the EU both false documents (58%) and au-

thentic documents used by impostors (41%) were common, while during transit the overwhelming majority of detected incidents involved false documents (72%).

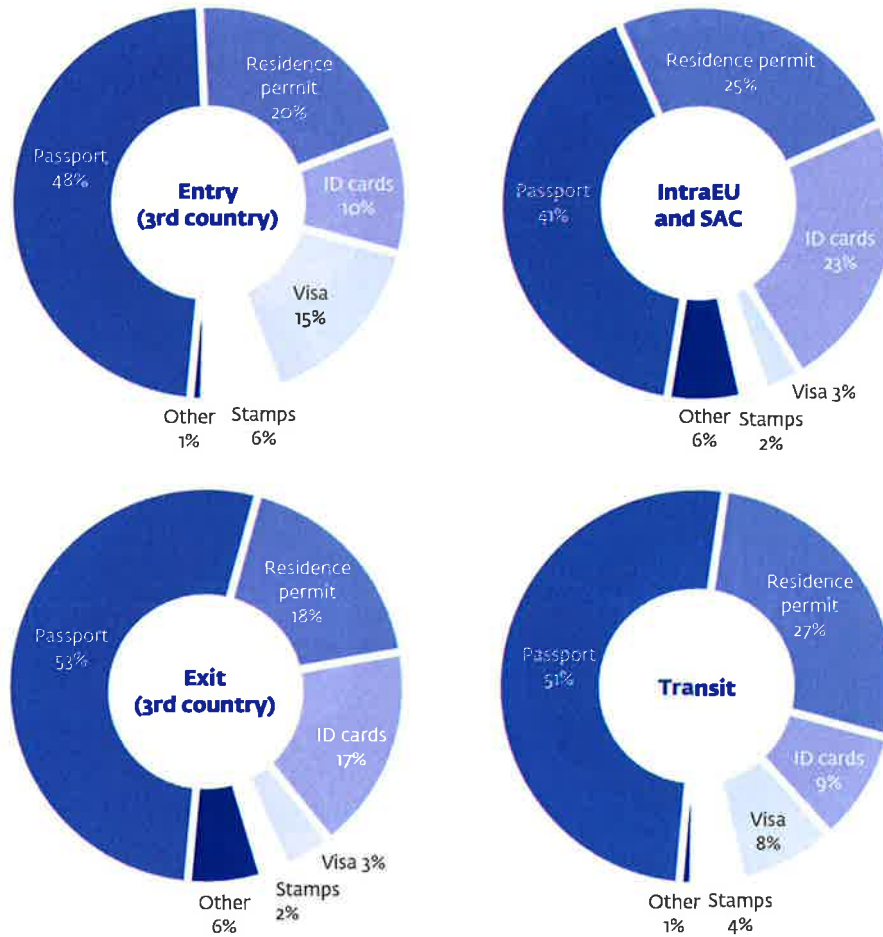
Document fraudsters attempting to use false documents were detected with various kinds of forgeries. Most commonly detected were entirely counterfeit documents, which accounted for 58% of all false documents detected. Other forgeries included alterations of the biopage (10%), image substitution (7%) and the use of stolen blanks (6%).

In terms of document type (see Fig. 19), almost half of detections on entry from third countries were associated with passports, visas and residence permits. On internal EU or Schengen area flights abuse of ID cards was



The non-disclosed parts on this page contain sensitive information obtained via co-operation with Member States and Third Countries. Its release would thus significantly hinder international relations and is therefore covered by the third indent of Article 4(1)(a).

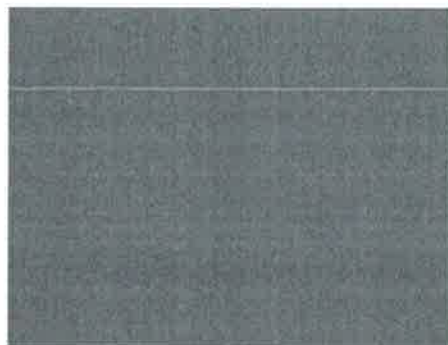
Figure 19. **Detections of fraudulent documents used by AFIC country nationals by direction of travel and type of document, Jan-Aug 2012**



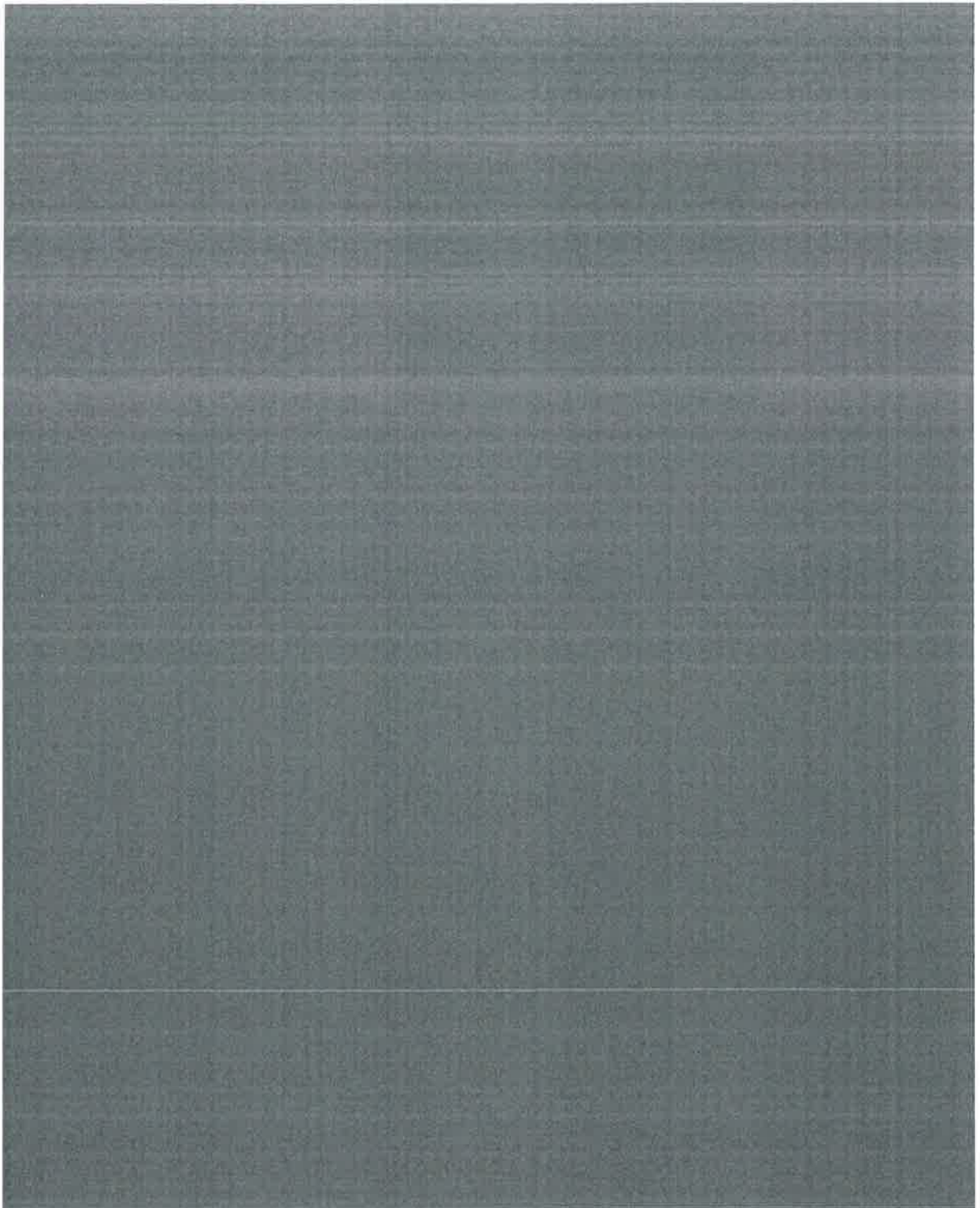
Source: EDF data as of 1 October 2012

much more common given that these flights can be boarded with ID cards only.

4.4.1. Departure airports



The non-disclosed part refers to the information obtained via bilateral co-operation with a Third Country. Given its sensitive nature, releasing it would not only hinder the trust building process with that country but also undermine the protection of public security. The non-disclosure is therefore justified under the first and the third indent of Article 4(1)(a) of Regulation No 1049/2001 relating to the protection of the public interest as regards public security and international relations.

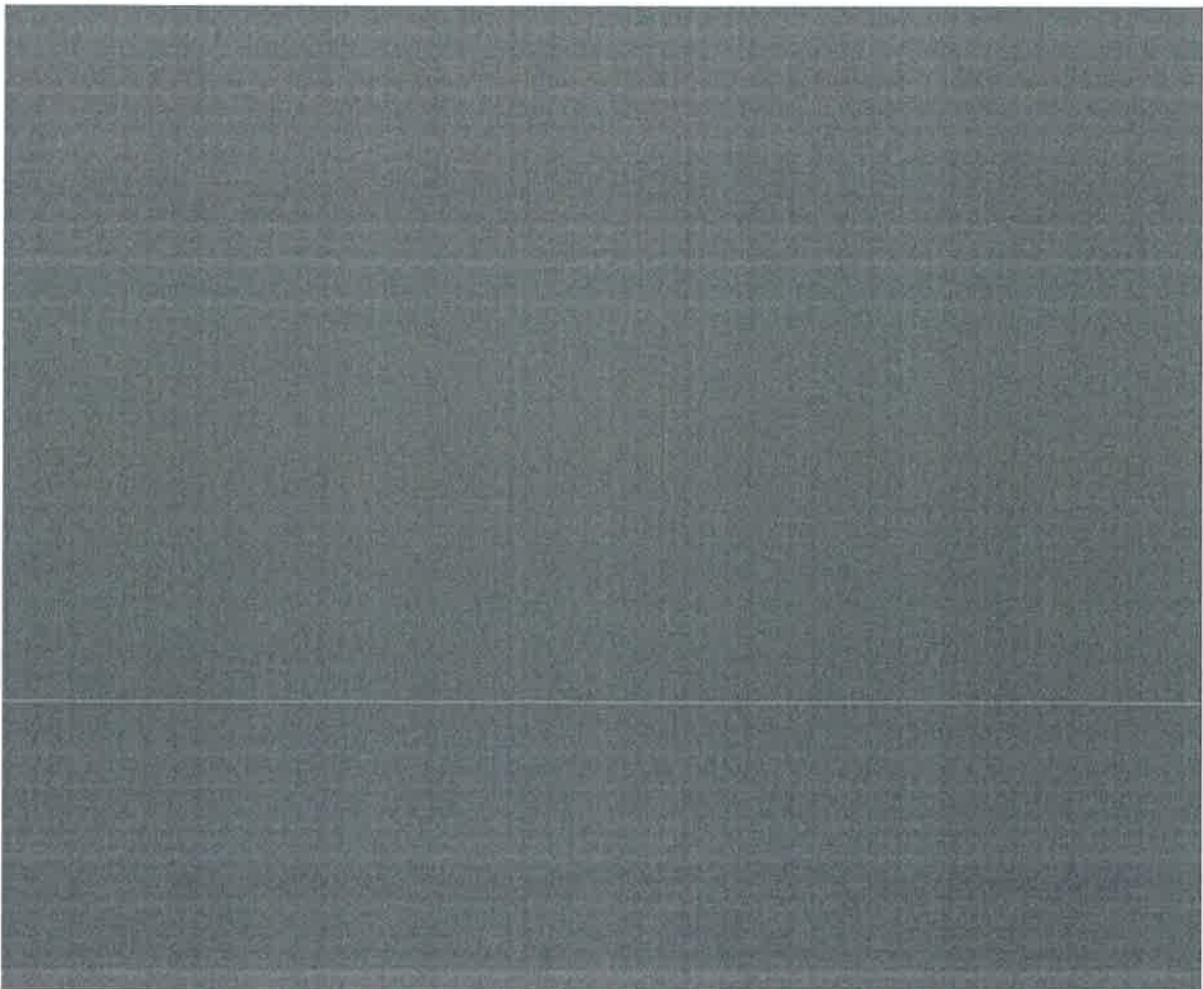




The non-disclosed parts on this page contain sensitive information obtained via co-operation with Member States and Third Countries, its release would thus significantly hinder international relations and is therefore covered by the third indent of Article 4(1)(a).



Importantly, only 7% of all detections of document abuse on entry to the EU/SAC were reported in relation to airport departure points in AFIC countries while the share of AFIC country nationals in the total detections was almost twice as high (13%). This further indicates that nationals of AFIC countries are using flights not originating in West Africa itself to reduce the risk of detection and/or refusal of entry.



The non-disclosed parts on this page contain sensitive information obtained via co-operation with Member States and Third Countries. Its release would thus significantly hinder international relations and is therefore covered by the third indent of Article 4(1)(a).

4.4.2. Documents used by AFIC country nationals

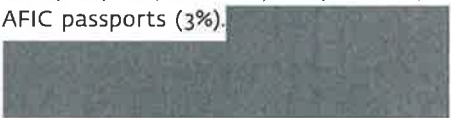
Between January and August 2012 AFIC country nationals were most commonly detected with fraudulent passports, followed by residence permits and ID cards.



Most visas used by AFIC country nationals were completely counterfeit, but it is assumed that every impostor using someone else's AFIC passport is also using their visa as an impostor.

4.4.3. Passports issued by AFIC countries

The vast majority (95%) of fraudulent AFIC documents detected in the EU or Schengen area were passports, reflecting also the importance of air travel as a method to reach Europe. Of these fraudulent AFIC passports, just over half were authentic passports, which included impostors (36% of all detected passports) and fraudulently obtained passports (13%). In both cases it is assumed that the passport also contained a visa that would authorise the holder to enter the EU/SAC. The remainder of AFIC passports were false, which included altered biopages (18% of all AFIC passports), and completely counterfeit AFIC passports (3%).



4.4.4. Place of detection

Detections of AFIC country nationals using fraudulent documents (see Fig. 23) predominantly occurred on entry checks to the EU/Schengen area from third countries (52%), but also during intra-EU/intra-Schengen travel (25%), on exit from the EU/Schengen area (17%) and while transiting through the EU/Schengen area (8%).

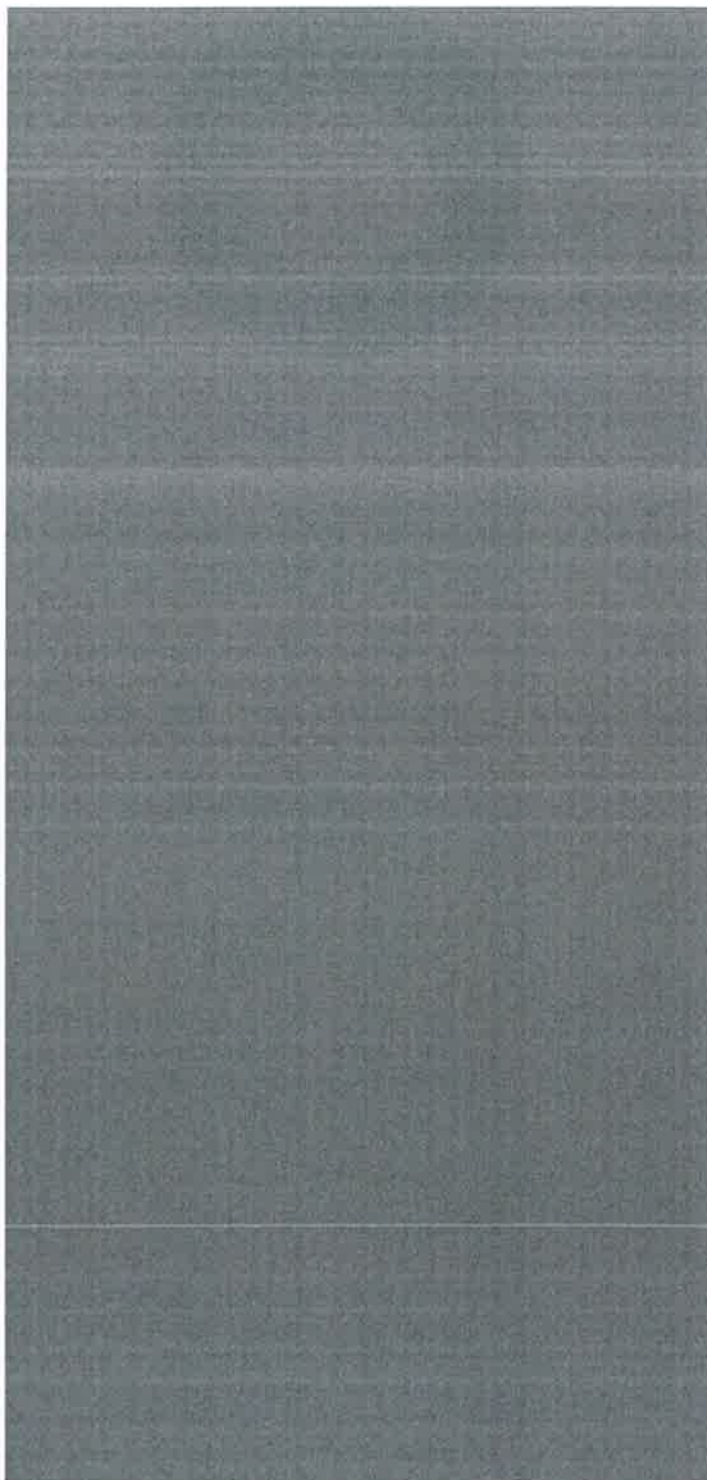
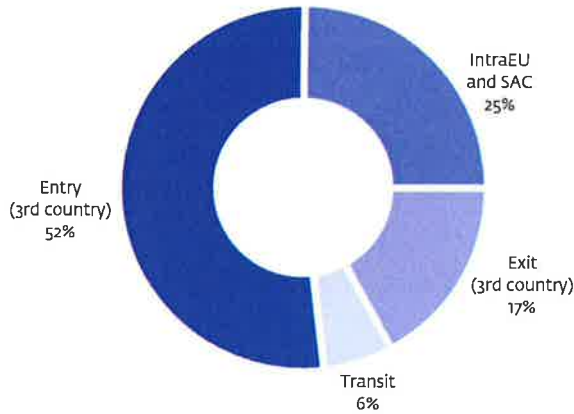




Figure 23. **Detections of fraudulent documents used by AFIC country nationals by direction of travel, Jan-Aug 2012**



Source: EDF data as of 1 October 2012

However, AFIC country nationals were more commonly represented during transit compared to the overall total of detected document fraudsters, with 18% of all detections in comparison to their share for other directions of travel. Higher proportion of detections in transit could signal a reporting bias (more focus on AFIC country nationals resulting in more detections) but also that AFIC country nationals, [redacted], are increasingly using European airports to illegally travel to North America.

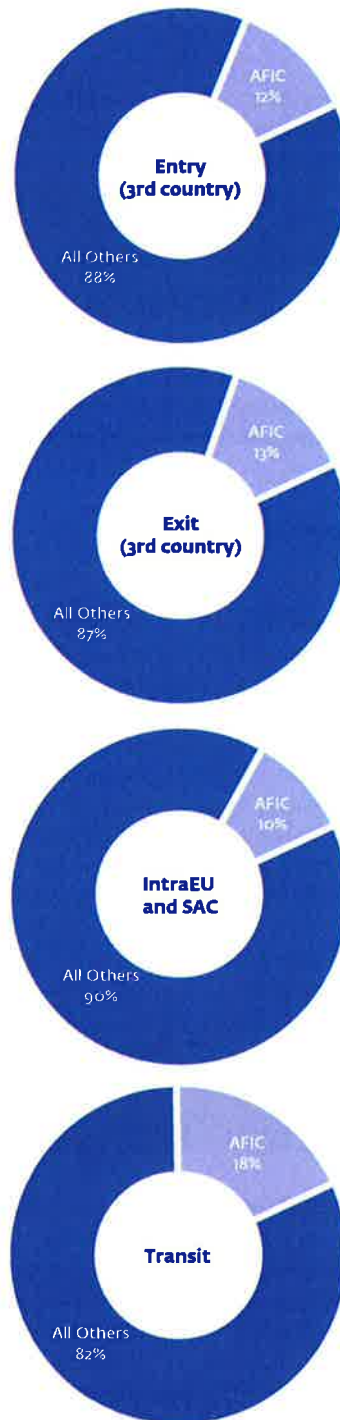
4.4.5. Nationalities of persons using fraudulent documents

While nationals from all AFIC countries were detected as participating in document fraud in the January to August 2012 period, Nigerians and, to a lesser extent, also Ghanaians stand out with particularly high levels of detections.

Nigeria

In January–August 2012, Nigerians were the most commonly detected nationals using both fraudulent documents as well as authentic documents as impostors. Of all recorded cases of document fraud involving Nigerian nationals, detections were most frequent on entry checks to the EU when

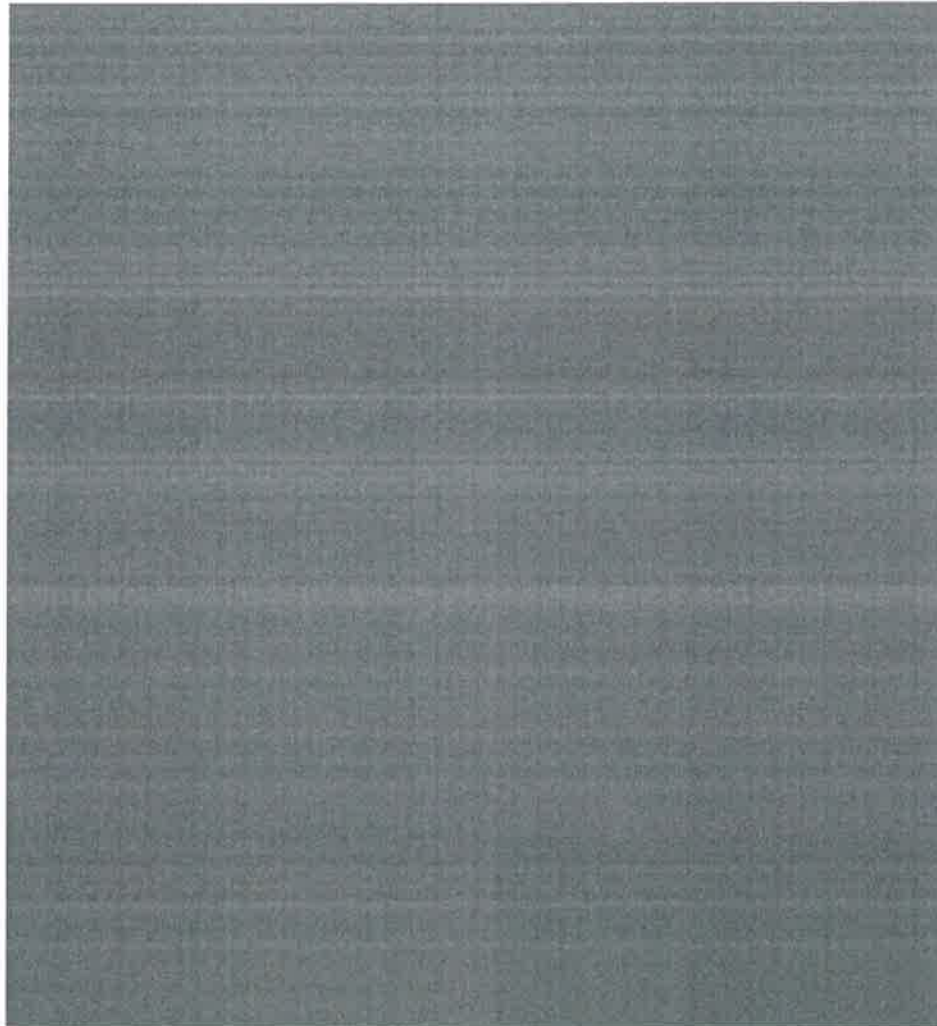
Figure 24. **Share of fraudulent documents used by AFIC country nationals in EU total, by direction of travel, Jan-Aug 2012**



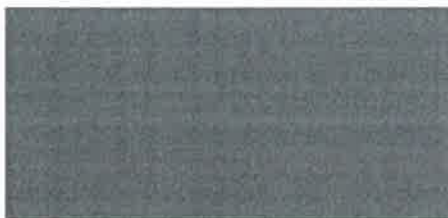
Source: EDF data as of 1 October 2012

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travel originated in a third country. [REDACTED]
However, Nigerian nationals using false documents were also detected in significant numbers on exit from the EU (19.1%) and during intra-EU/SAC travel (24.6%). Nigerians primarily used false documents, which accounted for 67% of incidents involving Nigerians, but detections of Nigerian nationals using authentic documents as impostors were also frequent (32%).



Overall, varying numbers of Nigerian nationals were detected using fraudulent documents in most EU and Schengen area states in January–August 2012. In the reporting period, Nigerian nationals detected attempting to use fraudulent documents accounted for 38.1% of all incidents involving AFIC coun-



try nationals and 4.5% of the total number of detections of document fraud in the EU/Schengen area.

Ghana

Nationals from Ghana were most commonly detected using false documents during intra-EU/SAC travel and on entry from a third country accounting for 29.5% and 27.2% of all document fraud incidents involving Ghanaian nationals in January–August 2012, respectively. Ghanaian fraudsters primarily used false documents (73.9%), but also appeared as impostors using authentic documents (26.1%). Overall, in the reporting period Ghanaian nationals detected attempting to use fraudulent documents accounted for 16.5% of all incidents involving AFIC country nationals and 1.9% of the total number of detections of document fraud in the EU/Schengen area.

The non-disclosed text contains sensitive information obtained via co-operation with Member States and Third Countries. Its release would thus significantly hinder international relations and is therefore covered by the third indent of Article 4(1)(a).



4.5. Traditional routes for irregular migration

4.5.1. Introduction

The geographical locations of the main migration routes leading from AFIC countries to the EU remain largely unchanged, as they mostly follow long-established African corridors of trade, commerce and migration. Likewise, the main entry points into the EU do not change frequently. They are mainly located along the southern Spanish coast, the Pelagic Islands of Italy, Malta and Greece. The

Canary Islands are the only important entry point into the EU outside the wider Mediterranean region.

The main south-north migratory corridors between West and North Africa can be grouped into four routes:

- West African coastal route, leading mostly towards the Canary Islands and southern Spain;
- West Saharan route with the main departure points in Morocco and Algeria towards Spain;
- Central Saharan route, which is linking Libya (and Tunisia) to the Pelagic Islands and Malta;
- West Africa – Turkey air route, which is linked with Greece (a relatively recent development driven by expanding air links between Africa and Turkey).

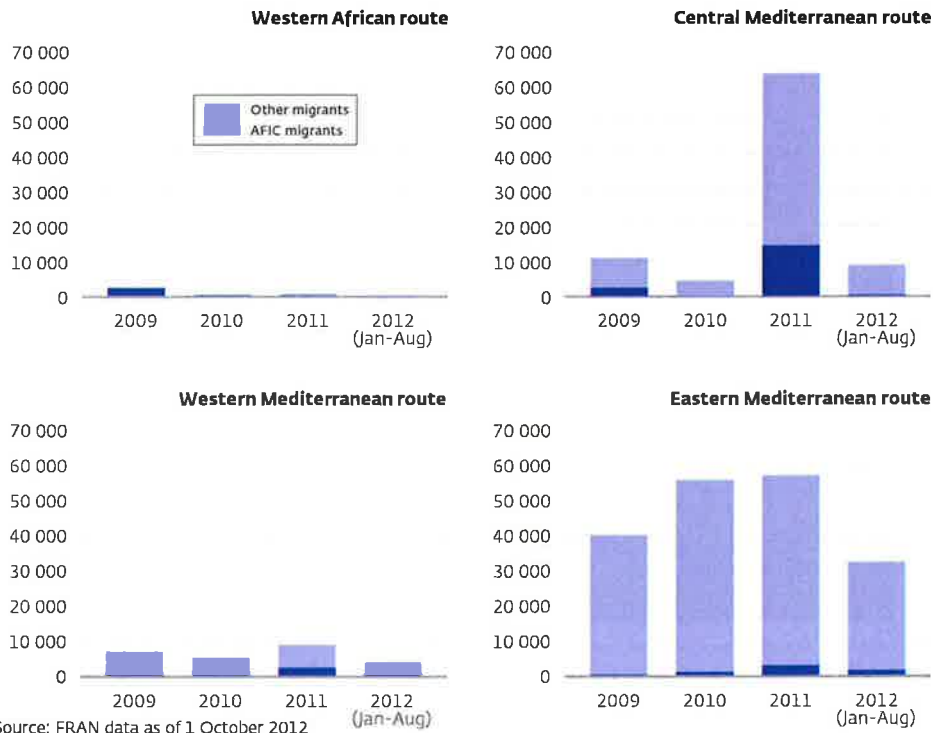
From the perspective of EU Member States, the names of the main routes are determined based on respective entry points (see Fig. 26). This chapter describes trends in detected irregular flow at each route based on annual data available to Frontex. Unless otherwise stated, figures pertaining to detections of illegal border-crossings include only AFIC migrants. In addition, the main characteristics of respective illegal flows are outlined through identifying prevailing *modus operandi*, main hubs and departing points in Africa as well as changes related to different nationalities.

4.5.2. West African route

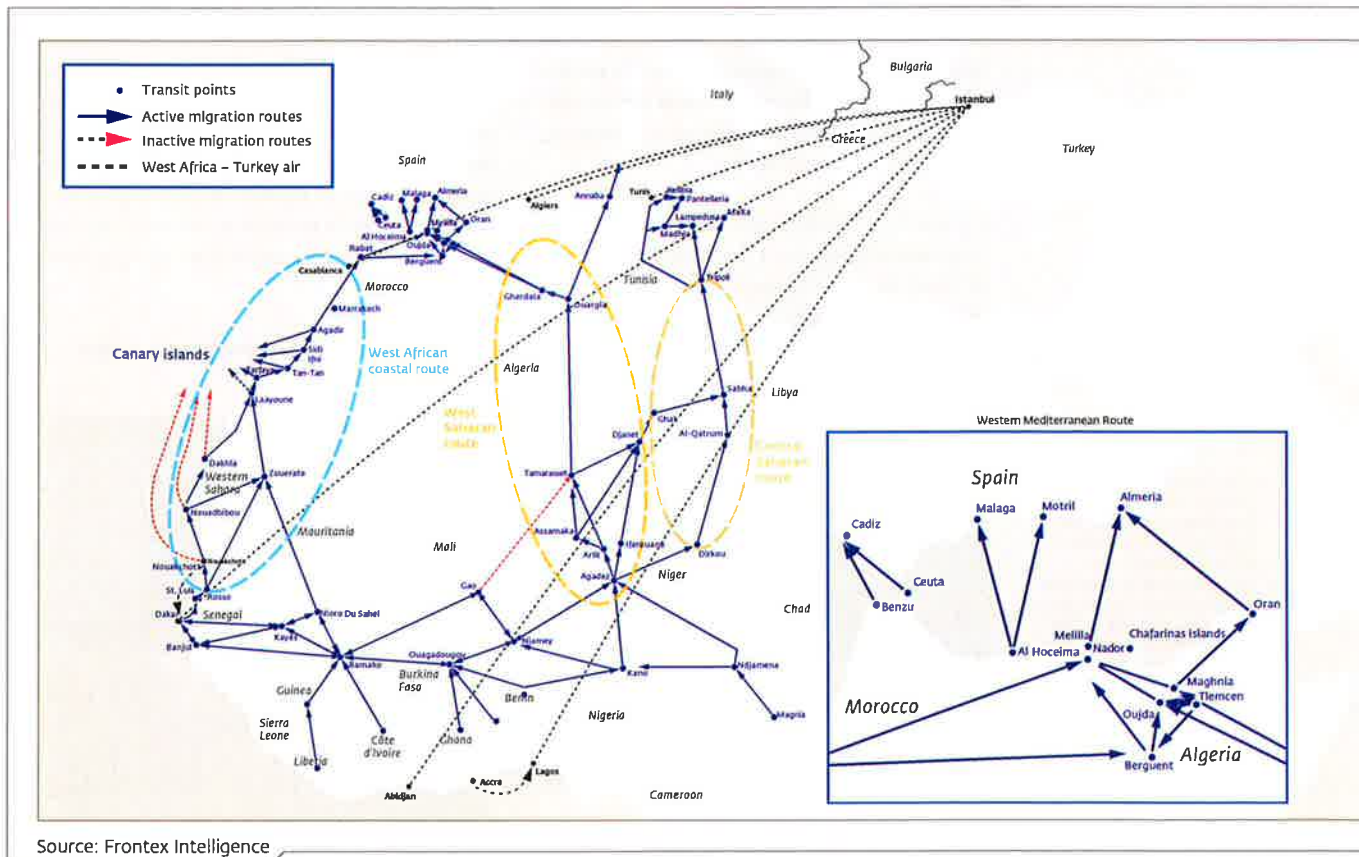
The 'West African route' refers to migration flows originating from West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, and moving towards the coastal areas of Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal. Traditionally the main entry point into the EU was the Canary Islands with the main peak in arrivals recorded in 2006.

However, from 2008 onwards the numbers of arriving West African migrants have

Figure 26. Main irregular migration routes linking West Africa with the EU



Source: FRAN data as of 1 October 2012



Source: Frontex Intelligence





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Cayucos vs pateras

Cayucos are fibreglass or wooden boats (8–12 m) capable of carrying up to 70 people.

Pateras are smaller (5–6 m long) open wooden boats with the ability to transport about 12 migrants.

dropped significantly. A partial displacement towards the southern Spanish coast and the two Spanish cities of Ceuta and Mellila has been ongoing ever since. Consequently, El Aaiouún, Dalhla and Nador in Morocco are increasingly becoming major hubs for would-be migrants from Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Niger and Guinea Conakry.

For example, Frontex operational intelligence from July 2012 reported that many thousands of West African migrants entered Mauritania en route to the north of Morocco. Though numbers cannot be accurately confirmed, they present a good indication of increased migration flows along the West Africa route towards Spain.

The non-disclosed text contains information on *modus operandi* of people involved in trans-border criminal activities. Its disclosure would undermine public interest as regards to public security, and is thus subject to the exception provided by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).



Vessels used for maritime crossing

The two main kinds of boats used by African migrants are *cayucos* (used in the past to reach the Canary Islands along with larger vessels anchored off-shore) and *pateras* (the most common type of boat used by facilitators operating in Morocco). Other vessels include inflatable rubber dinghies between 6–9 m as well as merchant vessels that can accommodate large quantities of migrants for long journeys.

Figure 27. **A group of migrants on a cayuco boat**



Migrant profiles

The most common push factors for West African migrants are economic disparity and insecure environments. Frontex operational reporting suggests that the majority of migrants en route to the Canary Islands are single males, mainly young adults. More precisely, a typical West African irregular migrant is single adult, aged between 25 and 35 years with a low level of education. The increase of arriving pregnant women or women with infants is described in Section 3.2.2. Trafficking in human beings.

Trends and forecasts

The trend of arrivals on the Canary Islands has been on a constant decrease since 2008. Effective counter-measures taken jointly by Spain, Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal in the field of intelligence sharing, surveillance, effective returns, as well as extensive Frontex-coordinated activities along the West African coast are the main reasons for the decrease. In fact, during 2012 only a negligible number of irregular migrants arrived on the Islands (only 9 AFIC country nationals were detected in 2012). At the same time, the migratory flow through Mauritania and Morocco towards Spain gained in importance.

Regardless of this partial shift, the AFIC countries stress that the pressure in the source countries persists; local push factors have not changed and the smuggling networks remain active.

The revival of migration flows towards the Canary Islands is very unlikely as long as the described effective counter-measures remain in place. Tight controls along the Mauritanian and Moroccan coast, as well as a SIVE monitoring system in the Canary Islands have also forced facilitators to resort to more dangerous and expensive travels from farther departure points along the West African coast.

Use of merchant vessels and chartered fishing boats

Merchant vessels and large fishing boats can transport several hundred migrants at one time. These boats are typically used for the longest sea journeys as they are large and able to accommodate migrants below deck. These vessels either disembark in inadequately controlled ports en route or they anchor offshore, with migrants completing the final leg either unaccompanied in small boats released from the mother ship.

Based on contributions received from AFIC partners, it appears that smugglers in West Africa are attempting to circumvent surveillance by chartering fishing boats or trawlers to sail, not to the Canary Islands but directly to Spanish mainland or other EU Member States.

According to contributions from Guinea, in May 2012, some 40 migrants of Sierra Leonean, Ghanaian and Guinean nationalities were apprehended off the coast of Guinea. Similarly, Sierra Leone has reported that recently 40–60 irregular migrants were discovered adrift on high seas while on their way to Spain. Ghana has contributed that in May 2012 about 50 irregular migrants, facilitated by a suspected Ghanaian, were stranded and were intercepted by the Sierra Leonean Maritime Administration.

4.5.3. Western Mediterranean route

The Western Mediterranean route includes migratory flows originating from the countries of West and North Africa to the southern sea borders of Spain. Main departure points include locations in Morocco and Algeria. Irregular migration has drastically decreased since 2006, when over 41 000 irregular migrants attempted access to Spanish territory, including through the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla along the Moroccan coast. Since then, the Western Mediterranean route is considered stable, with relatively consistent levels of detections of migrants crossing into Spanish territory every year.



The non-disclosed parts on this page contain information on *modus operandi* of people involved in cross-border criminal activities. Its disclosure would undermine public interest as regards to public security, and is thus subject to the exception provided by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).

Travelling through the Sahel region and the Sahara, West African migrants pass several transit points where they obtain work or fake documentation, meet facilitators or fellow migrants, such as Gao in Mali, Agadez and Arlit in Niger and Tamanrasset in Algeria. Travel along the Western Mediterranean route can last several months, sometimes even years. For all of the identified routes, the means of transport during this transit phase are small buses or cars.

Modus operandi



A new *modus operandi* was recently reported consisting of arrivals of boats from the beach of Karia on the Chafarinas Islands, a Spanish archipelago two nautical miles away from

the Moroccan coastline. It is suspected that the facilitation networks in Morocco are using this new maritime route so that they do not have to arrange long and dangerous sea travels. Once the boats land, the migrants request the help of the Spanish military garrison stationed on the islands. Migrants are then transported to Melilla, where, for the most part, they are repatriated due to very efficient repatriation agreements between Spain and Morocco. However, it has happened that migrants are forwarded to mainland Spain if detention centres in Melilla are overcrowded.

Vessels used

The Strait of Gibraltar is very narrow and can therefore be crossed using different small vessels. Besides the traditional *pateras*, Frontex intelligence also indicates the use of jet skis whereby driver brings one migrant to Spain and then returns to Morocco. Inflatable toy boats are also used.

Price paid

Intelligence suggests varying facilitation prices based on security conditions along the routes, nationalities of migrants, as well as detection risk while crossing towards Spain.



The fare paid also depends on the type of boat, the amount of fuel needed and navigation equipment on board. Some estimations suggests that smugglers usually get more than EUR 40 000 per boat for the sea crossing to the southern Spanish coast.

Several migrants reported having bought their own boats and equipment which can cost as little as EUR 400 per person.

Small vessels used to cross the Gibraltar

Jet skis: a maximum of two persons can be transported from the Moroccan coast between Ceuta and Tangier towards the area of Tarifa.

Toy rubber boats: the boats are purchased by the migrants mainly in Moroccan supermarkets for approximately EUR 100. Although the capacity is limited to four people on board, on average 8 to 12 migrants are detected in each incident.

Rubber dinghies: equipped with up to a 40 hp engine. The number of migrants on board varies between 20 and 60.

The non-disclosed parts on this page contain information on *modus operandi* of people involved in cross-border criminal activities. Its disclosure would undermine public interest as regards to public security, and is thus subject to the exception provided by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).



Main AFIC nationalities

Irregular migrants from Guinea (920), Nigeria (607) and Burkina Faso (472) were the most numerous in the first eight months of 2012. Prevailing profiles of migrants are the same as described under the previous route.

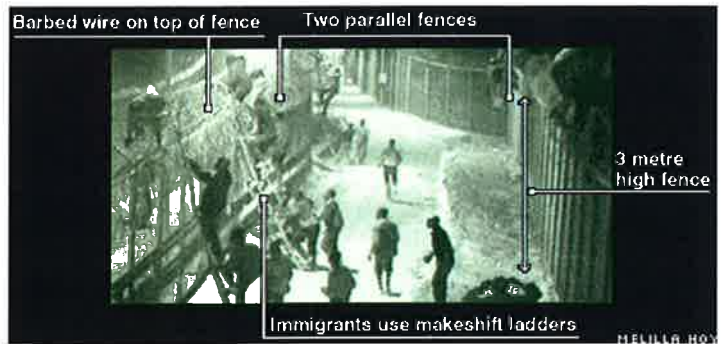
Trends and forecasts

The route is popular amongst West African migrants. Recent clashes between AQIM fighters and Tuareg rebel groups has made transit through Mali and Algeria more dangerous; however, the overall numbers of migrants arriving in Spain are expected to remain relatively stable during 2012 (same level as in 2010).

Worryingly, West African migrant settlements adjacent to the Melilla border fence in Morocco have grown in size in recent years. Spanish authorities consider a large scale illegal storming of the fences surrounding Ceuta and Melilla towards Spanish territory to be a possibility. Attempts have been made in the past though in varying scales ranging from dozens to hundreds. In an incident which occurred on 16 October 2012 around 300 sub-Saharan migrants tried to enter Melilla from Morocco. Some 100 got through but were later found by police and placed in temporary accommodation centres.



Figure 28. Migrants trying to storm the fence in Melilla



4.5.4. Central Mediterranean route

The Central Mediterranean route is used primarily by East African migrants followed by North Africans and then West Africans departing Tunisia, Libya, and Algeria to the southern sea borders of Italy and to Malta. Eastern Africans, however, were outnumbered during the Arab Spring in 2011 when more than 60 000 Tunisians and West Africans living in Libya left these countries.

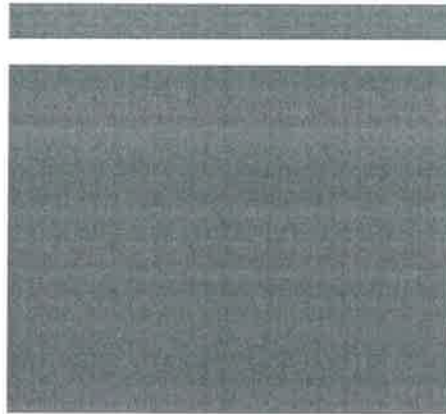
Before arriving in Libya, West African migrants use the same migration route inland from their countries of origin as elaborated under the Western Mediterranean route. Arlit, Agadez, Tamanrasset and Sabha are critical nexus points (see Fig. 26). Tamanrasset in Algeria is chosen for a more western path, and Sabha in Libya for a more eastern path.





During 2010, very few AFIC migrants have used this route as a result of enhanced security measures by Libya resulting from Italian/Libyan bilateral agreements. The numbers have increased to nearly 200 in 2012, a number still relatively low to the peak in 2011. Intelligence suggests that all West African migrants depart from Libya and not from Tunisia.

The non-disclosed text contains information on *modus operandi* of the irregular migrants. Its disclosure would undermine public interest as regards to public security, and is thus subject to the exception provided by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).



Prices paid

Intelligence collected during Frontex Joint Operations suggests that the maritime crossing towards Italy or Malta is not only dangerous but very expensive costing up to EUR 2 000 for West Africans. Prior to the civil war in Libya, Tripoli hosted a large number of West African migrants many of whom had smuggling debts of EUR 400–1 600. These migrants were typically stranded in Tripoli until payments could be made.

Migrant profile

West African migrants are usually men aged between 20 and 35, many of them are married. They claim to migrate for security reasons. In July 2012 alone, over 140 Nigerian migrants that arrived in Italy claimed that they are fleeing worsening security conditions in the north of Nigeria. However, economic incentive is very often a primary push factor.

Trends and forecasts

In 2008 Libya and Italy signed a 'friendship agreement' which was followed by a protocol in 2009. It included a clause on enhanced border controls in order to decrease migration flows to Europe via Libya. As a result, Libya increased its security efforts along its southern borders as well as its coastline. Italy, in turn, was allowed to patrol the waters off the Libyan coast in an effort to stop irregular migrants from reaching European territory. This explains the massive decline of total and AFIC detections in Italy via Libya in 2010.

After the fall of Gaddafi an interim government was established. The government stated, that it will continue to pursue the efforts laid out in this 'friendship agreement', yet the agreement itself is no longer valid. Furthermore, talks of cooperation are still vague and unsubstantial as Libyan focus lies on securing its country from separatist rebel groupings. It is therefore unclear at which intensity border protection will continue once Libya has become more stable.

Transit through Niger, South Algeria, and South West Libya is very dangerous as AQIM militants are trying to impose their agenda in areas traditionally ruled by Tuareg tribes. Several attacks also occurred throughout Libya, including in Benghazi and Sabha. Reports mention the displacement of half the citizens of Sabha, a key transit point in Libya, making transit through the city nearly impossible. Violent clashes between armed groups are likely to continue across the country.

This violence leaves migrants vulnerable to attack. Rape and robbery are frequent occurrences. In fact, Niger's contribution has highlighted that flows of West African migrants are still higher in the opposite direction (leaving Libya).

The non-disclosed text contains information on *modus operandi* of the irregular migrants. Its disclosure would undermine public interest as regards to public security, and is thus subject to the exception provided by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).

As instabilities continue, the number of AFIC migrants using this route is expected to decrease. The route through Libya could revive once Libya is more secure. This is, however, unlikely to happen for several months. A shift towards the Eastern Mediterranean route is likely (air link to Turkey).

4.5.5. Eastern Mediterranean route

Unlike the migration routes discussed previously, this route involves flights to Turkey, which is then used as a 'spring board' for illegal entry into the EU at Greek-Turkish borders. AFIC migrants benefit from a large number of flight connections located along the North and West African coast offering direct flights to Istanbul (see Fig. 29).

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Compared to other land-based routes, flying to Turkey and subsequent illegal entry to the EU in Greece is faster, safer, and much cheaper. It is therefore not surprising that in the first seven months of 2012 alone, there were more Nigerian nationals detected for il-

legal border-crossing in Greece than in Spain and Italy combined. This is also the case for nationals of Côte d'Ivoire, whose detections at the Greek-Turkish borders have been substantially higher to those in Italy or Spain.

Prices paid

The average cost of Turkish Airlines flight from West Africa to Istanbul is between EUR 250 and 350.

[Redacted]

The non-disclosed text contains information on the operational aspects of the ongoing missions. Its disclosure would lower their efficiency and thus could undermine public interest as regards to public security, and is thus subject to the exception provided by the first indent of Article 4(1)(a).

[Redacted]

Main AFIC nationalities

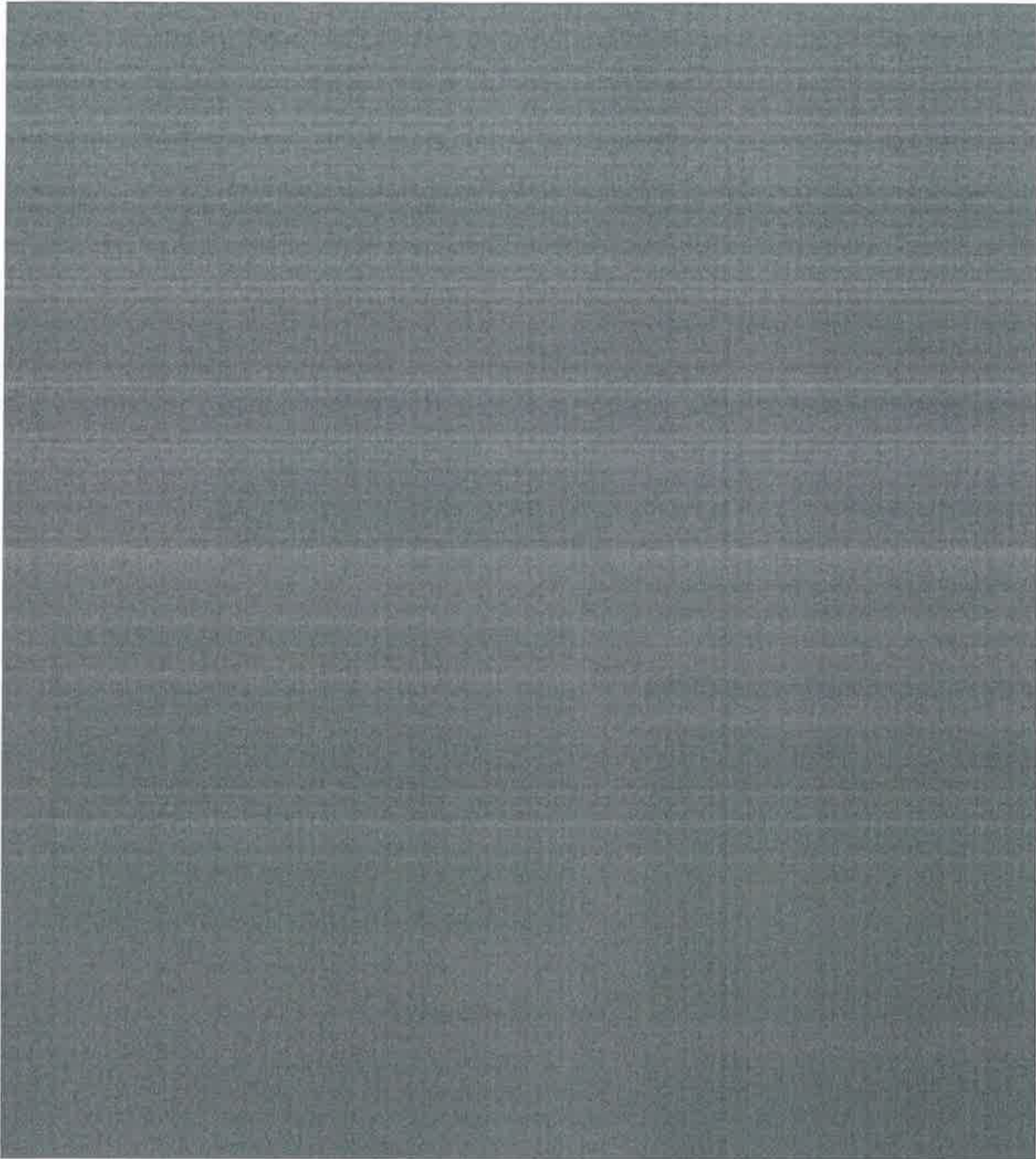
The top three AFIC nationalities using the Eastern Mediterranean route over the past three years have been Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, all of which have an airport with direct connections to Istanbul.

Trends and forecasts

The Eastern Mediterranean route requires air transit rather than more traditional land and sea movements. Several airports located throughout the coastal areas of North and West Africa provide cheap, reliable and direct flights to Turkey, where irregular migration



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into Greece is facilitated at a low price compared to most traditional facilitation routes. This route is emerging as a viable alternative to other previously described routes.



5. Brief overview of migratory movements from Asia to West Africa

5.1. Introduction

Countries in West Africa are not usual destinations of choice for migrants coming from beyond the region itself. This is clearly the case for nationals of Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, China and Vietnam (Asian migrants), whose numbers in West Africa remain relatively modest and difficult to ascertain precisely. However, the number of Asian migrants arriving in West Africa is most probably increasing, driven by a growing commercial engagement of China and India in the continent and the related growth of transport links between Asia and Africa.

This chapter looks at the phenomena from two main perspectives. The first is focused on the settlement of Asian migrants in the region and the related socio-economic challenges. The second looks at Asian transit flow of migrants who consider West Africa as a sort of 'spring board' for further (often illegal) migration to Europe or North America.

5.2. Growing commercial engagement of China and India in Africa

Over the last decade, investment in Africa has become a key economic priority for both India and China. Taking into account Africa's natural resources and population, the continent represents a major opportunity for Chinese and Indian investors, prompting the development of cooperation efforts at governmental level. China's strategic plan aims to achieve a preferential status for the country in key African nations.

In doing so China has invested billions of dollars directly into Africa's infrastructure and social development projects. In the case of Nigeria for example, Chinese investment in 2008 alone was worth around EUR 6.6 billion. China originally became involved in Nigerian infrastructure projects through the oil-for-infrastructure deals. Currently, despite many of the projects being marred with delays or cancellations, Chinese companies are still at work in construction ventures across Nigeria (see Fig. 30). They have been building roads, railways and airports across the country (such as the railway line linking Abuja and Kaduna).

Figure 30. **Lagos Light Rail Project is being done by a Chinese construction firm Chinese Civil Engineering Company Limited (CCECC), which has been operating in the country for 30 years; this project is expected to give work to 8 000 workers**



© Nairaland Forum, 3 May 2012



According to some Chinese economists, China became Africa's biggest trading partner in 2011, with the trade volume of nearly EUR 128 billion, thus surpassing the 2010 volume by more than EUR 24 billion.

India is following the Chinese example and is also bolstering its investments in Africa. In 2008, the Indian government announced duty-free access to Indian markets for the world's 50 least developed countries, 34 of which are located in Africa, and also the duplication of the Indian credit line to Africa in the years 2008–2009.

5.3. Extensive transport links between Asia and Africa

Growing commercial links are responsible for a significant increase in sea transport of products from China and India towards Africa. Africa, on the other hand, caters for more than one-third of China's crude oil needs, and supplies notable amounts of copper, timber and diamonds.

Unsurprisingly, air traffic between Africa and Asia has doubled over the last decade. Of all international air traffic originating in the Asia-Pacific region, destinations in Africa have the highest annual growth rate projected at 8.4% until 2020.

Major airline carriers, both from Africa and Asia (such as Cathay Pacific, Ethiopian Airlines, South African Airways and Kenya Airways), link the two continents with regular flights from several hubs in Asia to important airports like Johannesburg in the south, Cairo in the north, Lagos and Nairobi in the west and east, respectively.

The eastern and central regions of Africa are easily accessed through the air hub of Nairobi, Kenya. The airport was originally designed for 2.5 million passengers a year, yet served 4.9 million in 2007 and with the planned im-

provements the figure may reach 9 million in the future. Lagos International Airport is the busiest airport in West Africa and is recognised as the main entry gate (from Asia) to the region.

5.4. Settlement of Asian migrants in Africa and related socio-economic challenges

It remains difficult to accurately assess the actual size of migration from Asia to Africa, both regarding the stock of migrants and migratory flows. However, it is likely that Chinese and Indians are the most common Asian nationals in Africa.

The estimated total number of Chinese on the African continent varies between 600 000 to over 800 000. The Chinese community in South Africa is by far the largest, followed by those in Nigeria, Sudan, Angola and Algeria. In the case of other Asian nationals, in particular Indians, there are historical reasons associated with their initial settlement in Africa, mostly in the south and east of the continent.

New arrivals in West Africa from India and China are mostly temporary labour migrants, small business owners, entrepreneurs and agricultural workers. The largest of these four categories is without a doubt temporary labour with official Chinese government sources indicating the presence of several hundred Chinese companies operating in Africa. Chinese migrants working for these companies often sign short-term contracts for work in construction, oil and mining operations which are all tied to Chinese investment.

Nigeria seems to be the main West African country where Chinese (and Indian) migrants settle for longer periods. This is corroborated both by Figure 31 and [REDACTED] that show the size of settled Chinese communities as well as residence permit and visa-issuing

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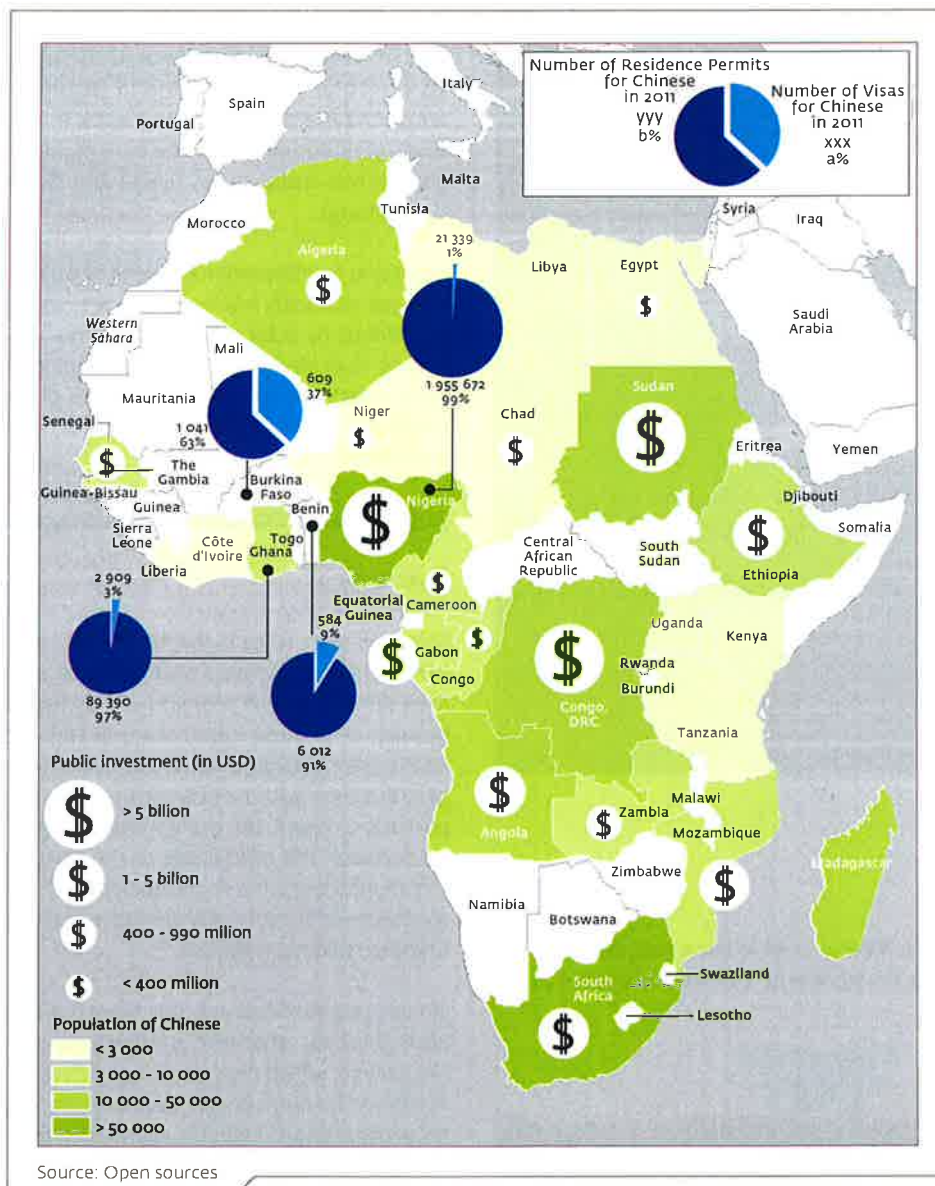


Figure 31. **Nigeria is the AFIC (West African) partner with the highest level of Chinese public direct investment and also the largest estimated Chinese community, which is reflected in the highest number of Chinese residence-permit holders (21 339)**

Chinese communities in Africa and visa-issuing trend for Asian nationals residing in West Africa

Sources: CEIC – Macroeconomic databases for Emerging and Developed Countries; OCAC – Overseas Compatriot Affairs Commission (China); MOIA – Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs; U.S. Census Bureau



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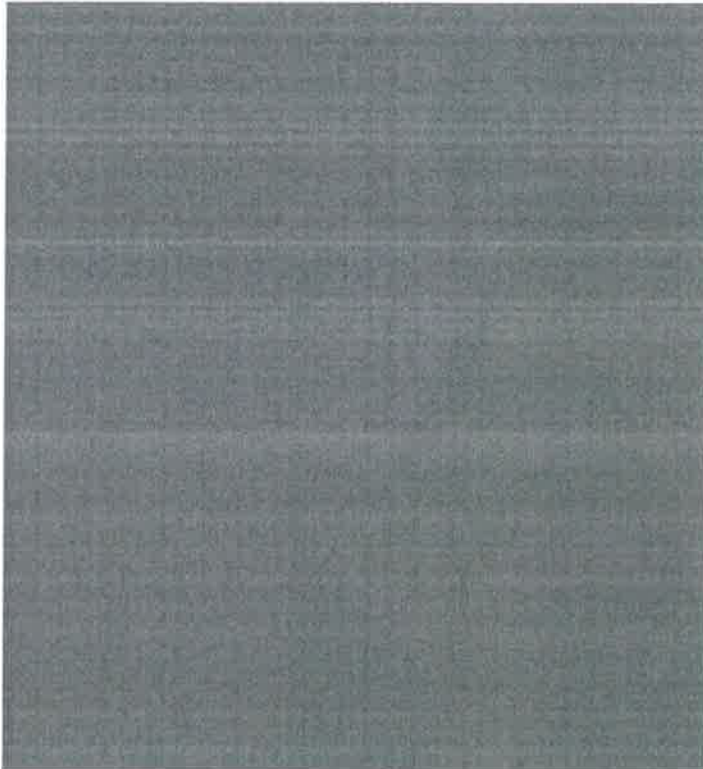


Figure 33. Chinatown in Lagos, Nigeria, built in 2004 and planned to have more than 100 shops, is a symbol of Chinese investment in the country

© NPR.org (National Public Radio), 15 June 2011



trends for Asian nationals in selected countries of West Africa. An estimated 20 000 to 50 000 Chinese were living in Nigeria in 2010. Chinese migrants often work in and own retail businesses in the two main Nigerian free-trade zones (Lekki and Ogun Guangdong).

According to information provided by Guinea, Chinese nationals residing there are mainly motivated by business opportunities, engaging in all kinds of activities (including illegal ones). Indian nationals on the other hand are mainly engaged in trade and agriculture.

5.5. Socio-economic challenges

Overstaying

Nigerian authorities highlight the fact that many Chinese migrants try to reunite with their families, which prompts a likely future growth of Chinese community in Nigeria. Family members often enter the country legally but then become overstayers. This may partially account for the apparent disparity between the official size of the Chinese community and what some studies and open sources consider to be the correct number of Chinese residing in Nigeria.

Similar observations are also reported and highlighted by other AFIC partner countries like Guinea, which reports a clear difference between the numbers of those arriving and those departing. In addition, information from Senegal indicates that most Chinese workers decide to remain in Senegal once their contracts expire.

Tensions with local communities

Despite Chinese official rhetoric about the 'win-win' nature of the relationship with Africa, Chinese companies insist on the use of mostly Chinese labour for infrastructural

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projects, even in situations where African labour is abundant. This practice persists despite the criticism and creates tensions between local communities and guest workers from China.

Likewise, tensions with local communities occur more and more frequently when Chinese businesses trade illegally (without a licence), often selling counterfeit goods at prices which local traders cannot compete with.



5.6. West Africa as a 'spring board' for further (mostly illegal) migration

5.6.1. To Europe

Given the vast geographical distance between West Africa and Europe and the fact that travel overland also requires dangerous maritime crossings, West Africa is not an obvious choice as a 'spring board' or a 'stop over' location. Other options, such as transiting Libya, Turkey or the Gulf, are by far more popular, indicated both by regular passenger flows and detections of irregular migrants at external air, land and sea borders of EU Member States.



Illegal trading practices lead to conflict with local communities

In February 2012, authorities in Ghana reported the arrest of 36 individuals (mostly Chinese) on the charges of violating the GIPC (Ghana Investment Promotion Centre) Act. Burkina Faso reported to Frontex that Chinese citizens involved in illegal activities were most often charged with fiscal and tax fraud.

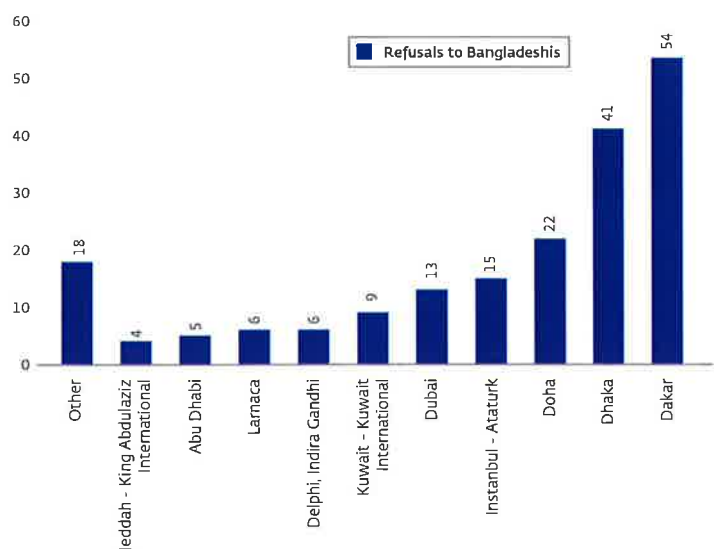
Likewise, Nigerian authorities recently expelled 45 Chinese nationals (May 2012) involved in illegal trading in textile goods. Some of the traders were also found to be illegally staying in Nigeria after the expiry of their initial visa.

Such instances of illegal trading practices are likely to cause more tensions with local communities in the future.

By air

In the case of departures by air the latest operational data from Frontex's Pulsar project suggests that out of more than 200 Bangladeshis that were refused entry at different airports in the EU during 2012, most (26% of the total) came on flights from Dakar in Senegal (see Fig. 34). This number, while still rel-

Figure 34. Refusals of entry issued to Bangladeshi nationals according to their last airport of departure in 2012



Source: Pulsar data as of 1 October 2012



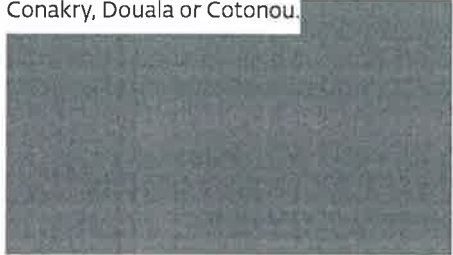
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atively low, is considerably higher compared to 2011 when fewer than 20 Asian nationals (most of them Chinese) arrived in Europe from various African airports. However, it is not clear if the refused Bangladeshis simply transited through Dakar as part of this *modus operandi* or had been staying in Senegal for some time prior to their departure to Europe.

While the refusal numbers are much lower in the case of Chinese nationals routing through West African airports, their *modi operandi* can be very sophisticated and thus difficult to detect.



There were also some cases of Chinese nationals travelling from China via Paris to Lome, Conakry, Douala or Cotonou.



Bangladeshis in Libya



According to a recent (August 2012) report by the Migration Policy Institute and the International Organization for Migration, many would-be migrants are recruited by local sub-agents in Bangladesh, known colloquially as *dalals*. They help to find and refer prospective migrants from villages and areas far from city centres. Importantly, the sub-agents or brokers work in an informal setting as they are not accountable to the formal recruitment agencies or to the migrants they eventually help to recruit.

By land and sea

It is also possible to reach Europe from West Africa by more traditional land and sea routes running through Africa and via different entry points in the wider Mediterranean region (Spain, Italy and Malta). However, Frontex operational information suggests that Asian nationals tend not to use these routes as they mostly transit through the Turkey-Greece corridor.

At best, North Africa (Libya, Morocco and Algeria) is used as a stop-over area. Migrants arrive in Libya by air from the Gulf (hosting large communities of Asian migrants) and later continue by boat to Italy. Some also move towards departure points in Morocco and Algeria before making a maritime crossing to Spain. It has to be stressed that the numbers of detected Asian nationals (mostly Bangladeshis and Pakistanis) in Italy or Spain are quite low (below 100 in 2012). Further-

more, the trend seems to be on the decline. Worryingly, however, Frontex operational intelligence from 2010 suggested that Bangladeshi migrants passing through Libya were facilitated on the basis of contracts that included elements of bonded labour (see box).

5.6.2. To North America

By sea

In May 2012, twelve people were arrested by Ghanaian authorities after they had been found hiding around Ghana's port of Tema, Africa's largest man-made harbour. The arrests were made possible through cooperation with the relevant Canadian authorities. The investigation determined that a ship was being prepared for a 7 500 km transatlantic voyage towards the east coast of Canada.

More than 200 would-be passengers were all Sri Lankan nationals (Tamils) who paid smugglers to transport them to Canada. However, they had already been stranded in West Africa (Togo) since November 2011. A large majority of them accepted voluntary return to Sri Lanka after they had been discovered in the Ghanaian port.

A month later, almost 150 Sri Lankans were detected in Benin allegedly en route to Canada. Almost all eventually agreed to return to Sri Lanka. Worryingly, open-source reporting suggests that more Sri Lankans came to Benin after this incident.

Likewise, Togolese authorities noted an increase in Sri Lankan and Pakistani nationals arriving in Togo. They were coming in small groups, seeking transit visas to Accra or Cotonou. Normally, they were staying in homes of their fellow citizens (mostly Sri Lankan nationals who had been granted the refugee status) while waiting for a possible maritime crossing to Canada.

Information provided by Benin and Burkina Faso also points to an increase in Sri Lankan arrivals. There seems to be a trend with smugglers shifting their attention to West Africa and trying to exploit many vulnerabilities related to border management there.

Attempts to reach Canada continue

Sri Lankan nationals allegedly continue to depart from Colombo and head to Mali, for example, where they try to get visas (either genuine or fake). They then continue to the Gulf of Guinea countries, waiting for their chance to reach Canada illegally.

There are two known *modi operandi* used by smuggling networks to transport Sri Lankans to Canada. The first one involves departure directly from a port in West Africa on mid-size fishing vessels. The second one makes use of a larger rented boat that is kept on the high seas and small fishing boats bring the migrants to the larger vessel.

Figure 35. Motor Vessel Sun Sea with 492 Sri Lankan migrants on board detected heading toward the British Columbia coast in 2010



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6. Final remarks

The Africa-Frontex Intelligence Community is a young and evolving community of experts. As such, it is well-placed to identify, discuss and jointly analyse border issues of common concern for partners in Africa and Europe. The Community's unique format and informal nature also enables it to address the ever-changing border security threats, both locally in Africa and beyond the continent itself, in a flexible manner. The first Joint Report should be considered as an initial approximation, a snapshot of the current situation as seen by AFIC experts and an attempt to arrive at a common understanding of the main problems.

Drawing up the first Joint Report was, however, by no means an easy exercise. Some problems with the quality of data, or lack thereof, and difficulties in obtaining information from beyond the border control authorities in AFIC countries were frequently cited. While these are quite common problems, which also occurred at initial stages of similar Frontex-coordinated risk analysis networks, the issue of quality and availability of data/information should be addressed by the AFIC in the future.

To overcome the mentioned deficiencies available written inputs from all AFIC partners were cross-examined and multiple sources available to Frontex consulted, making this product a truly all-source report.

The first analytical report, while structured into three separate parts, does not contain specific recommendations for risk mitigation measures. Nevertheless, it should be taken as providing a wider situational awareness for a range of international and national actors who are broadly engaged in migration policies and border security in Africa.

Finally, the main take-away messages in terms of the three subject-areas addressed in this report can be formulated as follows:

- The phenomenon of possible links between human smuggling and various cross-border criminal activities in West Africa is very complex and not easy to analyse. What seems clear, however, is that any approach to understand and tackle these issues requires actions that extend beyond the regional borders and thus shall imply concerted efforts by more than one country in Africa and Europe.
- From the AFIC point of view, human smuggling seems to be linked with trafficking in human beings, as smuggled persons often end up as victims of trafficking upon arrival at their destination.
- Even though traditional land and sea migration routes remain more or less active in Africa, the option of flying from Africa to Turkey legally to subsequently illegally enter the EU in Greece is faster, safer, cheaper and, consequently, a very attractive alternative for many nationals of AFIC partner countries. Therefore, document fraud and air travel in general are likely to gain further popularity among would-be migrants from West Africa.
- West Africa's importance for migratory movements from countries like China, India and, to a lesser extent, also from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan is likely to grow, both as a destination and a transit area for further (often illegal) migration flows towards Europe or North America.



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