



ANNEXES

Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on the Vulnerabilities of Migrants on the Central Mediterranean Route

1 July 2020

Part of the **SSS II** programme



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Annex 2. Glossary

| | |
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| Access | "Humanitarian access concerns humanitarian actors' ability to reach populations affected by crisis, as well as an affected population's ability to access humanitarian assistance and services." (UN OCHA) ¹ |
| Central Mediterranean Route | The Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) refers to the collection of pathways taken by people in mixed migration journeys from West and Central Africa towards North Africa that can result in attempts to cross the sea towards Italy and Malta from Libya, Algeria, Egypt or Tunisia. (UNSMIL and OHCHR) ² |
| Exploitation | Exploitation is not specifically defined in the Protocol but stipulated to include, at a minimum: "the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs." (Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons) ³ |
| Forced migration | "A migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion." (IOM) ⁴ Forced migrants may be seeking asylum or be recognised as refugees. |
| Ghettos | Ghettos are "compounds controlled by operators involved in the irregular migration industry." (Clingendael) ⁵ |
| Mixed migration | "Mixed migration refers to cross-border movements of people including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly and wholly or partially assisted by migrant smuggling facilitators." (MMC) ⁶ |
| Non-refoulement | Non-refoulement asserts that "a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom." (1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees) |
| Protection services | Protection services include safety, food, shelter, legal support, physical health and psychosocial health services. ⁷ (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) |
| Refugees | A refugee is any person "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." (Article 1 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees) |
| Returnees | "Returning migrants are persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another country." (OECD) ⁸ Return can be spontaneous and independent, forced by the authorities or |

¹ OCHA (2010), [Humanitarian Access](#).

² UNSMIL and OHCHR (2018), [Desperate and Dangerous: Report on the human rights situation of migrants and refugees in Libya](#).

³ Article 3, paragraph (a) of the [Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons](#).

⁴ IOM (2019), [Glossary on Migration](#).

⁵ Clingendael (2018), [A human rights and peace-building approach to migration governance in the Sahel](#).

⁶ MMC (undated), [What is Mixed Migration?](#)

⁷ Adapted from Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2016). [Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action](#).

⁸ OECD (2001), [Glossary of statistical terms](#).

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| | assisted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) via Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR). ⁹ |
| Smuggling | "The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or permanent resident." (UNODC) ¹⁰ In practice, a "voluntary transaction takes place between the migrant and the smuggler, where the latter facilitates the former's irregular movement." (Clingendael) ¹¹ Actors in smuggling networks may include drivers, car owners, "coaxers" (intermediaries) and "ghetto" owners. ¹² |
| Stranded migrants | A migrant who for "reasons beyond their control has been unintentionally forced to stay in a country" (European Commission). ¹³ Migrants become stranded when they are unable or unwilling to return to their state of nationality or former residence, are unable or unwilling to integrate in the state in which they are physically present, and/or are unable to move to the next leg of their journeys due to lack of resources or legal constraints. ¹⁴ |
| Transit migrants | Individuals who have the intention of continuing their journey on the Central Mediterranean Route as soon as they are able to do so. ¹⁵ |
| Trafficking in persons | The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. (Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons) ¹⁶ Trafficked persons may be migrants [of any legal status], but people are also trafficked within their own country of origin. (Clingendael) ¹⁷ |
| Vulnerability in mixed migration settings | The inability to avoid, cope with, and recover from exposure or experiences of harm (IOM). ¹⁸ Vulnerability is not "predetermined by personal characteristics (e.g. by describing persons with a physical disability as a vulnerable group), but as susceptibility to some type of harm under the influence of personal and situational factors." (Vogel & Kraher, 2017) ¹⁹ |

⁹ Adapted from IOM (2019a), [Glossary on Migration](#).

¹⁰ UNODC (2017). [The Concept of "Financial or Other Material Benefit" in the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol](#).

¹¹ Clingendael (2018d), Clingendael. 2018d. [Caught in the middle](#).

¹² Clingendael (2018b), [Multilateral Damage: The Impact of EU Migration Policies on Central Saharan Routes](#).

¹³ European Migration Network (undated), [Stranded migrant](#).

¹⁴ Adapted from IOM, UNHCR & Save the Children (2016), [Addressing the challenges of mixed migration: training guide](#).

¹⁵ IOM (2019), [Glossary on Migration](#).

¹⁶ Article 3, paragraph (a) of the [Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons](#).

¹⁷ Clingendael (2018), Clingendael. 2018. [Caught in the middle](#).

¹⁸ IOM (2019), [IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse](#); OHCHR (2017), [Principles and Guidelines migrants in vulnerable situations](#); ICRC (2017), [Approach to Migration](#).

¹⁹ Vogel and Kraher. (2017), [Demand-side Interventions Against Trafficking in Human Beings: Towards an Integrated Theoretical Approach](#). DemandAT Working Paper No. 14.

Annex 3. Qualitative Sample

IMREF conducted all interviews in May 2020.

Table 1: Overview of Informants²⁰

| | Regional / Global | Niger | Mali | Burkina Faso | Total |
|--|---|---|--|--|-------|
| Researchers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MERF, • MMC, • IFRC, • Migration Policy Center, • GI, • GMDAC Missing Migrants Project, • IOM, • DTM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REACH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REACH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No interview | 13 |
| Humanitarian and Development Organisations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF, • DRC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COOPI, • IOM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danish Red Cross, • Maison du Migrant, • ENDA Mali, • IOM, • DRC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish Red Cross, • UNICEF | 11 |
| Total | 10 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 24 |

Table 2: Overview of the qualitative sample

| Location | Code | Nationality | Age | Sex |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------|-----|--------|
| Agadez | 20200506_AGADEZ_1 | Cameroon | 40 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200507_AGADEZ_2 | Cameroon | 23 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200507_AGADEZ_3 | Cameroon | 25 | Female |
| Agadez | 20200507_AGADEZ_4 | Togo | 23 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200508_AGADEZ_5 | Cameroon | 30 | Female |
| Agadez | 20200508-AGADEZ-6 | Centrafrique | 24 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200509_AGADEZ_7 | Gabon | 27 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200509_AGADEZ_8 | Centrafrique | 21 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200512_AGADEZ_9 | Ivory Coast | 35 | Male |
| Agadez | 20200514_AGADEZ_10 | Cameroon | 29 | Female |
| Agadez | 20200514_AGADEZ_11 | Cameroon | 22 | Female |
| Agadez | 20200518_AGADEZ_12 | Cameroon | 24 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200508_Ouaga_01 | Cameroon | 24 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200509_Ouaga_02 | Ivory Coast | 24 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200509_Ouaga_03 | Senegal | 39 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200511_Ouaga_04 | Senegal | 25 | Male |

²⁰ In some instances, the team interviewed multiple informants from a single organisation.

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------|----|--------|
| Ouagadougou | 20200510_Ouaga_05 | Guinea | 28 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200511_Ouaga_06 | Senegal | 36 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200512_Ouaga_07 | Senegal | 36 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200516_Ouaga_08 | Senegal | 28 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200516_Ouaga_09 | Guinea | 28 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200521_Ouaga_10 | Mali | 33 | Male |
| Ouagadougou | 20200522_Ouaga_11 | Togo | 29 | Female |
| Ouagadougou | 20200522_Ouaga_12 | Togo | 24 | Female |
| Gao | 20200605_GAO_1 | Ivory Coast | 22 | Male |
| Gao | 20200605_GAO_2 | Guinea | 19 | Male |
| Gao | 20200705_GAO_3 | Guinea | 18 | Male |
| Gao | 20200705_GAO_4 | Ivory Coast | 22 | Male |
| Gao | 20200605_GAO_5 | Ivory Coast | 30 | Male |
| Gao | 20200805_GAO_6 | Burkina Faso | 29 | Male |
| Gao | 20200905_GAO_7 | Togo | 25 | Female |
| Gao | 20201105_GAO_8 | Benin | 33 | Male |
| Gao | 20201205_GAO_9 | Benin | 30 | Female |
| Gao | 20201405_GAO_10 | Ivory Coast | 27 | Male |
| Gao | 20201305_GAO_11 | Benin | 24 | Female |
| Gao | 20201605_GAO_12 | Togo | 38 | Female |

Annex 4. Limitations

There are methodological and practical limitations that affect the findings of this study. These include:

- The study provides insight into the experiences of the study participants and how their vulnerabilities evolved since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. However, primary data collected was purely qualitative and did not engage a representative sample of the populations of interest.
- The purposive sampling methodology employed did not designate quotas or otherwise attempt to sample proportionally to populations. Some sub-groups, such as certain nationalities, may therefore be sampled in greater numbers than would otherwise be the case in a proportional sample.
- However, we did seek to maximise the diversity of the sample in national, gender, age and circumstantial terms. The sample failed to do that in the following cases:
 - The team did not interview highly vulnerable migrants, such as children, older migrants, migrants with disability or chronic diseases, migrants in detention and victims of trafficking. This is primarily because of difficulties in identifying these groups remotely, as well as safeguarding concerns. For some RQs, it is likely that knowledge gaps will not be addressed in the short term due to difficulties in conducting research with these hard-to-access groups. This is notably the case for the impact of COVID-19 on human trafficking and violence against women and children.
 - In Burkina Faso, the team struggled to identify women who were planning to travel further along the CMR. These difficulties reflect findings from IOM DTM that there had been a decrease in the proportion of female travellers since the start of COVID-19.²¹ As a response, IMREF increased the number of female respondents in Gao and Agadez (total of 8) and interviewed Togolese women who reside in Ouagadougou.
 - In Burkina Faso, migrants travel independently and rarely rely on smuggling facilitators. All respondents in Ouagadougou are therefore residing in the community, either in private accommodation, in privately-owned shelters, or are homeless and sleep in the street or bus stations.
 - IMREF did not interview smuggling facilitators, local business owners, and local community members as part of this study. Further data collection with these groups will be needed to gain a more refined understanding of how COVID-19 affects migrants and the communities they transit through on the CMR.
- The study adopted a remote methodology. As a result, enumerators were unable to directly observe the living conditions of the migrants they interviewed, and to identify vulnerabilities that research participants did not report directly. Moreover, the absence of visual cues due to remotely interviewing study participants via telephone may have resulted in loss of contextual information and may have compromised the interpretation of responses.²²
- IMREF did not interview local community members as part of this study. Consequently, in some parts of the study, it is unclear whether migrants are more affected by COVID-19 and containment measures than local community members. For instance, it is unclear to which extent migrants have been more excluded than local community members from jobs amid an overall economic slowdown.
- There are limitations to the 4Mi methodology that apply to the quantitative data presented in this report. Limitations are as follows: (i) interviews are conducted via the phone and there might be biases, (ii) respondents are recruited through a number of remote or third-party mechanisms, meaning that 4Mi uses both purposive and snowball approaches; (iii) findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make inferences about the total population of refugees and migrants, as the sample is not representative. The 4Mi data used for this report was collected in Mali,

²¹ IOM DTM (2020m). [March Monthly Regional Update West & Central Africa](#), 11 May 2020.

²² Novick, G. (2008). Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research? *Research in nursing & health*, 31(4), 391-398.

Niger and Burkina Faso and the answers provided by refugees and migrants relate to their journey up until the place of interview.²³ The survey data is also cited without significance testing.

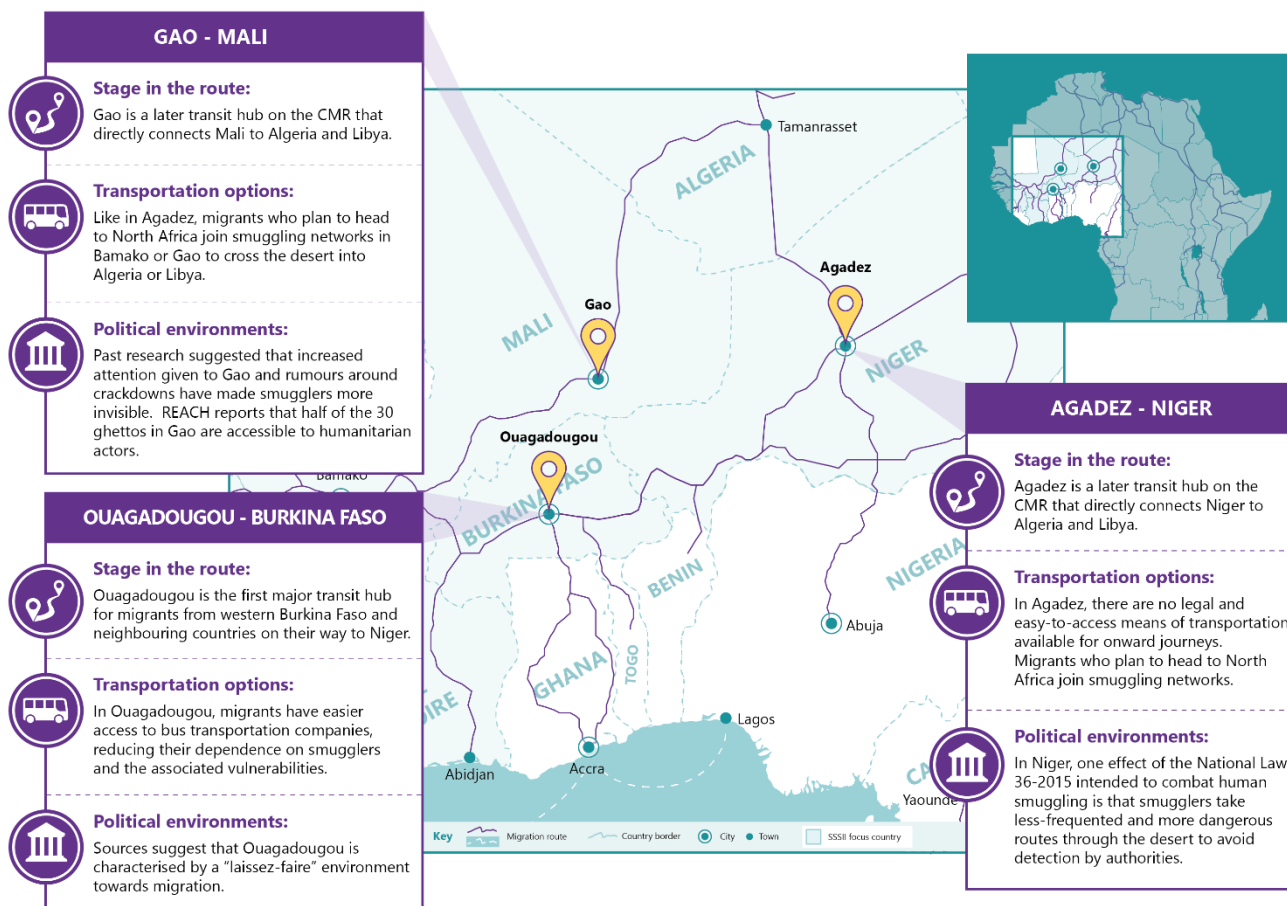
- There are significant variations in the quantity and quality of external evidence relevant to the topics examined in the report. Reflecting the recency of the outbreak of COVID-19 in countries along the CMR at the time of this study, evidence on its impact on migrants is still at an early stage. Available primary research on the impact of COVID-19 is limited and often has significant methodological limitations.
- The situation is evolving rapidly in reaction to border closures and new regulations. It may evolve between data collection and the time of the report's publication. Some of containment measures were lifted between data collection and the time of report writing. For instance, the ban on intercity travel in Burkina Faso was lifted in early May 2020, but several migrants described challenges linked to this ban. This report can only provide a snapshot of vulnerabilities at the time of data collection.

²³ See more at: [MMC adapts its 4Mi program to assess the impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants](#), April 2020.

Annex 5. Differences between the three study locations

Previous research from IMREF found that there are differences in the characteristics of Agadez, Gao and Ouagadougou that shaped the overall level of vulnerability in each location.²⁴ Throughout the report, we highlight the differences between locations. The graphic below summarises the key characteristics of each study location depending on its stage of the route, transportation options, and the political environment.

Figure 1: Contextual overview of the three locations²⁵



²⁴ IMREF (2020a). Accessing the Most Vulnerable in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and Agadez, Niger.

²⁵ Sources used for this visual include: Clingendael (2018a), Migration in northern Mali: Conflict sensitivity analysis and protection needs assessment; UNU-MERIT, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (2017b). [Mali Migration Profile](#), Annex to the Study on Migration Routes in the East and Horn of Africa, commissioned by GIZ; Global Initiative Against Transnational Crime (2014), [Smuggled Futures: The dangerous path of the migrant from Africa to Europe](#), p.11; UNU-MERIT, Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (2017), [Burkina Faso Migration Profile. Annex to the Study on Migration Routes in the East and Horn of Africa](#); Saferworld (2019), [Partners in Crime? The Impacts of Europe's Outsourced Migration Controls on Peace, Stability and Rights](#); Clingendael (2018b), [Multilateral Damage: The Impact of EU Migration Policies on Central Saharan Routes](#); GPP (2017), [Protection Fallout: How Increasing Capacity for Border Management Affects Migrants' Vulnerabilities in Niger and Mali](#); Danish Red Cross and Samuel Hall. (2018). Migration Needs Assessment in Mali; REACH (2020b). [Libya COVID-19 Rapid Market Assessment](#), 30 March-1 April 2020.

Annex 6. Risks faced by children

There was no primary evidence on the challenges faced by children on the CMR since the outbreak of COVID-19. This included unaccompanied minors, children travelling with their families, and children migrating regionally or towards the Mediterranean.²⁶ Neither IMREF nor 4Mi interviewed children (anyone under 18) as part of their data collection. This section draws mostly from KIs, and testimonies from migrants who had travelled or stayed with children, but does not include information on unaccompanied minors as respondents had little interaction with this group or did not know anyone falling in this category. Possibly, this is because children over 15 were often perceived to be adult. IOM in Agadez said that they had identified a greater number of unaccompanied children aged between 15 and 17 who are stranded on the route towards Libya.²⁷

Children disappearing from view was of concern to key informants. Children on the move towards North Africa and Europe may be invisible during their transit through Burkina Faso and Niger. Research by Save the Children in 2018 showed that, to protect themselves from abuse, children on the move may aim to stay invisible, choosing not to disclose their plans and avoiding locations where authorities may detect them.²⁸ Increased controls by authorities due to containment measures and curfews may have compelled them to hide further from view.²⁹

In ghettos, children faced the same challenges as adults but were less able to cope. A 30-year-old Cameroonian woman in Agadez reported that there were children in her ghetto who struggled finding healthy food, coping with the heat and finding appropriate clothes. In Agadez and Gao, migrants reported that there are children travelling with parents and staying in ghettos. A 25-year-old Cameroonian woman in Agadez explained that she was travelling with her 11-year old daughter and was greatly concerned for the development of her child, who had witnessed her mother sexually harassed by smuggling facilitators.

²⁶ Save the Children (2018), [Protecting and Supporting Children on the Move](#).

²⁷ KII IOM Agadez, May 2020.

²⁸ Save the Children (2018), [Protecting and Supporting Children on the Move](#); Save the Children (2017), [Young Invisible Enslaved: Children victims of trafficking and labour exploitation in Italy](#).

²⁹ KII UNICEF Regional West Africa Office, May 2020; UNICEF (2020b). [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children](#), 15 April 2020.

Annex 7. Summary of key findings and knowledge gaps

Table 3 below summarises some of the main findings of the two-part study and where the gaps remain.

Table 3 Summary of key findings³⁰

| Mobility |
|--|
| <p>Findings: Border closures and increased controls have made it harder for migrants to continue their journeys northward or back home. More migrants have been stranded in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger since the start of the pandemic, but some migrants continue to cross borders into Algeria and Libya. Migrants actively seeking to continue journeys described high levels of uncertainty, increased prices for smuggling services and a higher risk of scams.</p> |
| <p>Remaining Gaps: Granular understanding of how different types of people in mixed migration flows may be differently affected by movement restrictions.</p> <p>Understand to what extent there are more stranded migrants in later stages of the route.</p> |
| Asylum and assisted voluntary return |
| <p>Findings: The disruption of voluntary return has left migrants waiting in transit centres. In Mali, some migrants are unable to join formal return procedures. With money running out, many cannot afford shelter and food.</p> |
| <p>Remaining Gaps: Information on what services or solutions is available to migrants who want to return but cannot enter an AVRR process.</p> |
| Smuggling |
| <p>Findings: Migrants and informants confirmed reports that smuggling activities have decreased in the short-term because of border closures. Several migrants reported that smuggling facilitators still offered services but asked for higher prices, making the onward journey unaffordable. Some smuggling facilitators appeared to have further fragmented the journey to forgo containment measures.</p> |
| <p>Remaining Gaps: The extent to which migrants rely on smuggling facilitators for segments of the journey which did not previously require facilitation.</p> |
| Health |
| <p>Findings: Migrants who stayed in crowded places such as ghettos or bus stations struggled to follow COVID-19 health advisories. As of the end of May 2020, sources and key informants were not aware of COVID-19 cases among migrants on the CMR. Some migrants could not afford to buy antibacterial gel, soap and masks and had no access to water. Migrants interviewed noted other health concerns as secondary effects of containment measures related to hunger, hygiene issues and being forced to sleep outside.</p> |
| <p>Remaining Gaps: A more detailed understanding of the patterns of transmission in locations studied, as well as the secondary health effects.</p> |
| PSS |
| <p>Findings: Migrants experienced additional stress and anxiety because of financial hardships. Other stressors included being unable to continue their journeys as planned, fear of infection and the inability to send money home.</p> |

³⁰ In the table, the term migrants refers to migrants interviewed by IMREF only and is not representative of the wider population.

Remaining Gaps: Understanding effective measures to provide psychosocial support (PSS) without face-to-face interaction or in hard to access places such as ghettos.

Livelihoods

Findings: Stranded migrants are experiencing increased financial hardship. They struggled to access the informal labour market, government support, and remittances. Several migrants sold their assets such as phones and clothes. Lack of money also directly impacted access to food and shelter.

Remaining Gaps: The extent to which migrants have been more excluded than local community members from jobs amid an overall economic slowdown.

The long-term impact of the loss of phones on health, the likelihood of heightened vulnerabilities and the likelihood of returning home.

Discrimination

Findings: In Agadez, Gao and Ouagadougou, migrants said that local employers who saw them as an infection risk were reluctant to hire them but rarely reported violence or issues accessing services. Migrants said that discrimination often came from their (perceived) failure to respect containment measures.

Remaining Gaps: More analysis on different contexts along the CMR, including media analyses to understand narratives around migrants and refugees in the context of COVID-19.

SGBV and trafficking

Findings: Some migrants and key informants said that there were cases of harm, including SGBV, perpetrated by smuggling facilitators in ghettos. Financial hardship brought on by delays resulting from COVID-19 measures has made some migrants vulnerable to exploitative and dangerous work arrangements.

Remaining Gaps: The extent to which reliance on smuggling facilitators or lack of funds increases the risk that migrants are trafficked.

Information

Findings: Several migrants got information on COVID-19 on their phone - either via social media, notably Facebook, or by calling families at home or abroad. Lack of money affected their ability to use the internet on their phones, leaving them reliant on smugglers and other migrants for information.

Remaining Gaps: Whether current messaging is adapted to children in mobility.

Whether current information campaigns led to higher awareness or changes in behaviour towards health-related issues

Ability to access services

Findings: The reallocation of resources towards COVID-19 and mobility restrictions has reduced the availability of protection services. Migrants interviewed had little awareness of services, particularly those on their first journey or who had arrived in a transit hub at the beginning of the outbreak or who were staying in ghettos.

Remaining Gaps: The extent to which poor awareness of services in a consequence of containment measures or a pre-existing issue.

Willingness to access services

Findings: The desk review found little evidence on the effect of COVID-19 on barriers to access such as trust in humanitarian actors. Some migrants continued to be hidden by smugglers or actively evade authorities and international organisations to reduce the perceived risk of detention or deportation.

Remaining Gaps: How best to build trust with, and provide services to, migrants who want to continue their journeys towards North Africa and Europe.