ASSESSING THE RISKS
OF MIGRATION ALONG THE
CENTRAL AND EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES:

Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries.

UK**aid**
from the British people

65
YEARS
International Organization for Migration

IOM's Global Migration
Data Analysis Centre
GMDAC

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Acknowledgements

IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre

In response to growing calls for better data on migration, and better use and presentation of migration data, IOM has created a Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC). Located in the heart of Berlin, Germany, the Centre aims to provide authoritative and timely analysis of data on global migration issues as a global hub for data and statistics on migration.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return
AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
BAMF	German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DTM	IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GMDAC	Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIL	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
KII	Key informant interview
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
LAF	The Regional Office for Refugee Affairs (Berlin, Germany)
NGN	Nigerian Naira
SIA	Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Afghanistan
UAM	Unaccompanied minor
UNHCR	the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Please note: In the sections of this report where a mixed migratory movement is being referred to, the word migrant is used broadly to refer to all people on the move. This includes refugees, asylum seekers, irregular migrants and involuntary migrants, unless a distinction is otherwise made.

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FOREWORD

In 2015, over 1 million migrants entered the European Union through the Mediterranean Sea and 3,777 migrants lost their lives in the attempt to do so. The current year 2016 is proving to be even deadlier: as of 13 November, 341,055 migrants have arrived on European shores and 4,271 migrants have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea.[1]

The reasons for which these migrants enter the European Union are various and complex: to flee conflict, political instability, violence and/or persecution; poverty; in search of study or work opportunities; or out of a desire to reunite with family members who are already in the European Union. Faced with limited channels to migrate regularly, migrants and asylum seekers often embark on irregular and dangerous journeys, during which they often become extremely vulnerable.

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted and a range of Sustainable Development Goals were identified. Countries around the world have been asked to monitor progress towards the achievement of a whole range of migration-related targets, including the facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration (Goal 10.7). In line with this, the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants that took place in September 2016 launched the process for a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

Defining "safe migration", and particularly in a context of increasing rates of irregular migration, is challenging. Moreover, the lack of reliable, comparable and timely data on many aspects of international migration means developing migration-related indicators in the Sustainable Development Goal framework is not an easy task.

In an attempt to contribute to the discourse around the concept of safe migration and, thus, contribute to the development of more precise indicators for the measuring of safe migration, the IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) committed to implementing the project "Mediterranean Migration Response, Reducing the Risks of Unsafe Migration: Linking Research, Data and Policy" for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland's Department for International Development (DFID) in April 2016. The project ran until 30 November 2016, and involved the organization of one workshop, the preparation of three working papers and five data briefs, the piloting of the European section of the Global Migration Data Portal, and one primary research study. Three launch events were also organized for the dissemination of the findings of the research study and for the generation of discussion around its themes.

The workshop "Understanding and Measuring Safe Migration" took place in Nuremberg, Germany in June 2016. The objective of the workshop was to assess the availability and quality of data on irregular migration to the European Union and to explore how data points can be used to measure safe migration in the European context. A working paper outlining the main discourse around the concept of safe migration was prepared to set the scene of the workshop. Two working papers and five data briefs were commissioned by GMDAC after the workshop to critically assess the availability of data on different aspects of irregular migration to Europe. The topics explored in these papers are: return migration; irregular migration and related policy response; child migration; disability in the context of irregular migration and forecasting migration trends.

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1   International Organization for Migration Missing Migrants Project, 2016, available from https://missingmigrants.iom.int/ (accessed 19 November 2016).

The research study presented in this report has also been conducted by GMDAC in the context of the DFID-funded project. This study assesses the risks of migration along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes by taking Iraq and Nigeria as case study countries (of origin). What are the risks experienced by migrants at different stages of their journey? How do migrants perceive and understand the "irregularity" of their migration? How do migrants experience return migration and why are an increasing number of people deciding to undertake voluntary return? These are some of the questions that we wished to explore in this report.

The preliminary findings of this study have already been presented to policymakers and government officials in three launch events that took place between October and November 2016 in Athens, Berlin and London. It is my hope that this report will reach an even greater number of policymakers and government officials and that it will contribute to inform and influence the political debates on safe migration, bringing into the discussion a perspective that is often overlooked – that of the migrants themselves.

While migration patterns and trends keep changing, it is clear that migration will continue to be at the top of the policy agenda in many countries and regions around the world. Reliable data and research are fundamental to address movements and assist the most vulnerable. IOM GMDAC will continue its mission of providing authoritative and timely analysis of data on global migration issues.
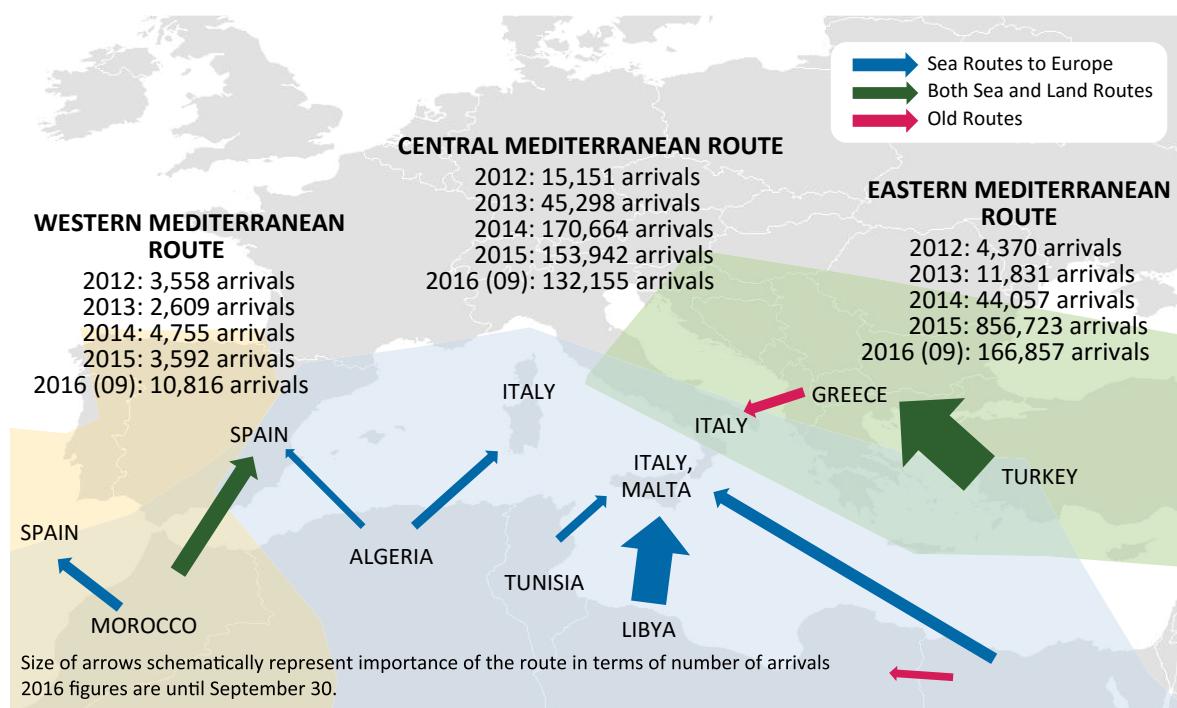
Frank Laczko
Director
IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre
Berlin, Germany

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Map 1: Arrivals along the Western, Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes 2012–2016[2]

Legend:
- Sea Routes to Europe
- Both Sea and Land Routes
- Old Routes

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE
2012: 15,151 arrivals
2013: 45,298 arrivals
2014: 170,664 arrivals
2015: 153,942 arrivals
2016 (09): 132,155 arrivals

WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE
2012: 3,558 arrivals
2013: 2,609 arrivals
2014: 4,755 arrivals
2015: 3,592 arrivals
2016 (09): 10,816 arrivals

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE
2012: 4,370 arrivals
2013: 11,831 arrivals
2014: 44,057 arrivals
2015: 856,723 arrivals
2016 (09): 166,857 arrivals

Size of arrows schematically represent importance of the route in terms of number of arrivals
2016 figures are until September 30.

Migration is recognized within the Sustainable Development Goals, with a specific mention of the need to facilitate "safe migration". Goal 10.7 states "[F]acilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies".

Over 1 million migrants entered Europe in 2015 and the journey has been far from safe. At least 3,770 migrants and refugees are known to have died in the Mediterranean Sea in that year, which constitutes an increase of 15 per cent from the previous one.[3] There are also reports of worsening exploitation and abuse during migrant journeys, particularly in Libya. The demographics of migrant flows to Europe are also changing, with a greater representation of more vulnerable groups such as women and children.

At the same time that migration to Europe demonstrated greater risk in 2015, it is expected that a growing number of asylum seekers who have received unfavourable decisions on their applications for asylum will be returned in the immediate future, largely to developing countries. This means that the safe and sustainable return and reintegration of migrants is also an integral part of safe migration.

This report tries to give some breadth to the concept of safe migration by considering two case study countries, Iraq and Nigeria, and analysing the risks of migration and return between these countries and Europe. Nigeria acts as a case study for the Central Mediterranean route and Iraq acts as a case study for the Eastern Mediterranean route.

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2   *Data source*: 2012–2014 figures from Frontex provided data; 2015–2016 figures retrieved from migration.iom.int/europe.

3   International Organization for Migration Missing Migrants Project, 2016, available from https://missingmigrants.iom.int/ (accessed 19 November 2016).

Map 1 charts movement along the three Mediterranean routes between 2012 and the first half of 2016. All three routes experienced mixed migratory flows, and as can be seen, the Western Mediterranean route has remained fairly stable in terms of numbers of arrivals. The Central Mediterranean route peaked in 2014, particularly in response to the renewed political crisis in Libya in that year, and due to an increased number of Syrians moving through Libya to access safe haven in Europe. The following year, 2015, saw a slight decrease in the numbers of arrivals through the Central Mediterranean in favour of a large increase on the Eastern Mediterranean route.

Focus box 1: What is mixed migration?

The principal characteristics of mixed migration flows include the irregular nature of and the multiplicity of factors driving such movements, and the differentiated needs and profiles of the persons involved. Mixed flows have been defined as "complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants". Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow (IOM's Ninety-Sixth Session, Discussion Note: International Dialogue on Migration).[4]

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4   *Source*: IOM ninety-sixth session: International Dialogue on Migration 2008, Challenges of Irregular Migration: Addressing Mixed Migration Flows, Discussion note.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IOM Global Migration Data Analysis Centre committed to implementing the project "Mediterranean Migration Response, Reducing the Risks of Unsafe Migration: Linking Research, Data and Policy" for the United Kingdom's Department for International Development in April 2016. The research that is the subject of the present report was undertaken as part of this wider project with the intention of giving breadth to the concept of "safe migration" by analysing patterns of migration and return from two case study countries: Iraq and Nigeria.

The methodology is based on **147 in-depth qualitative interviews** (104 in-depth interviews with migrants and 43 key informant interviews) across eight locations in five countries (Germany, Greece, Iraq, Italy and Nigeria).

The risks related to migration to Europe from Iraq

The risks on departure: The exit from Iraq is a straightforward journey for some and replete with risks and dangers for others. At the time of fieldwork, there were three main routes for exiting Iraq: flying to Istanbul or Bodrum from one of Iraq's international airports; moving through the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to reach Turkey by land (through the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing) or air (through Erbil or Sulaymaniyah airports); and moving to Turkey by land via the Syrian Arab Republic. Moving to Turkey via the Syrian Arab Republic is by far the riskiest modality to exit Iraq.

Risks during the journey: Iraqis travelling via the Syrian Arab Republic are less likely to travel with the whole family. When they do, they tend to take fewer risks and are more likely to abandon the journey after a few unsuccessful attempts. Sometimes one member of the family (sometimes the father, sometimes one of the children) makes the journey alone while others wait at origin for a family reunification scheme, as a way to minimize risk. However, this may lead to greater risk being taken in the event that reunification is overly delayed, and remaining family members attempt the migration without the father. There are also cases of family separation along the way. For children, hiding from authorities during the journey makes it difficult for them to trust aid workers and authorities at destination.

Other issues during the journey include running out of money, negotiating sectarian issues that spill over from Iraq, and dealing with the differing treatment of Syrians and Iraqis.

Risks at destination: The uncertainty created because of asylum applications taking longer to process than anticipated, and living in temporary accommodation centres for longer than expected, affects feelings about integration. Moreover, living alongside other Iraqis in these accommodation centres does not induce feelings of safety at destination. Migrants are poorly informed, not because of lack of information, but because they are selective in what they wish to know. Moreover, faith in official information sources is diminished by lack of trust in the interpreters that relay information. Iraqis also sometimes experience difficulty with identification documents at destination.

The risks related to return: In general terms, the riskier and more challenging the exit from Iraq, the less likely an asylum seeker is to consider a return. The drivers of return derive from family-related factors or medical reasons. Family-related drivers include failed family reunification, shifting family dynamics and pressure from family at origin. Medical issues can relate to the asylum seeker directly, or to family members of the asylum seeker at home.

The risks related to migration to Europe from Nigeria

The risks related to the migration of Nigerians to Europe can be classified into four stages: those present during the movement from origin to the Sahel (within the Economic Community of West African States); the risks present during the movement from the Sahel to North Africa; the risks associated with North Africa; and the risks at destination.

Risks on departure: The exit from Nigeria is relatively straightforward for the most part and generally the part of the journey with least risk. At the time of fieldwork, there were four main routes for exiting Nigeria: via Nigeria's northern border into the Niger; from Lagos state, exiting via the south-western border into Benin; from Borno state, exiting via the north-eastern border into Cameroon and Chad; and flying out of Lagos or Abuja airports.

Risks during the journey: While the Economic Community of West African States is an area of free movement, most migrants move irregularly. While the rates of trafficking for women (for sexual exploitation) are high and increasing, there is also a prevalence of migrants being sold in Libya in a context of modern slavery. Other risks for women include rape, turning to prostitution in desperation, and the perception by others of Nigerian women being prostitutes. Extortion, death at sea and in the desert are other risks for Nigerians.

The risks in Libya include arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment, bonded labour and labour exploitation. While in 2014 it was generally understood that militia groups in Libya maintained detention centres to create a market for their smuggling services, the research suggests that such centres are now hotspots for the trafficking of migrants. There are generally three main stages to a migrant's experience in Libya: being held hostage on arrival and asked for ransom; if unable to pay for his/her release, the migrant is put to work; sometimes, after working in a situation of slavery, the migrant is taken to the port and put on a boat to Europe.

Risks at destination: The main risks for Nigerians at destination include the uncertainty created by the lack of status coupled with the debt owed to smugglers, mental health issues, and abuse and exploitation within migrant communities.

Risks on return: After release from detention in Libya, a migrant's immediate objective is to leave Libya. Some migrants move back to Agadez and return home, and some board boats to cross the Mediterranean. For migrants located in the north of Libya, it is least risky to cross the Mediterranean than to move to one of Libya's southern borders. Those that return home from Europe generally do so because of an unsuccessful migration.

Key takeaways and perspectives

- The journey is risky for all, regardless of their reasons for migration.
- Increasing border control has led to riskier journeys for migrants.
- While a very large number of migrants and refugees travelled to Europe in 2015, the most vulnerable are left behind at origin.
- Family reunification is seen as a legal pathway to Europe in the absence of other legal pathways, but lengthy processes for family reunification lead to more dangerous journeys being undertaken by family members remaining at origin.
- Nigerians are being fooled by Nigerian traffickers who sell them to Libyan traffickers in situations of modern slavery, and detention centres in Libya have become hotbeds for trafficking.

- Vulnerability is linked more to circumstances than categories of migrants. That is, migrants tend to address their own vulnerabilities quite well for the most part, but become unable to do so when they encounter unfavourable circumstances.
- Children have a harder time moving on from the difficult things they experienced at origin and during migration.
- Distrust of other Iraqis makes life in accommodation centres very challenging for Iraqis.
- Social capital is more important than integration support for many migrants and asylum seekers.
- Lack of faith in regular migration channels is linked to poor governance at origin.

Recommendations

For Iraqis along the Eastern Mediterranean route:

1. Increase legal pathways to asylum;
2. Increase the circulation of official information;
3. Grant permission to work while waiting for status;
4. Promote integration on a personal level, not on an institutional level;
5. Strengthen support services for migrants and refugees at all levels.

For Nigerians along the Central Mediterranean route:

1. Create greater avenues for regular migration;
2. Provide opportunities for Nigerians in neighbouring countries;
3. Address corruption at border posts.

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

1.   Objectives

The International Organization for Migration's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) committed to implementing the project "Mediterranean Migration Response, Reducing the Risks of Unsafe Migration: Linking Research, Data and Policy" for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in April 2016. This research study was implemented as part of that wider project with the intention of giving breadth to the concept of safe migration by analysing patterns of migration and return from two case study countries: Iraq and Nigeria. The research study was launched in July 2016 and the report was finalized by November 2016.

The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

1.   The risks related to migration to Europe:
    a.   Risks during the journey
    b.   Risks at destination

2.   The risks related to return from Europe:
    a.   Drivers of return
    b.   Modalities of return

3.   Perception of regular and irregular migration:
    a.   Do migrants understand that there is a difference?
    b.   How do they perceive regular migration?
    c.   What kinds of regular channels of migration would start to curb risky journeys?

2.   Approach

This study was conducted through a qualitative approach, based on primary field research, that combined in-depth interviews with migrants and in-depth interviews with key informants. Information gleaned from key informants supplemented or complemented information gained from the migrants and sometimes allowed for the identification of certain hypotheses that could then be tested with the migrants themselves.
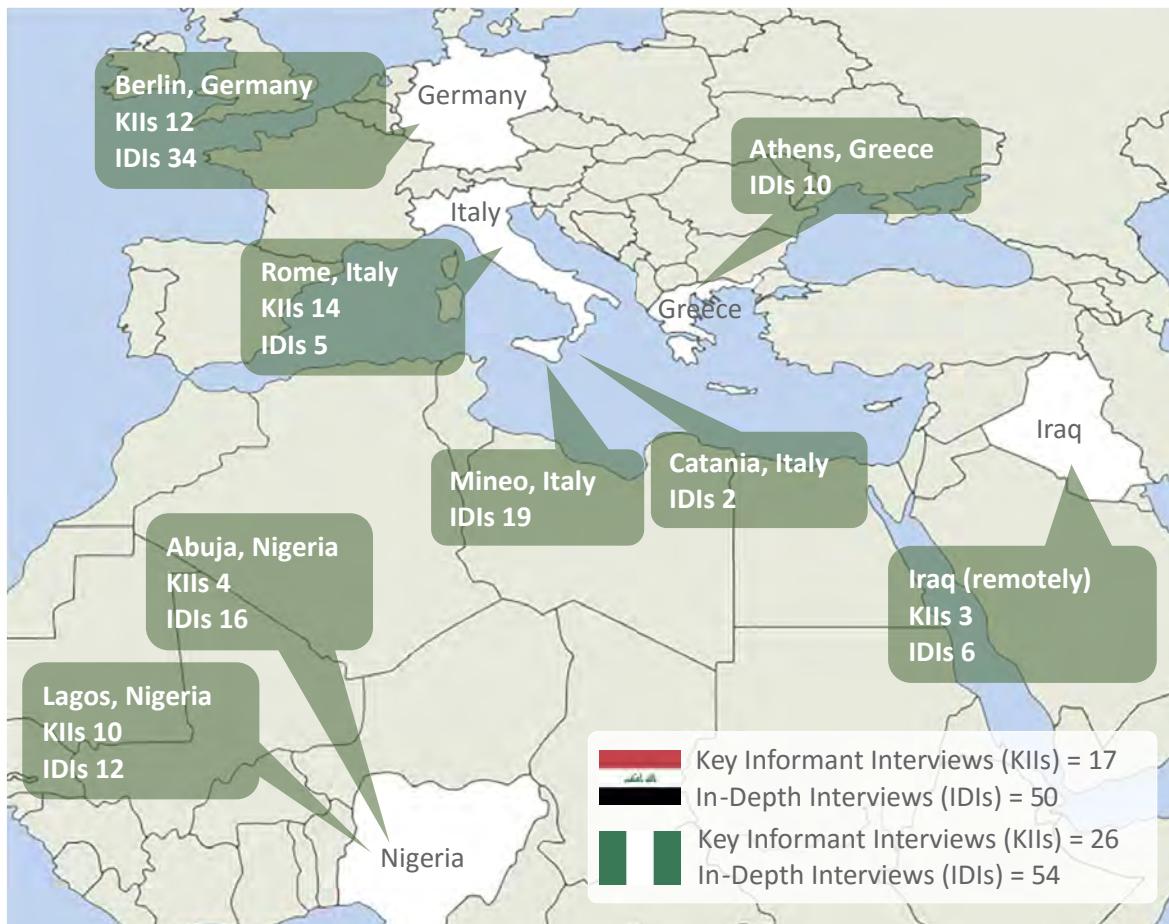
The purpose of the qualitative methodology was to identify the spectrum of risks and experiences that migrants are exposed to. The methodology does not seek to rank these experiences in relation to those most commonly experienced, nor does it seek to quantify these dynamics in any way, but rather it seeks to identify the spectrum and contribute to our understanding of the nature of those risks and experiences.

In this vein, the sample of migrants was purposively selected in order to reflect the full cross-section of migrants moving along the routes studied. It is by no means a representative sample. In addition to the fact that it is almost impossible to identify a representative sample when the total population of migrants along these routes is unknown, a representative sample would also not necessarily allow the full spectrum of risks to be identified, as it would lead to certain profiles of migrants being over-represented in relation to others.

3.   Fieldwork

Fieldwork culminated in a total of 147 in-depth qualitative interviews. This included 104 in-depth interviews with migrants and 43 key informant interviews. Each interview with each respondent took between two to four hours.

Map 2: Fieldwork Locations

Berlin, Germany
KIIs 12
IDIs 34

Athens, Greece
IDIs 10

Rome, Italy
KIIs 14
IDIs 5

Mineo, Italy
IDIs 19

Catania, Italy
IDIs 2

Abuja, Nigeria
KIIs 4
IDIs 16

Iraq (remotely)
KIIs 3
IDIs 6

Lagos, Nigeria
KIIs 10
IDIs 12

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) = 17
In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) = 50
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) = 26
In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) = 54

Fieldwork was carried out between August and September 2016 across eight locations in five countries. The locations visited by field teams were: Abuja and Lagos (Nigeria), Berlin (Germany), Catania, Mineo and Rome (Italy) and Athens (Greece). Interviews with both migrants and key informants were also conducted remotely in Iraq (by Viber). Finally, the report is also informed by interviews that were conducted by the author with migrants and key informants in Agadez (Niger) in June 2016. The fieldwork locations are indicated in Map 2.

3.1   In-depth interviews with migrants

In-depth interviews with migrants were carried out in all five countries and across eight locations. A total of 104 interviews were carried out with migrants, 50 of which were carried out with Iraqi migrants and 54 with Nigerian migrants. Figure 1 represents the spread of interviews across the locations in which migrants were interviewed. Figure 2 presents the proportion of the total that is represented by each country.
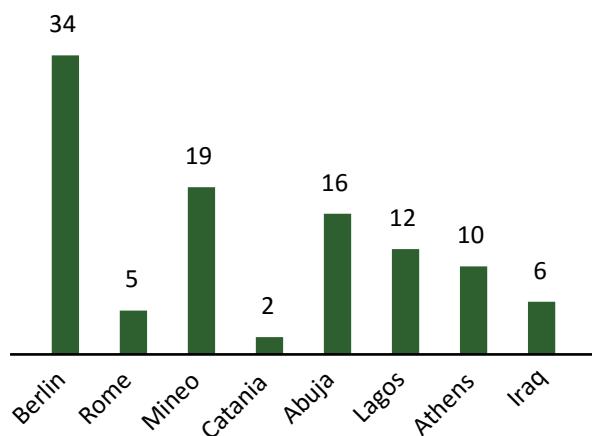
Figure 1:   In-depth interviews with migrants
according to location
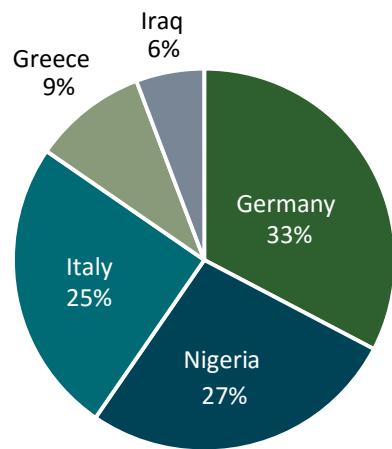
Figure 2:   The proportion of the total sample
of migrants represented by each
country of fieldwork

3.1.1 Iraqi migrants

As demonstrated in Figure 3, the sample of interviews with Iraqi migrants was spread across Germany (34 interviews, 68% of total), Greece (10 interviews, 20% of total) and Iraq (6 interviews, 12% of total). Interviews with Iraqi returnees in Iraq were conducted remotely through Viber. In addition to the interviews with returnees, all migrants were asked about their perceptions and views on return.
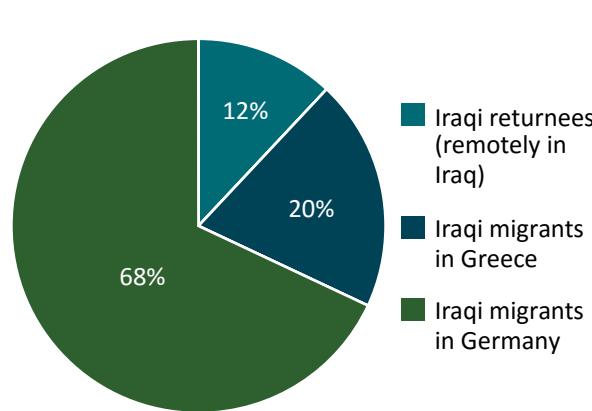
Figure 3:   Sample of Iraqi migrants according to
profile and location of migrant
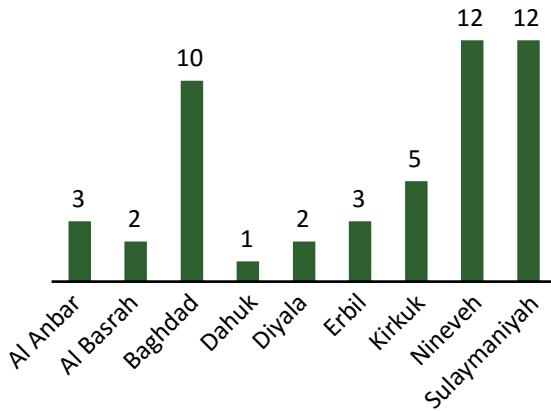
Figure 4:   Location of origin of Iraq migrants
interviewed

The location of origin of the Iraqi migrants in the sample is presented in Figure 4 and demonstrates that the sample is composed of Iraqi migrants from a number of provinces, which represent a number of ethnic and religious groups. The ethnic and religious groups represented by the sample are Arab, Kurdish, Turkmen, Christian, Shia Muslim, Sunni Muslim, Sabean and Yazidi.

In terms of the age distribution of Iraqi migrants, the sample is spread between the ages of 18 and 60, with a concentration between 20 and 35 (see Figure 5). In terms of the gender distribution, a total of 15 Iraqi women were interviewed, which represents 30 per cent of the sample (see Figure 6).
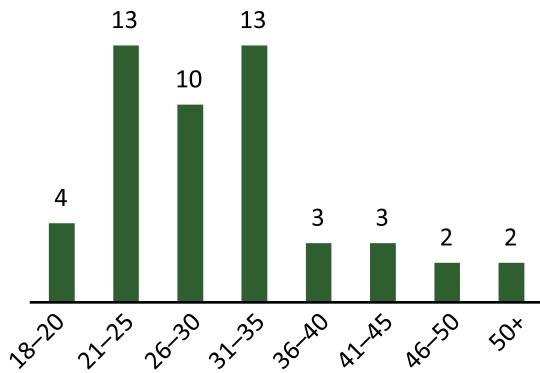
Figure 5: Age distribution of sample of Iraqi migrants
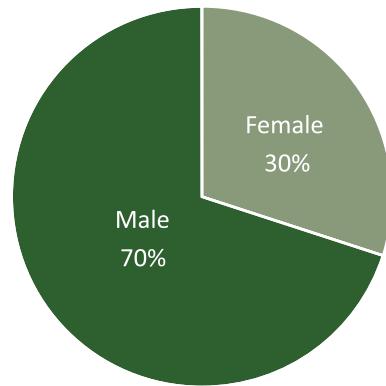
Figure 6: Gender distribution of Iraqi sample of migrants

3.1.2 Nigerian migrants

As demonstrated in Figure 7, Nigerian migrants were interviewed in Italy (26 interviews, 48% of total) and Nigerian returnees were interviewed in Nigeria (19 interviews, 35% of total). A small sample of potential migrants were also interviewed in Nigeria to provide a point of comparison (9 interviews, 17% of total).
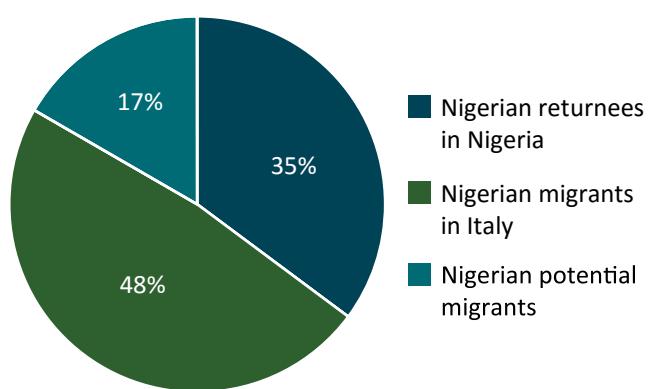
Figure 7: Sample of Nigerian migrants according to profile and location of migrant
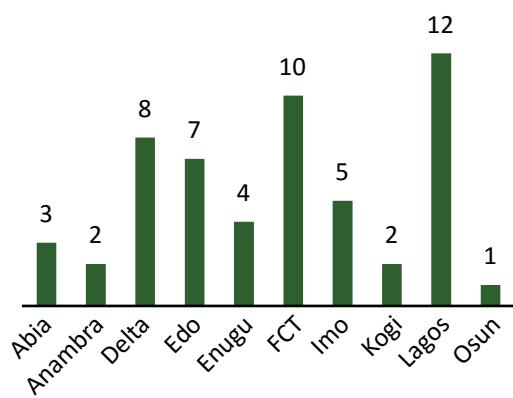
Figure 8: Location of origin of Nigerian migrants interviewed

The location of origin of the Nigerian migrants in the sample is presented in Figure 8. The sample is spread across 10 states in Nigeria and represents a number of ethnic and religious groups. The ethnic and religious groups represented by the sample are: Edo, Igbo, Ogugu, Oron, Yoruba, Esan, Igala, Christian and Muslim. In terms of the age distribution of Nigerian migrants, the sample is spread between the ages of 18 and 60, with a concentration between 20 and 35 (see Figure 9). In terms of the gender distribution, a total of nine Nigerian women were interviewed, which represents 15 per cent of the sample (see Figure 10).
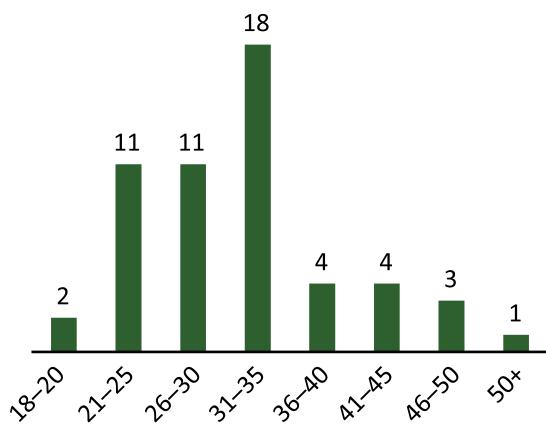
Figure 9:   Age distribution of sample of Nigerian migrants
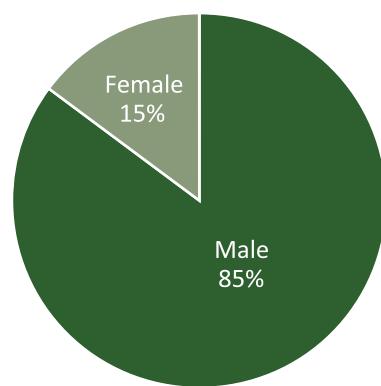
Figure 10:   Gender distribution of Nigerian sample of migrants

3.2   Key informant interviews

A total of 43 key informant interviews were conducted across five locations in four countries. Key informants included individuals in agencies and organizations working with migrants, other individuals who may have interacted with migrants or analysed migration trends in the country, as well as individuals who had a good sense of the local context. Key informant interviews complement interviews that were conducted with migrants themselves. A full list of all key informants interviewed appears in Annex 1.

3.3   Interview guidelines

Interviews with key informants and migrants were conducted using semi-structured interview guidelines that guided the interviewer through certain blocks of information while also allowing the interviewer freedom to explore particular topics of interest that arose in each interview.

Migrants were asked about:

• Their socioeconomic situation at origin;
• Their aspirations and expectations in relation to their migration;
• Their journey and the route followed;
• The risks they experienced along the way;
• The risks they experienced at destination;
• Their views on potential return;
• Their perceptions of regular and irregular migration.

Returnees were also additionally asked about:

• The drivers of their return from Europe;
• The conditions of their return;
• Their experience of reintegration at origin.

Key informant interviews generally followed the same topics but key informants were asked to speak about the community of migrants as a whole, rather than on individual experience. Specific blocks of questions were then explored in each key informant interview depending on the expertise and experience of the individual. Some key informants were interviewed for their contextual knowledge in an attempt to better understand the context from which a migrant departs and the factors that may add to the risks of their departure/journey.

IRAQ

IRAQ
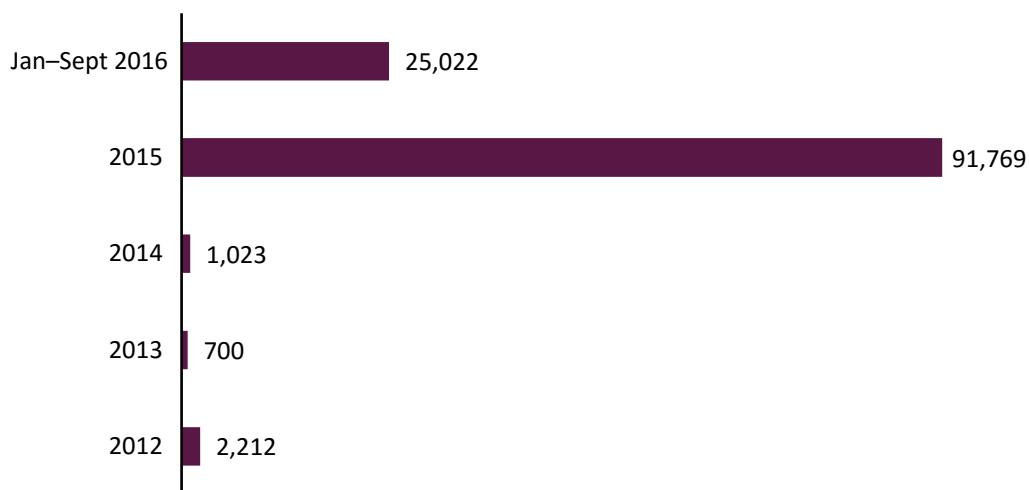
Figure 11: The number of Iraqis along the Eastern Mediterranean route, 2012–September 2016[5]

This section of the report explores the journey of Iraqis along the Eastern Mediterranean route to Europe. Figure 11 charts the number of Iraqis that moved along this route between 2012 and September 2016 and Figure 12 charts the proportion of the total number of arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean route that was represented by Iraqis over the same period.
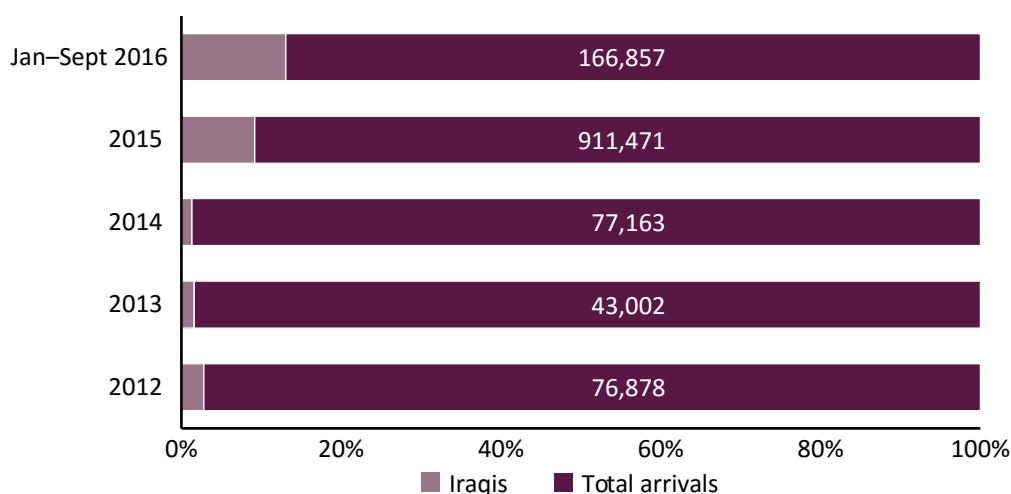
Figure 12: Percentage of total arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean route represented by Iraqis, 2012–2015[6]

These charts demonstrate that in 2015 there was a large increase in the number of Iraqis moving along this route, both in absolute terms and in terms of their proportion of the total number of arrivals. Specifically, 91,769 Iraqis arrived in 2015, compared to 1,023 in 2014. Iraqis constituted 1.3 per cent of the total number of arrivals in 2014 and 10 per cent in 2015. Although the total number of arrivals decreased in 2016 (dropping to 166,857 by September, compared to 911,471 in 2015), the proportion of the total number of arrivals represented by Iraqis continued to increase, moving up to 15 per cent in 2016.

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5   *Sources*: 2012–2013, Greek Ministry of Interior; 2014–2015, IOM Greece.
6   *Sources*: Iraqi arrival figures sourced from Greek Ministry of Interior (2012–2013) and IOM Greece (2014–2015); figures for total arrivals sourced from Frontex (2012–2014) and migration.iom.int/Europe (2015–2016).

IOM's displacement tracking matrix (DTM) in Iraq estimates that as of 15 November 2016, 56,400 individuals have been displaced as a result of the Mosul emergency.[7] This suggests that the number of Iraqis travelling to Europe to seek asylum could potentially increase as a result of the conflict in Iraq.

1. The risks related to migration to Europe

Destination
• Uncertainty
• Integration takes longer than expected
• Poor information and rumours
• Inconsistent procedures diminish trust
• Accommodation centres feel like Iraq
• ID issues

Europe

During the Journey
• Dangerous boat journey
• Family separation
• Children sent ahead of family
• Psychological trauma for children
• Running out of money
• Sectarian issues
• Different treatment of Iraqis and Syrians
• Smuggling

Greece   Turkey   Balkans

From Origin to Turkey
• Navigating checkpoints within Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic
• Indiscriminate bombing and crossfire
• Evading ISIL
• Irregular movements even within countries
• Many attempts required to exit successfully

Iraq   Syrian Arab Republic

Figure 13: Main risks related to migration to Europe from Iraq

This section looks at the risks related to migration from Iraq to Europe in the hope that such an analysis will provide greater context to the concept of safe migration. The risks related to migration for Iraqis moving to Europe can be classified into three stages: the risks related to the exit from Iraq, the risks along the journey and the risks at destination. These three layers are presented in Figure 13. The analysis in this section is classified in the same way and a number of maps have been produced to aid the understanding of the reader. All maps are originals created by the author and based on primary data collected during the fieldwork phase of this project.

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7   See www.iom.int/news/iom-iraq-displacement-tops-56000-mosul-military-operations-continue (accessed 19 November 2016).

1.1   Main risks during the departure from Iraq

Map 3: Main exit routes from Iraq

Routes

→ Main smuggling routes
→ Air routes
"Erbil" Smuggling hubs

Obstacles

ISIS territories in 2015
(Source: IHS Conflict Monitor)

Kurdish populations

Unpopulated desert

Minefields/airstrikes

The exit from Iraq is a straightforward journey for some and replete with risks and dangers for others. Some Iraqis, depending on which part of the country they reside in, are able to fly to Istanbul (and sometimes Bodrum), while others must make the journey by land.

At the time of fieldwork, there were three main routes for exiting Iraq:

1.   Flying to Istanbul or Bodrum from one of Iraq's international airports;
2.   Moving through the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to reach Turkey by land (through the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing) or air (through Erbil or Sulaymaniyah airports);
3.   Moving to Turkey by land via the Syrian Arab Republic.

All three routes are presented in Map 3 above.

1.1.1 Flying from an international airport in Iraq to Turkey

Iraqis taking this route: As travelling within Iraq by road is complicated and compromised by the various checkpoints along the way that are manned by conflicting groups, only Iraqis residing in the same city as one of the international airports (Baghdad, Basra and Najaf),[8] or close enough to be able to reach the airport without having to cross multiple areas, are able to take his route.

Main risks: The main risk relates to navigating the checkpoints that may be present on the way to one of the airports. This method of exiting Iraq would require a valid passport and visa to enter

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8   Erbil and Sulaymaniyah airports are treated in the next section on routes through the KRI.

Turkey and some migrants may not feel comfortable approaching authorities in Iraq to obtain such documents. In relation to Baghdad airport specifically, most non-Shia Iraqis reported feeling uncomfortable about the fact that most of the authorities and staff in Baghdad airport are Shia.

1.1.2 Travelling via the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to Turkey

Iraqis taking this route: Travelling via the KRI to Turkey is also a limited option. It is mainly KRI residents that travel on exit routes from the KRI region.

Journey: There are two main routes between the KRI and Turkey: one is to fly between Sulaymaniyah or Erbil and Turkey, the other is to pass by land through the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing.[9] Those that travel by land typically move to Erbil, and then Zakho (the nearest Iraqi town to the border), from where they make the crossing through Ibrahim Khalil border crossing (see Map 3). There are buses between Sulaymaniyah and Istanbul, and Erbil and Istanbul, that take about 30 hours and cost around USD 90. These journeys are generally booked through a travel agent that also takes care of the visa requirements. Those who do not have valid passports (and are therefore unable to obtain a visa) tend to make the journey clandestinely with smugglers and/or in private vehicles.

Main risks when entering the KRI: Non-Kurdish Iraqis (and in some cases, Kurds from outside the KRI) reported being asked to present a guarantor when trying to enter the KRI from one of its land borders. Most reported having to wait for hours, sometimes days, at the border to be cleared by Asayish.[10]

Main risks when crossing the border into Turkey: Before September 2016, Iraqi migrants could obtain visas for Turkey at the border. Since September 2016, Iraqis who are ordinary passport holders are required to obtain visas in advance. Migrants that did not have the required visa or a valid passport when moving through this border often reported paying bribes in order to move through. Some paid as much as USD 600 spread across various authorities.

1.1.3 Travelling via the Syrian Arab Republic to Turkey

Moving to Turkey via the Syrian Arab Republic is the riskiest modality to exit Iraq: This route leads migrants through the Syrian Arab Republic and over the Syrian border into Turkey and often necessitates a number of attempts.[11]

Iraqis taking this route: It is mainly Iraqis from Mosul (and its surrounds) or Anbar who follow this route. For Iraqis in this region, moving west to the Syrian Arab Republic poses the least risk as it only exposes the migrant to checkpoints controlled by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). When moving north or east, the migrant is not only exposed to ISIL, but a range of other checkpoints that need to be navigated.

Journey: Migrants move with smugglers to the Syrian border. At the time of the fieldwork, the border between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic was somewhat artificial, as ISIL controlled the territory on both sides. However, migrants would stop there and change smugglers, as Syrian smugglers operated on the Syrian side of the border.

At the time of the fieldwork, there was a general ban on all travel into and out of ISIL-controlled territory, and some Mosul residents reported being arrested four or five times by ISIL before managing to move out of their village. The ban on travel also required them to be discreet throughout the entirety of the ISIL-controlled area in order to avoid arrest. Some methods that are adopted

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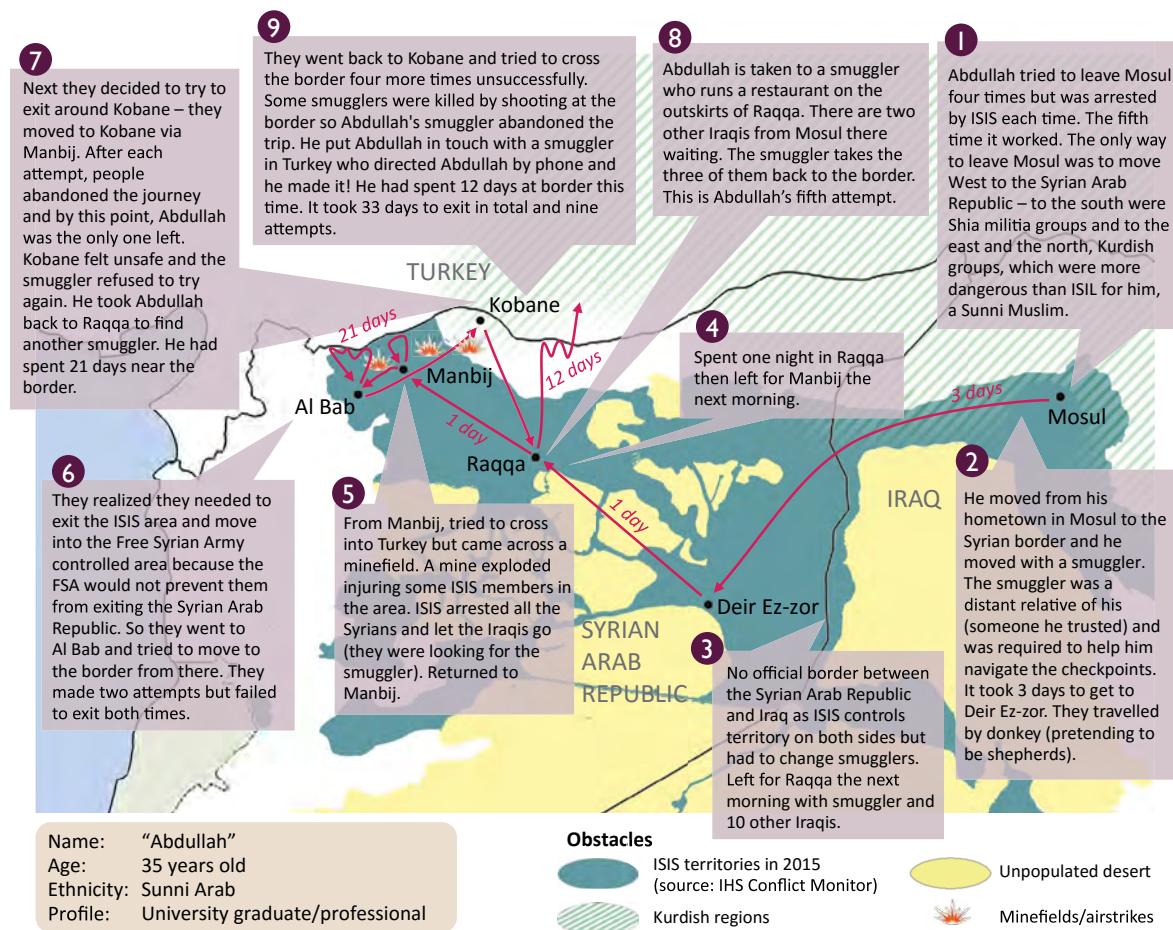
9   These routes are fully delineated in Map 3.
10   Security services of the Kurdish Regional Government.
11   This route is fully delineated in Map 3.

22

ASSESSING THE RISKS OF MIGRATION ALONG THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES:
Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries.

by smugglers to be discreet include travelling by donkey and giving the impression that they are shepherds; and travelling in the back of fuel tankers that have been authorized by ISIL to carry fuel between Iraqi ISIL-controlled areas and Syrian ISIL-controlled areas (migrants reported that in some cases, drivers of such fuel tankers would transport them for a price).

Map 4: Visual case study, moving from Mosul to Turkey[12]

7 Next they decided to try to exit around Kobane – they moved to Kobane via Manbij. After each attempt, people abandoned the journey and by this point, Abdullah was the only one left. Kobane felt unsafe and the smuggler refused to try again. He took Abdullah back to Raqqa to find another smuggler. He had spent 21 days near the border.

9 They went back to Kobane and tried to cross the border four more times unsuccessfully. Some smugglers were killed by shooting at the border so Abdullah's smuggler abandoned the trip. He put Abdullah in touch with a smuggler in Turkey who directed Abdullah by phone and he made it! He had spent 12 days at border this time. It took 33 days to exit in total and nine attempts.

8 Abdullah is taken to a smuggler who runs a restaurant on the outskirts of Raqqa. There are two other Iraqis from Mosul there waiting. The smuggler takes the three of them back to the border. This is Abdullah's fifth attempt.

1 Abdullah tried to leave Mosul four times but was arrested by ISIS each time. The fifth time it worked. The only way to leave Mosul was to move West to the Syrian Arab Republic – to the south were Shia militia groups and to the east and the north, Kurdish groups, which were more dangerous than ISIL for him, a Sunni Muslim.

4 Spent one night in Raqqa then left for Manbij the next morning.

6 They realized they needed to exit the ISIS area and move into the Free Syrian Army controlled area because the FSA would not prevent them from exiting the Syrian Arab Republic. So they went to Al Bab and tried to move to the border from there. They made two attempts but failed to exit both times.

5 From Manbij, tried to cross into Turkey but came across a minefield. A mine exploded injuring some ISIS members in the area. ISIS arrested all the Syrians and let the Iraqis go (they were looking for the smuggler). Returned to Manbij.

2 He moved from his hometown in Mosul to the Syrian border and he moved with a smuggler. The smuggler was a distant relative of his (someone he trusted) and was required to help him navigate the checkpoints. It took 3 days to get to Deir Ez-zor. They travelled by donkey (pretending to be shepherds).

3 No official border between the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq as ISIS controls territory on both sides but had to change smugglers. Left for Raqqa the next morning with smuggler and 10 other Iraqis.

TURKEY
Kobane
21 days
Manbij
Al Bab
12 days
1 day
Raqqa
1 day
Mosul
3 days
IRAQ
Deir Ez-zor
SYRIAN
ARAB
REPUBLIC

Name: "Abdullah"
Age: 35 years old
Ethnicity: Sunni Arab
Profile: University graduate/professional

Obstacles

ISIS territories in 2015
(source: IHS Conflict Monitor)

Unpopulated desert

Kurdish regions

Minefields/airstrikes

The general steps of the journey are as follows:

•   Migrants either cross the border into Deir Ez-zor in the Syrian Arab Republic (typically followed by Iraqis from Mosul and its surrounds) or cross from Al Qaim in Iraq over the Al Bukamal border crossing into Al Mayadeen in the Syrian Arab Republic (typically followed by Iraqis from Al Qaim in Al Anbar province). Migrants change smugglers in Deir Ez-zor and Al Mayadeen.

•   Sometimes migrants wait in Deir Ez-zor or Al Mayadeen for a few days (sometimes up to 10 days) because the smuggler would like a bigger group to amass before he starts the journey. The smuggler typically accommodates them at his home or in a house that he uses for this purpose.

•   These two different routes then meet in Raqqa and from there they move to the Syrian/Turkish border to attempt their exit from the Syrian Arab Republic. Migrants typically change smugglers again in Raqqa and are accommodated by this smuggler until they begin the journey to the border.

•   From Raqqa, there are four main routes across the Syrian/Turkish border: through Manbij; through Al Bab; through Aleppo; or through the surrounds of Kobane. From Aleppo, there is a route through Afrin or Khirbat Al Jawz.

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12   The name of the migrant has been changed for the purposes of his privacy.

- Between Manbij and Al Bab there are five villages; the last one before Al Bab is named Azaz and is the first village outside ISIL-controlled areas and in the area controlled by the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Everything to the west of Azaz is in FSA-controlled territory. Migrants reported that in FSA-controlled areas it was easier to exit the Syrian Arab Republic because FSA members sometimes provided migrants with information about changes at the border and opportune times to cross.
- Migrants typically pay between USD 1,200 and USD 1,500 to move between Mosul or Al Qaim and Turkey.

Main risks: There are a number of characteristics related to the ISIL-controlled areas that makes movement within these areas riskier. Specifically:

- Indiscriminate bombing in ISIL-controlled territory by the coalition forces;
- People's Protection Units firing into ISIL-controlled territory;
- Migrants report that behaviour at ISIL checkpoints is more erratic than at other checkpoints.

The general ban imposed by ISIL on travel into and out of ISIL-controlled territories creates a number of consequences for migrants:

- Migrants must avoid arrest when trying to leave even their location of origin (some were arrested up to five times before successfully leaving their village);
- Migrants require smugglers even to move within Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic (not just to cross borders);
- Migrants must move within ISIL-controlled territory in discreet ways, such as on donkeys or in the back of fuel tankers, which creates the possibility for further risk;
- The need to be discreet sometimes leads to migrants needing to spend more money than anticipated, which can lead to some of them running out of money along the way. For example, some migrants reported that they bought local clothes along the way to blend into the local population;
- Migrants report that they are not comfortable travelling with women and children (be it their own relatives or others) because if stopped and questioned about their journey by ISIL, women and children would be less able to withhold the truth.
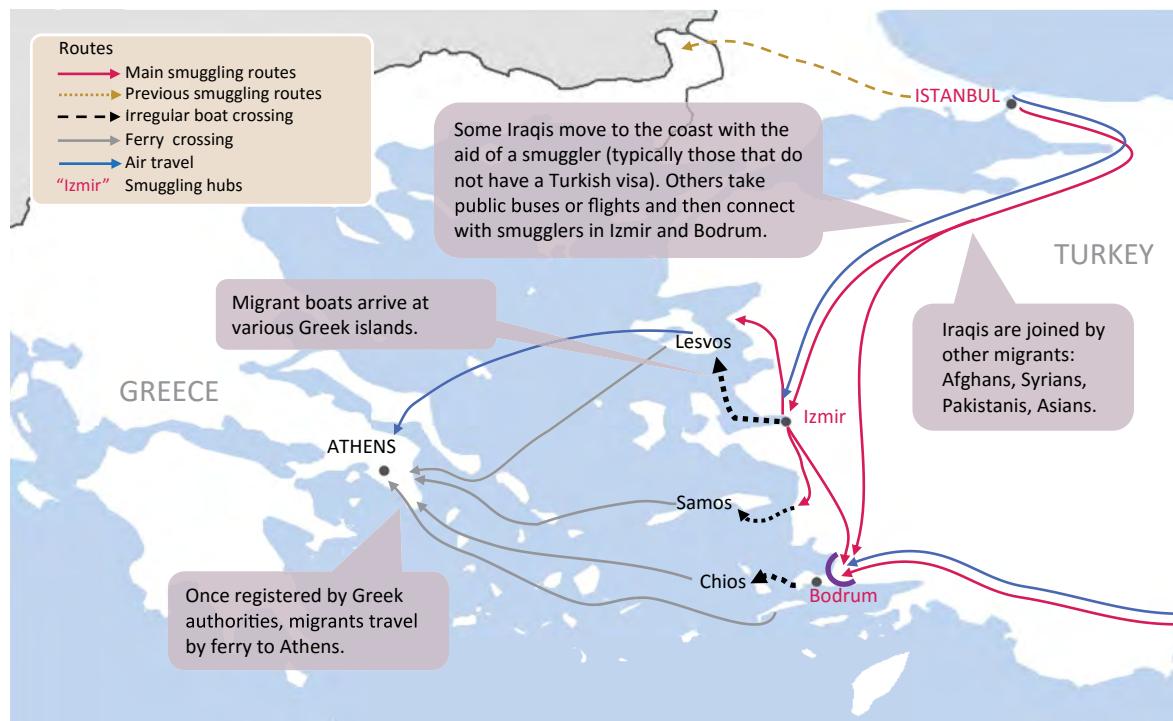
The consequence of the above-mentioned risks is that migrants often have to make more attempts than they originally anticipated to exit the country:

- Some migrants reported spending over one month at the Syrian/Turkish border attempting to cross and only doing so successfully after 9 or 10 attempts;
- Many abandon the journey after the first few unsuccessful attempts. This is especially common among families. That is, those travelling as a family tend to accept less risk than men travelling on their own.

A 36-year-old Iraqi woman interviewed in Germany explained: "The most difficult part of the journey was leaving Mosul. We are aware that ISIL kill people and harass women for no reason. Because of their reputation we knew that being spotted could mean being captured or killed by ISIL. We were afraid of making mistakes that would result in us being captured".

1.2 Main risks during the journey
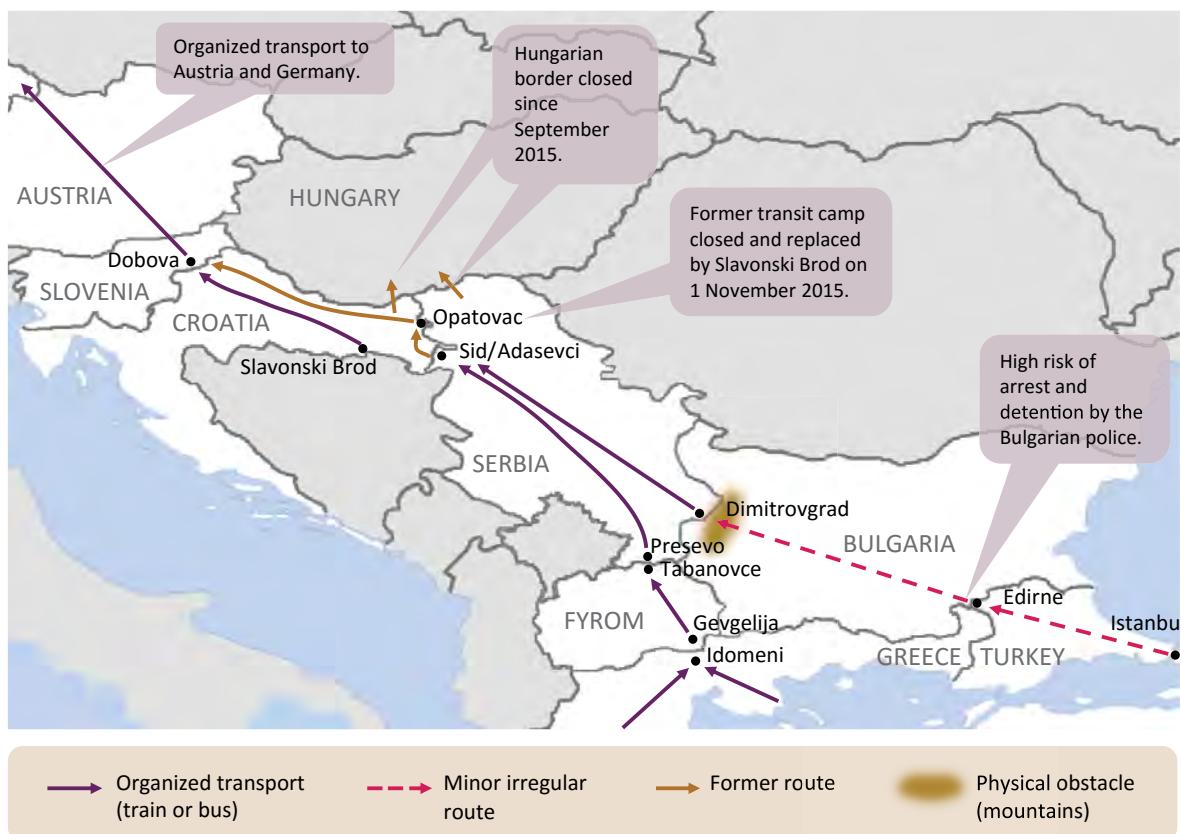
Map 5: Routes between Turkey and Greece

Fieldwork focused on Iraqis in Germany, and most of this population arrived in 2015 and in the early months of 2016; that is, prior to the implementation of the European Union–Turkey Agreement. Thus, our exploration of risks during the journey focuses on the route through the Balkans, as demonstrated in Map 5. While this route is no longer active, it did encompass a number of risks, which created vulnerabilities for migrants and which are likely to be repeated in a number of different contexts. The route is thus presented as a case study. The analysis in this section focuses less on risks that are very specific to the exact journey through the Balkans and more on risks that are present as general concerns. Moreover, it is important to understand the risks that the Iraqis who are currently in Germany faced during their journey to Europe if we are to explore their ability to integrate and live a settled and healthy life at the destination.

From Turkey, Iraqis in our sample moved to Greece with the aid of smugglers. Some Iraqis met their smugglers in Istanbul, then moved to the Turkish coast (Izmir or Bodrum) with the smuggler. This was typically the case for Iraqis who did not have passports and/or visas for Turkey. Other Iraqis moved to Izmir or Bodrum themselves, using public transport, and connected with smugglers there. From the Turkish coast they moved by boat across the Aegean Sea and arrived at various Greek Islands. From there, and after registration, they made their way to Athens by ferry (typically an eight-hour journey). This journey is depicted in Map 5.

Map 6: Routes through the Balkans

Organized transport to Austria and Germany.

Hungarian border closed since September 2015.

Former transit camp closed and replaced by Slavonski Brod on 1 November 2015.

High risk of arrest and detention by the Bulgarian police.

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY

Dobova

SLOVENIA

CROATIA

Opatovac

Slavonski Brod

Sid/Adasevci

SERBIA

Dimitrovgrad

Presevo

Tabanovce

BULGARIA

FYROM

Gevgelija

Idomeni

Edirne

Istanbul

GREECE TURKEY

→ Organized transport (train or bus)

- - → Minor irregular route

→ Former route

Physical obstacle (mountains)

The journey through Greece and the Balkans was generally quite straightforward and involved a series of steps as follows (see Map 6):

- Iraqis took public buses from the port in Athens to the Idomeni border with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, migrants registered at the Gevgelija Temporary Reception Centre.
- From the Gevgelija Temporary Reception Centre, migrants travelled by train to the Tabanovce Temporary Reception Centre in the northern region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- From the Tabanovce Temporary Reception Centre, migrants walked to Miratovac (a small village on the Serbian border, about four kilometres from Tabanovce).
- From Miratovac, migrants travelled by bus to the Presevo Temporary Reception Centre in southern Serbia.
- From Presevo, migrants travelled by train to the Sid Temporary Reception Centre in northern Serbia.
- From the Sid Temporary Reception Centre, migrants travelled by train to the Slavonski Brod Temporary Reception Centre in eastern Croatia.
- From the Slavonski Brod Temporary Reception Centre in eastern Croatia, migrants travelled to Dobova Temporary Reception Centre in Slovenia, then through Austria to Germany.

Since the European Union–Turkey Agreement and the subsequent closure of the Balkans route, there have been continued efforts to move through this route clandestinely. According to Frontex, until March 2016, most migrants moved into the European Union from Croatia's border with Serbia. From April onward, irregular migration via Croatia and Slovenia effectively stopped and was rerouted

to Hungary and Serbia. In the second quarter of 2016, Frontex reports that around 100 individuals crossed irregularly into Croatia and 11,000 individuals broke through the fence from Serbia.[13]

Iraqi father and son seeking asylum in Europe. © IOM, 2016

1.2.1 Specific issues for families

The extremely risky nature of the journey, coupled with the high cost of irregular travel to Europe, sometimes leads to male heads of households deciding to make the journey alone. For those that need to travel within ISIL-controlled territories to exit Iraq, the potential risks are even greater when travelling as a family. One of the additional risks is related to the concern that wives and children may not be able to conceal their true intentions from ISIL if stopped: "One of the main reasons I did not bring my family is that if we were stopped by ISIL along the way, ISIL would ask me questions about what we were doing and even if I managed to avoid the questions and my wife managed to avoid the questions, my children would not be able to conceal the truth, they would give away our story" (35-year-old Iraqi man interviewed in Germany). There are also heavy costs associated with irregular migration to Europe, with an Iraqi family of four being required to pay as much as USD 10,000 to travel irregularly from Iraq to Germany. This constitutes another factor that might encourage a family to send only one of its members ahead.

A decision to send the male head of household to Europe while the rest of the family remains in Iraq is usually made on the assumption that the rest of the family will join him through a family reunification scheme later. That is, once the man receives his refugee status, he will apply for family reunification and his family will be able to travel to Europe to join him. In reality, however, obtaining authorization for a family reunification takes much longer than expected. In most cases, after having waited for some time for a family reunification that may never happen, the family finally attempts to travel irregularly to Europe.

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13   Frontex, *FRAN Quarterly: Quarter 2 April–June 2016*, p. 8.

The decision to leave the family in Iraq exposes family members to a number of risks and challenges. One of the biggest challenges is that the personal safety of the woman and children is compromised in the absence of the father, particularly given the male-dominated context of Iraq. This is particularly problematic for Iraqis from persecuted minority groups who may feel less comfortable approaching authorities for protection. For the children, such a scenario can be unsettling because, in addition to the fear associated with feeling less protected, it leads to them living in a situation quite far from their cultural norms and outside what they are accustomed to (for example, living in a female-headed household). The family members are exposed to grave risks a second time when they make the decision to travel irregularly to join the husband/father in Europe. That is, after living in a precarious situation in his absence in Iraq, they then instigate the risky journey to Europe on their own, without his protection.

It should be noted that Iraqis who did travel with their family were less inclined to accept risks. For example, those who travelled through the Syrian Arab Republic to exit Iraq, when having to make a number of attempts over the Syrian/Turkish border, often abandoned the journey after the first or second attempt (whereas those who were alone kept moving). Some men decided to send their families back to Iraq and move on alone after the first few unsuccessful attempts.

Cases of family separation along the way also occurred, particularly during the Balkans segment of the journey. As very large numbers of migrants moved along this route, all registering at the same centres, and all possessing the same sense of urgency to arrive at the destination (compounded by rumours about border closures and changing policies at the borders – see Focus box 2), this often led to pushing and shoving at border locations and reception centres. Individuals easily became lost within a crowd, which resulted in family members becoming separated. Sometimes complications with identity documents also caused family separation. That is, if there was an error on a migrant's registration documentation, or if documentation had been lost or stolen, she/he often had to return to a previous country on the route to rectify the mistake.

Focus box 2: Timeline of policy changes along the Balkans route

20 August 2015: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia declares a state of emergency and closes the border with Greece.[14]

21 August 2015: Germany suspends the European Union regulation 604/2013 (the Dublin Regulation) in relation to Syrians,[15] which contributes to certain borders reopening in the Balkans.

15 September 2015: Hungary closes its border with Serbia, redirecting the flow to Croatia.

16 October 2015: Hungary closes its border with Croatia, redirecting the flow to Slovenia.

18 November 2015: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia impose the "SIA decision" (only refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan allowed to enter the territory irregularly).[16] Consequently, 440 people are blocked from entering Croatia and border police from Croatia and Serbia prevent migrants from boarding trains.[17]

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14 Amnesty International, 2016, *Trapped in Greece: An Avoidable Refugee Crisis*, available from www.amnesty.eu/content/assets/ Docs_2016/ReportsBriefings/Trapped_in_Greece_final_140416.pdf (accessed 20 November 2016), p. 8.
15 Ibid., p. 9.
16 Ibid., p. 9.
17 Amnesty International, 2015, Refugee crisis: Balkans border blocks leave thousands stranded, 20 November.

19 November 2015: Croatian authorities allow Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans and Palestinians to enter the country from Serbia.[18]

20 November 2015: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia closes its border to all nationalities except nationals from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan.[19]

27 November 2015: Austria begins constructing a 3.7-kilometre-long fence along the Slovenian border.[20]

19 February 2016: Serbia closes Presevo border to Afghan nationals, leaving more than 600 Afghans blocked at Tabanovce in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.[21]

19 February 2016: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia closes its border with Greece to nationals from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan without passports or identity cards.[22]

19 February 2016: Daily quotas introduced (500–1,500 per day)[23] on the southern border of Austria and only a maximum number of 80 asylum applications per day are allowed.[24]

19 February 2016: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia ban Afghans from entering their territories and only allow a small number of Syrians and Iraqis to enter.[25]

19 February 2016: Austria imposes a quota of 3,200 refugees who can enter per day.

22 February 2016: Greece starts removing refugees from the border camp of Idomeni.

24 February 2016: Austria holds a summit on refugees in Vienna; Balkan States decide to close the border with Greece.

26 February 2016: Slovenia and Croatia impose a quota of a maximum of 580 refugees per day.

7 March 2016: European Union–Turkey (European Union–Turkey Statement) summit decides on readmission to Turkey on a "one-for-one" principle.

8 March 2016: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia closes its border with Greece to all refugees.[26]

18 March 2016: The European Union and Turkey agree that any irregular migrants arriving in Greece after 20 March will be sent back to Turkey. For each Syrian sent back to Turkey, a Syrian refugee will be resettled in the European Union. The European Union will provide Turkey with EUR 3 billion in aid to help host the refugees.[27]

5 June 2016: A Hungarian law allows Hungarian border officials to return to Serbia any asylum seekers and migrants who are apprehended up to 8 kilometres from the Hungarian border.[28]

18 *Middle East Eye*, 2015, Balkan countries impose "national segregation" for refugees at borders, 19 November, available from www.middleeasteye.net/news/balkan-countries-impose-national-segregation-refugees-borders-98661480 (accessed 20 November 2016).

19 Amnesty International, 2015, Refugee crisis: Balkans border blocks leave thousands stranded, 20 November.

20 Ibid.

21 Amnesty International, 2016, *Trapped in Greece: An Avoidable Refugee Crisis*, p. 9.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Austria, Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2016, Daily upper limits effective from Friday [German], 17 February, available from www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20160217_OTS0148/mikl-leitner-taegliche-obergrenzen-ab-freitag-wirksam (accessed 20 November 2016).

25 Human Rights Watch, 2016, EU/Balkans/Greece: Border curbs threaten rights, 1 March, available from www.refworld.org/docid/56d6a19e4.html (accessed 20 November 2016).

26 Amnesty International, 2016, *Trapped in Greece: An Avoidable Refugee Crisis*, p. 8.

27 European Commission, 2016, Fact Sheet: Implementing the EU-Turkey Statement – Questions and Answers, 25 June, available from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1664_en.htm (accessed 20 November).

28 Human Rights Watch, 2016, Hungary: Migrants abused at border, 13 July, available from www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/13/hungary-migrants-abused-border (accessed 20 November 2016).

The particular locations where family separation was common include:

- At border crossings, when women and children were given prioritized crossing;
- When boarding trains, given the large crowds trying to enter the train;
- At registration within the countries because families were not typically registered together.

Young asylum seekers play football in an accommodation centre in Germany. © IOM, 2016

1.2.2 Specific issues for children

In a limited number of cases, a child was sent ahead of the rest of the family in the hope of paving the way for a family reunification, instead of the husband/father.[29] While the child travelled without his or her family, she/he was usually accompanied by other protective adults, such as extended family members or close family friends. The risks associated with such a decision are numerous as the child is extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse along the way, and will likely suffer great psychological pressure.

Moreover, in most countries along the route, if an unaccompanied child is identified and cannot be matched with parents or legal guardians in the country, the law is such that the State becomes the legal guardian of the child and makes decisions for the child's accommodation and upbringing (as deemed in the child's best interests) until the child becomes of age. There were cases of Iraqi children in the situation described above being identified as unaccompanied and prevented from moving on with the adults they began the journey with. Such children will typically spend some years in a State institution or in foster care. One might argue that it would be better to allow the child to move on with the protective adults entrusted by the parents than the child being kept in a State institution. However, the situation is complex due to it being frequently impossible to determine whether these adults are in fact family members (particularly when most do not have identity documents) and capable of acting as an appropriate guardian for the child in question.

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29   This was found to occur more commonly among Syrian than Iraqi families moving along the Eastern Mediterranean Route, although some cases did occur among the latter.

Other psychological pressures experienced by children include the need to hide from authorities, which begins in Iraq and continues at different points throughout the journey, leaving children in a constant state of anxiety and fear. It also creates an ominous picture of authority figures for children, which is exacerbated by the harsh treatment their parents sometimes experience in the hands of the same authorities. This image of authority figures can affect the ability of children to trust aid workers and social service providers in countries along the way because of their inability to discern a difference between the individuals wanting to assist them and the authorities from which they had continually to escape.

When encountering stressful and challenging circumstances and risks along the way, adults were often able to move through these experiences by focusing on the fact that it would be temporary and that their life would be better once they arrived in their destination. Many explained that they believed that their children would also feel much better once they were in Germany. When they arrived in Germany and their children still displayed signs of being unsettled, they believed it was because they were living in temporary accommodation centres and that they would feel differently once they moved into their own home and started attending school. However, this was not always the case, and children demonstrated that the psychological pressures were greater than parents imagined. Some Iraqi families explained that the inability of children to feel settled, even once in Germany and settled in their new life, was one of the reasons they eventually decided to return.

1.2.3 Running out of money along the way

Migrants typically ran out of money when their journey took longer than expected (or when they had to make more attempts than they originally anticipated) or when they were exposed to more costs. This was typically the case for those moving within ISIL-controlled areas in Iraq, some of which had to make up to 10 attempts to cross the Syrian border into Iraq. The need to be discreet when moving within ISIL-controlled territory in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic also engendered greater costs. For example, some migrants reported buying local clothing in certain areas to blend in with the local population. Few Iraqis reported cases of being robbed or extorted along the way, as can be common along the Central Mediterranean route.

For Iraqis originating from Mosul, the need for extra money is difficult to meet. ISIL has instituted a ban on any money leaving or coming into Mosul, which makes it hard for family to send money to migrants along the way. One respondent reported that when his family wished to send him money, they went to the Western Union office in Mosul, which then sent the money to the Western Union office in the KRI in the hands of one its staff, who personally carried the money overland. The Western Union office in the KRI then affected the transfer to Turkey. In such situations, the family in Mosul is exposed to great risk – if family members are detected by ISIL at a Western Union office, they will be in danger.

1.2.4 Sectarian issues

While there are a number of sectarian issues that create complexity within Iraqi society, some of these complex relationships were found to create challenges for Iraqis even when outside their home country. Some Iraqis reported that at registration and accommodation centres along the way, if they belonged to a religious or ethnic group that was not the majority in that particular centre, they would be made to feel unwelcome by the other Iraqis there and sometimes even asked to leave.

Iraqi Yazidi family in Germany. © IOM, 2016

1.2.5 Different treatment of Syrians and Iraqis

While border policies changed frequently in countries along the Balkans route, with sometimes only certain nationalities being allowed to pass, Iraqis also reported differing treatment of Iraqis and Syrians before reaching the Balkans. For example, when moving through the Syrian Arab Republic to reach Turkey, some Iraqis reported that if their group was arrested by ISIL, the Syrians were kept and the Iraqis were freed. Migrants explained that this was because ISIL wanted to identify the smuggler among them, and in Syrian territory, the smugglers would be Syrian. While on some level, this worked in favour of Iraqi migrants, it also meant that Iraqis sometimes preferred not to travel with Syrians (and to travel only with Iraqis) to avoid this layer of complexity. In some cases, refusing to travel with Syrians meant Iraqis had to wait for longer periods of time in holding locations in the Syrian Arab Republic so that the smuggler could amass enough Iraqi customers to start the journey.

Moreover, Iraqis entering Turkey must do so with a valid passport and visa. Iraqis not having these documents (or possibly having reasons for not being able to approach authorities in their own country for the acquisition of a passport) circulate within Turkey with an irregular administrative status and often with smugglers, which exposes them to significant risk. While Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention), it has adopted a geographic limitation that excludes non-European citizens from such protection. In 2014, Turkey demonstrated its commitment to human rights by creating an exception for Syrians in acknowledgement of their need for protection. This allows Syrians who may enter Turkey without a passport and/or visa to be able to apply for temporary protection (see Focus box 3 for full details).

Focus box 3: Turkey's Legal Framework for Asylum

Turkey is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention but with a geographic limitation that extends refugee protection only to "persons fleeing events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951." In November 1994, in acknowledgement of the changing composition of asylum seekers in Turkey, the Turkish Government decided through a Decree on Asylum Regulation that it would grant rights to non-European refuges to apply for asylum in Turkey, through the Turkish authorities as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on the basis that those determined to be refugees would be resettled to third countries. Close to 80,000 asylum applications were examined according to this decree between 1995 and 2010, mostly from Iranians and Iraqis.[30]

The Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LRIP), which went into effect in April 2014, is the first law that was passed on matters of asylum in Turkey (as opposed to the previous regulations and directives) and was welcomed by UNHCR as an important advancement for international protection.[31] It maintains the geographical limitation but allows non-European asylum seekers to be determined as "conditional refugees" and allows them to reside in Turkey temporarily until they are resettled to a third country.[32] The LRIP also allows for subsidiary protection that would be extended to those who do not qualify for refugee or conditional refugee status but do require protection.[33]

Article 91 of the LRIP provides for the possibility of a "temporary protection" regime, in situations of "mass influx" for refugees[34] by stating that "Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection".[35] The law provides that the specific details of how such a situation would be managed are to be determined by a Directive to be issued by the Council of Ministers.[36] In October, 2014 the Temporary Protection Regulation (TPR) established a "temporary protection" regime for "Syrian nationals, stateless people and refugees originating from Syria". This temporary protection regime does not currently extend to Iraqi nationals.

1.3   Smuggling

One of the greatest challenges reported by migrants that they experienced during the journey was smuggling and dealing with smugglers. In general, migrants move with a variety of smugglers, each one facilitating a different part of the journey. For example, someone who lives in Mosul and exits Iraq via the Syrian Arab Republic may work with a different smuggler for each of the following steps:

- Exiting their village/hometown (smuggler helps navigate checkpoints and avoiding arrest by ISIL);

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30 S.P. Elitok and T. Straubhaar, eds., 2012, *Turkey, Migration and the EU: Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities*, Hamburg Institute of International Economics, Hamburg University Press.

31 See www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/turkey-new-law-on-foreigners-and-international-protection/ (accessed 20 November 2016).

32 Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection, art. 62 (full text available from www.goc.gov.tr/files/files/eng_minikanun_5_son.pdf (accessed 20 November 2016)).

33 Ibid., art. 63.

34 See www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/temporary-protection-regulation-22-october-2014 (accessed 20 November 2016).

35 Turkish Law on Foreigners and International Protection, art. 91(1).

36 Ibid., art. 91(2).

- Moving to the Syrian border and crossing the border into Deir Ez-zor (for those coming from Mosul) or Al Mayadeen (for those coming from Al Anbar province);
- Moving from Deir Ez-zor or Al Mayadeen to Raqqa;
- Moving from Raqqa to the Syrian/Turkish border and crossing into Turkey (some migrants reported attempting the journey over the Syrian/Turkish border a number of times and using a different smuggler each time);
- Travelling by boat between Turkey (Izmir or Bordum) and the Greek Islands.

As all the respondents interviewed in Germany had arrived at their destination before the implementation of the European Union–Turkey Statement, smugglers were not required for the journey through the Balkans, between Greece and Germany.

Asylum seeker children in an accommodation centre in Germany. © IOM, 2016

1.3.1 The dynamics of smuggling

Smuggling tends to be dominated by local smuggling rings in each country, with the dynamics shifting across the countries. In Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, smuggling rings tend to be much smaller than in Turkey. Migrants report working with Iraqi smugglers in Iraq and Syrian smugglers in the Syrian Arab Republic. Even though the border between the two countries was somewhat artificial at the time of fieldwork (because ISIL controls the territory on both sides), migrants still stopped at this border to change smugglers because Syrian smugglers operate on the Syrian side.

In Turkey, migrants generally report dealing with a frontman (a broker of the smuggler) who is from the same country of origin as them but who works for a Turkish boss. However, many Iraqi migrants in Turkey reported dealing with a broker who had a Syrian, Lebanese or Palestinian accent and not necessarily an Iraqi one, implying that sometimes Arabic-speaking brokers deal with a variety of Arabic-speaking migrants.

It appears that there are large and highly organized smuggling rings operating on the Turkish coast with a number of brokers, who serve different migrant populations, working for the same

Turkish boss. Migrants reported that when they were waiting in holding locations, they were held with a large number of migrants from a number of different countries of origin, and that there was a broker per group. That is, four or five different brokers were involved who were from different countries of origin (for example, Afghans, Syrians and Iranians). The impression conveyed was that they were all frontmen working for the same smuggler.

There are impressions that in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic there have been new entrants into the smuggling business in recent times. The changing landscape, caused by conflict in both countries and the emergence of ISIL, has led to changes in smuggling dynamics. For example, moving within ISIL-controlled areas needs to be discreet, given the ban on travel into and out of the area, and has led to fuel tanker drivers (who have authorization to transport fuel within ISIL-controlled areas) transporting migrants for a price. There are also numerous reports of individuals working in cafes or restaurants close to border locations or key locations along the way (for example, Deir Ez-zor, Al Mayadeen, Raqqa) offering to facilitate a migrant's journey for a price.

There are also impressions that smugglers in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic are actively trying to recruit young men to work with them. Young men who had showed determination and skill during the journey often reported being offered jobs by smugglers. They also reported that smugglers would try a number of tactics to persuade them if they refused the offer. For example, a 30-year-old Iraqi man explained: "The smuggler used a lot of tactics to convince me to work with him; he even told the families that were travelling with me that if they did not have enough money for the journey, they could travel for free on the condition that they would convince me to stay and work with him".

Across all locations, migrants reported waiting in holding locations for optimal conditions (weather, security) or for enough migrants to amass for the journey to be profitable for the smuggler. Some examples include:

- **After crossing the Syrian/Iraqi border**, migrants change smugglers in the towns of Deir Ez-zor or Al Mayadeen. Some reported waiting as long as 10 days in these locations before the smuggler was ready to move. Migrants typically wait in homes or buildings that smugglers have organized for this purpose.
- **Along the Syrian/Turkish border,** holding locations are often filled with hundreds of migrants and smugglers lead groups of 15–20 across the border at a time. Again, migrants typically wait in homes or buildings that smugglers have organized for this purpose.
- **In Izmir and Bodrum,** migrants reported being taken to a holding location where they made payment and waited. The smuggler then led them in small groups to the coast. A second holding location can sometimes exist at the coast, with some migrants having waited up to 20 days there, usually sleeping in the open in the forest. It is not usual for migrants to wait at the coast in the open; this usually happens only if there has been an unexpected change in circumstances (weather, controls along the coast, and the like).

The general dynamics of smuggling in Turkey are represented by Figure 14. It demonstrates that in general, migrants first connect with the *samsar* – a broker of the smuggler generally from the same country of origin as the migrants he deals with. Migrants will discuss the details of their journey and come to an agreement with the *samsar.* Once an agreement has been reached, the migrants move to a holding location, which is where they wait for the commencement of their journey and where they make payment to the *muhareb*, who is the main smuggler (and the boss of the *samsar*). From this holding location, migrants are moved in smaller groups (usually five at a time, in cars) to the coast. At the coast, they are aided by intermediaries of the *muhareb*, who put them onto boats. As

mentioned above, sometimes in extremely exceptional circumstances, the migrants might wait at the coast for some time.

Some migrants reported that the intermediaries board the boat with them, for the first 100 metres of the journey (just a few minutes), to ensure that the boat begins on the right course. Then the intermediary jumps out of the boat and swims back to shore. Other than during this very initial stage of a few minutes, none of the smuggler's men are in the boat with the migrants and migrants themselves are expected to steer it.

Samsar Finds customers	Migrants are sent to a holding location	**Muhareb** Collects payment Migrants wait for journey	Migrants sent to coast, 5 at a time	**Intermediaries** Put migrants on boats

Figure 14: Dynamics of smuggling in Turkey

1.3.2 The agency of migrants

When it comes to interactions and negotiations between smugglers and migrants, in all locations along the route, Iraqi migrants showed a certain level of agency and negotiating power, particularly when contrasted against the experiences of migrants moving through the Central Mediterranean. For example:

- Iraqis often reported that they were able to negotiate with the smuggler before settling on a price;
- There were reports of Iraqis refusing boats over and over again until one they felt comfortable travelling on was shown to them;
- The typical agreement was that the smuggler would keep trying until the journey was made successfully (all-inclusive in the original price paid);
- In situations where the smuggler had been unable to move the person over a border as agreed (or to the location discussed), the smuggler returned the migrant's money.

One factor that could serve to explain this is the fact that almost all Iraqis mentioned that they had connected with the smuggler through friends or through the recommendations of friends. Travelling with someone that they know they can trust is naturally very important, particularly when moving within Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic when the risk of being arrested by ISIL is great (and when the smuggler needs to be able to tell a story when apprehended by ISIL members). Thus, good press is important for smugglers and they are consequently focused on keeping their customers' happy.

Another contributing factor could be the fact that the routes that Iraqi migrants travel along attract higher prices than other routes (such as that of the Central Mediterranean). For example, residents of Mosul reported paying between USD 1,200 and USD 1,500 just to move to Turkey. Travel from Turkey to Greece was often between USD 1,000 and USD 1,500. In some cases, a family of four paid up to USD 9,000 to travel from Iraq to Greece. Therefore, it is possible that the higher prices attract a higher level of service. This is a dynamic that was also seen on the Central Mediterranean route in 2014, where Syrians boarding boats to Europe from Libya paid higher prices than sub-Saharan Africans, and consequently received a much higher level of service.[37]

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37   A. Malakooti, 2015, *Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots* (Annex 3: Bibliography), pp. 91–92.

Despite the higher level of service provided by smugglers, migrants also adopt a number of measures to decrease their vulnerability when dealing with smugglers:

- **"Insurance offices"** exist in Turkey, which are basically individuals that hold the payment and hand it over to the smuggler once the refugee has called safely from the destination. Iraqis reported that they usually paid the person a fee to provide this service (around USD 80).
- **Guarantors:** Friends or family sometimes played the same role as an insurance office by acting as a guarantor for the migrant and handing over payment to the smuggler once the migrant arrived safely at her/his destination.
- **Half payment by family at origin:** Some migrants reported that they paid half of the agreed sum to the smuggler on departure and then alerted their family, back in their location of origin, to pay the other half to a contact of the smuggler in Iraq when they arrived at destination safely. The migrants who reported doing so usually originated from the KRI.

Throughout 2015, insurance offices became less and less common. Migrants reported that by October 2015, there were no insurance offices in Bodrum, only in Izmir and Istanbul. Migrants in Bodrum then handed their payment over to insurance offices in Istanbul before moving to Bodrum, or used one of the other forms of insurance. It is believed that insurance offices in Izmir and Istanbul also started to close down, likely in response to greater counter-smuggling activity on the part of the Turkish authorities and/or the gradual decrease in the number of migrants requesting smuggling services.

1.3.3 Information sources

It is not difficult to connect with smugglers; migrants report that in most locations the smugglers find the migrants rather than the other way around. Migrants simply go to key locations and know that once there, smugglers will approach them. Some examples include Aksaray Square in Istanbul and Basmanah Square in Izmir (Turkey). One 45-year-old Iraqi man explained: "There is a square in Izmir called Basmanah where you can find smugglers. Actually they approach you. They walk around the square saying names of Greek Islands or they ask if you're looking to get to Greece. Sometimes they even just outright ask if you're looking for a smuggler".

Finding a smuggler that you know you can trust is the greater challenge. To address this, when travelling within Iraq, migrants reported travelling with a smuggler that they knew (often a distant relative, a neighbour, or a member of the same community/from the same village). When connecting with smugglers in Turkey, migrants reported connecting only with those that were recommended by friends, or researching smugglers by acting as a guarantor for many friends and then selecting someone based on these experiences.

Most Iraqis reported that they travelled with smugglers that had been recommended by friends or family and there are impressions that these friends may in fact be brokers working for the smuggler. In some cases, the same friend who recommended the smuggler also handled all dealings with the smuggler. That is, the friend acted as the intermediary between the smuggler and the migrant wishing to travel. In such cases, the migrant reported that she/he had never come into contact with the smuggler, nor met him, suggesting that these "friends" may in fact be working for the smuggler (and receiving a payment for each person they introduce to the smuggler). The prevalence of such reports also suggests that this may be an increasing phenomenon.

In some instances, smugglers themselves become information sources for other smugglers. This was observed to be particularly so around the Syrian/Turkish border. Migrants reported that in instances where smugglers did not wish to continue in the face of very grave risks, or in instances

where smugglers decided to abandon the journey after many unsuccessful attempts over the border, they would return the migrant's money and introduce the migrant to another smuggler if so desired.

1.4 Main risks at destination
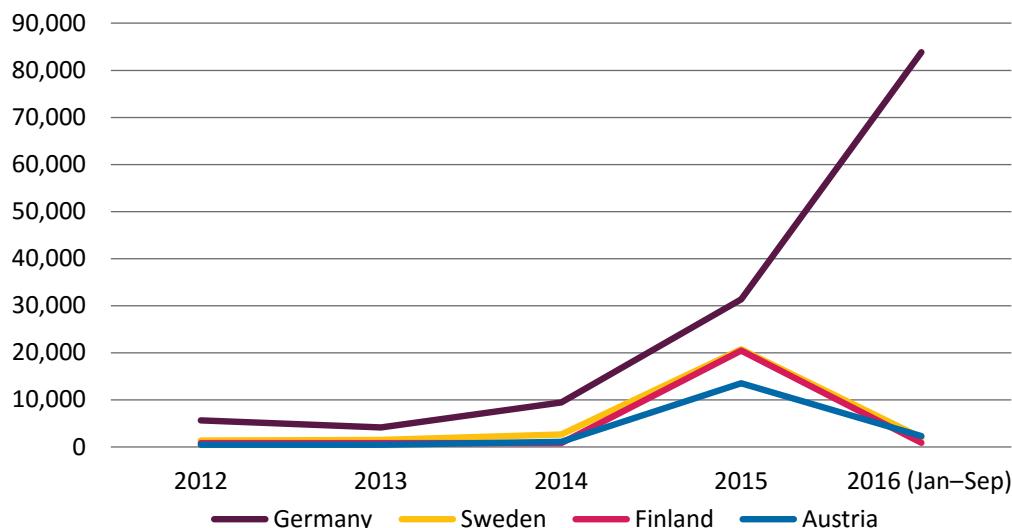
Figure 15: Top four European Union countries for Iraqi asylum applications, 2012–September 2016[38]

This section will explore the main challenges that Iraqi asylum seekers are facing at destination. Through 2015 and 2016, more and more Iraqis moved to Germany as their final destination, demonstrated by the fact that a greater proportion of the total number of Iraqis who arrived in Europe applied for asylum in Germany over other European destinations. Figure 15 charts the number of asylum applications made by Iraqis in the top four European Union countries where they made claims between 2012 and September 2016. It demonstrates that the number of applications made in Germany increased significantly, while the number of applications made in the other countries decreased to almost zero in 2016.

Figure 16 charts the total number of asylum applications made in Germany by Iraqi asylum seekers between 2012 and July 2016 July, according to total applications and first time applications.
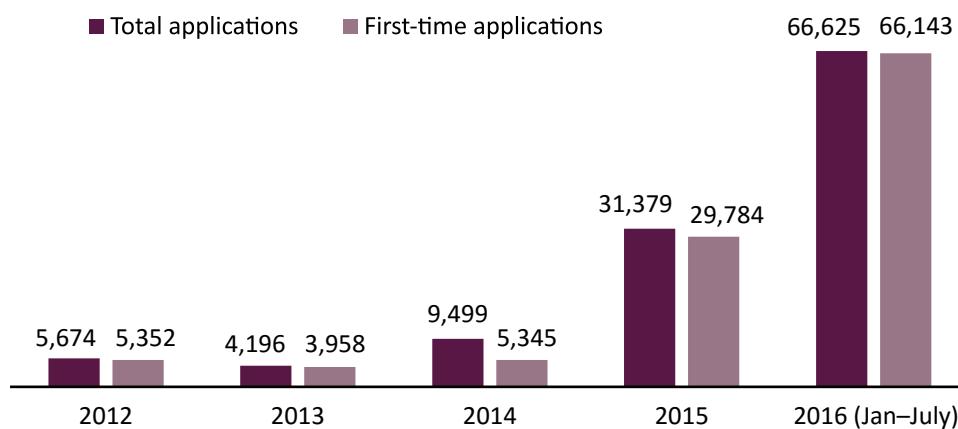
Figure 16: Number of asylum applications by Iraqis in Germany, 2012–July 2016[39]

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38 *Data source*: Eurostat; asylum and first time asylum applicants by citizenship, age and sex; monthly data (rounded); extracted 28 October 2016.
39 *Data source*: German eligibility statistics compiled by the German refugee status determination authority, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF); provided by UNHCR Berlin.

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ASSESSING THE RISKS OF MIGRATION ALONG THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES:
Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries.

Figure 17 demonstrates the recognition rate for Iraqi asylum applications in Germany, according to rates of refugee recognition, subsidiary protection and overall protection, between 2012 and July 2016. The overall recognition rate for Iraqi asylum applications in Germany is generally high and increased over the years charted, registered as 89 per cent in 2014, 99 per cent in 2015 and 88 per cent to July 2016. It is also noteworthy that most Iraqis who received some form of protection received refugee protection and not subsidiary protection.
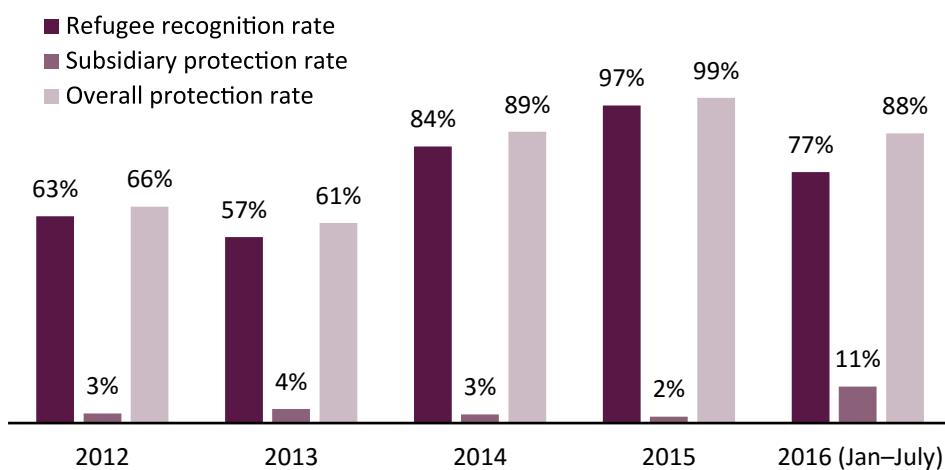
Figure 17: Recognition rates for Iraqis in Germany, 2012–June 2016[40]

While this section explores the challenges faced by Iraqi migrants at destination, it should be noted that the report does not imply that all Iraqis are challenged by their integration into German society or even that the challenges identified inhibit their integration. Many Iraqis are integrating well and happily. The report cites these challenges to better understand the experiences of Iraqis at destination, to give some context to why some Iraqis may choose to return home, and to identify areas for improvement.

1.4.1 Uncertainty

Given the very large number of asylum seekers who were welcomed by Germany in 2015 (according to the German Interior Minister, 890,000 in total),[41] the process for determining claims for asylum has taken longer than many asylum seekers expected. Most of the Iraqis in the sample spent, on average, one year waiting for their interview with the BAMF. In addition to not having any status during this period that would allow them to work, the uncertainty around whether their application for asylum would actually be successful also created a great deal of anxiety.

Most Iraqis spent this time living in temporary accommodation centres provided by the Government of Germany, which by their very nature were meant to be temporary and not conducive to Iraqis feeling settled in their new environment. While the German reception process allows asylum seekers to move out of the temporary centres and into their own housing after the first six months (with the Government of Germany, via the Regional Office for Refugee Affairs (LAF), covering the rent up to a certain amount), most Iraqis reported that they found it impossible to move into their own home. The main obstacle cited was the reluctance of landlords to rent to someone who had an undetermined status in Germany (coupled with high amounts of competition from other asylum seekers for the same amount of available apartments).

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40 *Data source*: German eligibility statistics compiled by the German refugee status determination authority, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF); provided by UNHCR Berlin.

41 *Source*: German Federal Ministry of the Interior, available from www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/EN/2016/announcement-latest-refugee-figures.html (accessed 20 November 2016).

When integration takes longer than expected, it can lead to feelings of apathy among Iraqis and doubts that they will be able to rebuild their lives. While experiencing many grave dangers and risks in Iraq, on exit and/or during the journey, migrants remained optimistic by looking forward to their arrival in a safe country like Germany, where they would rebuild their lives. This emerges as a coping mechanism that kept migrants going. When the process of integration into Germany took longer than expected, some started to doubt that they would be able to integrate successfully. The psychological consequence of this was great, even though unfounded, given that it had been their coping mechanism when faced with risks along the way.

The Iraqis in the sample who arrived in the years immediately prior to 2015 arrived at a time when the overall number of arrivals was much lower. For these individuals, finding accommodation and employment tends to have been easier compared to the Iraqis that arrived in 2015. However, the time required to wait for status to be determined did not seem to differ greatly. This is mainly because asylum applications made to the Government of Germany reached an all-time low in 2007, and the Government decided to move some of the resources that were being used for processing into integration. This naturally increased processing times, but allowed for relatively easier integration. As applications increased greatly in 2015, resources devoted to processing of applications were commensurately increased.

Asylum seekers attend integration classes in Germany. © IOM, 2016

1.4.2 Poorly informed

Many Iraqis demonstrated that they were poorly informed about the asylum and integration processes in Germany and the European Union in general, and often misinformed. Many rumours tend to be circulating in Iraq, in transit countries and in Germany itself. Some examples include:

- Some Iraqis believed that if they arrived with a passport, it would work against them, which led them to destroy their documentation before arrival;
- Iraqis in Italy were under the impression that if they moved to Germany through the European Relocation Programme, they would go through a fast-tracked asylum procedure and be given a house to live in on arrival;

- Others believed that if their application for asylum was rejected in Germany, they would be able to apply for asylum in another European Union country;
- Some were advised by smugglers and other migrants to provide false names so that they would not be prevented from applying in another country through the Dublin Regulation. Naturally, providing a false name created problems for them at a later stage.

While information circulates among migrants, there is a tendency to be selective in the type of information that they are prepared to receive. Iraqis tend to have a number of information sources in relation to processes and procedure, some of them official and some non-official (examples of the latter include smugglers and other migrants). However, they tend to look for information that serves their hopes and expectations (which could be interpreted as a coping mechanism) and sometimes leads to them being misinformed. When information is reinforced (for example, something a migrant is told by a smuggler that is then repeated to the migrant by other migrants) it tends to be taken seriously and seen to be truth.

There are a number of good reasons for which procedures are applied inconsistently at certain times; however, these inconsistencies can lead to diminished trust and misunderstanding, and generate further rumours. For example, the applications of vulnerable groups are sometimes prioritized over others. Sometimes, relevant government departments, in order to speed up the determination of asylum applications, prioritize particular caseloads for a period of time. While there is valid reason for such inconsistencies, migrants tend not to understand or be aware of these reasons. They complain that they were not able to register for some days after their arrival, when others registered on the same day, or that some asylum seekers received their asylum interview within six months, whereas others had to wait for over a year. The consequence of this is that migrants lose faith in the system and misunderstand the rules (this is particularly relevant, given that the asylum seekers come from countries where they have had no reason to trust their government) and often, this is what generates further rumours.

Another reason for misinformation is that when Iraqis interact with official information sources, their faith in these sources is sometime diminished by their lack of trust in the interpreters that are relaying this information to them. This is linked to the sectarian issues at origin, which complicate interactions between Iraqis of various faiths and ethnicities. Even when the interpreters are completely objective and neutral, it can be challenging for the asylum seeker to believe this neutrality, given the context they come from.

1.4.3 Accommodation centres feel like an extension of Iraq

The distrust of Iraqi interpreters is one example of a broader issue of Iraqis having difficulty trusting other Iraqis. Sectarian and ethnic differences in Iraq create complex relationships with different groups not necessarily trusting each other or feeling safe around one another. It is a dynamic that begins at origin and continues at destination, as these kinds of tensions do not disappear just because individuals are interacting in a different country. This is naturally of more concern for people from persecuted minority groups who may have never felt safe in Iraq. For example, some Iraqi Yazidi families interviewed in Germany felt a great deal of anxiety about living side by side with Sunni Iraqis. However, it is not limited to persecuted minority groups.

As many of the Iraqi asylum seekers in Germany reside in government-provided temporary accommodation centres alongside other asylum seekers, including other Iraqis, and given the complexity of the relationships between Iraqis, the centres feel like an extension of home for

many of them. That is, they feel that they have to be concerned about their safety in the same way that they would have been in Iraq. A 21-year-old Iraqi man explained: "It's not safe for me to discuss my views openly in this centre because there are ex-militia people here who still have a lot of power. If they don't like what I say, they could tell their counterparts back in Iraq to find my family and harm them". Some of the Iraqi women from minority groups reported that they did not feel safe when their husbands left the centres for administrative tasks during the day.

Asylum seekers in an accomodation centre in Germany. © IOM, 2016

Another aspect of this is that many of the Iraqi asylum seekers trust Germans more than they do other Iraqis, and look forward to moving out of the centres in order to feel safe. One 30-year-old Iraqi man explained: "The Germans treat me better than the Arabs do. Us Arabs are not good to each other". A 24-year-old Iraqi woman interviewed in Germany presented the female perspective by explaining: "I love the German culture, especially the way they treat women. At home when I am in public spaces, I don't feel safe because people are always staring and making me feel unsafe and vulnerable. In Germany, they respect women and are polite, especially on public transport. In my eight months of being here I haven't had one problem with a German".

One further ramification of this is that for some, the staff in the centres are not felt to be as trustworthy as the police who are external to the centres. Many Iraqis reported that they would feel safer taking their concerns to the police, rather than to the centre management.

1.4.4 Issues with identity documents

It is not uncommon for Iraqis to obtain forged documentation in Iraq that will help them move within the country (for example, a Shia family name will help you move through checkpoints on the way to Baghdad). While these identities allow Iraqis to circulate without complications in their own country, their validity is sometimes disputed in Europe and can create suspicions and challenges in their asylum process.

Another identity challenge relates to the fact that some Iraqis have difficulty obtaining identity documents altogether. For example, Iraqis that resided in ISIL-controlled areas often do not have valid identity documents.

2.   The risks related to return

2.1   General patterns of return

While a greater number of Iraqis are being forced to leave their homes in search of safe haven, the number of Iraqis that are opting to return home from Europe is also increasing. This section seeks to analyse some of the factors that are driving decisions to return, as well as the experience on return. Figure 18 charts the total number of Iraqis who received voluntary return and reintegration assistance from IOM between 2012 and 2015 globally. While these figures represent some proportion of the Iraqis returning home, there is also a segment of the total population of returnees that returns according to their own means, the total number of which is unknown.
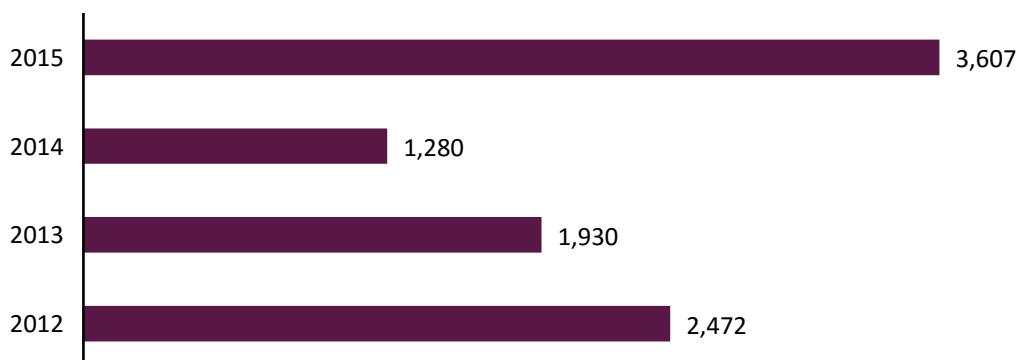
Figure 18: Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) to Iraq, 2012–2015[42]

Figure 19 charts the total number of Iraqis who were beneficiaries of the IOM AVR programme in 2015 according to host country. It demonstrates that the largest number of AVR cases were from Belgium (927), followed by Austria (673) and then Germany (652). The top seven host counties were all European countries.
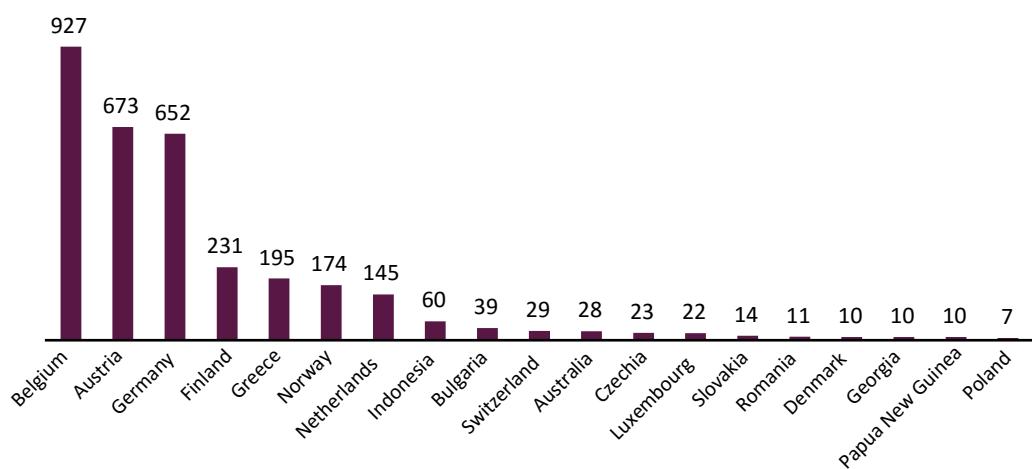

Figure 19: Total number of AVR to Iraq in 2015 by host country[43]

It should be noted that this section deals only with the dynamics of return for migrants who chose to return voluntarily, whether with or without IOM assistance.

42 *Data source*: IOM Department of Migrant Management – Migrant Assistance Division.
43 *Data source*: IOM Department of Migrant Management – Migrant Assistance Division.

2.2   Drivers of return

When looking at return patterns among Iraqi asylum seekers, it seems that a migrant's location of origin in Iraq influences whether she/he will consider returning or not. Put another way, the riskier and more challenging the exit from Iraq, the less likely an asylum seeker is to consider a return.

In some cases, asylum seekers fled Iraq because of personal or familial feuds, rather than in response to the general security threat. When the personal issues or feuds are resolved, the asylum seeker feels able to return. There are also cases of Iraqis who may not have experienced a personal or imminent threat to their security, but watched a worsening general security situation and decided to leave while there was still time. However, when they arrived in Europe, the reality of rebuilding their life from scratch in a new culture and new environment, without their family and typical support networks, became apparent and they decided that it was better to return home.

Other drivers for return migration can be grouped under family-related drivers and medical issues. They are described in greater detail below.

2.2.1 Family-related drivers

Family-related drivers are numerous and emerge as the most influential. The first and foremost is the realization that family reunification will take much longer than imagined. As discussed in the section on risks, it is not uncommon for Iraqi families to decide to send one family member ahead of the rest to secure his/her status and allow the others to join later, in a regular fashion, through a family reunification scheme. Most had imagined that this entire process would take a year at most but find themselves still waiting for their asylum interview a year after arriving in Germany. While some decide to organize an irregular journey for their family to be able to join them in Germany, others decide to return home. This is particularly so for those who left behind family members too old and/or frail to travel.

In some cases, the asylum seeker decides to return home instead of sending for the family because life at destination has been disappointing and not as expected. The asylum seeker may have spent a year waiting in an accommodation centre just for a first interview. During this time, the person may not have been able to work or support the family in any way. The consequent belief is that they can be of more use to their families back at home, where they can work and earn money to support them; and if there are risks to their lives, at least they will be together. IOM Iraq also found the desire to go back and support family at origin to be a significant driver of return for Iraqi returnees during its study of July 2016.[44]

Sometimes the situation of children can cause the entire family to consider returning. More specifically, the cumulative trauma for children who have been uprooted from their lives, embarked on extremely risky journeys to Europe, then spent a year in temporary accommodation centres in Germany can be immense. Children, who may not understand that the disruption to the family's life is undertaken in the hope of a better future, have a much harder time processing the challenges experienced and settling into the new life at destination. In some families, this specific challenge for the children has led to parents feeling as though they have no choice but to return with their children to Iraq. Some families even explained that they kept waiting and hoping that the children would feel better soon. When on the journey, they told themselves that once they arrived in Germany, things would be different. Once in Germany, they told themselves that once they moved into their own

44 International Organization for Migration DTM Iraq, 2016, *Migration Flows from Iraq to Europe: Reasons Behind Migration*, IOM, Baghdad, p. 20.

home, the children would feel differently. Once in their own home, they believed that the children would feel more settled when they started school. However, the adjustment that they were waiting for never materialized.

For some Iraqis, the uprooting of their lives and the subsequent move to Europe led to shifting family dynamics. For example, in some cases, the stress of leaving one's country and starting again in a new culture led to the breakdown of the family. In other cases, Iraqi women, upon moving to Europe, became more aware of their rights and felt more inclined to leave a dysfunctional marriage in the European context (when maybe at home they would not have had the courage to do so). In situations of family breakdown, some parties to the terminated marriage may decide to return home. One 41-year-old Iraqi man explained: "When I separated with my wife, I lived alone for six months. After six months, I tried one more time to reconcile with her but it didn't work. She didn't let me see my children, I was all alone. I found it unbearable to stay".

While family pressure was a factor that caused some asylum seekers to start the journey to Europe in the first place, it can also cause others to return. This became particularly evident when the asylum seekers themselves were not happy – that is, when they are unhappy, the family at origin pushes them to return. In fact, in the confusion and loneliness of starting again in a new country and trying to navigate in a new culture, returning to one's familial support structures is often a strong motivation for return. For example, a 35-year-old Iraqi man explained: "My life is for my children. While we tried, the kids would speak to their grandfather on the phone sometimes and tell him that they wanted to return home. My father then blamed us for taking his grandkids away to a place where they are unhappy".

2.2.2 Medical reasons

In some cases, asylum seekers decide to return home because of untreatable medical conditions. The scenario is usually such that an asylum seeker travels to Europe with a medical condition that they imagine that they will be able to address at destination. On arrival, they discover that the condition is untreatable and decide that they would rather return home and die there than in a foreign country.

There are other cases where asylum seekers return home because of a sick family member at origin. For example, a 26-year-old Iraqi man explained: "When I left, it was so hard for me to say goodbye to my parents, especially since both of them are sick. Then one day my friends told me that my father had just had surgery; I immediately decided to go back. Ten days after his surgery, I was in Iraq".

NIGERIA

NIGERIA

This section of the report explores the journey of Nigerians along the Central Mediterranean route to Europe. Figure 20 charts the number of Nigerians that moved along this route between 2012 and September 2016 and Figure 21 charts the proportion of the total number of arrivals on the Central Mediterranean route that was represented by Nigerians over the same period.
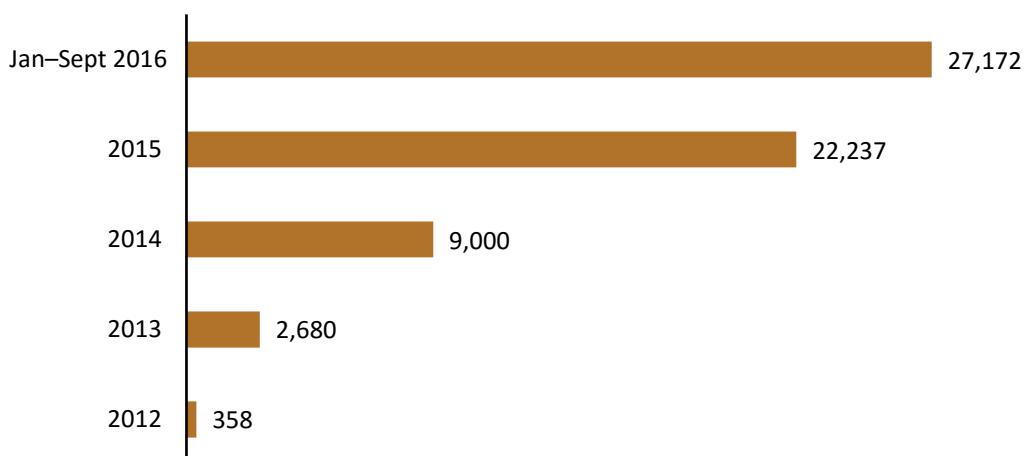

Figure 20: Number of Nigerians arriving along the Central Mediterranean route, 2012–September 2016[45]

These charts demonstrate that the number of Nigerians arriving along the Central Mediterranean route has continued to increase between 2012 and 2016. As the numbers of Nigerians increased, so did their percentage of the total for every year except 2014 (see Figure 21).
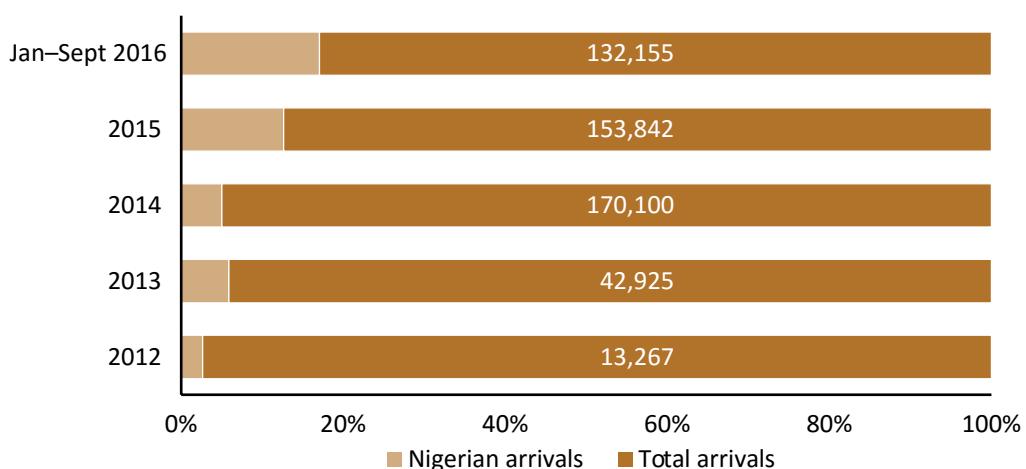

Figure 21: Percentage of arrivals on the Central Mediterranean route represented by Nigerians, 2012–September 2016[46]

In 2014, while the number of Nigerians increased to 9,000 (compared to 2,680 in 2013), the total number of arrivals also increase greatly (to 170,100 from 42,925 the year before), meaning that the percentage of the total that Nigerians accounted for decreased slightly on the previous year. In the first nine months of 2016, the number of Nigerian arrivals has already surpassed 2015, as has the percentage of the total number of arrivals represented by Nigerians.

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45 *Sources*: 2012–2014 figures sourced from Frontex; 2015–2016 figures sourced from migration.iom.int/Europe and IOM Italy.
46 *Sources*: 2012–2014 figures sourced from Frontex; 2015–2016 figures sourced from migration.iom.int/Europe and IOM Italy.

Figure 22 charts arrivals in Italy according to country of origin for the period 2012–July 2016. What can be seen from these graphs is that not only has the composition of migrants arriving in Italy shifted over the last four years, but the importance of Nigeria as a country of origin has also changed. Nigeria moved from the fifth most important country of origin in 2013 to the second most important in 2015. By August of 2016, Nigeria was the most important country of origin for sea arrivals in Italy. Nigeria is always represented in yellow in Figure 22.
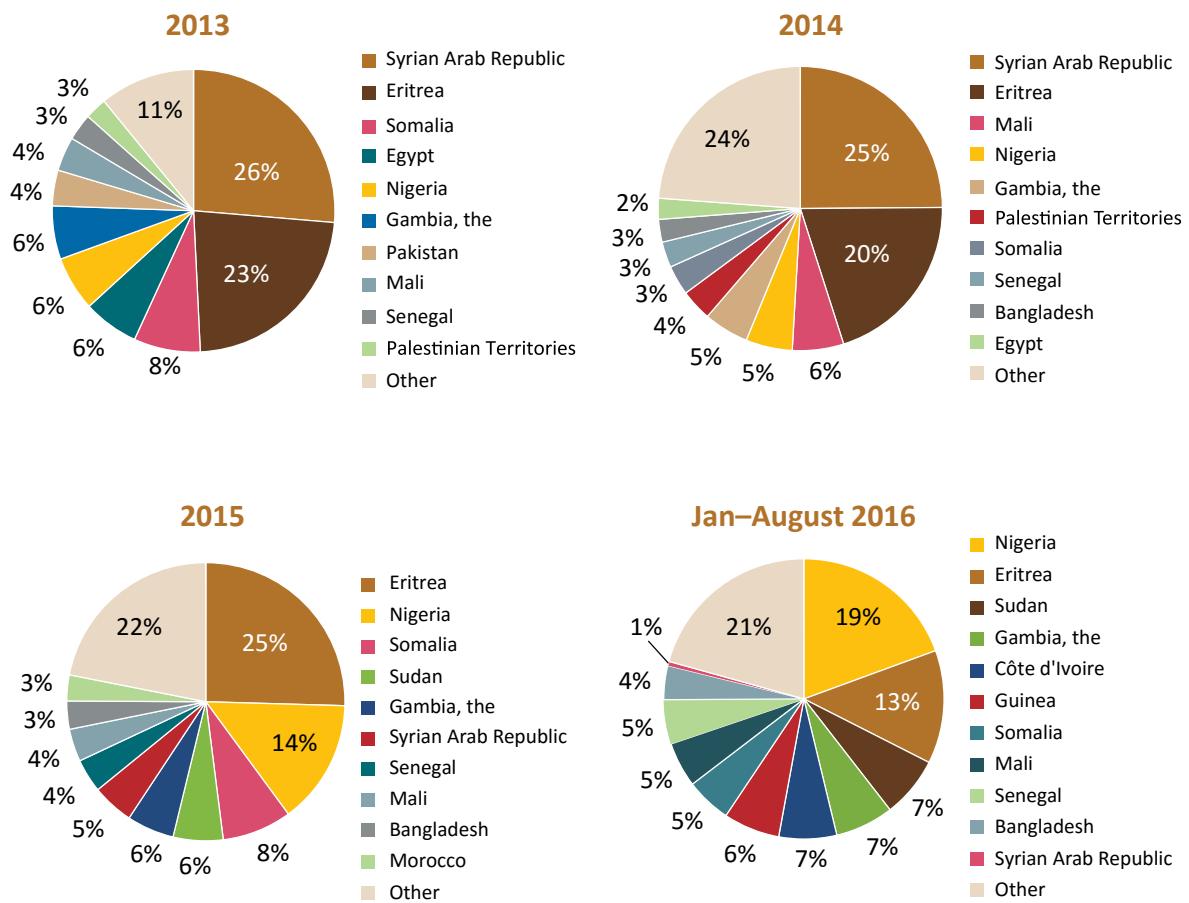

Figure 22: Arrivals in Italy by country of origin, 2013–August 2016[47]

1.   The risks related to migration to Europe

Nigerians migrating to Europe are exposed to risks throughout their journey, and these can be usefully grouped into four categories: risks encountered during the movement from origin to the Sahel (within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)); risks encountered during the movement from the Sahel to North Africa; risks encountered in North Africa; and risks encountered at destination. These four layers are presented in Figure 23.

While these risks are delineated according to the stage of the journey to better understand how migrants can be protected along the way and at which point on the journey they are most at risk, it should be noted that many of these risks are interrelated. Many of the risks re appear at different stages of the journey and they are not necessarily independent of one another.

47   *Source*: Italian Ministry of the Interior.

Destination
- Irregular status
- Lack of integration
- Debt to smugglers
- Mental health issues

Europe

North Africa
- Violent detention
- Extortion/ransom
- Bonded labour
- Sold into slavery

Libya

From Sahel to North Africa
- Extortion/ransom
- Death and dehydration in desert
- Trafficking and smuggling
- Theft by bandits

Niger

From Origin to Sahel
- Corruption
- Bribes
- Irregular movement
- Trafficking and smuggling

ECOWAS

Figure 23: The risks of migration from Nigeria to Europe

This section will explore these risks in greater detail. A number of maps have been produced to aid the understanding of the reader. All maps are based on primary data collected during the fieldwork phase of this project.

## 1.1   The main risks during the departure from Nigeria
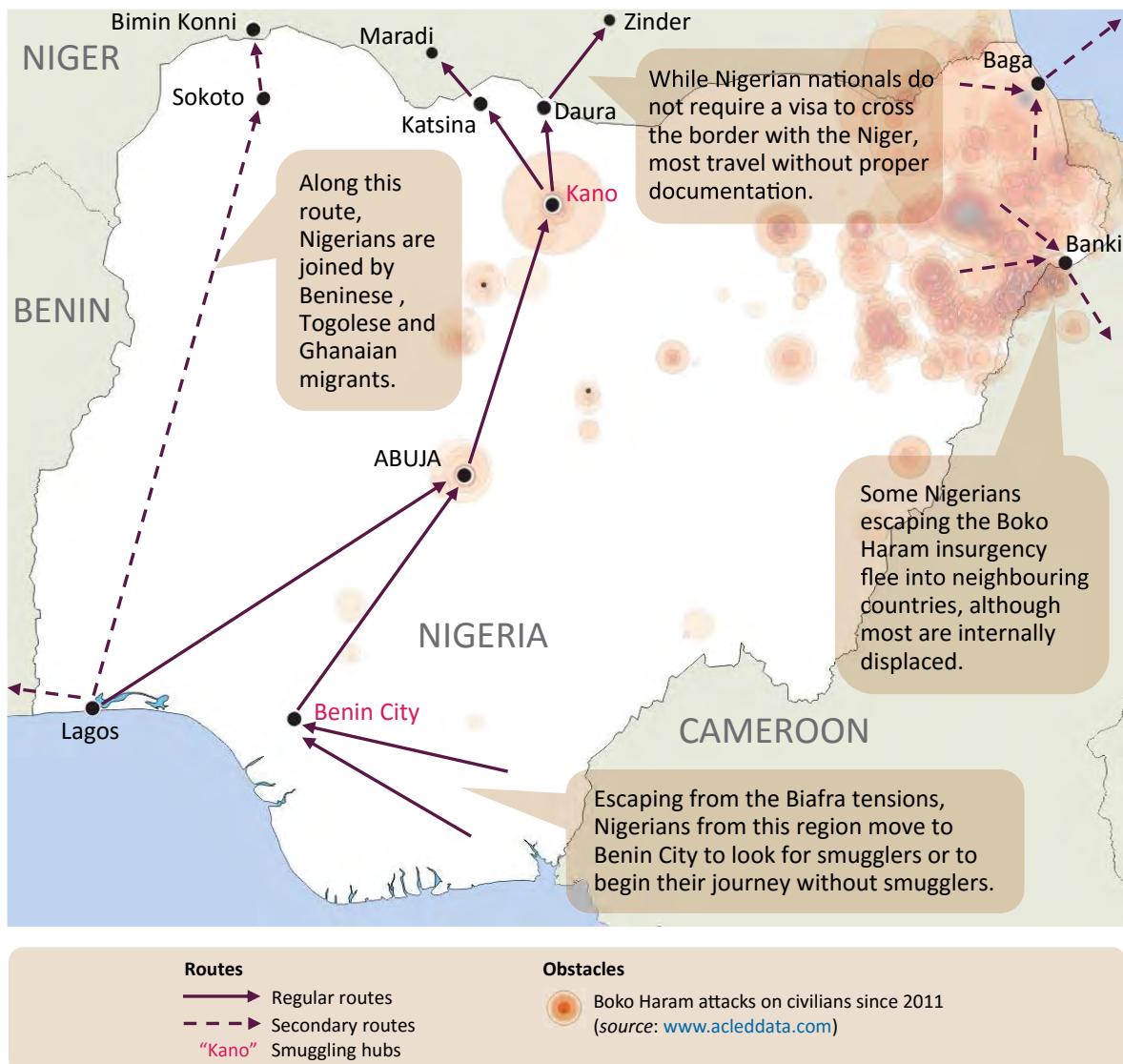
The exit from Nigeria is relatively straightforward and generally the least risky section of the journey. As Nigeria's western (Benin) and northern (the Niger) neighbours are ECOWAS Member States, movements across these borders can be made regularly and most Nigerians only connect with smugglers once they arrive in Niger and in Agadez specifically. However, not all Nigerians depart voluntarily (involuntary migrants include victims of trafficking, kidnapping and misinformation, as well as forced migrants) and involuntary migrants tend to be transported by a smuggler or trafficker.[48] There is also a small proportion of the voluntary migrants who move with smugglers, despite the free movement within ECOWAS, to avoid paying bribes and to be able to navigate border crossings more easily.

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48   See Focus box 4 for the definition of human trafficking.

At the time of fieldwork, the were four main routes for exiting Nigeria, as delineated in Map 7:

1.   Exiting via Nigeria's northern border into the Niger;
2.   From Lagos state, exiting via the south-western border into Benin;
3.   From Borno state, exiting via the north-eastern border into Cameroon and Chad;
4.   Flying out of Lagos or Abuja airports.

Map 7: Routes exiting Nigeria

The exit over the northern border with Niger is the most common exit point from Nigeria, with Nigerians from various parts of the country travelling north, via Kano, to exit over this border. There are a number of exit points across the Nigeria/Niger border, with the most frequently used indicated on Map 7. Migrants move to Kano with public buses, public vans or shared taxis, and then make their way to the border crossing. Those who cross this border in other locations, such as Sokoto, tend to move with private vehicles due to the unavailability of public transport. Internal travel within Nigeria poses minimal risks to those setting out on their migration journey. Migrants report systematically having to pay bribes when travelling over the border (despite the free movement protocols within ECOWAS), particularly if they do not carry identity documents.

As Lagos is the most populated city in Nigeria and a microcosm of the entire country, with every tribe being represented by a local community, **many Nigerians first migrate to Lagos to try their luck there before attempting an international migration.** There is a secondary route between Lagos and Benin, with migrants then moving north in Benin to the Niger. The movement of Nigerians over this border, and along this route, is limited however. The traffic is higher in the opposite direction; that is, Beninese migrants crossing into Nigeria and joining Nigerians who travel north to cross the Nigeria/Niger border into Niger. This is a long-established route because cross-border trade and movements (both formal and informal) have been ongoing for many years between Benin and Lagos. Migrants report minimal risk.

Lagos City, Nigeria. © IOM, 2016

The movement over the north-eastern border into Cameroon or Chad is minimal, and only followed by forced migrants who are escaping the Boko Haram insurgency. Even within that affected population, the movement over the border into Cameroon and Chad is minimal because the large majority of people are internally displaced and hosted by communities in nearby Nigerian states. As of August 2016, IOM DTM in Nigeria estimates that there are over 1.8 million internally displaced Nigerians who are dispersed primarily in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.[49] Care International estimates that 180,000 Nigerians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, with 114,000 in the Diffa Region of the Niger; 65,000 in northern Cameroon; and 7,000 in the Lake Chad basin region of Chad.[50]
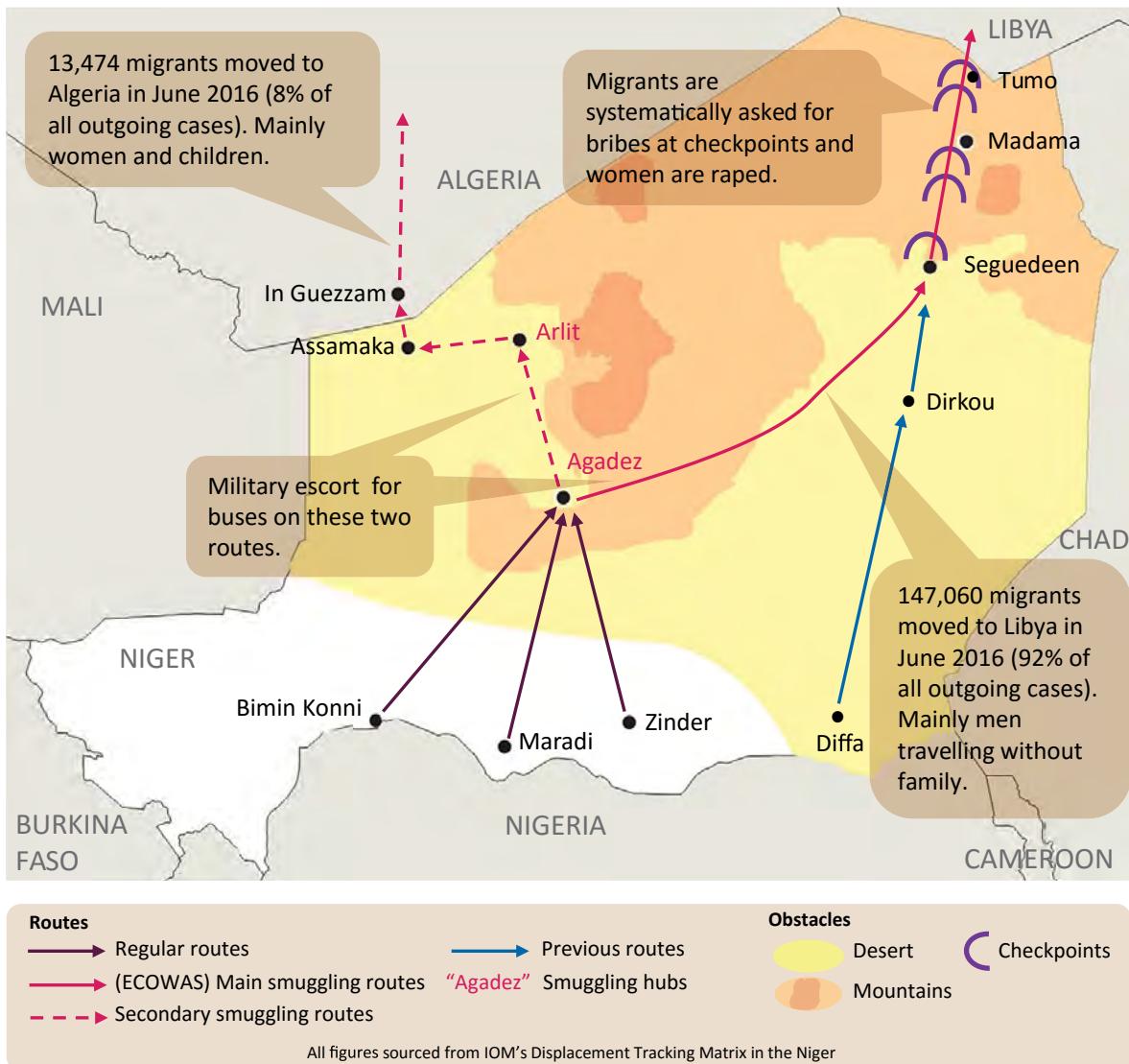
In addition to the Nigerians who fly to Europe regularly on educational, tourist or business visas, there is also a smaller number of Nigerians who travel by air with the use of forged documents.

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49 *Source*: https://nigeria.iom.int/sites/default/files/dtm/01%20DTM%20Nigeria%20Round%20XI%20Report%20August%202016.pdf.
50 *Source*: www.care-international.org/files/files/factsheets/CARE_Factsheet_West_Africa_Lowres(1).pdf (accessed 20 November 2016).

1.2   Main risks during the journey

Map 8: Routes from Niger to Libya

13,474 migrants moved to Algeria in June 2016 (8% of all outgoing cases). Mainly women and children.

Migrants are systematically asked for bribes at checkpoints and women are raped.

Military escort for buses on these two routes.

147,060 migrants moved to Libya in June 2016 (92% of all outgoing cases). Mainly men travelling without family.

Routes

→ Regular routes

→ (ECOWAS) Main smuggling routes

→ Secondary smuggling routes

→ Previous routes

"Agadez" Smuggling hubs

Obstacles

Desert

Mountains

Checkpoints

All figures sourced from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix in the Niger

The journey from Nigeria to Europe can be understood in terms of three stages.[51]

The first stage is the movement from origin to the Sahel, which occurs entirely within the ECOWAS region. This is usually the least dangerous part of the journey with the biggest risks being related to corruption and the payment of bribes at the border (see Map 7). While this is where many victims of trafficking first become entrapped by their traffickers, the abuse and exploitation that they experience usually occurs later in the journey.

The next stage relates to the movement from the Sahel to North Africa, which usually entails the first encounter with smugglers, a hazardous journey through the desert, the risk of kidnapping, and theft by bandits. This journey is depicted in Map 8.

The next stage is the time spent in North Africa (now mainly Libya, but previously Morocco and Algeria), which entails the greatest risks migrants face on this journey. This includes violent detention, being held hostage for ransom payments, bonded labour, and in some cases being sold into situations of slavery.

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51   As mentioned previously, these risks are not always independent of one another. Some of them repeat at different stages of the journey and some of them carry through the entire journey.

Nigerian woman in a market in Lagos, Nigeria. © IOM, 2016

1.2.1 Irregular movements within ECOWAS

Although ECOWAS is an area of free movement, the majority of border crossings are made irregularly. This is either because migrants do not carry the documents required of them or because they do not cross at official border posts. The ECOWAS Treaty allows nationals of any of the 15 ECOWAS Member States to enter any of the other Member States without a visa and for a period of up to 90 days, if they are in possession of valid travel documents and an international health certificate.[52] Most migrants do not realize that they are required to carry these documents and many of them would not know how to obtain such documents even if they wanted to. In any case, most migrants report being able to pass with the provision of a bribe at the border even without the documents. In fact, even migrants who have passports report paying bribes to border officials. Some migrants choose to cross at non-official border crossings to avoid paying such bribes. Others make unofficial crossings because it is more convenient geographically. Naturally, the lack of documents creates greater vulnerability for migrants, as does the corruption at borders that pushes them to cross at unofficial points.

Another consequence of migrants paying bribes at border crossings is that some of them spend more money than they originally anticipated, and arrive in Niger without enough money for the next leg of the journey, which leads to Libya. When migrants arrive in Niger without enough money (or no money), it makes them particularly vulnerable to traffickers and smugglers who may offer to transport the migrant for free and then expect the migrant to repay the debt at destination. Repaying the debt at destination typically results in a situation of bonded labour, usually in Libya.

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52   A. Malakooti, 2015, *Irregular Migration Between West Africa, North Africa and the Mediterranean* (Annex 3: Bibliography), p. 55.

1.2.2 Trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation

The trafficking of Nigerian women for the purposes of sexual exploitation is a well-known and documented phenomenon, and most women in this predicament have a similar profile.[53] According to IOM Italy, girls being trafficked within the sex trade increasingly originate from the poorest areas of Nigeria, predominantly the villages neighbouring Benin City, and belong to particularly disadvantaged families. They are often orphans or have been raised by relatives far away from their families. Alternatively, they might be the oldest child of a household, which in Nigerian custom means that they are expected to provide for their parents and younger siblings.[54]

The general trend is that the rates of women trafficked for sexual exploitation, from Nigeria in particular, is increasing. There are also indications that the networks are expanding across Europe. IOM Italy has observed that more and more Nigerian women suspected of being trafficked for sexual exploitation talk of needing to move to other European countries to join "family" (which was not the case previously). IOM Italy also reports an increase in the brutality of the traffickers, and their means of control and coercion, together with an escalation of violence and abuses in recent years.[55]

In addition to the women who have been trafficked from origin, there are also profiles of Nigerian women who leave their country voluntarily but become trafficked along the way. For example, some women arrive in Agadez having run out of money, and smugglers direct them to Arlit (see Map 8), where there are large prostitution rings, to work in prostitution and make money, or traffic them to Europe. The IOM DTM in Niger found that most of the migrants moving along the route from Agadez to Arlit are women and children, and also indicates that reports about the trafficking of women and children continue to emerge from their focal points.[56] IOM Italy has found that a woman's length of stay in a country can be used as a trafficking indicator: the longer the stay, the higher the chances of abuse.[57]

1.2.3 Victims of trafficking, kidnapping, or misinformation

In addition to women who are trafficked for sexual exploitation, there is a stark prevalence of migrants who report being fooled into travelling to Libya. These cases follow the same basic scenario: the migrant never intended to leave Nigeria but was experiencing problems at home (whether financial, linked to personal feuds, or linked to personal security and safety). Someone (who is most likely a trafficker) appears and suggests the idea of going to Libya as a solution to the problems the migrant is facing. When the migrant indicates that she/he doesn't have the money to journey to Libya, the trafficker offers to take the migrant for free. The trafficker says that a brother or friend, or some other family member of his in Libya, will pay for and greet the migrant when she/he arrives. The migrant comes to believe that the trafficker is a nice person who has the migrant's best interests at heart and agrees to the journey. For example, a 24-year-old Nigerian man interviewed in Italy explained: "I met a guy called Steven[58] who told me 'you are too big for this job, can't you travel to a better place where you can have peace?'; he said, 'Why don't you go to Europe?'. I didn't

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53 Since 2006, IOM Italy collaborates with the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior and the Italian border police to identify victims of human trafficking arriving by sea. In recent years, IOM has strengthened its efforts by signing ad hoc protocols with the Public Prosecutor's Offices of Palermo and Reggio Calabria. IOM has also established close collaboration with investigating authorities, the national anti-trafficking system and its communities, and the social services centres mainly affected by the phenomenon of maritime migration. See latest report: Report on victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows arriving in Italy by sea: April 2014–October 2015, IOM, Rome, 2015.

54 Report on victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows arriving in Italy by sea: April 2014–October 2015, IOM, Rome, 2015.

55 Ibid.

56 Displacement Tracking Matrix Niger Flow Monitoring Information Sheets (February–June 2016), available from www.globaldtm.info/dtm-niger-flow-monitoring-information-sheets-february-june-2016/ (accessed 22 November 2016).

57 Report on victims of trafficking in mixed migration flows arriving in Italy by sea: April 2014–October 2015, IOM, Rome, 2015.

58 Name changed for confidentiality.

know that it was possible to go to Europe by land; he convinced me over four days by showing me the map. He said, 'If you don't want to go to Europe, you can go to Libya, it is also a good place'. I had seen Libya on a map but I didn't know it. He said, 'My brother can help you go there and you can pay him when you arrive'. I trusted him; he seemed truthful". In most such situations, the migrant reports that the journey to Libya was quite comfortable and it is only on arrival in Libya that the migrant starts to realize that she/he may have been tricked.

It is suspected that Nigerian traffickers recruit Nigerian victims in Nigeria and then sell them to Libyan traffickers in Libya. For example, a 21-year-old Nigerian man interviewed in Italy explains: "When we got to Sabha, they sold me. At this point, the friend that took me there was still with me. I saw him talking to a Libyan man who had a beard. The Libyan man gave my friend some money. Now I know that it was the money he sold me with". The phenomenon also appears to be increasing; the impression is that as Libya has descended into further instability following the 2014 political crisis, traffickers see an opportunity to make more money.[59]

Focus box 4: Human Trafficking at Law

Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, defines trafficking in Persons as 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. Exploitation shall 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.

1.2.4 Main risks in Libya

The risks for migrants in Libya, particularly after the 2014 political crisis, which deepened the instability and worsened the situation for migrants, are well documented[60] and include arbitrary arrest and detention, harassment, bonded labour and labour exploitation. Periodic roundups and arbitrary detention are also rife with sub-Saharan Africans being the most vulnerable in such situations, and Nigerians being the most prominent sub-Saharan Africans in the country (according to IOM DTM in Libya, Nigerians constitute one of the top three nationalities of migrants observed in Libya currently).[61] Detention centres in the country are run by both State and non-State actors and armed groups. While in 2014 it was generally understood that militia groups in Libya maintained detention centres to create a market for their smuggling services,[62] the impression is that such centres are now hotspots for the trafficking of migrants.

The experience of a migrant in Libya can be generally classified according to three main stages, which are described below. This analysis deals mainly with the risks posed to men, as the specific risks for women are described in subsection 0. Some of these risks are described in the visual case study presented on Map 9.

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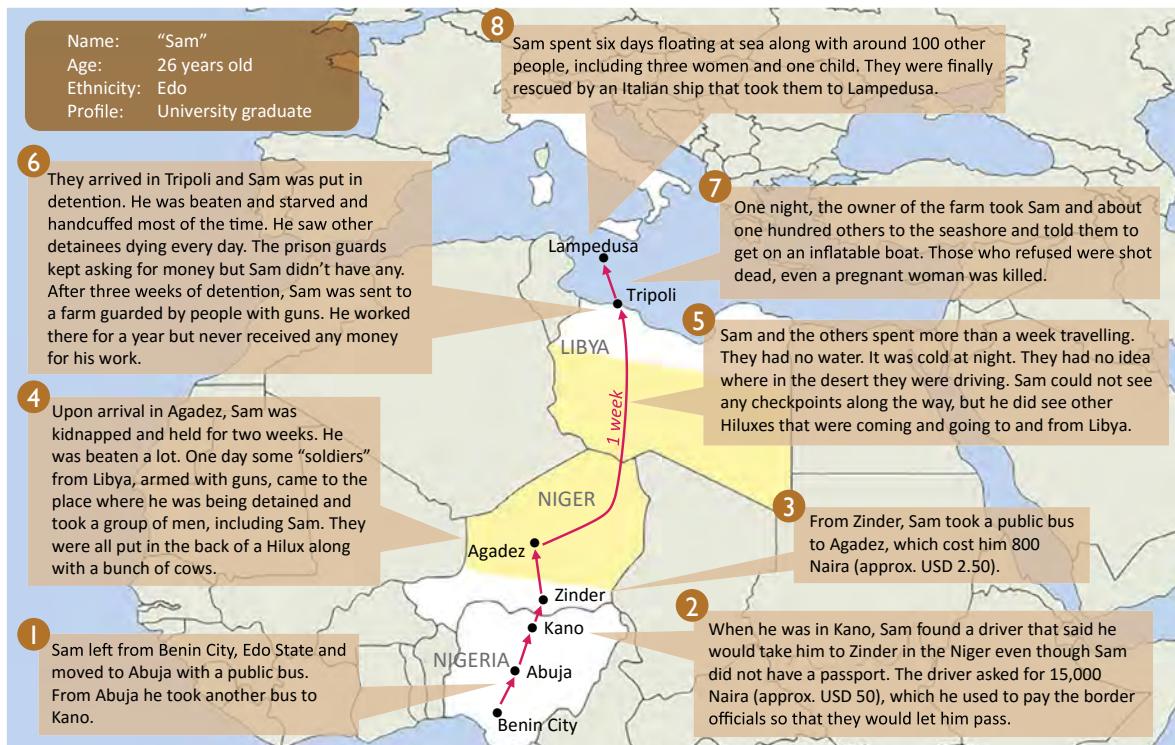
59 For more analysis on the links between increased trafficking and the instability in Libya, see A. Malakooti, 2015, *Migration Trends across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots* (Annex 3: Bibliography), p. 72.
60 For other works relating to this topic, see Annex 3: Bibliography, A. Malakooti, 2013–2015 (four publications).
61 International Organization for Migration DTM Libya Flow Monitoring Report 1 – August 2016, accessible from https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0Bz9sUHOxDRMOMG1hWG91dTZYb3M (accessed 22 November 2016).
62 See A. Malakooti, 2015, *Migration Trends across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots* (Annex 3: Bibliography), p. 59.

Map 9: Visual case study, journey from Nigeria to Europe

Name: "Sam"
Age: 26 years old
Ethnicity: Edo
Profile: University graduate

8 Sam spent six days floating at sea along with around 100 other people, including three women and one child. They were finally rescued by an Italian ship that took them to Lampedusa.

6 They arrived in Tripoli and Sam was put in detention. He was beaten and starved and handcuffed most of the time. He saw other detainees dying every day. The prison guards kept asking for money but Sam didn't have any. After three weeks of detention, Sam was sent to a farm guarded by people with guns. He worked there for a year but never received any money for his work.

7 One night, the owner of the farm took Sam and about one hundred others to the seashore and told them to get on an inflatable boat. Those who refused were shot dead, even a pregnant woman was killed.

5 Sam and the others spent more than a week travelling. They had no water. It was cold at night. They had no idea where in the desert they were driving. Sam could not see any checkpoints along the way, but he did see other Hiluxes that were coming and going to and from Libya.

4 Upon arrival in Agadez, Sam was kidnapped and held for two weeks. He was beaten a lot. One day some "soldiers" from Libya, armed with guns, came to the place where he was being detained and took a group of men, including Sam. They were all put in the back of a Hilux along with a bunch of cows.

3 From Zinder, Sam took a public bus to Agadez, which cost him 800 Naira (approx. USD 2.50).

1 Sam left from Benin City, Edo State and moved to Abuja with a public bus. From Abuja he took another bus to Kano.

2 When he was in Kano, Sam found a driver that said he would take him to Zinder in the Niger even though Sam did not have a passport. The driver asked for 15,000 Naira (approx. USD 50), which he used to pay the border officials so that they would let him pass.

Lampedusa · Tripoli · LIBYA · 1 week · NIGER · Agadez · Zinder · Kano · NIGERIA · Abuja · Benin City

Whether sold to Libyans on arrival or kidnapped along the way, once they arrive in Libya, migrants are generally held hostage and asked to pay a ransom to be released. This constitutes the first phase. In such situations, most migrants have nobody to call except the smuggler. The smuggler can then act as the intermediary between the migrant and his/her family or friends at origin for the transfer of the ransom payment. Some migrants reported that when their contacts at origin transferred payment for their release, they were instructed to send the money to a third African nation (such as Ghana), suggesting that the networks may be transnational.

Migrants report being stripped of clothing in detention centres in Libya, starved, and packed into spaces so small that they could not even lie down to sleep. Most migrants report seeing at least one person die per day, and explain that anyone who speaks back to the guards or refuses to do as they are told, is shot on the spot in front of everybody. Some migrants also reported that they were not only imprisoned alongside other sub-Saharan Africans but also Arabs, such as Egyptians and Tunisians. This is surprising given that Arab migrants in Libya generally benefit from a better situation than sub-Saharan Africans.

If a migrant is unable to pay for her or his release, at some point she/he will be taken from the detention centre and put to work. This constitutes the second phase. Migrants will be typically put to work on farms or in car washes, and migrants speak of farms that are heavily guarded by armed personnel. Sometimes the migrants are sent to live on a farm or in a car wash that they work in, and sometimes they are taken out to work during the day and returned to the detention centre in the evening. These are classic cases of bonded labour. A 22-year-old Nigerian man interviewed in Italy stated: "I travelled from Agadez with a group of 26 in a Hilux. I paid USD 1,200 and because I paid in cash, they thought I was rich, so they kidnapped me in Sebha and held me hostage for a month. Eventually when they realized that there was nobody to pay my ransom, they put me to work in a car wash for 3 months and then I was free to go". A second modality involves a Libyan who requires labourers coming to the centre and taking some young men with him after paying the prison guards for the migrants (migrants are thus sold a second time into slavery).

The third phase is where, after working for some time in a situation of slavery, the migrant is taken to the port and put on a boat to Europe. Migrants report stories of their bosses (whom they refer to as "*modir*", which is the Arabic term for master) one night putting them all into a truck and driving them to the port so they could board a boat to Europe, even though none of them had asked to be taken to Europe, and when none of them had paid for the journey.

Migrants who manage to pay the ransom payment and are released are often detained again, given that both State and non-State actors in Libya are systematically rounding up any migrants found in the streets and detaining them. Once detained a second time, they move through the entire process again. In rare instances, migrants manage to escape their captors, whether in detention or in bonded labour. Some return to Agadez, from where they begin the journey home (either alone or through return assistance) and many board boats to Europe. Some even report that they did not pay for the boat, they just begged the smuggler to let them on.

Nigerian women wait for the bus in Lagos, Nigeria. © IOM, 2016

1.2.1 Extortion

In addition to extortion in Libya (where migrants are systematically detained and asked for ransom payments) Nigerian migrants are also extorted for other payments along the way:

- Nigerian migrants report being robbed by bandits in the desert, the incidences of which have increased over the last five years. Migrants report that the bandits are Libyan, Chadian and Nigerien.
- Cases of kidnapping also occur prior to Libya, mainly in Agadez. Migrants report that even when kidnapped in Agadez, it is usually by Libyans.
- Sometimes smugglers will ask migrants for more money in the middle of the journey and threaten to dump the migrant if she/he does not pay. In this way, Nigerian migrants sometimes become stranded in the desert.

In an attempt to address their vulnerability, some migrants leave home with just enough money to reach North Africa so that they cannot be robbed. Then, once they are in Libya or Algeria, they stop to work or they ask family and friends back home to send them money for the next leg. While this tactic may make them less vulnerable to thieves, it renders the migrants vulnerable to smugglers and traffickers in North Africa.

1.2.2 Other risks for women

IOM Italy estimates that 80 per cent of Nigerian women who travel to Europe arrive in a context of trafficking. Albeit in small numbers, there are cases of Nigerian women who travel to Europe voluntarily and not in a situation of exploitation, whether alone or with husbands. However, even these women are vulnerable to traffickers, and to rape and abuse.

The rape of Nigerian (as well as other sub-Saharan African) women is rampant at border crossings, at checkpoints and by smugglers. Migrants report that when groups of migrants are being led through checkpoints, the whole group is asked for money, and if they cannot pay, then the women are raped. Some women can be raped systematically all the way between Nigeria and Libya, many of them falling pregnant as a result. Migrants have also reported that the smugglers will often take a woman into the front of the truck with them while transporting groups of migrants. Women who travel with their husbands are not excluded from such practices; it is common for the women and men to be separated both on the way and once they arrive in Libya, rendering even married women vulnerable.

Some Nigerian women also enter prostitution on the way, either voluntarily or involuntarily, when they run out of money. For example, if a woman has run out of money by the time she arrives in Niger and does not have enough money to pay for the journey to Libya, the smuggler may send her to Arlit to work in prostitution as an income-generating activity. There are also reports of women being sold into prostitution in the ghettos in Agadez.

One major challenge for women is that they are perceived to be prostitutes by other migrants even when they are not, or they are perceived to know what they are doing (and to be doing so gladly). This is particularly so for lone female travellers. The result of this is that women become afraid to turn to other migrants when they run into difficulties and migrants are less likely to move to their aid, thereby diminishing the support networks for women in a context where service providers are absent. One 23-year-old Nigerian woman interviewed in Italy stated: "In Libya, the hooligans of the neighbourhood raped me, robbed me and beat me. I didn't tell anybody because people talk so much, they don't believe, and your name only becomes tarnished".

1.2.3 Death at sea

In 2016, up to 24 November, 344,944 arrivals were recorded by sea to Europe and 4,663 are assumed to be dead or missing. Of those dead or missing, the vast majority (4,172) were recorded in the Central Mediterranean.[63] Not only is the number of deaths recorded in the Central Mediterranean in 2016 high, it is also higher than the number recorded during the same period in 2015. The Libyan coast guard also reported that by 3 November 2016, the number of bodies retrieved and rescued off the coast of Libya totalled 14,945.[64] This poses a significant risk for Nigerians, who are currently the most prominent nationality of sea arrivals in Italy (see Figure 24).

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63 International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project, see http://missingmigrants.iom.int (accessed 24 November 2016).

64 International Organization for Migration Libya, Maritime Incidents Libyan Coast Update, 21 October–3 November 2016, available from www.iom.int/countries/libya (accessed 23 November 2016).
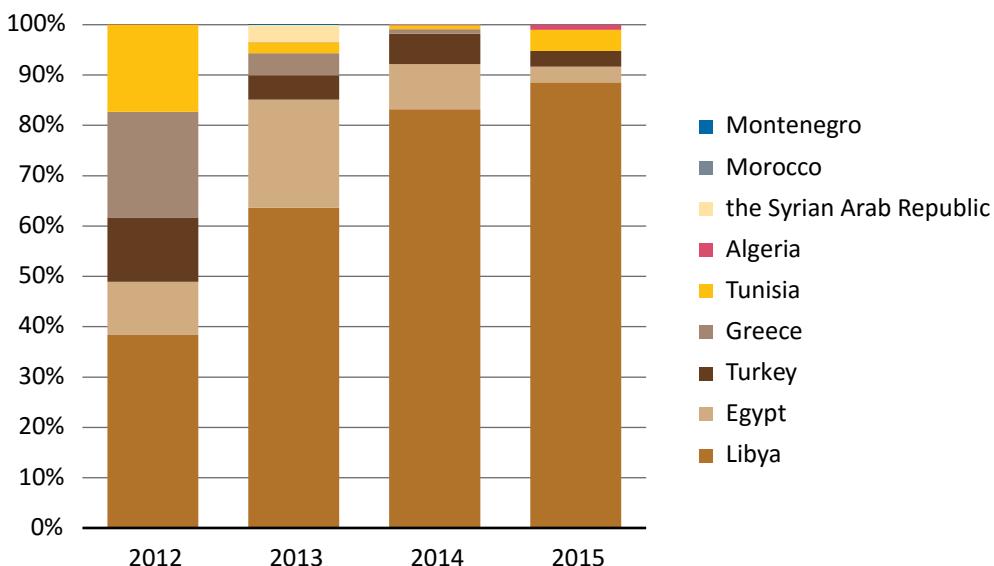
Figure 24: Sea arrivals in Italy according to country of departure, as a proportion of the total[65]

Libya remains the most prominent departure point for boat journeys across the Central Mediterranean. Figure 24 charts sea arrivals in Italy, according to country of departure, and as a proportion of the total number of arrivals. It demonstrates that a greater share of sea arrivals in Italy departed from Libya between 2012 and 2015, with departures from that country accounting for 38 per cent of arrivals in 2012 and 89 per cent of arrivals in 2015. In 2016, the share of sea arrivals in Italy that departed from Libya increased again, reaching 93 per cent.[66]

Departures from Egypt also increased in 2016, although Egypt's share of the total number of arrivals decreased. Departures from Egypt are mainly comprised of migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa who began to reroute through Egypt in response to the worsening of conditions in Libya. Increased departures from Egypt can also be explained by the increase in Egyptians travelling to Italy by sea. According to Frontex, more than one third of the migrants who departed Egypt in the second quarter of 2016 were Egyptian nationals.[67] Migrants that depart from Libya tend to be mainly West Africans, and one in every five who departed from that country in the second quarter of 2016 were Nigerian.[68]

1.2.4 Death in the desert

Death, dehydration and other illnesses are also common during desert crossings. While it is currently not possible to quantify death and illness in the desert, it is believed that the number of fatalities could be higher than those at sea. Some of the main reasons include:

- Smugglers ask migrants for more money halfway through the journey and abandon those that do not pay;
- Smugglers abandon migrants who become ill in the desert to try to stop the sickness spreading;
- As the trucks are generally overfilled with migrants and the smugglers drive fast across the harsh terrain, sometimes migrants fall off the truck. When this happens, smugglers leave them there;

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65 *Source*: Italian Ministry of the Interior.
66 Frontex FRAN reports indicate that in the first quarter of 2016, 94 per cent of arrivals in Italy departed from Libya, and 92 per cent in the second quarter.
67 Frontex, FRAN Quarterly, Quarter 2, April–June 2016, p. 9.
68 Ibid.

- Smugglers sometimes tell migrants to get out of the truck and walk to Libya, pointing to some lights in the distance and telling them that the lights are from the nearest Libyan city. They are told that Libya is just 20 minutes away when in fact they are days from Libya. In such scenarios, migrants typically perish in the desert.

Death in Libya also appears as a major risk, with migrants reporting that when in detention, if a migrant does not follow instructions or asks questions, the migrant is shot and killed on the spot, in front of everyone else. Migrants also report that it is common for at least one person to die per day from starvation or ill treatment when in detention. Naturally, these deaths are impossible to quantify.

Mother and child in Lagos, Nigeria. © IOM, 2016

1.3   Smuggling

The majority of migrants connect with smugglers for the first time in Niger and in Agadez specifically, as it is from Agadez that they begin their journey through the Sahara and to the Libyan border. As explained previously, movements prior to Agadez can be made regularly because of the free movement protocol of the ECOWAS region. A small proportion of migrants start the journey from Nigeria with smugglers, and these are typically migrants who have been fooled or who are victims of trafficking (in which case they are moving with traffickers). There are also some who may decide to begin the journey from Nigeria with a smuggler to avoid being harassed or paying bribes at the border on exit. Some also connect with smugglers in Niamey.

It is not difficult to connect with smugglers in Niger and it is not necessary to make the connection in advance. Brokers who work for the smugglers wait at bus stations in Niamey and Agadez and offer smuggling services to migrants as they disembark from the buses from Nigeria (and other West African countries). Migrants typically connect with one of these brokers as soon as they get off the bus and are then taken directly to one of many holding locations in Agadez, which are referred to as ghettos.

There are two types of smugglers in Agadez: the *chef de ghetto*, a type of smuggler who creates the market for smuggling services, and the *coxeur*, who physically moves the migrants. The ghetto, which is a holding location, is basically a house that the *chef de ghetto* has hired for the purpose of gathering migrants. Then a *coxeur* is invited to come and advertise his smuggling services to the migrants present. The *chef de ghetto* receives a fee for every migrant that the *coxeur* connects with in his ghetto. The *coxeur* typically moves the migrant to the Libyan border where they are exchanged with Libyan smugglers. If the *coxeur* has more migrants interested in moving with him than he can manage, he may hand some of the migrants back to a *chef de ghetto*. These dynamics are visually depicted in Figure 25. As the diagram demonstrates, the *coxeur* also connects with migrants directly or through brokers. The brokers are typically migrants themselves who are working for the *coxeur*. They usually come from the same country of origin as the migrants.

The trucks towards Libya and Algeria depart on Mondays, as this is when military escorts monitor the roads. Some trucks depart on other days, but this is not common and entails a riskier journey because of the lack of an escort. If migrants arrive on a day other than Monday, they wait in the ghetto until it is time to move.

Nigerian man in an accommodation centre in Italy. © IOM, 2016

The practical effect of migrants immediately connecting with smugglers when they arrive in Niger is that they remain in the hands of smugglers for their entire time in Agadez and have no freedom of movement. Smugglers will even take them to the bank or other money transfer operators, if they need to make a trip. Thus, it is very difficult for service providers to reach migrants and impossible for migrants to reach out to service providers if they have any needs (such as medical issues). This is, of course, compounded by the fact that migrants do not wish to seek out service providers or anyone who could potentially prevent them from moving onwards towards Libya. Their prime objective is to keep moving.

This trend of migrants relying completely on smugglers, even for their non-smuggling-related needs, then continues in Libya. That is, in the current context of Libya, where service providers are absent for the most part and those that are on the ground have great difficulty accessing migrant communities, migrants generally have no one to turn to but the smugglers. For example, migrants report that when they are detained in Libya, the only person that they can call to help them is the smuggler. The smuggler then typically acts as an intermediary between the migrant and her/his family at origin who will hopefully send the ransom payment. While migrants tend to view the smuggler as someone who is ruthless and not to be trusted, they still turn to him in moments of crisis because of their lack of any other option.
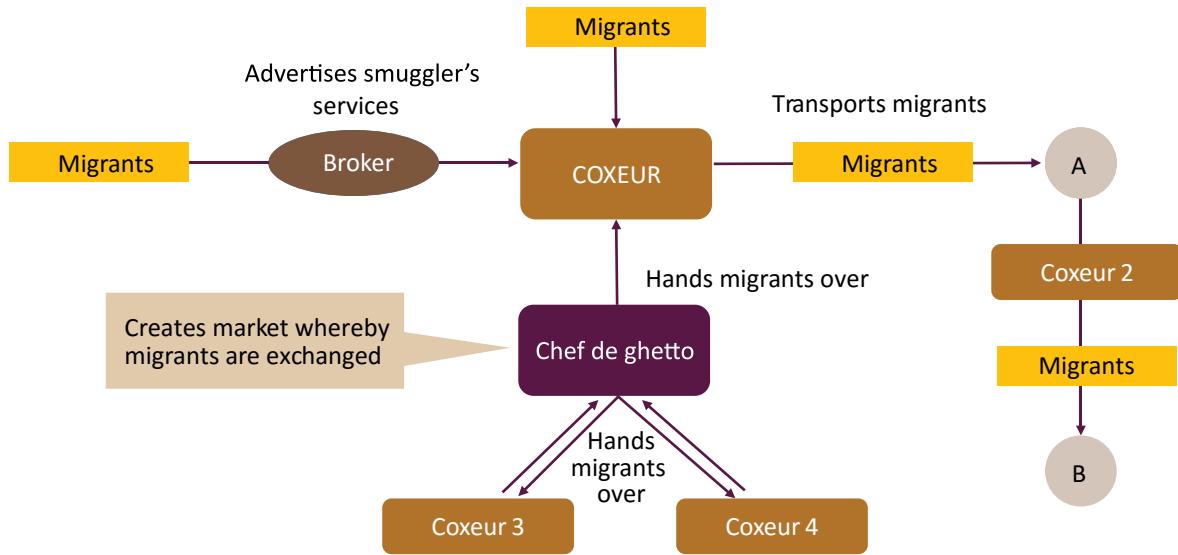
Figure 25: Smuggling Dynamics in Niger

1.4   Main risks at destination

1.4.1 Uncertainty

For most Nigerians, the journey to Europe is harrowing and even traumatizing. By the time Nigerian migrants arrive in Europe they have most likely experienced violence, abuse and torture in Libyan detention centres; experienced life-threatening journeys through the desert and across the Mediterranean; witnessed the death of other migrants in the desert, at sea and in detention centres; been sold into slavery in Libya (sometimes multiple times) and lived in a constant state of fear in Libya. Moreover, these are the basic risks that all migrants find themselves exposed to. In addition to this, there are those that are victims of trafficking, kidnapping or misinformation who may experience even greater risks.

Nigerians create their own church in an accommodation centre in Italy. © IOM, 2016

For those that manage to arrive in Europe, it is almost a miracle that they are still alive. Most feel comforted by the fact that the horror has ended, that they have arrived in a country that respects human rights, and that they can finally start to rebuild their lives. However, the reality is not quite what they imagined. Many were not aware that there were "rules" that governed their right to be in Italy, to work and to be protected. Just as one could exist, travel about, work, sell things, and the like, in Nigeria and the ECOWAS area without being governed by a large number of rules and regulations, the expectation was that one would be able to do the same in Europe but with a much higher return for one's efforts.

Many spend a large amount of time in temporary accommodation centres waiting for their status to be determined, with basic needs met, but with little opportunity for income generation and without the feeling that their lives are moving forward. While this constitutes a rude awakening for many, as it does for the Iraqis in Germany who did not expect to have to wait so long for status to be determined, the bigger challenge for Nigerians is their much lower recognition rate that means many of them will not actually receive a favourable decision on their application.

1.4.2 Mental health issues

One of the greatest challenges for Nigerians on arrival into Europe is being able to move on from the trauma of the journey, look forward, and rebuild their lives despite the horrors experienced. For many, the coping mechanism that was the anticipation of the opportunities that awaited them in Europe, was destroyed by the realization that regular status is harder to obtain than imagined and that jobs are very difficult to find. Moving forward without this once source of strength compounds the challenge. In any case, without support to address the psychological consequences of the traumatic journey, mental health issues have the potential to jeopardize the migrant's ability to integrate effectively at destination.

Not processing the psychological consequences of the journey also has the potential to make the migrant vulnerable to abusive and exploitative practices at destination. That is, migrants have been through situations of modern slavery in Libya, where they have been treated as second-class citizens. When desperate for a way to earn a livelihood at destination, they may not be in the best position to judge when what is being offered is unfit for their dignity or exploitative.

1.4.3 Abuse and exploitation within migrant communities

While community-based protection and support networks can play a vital role in the lives of migrants and fill a void created by the absence of aid organizations in countries like Libya, it is important to acknowledge that migrant communities are not always safe. Abuse and exploitation can and do occur within migrant communities. For example, some Nigerian women interviewed expressed a distrust for other Nigerian women (because they did not want to become involved in prostitution) and did not feel safe in such communities. There was also a perception among Nigerians that all lone female travellers must be intending to enter prostitution, even if that was not necessarily the case, making it difficult for Nigerian women to feel supported by other community members. There are also examples of Nigerians being involved in the exploitation of other Nigerians. For example, as explained in the previous section, there are increasing cases of Nigerians being fooled into travelling to Libya by a fellow national who will then sell the migrant to a Libyan trafficker.

Nigerian man seeking asylum in Italy. © IOM, 2016

1.4.2 Debt to smugglers

One immediate challenge for migrants is that their debt to the smuggler is owed right away. Some migrants have been given a "loan" by the smuggler in order to arrive in Europe on the assumption that they will repay the debt on arrival. Not being able to find a job is not an acceptable excuse. While this can be the cause of great distress for the migrant, it can also place family at origin at

risk. One 21-year-old Nigerian man explained: "Finding a job is my main issue now. The smugglers in Nigeria have been pressuring my mother about the debt. If I don't find a way to pay, she will be at risk".

Another consequence of not being able to repay the debt owed to smugglers is that migrants can find themselves in situations of exploitation even at destination. That is, the risks of the journey can repeat for migrants at destination. Some may even be pushed into illicit activities by the smuggler, or turn to such activity themselves in their desperation and inability to find a legitimate income-generating activity. For women, this can mean having to prostitute oneself for the repayment of debt. Some migrants had the perception that women were engaged in prostitution even inside migrant accommodation centres in order to repay their debt.

Nigerian men praying in an accommodation centre in Italy. © IOM, 2016

1.4.3 Secondary movements within the European Union

The challenges associated with lack of employment, and debt owed to smugglers and contacts back at origin, pushes some Nigerian migrants to attempt secondary movements within the European Union. It should be noted that for some victims of trafficking, this secondary movement is organized for them in advance.

According to Frontex, in 2016 the most common secondary movements undertaken by irregular sub-Saharan African migrants from Italy were to Germany, via Switzerland and Austria. The numbers of such migrants entering Germany from Austria decreased slightly between the first and second quarter of 2016 in favour of a four-fold increase through the Swiss/German border.[69]

Frontex also reports an increase in migrants arriving irregularly in France on secondary migration routes from Italy in 2016 and a corresponding increase in smuggling activity. Ever since the French

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69   Ibid., p. 16.

authorities resumed systematic control at their national border with Italy on 15 May 2016, several facilitators have been arrested and convicted for migrant smuggling. Smuggling journeys over that border are typically priced at EUR 150.[70]

Such secondary movements expose migrants to the risks of smuggling a second time, potentially push them further into debt to smugglers and/or family and contacts at origin, and push them deeper underground where, in an attempt to avoid detection by authorities, they become even more invisible and estranged from service providers that could assist them.

2.   The risks related to return

When analysing return dynamics for Nigerians, the analysis is classified according to the return home from Libya and the return home from Europe. This is mainly because even those that intend to travel to Europe sometimes finish by abandoning the journey and returning from Libya.

2.1   General patterns of return

Figure 26 charts the total number of Nigerian migrants who received return and reintegration assistance from IOM between 2012 and 2015 globally. While these figures represent some fraction of the Nigerians returning home, there are also returnees that return according to their own means, the total number of which is unknown. There are also forced returns that are implemented by European Union Member States. Frontex reports that the number of people effectively removed from the European Union between May 2015 and July 2016 amounted to 15,000 individuals per month,[71] with 1,000 Nigerians having been forcibly returned from Europe in the second quarter of 2016.[72]

Figure 26: AVR to Nigeria (Lagos and Abuja), 2012–2015[73]

Figure 27 charts the total number of Nigerians who were beneficiaries of IOM's AVR programme in 2015 according to host country. It demonstrates that the largest number of AVR cases were from Tunisia (172), followed by the Russian Federation and then Morocco (115) and Germany (40). Almost all of the top ten countries were located in North Africa or Europe.

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70   Ibid., p. 17.
71   Ibid., p. 15.
72   Ibid.
73   *Data source*: IOM Department of Migrant Management – Migrant Assistance Division.
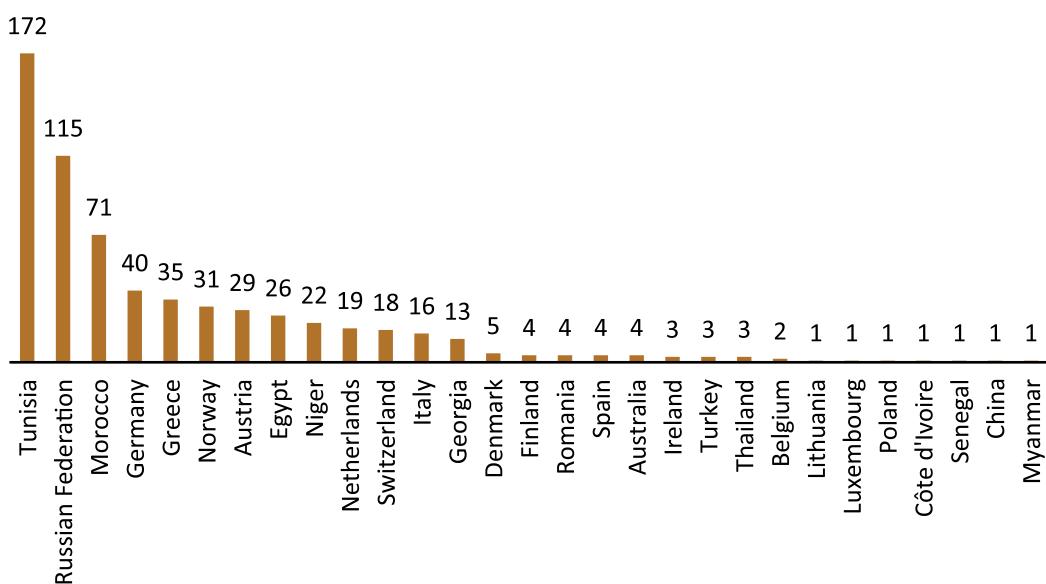
Figure 27: Total AVR to Nigeria in 2015 according to host country[74]

It should be noted that this section deals only with the dynamics of return for migrants who chose to return voluntarily, whether with or without IOM assistance.

2.2 Return from Libya

2.2.1 Drivers and modalities of return

When migrants escape detention in Libya, their primary focus is on leaving the country and escaping the grave risks that are present there, particularly of being detained again. Some move home and some move to Europe across the Mediterranean. Whether a migrant moves home or to Europe tends to depend on which part of the country she/he is in. For example, the majority of migrants move to the north of Libya (Tripoli or Benghazi) when they arrive because this is where they are most likely to find jobs and where they can board boats to Europe. If a migrant is in the north of Libya, travelling back through the country to one of its southern borders to return home is extremely risky. Doing so would expose the migrants to a number of checkpoints and the risk of repeat detention would be extremely high. Thus, migrants in the north of the country are more likely to board boats to Europe as a means of exiting the country. Migrants who are in the south (some stop there to work and some are detained in Sebha or Morzouq before they are able to move north) are more likely to return home than move north to board a boat.

However, there is not always a clear choice for migrants. Migrants are desperate to leave and to avoid being detained again, so they tend to move by whatever option presents itself to them. If they find a group moving towards the port, they may follow this group, and if they find a group moving south, then they may move with them. Most migrants are also out of money and many reported that they begged smugglers to let them on the boat. The question arises: are these migrants indebted to smugglers when they arrive in Europe?

Migrants that eventually move home from Libya find their way back to Agadez and then return from there. For Nigerians, the trip home from Agadez is quite straightforward: there is only one border to cross and it can be crossed regularly and by public bus. However, most are out of money, traumatized and in need of rest by the time they arrive in Agadez. Given these circumstances, many

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74   *Data source*: IOM Department of Migrant Management – Migrant Assistance Division.

find their way to the IOM transit centre in Agadez where they rest and eventually move home with IOM assistance. In order to address the shame of their "failed" migration, some migrants return to a different location in their country of origin. For example, some move back to Abuja or Lagos, instead of their hometown, and try to find work there.

Nigerian man in Lagos, Nigeria. © IOM, 2016

2.2.1 Sustainability of return

In general, there is a tendency for these migrants to view their migration as unsuccessful and to wish to try again under more optimal circumstances. They tend to go home, try and find a way to raise money for another attempt, and to search for a better way to make the journey. That is, to find someone to travel with who knows how to avoid the risks. This may mean making the journey with a smuggler from origin or travelling with someone who has made the journey many times and is experienced. At some point, if the migrant has made a number of unsuccessful attempts and experienced the harrowing conditions in Libya a number of times, they do give up and decide to return home with an intention to stay (at home or within the region of origin). These dynamics can make the migrants even more vulnerable to traffickers that fool them with promises of employment in Libya or Europe.
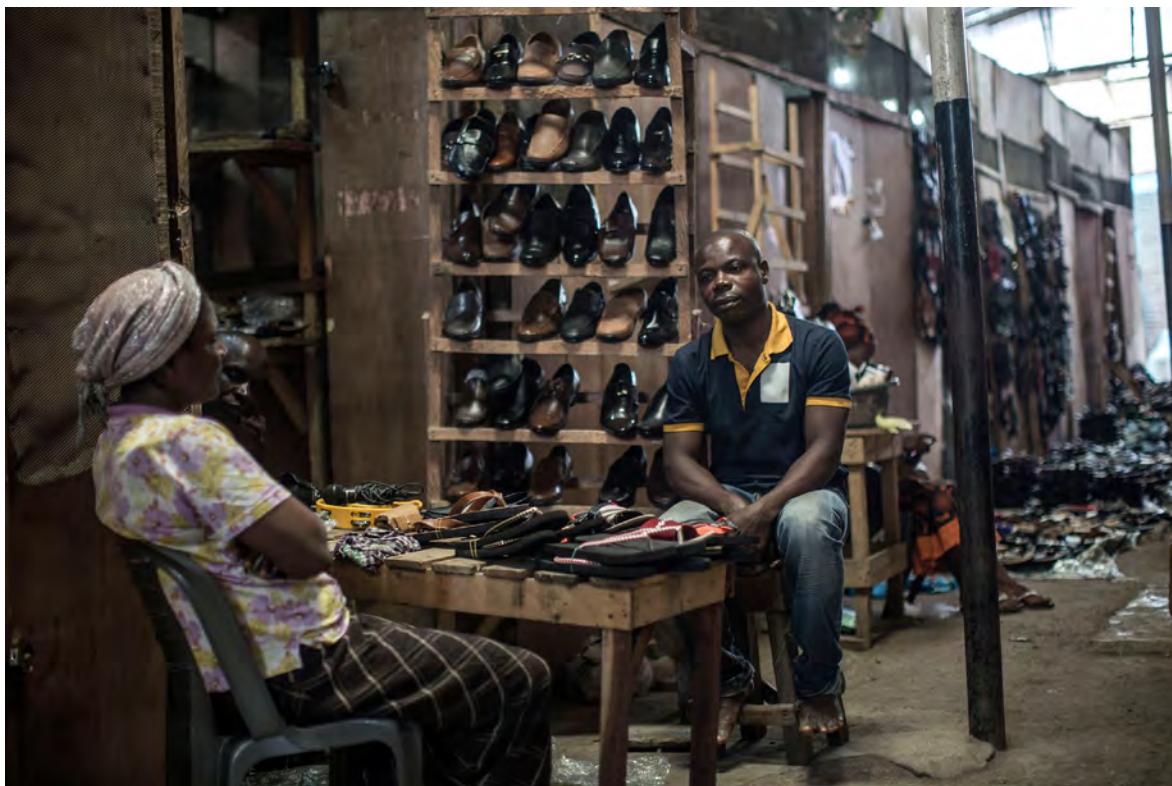
2.3   Return from Europe

2.3.1 The tipping point

Much like the original decision to migrate, the decision to return is not taken lightly and is usually made after some time of careful reflection. A 46-year-old Nigerian man interviewed in Nigeria explained: "I thought about returning for a long time. It was not an easy decision to make. I probably considered it for more than a year. I didn't have anything to return to in Nigeria; yet I wasn't happy

in Europe". As there is a tipping point when considering whether to migrate, there is also a tipping point following which the migrant makes the decision to return to origin.[75]

While the tipping point may vary for different migrants, the general trend is that the decision is made under considerable stress. The tipping point for a decision to return home is much like the tipping point for the original decision to migrate: life (at destination or origin) is precarious and held together by very thin threads; when one of these threads breaks, the migrant finally decides to instigate the return home. For example, some Nigerians reported that they were accommodated in temporary reception centres while they were waiting for the application for asylum to be decided. During this time, they had room and board and a small stipend. Their basic needs were covered and they could send the stipend home to family. However, their application was rejected, they were asked to leave the centre within a few weeks, they had nowhere to go and would not receive a stipend any longer. They then decided that they had no choice but to return home.

Nigerian man in a market in Lagos, Nigeria. © IOM, 2016

2.3.2 Drivers of return

The example of other Nigerians in Europe, who had spent sometimes up to a decade on the continent with no job and little opportunity, was a factor that influenced migrants to return home. That is, observing other Nigerians who had not managed to build their life in Europe after so long was an indication that chances were not high for a successful migration. Sometimes this was coupled with the feeling that while friends and family at origin had moved ahead in life, they were wasting their life in Europe. In this way, remaining in contact with home sometimes provided motivations for return.

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75 For more information about the tipping point when deciding to migrate, see A. Malakooti, 2015, *Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean: Connecting the Dots* (Annex 3: Bibliography), p. 32.

Family also provides a strong motivation to return home. Sometimes this is because migrants realize that they have been away from their family for too long and are not able to support them particularly well from Europe, so they decide it is better to return and be with their family. At other times, it may be motivated by a desire to return to their support networks. As a 27-year-old Nigerian woman interviewed in Nigeria explained: "I didn't have a job; I wasn't working in Europe, which was basically like being home. You know, no job, no prospects. So I figured it was better to go home so at least I would be around my family and my friends who could support me and help me feel better". Many migrants indicated that they would have stayed longer if their family had been with them.

2.3.3 Sustainability of return

For migrants who return home from Libya, despite the harrowing nature of the journey and time spent there, there is a feeling of something remaining to be tried. That is, they did not reach their intended destination and some still hope to try again to get to Europe. For those that return from Europe, however, there is a sense of having exhausted all options, which leaves less to be desired in terms of a repeat migration. Most of the returnees in the latter group invest their energy into their reintegration and are more likely to consider migrating to Abuja or Lagos to give their reintegration a boost. Most report they would only instigate a repeat migration if they managed to do so through regular means, or if they knew that they would have a job on arrival. The risk implied by such an attitude is that it makes the migrants vulnerable to traffickers who may seek to fool them with promises of employment in Europe.

PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR MIGRATION

PERCEPTIONS OF REGULAR MIGRATION

1.   Nigerians

As irregular migration is, by its very nature, unsafe and risky, promoting safe migration would involve promoting regular channels for this to take place. It is in this light, that the present study seeks to understand the perceptions of regular migration among migrants. Interviews explored how migrants understood the difference between regular and irregular migration (or if they actually even understood that there was a difference), the level of access they believed they had to regular migration channels, and their expectations of such channels.

1.1   Regular versus irregular migration

A certain fraction of the Nigerian population on the move does not fully appreciate or understand the difference between a regular and irregular migration, or the full irregularity of the migration undertaken. For some, the free movement available to them within ECOWAS diminishes the appreciation of borders and border policies elsewhere. Even within ECOWAS, many do not realize that there are some regulations that need to be followed for their movement to be "free". This tends to be particularly so for lesser educated Nigerians and for Nigerians from rural areas.

Many within this segment of the population view their movement as quite natural. The current borders, fixed as a result of the colonial period, have led to the spread of many tribal or ethnic groups across a number of newly created countries. These cultural and tribal links remain strong, even today, and encourage border crossings. For instance, the Hawsa population is scattered between Niger and Nigeria and a number of other West African countries, and thus there are frequent movements of Hawsa people across these borders to meet with family or members of the tribe. The Yoruba people also extend between Benin and south-west Nigeria. In addition to this, the agropastoralist nature of many, who are reliant on seasonal migration, encourages herders to move for grazing, often regardless of borders.

Nigerian man in Italy. © IOM, 2016

1.2   Choosing an irregular migration

For those that are aware of border policies and visa requirements, but still choose to migrate irregularly, it is usually because they do not believe that they have access to visas without the right connections. Nigerians commented that without the right connections, they would never be able to obtain a visa, even if they had the money. The way that potential migrants learn to navigate the need for the right connections is to use agents that follow up their visa application for a fee. So just as irregular migration requires a middleman (the smuggler), so does regular migration (the migration agent). Whether these middlemen are legitimate third parties or not, they are all service providers within the migration industry.

When the fee of the migration agent is added to the cost of the visa, the cost of a regular migration becomes higher than the cost of an irregular migration. A 24-year-old Nigerian man explained: "If I wanted to go to Europe with a visa, it would cost me NGN 18,000 [approximately USD 60]. If you use an agent, they will tell you it is NGN 300,000 [approximately USD 1,000]. The point is that the cost of the visa is not very high, but people don't know. But if you don't have connections in Nigeria, you can't do anything. The agent has the connection. I couldn't get the visa even though I had the money, because I didn't have the connection". The time taken to acquire a visa is also much greater than the time taken to move to Libya with a smuggler. Thus, while a regular migration would be preferred by many of the migrants, the process of obtaining a visa is seen as cumbersome, time consuming, expensive and producing little benefit.

This lack of faith in a regular migration system tends to be intricately linked to the lack of faith in governance. For many Nigerians, there tends to be a mistrust of anything official or government-related in their home country. They do not believe that the Government of Nigeria serves the average Nigerian; they believe that the Government serves only the rich and influential. Thus, the Nigerians in our sample do not believe that regular migration would work for them because they do not believe that the Government works for them. The fact that when they go to embassies to enquire about visas they are served by Nigerian embassy staff does little to combat these pessimistic perceptions.

In fact, the Nigerians in our sample demonstrated more faith in investing their money in forged passports and visas than in an actual regular migration channels. This was so even though many have been scammed or heard stories of others being scammed and losing money in this way; as a 28-year-old Nigerian man interviewed in Italy explained: "As soon as you say you want to get a visa, people start saying 'I can get you a visa'. Then you give them your money and your hope and you get nothing in return".

This lack of faith in following official channels is reinforced by the lack of official information sources. Migrants report few (and close to no) information sources on regular migration and visas. Most of the information circulates by word of mouth through other migrants. Thus, to combat such pessimistic views about regular migration channels, not only would migrants need to learn about the availability of such channels, but they would also need to be viewed as accessible, achievable and worth it to be pursued.

1.3   Expectations of a regular migration

It is only after a number of harrowing (vis-à-vis the experiences in Libya) and unsuccessful migration attempts that migrants start to even think about regular migration channels. That is, only when they fully appreciate the risks that they are exposing themselves to in an irregular migration and realize that they are not able to achieve their objectives in this way will migrants consider regular channels. However, it should be noted that hearing about risks is not sufficient to

persuade migrants to rethink their choices; it is only after they experience the risks themselves, and when they experience them a number of times, that alternative strategies are considered.

Yet despite the risks, most would only be willing to pay less than what they pay for an irregular migration when investing in a regular migration. This surprising tendency derives from the way in which value is assigned. That is, rather than value being assigned to one's safety or security, it is assigned to the services that are being provided in the transaction. That is, the smuggler is required to do more than the embassy or the agent; thus, it is only natural that the regular migration should be cheaper.

Whether a regular or irregular migration is pursued, for most Nigerians, the expectation is overwhelmingly for a temporary migration. Nigerians wish to migrate to Europe for a specific period of time to work, save enough money to be able to create a business or invest their money in some other income-generating activity on return, and enjoy the fruits of their labours at home with their families. Most Nigerians expect that they should be able to achieve this within six months to a few years at most if they had the right to work and a job.

2.   Iraqis

In the case of Iraqis, perceptions of regular migration were analysed through the lens of legal pathways to asylum. More specifically, from the viewpoint of third-country resettlement to Germany and family reunification.

Focus box 5: What is resettlement?

> Resettlement involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. The status provided ensures protection against refoulement and provides a resettled refugee and his/her family or dependants with access to rights similar to those enjoyed by nationals. Resettlement also carries with it the opportunity to eventually become a naturalized citizen of the resettlement country.[76]

2.1   Resettlement

As can be seen from the global figures demonstrated in Figure 28**, Iraqis were the second most prominent country of origin submitted for resettlement by UNHCR** between 2005 and 2014. Moreover, Iraqis constitute 19 per cent of all refugees submitted for resettlement by UNHCR since 2005.

Country	Number
Syrian Arab Republic	27,196
Somalia	106,578
Bhutan	109,411
Iraq	175,585
Myanmar	246,935
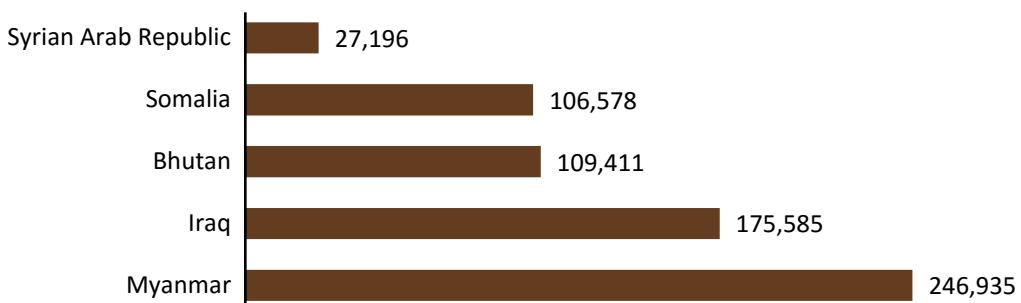
Figure 28: Top 5 countries of origin submitted for resettlement by UNHCR 2005–2014[77]

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76 UNHCR Refugee Resettlement Trends 2015, available from www.unhcr.org/news/agenda/2012/3/559e43ac9/unhcr-refugee-resettlement-trends-2015.html (accessed 23 November 2016), p. 5.

77 *Source*: Ibid., p. 11.

In 2015, the main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement programmes globally were refugees from Syrian Arab Republic (53,305), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (20,527), Iraq (11,161) and Somalia (10,193).[78]

2.1.1 Germany's involvement in resettlement

Resettlement to Germany first started in 2009 when Germany responded to a European Union plea to resettle up to 10,000 vulnerable Iraqi refugees. During 2009 and 2010, 2,501 Iraqis (mainly from Turkey and the north of Iraq) were resettled in Germany.[79]

In December 2011, following the Conference of the Ministers of the Interior of the Federal States (*Innenministerkonferenz*), Germany established annual resettlement quotas for the first time. It was decided that 300 persons would be settled each year between 2012 and 2014 according to UNHCR submissions. In 2015, the quota was increased to 500 persons annually and in 2016, according to the European Union council decision from 20 July 2015, Germany committed to resettling 1,600 persons during 2016 and 2017 (800 per year).[80]

Additionally, and in relation to the likely need for further resettlement under the one-for-one scheme that was established through the European Union–Turkey Agreement, Germany agreed to transfer commitments under the existing relocation decisions (all of the currently unallocated 13,500 German places) to the one-for-one scheme.[81]

While there is no explicit legal basis for the German refugee resettlement programme, refugee resettlement in Germany relies on section 23(2) of the Residence Act, which enables the Federal Government, in consultation with the governments of the individual regions, to admit groups of foreigners who are granted temporary or permanent residence permits on arrival.[82] This means that resettled refugees in Germany do not receive refugee status but temporary residence permits on arrival in Germany. After holding a residence permit for five years, resettled refugees may apply for permanent residency (subject to a number of conditions). Naturalization for resettled refugees is governed by section 10 of the Nationality Act and typically requires eight years of legal and habitual residence in Germany, but can be decreased to seven or six years with the successful completion of integration programmes.

Resettled refugees in Germany applying for family reunification are bound by the general rules of family reunification for migrants (as distinct from refugees), which encompass a number of requirements that refugees are exempt from.

2.2 Family reunification

The principle of family reunification is founded upon the notion of the unity of the family. As stated by UNHCR: "Following separation caused by forced displacement such as from persecution and war, family reunification is often the only way to ensure respect for a refugee's right to family unity".[83]

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78 See www.unhcr.org/resettlement.html (accessed 23 November 2016).

79 See www.resettlement.eu/country/germany (accessed 23 November 2016).

80 See www.unhcr.org/protection/resettlement/5162b3bc9/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapter-germany.html (accessed 23 November 2016).

81 Ibid.

82 See www.resettlement.eu/country/germany (accessed 23 November 2016).

83 Refugee Family Reunification: UNHCR's Response to the European Commission Green Paper on the Right to Family Reunification of Third Country Nationals Living in the European Union (Directive 2003/86/EC), available from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-is-new/public-consultation/2012/pdf/0023/famreun/internationalorganisationssocialpartnersngos/unhcr.pdf (accessed 23 November 2016).

Families that have become separated within Europe are also entitled to legal reunion under the European Union's Dublin Regulation. The Regulation allows a family member in one country covered by the Regulation to be able to apply for immediate family members in other countries covered by the Regulation to join them.

2.2.1 Family reunification in the German context

For many of the Iraqis in the sample, particularly those in families, family reunification was seen as a legal pathway to asylum and also the only viable legal pathway. A number of respondents either spoke of their own decision-making process, or that of others around them, which related to one member of the family travelling to Germany while the others waited at origin for family reunification. Such a decision was made to expose fewer family members to the risks and dangers of the irregular journey to Europe, and also because of the high costs involved in sending all family members with a smuggler.

However, in reality, many were disappointed with the process of family reunification. More specifically, it generally required many years for the individual's own application for asylum, and then that for family reunification, to be processed. At some point, the family at origin felt unable to wait any longer in the instability and/or conflict in Iraq. In cases where women and children had been left at origin while the male head of household travelled to Europe, there came a point where women and children felt unable to live any longer without the male protective figure in their lives.

The law in Germany states that persons entitled to protection (refugee protection or entitlement to asylum)[84] are entitled to privileged family reunification for spouses and/or children. Applications must be lodged within three months after the entitlement to protection has been granted.[85] However, under the new family reunification law that came into force on 17 March 2016 in Germany, and in an effort to speed up the processing of family reunification applications, persons in receipt of subsidiary protection cannot lodge applications for family reunification for the next two years, until 16 March 2018. For some Iraqis, this decreases their access to family reunification, which may lead to some family members remaining at origin feeling compelled to make the journey irregularly on dangerous routes.

The sample also pointed to the existence of cases of families separated within Europe, particularly after the European Union–Turkey Statement (for example, some family members arriving in Europe before the deal and others arriving after the deal). There are also cases of family members who made the journey at different times and arrived in different European Union destinations. While the Dublin Regulation allows for the reunification of these family members, in the reality of overstretched asylum systems, the processing of often complex Dublin Regulation cases has been slow and not prioritized, particularly in Greece. Even when claims to reunite are approved, it can take up to a year or more before families are back together again.

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84 A type of protection afforded to persons who would be subject to serious human rights violations by the State should they return to their country of origin.
85 See Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, available from www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/FamilienasylFamiliennachzug/familienasyl-familiennachzug-node.html (accessed 23 November 2016).

KEY FINDINGS
AND PERSPECTIVES

78

ASSESSING THE RISKS OF MIGRATION ALONG THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES:
Iraq and Nigeria as Case Study Countries.

KEY FINDINGS AND PERSPECTIVES

The journey is risky for all, regardless of their reasons for migration: While the movement of migrants through the Mediterranean is mixed and comprised of individuals that (although moving along the same routes) move for varying reasons, the present report does not focus on the motivations for their migration. Rather, the it focuses on the risks that are present along these routes and that make these migratory routes unsafe. The key point that emerges is that the journey is risky for all, regardless of the reasons for their migration, and all migrants moving along these routes require protection during their journey.

Increasing border control has led to riskier journeys for migrants: The report demonstrates that where border controls have increased, migrants have resorted to smugglers and been pushed to undertake riskier journeys along more dangerous routes. The apprehension of irregular migrants along the Balkans route continues to increase as migrants attempt to move on with smugglers and families have become separated by their attempts to move on from Greece irregularly. For example, some families who attempted to move on with forged documents found that some members of the family were able to move on successfully, while others were held back.

The most vulnerable are left behind at origin: While a very large number of migrants and refugees travelled to Europe in 2015 and were generously welcomed by the Government of Germany, it should be noted that they still had to travel on dangerous routes, which only the fit and healthy are able to tolerate. Significant costs are also involved to pay smugglers to facilitate the journey to Europe. Moreover, the risks, as well as the costs, are far higher for Iraqis who live in the most unstable sections of the country, even though they are the ones most in need of asylum. This means that many of the vulnerable are likely to have been left behind because of their inability to undertake the journey or to pay a lot of money to a smuggler.

Family reunification is seen as a legal pathway to Europe in the absence of other legal pathways: There have been various examples of Iraqi families sending one member ahead of the rest to pave the way for a family reunification in Europe. Such decisions are made because of the risky nature of the irregular journey to Europe and in an attempt to expose fewer members of the family to those risks. More importantly, such decisions are made out of a lack of other options for legal pathways to asylum.

Lengthy processes for family reunification lead to more risky journeys: In cases where family reunification processes took too long, family members who had been waiting at origin often eventually decided to make the journey irregularly anyway. In cases where a male head of household travels irregularly to Europe ahead of the others, the wife and children that he leaves behind in Iraq are often quite vulnerable in his absence (that is, living without a protective male figure in a male-dominated society like Iraq and in the current context of conflict). These family members are then exposed to risk a second time when they ultimately make the irregular journey to Europe, but now without the male head of household.

Nigerians are being fooled by Nigerian traffickers who sell them to Libyan traffickers in situations of modern slavery: Incidences of Nigerians being fooled into travelling to Libya by a Nigerian met at origin, and then sold to Libyans on arrival, seems to be increasing. Libyans then hold them hostage for ransom, in conditions where they are stripped of clothing, starved, and sometimes drugged. If ransom is not paid, the migrant is put to work to make money for the trafficker, or sold to a Libyan in need of labour.

Detention centres in Libya have become hotbeds for trafficking: Detention centres in Libya are maintained by both State and non-State actors, and since the 2014 political crisis in Libya, migrants in the country have experienced periodic roundups for arbitrary detention. In the earlier years of the 2014 crisis, it was believed that detention centres were maintained by militia groups to create a market for their smuggling services. Fieldwork conducted for this study suggests that these detention centres are now hotbeds for trafficking. That is, migrants are periodically and systematically rounded up in detention centres either to be extorted, or to be sold to Libyans that are looking for labour or for women.

Vulnerability is more linked to circumstances than categories of migrants: While vulnerability is traditionally assessed according to categories of migrants, which are determined by personal factors (for example, women and children are recognized as being more vulnerable than the average migrant, as are the disabled or chronically ill), the vulnerability of migrants increases greatly in certain locations and under certain circumstances. For example, locations (or terrain) where the vulnerability of migrants increases includes during sea journeys; in the desert; and at border crossings where migrants are systematically asked for bribes, where women are raped and where kidnapping and extortion is commonplace. Circumstances under which the vulnerability of migrants increases include when a migrant is dumped in the desert by the smuggler, robbed by bandits, or detained or trafficked. Vulnerability, therefore, can be linked to three different sources:

- Personal factors – women, children, disabled, chronically ill;
- Geography – desert, sea, border crossings;
- Circumstances – robbed, abandoned in the desert, trafficked.

Migrants address their own vulnerabilities quite well for the most part. They find work or manage to access health services when they need to. Migrants become unable to address their own vulnerabilities, however, when they encounter difficult or dangerous circumstances (such as when they are abandoned in the desert, robbed, detained, trafficked, fooled). When vulnerability is viewed in this way, it becomes apparent that every migrant on the move is extremely vulnerable and this vulnerability derives from their irregular status and desperation, rather than from personal factors.

Children have a harder time recovering from the difficult things they experienced at origin and during the journey: While many Iraqi families accepted the risks of the journey and the difficulties it posed for their children by focusing on the safe haven that they would find at the end, many found that their children were not able to recover from the journey so easily. The psychological consequences of what was experienced at origin, the departure from origin and the journey to destination were so great that children struggled under the pressure. The lack of support to parents in such situations sometimes caused them to return to Iraq, a decision not necessarily in the best interests of the child.

Distrust of other Iraqis makes life in accommodation centres very challenging for Iraqis: Iraqis who reside in accommodation centres in Germany do not feel safe in these centres because they are surrounded by other Iraqis. As a result, many of the sectarian challenges that they faced at origin continue to confront them in Germany too. This is particularly problematic for members of minority groups. The fact that many Iraqis receive official information, and conduct their interviews, through interpreters that are also of Iraqi origin, diminishes trust in official information and procedures.

Social capital is more important than integration support: The experiences of Iraqi asylum seekers in Germany, and returnees who decide to return to Iraq, has demonstrated the importance of

social capital, or social networks. These networks emerge as being more significant than integration assistance, particularly in instances where asylum seekers decide to return home to reconnect with these networks, despite the instability at origin. Nigerian returnees also demonstrated a desire to return home to reconnect with their social networks, with this sometimes being the most influential factor that motivated a decision to return.

Irregular migration is linked to poor governance at origin: While lack of good governance in countries of origin has long been identified as a driver of migration, this study has also linked it to decisions to migrate irregularly and a lack of faith in regular migration channels. Put another way, Nigerians demonstrated a lack of faith in regular migration channels because of their lack of faith in anything official or government-related in their home country. This suggests that as good governance and faith in government increase in Nigeria, Nigerians may be more likely to pursue regular channels of migration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Iraqis along the Eastern Mediterranean route

1. **Increase legal pathways to asylum:** Iraqis are currently required to undertake risky and irregular journeys to access asylum. Resettlement from a safe third country is not currently an option and family reunification has been limited in most European Union Member States. An increase in legal pathways to asylum is necessary to eliminate the need for risky journeys, particularly in light of the increasing instability in Iraq. More specifically:

   • Increasing access to family reunification so that it is within the reach of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and national protection (and not just recipients of international protection) and child refugees;
   • Decreasing processing times for family reunification and prioritising the applications of unaccompanied minors (UAM);
   • Increasing quotas for resettlement.

2. **Increase the circulation of official information** among asylum seekers at destination in order to address the high incidence of rumours and misinformation. While there are a number of official information sources that migrants can easily gain information from, the reality is that migrants are quite selective in what they would like to know and tend to focus on information that reinforces their hopes and expectations. Thus, for realistic information to reach migrants, it needs to be spreading within migrant communities. That is, official information needs also to circulate through unofficial sources. This may require:

   • Identifying individuals of influence within communities who can also be information hubs thereby reinforcing the spread of information through official sources;
   • Exploring possibilities of replacing interpreters of Iraqi origins with Arabic-speaking German interpreters to increase trust;
   • The creation of forums for information dissemination in smaller groups (for example, a few families at a time).

3. **Permission to work while waiting for status:** The large number of asylum seekers that were generously welcomed by the Government of Germany in 2015, has led to processing times of up to 18 months for individuals applications for asylum. Many of these applicants live in temporary centres while they await their status, meaning that they often spend a year or more in flux, waiting for permanent accommodation and status so that they can begin their lives. This prolonged period of transition leads to apathy and challenges integration. Allowing asylum seekers to work during this time would address some of these feelings of apathy and aid integration.

4. **Integration on a personal level, not on an institutional level:** The most successful examples of integration were demonstrated by Iraqis who had linked with German friends or a German community. That is, at the most fundamental level, bonds of friendship with Germans created extremely favourable conditions for integration and a process of integration that cannot be achieved on an institutional level. Promoting integration on a personal level could involve exploring models of community-based integration where a few families band together and "adopt" an Iraqi family (similar to the Canadian model).

5. **Strengthening support services for migrants and refugees at all levels:** Both at destination and along the way, there is the potential to improve support services and access to them. Some examples include:

- The study has demonstrated that Iraqi children often demonstrate difficulty moving on from the trauma of what they have experienced at home, on exit and throughout the journey. Parents sometimes feel they have no other choice but to return the children to Iraq. This can be addressed by more psychosocial support for children at destination.
- Some migrants leave their country of origin because they are sick and in search of medical treatment. If they are able to access the services they seek along the way, this may prevent them from being exposed to further risks.

Nigerians along the Central Mediterranean route

1. **Create greater avenues for regular migration as a way to counter smuggling and decease the vulnerability of Nigerians to trafficking:** Any attempt to increase regular migration channels to Europe would require increasing the access of Nigerians to these channels, as well as their faith in such channels.

2. **Providing opportunities for Nigerians in neighbouring countries:** Creating greater economic opportunities and livelihoods at origin, and within other ECOWAS countries, will serve to address the drivers of irregular migration to North Africa and Europe over time and potentially decrease the vulnerability of Nigerians to traffickers. Such an approach works best, however, if it is a part of a package of interventions that work together, including greater access to regular pathways for those who still wish to move to Europe, as well as return and reintegration options for those who wish to return home. Creating greater economic and livelihood opportunities in countries and region of origin could involve:

- Labour market assessments in countries of origin that determine gaps in local labour markets;
- Skill-development programmes that match the skills of the local labour force with the gaps on the local labour market;
- Identifying industries at the national level that could benefit from foreign labour in the form of migrants from other ECOWAS countries, and facilitating the matching of the two through more efficient work permit acquisition;
- Community stabilization approaches in areas prone to displacement;
- Facilitating exchange between countries: migrants are willing to do jobs in other countries that they may not be willing to do in their own countries. At home, they may feel ashamed by a certain job, but in another country, if no one knows exactly what they are doing but they are sending money home regularly, they are considered as heros. Facilitating exchanges between countries would allow some proportion of the flow to meet their desires without having to undertake dangerous and life threatening journeys.

3. **Address corruption at border posts:** Corruption and abuse is rampant at border crossing points and the study has shown these crossings to be some of the riskiest locations on the journey to North Africa. Many of the border crossings in the region have become military zones in recent years (due to national security concerns), which has worsened the issue of corruption given that many of the military personnel are not familiar with passports, nor do they know how to read them. Some possible ways of addressing corruption at border crossings include:

- Creating greater awareness among Nigerians on their ECOWAS rights and responsibilities and encouraging them to obtain the documents that are required of them at the border (passport and international health card). Being able to present the documents that they are required to carry will decrease their vulnerability at these border crossing points.
- Creating incentives for West African governments to monitor corruption along their borders.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1:
LIST OF VISUAL CONTENTS

ANNEX 2:
LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

No.	Name	Organization	Position	Location
		Germany		
1.	ARMAN, Hamidullah	Tamaja GmbH	Public Relations, Tempelhof Accommodation Centre	Berlin
2.	EINHOFF, Rebecca	UNHCR	Assistant Protection Officer	Berlin
3.	Feihle, Priska	UNHCR	Legal Intern	Berlin
4.	FRÖBEL, Katharina	Independent	Migration Lawyer	Berlin
5.	JOCHAM, Theresa	Tamaja GmbH	Public Relations, Tempelhof Accommodation Centre	Berlin
6.	MCPHEE, Shaun	IOM Return Counselling Centre	Return Counsellor	Berlin
7.	MERKEL, Karla	LAF	Managing Registration of Refugees	Berlin
8.	MOELLE, Moritz P.	Federal Foreign Office (FFO)	Desk office for Asylum, Law and Migration	Berlin
9.	SALEH, Abudullah	Independent	Syrian Refugee and Translator in Germany	Berlin
10.	SELIMAGIC, Sanella	IOM Return Counselling Centre	Return Counsellor	Berlin
11.	THOELDTE, Hannelore	LAF	Manager of Social Office for Asylum Consultations	Berlin
12.	TROSIEN, Norbert	UNHCR	Protection Officer	Berlin
		Iraq		
13.	BOHLINGER, Scott	International Non-Governmental Organisation Safety Organisation (INSO)	Iraq Country Director	Iraq
14.	DBOUK, Shereen	IOM Iraq	Return Working Group	Iraq
15.	MURANI, Saud	Independent	Local Journalist	Iraq
		Italy		
16.	Anonymous	Independent	Iraqi migrant in Italy	Italy
17.	Anonymous	Independent	Iraqi migrant in Italy	Italy
18.	ABBATE, Giovanni	IOM Italy	Project Manager, Anti-Labour Exploitation	Rome
19.	BARTOLINI, Laura	IOM Italy	Data Tracking Matrix (DTM) Research Officer	Rome
20.	CAMPANA, Paolo	Independent	Migration Researcher	Rome
21.	CONTE, Francesco	Termini TV	Termini TV	Rome
22.	DAMIANO, Marta	IOM Italy	Project Assistant, Family Tracing and Investigations for UAM	Rome

No.	Name	Organization	Position	Location
			Italy	
23.	DEYKESSER, Cedric	IOM Italy	Project Manager, Motuse (Returns)	Rome
24.	DI GIACOMO, Flavio	IOM Italy	IOM Spokesperson in Italy	Rome
25.	GUSTINIANI, Anna	IOM Italy	Project Manager, Family Tracing and Investigations for Unaccompanied Minors	Rome
26.	MOSCARELLI, Simona	IOM Italy	Anti-trafficking Focal point, Legal Counsel	Rome
27.	SANTAROSSA, Carlota	IOM Italy	Project Manager, Family Reunification Programme	Rome
28.	SPINUSO, Silvia	IOM Italy	Project Assistant, Family Tracing and Investigations for UAM	Rome
29.	TULLIO CATALDO, Angela	North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force (MHub)	MHub Research Officer for Italy	Rome
			Nigeria	
30.	AIDEYAN, Winnie	IOM Nigeria	Operations Assistant, AVRR Team	Lagos
31.	AKINMOLU, Collins	IOM Nigeria	Operations, AVRR Team	Lagos
32.	AKINYEMI, Akani Ibukun	Obafemi Awolowo University	Associate Professor, Demography and Social Statistics Department	Ile Ife
33.	ASOBIE, Olive Ihuoma	IOM Nigeria	Monitoring Assistant, AVRR Team	Abuja
34.	HAMO, Sara	IOM Nigeria	AVRR Consultant / Programme Manager	Lagos
35.	IWUORA, Nnamdi	IOM Nigeria	National Programme Officer, FMM West Africa	Abuja
36.	KOLAWOLE, Opeyemi	IOM Nigeria	Senior Programme Assistant, AVRR Team	Lagos
37.	KWENIN II, Henry	IOM Nigeria	DTM Programme Coordinator	Abuja
38.	NGAOBIDI, Casmir	Nigerian Returnees Cooperation Society	President, Lagos state Chapter	Lagos
39.	NWANOSIKE, René	IOM Nigeria	DTM Field Operations Assistant, Kaduna and Plateau states	Abuja
40.	OBOH, Onose	Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA)	Trainer / Project Assistant	Lagos
41.	OMOYENI, Sunday	IOM Nigeria	National Project Officer	Abuja
42.	OSITA, Osemene	Patriotic Citizens Initiatives	Executive Director	Lagos
43.	OSUAGWU, Linda	Private Sector	Statistician	Lagos

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