



ASSISTANCE TO VOLUNTARY  
AND HUMANITARIAN RETURNS  
IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA  
2017-2023

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# ACRONYMS

# AND COUNTRY CODES

## ACRONYMS

AVRR  
Assistance to Voluntary  
Return and Reintegration

IOM  
International Organization for  
Migration

UASC  
Unaccompanied and  
Separated Children

VHR  
Voluntary Humanitarian  
Return

VOT  
Victim of trafficking

WCA  
West and Central Africa

## COUNTRY CODES

BEN	Benin	LBY	Libya
BFA	Burkina Faso	MAR	Morocco
CAF	Central African Republic	MLI	Mali
		MRT	Mauritania
CIV	Côte d'Ivoire	NER	Niger
CMR	Cameroon	NGA	Nigeria
DEU	Germany	NLD	Netherlands (the)
DZA	Algeria	SDN	Sudan
EGY	Egypt	SEN	Senegal
GHA	Ghana	SLE	Sierra Leone
GIN	Guinea	TCD	Chad
GMB	The Gambia	TGO	Togo
GNB	Guinea-Bissau	TUN	Tunisia
ITA	Italy		
LBR	Liberia		



# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT

This document presents an analysis of interviews conducted with all individuals assisted in their voluntary return by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) between 2017 and 2023 (193,982) to all of the 23 countries covered by the West and Central Africa region (WCA). The analysis combines datasets from both **Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)** and **Voluntary Humanitarian returns (VHR)**.

**AVRR** is a part of a comprehensive approach to migration management. AVR programmes provide administrative, logistical and financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in host and transit countries and who decide to return to their country of origin.

The successful implementation of AVRR programmes requires the cooperation and participation of a broad range of actors, including migrants themselves, the civil society and the governments in both host and transit countries and countries of origin. The partnerships created by IOM and a diverse range of national and international stakeholders are essential to the effective implementation of AVRR programmes – from the return preparation to the reintegration stage.

For migrants who need to return home but lack the means to do so, IOM's AVRR programmes are often the only solution to their immediate difficulties and needs. Beneficiaries of IOM's assistance include:

1. individuals whose application for asylum was rejected or withdrawn
2. stranded migrants
3. victims of trafficking, and
4. other vulnerable migrants, including unaccompanied migrant children, or those with health-related needs.

**VHR** : In February 2011, civil unrest in Libya rapidly evolved into an armed conflict which led to the crossing of Libyan borders by some 796,000 within the same year. In the aftermath of the conflict, the socio-economic situation which remained unstable was further fragilized by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the loss of livelihood opportunities, the lack of financial resources and the inadequate housing made the living conditions very difficult. Despite those difficulties, Libya remained among the top two host countries for migrants who were nationals of the WCA region from 2017 to 2023. IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian return program was thus necessary to assist the vulnerable migrants, to return in a safe and dignified manner.

Since the onset of the crisis, IOM's strategy is to support Member States in protecting their nationals by providing evacuation assistance to stranded migrants in Libya through its "Voluntary Humanitarian Returns" programme. IOM deemed necessary to adopt a new terminology from AVRR to VHR to stress the humanitarian nature of this operation.

The **objective of this document** is to provide an overview of the profile of those assisted by IOM to return to their country of origin through AVRR and VHR programmes from January 2017 to December 2023. The trends in the main countries of origin and host countries are also displayed in this report to showcase the evolution of the returns in the region

Information about the questionnaire and the applied **methodology** and **limitations** can be found at the end of the report.





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I. TOTAL FOR 2017-2023

# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

## 1.1. TRENDS BY YEAR

Between 2017 and 2023, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has organized the return of 193,982 nationals of West and Central African countries. Although most returns were organized from Niger and Libya, another 127 countries supported these operations from Europe, North Africa, West and Central Africa, East Africa and many other regions around the globe.

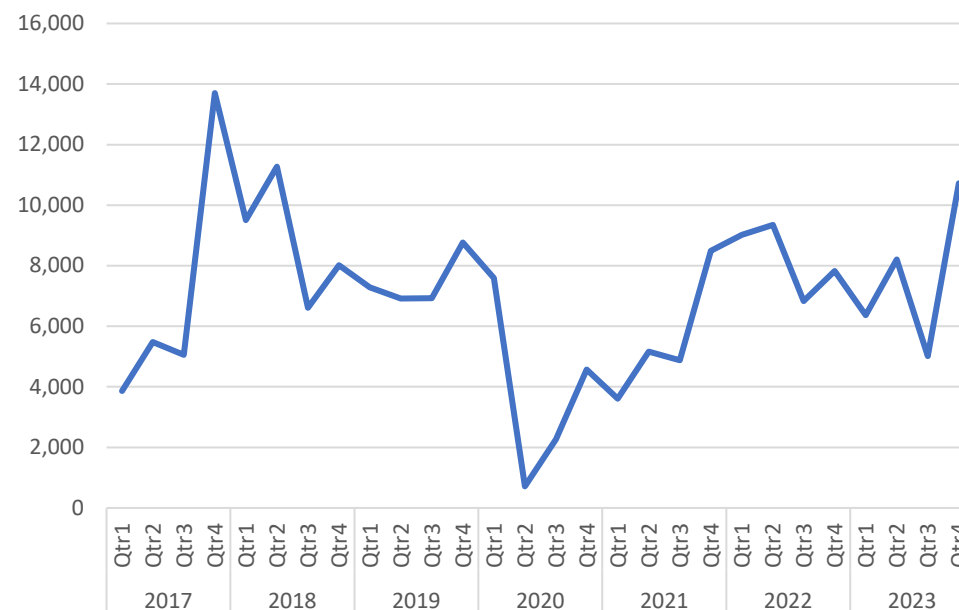
After a substantial increase in AVRR and VHR following the pandemic in 2021 and 2022, the number of returns decreased in 2023 compared to the past year. The military coup in August 2023 in Niger caused the returns operations to be stopped for more than 2 months. In the last quarter of 2023, the number of returns reached its maximum value since 2018 Quarter 3. The migrants assisted in their return were mainly from Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger. Niger remains the top host country since 2019, followed by Libya and Morocco.

### VOLUNTARY AND HUMANITARIAN RETURNS BY YEAR:

<u>2017</u>	28,093
<u>2018</u>	35,395
<u>2019</u>	29,892
<u>2020</u>	15,143
<u>2021</u>	22,127
<u>2022</u>	33,022
<u>2023</u>	30,310

**193,982** MIGRANTS ASSISTED IN THEIR VOLUNTARY RETURN BY IOM TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (2017- 2023)

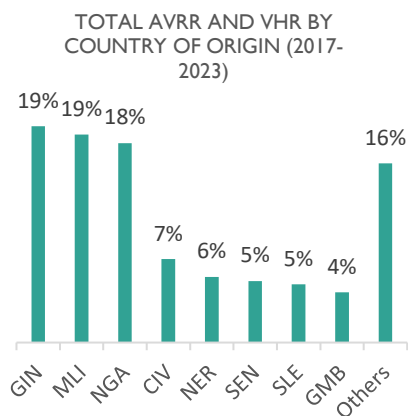
TOTAL AVRR AND VHR TO WCA COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN (2017-2023)



# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

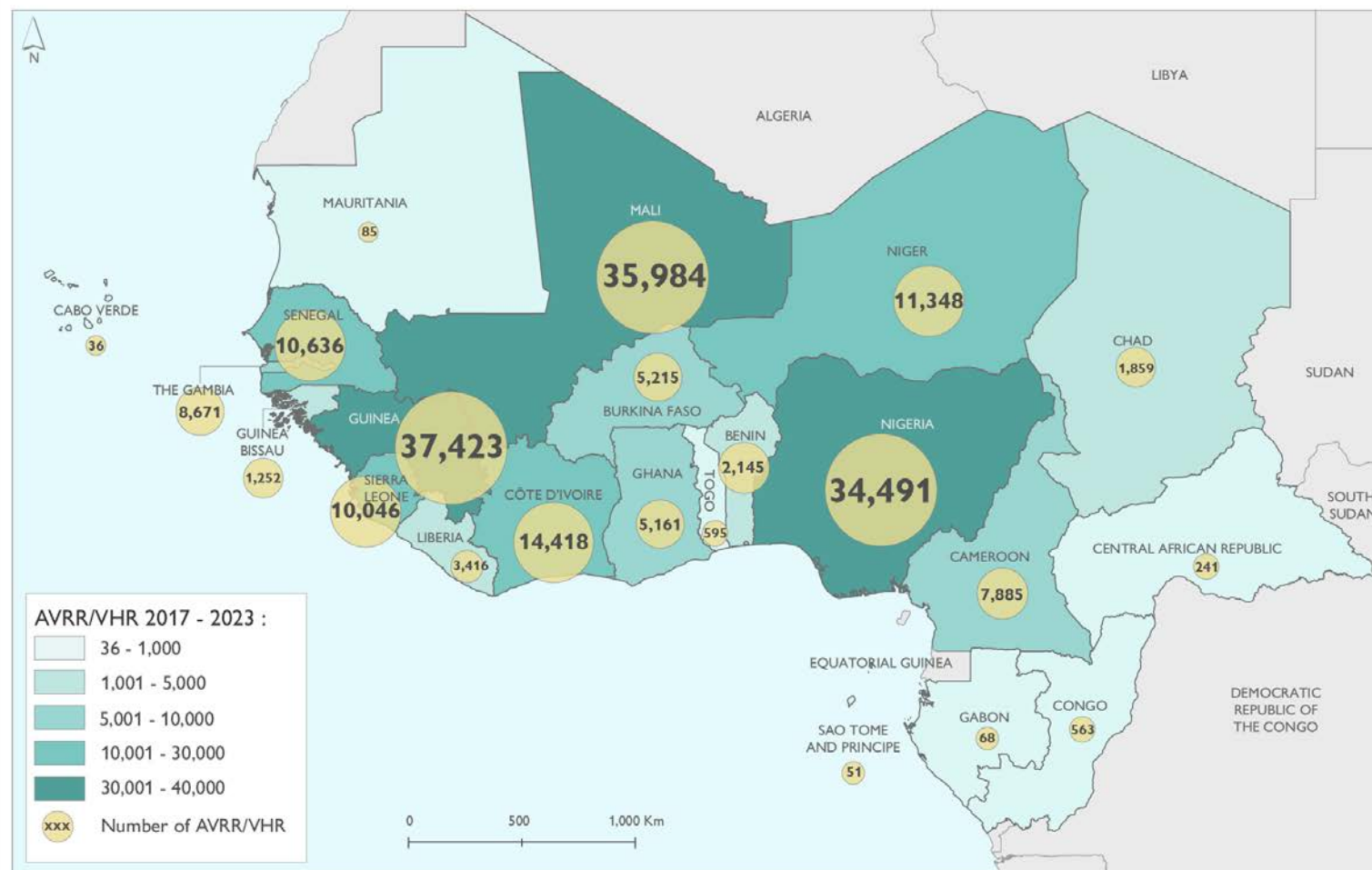
## 1.2. TRENDS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Three countries were the main countries of origin and accounted for over 56 per cent of all AVRR and VHR to West and Central Africa from 2017 to 2023: Guinea (37,423 or 19%), Mali (35,984 or 19%), and Nigeria (34,491 or 18%). AVRR and VHR were organized towards all 23 countries covered by the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa.



## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA 2017 - 2023

Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)





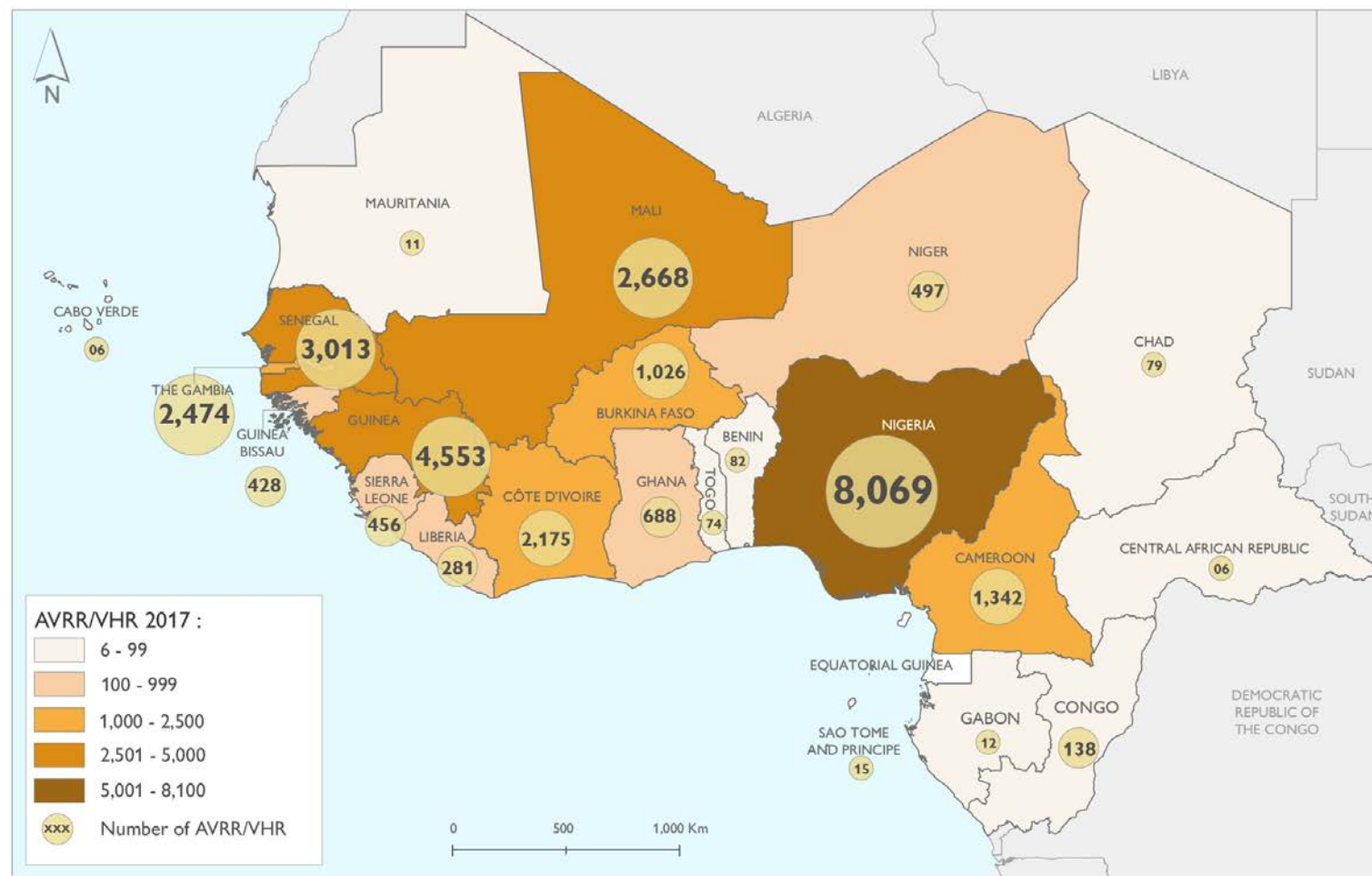
# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

## 1.2.1. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2017

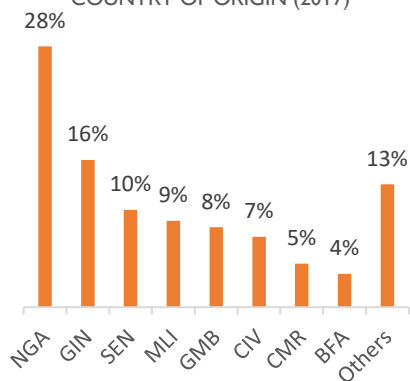
In 2017, IOM organized the return of 28,093 nationals of West and Central African countries. The map displays the main countries of origin (or in other words, countries of return) of West and Central African migrants who were beneficiaries of AVRR and VHR that year. The main countries of returns were Nigeria (8,069) followed by Guinea (4,553) and Senegal (3,013).

## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2017

Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)



TOTAL AVRR AND VHR BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (2017)

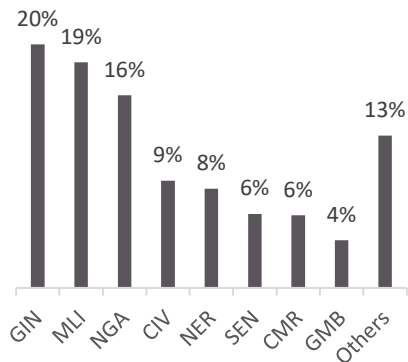


# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

## 1.2.2. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2018

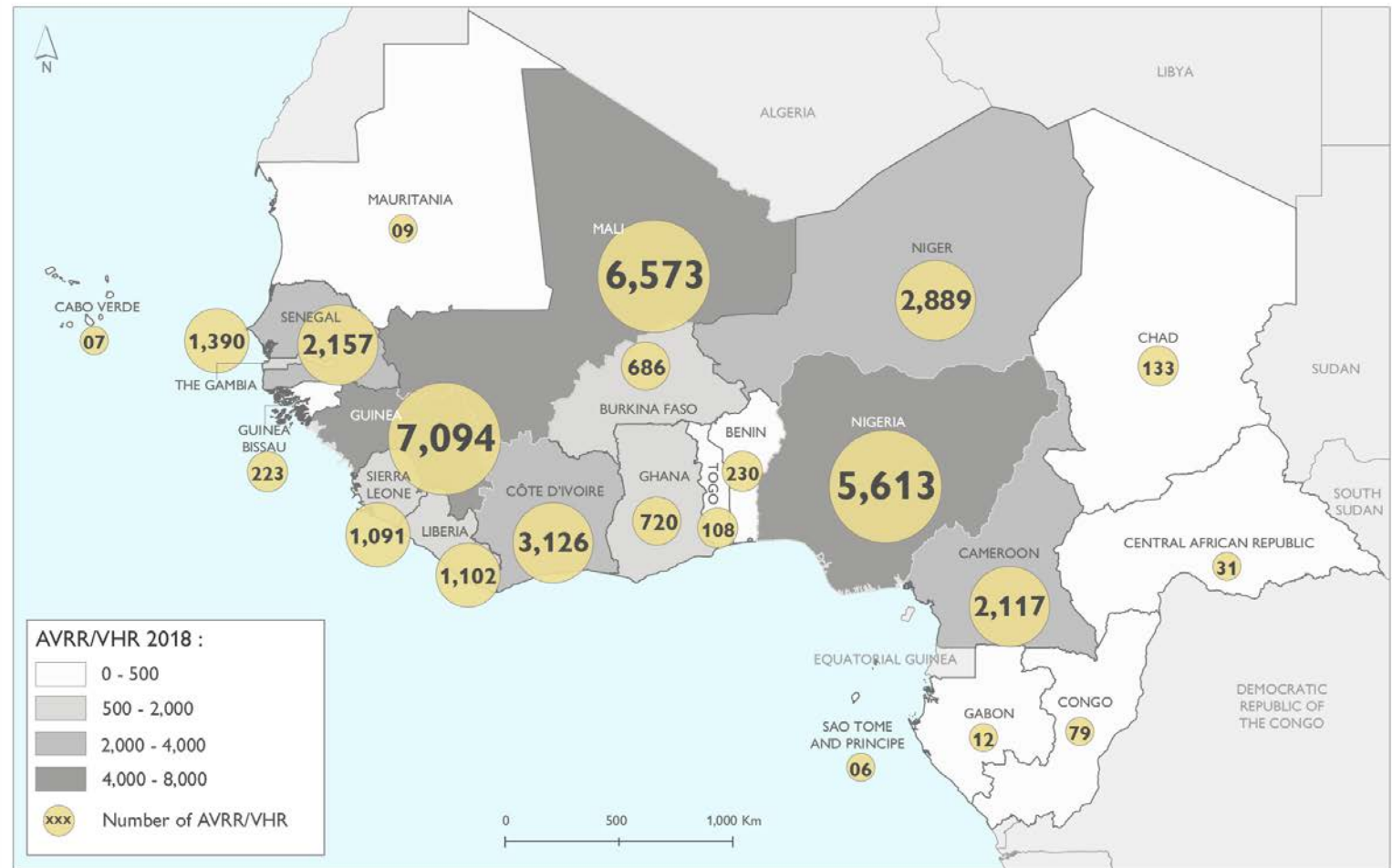
In 2018, IOM organized the return of 35,395 nationals of West and Central African countries. The map displays the main countries of origin (and therefore return) of West and Central Africa migrants who were beneficiaries of AVRR and VHR that year. The main countries of return were Guinea (7,094) followed by Mali (6,573) and Nigeria (5,613).

TOTAL AVRR AND VHR BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (2018)



## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2018

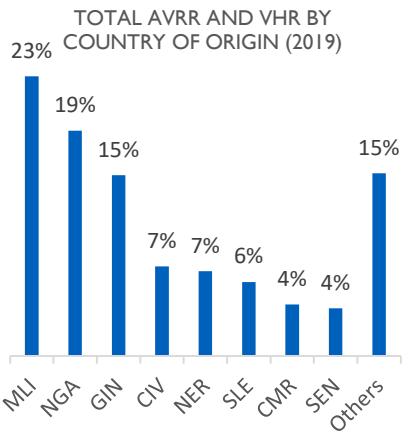
Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM)



# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

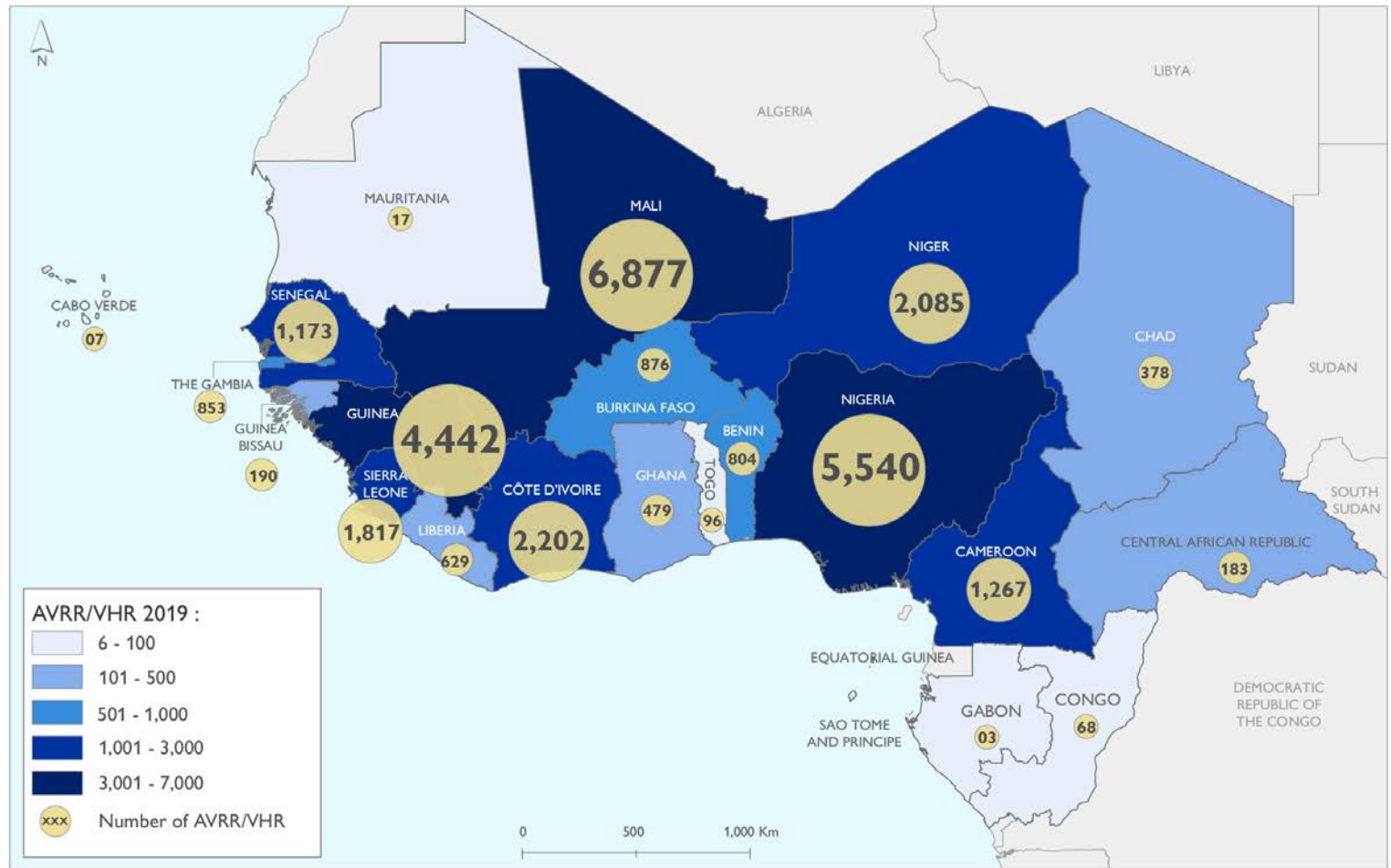
## 1.2.3. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2019

In 2019, IOM organized the return of 29,892 nationals of West and Central African countries. The map displays the main countries of origin of West and Central Africa migrants who were beneficiaries of AVRR and VHR that year. The main countries of return were Mali (6,877) followed by Nigeria (5,540) and Guinea (4,442).



## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2019

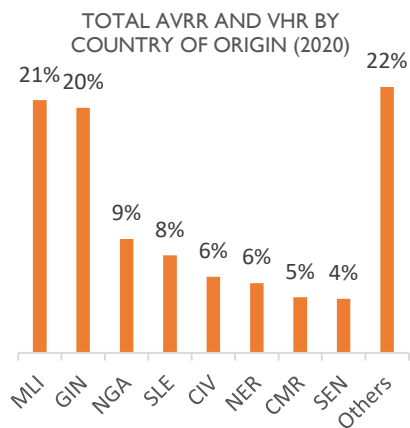
Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)



# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

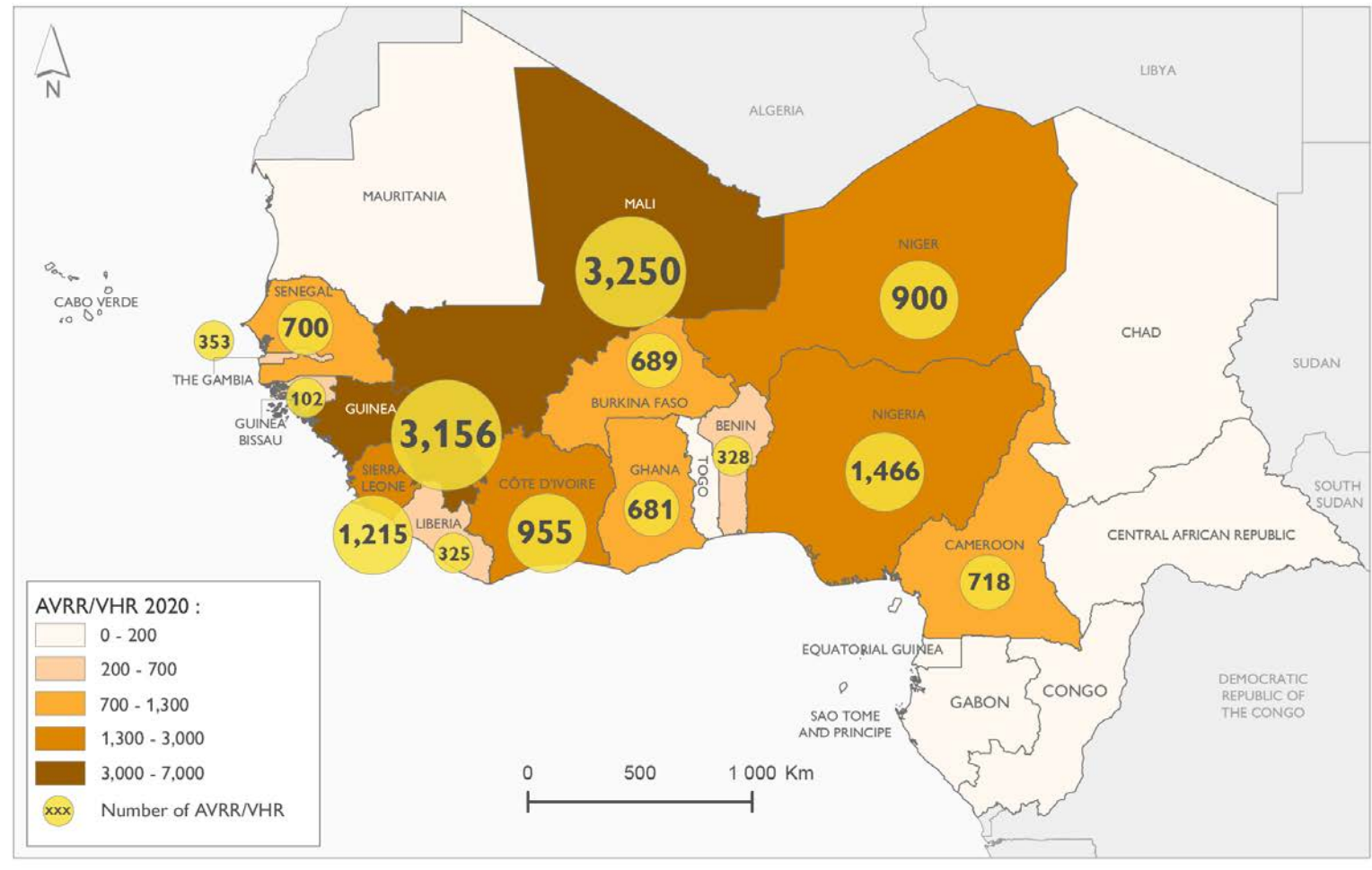
## 1.2.4. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2020

In 2020, IOM organized the return of 15,143 nationals of West and Central African countries. In 2020, two main countries of origin accounted for 41 per cent of all AVRR and VHR to West and Central Africa in 2020: Mali (3,250 or 21%), and Guinea (3,151 or 20%). In total, 22 countries covered by the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa received returning migrants.



## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2020

Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)



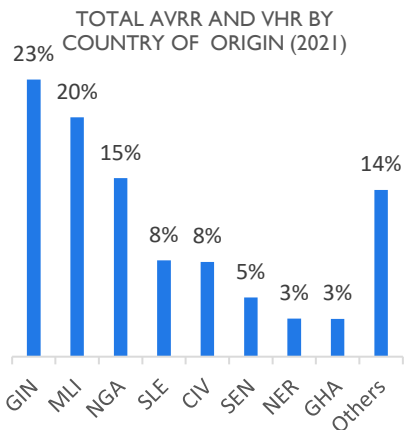
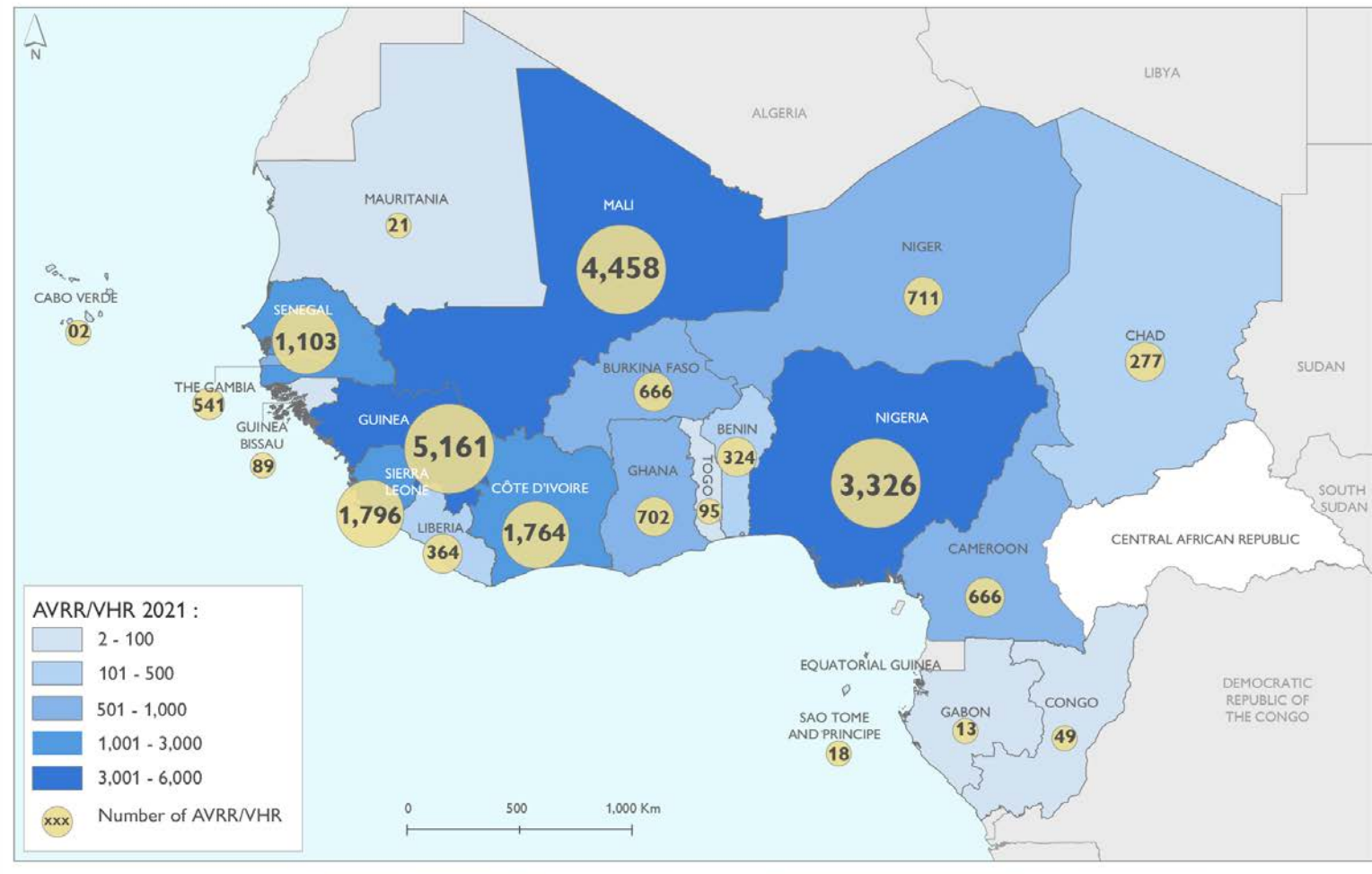
# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

## 1.2.5. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2021

In 2021, IOM organized the return of 22,127 nationals of West and Central African countries. Three main countries of origin accounted for 58 per cent of all AVRR and VHR from West and Central Africa in 2021: Guinea (5,161 or 23%), Mali (4,458 or 20%) and Nigeria (3,326 or 15%). In total, 21 countries covered by the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa received returning migrants.

## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2021

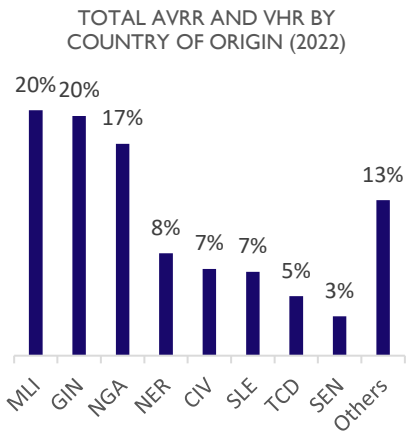
Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM)



# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

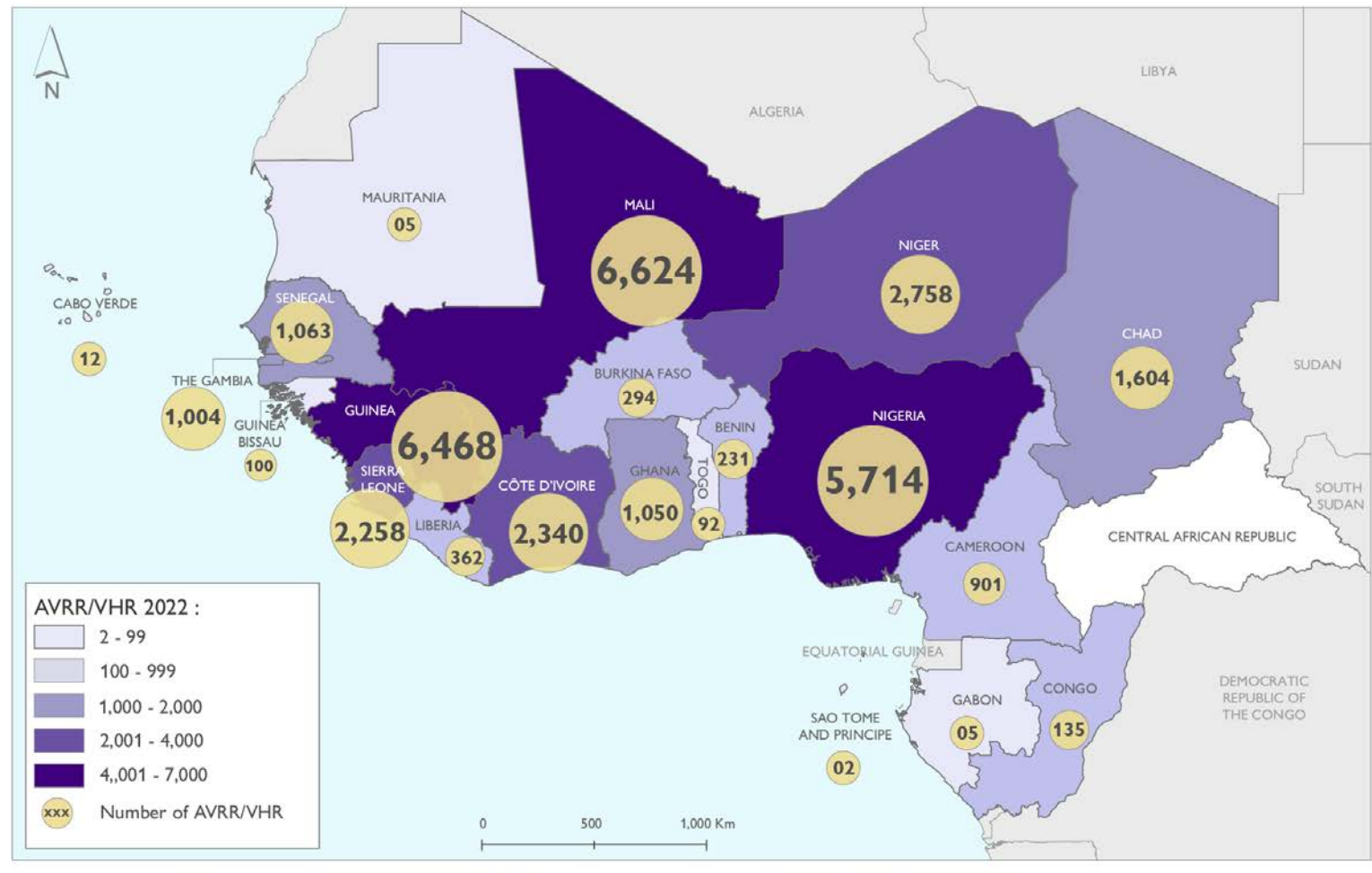
## 1.2.6. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2022

In 2022, IOM organized the return of 33,022 nationals of West and Central Africa countries. The map displays the main countries of origin of West and Central Africa migrants who were beneficiaries of AVRR and VHR in 2022. The main countries of origin were Mali (6,624), Guinea (6,468) and Nigeria (5,714). In total, 22 countries covered by the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa received returning migrants.



## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2022

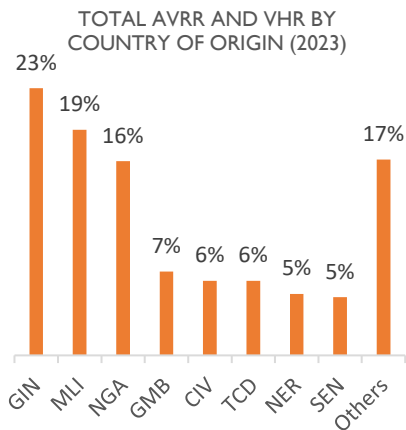
Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)



# I. TRENDS FOR 2017-2023

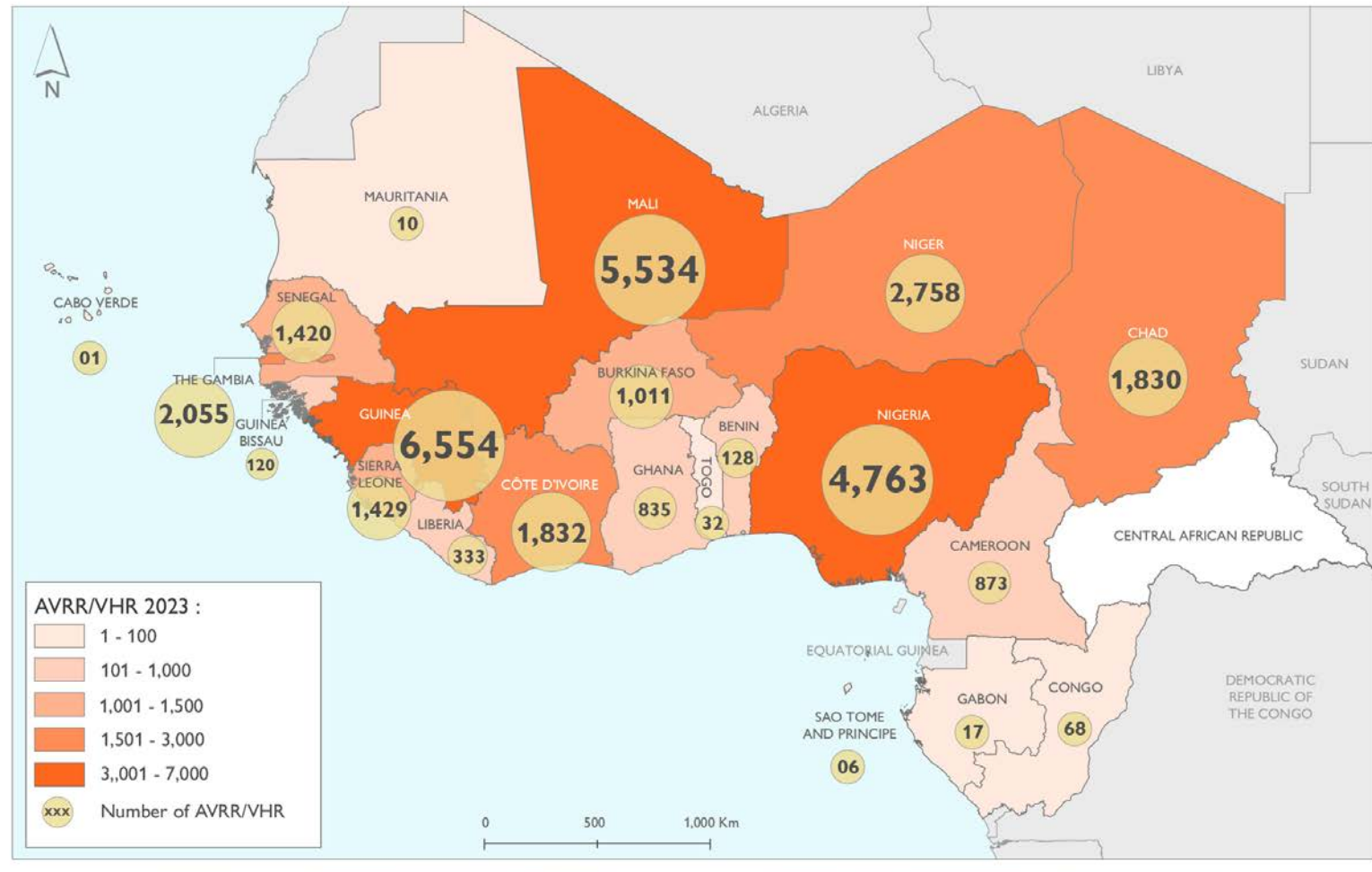
## 1.2.7. BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN - 2023

In 2023, IOM organized the return of 30,310 nationals of West and Central Africa countries.. The main countries of origin were Guinea (6,554), Mali (5,534) and Nigeria (4,763). In total, 21 countries covered by the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa received returning migrants.



## AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA - 2023

Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM)





## II. HOST COUNTRIES



## II. HOST COUNTRIES

### 2.1. MAIN REGIONS AND HOST COUNTRIES

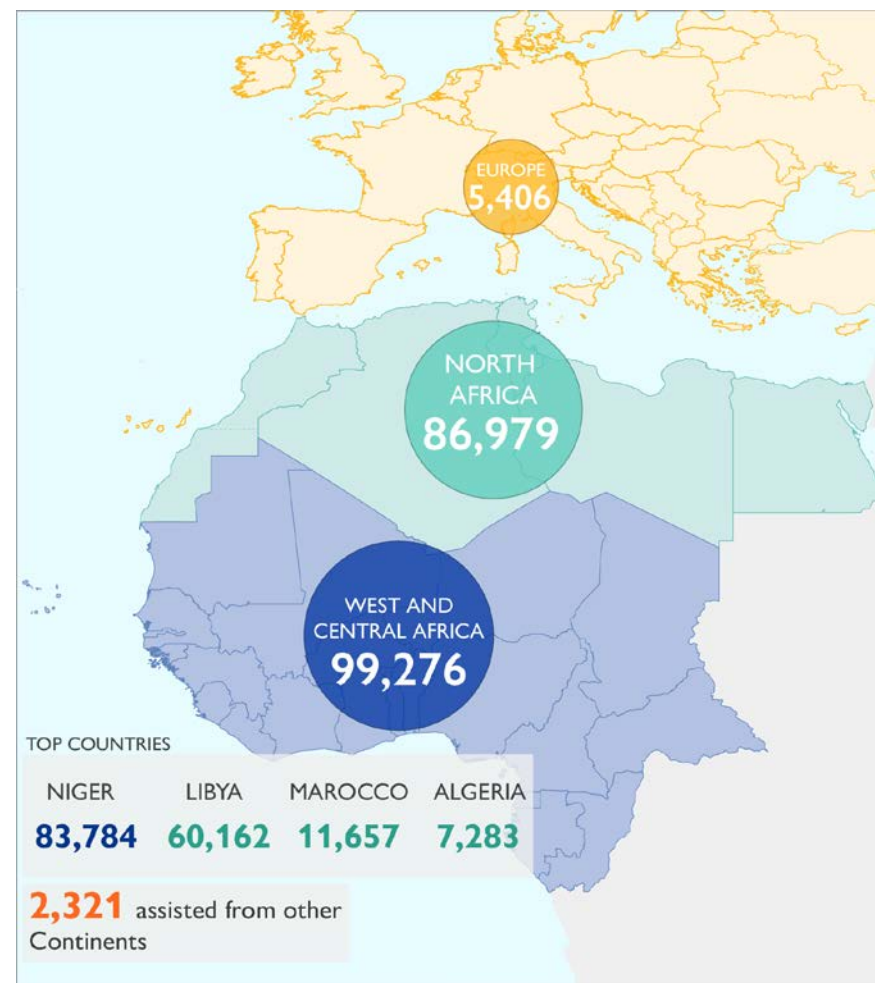
Of the 193,982 individuals assisted in their return by IOM to their country of origin in WCA, 51 per cent (or 99,276 individuals) were assisted to return from a country in West and Central Africa, mainly from Niger.

North Africa was the second main host region for WCA individuals assisted in their return (45%, or 86,979 individuals assisted from a country in the region), mainly from Libya.

The primary regions from which AVRR and VHR movements are organized have shifted in recent years, with West and Central Africa being the region organizing the highest number of returns and, thereby, overtaking North Africa as the main host region since 2019.

Returns from Europe represent 3 per cent of the total number of returns to WCA countries organized by IOM between 2017 and 2023.

Main host countries (countries that assisted migrants in their return) from 2017 to 2023 were Niger (83,784 or 43%) followed by Libya (60,162 or 31%), Morocco (11,657 or 6%), Algeria (7,283 or 4%) and Mali (6,336 or 3%).



## II. HOST COUNTRIES

### 2.2. TRENDS FOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND HOST COUNTRIES (2020-2023)

Since 2020, Guinea and Mali are the top 2 countries of origin, followed by Nigeria, which remains third across that period.. In 2023, returns to the Gambia increased considerably, from 1,004 returns in 2022 to 2,055 returns in 2023, an increase of 105%. We also witness an increase of 244% in returns to Burkina Faso: from 294 returns in 2022 to 1,011 returns in 2023

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN 2023	% OF AVRR/VHR	TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN 2022	% OF AVRR/VHR	TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN 2021	% OF AVRR/VHR	TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN 2020	% OF AVRR/VHR
GUINEA	22%	MALI	20%	GUINEA	23%	MALI	21%
MALI	18%	GUINEA	20%	MALI	20%	GUINEA	21%
NIGERIA	16%	NIGERIA	17%	NIGERIA	15%	NIGERIA	10%
THE GAMBIA	7%	NIGER	8%	SIERRA LEONE	8%	SIERRA LEONE	8%
COTE D'IVOIRE	6%	COTE D'IVOIRE	7%	COTE D'IVOIRE	8%	COTE D'IVOIRE	6%
OTHERS	32%	OTHERS	28%	OTHERS	25%	OTHERS	33%

Niger has been the main host country for AVRR and VHR assistance since 2019, replacing Libya which had previously been in this position in 2017 and 2018. However, returns from Niger have been decreasing since 2020. In 2020, 60 per cent of the returns were organized from Niger, before decreasing to 46 per cent in 2021, 45 per cent in 2022., and 43 per cent in 2023. Returns from Niger were stopped for almost two months following the military coup in August 2023. In contrast, proportions of returns from Libya have increased by more than 10 percentage points between 2021 (13%) and 2022 (25%). Since 2020, Mali is no longer among the top host countries, induced by the rise of returns from the other North African countries: Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

TOP HOST COUNTRIES 2023	% OF AVRR/VHR	TOP HOST COUNTRIES 2022	% OF AVRR/VHR	TOP HOST COUNTRIES 2021	% OF AVRR/VHR	TOP HOST COUNTRIES 2020	% OF AVRR/VHR
NIGER	43%	NIGER	45%	NIGER	46%	NIGER	60%
LIBYA	24%	LIBYA	25%	LIBYA	13%	LIBYA	11%
ALGERIA	8%	MOROCCO	7%	MOROCCO	10%	MOROCCO	5%
TUNISIA	7%	CHAD	4%	ALGERIA	9%	ALGERIA	3%
MOROCCO	6%	ALGERIA	4%	CHAD	4%	CHAD	3%
OTHERS	12%	OTHERS	15%	OTHERS	17%	OTHERS	17%

## II. HOST COUNTRIES

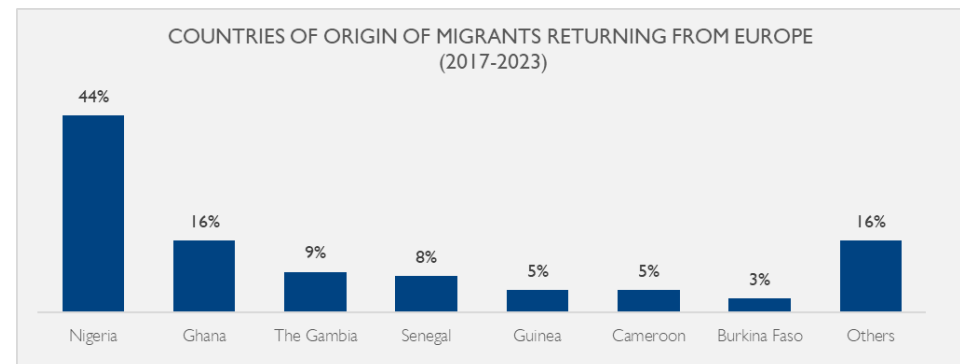
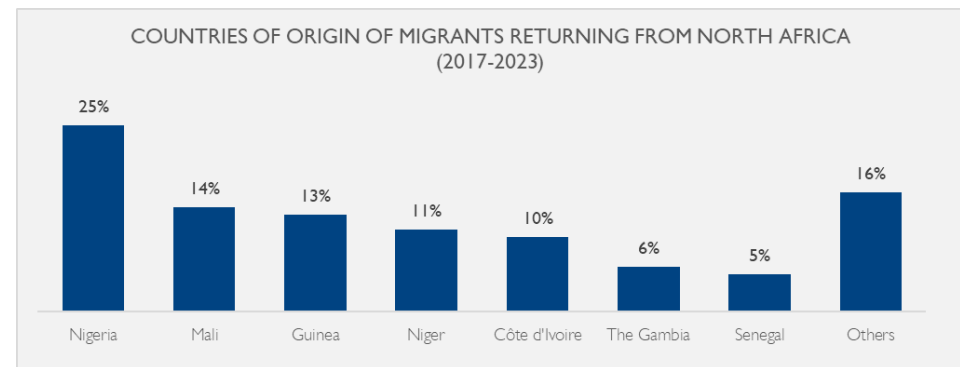
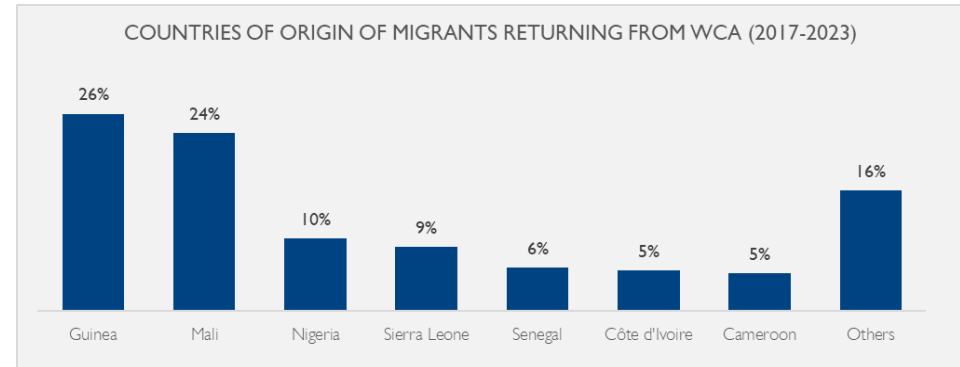
### 2.3. CROSS ANALYSIS OF HOST AND ORIGIN COUNTRIES

Between 2017 and 2023, most returns from the WCA Region were towards Guinea (26%), Mali (24%) and Nigeria (10%). Migrants who were assisted to return to their country of origin from North Africa were mainly from Nigeria (25%). Since 2017, Mali and Guinea have remained among the top 3 countries of origins for returns both from WCA and from North Africa.

Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands were the top 3 host countries for returns from Europe between 2017 and 2023. Most returns from the three previously mentioned countries took place towards English speaking countries, namely Nigeria (44%), Ghana (16%), and the Gambia (9%).

#### TOP HOST COUNTRIES 2017-2023

NIGER	83,784	43%
LIBYA	60,162	31%
MOROCCO	11,657	06%
ALGERIA	7,283	04%
MALI	6,336	03%
TUNISIA	5,748	03%
CHAD	3,157	02%
MAURITANIA	2,951	02%





### III. REGIONS OF ORIGIN

## III. REGIONS OF ORIGIN

### 3.1. REGIONS OF ORIGIN OF ASSISTED INDIVIDUALS (2020-2023)

Top regions of origin are based on places of origin as declared by migrants assisted by IOM between 2020 and 2023. For this period, Conakry in Guinea remains the main region of origin, followed by Bamako in Mali. Kayes (Mali), and Lagos (Nigeria) are in the top six regions of origin.

However, the regions of origin were not documented for a notable number of returnees. The number of returnees with no documented information on their region of origin represents 48 per cent of the total number of returns between 2020 and 2023 in the WCA region.

TOP REGIONS 2023	% of AVRR/VHR	TOP REGIONS 2022	% of AVRR/VHR	TOP REGIONS 2021	% of AVRR/VHR	TOP REGIONS 2020	% of AVRR/VHR
CONAKRY (GIN)	14%	CONAKRY (GIN)	18%	CONAKRY (GIN)	20%	CONAKRY (GIN)	13%
BAMAKO (MLI)	13%	BAMAKO (MLI)	11%	BAMAKO (MLI)	13%	BAMAKO (MLI)	12%
KAYES (MLI)	9%	LAGOS (NGA)	9%	LAGOS (NGA)	8%	KAYES (MLI)	12%
KANO (NGA)	5%	KANO (NGA)	8%	KAYES (MLI)	7%	LAGOS (NGA)	7%
KOULIKORO (MLI)	5%	KAYES (MLI)	6%	KOULIKORO (MLI)	4%	KOULIKORO (MLI)	5%
LAGOS (NGA)	4%	KOULIKORO (MLI)	5%	KANO (NGA)	4%	DAKAR (SEN)	4%
EDO (NGA)	3%	TAHOUA (NER)	4%	MAMOU (GIN)	4%	KANKAN (GIN)	4%
GAO (MLI)	2%	GAO (MLI)	3%	DAKAR (SEN)	4%	KANO (NGA)	3%
TOMBOUCTOU (MLI)	2%	MAMOU (GIN)	3%	KINDIA (GIN)	3%	CENTRE (CMR)	3%
KOLDA (SEN)	2%	KINDIA (GIN)	2%	TOMBOUCTOU (MLI)	3%	KINDIA (GIN)	3%
OTHERS	33%	OTHERS	31%	OTHERS	31%	OTHERS	35%

# III. REGIONS OF ORIGIN

## 3.2. REGIONS OF ORIGIN

Main regions of origin are displayed in this map for AVRR and VHR between 2017 and 2023. Top regions by country of origin of migrants are displayed on the tables below.

BURKINA FASO		CAMEROON	
Centre-Est	63%	Littoral	51%
Centre	15%	Centre	44%
Sahel	12%	Ouest	2%

CHAD		CÔTE D'IVOIRE	
Kanem	35%	Lagunes	48%
Hadjer-Lamis	20%	Bas-Sassandra	41%
Lac	15%	Lacs	7%

THE GAMBIA		GHANA	
Banjul	61%	Ashanti	56%
Western	22%	Western	18%
Upper River	9%	Central	12%

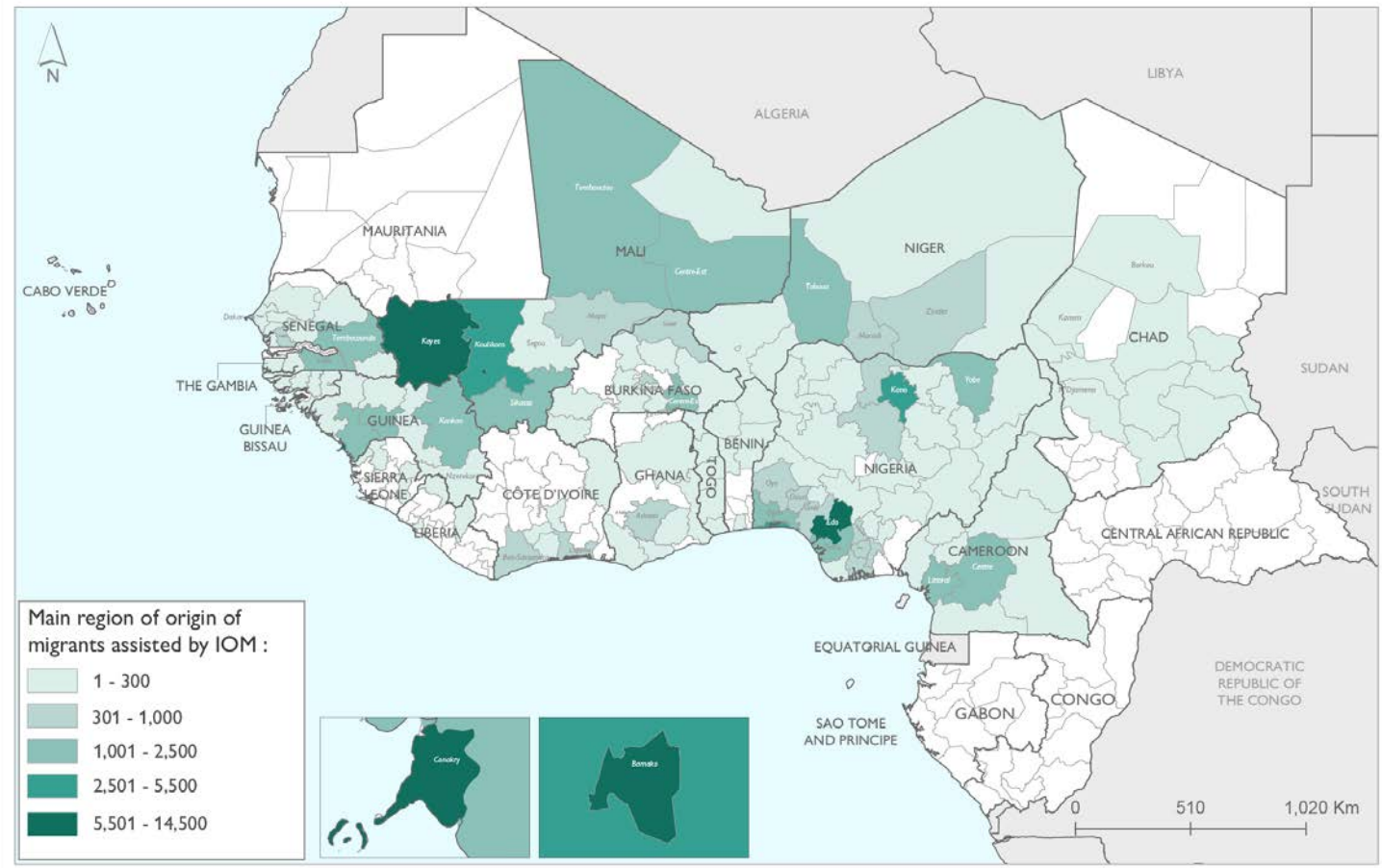
GUINEA		MALI	
Conakry	69%	Bamako	38%
Kankan	10%	Kayes	29%
Mamou	10%	Koulikoro	14%

NIGER		NIGERIA	
Tahoua	61%	Lagos	27%
Maradi	16%	Edo	23%
Zinder	15%	Kano	13%

SENEGAL		SIERRA LEONE	
Dakar	33%	Kenema	29%
Kolda	32%	Bombali	29%
Tambacounda	17%	Kono	29%

## DISTRIBUTION OF AVRR AND VHR BY MAIN REGIONS OF ORIGIN (2017- 2023)

Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)



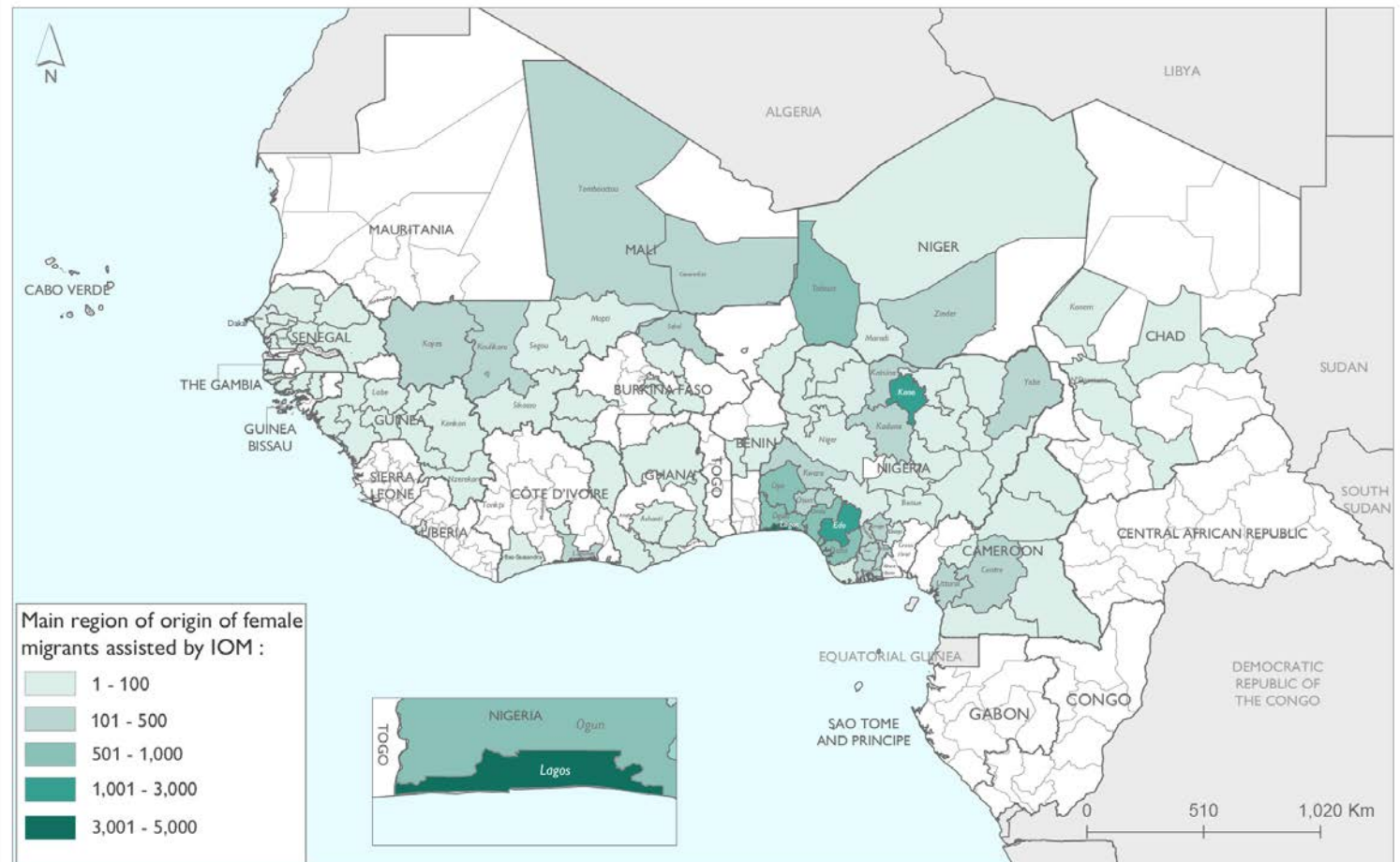
# III. REGIONS OF ORIGIN

## 3.3. REGIONS OF ORIGIN BY SEX

Main regions of origins of female migrants assisted to return by IOM are located in Nigeria (Edo, Lagos, Delta and Ogun), Cameroon (Littoral, Centre), Guinea (Conakry), Mali (Bamako), Niger (Tahoua, Zinder) as well as Côte d'Ivoire (Lagunes).

### MAIN REGIONS OF ORIGIN AND PROPORTION OF FEMALE AVRR AND VHR (2017- 2023)

Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)





## IV. SEX AND AGE



## IV. SEX AND AGE

### 4.1 SEX

Between 2017 and 2023, more than 34,000 women were assisted by IOM to return to their country of origin in West and Central Africa, representing 18 per cent of the total AVRR and VHR caseloads during that period.

The proportion of women returnees reached its highest value during the year 2023 (21%), and rose by 7 percentage points compared to 2020. Between 2020 and 2023; a decrease in returns from Niger (from 60% to 43%), one of the main host countries with the highest male to female returnees ratio (95%), was observed. In contrast, the fraction of returns from Libya and Tunisia (host countries with respectively 24% and 30% of female returnees assisted); increased from 2020 to 2023.

18% FEMALE MALE 82%

2017	18%	FEMALE	MALE	82%
2018	14%	FEMALE	MALE	86%
2019	16%	FEMALE	MALE	84%
2020	14%	FEMALE	MALE	86%
2021	19%	FEMALE	MALE	81%
2022	20%	FEMALE	MALE	80%
2023	21%	FEMALE	MALE	79%

## IV. SEX AND AGE

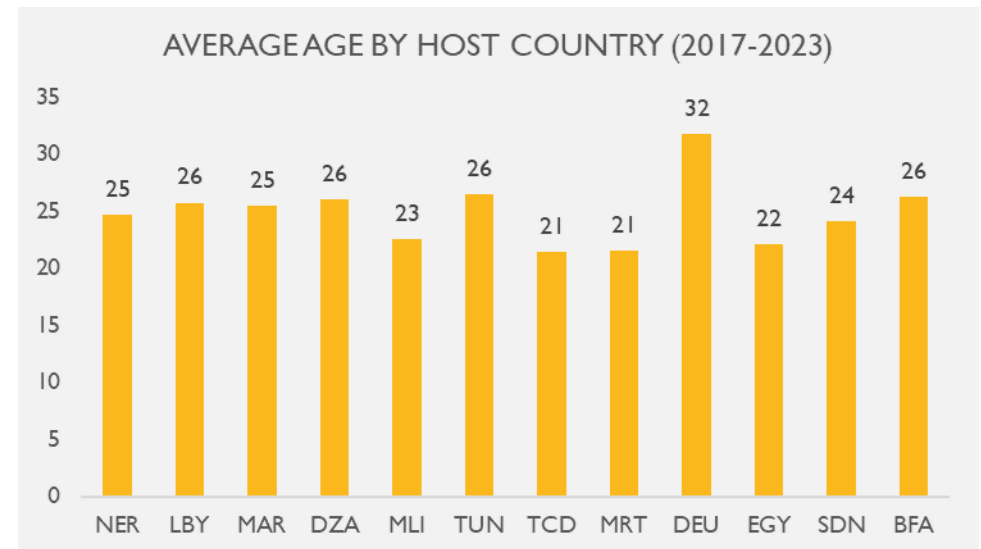
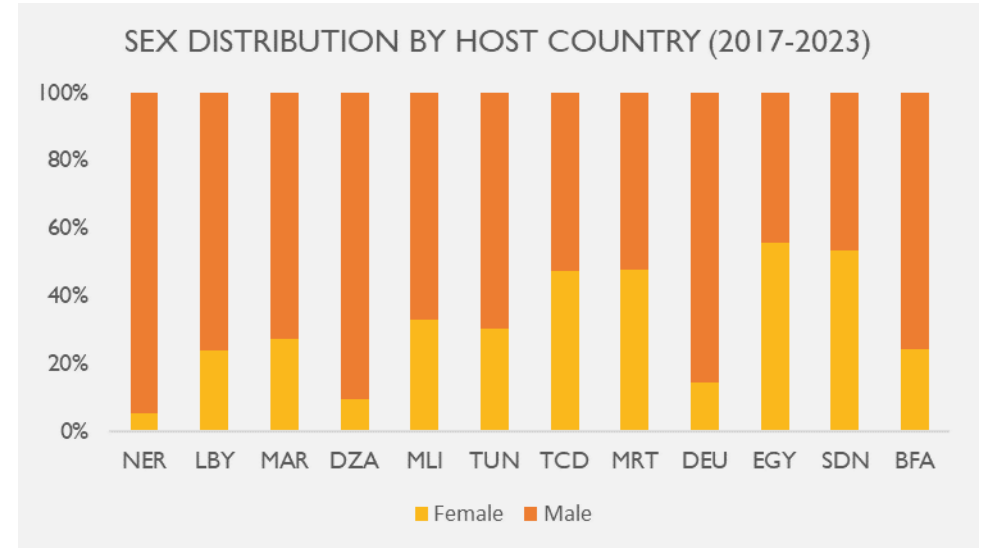
### 4.2. HOST COUNTRIES BY SEX AND AGE

Host countries have a very different sex ratio in their AVRR and VHR to WCA between 2017 and 2023.

If beneficiaries of AVRR and VHR organized from Niger (95%), Algeria (90%), Germany (85%), Italy (85%) are in vast majority made up of males, other host countries display high proportions of females among AVRR and VHR beneficiaries, including Lebanon (96%), Ghana (74%), Gabon (73%) and Côte d'Ivoire (61%), albeit the absolute number of returns from these countries is low. From the top 12 host countries shown in the graph, only Egypt (56%) and Sudan (53%) showed a higher proportion of females among beneficiaries.

The type of migration has a significant impact on sex distribution. Host countries with high level of family and/or domestic work migration (e.g., Middle Eastern countries) tend to have higher proportions of female migrants within their AVRR beneficiaries.

The age variable also varies from one host country to another. Egypt and Ghana, have, on average, the youngest AVRR beneficiaries from WCA. The average age of the WCA AVRR caseload returning from Chad and Mauritania is 21 years old. On the contrary, AVRR beneficiaries assisted from Germany to WCA are on average above 30 (Average of 32 years old).



## IV. SEX AND AGE

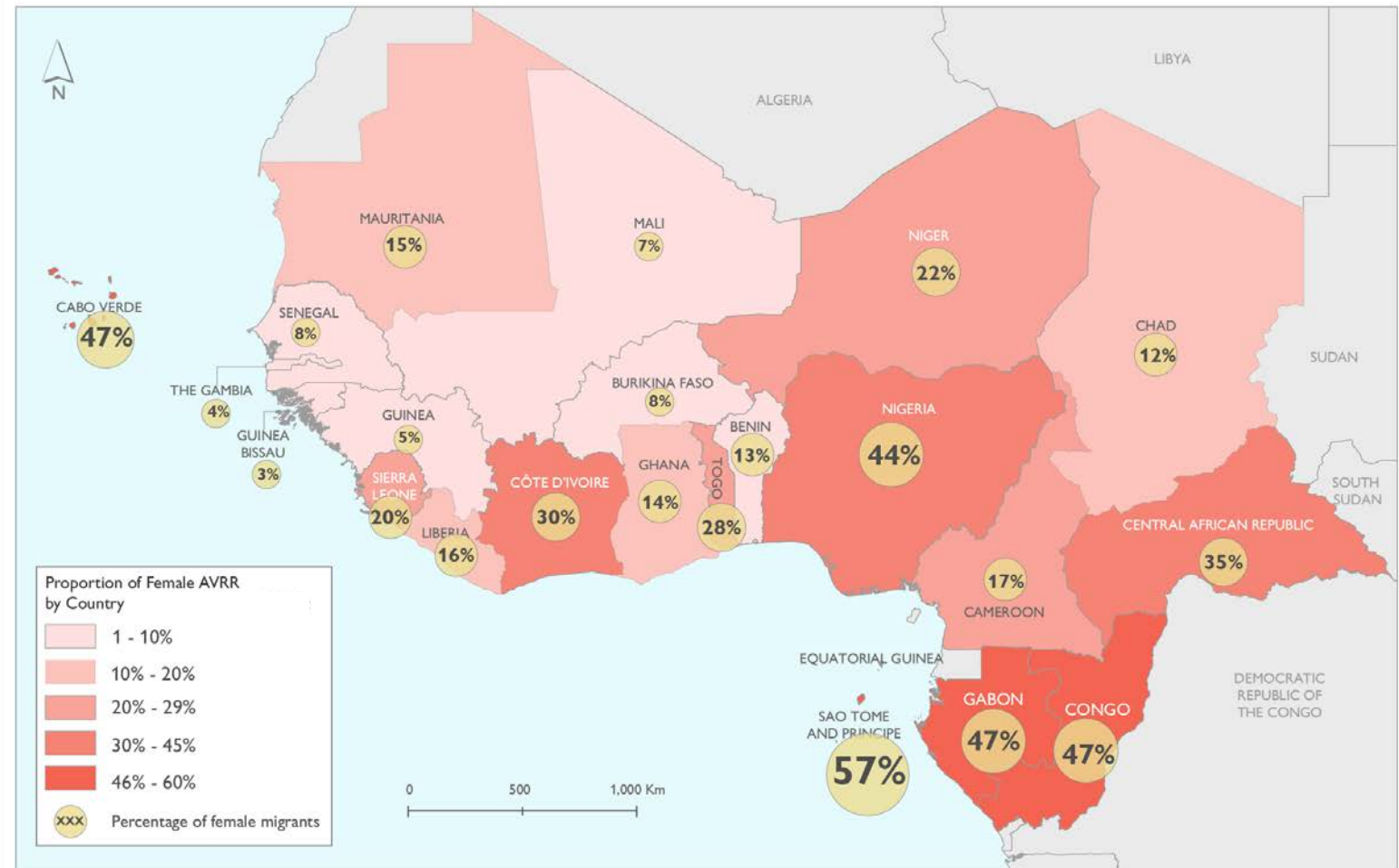
### 4.3. SEX BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Among the main countries of origin, Nigeria has the highest proportion of women returnees (44%) as opposed to Guinea Bissau (3%) and the Gambia (4%) which recorded the lowest proportions of women.

The high proportion of female migrants in Nigeria may be explained by multiple underlying or conjunctural factors including poverty, cultural approach to migration among the community and the family, trafficking networks, and ease of obtaining visa for certain countries.

#### PROPORTION OF FEMALES AVRR AND VHR TO WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA 2017 - 2023

Source: International Organization for Migration(IOM)

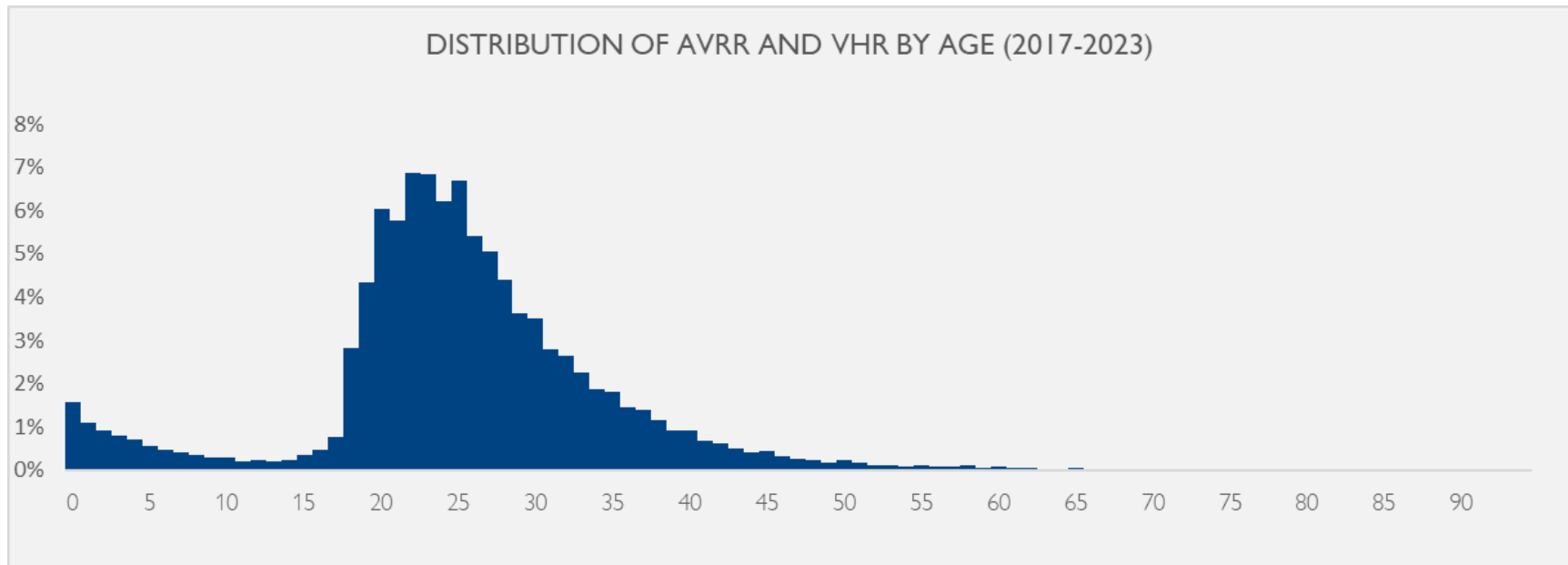


## IV. SEX AND AGE

### 4.4. AVERAGE AGE OF RETURNEES

On average, individuals assisted in their return by IOM between 2017 and 2023 were 25 years old at the time of their return. The below chart shows the distribution by age (min: 0, max: 94, mode: 23). 10% of individuals assisted were under 18 years old, 46% between 18 and 25 years old, and 33% between 26 and 35 years old. The remaining 11 per cent were 36 years old and above at the time of their return to their countries of origin.

**25** AVERAGE AGE

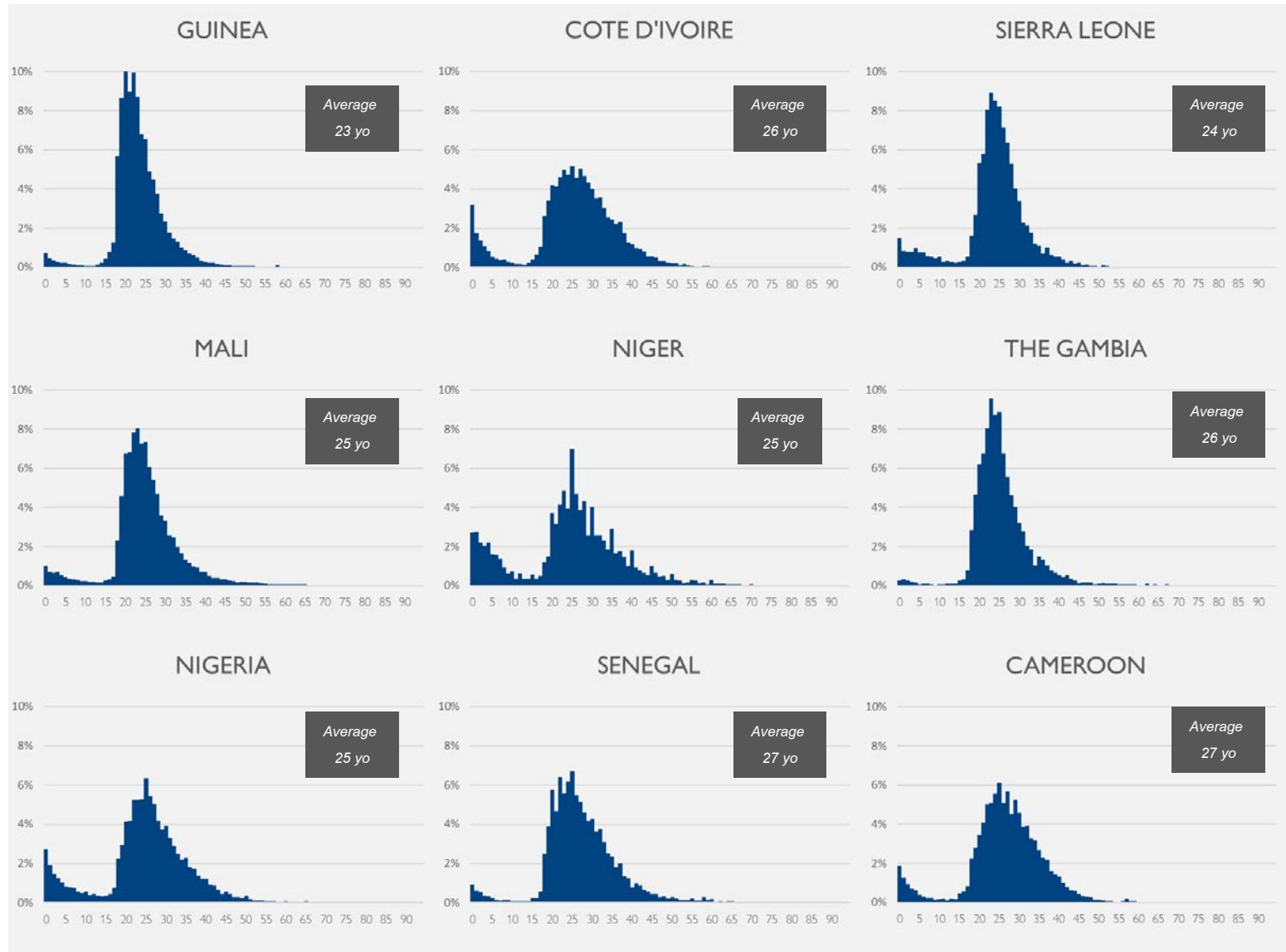


# IV. SEX AND AGE

## 4.5. AGE DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

This page presents the age distribution of the main countries of origin for AVRR and VHR organised by IOM between 2017 and 2023.

The shape of Guinea's age chart displays a particularly young population; an average age of 23 years old and the mode, most frequent value, being 20 years old. On another hand, the shape of the age chart in Senegal presents an older population; the average age being above 27 years old.



# IV. SEX AND AGE

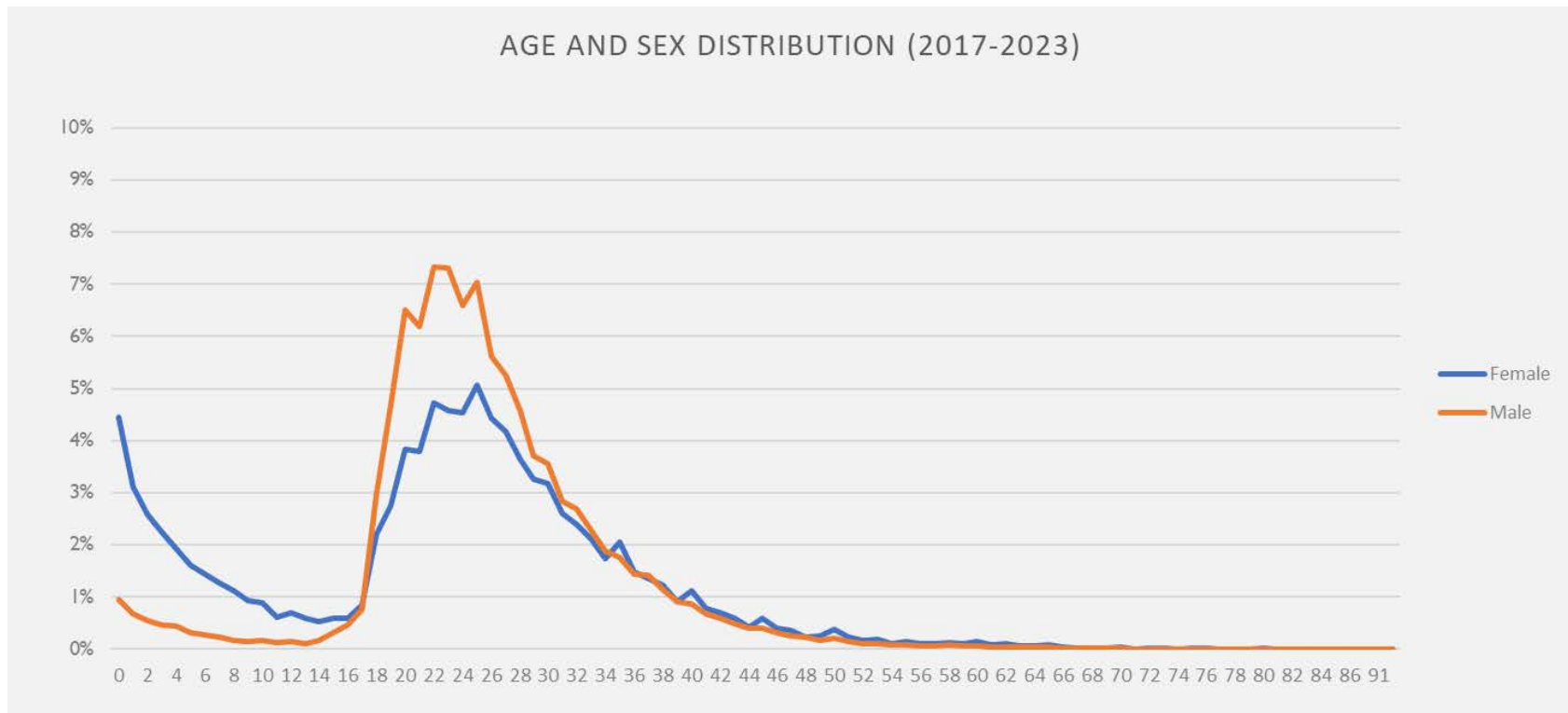
## 4.6. SEX & AGE

When crossing age and sex variables together, two main results are visible:

1. Women supported in their return are on average younger (23 years old) than men (26 years old).
2. The proportion of children within women (26%) is higher than the same proportion for men (6%).

Children are mainly nationals from Nigeria (28%), Mali (13%), Niger (13%), Guinea (11%) and Côte d'Ivoire (10%), returning from Libya and Niger (respectively representing 35% and 21% of the total number of children assisted with AVRR and VHR).

AVERAGE AGE	
FEMALE	<b>23</b> years old
MALE	<b>26</b> years old





V. PROTECTION CASES

# V. PROTECTION CASES

## 5.1. PROTECTION CASES OVERVIEW

A total of 12,783 protection cases benefited from AVRR/VHR between 2017 and 2023, which represents 7 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries assisted. Protections cases include unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs), migrants with health conditions and victims of trafficking (VOTs).

Data collected based on discussions upon departure or return with assisted migrants shows that one per cent of all migrants assisted to return were unaccompanied and separated children. These are mainly nationals from Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria and Cameroon returning from Mali or Niger.

Two per cent of all migrants assisted to return presented health conditions at the time of departure. They are mainly Nigerian nationals (41%) and the proportion of migrants with health conditions among women is higher (6%) than among men (2%).

Over three per cent of all individuals assisted between 2017 and 2023, were identified as victims of trafficking during their journey or stay. 83 per cent of reported victims of trafficking were women, 73 per cent of all identified VOTs were between 18 and 30 years old.

# 12,783

**TOTAL NUMBER OF PROTECTION CASES (7%)**

# 2,019

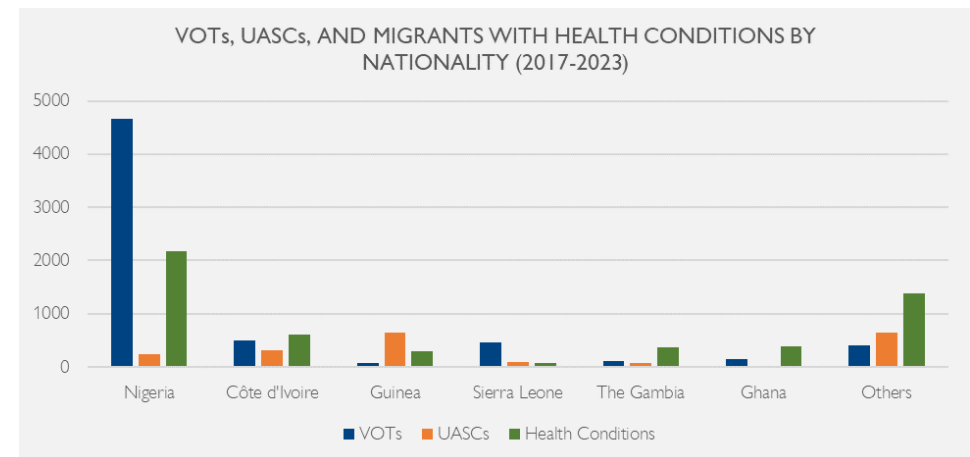
**UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN (1%)**

# 5,299

**SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CONDITIONS (3%)**

# 6,365

**VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING (3%)**





# V. PROTECTION CASES

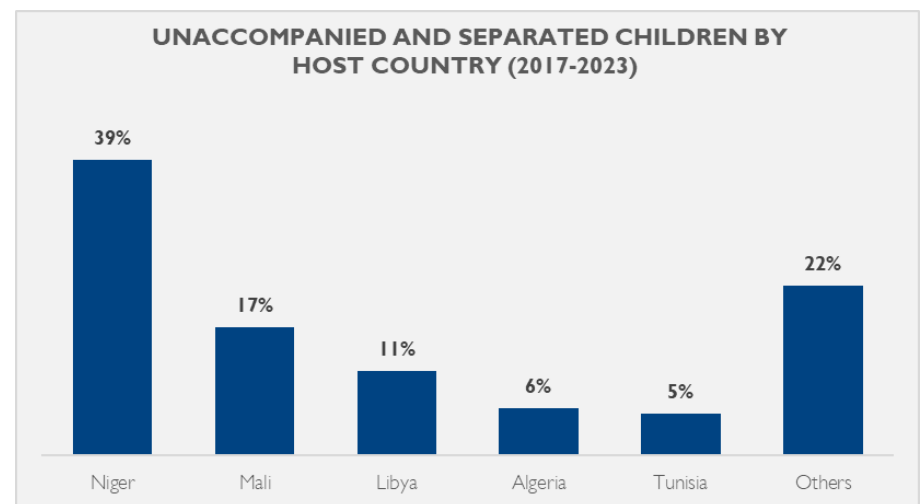
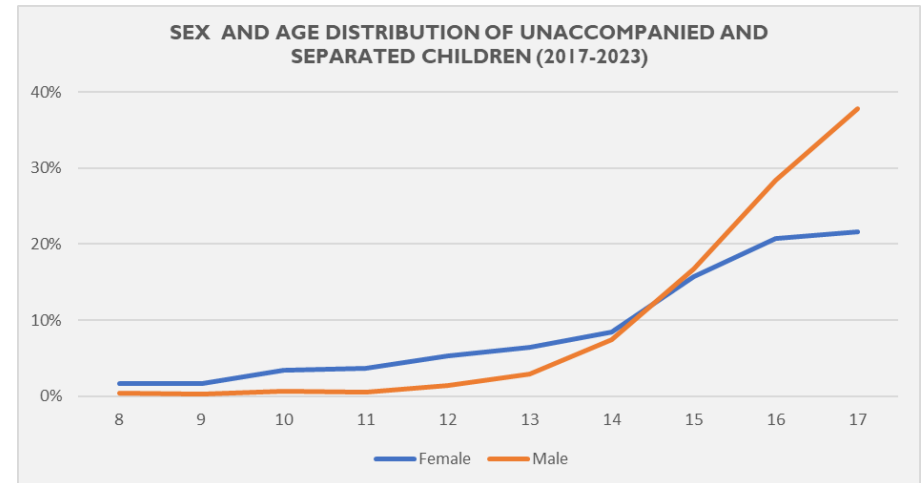
## 5.2. UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN OVERVIEW

A total of 2,019 unaccompanied and separated children were assisted with AVRR and VHR towards WCA countries between 2017 and 2023. UASCs represent about 11 per cent of the total number of children returnees in the region between 2017 and 2023. 79 per cent of the total number of unaccompanied children were boys, and 78 per cent of all UASCs were between 15 and 17 years old.

Niger (39%), Mali (17%), and Libya (11%) represent the main host countries from which AVRR and VHR were organised towards WCA countries in terms of UASCs. 21 per cent of the unaccompanied and separated children were girls, mainly returning from Mali and Libya to Nigeria.

### UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN BY YEAR:

<u>2017</u>	184	10%
<u>2018</u>	358	19%
<u>2019</u>	352	17%
<u>2020</u>	192	10%
<u>2021</u>	315	16%
<u>2022</u>	367	18%
<u>2023</u>	211	10%



# V. PROTECTION CASES

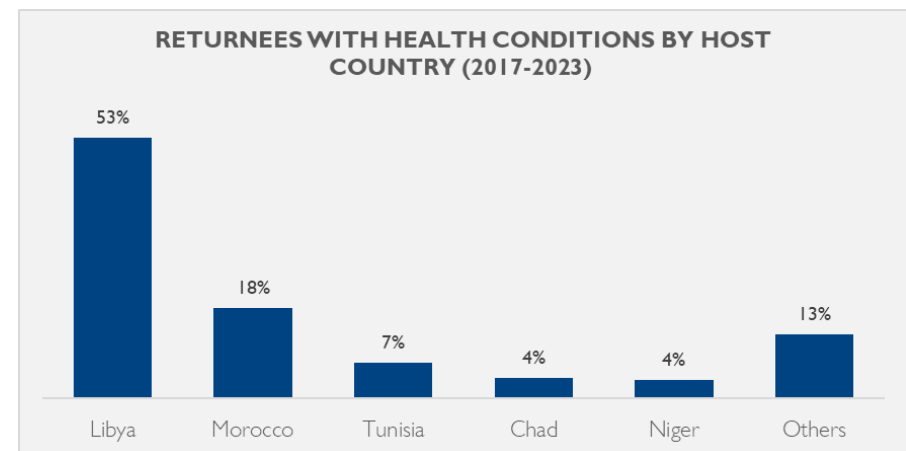
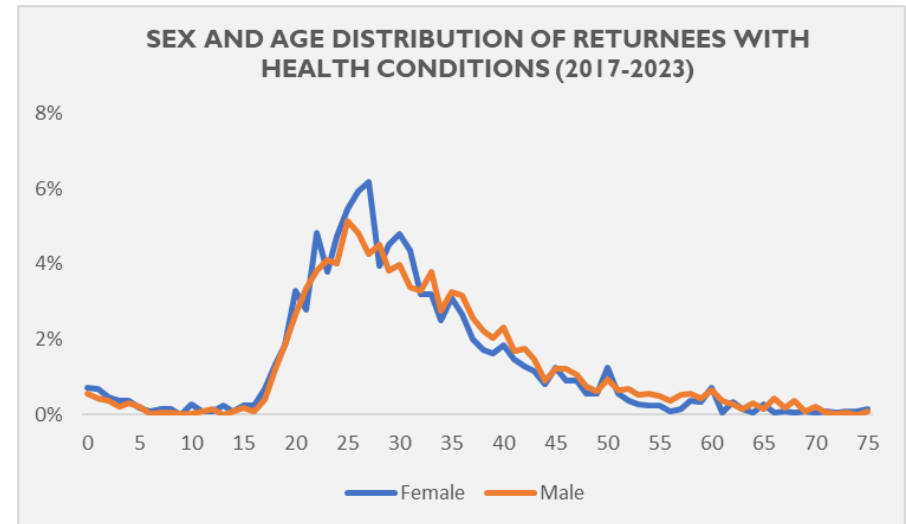
## 5.3. SIGNIFICANT HEALTH CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

Between 2017 and 2023, over 5,200 returnees had significant health conditions at the time of departure. Their age range varied from under 1 to 91 years old, with a mode (the most common value) at 25 years old. 55 per cent of women with health conditions were nationals of Nigeria, mainly returning from Libya. It is important to stress that data collection on returnees' health conditions have been strengthened in late 2020, which explains the substantial increase in the number of returnees with health conditions reported in the following years.

The main host countries of returnees with health conditions are Libya (53%) and Morocco (18%). 82 per cent of migrants with health conditions returned from North Africa.

### RETURNEES WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS BY YEAR:

<u>2017</u>	70	01%
<u>2018</u>	102	02%
<u>2019</u>	283	05%
<u>2020</u>	395	07%
<u>2021</u>	1,056	20%
<u>2022</u>	1,691	32%
<u>2023</u>	1,702	32%



# V. PROTECTION CASES

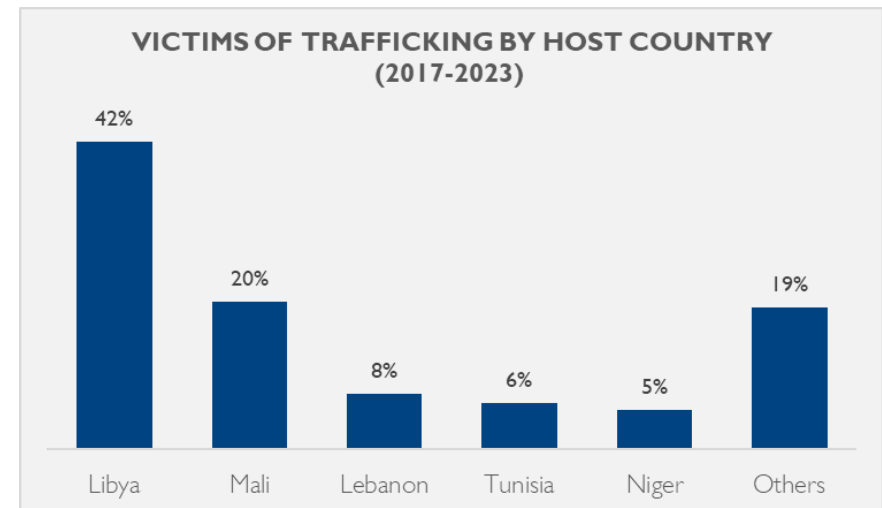
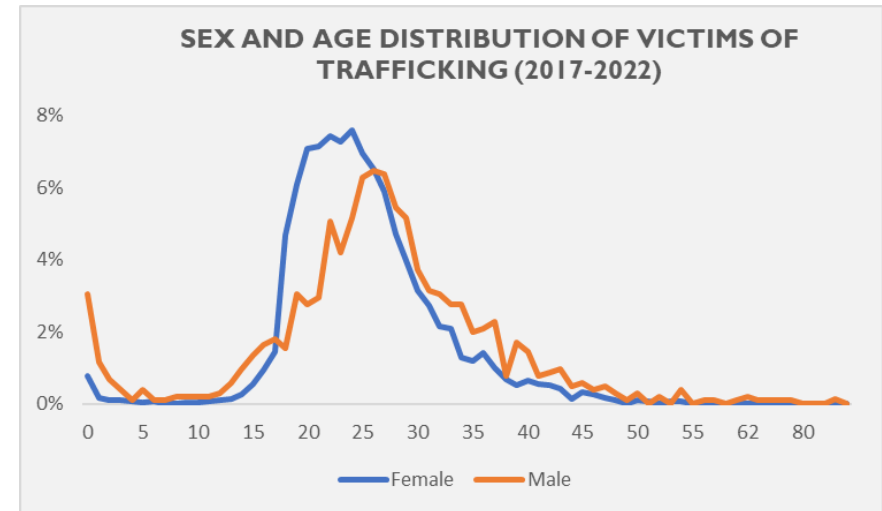
## 5.4. VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING OVERVIEW

Over 6,000 victims of trafficking (VOTs) were assisted with AVRR and VHR towards WCA countries between 2017 and 2023. 94 per cent of VOTs were adults (above 18) and 83 per cent of them were women. Nearly 79 per cent of women VOTs were Nigerians, they returned mainly from Libya and Mali.

During the period covered by this report the highest number of VOT returns was observed in 2022 with 1,464 returns. The main host countries of victims of trafficking are Libya (44%) and Mali (20%).

### VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING BY YEAR:

<u>2017</u>	371	06%
<u>2018</u>	927	15%
<u>2019</u>	1,045	17%
<u>2020</u>	468	08%
<u>2021</u>	870	14%
<u>2022</u>	1,464	24%
<u>2023</u>	1,080	17%



# METHODOLOGY

This report displays analysis conducted thanks to data collected from individuals that IOM assisted in their voluntary or humanitarian return.

## METHODOLOGY

Data is being collected by enumerators upon departure and arrival of each individual participating to IOM voluntary or humanitarian return programmes.

All data is then being entered and stocked by each host and origin countries. The regional office for West and Central Africa works on a consolidated overview every month.

In case of protection concerns (victims of trafficking or abuse), returnees are going through specific discussions with medical and psychosocial professionals.

## LIMITATIONS

Data displayed in this report presents the result of more than 190,000 migrants assisted in their voluntary or humanitarian return by IOM between 2017 and 2023. It is therefore a particularly strong representation of intra and inter-regional movements.

However, certain limitations should apply to this dataset. It does not represent accurately all movements and migration from the West and Central Africa region, but only represents migration undertaken by those voluntarily assisted to return by IOM. Therefore, although the dataset allows for a

certain confidence in the data given its width, it should not be considered as representative of all migration movements from the region.

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The framework for assisted voluntary return and reintegration (hereinafter referred to as the "Framework") builds on IOM's long-standing contribution in this area and marks an important milestone in the Organization's engagement in AVRR. Designed to guide both policymakers and AVRR practitioners, the scope of the Framework goes beyond IOM's own engagement.

Considering the diversity of AVRR projects' eligibility criteria, available resources, national policies, implementation partners and operational contexts, the Framework proposes a road map to address voluntary return and reintegration in a holistic way – one that responds to the needs of the individual returnees, the needs of the communities to which they return and the priorities of concerned governments, calling for the adoption of coordinated measures, policies, and practices between stakeholders responsible for migration management and development at the international, national and local levels.

To access the document, please visit:

[https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our\\_work/DMM/AVRR/a\\_framework\\_for\\_avrr\\_online\\_pdf\\_optimized\\_20181112.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/a_framework_for_avrr_online_pdf_optimized_20181112.pdf)





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