

# REPRESENTING MIGRATION IN THE MEDIA

Report on capacity-building initiatives and recommendations

*Burkina Faso, Colombia,  
Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire,  
The Gambia, Guinea,  
Jordan, Lebanon,  
Madagascar, Mali,  
Mauritania, Morocco,  
Niger, Senegal,  
Togo and Tunisia*



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# Summary



This report was commissioned by CFI, a subsidiary of the group France Medias Monde, and funded by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE). The project arose from a joint initiative with the France team as part of the "International Migration and Development 2018-2022 action plan" adopted by the French government's Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) in February 2018. It aims to analyse and improve representations of migration conveyed by the media, especially local and recent forms of migration.

In April 2021, CFI thus launched the "Dialogues on Migration" project, funded by the MEAE. The project aims to help foster an inclusive debate across society to bring about change in how migration is represented in the public arena. As part of this project, pilot activities to build capacity in production on the theme of migration were launched in 2022, targeting media outlets, journalists and schools of journalism in the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania and Niger. This report was also commissioned for this project, as part of a forward-looking approach aiming to assess the pertinence and opportunity of developing projects to reinforce and support media outlets in the well-informed and well-balanced coverage of migration, in one or several of the countries under review.

This participatory assessment has been conducted to pinpoint stakeholders in media and migration, gain insight into the

representations conveyed by both media and public discourse relayed in the media and social media on migration, analyse these representations, draw up a comprehensive report of initiatives already deployed by other international operators and analyse their impact.

It is part of a forward-looking approach aiming to assess the pertinence and opportunity of developing projects to reinforce media outlets and support them in providing well-informed, well-balanced coverage of migration, alongside the French development agency (Agence Française de Développement or AFD) in particular.

It covers the period 2015-2022 and examines 16 countries: Burkina Faso, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia.

Three organisations were selected to produce this review: the DARA International foundation and DAHLIA, which reviewed Colombia, and consulting firm Red Mangrove Development Advisors (RMDA) which reviewed the other 15 countries.

## The main expected outcomes

- Gain insight into the image of migration and migrants in both media and public discourse in the 16 countries via:

- an overview outlining the key migration trends,
- a review of how migration is handled in both the media and public discourse.

List what has already been done and who by, in terms of building capacity in the media on the theme of migration in these 16 countries, and the ensuing impact with:

- a report on capacity-building and support initiatives conducted, and an assessment of their impact,
- possible courses of action for CFI, its partners and other organisations providing support to media outlets with an interest in this theme.

The same method was applied across the board to all countries, with a literature review, one-on-one interviews, a discussion group with migrants and another with journalists having benefitted from capacity-building projects. Each discussion groups was attended by around ten participants. The main aim of the migrant discussion groups was to collect and analyse their perceptions of media coverage of migration in their country of residence. The aim of the journalist discussion group was to collect their assessment of the capacity-building initiatives they had previously attended and analyse this.

The country reviews were each produced using the same outline and the same predetermined terminology and tools for the purposes of comparing countries and to foster interregional and international prisms of thought.

The report uses internationally defined concepts, listed and explained in the lexicon, even though this terminology is often far removed from actual conditions on the ground and the vocabulary of journalism. Migration is a complex phenomenon, with certain forms tending to overlap, both from a conceptual and statistical vantage point. For example, those of us living in the west can have trouble distinguishing between economic and family migration.

Each country review was produced by a team comprising members of the international coordination team with one or two local consultants, using shared tools and the vocabulary and context specific to each country. The report will be followed by a communication campaign and the organisation of a forum at which the findings of the report will be shared, to raise awareness among local and international stakeholders and to identify possible links and synergy in action.

## Media landscape

Traditional media (television, press and radio) are all available in varying proportions and volumes in all 16 countries included in this report. To cite an example, Morocco has a rich media landscape with some 60 newspapers and magazines, whereas neighbouring Mauritania only has five.

In most of the countries in West Africa and Comoros, national and community radio is also very important. As evidenced by Côte d'Ivoire with 200 radios of various types: nationwide public stations like *Radio Côte d'Ivoire*, *Fréquence 2* and *RTI Radio Bouaké*, or privately-owned like *Nostalgie*, *Radio Jam* and *Life Radio*. The remaining radio stations mostly serve local communities.

Social media's reach is growing. In matters of migration, it is used in three separate ways:

- Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber are commonly used by migrants themselves to communicate with others and to collect information on migration;
- these networks are also a source of useful information for journalists covering migration issues;
- lastly, they act as a "sounding board" for public and media discourse, providing an arena for personal accounts and more radical opinions on migration (not necessarily well-founded).

Lastly, in certain countries, the freedom of information is greatly restricted, which in turn impacts media coverage. For example, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) specify on their website that in Morocco, "Independent media and journalists are subject to tremendous pressure, and the right to be informed is crushed by a powerful propaganda machine spewing misinformation."

The situation in Colombia is detrimental to the media, with reporters being subjected to physical assault, death threats and assassination. In other countries such as Lebanon, the media coverage of migration is impacted by a highly concentrated, politically polarised media landscape.

## Migration in both the media and public discourse

The report covers the representation of migration in the media discourse and, to a lesser extent, in public discourse. The notion of public discourse is broad, embracing statements by political officials and public personalities, media output, and also members of the general public who express their views on social media in particular. The notion of media discourse is more restricted in scope, embracing all output emanating from professional news outlets, whether in print or online, on television and radio. Despite media diversity and the fact that outlets exercise a certain degree of independence, media discourse still tends to act as a sounding board for public discourse.

It has transpired from the interviews that the topic of migration is sometimes handled patchily – with attention focalised on certain types of migration – or loosely. These observations echo the discussion groups, in which migrants declared that they did not feel that the media represented them accurately. One cause of partial, low-quality coverage resides in the reasons for the media focussing on migration, in that the topic of migration is mostly addressed depending on:

- the news. News coverage mostly features dramatic events involving irregular migration. This is a "clickbaity" theme as well as being a core issue to raise awareness of the dangers in connection with irregular migration. In Comoros for example, out of a sample

of eight journalists interviewed on the subject of the media coverage of migration, five mentioned losses at sea in the *kwassas* heading towards Mayotte and the shipwrecks between Morocco and Spain, emphasising that these dramas are the only migration events to be given media coverage. Articles examining in-depth causes and stakes, or other forms of migration, are simply in-existent;

- institutional communication by states and international institutions that help migrants. The media discourse actually relays public discourse. On this point, while the report only focusses on countries in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, links with Europe and other "northern" countries are very often mentioned in the country reviews;
- communication from national institutions is often influenced by national migration policies, especially when governed by bilateral agreements with European Union (EU) countries. Thus, since 2015, Niger has evolved from a role as a migration corridor to that of a pivot country, by becoming a key EU partner in the monitoring of migration routes. In the discussion group meetings, journalists explained that the media in Niger very often repeated the Nigerien authorities' viewpoint and the local EU representation of migration, with the result that they themselves were also focalised on irregular migration, and related tragedies and consequences such as voluntary or forced returns;
- communication from international institutions to help migrants are strictly controlled by these same organisations for both information and advocacy purposes. In Burkina Faso for example, the media focus on irregular migration is to be analysed as an echo of press releases from the Burkinabe authorities and international organisations working in the sector, which are largely focussed on raising awareness as to the dangers of this form of migration.

Surprisingly, the media seem to have largely ignored the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on migration in the countries under review. The pandemic has nevertheless had an impact on the digitalisation of training courses for journalists as well as on themes covered. For example, the webinar “Migration and youth employment during the Covid-19 pandemic” in Senegal or the training course on “The impact of Covid-19 on migration, the legal migration channels and human trafficking” in Guinea, both funded by UNESCO.

Other obstacles to well-informed and well-balanced coverage of the topic of migration are:

- a lack of understanding of terminology with legal definitions (for example incorrect use of the term “refugee” instead of “immigrant”) and the use of adversely connotated terminology (such as the use of the term “clandestine” instead of “migrant person in an irregular situation”);
- difficulties gaining access to reliable sources of information, leading certain journalists to simply parrot information from European media;
- trouble gaining access to migrants, depriving journalists of primary sources of information.

In several countries, journalists pointed out a paradoxical situation in which certain international organisations provide training on well-balanced media coverage of migration, yet restricted journalist access to migrants and “controlled” what these persons say;

- limited newsroom interest for this theme (except when a drama hits the headlines) with the assumption that it does not appeal to the general public. To quote Ibrahima Anne, Chief Editor at *WalFadjri* (a privately-owned daily newspaper in Senegal), “in general, newsrooms are not really inclined to cover migration issues because they are not reputed to be newsworthy, unless there is drama! So business takes precedence”;

- a lack of resources to cover these topics which require time, travelling to zones where migrants are to be found and equipment to collect information. In places like Colombia, Burkina Faso and Jordan, there are also security aspects in that travelling to the zones in question can be risky;
- the lack of training for journalists on this theme. It is rarely included in their initial training and subsequently is addressed only in short courses for the beneficiaries of capacity-building projects.

Consequently, the media coverage of migration eludes certain sub-themes and is generally limited to purely factual coverage without in-depth examination of the issues. For example, in Morocco, 3.3 million persons are affected by emigration, i.e. 9% of the population. Yet the working conditions of Moroccans abroad are rarely covered, and news about them is often limited to the economic boost thanks to money transfers and returns in summertime.

## Environmental migration

The Council of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) defines environmental migrants as “persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.”

While this notion is useful, it disregards the fact that migration generally occurs for multiple reasons. Isolating the environment as a cause of displacement has proven to be a complex matter. Several countries covered by the report are affected by this phenomenon, which is likely to amplify cross-border displacement in the coming years. For example, according to a World Bank report published in August 2021, Niger is the West African country slated to have the most internal climate migrants by 2050, unless action is taken.

Multilateral discussions are underway to better identify and define these phenomena and come up with a response, at least putting forward a legal definition of environmental or climate migration. So the media must be encouraged to

take an interest in connections between climate change and internal and international migration in various contexts.

The media also propagates stereotypes, to varying degrees from one country to another. In the Gambia for example, there are many social stereotypes of migrants in an irregular situation and returned persons who are deemed a “failure”. During the interviews, most interviewees stated that when the media address the issue of irregular migration and returns, people expelled from Europe and the USA are often described as “criminals”. Another illustration in Tunisia where the migration discussion group and the interviews conducted showed that the media coverage of migration topics contributed to the persistent “stigmatisation” of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Building capacity in the media on the theme of migration

Migration reporting skills are far from uniform in the countries under review. The extent of reporting skills varies according to educational resources within the countries under review. In Morocco, there is a Master of Research degree on “media and migration” and many capacity-building projects have been rolled out in the country, whereas journalists in Comoros have no access to vocational training locally (a single capacity-building project is known to have taken place between 2015 and 2021).

The table below recaps the number of capacity-building initiatives which have taken place in each country. These initiatives include a majority of training courses for media outlets on the theme of migration, as well as awards, financial and technical support for media output, the creation or reinforcement of journalist networks, think-tank workshop retreats, exchange visits to share experience etc. Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in the countries under review

## Initiatives that have taken place

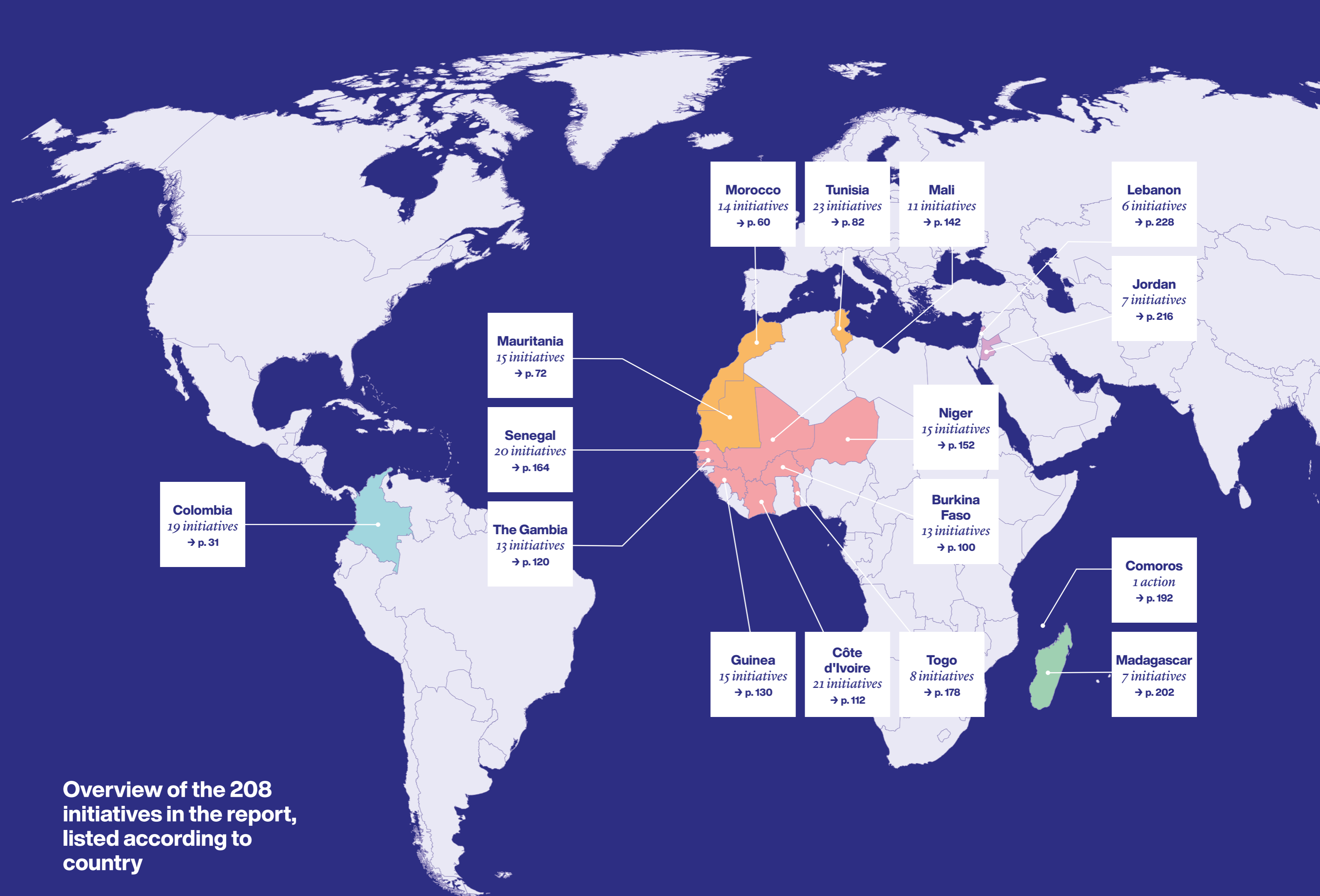
In terms of quantity, the report shows that there were very few capacity-building projects in certain countries, such as Madagascar, Jordan, Lebanon and Comoros.

In terms of quality, the report shows that the vast majority of initiatives listed were short (one to three days), even if more formats have been available in recent years with more awards, networking opportunities, and even beginner training courses, as in Guinea.

All the country reviews reveal that there is still great need for capacity building. The main pitfalls to be avoided to ensure that these actions have lasting effects are as follows:

- the training courses are too short: a single day of training does not lead to lasting change in how journalists work. Nevertheless, as journalists

- have emphasised in Tunisia, “getting a whole day off from newsroom work to take part in a training course remains a challenge”;
- the training courses only focus on theory: changing how journalists work involves the acquisition of technical skills (pushing back on fake news, data-driven journalism etc.), working on the ground and support during media production (investigative reporting, reportage etc.);
- systematic targeting of the same categories of beneficiaries: the attendance not only of journalists, but also chief editors would be pertinent, since without their support, journalists cannot cover migration issues. Broader, longer-term support for the media is also necessary to ensure that the effects of these initiatives translate into media output. In Togo for example, the topic of human trafficking is rarely discussed in the media despite the attention of the authorities and international organisations. The government, IOM and civil society organisations have regularly organised training workshops on this theme. Despite this and the effective participation of journalists in such workshops, very few results have been perceived in terms of the writing of articles and production of TV programmes on the topic given a lack of commitment, funding and long-term support.



**Overview of the 208 initiatives in the report, listed according to country**



## Recommendations

Given the above, recommendations for several countries have been set forth in the third section.

They follow these guidelines:

- emphasise ethics and the code of ethics for the profession and the media in general;
- address all dimensions of migration issues (emigration/immigration, reasons for migrating, categories of migrants etc.);
- broaden the scope to include more stakeholder profiles in the development initiatives, either as beneficiaries or contributors:
  - for contributors, a smart move would be to involve people working in NGOs and academics working on migration issues;
  - for beneficiaries, chief editors need to be trained as well as the journalists;
  - raise awareness among public institutions (national, local and regional authorities) as to the importance of ensuring the freedom of the press, independence of the media, data availability and statistics, so that journalists have access to reliable information.

Training remains a key element to build reporting skills, but the setup (duration, format and journalists targeted) and themes must be more varied and shaped according to what has already been accomplished. Interesting practices can also be replicated, such as:

- self-training and e-learning tools should be made available online free of charge in the local languages;
- mentoring schemes, especially to monitor output;
- interregional workshops with beneficiaries from several countries on a common theme (e.g.: trafficking of domestic workers sent to Gulf states, mostly from Guinea, Comoros, Niger and Madagascar), as well as workshops attended by journalists from Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, as a way of harnessing different views and experiences.

Lastly, other types of action may round off the training courses with a view to:

- supporting and encouraging output, especially via the launch and funding of calls for tender, the organisation of awards or making equipment or technical assistance available for media outlets;
- setting up and leading national and even regional journalist networks specialising in migration;
- raising awareness and educating the stakeholders (media, people working in research, public authorities, civilian stakeholders etc.) via projects, forums for dialogue and tools for information and education, with a view to deconstructing stereotypes, promoting cultural diversity and living together in harmony.

## Lexicon

# 2

# International acronyms

**ADB**

African Development Bank.

**AECID**

Spanish agency for international development cooperation

**AFD**

French development agency

**ASCOMS**

Platform of Sub-Saharan Associations and Communities in Morocco

**CICID**

French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development

**CMSMI**

Council of Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco

**CSCA**

Moroccan Higher Council of Audiovisual Communication

**DAHLIA**

Development and Humanitarian Learning in Action

**DANE**

Colombian Administrative Department of Statistics

**DESA**

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

**DW**

Deutsche Welle – International German radio station

**ECOWAS**

Economic Community of West African States

**EMN**

European Migration Network

**EU**

European Union

**FLIP**

Colombian Foundation for Press Freedom

**FTDES**

Tunisian Forum for Social and Economic Rights

**GIFMM**

Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows

**GIZ**

Gesellschaft für international Zusammenarbeit – German international cooperation firm

**HCR**

High Commissioner for Refugees

**HCP**

Moroccan High Commission for Planning

**ICMPD**

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

**ILO**

International Labour Organisation

**IOM**

International Organisation for Migration

**ISSP**

International Social Survey Program

**MEAE**

French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs

**MENA**

Middle East and North Africa

**MOOC**

Massive Open Online Course

**NGO**

Non-Governmental Organisation

**OFII**

French Office for Immigration and Integration

**OECD**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PPT**

Temporary protection permit

**RJSET**

Malagasy network of journalists specialising in employment and labour

**RMJM**

Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists

**RSF**

Reporters Without Borders

**SCO**

Civil Society Organisation

**SM**

Social Media

**TMF**

Cross-Border Mobility Card

**UM**

Unaccompanied Minors

**UN**

United Nations Organisation

**UN DESA**

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

**UNESCO**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**UNHCR**

United Nations Refugee Agency

**UNICEF**

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

**UNRWA**

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

**URAC**

Senegalese union of associative and community radio stations

## The various categories of migrants

### Migrant

An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students. Source: IOM

For statistical purposes, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) defines “international migrant” as “any person who changes his or her country of usual residence.” The UN DESA definition excludes movements that are due to “recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimages.”

### Refugee (Geneva Convention 1951)

Person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. Source: Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted on 28 July 1951, entry into force on 22 April 1954)

### Refugee (mandate)

A person who qualifies for the protection of the United Nations provided by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), in accordance with UNHCR’s Statute and, notably, subsequent General Assembly’s resolutions clarifying the scope of UNHCR’s competency, regardless of whether or not he or she is in a country that is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol – or a relevant regional refugee instrument – or whether or not he or she has been recognized by his or her host country as a refugee under either of these instruments. Source: UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

### Asylum seeker

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker. Source: UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)

### Worker migrants

A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national. Source: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (adopted 18 December 1990, entered into force 1 July 2003) 2220 UNTS 3, Art. 2(1)

### Environmental migrant

A person or group(s) of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence. Source: Council of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

### Migrant student

Person accepted by an establishment of higher education to pursue a course of study leading to a higher education qualification recognised by the host country. Source: European Migration Network (EMN)

### Irregular migration

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination Source: IOM

### Stateless person

A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. Source: United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (adopted 28 September 1954, entered into force 6 June 1960).

## The various types and places of migration

### Emigration

From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one’s country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. Source: IOM

### Immigration

From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one’s country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence. Source: IOM

### Destination country

In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly. Source: IOM

### Country of origin

In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly. Source: IOM

### Transit country

In the migration context, the country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or of habitual residence. Source: IOM

### Seasonal migration

Migration for temporary work of a person employed in a business sector dependent on the passing of the seasons for 3 to 12 months. Source: European Migration Network (EMN) / IOM

### Family reunification

The right of non-nationals to enter into and reside in a country where their family members reside lawfully or of which they have the nationality in order to preserve the family unit. Source: Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification

### Forced migration (displacement)

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. Source: IOM

### Smuggling of migrants

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident; Source: Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational organised crime (adopted on 15 November 2000, entry into force on 28 January 2004).

**Trafficking of persons**

“Trafficking of persons” shall mean 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; Source: Protocol added to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime aiming to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (adopted on 15 November 2000, entered in force on 25 December 2003).

## Other definitions

**Diaspora**

Individuals and members of networks, associations and communities, who have left their country of origin, but maintain links with their homelands. Source: European Migration Network (EMN)

**Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration**

Administrative, logistical and financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country or country of transit and who decide to return to their country of origin. Source: IOM

**Non-refoulement (principle of)**

The prohibition for States to extradite, deport, expel or otherwise return a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where there are

substantial grounds for believing that he or she would risk being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, or would be in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance, or of suffering another irreparable harm. Source: IOM

**Remittances (migrant)**

Private international monetary transfers that migrants make, individually or collectively. Source: IOM

**Migrant flow (international)**

The number of international migrants arriving in a country (immigrants) or the number of international migrants departing from a country (emigrants) over the course of a specific period. Source: IOM

**Migration governance**

The combined frameworks of legal norms, laws and regulations, policies and traditions as well as organisational structures (subnational, national, regional and international) and the relevant processes that shape and regulate States’ approaches with regard to migration in all its forms, addressing rights and responsibilities and promoting international cooperation. Source: IOM / United Nations Human Rights Council

# Background and method

# 3

## Context and aims of the report

CFI was founded in 1989, and operates under the umbrella of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) as a subsidiary of the group France Medias Monde. Since 2010, CFI has had a unique remit to support the media in southern countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Caucasus and South Asia, with a view to supporting the stakeholders involved to help to foster democracy, diverse sources of information, and sustainable development.

As part of the French policy of providing state development aid, specifically for the “International migration and development 2018-2022” action plan adopted by the French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID) in February 2018, CFI is part of a joint initiative of the team France, including the MEAE and the French development agency (AFD), aiming to promote informed, responsible discourse on migration (Aim 5 of the action plan).

In April 2021, CFI thus launched the “Dialogues on Migration” project, funded by the MEAE. The project aims to help foster an inclusive debate across society to bring about change in how migration is represented in the public arena. As part of this project, pilot activities to build production capacity on the theme of migration were launched in 2022, targeting media outlets, journalists and schools of journalism in the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania and Niger. This report was also commissioned for this project, as part of a forward-looking approach aiming to assess the pertinence and

opportunity of developing projects to reinforce and support media outlets in the well-informed and well-balanced coverage of migration, in one or several of the countries under review.

### The two main expected outcomes of the report were to:

#### Gain insight into the image of migration and migrants in both media and public discourse in the 16 countries via:

- an overview outlining the key migration trends,
- a review of how migration is handled in both the media and public discourse,

#### List what has already been done and who by, in terms of building capacity in the media on the theme of migration in these 16 countries, and the ensuing impact with:

- a report on capacity-building and support initiatives conducted, and an assessment of their impact,
- possible courses of action for CFI, its partners and other organisations providing support to media outlets with an interest in this theme.

### Three organisations were retained to produce this report:

The foundation DARA International and the organisation DAHLIA, which covered Colombia, and the consulting firm Red Mangrove Development Advisors (RMDA), which handled the other 15 countries. This report is the outcome of the work to standardise the reports produced by these three organisations on the 16 countries under review. With a view to standardising the document, CFI modified it after the transmission of the finalised versions, with support from the Steering Committee comprising the MEAE, AFD, and the organisations tasked with producing the report (RMDA, Dahlia and Dara).

## Scope of the report

### Purpose

This report examines the representation of migration in media discourse and, to a lesser extent, public discourse. The notion of public discourse is broad, embracing statements by political officials and public personalities, media content, and also members of the general public who express their views, mostly on social media. The notion of media discourse is more restricted in scope, embracing all output emanating from professional news outlets, whether in print or online, on television or radio. Despite media diversity and the fact that outlets exercise a certain degree of independence, media discourse still tends to act as a sounding board for public discourse.

### Timeline

The report focusses on the period 2015-2022. 2015 was the year migration hit the headlines, often referred to “the migration crisis in Europe,” with an influx of asylum seekers/ persons fleeing persecution, especially in Syria, followed by a marked reaction by European governments and sponsors.

In late 2015, the Valletta Summit on Migration bolstered political collaboration among European and African countries on migration flow management, sometimes without distinguishing between previous and new mobility dynamics and flow. 2015 was also a turning-point for Colombia, with an acceleration in immigration from Venezuela due to a major economic downturn. To tackle these migration phenomena, funding earmarked for development projects in connection with migration have increased greatly since 2015, especially in the countries under review. The number of media outlets available online also grew during this period. However, the migration phenomena observed had mostly started before 2015.

### → 1988-2021: 33 years of irregular migration towards Europe

On 1 November 1988, the body of a Moroccan shipwreck victim washed up on Los Lances beach in Tarifa, Spain. It was the first in a long series of shipwreck victims from irregular boat crossings departing from Morocco. The next day, the news made the front page of the newspaper Diario de Cádiz and was mentioned in the newspaper with the largest readership in Spain, El País. On 29 August 2021, 30 years after this first tragedy, the newspaper El País bore the headline “45 missing after the shipwreck north of Senegal of a vessel heading for the Canaries” (“Unos 45 desaparecidos tras el naufragio en el norte de Senegal de un cayuco que viajaba a Canarias”). Between these two dates, and despite the implementation of policies to control the flow of irregular migration on either side of the Mediterranean, migration management remains a high priority on political agenda in many countries, focussing opinion and sharpening tension between north and south.



Insofar as this report is to help to shape projects for the coming years, the Covid-19 pandemic has been included in the timeline, in order to analyse whether it modified media coverage and public discourse on the subject of migration.

### Geographic scope

The geographic scope embraces 16 countries: Burkina Faso, Colombia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia.

While this is a qualitative report with an overview of the subject, it does factor in features peculiar to each country, especially via the identification of local priorities. Overall consistency has been achieved by using the same method and the use of comparable data throughout the review.

Furthermore, given the importance of the regional dimension of migration phenomena, the countries have been sorted into four sub-regions: North Africa, West Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. There is an overview to introduce each sub-region. As the only country in Latin America under review, Colombia is an exception and is in a category of its own.

### Types of migration (see lexicon)

With a view to placing media discourse in perspective, with its tendency to concentrate on irregular migration, it transpired that we needed to first take the full breadth of migration phenomena in each country into account, focussing on reliable, official sources to do so.

The migration situation in each country has thus been envisaged from all angles, factoring in the regional dynamics and the various types of migration observed. This has helped to analyse the salient facts and trends as well as elements that are played down or side-lined in national media with a view to better identifying needs in terms of capacity building and support.

The report examined the following forms of migration in each country:

- worker migration,
- family migration,
- student migration,
- asylum (asylum seekers and refugees),
- irregular migration – this last category partially overlapping the others.

In addition to this, one or several of the following themes were examined for certain countries:

- seasonal migration,
- environmental migration,
- return migration (voluntary or forced),
- statelessness,
- human trafficking,
- diaspora.

These categories form the backbone to the structure of the entire search form and review for the report, thus highlighting migration trends and how they are represented in both media and public discourse.

### Types of media

The report focusses on the following types of media to examine media discourse: press: all means of spreading the news in writing, especially daily printed newspapers and other periodical publications as well as the online press, radio, including the community radios, television, social media and blogs.

This breakdown helps to measure the specific features of the media landscape in each country under review. In Niger and Mali, the dominant media and first port of call for daily news is radio, especially community radio, far ahead of television. In Senegal and even more in Côte d'Ivoire, the printed press plays an essential role, alongside TV and radio, especially given the robust partisan press.

Social media is gaining in importance with respect to media coverage of migration issues, even though its importance varies according to the ease with which people can access Internet in each country. While Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber are commonly used by the migrants themselves as communication channels and to collect information on migration, these networks are also a useful source of information for journalists. Regarding public discourse, the report focusses on public statements by political officials, and which have been widely covered in the media or sparked much debate in society.

## Data collection

This report has been produced using three different methods of data collection: documentary review, one-on-one interviews, discussion groups.

These methods were implemented in each country by the local experts, with adjustments depending on context and accessibility of the data sought.

Today, the majority of quantitative surveys on media coverage rely on online data, using *scraping* software to identify pertinent information in a set of content. This approach only works when the content has been digitised and is freely accessible; which immediately excludes important media outlets in some countries such as community radio. Moreover, in several countries, little digital content is available. This explains why this report did not use *scraping* methods.

### Documentary review

Documentary review involves seeking out, reading and analysing documents on the themes of this report. This has provided material for the descriptive overview of migration trends in each country. It has also contributed to the review of how migration is represented in media and public discourse.

### Indispensable strict methods used to collect documents

While conducting their reviews, the country experts only used statistics and information when the source was cited. In a sensitive context, with the topic of migration often sparking fiery debate nationwide, it is of utmost importance to distinguish facts and reliable data from comment and opinions.

Furthermore, despite many global initiatives to improve the collection and comparability of data (*open data*), many national data collection systems are as yet poorly equipped to produce and circulate detailed data and make it available for public and media use. To produce a comparative overview of migration in all countries and cross-check the results, country experts relied on core statistics authenticated at international level: the IOM migration data portal; statistics from the population division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); the annual US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Reports for each country; statistics from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and those of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Lastly, country experts were careful to exercise neutrality in order to identify ethical abuse (hate speech, stereotypes, fake news etc.) and the use of inappropriate or controversial terminology (use of terms "clandestine", "illegal migrants" or confusion concerning use of the term "refugee"). The experts were also asked to consider specific aspects of migration phenomena that are too often ignored: gender and the growing number of minors in recent migration flows.

### One-on-one interviews

The interviews were based on common guidelines applicable to all countries and targeted the following persons:

- media professionals (chief editors, journalists specialising in migration issues, representatives of media regulation bodies etc.),
- professionals working in migration (NGOs, international organisations, research institutes etc.),
- partners and stakeholders committed to professional, responsible media coverage of migration (government bodies, technical and financial partners, schools of journalism, international organisations etc.).

15 to 30 interviews were conducted, depending on the number of pertinent stakeholders identified in each country.

### → Anonymity policy

Certain people are cited by name in the report. Drawing on their knowledge of local stakeholders, national experts made sure of their agreement and exercised their judgment to determine whether citing them could jeopardise their safety or reputation. In certain cases where their safety and reputation were indeed at risk, people's identities have been anonymised in the report.

### Discussion groups

The discussion groups were conducted according to the interviewing and discussion-leading guidelines common to all countries. Two discussion groups were organised in each country, each involving an average of a dozen persons, and maintaining gender equality as far as possible:

- a discussion group attended by migrants. Group members' impressions were collected, and their assessment of media representations of migration were discussed;
- a discussion group attended by journalists having benefitted from capacity-building initiatives and support for the coverage of

migration in the past seven years. The aim was to collect their assessment of these initiatives and their impact.

Colombia was an exception, since five discussion groups were organised: two attended by migrants, two attended by journalists having benefitted from capacity-building initiatives, and an open discussion with 20 young people (aged 13 to 25) from Colombia and Venezuela, both male and female, at the cultural centre "La Casa Morada" in the city of Cúcuta.

### Data analysis

For each country abstract, data analysis relied on common review grids, making it possible to address migration trends, media representations of migration and the effects of capacity building and support initiatives already conducted. The country abstracts were produced on this basis.

The various sources of data have also helped to compile and map a list of previous capacity-building initiatives in each country between 2010 and 2020 (see Appendix 2).

Lastly, the recommendations formulated in the conclusions for each country come from two sources: the interviews and discussion groups. They were debated with the country experts and the Steering Committee's coordination team made up of the organisations tasked with producing the reports, RMDA, Dara and Dahlia, AFD, CFI and the MEAE in its capacity as commissioner of this report. They are the expression of needs in each country and are to inspire future projects and programmes to build capacity in the media on the theme of migration.

# Review by region and country



The key review elements in each of the 16 countries under review have been drawn up according to a common structure:

- an overview of migration in the country,
- migration issues in the media landscape and public discourse,
- building capacity in the media,
- findings and recommendations.

The introductions for each sub-region – North Africa, West Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean – recapitulate the main trends in the sub-region and help to position the countries in relation to each other in terms of the volume of capacity-building initiatives conducted. There is no sub-regional introduction for Colombia since it is the only country under review in Latin America.

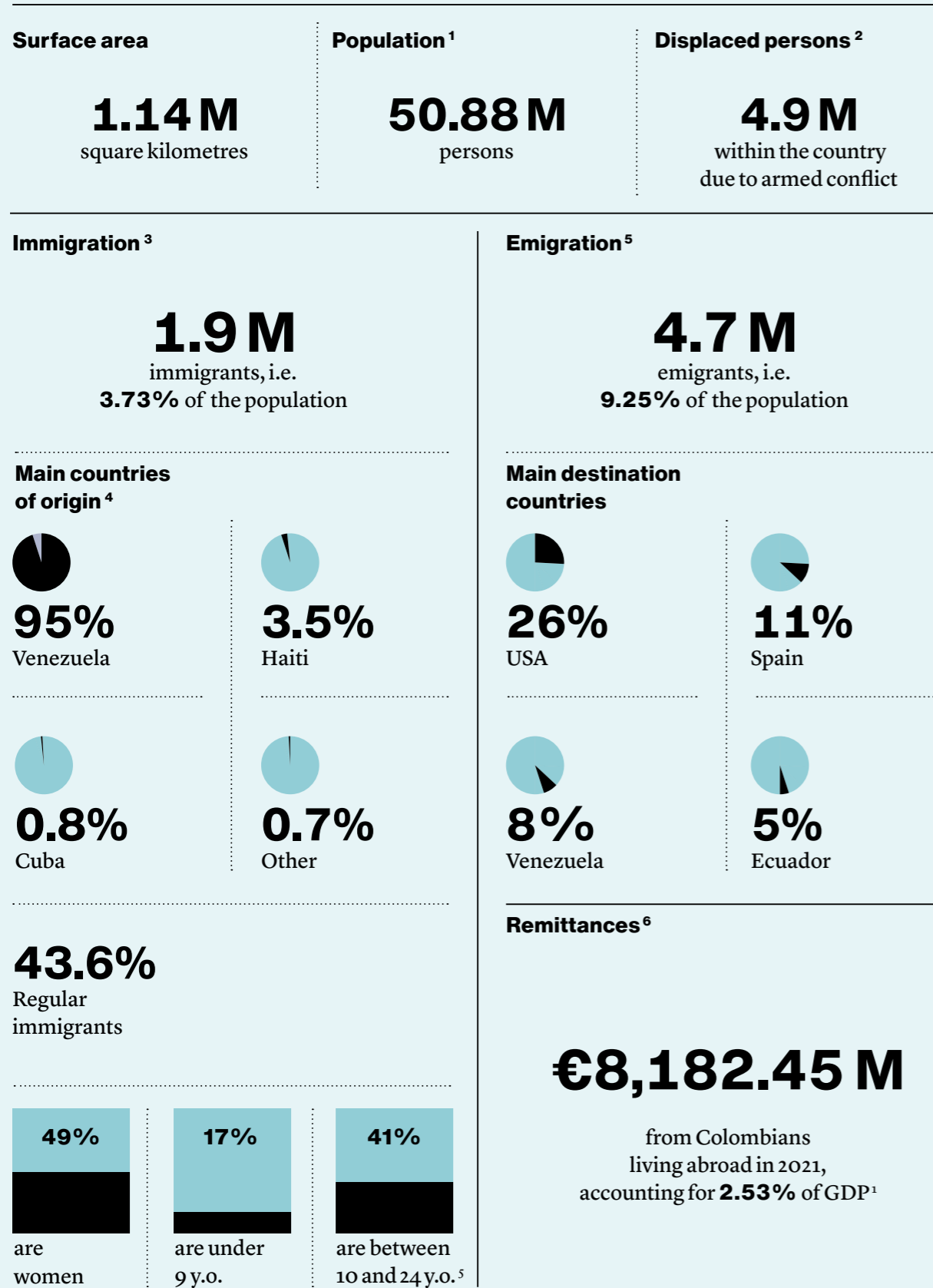


Training workshops, online classes and debates organised in Colombia (details of the initiatives and venues provided in Appendix 2).



# Colombia

## Key figures



Sources: 1 - World Bank; 2 - Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; 3 - IOM; Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants - R4M; 4 - Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows or GIFMM; 5 - Colombian Administrative Department of Statistics, DANE; 6 - Bank of Colombia

## Media landscape

### Television

With a penetration rate of 91% in homes, it is the most important media for Colombians. Main national channels: *RCN* and *Caracol*, the two most popular, privately-owned channels (according to Rating Colombia), as well as *Canal 1*, the only independent TV channel which is not funded by any economic group. Regional, local and community channels: over 800 in the 32 departments of the country.

### Radio

Audience of 77%, making it the second media in terms of consumption per Colombian. Commercial radio stations: 667, the ones with the most listeners being: *Olimpica*, *Caracol Radio*, *RCN Radio* and *La Mega* (ECAR-2021). Community radios: 626 (source: Colombian Ministry of Information Technology and Communications).

### Press

Main newspapers with nationwide circulation: *El Tiempo* and *El Espectador*. Regional newspapers: 90 across the 32 departments of the country including *El Colombiano* (Medellín), *El País* (Cali), *El Heraldo* (Barranquilla), *La Opinión* (Cúcuta), *Vanguardia* (Santander) and *El Universal* (Cartagena). Alternative, independent online press: *Pacifista*, *La Silla Vacía*, *Cuestión Pública*, *La Nueva Prensa*, *Verdad Abierta*, *El Shabbat* and *La Oreja Roja*.

### Social media

Internet use rate (2021): 68% of the population were Internet users (World Bank). Rate of active use of social media (2021): 76.4% (Digital 2021 Global Overview Report). Platforms used the most (2011): YouTube (95.7% of the population), Facebook (93.6%), Instagram (91%). (Digital 2021 Global Overview Report).

## Review of the media landscape

### Structure and organisation of the media Zin Colombia

In Colombia, the main TV, radio and newspaper networks are run by members of the political and economic élite. Three private groups<sup>1</sup> control 60% of TV channels, radio stations and Internet and boast the largest audience share of national, regional and local television.<sup>2</sup> The Colombian media have experienced a major economic and financial crisis and are partly dependent on revenue generated by government advertising and local aid. This form of dependence on public funding may influence the editorial line, especially in the choice and tone of topics covered. The situation is especially critical among regional press outlets, over whom local political authorities often wield their power.

There are alternative media which strive to cater to the need for independent news, but their audience is limited. These media companies have to take up economic, technological and political challenges to be able to last. For funding, they appeal to philanthropical organisations for support, ask for donations, and encourage their audience to participate. More creative methods involve the independent press organising lunchtime and dinner debates, leading training workshops and offering consulting services in communication.

<sup>1</sup> Organización Ardila Lülle, Organización Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo Ltda and Santo Domingo Group

<sup>2</sup> Media Ownership Monitor

Armed groups are a perpetual threat to journalists, with the deliberate aim of censoring the news and reducing the media to silence.<sup>3</sup> In certain regions, the chances of conducting investigations without compromising journalist safety are practically nil. These threats prompt journalists to practise self-censorship, which in turn leads to the formation of “black holes” in the news.

### Freedom of the press

In 2021, Reporters Without Borders ranked Colombia 134<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index.

The reasons for this poor ranking include:

- aggressions, death threats and assassination of journalists,
- climate of fear triggering self-censorship,
- lack of information in rural regions and on the borders with Venezuela and Ecuador,
- media with close ties to economic empires and the political élite.

### Key players for the independence of the press

Colombia has a robust media environment, with foundations, professional organisations and civilian stakeholders monitoring observance of the code of ethics and defending the freedom of the press. Since the onset of the migration phenomenon, these organisations have offered training courses, reiterated the profession’s ethical guidelines and offered materials (handbooks, examples of projects and reporting work on migration, academic and professional sources to be consulted etc.). These various stakeholders have unanimously asserted that following these rules and guidelines is more important than ever to prevent the spread of misinformation and hate speech.

### The main organisations to defend the independence of the press are:

- Fundación Gabo (Gabriel García Márquez Foundation):<sup>4</sup> a centre for the professional development of journalists with an ethics commission. The opinions it emits are given due consideration in the country,
- Colombian Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP):<sup>5</sup> a foundation that protects journalists and the freedom of the press, as well as defending the right of access to information,
- Colombian Federation of Journalists (FECOLPER):<sup>6</sup> a union with 1,200 members, which promotes good reporting practices, monitors freedom of the press and defends the right of access to information,
- Consejo de Redacción (CdR):<sup>7</sup> a non-profit organisation which develops collaboration for training in journalism, the production of good-quality content and support for initiatives in journalism.

### Training and status of journalists

Colombia now has nearly 50 public and private establishments of higher education offering university programmes in connection with social communication, journalism and media. In addition to this, there are some 20 institutes offering training courses in TV and radio careers. The GABO foundation and CdR (see part 5.2) also offer training courses for journalists and tools to practise careful, in-depth journalism.

In 1998, the Constitutional Court of Colombia eliminated the press card, meaning that going forward, people without any qualifications could work as a reporter. Since then, many people have started working as a journalist without having previously studied social communication or journalism.

<sup>4</sup> Gabo Foundation website: <https://fundaciongabo.org/es> (English version available at the link)

<sup>5</sup> See the website: <https://flip.org.co/index.php/en/>

<sup>6</sup> See the website: <https://fecolper.com.co/> (in Spanish only)

<sup>7</sup> See the website: <https://consejoderedaccion.org> (in Spanish only)

<sup>3</sup> FLIP (2021): 700 physical attacks, threats and harassment incidents targeting journalists in 2021

## Overview of migration

### The arrival of 1.8 million migrants from Venezuela

Colombia is facing unprecedented migration, mainly triggered by the political, economic and social crisis in Venezuela. Since 2013, Venezuela has experienced economic and social collapse, combined as of 2015 with an institutional crisis and serious political instability.<sup>8</sup> Annual inflation is rampant<sup>9</sup> at nearly 500,000% in September 2018, a significant drop of real wages and food shortages<sup>10</sup> which have led to unprecedented increases in poverty levels.<sup>11</sup>

### Destination countries of Venezuelan migrants

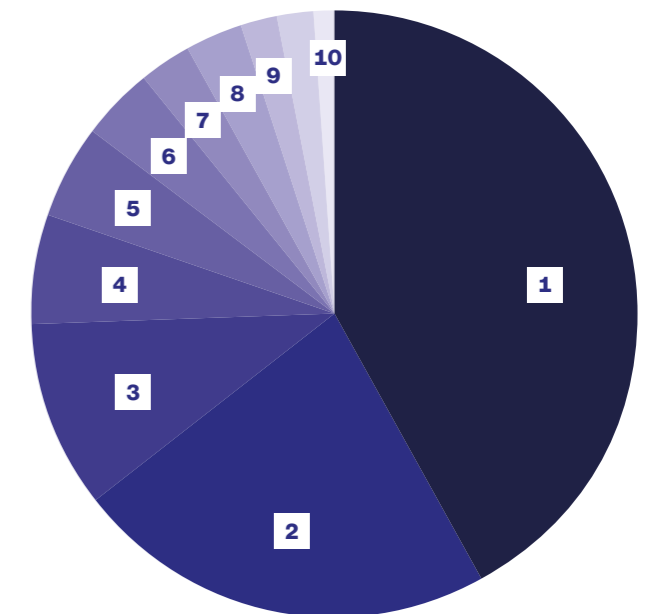
There were 6,038,937 Venezuelan migrants in 2021, 4,992,664 of whom were in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 1,842,000 in Colombia.

1	Colombia	43%
2	Peru	23%
3	Chili	10%
4	Brazil	6%
5	Spain	5%
6	Argentina	4%
7	Panama	3%
8	Dominican Republic	3%
9	Mexico	2%
10	Costa Rica	1%

The main causes underpinning this economic crisis are the drop in oil prices, in a country that depended heavily on crude oil exports,<sup>12</sup> and corruption.<sup>13</sup> The deterioration of public finances has impacted healthcare, leading to a steep rise in illness and a shortage of medicine.<sup>14</sup>

This situation has resulted in a knock-on regional migration crisis. According to the United Nations, in 2015, 397,000 persons had chosen to leave Venezuela, mainly for the USA. By 2020, over 4 800,000 Venezuelans had left their country. As of 2022, nearly 6,000,000 Venezuelans are living abroad.

Source: 4V coordination platform for refugees and migrants from Venezuela, Spanish statistics institute (2021)



<sup>8</sup> OFPRA (2016): “La crise vénézuélienne, facteurs, évolution, impacts sur les citoyens et l'appareil d'État” (The crisis in Venezuela, factors, evolution, impact on citizens and state apparatus) (in French only); UN (2019), “Report of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela mandated by the UN.”

<sup>9</sup> The Bloomberg news website monitored the price of a cup of coffee in Caracas: it rose from 1.77 Bolivar to 8.68 Bolivars in 12 months, i.e. an increase of 391%.

<sup>10</sup> World Food Programme: 9.3 million people in Venezuela (1/3 of the country’s population) suffer from food insecurity. 2020 Global Report on Food Crises.

<sup>11</sup> Andrés Bello Catholic University (2021), “National Survey on Living Conditions”: 76.6% of households live in utter poverty and 94.5% below the poverty line, existing on less than 1.9 dollars a day.

<sup>12</sup> Center Global Energy Policy (2015): “Impact of the Decline in Oil Prices on the economy, politics and oil industry in Venezuela.”

<sup>13</sup> In 2018, Transparency International ranked Venezuela among the 13 most corrupt countries out of the 180 under review.

<sup>14</sup> The Pharmaceutical Federation of Venezuela estimated that eight in ten medicines are not available. Shortages of 90% of medicines for cancer, HIV and haemophilia. Epidemiology Bulletin published by the Venezuelan Ministry of Popular Power for Health (2016-2018): 30% increase in the number of infants dying before their first birthday, 64% increase in the number of women dying in pregnancy.

### Destination countries of Venezuelan migrants

Between 2015 and January 2022, the population of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia rose from less than 39,000 to over 1.8 million, sparking the worst migration crisis in the history of Colombia. Most of these people arrived in the country in a state of dire need if not emergency.

### Several phases of exile

Between 2005 and 2015, Venezuelans leaving the country were mostly members of the upper classes in sharp disagreement with the regime of President Maduro. They headed for Colombia, Florida, Panama, Spain and other international destinations. Many of those settling in Colombia brought skills, investments and entrepreneurial spirit.

As from 2015, with the ballooning of the Venezuelan economic crisis, and ensuing shortages in staple products and hyperinflation, as well as growing political instability,<sup>15</sup> Venezuelans from the middle and working classes also started to leave. The number of children also rose.

In 2017, the worsening of the humanitarian crisis prompted poorer, less qualified people to leave Venezuela. In Colombia, these new arrivals often had no access to formal reception networks. After crossing the border, they continued to travel for thousands of miles on foot to their final destination, Bogotá or Cali, even Ecuador or Peru. They are known as “caminantes” (walkers). The majority of these people cite the need to earn their living as their reason for migration.<sup>16</sup> Shelters opened by private citizens or NGOs provide them with basic services. While travelling, they are vulnerable to kidnapping and extortion by armed gangs. They are also regularly confronted with xenophobia and the fallout from misinformation and rumours.<sup>17</sup>

**“I was working in Venezuela, but we were dying a slow death. I could not feed my family. I left alone and try to send money to my wife, three children and parents.”**  
*Venezuelan, 42, Bogotá (22/10/2021)*

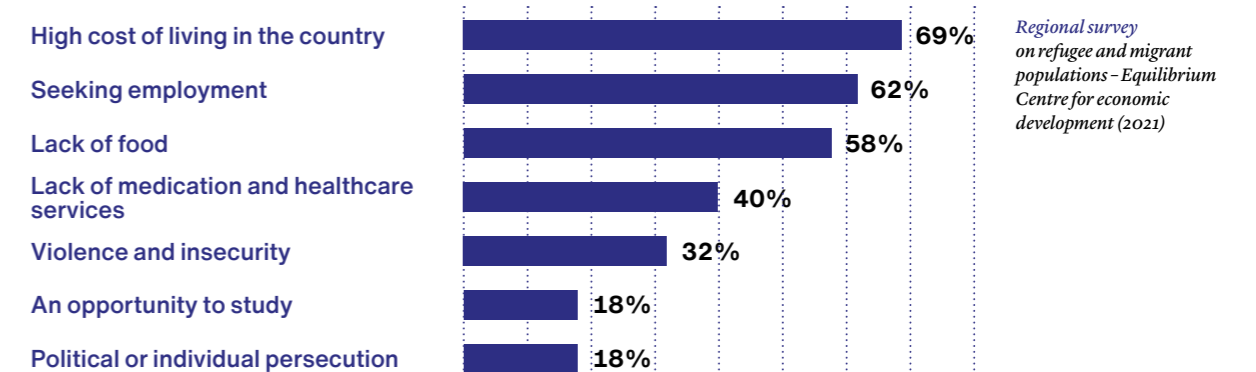
	2005-2015 REVOLT OF THE ÉLITE	2015-2017 THE CRISIS WORSENS	SINCE 2017 EROSION AND EXILE
<b>Social classes</b>	- Company directors - Independent workers - Intellectuals - Students	- Middle classes - People on low incomes	All layers of the population with a prevalence of people on low income or in a state of poverty
<b>Grounds for migration</b>	- Worsening political and social situation - Growing insecurity - Repression	- Economic crisis - Permanent state of insecurity - Food shortages - Deterioration in healthcare - Political deadlock	- Acute food and medicine shortage - Acute malnutrition / children - Permanent state of insecurity - Political deadlock

<sup>15</sup> December 2016: the opposition won the majority at the National Assembly but N. Maduro held on to power and was reelected in 2018. The vote was disputed and the leader of the National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, proclaimed himself interim President in 2019. Over 50 countries have recognised Juan Guaidó.

<sup>16</sup> National Survey on Living Conditions, Andrés Bello Catholic University (July 2020): 83% of Venezuelan migrants having left their country have stated that their aim is to earn their own living.

<sup>17</sup> “Needs and vulnerabilities among Venezuelan refugees and migrants travelling to Colombia” (2021 report), ACAPS.

### The reasons for exile



Nearly half a million of these people have remained near the border due to a lack of resources or because they wish to remain close to home, despite poor living conditions on site.<sup>18</sup> In these regions, the arrival of this population has sparked tension, leading to occasional outbursts of xenophobia<sup>19</sup> reported in the press. These people are often victims of aporophobia,<sup>20</sup> i.e. they are not rejected because of their migrant status but because they are poor.

Even if many Colombians interviewed demonstrate a sense of empathy for these people, and moral recognition towards this “sister country” which had previously long been a host country for them,<sup>21</sup> the majority of the population is worried<sup>22</sup> and mistrustful<sup>23</sup> towards this migration flow.

Thus, migrants often fall victim to prejudice. The organisation ColombiaCheck<sup>24</sup> reported that they have been accused of being “persons who cause violence” or “bring diseases such as AIDS,” mainly on social media. In June 2021, 60% of Colombian public opinion showed little or no trust for migrants from Venezuela.<sup>25</sup>

### The various categories of migration from Venezuela

The World Bank qualifies the arrival in Colombia of these Venezuelans as mixed migration, since there are economic migrants, people of Colombian origin returning to their country of origin and, to a lesser extent, asylum seekers. It is also necessary to distinguish between regular migration (people entering the country at authorised crossing points)<sup>26</sup> from irregular migration. Lastly, it is necessary to distinguish forms of migration lasting several years and generations from other, more short-term forms.

<sup>18</sup> “X-ray of Venezuelans in Colombia”, Migración Colombia (8 September 2020 - in Spanish only)

<sup>19</sup> Semana: “Xenophobic alert targeting Venezuelans in Colombia”

<sup>20</sup> Margarita Barandica Perilla (2019), “Migrants Venezolanos in Colombia, entre la Xenofobia y Aporofobia.” (English version available at the link)

<sup>21</sup> Megan Janetsky, Foreign Policy (January 2019): “Here’s Why Colombia Opened Its Arms to Venezuelan Migrants—Until Now”

<sup>22</sup> ECP-DANE survey (2019): 75.7% of the population do not trust anyone of another nationality, Invaer survey for SEMANA, Caracol Televisión and Blu radio (July 2019): 62.2% of persons interviewed claimed to have a poor opinion of Venezuelans and disagree with the government authorising Venezuelans to remain in Colombia. This figure has increased by 9% since the previous report in February 2019; Invaer Gallup-Poll Survey (February 2020): 54% of Colombians interviewed stated that they disagreed with the policy of welcoming Venezuelans to Colombia.

<sup>23</sup> “Yes, but not here”, Oxfam (24 October 2019): Perceptions of xenophobia and discrimination towards Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru

<sup>24</sup> ColombiaCheck is a Consejo de Redacción project, with over 100 associated journalists in Colombia to promote investigative journalism.

<sup>25</sup> The Observatory of the Venezuela Migration Project: “Surveys on the perception of migration in Colombia”, September 2020, February-March 2021 and May-June 2021

<sup>26</sup> North Santander (3), La Guajira (1), Vichada (1), Guainía (1) and Arauca (1)

### Asylum seekers and refugees

For the time being, Colombia has only granted refugee status to a small number of Venezuelans, alongside other persons from other countries.<sup>27</sup> This can be partly explained by the fact that few Venezuelans have applied for refugee status.<sup>28</sup>

However, international observers have remarked that many opponents of the government in Venezuela, members of native communities and LGBTQI+ persons have all been forced into exile. The Colombian government is in discussion with UN agencies about the access of such people to refugee status and asylum in Colombia.

### Irregular migration

The majority of migrants in Colombia are in an irregular migration situation<sup>29</sup> and come up against huge obstacles when seeking to gain access to services and exercise their rights.<sup>30</sup> Irregular migration rarely takes place as a well-planned, orderly and organised process. It is more often flight from an unbearable situation into a precarious situation. Many of these people arrive in Colombia via irregular crossing points (known as trochas, or “paths”) along the 2,219-kilometre border.

These illegal crossing points are mostly to be found in zones where the State has little or no sovereignty, with illegal armed groups or criminal gangs replacing it. These are zones that are propitious to the development of illegal economies, human trafficking, and the smuggling of drugs and other goods.

**“Crossing at the trochas costs money. At each checkpoint you have to pay something. I went through 15 and each time I had to pay armed men. Soldiers also racketed us, taking our money and insulting us.”**

*A Venezuelan, 37, Cúcuta (24/10/2021)*

### Abuse and human trafficking

There are high levels of insecurity at border crossings between Colombia and Venezuela. Large sections of the border are controlled by armed groups who levy taxes from those entering Colombia, as a result of armed conflict and smuggling in connection with the local mafia.<sup>31</sup> The Colombian border was closed in March 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to an increase in irregular crossings. This in turn increases the risk of kidnapping for these people who are then shanghaied into armed groups and coerced into forced labour or sexual exploitation.<sup>32</sup> Women travelling alone are at increased risk of harassment, falling victim to sexual exploitation<sup>33</sup> and abuse<sup>34</sup> from armed groups and criminal gangs, police officers<sup>35</sup> and security force workers.<sup>36</sup> LGBTQI+ people are also victims of this sexist violence. Figures published by the Colombian Ministry of the Interior reveal 729 cases of people subjected to human trafficking between 2013 and 2020. This human trafficking is a source of worry for the Colombian Ministry of the Interior<sup>37</sup> and various civil society organisations. All the more because international agencies are of the opinion that the phenomenon is underestimated.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> EFE: the price of the crossing is between 15 and 30 US dollars per person:

<sup>32</sup> Article <https://www.eltiempo.com> (in Spanish only)

<sup>33</sup> M. Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, asked for more attention to be paid to human trafficking in the region (2019).

<sup>34</sup> Semana (March 2020): El drama de las violaciones en la frontera con Venezuela (in Spanish only)

<sup>35</sup> In August 2019, four Cúcuta police officers arrested for human trafficking. “Capturados cuatro policías en Cúcuta por trata de personas”, W Radio (August 2019)

<sup>36</sup> R4V Flash Update: Covid-19 Update, September 2020

<sup>37</sup> RCN Radio

<sup>38</sup> The trafficking of refugees and migrants, GIFMM/R4V (October 2020 - in Spanish only)

<sup>27</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (November 2020): mid-2020, out of 17,000 asylum applications, only 3.4% were granted. According to the same source, 665 people have been recognised as refugees in Colombia, of whom 67% are Venezuelan.

<sup>28</sup> UNHCR: as of November 2020, nearly 20,000 asylum applications were being processed (cumulated applications since 2017).

<sup>29</sup> According to the report by the Interagency Group for Mixed Migration Flows (GIFMM), published in June 2021, 56.4% were in an irregular situation. The remaining 43.6% were in possession of the documents required of legal residents.

<sup>30</sup> DANE (2019): double the number of unemployed among Venezuelans. 92.1% stated that they were working in the informal sector. 44.7% of 12-15 year-olds stated that they were working.

### Worker migration

92% of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia moved to find work and improve their economic condition.<sup>39</sup> Once in Colombia, 61.3% of these people have asserted that they have had trouble finding a job and 23.4% feel discriminated against because of their nationality. The migrant population especially works in the informal labour market.<sup>40</sup>

The first obstacle encountered by migrants seeking to work in the formal labour market is obtaining the official documents needed to apply for a job, in particular the authentication of diplomas and certifications of professional experience. Furthermore, given the persistence of gender inequality, being both a woman and a migrant produces an even worse cumulative effect when seeking work. Many women find themselves working in the illegal and informal economy<sup>41</sup> as domestic workers or in food service.

### Persons returning to their country of origin

According to UNHCR estimations, over 845,000 Colombians have returned to Colombia since 2015. They had been living in Venezuela for decades, and are mostly binationals,<sup>42</sup> A large majority of these people returned to their country of origin because of the worsening socio-economic situation in Venezuela. Others were forced to leave Venezuela between 2015 and 2016. At the time, relations of solidarity and hospitality were forged between the exiled Colombians and Venezuelans living in poor neighbourhoods on the other side of the border. This fragile balance shattered in mid-2015, when Nicolas Maduro’s government in Venezuela launched the “Operations for the Liberation of the People.” In theory, these operations were to push back on “Colombian paramilitarism”, but turned into an anti-Colombian campaign, with arbitrary

<sup>39</sup> DANE: Pulse of Migration survey: <https://www.eltiempo.com>

<sup>40</sup> Labor Market and Social Security Observatory of Externado University of Colombia (2019), “Labour Overview of Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia 2014-2019”: 25% of Venezuelan migrants have an employment contract. They work an average of at least 50 hours a week, whereas the average working week for Colombians is 44 hours. They are paid 12% less than Colombian workers.”

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid* 5, 75% of Venezuelan migrants work in the informal market.

<sup>42</sup> Migración Colombia (2017): 40% of those coming to Colombia had dual nationality (Colombian and Venezuelan).

inspections, intimidation, pillaging and demolition. This episode led to the deportation of some 2,000 persons to Colombia and a mass return of 22,000 persons to Colombia.

The number of voluntary returns may increase given that between 3.5 and 5 million Colombians left to settle in Venezuela since the 1950s.<sup>43</sup> Looking beyond economic reintegration, these people having returned to their country of origin need psychosocial assistance due to the traumatism of returning, combined with assistance with reintegrating healthcare and education systems, in order to find housing and, in general, to exercise all their economic, social and cultural rights.

### Shuttle migration

In 2017, the Colombian government rolled out a series of migration measures targeting Venezuelans,<sup>44</sup> including the “Cross-Border Mobility Card” (TMF) to “identify Venezuelan citizens living near the border and who regularly move between the two countries”.<sup>45</sup>

Since then, nearly 1.6 million Venezuelans have obtained this card. Every day, an average of 45,000 persons<sup>46</sup> uses one to travel between Venezuela and Colombia, to buy medicine, gain access to education or health services, or make purchases. These people have not left their place of residence and only travel short distances and for short periods of time.

<sup>43</sup> Ángela María Carreño Malaver, Memorias (2014). Colombian immigration to Venezuela increased in the second half of the 20th century because of the oil boom and armed conflict in Colombia. The estimations vary from 2 to 4.5 million.

<sup>44</sup> Koehlin J., Eguren J. (2018), El éxodo venezolano: entre el exilio y la emigración. Konrad Adenauer Foundation (in Spanish only)

<sup>45</sup> Migración Colombia (2017)

<sup>46</sup> Research Radio Fe y Alegría (2020): 60% of these shuttle migrants are women, 30% are aged 21 to 40 and 70% are under 21.

### Transit migration

These are people in transit across Colombia to reach another destination. Since 2018, over 593,000 Venezuelans have transited through Colombia to reach another country.<sup>47</sup> 75% of these people leave via the checkpoint at the Rumichaca International Bridge, on the border with Ecuador. Their main destinations are Ecuador, Peru and Chile.

### Regularisation and integration measures

The arrival en masse of migrants from Venezuela took the Colombian government by surprise. In 2018 they had no suitable migration policy to tackle this unprecedented phenomenon. They have been responsive, introducing a set of measures and emergency decrees.<sup>48</sup> Initially, they rolled out the special residence permit (PEP), which was valid for two years and renewable for a second 2-year period. With its tight validity period, the PEP soon reached its limits. It was thus necessary to establish another status as a more suitable response to permanent Venezuelan migration, rather than transit migration. According to DANE, only 15% of Venezuelan migrants have received a PEP (around 260,000 persons).<sup>49</sup>

The second important initiative was the introduction by decree in February 2021 of the temporary protection permit (PPT), issued by Migración Colombia.<sup>50</sup> The PPT replaced the PEP, granting temporary protection for ten years to Venezuelans in the country. Instead of a two-year permit with ordinary migration status, they could obtain a ten-year residence visa. In early 2022, according to Migración Colombia, over 700,000 Venezuelans had already been regularised with the PPT. On 24 May 2022 the President of the Republic, Iván Duque Márquez stated at the Latin America Presidential Panel at the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland, that the millionth temporary protection permit would be issued in June 2022.<sup>51</sup>

This new status was rolled out just as several other countries in the region hardened their migration policies to contain the entry of Venezuelan nationals on their territory.<sup>52</sup> This decision was part of the Colombia integration and regularisation policy, which also includes local initiatives such as issuing work permits and providing greater access to healthcare and education, social welfare programmes and housing benefits. Thanks to this strategy, Colombia has been labelled a country that is open to migration<sup>53</sup> and with authorities who have been both creative and generous.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Colombia's border control agency responsible for monitoring and conducting migratory control within the framework of national sovereignty and in accordance with the law.

<sup>51</sup> Presidency of the Colombian Republic (in Spanish only)

<sup>52</sup> In 2021, Chile enacted new legislation on immigration requiring visas to be obtained from the Chilean consulate in the country of origin to cross its borders.

<sup>53</sup> I. Duque, Colombian President (February 2021): "We want to set the benchmark for other countries. We want to show that, while we are not a rich country, we can demonstrate humanity and solidarity, with an intelligent, healthy migration policy."

<sup>54</sup> F. Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (February 2021): This is a "bold humanitarian gesture" that "serves as an example to the world. This initiative will change the lives of the 1.7 million uprooted Venezuelans who can now benefit from greater levels of protection, security and stability despite being far from home."

<sup>47</sup> Migración Colombia 2018

<sup>48</sup> Including the Decree 1288 dated 25 July 2018 guaranteeing access to institutional services for Venezuelan migrants. Resolution 6370 dated 1 August 2018, drawing up an administrative register of Venezuelan migrants

<sup>49</sup> DANE (2022), "Pulse of Migration" survey conducted in January and February 2022

## Migration issues in the Colombian media scene and public discourse

### Media coverage of migration in several phases

The migration situation has been widely covered in the media. There have been some "positive" accounts, viewing migration as an asset or a source of pride, and others have been "negative", viewing migration as a threat. This coverage has evolved greatly over time depending on the profile and number of migrants crossing the border.

Between 2005 and 2015, the arrival of entrepreneurs, intellectuals and well-educated opponents to the Venezuelan regime was viewed positively in the media and public opinion in general.<sup>55</sup> This positive image generally benefitted these migrants, but was sometimes rocked by new migration flows from Venezuela.

Starting in 2017, the daily influx of thousands of Venezuelan migrants from more modest classes heralded a change in the editorial line of the main media outlets in Colombia. Footage of huge migrant caravans crossing bridges and roads gave rise to a sentiment of loss of control<sup>56</sup> with the media resorting to the language of natural catastrophes or war, referring to "avalanches", "invasion", "waves", "chaos" and "onslaught".



<sup>55</sup> "Talent is not a prophet in his own country," El Tiempo (2008) (in Spanish only)

<sup>56</sup> [https://es.kiosko.net/co/2021-07-02/np/co\\_espectador.html](https://es.kiosko.net/co/2021-07-02/np/co_espectador.html) (in Spanish only)

### Discourse on insecurity

The discourse identifying migrants as a threat focalises on the theme of insecurity, whether on a personal level (crime)<sup>57</sup> or in terms of the economy (unfair competition and anxiety over resources and work).

Phenomena such as insecurity, crime and inadequate public services had already been observed in Colombia, yet are now associated with migration, fuelling fear and worry in public opinion,<sup>58</sup> leading to a mistrustful attitude towards “others”<sup>59</sup> in general. And yet, statistics show that these migrants are not responsible for increased violence in Colombia<sup>60</sup> and that most reported crime occurs in border regions controlled by armed gangs.<sup>61</sup>

**“For years I have been selling cigarettes and water at the same traffic lights. Over time, I’ve got to know some Colombians, who were always courteous to me. Just one aggression in the neighbourhood was mentioned on the radio and in newspapers and I feel that people have changed their opinion. They shout at me: ‘go kill at home’, ‘get out, you old hag!’ I still go to work every day, for the money, but I am so ashamed, I feel humiliated.”**

*Venezuelan, 54 years, Cúcuta (24/10/2021)*

In terms of economic impact, Venezuelan migrants are depicted in the media as competing unfairly for jobs.<sup>62</sup> Opinion pieces and reports explain, for example, that they accept work for lower wages than Colombians.

Politicians making hostile declarations have fuelled xenophobic discourse in certain media outlets, especially in the sensationalist tabloid press known as *amarillista*.<sup>63</sup> On social media, vicious language referring to migrants has gone viral with the use of expressions such as “*veneco*”,<sup>64</sup> “illegal”, “socialists”,<sup>65</sup> “invaders” and “*hambriento*”.<sup>66</sup> Certain regions like Bogotá, La Guajira, North Santander, Arauca and Nariño have, consequently, experienced surges of xenophobia.

**“People despise us. I was asked to leave a bar because I’m Venezuelan. Everyone was looking daggers at me, was making fun of me. I left in tears.”**

*Venezuelan adolescent, Cúcuta (25/10/2021)*

Some Colombian press outlets however have reported on this climate of rejection and the dangers the migrant population have to face.<sup>67</sup> Certain media outlets also strive to correct this perception by focussing on official data.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>57</sup> “Theft, the dark side of the Venezuelan exodus” (in Spanish only)

<sup>58</sup> ECP-DANE survey (2019): 75.7% of the population do not trust people of another nationality.

<sup>59</sup> Oxfam (2018): “Yes, but not here”, Perceptions of xenophobia and discrimination towards Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

<sup>60</sup> Dooley and Selee, MPI and Brookings Institution (2020), Venezuelan migration, crime and misperceptions: in 2020 Venezuelans accounted for 4% of the population in Colombia; 2.3% are responsible for crimes (National Penitentiary and Prison Institute (Colombia)) and account for 0.63% of the prison population.

<sup>61</sup> Dooley and Selee, MPI and Brookings Institution (2020), Venezuelan migration, crime and misperceptions.

<sup>62</sup> “Colombians are invited to regain their composure faced with competition from Venezuelans on the labour market” (in Spanish only)

<sup>63</sup> “The mayor of Bogotá, Claudia López, sparks controversy with her attacks on Venezuelan migrants and refugees” (in Spanish only): Claudia López has an immense talent for reframing public debate with a xenophobic slant. She holds the second most important public role in the country and she is the second most influential political personality on Twitter in Colombia, after current President Álvaro Uribe.

<sup>64</sup> Term designating Colombians having emigrated to Venezuela. It has become a derogatory insult for Venezuelans.

<sup>65</sup> Given the background of bloody guerilla warfare in Colombia, “socialist” and “communist” are used as insults.

<sup>66</sup> Meaning “ravenous”, designating someone who gulps all the food down without taking into account the needs or rights of others.

<sup>67</sup> In Soacha (Bogotá), Jesuits denounced pamphlets threatening to massacre Venezuelans (in Spanish only)

<sup>68</sup> “Myths of Venezuelan migration” (2021) (in Spanish only)

### Covid-19 and migrants in the media

With the Covid-19 pandemic, contradictory accounts have developed in the media and on Colombian social media.

Some content with a negative tone insinuated that Venezuelan migrants helped to spread disease,<sup>69</sup> saturated healthcare facilities and caused a crisis in Colombian hospitals.<sup>70</sup> Combined with the fear of the virus spreading unchecked, these arguments sparked xenophobic reactions in the country.<sup>71</sup> One migrant stated that “Rumours were taken up by the media and Internet claiming that we imported Covid. We have been treated like pariahs.” Certain media outlets also criticised international aid, claiming that foreigners received more than the most vulnerable Colombians.

To a lesser extent, certain media outlets (mainly the national press and alternative and independent online media outlets) emphasised the key role played by Venezuelan healthcare workers to support overwhelmed hospital departments.<sup>72</sup> They have also paid tribute to the unsung heroes (delivery workers, street sellers, drivers etc.) who got moving and “powered the nation” during the pandemic. Alternative and independent media outlets have widely informed the public as to the devastating impact of Covid on the most vulnerable migrants:<sup>73</sup> during lockdown, many lost their meagre livelihood and slid into abject poverty,<sup>74</sup> risking expulsion and food insecurity.<sup>75</sup> The press also took an interest in a

return to Venezuela of 130,000 migrants living in Colombia,<sup>76</sup> who could not work because of measures to enforce isolation and blockades.<sup>77</sup>

**“We did not perceive any gratitude for our work in the media during Covid. We cared for senior citizens, people who were alone etc. It is like that didn’t count.”**

*Venezuelan/Colombian binational, 34, Bogotá (22/10/2021)*

Scapegoats for some, essential workers for others, the Covid-19 pandemic put the spotlight on contradictory, competing anti-migration accounts within Colombian society. Media coverage thus reflects most representations circulating within Colombian society.

### Women migrants from Venezuela in the media

Women migrants from Venezuela are victims of especially violent stigmatisation in both the media and public discourse. In Colombia, the hypersexualised image of Venezuelan women, combined with a highly sexist culture, exposes them to aggression and harassment. A binational journalist said that “There is much discussion in popular Colombian culture of ‘Venezuelan beauties’ who win beauty pageants, as well as the ‘*bonitas*’ who come to ‘steal Colombian men’ and ‘wreck Colombian homes.’”<sup>78</sup>

**“I work as a street seller. I’m not for sale myself. It is so banal. They say to ‘get yourself a Venezuelan woman’ when they mean ‘visit a prostitute’.”**

*Venezuelan woman, 40, Bogotá (22/10/2021)*

<sup>69</sup> “Experts fear that the crisis in Venezuela will trigger major regional epidemics” (in Spanish only)

<sup>70</sup> 80’ “Care for migrants generates a hospital crisis in Sucre and Magdalena” (09/07/2019) (in Spanish only) “National (dis)order: shaping Venezuelan migration as a threat to health and public safety in Colombia”, Ordóñez and Ramírez Arcos, Revista Ciencias de la Salud (2019).

<sup>71</sup> La Opinión (14 April 2020): “Coronavirus aviva la xenofobia en Colombia.” (in Spanish only)

<sup>72</sup> The country has 948 Venezuelan experts in healthcare (in Spanish only) Venezuelans are helping us get through this pandemic (in Spanish only) Venezuelan migration: a resource to fight Covid-19 (2020) (in Spanish only)

<sup>73</sup> “Migración Colombia has marginalised foreigners during lockdown” (2020) (in Spanish only) “The pandemic has increased xenophobia” (2020) (in Spanish only); “Covid-19: the expulsion of Venezuelan nationals from their homes in Colombia on the increase” (2020) (in Spanish only)

<sup>74</sup> El Espectador: “The dual struggle for Venezuelans in Bogotá” (in Spanish only)

<sup>75</sup> GIFMM (January 2021): 85% of Venezuelan households in Colombia have trouble obtaining enough food, 68% have trouble finding housing, 44% finding a job, and 29% getting medical care. One in three families has had to beg in the street to buy food.

<sup>76</sup> Dr Eduardo Stein, Joint Special Representative of UNHCR and IOM for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela.

<sup>77</sup> El Espectador: “Venezuelan migrants going home because of coronavirus”, 2020 (in Spanish only)

<sup>78</sup> Caracol Radio: “Venezuelan exodus wrecking families” (in Spanish only)

### News broadcast in the media and social media overexploit the image of women

migrants from Venezuela represented as prostitutes,<sup>79</sup> exploited<sup>80</sup> or begging in the street with their children in arms. Malicious content accuses women migrants of crossing the border to give birth in order to gain Colombian nationality for their child and abuse the healthcare system. The opinion piece by journalist Claudia Palacios “They need to stop giving birth”<sup>81</sup> is a striking illustration of this, provoking sharp controversy in Colombia.

Hostile, stigmatising remarks from members of the political élite or Internet users on social media<sup>82</sup> are reproduced fully by the media without analysis or critical thinking.<sup>83</sup> Against this backdrop, Venezuelan women have had trouble gaining access to certain public services. Between March and September 2020, the platform *Cosas de Mujeres* recorded many complaints from Venezuelan women in Cúcuta who were deprived of access to justice because of their nationality. Other have been subjected to xenophobic attacks in hospital. One migrant revealed that “I came for a medical appointment, five months pregnant. People looked at me in disgust, as if to say: ‘yet another *veneca* coming to give birth here, why don’t you go home to have your baby!’”

Some articles<sup>84</sup> were published to condemn this discriminatory violence towards Venezuelan women and young girls. The number of articles and their impact have been deemed insufficient.<sup>85</sup>

### Regularisation and legal status in the media

The media widely covered the announcement by the Colombian President, Ivan Duque Márquez, regarding the rollout of the temporary protection permit (PPT). The televised announcement garnered high ratings and there was a lot of commentary. He notably stated that “Faced with those who want to exclude or discriminate against migrants, we are standing now to say that we will welcome them, we will help them and support them in their troubled times.” The majority of media analysts considered this gesture to be generous and emphasised that it was applauded by the United Nations and countries like France.<sup>86</sup>

On social media however, and especially on Twitter, many criticised the decision and published expressions of rejection towards Venezuelans. The xenophobia barometer<sup>87</sup> explained that on the day after this announcement by the President, the most frequently cited hashtags were #venezolanos, followed by #venecos, to express nationalist sentiment and discontent and to denigrate Venezuelan migrants.

### Representation of types of migration in the media

#### Irregular immigration

There is a predominance of news and reportage on clandestine crossing points, people arriving in irregular circumstances and the armed gangs which control these crossing points.<sup>88</sup> The media rely above all on official figures and sources.<sup>89</sup> The content is often nothing but facts and figures, indicating the number of people who have entered the country, or who are transiting through Colombia<sup>90</sup> to other countries in the region. Content is also produced on the emergency aid programmes run by humanitarian organisations.<sup>91</sup>

#### Asylum seekers and refugees

The media has given very little coverage to asylum applications and international protection afforded to relatively few Venezuelans having moved to Colombia. However, the media covered the case of Luisa Ortega Díaz<sup>92</sup> extensively. The former head prosecutor and supporter of Chavez, who criticised Nicolas Maduro’s regime, was fired in 2017 and has since gained refugee status in Colombia. The majority of articles condemned the “authoritarian” Venezuelan regime and the obstacles to fundamental freedoms. Content has also been circulated within the LGBTQI+ community, repressed in Venezuela. Some community members have applied for asylum in Colombia. They highlight the trouble they have had gaining this status, as well as xenophobia<sup>93</sup> and their problems while trying to integrate into Colombian society.<sup>94</sup>

### Going home

The theme of Colombians returning to their country of origin after leaving for Venezuela is recounted from a personal viewpoint, as personal life stories featuring a mixture of nostalgia and emotion at the prospect of “going home”, along with the human, logistical and psychological issues such a move might involve.<sup>95</sup> Another narrative looks at repatriated young children and adolescents and their integration<sup>96</sup> into Colombian society.

### Human smuggling and trafficking

Colombian media coverage of this theme has mostly been geared around content in the form of short, factual articles about police initiatives to dismantle prostitution networks exploiting women and minors<sup>97</sup> of Venezuelan and other nationalities.<sup>98</sup> The media also mention this subject in interviews with experts<sup>99</sup> (United Nations, lawyers etc.). Generally speaking, local media outlets have more trouble covering this subject. Journalists who condemn human trafficking or investigate possible connections between criminal groups and public stakeholders, such as police officers and local politicians, are threatened. Some have to leave the country or live with permanent police protection.<sup>100</sup> Some content does mention aid provided by NGOs to victims of human trafficking, and shelters to accommodate them and protect them.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>79</sup> “The invasion of ‘las Venecas’” (2017): <https://www.elmundo.es/internacional/2017/08/18/5995b1bde2704e3d318b45b2.html> (in Spanish only)

<sup>80</sup> “43 Venezuelan women subjected to cruel sexual exploitation” (2018), URL: <https://beta.eltiempo.com/amp/bogota/desde-cucuta-traian-mujeres-venezolanas-para-prostituiras-en-bogota-296612> (in Spanish only)

<sup>81</sup> “They need to stop giving birth” (2019): <https://www.eltiempo.com/opinion/columnistas/claudia-palacios/paren-de-parir-columna-de-claudia-isabel-palacios-giraldo-374742> (in Spanish only)

<sup>82</sup> “I kept my eternal bachelor status because of the Venecas”: [https://www.memegenerator.es/meme/2848494/Do your part and adopt a Venezuelan woman!](https://www.memegenerator.es/meme/2848494/Do%20your%20part%20and%20adopt%20a%20Venezuelan%20woman!); [twitter.com/patottas/status/436927521565573120](https://twitter.com/patottas/status/436927521565573120)

<sup>83</sup> L. Cortés Sierra, National University of Rosario (2021): “Discrimination in the representation of women migrants from Venezuela in Colombia?”

<sup>84</sup> “I am not a veneca. I am a migrant. I am a woman” (2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2BEo1Vc6fg> (in Spanish only)

<sup>85</sup> Interviews and discussion groups conducted for this report

<sup>86</sup> France praises Duque’s migration policy”, *El Nuevo Siglo* (2021), URL: <https://www.elnuevosiglo.com.co/articulos/11-03-2021-venimos-agradecer-y-seguir-construyendo-con-francia-duque> (in Spanish only)

<sup>87</sup> Platform which systematises, analyses and publishes the result of analysis of conversations on Twitter regarding the migrant population in Colombia: <http://barometrodexenofobia.org> (in Spanish only)

<sup>88</sup> Caracol Radio: “Venezuelan exodus wrecking families”, URL: [caracol.com.co/emisora/2018/08/28/bucaramanga/1535407747\\_326141.html](http://caracol.com.co/emisora/2018/08/28/bucaramanga/1535407747_326141.html) (in Spanish only)

<sup>89</sup> *El Espectador* (2022), “A network of traffickers of immigrants dismantled; 70 billion dollars confiscated” (in Spanish only)

<sup>90</sup> RCN (2018), “Venezuelan cross the border chasing their dream” (in Spanish only)

<sup>91</sup> *Diario del Sur* (2022), “Humanitarian crisis in Nariño with the arrival of migrants”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>92</sup> *El Tiempo* (2017), (in Spanish only), *La Opinión* (2017), (in Spanish only), RCN Radio (2017), URL: <https://www.rcnradio.com/internacional/fiscal-luisa-ortega-diaz-afirmo-que-en-venezuela-hay-terrorismo-de-estado> (in Spanish only)

<sup>93</sup> *El Tiempo* (2020), “Violence inflicted on Venezuelan LGBTQI+ migrants in Colombia”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>94</sup> *El Espectador* (2021), “From Venezuelan hell to Colombian limbo: challenge for LGBT migrants”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>95</sup> Radio RCN (2019), (in Spanish only)

<sup>96</sup> *Semana* (2019), “A troubled return for Colombians in Venezuela”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>97</sup> *Migración Colombia* (2019): 63% of female victims of human trafficking are 10 to 30 years old.

<sup>98</sup> *El Tiempo* (2022), “A network of traffickers of immigrants dismantled; 70 billion dollars confiscated”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>99</sup> *El Espectador*, (2021), “Something has to be done about human trafficking”, URL: (in Spanish only)

<sup>100</sup> Website: <https://www.ifj.org> (in Spanish only)

<sup>101</sup> *La Opinión* (2021), “EACANNA, the special care unit for children and adolescents from La Parada” (in Spanish only)

### Quality of media coverage of migration

Given the speed and extent of Venezuelan migration, it presents a great challenge for Colombian media. It has highlighted the inexperience of those covering this phenomenon, as has been observed elsewhere in Latin America.<sup>102</sup> The majority of journalists we consulted are sensitive to the fact that the content they produce may ramp up rejection of this migrant population. They do emphasise their duty to report all events however, even those that may exacerbate xenophobia, such as the coverage of the Haitian migrants' blockade of the bus station<sup>103</sup> in Nariño demanding access to its services (toilets, showers etc.).

### Placing in context

A lot of content presents the facts and figures of migration and the migrant population as an anonymous group. The media justified this exodus by saying that “they were fleeing poverty and violence.” A radio journalist stated: “Poverty and violence is the daily lot of many Colombians. We need to be more precise regarding the precariousness of daily life in Venezuela for Colombians to better understand and accept these people.” A reporter for local television acknowledged that providing well-analysed news and placing it in context is complicated. He stated that “It is a challenge for me, we have to work fast, and it isn't a subject I have a full grasp of. We are not given the necessary resources to produce in-depth, good-quality work.”

Without a frame of reference, journalists have sometimes deformed reality. One said that “I don't have enough basic knowledge on migration. The race to produce content does not leave us enough time to connect the dots of essential information with the news content we produce.” The lack of knowledge and insights into the theme of migration is another blocking point. One journalist said: “I would like to write that migration is a universal right, but if I am not capable of reasoning it properly, readers would just reject the notion outright, making it even worse.” There are some alternative digital media outlets and special issues of magazines which explain the context behind this wave of migration clearly, in particular looking back at the historical ties between the two countries.

### Professionalism and quality of media coverage

Many journalists regret the lack of an editorial line to cover the migration crisis, which would help to avoid pitfalls and blunders. These include semantic issues, for example using the term “illegal migrants” to describe people in an irregular situation or people undergoing the regulation process, and an emphasis on personal value judgments and preconceived ideas. One reporter from an online media outlet said: “We lack staff to edit content, we work without a safety net.” Verbal blunders by journalists and participants in news programmes have occurred during guest interviews or vox pops on live radio and television programmes.

Reporters wishing to investigate and produce original content are frustrated in their approach. One journalist said: “I may be the one on the ground, but it is my Chief Editor who decides because he says he knows what the public are interested in. I'm mostly asked to cover news items about crime.” A member of a foundation stated that “In Colombia, it is a daily struggle to preserve our freedom and write decent articles. Some journalists have abandoned the fight.”

### Abiding by the code of ethics

One migrant remarked: “They never ask for our permission before filming or photographing us. Some journalists lie, claiming that nobody will see our faces, or that they are going to help us.” Photos and footage show vulnerable migrants, in abject conditions. Reporters encroach on their private life, failing to protect their rights and their dignity. One trainer asserted that “Such behaviour is ethically reprehensible, and sometimes even illegal. It is a source of growing strife between the migrants and the press.” One reporter called some of his colleagues “mediocre,” “mundane when they cover migration topics,” “easily annoyed, irritable and completely lacking in respect for the migrants. If a migrant doesn't want to answer them, they take it badly. This might be why they disparage them.” Yet international organisations insist when reaching out to the media on the principle of “*doing no harm*” to these fragile, vulnerable people.

In terms of independence, there are blurred lines between the media and politicians. This proximity means that some politicians use the media to exempt themselves from responsibility regarding topics such as the economy and security. Journalists working for the regional press specify that they are pressured by local political leaders who curb their freedom of action and expression. One journalist said: “If we criticise migration management at the border, the mayor, governor or police pay us a visit or complain.”

Moreover, media outlets send very few journalists out into the field due to lack of resources. Sometimes, the only solution to meet migrants is to accompany an international organisation like UNICEF or IOM. One journalist said: “In this case, we feel obliged to talk about them and their programmes.” Media outlets which cover the subject without going out into the field often content themselves with copying official dispatches or press releases from the police. The use of varied sources, including interviews with actual migrants, and the triangulation of information, are neglected by journalists through lack of time, means and the consolidation of poor practices.

**“Sometimes, we hear reports about us (the Venezuelans) but we have never talked with any journalists. I wonder how they can discuss us without knowing us.”**

*A Venezuelan, 44, Cúcuta (24/10/2021)*

Lastly, there are few journalists specialising in the theme of migration. One editor said: “It is a luxury that few media outlets can afford. Journalists have to be a jack of all trades, writing about politics in the morning, migrants in the afternoon and football in the evening.” To make up for this, some media outlets have hired binational journalists in their newsroom.

The migrants we consulted disparaged the abundance of sensationalist themes. One migrant said: “They always bring up the same topics: that Venezuelans are thieves and take advantage of the system. But they never mention what we bring to Colombia. We have plenty to say on the subject but for that, we need them to come and listen to us.”

<sup>102</sup> “Project Migration Venezuela”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>103</sup> Caracol Radio (2021), “Haitians take over the bus station in Pasto, Nariño,” (in Spanish only)



And if a media outlet circulates fake news about the migrant population, it is rarely rectified. There is a Regulation Commission, but it only formulates recommendations and may not apply sanctions or even require rectification. If a migrant feels that they are a victim of xenophobic attacks, there is no system to petition for a right of reply. A media expert commented: “If a migrant feels insulted and asks for a right of reply, they will need a good lawyer, plenty of time and money, which of course they don’t have at all.”

Whether or not to mention the nationality of an alleged criminal is a debate which fires the media up. Including this information, which from a reporting point of view is often not particularly useful, can cause harm and risks stimulating xenophobia. One migrant acknowledged that “Sure, there are Venezuelans who do wrong things, but it is a minority, and when the media publish lots of news on crimes committed by Venezuelans, we are all pointed at, designated as jointly responsible.” Some journalists think that the nationality of delinquents should be mentioned because it is their duty to inform the public. Others explain that they are ready to adhere to another editorial line, while yet regretting a lack of clear instructions from their media outlet. A member of an international organisation stated: “The fact that this debate has not already been decided by the Colombian media is a matter of concern. This amalgam reinforces stereotypes and bolsters the message that the Venezuelans are all criminals because they are migrants.”

### Representation according to type of media

Radio and television have developed popular news formats which blur the distinction between news, opinion and entertainment. These formats have a lighter touch with the news and often scarcely bother to place an item in context or analyse it.

#### Television

it is the most popular media with a penetration rate of 91%. It occupies a key position and is the main source of news, cultural and educational content for Colombians. During the migration crisis, the Colombian TV channels fulfilled basic requirements, namely relating events, showing spectacular footage of migrant caravans crossing Simón Bolívar International Bridge, walking along the mountain roads or huddled in parks or on the pavements of large cities. Dehumanizing and threatening expressions like “floods”, “waves” or “mass” are used in commentary to such footage. A media expert stated that “TV has whipped up a sentiment of invasion and fear.” The more the media work in haste, the more the risk of error adds up. A journalist from a local TV channel stated that “We lack hindsight when reporting on events. We have to work fast, too fast.”

TV reporters are also reproached for not listening to migrant opinions enough, not giving them an opportunity to speak of their experience, suffering and hopes. One academic stated that “Footage mostly shows them in the role of victims, or silent and passive.” TV channels favour official sources like official statistics from State authorities or the police. We have also observed the abusive use of data that has not been properly compiled and oversimplification in the *tertulias*<sup>104</sup> on TV.

<sup>104</sup> Debate or talk show in which four or five personalities from the world of politics or literature discuss the news. It is a very popular format with great influence on public opinion.

Some rare reportage uses different angles by relating human stories, placing greater importance on individual experience<sup>105</sup> and taking an interest in the migrants’ emotional state.

#### Radio

It is one of the most influential media among Colombians,<sup>106</sup> an essential source of information and entertainment. The review of discourse on radio with respect to migration features many factual inaccuracies and reinforces stereotypes tying migration to insecurity. One media expert stated that “Radio has helped to consolidate and normalise expressions like ‘veneco’, which is harmful to living in harmony and paves the way to the proliferation of hate speech.”

There are verbal blunders during live shows, especially the *tertulias* (talk shows with journalists, guests and sometimes members of the public). One journalist said: “This is a format in which commentators let themselves go, and speak their minds. There are stereotypes galore. This discourse spreads very easily, billed as “saying it like it is”, using simplistic reasoning with a semblance of common sense, which is easy to understand and reproduce.” These public stances also reach the migrants’ ears. One young migrant recounted: “On a *tertulia*, I heard that we were cowards because we had fled our country instead of staying to get rid of Maduro, that we are only brave enough to steal from the elderly.” During these debates, certain participants do defend a more humanist stance and emphasise the contribution of migrants to the development of society, but their viewpoint is considered to be “marginal”, and these contributors remain a minority.

<sup>105</sup> “Migrants, intersecting lives”, Canal TRO (2019) (in Spanish only)

<sup>106</sup> Nearly 1,600, penetration rate 77%, 40 million listeners

### Community radio stations and TV channels

These media outlets serve the community, sometimes as the sole platform for communication in the most isolated regions of Colombia. They are mainly funded by subscriptions, donations and direct or indirect subsidies from the State or the region. Such funding may influence the nature of content and themes covered. One media expert stated that “Media outlets serving the community have fostered great trust in certain rural towns. They may be a source of rumours or misinformation on migrants which can have an extremely negative knock-on effect.” Furthermore, many migrants listen to the community radio, deploring that they do not contribute to programmes that might address their needs for specific information and help to foster harmony among communities.

#### Printed press

After facing off competition from radio and television, the press now faces growing competition from the online press and social media. With the emergence of free news websites and social media, readers now play an active role in shaping the news, with some creating their own media outlets. This competition has shaken up the traditional press which depends on advertising revenue. This situation worsened during the pandemic with a sharp drop in advertising revenue and the collapse of street sales. These media outlets are striving to reinvent themselves by stepping up their digital presence.



### National press

Practically the entire national press in Colombia is held by powerful family businesses. Newspapers such *El Espectador* and *El Tiempo* provide better quality news content than others. The national press tends more to triangulate its sources,<sup>107</sup> it does not merely relay official statements and seeks to provide context for in-depth articles. Furthermore, some content features Venezuelan migrants with interesting life stories, such as teachers, artists and athletes. These newspapers develop a mostly pro-integration editorial line, yet they are not above reproach. One media expert observed that “In the national press you can read editorials in support of the policy of welcoming migrants, alongside articles covering crime which use stigmatising language to describe migrants, especially in the headlines. These supposedly “traditional” media outlets sometimes publish content on a par with the tabloids.”<sup>108</sup>

Certain articles have been written with good intentions, presenting migrants as victims, expressing compassion, but also a condescending attitude. One trainer argued that “These articles place Colombian readers in a position of superiority compared to the migrants. This perception then induces discriminatory and xenophobic sentiment.”

### Regional press

All the regional media outlets have partially moved over to digital formats in order to cut production costs and attract new readers. Despite these measures, major regional newspapers operate at a loss and depend greatly on public subsidies and occasionally on partnerships with international aid agencies. One reporter from the regional press explained that “This economic dependence leads to coercion and may influence our work.” A media expert stated that “At local level, pressure from the political classes practically never lets up. It might involve the topics covered or censorship of articles about [migration] management.” A reporter from a regional newspaper stated that “Sometimes your only option is to publish the press releases drafted by the mayor or the local chief of police.” Another local journalist added that “There is violence, illegal activity by the local mafia who take advantage of the migrants. But speaking up can be very risky. We are threatened and assassinated. Since we get no support from the authorities, we keep our mouths shut.”

Despite close political ties with local politicians, the regional press has however sometimes criticised decisions deemed unfair. This was the case when the mayor of Pamplona (North Santander) decided to close the shelters for *caminantes* at the height of the pandemic.” The local press slammed this initiative<sup>109</sup> and in the end the mayor let those shelters already in place continue to operate.

<sup>107</sup> El Tiempo (2018), “The infamous pilgrimage of Venezuelans”, (in Spanish only)

<sup>108</sup> El Tiempo (2018), “17 Venezuelan are captured every day in Colombia”, El Tiempo (2018) (in Spanish only), “Dismantling of a house in which 20 Venezuelans were sexually exploited” (in Spanish only)

<sup>109</sup> Estoy en la frontera (2021), “Venezuelan migrants left unprotected in Pamplona during Covid-19 - De Justicia (2020) (in Spanish only), “COVID-19: where will the migrants stay?” (in Spanish only)



Furthermore, certain regional media outlets do endeavour to provide alternative coverage of migration phenomena. This is the case of *La Opinión Cúcuta*,<sup>110</sup> a Cúcuta newspaper often criticised for its “clickbait” coverage, and “*amarillista*” style worthy of the tabloids,<sup>111</sup> which has launched an online platform, *Estoy en la frontera*.<sup>112</sup> It encourages dialogue with the migrants, providing them with practical information and publishing positive integration stories. A journalist explained that “We have historic ties and sometimes strong family ties on either side of the border. We know each other very well. Our line of conduct is to avoid a dramatic, provocative tone.” This editorial experience is nevertheless slated to be axed due to a lack of funding to help it last.

### “Amarillista” press (gossip magazines)

A style of journalism typical of tabloids. It crops up indistinctly in the regional and national press, and in free newspapers. It favours scandals, using “tough” language<sup>113</sup> illustrated with photos of corpses and mutilation. A member of an international organisation commented that “This press systematically links migration and crime and accuses Venezuelan women of husband stealing and other wrongdoing.”

<sup>110</sup> City in Colombia and seat of government in the department North Santander, located in the north-east of the country, on the Venezuelan border

<sup>111</sup> Style of journalism, typical of tabloids

<sup>112</sup> Website: <https://estoyenlafrontera.com/> (in Spanish only)

<sup>113</sup> Examples mentioned: “Venezuelans kill you first, then rob you”; “They kill with bullets.” Even when Venezuelans are not involved, the term “Venezuelan” is added: “Arrested with weapons on a Venezuelan motorbike”

### Social media

Colombia ranks fourth in terms of Internet consumption in Latin America.<sup>114</sup> In January 2020, Colombia had 35 million Internet users (69% of the population) and over half of the population accessed Internet via their mobile phone.<sup>115</sup> Venezuelan migration is a subject that stimulates conversations on social media. The tone of these conversations is mostly negative, with endlessly repeated themes of security (drug dealing and consumption, prostitution and general insecurity), the economy (cost of aid, employment at risk for Colombians) and healthcare (rumours of increased incidence of HIV, Covid, overwhelmed hospital wards because of migration etc.).<sup>116</sup>

One journalist said: “On 21 November 2021, a labour movement degenerated. Violent fighting broke out between the strikers and the police, leading to several deaths and injuries. The Venezuelans were blamed for this violence on social media. Pure misinformation.” This fake news was taken up certain media outlets, provoking a wave of rejection. Hostile graffiti covered city walls, Venezuelans were physically assaulted, and bicycle-taxis were burned in Bogotá and Cali. Over 300,000 tweets<sup>117</sup> were shared containing the term “Venezuelan”, with commentary that was xenophobic in tone. Social media also uses “memes”<sup>118</sup> to produce content that is hostile towards migrants, from a supposedly humoristic viewpoint.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Website: <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/1073677/usuarios-internet-pais-america-latina/> (in Spanish only)

<sup>115</sup> Data on the website: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-colombia>

<sup>116</sup> “Project Migration Venezuela” (2021), “Perceptions on Social Media about Venezuelan Migration.” (in Spanish only)

<sup>117</sup> Digital Forensic Research Lab (DFRLab) of the Atlantic Council

<sup>118</sup> Viral photo aiming to put across a message via social media

<sup>119</sup> Córdoba J., Lobo Ojeda S., Lizarralde Díaz Á. and Torres Sanmiguel A. (2020): “A review of Venezuelan Migration to Colombia through memes on social media: revanchism and perverse representations” (Abstract only in English)

**“On the Internet, they say: Venezuelans kill you first, then rob you, Colombians only rob you.”**

*Venezuelan man, 22, Cúcuta (24/10/2021)*

Furthermore, social media have become a “sounding board” to criticise the Colombian government’s policy of welcoming and regularising migrants. Media analysts worry that certain journalists consider such content published on social media as a source of information in its own right and use it without fact-checking. A trainer argued that “The media know that these news items on crime or comments published on social media are dynamite and attract readers. Publishing such content without filtering anything is dangerous and unacceptable.”

Against the current backdrop of economic crisis, certain Colombian media outlets are tempted to relay this content to reach out to a broader audience and generate more traffic for their online media platform.<sup>120</sup> To push back on misinformation on social media on the theme of migration, the open, collaborative digital platform *ColombiaCheck*<sup>121</sup> regularly publishes articles with a view to deconstructing this misinformation (*fact-checking*).

## Building capacity in the media

### Past initiatives

Since 2015, a number of training and capacity-building initiatives have been dispensed to journalists working for national, regional and community media by civil society organisations (the GABO foundation, Internews, CdR and Deutsche Welle) and international organisations (UNHCR, UNICEF etc.). A non-exhaustive list has been provided in Appendix 2. Practical guidelines for journalists on the migration themes have also been produced at national and international level (Appendix 1).

### Review of the various capacity-building initiatives

Training courses have been organised all over Colombia on various themes. The types of training course that were commented on the most during the one-on-one interviews and discussion groups with the journalists were as follows:

#### Choice of topic and vocabulary

Journalists are aware of their share of responsibility in the public’s positive or negative perception of migrants depending on the subject covered, the angle and vocabulary used. At hands-on workshops organised during training courses, journalists worked on the importance of language used, distinguishing for example between “a person in the process of regularisation” and “clandestine.” Articles and reportages have also been analysed to make note of the terms most often associated with Venezuelan women. This exercise has shown that media representations often use macho, stigmatising language. Generally speaking, these practical exercises have sought to highlight the importance of language in the perpetuation of myths that associate migration with negative events.

<sup>120</sup> “Project Migration Venezuela” (2021), “Perceptions on Social Media about Venezuelan Migration.” (in Spanish only)

<sup>121</sup> Website of the CdR project: <https://colombiacheck.com/> (in Spanish only)

Certain training courses have also helped to compare jargon in journalism and politics. A journalist recounted: “During the training course, there was a consensus on the fact that while good journalism may help to push back on xenophobia, politicians also must set an example and change how they refer to migration,” referring to the speech by the mayor of Bogotá and other members of the political classes.

The journalists also questioned the pertinence of citing the nationality of people involved in crimes. One journalist asserted that “The debate focussed on the fact that nationality has nothing to do with the decision to commit a crime and that it is not necessary to mention it in our articles.” This stance is far from unanimous. Another journalist said: “In these training courses, we are asked to demonstrate more compassion. I am a journalist. If the news is that a Venezuelan has committed murder, I’m putting that in the headline and that’s that.”

#### Diversity in sources

Some training courses examined the use of several different sources of information and problems in connection with the predominance of official and powerful sources, such as elected officials or local police officers. The training courses cover the search for alternative sources such as humanitarian organisations, the migrants themselves, economists, sociologists and historians. One journalist said: “The debate focussed on practising responsible, independent journalism, where reporters do not content themselves with reproducing official declarations. This is easier at national media outlets; and more complicated for local media outlets, because the elected officials wield a lot of influence.”

#### Production of positive accounts

Hands-on exercises have focussed on the production of positive, human accounts of migration with a view to preventing and pushing back on xenophobia. One journalist said: “We worked on migrant life stories, looking at their capacity to tackle difficult challenges: they are well worth sharing.” Others sometimes had the impression that they were being asked to idealise migration. One journalist said: “These training courses are organised by NGOs, but we are not NGOs, and we need to avoid sentimentalism. And honestly, I don’t think that sweet anecdotes about migrants integrating smoothly into society will attract much attention, it won’t generate traffic.”

#### Public service journalism

Journalists have been trained to produce information about services for migrants on themes such as the right to asylum and immigration, access to healthcare, education and adequate housing. A benchmark media outlet is *Somos Panas Colombia*<sup>122</sup> a United Nations setup supplying information on questions like access to healthcare, work and the protection of rights, and discouraging xenophobia by producing human content that promotes values such as solidarity, empathy and tolerance.



<sup>122</sup> Website: <https://somospanascolombia.com/> (in Spanish only)

### Review of the impact of capacity-building initiatives

The many training and capacity-building initiatives implemented in Colombia had not been compiled and integrated into a database, and no coordination efforts had been made among stakeholders in the sector. The interviews highlighted a need for coordination. Knowing “who does what, where and how” would make it possible to map the initiatives precisely and ensure that training efforts are spread evenly over the country. Furthermore, coordination would make it possible for stakeholders in the sector to share their experiences, tools and effective approaches.

### Positive elements and learnings

- The journalists admitted that training is a useful point at which to step back and think hard about their work. For some, this stepping back has sharpened their awareness of the “exceptional, historic situation” they were experiencing and the need to “rise to the occasion.” The training courses have encouraged some journalists to take a proactive stance to seek out topics and think positively about how to cover it, without focussing solely on the problems, but also looking at individual and collective achievements.

- Some journalists explained that training was an opportunity to share certain dilemmas they had had to deal with when writing about migration, especially regarding the choice of sources, terminology and angle. They have fully taken on board that the choice of words is of crucial importance, and that they may improve their reportage by consulting people with various points of view.

- Further to their training, journalists recounted that they used sources coming from migrants, Venezuelans opinion leaders, experts and

workers with international and national humanitarian organisations more regularly, even though access to NGOs and UN agencies on the ground is unanimously deemed difficult. These entities often centralise press relations and share operational news with the media in Bogotá. This MO for humanitarian organisations makes searching, approving and circulating information on migration harder for media outlets, where staff often work to very tight deadlines.

- After their training, journalists said they had acquired knowledge that would help them provide better context for their news stories on migration. Some indicated that they wished to build their knowledge of social studies and geopolitics.



### Room for improvement

- Lack of follow-up after the training courses, especially online and remote courses. In many cases, instructors and trainers acknowledge that the only way they can ensure follow-up is to call the journalists on the telephone. An instructor asserted that “I do try to keep up with them in their career. In the short term it is doable, but in the long term, it’s just not possible.” One journalist said: “After the training course, ideally we would set up a network of tutors and could consult quickly whenever I might have doubts.”

- This need for individual follow-up is especially important for journalists working for small, local media outlets and media outlets serving the community. Once the training course is over, they are left to themselves, and sometimes have trouble with putting what they have learned from the training course into practice.

- Training courses on social media are too rare and focus too much on theory. By the end of these training courses, certain journalists say they still do not understand the codes and language. One journalist said: “I am in competition with self-proclaimed journalists on Facebook who are perfectly at home on this network, who run rings around us and make us look old hat.” Another journalist stated that “After the training course, I published portraits of Venezuelans living here and my newspaper asked some of them to write their own stories. I think it has received a fair reception, even if there were some aggressive comments on our social media pages about doing too much for Venezuelans.” Some journalists have asked for more training on social media with hands-on workshops to analyse content and writing.

### Identifying further needs

- Specific training courses for influencers on social media: raising their awareness of the concepts of responsibility and ethics, offering partnerships with humanitarian agencies and foundations specialising in the media to provide more in-depth knowledge of migration.

- Training courses and support on the following themes: unaccompanied minors, human trafficking, especially of women and young

girls, migration and handicap. There is also a need for further training courses on the legal status and framework for migrants and human rights.

- Training courses in peace journalism and journalism for integration with a more positive vision of migration. Helping reporters to produce content for the general public on the socio-economic aspects for more insight into the opportunities that migration offers the local community.

- Training courses on the use of photographs and video footage. Giving reporters and editors critical criteria to choose and publish photos and footage of migration. Analysing the role and pressure on the online press and social media in the choice of pictures in traditional newsrooms. Placing photos and footage in context and sharing information about them.

- Training courses in the school of journalism where the theme of migration and media coverage of it is not taught sufficiently.

- Fostering a more empathetic approach to vulnerable people, drawing inspiration from techniques for reaching out and interviewing as used by humanitarian organisations, that demonstrate respect and sensitivity.<sup>123</sup>

## Findings and recommendations

In Colombia, the media discourse on the Venezuelan migration phenomenon is often polarised and simplified. It is generally built on perception rather than fact and may generate tension and violence. This discourse is often focalised on the supposedly negative impact of these migrants, forgetting to provide the back story or emphasise the human element and positive effects. The challenges which remain to be taken up set the framework for initiatives which may be developed to build media capacity. Two concepts especially were mentioned during the interviews.

### Organising more training courses in the regions, especially near the borders

- workshops lasting at least two days with time for practical exercises and critical content reviews (language, angle, sources, iconography etc.);
- occasional participation of external contributors (lawyers, NGO workers etc.), to provide more in-depth knowledge of technical concepts that are often not well-known and under-represented in the media (human rights, humanitarian law, human trafficking etc.);
- offering training courses to improve the culture of dialogue and debate within the media, with the participation of chief editors and media outlet directors. The aim of these courses would be to help define an editorial line for each media outlet and ensure that the training course has a lasting effect;
- encourage the participation of Venezuelan journalists in Colombia with a view to gaining better insights into the back story, pointing out

typical errors and putting solutions forward;

- further to training courses, set up a network of tutors to ensure follow-up, respond to needs and doubts of journalists.

### Put forward training courses on social media

- training courses combining theory and hands-on exercises lasting several months (between three and five), alternating online and in-person classes;
- training course on the use of new information channels, on the relations between journalists and social media;
- brainstorming a new role for journalists faced with this competition and adapting media outlets to these new platforms;
- courses to detect and refute misinformation and rumours. Guidelines for online discussion and heading off hate speech in real time. Help with managing xenophobic comments on the media outlet's social network. Participation in training courses for online media *community managers* who are often the first to detect a rise in xenophobic sentiment. Setup of a protocol to manage content, ahead of publication, to prevent the spread of aggressive and xenophobic concepts (controlling language, sources and pictures etc.);
- participation in training courses for bloggers, influencers and representatives of a new generation of journalists who have developed alternative media projects<sup>124</sup> using solutions journalism, inclusive journalism and participatory journalism and who refuse to let "algorithms" take over as Chief Editor, as explained by a founder of one of these platforms.

<sup>124</sup> Los Danieles, La Nueva Prensa, Voragine, Cuestión Pública and La Silla Vacía

# North Africa

Networking, training or awareness-raising workshops, debates, scholarships and competitions organised in North Africa (details of initiatives and venues in Appendix 2)



## Regional overview

### Migration trends

Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia have historically been countries of origin, and are now becoming transit and destination countries.

- These three Greater Maghreb states have been countries of origin for several decades, and still are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Boasting diasporas of hundreds of thousands of citizens, even millions for Morocco, the three North African countries under review in this report receive considerable financial contributions from their expatriates, up to 6.5% of GDP for Morocco.<sup>1</sup>

- In the past 20 years, North Africa has also become an important transit region for migrants, mainly from West Africa. Against a backdrop of human trafficking, especially via the “Libyan hell”, they head for the central Mediterranean area towards Italy or western Mediterranean countries such as Spain, including the Canary Islands. These irregular migration routes very often prove fatal: in 2021 alone, IOM clocked up over 2,000 deaths and missing persons in the Mediterranean, and over 23,800 since 2014.<sup>2</sup>

- Morocco is the most striking example of a transit country that has become a destination country. Proof lies in the two important regularisation drives involving tens of thousands of migrants in an irregular situation in 2014 and 2017.

During the most recent period, in 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down the flow of both regular and irregular migration flows towards Europe, blocking thousands of people, especially seasonal workers, temporary residents, international students and people moving for medical care. Women migrants were harder hit during the pandemic: in Tunisia, for example, they not only lost more revenue than men but were also more vulnerable to the risk of sexual exploitation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Remittances sent by workers and employee wages, received (% of GDP) according to the World Bank website: Morocco | Data (banquemonde.org). <https://data.worldbank.org/country/morocco>

<sup>2</sup> Missing Migrants Project, details on the IOM website: | Missing Migrants Project (iom.int)

<sup>3</sup> Website: Interactive World Migration Report 2022 (iom.int)

### Migration issues in the media landscape

Excessive media coverage of irregular migration – with extensive coverage of tragedies, shipwrecks and crime, followed by periods without any media output – is produced to the detriment of other types of migration, like worker migration, family reunification and student migration. These are rarely covered, if ever, by the regional media. Despite their considerable size, especially in Europe, diasporas are hardly ever mentioned in the media.

Stereotypes and discriminatory language, playing on the fear of both settled migrants and those in transit, are regularly used in the press, TV, radio and social media, with the latter often amplifying misinformation, or fake news.

The NGO networks with a high level of investment on the topic of immigration, as in Tunisia and in Morocco, do sometimes manage to make their voices heard in the public debate, unlike migrants who rarely enjoy such opportunities. They also lack legitimacy to put their messages across in the public debate.

This partial media coverage of migration is to be examined against a backdrop in which investigative journalism is embryonic, with newsrooms under pressure from authorities, and lacking resources in general. Nevertheless there are some noteworthy exceptions, such as the websites *Nawaat*<sup>4</sup> and *Inkyfada*<sup>5</sup> in Tunisia, which are positioned as independent media outlets aiming to provide information on themes that are rarely addressed by mainstream media and thus contribute to the public debate.

### Capacity-building initiatives

Tunisia has had a substantial number of workshops and training courses on migration for journalists. For over ten years, a great number of international organisations, NGOs and associations have offered training courses comprising both theory and hands-on sessions. The European Union and some countries like Italy and France were – and still are – among the most active sponsors.

COUNTRY	INITIATIVES LISTED
Morocco	14
Mauritania	15
Tunisia	23

These training courses have helped to introduce hundreds of journalists to migration issues. However, the beneficiaries are often critical (see above) of the nature of these training courses sometimes deemed too short, repetitive and too focussed on theory, without enough hands-on exercises. They also noted the lack of mentoring or follow-up after the course.

The impact of these training courses on the overall quality of media coverage in these countries is difficult to assess. However there is still plenty left to be done: not all journalists have a grasp of the basics of migration, and stereotypes and clichés still crop up in some media output.



<sup>4</sup> Website: *Nawaat* <https://nawaat.org/en/>

<sup>5</sup> Website: *inkyfada* | Who We Are – *Inkyfada*. <https://inkyfada.com/en/apropos/>

# Morocco

## Key figures

### Surface area

**446,550**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**36.9 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**102,400**  
persons i.e. **0.3%**  
of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Belgium**

**Algeria**

**Spain**

**Syrian Arab Republic**

**Tunisia**

**48.5%**  
are  
women

**21.5%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**3.3 M**  
persons i.e. **9%**  
of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**France**

**Spain**

**Italy**

**Belgium**

**Netherlands**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
accounted in 2021<sup>1</sup>

**6.5% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - Data from this overview available on the website: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>; 2 - IOM website: <https://www.iom.int/interactive>, URL: World Migration Report 2021; 3 - Data on the World Bank website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/TT.NET.USER.ZS>

## Media landscape

The printed press boasts around 60 newspapers and magazines. As for the online press, there are up to 2,000 news websites, but only around 50 of these have a significant readership in this market which is in great economic difficulty.

As for radio, there are seven public stations and 15 privately-owned, general-interest and specialist stations with nationwide or region-wide reach. There is also an emerging network of regional community radio stations. There are three general-interest, public TV channels (*Al Aoula*, *2M* and *Medi1 TV*) and five specialist channels (sport, education, film, religion and one broadcasting in the Amazigh language). There are also two privately-owned satellite channels (*Chada TV* and *Télé Morocco*). Half of the potential Moroccan viewership does not watch these TV channels, preferring to watch foreign channels (European and other Arabic-speaking countries). In 2020, 84% of the population were Internet users.<sup>6</sup>

The Moroccan media landscape thus features a diverse media with many broadcasting channels, but the freedom of the press is significantly restricted,<sup>7</sup> prompting journalists to practise self-censorship. Another notable trend is the rise of digital media lacking in professionalism, that “seeks to create a buzz” and freely sacrifices journalism ethics.

## Overview of migration

Morocco has long been a country of origin, with people leaving for Europe. It then became a country of transit for immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and in the past decade it has become a destination country for these same people.

### A country of origin and transit

With over 3,300,000 Moroccans residing abroad,<sup>8</sup> Morocco is a country with a strong tradition of emigration: worker migration coupled with family migration. The historic importance of this migration can be measured in terms of personal remittances from the diaspora to the country of origin which accounts for 6.5% of GDP.<sup>9</sup>

On top of this established emigrant population, there are also 60,000 Moroccan students abroad, half of whom are in France.<sup>10</sup>

The migration profile for Morocco also features persistent, irregular migration of Moroccans towards Western Europe since the late 1980s. After a relatively slower period from 2006 to 2015, this form of migration has ramped back up among young Moroccans since 2017.<sup>11</sup>

The route to the Western Mediterranean and the Atlantic route towards the Canary Islands are the top two entry points into Europe.<sup>12</sup> In the last quarter of 2020, the Canary Islands saw an increase in arrivals from Morocco: 23,000 migrants (a majority of Moroccans) have arrived, up 750% over 2019.<sup>13</sup> This peak

<sup>8</sup> UN DESA data, (2020) available on the website: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

<sup>9</sup> World Bank data (2021)

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO, (2021) “Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students”

<sup>11</sup> Moroccan Association of Human Rights (2017), “Rapport sur la situation de la migration [...]”, section Nador (AMDH Nador); “Rapport sur la migration situation in [...]”, section Nador (AMDH Nador); Lemaizi S., (2019) “Enquête au royaume des Herraga” (Investigation in the kingdom of the Herraga), in Migration au Maroc : L’impasse ? (Migration in Morocco: A dead end?), Éditions En Toutes Lettres, Casablanca

<sup>12</sup> European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX), (2021) “Risk Analysis for 2021”

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Data on the World Bank website: <https://data.worldbank.org>

<sup>7</sup> Morocco is ranked 135th out of 180 countries on the 2022 Reporters Without Borders barometer

in irregular migration is illustrated by the events in Ceuta in May 2021. In the night of 16 to 17 May 2021, over 8,000 Moroccans, as well as migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa took advantage of relaxed border controls in Morocco, to swim or walk across the border between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Ceuta. This happened at a time of diplomatic crisis between the two countries, in connection with medical care in Spain for the Sahrawi independentist chief, who is an opponent of Morocco in the Western Sahara conflict.<sup>14</sup>

Morocco is also a transit country for migrants in an irregular situation, from countries in West and Central Africa. The sheer numbers make it difficult to evaluate. According to an investigation by the Moroccan High Commission for Planning (HCP) conducted during the first quarter of 2021, 53.7% of these migrants have stated that they now want to stay in Morocco.<sup>15</sup>

→ **The vulnerability of women migrants**  
In 2018, 20-year-old student Hayat Belkacem was mortally wounded by shots fired by the Moroccan navy as she was attempting to reach Spain on board a “go-fast”. Her tragic death put the spotlight on emigrating Moroccan women, a phenomenon that had been ignored for too long, since preconceived notions dictated that women only migrated as wives joining their husbands via family reunification schemes.<sup>16</sup> There is a lack of official data but a number of NGOs on the ground confirm that the makeshift boats setting out from Morocco known as pateras carry growing numbers of women, some of whom are accompanied by children. The same trend has been observed among migrants from Sub-Saharan countries in Morocco. Women account for 40.7%<sup>17</sup> of forced migration in 2021 in Morocco. With the

migration of women comes the issue of gender-related violence on migration routes and in destination countries. Migrants in general, and those from Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, are vulnerable to violence because of their precarious socio-economic and administrative situation and racism, which is rampant in Morocco. And women migrants suffer not only from this discrimination but also gender-related discrimination.<sup>18</sup>

Women are also subjected to various forms of violence during the seasonal emigration of Moroccan farm labourers to farms in Spain and France (around 20,000 women a year).<sup>19</sup> This is reported in local and international media outlets.

#### Immigration: increasing and diversifying

There are several forms of immigration in Morocco, especially residential<sup>20</sup> and worker migration. This migrant population was evaluated at 100,000 persons in 2014. These are migrants in a regular situation.<sup>21</sup> This category mostly comprises people from France, Spain and Senegal. Then there are irregular migrants who benefitted from the exceptional regularisation drives in 2014 and 2017. These drives involved around 42,000 migrants,<sup>22</sup> mostly from West and Central Africa. Immigrant workers are coming from increasingly diverse places thanks to the economic boom Morocco has been enjoying since 2002: Morocco now attracts not only qualified workers from Europe (France and Spain), but also a labour force from China, Türkiye, and other North African countries (Algeria and Tunisia), West Africa (Mali, Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire) and Central Africa (DRC and Gabon).

<sup>14</sup> Maleno H., (2018) “Des voix qui s’élèvent : analyse du discours et des résistances des femmes migrantes subsahariennes au Maroc” (Raising voices: a review of the discourse and resistance by Sub-Saharan women migrating to Morocco), Alianza por la Solidaridad (in French only)

<sup>15</sup> Article on Média 24 (2022) (in French only)

<sup>16</sup> This is transit migration which may evolve into residential migration in Morocco for varying lengths of time during the transit period.

<sup>17</sup> HCP (2014), “Les résidents étrangers au Maroc” (Foreign residents in Morocco), URL: <https://bit.ly/3LQlwm2> (in French only)

<sup>18</sup> Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, “Opérations de régularisation” (Regularisation operations), URL: <https://marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/en/regularization-operations/>

<sup>14</sup> “A Ceuta, des décennies de crise migratoire entre l’Espagne et le Maroc” (In Ceuta, a decades-long migration crisis between Spain and Morocco), Le Monde, May 2021 (in French only)

<sup>15</sup> HCP website, statistics (in French only)

<sup>16</sup> France Info, “Maroc : 9 trafiquants Marocains et espagnols condamnés après la mort d’une jeune migrante” (Morocco: 9 Moroccans and Spanish smugglers sentenced after the death of a young migrant), December 2019 (in French only)

<sup>17</sup> HCP data, 2021

Morocco is also a destination country for refugees and asylum seekers. This population is on the rise, from a few hundred in 2007 to 15,000 in 2020. However, they barely account for 0.01% of the Moroccan population, tallying 8,491 refugees and 6,461 asylum seekers. Refugees hail from 45 different countries. The majority are from Syria (4,700), Guinea (2,000), Côte d’Ivoire (1,200), Cameroon (1,200) and Yemen (1,000). Women account for 39% of these refugees and asylum seekers. The Kingdom of Morocco has yet to pass national legislation governing asylum. Lastly, there are 4,500 Moroccan refugees living elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

Migration is often a diplomatic issue with Europe. Morocco has officially assumed an outsourced role in the management of EU borders, as part of the “shared responsibility” doctrine.

The subject is of great importance as it is part of a set of negotiations on other strategic issues between Morocco and the EU, such as the conflict in the Western Sahara, free trade agreements and fishing. In recent years Morocco has lately asserted its new role as a destination country, implementing since 2013 a national policy known as the national immigration and asylum strategy, and two regularisation drives for the undocumented (in 2014 and 2017).<sup>24</sup> Parallel to this, several associations from the Platform of Sub-Saharan Associations and Communities in Morocco (ASCOMS) have criticised campaigns to arrest and forcibly displace migrants towards the south of Morocco.<sup>25</sup>

#### → Unaccompanied minors, a major protection issue

Morocco is dually concerned with the issue of unaccompanied minors (UMs), as both country of origin and host country.

The question of Moroccan minors is problematic for both Morocco and the countries in which these vulnerable young people reside. In 2015, the Moroccan Observatory for the Rights of the Child (ONDE) had counted 25,000 isolated and homeless minors in Morocco. It has not been possible to determine the total number of unaccompanied Moroccan minors abroad. In 2018, Spain estimated that there were 10,000 unaccompanied Moroccan minors on its territory. There are many in France and other countries reaching as far as Sweden.<sup>26</sup> In Morocco, 10% of migrants in an irregular situation are under 18.<sup>27</sup> This growing population is mainly from Guinea and Mali. For example, 400 UMs arrive at the Caritas Morocco centre in Rabat every year, mainly from Guinea.<sup>28</sup> Despite much-heralded announcements, Morocco does not yet have enough structures nor inclusive public policies to take care of this vulnerable population.

<sup>23</sup> HCR (2021)

<sup>24</sup> Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates’ presentation of the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum in Morocco, URL: <https://marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Strate%CC%81gie-Nationale-dimmigration-et-dAsile-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>25</sup> Article on Enass (2021), URL : Arrestations et déplacements : “A Rabat, les migrants ont la peur au ventre” (enass.ma) (Arrests and displacement: in Rabat, migrants are sick with fear - in French only)

<sup>26</sup> Podcast France Inter (2019), “Spain buckling under pressure because of migrant minors” URL: L’Spain ploie sous l’afflux de mineurs migrants (radiofrance.fr)

<sup>27</sup> Report UNICEF Morocco (2021)

<sup>28</sup> Caritas (2016), “Étude : mineurs non accompagnés, en recherche d’avenir” (Report: Unaccompanied minors, searching for a future)



## Migration issues in the Moroccan media scene and public discourse

Media coverage of migration is sporadic, tapping into drama and mainly featuring information from official sources. The press covers this theme more regularly than radio and TV, which rarely put migration on the agenda.

The living conditions of Moroccan workers abroad are rarely covered. Regarding irregular migration, media coverage focusses on news from public institutions working on this issue, especially from a security angle.

As a result, many media outlets toe the official line, reporting especially on “Moroccan efforts to push back on irregular immigration and human trafficking networks.”<sup>29</sup> The media also cover this theme when tragic events hit the headlines.

The Moroccan press may sometimes provide well-balanced, professional coverage of the theme of migration, but can also stigmatise and convey racist ideas. Indeed, certain media outlets and social media users employ racist hate speech targeting foreign workers established in Morocco, especially those from West and Central Africa.

### Five emblematic cases

The front page of regional weekly *Achamal* dated 12 September 2005 made waves with the headline “The North invaded by black locusts” over a photograph of three men of Sub-Saharan origin. This was a serious professional fault, by an outlet run by a seasoned journalist that supposedly sets the benchmark in the region. The issue was examined by the Tangiers court and the Director was convicted for “incitement to racial hatred,” for which he received a suspended prison sentence.

In November 2012, *Morocco Hebdo International* headlined “The Black Peril”. The journalist’s article featured a roundup of amalgams and clichés about Sub-Saharan people. This article was problematic on several counts: the breach of the code of ethics, factual errors, photos used out of context, a mix of information and opinion etc. The ensuing outrage, especially on Moroccan social media, prompted management to issue a timid apology.

In 2020, the daily national *Assabah* published two successive articles using the “migration invasion” angle. The first looked at informal accommodation for migrants in poor neighbourhoods in Casablanca, and the second at beggars from Sub-Saharan Africa. The repetition of this type of article with a “security” dimension coincided with the renewal of forced displacement operations targeting Sub-Saharan migrants from the north to the south of Morocco.

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the weekly *Le Reporter* published a racist front page that stigmatised Black people in Morocco. Taken out of context, the photo showed a person whose face is dissimulated by a hood, alongside the headline: “1<sup>st</sup> case of coronavirus in Morocco: who is responsible?” This front page shocked public opinion. It recalled the stigmatising coverage targeting Black people during the Ebola outbreak in 2015.

### Media coverage according to type of migration

The conditions of Moroccan workers abroad spark varying degrees of interest in the media. News of Moroccans residing abroad is often limited to mentions of money transfers and returns in summertime. Aside from some rare specialist media outlets (*Yabiladi* and *Bladi.net*), the daily life of emigrant Moroccans is rarely covered by the national media, because of a lack of correspondents abroad and similarly of reportage within these communities that might describe their reality.

The same observation may be made for two other themes: Moroccan students abroad and Moroccan seasonal migrants. These populations are very diverse and generate very little interest in the Moroccan media.

Likewise, the fact that the country has become a place where migrant workers in a regular situation eventually settle is ignored by the media, apart from institutional coverage putting the spotlight on “positive initiatives” by public authorities and other government agencies.

On the other hand, irregular migration in Morocco grabs much media attention, as pointed out in the interviews and discussion groups with migrants. This theme crops up in the media according to three stances: - the first stance is mainly “institutional” coverage, in which news from public institutions working on this theme is prevalent. They especially focus on security, reporting on the dismantling of smuggler networks, sea rescue operations, announcements of public programmes etc.; - the second stance is occasional media coverage of news, reporting on tragedies occurring during irregular immigration. This editorial approach can be justified as the reporting of daily news, which is the basic remit for journalists. But this form of occasional, over-emotive media coverage does not help to produce well-balanced, objective and humane

coverage of the theme.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, this coverage is regularly littered with stigmatising clichés and stereotypes, as mentioned above. Resulting in the migrants’ ever greater mistrust of the media; - the third stance is that irregular migration remains an “invisible” subject when Moroccans are involved. Despite the extent of the phenomenon, this irregular migration is paradoxically a subject that rarely gets covered by local media. Only a handful of media outlets regularly covers the topic, placing it in perspective. For the printed Moroccan press this is a subject that has been forgotten or glossed over.

Lastly, regarding media coverage of refugees in Morocco, most media coverage is timed for publication on World Refugee Day (20 June). This media coverage reflects “prudent” communication from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) which often produces its own content, putting out a reassuring account of refugees.

This communication does not cover controversial topics such as the lack of a legal framework for refugee status in Morocco, the failure to grant refugee status to Syrians, the arbitrary arrest of certain refugees etc.

<sup>29</sup> Report by the Moroccan General Directorate for National Security (DGSN) (2021), available on: [www.mapnews.com](http://www.mapnews.com)

<sup>30</sup> As observed during interviews

### Varied media coverage according to media

The review of media coverage according to type of media shows differing situations between the printed press on the one hand and TV and radio on the other.

In the press, <sup>31</sup> media coverage is occasional, driven by events. <sup>32</sup> This editorial approach does not allow for in-depth examination of the subject and background information. <sup>33</sup> Articles fail to distinguish the various categories properly (migrants / refugees / asylum seekers), stigmatise irregular migration and make sweeping generalisations with references to “Africans” and “Sub-Saharan”. Restrictions in the freedom of the press have also led to less variety in the opinions expressed on migration. <sup>34</sup> The official stance regulates and controls media coverage of migration issues according to national directives. <sup>35</sup> The press often accentuates “positive” aspects of public migration policy, during the two regularisation drives for undocumented people for example.

Radio <sup>36</sup> coverage of migration remains marginal. <sup>37</sup> Migration news is limited to press dispatches from the official agency, relating news of irregular migration and ensuing tragedies. Generally speaking, there is very little radio coverage of the theme, and the quality is poor. There is no diversity in viewpoints to provide insights into issues with this phenomenon. On the rare occasions when diverse opinions are expressed, the debate is antagonistic and polarised and is not based on actual facts – which does not help listeners learn in a neutral setting. There are two exceptions

<sup>31</sup> The printed press comprises 60 newspapers and magazines, the digital press includes up to 2,000 news websites, but only 50 or so have managed to carve out a place in this market beset with economic issues, even before the Covid-19 pandemic.

<sup>32</sup> As observed during the interviews

<sup>33</sup> Bentaleb H. (May 2020), “Conclusion tirée des entretiens et de la documentation” (Conclusion of interviews and documentation): article in La Revue Marocaine de droit d’asile et migration; “Couverture médiatique de la migration au Maroc : une presse qui se cherche” (Media coverage of migration in Morocco: the press seeks a way), La Revue Marocaine de droit d’asile et migration, pp. 47–60; Lemaizi S. (2020), “La migration dans la presse écrite Marocaine : le danger de l’invisibilité” (Migration in the Moroccan press: the danger of becoming invisible), La Revue Marocaine de droit d’asile et migration, No. 5, pp. 8–20 (in French only)

<sup>34</sup> As observed during the interviews and discussion groups

<sup>35</sup> Conclusion drawn from interviews

<sup>36</sup> The radio scene comprises a dense offer of public radio stations (seven stations) and private (a dozen, general and themes), both national and regional.

<sup>37</sup> Conclusion drawn from analysis of programme schedules of Moroccan radio stations

in this overview: *Medi 1 Radio* which provides an international take on migration, and public radio stations which cover news of Moroccan emigrants throughout the world.

On television <sup>38</sup> as in other media, coverage focusses on the few facts and events which make the headlines. <sup>39</sup> After a period of marked interest in migration issues between 2014 and 2018, the theme only rarely makes it to the agenda nowadays. Coverage is influenced by the State’s official line. The most striking blunders on television have involved entertainment programmes, as in the following two examples:

- in 2013, during a *prime-time* candid camera show broadcast on *Medi 1 TV* during the month of Ramadan, a Black Sub-Saharan migrant was called an “*azzi*” (negro) in a humorous, condescending tone. The show was sanctioned by the Moroccan Higher Council of Audiovisual Communication (CSCA), which regulates the sector, seeking to promote the ethical coverage of migration issues. <sup>40</sup> The CSCA opined that “the remarks made by the person filmed by the candid camera may be qualified as disdainful and humiliating towards a person specifically because of their origin, ethnicity or race,” <sup>41</sup>

- in 2019, a sketch on the channel *Al Aoula* (SNRT) presented by a Black Moroccan comedian caused a scandal. Playing the role of an immigrant, the comedian repeatedly used the term *kahlouch*, which is a derogatory term for Black people in the Maghreb. The CSCA considered that “The repeated use of the adjective *kahlouch*, even though the candidate used it as his stage name, is a derogatory sobriquet in reference to skin colour (etc.) which is a racial insult targeting as specific category of the public.” <sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> This comprises three general-interest public channels (*Al Aoula*, 2M and *Medi 1 TV*) and five specialist channels (sport, education, film, religion and an Amazigh-language channel). There are also two private channels on satellite (Chada TV and Télé Morocco). 50% of Moroccan viewers do not watch these channels.

<sup>39</sup> Conclusion drawn from interviews

<sup>40</sup> The HACA had for example organised a workshop on the theme “The role of media and regulatory bodies during the migrant and immigrant crisis” on the fringe of the UN conference on migration held in December 2018 in Marrakesh

<sup>41</sup> CSCA ruling No. 24-13 (5 September 2013) on the show “*Ouakila Houa*” broadcast by *Medi 1 SAT*

<sup>42</sup> CSCA ruling No. 13-19 (21 February 2019) relative to the show “*Stand’up*” broadcast by the public TV channel *Al Oula* (in French only)

### Structure and method impacting the quality of media coverage of migration

The quality of media coverage of migration in Morocco depends on two elements: the first involves structure, the media setup in Morocco, and the second is specific to the theme of migration and related issues. <sup>46</sup>

Structure is influenced by a range of factors:

- Deteriorating quality in journalism and the media in Morocco because of the crisis in the sector (problems with finding lasting sources of funding, precarious finances etc.),
- Restrictions in the freedom of the press and expression,
- Dwindling time slots for the news, especially in TV and radio, replaced by entertainment content.

The quality of coverage specifically on the theme of migration, as mentioned above, may depend on many factors:

- Migration is often mentioned only as “a problem”,
- Generally speaking, newsrooms are not very well equipped to handle the subject,
- Some journalists have no technical grasp of the subject, even though top-rate journalism training courses are available in Morocco, including a master’s degree in research on “Media and Migration” at the Higher Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC) in Rabat,
- There is a gulf between top-rate specialist journalism and persistent blunders in sensationalist media,
- Community radio stations and communication in the network of migrant associations in Morocco are weak, which means the public discourse is not well-balanced and migrant communities do not express their views publicly,
- Shameless xenophobic discourse on digital social media and in certain media outlets is on the rise.

On digital social media, discussion of migration is peppered with fake news, <sup>43</sup> the use of hate speech/discrimination and, paradoxically, discourse with a positive stance on migration. These “positive” and “negative” narratives compete on this media which helps to shape public opinion. <sup>44</sup> Discourse rooted in a spirit of fraternity, African solidarity and compassion faces off discourse tapping into fear, stigmatisation and generalisation. Social media plays a dominant role in shaping terminology as used in public debate in Morocco and may increase the visibility of the “negative” narrative, as was the case in May 2022 with a news item about a crime wrongly accusing people of Sub-Saharan origin. This fake news fuelled a wave of hate on social media. <sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> The French term “*infox*” (the equivalent of “fake news” in English) is a portmanteau word combining “information” and “intoxication”.

<sup>44</sup> For the complete results, see Banulescu-Bogdan N., Malka H., Culbertson S. (2021), “How We Talk about Migration: The Link between Migration Narratives, Policy, and Power”, Migration Policy Institute

<sup>45</sup> On 9 May 2022, a Moroccan family from Casablanca announced that their 15 year-old daughter had been kidnapped by a “gang of Sub-Saharan”. The media repeated the family’s version without stepping back to look at the big picture or fact checking. This triggered a wave of backlash against Black people on social media. Extreme right groups launched hate campaigns. A week later, it turned out that the daughter had absconded with a friend (cf “Kidnapping of an adolescent girl by Sub-Saharan in Casablanca: what really happened” (in French only)

<sup>46</sup> Conclusion drawn from interviews and discussion groups

## Building capacity in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Morocco.

### Many capacity-building initiatives have already been organised

Morocco is one of the countries in Africa and the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) having benefitted from the most capacity-building programmes on migration. From the Panos Institute programme (2011-2013) to activities available via IOM or UNHCR, over 14 projects, programmes and activities in connection with the “media and migration” issue have thus taken place for news professionals in Morocco between 2015 and 2021 (see Appendix 2).

These capacity-building activities on migration also have the Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists (RMJM) to rely on. This network was founded in 2018 by a group of journalists working for various press outlets wishing to provide more in-depth coverage of migration and asylum. It has been designed as a forum for discussion, thinking and collaboration, as well as a place where reporters can seek help on migration issues. It has nearly 3,000 followers on Facebook.<sup>47</sup>

### Review of the various initiatives and their impact

The huge volume of capacity-building initiatives in a similar format (general-interest workshops mostly held in Rabat) may have generated an impression of saturation for journalists, especially those working in the French-language press.

However, these training courses have helped to increase the number of journalists specialising in “migration” in Morocco, who are willing to work on the ground. Several journalists participating in these workshops have joined the Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists (RMJM) or take part in regional or international programmes dealing with migration.

Several Moroccan journalists working on migration have received awards in the past few years. At a national level, three winners of the national press award in 2021 for investigations or reportage on migration.<sup>48</sup> These prize-winning journalists had taken part in capacity-building programmes in recent years. At an international level, Moroccan journalists were among the winners at the Migration Media Awards in 2017 (two awards), 2018 (one award) and 2019 (three awards).<sup>49</sup> The majority of these award-winners had also participated in training courses on migration.

<sup>48</sup> Naima Cherii (Le Reporter), Abdelsalam Chemakh (Hespress) and Mohamed Karim (Al Amazighia TV) received awards in the categories investigation for the printed press, investigation for digital press and TV reporting respectively.

<sup>49</sup> The award-winning journalists were: H. Belmeki and S. Lemaizi (2017), H. Haswnane (2018) and K. Boukhssas, W. Boucharchen and K. El Bab (2019). <https://openmediahub.com/fr/tag/migration-media-award/>

<sup>47</sup> URL: (20+) Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists (RMJM) | Facebook

Despite such success, the need for training is still great. The needs expressed during interviews and discussion groups focussed on:

- mastering terminology in connection with international migration,
- access to databases with national and international statistics on migration,
- the need for a workshop on data-driven journalism<sup>50</sup> and migration, for a better grasp of data and how to view it,
- pushing back on fake news and fact-checking,
- a specific focus on gender and unaccompanied minors,
- the need to participate in two types of training courses:
  - introductory training courses presenting the basics of the theme,
  - advanced training courses specialising in sub-themes and techniques.

The challenge is now to better target the beneficiaries, especially in digital media which has great influence on public opinion.

It is also necessary to review design for future programmes, specifically catering to media outlets where staff are not aware of these questions, especially in radio and television, with emphasis on support in production.



<sup>50</sup> “Data journalism is about collecting, sorting, comparing, analysing, viewing and plotting large data bases to extract the news and present it in a way that everyone can grasp”, Caroline Goulard (2020)

## Findings and recommendations

The recommendations below have been formulated by drawing on discussion in the groups organised with journalists and migrants, as well as interviews with key players on the topic of the media coverage of migration.

### Guidelines for future programmes

Future programmes to build capacity in the Moroccan media should factor in the following principles:

- addressing migration issues according to the emigration/immigration tandem, insisting on the fact that there are several types of migration,
- opening up to include more types of stakeholders and players taking part in initiatives (journalists, research workers, chief editors, national and international institutions) and especially collaborating with:
  - networks of grass-roots organisations working with migrants because they are dynamic, multiform and present throughout the territory (e.g.: the Platform of Sub-Saharan Associations and Communities in Morocco [ASCOMS], the Association putting the spotlight on clandestine emigration in Morocco [ALECMA] and the Council of Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco [CMSM]),
  - specialist academics in Morocco and abroad (from competent, independent, specialist research centres, as well as the independent researchers),<sup>51</sup>
  - including a course on the code of ethics for the press and media in each capacity-building initiative (this last being imperative).

### Training for journalists

It is important to decentralise the training courses to regional capitals (12 regions, including the Sahara) and to include junior and senior reporters as well as students and journalism, to:

- promote top-rate, in-person training courses and also set up self-training and e-learning tools,
- work on short training courses (two days) for introductory courses, insisting on “short” because it is difficult for journalists to make themselves available for lengthy periods, especially juniors working in precarious conditions in digital newsrooms in major urban centres. It is necessary to adapt to their working conditions given how important it is to include them,
- also plan longer training courses (spread over several months) with grants to fund investigative reporting,
- in Rabat, Casablanca and Tangiers, also target:
  - journalists working in radio and TV,
  - influencers and bloggers on digital social media,
  - for maximum outreach, make the guidelines and training course kits available to the public and translate them into Arabic, adapt the guides and kits for self-training online.



<sup>51</sup> To find out more, see the report “Recent trends in Moroccan research on migration (2010-2016)”, by Mohamed Berriane. URL: [https://www.academia.edu/35271394/TENDANCES\\_R%C3%89CENTES\\_DE\\_LA\\_RECHERCHE\\_Marocaine\\_SUR\\_LES\\_MIGRATIONS\\_2010\\_2016\\_\(in\\_French\\_only\)](https://www.academia.edu/35271394/TENDANCES_R%C3%89CENTES_DE_LA_RECHERCHE_Marocaine_SUR_LES_MIGRATIONS_2010_2016_(in_French_only))

### Other actions to improve media coverage on the subject of migration

PLACE	RECOMMENDATION	FORMAT	PARTIES TO BE INVOLVED
<b>Regional and national media outlets</b>	Encourage content production initiatives. Dispense grants so that journalists can ensure coverage of themes (and geographical areas) ignored by the media.	Regional and national grants	Junior and senior reporters, students in journalism
<b>Rabat / Casablanca / Tangiers / Marrakesh / Beni Mellal</b>	Reinforce the areas of dialogue between media, academics and decision-makers as to public discourse on migration.	National workshops	Research centres in the cities mentioned
<b>Rabat / Casablanca</b>	Encourage cross-border journalism projects with neighbouring countries (North and West Africa and/or the EU).	National workshops	Journalists from North and West Africa and/or the EU
<b>Rabat / Casablanca / Tangiers</b>	Provide support and/or create independent, specialist media outlets serving the community: media that practise journalism and are mobile and capable of reaching their targets, especially on social media.	National workshops	Community radio stations and associations defending migrant rights
<b>Casablanca / Rabat</b>	Promote medias projects to break down stereotypes, promote cultural diversity and living together in harmony.	Workshops/ debates / seminars Surveys on the ground	Journalists, researchers, chief editors, national and international institutions



# Mauritania

## Key figures

### Surface area

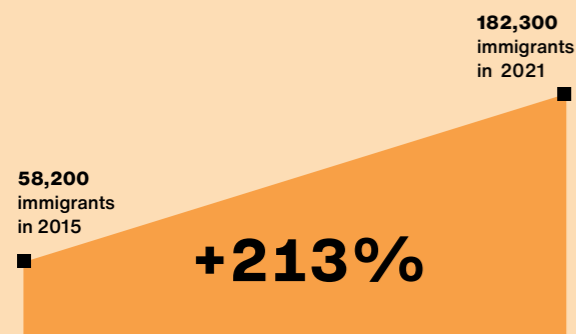
**1,030,700**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**4,646,600**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**182,300**  
persons i.e. **3.9%**  
of the population



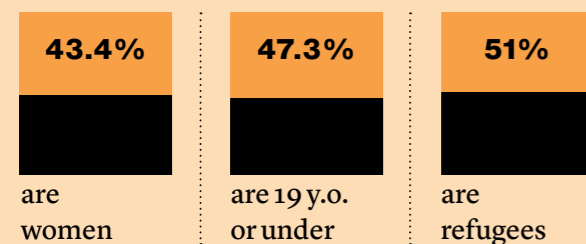
### Main countries of origin<sup>1</sup>

**Mali**

**Senegal**

**Algeria**

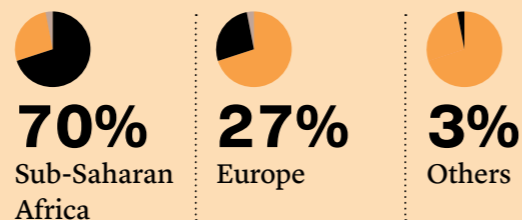
**Guinea-Bissau**



### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**130,200**  
persons i.e. **2.8%**  
of the population

### Main destination regions<sup>1</sup>



### Main destination countries<sup>1</sup>

**Senegal**

**Mali**

**France**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Spain**

### Remittances<sup>2</sup>

Personal remittances account for **0.7%** of GDP in 2021<sup>1</sup>

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

Mauritania's media landscape includes approximately:

- five newspapers: *Le Calame*, *Horizons*, *Le Quotidien*, *La Tribune* and *L'Éveil hebdo*,
- seven TV channels: *TV de Mauritanie*, *Sahel TV*, *Elmourabiton TV*, *Dava TV*, *Chinguetti TV*, *El Medina TV* and *Al Wataniya*,
- five radio stations: *Radio Mauritanie*, *Radio Kobeni*, *Tenwir*, *Mauritanide* and *Sahara média FM*,
- some 40 news websites run by journalists: *Cridem*, *Alakhbar*, *Sahara Media*, *Tawatur*, *La Vision*, *BellewarMedia* etc.

Most reporter output is based on press releases and other media output. There is very little investigative journalism. In 2020, 41% of the population were Internet users.

## Overview of migration

Located between West Africa and the Maghreb, Mauritania is a destination country for nationals from neighbouring countries, especially Mali. It is also a country of origin, with migrants mainly heading for other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent years, Mauritania has also become a transit country for migrants heading towards North Africa and Europe.

### Emigration of Mauritians<sup>52</sup>

According to the UN statistics, Mauritanian emigration started to dwindle in the 1990s before increasing again in 2010. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of Mauritanians emigrating abroad increased by 6.2%, to the point that by 2017, the Mauritanian diaspora accounted for around 3% of the population. This figure is close to that of some neighbouring countries, like Mali where the diaspora accounted for 2.1% of the population that same year.

Data on the evolution of migration from 1990 to 2019 shows that Sub-Saharan countries have long been the top destinations where Mauritanians settle, primarily Senegal (46,500), Mali (23,300) and Côte d'Ivoire (12,600). This can be explained by geographical proximity as well as a long tradition of trade in goods and services between these countries. Migration towards North African countries is limited, with Morocco as the top destination, boasting a Mauritanian community of 12,000 persons, of whom 2,000 are students.



<sup>52</sup> All the data from this paragraph come from the website DataPortal: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>. This website publishes data from UN DESA 2020 and World Bank data.

Looking beyond Africa, the only other continent with a non negligible number of Mauritanian nationals is Europe, especially France, the top European country in which Mauritanians settle. In 2019, there were over 13,000 Mauritanian nationals in Europe, around 11,300 of whom were in France.<sup>53</sup>

According to the World Bank, remittances accounted for 0.7% of GDP in 2021, although the state authorities claim that this percentage is underestimated. The economic role of the diaspora is important, even vital, in certain areas. For example, people living in the Senegal river valley and in the east of the country largely live off remittances from the diaspora.

### Worker immigration

According to a survey conducted jointly by the National Agency for Statistics and Demographic and Economic Analysis (ANSADE) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Nouakchott, then in Nouadhibou, in 2021, the main reason for migrating cited by the immigrants in Mauritania interviewed in the two cities is economic (respectively 66% and 74%), to which around 10% also cited the promise of a job. The vast majority of immigrants interviewed in these two cities work (respectively 87% and 91%).<sup>54</sup>

With its thriving industry and economic sectors, such as fishing and construction, the city of Nouadhibou attracts many workers and job-seeking migrants; especially from Sub-Saharan countries.

Despite this phenomenon, there are no specific programmes to manage labour migration, and statistics are lacking.<sup>55</sup> While the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation does have information on residence permits, and dates of entry and exit, they are not published.

<sup>53</sup> Data from the UN: <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates19.asp>

<sup>54</sup> IOM (March-April 2021), analytical report: "Enquête sur la migration à Nouadhibou" (Survey on Migration in Nouadhibou), URL: <https://bit.ly/38RiDiB> (in French only); IOM (December 2021), analytical report: "Enquête sur la migration à Nouakchott" (Survey on Migration in Nouakchott), URL: <https://bit.ly/3IZrW7y> (in French only)

<sup>55</sup> ILO (2020), "Report on the information system regarding international migration of workers to and from Mauritania", URL: <https://bit.ly/3PTUDAL> (in French only)

Regarding administrative requirements, immigrants may obtain a work permit provided that they supply proof that their position cannot be filled by a Mauritanian. In practice, obtaining a work permit means going through administrative procedures with conditions that are difficult to meet, with the result that many end up working in the informal sector, as domestic workers, street sellers, chauffeurs and farm labourers, as well as in fishing and food-processing. In fact, the Mauritanian authorities treat unemployed immigrant workers the same as immigrants in a regular situation, and all may gain access to the same services.

### Irregular migration

According to a 2010 report, 84% of the approximately 100,000 migrants living in Mauritania, mostly in an irregular situation, were from neighbouring countries, especially Senegal, Mali, the Gambia, Côte-d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. This number includes both immigrants working in the informal sector, and those transiting through Mauritania to Europe via the Canary Islands.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, regulations governing the issuing of residence and work permits are not applied systematically, with the result that many stay on beyond the length of stay initially authorised, meaning that they then find themselves in an irregular situation.

<sup>56</sup> IOM (2010): "Mauritania is a major transit destination country in West Africa", <https://bit.ly/3zcEOiv>

### Family immigration

While there is no official data on this type of migration in Mauritania, nor clear procedures for the reunification of immigrant families in Mauritania, family migration came second (after work) among the reasons for moving cited by immigrants interviewed in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott in 2021.<sup>57</sup>

While family unity and the right to family reunification are explicitly mentioned in articles 44 and 50 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, ratified by Mauritania, this convention has not been uniformly incorporated into the national corpus juris, meaning that migrants cannot legally reunite their families according to a specific legal procedure. The 2012 bill governing the arrival and stay of foreigners and the right to asylum in Mauritania, guaranteeing the right to family reunification to all migrant persons with a residence permit in Mauritania, was modified in 2016 to only cover the right to asylum.

In addition to this, document fraud and a lack of understanding among civil servants working in civil registry departments complicates the situation for immigrants in terms of identification. Recording the birth of children to foreign parents in Mauritania often proves difficult because of the lack of reliable ID.

### Asylum and refugees

According to international data available in mid-2020<sup>58</sup>, over half of immigrants in Mauritania were refugees,<sup>59</sup> i.e. 93,600 persons as of this date. They are mostly from Mali (over 70%) and to a lesser extent the Western Sahara. The country also hosts hundreds of refugees from Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire, residing primarily in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott.

As of 31 March 2022, the number of refugees from Mali was estimated at over 80,000.<sup>60</sup> Nearly 73,000 of these, i.e. practically all of them, are refugees who have been living in or near the M'bera refugee camp<sup>61</sup> since 2012. This camp is located 50 kilometres from the Malian border, in the arid south-east of Mauritania. While most of the refugees arrived in 2012 and 2013 (respectively 35,000 and 30,000), new arrivals are still being registered every year in the camp, following waves of jihadist attacks in the north of Mali. Among those living in M'bera, 58% are children and 54% are women and young girls.<sup>62</sup>

Over 10,000 refugees, mostly men, live outside M'bera refugee camp, in the built-up zones in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.<sup>63</sup> Since 2019, people in exile may be registered as refugees by UNHCR in these two cities, whereas previously they could only register at the M'bera refugee camp,<sup>64</sup> which restricted opportunities for socio-economic inclusion.

Host and refugee populations mostly live together on good terms in Mauritania. Reported acts of discrimination towards refugees are mostly in relation to sexual orientation or gender.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> HCR, Detailed data for each year and country of origin of refugees in Mauritania, <https://bit.ly/3m4Y0vz>

<sup>61</sup> UNHCR (2022), "Operational Data Portal Refugee Situations – Dashboard Mauritania", <https://bit.ly/3aB6Vhj>; UNHCR (March 2022), "Data on the M'bera refugee camp", <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/mrt>

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>63</sup> UNHCR (March 2022), Dashboard for Nouakchott and Nouadhibou - Refugees and Asylum seekers - March 2022 <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91962>.

<sup>64</sup> UNHCR (June 2020), Mauritania Refugee Policy Review, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91884>

<sup>65</sup> *Idem*

<sup>57</sup> IOM (March-April 2021): "Enquête sur la migration à Nouadhibou" (Survey on migration in Nouadhibou), <https://bit.ly/38RiDiB> (in French only) and IOM (December 2021), and "Enquête sur la migration à Nouakchott" (Survey on migration in Nouakchott) <https://bit.ly/3IZrW7y> (in French only)

<sup>58</sup> In comparison with the other migration statistics mentioned in the review

<sup>59</sup> Portal for Migration Data, Mauritania profile <https://bit.ly/3NFJlmi>

### Migration policies

Mauritania was a founding member of ECOWAS in 1975, then left in 2000 to join the Arab Maghreb Union. In 2017, ECOWAS and Mauritania signed a partnership agreement pertaining to the movement of goods and people. While a return to the Free Movement of Persons and Goods Zone in West Africa had been slated for 2019, ECOWAS finally asked Mauritania to apply to join again.<sup>66</sup>

At a national level, the Mauritanian government has reinforced the national governance framework for migration in the past ten years. A four-point National Migration Management Strategy (SNGM) was developed with support from the European Union in 2010<sup>67</sup> and is currently being reviewed. The strategy includes the setup of a framework to manage and measure migration; migration and development; the promotion of basic rights for returnees, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and the control of migration flows.

In light of recent complications (difficult economic situation, insecurity in the Sahel, Jihadist terrorism and pressure from the European Union regarding migration management), the Mauritanian authorities have hardened their approach and adopted dissuasive measures as part of their migration policy. With a view to securing the country's air, land and sea borders, and pushing back on irregular migration (to and from Mauritania), a National Strategy of Integrated Border Management in Mauritania was drawn up with IOM funding and adopted in 2015. In 2016, a bill on asylum was put forward by the Mauritanian government but the Parliament has yet to vote on it.<sup>68</sup>

Lastly, the Mauritanian diaspora is of great importance for the authorities. Symbolic of this importance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

which is henceforth in charge of Mauritanians abroad, changed its name to become the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Mauritanians Abroad. The Mauritanian diaspora has the right to vote. In France, there are two polling stations for Mauritanian nationals, at the embassy and the consulate, which are available to the entire Mauritanian diaspora having settled in Europe. Other stations have also been established on other continents, especially in West Africa. The diaspora is thus able to vote for four members of Parliament to represent them (Africa, Europe, Asia and America). During the 2019 Presidential election, the main candidates campaigned in France and other countries, illustrating the importance of the diaspora in the sphere of national policy.



<sup>66</sup> Article in Jeune Afrique, Kozłowski N., (September 2021), "CÉDÉAO, le Maroc, la Tunisie et la Mauritanie coincés en salle d'attente" (ECOWAS: Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania stuck in the waiting room), URL: <https://bit.ly/3NJzrQ> (in French only)

<sup>67</sup> IOM (October 2010), "Document de stratégie nationale pour une meilleure gestion de la migration" (National Migration Management Strategy), URL: <https://bit.ly/3z2SLzA> (in French only)

<sup>68</sup> UNHCR (June 2020), "Mauritania Refugee Policy Review", URL: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/91884>

## Migration issues in the Mauritanian media scene and public discourse

### General overview

To conduct this review properly, two discussion groups were organised: one with migrants residing in Mauritania, and the other with Mauritanian journalists, most of whom spoke Arabic, and a majority of women journalists. The general observation shared by the people interviewed for this report (during the interviews and discussion groups) is that irregular migration is the only type of migration covered by the media, with a few rare exceptions. It is also the form of migration which dominates public discourse on migration, according to a journalist based in Nouadhibou.

These people also pointed out that the tone of media discourse is mostly negative, using stereotypical terms, deforming reality and perpetuating the notion that immigration is like "an invasion", "a burden" and/or contributes to insecurity. Migrants are thus used as scapegoats and tend to be discriminated against when accessing rights and services. They are sometimes the recipients of hate speech and threats. In the discussion group, a Malian migrant argued that there is a lot of prejudice and stereotypes according to which immigrants take jobs from Mauritanian nationals or spread disease. Such statements also affect refugees, although generally speaking their situation is rarely addressed by the media.

Workers and migrant seasonal workers, mainly in farming, are spoken of in more reasonable terms, by both the media and politicians. These migrants have a positive reputation in the population, with hate speech and discriminating coverage rarely being levelled against them.

Likewise, the Mauritanian media never speak negatively of Mauritanian emigrants and this subject is not covered in the same way as other migration issues.

During the discussion group with journalists, many have brought up the complexity of these phenomena and migration issues in the country. For journalist and blogger Awa Traoré, most articles are published on International Migrants Day, and very few journalists cover the topic on an everyday basis. According to her, media coverage on migration only scratches at the surface.

For Mauritanian journalist Houleye Kane, the media play an important role in the construction of public opinion, and thus in the drafting of migration policies. Consequently it is essential for journalists to have the knowledge and skills needed to report on migration using an approach based on factual elements and human rights, which is not the case for the time being.

### → Media coverage of migration in Mauritania as seen by migrants

The majority of migrants having participated in the discussion group said they did not relate to how the media portrayed them and deemed that media coverage of their situation was insufficient. They opined that the media should cover topics of immediate relevance to them and discuss difficulties they encounter in their daily lives. A Malian refugee in Mauritania raised a problem in connection with media coverage: the media do not mention migrant rights whereas many are experiencing great difficulties. He also disclosed that the refugees did not know who to tell their story to or where to find a sympathetic ear. He felt that if the media covered migration topics more, their situation might improve.

According to a Senegalese national, the language barrier is also huge, because the few published articles on migration are written in Arabic, whereas the vast majority of migrants do not understand this language.

### Coverage according to type of media

Coverage of the topic of migration differs according to the type of media. “TV channels, digital media and the press monopolise the coverage of these questions, harnessing the power of pictures,” asserted Ibou Badiane, a journalist specialising in migration.

In terms of journalistic practices, the following observations may be made:

#### Press

A journalist from *La Vision* (an online media outlet) declared that “the media convey the usual clichés and stereotypes on migration,” because they use images taken out of context to illustrate their articles, which is misleading. A Congolese migrant in Mauritania added that “people are attracted by the footage and don’t take time to read the news properly.” He felt that this contributed to people making hasty, negative judgements of migrants.

#### Radio, including community radio stations

According to the majority of migrants who participated in the discussion group, the topic of migration is very rarely addressed on the radio. While working on this report, we did not find any community radios with a programme on migration issues. In 2011, Panos Institute West Africa and the European Union organised a training course for communicators from local radio stations in Mauritania, but with little impact.

#### Television

The review of programmes on public and privately-owned TV channels shows that the migrants are rarely allowed to have their say, while journalists, political officials and experts all chime in.

Migrants are represented as dumb objects: they are shown on screen but their voices are never heard. In addition to this, their image tends to be exploited by journalists. According to a chief editor, footage is often broadcast to illustrate or introduce debates on TV, without letting the people in question have their say.



## Capacity building for journalists

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of 15 capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Mauritania.

### → Media coverage of migration and influence on public opinion: 23 journalists and editors trained in December 2021 by IOM

In a context where Mauritanian journalists receive very little training on migration topics, IOM organised two 2-day training courses for 23 editors and producers working for the press, television, radio and online media in December 2021. The aim of these courses taking place in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou were to help the trainees gain better insights and better cover these topics, especially learning to exercise greater objectivity. Attendees were given first-hand information on the migration situation in Mauritania, as well as the tools and terminology needed to perform their work ethically, with the aim of providing objective news on migration and migrants. The training course also aimed to raise awareness among journalists addressing migration topics as to issues with media coverage of migration and their influential role in terms of shaping public opinion of migrants.

According to a Radio Mauritania journalist who attended the training course, “These training courses were an opportunity for vibrant debate with the Mauritanian journalists who showed their interest in this theme and their determination to work harder to produce in-depth coverage of migration issues.”

### Review of the various initiatives

The training workshops on the topics of migration organised in Mauritania for journalists are fairly similar and very often attended by the same persons. Moreover, these training courses give little opportunity for hands-on practice. For Mohamed Keboud,

### Social media

Despite the democratisation of digital, news and communication in Mauritania, themes of migration are rarely mentioned in publications and discussions.

### Bloggers and influencers

There are no bloggers who tackle migration topics, with the notable exception of Awa Seydou who draws portraits of migrants in Mauritania.<sup>69</sup> As for influencers, none ever mention the topic of migration in Mauritania.

### Key issues in the media coverage of migration

The national experts’ review of the various media outlets and their output for this report highlights three key issues in the media coverage of migration in Mauritania:

- while there are many migration issues in the country, media output practically exclusively covers irregular migration from Mauritania to Europe,
- many media outlets, especially the press, content themselves with reproducing dispatches produced by French and other European media outlets, such as Agence France Press, *France 24* and Reuters,
- the quality of journalism is generally speaking fairly low and media coverage only scratches the surface; terms used are often inappropriate and media output contributes to spreading negative stereotypes of migrants.

<sup>69</sup> Blog by Awa Seydou: <https://bit.ly/3wVsj8s> (in French only) See also the blog by Mauritanian journalist Cheikh Aidara on questions related to migration, in particular the question of exploitation at work: <https://bit.ly/3z9bUjfi> (in French only)



a journalist based in Nouadhibou, “it is as if organisations and sponsors all agreed to provide training courses based solely on theory.” All the discussion group participants agreed with this assertion.

In addition to this, “nearly all these training courses are organised in two cities, Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, in hotels, far from areas where migrants themselves are to be found,” reported Cheikh Aïdara, Chief Editor of the news website *L'Authentique*. They are also dispensed exclusively in French, thus excluding a more diverse panel of journalists, especially Arabic-speaking journalists, despite the fact that they reach a very large audience.

Lastly, the multiplication of initiatives has drawn attention to needs in terms of cooperation and the adoption of shared frameworks which might help move beyond individual initiatives by each sponsor, which necessarily influence the choice of theme.

Cheikh Aïdara, Chief Editor at *L'Authentique*, one of the top French-language news websites in Mauritania, remains optimistic however: “In Mauritania the multiplication of initiatives striving towards well-informed, responsible coverage of migration is a positive sign. By setting up partnerships involving several different players and working on the long term, it will be possible to help the media better grasp international mobility and contribute to a peaceful public debate on this subject.”

### Review of the long-term effects of these initiatives

The journalists interviewed having participated in training courses pointed out that the organisations and sponsors setting them up do not provide any follow-up.

Furthermore, these initiatives have little impact on journalist output. Articles written further to the training courses still lack well-sourced data and documentation.

Journalists having attended these courses continue to have difficulty differentiating between the terms “migrant”, “asylum seeker” and “refugee”. Whereas, according to a journalist from *La Vision*, a digital platform based in Nouakchott:

“Words are important. So journalists are not in a position to report on migration issues in Mauritania.”

So the training courses are not sufficient, for the time being, to help journalists grasp the terms and concepts in connection with migration.



## Findings and recommendations

The recommendations below have been formulated by drawing on discussion in the groups organised with journalists and migrants, as well as interviews with key players.

### Content of capacity-building initiatives

- Promote ethical journalism and push back on misinformation (cross-checking sources, preserving anonymity, right to control use of their image etc.).
- Address all the types of migration and refrain from focalising solely on irregular migration.

### Training for journalists

- Offer longer training courses (several weeks, even months) and organise them over several sessions.
- Put forward hands-on training courses combining theory (concepts etc.) with more practical exercises and going out to meet migrants.
- Open up the training courses to more journalists, both French- and Arabic-speaking, working for all types of media (TV, radio, printed and online press, bloggers etc.).
- Set up monitoring and assessment tools to evaluate the attendee's level of comprehension and the impact of the course.

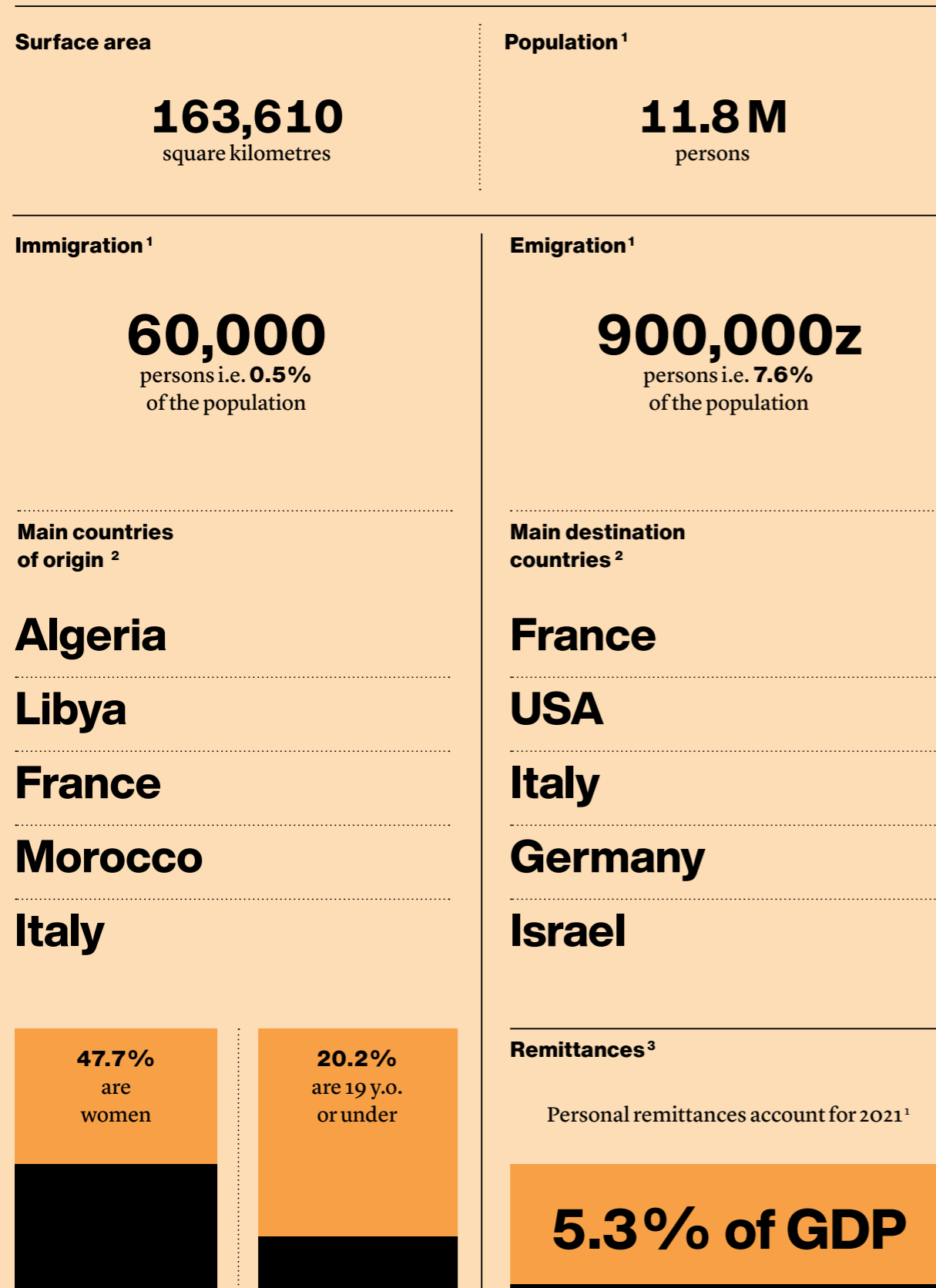
### Other types of capacity-building initiatives

- Set up a contest to promote top-rate coverage of migration issues. Awards may be bestowed on journalists who draw attention to the many dimensions of migration, underlining the importance of their work nationwide.
- Integrate migration issues into foundation courses in journalism and communication. For example, offer a course on migration at the National School of Administration, Journalism and Magistrates (ENAJM)<sup>70</sup> located in Nouakchott.
- Set up a network of journalists specialising in migration in Mauritania.
- Develop tools in connection with major migration issues, especially educational resources (guidelines, sources for statistics etc.) devoted to the media coverage of specific topics.
- Facilitate access to documents produced by certain organisations and institutions (IOM, HCR, public administrations in charge of migration etc.) so that official, reliable data is available to journalists.
- Develop documentary resources (assessment and leveraging) for capacity-building initiatives where there are none, and share those that do already exist.

<sup>70</sup> The ENAJM was founded in 1966. Until the late 1980s, it was the top institution of higher education for staff and agents working for the Mauritanian state. In the 1990s, the school started focussing on advanced courses and vocational training, offering fewer introductory courses. Since 2010, the school has incorporated a department of vocational training in communication and journalism alongside long-standing departments (magistrates, chancery, general administration and finance). Events and training courses are organised for the media, in particular in connection with the Mauritanian Ministry of Communication and Relations with Parliament.

# Tunisia

## Key figures



Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2022; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

Since the 2011 revolution and the ensuing liberalisation of the media, a diversified media landscape has burgeoned in Tunisia.

The number of TV channels has increased from five during the Zine El Abidine Ben Ali era, to 14 nowadays, and the number of radio stations has increased from 14 to 41. Added to which there are over 220 newspapers and magazines and around 50 news websites.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the country's economic crisis and the unprecedented political situation with power concentrated in the hands of President Kais Saied have given rise to fears of regression in terms of freedom.<sup>72</sup> Despite media diversity and the critical stance of certain media outlets on politics, economic interests and the lack of independence continue to dominate the sector which is fighting to continue to enjoy freedom of expression and information. In 2020, 72% of the population were Internet users.<sup>73</sup>



<sup>71</sup> Reporters Without Borders and the Tunisian organisation Al Khatt; Media Ownership Monitor Tunisia: <http://tunisia.mom-gmr.org/en/media/>  
<sup>72</sup> Reporters Without Borders: "Journalism in Tunisia: time for truth"; URL: [https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/journalisme\\_en\\_tunisie\\_-\\_lheure\\_de\\_verite.pdf](https://rsf.org/sites/default/files/journalisme_en_tunisie_-_lheure_de_verite.pdf). (in French only)  
<sup>73</sup> Data from the World Bank website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

## Overview of migration

Tunisia is both the country of origin of migrants heading mainly for Europe and a transit and destination country for many Sub-Saharan nationals.

### Emigration

With 900,000 persons living abroad, emigration officially accounted for 7.6% of the total population in 2020.<sup>74</sup> Certain forms of migration, such as emigration towards other countries in Africa, are as yet underestimated.

The reasons for emigration are constant: employment and the improvement of working conditions. According to several experts working on the diaspora such as Samir Bouzidi, the tendency to emigrate has increased in recent years, especially in 2021 and early 2022, because of political instability in the country and an increase in the cost of living.

Qualified workers continue to emigrate at ever increasing rates. A joint report by the Tunisian Observatory on Migration (ONM) and the Tunisian Institute of Statistics (INS) estimated that around 39,000 engineers and 3,300 physicians, of both genders, left the country between 2015 and 2020 for work opportunities abroad.<sup>75</sup> This phenomenon is tied in with the worsening of the economic situation as well as the difference in revenue which remains significant: Tunisian graduates in medicine and engineering of either gender earn three times as much in France. Many also mentioned better infrastructure and quality of life in Europe.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> UN DESA 2020, International Data | Migration Data Portal (Migrationdataportal.org)

<sup>75</sup> INS-ONM (2021), "Enquête nationale sur la migration internationale" (National survey on international migration), URL: ONM - La migration internationale en chiffres à travers l'Enquête Nationale sur la Migration Internationale (in French and Arabic only)

<sup>76</sup> Article in Le Monde (01/06/2021), URL: [https://www.lemonde.fr/m-le-mag/article/2021/06/01/c-est-vrai-que-l-on-se-sent-coupable-et-egoiste-de-partir-mais-tout-regresse-la-tunisie-affaiblie-par-une-hemorragie-de-medecins\\_6082299\\_4500055.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/m-le-mag/article/2021/06/01/c-est-vrai-que-l-on-se-sent-coupable-et-egoiste-de-partir-mais-tout-regresse-la-tunisie-affaiblie-par-une-hemorragie-de-medecins_6082299_4500055.html). (in French only)

A national expert in the movement of African diasporas, Samir Bouzidi, recounted: “We have also noticed an uptick in student mobility as well as among executives, people aged upwards of 40 who choose to emigrate. It is unfortunately the sign of decline in the country when people in mid-career choose to leave.”

### Irregular migration

Given the lack of socio-economic prospects and the traditional weakness in regular migration channels, which are closed to all but the most qualified candidates, many Tunisians have decided to leave the country irregularly. Irregular migration as a phenomenon has existed in Tunisia since the 1990s, with an uptick after the revolution in 2011. Nearly 28,000 Tunisians had reached the coast of Italy after the uprising. After a relative drop-off during the pandemic, departures increased by 150% in 2020<sup>77</sup> compared to 2018,<sup>78</sup> Tunisians being the top foreign nationality arriving on Italian shores.

According to the Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES), there is also an increase in the interception of irregular migration operations by the authorities, which have multiplied by six between 2019 and 2021, up from 4,177 interceptions to 25,657. Irregular migration routes start primarily in the Tunisian ports of Zarzis, Kelibia and Sfax.

The increase in irregular migration has sparked a number of disputes between Tunisia and Italy, which peaked on 3 June 2018 when the Italian Minister for the Interior Matteo Salvini stated that “More clandestine migrants are arriving here from Tunisia. They are not war refugees, more often delinquents and former convicts.”<sup>79</sup> As of today, many intercepted Tunisians are being held in Italian “centri”,

detention centres, waiting to be expelled back to Tunisia. These centres have been widely criticised for ignoring human rights.<sup>80</sup>

Since the end of the pandemic, Tunisia has agreed to the repatriation by air of Tunisians arrested in Italy after arriving by irregular means. According to a report conducted jointly by the FTDES and Lawyers Without Borders (ASF) in 2022,<sup>81</sup> the number of returnee Tunisians rose from 1,922 persons in 2020 to 18,722 in 2021.

The question of repatriating Tunisians in an irregular situation on French territory is a current source of diplomatic tension between France and Tunisia. In September 2021, France slashed the number of visas granted to Tunisians by 30%, because of trouble gaining consular passes from Tunisian authorities needed to readmit those expelled from France to Tunisia.<sup>82</sup>

Irregular migration is also a matter of concern for Sub-Saharan migrants who transit through Tunisia to Europe, often risking their lives.<sup>83</sup> Tragedies are widely mediated, with footage of cemeteries for migrants set up in Zarzis to compensate for the authorities’ lack of resources to deal with the bodies and provide a decent resting-place.<sup>84</sup>

One point worthy of attention is that irregular migration involves a growing number of unaccompanied minors of both genders. Four times as many arrived at the Italian coast in 2021 compared to 2017, up from 544 to 2,076 (of whom 70-80% from Sub-Saharan Africa) according to the FTDES.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Article in AA (21/02/2018), URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/migrants-tunisiens-apr%C3%A8s-les-vagues-de-la-mer-les-centres-de-enfer-3-5/1070014> (in French only)

<sup>81</sup> FTDES/ASF, press release on a report on migrant status and itineraries (2022): <https://ftdes.net/ar/etude-sur-les-conditions-de-sejour-et-les-trajectoires-des-migrant-e-s-tunisien-ne-s-rapatrie-e-s-en-italie/?fbclid=IwAR-2SWOLQnMm2TDmcm0L72ZE-ZtZINT16AlytNpenh0IVQ08DY0XioKuxF8> (in Arabic only)

<sup>82</sup> Article on *France 24* (04/10/2021), URL: <https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20211004-r%C3%A9duire-les-visas-fran%C3%A7ais-aux-pays-du-maghreb-est-une-m%C3%A9thode-biais%C3%A9e> (in French only)

<sup>83</sup> Article on Médiapart, Lilia Blaise (29/07/2019), URL: <https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/international/220719/la-tunisie-nouveau-cimetiere-des-migrants-morts-en-mer> (in French only)

<sup>84</sup> Article on RFI, Lilia Blaise (09/06/2021), URL: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/podcasts/reportage-afrique/20210608-tunisie-le-jardin-d-afrique-%C3%A0-zarzis> (in French only)

<sup>85</sup> Article published in *Le Figaro* (16/03/2022), URL: <https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/20220316/le-nombre-record-de-migrants-mineurs-arrives-en-italie-en-2021> (in French only)

<sup>77</sup> FTDES/ASF, press release on a report on migrant status and itineraries (2022): <https://ftdes.net/ar/etude-sur-les-conditions-de-sejour-et-les-trajectoires-des-migrant-e-s-tunisien-ne-s-rapatrie-e-s-en-italie/?fbclid=IwAR-2SWOLQnMm2TDmcm0L72ZE-ZtZINT16AlytNpenh0IVQ08DY0XioKuxF8> (in Arabic only)

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>79</sup> Article in *Jeune Afrique* (06/06/2021), URL: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/565536/politique/tunisie-italie-les-propos-du-ministre-italien-de-linterieur-sur-les-migrants-etonnent-a-tunis/> (in French only)

### Immigration

Tunisia is also an immigration country because of its history as well as geographic location. The authorities do not have exact figures for the number of immigrants in Tunisia but according to the UN DESA 2020, there were 60,100, spread throughout the territory in 2020. The main countries of origin are Algeria, Libya, France, Morocco and Italy.<sup>86</sup> According to the Tunisian Observatory on Migration, “immigrants from countries in Africa, apart from the Maghreb, have increased the most in the past years, with estimations up from 7,200 individuals in 2014 to 21,466 at the time of the investigation”.<sup>87</sup> The main reasons for migrating to Tunisia are “marriage and family reunification in 36.6% of cases, employment and improving living conditions in 35.1% of cases and studies in 15.5% of cases.”

Civilian stakeholders and research workers have noticed a clear difference in coverage between European immigrants, referred to as “expatriates” by the authorities, and migrants of other origins, especially in the granting of residence permits. A researcher with the Research Institute on Contemporary Maghreb (IRMC), Valentina Zagaria, pointed out that “there are European retirees who find it very easy to settle in Tunisia compared to other migration profiles.” IOM also pointed to difficulties in obtaining residence permits for Jordanian, Moroccan and Algerian migrants living in Tunisia.

### Focus on migration from Sub-Saharan Africa

Tunisia has witnessed an increase in migration flows from Sub-Saharan Africa in the past five years. There are between 30,000 and 50,000 migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, some of whom are in an irregular situation.

The number of students from Sub-Saharan Africa dwindled from 12,000 in 2015, to 6,500 in 2018.<sup>88</sup> This trend has been attributed primarily to racist aggressions targeting students as well as administrative problems encountered in Tunisia. A law against discrimination and racism was voted in 2018, leading to more open public debate of racist issues, but a number of migrants still do not dare go to court because of their irregular status in the country.

In February 2022, several students condemned police raids with fingerprinting and saliva sampling at the police station, even for those in a regular situation. For the student community and grass-roots groups, this is symptomatic of a worsening situation for students, as well as a lack of communication with the Tunisian authorities.<sup>89</sup> According to the participants in the discussion group, students from Sub-Saharan Africa often feel targeted by discrimination and racism, “despite their contribution to the Tunisian economy with the tuition fees and rent,” as do migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa who come to Tunisia by other routes to seek work.

There are various routes to enter Tunisian territory. Migrants from Côte d’Ivoire prefer to come by air, since Tunisia does not require them to obtain an entry visa. Ivorians are in fact that the top nationality of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia.

<sup>86</sup> IOM (2022): <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2022-interactive/?lang=EN>

<sup>87</sup> Tunisian Observatory on Migration and National Institute of Statistics (Tunisia), “Enquête nationale sur la migration internationale” (National survey on international migration), URL: <https://www.onm.gov.tn/la-migration-internationale-en-chiffres-a-travers-l-enquete-nationale-sur-la-migration-internationale> (in French only)

<sup>88</sup> Estimation by the African intern and student association in Tunisia, covered in the media: *La Tunisie accueille de moins en moins d’étudiants originaires d’Afrique subsahara* (ilboursa.com) (in French only)

<sup>89</sup> Article in *Le Monde* (22/02/2022), URL: [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/02/22/raffles-insultes-violences-le-traitement-des-etudiants-subsahariens-empire-en-tunisie\\_6114762\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/02/22/raffles-insultes-violences-le-traitement-des-etudiants-subsahariens-empire-en-tunisie_6114762_3212.html) (in French only)

Durant the pandemic, migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa fled poor working conditions in Algeria via the Tunisian-Algerian border in the Kasserine region, travelling on foot with the help of smugglers. Tunisian authorities are having difficulties handling this phenomenon which has received little media coverage to date.

The majority of migrant workers outstay the three-month tourist visa for work, and as a result often end up in an irregular situation, since they cannot get a residence permit or employment contract. According to the participants in the migrant discussion group, this situation facilitates exploitation, despite their contribution to the economy (see box). Several civilian stakeholders also mentioned the penalty system set up for those outstaying their visa. This practice is dissuasive, with the intention of encouraging assisted voluntary returns. Many do not have the means to pay both the penalties for outstaying and the cost of airfare. The procedure was temporarily suspended<sup>90</sup> by the authorities during the pandemic but has been reimplemented since borders reopened.<sup>91</sup>

### → The precarious status of workers from Sub-Saharan Africa

Migrants work in many industries in Tunisia, on building sites, as waiting staff, seasonal farm labourers and hotel and factory workers. Tunisian law is very restrictive with respect to hiring foreign nationals, so they hardly ever have an employment contract or access to welfare. The government turns a blind eye to this invisible labour force, often exploited by the employers. Journalist Sana Sboui explained: “Given the lack of government policy on integration for these migrants in Tunisia and the non-response to their status requests, we are of the impression that the authorities are willing to gain economically from this low-cost labour force. We have noticed this since the arrival of these migrants in Choucha and their subsequent exploitation.” The trade-union federation UGTT has attempted to set up “migrant welcome spots”<sup>92</sup> with a view to providing better information about their rights, but many migrants simply lack a legal framework to work. The few who do manage to get hired within the legal economy are those who manage to obtain a residence permit, for example by starting their own business, which is yet another obstacle course because of legislative restrictions on employment for foreigners.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Publication on the website Infomigrants (09/04/2020): <https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/23991/coronavirus--en-tunisie-le-gouvernement-prend-des-mesures-en-faveur-des-etrangers> (in French only)

<sup>91</sup> For more information on penalties for outstaying visas on: <https://www.centresmigrants.tn/fr/vivre-en-tant-que-migrant-en-tunisie/les-penalties-de-depassement-de-sejour#:~:text=Vous%20prenez%20le%20risque%20de,ambassade%20pour%20orientation%20et%20appui> (in French only)

<sup>92</sup> ILO, publication on the inauguration of two “migrant welcome spots” at the UGTT Tunis and Sousse for foreign migrant workers in Tunisia: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-Migration/events-training/WCMS\\_629992/lang-fr/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-Migration/events-training/WCMS_629992/lang-fr/index.htm) (in French only)

<sup>93</sup> Mustapha Nasraoui (2017), “Les travailleurs migrants subsahariens en Tunisie face aux restrictions législatives sur l’emploi des étrangers” (Migrant workers from Sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia facing legislative restrictions on the employment of foreigners) URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/remi/9244?lang=en>. (Abstract only in English)

### Human trafficking

In recent years, Tunisia has stepped up efforts to pinpoint and prevent cases of human trafficking. In the case of foreign victims of human trafficking, this phenomenon mostly affects women from Sub-Saharan Africa whose passports are confiscated, and who are forced to work as “domestic sex workers” and expected to perform all domestic duties.

According to several reports,<sup>94</sup> the majority of these women are from Côte d’Ivoire, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Congo. Between 2012 and 2019, IOM identified 575 Ivorian women who were victims of human trafficking in Tunisia. Most of these women had fled poor working conditions in their country of origin, domestic violence, or to provide for their family back home.<sup>95, 96</sup>

A specific body, the Tunisian body to push back on human trafficking or INLTP, set up in 2017, strives to identify and expose the various cases of human trafficking. For 2020, the INLTP pointed out that 40% of victims of human trafficking listed were women and children of foreign origin, adding that Tunisians were involved too.<sup>97</sup> The media has flagged several cases involving the trafficking of foreign women for the purposes of sexual exploitation.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Republic of Tunisia and IOM, “Baseline study on trafficking in persons in Tunisia”: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Baseline%20Study%20on%20Trafficking%20in%20Persons%20in%20Tunisia.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>95</sup> Naima Kekih (2019), “La traite des jeunes femmes migrantes subsaharienne en Tunisie” (The trafficking of young women migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in Tunisia), URL: <http://investigaciones.uniatlantico.edu.co/revistas/inde.g.php/Collectivus/article/view/2420/3039> (in French only)

<sup>96</sup> France Terre d’Asile (2021), “Parcours de vie de femmes migrantes en Tunisie” (The experience of women migrants in Tunisia): [https://www.france-terre-asile.org/images/stories/publications/pdf/Parcours\\_de\\_vie\\_de\\_femmes\\_migrantes.pdf](https://www.france-terre-asile.org/images/stories/publications/pdf/Parcours_de_vie_de_femmes_migrantes.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>97</sup> Article in *La Presse* (05/04/2021), Raoudha Laabidi: “Les crimes d’exploitation des enfants et des femmes en Tunisie ont connu une hausse inquiétante” (A worrying increase in crime involving the exploitation of women and children in Tunisia), URL: <https://lapresse.tn/93325/les-crimes-dexploitation-des-enfants-et-des-femmes-en-tunisie-ont-connu-une-hausse-inquietante/> (in French only)

<sup>98</sup> Article in *Leader* (24/07/2019), “La lutte contre la traite des êtres humains en Tunisie entre la réalité et les poursuites judiciaires” (The fight against human trafficking in Tunisia, between reality and lawsuits), URL: <https://www.leaders.com.tn/article/27566-la-lutte-contre-la-traite-des-etres-humains-en-tunisie> (in French only)

### Asylum

In 2011, Tunisia took in over a million Libyan refugees fleeing the war in Libya, which was praised by the international community. The majority of these nationals have returned to Libya, and many come and go between the two countries. The remaining refugee population is difficult to quantify given that Libyans have little interaction with associations working with migrants in the country. Many already have their own networks and communities in Tunisia and there is no language barrier.

Despite these events, Tunisia has not set up a legal framework for the right to asylum or to recognise refugee status. Given the lack of legislation governing asylum, UNHCR has a mandate to help asylum seekers according to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, ratified by Tunisia. This is often a source of misunderstanding for asylum seekers who lack information about their rights and the procedures to be followed. According to Ana Maria Cavalcanti, a project manager at HCR, “finding work and gaining refugee official status is a truly daunting obstacle course. Tunisia has an open-door policy but concurrently has not set up any hosting facilities.” According to UNHCR, there are 9,500 refugees registered in Tunisia, 453 of whom are unaccompanied minors.



### Migration policy

In the 1960s, Tunisia set up an institutional framework for worker migration to the country. After the 2011 revolution, a Secretary of State in charge of Migration and Tunisians Abroad was appointed, then replaced by a delegate to the Prime Minister in 2019. A Tunisian Observatory on Migration was also set up in 2014 with a view to collecting data about migration and help develop migration policies.

Despite this, civilian stakeholders has criticised the lack of a clear migration policy and appropriate national strategy on the question. Tunisia has for example long refused the concept of *hotspots* or migrant centres<sup>99</sup> despite voting in a law in 2004 to organise the repression of entry and exit in an irregular situation. It has also signed several bilateral agreements, especially with Italy, authorising the expulsion of Tunisian migrants in an irregular situation back to Tunisia. Caught between its role as “border guard” for Europe and its own problems with regulating immigration, the country has found it hard to formulate a clear vision for its migration policy or even draw up a law governing asylum.

## Migration issues in the media and public discourse

### Recurrent issues in media coverage

According to our review of media coverage in Tunisia and the interviews conducted with migrants and journalists, several problems emerged on the coverage of migration in the media, such as the lack of investigation and in-depth examination (with shipwrecks often covered as everyday news with a few figures for background information), sensationalism and fake news. Despite recent efforts regarding migration terminology, pushing back on negative Arabic terms such as “*oussif*” and “*kahlouch*”, there have been occasional racist drifts with direct references to slavery and skin colour.

The lack of coverage of certain topics is also an issue. During the pandemic, only foreign media outlets based in Tunisia such as *Jeune Afrique*<sup>100</sup> raised the alert on the precarious living conditions of Sub-Saharan migrants because of lockdown. Many found themselves out of work overnight, and without access to any kind of aid. “The articles on this question have had an impact since certain mayors have acted to help migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in their neighbourhoods and solidarity initiatives have been set up. But it is a pity that the Tunisian media did not cover the issue as they did for Tunisians during this period,” stated Frida Dahmani, correspondent for *Jeune Afrique*.

<sup>99</sup> European Training Foundation (2021), Skills and Migration Country fact-sheet Tunisia, URL: [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/etf\\_fiche\\_pays\\_competences\\_et\\_migration\\_tunisie\\_2021\\_fr\\_0.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-11/etf_fiche_pays_competences_et_migration_tunisie_2021_fr_0.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Article in *Jeune Afrique*, Frida Dahmani (24/02/2022): “En Tunisie, les migrants subsahariens démunis face à la pandémie de coronavirus” (In Tunisia, Sub-Saharan migrants left powerless to withstand the coronavirus pandemic), URL: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915161/societe/en-tunisie-les-migrants-subsahariens-demunis-face-a-la-pandemie-de-coronavirus/> (in French only)

Another example of the lack of coverage of certain topics: there were very few investigative reports in the Tunisian media on the question of centres for migrants, such as the one in El Ouardia<sup>101</sup> (Tunis) with a legal status that remains unclear.<sup>102</sup> NGOs have criticised the very existence of this centre on several occasions as well as on-site treatment of migrants arrested by the police.<sup>103</sup> The Tunisian media have covered this issue, albeit without due investigation. A French-language newspaper owned by the public authorities, *La Presse*,<sup>104</sup> mediated the FTDES investigation of the centre conducted by a freelance journalist, Amal Mekki. It also covered the press release produced jointly by several civil society organisations demanding explanations as to the nature and legal basis of migrant detention.

According to the interviews with migrants conducted during discussion groups, media coverage of migration topics fuels the persistent “stigmatisation” of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa. “We would like to see more coverage of our economic contribution to society, and our successes too,” asserted Paul Laurent Nyobe Lipot, a Cameroonian entrepreneur based in Sfax and founder of an entrepreneurial incubator for migrants, called Kufanya.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Article in Middle East Eye, Fatima-Ezzahra Bendami (08/10/2020), URL: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/reportages/Tunisie-tunis-centre-ouardia-migrants-detention> (in French only)

<sup>102</sup> Press release, OMCT (26/02/2021), “Détenition arbitraire à El Ouardia : le ministère de l'Intérieur multi-récidive” (Arbitrary detention in El Ouardia: the Ministry of the Interior is at it again): <https://omct-tunisie.org/2021/02/26/communique-de-presse-detention-arbitraire-a-el-ouardia-le-ministere-de-linterieur-multi-recidive/> (in French only)

<sup>103</sup> FTDES publication; 23/09/2020, URL: <https://ftdes.net/detention-arbitraire-au-centre-del-ouardia-le-cauchemar-se-terme-pour-22-migrants-mais-il-se-poursuit-pour-dautres> (in Arabic only)

<sup>104</sup> Article in *La Presse* (30/04/2020): “Des migrants au Centre El Ouardia privés de leur liberté sans garanties judiciaires” (Migrants at the Centre El Ouardia deprived of their freedom without legal guarantees), URL: <https://lapresse.tn/60572/des-migrants-au-centre-el-ouardia-privés-de-leur-liberté-sans-garanties-judiciaires/> (in French only) (06/03/2020); and “Migrant detention centres: ‘Ici, je suis... un prisonnier’ (Here, I am... a prisoner): <https://lapresse.tn/51432/centres-de-retention-des-migrants-ici-je-suis-un-prisonnier/> (in French only)

<sup>105</sup> Article in *Le Monde*, Lilia Blaise (27/04/2021): “En Tunisie, l'autre parcours des migrants subsahariens” (In Tunisia, another route for Sub-Saharan migrants), URL: [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/04/27/en-tunisie-l-autre-parcours-des-migrants-subsahariens\\_6078270\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2021/04/27/en-tunisie-l-autre-parcours-des-migrants-subsahariens_6078270_3212.html) (in French only)

### Coverage according to type of migration

#### Irregular migration of Tunisians towards Europe in the media

This is a subject covered often by Tunisian media. It is especially the case for private and public TV in Tunisia<sup>106</sup> which relates stories of tragic crossings with accounts by the families of those lost at sea, as well as the question of independent young people, departing without smugglers, who live-stream their sea crossing on social media. The question of Tunisians held in Italian detention camps or in boats during lockdown has also been widely covered in Tunisian media. Certain Tunisians were confined in docked boats for two weeks during the pandemic, before being placed in detention camps. Stories of Tunisians returning or being repatriated by Italy get very little, mostly poor coverage: “This aspect is not shown, sometimes returning migrants are treated rather like pariahs,” explained Nesrine Akkari, President of an association in Mahdia which works on forced returns.

Other stories, like that of 800 Tunisian emigrants trapped in the Spanish enclave of Melilla during the pandemic, did not attract as much media, as explained by Refka, a Tunisian emigrant who stayed in Melilla with her child for nearly a year: “We were forgotten, maybe because the authorities insisted too much on our irregular status, but we would have liked coverage in the Tunisian media, especially since it was during Covid-19 and we were living in tough conditions.”<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Video, “Les 4 Vérités” (The Four Truths), S04, episode 29 (04/05/2022), part 01: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXAmRSaHSig&ab\\_channel=El-hiwarEttounsiReplay](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXAmRSaHSig&ab_channel=El-hiwarEttounsiReplay) (in French only)

<sup>107</sup> Article in *La Presse* (05/02/2020), “Détenition de 800 migrants tunisiens à Melilla : le FTDES appelle le gouvernement tunisien à suspendre les négociations avec l'Espagne” (800 Tunisian migrants detained in Melilla: the FTDES calls on the Tunisian government to suspend negotiations with Spain), URL: <https://lapresse.tn/47289/detention-de-800-migrants-tunisiens-a-melilla-le-ftdes-appelle-le-gouvernement-tunisien-a-suspendre-les-negociations-avec-lEspagne/> (in French only)

### Migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa in the media

Efforts have been made in recent years to provide better media coverage of the question of migrant workers from Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan migration to Tunisia is covered in Arabic- and French-language media and contributes to raising awareness of these communities who used to have few chances of making themselves heard.

“When the cases of arbitrary police raids were exposed, for example in late 2021 and early 2022, we called a press conference, and many Tunisian journalists came. They asked us questions and took an interest in our cause,” stated a representative of the African intern and student association in Tunisia (AESAT) during a discussion group meeting.

However, once these migrants have a more prominent profile, especially in Tunis or in the port of Sfax where communities of workers and students are concentrated, coverage in the Tunisian media has often focussed on security,<sup>108</sup> with articles on neighbourhood fighting. Despite some recent progress, people do still amalgamate migration and crime.<sup>109</sup> Student migrants in Sfax say they often suffer because of these clichés and shortcuts, when in fact they have entered the country by regular means, to study.

As for specifically irregular migration from Sub-Saharan Africa, coverage often draws on statistics since there is an increase in shipwrecked vessels in recent years, but several observers felt this question is poorly covered by the Tunisian media. There was the case of a cemetery for migrants, in Zarzis, set up before the revolution by the town council and tended only by a fisherman as from 2017<sup>110</sup> (a second

was set up in 2021 by an Algerian artist).<sup>111</sup> This cemetery became a focal point for Tunisian and foreign media for a time, although, according to Valentina Zagaria, who authored a report on the cemetery in Zarzis, “no related issues were examined, such as the reasons why local town councils have trouble burying these migrants; their lack of resources; the question of follow-up for DNA samples taken by forensic doctors etc.”<sup>112</sup>

### Media coverage of Libyan migration to Tunisia

The migration of Libyans to Tunisia is often mentioned in minor news items, contributing to the caricaturisation of these communities which have sometimes been long established in Tunisia.

In 2011, the Tunisian media did cover the taking in of Libyan refugees extensively. This was especially the case regarding the thousands of migrants coming from Libya who had been settled in tents in Choucha, in the south of Tunisia, in a refugee camp managed by UNHCR and IOM. Journalist Sana Sboui explained: “We had the impression that it was a “migrant fair” for journalists who toured the camp and came back with a report, however, there has been no real subsequent follow-up, especially regarding outcomes for these migrants or the way the Tunisian authorities have treated them, the violence and abuse by authorities on the site and human trafficking.”

But since then, this community has had very little media coverage even though they are developing activities in the country, and also, as in the past, come to benefit from medical care in Tunisian clinics.<sup>113</sup> Libyans were considered to be “brothers” when it was a

<sup>108</sup> Article on Webdo (15/06/2021), “Sfax : grosse bagarre et violence inouïe entre Subsahariens et habitants locaux” (Sfax: huge battle and unheard-of violence between Sub-Saharan and local residents), URL: <https://www.webdo.tn/2021/06/15/sfax-grande-bagarre-et-violence-inouie-entre-sub-sahariens-et-habitants-locaux/> (in French only)

<sup>109</sup> Article in *La Presse*, Samir Didri (31/01/2022), “Entre inclusion et rejet : quand des migrants subsahariens ternissent l’image de toute une communauté” (Between inclusion and rejection: when Sub-Saharan migrants wreck the image of an entire community), URL: <https://lapresse.tn/121943/entre-inclusion-et-rejet-quand-des-migrants-subsahariens-ternissent-limage-de-toute-une-communaute/> (in French only)

<sup>110</sup> Article on Webdo, Imene Boudali (24/04/2018), “Chamseddine Marzoug, le tunisien qui enterre les migrants, invité au Parlement européen” (Chamseddine Marzoug, the Tunisian who buries migrants, invited to the

EU Parliament), URL: <https://www.webdo.tn/2018/04/24/chamseddine-marzoug-le-tunisien-qui-enterre-les-migrants-invite-au-parlement-europeen/> (in French only)

<sup>111</sup> Publication on the website Infomigrants: [infomigrants.net/fr/post/32835/tunisie-un-nouveau-cimetiere-de-migrants-jardin-dafrique-inaugure-a-zarzis](http://infomigrants.net/fr/post/32835/tunisie-un-nouveau-cimetiere-de-migrants-jardin-dafrique-inaugure-a-zarzis) (in French only)

<sup>112</sup> Zagaria V. and Périer M. (2019), “A small story with great symbolic potential. “Fixing” a cemetery for unknown migrants in South-East Tunisia”, *Critique internationale*, No. 83, pp. 61-85: [https://www.cairn-int.info/article.php?ID\\_ARTICLE=E\\_CR1083\\_0061](https://www.cairn-int.info/article.php?ID_ARTICLE=E_CR1083_0061)

<sup>113</sup> Article on Tunisie Numérique (22/05/2021), “Les cliniques privées cherchent à se faire payer les dettes de la Libye” (Private clinics seek payment for Libyan debts), URL: <https://www.tunisienumerique.com/les-cliniques-privées-cherchent-a-se-faire-payer-les-dettes-de-la-libye/> (in French only)

matter of taking them in during the war, but later, many Tunisians started complaining of their presence, cultural differences and the behaviour of Libyan authorities towards Tunisians workers<sup>114</sup> and the fishermen.<sup>115</sup>

The lack of precise statistics on the Libyan community in Tunisia or on the value of trade between the two countries shows the lack of interest for this question in Tunisia. The only issues to be mediated in recent years are sensitive issues and news items covering events like the extradition of the pro-Gadhafi politician Baghdadi Mahmudi,<sup>116</sup> the disappearance of Tunisian journalists in Libya,<sup>117</sup> and the impact on the price of housing because of the great buying power of certain Libyans.<sup>118</sup> In 2016, the Tunisian media also tapped into sensationalism with coverage of a “Libyan” who threw a Tunisian woman from a building, which further maintained negative sentiment towards this community.<sup>119</sup>

### Media coverage of human trafficking

The question of human trafficking, especially including the living conditions of Ivorian women employed by Tunisians as domestic workers, has also been widely covered by certain independent media outlets in Tunisia, like *Inkyfada*<sup>120</sup> and *Nawaat*<sup>121 - 122</sup>, in both

<sup>114</sup> Article in Business News (20/04/2020), “Des Tunisiens bloqués en Libye forcent le passage frontalier de Ras Jedir” (Tunisians trapped in Libya break through the border in Ras Jedir), URL: <https://www.businessnews.com.tn/des-tunisiens-bloques-en-libye-forcent-le-passage-frontalier-de-ras-jedir,520,97696,3> (in French only)

<sup>115</sup> Article in Réalités (03/2022), URL: <https://www.realites.com.tn/2022/03/des-pecheurs-tunisiens-arretes-Libye/> (in French only)

<sup>116</sup> Article in Jeune Afrique, Frida Dahmani (29/07/2015), “Libye : la condamnation à mort de Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi suscite le malaise en Tunisie” (Libya: the death sentence for Baghdadi al-Mahmoudi is a source of unease in Tunisia), URL: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/251385/politique/lex-premier-ministre-de-khadafi-condamne-a-mort-decision-pourrait-mettre-tunisie-lembarras/> (in French only)

<sup>117</sup> Article on *France 24* (22/04/2015), “Les familles de deux journalistes tunisiens tués en Libye réclament la vérité” (The families of two Tunisian journalists killed in Libya demand to know the truth), URL: <https://www.france24.com/fr/20150502-tunisie-libye-sofiene-nadhir-familles-journalistes-tunisiens-morts-libye-ei> (in French only)

<sup>118</sup> Article on Tunisie Numérique (23/05/2021), “Tunisie, le libre accès des Libyens à la propriété foncière et ses retombées sur la vie du Tunisien” (Tunisia, free access to property for Libyans and the knock-on effect for Tunisians), URL: <https://www.tunisienumerique.com/tunisie-le-libre-acces-des-libyens-a-la-propriete-fonciere-et-ses-retombees-sur-la-vie-du-tunisien/> (in French only)

<sup>119</sup> Article on Nessma (03/01/2016), URL: <https://www.nessma.tv/fr/societe/actu/tunis-un-libyan-jette-une-tunisienne-du-haut-d-un-immeuble-8744/3861> (in French and Arabic only)

<sup>120</sup> Reportage on *Inkyfada*, Sana Sboui (15/08/2015), “Esclavage en Tunisie” (Slavery in Tunisia), URL: <https://inkyfada.com/fr/2015/08/15/domes-tique-etrangere-bonne-esclave-tunisie/> (in French only)

<sup>121</sup> Article on *Nawaat*, Adriana Vidano (29/01/2018), survey, URL: <https://nawaat.org/2018/01/29/enquete-entre-la-cote-divoire-et-la-tunisie-arnaques-traffic-et-esclavage/> (in French only)

<sup>122</sup> Investigation on *Inkyfada* Ager Oueslati, Monia Ben Hamadi and Marwen Ben Mustapha (15/12/2017), “Traite en Tunisie : les aveux d’une trafiquante” (Human trafficking in Tunisia: confessions of a smuggler), URL: <https://inkyfada.com/fr/2017/12/15/traite-tunisie-migrants-traffic/> (in French only)

French and Arabic. A journalist working for the Arabic-language radio station *Shems FM*, Malek Khaldi, who is also a member of the INLTP, has helped to mediate the phenomenon with investigative reports in Arabic. He specified that “it is still hard to do justice to these topics and obtain financial support from our media outlets.” He received the award for best radio news programme on human trafficking in 2017 from IOM, HAICA and INLTP.

### Little mediation of the diaspora

The Tunisian diaspora comprises nearly a million people and is covered in the media with accounts of individual success stories and economic data, like currency that they send to their family in Tunisia. “The topic of the diaspora is not very specialised in Tunisia, it is a fairly complex subject in economic terms and often, journalists are content to simply publish press releases from the Central Bank of Tunisia about currency contributions,” explained Samir Bouzidi, an international expert in the movement of African diasporas. Recently, the diaspora angle has also been covered in an alarmist tone, referencing figures for male and female physicians and engineers leaving the country, a brain drain that is constantly worsening in Tunisia.<sup>123</sup> Even worse, the question of dual nationality among Tunisians within the diaspora is often covered from the angle “collaborating with our former colonisers” rather than as an asset, with the media reproducing speeches delivered by politicians who often exploit this question.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Article in *L’Économiste Maghrébin*, Mervet Chartkmi (08/02/2022), URL: <https://www.leconomistemaghrebin.com/2022/02/08/fuite-cerveaux-tunisie-malheur-bonheur-medecins/> (in French only)

<sup>124</sup> Article on Business News (26/02/2020), “Safi Saïd poursuit sa fixation sur les Tunisiens binationaux !” (Safi Saïd continues to obsess about Tunisians with dual nationality), URL: <https://www.businessnews.com.tn/safi-said-poursuit-sa-fixation-sur-les-tunisiens-binationaux,520,95641,3> (in French only)

## Coverage according to type of media

### Printed press

It has been observed that a media outlet owned by the public authorities, *La Presse*, often covers irregular migration but without any in-depth investigation. The newspaper is content to mainly recount press conferences and reports by civil society organisations. The same goes for the Arabic-language dailies which only scratch at the surface of various migration issues. Coverage by the Arabic-language press mainly focusses on security, neighbourhood fighting, and migrants being arrested while attempting to crossing the sea to Europe. There are few interviews or in-depth investigations within the community.

### Online French-language newspapers

Papers such as *Kapitalis* and *Business News*<sup>125</sup> mostly cover news items on crime<sup>126</sup> and controversy on social media. While they do report on cases of racism<sup>127</sup> towards migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, articles on crime often tend to stigmatise these communities.<sup>128</sup>

However, certain online, independent media outlets like *Inkyfada* and *Nawaat*<sup>129</sup> are exceptions, developing in-depth investigative reports, as much on emigration from Tunisia as immigration to Tunisia. *Inkyfada* and *Nawaat* thus shed light on issues that are rarely mentioned in the mainstream media, including forced returns and human trafficking.<sup>130</sup> They also call European migration policy into question, which rarely happens in the media.

*Inkyfada* has published several investigations into the trafficking of Ivorian women. The outlet has also covered the management of migrant flows and EU border security. A podcast has discussed young migrants from Tunis neighbourhoods in an original format designed by documentary director Hamza Ouni. This is a series in Tunisian dialect, *L'byessa*, talking of the daily life of drug dealers in Tunis and also young people attempting the *harga* (irregular sea crossing). *Nawaat* has also discussed racist acts towards Blacks in Tunisia.<sup>131</sup> This serious coverage of migration issues, tending towards advocacy, contrasts with that of most Tunisian media and press outlets who are sorely lacking in analysts in this field, and which launch few in-depth, investigative reports on these topics.

### Radio stations

Private and public radio stations show more diversity in coverage than the press and television, thanks to support mechanisms set up by certain organisations such as IOM and Terre d'Asile Tunisia. Examples include support for community radio stations as well as a programme on *Shems FM* looking at migration, presented by Malek Khaldi<sup>132</sup> and regional radio programmes given a boost via capacity-building programmes.<sup>133</sup> In other media outlets such as the top radio nationwide, *Mosaïque FM*, migration is often mentioned only in news items on crime or when announcing security statistics.

<sup>125</sup> Article in *Business News* (14/04/2021), "Sept subsahariens arrêtés pour consommation d'alcool pendant Ramadan" (Seven Sub-Saharan arrested for consuming alcohol during Ramadan), URL: <https://www.businessnews.com.tn/Sept-subsahariens-arr%C4%99t%C3%A9s-pour-consommation-d%20alcool-pendant-Ramadan,537,107485,3> (in French only)

<sup>126</sup> Article on *Kapitalis* (24/01/2022), "Tunisie : deux Subsahariens enlèvent un ressortissant étranger pour exiger une rançon de sa famille" (Tunisia: two Sub-Saharan kidnaps a foreign national to demand ransom from the family), URL: <http://kapitalis.com/tunisie/2022/01/28/tunisie-deux-subsahariens-enlèvent-un-ressortissant-étranger-pour-exiger-une-rançon-de-sa-famille/> (in French only)

<sup>127</sup> Article on *Kapitalis* (16/02/2022), "Tunisie : 50 % des réfugiés subsahariens seraient victimes de racisme" (Tunisia: 50% of Sub-Saharan refugees may be victims of racism), URL: <http://kapitalis.com/tunisie/2022/02/16/tunisie-50-des-refugiés-subsahariens-seraient-victimes-de-racisme/> (in French only)

<sup>128</sup> Article on *Kapitalis* (27/08/2021), "Sfax : sous couvert d'une association des Subsahariens font régner un ordre parallèle" (Sfax: a Sub-Saharan organisation set up their own, parallel system for law and order), URL: <http://kapitalis.com/tunisie/2021/08/27/sfax-sous-couvert-d'une-association-des-subsahariens-ont-regner-un-ordre-parallèle/> (in French only)

<sup>129</sup> *Nawaat* Website: <https://nawaat.org/tag/migration/> (in French only)

<sup>130</sup> *Inkyfada* Website: <https://inkyfada.com/fr/thematique/drame-migration-afrique-europe/> (in French only)

<sup>131</sup> *Nawaat* Video (25/12/2018): <https://nawaat.org/2018/12/25/eric-un-ivoirien-hors-la-loi-malgré-lui-en-tunisie-video/?fbclid=IwAR2YVBDCISAxGSR-7F1lzZuKt9SpKCPYgnyC3MWbmqHqT4eaAwHyWqudoK6wE> (in French only)

<sup>132</sup> *Shems FM* (07/09/2017), radio programme on the subject of human trafficking in Tunisia: <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=coO22VhDdSs> (in French only)

<sup>133</sup> Debrief after the Zaris workshop 5 to 9 November 2012: <https://www.panosgl.org/activites/atelier-de-zaris-tunisie-stimuler-une-couverture-objective-des-faits-migratoires> (in French only)

## Television in Tunisia

Tunisian state television alternates between investigative reports like the many programmes in Arabic by journalist Hamza Belloumi, *The Four Truths*, which have variously covered the issue of smugglers, Tunisians dying at sea, poor treatment of Tunisians in Italy and even more recently, Instagrammers mediatizing their sea crossing on social media; - coverage stating the facts of migration, paying special attention to shipwrecks and problems between immigrants in Tunis neighbourhoods. This coverage is sometimes biased, and has garnered criticism on several occasions from media outlet *Nawaat* for the "racist" or "stigmatising" coverage of immigration.<sup>134</sup>

Private TV channels specialising in "entertainment" have committed many racist blunders towards immigrants in Tunisia, including moral and ethical errors often criticised by other media outlets. The last blunder to date was a pop-vox conducted by journalists in the form of videos broadcast on social media: most of the Tunisians interviewed spewed their hate of "Africans", without any intervention from the journalist<sup>135, 136</sup>.

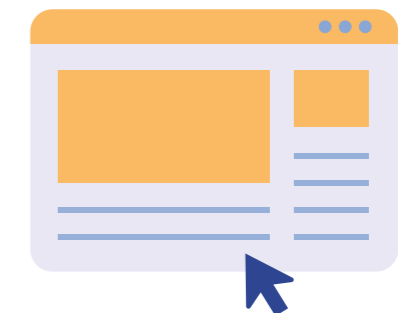
Journalist Sana Sbouai explained: "In both ethical and professional terms, the vox pop is problematic. Why didn't the journalist understand that it is not only racist but hate speech? Why didn't she speak up? And what is the news value of this kind of interview?"

While migration issues are frequently covered on several media outlets in Tunisia, with some making efforts to diversify the angles, there is room for improvement, especially in the mainstream media, which boasts many viewers and listeners in Tunisia. "There is also a lack of interest among chief editors for these questions, hence the lack of slots for migration in programme schedules," explained

journalist Frida Dahmani. This observation was confirmed by a radio journalist who recounted that they were often obliged to cover the news as it happened, without being able to focus on these themes. Lastly, there is as yet little specialisation on the issue, leading to superficial coverage without any in-depth analysis, which peaks whenever a boat capsizes and in the event of racist assaults, which are then soon forgotten.

### Social media

The other problem related by migrants and journalists in the interviews is the use of the social network Facebook in Tunisia. It is very popular (nearly 7 million accounts for 12 million inhabitants), and often used to share fake news. Facebook is however also used by the Sub-Saharan community to expose acts of racism and attract media attention, according to the interviews. Lastly, it may also have a perverse effect when young Tunisians publish their sea crossing as a "story", leading viewers to believe that the experience is easy and even "fun".<sup>137</sup>



<sup>134</sup> Article in *Nawaat* (04/06/2015), "Médias et racisme : le stigmatisant reportage de la Watania 1" (Media and racism: the stigmatising report from Watania 1), URL: <https://nawaat.org/2015/06/04/medias-et-racisme-le-stigmatisant-reportage-de-la-watania-1/> (in French only)

<sup>135</sup> Facebook video: [https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN\\_GK0T-GK1C&v=373145437820216](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&v=373145437820216) (in French only)

<sup>136</sup> Tik Tok video: [https://www.tiktok.com/@barchatv1/video/7068930817443073285?\\_r=1&t=8REQCTQeQP&social\\_sharing=v3](https://www.tiktok.com/@barchatv1/video/7068930817443073285?_r=1&t=8REQCTQeQP&social_sharing=v3) (in French only)

<sup>137</sup> RFI article (23/11/2021), "Tunisie : une «instagrameuse» déchaîne la Toile en postant des photos de sa traversée présumée vers l'Italie" (Tunisia: an "instagrammer" causes a stir on the Net posting photos of her alleged crossing to Italy), URL: <https://www.informigrants.net/fr/post/36678/tunisie-une-instagrameuse-dechaîne-la-toile-en-postant-des-photos-de-sa-traversee-presumee-vers-litalie> (in French only)

### → A series on irregular migration

This year, the feuilleton *Harga*<sup>138</sup> embarks on its second season. This star programme broadcast on Tunisian state television is a feature of the media landscape every year during the month of Ramadan. It sparked debate in 2021 by openly relating issues in connection with irregular migration and showing many profiles of both Tunisians and foreigners. While it was being broadcast, this question was debated on social media, with some Tunisians displaying a propensity to empathy despite their habitual prejudice towards migrants in an irregular situation. The series format made it possible to address many more issues than in a traditional media format and thus provided alternative coverage of migration issues. For example, the series director questioned the role of the Tunisian government in irregular migration, racism towards migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and the complicity of authorities with smugglers. These taboo topics are freely covered in fiction, based on true stories according to the director who interviewed a number of migrants before shooting. “I wanted to avoid stereotypes. There is for example the character of a single mother who leaves, not because of unemployment, but because of the prejudice she is subjected to. She wants to raise her son in a country where there are no taboos regarding her situation. It is the case for many migrating Tunisians.” Lassaad Oueslati, director (interview published in *Le Monde* on 7 May 2021).

<sup>138</sup> Article in *Le Monde* (07/05/2021), “En Tunisie, un feuilleton du ramadan relance le débat sur l’émigration clandestine” (In Tunisia, a series during Ramadan yet again sparks debate on clandestine migration), URL: En Tunisie, un feuilleton du ramadan relance le débat sur l’émigration clandestine (lemonde.fr) (in French only)

## Capacity-building initiatives

Since 2011, Tunisia has benefitted from a number of capacity-building initiatives catering to journalists.

→ **Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of media capacity-building initiatives which have taken place in Tunisia.**

The majority of interviews and data from discussion groups show that the beneficiaries of these training courses remain critical as to the outcome. What they learned did help the journalists use migration terminology properly, in both Arabic and French. But they felt that most of these training courses included insufficient hands-on practice. As a freelance journalist in Sfax who participated in a training course dispensed by IOM in 2018, Loic Oyno deemed that the training course focussed too much on theory. “We need more tuition on practical tools like live-streaming on Facebook, the type of material to be used according to the topics, how to edit web videos.”

Some also felt that most training courses are not sufficiently in phase with the context in Tunisia, especially regarding immigration in Tunisia and irregular migration. “I have learned more as a journalist with the free online course from the *École supérieure de journalisme de Lille (ESJ)* than in the local training courses, where I got the impression that they were applying theory and fact sheets drawn up for other countries rather than looking at the situation in Tunisia,” explained journalist Dobe Aboubacara. He participated in a training course that left him unsatisfied because of a disconnect between the instructors who were not journalists and his expectations.

Many also mentioned that courses were too long. It seems that training courses have been reduced from five to one or two days, which trend started in 2018. For the journalists however, “it’s still complicated to be out of the newsroom all day for a training course.”

A guide for journalists<sup>139</sup> on the media coverage of migration was published by IOM in 2019. “We realised afterwards that a 300-page guidebook could be hard-going, it would be better to draw up factsheets to recap the basics, or a 7-page mini set of guidelines, for example,” remarked Nozha Ben Mohamed, author and head of the Tunis branch of the Journalists for Human Rights (JHR).

Others mentioned a lack of communication with the authorities and certain international organisations which are not all that responsive to requests for interviews and additional information.



<sup>139</sup> Guidebook for journalists on the “Media coverage of migration” available on: [https://tunisia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1056/files/documents/IOM%20Tunisia\\_MEDIA%20COVERAGE%20OF%20MIGRATION\\_Journalist%20Guide.pdf](https://tunisia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1056/files/documents/IOM%20Tunisia_MEDIA%20COVERAGE%20OF%20MIGRATION_Journalist%20Guide.pdf)

## Findings and recommendations

More training courses adapted to the Tunisian context, more varied themes, instructors and trainer journalists having experience in the field: despite the initiatives conducted in Tunisia, there is still plenty left to do in terms of building capacity. The Tunisian situation seems propitious, given demand from not only professionals but the public, for more awareness-raising on migration issues.

There are many challenges for future training courses and there are several guiding principles that may be used.

### Shorter training courses, exploring aspects of migration that are insufficiently covered

Among the journalists and stakeholders in training courses who took part in the discussion groups and interviews, a majority felt that the training courses had to be shorter, or online, to prevent journalists working in private media having to take time away from the newsroom during a time of tension and hot news, for there are few possibilities to replace them in Tunisian newsrooms.

Haïfa Mzalouat ventured that “It would also be necessary to contact journalists and beneficiaries of capacity building ahead of time and ask what they want training in, what their needs might be.”

Freelance journalist Nadia Haddaoui felt that the training courses should also make more documentation and research on migration available to journalists, “via an online platform or a Facebook group, so we can obtain documentation ahead of the training courses.



That way, journalists can better identify what they need more in-depth knowledge of during the capacity-building session.”

Journalist Frida Dahmani insisted on what she saw as new themes to be explored, including a gender-based approach, for example “the question of the sexual and reproductive rights of women migrants”. Romdhane Ben Amor, Communications Officer at the FTDES explained that “Rights and the legal aspects of migration must be examined more fully during training courses, rather than merely looking at techniques and concepts,” adding that “For example, we have journalists who don’t understand the problem with the centre in Ouardia because they don’t know that the setup is not legally compliant.”

#### **Better targeting the beneficiaries.**

#### **Ensuring follow-up after training courses**

Nozha Ben Mohamed and Sana Bousbih are both migration experts and also trainers on several panels. They recommend improving the methods to select the beneficiaries of capacity building. “We find ourselves working with novice journalists alongside others who have already had plenty of training, so we have to teach a hybrid model where we repeat the very basics, wasting time.” And the journalists who come to these training courses need to be “interested in the subject, rather than being sent by the newsroom simply because they had an available slot at the time of the training course.” Lastly, the question of dispensing training courses for chief editors of TV channels and radio stations often came up in the interviews.

“We also need better follow-up of the journalist’s subsequent work to see whether the training courses were effective,” opined Frida Dahmani who deplored that often, journalists who turned up for training did not actually work on migration. Mentoring and grants for long-term projects are apparently more in demand than technical support to cover daily migration news.

#### **Training courses adapted to the Tunisian context and in connection with the ground**

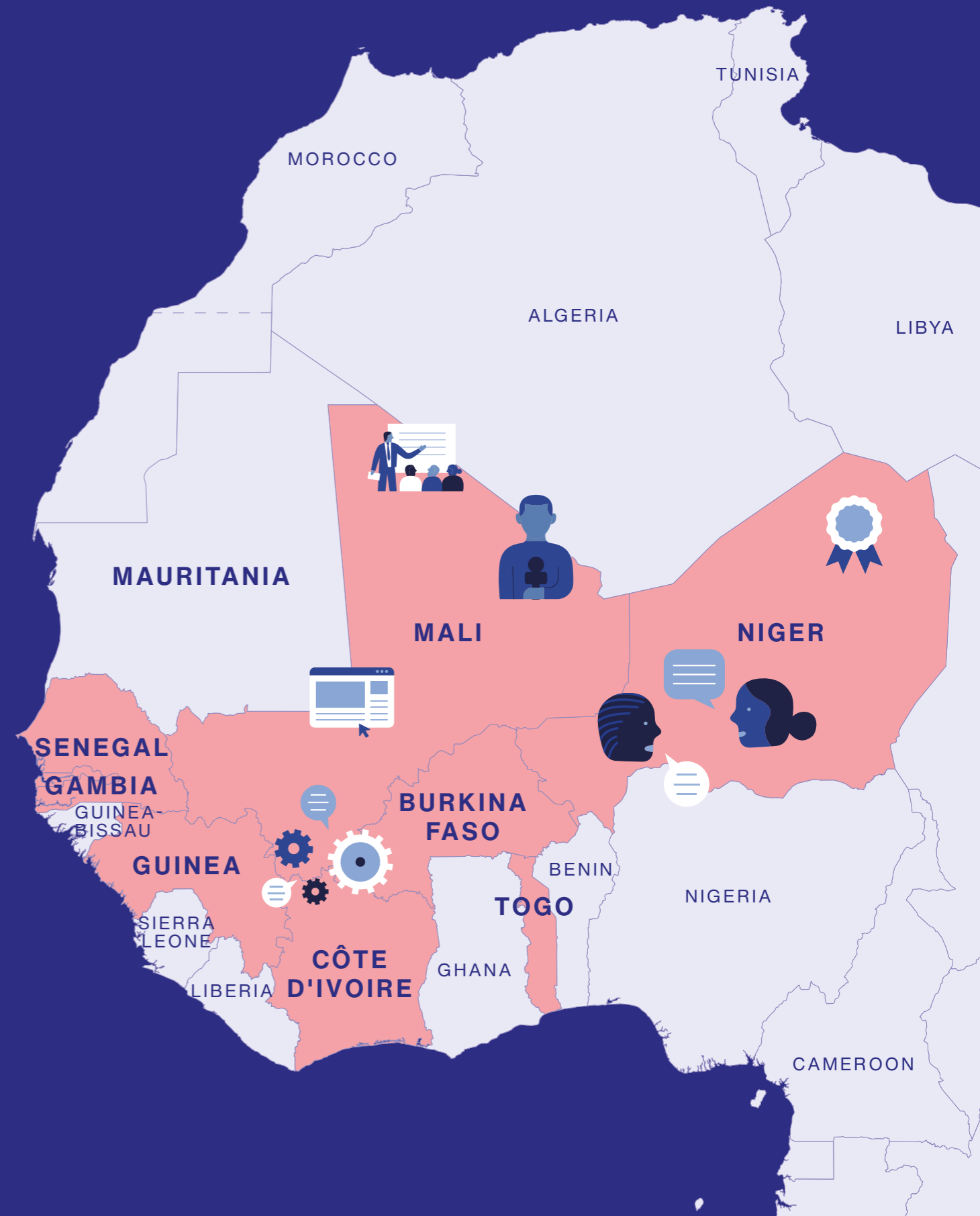
Interviewees agreed that the content of training courses is not always appropriate to Tunisia or sufficiently attuned to the complexity of situations.

Several Tunisian journalists recommended associating foreign peers specialising in migration to work on practical cases in a Tunisian context, like migration from Sub-Saharan Africa or security policies in Europe.

Another recommendation was to decentralise the training courses out of the capital and adapt them to the context of the new location. For example, address the specifics of migration in Zarzis, Sfax or Medenine, with the possibility of covering practical cases on the ground, rather than working in meeting rooms.

# West Africa

Training, reflection or awareness-raising workshops, competitions, debates and production support sessions organised in West Africa (details of initiatives and venues in Appendix 2).



## Regional overview

### Migration trends

National data on migration is generally speaking insufficient in West Africa and sometimes difficult to compare. IOM confirmed: “All reviews of migration emphasised major issues with shortfalls in the collection and production of data needed for a correct grasp of migration realities. The data available is patchy, making a full, detailed review impossible to conduct.”<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, one generally applicable observation was gleaned from the countries under review in this section: the vast majority of migrants in West Africa circulate within the sub-region. According to UN data, in 2020, two thirds of migrants from the region were living in another country in West Africa. This predominance of intraregional migration can be attributed to several factors, and especially the right to circulate without a visa between the member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).<sup>2</sup> Migration within the Community is primarily a matter of mobility in the labour force. Those emigrating further afield usually head for Europe, often according to a long tradition rooted in history. These phenomena have led to diasporas, sometimes in excess of a million people, and contribute to the development of countries of origin by way of money transfers which may account for over 10% of GDP, as in Senegal for example.<sup>3</sup>

Irregular migration remains significant in West Africa. Since 2011, the route from the central Mediterranean region to Europe has been used ever more frequently. In the mid-2010s, the sea route to the Canaries also started gaining in popularity: the number of migrants crossing from West Africa towards the Spanish Canary Islands increased greatly in 2020, with 16,760 arrivals between January and November, i.e. an uptick of 1,000% compared to the same period in 2019.<sup>4</sup> These crossings are particularly dangerous, since according to the Spanish NGO Caminando Fronteras (“Front-Line Defenders”) over 4,400 migrants (all nationalities taken together) either died or were lost at sea in 2021 during their attempt to reach Spain. This tally is far higher than that cited by IOM which counted 955 persons dead or lost.

Because of conflicts and violence in connection with political strife, intercommunity and interethnic tension and extremism, most countries in West Africa are affected by internal and cross-border forced displacement, leading to a growing number of persons seeking asylum, even if the extent varies greatly from one country to another.

Lastly, environmental changes in West Africa are having repercussions on livelihood and human mobility, whether because of coastal erosion or variations in rainfall, as in Senegal, or drought within the continent, as in Niger.

### Migration issues in the media landscape

As in Europe, irregular migration is, by far, the migration theme attracting the most coverage in West Africa. It is a recurrent feature on the news, with the occurrence of tragic events like shipwrecks, and other dramatic episodes on migration routes. An underlying trend gaining traction in recent years, of increasing numbers of women and unaccompanied minors in the irregular migration flows, has not yet been given the coverage it deserves.

One striking fact is that the media in countries with high emigration rates like Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso rarely mention their diaspora or anything relative to worker migration in general. And yet this is the predominant form of migration in all countries covered by the report. The few media outlets addressing this theme do so from a very institutional vantage point, generally drawing on public discourse emanating from the authorities.

This lack of diversity in the topics addressed is combined with a more general observation involving all media taken together: there is an utter dearth of investigation and in-depth reportage on migration. The reasons cited – without doubt not the only reasons – are lack of time and means. Rather than in-depth investigation and analysis, media outlets are often content to publish press releases almost word-for-word, as emitted by public authorities, international agencies, NGOs and associations, without stepping back to take a critical view.

While, in the best of cases, social media and Internet may provide extra value, with influential bloggers who sometimes cover migration for example, they are too often a mere amplifier of bad practices, without filtering or considering ethics, simply repeating and amplifying clichés and stereotypes.

### Capacity-building initiatives

While a number of capacity-building initiatives have taken place in this area, some countries have benefitted more than others.

COUNTRY	INITIATIVES LISTED
Côte d'Ivoire	21
Senegal	20
Guinea	15
Niger	15
Burkina Faso	13
The Gambia	13
Mali	11
Togo	8

Many needs still remain unmet, especially a thorough grasp of migration vocabulary and local, regional and transnational contexts, and the need to open up to the theme of international migration beyond the relative media hypertrophy with respect to irregular migration. Remarks by stakeholders, players and beneficiaries of training courses have generally been harsh, emphasising a deficit of detailed knowledge of migration issues. In short, specialist journalists are sorely lacking in all countries throughout the sub-region.



<sup>1</sup> IOM (2018), “Migration au Senegal : Profil national” (Migration in Senegal: Country profile), URL: [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp\\_senegal\\_2018\\_fr.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp_senegal_2018_fr.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>2</sup> The ECOWAS protocol on the free movement of persons and the right to reside and settle was signed in Dakar, on 29 May 1979, and applied as from 1984. This process was accelerated in 1994 with the introduction of a common market among ECOWAS member states, based on the free movement of persons, goods and services, and the right for employees and independent workers to settle.

<sup>3</sup> Data available on International Data | Migration Data Portal (Migrationdataportal.org) [https://www.migrationdataportal.org/international-data?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2020&cm49=686](https://www.migrationdataportal.org/international-data?i=stock_abs_&t=2020&cm49=686)

<sup>4</sup> “Western African Route: Migration to the Canary Islands” (2020), IOM, URL: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/powerpoint-presentation-reliefweb-int>

# Burkina Faso

## Key figures

### Surface area

**274,220**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**20.9 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**724,000**  
persons i.e. **3.5%**  
of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Mali**

**Ghana**

**Gabon**

**Sudan**

**Algeria**

**52.4%**  
are  
women

**21.7%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**1.6 M**  
persons i.e. **7.7%**  
of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>3</sup>

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Ghana**

**Mali**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances account for 2021<sup>1</sup>

**2.8% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2022; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

The Burkinabe media landscape is dynamic, with new press outlets, radio stations and TV channels arriving on the scene at a regular pace.

The democratisation process embarked upon in the 1990s has ensured great media diversity, which has diversified yet further in recent years with developments in news and communication technology. The public media, which previously enjoyed a monopoly, were fast challenged by a multitude of private media outlets, operating all over the country. According to the Burkinabe Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD),<sup>5</sup> Burkina Faso boasted a total of 393 press outlets in 2021: 160 radio stations of which 135 privately-owned, 145 online press outlets (all in the private sector), 56 printed press outlets of which 55 are privately-owned, 32 TV channels of which 28 are privately-owned. One reason for this situation is that the institutional and legal framework is conducive to the creation of press outlets in Burkina Faso. The country is actually ranked first in French-speaking Africa and fifth continent-wide in 2021 in terms of freedom of expression and press freedom, according to Reporters Without Borders. While these media outlets contribute to bringing the news to people and taking a lead in public life, they do have problems because of a lack of staff training, a cumbersome socio-political situation and a narrow advertising market: the growing number of press outlets dominated by private media has added a layer of complexity to the domestic market that is already highly competitive and typically suffering from insufficient resources (advertising, sales etc.).<sup>6</sup> In 2020, 22% of the population were Internet users.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> INSD and FAPP (2021), "Audience of national media in Burkina Faso", URL: [http://cns.bf/IMG/pdf/audience\\_des\\_medias\\_2021.pdf](http://cns.bf/IMG/pdf/audience_des_medias_2021.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> World Bank data website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

## Overview of migration

### A country of origin, transit and destination

Migration has always played an important role in the history of Burkina Faso. At the heart of West Africa, Burkina Faso is a hub of trading routes in West Africa and a thoroughfare for labour migration.

### Immigration

In 2020, 723,989 immigrants were registered in Burkina Faso, i.e. 3.5% of the total population. Among these immigrants, 52.4% were women and 21.7% were 19 or under. The vast majority of immigrants come from other countries in the same sub-region.

### Worker immigration

Immigrants accounted for 4% of the total labour force in Burkina Faso in 2017. They are working mainly in education (9% of workers in the industry), healthcare (6% of workers in the industry), farming (2% of workers in the industry) and construction (3% of workers in the industry).<sup>8</sup>

According to the report "Interactions between public policies, migration and development in Burkina Faso,"<sup>9</sup> immigrants coming from countries in the sub-region are attracted to Burkina Faso because of cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties between Burkina Faso and their country of origin. The 2017 OECD/ISSP<sup>10</sup> report specifies that immigrants help to compensate for the loss of human capital due to emigration. They do indeed bring much needed skills to the local employment market. A lot of them work in highly qualified professions. According to the participants in

<sup>8</sup> OECD (2017), Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development, Editions OECD, Paris. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/interrelations-between-public-policies-migration-and-development\\_9789264265615-en#page1](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/interrelations-between-public-policies-migration-and-development_9789264265615-en#page1)

<sup>9</sup> OECD/ISSP (2017), "Impact of migration on development in Burkina Faso", Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development in Burkina Faso, OECD publications, Paris. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264275003-8-fr>

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

the discussion groups, most immigrants blend into community units and enjoy support from members of their community.

### Student migration

Many immigrants enrol as students. In 2021, 3,106 international students were enrolled in Burkinabe higher education establishments.<sup>11</sup> The majority of them are from other countries in the sub-region. One participant in the discussion groups explained that “most of those who come to study are left to their own devices” and sometimes have trouble finding accommodation or resources to meet their primary needs.

### Refugees: a strong community of Malian refugees

Burkina Faso also hosts refugees having fled political instability and conflict in their home country. In 2022, UNHCR listed 25,239 refugees in Burkina Faso, mainly from Mali.<sup>12</sup> Fleeing the instability and lack of security in their country, many Malians have fled to camps in Goudoubo and Mentao, in the Sahel region. As explained by Wendso Jacqueline Zougrana Ouedraogo in her report<sup>13</sup>, they “remain dependent on humanitarian aid on many fronts including protection, education, health, water and hygiene, and protection from the gender-related violence.” Outside this region of Sahel, the cities of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou have also taken in Malian refugees.<sup>14</sup>

On 11 August 2021, Malian and Burkinabe authorities in charge of migration issues met in Ouagadougou, under the aegis of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), to analyse the implementation of the tripartite agreement dating from 9 January 2015 that provides a legal framework to support the organised, voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees living in Burkina Faso and their reintegration in Mali.<sup>15</sup> The agreement required the parties to ensure that repatriation was indeed voluntary, and to safeguard the security and dignity of returnees, while also guaranteeing the right to asylum and international protection for Malian refugees who chose not to return.<sup>16</sup> In 2015, UNHCR gave priority to freely consented repatriation and reintegration of around 42,000 Malian refugees.<sup>17</sup> This phenomenon has continued since 2016.

### Emigration

According to expert Konéré Djouma Hema, Burkina Faso is “historically recognised as a country providing a labour force for immediate neighbours in the sub-region including Côte d’Ivoire, Mali and Niger (...); migration flows were especially exacerbated during the colonial period with the hiring and sending of several thousands of Burkinabe to Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana. This historic context and the seeking of social well-being meant that these two countries are still the top choices of destination for Burkinabe migrants, even if they have now diversified.”<sup>18</sup>

Burkina Faso being historically a country of emigration, its diaspora has gained in importance in demographic, economic and political terms. Thus, during the Conference

to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in December 2018, the former Minister for African Integration and Burkinabe Expatriates, Paul Robert Tiendrebeogo, estimated that “nearly ten million Burkinabe live abroad, the majority being in West Africa. This is why my country has made the question of migration an important feature of its policies and development programmes.”<sup>19</sup>

### Transit

Burkina Faso is also a transit country. The sociologist and project manager at the Trade Union Confederation of Burkina (CSB), Rosine Coulibaly, estimated that “every year, some 2.5 million persons enter and leave Burkina Faso.”<sup>20</sup>

In its alternative report published in November 2019, SOS-Torture Network confirmed this statement with its analysis of the new migration routes starting in West Africa with Europe as the final destination. A number of migrants from Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, the Gambia and Senegal transit via Burkina Faso and Niger to enter Libya or Algeria with a view to reaching Europe.<sup>21</sup>

### Masculine emigration, and mostly feminine immigration

According to the “2020 Gender Report”, more women have immigrated than men since 1985. This can mostly be explained by the fact that Burkinabe emigrants are mainly men.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, according to the division of the population of the United Nations Statistics Department, out of the 724,000 immigrants

registered in Burkina Faso in mid-2020, 52.4% were women. Thus, a majority of immigrants are women.

### Internal migration

Internal migration does not fall within this report’s remit, nevertheless the fact that Burkina Faso is facing up to significant flows of forced displacement in connection with the security crisis needs to be mentioned for context. On 31 January 2021, nearly 1.5 million internally displaced persons were registered by the Burkinabe Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (CONASUR).<sup>23</sup>

### Return migration, a focus for attention from international organisations and government

It is difficult to provide accurate figures on return migration, but several official sources point to a trend. According to the Burkinabe Ministry of Social Action, Burkina Faso took in some 1,200 migrants returning from Europe and other countries in Africa in October 2016. Most of these benefitted from IOM assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes. In a single year, 2017, IOM in Burkina Faso assisted with the voluntary return of 1,013 Burkinabe migrants, of which 954 men and 59 women. They mainly came from Libya, Niger, Morocco and Europe. The top European countries involved were Switzerland, Greece, Germany and Italy.

<sup>11</sup> Data available on the UNESCO website: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

<sup>12</sup> Data available on the UNHCR website: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/bfa>

<sup>13</sup> Zougrana/Ouedraogo W. J. (2017), “Étude évaluative de l’assistance humanitaire des réfugiés maliens vivant à Mentao au Burkina Faso” (Assessment of humanitarian assistance for Malian refugees living in Mentao, Burkina Faso), 2ie, URL: [http://documentation.2ie-edu.org/cdi2ie/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=2580](http://documentation.2ie-edu.org/cdi2ie/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=2580) (in French only)

<sup>14</sup> UNHCR website: <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/details/84365> (in French only)

<sup>15</sup> Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs (11/08/2021), “Gestion des réfugiés maliens et Burkinabè : début de la 10e commission tripartite Burkina Faso - République du Mali - UNHCR à Ouagadougou” (Management of Malian and Burkinabe refugees: starting the 10th tripartite commission Burkina Faso - Republic of Mali - UNHCR in Ouagadougou), URL: [https://www.mae.gov.bf/detail?tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bcontroler%5D=News&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=233&cHash=0ee2f795f-fb3933196464875840c689e](https://www.mae.gov.bf/detail?tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroler%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=233&cHash=0ee2f795f-fb3933196464875840c689e) (in French only)

<sup>16</sup> Article on ReliefWeb.int, Absalon P. (2015), “Le Mali, le Burkina Faso et le HCR signent un accord sur le rapatriement des réfugiés maliens” (Mali, Burkina Faso and UNHCR sign an agreement on the repatriation of Malian refugees), URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/le-mali-le-burkina-faso-et-le-hcr-signent-un-accord-sur-le-rapatriement-des-r> (in French only)

<sup>17</sup> Zougrana/Ouedraogo W. J. (2017), “Étude évaluative de l’assistance humanitaire des réfugiés maliens vivant à Mentao au Burkina Faso” (Assessment of humanitarian assistance for Malian refugees living in Mentao, Burkina Faso), 2ie, URL: [http://documentation.2ie-edu.org/cdi2ie/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=2580](http://documentation.2ie-edu.org/cdi2ie/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=2580) (in French only)

<sup>18</sup> Speech at the 6th Union for African Population Studies (UAPS) conference on the theme “Population of Africa: Past, Present and Future” in December 2011

<sup>19</sup> Statement released by the Burkinabe Ministry of African Integration and Burkinabe Expatriates further to the Conference to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Marrakesh (10-11 December 2018). URL: <https://www.a.org/in/conf/migration/assets/pdf/GCM-Statements/burkinafaso.pdf> (in French only) The 10 million statistic mentioned by the former Minister included Burkinabe nationals born in other countries, in particular in Côte d’Ivoire which has had a large Burkinabe community since independence.

<sup>20</sup> “Migration and Social justice” seminar, in October 2018 in Ouagadougou: [https://alliance-progressiste.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018\\_Coulibaly\\_MIGRATION-AU-BURKINA-FASO.pdf](https://alliance-progressiste.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018_Coulibaly_MIGRATION-AU-BURKINA-FASO.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>21</sup> SOS-Torture Network (2019), “Burkina Faso : torture et les mauvais traitements des migrants aux frontières” (Burkina Faso: torture and poor treatment of migrants at the borders), URL: [https://www.omct.org/site-resources/legacy/alternative\\_report\\_cat68.pdf](https://www.omct.org/site-resources/legacy/alternative_report_cat68.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>22</sup> INSD (2021), “Femmes et hommes au Burkina Faso en 2020” (Men and Women in Burkina Faso in 2020), URL: [http://www.insd.bf/content/pub-periodiques/Livret\\_genre/Livret\\_Genre%202020.pdf](http://www.insd.bf/content/pub-periodiques/Livret_genre/Livret_Genre%202020.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>23</sup> Infographic by OCHA (31/11/2021), “Enregistrement des personnes déplacées internes du Burkina Faso” (Registering internally displaced persons in Burkina Faso), No. 10-2021, URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/enregistrement-des-personnes-d-plac-es-internes-du-burkina-faso-n-102021-31> (in French only)

### → An account from a returning migrant in the migrant discussion group

After several attempts to cross the Mediterranean, this man was repatriated to Burkina Faso from Libya by IOM. Aside from the cost of the return journey, he disclosed that he benefitted from support for the setup of a business to earn revenue. “We had a one-week training course on raising broiler chickens, during which IOM gave us 3,000 CFA francs /day (€4.60). At the end of the course, we were given 30,000 CFA francs (€46) to buy building materials.”

With support from the EU and IOM, the Burkinabe Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Burkinabe Expatriates started building a centre for migrant reinsertion in Ouagadougou, to house 80 migrants, in December 2020.<sup>24</sup>

Parallel to this, a national diaspora strategy is being drawn up. The Burkinabe diaspora has been estimated at around 10 million persons worldwide (the equivalent of 40% of the population of Burkina Faso), most of whom are based in Côte d’Ivoire.<sup>25</sup> Based on this observation, the government is working to repatriate skilled workers from its diaspora, if necessary with the physical return of individuals, backed by Rabat Process institutions.

### Irregular migration

According to IOM, around 3,000 Burkinabe migrants arrived in Spain, Italy and Greece between 2016 and 2020 via irregular migration

routes. Arrivals from Burkina Faso accounted for 0.3% of the total number of arrivals in these countries over this period.<sup>26</sup>

As for immigrants in an irregular situation in Burkina Faso, there are no official estimates.

### Public migration policies

In 2017, Burkina Faso adopted a National migration strategy (SNMig, 2016-2025). The document was drawn up by the Directorate General of the Economy and Planning (DGEP) as part of a process involving civilian stakeholders, IOM, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Red Cross.<sup>27</sup>

This National migration strategy aims to handle migration according to a consistent, well-coordinated process. It is geared around five leads:

- helping to reinforce complementary initiatives between city and rural areas, and between the various regions,
- protecting and safeguarding migrant rights,
- optimising the positive impact of international migration to reduce poverty,
- gaining further insights into all dimensions of migration,
- consolidating institutional foundations for coordinated management of migration.

Moreover, as an ECOWAS country, Burkina Faso endeavours to apply this organisation’s integration legislation. Several initiatives have been rolled out to foster harmonious relations between immigrants and locals. One of these initiatives is the National integration forum (FNI),<sup>28</sup> the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of which took place on 5 and 6 November 2021 in Ziniaré, in the Central-Plateau region. This forum was initiated in 2013

as a means to better promote and disseminate sub-regional and regional integration policies. The main aim of this forum is to raise awareness among communities living in Burkina Faso of the foundations of integration, their rights and duties, as well as highlight their contributions to the country’s development.

## Migration issues in the media and public discourse

### A minor presence in traditional media and more on social media

Migration themes are rarely covered by the Burkinabe media. This observation was made by the migrants, journalists and civilian stakeholders consulted. The coordinator of the organisation Tié founded in Bobo Dioulasso in 1996, with a view to helping street children, Lassina Konaté, confirmed: “In both media and public discourse, migration issues are very seldom addressed. It’s not something that comes up very often. The fact is that people are more focalised on insecurity nowadays. So attention is paid first to resolving this problem and managing internally displaced people.”

### Traditional media: radio, television and press

This observation is valid for radio and television, and to a lesser extent the press where more articles on awareness-raising initiatives and public debates on migration are written and available online.<sup>29</sup> For example, the *Fasozine.com* website zoomed in on the film opening the 27th edition of the Pan-African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO) on the theme of irregular migration.<sup>30</sup> In a long article, it described how Irène Tassembédo, Burkinabe director of the film *The Crossing*, addresses the issue of irregular immigration of young Africans while inviting them to dream about their future by imagining home-grown development projects.

Wilfried Bakouan, coordinator of the Network of journalists and communicators for integration and migration (ReJICIM), put forward an explanation: “Our media has defects. Themes are not covered much. Media outlets here are more attuned to scoops, news that attracts immediate attention. And migration issues don’t have a reputation for going viral.”

During interviews and discussion groups, other explanations were also underscored: the lack of means in the media to cover this complex theme and the security risk involved in covering these phenomena on the ground. Consequently, the production of footage is rare and apart from important events instituted by international institutions, the coverage of migration repeats the authorities’ official stance. One Burkinabe migrant deplored that the media – especially the press which produces more articles on migration – are very often content to simply relay awareness-raising messages on irregular migration targeting young people.

<sup>24</sup> Statement released by the Burkinabe Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and Burkinabe Expatriates (11/09/2021), “Construction du Centre d’accueil et de réinsertion pour migrants : La MD et la cheffe de mission de l’OIM en visite sur le site” (Building the Centre for Migrant Reinsertion: The Deputy Minister and the Head of the IOM Mission Visit the Site), URL: [https://www.mae.gov.bf/detail?tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx\\_news\\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=232&Hash=31e533621ee4e9f95091bf07b1931377](https://www.mae.gov.bf/detail?tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=232&Hash=31e533621ee4e9f95091bf07b1931377) (in French only)

<sup>25</sup> ICMPD, EU, Rabat process, (2021), “Document de travail : politiques et stratégies en matière de migrations et de développement” (Working document: policies and strategies relative to migration and development), URL: <https://rabat-process.org/fr/repertoire-de-documents/71-etudes-publications/305-document-de-travail-strategies-et-politiques-m-d-afrique/> (in French only)

<sup>26</sup> IOM (2020), “Mobilités au Burkina Faso : cartographie des mobilités sur le territoire burkinabè” (Mobility in Burkina Faso: mapping of mobility on Burkinabe territory), URL: [https://displacement.iom.int/sites/default/files/public/reports/Mobilites%20Burkina%20Faso%20Sept\\_2020\\_FINAL\\_v1.pdf](https://displacement.iom.int/sites/default/files/public/reports/Mobilites%20Burkina%20Faso%20Sept_2020_FINAL_v1.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>27</sup> IOM (2021), “Migration Governance Indicators – Burkina Faso – Profile 2021”

<sup>28</sup> Article on Africa-Press, Sidibé A. L. G. (2021), “4e édition du Forum national de l’intégration : les communautés vivant au Burkina veulent promouvoir la cohésion sociale” (4th edition of the National integration forum: communities living in Burkina want to promote social cohesion), URL: <https://www.africa-press.net/burkina-faso/photo/4e-edition-du-forum-national-de-lintegration-les-communautés-vivant-au-burkina-veulent-promouvoir-la-cohesion-sociale> (in French only)

<sup>29</sup> Article on lefaso.net, Diallo M. (26/02/2019), “OIM : #FasoNooma pour prévenir la migration irrégulière et promouvoir la réintégration des anciens migrants” (IOM: #FasoNooma to prevent irregular migration and promote the reintegration of returning migrants), URL: <https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article88253> (in French only)

<sup>30</sup> Article on Fasozine (22/10/2021), “Fespaco 2021 : Irène Tassembédo scanne l’immigration des jeunes avec ‘La Traversée’” (Fespaco 2021: Irène Tassembédo scans immigration of young people with *The Crossing*), URL: <http://fasozine.com/actualite/culture/9400-fespaco-2021-irene-tassembedo-scanne-l-immigration-des-jeunes-avec-la-traversee.html> (in French only)

### → Access to sources and the need for support

One persistent obstacle to producing content on migration issues is trouble locating information and resource persons. This point was brought up during the discussion group by journalists from various media outlets (radio, press, television and bloggers).

According to radio journalist Mathieu Somda, during events organised by international organisations to present their activities assisting migrants with voluntary return, certain restrictions prevent journalists from gaining access to information. He explained that during media coverage of one of these operations at the airport: “We were blinded with stats. We were only able to talk with two or three persons before it was over. [...] It is difficult to interview migrants coming back with the support of international organisations.” A glaring lack of clear, precise statistics on migration is another obstacle to producing content.

Discussion group participants also said they needed technical and financial support, for media outlets as much as journalists. According to a journalist from Bobo-Dioulasso: “We do very much want to cover migration issues. But there is a lack of support for those who produce output on migration.” Another journalist working for a daily in Bobo-Dioulasso explained that “There are many reasons [to cover migration issues]. There is the fact that migration is a current issue. Covering this question means discussing ongoing preoccupations. There is also the fact that any time a journalist covers this subject, they call on the authorities to put migration on the agenda. Furthermore, it can raise awareness for parents and the migrants themselves.” Migration is in fact part of daily life for Burkinabe families, most of whom have at least one migrant in their family.

In their publications, the media do let civilian stakeholders have a say. They analyse the news and call decision-makers out on the issue. It

is also possible to find accounts by migrants in the output of certain media outlets. This is the case for video in particular. For example, videos produced by the online TV channel *droitlibre.tv* let returning migrants tell their story and give advice to those planning to migrate in an irregular situation.<sup>31</sup> On other channels like *Plus TFO*, on YouTube, migrants having managed to integrate into their host communities recount their success stories.<sup>32</sup>

Certain radio stations also hand the microphone over to their listeners to debate migration issues, especially in interactive news programmes discussing returning migrants. This was the case for *Radio Oméga* in its programme “Ça nous concerne” on 12 February 2019. Listeners were able to speak their mind on the subject of cooperation agreements struck with other countries on the subject of migration.

The Network of journalists and communicators for integration and migration (ReJCIM) also contributes to the production of articles on migration, especially from a legal viewpoint. It helps to inform the population on legislation governing the free movement of people within ECOWAS.

### → The ReJCIM

Founded in 2012 further to an awareness-raising workshop organised by the Burkinabe Ministry in charge of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, the Network of journalists and communicators for integration (ReJCI) formulated its main aim as supporting the Burkina Faso government during the ECOWAS regional integration process. The network especially aimed to provide sharper insights into legislation governing the free movement of goods and people within ECOWAS, with a view to fostering its application in Burkina Faso and throughout the region. In 2020,

<sup>31</sup> Video, “Libye, les conseils d’un ancien migrant burkinabè” (Libya, tips from a former Burkinabe migrant), URL: <https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=fn7Zd1eg2oM> (in French only)

<sup>32</sup> Video, “Histoire à succès pour un immigrant du Burkina Faso” (Success story for an immigrant from Burkina Faso), URL: <https://youtu.be/leOrLxnZ0Bw> (in French only)

the network evolved into the Network of journalists and communicators for integration and migration (ReJCIM), with journalist Wilfried Bakouan at the helm, further to the training session on migration which took place from 15 to 17 January 2020 in Bobo-Dioulasso. During the session, participants made a point of emphasising the importance of migration issues in the process to integrate peoples, hence the modification in the network’s name.

### Social media

Migration themes feature more on social media because of Internet user reactions on Facebook and reactions to articles in the online press. The tone is fairly variable, but the report has not identified strongly negative stereotypes of migrants, as is the case in other countries across the region.

### A stronger focus on irregular migration

During the interviews and discussion groups, the lack of coverage of migration issues was brought up. For the majority of contributors, journalists only take an interest in the question in the following cases:

- events organised by the government, NGOs or international institutions such as the IOM’s 2021 West and Central Africa Migration Journalism Awards,<sup>33</sup> which occasion generated the production of well-documented reports that clearly cited sources,
- the occurrence of a tragedy linked to irregular migration.<sup>34</sup>

So the media focus on irregular migration is to be analysed like an echo of public discourse (emanating from Burkinabe authorities and organisations working in the sector), which are broadly focussed on raising awareness as to the dangers of this form of migration.

Speaking to migrants returning to their country of origin in September 2019, the former Burkinabe Minister for African Integration and Burkinabe Expatriates, Paul Robert Tiendrebeogo, declared: “Do not risk your lives for nothing. But, when you want to go, take the regular route; because it is not immigration which is prohibited, it is clandestine immigration which is dangerous.”

Several awareness-raising and information initiatives have also been started by various structures to push back on irregular migration. For example, a second edition of IOM’s awareness-raising campaign #FasoNooma<sup>35</sup> was launched on 25 February 2019 in Tenkodogo in the Centre-Est region, a region with high emigration potential. The aim of this campaign was to prevent irregular migration and promote the reintegration of former migrants by way of theatre productions, film screenings, discussion groups with accounts from former migrants, discussions with communities on risks inherent in irregular migration and potentialities to be exploited locally. This event was covered in the media and on social media. Similarly, the Burkinabe National Youth Council (CNJ) initiated a “campaign against irregular migration on the social network Facebook”<sup>36</sup> in 2017, with support from the NGO TANG. In January 2018, the NGO Help also initiated a training course for journalists in Ouagadougou, as part of its project to provide information and raise awareness among the population as to the realities of migration.<sup>37</sup> The long-term aim was for these journalists to raise awareness among others.

<sup>35</sup> Article on *lefaso.net*, “IOM: #FasoNooma pour prévenir la migration irrégulière et promouvoir la réintégration des anciens migrants” (IOM: #FasoNooma to prevent irregular migration and promote the reintegration of returning migrants), URL Diallo M. (26/02/2019): <http://centre-est.lefaso.net/spip.php?article41> (in French only)

<sup>36</sup> Article on *Faso Actu*, Latif, A. (29/08/2017), “Lutte contre l’immigration irrégulière : l’ONG TANG et le CNJ contre-attaquent” (Fighting irregular immigration: the NGO TANG and the CNJ counter attack), URL: <https://faso-actu.info/actualites/lutte-contre-immigration-irreguliere-ong-tang-et-le-cnj-contre-attaquant> (in French only)

<sup>37</sup> Article on *Burkina Demain* (30/01/2018), “Migration : l’ONG Help sensibilise !” (Migration: the NGO Help is raising awareness!), URL: <https://www.burkinademain.com/2018/01/30/migration-long-help-sensibilise/> (in French only)

<sup>33</sup> More information available on: L’OIM organise le premier prix du journalisme sur la migration en Afrique de l’Ouest et du Centre, édition 2021 – FAAPA FR. (in French only)

<sup>34</sup> As observed by journalist Abdoulaye Balboné in the state daily *Sidwaya*

For Burkinabe migrants having participated in the discussion group for this report, migration issues should feature more often in the media, but without fixating on individual failures. They especially say that they expect the media to produce reportage highlighting the country's potential.

A Burkinabe migrant explained that “Reading a newspaper that presents opportunities available in your own country may help to exploit these and prevent you from setting out on an adventure. The media must exhort politicians to take the right decisions, so that young people can stay at home. Our media must promote our riches and potential, rather than explain how to reach France or Italy.”

#### The diaspora's role in public discourse and media

Public and media discourse also focus on the sub-theme of diasporas. The expatriate vote was fiercely debated in 2020 for the Presidential elections. Burkinabe expatriates voted for the first time on 22 November 2020, to elect the President of Burkina Faso and members of parliament.

The sub-theme of the Burkinabe diaspora is also exceptional because it is occasionally covered in a more positive tone. Journalists sometimes get emigrants to recount their story and show the diaspora's contribution to local development



For example, media content has put the spotlight on an initiative by the Burkinabe diaspora in Italy who are participating actively in the development of Bèguédo, in the Centre-Est region, by investing in property, founding businesses, and building infrastructure for the community.<sup>38</sup>

Several Burkinabe diaspora success stories have also been reported in the media, especially in technology. It is the case for Tinga Jean Bonkougou, who studied in Morocco. Upon his return to Burkina Faso, he set up a mobile application called SAFLAN<sup>39</sup> to purchase communication credits and Internet plans. Likewise, the story of Jules Kader Kabore has been covered by the media. After training in software development, this young USA-based Burkinabe set up a money transfer platform called Sank.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Reportage on Télévision BF1, “Bèguédo : une diaspora bâtisseuse” (Bèguédo: a constructive diaspora), available on its Facebook page: <https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=466760297348470> and YouTube page <https://youtu.be/doYzniu8iLY> (in French only)

**Droit** Libre TV also has a video talking about including migrant contributions to the development of Bèguédo.

<sup>39</sup> Article on Les affaires BF (20/05/2022), “Technologie au Burkina : SAFLAN, le nouveau logiciel révolutionnaire dans le domaine des recharges téléphoniques” (Technology in Burkina: SAFLAN, new revolutionary software to recharge your telephone), URL: <https://lesaffairesbf.com/2022/05/20/technologie-au-burkina-saflan-le-nouveau-logiciel-revolutionnaire-dans-le-domaine-des-recharges-telephoniques/> (in French only)

<sup>40</sup> Article Burkina 24, Sagbe W. (07/09/2021), “Transfert d'argent : la plateforme Sank promet une révolution financière à la Thomas Sankara” (Money transfers: the platform “Sank” promises a financial revolution, in Thomas Sankara style), URL: <https://burkina24.com/2021/09/07/transfert-dargent-la-plateforme-sank-promet-une-revolution-financiere-a-la-thomas-sankara/> (in French only)

## Capacity building on the theme of migration

Burkina Faso has benefitted from a number of relatively significant, diversified capacity-building initiatives.

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of these initiatives.

Reviewing the activities listed, it transpires that institutions and NGOs are more inclined to organise short, theme-based workshops. Very few of them offer both theory and practice.

Most training initiatives were organised for journalists from classic media outlets like radio stations, TV channels and the press. According to the bloggers interviewed, awareness-raising initiatives and courses have seldom been organised for them. And yet, migration issues come up often on the web (blogs and social media) with publications especially reporting on tragedies in irregular migration.

In terms of effects, during the focus attended by journalists, Abdoulaye Balboné shared his experience of a Spring School training workshop on the media and migrants, organised by the African Media Initiative in Dakar, in March 2018. The two weeks of learning raised his awareness, and certainty that “African journalists must not continue to cover migration issues from the same angle as Western media,” focussing solely on tragedies during irregular migration (deaths at sea, migrants depicted as invaders etc.). For this award-winning journalist working for the state daily *Sidwaya* (2020 Reporting Fairly on Labour Migration award), “there are also migrants crossing via regular routes, who help to provide relief for families in Africa”.

Mathieu Somda, journalist for the state radio station, participated in a workshop organised by IOM in Ouagadougou in 2017 on the protection and reintegration of migrants in Burkina Faso. He asserted that going forward he took “a more human view of migrants.” He nevertheless admitted that this course “did not really add to his understanding of migration phenomena (types of migration, definitions, causes and consequences etc.)”.

A participant in the journalist discussion group who attended a training course in June 2019 organised by the Journalists' initiative network (RIJ) in partnership with the Deutsche Welle Akademie in Bèguédo, in the Centre-Est region, admitted that for them, a week of training and journalistic production is “too little”, in that “we only skimmed over the subject whereas we noticed several news-worthy matters on the ground (local development, remittances, the social impact of migration with a growing number of single-parent families, the disappearance or death of migrants on migration routes etc.) which deserve the attention of the general public.” Feedback from participants in the workshops with a news theme emphasised that while the training courses were useful, they also deplored that they were too short to fully learn about the various aspects of migration. These workshops rarely lead to the production of in-depth articles (reportage, interviews with experts/accounts, dossiers) on themes covered. This being mainly due to external factors, especially a lack of funding.

The discussion groups and interviews with managers of radio stations, television channels and press outlets also pointed to a lack of organiser follow-up in the medium- and long-term, after the courses, resulting in the journalists' interest for migration issues dwindling. According to one participant, "certain journalists could not see the point" of participating in workshops or training courses "but have to because they were sent by their boss." And when there is no follow-up, these journalists "take less interest in the question or are simply overwhelmed by their daily workload in the newsroom."

On the other hand, training courses followed by the production of content, with financial and educational support and awards, did trigger the production of better documented articles. This was the case especially with the training course organised in 2019 by the Network of journalist initiatives (RIJ) which led to some content being produced. The participants in this session not only acquired theoretical knowledge of migration issues, they also worked on the ground and were able to produce reportage, broadcast on the website [www.pax-sahel.com](http://www.pax-sahel.com).

Another shining example of an activity for journalists is the launch of the 2020 Reporting Fairly on Labour Migration awards. Journalists from several countries in Africa participated in this competition and eight of them won awards for the quality of their work. This type of initiative incites the production of articles on migration.

## Findings and recommendations

The theme of migration is rarely touched on in traditional media, and what coverage there is mainly focuses on irregular migration.

With the aim of stimulating media and journalist interest in migration issues, several types of activity may be organised, leveraging training courses and past success stories.

### Training for journalists

During the discussion group, journalists mentioned the need to have more frequent, comprehensive training courses with a view to creating a pool of specialist journalists. It would necessarily entail:

### Training courses combining theory and hands-on practice for journalists from national and community media outlets.

They should be followed up with production, giving top priority to places frequented by migrants. From a theoretical viewpoint, these training courses aim to:

- clarify key notions of migration (the vocabulary of migration), review the causes and consequences of migration phenomena as well as the impact of migration on development;
- create the national and international legal framework for migration (focussing on migrant rights and principles, and humanitarian standards in the management of migration);
- provide information about the role of national stakeholders and NGOs helping to manage migration in Burkina Faso;
- identify available resources on the subject of migration and methods of coverage: how to find information, which resource persons to apply to, how to cover sensitive news gleaned from migrants, and how to cover data (data-driven journalism).

### Training courses for national bloggers and influencers from several parts of the country on:

- non-violent communication,
- storytelling: giving the floor to migrants in audio and video capsules.

The Burkina bloggers organisation may help to pinpoint members interested in migration.

### Other actions to improve media coverage of migration

#### Support for existing journalist networks and creation of networks for Burkinabe journalists

with peers in the sub-region for the production of investigative cross-border reportage on themes like irregular migration (as part of a sub-regional training course on the West African migration policies). This network would include journalists from ECOWAS member states.

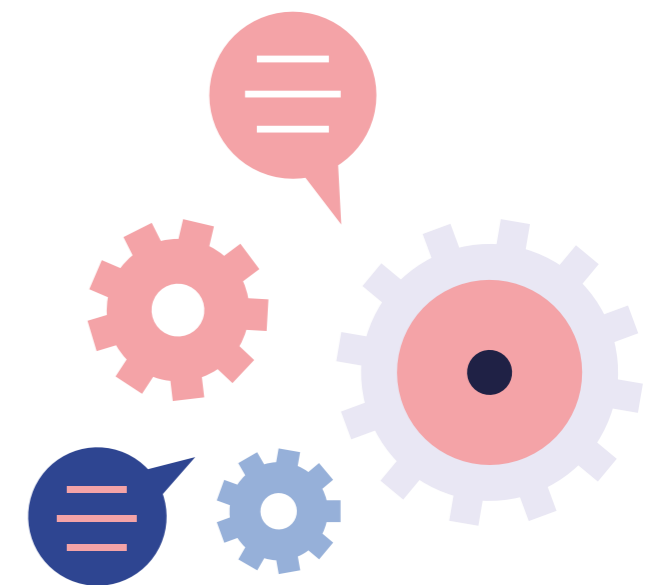
Participants in the discussion group mentioned the need to support existing networks like the Network of journalists and communicators for integration and migration (ReJCI) and the Network of journalist initiatives (RIJ) which have already set up a fund to support production on themes like migration, conflicts and Covid-19. There are operational difficulties due to a lack of resources.

### Setup of a fund to support production

In partnership with existing and future journalist networks, grants may be available to journalists for the production of content, with calls for candidates. The articles produced would be published by the media outlets of the journalists in question as well as on web platforms of journalist networks interested in the topic. These calls for candidates may be opened up to journalists, media outlets and bloggers nationwide. This would help to reinforce the dynamic production for top-rate topics and bring journalists and their networks together on migration.

### Migration awards for media outlets serving the community

With a view to stimulating interest at community radio stations nationwide in the production of content on migration, awards are an interesting option, since they help to stimulate interest for certain themes, publicise top-rate content and help journalists take stock of their expert knowledge.





# Côte d'Ivoire

## Key figures

### Surface area

**322,462**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**26,453,542**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**2.6 M**

persons i.e. **9.7%**  
of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Burkina Faso**

**Mali**

**Guinea**

**Ghana**

**44.6%**  
are  
women

**12.4%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**1.1 M**

persons i.e. **4%**  
of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**France**

**Italy**

**Morocco**

**Libya**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances account for 2021<sup>1</sup>

**0.5% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2022; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

1,000 professional journalists are officially registered in Côte d'Ivoire. The media landscape is dynamic, with mostly seasoned journalists. The press is diverse and free. The country was ranked 37<sup>th</sup> out of 180 in 2022 in the RSF rankings, up from 66<sup>th</sup> just one year previously in 2021.

In the press, the state daily *Fraternité Matin* rivals with several private outlets such as *Le Patriote* (close to the party in power), *Notre Voie* and *Le Nouveau Réveil* (close to the opposition) as well as independent dailies like *Soir Info*, *Inter* and *L'Intelligent d'Abidjan*. In all, there are some 50 outlets.

As for TV, there are a dozen free TV channels including the state-owned *RTI1*, *RTI2* and *RTI3* and the privately-owned *NCI*, *Life TV* and *A+ Ivoire*, as well as a package of television services.

As for radio, there are also around 200 radio stations of various types: public stations like *Radio Côte d'Ivoire*, *Fréquence 2* and *RTI Radio Bouaké*, or privately-owned like *Nostalgie*, *Radio Jam* and *Life Radio*. The remaining radio stations mostly serve local communities.

In the online press, there is a multitude of news websites and blogs. For the present, the exact number is unknown, but the main sites are *abidjan.net*, *L'infodrôme*, *Connexion ivoirienne*, *Le banco.net*, *presse Côte-d'Ivoire*, *lepoinstsur*, *Koaci.com* and *apanews*. In 2019, 36% of the population were Internet users.

## Overview of migration

### Migration trends

The three most significant types of migration in Côte d'Ivoire are worker migration, irregular migration and human trafficking. Family migration, student migration and asylum do also exist but are not the most common forms of migration.

### Worker migration

Subject to various structural adjustment programmes further to economic crises between the late 1980s and 1994, farming drives the economy nationwide. The sector now faces tension that threatens social harmony.<sup>41</sup> Politicians have failed to play a conciliatory role as tension rose in the 1990s. The entire Ivorian economy has thus been shaken up, leading to professional reconversion and Ivoirians leaving in search of a new Eldorado to ensure better economic and social prospects for their families.<sup>42</sup> This emigration phenomenon sharpened in the early 2000s, after the 1999 military coup and the 2002 politico-military crisis.

So Côte d'Ivoire has seen many nationals migrate elsewhere in the sub-region for economic reasons, heading mainly for Burkina Faso, Mali and North Africa. Outside the continent, Europe is a popular destination for Ivoirians who have that possibility.

Nevertheless, Côte d'Ivoire traditionally remains a host country for worker migration, for Burkinabe, Guinean, Malian, Nigerian, Nigerien and Beninese nationals. The country now boasts 2.6 million foreign nationals on

<sup>41</sup> Academic article in the *Revue de géographie tropicale et d'environnement* (GÉOTROPE), Adou Diané L., Mafou Kouassi C. (2014), "Problèmes de cohabitation entre populations rurales dans une zone d'économie de plantation en Côte d'Ivoire : cas des départements de Daloa et Vavoua" (Neighbourhood issues among rural populations in a plantation zone in Côte d'Ivoire: case of the Daloa and Vavoua departments), issue 1-2014, pp. 7-18 (in French only)

<sup>42</sup> Academic article in the magazine *Histoire*, Mafou Kouassi C., Oura Kouadio R. and Gohourou F. (2016), "Reconversion économique dans les villages de colonisation Mossi de Bouafé (Centre-Ouest ivoirien)" (Economic conversion in colonised villages in Mossi, Bouafé (Centre-Ouest region of Côte d'Ivoire)), 28: p. 30-43 (in French only)

its territory,<sup>43, 44</sup> i.e. 9.7% of total population. According to the OECD's Ivorian Centre for Economic and Social Research (CIRES),<sup>45</sup> "people born in Burkina Faso and living in Côte d'Ivoire accounted for around 60% of immigrants in the country in 2013, followed by immigrants from Mali with 16%."

According to teacher and independent consultant on migration issues Danho Adjon Guy Ghislain, who was interviewed, "regional mobility can be explained by the possibilities of insertion in both the formal and informal sectors, thanks to free movement within ECOWAS."

While in the past migrant workers abroad were well received, a rise of xenophobic sentiment has been observed since the 1990s.<sup>46</sup> Both media and public discourse are now littered with all sorts of prejudice.<sup>47</sup>

### Irregular migration

Migration beyond ECOWAS borders became more irregular in the early 2000s, even more so as from 2014. Côte d'Ivoire is one of the main countries of origin for migrants on the central Mediterranean route with nearly 25,000 arrivals in Italy by sea since 2016.<sup>48</sup>

In less than a decade, the country has even become a hub for migration, hence its new status as a country of transit. Côte d'Ivoire used to be a destination country, and has become a country of transit and origin for many individuals. The descendants of immigrants and new candidates for migration plan their journey with Côte d'Ivoire as their starting point, using it as a stepping-stone and tapping into its resources to nurture the project of reaching another country. Young people in the 18 to 35 age bracket account for 90% of irregular migration.<sup>49</sup>

### Return migration in Côte d'Ivoire<sup>50</sup>

The majority of migrants returning voluntarily to Côte d'Ivoire with IOM assistance are men. However, the proportion of women – 21% of all returns with EU Emergency Trust Fund funding – remains clearly much higher than in all other countries in the sub-region. In comparison, the proportion of women among all the returns assisted by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative is 4% in Burkina Faso, 5% in Mali and Guinea and 10% in Niger.

The average age of migrants interviewed by IOM for voluntary return operations is 27 (men and women taken together). Women migrants tend to be older than the men.

Between May 2017 and December 2020, 170 unaccompanied minors returning were accompanied by IOM, a majority of boys (86%) aged 15 to 17.

### Human trafficking

Côte d'Ivoire is at once a country of origin, transit and destination for the victims of human trafficking. Human trafficking primarily involves foreign women and young girls in Côte d'Ivoire (mainly Nigerians), as well as children from Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin, who are then exploited in agriculture and small-scale gold mining. Despite the Ivorian authorities

reinforcing its legal mechanism to push back on human trafficking, few are familiar with the issue, and it is thus rarely covered in the media.

Human trafficking involves the setup of organised networks which target victims, including migrants. A large number of victims have been recorded. In 2019, the following statistics were published by the Ivorian government:

- 1,382 victims of human trafficking on Ivorian territory, of which 46% are minors, boys and girls; 20% of victims (273 persons) are Ivorian and 80% (1,109 persons) are foreign,
- 419 charges were brought, 115 persons charged, 88 sentenced for human trafficking and 3 for trafficking migrants,
- In collaboration with IOM, 166 victims received care and 45 victims were repatriated to their country of origin.<sup>51</sup>

Ivorian victims of human trafficking have mostly been observed in the Gulf States and North Africa. Many Ivorian women emigrants, employed as domestic workers, fall victim to trafficking in Tunisia. President of NGO Côte d'Ivoire Prospérité (CIP), Patrick Klossaïl noted that "Between 2009 and 2020, 85% of Ivorian victims of human trafficking were listed in Tunisia by IOM." "In the first half of 2021 alone, our centre has taken in 789 Ivorian victims of human trafficking having returned to the country, mostly women, some children and also couples. They have chiefly come from Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Niger, the Gulf States and Italy."

### Public policies and measures

Despite recurring crises over the past several decades, Côte d'Ivoire remains a leading destination country for inhabitants of West Africa, given its economic potential. It has attracted many nationals of Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea and Ghana (see above) who have contributed to its economic performance since

the 1970s. This is the outcome of the migration policy set up after independence, in the early 1960s, but also immigrant investments.

It was only later in the 1990s and 2000s, that legislation governing worker migration was introduced. Parallel to these laws, various entities handle governance of migration, including the Ivorian Ministries of Planning and Development (in charge of steering national population and migration policy), Justice, Security, the Interior and Foreign Affairs.

According to the 1999 social security code, all workers in Côte d'Ivoire, whatever their nationality, may benefit from the services of the National Social Providence Fund (CNPS). Côte d'Ivoire has also signed agreements on the portability of retirement pensions with some countries including Burkina Faso and France and is currently envisaging the extension of retirement pension portability to all 16 member states of the Inter-African Conference on Social Welfare (CIPRES).<sup>52</sup>

As for human trafficking, the Ivorian authorities have made it a priority. Further to the law No. 2016-1111 dated 8 December 2016, governing the prevention of human trafficking, the National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP) was founded. The purpose of this law is to "prevent and repress human trafficking, protect and assist the victims and witnesses of human trafficking, promote and facilitate national and international cooperation in terms of pushing back on human trafficking".<sup>53</sup> Since April 2017, Côte d'Ivoire has ratified the last of the three protocols to supplement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, also known as the Palermo Convention.<sup>54</sup> A project entitled COCOTIP was also launched, with German funding. The project was scheduled to run from 1 December 2019 to end November 2022, on a budget of 2.4 billion CFA francs. According to IOM Chief of Mission Marina

<sup>43</sup> UN DESA, (2020), statistics from the Migration Data Portal website: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/fr/regional-data-overview/western-africa>

<sup>44</sup> GRIP (January 2021), "Gestion des migrations en Afrique de l'Ouest : focus sur la Côte d'Ivoire et le Niger" (Management of migration in West Africa: focus on Côte d'Ivoire and Niger), URL: <https://grip.org/migrations-afrique-ouest-niger-cote-ivoire/> (in French only)

<sup>45</sup> OECD/ Ivorian Centre for Economic and Social Research (2017), "Paysage de la migration en Côte d'Ivoire" (Migration landscape in Côte d'Ivoire), in Interactions between public policy, migration and development in Côte d'Ivoire, OECD publications, Paris. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264277090-6-fr>. (in French only)

<sup>46</sup> Academic article in the magazine Politique africaine, Gngangadjomon K., Ba Morou O., Akindès F. (2017), "L'autochtonie, la terre et les jeunes à Sassandra (ouest Côte d'Ivoire)" (Indigenosity, land and young people in Sassandra (west of Côte d'Ivoire)), 2017/4, No. 148, pp. 69-88 (in French only)

<sup>47</sup> Academic article in the Revue européenne des migrations internationales, Bredeloup S., "La Côte d'Ivoire ou l'étrange destin de l'étranger" (Côte d'Ivoire: a strange destiny for foreigners), vol. 19, No. 2 (2003), published online on 19 April 2007, as viewed on 23 November 2021 URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/remi/461>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/remi.461> (Abstract only in English)

<sup>48</sup> IOM (2020), "Migration de retour : lien entre irrégularité et renforcement de la vulnérabilité des migrants ivoiriens en Tunisie, au Maroc et en Algérie" (Return migration: connections between irregularity and reinforcement of vulnerability of Ivorian migrants in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria); URL: [file:///C:/Users/cneus/Downloads/migration%20de%20retour\\_IOM%20CIV.pdf](file:///C:/Users/cneus/Downloads/migration%20de%20retour_IOM%20CIV.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>49</sup> Touamé Zrampieu L. (2019), "Daloa, la plaque tournante de l'émigration clandestine en Côte d'Ivoire" (Daloa, the hub for clandestine emigration in Côte d'Ivoire), Master thesis, department of Geography, University Jean Lorougnon Guédé, 100 p. (in French only)

<sup>50</sup> IOM (2017), "Rapport de profilage des migrants ivoiriens" (Profiling report on returning Ivorian migrants), URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/c-te-d-ivoire/c-te-d-ivoire-report-de-profilage-des-migrants-ivoiriens-2017> (in French only)

<sup>51</sup> Article in FratMat (30/07/21), "Journée mondiale de la lutte contre la traite des personnes : Myss Belmonde Dogo se félicite des acquis de la Côte d'Ivoire" (World Day Against Trafficking in Persons: Myss Belmonde Dogo is pleased with progress in Côte d'Ivoire), URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/c-te-d-ivoire/c-te-d-ivoire-rapport-de-profilage-des-migrants-ivoiriens-2017> (in French only)

<sup>52</sup> IOM (2019), "Migration Governance Indicators (IGM): Côte d'Ivoire" (Migration Governance Indicators (IGM): Côte d'Ivoire), URL: [https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/atoms/files/1902\\_civ\\_teh.pdf](https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/atoms/files/1902_civ_teh.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>53</sup> Law No. 2016-1111 dated 8 December 2016 to prevent and repress human trafficking

<sup>54</sup> OFPRA Report, (2019), URL: [https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/1902\\_civ\\_teh.pdf](https://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/atoms/files/1902_civ_teh.pdf) (in French only)

Schramm, “the COCOTIP project aims to develop the operational and technical skills of the Ivorian authorities in order to pinpoint, investigate and refer cases of human trafficking, including migrant trafficking.”<sup>55</sup>

Regarding irregular migration, the Directorate-General for Ivorians abroad has been tasked with ensuring the reinsertion of returning Ivorians. Among the 6,757 Ivorian migrants assisted by the joint EU-IOM voluntary return initiative between May 2017 and May 2020, 39% returned from Niger, 31% from Libya, 14% from Morocco and 7% from Tunisia.<sup>56</sup> In places considered to be transit zones (where people hatch out their migration projects) and departure zones such as Abidjan, Daloa, Bouaké and Korhogo, Regional Committees to Combat Irregular Migration (CRLMI) have been set up.

In short, the Ivorian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and the Diaspora, the Interior and Security, Planning and Development and Justice and Human Rights steer government migration initiatives. The media tend to parrot political discourse emanating from these entities and sometimes lack independence.

## Migration issues in the media and public discourse

Migration has economic, cultural, social and political implications in Côte d’Ivoire. Nevertheless, its coverage in media discourse remains largely undocumented.

### Little media coverage of migration news

Generally speaking, the media seldom covers migration. Journalists do relay information on migration issues but fail to produce any detailed work on the subject. While being interviewed for this report, the President of the migrants’ assistance and reinsertion organisation, Dosso Mene observed that “the press relays information from public authorities, but many media outlets do not cover news on migration in general.”

The media have not included migration as a topic worthy of ongoing investigation in their editorial lines and there are no special issues or programmes on it.

The introduction of the annual Ebony award for best journalist in the prevention of irregular immigration has prompted more media output on the subject.

### Lack of knowledge of migration concepts in the media

A decent grasp of migration concepts and vocabulary is yet another major stumbling-block for the media. During her interview for this report, the Public Information Officer for IOM in Côte d’Ivoire Joëlle Furrer emphasised that “journalists confuse immigration and migration, and they continue to refer to clandestine immigration instead of irregular migration.” During his interview for this report, the Executive Director of Animation rurale de Korhogo, Roger Gaoussou Soro explained that “the terms used by journalists to refer to

<sup>55</sup> Government of Côte d’Ivoire (21/12/2019), “Human trafficking: a project launched to fight this scourge”, URL: [https://www.gouv.ci/\\_actualite-article.php?recordID=10747&d=3](https://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?recordID=10747&d=3)

<sup>56</sup> IOM (2020), “Côte d’Ivoire, Return Migration”

migration are frightening. The vocabulary used is very harsh, which in turn projects a negative image of migrants.”

Media specialists do not have in-depth training specifically on migration. The question is addressed sporadically, with the result that the journalists have trouble providing ongoing information on the theme. According to the Chief Editor of the Ivorian press agency: “To be honest, we don’t have the skills required to cover the topic of migration. In practical terms, migration is not a speciality in its own right in Ivorian media. I cannot say that journalists are well-equipped to discuss migration.”

### News coverage: a focus on sensational news and irregular migration

News coverage on migration mainly focusses on sensational aspects, i.e. tragedies and shipwrecks in connection with irregular migration. Ivorian writer Abraham Gbogbou<sup>57</sup> has berated the local and national press for its coverage of migration issues. He claims that the press “are content merely to report tragedies, showing macabre footage which yet fails to dissuade those wishing to leave. African journalists are too partisan and risk-averse when the need arises to criticise the public authorities.” These topics are addressed negatively, with generally othering terms for migrants.

Other aspects of migration, such as reinsertion projects for returning migrants and awareness-raising campaigns on irregular migration, are rarely covered in the media. Some investigations and video reports produced by the RTI on returning migrants deserve a mention, like the topic of the journalist Marthe Akissi: “Europe at all costs, Ivorians are the champions in West Africa for irregular migration.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Gbogbou A. (2019), “Lampedusa contre vents et marées” (Lampedusa at all costs), L’Harmattan (in French only)

<sup>58</sup> RTI special report: <https://rti.info/dossiers/9873> (in French only)

### The predominance of social media in news coverage

For most migrants who participated in the discussion groups, social media is the most pertinent communication channel to obtain information on migration, since the traditional media (press, radio and television) do not cover the question sufficiently. This is confirmed in the analysis of all the data collected for this report (the two discussion groups, the one-on-one interviews and the documentary search). On a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 as the weakest and 6 the strongest frequency of coverage of migration according to type of media, the following ranking was obtained: **1** bloggers, **2** public radio, **3** printed and online press, **4** community radio, **5** TV, **6** social media.

So the predominance of social media in the coverage of migration is evident, as mentioned above. According to an economic migrant who was denied asylum, and who attended the discussion group: “If you want to discuss migration, you have to go on social media.”

## Capacity building in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Côte d'Ivoire.

Several international organisations and NGOs have invested the sphere of migration. Mindful of generating plenty of publicity and boosting the impact of their work, they endeavour to involve the media, especially journalists, by offering training courses. IOM has organised over a dozen workshops for Ivorian journalists in Abidjan and Bouaké. The CAIDP (Commission for access to information of interest to the public and public documents) and the AVSI Foundation (an Italian NGO), the NGO LISAD, the OJPCI (Organisation of professional journalists in Côte d'Ivoire) and the Red Cross have also laid on workshops. In 2020, UNESCO's Abidjan office trained 50 journalists, including community radio presenters for the first time.

### Training courses that lack diversity

The sponsors and commissioners of training workshops are satisfied to note “a distinct improvement in the coverage of migration news in Côte d'Ivoire,”<sup>59</sup> yet beneficiaries observed that the courses were not sufficiently varied. While the training courses did focus on a number of sub-themes such as the risks of migration, journeys and routes, preventing the stigmatisation of irregular migrants and migrant insertion, it would still be useful to also work on sociocultural and socio-economic aspects, and links with the job market and working conditions.

### Progress and an embryonic network of journalists specialising in migration

The effects of these capacity-building initiatives are tangible. According to N'Dri Kouakou Hervé, representative of the NGO

LISAD: “There is progress regarding a decent grasp of correct migration terminology and its use.”

These training courses have also led to the setup of a network of journalists interested in migration issues. President of the organisation of professional journalists in Côte d'Ivoire Olivier Yro confirmed this during the interviews, although he did express some reservations: “We have formed a core with a view to remedying the lack of skills on migration topics. But despite these training courses, the result has yet to be felt on the ground.”

### Training courses with too much theory and not enough practice

Certain training courses have helped to address practical situations, for example conducting interviews with returning migrants. However, there are still too few hands-on training courses. According to the President of the national organisation of investigative journalists in Côte d'Ivoire, Seriba Koné: “There are training courses, but they lack relevance. After a few days' theoretical training, the journalists have trouble putting what they have learned into practice. We need more in-depth training courses with a mentoring system and funding for some subsequent output.”

### Importance of support after the training courses

To illustrate this point, after the RECOLTEHA project (a France Terre d'Asile project backed by the European Union), three topics were selected for investigation and funded, in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Tunisia, for journalists to carry out their investigations over six months, with mentors to assist them. In this setting, a French journalist specialising in migration issues stayed in permanent contact with the Ivorian journalists to follow up on their work. This initiative helped the journalists gain better insights into the theme of human trafficking.

## Findings and recommendations

Based on this report, several recommendations may be formulated.

### Training for journalists

- Vocational training would be very timely and would help to monitor the evolution of migration trends.
- With a view to efficiency, chief editors and other crucial newsroom staff need to attend workshops, as well as journalists.
- Requests have been made to envisage the organisation of other capacity-building workshops, with purely hands-on practice, for journalists to gain practice on the ground.
- Furthermore, given the complexity of the theme, the involvement of academic specialists in migration is recommended, since they not only possess many documents but above all experiences on the ground and in writing. Teamwork between journalists and experts would provide an opportunity to exchange viewpoints on migration issues and to jointly brainstorm how to cover this subject in the media.
- The Institute of communication techniques and sciences (ISTC) may serve as a venue for training courses of variable duration (one to two weeks). In-person courses are to be given priority, although online courses need not be excluded, widening the net to include regional and international networks (for example with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger).

### Other actions to improve media coverage of the topic of migration

- Lead the existing core/network of journalists.
- Funding immersion trips to France, Italy or Spain for journalists and experts in migration would be pertinent, and conducive to experience sharing. Study trips would also be useful for journalists to become acquainted with investigative methods used as part of large-scale investigations and reportage.
- The proximity of community radio stations with their audience must be leveraged as an asset, so they need to be involved more in the media coverage of migration.
- Strategies to produce and broadcast programmes on the various dimensions of migration must be developed, emphasising migration issues for young people.
- Certain training courses have targeted radio, TV and the press. However, it would be more useful to organise separate training courses, as mentioned by Joëlle Furrer, Public Information Officer at IOM in Côte d'Ivoire: “The three types of media have different limitations.”
- Since television and radio have a huge audience in all regions (the press is concentrated in Abidjan, since newspapers may take a couple of days to arrive in other regions of the country), they need to develop programmes on migration themes. To this end, funding for investigation with a specific mentoring system for both types of media would be very welcome.

<sup>59</sup> Interview conducted with Joëlle Furrer, Public Information Officer for IOM in Côte d'Ivoire

# Gambia

## Key figures

### Surface area

**11,295**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**2.4 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**216,000**  
persons i.e. **8.9%**  
of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

#### Senegal<sup>3</sup>

**126,150** Senegalese nationals live in the Gambia, i.e. **19.6%** of the total population Senegalese emigrants.

#### Guinea Conakry

#### Guinea-Bissau

#### Mali

#### Mauritania

**47%**  
are  
women

**25%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**139,200** persons,  
persons i.e. nearly  
**6%**  
of the population  
according to the UN<sup>1</sup>

→ Based on the UN estimation, which refers to data published by the national and international institutions, the Gambia has **one of the highest emigration rates in Africa in proportion to its population.**

**140,000** persons  
according to the  
Gambian economist  
Cherno O. Kebbeh<sup>4</sup>

→ The UN DESA has estimated that the Gambian diaspora comprises **66% men** and **34% women**. This imbalance is due to the high number of young men emigrating to Italy, Spain and Germany

**200,000** persons  
according to the  
Gambian government<sup>5</sup>

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

#### USA

#### Italy

#### Spain

#### Germany

#### United Kingdom

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Remittances from the diaspora in 2022<sup>1</sup>

**62.9% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020:12 - IOM, 2022:3 - Data from a 2018 study commissioned by the Directorate-General for Senegalese Abroad (DGSE); 4 - Data from the national development plan (NDP 2018-21). This estimate takes people in an irregular situation and the multi-generational diaspora into account; 5 - Kebbeh C.O.(2021), "Overview of the Gambian Diaspora Population", URL: [http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MSDG-BP-9-Overview-of-the-Gambian-Diaspora-Population-Oct-2020\\_2.pdf](http://gambiandiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MSDG-BP-9-Overview-of-the-Gambian-Diaspora-Population-Oct-2020_2.pdf); 6 - International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2022.

## Media landscape

During the second republic (1994-2016), the government rolled out a series of repressive measures targeting media outlets and personalities.

There was no guarantee of media freedom, and criticism of government action could lead to arrest, torture, firing, death and even forced disappearance. Since the new President Adama Barrow took power, in January 2017, public radio and television have lost their monopoly, and several privately-owned and community TV channels and radio stations have been founded. The Gambia now boasts 33 radio stations (of which one public), six TV channels (of which five are privately-owned), four dailies, and three newspapers published three times a week. In 2020, 37% of the population were Internet users.<sup>60</sup>



## Overview of migration

Because of its political stability and geographic situation, the Gambia is a country of origin, a destination country for migrants in the region, and a transit country for people migrating within and beyond West Africa.

The Gambia became a country of emigration in the late 1990s, having chiefly been a destination country up to that point. Within ECOWAS, the Gambia still has one of the highest proportions of immigrants compared to its total population: immigrants in the Gambia accounted for 8.9% of the population in 2020, as opposed to 14.9% in 2000.<sup>61</sup> This development can be explained mainly by the fact that the Gambian population has increased more than the number of immigrants since the 2000s. Over 20 years, the number of immigrants has increased by only 20,000 whereas the Gambian population has increased by 1 million.

The categories of migration below are the highest in terms of volume, political and media attention and/or in terms of human rights.

### Worker migration

The country mainly hosts immigrant workers from the sub-region, especially from Senegal, Guinea, Mali and Nigeria. Worker migration has increased since the adoption of the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of people, goods and services in 1979. Temporary migration for seasonal work is common in the Gambia, as across the whole of West Africa.

As for emigrant Gambian workers, the Gambia strives to oversee the work of international recruitment agencies in the country with a view to ensuring an ethical recruiting system.

<sup>60</sup> World Bank website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

<sup>61</sup> Migration Data Portal, the Gambia page

Recently, a strategy for labour migration was drawn up and approved to promote the ethical recruiting of Gambians in various industries throughout the world. The Gambia has especially signed a bilateral agreement with the State of Kuwait with a view to safeguarding Gambians from abuse and exploitation. The authorities are striving to develop other bilateral agreements with a view to protecting and improving the conditions of migrant workers.

### Irregular migration

From 2014 to 2018, over 35,000 persons from the Gambia arrived in Europe by an irregular route, according to IOM. They were chiefly male (90%) and young, aged 15 to 40 years. Certain areas of the country are especially affected by their departure. For example, the village of Saba, on the north bank of the Gambia river, has lost 15% of its population in just a few years, with 600 young men leaving the village for Europe in 2015.<sup>62</sup>

Given the size of the Gambian population, Gambian nationals account for a significant proportion of migrants crossing the Mediterranean. For example, in 2017, they were among the top five nationalities to land on the Italian coast and accounted for 6.6% of those migrants.<sup>63</sup> Most Gambian nationals going to Europe by irregular means use the central Mediterranean route: they take the bus to Agadez in Niger, then are transported across the desert to Libya.

The EU and its members states support several IOM communication projects aiming to dissuade people, especially young people, from embarking on irregular migration.<sup>64</sup> These regional projects include projects involving capacity building for the media.

Immigrants coming to the Gambia also arrive by irregular means. Many arrive without valid travel documents and/or do not manage to obtain regular residence permits in the country.

### Returns and readmission

Given the extent of irregular migration from the Gambia to Europe, forced returns and readmissions are a reality in the country. For example: “In Germany, around 2,600 Gambian nationals risk imminent expulsion, and 6,000 applications for asylum are under way. In all, 10,000 Gambians are likely to be sent back home from Germany, according to a report by Berlin think tank European Stability Initiative.”<sup>65</sup>

### Migration of minors

Many minors embark on irregular migration from the Gambia. According to The Migrant Project, “In January 2017, 39% of Gambians arriving in Italy were unaccompanied minors (both girls and boys).”<sup>66</sup> These many minors are often victims of human trafficking and abusive exploitation.

According to the officers in charge of immigration and borders<sup>67</sup> between the Gambia and Senegal, Gambian minors migrating between the two countries are mostly “Talibehs”, i.e. children sent to learn the Quran in Senegal. These vulnerable young people suffer much violence, to the point that many of them escape and disappear.

<sup>62</sup> Article in The Telegraph, by Sabbah and Freeman (10/11/2015), “Inside the west African village where every young man is trying to migrate to Europe”, URL: telegraph.co.uk

<sup>63</sup> IOM, “The Gambia: Migration Profile”, pp. 63-70

<sup>64</sup> Data available on the website: Communication for Development | IOM Gambia <https://gambia.iom.int/>

<sup>65</sup> Article in The New Humanitarian (2020), “Warnings over Gambian migrant returns as democratic transition wobbles”, URL: <https://bit.ly/3CWPNBM>

<sup>66</sup> The Migrant Project Website: <https://www.themigrantproject.org/the-gambia/migration-from-gambia/>

<sup>67</sup> This information was collected in October 2021 at a meeting attended by the national expert as a member of the group working on border management.

### Human trafficking

According to the annual reports on human trafficking by the US Department of State,<sup>68</sup> smugglers exploit Gambian women as forced labour to the Middle East, especially Lebanon and Kuwait. These women are very often recruited via social media platforms. In addition to this, certain recruitment agencies use fraudulent practices that facilitate forced labour. The authorities and NGOs have identified both male and female Gambian victims, who are recruited by agencies and exploited in Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates in industries such as domestic work, hospitality, construction and mining. In 2021, the number of victims of human trafficking formally identified abroad and protected by the authorities was very low: seven Gambian women exploited in the Middle East as domestic workers, whereas NGOs had detected 42. The authorities also detected potential victims of human trafficking among their nationals in Algeria, Cyprus, Finland and Italy. Gambian migrants, especially young men from poor backgrounds, who try to reach Europe by irregular means, known as the “backway”, are also vulnerable to human trafficking and abuse. In 2018, an international organisation repatriated 1,734 Gambians from Libya, many of whom were at risk of falling victim to human trafficking.<sup>69</sup>

### Student migration

Until the 1970s, the UK was the top destination country for Gambians wishing to study and work abroad. Nowadays, the UK is the second OECD destination country for Gambian students after the USA, followed by Canada, Türkiye and Australia. According to the Gambian Ministry of Higher Education, Morocco was the non-OECD country that took in the most Gambian students in the academic year 2016-2017 (111), followed by Sudan (100), India (43) and Tunisia (14).<sup>70</sup>

No statistics are available on foreign students in the Gambia.

### Asylum seekers and refugees

The Gambia hosts refugees coming mainly from Casamance (Senegal) as well as asylum seekers from ECOWAS member states and beyond (Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Congo, and a few from Sierra Leone and Liberia). In July 2021, there were 4,124 refugees and asylum seekers in the Gambia, the majority of them being established in rural zones. Children account for 60% of the total refugee population.<sup>71</sup>

Refugees and asylum seekers live in harmony with local communities. They enjoy the same possibilities for participation in socio-economic activities and access to social services as nationals, including Covid-19 vaccinations.<sup>72</sup>

In 2016, there were 10,070 Gambian refugees and 16,500 asylum seekers worldwide. Italy, the United Kingdom, the USA and Germany hosted the most Gambian refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> 2021 TIP Report by the US Department of State on the Gambia. This source has been used for the entire paragraph, except when other sources are mentioned.

<sup>69</sup> UNHCR (2018), “2018 Report on Trafficking in Persons. Gambia”, URL: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0a5c4.html>

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>72</sup> Official press release from the Republic of the Gambia, <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/excom/announce/615ea6f84/gambia-the.html?query=gambia>

<sup>73</sup> IOM (2017), “Gambia Country Profile”, URL: <https://gambia.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1166/files/documents/The%20Gambia%20Migration%20Profile.pdf>

## Diaspora

The Gambian authorities acknowledge the significance of the diaspora for national development. Based on a recently defined strategy, a department known as the Gambia Diaspora Directorate (GDD) is to be created to manage this diaspora and coordinate government work with a view to optimising their contributions.

### → Estimated size of the Gambian diaspora

With “diaspora” being defined very broadly and migration data often leaving out second and third generations, it can be difficult to estimate the size of diasporas.

A Gambian professor and former “Overarching Expert” in the United Nations Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM), Gibril Faal, produced a case study analysis on “Gambian Diaspora Constituencies and Estimates of Diaspora Population” in 2020. This case study analysis defined a new GCM-compliant statistical method applicable to all diasporas. This ground-breaking research is the first full review of the Gambian diaspora in the UK. It estimated that as of January 2020, 36,279 members of the diaspora born in the Gambia were living in the UK, of whom 28,720 had been legally established since the 1960s, and 1,426 migrants were in an irregular situation.<sup>74</sup>

Remittances from Gambians living abroad play an essential role in the nation’s economy. These transfers account for a significant share of GDP: in 2021, they accounted for 62.9% of GDP.<sup>75</sup> Compared to the rest of Africa, this rate is the fourth highest, after Somalia, Lesotho and South Sudan. Remittances greatly exceed direct foreign investments. A large share of these transfers come from migrants having entered the EU irregularly.

<sup>74</sup> Kebbeh C. O. (2021), “Overview of Gambian Diaspora Population”, URL: [http://gambiadiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MSDG-BP-9-Overview-of-the-Gambian-Diaspora-Population-Oct-2020\\_2.pdf](http://gambiadiaspora.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MSDG-BP-9-Overview-of-the-Gambian-Diaspora-Population-Oct-2020_2.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> Foreyaa, “Diaspora Remittance Increase to D40.65 Billion in 2021 or 62.9% of GDP” CBG’s First Deputy Governor Says”, 11/01/2022, URL: <https://foroyaa.net/diaspora-remittance-increase-to-d40-65-billion-in-2021-or-62-9-of-gdp-cbgs-first-deputy-governor-says/>

## Migration policy

The Gambia adopted its first ever national migration policy (2020-2030)<sup>76</sup> with a view to guiding the government and all stakeholders towards a holistic approach to migration issues. It has ratified all relevant international instruments laying down a legal framework to protect immigrants in the Gambia, and its national legislation ensures that all immigrants have access to healthcare and education, whatever their status. In application of this national migration policy, the Gambia is striving to push back on discrimination towards immigrants especially by arranging training for public service agents and awareness-raising campaigns for the general public. Lastly, the 2007 law governing labour protects the rights of migrant workers.

# Migration in the Gambian media and public discourse

### The media’s view of migration: sensationalism and focalisation on tragic events

Migration tends to be highly mediated in the Gambia when incidents occur, for example when boats are intercepted along the Atlantic coast, get tragically shipwrecked or when migrants go missing.

The media also cover training courses, awareness-raising initiatives and events on the theme of migration organised by international organisations and national institutions.

While immigrant workers are generally praised in the public debate for their contribution to development of their host community, they do not get media attention. Labour migration is mentioned in the news when problems occur, like in April 2021, in Sanyang, a village on the

<sup>76</sup> IOM (2021), “Gambia, Migration Governance Indicators”, pp. 11-12

coast which hosts a great number of Senegalese fishermen. A conflict erupted between the Senegalese and Gambian communities, leading to a Gambian being attacked with a knife.<sup>77</sup>

When migrant workers engage in irregular activities<sup>78</sup> or activities perceived as unhabitual or unacceptable, it leads to rhetoric and negative stereotypes of migrants being conjured up in the media.

### Media attention focussing on irregular migration

The interviews conducted for this report all showed that media coverage of migration in the Gambia focuses on irregular migration. All media outlets nationwide focus on this subject and irregular migration is mentioned on one or several media outlets at least once a month. In most cases, messages are formulated for the purpose of discouraging young people from leaving, and well-known people are invited to broadcast these messages. This strategy is widely supported by the State authorities.

“Migration is generally frowned upon as an option since the media chiefly publish news of migrants dying.” *Migrant from Guinea-Bissau*

<sup>77</sup> Article on Mongabay, Hunt L. (04/2021), “A Fatal Stabbing Sends a Gambian Fishing Village into Turmoil over Fishmeal”, URL: <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/a-fatal-stabbing-sends-a-gambian-fishing-village-into-turmoil-over-fishmeal/>

<sup>78</sup> Article in The Point (2021), “On Sanyang Unrest!”, URL: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/editorial/on-sanyang-unrest>

### → The “backway boys”

Irregular migration dominates the migration debate in the country. When you ask people about migration, they often mention “backway” migrants. In the Gambia, this term refers to irregular migration routes, whether by land and sea (towards Libya, Morocco or Algeria, then across the Mediterranean), or directly by boat across the Atlantic towards countries like Italy, Spain and Malta.

This is the most mediated form of migration, the form the public are most familiar with. Some members of the public have a positive perception of the “return on investment”: migrants can meet the needs of their family and contribute significantly to developing society once they have reached Europe. However, for most, including the authorities, it is considered to be risky and dangerous, with negative consequences not only for the migrants themselves, but for their family and loved ones, and society as a whole.

Whereas the public acknowledges that young people embark on this type of migration because there is not enough opportunity to blossom and thrive decently at home, the media mainly depicts the consequences of travelling without discussing why young people decide to leave.

The tone used in the media and public discourse has firmed up, including among politicians, trying to dissuade young people from venturing on irregular migration routes. In his speech on irregular migration in late 2021, the vice-President called on local authorities, school pupils and community leaders to discourage young people from leaving.<sup>79</sup> IOM and other civil society organisations have also started organising media events (radio talk shows, social media campaigns, TV programmes, newspaper articles and accounts) to raise awareness of the risk and dangers of irregular migration.

<sup>79</sup> Video content on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Kerrfatou/videos/541442790469173/>

The question of returns and readmissions has recently attracted a great deal of public attention and has been widely reported by the media as a hot political subject for the country. Opinion is sharply divided as to how to handle this question, as pointed out in a report by the *Standard Newspaper*.<sup>80</sup> The EU is pressuring the Gambian authorities to accept returning Gambians whose applications for asylum have been rejected in an EU member state.<sup>81</sup> Further to a declaration by the Gambian authorities asserting that they are not prepared to take back those whose right to asylum has been refused, the EU imposed sanctions, especially visa restrictions, on Gambians wishing to visit an EU member state.

### Stereotypes of irregular migration and repatriated migrants

There are widespread stereotypes of irregular migrants and returned persons projected in society, with an implication of “failure.” During interviews, most interviewees stated that when the media address the question of irregular migration or return, people who have been expelled from Europe and the USA are often described as “criminals”. Journalists generally have little or no knowledge of migration. Often, they do not know the correct terminology and, in most cases, use it wrongly. The concept of irregular migration is also badly interpreted, in that it is sometimes used for nationals of an ECOWAS member state, despite not applying to them in the least.<sup>82</sup>

A repatriated Gambian explained that “with the many negative stereotypes associated with returning irregular migrants, the media should not focus on irregular migration alone. They should also report on other types of migration, like economic migrants.”

### Varying practices according to the type of media

#### Press

Given low literacy levels in English in the Gambia, newspapers are read mainly by the élite who can read and write. Printed newspapers are only available in cities and suburbs.

Migration issues are reported in articles and accounts in printed newspapers and on web platforms. The topic of migration is mainly covered by journalists as “hot news” when tragic events involving irregular migration occur, or when migrants return. They prefer to relate simple, in-brief items rather than going out on the ground to obtain accounts and publish full articles, which might also refer to other types of migration.

Events organised by international organisations working on migration, such as IOM, are sometimes covered by the press.

#### Radio, including community radio

Radio is the one of the most popular types of media in the country. It is commonly used to broadcast information on migration and awareness-raising campaigns. Irregular migration and return migration are the predominant types of migration to feature in this type of media, primarily for the purpose of awareness-raising. Unlike the press, radio has the potential to reach a large audience and provides plenty of opportunity for in-depth debates as well as the “instant” coverage of the theme of migration, given its diverse scheduling. Since most radio stations do not have correspondents in all the regions they cover, some pertinent information on migration and related themes (economy, climate and agriculture) is often limited to some regions and local communities. Despite these limits, radio remains more accessible than television.

<sup>80</sup> Article on Standard.gm, “Deportation Fear Sends Gambians to Sleep in Germany Streets”, URL: [https://standard.gm/gambia-news/deportation-fear-sends-gambians-to-sleep-in-germany-streets/?fb\\_comment\\_id=2037121816342652\\_2038689792852521](https://standard.gm/gambia-news/deportation-fear-sends-gambians-to-sleep-in-germany-streets/?fb_comment_id=2037121816342652_2038689792852521)

<sup>81</sup> Article on Gambia.com, “EU ambassador breaks silence on the return and readmission of Gambians”

<sup>82</sup> 1979, the “Protocol A/P1/5/79” on the Free Movement of Persons and the Right of Residence and Establishment sets forth Community citizens’ right to enter, stay and settle on the territory of member states (article 2, paragraph 1).

### Television

Television is sometimes used to broadcast information and even entire programmes on the theme of migration. Even if it is not the most popular media platform to address this subject, organisations with significant funding, especially international organisations, may sometimes purchase an hour to discuss migration. The emphasis is on irregular migration, in order to raise awareness among members of the general public and present services and projects that might be viable “alternatives”.

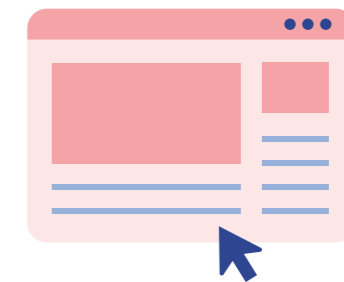
### Social media

Social media also plays an essential role in spreading information on migration. Most people, including migrants, have a smartphone and use social media to reach out to and communicate with their close family, friends and community. According to the answers given during discussion groups, migrants mainly use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp to obtain information on their country of origin and their host country.

Similarly, all these platforms and networks have helped the media to reach out to a broader audience and foster interaction. They are also commonly used to broadcast information on irregular migration. Organisations also invest a lot of time and money on reinforcing their credibility and footing by sharing relevant information on their migration initiatives.

### Bloggers and influencers

Bloggers and influencers are gaining in popularity in the Gambia. Few people used to read blogs, but the number of personal blogs written by journalists to share their articles and publications are on the increase. While blogs can be used to share a constant stream of articles,<sup>83</sup> they do not have the same reach as social media, radio stations and TV channels. However, it is important to note that most of these blogs are hosted outside the country. Most of those hosted in the country only rarely touch on migration issues.



<sup>83</sup> An example of a blog: the GlobalDev Blog: <https://globaldev.blog/blog/intentions-gambian-youth-migrate-europe-effects-covid-19>



## Capacity building in the media

Much has been accomplished to improve the reporting of migration issues, as well as to pinpoint needs to build media capacity for the coverage of these topics.

→ **Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in the Gambia.**

### Review of the various capacity-building initiatives accomplished and their effects

There have been improvements in the past few years, thanks chiefly to capacity-building initiatives laid on by IOM and other stakeholders. For example, the course catering to journalists and media players on reporting on migration, organised by IOM, helped them acquire the basics needed to report on the topic of migration using the right terminology. Before the training course, the term “illegal migration” was used whereas “irregular migration” has replaced it going forward.

IOM has also steered a programme dispensing grants to journalists, with experts from IOM and seasoned journalists sharing technical tips with these journalists for the purposes of drafting reports on migration. Eight journalists have earned a diploma thanks to this scheme.

Nevertheless, few structural changes have been observed in how migration is covered, as in the media coverage of a recent shipwreck in the Mediterranean involving Gambian nationals.<sup>84</sup> Certain crucial questions, like shipwrecks, are mainly covered from the angle of dramatic fallout without the slightest interest in the underlying causes that prompt migrants

to travel on these boats. The meagre resources available to journalists cannot stretch to providing more extensive coverage of events.

Most journalists interviewed for this report said that they often have trouble going out on the ground, especially in rural zones, to cover what is happening there, due to lack of resources (budget, mobility and even limited staffing). Similarly, the necessary equipment (cameras and other recording devices, laptops etc.) to carry out reporting work is rarely available due to lack of financial resources.

There is also room for improvement in targeting beneficiaries of capacity-building initiatives in this sphere. It is especially important to target editorial staff. In addition to this, there are few journalists trained to report on migration compared to the number of journalists in the country and many journalists having received training do not cover the topic of migration in their daily work. Several journalists taking part in the discussion group felt that the training courses are not always attended by the most appropriate journalists. According to Yusef Taylor: “The need is to train those who are interested in migration rather than having journalists who attend the course then write only one article afterwards. This type of journalist should not be in the running for subsequent training courses. Greater consistency and a follow-up scheme are recommended, to ensure that interested journalists are provided with coaching and guidance to cover migration.”

## Findings and recommendations

A great number of shortfalls were identified in media player capacity to report on migration questions, based on the discussion groups, documentary review and interviews. The following recommendations were thus drawn up.

### Training for journalists

- Support the Gambia Press Union (GPU), the Media Academy for Journalism and Communication (MaJAC) and University of The Gambia’s School of Journalism & Digital Media to draw up a standardised course of study on the media coverage of migration, to be integrated into training courses leading to diplomas and vocational training.
- Courses of study for instructors and trainers and grants to produce reports on migration were also suggested as a way to provide opportunities for professional specialisation for interested journalists.
- More technical courses need to be put forward for training on migration, especially regarding data collection and analysis (datajournalism).
- According to the migrant interviewees, more needs to be done to build capacity for the media to cover other types of migration than irregular migration and returnees for more extensive, more inclusive and non-discriminatory coverage.
- Journalist interviewees also expressed the need for their peers to benefit from more in-depth vocational training on migration. Certain criteria have been recommended for these training courses.
- Duration: three days to one week according to the level of the training course.
- Venue: organise local training courses as well as national and regional courses. This would make it possible for more journalists to benefit from the training course, including those working in remote and rural zones.

- Format: in-person training is more effective given the random quality of Internet.
- Frequency: journalists need regular training (for example once a quarter or at least twice a year) both in person and/or remote.
- Beneficiaries: journalists who already cover migration issues and/or show genuine interest for these questions.

### Other types of capacity-building initiatives

- Provide journalists with adequate resources to go out on the ground, especially to remote areas that are difficult to reach.
- Provide journalists with the necessary equipment to produce ethical, accurate, fact-based reports.
- Support the Gambia Press Union’s initiative of organising an annual journalism award by sponsoring the Migration Journalist of the Year Award, to encourage the writing and publishing of effective, ethical, fact-based reports on migration issues (this may involve a grant for the award-winner to study or purchase recording equipment).

<sup>84</sup> Article in The Point, “Gambian Sole Survivor Says Some 146 Migrants Feared Dead After Shipwreck”, URL: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/gambian-sole-survivor-says-some-146-migrants-feared-dead-after-shipwreck>

# Guinea

## Key figures

### Surface area

**245,857**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**13.13 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**121,400**  
persons i.e. **0.9%**  
of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Mali**

**Sierra Leone**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**550,800**  
persons i.e. **4.2%**  
of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Senegal**

**Gambia**

**Mali**

**Sierra Leone**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**1% of GDP**

**41.2%**  
are  
women

**30.5%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2022; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

The Guinean media landscape is diverse. Since the 1990s, the press has flourished: out of 65 weekly publications reviewed, 10 are published regularly, from satirical newspapers like *Le Lynx*, to general-interest newspapers like *L'Indépendant*.

The TV and radio scene comprises at least 60 radio stations and a dozen or so TV channels. Around 100 online news websites have been founded in the past 25 years. And yet, the production of critical, independent news reports remains difficult, especially when government members or the security forces are challenged. <sup>85</sup> In 2020, 26% of the population were Internet users. <sup>86</sup>

## Overview of migration

### Migration trends

With a young, mainly rural population, Guinea is one of the least developed countries worldwide, ranking 178<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index in 2019, and a poverty rate standing at 43.7% (INS Guinea). <sup>87</sup>

### A country of origin

Many emigrate from Guinea, mainly heading for neighbouring countries.

Out of the 550,800 Guineans living abroad, <sup>88</sup> three quarters reside in ECOWAS member states. Given the lack of recent data from the Department of Guinean Expatriates, the importance of this emigration (at least 4% of the population) needs to be measured by looking at the importance of the diaspora in the country's economy. Many Guinean families live off money transfers from family members living abroad. While in 2021, the World Bank cited a modest rate of personal remittances (1% of GDP), this figure seems to be greatly underestimated, bearing in mind that 80% of money transfers are sent by informal means. <sup>89</sup>

Most emigrants are young and male. According to the 2014 census, 78% of Guineans having emigrated abroad from 2007 to 2014 were men. However, increasing numbers of women are now starting to migrate too. Emigrants are chiefly young, reflecting the demographic structure of the region. People in the 15-35 age bracket account for 46% of migrant workers in ECOWAS member states, all nationalities taken together. <sup>90</sup>

While it is difficult to assess the extent of irregular emigration, it seems significant and

<sup>87</sup> Guinean Institute of Statistics website: <https://www.stat-guinee.org> (in French only)

<sup>88</sup> UN DESA 2020 figures that do not factor in the great number of Guineans in an irregular situation

<sup>89</sup> IOM (2020), "Guinea: Migration Profile", URL: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp-guinee-202-fr.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>90</sup> African Union (30/09/2020), second edition of report "Statistics on labour migration in Africa", URL: <https://au.int/in/documents/20200930/second-edition-labour-migration-statistics-report-africa>

<sup>85</sup> Data from this overview available on the website: <https://www.migration-dataportal.org/>

<sup>86</sup> IOM interactive report on the website: Interactive World Migration Report 2022 (iom.int)

is on the increase. In 2018, 17,290 Guinean migrants in an irregular situation had been identified in the European Union; a huge increase over 2014 (3,115).<sup>91</sup>

#### A destination and transit country

Guinea is also a destination and transit country, especially for people from Mali, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Liberia who mainly settle in Conakry or near the border. Migration is mainly regional, involving people of both genders: in 2014, 89% of people registered as having been born abroad were from an ECOWAS member state and 53% were women.<sup>92</sup> While most people immigrate for work, many also immigrate to study. There is little data on this subject but Ivorians, Beninese, Malians, Chadians and Nigeriens study medicine or engineering, and generally return to their country of origin after graduating.<sup>93</sup>

In the past decades, Guinea has also been a country of asylum, hosting refugees further to civilian unrest in Sierra Leone (1991 to 2002) and Liberia (1989 to 2003). Over 670,000 refugees and assimilated were living in Guinea in 1995.<sup>94</sup> The number has dropped significantly since then, reaching 5,700 refugees in Guinea in 2022.<sup>95</sup> They mainly came from Côte d'Ivoire during the crises in 2002 and 2010-11.

#### Human trafficking

In Guinea, human trafficking is above all an internal phenomenon, supplying labour to the farming and mining sectors.

From an international viewpoint, Guinea is also the country of origin for women and children having fallen victim to human trafficking. Children are sent from the border regions to Quranic schools in Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, where they are often exploited and forced to beg. Guinean women are forced to perform domestic work and/or sexual services in neighbouring countries in West Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the USA.

Guinea is also a transit zone and, to a lesser extent, a destination country for forced child labour in West Africa (sent to work in gold mines), as well as for victims from Nigeria transiting through the country to reach Europe.<sup>96</sup>

#### Public policies

As evidenced by IOM's migration profile (2020),<sup>97</sup> "in a context of swift change and diversification in migration, Guinea has invested a lot in the past few years to handle migration and manage opportunities (...). These efforts have led to the creation of institutions and legislation in various spheres of migration, without any real interministerial coordination."

On 1 September 2021 (four days before the change of regime), the President of the Republic promulgated the National migration policy. The primary aims of this policy are to prevent human trafficking, manage forced migration and unaccompanied minors, and promote regular worker migration to boost the socio-economic development of Guinea.

<sup>91</sup> IOM (2020), "Guinea: Migration Profile", URL: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp-guinee-202-fr.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>92</sup> IOM (2020), "Guinea: Migration Profile", URL: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp-guinee-202-fr.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>95</sup> UNHCR (2022), data available on: [https://www.migrationdataportal.org/fr/international-data?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2020&cm49=324](https://www.migrationdataportal.org/fr/international-data?i=stock_abs_&t=2020&cm49=324)

<sup>96</sup> IOM (2020), "Guinea: Migration Profile", URL: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp-guinee-202-fr.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*

The transition government's recent decisions include a brainstorming session on increasing the price of work permits for immigrants in Guinea held on 9 December 2021.<sup>98</sup> As for return migration, the State set up a transit and orientation centre in Conakry, in September 2021.

#### → An appeal to the Guinean diaspora

The TOKTEN Guinea project (acronym for "Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals") puts Guinean executives with technical qualifications, living in the country or coming from the diaspora, in contact with the Guinean public administration structures, in order for the country to leverage their expertise.<sup>99</sup> Guinean expatriates can thus return to their country for a short assignment or definitively. In Guinea, the TOKTEN project is overseen by the President of the Republic and funded by UNDP.

Similarly, an initiative of interim president Mamadi Doumbouya, *Servir 224*, is a recent platform for collecting profiles of Guinean people wishing to work for the civil service. It is an international database of the Guinean skill set.<sup>100</sup>

## Migration issues in the Guinean media and public discourse

Generally speaking, media coverage of migration in Guinea<sup>101</sup> falls short in many ways: wrong use of terminology, lack of professionalism, especially in analysis, absence of sources etc. In this highly controversial media landscape, much needs to be done to achieve the fair, equitable, inclusive and especially professional coverage of migration issues in Guinea.

This sombre situation was confirmed by the President of the High Authority for Communication's Commission of ethics, code of ethics and social mores: "Newsrooms don't have an editorial line or a code of ethics on the subject of migration coverage. The consequence is a lack of media themes on the question and a lack of specialist journalists."

According to Dr Thierno Souaibou Barry, head of the Department of Journalism at the Higher Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC) in Kountia: "Confusion still prevails in the media as to the choice of terms, mixing immigration and emigration for example. Hence the need to work on clarifying terms." A video journalist at RTG, Mounir Barry, confirmed: "There is no grasp of correct terminology for migration or related concepts."

During the discussion group in Conakry for journalists having benefitted from capacity-building initiatives on the theme of migration,

<sup>98</sup> Article on Guinée news (10/12/2021), "Mamadi Doumbouya demande l'augmentation du prix du permis de travail pour les étrangers (conseil des ministres)" (Mamadi Doumbouya asks for an increase in the price of work permits for foreigners at a cabinet meeting), URL: <https://guineenews.org/mamadi-doumbouya-demande-l'augmentation-du-prix-du-permis-de-travail-pour-les-etrangers-conseil-des-ministres> (in French only)

<sup>99</sup> Website of the project: [EmploiGuinee.com/TOKTEN-GUINEE](http://EmploiGuinee.com/TOKTEN-GUINEE) or [www.tokten-guinee.org](http://www.tokten-guinee.org)

<sup>100</sup> Website of the platform: [fonctionpublique.gov.gn/enregistrez-vous](http://fonctionpublique.gov.gn/enregistrez-vous)

<sup>101</sup> This emerged from the set of interviews conducted for this report.

eight out of nine participants declared that they were not able to cover worker migration properly due to a weak grasp of the concepts. They declared that they did not know that worker migration is a migration trend in Guinea, and emphasised “the lack of interviewees, statistics and inaccessibility of sources.” The same observation was made regarding the lack of data to quantify the proportion of women among worker migrants. “There are increasing numbers of women who migrate in an irregular situation or work in the Gulf States. And given the lack of data and investigations, it is not possible to quantify the phenomenon,” recounted Jacques Lewa Leno, former Chief Editor and current CEO of *Espace TV*.

The debate needs input from people with a variety of informed viewpoints: “Sociologists, anthropologists, civilian stakeholders (...) are absent from media coverage,” opined the head of the Department of Journalism at ISIC. Asmaou Barry, President of the Association of African Communication Professionals (AAPC-Guinea), felt that other vantage points were necessary: “We could read, watch and hear other topics and original angles on migration. The repatriation of funds by Guineans, for example, is not covered by the media.” This opinion is shared by Jacques Lewa Leno at *Espace TV*: “The press hardly ever recounts success stories of Guineans abroad, nor their contribution to the development of basic social services. And economic immigrants in Guinea, especially those in mining areas, are also ignored by the media.”

Some journalists having received training on the question are an exception. However, due to lack of resources, they chiefly produce work to order: articles in the press and even reports, thanks to funding from international institutions like UNESCO (see the series of articles by Mamadou Siré Diallo for *Le Lynx*).<sup>102</sup>

<sup>102</sup> “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : sur les traces des passeurs clandestins” (Irregular migration in Guinea: in the footsteps of clandestine smugglers) (part 1/4), URL: <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-sur-les-traces-des-passeurs-clandestins/> (in French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : complicité, laxisme ?” (Irregular migration in Guinea: complicity or laxism?) (part 2/4) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-complicite-laxisme/> (in French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : cap sur Labé, une des plaques tournantes” (Irregular migration in Guinea: focus on Labé, a hub) (part 3/4), URL: <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/>

### Worker migration: patchy coverage in the media, despite its significance in migration as a whole

Despite being part of the Guinean migration policy (4<sup>th</sup> point), the two facets of worker migration (immigration and emigration) “seldom get a mention in the Guinean media,” according to Amadou Touré, President of the High Authority for Communication’s Ethics, code of ethics and social mores commission. In the rare cases where worker migration is mentioned, various contrasting points are made:

#### Regarding worker migration, two portraits are painted:

- a positive perception factoring in migrant contributions to their communities in Guinea as well as oft-inaccurate stories shared by migrants returning to Guinea<sup>103</sup>,
- a critical perception explaining that emigrants are leaving at an increasingly early age, leaving villages deserted and mis-shaping social structure.

migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-cap-sur-labe-une-des-plaques-tournantes/ (in French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : Koundara, porte de sortie poreuse” (Irregular migration in Guinea: Koundara, a porous border?) (part 4/4) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-koundara-porte-de-sortie-poreuse/> (in French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : fléau aux multiples aspects” (Irregular migration in Guinea: a multi-faceted scourge) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-fleau-aux-multiples-aspects/#:~:text=Les%20d%C3%A9parts%20de%20migrants%20en,internationale%20pour%20les%20migrations%2C%20OIM.> (in French only)

<sup>103</sup> For example, an article in *GuinéeNews*, Sow A. (05/08/2021), “Migration interafricaine : l'apport inestimable des acteurs dans le développement de leurs localités” (Intra-African migration: inestimable contributions of stakeholders to develop their hometowns), URL: <https://guineenews.org/migration-inter-africaine-lapport-inestimable-des-acteurs-dans-le-developpement-de-leurs-localites/>

### Worker immigration in Guinea is hardly ever covered by the media and the tone is fairly negative.

According to public opinion, worker migration is a major component in the migration landscape, and thus often considered to be the swiftest, most effective means of gaining social prestige and riches. This positive perception of migration is based on oft-inaccurate stories shared by the media, which “unconsciously capture the people’s imagination,” as evidenced by Afiwa Mata Ahouadjogbe from the women journalists’ organisation.

At the other end of the spectrum, a minority of members of the public and media outlets have expressed another opinion, that emigration of increasingly young people leaves villages deserted and mis-shapes social structure. Cities and villages, deprived of a workforce, are increasingly peopled with “old faces in new constructions”.<sup>104</sup> This popular expression refers to the village elders who no longer live in traditional thatched huts but in new houses built with money sent from the diaspora. There are widespread stereotypes regarding working immigrants and emigrants. In Guinea, emigrants are always perceived to be very rich. Upon their return, if they do not share their riches and money with the family, and even society at large, they are considered to have wasted their fortune. Several accounts from discussion groups conducted among migrants illustrate this reality.

A Guinean who emigrated to Angola and later returned to Guinea reported that “once you go back to Guinea, people see you as a rich person. They don’t ask about your actual economic situation nor how you lived abroad.”

<sup>104</sup> For example, an article in *GuinéeNews*, Sow A. (03/08/2021), “Migration interafricaine : des villes et villages de Labé vidés de leurs bras valides” (Intra-African migration: towns and villages in Labé emptied of the able-bodied), URL: <https://guineenews.org/migration-inter-africaine-des-villes-et-villages-de-labe-vides-de-leurs-bras-valides/> (in French only)

### → Migrants speak up

In the migrants’ discussion group, participants made a point of listing the topics which they felt were too seldom addressed in the media, namely:

- social reintegration and psychosocial support,
- immigrant life in Guinea and that of Guineans emigrants abroad,
- higher proportions of women migrants,
- skills and qualifications of returning migrants.

Returning migrants mentioned the frequency of stereotypes and prejudice towards them: “Some people think we have changed our mentality. They think we have been uprooted, and are incapable of getting on with our family (...) some call us weed smokers, drug addicts, drinkers of alcohol etc.” Participants in the discussion group furthermore wished to point out how they would like to be represented in the media, in opposition to the stereotypes often conveyed:

- “The motivation behind any departure, whether regular or irregular is positive because it is to achieve well-being for migrants and their families,”
- “We should be seen as being worthy and normal, rather than dishonest and unlucky,”
- “We would like to be considered to be capable of something,”
- “Instead of going over our personal stories that are sometime traumatising, we would like the media to focalise more on positive questions like: What can you contribute to the community or your country? What experiences are you bringing back? How can you leverage what you learned?”

### Irregular migration: political and media discourse often contrasting with public opinion

Media coverage of migration in traditional media outlets focusses especially irregular migration. Aside from the tragedies and crises, coverage is very sporadic, with outlets which are often content to merely parrot institutional information, reports of workshops, conferences and seminars laid on by organisations working on the question. Guinean media outlets simply relay the international media, drawing almost systematically on their content.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, there are programmes and articles aiming to push back on irregular emigration on rural radio stations and/or websites like *Guineanews*, *Africaguinee.com* and *Le Lynx*,<sup>106</sup> funded by this same type of sponsors.

When the media do address this theme, it is often quite approximate. In many media outlets, journalists without a decent grasp of the right terminology use attributes and stereotypes to describe migrants in an irregular situation. There are myriad negative expressions like “losers”, “layabouts”, “people who’ve lost their way”, “no future” and “clandestine”. As explained below, the printed and online press does better on these topics than the other types of media. Certain relevant articles nevertheless resort to stereotyping and incorrect terms, especially the negatively connotated term “clandestine immigration” rather than “irregular immigration”.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>105</sup> For example, Sow A. (06/11/2020) “Labé : remise de certificat de fin de formation professionnelle et d'équipement à 7 migrants retournés” (Labé: end-of-training certificates and equipment awarded to seven returning migrants), URL: <https://guineenews.org/oim-labe-remise-de-certificats-de-fin-de-formation-professionnelle-et-dequipement-a-7-migrants-retournes/> (In French only)

<sup>106</sup> See the series of articles by Mamadou Siré Diallo in *Le Lynx*: “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : sur les traces des passeurs clandestins” (Irregular migration in Guinea: in the footsteps of clandestine smugglers) (part 1/4), URL: <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-sur-les-traces-des-passeurs-clandestins/> (In French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : complicité, laxisme ?” (Irregular migration in Guinea: complicity or laxism?) (part 2/4) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-complicite-laxisme/> (In French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : cap sur Labé, une des plaques tournantes” (Irregular migration in Guinea: focus on Labé, a hub) (part 3/4), URL: <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-cap-sur-labe-une-des-plaques-tournantes/> (In French only) “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : Koundara, porte de sortie poreuse” (Irregular migration in Guinea: Koundara, a porous border?) (part 4/4) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-koundara-porte-de-sortie-poreuse/> (In French only)

<sup>107</sup> (06/12/2016), “Immigration clandestine : un passeur nous livre les secrets du voyage” (Clandestine immigration: a smuggler lets us in on his travel secrets), URL: <https://www.africaguinee.com/articles/2016/12/06/immigration-clandestine-un-passeur-nous-livre-les-secrets-du-voyage-exclusif> (In French only)

The majority of media outlets criticise irregular migration, arguing that there is potential in the country and repeating the authorities’ discourse. Political and media discourse seem to contrast directly with the “majority public opinion” (as reported on a recurring basis in both interviews and discussion groups). The majority opinion is that the State is at fault for its inability to implement public policies to boost employment and/or the creation of opportunities, especially for young people. Public opinion is also favourable to emigration which has a very positive image, as mentioned by Mamadou Alpha Diallo, President of the organisation ABLOGUI:

“An exaggeration, or at least an overestimation, of Guinean emigrants is perceptible in public opinion, to the point that leaving is synonymous with success.”

Only a few TV channels and radio stations like Espace and online media like *Africaguinee.com*, as well as civil society organisations like the NGO Women, development and human rights, hold the Guinean government responsible, as an entity that no longer inspires confidence and has failed to ensure satisfactory living conditions for all citizens.

### → “The deafening silence of government on irregular migration”

**Moussa Yero Bah, from the NGO F2DHG** “The underlying problem regarding irregular migration in Guinea can be attributed to insufficient, even inexistant information. The authorities have left a void, which has been filled by smuggler networks. These are established all over the country, selling dreams to unemployed young people. Migrating irregularly may cost up to 10,000 euros, whereas this is plenty for a well-informed, well-coached young person to set up a thriving business here. “In certain zones, like Ratoma in Conakry, many young people have felt the urge to migrate via irregular routes because of endemic poverty and political disruptions leading to state reprisals. “This is why the deafening silence of government on irregular migration is often criticised. The authorities only ever intervene on rare occasions: in response to invitations from organisations like IOM, to mark International Migrants Day for example. The people’s expectations vis-à-vis the authorities are fairly high though.”

### Return migration: regular coverage in the media, featuring messages from international donors

Return migration is covered by the Guinean media from a generally positive angle, falling in line with the policy of international institutions working in this sector, like IOM and UNESCO. A rural radio host in Labé went as far as to mention “infomercials” in magazines and other articles “commissioned” by the NGOs and international institutions working in this sector.

Return migration is certainly extremely mediated but this complex subject deserves to be explored more fully. As with initiatives led by institutions and international organisations like IOM, UNESCO, the EU and ENABEL-INTEGRA working in this sector in collaboration with government organisations, the media especially highlights returning migrants from the socio-professional insertion angle (training courses leading to a diploma,

setting up a business). Social reinsertion rarely features in projects and media reports despite its importance for returning migrants.

### Representation by types of media Printed and online press

Placing matters in perspective (context, causes and consequences) is not always on the agenda but the press, especially online, outperforms other types of media on these topics.

For example, websites such as *Africaguinee.com*, *Guineanews.org*, *guineematin.com* and the print newspaper *Le Lynx*: - between 2016 and 2020, Alpha Ousmane Bah, a reporter at *Africaguinee.com*, published over 20 articles on migration, especially irregular migration,<sup>108</sup> - on the website *guineenews.org*, several articles were published on the theme, notably by Alaidhy Sow and Louis Célestin, from 5 August to 18 October 2021,<sup>109</sup> - in the satirical newspaper *Le Lynx*, Chief Editor Mamadou Siré Diallo produced a special report on irregular migration<sup>110</sup> with financial support from UNESCO.

<sup>108</sup> For example several articles on *AfricaGuinea.com*: (23/05/2019) “Immigration clandestine vers l'Europe : fin de rêve pour Raguitatou Diallo” (Clandestine immigration towards Europe: end of a dream for Raguitatou Diallo), URL: <https://www.africaguinee.com/articles/2019/05/23/immigration-clandestine-vers-l-europe-fin-de-reve-pour-raguitatou-diallo> (In French only), (24/05/2019) “L'histoire tragique d'Aissatou Barry, morte dans les eaux au Maroc” (The tragic story of Aissatou Barry, who perished at sea off the Moroccan coast), URL: <https://www.africaguinee.com/articles/2019/05/24/l-histoire-tragique-de-aissatou-barry-morte-dans-les-eaux-au-maroc> (In French only), (06/12/2016) “Immigration clandestine : un passeur nous livre les secrets du voyage” (Clandestine immigration: a smuggler lets us in on his travel secrets), URL: <https://www.africaguinee.com/articles/2016/12/06/immigration-clandestine-un-passeur-nous-livre-les-secrets-du-voyage-exclusif> (In French only), (24/11/2019) “Guinée : l'autre facette de l'immigration clandestine” (Guinea: the other facet of clandestine immigration), URL: <https://www.africaguinee.com/articles/2016/11/24/guinee-l-autre-facette-de-l-immigration-clandestine> (In French only), (30/12/2016) “Labé : le grand imam El Hadj Badru Bah livre un message singulier” (Labé: the great imam El Hadj Badru Bah sends out an unusual message), URL: <https://www.africaguinee.com/articles/2016/12/30/labe-le-grand-imam-el-hadj-badru-bah-livre-un-message-singulier> (In French only)

<sup>109</sup> For example, several articles on *Guinée.news.org*: Celestin L. (18/11/2021), “La prostitution sur la route de l'immigration clandestine” (Prostitution on the clandestine immigration route), URL: <https://guineenews.org/la-prostitution-sur-la-route-de-l-immigration-clandestine> (In French only), Sow A. (05/08/2021), “Migration inter-africaine : l'apport inestimable des acteurs dans le développement de leurs localités” (Intra-African migration: inestimable contributions of stakeholders to develop their hometowns), URL: <https://guineenews.org/migration-inter-africaine-lapport-inestimable-des-acteurs-dans-le-developpement-de-leurs-localites> (In French only)

<sup>110</sup> Cf. the series of articles by Siré in *Le Lynx*: “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : sur les traces des passeurs clandestins” (Irregular migration in Guinea: in the footsteps of clandestine smugglers) (part 1/4), URL: <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-sur-les-traces-des-passeurs-clandestins/> (In French only), “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : complicité, laxisme ?” (Irregular migration in Guinea: complicity or laxism?) (part 2/4) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-complicite-laxisme/> (In French only), “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : cap sur Labé, une des plaques tournantes” (Irregular migration in Guinea: focus on Labé, a hub) (part 3/4), URL: <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-cap-sur-labe-une-des-plaques-tournantes/> (In French only), “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : Koundara, porte de sortie poreuse” (Irregular migration in Guinea: Koundara, a porous border?) (part 4/4) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-koundara-porte-de-sortie-poreuse/> (In French only), “Migration irrégulière en Guinée : fléau aux multiples aspects” (Irregular migration in Guinea: a multi-faceted scourge) <https://lelynx.net/2020/12/migration-irreguliere-en-guinee-fleau-aux-multiples-aspects/#:~:text=Les%20d%C3%A9parts%20de%20migrants%20en,internationale%20pour%20les%20migrations%2C%20IOM.> (In French only)

### Radio

Radio stations, including community radio stations, are very popular. They favour sensational news (tragedies, especially involving irregular migration) over investigation and/or immersion. Media outlets serving the community have few means to cover these tragedies properly, so they simply relay information from international media (*RFI* and *the Deutsche Welle*) without any in-depth reports or programmes on migration as these foreign outlets may also provide.

Migrants attending the discussion group observed that out of the four radio stations emitting from Mamou (*Bolivar FM*, *GPP FM*, *Fraternité FM* and *the rural station*), only *Fraternité FM* had a programme focussing on migration issues. This programme is called “*Safaari: travelling in Fula*,” Fula being the language spoken by the Fulani. In this programme, migrant opinions are taken into account.

It has to be emphasised that rural radio stations emitting in local languages act as buttresses against irregular emigration. They regularly conduct awareness-raising, even though there is little coverage of migration in terms of quantity, and it is generally poor in terms of quality. Journalists do not always have a firm grasp of concepts and the sources used are not always reliable, apart from information provided by institutions working in this sector.

### Television

It is the media that covers return migration most often, as the preoccupation of international institutions. From 7 to 29 October 2021, for example, at least six reports were broadcast on *RTG* (four broadcasts) and *Espace TV* (two broadcasts) focusing exclusively on socio-professional integration among returning migrants and awareness-raising on issues with irregular immigration. Return migration is addressed only superficially.

In terms of journalistic styles, news reports are dominant. As observed by a student at the discussion group: “Most TV coverage of migration amounts to factual reports of workshops and seminars funded by donors: 56% are the minutes of meetings as opposed to 38% for reportage and only 6% for migrant portraits”.<sup>111</sup> However, mere news reports provide little hindsight and lack analysis.

### Social media and blogs

These new types of media are the swiftest, most effective means of spreading migration information. A blog called *blogcamp224*, managed by ABLOGUI, and a Facebook page, “Un cliché de Guinea” (A snapshot of Guinea),<sup>112</sup> both discuss irregular migration, sharing various accounts and videos, while seeking to promote opportunities in Guinea. Unlike in mainstream media, journalists running these blogs and networks are more independent. They often have a very personal approach to writing, and a more subjective stance.

Mamadou Alpha Diallo, President of ABLOGUI, acknowledges that: “These media outlets do sometimes get it wrong, because it’s a new format and there are no standards. The style is dominated by commentary, with a risk of fake news.” Social media is fertile ground for the spreading of clichés. Nevertheless, in terms of checking sources, a handful of timid

<sup>111</sup> Extract from his memoirs “L’Emigration irrégulière à l’épreuve de sa médiatisation télévisuelle en Guinée : cas de la Télévision nationale, d’Espace TV et d’Évasion TV, de 2017 à 2020” (Irregular emigration and TV mediatisation in Guinea: on state TV, Espace TV and Évasion TV, 2017 to 2020), p. 30

<sup>112</sup> Blog Camp 224 website: <https://blog.ablogui.org/category/blogcamp224> and <https://web.facebook.com/pg/Maguia224/posts/> (in French only)

## Capacity building in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Guinea.

### Review of the various initiatives and their impact

Regarding initiatives that have taken place, several observations are to be emphasised:

- first of all, most efforts focus on theory. There are few training courses with hands-on or on-the-ground elements;
- there are barely any follow-up schemes after the courses;
- chief editors and/or editorial managers have not been involved in the training. According to the Chief Editor of *Espace TV*, “there is no point training journalists without integrating outlet managers, for they are responsible for defining the editorial line.” Consequently, topics introduced in these workshops have rarely made the front page;
- given a lack of donors, funding for these topics initiated in workshops poses a problem; reportage and investigations take time and involve travel. According to Moussa Yero Bah, from the NGO Femmes, développement et droits humains (Women, development and human rights or F2DHG): “Reportage and investigations cost money. This is what the media entrepreneurs focus on, because they are operating a business.” For Mamadou Siré Diallo, Chief Editor of *Le Lynx*: “Media outlets are limited by their means. Sometimes, newsrooms want to work on these questions but when travel is required, and thus means, they give up.”

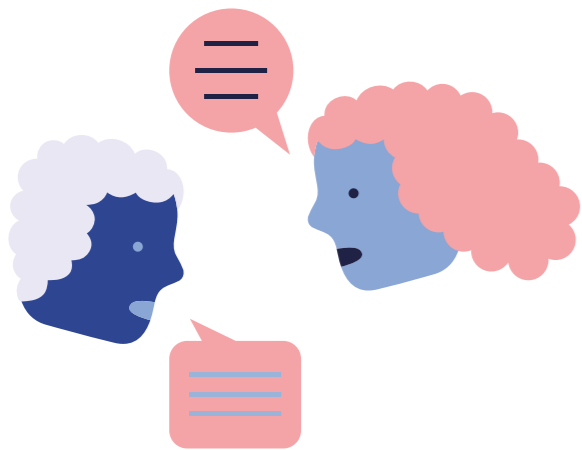
initiatives are being introduced, as confirmed by Lucas Chandellier at IOM Guinea: “We have set up a system with bloggers to check sources in order to avoid *fake news*.” In addition to this, the website *guineecheck.org* administered by the organisation *Les Villageois 2.0* has sections like “Détox et Vérifox” which help to push back on the proliferation of misinformation.

### → A training course on migration for students in journalism at ISIC in Kountia

The Higher Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC) in Guinea is a public establishment for scientific and professional training, overseen by the Guinean Ministry of Higher Education. Its Department of Journalism offers top-level 3-year and Master’s degrees. In partnership with IOM and UNESCO, ISIC founded a training course leading to a certificate in “Migration and Sustainable Development Goals”, which is the first of its kind in Guinea. Students get in-person tuition and internships on the ground in connection with the theme of migration. It has now reached the pilot phase, testing all stages and leveraging success with a view to launching a programme for a 3-year or Master’s degree in the future. With financial support from a partner, the course is slated for accreditation by the Guinean quality assurance agency (ANAG) to train future journalists specialising in migration.

Nevertheless, the various training courses have had some effect:

- the appeal of and interest for migration issues is greater among journalists having received training, with fairly broad awareness of the range and depth of the theme;
- these workshops have also reached out and facilitated contact with sources like IOM, UNESCO, the authorities and the migrants themselves, with greater ensuing capacity to introduce migration topics and report on them properly.



## Findings and recommendations

### Persistent needs

Many needs for development persist, especially:

- migration concepts and terminology: build up knowledge of the basics and migration vocabulary. All participants recommended revising the basics to gain insight into the concept of worker migration, for example, prior to providing hands-on practice on the ground;
- techniques for interviewing vulnerable people: this need was clearly highlighted <sup>113</sup> during migrant interviews and discussion groups;
- a training course on mobile journalism; <sup>114</sup>
- techniques for checking sources in an increasingly digital world: as stated by Moussa Yero Bah, President of the NGO F2DHG (Women, development and human rights), it is necessary to develop “specific ethics for the coverage of migration and appropriate checking mechanisms.” This observation came up in several interviews. This is why training courses on the checking techniques are deemed to be essential, to sort real from fake news as part of migration coverage;
- media coverage of migration from the angle of journalistic genres, especially investigation: the need for training was mentioned and was given priority by interviewees during the discussion groups and interviews. According to Asmaou Barry from the Association of African Communication Professionals (AACP): “Comments are given prominence, no research is performed. There is not enough room for investigation which requires keeping up to standards and checking information.” This led to the following recommendations.

<sup>113</sup> Extract from the discussion group

<sup>114</sup> Mobile journalism or MOJO, a portmanteau word contracting “mobile” and “journalist.” It is an emerging form of new media storytelling where reporters use portable electronic devices with network connectivity to gather, edit and distribute news from his or her community” Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile\\_journalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_journalism)

### Training for journalists

#### Training for journalists along two lines:

1. initial and/or continuous training courses for journalists to make up for the lack of specialist journalists. To achieve this, a call for candidates would be needed, and training conducted collaboration with a school of journalism like ISIC which already offers certification in “Migration and Sustainable Development Goals”;
2. a series of training workshops on specific migration themes, for example worker migration.

Chief editors and editorial managers need to be involved in these training courses, so that they produce a knock-on effect and become an everyday part of newsroom work.

Some training courses could last for six months, combining theory and hands-on practice on the ground. They could be organised over several sessions, starting in departure and return zones (at national level) then gradually moving towards the transit and destination zones (sub-regional and international level).

#### Instructor and trainer profiles

They need to be selected according to experience, and act more as mentors (at national and international level). Follow-up needs to be arranged after the training course.

#### The types of media to be given priority

Target the press, especially online, radio, especially rural, and television.

### Other types of capacity-building initiatives

#### Benchmark guidelines to cover migration news should be drawn up

In production workshops, for approval at national level (or at an international level, depending on languages spoken). This project must include national and international experts, media outlets and other partners.

#### Networking

A network needs to be set up, acting as an umbrella organisation for all categories of media already working on migration issues, or which want to. National forums to be attended by trained journalists and/or expeditions to learn about practices in other countries may also help to strengthen this network.

#### Support for production

A proposal to support production, with the aim of inciting candidates to explore the various journalistic genres, like large-format reportage and investigations. Emphasis needs to be given to added value and original angles on migration, taking all the types of media into account, in synergy with professional media organisations. Special attention needs to be paid to media outlets working in local languages, which have great impact on rural communities.

#### Setup of an online platform

This would be a place in which to publish calls for production and all output from the hands-on training courses, with a database. This content platform may be managed by the network mentioned above. This would help to ensure that capacity building is well appropriated and has a lasting effect.

# Mali

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**1,241,238**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**20,933,000**  
persons en 2020

### Immigration<sup>2</sup>

**458,000**  
persons i.e.  
2.4% of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>3</sup>

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Burkina Faso**

**Guinea**

**Senegal**

**Mauritania**

**49.3%**  
are  
women

**20.8%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>2</sup>

**1.3 M**  
persons i.e.  
6.2% of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>3</sup>

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Nigeria**

**Mauritania**

**Niger**

**France**

### Remittances<sup>4</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**5.6% of GDP**

It must be stressed that similar sums of money are sent using informal transfer route (via circuits organised by tradespeople and tourists)<sup>5</sup>.

Sources: 1 - Website Population Data.net: <https://en.populationdata.net/countries/mali/>; 2 - UN DESA, 2020; 3 - Website, Interactive World Migration Report 2022 (om.int); 4 - World Bank (2021); 5 - Academic article in the magazine Région et Développement, Mésle Soms S. and Nilsson B. (2020), "Les migrations internationales des Maliens" (International migration of Malians), URL: <https://regiondeveloppement.univ-dn.fr/wp-content/uploads/8-Mesle-formate.pdf>, p.139 (in French only); "Au total, près de 10% des habitants du Mali reçoivent des transferts depuis l'étranger, soit environ 1,8 million de personnes." (In total, almost 10% of Malian inhabitants receive transfers from abroad, i.e. approx. 1.8 million people).

## Media landscape

Mali has a diversified, professional media landscape.

According to RSF, there are around 120 press outlets (including *L'Essor*, *Les Échos*, *Le Républicain* and *Le Sursaut*), at least 500 radio stations (including *Kledu*, *Bamakan*, *Liberté*, *Guintan* and *Kaoural*) and several dozen TV channels (including *ORTM*, *Renouveau*, *Cherifla TV* and *TM1*). According to APPEL Mali (an online professional press association), there are around 60 online newspapers (including *JournalduMali*, *Maliweb*, *Malijet* and *Maliz4*) of which 4 web TV channels (including *Kunafoni.com*, *Actuel Média* and *Horon TV*) and a web radio (*Giez star*).

## Overview of migration

### Migration trends

Mali is a country of origin, a host country and a transit country for migrants. It has a high poverty rate and a very young population almost half of which (48.8%) is under 15.<sup>115</sup> The population is growing at a rate of 3.36% a year.<sup>116</sup>

### A long-standing tradition of emigration

Maliens have been emigrating for a long time, since before colonisation, and have close ties with neighbouring countries as explained by Simon Barussaud from the ILO:<sup>117</sup> "The percentage of emigrants heading towards other countries in West Africa was 85.8% in 2000 and 82.3% in 2017, which shows the vitality of migration within the sub-region." Malian emigration is a phenomenon rooted in social mores. But the country also has migrants because of poverty, unemployment problems, institutional instability (five military coups in 1968, 1991, 2012, 2020 and 2021), cyclical uprisings (1963, 1991 and 2006) and terrorism. Since 2012, terrorism-related insecurity mainly involves five regions in the North, the two regions in the Centre and the Sahel occidental (on the Mauritanian border). The regions of Bamako and the South<sup>118</sup> were also subject to terrorist attacks in 2015.<sup>119</sup> More recently in 2021,<sup>120</sup> the south of the country was affected again.

<sup>115</sup> INSTAT Mali (2017), "Enquête modulaire et permanente auprès des ménages" (Modular, ongoing household survey), URL: [https://www.instat-mali.org/laravel-filemanager/files/shares/eq/ana17pas1\\_eq.pdf](https://www.instat-mali.org/laravel-filemanager/files/shares/eq/ana17pas1_eq.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>116</sup> Website Population Data.net: <https://en.populationdata.net/countries/mali/>

<sup>117</sup> Barussaud S. (2020), "Potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Mali" (Potential partnerships for skills and migration in Mali), ILO, URL: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_747719.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_747719.pdf) (p. 2). (in French only)

<sup>118</sup> Article Studio Tamani (29/06/2015), "Attaque de Fakola : les populations de Kolondiéba dénoncent le "laxisme de l'État" (Fakola attack: Kolondiéba residents blame "state laxism"), URL: <https://www.studiotamani.org/4355-attaque-de-fakola-les-populations-de-kolondieba-denoncent-le-laxisme-de-l-etat> (in French only)

<sup>119</sup> Article on France Info with the AFP (27/10/2020), "Au procès des attentats de Bamako, le principal accusé était bel et bien présent, contre toute attente" (The main defendant unexpectedly attends the trial for the Bamako terrorist attacks), URL: [https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/mali/attentat-a-bamako/au-proces-des-attentats-de-bamako-le-principal-accuse-etait-bel-et-bien-present-contre-toute-attente\\_4158249.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/mali/attentat-a-bamako/au-proces-des-attentats-de-bamako-le-principal-accuse-etait-bel-et-bien-present-contre-toute-attente_4158249.html) (in French only)

<sup>120</sup> Podcast on Radio Mikado, "Faut-il s'inquiéter de la multiplication des attaques dans la région de Sikasso ?" (Should we be worried about increasing attacks in the Sikasso region?), URL: <https://soundcloud.com/mikado-fm/faut-il-sinquieter-de-la-multiplication-des-attaques-dans-la-region-de-si>





In terms of places of origin of Malian emigrants, migration has been part of daily life for decades for families in the region of Kayes, a traditional zone for emigration in the west of Mali. But there is ever more cross-border displacement in the north (Timbuktu, Gao etc.), in particular because of rising levels of terrorism in these regions.

### The Malian diaspora

According to UN DESA data, there were nearly 1.3 million Malian emigrants in the world in 2020, although the Malian diaspora abroad now also includes the children and grandchildren of Malian emigrants.

Maliens abroad have settled mostly in ECOWAS member states, especially Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Niger, and to a lesser extent Europe (10% of Malians settled abroad). The Malian diaspora plays a major role in developing the country by way of money transfers and local development initiatives.

In 2021, the Malian government adopted the Strategy to promote productive investment from the Malian diaspora. It aims to leverage the diaspora's human, economic and financial capital to help develop Mali by informing potential investors from the diaspora and directing them to schemes and opportunities for productive investment in Mali.<sup>121</sup>

### Increasing numbers of emigrant women

Malian emigrants have historically been mostly men, but more women started migrating as from the 1970s. Women migrants from Mali accounted for 49.3% of the international migrant population in 2020.<sup>122</sup>

### Family emigration

Family reunification mainly involves Malian women moving to join their husband in central Africa (Gabon and the two Congos), West Africa (Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire) and France. Family

migration is also developing as part of the Green Card procedure in the USA and resident permits in Canada.

### Student migration

Student migration is less significant statistically than other forms of migration detailed below (worker migration, irregular migration, return migration and human trafficking).

According to the Directorate-General for Higher Education in Mali,<sup>123</sup> there was a total of 1,090 foreign students in Mali during the 2019-2020 academic year, of whom 673 came from the sub-region.

UNESCO (2021)<sup>124</sup> furthermore counted 10,153 Malian students abroad, mainly in Morocco (2,894), France (2,357), Senegal (1,006), Saudi Arabia (545), Canada (474), Tunisia (435), Türkiye (387), Côte d'Ivoire (351), Niger (340) and the USA (307). According to Campus France (2020),<sup>125</sup> 3,137 Malian students came to France for the 2019-2020 academic year, an increase of 18% in five years.

<sup>123</sup> Statistics for students in higher education in Mali 2018-2019 (01/2020), p.18: [http://dg-enseignementsup.mi/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ANNUAIRE-STATISQUE-DES-ETUDIANTS-2018-2019-revu-CM\\_Prise-en-compte-des-observations\\_CM-2.pdf](http://dg-enseignementsup.mi/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ANNUAIRE-STATISQUE-DES-ETUDIANTS-2018-2019-revu-CM_Prise-en-compte-des-observations_CM-2.pdf). (in French only)

<sup>124</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students" Available on the website: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/uis-student-flow>

<sup>125</sup> Campus France website: [https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publications/mobilite\\_pays/fr/mali\\_fr.pdf](https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publications/mobilite_pays/fr/mali_fr.pdf) (in French only)

kasso (in French only)

<sup>121</sup> Migration Governance Indicators, Mali, 2021, IOM

<sup>122</sup> UN DESA (2020): <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

### Transit migration

Given its geographic position as a hub for West Africa, Mali has become a transit country in the past few decades, for Senegalese, Ivorian, Cameroonian, Guinean, Togolese, Burkinabe, Central African and Congolese migrants. Migrants transiting through Mali are mainly people in an irregular situation attempting to reach Europe and others returning to their country of origin. Since 2017, over 3,649 migrants<sup>126</sup> in transit in Mali were hosted in centres run by IOM Mali while awaiting the organisation of their voluntary return to their country or community of origin as part of the EU-IOM joint initiative for the protection and the reintegration of migrants in Africa.

On 10 October 2018,<sup>127</sup> 984 migrants in transit had been identified by IOM Mali, of whom 659 from Sierra Leone and 160 Liberians, as well as Cameroonians and Guineans. While monitoring population flow, IOM counted 18,532 individuals leaving Mali at checkpoints.

### Refugees

There are 46,960 refugees<sup>128</sup> in Mali, coming mostly from Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso. However, there are more Malian refugees abroad. Since the onset of the security crisis in 2012, nearly 160,000 Malians have sought refuge abroad, mainly in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso<sup>129</sup>.

### Worker migration

Mali is a host country for foreign workers (Burkinabe, Beninese, Togolese, Ivorian, Senegalese, Congolese, Guinean, Central African nationals and so on), attracted by the mining resources. They also work in construction, food service, hospitality and

the textile industry. Worker migrants mostly go to Bamako. The presence of West African nationals in Mali can be explained by the existence of a legal framework conducive to the movement of people thanks to the ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of persons and goods, right of residence and right of establishment.<sup>130</sup>

There is also a considerable number of seasonal migrants from Burkina Faso at small-scale mining sites in Mali, who very often return to their country after spending some time in Mali.

Foreign immigrants of African origin living in Mali have founded the Federation of African communities in Mali (FECAM) which now boasts 19 member communities (countries) and boasts thousands of supporters throughout Mali.

As for Malian workers migrating abroad, Côte d'Ivoire remains the main destination of Malian emigrants seeking work, according to Boulaye Keita, consultant to the Ministry of Malian Expatriates and Salia Traoré, Director-General of the Migration Information and Management Centre in Mali (CIGEM), interviewed for this report.

Inaugurated in October 2008, the Migration Information and Management Centre (CIGEM) has been entrusted by the Ministry of Malian Expatriates to pinpoint job opportunities worldwide and suggest partnerships with countries with a view to facilitating regular migration.

Its Director, Salia Traoré pointed to circular migration organised by the Malian Ministry of Employment with the UK, Spain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia as destination countries. Salia Traoré specified that a partnership agreement was also being negotiated with Qatar.

<sup>126</sup> Statement by the EU delegation in Mali (19/01/2022), "L'OIM, l'UE et le Gouvernement malien inaugurent un nouveau centre de transit pour les migrants" (IOM, EU and Malian Government inaugurate a New Migrant Transit Centre), URL: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mali/1%E2%80%99oim-lue-et-le-gouvernement-malien-inaugurent-un-nouveau-centre-de-transit-pour\\_fr?s=108](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mali/1%E2%80%99oim-lue-et-le-gouvernement-malien-inaugurent-un-nouveau-centre-de-transit-pour_fr?s=108) (in French only)

<sup>127</sup> IOM Mali (13/12/2018), "L'OIM Mali assiste les migrants en transit au Mali dans leur processus de retour volontaire vers leurs pays à travers une journée de profilage" (IOM Mali assists migrants transiting through Mali in their voluntary return process to their country of origin with a profiling day), URL: <https://rodakar.iom.int/fr/news/loim-mali-assiste-les-migrants-en-transit-au-mali-dans-leur-processus-de-retour-volontaire-vers-leurs-pays-travers-une-journee-de-profilage> (in French only)

<sup>128</sup> Operations portal to handle the refugee crisis, Mali, HCR

<sup>129</sup> UNHCR (30/11/2021): Mali: Situation of Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees (30\_November\_2021)

<sup>130</sup> Adepoju A. (2009), "Les migrations en Afrique de l'Ouest dans le contexte du Protocole sur la libre circulation et de l'approche commune de la CÉDEAO" (Migration Management in West Africa within the context of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the Common Approach on Migration), Club du Sahel, Regional Challenges of West African Migration, Paris, OECD, p. 17-50

### Irregular migration

Mali is both a country of origin and a transit country for migrants in an irregular situation continuing their migration journey (Ivorian, Beninese, Guinean, Senegalese and Togolese nationals). There are several itineraries for Malians and migrants of other nationalities in an irregular situation who hope to reach Europe: Bamako-Gao-Niger-Libya-Italy, Gao-Algeria-Morocco and Bamako-Nioro du Sahel-Mauritania-Spain.

Minors, both girls and boys, are also involved in irregular migration, especially towards Europe. Boulaye Keita, consultant to the Ministry of Malian Expatriates, illustrated this phenomenon by citing the figures from the French Ministry of the Interior: “There are around 16,000 minors of Malian origin aged 13 to 15, who came by way of Libya and Mauritania, now staying in migrant centres in France.”

### Human trafficking

Salia Traoré, Director of the CIGEM confirmed: “[Malian] human trafficking does exist within irregular migration, especially in Libya. Since 2011, the Malian Minister of Justice has implemented the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Assimilated Practices.” The government is now tackling human trafficking of Malians abroad. On 12 July 2012, Mali adopted the Law relative to the prevention of human trafficking and assimilated practices (Law No. 2012-023). Salia Traoré stressed its role: “This law rounds off the Penal Code which lacked precision. Mali is committed to pushing back on human trafficking. The government is pinpointing cases, informing the population and training magistrates on this question.”

Human trafficking is also a reality within the country. In November 2019, Interpol released a statement on an operation conducted in Mali: “The authorities rescued 64 victims of human trafficking during an operation coordinated by Interpol in Mali. The victims – mostly women and young girls – were victims of sexual exploitation and forced labour in mining, as

well as being forced into begging.”<sup>131</sup> Some of the victims identified and rescued came from Mali, others from Burkina Faso, Guinea and Nigeria.

### → Return migration

Some figures on the return and reintegration of Malians from abroad

According to Boulaye Keita, consultant to the Ministry of Malian Expatriates, “since 2013, over 36,000 migrants have returned from Mali. Most returning migrants come from Libya, Algeria, Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (2015-2017), France and Equatorial Guinea.”

Between 2017 and 2021, over 18,600 returning Malian migrants (out of the 25,600 registered) have benefitted from assisted reintegration, as part of the EU and IOM’s joint initiative to protect and reintegrate migrants in Africa, backed by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

According to IOM data, over 13,000 returning migrants have stayed at the centre for Malians from abroad which opened in Bamako, in July 2018, thanks to State and IOM funding.

<sup>131</sup> Interpol (8/11/2019), “Des victimes de trafiquants d’êtres humains secourues lors d’une opération coordonnée par INTERPOL au Mali” (Trafficking victims rescued during INTERPOL-coordinated operation in Mali), <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2019/Trafficking-victims-rescued-during-INTERPOL-coordinated-operation-in-Mali#:~:text=BAMAKO%2C%20Mali%20%E2%80%93%20Authorities%20have%20rescued,as%20well%20as%20forced%20begging>

Return migration is a priority for the Malian government, as demonstrated by recently adopted measures. The Ministry of Malian Expatriates and African Integration has set up a fund to assist Malian migrants in emergencies.<sup>132</sup> The Strategic framework for economic recovery and sustainable development (2019-2023) also included assistance for internally displaced persons, repatriated persons and refugees. Lastly, the Ministry has set up centres in several airports, railway stations and coach stations to assist returning persons.

Parallel to the government’s measures, several projects pay special attention to the theme of return migration, partly funded by the EU and development agencies in EU countries (such as GIZ<sup>133</sup> and AECID).<sup>134</sup>

### Migration policies

There is a framework in Mali to coordinate all stakeholders working in migration. In September 2014, the Malian migration policy (PONAM) was created. Steered by the Ministry of Malian Expatriates and African Integration, it handles all aspects of migration. In October 2020, the Ministry organised a national workshop to revise the PONAM action plan (2020-2024),<sup>135</sup> with technical and financial support from the EU and IOM in particular. This revised action plan aims to improve the state of knowledge on internal and international migration, and especially includes measures to help returning Malians reintegrate.

Mali has signed several bilateral agreements granting foreigners the right of residence with neighbouring and European countries (France in 1994, Spain in 2007) and the European Union (2015).<sup>136</sup>

<sup>132</sup> 2021, “Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) profile: Republic of Mali.” Available on the website: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/fr/overviews/mgi/mali-0#5>

<sup>133</sup> Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (German international cooperation firm)

<sup>134</sup> Spanish agency for international cooperation and development

<sup>135</sup> “Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) profile: Republic of Mali” (2021), <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/fr/overviews/mgi/mali-0#5>

<sup>136</sup> IOM (May 2018), “Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) profile: Republic of Mali”, p. 3

Furthermore, the Malian department for social development is working with IOM and the Directorate of Civil Defence with a view to centralising statistics on the movement of people and the assessment of displaced and returning people’s needs, using the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix.

Lastly, in 2021, the government adopted a Strategy to promote productive investment from the Malian diaspora. According to Tangara Nèma Guindo, Secretary-General of the Malian Ministry of Malian Expatriates: “This strategy helps to inform potential investors from the diaspora and above all direct them towards productive investment schemes and opportunities in Mali.”<sup>137</sup> Tangara Nèma Guindo pointed out that the strategy catered for the creation of an office to facilitate administrative procedures at the agency to promote investment in Mali (API-Mali). Another important fact is that the highest institutions in the country (President of the Republic, Prime Minister and Ministry of Malian Expatriates) all shower praise on the Malian diaspora, especially for their financial contribution in the form of remittances.

<sup>137</sup> Ccom/MMEIA (2021), “Promotion de l’investissement productif de la diaspora malienne” (Promoting productive investment to the Malian diaspora), URL: <http://maliens-exterieur.gouv.ml/promotion-de-linvestissement-productif-de-la-diaspora-malienne/> (in French only)

## Migration issues in the Malian media and public discourse

Migration has patchy coverage in the Malian media, mostly when there are shipwrecks and tragedies in the Mediterranean.

Radio stations, the printed and online press and TV channels also put migration issues on the front page when irregular migrants return (whether voluntarily or forced) or when they embark on their socio-professional reinsertion. The authorities' actions and discourse, in collaboration with IOM, also get plenty of media coverage. For example, the symbolic issuing of work equipment to returning migrants as part of socio-economic reinsertion projects is covered by the media, at the government's request and that of its technical and financial partners like the European Union or the French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII).

The media also give priority coverage to institutional news, such as the signing of agreements between States with reference to migration issues.<sup>138</sup>

Radio stations play a key role in raising awareness as to the dangers of irregular migration, via weekly programmes ("Tounka" on *Radio Kledu* and "Tamala" – meaning "migrant" – on *Radio FM*).

Public and privately-owned TV channels such as *TM2* (the second state-owned, general-interest TV channel in Mali), which broadcasts the show "Diaspora en marche" (Diaspora on the move), and the private TV channel *Renouveau TV*, which broadcasts "Diaspora-info", also contribute weekly to this effort to inform and raise awareness among the public nationwide on the migration issue.

The theme is largely absent from debates on social media, with topics of discussion mainly focusing on national and international politics. Some articles are written to address the issue on social media when tragic events occur in the desert or the Mediterranean, for example. The fact that the theme of migration gets little attention on social media may be explained by the fact that Internet users are not very interested in this issue. They are mainly attracted to reports with a sensational slant on events in society, disputes within political classes, the buzz generated by TikTok posts, artists etc.

Among the issues identified in the media with a view to covering the theme of migration better, Mohamed Kanouté from online newspaper *Maliz4* cited the lack of means: "I am sorry to put it like this, but it is difficult to devote newsroom time to the coverage of migration questions. We have minimum staffing. Unless funding is provided, we are fully occupied with the coverage of political and institutional news in this country seven days a week." Chiaka Doumbia from the print newspaper *Le Challenger* confirmed this observation: "Since it's money that makes the world go round, it is difficult, even impossible, for the media to take an interest in migration news when it's lacking."

Chiaka Doumbia added that "investigation takes time and costs press outlets money," concluding that "without support from international organisations or the State, investigative reports on migration are just a pipe dream."

And yet, there are a few examples showing how Malian media coverage can cover topics from pertinent angles. The national daily *L'Essor* published a long article on "Bereft migrant spouses weighed down by tradition."<sup>139</sup> The investigation reveals the difficult conditions experienced by migrants' spouses.

### Media coverage by types of migration Worker emigration

Radio programmes and the press like to highlight success stories, such as Malamine Koné, business owner and publicist for the *Airness* brand.<sup>140</sup> They put the spotlight on positive fallout from migration. Generally speaking, worker migration is praised in the media, for remittances sent by the Malian diaspora are precious, for both families and communities. The media reiterate that these remittances outstrip public development aid received by Mali.

### Irregular migration

Tragedies in the Mediterranean and Sahara are widely commented on social media and in the press in general. However, few media outlets paint a negative vision of irregular migration to their audience. For many media professionals interviewed for this report, migrants demonstrate great courage and perseverance crossing the Sahara and the Mediterranean. It is the case for Boubacar Diarra, who hosts a popular weekly show "Tounka" on *Radio Kledu* and raises public awareness as to the risks of irregular migration.

### Human trafficking

Generally speaking, the Malian media mentions human trafficking rarely if at all. But this situation changed in 2017, when many media outlets reacted to a report on the US news channel *CNN* showing Sub-Saharan migrants in Libya being auctioned like slaves.



<sup>138</sup> Article on Mali Web.net (15/11/2012), "Mali-Spain : un accord de "dupes" sur l'immigration !" (Mali-Spain: a dud agreement on immigration!), URL: <https://www.maliweb.net/societe/immigration-emigration/mali-spain-un-acord-de-dupes-sur-limmigration-105411.html> (in French only)

<sup>139</sup> Article on Mali web (29/07/2021), "Épouses de migrants : une vie de privations et de solitude" (Migrants' spouses: a life of deprivation and solitude), URL: <https://www.maliweb.net/societe/epouses-de-migrants-une-vie-de-privations-et-de-solitude-2937470.html> (in French only)

<sup>140</sup> Article on Mali web, "Diaspora – Malamine Koné, du punch dans le business et sur le ring. PORTRAIT. Armé d'une rare opiniâtreté, Malamine Koné, patron de la marque *Airness*, concilie aujourd'hui sa passion des affaires et celle de la boxe" (Diaspora – Malamine Koné, punching up in business and the ring. PORTRAIT. The perseverant Malamine Koné, CEO of *Airness*, blends his passion for business and boxing), URL: <https://maliweb-malijet.tumblr.com/post/127100981799/diaspora-malamine-kone-du-punch-dans-le> (in French only)

### → The shock of CNN footage showing a migrant “auction”

The scene took place in Libya, outside Tripoli. “Anyone need a miner? He is a miner, a strong guy, he can dig.” In November 2017, CNN broadcast shocking footage of humans being auctioned. A dozen migrants, delivered by smugglers for 500 to 700 Libyan dinars (up to 435 euros). These “sales” take place once or twice a month. This footage went viral, shocking people all over the world. While the authorities did not release exact figures, there were many Malians among these migrants. The newspaper *Le Sursaut* then published a hard-hitting headline on its front page: “Enslaved migrants in Libya: The indignant, the imposters and the stragglers.” This Malian weekly echoed the wave of indignation sparked by the footage of these Black migrants sold like livestock on African soil by Africans. “No to discrimination and the sale of Sub-Saharan migrants in Libya,” was *Le Républicain*’s headline. The Malian daily also covered the press conference organised by Tiken Jah Fakoly, Ivorian superstar and legend, accompanied by the manager of the Malian organisation of expelled migrants (AME) and the organisation *Trop c’est Trop*. He released a statement expressing his indignation, calling on African and global leaders to put an end to this practice. The subject was also abundantly commented in local languages on community radio stations, especially in the general information sessions on Radio Kledu, Radio Djekafo and Studio Tamani. Entire programmes were also focussed exclusively on this news, as was the case for the programme “Tounka” on Radio Kledu with accounts by returning migrants who had been enslaved in Libya.

## Capacity building in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Mali on the theme of migration.

### Review of the various capacity-building initiatives

Practically all capacity-building initiatives are funded by regional and international organisations.<sup>141</sup> For example, Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO) dispensed two training workshops in Bamako, in 2012 and 2013, for the project “No ID, no clichés: better information on migration (MIMIG),” including the production of content. UNESCO has also coordinated several capacity-building sessions, with financial backing from the Italian agency for cooperation and development.

During the discussion group organised with journalists having benefitted from capacity-building initiatives on the theme of migration, several journalists regretted a lack of follow-up. It was the case for Kady Sanogo from online newspaper *Maliweb*, who took part in UNESCO workshops (funded by the Italian agency for cooperation and development) in 2019. Covid-19 was a key factor preventing follow-up, the pandemic having rocked the programme.

Madihawa Kébé from *Radio Ika FM* in Bamako made the same observation. Hailing from Selinkegny in the region of Kayes, Madihawa Kébé is Soninké, an ethnic group known to be the most mobile in Mali. He defended a Master’s thesis at the University of Bamako on the theme: “Migrant contributions to the socio-economic development of Kayes”. Madihawa followed a three-day training workshop in 2021, organised by the Ministry

<sup>141</sup> Article on Mali web (6/12/2021), “Projet d’Information et de sensibilisation sur les risques et dangers de la migration irrégulière : le bilan satisfaisant!” (Project to provide information on and raise awareness of the risks and dangers of irregular migration: a satisfactory outcome!), URL: <https://www.maliweb.net/societe/immigration-emigration/projet-d-information-et-de-sensibilisation-sur-les-risques-et-dangers-de-la-migration-irreguliere-le-bilan-satisfaisant-2955444.html> (in French only)

of Malian Expatriates. The department had promised participants they would receive support for production, which ultimately failed to materialise.

Several journalists interviewed during the discussion group highlighted positive points and some disappointments. In 2019 Salif Diarra, journalist at the online media outlet *Maliactu*, followed a 2-week training session in Bamako, focusing on Sub-Saharan people wishing to emigrate to France. For this training course, Salif Diarra was teamed with a French student from the *École supérieure de journalisme (ESJ)* in Lille, to travel from Mali along migration routes thanks to funding from the *ESJ-Lille*. This was an enriching experience, even if the journalist from *Maliactu* regretted that the article written on their work was shared much more in France than in Mali.

## Findings and recommendations

The granting of funds to the media, aiming to enable journalists specialising in the coverage of migration issues to produce good-quality content, was the recommendation most often formulated during the interviews and discussion groups.

The journalists also wish to attend training sessions on investigative journalism, to then be able to go out on the ground leveraging funds to assist with production.

The duration of training workshops was also debated. The “fast-track courses” lasting two or three days were often criticised. Donors and other organisers of capacity-building initiatives need to make efforts to spread the workshops over several more days, even weeks, divided into several small sessions. The aim being to set an agenda for follow-up

after the workshop, along with the production of content. While the question of online training courses was not mentioned among the participant recommendations in the media discussion group, community journalists may be interested in such training courses given the current context.

Another recurrent request from journalists in the discussion group was the promotion of local languages in the production of content at the end of the workshops. The work is most often in French, at the request of the donor. However, the lack of content in local languages prevents journalists from reaching broad segments of the public. Donors need to remember that they are working in an environment where over 80% of the population cannot read or write, meaning that audio and video media should be preferred.

Ideally, media output may be initiated on the ground, in the thick of migration issues. Once produced, their content needs to be promoted and screened, for example in public schools, universities, at the market or in the homes of young people, with a view to sparking debate and meeting those most affected by these issues.

# Niger

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**1,267,000**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**24.2 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**348,100**  
persons i.e.  
1.4% of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Nigeria**

**Mali**

**Burkina Faso**

**Benin**

**Togo**

**53.5%**  
are  
women

**32.9%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**399,700**  
persons i.e.  
1.7% of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**Nigeria**

**Benin**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Togo**

**Mali**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**2.2% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2021; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

In the early 1990s, Niger embarked on a process to liberalise the media alongside the process to achieve democracy. The first independent media outlets sprang up in 1991 and since then, the media has continued to grow.

At the time of the national conference held from 29 July to 3 November 1991, marking the return of civilians to power in the Nigerien State, independent media amounted to four weekly newspapers: *Haské*, *Moustique*, *Le Républicain* and *Le Démocrate*. With the adoption of a new regime granting freedom of the press in June 2010, alongside confirmation of the depenalisation of offences committed via the press, the Nigerien media landscape is now burgeoning. New TV channels and radio stations have been founded, and new printed and online press outlets created. By 2020, the Nigerien media landscape boasted around 200 radio stations (of which 170 community radio stations and some 30 commercial radio stations), 17 TV channels, over 130 newspapers outlets and over 20 online media outlets.<sup>142</sup> Despite this thriving scene, the Nigerien media landscape faces many challenges, mostly pertaining to the need to build capacity for intervention and media output. In 2017, 10% of the population were Internet users.<sup>143</sup>

## Overview of migration

With a GDP of USD 567.7 per inhabitant in 2020, Niger is ranked 10th among the poorest countries of the planet in 2020.<sup>144</sup> For years, the country has faced significant migration flows. It is both a country of origin, a transit country for Sub-Saharan migrants hoping to reach the Maghreb and Europe, and a destination country, especially for people living in West Africa.

### A country of origin

In the past ten years, Niger has been more a country of emigration than immigration. The percentage of Nigeriens leaving to settle in other African countries, especially neighbouring countries, has been estimated at 1.7% of the population.<sup>145</sup> In 2020, nearly 400,000 emigrants left the country.<sup>146</sup> The breakdown in age shows that many emigrants are young, reflecting the country's demographic structure. Nigerien emigrants mainly head for neighbouring countries, like Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Benin.<sup>147</sup>

The proportion of women among migrants has risen in recent years, for example in the department of Kantché,<sup>148</sup> in the region of Zinder, from which many women leave by irregular means. While the full breadth of the phenomenon is difficult to measure, Mamam Sani Ousmane, mayor of the seven-village rural municipality of Kourni, has listed a total

<sup>144</sup> 2020 data on the national accounts of the World Bank and data files on the national accounts at the OECD

<sup>145</sup> UN DESA (2020): <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

<sup>146</sup> UN DESA (2020): <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

<sup>147</sup> Website Interactive: "World Migration Report 2022" (iom.int)

<sup>148</sup> Article on Aniaméy (2014): "Zinder/Forum social sur la migration clandestine à Kantché : enrayer le phénomène de migration clandestine et ses multiples dangers" (Zinder/Social forum on clandestine migration in Kantché: eliminating clandestine migration and its many dangers), URL: <http://news.aniamey.com/h/17894.html> (in French only)

<sup>142</sup> Media Foundation for West Africa (2021), "Rapport d'étude sur l'état de la liberté des médias dans la sous-région" (Report on freedom of the media in the sub-region), URL: <https://www.mfwa.org/fr/publication/letat-de-liberte-de-la-presse-au-niger-rapport/> (in French only)

<sup>143</sup> World Bank data website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

of 1,119 persons having left the municipality for Algeria of whom 847 children, 201 women, and 71 men.<sup>149</sup>

Transnational crime in the form of human trafficking has ballooned to worrying proportions with smuggler networks, especially in Agadez. Nigerien women and children are recruited then transported to Nigeria, Algeria and Saudi Arabia, where they are forced into domestic servitude, begging and sexual exploitation.<sup>150</sup> According to UNICEF, the victims of human trafficking towards Algeria are mainly adults (often women) accompanied by young girls and boys aged 5 to 12, mostly from the department of Kantché (Zinder region). The minors are often forced to beg.<sup>151</sup> Niger has planned to take action over this phenomenon as part of its 2020-2035 migration policy.

#### A new status as a country of transit

As from 2010, Niger became a key transit country for West African nationals travelling to countries in North Africa (Algeria and Libya) then Europe.<sup>152</sup>

Since 2015, Niger has evolved from its simple role as a migration corridor to that of a pivot country, becoming a key partner of the European Union to systematically control all migration from Nigerien territory.<sup>153</sup> To this end, Niger adopted a fairly complex migration control mechanism, with the adoption of Law 2015-36 to repress “the border crossing industry” at its internal borders.<sup>154</sup> As a result of this policy, migration flows towards the north have dropped off considerably.<sup>155</sup> Certain

citizens from ECOWAS member states see Niger’s current stance as disputing their right to circulate freely within the community.<sup>156</sup>

#### → Focus on return migration

There are two forms of return migration: the return of Nigerien migrants to Niger and the return of foreign migrants in an irregular situation, from Niger to their country of origin. According to the Nigerien institute of statistics’ 2020 report based on data from the national migration report, the returnee migrant population (discounting internal migration) was assessed during the last census in 2012 at 343,800 men and 140,500 women, i.e. 484,300 in all.<sup>157</sup> In 2019, IOM indicated that 49,112 Nigerien migrants were returned from Algeria by official convoy between December 2014 and December 2019. 70% of them were from the Zinder region. IOM also indicated that 8,184 Nigerien migrants were repatriated from Libya by chartered flights, 45% of whom were from the region of Tahoua.<sup>158</sup> As for foreigners in an irregular situation in Niger returning to their country of origin, 42,604 benefitted from IOM assistance for voluntary return (AVR) to return to their country of origin from 2016 to 2019. The majority of these migrants (78%) had previously been expelled from Algeria.<sup>159</sup>

l'intérieur du Niger” [https://migration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/iom\\_niger\\_fouryearreport\\_french\\_digital.pdf](https://migration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/iom_niger_fouryearreport_french_digital.pdf)

<sup>156</sup> Academic article in the Revue des droits de l'Homme, Hamadou A. (2018), “La gestion des flux migratoires au Niger entre engagements et contraintes” (Managing migration flows in Niger, juggling commitments and constraints): <http://journals.openedition.org/revdh/4378>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/revdh.4378> (in French only)

<sup>157</sup> INS (2020) “Rapport sur la migration” (Report on Migration), p. 18: REPORT ON MIGRATION\_fin\_MF\_fin2\_fin3 (stat-niger.org) (in French only)

<sup>158</sup> IOM (2019), “Tendances migratoires en provenance, à destination et à l'intérieur du Niger” (Migration trends from, to and within Niger), 2016-2019 URL: Tendances Migratoires en Provenance, à Destination et à l'Intérieur du Niger: 2016-2019 (iom.int) (in French only).

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>149</sup> Article on Studio Kalangou, “Forum du 11/09/2017 : La migration des femmes et des enfants vers la Libye ou l'Algérie : raisons, conséquences et mesures pour y remédier” (Forum on 11/09/2017: Women and children migrating to Libya or Algeria: reasons, consequences and measures to remedy the situation), URL: [Au rythme du Niger](http://au.rythme.org). (in French only)

<sup>150</sup> US embassy (2017), “Rapport narratif sur la situation de la traite des personnes et le trafic illicite des migrants, Niger” (Narrative report on Trafficking in Persons and the illicit smuggling of migrants, Niger), URL: NIGER-2017-TIP-Report-Narrative-FINAL-20JUNE2017\_French.pdf (usembassy.gov), p. 4-5 (in French only)

<sup>151</sup> UNICEF (2018), “Niger issue brief, protecting children on the move in Niger”, URL: [Issue Brief Children on the Move Niger 2018.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/niger) (unicef.org)

<sup>152</sup> Boyer F., Mounkaila H. (2018), “La Fabrique de la politique migratoire au Niger : les approches sécuritaires et humanitaires au service de la fermeture d'un couloir migratoire” (Making migration policy in Niger: security and humanitarian approaches serving the closure of a migration corridor) (in French only)

<sup>153</sup> Guilyard C., Boyer F., Chappart P. (2019), “Le Niger, nouvelle frontière de l'Europe et laboratoire de l'asile” (Niger, the new EU border and asylum laboratory) (in French only)

<sup>154</sup> Pr Harouna Mounkaila, (2020), “Les conséquences des politiques migratoires sur la libre circulation au Niger” (The consequences of migration policies on free movement in Niger), Lagos (in French only)

<sup>155</sup> IOM (2019), “Tendances migratoires en provenance, à destination et à

#### A destination country and internal migration

348,100 immigrants were established in Niger in 2020, i.e. 1.4% of the total population.<sup>160</sup>

Niger has long been a destination country for ECOWAS nationals seeking work.

Niger also hosts refugees and asylum seekers. In 2020, their numbers were estimated at around 235,000. By 2022, the total population of refugees had reached around 300,000.<sup>161</sup> The increase is due to a massive influx of Nigerian, Malian, Burkinabe and Chadian nationals fleeing the conflict zones to seek refuge in Niger.

Furthermore, climate catastrophe has had a direct effect on Nigerien households in recent years. While environmental migration is mainly internal at this point, it will probably be correlated with cross border displacement in the future, as climate change forces increasing numbers of people to leave their homes. According to a World Bank report (August 2021), Niger looks set to be the country in West Africa with the most internal climate migrants by 2050,<sup>162</sup> unless measures are taken. The main determinants of environmental migration are drought, flooding and natural catastrophes. Research such as that of the IRI<sup>163</sup> showed that the majority of the population depends on subsistence farming, which in turn depends on rainfall. Decades-long periods of drought<sup>164</sup> have had huge repercussions on arable land, with subsistence farming yielding random harvests. According to an EVIAM survey,<sup>165</sup> 39.9% of rural households interviewed were affected by drought in 2015, leading directly to more meagre harvests for 56.8% of them. Climate uncertainty is a burden for households

<sup>160</sup> UN DESA (2021), data available on: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

<sup>161</sup> HCR (2022), data available on Niger (unhcr.org)

<sup>162</sup> World Bank (2021), Groundswell Africa: Internal Climate Migration in West African Countries <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36404?locale-attribute=en>

<sup>163</sup> International Republican Institute (2020), “Migration and Governance in Niger: a Critical Juncture”, p. 12: [https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/niger\\_migration.041320.pdf](https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/niger_migration.041320.pdf)

<sup>164</sup> Niger (2006), “Programme d'actions nationales pour l'adaptation aux changements climatiques” (National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) to adverse effects of Climate Changes), p. 7: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/ner01f.pdf> (in French only)

<sup>165</sup> EVIAM is the National assessment of chronic food insecurity in Niger, conducted nationwide in December 2014 and January 2015 by the National Institute of Statistics (Niger).

dependent on farming.<sup>166</sup> In such situations, those subjected to climate changes have to migrate elsewhere in search of food during the hunger gap.<sup>167</sup>

Lastly, there is little student migration, with only 4,800 Nigerien students in higher education abroad and 2,800 foreign students in Niger<sup>168</sup> in 2017.

<sup>166</sup> Set of academic articles published by Vertigo, a webjournal devoted to environmental sciences, Nassourou L. M., Sarr B., Alhassane A., Traoré S. and Abdourahmane B. (2018), “Perception et observation : les principaux risques agro-climatiques de l'agriculture pluviale dans l'ouest du Niger” (Perception and observation: the main agro-climatic risks for rain-fed agriculture in western Niger), vol. 18, No. 1, May 2018, published online on 25 May 2018, URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/vertigo/20003>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/vertigo.20003> (Abstract only in English)

<sup>167</sup> Data from the International Republican Institute, (2016)

<sup>168</sup> UNESCO (2020), data available on: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

# Migration issues in the Nigerien media and public discourse

## General overview

In Niger, the media coverage of migration issues stepped up in 2013 due to a tragedy uncovered on 2 October: the discovery of 92 corpses of migrants in a convoy of 112 persons, on the Nigerien-Algerian border.<sup>169</sup> The investigation revealed that many of them came from the department of Kantché, in the Zinder region, in the centre-east of Niger. Newspapers, radio stations, TV channels and social media, all featured photos, articles and comments, helping to raise awareness of the phenomenon of migration and the extent of danger in irregular migration. In allusion to the extensive media coverage of this tragic event, IOM had noted the Nigerien media's great interest for the humanitarian tragedy in the sub-title of its 2016 report entitled "Socio-anthropological analysis of a misunderstood phenomenon". Newsrooms unanimously adopted an emotional tone in their content, focussing on irregular migration and its direct consequences.

Nearly ten years later, public and media discourse continue to focus on only a few types of migration: irregular migration and its direct consequences, asylum, and sometimes the internal migration of Nigeriens due to climate catastrophe.

Furthermore, the media rarely let migrants give their point of view. Those consulted all deplored "the media's failure to take their day-to-day experience into account in coverage." They consider that their voices are rarely heard in the media: when migrants do get a rare chance to express themselves in

a media, it is at the request of international organisations, and these organisations keep close watch on their statements.

Lastly, community media outlets produce very little content on the topic of migration. In most instances, journalists merely parrot the official stance and press releases issued by international organisations in charge of migration, like IOM and UNHCR.<sup>170</sup>

A majority of interviewees (10 out of 13) felt that migration is not covered properly by the media. According to Alassane Abdou, Chief Editor of *Studio Kalangou*, "The tone in most coverage tends to disparage both migration and migrants." Terms used to describe migrants in both the media and public discourse are often derogatory: "daredevils", "clandestine" etc. Director of *Radio Alternative Niger* Albert Chaibou, who is also a journalist specialising in migration, saw the "use of certain stereotypes" as proof that "journalists do not have a very good grasp of the question." Media professionals interviewed for this report all deplored a poor grasp of the various migration concepts and issues. This lack of knowledge about concepts is reflected in public discourse, which in turn influences media discourse.

According to Albert Chaibou, "We need to deconstruct the discourse that incriminates migrants, and journalists need to avoid using these clichés. We need to let those primarily affected - the migrants themselves - have their say and contribute their own accounts. This could help us to look past the clichés and stereotypes." Abdoul-Razak Idrissa, President of the Network of journalists for security and migration pointed out that "Journalists don't dig down into the various phenomena to gain insight into the full scope in time and space."

<sup>170</sup> For example, the EU Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs' visit to Agadez: "Visite de la commissaire européenne aux Affaires intérieures et à la Migration : Des échanges enrichissants sur les défis et les enjeux de la lutte contre la migration clandestine" (The EU Commissioner for Interior and Migration Affairs visits for a fruitful discussion of the challenges and issues with pushing back on clandestine migration), article published on 18 February 2022: <https://www.lesahel.org/visite-de-la-commissaire-europeenne-aux-affaires-interieures-et-a-la-migration-a-agadez-des-echanges-enrichissants-sur-les-defis-et-les-enjeux-de-la-lutte-contre-la-migration-clandestine/> (in French only)

<sup>169</sup> IOM (2016), "Socio-anthropological analysis of a misunderstood phenomenon" (in French only)

Looking beyond the lack of understanding of and interest in the concepts, the question of economic hardship among local media outlets is sometimes used to explain the journalists' lack of implication in this topic. Added to which the trouble involved in gaining real-time access to sources of information and resources available on the subject.

## → Trouble gaining access to direct sources of information

On several occasions during the interviews and discussion groups, people brought up the trouble they had gaining access to direct sources while covering hot news.

Half of the participants in the discussion group attended by the former beneficiaries of capacity-building initiatives mentioned that certain international organisations do not facilitate the media's task "since they do not let them have access to information in real time. (...) They exercise excess rigor, and systematically refuse media access to migrants on the various sites."

This situation was criticised in a 2018 Reporters Without Borders publication:<sup>171</sup> "Outside Europe, the picture is even less pretty. Ousmane Oumarou, Director of the radio station Kaoucen, explained that in Agadez, Niger, the hub for Guinean, Nigerien, Malian and Sudanese migrants, "the ground is inaccessible". Even with a press card, the doors to the centre [owned by an international organisation to assist migrants] remain closed, yet, "we know there are thousands of migrants living there in deplorable conditions with barely enough to eat." Difficulties identifying stakeholders in migration issues can be added to these problems. Many journalists do not know their physical addresses to be able to meet them when producing reportage or an investigation.

## Types of migration and their coverage in the media scene and public discourse

### Worker migration

The Nigerien media seldom covers worker migration. This form of migration is mainly mentioned in reference to political discourse from the State authorities (Head of State, Parliament Leader, Prime Minister etc.) regarding Nigeriens having settled abroad.<sup>172</sup> These reports take an admiring tone. As for migrant workers in Niger, they attract little media attention, except for certain important events, for example during visits of heads of state of countries with many nationals in Niger, like Nigeria or Benin.

### Student migration

This type of migration is seldom mentioned in the media. Media and social media publications are often prompted by declarations by Nigerien students asking for their grants to be paid or deploring their study conditions abroad,<sup>173</sup> especially on the radio or television. In media coverage of student migration, journalists use terms such as "the pauperisation of students", "students reduced to begging". These expressions are also used by Nigerien students abroad, during mediated visits.

<sup>172</sup> For example the Nigerien publishing and press office, 22/04/2021: Le Président de la République a rencontré les ressortissants nigériens en marge de visite de travail et d'amitié à Abuja, au Nigeria : d'importants sujets relatifs à la vie de la Nation et autres questions d'actualité abordés" (The President of the Republic met Nigerien nationals on the fringe of a friendly working visit to Abuja, Nigeria: important topics relative to the Nation and other pressing questions addressed), <https://www.lesahel.org/le-president-de-la-republique-a-rencontre-les-ressortissants-nigeriens-en-marge-de-visite-de-travail-et-damitie-a-abuja-au-nigeria-dimportants-sujets-relatifs-a-la-vie-de-la-natio/> (in French only)

<sup>173</sup> For example: "Déclaration de presse des sections USN des Étudiants nigériens à l'étranger du 30 mars 2016" (Statement by USN sections of Nigerien students abroad, 30 March 2016), URL: <http://news.aniamey.com/h/71832.html> (in French only)

<sup>171</sup> Reporters Without Borders (2018), "Refugee routes blocked for reporters as well", URL: [Refugee routes blocked for reporters as well](https://www.rwb.org/en/refugee-routes-blocked-for-reporters-as-well) | RSF

### Asylum and refugees

The question of asylum and refugees is regularly covered. According to the interviews and discussion groups, the radio stations, the TV channels, the newspapers and social media most often mention asylum seekers and refugees using a negative tone and from a superficial angle. Thus, asylum seekers and refugees attending the discussion group reproached the media for not giving them a chance to express themselves and criticized their lack of independence in general.

While media coverage is neutral in various publications on refugees analysed on *Aniamey*, Studio Kalangou and Air Info Agadez, statements collected and cited by the media in their content may still project negative stereotypes if they are not placed in context. The media often mentions friction between refugees and local residents, especially in Agadez, without any nuance and in a too one-sided manner, which may contribute to stigmatisation.<sup>174</sup> However some more thoughtful coverage, like the article “Sudanese asylum seekers in Agadez: the great disillusion” by Amina Manzo Diallo, provided context and gave refugees a chance to speak up.<sup>175</sup> Another point worth noting is that the High Commission for Refugees recently initiated “an awareness-raising caravan to foster a climate of peace among locals, asylum seekers and refugees” to push back on such friction.<sup>176</sup>

### Irregular migration

All types of media taken together, the question of irregular migration is covered the most. According to the interviews and discussion groups, coverage is littered with stereotypes<sup>177</sup> with migrants being referred

to as “clandestine”, without questioning the underlying causes or consequences of migration.

The journalists who attended the discussion group further explained that the Nigerien media systematically repeats public discourse on the subject. Some also emphasised the influence of foreign media on the local media. For freelance journalist Ousseini Issa, this mode of media operation helps to mask an integral part of migration, namely the human dimension.

### Seasonal and environmental migration

Migration triggered by climate change or poor rainfall distribution is often covered in the media, with frequent commentary on the vulnerability of rural people moving to neighbouring countries. Positive aspects of this migration are generally not emphasised. Whereas in Niger, the individuals in question leave their village or country during the hunger gap, after a poor harvest, to seek seasonal work and protect themselves from food insecurity before the next harvest. Most of these migrants come back home and “migrants returning during the rainy season often bring food at a time when granaries are empty and where the hunger gap has already set in.”<sup>178</sup>

### **Practices observed according to type of media**

Whatever the media, there is a dearth of statistics in practically all media coverage.

### Printed and online press

As emphasised during the interviews, facts are outlined superficially and rarely placed in context. There is rarely any analysis of the factors causing migration, as well as current and future consequences. The main reason is that local journalists have trouble gaining access to direct sources of information (see box). Moreover, they are primarily focussed on covering events as they occur. Since they have no access to direct local sources, they simply repeat content produced by foreign media.

Certain media outlets, such as *Le Sahel*<sup>179</sup>, *L'Enquêteur*<sup>180</sup> and *Air Info*<sup>181</sup> do occasionally publish hard-hitting, in-depth articles.

### Television and radio

The coverage of migration issues is even less in-depth on the radio. It is mainly fact-based with said facts being checked at least, but there is little analysis and even less nuance. A more diverse set of reliable sources would be necessary for more in-depth reviews. With respect to radio stations and TV channels, journalists refer to statistics published in speeches and press releases made public by national and international institutions. Migrants are seldom represented; according to the journalists consulted, “Migrants are not encouraged by [certain international organisations] to speak to journalists nor even consider their questions”

However there is some interesting output, like the very many radio reports on migration by *Studio Kalangou*.<sup>182</sup>

### Social media and blogs

On social media, coverage is dominated by emotion. Influencers, and sometimes militants, acknowledge that they do not have the capacity needed to cover this theme, which explained the lack of depth and perspective in what they publish. Nevertheless, they often feel obliged to react further to the discovery of migrant corpses in the desert, or in reaction to media output aiming to raise awareness among Sub-Saharan migrants as to the dangers of irregular migration. There is nevertheless a propensity to make comments that are not backed by data, without nuance or perspective.

<sup>174</sup> For example: the Studio Kalangou report about friction between inhabitants of the Dubai neighbourhood in Agadez and migrants: newscast dated 2 February 2021, URL: <https://www.studiokalangou.org/13900-Idifficile-cohabitation-entre-habitants-quartier-dubai-agadez-et-migrants> (in French only)

<sup>175</sup> For example: an article on Air Info Agadez (29/08/2019), URL: <https://airinfoagadez.com/2019/08/29/demandeurs-dasile-soudanais-a-agadez-la-grande-desillusion/> (in French only)

<sup>176</sup> For more information on the web, see the Studio Kalangou website: <https://www.studiokalangou.org/10872-agadez-une-caravane-de-sensibilisation-pour-instaurer-un-climat-de-paix-entre-autochtones-demandeurs-d-asile-et-refugies> (in French only)

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Laurent, head of La Pastorale des Migrants: “The majority of terms used to refer to migrants are stereotypes devoid of humanity. They are presented as pariahs, dangerous people, clandestines etc.”

<sup>178</sup> Mounkaïla H. (2002), “De la migration circulaire à l'abandon du territoire local dans le Zarmaganda (Niger)” (From circular migration to abandoning local territory in Zarmaganda, Niger), URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/remi/1662#tocto2n4> (in French only)

<sup>179</sup> Le Sahel, “Migration clandestine et trafic de mendiants : un fléau social qui porte atteinte à la dignité humaine” (Clandestine migration and trafficking of beggars: a social scourge, an affront to human dignity), URL: <https://www.lesahel.org/migration-clandestine-et-traffic-de-mendiants-un-fleau-social-qui-porte-atteinte-a-la-dignite-humaine> (in French only)

<sup>180</sup> L'Enquêteur, “Migrants violemment expulsés : le Niger, déversoir privilégié pour l'Algérie” (Migrants violently expelled: Niger, a favourite spillway to Algeria), URL: <https://www.lenqueteur-niger.com/migrants-violemment-expulses-le-niger-deversoir-privilegie-pour-lalgerie/> (in French only)

<sup>181</sup> Air Info Agadez, “Agadez-Bamako-Ouagadougou : La frontière invisible de l'Europe” (Agadez-Bamako-Ouagadougou: Europe's invisible border), 27/08/2019, URL: <https://airinfoagadez.com/2019/08/27/2077/> (in French only)

<sup>182</sup> Studio Kalangou website: <https://www.studiokalangou.org/?s=migration> (in French only)



## Capacity building in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Niger.

### Networking initiatives

In 2015, Nigerien journalists decided to organise networks to work on migration issues, as part of a drive to push back on irregular migration. In the wake of the 2015 Valletta summit, two networks were set up, each attracting journalists from various independent media outlets including printed newspapers, radio stations, TV channels and online newspapers. They did not include online militants or bloggers. Initially, these networks were not able to implement the hoped-for initiatives.

As from 2020, one of the two networks, the Journalists' organisation for security and migration (AJ-JSEM/Niger), working on both security and migration, has received support by way of UNESCO's West Africa office based in Dakar, Senegal, tapping into financial support from the Italian agency for cooperation and development via Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation's *Fondo Africa*. AJ-JSEM/Niger has around 30 members and a seven-member national coordination bureau.

The network has leveraged this support to organise some nationwide activities for journalists and the outlets they work for. It has organised the following:

- a forum in Niamey about good-quality reporting on migration against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic in May 2021. The aim of this forum was to share experiences and best practices among journalists, media professionals, experts in communication, experts in migration and civilian stakeholders, on the issues in good-quality information on migration and the regular production of good-quality editorial content on migration themes.<sup>183</sup> On 14 and 15 June 2022 a second forum took place in Niamey on "The media and migration routes in Niger", and a regional conference has been planned for late 2022;<sup>184</sup>
- production retreats across the country, especially in Agadez and Zinder, two regions much affected by migration, and series of training courses held near where journalists work;
- support for the production and broadcasting of top-quality editorial content, with the setup of *migration desks* (an in-house newsroom department handling information on migration).

This initiative is part of a regional UNESCO project, "Empowering Young People in Africa through Media and Communication", funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, via the Italian agency for cooperation and development. Its impact shall not suffice to cover all the media's capacity-building needs. Out of myriad outlets and a considerable number of journalists, only six media outlets were involved in the project during its first phase.

### Conferences and discussion days for journalists

In 2015, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) organised a discussion day for Nigerien journalists, with an Italian journalist specialising in migration as a guest speaker. The aim was to create a setting conducive to discussion between Nigerien journalists and networking with their Italian colleagues on migration issues to explore collaboration initiatives. This action was deemed useful by the journalists. One Nigerien journalist was especially distinguished by the journalistic work accomplished with his European counterparts. But this initiative has not had a long-term effect and the initial enthusiasm of journalists having launched it has now waned.

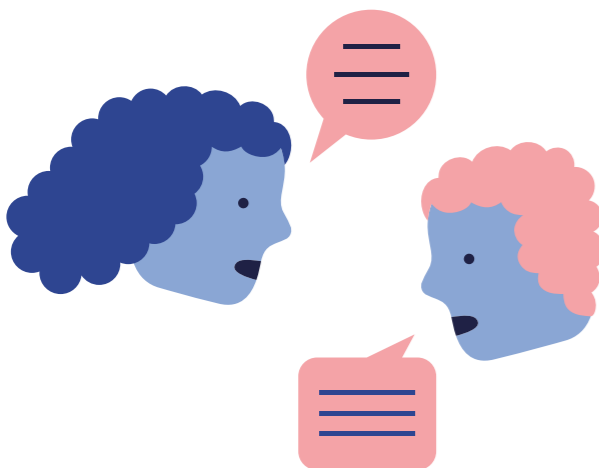
Other communication initiatives have been set up by national organisations. For example, an initiative by the NGO Aide à l'information communautaire (Aid for community news or AIC) led to a communication campaign in Niamey and Agadez on the issue of irregular migration in late 2018. As with previous editions, it aimed to help journalists gain better insight into the types of reliable information migrants needed to help them make useful decisions during their journey. As with other, similar activities, it was limited in that it only helped journalists with one aspect of migration, namely irregular migration and all the measures taken to deal with it.

### Training workshops for journalists and visits on the ground

From 2015 to 2017, Denmark's development cooperation agency (DANIDA) organised a series of training workshops for around 30 professional journalists in both public and private sectors. The themes addressed in these workshops included the question of asylum, and the status of migrants and refugees.

Furthermore, the International Labour Office emphasised the importance of training for journalists in Niamey and Maradi (in the provinces) for the Bridge project. The aim was to leverage partnerships with the media to grow general awareness of interrelations between forced labour and abusive hiring practices, especially in the Nigerien context with the development of human trafficking, targeting migrants in particular.

In addition to training workshops, other on-the-ground initiatives have been organised. The journalists who took part produced reports on migrants in the region of Agadez. This action was innovative since journalists seldom get a chance to go out on the ground. The place chosen and the stakeholders encountered (migrants in an irregular situation, asylum seekers, humanitarian workers etc.) show that these guided tours gave journalists insights into the impact of irregular migration. The limit for this action was that beneficiary journalists only gained insights into one aspect of migration.



<sup>183</sup> Actuniger (May 2021), "Médias et migrations au Niger : lancement d'une initiative pour une information de qualité dans un contexte de Covid-19" (Media and migration in Niger: launch of an initiative for good-quality information in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic) <https://www.actuniger.com/societe/17173-medias-et-migrations-au-niger-lancement-d-une-initiative-pour-une-information-de-qualite-dans-un-contexte-de-covid-19.html> (in French only)

<sup>184</sup> Aniamy (16/06/2022), "Fin du forum sur médias et migration : Des recommandations pertinentes en préludes à la conférence régionale sur les médias et la migration, prévue en septembre prochain à Niamey" (End of the forum on media and migration: pertinent recommendations as a prelude to the regional conference on media and migration, scheduled for next September in Niamey) <https://www.lesahel.org/fin-du-forum-sur-medias-et-migration-des-recommandations-pertinentes-en-preludes-a-la-conference-regionale-sur-les-medias-et-la-migration-prevue-en-septembre-prochain-a-niamey/> (in French only)

### Support for production

Several socio-professional media organisations and international organisations, like the Journalists' organisation for security and migration (AJ-JSEM/Niger), the Association of African Communication Professionals (ACCP) Niger, Panos Institute West Africa and International Media Support (IMS), have organised not only training workshops but also production campaigns, with awards for the best output. Most of these have focussed on irregular migration and its consequences, especially women migrants in the department of Kantché, in the region of Zinder. Community radio stations were involved in these campaigns with a specific programme implemented by the Association of African Communication Professionals (ACCP) Niger.

### Analysis of the impact

As explained above, some of these initiatives have included support for the production of content. The discussion group stressed that in the course of these training courses, "journalists have produced some reports and investigations in remote areas" with "more diverse viewpoints expressed by journalists on the question" as a result.

Overall, these initiatives are pertinent and have enabled beneficiaries to improve their coverage of certain sub-themes of migration, even if irregular migration is still covered most, with the political aim of dissuasion. However, as militant web-journalist Omar Issa pointed out, they are not long enough "to provide journalists with the tools to tackle the many challenges in connection with media coverage of migration issues."



## Findings and recommendations

This review has shown that representations of migration issues in both media and public discourse are often dominated by stereotypes depicting migration and migrants in a negative light.

Public discourse has also been more focussed on irregular migration and its various consequences since the Valletta Summit on Migration. Migration issues were emerging a very frequent rate for some time, with many tragedies in the Nigerien desert, before a period of latency set in, during which only a few reports were published, initiated by local and international stakeholders in charge of migration. Moreover, research for this report has brought to light that the local media has only a relative grasp of the various concepts of migration. Media professionals and migrants deplored this during the interviews and discussion groups. Media outlets are motivated to cover migration issues, but they express a need for support and a framework to work in.

The recommendations below have been formulated by drawing on discussion in the groups organised with journalists and migrants, as well as interviews with key players on the topic of the media coverage of migration.

### Training for journalists

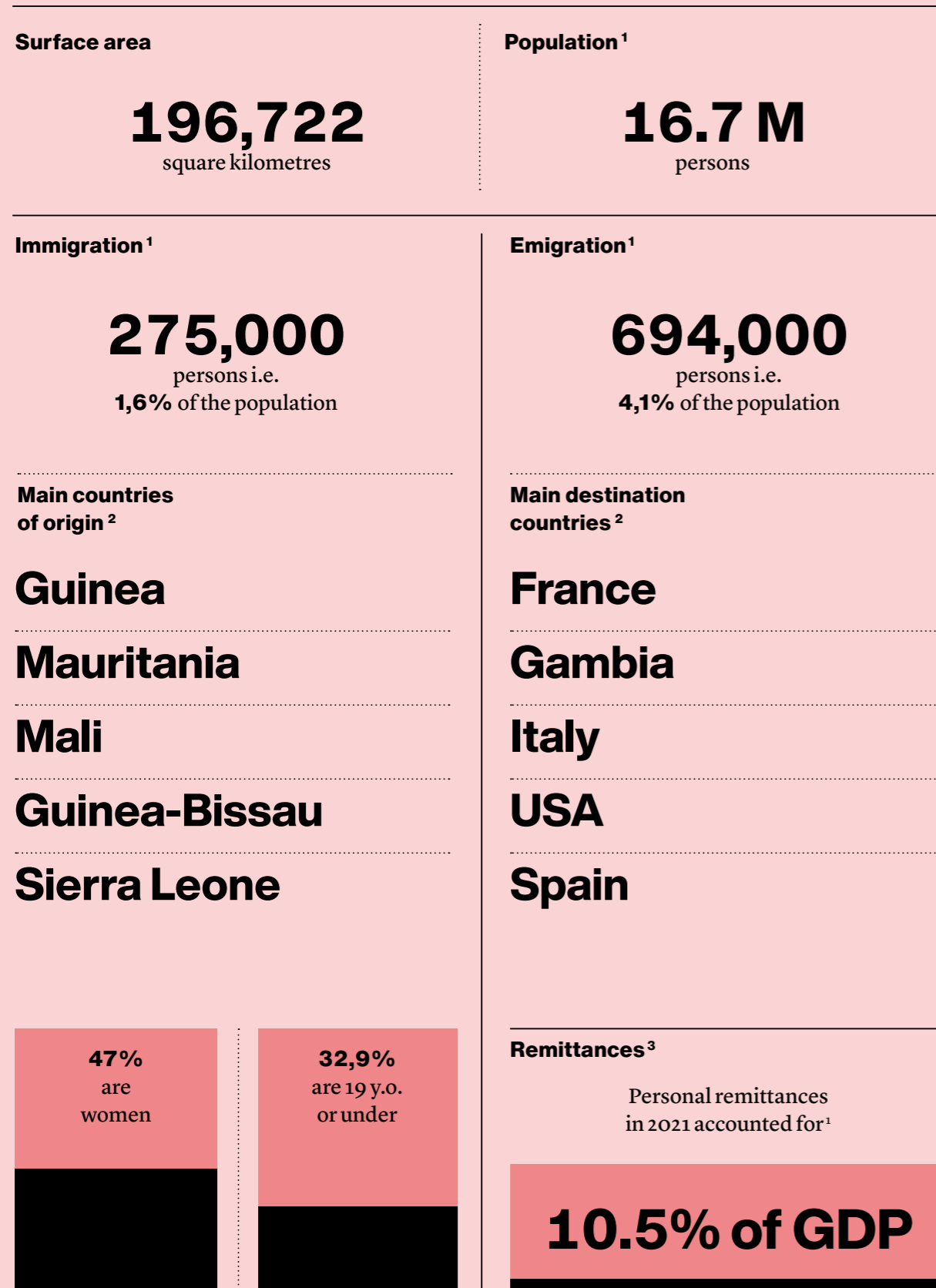
- Initiate theoretical training courses along with hands-on practice at least three times a year in Niamey, Agadez and Zinder. Almost all the contributors in the discussion group felt that hands-on practice is needed alongside theoretical training. "When you put the theory into practice while grappling with reality on the ground, it gives so much more meaning to our work as journalists," maintained for example Omar Kané, journalist at the daily *La Nation*. He also wanted a specialist training course to be set up for journalists on the theme of migration.
- Introduce in situ training courses on all aspects of migration, in preparation for editorial production, lasting at least two weeks for media outlets in Niamey and in the regions most affected by migration phenomena.

### Other actions to improve media coverage on the subject of migration

- Make a multimedia platform available to media professionals, so that journalists can access resources and tools in real time to enhance their output on migration. For example, it may contain a directory of stakeholders dealing with these questions, as well as a database (including statistics) on migration issues.
- Foster "collaborative journalism", namely a form of coproduction, on a theme like migration, with journalists from two or three different countries in West Africa, at least once a year.
- Initiate a media output campaign in certain parts of the country and excursions beyond national borders, at least once a year.
- Shore up media output focussing on migration issues by setting up *migration desks* in newsrooms, and ensuring that media directors are fully involved.

# Senegal

## Key Figures



Sources: 1 - DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2021; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

The Senegalese media landscape comprises at least 30 dailies, and exactly 43 general-interest radio stations, 172 community radio stations (over 400 radio frequencies attributed in all), and nearly 20 TV channels on digital terrestrial television (DTT).

The online press is very well developed, as are online news channels. With over 31 online news websites, out of the 130 registered with the Ministry of Communication (source MICOM, September 2022), the Senegalese media landscape also features a great number of news websites which are not all that reliable and seek above all to attract traffic.

Whereas private media outlets let all political viewpoints be expressed, state television continues to focus chiefly on the parties within the Presidential majority. TV and radio outlets in the *Futurs Médias* and *D-Media* groups have the largest audiences in the capital, Dakar. Newspapers have low circulation, because they cannot be published across the entire national territory, and are primarily limited to Dakar.<sup>185</sup> In 2020, 43% of the population were Internet users.<sup>186</sup>

## Overview of migration

Given the lack of a reliable statistics tool, it is only possible to glean a certain number of trends in this country with a strong tradition of emigration, transit and immigration dating back to colonial times.

### Senegal, host country

The political stability of the country makes it an attractive destination in West Africa. Senegal thus hosts immigrants, most of whom come from neighbouring countries. The majority of immigrants have settled in the region of Dakar in Senegal (275,000 in all, see above). Most of the foreigners are children and young, working-age adults (15-34 years). The relatively high numbers of children among foreign residents probably indicates that family reunification is common, with families settling for good. The majority of foreigners residing in Senegal have not been educated (59.2%) as opposed to 15.3% having received primary school education (Senegalese Agency of Statistics and Demography or ANSD-IOM / Profile migration 2018).

### Senegal, country of origin

A considerable percentage of the population is affected by emigration (4.1% see above), with south-south flows (248,198 / 46.4%)<sup>187</sup> especially heading towards other West African countries (203,076 / 38%), and south-north flows towards industrialised countries in Europe (France: 115,909 / 21.74%), Italy: 79,102 / 14.83%, Spain: 59,072 / 11.08%) and North America (USA: 13,173, / 2.47% and Canada 2,903 / 0.54%).

Emigration affects all layers of the working population. Emigrants come mainly from the region of Dakar, Matam, Saint-Louis, Diourbel and Thiès. Irregular emigration especially

<sup>185</sup> Media outlets rely on data from Reporters Without Borders.

<sup>186</sup> World Bank data website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

<sup>187</sup> National migration policy of Senegal (2018), p. 141

involves young people from working-class neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities and rural areas.<sup>188</sup>

### A growing number of women

The proportion of women is increasing, one of the chief new characteristics in the dynamics of international migration, and Senegal is no exception: “Previously, women used to migrate to a different country primarily to study or join their husbands who had already settled abroad for the long-term. As from the 2010s, women started emigrating alone, actively and independently, seeking a better economic and social status” (ANSD and IOM / Profile migration 2018).

### Worker migration

Most migration from/to Senegal is for the purpose of work. The majority of migrant workers in Senegal work in the informal sector (agriculture, commerce, services etc.); it is their main source of employment. Given free movement within the sub-region and flows of irregular migration from Senegal, it is very difficult to quantify worker migration exactly.

### Diaspora contributions to development

Transfers from the Senegalese diaspora have reached considerable proportions in the past few years, hitting 1.5% of GDP in 2020.<sup>189</sup> Money is sent from many different countries, predominantly France, followed by Spain. In Africa, the Gambia, Mauritania and Gabon are the main countries from which remittances are received. However, the IOM report indicated that “The contribution of Senegalese expatriates in economic investment is relatively low. Most money transfers from emigrants are used by their households of origin to purchase everyday consumer goods”.<sup>190</sup>

### Irregular migration

From 2015 to 2018, Senegal was one of the African countries (behind Nigeria, South Africa and Somalia) from which the most migrants

set out for Greece, Italy and Spain.<sup>191</sup> As from 2011, the “desert route” (Niger/Algeria/Libya, towards Europe) became increasingly popular. Then, as from the mid-2010s, migrants increasingly used an alternative route by sea to the Canaries.<sup>192</sup> In the first eight months of 2021, IOM recorded 9,386 persons arriving in the Canary Islands by sea, i.e. an increase of 140% compared to the same period in 2020 (3,933 persons).

### Return migration

According to the IOM’s 2018 migration profile: “Return migration is an unknown variable, since there is a dearth of adequate data. There is no centralised system to log returning migrants and determine their exact number or sociodemographic and economic profile, which could serve as a database for monitoring, support and the creation of reinsertion projects.”<sup>193</sup>

The factors determining return, as well as the conditions in which it takes place and how the returning migrants feel about it, are still poorly documented, and none of it is centralised. IOM has precise statistics but only for the returnees having benefitted from its assistance, which amounted to 3,023 persons in 2017 (IOM migration profile, 2018).

### Student migration

Approximately the same number of students head abroad as come to Senegal (around 15,000 each way). Student immigration is almost exclusively intra-African (the main countries of origin being Côte d’Ivoire, Morocco, Ghana, Mali and Togo), while Senegalese students tend to leave the continent. The main destinations are France, Canada, the USA and Saudi Arabia, and just one country in Africa, as an exception: Morocco.

### Asylum

Nowadays, asylum is a fairly marginal phenomenon. Most of the 16,000 refugees in

Senegal are from Mauritania, because Senegal took in a number of displaced persons further to border skirmishes between the two countries in the late 20th century (1989-1991). These refugees have primarily settled in the border region of Saint-Louis, and most have expressed the wish to return to their country of origin.<sup>194</sup>

### → Environmental migration: an imprecise report

Climate change has had visible impact for over a decade in several regions of Senegal, in the form of coastal erosion, a drop in rainfall in Casamance, and disrupted rainy seasons that now start and end at different times. Rivers have silted up and even dried up completely in the region of Kolda.<sup>195</sup> But as emphasised by Alassane Diallo in his thesis: “Climate change alone is generally not enough of a reason to migrate, especially when it happens gradually. It is a factor that interacts with other contextual factors such as socioeconomics, culture, demographics, politico-institutional issues and the environment in migration processes, exacerbating the people’s initial vulnerability.”<sup>196</sup> Hence the difficulty, in Senegal as elsewhere, in measuring reality and the specific impact of environmental migration. Lastly, IOM’s regional office for West and Central Africa has an Environmental Migration Officer in Dakar who has launched several reports and programmes in this field.<sup>197</sup>

### Migration policies

The Senegalese authorities laid the foundations for a migration policy in the mid-2010s, thanks largely to IOM funding and encouragement.

Professor of sociology Mamadou Dimé, who conducts research in the Department of Sociology at the University Gaston Berger in Saint-Louis (Senegal), criticised this national migration policy in a report which was widely mediated in 2020 in cooperation circles.<sup>198</sup> Mamadou Dimé drew up a harsh review: “There is no structure in Senegal to address migration across the board, looking at emigration, internal migration and immigration. (...) Given this lack of institutional coordination, there is no framework to oversee migration initiatives, leading to a chaotic multiplication of overlapping and duplicate initiatives, programmes and projects. It prevents the emergence of a clear, consistent policy to ensure governance with regard to issues and challenges posed by migration.”<sup>199</sup>

The professor observed paradoxically that in Senegal, “migration is now the recipient of plenty of funding.” He added:

<sup>188</sup> IOM (2019), “Migration Report”

<sup>189</sup> Data available on the website Data Portal: International Data | Migration Data Portal/

<sup>190</sup> IOM (2018), “Migration in Senegal: Country profile”, URL: Migration in Senegal: country profile 2018 | IOM Publications Platform

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>193</sup> IOM (2018), “Migration Profile Senegal, 2018”, URL: mp\_senegal\_2018\_fr.pdf (iom.int)

<sup>194</sup> IOM (2018), “Migration in Senegal: country profile”, URL: Migration in Senegal: Country profile 2018 | IOM Publications Platform

<sup>195</sup> IOM, M. Dimé and C. T. Wade (March 2019), “Étude sur les opportunités de création d’emplois favorisant l’adaptation des territoires au changement climatique pour les migrants de retour au Sénégal” (Report on opportunities for job creation in a bid to help territories adapt to climate change for migrants returning to Senegal - in French only)

<sup>196</sup> A. Diallo (2019), thesis: “Changement climatique et migrations humaines au Sénégal : une approche en termes de vulnérabilité du système socio-écologique” (Climate change and human migration in Senegal : an approach in terms of social-ecological system vulnerability), Revue de la régulation, autumn 2019 (in French only)

<sup>197</sup> The IOM website: <https://rodakar.iom.int/migration-environment-and-climate-change>

<sup>198</sup> M. Dimé and H. Böll Foundation (2019), “Projets et programmes migratoires au Sénégal : Dakar” (Migration projects and programmes in Senegal: Dakar), May 2020, Projets et programmes migratoires au Sénégal : une avalanche de financements pour des résultats mitigés” (Report on migration projects and programmes in Senegal from 2005 to 2019: an avalanche of funding for mitigated outcomes - in French only)

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8

“It is the strategic aim of donors, especially in the European Union and its member states, that have determined political choices and migration programmes in Senegal. So it’s hardly surprising that the projects and programmes implemented from 2005 to 2019 focus almost exclusively on regulating irregular emigration by dissuading potential migrants from leaving, and assisting with returns, which are the main pillars of European migration policy. Sub-regional migration has barely been considered.”

The question of irregular migration is a staple item on the agenda of diplomatic relations with the European Union – specifically with France, Spain and Italy – and as such has been a priority for public authorities since the 2000s. Professor Mamadou Dimé has criticised this however, taking a stance that is shared by a fair number of Senegalese civilians: “While the position adopted by the Senegalese authorities has forged a reputation as a ‘good pupil’ and ‘conciliatory collaborator’ on migration issues for Senegal in the eyes of the European Union, it is increasingly contested by local stakeholders involved in migration issues.”



## Migration issues in the media and public discourse

### General overview

According to Birame Faye, Programme Coordinator at Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO), “migration is a major topic of interest for the media in Senegal. But generally speaking they react to events, depending on the extent of catastrophes.”

According to interviews and discussion groups conducted for this report, the media gives migration phenomena considerable coverage, but it is often superficial, focussing on tragedies in connection with irregular emigration. Clichés and stereotypes continue to prevail and there is a need to let migrants have their say. Among the factors explaining these shortfalls, the lack of media knowledge of migration, the lack of investigations and reports on the ground and a tendency to only cover the negative aspects of migration. The report concluded this section with a focus on the essential role of community radio stations and social media in the media coverage of migration in Senegal.

### Partial coverage lacking depth

Ibrahima Anne, Chief Editor of *WalFadjri* (a privately-owned daily newspaper) emphasised: “The newsrooms are generally not much inclined to cover migration issues because these topics don’t tend to generate sales, unless there is a tragedy! So commercial considerations take precedence.”

Codou Loume, who works as a reporter for *Radio Oxy Jeunes FM* (community radio established in Pikine, an outer suburb of Dakar) and is President of the international women’s network (AMARC-RIF), specified that “the media do address migration issues, but there’s no balance: the subject is important, and yet it only comes up when there are tragedies. And even then, only the sensational aspect is discussed.” This journalist is all the more sensitive to the subject because she works for

a community radio that covers the suburbs of Dakar, especially Pikine and Thiaroye which are greatly affected by irregular emigration. She added: “The zone we operate in is much affected by migration - Kayar, Thiaroye, Yarakh – were the first regions to be affected by irregular emigration, with mass departures and also dozens and even hundreds of deaths. With ever more frequent shipwrecks, people have started to come on the radio to discuss it, as well as to gain insight. Despite this interest, radio stations have not given much time at all to irregular migration. There’s no desk or specialist, only coverage without a well-defined editorial line.” Ultimately, the radio journalist estimated that “only a few decent journalists cover the question or attempt to investigate migration. The newsrooms don’t consider it important.”

While radio stations and TV channels provide fairly superficial coverage of migration issues, they do sometimes compensate for this lack of interest by scheduling interactive programmes on these topics, which give listeners and viewers a chance to speak up. There are even programmes in which migrants can express themselves, such as “Parole de migrants: Senegal, c’est nous” on *Radio Gabou* and *Radio Oxy Jeunes FM*, broadcast in 2020.

Mamadou Diouf, Coordinator of the Social forum and the Citizen’s platform for migration, freedom of movement and the right to asylum, agrees with Codou Loume: “Coverage of migration is in the petty crime section; it’s sensational, it fails to address underlying issues, or addresses them superficially, at radio stations, on TV channels and in the online and printed press.” He added: “Often, when stakeholders write about the issue, they simply repeat the wording of dispatches. They are not able to analyse the question and content themselves with describing the sensational aspect.” Commercial considerations in the newsroom discourages coverage of migration because it doesn’t attract much of an audience, except for reports of migration disasters.

### The persistence of clichés and stereotypes

According to Marie Madeleine Sakho, in charge of protection at HCR Senegal: “The stereotypes we hear are often tinged with pity or draw portraits of troublemakers who are not welcome in their home country.” Fatou Laye Mbaye Diop, a reporter for *Zik FM*, a private radio in Dakar, stated that “Migrants are often seen as desperate, jobless and uneducated. Journalists seldom wonder about the reasons prompting people to emigrate.” Sociologist M. Dimé cites the example, often cited in Senegal, of stigmatisation towards Nigerians: “When you speak of Nigerians, very often, people mention fraud, swindling, scamming attempts on Internet and prostitution.” Neighbours from Guinea are given the same treatment: “‘They steal our jobs’, ‘they have invaded Dakar’ and so on. In public opinion, Guineans and Malians are sometimes referred to as ‘Niak’ (forest dwellers), a derogatory, othering expression to describe foreigners, and the media tend to echo this.”

Taking a political stance, Mamadou Diouf, Coordinator of the Social forum and the Citizen’s platform for migration, freedom of movement and the right to asylum, estimated that the image of African emigrants is partly shaped by western media systems: “Dispatches from major press agencies in the north are repeated by local press outlets in a spirit of stigmatisation, viewing Africa as a poor place that young people desert.”

In our interviews and discussion groups, one request was very often cited more than all others: to remember to speak positively of migration. It is important to “praise success stories. Show that it is possible to succeed in Senegal,” declared Marina Mancabo from the Migration and development network (REMIDEV) founded in 2008 by 30 civil society organisations working on migration.

### Migrants insufficiently listened to

Many of our interviewees noted that migrants were insufficiently listened to or taken into account. Journalist Joe Marone who works as a department head at *Radio Futurs Medias (RFM)*, the private radio in Dakar attracting the most listeners, explained that “migrants rarely have a say. The authorities and NGOs speak for them.” Alpha Seydi Ba, Senior Communications Officer for the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, agreed with this observation: “Often, there is zero room for nuance. Migrants should be the main character in their own story. Rather than speculate on health and security risks, or whatever, that are ascribed to migrants, we need to insist on the human aspect.”

Migrants having expressed their opinions during a discussion group organised for this report also contributed their viewpoint on their relationship with the media. A member of the Senegalese diaspora collective (CSD) and the Collective of Senegalese expatriates (CSE), confirmed the lack of interest shown by journalists towards migrants: “We see many media workers at our meeting on 18 December to mark International Migrants Day, but they are solely interested in political aspects of the event. They write superficial reports, then forget about us until the date comes round again.”

One Senegalese migrant who had to leave his host country, Côte d’Ivoire, during the 2010-2011 crisis, recounted: “We experienced hard times, for ourselves and our families, and as foreigners, there was nobody to recount our stories to. We had to deal with our frustrations and pain. There were some tough situations. [...] Things we have suffered in silence because nobody was interested in us. Neither the Ivorian media, nor the Senegalese.”

### A lack of knowledge, and few if any specialists in migration

When asked about the reasons for shortfalls in the media coverage of migration, our interviewees first mentioned a lack of knowledge and training for journalists.

El Hadji Saidou Nourou Dia, expert in communication, stressed that “reporting skills are fairly limited on these questions.” A poor grasp of vocabulary and confusion between the various types of migration are frequent. The lack of specialists in migration issues is glaringly obvious on television and radio, when hosts of *talk shows* rather than journalists are the ones to mention these questions in response to listeners during phone-in programmes.

### A lack of investigations and reports

Joe Marone heads up the ICT Department at *RFM*, a private commercial radio (the top radio in terms of audience) which emits from Dakar. He has participated in many training workshops. Above all, he defends reporting and investigation as the means to gain insights into migration issues: “Everything the European media tell us about migration, we recap in our media because our journalists don’t go out into the field to check information for themselves. We’d have to go to Spain or Italy to see what the migrant experience is like there.”

A member of the Coalition of workers in small-scale fishing in Saint Louis, which is committed to local awareness-raising about irregular migration which affects a number of families, also blames the media for their absence on the ground: “On the question of irregular migrants for example, we would like to see our journalists come to us for more detailed explanations. Even better, for them to go to Spain to see how the Senegalese who have succeeded in crossing live over there.”

### The essential role of community radio stations and social media

The importance of community radio stations is too often played down. The Union of associative and community radio stations (URAC), with 102 radio station members, is active in all 14 administrative regions, and its members broadcast in all languages spoken in the country. As evidenced by the journalist Codou Loume above, these radio stations know how to address their listeners in a style they can relate to.

On a subject like migration, these radio stations catering to local neighbourhoods, communities, women and young people, and/or rural radio stations are especially important vectors for information and were often mentioned during the discussion groups and interviews conducted for this report. Apart from their ability to connect with the public, “they speak more easily of migration, because the subject is of interest to them, as it is for thousands of families,” according to Marina Mancabo, from the network REMIDEV. Likewise, Gilles Herbert Fotso and Birame Faye, Project Coordinator and Regional Media Coordinator respectively at IPAO, emphasised that: “Community radio stations are very important because they take an interest in these questions from a social vantage point. They take a different view of migration, especially bearing in mind the all-essential contributions from the diaspora. Furthermore, they speak to their audience in the local language.” Thus, community radio stations have an essential role to play in the media coverage of migration issues, taking a local approach with a more humane, upbeat angle.

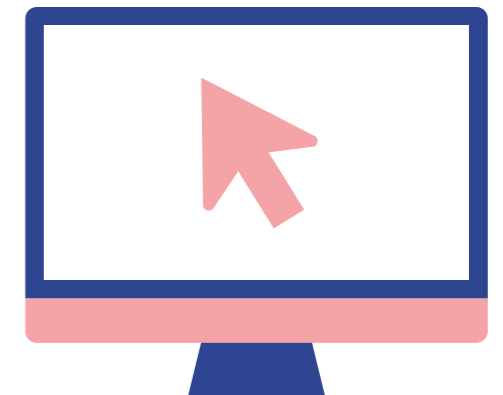
As for social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), their importance as an essential vector for information no longer needs to be proven. In the specific sphere of migration, it needs to be examined in-depth, given how much news is dispersed. We do not have a list of bloggers or influencers specialising in migration. As in mainstream media, the subject crops up periodically but social media remains

an essential resource for information, as evidenced by several migrants in our discussion groups.

*K. A., a Togolese immigrant*, explained that “Social media is usually our go-to source of information, in our home countries and Senegal. Especially YouTube. But there is also the TV channel *France 24*.”

*L. B., an Ivorian immigrant* added that “It is great to follow our national media to keep abreast of the news. We get copies on WhatsApp. But while social media does help us a lot, there is manipulation too. We gather a lot of info on social media, but we listen and read with a critical mind until we can double-check it all.”

So, social media is primarily a source of information, but not necessarily reliable since fake news is sometimes published.



## Media coverage according to type of migration

### Worker migration

The “worker migration” angle is hardly ever addressed by the media, all the more because the journalists have few tools to gain a grasp of this type of migration and its economic dimension.

### Irregular migration

This type of migration is covered a lot by the media, but coverage is often of poor quality and reinforces stereotypes. In line with public opinion, the media tend to relate failures and tragedies. But once the migrants have arrived at their destination, they generally enjoy a certain degree of empathy from the media, which praises their courage and their contributions to the country of origin (whether financial or material), as with all members of the diaspora.

### Family migration

This dimension of migration is significant, yet is ignored by all media. In recent times, we have not seen any reports or full investigations mentioning family reunification, for example.

### Student migration

This phenomenon is hardly ever covered by the media.

### Asylum (asylum seekers and refugees)

The phenomenon is rarely covered.<sup>200</sup> The theme of asylum periodically gets media coverage on occasions such as World Refugee Day, or when the possible return of refugees to Mauritania is being debated.

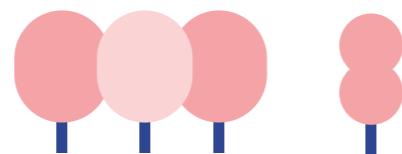
<sup>200</sup> Conclusion drawn from the interview with Marie Madeleine Sakho, Protection Officer at HCR

# Capacity building in the media

Senegal, especially Dakar, is an important place for journalist training nationwide, but it is also a focal point for the entire sub-region. Dakar also hosts the regional offices of several organisations like the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNESCO, Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO), and media outlets like *West Africa Democracy Radio*.

Since the early 2000s, hundreds of journalists have benefitted from training courses organised by independent institutions like IPAO and international organisations like IOM or UNESCO. The European Union is an important donor in terms of funding these initiatives.

→ **Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of 20 capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Senegal from 2015 to 2022.**



## Review of the various initiatives

Most of the many workshops listed were organised in Dakar and focussed on irregular migration. There were some ground-breaking initiatives such as that organised by UNESCO, to broaden the scope of training courses. Joshua Massarenti, Regional Project Coordinator at the UNESCO office in Dakar, explained that “A number of NGOs, under the umbrella of IOM and the United Nations, have organised a series of training courses focussing mainly on irregular migration, and funded by the European Union (...) We wanted to move beyond this sphere and do something different.” With financial support from the Italian Agency for cooperation and development (AICS), UNESCO has thus harnessed its training courses to address the question of youth employment and free movement among ECOWAS member states (see Appendix 2). “We need to examine the underlying causes of irregular migration: one of the main reasons for leaving in this sub-region is the lack of employment,” Joshua Massarenti continued. “So we attempted to gain insight into why young people leave. Hence the idea of a series of workshops on this theme.”

Leveraging its experience, Panos Institute West Africa has also developed the technical and practical aspect of its training courses. According to Birame Faye, Programme Coordinator: “The workshop always includes two sections: a technical section looking at investigation and oral accounts, and a themed section comprising the aspects of migration we want to share, inviting resource people. Journalists also need assistance with hands-on practice and applying what they have learned. Which is why we invite experienced journalists to take on a mentoring role for journalists [to support their production]. But there is a difficulty: relations between the mentor and the newsroom are not always smooth. They are not always in a position to guide their mentee, unless they have editorial responsibility at the media outlet.”

Capacity-building projects are also developed at an interregional scale as evidenced by Joe

Marone, ICT Director at *Radio Futurs Medias*: “I started working on migration after a training course with IPAO. I was able to travel to Lyon, as part of a training course. In 2013, I also went to Switzerland for EQDA [on a journalist exchange programme between Switzerland and other countries, organised by En Quête D’Ailleurs] to see how migration issues are addressed in both North and South.<sup>201</sup> We do it in their country, then they come to see what we do.”

Lastly, the Journalists’ organisation for security and migration (AJMS/Senegal)<sup>202</sup> and IOM<sup>203</sup> have awarded several prizes in recent years for the best reportage on migration. According to Daouda Gbaya, President of the AJMS: “We had asked journalists to write more than a mere dry-facts report and to try more in-depth articles with investigative reporting. The jury had insisted on documentation, identification of sources and work on the ground.”

## Analysis of initiative impact

It is difficult to measure the actual impact of all these training courses in either Senegal or the sub-region, but it is evident that as of today there are only a handful of specialist journalists regularly covering migration. Media coverage of migration remains periodic and patchy, especially bearing in mind the full extent of efforts rolled out in the sphere of training.

<sup>201</sup> Radio report by EQDA, “L’accueil des requérants d’asile en Suisse” (Hosting asylum seekers in Switzerland), URL: <https://eqda.ch/articles/laccueil-des-requerants-dasile-en-suisse/> (in French only)

<sup>202</sup> Facebook Page of the Association of journalists in migration and security in Senegal (AJMS): <https://fr-fr.facebook.com/pages/category/Organization/Association-des-journalistes-en-migration-et-securite-au-senegal-AJMS-1194736077283193/> (in French only)

<sup>203</sup> Publication on the IOM website, “Reporting Migration Competition: IOM Awards 9 Senegalese Journalists”, URL: <https://rodakar.iom.int/news/reporting-migration-competition-iom-awards-9-senegalese-journalists>

### The influence of national and international donors on the media coverage of migration

Another point that was frequently brought up: the influence of national and international donors on the choice, angles and methods used by Senegalese journalists to cover migration. Codou Loume from *Oxyjeunes FM*, a community radio in Dakar, sums up this critique well: “Very few take an interest in the theme unless there is support from international financial partners. Some of those who lack training will merely follow the agenda set by certain sponsors.” They produce subjects on trafficking, for example, but solely when donors launch a campaign or a course on the topic. They sign up for the programme and the donor’s short-term goals, without really following through.



### The problems raised by the initial level and selection of beneficiaries

Among the factors curbing the effects of capacity-building initiatives, some pointed out the initial low level of certain beneficiary journalists. Alpha Seydi Ba, Senior Communications Officer at the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, the main stakeholders in training in this field, was harsh in his criticism: “In recent years, IOM has trained some 2,000 journalists in the sub-region. Training courses with both theory and practice. I have been participating in training courses for journalists on these questions for 20 years. I am still not satisfied with the outcome and have come to the following conclusion: two or three training courses are not enough to make a good journalist. There are ethical issues that journalists are aware of, or not. Without this basic knowledge, the same errors are repeated. They talk of “clandestine” migration, the articles are biased and so on.”

Hamadou Tidiane Sy, journalist and Director of l’E-jicom, a private school of journalism in Dakar, confirmed: “Whether we’re discussing migration or any other subject, it is first and foremost a matter of journalism. Which implies a grasp of the basics as well as the code of ethics.”

Fara Mendy, Organisation Officer at AJMS, also points to the problem with selecting beneficiaries who are sometimes not really interested: “There are journalists who are obviously interested in the theme, but there are others who are there for a per diem payment or because the person inviting them is fairly influential and the Chief Editor insists on you going. So there are journalists finding out about the terms of reference in the classroom and who are not prepared in the least for the workshop. Then you see journalists taking part in all sorts of workshops, which each cover the same themes but at the end of the day, they still haven’t retained a thing. So informed choices have to be made with respect to participation and some people maybe even need to be excluded.”

### Many short training courses with genuine but limited impact

The majority of journalists having benefitted from past capacity-building projects emphasise that expectations regarding the impact of short training courses should not run too high. According to Sagar DIOP, journalist at *La Gazette*: “The training courses are not sufficient in and of themselves. It is merely a starting point. Once the journalist’s awareness has been raised, they need to do the rest, performing documentary research, seeking out sources, creating a database etc.” Joe Marone, ICT director at *Radio Futurs Medias*, personally regrets the lack of support after the training: “Often we have two or three days of training but after the course it just stops. There is no support, there are no mentors to help you.”

While limited, the short training courses are appreciated for the basic notions taught and the wake-up call that there is a point in covering this complex theme. According to Fatou Laye Mbaye Diop, investigative reporter and anchor at *Zik FM Dakar*: “Sometimes [during training courses], we don’t have the time to develop themes, but the discussions are an opportunity to enhance our output. And above all, these training courses are great for making sure we use the right terminology for migration, choosing the right words, without conflating.” Another journalist at *West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR)*, also recounted: “There have been training courses with IOM where we learned that migration is not just about Africans leaving the continent for Europe, and in fact there are even more migrants leaving for other countries in Africa. This has changed my perspective on this question. My newsroom has also changed its tack.”

Among the journalist interviewees having benefitted from former capacity-building initiatives, most had participated in several short training courses run by various organisations, which raises the problem of a form of saturation on this theme. Codou Loume, journalist at *Radio Oxy Jeunes FM*, still remained upbeat: “I don’t think it’s wrong to do several training courses. They are not always

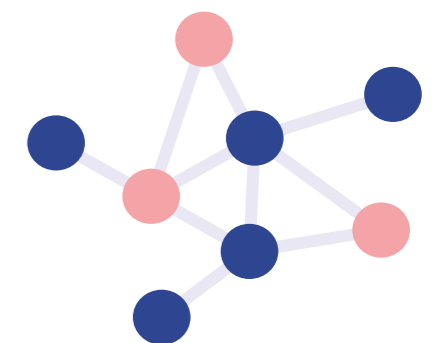
exactly identical. And I do think there is an educational point in repetition and taking one training course after another helps to make progress and specialise.”

### The advantage of networking with resource people

One satisfactory point regarding capacity-building projects was highlighted by journalists: they had the advantage of meeting migration stakeholders. Fara Mendy, journalist member of AJMS, recounted: “At IPAO training courses, documentation is handed out and we get help with identifying sources. Subsequently, I met people from the Ministry, and migrants, and that has helped me gain a firmer grasp of migration issues. And this article grabbed the attention of government officials who reacted to the fact that there was no national migration policy.”

### The point of organising awards for media output on migration

The President of the Journalists’ organisation for security and migration (AJMS/Senegal) explained that “I organised an Award for the best reportage on migration in 2018 and 2021. We noticed a certain evolution among journalists, with a better grasp of the subject. We also noticed that previously, migration issues were not at all a priority. But we now see that the newsrooms take more of an interest in this subject. They relate the tragedies, but there is also an interest in the victims, their life stories are told and interest is shown in how they organised their expedition.”





## Findings and recommendations

Several general recommendations emerged from our interviews and discussion groups:

- speak more about inter-African migration, as recommended by Fatou Laye Mbaye Diop Diop (*Zik FM/Sen TV*) and Marina Mancabo from network of associations REMIDEV (Migration and development network);
- develop the “positive aspects” of migration as requested by Jacques Ngor Sarr, administrator of the “*media post*” website, even if “positive journalism” sparks heated debate. This concept has not gained unanimous approval across the profession, since some think it skews reality by accentuating only success stories and positive initiatives, and thus glossing over the sheer complexity of the phenomena in question;
- train reporters and investigators and encourage trips on the ground, to meet migrants;
- above all use reportage and investigation as a means of gaining a decent grasp of migration issues;
- train all media players, not only journalists. Given his wealth of experience, Alpha Seydi Ba, Senior Communications Officer at the IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, suggested reorientation for more effective awareness-raising about migration in the media: “Turnover among journalists is huge. We need to target newsrooms rather than individual journalists. This is what we want to start doing with the United Nations: work not just with journalists in workshops but with the entire media outlet, taken as a whole”;
- provide follow-up and assessment of projects *a posteriori*, especially in the case of support for production;
- lastly, there are many training courses to be developed among community radios. Daouda Gbaya, President of the Journalists’ organisation for security and migration (AJMS/ Senegal), asserted that “These community media outlets cover regions where there is room for improvement in awareness-raising.

Institutions such as UNESCO have started to work with these radios, but much remains to be done.”

### → Comparing notes between the South and the North

Interview with Gilles Herbert Fotso, Project Coordinator at Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO, Dakar): “See how the majority of accounts on migration, in the international press, usually start at sea. Don’t you think this comes across as people in the North dictating the narrative of the South? Similarly, debates on migration take place in the North, and yet these debates are of immediate concern to us.

“I watch *France 24* and *TV5* and I read *Jeune Afrique*, I am influenced by these media, by *RTS*, *Radio-V* in Senegal and *Africable*, the private, pan-African channel based in Bamako, Mali.

“Perhaps we should gather journalists from both South and North for them to work together, confronting their points of view and gaining deeper insights.”

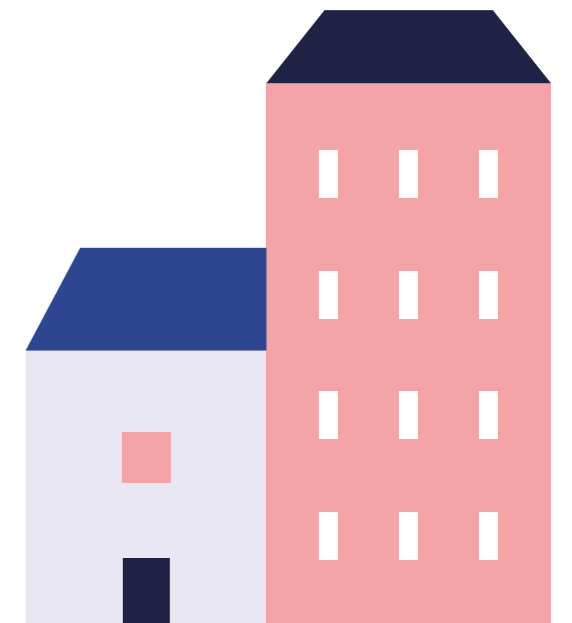


### Training courses for journalists

- Address a broader scope of themes. Irregular migration must still be explored but many other essential spheres remain to be covered: regional migration, labour migration, circular migration, women migrants, migration of minors, internal migration, impact of the diaspora etc.
- Foster projects on specific themes with a regional or international dimension, for example trafficking, labour migration etc.
- Organise workshops on the ground, working directly with migrants, preferably using investigative techniques.
- Remember to target community radios and regional media, since many training courses cater primarily to journalists in the capital.
- Include a hands-on, interactive session (with production of content), coupled with a short theoretical training course, in the workshops.
- No longer lay on short workshops without follow-up, but training courses with support in the medium- and long-term. For this, a form of mentoring may be envisaged.
- Give more consideration to the process to select media outlets and journalists. The very many training courses organised in Senegal and in the region have often fallen short when targeting a panel of journalists: selection has sometimes been random and hasty. As a result, the same media outlets, and even sometimes the same professionals are invited, to the detriment of a more varied line-up, especially including young and motivated journalists working outside the capital.

### Other actions to improve the media coverage of the subject of migration

- Put together programmes to assist with editorial output, selecting applicants by way of a call for projects.
- Organise migration journalism awards with financial compensation.
- Encourage joint output at local and regional level.



# Togo

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**56,600**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**8.3 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**279,900**  
persons i.e.  
3.4% of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Ghana**

**Benin**

**Nigeria**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

**Niger**

**49.3%**  
are  
women

**40.1%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**545,400**  
persons i.e.  
6.5% of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**Nigeria**

**Benin**

**Burkina Faso**

**Guinea**

**Gabon**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**5.9% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - ILO, 2020; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

Togo has a dynamic media landscape with 94 radio stations and 10 TV channels sharing frequencies nationwide.

Regarding online TV and radio, there are six web TV channels and five web radios. As of 31 December 2021, there were 234 printed newspapers, of which some 30 have been declared “irregular” by the High Audiovisual and Communication Authority (HAAC). Some of these no longer publish any content. As for the online press, there are around a hundred news websites, of which 51 had a permit issued by the HAAC as of 31 December 2021. The majority of press outlets are also online.<sup>204</sup> In 2020, 24% of the population were Internet users.<sup>205</sup>

## Overview of migration

### Migration trends

Togo is mainly a country of origin towards other countries in the West African sub-region and to a lesser extent towards Europe. Togo is also a destination country for regional migration, especially labour migration from neighbouring countries.

### Emigration

A significant proportion of the population is directly involved in emigration (6.5% in 2020).<sup>206</sup> Emigrants tend first to head for other countries in the sub-region. According to the results of an Afrobaromètre investigation, 43% of respondents indicated that they wished to emigrate to another country in the sub-region, 19% to North America, 14% to Europe, 12% to another African country and the remaining 12% either wanted to go to another continent or did not respond.<sup>207</sup> This corresponds to the general trend in migration flows on the continent, as indicated in the report.

Despite the lack of statistics, several emigrant profiles may be identified:<sup>208</sup>

- artisans and qualified construction workers (carpenters, masons, painters, tilers, scrap dealers, mechanics etc.) who set out to work in neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso, Niger etc.) or elsewhere in Africa (Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville etc.),
  - domestic workers, shop assistants, bartenders and restaurant waiting staff who set out to work in neighbouring countries (Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger etc.), elsewhere in Africa (Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville etc.) or the Middle East (Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria etc.).
- These vulnerable people often fall victim to

<sup>206</sup> UN DESA (2020), URL: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

<sup>207</sup> Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny J., Logan C., and Gyimah-Boadi E. (2019), “À la recherche d’opportunités : en Afrique, les jeunes et les instruits sont plus susceptibles de penser à émigrer” (Seeking opportunity: in Africa, young and educated people are more likely to think of emigrating), Afrobaromètre, Dépêche No. 288, URL: [https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ab\\_r7\\_dispatchno288\\_a\\_la\\_recherche\\_dopportunités\\_migration\\_en\\_afrique1.pdf](https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ab_r7_dispatchno288_a_la_recherche_dopportunités_migration_en_afrique1.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>208</sup> World Bank data website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

<sup>208</sup> Sangbana B. N. M., Barussaud S. (2020), “Potentiel de partenariats pour les compétences et la migration au Togo” (Potential partnerships for skills and migration in Togo) (in French only)

human trafficking, as evidenced by a migrant participating in the discussion group: “Three of us migrated to Benin. I had heard of a position as a domestic worker. Some people recruited us for a job in Benin. They took us to Cotonou. While I was working there, I could not earn a decent living. I worked ever harder, yet I didn’t earn any more. I didn’t have decent accommodation. At one point, my boss asked us to sleep with men in rooms, like sex slaves. I ran away and came back home to Anié. I was away for a year. They wouldn’t even let us eat there.”;

- highly qualified workers, such as physicians and civil engineers, who chiefly emigrate to Europe. According to IOM, “10.1% of physicians trained in the country then practice abroad.”<sup>209</sup> The ICMPD reinforces this observation, estimating that 20% of Togolese emigrating are highly qualified workers.<sup>210</sup>

This is especially the case for young graduates who fail to find employment at their level of skill and very often emigrate to Europe. They are determined to avoid failing in their career. This brain drain constitutes a net loss for the country which invests in their training without benefitting from the potential economic benefits these persons might provide, except possibly via the repatriation of funds once they join the diaspora;

- rural migrants and farm labourers leaving to work in towns nearby or in the capital, even in other countries during the low season. With global heating, seasonal migration is tending to turn into long-term migration. The low profitability of farm work, especially in the case of drought, prompts individuals to seek employment in town, sometimes permanently. Even today, internal migration is a major mobility factor for citizens in Togo, but this report does not cover this aspect.

The seeking of economic opportunity and the determination to flee poverty and tough living conditions are thus the primary motives for departure (cited by 82% Togolese people having

responded).<sup>211</sup> In light of these findings, the government has set up a national development plan with plans to create 500,000 jobs by 2022.<sup>212</sup>

### The diaspora

The authorities estimated the Togolese diaspora at 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 persons in 2013, of whom around two thirds reside in Africa and one third in Europe.<sup>213</sup> The importance of this diaspora has been acknowledged by the authorities who encourage the return of skilled workers and investments in production from the diaspora to develop the country via the Diaspora Management Unit programme, with backing from UNDP and the African Development Bank.



<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>212</sup> Ayi Renaud Dossavi (27/03/2019), “Immigration : les Togolais préfèrent rester en Afrique” (Immigration: the Togolese prefer to remain in Africa), published on TogoFirst, URL: <https://www.togofirst.com/fr/social/2703-2833-immigration-les-togolais-preferent-rester-en-afrique> (in French only)

<sup>213</sup> UN (2015), “A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa”, chap. Togo, p. 305-319, URL: [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2015/docs/Workshop2015\\_Togo\\_Migration\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2015/docs/Workshop2015_Togo_Migration_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

<sup>209</sup> IOM (2016), “Overview of Migration in Togo”

<sup>210</sup> UN (2015), “A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa”, chap. Togo, p. 305-319, URL: [https://www.a.org/in/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2015/docs/Workshop2015\\_Togo\\_migration\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.a.org/in/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2015/docs/Workshop2015_Togo_migration_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

### Immigration

Most immigrants to Togo head for the cities. Greater Lomé, the agglomeration comprising the capital Lomé and suburbs, hosts the majority of immigrants, except for the Burkinabe who settle mostly in the savannah, on the Burkina Faso border. Coastal regions and plateaux, the two most heavily populated areas after Greater Lomé, also attract many immigrants.<sup>214</sup> The vast majority of immigrants are from ECOWAS member states.<sup>215</sup>

Immigrants mainly work in the informal sector, as do nationals, working chiefly in trade. They sell new and recycled industrial products (loincloths, second-hand clothing, hardware, spare parts for vehicles etc.), crafts (food, objets d’art etc.) or work in services as scrap metal dealers, itinerant shoemakers etc. IOM and the Togolese Directorate General of Statistics and National Accounts (DGSCN) acknowledge the economic importance of immigrants in Togo despite difficulties in accessing and accounting for data.<sup>216</sup> Data available on the economic profile of immigrants needs more nuance since international reports, especially the IOM migration profile, all refer to the last census carried out by the DGSCN which dates back to 2010.

### Increasing numbers of women migrants

“Increasing numbers of women are migrating nowadays, given the multiple opportunities available to women in the host country,” observed Assanlélou Kalouweani, Executive Director of the association Visions solidaires, which is committed to working in the field of migration in Togo. This recent phenomenon has not yet been recorded with precise statistics.

Immigration to Togo is balanced gender-wise, with the percentage of women hovering around 50% (49.3% in 2020).<sup>217</sup> Most women immigrating to Togo come via family reunification.

### Student mobility

Student migration is significant in Togo. There were 48,062 international students registered in Togo in 2010, accounting for 26.5% of all immigrants.<sup>218</sup>

International mobility among Togolese students is even more significant. In 2018, 102,000 Togolese students were living abroad (7%).<sup>219</sup> They emigrate either to developed countries (France, USA, Canada etc.) to take advantage of a wider choice of good-quality training courses or subsidiarily to countries in Africa like Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Studying abroad also ensures better insertion in the employment market later on.

<sup>217</sup> UN DESA 2020

<sup>218</sup> IOM, “Migration in Togo, Country profile 2015”, URL: [file:///C:/Downloads/mp\\_togo\\_fr.pdf](file:///C:/Downloads/mp_togo_fr.pdf)

<sup>There</sup> is no more recent data on students emigrating to Togo, but UNESCO managed to glean data on emigrating Togolese students from international data.

<sup>219</sup> Campus France, “Fiche Mobilité Togo” (Togo Mobility Factsheet), URL: [https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publications/mobilite\\_pays/fr/togo\\_fr.pdf](https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publications/mobilite_pays/fr/togo_fr.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>214</sup> IOM, “Migration in Togo, Country profile 2015”, URL: [file:///C:/Downloads/mp\\_togo\\_fr.pdf](file:///C:/Downloads/mp_togo_fr.pdf)

<sup>215</sup> UN (2015), “A Survey on Migration Policies in West Africa”, chap. Togo, p. 305-319, URL: [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2015/docs/Workshop2015\\_Togo\\_Migration\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/workshop/2015/docs/Workshop2015_Togo_Migration_Fact_Sheet.pdf)

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*

## Refugees

Two periods of major political crisis, in the 1990s and 2005, have led to a mass exodus of Togolese refugees and political exiles, firstly to Ghana and Benin, but also Europe.<sup>220</sup> An estimated 15,000 Togolese political refugees are now living abroad.<sup>221</sup>

Togo also hosts refugees on its territory. In 2015, 22,030 refugees were registered in Togo, hailing from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.<sup>222</sup>

## Human trafficking

Human trafficking is a major issue in Togo. It affects Togolese people abroad, especially emigrant domestic workers, as previously mentioned, as well as certain immigrants on Togolese territory, especially from Asia. Degbovi Koffi, President of the Anti-trafficking unit explained that “Togo is a country of origin for human trafficking, because it is the starting point for many persons in this case, and an arrival point for many other foreigners (Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese etc.) who are exploited here in Togo.”

## Stateless persons

There is no accurate data on statelessness in Togo. However, UNHCR has registered over a million stateless persons in West Africa, indicating the importance of this issue within the sub-region.<sup>223</sup> The Togolese government started tackling it by ratifying the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2020. Following the same logic, the Togolese authorities are participating in the campaign “I am here, I belong” launched by HCR in 2014.<sup>224</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Gu-Konu, E. Y., “Une migration transfrontalière inédite en Afrique de l'Ouest. Les réfugiés togolais au Bénin” (Unprecedented cross-border migration in West Africa. Togolese refugees in Benin), in Gu-Konu, E. Y. et al., “Migrations internationales en Afrique de l'Ouest. Aspects et problèmes” (International migration in West Africa. Aspects and problems), URA/ UNB-ORSTOM, 1993, p. 11; Galloway, M., Return Migration to Togo. Monitoring the Embeddedness of Returnees, 2008, pp. 5-6. According to Galloway, “During the crisis in the early 1990s, about 300,000-350,000 Togolese (mainly from the Lomé area) fled to neighbouring countries Ghana and Benin”; Radji, S., “La stratégie d'optimisation des Remittances de la diaspora au Togo” (The strategy to optimise money transfers from the diaspora to Togo), African Development Bank, Togolese Republic, 2012, p. 8

<sup>221</sup> UN DESA and UNICEF, 2012

<sup>222</sup> UNHCR (2015), “Togo Factsheet”, URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/protection/operations/524d87e79/togo-fact-sheet.html?query=togo>

<sup>223</sup> Togolese National Assembly (05/11/2021), “Lutte contre l'apatridie, les députés mis à contribution” (Pushing back on statelessness, MPs make their contribution), URL: <https://assemblee-nationale.tg/lutte-contre-lapatridie-les-deputes-mis-a-contribution/> (in French only)

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*

## Public policies

Togo does not yet have a national policy governing migration as a whole (including workers and migrant workers, members of the diaspora, refugees etc.). But in 2013, the country adopted a strategy with a view to better leveraging the resources and skills of the Togolese diaspora to help develop the country.

Moreover, in 2017, the Ministry of Public Service, Labour, Administrative Reform and Social Protection with the Directorate-General for employment and various partners drew up a professional migration strategy and an operational action plan (2018-2022). The aim is to better manage labour migration. The process of drawing up, approving and adopting the strategy, initiated and steered according to the Togolese government's aims, is part of the “Support for free movement of people and migration in West Africa” project, with assistance from ECOWAS and the European Union. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) also contribute to their application.

The State has also set up a Professional migration unit at the Togolese employment agency (ANPE).

Nevertheless, we have observed that the current national development plan (2018-2022) does not include migration as a national priority aiming to promote economic and social development.

# The question of migration in the Togolese media landscape and public discourse

## General overview: little coverage of migration

The Togolese media seldom cover the question of migration in their various written and recorded output. All media taken together, in-depth content is rarely produced on these subjects. Ekué Gada, writer, teacher-researcher at the University of Lomé, specialist in international relations, asserted the following: “I think that migration phenomena are not covered by Togolese media. The Togolese media scene is very specific. There is a glaring lack of such themes, despite their social importance. The question of migration flows is practically inexistent in the media. So I'm not saying it is covered correctly or incorrectly. I think it is ignored outright. These are themes that are simply never mentioned in the press.”

This statement is an exaggeration, since we did observe several cases in which migration themes were mentioned in the media. But when it is reported, the news is often about institutions or petty crime. Migration is thus mainly covered by the Togolese media in the following cases:

- to cover tragedies,
- during International Migrants Day and World Refugee Day,
- further to training workshops or as part of awareness-raising campaigns initiated by IOM,
- when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad releases statements about programmes targeting the diaspora,
- when civilian stakeholders mention the question of human trafficking,
- or, lastly, when discussing opportunities for young people seeking to achieve success

and embark on entrepreneurship, as part of awareness-raising campaigns funded by technical and financial partners.

According to Pr Akodah Ayewouadan, Togolese Minister for Communication and Media and government spokesperson, the complexification of migration flows and the reasons for leaving can partly explain the limited media coverage:

- “Migration is only mentioned sporadically in the Togolese media, and is often limited to accounts by returning compatriots, as an occasion to raise awareness among young people, helping them to discover or rediscover the various opportunities for success available at home. The factors leading to migration flows have complexified over time. Poverty is no longer enough of an argument to be dreaming of elsewhere. Given these developments, the media, which have an important role to play in dealing with migration issues, don't always have arguments to develop their output.”

## Other features of media coverage of migration are as follows.

### A poor grasp of migration terminology

The correct usage of terms and concepts relative to migration phenomena is a huge challenge. The journalist interviewees from the discussion group raised the problem of comprehension regarding migration phenomena and admitted that significant work is to be conducted to ensure a better grasp of the terms.

### The question of access to reliable sources

Access to reliable sources is a requirement to cover a topic properly. This is nevertheless not yet a shared reflex given journalists' lack of knowledge on the subject of sources of information available in the sphere of migration. The UN system database is largely unused due to a lack of training for journalists.

### Editorial lines subjected to influence

The editorial line in each media outlet, whether sympathetic to the government or the opposition, sometimes bleeds into coverage of migration news. Emmanuelle Sodji, journalist at *France 24* put forward her analysis: “In general, the media speak of migrants in connection with hot news, often involving tragic events. Private media outlets that criticise the regime seize on the occasion to remind the executive of their responsibility (...) As for the diaspora, the public authorities speak about it when implementing an initiative regarding qualified migrants, those with a better socioeconomic status. Media outlets close to the opposition will more often quote members of the diaspora when they contribute to political causes.”

### **Review of media coverage of migration by themes**

When migration is addressed, the media usually focus on the emigrant workforce. This is the only angle with a mostly positive spin. The importance of financial flows from the diaspora to Togo (5.9% of the GDP)<sup>225</sup> is of great interest to the public authorities, with the media reporting on any official statements released. The official denomination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs changing to “Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad” is a neat illustration of the attention paid to the diaspora. The organisation of Réussites Diaspora (Diaspora success stories) week also points to this interest. Thus, articles or content on the subject are mostly linked to official activities and professional migration without being subjected to critical analysis in the media.

The second subject addressed in the field of migration is irregular migration. The extent of media coverage depends on the news, when a tragedy occurs or when IOM releases statements about its initiatives (for example, when IOM announced that it had assisted some Togolese in an irregular situation in Libya to return to their country of origin). In general,

coverage is fact-based, without any prior research or in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, there are a few rare articles that have garnered critical praise, especially in the printed press, such as that by Togolese journalist Maxime Domegni in 2018 (see box below). The nature of this very detailed account, recounted as a travel log, captured the imagination of the readership.

### **→ Within the Togolese immigration system on the Mediterranean route<sup>226</sup>**

#### **7 January 2018, JIC (*Journalism in a Global Context*)**

Extract:

“I am a young Togolese guy, and given the tough work situation in our country, I decided to embark on an adventure so that I too could become someone one day.” Issa, 24, a former pupil from the Lycée de Kpodji in Kpalime, in the south-east of Togo, set out on the irregular immigration route one day in December 2014. Two years later, the young Togolese man was in Milan, Italy, where he decided to confide in us. The desert, ghettos, abductions, crossing the Mediterranean and death had never crossed his mind when he took the decision to leave in search of happiness, far from his family. (...) To dissuade other young people from setting out into the unknown like him, he chose to tell us his story, in October 2016. A year before the scandal of “Black slavery in Libya” burst and rocked African opinion.”

<sup>226</sup> Maxime Domegni (2018), “Au coeur de la filière togolaise d’immigration par la Méditerranée” (Within the Togolese immigration system on the Mediterranean route) URL: <https://jicg.media/fr/au-coeur-de-la-filiere-togolaise-dimmigration-par-la-mediteranee> (in French only)

<sup>225</sup> World Bank data website, 2021

### **Statelessness**

Statelessness is mentioned in certain media content in connection with efforts by the Togolese government, with support from development partners, to gain clearer insights into the issue of statelessness, prevent it, raise awareness of it among citizens and put an end to it. Initiatives such as providing birth certificates free of charge and reforms in connection with obtaining Togolese nationality are government decisions which have led to the media writing articles about preventing statelessness, without actually examining the subject in depth.

### **Human trafficking**

The subject of human trafficking is also rarely covered, despite the authorities and international organisations treating it as important. The government, IOM, the official diplomatic service in Togo and civil society organisations regularly organise training workshops on the theme of human trafficking. However, despite the frequency of such workshops and journalist participation, the results are not yet tangible in terms of output because of a lack of commitment, funding and long-term support to produce articles or programmes on the phenomenon.

### **Representation according to types of media**

#### Printed and online press

Migration issues do not enjoy in-depth coverage in the Togolese press. People can rarely read articles providing details of factors causing migration, its effects on individuals and systems in the Togolese newspapers. The few articles devoted to migration are published when it hits the news, when a tragedy occurs in the Mediterranean, or in the form of reportage on occasions such as World Refugee Day, International Migrants Day, and coverage of training workshops on migration.

### Radio, including community radios

The coverage of migration subjects is more frequent on the radio than in the press and on television. Weekly programmes are devoted to success stories about members of the Togolese diaspora. Human trafficking is also covered by these radio programmes, in partnership with IOM. Rural radios in the hinterland are included in this. The contours, causes and consequences of irregular migration are mentioned during these programmes, the aim being to encourage legal migration instead of irregular migration.<sup>227</sup>

- *Nana FM* has a programme in which successful members of the Togolese diaspora have their say.

- *Kanal FM* broadcasts subjects on irregular migration and human trafficking.

- *Victoire FM* also discusses migration with its guests, but periodically.

- In the hinterland, the subject of migration is featured on *Radio Azur-Anié* in Anié, *Radio Tchamba*, the rural radio in Dapaong, *Radio Maranatha* in Assahoun, and *Radio La Voix de Vo* in Vogan, for example, which regularly organise programmes to raise awareness of migration, above all irregular migration, in partnership with IOM.

<sup>227</sup> *Nana FM*, *Kanal FM* and *Victoire FM* are commercial radio stations in the Togolese capital. They attract many listeners and have a wide audience in the country. In the hinterland, most radio stations are community or rural stations. They also have many listeners in their communities.

### Television

Migration issues are not examined in-depth on the TV scene in Togo. This scene is in fact very limited, with only one state TV channel (*TVT*), and a few privately-owned TV channels (*TV7*, *TV2*, *RTDS*, *TV Zion* and *E47*). TV coverage of migration generally refers to events and programmes run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad and other civil society organisations. In-depth reports on migration are few and far between on TV channels. Furthermore, there is still plenty of confusion as to the use of terms in connection with migration on Togolese TV channels.

### Social media, bloggers and influencers

Comments, videos and links on social media and blogs are generally rife with fake news, discourse promoting migration (both regular and irregular), discriminatory comments and hate speech. Internet users also publish practical tips on migration routes and crossing points where citizens can leave the country as well as romanticised success stories about members of the diaspora, giving the Togolese the impression that the grass is always greener elsewhere.

## Capacity building in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Togo.

Firstly, **the question of human trafficking prevails** in training courses available in Togo. Focusing on only one theme is questionable, according to Aimée Atana, from *Radio Azur*, who participated in the discussion group:

“We would like quarterly training sessions on all migration subjects. This would give us a more comprehensive view, to counter the fact that clandestine migration, human trafficking and professional migration have taken precedence over all other forms of migration in media coverage of this subject. However, within the major theme of ‘migration’, there are several sub-themes that we do not understand or that we don’t cover in-depth in our media outlets.”

Furthermore, the effects of training courses organised are somewhat mitigated. The various capacity-building initiatives on migration phenomena catering to journalists did **provide knowledge to media professionals, but have not led to more output of subjects on migration in the press, due to a lack of follow-up.**

**The teaching of basic knowledge on migration corresponds to a very real need in Togo.** In response to this need, a Journalists International Forum for Migration was organised in 2021. Participating media professionals became acquainted with migration terms via a glossary handed out in class, as recounted by certain participants interviewed for this report. This training course was much appreciated by the journalists, and needs to be leveraged further.

In the media discussion group, journalists suggested that both initial and continuous training modules needed to be introduced. Firstly, they suggested creating a course on migration to be taught to students in journalism at university and in schools of journalism. Secondly, they mentioned the possibility of adapting this course for vocational training on migration issues. Nephthali Messanh Ledy, a journalist in continuous training at ISICA<sup>228</sup> / PROFAMED project,<sup>229</sup> insisted on the point of including this course in more general curricula at universities and institutes, with involvement of the relevant Ministries: “During these training workshops, I have noticed that the themes are poorly organised, lack consistency and have no point. I suggest that maybe the Ministry of Communication and Media, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Togolese Abroad could be involved in shaping a course on migration and the media in universities or training institutes.”

Other journalists insisted on **the need to highlight the positive aspects of migration.** *Togobreakingnews* Director Didier Assogba asserted during the discussion group that “Instructors often fail to bring these aspects up during workshops.”

Journalists having participated in the discussion group all agreed that **workshop follow-up was insufficient**: “We have participated in a few national and regional training workshops on migration. But once it’s over, it’s over. There are no other initiatives to round it off and help us actually work on the subject. The awareness-raising and the production of articles or programmes needs to be bolstered. And this requires resources. The training workshops are great. We’d like even more. But we also need follow-up (...) Media professionals draw the most attention in these workshops. They have an important role in awareness-raising and providing information about migration. People are taken in, mostly, because they are not well-informed.”

After these training workshops, many journalists said they felt they had been left to figure everything out themselves, without any actual practice working on the ground, and without support or resources to produce content in the longer term or envisage specialising in the question. Not only are these workshops rarely organised, but they apparently fail to reach the goals set, since very few journalists have a decent grasp of migration issues, and in-depth subjects on migration are still lacking in the media. Yet there is definite interest and willingness to learn.

<sup>228</sup> ISICA: Institute for Arts, Communication and Information Sciences, at the University of Lomé (UL)

<sup>229</sup> PROFAMED: a media training and support project

## Findings and recommendations

### Training for journalists

- The Centre for training and reconversion in communication (CFRC) in Lomé could include a course on migration issues in certain syllabuses for students of journalism, and also make this course accessible via continuous training.
- A practical section could be added after the theoretical training to teach techniques on the ground and conduct hands-on sessions directly on the ground. The aim would especially be to learn about migration routes, and tips for reaching out to migrants. Also to learn to keep a professional distance from discourse full of emotion, distinguish between legal and illegal migration networks etc.
- Highlight the positive aspects of migration in the training courses, as well as the dangers and risks inherent in migration phenomena.

### Other actions to improve the media coverage of migration

- Once a quarter, schedule a meeting with journalists on migration issues, as part of an ongoing debate covering all angles of the subject.
- Fund reportage, investigations and production on migration phenomena.
- Leverage the actions conducted in connection with development organisations specialising in migration and continue to strengthen this collaboration. It would also be essential to involve local organisations in the design and setup of these initiatives.
- Explain national legislation and international treaties governing migration issues in simple terms.



Training or awareness-raising workshops, production support and valorisation sessions, organised in the Indian Ocean (details of initiatives and venues in Appendix 2).

## Regional overview

### Migration trends

Migration trends in Madagascar and the Union of the Comoros, an archipelago in the Indian Ocean with a high poverty rate, bear the imprint of their historic links with France, as the former colonial power. Emigration of nationals from these two countries is strongly motivated by economic reasons, and France and its overseas departments are therefore one of the main destinations. Migration flows between Madagascar and the Union of the Comoros are also significant.

Labour and student migration account for most of the flow. Irregular migration and human trafficking, in particular for the purposes of exploitation via work and domestic service, frequently feature in the media, with coverage that leans into sensationalism while remaining superficial. Statelessness is a common phenomenon common in both countries, but is poorly documented despite potentially explosive consequences for living together in harmony. Lastly, while environmental migration is a mainly internal phenomenon for the time being, it is addressed regularly in the Malagasy media. This does not yet apply to the Union of the Comoros. The authorities of both countries have only recently started taking an interest in migration issues, exploited by politicians in Comoros, because of its proximity with Mayotte.

### Media landscape

While the media landscape is very different in each country, in both their nature and modus operandi, the media coverage of migration issues have the same shortfalls. This report has revealed fact-based, superficial coverage, totally ignoring certain themes such as statelessness, and a lack of knowledge regarding terms and related concepts. Migration is often covered in the media of these two countries only as “hot” news, whether in reaction to tragedies or striking events, such as shipwrecks or the dismantling of human trafficking networks. Very little media coverage has any real structure or in-depth investigation as to causes and consequences or examination of different perspectives of migration phenomena.

### Capacity-building initiatives

Few capacity-building initiatives on migration issues have been conducted in either country: one in the Union of the Comoros and seven in Madagascar. Training courses on human trafficking have been organised in both countries. Nevertheless, the initiatives already conducted seem insufficient to improve the structural quality of media coverage of migration.





# Comoros

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**2,234**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**869,595**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**12,496**  
persons i.e.  
1.4% of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>1</sup>

**Madagascar**

**France (Mayotte)**

**France (La Réunion)**

**Tanzania**

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**150 823**  
persons i.e.  
17% of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>1</sup>

**France (Mayotte)**

**France (La Réunion)**

**Madagascar**

**Libya**

**51.6%**  
are  
women

**17.4%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**13% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

In terms of the printed press, the privately-owned daily newspaper *La Gazette des Comores* and the state newspaper *Al Watwan* are very popular in the archipelago. The *ORTC* (Comoros broadcasting office) is the only TV channel in Comoros.

State-owned, free and available nationwide, it has a large audience and leans pro-government. Along with the *ORTC*, two other radio stations, *Radio Ngazidja* and Hayba-FM dominate the waves in the Comoros Islands, but other community radio stations are gradually gaining ground. Online news is also gaining traction, especially on social media boasting greater freedom in tone. Lastly, it is important to emphasise that difficulty of access, even the lack of up-to-date statistics in several areas of the country, is a significant constraint in the Comorian media landscape, making investigative journalism difficult.

In 2017, 8% of the population were Internet users, especially the social network WhatsApp, but this data is probably underestimated.



## Overview of migration

### A country of emigration

Nowadays, migration flows towards France attract most of the media's and public authorities' attention, whether to Mayotte, mainland France or, to a lesser extent, La Réunion.

There are sub-regional migration dynamics of historic importance for example with Madagascar (with which the Comoros used to form a single administrative, economic and financial unit), Tanzania and some central African countries. Bilateral relations forged with China and India have encouraged the arrival of expatriates from these two countries.

According to UN statistics, there are 150,823 Comorians living abroad, of whom 57,991 are in Mayotte, 40,337 in mainland France, 1,932 in Madagascar, 4,557 in Libya and 2,248 in La Réunion.<sup>1</sup> However, these figures on Comorian emigration have probably nevertheless been significantly underestimated, especially bearing in mind the extent of irregular migration and the great number of Comorians with other nationalities. Thus, according to certain sources, it is very difficult to accurately estimate the number of Comorian emigrants.<sup>2</sup> The main reasons for this emigration are economic hardship, above all for irregular migration, and health.

### The role of the Comorian diaspora

The Comoros do have a significant diaspora, but data, especially relevant statistics (estimation of the size of the diaspora, formal and informal GDP etc.) are not always reliable. According to the World Bank, remittances from the Comorian diaspora accounted for 13% of the country's GDP in 2021, but informal

<sup>1</sup> EUDIF (2019), Diaspora engagement mapping in the Comoros

<sup>2</sup> Sources (i), Third-world documentation centre (CDTM) in 2017: <https://www.ritimo.org/La-contribution-de-la-diaspora-a-la-vie-economique-et-sociale-du-pays-est> (in French only); (ii), EUDIF, Diaspora engagement mapping in the Comoros, 2019

payments would bump this rate up to 20-25%.<sup>3</sup> Most transfers are used to fund medical care or weddings, since “anda” is a traditional social obligation in the Comoros Islands. The cost can vary from 20,000 to 100,000 euros according to the blood line and the family’s status in the country. These transfers are also used to fund community building projects such as the renovation or construction of edifices. During crisis periods, remittances boost humanitarian aid, such as when cyclone Kenneth hit in April 2019.

### Student migration

There were 6,400 Comorian students in higher education abroad in 2017.<sup>4</sup> Most emigrate to Madagascar, France, Senegal and Morocco. When the Comoros joined the Arab League, other possible destinations opened up for Comorian students, such as Libya, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. These Arab League countries are also countries of origin for people migrating to the Comoros.

### Irregular migration

Despite efforts deployed by the Comorian government and their partners (the other countries involved, United Nations etc.) to set up strategies and measures to push back against irregular migration, the observation on the ground is still very bitter. Many have perished at sea between Anjouan and the sister island of Mayotte since the introduction in January 1995 of the “Balladur visa”<sup>5</sup>. This put an end to freedom of movement between Mayotte and the Comorian archipelago, and obtaining the visa has become a very complicated process for Comorians.

<sup>3</sup> Article Jeune Afrique, “Pour les Comores, le délicat enjeu économique de la diaspora” (A tricky economic issue between the Comoros islands and the diaspora), URL: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/860436/societe/pour-les-comores-le-delicat-enjeu-economique-de-la-diaspora/> (in French only)

<sup>4</sup> Unesco (2017): <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Article in Le Monde dated 03/05/2018, URL: [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/05/03/comment-le-visa-balladur-a-fragilise-l-equi-libre-comorien\\_5293746\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/05/03/comment-le-visa-balladur-a-fragilise-l-equi-libre-comorien_5293746_3212.html) (in French only)

According to a 2012 French Senate report, an estimated 7,000 to 10,000 persons died during *kwassa* crossings from 1995 to 2012.<sup>6</sup> While it is difficult to gain access to official data, the Comorian authorities estimated a total of 12,000 in 2014.<sup>7</sup>

### → Crossing at sea in “kwassa” towards Mayotte

In their bid to emigrate irregularly towards Mayotte, Comorians and other migrants in transit cross the sea in small fishing vessels called *kwassa* or *kwassa-kwassa*, leaving from Anjouan, often travelling to Mtsamboro. The crossing usually takes three to four hours. To escape patrols, they travel by night, which can take double the normal time. The crossing now costs 150 to 1,000 euros. It is an arduous journey, with migrants often getting scammed by smugglers.

The account of a Comorian reported by *France 24* illustrates this phenomenon: “By night, smugglers frequently lie to the migrants, telling them that they have arrived in Mayotte when actually they have reached Mtsamboro. This islet is seven kilometres from the large island, and has no drinking water, only a few banana plantations. To reach their destination, the migrants then need to find a second smuggler for around 200 euros. These second smugglers are generally fishermen who take fewer risks, taking only a few persons at a time, for this zone is under greater surveillance. I had to hide under their catch to avoid awakening any suspicion.”

Many migrants are sent back to the borders or fall victim to shipwrecks. The *kwassa-kwassa* are nowadays the main means used by the smugglers for irregular immigration towards Mayotte. In 2014, 597 *kwassa-kwassa* were intercepted by the French authorities, with a total of 12,879 persons on board, and 610 smugglers were arrested, according to data from the French Directorate-General for

<sup>6</sup> French Senate report (2012), “Mayotte : un nouveau département confronté à de lourds défis” (Mayotte: a new department facing tough challenges) Mayotte : un nouveau département confronté à de lourds défis (senat.fr) (in French only) More recent data is not available or hard to access.

<sup>7</sup> Article in Le Parisien dated 03/06/2017, URL: <https://www.leparisien.fr/politique/les-kwassa-kwassa-une-tres-mauvaise-blague-de-macron-et-un-vrai-drame-humanitaire-03-06-2017-7013973.php> (in French only)

### Overseas Territories. In 2021, 676 *kwassa-kwassa* engines were destroyed in Mayotte, and according to the Prefect of Mayotte, 350 to 400 *kwassa-kwassa* are seized every year

This irregular migration reflects a variety of realities and reasons. According to a 2017 report from the Comorian Institute of Statistics and Economic and Demographic Studies (INSEED), over 31% of migrants making their way to Mayotte aimed to seek employment to improve their living conditions, whereas 20% attempted the crossing for family reasons. These two main reasons can be explained firstly by very high unemployment levels in the Comoros Islands, creating a precarious situation that encourages emigration, and secondly by the family ties existing between the people living on the four islands. Marriage is another reason for migration; including it in family migration would increase the rate for family migration to up to 31% of the flow.<sup>8</sup> Between 2020 and 2021, around 40,000 persons were deported from Mayotte<sup>9</sup> whereas 3,000 to 4,000 unaccompanied minors (both girls and boys)<sup>10</sup> are still blocked there. For migrants in an irregular situation to be deported back to the Comoros Islands, the Comoros have to agree to take them back.<sup>11</sup>

In recent years, the country has also become a hub for migrants in transit hoping to reach Mayotte by irregular means. The Mutsamudu national gendarmerie (in Anjouan) dismantled a migrant trafficking network in 2021 and around 53 migrants of Congolese, Burundian and Mozambican origin were questioned;<sup>12</sup> 28 of these 53 migrants have since obtained refugee status in Lesotho, thanks to United Nations facilitation with international

<sup>8</sup> The Togolese institute of statistics and economic and demographic studies (INSEED), General Population and Housing Census (RGPH), 2017

<sup>9</sup> Article on RFI, “Tensions entre les Comores et la France” (Tension between the Comoros and France), 11/02/2021, URL: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20210211-tensions-entre-les-comores-et-la-france-%C3%A0-propos-de-l-immigration-clandestine> (in French only)

<sup>10</sup> US Embassy in Madagascar and Comoros (2020), Comoros trafficking in persons, Report, URL: <https://mg.usembassy.gov/comoros-trafficking-in-persons-report-2020/>

<sup>11</sup> In this case, the Comoros refused to take the migrants because France was blocking visas for Comorians. This is a recurrent problem in many countries, where returns are accepted on condition that visa requirements are eased, and vice versa.

<sup>12</sup> Post by the Gendarmerie nationale of the Comoros, URL: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=1287734011689180&id=580850892377499](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1287734011689180&id=580850892377499) (in French only)

cooperation and senior officials from the kingdom of Lesotho’s government who pleaded with the Comorian authorities.

Apart from Mayotte, Comorians also seek to reach mainland France. For a long time, they used to pass through Madagascar. From there, they would fly to France using fake ID. On site, a well-organised network would profit from this lucrative trafficking business. The Malagasy network has now weakened, so those wishing to leave now head for other countries on the African continent (Senegal, Niger, Kenya etc.). For the past few years, North African countries have been the first choice as a transit country for Comorians, as for other Africans aiming for Europe. Most routes involve crossing several countries, sometimes deserts and often the Mediterranean. The crossing is perilous, making these irregular forms of migration seem even more tragic.<sup>13</sup> The 2021 statistics are alarming, since at least 35 Comorians perished in the Mediterranean.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Thesis by Youssouf Mohamed Youssouf (February 2020), “Parcours migratoire, mobilisation transnationale et efforts de développement villageois aux Comores” (Migration journey, transnational mobilisation and development efforts by villagers in the Comoros)

<sup>14</sup> Article on Al-Watwan, URL: [https://alwatwan.net/societe/migrations-vers-l%e2%80%99europe-l-environ-%C2%AB35-comoriens-%C2%BB-ont-perdu-la-vie-en-2021-en-m%C3%A9diterran%C3%A9e.html?fbclid=IwAR-fgQbxh2-dfaJddvxBzYzJjQE-tiaUCjQs\\_OLuYPE0KBQscdGtDwXCME](https://alwatwan.net/societe/migrations-vers-l%e2%80%99europe-l-environ-%C2%AB35-comoriens-%C2%BB-ont-perdu-la-vie-en-2021-en-m%C3%A9diterran%C3%A9e.html?fbclid=IwAR-fgQbxh2-dfaJddvxBzYzJjQE-tiaUCjQs_OLuYPE0KBQscdGtDwXCME) (in French only)

Irregular migration raises important humanitarian questions. The threats and insecurity to which the migrants are exposed in the course of their journey, whether over land or sea, increase their vulnerability. To deal with this phenomenon, in coordination with partner countries, the Comoros introduced various measures:

the consolidation of the collaboration between countries and territories in the Indian Ocean region (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, La Réunion, Mayotte and the Seychelles);

an agreement signed on 22 July 2019 in Paris by the Presidents of France and the Comoros and a Franco-Comorian supervisory committee formed to coordinate migration flows. The agreement provides for the prevention of unregulated movement of the population and to save human lives at sea, as well as development. A three-year envelope worth €150 million euros has been allocated by France to handle this;

plans to apply a programme to take isolated minors in Mayotte back to their families in the Comoros Islands, (affecting 50 persons a year), with support and funding for the family in the Comoros Islands.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, on a national scale, the Union of the Comoros promulgated a new penal code on 16 February 2021, in which the illegal shipping of persons at sea has been categorised as a crime. This code also allows for prosecuting smugglers, and seizing and destroying *kwassas* as well as equipment on board. Despite a few setbacks, things are now happening thanks to political determination as stated.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Article in the Journal de Mayotte, Anne Perzo (September 2021), URL: <https://lejournaldemayotte.yt/2021/09/21/nouveau-projet-de-raccompagnement-des-mineurs-dans-leurs-familles-aux-comores/> (in French only)

<sup>16</sup> Statement released by the Ministry of the Interior, Information and Decentralization charged with Relations with the Institutions, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/1631440933762601/posts/3025330231040324/> (in French only)

### Human trafficking

Human trafficking is an important phenomenon in the Comoros Islands, although it has only recently been in the spotlight. It can be a national issue, or international (Middle East, Mayotte etc.). The trafficking of Comorian women subjected to forced labour continues to gain ground in the Middle East. And in 2021, an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 unaccompanied Comorian minors were at risk of falling victim to trafficking for either sexual exploitation or forced labour in Mayotte.<sup>17</sup>

The trafficking of migrants in the Comoros was also discussed during our discussion group with journalists. A journalist working on the ground for a local media outlet revealed the opening of a brothel to the north of the capital employing Malagasy minors. “It is mind-bending, we all need to ask what these young Malagasy girls are doing in the streets of Moroni? Whole families are sometimes controlled by a single high-ranking person. In the Sahara district for example, there is a brothel where young boys are initiated into sexual practices.” Three of the eight participants in the discussion group organised for this report also flagged Malagasy minors working in bars known as *chichas*.

The Union of the Comoros examined this question recently, with support from international cooperation, especially the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). It has fast-tracked the introduction of public policy on the subject and developed a whole range of measures to push back on these horrors.

<sup>17</sup> US embassy in the Comoros and Madagascar (2021), “Report on human trafficking”

Article 13 of the 2014 law to prevent child labour and the trafficking of children defines all forms of trafficking involving children, including trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and child labour, as crimes. As for the trafficking of adults, the government is gradually rolling out measures to push back on this phenomenon:

- in 2016, the Ministry of Labour signed an agreement with several recruitment agencies to facilitate the monitoring of transnational hiring processes;
- in June 2020, the Comoros ratified the United Nations 2000 protocol, known as the Palermo protocols, to prevent human trafficking, especially women and children;
- in 2021, a project steered by IOM, the United Nations’ Comoros Islands office and the US embassy in Madagascar & Comoros was implemented to “improve referencing capacity and the handling of human trafficking cases in the Comoros Islands.” The aim was to ensure that stakeholders working to prevent human trafficking had context-appropriate, standardised tools to identify and handle human trafficking cases in the Union of the Comoros. This project initiated the process to draw up legislation against human trafficking and protect victims in the country;
- on 2 February 2021, the country promulgated a new penal code and measures to push back on sexual assault and human trafficking.

### Statelessness

The proximity of the archipelago with Arab and Islamic states has given rise to another form of migration towards the Comoros, involving statelessness. In recent years, Comorian nationality has been offered to stateless persons, known as “*bidoun*”,<sup>18</sup> amounting to several tens of thousands people living in Kuwait and in the United Arab Emirates.<sup>19</sup>

The spotlight was thrown on this question of *bidoun* statelessness in 2018 with a scandal involving the sale of Comorian passports.<sup>20</sup> This type of heavily mediated scandal may well be repeated, and it would be useful for journalists to have tools available to gain insights into how to cover this subject. And looking beyond this, it is also important to gain a better grasp of the situation of *bidouns* having gained Comorian nationality.



<sup>18</sup> *Bidoun* literally means “without nationality” in Arabic. The term designates stateless Arabs.

<sup>19</sup> Article on RFI, “Le Koweït propose la nationalité comorienne aux apatrides” (Kuwait offers Comorian nationality to stateless citizens), 10/11/2014, URL: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/moyen-orient/20141110-le-koweit-propose-nationalite-comorienne-apatrides> (in French only)

<sup>20</sup> Article on France TV Info (10/04/2018), “Comores : deux ex-présidents au cœur d’un scandale de vente de passeports” (Comoros: two former Presidents involved in a passport sales scandal), URL: <https://ia1ere.francetvinfo.fr/comores-deux-ex-presidents-au-coeur-scandale-vente-passeports-577499.html> (in French only)

## Migration in the Comorian media landscape and public discourse

First of all, it is important to stress that there is little reliable data, especially in terms of quantity, regarding migration in the Comoros Islands.

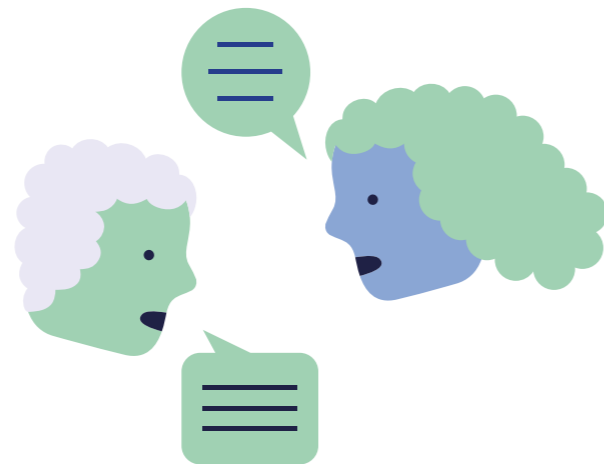
### Fact-based coverage concentrating on the tragedies of irregular migration

On a sample of eight journalists interviewed on the subjects favoured by the media when addressing migration, five mentioned losses at sea in the *kwassas* heading for Mayotte and shipwrecks between Morocco and Spain,<sup>21</sup> emphasising that only these tragedies are mediated, without any articles covering other forms of migration. They specify that these articles do not examine the underlying causes and issues related to these tragedies.

The question of migration has mostly garnered attention from Comorian media during tragedies, especially at sea. Irregular migration is thus covered in the media only sporadically, leaning heavily into the sensationalist aspects, discussing smuggling networks that hit the headlines, deaths and the disappearances at sea, as evidenced by the many articles listed in the course of this report. The causes, consequences and issues inherent in migration are rarely discussed, if ever. The tone is necessarily sombre, for example in the case of media coverage of the ordeal suffered by Comorians in Libya.<sup>22</sup>

### Empathy and awareness-raising missions

There are expressions of empathy and solidarity towards migrants in the media, along with frequent calls to assist the victims of shipwrecks in difficulty and indignant reports of migrant rights being infringed, especially when incarcerated in inhumane conditions. There are also accounts on social media to dissuade young people from embarking on these journeys. At the discussion group organised with journalists, some recounted that they had hosted programmes to alert residents as to the dangers of attempting a crossing. One journalist working on the morning programme at *ORTC* recounted that “After a disappearance at sea, we use our morning programme to let residents express themselves freely. We sound the alarm to the extent it is possible. It is saddening that some are aware of these dangers, but unemployment and difficult living conditions prompt them to sell off plots of land or pawn their possessions to make a desperate attempt to live a better life.” Rural radio stations also question the state of affairs.



<sup>21</sup> Article in *Al-Watwan* (29/12/2021), “Durant l’année 2021, 35 Comoriens ont perdu la vie dans la Méditerranée lors de migrations vers l’Europe” (In 2021, 35 Comorians perished in the Mediterranean while migrating to Europe), URL: <https://alwatwan.net/societe/migrations-vers-l%E2%80%99Europe-environ,-%C2%AB35-comoriens%C2%BB-ont-perdu-la-vie-en-2021-en-m%C3%A9diterran%C3%A9e.html> (in French only)

<sup>22</sup> Over a hundred Comorian migrants are still being held prisoner in Libya. The Comorian authorities are working in close collaboration with their Libyan counterparts and IOM to help them return. 149 Comorians and have already been repatriated. Source: IOM

### A lack of investigation and in-depth articles

The Comorian passport sales scandal targeting *bidoun* families has been the subject of many press articles, but without any real investigation into it. The national and international press always takes an interest in the former President Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi being held in police custody (for over three years) but ignores the plight of stateless persons.

### Lack of knowledge of terms and concepts

Given the dearth of training, the majority of journalists know nothing of migration terms and concepts. There are no specific columns addressing this theme in the media, there are no specialist journalists on the subject. For example, the coverage of statelessness in the Comoros Islands has not been linked to migration issues but covered as politico-economic news.<sup>23</sup> The concept of “human trafficking” is also relatively unknown; journalists often fail to identify cases of smuggling, do not use the right terms and, a fortiori, do not ask the right questions.

### Representation according to type of media

First of all there are no initial training courses in journalism in the Comoros Islands and very few Comorian journalists have had any abroad. To make up for this, Actions media francophones (AMF) has collaborated with the Centre de Performance to set up a technical capacity-building course for Comorian journalists known as the “Passport for journalism”. In the past four years, 70 journalists have thus been trained.<sup>24</sup> AMF also provided support to create the GEPIC, the Union of Comorian news outlets, and the CFPJC, or Advanced training centre for Comorian journalists, in 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Example: *Al-Watwan* (16/03/2018), “Programme de citoyenneté économique : la mafia au sommet de l’État” (Economic citizenship programme: the mafia at the most senior levels of government), URL: <https://alwatwan.net/economie/programme-de-citoyennete-%C3%A9-%C3%A9conomique-la-mafia-au-sommet-de-l%E2%80%99etat.html> (in French only)

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Loïc Hervouet, founder of AMF, “Passport to journalism” courses: 19 days’ training and six themes

### Press

The main newspapers are *Al-Watwan*, *La Gazette des Comores* and a newcomer, *Al-Fajr*. They have a fact-based approach to addressing migration, without in-depth analysis on the subject. They all publish articles on tragedies and shipwrecks, smuggling networks and refoulement events. They also cover events related by the Ministry of the Interior and the International Organisation for Migration via their press releases.<sup>25</sup> Underlying migration issues are rarely addressed by the press. All the journalists interviewed for this report stated that the lack of tools and resources prevent them from moving ahead with investigation.

### Television

The country has a single state TV channel, the *ORTC*. Whereas *ORTC* journalists can invite the authorities to their studios and have the human and financial resources to conduct in-depth investigation on migration, the channel is mainly content to repeat the official discourse. Certain journalists practise self-censorship for fear of losing their job or risking reprisals. Migration subjects do not take priority and journalists act as spokespeople for the government or their allies, local authorities and even international organisations.

### Radio

The country officially has three radio stations: the *ORTC*, *Hayba-FM* and *HaYba-FM*. Other community radio stations are gradually gaining ground. Migration themes are seldom covered. The little information available to the media is insufficiently exploited. At certain stations, newscasts are simply press reviews.

<sup>25</sup> *La Gazette des Comores*, “Migration : la protection des migrants au coeur d’une formation à Moroni” (Migration: training on migrant protection in Moroni), URL: <https://lagazettedescomores.com/migration-la-protection-des-migrants-au-coeur-dune-formation-a-moroni-.html> (in French only)

### Social media

To be able to express themselves freely and remain attuned to the people, journalists express themselves on social media and create blogs which are fairly popular, especially on Facebook. For example, a reputed journalist on *Fcb-fm* created *Fcbk FM Comoros* in 2018 on Facebook, which he uses to provide information and cover in-depth subjects on shipwrecks,<sup>26</sup> with actual analysis of people risking the journey to leave poverty behind. Moroni's blog *Bogo-city*, also on Facebook, and likewise alerts the population. Given their freedom, social media platforms are not content to simply repeat information from the State. On the contrary, they dig down and bring up key elements on various subjects. Some journalists have been imprisoned for publishing certain content online.<sup>27</sup> But yet again, the lack of training, ethics and the withholding of information all compromise the quality of information published.

## Capacity building in the media

### Capacity-building initiatives on migration

According to our inventory, the only capacity-building initiative benefitting Comorian journalists on the theme of migration was organised in 2021 by IOM, the US embassy to the Comoros Islands and the United Nations System on human trafficking (see Appendix 2).

Regional training courses have been organised in recent years, especially in Gaborone, on human trafficking or for the SAMM project (these two workshops are listed in the Madagascar overview), but to our knowledge, no journalists from the archipelago have participated.

### Report on capacity-building initiatives received by journalists

The aim of the training course on identifying cases of national and transnational human trafficking was to raise awareness and foster higher levels of involvement among stakeholders in the handling of human trafficking, including journalists. Unfortunately, this training course did not cater exclusively to journalists and only three out of hundreds of journalists in the Comoros Islands were able to benefit from them: two journalists from the *ORTC* and another from a community radio.

The training course was short: three days, 8.00 am to 5.00 pm. According to the community radio journalist from Mvouni, the training method based on the pop song “Wapambe” by Salim Ali Amir, on the subject of human trafficking, was effective. The participants, especially the journalists, understood the point of covering the subject, at both national and international level. The tools acquired during this training course helped them gain insight into the concept, assimilate the right vocabulary, ask the right questions when unearthing potential cases and identify proven cases of human trafficking in a migration context, as evidenced by a journalist from *ISIC*.

## Findings and recommendations

The Comoros is a country with a high rate of labour migration, due to bilateral relations with various countries, with significant numbers of migrants heading for Mayotte and mainland France.

The reasons for these displacements are precarity, health, education and work. The media need to move beyond the publication of sensationalist articles and the expression of empathy, to concentrate on in-depth articles.

<sup>26</sup> Facebook publication by FM Comoros, video “En direct de Tunisie : naufrage en mer entre la Tunisie et l'Italie, les membres du Consulat Comorien en Tunisie font le point du drame” (Live from Tunisia: shipwreck at sea between Tunisia and Italy, Comorian consulate officials in Tunisia examine the tragedy), URL: <https://www.facebook.com/914095722128114/videos/261505141781057> (in French only)

<sup>27</sup> Article on Comoros info: <https://www.comoresinfos.net/le-journaliste-abilis-arrete-pour-avoir-filme-la-manifestation-de-mabedja/> (in French only)

Certain journalists are reticent about covering this touchy subject for fear of being arrested or censored.

The journalists interviewed are aware of the need to better cover migration issues and ask for capacity-building initiatives to be set up. Popular ideas included the setup of vocational training on the question of migration with practical cases, the development of investigative skills and assistance with creating columns and special programmes on migration. It is also necessary to form a network of journalists specialising in migration for them to share their experiences and collaborate on in-depth reports. This networking may be extended to regional level.

Journalists also need tools at their fingertips to gain better insights into migration issues in neighbouring countries. Some of these issues may well be of concern to the Comoros in the short- or long-term, like displacements caused by climate change which already affects countries such as Madagascar, and African migrants transiting to Mayotte via the Comoros. In this respect, it would be opportune for journalists from several countries to collaborate, which process could well enhance their work.

### Training for journalists

- Train investigative journalists on the subject of migration with case studies for in-depth reportage.
- Train a few expert journalists. These “senior” profiles could then train their peers.
- Set up vocational training on migration with three top-priority themes (irregular migration, statelessness and human trafficking) with key actions and case studies. This training course could be spread over several sessions and several months. It could be rolled out at the Advanced training centre for Comorian journalists (CFPJC).
- Provide follow-up to the training courses.

### Other initiatives to improve the media coverage of the subject of migration

- Leverage existing structures with detailed knowledge of the context and socio-political and economic issues such as the CFPJC, the Union of Comorian news outlets (GEPIC) and Actions media francophones Comores.
- Support journalists on the ground to encourage the creation of output that truly reflects reality.
- Raise awareness among the press managers so that:
  - 1/ they understand migration issues,
  - 2/ to facilitate journalist availability during training sessions,
  - 3/ to create special columns on migration.
- Support the creation of a national network of journalists on migration.
- Support regional networking for journalists trained on migration in the Indian Ocean or Sub-Saharan Africa by organising inter-regional forums or workshops. Themes addressed might include, for example, migration issues affecting Madagascar and the Comoros together, such as human trafficking, and the smuggling of domestic workers to the Middle East, which involves several countries of origin and transit. This regional network could be developed in order to foster the sharing of experiences and collaborative work on in-depth reportage.

# Madagascar

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**587,041**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**27.7 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**35,600**  
persons i.e.  
0.13% of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**France**

**China**

**India**

**Comoros**

**USA**

**Sri Lanka**

43%  
are  
women

20.5%  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**193,526**  
persons i.e.  
0.71% of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**France (Mayotte)**

**France (La Réunion)**

**Comoros**

**Canada**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**2.9% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - ILO, 2020; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

There are around 30 TV channels mostly based in Antananarivo, with some also having regional branches.

The press boasts some 40 outlets. The four major French-language or bilingual dailies with a circulation of around 10,000 to 20,000 (*Midi Madagasikara*, *L'Express de Madagascar*, *La Gazette de la Grande Île* and *Les Nouvelles*) attract the most advertising revenue. Radio is the most popular media in Madagascar with over 300 active stations.<sup>28</sup>

The state TV channel (*TVM*) and radio station (*RNM*) have to toe the line in the form of communication directives dictated by the government. There are many private outlets on all media, with a definite political slant, whether pro-government or pro-opposition. The ensuing polarisation means that access to neutral, independent information is limited. In 2018, 15% of the population were Internet users.<sup>29</sup>



<sup>28</sup> Data from the Internews report, "Report on the media landscape in Madagascar" (September 2021):

URL: [https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Mada\\_Etude-paysage-media\\_09302021.pdf](https://internews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Mada_Etude-paysage-media_09302021.pdf) (in French only)

<sup>29</sup> World Bank data website: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>

## Overview of migration

### Migration trends

Madagascar is an Indian Ocean island with brisk demographic growth and high poverty rates. While emigration and above all immigration<sup>30</sup> are limited in terms of quantity, there are several forms and moreover raise socio-political and economic issues. The authorities' interest in migration being relatively recent, the country lacks many statistics regarding the various forms of migration, which sometimes makes it difficult to understand the issues and roll out suitable public policies.

The Malagasy diaspora has been estimated at 193,526 persons i.e. 0.71% of the population.<sup>31</sup> They reside mostly in Europe (9 out of 10), with an 85% majority in France.<sup>32</sup>

In the course of the last decade, two migration dynamics have driven Malagasy emigration: student and labour migration. While students have historically migrated to France, the former colonial power, new destinations, such as Canada, Mauritius, Saudi Arabia and Morocco have now emerged, attracting a rapidly-increasing number of students.<sup>33</sup> Labour migration especially involves domestic workers emigrating to the Middle East and the Gulf States. There are other labour migration corridors to Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Seychelles and Mauritius (with the latter mainly involving men, working in factories).

### → Malagasy domestic workers in the Middle East and the Gulf States

<sup>30</sup> Madagascar has few immigrants: 35,600 persons, i.e. 0.13% of the population, according to UN DESA, 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Statistics from UN DESA (2020). NB: the statistics on the Malagasy diaspora are open to debate.

<sup>32</sup> Mireille Razafindrakoto, Nicolas Razafindratsima, Nirintsoa Razakamanana, François Roubaux (2017), "La diaspora malagasy en France et dans le monde : une communauté invisible" (The Malagasy diaspora in France and in the world: an invisible community), IRD, University Paris Dauphine (in French only)

<sup>33</sup> From 2013 to 2018, student numbers have increased as follows: Saudi Arabia: up 45% (222), Mauritius: up 90% (194), Morocco: up 157%, Canada: up 48% (160). These four countries host 16% of Malagasy migrant students, 60% being in France. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Campus France, 2018

Malagasy women have been migrating as domestic workers to the Middle East and the Gulf States since the 1990s. With the 2009 socio-political crisis in Madagascar, the closure of several textile mills led to unemployment for over 7,000 women living in the capital, leading to mass movement towards these countries. During this 2009 peak, 7,504 women were recorded as migrating for work. This ground to a halt in 2013 when cases of human trafficking were reported, after which the government prohibited the departure of women to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

A significant number of women migrants also came from the region of Sava, in the north-west of Madagascar. This region lives off vanilla farming. This is an industry that skews strongly in favour of men, with women enjoying far fewer benefits from this source of income, along with young people and landless peasants. Women migrating for work are often single or divorced mothers with dependent children that they leave with their family, and women who are encouraged by their family or husband to leave in order to meet the needs of their family in their country of origin. These women are often ostracised in their own community and always wish to migrate in the hope of improving their living conditions and those of their children and family. Returning women migrants from this region have grouped together in the district of Andapa and built houses symbolic of their success. These dwelling places are noticeable in a district inhabited mainly by underprivileged classes, that has now been dubbed Antanambao Kuwait (“New Kuwait”).

Domestic workers in Lebanon have founded an organisation to support peers who have fallen on hard times. Returning to their home country, the founders of this organisation formed the National Union of Malagasy Domestic Workers (SENAMAMA), with support from the International Labour Organisation. The union boasts 2,200 local members and has forged close relations with domestic workers abroad.

In 2021, 300 workers in a regular situation in the Gulf States and the Middle East were registered at the consulate. According to the Malagasy Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

the actual number is closer to 2,000 once women migrating in an irregular situation are added. This is actually more a case of labour migration, with sub-jacent yet no less important themes of irregular migration and human trafficking, involving mostly women in a tight socio-economic situation.

### Immigration

The main immigrants in Madagascar are of French, Chinese, Indian and Comorian nationality. The number of Chinese immigrants in Madagascar has increased in recent years. They work in the construction of infrastructure and in trade, but there is no information or analysis on the subject.

There are two other migration themes which have high socio-economic stakes but which are ignored or downplayed:

- firstly, **internal displacements due to the environment and climate change**. These displacements are cyclic and have affected the south for years, as a very dry region steeped in poverty. Famine raging in this region has been covered in international media over the past two years. Women and children suffer the most from these displacements. In 2018, 986 persons migrated between January and August: an increase over 2017 and equivalent to the total number from 2009 to 2012.<sup>34</sup> This form of migration is thus growing rapidly. While it remains internal to Madagascar for the time being, it may lead to international displacement in the future;

<sup>34</sup> The IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, DTM reports July 2017 to August 2018

- secondly, **statelessness** which concerns communities of ostracised people and people living in hiding, who have been deprived of their human rights, and whose situation is unknown or ignored. It is the case above all of generations of migrants from India, Pakistan and the Comoros, who lost their original nationality without acquiring a new one when Madagascar achieved independence in 1960. Until the recent reform of the Malagasy Nationality Code in 2017, statelessness was perpetuated partly by descentance, in that Malagasy women marrying stateless men could not pass on Malagasy nationality to either their husband or any children. The UN Refugee Agency estimated there could be any number of stateless persons, ranging from 2,200 to 100,000, which showed how unreliable existing data is, as well as a lack of understanding for their exact situation.<sup>35</sup>

### Public policies and measures

In light of these observations, the Malagasy authorities have taken measures. The Malagasy Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) drew up an Action plan to engage the diaspora in 2019. This plan was adopted by the cabinet in February 2021, with the aim of improving consulate services for Malagasy nationals abroad, especially to protect migrant workers. It also aims to leverage the social, economic, cultural and financial capital of migrants in favour of development in Madagascar.

The Malagasy Ministry of Employment, Civil Service and Welfare (MTEFPLS) and the Malagasy Office to Combat Human Trafficking (BNLTEH)<sup>36</sup> were founded in 2018 as backup for the legal and institutional framework to push back on trafficking, protect migrant workers and build stakeholder capacity.

In 2020, the ILO implemented the EU-funded REFRAME<sup>37</sup> project to help set up information bureaus for questions on labour migration at the regional labour directorates in the regions of Sava and Diana. Madagascar has furthermore made a commitment as a pioneering member of Alliance 8.7 which aims to eliminate forced labour and human trafficking.

As for displacements triggered by climate change, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Malagasy Research Centre for the Environment (CNRE) inaugurated an Internal Migration Observatory with the REAP project<sup>38</sup> in December 2020. In 2021, the Malagasy government decided to set up an Interministerial Committee to support internal migrants where they have settled, especially in the north or in the region of Bongolava. The REAP project helps to foster women's empowerment in their regions of both origin and migration, with a view to helping to preserve peace and social harmony. Women's committees have been set up to prevent and manage conflicts within their community. Women have also been provided with support to access revenue-generating businesses. Furthermore, IOM has drawn up the Displacement Tracking Matrix for people in Androy. This tool was transferred to the Malagasy Office for Risk and Disaster Management (BNGRC) which does not use it, due a lack of funding and human resources.

<sup>35</sup> Dimitrina Petrova (2015), “In Madagascar, Reforming Nationality Law Advances Social and Economic Rights”: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/in/openglobalrights-openpage/in-madagascar-reforming-nationality-law-advances-social-and-econo/>

<sup>36</sup> The Malagasy Office to Combat Human Trafficking (BNLTEH) was founded by decree in 2018. It was created as set forth in Law No. 2014-040 to push back against human trafficking. The BNLTEH coordinates the various ministries involved in initiatives to push back on human trafficking, in partnership with the ILO, IOM and EU.

<sup>37</sup> The REFRAME project: global action to improve hiring practices for labour migration and programme to build capacity regarding labour migration, fair hiring practices and human trafficking

<sup>38</sup> Funded by the United Nations Peace Building Fund (PBF), the 2-year project “Responding to threats to peace and social cohesion, supporting the empowerment and promotion of women in Madagascar” (REAP), has been implemented by IOM and the UNPD.

Lastly, regarding statelessness, Madagascar joined the UN Refugee Agency #IBelong campaign in 2014 to push back against statelessness (2014-2024). In 2017, the Malagasy nationality code was reformed, so that men and women henceforth have equal rights regarding the transmission of their nationality to their children. In 2020, the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation (MID) ran a campaign to encourage people to register births and prevent statelessness and, in December, 20 MPs attended a training workshop on the right to a nationality to develop their knowledge on statelessness and foster the adoption of suitable laws governing nationality.

## The question of migration in the Malagasy media landscape and public discourse

### Themes given priority in the analysis of media coverage of migration

The following themes represent important issues nationwide yet are largely ignored by the media, and as such were given priority in this participatory assessment:

- labour migration and human trafficking. Most migration issues in Madagascar are correlated with these concepts: irregular migration and return migration are sub-jacent themes;
- statelessness. There are very few records of this, yet consequences are potentially explosive in terms of living together in harmony and access to rights;
- environmental migration. Madagascar is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, especially the south. Recent episodes have shown that great efforts need to be deployed for a better understanding of this phenomenon. Another significant point raised by the World Bank is that while displacements ensuing from climate change are often internal, forecasts show an upward curve, making it

an important international issue in socio-economic terms.<sup>39</sup> Encouraging the media to start taking an interest is pertinent, strategic and proactive.

### Anecdotal coverage on a par with petty crime

Migration is seldom covered by the Malagasy media. Articles on the subject are published sporadically, and above all take a dramatic tone, in general on subjects such as:

- emigrant domestic workers being abused and repatriated,
- mass exodus from the region of Androy because of drought and famine there.

### A negative tone, without analysis or investigation, in media coverage of labour emigration

Labour emigration is regularly covered, featuring several times a year in the media. The tone used is often negative, with most articles simply covering the repatriation of domestic workers having experienced tragedies. Migration of domestic workers is thus in general combined with modern slavery, human trafficking and irregular migration, whereas the phenomenon is wider-reaching and experiences not necessarily as clear-cut.

<sup>39</sup> World Bank, second "Groundswell Report", September 2021, URL: <https://www.banquemondiale.org/fr/news/press-release/2021/09/13/climate-change-could-force-216-million-people-to-migrate-within-their-own-countries-by-2050>

For example, on 11 December 2021, 118 women migrant workers and four children were repatriated from Kuwait at the initiative of the Malagasy government, with Kuwaiti government cooperation and IOM support. Several similar articles were published in the media.<sup>40</sup> None of the journalists involved conducted any in-depth examination of the causes behind the departure of these women nor the dramatic situation they were in, nor the consequences. Now that they have returned to their region of origin, the media have dropped the subject without addressing the questions raised by their return, or any of the planned or implemented measures to protect migrant workers.

The articles are thus almost systematically on a par with those describing sensational news items, despite the significance of the socio-economic ramifications. The main causes for the departure of these women migrant workers are poverty and the lack of social standing for women in their community.

Furthermore, the media rarely let migrants speak up. For example, during the repatriation process in December 2021, none of the women were interviewed by journalists. At the migrant discussion group,<sup>41</sup> they deplored never being consulted by the media. This often led to the spreading of negative information, lacking depth and even humanity.

From this dialogue with migrants in the discussion group it was also clear that they felt that the journalists misunderstood their situation. One participant in the discussion group having worked in Lebanon and Kuwait recounted: "There are several positive

experiences of domestic workers in Lebanon and Kuwait, but the media never mention that. We are there, and can talk of it. We send currency back home, we have been able to help our families and improve our living conditions. I speak French better now, and I've learned to speak English and Arabic too. So there are benefits to having experience as a domestic worker abroad, it's not all abuse, as related by the media."<sup>42</sup>

### Same tendency regarding climate-driven displacement

The media discourse on the climate-driven displacement is fact-based. The media only ever mention it when catastrophes occur, and there are rarely any in-depth articles,<sup>43</sup> despite the phenomenon being cyclical and the socio-economic stakes high. Most of the time, media coverage fails to do full justice to the issue and the forecasts indicating ever more internal displacements, with a potential internationalisation of the phenomenon.

### Few articles on stateless people

There are very few articles on this subject. They are discreet communities, living in hiding. In Malagasy society, not having a homeland is inadmissible; public discourse is thus negative. Nevertheless, the few articles published in the media on statelessness are the result of initiatives by UNHCR and the NGO Focus Development, on the reform of the nationality code<sup>44</sup> and awareness-raising of the condition of statelessness among the general public. These are positive articles with an upbeat message, balancing out the ambient public discourse.

<sup>40</sup> La Vérité, "Travailleuses migrantes, 118 femmes malagasy et 4 enfants rapatriés de Koweït" (Migrant workers: 118 Malagasy women and four children repatriated from Kuwait), 17/12/2021, URL: <https://laverite.mg/societe/item/15104-travailleuses-migrantes-118-femmes-malagasy-et-4-enfants-rapatries-de-koweit.html> and 2424.mg, "118 travailleuses malgaches sans papiers bloquées au Koweït rapatriées dans la nuit du jeudi à vendredi par un vol spécial" (118 undocumented Malagasy workers stranded in Kuwait repatriated on Thursday night on a special flight), 17/12/2021, URL:

<https://2424.mg/news/rapatriement-118-travailleuses-malgaches-sans-papiers-bloquees-au-koweit-rapatriees-dans-la-nuit-du-jeudi-a-vendredi-par-un-vol-special/>

<sup>41</sup> The migrants who spoke at discussion groups were: migrant workers and women domestic workers, including victims of human trafficking. Many stateless people have been ostracised and live in hiding, making it hard to locate them, so the NGO Focus Development, which works in close contact with them, participated in the discussion group to represent their point of view.

<sup>42</sup> Discussion group, Antananarivo (15/12/2021): <https://laverite.mg/societe/item/15104-travailleuses-migrantes-118-femmes-malagasy-et-4-enfants-rapatries-de-koweit.html> (in French only)

<sup>43</sup> One exception: this survey from Maminirina Rado to Midi Madagasikara (6 November 2021): <https://midi-madagasikara.mg/2021/11/06/crise-alimentaire-lerrance-des-deplaces-de-la-faim-dans-le-district-dampanihy/>

<sup>44</sup> For example in L'Express, "Apatride : le code de la nationalité à moderniser" (Statelessness: the nationality code needs modernising), 06/03/2021, URL: <https://lexpress.mg/06/03/2021/apatride-le-code-de-la-nationalite-a-moderniser/> (in French only)



### Statistics and sources

Competent analysis of the subjects is impossible given the lack of accurate, up-to-date statistics for the entire country, likewise a lack of access to certain information and reticence among resource people. Information is often even more difficult to obtain for sensitive cases such as trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, irregular migration to Arab countries, violence towards domestic workers and stateless people.

### Press releases repeated at length

When international professional organisations and civil society organisations working on migration or the Malagasy government share information on the subject of migration, they prepare press releases<sup>45</sup> to ensure that all messages are correctly conveyed, using the right terms. Journalists simply reprint these entire press releases, without providing any extra context or in-depth analysis.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with IOM staff. Preparing a press release “ready for publishing”, to be distributed to the media, is a commonplace practice in Madagascar at press conferences.

### Media coverage of migration according to migrants

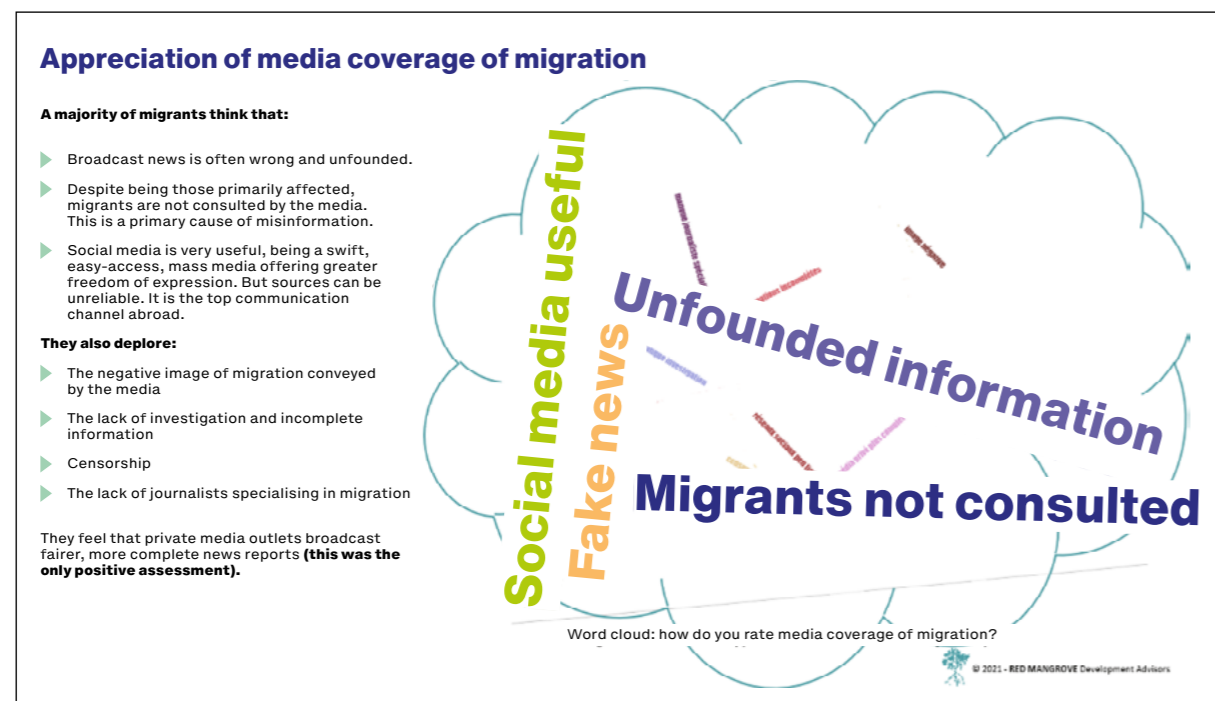
These observations are shared by the migrants who participated in the discussion group, as shown in the document below, summing up their statements

### Review according to type of media

Madagascar’s insular nature, as well as the prevalence of a strong attachment to the homeland, means that nationals take a different stance on migration. It is primarily viewed as an act driven by necessity, placing migrants in the role of “victim”.

### The press

There are some 40 dailies in Madagascar, the majority of which are bilingual (with articles in Malagasy and French). As with television and major radio stations, the quality of news articles is skewed by outlets’ political stance. In the printed press, the topic is analysed from a very local standpoint, often failing to mention the countries of origin in the case of migrants in Madagascar, or countries of destination in the case of emigration from Madagascar. According to an interviewee from the Media and communication observatory in Madagascar: “There is indeed the notion



of proximity of news, but nowadays the phenomenon has gone global. Terms and concepts are used more or less correctly and on point. While literal definitions do not seem to pose a problem, the definition of the various concepts remains an issue especially for each type of migration, such as domestic work and seasonal migration.”

### Radio

There are over 300 stations in Madagascar.<sup>46</sup> Radio stations in the regions people are leaving do cover migration: certain radio stations employing journalists trained by the ILO’s REFRAME project have in fact produced awareness-raising programmes on various themes, such as the hiring of irregular migrants, migrant worker rights etc.<sup>47</sup>

Nationwide, most coverage is purely factual, without any analysis. With little data and few sources, the quality of reportage depends greatly on the journalist’s experience and professionalism.<sup>48</sup> Since labour migration is an important issue in Madagascar, their alarmist messages act as warnings for the various pitfalls when working abroad. In programmes, people sometimes forget that the problem does not only hinge on employer quality but also on working conditions (the contract), which implies a need for bilateral working agreements and a fair hiring process. Debates are mostly on the same subject, and some are controversial, as with the case with returning domestic workers, which raises suspicions of corruption since a 2013 ruling officially prohibits sending migrant workers to high-risk countries.

<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Culture and Communication: <http://www.univ-antananarivo.mg/Journee-Mondiale-de-la-Radio-et-1er-Salon-de-la-Radio-a-la-RNM-Nouvelle-radio#:~:text=Selon%20le%20Minist%C3%A9re%20de%20la,40%20sont%20concentr%C3%A9es%20%C3%A0%20Antananarivo> (in French only)

<sup>47</sup> Radio Tsiry, Fianarantsoa (105.6 Fm), Radio Voix de la Sagesse (90.6 Fm), Nosy Be (90.6 Fm) and Radio Université Toliara (91.4 Fm)

<sup>48</sup> Interview with the national coordinator of the REFRAME project

### Television

Madagascar has around 30 TV channels. The state-owned TVM is the only channel available nationwide. Television covers migration phenomena in the event of sensational news (e.g.: clashes between migrants and local residents, the death of domestic workers in the United Arab Emirates, violence towards domestic workers etc.) or when relevant organisations (UNDP, IOM, SCOs etc.) coordinate occasional events. The tone often remains informative and fact-based, without any in-depth analysis of the subject (background, process, issues, solutions, follow-up etc.) and stereotypes abound, with migrants described as “starving”, “poor”, “jobless” or “karàna”.<sup>49</sup>

### Social media

There is great diversity in the coverage of migration by influencers and social media platforms. Social networks are also used for alerts since activists enjoy relative freedom on the various platforms. They may thus be a source of precious information for journalists.<sup>50</sup>

Comments abound and opinions diverge, discourse is very partisan and political. The diversity of coverage and stakeholder approach does lead to a certain amount of nuance, yet this remains mostly unavailable to the general public since Internet use rates are low.

<sup>49</sup> Indians who mostly emigrated to Madagascar in the late 19th century

<sup>50</sup> For example, this article by Seth Andriamarohasina (L’Express Mada, 7 March 2018) inspired by Facebook accounts by Malagasy migrants, domestic workers in Kuwait, URL: <https://lexpress.mg/07/03/2018/immigration-au-kuwait-sos-de-quatre-vingt-domestiques-malgaches/> (in French only)

## Capacity building in the media

Malagasy journalists have benefitted from few capacity-building initiatives on migration, although more have become available in recent years.

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of capacity-building initiatives in the media having taken place in Madagascar since 2015.

### → Trained journalists and basic tools to better cover labour migration

For the REFRAME project, 45 men and women journalists were trained on labour migration, fair hiring and human trafficking. It was organised with members of the Malagasy network of journalists specialising in employment and labour (RJSET). 120 student journalists at a private institute also benefitted from awareness-raising sessions on the theme. For this project, journalists drew up a glossary on migration for those working in Madagascar. Each term was defined in French with its equivalent in Malagasy.

These capacity-building initiatives were decisive in raising awareness among journalists and students in journalism on the theme of migration. They have nevertheless been deemed to be insufficient, as shown by the report drawn up by participants in the journalists' discussion group having taken part in capacity-building initiatives and summed up in the table below.

DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE	POSITIVE POINTS	NEGATIVE POINTS	EFFECTS
<b>SADC</b> Regional training course for media professionals: human trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding of basic notions</li> <li>- Networking set up between participants</li> <li>- Tools-sharing for participants</li> <li>- Certificate for trainees who complete the course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not adapted to Madagascar</li> <li>- Training course in English, with translators: the terminology used did not correspond</li> <li>- Follow-up was difficult</li> <li>- The tools were in English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only 1 Malagasy journalist trained</li> <li>- The cascade training course did not continue as planned. The sharing of experience to train other Malagasy journalists did not happen</li> </ul>
<b>SAMM</b> Online training course on labour migration, child labour and human trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working at the student's pace</li> <li>- Media always available on the platform</li> <li>- No health risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of interactivity given the lack of discussion</li> <li>- Concentration and listening hard during webinars</li> <li>- A rather difficult theme to understand, explanations too hard to follow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity to differentiate between the themes addressed</li> <li>- Capacity to direct a line of enquiry vis-à-vis the themes and prioritise</li> </ul>
<b>REFRAME</b> Training course on labour migration, fair hiring and human trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A lot of discussion</li> <li>- Many fertile questions</li> <li>- Relevant training documents provided</li> <li>- Working on the ground</li> <li>- Easy to assimilate</li> <li>- Highlighting the responsibility of journalists in various situations</li> <li>- High levels of concentration facilitated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training course too theoretical</li> <li>- The information was superficial and needs to be more in-depth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 45 journalists received training, 120 student journalists benefitted from awareness-raising</li> <li>- Migration glossary adapted to Malagasy</li> <li>- Decent grasp of technical terms and migration jargon</li> <li>- Facilitation of coverage for migration news</li> <li>- Setup of the RJSET: Malagasy network of journalists specialising in employment and labour (45 members)</li> <li>- Information and awareness-raising for the public</li> </ul>



## Findings and recommendations

The recommendations below have been formulated by drawing on discussion in the groups organised with journalists and migrants, as well as interviews with key players on the topic of the media coverage of migration.

### Training for journalists

- Train a pool of journalists in investigating migration.
- Add case studies and missions on the ground to the theoretical training courses.
- Editorial managers need to be trained as well as journalists, in order to influence the editorial line.
- At national level, there are few specialists and trainers on migration, some need to be trained.
- Journalists specifically need training on the top-priority themes: labour migration, human trafficking, statelessness and environmental migration.
- Constraint to be factored into the design of courses:
  - The journalists have limited time for work and training, this is even more the case since Covid-19.

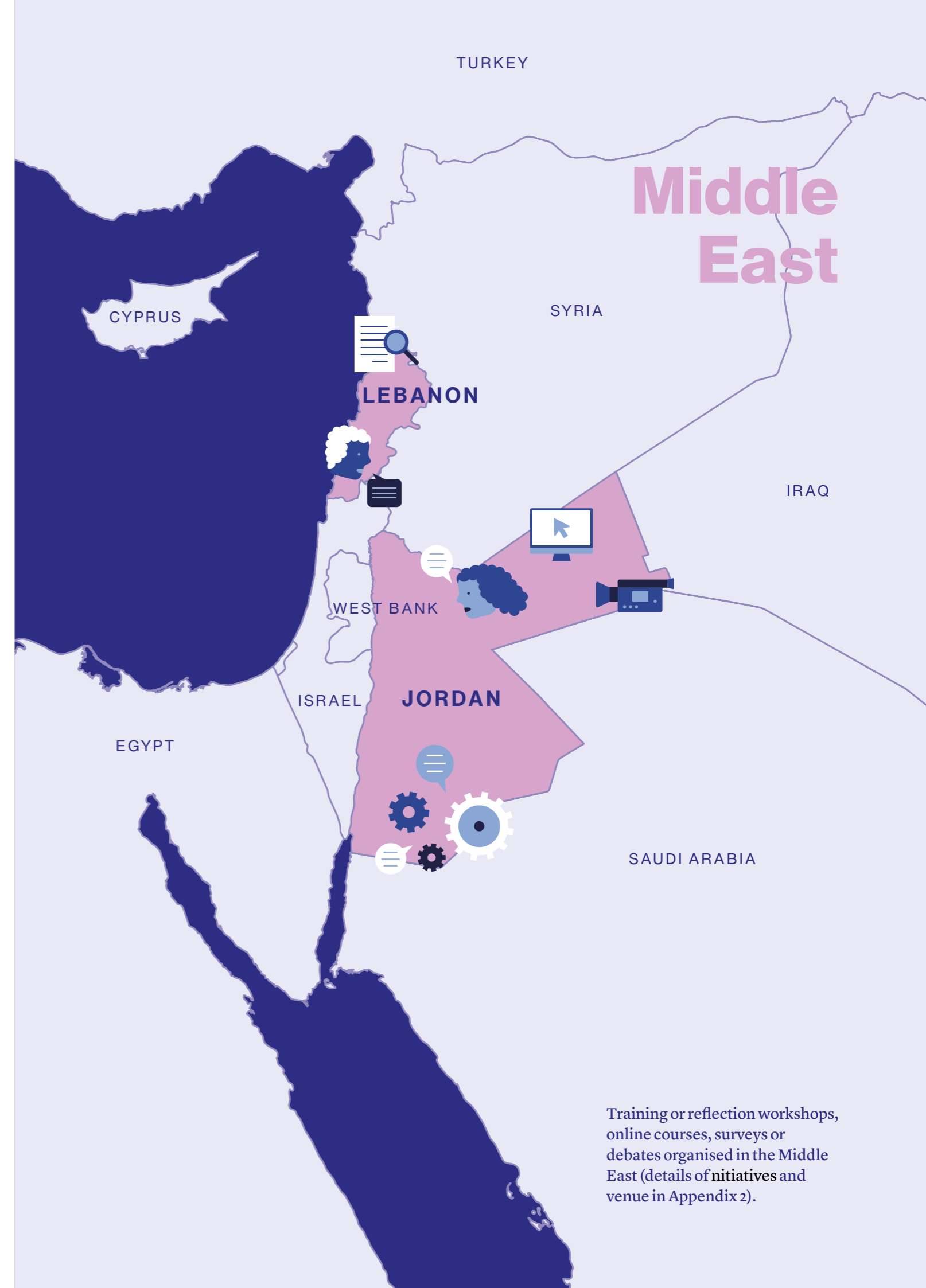
### Other actions to improve media coverage of migration

- Foster reportage in cooperation with several media outlets, which would also circumvent censorship in public media.
- At national level, draw up a glossary specific to the themes of environmental migration and statelessness, to complement that of the ILO on labour migration.
- At national level, set up a platform and/or a network of journalists specialising in migration along RJSET lines, in order to foster discussion, cooperation, leveraging and training.

- Identify the organisations that produce sources of data and statistics, and organise an awareness-raising workshop with these organisations on data accessibility.
- Create a regional award for investigations on the theme of migration.

The project is ambitious, but it is possible to tap into the progress already made. Malagasy journalists having already participated in training had the basic tools on labour migration and human trafficking at their fingertips, and they have organised a network; several student journalists have also benefitted from awareness-raising. Furthermore, all new capacity-building initiatives can now count on stakeholders such as the Malagasy vocational training centre for journalists (CFPJM), the Group of Publishers of News Media, Multimedia in Madagascar (GEPIMM), AMF Madagascar and AMF International. These stakeholders have pertinent experience and vision as to the future of Malagasy journalism and have a firm grasp of the socio-political and economic context they work in.

Capacity building for journalists is still not enough. Difficulties accessing data, and a lack of data and statistics are also major constraints preventing better coverage of migration topics, and remedying this requires collaboration with the key migration stakeholders in Madagascar.



Training or reflection workshops, online courses, surveys or debates organised in the Middle East (details of initiatives and venue in Appendix 2).

## Regional overview

### Migration trends

Jordan and Lebanon are located in a region with various armed conflicts leading to a considerable number of forced displacements. Whereas neighbouring countries (Syria, Iraq and Palestine) have been greatly affected by recurrent conflicts in recent years, Jordan and Lebanon have enjoyed relative stability. Despite the uncertain political context, these two countries have had fairly similar experiences with migration:

- As refugees for the populations fleeing the war. Jordan and Lebanon have taken in successive waves of people forcibly displaced by various conflicts: Palestinians after the Arab-Israeli War (1948), Iraqi after two gulf wars (1991 and 2003) and, more recently, Syrians further to civil war in Syria (2011). In Jordan and Lebanon alike, these refugees account for over 20% of the population;

- As a destination country for migrant workers from Africa or Asia. Both countries have had a similar experience and face similar challenges, especially with the sponsorship system (*kafala*) governing labour migration;

- Emigration is also a reality. Many Jordanian workers move abroad to seek out professional opportunities that they have not found in their country of origin. In Lebanon, emigration has even more significance, since the Lebanese diaspora is one of the largest diasporas in the world. The economic boost it affords Lebanon is considerable, especially when facing successive economic crises.



## The media landscape

The two countries' media landscapes are broadly similar, except for the multi-lingual dimension peculiar to Lebanon. Migration issues are perceived as sensitive in both countries and are mainly given sensationalist and negative coverage. Migrants are rarely interviewed, and the thrust of discourse is that of local or national authorities. There are frequent articles associating the presence of foreigners with economic, social and security problems in both countries. In contrast, the diaspora is viewed in a very positive light, especially in Lebanon.



## Training/ capacity building

According to the non-exhaustive list in this report, both countries have hosted capacity-building activities in similar proportions in recent years: seven for Jordan and eight for Lebanon. Some activities have been specific to Lebanon or Jordan, others have been regional initiatives organised in Lebanon or Jordan for practical reasons. Given the migration challenges the two countries have to deal with, the volume of these initiatives has been deemed insufficient by people working in migration, as well as journalists.

→ In the 2022 Reporters Without Borders rankings for freedom of the press, Lebanon ranked 130th and Jordan 120th.<sup>1</sup> Bearing in mind the financial vulnerability and security issues affecting the experts interviewed – whose work is generally in connection with the media, international organisations and the authorities – anonymity has been preserved in certain cases.

<sup>1</sup> 2022 RSF rankings: <https://rsf.org/en/index>

# Jordan

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**89,342**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**10.2 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**3.5 M**  
persons, i.e.  
**33.9%** of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

**Syria**

**Iraq**

**Egypt**

**Yemen**

**China**

**49.2%**  
are  
women

**49.2%**  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**814,900**  
persons i.e.  
**7.9%** of the population

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

**Saudi Arabia**

**United Arab Emirates**

**USA**

**Kuwait**

**Qatar**

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

**9% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2022; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

According to the information published on the Jordanian media authority's website, there are 10 dailies, 38 radio stations and 130 news websites operating with a licence in Jordan.

There are also 17 Jordanian TV channels. Self-censorship has long been practised in the press on taboo subjects such as the army, the royal family and religious matters, but also because of the publication of decrees by the Jordanian government which imposes restrictions on specific subjects. In 2012, the government passed a law requiring all news websites to be registered, which has led to dozens of websites being blocked. In 2018, 66% of the population were Internet users.

## Overview of migration

Throughout its recent history, Jordan has acted as a host country for refugees. There are over 2.8 million refugees registered and living in Jordan, the majority of whom are from Palestine (2.1 million)<sup>2</sup> and Syria (665,000), with a minority from Iraq and Yemen.<sup>3</sup>

The country also hosts immigrant workers, most of whom work in agriculture, construction, the textile industry and domestic services.

### Waves of migration to Jordan

They have mainly been due to wars in neighbouring countries: the Arab-Israeli wars in 1948 and 1967 triggered migration from Palestine, the 1991 Gulf war and the 2003 Iraq war provoked migration from Iraq, and the Syrian conflict which started in 2011 has provoked a considerable number of departures from Syria.

<sup>2</sup> UNRWA website

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR (2019), Jordan Factsheet

### Palestinian refugees

The Palestinian diaspora in Jordan is now estimated at around 4.4 million persons (almost half the population of the country), of whom around 2.1 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Most of them enjoy full citizenship in Jordan.<sup>4</sup> They are nevertheless subject to discrimination. Further to the war in Syria, the authorities have denied entry for Palestinian refugees fleeing Syria, while accepting Syrians.<sup>5</sup>

### Syrian refugees

Their number has now been estimated by the authorities at 1.3 million, of whom 665,000 persons registered with the UN Refugee Agency. Syrian refugees now account for over 10% of the Jordanian population. The vast majority, nearly 84%, live in urban zones rather than the official camps,<sup>6</sup> and 16% live in three refugee camps.<sup>7</sup> Around 150,000 Syrians work in Jordan, of whom some 62,000 have a work permit,<sup>8</sup> the authorities having authorised Syrian refugees to obtain work permits in certain professions.

### Other refugee populations

There are nearly 89,000 refugees of other nationalities, broken down as follows: 66,771 Iraqis, 13,919 Yemenites, 6,027 Sudanese, 719 Somalians and 1,466 refugees of other nationalities.<sup>9</sup>

### Immigrant workers

Recourse to labour migration has long existed. Jordan signed its first workforce exchange agreement with Pakistan to boost its economic development in 1978. As from the 1980s, farming developed in the Jordan Valley, coinciding with the arrival of Egyptian

workers.<sup>10</sup> Gradually, Jordan has opened up to other nationalities. For example, the textile industry now employs workers from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Madagascar, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Syria.<sup>11</sup>

The Jordanian Ministry of Labour has estimated that 440,000 out of the 850,000 migrant workers in Jordan (8.5% of the country's population) are currently working illegally. Official reports indicate that Egyptians represent the majority of foreign workers in the kingdom, i.e. approximately 500,000 workers, regular and irregular workers taken together. Domestic workers have been estimated at 60,000, while the textile industry employs around 53,000 migrant workers.

Most immigrants working in farming and construction are men, whereas domestic work is reserved for women, as is the textile industry where 69% of employees are women.

<sup>4</sup> Palestinian Return Centre (2020), "A heavy year for Palestinian refugees in Jordan", (prc.org.uk), (in Arabic only) and UNRWA, "Palestinian refugees camps in Jordan"

<sup>5</sup> Platform of French NGOs in Palestine, "Palestinian refugees, key figures for 2020"; and Amnesty International, "Seventy+ Years of Suffocation"

<sup>6</sup> "Oxfam in the world, Jordan"

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR (2019), "Jordan Factsheet"

<sup>8</sup> Al Ghad newspaper, "Jordan delivers a record number of work permits to Syrian refugees" (in Arabic only) and ILO, "Changes in Jordan's work permit regulations for Syrian refugees contribute to decent work"

<sup>9</sup> AlMamlaka TV, report, "Centenary in Jordan" (12 April 2021) (almamlakatv.com) (in Arabic only)

<sup>10</sup> AlMamlaka TV, documentary, "No Permit, the story of immigrant workers in Jordan" (in Arabic only)

<sup>11</sup> AlMamlaka TV, documentary, "No Permit, the story of immigrant workers in Jordan" (in Arabic only)

### Emigration of Jordanians

Jordan has a high unemployment rate, which recently reached 50% among young people.<sup>12</sup> This has prompted jobless citizens to emigrate. While accurate figures are not available, some non-official statistics show that over 40% of graduates in medicine and other highly qualified graduates from Jordanian universities relocate abroad.<sup>13</sup> Many young Jordanians seeking employment also emigrate to the Gulf States: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar.

Since the onset of the Syrian migration crisis, several cases of Jordanians migrating in an irregular situation towards Europe have been registered. Jordanian emigrants reach Türkiye using their Jordanian passport, then request asylum in a European country using fake Syrian documents. It is difficult to determine the extent of this phenomenon, given how discreet it is. The Jordanian media and public discourse seldom mention the question of irregular emigration involving Jordanians. Only a few articles have been published in the press.<sup>14</sup>

### Student migration

Jordan is a destination for many Arab-speaking and foreign students wishing to continue studying at university.<sup>15</sup> According to the authorities, there are now 38,000 foreign students in Jordan, of 108 different nationalities.<sup>16</sup> They are mainly in the cities of Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Al-Salt and Jerash.

Furthermore, many Jordanian students emigrate to continue studying abroad. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research cited the number of 40,000

### → Living conditions for migrant workers

The subject is practically taboo, with no official data recorded, so this report draws on the interviews conducted with resource people. Thus, an official from the International Research Exchange Board stated that "There are few organisations monitoring the situation of migrant workers in the country. There is hardly any information on their living conditions because certain personalities are involved (...). They live in "tin cans". Their living conditions are utterly dire."

A journalist specialising in human rights specified that "There are workers who are abused (...). One man was known to stub his cigarettes out on the body of his chambermaid, and when she went to the police, they did nothing. Usually, she would be returned to her country of origin." The same IREX official added on the subject of refugees working in Jordan that "If a migrant or occasionally a refugee attempts to file a report or lodge a complaint, they are soon repatriated. Even refugees are threatened with a transfer to a camp, leaving the host community behind. This reveals discrimination in the legal system (...). "These migrants are considered as foreigners rather than workers, and it is a problem because they have worker rights. In addition to this, they are not paid as much as they should be, meaning that they are perceived as individuals of less value."

<sup>12</sup> AlMamlaka TV (16 June 2021.) Minister for Labour, interview: "Unemployment really has reached 50% among young people (almamlakatv.com - in Arabic only)

<sup>13</sup> Statistics prepared by the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Jordan: 40% of Jordanian Medicine graduates work in the United States of America. Source: article in Amman news (23 June 2018) (in Arabic only)

<sup>14</sup> "Some Jobless Jordanians Take Risky Path to Europe", Saba Abu Farha, 06/02/2018, (in Arabic only)

<sup>15</sup> AlMamlaka TV, report, "The Ministry of Higher Education in Jordan, 3,009 students have applied to benefit from educational grants outside Jordan" (almamlakatv.com - in Arabic only)

<sup>16</sup> Statement released by the Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research

students.<sup>17</sup> The main destinations of these students are the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, USA, Ukraine, the UK and Türkiye.<sup>18</sup>

### Age and gender issues

Nearly half of Syrian refugees in Jordan are under 18<sup>19</sup> and 85% of Syrian children registered as refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line.<sup>20</sup>

Syrian refugee children aged 12 and above have to deal with myriad issues, especially child labour and early marriage because of poverty and government policies which limit their access to education. A local NGO official commented that “Many Syrian children without access to education are forced into early marriage. Those without a birth certificate are considered to be stateless.”<sup>21</sup> Added to which there is a lack of inclusive education meaning that handicapped children cannot attend school.<sup>22</sup>



The arrival of Syrian refugees has led to an increase in child labour in Jordan. A report from the Jordanian Workers House estimated that the number of children working in the country was around 100,000, compared to 76,000 in 2016. According to the figures, 45,000 children are hired to perform dangerous work, according to the meaning of the right to work in Jordan.<sup>23</sup> Many children are also hired with fake ID showing a different age. “Many of these children look like they are 10 or 12, but according to their ID, they are 18 or 19.”<sup>24</sup>

Working conditions for women are very difficult, although there are no official reports on the subject. Domestic workers are very vulnerable to violence and abuse, and a majority of these are women. Workers in the textile industry suffer a similar fate.<sup>25</sup> A journalist specialising in human rights explained that “One domestic worker thought that enduring harassment was simply part of her job.”<sup>26</sup>

Women refugees from Syria have to deal with inequality issues. Deprived of work, they have fewer financial resources and less decision-making power at home and elsewhere. Many are subjected to various forms of gender-related issues, including early marriage.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Article in Alghad Journal (30/03/2020), “Ministry of Higher Education: Over 40,000 Jordanian students studying abroad” (alghad.com - in Arabic only)

<sup>18</sup> UNESCO UIS

<sup>19</sup> A Sustainable Development Group (2021), “Imagining a better world: In Jordan, young Syrian refugees pursue education”

<sup>20</sup> Unicef (2018), “The living conditions of Syrian families have deteriorated in the course of the past two years”

<sup>21</sup> Interview with an official from a local NGO

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Watch, Jordan (2020), “Secondary School Gap for Syrian Refugee Kids”

<sup>23</sup> Workers’ House, Jordan (2021), “Child labour is more prevalent than ever, (workershouse.org) (in Arabic only)

<sup>24</sup> A specialist on migration questions interviewed

<sup>25</sup> Tamkeen (16 June 2021), “Wages, Withholding of Documents and Abuse push 346 Domestic Workers to Complain”, during the Migration and Labour seminar organised by LEST, Taher Labadi from Iremam presented a paper on: “Captives of time: migrant workers in the textile industry in Jordan”, discussions with Tristan Brulé, CNRS-CEH, 2021; and 7iber (28 February 2020), “Men and women working in the textile industry: what is the union for?” (in Arabic only)

<sup>26</sup> Expert interviewed, journalist specialising in human rights

<sup>27</sup> Oxfam in the world, Jordan

### Migration policy

#### Welcoming Syrian refugees

Jordan had an open border policy from 2011 to 2014 to provide refuge for Syrians. But since 2015, security worries have led to the borders gradually closing and the government has adopted a policy to prevent Syrians from leaving refugee camps without a Jordanian “kafil” (guarantor).<sup>28</sup>

#### Government measures regarding migrant workers

One of the Jordanian authorities’ priorities is to regulate the labour market in order to ensure job opportunities for Jordanians, and define how to control migrant workers. Each year, the Jordanian authorities launch a campaign to regularise workers in an irregular situation. Those who are not regularised risk expulsion.<sup>29</sup>

With an increasing unemployment rate, the authorities are seeking to launch training programmes to replace foreign workers with nationals, while authorising the hiring of immigrant workers in certain essential industries scorned by Jordanians workers, such as construction, textiles and agriculture.

### Migrants in the official discourse

The authorities’ official discourse rarely mentions the subject of the immigration from a humanitarian point of view, preferring economic and security angles. When this problem is mentioned, it is often in a political speech holding refugees and migrants responsible for the country’s socio-economic problems.<sup>30</sup> At a meeting with certain stakeholders in July 2019, the Minister for Labour, Nidal Bataineh, opined that the presence of 650,000 foreign workers in an irregular situation is a problem in both social and security terms. A journalist specialising in human rights went as far as to state that “some Ministers and MPs even resort to hate speech.”<sup>31</sup>



<sup>28</sup> In 2016, further to an agreement signed between the EU and Jordan, the Jordanian government obtained the right to subsidies and subsidised loans as well as the facilitated sale of Jordanian products in the EU, in exchange for the Jordanian government’s initiative to take concrete measures to provide more job opportunities to Syrian refugees and facilitate their entry in the formal labour market

<sup>29</sup> MOIJ (30 May 2019), “The Jordanian Ministry of the Interior and Labour discusses regulations governing the labour market and controlling workers that flout them” (in Arabic only)

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>31</sup> Expert interviewed, journalist specialising in human rights

## Migration in the Jordanian media landscape and public discourse

The Jordanian media shows relatively little interest for migration. In both the documentary search and the interviews for this report, it was obvious that subjects about migrants were not a priority for most media outlets, especially labour migration. There are several underlying reasons, primarily restrictions on freedom of expression in the media, the authorities' tendency to consider this a sensitive subject, and the little interest journalists show for immigrants.

Discussions for this report during the migrant and journalist discussion groups and interviews with experts confirmed that not only did the media pay very little attention to this theme, but a negative tone was generally used to cover migration.

A recent ILO report<sup>32</sup> has furthermore shown that reportage in newspapers and on television about migration in Jordan (and Kuwait) rarely use a positive tone. A review of newspapers and television channels in both countries also brought to light that, on the subject of migrant workers, the tone is mainly neutral or negative. In “the specific case of Jordan, 91% of opinion pieces were negative, and the remaining 9% neutral.” The report specified that the “articles mainly opposed the migration of labourers to Jordan, seeking to influence Jordanian opinion on questions of legislation, access to the labour market and unemployment.”

### Media coverage

Most media coverage focusses on labour market regulations to limit competition with the local workforce and on government inspection campaigns to track down migrant workers in an irregular situation.<sup>33</sup> In other words, the media mainly toe the government line in this sphere.

One journalist specialising in human rights was highly critical of this media landscape during their interview, especially regarding their stance on migrant workers: “Most Jordanian media outlets are subordinate to the government (...). They are not very aware of human rights. Sometimes, they use hate speech (...).”

So the opinions of people interviewed for this report were generally speaking critical of media coverage of migration in Jordan. The members of migrant and journalist discussion groups and the other interviewees described coverage as follows:

- sparse: “The media play a very low-key, unsatisfactory role (...). Few individual immigration cases are covered and there is no continuity in the coverage of events or issues”;
- sporadic: “The media coverage of migrants is insufficient, even in social media. It is seasonal and depends on the weather, or the political situation”;

<sup>32</sup> ILO (2021), “Promoting balanced media reporting on migrant workers in the Arab States”

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid* ILO (2021)

- subjective: “The media highlight what they think is important or beneficial for themselves (...). Media coverage was high during the onset of the Syrian crisis, and subsequently died down.” “Coverage is not very objective, with one reason being the journalists’ limited knowledge,” for example when they blame unemployment on refugees;
- selective. The manager of a refugee support programme maintained that “Certain categories of immigrant worker are never covered in the media. It is the case for Filipino workers and other Asian migrants in a regular situation. The media never cover their problems.” Points of view are sometimes selected arbitrarily: “In the coverage of violence against domestic workers, journalists cite the nationality of the victim, without exposing both points of view of what happened”;
- imprecise, and sometimes simply wrong: according to certain expert interviewees “Once it was announced that 45% of crimes in Jordan are committed by migrant workers. I looked into it, and it proved to be completely wrong. But the media copied and pasted the news because a government official made a statement about it. They never check the facts nor their source”;
- risky: “When I wrote about the camps on the border between Jordan and Syria, a head of an army division called to threaten me; I had to leave my home for a week and I was frightened of speaking up,” revealed a journalist taking part in the journalists’ discussion group. Other accounts emphasised the restrictions on journalists’ freedom with respect to the authorities;
- fails to take gender into account.

### The image of immigrants in the media

The tone used in coverage of news about immigrants and refugees is often stigmatising. According to an expert from the International Research Exchange Board (IREX), “On television, migrant workers are always blamed for taking away our jobs. (...) They broadcast a campaign against Egyptians [known for working in service stations in Jordan] for this work to be reserved for Jordanians. Then the TV channel backtracked because Jordanians scorn such work. But they did not announce this on television.” She also said that “There is a very large difference [in media coverage] between migrants and refugees in Jordan. The country’s economic problems are blamed on refugees, calling them a “huge burden on the country,” because the number of migrants is monitored, and they work in industries known to pay poorly. Syrian refugees are sometimes held responsible for the economic crisis.”

According to the manager of a refugee support programme: “Other articles mentioned begging in relation to Syrian refugees (...). Even in institutions which preach humanism, we have found articles that discriminate and demonstrate an inhumane attitude [towards immigrants].” In certain articles in the press, stereotypes have thus been used, attributing certain characteristics to categories of workers based on their nationality, or viewing foreign workers as a threat to society and security.<sup>34</sup> However, these articles did not use racist terms and expressions to describe refugees and did not promote hate speech.

<sup>34</sup> For example on SAGE: “Media Coverage of Syrian Women Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon”, January-March 2021



### Structural difficulties

The Jordanian media landscape lacks journalists specialising in migration issues. “There are no advocates for refugees. (...) Human rights are not a priority in the Jordanian media, nor are migrants’ problems.”<sup>35</sup>

Two other problems are mentioned: “The lack of credible sources, and of ethical behaviour with refugees” and: “The majority of journalists don’t even use the right terminology, they need training,” according to an expert working in a refugee support programme.

### Difficulties gaining access to migrants

An expert interviewee, a journalist specialising in human rights, mentioned limits on access to the ground: “To visit refugee camps you need approval from the Ministry of the Interior, which needs the approval of intelligence services (...).” As a result, certain journalists stop covering these subjects because of difficulties gaining access to migrants.

A specialist in migration issues also mentioned the difficulty encountered by journalists in gaining access to places frequented by migrant workers: “Most migrant workers are concentrated in closed industrial zones which are difficult for journalists to access. They often have to hide to gain entry. The fact is that the textile industry in Jordan is a goose that lays golden eggs for the country’s economy (...) they don’t like this information leaking.” The question of workers in industrial zones is a very sensitive subject in Jordan, and the journalists are aware of this. The prevailing discourse on any incident generally toes the government line. There is very little room for criticism.

<sup>35</sup> Quoting a journalist specialising in human rights

### Women and children in the media

The media coverage of women and children is also fraught. The problems they have to confront are rarely mentioned by the media. “We know of many cases of harassment, rape etc. but there is never any media content about it,” recounted a migrant.<sup>36</sup> This opinion is shared by an expert interviewed: “Domestic workers are exposed to much violence, but the media don’t cover these questions.”

However, the lack of coverage of women migrants’ problems in the media is not always due to journalist indifference. Women sometimes refuse to speak to them or be filmed. “We are dealing with vulnerable people living in fear because some do not have official ID and don’t want attention drawn to them.”<sup>37</sup>

The media show more interest in subjects pertaining to child labour migrants. “Child labour is covered by the media more than the problems of migrant workers, and certain campaigns try to tackle this question, but it doesn’t always work because in industry, it is impossible to track what happens inside factories. In Amman, the question of child labour is less visible than elsewhere. The media speak of it a lot and cover cases of child migrants systematically. The government too is trying to work on it. But it remains insufficient.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Member of the migrants’ discussion group

<sup>37</sup> Interview with an official from a local NGO

<sup>38</sup> Interview with an expert from the International Research Exchange Board (IREX)

## Capacity building in the media

→ Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of seven capacity-building initiatives catering to the media which have taken place in Jordan since 2015.

These initiatives have mainly involved short training courses on refugees and migrant workers. To our knowledge, the question of Jordanian emigration has not been addressed. Thus, the initiatives organised have only partly remedied the lack of journalists specialising in the media coverage of migration.

The group of 13 journalists having benefitted from past capacity-building projects confirmed the lack of specialist training courses. Most have followed training courses on the question of refugees: 23% asserted that they benefitted greatly from the course and for 53% the benefit was average.

Since 2016, CFI has managed the media section of the European programme Qudra – conducted by GIZ (the German development agency), in partnership with Expertise France and mostly funded by the European Union. This programme collects and spreads useful information on daily life for Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as facilitating links with host communities.<sup>39</sup> Journalists are trained to cover refugee accounts, especially harnessing technology, with courses focussing on mobile journalism, digital multimedia and the coverage of women refugees in Jordan.

The group also listed what they need for their work: sources of information (figures, statements and data), networks for sharing experience, encouragement from the newsroom, training, hands-on practice and an adequate legal culture.



<sup>39</sup> CFI website: <https://cfi.fr/en/project/qudra> and <https://cfi.fr/en/project/qudra-2>

## Findings and recommendations

Despite the importance of migration in Jordanian society, its coverage remains marginal in Jordanian media. Media discourse often aligns with official discourse, giving priority to the economic and security aspects of migration, rather than social or humane aspects, and the difficult living conditions of many migrants are ignored completely.

The official discourse also tends to blame the country's economic problems on "the burden of refugees and immigrants," suggests a negative discourse, without being racist or exclusionary. The lack of documentation and data on the migrants' situation is an additional problem.

### Guidelines for future programmes

Examining media coverage of migration closely, journalists across the board fall short in professional, ethical and legal aspects. Recommendations could be formulated for three types of stakeholders: the authorities, journalists and civilian stakeholders.

### Engage in dialogue with the authorities

Despite the limited freedoms for the media, and the orientation the authorities suggest for journalists, better coverage of migration would not harm those in power because it would help to move beyond certain received ideas conveyed within Jordanian society. A certain complementarity may be established between the authorities and the media with a view to shedding light on migrant difficulties, thus improving their living conditions while promoting national cohesion.

Furthermore, journalists must draw on hard data, figures and reports describing the migrants' situation. This data is sorely lacking,

according to journalists' accounts, and the authorities could participate in the production of this data and/or ensure it circulates better.

Lastly, as emphasised in the journalists' discussion group, the authorities should, generally speaking, protect the freedom of the press better: "Journalists should be independent; they should not be getting phone calls from intelligence agencies when they speak up about certain subjects. Jordan has signed international and local conventions and the country should implement them."

### Stimulating the media

New initiatives could be rolled out for journalists and media directors with a view to raising awareness of migration issues in order to multiply the number of well-informed professionals on these subjects. Certain questions, such as gender, also need greater coverage. Awareness-raising campaigns appear to be indispensable given the little interest in these subjects. A professional code of ethics specific to migration also seems necessary given the mistakes made in journalist output. Given that the Jordanian media landscape is generally weak, collaborative work among several media outlets might work better and raise visibility for their content.

### Support/raise awareness among civilian stakeholders

Given how few active grass-roots organisations operate in the field, there are very few initiatives in the field of migration, especially among migrant workers. They concentrate above all on providing services and legal support. Furthermore, there are few personalities or opinion leaders advocating for migrants.

This partly explains the relative lack of data on the migrants' situation, a core problem for journalists. One journalist reported that "There is hardly any information on the question of migrant workers and the situations in which they live".

### Training courses for journalists

Most journalists interviewed expressed a great need for training to gain a decent grasp of data research, be able to cover subjects considered to be sensitive by the authorities, gain a better understanding of the legal framework for migrant labour etc. and hone their use of new technology in social media.

### Other actions to improve media coverage of migration

Other leads were available via the journalists' discussion group:

- raise awareness among the media directors: migration does not attract much interest among media directors, and they have a key role in deciding on media content. Hence the need for awareness-raising initiatives for them;
- brainstorm how to let migrants have their say, give them the resources to express themselves and relate their account accurately in the media;
- draw up a code of ethics on the subject of migration: a code of ethics would help journalists in several ways: learning how to cover the news with respect to migration issues, learning the code of ethics and knowing the right vocabulary. This code may complement their training;
- provide journalists with equipment: according to the director of a local NGO: "Journalists lack equipment, both when studying at university and in their career (...). Another thing is that journalists need a budget and time to cover certain subjects";<sup>40</sup>
- draw up a regional coordination taking the proximity of issues within the region into account, promote a region-wide coordination between journalists, for training, advocacy and other types of exchanges. The coordination may be systematised and expanded to include journalists from the migrants' countries of origin. The content may help them to gain insight on the following themes: work on fairer media coverage, give migrants a voice by letting them have their say without putting them in danger. This coordination may work between Jordan and Lebanon initially, to then expand to include other countries.



# Lebanon

## Key Figures

### Surface area

**10,452**  
square kilometres

### Population<sup>1</sup>

**6.8 M**  
persons

### Immigration<sup>1</sup>

**1,7 M**  
persons, i.e.  
25.1% of the population

### Main countries of origin<sup>2</sup>

Syria

Iraq

Egypt

Sri Lanka

Bangladesh

51.9%  
are  
women

32.7%  
are 19 y.o.  
or under

### Emigration<sup>1</sup>

**856,800**  
persons i.e.  
12.5% of the population en 2021.

230,000 new emigrants in the first four months of 2021.

### Main destination countries<sup>2</sup>

Saudi Arabia

USA

Australia

Canada

Germany

### Remittances<sup>3</sup>

Personal remittances  
in 2021 accounted for<sup>1</sup>

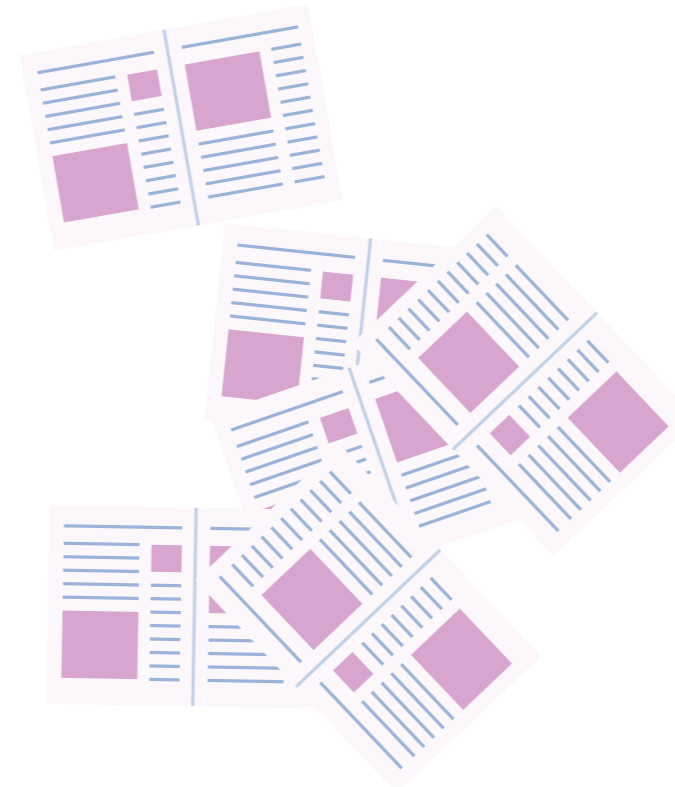
**32.9% of GDP**

Sources: 1 - UN DESA, 2020; 2 - IOM, 2022; 3 - World Bank, 2021

## Media landscape

In Lebanon, while the media is in general considered to enjoy more freedom than elsewhere in the Arab world, the media landscape is very concentrated, politicised and polarised. There are 110 press publications operating with a permit in Lebanon, of which eight are published as hard copy, including one in French.

There are several TV channels: *Télé Lebanon* is the longest-running channel founded in 1959, which subsequently became the state channel, as well as seven commercial channels. Radio is highly diversified with around 40 FM radio stations. There is also a wave of new media, mainly online, attempting to offer independent coverage. In 2020, 84% of the population were Internet users



## Overview of migration

Lebanon has long been considered to be a country of immigration, involving both labour migration and forced migration further to conflicts in the region. It is also a country with significant emigration flows since the onset of war in 1975.

### Refugees in Lebanon

The main communities of refugees are:

- Palestinian refugees: a large Palestinian community sought refuge in Lebanon further to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. According to the last census in 2017, the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon now stands at around 192,000.<sup>41</sup>
- Syrian refugees: since 2011, Lebanon has been a refuge for hundreds of thousands of Syrians fleeing their homeland. In December 2020, some 865,000 Syrian refugees had been officially registered with the UN Refugee Agency (HCR), while around 1.5 million were factually resident on Lebanese territory.<sup>42</sup>
- According to data from the Lebanese Unité d'éducation global (2019), there are 61,206 Syrian refugees registered as schoolchildren in Lebanon, 60% of whom are enrolled in primary education.<sup>43</sup> Around 300,000 Syrian refugees of school age (3 to 18), are not receiving any education.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> UNICEF's Palestinian Programme in Lebanon (PPL), (unicef.org) (in Arabic only) The number of Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) in Lebanon is 480,000, but a certain number have left the country without notifying the agency.

<sup>42</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (2021), "News and Press Release"

<sup>43</sup> Centre for Lebanese Studies, "The reality of education for Syrian children in Lebanon" The Centre for Lebanese Studies (in Arabic only)

<sup>44</sup> UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, "An assessment of the vulnerability of Syrian refugees in Lebanon in 2020" (in Arabic only)

## Labour immigration

Lebanon is a destination country for immigrant workers. Since the late 1970s, Lebanon has become a favoured destination for migrant workers mainly from Asia and Africa.<sup>45</sup> The flows of regular immigration especially come from Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Cameroon, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.<sup>46</sup>

Migrant workers taken in by Lebanon apparently account for 50% of the labour force in certain industries, especially in construction, farming, domestic work and maintenance services.<sup>47</sup> The country favours foreign women for domestic work, whereas the men are employed for other tasks, working in service stations, agriculture, waste treatment etc.<sup>48</sup> Thus, with the exception of Syrians and Palestinians, the majority of whom are men, 72% of migrants legally employed in Lebanon are women performing domestic work.<sup>49</sup>

### → Violation of migrant workers' rights

Foreign workers are subjected to the *kafala* system in Lebanon, which ties the worker's residence permit to their contract. This system exists in several countries across the region and is regularly criticised by international organisations because it leads to recurrent exploitation.

Furthermore, labour laws do not apply to immigrant domestic workers in Lebanon<sup>50</sup> instead they are subject to the regime set by the employer.<sup>51</sup> Article 7 of the Lebanese labour law (promulgated on 23 September 1946) excludes domestic workers from its provisions, thus depriving them of all effective legal protection. According to the *kafala* system and immigration legislation, these workers may not leave their employer without losing their status.

Human rights organisations have regularly produced reports about the violations of domestic workers' rights, especially regarding the non-payment of wages, forced detention, the lack of rest periods and physical and verbal violence. A good number of these workers, mainly women, suffer abuse, trafficking, sexual assault and racial and ethnic discrimination.<sup>52</sup>

Many foreign domestic workers die (an average of more than one a week in 2008), the main causes of death being suicide and attempted escape.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>45</sup> OpenEdition Journals, Assaf Dahdah, "New Mobility in the South, Mobility among international domestic workers and new territorial issues in Beirut (Lebanon)", pp. 267–279

<sup>46</sup> Op.cit, "Atlas of Lebanon, Chapter Three: Population and Housing", pp. 64–90

<sup>47</sup> Article in L'Orient le Jour, Agathe Bailleul, "Liban et migration : état des lieux et idées de solution" (Lebanon and migration: state of affairs and ideas for a solution), 7 March 2019 (in French only)

<sup>48</sup> Article in L'Orient le Jour, Anne-Marie El-Hage, "Quel avenir pour la main-d'oeuvre domestique au Liban" (A future for domestic workers in Lebanon), 12 May 2020 (in French only)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

<sup>50</sup> The Advisory Council of State in Lebanon, the highest administrative jurisdiction in the country, dashed the chances of upholding domestic workers' rights migrants by suspending the implementation of a standard new contract, which would have included new protections for migrant domestic workers. Lebanon: Blow to Migrant Domestic Worker Rights | Human Rights Watch (hrw.org)

<sup>51</sup> Léa Polverini, "Les travailleuses domestiques au Liban ou la honte des invisibles de l'explosion" (Women domestic workers in Lebanon or the shame of invisible victims of the explosion), published on 25 August 2020

<sup>52</sup> Amnesty International (2020), "Lebanon: Blow to Migrant Domestic Worker Rights"

<sup>53</sup> Human Rights Watch (2018), "Lebanon: a migrant domestic worker protests abuse"

After the end of the war in Lebanon and in the early 1990s, the number of foreign workers registered increased from 33,268 in 1993 to 109,000 in 2005, then 209,000 in 2015. In 2019, there were 400,000 registered foreign workers, but with the current crisis in Lebanon, this number dropped to around 230,000 in 2020.<sup>54</sup>

A few years ago, an estimated 900,000 Syrians were working irregularly (without being registered). However, in 2020, this workforce in an irregular situation was estimated at 600,000, a drop which can be explained by financial and economic factors in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis the country is experiencing.

In July 2019, the Lebanese Ministry of Labour hardened the procedures for foreigners to obtain a work permit, including for Syrians and Palestinians, which triggered a wave of protestation<sup>55</sup> from Syrian refugees working in Lebanon and their employers.

Regarding the specific question of child labour: in 2019, over 100,000 children were estimated to be in work on Lebanese territory, in various industries. Two thirds of these are foreign children residing in Lebanon.<sup>56</sup>

## Transit migration

Lebanon hosts a great number of persons who have been forcibly displaced by the conflicts in the sub-region, and as such has become a transit point for migrants in an irregular situation, who are mostly attempting to reach Europe. These migration flows are complex and may also apply to Lebanese nationals, especially with the worsening economic and political crisis in the country further to the explosion in the port of Beirut, on 4 August 2020. Hopefuls especially include Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian nationals, as well as groups of Kurds, Iraqi, and Yemenites. Given that they are attempting irregular migration, there are no accurate statistics. Tragedies

<sup>54</sup> Report published by Information International Sal, in March 2021, on the Lebanese Ministry of Information website

<sup>55</sup> DW, "The campaign "Non-Lebanese employment": racism or organisation?", 15.08.2019 (in Arabic only)

<sup>56</sup> Lebanese Ministry of Information, Report, "100,000 children working in Lebanon"

related to irregular migration are regularly shown on the news: in April 2022, at least six migrants, including a little girl, drowned when their boat was shipwrecked off the coast of Lebanon.<sup>57</sup>

## Emigration and the Lebanese diaspora

Lebanon is well-known for its diaspora considered to be one of the largest in the world.<sup>58</sup> The number of Lebanese expatriates and people of Lebanese origin in the world has been estimated at 8,624,000, according to the 2001 census.<sup>59</sup> According to unofficial statistics, over 65% of Lebanese residents have a family member or close friend who has settled abroad.<sup>60</sup> The diaspora contributes greatly to the country's economy, its financial contributions amounting to nearly 7 billion dollars a year.<sup>61</sup>

"Since its creation, Lebanon has lived through crises that prompt its inhabitants to emigrate: war, economic crises, political crises etc. And since 2020 a new generation of exiles has joined the diaspora."<sup>62</sup> Since the onset of the latest economic crisis in 2020, the World Bank estimated that one out of five Lebanese workers had lost their job.<sup>63</sup> For Lebanese people seeking a better life, migration remains the best option. The emigration of skilled workers in various industries from Lebanon is the highest in the Middle East.<sup>64</sup> The majority of emigrants are men (around two thirds).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Article in L'Orient le Jour (24 April 2022), "Au moins six corps repêchés après le naufrage d'un bateau de migrants au large du Liban-nord" (At least six bodies retrieved from the sea after the shipwreck of a boat full of migrants off the north Lebanese coast)

<sup>58</sup> Article in L'Orient le Jour (7 March 2019), Agathe Bailleul, "Lebanon et migration : état des lieux et idées de solution" (Lebanon and migration: state of affairs and ideas for a solution)

<sup>59</sup> Fanack (2009), "Population of Lebanon"

<sup>60</sup> Lebanonvision, links and vision of French-speaking Lebanese, "La Diaspora libanaise dans le monde : le coin de ciel bleu du Liban ?" (The Lebanese diaspora in the world, a snippet of blue sky in Lebanon) (in French only)

<sup>61</sup> World Bank (2021), Migration and Remittances Data (worldbank.org)

<sup>62</sup> Lebanonvision, links and vision of French-speaking Lebanese, "La Diaspora libanaise dans le monde : le coin de ciel bleu du Liban ?" (The Lebanese diaspora in the world, a snippet of blue sky in Lebanon) (in French only)

<sup>63</sup> The Lebanese nurses union, for example, tracked the migration of 1,600 nurses since 2019. An estimated 150,000 Lebanese have left Lebanon to seek work abroad since the onset of the crisis (Lebanon Crisis Observatory report – AUB)

<sup>64</sup> AUB, Data visualization, Lebanese Talent Immigration

<sup>65</sup> ILO, Marwan Abi Samra (2010), "L'Emigration libanaise et son impact sur l'économie et le développement" (Lebanese emigration and its impact on the economy and development), Cahiers des migrations internationales, No. 105 (in French only)

### Student migration

Many Lebanese study outside the country. The figure has been estimated at over 18,000, spread over some 50 different destinations.<sup>66</sup>

## Migration in the Lebanese media landscape and public discourse

The media landscape in Lebanon is considered to be rich and diverse but this is not always to the advantage of good-quality coverage of migration. According to the interviews conducted, media coverage of subjects with reference to refugees or migrant workers remains widely politicised and influenced by official and public discourse. The subject is often mentioned in a negative way without enough emphasis being placed on the human dimension.

### The official and public discourse

The Lebanese government is opposed to the naturalisation of Palestinian and Syrian refugees. Certain political parties have included this position in their election platforms. Political discourse on the subject of Syrian refugees is thus mostly negative. At the onset of the Syrian crisis, the Lebanese were divided between solidarity and hostility towards Syrian refugees.<sup>67</sup> Several prominent politicians established a causal link between them and

security issues in Lebanon. In early 2015, the Lebanese Minister for Social Affairs stated that he would put the question of refugees on the agenda for society as a matter of national importance, claiming that “all Ministries have to take responsibility to eliminate the spectre of chaos and insecurity.” Then in February 2019, the Minister for Foreign Affairs also stated that “Syrian displaced persons threaten the very existence of Lebanon” in a speech delivered at an EU-League of Arab States ministerial meeting in Brussels. Further to this, a number of town councils took measures prohibiting the circulation of “foreigners” at night.

Recently, political and popular discourse on the subject of Palestinian refugees has been tempered to a certain degree. With the roll-out of an official policy restricting their right to work, naturalisation and access to property, their numbers are dwindling in Lebanon.

Regarding domestic workers, mostly women, the public discourse used to describe them is detrimental to their dignity and humanity. Especially the term *bint*, which means “the girl I have” in Arabic, and is used to designate domestic workers subject to the *kafala* system. The term *bint* is strongly connotated and designates the thousands of African or Asian women who arrive each year in Lebanon. Foreign domestic workers are referred to by nationality, “Sri-Lankan”, “Filipino” or “Ethiopian” etc., to indicate that they are from a lower, degrading social class.

As for the official and public discourse on the subject of the diaspora, homage is always paid, using terms such as “Lebanese oil” or “an emotional tax our families pay since our country exports its sons instead of its products,” according to the President of the Republic.<sup>68</sup>



<sup>66</sup> Based on figures from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics which are the only ones available for 2018-2019. The number is probably higher, since there are around 5,000 students in France and 5,000 others in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Georgia.

<sup>67</sup> Article, Tamirace Fakhoury, “Refugee return and fragmented governance in the host state: displaced Syrians in the face of Lebanon’s divided politics”, 8 June 2020

<sup>68</sup> The President of the Republic inaugurating the Lebanese Diaspora Energy Conference in 2017

### The image of immigration in the media

The people we consulted for this report unanimously considered that news coverage of immigrants is often negative. For Assaad Sammour, journalist, “hate speech is there for all to see in the media.”

As detailed in the previous section, the presence of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is often considered in official discourse and by certain political forces as a political and security problem.<sup>69</sup> In addition to this, certain media outlets are extremely polarised in terms of politics. The vast majority of these outlets have been privatised, with funding from Lebanese and foreign businessmen from countries such as Saudi Arabia or Iran. The political slant is that of the donors, and migrants are represented accordingly. It is the case for OTV for example. This media outlet is affiliated to Free Patriotic Movement, which has expressed its fear of Syrians because of their “affiliation mainly to the Sunni sect.” Certain reports from this channel have also called Syrians “terrorists”. The TV channel MTV has also been accused of racist content stigmatising immigrants,<sup>70</sup> whereas the newspapers *Al Joumhouriyah* and *An Nahar* were singled out for their media coverage of migration issues.

Immigrants are thus often described in the media as dangerous foreigners coming to take the resources of the country. Generalisations and expressions tapping into fear crop up on a regular basis: “foreigners”, “Syrians will outnumber us”, “we have become foreigners in our own country”, “threats to national identity and the very existence of Lebanon”.<sup>71</sup> A report conducted by the Maharat Foundation on the media coverage of Syrian refugees confirmed the “xenophobic discourse” targeting them.<sup>72</sup> “These people are not depicted as contributors

to the economy of the country, or seen from a humanitarian angle. They are deprived of their human rights.”<sup>73</sup>

So the image of migrants is mainly stereotyped, and they are often presented in a discriminatory way as being “inferior” socially to the Lebanese. And in the few cases where they are defended, the subjects are addressed via the prism of work, rather than their right to freedom, aside from the right to work. The voices of migrants are rarely heard. The media often speak in their name, as much to defend as to accuse them. There are a few notable exceptions, such as the investigation produced by Sawsan Abdel-Raheem in August 2020 for the newspaper *Daraj* on the working conditions of migrants in Lebanon.<sup>74</sup> The journalist and professor cleverly deconstructed the stereotypes of migrant workers, and humanised their stance with the portrait of a Sudanese migrant.

Most members of the migrants’ discussion group organised for this report were also critical of media coverage:

- “They should show how refugees live and the problems they are confronted with,”
- “We need *wasta* (“support”) to make ourselves heard. Nobody listens to us. The media should listen to our problems.”

Online news websites have enjoyed brisk growth in the past dozen years, without changing much in media coverage of immigration. The most important websites have ties with political parties and other media groups. However, according to one journalist interviewed, certain “platforms and social networks do highlight refugees and their daily life.”

As for public media (*Télé Lebanon* and *Radio Lebanon*), they wield little influence given their lack of resources, but also because their audience is relatively low.

<sup>69</sup> Sima Ghaddar (7 April 2017), “Lebanon Treats Refugees as a Security Problem, and It Doesn’t Work”, The Century Foundation

<sup>70</sup> Publication (24 June 2015), “Dear MTV Lebanon, Lebanese ARE Racist”, blog State of mind

<sup>71</sup> Article (16 October 2016), Legal Agenda, “Public discourse and collective punishment: the ‘crime of Miziara’ as a template,” (legal-agenda.com) (in Arabic only)

<sup>72</sup> Maharat Foundation (2016), “Media coverage of refugee issues in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco” (in Arabic only)

<sup>73</sup> Jasmin Diab, director of the Institute for Migration

<sup>74</sup> Daraj, Sawsan Abdel-Raheem (August 2020), URL: “In Lebanon, the Line Between Forced and Labor Migration is Fuzzy.”

### Migrant children

Media coverage of migrant children also poses a problem. According to Mohamad Kleit, journalist, no major local channel covers the stories and accounts of these children. And according to another journalist, Bissane Tay, the media have published a number of pictures of children in groups without mentioning their everyday life and struggles such as not being able to attend school, psychological trauma etc.

There are however a few pertinent articles such the one by Bassel Akar and Al Hassnaa Kheftaro published in *L'Orient le Jour*, the top French-language daily in the country. This 2019 article carried the headline “Promoting the right to education for Syrian child refugees in Lebanon: here’s how to prevent a “lost generation””, especially lists the causes limiting Syrian child refugees’ access to decent education in Lebanon, including the survival climate, marginalisation, domestic violence and harassment at school.<sup>75</sup>

### Structural reasons for this media coverage

According to the interviewees, there are many reasons for this negative coverage: lack of training for journalists, politicisation of the subject, deliberate marginalisation of subjects by newsrooms, seeking scoops to the detriment of showing respect for immigrants etc.

During the interviews, participants explained that journalists have strong political leanings, which is reflected in their reports and articles.

Furthermore, according to the Director of the Institute for Migration Studies, Jasmin Diab, journalists are not always to blame, since certain biases in media coverage are intentional and correspond to the media outlet’s editorial line. While migration issues are not sufficiently covered, it is not because of a lack of interest among journalists. Many journalists like to work on such assignments, but media outlets do

not. For Rayhana Najm, journalist, the way the news is delivered depends entirely on channel policy.

Another important element to be taken into consideration is the journalist profile in Lebanese media:

- journalists in Lebanon are not all trained in media schools;
- schools of journalism do not include migration issues in their curriculum;
- according to Ilda al-Ghossein, journalist: “The problem is that the Lebanese media have no code of conduct for journalists.” Judgement of foreigners is often considered to fall within freedom of expression, even when the opinions expressed are racist and discriminatory. A code of ethics would help to prevent the spreading of negative stereotypes used to describe migrants.

Journalists covering migration news also complain of several other obstacles:

- lack of sources of information on the situation for refugees and migrant workers;
- unreliable or manipulated information;
- absent or obsolete data, even in relevant administrations such as the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Social Affairs and Directorate-General of General Security;
- difficulties contacting migrants for various reasons: security, administrative issues, lack of resources etc.;
- language incompatibility between journalists and interviewees; migrant workers also have difficulties obtaining information in Arabic, French or English, the three most commonly used languages in Lebanon. Their news websites and home pages on social media are not always the same as for the Lebanese.

## Capacity building in the media

Certain initiatives were conducted among groups of journalists to raise awareness among them as to migration issues and provide professional know-how. Appendix 2 provides a non-exhaustive list of eight capacity-building initiatives in the media which have taken place in Lebanon since 2015.

Journalists have had training to cover refugee stories via the media section of the Qudra project<sup>76</sup> implemented by CFI since 2016.<sup>77</sup> This programme has especially focussed on using technology, with training courses on mobile journalism and digital media, as well as examining issues with gender and children in Lebanon.

The questionnaire produced at a discussion group attended by 15 journalists having followed capacity-building workshops showed that they have mostly participated in training courses on one of the following themes: media coverage of migration, establishment of professional networks and awareness-raising activities. In answer to the question: “Have these training courses contributed to improving your grasp of the subject?”, 21% responded “yes, completely”, 71% “a little”, and 7% “no”.

These training and awareness-raising initiatives targeted small groups of journalists, with modest impact. And training journalists is merely the first step. Choosing participant profiles wisely is just as important, as confirmed by the manager of the communication department of an international organisation.

**The discussion group has helped to list the issues to be dealt with and the following recommendations to make capacity-building initiatives more effective.**

### Lack of specialist journalists

“It was difficult to find specialists to speak to. Journalists in Lebanon generally cover all subjects and questions, and the number of journalists specialising in humanitarian questions is at an absolute minimum,” (Rayhana Najm, journalist). The solution to this difficulty resides in wider-reaching training for journalists in all media.

### Difficulties in newsrooms

Experts unanimously state that editorial policies in many media outlets are deeply hostile towards immigration, reflected clearly in the editorial line, in the way these subjects are covered and the importance they are granted. Here too a great awareness-raising effort targeting media directors is necessary, otherwise efforts expended with journalists will not yield any significant result.

### Lack of resources for journalists

Journalists flagged a lack of resources and necessary equipment. They also mentioned lack of time to collect information and foster trusting relations with interviewees in migration. Other have asked for psychological support, given the dire poverty they are exposed to and feelings of helplessness.

<sup>75</sup> Bassel Akar and Al Hassnaa Kheftaro, *L'Orient le Jour* (17 December 2019), “Promouvoir le droit à l'éducation pour les enfants réfugiés syriens au Liban : les voies pour éviter des “générations perdues” (in French only)

<sup>76</sup> CFI website

<sup>77</sup> The Qudra project is run by GIZ (the German development agency), in partnership with Expertise France, and mostly funded by the EU. It ensures the collection and circulation of useful information for Syrian refugees about daily life in Jordan and Lebanon, and facilitates ties with the host communities.

### Lack of sources and data

Journalists flagged difficulties encountered in attempting to gain access to information because of the lack of organisations or administrations who could provide it. They also mentioned difficulties encountered when attempting to gain access to refugee camps. They recommended the creation of a platform to express their preoccupations and issues of people involved in migration.

### Draw up a code of ethics

Journalists also need to learn to cover migration subjects and child- or gender-related topics, making sure not to stir up tension in society or foster racism. “We need training courses on how to cover migration, as well as a code of ethics on how to address these subjects.”<sup>78</sup>



## Findings and recommendations

There are glaring shortfalls in migration coverage in most Lebanese media. Media coverage is often negative in tone, sometimes plain wrong, and fails to do justice to the sheer importance of the subject.

Furthermore, criteria such as professionalism and ethics are not met. Media coverage also lacks awareness of gender-related issues. Men and women are often reduced to stereotypes, reflecting the journalist’s own prejudices. These stereotypical images circulate on official media as much as on social media and influence the general public’s perception of others. Journalists and experts interviewed for this report confirmed this trend.

This is due to several factors, some of which pertain to the political situation in the country, while others depend on the media outlet’s editorial line, lack of resources for journalists and troublesome social and security conditions. Consequently, several stakeholders may be held responsible: the authorities, all categories of media outlets and journalists. All these parties have to be prepared to circulate well-balanced information and put an end to negative stereotypes that pervade this subject.

### **Beneficiaries to be targeted for future programmes**

- First target: media outlet owners and directors. It emerged from the questionnaires and meetings with journalists that they do not have editorial freedom on migration issues: this is the prerogative of their directors.
- Second target: journalists who claim to lack know-how and resources needed to conduct their investigations. As mentioned before, some are quite simply unaware of the question of migrant workers and refugees. A network of journalists interested in migrants need to be identified and trained.

### **Training for journalists**

During the interviews and discussion groups, it transpired that there was a need for extensive training for journalists in all media. This training would involve raising awareness of the various forms of migration and how to cover these subjects, factoring in ethical considerations. These activities could involve drawing up a handbook for journalists.

At university and in schools of journalism, develop a curriculum on the media coverage of migration or adapt the curricula already applied, and include it in undergraduate degrees. This course may be dispensed for students in journalism, radio, TV and other humanities. Conferences could also be organised.

Region-wide, it would be necessary to broaden the training and foster more discussion among Arabic-speaking and non- Arabic-speaking countries, including migrants’ countries of origin as well as the host countries. Training and discussion could be in person or online. Journalists could meet up to share their experiences.

### **Other actions to improve the media coverage of migration**

- Create a system to regularly monitor the media, made public, to shed light on how they cover migration subjects, which may inspire media outlets and journalists to improve their work.
- Provide funding and encourage media production, especially at independent media outlets which already cover migration issues.
- Involve the media, making them take moral responsibility for poor output, and above all making them take responsibility for the establishment of a code of ethics for journalists with a view to helping them cover the subject better. This code of ethics may include a lexicon.
- Respond to the expectations of journalists seeking material and psychological assistance, supervision and reliable sources of information. The proposal of a shared platform run by journalists from the discussion group may supply the data needed for their work.
- Draw up a list of journalists who cover migration news in the various media to organise regular meetings and debates on the subject with them so they can share the difficulties they encounter in their work.
- Organise visits to camps for displaced people and refugees.
- Organise more regular activities on the question of migrants and refugees, such as round tables, conferences etc.
- Include migrants in the various activities. This participatory approach is crucial to become acquainted with them, listen to them and no longer judge them.

# Findings and recommendations

# 5

The many interviews and discussion groups conducted for this report have highlighted the limits of previous capacity-building initiatives (short courses, with a very specific focus, failure to take the journalists' initial level into account, lack of follow-up over time etc.). It has also emphasised important media needs for more balanced coverage of migration.

This participatory assessment is ripe with lessons to be learned, especially for international and national organisations embarking on capacity-building projects on migration for the media. As a result, a number of recommendations can be made.

**It is necessary to adapt to the specific features of media and migration in each country and geographic area**

**Traditional media (television, press and radio) are available in all 16 countries covered by the report, in varying proportions and volumes.** Colombia for example has a rich media landscape with over 90 outlets for the printed press alone whereas Mauritania only has five. Other specific features are to be considered, such as the importance of national and community radio stations in most countries in West Africa and in the Comoros Islands: district radios, rural radios, women's radios, radios for young people etc., mostly emitting in local languages. To boost the impact of projects in each territory, it is thus pertinent for organisations wishing to develop capacity-building projects on migration to favour media outlets that attract large audiences.

**Social media** occupies a growing place in media landscapes, although its importance varies greatly according to the accessibility of Internet for the inhabitants of each country.

In some countries, there are considerable **restrictions on freedom of information, which impacts media coverage.**

Organisations initiating capacity-building projects for the media absolutely need to factor in security aspects and media freedom issues in each of the 16 countries under review, in order to minimise risk for beneficiaries of these projects.

**The vast majority of the 16 countries are currently experiencing significant and diverse levels of migration.** Colombia, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco and Niger for example may be cited as host countries, countries of origin and transit countries. **So it is important for national media outlets to tackle the full breadth of migration in all its diversity,** examining issues, causes and consequences for each type of migration, as well as links with other types. In the case of Madagascar, where emigration levels may seem relatively low compared to its population (0.71%, compared to over 6% in Mali), the report has thus shone a spotlight on specific, important issues such as human trafficking in the Gulf States, statelessness and environmental migration within the country. International organisations initiating capacity-building projects for the media on migration absolutely have to factor in the specifics of migration in each territory when designing content for their projects.



**Migration trends have also been examined as a regional phenomenon in this report.** In 2020, two-thirds of West African migrants were living in another country in the same region, enjoying freedom of movement without a visa between Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states<sup>1</sup>. A regional approach has also placed certain phenomena and issues with migration in perspective, such as Syrian immigration in Lebanon and Jordan and human trafficking in Madagascar and in the Comoros Islands. The setup of region-wide support programmes appears to be a very pertinent option that would help to foster international networks for sharing knowledge and, potentially, collaborative production.

Lastly, migration trends may be considered **according to an interregional approach**. North Africa is thus an important host region and a transit country for irregular migration from West Africa, with sub-jacent issues such as human trafficking. Countries that are very far from each other are seen to experience similar migration phenomena, with Colombia and Jordan respectively taking in 1.7 million persons from Venezuela and 1.3 million persons from Syria, in a very short timeframe.

**The report has emphasised that in 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down regular and irregular migration flows towards Europe**, blocking thousands of people, especially seasonal workers, residents and temporary residents, international students and those migrating in highly precarious conditions. And inversely, it led to an increase in irregular crossings, especially in Colombia, since the pandemic caused borders to be shut.

Content with a negative tone has insinuated that migrants contributed to the spread of the disease, in Colombia for example<sup>2</sup>. This discourse, combined with the fear of the virus

spreading out of control, provoked xenophobic reactions in the country<sup>3</sup>. Women migrants were affected even worse by the pandemic: in Tunisia, for example, they not only lost more revenue than men but were also more exposed to risks of sexual exploitation.<sup>4</sup>

The pandemic nevertheless had an impact on the digitalisation of training courses for journalists as well as on the themes covered. For example the webinar “Migration and employment of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic” in Senegal and the training course “The impact of Covid-19 on migration, legal migration routes and human trafficking” in Guinea, both funded by UNESCO.

#### **The need to build media capacity on the question of migration persists**

While it is always possible to identify good-quality output in the media of the 16 countries under review, the interviews conducted did reveal that the subject of migration is often covered:

- **partially** – in that attention is focussed on certain types of migration, especially irregular migration and refugees, to the detriment of other types of migration such as labour migration, family reunification, student migration etc. It is thus striking to observe that the media in countries with high levels of emigration (such as Morocco, Burkina Faso and Lebanon) rarely mentioned their diaspora or indeed anything relative to labour migration. These observations echo the migrants’ statements, during discussion groups conducted for this report, about not feeling represented in the media. One noticeable trend in recent years, of growing numbers of women and unaccompanied minors in migration flows, has not been given due coverage;
- **with very little analysis** – while the news is generally well-sourced, events are rarely placed in perspective or analysed, and investigative journalism is all too often embryonic;
- sometimes paying little heed to ethics – with

inappropriate use of terminology, resorting to stereotypes and a failure to represent diverse points of view.

**The reasons for partial coverage of migration** reside firstly in the reasons for covering migration in the media. The subject of migration is addressed in the majority of cases depending on:

- the news. This is mostly dictated by tragedies in irregular migration, in the majority of cases with media outlets simply reproducing dispatches sent out by international press agencies. This theme is deemed lucrative as well as of key importance in raising awareness among the general public as to the dangers of irregular migration;
- institutional communication from governments and international institutions that assist migrants, regularly repeated by the media. National institutional communication is often influenced by national migration policies, especially when there are bilateral political agreements with EU countries regarding irregular migration. Statements by international institutions are controlled very strictly by these organisations with a view to advocacy and providing accurate information. They mostly involve assistance for migrants in an irregular situation and refugees.

According to the different contexts of the countries under review, the **other obstacles** preventing pertinent, well-balanced coverage of migration are as follows:

- the **lack of training for journalists** on this theme. It is rarely included in their initial training and they only benefit from short capacity-building training courses *a posteriori*;
- a **lack of understanding of certain terminology** that has been carefully defined for legal purposes (for example incorrect use of the term “refugee” for “immigrant”) and the use of disparaging terms (such as “clandestine” instead of “migrant in an irregular situation”);
- **difficulties gaining access to reliable sources of information**, and/or a lack of understanding of available sources;
- **difficulties gaining access to migrants**, depriving journalists of primary sources of information. In several countries, journalists

emphasised a paradoxical position adopted by certain international organisations which provide training on well-balanced media coverage of migration but limit journalist access to migrants and influence their statements; - **the lack of funding** to cover these subjects which takes time, with the need to travel to zones frequented by migrants and equipment to collect information. Additionally, security aspects sometimes have to be factored in, for example in Colombia, Jordan and countries in the Sahel region where travel can be risky.

The needs set forth above have been described generally, however there are nuances according to the countries within the scope of the report. They apply to all countries, but to varying degrees, depending especially on the quality of the initial local training courses in journalism and the economic weight of the media as an industry in general.

<sup>1</sup> The ECOWAS Protocol on the free movement of people, goods and services and the right to reside and settle was signed in Dakar, on 29 May 1979, and applied as from 1984. This process was accelerated in 1994 with the introduction of a Common Market for the ECOWAS member states, based on free movement of people, goods and services and the right to settle for salaried and self-employed workers.

<sup>2</sup> “Experts fear that the crisis in Venezuela may trigger regional epidemics”; “Venezuela and Covid-19 are a ‘time bomb’”; (El Tiempo, 2020)

<sup>3</sup> La Opinión (14 April 2020): “Coronavirus stirring up xenophobia in Colombia”

<sup>4</sup> Website: Interactive World Migration Report 2022 (iom.int)

### Current initiatives to build media capacity on the question of migration have their limits

The review of media coverage of migration has confirmed the need for capacity building for all media players in all 16 countries under review. To meet these needs, international and national organisations have already initiated many capacity-building projects for media on migration. The international organisations with the highest levels of involvement are the UN agencies (the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)), Panos Institute (Paris and West Africa), the GABO Foundation and France Terre d'Asile.

Building on the previous mapping work produced by consultant Charles Autheman<sup>5</sup>, the report has helped to produce a non-exhaustive list of **208 capacity building initiatives** in the 16 countries within the scope of the report over the period 2015-2022 (Appendix 2). These actions include a majority of short media training courses on the theme of migration, as well as awards, financial and technical support for media output, initiatives to create or reinforce journalist networks, workshops on awareness-raising, brainstorming and sharing experiences etc. While most of these are short-term projects, certain local and international initiatives aim for longer-lasting effects, such as the setup of long “media and migration” training courses in Morocco<sup>6</sup> and the formation of the Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists (RMJM). In terms of quantity, the report also shows that the Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern countries enjoyed fewer capacity-building projects in comparison with Colombia and countries in North and West Africa.

The discussion groups conducted with former beneficiaries of these capacity-building projects have highlighted the contributions and limits of these initiatives. While these projects have helped to introduce hundreds of journalists to migration issues, the impact of these initiatives on the overall quality of media coverage of migration in these countries is difficult to measure. **Several pitfalls to be avoided have however been identified:**

#### The training courses are too short

A single, isolated training course lasting for one, two or three days is not sufficient to modify journalist practices in the long term. Longer training courses (lasting several weeks or even months) to enable the specialisation of journalists on the subject of migration would be more appropriate;

#### The training courses are insufficiently technical and practical

Many training workshops involve mere awareness-raising, discussing migration issues in general and focussing on the terminology, whereas to change journalistic practices, the acquisition of technical skills is also necessary (learning how to detect and push back on fake news, datajournalism<sup>7</sup> and investigative journalism), as is experience on the ground and support for media production;

#### Focalisation that's all too frequent on very specific themes

Especially irregular migration, to the detriment of other type of migration;

#### failure to take the journalists' initial level into account

With programmes containing inappropriate content;

<sup>7</sup> Data journalism consists in collecting, sorting, comparing, analysing and viewing large databases to extract data that's comprehensible for all - Caroline Goulard (2020). Training in data journalism consists in training people to identify sources of useful data at national and international level, generate statistics to be able to analyse the data, and use visual tools (graphs, maps etc.) to vulgarise this data for the general public.

<sup>5</sup> Map by Charles Autheman available on: Mapping media and migration activities 2010-2020 - Google My Maps

<sup>6</sup> The Master's degree in research “Media and migration” (isic.ac.ma)

### The lack of follow-up for beneficiaries

Short- and medium-term support and post-training follow-up in the form of mentoring is necessary to help media outlets in the longer term and to produce actual media content further to the capacity building;

### The selection of beneficiaries is too restrictive, or does not match needs

The following elements need to be factored in: **- the training courses need to be opened up to a broader section of journalists**, to include journalists in all types of media (TV, radio, press, influencers and bloggers etc.) who do not speak French or English. In West Africa, special attention must be paid to district radios, rural radios, women's radios, young people's radios etc., which mostly emit in local languages and are important vectors for communication with local residents; **- the representativity and pertinence of journalists targeted needs to be reviewed systematically**. To achieve this, calls for applicants must be launched ahead of time and applicants systematically asked to write a letter detailing their motivation along with their CV. Communication on these calls for applicants can be published by the professional journalist networks, editorial managers, schools of journalism and their alumni networks.

Given the above, the following recommendations have been formulated across the board for the countries under review.

### **Guidelines for future programmes**

The report includes reviews summarising the context in terms of both media and migration so that international and national organisations can adapt their capacity-building projects to the specific features in each country. The interviews and the discussion groups also highlighted some of the limits to current initiatives and can thus help the authors of this report to formulate a certain number of recommended guidelines for future capacity-building programmes:

#### Emphasise ethics in the profession and the media as an industry.

Migration vocabulary needs to be mastered and appropriated, to avoid stereotyping. Reporters need a proper grasp of the issues and must cover them in a humane fashion. Information must come from reliable sources and fake information must be deconstructed. Articles, debates and reportage must represent diverse points of view held by the protagonists involved in migration. Attention must be paid to the participation of migrants in media production, preserving their security, data and right to control the use of their image.

#### Address the question of migration in all its dimensions (emigration/immigration, grounds for migration, categories of migrants) and complexity

This must be factored in when producing content during training courses, as well as when supporting the production of independent investigations so that the media can move beyond merely reproducing dispatches about the tragedies of irregular immigration released by international press agencies, and statements by governments and international organisations. Financial and educational support would help the media cover migration in-depth and address specific and pertinent migration themes, embracing broader geopolitical and governance issues, and situations that are too often neglected (diasporas, interregional migration which is often ignored even though it involves a majority of migrants, internal migration, human trafficking, statelessness etc.).

Open up to more types of stakeholders taking part in capacity building initiatives, either as beneficiaries or as contributors or supervisors.

Regarding the participants, it is indispensable to involve not only journalists but editorial managers and media directors, who choose which subjects are to be published, for the capacity-building projects to have real impact on the local media production. Other beneficiaries may also be envisaged, such as bloggers and activists having already shown an interest in migration issues. As for finding other supervisors to integrate teaching teams or lead workshops and conferences, it is important to involve stakeholders from local organisations and universities working on migration issues to foster the transmission of knowledge. Lastly, it would be pertinent to systematically involve migrants in the design and/or implementation of capacity building initiatives for the media.

Context permitting, the organisations involved in capacity building for the media on migration have to also include awareness-raising for public stakeholders (national, local and regional authorities), especially in order to support them in the transparent production and publication of migration data, so that journalists and thus the general public can have reliable information.

For the media to be able to cover the question of migration freely and pertinently, national and international organisations also have to persevere with awareness-raising for public stakeholders as to the importance of safeguarding the freedom of the press, independence of the media and data availability (*open data*). Having public stakeholders participate in workshops or forums on the production of reliable information on migration would be pertinent.

**Initial and continuous training for journalists and media outlets**

As for **training for journalists**, which accounts for the majority of capacity-building projects for the media on migration listed in this report, several recommendations may be made for future projects with a view to differentiating courses and offering course content specific to types of media (TV, radio, press, influencers and bloggers etc.):

Setup of self-training tools and e-learning available online free of charge in the local languages.

It would be pertinent to fund and produce tutorials specific to migration, especially in formats suitable for mobile phones (the primary tool for journalists in Africa), and create MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) for the general public on migration and on various specific migration themes, adapting these to national and regional contexts.

Decentralise in-person continuous training courses to various places rather than holding them solely in capital cities

Decentralisation will make it possible to involve more local media outlets and integrate travel on the ground, preferably to places frequented by migrants.

Emphasise training for students in journalism and communication

Working with universities and schools in each country, integrating migration issues in the curricula, as has been done in Morocco for example.

Foster interregional workshops with beneficiaries from several countries on a common theme

As well as workshops for journalists from different continents in order to compare notes, share experiences and encourage joint output.

Put forward training courses systematically combining theory with hands-on practice with technical courses and visits on the ground

- The report highlighted **very strong demand from journalists for training in investigative and reporting techniques**, as well as working in migration hotspots (visiting a formal or informal camp, a border checkpoint, a region or a zone from which migrants depart, a vulnerable zone involving smuggling and trafficking, a campus with foreign students etc.). The training courses could also go hand in hand with short- and medium-term financial and educational support, in the form of mentoring, to investigate and report on migration issues specific to each country, ensuring that this content is translated into local languages and published in the media; - the report also emphasised **the importance of including the collecting and analysing data, especially statistics**. It may be pertinent to develop workshops specifically on digital journalism applied to migration, integrating specific work on writing, video, photos and sound. Media coverage of the question of migration is difficult to envisage without the use of data and this training course would help

to identify useful sources of data at national and international level as well as collecting data, generating statistics to be able to analyse it and using visualisation tools (graphs and maps) to vulgarise this data for the general public. This may especially include a focus on obtaining accounts from migrants and the specific requirements of online journalism.

In addition to this, the appeal of these technical courses would improve the quality of applications when selecting future beneficiaries of such training courses, as would the involvement and motivation of beneficiaries during the training course:

**Train media outlets to use social media**

brainstorming the new role of journalists faced with this competition and how media outlets can adapt to these new platforms and courses, to detect and shoot down misinformation and rumours, moderate a social network and thwart hate speech in real time.

Set up more monitoring and assessment tools

As much for the short-term appreciation of satisfaction levels among those participating and the skills they feel they have acquired, as to measure the effect of these actions on the volume and quality of output in the medium or long term.

**Other actions aiming to improve the quality of media coverage of migration**

Looking beyond training, several recommendations may also be formulated regarding **other types of initiative aiming to improve the quality of media coverage** of migration:

### Support and encourage the production of media content

While assistance with production can take place as part of the training course, it can also happen more directly with the launch of calls for production (selection of projects by a panel of professional) to fund and support the winning production projects, to encourage the coverage of certain subjects that are absent from the media and/or promote certain forms of media coverage (reportage, investigation, photos, video capsules etc.). The creation of awards on specific themes can also be pertinent, with a view to promoting good-quality output on migration issues. Funding schemes may also be bolstered (for example grants for journalists wishing to specialise in migration or subsidies for media outlets investing in investigative journalism on migration) to ensure the coverage of themes and/or geographical zones ignored by the media, and offer material and/or technical assistance to produce content on specific subjects/angles.

### Set up and lead networks for journalists specialising in migration at national, and even regional and interregional level

These networks may be reinforced by organising national and/or regional forums for journalists, and/or visits to report and discuss practices. It would also be pertinent to promote cross-border journalism projects involving consortiums of journalists from several countries, to work on investigations in connection with migration, along the lines of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists<sup>8</sup>. It may for example encourage the collaboration of journalists from Guinea, the Comoros islands, Niger and Madagascar to investigate trafficking of domestic workers to the Gulf States.

<sup>8</sup> Website of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists: <https://www.icij.org/>

### Raise awareness and educate with support to set up arenas in which to foster dialogue on the public and media discourse on migration, between media outlets, areas of research, public authorities, civilian stakeholders and migrants.

Also support for media projects to deconstruct stereotypes and promote cultural diversity and living in harmony. An interesting example in France is “Désinfox-Migration”<sup>9</sup>, teaming researchers and journalists to push back on stereotypes, using facts and analysis to counter abuse in public debate. Lastly, it would be good to develop tools to inform and educate the general public about the media and migration, and offer to have production and/or output from training courses translated or produced directly in local languages (for example in public schools, universities etc.) to reach out to more people.

<sup>9</sup> Désinfox-Migration - Institut Convergences Migration (cnrs.fr - in French only)

**Country reviews for Burkina Faso, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia:**

**Red Mangrove Development Advisors**

Red Mangrove Development Advisors is a consulting firm providing support for players in international cooperation in both North and South. Its services include drawing up reports and strategic planning consultation for public and private organisations as well as civil society organisations. The firm also supports the setup, project management and assessment (including effects on development in countries of both origin and residence) of migration programmes.



**Coordination and international experts (in alphabetic order):**

**Charles Autheman** is a consultant specialising in the media coverage of migration. In the past ten years, he has organised and led training workshops for journalists, union members and communication professionals in some 20 countries, mainly in the Middle East, Africa and southern Asia. From 2012 to 2014, he coordinated a European project to promote good-quality, well-balanced news on migration in eight countries (Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, France and Spain). More recently, he supervised the publication of the first glossary for journalists on migration and the ILO toolkit on forced labour and fair hiring.

**Laura Denis** is a specialist in steering, monitoring and assessing projects. Having graduated with a degree in political science and international cooperation, she now boasts ten years' professional experience in project management and consulting for public stakeholders, international organisations and civil society organisations. She has also worked with media outlets and organisations defending the media, especially with the NGO Reporters Without Borders as an officer in charge of planning and assessment, and with CFI and France Medias Monde.

**Barbara Joannon** is a specialist in migration and asylum. Having graduated with a Master 2 in Globalisation and Governance from IEP Lyon, she kicked off her career as a manager handling European questions for an association supporting asylum seekers and refugees in France, before developing her consulting business. She has supported a good dozen organisations and projects. She especially coordinated the drawing up of the French action plan International Migration and Development for AFD and worked on the development and application of the Désinfox-Migration project. She joined HCR in France as External Relations Associate in June 2022.

**Thierry Leclere** is a journalist, film director and instructor, specialising in the media coverage of international migration. A graduate from the Centre de Formation des journalistes (CFJ, Paris), he has worked as a journalist for the press, web, TV and radio, including a 25-year stint as a reporter for the group *Télérama-Le Monde*. In his expert and consultant role in Europe, the Maghreb and West Africa, he has trained very many journalists in the coverage of migration. He has authored and/or directed a dozen documentaries for television.

**Maïa Lê-hurand** is specialised in migration issues. Having graduated with a Master in political science and international migration, she has produced several feasibility reports on the themes of migration, diaspora and development in Africa. She is now working on a sociology thesis focussing on the integration of regional migrants in Johannesburg and Abidjan, in partnership with the University of Rouen and the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

**Claire Neuschwander** specialises in steering and coordinating projects. Having graduated with a Master 2 in management and another Master 2 in international trade, she boasts over ten years' professional experience in project management and consulting for private stakeholders, international organisations and civil society organisations in Europe, Africa and Latin America. She has also produced several reports and projects on African diasporas, and has worked with the NGO Reporters Without Borders.

**Ophélie Tardieu** is an independent migration expert. She has consolidated experience in the spheres of research, project management, policy review and capacity building in Europe and Africa. She collaborates nowadays with a large portfolio of stakeholders, especially governments, European institutions and international organisations. She has worked for over a dozen years in French and European public administrations, handling questions about migration, asylum and international development.

#### Local experts (in alphabetic order)

**Andjouza Abouheir Ali Msa** worked on the country review for Comoros. She has a Master's degree in journalism and communication, and works as a journalist for *La Gazette des Comores*, especially focussing on health, diversity, politics, violence, migration, inclusion and gender equality. She is now vice-President of the National Union of Comorian Journalists (SNJC). Reporters Without Borders included her in their 2020 list of 30 coronavirus "information heroes" for her work on the Covid-19 pandemic in the Comoros Islands.

**Elom K. Attissogbe** worked on the country review for Togo. Having earned a professional degree in Journalism and a Master 2 in public and political communication, he is a journalist and Publication Director for the newspaper *La Nouvelle Tribune*. Driven by a passion for migration and development issues, he organised the West African Young Leaders Summit in Lomé in 2016. This event was attended by 100 young people from 15 countries in West Africa to brainstorm alternatives to irregular migration.

**Lilia Blaise** worked on the country review for Tunisia. She has worked as a freelance journalist based in Tunisia for six years. She covers the news in Tunisia for the French newspaper *Le Monde* and the French news channel *France 24*. She has taken great interest in migration issues in Tunisia, covering irregular departures towards Europe as well as the presence of Sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia.

**Adama Bakayoko** worked on the country review for Côte d'Ivoire. He is a journalist and media producer, heading up the Magazines and Debates Department at *Radio Côte d'Ivoire*, the top public radio nationwide. He is also an instructor in media production at *RTI*, the main Ivorian media group. He has no less than 20 years' experience in this line of business, including ten years devoted to migration issues. He has won the annual Ebony award for best Ivorian journalist six times.

**Boubacar Koubia Diallo** worked on the country review for Guinea. As an all-round expert in development, he studied private law at the Gamal Abdel Nasser University of Conakry (UGANC). With certifications in mining governance, project management, sustainable development and public management, he boasts some 20 years' experience as an instructor, supervisor, project coordinator and/or consultant.

**Abou Dicko** worked on the country review for Mauritania. He is the coordinator of *À Ciel Ouvert*, a "third place" for the media in Mauritania. He is also an instructor in journalism and mobile journalism.

**Bréma Dicko** worked on the country review for Mali. He is a senior lecturer in sociology at the University of Letters and Human Sciences of Bamako (ULSHB). He has mainly focussed on Malian migration towards Europe, intra-African migration and violent extremism in central regions of Mali.

**Jerry Édouard** worked on the country review for Madagascar. He works as a journalist for a private TV channel based in Antananarivo. He has been on the Board of Directors for the Malagasy Office to Combat Human Trafficking (BNLTEH) since 2015. He specialises in migration issues, especially human trafficking and labour migration.

**Mahamadou Kane** worked on the country review for Mali. He is a journalist at a local media outlet (*Radio Kledu*) and also works for foreign media. He has specialised for 12 years in the coverage of migration issues in Mali, as well as in countries that Malian migrants transit through or settle in.

**Mouhamadou Tidiane Kasse** worked on the country review for Senegal. He is a journalist, having graduated from CESTI (Centre d'études des sciences techniques de l'information) in 1982. He worked as a reporter for the newspaper *Takusaan*, then deskman for *Sud*, before working as Chief Editor, then Publication Director at *WalFadjri*. He then joined Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO) as Programme Officer and Instructor on migration (2006-2017) as well as working as an instructor for Africa Consultants International in family health and HIV/AIDS (2002-2014).

**Salaheddine Lemaizi** worked on the country review for Morocco. He is a journalist specialising in migration and asylum issues. He chairs the Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists (RMJM), founded in 2018, and also co-founded the independent Moroccan digital media outlet *Enass*.

**Kouassi Combo Mafou** worked on the country review for Côte d'Ivoire. He is a professor and research worker at the University Jean Lorougnon Guédé, and a senior lecturer in population geography and expert in migration and development. He has worked on migration since 2006 and has authored some 30 scientific publications on the subject.

**Amadou Mbow** worked on the country review for Mauritania. He coordinates the West-African network for the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. He is also Secretary-General for the Mauritanian Human Rights Association and heads the migrant workers department of the Mauritanian social security fund.

**Tony Mikhael** worked on the country reviews for Jordan and Lebanon. Since 2007 he has directed the Media Monitoring Unit at the Maharat Foundation, and since 2016 has been a member of the Advisory Board at the Internet Legislation Atlas (ILA). He studied the legislation governing media institutions and freedom of opinion and expression at Oxford University, and acquired extensive experience in *media monitoring* while cooperating with international organisations and European specialists, such as Memog8 and International Media Support.

**Haingonirina Randrianarivony** worked on the country reviews for the Comoros Islands and Madagascar. She has a Master's degree in international law and international relations. She is an independent consultant based in Madagascar, contributing to the entire project management cycle in the Indian Ocean, Africa and France. Her specialist spheres are entrepreneurship, training and professional insertion, providing support for civilian stakeholders, gender and migration.

**Bubacarr Singhateh** worked on the country review for the Gambia. Working in the humanitarian sector, he specialises in migration. He has gained in-depth knowledge of how policies relative to migration are formed and provides humanitarian assistance and protection for vulnerable displaced persons, as part of his professional work. He also works in capacity building and advocacy on behalf of migrants.

**Lamine Souleymane** worked on the country review for Niger. He is a freelance journalist, media consultant and instructor. Since October 2019, he has been the main consultant for the Network of independent radio and television in Niger. He managed the radio station and TV channel *Niger 24* for five years, and has specialised in international relations and security studies.

**Gulnar Wakim** worked on the country reviews for Jordan and Lebanon. She has a Ph.D in Sociology and Gender Studies from the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences in Paris. As a consultant in assessment and a certified expert in gender auditing, she boasts over ten years' experience in assessment and research. Her main areas of expertise are issues pertaining to refugees, young people and gender in the Middle East and North Africa.

**Romaine Raïssa Zidouemba** worked on the country review for Burkina Faso. She is a journalist specialising in radio and television and has worked as a certified trainer in journalism since 2015. She regularly leads training sessions for community radio stations. She is also a coordinator for the Network of journalist initiatives (RIJ).

#### Country review for Colombia

**Foundation DARA International / DAHLIA** DARA was founded in 2003. It is an independent non-profit organisation aiming to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian initiatives and development aid by focussing on assessment and measuring the impact of actions conducted. Its quantitative and qualitative reports help governments, UN agencies, NGOs and other civilian stakeholders to take decisions regarding policy, strategy and programmes based on solid data.

DAHLIA is also a non-profit organisation founded by a group of independent professionals working in assessment and communication. It operates as an international network of professionals including innovative entrepreneurs working with the Internet, 2-way communication and information management. DAHLIA aims to fill information and communication gaps in programming processes (development programmes, humanitarian response, transition periods etc.), by assessing communication and information flows at all levels, pinpointing shortfalls and pertinent solutions.

dahlia 

#### Coordination and expertise (in alphabetic order)

**Gilles Gasser** is a freelance journalist and consultant, specialising in communication and information management issues in humanitarian response, especially in regions of the world dealing with migration. He recently led an assignment with DAHLIA to gain insight into humanitarian information and communication schemes in response to the migration crisis in the Canary Islands. He produced a similar report in Colombia and Ecuador to document the crisis of migrants from Venezuela. During the 2015 migration crisis in Europe, he ran a survey with *BBC Media Action* and DAHLIA to gain insights into the information and communication needs of refugees in the Balkans and Germany. He also coordinated CEA on the FICR Ebola response team in North Kivu, in DR Congo. He trained local journalists and designed radio programmes with them to help prevent Ebola. As a journalist, he regularly collaborates with the Altapress agency in Madrid, Bonne Compagnie, ZED Productions and *Éléphant* (reportage and documentaries for *Arte*, *France Television*, *France 24*, *La Sexta*, and *TF1*).

**Silvia Hidalgo** is an economist, analyst and assessor with over 25 years' experience. She specialises in the assessment of humanitarian and development aid, the use of targeted assessment and designing mixed analysis methods, assessing the strategic and operational management of humanitarian operations and the effectiveness of communication strategies. She has a well-rounded grasp of quality standards, architecture and the sector-based approach. She has in-depth knowledge of protection issues, specialising in migrants. Regarding assignments on the ground, she has systematically integrated a review of the media environment in her reports with a view to gaining better insights into the local context. She has supervised a number of mixed reports on the migrants' situation in West Africa, DRC, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Algeria and in both North and South America.

# Appendices

## **Appendix 1: Additional Bibliographical Resources**

This additional bibliography provides a selection of works, reports and video and audio content that reflect the thrust of this report, as suggestions for readers to explore the issues further. It is not exhaustive. Many of the references for sources used are cited in footnotes in the main body of this report.



### **Bibliographical Resources for Burkina Faso Reports**

CONASUR (2021), “Tableau de bord général sur l’enregistrement des PDI au 31 décembre 2021” (General dashboard showing persons logged as being internally displaced as of 31 December 2021)

INSD (2020), “Livret Genre : Femmes et Hommes au Burkina Faso en 2020”, (Gender report: Women and Men in Burkina Faso in 2020) by the Burkinabe Institute of Statistics and Demography

INSTAT Mali (2017), “Enquête modulaire et permanent auprès des ménages (EMOP)” (Modular, ongoing household survey)”

IOM (2016), “Migration au Burkina Faso : Profil migratoire 2016” (Migration in Burkina Faso: 2016 Migration Profile)

IOM (2020), “Mobilités au Burkina Faso : Cartographie des mobilités sur le territoire burkinabè, septembre 2020” (Mobility in Burkina Faso: Mobility mapping on Burkinabe territory, September 2020)

UNHCR (2021), “Burkina Faso : Carte des persons relevant de la compétence du HCR au 31 juillet 2021” (Burkina Faso: Map showing people registered with HCR as of 31 July 2021)

UNHCR (2020), “Burkina Faso : Synthèse des données des réfugiés maliens au Burkina Faso par Site/Camp au 31 décembre 2020” (Burkina Faso: Summary of data on Malian refugees in Burkina Faso by Site/Camp as of 31 December 2020)

Network SOS Torture (2019), “Torture et les mauvais traitements des migrants aux frontières ? Rapport alternatif soumis en application de l’article 19 de la Convention contre la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants, Burkina Faso” (Torture and poor treatment of migrants at borders: an alternative report submitted in application of article 19

of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Burkina Faso)

### **Official statements**

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GABO Foundation, USAID & ACIDI/VOCA	2021	Communicating on Venezuelan migration in Colombia,
FLIP UNHCR	2021	Check list for a journalism without stigmatising accounts
UNHCR	2021	Handbook for journalists wishing to cover forced displacement situations in Latin America and in the Caribbean,
Efecto Cocuyo, Deutsche Welle, Venezuela Migrante, Puentes de Comunicación	2020	Communication bridges: how to cover issues with migration and Venezuelan refugees
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## Appendix 2 Initiative Mapping

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\* The names in italics are entire territories (departments, regions, countries) and are not shown on the map.



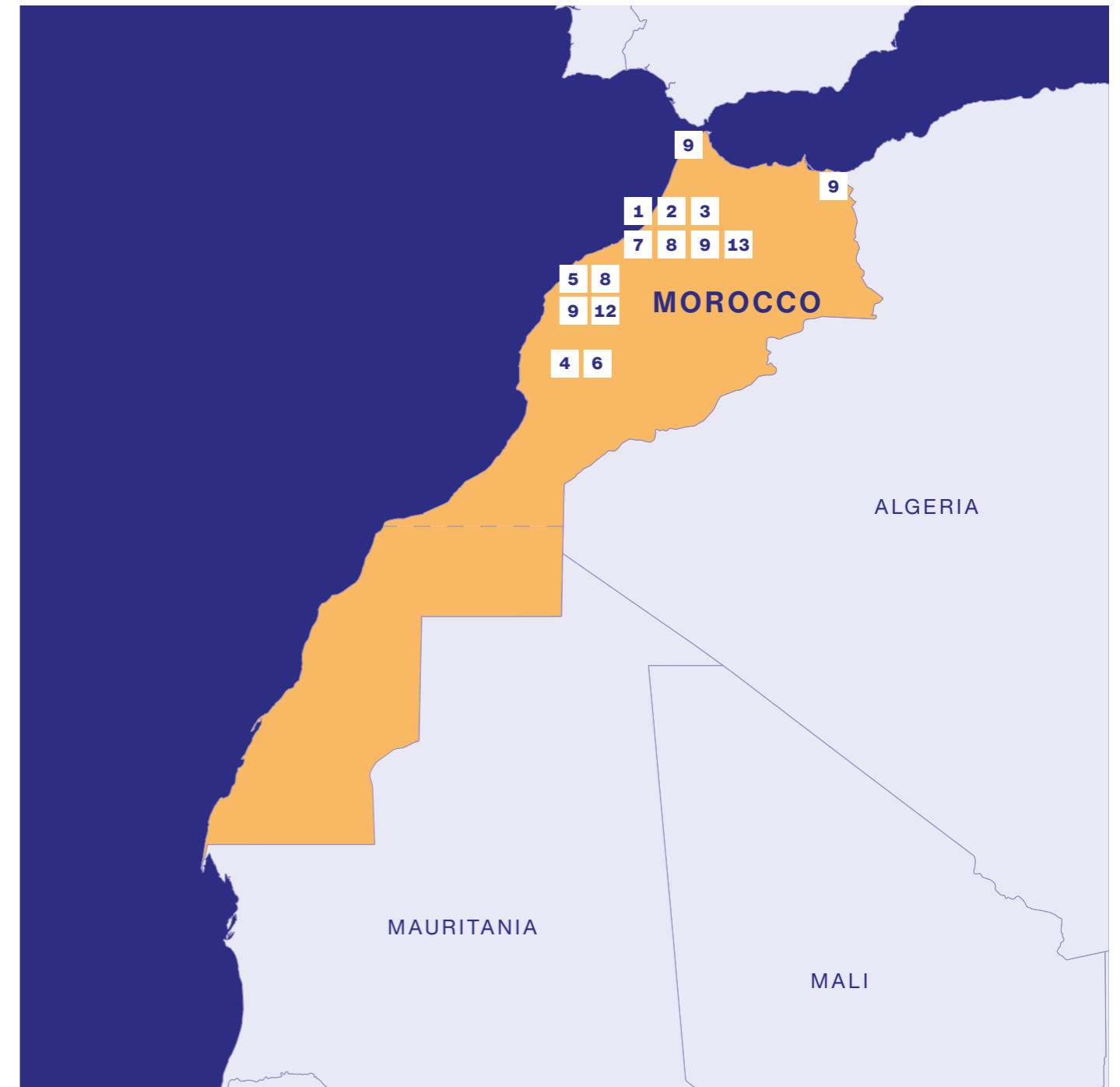
COLOMBIA



	VENUE*	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Barranquilla, Riohacha, Cúcuta, Medellín, Arauca, Cali, Ipiales and Bogotá	8 training workshops	Editorial Board, IOM	2021	2 days	Migration and media: best practices, migration accounts and integration	100 journalists from local and community media outlets
2	National	Online classes	International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Editorial Board	2021	5 weeks	International human rights law, language use	250 journalists
3	National	Online training workshop	GABO Foundation IOM	2021	11 days	Coverage of migration, migrant contributions to the local economy	18 journalists with experience in the coverage of migration
4	National	Online training workshop	Editorial Board, Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) and ICRC	2021	4 weeks	Training on four topics: migration concepts, context, narration and challenges	20 journalists, communicators and students in journalism
5	Cali and Yopal	Training workshop	Editorial Board, ICRC and KAS	2021	2 days	General concepts of migration and legal framework	20 journalists
6	Santander, North Santander and Arauca	Online training workshop	GABO Foundation, USAID, ACIDI / VOCA	2021	3 days	Communicating on migration without prejudice or xenophobic language	15 journalists, social media communicators and bloggers
7	Bogotá, La Guajira and Cundinamarca	Online training workshop	Editorial Board	2021	3 days	Communicating on the migrant crisis during the Covid pandemic	30 journalists, communicators and bloggers
8	Medellín	Training workshop	GABO Foundation, UNHCR	2020	4 days	Workshop on "Refugees and migrants: covering the case of Venezuela"	12 journalists: Chile, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil and Argentina.
9	National	Online training workshop	ColombiaCheck, Editorial Board	2020	2 days	Covid and migration: misinformation on social media, public discourse etc.	15 media editors and journalists and students in journalism
10	Regional: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru	Online training workshop	Deutsche Welle Akademie and Efecto Cocuyo	2020	2 months	Training in reportage on migration, sources, innovative tools etc.	63 journalists, 15 scholarship students (production of reportage and podcasts)

	VENUE*	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
11	Carthage	Meeting and debate	GABO Foundation	2020	1 day	Challenges and strategies to regain public trust.	20 chief editors and editors from media outlets in Colombia
12	Bogotá, Cúcuta	Training workshop	IOM, Proyecto Migración Venezuela, EU and USAID	2019-2020	1 day	Coverage of migration: human rights to prevent xenophobia.	46 journalists from national and regional media outlets and community managers from various media outlets.
13	Bogotá	Training workshop	Thomson Reuters	2019	4 days	Gaining a grasp of multimedia accounts of migration and new multimedia approaches.	15 journalists from the printed press, radio, television and Internet with five years' experience.
14	Arauca, Cali, Cúcuta, Pasto, Bogotá, Huila, Rionegro and Tolima	8 training workshops	ACNUR UNICEF and the PANDI Agency	2019	2 days	Journalism and respect for the rights of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.	160 journalists
15	Baranquilla	Training workshop	GABO Foundation	2019	1 day	Workshop on "Stereotypes and misinformation in the coverage of migration".	50 journalists
16	Baranquilla	Training workshop	GABO Foundation	2019	1.5 days	Ethical principles and best practices for good-quality journalism on migration phenomena.	14 journalists from the region with at least three years' experience in media or platforms.
17	Apartadó, Cúcuta and Ipiales	Training workshop	Editorial Board, Konrad Adenauer Foundation and ICRC	2019	2 days	Coverage of migration: general context, legal aspects and tools for journalists.	20 regional journalists, communicators and media outlets
18	Putumayo	Training workshop	Corpep Colombia, Transforma	2019	1 day	Workshop on humanising language and working on sources.	20 journalists and communicators
19	Bogotá	Training workshop	IOM, Pontifica University, Javeriana	2015	1 day	Responsible reporting on human trafficking	70 students in journalism

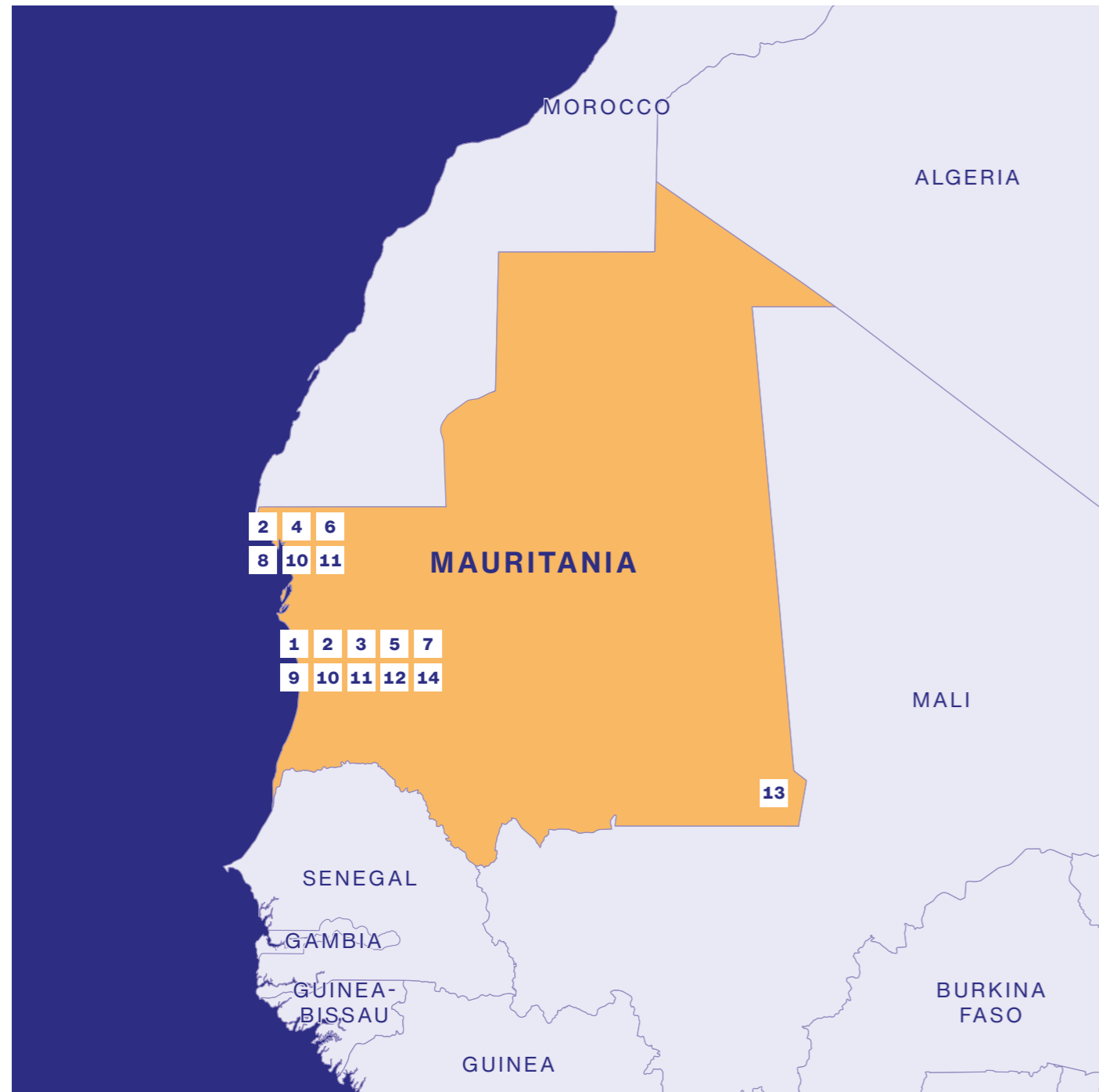
MOROCCO



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Rabat	Training workshop and setup of networks	The Council of the Moroccan Community Abroad (CCME) and the Higher Institute of Information and Communication (ISIC)	2015	2 days	Coverage of migration issues	Media
2	Rabat	Training for journalists	NGO CEFA (Italy), funded by the EU	2017	2 days	International migration, Irregular migration, Human trafficking	Journalists (18)
3	Rabat	Setting up a network of journalists and researchers Teamwork on the ground	The MOVIDA Research Group and the International University of Rabat	2017	3 days	Worker migration / Labour migration / International migration /	Journalists (5) Researchers (10)
4	Marrakesh	Training workshops	Inter Press Service (IPS)	2018	1 day	“How to report on global migration issues” in connection with the GCM conference	Journalists (13)
5	Casablanca	Forum	Forum of African women journalists Les Panafricaines and TV channel 2M	2018		“African migration: an opportunity for the continent, a responsibility for the media”	
6	Marrakesh	Workshop debate	IMS / GCM	2018		“Changing the narratives on migration in Africa: collaboration between media outlets, journalists and civil society migrant rights network”	Media outlets, journalists and civil society
7	Rabat	Training workshop and discussion	JIGC	2019	6 days	Media and Migration	Journalists from Africa (15) and Europe (10)
8	Casablanca, Rabat and Webinar	Workshop debates	RMJM (Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists) / HCR	2019 / 2020			Journalists
9	Rabat, Casablanca, Oujda and Tangiers	Training for journalists	IOM and UNHCR Morocco, funded by the UN and the EU	2020	8 days	Worker migration / Labour migration / International migration / Asylum	Journalists (40) Students (40)

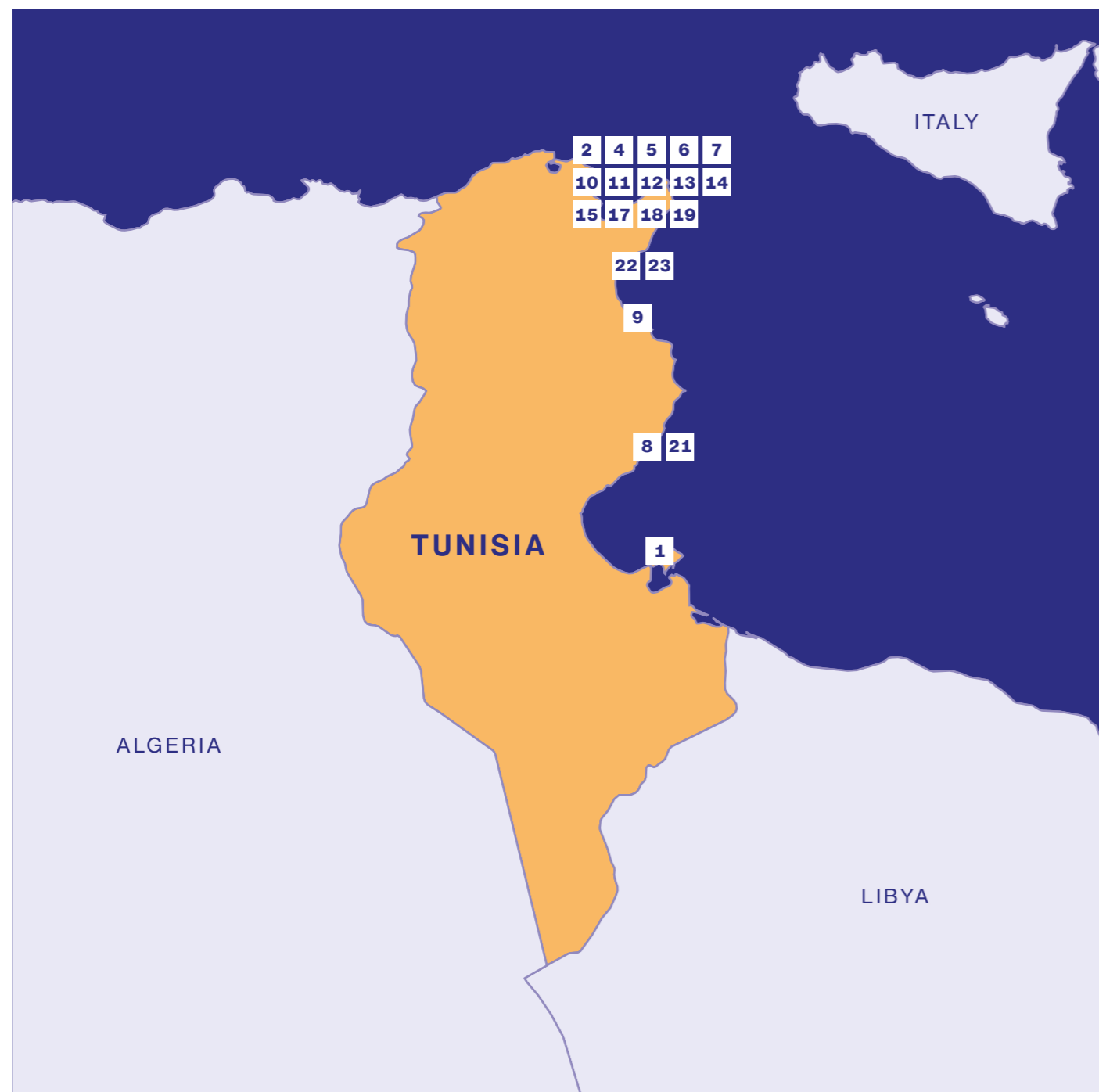
	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
10	Morocco	Grants for migration journalism	RMJM, funded by Oxfam	2021	4 days	Support for production and promotion: support for content production, journalism awards, co-production: Irregular and worker migration	Journalists (3) Students (4)
11	Souss-Massa	Training workshops	Migration & Development	2021	3 workshops	Objective, responsible discourse with a view to contributing to the deconstruction of stereotypes and promoting living in harmony by adopting responsible attitudes to covering news of migration and migrants.	15 journalists
12	Casablanca	Meeting for discussion	HCR and IOM	2022	1 day	Asylum and migration in Morocco	French-speaking journalists
13	Rabat	Training and awareness-raising	RMJM and ISIC	2022	1 day	Migration	Students in journalism

MAURITANIA



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Nouakchott	Training workshops	IOM (funding from the Federal Republic of Germany)	2015-2017	A set of training courses	Managing information relative to migration in Nouakchott - Project to "Understand and combat human trafficking".	Journalists
2	Nouakchott / Nouadhibou	Training workshops	IOM (EU funding)	2017	4 days (2 workshops)	Improving media coverage of migration in Mauritania - EU project to "Improve intervention capacity in Mauritania in terms of assistance for vulnerable migrants in transit, including access to healthcare, legal aid and aid for reintegration."	Professional journalists from private and public outlets belonging to the Union of journalists and reporters (40)
3	Nouakchott / Nouadhibou	Training workshop	JMI / IOM (EU funding)	2017	4 days	Improving media coverage of migration in Mauritania - EU project to "Improve intervention capacity in Mauritania in terms of assistance for vulnerable migrants in transit, including access to healthcare, legal aid and aid for reintegration."	Journalists (20)
4		Training workshop	Network of women journalists / IOM (EU funding)	2017	3 days		Journalists (30)
5	Nouakchott	Training workshops	Organisation of freelance journalists for education and steering in collaboration with IPDC and UNESCO	2017	5 days (2 workshops)	Media outlets and migration	Journalists (60)
6	Nouadhibou	Training workshop	Jordan Media Institute (JMI) and the IOM	2018	3 days	Media capacity and migrant worker problems	Media outlets (25)
7	Nouakchott	Training workshop Awards	OIM / Thomson Reuters (EU funding)	2018		Media coverage of migration	Journalists and influencers (15)
8	Nouadhibou	Training workshop	OIM / HCR	2018		Build media capacity in Mauritania on reporting #mixed movement, raising awareness on refugees and asylum seekers	Journalists, bloggers and influencers
9	Nouakchott	Seminar	IOM	2019		Migrants in Mauritania Where have they come from, what do they aspire to?	
10	Nouakchott / Nouadhibou	Information workshop	IOM	2019		Rethinking media coverage	Journalists and editors
11	Nouakchott / Nouadhibou	Training workshop	IOM	2021	5 days	Coverage of migrants and refugees by journalists in Mauritania	Journalists (radio, TV) and OSCs
12	Nouakchott	Training workshop	HCR	2021	4 days	Creating content using the right terms	Journalists
13	M'bera	Training workshop	HCR	2021		Information on refugees	4 refugees and 4 journalists
14	Nouakchott	Training workshop	IOM, Carta Di Roma and the European Federation of Journalists (FEJ)	2022	3 days	Media coverage of migration	30 journalists

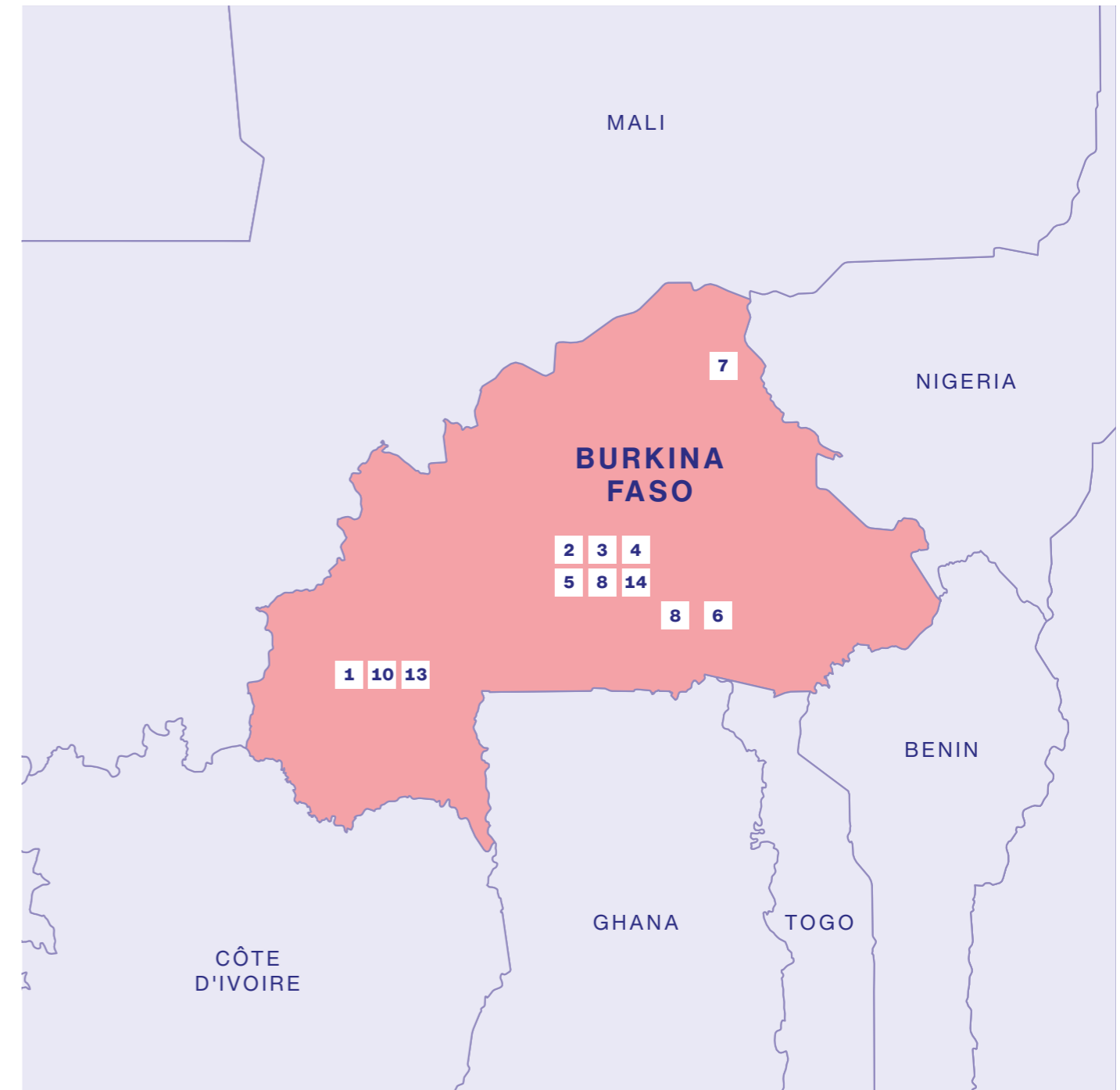
## TUNISIA



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Djerba	Training workshop	HCR	2015	2 days	Refugees and asylum	22 local journalists from the south of Tunisia (TV, radio and press)
2	Tunis	Training workshop	HCR	2015	2 days	Refugees and asylum	Journalists
3		Training workshops	UNHCR and IADH	2016	January to June	Refugees and asylum	Journalists and members of civil society (9)
4	Tunis	Training workshops	ILO in partnership with the African centre of advanced training for journalists and communicators (CAPJC) and the participation du National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT)	2017	April to October	Labour migration and fair hiring	Journalists (24)
5	Tunis	Training workshops for instructors	ILO in partnership with the African centre of advanced training for journalists and communicators (CAPJC)	2017	3 days	Training for instructors: best practices in media in terms of migration.	Instructors
6	Tunis	Training workshop	ILO in partnership with the African centre of advanced training for journalists and communicators (CAPJC)	2018	2 days	Media coverage of migration	Journalists
7	Manouba	Training workshop	CIES / Tunisian Union for Social Solidarity (UTSS)	2018	2 days		
8	Sfax	Training workshop	IOM	2018	2 days	Media coverage of migration	Journalists (10)
9	Sousse	Training workshop	IOM	2018	2 days	Media coverage of migration with reference to international law and based on facts	Journalists (17)
10	Tunis	Training workshop	OpenMediaHub and EuroMed Migration (EU funding)	2018	3 days	Media coverage of migration: producing reportage on migration issues	Journalists and TV and radio outlets

	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
11	Tunis	Training workshop	OrientXXI	2018	2 days		Young journalists
12	Tunis	Training workshop	IOM	2018	4 days	Media coverage of migration with reference to international law and based on facts	Journalists (20)
13	Manouba	Training workshop	CIES?? / Tunisian Union for Social Solidarity (UTSS)	2019	2 days		
14	Manouba	Training workshop	ILO / Institute of Press and Information Sciences (IPSI)	2019	2 days	Media coverage of international labour migration	Students (30)
15	Tunis	Training workshop	IOM	2019	3 days	Media coverage of migration issues	Journalists and press officers
16	Webinar	Debates	HCR and the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR)			International protection for refugees and stateless people	
17	Tunis	Meeting and debate	HCR and the Arab Institute for Human Rights	2019		"Media and refugees: challenges and best practices"	
18	Tunis	Meeting to share practices	France Terre d'Asile	2019	3 days	"Better combatting transnational human trafficking: comparing notes between OSCs and institutions in French-speaking countries"	
19	Tunis	Meeting and debate	France Terre d'Asile	2020	1 day	"Media discourse vs. reality for migrants in Tunisia: how should Tunisian and community media cover the issue?"	Journalists (30)
20	Tunisia	Award	Arab Institute for Human Rights in collaboration with the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists and the UN Refugee Agency	2017		"Kelma Lihom 2" Award (La parole est à eux)	
21	Sfax	Workshop	Terre d'Asile Tunisia - Maison du Droit et des Migrations	2022	1 day	Geopolitical context of migration in Tunisia	Journalists
22	Hammamet	Workshop	ILO and IPSi??	2022	3 days	Labour migration	20 journalists and students from IPSI
23	Hammamet	Workshop	UGTT (Tunisian General Labour Union) and ILO	2022	3 days	Labour migration	Journalists

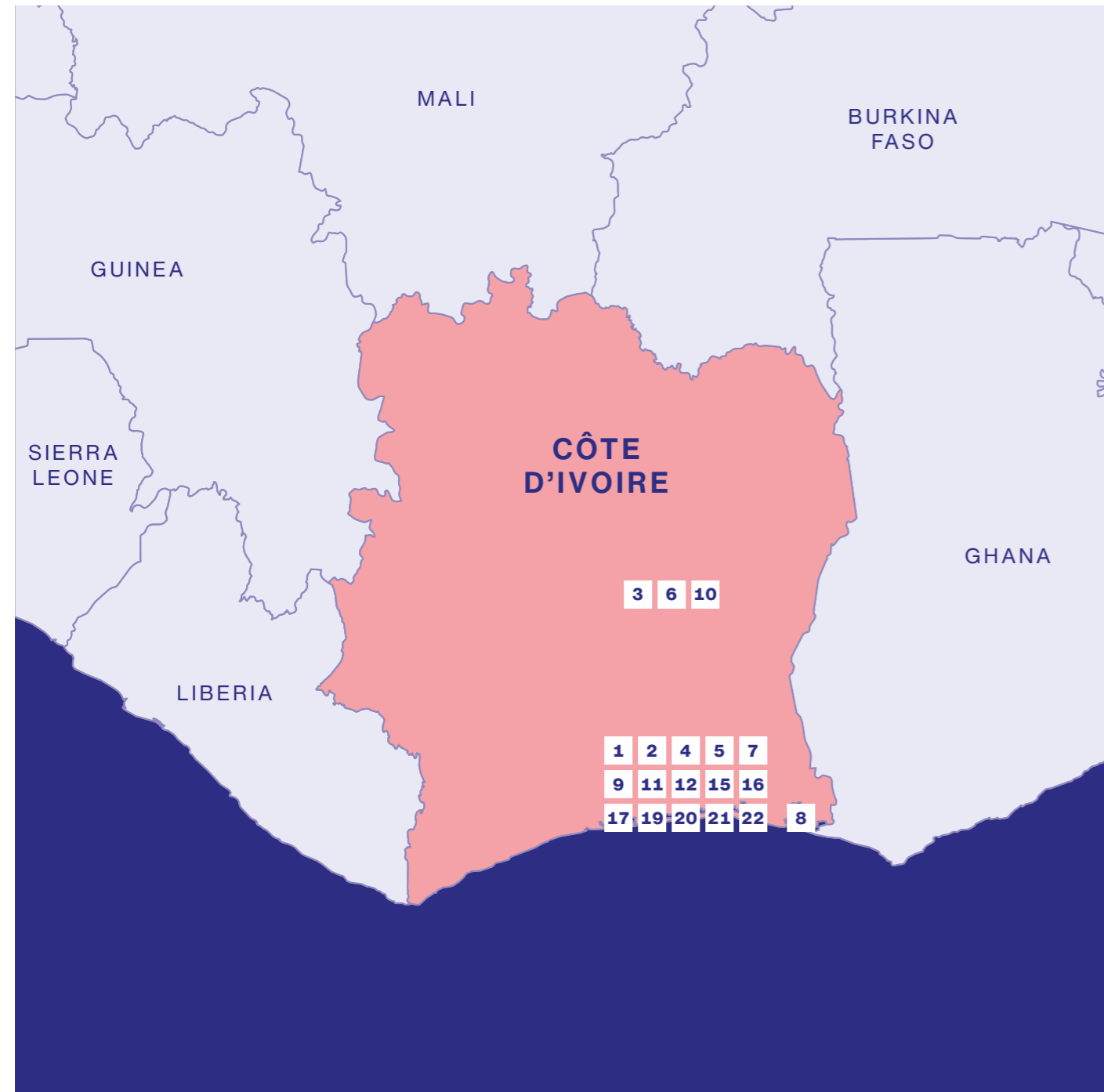
## BURKINA FASO



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Bobo-Dioulasso	Training workshop	UNHCR	2016	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarification of the concepts of statelessness and nationality</li> <li>Review of the two UN conventions on statelessness, signed in 1954 and 1961</li> <li>Causes and groups at risk of statelessness</li> <li>Initiatives by Burkina Faso and ECOWAS to push back against statelessness</li> </ul>	Around 20 journalists
2	Ouagadougou	Training workshop	IOM (funding: US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM))	2017	2 days	<p>Best practices in the media and migration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of the right terminology (illicit trafficking of migrants and human trafficking)</li> <li>Interactive role of pictures in the media coverage of migration issues</li> </ol>	Journalists in West Africa (Senegal, Gambia, Burkina Faso and Ghana)
3	Ouagadougou	Training workshop	IOM	2017	2 days	Protection for vulnerable migrants Voluntary return of migrants Aid for reintegration	Journalists Moroccan Higher Council of Audiovisual Communication (CSCA) and Ministries (of National Solidarity and Foreign Affairs.
4	Ouagadougou	Training workshop	IOM	2018	3 days	Coverage of migration by journalists, bloggers and influencers	Journalists, bloggers and influencers
5	Ouagadougou	Training workshop	NGO Help	2018	1 day	Media contributions to push back against irregular emigration	Journalists
6	Tenkodogo	Training workshop	IOM (funding: EUTF and DFID)	2019	2 days	Raising awareness of irregular migration (brainstorming the best strategies to motivate the community and raise awareness among young people).	Returning migrants, mothers of young migrants, traditional chiefs, young entrepreneurs and government representatives (24)
7	Dori	Training workshop	UNHCR, DRC (Danish Refugee Council) and the Burkinabe Commission for Refugees (CONAREF)	2019	2 days	International protection for refugees and asylum seekers	Professional journalists and OSCs
8	Ouagadougou / Béguédo / Niaogho	Training workshop with production of content	Network of initiatives for journalists	2019	5 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration profile for Burkina Faso</li> <li>Account by returning migrants</li> <li>Account by migrant families (impact of migration on the social life in their neighbourhoods of origin)</li> <li>Contributions of migrants to local development (building infrastructure and support for families)</li> <li>Production of a dozen reports on the themes cited</li> </ul>	Professional journalists and bloggers

	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
9	n/a	Award	UNO Migration	2019	n/a	Mobile video award: «young people and immigration» theme	Professional journalists
10	Bobo-Dioulasso	Training workshop and awareness-raising refresher courses by the Network of journalists and communicators on integration and migration	Ministry of African Integration and Burkinabe Expatriates (MIABE)	2020	3 days	Migration: presentation of the United Nations Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM) Regional integration process within ECOWAS (vision 2020) and West African Economic and Monetary Union	Burkinabe journalists
11		Brainstorming workshop	International festival of French-language radio stations in Africa (FIRAF) in partnership with Reporters solidaires	2020	3 days	Brainstorming on the theme «Radio and Migration»: discussion on a communication strategy for put an end on clandestine immigration of young Africans towards Europe	Journalists from French-speaking Africa
12	Online ceremony	Labour Migration Reporting Award Ceremony	AWiM and AUC, ILO and IOM	2020	1 day	<p>Labour migration:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance for labour migration</li> <li>Migrant rights</li> <li>Migration within Africa</li> <li>Fair hiring, forced labour and migrant worker trafficking</li> <li>The economic impact of migration</li> <li>Money transfers and the diaspora's contribution to development</li> <li>Migration and health</li> <li>Gendered migration</li> </ol>	African journalists
13	Bobo-Dioulasso	International festival of French-language radio stations in Africa (FIRAF) Panels and radio awards Support for the production of reportage and round tables (by Studio Yafa / Fondation Hirondelle)	WAMECO	2020	3 days	Irregular immigration Role of media in awareness-raising	Journalists, students NGOs Organisations and public services artists and migration experts
14	Ouagadougou	Support for the production of reportage and round tables (by Studio Yafa / Fondation Hirondelle)	IOM	2021	4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity to raise awareness among the general public, decision-makers and candidates for migration as to the risks and dangers of irregular migration</li> <li>IOM initiative to protect and reintegrate migrants</li> <li>Voluntary return</li> <li>National migrant registry.</li> </ul>	Journalists, experts, population

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Abidjan	Training workshop	Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Service of Aid and Assistance to Refugees and Stateless Persons (SAARA), in collaboration with HCR	2017	2 days	Pushing back on the risks of statelessness	Communication officers and journalists (50)
2	Abidjan	Training workshop	Directorate-general for Ivoirians abroad (DGIE) and	2017	1 day	Theme: reducing irregular migration by way of awareness-raising in Côte d'Ivoire	Journalists to broadcast the Ministry campaign
3	Bouaké	Training workshop	IOM	2017	1 day	Theme: reducing irregular migration by way of awareness-raising in Côte d'Ivoire	Journalists to broadcast the Ministry campaign
4	Abidjan	Training workshop	Friedrich Naumann Foundation, in partnership with Ciné Connexion, the IOM and the Ministry of African integration and Ivoirians Abroad.	2017	2 days	Training on definitions in migration terminology (regular and irregular migration, migrants, refugees, victims of human trafficking and illicit trafficking de migrants)	Professional journalists (20)
5	Abidjan	Information and Discussion Day	Institute of communication techniques and sciences (ISTC), IOM in partnership with the Directorate-general for Ivoirians abroad (funding from the Federal Republic of Germany)	2017	1 day	Reducing irregular migration with awareness-raising in Côte d'Ivoire	Students from ISTC (500)
6	Bouaké	Training workshop	HCR and Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate of Aid and Assistance to Refugees and Stateless Persons (DAARA)	2018	2 days	Statelessness	Journalists and press correspondents
7	Abidjan	Training workshop	German organisations Africa Positive, Africa media initiative, Erich Brost Institute, in collaboration with the Robert Bosch Foundation	2018	1 day	Media and migration	Journalists (15)



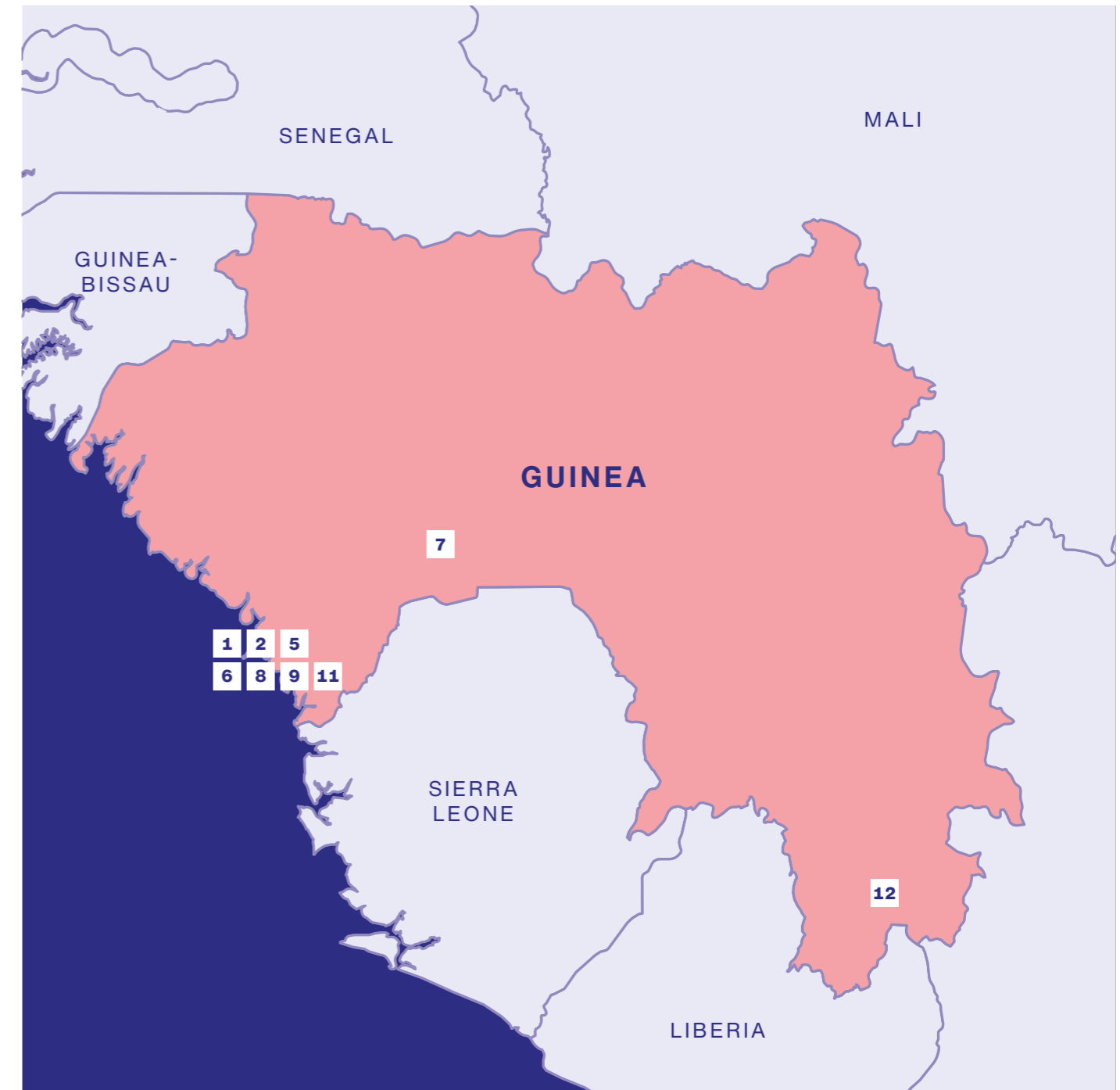
	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
8	Assinie	Training workshop	Friedrich Ebert Foundation office	2019	4 days	Governance, migration and social media in Sub-Saharan Africa: challenges and perspectives	Young bloggers from Sub-Saharan Africa
9	Abidjan	Training workshop	IOM / NGO Côte d'Ivoire Prospérité (CIP)	2019	3 days	Journalist involvement	Journalists and NGOs working in migration
10	Bouaké	Training workshop	IOM	2019	2 days	Irregular migration	Journalists
11	Abidjan	Theoretical training workshop	RECOLTHEA, Terre d'Asile Tunisia / France Terre d'Asile / EU	2019	5 days	Human trafficking	15 journalists
12	Abidjan	Training workshop	West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR) (funding from the German Embassy)	2019	2 days	Use radio to push back on irregular migration	Radio journalists
13	Yamoussoukro	Training workshop	UNESCO	2019	4 days	Investigative journalism techniques applied to migration	Journalists (20)
14		Setting up a network		2019		Setting up the Network for Ivorian communicators on migration (Recim)	
15	Abidjan	Training workshop	IOM	2020	3 days	Migration concepts	Journalists
16	Abidjan	Training workshop	IOM / CICR / DGIE	2020	3 days	Irregular migration	Journalists
17	Abidjan	Training workshop	UNESCO	2020	2 days	The various forms of migration	Journalists and show hosts from community radios (50)
18	Italy (Rome)	Exchange trip to share experience	"The Project - Aware Migrants": Carta Di Roma organisation / OIM	2020	5 days	Visit of Italian press outlets, discussion with these outlets and foreign correspondents based in Italy	12 journalists (Tunisia, Senegal, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire)
19	Abidjan	Information and Discussion Day	Institute of communication techniques and sciences (ISTC) and UNESCO	2020	1 day	Raising awareness as to the dangers of irregular migration	Students from ISTC and the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny
20	Abidjan	Training workshop	OJPCI (Organisation of professional journalists in Côte d'Ivoire) / Red Cross	2021	3 days	Knowledge of migration	Journalists
21	Abidjan	Training workshop	NGO LISA	2021	2 days	Accounts by migrants (theoretical training on migration vocabulary)	Journalists
22	Abidjan	Training workshop	CAIDP / AVSI	2021	3 days	Migration in Côte d'Ivoire	Journalists

## GAMBIA



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Banjul	Training workshop	West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR) (funded by Germany)	2018	2 days	Use radio to push back on irregular migration	journalists
2	Kunta Kinteh	Training workshop	IOM (EU funding)	2019	2 days	Coverage of migration	Student journalists (44) journalists (51)
3	Banjul	Training workshop	IOM (EU funding)	2019	2 days	Protection and reintegration of migrants	Journalists (25) and programme to assist with voluntary returns
		Training workshop	Young Journalists' Association of The Gambia (YJAG)	2020	1 day	Coverage of migration	Journalists from the printed and digital press (20)
4	Yundum	Training workshop	IOM	2020	2 days	Raising awareness in the general public about migration and related questions by improving media coverage	Student journalists
5	Kololi	Training workshop	IOM	2020	1 day	Media coverage	Women journalists (20)
6	Webinar	Training workshop	IOM and West Africa Democracy Radio	2020	3 days	Improving journalists' skills and knowledge in terms of reporting about migration	Journalists (30)
7	Webinar	Training workshop	IOM	2020	3 days	Knowledge of migration, technical skills and ethics, with emphasis on understanding the links between health and mobility in the context of the pandemic	Journalists
8	The Gambia	Training workshop	IOM	2021	5 days	Raising awareness as to the dangers of irregular migration	25 returning migrants
9	Banjul	Training for instructors	r0g_agency	2021	3 days	Irregular migration	Instructors
10	The Gambia	Training workshop	IOM	2021		Coverage of migration	34 journalists
11	The Gambia	Training workshop	IOM and FactCheck Gambia	2022	5 days	Migration and fact checking	20 journalists
12	The Gambia	Award	IOM	2022	/	Solutions journalism and migration	/

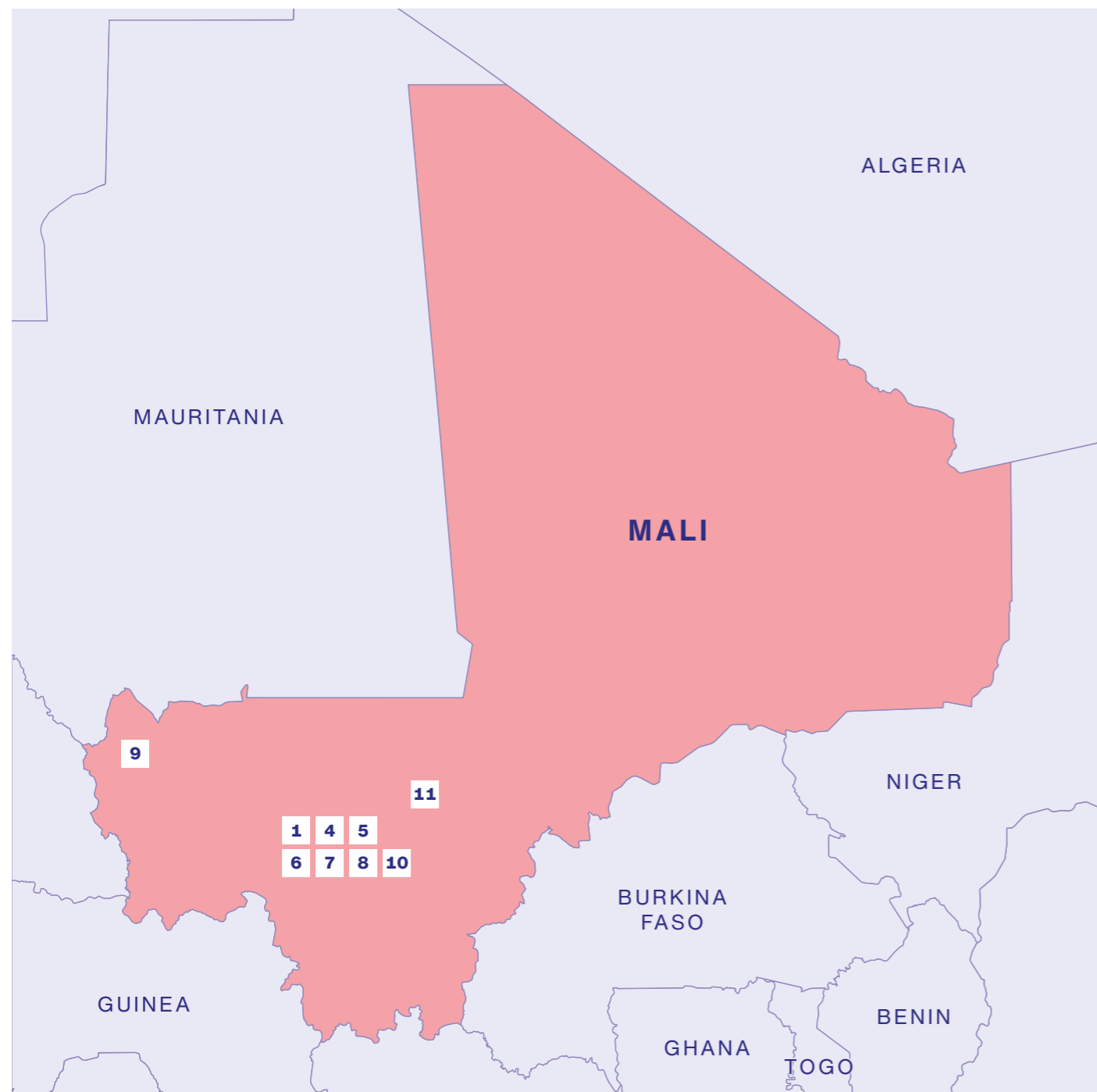
## GUINEA



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Conakry	Training workshop	Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO) and the International trade centre for development (CECIDE)	2016	1 day	Training workshop on migration issues: defining migration concepts, emigration and immigration; examining migration issues and challenges in Guinean society	Journalists from rural radio stations (8)
2	Conakry	Training workshop	IOM	2016	1 day	Training workshop on migration issues	Journalists from national radio stations (9)
3	Niamey	Training workshop	Fondation Hirondelle	2016		Production of reports on the migrant situation in Agadez	Professional journalists
4	Niamey and Agadez	Training workshop and support for the production of content					
5	Conakry and 7 administrative regions in the country	Training workshop and support for production and promotion	NGO F2DHG (funding from the IOM)	2018		Role of women to curb irregular immigration	Women journalists and activists (30)
6	Conakry	Training workshop	IOM	2018	2 days	"Media and Migration" theme	Journalists
7	Mamou	Training workshop	IOM	2018	3 days	Migration theme: "facilitating the coverage of accounts by young returning migrants settled in their neighbourhood of origin"	Journalists from rural radio stations in Guinea (40)
8	Coléah	Training workshop	UNESCO (funding from the Italian agency for cooperation and development - AICS)	2019	2 days	Irregular migration	Journalists (30)
9	Coyah-Kountia	Initial training	IOM and UNESCO in collaboration with ISIC	2019-2020	6 months	Migration policies and cooperation, the evolution of migration flows in Africa, managing migration, communication for development and raising awareness and research methods	Students in journalism (24) including 10 women

	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
10	Guinea	Support for production and promotion	Guinean Women Journalists Organisation (AFJG) with UNESCO support	2020		"Yaguine and Fodé" award on human trafficking	Journalists and bloggers
11	Conakry	Training workshop	UNESCO	2020	2 days	The various forms of migration	Journalists and show hosts from rural radio stations (30)
12	Nzerekore	Training workshop	IOM	2021			Journalists (10)
13	Guinea	Master class	IOM	2021		Master class with an international journalist from the French newspaper "Le Monde" on the question of migration	OSCs and media stakeholders
14	Guinea	Investigation	ENABEL	2021		Investigation into knowledge of migration issues in a sample of 500 young people	Young people from Guinea
15	Guinea	2nd edition of the Yaguine and Fodé migration Award	Guinean Women Journalists Organisation (AFJG) with UNESCO funding	2021	1 month and 2 weeks	The impact of Covid-19 on migration, legal migration routes and human trafficking	Radio, TV, online press with bloggers and the printed press Four (4) award-winners including two (2) women out of 19 news reports: Haoulataou Sow (Radio), Mamadou Kaly Sow (TV) and Mamadou Alimou Diop (online press) and Rabiataou Diallo (blog)

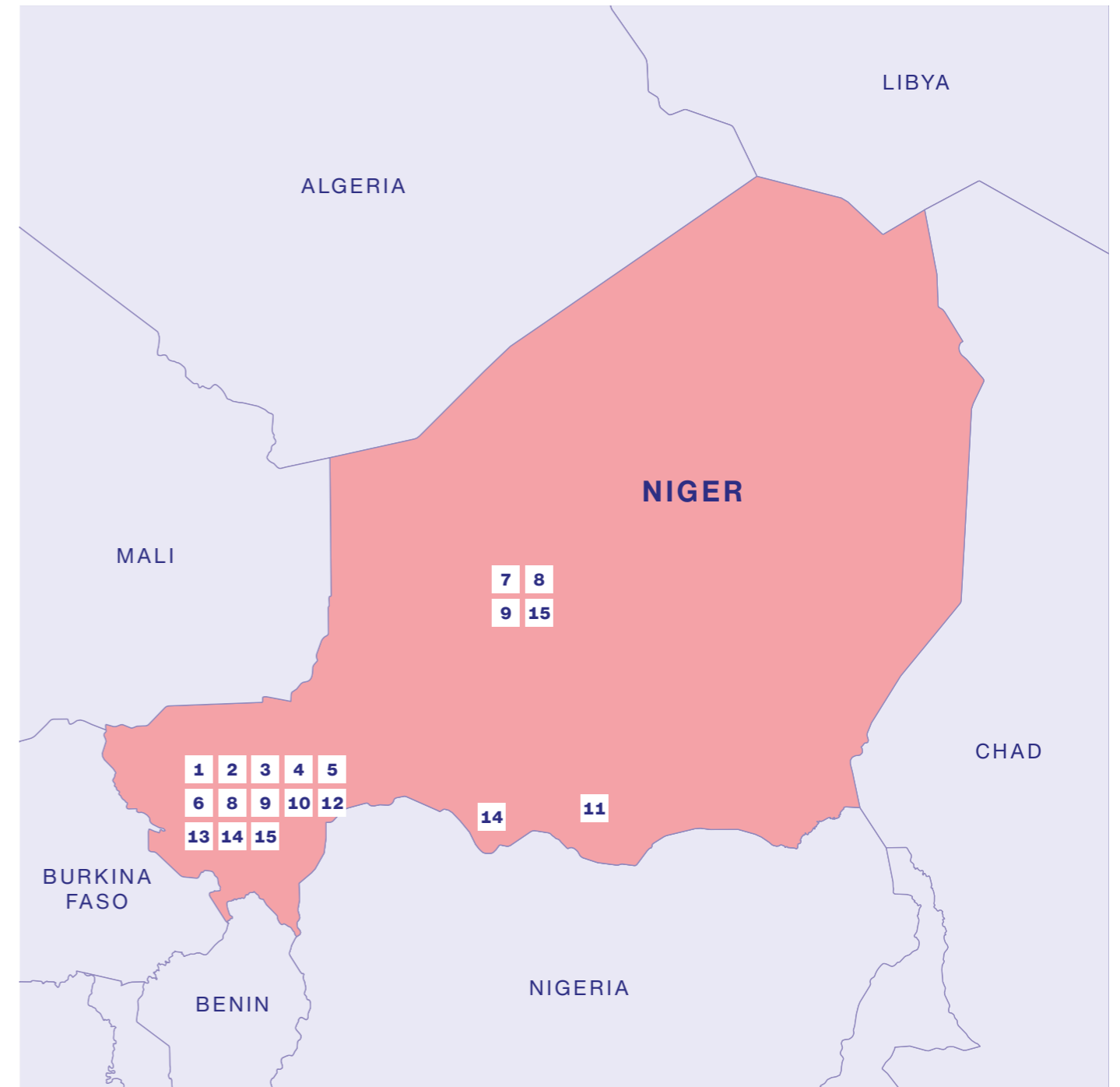
## MALI



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Bamako	2 training workshops	Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO) with Panos Institute Paris (EU with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation)	October 2012 and June 2013	4 days	Investigative journalism techniques for the project "No ID, no clichés: better information on migration (MIMIG)" Course title: Encouraging the objective coverage of migration	October 2012: 11 journalists from four countries (France, Mali, Morocco and Tunisia), specialising in the printed press, radio and TV  June 2013: 11 journalists from three countries (Algeria, Spain and Mali)
2	Niamey	Training workshop	Fondation Hirondelle	2016		Production of reports on the migrant situation in Agadez	Professional journalists
3	Agadez						
4	Bamako	Training workshop	West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR)	2018	2 days	Professional production techniques to prevent irregular migration	Radio journalists
5	Banankoro (a suburb of Bamako)	Training workshop	UNESCO (with the Italian agency for cooperation and development - AICS)	2019	3 days	Migration, initiation into investigative journalism, freedom of movement for people in ECOWAS member states	Around 20 participants, mainly journalists.
6	Bamako	Training workshop	UNESCO (with the Italian agency for cooperation and development - AICS)	2019	3 days	Reporting techniques in conflict zones, migrant rights	Journalists and show hosts from rural radio stations (30)
7	Bamako	Training workshop	AFPM (Organisation of women journalists in Mali) with the Ministry of Malian Expatriates	2019	1 day	Migration concepts and current issues	Around 40 journalists
8	Bamako	Training workshop	Organisation of women journalists in Mali (AFPM) in partnership with the Ministry of Malian Expatriates	2020	1 day	Migration concepts and current issues (tying in with awareness-raising as to irregular migration and promotion of free movement within ECOWAS member states)	Journalists and radio show hosts
9	Kayes	Training workshop	UNESCO / and the Italian agency for cooperation and development	2021	4 days	Better covering migration themes / producing top-quality content for radio	Around 30 journalists / show hosts from community radio stations

	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
10	Bamako	Training workshop	Ministry of Malian Expatriates	2021	3 days	Capacity building for the media on irregular migration: links between migration, development and freedom of movement for people and goods in ECOWAS member states	Journalists, radio show hosts, stakeholders in civil society. Around 60 participants.
11	Ségou	Workshop for the development of an information kit	UNESCO, Group Arc-en-ciel and the Malian press and advertisement agency	2021	2 days	Providing journalists with tools to cover migration issues in the media better	Around 20 journalists

**NIGERIA**



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Niamey	Awareness-raising workshop	IOM, NGO Migration and Development, IFTIC, with support from the Ministry of Communication in charge of Relations with Institutions	2015	5 days	Providing communicators with tools and building their capacity regarding migration issues - project "Supporting safe, well-informed migration in Niger"	Professional communicators (private and public, and from press, radio and television) (19)
2	Niamey	Conference and initiation in the creation of a blog	IOM	28-May-15	1 day	Irregular migration	Around 20 Nigerien journalists from the radio, TV and printed and online press
3	Niamey	Setting up two networks	Journalists	2015-2018	Indeterminate	Migration issues	Around 20 journalists for both networks, from radio, TV and press outlets
4	Niamey	Training workshop followed by an awareness-raising campaign	ILO.PACTRAD (Support project to combat forced labour and discrimination)	2015	1 month	Migrating women, illicit trafficking of migrants Exploitation of migrant workers	12 journalists working in radio, TV and the press
5	Niamey	Awareness-raising workshop	IOM	2016	1 day	Investigation into knowledge of migration issues in a sample of 500 young people	Journalists
6	Niamey	Awareness-raising workshop for journalists	IPAO, Article 19, IMS and DANIDA	1 Jan. 2017	2 days	Communicating about asylum, refugee and migrant status	Around 30 journalists from radio stations, TV channels and the press
7	Agadez	Training workshop	IOM (funding from the German Federal Foreign Office)	2018	2 days	Media outlets and migration - Community Stabilization Initiatives in Northern Niger (COSINN) project	Journalists (15)

	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
8	Niamey and Agadez	Training followed by a reporting assignment in Agadez	Studio Kalangou and Fondation Hirondelle	28 Aug. 2018	1 week	Asylum, irregular migration and refugee issues	A dozen Malian, Guinean and Nigerien journalists
9	Niamey and Agadez	Communication campaign	NGO Aid for community news (AIC)	28 Dec. 2018	1 day	Irregular migration	Around 40 journalists from radio stations, TV channels and the press
10	Niamey	Training workshop	UNESCO and Panos Institute	2019	3 days	Investigative journalism and migration	Journalists
11	Zinder	Training and media production	APAC, UNESCO and UN Women Niger	2019-2021	12 months		Around 20 journalists from community radio stations
12	Niamey	Support for production and promotion	UNESCO (with support from AICS and ItalyMFA)	2020	2 days	Production of artistic videos on information and migration in Niger	Journalists, experts and musicians
13	Niamey	Training workshop	ILO (with funding from the US Department of Labor (USDOL))	2020	3 days	Forced labour	Journalists (20)
14	Niamey and Maradi	Capacity building for journalists on the coverage of forced labour and fair treatment in connection with the smuggling of migrants	ILO's Bridge Project	Feb 2020 and Oct 2021	45 days	Slavery, fair hiring, forced labour, smuggling of migrants, migrant labour	Around 60 journalists from Niamey, instructors from the school of journalism, and 10 institutional and legal stakeholders working in the chain to repress practices in connection with forced labour and smuggling of migrants
15	Niamey and Agadez	Forum for discussion, training courses and media production	RJSEM, UNESCO and the Italian agency for cooperation and development	2021	6 months	Sharing best practices, training on the theme of migration	30 journalists and six media outlets (radio, TV and press)

## SENEGAL



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Niamey	Awareness-raising workshop	IOM	2016	1 day	Media coverage of migration: for a positive, human approach	Journalists
2	Dakar	Training workshop	IOM	2016		Migration terminology, difference between human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, writing articles on migration	Journalists (11)
3	Dakar	Training workshop	DW Akademie	2017		Developing communication strategies for provide better information about the risks and dangers of irregular migration	Media
4	Bamako	Training workshop	West Africa Democracy Radio (WADR)	2018		Professional production techniques to prevent irregular migration	Radio journalists
5	Marrakesh		Inter Press Service (IPS)	2018	1 day	How to report on global migration issues better, tied in with the GCM conference	Journalists (13)
6	Dakar	Training workshop	Erich Brost Institute	2018	7 days	Journalism in a global context - Challenge of migration	Journalists from the sub-region working for the printed press, television, radio and online press (28)
7	Dakar	Training workshop	IOM / CESTI	2019	3 days	Media coverage of migration	Journalists from private and public media and student journalists (22)
8	Dakar	Training workshop	France Terre d'Asile and partners Terre d'Asile Tunisia, SOS Exclusion and the organisation Donner Pour Sauver (EU funding)	2017-2020	3 + 2 days	Pushing back on human trafficking - RECOLTEHA project to build capacity for CSOs to better push back on human trafficking in Africa.	12 journalists
9	Dakar	Training workshop	West Africa Democracy Radio	2019	2 days	Coverage of irregular migration	Journalists
10	Dakar	Training workshop	UNESCO and Panos Institute West Africa (IPAO)	2019	3 days	Investigative journalism and Forum on the ECOWAS protocol relative to freedom of movement	Journalists (30) from TV, radio, printed and online press (bloggers)
11	Dakar	Training workshop	UNESCO and the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ)	2019		Migration and investigative journalism	Journalists

	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
12	Webinar	Training workshop	UNESCO	2019	1 day	Information, migration and employment challenges for young people in Senegal	Community radios in Dakar and Thies (11 journalists)
13	Rome	Training workshop	IOM in partnership with the Italian organisation Carta di Roma and The Project - Aware Migrants	2020	5 days	Media outlets and Migration	Journalists (12)
14	Webinar	Training workshop	UNESCO	2020	1 day	Migration and employment of young people during the COVID-19 pandemic	Community radios in Dakar and Thies (11 journalists)
15	Dakar	Support for production and promotion	UNESCO and the organisation Africulturban	2020	2 days	Production of artistic videos on information and migration in Senegal	Journalists, migrants and rappers
16	Dakar	Training workshop	France Terre d'Asile and partners Terre d'Asile Tunisia, SOS Exclusion and the organisation Donner Pour Sauver (EU funding)	2017-2020	Several workshops	Pushing back on human trafficking - RECOLTEHA project to build capacity for CSOs to better push back on human trafficking in Africa.	Journalists
17		Award	Journalists' organisation for security and migration in Senegal (AJMS Senegal)			Award for the best reporting on migration (2019 and 2021)	
18	Webinar	Training workshop	IOM and WADR	2021	2 days	Support for the production of radio programmes on migration and employment	Radio journalists
19	Dakar	Training workshop	Caritas and CESTI	2021	3 days	Protection for asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons and migrants	Journalists
20	Dakar	Training workshop	Network Migration Development - REMIDEV	2021	3 days	Documentary research and investigation on migration	20 mainstream media journalists (radio, TV and printed press), community radio stations and online press
21	Kolda	Training workshop	IOM	2021	4 days	Mobile journalism	10 returning migrants

## TOGO





	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Lomé	Training workshop	Terre des Hommes	2015		Protection for children on the move	Media professionals (20)
2	Lomé	Training workshop	RELUTET	2018	2 days	Human trafficking and provisions in the new Penal Code relative to the theme	Journalists (18)
3	Lomé	Training workshop	Press House, French Embassy in Togo	2018	2 days	Pushing back on human trafficking	Journalists (40)
4	Kpalime	Training workshop	IOM	2020	2 days	Pushing back on human trafficking	Journalists, magistrates, criminal police officers and MPs
5	Kpalime	Training workshop	IOM	2021	2 days	Pushing back on human trafficking	Journalists, MPs, criminal police officers and lawyers
6	Lomé	Training workshop	Journalists International Forum for Migration (JIFORM) and the Organisation for African integration (OIA)	2021	2 days	Reassessment of reportage on migration and its impact on the West African economy	Journalists from public and private media outlets (30)
7	Lomé	Training workshop	EU, French Embassy, Expertise France	2022	2 days	Pushing back on the trafficking of Guineans in the Gulf states	Magistrates (20)
8	Kpalime	Training workshop	IOM	2020	3 days	Human trafficking	Journalists, magistrates, criminal police officers and MPs

## REGIONAL

VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR COMPLETION	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
	Award	IOM, RFI and APO Group	2021		Award for journalism on migration in West and Central Africa	
Webinar	Training workshop	UNESCO	2020	2 days	Presenting the benchmark: «Coverage of migration news in West and Central Africa, for a best practices benchmark»	Media outlets in the sub-region
	Award	African Women in Media (AWiM), in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Organization for Migration (IOM)	2020		Reportage on labour migration	African journalists (8 awards)
Webinar	Online training workshop	UNESCO / CENOZO	2021	2 days	Investigative journalism and migration	24 journalists (Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal)

**MADAGASCAR  
& COMOROS**


	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Moroni	Training workshop	IOM, US embassy and United Nations System	2021	3 days	Human trafficking: Standard tools adapted to the context to identify and handle human trafficking cases	3 journalists, training also followed by counselling service providers and the vice squad
2	Gaborone, Botswana	Regional training	SADC (Southern African Development Community)	2016	3 days	Introduction to the concepts of human trafficking, impregnation of missions and agencies such as the IOM, SADC, SARPCCO (Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation) and UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).	30 journalists trained including one from Madagascar.
3	Tananarive	Support for production and promotion	ILO/ Malagasy network of journalists specialising in employment and labour (RJSET)	2019	2 days	Labour migration and fair hiring	12 journalists
4	Tananarive	Awareness-raising workshop	ILO / University of Antananarivo	2019	1 day	Awareness-raising on coverage of labour migration and fair hiring	120 students
5	Mahajanga	Training workshop	ILO / RJSET	2019		Labour migration and fair hiring	50 journalists
6	Mahajanga	Training workshop	Focus Development Association (FDA) in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation (MID) with support from the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)	April 2018 and September 2020	2 days	Statelessness	Journalists and show hosts from radio stations and PR firms
7	Madagascar	SAMM project	ILO, IOM, UNHCR and UNODC	2020-24	4 years	Worker migration, child labour and human trafficking and refugees	Capacity building for authorities, migrants, OSCs and journalists
8	Madagascar / World	REFRAME project	Malagasy Ministry of Employment, Civil Service and Welfare (MTEFPLS), ILO, EU and Malagasy Office to Combat Human Trafficking (BNLTEH)	2018-21	n/a	Capacity building on worker migration, fair hiring and human trafficking	Journalists

## JORDAN



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Amman	Training workshop	CFI	2022	4 days	Covering refugee stories	16 Syrian and Jordanian journalists
2	Amman	Training workshop	International Labour Organisation	2021		FAIRWAY project Awareness raising on discriminatory behaviour towards foreign workers	15 students in journalism
3	Amman	Training workshop with support for production	Jordan Media Institute and Media Frontline	2020	2 days	Production of TV reportage and documentaries on migration	Students in journalism and recent graduates in journalism
4	Amman	Training workshop	Bernard Van Leer Foundation with Jacobs Foundation, Maria Cecilia Souto Vidigal Foundation and Two Lilies Fund	2019	3 days	Covering the Syrian refugee crisis	22 journalists from 16 countries
5	Amman	Training workshop	Project shared by FIJ and ILO	2018	3 days	Improving media coverage of issues pertaining to forced labour and fair hiring	20 journalists
6	Amman	Training workshop on investigative journalism	The Heinrich Böll Foundation in collaboration with Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ)	2018	3 days	Investigation into migrant worker rights	15 journalists from Palestine, Jordan and Arabic-speaking journalists residing in Jordan
7	Amman	Orientation meeting	International Labour Organisation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	2018	1 day	FAIRWAY project - Labour migration and immigrants' rights	Jordanian chief editors and press agency directors

## LIBAN



	VENUE	TYPE OF INITIATIVE	PRINCIPAL / PARTNER	YEAR	DURATION	SUBJECT COVERED	TARGET AUDIENCE
1	Webinar	Workshop	CFI	2021	2 days	Covering refugee stories	Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian journalists
2	Tripoli-Lebanon	Brainstorming workshop	Academie alternative + Lebanon Support	2020	2½ days	New thinking on exile and migration	Journalists and writers
3	Berlin Lyon	Workshop for journalists	Babob (Germany)	2018	3 steps in the countries mentioned	Cultural diversity and social justice	Journalists aged 18 to 30
4	Zahlé / Lebanon		Discussion (France)				
5			Mashallah Team (Lebanon)				
6	Amman	Sharing their experiences and discussing the development of new tools to help media workers	International Federation of Journalists (FIJ) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO)	2018	3 days	Improving media coverage of issues pertaining to forced labour and fair hiring	20 journalists
7	Beirut	Training	ILO+ Ethical Journalism Network	2018	6 months	Coverage of labour migration	12 novice journalists working in Lebanon, Jordan and Gulf countries
8	Amman	Debate and exchanging ideas	ILO	2016	1 day	Coverage of labour migration	25 journalists from Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon

Canal France International, the French Media Development Agency, works to foster media development all over the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab world and the European Union's neighbourhood. We support media players to foster dialogue between local authorities and citizens, to ensure that people gain the best possible access to information. Core topics include fighting misinformation, promoting gender equality, protecting the environment and promoting democracy and civic engagement. CFI operates under the umbrella of the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and is a subsidiary of the group France Médias Monde.