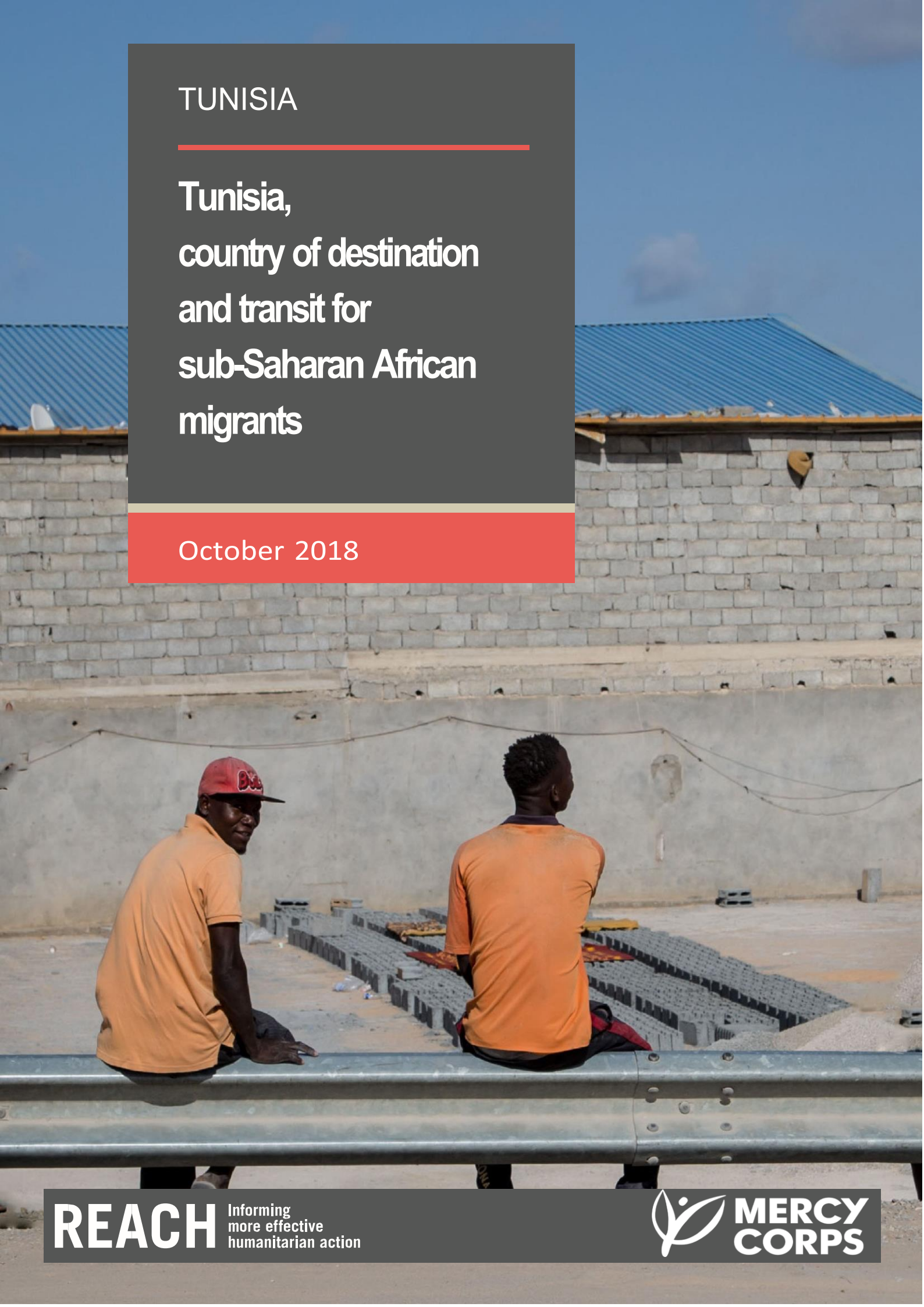


TUNISIA

Tunisia,
country of destination
and transit for
sub-Saharan African
migrants

October 2018

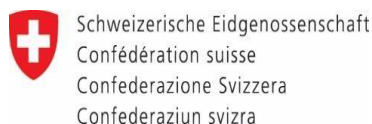


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The **Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi)** contributed to this assessment by providing data collected in Tunisia between September and October 2017 and analysed by REACH. Whenever applicable to the research questions for this assessment, findings from data collected by 4Mi were compared and triangulated with findings emerging from data collected by REACH.



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About REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations - ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives - and the UN Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH's mission is to strengthen evidence-based decision making by aid actors through efficient data collection, management and analysis before, during and after an emergency. By doing so, REACH contributes to ensuring that communities affected by emergencies receive the support they need. All REACH activities are conducted in support to and within the framework of inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org.

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About Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a leading global humanitarian agency saving and improving lives in the world's toughest places. With a network of experienced professionals in more than 40 countries, we partner with local communities to put bold ideas into action to help people recover, overcome hardship and build better lives. Now and for the future.

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SUMMARY

Since the early 2000s the number of sub-Saharan migrants¹ in Tunisia has been increasing. Official statistics show that between 2004 and 2014 the number of non-Tunisian nationals residing in Tunisia increased by 66%, passing from 35,192 to 53,490 individuals.²³ This excludes, however, the more than 10,000 sub-Saharan migrants in an irregular situation estimated to be living in the country,⁴ on whom no reliable and up-to-date statistics are available. Furthermore, between 2016 and 2017 the number of sub-Saharan nationals who were apprehended off the Tunisian coast in an attempt to reach Europe by boat rose from 71 to 271 individuals.⁵ While figures on sub-Saharan African apprehensions have remained low overall, the question has arisen whether Tunisia is becoming an increasingly popular destination and transit country for sub-Saharan migrants in the North African region, especially considering the recent developments in Libya⁶ and the increase in irregular departures of sub-Saharan and Tunisian migrants to Europe.⁷

In response to the lack of information on sub-Saharan African migration to Tunisia and its most recent dynamics, REACH and Mercy Corps conducted the study 'Tunisia, country of transit and destination for sub-Saharan African migrants'. Data collection activities took place from 9 August to 2 September 2018 in Tunis, Sfax and Medenine, known for being the three main migration hubs in Tunisia for sub-Saharan migrants. The report also contains reference to data collected by the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in 2017 in Tunisia and analysed by REACH. The study aims to analyse the following dimensions of sub-Saharan migration to Tunisia: (1) migration drivers, (2) routes, (3) protection risks faced while en route and (4) living conditions in Tunisia, as well as (5) migratory intentions and (6) mobility to and from Tunisia's neighbouring countries of sub-Saharan African migrants.

With the aim to shed light on these dynamics, the present study, based on 62 in-depth qualitative individual interviews with male and female sub-Saharan migrants, 18 key informant interviews with researchers, NGO and IGO staff and 7 focus group discussions with male and female sub-Saharan migrants in Tunis, Sfax and Medenine found that:

What are the drivers of sub-Saharan African migrants' decisions to go to Tunisia?

- **Respondents' reasons to leave their country of origin were multi-faceted and overlapping.** Factors that shaped the decision to leave were mostly associated with the perception of not being able to realise their objectives back home, be it in terms of sustainable livelihoods, higher education or other aspirations. For one in ten respondents, studying or working in Tunisia was also perceived as facilitating future onward movement, by providing the right skillset or financial means, which would increase their chances of being granted a visa for other countries.
- **Institutional factors, such as visa exemptions, made Tunisia an accessible destination, while information about the living conditions there, channeled through personal networks, shaped respondents' image of Tunisia as an attractive destination.** Information received prior to departure had a strong impact on migrants' decision-making to come to Tunisia, even though information shared reportedly often did not correspond to the situation respondents found once in Tunisia.
- **Most respondents interviewed aimed to reach Tunisia when they left home, with only a few coming to Tunisia with the intention to transit to Europe or elsewhere in the region.** Those who came to Tunisia with the intention to transit to Europe had either: (1) previously transited through Libya to reach Europe from there and then crossed into Tunisia, (2) had tried to reach Libya from Tunisia to then leave via boat to Italy but did not succeed, or (3) intended to apply for a European visa from Tunisia.

¹ For the purposes of this study, the term 'migrant' embraces all profiles of people in 'mixed migration' flows. 'Mixed migration' is defined as: 'complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants'. Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow.

² National Institute of Statistics, Results of the national census 2014, accessible [here](#).

³ These figures refer to foreign nationals officially residing in Tunisia. The Tunisian National Institute of Statistics found that more than half of them originate from North African countries.

⁴ Natter, K., [Revolution and Political Transition in Tunisia: A Migration Game Changer?](#), Migration Policy Institute, 2015.

⁵ Forum Tunisien des Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES), [Rapport Annuel : Emigration non réglementaire depuis la Tunisie](#), 2017.

⁶ Starting from the second half of 2017, agreements taken by the EU, its member states and the Libyan government resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of migrants' departures from Libya to Europe.⁶

⁷ FTDES, [Rapport Annuel : Emigration non réglementaire depuis la Tunisie](#), 2017.

What are the migration routes that sub-Saharan African migrants take to reach Tunisia?

- **Sub-Saharan migrants interviewed used three main routes to reach Tunisia from their countries of origin.** The first, most commonly used, was taking a direct flight from the country of origin to Tunisia, facilitated by the visa free entry schemes many nationals of sub-Saharan African countries can take advantage of to reach Tunisia. The second, less frequently used route, consisted in more fragmented journeys, which entailed crossing between one and two countries before flying to Tunisia. The third route entailed crossing between three and four countries before entering Tunisia over land from Libya.
- **Respondents who had first intended to go to countries other than Tunisia tended to have more fragmented and longer journeys,** as reported by six out of eight respondents. These routes differed between each individual, with journeys lasting between one month and two years.

What are the most common protection risks that sub-Saharan African migrants face en route to Tunisia?

- **Many respondents reported having been victim or knowing about scams, where individuals, still in their countries of origin, were promised jobs or educational opportunities in Tunisia** to then arrive in the country and realise that they had been misled, suffering financial losses, poor living conditions and exploitative forms of employment, once in Tunisia.
- **Human trafficking of sub-Saharan migrants, women in particular, was frequently reported by key informants.** In these cases, women were promised jobs with good salaries in Tunisia, but, once arrived, would find their passport confiscated and forced to work for very little pay. They would often be unable to leave their employer's house, with frequent exposure to verbal, physical and, in some instances, sexual abuse.
- **Sub-Saharan migrants interviewed who intended to reach Europe when they left their country of origin tended to have the most fragmented and dangerous journeys.** In these cases, respondents reported instances of robbery, beatings, arbitrary detention and kidnapping, most of which occurred in Libya, but also in other neighbouring countries migrants transited through.

What are the challenges that sub-Saharan African migrants face in Tunisia?

- **While many sub-Saharan nationals can enter Tunisia with ease thanks to free short-term tourist visa facilitations, respondents reported that the possibility to remain in the country legally is much more limited.** As such, the most reported challenge for sub-Saharan migrants interviewed in Tunisia was access to legal documentation and the inability to legally stay in the country in the longer term.
- **Without legal permit to reside in the country, respondents mostly worked irregularly in the informal sector and were extremely vulnerable to exploitation at the hands of their employers. In this regard, their irregular status made it particularly difficult for them to have recourse to the law and enforce their rights.** Respondents uniformly reported that employers expected them to work excessive hours, often more than 12 hours a day, for very little pay. Some also reported being expected to work harder and do more physically straining jobs for less money than their Tunisian co-workers. Overall, respondents reported earning between 200 and a maximum of 400 Tunisian Dinar (TND)⁸ each month.
- **Other most reported challenges related to respondents' access to healthcare and housing, as well as respondents' strained relations with the host community, with sub-Saharan migrants reportedly being frequent victims of incidents affecting their safety and security.**

What are the migratory intentions of sub-Saharan migrants living in Tunisia?

- **Most respondents reported that the difficulties they faced in Tunisia, with regards to access to documentation, decent work⁹ and relations with the host community, implied that they did not see themselves build a future in the country in the longer term.** When asked whether they would recommend Tunisia as a destination to friends and family in their countries of origin, respondents reportedly felt that Tunisia could be an interesting destination for education or tourism only.

⁸ As of 28 September 2018, one United States Dollar (USD) equaled 2.8 Tunisian Dinars (TND). Hence, 200 to 400 TND corresponded to 71.43 to 142.85 USD. For more information, please see the website of the [Tunisian Central Bank](#). Last accessed: 01 October 2018.

⁹ According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), decent work includes 'opportunities for work that are productive and deliver a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.'

- The majority of respondents reported **intending to stay in Tunisia for the time being, also because they reported being unable to pay the penalties, the fees applied by the state for each week of illegal overstay in the country. As these are due at the moment of leaving Tunisia, this made legal departure from Tunisia impossible for many.** As a result, respondents reported either relying on external help to pay for the fees or considering to travel irregularly to Libya or via boat to Europe.
- **Among respondents who expressed the intention to leave within 12 months, the majority reported wanting to return to their country of origin.** Only a few respondents reportedly aimed to go to Europe, considering both regular and irregular routes to the continent.

How has Tunisia's role as a country of destination and transit (to Europe, to its neighbouring countries or back to migrants' countries of origin) been evolving in relation to recent events in the region since 2017?

Situated between North Africa and Europe, sub-Saharan mobility to Tunisia has to be analysed in the wider regional context.

- **Along the Tunisian-Libyan border, more irregular land crossings of sub-Saharan migrants occur from Libya to Tunisia, compared to from Tunisia to Libya.** While views among key informants differed regarding a possible increase in irregular land crossings from Libya to Tunisia, some reported a slight increase since 2017, a view confirmed by sub-Saharan migrant respondents. A deeper understanding of this phenomenon requires, however, further investigation.
- **With regards to sub-Saharan migration between Tunisia and Algeria or Tunisia and Morocco,** sub-Saharan migrants and key informants both reported that such movement was negligible with limited indication of this changing in the near future.
- **Only few respondents reported knowing people who crossed from Tunisia to Europe via boat. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, figures are likely to be higher. In this regard,** while not necessarily an indication of intentions to depart, **levels of information among respondents about the journey modalities and costs of the irregular boat trip from Tunisia to Europe appeared to be quite detailed.**
- When asked about the irregular boat journey to Europe, the inability for sub-Saharans to pay off penalties for overstay in Tunisia was reported by sub-Saharan workers as the primary reason motivating their acquaintances' irregular journeys via boat to Europe.

Map: Tunisia and its neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean region



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List of Acronyms

AVRR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
CFA	Communauté Financière d'Afrique (African Financial Community)
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
II	Individual Interview
IGO	International Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
LYD	Libyan Dinar
MDM	Médecins Du Monde
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
TND	Tunisian Dinar
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally a country of emigration, Tunisia has seen an increasing inflow of migrants¹⁰ of sub-Saharan origin transiting through or settling in the country.¹¹ Official statistics show that between 2004 and 2014 the number of non-Tunisian nationals residing in Tunisia increased by 66%, passing from 35,192 to 53,490 individuals.¹² This excludes, however, the more than 10,000 sub-Saharan migrants in an irregular situation estimated to be living in the country,¹³ on whom no reliable and up-to-date statistics are available. Due to this gap, it is hard to keep track of any significant variations in mobility patterns and profiles of sub-Saharan migration in Tunisia. In 2017, however, the number of sub-Saharan nationals who were apprehended off the Tunisian coast in an attempt to reach Europe by boat rose from 71 to 271 cases, a three-fold increase compared to the year before.¹⁴ While numbers of sub-Saharan African migrants' apprehensions remained low overall, the question has arisen whether Tunisia may become an increasingly popular destination and transit country for sub-Saharan migrants in the North African region, especially considering the recent developments in Libya and the increase in irregular departures of sub-Saharan and Tunisian migrants to Europe.¹⁵

From the second half of 2017 a few events are likely to have - directly or indirectly - affected Tunisia's migratory dynamics. First of all, European Union (EU) Member States scaled up efforts to control Libyan borders, making it more difficult for migrants to reach Europe from Libya.¹⁶ Secondly, the already harsh living conditions for migrants living in Libya dramatically deteriorated.¹⁷ Thirdly, Algeria increased deportations of sub-Saharan African migrants at the border to Niger.¹⁸ It is not clear whether these phenomena had an impact on the trajectories taken by migrants to reach Europe. However, in the past year, sea arrivals from Libya to Italy decreased, against a new surge in arrivals from Tunisia - mostly of Tunisians - to Italy, and an even higher number of arrivals in Spain who had transited through Algeria and Morocco.

Besides these developments, no information is currently available to support any correlations between the dynamics in Tunisia's neighbouring countries and the increased migration inflows to Tunisia, nor on possible changes in the profiles of migrants arriving to Tunisia. Information about how Tunisia's role as a transit and destination country has evolved in the past decades is sparse and often contradictory. A more nuanced understanding of sub-Saharan migrants' drivers to and conditions in the country, the challenges they face in accessing services and the risks they might face during their stay is, therefore, needed to support humanitarian and migration-related stakeholders in formulating tailored and needs-based responses.

In response to these information gaps, REACH and Mercy Corps conducted the study 'Tunisia, country of transit and destination for sub-Saharan African migrants'. Data collection took place from 9 August to 2 September 2018 in Tunis, Sfax and Medenine, known for being the three main migration hubs in Tunisia for sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia. The study aims to analyse the following dimensions of sub-Saharan migration to Tunisia: the (1) drivers, (2) routes, (3) protection risks faced while en route and (4) living conditions in Tunisia, (5) migratory intentions and (6) mobility to and from Tunisia's neighbouring countries of sub-Saharan African migrants.

This report is structured in line with the research questions, with one chapter assigned to each research question, ordered chronologically.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this study, the term 'migrant' embraces all profiles of people involved in 'mixed migration' flows. 'Mixed migration' is defined as: 'complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants'. Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow.

¹¹ Boubakri H. and Mazzella S., [La Tunisie entre transit et immigration : politiques migratoires et conditions d'accueil des migrants africains à Tunis](#), Autrepart, 2005/4 (n° 36)

¹² Observatoire National de la Migration, [Statistiques](#), 2016, accessed on 14 June 2018.

¹³ Natter K., [Revolution and Political Transition in Tunisia: A Migration Game Changer?](#), Migration Policy Institute, 2015.

¹⁴ FTDES, [Rapport Annuel : Emigration non réglementaire depuis la Tunisie](#), 2015.

¹⁵ FTDES, [Rapport Annuel : Emigration non réglementaire depuis la Tunisie](#), 2017.

¹⁶ Amnesty International, [Libya's dark web of collusion: abuses against Europe-bound refugees and migrants, 2017](#).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Del Pistoia, D., [Why Algeria is emptying itself of African migrant workers](#), Refugees Deeply, 10 July 2018.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study used qualitative research methods to explore the migratory profile of Tunisia as a transit and destination country for sub-Saharan African migrants. The following research questions underpinned this assessment:

- **RQ 1:** What are the drivers of sub-Saharan African migrants' decisions to go to Tunisia?
- **RQ 2:** What are the migration routes that sub-Saharan African migrants take to reach Tunisia?
- **RQ 3:** What are the most common protection risks that sub-Saharan African migrants face *en route* to Tunisia?
- **RQ 4:** What are the challenges that sub-Saharan African migrants face in Tunisia? (Both for those who chose Tunisia as their intended destination and those who arrived in Tunisia with the intention to transit but stayed)
- **RQ 5:** What are the migratory intentions of sub-Saharan migrants living in Tunisia?
- **RQ 6:** How has Tunisia's role as a country of destination and transit (to Europe, to its neighbouring countries or back to migrants' countries of origin) been evolving in relation to recent events in the region since 2017?

This assessment builds on theories that recognise migrants' ability to make decisions about where and how to reach their destination at departure and throughout the whole migration process. This approach is therefore preferred to theoretical frameworks considering migrants as perfectly rational agents, or passive actors pushed and pulled by systemic factors.¹⁹ The research design and development of data collection tools and key indicators draws from the migration theories outlined below.

RQ1: Explaining why migrants decide to go to Tunisia

Drivers are defined by Van Hear, Bakewell and Long as 'the factors which get migration going and keep it going once begun'.²⁰ Four different levels of factors initiate and perpetuate migration.²¹

- 1) **Predisposing factors:** structural factors that contribute to make a given area as more prone to emigration. These include economic, political, environmental systemic imbalances among countries of origin and destination which derive from global processes such as globalisation, urbanisation, etc.
- 2) **Proximate factors,** which relate to more direct manifestations of the structural factors above (for example an economic downturn in the country of origin or increased economic opportunities in the country of destination);
- 3) **Precipitating factors:** those that directly affect individual or household decisions to migrate or stay (for example: a natural disaster, a factory closing with immediate employment consequences on the individual or the household, the persecution suffered by a prospective migrant or conflict escalation);
- 4) **Mediating factors:** those that facilitate, consolidate or undermine migration processes (migration or other policies, presence of infrastructure, migration industry, etc.)

All of these factors are interlinked and can enable or constrain people's ability to make decisions. How people react to this set of factors is the expression of their (1) **aspirations** to leave or stay put, and their (2) **capabilities**, the means and resources available to them to put their aspirations in practice. The way these are shaped depends both on individual, cultural and social factors.²²

RQ2: Tracing sub-Saharan migration routes to Tunisia

Migrants' journeys are rarely a linear movement between origin and destination. According to Schapedonk,²³ the trajectories migrants take are affected by three elements:

- 1) **Motivation:** migrants' aspirations, dreams and wishes regardless of the voluntary or 'forced' nature of their migration;
- 2) **Facilitation:** the connections and mechanisms enabling, facilitating or constraining migrants' journeys;

¹⁹ De Haas, H., Migration and development: a theoretical perspective, *International Migration Review*, 44(1), 2010.

²⁰ Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O. and Long, K., [Drivers of migration](#), Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme, 2012.

²¹ Van Hear, N., *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities*. London: UCL Press, 1998.

²² Carling, J. and Collins, F., [Aspiration, desire and drivers of migration](#), *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(6), 2018.

²³ Schapedonk, J., [Turbulent Trajectories: African Migrants on Their Way to the European Union](#), *Societies* 2, 2012.

- 3) **Velocity:** the expected or unexpected presence of moments of mobility and immobility depending on the resources, means of transportation and encounters available to migrants along the journey.

RQ3: Assessing the protection risks of migrants en route to Tunisia

According to Michael Collyer, increasingly restrictive migration policies result in more dangerous, longer and more fragmented migrant journeys.²⁴ The protection concerns migrants might have faced along one segment of their trajectory, especially if undocumented, can potentially restrain possible future destinations and affect the choice of the means of transportation due, for example, to reduced economic resources or psychological distress induced in the migration process.

This study adopts the definition of 'protection' provided by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which refers to: *'all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.'*²⁵ More specifically, this study looks into the following list of factors causing protection needs developed by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP):²⁶

- 1) Deliberate killing, wounding, displacement, destitution and disappearance.
- 2) Sexual violence and rape.
- 3) Torture and inhuman or degrading treatment.
- 4) Dispossession of assets by theft and destruction.
- 5) The misappropriation of land and violations of land rights.
- 6) Deliberate discrimination and deprivation of health, education, property rights, access to water and economic opportunity.
- 7) Violence and exploitation within the affected community.
- 8) Forced recruitment of children, prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking, abduction and slavery.
- 9) Forced or accidental family separation.
- 10) Arbitrary restrictions on movement, including forced return, punitive curfews or roadblocks which prevent access to fields, markets, jobs, family, friends and social services.
- 11) Thirst, hunger, disease and reproductive health crises caused by the deliberate destruction of services or the denial of livelihoods.
- 12) Restrictions on political participation, freedom of association and religious freedom.
- 13) The loss or theft of personal documentation that gives proof of identity, ownership and citizen's rights.
- 14) Attacks against civilians and the spread of landmines.

RQ4: Understanding migrants' challenges in Tunisia

This research question aims to explore the self-reported challenges met by respondents while in Tunisia. The definition of questions and indicators was, however, guided by the core rights identified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as applicable to all migrants, including those in an irregular situation, as listed below:

- 1) the right to health;
- 2) the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing, water and sanitation, and food;
- 3) the right to education;
- 4) the right to work and the right to just and favourable conditions of work.

A review of secondary sources about the most reported challenges faced by migrants in Tunisia allowed to complement the list above with challenges related to: (1) access to documentation and irregular migratory status and (2) interaction with the host community.²⁷

²⁴ Collyer, M., [In-Between Places: Trans-Saharan Transit Migrants in Morocco and the Fragmented Journey to Europe](#), 2007.

²⁵ IASC Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Protection Policy 1999. The definition was originally adopted by participants in a Workshop on Protection organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1999.

²⁶ Slim H. and Bonwick A., [An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies](#), Overseas Development Institute, 2005.

²⁷ See for example: Limousin, F., [Portraits de migrants, 2017](#), Terre d'Asile Tunisie and Boubakri H. and Mazzella, S., [La Tunisie entre transit et immigration: politiques migratoires et conditions d'accueil des migrants africains à Tunis](#), Autrepart, 2005/4 (n° 36), 2005.

RQ5: Assessing the migratory intentions of sub-Saharan African migrants in Tunisia

According to Jørgen Carling, migratory intentions²⁸ result from migrants' individual preferences and expectations of opportunities elsewhere, which are in turn mediated by the social, cultural and institutional environment in which migrants are immersed.²⁹

In the specific context of transit between two destinations, Wissink, Duvell and Eerdewijk³⁰ identified three main factors that shape migrants' intentions:

- 1) *local networks*, intended as the connections that sub-Saharan migrants can have in Tunisia;
- 2) *transnational networks*, or the links that sub-Saharan migrants have in countries of origin or in third countries other than Tunisia;
- 3) *institutional contexts*, which refer to the policies, services and factors affecting migrants' living conditions in Tunisia.

Migrants' intentions while in transit can be affected by each of these factors or by the combination of more than one. Questions on the migratory intentions of sub-Saharan African migrants from Tunisia build on the three indicators above.

RQ6: Investigating how migration policies in neighbouring countries have affected international mobility to, from and through Tunisia since 2017

Migration scholar Hein de Haas et al.³¹ argue that policies can have four types of unintended effects on international mobility:

- 1) *spatial substitution* or a change in migrants' trajectories based on perceived better opportunities in other geographical areas;
- 2) *categorical substitution*, when it becomes too difficult to use a given migration pathway and migrants reorient towards another channel (regular or irregular);
- 3) *inter-temporal substitution* or the 'now or never' emigration, triggered by migrants' expectations of future tightening of migration policies;
- 4) *reverse flow substitution*, when stricter migration policies push migrants into permanent settlement and dissuade them from returning home.

In relation to the political instability and crackdown on migration in neighbouring countries, this research question particularly aims to explore to what extent effects (1) and (3) - spatial and inter-temporal substitution – manifested in Tunisia since the second half of 2017.

²⁸ Carling's theoretical contribution refers to 'aspirations' as people's desires or wishes to migrate. For the purposes of this assessment, the word "intention" was preferred to avoid confusion among different migration theories illustrated in the "analytical framework" section.

²⁹ Carling, J. and Collins, F., [Aspiration, desire and drivers of migration](#), Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44(6), 2018.

³⁰ Duvell, F., Wissink, M. and van Eerdewijk, A., [Dynamic Migration Intentions and the Impact of Socio-Institutional Environments: The Case of a Transit Hub in Turkey](#), Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 39(7), 2013.

³¹ De Haas et al., [International Migration Trends, determinants and policy effects](#), IMI Working Paper Series no. 142, 2018.

METHODOLOGY

This assessment used a **qualitative approach** to explore issues related to the movement of sub-Saharan African migrants to Tunisia on whom very limited and no up-to-date information is available. Research design was informed by existing migration theories and concepts outlined in the previous section.

Population of interest

This assessment targeted sub-Saharan African adult³² migrants who arrived regularly or irregularly to Tunisia within or before 12 months of data collection (July 2018).

Secondary data review

A secondary data review (SDR) was carried out to identify available information on the evolution of Tunisia's migration profile, including in relation to its neighbouring countries. In particular, the SDR aimed to increase understanding of the demographic and socio-economic profiles of sub-Saharan African migrants living in Tunisia, the routes migrants take to reach and to leave Tunisia, their living conditions in the country, and findings on the departures of sub-Saharan African migrants from Tunisia to Europe and to neighbouring countries. The SDR showed that limited and often outdated information was available on these topics. Nevertheless, it contributed to informing the definition of the research questions and of the overall methodology, the indicators and the development of the data collection tools. This was further fine-tuned based on the information received from key informants. Secondary data was also used to contextualise findings from data collection. The matrix of the secondary sources consulted is attached as an annex to this report.

Primary data collection

Data collection took place from 9 August to 2 September 2018. It was initially established that data collection would take place in the metropolitan areas of the Greater Tunis and Sfax, known as the main migration hubs in the country. A smaller data collection team was then deployed at a later stage of data collection in the governorate of Medenine based on preliminary findings collected in the primary data collection sites.

These were identified on the basis of information from secondary sources and key informant (KI) interviews. Interviews with KIs contextually also provided channels to access directly or activate further networks of contacts that could facilitate access to the target population in data collection sites such as universities, informal sites, reception facilities and urban centres.

Qualitative data was collected through:

- 1) **18 semi-structured in-depth interviews with male and female KIs, including:** researchers and practitioners in the field of migration in Tunisia, representatives of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local and national authorities, employers and community leaders, with the aim to identify broader changes in trends in sub-Saharan African migration to and through Tunisia, define research questions, as well as identify locations with significant presence of the target population.
- 2) **62 in-depth semi-structured individual interviews with male and female sub-Saharan migrants (IIs),** aiming to explore in-depth individuals' stories and experiences.
- 3) **7 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 32 male and female sub-Saharan migrants,** which aimed to explore common trends and dynamics.

Sampling strategy

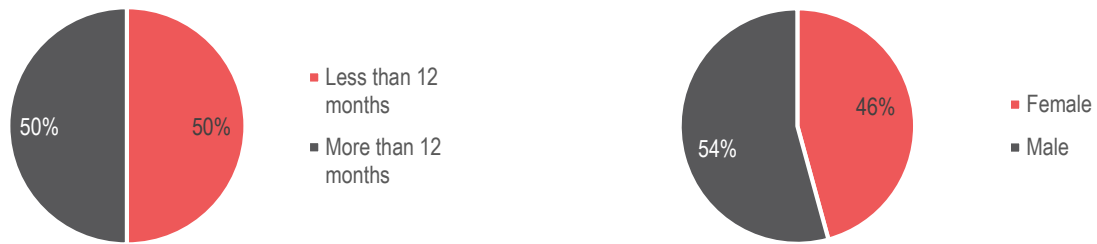
FGD participants and respondents to individual interviews were sampled purposively on the basis of their sub-Saharan African origin,³³ gender and time of arrival in Tunisia. FGD participants were also sampled purposively on the basis of their occupation. This allowed to compare the experience of respondents who spent a short time (up to

³² Aged 18 years old or more.

³³ Disaggregated data on the presence of sub-Saharan African nationals in Tunisia are sparse and difficult to access. However, the multiple sources consulted for the SDR suggest a significant presence of people coming from West and Central Africa, mostly from: Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Guinea. Some migrants from East Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somali and Sudan) are also reportedly living in the country, but are a minority.

12 months) in Tunisia, and are more likely to be in transit, or a longer time (12 months and more), possibly to work or study in the country.

Figure 1: Breakdown of FGD participants and respondents to individual interviews, by time of arrival and gender

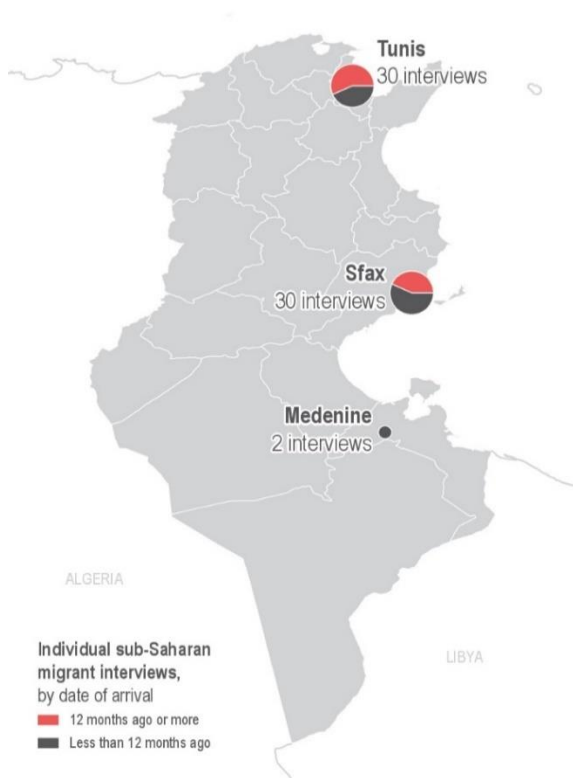


Total: 32 FGD participants and 62 II respondents.

Individual interview sub-Saharan migrant respondents' profiles

According to secondary literature, most sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia are concentrated in the urban hubs of Tunis, Sfax and Sousse, as well as in migration transit points across the country, including Medenine in the South, and along the coastal area.³⁴ Among the respondents interviewed for this study, 50% reported residing in the Greater Tunis area (including Ariana), 46% in Sfax, 3% in Medenine and 1 respondent reported residing in Monastir. Among them, a slight majority of respondents were workers (53%), followed by students (35%) and individuals who were in a training course ('formation'; 10%).

Map 1: Primary data collection sites for individual interviews with sub-Saharan migrant respondents

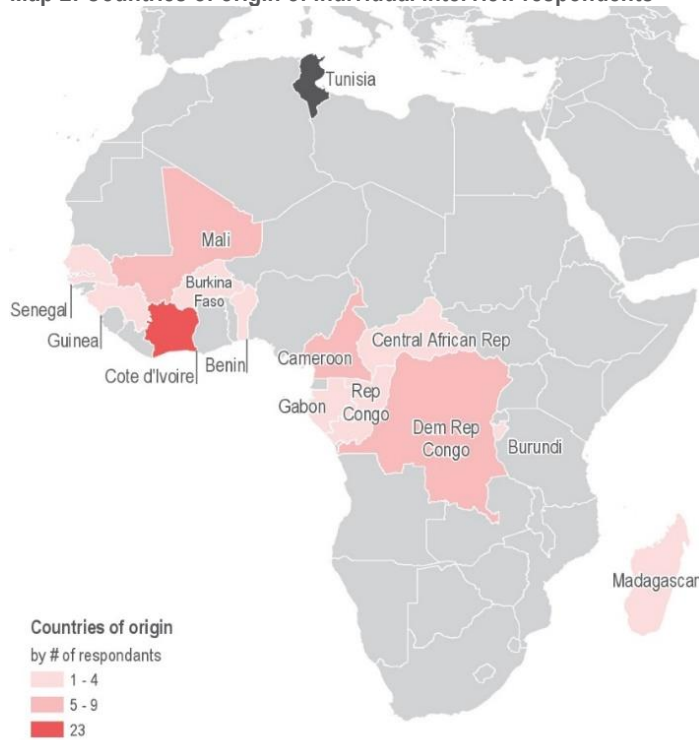


Sub-Saharan respondents for individual interviews were further sampled to mirror the countries of origin of sub-Saharan migrants who are estimated to be in Tunisia. The relative majority of respondents were from Côte d'Ivoire (23 individuals), followed by 9 individuals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) and Cameroon each, 5 individuals from Mali, 4 from Guinea Conakry, 3 from Gabon, 2 from Senegal and Benin

³⁴ UNHCR, [Tunisia Operational Activities](#), March 2018, accessed 9 July 2018; Vidano, A., [Enquête: Entre la Côte d'Ivoire et la Tunisie](#), 29 January 2018.

respectively and 1 individual from Congo Brazzaville, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Madagascar and Burundi each.

Map 2: Countries of origin of individual interview respondents

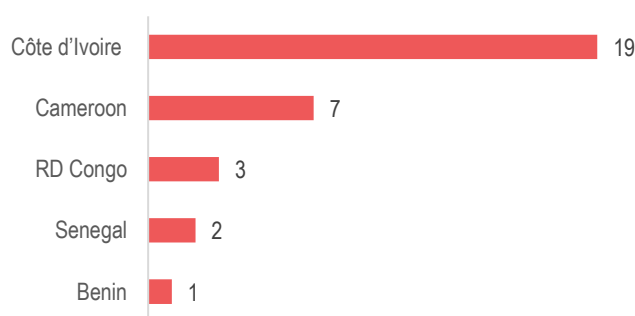


Profile of FGD participants

Seven FGDs with a total of 32 participants were conducted for this assessment based on preliminary findings emerging from data collection: three in Tunis, three in Sfax and one in Medenine. Participants were sampled on the basis of their gender, nationality and time of arrival:

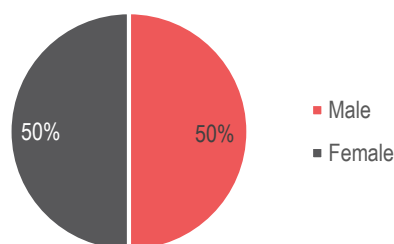
- Three FGDs with women took place in Tunis, Sfax and Medenine;
- Two FGDs with students (both women and men) took place in Tunis and Sfax;
- Two FGDs with workers (both women and men) took place in Tunis and Sfax.

Figure 2: Country of origin of FGD participants



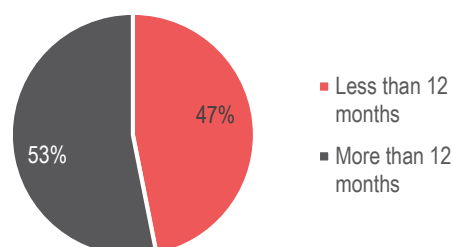
Total: 32 FGD participants

Figure 3: Gender of FGD participants



Total: 32 FGD participants.

Figure 4: Time of arrival of FGD participants



Total: 32 FGD participants.

Data collection team

A total of **5 enumerators** were deployed for this study speaking the languages of the most reported countries of origin of sub-Saharan African migrants in Tunisia (French and English), and were based respectively in Tunis and Sfax. Data collection teams included community mobilisers of sub-Saharan African origin, who facilitated access to the population of interest. Data collector teams did not, however, interview migrants from their same country of origin, in order to minimise the risk of pre-empting possible answers. All data collection teams were trained on data collection methods and ethical safeguards before the beginning of data collection, and on how to counter bias during data collection. The enumerators were directly supervised by an assessment team in Tunis. The latter also conducted a data collection mission in the governorate of Medenine.

Data processing and analysis

Primary data was collected through questionnaires filled manually by enumerators and transcribed on a daily basis for submission to the assessment team in Tunis. Incoming data was cleaned on a daily basis in order to monitor its quality and address any possible issues of concern in a timely manner. The analysis identified any possible relationships between the key characteristics of respondents, such as country of origin, time of arrival in Tunisia and migratory intentions and was triangulated and contextualised with information emerging from KI interviews and secondary data.

Qualitative data was coded through the data analysis software NVivo on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Frequency:** the analysis took into account the number of times a piece of information was reported by respondents. Given the non-probability nature of the sample, this was only considered indicative of how much the information is spread among respondents and not strictly associated to a different level of importance.

- **Specificity:** while taking into account the bias of respondents, detailed information was treated as more relevant.
- **Extensiveness:** extensiveness of comments was linked to how many different participants had reported a specific comment or issue.

Challenges and limitations

- This study used qualitative methods. The results are therefore to be considered indicative only and cannot be generalised towards the whole population of sub-Saharan African migrants in Tunisia.
- All respondents originated from West and the Central African countries as reflected in official statistics on the main regions of origin of sub-Saharan African migrants in Tunisia. This implies, however, that the views of minority groups from other regions of sub-Saharan Africa are not represented.
- The majority of respondents were single individuals with no family. Hence, the views and challenges of parents with children or migrants with families are underrepresented.
- Despite efforts in reaching out to the minorities of English-speaking migrants, none could be interviewed for this assessment. Profiles, migratory drivers and challenges affecting this specific group of people was, nevertheless, explored through KIIs and FGDs.
- All the information provided by respondents, including age, occupation and time of arrival are self-reported. In order to ensure the anonymity and the respect of respondents' privacy, such information could not be verified.
- Following secondary data about the most populous migration hubs in Tunisia, data collection was mostly conducted in the metropolitan areas of Tunis and Sfax. Based on preliminary findings from first data collected, an exploratory mission was deployed in the South of Tunisia, which allowed to identify more transitory migratory profiles, with more fragmented journeys. While some interviews were conducted in the South, the overall number of interviews with migrants who aimed to transit through North Africa to reach Europe upon departure remained low due to the limited timeframe of data collection. Findings on this group in particular should be treated as indicative only.

FINDINGS

1. Drivers of migration to Tunisia

This sub-section of the report presents findings in relation to the primary reasons cited by respondents for leaving their countries of origin and the factors which influenced their decision to go to Tunisia.

KEY FINDINGS

- The decision to leave home was reportedly affected by structural factors (political instability, lack of security and poor development of the origin country's infrastructure) and personal factors (willingness to explore new countries, specific personal or family circumstances and strained family relations).
- **Tunisia was the intended destination for 52 out of 62 respondents** when they left home. Only three, instead, intended to transit Tunisia with the aim to reach Europe.
- Respondents chose Tunisia as their destination reportedly because of **visa exemptions**, availability of a **social network** at destination and expectations of **good quality education** and **employment opportunities**.

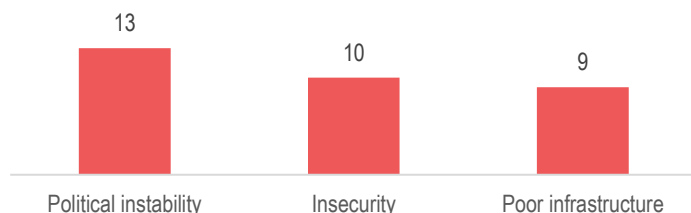
1.1. Leaving the country of origin

Interviewed Sub-Saharan migrants were asked why they had left their country of origin. Reasons tended to be complex and intertwined, with respondents citing several connected reasons, both at the structural and personal level, which shaped their decision to leave the country of origin with the hope to find better conditions in Tunisia.

1.1.1. Structural factors related to the political, security and economic environment

Respondents reported **political instability (13/62³⁵)**, **lack of security (10/62)**, as well as **poor development of the origin country's infrastructure (9/62)** as the structural factors that prevented them from accessing sustainable livelihoods or educational opportunities. Often, respondents cited a combination of these factors as intertwining reasons for leaving their country of origin.

Figure 5: Top three most reported structural drivers in countries of origin affecting respondents' decision to migrate



Total: 62 respondents.

Political instability, in countries of origin in particular, impacted respondents' ability to realise their aspirations at home. Respondents reported that overall political instability had a negative impact on their origin country's economies, making it difficult for respondents to find employment (8/62). This was particularly the case for migrants originating from DR Congo, the Central African Republic, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire. Poor public services in the origin country, reportedly connected to political instability, prompted respondents to look for opportunities elsewhere. Students from Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali often cited prolonged strikes in their origin countries, which significantly disrupted the educational system, as a reason for looking for better educational opportunities in a more favourable context.

In addition, unequal access to opportunities in countries of origin was reported as a factor to leave home. Among those who alluded to political instability, five respondents cited instances of endemic corruption, including having to pay to obtain diplomas or jobs, as a reason to leave their origin country. This was especially

Political instability reportedly associated to:

1. poor economic performance and unemployment
2. poor public services
3. corruption and unequal access to opportunities

³⁵ Reported by 13 out of 62 respondents.

reported by respondents from DR Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea Conakry as a reason for seeking education or employment abroad.

'I tried to enrol in a school here in Tunisia, because of the instability in Côte d'Ivoire. Since the electoral crisis, the situation has worsened, especially in relation to studying. The management of schools has become very bad: instead of finishing the courses in a year, we finish in two, so the duration of studies has become very long. Also the cost of studies has increased a lot.'

Côte d'Ivoire, male student, 29 years old, arrived in November 2017³⁶

Security considerations (10/62) were often intertwined in migrants' accounts of the drivers that influenced their decision to leave. For those who were personally affected by it, the loss of a relative or partner in violent circumstances, or threats against a family member, were among some of the factors reported by migrants for leaving elsewhere. Such was, for instance, the case for many Ivorians interviewed for this study who felt compelled to leave Côte d'Ivoire following the 2010 electoral crisis.

Some students reported emigrating due to the poor performance of the education system in their countries of origin in specific academic sectors. Students from Cameroon and DR Congo, as well as from Benin and Burundi, cited the poor development or inexistence of the subject they aimed to study in their countries, along with a lack of adequate infrastructure that could support their educational needs. These considerations were also shared in an FGD conducted with students in Tunis.

While both male and female respondents cited the inability to find employment as a reason for migrating, men discussed educational drivers more often than women. This might be linked to the fact that migrant men interviewed for this assessment tended to have a higher level of education, while women had overall comparatively lower levels of education or no formal education at all.³⁷ Perceived poor medical infrastructure in the country of origin was also reported by one respondent, a Cameroonian woman, as a driver for seeking medical treatment outside her country.

1.1.2. Personal factors

One sixth of respondents reported that exploring new countries and contexts was a key driver in deciding to leave their country of origin. reality and culture was mentioned by some male and female migrants as a reason for leaving.

'I did not choose Tunisia because I could increase my chances to reach another destination. I chose Tunisia simply because I wanted to explore other countries. As I had acquaintances here, I chose to come here.'

Cameroon, female worker, 28 years old, arrived in March 2018

Specific events linked to personal or family issues (4/62), including the loss of a parent or a husband or strained relations within the family, which required the respondent to take responsibility for the household, were also reported by some as triggering their departure. Strained family relations were also found to be a driver for leaving one's country of origin in a previous study conducted by REACH with young people on the move from West Africa to Italy.³⁸

Most reported personal factors:

1. Discovering new countries
2. Specific personal or family issues
3. Strained family relations

³⁶ All the sub-Saharan African migrants who participated in this assessment came from French-speaking countries, hence the interviews were carried out in French. All respondents' quotes in this study were translated from French to English by REACH.

³⁷ Among respondents, almost one third had no formal education (10/32) and overall, female workers tended to have lower levels of education (9 out of the 10 female workers had received no formal education). Among men, 8 workers had studied at university level, 1 worker had graduated from university and 5 respondents respectively had received either between 1 and 5 or between 10 and 12 years of schooling. Three respondents had received six to nine years of schooling.

³⁸ REACH/MMP/MHub, [Youth on the move](#), September 2017.

'We were based in Côte d'Ivoire when the electoral crisis took place. My father was a close friend of the former president. Thus, we fled to Guinea, my mother's country of origin. I was not too comfortable there with the family problems between my father and my mother's family. So, when I got my high school diploma, I decided to continue my studies abroad. I had a friend who studied in Tunisia, who encouraged me to come.'

Côte d'Ivoire, male student, 26 years old, arrived in June 2014

1.2. Going to Tunisia

Of the 62 respondents interviewed for this assessment, the vast majority (52/62 respondents) indicated Tunisia as their intended destination upon departure from their country of origin. Choices of sub-Saharan migrants to come to Tunisia were reportedly shaped by institutional factors, as well as by information provided about Tunisia by a variety of actors, including family and friends, as well as by individuals who were part of the respondents' wider social networks. Social networks in particular played an important role in mediating information about Tunisia as a country of destination. They were reported as often being transnational, extending from countries of origin to destination and transit, the latter case applying to interviewed migrants who reported having fragmented journeys.

Why was Tunisia the intended destination of 52 out of 62 respondents?

- Visa exemptions and institutional facilitations
- Perceived good quality of education
- Better employment opportunities
- Access to information and social networks encouraging or facilitating migration to Tunisia
- Perceived higher chances to get a visa or the right skillset to move regularly to a third country.

1.2.1. Institutional factors: visa exemptions and facilitations

Nationals from some sub-Saharan African countries benefit from visa waiver programmes to enter Tunisia, giving them the possibility to enter the country with a three-month tourist entry permit issued on arrival, making legal entry to Tunisia easy.³⁹ The visa exemption was mostly reported as a driver to go to Tunisia, by migrants from: Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Benin and Madagascar.⁴⁰

Also, some respondents from countries that are not visa-free reported that the relative ease with which a visa can be obtained – especially when compared to visa applications to Europe – influenced their decision to come to Tunisia. This was particularly reported by Cameroonian nationals. Individual interviews, as well as FGDs with students, in particular, showed that awareness about this possibility was often an important driver for migrating to Tunisia.

Besides the practical advantages, some respondents in individual interviews and FGDs elaborated on the sense of freedom that this exemption granted them,⁴¹ relating this to the potential for returning to their home country without fear of not being able to return to Tunisia. This was reported regardless of the factors that prompted migration in the first place and whether respondents had concrete plans to return to their origin country or not.

'Tunisian universities conduct many advertisement campaigns in our countries. With time, they have built many partnerships. The visa procedure is not so difficult. They do not reject our visa [application]. On the other hand, for a Cameroonian, getting a visa for a European country - for example France- is very complicated. In Tunisia it's less paperwork [...] it's very easy to do it.'

Cameroon, male student, 24 years old, arrived in October 2014

³⁹ Limousin, F., [Portraits de migrants : Description de l'immigration en Tunisie par les migrants accompagnés à la permanence d'accueil de Terre d'Asile Tunisie de janvier 2014 à mars 2016](#). Terre d'Asile Tunisie, December 2016.

⁴⁰ Sources consulted regarding sub-Saharan nationalities enjoying visa exemption to enter Tunisia tended to diverge on the exact nationalities eligible for the scheme. See, among others: [Aéroport de Tunis](#) (updated 2018); Consul Honoraire de Tunisie en Ukraine, [Le régime des visas en Tunisie](#), 2007; De Bel-Air, F., [Tunisia: Migration Profile, December 2016](#); Boubakri, H. and Mazzella, S., [La Tunisie entre transit et immigration: politiques migratoires et conditions d'accueil des migrants africains à Tunis](#), 2005.

⁴¹ de Haas, H., [Migration theory: Quo vadis?](#), International Migration Institute, Working Paper 100 / DEMIG Project Paper No. 24, November 2014.

Box 1: The role of intermediaries⁴² in shaping decision-making on migrating to Tunisia

The role of intermediaries emerged as a powerful mediating factor shaping many sub-Saharan migrants' decisions about mobility to Tunisia. Intermediaries reportedly shaped both perceptions about opportunities available in Tunisia and provided migration-related services, which directly facilitated respondents' migratory process.

Intermediaries included Tunisian or non-Tunisian labour recruiters with networks in countries of origin and destination, Tunisian universities or their marketing agents and, in some cases, even Tunisians in the country of origin. In some cases, they facilitated access to travel tickets, paperwork-related services, and access to employment once in Tunisia.

Payment of the intermediary's services, for many respondents, could occur either before departure or later, upon arrival in Tunisia, through deductions from the worker's salary. The risk of falling prey to fraudulent practices was more pronounced in the cases in which migrants had paid money to intermediaries before departure. However, forms of brokerage based on trust and reputation (in which the intermediary advanced money for the journey) were more easily accessed in cases in which migrants had a social network which could connect them to the intermediary.

'My sister was friends with the intermediary in Tunisia. He is an Ivorian. He said that he could pay for my flight and that he could get me a job. She gave me his number. I hesitated a lot before calling him, as my wife did not want to remain alone with the children without me. I ended up convincing her that working is better than staying unemployed, that she and the girls would be safe with my mother and my brothers and that one suffers without money. Finally, she had to accept. In the end, I left almost five months between my decision and the first time I called the intermediary. Then it took around one month, to make my identity card, my passport, the vaccinations...' (Côte d'Ivoire, male worker, 29 years old, arrived in March 2017)

Commenting on the role of migration intermediaries, some respondents pointed out that **even if the information they had received from them prior to arriving in Tunisia was not necessarily reflective of reality, if in need once in the country they would still recur to the intermediary for help.** This points to the complex relationship between migrants and intermediaries, where respondents may be misled, but are also dependent on intermediaries, especially when the number of individuals they trust and can recur to for help is small.

1.2.2. Social networks shaping the image of Tunisia as attractive destination for sub-Saharan migrants

Most respondents reported that their decision to go to Tunisia was highly influenced by the information provided to them by members of their social networks. These networks shaped respondents' image of Tunisia prior to departure and thereby heavily impacted their decision-making on coming to Tunisia, especially in relation to educational and work opportunities.

1. Quality and affordability of higher education

The quality of education in Tunisia, perceived as offering a level of education comparable to the European educational offer, was reported by almost half of the students (10/23) as a strong driver to choose Tunisia as their destination to study.

Considerations about the affordability of studying in Tunisia as opposed to the cost of studying in European institutions or, for some nationalities, in the country of origin, were often factored in respondents' decision-making. Similar considerations were also expressed by those students who had less say in their choice, because Tunisia had been either selected for them by their parents or because they came through cooperation agreements to study in Tunisia (9/23). Some nationalities prevailed among scholarships holders, with respondents coming particularly from Gabon, Mali and DR Congo.

'Initially, I had chosen to go to Morocco, then someone told me about Tunisia. It was a friend who studied in Tunisia for 3 years and he advised me to come.'

Mali, male student 20 years old, arrived in October 2017

⁴² For the purpose of this study, intermediaries are defined as all agents facilitating migrants' mobility by providing services, facilitating connection among distant areas, providing concrete help and support or advocating for their rights, regardless of the regular or irregular nature of their activities and the stage of migration in which support is provided. For more information, please see: Ambrosini, M., [Why irregular migrants arrive and remain: the role of intermediaries](#), 2016. Smugglers, labour recruiters, travel agents, ordinary citizens, NGOs can all be intermediaries. This study will, however, also specifically refer to the sub-group of smugglers, whenever respondents explicitly referred to them as such, implying the irregular nature of the service provided.

2. Employment opportunities and better pay

A third of sub-Saharan workers interviewed reported having decided to come to Tunisia, among other countries, because they expected to find more attractive jobs and higher salaries compared to their countries of origin (11/33). Information received from acquaintances in countries of origin contributed to shaping these expectations. A small number of four respondents also specifically reported that the possibility to earn enough money to support their families in their country of origin drove their decision to come to Tunisia.

Friends and family members who were already present in Tunisia significantly mediated respondents' expectations about Tunisia (22/62) and represented the main source of information about the conditions at destination (10/62). Before departure, they also often played a decisive role in settling situations in which respondents hesitated or had the possibility to select between more than one potential destinations. This was the case for both students and migrant workers interviewed.

Likewise, among respondents for whom Tunisia was not the intended destination (8/62), friends in the country of transit or, alternatively, friends and family consulted in the country of origin once the journey had already started, had an important role in influencing and, at times, facilitating the process of re-routing of respondents' trajectories towards Tunisia.

'When I arrived in Casablanca, a person greeted me and dropped me at the station to go to Tan Tan, a city on the border with Algeria. Down there I found a person who asked for money to find a job for me. I refused. I contacted my brother to find a solution for me. My brother contacted another Ivorian in Tunisia and sent him money to buy the ticket and send it to me.'

Côte d'Ivoire, male worker, 25 years old, arrived in March 2018

Box 2: Asymmetry of information about life in Tunisia prior to departure

Respondents reported that the information they received about Tunisia was not always fully representative of the reality they found once they arrived in the country. Among 13 respondents who had relied on the information provided by intermediaries, 10 individuals reportedly had received only partial or false information.

As to the nature of the deceitful information received, respondents who came to Tunisia with the purpose of study and skills development commonly reported being driven by ads from private institutions and their marketing agents or simply intermediaries from their country of origin, only to later discover that the course offered did not correspond to what they had expected. Some also reported that the type of diploma released by the university was not recognised in their country of origin, unlike what they had been told prior to departure.

'I came on the basis of false advertising. The principal of the school came to our school at the time to advertise. We were going through the final year exams. After the exam, the director handed out the flyers. I loved fashion since I was a child. I was just an ambitious young girl. So I spent my time at the cybercafé to send emails to the director and to search. I found schools all over the world but many were very expensive and Tunisia is after all an African country so I thought it's cheaper and it's closer. And my family is modest, we are not rich so all the conditions encouraged me to choose Tunis. The man sent me emails with very false information about the diploma, payment methods and everything. I was just 17 and easily fooled.'

Cameroon, female former student, 28 years old, arrived in Tunisia in 2009

Among respondents who had come to the country for work (32/62), most reported that they had been told about much higher salaries than what they eventually earned in Tunisia, noting that they had not been warned about the more difficult sides of living in Tunisia, including the issue of penalties and the difficulties with the host community.

1.2.3. Tunisia as multiplier of chances for onward travel and return

For one third of respondents (18/62) coming to Tunisia was also a stepping-stone (1) to improve their chances for legal onward travel to Europe and North Africa or (2) to give them a competitive edge in the labour market in their countries of origin or elsewhere.

Around one in ten individuals interviewed (13/62) reportedly chose Tunisia as they anticipated that studying or working in Tunisia could enhance their chances for onward travel towards another destination. Depending on the purpose for which they came to Tunisia, respondents reported the possibility to acquire a good education or enough financial resources to increase their chances of being granted a visa for other countries, which required entry visas. Destinations indicated were for the majority of cases Europe and especially French-speaking countries like Belgium or France, but also North America, including the United States and Canada.

In four cases, migrants interviewed explained that one reason that drove them to Tunisia was that they had already been refused a visa to Europe or North America in their countries of origin. In these cases, the journey to Tunisia had been motivated, among other things, by **the idea that the procedure to obtain a visa for third countries could be easier once in Tunisia**. In these cases, respondents already had family members in Europe or in North America who had advised that it would be easier to receive a visa for their intended destination once in Tunisia.

Some individual interview respondents reported choosing to come to Tunisia in the hope to acquire specific skills which could make their profile more interesting to employers upon return in their country of origin or elsewhere. Interviewed migrant students explained that obtaining a first degree in Tunisia would increase their chances of being selected by European or North American universities, due to the perceived better quality and reputation of Tunisian education compared to academic institutions in countries of origin. Additionally, some mentioned that accessing Tunisian education would increase their chances of being hired by recruiters seeking for highly skilled workers in specific sectors such as computer engineering or information technology. Likewise, workers indicated that the savings and skills they thought they would be able to acquire might allow them to start a commercial activity in their country of origin upon return

'I could not find a job in my country. So a friend from Congo advised me to come and study IT in Tunisia. I want to come back to work in my country. There, we import IT specialists from abroad and it is well paid.'

DR Congo, male student, 24 years old, arrived in August 2018

1.2.4. Tunisia to transit

Only three sub-Saharan migrants interviewed reportedly came to Tunisia with the intention to cross irregularly via boat to Europe.⁴³

Among sub-Saharan respondents who had crossed from Libya to Tunisia, protection-related drivers were the most cited reasons for leaving Libya and coming to Tunisia. Migrant respondents related stories about acquaintances they knew who had experienced prolonged and often repeated periods of detention and inhumane treatment in Libya, aimed at extorting money from families in the country of origin. Female respondents reported instances of rape they had personally experienced or had heard of from friends. One respondent had been rescued at sea off the Tunisian coast in an attempt to reach Europe by boat from Libya. These recently arrived respondents reported not having any strong intention of reaching Europe. As they had too recently arrived to make any conclusive evaluations about their personal situation in Tunisia, they stay in Tunisia for the time being.

Findings from individual interviews and FGDs conducted with migrants in Medenine showed that they had some knowledge of the ongoing efforts pursued by the European Union to stem departures from the Libyan coasts, but that this had not previously stopped them from trying to cross to Europe from Libya. **Only in a second moment, after several unsuccessful attempts to cross the sea via boat from Libya to Italy, respondents opted to re-orient their trajectories towards Tunisia, because the journey was deemed too difficult or dangerous.** This finding appears to match with recent research conducted by REACH on the impact of EU migration policies on the mobility of refugees and migrants in Libya.⁴⁴

Respondents interviewed in Medenine heard about the possibility to cross into Tunisia from friends they were in contact with while in Libya:

'The second time I called a friend who gave me the contact of another smuggler who could help me cross [from Libya], but also this time I lost my money as time passed by and they kept telling me that the sea was not good to cross, that police controls were high. So, I got discouraged. I had some Ivorian friends who told me to go to Tunisia, where I could find again some hope. So, I went to Zwara, where I worked for some time. I then relied on a Libyan whom I paid 1000 LYD to bring me by car to the border.'

Guinea Conakry, male, 23 years old, arrived in August 2018

⁴³ Considering the sensitivity of the topic, answers in relation to intention to transit are likely to be underreported.

⁴⁴ REACH/UNHCR, [Mixed migration routes and dynamics in Libya: The impact of EU migration measures on mixed migration in Libya, April 2018](#).

1.3. Destination Tunisia, as opposed to other North African countries

Respondents were asked to explain why they had chosen to come to Tunisia, as opposed to other countries in the North African region, such as Morocco, Algeria and Libya. While most respondents tended to discard Libya as destination at the onset, as they described the country as too dangerous, they reported that the **presence of friends or family in Tunisia (11/62) along with visa exemptions and facilitations (9/62)** as primary reasons for choosing Tunisia over Morocco or Algeria. **Furthermore, a smaller number of respondents (6/62) reported that before leaving their countries of origin, the perception of Tunisian society as being more open than its neighbouring countries, was key in the decision to go to Tunisia.** More often, interviewed migrants cited a mix of these factors in their accounts.

On Morocco specifically, respondents also factored in considerations about security, employment availability and cost and quality of education in deciding for Tunisia over Morocco. Workers who participated in FGDs in Tunis and Sfax, for instance, reported a lack of livelihood opportunities in Morocco as a reason for opting for Tunisia. Participants also remarked that male workers face greater challenges in finding employment in Morocco, compared to women. KIs in both Tunis and Sfax further observed that the inflation and devaluation of the Tunisian Dinar could have made the recruitment of sub-Saharan migrant workers in Tunisia as more attractive, hence increasing the demand for foreign workers by Tunisian employers. With regard to Algeria specifically, respondents tended to hold views of the country as overall less hospitable for migrants compared to Tunisia.

'I chose Tunisia because for me, Tunisia was more open, it is the country of the Maghreb where there is less racism; then because I had friends here and I wanted to feel less lonely.'

Cameroon, female student, 28 years old, arrived in March 2018

While workers singled out social networks in Tunisia as the most important factor for choosing Tunisia over Algeria, Libya or Morocco (8/11), full-time students and graduates highlighted the availability of scholarships and quality of education, as well as visa exemptions. In these cases, friends who had previously studied in Tunisia and told them about the state of education in the country were important sources of information that shaped the decision to come to Tunisia, as opposed to other countries in the North African region.

2. Sub-Saharan migrants' routes to Tunisia

This section of the report lays out the routes respondents took to Tunisia from their countries of origin, how they paid for the journey and respondents' secondary movements within Tunisia.

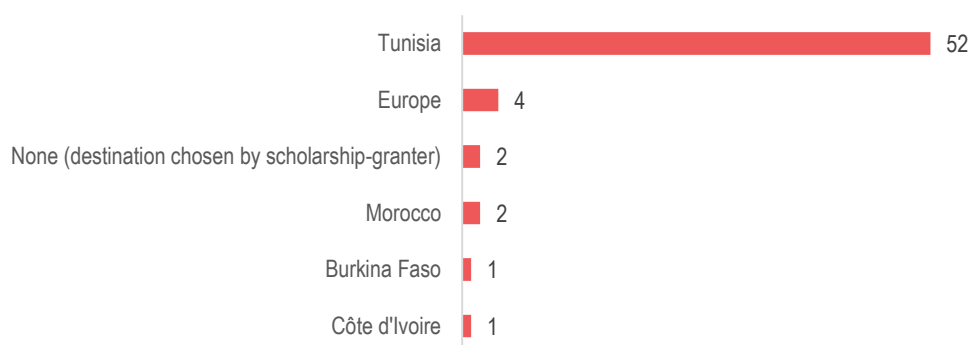
KEY FINDINGS

- **The vast majority of respondents reported having reached Tunisia directly, by plane.** A smaller number of respondents had, instead, more fragmented journeys, crossing one or multiple countries before reaching Tunisia.
- To fund their journeys to Tunisia, most respondents relied on the **support of their families, sold their assets** in their country of origin or received a **state scholarship**.
- Respondents only exceptionally moved to other locations after having reached their first destination within Tunisia.

2.1. Intended destination upon departure

The majority of respondents intended to reach Tunisia when they left their country of origin, reported by 52 out of 62 respondents. Among respondents who reportedly intended to go elsewhere when they left their country of origin (8/62), four respondents reportedly intended to go to Europe, two intended to go to Morocco and one individual to Côte d'Ivoire and to Burkina Faso respectively. Two individuals came to Tunisia through government-sponsored higher education schemes and for a health emergency, respectively, and reported not to have had any clear intention about their destination when they left their country of origin.

Figure 6: Respondents' intended destinations upon departure



2.2. The main routes to Tunisia

Sub-Saharan migrants interviewed used three main routes to reach Tunisia.

1. The first, most commonly used, was taking a direct flight from the country of origin to Tunisia, reported by 54 out of 62 individuals.
2. The second route used, reported by a comparatively low six individuals, was more fragmented and entailed crossing between one and two countries before flying to Tunisia.
3. The third route, reported by two respondents, consisted in crossing various countries before entering Tunisia over land from Libya.

Routes, countries crossed and length of the journey tended to differ by respondents' intended destination when they first left their country of origin. Respondents who intended to reach Tunisia when they first left their home country tended to take direct flights to Tunisia, due to the visa free travel rule or visa facilitations for sub-Saharan nationals, reported by 50 out of the 52 individuals who had intended to reach Tunisia when they first left home. The remaining two individuals who intended to reach Tunisia, but did not take a direct flight, were from Mali and the Central African Republic and had first travelled to Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon respectively, to transit from there by plane.

The trend that most sub-Saharan migrants tend to enter Tunisia directly via plane with a smaller proportion of individuals entering Tunisia through more fragmented journeys or via the land border, is confirmed by

secondary data. Similarly, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) found in 2015 that most sub-Saharan migrants enter Tunisia via plane, data on sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia collected by 4MI in September and October 2017 found that 266 out of 310 respondents had reached Tunisia via plane.⁴⁵

2.2.1. Flying to Tunisia from the country of origin

The majority of individuals interviewed flew directly from their country of origin to Tunis Carthage International Airport, Tunisia, as was the case for 50 out of 62 individuals. This was reportedly the quickest and safest way to travel, as well as the most easily accessible due to the visa free travel rule for many sub-Saharan nationals to enter Tunisia. Most individuals who had intended to go to Tunisia when they first left their country of origin travelled this way (50 out of 52). One individual who intended to go to Europe from Tunisia also entered the country by plane to then transit from Tunisia to Libya and then back to Tunisia.

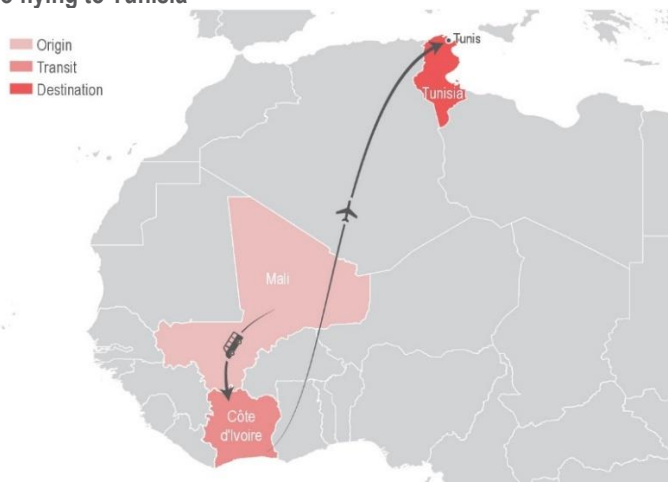
Map 3: Example of route option 1: flying directly from the country of origin to Tunisia



2.2.2. Transiting to neighbouring countries in West Africa or North Africa and flying from there to Tunisia

Eight individuals reportedly first went to either a neighbouring country in West Africa or another country in North Africa with different means of transportation, before transiting to a second country in the region or flying from there to Tunisia. The majority of them had not intended to reach Tunisia when they first left home, but rather changed their trajectory once in their first intended destination, including in Morocco, Burkina Faso or Côte d'Ivoire.

Map 4: Example of route option 2: Journey from country of origin with one stopover in a neighbouring country prior to flying to Tunisia



⁴⁵ IOM, [Migration in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia](#), 2015, p.6; 4MI, sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia dataset, October 2017.

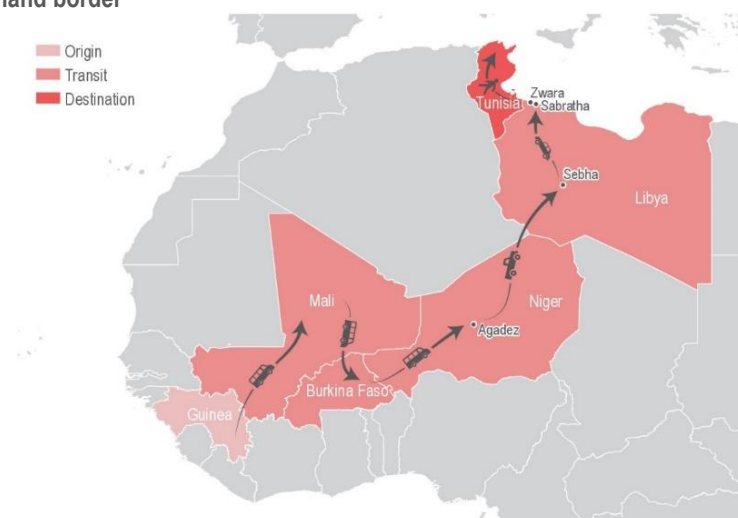
Some respondents, notably Malian nationals, reportedly travelled first to Côte d'Ivoire to access papers to be then able to fly to Tunisia. According to Tunisian entry regulations for Malian nationals, Malians are technically exempted from obtaining a visa to enter the country through Tunisia's free entry visa system.⁴⁶ However, individual interview respondents and FGDs,⁴⁷ as well as some KIs, reported that Malians who aim to migrate to Tunisia tend to go to Côte d'Ivoire to obtain a forged Ivorian passport, to then enter Tunisia as Ivorian nationals.

These journeys tended to last between one month and one to two years. Respondents travelled with overland busses between countries, except for the last leg of the journey to Tunisia, for which respondents used air travel.

2.2.3. Transiting to neighbouring countries and crossing from there over land to Tunisia

Only two respondents who took part in this study entered Tunisia via a land border. This was largely due to the ease with which most sub-Saharan nationals can enter Tunisia legally, making the significantly more dangerous land route less used.

Map 5: Example of route option 3: Fragmented journeys including several stopovers before arriving in Tunisia via the land border



The two respondents who entered Tunisia over land entered Tunisia from Libya irregularly with the help of a smuggler. In both cases, respondents had first attempted to cross to Europe from Libya only to realise that the crossing was too difficult. While one respondent crossed into Libya from the border with Algeria, the other transited through Libya's Southern border via Sebha.

2.3. Paying for the journey

The majority of respondents paid for the journey through a combination of sources. The three most reported ways to fund the journey included: the family's support from countries of origin, as reported by 22 individuals, selling assets in the country of origin to support their travels (7) and with a state scholarship they received to study in Tunisia (5).

In some cases, respondents received financial support from the intermediary who had facilitated the journey to Tunisia and advanced money for the trip. In the four cases where this was reported, intermediaries had advanced the money for the air travel ticket, which respondents agreed to pay back once in Tunisia.

The sources of payment reported in this study and the proportions of respondents who reported having used them were comparable to what was found analysing 4MI data collected between September and October 2017. There, the most frequently reported source of financial support were friends, family and community

Most reported ways to fund the journey to Tunisia:

1. Family support
2. Selling assets in country of origin
3. State scholarship to study in Tunisia

⁴⁶ Source: [Aéroport de Tunis](#), accessed 20 September 2018.

⁴⁷ FGD with workers in Sfax, August 2018

in the country or origin (128/309), followed by respondents' savings (64/309) and friends, family and community abroad (27/309).⁴⁸

Box 3: Relying on smugglers

Individuals intending to migrate tend to rely on smugglers when there is no legal way for them to undertake their journey. The sub-Saharan migrants in this study who reportedly relied on smugglers during parts of their journey did so to enter Tunisia via the land border from Libya or on other legs of the journey where they intended to enter other countries, notably Libya and Algeria. One respondent recalled his experience enlisting the services of a smuggler from Algeria to Libya:

'I stayed in Algeria until Ramadan, July 2017. I was working in a building site there. However, my plan was still to go to Morocco in order to reach Spain. I faced issues in crossing the borders between Algeria and Morocco so, as I had friends in Libya, they told me that it would be easier that I could try to cross from there. So I contacted the smuggler whose number was given to me by my friends and I reached Deb Deb to cross into Libya. Since our arrival in Deb Deb at the border with Libya we already knew that a boat with 14 people was waiting for us to depart. This was in July 2017.'

Guinea Conakry, male, 24 years old, arrived in August 2018

The availability of smugglers or the lack thereof both enabled and constrained further movement. At times, the inability to find smugglers who could facilitate border crossings and onward movement was cited among the factors for changing the trajectory to the intended destination. Contacts of smugglers who could facilitate border crossings had been usually provided to respondents by friends or acquaintances in countries of transit.

2.4. Arriving in Tunisia

The vast majority of respondents arrived in Tunisia via plane at Carthage International Airport in Tunis, as reported by 60 out of 62 respondents. Two individual interview respondents and one FGD participant entered Tunisia over land and reached the Southern city of Medenine. Upon arrival, the majority of respondents intended to settle in Tunis, as reported by 37 respondents, with 21 respondents aiming to reach Sfax and a further 2 Sousse.

Map 6: Respondents' primary movements within Tunisia



⁴⁸ 4MI, sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia dataset, October 2017.

In a survey conducted by 4Mi in September and October 2017⁴⁹, respondents primarily chose their city of destination in Tunisia for employment (116/310) or educational opportunities (102/310). A smaller group of 45 respondents out of 310 reported not having chosen the city where they were located. For almost half of them, living in the current location turned out to be more difficult than expected (150/310), including in relation to the local economic conditions, which for almost half of respondents did not meet their expectations (150/310).

2.4.1. Secondary movements within Tunisia

Only four sub-Saharan migrants interviewed changed destination once in Tunisia. In these cases, respondents moved from one city to another within Tunisia, in either a matter of months or years in the country. These secondary movements were usually due either to: (1) the fact that the situation in respondents' present location was not as expected and they hoped to find better conditions elsewhere in Tunisia, or (2) to the need of escaping a dangerous situation. In these cases, respondents moved within Tunisia in the hope of finding better employment opportunities, because they had a closer social network elsewhere or because they felt that some locations were safer than others, or simply hosted larger migrant populations. In one case, secondary internal mobility did not result from a respondent's choice. This was the case of an FGD participant who reported having been rescued at sea off the coast of Sfax⁵⁰ and then taken to a reception centre in Medenine.

Drivers of secondary movements within Tunisia:

1. Mismatch between expectations at departure and actual conditions in Tunisia
2. Fleeing a dangerous situation.

Map 7: Respondents' secondary movements within Tunisia



Two individuals interviewed, both women, who had come to Tunisia to work, reportedly left their first location because they were working in exploitative conditions and escaped from their employers. All respondents who travelled within Tunisia used public transport to travel, including shared taxi busses ('louages') or trains.

⁴⁹ 4Mi, sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia dataset, October 2017

⁵⁰ The respondent reported having left Libya to reach Europe by boat. Due to bad weather conditions, the boat ran aground in the Tunisian national waters and the respondent was rescued by the Tunisian authorities.

3. Protection risks en route

This section of the report outlines the protection risks experienced or witnessed by respondents along their journeys from their countries of origin to Tunisia. It includes sub-sections on the risk of scams, human trafficking and identifies the most vulnerable groups that emerged from the assessment.

KEY FINDINGS

- The more fragmented respondents' journeys, the more protection risks they faced on the way. Flying legally to Tunisia was the safest way of reaching the country with no protection risks reported on the way by respondents who reached Tunisia via this route.
- Scams and human trafficking were the most reported protection risks.
- Respondents only exceptionally reported any secondary movements after having entered Tunisia.
- Women, children and migrants who had fragmented journeys were reportedly more vulnerable to protection risks.

3.1. Protection risks experienced or witnessed

As most sub-Saharan migrants interviewed entered Tunisia directly from their country of origin via plane, their exposure to protection risks en route was relatively low. Respondents who crossed several countries, and particularly those who had longer journeys, involving cross-country land travel, faced a more heightened exposure to protection risks.

The most frequently reported protection risk among all respondents was the fact of being a victim of scams (15/62). In these cases individuals were promised jobs or educational opportunities in Tunisia to then arrive in the country and realise that they had been misled by their contact person and that the money they had advanced had been stolen. Other protection risks experienced included kidnapping, arbitrary detention, police violence and a lack of access to shelter, all reported by individuals who had crossed more than one country before reaching Tunisia, including, but not only, Libya. Protection risks witnessed or heard of mirrored the proportion of protection risks experienced.

3.1.1. Scams

Both workers and students reported having been promised study or work opportunities, which did not mirror the conditions they found once in Tunisia. These scams resulted in exploitative labour conditions and access to poorer services than they expected.

Respondents who arrived in Tunisia with the purpose of working (7/10) reported having been victims of scams more often than respondents who came for other reasons. Prospective workers reported that intermediaries had provided them with false or partial information regarding, either the type of job they would be doing or by playing up their salary expectations, profiting from migrants' lack of awareness about currency exchange rates or the actual cost of living in Tunisia. In at least half of these cases, migrants had sold all of their assets in the country of origin to finance the journey and pay for the intermediaries' services. The limited economic means available made them particularly vulnerable.

Some respondents who came to Tunisia with the purpose of study and skills development reported being deceived by intermediaries or marketing agents from private institutions about the educational opportunities in Tunisia. Some reported that the type of diploma released by the university was not recognised in their country of origin, contrary to what they had been told by intermediaries when applying. KIs also reported cases of students who had been attracted by institutions which were not actually accredited with the Tunisian Ministry of Education, leading to difficulties in accessing residence permits once in Tunisia.

'Those who lie to you, they have of course a financial interest. They do not tell you about the penalties, for example. They tell you that if you come to work you will get 400 TND, but they do not tell you how much you have to pay for rent and for food. At home, [knowing that you can earn] 400 TND encourages you to go but you are not aware of the living costs here. You come to work with people you do not know.'

FGD with workers, participant from Côte d'Ivoire, Sfax

Respondents who had reportedly fallen prey to scams were from Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Mali, and a slight majority of them were men. The risk to fall prey to scams was reportedly higher when migrants only relied on one source of information rather than multiple.

3.1.2. Human trafficking

In 2016, Tunisia passed a law that criminalises human trafficking and provides assistance to survivors of human trafficking.⁵¹ To this day, however, **there are no recent and accurate official statistics on the number of survivors of human trafficking in Tunisia.**⁵² Secondary data suggests that most survivors of human trafficking in Tunisia are women from the Côte d'Ivoire. Since 2012, IOM assisted 260 survivors (148 in 2017), out of whom 83% were women and 81% were from Côte d'Ivoire.⁵³ The INGO Médecins du Monde (MDM) estimated, in January 2018, that, out of 1,000 patients the organisation assisted, 150 were survivors of human trafficking. Of them, the organisation estimates that 95% are Ivorian.⁵⁴

Secondary data suggests that individuals tend to be recruited directly in their countries of origin, through face agencies or personal connections who promise attractive job opportunities in Tunisia, such as working as maids in rich families or other employment opportunities at the recruiter's.⁵⁵ Once in country, survivors have their passports confiscated and realise that they had had come to the country on the basis of false promises and are unable to leave. According to France Terre d'Asile, one survivor out of five is able to escape in less than three months but, on average, survivors remain in the network between five to 13 months.⁵⁶

'It's worse for people like me, who don't know anyone else in Tunis and can't know if the information they give us [the intermediary] is correct or not. It's the same for women. They are also exploited.'

Among female respondents interviewed, two Ivorian women had been attracted by fraudulent means into extremely exploitative working conditions upon arrival in Tunisia. Both women had been promised employment with an attractive salary in Tunisia, but, once arrived, they had their passports confiscated and were forbidden to leave the house. One of them reportedly remained for two years in this exploitative situation until she escaped from her employer's house.

3.2. Fragmented journeys and particularly vulnerable groups

Individuals who had crossed at least one country irregularly reported having experienced multiple protection risks, except for scams. This illustrates how, the longer and more fragmented the travel, coupled with lack of documentation, the more vulnerable migrants are to exploitation and abuse. Among respondents who had crossed more than one country, protection risks experienced or witnessed during fragmented journeys included instances of robbery, beatings, arbitrary detention and kidnapping. Two individuals who had crossed several countries on foot had further reportedly witnessed deaths of fellow migrants in the desert during their journey. Most of these accidents occurred in Libya, Algeria and Morocco.

Protection risks along the route:

1. Fragmented journeys were reportedly associated to higher exposure to exploitation and abuse.
2. Most protection risks en route were experienced in Libya, Algeria and Morocco.
3. Women and children were reportedly the most vulnerable groups

⁵¹ Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne, [Loi organique n° 2016-61 du 3 août 2016, relative à la prévention et la lutte contre la traite des personnes](#), accessed 19 June 2018.

⁵² Vidano, A., [Enquête: Entre la Côte d'Ivoire et la Tunisie, arnaques, trafic et esclavage](#), 19 January 2018, accessed 19 June 2018.

⁵³ IOM, [Migration in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia – Overview of the Complex Migratory Flows in the Region](#), 2015.

⁵⁴ Vidano, A., [Enquête: Entre la Côte d'Ivoire et la Tunisie, arnaques, trafic et esclavage](#), 19 January 2018, accessed 19 June 2018.

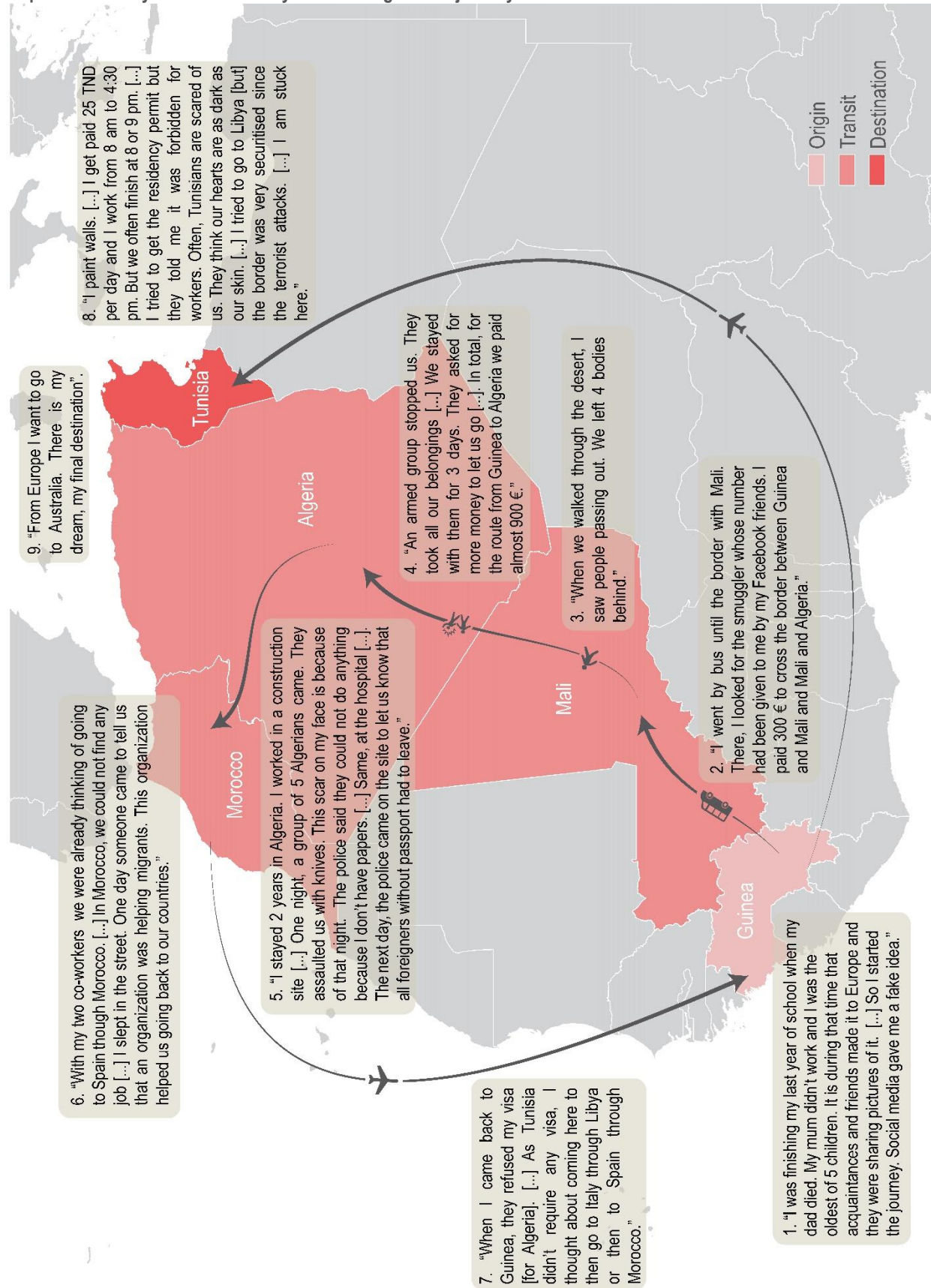
⁵⁵ Harrison, C., Elbassil, A., Limousin, F., [Portraits de migrants : Description de l'immigration en Tunisie par les migrants accompagnés à la permanence d'accueil de Terre d'Asile Tunisie de janvier 2014 à mars 2016](#), Terre d'Asile Tunisie, December 2016.

⁵⁶ Vidano, A., [Enquête: Entre la Côte d'Ivoire et la Tunisie, arnaques, trafic et esclavage](#), 19 January 2018, accessed 19 June 2018.

Respondents reported that women and children were more vulnerable to protection risks along fragmented journeys. Rape was cited as the most common risk that women faced when travelling irregularly by land. All female FGD participants in Medenine reported having been sexually assaulted at some point during their journey and in Libya.

FGD participants explained how recently-arrived migrants' more limited knowledge of the Tunisian context and reliance on limited social networks would make them more vulnerable than longer-term stayers. Similarly, **almost all respondents who had crossed more than one country and, accordingly, had been more exposed to risk arrived in Tunisia less than 12 months ago (6/8).**

Map 8: Case study of a Guinean 23 year old's fragmented journey to Tunisia



4. Life and challenges in Tunisia

This section of the report presents findings in relation to sub-Saharan migrants' lives and challenges in Tunisia, with a focus on access to legal documentation, the issue of penalties, access to employment, safety and security incidents, access to healthcare, access to housing and access to higher education. Two sub-sections further focus on respondents' interactions with the host community and particular vulnerable groups.

KEY FINDINGS

- **The types of challenges making locations difficult to live in were comparable across the main migration hubs of Tunis and Sfax.**
- Respondents reported facing challenges in relation to access to legal documentation (access and delays to get a residence permit and birth registration issues for migrant children), regular employment, healthcare and housing.
- The vast majority of respondents reported having strained relations with the host community, with frequent cases of harassment and violence experienced in Tunisia.
- All migrants overstaying **their entry permit in Tunisia pile up penalties of overstay of 20 TND per week.** As penalties pile up, it becomes difficult for irregular migrants to leave the country.

Respondents who had lived in several locations in the country were asked which locations they found most difficult to live in Tunisia, as well as the factors that affected their perception of places with a better or worse quality of life in Tunisia. **Overall, the types of challenges making locations difficult to live in were comparable across the main migration hubs of Tunis and Sfax.**

4.1. Access to legal documentation

4.1.1. Residence permits

Difficulties to access residence permits were reported by three out of four respondents as a major challenge they faced in Tunisia (48/62). While both students and workers reported this to be a challenge, the type of reported problems differed.

All migrant workers interviewed reported that it was virtually impossible for them to regularise their stay in Tunisia upon the expiry of their three months entry permit. Confirmed by KIs and secondary data, this meant that sub-Saharan workers, once they overstayed their entry permit, remained in the country irregularly, with all the heightened risks that being in a country in an irregular situation brings. The only option reported by workers was to subscribe to short training courses as a means to access temporary residence permits. However, even with such permits, sub-Saharan migrants are not allowed to work, meaning that respondents continued to work irregularly.

In contrast, students' concerns revolved more around issues of delays in the issuance of permanent residence permits, once the first temporary permit of three months expired (16/48). In these cases, respondents reported the complexity of the administrative procedures to obtain the permit, as well as students' inability to travel outside Tunisia, while waiting for the permanent residence permit to be issued.

4.1.2. Birth registration

In two cases, respondents with children born in Tunisia raised the issue of registration of newborns and legal treatment of migrants' children. Female respondents who had given birth in Tunisia reported that registering newborns and obtaining a birth certificate for them was difficult. The registration of newborns is usually made through a declaration signed by the father. Alternatively, a hospital declaration or a declaration of witnesses can suffice.⁵⁷ In the latter cases, respondents reported delays in the release of the declaration by the hospital. In FGD discussions with women, participants highlighted the difficulty for unmarried women to obtain the registration of their children due to hospital staff's reluctance to admit unmarried women to give birth.

Most reported challenges in access to legal documentation:

- Access to residence permits
- Registration of newborns

⁵⁷ Key Informant interview, Tunis, September 2018.

4.2. Penalties

Migrants who overstay their entry permit in Tunisia face a penalty of overstay of 20 TND⁵⁸ per week. This fee is to be paid when leaving the country, regardless of the type of permit used to enter Tunisia. In 2017 the Tunisian government issued a decree setting the penalties' ceiling to 3,000 TND.⁵⁹ In 2018, a second decree⁶⁰ lifted the penalties applicable to sub-Saharan African students, trainees and people enrolled in professional training courses. **For sub-Saharan workers, this means that, if they stay in Tunisia beyond the three-month entry permit, they pile up penalty fees up to 3,000 TND, which will make it increasingly difficult for them to leave the country as time progresses.**

Penalties:

Two governmental decrees issued in 2017 and 2018 respectively set the penalties' ceiling to 3,000 TND and lifted their payment for students, interns and foreigners enrolled in professional trainings.

More than one third of respondents among workers reported that, even if they decided to leave Tunisia, they would not be able to pay the penalty fees, as their living means barely allowed them to cover their basic needs, like shelter and food (13/33). As a result, respondents reported that they would be unable to exit the country regularly, without external help.

When respondents were asked how they planned to deal with the penalties to be paid, seven respondents stated that they would defer the issue to the moment in which they would leave the country. Reportedly, respondents' employment and financial situation made it impossible for them to save money to pay for penalties

upon departure, rendering respondents entirely dependent upon the help of associations once they decided to return. In some cases, respondents reported being waiting to access IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) scheme, to allow them to go back without paying the fee.

'If I had no penalties to pay, I would go back to Côte d'Ivoire, but the Tunisian government makes it impossible to go back home. I have to pay 4000 TND of penalties. I earn 400 TND, so I can use this amount of money either to live or to pay [the penalties]. I will end up staying here my whole life if I have to pay them.'

Côte d'Ivoire, male worker, 27 years old, arrived in December 2015

4.3. Access to employment

Workers interviewed were predominantly employed in low skilled jobs. Among women, the most common types of work included cleaning, working as housemaids or as beauticians. Men tended to work in other physically demanding jobs, including as builders, shop clerks, restaurant or factory workers. The types of jobs corresponded with the types of jobs most frequently reported by key informants and in FGD participants as typical for sub-Saharan workers in Tunisia. Seven of the workers interviewed were unemployed at the time of data collection, with the majority of them supporting themselves with small daily jobs or support from friends. Two women interviewed were heavily pregnant or had recently given birth, which is why they reportedly did not work.

While respondents reported that it was overall easy to find some kind of employment in Tunisia for sub-Saharan workers, all workers interviewed reported working irregularly in Tunisia (32/62), in either semi-stable forms of employment or casual jobs. This was reportedly due to two reasons. First, most respondents arrived to Tunisia on the three months entry permit which does not give the permit to work in the country. Once respondents overstayed, they could still not work legally. Second, few respondents, who arrived to Tunisia over land irregularly were unable to work legally in country, also due to a lack of work permit.

Access to employment:

Barriers to work legally in the country made respondents more vulnerable to labour exploitation and abuse, especially migrant women.

⁵⁸ This amounts to 7,14 USD. As of 28 September 2018, 1 US dollar equalled 2,8 Tunisian Dinar. Please see [Tunisian Central Bank](#). Last accessed: 01 October 2018

⁵⁹ [Décret gouvernemental n° 2017-1061 du 26 septembre 2017](#), fixant les tarifs des droits de chancellerie, last accessed: 18 October 2018.

⁶⁰ [Décret gouvernemental n° 2018-331 du 6 avril 2018](#), complétant le décret gouvernemental n° 2017-1061 du 26 septembre 2017, fixant les tarifs des droits de chancellerie, last accessed: 18 October 2018.

According to KIs, Tunisian legislation makes it difficult for sub-Saharan migrants to work legally in the country.

Indeed, while nationals of many sub-Saharan countries can enter Tunisia relatively easily, the three months entry permit does not allow the holder to work in the country during this time.⁶¹ The ability to regularise one's status, including receiving a work permit later on is very difficult, due to restrictions on migrant labour. According to Tunisian labour law, foreign workers are only allowed to work in Tunisia if a national cannot fill a given position. Further, employment contracts are limited to one year with only one renewal possible, requiring migrants to have a residence card, which is only accessible to individuals who already have a work permit. In addition, according to Article 258 of the Labour Code⁶², a Ministry of Employment visa is required to obtain a work permit.⁶³ Finally, when losing employment, migrants automatically lose their right to renew their residence permit.

'It's almost impossible for sub-Saharan migrants to work legally according to Tunisian law. We are therefore forced to work irregularly. Only problems can come out of working without contract, mistreatment by the employer is just one of them. It's really a difficult issue for us, working in Tunisia.'

DR Congo, male worker, 22 years old,

As a result of working irregularly, respondents uniformly reported feeling vulnerable to labour exploitation. Repeatedly, respondents reported that employers expected them to work excessive hours, often more than 12 hours a day, for very little pay.

Some also reported being expected to work harder and do more physically straining jobs for less money than their Tunisian co-workers. Overall, respondents reported earning between 200 and a maximum of 400 TND⁶⁴ each month. The low salaries, coupled with the long hours worked, meant that workers faced challenges in setting money aside to send back home (6/33); to use it in order to build their skillset and find better opportunities in Tunisia or elsewhere (3/33); or even to have the time to look into other, possibly better remunerated, opportunities.

'Everyone [sub-Saharan migrants] works, but we work irregularly, without a contract. This means we have no insurance and no social security. A friend of mine worked on a construction site and broke his hand. No one helped him. His employer just left him in front of the hospital. The solution are residence permits, it's the basis of everything.'

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 45 years old,
arrived in 2016

No access to work contracts further meant that sub-Saharan migrant workers could not have access to social security and were, accordingly, not entitled to healthcare in case of accidents during employment hours, as one respondent reported:

'It's not easy to find work here, where you are not at risk of some form of abuse. The son of my employer tried to rape me and then accused me of stealing something to divert attention from what he had done. His parents hit me and threw me out of the house at 10pm in the night.'

Mali, female worker, 29 years old, arrived April 2018

Female workers, usually working in people's homes as cleaning ladies or maids, were reportedly particularly vulnerable to exploitation and potential abuse by their employers. In FGDs, several female participants reported that women working as maids and living in their employers' homes were often not allowed to leave the house, if not

accompanied by their employers. Female respondents also reported the risk of sexual abuse at the hands of their employers, either because they had fallen victim themselves or, because they knew of other women who had.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Zampagni, F., et al., [Migrants In Countries In Crisis. Libya Case Study An Unending Crisis – Responses of Migrants, States and Organisations to the 2011 Libya Crisis](#), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 2017.

⁶² [Tunisian Labour Code](#), 1996.

⁶³ According to KIs, obtaining a work permit for a foreigner is very complicated. The enterprise needs to prove that no Tunisians can occupy the position and or why foreign work is preferred. Once the Ministry of Employment grants its approval, the enterprise is authorised to hire the person.

⁶⁴ Between 71.4 and 142.8 USD. As of 28 September 2018, 1 US dollar equalled 2,8 Tunisian Dinar. Please see [Tunisian Central Bank](#). Last accessed: 01 October 2018

⁶⁵ Please see section entitled 'human trafficking' in the chapter 'Protection risks en route' for further information.

4.4. Security and safety

Most sub-Saharan migrants interviewed reported having been subject to some form of violence or harassment since they arrived in Tunisia. One fourth of respondents (15/62) reported having been a victim of robbery. Eleven respondents also reported having suffered sexual harassment. Verbal and physical harassment of sub-Saharan migrants was described as widespread by both KIs and FGD participants.

'My sisters and I, as soon as we go out to the market, we may be touched inappropriately, in front of others, with no one saying anything. We contribute to the country's economy and we work a lot, but we are treated very badly.'

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 38 years old, arrived October 2016

While most security and safety incidents were described to be of concern for both men and women, women were much more likely to report sexual harassment on the street, including inappropriate touching and verbal sexual harassment. Female respondents also reported being particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse at the workplace, mostly in employers' homes, when female workers were working as maids or cleaning ladies. Two female respondents reported having been victims of attempted rape in their employer's home.

In several FGDs respondents further reported episodes of people, throwing stones at sub-Saharan migrants when crossing the street. One respondent described it as follows:

'You walk along the road and there are children who throw stones after you, who shout racist words at you and insult you. I really don't understand why. I walk quietly, not saying anything to anyone and find myself in this situation.'

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 35 years old, arrived December 2017

4.5. Access to healthcare

Among the 29 respondents who had been in need of healthcare or who had friends or family members who had needed assistance since they arrived in Tunisia, 22 reported having faced challenges in accessing healthcare. The main issues reported by respondents were a lack of information about the Tunisian healthcare system and their rights in Tunisia; delays in accessing treatment, denial of access and language barriers.

While the right to receive basic medical treatment in Tunisia is guaranteed to all,⁶⁶ 6 out of 29 respondents reported having an unclear understanding of how the healthcare system works in Tunisia. Respondents reportedly did not know that they had the right to seek treatment, regardless of their legal status. In at least four cases, respondents reportedly knew someone very close to them who had been denied access to public healthcare due to the lack of papers or as a form of discrimination towards sub-Saharan migrants. These migrants reported that in such cases support provided by specialised NGOs and, at times, employers, proved essential to facilitate access to much needed healthcare.

'Thank God, I did not get sick. A friend tried to go to the hospital to give birth, but they refused to accept her because she did not have a residence card. She ended up giving birth at home.'

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 26 years old, arrived in October 2017

Language barriers in the interaction with hospitals staff, as well as the lack of signposting in French, were also reported by some respondents as a challenge. This meant that respondents were unable to find their way around hospitals and had difficulty in communicating with healthcare professionals, making their access to appropriate healthcare difficult.

Overall, student respondents reported less problems in accessing health services, reportedly thanks to the facilitated access provided to them by their student ID cards (10/23). Nevertheless, KIs, as well as FGD participants from private universities in both Tunis and Sfax, highlighted a discrepancy in individuals' access to healthcare, comparing students in public and private institutions, whereby consultations are levied for the former.

4.6. Access to housing

Many interviewed Sub-Saharan migrants reported various challenges in relation to access to housing. **The most frequently reported challenges were (1) inflated rents (2) scams, whereby respondents were asked to pay**

⁶⁶ KI interview in Tunis, September 2018 and Médecins du Monde, [Plaidoyer pour l'accès des migrants au droit à la santé en Tunisie](#), 2016.

inflated rates for electricity and water and (3) limited access to housing contracts, increasing respondents' risk of eviction and limiting their capacity to get a residence permit, for which a rental contract is required.

In all FGDs and in several individual interviews, respondents reported that sub-Saharan migrants were asked to pay for rent more than Tunisian nationals pay. Respondents also frequently perceived that landlords asked to pay for utilities much higher fees than what respondents had consumed. This was reportedly because landlords took advantage of respondents' limited knowledge of prices in Tunisia when they first arrived. Secondly, landlords reportedly knew that respondents had limited options available to them in terms of housing, as sub-Saharan migrants were reportedly sometimes refused housing because they were foreigners.

'We pay 400 Tunisian Dinars for 3 rooms. Myself, I pay 100 Dinars, as I share the rent with three others. If I didn't share the costs, I couldn't afford to live here, my salary is 400 Dinars. For Tunisians, renting is much cheaper; landlords ask us to pay much more. They do it because they know we can't complain. Even if they decide to throw us out of the house, we can't seek justice, because we have no papers. We have no security here.'

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 35 years old, arrived in November 2017

The challenges surrounding housing were often also related to respondents' irregular situation and their limited ability to have recourse to the law. In several cases, respondents reported being denied a housing contract or being evicted from their home with immediate effect. Respondents also reported that they had to put up with very poor shelter conditions and almost no maintenance offered by the landlord.

4.7. Access to higher education

KIs suggest that the overall number of sub-Saharan students in Tunisia has been declining in recent years due to the administrative barriers and the deterioration of the living conditions in Tunisia. According to one KI, Morocco would be gaining ground compared to Tunisia as a more attractive destination for foreign students thanks to facilitations and incentives to prospective students.

Interviewed students reported most frequently studying IT, engineering, management, mathematics, physics and tourism. The majority studied in private institutes or at public universities in Sfax (12/21), followed by 9 respondents studying in Tunis and 1 individual studying in Monastir. The majority of students interviewed were men (15/21) with 10 respondents aged 18 to 24 and 10 more respondents aged 25 to 34.⁶⁷

Students' most reported challenges with regards to education included: (1) language barriers (10/21), (2) administrative issues (7/21) and (3) the need for upfront payments to access some educational opportunities (3/21). Language barriers in particular were reported in relation to the increased use of Arabic in otherwise French-speaking university classes, a trend which was reportedly on the increase and confirmed by key informants. Lengthy administrative procedures were reported as a concern making studies in Tunisia burdensome, impacting the delay in the issuance of residence permits. Upfront payments of school fees were cited as an issue, as students were reportedly required to pay yearly school fees in one go, with little flexibility to pay the fees in installments.

With regards to migrant children's access to education, KIs reported that migrant children have access to free education in Tunisia, even if their parents are in an irregular situation in the country.

4.8. Sub-Saharan migrants' interaction with the host community

Almost all sub-Saharan migrants interviewed reported that their relations with the host community were strained, characterised by respondents' perception of closure on the part of Tunisian society. The majority of respondents reported having felt discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour and their sub-Saharan origin in a variety of settings and situations in Tunisia, including by university professors and on the means of transportation on a daily basis.

A large majority of respondents reported having made repeatedly the object of derogatory language with a racialised tone. FGD participants and individual interview respondents reported that women were the most targeted by these accidents. **While interactions with the host community appeared to be strained overall,**

⁶⁷ Please note that one respondent did not respond to the question. Hence the total of responses is below the total of 62 respondents who participated in the present assessment.

some variations were visible among respondents in different cities. Sub-Saharan migrant respondents in Tunis, for instance, seem to have built better relationships with their Tunisian host communities. Tunis-based respondents reported having Tunisian friends more frequently. In contrast, in Sfax, respondents alluded to very polarised relations between sub-Saharan migrants and Tunisians often referring to the two communities as two separate ‘poles’, ‘teams’ or ‘clans’.

‘Tunisians do not accept us. There are two teams in the same community, the Ivorian team and the Tunisian team. One considers the other as the enemy. If we had the residence permit, we would be kifkif (equal) - they wouldn’t be able to exploit or attack us.’

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 35 years old, arrived in November 2017

Asked about what could explain the different perceptions of sub-Saharan migrants in Tunis and Sfax, KIs reported that Sfax was often associated with being a ‘workers’ city’, offering limited gathering sites and opportunities for exchange among different communities, compared to Tunis.

Speaking Arabic reportedly helped sub-Saharan migrants interviewed in dealing with potential protection risks, but did not facilitate their acceptance by the host community. When asked about the advantages of speaking Arabic, respondents who had been able to acquire some Arabic knowledge reported being able to better pre-empt negative experiences, such as scam attempts, and respond to street harassment in an appropriate way.

As a result of the limited interactions with the host community, respondents reported feeling isolated in Tunisia. The negative impact of poor host-migrant relations was also reported by KIs. In interviews in Sfax and Tunis,⁶⁸ KIs highlighted the effects that poor quality of interaction may have on migrants’ psychological wellbeing, including the heightened risk of depression and general sense of alienation.

‘It’s a cultural shock for sub-Saharan migrants when they reach Sfax: in Sfax, at 7p.m. you go out and there is nobody, everyone sleeps. In my country, when the sun goes down, that’s when the people come out and are more active.’

Key informant (from sub-Saharan African country) interview, Sfax

4.9. Particularly vulnerable groups

KIs and FGD participants were asked about particularly vulnerable population groups among the sub-Saharan migrant community in Tunisia. Several vulnerable groups emerged. The most reported vulnerable population groups were **(1) female sub-Saharan workers; (2) sub-Saharan pregnant women and (3) newly arrived migrants.** However, overall, KIs and sub-Saharan migrant respondents alike reported that the cross-cutting issue making most sub-Saharan migrants vulnerable in Tunisia was their irregular situation in the country.

4.9.1. Female workers

In both mixed gender and female-only FGDs in Tunis and Sfax respondents agreed that the most vulnerable group among sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia are female workers. This was reportedly because female sub-Saharan workers tended to work as house maids or cleaning ladies, often living with their employer. FGD participants repeatedly reported that female workers were not allowed to leave the house and worked excessive hours in servitude-like conditions. Two female workers interviewed reported having had their passport confiscated by their employer in the past, creating complete dependence on the employer. These dynamics were also confirmed by FGD participants and KIs who reported how the phenomenon of trafficking of sub-Saharan female workers in Tunisia is linked to both labour and sexual exploitation.

‘In Sfax it was terrible. When we arrived in Sfax, the lady directly confiscated our passports and our phones. The husband gave my mother 200 TND each month to take care of my son, another 200 TND of my sister’s salary was given to my mother. I worked from 6am until midnight. I went to sleep at midnight. I spent all day cleaning, gardening, cleaning the furniture and everything. My sister would take care of 3 children. When the children were not sleeping, we wouldn’t sleep either. The lady always shouted, insulted us and she was never satisfied. We were staying at home, we did not have the possibility to go outside.’

Côte d'Ivoire, female worker, 27 years old, arrived in December 2015

⁶⁸ KI interviews in Sfax and Tunis, August and September 2018.

4.9.2. Pregnant women and mothers of newborns

In female-only FGDs, respondents also reported the particularly vulnerable situation for sub-Saharan women who are pregnant or give birth in Tunisia. First, pregnant sub-Saharan workers are reportedly more exposed to being fired once unable to continue their work before child birth and also upon giving birth, making them

'I worked as a housekeeper but stopped working because of the child. He was born in Tunisia. They refused to give me a birth certificate.'

Côte d'Ivoire, unemployed female, 28 years old,
arrived in October 2017

entirely dependable on friends or other sources of support. Second, several respondents explained the challenge of giving birth in a public hospital as an unmarried sub-Saharan woman. Respondents reported that either they were not admitted to giving birth in the hospital, because they were unmarried, or, once they gave birth, mothers were not given their child's birth certificate, because they did not give the name of the child's father.

4.9.3. New arrivals

Some respondents also reported that newly arrived sub-Saharan migrants were a particularly vulnerable group. This was reportedly because newly arrived individuals did not yet have the contextual knowledge and information to navigate life in Tunisia successfully, making them more vulnerable to paying inflated prices, trusting individuals who could later deceive them or also just knowing less their way around Tunisia.

5. Migratory intentions

This section of the report outlines the future migratory intentions of the sub-Saharan migrants interviewed, as well as the different factors that influence respondents' decision-making over leaving or staying in Tunisia.

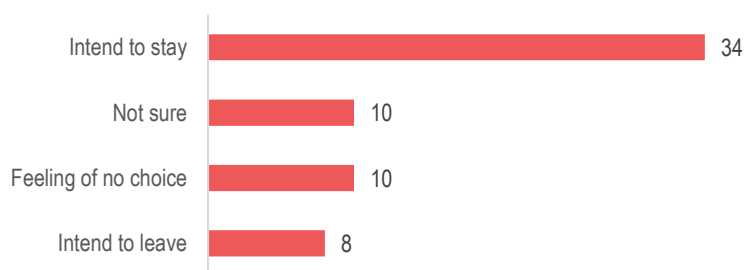
KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of sub-Saharan migrants interviewed stated that they **planned to stay** in Tunisia in the coming **6 and 12 months**.
- The proportion of **sub-Saharan migrants intending to leave Tunisia doubled from the 6 to the 12 months timeframe**, possibly because of a higher number of transit migrants than reported or because of the need to accumulate sufficient resources to move on.
- Factors affecting migrants' intentions to leave were all linked to the challenges respondents faced in their day-to-day lives in Tunisia.

5.1. Respondents' future migratory intentions

The majority of sub-Saharan migrants interviewed stated that they planned to stay in Tunisia in the coming six months (34/62). One in six respondents reported that they felt they had no choice over whether to stay or leave Tunisia as, due to the penalties for irregular overstay accumulated, they were reportedly stuck in Tunisia, unable to return, even if they wanted to (10/62). Ten further respondents were reportedly not sure whether they wanted to stay and eight individuals reported wanting to leave Tunisia in the coming six months.

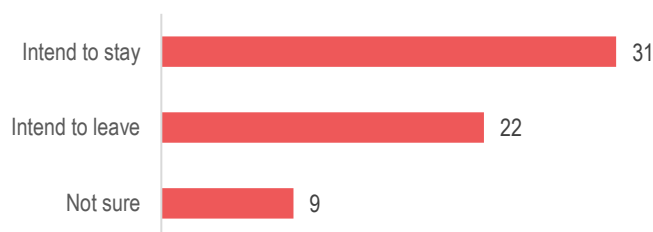
Figure 7: Sub-Saharan respondents' migratory intentions in the six months following data collection



Total: 62 respondents

Respondents who intended to stay for the coming six months reportedly did so mostly in view of finishing their studies or vocational training (23/34). Five respondents wanted to stay in Tunisia, as they felt they had not yet saved enough money to return to their country of origin.

Figure 8: Sub-Saharan respondents' migratory intentions in the 12 months following data collection

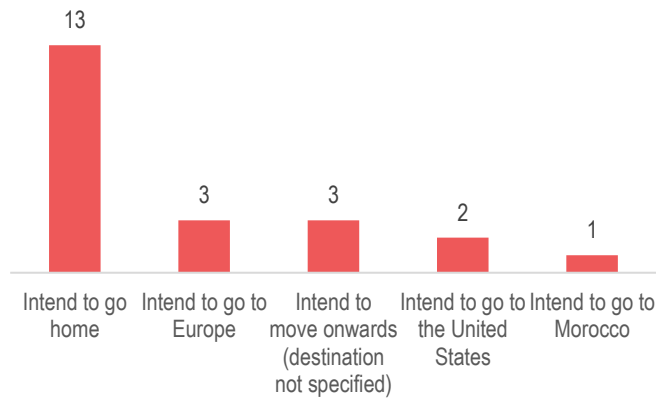


Total: 62 respondents

When asked what sub-Saharan migrants interviewed planned to do in a 12 months' timeframe, the number of respondents reporting intending to stay in Tunisia remained relatively constant (31, compared to 34 within a 6 months timeframe). **In contrast, the proportion of sub-Saharan migrants intending to leave Tunisia increased from 10 to 22 individuals from the 6 to the 12 month-timeframe.**

Among those who expressed the intention to leave within 12 months, the majority reported wanting to return to their home country (13/22), with 9 respondents reportedly wanting to go to third countries. Of those who reportedly planned to travel elsewhere (and not to the country of origin) in the coming 12 months, the relative majority aimed to go to Europe, reported by three individuals, followed by two individuals wanting to go to the United States and one to Morocco.⁶⁹ This included both regular and irregular movements.

Figure 9: Breakdown of respondents' migratory intentions to leave in the upcoming 12 months



Total: 22 respondents

Top 3 destinations (Intentions to leave):

1. Country of origin (13/22)
2. Europe (3/22) or Destination unspecified (3/22)
3. United States (2/22)

While no significant differences in terms of future intentions were found between newly arrived respondents and individuals who had been in Tunisia for one year or longer, **the number of recently arrived respondents who expressed the intention to leave in a 12 month-timeframe, saw more than a three-fold increase compared to those intending to leave in the upcoming 6 months** (11 respondents as opposed to 3).

Two possible explanations can account for this change. On the one hand, it is likely that among recently arrived migrants there is a much higher number of transit migrants than what respondents self-reported, considering the reluctance of respondents to speak about transit migration. The difference in intentions for the upcoming 6 or 12 months is likely to be explained by respondents' need to accumulate sufficient resources to continue their journeys onward. The latter assumption would be reinforced by the indication that recently arrived migrants are among the most vulnerable groups of migrants in Tunisia and, faced with harsh conditions, are more likely to want to leave as soon as they meet their goals or gather the resources needed to do so. In comparison, among respondents who had been in Tunisia for one year or more, this increase was only two-fold (6 respondents versus 12).

5.2. Factors influencing intentions to stay or leave Tunisia

Sub-Saharan migrants interviewed were asked about the factors that influenced their decision over staying or leaving Tunisia and whether they would advise other sub-Saharan migrants in their countries of origin to come to Tunisia.

5.2.1. Factors influencing migratory intentions

The main factors respondents cited as shaping their migratory intentions in Tunisia were related to their living conditions, the main challenges they faced in the country and their aspirations for better conditions elsewhere. **Most respondents reported that the difficulties they faced in Tunisia, related to access to documentation, decent work and relations with the host community, meant that they did not see themselves building a future in the country in the longer term.** Rather, respondents saw Tunisia as an intermittent destination, where they planned to stay for months or a few years, to then fulfil their projects elsewhere. Interestingly though, almost

⁶⁹ Please note that not all respondents responded to this question. As a result, the total is below the number of 22 respondents who intended to leave within 12 months.

half of respondents interviewed by 4Mi between September and October 2017 (141/310) reported that even aware of the living conditions in Tunisia, they would still have chosen to go to Tunisia.⁷⁰

Penalties were reported as a key factor restraining respondents' intentions. According to some respondents, the need to pay to leave the country led some sub-Saharan migrants to attempt to transit irregularly to Libya, as they felt trapped in Tunisia, unable to pay for the penalties and leave the country via legal means.

Some respondents reported a vicious circle, whereby some sub-Saharan migrants who had already reached Tunisia based on false premises faced particular difficulties in making an informed and 'real' choice over whether to stay in Tunisia or not. As a result of respondents' vulnerable situation in Tunisia, their exposure to risky journeys could further heighten.

'A lot of people are betrayed. People are sold dreams of a better life in Tunisia, but when they come here, they find nothing. Then the penalties accumulate little by little and they are forced to plunge into the sea and go to Europe. They pay 3,500 TND (1,250 USD) per trip.'

Mali, female worker, 29 years old, arrived in August 2018

Factors influencing intentions to leave:

- Access to legal documentation
- Access to decent work
- Strained relations with the host community
- Penalties to be paid

5.2.2. Advising friends back home on Tunisia as a destination

With regards to what respondents would advise others, about two thirds of respondents stated that they would not recommend their acquaintances to come to Tunisia (38/60).⁷¹ This opinion was equally shared by both students (19/60) and workers (19/60), with no difference among migrants who had arrived in Tunisia within the last 12 months and those who had been in the country for longer. More than half of respondents who participated in the survey by 4Mi in 2017 reported instead that they would maybe encourage others to come (170/310), despite finding their life in their current location in Tunisia more difficult than they had previously expected (150/310).⁷² Individual factors, as much as the different timeframes and contexts in which the question was asked, may play a role in shaping respondents' perceptions. As REACH data was collected in 2018, almost a year later than 4Mi data, migrants' perception of living conditions in Tunisia might reflect an increased discontent towards Tunisia's socio-economic conditions and overall day-to-day challenges in Tunisia.

A remaining third of respondents reportedly would advise other migrants to come, but only for education-related reasons (17/60). Overall, respondents appeared to agree that Tunisia is a country for study and tourism. When asked to highlight some points that made Tunisia an attractive destination, most respondents mentioned culture and local heritage, food and the still relatively affordable cost of living.

When asked about the factors which, according to respondents, made Tunisia an unattractive destination for sub-Saharan migrants, the vast majority reported the **challenges they faced in relation to acquiring residence permits to stay and the key risk of accumulating penalties for overstay, which made leaving Tunisia extremely difficult for sub-Saharan migrants.**

⁷⁰ 4Mi, sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia dataset, October 2017.

⁷¹ Please note that not all respondents responded to this question.

⁷² 4Mi, sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia dataset, October 2017.

6. Mobility patterns in relation to Europe and neighbouring countries

This section of the report analyses variations in mobility patterns of sub-Saharan migration between Tunisia and other countries in the North African region, including Libya, Algeria and Morocco, as well as mobility of sub-Saharan migrants from Tunisia to Europe since 2017.

KEY FINDINGS

- Only **6 out of 62 respondents knew someone** who went from Tunisia to Libya.
- **1/5 of respondents (11/62) knew someone** who went from Libya to Tunisia via land in the past 12 months.
- **The majority** of sub-Saharan migrants interviewed for this assessment **knew somebody** who had left Tunisia for Europe (40/62).
- The inability to pay off penalties for their irregular stay in Tunisia was reported by workers as the primary reason motivating their acquaintances' irregular journeys via boat to Europe.
- **Sub-Saharanans' mobility between Tunisia and Algeria or Tunisia and Morocco was negligible.**

Map 9: Tunisia and its neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean region



6.1. Recent developments in Tunisia's neighbouring countries

Mobility patterns in North African countries have been characterised by two main trends in 2017: increased migration controls in main transit and destination hubs, and the re-emerging importance of the Western Mediterranean Route.

While increased border controls applied as a general trend, this became more evident in Algeria and Libya in 2017. As an increasingly important transit and destination country for sub-Saharan African migrants in the last years, in 2017, **Algeria** scaled up efforts to increase security along its borders, including by increasing episodes of detention and repatriation of sub-Saharan African irregular migrants, which also targeted women, children and other vulnerable groups. The criminalisation of irregular migration, coupled with a rising xenophobic discourse, was allegedly motivated by domestic considerations and international pressure.⁷³

In **Libya**, starting from the second half of 2017, measures taken by the EU, its member states and the Libyan government resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of departures of irregular migrants from traditional sites

⁷³ Del Pistoia, D., [Why Algeria is emptying itself of African migrant workers](#), Refugees Deeply, 10 July 2018.

of embarkation located in the Western area of the country, and in an increase of interceptions of boats attempting to cross the Mediterranean.⁷⁴ As of July 2018, only 23% of migrants leaving from Libya made it to Europe.⁷⁵

While restrictive migration policies were being implemented along the Western Mediterranean Route and sea arrivals in Italy were drastically decreasing, a larger proportion of migrants reached Spain via the Western Mediterranean Route through **Morocco**. In 2017, Spain received 201% more migrant arrivals than in 2016.⁷⁶

It remains unclear to what extent the emergence of new migratory routes can be explained by the migrant crackdown in other North African countries. Hence, the upcoming sub-sections aim to provide a preliminary overview of how such events might have affected mobility patterns to and from Tunisia. While it was initially established that Tunis and Sfax would be the two sites for data collection for this assessment, preliminary results emerging from data collection suggested that the Southern region of Tunisia would offer more insights to answer the research question 6 on evolving mobility dynamics between Tunisia and Libya. This issue was timely addressed by deploying a mission in the South of Tunisia, however, the limited time allowed for data collection and other related operational constraints affected the extensiveness of data collection activities in the governorate of Medenine. Hence while the individual interviews and FGD conducted provided insightful information, more research efforts are needed to provide a more exhaustive answer to research question number 6.

6.2. Mobility patterns between Libya and Tunisia

Sub-Saharan migrant respondents, FGD participants and KIs were asked about the two-way mobility patterns between Libya and Tunisia and if these had changed since 2017. Sub-Saharan migrants were asked about their personal experiences and experiences of persons they knew crossing either way, while KIs were asked about wider trends in mobility between the two countries, on the basis of their regional expertise.

Overall, it emerged that more irregular land crossings of sub-Saharan migrants from Libya to Tunisia occur, compared to from Tunisia to Libya.⁷⁷

6.2.1. From Tunisia to Libya

Interviewed Sub-Saharan migrants and KIs reported that the irregular land route from Tunisia to Libya was used only rarely by sub-Saharan migrants, mostly because of the dangers migrants knew they would face in Libya.

Among migrant respondents, only six individuals reportedly knew someone who had crossed from Tunisia to Libya. Three of them mentioned knowing somebody who had taken this route in the last 12 months. One respondent had personally unsuccessfully attempted to cross from Tunisia to Libya once during the last year. The presence of a flow of people, particularly Ivorian and Senegalese nationals, travelling from their country of origin to Tunis and then through smugglers all the way South to Ben Guerdane, Tunisia, to cross to Libya was mentioned by key informants interviewed in Tunis and the Southern region.⁷⁸

However, key informants in all three data collection sites confirmed that, based on their observations, this flow had been in decline since 2017.⁷⁹

Considering the dangers sub-Saharan migrants were likely to face in Libya, respondents reported that only individuals with a high-risk threshold would attempt this journey. Migrants often referred to these people as

Mobility between Libya and Tunisia

- Greater awareness of the dangers in Libya, but Libya remains a possible hub of departure to reach Europe due to heightened controls along the coast in Tunisia.
- Only 6 out of 62 respondents knew someone who had gone to Libya from Tunisia
- 11 out of 62 respondents knew someone who had gone from Libya to Tunisia via land in the past 12 months.

⁷⁴ REACH/UNHCR, [Mixed migration routes and dynamics in Libya: The impact of EU migration measures on mixed migration in Libya, April 2018](#).

⁷⁵ Villa M., [Tweet](#) from 2 August 2018, ISPI estimates.

⁷⁶ UNHCR, [Operational Portal. Refugee Situation – Spain](#), last accessed 1 October 2018.

⁷⁷ KI interviews in Tunis and Medenine, August 2018

⁷⁸ According to a 2017 IOM report, an increasing number of Ivorian women flew to Tunisia before going to Libya and the IOM notes that this trend only concerns women. In 2017, the IOM interviewed more than 1 000 migrants who voluntarily came back to Côte d'Ivoire after traveling through the Central Mediterranean route. Out of the people surveyed, the IOM noticed 62% of Ivorian women had transited through Tunisia before reaching Libya in the hope to later go to Europe. It is worth noting that men usually go from Mali, Algeria and Niger before going to Libya and therefore they do not transit through Tunisia.

⁷⁹ KI interviews in Tunis, Sfax and Medenine, August 2018

'adventure seekers' or 'chance takers', whom they described as generally unresponsive to warnings against possible risks they might face in Libya. Some migrants explained the heightened awareness about the dangers in Libya to be the result of the strong mediatization of some of the protection risks incurred by sub-Saharan migrants during their stay in Libya, like enslavement or kidnapping.

During the FGDs, some sub-Saharan migrants reported that the heightened controls around the islands of Kerkennah since the two major tragedies of October 2017 and June 2018,⁸⁰ makes it more difficult for migrants who intended to cross to Europe to leave from Tunisia and may still drive some of them to Libya to transit from there to Europe. In some cases, respondents knew individuals who had re-routed their journey from Tunisia to Libya, as a result of the increased border controls around boat departures from Tunisia.

'An Ivorian acquaintance. She is a housekeeper. She went to Libya to go to Europe. I do not know what happened to her. She was undocumented and could not pay the penalties so she chose to go via sea.'

Côte d'Ivoire, housemaid, 27 years old, arrived in December 2015

6.2.2. From Libya to Tunisia

While views among KIs differed about any possible fluctuations in mobility from Libya to Tunisia, some reported a slight increase since 2017, a view confirmed by individual interview respondents. KIs who had worked with irregular sub-Saharan migrants in the South reported having seen a slight increase in the movement of people coming from Libya since 2017, although cautioning that numbers remained low. Other KIs reported that the smuggling land route from Libya to Tunisia was only used for goods and not people.

However, one in five interviewed sub-Saharan migrants interviewed in Tunis and Sfax reported knowing personally someone who had crossed from Libya to Tunisia via the land border in the past 12 months (12/62). Further, among individual interviews and FGDs conducted in the South of Tunisia, in Medenine and Zarzis, in four out of five cases, individuals interviewed had either crossed via land into Tunisia or, in one case, had been rescued at sea off the coast of Zarzis.

Box 4: The case of two Guinean respondents who re-routed from Libya to Tunisia

Two respondents, both Guinean nationals in their early 20s, had entered Tunisia from Libya in August 2018, after having unsuccessfully attempted to transit to Europe from Libya via boat. Both of them had left Guinea Conakry with the intention to reach Europe more than two years prior to arriving in Tunisia. After an already fragmented journey from their country of origin, they faced severe protection risks once in Libya in attempting to cross the sea to Italy. As one respondent recalled:

'I tried to cross the Mediterranean twice. The first time I was sold, instead of being put on a boat. The second time I was arrested and spent one month in a detention centre. It was horrible. I had to pay my way out.'

Before the third tried crossing, the respondent reportedly heard of the increase in coastguard controls along the Libyan coast and the risk of being sent back to a detention centre. This made him decide to try to go to Tunisia instead:

'I was about to try for a third time, but I got to know that, due to the agreements between the EU and Libya, the risk would be that no rescue boat would come to save us and that at the same time if we got caught by the Libyan coastguard, we would be sent back to Libya. So I searched for a smuggler who knew the border who could help me to cross into Tunisia.'

Knowledge about increased coastguard controls, however, did not discourage others to come first to Libya to see the situation for themselves before re-routing once in the country, as the second respondent recalled:

'We were following the news at the time and we knew about the agreements between Libyan militias and the EU. But we were not convinced, as there were every now and then still some boats departing. So we still came to Libya.'

To find a smuggler to help cross into Tunisia was reportedly easy with respondents relying on friends or people they had met in Libya to introduce them to a smuggler:

'Finally, I got discouraged and told myself I had to change route. I had some Ivorian friends who told me to go to Tunisia because I could find again some hope there. So I went to Zwara, where I worked for some time and found a smuggler. I paid him 1,000 Libyan Dinars to take me by car to the border. I walked along the coast line and managed to escape the border controls. I arrived in Ben Guerdane, found a taxi and asked him to bring me where I could find other 'black people'.'

⁸⁰ Many Tunisians and third-country nationals intending to reach Europe lost their lives in these two accidents off the Tunisian coast.

6.3. Mobility patterns from Tunisia to Europe

Tunisia can be a stepping stone for sub-Saharan migrants to travel to Europe both regularly and irregularly. While no official statistics exist on regular onward journeys of sub-Saharan migrants to Europe, from January to August 2018, 208 sub-Saharan migrants were apprehended off the Tunisian coast in an attempt to reach Europe irregularly.⁸¹ **The majority of sub-Saharan migrants interviewed for this assessment knew somebody who had left Tunisia for Europe (40/62).** These respondents reportedly knew both sub-Saharan migrants who had left Tunisia legally and individuals who had left or attempted to leave irregularly via boat.

While student respondents tended to know other students who had left for Europe through legal means, migrant workers interviewed were more likely to know individuals who had transited or attempted to transit irregularly. Full time students, graduates and migrants currently undergoing vocational training (13/20) knew of former classmates who had gone to Europe for further studies or after having received an employment offer.

6.3.1. Legal onward travel

About half of the students interviewed for this assessment (17/33) knew peers who had applied for visas to European countries to continue their education abroad or to look for better employment opportunities. The most adopted channels by these students were applications through the bureaus of cultural promotion abroad of European countries, most notably France ('Campus France') and Belgium. Some students also cited Germany and Canada as possible other destinations.

6.3.2. Irregular boat travel

The inability to pay off penalties for their irregular stay in Tunisia (8/20) was reported by workers as the primary reason motivating their acquaintances' irregular journeys via boat to Europe. Lack of funds to pay the penalties meant that sub-Saharan migrants were stuck, unable to return to their countries of origin or travel elsewhere. **Given the dangerous situation in Libya and the tough entry regulations for sub-Saharan migrants to enter Algeria, respondents reported that the irregular boat trip to Europe was de facto the only way for them to leave Tunisia.**

Comparatively few sub-Saharan workers interviewed reportedly knew of sub-Saharan migrants who had come to Tunisia to directly transit via boat to Europe (4/20). In general, during individual interviews and FGDs sub-Saharan respondents tended to be hesitant to speak about the topic of transit migration through Tunisia to Europe, often appearing to distance themselves from individuals they had heard of who had attempted the sea journey. It emerged that for many sub-Saharan migrants in the country this topic is a taboo issue, as, already in an irregular situation, sub-Saharan migrants reportedly know that being associated with transit migrants may put them in an even more vulnerable situation.

While not necessarily an indication of intention to depart, levels of information among respondents about the journey modalities and costs of the irregular boat trip from Tunisia to Europe appeared to be quite detailed. Some respondents were able to comment extensively on the range of prices applied, which they reported to be between 2,500 and 3,500 TND.⁸² Some respondents also spoke about the presence of networks of recruiters or smugglers – both Tunisian and sub-Saharan nationals – approaching migrants to sell them journeys by boat.

'I know about the sinking that made the front page, I knew 10 [people] who were on that boat. It is because of the complicity between Tunisian smugglers and volunteers (sub-Saharans who want to leave). They ask them to spread the word and recruit other people and sometimes they offer them money. It's a business. The crossing costs between 2,500 TND and 3,000 TND and it is made in places like the Kerkennah islands, Sidi Mansour, Mahdia.'

Côte d'Ivoire, male worker, 29 years old, arrived in November 2017

⁸¹ Herbert, M. and Gallien, M., [Tunisia isn't a migrant transit country – yet](#), 29 August 2018.

⁸² As of 28 September 2018, 1 US dollar equalled 2.8 Tunisian Dinars. Hence 2,500 to 3,000 TND equal to 892.95 to 1071.43 USD. For more information, please consult the website of the [Tunisian Central Bank](#). Last accessed: 01 October 2018.

6.4. Mobility patterns to and from Morocco and Algeria

Overall, sub-Saharan migrants and KIs alike reported that sub-Saharanans' mobility between Tunisia and Algeria or Tunisia and Morocco was negligible. With regards to mobility between Tunisia and Algeria, only two respondents had acquaintances who had opted to go to or had come from Algeria. With regards to mobility to and from Morocco, five respondents knew somebody who had reached Morocco from Tunisia.

Among respondents who had spent some time in Algeria as part of their journey, it appears that these individuals had come to **Tunisia as part of a secondary movement after having attempted to either cross into Morocco or into Libya**, only later entering to Tunisia. In the cases of the two respondents who had heard about such movements, mobility was either motivated by visa renewal procedures or alternatively to go to study there. The currently negligible nature of this mobility was also reported by KIs knowledgeable about migration dynamics in both Tunisia and Algeria.

Regarding the motivations of sub-Saharan migrants to go from Tunisia to Morocco, opinions were mixed.

Some respondents reported the positive experience of migrants they knew that had left Tunisia for Morocco, who told them about the greater chances to regularise one's migratory status through longer term residence permits. However, other respondents reported issues related to the more precarious employment and safety environment they had heard of in Morocco. Two respondents who had personally travelled to Morocco before coming to Tunisia also pointed to the inability to find employment and the risk of scams which pushed them to leave Morocco and come to Tunisia instead.

CONCLUSIONS

Among North African and Mediterranean countries, Tunisia is one of the few countries that have less restrictive entry policies for many sub-Saharan African nationalities. Sub-Saharan African migrants come to Tunisia to study, work and potentially transit elsewhere. While sub-Saharan migration to Tunisia is nothing new, there has been up to recently only very limited information on the situation of sub-Saharan migrants in Tunisia, the drivers of migration to the country, the routes they use, the challenges individuals face once in Tunisia, as well as their migratory intentions from Tunisia onwards. Considering Tunisia's position between North African countries, which present increasingly hostile environments for sub-Saharan migrants, the question further arises how sub-Saharan migration towards Tunisia sits within regional migration dynamics, both within North Africa and towards Europe. The conclusions below emerged from the findings presented in this report:

Drivers of migration

This study confirmed that sub-Saharan migrants' choices to migrate result from the complex interplay of structural and personal factors, sustained by agents facilitating migration. For the vast majority of respondents in this study, Tunisia was the intended destination upon departure and the result of straightforward journeys from origin to destination. The quality of Tunisian education, the perception of better employment opportunities, combined with the ease in reaching the country regularly were among the most reported drivers.

Individual preferences on reaching Tunisia compared to its North African neighbours and the existence of networks facilitating migrants' mobility to Tunisia give an indication, as already suggested by other sources, that **Tunisia is already a country of destination, despite the limited size of its foreign population.**

Routes and protection risks en route

Migrants prefer taking safe and direct trajectories, whenever they exist. As the vast majority of respondents for this study aimed to reach Tunisia as their intended destination, almost all interviewed sub-Saharan migrants' routes to Tunisia were linear, with respondents arriving to Tunisia by plane, thanks to visa exemptions. Conversely, the limited number of respondents who aimed to reach Europe upon departure had more fragmented journeys. This is an indicator of the more dangerous and lengthy routes that respondents had to take because of the need to circumvent restrictive immigration policies.

Individuals who were able to travel legally to Tunisia were significantly less exposed to protection risks, compared to those who undertook more fragmented journeys. The limited number of respondents who crossed multiple countries before reaching Tunisia reported having relied on smugglers and having engaged in exploitative forms of employment to collect the economic resources necessary to pay for the journey. Female respondents in particular reported having been exposed to sexual harassment and abuse along the journey. Libya remained one of the most traumatising segments of migrants' journeys to Tunisia due the severity of human rights violations they suffered.

Life and challenges in Tunisia

While the ease with which many sub-Saharan nationals can enter Tunisia regularly contributes to its de facto status as a country of destination, the Tunisian legal and policy framework poses constraints to sub-Saharan African migrants' ability to remain legally in the country. This, in turn, has immediate consequences on all aspects of sub-Saharan African migrants' day-to-day lives, from access to healthcare and employment to shaping respondents' future migratory intentions. Barriers to access legal documentation reportedly made sub-Saharan African migrants' more vulnerable to labour exploitation and abuse, and restrained students' access to higher education, the main reason for many for having reached Tunisia in the first place. Similarly, the payment of the penalty fees remains an important concern and is likely to affect the migratory intentions of those who would like to go home but are stranded in the country.

A strong sense of isolation emerged from sub-Saharan African migrants' accounts of their interaction with the Tunisian host society. Respondents mostly reported having limited interaction with Tunisians and to be frequently exposed to derogatory language and harassment, which in some cases escalated in episodes of violence, thus nurturing sub-Saharan African migrants' feeling of not being welcome in the Tunisia.

Migratory intentions

Findings on respondents' future migratory intentions in Tunisia indicate two key trends. First, half of respondents interviewed reportedly intended to stay in Tunisia, regardless of the 6 or 12-month timeframe. This is indicative of **Tunisia' status as destination country and is reinforced by the fact that for the vast majority of respondents, Tunisia was their intended destination upon departure from their country of origin.**

The other half of respondents reported shifting migratory intentions, based on short-term or long-term considerations. This second half is hence likely to include transit migrants, who are gathering the necessary resources to move elsewhere, and recently arrived migrants, who wait to see what their life in Tunisia will be before making any migratory decisions.

For the group of undecided migrants, who predominantly would like to return home in the longer run, penalties to pay for their irregular stay could be crucial to remain stranded in the country or to make the decision to embark on dangerous journeys to Europe. As paying the penalties may become more expensive than taking the boat to transit irregularly to Europe, taking the boat may become the only option for migrants who want to leave Tunisia but cannot do so due to the penalties they would have to pay to leave legally.

Regional dynamics

Evidence collected for this study supports the claim that Tunisia has not turned yet into a new transit hub for migration to Europe as a consequence of a re-rerouting from Libya.⁸³ This is based both on individual interviews, whereby only a minority of sub-Saharan African respondents reportedly wanted to go to Europe, and KIs working in the field. The high level of detailed awareness about modalities and costs of the journey to Europe found among migrant respondents is telling, however, of the topicality of the phenomenon, suggesting that respondents knew more people having left for Europe than they reported, due to the sensitivity of the subject.

It would also be misleading to dissociate the analysis of Tunisia's mobility dynamics from the recent events in the region, and, in particular, in Libya. While all respondents agreed that mobility from and towards Algeria and Morocco did not change much lately, evidence gathered in the South of Tunisia by interviewing KIs and sub-Saharan migrants suggests that an increase, although modest in numbers, of migrants coming from Libya, has been occurring since 2017.

Sub-Saharan respondents interviewed in the South, all recently arrived, had crossed the border by foot from Libya to Tunisia themselves, or knew someone who had done the same. Reference to the inability to leave Libya's shores because of increased border controls and awareness of the better conditions in Tunisia were reported among the drivers of respondents' mobility to Tunisia. While all confirmed the limited size of these inflows, given the limited number of respondents interviewed in the South, more research is required to gauge the scope of the phenomenon and how this may develop in the future, especially against the backdrop of the deterioration of the security conditions in western Libya.

Areas for further investigation:

- In the course of data collection, the specific dynamics of mobility in the South emerged as peculiar, compared to other key migration sites in the country, in particular in relation to Libya. Limited evidence suggested that although no substantial re-routing is happening from Libya to Tunisia, an increase in land arrivals of sub-Saharan migrants from Libya to Tunisia is occurring. The individual drivers and mechanisms sustaining this modest increase of people crossing from Libya to Tunisia need to be investigated further to understand the size and relevance of this phenomenon.
- This study mostly focused on students and workers, but outlined some of the challenges that migrants with families face in their day-to-day lives in Tunisia. A greater understanding of these dynamics and how these differ from the migration experiences of single migrants is needed. In particular, future research efforts should focus on the challenges faced by migrant women and single mothers both from a socio-economic and legal perspective.

⁸³ Herbert, M. and Gallien, M., [Tunisia isn't a migrant transit country – yet](#), 29 August 2018.

- Although many relevant actors working on asylum in Tunisia were consulted, more needs to be known about the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in Tunisia, including their profiles, living conditions and livelihood strategies in the country.