

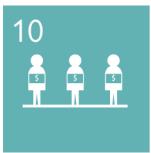
13.

Overview of migrants in vulnerable situations assisted in the transit centres, the Niger¹

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VULNERABILITIES



TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Abstract: This chapter provides an overview of the main vulnerabilities and risks faced by migrants assisted in the IOM transit centres in the Niger en route back to their countries of origin, and of changes to such risks observed over the past three years. These are also presented through migrants' personal stories. The clear pattern that emerges is an overrepresentation of certain nationalities and demographics among unaccompanied migrant children and victims of trafficking. The chapter recommends the utilization of an evidence-based approach in aligning programming with the main patterns observed among migrants in vulnerable situations, particularly victims of trafficking.

13.1. Overview

Migrants transiting through the Niger intending to return to their countries of origin or community of origin with the assistance of IOM temporarily stay in transit centres in Arlit, Agadez, Dirkou or Niamey (three centres) until their scheduled departures to their home countries or communities.³ All migrants arriving at the transit centres do so on a voluntary basis and are registered and informed about their rights and the services provided by IOM.⁴ Assistance in the centres includes accommodation, water, food, access to health care, preparation and facilitation of travel documents,⁵ psychosocial support, protection screening and support to most vulnerable migrants, recreational activities and vocational trainings. In 2016 and 2017, most migrants arrived at the transit centres at their own initiative or by referral by one of IOM's community mobilizers. In 2018, this shifted to the highest

¹ This chapter was written with support from IOM Protection field staff in Niamey (Eva Pons, Nikolaas Swyngedouw, Harira Middah Darius, Halimatou Hassane Bolmey, Boube Cheffou, Balkissa Amoudou Souley, Rekia Sidibe), Agadez (Hawa Diallo, Abdoukader Djibir, Malika Ka Abdoulaye, Fatima Ibrahima Mohamat, Jamilou Hamza) and Arlit (Aichatou Abdou Nar).

² IOM Niger.

³ The majority of migrants assisted in the transit centres are foreign, but there are also some assisted migrants from the Niger, who typically come to the transit centres on their own initiative. Foreign migrants are assisted to return to their countries of origin and migrants from the Niger to their communities of origin. These do not include those from the Niger who are repatriated from the official convoys (as they stay and receive assistance at a temporary site in Agadez managed by the Government of the Niger), but may include some people from the Niger expelled from Algeria or rescued through IOM's search and rescue operations conducted in the areas around Agadez, Arlit, Dirkou and Bilma.

⁴ Most migrants arriving to the transit centres were expelled from Algeria, particularly in 2018 and 2019. Of those expelled from Algeria, the majority (95%) chose to opt into IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme at the transit centres. In some situations, migrants who originally arrived to the transit centres with the intention of participating in the AVRR programme changed their minds and chose to leave the transit centres for various reasons.

⁵ As the majority of migrants do not have identification documents for various reasons (for example, being lost or confiscated), IOM Niger liaises with the relevant consulates and embassies in the Niger to issue travel documents for migrants, and also liaises with the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire in the Niger to issue travel documents for migrants from countries without embassies or consulates in the Niger.

number of migrants (46%) arriving at transit centres after being expelled from Algeria, a significant increase from 2017, when only 4 per cent of migrants arrived with the assistance of IOM after being stranded in the desert.⁶

Most migrants in the transit centres in the Niger reported that they were staying in Algeria or Libya to seek economic opportunities. Their desire to voluntarily return to their countries of origin is usually marked by an unsuccessful migration experience. This may be due to being expelled, especially in 2018 and 2019, when expulsions from Algeria increased significantly (see Overview of Migration Trends in the Republic of the Niger: 2016–2019). In other, but fewer, cases, particularly for migrants who were previously staying in Libya, migrants, mainly foreign, made their own decisions to return to their countries of origin and sought the assistance of IOM at the transit centres. Their decisions were usually the result of a difficult experience or of hearing stories from other migrants, which included the common themes of torture, labour exploitation and sexual exploitation.

13.2. Migrants in vulnerable situations

Several factors make migrants vulnerable to being exploited during their migration journey or at the final destination. Migrants are vulnerable to abuses and exploitation, including trafficking in persons, as they are often undocumented, have limited financial means and work opportunities, and rely on third parties to organize their journeys (and sometimes stays). IOM data have consistently shown that women and children are more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation, both in West Africa and globally (Sattler and Cook, Chapter 11 of this volume). In addition, IOM research along the Mediterranean routes has clearly demonstrated that travelling alone is a strong factor of vulnerability.

This overview focuses on the trends and patterns of two main categories of migrants in vulnerable situations: unaccompanied minor children (UMC) and victims of trafficking (VoTs). Both groups are identified and registered by IOM Niger staff within the scope of the direct assistance programme at the transit centres for migrants. UMC are children under the age of 18 years who have been separated from both parents and other relatives, and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. VoTs are identified based on the definition set out in the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children⁷ and in collaboration with the Government of the Niger. Case studies are also presented here to highlight the stories and risks faced by different migrants in vulnerable situations during their migration journeys. The IOM transit centre registration data from January 2017 to December 2019 are used for the analysis of the two groups; anonymized interviews conducted by IOM protection staff are used for the case studies.

13.3. Unaccompanied migrant children

UMC represent a small proportion of migrants staying in the transit centres. From January 2017 to December 2019, IOM assisted a total of 1,032 UMC. Over the years, IOM has noticed that the migration of UMC follows a specific dynamic, with some nationalities being consistently overrepresented. Unlike older migrant groups, UMC tend to declare having Europe as their final destination.⁸ These children may migrate on their own initiative or with

⁶ As a total of 20,056 migrants were assisted in the transit centres in 2018, this equates to around 9,200 migrants entering the transit centres with the assistance of IOM after being expelled from Algeria, which is comparable to the total number of migrants expelled from Algeria that were assisted by IOM in 2018 (9,031 migrants).

⁷ According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, “trafficking in persons” shall mean the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs... The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth [above] shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth [above] have been used.”

⁸ A total of 360 UMC (35%) declared a country in Europe as their final destination from 2017 to 2019; 446 UMC (43%) Algeria; 113 UMC (11%) Libya; and 113 UMC (11%) other countries such as the Niger, Mali and Morocco, for example.

the support of their relatives, sometimes even of the whole community. Being children alone on perilous migration journeys, UMC are some of the most vulnerable migrants crossing the Sahel. Children have specific rights, which governments have a duty to protect under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

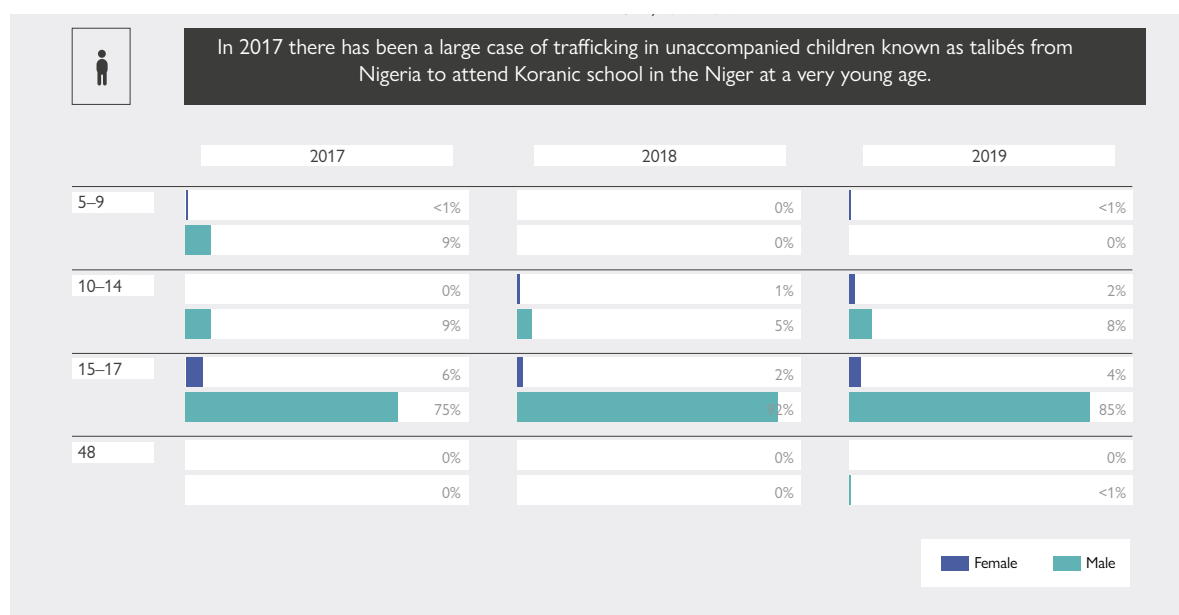
Table 13.1. Number and percentage of unaccompanied minors assisted, by sex, 2017–2019

Year	Female	Male	Total
2017	22 (7%)	302 (93%)	324 (100%)
2018	12 (3%)	334 (97%)	346 (100%)
2019	21 (7%)	341 (93%)	362 (100%)
Total	55 (6%)	977 (94%)	1 032 (100%)

The great majority of UMC assisted were male (93–97%), while females represent 3 to 7 per cent of the total. This male-to-female ratio is similar to that of the overall migrant population in the transit centres from the main sending countries, such as Guinea and Mali, with 99 per cent male migrants. In addition, this is in line with regional and global trends, as the unaccompanied migration of children is a highly male-dominated phenomenon. This is linked to the perceived capacity of boys to manage migration alone and the risks faced along the migration route, as well as the role of men, including UMC, who are often the eldest boy of the family, as the main breadwinners for the family.

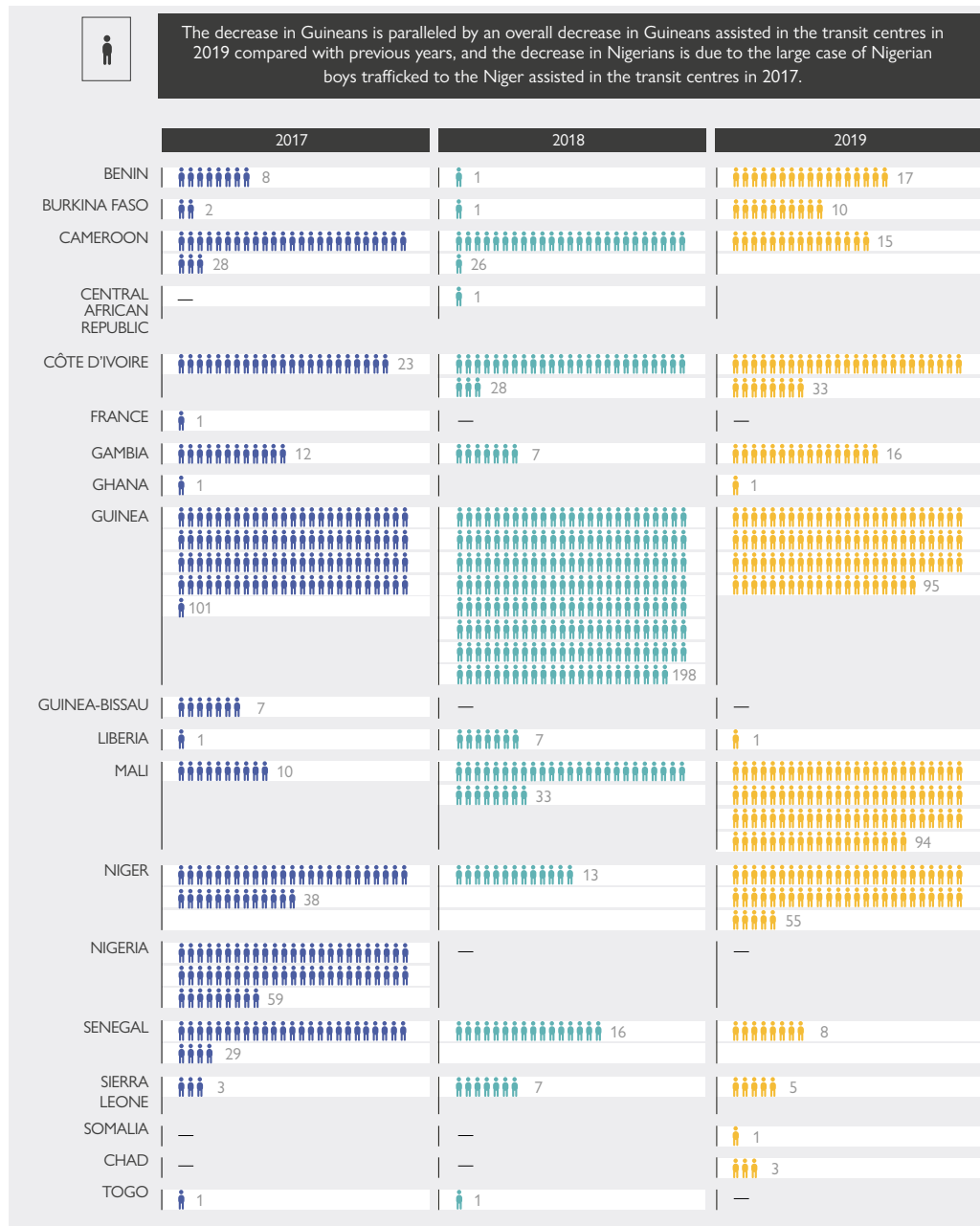
Most UMC assisted were between the ages of 15 to 17 years for both female (75% or 55 UMC females out of the total in 2017–2019) and males (84% or 977 UMC males in total). However, there was a significant number of male children between the ages of 5 to 9 years (29 UMCs or 9%) in 2017, most of whom were from Nigeria. This was due to a large case of trafficking in unaccompanied children known as talibés from Nigeria to attend Koranic school in the Niger at a very young age (see section IV – Victims of trafficking – below).

Figure 13.1. Sex–age distribution of unaccompanied migrant children in the transit centres, the Niger, 2017–2019



The vast majority of UMC were from Guinea, followed by Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. In 2018, the number of nationals of Nigeria decreased by 88 per cent compared with 2017, while in 2019, the number of Guinean nationals decreased by 52 per cent compared with 2018.⁹ The decrease in Guineans is paralleled by an overall decrease in Guineans assisted in the transit centres in 2019 compared with previous years, and the decrease in Nigerians is due to the large case of Nigerian boys trafficked to the Niger assisted in the transit centres in 2017. Conversely, between 2018 and 2019, there was a 323 per cent and 184 per cent increase in UMC nationals from the Niger and Mali, respectively.¹⁰ The spike in UMC from the Niger and Mali is probably linked to the increased number of migrants, including UMC, expelled from Algeria in 2018 and 2019.¹¹

Figure 13.2. Nationalities of unaccompanied migrant children in the IOM transit centres, the Niger, 2017–2019



⁹ Nigeria: 59 UMC in 2017 to 7 UMC in 2018; Guinea: 198 UMC in 2018 to 95 UMC in 2019.

¹⁰ The Niger: 13 UMC in 2018 to 55 UMC in 2019; Mali: 33 UMC in 2018 to 94 UMC in 2019.

¹¹ People from the Niger are also expelled among other foreign migrants from Algeria to the Niger; however, generally, most people from the Niger are repatriated through the Official Algerian Convoys organized between the Governments of the Niger and Algeria.

Case Study 1. B., unaccompanied migrant child from Guinea

B. is a 16 year-old-boy from Guinea. Back home, he lived alone in a rental house. His family is poor and he lost both his parents at a very young age. B. has not attended school much. He left primary school in 2016 to start his migratory journey. His dream is to go to Europe, France specifically. He travelled alone, within a group of people from his village to whom he is not related. The group first crossed the border into Mali, then to the Niger, and finally reached Algeria. B. says he financed his travel himself. He says he faced a lot of suffering and difficulties during his travel, including an attack by a rebel group in the desert, torture, death threats, scams and physical abuse. B. stayed one year in Algeria working in a small business. From Algeria, he moved to Libya, where he spent one month, but soon decided to return to Algeria. After six difficult months in Algeria, he was expelled to the Niger by the Algerian authorities.

13.4. Victims of trafficking

IOM Niger assisted 333 VoTs from January 2017 to December 2019, with the largest caseload in 2017, partly due to the assistance of a large group of children trafficked from Nigeria to the Niger. The Niger is a transit country for the trafficking of foreign migrants from West and Central Africa who have fallen victim to traffickers while transiting through the Niger en route to Libya or Algeria or beyond. Victims may be transported within the Niger, to neighbouring West African countries, North Africa, the Middle East or Europe, where they are subjected to forced labour, sexual exploitation or domestic servitude. Foreign migrants are particularly vulnerable in the Niger, as they risk being stranded along their migratory routes after running out of financial means. This renders them vulnerable to false promises to move onward on their journeys. For nationals of the Niger, trafficking is more localized in the region of Kantché (Zinder) and tends to mostly target women and children, for the purpose of forced begging and sexual exploitation in the north of the Niger in the mining sites, or transportation centres, or in Algeria. However, men also fall prey to trafficking and exploitation.

Trafficking affects both men and women, but often in different ways, with men most often being victims of labour exploitation and women being targeted for sexual exploitation. Commonalities can generally be observed across both sexes, as reflected in the case studies below. Most victims assisted were either orphans or persons who were unexpectedly forced to bear the responsibility for providing for their families. This includes children and youth who have become the main breadwinners for their families at a young age due to their fathers passing away (see Case Studies 4 and 5), as well as women who become the sole breadwinners due to their husbands passing away or as a result of divorce. In both situations, there is immense pressure to provide for their families, a responsibility they may often have not had before.

The tactics used by traffickers to approach potential victims tended to differ by sex. Female victims of trafficking were often approached by traffickers in their home countries, either at their jobs or in their hometowns, with promises of high-paying jobs in Libya or other countries (see Case Study 3), while male victims of trafficking were deceived, oftentimes by their smugglers, at some point along their journeys, and sold into slavery, where they were forced to pay a ransom and/or work without any compensation (see Case Study 2).

Table 13.2. Number of victims of trafficking assisted, by sex, 2017–2019

Year	Female	Male	Total
2017	79 (51%)	75 (49%)	154 (100%)
2018	75 (95%)	4 (5%)	79 (100%)
2019	71 (71%)	29 (29%)	100 (100%)
Total	225 (68%)	108 (32%)	333 (100%)

The majority of VoTs identified and assisted by IOM were females, reflecting the fact that trafficking in the Niger remains a strongly feminized phenomenon. This trend may also be generalized to the West and Central Africa region and the overall Central Mediterranean Route, where more female VoTs are identified. However, this may also be partly due to the difficulty in identifying male VoTs, as men tend to be less forthcoming and willing to disclose experiences of trafficking.

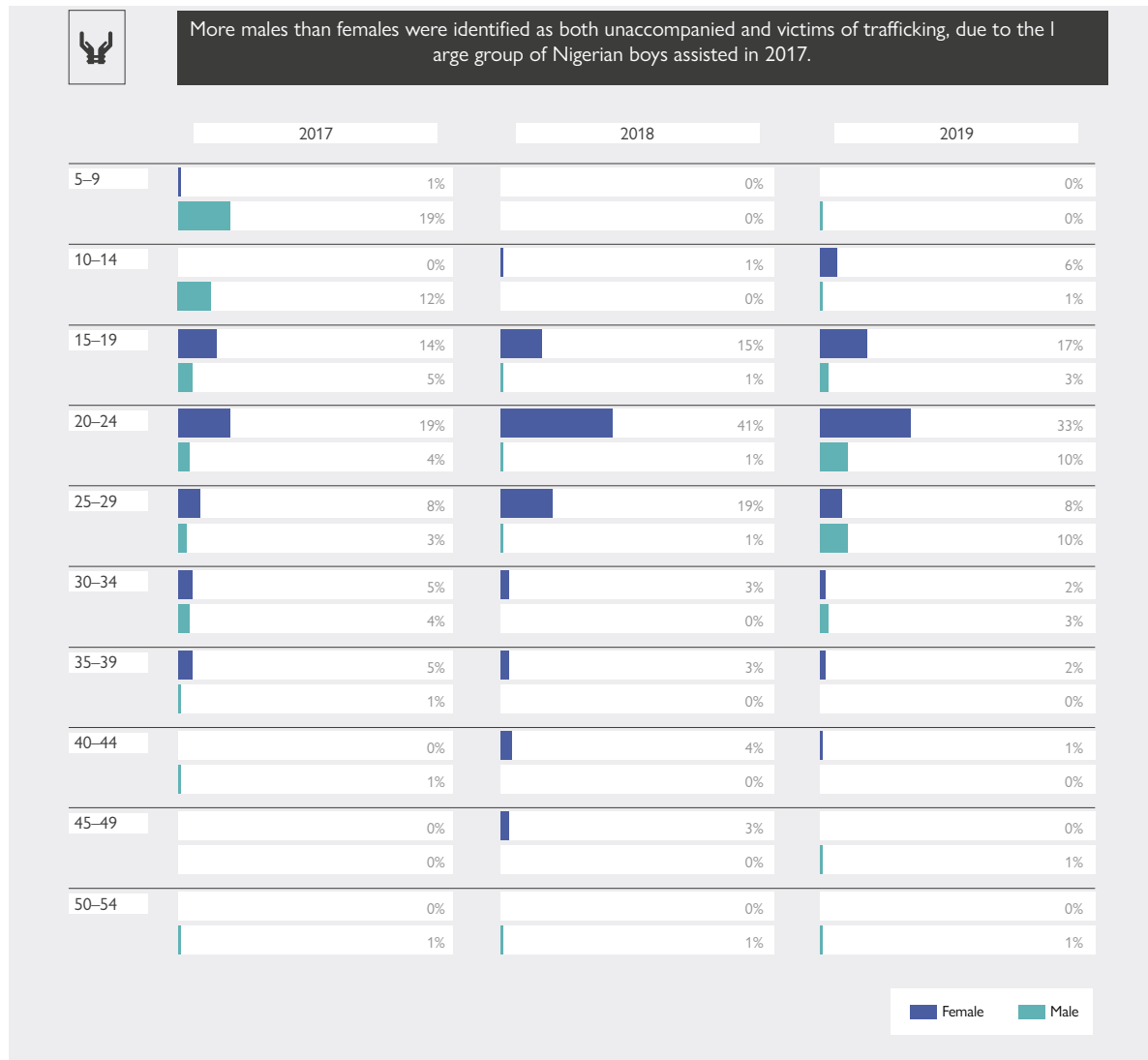
The female VoTs assisted by IOM were mainly between the ages of 20 and 24 years (19% in 2017, 41% in 2018, and 33% in 2019) and 15 to 19 years (14% in 2017, 15% in 2018, and 17% in 2019), primarily victims of sexual and labour exploitation. Meanwhile, the male VoTs assisted were younger (19% 5 to 9 years, 12% 10 to 14 years), particularly in 2017, and in 2019 more young men VoTs between the ages of 20 and 29 years (20%) were assisted.¹² The spike in the number of young male VoTs assisted in 2017 is due to the incoming caseload that year of 39 boys from Nigeria who were trafficked to the Niger to attend Koranic school.¹³ It is traditional practice in the West and Central Africa region to send boys, also referred to as talibés, to Koranic schools. However, there are reports that boys are forced by their teachers (marabouts) to perform manual labour or beg on the streets. Male children are typically trafficked for the purpose of forced begging or labour exploitation, while young men are exploited in forced labour. For young men, migration often starts out through smuggling, but they may become victims of trafficking along the route, either as a consequence of running out of funds or due to the practices of combined deprivation of freedom and forced labour, particularly common in the areas of North Africa and the Middle East.

Between 2017 and 2019, about a quarter of the VoTs identified and assisted were also identified as unaccompanied minor children. More males than females were identified as both unaccompanied and VoTs, due to the large group of Nigerian boys assisted in 2017.

¹² Only four male VoTs were assisted in 2018, of various ages, ranging from 15 to 54 years.

¹³ The boys were rescued by the police from the Niger and brought to child protection authorities, who contacted IOM for support.

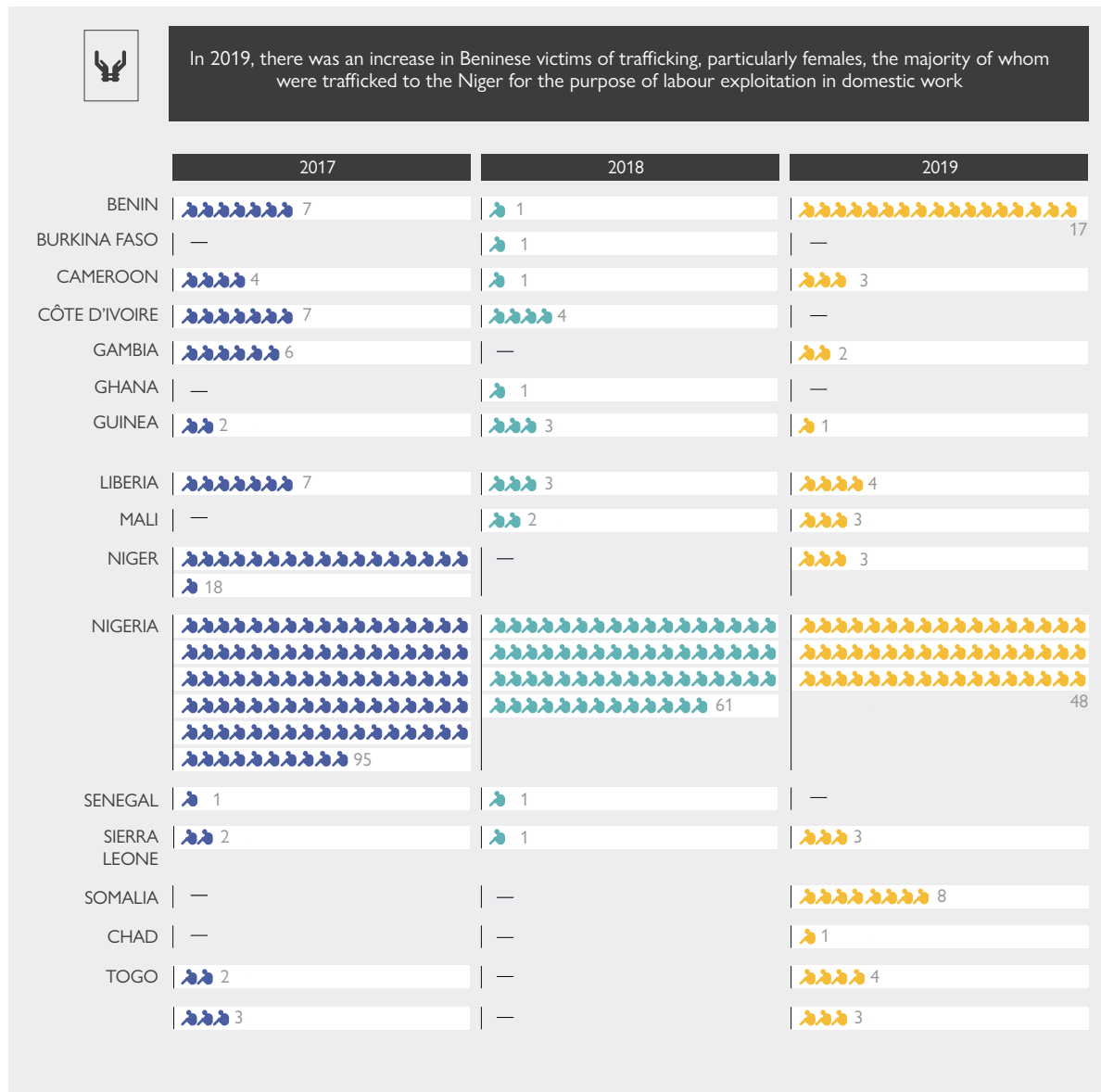
Figure 13.3. Sex–age distribution of victims of trafficking assisted in the transit centres in the Niger, 2017–2019



The majority of VoTs assisted were from Nigeria. There is a persisting trend of women from Nigeria being trafficked into prostitution, mostly to the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. In 2019, there was an increase in Beninese VoTs, particularly females, the majority of whom are trafficked to the Niger for the purpose of labour exploitation in domestic work (predominantly in Agadez).¹⁴

¹⁴ Based on case work interviews with victims of trafficking identified and assisted in IOM Niger transit centres.

Figure 13.4. Nationalities of victims of trafficking assisted in the transit centres in the Niger, 2017–2019



The final destination countries of VoTs, as agreed upon between the trafficker and the victim, or decided upon by the trafficker, varied across the years. In 2017, the majority of VoTs reported the Niger and Libya as the main destination countries. In 2018 and 2019, the number of VoTs assisted reporting the Niger as the destination country dropped significantly (from 47 VoTs reporting the Niger as the main destination country in 2017 to 5 and 6 VoTs in 2018 and 2019, respectively); this decrease may be linked to the large caseload of boys trafficked to the Niger from Nigeria assisted in 2017. Increasing numbers of VoTs assisted in 2018 and 2019 reported Algeria as their final destination, which may be linked to the increased expulsions of migrants from Algeria during these years. Another trend observed was that more VoTs assisted in 2017 reported final destinations in countries beyond North Africa such as Italy, Spain, Kuwait and Mali, while in 2018 and 2019, only a handful of VoTs assisted reported destination countries outside of North Africa, which may indicate shifting migration patterns as a result of the enforcement of restrictive migration policies in the Niger and Algeria (see Overview of Migration Trends in the Republic of the Niger: 2016–2019).

Disaggregated by sex, most females reported Libya and Italy as their final destinations in 2017, while most males reported the Niger, Mali and Algeria as their final destinations. In 2018 and 2019, there were no clear patterns in differences in final destinations by sex, as was observed in 2017.¹⁵

13.5. Moving forward

This overview has presented the trends in the profiles of migrants in vulnerable situations, focusing on two main groups, UMC and VoTs, assisted in the transit centres from 2017 to 2019. Clear patterns can be discerned from the analysis which may inform programming in key areas along the migration route, targeting specific demographics and nationalities that have been consistently overrepresented among UMC and VoTs, or both. Preventative work such as information campaigns to increase awareness on the common tactics utilized by traffickers, for example, can be conducted in hot-spot communities, targeting profiles that are found to be typically targeted by traffickers, in efforts to empower communities to make informed decisions. It is equally essential to ensure that identification capacity exists among front-line actors, and appropriate specialized responses are designed to follow up on the needs of these particularly vulnerable groups. Both VoTs and UMC are entitled to specific rights and safeguards under international instruments, but effective implementation of such provisions requires commensurate human and financial resources from governmental authorities and their partners. This remains a challenge in a country with many competing humanitarian and development needs and scarce resources available.

Case Study 2. M., a Guinean male victim of torture and labour exploitation in Libya

M. is a young university student. He is the only son and the main breadwinner for his family since his father died. Having completed his studies, M. had to defend his thesis in order to graduate. However, as M. had no means to pay for the costs related to his thesis presentation, he decided to go to France with the hope to earn enough money to complete his studies.

He started his journey by first going to Mali. There, he met a person at the bus station who promised to connect him with another person who could facilitate his trip to Algeria once M. paid him CFAF 150,000 (USD 250). M. paid him and embarked on a bus to Agadez, the Niger. Upon arrival in Agadez, M. was picked up by the smuggler and spent a week waiting at the smuggler's place. After they agreed on the transportation price to Algeria (CFAF 330,000 or USD 550), M. joined a group of about 152 persons at a meeting place, and they departed in pickup trucks or smaller vehicles around 2 a.m. The journey took about 12 days due to frequent vehicle breakdowns in the desert. Two Nigerian girls and one Ghanaian man in their group passed away during the journey due to lack of water.

When they finally reached a paved road, M. overheard someone mentioning Libya. At that point, M. understood that they had not been on the road to Algeria as he was initially promised, but to Libya. He had no other option but to continue.

¹⁵ For final destination, 46 per cent of females and 13 per cent of males declared Libya, while 14 per cent of females and 36 per cent of males declared Algeria. However, we must consider that females accounted for only 22 of the 324 UMC in 2017.

Once the group reached Sabha, the driver brought them to a detention space in the desert where all of them were locked into a container until they were transferred to a prison controlled by bandits. The boss of the prison, a Ghanaian man, informed them that they had all been sold and that they must call their families or their smugglers to ask for money in order to be released. M. called his smuggler, who instructed him to call his family instead, claiming he had nothing to do with his situation.

M. was tortured regularly. He was beaten three times a day, and the group was not given food until the evening of the sixth day at the prison. M. sustained many injuries from the beatings and at one point was unable to walk for two weeks.

After three months in detention, M.'s family paid the ransom of CFAF 800,000 (USD 1,300 USD) by money transfer. However, the bandits still refused to release him.

One day, M. decided to escape after he was informed by another man who overheard a conversation between the prison boss and another person of their plans to sell M. When the gate was left open one day, M. ran away. He ran to a construction site where he was eventually helped by the Guinean community to go to the hospital in Murzuq to receive treatment for his injuries. During his recovery in Murzuq, a man from Guinea-Bissau helped M. to find transportation to Agadez. Upon arrival to Agadez, M. went to the IOM transit centre.

Case Study 3. J., E. and P., victims of trafficking from Nigeria

J. comes from Nassarawa State in Nigeria, where she lives with her mother and her three little brothers. Her father died a long time ago and her mother is in poor health. She is the eldest of the family and shoulders the responsibility of feeding her family and providing for the schooling of her three younger brothers. J. worked at a small food retail business. One day at work, she was approached by a customer who offered her a job at a big company in Libya. J. refused at first, as she knew she could not leave her family unattended. The trafficker tried to persuade J. by telling her that the job was only for a short four-month contract, which would allow her to earn a lot of money to support herself and her family. Appealed by this prospect, J. agreed to the offer.

E. is from Jos, a town north of Abuja, where she works in hairdressing. An orphan of mother, she is the eldest of the family and has two younger sisters. E. is responsible for taking care of her younger sister who is sick, and pays for her treatments with her small savings. E. worked at a hairdressing salon in Jos. One day while she was at work, a lady approached E. with an offer to work for her in Kano, where she claimed to own a large hairdressing salon. She promised E. would earn a lot of money there.

P. is from Imo State, in the south of Nigeria. She lost her mother at birth and her father abandoned her. She was hosted by her aunt, but P. has been providing for herself since a young age. A woman approached her in her village, explaining that she assists girls to obtain work in Libya. She promised P. a very well-paid housekeeping job.

J., E. and P. travelled jointly, arranged for and paid by their trafficker. During their journey, a Nigerian woman – also in the same car – approached the young girls to ask what they were doing there by themselves as they were so young. They told the lady their stories and the lady explained to them what the true intentions of the trafficker were and warned them that these were false promises that would lead them to prostitution and exploitation without any salary.

When the car stopped, the three girls escaped and ran to the police. The police officer confirmed the allegation of the lady and referred them to IOM for assistance.

Case Study 4. O., Chadian male victim of torture and labour exploitation in Libya

O. left his country in late 2017 with the intention of going to Europe via Libya. Before leaving, he lived in the city of N'Djamena with his mother, three sisters and four nephews; he was the primary caretaker ever since his father passed away. In order to provide for his family, he traded motorbikes between Chad and Nigeria. This business also helped him to pay for his migration journey.

A Sudanese smuggler transported him from Sabha and sold him in Bani Walid to an armed group belonging to his network.

The armed group demanded the payment of a ransom from all the persons in the group that were sold to them. To intimidate them, they fired a bullet into the foot of a migrant to force others to accept paying the ransom. They asked O. to pay CFAF 2 million (USD 3,300), which neither he nor his family had.

The armed group members started torturing him when he refused to contact his family saying that he had no contact with them. He was stabbed in the thigh and locked naked in an air-conditioned room until the next morning when he was tortured again. This lasted a week.

Afterwards, O. was taken back to another cell where he received only one piece of bread a day and a few sips of water twice a day for two months. O. did not think he was going to survive. Unable to continue, he decided to call his mother. His mother ended up selling the family's home and sent CFAF 1,500,000 (2,500 USD) to the kidnappers in order to save O.'s life.

After his release, the same kidnappers took him to the city of Zawiyya in Tripoli, where he was taken to a camp with other migrants, including Sudanese and Chadians. One day, a Libyan man came to the camp to look for a person to work at his house for a salary. O. volunteered and left the camp with him. When O. arrived to his home, they agreed on a salary of 17,000 dinars (equivalent to CFAF 90,000 or USD 150) per month in exchange for O. taking care of his garden and cows.

After a month of work, when O. tried to claim his salary, his employer did not pay him. After three months, he still did not receive anything. At this point, O. realized that his employer did not have any intention of paying him. The employer also had no intention of letting him go, as O. was locked in the property at all times.

One day when his employer left the property, O. jumped the wall of the house and escaped. He returned to his fellows in the camp, who advised him against working for a monthly salary because no one would actually pay him. Subsequently, he started working as a day worker. After having saved a bit of money, he tried to cross the sea for Europe but was caught by the police and imprisoned for two months. After his release, he returned to continue working as a day worker.

After staying one more month in Libya, O. decided to move to Algeria due to the deteriorating security situation in Libya. After five days at the Algerian border, he was arrested by the police and subsequently deported to the Niger.

Case Study 5. B., Cameroonian victim of torture and exploited in Algeria

B. is a single man and was orphaned at a young age. Back in Cameroon, he lost his mother at the age of two and his father, who did not recognize him at birth, died when he was six years old. B. did not meet his paternal side of the family and as such, he was raised by his maternal aunt, who treated him badly and never enrolled him in school, contrary to her own children. He was marginalized because of his status as an illegitimate child, orphan, illiterate and poor. When he grew up, he left his aunt's house and stayed with his friends. Being illiterate, the only work he could do was as a taxi-moto driver, a job he secured thanks to the support of a helping person.

His friends advised him to go to Algeria and continue to Europe in order to look for a better life there. His journey to Nigeria went well, but other passengers stronger than him hit him and stole his money.

B. stayed in Kano for six months, where he got a contract as a painter and for some other small construction jobs. With his small savings, he was able to pay his transport costs to Algeria. Once he arrived in Algeria, he settled in Tamanrasset with a group of compatriots.

An African migrant fluent in Arabic in charge of hiring African men to work on a construction site owned by an Arab recruited B. to work there for three months without being paid.

One day, one of the workers told B. that others had been working at the same site for six months without being paid. He told B. that it seemed that the boss had no intention to pay them and considered them as slaves. He also told B. that if he tried to claim his salary, he would likely either get killed or turned in to the police.

When B. decided to try to ask for his salary along with other migrant workers, the boss turned them into law enforcement. B. believed that this was all carried out with the complicity of their African recruiter as he was spared while all other African workers were rounded up and deported.

B. reported several instances of physical and psychological violence during the deportation. The group of deportees was thrown off at the Niger border in the middle of the desert, where a helpful person took them in his vehicle to Agadez. Thanks to the charity of the man and the selling of his personal items, B. managed to pay his transport costs to Niamey, where he was referred to IOM for AVRR. B. arrived with a wounded hand because of the violent beatings he had received.

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