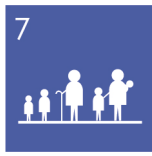


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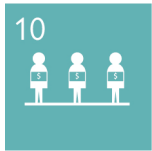
What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to protection incidents in Libya? A microlevel study on the determinants of vulnerability¹

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Abstract: *The protection abuses and human rights violations faced by refugees and migrants along the journey to Libya and within the country are well documented by NGOs, human rights organizations and news outlets. Yet, little is understood about why certain people on the move are exposed to protection abuses, and the specific factors influencing their vulnerability. This chapter analyzes a unique dataset of more than 5,000 interviews with people on the move who have reached Libya from countries across the continent and attempts to analyze the demographic, social, and economic determinants of vulnerability to protection incidents.*

14.1. Introduction

Refugees and migrants who undertake the journey to and through Libya move in response to a diverse range of factors, including seeking refuge from war, conflict and crisis, and political oppression; seeking out a better future as part of a livelihood strategy; sending financial remittances to support their kin back home; and/or pursuing their aspirations.³ Their mixed migration⁴ journeys can be long and perilous and, over the past few years, news outlets, non-governmental organizations and watchdogs have extensively documented the dangers they face along the route and inside Libya.⁵

In 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) published a detailed account of human rights abuses in Libya, including physical and sexual abuse, torture and unlawful killings, as well as arbitrary detention from criminal gangs, traffickers, armed groups, smugglers and State officials. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report *Desperate Journeys* (2018) found that “the vast majority of women and girls, as well as many men and boys had been victims of torture and sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual assault and rape, sometimes by multiple perpetrators”, during their journeys (UNHCR, 2018:19). UNSMIL reported serious violations within detention centres in

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² Mixed Migration Centre.

³ More information can be found in Teppert, Cottone and Rossi, Chapter 5 of this volume, which outlines key migration trends in Libya.

⁴ The [Mixed Migration Centre](#) defines mixed migration as cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities.

⁵ See, for example, Amnesty International (2018); OHCHR (2016); IOM (2019); or UNHCR and MMC (2020). See also Black, Chapter 12 of this volume; Bartolini and Zakoska-Todorovska, Chapter 15 of this volume; and Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio and Leigh, Chapter 17 of this volume.

Libya, including poor sanitary conditions; overcrowding; lack of water; sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities; denial of contact with the outside world and medical care; along with protection and human rights violations such as forced labour, sexual violence and physical violence, including torture (UNSMIL and OHCHR, 2018). Furthermore, several reports from United Nations (UN) organizations, as well as news media, have revealed migrants and refugees being sold and forced into slavery in Libya (IOM, 2017; CNN, 2017). These protection incidents were mapped along mixed migration routes to and through the country further highlighting the extent of human rights abuses in a 2020 UNHCR and MMC report *On this Journey, No One Cares if You Live or Die*.

While the above reports underscore that refugees and migrants face a variety of protection incidents and human rights abuses during their journeys to and through Libya, there is still limited understanding about the factors that determine vulnerability and why certain migrants are more likely to experience such abuses. IOM's (2019) migrant vulnerability model conceptualizes vulnerability as a function of individual, household, community, and macro-level factors. ICMPD (2019) similarly examines vulnerability in terms of personal, contextual, and situational factors, with vulnerability being equated with susceptibility to trafficking and other abuses. OHCHR (2017), by contrast, understands vulnerability as being unable to enjoy basic rights and being at risk of violations and abuse. A dearth of detailed, quantitative data has made it difficult to estimate the extent and the distribution of protection incidents in Libya. This chapter attempts to address this gap by analysing a unique data set with 5,659 interviews from refugees and migrants who have moved to Libya from countries in West, Central and East Africa. More specifically, it analyses the demographic, social and economic determinants of vulnerability to protection incidents within Libya for people moving along mixed migration routes, to learn what makes them more or less vulnerable. For the purposes of this study, protection incidents or violations⁶ include physical abuse, sexual abuse, kidnapping, detention, robbery and witnessing another migrant's death.

This chapter provides a model to determine the likelihood of experiencing a protection incident across different socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of respondents sampled in Libya.⁷ The analysis herein has implications for protection programming and other human rights stakeholders operating in Libya. This chapter is structured as follows: Section 14.2 presents an overview of the methodology and outlines the data used, the estimation strategy and methodological limitations. Section 14.3 illustrates some descriptive statistics of the data included in the analysis. Section 14.4 presents the results, drawing on quantitative data collected by the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism initiative (4Mi)⁸ from refugees and migrants in Libya. After a discussion in Section 14.4, section 14.5 presents the implications of the research.

14.2. Methodology

14.2.1. Data, sampling and data collection

This chapter analyses quantitative data collected by the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) through its data collection project, 4Mi.⁹ This project collects data on refugees and migrants while they are on the move. Surveys contain a series of structured questions related to the profiles of refugees and migrants, their routes, protection incidents along the route, the needs of migrants and assistance received, among other variables. In the protection module of the survey, respondents are asked about a series of protection incidents, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, kidnapping, robbery, detention and migrant deaths. When asked about sexual abuse on the journey, the number reported describes the number (or percentage, where applicable) of respondents who experienced or witnessed the incident. The decision was taken to phrase the question in this way to reduce potential harm posed by asking

⁶ Sexual abuse reports the share of respondents having experienced or witnessed the incident – as opposed to only experience. Death reports the share of respondents who have witnessed a fellow migrant's death. Physical abuse, kidnapping, robberies and detention account for the direct experience of the migrant surveyed.

⁷ The basis for this model is the study *What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to detention in Libya? A microlevel study of the determinants of detention* (Mixed Migration Centre, 2019a). For the full report examining vulnerability to protection incidences in Libya, see *What makes refugees and migrants vulnerable to protection incidents in Libya* (MMC, 2020).

⁸ For more information about 4Mi, visit www.mixedmigration.org/4mi/ (accessed 1 April 2020).

⁹ *Ibid.*

respondents directly if they have experienced sexual abuse. The variable on migrant deaths reports the number of respondents who have witnessed a fellow migrant's death, given that this figure cannot be reported directly. On the other hand, incidents of physical abuse, kidnapping, robberies and detention describe the direct experience of the migrant surveyed. Surveys also include an open-ended question in which many individuals report human rights abuses along their journey. The data set upon which this chapter is based includes 5,659 surveys with refugees and migrants¹⁰ in Libya conducted from May 2017 to October 2019.

Given the difficulties in collecting data on people on the move, the sensitivity of the topic and security concerns in Libya, 4Mi employs a non-randomized, purposive sampling strategy. Survey respondents are primarily identified through snowball sampling, seeking respondents 18 years of age and older, a balance between the number of male and female respondents, as well as diversity in terms of origin country. No distinction is made in sampling between migrants in regular or irregular situations, asylum seekers and refugees, in an effort to include all groups in the sample. Moreover, because 4Mi focuses on refugees and migrants who are on the move, and not settled migrant communities, it excludes from the sample long-term migrants and/or those who have been continuously living in Libya for more than two years. Thus, the findings of this study are limited to this more mobile population and, when considering the start of 4Mi data collection, arrivals to Libya since 2015. More broadly, because of the non-randomized nature of sampling, the findings should be read with caution and not generalized beyond the sampled refugees and migrants.

Data for 4Mi are collected through enumerators who are refugees and migrants themselves, which enables unique access to migrant communities. Enumerators are chosen in part based on their country of origin being among the more represented refugee and migrant populations in the country and may be subject to change overtime. Enumerators are deployed to known migration “nodes” and “hotspots” – urban centres, border areas and along transit routes – where there is a large presence of people on the move. To improve the diversity of the sample, enumerators vary their contact points. Several measures are implemented to ensure data validity and quality. First, Project and Information Management Officers supervise the enumerators and hold monthly Skype calls to discuss quality and data collection issues. Second, the Information Management Officer review all survey data to ensure quality control, based on checking (a) the time taken to complete the survey, (b) the location where the survey was recorded, (c) the quality of the completed survey, and (d) identification of repetitive responses and outliers. Third, Project and Information Management Officers conduct ad hoc spot checks on enumerators to ensure compliance with data collection protocols. Any submitted questionnaire that does not meet the data quality requirements is discarded. Respondents are informed that their answers remain confidential; no information is collected on respondents' names and other personally identifying data. Participants are also informed that they can withdraw at any time during the interview. Fourth, enumerators receive extensive training before they begin data collection.

14.2.2. Estimation strategy

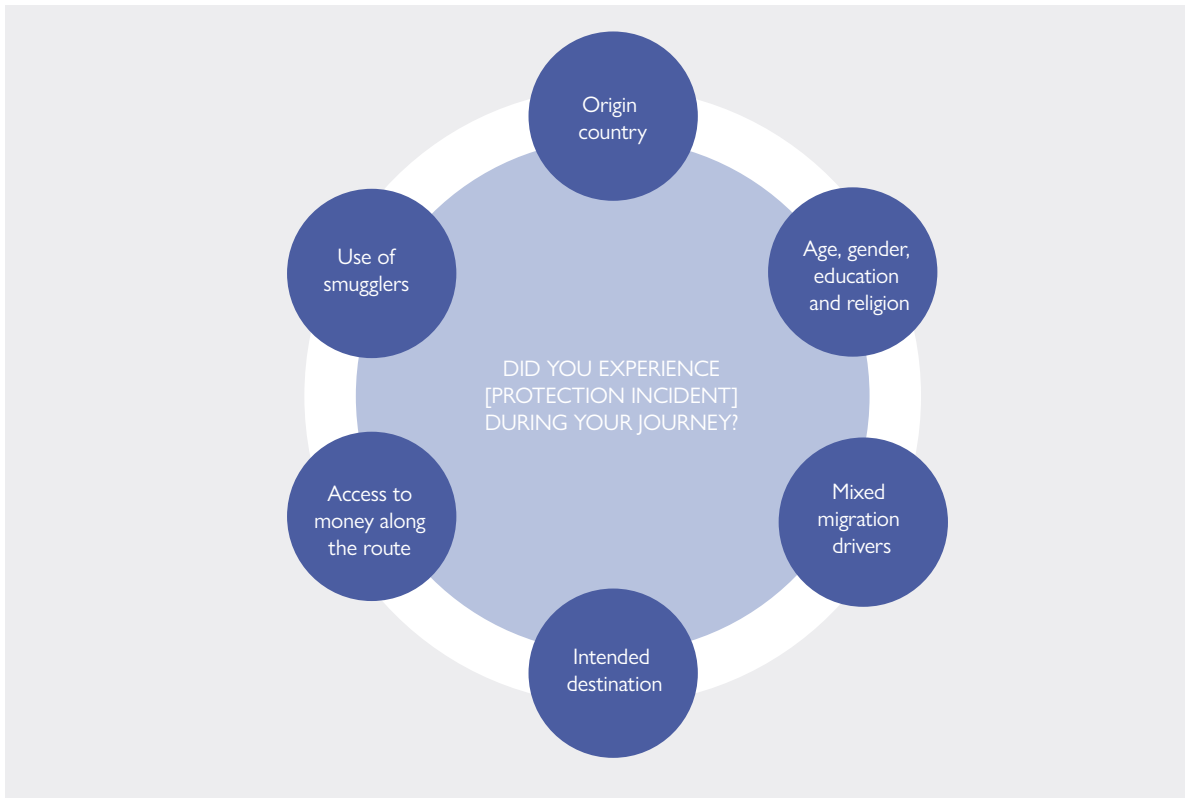
This chapter sets out to investigate the demographic and socioeconomic determinants of protection vulnerability. More specifically, it investigates the impact of a range of demographic, social, economic and political factors on people's likelihood to experience a protection incident. The main variable of interest is based on the question: Did you experience [protection incident] during your journey? The protection incidents analysed in this chapter are whether the respondent experienced physical abuse, robbery, kidnapping and detention, and whether they witnessed/experienced sexual abuse as well as witnessed another migrant's death.¹¹

¹⁰ Libya is neither a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Protocol, however, the country did ratify the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1985 and 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa in 1981, which recognize the right to seek and receive asylum while also prohibiting expulsions. In 2010, the government introduced Law No. 19, which marked a shift toward the criminalization of migration in Libya. Under Law No. 19, migrants who enter the country illegally – which includes refugees and asylum seekers – are at risk of detention and forced labor for an undefined period of time, after which they are expelled from the country. With Libya's domestic legislation focused on combatting “illegal migration” and its weak support of international asylum norms, every refugee and migrant who enters the country irregularly risks the violation of their rights to protection. Although UNHCR is not formally recognized by the Government, it has been allowed to register people of nine nationalities as persons of concerns.

¹¹ The exact questions asked were: (a) Did you experience any physical abuse or harassment (of a non-sexual nature) during your journey? (b) Have you been kidnapped or otherwise held against your will during your journey? (c) Have you ever been robbed during your journey? (d) Have you been detained by the police, military, militia or immigration officials during your journey? (e) Did you witness or experience any sexual assault or harassment during your journey? (f) Did you witness any migrant deaths during your journey?

To identify the effect of these variables on vulnerability to protection incidents, regression analysis was undertaken, which allows the researcher to hold confounding factors constant in the model. Estimations were conducted with several models to ensure robustness. The first model applied was a logistic regression model which considers the binary outcome variable (if the respondents have experienced any protection incident or not). Secondly, an ordinary least squares (OLS) model was estimated which considers the number of protection incidents respondents faced.¹²

Figure 14.1. Analytical model



Source: 4Mi survey.

14.2.3. Predictors of vulnerability

We investigate whether demographics such as gender, age, religion, origin country¹³ and education make refugees and migrants less or more vulnerable to protection incidents, as well as respondents' use of and interaction with smugglers¹⁴ can potentially affect the likelihood of experiencing protection incidents. As shown in Chapter 17 of this of this volume (Murphy-Teixidor, Bonfiglio and Leigh), smugglers are the main cited perpetrators of protection incidents in Libya.¹⁵ Since most respondents reported using smugglers to facilitate their journeys, we cannot investigate if the use of smugglers as such has an impact. However, we can investigate if the payment arrangements with smugglers affect the respondents' likelihood of experiencing protection incidents, which includes the timing of payments. More specifically, we investigate if paying one's smuggler on arrival, departure or by working along the journey (and paying-as-you-go) affects the likelihood of experiencing protection incidents. We also investigate if people who migrated due to factors related to violence, insecurity and persecution are more or less vulnerable to

¹² We also experiment by estimating Poisson models, to further assess the robustness of the result.

¹³ Here we use origin country and nationality interchangeably as respondents both started their journey and held the nationality of the specified country.

¹⁴ For the purpose of this work, the term "smuggler" refers to someone who is engaged in the smuggling sector, namely whoever facilitates the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (Palermo Protocols of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime).

¹⁵ See, for example, MMC (2019b).

protection violations. The assumption here is that past experience with persecution and/or protection incidents may make refugees and migrants more likely to experience protection incidents in Libya. Finally, we analyse if refugees' and migrants' intended destinations, as well as as well as the way in which they accessed money along the route to and within Libya play a role.

14.2.4. Control strategy

The 4Mi data set provides the basis for a rigorous regression model. Other than the independent variables of main interest stated above, the authors controlled for additional variables that might affect vulnerability to protection incidents. The researchers distinguished between given demographics versus family factors, as well as variables that are connected to social status. The estimated models incorporate these different sets of variables systematically to analyse the robustness of the result. "Given demographics" variables include nationality, gender, age and religion. "Family factors" include number of children and marital status of the respondent. "Social status" relates to the level of education obtained by the respondent, previous sector of employment (or unemployment), and the urban classification of the respondent's home in their origin country (rural, semi-urban or urban area). Lastly, each model controls for journey length¹⁶ to account for differences in "exposure time" and location of interview within Libya to control for heterogeneity. Location of interview is important to control for since the different locations will capture differences in geographical places our respondents have visited.

This strategy enables the researchers to isolate the effect of the variables of interest, while holding other factors constant. For example, variables related to "social status" might simultaneously affect vulnerability and the independent variable under investigation, thus biasing the result if "social status" is not controlled for. The aforementioned control strategy will therefore enable us to investigate the relationship between the variables of interest, while holding factors related to given demographics, family factors and social status constant. However, as further discussed later in the chapter, when analysing phenomena as complex as mixed migration trends, there are potentially a great number of variables that can bias the result and cannot be controlled for. For example, in the case of "social status", one can imagine that wealth drives both vulnerability to protection incidents and education. Unfortunately, the 4Mi survey does not capture such information, and omitted variable bias cannot be excluded.

14.2.5. Limitations

There are a number of potential biases in the presented analysis. Firstly, and most importantly, is the formulation of the survey questions surrounding protection. While accounts of physical abuse, kidnapping, robberies and detention account for the direct experience of the migrants surveyed, reports of sexual abuse and migrant death cannot be directly linked with respondents, given the nature of the question formulation.¹⁷ It is therefore possible that the results of sexual abuse and death are slight overestimates (for example, if two migrants travelling together witnessed the same migrant death or instance of sexual exploitation). However, it is also likely that, given the stigma around experiencing abuse and an unwillingness to share experiences (or the witnessing) of abuse, the numbers reported through 4Mi are underestimates of actual rates of protection incidents.

Second, the 4Mi sample is not representative of the wider population of people on the move in Libya. Primarily, this is because the total population of irregular migrants is not known, and 4Mi cannot carry out random sampling. Instead, it must rely on snowball sampling and the networks of its enumerators. Comparing 4Mi data with those of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),¹⁸ West Africans are overrepresented in the 4Mi data set, while people from North Africa and the Middle East are underrepresented. Non-representativity also stems from the fact that 4Mi has specific inclusion criteria. In particular, the 4Mi sample tries to understand the experiences of refugees and migrants while they are on the move, and so it includes only those who have been in Libya for less than two years. The non-representativeness of our sample has implications for the interpretation of results, and conclusions cannot be drawn about the larger population of people on the move. However, given the difficulties in collecting data of

¹⁶ The log of the months is used in the control strategy.

¹⁷ On sexual abuse, the survey asks whether respondents have witnessed or experienced such abuse, and on deaths, the survey asks whether respondents have witnessed another migrant's death.

¹⁸ However, IOM-DTM data are not necessarily representative either.

people on the move, the 4Mi data set is one of the most rigorous databases which captures unique information of the experiences of refugees and migrants.

Additionally, various and overlapping factors affect the vulnerability of refugees and migrants in Libya, which are not wholly captured by the 4Mi survey. If such factors drive both vulnerability and the independent variables of interest, there is the potential for omitted variable bias. For example, wealth, social class and language might affect vulnerability and at the same time affect education and phone possession. However, while limited in some regards, the regression model controls for many factors related to demographics, family factors and social status. Furthermore, reporting bias, which stems from the fact that the protection incidents are self-reported and not observed, cannot be excluded. Respondents may be reluctant to share their experience of protection incidents with monitors and, therefore, 4Mi faces a risk of underreporting. However, 4Mi attempts to mitigate this risk by conducting the interview with monitors who are part of migrant communities themselves, thus potentially building a feeling of trust and rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Despite the limitations of this analysis and the resulting need to treat results with caution, it is also important to acknowledge that the 4Mi survey is one of the few attempts to collect large quantitative data of people on the move in difficult-to-reach contexts. The survey enables researchers to build advanced regression models to analyse refugee and migrant vulnerability. It is important to highlight that, while the results presented here do not extend to larger refugee and migrant communities in Libya, they can still provide some basis for evidence-based programming for protection organizations in Libya.

14.3. Results

14.3.1. Prevalence of protection incidents by gender and nationality

Data from 4Mi reveal that 37 per cent of all surveyed individuals experienced one or more protection incidents within Libya (3,634 total incidences from May 2017 to October 2019).¹⁹ This number is remarkably high, and it supports previous reports that suggest that the situation for refugees and migrants within Libya is acute. Physical abuse is the most prevalent protection incident reported by both men and women, with 21 per cent of the total sample answering “Yes” to the question “Did you experience any physical abuse or harassment (of a non-sexual nature) during your journey?” The second most-cited protection incident reported is robbery (14%) followed by detention, death and sexual abuse, each at 12 per cent. Respondents reported 542 incidents of detention, and 248 incidents of kidnapping. Some 450 individuals have witnessed a fellow migrant’s death during the reporting period.²⁰ Moreover, 5 per cent of the whole sample reported having been kidnapped.²¹

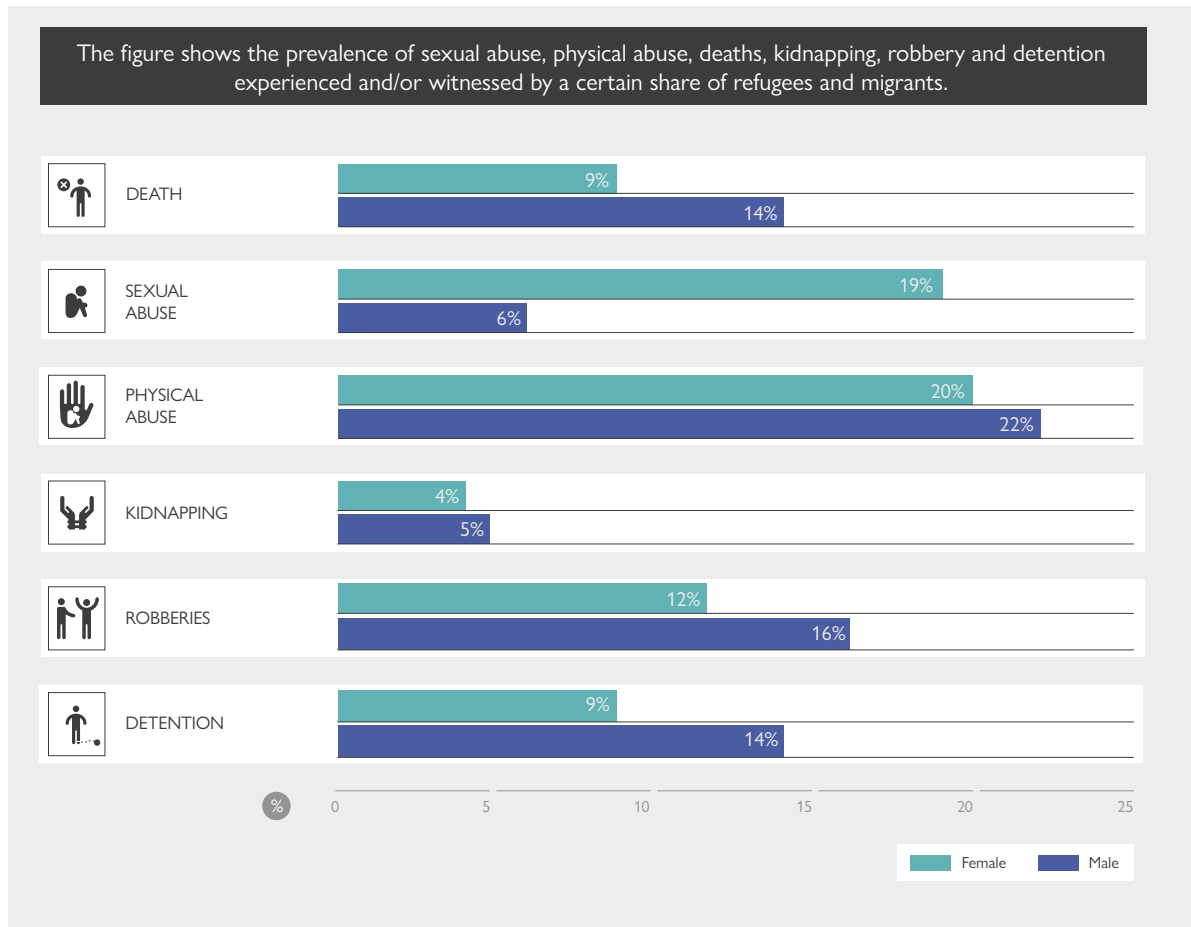
Figure 14.2 displays the share of refugees and migrants experiencing and/or witnessing different protection incidents, disaggregated by gender. More specifically, it shows the prevalence of sexual abuse, physical abuse, deaths, kidnapping, robbery and detention. When considering only the females in the sample, sexual abuse stands out, with 19 per cent of the female respondents having experienced/witnessed sexual abuse, compared with 6 per cent of their male counterparts.

¹⁹ Overall in the 4Mi sample, 56 per cent of the respondents are men, while 44 per cent are women. The majority of the respondents originate from countries in West Africa (69%), while 19.5 per cent originate from East Africa and 11.5 per cent from Central Africa. The average age of our respondents is 30 years.

²⁰ The 4Mi data on deaths are used by IOM in the Missing Migrant Project.

²¹ Sexual abuse reports the share of respondents having experienced or witnessed the incident – as opposed to only experience. Death reports the share of respondents who have witnessed a fellow migrant’s death.

Figure 14.2. Prevalence of protection incidents by gender (n=5,659)²²



Source: 4Mi survey.

A few key trends emerge when analysing vulnerability to protection incidents across nationality.²³ Of all surveyed nationalities, Eritreans most commonly reported experiencing protection incidents at 70 per cent of 365 respondents. The particular vulnerability faced by Eritreans in Libya has been widely documented by human rights organizations ([Human Rights Watch, 2019](#); [Amnesty International, 2016](#)). Of the refugees and migrants coming from neighbouring countries, nearly half (49%) of surveyed Sudanese (n=627), 40 per cent of Chadian (n=312), and 30 per cent of Nigerian respondents (n=301) reported experiencing a protection incident in Libya.²⁴ Among West Africans, Nigerians (31%, n=2,107), Beninese (26%, n=134) and Cameroonians (21%, n=265) more often reported experiencing a protection incident in comparison to their Ivorian (18%, n=150), Burkinabe (16%, n=343), Malian (16%, n=147), and Ghanaian (15%, n=526) peers.

14.3.2. Prevalence of protection incidents by location

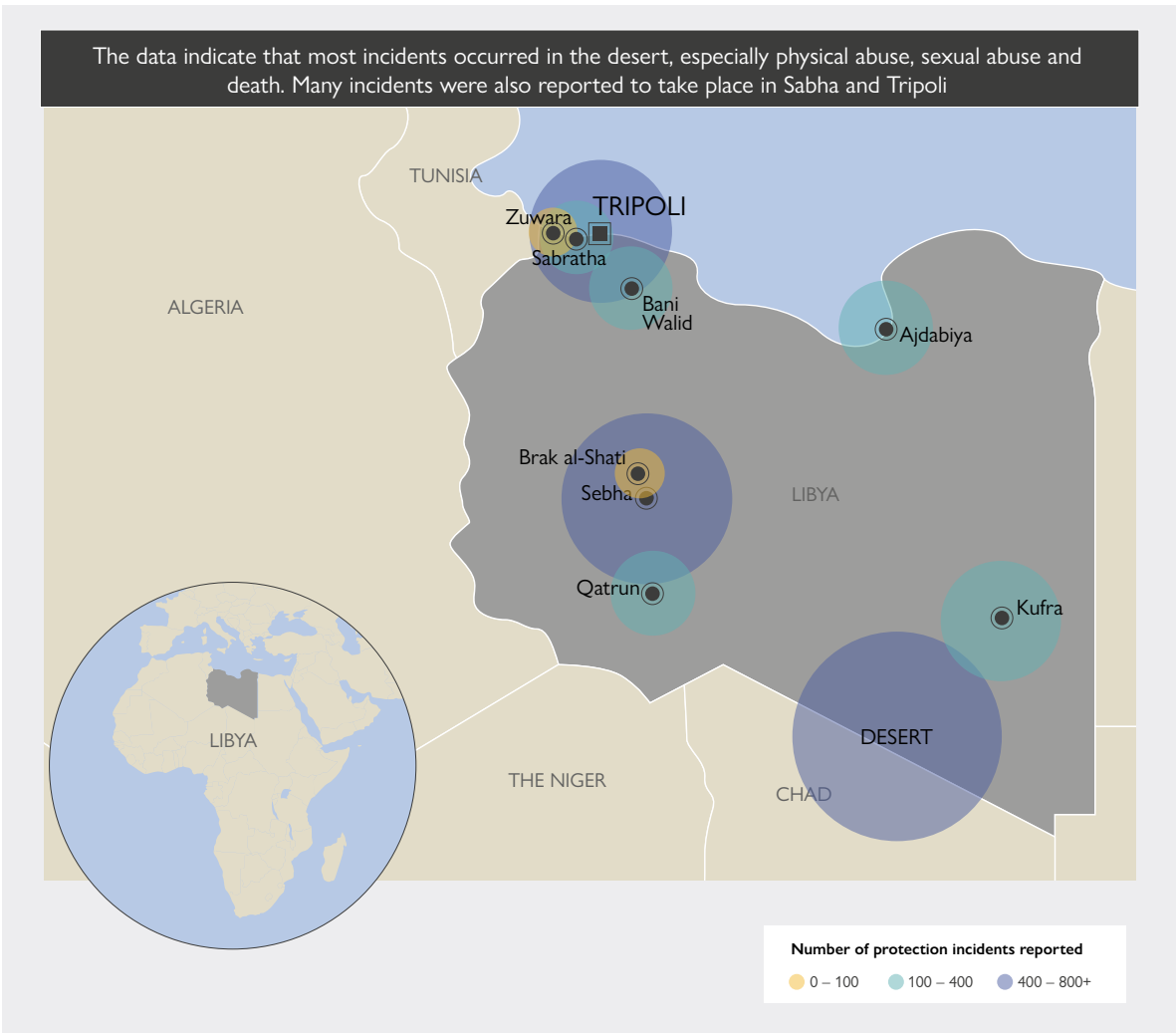
Figures 14.3 and 14.4 display where in Libya the protection incidents occurred for respondents, with the former mapping total incidents across Libya and the latter revealing the exact breakdown of type of protection incidents per location. It must be noted that where incidents are reported to occur is impacted by the location of interviews and the routes that respondent took to and through Libya.

²² A total of 56 per cent of the respondents are men (n=3,169), while 44 per cent are women (n=2,490).

²³ Only nationalities with more than 100 respondents in the sample are included in the analysis.

²⁴ Ethiopian and Somali respondents were excluded from the analysis given their low sample size numbers. While results should be taken with caution, 46 of 63 surveyed Ethiopians and 17 of 21 surveyed Somalis cited experiencing a protection incident.

Figure 14.3. Map of incidents in Libya reported in the 4Mi survey



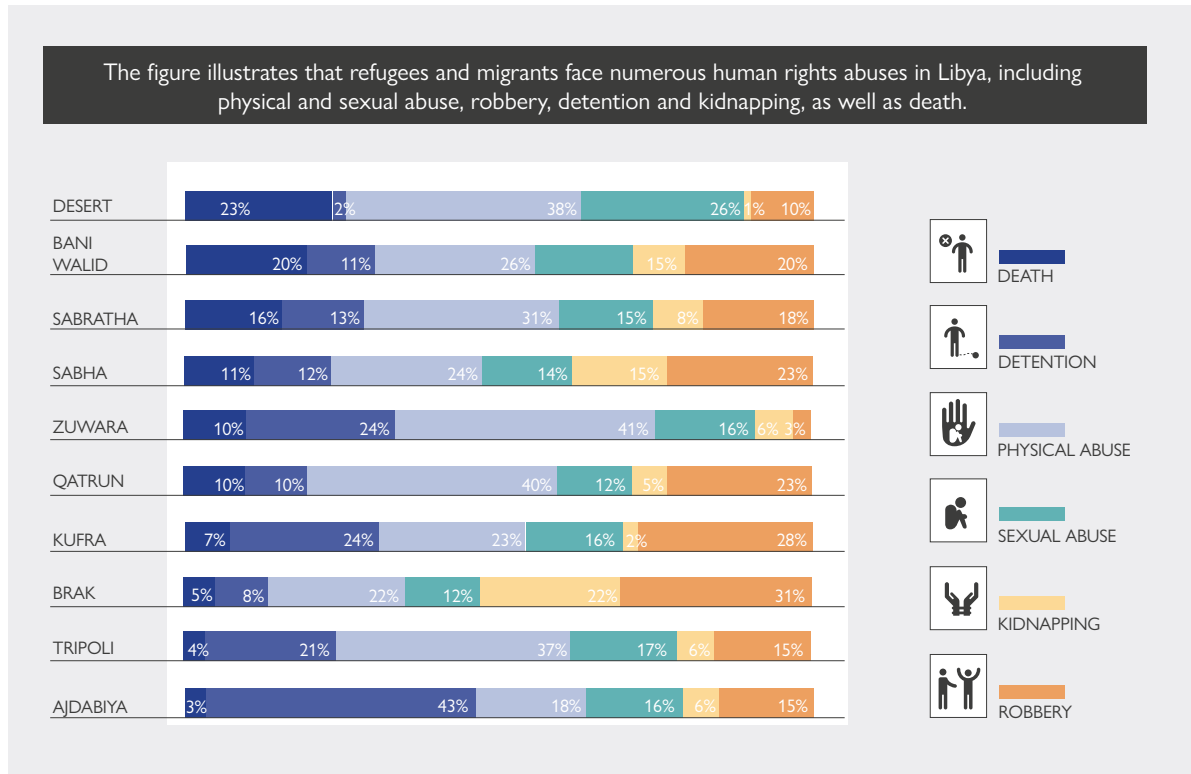
Source: 4Mi survey.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The data indicate that most incidents occurred in the desert, especially physical abuse, sexual abuse and death. Many incidents were also reported to take place in Sabha and Tripoli.²⁵ This aligns with the findings of a recent reports (UNHCR, 2018; UNHCR and MMC, 2020), which suggests that the desert is a particularly dangerous place (see also Black, Chapter 12 of this volume).

²⁵ Note that the reported locations of incidents depend largely upon location of interview. Comparison between locations might therefore be misleading.

Figure 14.4. Type of incidents per city/location



Overall, the accounts above illustrate that refugees and migrants face numerous human rights abuses in Libya, including physical and sexual abuse, robbery, detention and kidnapping, as well as death. In the following section, we turn our focus to the main independent variables of interest to investigate what factors make people on the move vulnerable to protection incidents.

14.3.3. Results on the factors that impact protection vulnerability in Libya

Table 14.1 summarizes the main insights using different statistical estimations. The first column displays the variables we investigate, while the second column, “Association”, indicates the effect of that variable on the likelihood of experiencing protection incidents in Libya. A positive sign indicates an increased likelihood of experiencing protection incidents, while a negative sign suggests that the variable would likely make the respondent less vulnerable to the cited protection incidents. The third column provides a short narrative and potential explanation for the result.²⁶

²⁶ This is a shortened version of a longer analysis to be published by MMC in 2020.

Table 14.1. Factors that determine vulnerability to protection incidents

Variables	Association	Explanation
Nationality	Nigerian: Positive (***) Sudanese: ~ Ghanaian: Negative (**) Eritrean: Positive (***) Burkinabe: Negative (***)	When individually examining the five most prevalent nationalities of surveyed refugees and migrants vis-a-vis all other migrants within the sample, all models show a positive and highly significant coefficient on “Nigerian” and “Eritrean.” The specific vulnerability of Eritreans has often been suggested in the literature, and research undertaken by MMC also suggests that Nigerian women may be vulnerable to experiencing sexual abuse as numerous respondents have detailed experiences of international sex trafficking within Libya.
Muslim	~	We do not have a clear finding regarding religion, and we can therefore not claim that Christians are more vulnerable to experiencing protection incidents, as has often been suggested in the literature.
Male	Positive (***)	In all the regressions, the coefficient on male is positive and highly significant, which suggests that men are more vulnerable compared with women. However, women are considerably more likely to experience/witness sexual abuse compared with men.
Age	Negative (***)	The coefficient on age is negative and significant in all the models, which indicates that younger people are more vulnerable than older people.
Education	Positive (***)	In all the specified models, having an education – as opposed to having no education – seems to increase vulnerability to protection incidents, which is in contrast to the hypothesis. However, as more controls are incorporated, the effect seems to decrease, especially for vocational and tertiary education. The result should be treated with a high degree of caution, since there are several potential biases. For example, we are not able to control for wealth and other factors that could drive both vulnerability and education, which leads to an omitted variable bias. Secondly, educated respondents might be more inclined to report incidents compared with less educated respondents. Overall, it is plausible that people with education are more vulnerable – not necessarily because of education, but because of other factors that are correlated with both education and protection vulnerability. This might suggest that educated people are more vulnerable due to financial resources, rather than their education.
Payment arrangement to smuggler <i>Payment at departure</i> <i>Half at departure and half at arrival</i> <i>Payment at arrival</i> <i>Payment through work</i>	~ Negative (***) Negative (***) (loses significance in the OLS model) Positive (***)	The result clearly shows that: the timing of smuggler payment matters. The table suggests that refugees and migrants who pay their smuggler on arrival at the destination, or half on departure and half on arrival are less vulnerable as compared with those who pay up front. People who work throughout the journey to pay the smuggler seem to be particularly vulnerable. Paying the smuggler upon arrival or having agreed to pay half before and half after might therefore reduce vulnerability along the migration journey, as it gives the smuggler an economic incentive to facilitate a safe journey.
Violence, war and a lack of rights as a migration driver	Negative (***)	The result indicates, surprisingly, that people who cited war, violence or persecution as a mixed migration driver were significantly less vulnerable to experiencing protection incidents. We can therefore not say that people who migrated because of violence, insecurity and persecution are more vulnerable to protection abuses within Libya.

Variables	Association	Explanation
Access to money		The result illustrates that those who worked during their journey were considerably more vulnerable compared with those who did not. While this could also be due to linked socioeconomic factors, the data were not able to distinguish among these factors. Accordingly, those who used digital means of accessing money were less vulnerable compared with those who did not. The conclusion is therefore that people with secure ways of accessing money are less vulnerable compared with those who are working along the journey. The result is significant and holds when other factors are held constant.
<i>Carrying cash</i>	~	
<i>Work along the journey</i>	Positive (***)	
<i>Digital money transfer</i>	Negative (***)	

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, **p<0.05, * p<0.1

14.4. Discussion

Data from 4Mi reveal that 37 per cent of all surveyed individuals experienced one or more protection incidents within Libya. The number is remarkably high and supports previous reports that suggest that the situation for refugees and migrants within Libya is critical. Physical abuse is the most prevalent protection incident reported by both men and women, experienced by 21 per cent of the respondents. The second most-cited protection incident reported is robbery (14%) followed by detention, death and sexual abuse, each at 12 per cent. A total of 5 per cent of the whole sample reported having been kidnapped. The data reveal specific gender dynamics in protection, in that sexual abuse is more prevalent for women, with 19 per cent of the female respondents having experienced/ witnessed sexual abuse, compared with 6 per cent for male respondents. Based on the fact that refugee and migrant respondents who are interviewed by 4Mi had been in Libya for less than two years, future research should determine whether short-term versus longer-term stay is itself a factor that determines vulnerability, as exploratory research does in Chapter 17 of this volume. It is possible that, given their short stay in Libya, 4Mi respondents are less integrated into Libyan communities, and therefore may be more vulnerable than migrants who have settled in Libya. Moreover, as protection may be linked with movement aspiration, future MMC work will examine how the effect of aspiring to onward movement from Libya impacts protection vulnerability, in comparison with refugees and migrants who intend to stay in Libya.

The regression analysis provides further insight into that factors that determine vulnerability. Nationality seems to play a large role in respondents' vulnerability to protection incidents. Respondents from Nigeria and Eritrea were significantly more vulnerable than their peers, even when a large number of control variables were considered. Additionally, men were overall found to be more vulnerable compared with women, except in relation to witnessing or experiencing abuse. The model, however, does not reveal that religion played a role in vulnerability, and thus we found no evidence that Christians were more vulnerable to experiencing protection incidents, as has often been highlighted in the literature. Moreover, respondents who migrated due to factors related to war, violence and a lack of rights were not found to be more vulnerable compared with those who migrated for other reasons (such as economic, familial and environmental, among others). Finally, the way in which refugees and migrants arranged payments to their smuggler, and how they accessed money along the journey matters. Specifically, those who worked along the journey to access money or to pay their smuggler fee were considerably more vulnerable, compared to those with secure ways of accessing money. Paying the smuggler upon arrival or having agreed to pay half at departure and half upon arrival decreased the vulnerability of our respondents. Such payment arrangements might therefore reduce vulnerability along the migration journey, as it gives the smuggler an economic incentive to facilitate a safe journey and might therefore be a strategy to mitigate protection vulnerabilities.

14.5. Implications

The results of this research have various implications for protection responses within Libya, both for programming and policy.

14.5.1. For programming

- **Use a route-based approach to develop and implement protection programming.** The research presented suggests that Eritreans and Nigerians are among the most vulnerable, and thus programming for these target groups should be undertaken in Libya, and in origin and transit countries (including Arabic language training or information campaigns on risks associated with carrying cash while migrating) to reduce refugees' and migrants' vulnerabilities before they arrive to Libya.
- **Provide gender-sensitive programming for both female and male refugees and migrants, particularly in regard to sexual exploitation and abuse.** Some 19 per cent of the female respondents experienced/witnessed sexual abuse.
- **Geographically tailor protection programming.** The findings suggest that the majority of incidents occurred in the desert (Kufra district), especially physical abuse, sexual abuse and witnessing migrant death. Many protection incidents were also reported in Sabha and Tripoli. Therefore, protection programming should specifically seek to work in these locations.
- **Expand research and data collection on refugee and migrant protection in Libya.** While this report contributes to understanding the potential factors that may influence refugees' and migrants' vulnerability to protection incidents, there is still a lack of data on protection in Libya. While 4Mi data seek to understand the protection risks of highly mobile populations, they do not account for refugees and migrants who are more settled in Libya and may have very different experiences with protection and human rights violations.

14.5.2. For policy

- **Engage local civil society actors and Libyan authorities to promote a domestic legal framework for refugees and migrants that focuses on protection, irrespective of legal status.**
- **Create complementary protection pathways to countries of intended destination through employment schemes and higher education, to create opportunities for safe routes out of Libya, for both migrants as well as refugees.**
- **Place human rights at the centre of all approaches.** The human rights of refugees and migrants should be at the centre of programming and support for Libya, taking into account the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders. These principles recommend that legislative provisions be proportionate and that criminal penalties be applied, where appropriate, for offenses committed against migrants at international borders.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 and the broader socioeconomic and political impacts of the pandemic have exacerbated the vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants to protection incidents within Libya. 4Mi COVID-19 surveys and key informant data reveal that people on the move are citing multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities due to mobility restrictions, limited access to work and the loss of income, and a perceived increase in discrimination and xenophobia. Refugees and migrants report discrimination both in access to health care and in day-to-day lives, including incidents such as forced detainment of housemaids by employers. Key informant interviews also suggest that within Libya, the impact of the pandemic is being exacerbated by conflict, particularly in Tripoli. A second phase of 4Mi data collection on the impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants focuses, among other things, on the extent to which various risks have been exacerbated by COVID-19.



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