

This snapshot provides an overview of the protection incidents reported by 4Mi respondents in West Africa, including the nature of these incidents and their geographic distribution. This snapshot also looks at assistance most needed and received by respondents.

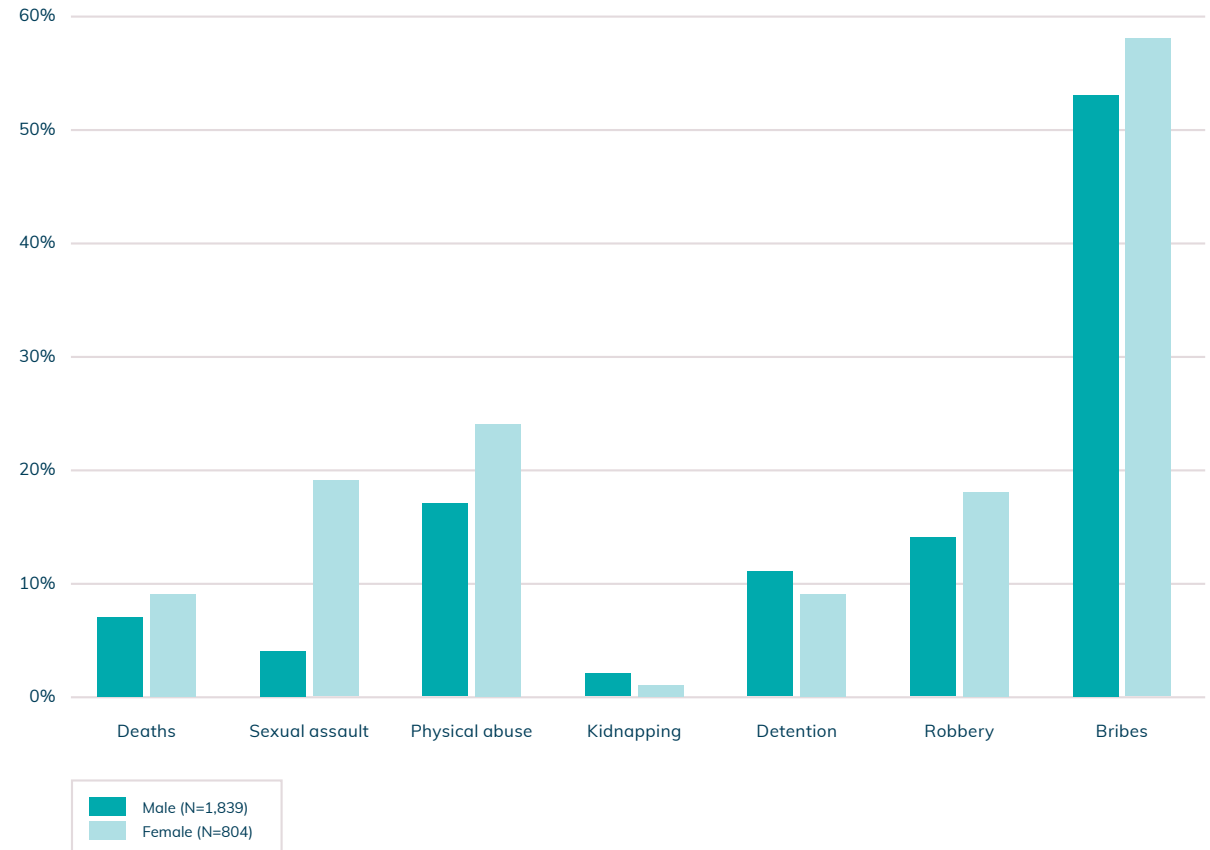
### Profiles

Of the 2,643 migrants and refugees interviewed 70% are men and 30% are women. The main nationalities encountered are Burkina Faso (15%), Guinea (12%), Côte d'Ivoire (11%), Nigeria (9%) and Mali (8%). Interviews took place between 1 October 2018 and 31 March 2019 in Mali (Kayes, Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu and Ber), Niger (Niamey, Diffa, Agadez and Tillaberi) and Burkina Faso (Dori, Bobo Dioulasso and Kantchari).

### Women at risk

Data disaggregated by gender show greater vulnerability to protection incidents among women 4Mi respondents in every category of incident except detention and kidnapping (Figure 1), and particularly with regard to sexual assault.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1: Percentage of respondents that experienced protection incidents disaggregated by gender**



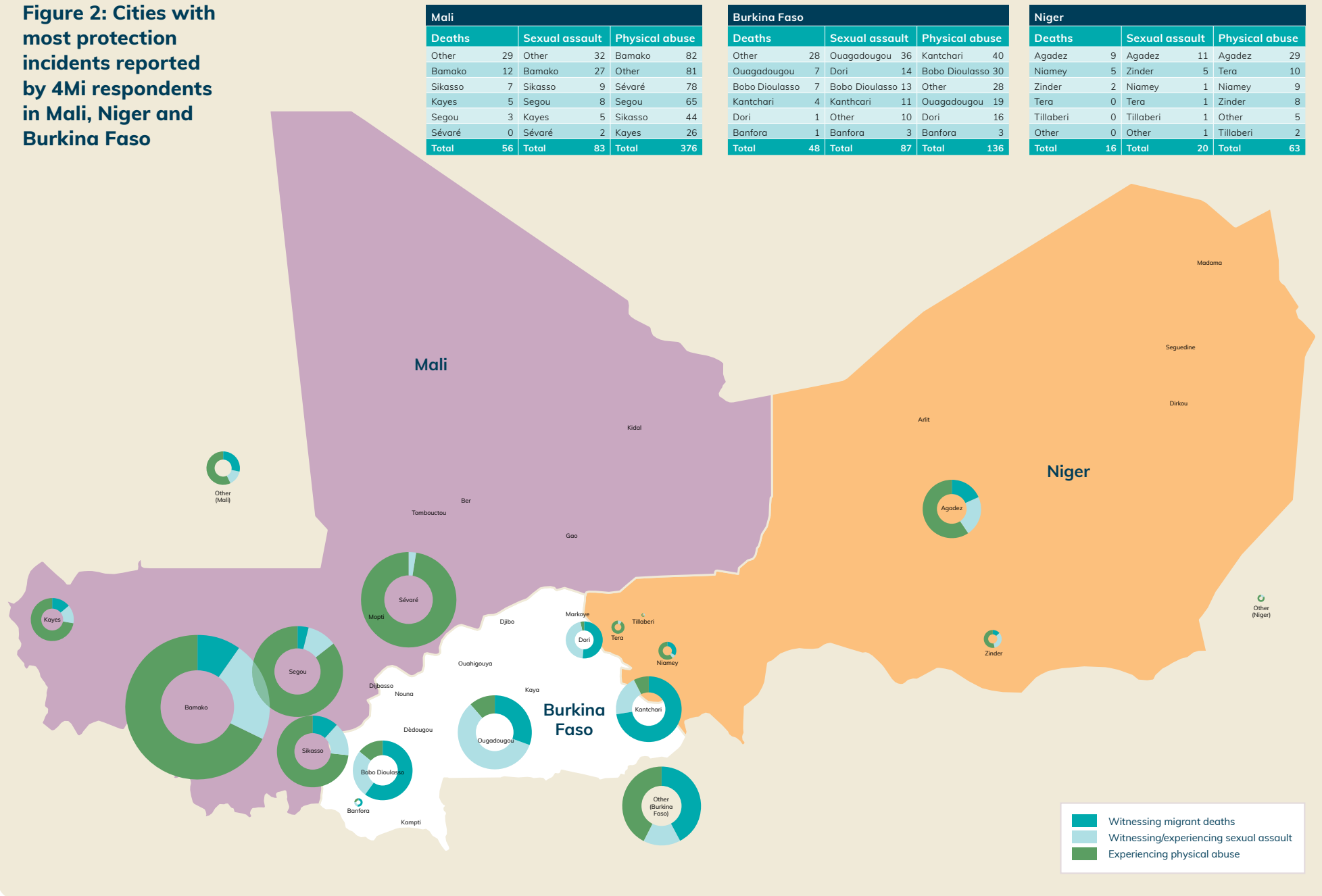
<sup>1</sup> The questions linked to protection incidents in the 4Mi survey are formulated as follows: "Did you witness any migrant deaths during your journey?", "Did you witness or experience any sexual assault or harassment during your journey?", "Did you experience any physical abuse or harassment (of a non-sexual nature) during your journey?", "Have you been kidnapped or otherwise held against your will during your journey?", "Have you been detained by the police, military, militia or immigration officials during your journey?", "Have you ever been robbed during your journey?", "Did you have to give government officials gifts, services or bribes during your journey?".

# Capital cities and border areas

4Mi cannot generate a picture of the places where protection incidents occur most frequently. A particular location may be cited more frequently for a number of reasons other than it being the location where most protection incidents happen.<sup>2</sup> This snapshot will therefore only provide an indicative picture for countries where data is collected. Here we present an overview of protection incidents reported in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (Figure 2).

Capital cities and other urban hubs are most often cited as areas where incidents take place. The ‘other’ category is relatively prominent, and respondents who use ‘other’ frequently refer to border areas, suggesting that many protection incidents may be occurring at border crossings. This trend is also present in the incident category “gifts and bribes” (not displayed here).<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2: Cities with most protection incidents reported by 4Mi respondents in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso**

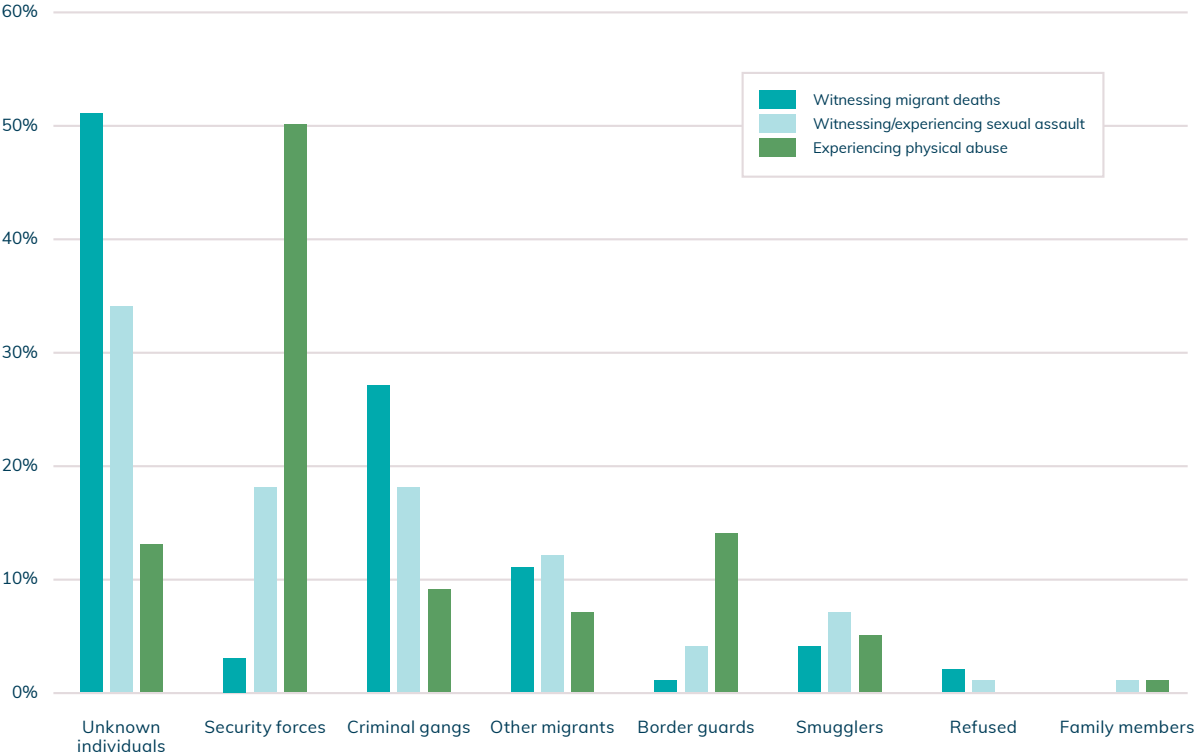


2 For instance, that location may be close to the city of interview and thus still fresh in the respondent’s memory.  
 3 4Mi respondents reported having to pay gifts and bribes 757 times in Burkina Faso, 1,258 times in Mali and 760 times in Niger. The ‘other’ category represented the most cited location for Burkina Faso, and the fifth most cited location for both Mali and Niger.

# Perpetrators: frequent reporting of security forces and border officials

The reported perpetrators of protection incidents, especially in cases of deaths and sexual assault, are often unknown or categorised in a rather unidentifiable category of criminal gangs. The presence of security forces and border officials as reported perpetrators of physical abuse is noteworthy, as is the relative absence of smugglers in all categories of protection incidents.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 3: Reported perpetrators of protection incidents experienced by 4Mi respondents**

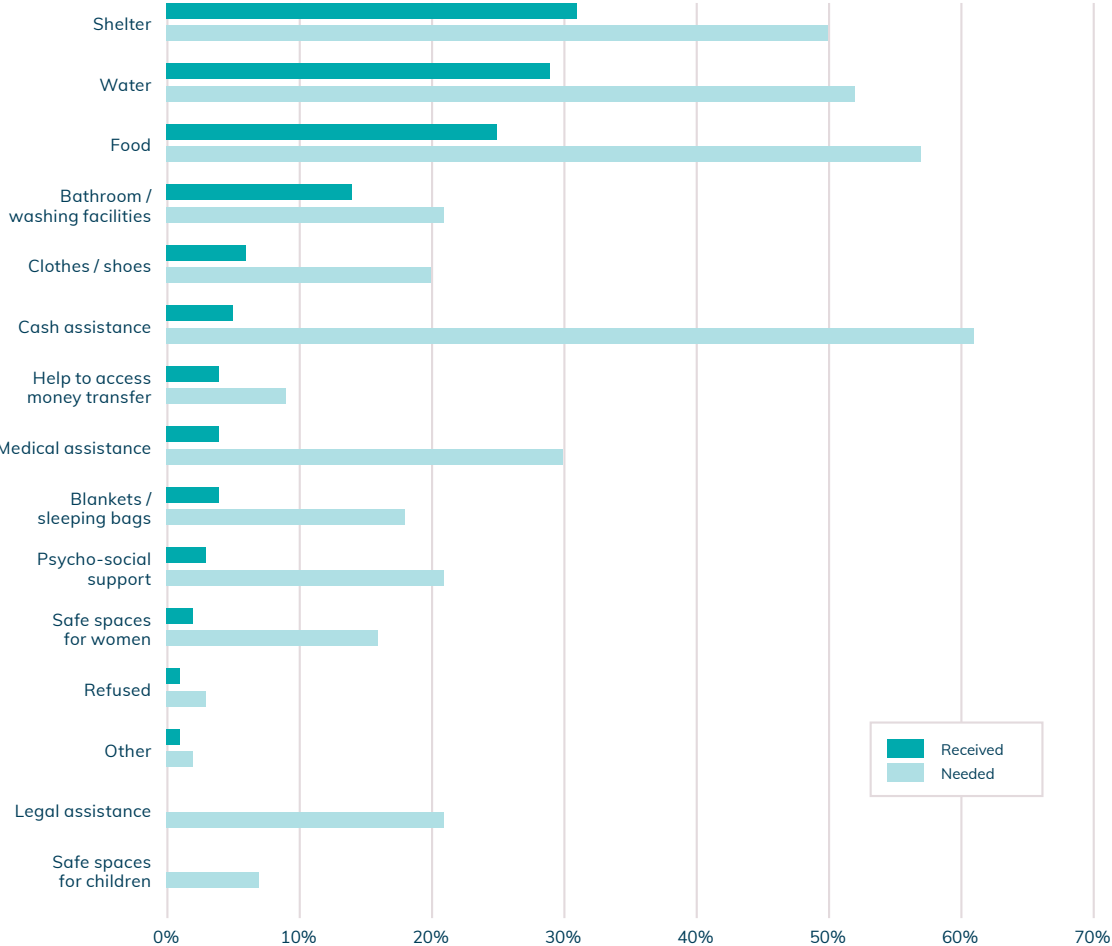


<sup>4</sup> This aggregate data used in this snapshot indicate that smugglers play a much smaller role in protection incidents than the findings for MMC West Africa’s recent smuggling paper ([available here](#)), which looks at Niger and Mali only. It is important to underline that several perpetrators can be selected for every protection incident. Also, reported perpetrators often fall into categories that are external to the migrant or refugee’s personal circle. This might indicate a bias in reporting according to the relationship the interviewed person has with the perpetrator.

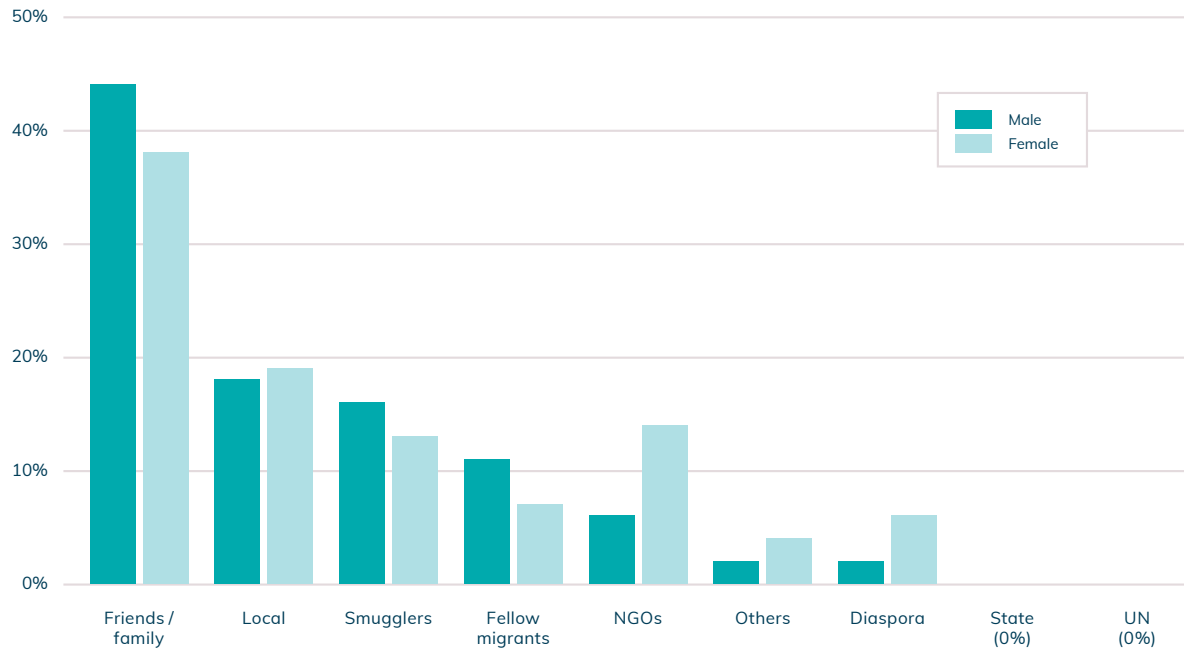
# Specialised services reported as largest gaps in assistance

Plotting assistance received against assistance most needed allow for gaps to be identified. The main cited needs of respondents correspond to those reported to have been most received (food, water and shelter). The largest gaps cited by respondents are for specialized services such as cash assistance, medical assistance, legal assistance, safe spaces for women and psycho-social support.

**Figure 4: Assistance needed plotted against assistance received**



**Figure 5: Source of assistance**



Family and friends are by far cited most often as service providers by 4Mi respondents (38% women compared to 44% men). They are followed by local populations (19% women compared to 18% men) and smugglers (13% women compared to 16% men). NGOs, the UN and authorities are cited much less, which may explain the earlier identified gaps in more specialised types of assistance, typically only provided by these types of service providers.

## Conclusion

Key takeaways from this snapshot are the finding that women respondents are more vulnerable to protection incidents in West Africa, in particular sexual violence, and the high amount of such incidents taking place in capital cities and border areas. Furthermore, the need for specialised assistance to migrants and refugees on routes becomes apparent.

A key takeaway for policymakers in the plural role that smugglers play. They are not cited as the main perpetrators of protection incidents by respondents while being reported as one of the main service providers. This may inform more nuanced policy and programming.

The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field monitors are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa, East Africa and Yemen, North Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Sample sizes are clearly indicated and represent a limited section of those on the move. The findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make any inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi)