

NIGER

Multi-sector assessment of migrants' needs in Agadez

Executive Summary

January 2019



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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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Located at the edge of the Sahara in northern Niger, the city of Agadez is at the intersection of the migratory routes between West and North Africa. Due to its geographical position, it is traditionally a transit area for sub-Saharan migrants¹ travelling towards Northern Africa, and more particularly to Libya and Algeria.² Since 2015, with the political and financial support of the European Union (EU), the government of Niger has adopted several measures in order to reduce the number of irregular movements towards North Africa.³ One of these measures is reflected in the adoption of law n°2015-36 criminalising migrant smuggling.⁴ According to secondary sources, these measures have reduced migratory flows from Agadez towards Northern Africa, but they have also increased the vulnerability of migrants *en route*, as well as in the ghettos⁵ of the city.⁶ Meanwhile, a new migratory trend has emerged in the area, which consists in the increase of population flows towards the south of the Sahara.⁷ In the city of Agadez, this has translated into an increase in the number of expelled migrants from Algeria since late 2017/early 2018.⁸ The arrival of 2,000 Sudanese nationals, mainly originally from Darfur, in the city since December 2017 is also an illustration of this new trend.⁹

These three phenomena have led to a reconfiguration of the migration context in Agadez which, in turn, has led to a reconfiguration of the humanitarian context in the area. An increasing number of actors, activities and coordination mechanisms in the migration sector have gradually emerged in the city of Agadez. In such context, several actors have identified a lack of overview regarding the needs and assistance provided to migrants in the city of Agadez across different sectors and different groups of migrants.

In order to fill this information gap, in December 2018, REACH with the support from the Migration Emergency Response Fund (MERF) managed by the Start Network, conducted a multi-sector assessment of migrants' needs in the city of Agadez. Data was collected through 98 qualitative, individual and in-depth interviews with migrants from the following three groups: asylum seekers¹⁰, mostly Sudanese nationals, residing in the *cases de passage*¹¹ (10 interviews) and at the humanitarian centre¹² for asylum seekers (28 interviews), expelled migrants from Algeria residing in the *site de refoulés*¹³ (30 interviews), and migrants in-transit living in ghettos (30 interviews). In order to complement the data collected through individual interviews with migrants, interviews were also conducted with 20 key informants (KIs) selected based on their knowledge of the situations of the three groups of migrants assessed (including their living conditions and needs). The objective of this assessment was to provide an overview of the humanitarian situation and the needs of the three groups of migrants in the city of

¹ REACH refers to all people on the move in the context of Agadez as 'people in mixed migration flows'. These may include, among others, recognised refugees, asylum seekers, individuals moving predominantly for economic reasons and victims of trafficking. To ease readability of the report, all these groups have been subsumed under the term 'migrant', unless otherwise specified in text.

² Jérôme Tubiana, Clotilde Warin, Gaffar Mohammad Saeneen. *Multilateral Damage – The impact of EU migration policies on central Saharan routes*. September 2018. Clingendael.

³ Ibid.

⁴ For more information on this law: https://sherloc.unodc.org/res/cld/document/ner/2015/loi_relative_au_trafic_illicite_de_migrants.html/Loi_N2015-36_relative_au_trafic_illicite_de_migrants.pdf.

⁵ 'Ghetto' is the term commonly used to refer to the houses where migrants in-transit stay in the city of Agadez.

⁶ Fransje Molenaar, Jérôme Tubiana, Clotilde Warin. *Caught in the middle: a human rights and peace building approach to migration governance in the Sahel*. December 2018. Clingendael.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *Le Monde.fr* avec l'AFP. En Algérie, les ONG dénoncent de nouvelles expulsions de migrants. 19 February 2018.

⁹ Radio France Internationale (RFI). Niger : les autorités s'inquiètent de la présence des réfugiés soudanais à Agadez. 26 mai 2018. RFI.

¹⁰ An asylum seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker. Source: Amnesty International. 'What's the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker?'. 24 January 2019. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org.au/refugee-and-an-asylum-seeker-difference/>

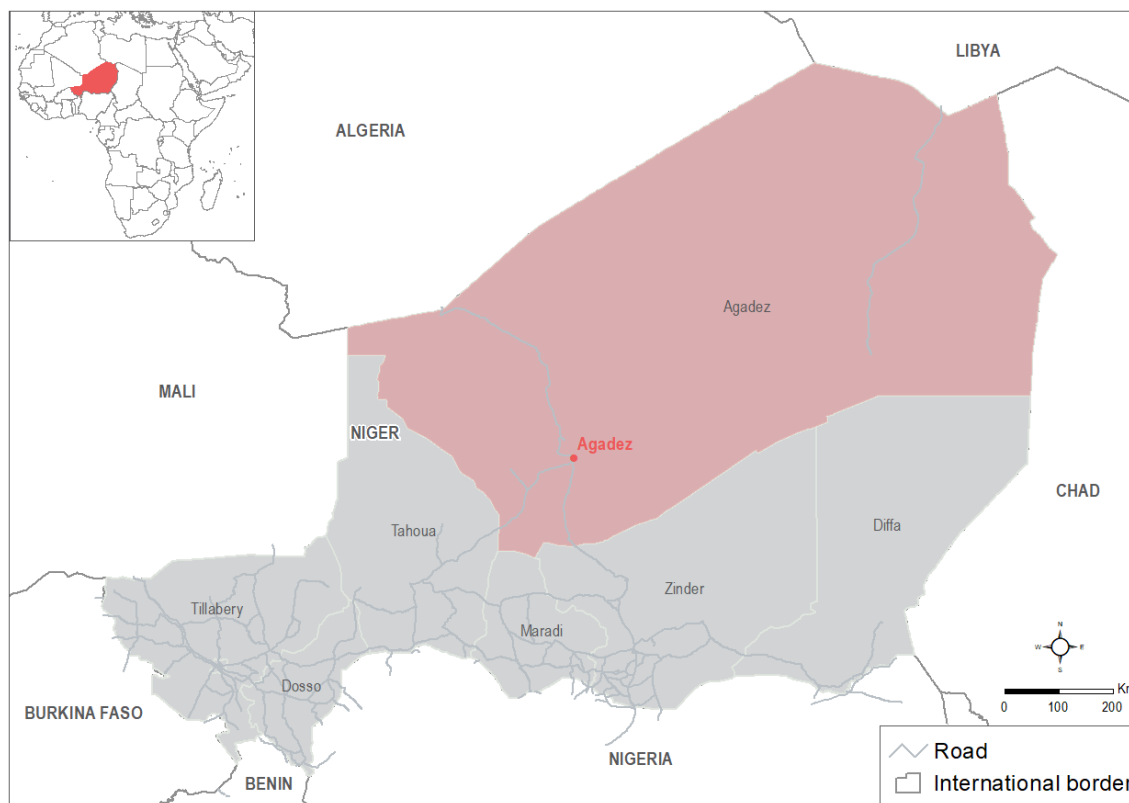
¹¹ At the time of data collection, there were six cases de passage in Agadez. These cases de passage are houses managed by the international non-governmental organisation (NGO) Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They accommodate the most vulnerable cases among the asylum seekers in Agadez - around 500 persons at the time of data collection.

¹² The humanitarian centre for asylum seekers is located at 13km from Agadez. It accommodated around 1,000 asylum seekers, mostly Sudanese nationals, at the time of data collection. It is managed by the local NGO Action Pour le Bien Être (APBE) under the supervision of UNHCR.

¹³ "Site de refoulés" is a displacement site located a bit outside of the city of Agadez. It accommodates the expelled migrants when they arrive in Agadez after their travel from Algeria. It is a temporary site, meaning that humanitarian actors only develop activities following the arrival of a wave of expelled migrants from Algeria. It is managed by a local and regional authority: Comité Régional de la Prévention et Gestion des Crises et des Catastrophes Alimentaires.

Agadez in order to inform humanitarian assistance planning, and to facilitate coordination between the different actors involved.

Map 1: Location of the city of Agadez



Key findings

Q1: What are the main displacement characteristics (in terms of departure from country of origin and arrival to Agadez) among the three different groups of migrants? What are their future movement intentions?

- An important proportion of interviewed migrants reported having left their country of origin between 1 and 5 years ago (39/97)¹⁴, while **almost all** reported **arriving in the city of Agadez a year or less ago** (85/91)¹⁵. As such, **Agadez does not seem to be the first destination** for a significant proportion of interviewed migrants.
- **Security** is an important factor that has influenced **displacement choices of interviewed migrants staying at the humanitarian centre and in the cases de passage**. Armed conflict was reported by migrants interviewed in these two places as **the main push factor** for leaving their country of origin (20/20)¹⁶, whereas the perceived **absence of conflict** in Agadez was considered **the main pull factor for coming to the city** (31/38)¹⁷. This could be explained by the fact that all migrants interviewed at the humanitarian centre and in the cases de passage were asylum seekers.

¹⁴ One migrant interviewed in the ghettos did not answer this question.

¹⁵ Seven migrants did not answer this question, including five at the *site de refoulés* and two in the ghettos.

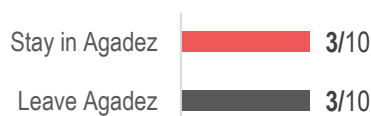
¹⁶ Among the 20 migrants who answered this question in these two locations, including 15 in the humanitarian centre and 5 in the cases de passage.

¹⁷ Among the 38 migrants who answered this question in the two locations, including 28 in the humanitarian centre and 10 in the cases de passage.

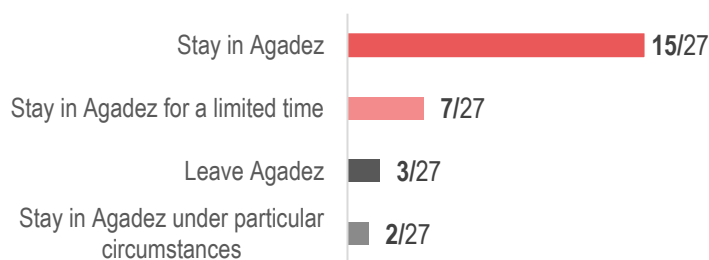
- **Displacement choices of stranded migrants in the ghettos** were found to be mostly influenced by the **search for economic opportunities**. Economic opportunities (abroad) were identified by these migrants as their **main pull factor (18/28)¹⁸**, and, for almost all of them, the lack thereof as their **main push factor (5/7)¹⁹**. Migrants at the *site de refoulés* also mainly reported the **search for economic opportunities** as their **main push factor (9/10)²⁰**. However, **almost all of them mentioned their expulsion from Algeria as their main pull factor to for going/returning to Agadez (28/30)²¹**.
- A slight majority of interviewed migrants reported **intending to leave Agadez** during the month following data collection **(47/97)²²**. An important proportion of migrants also reportedly intended to **stay in Agadez**, or to **stay in Agadez either for a limited period of time or under particular circumstances (45/97)**. However, migrants' displacement intentions were found to **differ depending on their location**. For example, while a sizeable proportion of migrants interviewed in the ghettos reported intending to leave Agadez **(14/30)**, the majority of migrants interviewed at the humanitarian centre reported intending to stay in Agadez **(15/29)**, for reasons mainly related to peace and security.

Figure 1: Main future movement intentions during the month following data collection reported by interviewed migrants, by location

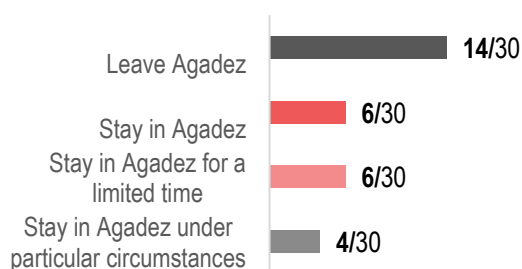
Cases de passage



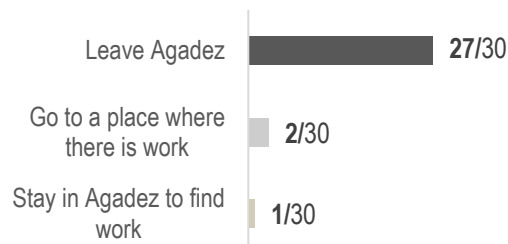
Humanitarian centre for asylum seekers²³



Ghettos



Site de refoulés²⁴



- **Migrants' intention to stay in Agadez were reportedly based on their access to economic opportunities, basic services and/or humanitarian assistance in the area.** Almost half of the interviewed migrants reported intending to leave Agadez due to limited access to economic opportunities and basic services, such as healthcare and education. This may raise questions regarding the type of

¹⁸ Among the 28 migrants interviewed in the ghettos who answered this question.

¹⁹ Among the seven migrants interviewed in the ghettos who answered this question.

²⁰ Among the 10 migrants interviewed at the *site de refoulés* who answered this question.

²¹ Among the 30 migrants interviewed at the *site de refoulés* who answered this question.

²² One migrant in the humanitarian centre for asylum seekers did not answer this question.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The category 'go to a place where there is work' refers to two persons who mentioned being willing to go to a place where they could develop their business or find work, without specifying the location.

assistance to be provided to migrants who intend to stay in Agadez and the scalability of the local socio-economic infrastructures, which already have limited capacity.²⁵ It also raises the question of migrants' integration on a long-term basis in an area where tensions between migrant and host communities have become more visible in the last months.²⁶

Q2: What are the priority needs (including in terms of access to food, non-food items (NFIs) and shelter) of the three different groups of migrants in Agadez?

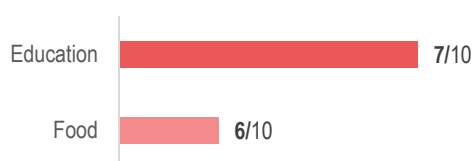
Figure 2: Main priority needs reported by interviewed migrants^{27,28}



- The **most reported priority need** was found to be food, identified by two thirds of interviewed migrants (62/94)²⁹, followed by **non-food items (NFIs)** (49/94) and **economic resources** (47/94). Access to economic resources appears to be important for interviewed migrants, with **employment being the fourth most commonly reported priority need** (44/94). While almost all interviewed migrants who answered this question reported having access to health services (69/77)³⁰, **health care** was identified as a priority need by more than a third of interviewed migrants (38/94), which may indicate a lack of quality of services and/or infrastructures, even though these may exist.

Figure 3: Three main priority needs reported by interviewed migrants in each location^{31,32}

Cases de passage



Humanitarian centre for asylum seekers



In the *cases de passage*, the third most reported priority needs were economic resources, health, protection, employment and NFIs, each indicated by half of the migrants interviewed (5/10).

²⁵ As highlighted in: [OCHA. Aperçu des besoins humanitaires Niger 2019. Novembre 2018.](#)

²⁶ For more information, consult: [Fransje Molenaar, Jérôme Tubiana, Clotilde Warin. Caught in the middle: a human rights and peace building approach to migration governance in the Sahel. December 2018. Clingendael.](#)

²⁷ Four migrants are not included in this question either because their answer was not logical or because they did not answer the question. Among these four migrants, three were located at the *site de refoulés* and one in the ghettos.

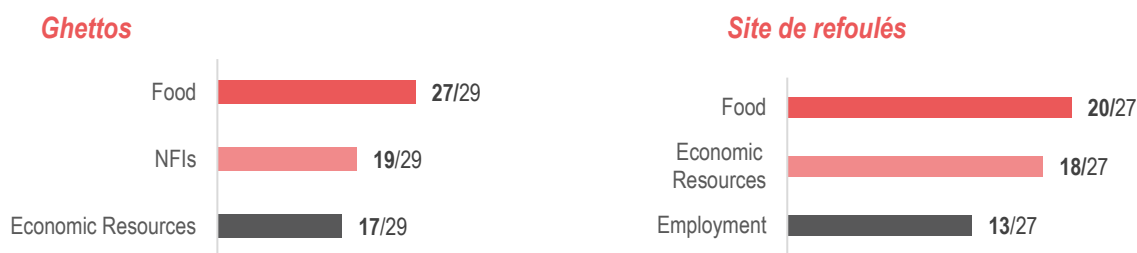
²⁸ Multiple choices possible.

²⁹ Multiple choices possible.

³⁰ 21 migrants did not answer this question, including 19 at the *site de refoulés*, 1 in the *cases de passage* and 1 in the ghettos.

³¹ Multiple choices possible.

³² Four migrants are not included in this question either because their answer was not logical or because they did not answer the question. Among these four migrants, three were located at the *site de refoulés* and one in the ghettos.



- **Access to food appears to be particularly problematic for migrants interviewed in the ghettos.** Among the 32 migrants who reported difficulties accessing food³³, 25 were living in the ghettos. Almost all of these 25 migrants mentioned the **lack of money** as a difficulty (24/25). In addition, **almost all migrants who reported eating less than three meals per day were located in the ghettos (17/18).**
- **Access to education** was mainly mentioned as a priority need by migrants interviewed at the humanitarian centre and in the *cases de passage*, and by considerable proportions: 22/28 and 7/10 migrants, respectively. This may be linked to the fact that migrants interviewed in these two places are relatively younger than in other places, with most being aged between 18 and 25 years old.
- The majority of interviewed migrants reported being only **partially satisfied or not satisfied with the shelters they are able to use (50/83)**³⁴. These migrants are mainly located in the *cases de passage* and at the humanitarian centre. The main issues mentioned in relation to their shelters are the **lack of comfort, the persistent dust and the heat.**
- Reportedly, migrants living in the ghettos were **disproportionately not receiving any NFI kits since their arrival in Agadez**, when compared to other population groups (15 out of the 16 respondents who reported not receiving such kits were living in the ghettos). In addition, the main NFI needs identified by interviewed migrants were **clothes (50/72)**³⁵, **sleeping materials**, including (bed) cover, mattress and bed (47/72), and **personal hygiene items**, including soap, toothpaste and brush (35/72). The high prevalence of clothes and sleeping materials reported as NFI needs could be related to the fact that data collection took place in December, which coincides with the cold season in Niger.

Q3: To what extent do the three different groups of migrants have access to economic resources and basic services (such as water, healthcare and food) in Agadez and what are the difficulties migrants face in accessing these?

- Interviewed migrants were found to have **limited access to economic resources**: only two migrants reported having savings, nine reported receiving money from family and/or friends, and 19 reported having sources of income, through a job (14/19) or by selling goods (5/19).
- **Access to basic services** appears to be comparatively **more limited for migrants living in the ghettos**: in addition to their limited access to food, they were also more likely to report **difficulties in accessing water and health services.**
- Eight migrants reported not having access to healthcare services – seven in the ghettos and one at the *site de refoulés*. Among the 69 migrants who indicated having access³⁶, the **main health services** identified were **general medical consultations (45/69)** and **vaccinations (30/69)**. Mainly migrants in

³³ 34 migrants did not answer this question, and 32 reported having no difficulties accessing food.

³⁴ 15 migrants at the *site de refoulés* did not answer this question.

³⁵ Among the 72 migrants who reported having specific NFI needs.

³⁶ 21 migrants did not answer this question, including 19 at the *site de refoulés*, 1 in the *cases de passage* and 1 in the ghettos.

the *cases de passage* and at the humanitarian centre reported not being satisfied with the healthcare services they had access to (18/19)³⁷: the main reasons mentioned were the lack of results, the low quality of these services and these services being insufficient.

- None of the interviewed migrants reported having access to education services (notably higher education and/or vocational training).³⁸ However, a large proportion reported being interested in accessing these services (43/51)³⁹, mainly language lessons or going back to school. In addition, the vast majority of the interviewed migrants was reportedly willing to access vocational trainings (51/61)⁴⁰, particularly in the fields of sewing and computer science.
- Most of the interviewed migrants reported being satisfied or partially satisfied with the water they had access to (55/76)⁴¹, notably because of its quality (23/55)⁴². The main aspect migrants reported as to not being satisfied was related to the quantity of the water provided (22/27)⁴³. Almost all of the interviewed migrants had access to latrines (87/88)⁴⁴. However, access to latrines in poor or unclean conditions was also reported, mostly among migrants interviewed at the humanitarian centre (25/38 and 24/39, respectively).⁴⁵
- Almost all of the migrants expelled from Algeria and interviewed at the *site de refoulés* reported having accessed drinking water and food during their travel from Algeria to Niger, mainly through distributions.⁴⁶ However, several migrants reported not being able to wash themselves or their clothes (7) and not having access to latrines (8) during the several days of travel. Difficult travel conditions were also reported by several migrants interviewed at this site (12), notably as a result of the poor conditions of the roads and the low temperatures. The interviews found that most concerns voiced by the migrants expelled from Algeria were related to their travel conditions instead of their current living conditions. This could be explained by their short stay at the site.

Q4: What are the coping mechanisms used by the three different groups of migrants in Agadez in order to access economic resources and basic services?

- The reported use of coping mechanisms in case of limited access to economic resources and basic services was mostly mentioned by migrants interviewed in the ghettos. An important proportion of the migrants who reported using these mechanisms were women; further research on this is required.
- In case of limited access to resources and basic services, migrants appear to mainly ask for support from friends and/or acquaintances in Agadez. Indeed, the main coping mechanism identified by interviewed migrants to access food and economic resources is to borrow food or money from friends and/or acquaintances in Agadez.
- Out of the interviewed migrant groups, migrants in the ghettos mostly reported being in contact with their family and/or friends in their country of origin (22/32)⁴⁷ through phone and social media. It is also mostly these migrants who reported having received support from their family and/or

³⁷ Among the 19 migrants who reported not being satisfied with the healthcare services they have access to.

³⁸ Because of their short stay at the site, migrants interviewed at the *site de refoulés* were not asked questions on their access to education services.

³⁹ Migrants interviewed at the *site de refoulés* did not answer this question, as well as 4 migrants in the humanitarian centre, 2 migrants in the *cases de passage* and 11 migrants in the ghettos.

⁴⁰ Migrants interviewed at the *site de refoulés* did not answer this question, as well as six migrants in the ghettos and one migrant in the *cases de passage*.

⁴¹ 22 migrants did not answer this question, including 17 at the *site de refoulés*, 4 in the ghettos and 1 in the humanitarian centre.

⁴² Among the 55 migrants who reported being satisfied or partially satisfied with the water they had access to.

⁴³ Among the 27 migrants who reported being partially or not satisfied with the water they had access to.

⁴⁴ 10 migrants did not answer this question, including 9 at the *site de refoulés* and 1 in the humanitarian centre.

⁴⁵ Among the 38 migrants who reported having access to latrines in poor conditions and among the 39 migrants who reported having access to unclean latrines.

⁴⁶ One migrant reportedly did not have access to food during the journey.

⁴⁷ Among the 32 migrants who reported being in contact with their family and/or friends in their country of origin.

friends in their country of origin since they arrived in Agadez (14/16)⁴⁸. Respondents reported that this support mainly comes **from their family** and is mostly **financial and moral**.

- One third of all interviewed migrants reported having a **social network⁴⁹ in Agadez (33)**, mainly comprised of **members of their family (13/33)**, **compatriots (10/33)** and **roommates (5/33)**.

MATRIX OF ACTIVITIES

A matrix listing the activities developed by local and international actors aimed at the three groups of migrants assessed was produced as part of this assessment. This matrix aims to provide an overview of these actors and activities, and is based on interviews conducted with 20 key informants (KIs) from 10 December 2018 to 21 January 2019 in Agadez and Niamey. These KIs are actors working directly or indirectly with one or several of the three groups of migrants assessed. As information presented in this matrix is based on information shared by KIs during the interviews, it is possible that the list of activities is not exhaustive.

The matrix of activities is available here: <http://bit.ly/2HXWfKK>

OTHER INSIGHTS AND AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER RESEARCH

- **Needs of the host population:** even though not covered by this assessment, the host population has also been impacted by the recent reconfiguration of the migration context in Agadez.⁵⁰ While this impact is mentioned in different studies⁵¹, little is known about the consequences on the host population specifically, and across thematic areas (economic, social and political).
- **Needs of hard-to-reach migrants:** while this assessment focused on three main groups of migrants, there are other population groups with humanitarian needs in the city of Agadez, including women engaged in sex trade and migrants in ghettos which are not accessible to humanitarian actors. Being hard-to-reach, these migrants may be highly vulnerable, notably due to their clandestine situation.⁵² However, only limited information on the situation and needs of these groups is available.
- **Redirection of flows towards the south:** the development of new migration policies in the Sahel has led to a redirection of population flows towards the south.⁵³ Further investigation on this new migration trend seems necessary in order to derive a better sense of the new trajectories taken by migrants, as well as the conditions in which they travel.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected through 98 qualitative, individual and in-depth interviews with migrants from the three following groups: migrants in *cases de passage* and at the humanitarian centre for asylum seekers (mostly consisting of Sudanese nationals), expelled migrants from Algeria living at the *site de refoulés*, and migrants in ghettos. Respondents were selected on the basis of their place of residence at the time of data collection and their profile, including age, gender, and nationality.

In order to complement the data collected during interviews with migrants, interviews were also conducted with 20 KIs. KIs were selected based on their knowledge of the situations of the three groups of migrants assessed, as they were actors working directly or indirectly with one or several of the three groups of migrants. The objective of these KI interviews was to provide an overview of the actors developing activities aimed at the assessed migrant groups. The overview was used to highlight the type of assistance provided and its potential gaps.

⁴⁸ Among the 16 migrants who reported receiving support from their family and/or friends since their arrival in Agadez.

⁴⁹ A social network is a group of people and resources on which an individual could count if he/she needs help.

⁵⁰ For more information on this, see the original report's (in French) context analysis on page 24.

⁵¹ Including: Jérôme Tubiana, Clotilde Warin, Gaffar Mohammad Saeneen. *Multilateral Damage – The impact of EU migration policies on central Saharan routes*. September 2018. Clingendael.

⁵² According to the Cambridge dictionary, 'clandestine' refers to something which is planned or done in secret, especially describing something that is not officially allowed. It intends to mean that these migrants live in hidden conditions but are not necessarily all irregular in the country.

⁵³ For more information on this, see the original report's (in French) context analysis on page 24.

KEY LIMITATIONS

Due to the assessment's characteristics and the methodology used, some key limitations should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings:

- Results are indicative, and not representative, of the situation of the three groups of migrants assessed in the city of Agadez.
- Access to the different data collection sites was facilitated by humanitarian organisations. As such, it is likely that the most vulnerable migrants, who are less accessible and do not receive assistance, are underrepresented in this assessment.
- As information is based on participants' responses, a potential bias can exist in their responses, notably in order to receive more assistance.
- Due to migrants' limited stay at the *site de refoulés* (between a period of 12h and 48h), some questions, such as questions on their access to education, were not asked to migrants expelled from Algeria. However, they answered additional questions on their travel conditions between Algeria and Niger.