Protection risks along the journey to Khartoum

Data and research on mixed migration in Sudan are scarce, in particular regarding the protection landscape for refugees and migrants. A number of reports have highlighted risks of torture, trafficking and extortion as well as violence, deprivation of documents, and detention. Drawing upon data from a 4Mi pilot in Khartoum state, this snapshot seeks to examine the main risks along mixed migration routes to and through the country's capital to better understand refugee and migrant vulnerability and inform programming and policy.
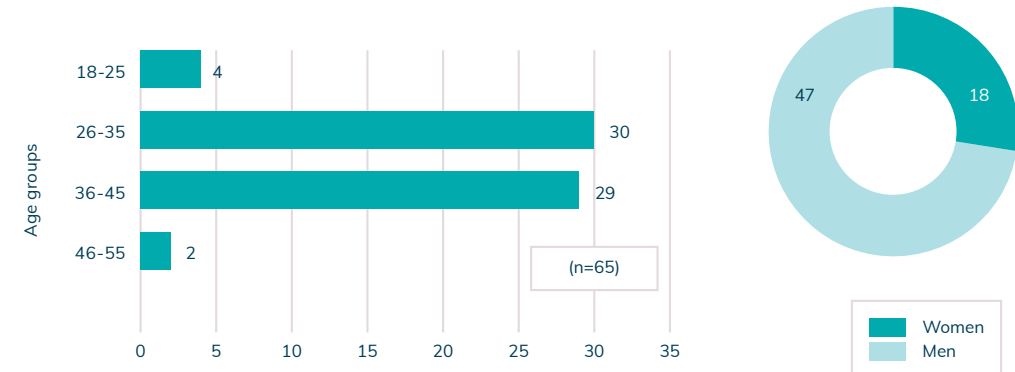
Recommendations

- Provide protection programming for refugees and migrants moving from Libya and Chad to Khartoum, who may require specific services (e.g. medical care and psycho-social support).

- Engage authorities in Libya and Sudan to decriminalize migration and provide safeguards for asylum seekers who are often forced to cross borders irregularly in search of safety.

- Engage authorities in Libya, Chad and Sudan to uphold legal and institutional frameworks which make accountable the perpetrators of protection violations.

Profiles

This snapshot is based on data collected through a 4Mi pilot in Sudan with 65 refugees and migrants surveyed from May 30 - July 27, 2020 in Khartoum state.[1] Respondents represent 18 different nationalities, most notably Liberian (n=17), Nigerian (n=12), Cameroonian (n=6), Eritrean (n=5), and Ivorian (n=5). Other nationalities include Burkinabe, Central African, Kenyan, Malian, Congolese (DRC), and Senegalese. Of those surveyed, 47 are men and 18 are women, and their ages range from 21 to 50.
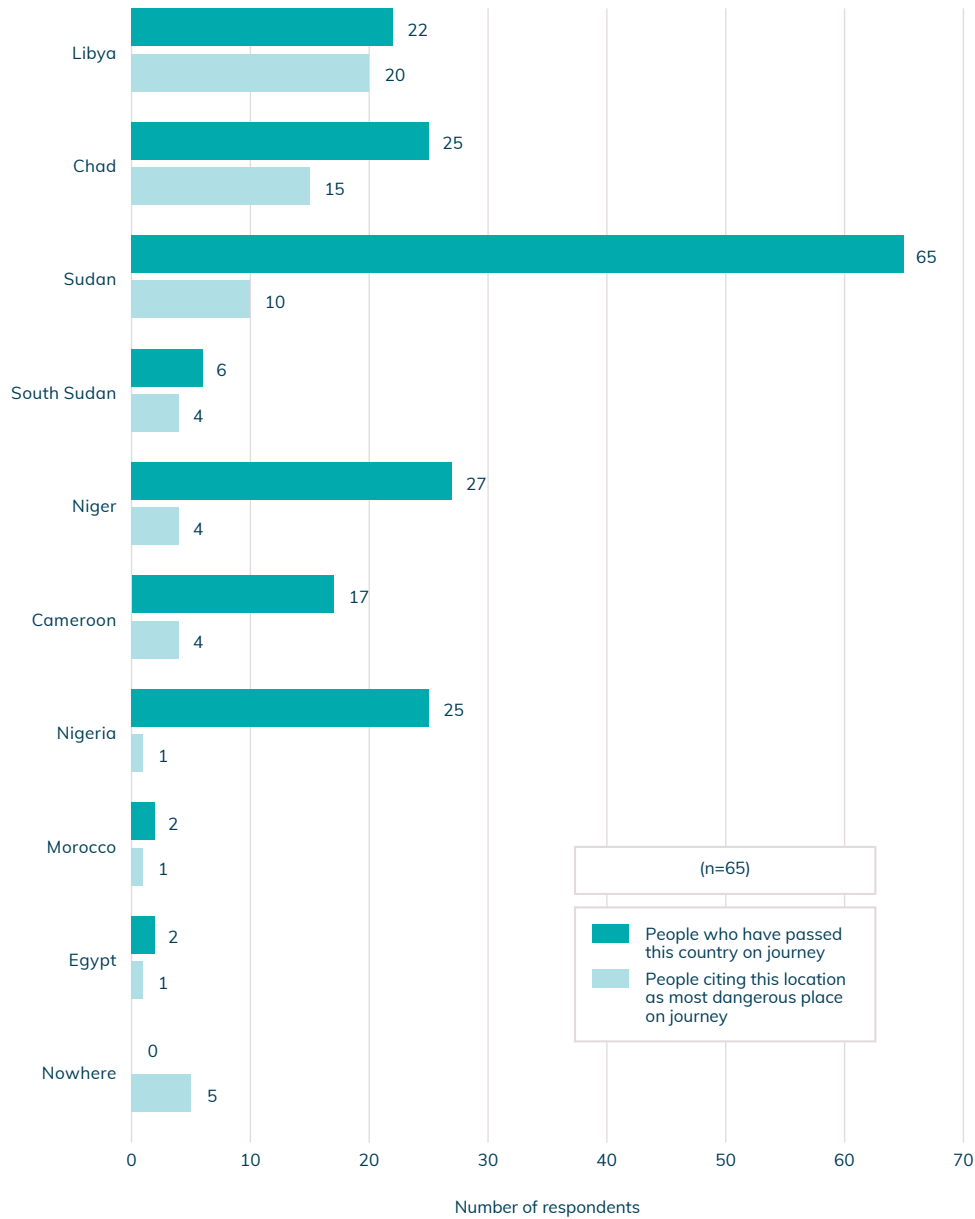
Figure 1. Age and sex distribution of respondents

Respondents perceive routes through Libya and Chad to Sudan as particularly risky
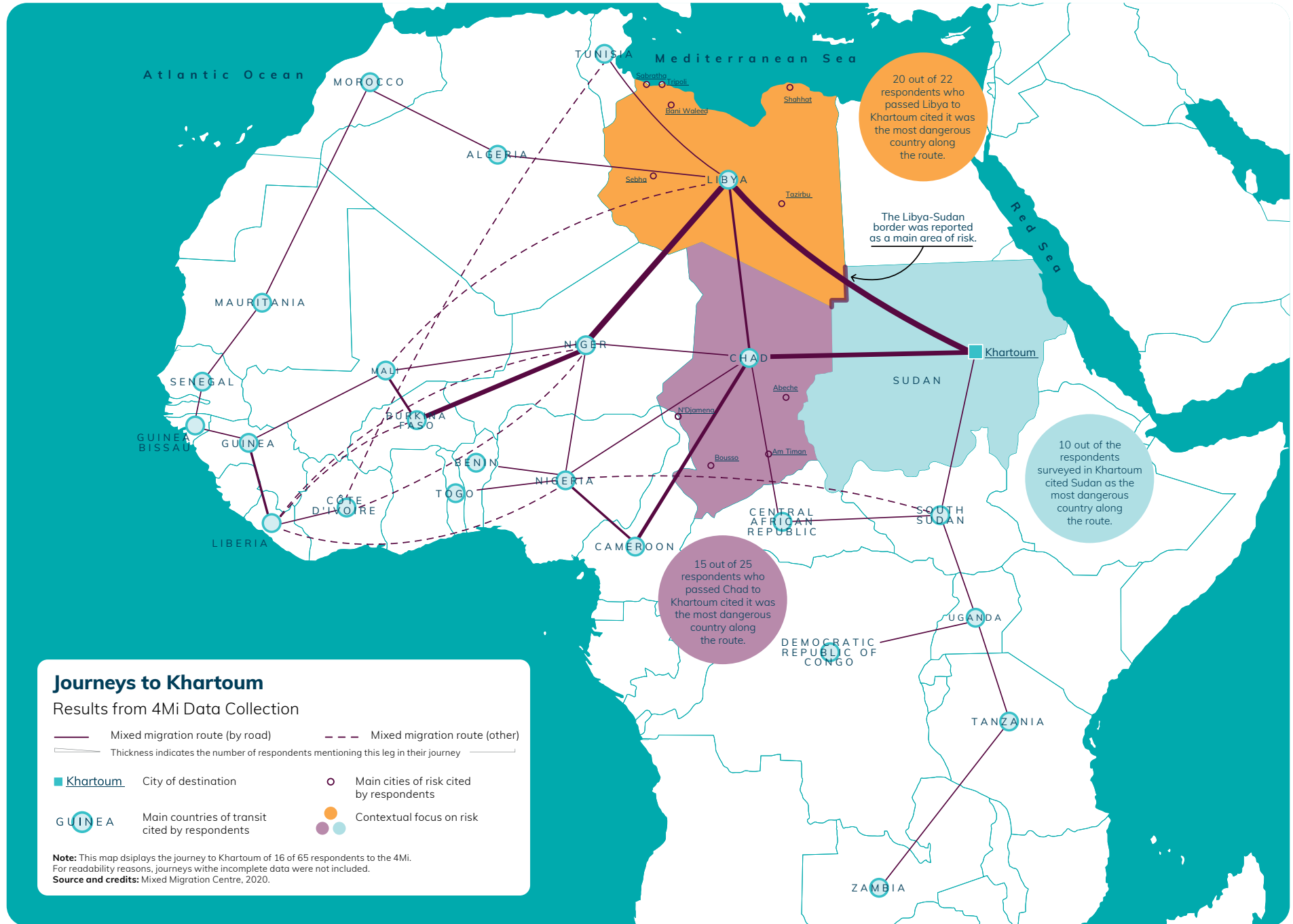
When queried about the most dangerous location on their journey, respondents most often cited Libya (20 out of 22 respondents who had transited through Libya), followed by Chad (15 out of 25 who had transited through Chad), and Sudan (10 out of all 65 surveyed in Sudan). A 29-year-old respondent from the Central African Republic highlighted the particular risks of journeys along routes through Libya, noting: "It is total insecurity, especially in Libya." Other surveyed refugees and migrants highlighted the relative security of Sudan compared to Libya, noting that Sudan was a place of comparative refuge along the journey. A 35-year-old Nigerien man explains: "Since I left Niger for Libya, I have suffered. Libya has been hell for me. I went to Sudan thanks to a friend."

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1   Khartoum state includes the localities of Khartoum (city), Ombada, Omdurman, Karary, Bahri, Sharq Elnil, Jabal Awliya.

Figure 2. What was the most dangerous location on your journey?

More specifically, places which were found to be particularly risky in Libya include Tripoli, Bani Walid, Sabha, Sabratha, Shahhat, and Tairbu. In Chad, key risky cities include Abeche, Bousso, N'Djamena, and Am Timan. In Sudan, locations considered risky include Khartoum (city), Khartoum North, as well as an unspecified area of desert, particularly near the border with Libya. Figure 3 maps out the locations that respondents perceived as the most "risky" along their mixed migration routes. These routes illustrate the circular and return movements taking place within the region, and highlight that Libya and Sudan are not merely transit countries on the way to Europe.

Figure 3. Map of locations deemed most 'risky' along mixed migration routes through Chad and Libya to Sudan

Atlantic Ocean

Mediterranean Sea

MOROCCO

TUNISIA

Sabratha
Tripoli
Bani Waleed
Shahhat

ALGERIA

LIBYA
Sebha
Tazirbu

Red Sea

20 out of 22 respondents who passed Libya to Khartoum cited it was the most dangerous country along the route.

The Libya-Sudan border was reported as a main area of risk.

MAURITANIA

NIGER

CHAD

Khartoum

SUDAN

SENEGAL

MALI

Abeche

GUINEA BISSAU

BURKINA FASO

GUINEA

N'Djamena

10 out of the respondents surveyed in Khartoum cited Sudan as the most dangerous country along the route.

BENIN

NIGERIA

TOGO

Bousso

Am Timan

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

SOUTH SUDAN

LIBERIA

CAMEROON

15 out of 25 respondents who passed Chad to Khartoum cited it was the most dangerous country along the route.

UGANDA

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

TANZANIA

ZAMBIA

Journeys to Khartoum

Results from 4Mi Data Collection

——— Mixed migration route (by road)   – – – Mixed migration route (other)

Thickness indicates the number of respondents mentioning this leg in their journey

■ Khartoum   City of destination   ○ Main cities of risk cited by respondents

GUINEA   Main countries of transit cited by respondents   Contextual focus on risk

Note: This map dsiplays the journey to Khartoum of 16 of 65 respondents to the 4Mi.
For readability reasons, journeys withe incomplete data were not included.
Source and credits: Mixed Migration Centre, 2020.

Physical violence the most-cited protection risk in Libya and Chad by surveyed refugees and migrants

The 20 refugees and migrants surveyed in Khartoum who cited Libya as the most dangerous country along their journey, were asked to detail the specific risks within Libya. All reported physical violence (20/20), which aligns with findings from a 2020 MMC study on vulnerability to protection violations in Libya based on 5,659 surveys with refugees and migrants. The second-most cited risks were detention (10/20) and death (10/20), followed by robbery (8/20), and kidnapping (7/20). In the limited qualitative data provided by the survey, refugees and migrants noted repeated exposure to risks. A 37-year-old Senegalese man highlighted: "My migration was very difficult, I [was detained in Libya] twice. So, I suffered." Similar to Libya, the most-cited risk in Chad included physical violence (10/15), followed by robbery (9/15).

Refugee and migrant respondents cite vulnerability to detention, physical violence, and robbery in Sudan

The 10 migrants surveyed in Khartoum who perceived Sudan as the most dangerous country along their journey, were further queried on the specific risks which people on the move face. The most cited risk was detention (5 respondents) followed by physical violence (4), robbery (4), the COVID-19 pandemic (2), and kidnapping (2), among others. The sample size is extremely small, and all results should just be taken to indicate the type of risks present within Sudan, rather than the prevalence of specific risks.
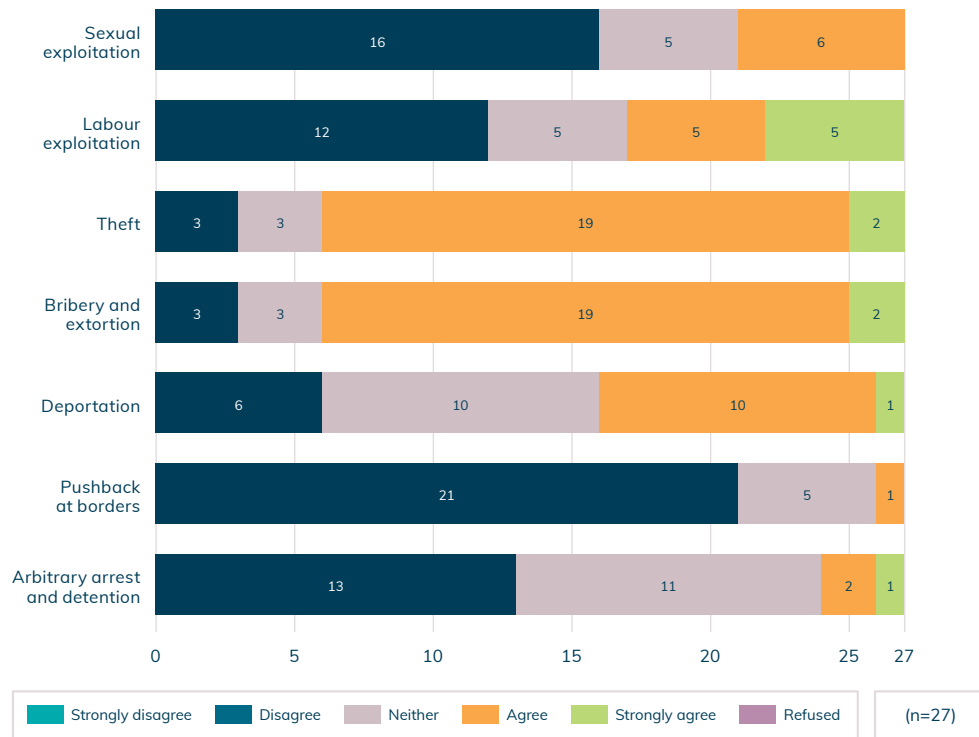
Interestingly, 9 out of 10 respondents who cited a protection risk in Sudan had arrived in the country 1-2 years ago, with the remaining respondents having arrived within the last year. This may suggest that time spent within a country or "exposure time" may increase one's vulnerability to protection incidents, rather than act as a mitigating factor, or that time spent in-country may make one's perception of the risk in-country more salient. This counters prevailing wisdom that the longer one spends in a country, the better integrated they are (familiarity with language, culture, geography), and thus the less vulnerable they are. Once again, this is based on very limited data and more is needed to explore it further.

When further examining fear of detention in Sudan, all of the 5 respondents who cited this risk were men, with ages ranging from 25 to 50, which aligns with the results of MMC's 2019 Determinants of Detention in Libya report, which found the particular vulnerability of young men to detention in Libya. When asked whether respondents perceived an increased risk of arbitrary arrest and detention since the outbreak of COVID-19, the majority either disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed (Figure 4).

Refugee and migrant respondents cite increased risk of theft in Khartoum since the COVID-19 outbreak

27 refugees and migrants surveyed were further asked about the role of COVID-19 in heightening various protection risks. To do so they were queried on their agreement with the statement: "There is an increased risk of [protection incident] since the COVID-19 outbreak." A majority of respondents (21/27) agreed or strongly agreed with the increased risk of theft in Khartoum since the COVID-19 outbreak. This was reported by both men (12/18) and women (9/9).

Figure 4. "There is an increased risk of [protection incident] since the COVID-19 outbreak"

Legend: Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither | Agree | Strongly agree | Refused   (n=27)

Data by category:

Category	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Refused
Sexual exploitation	16	5	6		
Labour exploitation	12	5	5	5	
Theft	3	3	19	2	
Bribery and extortion	3	3	19	2	
Deportation	6	10	10	1	
Pushback at borders	21	5	1		
Arbitrary arrest and detention	13	11	2	1	

Conclusion

This snapshot provides a tentative mapping of the protection experiences of refugees and migrants in Khartoum state based on a 4Mi pilot. This initial exploration poses key questions and considerations for further analysis. Factors which may impact the vulnerability of refugees and migrants include age, gender, nationality, length of time within Sudan, and migration route. Moreover, it highlights that future research in Sudan examining refugee and migrant vulnerability must take into consideration key mixed migration dynamics including circular and return movements within the region.

4Mi & COVID-19

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. Normally, the recruitment of respondents and interviews take place face-to-face. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face recruitment and data collection has been suspended in all countries.

MMC has responded to the COVID-19 crisis by changing the data it collects and the way it collects it. Respondents are recruited through a number of remote or third-party mechanisms; sampling is through a mixture of purposive and snowball approaches. A new survey focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on refugees and migrants, and the surveys are administered by telephone, by the 4Mi monitors in West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Asia and Latin America. Findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make inferences about the total population of refugees and migrants, as the sample is not representative. The switch to remote recruitment and data collection results in additional potential bias and risks, which cannot be completely avoided. Further measures have been put in place to check and – to the extent possible – control for bias and to protect personal data. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at www.mixedmigration.org/4mi