Since 2019, a growing number of people have taken the West African Atlantic Route (WAAR). This migratory route, which had been particularly active in the past, and in particular in 2006, has once again become a route used more commonly by migrants. Along this route, migrants generally cross from the coasts of Morocco or Mauritania to the Spanish Canary Islands. However, departures are often prepared from the coasts of Senegal and the journey to the Canary Islands often includes several intermediate stages. In 2006, more than 32,000 migrants from the West and Central African region had taken this route. In 2019, 2,687 migrants arrived in the Canary Islands, a figure which grew to 23,023 individuals in 2020. In January and February 2021, 2,341 migrants arrived irregularly in the Canary Islands; in 2020, during the same period, 1,103 people arrived in the Canary Islands. This represents an increase of 112 per cent in irregular migrant arrivals to the Canary Islands between 2020 and 2021. Since October 2020, IOM has been monitoring the main areas of departure along the Senegalese coastline of boats leaving for the Canary Islands (Spain). This report presents the main data collected, the methodology used and the other events identified by the investigators along the Senegalese coast.

DEPARTURES FROM SENEGAL - MIGRANT PROFILE

Nationalities

Main nationalities of migrants departing from the coasts of Senegal

- Senegal
- The Gambia
- Mali

Demographic profile

- Men: <1%
- Women: 3%
- Minors: 97%

METHODOLOGY

The Departure Area Monitoring Tool monitors events relating to migratory movements from the coasts of Senegal to the Spanish Canary Islands (which, most frequently, are conducted through several intermediate stages), with the aim of documenting mobility along the West African Atlantic Route (WAAR). The methodology combines three tools: monitoring of departures, mapping of departure areas and counting.

This report presents data collected by the departure monitoring tool between 1 January and 28 February 2021 at key departure points along the Senegalese coastline. Information is provided to enumerators by Community Focal Points (CFPs) who provide information on notable events observed in areas of departure used by migrants to travel to Mauritania, Morocco and the Canary Islands. When information is available to the Community Focal Points, they record it in the database using the data collection form. As part of its monitoring activities for departures from the Senegalese coasts, IOM does not collaborate in any way, shape or form with smuggling and migrant facilitation networks.

DATA SOURCES AND NOTES:

There are some limitations to the data provided by the CFPs on the movements that take place on the coast in the context of maritime migration in Senegal. The data available is sparse and rarely contains information on the exact date of travel or the list of migrants who embark on boats. Furthermore, there is no perfectly harmonized data with the Spanish government on arrivals to the Canary Islands (Spain) from Senegal. This project is funded by the European Union.

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COLLECTION TOOLS

- Design and implementation of data a collection form.
- Assessments conducted with CFPs via smartphone.
- Total number of CFPs participating in the s project.
- From St-Louis to Ziguinchor, CFPs living in their localities cover the Senegalese coast.
This page presents data collected between 1 January and 28 February 2021 from Community Focal Points (CFPs) along the Senegalese coast. The data collected refer to all types of movements by boat from Senegal to Mauritania or the Canary Islands (Spain) identified as irregular migration.

Between January 1 and February 28, 2021, 21 events were reported by CFPs. 11 events (52 per cent) were related to the registration of potential migrants (with a total of around 455 registered migrants) for a future departure, 4 events (19 per cent) related to the departure of boats from the Senegalese coasts, 3 events (14 per cent) related to boat design and 2 events (10 per cent) concerned shipwrecks and incidents on boats at sea.

Fig. 1 - Types of events identified (1 January — 28 February 2021)

Map 1 – Number of reported boat departures from Senegal (January — February 2021)