



SITREP #10

29 JULY 2020



162,000 cases

2,800 deaths

1,226  
migrants waiting  
in transit centers

A returnee takes part in a community engagement training organized in Guinea. IOM

## FOCUS

### Supporting and Empowering Communities to Protect Themselves From COVID-19

While COVID-19 is on a slow but steady decline globally, infections in West and Central Africa are growing exponentially as the lack of information, fake news and rumors on how to stop or cure the virus spread worryingly. Since the beginning of outbreak in March 2020, IOM has been **supporting populations across the region to protect themselves from COVID-19, prevent the spread of the disease**

**within their communities and combat rumors and stigmatization of those already infected.**

However, as preventive measures and crucial information on the virus are being shared mainly on social media, countries in West and Central Africa cannot reach the same levels of information. In fact, with a few exceptions, most of the region's nations face severe connectivity issues, have weak telecommunications infrastructures and low internet



penetration. This is all the more true in remote areas and hard-to-reach regions. Landlocked Chad, in Central Africa, is a case in point given that more than 70 per cent of the population is rural and with limited access to digital information channels. Many of these communities are 'disconnected' from radio and cellphone coverage, leaving them out of critical COVID-19 prevention messages.

To overcome this challenge and strengthen health security at local levels, IOM in Chad partnered with local traditional town troubadours to ensure that the most rural communities across the country are informed on COVID-19 transmission and preventive measures. Over 80 troubadours were identified through IOM networks in eight regions in Chad, where IOM already has a presence. They were trained and equipped by IOM with key messages to share with communities in local languages.

Local initiatives such as the town criers in Chad are part of IOM's Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) efforts and have reached over 10 million people, across 15 countries, in 51 languages. These efforts, guided by local government health authorities and the World Health Organization, are based on a migrant-inclusive approach, engaging returning migrant networks, migrants in transit and young people considering migration, in the design and implementation of outreach activities.

### ON-THE-GROUND

Across West and Central Africa, IOM and its partners have conducted 1,081 on-the-ground activities since March 2020, engaging close to 600,000 people -200,000 female- across 621 communities. In The Gambia, IOM mentored community health volunteers in 136 border

communities, identifying RCCE best practices and helping to address communications and information sharing challenges.

In Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, IOM organised a [photography training](#) in its transit centers and lent photo cameras in order for migrants waiting for the border closures to be lifted to share their daily lives. In Niger, through the [EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration](#), IOM's 50 community mobilizers conducted awareness raising sessions in transit centers in Agadez, Arlit and Dirkou, reaching thousands of migrants.

In Senegal, Ghana, Niger, and Guinea Bissau, still thanks to the Joint Initiative, street art sessions to build community resilience were organized together with urban artists to paint the post-pandemic world on the walls the cities, to raise awareness among the population, including young people, of the COVID-19 and solidarity that must be demonstrated amid the crisis.

In Liberia and Ghana, IOM's Migrants as Messengers volunteers were trained to conduct [outreach](#) in various communities, sharing critical information on COVID-19. In Mauritania, IOM rolled out information sessions in 24 border communities reaching 2,400 individuals including 120 community leaders through the Joint Initiative.

### ON-AIR

Through 54 television airings and 346 radio broadcasts, IOM has reached an audience of 8,442,000 in West and Central Africa with information on COVID-19.

In The Gambia, messages on COVID-19 stigmatization and discrimination ran in television and radio stations. Also in The Gambia, the weekly radio



broadcast hosted by IOM staff and returnees “Migration Hour Weekly” funded by the European Union, was dedicated to discussing COVID-19 prevention and the impact on migration and migrants. In **Nigeria**, information on COVID-19 was disseminated through four radio stations in Edo State and Delta State, as part of the IOM-supported *Abroad Mata* programme, accessible to a audience of over 1 million listeners. In June 2020, IOM volunteers [participated in radio shows](#) to share prevention messages. In **Sierra Leone**, the song *Coronavirus is Real* was written by IOM’s Migrants as Messengers volunteers and aired on 11 radio stations.

#### ONLINE

As a response to movement and gathering restrictions across the region, IOM adapted its COVID-19 community engagement response to digital solutions. Since March 2020, more than 74,555 people have engaged with (liked, commented and shared) over 725 of IOM’s COVID-19 posts on digital platforms.

[Peer-to-peer videos](#), produced by community volunteers with IOM’s support as well as videos by IOM staff or good will ambassadors, form an important part of the online response. These videos are in local languages, and provide local solutions. A total of 182 videos have been produced and published online, which have been viewed close to a million times.

Online content has been created for audiences with specific needs. For example, in **Côte d’Ivoire**, video content was produced to raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention for specific audiences, including [a video in sign language](#) and [a video to teach children](#) about physical distancing. Also in Côte d’Ivoire, IOM has also been engaging influencers like

the singer Jahelle and the group Magique System to record preventive messaging and share it on online platforms.

The regional [#stayhomechallenge campaign](#) used video to encourage people to remain home by profiling home-based activities and entertainment, such as reading, dancing and cooking.

In June 2020, IOM’s Regional Office in Dakar launched a study to measure the impact of its RCCE activities online. IOM’s Regional Office also co-led in the development of CoronaWestAfrica.info, which is an online library of community engagement tools specific to the region. Since its launch on 1 April 2020, more than 6,000 people have visited the website which hosts 200 video, image, PDF and audio files, across 10 categories, in 11 regional languages. IOM is currently supporting the development of an RCCE e-Learning course for West and Central Africa, which will be available in English and French through the website.

#### TRAINING

IOM has conducted 73 trainings benefitting 2,017 people (675 female) since March 2020, to support the dissemination of accurate information on COVID-19 prevention. In **The Gambia**, 30 journalists participated in a virtual training on migration reporting and its relationship with COVID-19. In **Guinea**, returning migrants as well as 20 mothers from five communes of Conakry received training on prevention of COVID-19 to stop the spread of the virus within their households and communities.

In **Liberia**, returnees received COVID-19 training from medical trainers before going out into their



communities to share important preventative information.

IOM's Regional Office organized an online training session on RCCE attended by more than 130 staff from across West and Central Africa on 18 June 2020 to further disseminate existing RCCE tools, and inform staff of IOM's varied RCCE efforts in the region.

#### ADDRESSING RUMOURS AND STIGMATIZATION

Combatting COVID-19 rumors and stigmatization is central to IOM's RCCE response in the region. It has guided the design of on-the-ground, on-air and online communications. Various videos have been produced to address rumors on COVID-19. In **Senegal**, a video series was published showcasing community members holding signs that debunk myths and rumors on traditional cures, and in **Côte d'Ivoire**, IOM created a [video](#) about how to identify and stop fake news about COVID-19.

In **The Gambia**, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, 69 border communities in the West Coast Region were visited to promote anti-discrimination measures, alongside hygiene, and distancing. IOM's Regional Office in Dakar is working with UK-based Research center Centric located within Sheffield Hallam University to develop a "social media rumor" tracking (social media monitoring focusing on fake news) tool.

#### ADDRESSING RUMOURS AND STIGMATIZATION

At the heart of IOM's COVID-19 RCCE response is recognition that the fundamental principles of community engagement have never been more important. Messages must be tailored to each audience based on what we learn through community feedback, available in local languages and delivered by people the audience trusts. Only through this approach can we achieve our objective of helping communities protect themselves from the disease.

### IOM RESPONSE - HIGHLIGHTS FOR WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

IOM in West and Central Africa is working to ensure that a well-coordinated, comprehensive, equitable and timely response to the crisis is underway to **halt further transmission of the disease, limit the humanitarian and socio-economic effects of the pandemic**, and support affected **communities** to prepare for longer term-recovery. IOM's approach to preparing for and responding to disease outbreaks is anchored in IOM's Health, Border and Mobility Management (HBMM) framework. The HBMM framework links an understanding of population mobility with disease surveillance and provides a platform to develop country-specific and multi-country interventions, emphasizing health system strengthening along mobility corridors in line with the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR).



IOM's approach is aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and its revision, the [UN Framework](#) for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19, and country-level Preparedness and Response Plans (PRP). IOM responses aim to tackle the pandemic as an organization that can respond to the acute health and multi-sectoral needs of affected populations and communities of concern, while also implementing programmes to mitigate and address the longer term socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

In addition to the ongoing activities mentioned in the internal [SitRep 1](#), [SitRep 2](#), [SitRep 3](#), [SitRep 4](#), [SitRep 5](#), [SitRep 6](#), [SitRep 7](#), [SitRep 8](#) and [SitRep 9](#), IOM is currently running the following activities:

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY I** - Ensure a well-coordinated, informed and timely response through mobility tracking systems and strengthening partnership and coordination structures established at the community, national and regional levels.

- **COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

IOM in collaboration with **Senegalese** Public Health Authorities and the US Center for Disease Control (Atlanta) provided support for the development of guides for land, air and sea entry points for supervisors and local authorities to assess their own capacity and public health needs in the response to COVID-19.

IOM in **Niger** has supported four health centres in the city of Arlit (Agadez region), equipping them with latrines, solar panels and solar-powered refrigerators. This will increase the level of access to healthcare for the population in these remote areas. Access to solar-powered refrigerators allows for better storage of medicines, vaccines and samples. The health centres that received support form an integral part of the COVID-19 response in the Agadez region. [Link here](#).

IOM in **Cameroon** launched preparations for a participatory mapping methodology for the East region, to collectively identify priority transit mobility routes and high mobility areas that are to

be prioritized amongst COVID-19 response actors. All members of the working group for COVID-19 response at PoEs in Cameroon, plus additional COVID-19 response actors in East region will be invited to join IOM for the exercise.

IOM in **Guinea** in coordination with the BICIGUI banking company, a member of the private sector alliance for the health security (A2SG), supported the distribution of three tons of rice, one and a half tons of sugar, 3,000 bibs, 400 surgical masks, 5,000 gloves, 112 gowns and 100 Thermos flasks to the Donka treatment center in Conakry.

- **TRACKING MOBILITY IMPACTS**

A regional Mobility Restriction Mapping (MRM) dashboard for analysing 352 points of entry within the ECOWAS region and its Member States was produced and published ([link](#)). The document presents mobility restriction measures as well as key health and border management information (presence of medical staff, mitigation measures in place in the PoE, PPE available, etc.) for each of the 352 points assessed.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY II – Contribute to global, regional, national and community preparedness and response efforts for COVID-19 to reduce associated morbidity and mortality.

- RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)

To tackle myths, misinformation on COVID-19 and its preventive measures, Migrants as Messengers volunteers in **Nigeria** carried out an awareness raising campaign at Cable Market in Asaba, Delta state where over 200 traders were reached. The volunteers also distributed 362 Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials on safe migration pathways.

The Government of **Ghana**, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the European Union Delegation to Ghana launched on 17 July 2020 the nationwide “No Place Like Home” campaign to promote safe migration among the Ghanaian youth amid COVID-19. In addition, IOM’s implementing partner NGO BOK Africa Concern continues to raise awareness of irregular migration, trafficking in persons, as well as COVID-19. The most recent was with students, teachers and staff at St. Francis High School in Buoyam (Techiman, Bono East region). As part of these sessions, informational posters and T-shirts were distributed. Out of the total school population of 487 (including 52 teaching staff), due to COVID-19 safety measures, 247 final year students (girls 113, boys 134) are currently in school, and benefit from the information shared.

IOM **Cameroon** has finalised the recruitment of community mobilizers in both the East and Far-North region to effectively sensitize border populations to the risks of COVID-19 near to

PoEs with Chad and CAR. Sensitizers will continue their work for 2 months and will cover a range of PoEs and additional points of interest.

- POINTS OF ENTRY (POE) ● DISEASE SURVEILLANCE ● INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC)

In **Guinea**, IOM trained 20 civil protection officers (PCs) deployed in the treatment sites in Conakry and ten managers of health districts on COVID-19 information.

IOM in **Cameroon** organised a training for 23 border agents on infection prevention and control screening and referral of suspect cases for PoEs with CAR Garoua Boulai and Kentzou. Additional sanitary products and screening infrastructure such as tents were also delivered, and further trips for similar activities are now planned for the Far-North region for Kousseri and Pont Bongar PoEs with Chad.

IOM in **Mali** organized COVID-19 training sessions for 175 border police agents stationed at Bamako International Airport, in anticipation of its reopening during course of July 2020. Additional trainings are scheduled from 20 to 26 July 2020 to train agents from services at the airport, including 90 agents from the gendarmerie, 56 customs agents and 50 agents from the Airport Authority in Mali.

IOM in **Mauritania** trained 31 agents from the Rapid Action Groups for Monitoring and Intervention (GARS) team, as well as 10 customs officers, deployed at borders, on the barrier measures to adopt in the face of the pandemic and the protection of human rights. PPE accompanied by a demonstration of the use of the



equipment at a border post located on the Mauritanian border along the Senegal river were also distributed.

In **Senegal**, IOM has provided infection prevention and control equipment to 23 Points of Entry across the territory. In total, 30 hand washing stations, more than 900 hygiene products (soaps, hydroalcoholic gels, bleach), 750 fabric masks for community relays and around 1,000 surgical masks were delivered. Infection prevention and

control and health control equipment (around 2,500 masks, 76 cans of hydroalcoholic gels, boxes of gloves) was also handed over to the Air Border Sanitary Control (CSFA) team at Senegal's primary international airport.

IOM in **Guinea** is supporting the monitoring of travellers at three important land entry points, including Salamouya and Port Fory, and has evaluated Port Nènè in the Boké region in view of resuming operations.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY III – Ensure access of affected people to basic services and commodities including health care, and protection and social services.

#### ● PROTECTION

A group of 200 **Guinean** nationals stranded in **Senegal** arrived at Conakry airport this week assisted by IOM Guinea. Upon arrival, all passengers were screened and required to follow a 14-day isolation period before being able to return home to their families.

In **Mali**, IOM continues to provide voluntary return support to vulnerable migrants stranded along the migration route. During the COVID-19

period, these returns are made possible thanks to the establishment of humanitarian corridors, made possible thanks to the collaboration of the authorities of the countries concerned and the support of the European Union. 84 Malian nationals stranded in Algeria returned voluntarily to their country of origin and screened in line with national protocol for protection against COVID-19 propagation and were placed in isolation in accommodation centres for a period of two weeks.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITY IV – Support international, national and local partners to respond to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

#### ● SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

IOM in **Cameroon** completed its study on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the level of remittances in **Cameroon**, finding a sharp decline from those surveyed on the amount of remittances being sent or received.

IOM **Mali** is currently developing a study measuring the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on internally displaced persons. The study will be conducted over rounds of standard DTM

mobility tracking assessment in areas densely populated and measure various indicators such as variations in incomes and spending over time. IOM in **Mauritania** is supporting to re-opening of Child Protection and Social Integration Centers (CPISE) in line with COVID-19 requirements for the benefit of children in need of care and support.

In addition, IOM in **Mauritania** also launched a cattle feed distribution campaign at the M'bera

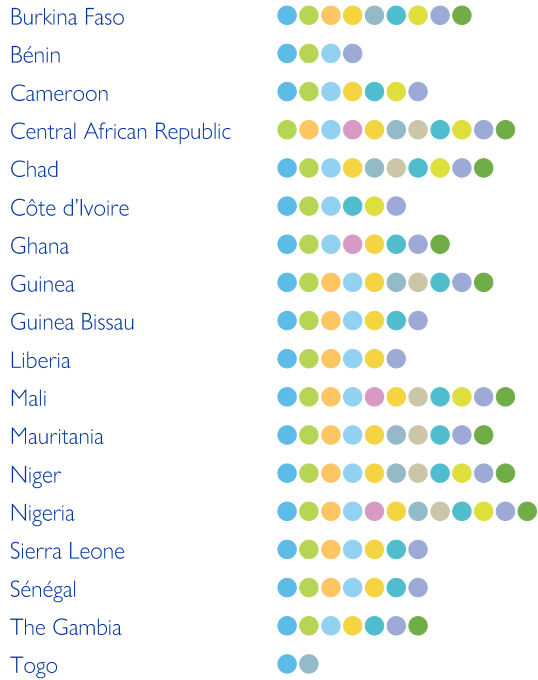


refugee camp. The aim of the campaign was to improve the state of health of the livestock, which is already feeling the long-term consequences of

the impact of COVID-19 on transhumant populations.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

- coordination and partnerships
- risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)
- disease surveillance
- points of entry (POE)
- national laboratory system
- infection prevention and control (IPC)
- case management and continuity of essential services
- logistics, procurement and supply management
- protection
- camp coordination and camp management (CCCM)
- tracking mobility impacts
- addressing socio-economic impacts of the crisis



COMMUNICATIONS

Clean Water, Hygiene and Sanitation: Crucial to Contain COVID-19 Among IDPs in Northeast Nigeria

As COVID-19 continues to spread in North-East Nigeria, IOM is extending its water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) operations to reduce the spread of the virus.

A new IOM project will help prevent and control COVID-19 infections in three areas in Borno State with high concentrations of displaced persons.

[ENGLISH](#) - [FRENCH](#)







### [Migrant Returnees, Gambian Authorities Join Forces to Step Up COVID-19 Community Engagement](#)

With a slow but steady increase in The Gambia's number of COVID-19 cases – leading to a 50% increase between 18 June and 8 July 2020 – migrant returnees joined forces in stepping up the country's risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) efforts.

[ENGLISH](#)

### [How COVID-19 Affects Nomadic Herders: IOM's Transhumance Tracking Tool Launched in Mauritania](#)

As a result of border closures decreed by Governments across West and Central Africa to limit the spread of COVID-19, herders and cattle who took to the corridor between Mauritania and Mali during the lean season now are stranded in border areas without resources to feed their livestock.

[ENGLISH](#) - [FRENCH](#)



### [IOM Water Facilities Help Resettled Communities Fight COVID-19 in Sierra Leone](#)

Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, handwashing remains among the most difficult preventive measures for millions of Sierra Leoneans to follow. To support communities, IOM has constructed water facilities with the use of Poly Glu, a Japanese water purification system.

[ENGLISH](#)



### [Nigerian Returnees Join Together to Protect their Communities from the Spread of the COVID-19](#)



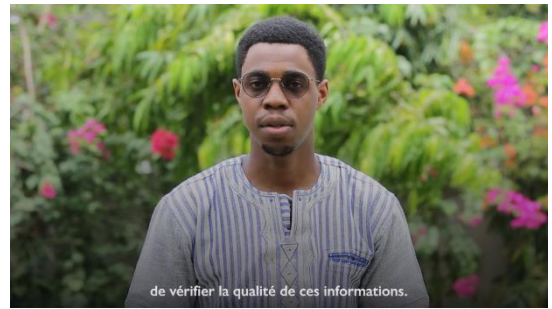
### [L'OIM et la Mission catholique soutiennent les migrants laissés vulnérables par la crise COVID-19 en Mauritanie](#)



[Responding to the Pandemic Amid Multi-layered Crises in the Sahel: "Stop the Virus, Not the People."](#)



[Fake News : les réflexes à adopter face à la COVID-19](#)



[Mohamed, de menuisier exploité à menuisier heureux](#)



[Être Assistant social auprès des enfants migrants en Guinée, le quotidien de Mohamed Zie Kaba](#)

