

INTRODUCTION

Within the West and Central Africa (WCA) region, the **Sahel** stretches from Mauritania to Chad, separating the Sahara desert on the North, from tropical coastal countries to the South. Overall, within the African continent, it spans from the Atlantic Ocean on the West to the Red Sea on the East, separating the desert from the savanna. **Migratory routes within the WCA region inevitably cross the Sahel and - throughout their journeys - migrants are facing multiple risks along these routes.** This report compiles information from different data and research activities held within the region in the objective to **highlight the diverse dynamics, profiles and risks migrants are facing while travelling on the WCA routes through the Sahel.** This dashboard covers the period between January and December 2024 and is based on information from (1) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data on mobility trends and population flows; (2) Missing Migrants Project (MMP) data on arrivals to Europe and the Canary Islands, migrant deaths and disappearances; (3) Data on migrants seeking Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) to and within the WCA region; (4) Expulsions of migrants from other regions to WCA, especially from Algeria and Libya; (5) Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) data on the mobility of transhumant populations throughout the Sahel; and (6) Solutions and Mobility Index (SMI) indicators of stability within the Sahelian region.

MIGRATORY ROUTES THROUGH SAHEL



MIGRATORY ROUTES THROUGH SAHEL TO EUROPE

THE WESTERN ATLANTIC ROUTE

Migrants travel from the region to the coasts of West Africa where they embark on boats to the Canary Islands of Spain. This route, already active in 2006, saw an increasing number of movements in 2024. The risks, deaths and disappearances following shipwrecks are also on the rise along the Atlantic coasts.

THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

The Western Mediterranean Route to Europe finds its different origins within sub-Saharan African countries, Northern Africa, and the Middle East. Migrants' extremely dangerous path through the Sahel and the Sahara desert leads them to the Algerian and Moroccan coasts where they embark on boats towards Spain's mainland.

THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

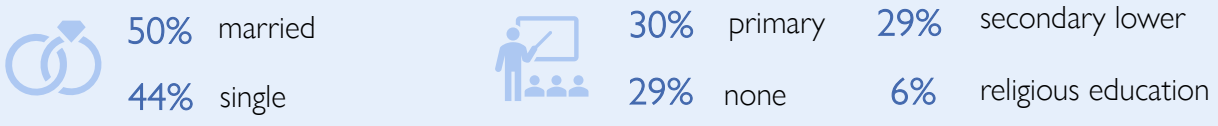
The Central Mediterranean Route finds its roots across different countries in the Sahel and crosses the Sahara desert to the coasts of Libya and Tunisia, towards Italy or Malta. It is mostly chosen by sub-Saharan Africans, whose identified deaths and disappearances are largely observed along this route. It is known as the deadliest route to Europe from the region.

PROFILES AND TRAVEL MODALITIES

Profiles of migrants registered at flow monitoring points within WCA between January and December 2024*



SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE MAJORITY OF SURVEYED MIGRANTS **



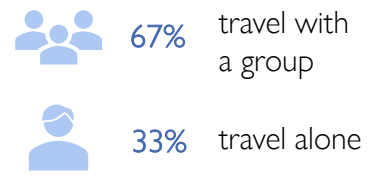
SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE MAJORITY OF SURVEYED MIGRANTS **



PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION OF REGISTERED MIGRANTS *

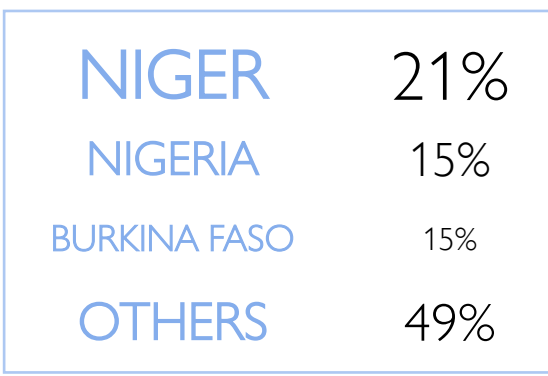


MODALITIES OF TRAVEL **

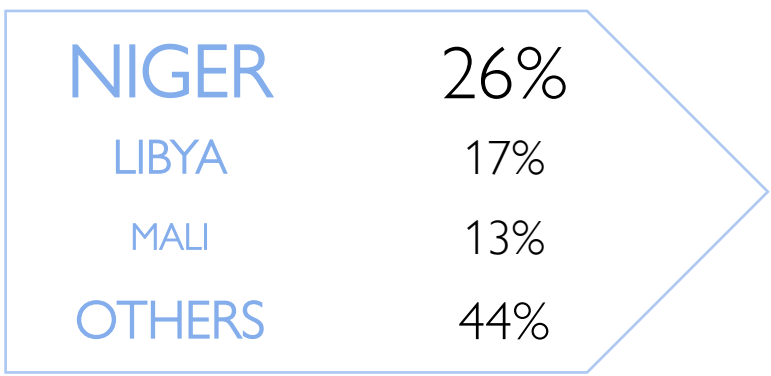


* Analysis based on data collected in Burkina Faso, Chad, Central African Republic, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal between January and December 2024. The means of transportation analysis is based on data collected in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Niger, Central African Republic, and Chad between January and December 2024.
** Analysis based on data collected through 69,362 interviews in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal between January and December 2024..

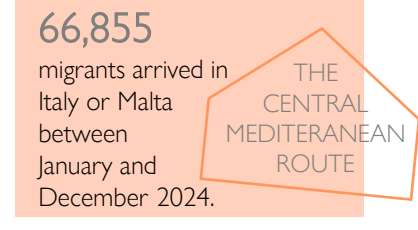
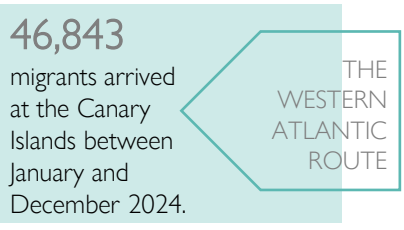
WHERE FROM? **



WHERE TO? **



ARRIVALS TO EUROPE THROUGH SAHEL



MIGRATORY ASPIRATIONS

The large majority of surveyed migrants at Flow Monitoring Points between January and December 2024 mentioned travelling for economic reasons (72%) and 11 per cent for marriages or family reunifications. For those travelling for economic reasons, 57 per cent were looking for a job or another livelihood opportunity, 23 per cent were travelling to conduct business and 11 per cent were engaged in commuting activities. Thirty per cent (30%) of the surveyed migrants planned to stay two weeks or less in their intended destination, 20 per cent were planning to stay between three and six months, and 18 per cent were planning to stay between two and three months. Flows observed were mainly internal to WCA, at 90 per cent. Indeed, only 10 per cent of travelers intended to leave the region during this period.

Analysis based on data collected through 69,362 interviews in Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal between January and December 2024.

ASSISTED VULNERABLE MIGRANTS *

63% of assisted unaccompanied or separated children returned from North Africa

62% of assisted victims of trafficking were from Nigeria

53% of migrants with health-related needs returned from Libya

Category	Female	Male	Total
Migrants assisted in their voluntary return	10,662 (21%)	39,012 (79%)	49,674
Assisted unaccompanied/separated children	149 (36%)	261 (64%)	410
Assisted victims of trafficking	1,184 (80%)	292 (20%)	1,476
Migrants with health-related needs assisted	739 (30%)	1,687 (70%)	2,426

** Analysis based on data from assisted voluntary returns provided between January and December 2024.*

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURNS *

COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

GUINEA	20%
MALI	20%
NIGERIA	17%
OTHERS	43%

RETURNS FROM

NIGER	32%
LIBYA	24%
ALGERIA	15%
OTHERS	29%

EXPULSIONS OF MIGRANTS

13,756

is the number of migrants expelled from Algeria to the Niger side of the border between January and December 2024 (-24% compared to 2023).

26,236

Nigerien returned to Niger on official convoys from Algeria between January and December 2024 (+52% compared to 2023).

558

migrants expelled from Libya to Chad between January and December 2024 (-27% compared to 2023).

MISSING OR DECEASED MIGRANTS

2,151

missing migrants were recorded on routes within WCA, to Northern Africa or to Europe between January and December 2024.

1,538

deceased migrants were recorded on routes within WCA, to Northern Africa or to Europe between January and December 2024.

CRISIS AND DISPLACEMENT

LAKE CHAD BASIN

- 3,164,764 IDPs (52%)
- 2,043,323 Returnees former IDPs (33%)
- 397,669 Returnees from abroad (7%)
- 506,996 Refugees (8%)

The conflict in this region impacts Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria with an estimated total of **6,112,752** individuals affected by December 2024.

LIPTAKO GOURMA, CENTRAL SAHEL AND COASTAL COUNTRIES

- 2,670,331 IDPs (81%)
- 617,492 Refugees (19%)

The region includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo with an estimated total of **3,287,823** individuals affected by December 2024.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

- 469,892 IDPs (12%)
- 2,309,365 Returnees former IDPs (57%)
- 539,800 Returnees from abroad (14%)
- 718,531 Refugees (18%)

The conflict in the region includes the CAR, Chad, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan with an estimated total of **4,037,588** individuals affected by December 2024.

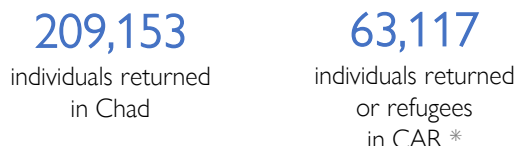
NIGERIA NORTH-WEST NORTH-CENTRAL (NW-NC)

- The crisis in NW-NC Nigeria is affecting a reported total of **1,192,416** IDPs in Nigeria and **18,228** IDPs in Niger by December 2024.

CAMEROON NORTH-WEST SOUTH-WEST (NW-SW)

- The crisis in NW-SW Cameroon is affecting a reported total of **828,545** individuals (IDPs and returnees) by December 2024.

SUDAN CRISIS IMPACT ON CHAD AND CAR BY DECEMBER 2024

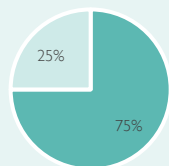
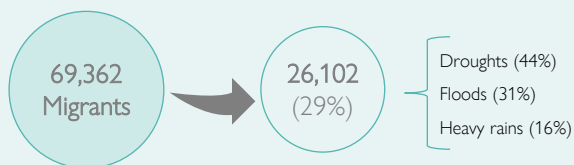


* Impacted individuals in CAR by Sudan crisis (32,388 returnees and 30,729 refugees) already included in CAR detailed part, not double-counted in the total figure.

THE DIFFERENT CRISES IN WCA ARE AFFECTING AN ESTIMATED TOTAL OF **15,686,505** INDIVIDUALS BY DECEMBER 2024, OF WHICH **7,849,729** ARE IDPs.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND MIGRATION

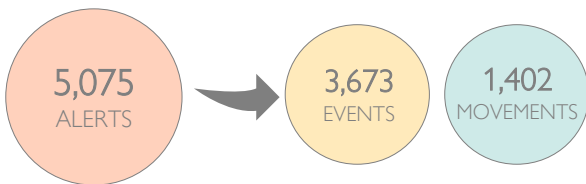
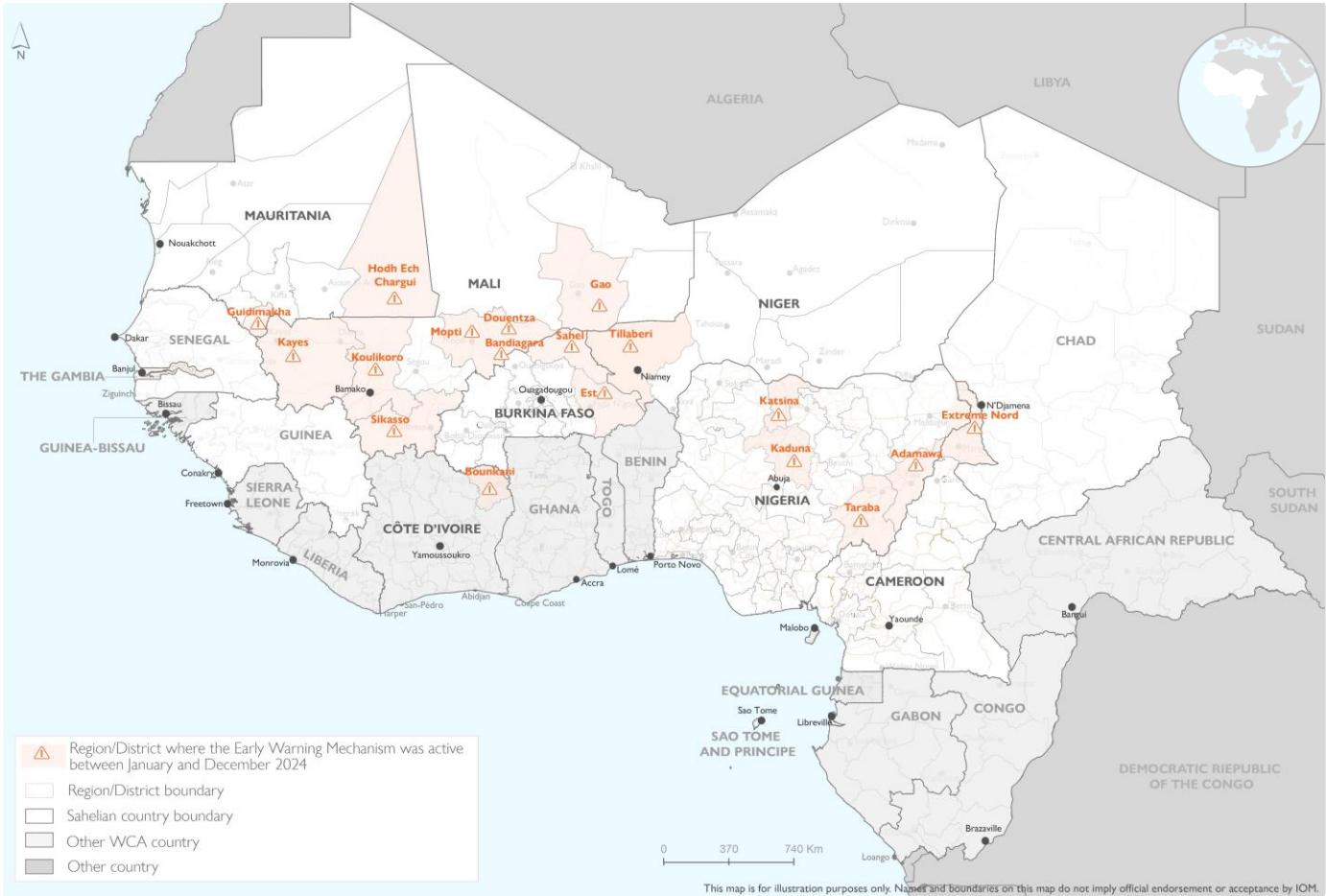
Among 69,362 individuals surveyed in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal between January and December 2024, 26,102 (29%) noticed environmental changes and/or a disaster at their place of origin. The main environmental changes reported were droughts (44%), floods (31%), and heavy rains (16%). Of these 26,102 individuals, 19,525 (75%) declared environmental changes or disasters have impacted their decision to migrate.



- Environmental changes have contributed to the decision to migrate among migrants who noticed environmental changes at the place of origin
- Environmental changes have not contributed to the decision to migrate among migrants who noticed environmental changes at the place of origin

TRANSHUMANCE IN THE SAHEL

Cross-border transhumance is a longstanding traditional pastoral practice in Africa where herders migrate seasonally with their livestock in search of grazing land. In the Sahel and coastal countries of West Africa, a region characterized by long dry seasons, livestock mobility is an important livelihood adaptation to increase resilience to climatic and economic vulnerabilities and risks. In recent years however, climate change, environmental degradation disasters, exponential population growth, urbanization, land privatization, changes in farming practices, and insecurity have affected transhumance patterns, routes and periods as well as relations with other communities. For instance, a recent IOM study in Mauritania in 2024 found that 64 per cent of herders surveyed had to change their initial itinerary, and 68 per cent changed their time of transhumance due to the climate changes impacts on water and pasture resources. These changes have resulted in increasing competition over natural resources and have exacerbated tensions. Through the **Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) Early Warning System**, IOM contributes to the mitigation of conflict over natural resources between farmer and herder communities.

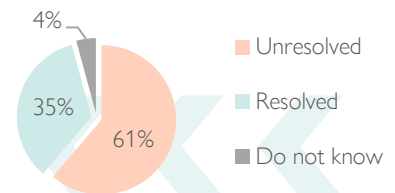


Between January and December 2024, a total of 5,075 alerts have been reported through IOM's TTT Early Warning Mechanism in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d' Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria. These alerts included 3,673 events and 1,402 movements. Among the reported events, 35 per cent were resolved by local actors during the period of reporting.

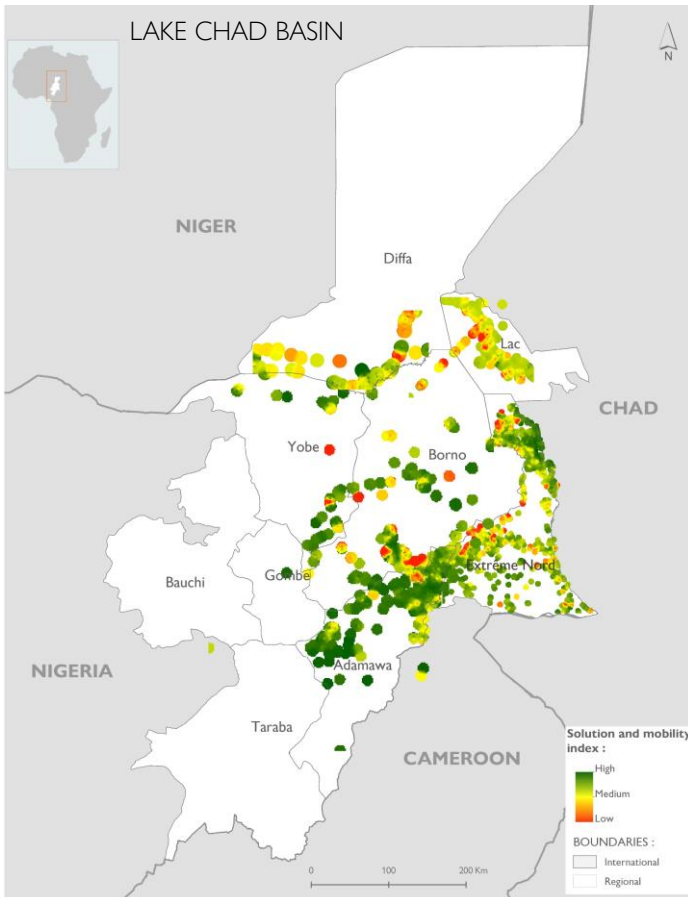
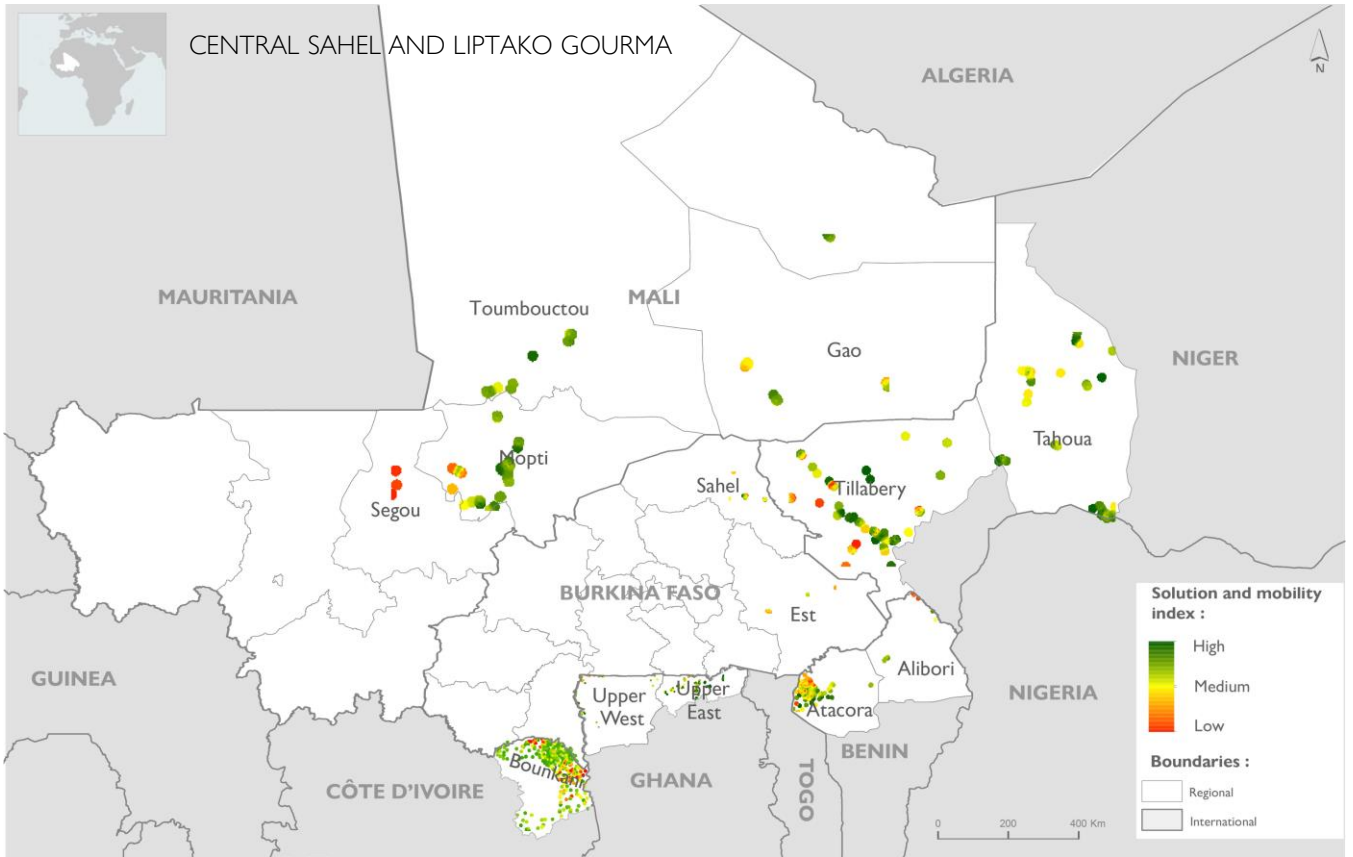
Types of alerts by country

Countries	Events	Movements	Total
Nigeria	3,227	1,083	4,310
Côte d'Ivoire	270	10	280
Cameroon	1	231	232
Mali	123	33	156
Other	52	45	97
Total	3,673	1,402	5,075

Status of events



DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND MOBILITY IN THE SAHEL



IOM implements within Sahelian countries the Solution and Mobility Index. This assessment allows to evaluate the stability of living conditions in covered areas by calculating a [Stability Score](#) for each displacement-hosting location, identifying [pockets of stability](#) and instability and thereby prioritizing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programs.

As of December 2024, for the Central Sahel and Liptako Gourma region, Burkina Faso had an average stability score of [45/100](#), Mali of [72/100](#) and Niger of [76/100](#). In the coastal countries affected by this crisis, in December 2024, Côte d'Ivoire had an average stability score of [85/100](#), Ghana of [93/100](#) and Benin of [54/100](#).

For the locations in the Lake Chad Basin, as of December 2024, Cameroon had an average stability score of [80/100](#), Chad of [58/100](#), Niger of [74/100](#) and Nigeria of [89/100](#).

For the other regions covered, in the Central African Republic, the average score was [74/100](#). The covered localities within the Maradi region in Niger had an average score of [68/100](#).