

World Atlas of Illicit Flows



INTERPOL



RHIPTO



THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME

07 The Trans-Sahara

Migrants, drugs and arms



The Trans-Sahara: Migrants, drugs and arms

Armed groups in the Trans-Sahara engage in numerous forms of trafficking, including smuggling cigarettes, drugs and arms. However, their main source of income is from extorting taxes, and through their involvement in supplying the human-trafficking industry, including supply of 4x4 vehicles.⁹² Taxes are extorted of between 10% and 30% of the price depending on the commodity and its place in the supply chain. In addition, armed groups invest incomes from cigarette and arms trafficking, ransom and ex-pat finance in improving the logistical base of smugglers, and subsequently tax them 30–50% of their incomes from traditional trafficking.

Drugs are trafficked by ship and air from Brazil and Venezuela, landing in West Africa, especially Guinea-Bissau. Drugs transported in mother ships are consolidated into smaller units in fast boats or sailing vessels at sea, which head north to Cape Verde or the Canary Islands and then onwards to mainland Europe. Those that arrive on the African mainland are trafficked onwards using all manner of transport, but commonly 4x4s that driven by highly organized groups. Much of these flows pass through Morocco and Algeria, as well as Libya. Cocaine also arrives in containers in West Africa, and in East Africa by air via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), as well as its splinter groups Al-Mourabitoun (now reformed after a two-year split) and Ansar Dine,

are now increasingly changing how they finance themselves, shifting their attention away from kidnapping for ransom and cigarette smuggling to protection-taxing the trafficking of drugs, predominantly cocaine originating in Latin America, an activity that pays much higher dividends. For AQIM, these illicit protection taxes are charged at a rate of between 10% and 30%. The group has been significantly bolstered by having had access to a steady supply of arms from Libya since 2011, which has strengthened their position to offer ‘protection’. AQIM has also invested cigarette smuggling profits in traffickers’ infrastructure since the mid-2000s, in return for a cut of trafficking profits. This affords a discreet and hands-off approach to how they make money, earning a possible rate of 5% of the value of drugs trafficked through key hotspots.

The estimated trafficked volume of cocaine in the region is around 18 tonnes per year, and its price rises from US\$1 600–2 500/kg in Colombia to around US\$20 000–30 000/kg as it passes through checkpoints. If, hypothetically, AQIM and Al-Mourabitoun could tax only one in three route segments and only two out of the four major drug routes in the region, one could put an estimate of their likely annual income from these flows at around US\$7.5 million to US\$22.5 million a year, or US\$2.5 million to US\$7.5 million.

Armed groups are also involved in the smuggling and trafficking of migrants. For example, Islam-

ic State in the Sirte region of Libya allegedly operated a vehicle checkpoint near Al Nuwfayah, where receipts were issued for migrants to pass through. With an estimated 150 000 to 170 000 migrants and fees for transit and onward travel at around US\$3 000 to US\$4 500 per migrant, the overall migrant business in the Trans-Sahara, including Libya, is now estimated to be worth between US\$450 million and US\$765 million.

If armed groups tax criminal entrepreneurs or take the commonly used illegal tax rate of 10% to 30%, and less than 5% goes to terrorist organizations, armed groups in the region may make as much as US\$45 million to US\$229 million a year.⁹³ Meanwhile, terrorist groups, like JNIM, Ansar al-Sharia and, for a time, Islamic State, are likely to make around US\$22 million to US\$38 million.⁹⁴

It is believed that smuggling of drugs and cigarettes continues to be a relatively important income mainstay for regional terrorist groups, but it is also evident that migrant trafficking and investing in entrepreneurs and traffickers – irrespective of what they transport – are becoming safer and more common sources of income for terrorist organizations, such as JNIM. This may also explain the aggressive attacks made by JNIM during 2017 on UN forces north and east of Bamako in Mali – seen as an attempt to enable them to exert taxes on the routes from the west to the Gao–Kidal–Menaka–Tessalit ‘smuggling highway’ to Algeria and Libya.⁹⁵

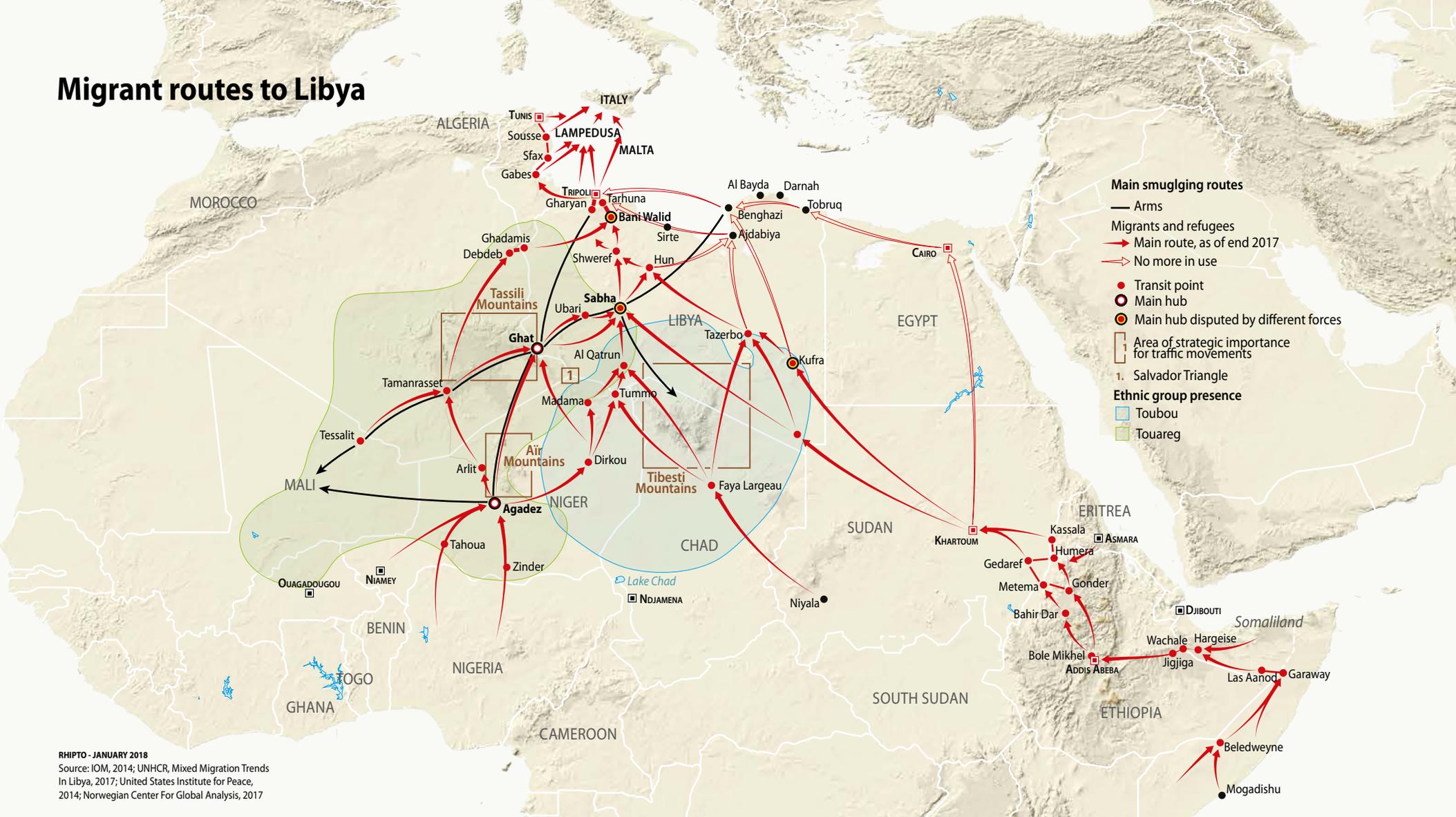






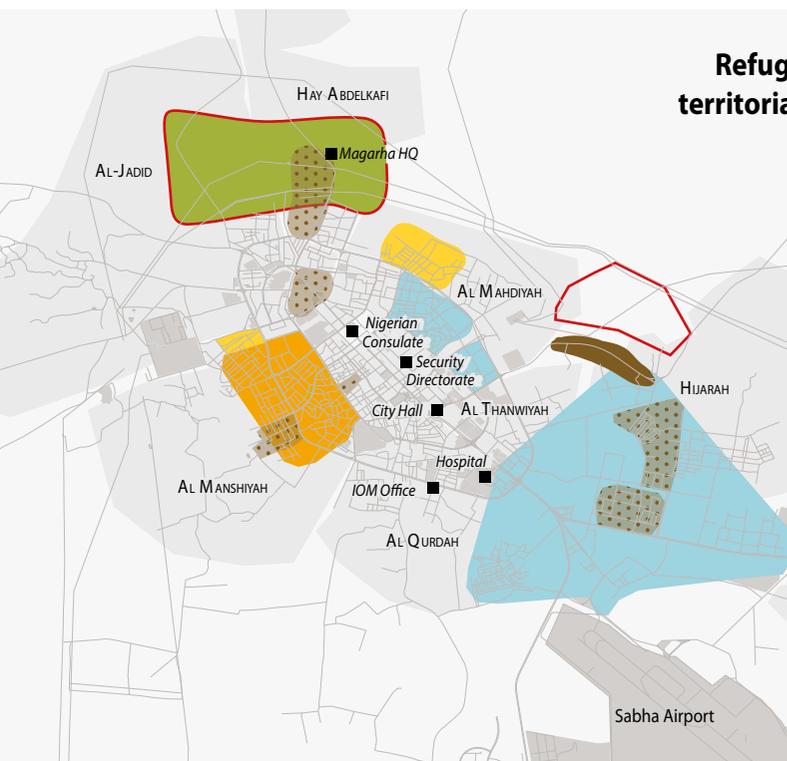
LIBYA – In this March 5, 2011 photo, an anti-government rebel sits with an anti-aircraft weapon in front an oil refinery in Ras Lanouf, eastern Libya. The fight for the Ras Lanouf refinery and nearby Sidr depot threatens to spiral into open conflict between rival factions vying for power from east and west.
© AP Photo / Hussein Malla

Migrant routes to Libya



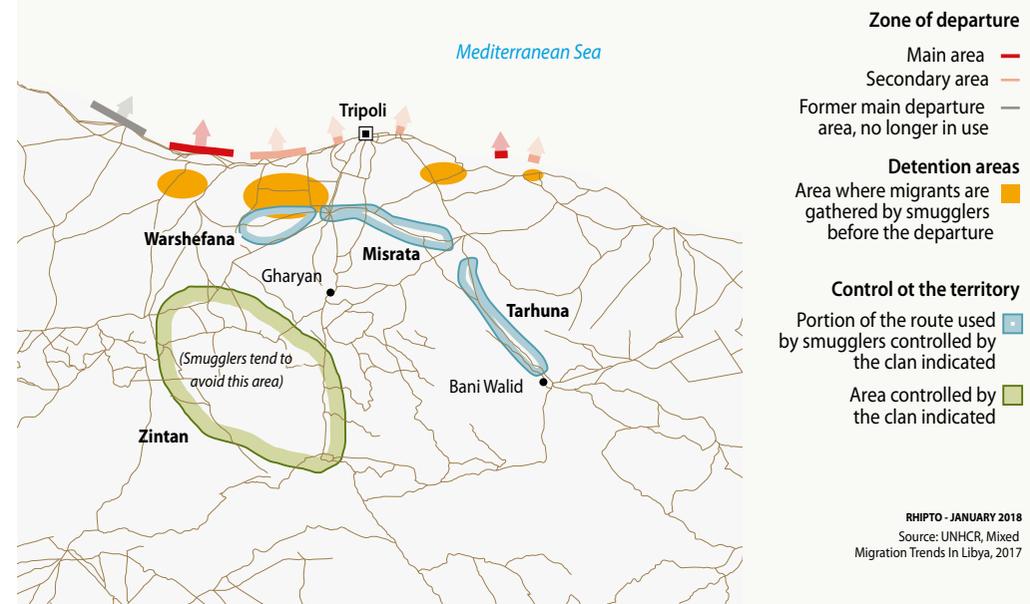
RHIPTO - JANUARY 2018
 Source: IOM, 2014; UNHCR, Mixed Migration Trends In Libya, 2017; United States Institute for Peace, 2014; Norwegian Center For Global Analysis, 2017

Refugees, migrants and territorial control in Sabha



RHIPTO - JANUARY 2018
 Source: UNHCR, Mixed Migration Trends In Libya, 2017

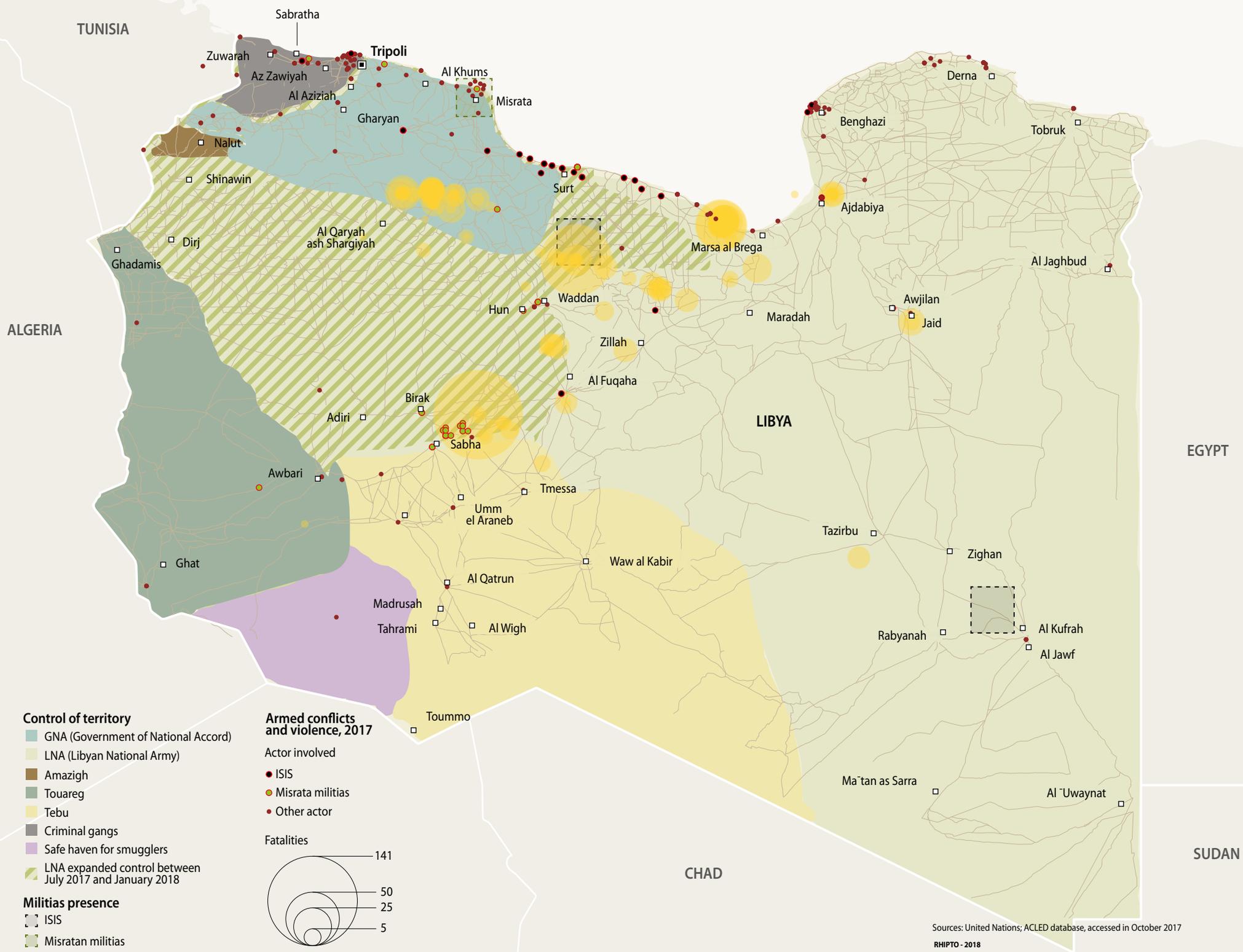
Migrant detention zones and departing points in Libya



RHIPTO - JANUARY 2018
 Source: UNHCR, Mixed Migration Trends In Libya, 2017

Libya territory control and conflict

January 2018



Sources: United Nations; ACLED database, accessed in October 2017
RHIPTO - 2018

Attacks in Mali linked to violent-extremist groups

Attacks from extremist groups

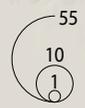
- 2017
- 2016
- 2015
- 2014

Include rebels, political militias and ethnic militias

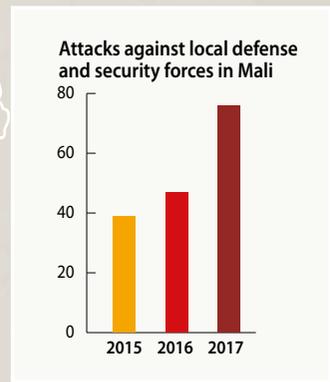
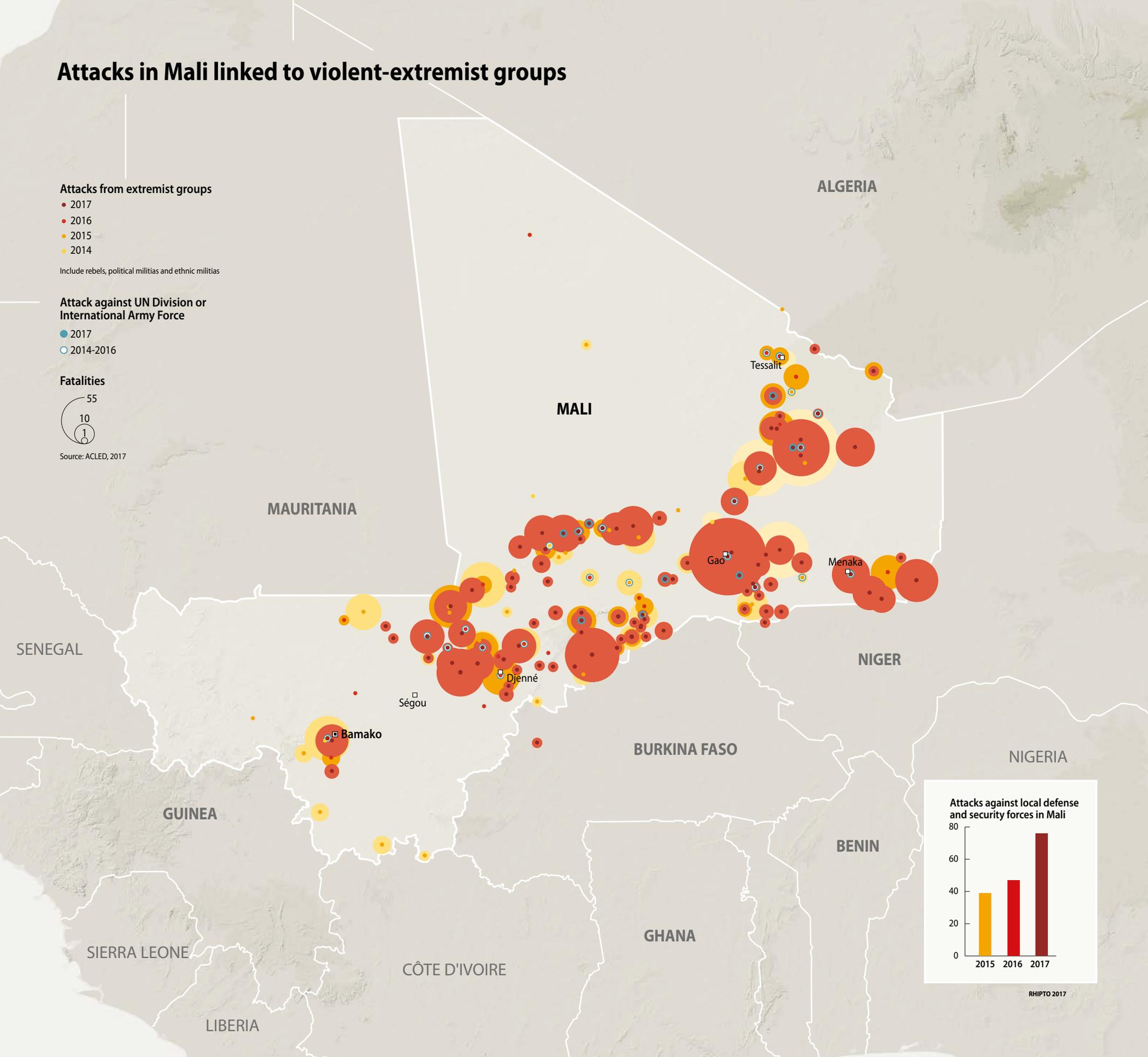
Attack against UN Division or International Army Force

- 2017
- 2014-2016

Fatalities



Source: ACLED, 2017



RHIPTO 2017



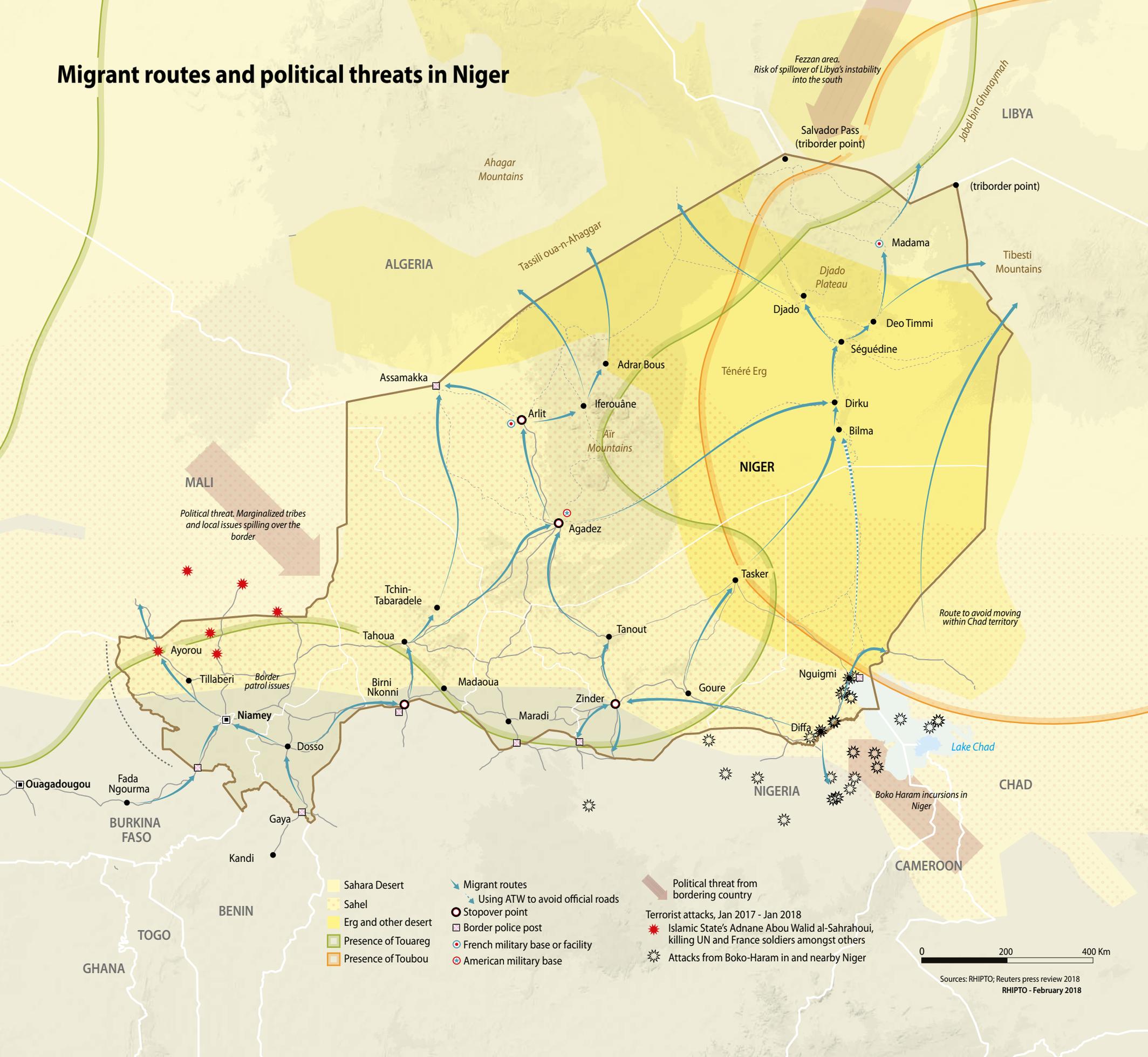
MALI – Malian soldiers patrol the roads during the visit of the Malian Prime Minister in Menaka Mali on May 9 2018.
© AFP PHOTO / Sebastien Rieussec





SAHARA – Young Tuareg with camel on Western Sahara
Desert in Africa.
© iStock / Hadynyah

Migrant routes and political threats in Niger



- Sahara Desert
- Sahel
- Erg and other desert
- Presence of Touareg
- Presence of Toubou
- Migrant routes
- Using ATW to avoid official roads
- Stopover point
- Border police post
- French military base or facility
- American military base

- Political threat from bordering country
- Terrorist attacks, Jan 2017 - Jan 2018
- Islamic State's Adnane Abou Walid al-Sahraoui, killing UN and France soldiers amongst others
- Attacks from Boko-Haram in and nearby Niger



Sources: RHIPTO; Reuters press review 2018
RHIPTO - February 2018



GREECE – Refugee migrants, arrived on Lesbos in inflatable dinghy boats, they stay in refugee camps waiting for the ferry to mainland Greece. October 12, 2015, 2015.
© Shutterstock / Anjo Kan

08 Migrant smuggling & human trafficking



Migrant smuggling and human trafficking

Human smuggling and trafficking are now probably, economically speaking, the fourth largest global crime sector – estimated at an annual market value of at least US\$157 billion.⁹⁶ Globalization and increasing access to transport from any corner of the planet have made it possible for criminal networks to organize the movement of enslaved victims, and of refugees and migrants at unprecedented levels, even for mass movements.

EUROPOL and INTERPOL estimated the value of migrant traffic from outside Europe to Europe in 2015 to be in the order of US\$5 billion to 6 billion each year.⁹⁷ According to various other estimates, human smugglers made revenues of about US\$4.2 billion smuggling people into Europe; US\$672 million from the onward journey inside Europe; total revenues in 2015 of US\$4.9 billion. The profit margins for human smugglers (in the range of 10% to 50%) are US\$42 million to US\$2.1 billion for entry into Europe; US\$67 to US\$301 million for the onward journey; total profits in 2015: US\$489 million to US\$2.3 billion.⁹⁸

Nepal: Trafficking networks grew during the civil war and continued post-war

During the civil war in Nepal, many trafficking networks expanded, as is often the case during conflicts. However, unlike with the poaching of rhino horn, the incidence of which was reduced or even stopped as a result of targeted efforts after the war, trafficking of women and children for forced labour and prostitution in Nepal continued, and these activities now fuel organized crime.

Libya: Migrant trafficking in conflict

Based on numbers of migrants arriving in Italy in 2016, combined with detailed price levels for the different legs of the journey, it is possible to calculate revenues and profits to armed groups on the various legs. Along the eastern route, there were about 43 000, whereas on the western route the number was between 143 000 and 300 000, with the two flows merging in Sabha. The average prices charged within Libya to the north-west coast is US\$300 to US\$500, with an additional US\$200 to US\$250 for the departure by boat. The traffickers and smugglers may gain a profit of 15% to 30% of the income. With an estimated 186 000 to 343 000 passing through Libya in 2016, and with no indication of a significant decrease in flow, the annual revenue to all armed groups combined is US\$93 million to US\$244 million, with a net profit of US\$13 million to US\$71 million.¹⁰¹

Mali and Niger: Migrants, cigarettes and conflict

JNIM conducted an eastward offensive in 2017, including attacks on forces of the UN mission in Mali, MINUSMA. JNIM also operates from the south-east corner of Mauritania. From there, they advance out, using caches of arms, as far as south of Bamako. Formerly parts of AQIM's Sahara branch, Ansar Dine, Katibat Macina and Al-Mourabitoun merged with JNIM in early 2017. The group is based in the Sahel, its core area being northern Mali. They have been responsible for a large number of attacks on UN peacekeeping forces in Mali, operating out of Mauritania and Mali, and in south-west Libya and Algeria. It is likely that they will increasingly move into Niger to gain control of smuggling networks as income opportunities. Their precise sources of finance are unknown, but it is derived mainly from ransom money, cigarette and drug smuggling, illicit taxation, protection money and return from investments in migrant smugglers (e.g. trucks and finance).

JNIM's income is probably in the range of US\$7 million to US\$20 million for drugs and ransom, and US\$11 million to US\$15 million from return of investments in the migrant trafficking trade, which is largely outside JNIM-controlled areas, apart from some traffic from the south-west. JNIM is the big potential future winner among the Salafist/jihadist groups. Some expat finance is believed to be involved. The group probably has about 3 500 to 4 500 fighters.

Migrant trafficking into and within European Union and approximate costs in 2015

- EU and Schengen country
- EU non-Schengen country
- Non-EU and Schengen country
- Main origin country

- Border with reinforced surveillance or fence
- Temporary and local reintroduction of border controls

Migration routes

- Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan route
- Apulia and Calabria route
- Central Mediterranean route
- Western Mediterranean route
- Western Africa route

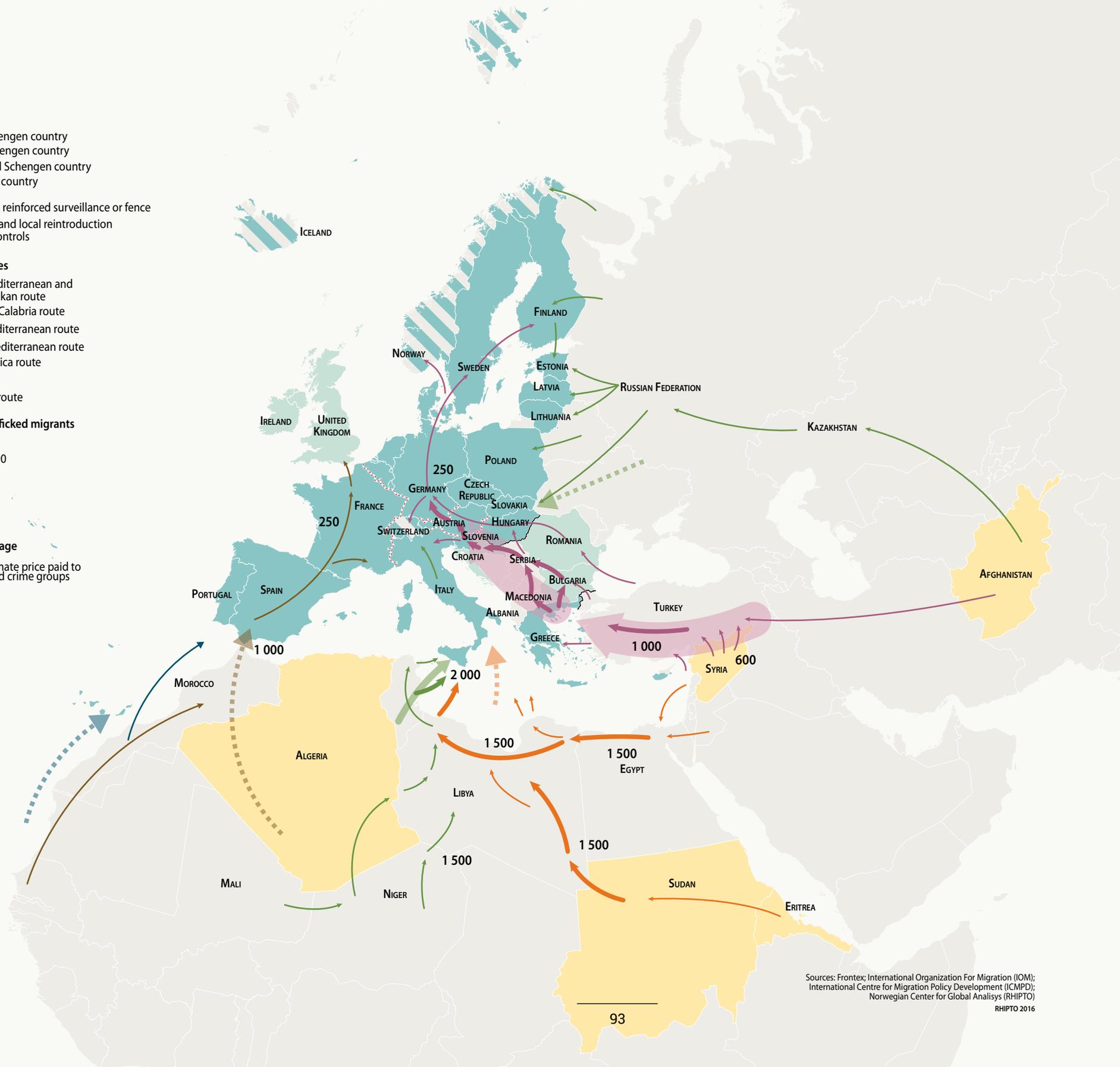
- Main route
- Secondary route

Number of trafficked migrants

- 790
- 15
- 2 or less

Cost of the voyage

1 000 Approximate price paid to organized crime groups



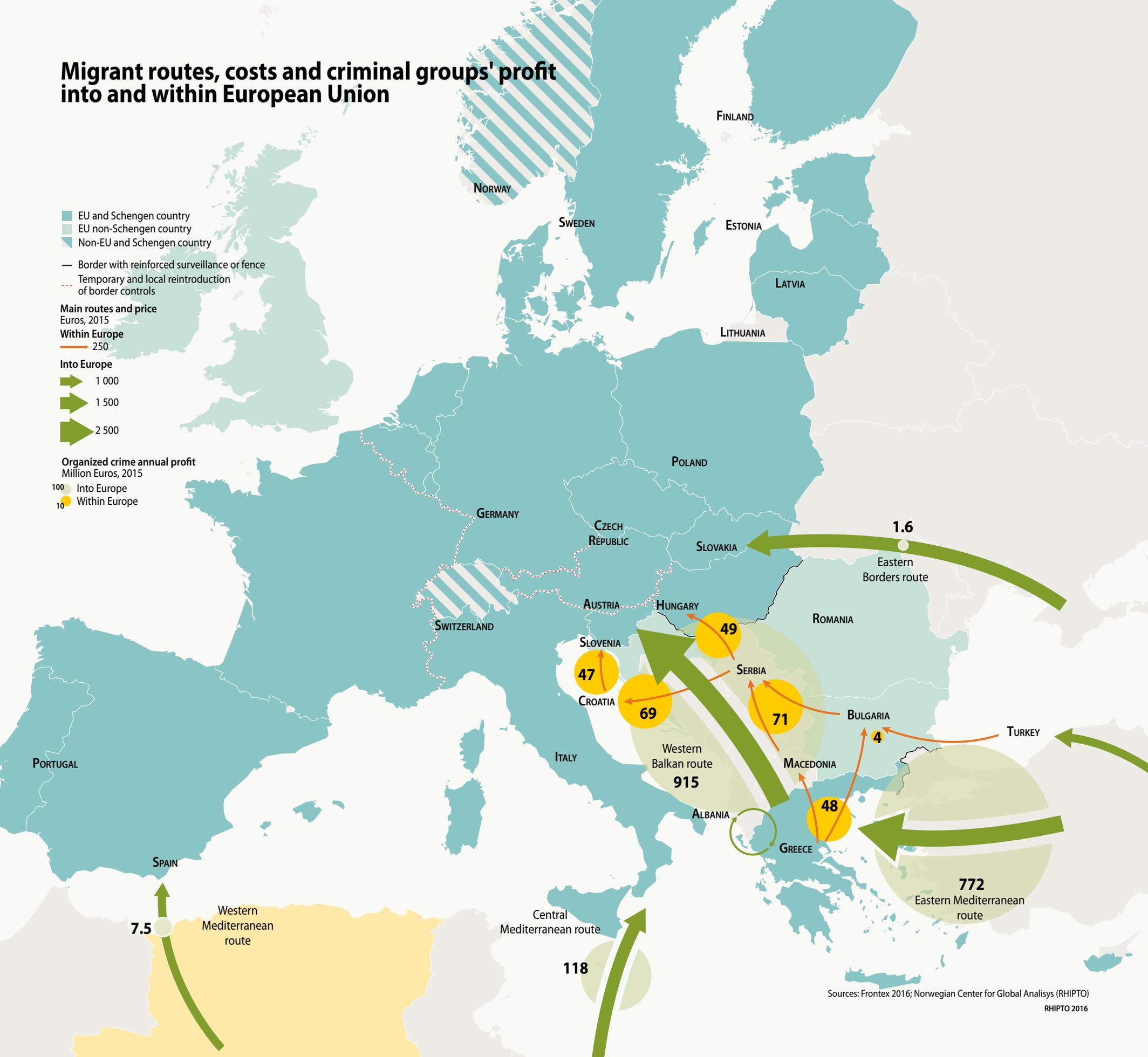


NIGER – West African refugees travelling north to Libya across the Sahara and then on to Europe. Niger, 2005.
© Nature Picture Library / Steve O. Taylor



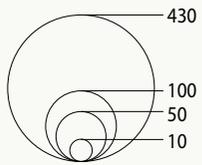
Migrant routes, costs and criminal groups' profit into and within European Union

- EU and Schengen country
 - EU non-Schengen country
 - Non-EU and Schengen country
 - Border with reinforced surveillance or fence
 - - - Temporary and local reintroduction of border controls
- Main routes and price**
Euros, 2015
- Within Europe**
— 250
- Into Europe**
- 1 000
 - 1 500
 - 2 500
- Organized crime annual profit**
Million Euros, 2015
- 100 Into Europe
 - 10 Within Europe



Migrants in the EU: main countries of origin and destination

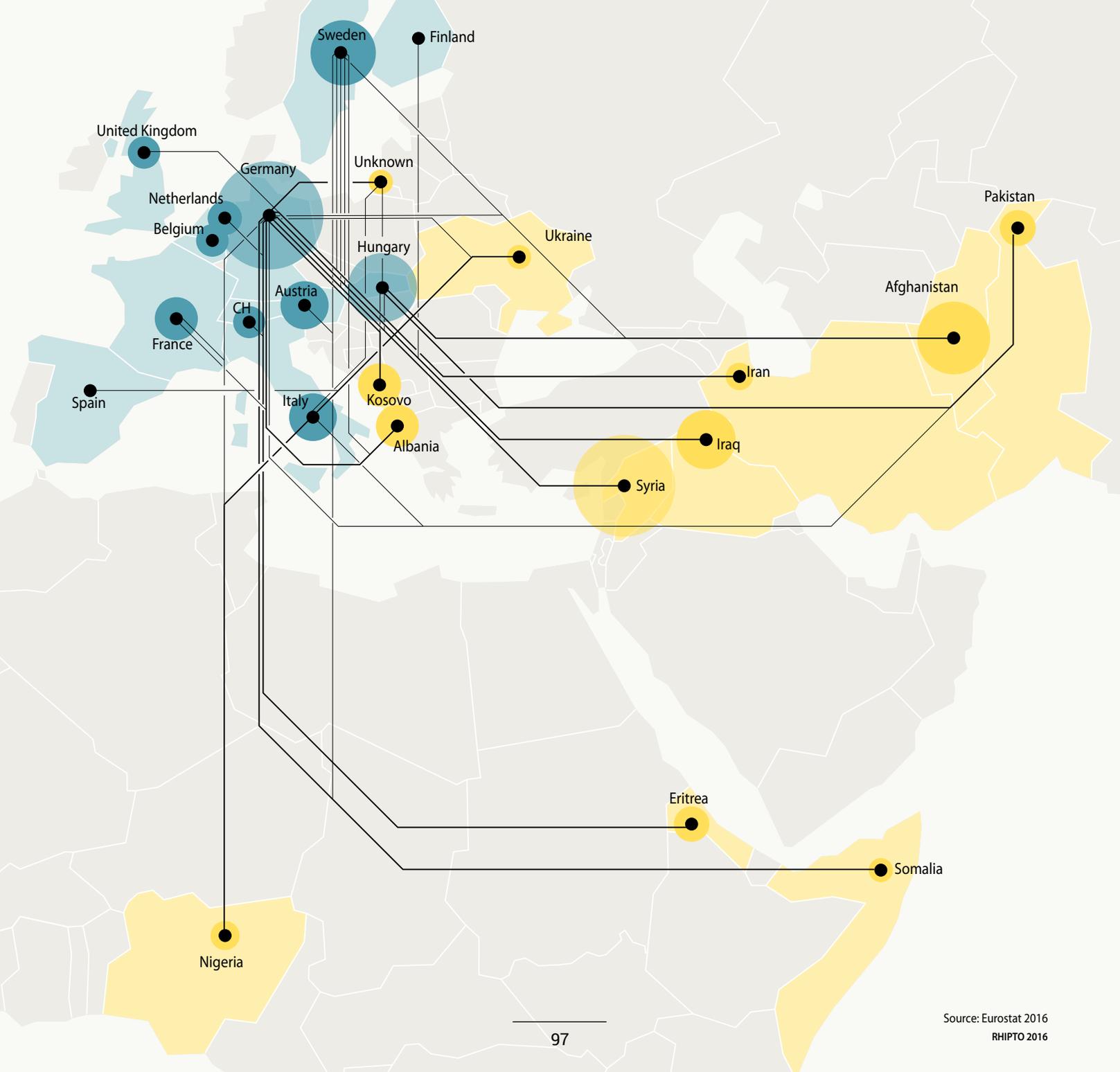
First-time asylum applicant, 2015
Thousands



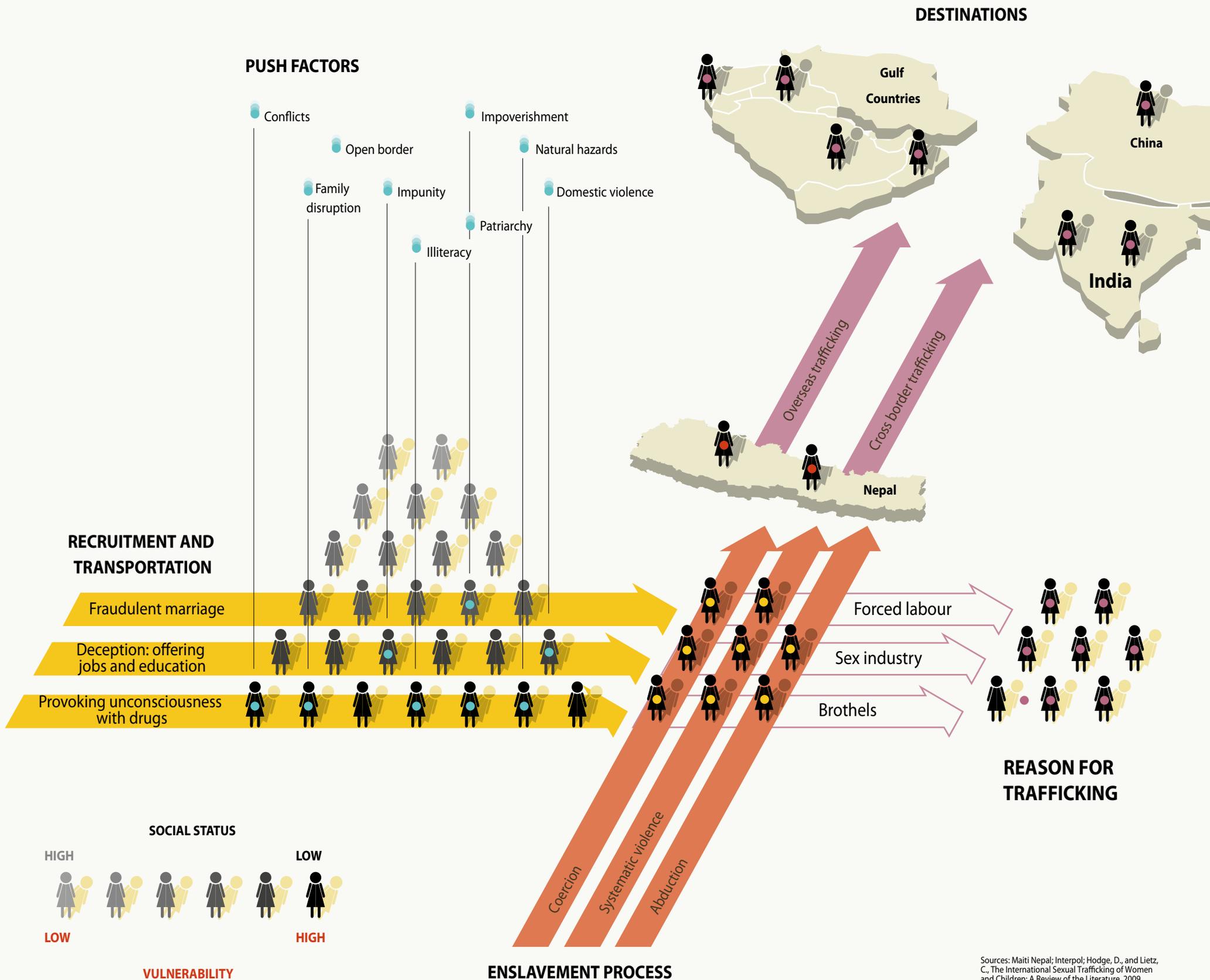
Country of origin
Country of destination

Main destinations
— Primary destination
— Second and third destination by number of asylum seeker

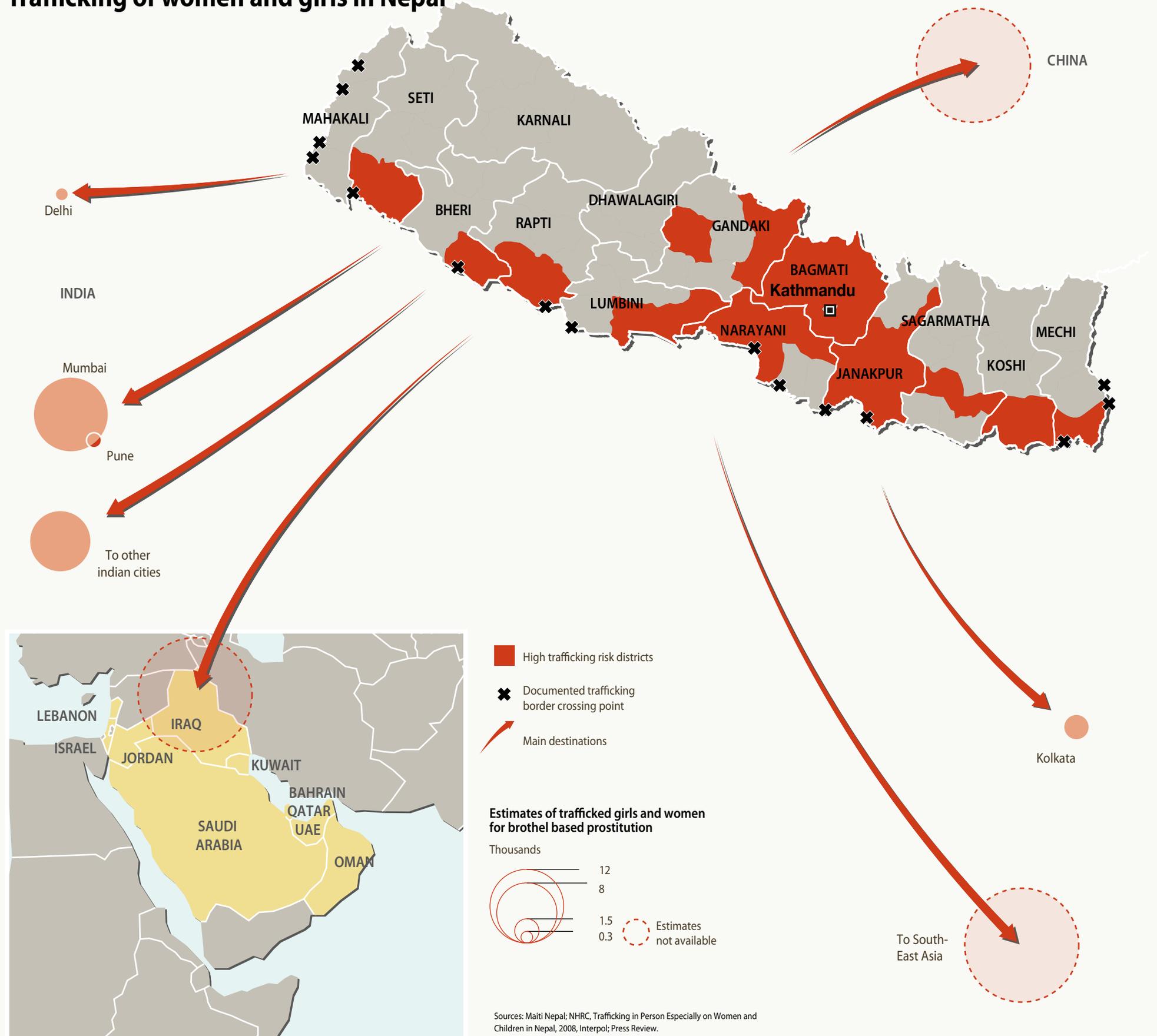
Note: only the first 10 countries by origin and destination, and only the first three destinations by country are represented



Human trafficking in Nepal - Patterns



Trafficking of women and girls in Nepal



Sources: Maiti Nepal; NHRC, Trafficking in Person Especially on Women and Children in Nepal, 2008, Interpol; Press Review.

Migrants to the US bypass the Mexican border using multiple entry points

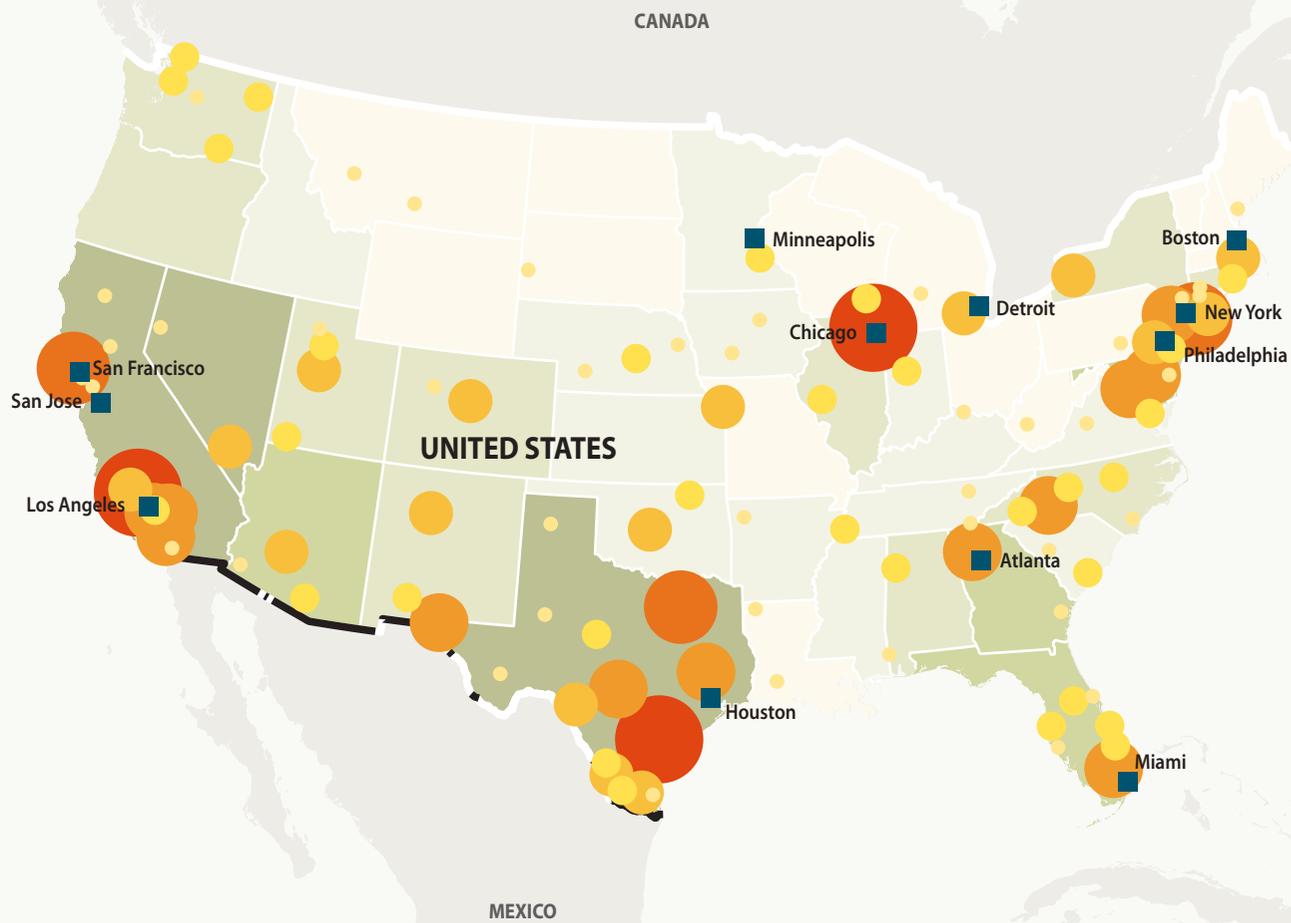
In the Americas, the UNODC estimated that in 2010 there are 3 million illegal entries to the US each year, with 60% to 75% entering secretly, and over 90% paying a smuggler. Of these, between 14 500 and 17 500 are victims of human trafficking.⁹⁹ Facilitating smuggling across the Mexico–US border has been estimated to generate an income of US\$6.6 billion a year,¹⁰⁰ and links to drug trafficking cartels are often insinuated. Meanwhile, US efforts to counter this threat have resulted in the creation of a border patrol of paramilitary proportions, with over 60 000 border-patrol officers. However, smuggling hubs that move migrants into the US are far from confined to the Mexican border alone. Addressing the smuggling networks requires more sophisticated approaches.



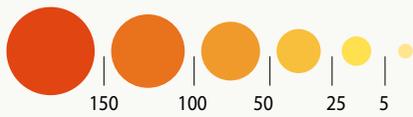
USA – A Border Patrol agent looks out from his small river patrol boat momentarily resting against the Texas bank while monitoring the Rio Grande River for illegal aliens crossing into the U.S. Such encounters are a daily experience in the Rio Grande Valley sector of Border Patrol operations.
© iStock / Vic Hinterlang

Trafficker gang arrests and Latin-American migrant smuggling hubs in the US

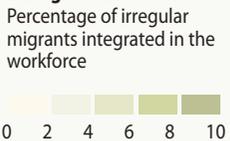
Gang member arrests, by gang



Gang member arrests, 2013



Immigration as workforce



Fonti: The Washington Post, Who's crossing the Mexico border? A new survey tries to find out, 2013; Brookings Institute, Metro North America: Metros as Hubs of Advanced Industries and Integrated Goods Trade, 2013; BuzzFeed, The Deported: Life On The Wrong Side Of The Border For Repatriated Mexicans, 2013; Center for immigration studies, 2013



SYRIA – An explosion after an apparent US-led coalition airstrike on Kobane, Syria, as seen from the Turkish side of the border, near Suruc district, 24 October 2014, Sanliurfa, Turkey.
© Shutterstock / Orlok

09 Foreign fighters

Travelling along smuggling networks



Foreign fighters: Travelling along smuggling networks

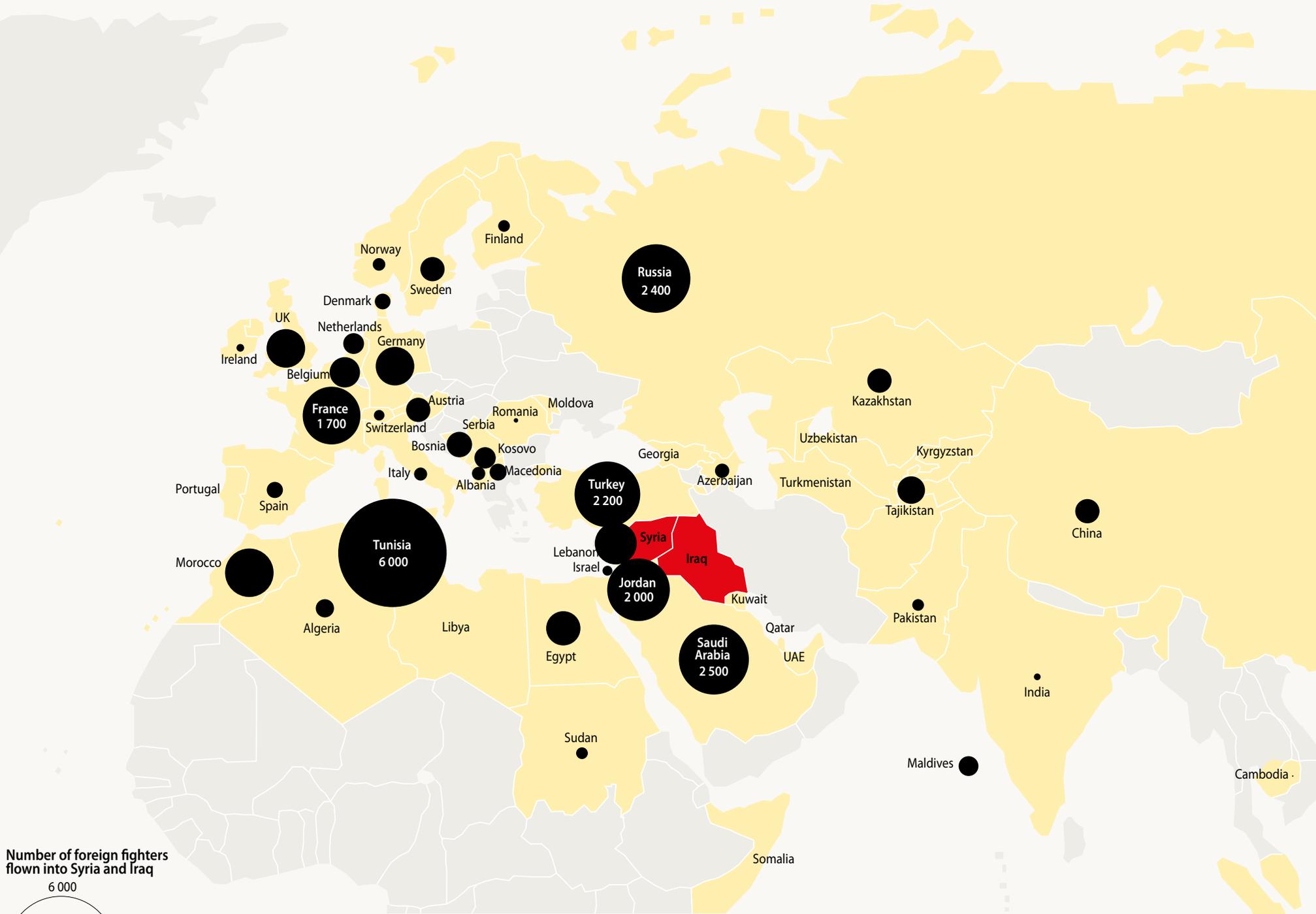
There are at least 5 600 foreign fighters associated with Islamic State.¹⁰² These combatants move along several routes: from Libya to Egypt, Mali and Mauritania onwards to Senegal and out of the African continent; from Turkey to the Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan, then across the Caspian Sea and via Iran or Turkmenistan to central Asia (Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); via Turkey to the Balkans, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many have also returned to Western Europe, and to Tunisia and Morocco. Claims of large numbers of Islamic State foreign fighters from Africa's Great Lakes region are false.

Some 14 900 foreign fighters leaving conflict zones have at least in part used these routes for travel back to their home countries; of these, some 5 395 are imprisoned; 6 837 have returned home but without having been apprehended by the criminal-justice system. This leaves over 2 600 unaccounted for, in addition to some 7 000 killed, mainly in Syria and Iraq.¹⁰³

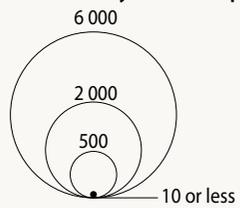
Organized-crime groups use smuggling networks that increasingly enable foreign fighters to move across borders to safe havens, as well as build up or migrate resources through formal and informal networks of financial flows. The over 2 600 unaccounted-for foreign fighters have left Syria and Iraq, and an unknown number travelled via Libya, using these illicit smuggling networks for access to resources such as forged papers, as well as routes to safe havens.



Flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq



Number of foreign fighters flown into Syria and Iraq



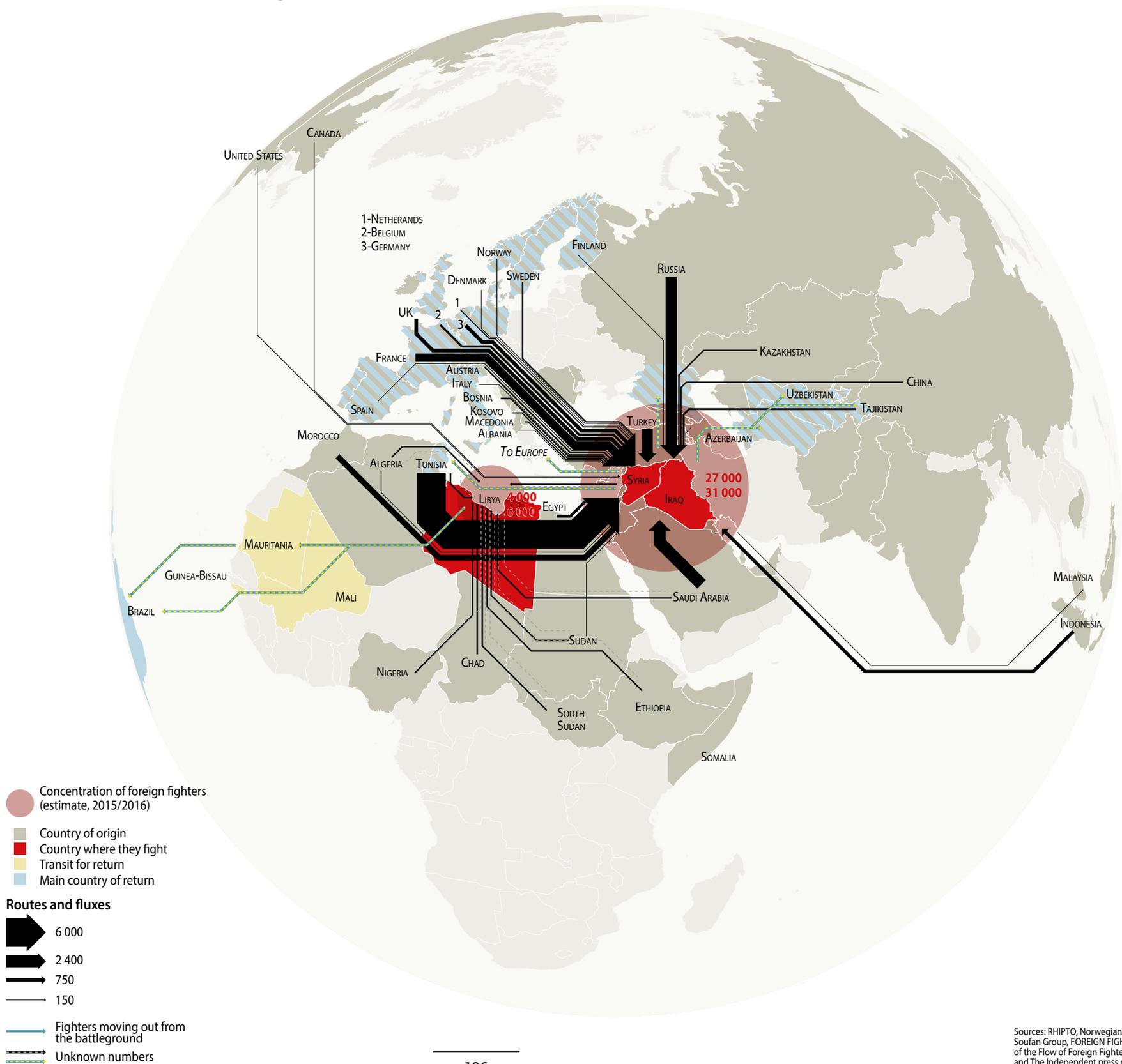
- Country of origin
- Country of destination

Source: The Soufan Group, December 2015

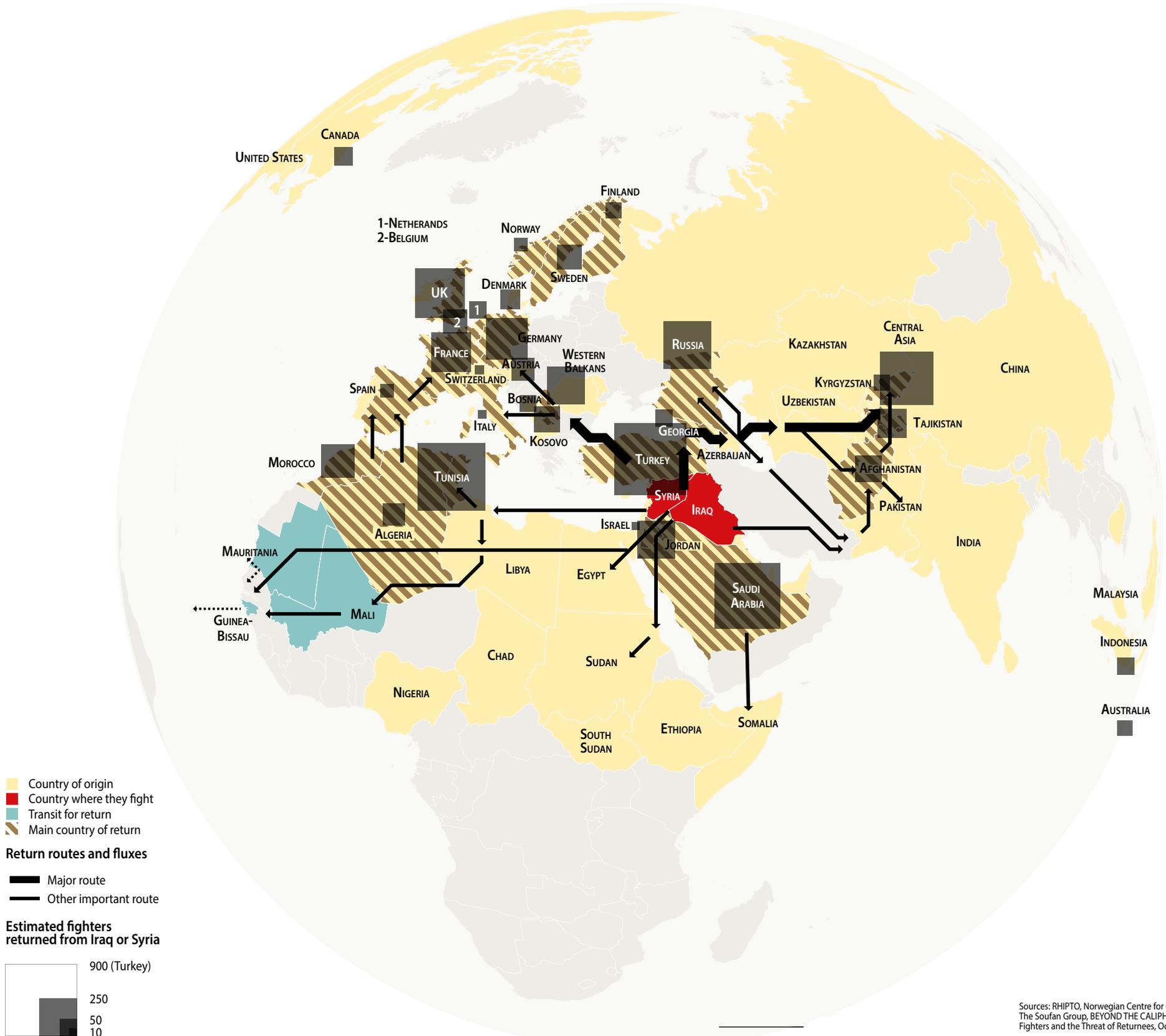
Foreign fighters joining the fights in both Syria, Iraq and Libya originate from a wide range of countries - of which Tunisia and Saudi Arabia are the most significant in terms of absolute numbers, but also including former soviet republics, Jordan and France as the top five countries of origin, reaching as far as Central and Southeast Asia and covering over a hundred countries.

Foreign fighters often return to their countries following periods of fighting in Syria/Iraq. Terrorist suspects subsequently cannot be identified through means of race, nationality or religion. Strengthening information, analysis and investigative capacity, along with accelerated sharing mechanisms of intelligence, are vital for prevention and early intervention. Nonetheless, the mass migrations and refugee streams to Europe, including expansions of networks of traffickers, smugglers and forged document suppliers along these streams, also facilitate movements of individual criminals - including terrorist suspects.

Foreign fighters to Syria, Iraq and Libya And their routes out of the fight



Foreign fighters going back home from Syria and Iraq



Sources: RHIPTO, Norwegian Centre for Global Analyses; The Soufan Group, BEYOND THE CALIPHATE: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees, October 2017



COLOMBIA – A counter-narcotics police officer takes cover as a helicopter lands on a coca field in Tumaco, southern Colombia, Wednesday, April 18, 2018.

© AP Photo / Fernando Vergara

10 Drugs & threat finance

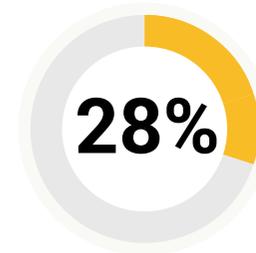




AFGHANISTAN – May 27, 2016: members of a breakaway faction of the Taliban fighters during a gathering, in Shindand district of Herat province, Afghanistan. Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi said Sunday.
© AP Photo / Allauddin Khan



Drugs and threat finance



of the income of the largest armed groups is derived from production, trafficking and taxation of drugs

The Taliban – opium and heroin

According to the US military and the Afghan government, in late 2017 insurgents were in ‘control’ of 2.2% of the population and ‘influenced’ another 9.2%, which, combined, means some 3.7 million Afghans. A further 24.9%, or 8.1 million people, live in contested areas. As of August 2017, 13% of Afghanistan’s municipal districts were either controlled or influenced by insurgents, the highest rate in at least two years.

In late 2017, the Taliban claimed to control 34 out of 400 districts, and to contest a further 167 districts (claiming a 40–97% presence in the latter). In practice, the Taliban contest half the country. The group claims to control most of the provinces of Helmand, Nimruz, Urozgan, Ghazni and Zabul, and half of Kandahar.

The Taliban’s size has been estimated to be more than 200 000, with a fighting strength of 150 000, of whom about 60 000 constitute a full-time force. Accounting for rotation for leave, and other reasons for absence, the fighting force present in Afghanistan would not exceed, at any one time, 40 000.¹⁰⁴ The full-timers are highly mobile and rely on safe havens, particularly in Pakistan, but also in Iran, when they are not operating in Afghanistan (accounting for a third of the time spent outside the country on rest and recreation). This compares to about 11 000 US troops in present in the country, and well over 300 000 Afghan government security forces (numbers recently classified).¹⁰⁵

There has been recent fighting between the Taliban and Islamic State in the north-western provinces of Jawzjan and Faryab, and at least one case of

collaboration between the two in the attacks and killing of over 50 Shias in the Sayyad District of Sar-e-Pol Province in August 2017, probably attributable to family or tribal affiliation rather than strategic cooperation.

The Taliban carried out eight large attacks in 2017, killing Afghan security forces and civilians, with between 15 and 150 fatalities per attack. Both the magnitude of such attacks and the increase in insurgent control over the population undermine the credibility of the Afghan security forces and the government.

Opium production in 2017 in Afghanistan was 9 000 metric tonnes (up by 87% from 2016) from an area of 328 000 hectares (up 63% from 2016) – equivalent to a total farm-gate value of US\$1.4 billion, according to UNODC. The largest increase was in Helmand Province, followed by Kandahar, Badghis and Faryab.

UNODC estimates that non-state armed groups in Afghanistan raised about US\$150 million in 2016 from taxing opium production. The UN Security Council Committee in 2011/12 cited an Afghan government estimate that reckoned that a quarter of the Taliban’s income was derived from opium-related activity, in other words US\$100 million out of a total income of US\$400 million. In 2010 the CIA estimated that the group was predominantly funded by non-drug-related taxation, and donations from Pakistan and Persian Gulf countries. As these examples show, agencies with different perspectives and priorities have debated this issue throughout the Afghanistan war.¹⁰⁶

The entire 2017 poppy crop was 9 000 metric tonnes. The price varies between regions, and has been cited as between US\$52¹⁰⁷ and US\$155¹⁰⁸ per kilogram for fresh opium, and US\$182 for cooked opium.¹⁰⁹ The fresh farm-gate price then gives a price range for the crop value of about US\$468 million to US\$1.4 billion. If the Taliban tax three-quarters of the area they control – and there is some evidence they are effectively taxing the rural parts of districts that are supposedly in government control, so about a quarter of those – then this balances out the equivalent of 100% taxation of 60% of the land.

Prices vary by season, year and even by district, not to mention by region. Empirical data is not available to cover these variations (and will probably never be available). In the meantime, by extrapolating from their Helmand tax rate of 1.125 kg per hectare,¹¹⁰ with a 60% tax coverage, the Taliban earn an estimated 221.4 tonnes of opium from the entire crop, worth a total of US\$11.5 million to US\$34.3 million.¹¹¹ In addition to this there is taxation of transportation at checkpoints, but this is very hard to quantify without specific intelligence, since the transported goods do not pass through just a few ports, as is the case in Somalia with charcoal, for example (see Chapter 3).

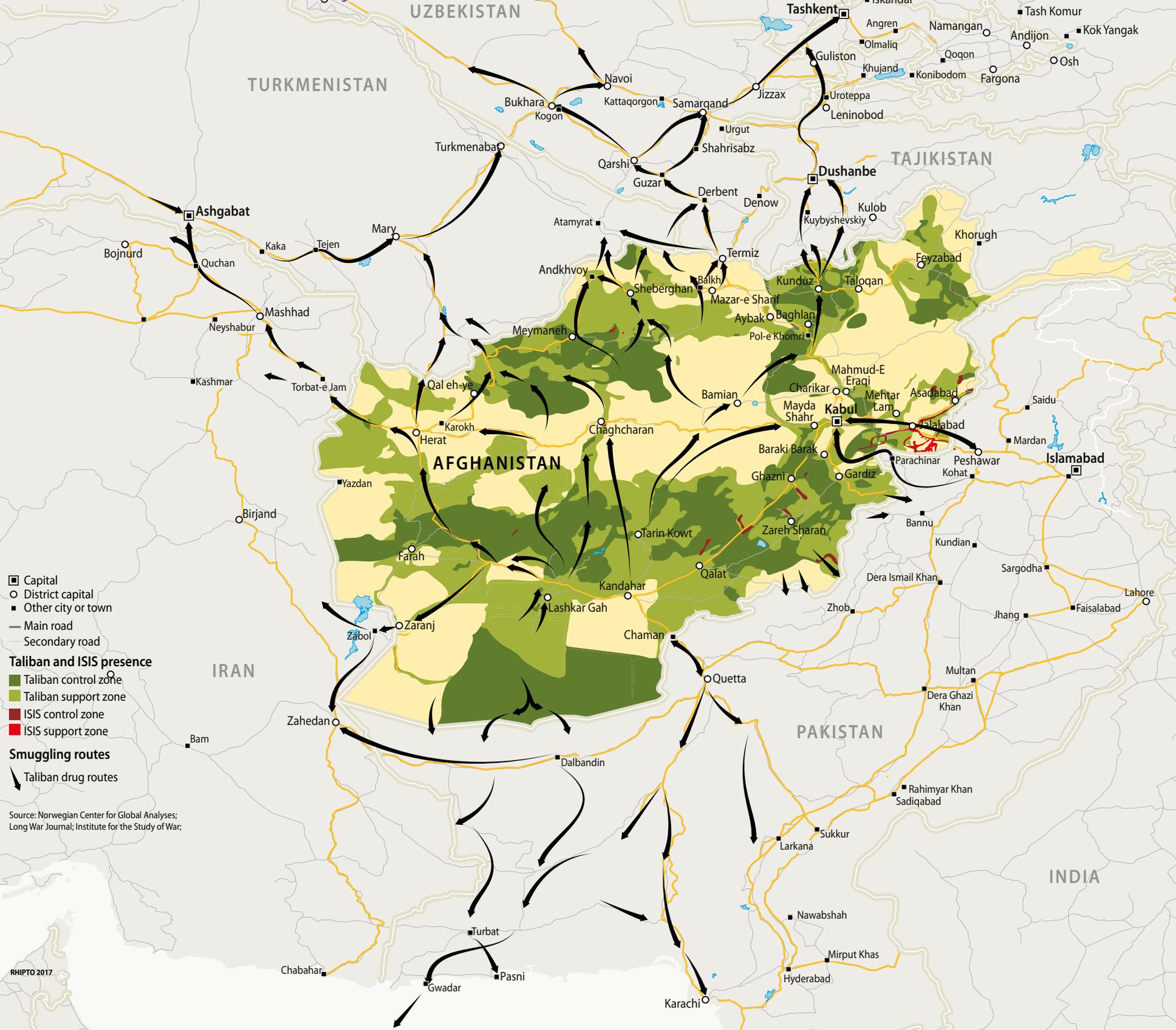
In the two districts Nad-e-Ali and Marjah, closely studied by David Mansfield in 2016, 66% of the Taliban's income came from tax on opium (US\$2.46 million); 8.2% (US\$305 000) was land tax, and 25% (US\$935 000) was wheat tax.¹¹² In the case of the Bakwa District, in Farah Province, also in 2016, taxation was based on an altogether different method: the number of tube wells, and totalled US\$287 000–US\$766 000.¹¹³

In the two districts in Helmand cited above, two-thirds of the Taliban's funding came from opium, whereas in the district cited above in Farah, none of it did. Their funding from Pakistan is also very well documented, although precise figures are difficult to come by.¹¹⁴ Given the expenses incurred by maintaining a permanent force of 40 000, with another 20 000 out of the country, and ambitions to make savings towards future governance expenditure, it is likely that the group's annual funding would need to be in the US\$50 million to US\$100 million range (and probably closer to US\$100 million), where one-third comes from opium, giving an annual funding of US\$75–95 million from all sources.



Opium poppy field
© Shutterstock / Zoran Orcik

Drug routes, Taliban and ISIS presence in Afghanistan



Source: Norwegian Center for Global Analyses; Long War Journal; Institute for the Study of War;



AFGHANISTAN – farmers harvest raw opium at a poppy field in the Zhari district of Kandahar province, Afghanistan.
© AP Photo / Allauddin Khan









AFGHANISTAN – Special Forces vehicles on mission.
© iStock / Analisa Hegyesi

Drug routes and threat finance to Eastern European organized crime



Organized crime

- Organized crime hub
- Main criminal organization
- 1. Chechen mafia
- 2. Dagestan criminal groups

Heroin

- Trafficking route
- Country of origin
- Main flow

Weapons

- Trafficking route
- Country of origin
- Country or region of destination

Source: UNODC, 2010; Norwegian Center for Global Analyses, 2015



COLOMBIA – Military forces of Colombia supervise territories where guerrillas of FARC still act. Soldiers patrol the mountain river in November 6, 2012 in La Macarena, Colombia.
© Shutterstock





COLOMBIA – Soldiers keep guard over workers uprooting coca plantations as part of a government counter-narcotics program in San Francisco Antioquia province May 11, 2009.
© Reuters / Fredy Amariles



FARC – cocaine and illicit mining

The Colombian revolutionary insurgent movement, FARC, who had been at war with the Colombian government since 1964, disarmed itself and transitioned into a political party in June 2017. In the 1980s, FARC were funded by primary commodities, like cattle and other agricultural products, and by oil and gold. They also engaged in smuggling in border areas.¹¹⁵ Until 1981 they had considered cocaine and marijuana counter-revolutionary, but for fear of alienating local farmers, and seeing obvious financial advantages, FARC changed their policy on drugs. Initially their taxation came from gramaaje, which is a farm tax. Later this was upscaled to both systematic taxation of coca cultivation, as well as any infrastructure or transportation routes associated with the logistics of moving the product.

The Colombian government assessed in 1998 that illegal paramilitaries, including guerrilla movements like FARC, made US\$551 million a year in drug trafficking, US\$311 million from extortion and US\$236 million from kidnapping for ransom.¹¹⁶

During the last few years of their insurgency, FARC guerrillas moved out of the mountainous areas and established a number of camps in the Colombian Amazon, including areas north of the Brazilian border to the far east of the country, outside drug-producing areas. In recent years, they gained about 20% of their income from illegal mining of gold. The organization's 34th Front allegedly made over US\$1 million a month from extorting miners.¹¹⁷

When the peace process took place, FARC declared their wealth in an inventory as US\$332 million, including assets such as US\$147 million worth of property, US\$10.5 million in cattle, US\$70 million in weaponry and US\$10.7 million in gold. However, InSight Crime calculated in 2015/2016 that FARC at that time had assets worth US\$580 million, mostly income from drugs and illegal mining.¹¹⁸

The peace process was honoured by about 10 000 FARC members, but several thousand rejected it

or did not participate in it, led by the dissident 1st Front. About 2 500 of these dissidents are thought to have formed an ex-FARC mafia, some of whom call themselves the Eastern Bloc, who have become big players in the cocaine trade. They operate a relatively flat business-oriented structure, and have taken control of key choke points bordering Venezuela and Brazil.¹¹⁹

A significant degree of corruption in the chain of command, as well as thousands of FARC members or their part-time support cadre leaving or ignoring the peace process, or simply going rogue and joining criminal groups, could explain some of the discrepancy. In addition, assets kept abroad are not included in the inventory.¹²⁰

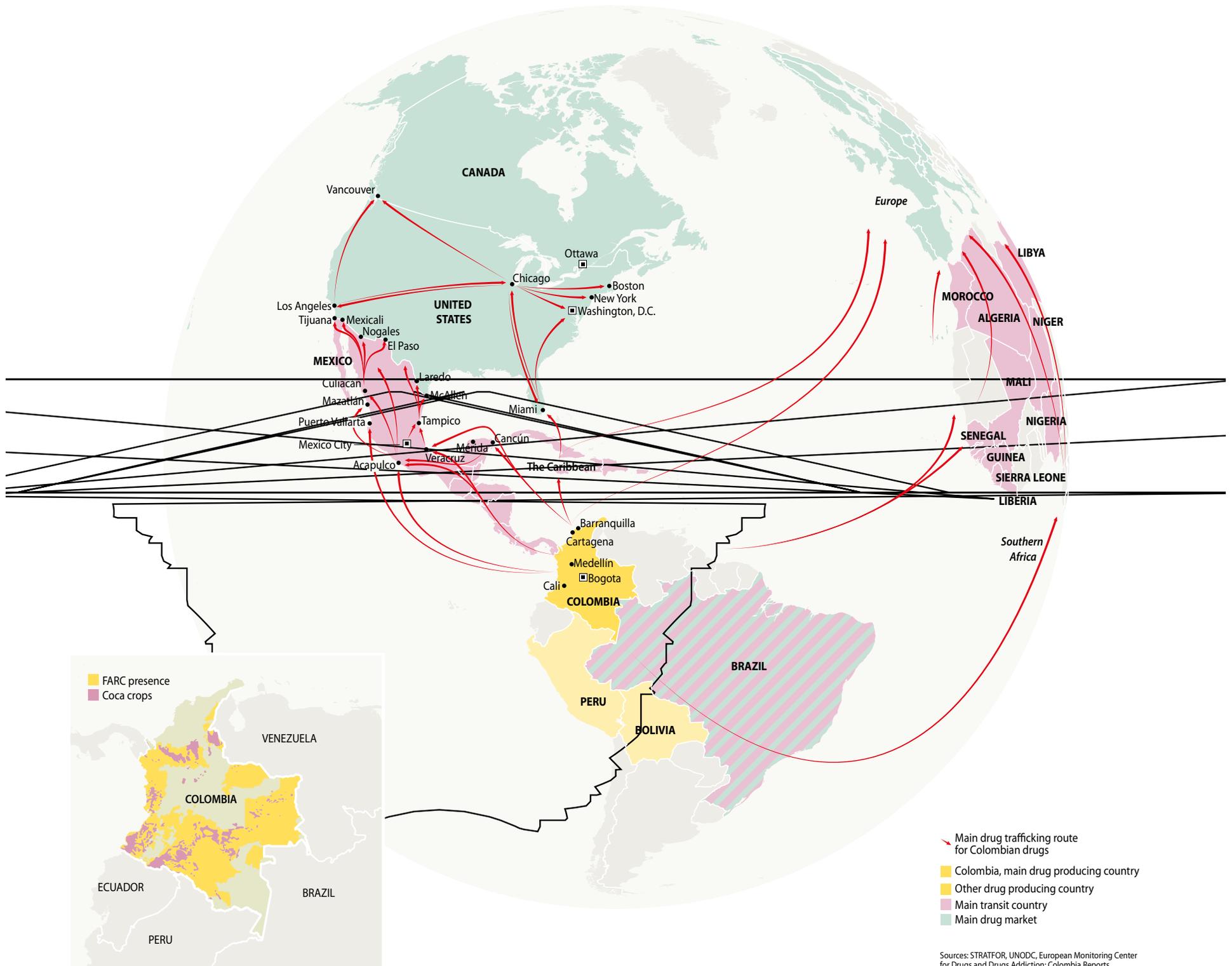
FARC controlled about 60% to 70% of the coca-producing areas, and were the biggest single player. Their income largely came from taxing – varying between US\$35 and US\$150 per kilogram of coca base.¹²¹ They were also to some extent involved in production, and widely taxing of labs and transportation.¹²² In 2016 the coca crop – over 188 000 hectares, with an average production 7 kg of cocaine per hectare – could have produced a max crop of 1 200 tonnes, according to InSight Crime. The actual cocaine production for 2015 was about 646 000 kg, according to UNODC.¹²³ The price of coca base was US\$621 per kilogram in 2016, and US\$1 633 for cocaine.¹²⁴ The total cocaine value for the entire crop would be US\$1.05 billion, given UNODC production numbers. InSight Crime has calculated FARC's earnings from the cocaine trade alone to be in the region of US\$267 million, where US\$67.9 million was from cocaine base taxation, US\$169.5 million from cocaine production and US\$30 million from other taxes. Other earnings came from heroin (US\$5 million), marijuana (US\$30 million), cattle taxation (US\$4.5 million), extortion of businesses (US\$76.8 million a year) and illegal mining (US\$200 million), giving a total of US\$580 million in 2015, of which about US\$200 million was taken by corrupt commanders.¹²⁵



COLOMBIA – Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas listen during a “class” on the peace process between the Colombian government and their force, at a camp in the Colombian mountains on February 18, 2016.
© AP Photo / Luis Acosta



Drug trafficking routes from colombia





COLOMBIA – A soldier stands next to packages containing marijuana at an army base in Cali, Colombia, Friday, Aug. 22, 2008. According to the Colombian army, 6.7 tons of marijuana were seized from rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC, near Cali.
© AP Photo / Christian Escobar Mora



LIBYA – Libyan rebels travel to a battle line where they will fight Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's army. Ajdabiya, Libya, April 7, 2011.
© Shutterstock / Rosen Ivanov Iliev



The new 'jihadist drugs'

Since 2015 there has been an increasing number of intelligence reports regarding extensive smuggling and use by jihadist fighters, especially Islamic State, of tramadol, an opioid pain reliever, as well as Captagon, a psychostimulant for increased alertness. Both often called 'jihadist pills' or 'courage pills'. Captagon is a brand name for the drug fenethylline, a combination of amphetamine and theophylline, which increases alertness. Tramadol provides pain relief and can also allegedly reduce fear and stress during battle by in some cases releasing serotonin, creating a feeling of wellbeing or happiness. Captagon stimulates alertness and reduces exhaustion, and the need for sleep.

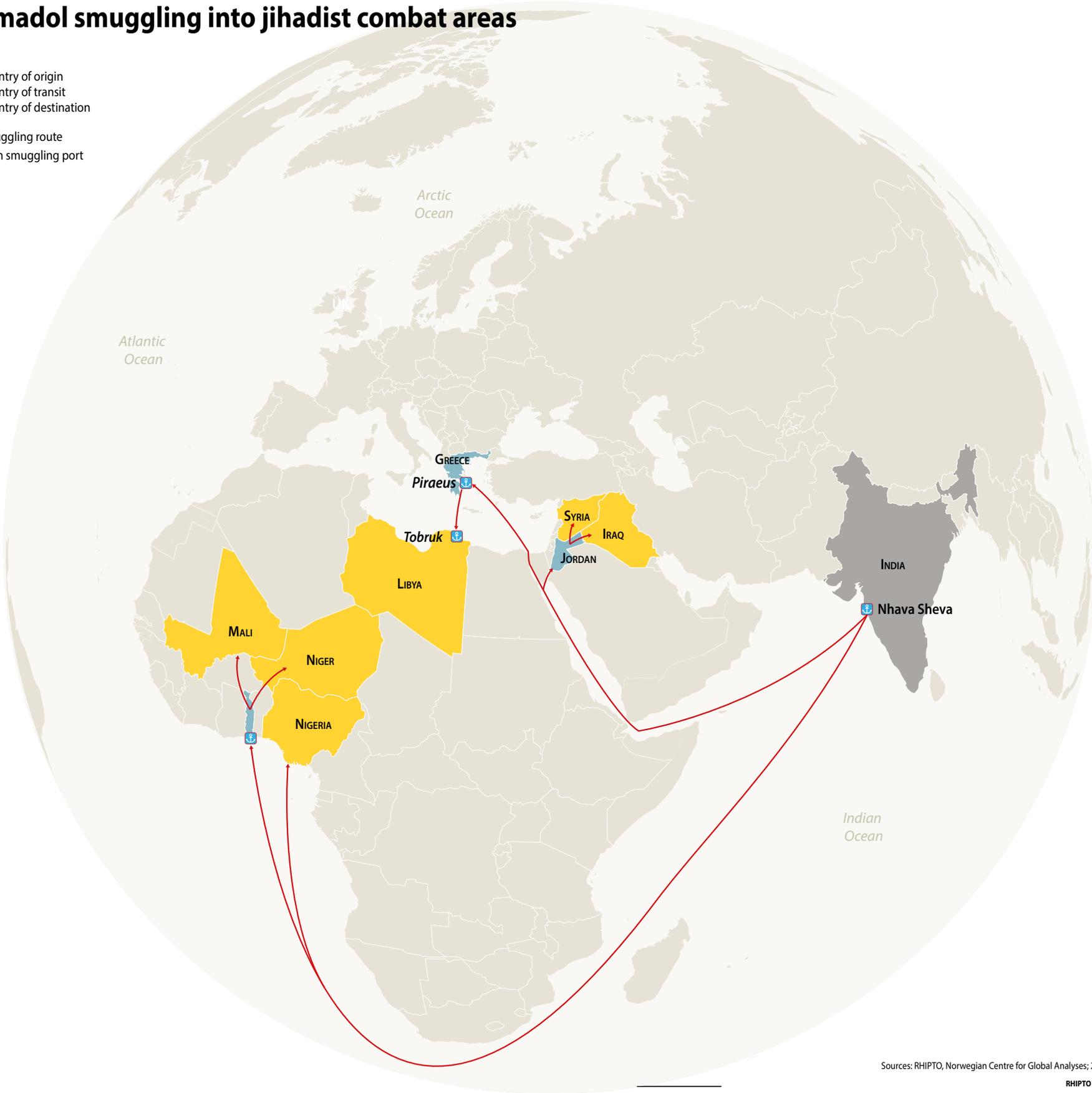
This kind of drug use is predominantly seen in the Middle East, is very prevalent in Syria and Iraq, including by Chechen fighters, but is also becoming increasingly common in the Trans-Sahara, including Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Libya. Islamic State has been directly involved in the smuggling and sale of jihadist drugs, and not only to their own fighters. Pills are entering the region from Greece and Tobruk, Libya, as well as via Lomé (Togo), Cotonou (Benin) and Nigeria. Most originates from India. The rising use of this drug by jihadist fighters in the Trans-Sahara, Libya and Nigeria most likely points to increased smuggling activity by Islamic State and related jihadist groups.



LIBYA – Libyan rebels in Tripoli, 21 Aug 2011.
© Lightroom Photos / Fyson Lathbury

Tramadol smuggling into jihadist combat areas

- Country of origin
- Country of transit
- Country of destination
- Smuggling route
- Main smuggling port



Sources: RHIPTO, Norwegian Centre for Global Analyses; 2018



DRC – New recruits in the FDLR rebel group begin training in the mountainous region of DR Congo, North Kivu Province. Chai, North Kivu, DRC- March 29, 2014.
© iStock / Jon Brown

11 Terrorist & rebel finance

Taxation, drugs, counterfeits, natural resources and migrants





DRC – Artesanal gold mine in a river in Mwenga, in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.
© Riccardo Pravettoni

Terrorist and rebel finance: Taxation, drugs, counterfeits, natural resources and migrants

	Incomes to seven armed groups + groups in DRC US\$ millions	%
Drugs	330	28
Charcoal	15	1
Antiquities	15	1
Kidnapping for ransom	36	3
External funding and donations	36	3
Confiscations and looting	99	9
Taxation and extortion (not drugs)	197	17
Illegal mining	203	17
Oil and gas	230	20
Total	1 160	100

For the seven main terrorist/rebel groups that comprise a mix of insurgents and terrorists – al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, FARC, HTS, JNIM, Islamic State and the Taliban – as well as a number of groups operating in the eastern DRC, the combined funding is about US\$1 billion–US\$1.39 billion a year. Taxation of natural resources and drugs is the most important, commonly available and accessible source of income. This ranges from taxation of transport at vehicle checkpoints, to agricultural produce, protection money targeting commercial activity and religious taxes.

The numbers given here represent updates on a body of work accumulated over the last few years featuring best estimates based on official reports, academic assessments and criminal intelligence.¹²⁶ Insurgent groups primarily finance their activities by illegal taxation of the populace, illicit commercial activity, whether in drugs, minerals, gold, charcoal, timber, or through taxation of migrants. If they do not exert territorial control,

which is typical for terrorist groups, incomes more typically involve mobility, such as kidnapping for ransom, or smuggling of high-value goods, like drugs.

The seven major non-state armed groups here all feature elements of insurgency and terrorism. None is either a pure terrorist or pure insurgent group, but the motivational characteristics of terrorism or insurgency can be plotted on a continuum between the two. They are insurgents,¹²⁷ in that they seek political change over a ruling regime, and hold or aspire to hold territory. These dimensions apply particularly to FARC and the Taliban, but also in considerable measure to al-Shabaab and Islamic State as well. They are all terrorists¹²⁸ too, in that they use fear generating violence and coercion without legal or moral restraint against civilians, for its effect on various audiences. This applies particularly to JNIM, HTS, Boko Haram and Islamic State, but also to the Taliban and, to some extent, FARC.



Islamic State remains the most serious threat because of the organization's international reach and suspected financial reserves. As of May 2017, the group was making up to US\$10 million a month in revenues. In mid-2018, its funding in Iraq and Syria is likely to be a tenth of that – a total of US\$6 million to US\$24 million a year. A large, unknown amount, but possibly over US\$100 million, has been funnelled out of Iraq and Syria, and some of this has been laundered in investments in Iraq, Syria and neighbouring countries. The group's estimated strength is currently around 15 600 including 5 600 returned foreign fighters, with a remaining force in Syria and Iraq of 5 000 active fighters – and probably at least a similar amount laying low.

HTS is a merger of what used to be al-Qaeda groups, which for a time took the name 'Jabhat al-Nusra' in Syria. Their relationship with the al-Qaeda central command is currently under much debate, but should not be underestimated. They are about 10 000 strong, funded by taxation, donations and kidnap for ransom, but are underfunded at about US\$8 million a year. With expenses of US\$19 million, they are dependent on expat finance from organizations to the tune of about US\$11 million.

JNIM is the al-Qaeda central merger in the Sahel of the former AQIM Sahara branch, Katibat Macina, and Ansar Dine and Al-Mourabitoun. They have been very active recently, attacking UN forces in Mali from neighbouring countries. JNIM are funded by revenue from cigarette smuggling, drugs and other taxation forms, extortion, possibly migrant taxation and kidnapping for ransom. Their income range is likely to be in the range of US\$18 million to US\$35 million. Kidnapping for ransom provides the major chunk of their funding, at US\$8 million in 2017 alone. Their strength is estimated to be at about 3 500 to 4 500 fighters.

The **Taliban's** roughly 40 000 full-time members control or influence at least 13% of districts in Afghanistan (see Chapter 10). Their funding sources are highly disputed but are believed to include taxation of the biggest cash crop in the country, opium. The 2017 poppy crop was 9 000 metric tonnes. The Taliban are able to tax 60% of this crop at rate of 1.125 kg per hectare and US\$52–US\$155 per kilogram for an estimated 221.4 tonnes of opium from the entire crop, worth a total of between US\$11.5 million and US\$34.3 million. In addition, they are funded by taxation of transportation at checkpoints, but this is very hard to quantify without specific intelligence. Their funding from Pakistan is also very well documented, although precise figures are difficult to come by.¹²⁹ Given the expenses incurred by maintaining a permanent force of 40 000, with another 20 000 out of the country, and ambitions to make savings towards governance in future, it is likely that the group's annual funding would need to be in the US\$50 million to US\$100 million range (and probably closer to US\$100 million), where one-third comes from opium, amounting to a total annual funding of US\$75–95 million.

Boko Haram has suffered serious setbacks following Nigerian military offensives supported by a joint task force from neighbouring countries. Their fighting strength has dwindled to about 4 000, which is further weakened by their split into two factions in 2016, one led by Abubakar Shekau and the other by Abu Musab al-Barnawi. Shekau is on the run and is striking back against civilian targets using suicide bombers, increasingly children. Barnawi is based around Lake Chad and is slowly building up military capacity and attacking military targets. Barnawi remains loyal to Boko Haram's allegiance to Islamic State. The group's income is reckoned to be no more than US\$5–10 million a year, mainly from extortion, donations made by individuals, charities and groups like AQIM, kidnapping for ransom and bank robberies, as well as taxing migrants and human traffickers.

Al Shabaab remain a significant threat in Somalia, with their most violent attack to date happening in Mogadishu in October 2017, which killed over 300. They were responsible for killing over 4 500 people in 2017. Their current strength (as of 2018) is about 5 000 fighters, compared with about 250 Islamic State combatants in Somalia. Their estimated revenue from charcoal is currently about US\$10 million per year, but this is down dramatically from 2012 when they were making US\$38–56 million.¹³⁰ Al-Shabaab for various reasons imposed their own ban on the trade in charcoal in their own area, but after about a year they returned to charcoal as a revenue source. The shift back was possibly due to their having found that alternative income sources proved both resource-intensive to collect and less fruitful. In addition to their charcoal income, al-Shabaab probably make another US\$10 million from other forms of illicit taxation. Just over 40% of their income is spent on salaries, and the rest for other costs, including transportation, ammunition, food, training camps, religious education and bribes.

FARC, now officially disbanded, numbered about 8 000 at the time they disarmed and became a political movement, but also had a very large number of part-time supporters in various functions. Today, about 10 000 of them have accepted the peace process, whereas about 2 500 did not or went rogue and joined various criminal activities, including an ex-FARC mafia network running drugs. Their income, calculated in 2015, but likely to be similar in 2017 at the time of the disbandment, was made up as follows: about US\$267 million a year from the cocaine trade, heroin (US\$5 million), marijuana (US\$30 million), cattle taxation (US\$4.5 million), extortion of businesses (US\$76.8 million a year) and illegal mining (US\$200 million), giving a total of US\$580 million in 2015, of which about US\$200 million was taken by corrupt commanders. At the time of their disbandment, the group had declared assets of US\$332 million, believed by some to be as high as US\$580 million if one includes drugs and illegal mining. This figure excludes the group's overseas assets.

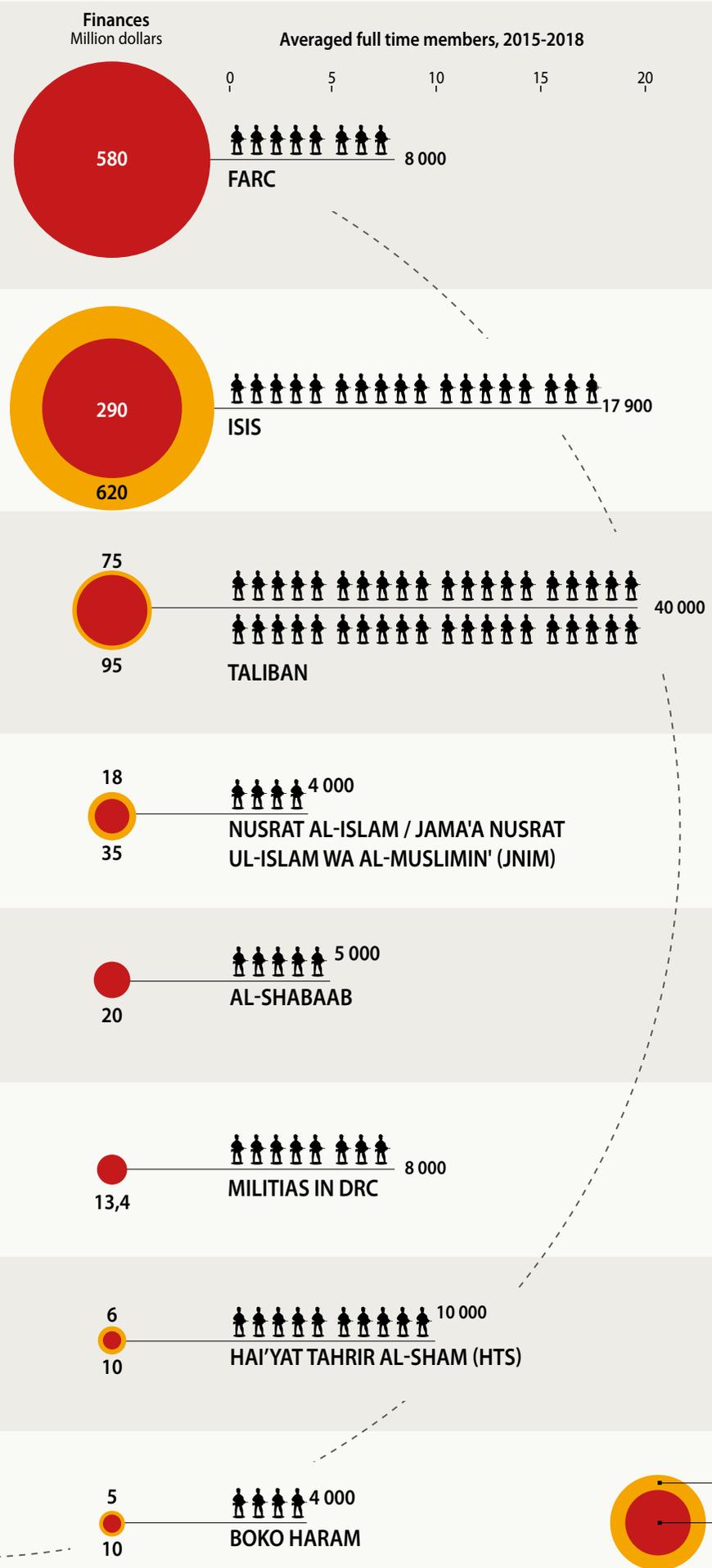
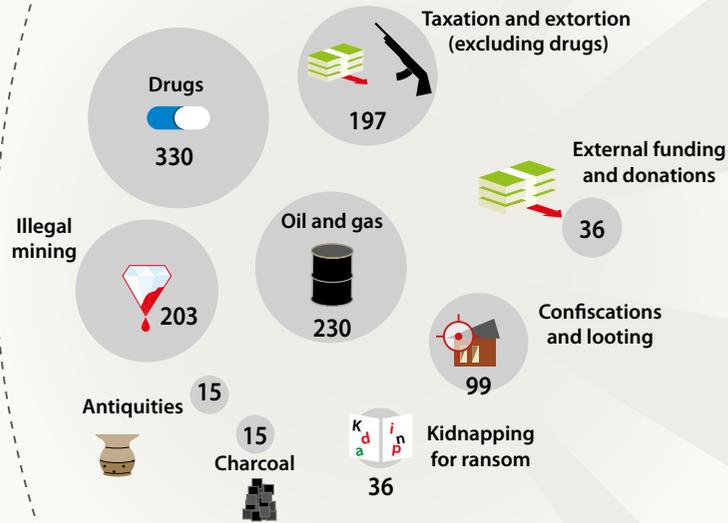


SOMALIA – Amisom troops prepare for battle.
© United Nations / Flickr

Organized crime and insurgent groups' finances

Total Income to organized crime in and around conflict areas
 Million USD
31 539

1 160
4% Part of the income that goes to insurgent and terrorist groups





JORDAN – A syrian refugee child in front of his tent in Zaatari refugee camp.
© Shutterstock / Melih Cevdet Teksen

12 Conclusion

The cost of war

environmental crime surges as threat
finance for war profiteers





GHANA — Fevered by hopes of striking it rich, illegal miners claw sacks of “money stone”—gold ore—from the Pra River in Ghana. Their toil feeds the world’s hunger for gold, and leaves a ruined landscape in its wake.

© National Geographic / Randy Olson



Conclusion: The cost of war – environmental crime surges as threat finance for war profiteers

If one looks beyond groups designated as terrorist organizations to include regular organized crime that occurs in and around conflict, the scale of criminal economies is in the range of US\$24 billion to US\$39 billion by turnover, although profits are far lower. Threat finance revenue to terrorism and major insurgencies represents only about 4% of the total illicit finance in or near areas of conflict.¹³¹ Despite their high profile, such armed groups operate within an environment where exponentially higher incomes go to transnational organized crime. The armed groups take part in these activities, and feed off the income streams, but they are not the dominant financial players.

Powerful elites engaged in organized crime gain from sustaining conflicts and fund non-state armed groups, which undermines the rule of law and good governance. This, in turn, enables criminal elites to benefit from instability, violence and lack of enforcement and, hence, subsequent exploitation of illicit flows during conflict.

Strengthening information and analysis is essential to be able to prevent, disrupt and defeat, before it is too late, both violent armed groups and the organized-criminal actors that provide these armed groups (and themselves) with an environment of impunity and instability.

In order to ensure early prevention and intervention in conflict, it is therefore imperative to forcefully address the role of organized crime and illicit flows in benefiting non-state armed groups and the powerful elites engaged in criminal activity.



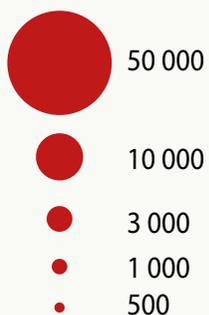
BRAZIL – A boy plays with a kite in front of logs cut illegally from the Amazon rainforest at a sawmill in the city of Morais Almeida, Para state, June 27, 2013.
© Reuters / Nacho Doce

Children living in conflict



Number of children living in conflict zones

Thousands, by country, 2016



Conflict and disasters impact 535 million children and a total of over 2 billion people



One in four children in the world live in countries affected by conflict or disaster, often without access to medical care, quality education, proper nutrition and protection

Footnotes

- ¹ Taxation of migration is not included here because the empirical basis is too thin to be able to accurately calculate what portion it forms of the seven big groups' funding. Other armed groups, particularly in Libya, are making very large incomes from this, but that is largely outside the realm of the seven.
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- ³ RHIPTO Threat Network Assessment, 'Update on Islamic State financial situation in Syria-Iraq' (27 May 2017).
- ⁴ RHIPTO Threat Network Assessment, 'Islamic State funding and implications' (18 September 2014).
- ⁵ UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, 'S/2017/924 Report on Somalia' (2 November 2017), para 200.
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- ²³ Ibid. p 9–10.
- ²⁴ Ibid. p 30.
- ²⁵ Ibid. p 38.
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- ⁵⁶ Seventeen out of 19 merchant vessels exported out of Kismayo, the other two from Barawe. Al-Shabaab had reduced activity from Barawe, but most activity out of Kismayo. See Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, 'S/2014/726 Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2111 (2013),' (10 October 2014), para 139. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/726 accessed 25 June 2018.
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- ⁶⁰ S/2017/924 p 46.
- ⁶¹ In 2014 the Monitoring Group of Experts assessed the trade to be worth US\$250m, and in 2017 only US\$150m. See S/2014/726 and S/2017/924 p 47.
- ⁶² S/2016/919 p 42.
- ⁶³ S/2017/924, p 46.
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