



Rabat Process

Euro-African Dialogue on
Migration and Development

Bridging the gaps: advancing cooperation on Missing Migrants in the Rabat Process region

Unir les efforts: faire avancer la coopération sur la question des
personnes migrantes disparues dans la région du Processus de Rabat

09-10
July 2025

Banjul,
The Gambia

Under the co-chairmanship of The Gambia and Switzerland

Sous la coprésidence de la Gambie et de la Suisse



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Project funded by the European Union



As part of the Support Programme for the Africa-EU
Dialogue on Migration and Mobility (MMD)



Project implemented by ICMPD



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Mapping the landscape and strengthening cooperation

Cartographier le paysage et renforcer la coopération

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Guiding questions / Questions directrices

- ❖ How is your country affected by the issue of missing migrants?
- ❖ What are the **main challenges** your country encounters in addressing cases of missing migrants?
- ❖ What **concrete steps** have been taken to address these challenges?
- ❖ Are there specific mechanisms in place for **engaging with affected families**?
- ❖ What institutions are currently involved in search, identification, and response?
- ❖ What exists today, and what is planned for the near future?

- ❖ Comment votre pays est-il affecté par la problématique des personnes migrantes disparues ?
- ❖ Quels sont les **principaux défis** rencontrés par votre pays dans la réponse aux cas de personnes migrantes disparues ?
- ❖ Quelles **mesures concrètes** ont été prises pour répondre à ces défis ?
- ❖ Y'a-t-il des mécanismes spécifiques en place pour **impliquer les familles affectées** ?
- ❖ Quelles sont les institutions impliquées actuellement dans les processus de recherche, d'identification et de réponse ?
- ❖ Quels sont les systèmes existants et quels sont ceux prévus dans un futur proche ?





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Guiding questions

National Focal Points and bilateral agreements

- Has your country appointed a Focal Point on missing migrants?
- Are any bilateral agreements in place or under discussion to facilitate information sharing and cooperation on cases of missing migrants?

Prevention measures

- Has your country taken steps to ensure migrants can access communication, services, and reliable information along their journey?
- Is there a toll-free, anonymous hotline for reporting missing persons or deaths along migratory routes?

National coordination

- Has your country established a national working group or task force dedicated to addressing cases of missing migrants?

Support for families

- What measures have been taken to support families of missing migrants?
- Can families report disappearances safely and without fear of reprisals?
- Is there a trusted government or local point of contact for families?

Child protection and capacity-building

- What training or capacity-building initiatives exist for relevant professionals (police, immigration officials, judges, lawyers, social workers, staff of international and civil society organisations) on child protection - particularly for unaccompanied and separated migrant children?





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Scenario-based exercise

From reflection to practice

Exercice de scénarios blancs

De la réflexion à la pratique

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ICRC FORENSIC UNIT

Management of the Dead in Emergencies

Banjul, July 2025

HUMANITARIAN FORENSIC ACTION

- The use and application of forensic science to humanitarian activities
- **The dead, missing, and their families** are at the center of the Forensic activities in the ICRC.
- A priority of forensic science in the humanitarian space **is the dignified management of the dead and the resolution of cases of missing persons -**
Right of the victims' families to know the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones and Restoration of the identity of the deceased.

MoTD/PoTD

From a forensic perspective, there is **no justification for not following all standard procedures for the recovery, transfer, identification and final disposal of remains of disaster victims**. A small group of experts experienced in these procedures should supervise the process. However, in situations where experts are not available, **the community physician(s) should provide leadership and use all available resources to carry out these tasks**.

WHO, DBM in disaster situations. 2004

Basic objectives of MoTD :

1. Legally pronounce death
2. Recover the Human remains
3. Establish the identity of the dead
4. Estimate the time of death
5. Determine the cause of death
6. Explain the possible circumstances leading to death
7. Prepare the remains for final disposal
8. Draw lessons from the event to aid in future prevention.

WHO, MoTD in disaster situations. 2004

Who is involved?

- Justice/Legal institutions,
- Investigative/Security institutions,
- Administrative institutions,
- Medical systems,
- Armed forces
- Emergency responders (civil protection, firefighters, emergency care teams).

Responsible for the investigation of disappearances, missing person cases and death investigations

Four phases of MoTD



Human Remains Recovery

Depending on the incident and where it happened, it can take days or even weeks for all the human remains and their property to be recovered.



Mortuary

The Mortuary phase is where human remains are examined by forensic specialists, and the recovery of the traditional Primary Identifiers is conducted to provide scientifically robust reference data that can be utilised to provide conclusive identification of a deceased person.



Missing Person Enquiry

The MPE phase is where the next-of-kin or family of a person suspected as being amongst the fatalities are interviewed.



Reconciliation, Repatriation and Disposition

Once the Mortuary data and MPE data have been collected and subjected to scientific analysis, a team of specialists, usually comprised of police, legal and forensic (termed as the Identification Commission), will consider each provisional identification made in relation to bodies and body parts.

Forensic Human Identification



THE FORENSIC HUMAN IDENTIFICATION PROCESS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

- “**Identification is a process** itself rather than a result of the use of a given technique”

- “The identification phase of the Search process is also of an investigative nature in which the collection of information from **different sources** is the basis for this reconstruction and the resulting conclusions”

quatrième niveau

- “Information will be compared as independent **lines of evidence**; each including comparable data from different information sources to confirm or refute a hypothesis formulated at the beginning of the identification process”

- “Even in simple cases, the identification must, where practicable, involve several lines of evidence **rather than relying solely on a single technique (i.e. fingerprints, dental, DNA, etc.)**”

- “The Search process must be **multi-disciplinary, objective, integrated, holistic, exhaustive, multi-agency coordinated, and able to withstand peer review**”

The ID PROCESS

Combines (**primary/scientific** and secondary methods):

- Visual Identification
- Medical History – unique medical conditions
- Unique or combination of multiple characteristics such as scars, marks and tattoos, etc.
- Circumstantial Evidence – Reports, testimonies, etc.
- **Fingerprints**
- **Odontology (Dentistry)**
- **Radiography (Imaging)**
- **DNA analysis**

The ID Process

First Responders/MLS

Body Recovery
and Collection
of Information

Dead Bodies
Identification Form

Postmortem
Information

Forensic
Match

Families

Reports of the
Disappearance

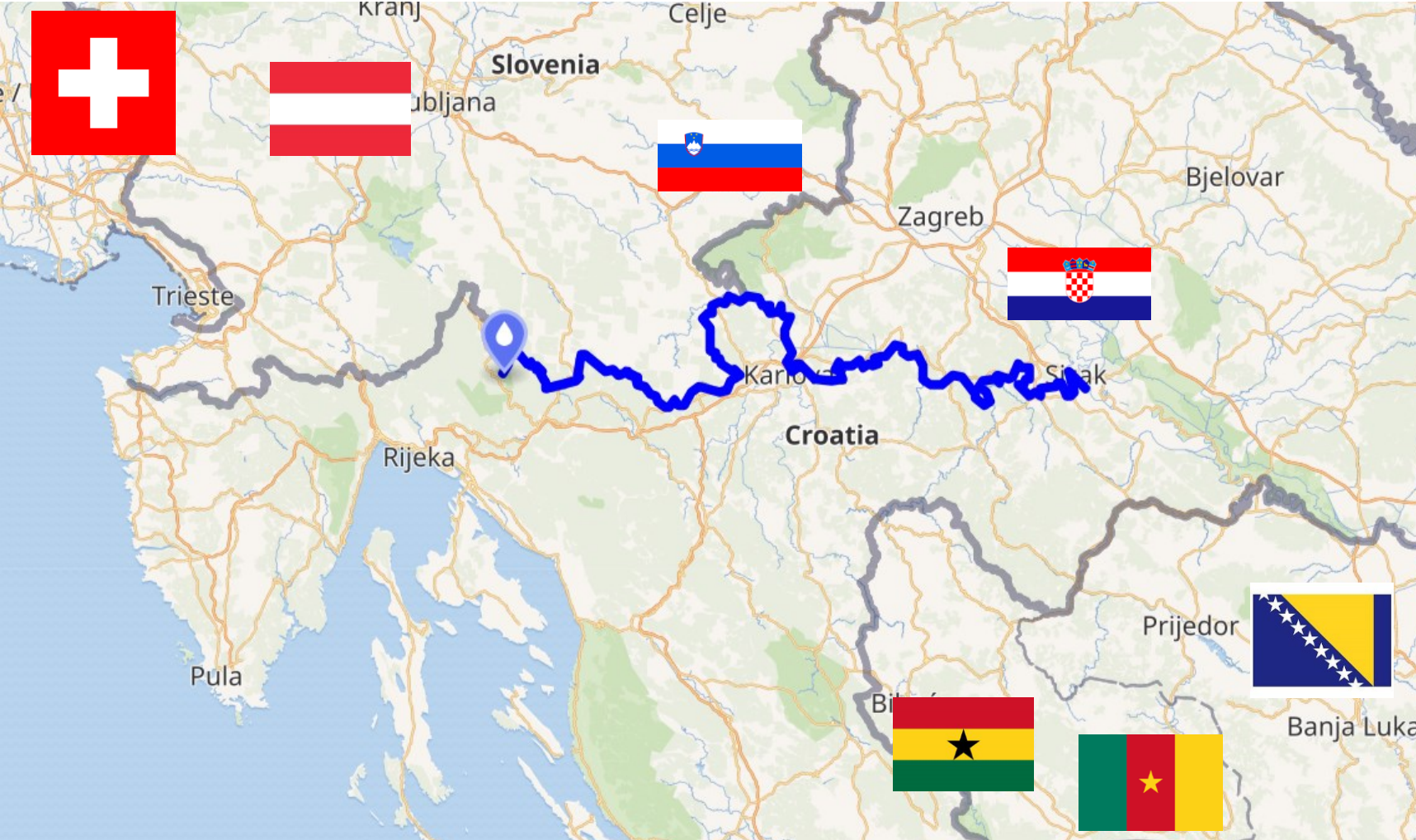
Missing Persons
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Information

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**Thank you for your kind
attention!**

Questions?



Exemple pratique d'identification d'une personne migrante disparue et leçons apprises

Situation d'un fils camerounais / Situation of a son from Cameroun

Une mère d'origine camerounaise vivant en Suisse a contacté notre service car elle a été contactée par un homme ghanéen et une dame camerounaise qui se trouvent tous deux dans un camp de réfugiés en Bosnie. Les deux ont entendu que **son fils de 18 ans est décédé en essayant de traverser une rivière entre la Croatie et la Slovénie ou près d'un village en Bosnie.**

Son fils Adou aurait dû commencer ses études au Cameroun. Contre sa volonté, il a décidé de quitter le Cameroun et faire le voyage jusqu'en Europe.

Après **132 emails** et un nombre important d'appels avec les parties prenantes impliquées, le corps d'Adou a pu être identifié et ses cendres ont pu être remises à sa mère.

A mother of Cameroonian origin living in Switzerland contacted our service because she had been contacted by a man from Ghana and a Cameroonian woman who were both in a refugee camp in Bosnia. Both had heard that **her 18-years old son had died trying to cross a river between Croatia and Slovenia or close to a town in Bosnia.**

Her son Adou was due to start university in Cameroon. Against his will, he decided to leave Cameroon and make the journey to Europe.

After **132 e-mails** and many different calls with all different parties, Adou's body was identified and his ashes given to his mother.

Du signalement d'une personne disparue à l'identification

01.05.2020	Dernières nouvelles du fils
14.07.2020	Information par d'autres migrants que son fils a disparu dans la rivière Kupa ou en Bosnie
15.07.2020	Prise de contact de la famille avec la CR suisse
20.07.2020	Demande aux CR de la région sur les possibilités de recherche et des événements possibles le long de la rivière Kupa => Info reçue que la rivière marque la frontière entre la Slovénie et la Croatie
20.07.2020	Information de la CR suisse à la police fédérale sur le cas
27.07.2020	RDV avec la famille à la police locale pour renseigner l'avis de disparition et prendre les informations AMD organisé et accompagné par la CR
28.07.2020	Transfert de la demande en Croatie via les canaux Interpol par la police fédérale (Fedpol)
30.07.2020	Demande d'Ante Mortem Data aussi envoyée aux collègues Croix-Rouge (CR) en Croatie
19.08.2020	Recommandation à la famille de s'organiser un soutien psychologique
17.09.2020	Information de la CR croate que le corps a été identifié, transfert de cette information à la police
23.09.2020	Confirmation de la police sur l'identification
09.2020 - 03.2021	Nombreux échanges pour résoudre les difficultés du transfert de l'urne
05.03.2021	Avocat confirme la crémation du corps le 09.03.2021
03.2021	Transfert de l'urne par les pompes funèbres
23.03.2021	L'urne est remise à la mère en Suisse
2024	Après avoir gardé les cendres chez elle pendant des années, elle a décidé de les enterrer dans le cimetière de sa commune de résidence
2025	Demande d'un certificat de décès après rencontre avec la famille pour une évaluation de notre service. La Croix-Rouge croate était contacté récemment à ce sujet.



From reporting a missing person to identification

01.05.2020	Last news of son
14.07.2020	Information through other migrants who knew the son saying that he disappeared in the river Kupa or in Bosnia
15.07.2020	First contact of the family with the Swiss Red Cross
20.07.2020	Request to regional Red Crosses about the possibilities of search along the river Kupa=> Info received that Kupa is at the border between Slovenia and Croatia
20.07.2020	Information about the case of the Swiss Red Cross to the Swiss Federal Police
27.07.2020	Appointment of the mother at local police for the missing person report and collection of the AMD information, accompanied by the Swiss Red Cross
28.07.2020	Transfer of the request AMD to Croatia via channel Interpol and the Federal Police (Fedpol)
30.07.2020	Request Ante Mortem Data also sent to colleagues of the Croatian Red Cross
19.08.2020	Recommendation to the family to organize a psychological support
17.09.2020	Information to the Croatian Red Cross that the body has been identified, transfer of this information to the police
23.09.2020	Confirmation of the police about the identification
09.2020 - 03.2021	Numerous contacts made to resolve the difficulties of transferring the urn
05.03.2021	Lawyer confirms the cremation of the body on 09.03.2021
03.2021	Transfer of the urn via the undertaker
23.03.2021	The urn is in the hands of the mother in Switzerland
2024	After keeping the urn at her home for several years, the mother decided to bury them in the cemetery of her commune of residence
2024	Request for a death certificate after meeting with the family for an assessment. The Croatian Red Cross was recently contacted on this subject.

Bonnes pratiques autorités / Good practices authorities

Au niveau national:

- Groupe de travail national établi (par Engagement Croix-Rouge) et rencontre régulières
- Analyse des cas/demandes concrètes
- Compréhension approfondie sur le fonctionnement des autres parties prenantes (par exemple Yellow Notice, I-Familia)
- Identification des points focaux dans chaque organisation (par exemple les Bureaux centraux nationaux d'Interpol auprès des Polices nationales)

Au niveau local:

- Information des forces de l'ordre par la fiche d'information nationale
- Préparer les autorités locales pour l'entretien, clarifier qui fait quoi entre avis de disparition, prélèvements ADN etc.

On national level:

- National working group established (through pledge of the RC conference)
- Analysis of concrete requests/cases
- Deep comprehension about the way of working of the other stakeholders (e.g. Yellow Notice, I-Familia)
- Identification of focal points in each organization (e.g. the National Central Bureaux of Interpol at the national police)

On local level:

- Information of all police staff members through national information sheet
- Prepare local police for the interviews, clarify who is doing what (missing persons report, taking DNA samples etc).

Bonnes pratiques pour les familles / Good practices for the families

- Accueil/Information/Préparation de la famille => Entretien et fiche d'information
- Prise de décision libre sur le choix des voies de recherches
- Accompagnement de la famille à la police (incl. interprétariat)
- Recommander/aider à organiser un soutien psychologique
- Coopération avec d'autres acteurs/trices

Pour les familles qui ne trouvent pas:

- Etre à l'écoute de leurs besoins
- Organiser des espaces d'échange (groupes de parole, événements)
- Proposer aux accompagnants l'E-Learning sur la perte ambiguë (*Ambiguous Loss*)

- Welcome/Information/Preparation of the family => Meeting and information sheet
- Free decision of the family to choose the way of tracing
- Accompany the family to the police (incl. Interpreter)
- Recommend/Help organizing a psychological support
- Cooperation with other involved stakeholders

For the families who do not find:

- Listening to their needs
- Organizing events for exchange between the families
- Propose to accompanying persons the E-Learning

"Ambiguous Loss"

11.07.2025
Rabat Process Banjul 2025
22



Exemple de sentiments avant de trouver ou avoir une identification

Example of feelings before finding or having an identification

"Si seulement je savais qu'il était mort. Je pourrais ainsi pleurer pendant un mois, mais ensuite avancer dans la vie. Maintenant, je pense toujours : Où est-il? A-t-il faim ou est-il malade ? Est-il en prison ou me cherche-t-il aussi?".

(Magda, 31 ans, Éthiopie)

« If only I would know that he is dead. I could cry during months but then go ahead with life.

Now, I am always thinking: Where is he? Is he hungry or sick? Is he in prison or is he also searching? »

(Magda, 31 years, Ethiopia)



Sentiments APRES de trouver ou avoir une identification

Feelings AFTER finding or having an identification

Les mots nous manquent pour vous transmettre tous les remerciements que vous méritez suite à toutes les actions que vous avez entreprise depuis bientôt une année pour nous aider à la recherche puis au rapatriement de notre fils.

Nous allons pouvoir tourner une page de notre vie et c'est grâce à vous.

(Parents de Adou, 18 ans)

Words fail us when it comes to thanking you for all the work you have done over the past year to help us find and repatriate our son.

We're going to be able to turn a page in our lives, thanks to you.

(Parents of 18 years old Adou)

Informations utiles / Useful information

Plateforme du réseau RLF (informations, adresses mondiales, lien vers la plateforme Trace the Face, prévention, etc.)

www.familylinks.icrc.org

Resources on missing persons from the ICRC and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

[Missing Persons Global Response](#) | [Missing Persons Platform](#)

Pledge from International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent

Report Pledge 2019: [Dead migrants and information to their families – Statutory Meetings](#)

Pledge Report: 2024: [Report on pledge – Dead migrants and information to their families – Statutory Meetings](#)

New Pledge 2024-2028: [Missing and dead persons and information to their families in situations of armed conflict – Statutory Meetings](#)

Information about our cooperation work together with the authorities

[Giving families of missing migrants the right to know the fate of their relatives](#) | [Missing Persons Platform](#)

[Donner aux familles des migrants disparus le droit de connaître le sort de leurs proches](#)

ICRC Guidance on Management of Dead Bodies in Disaster

[Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders](#) | [Missing Persons Platform](#)

[Management of the dead under Islamic Law](#) | [Missing Persons Platform](#)

Service de recherches Croix-Rouge suisse / Swiss Red Cross Tracing Service

www.redcross.ch/recherches / www.redcross.ch/tracing

11.07.2025
Rabat Process Banjul 2025
25

Croix-Rouge suisse
Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz
Croce Rossa Svizzera 

JVAP Follow-up

Insights from the JVAP Database on
Preventing and Resolving Cases of
Missing Migrants



Implemented by



Rabat Process | Thematic Meeting

Bridging the gaps: Advancing cooperation on Missing Migrants in
the Rabat Process Region

Banjul, 9-10 July 2025



**Funded by
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JVAP Database

Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) is the result of the **2015 Valletta Summit**.

Contains **Projects** and **Policies** that are:

1. Related to at least one of the JVAP Domains
2. Implemented in or after 2015
3. Funded or sponsored by JVAP Partners



25,1 B

Funding



3464

Initiatives



848

Implementing
Organisations



59

Funding Partners



68

Countries of
Implementation



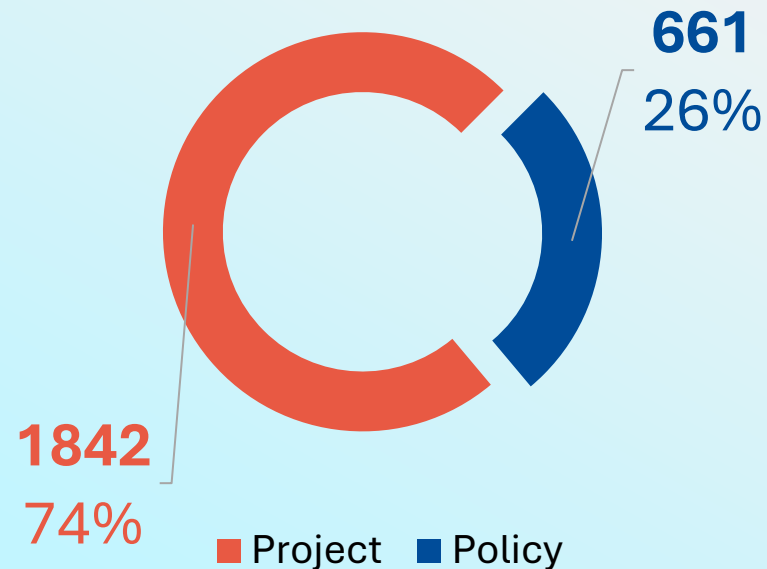
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Rabat Process Region Overview

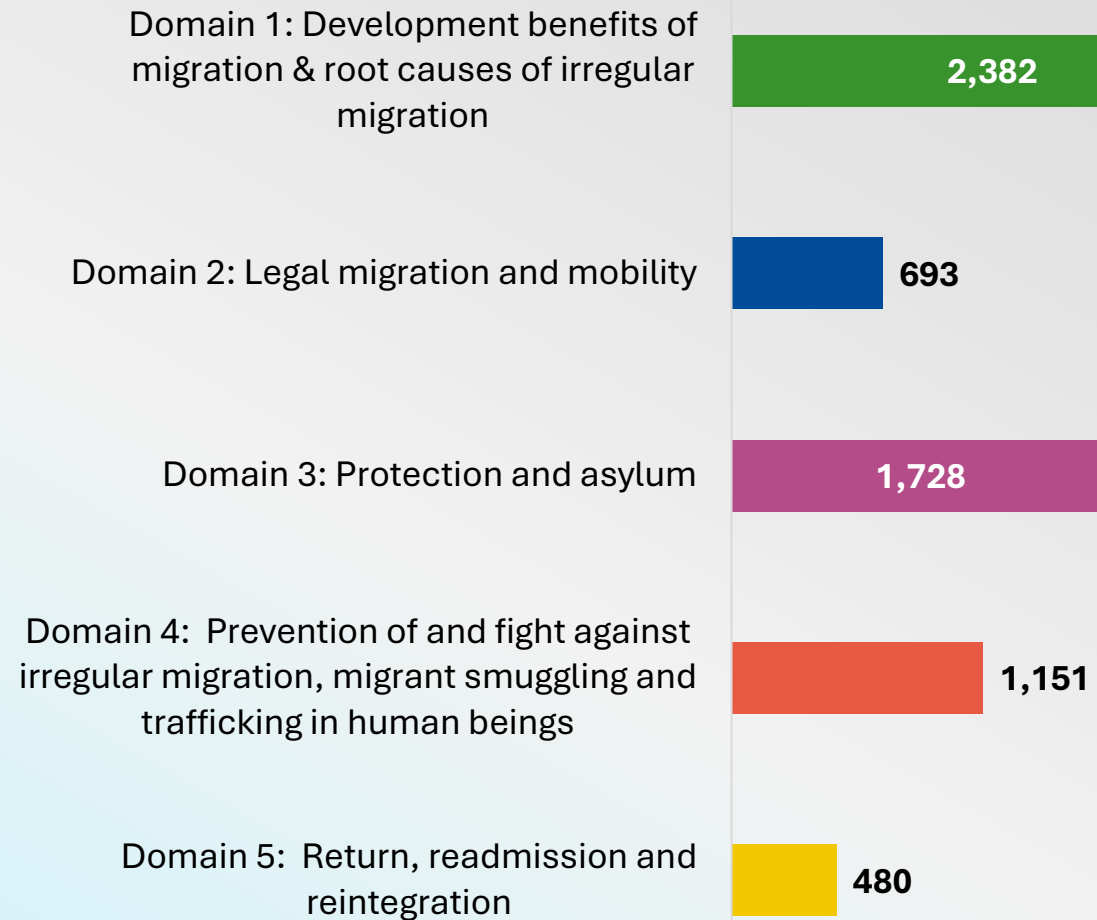
2503 Initiatives since 2015

EUR 14.5 bn Funding



Domain Allocation

(number of times an initiative was assigned to a Domain)



Context & Scope

JVAP database tracks **3,446 initiatives (2015–2024)**.

Only **32** address missing migrants.

€257.4 million mobilized.

4 structural gaps persist:

1. Fragmented data standards
2. Under-funded family services
3. Uneven route coverage
4. Short-term financing



Implementing Cádiz Action-Plan Objective 5b

Insights from the JVAP Database on Preventing and Resolving Cases of Missing Migrants (2015-2024)¹

Overview

The Rabat Process partner countries and key stakeholders meet in Banjul, The Gambia, against a sobering backdrop: in 2024 alone at least 9,002 people have died or gone missing along mixed-migration routes, the highest annual total since records began in 2014. Objective 5b of the Cádiz Action Plan – reinforced by Action 17 – commits partners to prevent such tragedies, locate and identify the missing and support their families. A review of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) database shows that 32 of the 3,446 recorded actions between 2015 and 2024 address at least one phase of this response chain and mobilise some €257.4 million. They have delivered measurable gains: desert and maritime search-and-rescue (SAR) corridors, new forensic laboratories, digitised civil registries and family-assistance centres. Yet four structural gaps persist – fragmented data standards, under-funded family services, uneven route coverage and short-term financing – all of which require attention in Banjul to consolidate progress into a coherent, route-based architecture.

Context and Purpose

The Rabat Process was founded on principles of solidarity and shared responsibility. Nearly two decades on, partners confront a humanitarian toll that underscores the urgency of those principles: every 58 minutes, on average, a person disappears while attempting to cross the Sahara, the Atlantic or the Mediterranean. The Banjul meeting is the first in-person gathering of formally appointed National Focal Points (NFPs) for Missing Migrants. Therefore, there is need for a concise, evidence-based picture of what has been undertaken to date under the JVAP framework, i.e. where resources are presently concentrated and which corrective measures can maximise impact in the next programme cycle. This analytical note distils 10 years of monitoring data into policy-relevant findings intended to inform both plenary debate and technical break-out sessions.

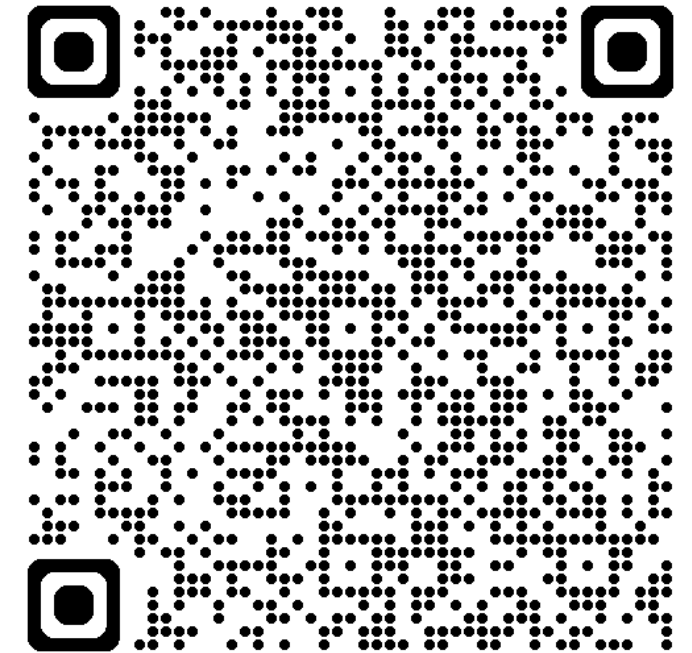
¹ This document was prepared by ICMPD's JVAP Follow-up Team and the Rabat Process Secretariat, with the support of artificial intelligence-enabled tools to assist in the analysis, drafting, and synthesis of data. All findings and interpretations remain the sole responsibility of the authors.



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↑ Link to Report ↑



← Link to Report

Key Findings

4 direct initiatives: SAR, forensics, tracing.

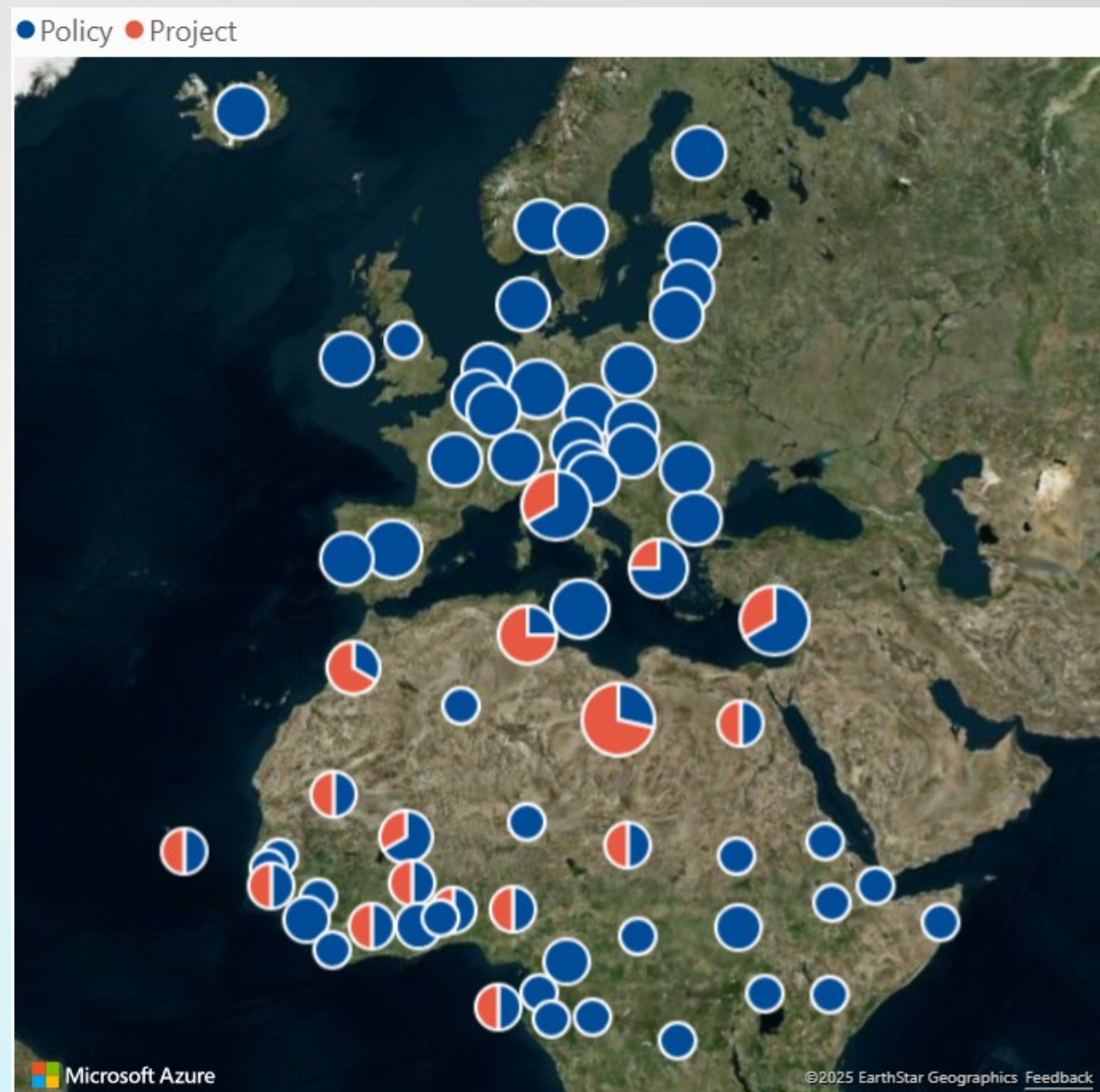
- SAR in Tunisia & Libya (x2)
- ICRC Family Tracing Programme in Chad
- ICMP Missing Migrants Initiative

28 indirect: anti-smuggling, civil registry, borders.

Most **focus on North Africa.**

Few target **family reunification or identification.**

Improvements can be made on **data and coordination.**



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← Link to Report

Recommendations

- ↔ Rebalancing **direct vs. indirect** efforts.
-  Promoting **cross-border cooperation**.
-  Investing in **forensic and tracing capacity**.
-  Integrating missing migrants into **protection systems**.
-  Using the JVAP Database to **scale up targeted responses**.



Photo credit: "EU Humanitarian Aid Flight: bringing relief to hard-to-reach villages in DRC" by EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, CC BY-ND 2.0



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Migration Policy Development

NEW Data Collection Underway

 **Deadline to enter data:** November 2025

What to do:

- 1 **Confirm** your contact point
- 2 **Register** on the platform
- 3 **Enter** or update your data

Why it matters:

We're taking stock of progress since 2023 to strengthen our shared knowledge and support better migration policy.

More info & tutorials:

Visit our website for full guidance and tools in English and French.





Implemented by



Thank You

www.jvapfollowup.org

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