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The rebordering of human mobility in the Atlantic: the risky maritime route between Morocco and Portugal

Susana de-Sousa-Ferreira¹

INTRODUCTION

In the Summer of 2020 the arrival of several boats with irregular migrants to the Algarve's shores, in Southern Portugal, framed a media discussion regarding the possibility of the emergence of a brand-new migratory route in the Atlantic. The Portuguese government immediately declined this possibility with the then foreign minister Santos Silva claiming that "one cannot speak of a route" of migration to the Algarve (Lusa, 2020). However, the 2021 Annual Internal Security Report talks about the El Jadida-Faro route (MAI, 2022, p. 53), referring to this novel migratory pattern identified in Portugal as a way to circumvent the tighter controls within the Atlantic and the West Mediterranean routes.

Moving beyond the assumption that a new migratory pattern has emerged connecting Portugal and Morocco by sea, this policy brief focuses on the mobility of borders, exploring the rebordering of human migration at sea. Thus, mapping migratory patterns across regions allows us to understand why, how and where borders are

¹ Lecturer at Universidad Complutense de Madrid and FLAD Atlantic Security Award Fellow 2021.

moving at sea. By focusing on the shifting geographies of mobility that led to the emergency of a new migratory pattern, this policy brief will address in detail the rebordering process in the Atlantic, highlighting the major risks associated to migrants' human security within this unique migratory corridor.

Irregular migration within the maritime domain has been framed as a threat and treated with suspicion by European states and the global North in general. The focus on the 'uncontrollability' character of this phenomenon and their connections to criminal activities has prevailed in the political discourses and translated into the enactment of urgent deterrence measures, addressing it within a logic of securitisation. Oftentimes the prevailing response by Western countries has been to 'prevent' or 'fight against' irregular migration posing it as a 'plague' that needs to be eradicated. A conceptualisation that prevents migrants from seeking international protection and repeatedly averts a humanitarian approach to irregular movements.

This policy brief aims to contribute to the discussion on the human security dimension of migration policies including the maritime domain, as well as to unpack the politics of mobility and provide evidence on the human security risks migrants face during the migration process. This document is based on the results of a research project entitled "The transformation of border regimes in the Atlantic. From securitisation to a human-centred approach in South-Western Europe", undertaken in the framework of the FLAD Atlantic Security Award that I was granted in 2021. The research presented stems from a literature review from theoretical contributions on human security, securitisation and migration management, conducted along with a documentary analysis of policy documents, reports and databases. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were held with major stakeholders and migrants in Senegal, Spain (particularly in the Canary Islands) and Portugal, along with participant observation. In this sense, the field work carried out has been critical to improve the understanding on the complexity of the phenomenon – the externalisation of migration policies within the context of the Atlantic migratory route – and contribute with insights to a transformative approach to migration management in this region.

The policy brief is structured in four parts. The first one aims to frame the analysis within the externalisation process undertaken by the European Union (EU) and its Member States. The second part offers a snapshot of migration within the North Atlantic, focusing on the “Portuguese phenomenon”. The third part is dedicated to the implications of these journeys to human security, which stem from the dangers of the seascape to human rights abuses throughout the journey. The fourth and last part explores some of the key challenges and considers the key findings and its implications to advance political recommendations.

THE EXTERNALISATION OF MOBILITY AND BORDER POLICIES IN THE EU

Modern borders have become spaces of tension and coexistence between different mobility and governance experiences. Borders are now everywhere and are dynamic, fluid and permeable. Day-to-day border control and surveillance practices involve systems of scanning and sorting, which allow constant surveillance of large spaces and regions. State-of-the-art technologies play a central role in creating border security processes that work as deterrence devices, which operate as instruments of anticipation and pre-decision. Nevertheless, despite the state-of-the-art border infrastructures created around the European Union to deter irregular movements, migrants continue to risk their lives in increasingly more dangerous journeys to reach the EU’s territory.

In recent decades, we have witnessed a trend towards the externalisation of controls that make borders omnipresent, in an exercise that allows to expand the extension of the control, both in its spatial and institutional dimensions. These processes of externalisation involve the implementation of measures by States beyond their borders, in order to prevent or limit the arrival of foreigners to destination countries. These practices have been developed by the EU Member States in collaboration with third countries through the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements, such as the agreement signed between Portugal and Morocco in January 2022 regarding employment and working conditions for Moroccans. These policies have made it

possible to reduce the number of migrants who effectively reach the EU and its Member States, while the routes have become increasingly more dangerous and clandestine, which entails a great humanitarian cost.

Thus, recent critical border and security studies have questioned modern security logics and practices and offer an approach based on the safeguarding of human rights and international norms that result in border humanization processes (Ferreira, 2022, p. 32). The advent of sea route that directly connects Morocco and Portugal, so far through the link El Jadida-Faro, has to be read in this framework of border externalisation and requires a holistic approach to address the major risks posed by such a route through open sea.

MAPPING MIGRATION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC BASIN

Increasing recognition of the shifting patterns of migratory flows highlight the capacity of adjustment and adaptation of migrant smugglers and migrants, as well as the growing interconnection between the routes. To grasp the emerging phenomenon of the irregular migration route to Portugal, one needs to consider it within the wider and deeply studied context of irregular migration routes to the EU.

Today's complex migration dynamics can undergo significant variations in short periods of time, as highlighted by Table 1 with regards to the dynamics within maritime and land migration routes to the EU over the last 13 years.

TABLE 1. Evolution of irregular migratory routes to the EU

Year	Atlantic route	% of arrivals	Western Med.	% of arrivals	Central Med.	% of arrivals	Eastern Med.	% of arrivals	Total arrivals
2009	2,244	3.81%	6,642	11.23%	10,236	17.32%	39,975	67.64%	59,097
2010	196	0.35%	5,003	8%	1,662	2.65%	55,688	89%	62,549
2011	340	0.27%	8,448	6.76%	59,002	47.27%	57,025	45.68%	124,815
2012	174	0.32%	6,397	11.8%	10,379	19.15%	37,224	68.71%	54,174
2013	283	0.39%	6,838	0.94%	40,304	55.8%	24,799	34.33%	72,224
2014	276	0.12%	7,243	3.16%	170,664	74.52%	50,834	22.19%	229,017
2015	874	0.08%	7,004	0.66%	153,946	14.7%	885,386	84.54%	1,047,210
2016	671	0.17%	9,900	2.65%	181,376	48.46%	182,277	48.7%	374,224
2017	421	0.2%	21,552	12.2%	118,962	67.51%	34,732	19.71%	175,667
2018	1,323	1.2%	54,820	49.4%	23,485	20.67%	34,014	29.93%	113,642
2019	2,718	2.6%	23,553	24.73%	14,003	13.18%	65,963	62.09%	106,237
2020	23,029	26.7%	17,132	19.9%	35,673	41.35%	10,431	12.09%	86,265
2021	25,498	17.3%	18,359	12.5%	70,759	48.02%	5,439	3.69%	120,055

Source: Own elaboration from Frontex data².

Key points regarding irregular routes to the EU

- In 2011, in the context of the Arab Spring, there is an upsurge in the number of maritime arrivals, mostly through Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes.
- The maximum number of detections upon arrival is registered in 2015, with nearly 1.1 million migrants arriving to the EU's shores.
- Following the so-called "Migrant Crisis" of 2015, the number of arrivals sharply decreased. Despite this abrupt reduction, there is still migratory pressure at the EU's borders, with detections always over 110 thousand per year, with the exception of the year 2020.
- The year 2020 is an exception in terms of migratory pressure, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with 86 thousand migrant detections. The measures adopted by Member States and the EU, such as lockdowns and the closure of the EU's borders, had a deep impact in the migratory flows.
- In 2018, the Western Mediterranean route registers the highest percentage of arrivals, with nearly 50% of the total arrivals. This will represent a "migratory

² At the time of writing, mid-February 2023, there is still no available data provided by Frontex regarding the year 2022.

crisis” for Spain, leading to the adoption of a set of mechanisms to detain these arrivals, among which the creation of a Regional Coordination Centre for the Strait of Gibraltar, similar to the one already in place in the Canary Islands.

- In 2020, the arrivals to the Canary Islands reach its highest number since the 2009 “Cayucos crisis”³, registering over 25,400 detections in this route.
- In that same year, 2020, the arrivals through the Atlantic and the Western Mediterranean routes account for 46,6% of the total arrivals through these routes to the EU.

In mid-2019 we started witnessing a significant surge in arrivals to the Canary Islands, with an increase of 106,4% between 2018 and 2019. In 2020 more than 23,000 people (figures vary in around 200 people in the data collected by IOM and the Spanish Ministry of Interior as can be seen in Table 2), more than eight times the number of the previous year.

This drastic rise in the Atlantic route made it the second most active route to Europe, only preceded by the Central Mediterranean route (see Table 1). Despite a small decrease, a similar trend was registered in 2021 with the arrival of over 22,300 people. The phenomenon of massive departures in Senegal is known as “Barça or Barsakh” (which in the Wolof – native – language means “Barcelona or Death”) (Alarm Phone, 2022).

³The arrival of over 30,000 migrants to the islands in 2006 became known as the “Cayucos crisis”, with migrants departing from countries southern of Western Sahara, mostly Mauritania and Senegal and with possible departures from Guinea Bissau. Factors such as the reinforcement of the borders of Ceuta and Melilla, the conflicts in several countries and the collapse of traditional fisheries, made the Canary Islands a privileged gateway to reach prosperous Europe. Several mechanisms at both bilateral and regional level were put in place to address this phenomenon, with a major focus on border control and repatriation with Mauritania and Senegal and the creation of the Canary Islands Regional Coordination Centre (Centro de Coordinación Regional de Canarias) which has ever since played a major role in coordinating migration management within this route (Ferreira & Rodrigues, 2019, pp. 125-126).

TABLE 2. The Atlantic Route to the Canary Islands

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Migrants arrivals	276	874	672	425	1,307	2,698	23,023 (IOM) 23,271 (Min. Int.)	22,316	15.082**
Boats arrivals	*	*	*	20	69	129 (IOM) 133 (Min. Int.)	745 (IOM) 759 (Min. Int.)	542	336**
Recorded migrant deaths	26	82	169	1	45	210	849	1,173	447***

Legend: * No available data ** Data from January to November 2022 *** Data from January to 11 December 2022

Source: own elaboration from IOM, Frontex and the Spanish Ministry of Interior data.

BOX 1. THE CHALLENGES OF DATA COLLECTION ON MIGRATION

The collection of data on migration is challenging, particularly when talking about clandestine movements. The majority of the data is collected by countries to support their own national legislative, policy and administrative requests. Thus, the gathering of information on migration may vary given the use of different definitions, criteria and parameters, which makes it problematic to disaggregate and/or compare data. Furthermore, the quality and value of the data also depends on the countries' or organisations' interest and efforts dedicated to data collection. Data analysis and comparison is therefore conditioned by all these elements in an attempt to bring together data collected by different actors.

Extensive data on the Atlantic route is scarce and the major sources of information are the Spanish Ministry of Interior, that publishes yearly and seasonal (at times quarterly other times monthly) reports on irregular migration available on its website; the Frontex Risk Analysis Reports that gather information on illegal border crossings at the EU's external borders, based on the detections done at the border crossing points; the IOM Flow Monitoring Report, that collects data from its different offices on border crossings and migratory movements; and, the IOM Missing Migrants Project

that collects data since 2014 on migrants who have died or gone missing at the external borders of states. Regarding the specific arrivals to Portugal the information is very limited and spread between different reports from SEF, to the Ministry of Home Affairs or even European reports on the national reality. However, this data is still not accounted for in European reports regarding migratory trends.

Overall, the various reports available provide data based on different types of criteria and data collection, sometimes even changing the procedures of data collection, which makes it more challenging to have an exact quantitative picture of the phenomenon. As can be observed in Table 1 and 2 there are variations in the data provided by the different actors, which does not give us a clear-cut picture of the phenomenon, rather an estimate of the number of arrivals and profiles.

The arrivals to the Portuguese shores, although not registered in Table 1 since they are not quantitatively significant (and have not been registered nor documented by European agencies, such as Frontex), take place in the period between December 2019 and November 2021. The first detection takes place in mid-December 2019⁴. Figure 1 highlights the points of interception of the vessels, which are very close to one another, concentrated mostly in the area between Faro and Olhão, in the Algarve, and a last boat which was rescued in the high seas. In the period between the end of 2019 and the year 2020, a total of 134 migrants reached the Portuguese shores. The Summer of 2020, in the middle of the pandemic and during the lockdowns, was the most intense period, with 4 boats rescued and the arrival of 78 people.

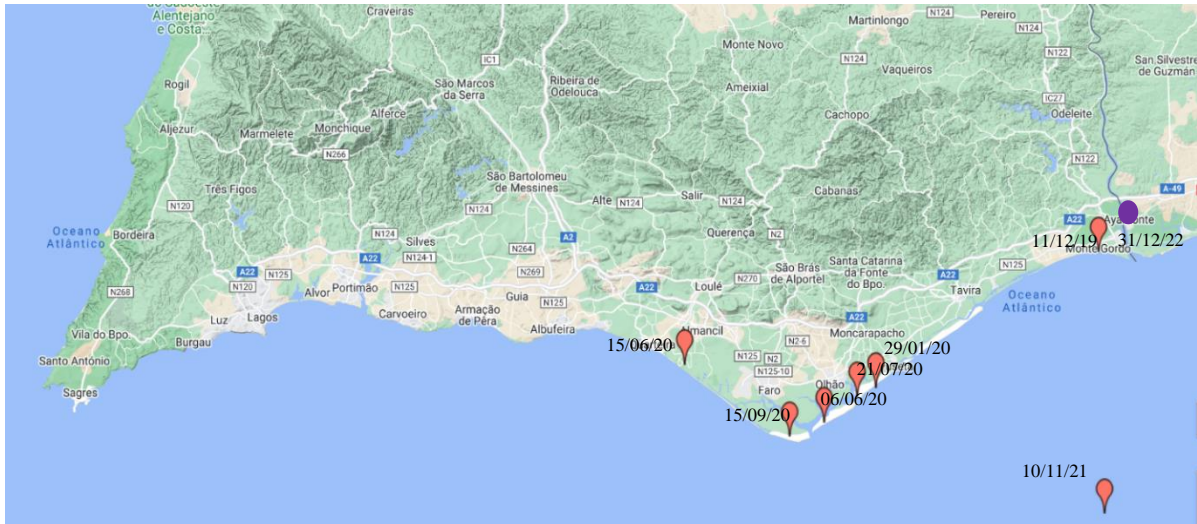
All the arrivals proceeded from El Jadida (former Mazagan⁵), in Morocco. Table 3 demonstrates that the number of boats at first (in the first three rescues) had a lower

⁴ There had been a first previous arrival in 2007, with the detection and rescue of 23 irregular migrants near the shores of the Algarve, coming from Morocco. This isolated event rose fears regarding the possibility of Portugal becoming a preferred destination for maritime migration, following the strengthening of border controls in the Spanish coast. Nevertheless, at the time, national authorities considered it a secluded event, considering that the boat aimed to reach the Spanish coast and had been deviated due to climacteric conditions (Ferreira, 2016, pp. 192-193).

⁵ This port city in the Atlantic coast of Morocco was built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and taken by Morocco in the 18th century.

number of people on board (between 7 and 11 people), but the following ones had a significantly higher number, ranging from 21 to 37, which also supposed a greater danger for the migrants themselves, as will be highlighted in the following section.

FIGURE 1. Rescue points of migrants in the Southern Portuguese shore



Source: Author's elaboration based on information from the media and interviews conducted with Portuguese and Spanish authorities.

TABLE 3. Irregular migrants arriving to the Portuguese shores

Date	Detection point	Number of migrants aboard	Vessels rescued
11/12/19	Monte Gordo	8	1
29/01/20	Ilha da Armona (Armona Island)	11	1
06/06/20	Ilha da Culatra (Culatra Island)	7	1
15/06/20	Vale de Lobo Beach	22	1
21/07/20	Ilha da Culatra (Culatra Island)	21	1
15/09/20	Ilha Deserta (Desert Island)	28	1
10/11/21	High seas	37	1
31/12/22	Vila Real Santo António	15	1
TOTAL		134 / 149	7

Source: Author's elaboration based on information from the media and interviews conducted with Portuguese authorities.

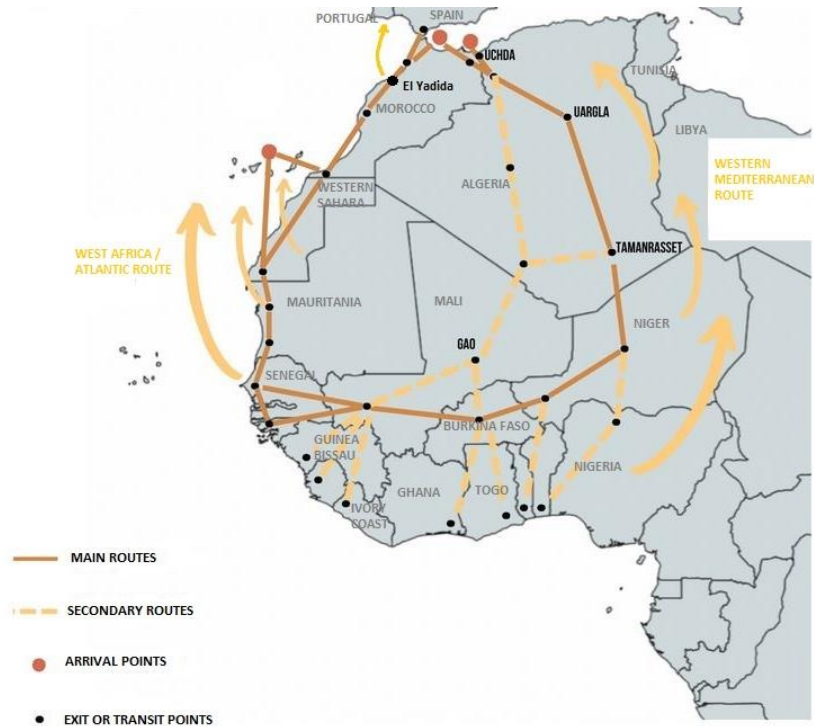
At the time of writing a new possible detection has been disclosed by the media and might have taken place on the 31st of December 2022 (highlighted in the map in Figure 1 and Table 3 with a different colour since it has not been confirmed by the

authorities). Surveillance videos attest that 15 individuals were on board. However, the national authorities have only received this information several days later (CNN, 2023).

Although the phenomenon seems rather insignificant in terms of figures and seemed to have come to an end until these last reported arrivals, it should be object of study and consideration by political and security entities (besides academics) since it could represent (as it seems that it might become active again now or in the future) a secondary migratory pattern within the Atlantic context, as a potential way to avoid the controls implemented by the EU and its Member States to halt migratory flows (particularly in the Canary Islands and the Western Mediterranean route). We could be talking about a sort of latent route, that can be activated if and when necessary.

Figure 2 illustrates the major migratory routes within the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean, with the inclusion of the route between Morocco (El Jadida) and Portugal as part of the secondary routes, highlighting the short distance between these two points.

FIGURE 2. Migratory routes along West Africa



Source: Adaptation from a map from Africa Mundi, prepared by Soraya Aybar to the International Centre for Migration Policy, Frontex.

The information recovered indicates that this new migratory pattern directly targets the points of arrival and is not an unintentional deviation from the typical route towards the Spanish coast (particularly the Western Mediterranean route), as often claimed by many authorities. Nevertheless, the arrivals along the border and the detections in high seas might obviously respond to this logic, as the first one in 2019 might suggest, the one of 2021 in high seas or the most recent one in January 2023, right at the border between Spain and Portugal, along the Guadiana river. All in all, despite possible “deviations” of some boats along the border (in this case accounting for 2 or 3 if we consider the rescue at high seas), evidence highlights that all those that disembark in the vicinity of Faro clearly aimed for that specific region. Sources consulted affirmed that after analyzing the navigation systems and the location points of the boat to reconstruct the route undertaken, the intentionality to reach the Portuguese shore can be clearly appreciated.

Furthermore, the rescue done in high seas on November 2021 might show a different modus operandi (MO). Migrants rescued claimed that they were on their way to Spain and the interception was done at a location that might point towards that possibility. This vessel was overloaded and the appearance and conditions of the people on board was not as severe as in previous disembarkations. The authorities consider that a logic of “support” is at the basis of this MO, transportation in larger vessels (cargo transport or larger ships) from the point of departure to a specific area in open seas, where they are left by their own means to reach the coast or being rescued. This aligns with a pattern used in other routes, which is the use of mother ships to support part of the journey. This logic brings forward the possibility of using different MOs in this route, but still has to be contrasted with further arrivals.

Questions arise about the lack of continuity of this route due to its infeasibility and even due to some possible failures in the attempts of departure which we might not be aware and others that are documented as aborted by the Moroccan authorities. Following the Summer of 2020, to encourage greater control of the Atlantic coast by Morocco, a bilateral cooperation agreement has been signed, which could have affected the practical viability of the route.

All things considered, the arrivals to the Portuguese shores demonstrate the possibility to cross the Atlantic with such precarious boats (without any specific electronic equipment apart from a mobile). However, the major issue that arises, besides its theoretical feasibility, is regarding its material viability, concerning the maintenance of a route with too many dangers and difficulties that poses a high risk for both migrants and smugglers.

In any case, although 7 (possibly 8) arrivals have been documented with a total number of 134 (that could increase to 149 with this last detection) individuals, national authorities have rapidly lost track of them. This seems to indicate that Portugal presents itself as a gateway, or a country of transit, rather than a host country for these migrants. The difficulty in locating them, due to their “disappearance”, has

not allowed us to find out their final destination and consult if it was decided from the starting point. Still, it is noteworthy to take into account the historical-cultural relationship between the harbor that has been identified as the place of departure, El Jadida, former Mazagan, harbor of Portuguese sovereignty during the Modern Age (1502-1769), and the possibility of envisaging Portugal as a possible reference and final destination.

The dynamics of the flows and the constant search for alternatives, where we include the arrivals to the Portuguese shores and the surge in migration within the Atlantic route lead us to reconsider the effectiveness of the management and migration system established in the EU with the support of third countries and the need to pay further attention to this phenomenon in Portugal.

Key drivers for the activation of the Morocco-Portugal route:

- STRUCTURAL DRIVERS:
 - Social, economic, and political factors.
 - Geopolitical factors and regional insecurity.
- CONJUNCTURAL DRIVERS
 - The Covid-19 pandemic that had led to lockdowns and the closure of the EU's borders.
 - Stricter border controls in Morocco and Spain, following greater cooperation between Spain and Morocco, in the aftermath of the 2018 migratory crisis in the Western Mediterranean route.
 - Significant decrease within the Eastern and Central Mediterranean routes and a detour towards the Western routes.
 - The absence of a devolution agreement between Portugal and Morocco, such as the one in place between Spain and Morocco.

Taking into account the aforementioned circumstances, the possibility of activating the El Jadida-Faro route has increased. As can be seen, the closure of borders on other

traditional routes has led to the rise of this new migratory pattern and the emergence of a direct migration from Morocco to Portugal through a sea route.

RISK DIMENSIONS FOR HUMAN SECURITY

The concept of human security provides a useful framework to analyse migratory pressure in the Atlantic, especially when referring to the crossing of open sea, since these departures have often caused many deaths and disappearances, while those who have reached their final destination did so facing major risks, human rights violations and structural violence. Therefore, increasing knowledge on the risks and dangers to human security of the crossing, as well as on the impact of the policies implemented is of essence to advance on public policies to promote orderly and safe migration.

The arrivals to the Portuguese shores should be a case of concern due to the humanitarian implications they have. Despite the low intensity of this route, which is (still) insignificant in the European framework, any arrival to the Portuguese shores should be a case for concern, given its humanitarian (apart from the political) consequences.

- Perilous journey across the Atlantic due to several factors, but mostly to the length of the journey. This journey takes between 50 to 69 hours to cross the nearly 450 kms that separate El Jadida from Faro. Depending on the tides and the preciseness of the navigation systems, the journey can be between 450 and 500 kms.
- The route includes the crossing of a major maritime hotspot, the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar, with hundreds of large vessels crossing this Strait daily.
- Death and possible missing migrants: those who die on the boats are taken off the edge.
- Risks associated to boat trips besides death: exposure to extreme weather conditions, lack of life jackets and many people who do not know how to swim, lack of supplies (water and food) in the boats, sunburns and gasoline burns due to the contact with water that mixes salt and gasoline waste.

- The conditions of the boats (see Box 2 on the typology of boats used for the crossing) in terms of structure and maintenance. Given the boat structure and the number of individuals on board, most likely the water comes over the edge of the boat. There is a risk of flooding the vessel or of shipwreck.
- Possible violence at the hands of smugglers.
- Sexual and/or gender-based violence during the journey.
- Migrant smuggling might turn into human trafficking.
- Tightening of border and migration controls across African countries, with a major impact on the safeguarding of migrants' rights and human security.

BOX 2. TYPOLOGY OF BOATS USED FOR THE CROSSING

Migrants have used different types of boats to cross the Atlantic, from small, undecked, shallow-bottomed wooden boats, known as “*pateras*” (“*barcaças*”), to “*cayucos*”, a larger wooden boat used for fishing in the high sea. The use of these distinct types of boats has represented the possibility to displace the points of departure further south along the Atlantic route. “When the *cayuco* enters the scene, there is a perception that it [the Canary Islands] can be reached from Mauritania or Senegal” (Pepe Naranjo interview in 2022). Some of these boats are 25 meters long and some arrived with nearly 260 people, making the journey extremely dangerous for all those on board.

Inflatable boats (*zodiacs*) are the privileged means to travel from Morocco (and Western Sahara) to the Canary Islands. Over the last years there has been a significant increase in the number of clandestine manufacturers of inflatable boats in Morocco destined for irregular migration (Otazul/EFE, 2019; EFE, 2020).

In the route between El Jadida and Faro the boats used are this first type mentioned, kind of small, shallow-bottomed wooden boats, the typical coastal fishing boats, 7 mts large and with low power engines. They all had jerricans with fuel on board, especially the first 4, which allowed covering the 450 to 500 km of the journey. The boats are

not equipped with any kind of electronic systems, apart from the mobiles carried by the migrants on board. This type of boat without electronic systems and small in size is very difficult to be detected by border surveillance systems such as SIVICC⁶.

CHALLENGES AND POLITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The arrivals to the Portuguese southern shores over the last years have demonstrated the possibility to cross the Atlantic through a route that connects Morocco and Portugal. Pepe Naranjo, journalist of El País, expert in Western Africa, stressed that “When the cayuco enters the scene, there is a perception that it [the Canary Islands] can be reached from Mauritania or Senegal” (Pepe Naranjo interview in 2022). Translating this quote to the Portuguese reality could it be said that “when the first boat enters the scene, there is a perception that Portugal can be reached from Morocco”? We should be prudent and vigilant on this regard, but not completely discard this option, especially if there is a change in the type of boats used for the journey and if a vessel more suitable for navigation on the high seas is used. Nevertheless, the activation of a route in the open-seas, such as the one that directly connects El Jadida-Faro, supposes a notable increase in the risk for the human security of migrants and has also led to a securitisation of the borders. It is possible to cross, but it is very risky.

Although Portugal has an advanced border surveillance system, SIVICC, it seems to have failed to detect in time the arrival of these boats and the capacity to implement an effective and rapid response. The boats rescued were sighted by the population who have called the authorities, that only later activated the corresponding response. Furthermore, if we recall the most recent case, on the last day of 2022, the authorities only became aware of the landing three days later, which shows that there is still an insufficient response and that there is no adequate monitoring of this phenomenon.

⁶ SIVICC stands for *Sistema Integrado de Vigilância, Comando e Controlo* (in English, Integrated Surveillance, Command and Control System) and is a high-tech border surveillance system managed and operated by GNR with both fixed and mobile observation points located across the coast to detect, locate and identify possible threats within the territorial sea.

It is noteworthy that, despite having been oblivious to the phenomenon of irregular migration by sea to its territory until 2019 (contrary to the reality lived by the Mediterranean countries and even Spain within its Atlantic coast, in the Gulf of Cádiz and the Canary Islands), Portugal has been active in all operations implemented by Frontex within the Mediterranean and even at a multilateral and bilateral level with Spain and third countries. This participation in joint operations has been very useful in terms of practical experience and knowledge acquisition. Nevertheless, experiencing this phenomenon “on the flesh” implies greater challenges and the need for a major internal and international coordination.

The study undertaken has revealed that there are still gaps in several areas, critical for a proper management of maritime migration flows, particularly one that takes into account a human security dimension. The following recommendations are considered to contribute to overcome these gaps and achieve a balance between migration management and border control:

1. Maintain active surveillance of migratory dynamics not only in the Atlantic area but throughout North Africa.
2. Increased cooperation with the European Union (and Frontex) at the multilateral level and with Spain at the bilateral level.
3. Intense exchange of information at different levels:
 - a. Between the different Portuguese authorities (regardless of the new configuration of the border control model in the country).
 - b. Both with Frontex and with Spain at a bilateral level for joint management if necessary.
 - c. With the authorities of the countries of the African Atlantic coast, to have an updated situation map.
4. Need for specific joint training on technical border surveillance systems between the responsible bodies in Portugal and Spain for detection and exchange of information with respect to small vessels on the high seas. The Portuguese authorities can benefit from the intense work carried out in this

aspect by the competent entities in this matter in Spain and other Member States.

5. Implementation of a coordination model that encompasses both the action of the responsible security forces, the entities responsible for the humanitarian response, together with foreign health/sanitation and other responsible administration and civil society entities. Taking advantage of synergies and mutual knowledge of the activities carried out contribute to a holistic response, which takes into account both national security and the migrant and the safeguarding of their human rights.
6. Involve all the administrations that may have a role in the management of these flows, such as affected town halls, educational centers, etc., for the coordination of the reception.
7. Greater transparency in the information made available to experts in the field of border control, migration and security in order to have the best possible diagnosis of the situation at all times and facilitate greater exchange and collaboration between academia, security forces and administration.
8. Need to create a network that brings together different relevant actors in the decision-making process, security forces, specialists and employees of international organizations and academics in the area, who work in the field of migration in the Atlantic area to establish a space for exchange, reflection and suggestion of public policies. This network will have as its *leitmotiv* to share experiences and good practices, in addition to creating new synergies between the various actors, promoting greater coordination between all parties and facilitating more fluid communication between specialists and civil society.

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