

MADAR Network CENTRAL MAGHREB

The Maghreb Action on Displacement and Rights (MADAR or مدار is the Arabic word for path) Network Plus aims to improve the humanitarian protection of vulnerable, displaced people in contexts of conflict in the central Maghreb region of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

"To promote the emergence of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensure universal access to justice, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels."



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Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

POLICY BRIEF Central Maghreb: Advocating for Inclusive Migration Policies

Context

The three countries of the Central Maghreb — Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia — have long been countries of emigration. However, over the past few decades, they have also become destinations and transit hubs for migration to Europe. Although Maghreb states have undertaken significant reforms to adapt their legislation and institutions to these evolving migration dynamics, their policies remain marked by deep contradictions. On the one hand, they respond to the demands of their European partners by enforcing strict border control measures. On the other, they must address domestic social and economic pressures, as well as humanitarian concerns.

While these policies remain **primarily driven by security objectives**, migrants face numerous violations of their fundamental rights, as well as violence and discrimination — all of which heighten their vulnerability and hinder their integration into these countries.

Recommendations

Given these realities, it has become urgent to rethink current approaches to migration management.

- **At the national level**, states should implement programs aimed at strengthening the **social, economic, and cultural integration** of migrants. Priority should be given to easing access to residency permits and employment opportunities, while also promoting public awareness campaigns to combat prejudice and foster acceptance of migrants among the local population.
- **At the regional level**: States should put an end to border deportation practices and establish **a regional coordination mechanism to manage migratory flows in full compliance with international law**.
- **At the international level**, considering the border externalization policies that promote a security-based approach to migration, it is urgent to foster a balanced partnership between the EU and Central Maghreb countries — one that is grounded in **the protection of migrants and the respect for their fundamental rights**.

MADAR Network in numbers

3 countries
of research

11 projects
carried out

400 qualitative
interviews conducted

1500
local, national, and
international stakeholders,
as well as displaced persons,
engaged in the region

4 years of
project
duration

20 workshops
and events
organized

1000 people surveyed
in quantitative studies

Statistical Annex:

Data on Foreign Populations Residing in the Maghreb

According to the United Nations, nearly 434,000 migrants (precisely 433,728) were residing in the three Central Maghreb countries in 2024. As detailed in the table below, this figure represents approximately 7% of the region’s total population and has not changed significantly over time. It has increased by only 18.2% since 1990 – over a span of 34 years – even though the so-called irregular migration did not become a significant phenomenon until the late 20th and early 21st centuries, when the Schengen Agreements on free movement within Europe came into effect.

As presented, the data does not distinguish between populations that are legally residing in the three countries, and populations with an irregular status. It is important to note a significant disparity in data availability across the three countries. Migration data appears to be more accessible in Morocco, with longer and more consistent time series. In contrast, data is very limited in Algeria, and increasingly difficult to obtain in Tunisia – particularly since the 2011 uprising and, more recently, following the Tunisian President’s speech in 2023. This discrepancy is reflected in each country’s policy brief, where migration-related data for Morocco is notably more abundant than for the other two countries.

Table 1: Foreigners residing in the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) – 1990/2024

Country	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2024
Algeria	273.954	262.023	250.110	197.728	217.268	239.473	250.378	259.458
Morocco	54.895	50.360	53.034	56.222	71.189	92.424	102.358	111.069
Tunisia	37.984	37.867	36.719	35.040	43.172	56.532	60.145	63.201

Source : UNDESA, 2024. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/international-migrant-stocks-overview>