About the report

The Horn of Africa and Yemen is one of the busiest and riskiest migration corridors in the world travelled by hundreds of thousands of migrants, the majority of whom travel in an irregular manner, often relying on smugglers to facilitate movement along the Eastern Route. This regional report provides monthly updates on the complex migratory dynamics through Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen and Ethiopia based on diverse data sources and consultations with key informants in the four countries. Moreover, it provides information on the main protection concerns for migrants along the journey, information on spillover effects of the conflict in the Sudan observed at the border with Ethiopia, a specific focus on children and information on the returns from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen.

Data sources:

- Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) data collected at flow monitoring points (FMPs), which includes flow monitoring registry (group level) and flow monitoring survey (individual level) data
- Migration Response Centre (MRC) data on migrants seeking assistance in Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia, including information on assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR)
- Voluntary humanitarian returns (VHR) from Yemen
- Returns from Saudi Arabia
- Missing Migrants Project (MMP) data on migrant deaths and disappearances (reporting based on those that could be verified)
Migrants surveyed in December 2023

- Migrant entries into Djibouti increased by 34% from November.
- While the number of spontaneous returns from Yemen decreased by 43% between November (505) and December (286), numerous migrants are still observed returning to Ethiopia in key transit locations, such as in Obock (813) or Tadjourah (390).
- Women and children still represent over one-third (35%) of all entries and more than one in ten (14%) children were travelling alone (all boys).
- Stranded migrants decreased by 14% since November (from 838 to 718), with women (23%) and children (19%) representing around two-fifths (42%) of stranded migrants.
- Although migration through Djibouti continues to be predominantly economic, most of those departing from the Somali region of Ethiopia were migrating due to natural disasters (58%), while almost two fifths of those departing Amhara were fleeing conflict (18%).
- IOM carried out two AVR convoys in which 133 people received voluntary assistance to return to their place of origin. Due to the renewed conflict in northern Ethiopia, much of Amhara and Tigray are inaccessible and return of migrants to these regions is suspended.

### Entries into Djibouti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative 2023</th>
<th>138,196</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entries December 2023</td>
<td>12,467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sex & Age Group**
- Men: 65%
- Women: 31%
- Boys: 3%
- Girls: 1%

**Region of Origin**
- Oromia (ETH): 36%
- Amhara (ETH): 31%
- Tigray (ETH): 27%

**Intended Destination**
- Saudi Arabia: 43%
- Yemen: 32%
- Djibouti: 25%

### Spontaneous Returns from Yemen to Djibouti

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative 2023</th>
<th>6,044</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Returns December 2023</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sex & Age Group**
- Men: 94%
- Women: 5%
- Boys: 1%
- Girls: 0%

### Migrants Seeking Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative 2023</th>
<th>2,845</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRC registrations December 2023</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sex & Age Group**
- Men: 79%
- Women: 10%
- Boys: 9%
- Girls: 2%

| None reported | Dead/missing migrants December 2023 | 718 |
Migration Through Somalia

- Migrant entries into Somalia increased by 7% from November.
- Ethiopian community centers reported that around 1,250 migrants entered the Somaliland region.
- 3,131 Ethiopian migrants were observed transiting through Bossaso, the main departure point before crossing the Gulf of Aden towards Yemen, in the regions of Sanaag and Buuhoodle.
- The number of stranded migrants (5,955) remained similar (-2%) to November (6,080), with women (22%) and children (13%) representing over a third (35%) of the stranded migrants. Notably, all stranded migrant children were unaccompanied.
- Some migrant women in Harirad have reported encountering many challenges on their journey, such as pregnant women who felt sick after travelling long distances in overcrowded vehicles. Some other migrants have reported lack of food and shortage of water during their trips as most of the water sources are dry.
- 39 Ethiopian migrants received AVR assistance to return to Addis Ababa, while many more requested the service but were unable to receive it due to funding constraints. Twelve of the most vulnerable were referred to safe houses and await AVR in the next convoys.
- Stranded migrants in Bossaso continue to seek assistance at the MRC. The migrants reported being deceived by smugglers who promised them jobs in Bossaso and easy passage to Yemen, only to endure harsh journeys and encounter job scarcity in transit. Over half (55%) of people at MRCs were children and one-third (31%) of children were unaccompanied. Female migrants reported a higher proportion of movement due to economic reasons (72%) compared to male migrants (54%) and similarly for conflict reasons (12% vs. 5%).

Entries into Somalia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative</th>
<th>19,459</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entries</td>
<td>1,845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex &amp; Age Group</th>
<th>Region of Origin</th>
<th>Intended Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40% Men</td>
<td>Somali (ETH)</td>
<td>Somalia (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29% Women</td>
<td>Oromia (ETH)</td>
<td>Djibouti (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15% Boys</td>
<td>Dire Dawa (ETH)</td>
<td>Yemen (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16% Girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Note: Flow monitoring activities in Somalia were suspended from March to October 2022 and from March to April 2023. To address the gap in 2022, the Regional Data Hub built a predictive model estimating the missing data (auto-regressive integrated moving average – ARIMA). |

Spontaneous Returns from Yemen to Somalia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative</th>
<th>651</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Returns</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex &amp; Age Group</th>
<th>Region of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38% Men</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23% Boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14% Girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Migrants surveyed in December 2023 | 1,034 |
| Access to services | 26% |
| Economic reasons | 25% |
| Marriage/family reunification | 23% |

Migrants Seeking Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cumulative</th>
<th>3,841</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRC registrations December 2023</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MRC Location</th>
<th>Sex &amp; Age Group</th>
<th>Hardships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hargeisa</td>
<td>28% Men</td>
<td>Lack of basic services 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bossaso</td>
<td>17% Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32% Boys</td>
<td>23% Girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None reported</td>
<td>Dead/missing migrants December 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5,955 Stranded migrants December 2023
December observed a 15% increase in migrant arrivals in Yemen.

This increase is attributed to the increase of migrants departing Djibouti, which increased by 21% from November (400 to 482) and due to migrants departing from Somalia, which increased by 12% (1,065 to 1,197). Arrivals in Yemen from Somalia have been higher than those from Djibouti for the fourth consecutive month.

The new migration trend observed in November continued, whereby to avoid coast guards, boats departing from Djibouti travel around 450 km eastwards from the Bab el-Mandeb Strait towards the Gulf of Aden before disembarking along the Shabwah coast. However, for the first time since October, there were also migrant arrivals at the Lahj coast (110).

It was also reported that local authorities along the Lahj coast intensified their presence to pursue smugglers’ boats, arrest smugglers who assisted in transporting migrants, and raid their properties. The increased presence of authorities continues in Lahj governorate, which used to receive a high number of migrants from Djibouti before August 2023.

Migration drivers for migrants arriving in Yemen from the Horn of Africa have seen a shift since September 2023. Before then, the main drivers were economic reasons, mainly due to the major influx of economic migrants arriving from Djibouti. However, since September, movements due to conflict increased significantly in proportion (from 25% in August to 50% in September) and increased even more since October (78%). This may be due to the new trend observed since September when fewer migrants arrived from Djibouti, which has historically observed more arrivals due to economic reasons than those from Somalia. It is important to note that the overall figures of arrivals from Somalia remain historically consistent and the decrease in absolute arrivals from Djibouti may explain the shift in the proportion of migration drivers since September. In December, most migrants arriving in Yemen were fleeing conflict (73%) or in search of better economic opportunities (27%).

The proportion of women and children increased from 42% in November to 46% in December. Particularly relevant has been the increase in boys (+113%) and girls (+27%) in the last month.

Following the announcement of the resumption of VHR, there has been a significant influx of Ethiopian migrants from Shabwah governorate to Marib – approximately 50 to 80 per day. Migrants have walked long distances with limited access to food and water.

Partners reported interactions with migrants who lacked awareness of the Yemen context, including the hazards at the departure point in Obock.

Migrants continued to be targeted and killed while crossing international borders. IOM and partners have supported with cash for protection to cover medical follow-up costs, transportation, and other necessary basic needs.

In December, 280 migrants returned voluntarily to Ethiopia through the IOM VHR programme, of whom almost half were women (21%) and children (24%). All were offered pre-departure support including accommodation and counselling.

### Arrivals in Yemen from the Horn of Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Sex &amp; Age Group</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Intended Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Men 54%</td>
<td>Ethiopia 79%</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Women 24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys 11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls 11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cumulative 2023: 96,670

Arrivals December 2023: 1,679

January 2023: 1,679

February 2023: 1,309

March 2023: 1,060

April 2023: 1,044

May 2023: 1,035

June 2023: 1,039

July 2023: 965

August 2023: 1,092

September 2023: 1,161

October 2023: 1,090

November 2023: 1,050

December 2023: 1,031

### Stranded migrants

December 2023: 40,000

### Dead/missing migrants

December 2023: Under verification
Only 61 respondents surveyed from Tigray.

Migration Through Ethiopia

Exits out of Ethiopia

Cumulative 2023
310,681

Migrant exits from Ethiopia December 2023
24,998

Sex & Age Group

- 65% Men
- 28% Women
- 4% Boys
- 3% Girls

Region of Origin

- Oromia (ETH) 32%
- Amhara (ETH) 26%
- SNNP (ETH) 12%

Intended Destination

- Saudi Arabia 67%
- Djibouti 16%
- Somalia 10%

Note: Tigray (ETH) 12%

Migration Drivers

- Economic reasons 75%
- Climate and environment 9%
- Conflict/violence/persecution 8%

Intended Destination

- Saudi Arabia 52%
- Kenya 16%
- Djibouti 7%

Migrants surveyed in December 2023

- 764 Surveyed migrants exiting Ethiopia December 2023

- 69% Men
- 28% Women
- 1% Boys
- 2% Girls

Migration Drivers

- Economic reasons 73%
- Conflict/violence/persecution 86%
- Access to services 94%
- Education or training 94%
- Climate and environment 94%
- Marriage/family reunification 71%
- Other 71%

1 Only 61 respondents surveyed from Tigray.
### Migrants Seeking Assistance

**Cumulative 2023**

- **29,869** MRC registrations

**MRC Location**

- **Metema** 91%
- **Dire Dawa** 5%
- **Moyale** 2%
- **Togochale** 2%

**Sex & Age Group**

- **Men** 49%
  - **Boys** 14%
- **Women** 26%
  - **Girls** 11%

**Hardships**

- **Lack of basic services** 52%
- **Physical/psychological abuse** 46%
- **Imprisonment/detention** 2%

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### Impact of the Sudan Conflict Along the Border with Ethiopia

#### Metema Border Point

- **Exits**
  - **230** Migrant exits from Ethiopia December 2023
- **Surveyed migrants exiting Ethiopia December 2023**
  - **32**
- **84%** Cumulative 2023

- ** Entries**
  - **7,142** Migrant entries into Ethiopia December 2023
  - **319** Surveyed migrants entering Ethiopia December 2023
  - **87%**

- **Migration Drivers**
  - **Conflict/violence/persecution** 6%
  - **Economic reasons** 3%
  - **Other** 91%

#### Kurmuk Border Point

- **Exits**
  - **315** Migrant exits from Ethiopia December 2023
  - **4** Surveyed migrants exiting Ethiopia December 2023
  - **69%** Cumulative 2023

- **Entries**
  - **929** Migrant entries into Ethiopia December 2023
  - **6** Surveyed migrants entering Ethiopia December 2023
  - **100%**

- **Migration Drivers**
  - **Marriage/family reunification** 50%
  - **Conflict/violence/persecution** 25%
  - **Access to services** 25%

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*Note: A new flow monitoring point was established in Kurmuk on 11 May 2023 to increase coverage.*
Migrant Children Along the Eastern Corridor

**394**
Migrants surveyed who are caring for children (17% of all respondents) December 2023

- Travelling with children: 21%
- Having children in the country of intended destination: 28%
- Who left children behind in the country of origin: 50%
- Caretakers of migrant children not travelling with the migrant parent: 45%
- My spouse/partner: 45%
- My older children (18 and over): 28%
- Grandparents or extended family: 23%

**Returns from Saudi Arabia**

**6,278**
Returns December 2023

**109,382**
Cumulative 2023

Region of intended return in Ethiopia 2023

- Amhara: 35%
- Oromia: 34%
- Tigray: 26%
- SNNP: 3%
- Afar: 1%

Note: From December 2021 to February 2022 and from September to October 2022, returns to Ethiopia were suspended due to the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Returns were again suspended from early April 2023 for unspecified reasons and resumed in October 2023. IOM has only partial information on returns to Somalia for 2023 and data were not available for December 2023.