

# EAST & HORN OF AFRICA COVID-19 SITUATION REPORT - #39

08 JANUARY 2021 Update



## EHoA SITUATION OVERVIEW

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At the start of 2021, the number of people infected with COVID-19 in East & Horn of Africa is continuing to rise. Migrants, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), are among some of the world's most vulnerable communities likely to be affected by the disease. Migrants are more likely to be exposed to the conditions and circumstances in which COVID-19 spreads, which includes living in poorer and makeshift conditions, or overcrowded settings. Migrant groups are also less likely to have access to medical care, hygiene, and access to COVID-19 'preventatives' like Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and the COVID-19 vaccines.

As a result of the pandemic, thousands of migrants are stranded across the East and Horn of Africa due to movement and mobility restrictions, including air, land and sea border closures, and quarantine rules. Many are in need of food, water, medical assistance, transport, counselling and psycho-social support. Migrants also continue to experience involuntarily return to their countries of origin. Some migrants are experiencing detention, and facing abuse in such facilities. Others are facing stigma and xenophobia, resulting from being blamed for the spread of the disease.

IOM is supporting governments throughout the region to respond to COVID-19 in the areas of risk communication, disease surveillance, infection prevention and control, case management, 'Points of Entry' (PoEs), procurement and logistics, and in other areas. IOM is advocating for migrants, including IDPs, to be included in all government responses to COVID-19, as well as the roll out of COVID-19 vaccines. IOM launched a regional appeal for the East and Horn of Africa for \$71.6M in April 2020, to meet the many needs of these communities.

Link to the EHoA COVID-19 appeal document: <https://ronairobi.iom.int/publications/iom-east-and-horn-africa-strategic-and-preparedness-and-response-plan-covid-19>. So far 72 % of the required funds have been received.

In August, IOM launched an appeal for the 'Regional Migrant Response Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen', specifically to assist stranded migrants, other similar groups, and host communities along the 'Eastern Route' towards the Gulf nations. Link to the Regional Migrant Response Plan for Horn of Africa and Yemen' (RMRP) 2020 Appeal: <https://ronairobi.iom.int/publications/regional-migrants-response-plan-horn-africa-and-yemen-2018-%E2%80%93-2020>

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## IOM COUNTRY RESPONSE

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### Partnerships and Coordination

**IOM Ethiopia** is working in partnership with the Government of Ethiopia to assist tens of thousands of migrants who have voluntarily and involuntarily returned to the country. It is working in partnership with the government in providing assistance in quarantine facilities across the country. IOM is supporting 5 temporary accommodation facilities at different 'Points of Entry' (PoEs) into Ethiopia, where migrant returnees receive direct assistance, including food, water and medical assistance, and financial support for onward transportation to their communities of origin. IOM South Sudan is participating in Ebola/COVID-19 forums, including the Strategic Advisory Group, National Task Force, COVID-19 National Steering Committee meetings, Technical Working Groups, and State Task Forces, among others. With support from the Central Emergency Response Fund, IOM South Sudan's four partners continued their activities in health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) initiatives to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The International Rescue Committee, operating in Rubkona County, and Medair, operating in Juba County, conducts health and WASH activities. In Yei County, Torit, and Nimule, the Norwegian Refugee Council conducts WASH activities, while the United Networks for Health conduct health activities in the same locations. **IOM Rwanda** continues to support the government's COVID-19 response, constructing 66 handwashing stations in three districts in Mahama, Nyabiheke and Gihembe refugee camps.


### Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

**IOM Ethiopia** has reached a total of 25,638 individuals, including migrant returnees, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and members of host communities with COVID-19 awareness messaging. Returnees and community members received sensitization messaging on the prevention of COVID-19 in East Hararghe, West Guji, Borena, Gondar, East and West Wollega Zones. **IOM South Sudan** continues to focus on COVID-19 response and prevention in humanitarian, recovery, resilience, and development programming. Risk communication and awareness messages on COVID-19 continue to be disseminated through a network of 254 Community Hygiene Promoters working across the country, reaching in total 212,003 individuals with key messages including signs and symptoms and prevention measures, all aligned with the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Technical Working Group guidance. **IOM South Sudan** has also continued the dissemination of COVID-19 related radio messages on City FM 88.4, combined with protection, gender equality and GBV mainstreaming. 20 radio talk shows on COVID-19 prevention have been broadcast so far. **IOM South Sudan** has also observed the positive impact of COVID-19 preventive measures at its handwashing points across Juba. Out of 2,649 individuals who passed handwashing facilities, on average 57% washed their hands (an increase from last week's average of 53%), while an average of 24% of them were wearing face mask (an increase from the last week's average of 18%). The exercise was conducted in 5 out of 29 public places (markets, bus stations, ports, university and hospital) within Juba where IOM is currently implementing COVID-19 related activities.

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In Malakal, Bentiu and Wau, IOM South Sudan's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) teams continue to hold COVID-19 risk communication and awareness raising sessions, reaching 2,064 beneficiaries with key messages on MHPSS during COVID-19, and its prevention, aimed at behavioural change, while tackling misinformation. In Malakal, MHPSS received nine calls to the Regional Hotline for MHPSS regarding COVID-19 prevention measures and the availability of MHPSS services in their area. IOM Kenya conducted outreach activities in Eastleigh, an urban migrant settlement in Nairobi. A total of 6,106 individuals were directly engaged in COVID-19 prevention and awareness, while 97 handwashing demonstrations were performed for the community. IOM Rwanda reached over 1 million people through awareness raising campaigns carried out in Rubavu, Karongi and Musanze districts, during December. Awareness raising sessions continued in Baidoa, Dollow and Kismayo IDP sites. **IOM Somalia** and the Ministry of Health continued to screen for COVID-19 symptoms and to conduct awareness sessions on preventive measures in 38 facilities. COVID-19 information was shared with 8,051 individuals. Information was shared with 1,460 individuals at seven flow monitoring points, some of whom said they were not aware of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### National Laboratory Systems

As part of the UN's 'First Line of Defense', IOM is providing COVID-19 testing for humanitarian workers, including UN personnel in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania. IOM Ethiopia has conducted over 150 COVID-19 tests for humanitarian workers and UN staff at the Migrant Health Assessment Centre in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. IOM is also supporting 5 quarantine facilities in Addis Ababa, Jijiga, and Moyale with COVID-19 testing. IOM Kenya has tested over 26,600 truck drivers, since August, on Kenya's key trade border, the port city of Mombasa, thus facilitating trade and the movement of goods and services in the region.

### Disease Surveillance

**IOM Burundi** is providing transport and daily financial support to community health workers travelling from cross-border communities near the border with United Republic of Tanzania, implementing community event-based disease surveillance of epidemics with a focus on COVID-19 activities, in Muyinga Province. **IOM Ethiopia** received a total of 609 new migrant returnees during the reporting period who were met and assisted at PoEs. Since the start of the pandemic more than 44,400 migrant returnees have returned to Ethiopia and been assisted by IOM.

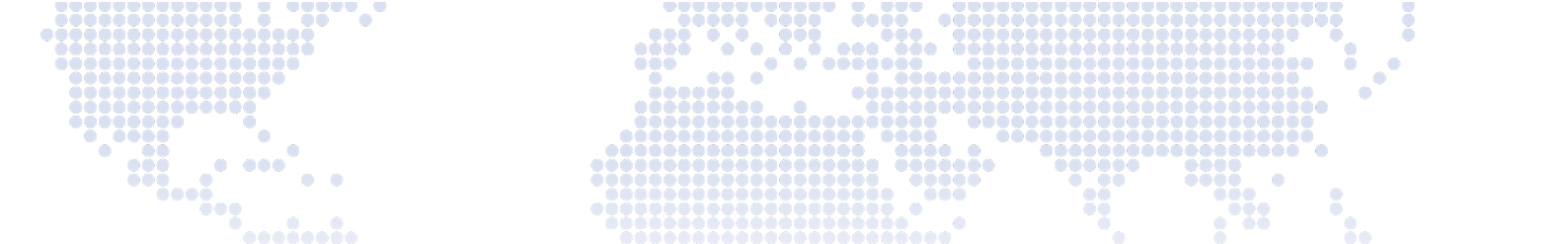
### Points of Entry

**IOM Burundi** and the Ministry of Public Health and the Fight Against AIDS have jointly conducted a needs assessment at Mugina's PoE in Makamba Province. The aim of the assessment is to prepare for the construction of waiting areas for migrants passing through. The infrastructure will include separate entry and exit corridors for people, with two separate routes. An isolation room for suspected COVID-19

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cases and those requiring further treatment, or ambulance evacuation. Another route will lead to a waiting area for COVID-19 cleared passengers awaiting ordinary immigration procedures. **IOM Ethiopia** screened over 1,203 migrant returnees and members of host communities for COVID-19 at IOM Mobile Health Nutrition Teams sites and government supported health posts in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Geddo, West Guji and East Wollega zones. IOM South Sudan continued with COVID-19 screening and provided IPC/WASH support at five PoEs; including Juba International Airport, Wau Airport, Nimule Ground Crossing, Wunthou (Renk), and Amiet (Abyei). IPC/WASH support at the POEs includes the supply of clean water through water trucking, rehabilitation and maintenance of sanitation facilities, construction and installation of handwashing facilities, and supply of IPC materials, such as face masks, soap, and hand sanitizers. Arrival and departure screening for COVID-19 was conducted, reaching a total of 9,100 travellers during the reporting period, bringing the cumulative number of travellers screened from 15 February 2020 to 512,631. IOM South Sudan continued to support two health facilities nearest to the PoEs in Nimule and Renk with medical supplies, training for health facility staff and risk communication. Over the last week 659 individuals from the host communities were provided with health care services at the outpatient clinic in Nimule Hospital. This brings the cumulative number of out-patients seen at the hospital from since October 2020 to 10,804. **IOM Kenya** has concluded COVID-19 testing for over 29,600 truck drivers in Mombasa, Kenya's key trade route, enabling the freer flow of trade, essential and non-essential goods. Humanitarian workers including UN staff have also been given access to COVID-19 testing. **IOM Somalia** has reached a total of 14,932 people with COVID-19 screenings at PoEs in support of the national Ministry of Health.

### Infection Prevention and Control

**IOM Ethiopia** is continuing to provide IDPs, IDPs led committees, migrant returnees, and community representatives with face masks and sanitizer at PoEs. Five latrines and five shower rooms were completed for Gambella Hospital. Seven water tankers were distributed to seven schools in Gambella for hand washing activities. IOM South Sudan is maintaining 658 handwashing devices. In Juba, the upgrading of the five borehole systems in Gumbo, Lologo II, Lemon Gaba and Joppa Block 1, and Nesitu is ongoing. **IOM Rwanda** provided an additional 50,000 washable masks to refugees in Rwanda. **IOM Somalia** and the Ministry of Health continued to screen for COVID-19 symptoms and conduct awareness sessions on preventive measures in 38 facilities. Community mobilization and sensitization sessions on good community hygiene and sanitation practices targeting IDP communities are ongoing. Over 41,000 individuals were reached with hygiene kits and 1,232 handwashing points installed across the country.

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## Case Management and Continuity of Essential Services

**IOM Ethiopia** assisted over 1,200 migrant returnees and host community members with medical consultations in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Gedeo, West Guji and East Wollega Zones.

## Logistics, Procurement and Supply Management

**IOM South Sudan** has received and is processing three WASH support requests from Solidarite International, Medecins Sans Frontier Holland, and the Norwegian Refugee Council. Two requests are part of the WASH flood response on COVID-19 prevention, targeting flood-affected locations in Nyirol and Uror in Jonglei state. The planned response includes the distribution of WASH key supplies, such as household water treatment, water containers, soap and menstrual hygiene kits, as well as repairing non-functioning and low-functioning hand-pumps in multiple payams in Nyirol. The third request was to support COVID-19 prevention measures in the public areas of Nimule, Yei and Torit. The planned response includes the maintenance of public handwashing facilities and the provision of soap. IOM processed one PPE supplies request from WHO. The items included 30 boxes of medical gloves to be used by the National Public Health Laboratory in Juba.

## Protection

**IOM Burundi** conducted two awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 preventive measures to demystify beliefs around the disease in Bukemba and Giharo (Rutana province) for 51 participants. In Ethiopia, 2,517 individuals were reached with Gender-based Violence, GBV-MHPSS risk mitigation, Mental Health aspects of COVID-19 and Child Protection awareness sessions. The intervention included psychosocial support and follow up counselling, home visits, Self-Help Group discussions, mass community mobilization and public campaigns in Dire Dawa, West Guji, East Hararghe, East and West Wollega Zones. A total of 307 unaccompanied minor children, and adult migrant returnees received non-food items including blankets, bedsheets, dignity kits at PoE and in different temporary accommodation shelters. Some 206 accompanied and unaccompanied minor children and adult returnees received food, medical support and onward transportation allowance assistance in Semera, Dire Dawa, Metema and Moyale. An end of project beneficiaries service satisfaction survey assessment was conducted in East Wollega Zone returnee sites. Medication, hospital beds, and other recreational items were donated to Emmanuel Psychiatric Hospital to support psycho social support activities. Over the past five months, an increasing number of migrants have been returning to Djibouti from Yemen. Border closures in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, movement restrictions due to COVID-19 containment measures and difficult living conditions in Yemen are contributing to this migration trend. The returning migrants are arriving in the coastal area within the Obock region in Djibouti, where **IOM Djibouti's** mobile health unit has provided 262 migrants with live-saving assistance (water and food) and medical first aid during the first week of January. These migrants are then assisted at IOM's Migration Response Centre in Obock.

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## Camp Coordination and Camp Management

In collaboration with the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, **IOM Ethiopia** continued supporting Woreda and IDPs camp coordination meetings on COVID-19 preparedness and response agendas in East and West Hararghe, Borena, Gedeo, East and West Guji, and East and West Wollega. **IOM Somalia** continued to disseminate information to ensure IDPs are aware of the risks, signs and symptoms and mode of transmissions of COVID-19. They were also apprised of the appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the risks. Awareness raising sessions were conducted at information centres, market places or during community meetings, with a highlight on how to practice physical distancing.

## Displacement Tracking Matrix

**IOM Burundi's** DTM continued flow monitoring data collection for COVID-19 surveillance at the borders with the United Republic of Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Based on data submitted by 3 January 2021 which includes 25 out of 34 flow monitoring points at the borders of South Sudan, internal transit hubs and displacement sites, DTM enumerators carried out 1,668 interviews representing 4,721 individual movements. Through flow monitoring registry, DTM surveys people on the move at key transit points within South Sudan and at its borders. Data provides an insight into mobility trends, migration drivers and traveler's profiles. In addition, DTM continued operating four displacement site flow monitoring points at the gates of Wau displacement site, Masna collective centre, Bentiu PoC and Malakal PoC site. In the first week of January, **IOM Djibouti** reached 3,795 host community members and migrants through awareness-raising activities on the prevention of COVID-19 across 11 flow monitoring points in the country's five regions. IOM Somalia continued to raise awareness among migrants crossing the border at seven flow monitoring points. A total of 8,527 people entering and exiting Somalia were recorded. COVID-19 information was shared with 4,106 individuals (48% of individuals reached) who reported to be unaware of the COVID-19 situation.

## Information sharing and communications

**IOM Somalia** is supporting the National Union of Somali Journalists to develop a safety and professional guidance booklet for journalists reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance includes tips on where to fact-check information, along with debunking myths and ensuring that media workers are safe as they conduct their work. It also has information on how to counter xenophobia and stigma against migrants and returnees.

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# POINTS OF ENTRY & MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

