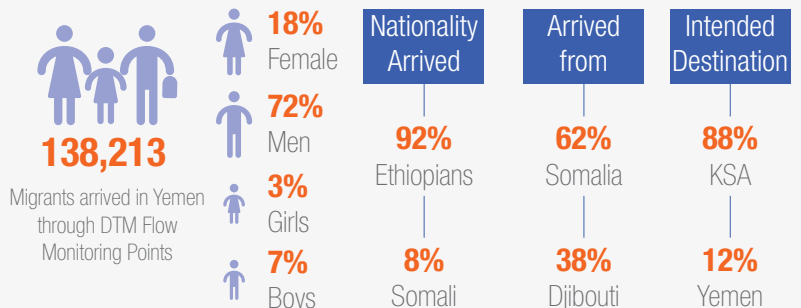


Fluidity of migration along the Eastern route, from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, continued to be a common phenomenon in 2019. High volumes of migrants faced significant risks when crossing the Gulf of Aden from the Horn of Africa to Yemen and onward to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). These flows are mixed in nature in which different categories of migrants including refugees, economic migrants and other types of migrants move along the same route.

Throughout 2019, migrant movements were mainly composed of Ethiopian nationals seeking better economic opportunities, often re-migrating multiple times. These trends remained steady despite Yemen is soon entering its fifth year of conflict and KSA tightening its immigration policy and returning irregular migrants back to their countries of origin. Over 309,000 Ethiopian migrants were returned since May 2017 by KSA authorities. Further research shows how migration is a widespread livelihood strategy and coping mechanism in many communities in Ethiopia, where migrant respondents often report that one or more family members or others in the community had previously migrated. Although the migrants themselves are reportedly the main decision makers for migrating, families and friends, as well as communities and brokers have a strong role in the decision-making process. When informed of the planned journey, families and friends become both a social and financial support system and, in general, exert a social influence that nurtures a culture of migration. This dashboard aims to convey the complexity of movements across the Eastern route, where following a perilous journey across the Horn of Africa and then through Yemen, migrants and refugees can face becoming stranded in a country in conflict and exposed to extreme protection risks or can be forcibly returned upon arrival to KSA.

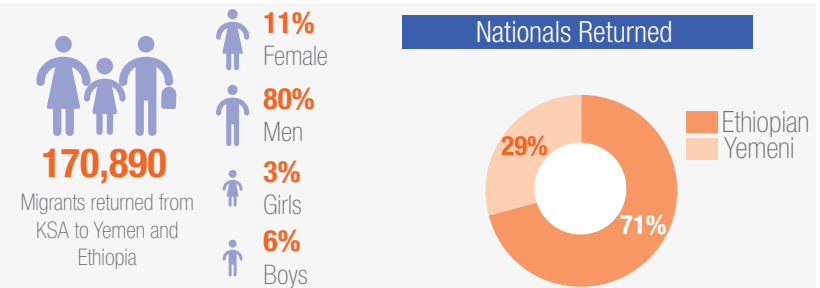
YEMEN ARRIVALS FROM THE HORN OF AFRICA

In 2019, a total of 138,213 migrants were recorded at five Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) along the southern coast of Yemen. Ethiopian nationals remained the largest observed group on the move, and Bosasso as the main area of departure. Although migrant crossings continued throughout the year, the smallest number were observed during the third quarter (17%) when heat waves in Djibouti and choppy seas in the Gulf of Aden were reported. Economic drivers remained the main reason for moving (above 98%), and 88 per cent indicating the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as their intended destination. This route also continued to be characterized by a high volume of unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs), with more than 8,100 UMCs (6%) being reported by the end of the year.



RETURNS FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

In April 2017, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched a campaign titled 'A Nation without Violations', granting all irregular migrants an amnesty period of 90 days to leave the country without facing penalties. In April 2017, as the KSA authorities launched a large airlift operation to return migrants, IOM began registering these migrants returning to Ethiopia. In 2019, IOM registered 120,825 returnees to Ethiopia, 99.6 per cent of whom reportedly returned involuntarily. Additionally, 50,065 Yemeni migrants returned from KSA to Yemen during the same time period. Somali migrants were also returned from KSA to Somalia in 2019, but the extent of this movement remains unclear.



IOM ASSISTED RETURNS FROM YEMEN

To assist those stranded in Yemen, IOM helps migrants wishing to return to their home country through its Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme. IOM provides counselling, ensuring that migrants make an informed decision, provides medical screenings and escorts, and organizes their travel home via chartered flights to Ethiopia and commercial flights to other countries. IOM assisted 3,785 migrants to voluntarily return home in 2019, out of which 99 per cent were Ethiopian nationals. In partnership with UNHCR under the Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme, IOM also provides return support to Somali refugees who express a wish to return home. In 2019, IOM facilitated the movement of 1,681 refugees back to Somalia by commercial vessel from Aden, Yemen.

