



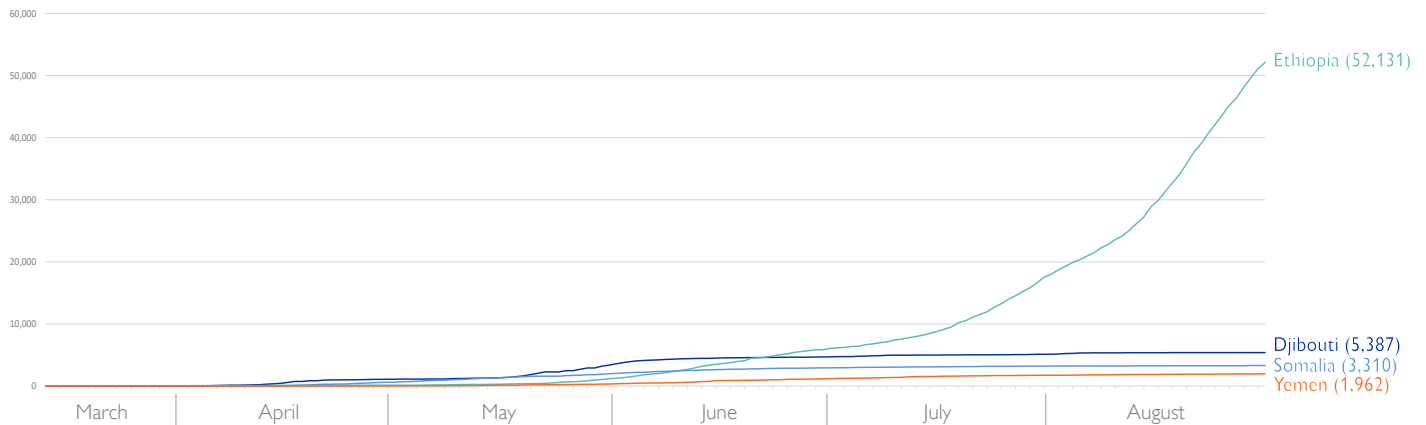
IOM mobile health clinic in Dhobley. Photo: © IOM Somalia 2020

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 outbreak has restricted global mobility, whilst heightening the risk of exploitation of vulnerable populations. This report provides a snapshot of the **COVID-19 epidemiological situation** and **mobility restrictions**, and of the **current migration trends** along the Eastern Corridor migration route, in addition to an analysis of the impact that movement restrictions have had in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen. Moreover, it provides **information on the main protection concerns for migrants** and **assistance provided**, and **COVID-19 risk mitigation measures**. This report utilizes data collected through IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs), Migrant Response Centres (MRCs),¹ Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) data, as well as anecdotal information provided by IOM team members working in the region.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Incidence Trend of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases as of 31 August 2020



Source: IOM, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO)

¹ Migration Response Centres (MRCs) are situated along key migration routes, where they fill critical gaps by providing direct assistance, including food and temporary shelter, information and service referrals to migrants on the move. MRCs bring together key partners to facilitate the identification of migrants in vulnerable situations, and ensure that they receive appropriate, immediate and longer-term support. Seven MRCs are currently operational in the Horn of Africa: Obock (Djibouti), Hargeisa, Bossaso (Somalia), Semera, Metema, Dire Dawa and Tog-Wajaale (Ethiopia).

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COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

As of 31 August 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases along the Eastern Corridor stood at 62,790 with a drastic increase in new cases reported in Ethiopia (+34,601), followed by Djibouti (+261), Yemen (+230) and Somalia (+98). **Ethiopia continued recording the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases at 52,131 (83% of total cases)**. Following Ethiopia is Djibouti with 5,387 confirmed cases (9% of total cases) and Somalia with 3,310 cases (5% of total cases), while Yemen cases amounted to 1,962 (3% of total cases). As of 31 August 2020, the number of COVID-19 related deaths along the Eastern Corridor stood at 1,533, majority of which were recorded in Ethiopia (809). Yemen holds the highest case fatality rate (CFR) at approximately 28.9%, compared to Djibouti (CFR 1.1%), Ethiopia (CFR 1.6%) and Somalia (CFR 2.9%). This is much higher than the global average CFR of 3.3% and is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war and the fact that people tend to seek health care when the disease has progressed too far. **Additionally, the number of COVID-19 cases in Yemen appears relatively low due to the limited testing capacity, along with lack of access to health facilities and the associated stigma with seeking treatment for COVID-19, which hides the true impact and spread of the virus.**

COVID-19 MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

Since 17 July, Djibouti's air, land and sea borders have remained open with strict health guidelines in regard to travellers' screening at the various Points of Entry (PoEs). At the same time, Ethiopia resumed land and air transport services to countries that eased their COVID-19 measures and were set to reopen for tourism, such as Djibouti. **On 3 August, Somalia reopened its airspace for international flights after four months of disruptions, while domestic flights continued to operate, apart from Abudwak airport which is still closed for maintenance work.** All sea ports in Somalia remained operational, while all land border crossings remained closed, with the exception of one point at the border with Ethiopia. **In Yemen, three of the five functioning international airports were opened to facilitate the return of small numbers of stranded Yemenis abroad and humanitarian staff.** Overall, two of these three airports (Aden and Seiyun), in addition to 15 sea border points and three land border points, were partially open for movement. A total of 10 internal transit points were also active in Taizz and Al-Bayda governorates to track inter-governorate movements, with additional preventive measures and health screening put in place.

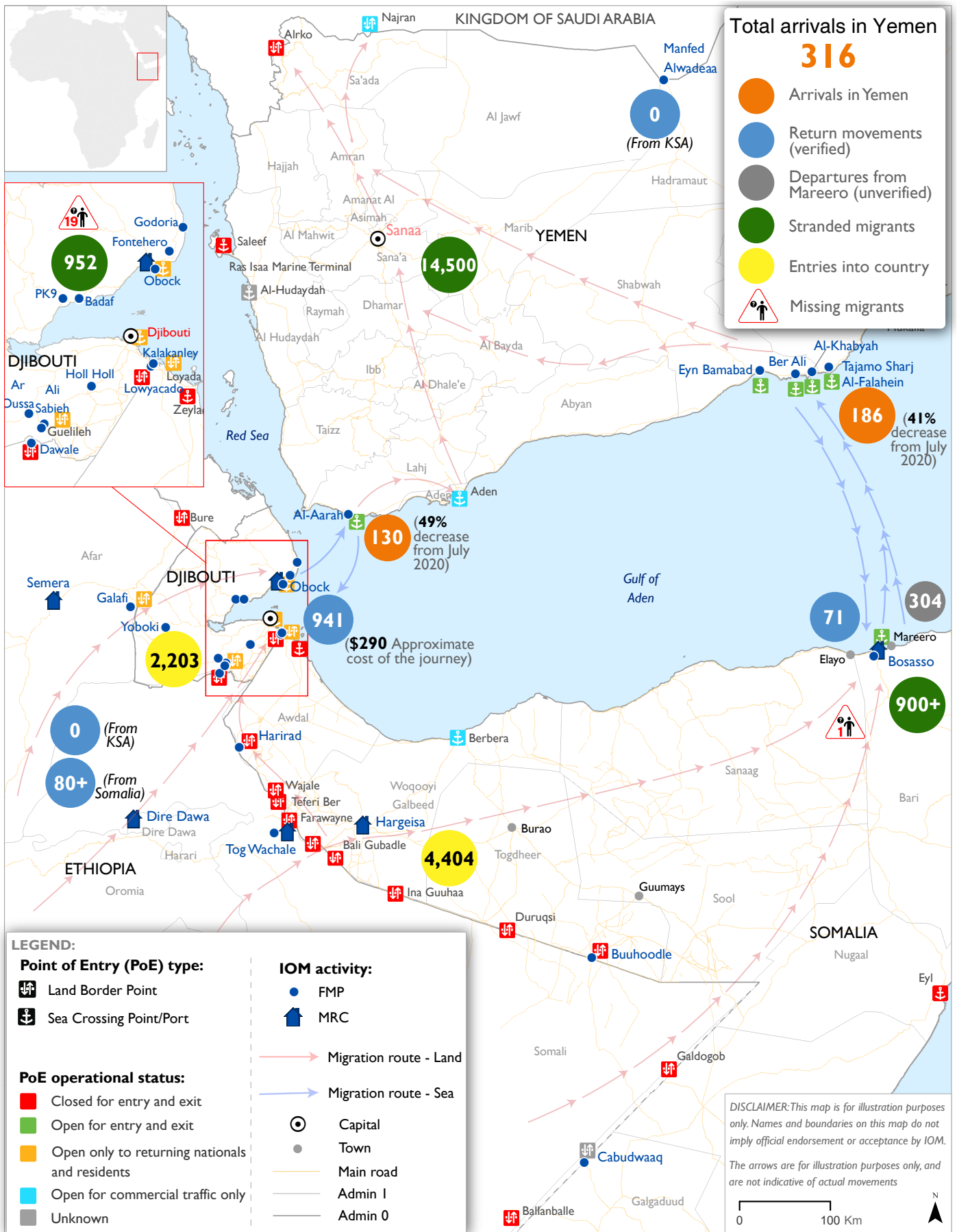
COVID-19 IMPACT ON MIGRANT FLOWS

Overall migrants' arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa decreased by 45% between August (316) and July (572), and by almost 67% in relation to overall arrival trends between January and August of 2019 (97,069 arrivals in 2019 and 32,505 arrivals in 2020). 41% of the arrivals during August 2020 came from Djibouti while 59% originated from Somalia. Meanwhile, spontaneous return movements of Ethiopians from Yemen to Djibouti continued to be observed with over 2,399 returns as of May, 941 of which occurred in August, and around 80 returns to Ethiopia from Somalia. Please see Map 1 on the following page for an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on migrant flows along the Eastern Corridor.

MIGRANT PROTECTION AND DETENTION CONCERNS

By the end of August 2020, it is estimated that over 14,500 migrants were stranded in Yemen, 952 in Djibouti and over 900 in Somalia with no options to leave as borders have become increasingly harder to cross and temporary suspension of AVR and Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) assistance does not allow them to return. With the instrumentalization of COVID-19 mitigation measures, migrant detention in Yemen is on the rise, and since March 2020 over 2,000 migrants have been forcibly transferred from the northern to the southern governorates. Spontaneous returnees from Yemen to Djibouti continue reporting extreme violence experienced in Yemen not only at the hands of smugglers, armed groups and government authorities, but also from other Ethiopian migrants of different ethnic groups. **In addition to the abuse and exploitation experienced in Yemen, in August alone, 20 migrants were reported missing: one died of dehydration in Somalia and another 19 drowned or disappeared in Djibouti, abandoned by smugglers at sea or in the desert.**

MAP 1 | COVID-19 IMPACT ON MIGRATION ALONG THE EASTERN CORRIDOR (AUGUST 2020)



MIGRANT ASSISTANCE (MRC/AVR)

IOM continues to provide basic life-saving assistance and psychosocial support at the MRCs. IOM Djibouti is currently assisting 20 vulnerable migrants at the MRC in Obock, as AVR assistance is still severely limited. **COVID-19 risk sensitization is ongoing among stranded migrants and IOM is providing search and rescue operations along the coast of Obock.** In Somalia, 154 new migrants were assisted at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa while 512 migrants continue awaiting for AVR as the service is still severely restricted due to COVID-19 measures imposed by the Government of Ethiopia.² **In Yemen, movement restrictions, the deterioration of migrants' living conditions and the increased danger migrants are facing due to a variety of factors are leaving many with no other option than seeking to return home.** In this scenario, the resumption of VHR assistance is a priority to address the life-threatening conditions migrants are living in Yemen. While efforts are underway to negotiate the return of migrants with Ethiopia from Aden (south), in the north, little progress has been seen as negotiations are still pending with De Facto Authorities (DFA).

MIGRANT RETURNS

No returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia took place towards Ethiopia or Yemen in the month of August. Returns to Ethiopia had decreased by almost 70%, between March and April 2020, falling from 8,963 to 2,757. In May, after a one-month suspension, 387 migrants were returned to Addis Ababa in June, but no other return has been carried out since then. Returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Yemen have also been put on hold in August, after a brief resumption of activity in July when 363 returnees were tracked in Manfed Alwadeeya. Overall, the returns of Yemeni nationals since January 2020 amounted to 13,417, almost one third of the returns recorded in the same period in 2019 (35,353). **The only reported returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the region are the 71 returnees flown back to Mogadishu which were referred for assistance to IOM.**

QUARANTINE MEASURES

During the month of August, the Government of Djibouti's quarantine site in Ali Sabieh run by ONARS (National Office for Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims) admitted 893 new migrants. Meanwhile, the quarantine period for all persons entering Ethiopia was maintained to seven days as established in June. Since returnee movements to Addis Ababa remained limited, the government closed one of the seven quarantine centres designated for returnees and converted a second centre to serve as a treatment facility.



IOM distributes IEC materials in Bossaso to raise awareness about COVID-19 among host community. Photo: © IOM Somalia 2020

² The number of migrants awaiting AVR assistance is an estimate based on the number of unattended requests received. However, as the service has been suspended for over six months due to COVID-19 restrictions and stranded migrants have spontaneously returned to Ethiopia, the precise number of migrants awaiting AVR would be available only by conducting a new registration.

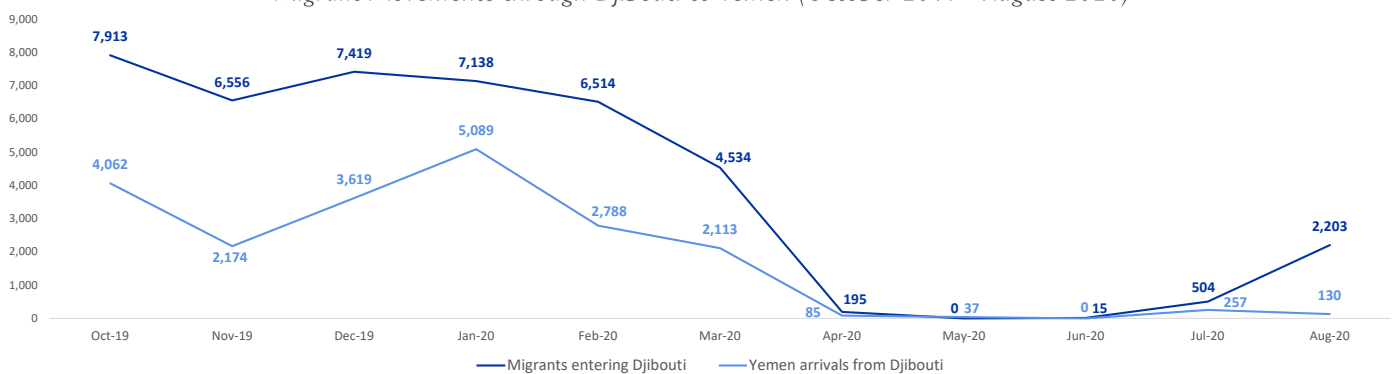
DJIBOUTI SITUATION

As of 31 August, Djibouti recorded a total of 5,387 confirmed individuals, 60 deaths and 5,323 recoveries. In August, the country recorded a 41% decrease in the number of new COVID-19 positive cases (261 in August compared to 444 in July). Since 17 July, Djibouti's air, land and sea borders have remained open under strict health protocols for travellers issued by the Ministry of Health. As the country eased its COVID-19 related restrictions and slowly reopened for tourism, land and air transport services resumed and all the passengers arriving at Ambouli International Airport and land borders were tested. In August, however, the Ministry of Health reiterated the need to observe barrier measures and limit the regrouping of people in public places.

Migrant Flows Observed Through Djibouti and at Yemen Points of Entry

- In August, migrant movements into Djibouti increased significantly with 2,203 migrants, all Ethiopian, tracked along Djibouti's western borders at various FMPs; this is a large increase from the 504 migrant entries observed in July, and is attributed to the official re-opening of borders in Djibouti on 17 July;
- 130 arrivals from Djibouti were tracked in Yemen near Al-Aarah FMP in Lahj governorate, all of whom were Ethiopian nationals. A majority of the migrants were adult men (116) and only 14 were women; between 30 to 50 migrants arrived on each of the three boats that came ashore between 13 and 17 August;

Migrant Movements through Djibouti to Yemen (October 2019 - August 2020)³



- Spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Djibouti had started in May 2020 and a total of 2,399 migrants were accounted for as of August 2020, of which 941 (including 105 women) were recorded in August only. Migrants arrive on the coasts of Obock between Moulhoule and Godoria mainly, but also Ras Bir, Guehere and Khor Angar.

Migrant Protection and Detention Concerns

- Migrants returning from Yemen to Djibouti continue to report experiences of violence, deprivation and abuse. Most return because they are unable to proceed into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to border closures and strict controls, and are given the option by smugglers to be taken back to Ethiopia. Allegedly the cost of the journey from Yemen to Djibouti is around 10,000 ETB (around 294 USD) but smugglers only drop off migrants on the coast and leave them to walk up to over 50 km in the desert at temperatures which can reach 45 degrees Celsius which is deadly for many;
- Tragically, the number of missing migrants increased in August when 19 individuals were reported missing or deceased. Most of them (14) drowned or disappeared near Guehere on 17 August when they were obliged by smugglers to jump off the boat that was transporting them before they could reach land. Of the 23 migrants onboard the boat, only nine managed to swim to shore, while the other 14 disappeared. The Djiboutian coast guard searched the waters for survivors but was only able to recover six bodies. The previous month, six migrants had lost their lives due to dehydration in Ras Bir, Oulma and Doubia (Obock region) as they were caught in sandstorms and had to endure average temperatures of over 45 degrees Celsius;
- The migrants who have returned in August from Yemen also reported having been abused and having endured great hardship at the hands not only of smugglers and authorities or armed groups in Yemen, but also at the hands of other migrants from different ethnic groups. Once in Djibouti, the returnees are hosted at the government managed Masagara site for first assistance and later transferred to the quarantine site. Here, conflict among migrants is not infrequent, especially when there is an unbalance in the representation of different ethnicities;
- Both the closure of the Djibouti-Ethiopia border and the stricter border controls in Yemen have left many migrants stranded in the country. As of 30 August, 952 migrants on their way to the Arab Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered in 19 spontaneous sites located along the migration route. All stranded migrants were Ethiopian nationals and most of them were men (88%). Immediate needs included water, food, hygiene kits and non-food items (NFIs);

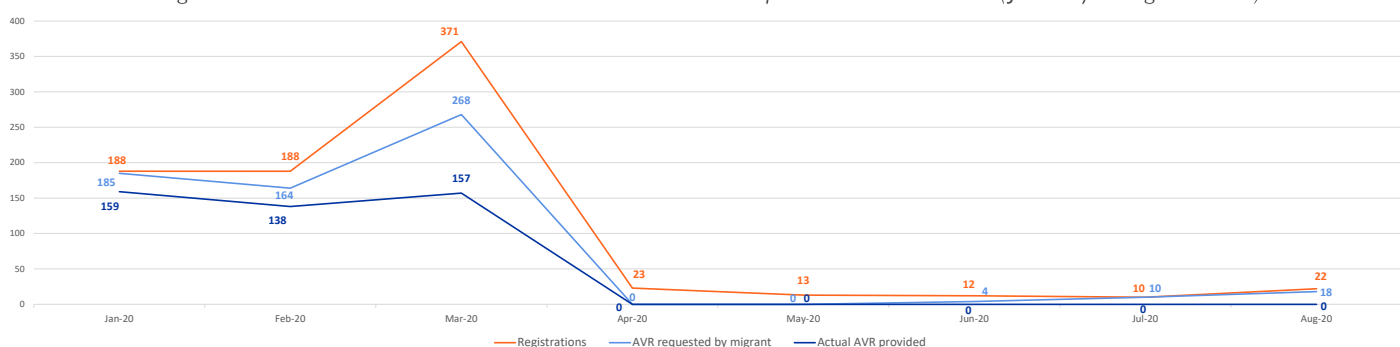
³ Errata corrip: 259 Yemeni nationals tracked on arrival in Yemen during June have been removed as they were visiting family over Eid and are not categorized as 'migrant arrivals' by DTM Yemen.

- When asked about COVID-19 awareness, a little over 83% of all migrants tracked through Djibouti reported to be aware of the COVID-19 outbreak and this represents a decrease compared to the level of awareness reported in previous months.

Migrant Assistance (MRC/AVR)

- The MRC in Obock was assisting, as of 31 August, 20 vulnerable migrants who have been stranded for several months. A total of 22 new migrants were admitted to the centre in August. Similar to previous trends, the prolonged suspension of AVR assistance and long waiting times prompted some of the migrants to leave the MRC;
- In the context of COVID-19 prevention, the admission of new migrants at the MRC in Obock was reduced to admission only of the most vulnerable cases, namely women, children, and sick migrants. Additionally, 6 unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs) have been hosted by CARITAS since May, and their return is being planned in close coordination with IOM Ethiopia and the Embassy of Ethiopia in Djibouti;
- IOM Djibouti organized focus group discussions (FGDs) between 13 and 24 August 2020, at Masagara site to better understand the increased migrant arrivals from Yemen, the experiences endured during the journey and the most pressing needs. 72 Ethiopian migrants participated in the FGDs (15 women and 57 men) and a report will be published soon;
- While only four requests for AVR were recorded at the MRC between April and June 2020, a total of 18 AVR requests were received in August, almost double the requests received in July (10);
- With the increased number of spontaneous arrivals from Yemen and the many casualties witnessed in the past two months due to reckless practices of smugglers and the difficulties in which migrants have to walk to reach Obock town, the MRC has set up search and rescue activities between Obock City and Khor Angar. An ambulance with medical staff assists migrants en route, providing medical care and water to those in distress.

Registrations at the MRC in Obock and AVR Services Requested and Provided (January - August 2020)



Quarantine Measures

- During the month of August, the Government of Djibouti's quarantine site in Ali Sabieh run by ONARS (National Office for Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims) admitted 893 new migrants. Of these, 771 were men (86%) and 122 were women (14%).

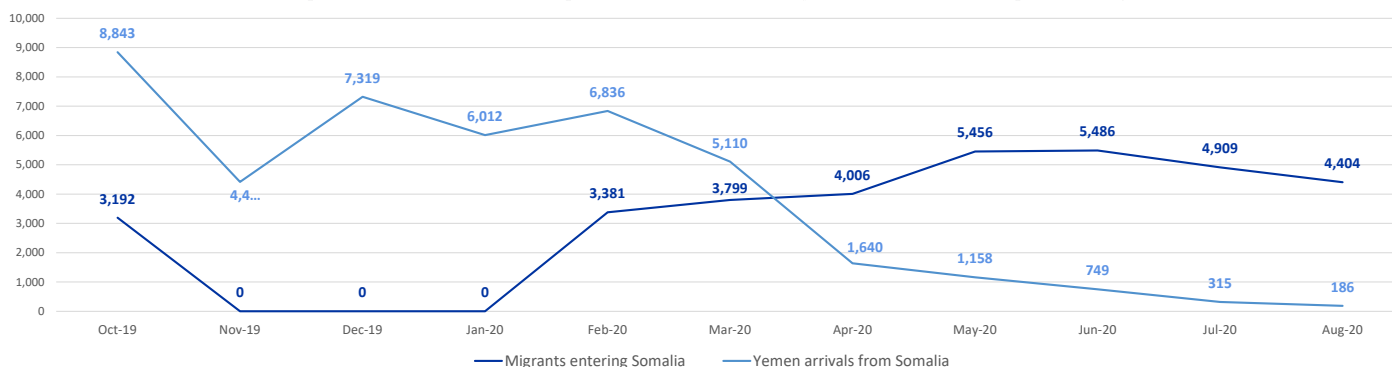
SOMALIA SITUATION

As of 31 August, Somalia reported 3,310 confirmed positive COVID-19 individuals, 97 deaths and 2,579 recoveries. In Somalia, as it was the case in Djibouti, the rate of new COVID-19 infections fell by 66% in August when a total of 98 new infections were confirmed compared to 288 which were confirmed in July. International air travel resumed on 3 August after four months of disruptions, facilitating the movement of aid workers and delivery of supplies, while domestic flights continued to operate, apart from Abudwak airport which is still closed for maintenance work. All sea ports in Somalia continued to remain operational, while all land border crossings remained closed, with the exception of one point at the border with Ethiopia. The Kenya-Somalia land borders remained closed for commercial entities, and the border with Djibouti remained open for commercial trade only.

Migrant Flows Observed Through Somalia and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Yemen arrivals from Somalia stood at 186 in August, a sharp 41% decrease from the 315 recorded in July, partly due to unfavorable weather conditions during the first two weeks of August. Similar to previous months, the largest proportion of these migrants were Ethiopian (71%), with the remainder being Somali (29%) nationals. As in July, the majority of the migrants arriving in Yemen from Somalia were adult males (65%), while 18% were adult females, and 17% were children, of which 18 were UMCs;

- Flow monitoring data showed a slight decrease in migrant entries into Somalia with 4,404 movements observed in August versus 4,909 movements tracked in July; almost all of the migrants were Ethiopian nationals (98.6%). 44 Yemeni nationals were also tracked intending to return to Yemen from Somalia;
- Similar to what was observed in July, a significant number of Ethiopians travelled through Djibouti to Somalia (394), which is a slight decrease from the 574 recorded in July. These movements made up 9% of all migrants tracked entering Somalia;

Migrant Movements through Somalia to Yemen (October 2019 - August 2020)⁴

Note: Values for the period between the Somali port of arrival for November 2019 to January 2020 are 0. As a result of the temporary closure of Djibouti border in Somalia.

- Unverified reports received by IOM stated that 304 Ethiopian migrants departed by boat to Yemen from Mareero, a small town 15 km east of Bossaso, respectively on 23 August (87) and 29 August (217). Departures from Mareero decreased in August by 20% compared to July when 379 departures were reported;
- Spontaneous returns from Somalia to Ethiopia through Wajaale continue with around 20 migrants returning weekly.

Migrant Protection and Detention Concerns

- IOM estimates that around 400 migrants continue to be stranded in and around Bossaso. With few options available to continue their journey or to return, frustration is growing and on 25 August clashes between Oromo and Tigray ethnic groups unfolded badly injuring three men;
- Between 9 and 15 August, one migrant lost his life between Jidhi and Lowya'ado due to extreme heat and died of dehydration. The death was confirmed by the head of police in Lowya'ado to the MRC staff stating that the migrant got lost and did not have water provisions;
- Migrants seeking assistance at MRCs continue reporting that COVID-19 is having an adverse impact on their capacity to provide for themselves. Daily work opportunities are scarce, food prices have increased and COVID-19 limits movement and interaction with the local community. Many migrants, particularly Ethiopian Oromos, were working in farms in Barookhle, Dhud and other farming locations of Bari region;
- Of concern is the fact that in August almost three quarters (67%) of the migrant groups interviewed by DTM in Somalia were aware of the COVID-19 pandemic, although this is an improvement as compared to the previous month (57%).

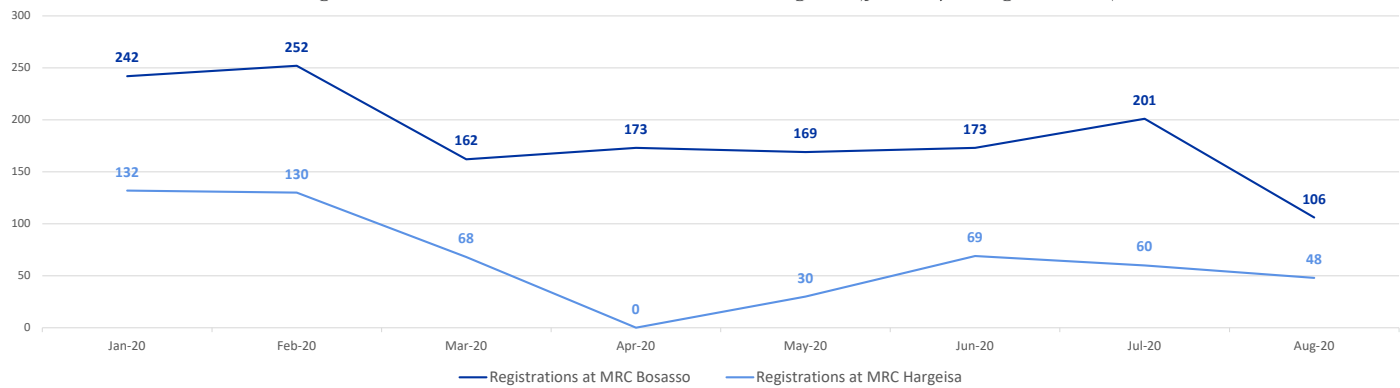
Migrant Assistance (MRC/AVR)

Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- 24 Yemenis reached Berbera port town in Somaliland on 24 and 29 August in small boats from the port of Rasul Arah in Yemen. Migrants were referred to the Berbera reception centre for provision of food, medical assistance and Onwards Transportation Assistance (OTA) to reach Hargeisa;
- 83 refugees and returnees arrived in Puntland from Yemen, respectively on 25 August (45) and on 1 August (38). Assistance in Puntland is usually provided at the reception facility managed by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization with the support of UNHCR and IOM;
- 60 Yemenis living in Bossaso received clearance from Puntland authorities and the Embassy of Yemen to return to their country of origin;
- Somaliland Immigration Officials in Wajaale confirmed that approximately 40 refugees from Syria crossed the border during the span of two weeks and entered Somaliland. All refugees came from Addis Ababa through Sudan. Some of them have been returned by border officials as their refugee status was issued by the Government of Ethiopia and they were not holding any entry visa into Somaliland.

⁴ Errata corriege: seven Yemeni nationals tracked on arrival in Yemen during July have been removed as they were visiting family over Eid and are not categorized as 'migrant arrivals' by DTM Yemen.

Registrations at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa (January - August 2020)



Bossaso

- The number of migrants registered decreased significantly in August (106) as compared to July (201). This is similar to the trend seen in the summer of 2019, when smugglers slowed down the departures in the summer months due to the windy season which leads to unfavorable conditions at sea, but picked up again later in the year;
- This month saw an 89% drop in AVR requests, falling from 104 in July to 11 in August. Yet, AVR assistance remained suspended with an overall backlog of 312 stranded migrants among which are 22 UMCs as Ethiopian borders are still closed. IOM and partners continue to provide shelter and basic services to vulnerable migrants;
- MRC Bossaso conducted three sessions on risks, signs and symptoms as well as mode of transmission of COVID-19 reaching out to 118 migrants.

Hargeisa

- A total of 48 new migrant registrations were carried out by the MRC in Hargeisa in August and 36 new AVR requests were recorded, adding to a backlog of 200 requests, but no return assistance could be provided due to the closure of the Ethiopian borders;
- On 30 August, the MRC conducted COVID-19 awareness raising sessions inside the MRC compound and at the Ethiopian Community Centre, reaching 28 migrants, and provided protection materials to the migrants.

Migrant Returns to Somalia

- According to the Immigration and Naturalization Directorate of Somalia (IND), 71 individuals were returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Mogadishu during the month of August, but the number only refers to cases that were referred to IOM. Among the returnees were 60 men, 9 women and two boys.

Quarantine Measures

- There are currently 18 functional isolation facilities in Somalia, accounting for a total of 376 ready isolation beds by end of August.

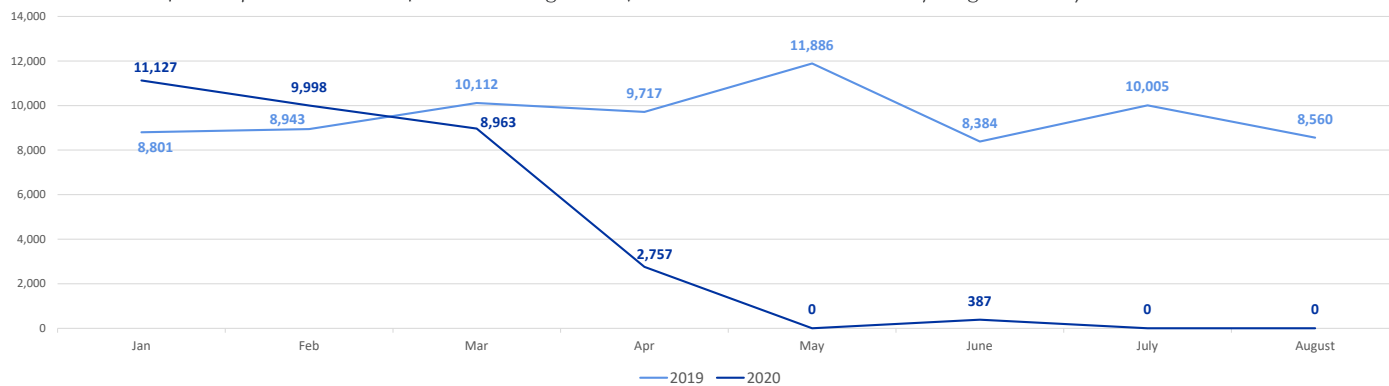
ETHIOPIA SITUATION

As of 31 August, the Government of Ethiopia recorded the highest number of COVID-19 cases among the countries on the Eastern Corridor, with a total of 52,131 confirmed individuals, 809 deaths and 18,994 recoveries. The month of August marked another steep increase in new COVID-19 cases which rose by 197% as compared to July (34,601 new cases in August, and 11,684 in July). While the state of emergency which was declared on 8 April was still in force, community transmission rates rose sharply over the past month, increasing pressure on quarantine, isolation and treatment facilities and the health system in general. At the same time, Ethiopia resumed land and air transport services to countries that eased their COVID-19 measures and were set to reopen for tourism, such as Djibouti.

Migrant Flows, and Protection and Detention Concerns

- In August, similar to July, no Ethiopian nationals were returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa after a temporary resumption of returns in June when 387 nationals were returned. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia kept returning migrants in March (8,963) and April (2,757) despite COVID-19 risks, though no returns happened in May. In comparison, August 2019 saw the return of 8,560 migrants, while the cumulative returns between January and August decreased by 57% (33,232 in 2020 and 76,408 in 2019).

Returns of Ethiopian Nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Electronically Registered by IOM in 2019 and 2020



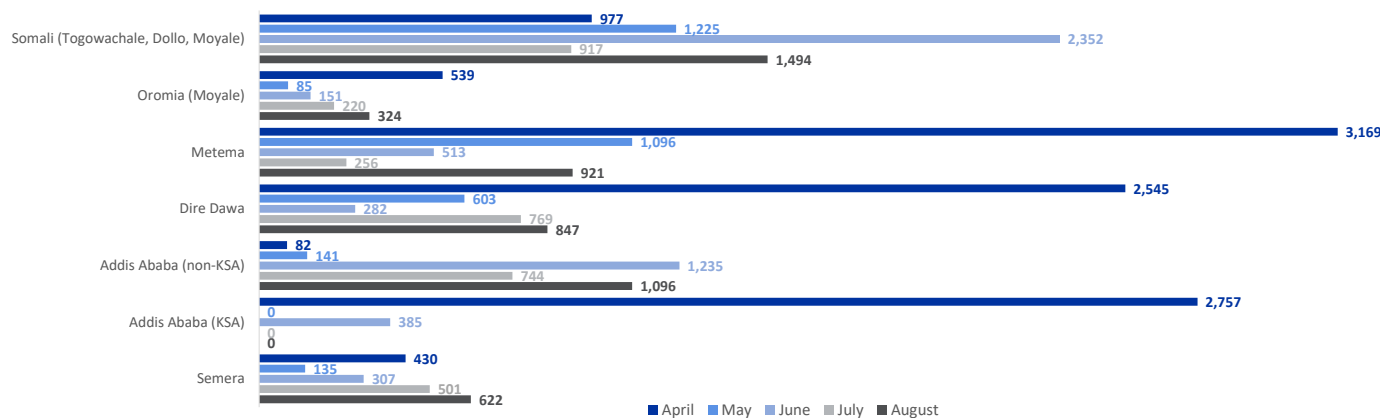
Migrant Assistance (MRC/AVR)

- Since the adoption of travel restrictions by the Government of Ethiopia last 23 March 2020, IOM’s AVR operations have been significantly reduced. As such, in August, the Government of Ethiopia, with assistance provided by IOM, facilitated the return of some of the 825 Ethiopian nationals returning from the United Arab Emirates (451), Qatar (202) and Lebanon (172);
- Assistance at MRCs in Ethiopia continued to be suspended as a result of the pandemic. However, IOM kept supporting returnees upon arrival at several PoEs, including Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, and quarantine centres designated for returnees in the capital and in regional states (namely Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Dire Dawa). OTA was provided to 109 returnees from different countries;
- IOM Ethiopia strongly advocates for the inclusion of stranded Ethiopian migrants in the national, multi-stakeholder COVID-19 response plans of host and transit countries – in terms of humanitarian responses, socioeconomic and psychosocial support, as well as legal assistance to migrant workers.

Quarantine Measures

- The measure reducing the quarantine period for all persons entering Ethiopia from 14 days to seven days was maintained through August. Since returnee movements to Addis Ababa remained limited, the government closed one of the seven quarantine centres designated for returnees and converted a second centre to serve as a treatment facility. Overall, IOM reported that in August a total of 5,304 returning migrants were quarantined in different facilities across the country, including from Djibouti (1,768), Somalia (165) and Yemen (802). This marks a 56% increase compared to July.

Returnees Accommodated in Quarantine Centres (April - August 2020)

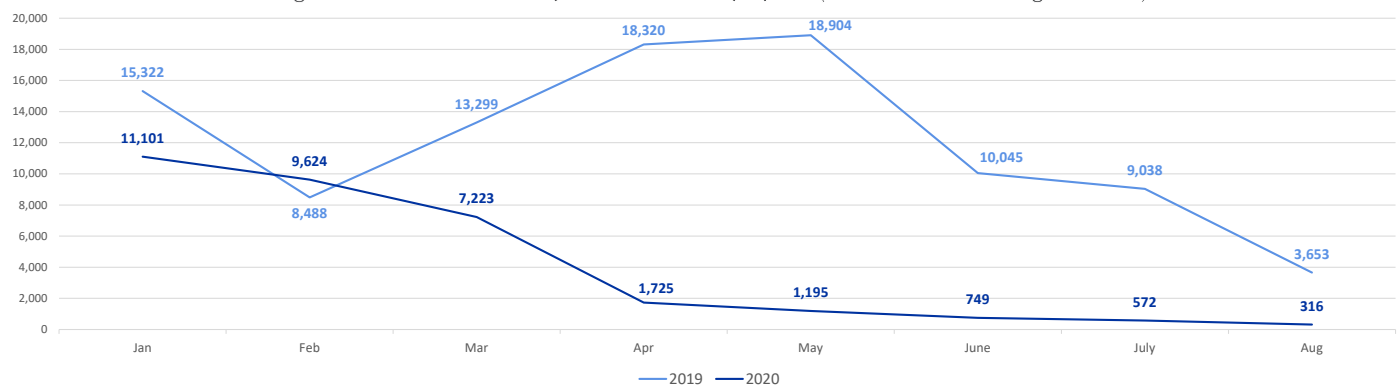


YEMEN SITUATION

As of 31 August, the Yemeni authorities have reported 1,962 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 567 deaths and 1,133 recoveries across 11 governorates in Yemen. COVID-19 continues to be reported across Yemen, with the highest number of confirmed cases reported in Hadramaut, Taizz and Aden governorates. Three of the five international airports have been opened to facilitate the return of stranded Yemenis abroad and humanitarian staff. Of these three airports, two are also open to commercial flights (Aden and Seiyun), and all 15 sea border points and three land border points are partially open for movements. The 10 transit points in Taizz and in Al Bayda remain active to monitor public movements between southern and northern governorates.

Migrant Flows Observed in Yemen

Migrant Arrivals in Yemen from the Horn of Africa (October 2019 - August 2020)



- Overall, 316 migrant arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa were recorded in August, a 45% decrease from 572 arrivals in July, but more significantly, a 91% decrease in relation to arrival during the same period in 2019 (3,653);
- Arrivals to Yemen from Somalia decreased by 41% in August (186) as compared to July (315), while arrivals from Djibouti decreased by 49%, from 257 in July to 130 in August;
- Most migrant arrivals were Ethiopian nationals (83%), while the remainder were Somali nationals (17%); all of the latter were travelling from Somalia;
- Overall, the majority of the migrants were adult males (75%), while 15% were adult females, and 11% were children, of which 56% (18) were UMCs.

Migrant Protection and Detention Concerns

- The widespread xenophobic and discriminatory narrative that depicts migrants as carriers of COVID-19 is increasingly creating obstacles to accessing essential services, most of all health care. As only half of the health facilities in Yemen are fully functional and resources are stretched, many hospitals refuse to provide assistance to migrants, especially if presenting symptoms of COVID-19. Referrals to private clinics are becoming more costly as additional tests are required to rule out the possibility that the patients have COVID-19;
- No Yemeni nationals were returned by force to Yemen from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the month of August;
- It is estimated that the overall stranded migrant population in the country amounts to over 14,500 individuals and their situation has seen little improvement. The number of migrants detained in dire conditions is on the rise. Many migrants, and notably minors, are being detained in increasingly inhumane conditions with most facilities not meeting the minimum standards for living conditions and access to critical assistance, including healthcare. Overcrowding and congestion is a huge concern owing to potential for disease outbreak, among other risks;
- Migrants continue to be forcibly transferred from northern to southern governorates with over 2,000 migrants reported to have been transferred since March. Forced transfers by authorities across frontlines and into hard to reach areas or areas of active hostilities present a significant threat to safety and physical well-being. The increasing protection risks migrants are facing in Yemen is concerning, particularly as COVID-19 increases discriminatory attitudes, and migrants' access to basic and health services as well as support from communities, is becoming severely limited.

Migrant Assistance

- IOM and partners are scaling up assistance focused on large-scale interventions to provide stranded migrants with minimum means to survive. Meanwhile, the provision of humanitarian assistance through IOM and partners' health and protection mobile teams continues, with COVID-19 hygiene and health prevention awareness sessions integrated into these interventions. However, the humanitarian response capacity in the country remains limited compared to migrants' increasing needs as their living conditions in the country are becoming more dire. Against this backdrop, IOM and the humanitarian community continue advocating for the need to resume VHR assistance as an immediate life-saving measure.

Quarantine Measures

- IOM and partners continue to advocate against discriminatory policies and human rights abuses against migrants, including detention and forced transfers, the establishment of quarantine centres to hold migrants, and the lack of inclusive solutions in the management of the COVID-19 crisis throughout the country. IOM also keeps advocating against quarantine centres for migrants and refugees only, as a measure to avail discriminatory policies of arrest, encampment, or detention.

ANNEX 1 | 2020 MRC REGISTRATION DATA

MRCs	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	MRC Total
Bosasso	242	252	162	173	169	173	201	106	1,478
Metema	149	220	246	41	8	0	0	0	664
Tog-Wajaale	200	267	38	33	0	0	0	0	538
Dire Dawa	182	168	89	0	0	0	0	0	439
Hargeisa	132	130	68	0	30	69	60	48	537
Obock	188	188	371	23	13	12	10	22	827
Semera	56	92	235	0	0	0	0	0	383
Monthly Total	1,149	1,317	1,209	270	220	254	271	176	3,945

ANNEX 2 | STATUS OF POINTS OF ENTRY IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGION

