

A REGION ON THE MOVE

2020 Mobility Overview in the East and Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula

IOM Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa



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Migrant Protection
and Reintegration



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



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Cover photo: Migrants are walking in the desert from Alat Ela to Fantahero. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfCFTA: African Continental Free Trade Area	MRC: Migration Response Centre
AFDB: African Development Bank	MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières
ASR: Assisted Spontaneous Return	MT: Mobility Tracking
AVR: Assisted Voluntary Return	NDRMC: National Disaster Risk Management Commission (Ethiopia)
AU: African Union	NFI: Non-Food Item
BTI: Bertelsmann Transformation Index	OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – UN
COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019	OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – UN
COVAX: COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access	PoC: Protection of Civilians
DRC: Danish Refugee Council	PoC: Point of Control
DSI: Durable Solutions Initiative (Somalia)	PoE: Point of Entry
DTM: Displacement Tracking Matrix	PME: Participatory Mapping Exercise
DWG: Drought Working Group (Ethiopia)	PMM: Population Mobility Mapping
EAC: East Africa Community	R-ARCSS: Revitalization Agreement of the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
EHoA: East and Horn of Africa	RDH: Regional Data Hub
EU: European Union	RMMS: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
EVD: Ebola Virus Disease	SNNP: Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (Ethiopia)
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization – UN	TGoNU: Transitional Government of National Unity (South Sudan)
FEWS NET: Famine Early Warning Systems Network	UMC: Unaccompanied Migrant Children
FM: Flow Monitoring	UN: United Nations
FMP: Flow Monitoring Point	UNDESA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
FMR: Flow Monitoring Registry	UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
FMS: Flow Monitoring Survey	UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugees
FSNAU: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit	UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
FSNMS: Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring System	UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan
GDP: Gross Domestic Product	USD: United States Dollar
GPAA: Greater Pibor Administrative Area (South Sudan)	VHR: Voluntary Humanitarian Return
HoA: Horn of Africa	WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee	WFP: World Food Programme – UN
IATA: International Air Transport Association	WHO: World Health Organization
ICCG: Inter-Cluster Coordination Group	
IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	
IDP: Internally Displaced Person	
IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification	
IOM: International Organization for Migration – UN	
MENA: Middle East and North Africa	
MMC: Mixed Migration Centre	
MMP: Missing Migrants Project	

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Migrants are walking in the desert from Alat Ela to Fantahero. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

I. HIGHLIGHTS



Displaced person affected by floods living at Kinyinya site located in Bujumbura Rural province, Mutimbuzi commune. Photo: © ICVA

COVID-19 IMPACT

In the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA), the first coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) positive cases were reported in mid-March 2020 and by the end of the year, over 281,000 people were infected. The fatality rate (1.5%) was below the Africa (2.2%) and global (2.2%) averages, with contained numbers of severity cases. Between 14 and 25 March, all countries in the region had either closed their airports and land borders (Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda) or implemented partial closures with restrictions to and from countries with high numbers of COVID-19 positive cases (Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania). Migrants' awareness of COVID-19 was not high during the first weeks of the pandemic but rose in subsequent months to roughly 70 per cent. The difficulties migrants reported to have faced as a direct result of the pandemic mostly revolved around challenges in sending and receiving remittances, while a large proportion also had issues with access to basic services. By the end of 2020, access to vaccination was expected in early 2021.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Overview

The EHOA region was home to 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 3.6 million refugees and asylum-seekers as of December 2020.

Burundi

Burundi continued to be affected by devastating, recurring natural disasters with over 115,200 IDPs present in the country as of 31 December 2020. To date, the risk of flooding remains very high, especially in the Gatumba zone, and new waves of displacement are likely to take place throughout 2021.

Ethiopia

The year 2020 in Ethiopia was notably marked by the conflict that broke out in the northern Tigray region in early November. However, climate shocks, the desert locust infestation and the COVID-19 pandemic have all continued to affect displacement and migration trends as well as food insecurity and livelihoods nationwide. By the end of the year, a total of 2 million IDPs were recorded across the country.

Somalia

Heavy floods, desert locusts and the COVID-19 pandemic – the triple threat – have contributed to a deterioration of the humanitarian conditions since the beginning of the year, alongside drought and conflict. The prolonged humanitarian crisis in Somalia critically hinders the pursuit of long-term recovery and durable solutions for the 2.6 million IDPs present in the country.

South Sudan

Escalating sub-national violence continued in the second half of 2020 despite the signing of the peace deal and the establishment of the revitalized government, triggering new waves of displacement. Severe flooding also remained a significant driver of displacement. At the end of the year, there were a total of 1.6 million displaced persons across South Sudan.

REGIONAL MIXED MIGRATION TRENDS

Migration Movements

- Over **2 million movements** were tracked through **112 flow monitoring points (FMPs)** in the EHOA flow monitoring (FM) network.
- Health Vulnerability Monitoring Network: **614,878** movements were tracked through a total of 35 FMPs established in South Sudan (16), Burundi (11), and Uganda (8).
- Migration Routes Network: **482,324** movements were tracked through 34 FMPs established in Djibouti (6), Ethiopia (6), Kenya (4), Somalia (7), the United Republic of Tanzania (5), and Yemen (6).
- Movements Between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania Network: **466,972** movements were tracked through nine FMPs in Burundi.
- Cross-border Movements Network: **273,799** movements were tracked through FMPs in South Sudan (14) and Uganda (3).

Migration Routes

- Out of the 482,324 movements observed, **33 per cent** were tracked along the Eastern Route, **54 per cent** along the Horn of Africa (HoA) Route, **1 per cent** along the Northern Route and **12 per cent** along the Southern Route. Due to the impact of COVID-19, these trends are in striking difference from the usual mobility dynamics observed in the region; historically, most migration in the region is directed towards the Eastern Corridor.
- Overall, **28 per cent** were migrating towards Somalia, **25 per cent** intended to travel to Saudi Arabia, **15 per cent** to Ethiopia, **12 per cent** to Djibouti, **7 per cent** to Kenya, and another **7 per cent** were headed to Yemen.
- Along the Eastern Route, **77 per cent** were migrating towards Saudi Arabia, **21 per cent** were headed to Yemen, and around **2 per cent** to other countries on the Arabian Peninsula.
- Spontaneous returns from Yemen to **Djibouti (6,094)** and **Somalia (1,288)** were also tracked in 2020.
- Along the Northern Route, only **22 per cent** movements were tracked with the intention of going to Europe, mainly to Germany (62%) and Italy (23%).
- Along the Southern Route, only **3 per cent** movements were tracked with the intention of going to South Africa, while the majority were travelling to Kenya (61%) and the United Republic of Tanzania (28%).
- As of the end of 2020, over **400** migrants were stranded on average in any one month in Somalia and Djibouti, respectively, and an estimated **32,700** were stranded in Yemen.
- IOM registered **36,632 Ethiopian nationals** returning from Saudi Arabia upon arrival at the Bole airport in Addis Ababa in 2020, over 93 per cent of which reported that they were returning involuntarily. A further **13,895 Yemeni returnees** from Saudi Arabia were also tracked by DTM in Yemen.
- In 2020, IOM facilitated the voluntary return of **319 Ethiopian migrants**, 248 of whom were returning from Yemen and of **329 Somali migrants** by boat from Aden in Yemen to Berbera. This marks respectively a 93 per cent decrease and an 80 per cent decrease compared to 2019 before COVID-19 travel restrictions were in place.
- During the same period, **37,535 new arrivals (73% decrease compared to 2019)** from the HoA were tracked by FM teams through six FMPs along the coast of Yemen.
- The number of arrivals of EHoA migrants by sea to Greece, Italy and Spain decreased by almost **27 per cent** compared to 2018 (from 4,624 in 2018 to 3,452 in 2019).
- A total of **58 migrants** were reported missing or deceased in 2020, with 51 in Djibouti, 5 in Somalia, and 2 in Rwanda.

Migration Routes Profiles

- The two main nationalities of migrants tracked through FM were **Ethiopian (74%)** and **Somali (18%)**.
- **56 per cent** were men, **28 per cent** were women and **16 per cent** were children.
- Of the total population tracked, **2 per cent** were children under the age of five years, **2 per cent** were unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs), **3 per cent** were pregnant and/or lactating women, another **1 per cent** were elderly (60+) and **2 per cent** were people living with disabilities.

Migration Routes Reasons

- **55 per cent** were travelling for economic reasons, **11 per cent** due to seasonal reasons, **9 per cent** were short-term local movement, **8 per cent** due to natural disaster, **5 per cent** to escape conflict, while **2 per cent** were moving for tourism, and another **3 per cent** for unknown reasons.

Migration Response Centres

- **8,093 migrants** were registered across **7 MRCs** in the region in 2020.



Scene of life on the Massagara site that welcomes Ethiopian migrants returning from Yemen waiting to be moved to Ar Aoussa. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

II. INTRODUCTION



Three young women are sitting under a tree in Alat Ela. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

The COVID-19 outbreak has marked the beginning of a new global paradigm, where unprecedented shifts in the capacity of governments to issue multiple restrictive measures impacting movements were observed in a highly fluid mobility environment. In line with a continental trend, the EHoA was less severely affected by the pandemic from a health perspective, and countries have been progressively lifting some movement restrictions during the second half of the year. However, the pandemic is far from over, as governments and authorities continue to issue new mobility restrictions and policy changes, while the socio-economic impact of repeated lockdowns and renewed closures of points of entry (PoEs) are yet to be fully assessed.

Home to an estimated population of 331 million, of which 42 per cent are under the age of 15, the region hosted 6.2 million international migrants at mid-year 2020.¹ With over 6.5 million IDPs and more than 3.6 million refugees and asylum-seekers recorded by the end of the year,² countries in the EHoA have continued to experience significant levels of internal and cross-border mobility, although at a reduced pace. Mobility in the region is still triggered by a combination of persistent insecurity and conflict, harsh climatic shocks and conditions, in addition to socio-economic drivers and more traditional seasonal factors, fueling intra- and extra-regional movements. These intertwined flows of IDPs, migrants and refugees are strongly influenced by historical and cultural links such as those tying similar communities separated by borders in the HoA and in the Great Lakes region, as well as by dynamics of labour supply and demand, locally and towards the Gulf countries. At the same time, the pandemic has also generated new trends, while exacerbating existing vulnerabilities of the most fragile population groups.

Hosting some of the world's most severe protracted displacement contexts, the region has also witnessed new waves of displacement due to hostilities affecting the Tigray region of Ethiopia since the beginning of November. Multiple countries were also hit by repeated drought, a cyclone, and regular flash and riverine floods. The pandemic has also accentuated the existing socio-economic vulnerabilities of these displaced populations and further hampered the achievement of sustainable and durable solutions. These aspects are further investigated in the *Forced Displacement* section with a focus on four countries which have reported the most volatile conditions in 2020.

New mobility trends were particularly evident along the Eastern Route, which runs from the HoA to the Arabian Peninsula, in particular to Saudi Arabia, and which has long been the most relevant migratory corridor in the region in terms of volume and characteristics. At the beginning of the outbreak, when restrictions were the most severe, a switch in routes was observed as migrants attempted to cross through Somalia rather than Djibouti where border closures were enforced more effectively. Soon enough, many stranded migrants were reported in different parts of the Horn, unable to proceed or return to their place of origin. The increased pressure, coupled with fears of contamination, resulted in a widespread xenophobic and discriminatory narrative, limited or curtailed access to coping strategies and basic services along the journey, in addition to episodes of detentions and deportations. By the end of the year, it is estimated that at least 2,700 migrants were stranded across the region, with a further 32,700 EHoA migrants stranded in Yemen, out of which an estimated 6,200 were in detention. In 2020, only 37,535 new arrivals from the HoA were tracked along the coast of Yemen compared to the same period in 2019, corresponding to a reduction of 73 per cent. Overall, this corridor reported a 66 per cent decrease in movements due to a sharp fall in monthly movements as of March 2020 (from 468,234 movements in 2019 to 157,702 in 2020). Most interestingly and of relevance were the return trends observed from Saudi Arabia and Yemen to the Horn, which were halted or reduced during the year, whereas an increasing number of migrants were observed to return spontaneously from Yemen to the Horn using the same network of smugglers. The complexities, risks and consequences of such revamped bi-directional trends are analyzed in depth in the *Regional Mixed Migration Trends* section, together with an analysis of migrant movements along the other main corridors affecting the EHoA.

This edition builds on multiple IOM data sources, whereby the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) constitutes the main methodology used to track and monitor displacement and population mobility, as it maps IDP and returnee stocks, migration flows and characteristics of populations on the move.³ Further migrant data is collected by IOM through modules targeting specific sub-groups of these populations at different stages of their migration journey. The analysis is further enriched through findings of multiple research efforts being conducted along the Eastern and Southern Routes, as well as external sources to provide a holistic understanding of the articulated population movement dynamics stemming from this region. To this end, a Regional Data Hub (RDH) was established at the beginning of 2018 to promote evidence-based migration dialogue, lead regional research efforts and foster a multi-layered analysis of regional migration data.⁴

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

A new regional cooperation agreement aimed at harmonizing labour migration policies in the region, also known as the 'Nairobi Process', is signed by 11 member states on 21 January.

SOMALIA

Somalia declares a national emergency over the desert locust invasion in February.

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

Swarms of locusts reach South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, while they continue to spread further in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, threatening crop production, food security and livelihoods in the region.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

The EAC announces its plans to put in place a single currency for the region by 2024.

EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY (EAC)

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

On 13 March, the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the region are declared in Ethiopia and Kenya. Almost all countries in the region imposed some level of mobility restrictions, by suspending air travel, closing land and sea border points and by adopting countrywide curfews and lockdowns.

ETHIOPIA

Due to COVID-19, Ethiopia postpones the parliamentary elections scheduled for August.

ETHIOPIA

On 8 April, Ethiopia declares a five-month state of emergency on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is approved by Parliament on 10 April.

BURUNDI

General elections are held despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and new President Évariste Ndayishimiye is elected on 20 May.

AFRICAN UNION (AU)*

The commencement of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is postponed from the intended start date of 1 July due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ETHIOPIA

The death of a popular singer and political activist on 29 June sparks unrest in the Oromia region and results in a nationwide internet shutdown.

On 22 February, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) is established in South Sudan.

SOUTH SUDAN

On 20 February, President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo signs a federal electoral bill that allows ordinary Somalis to vote in parliamentary elections for the first time since the 1969 Somali parliamentary election.

SOMALIA

* DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

On 25 June, WHO declares over the tenth outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Heavy rainfall hit the region from April through May, leading to severe flooding and landslides particularly affecting areas in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

Kenya is elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, defeating Djibouti.

KENYA

The upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections, initially scheduled for 27 November, are postponed.

SOMALIA

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

After a few months of disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, three countries in the region resume international international flights, Kenya and Rwanda on 1 August and Somalia on 3 August, while Ethiopia resumes land and air transport services to neighbouring Djibouti.

SOUTH SUDAN

On 13 August, President Salva Kiir announces a three-month state of emergency in Jonglei State due to sub-national violence and flooding.

SOUTH SUDAN / SUDAN *

On 31 August, the landmark Sudanese Peace Agreement aimed to achieve stability and peace in Sudan after decades of conflict is signed, under the mediation of South Sudan.

SOUTH SUDAN

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) begins the process of withdrawing protection forces from the various Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites (Bor, Wau, Juba, Malakal and Bentiu) aiming to redeploy troops to hotspots across the country. The re-designation of PoC sites into IDP camps started in Wau and Bor.

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), in collaboration with government ministries and partners, activates a Drought Working Group (DWG) following sustained drought conditions in parts of the country.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

General elections are held on 28 October and President John Magufuli is re-elected for another five-year term.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

A new wave of locusts threatens food security across the Horn of Africa, in particular Eritrea and northern Kenya but also Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

ETHIOPIA

In early November, conflict breaks out in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, forcing many to flee their homes for safety, including across the border into Sudan.

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

The parliamentary elections scheduled for 29 August are postponed a second time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ETHIOPIA

In early July, President Salva Kiir announces the start of an extensive countrywide disarmament effort combined with communal dialogues aimed at eradicating intercommunal violence in South Sudan.

SOUTH SUDAN

Ethiopia lifts the state of emergency linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and reopens its border on 23 September to tourists and foreigners.

ETHIOPIA

On 11 September, tensions between host community and refugees escalate into a violent attack in northern Uganda, causing the death of 10 South Sudanese refugees. This likely contributes to increased return movement of South Sudanese refugees back to South Sudan.

SOUTH SUDAN / UGANDA

Cyclone Gati, the strongest tropical cyclone ever recorded in Somalia, makes landfall in Puntland's Bari region on 22 November, affecting an estimated 180,000 people, including 42,000 displaced persons.

SOMALIA

At least eight migrants died by drowning and 12 are missing at sea after smugglers forced them off a boat near Djibouti on 5 October. These were all Ethiopians returning to the Horn of Africa after a failed attempt to reach Saudi Arabia through Yemen due to COVID-19 border closures. A similar incident occurred on 17 October, with another 12 migrants found dead and more missing off the coast of Djibouti.

DJIBOUTI

Saudi Arabia's labour reform initiative is launched on 4 November. These reforms aim to ease foreign workers' contractual restrictions, and could have a tangible impact on the prevention of exploitation and abuse of vulnerable foreign workers in Saudi Arabia.

SAUDI ARABIA *

* Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia and Sudan are not under the coordination of the Nairobi Regional Office, events in these countries affect countries in the region. The same applies to African Union (AU) events.

III. HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGION?

COVID-19, which has affected the health of millions globally, is first and foremost a public health crisis. By the end of the year, almost 84 million people were reported to have been infected by the virus, and 1.8 million had died globally.⁵ Healthcare systems worldwide have been severely tested, highlighting the importance of universal health coverage and the need to recruit, retain, and protect well-trained health workers. Beyond public health, the pandemic changed human mobility, social interactions, the economy, food security, access to education, and nearly every aspect of development worldwide.

In the EHoA, the first positive cases were recorded in Ethiopia and Kenya (13 March), followed by Rwanda (14 March), Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania (16 March), Djibouti (18 March), Eritrea (21 March), Uganda (22 March), Burundi (31 March), and South Sudan (5 April). By December 2020, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the region exceeded 281,000, representing 14.8 per cent of the total Africa COVID-19 cases. Across the region, most cases were asymptomatic and developed through community transmission. As of 31 December 2020, the number of COVID-19 related deaths in the region stood at 4,230. The fatality rate (1.5%) was still below the Africa (2.2%) and global (2.2%) averages, showing contained numbers of severity cases in the region. The number of cumulative recovered cases was 223,270 (79.4% of cases in the region).⁶

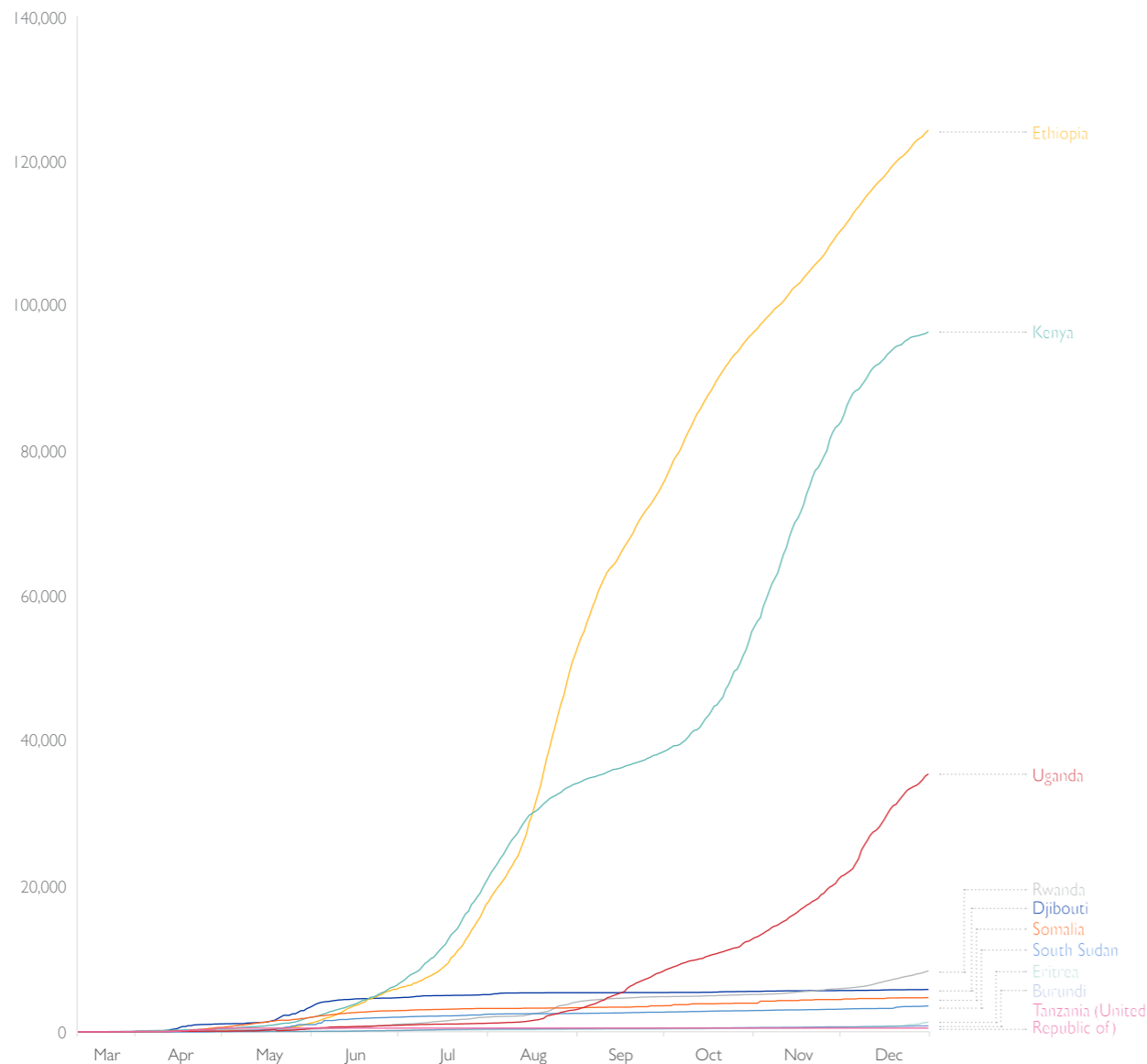


Figure 1: Incidence trend of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the EHoA (31 December 2020)

Governments worldwide had enforced a number of mobility restrictions in an attempt to curve the infection rates, and the EHoA was no exception. Evidence shows that African countries with more stringent lockdown restrictions experienced fewer COVID-19 cases than those with less restrictive policies, however, lockdown measures in Africa have been less effective than in other parts of the world, possibly because of challenges in enforcing such measures.⁷ The closure of most international and national airports was among the first measures adopted, closely followed by restrictions on land and water borders. Between 14 and 25 March, all countries in the region had either closed their airports and land borders (Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda) or implemented partial closures with restrictions to and from countries with high numbers of confirmed cases (Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania).⁸

At the onset of the pandemic, IOM's DTM set up a system to monitor restrictions at PoEs on a weekly basis looking at the type of PoE (air, land, blue), the operational status (open, closed or partially open), the type of restrictions in place (new immigration requirements and health measures) and the most affected populations. DTM expanded the regional coverage of the assessment from 272 PoEs in April to 344 in December 2020. At the beginning of this exercise, most PoEs were partially closed (28%), while a fairly large proportion (27%) had some sort of restrictions on movements. Others were either completely closed (20%) or had unknown operational status (25%). However, as the geographical coverage expanded and governments became more proactive in their efforts to curb the spread of the virus, more PoEs adopted measures to restrict movements, and in June, as COVID-19 cases spiked in the region, 51 per cent of PoEs were partially closed, including those that were open for commercial traffic only (26%), or for returning nationals and residents only (22%). In addition, 34 per cent were closed for all kinds of movements, and only 11 per cent were open. In contrast, as restrictions were eased with the stabilization of COVID-19 cases by the end of the year, 59 per cent were fully operational, 22 per cent were fully closed, 19 per cent were partially operational, and none had unknown operational status.

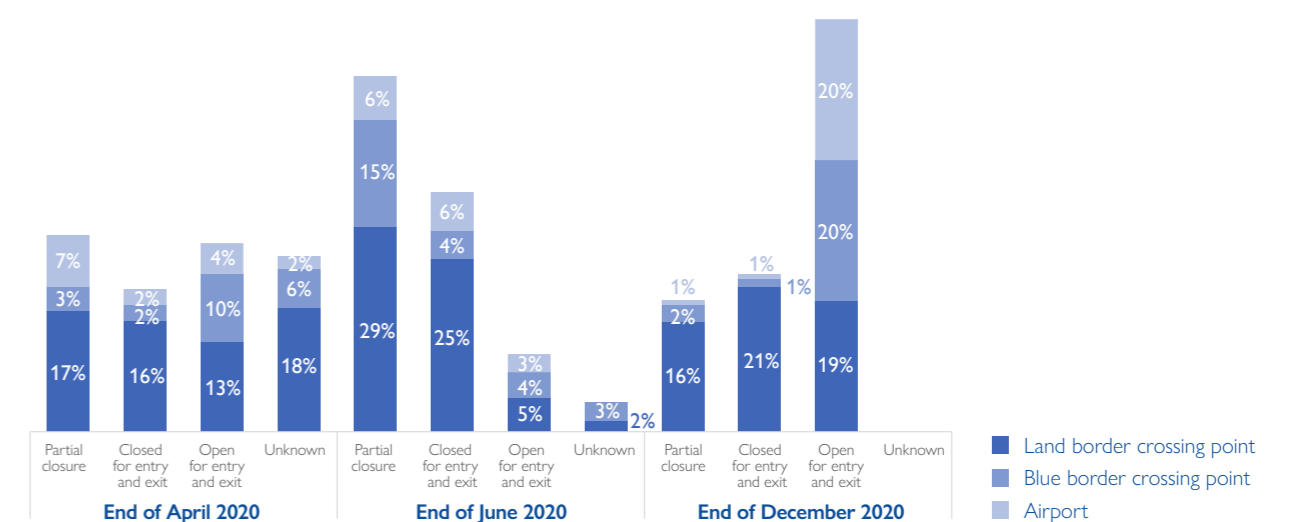
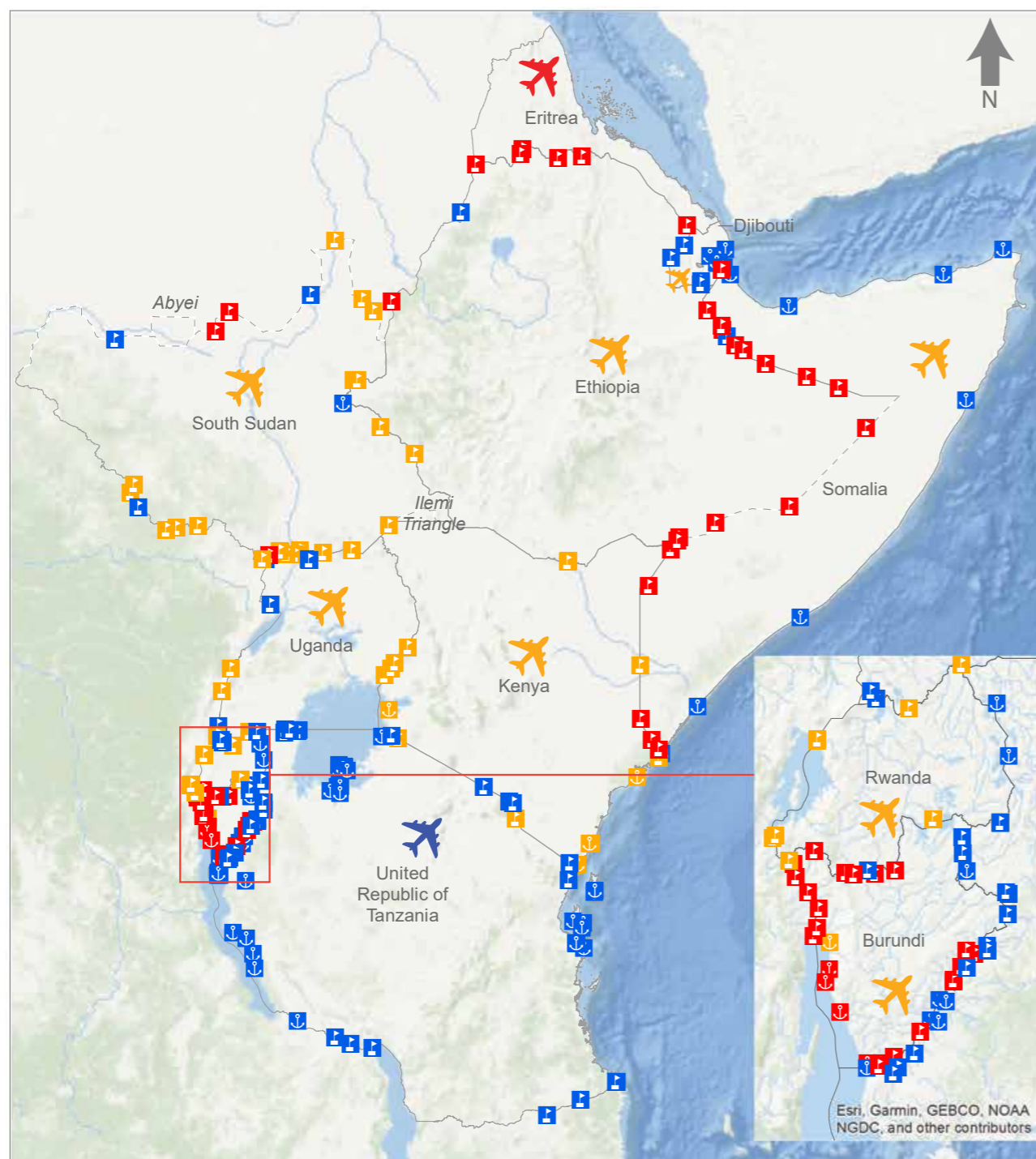


Figure 2: Operational status of PoEs (April - December 2020)

The effect of travel restrictions reverberated across all social, economic and political aspects of life, affecting disproportionately those depending on mobility for their survival and livelihoods, and those depending on informal employment or living on daily wages for which “work from home” modalities were not an option. The absence of social welfare benefits such as free medical care or unemployment benefits, the closure of schools and living in densely populated settings rendered protecting against the pandemic and navigating the numerous restrictions particularly cumbersome to some.



Status of international flights*		Status of other border points	Source:
Not Restrictive	Partially Restrictive	Sea Border Point	International Air Transport Association (IATA) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)
Totally Restrictive	----- Disputed Areas	Land Border Point	Date: 31 December 2020
Countries East and Horn of Africa		Closed for entry and exit	Disclaimer: These maps are for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.
		Partial closure	*Details of the travel restriction can be found on IATA website: https://www.iata.org/
		Open for entry and exit	
		Unknown	

Figure 3: Status of PoEs in the EHoA region (31 December 2020)



Children wash their hands at a water point in a displacement site in Marib. Photo: © IOM / Olivia Headon

Migration flows monitored by IOM in the region fell drastically in 2020 with a 40 per cent decrease in overall movements, showing that while human mobility had significantly reduced, movements had not stopped. Early on, IOM assessed the level of awareness of migrants to COVID-19 and found that migrants were not particularly aware of the outbreak during the initial weeks of the crisis. That awareness quickly rose in the subsequent months, and by the end of the year, over 70 per cent of migrants tracked reported having some level of awareness about COVID-19.

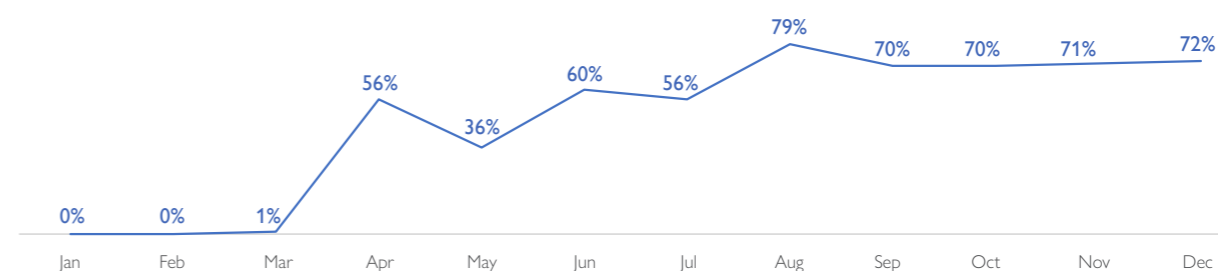
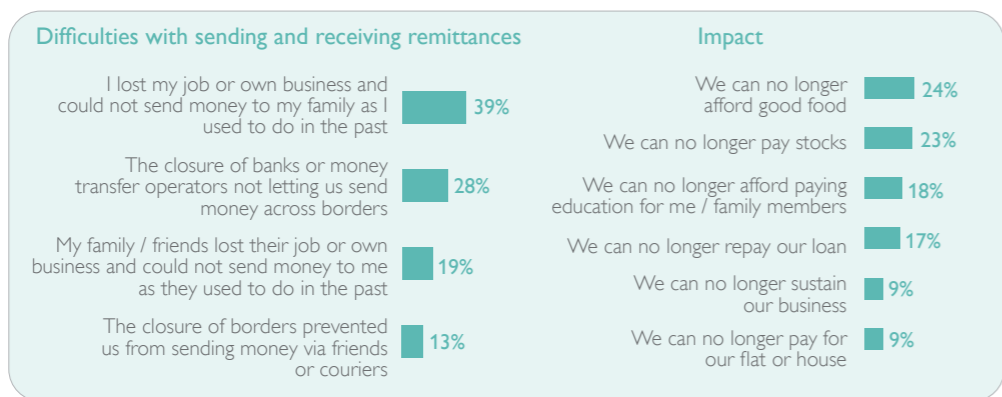
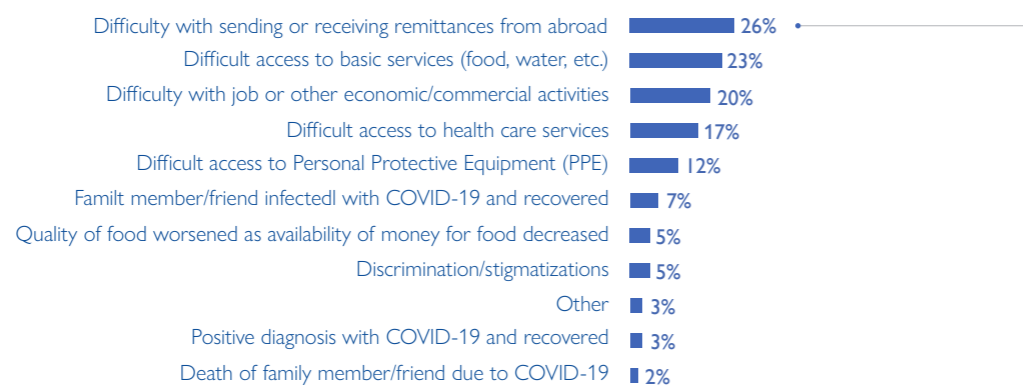


Figure 4: COVID-19 awareness over time

Migrants also reported to have fairly accurate information regarding preventive measures and COVID-19 symptoms. Many recognized handwashing with soap or sanitizer and the practice of social distancing as effective risk preventive measures, while fever, dry cough, headache, and difficulty breathing were the most mentioned symptoms. Difficulties migrants reported to have faced as a direct result of the pandemic mostly revolved around challenges in sending and receiving remittances as well as issues with access to basic services. In particular, migrants were either not able to send remittances to their families as done in the past because of lost jobs or businesses, or could no longer receive remittances because their sponsors lost their income. Moreover, the closure of money transfer organizations and the closure of borders constituted additional challenges, preventing migrants from sending money through friends and couriers.²



While the pandemic had caused a global economic crisis, Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted 2.1 per cent in 2020, the continent's first recession in half a century. The situation of individual countries in the region varied significantly.¹⁰ Djibouti's real GDP growth slowed to 1.4 per cent in 2020 from 7.8 per cent in 2019, but its recovery prospects are good, supported by the rapid recovery of port activities as international trade demand increases. Ethiopia's economy grew by 6.1 per cent in 2020, down from 8.4 per cent in 2019. Growth was led by the services and industry sectors, whereas the hospitality, transport, and communications sectors were adversely affected by the pandemic and associated containment measures. In 2020, Kenya's GDP growth was expected to decelerate to 1.4 per cent from 5.4 per cent in 2019. Growth was supported by agriculture, while weaknesses in services and industry have had a dampening effect. Rwanda's GDP contracted by 0.4 per cent as trade, transportation, and tourist services were severely affected. Somalia's multiple shocks caused a 1.5 per cent contraction in GDP. Growth was also affected by reduced foreign direct investment, a shrinkage in remittances caused by the global recession, and bans on livestock exports by the Gulf countries. South Sudan's real GDP growth was expected to decline by 3.6 per cent in 2020, mainly due to disruptions in the services sector, the impact of floods and desert locusts on the agriculture sector, as well as the collapse in global oil prices. Meanwhile, the economic growth slowed to 2.1 per cent in the United Republic of Tanzania and declined by 0.5 per cent in Uganda. Burundi fell into recession as its real GDP contracted by 3.3 per cent.

To recover from the pandemic, besides enforcing mass testing and risk mitigation measures, substantial resources were allocated to develop vaccines to protect against the virus and its numerous strains. Multiple pharmaceutical companies developed vaccines at an unprecedented rate and by the end of the year, many countries had started vaccination operations or had developed plans to roll out such operations. In an effort to ensure equitable vaccine distribution regardless of the level of income of a country, the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) is an effort to ensure that international resources are coordinated to enable low to middle-income countries equitable access to COVID-19 tests, therapies and vaccines.¹¹ Vaccinations in the EHoA began in 2021, with many countries receiving first batches of vaccine doses in early March.



Handwashing during a distribution in Yemen. Photo: © IOM / Rami Ibrahim

IV. FORCED DISPLACEMENT

OVERVIEW

Besides labour and family migration, humanitarian crises have also contributed to the 281 million international migrants recorded in 2020, with an increase of 17 million in the number of refugees and asylum-seekers between 2000 and 2020. During this year, the worldwide number of persons forcibly displaced across national borders stood at 34 million, double the number in 2000.¹² Between January and June, a total of 14.6 million new displacements were recorded, of which natural disasters triggered around 9.8 million, and conflict and violence 4.8 million. Displacement in the EHoA (more than 12% of the global new displacements in 2020) was also predominantly triggered by natural disasters, despite the growing trend in conflict-induced displacement mainly due to communal violence across the region. Indeed, over 1.2 million new disaster-related displacements were recorded in the first six months of 2020, mostly due to heavy flooding, landslides and renewed drought, compared to almost 497,500 new conflict-related displacements.¹³ By the end of the year, the EHoA was home to 6.5 million IDPs and 3.6 million refugees and asylum-seekers.¹⁴

Many of the world's protracted displacement contexts, economic crises, conflicts and climate shocks, including the worst desert locust infestation in decades, were already present in the EHoA region, before the pandemic hit the region. This public health emergency has further accentuated the existing socio-economic vulnerabilities of the displaced population. As many IDPs seek better job and livelihood opportunities as well as an improved access to services, they are most likely to take refuge in urban settings. However, they are often exposed to limited economic opportunities, opening the door to extreme poverty. Without access to social protection, IDPs are highly susceptible to discrimination, exploitation and unsafe working conditions, and with the COVID-19 outbreak, they are also at a higher risk of losing their jobs. In Somalia, for instance, some IDPs have lost their livelihoods as they are no longer doing domestic work at the host community's houses due to the fear of community transmission.

In the region, a large majority remained internally displaced by ongoing conflict and localized violence, in particular communal clashes and disputes over ethnicity, land and access to resources. Communal clashes were prevalent in Ethiopia and South Sudan, while instances of violence linked to the political or national conflict still occurred in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan. But 2020 did not come without new waves of violence. Since the beginning of November, hostilities have been ongoing in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, bordering Eritrea and Sudan. This crisis has pushed more than 56,000 Ethiopian refugees to flee to neighbouring Sudan since early November,¹⁵ and a steady influx of daily arrivals continues in 2021. In addition, the Tigray region is known to be home to several refugee camps hosting an estimated 96,000 Eritrean refugees,¹⁶ many of whom have also fled in search of safety and food. Humanitarian access has been highly limited by the prevailing insecurity and violence which have hampered the distribution of relief aid to the affected population.

It is not just violence contributing to displacement in the region. High levels of vulnerability and exposure to climatic shocks and environmental change have made the region more prone to disaster risk. Harsh climate conditions, including Cyclone Gati, the strongest tropical cyclone ever recorded in Somalia, have sustained the damaging effect of a prolonged drought and abnormal seasonal floods on food security and livelihoods across the region. Drought-affected areas were mostly located in the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya and Somalia, southeastern and southern Ethiopia and parts of Uganda,¹⁷ while flash and riverine floods affected communities in almost all the countries in the region. In other instances, populations were forced to move due to the lack of livelihoods and/or service provision. These recurring climatic events and associated food shortages remain among the current obstacles to achieving durable solutions for IDPs.

6.5M
Estimated IDPs

3.6M
Estimated refugees and asylum-seekers

Country	IDPs	Date	Refugees	Date
Burundi	115,221	Dec-20	80,344	Dec-20
Djibouti	No IDPs reported	Dec-20	31,986	Dec-20
Democratic Republic of the Congo*	5,500,000	Feb-20	491,727	Dec-20
Eritrea	No IDPs reported	Dec-20	201	Dec-20
Ethiopia	1,959,797	Dec-20	802,821	Dec-20
Kenya	163,400	Dec-19	504,854	Dec-20
Rwanda	No IDPs reported	Dec-20	144,662	Dec-20
Somalia	2,648,000	Feb-18	24,453	Dec-20
South Sudan	1,615,765	Dec-20	316,212	Dec-20
Sudan*	2,399,433	Jan-20	1,040,000	Dec-20
Uganda	33,100	Dec-19	1,446,378	Dec-20
United Republic of Tanzania	No IDPs reported	Dec-20	287,331	Dec-20
Yemen*	3,650,000	Mar-19	200,744	Dec-20

*Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Yemen are not under the coordination of the Nairobi Regional Office for EHoA, crises in these countries affect countries in the region.

DISCLAIMER: This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOH.

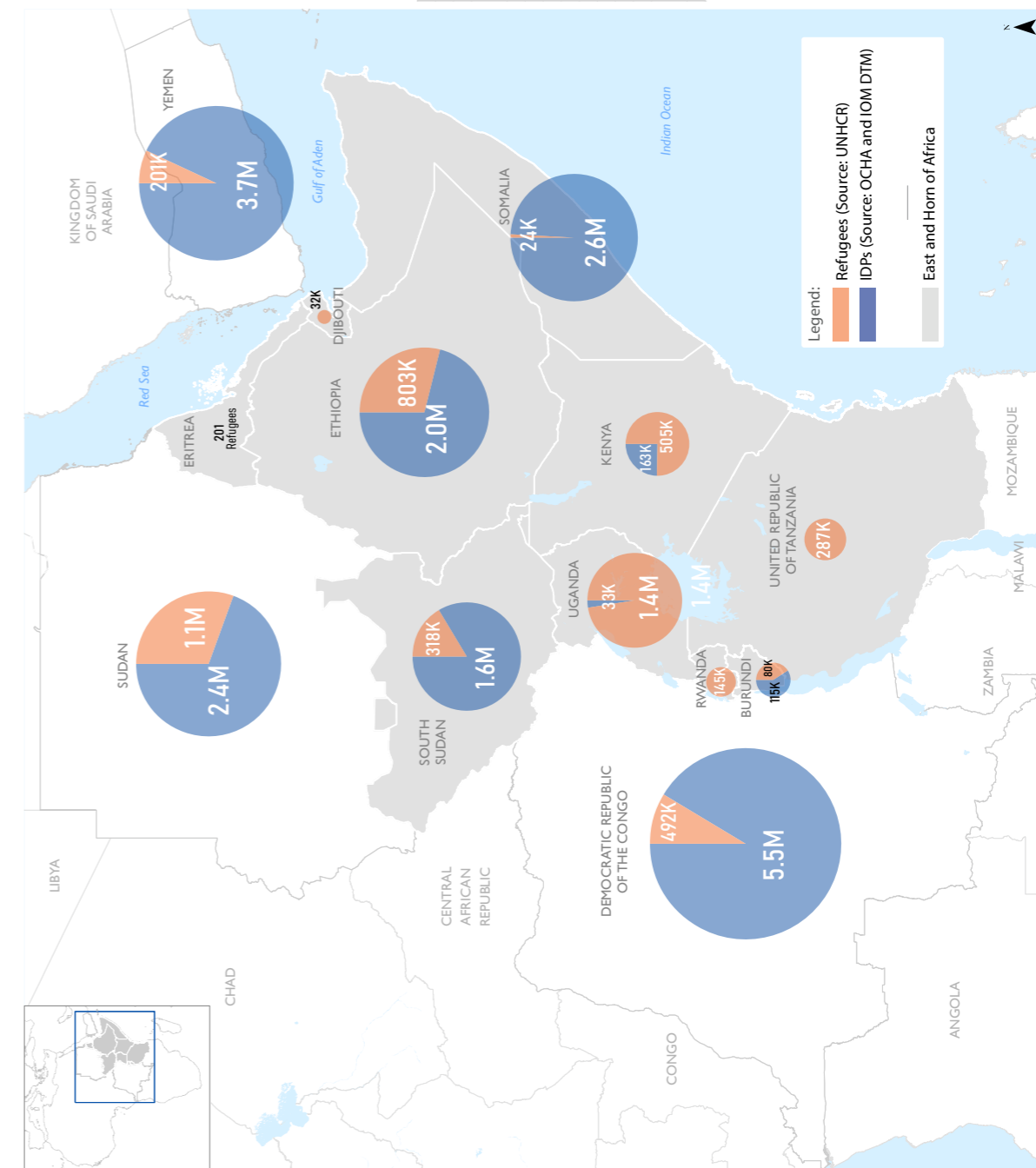


Figure 5: Overview of IDPs, refugees and asylum-seekers in the EHoA (December 2020)

THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF RECURRENT CLIMATE SHOCKS IN BURUNDI

In 2020, Burundi saw a relative peaceful transition of power following the general elections held on 20 May for the president and the National Assembly which brought Évariste Ndayishimiye, candidate of the ruling party, to power. The structural challenges faced by the country in the past years have not changed with the new leadership: an economy in recession since 2015, scarce resources, very limited access to basic services and 90 per cent of the population being dependent on subsistence farming in a land that has very high exposure to extreme climatic events.¹⁸

During this year, Burundi continued to be affected by devastating natural disasters which triggered new waves of internal displacement. An estimated 115,200 IDPs were present in the country as of 31 December 2020,¹⁹ which is an 11 per cent increase from 2019. Climate-induced displacement was the most common reported reason (81%) and a large majority of IDPs was living with host communities (83%), while 13 per cent were living in displacement sites and 1 per cent in collective centres. Most IDPs were located in the provinces of Bujumbura Mairie (24%), Bujumbura Rural (13%) and Cankuzo (13%).²⁰

Heavy floods, torrential rains and strong winds were particularly damaging during the months of April and November 2020. Between 13 and 19 April 2020, a total of 40,155 people were affected by natural disasters, of which almost all (99.7%) were displaced from their homes in the provinces of Bujumbura Rural (98%), Rumonge (2%) and Bubanza (0.1%).²¹ Another 4,294 affected persons were recorded between 7 and 21 November 2020, mostly due to torrential rains and strong winds. Of these, almost one third (28%) were also IDPs.²² In the Bujumbura Rural province, the rising water levels of the Rusizi river resulted in severe floods that provoked the displacement of many in the Gatumba zone on 19 April. The same zone was hit by flooding a second time on 1 May and a new wave of displacement followed. Overall, more than 45,000 persons were affected by the Gatumba floods, including an estimated 17,800 displaced persons.²³

Many Burundians lost their homes and livelihoods due to the Gatumba floods. Indeed, the property damage was quite critical with a total of 4,974 destroyed houses, 2,684 flooded houses and 1,940 partially damaged houses.²⁴ Similarly, agricultural land was washed away by floodwaters which added further stress to the local communities as the vast majority of the Burundian population depends on agriculture.²⁵ IDPs found refuge in four temporary displacement sites, using different types of makeshift shelters such as tarpaulins (58%) and straw houses (36%).²⁶ To date, the risk of flooding remains very high in Gatumba and new waves of displacement are likely to take place throughout 2021. The Government of Burundi has put various initiatives forward to support the displaced populations in Gatumba. In particular, the government proposed to build emergency shelters for the IDPs as well as recommended to close the current temporary displacement sites at high risk of flooding, namely the Kigaramango site. The process to close this site started in February 2021, and with joint efforts from the government and humanitarian partners, some IDPs were assisted and have already left the site.

According to the latest IDP household return intention survey conducted by DTM in Gatumba, 92 per cent of the assessed households reported their intention to leave the displacement sites. Of these, more than half (51%) reported wanting to move to an area different than where they were prior to displacement, while 44 per cent reported wanting to go back to their areas of origin. The remaining (5%) had not yet decided at the time of the survey.²⁷ IDP return movements in Burundi have been affected and slowed down by many factors. For a substantial portion of the displaced population, the destruction of their houses (65%) remains the main obstacle to returning to their area of origin, followed by the limited availability of food (11%) and the lack of access to livelihoods (10%). The province of Kirundo recorded the highest percentage (69%) of households reporting the limited availability of food, mainly due to the prolonged drought in this province. Moreover, the lack of financial means (8%) represents an additional burden preventing the displaced population from restoring their destroyed houses.²⁸

The persistent adverse effects of natural disasters and high poverty rates, compounded by the socio-economic impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic, continue to pose a serious risk to food security in Burundi, which accounts for most of the humanitarian needs in the country.²⁹ In October 2020, livelihood zones along the border with the United Republic of Tanzania (Eastern Lowlands) and on the shores of Lake Tanganyika (Imbo Plains) were facing increased food insecurity (IPC Phase 2),³⁰ and are projected to remain at this level until May 2021.³¹

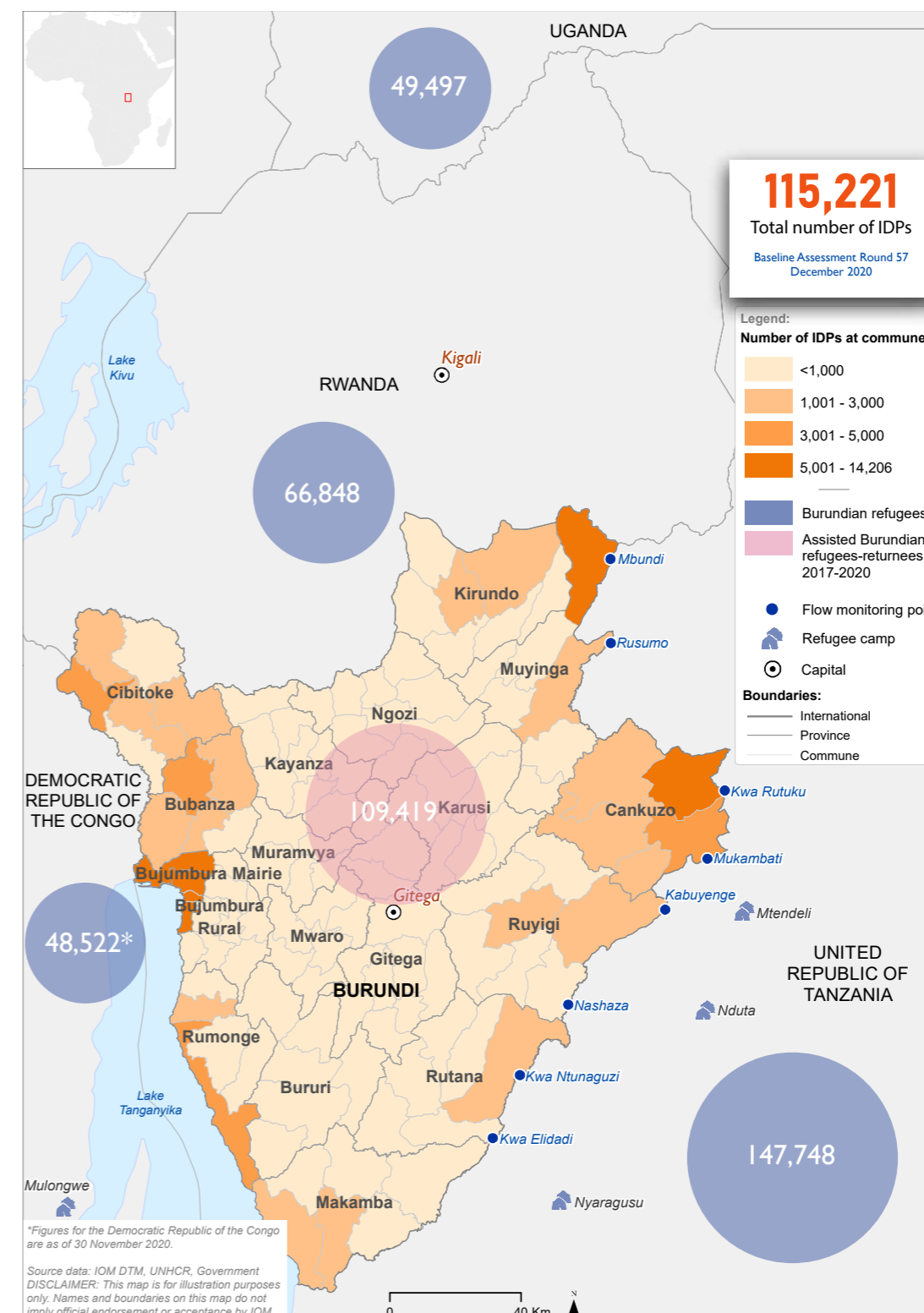


Figure 6: Burundi's returns, refugee and IDP presence by commune (December 2020)

A NEW COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN ETHIOPIA

The year 2020 in Ethiopia was notably marked by the conflict that broke out in the northern Tigray region in early November between regional forces and the federal government with the intervention of military forces, namely the Amhara militia and Eritrean military troops later in 2021. This new emergency situation triggered a humanitarian crisis of untold proportions as hundreds of thousands of civilians are reported to have been subjected to indiscriminate and targeted violence.³² Some sought refuge into neighbouring Sudan, while the majority was displaced within Tigray and into the bordering regions of Amhara and Afar. Between 4 November and 31 December, more than 55,000 refugees were reported to have fled the armed conflict in Tigray, seeking refuge in Sudan, mainly in the Um Raquba refugee camp.³³ More than 30 per cent were children while 5 per cent were over 60 years old. Another refugee camp, Tunaydbah, was also set up in the state of Gedaref by the end of December, as Um Raquba had already reached its maximum capacity.³⁴ Updated IDP figures for the Tigray region were not available throughout 2020, however, some initial estimates were published in early 2021, reporting a total of 1,064,176 IDPs across 178 sites in the Tigray (94%), Afar (4%) and Amhara (2%) regions.³⁵

Prior to the conflict, the Tigray region was hosting more than 100,000 IDPs, over 5,500 returning IDPs³⁶ and approximately 96,000 Eritrean refugees in four refugee camps, of whom 38 per cent were children under 18 years old.³⁷ Moreover, the region was already a fragile environment with an estimated 1.6 million people in need of assistance before the conflict, representing just under a third of Tigray's population.³⁸ By the end of the year, localized conflict and insecurity were still ongoing, mainly with instances reported in rural areas and around the cities of Mekelle, Shiraro and Shire. The dire humanitarian situation was characterized by a poor access to services, very limited food supplies, damaged infrastructures and severe needs across various sectors, particularly food security, protection/security, shelter, non-food items (NFIs), health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).³⁹ A total of 2.3 million people were targeted by the Humanitarian Response Plan for Northern Ethiopia, of which 50 per cent were children and 26 per cent were women.⁴⁰

The Tigray crisis has surely been pushed to the forefront in 2020, however, climate shocks, the desert locust infestation and the COVID-19 pandemic have all continued to affect displacement and migration trends as well as food insecurity and livelihoods nationwide. The combined impact of these factors, added to the conflict in Tigray, but also the instability in Oromia, fights in the Metekel zone of Benishangul Gumuz and the Konso zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP) region, have put an estimated 8.6 million people (16% of the 53 million people analyzed in rural Ethiopia) in high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between October and December 2020. Of these, 1.4 million people were facing emergency food insecurity (IPC Phase 4), mainly in the Afar (25%), Somali (23%) and Tigray (19%) regions.⁴¹ Given that more than 80 per cent of the Ethiopian population rely on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods,⁴² desert locusts remain a serious threat to crops and pastures, adding further stress to the already vulnerable agricultural and pastoralists communities. In the second half of the year, more swarms have been forming in the Afar and Somali regions, creating new generations of breeding which are expected to move further south at any time.⁴³

By the end of the year, an estimated 2 million IDPs were recorded across Ethiopia, excluding the Tigray region which was not accessible due to security issues at the time of data collection. This represents a 13 per cent increase from 2019. Internal displacement was mainly concentrated in the Somali (43%) and Oromia (31%) regions, with 12 per cent of all IDPs recorded in the SNNP region. The majority of IDPs reported being displaced as a result of conflict (62%), followed by drought (17%) and flash floods (9%).⁴⁴ In October, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), in collaboration with government ministries and partners, activated a Drought Working Group (DWG) following sustained and projected drought conditions in parts of the country.⁴⁵ In addition, Ethiopia continued to be the third largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, sheltering more than 802,000 refugees and asylum-seekers at the end of 2020, many of whom were South Sudanese (45%) and Somali (25%) nationals.⁴⁶

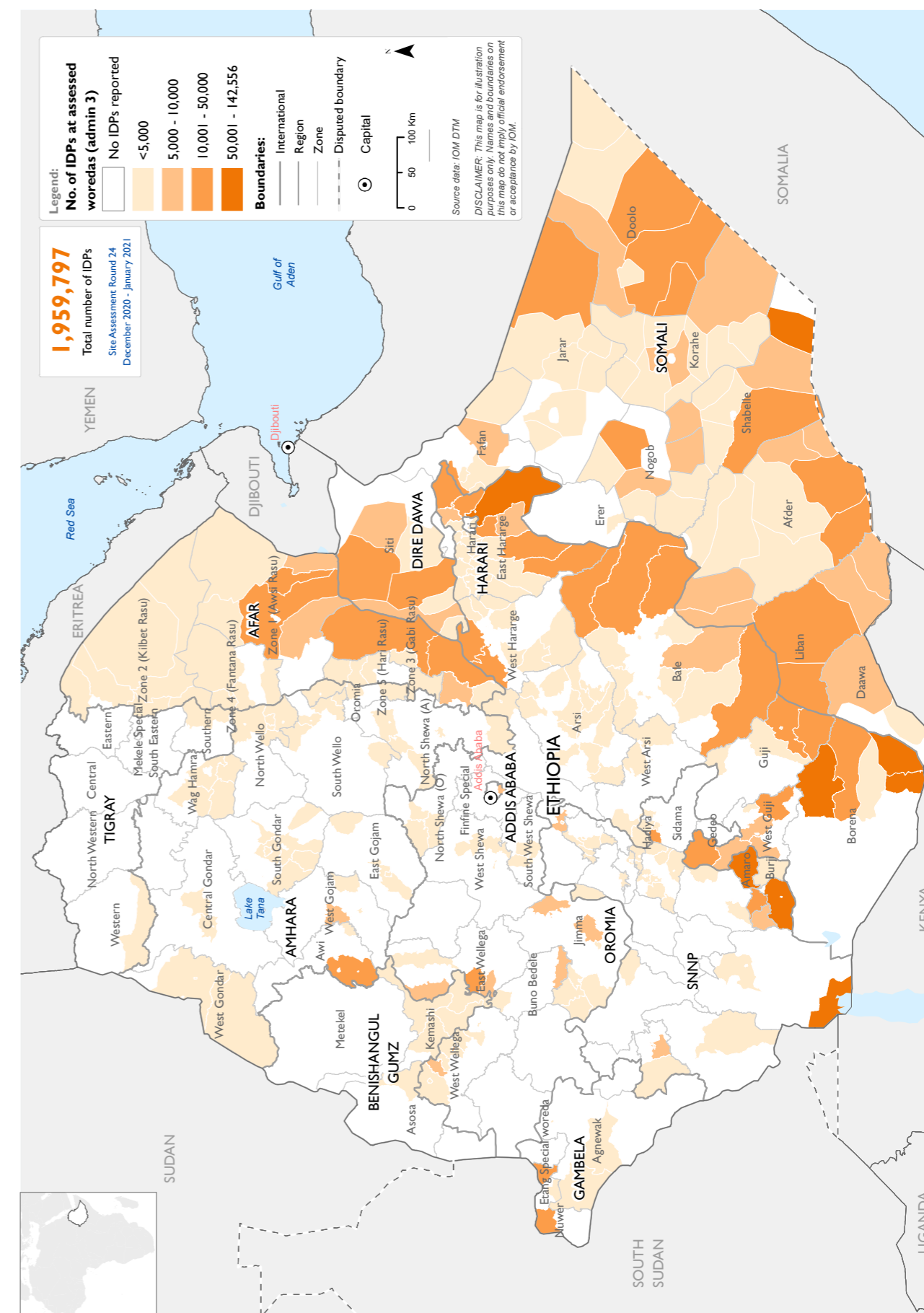


Figure 7: IDP presence in Ethiopia by woreda (December 2020)

THE CHALLENGED PURSUIT OF DURABLE SOLUTIONS IN SOMALIA

Ongoing armed fighting, recurring drought, severe flooding and the unprecedented desert locust infestation, have continued to push thousands into new displacement in Somalia alongside those in protracted displacement. In particular, heavy floods, desert locusts and the COVID-19 pandemic – the triple threat – have contributed to a deterioration of the humanitarian conditions since the beginning of the year. An estimated 5.2 million people, 63 per cent of which were children, were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020 and this number is projected to increase by 13 per cent in 2021.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the IDP estimate remained fixed at 2.6 million at the end of 2020, but an updated figure is to be officially endorsed in 2021.

Armed violence and insecurity were still ongoing, with increased political tensions associated with the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. An estimated 190,000 people are expected to be displaced in 2021 by potential political instability due to elections, combined with the continuing terrorist activity.⁴⁸ Alongside conflict, riverine and flash floods along the Shabelle river basin affected over 555,000 people in the states of Hirshabelle, South West and Jubaland and the regions of Sanaag and Banadir between June and September, 65 per cent of whom were displaced.⁴⁹ Following these floods was Cyclone Gati, the most powerful storm ever recorded in Somalia, which made landfall in Puntland's Bari region on 22 November, affecting 120,000 people, including 42,100 displaced people.⁵⁰ In addition, below-average Deyr rainfall from October to December caused significant water shortages in the coastal areas of Bari, Nugaal and Sanaag as well as the Togdheer and Gedo regions. In Togdheer, many pastoral families were forced to move to Ethiopia in search of water and pasture.⁵¹ Such decreased rainfall resulting from waning La Niña conditions⁵² is expected to sustain the drought conditions through the first half of 2021.⁵³

Renewed locust infestations have been reported throughout the year, with heavy rains continuing to create favourable conditions for locust breeding. Despite the ongoing control operations, almost 700,000 people and close to 300,000 hectares of land have been affected across Somalia, impacting livelihoods and food security for nearly 200,000 people.⁵⁴ The country declared emergency over locust swarms in February 2020, and the food security situation continued to be stressed throughout the year, in particular for the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities who lost their crops and pastures. In late 2020, the Somali population facing crisis food insecurity levels (IPC Phase 3 or above) was likely to reach 2.1 million, and was expected to rise to over 2.5 million in early to mid-2021 due to the impact of consecutive, below-average rainfall seasons on crop and livestock production.⁵⁵

Many of the people affected by the various shocks in 2020 were already in a state of displacement due to violence, prior droughts or extensive flooding, and these new shocks have only exacerbated their pre-existing needs and vulnerabilities. The main humanitarian needs of the Somali population remain health (4.7 million in need) and WASH (4.6 million), followed by food security (3.5 million), protection (3.2 million) and shelter (3.1 million).⁵⁶ In reality, the prolonged humanitarian crisis in Somalia critically hinders the pursuit of long-term recovery and durable solutions. Without sustainable options to return to their areas of origin or re-establish their lives outside of displacement sites, the affected IDP communities thus continue to heavily rely on relief assistance. Additionally, the persistent prevalence of evictions combined with the limited availability of land for local integration or resettlement has presented a substantial challenge for IDPs.⁵⁷

As of October 2020, the Federal Government was developing national IDP legislation and was also finalizing a national Durable Solutions Strategy. The Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI) which was launched in early 2016, is now transitioning to a fully owned national initiative led by the National Durable Solutions Secretariat. Over time, actors working on durable solutions programmes in Somalia identified IDPs' perceptions and feelings of integration and social cohesion as important non-material components of achieving durable solutions that were not adequately reflected within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions.⁵⁸ Community stabilization initiatives have also been set in motion with participation from different population groups to take responsibility to drive their own recovery processes. In Kismayo, for instance, social cohesion as well as an improved equitable access to

basic services, infrastructures and protection were put forward in inclusive planning among returnees, IDPs and host communities for peaceful coexistence and better reintegration/local integration.⁵⁹

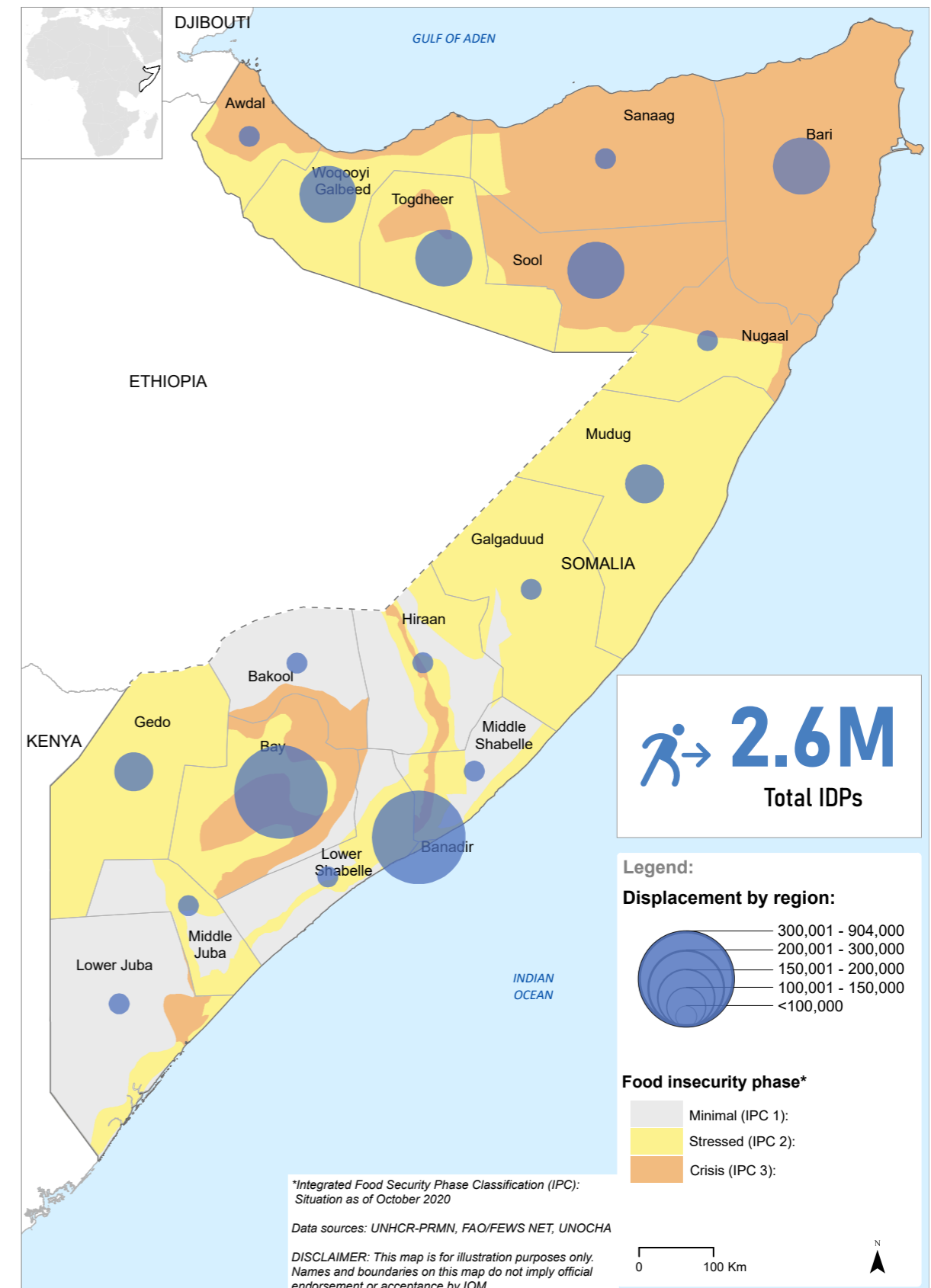


Figure 8: Somalia's food insecurity and IDP presence by region (December 2020)

SOUTH SUDAN: BETWEEN CONFLICT AND FAMINE

Despite being the world's youngest nation, South Sudan already has a long history of conflict and internal displacement alongside a critical food security situation. By the end of the year, there were 1.6 million displaced persons across the country, who got displaced between 2014 and September 2020. Around 95 per cent of the displaced population tracked were displaced within the country and 5 per cent were previously displaced abroad. Higher IDP concentrations were found in the states of Warrap (18%), Jonglei (15%), Central Equatoria (15%) and Upper Nile (14%).⁶⁰ According to DTM's more rapid and localized event tracking assessment, over 700,000 new individual displacements related to conflict and natural disasters were recorded in 2020, the majority of which were short-term displacement caused by flooding and sub-national violence as opposed to protracted displacement.⁶¹

Following the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) in February 2020, which was a major achievement in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS, September 2018), the country witnessed a decline in political conflict at the national level, and expected a significant increase in returns. However, these two milestones have not brought long-lasting peace to South Sudan as demonstrated by the growing trend in localized, sub-national violence, mainly related to inter and intracommunal clashes. In the second half of 2020, escalating violence in the states of Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Western Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap resulted in the killing and injury of hundreds of civilians and caused the displacement of more than 80,000 people, of which women, children and the elderly were particularly targeted by the heightened levels of violence and suffering.⁶² The central and southern parts of Jonglei State as well as the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) were amongst the key hotspots for such violence, especially from June to August, with tensions spilling over into neighbouring parts of the country.⁶³ With the start of the dry season (from October to April), violent clashes have intensified, mainly in the states of Warrap and Central Equatoria, and are expected to persist and worsen throughout the season, particularly against the backdrop of economic downturns, food insecurity and administrative appointments,⁶⁴ including the impact of COVID-19.⁶⁵

Severe flooding also continued to be a significant driver of displacement, especially in the second half of the year. Overall, more than 1 million individuals were impacted by floods from July to December, including an estimated 480,000 flood-displaced people. Jonglei State and GPAA were amongst the most impacted areas with 495,000 people affected, followed by the states of Lakes (147,000) and Unity (126,000).⁶⁶ Areas along the White Nile have been particularly affected by floods since mid-June, and many populations have moved from lowland to highland areas in search of a temporary place to settle until floodwaters recede. One such area is Mangala in the state of Central Equatoria, which, by the end of the year, hosted more than 24,500 IDPs.⁶⁷

The current crisis in South Sudan has further exacerbated the number of food insecure people. In fact, the country is currently facing a major hunger crisis and experiencing record levels of food insecurity. The situation in Pibor County has been extremely concerning with many in famine-like conditions (IPC Phase 5). By the end of the year, 6.3 million people – over half of the country's population (53%) – were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 or above). This number is expected to increase to 7.2 million in the April-July 2021 period with 108,000 people facing catastrophic food security levels (IPC Phase 5),⁶⁸ which is more than double the number of people projected to endure the same food insecurity levels in Yemen (47,000).⁶⁹

With all its persisting domestic challenges, return movements of the South Sudanese population have not been systematic nor as high as expected following the signing of the peace deal and the establishment of the revitalized government. An estimated 1.7 million returnees were recorded at the end of the year, of which 32 per cent were previously displaced abroad.⁷⁰ Even though the number of returnees has increased over the past year, there are still 1.6 million IDPs across the country and numbers are likely to increase throughout 2021 due to multiple incidents which cause short-term displacement, namely sub-national violence and flooding. Furthermore, the instability across South Sudan hinders the sustainability

of returns, as some 86,404 individuals who returned from abroad remain displaced within the country, unable to return to their areas of habitual residence.⁷¹ Many IDPs living in Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites/IDP camps⁷² and collective centres continue to report insecurity at their preferred destination as the main reason for non-return, with only 36 per cent of respondents per site reporting an intention to leave.⁷³ Moreover, these returns are not always a direct result of the betterment of the peace situation within the country. In some instances, they are forced on account of push factors in the places of displacement abroad, such as tensions with the host communities and increasing food insecurity in Uganda in September 2020.⁷⁴



A woman poses with her two children outside of a square building in Bentiu Town, South Sudan.. Photo: © IOM / Muse Mohammed

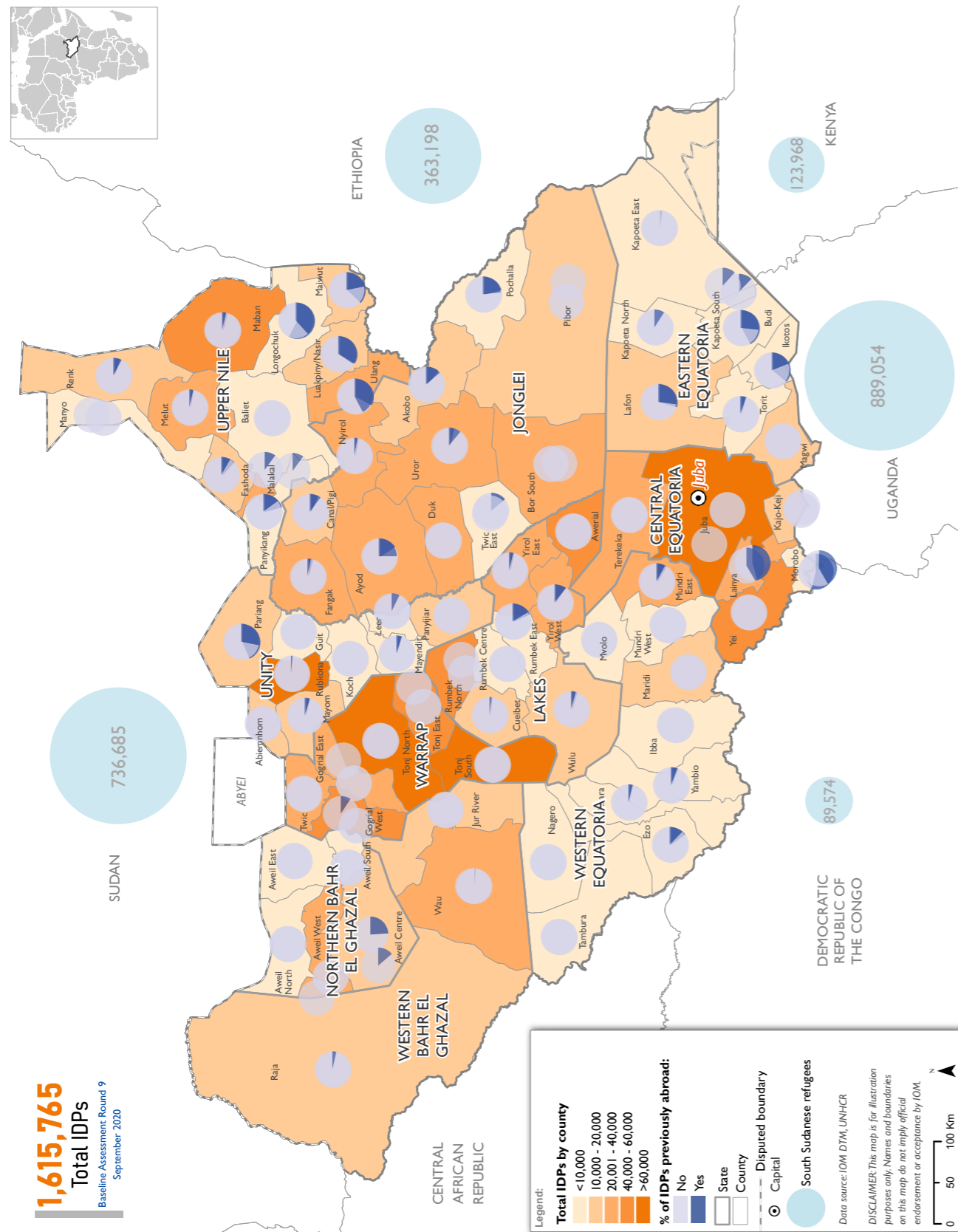


Figure 9: IDP presence in South Sudan by county (December 2020)

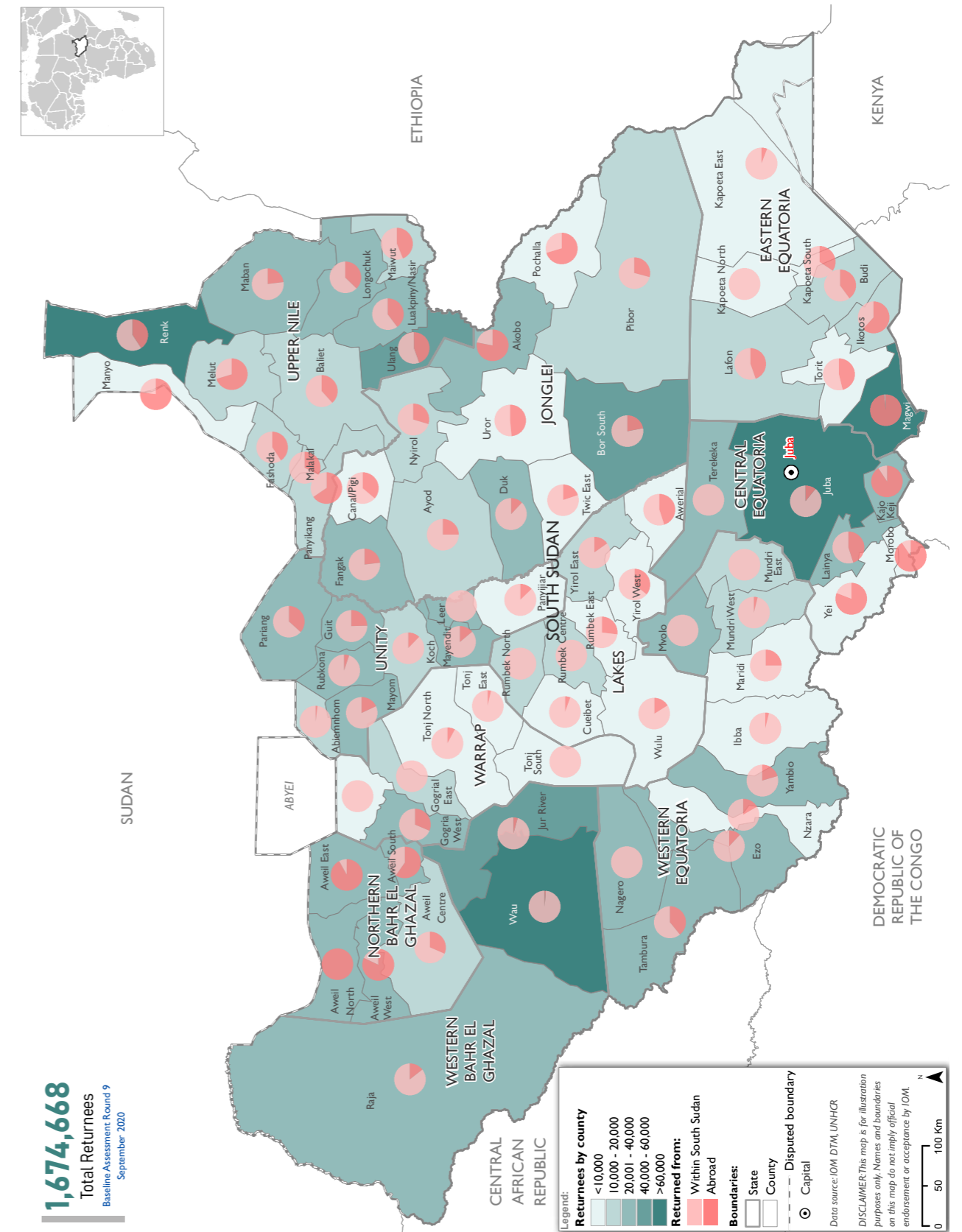


Figure 10: Returnee presence in South Sudan by county (December 2020)

V. REGIONAL MIXED MIGRATION TRENDS

OVERVIEW

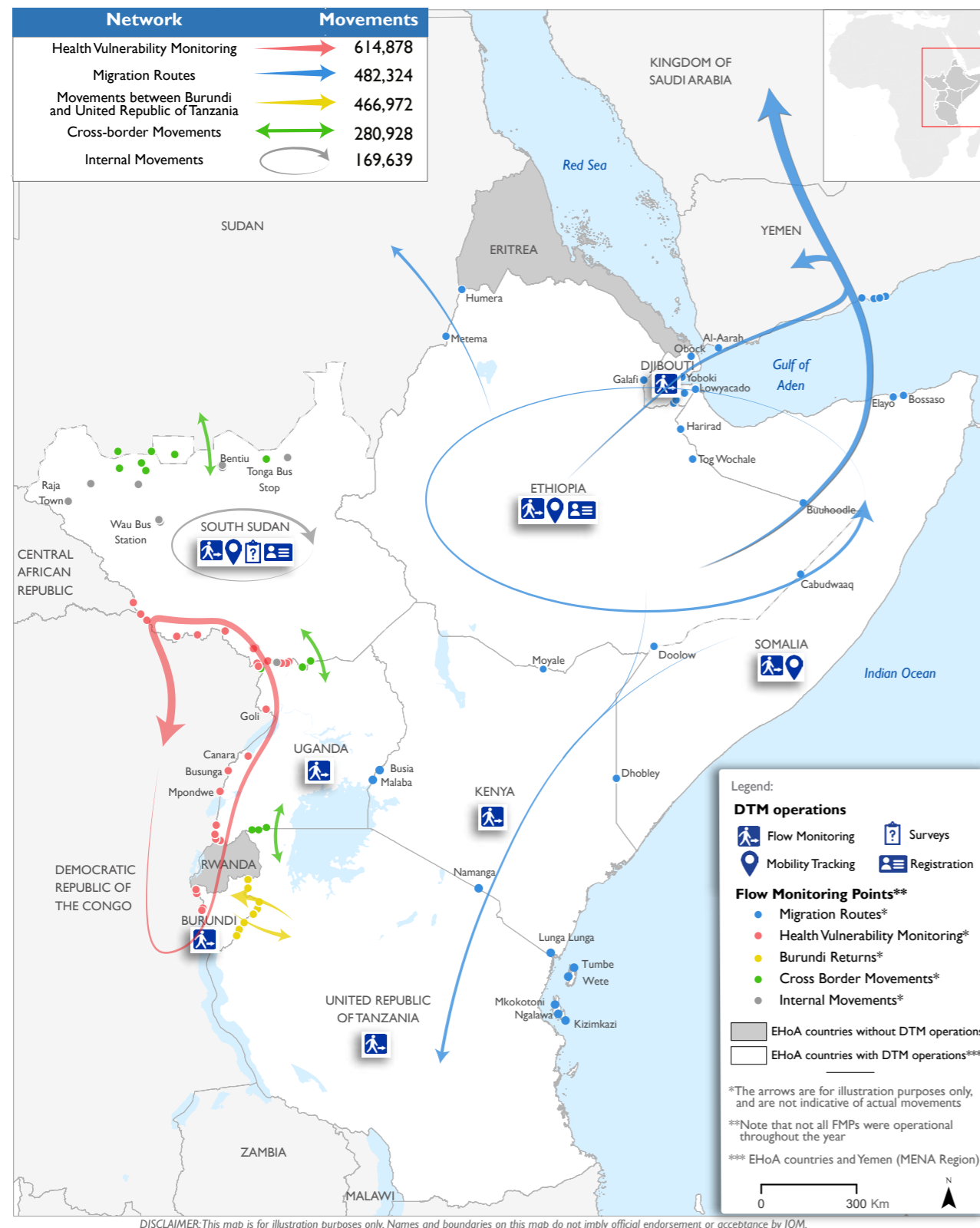


Figure 11: FM networks tracked in the EHoA (December 2020)

In 2020, IOM continued to observe migration movements through 112 FMPs across four FM networks.

These are the migration routes network (Eastern, HoA, Southern and Northern) with points in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania; the network established in the context of public health concerns with FMPs in Burundi, Uganda, and South Sudan to track population movements to and from areas affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and later COVID-19; the Burundi returns network to monitor movements between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania; and lastly the cross-border network mainly for movements between South Sudan and Sudan, and South Sudan and Uganda, but also between Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Over 2 million movements were tracked along these FM networks in 2020, the largest proportion of which were observed in the public health context (31%), followed by movements along the main migratory routes (24%), movements in Burundi (23%), cross-border movements (14%), and internal movements tracked in South Sudan (8%).⁷⁵

Further data sources used to complement this mixed migration analysis are registration data collected through a network of seven Migration Response Centres (MRCs) that were operational in the EHoA in 2020, as well as registration data of Ethiopian migrants returned from Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the movements along the Eastern Route, information on the Voluntary Humanitarian Returns (VHR) provided by IOM Yemen to migrants wishing to return to their home country in a safe and dignified manner is also analyzed, together with information about the Assisted Spontaneous Returns (ASR) programme that IOM, in partnership with UNHCR, organizes to assist Somali refugees stranded in Yemen to return to Somalia. An analysis of the 2020 IOM's Missing Migrant Project (MMP) findings related to migrant deaths and disappearances in the EHoA are also presented.

Findings of research efforts launched along the key migration routes are integrated to build a stronger evidence base of the region's migration narrative.⁷⁶ In 2019, the RDH for the EHoA launched a multistage research project aimed at better understanding the experiences, decision-making, perceptions and expectations of young Ethiopians along the Eastern Route regarding their migration journey. The project aims to investigate the nexus between decision-making, migrant expectations and realities on the ground by interviewing migrants leaving the Horn towards the Arabian Peninsula. While other migration routes in the region have received significant international attention in recent years, the Southern Route remains largely understudied despite being one of the most dangerous and challenging migration routes on the continent. The RDH is currently addressing this gap through multiple research initiatives which aim to create a foundational understanding of the migration dynamics and migrant characteristics of Ethiopians and Somalis at origin, transit and destination communities along this corridor. Anecdotal information provided by IOM staff working in the region further complements this overview with observations on the main protection concerns for migrants, assistance provided, and COVID-19 risk mitigation measures.

MIGRATION ROUTES NETWORK

This year, largely due to COVID-19, a significant reduction in migration movements was observed along the four migratory routes, starting from March at the onset of the pandemic in the region. Over 482,000 movements were tracked in 2020, a 35 per cent decrease from the movements tracked in 2019 (744,113), notwithstanding the expanded coverage along the Southern Route through the inclusion of new FMPs in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.⁷⁷ The largest difference in movement trends between 2020 and 2019 was captured from April to July, when the COVID-19-related measures were most stringent. The gap decreased from July 2020 onwards, as mobility restrictions eased, with movements tracked during November and December 2020 increasing to levels exceeding those reported in 2019.⁷⁸ In particular, the sharpest decrease in movements was observed along the Eastern Corridor, with a reduction of over 66 per cent compared to 2019. This route was heavily impacted by travel limitations along international borders, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, and a greater proportion of movements was instead observed within the HoA.

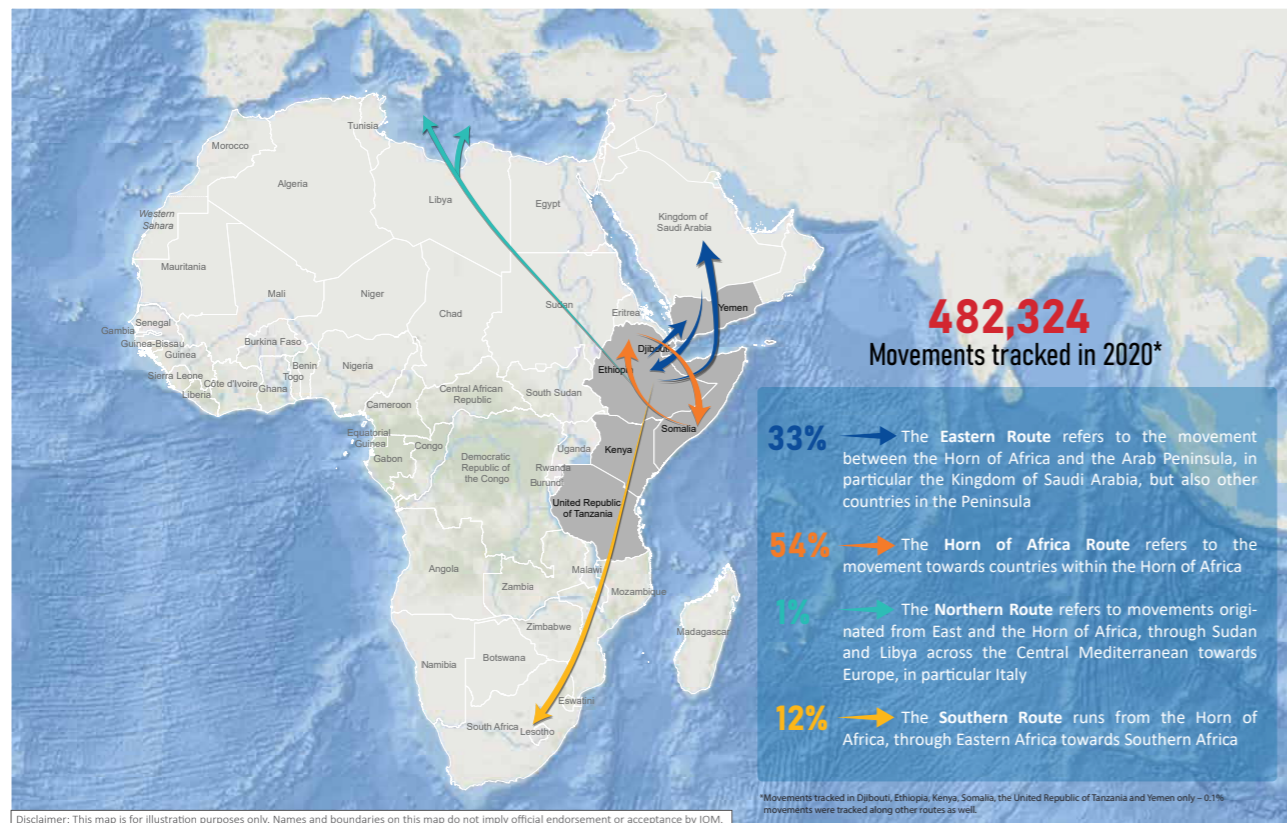
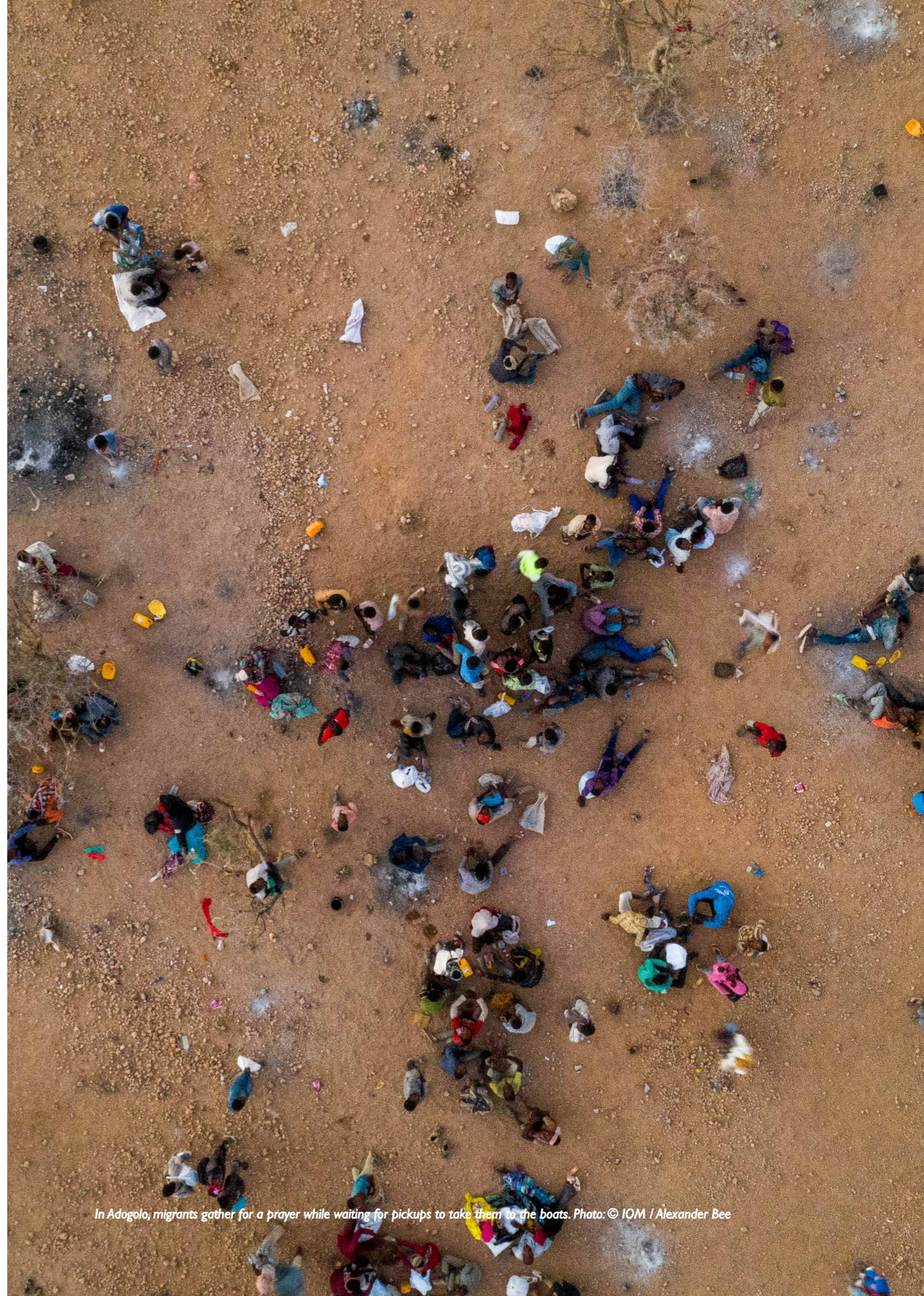


Figure 12: Main migration routes in the EHoA (December 2020)



Figure 13: Movements tracked along the four routes in 2019 and 2020



In Adogolo, migrants gather for a prayer while waiting for pickups to take them to the boats. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

Despite the changes in routes and volume of migrants, the overall movement intentions of migrants remained largely unchanged, with most tracked movements originating in Ethiopia, and directed towards Somalia (for the HoA Route) and Saudi Arabia (for the Eastern Route).

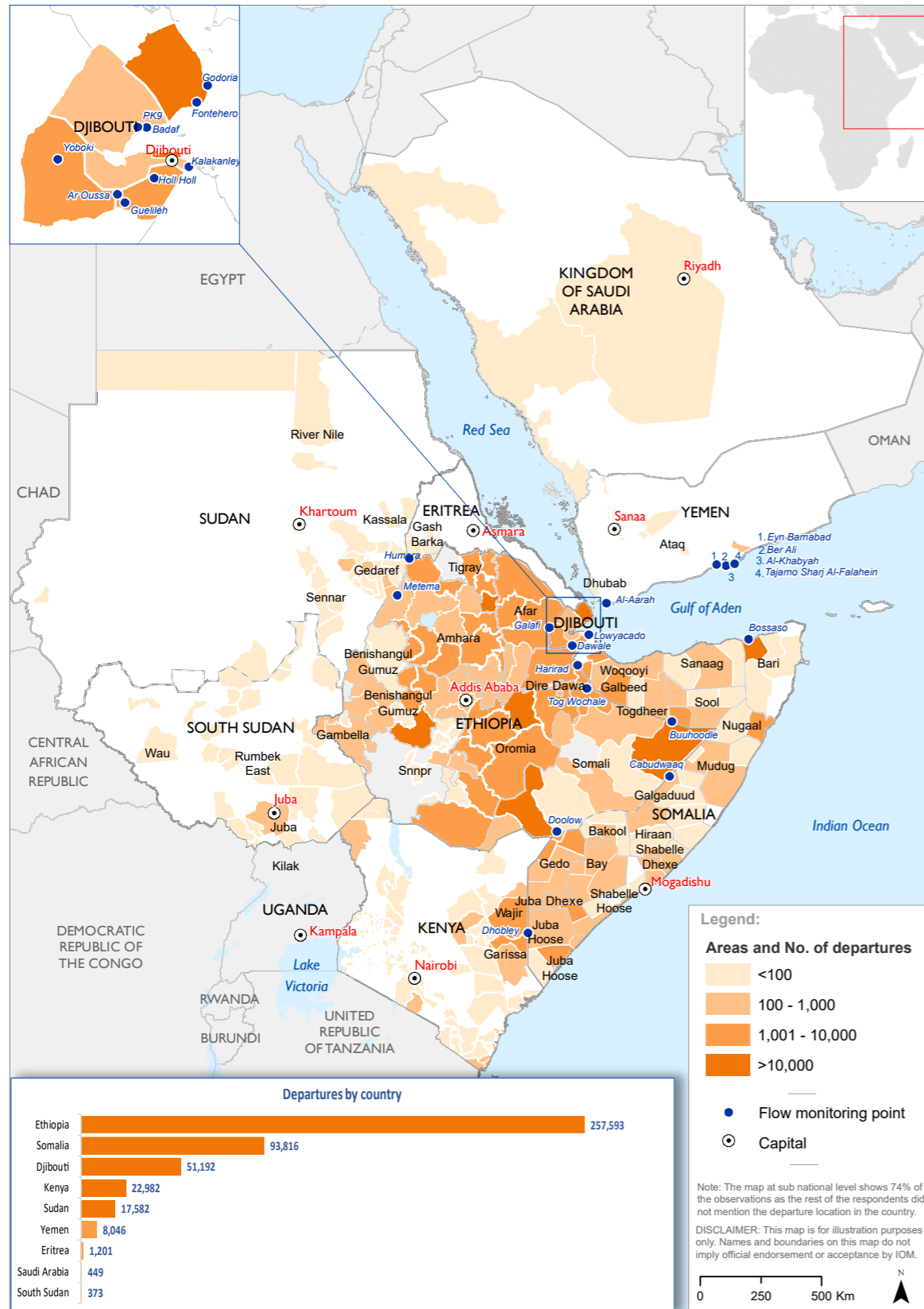


Figure 14: Main areas of departure in 2020

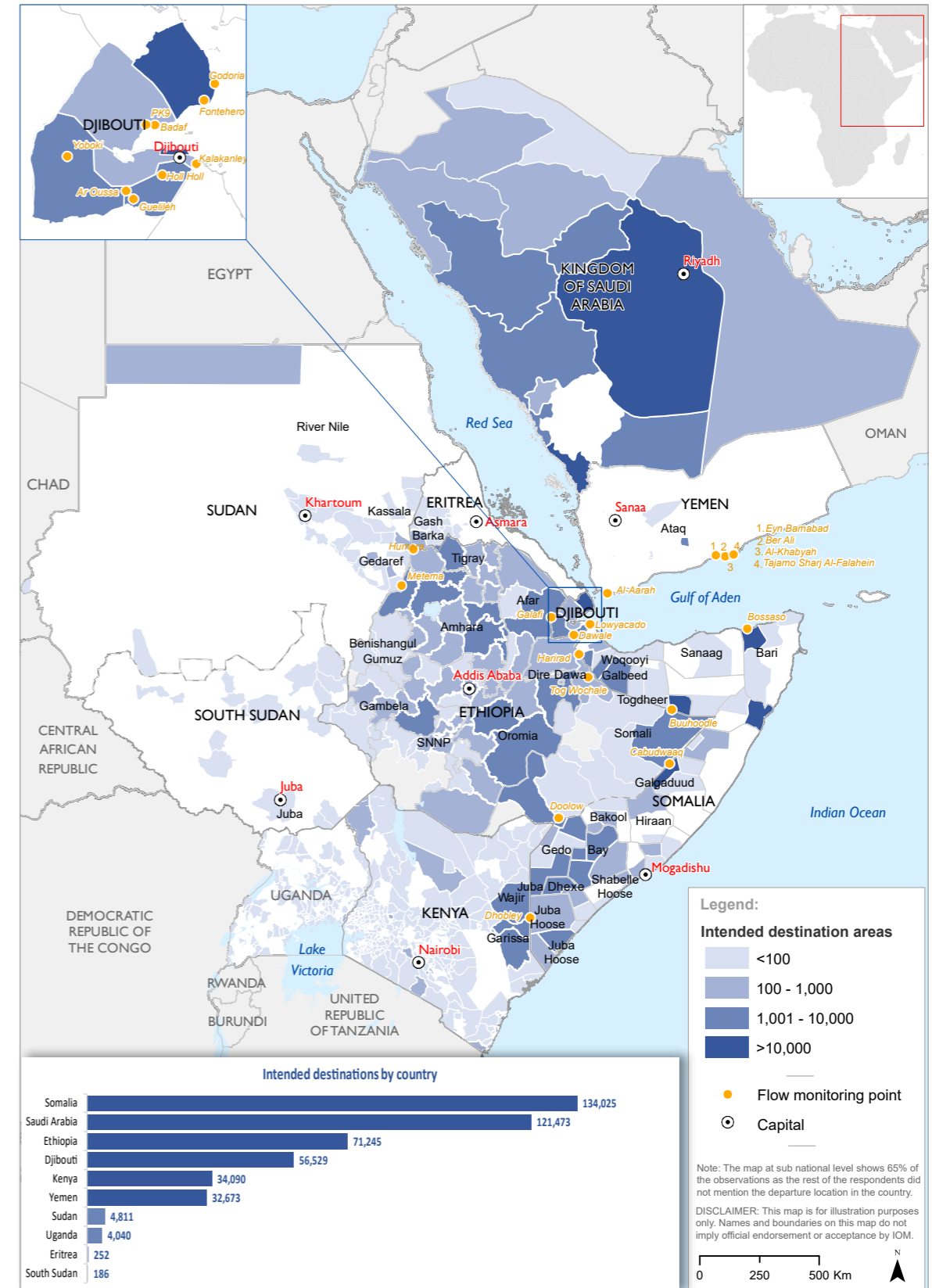


Figure 15: Main areas of intended destination in 2020

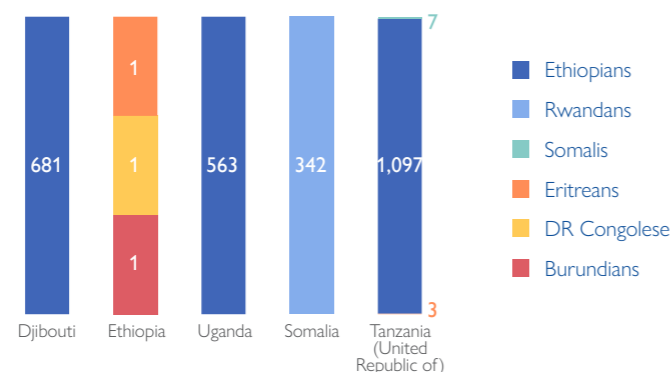
Stranded Migrant Populations



Food distribution in Massagara site which welcomes Ethiopians back from Yemen. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

Most dramatically, the COVID-19-related restrictions resulted in an increase in stranded migrant populations, unable to continue their journey or return home. Many migrants were left with reduced coping mechanisms as host communities struggled with both the economic impact brought by such restrictions and the fear of infection. Consequently, access to informal work to sustain their journey, access to health care, and other basic services were severely affected. Moreover, several cases of xenophobia, discrimination and stigmatization were reported, whereby migrants were believed to be carriers of the virus. This led to instances of arrests, detention, forced relocations and deportations, the latter occurring only if the countries of origin allowed such movements to take place.

In Djibouti, IOM reported over 1,400 stranded migrants in May, which reduced to around 400 in December. There have been anecdotal reports, especially at the beginning of the outbreak, of migrants travelling from the northern part of the country to the south and back, unable to move onwards on their journey or back to their areas of origin, and these migrants are likely not part of the above estimates. In Somalia, between 400 and 500 migrants were estimated to be stranded in the country, although these are most likely also underestimates. In Yemen, the number of stranded migrants was most difficult to ascertain, with reports ranging from around 4,000 to 14,000 migrants stranded in both spontaneous settlements and detention centres. However, this estimate increased to 32,700 by the end of the year. Overall, DTM reported an estimated 2,700 migrants stranded in five countries in the EHoA as of December 2020. But again, this is almost certainly an underestimation of the actual situation.



EASTERN ROUTE

The Eastern Corridor via Djibouti and Somalia to the Gulf countries is by far the most travelled route in the region. In comparison to the Northern and Southern Routes, the Eastern Route is shorter, significantly cheaper, and most commonly used by Ethiopian nationals. Around 158,000 movements were observed along this route in 2020, with monthly movements after April decreasing as much as by 84 per cent. Over 67 per cent of the movements originated in Ethiopia, and more than 77 per cent were headed towards Saudi Arabia. This corridor is, however, characterized by high bi-directional flows, with migrants' attempts to cross to the Arabian Peninsula and parallel forced returns organized by Saudi Arabia back to the EHoA. With the pandemic, these dynamics were further marked by hardship, and for the first time, high numbers of spontaneous return movements were observed from Yemen to Djibouti and Somalia as migration to Saudi Arabia became impossible.

Migration Trends from the Horn of Africa to Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula

The Eastern Corridor runs through two main routes, one via Djibouti and one via Somalia. Obock in Djibouti and Bossaso in Puntland are the two major embarkation hubs for migrants travelling to Saudi Arabia via Yemen. While migration flows to Saudi Arabia via Djibouti go back several decades, the route via Bossaso gained popularity around 2014 and has surpassed Djibouti as the main country of embarkation in recent years. The rise in embarkations from Bossaso were likely the result of increased military patrolling of coastal areas along the Red Sea and intensified fighting and air strikes in Ta'iz governorate in Yemen, where many arrivals from Djibouti were disembarking.⁷⁹

With the closure of international borders due to COVID-19, very few migrants were able to enter Yemen, and almost none were able to migrate onwards to Saudi Arabia, although some still managed to move to a certain degree within the Horn.⁸⁰ As a result, migrant arrivals to Yemen from the HoA decreased by almost 73 per cent, from 138,213 in 2019 to 37,535 in 2020. A sharp decrease in movements from both Djibouti and Somalia was observed at the end of March and through the rest of the year, with less than 6,000 entries into Yemen recorded between July and December. Departures from Djibouti were the most affected in the second quarter of the year as authorities tightly patrolled the coasts of Obock, while departures from Somalia continued more consistently, albeit at a reduced rate. Additionally, as regular migration channels were closed, IOM observed the return of 259 Yemeni nationals from Djibouti to Yemen in June, allegedly travelling for family reasons, with another seven Yemeni nationals who travelled from Somalia to Yemen in July.⁸¹

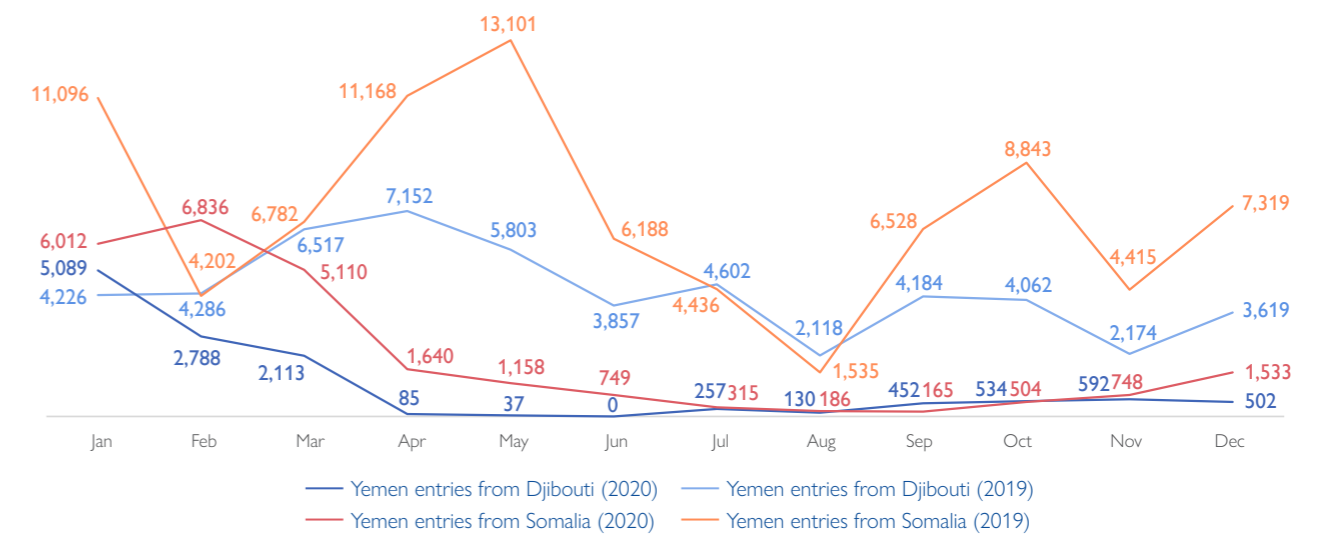


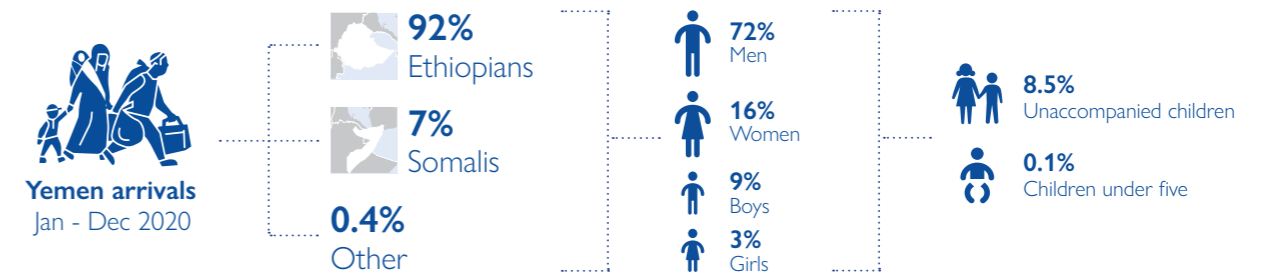
Figure 16: Entries into Yemen from the HoA in 2019 and 2020

The journey along the Eastern Route is fraught with danger, challenges and hardships.⁸² One of the greatest challenges experienced by migrants on their way to Obock is the harsh climate in Djibouti, where temperatures can exceed 40 degrees Celsius in summer, and migrants often embark on long journeys on foot through the desert, with very little access to food, water and shade. They are often caught by exhaustion, dehydration and fall ill. Across both the Djibouti and Somalia departure hubs, migrants reported other hardships en route, namely a lack of access to basic services as well as threats to their security, such as extortion by brokers and other actors as well as physical and psychological abuse including gender-based violence. The degree of hardship experienced by migrants depends on a combination of factors, including migrants' travel modalities, in particular whether they are moving by foot or in vehicles, migrants' agreements with their brokers and types of terrains migrants are crossing. In general, the more money a migrant is able to pay to brokers the more protection and services he/she can expect to receive. This includes travel time by car and receiving sufficient amounts of food and water during the journey. Migrants interviewed in Obock reported that they took an average of 12 days to reach Obock from Ethiopia and were paying an average of 800 USD to reach Saudi Arabia via Obock. The route via Bossaso takes longer, with migrants taking an average of 23 days to reach Bossaso, almost twice as long as what migrants take to reach Obock. It is also more expensive as migrants pay an average of 900 USD to reach Saudi Arabia via Bossaso.

Migrants interviewed displayed very low levels of awareness to the problems they might encounter during their journey, and were often unaware of how much their journeys would cost. Some migrants reported that they have been deceived about the cost of the journey by brokers prior to departure or extorted to pay additional fees en route. Additionally, many migrants also underestimate the additional costs of buying food and water en route and some travel without any money, thereby rendering themselves vulnerable to a multitude of protection risks such as abuse by brokers, dehydration, starvation and disease from adopting dangerous coping strategies such as drinking contaminated groundwater. Risk awareness is largely acquired by experience and likely to increase as journeys progress, with pre-departure knowledge mostly limited to word-of-mouth information (from friends, peers, returnees and brokers) and often incomplete and/or inaccurate as both brokers and returnees may contribute to false narratives of the journey to the Saudi Arabia or fail to depict a complete picture of the migration experience. Migrants also displayed a strong determination to move and change their lives, irrespective of the risks and costs associated with migration.



Migration Profiles – Yemen Arrivals⁸³



Ethiopians continue to represent the largest group of migrants arriving to Yemen, and the proportions of men and children are consistent with what was observed in 2019. However, as the movements tracked in Yemen decreased, the proportion of UMCs has in fact increased between 2019 (6%) and 2020 (9%). Overall, UMCs make up 71 per cent of all migrating children in 2020, compared to 46 per cent in 2019. Furthermore, over 260 Yemeni nationals were also observed travelling from the HoA to Yemen, which were reported as short-term movements for family visits during the holiday of Eid, as Yemeni nationals opted to use irregular means of transport in the face of COVID-19 restrictions.

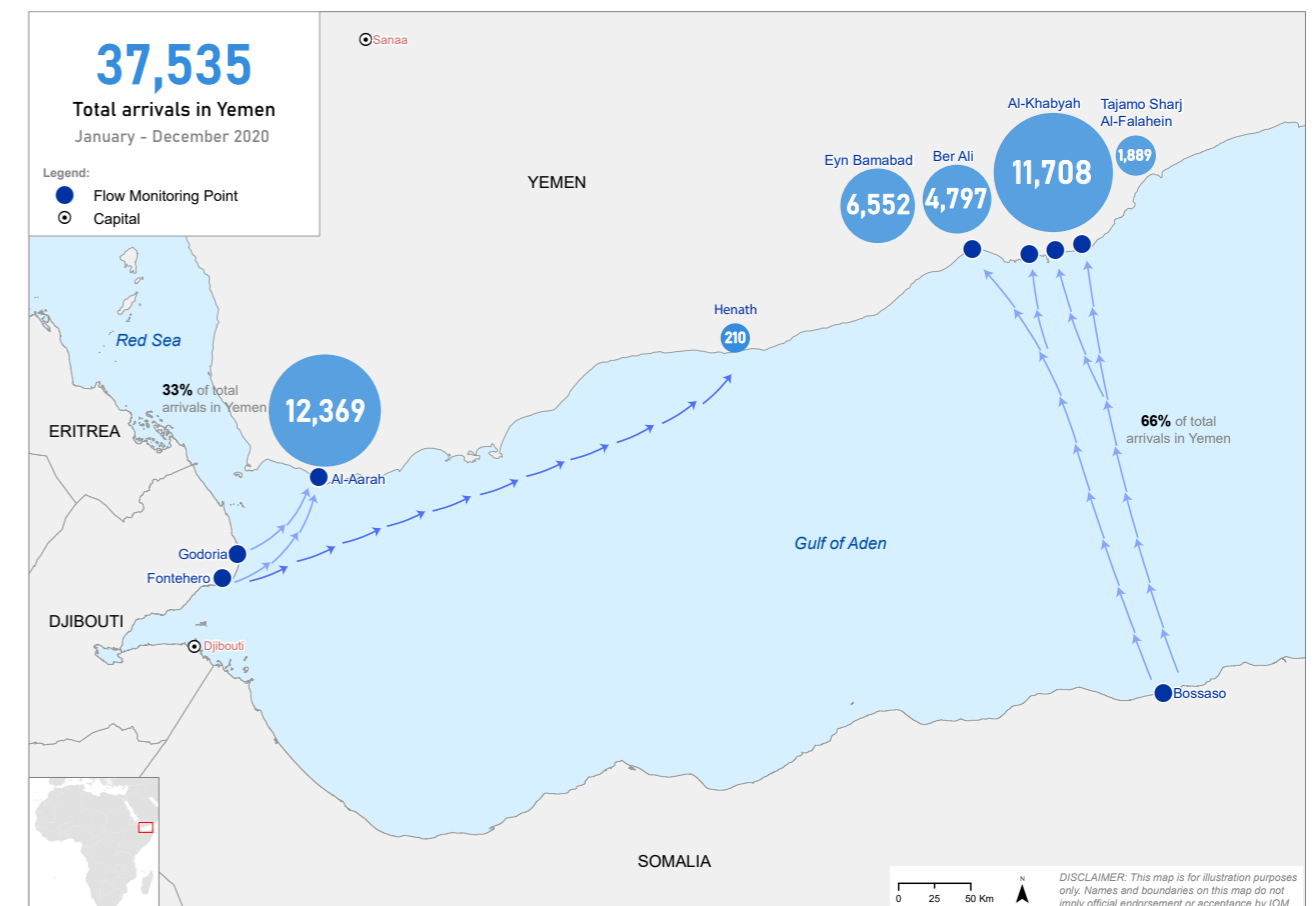


Figure 17: Yemen arrivals from the HoA in 2020

Return Migration Dynamics from the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula

In its sixth year of conflict, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen has seen a further deterioration of vital infrastructure, namely the health care system which is struggling under the additional pressure of the pandemic. Few community-level prevention measures, limited testing and stigma surrounding the disease, delaying those with symptoms from seeking treatment, have led to a high mortality rate.⁸⁴ While the humanitarian situation remains critical, the conflict and armed clashes continued throughout the year, with migrants' conditions worsening in parallel. In addition to the risks linked to COVID-19 and the limited access to life-saving health services, migrants in Yemen have experienced reduced support from host communities, widespread discrimination and an increase in xenophobic acts, arbitrary arrests and detention, movement restrictions as well as forced movement to locations where they lack access to basic services such as shelter, food, water and healthcare.⁸⁵

The situation is particularly critical for the 32,700 migrants who have become stranded in Yemen, while transiting the country on their way to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. As part of localized deportation campaigns, over 15,000 migrants were forcibly transferred within Yemen in 2020.⁸⁶ IOM further estimates that at least 400 migrants were killed by targeted violence.⁸⁷ Another 6,000 migrants were estimated to be held in detention across Yemen at the end of the year.⁸⁸ Moreover, conflict and COVID-19-related restrictions forced migrants to remain in Marib, resulting in over 4,500 migrants who reportedly remain stranded in the governorate. Reports of abuse, exploitation and extortion of these migrants have increased as the main migratory routes continue to be inactive and migrants are trapped in the area.⁸⁹ While irregular migrants continued to travel to Yemen, albeit at a significantly reduced rate, humanitarian evacuations from multiple detention centres in Yemen were suspended because of the pandemic. Forced returns from Saudi Arabia were also halted for much of 2020, causing several humanitarian actors to raise alarm about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in these facilities.⁹⁰

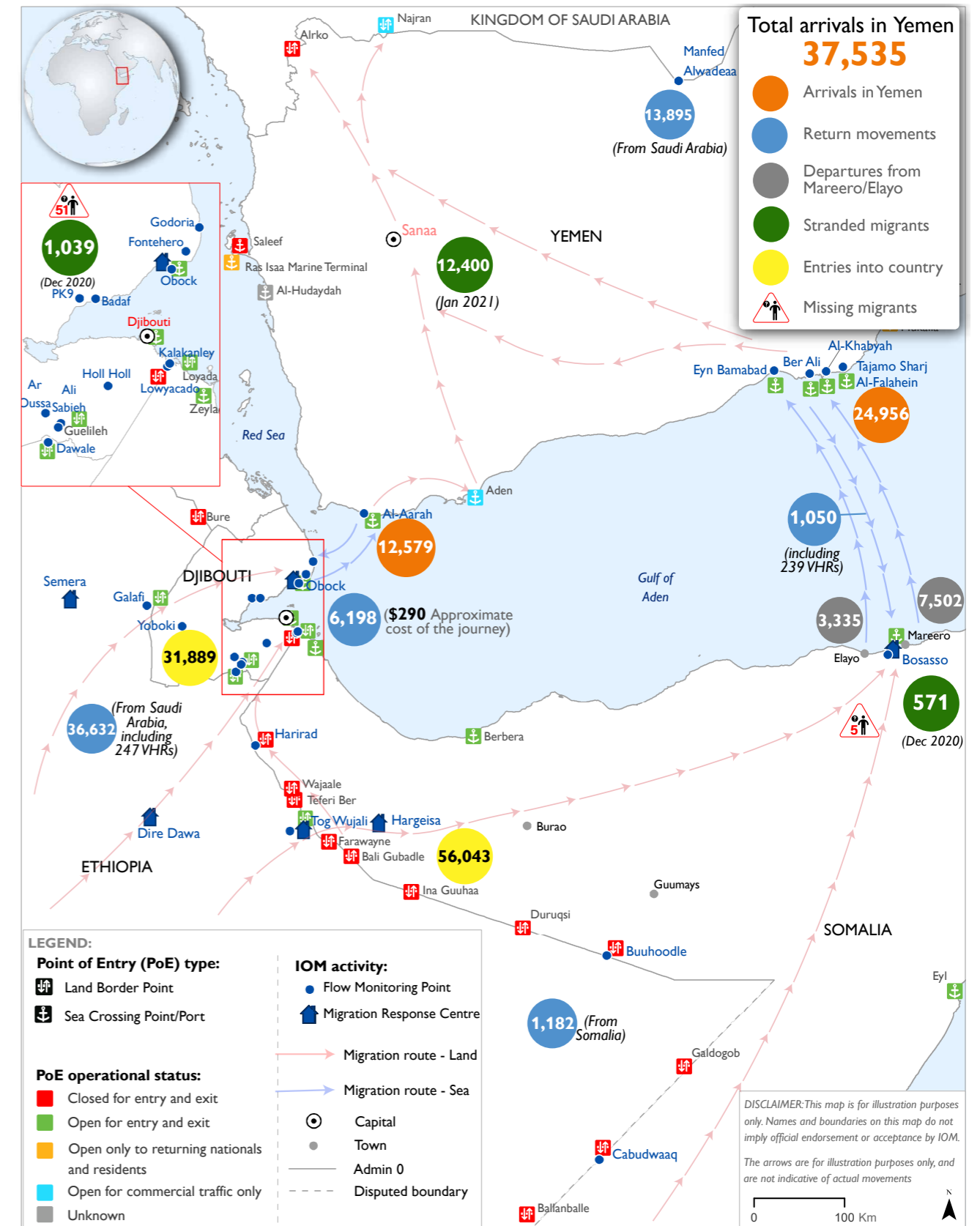


Figure 18: Impact of COVID-19 on migration trends and routes in 2020

Increased Challenges During Migration: Spontaneous Returns to the Horn of Africa

Simultaneously, the increase in stranded migrants in the Arabian Peninsula triggered spontaneous returns, particularly from Yemen, back to Djibouti and Somalia. Those who could afford to do so used the same network of smugglers to try and return to their areas of origin on the HoA. This return journey is arguably even more perilous for the migrants who are already in precarious conditions, often as a result of prolonged detention and/or abuse in Yemen. These migrants might also be abused by their smugglers, and are sometimes made to disembark in the middle of the ocean. Others report having been forced to cross the desert on foot with little or no resources left for their return journey. IOM Djibouti confirmed the arrival of around 6,000 migrants from Yemen between March and December, while over 1,300 migrants returned to Somalia from Yemen, arriving on the coast of Berbera and Bossaso.

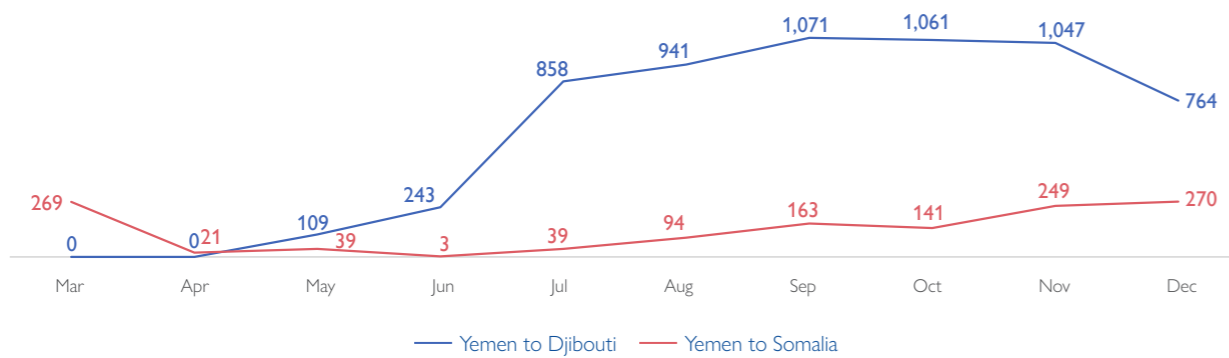


Figure 19: Spontaneous returns from Yemen in 2020



Migrants from the MRC are departing on buses to go to Ar Aoussa. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

Returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

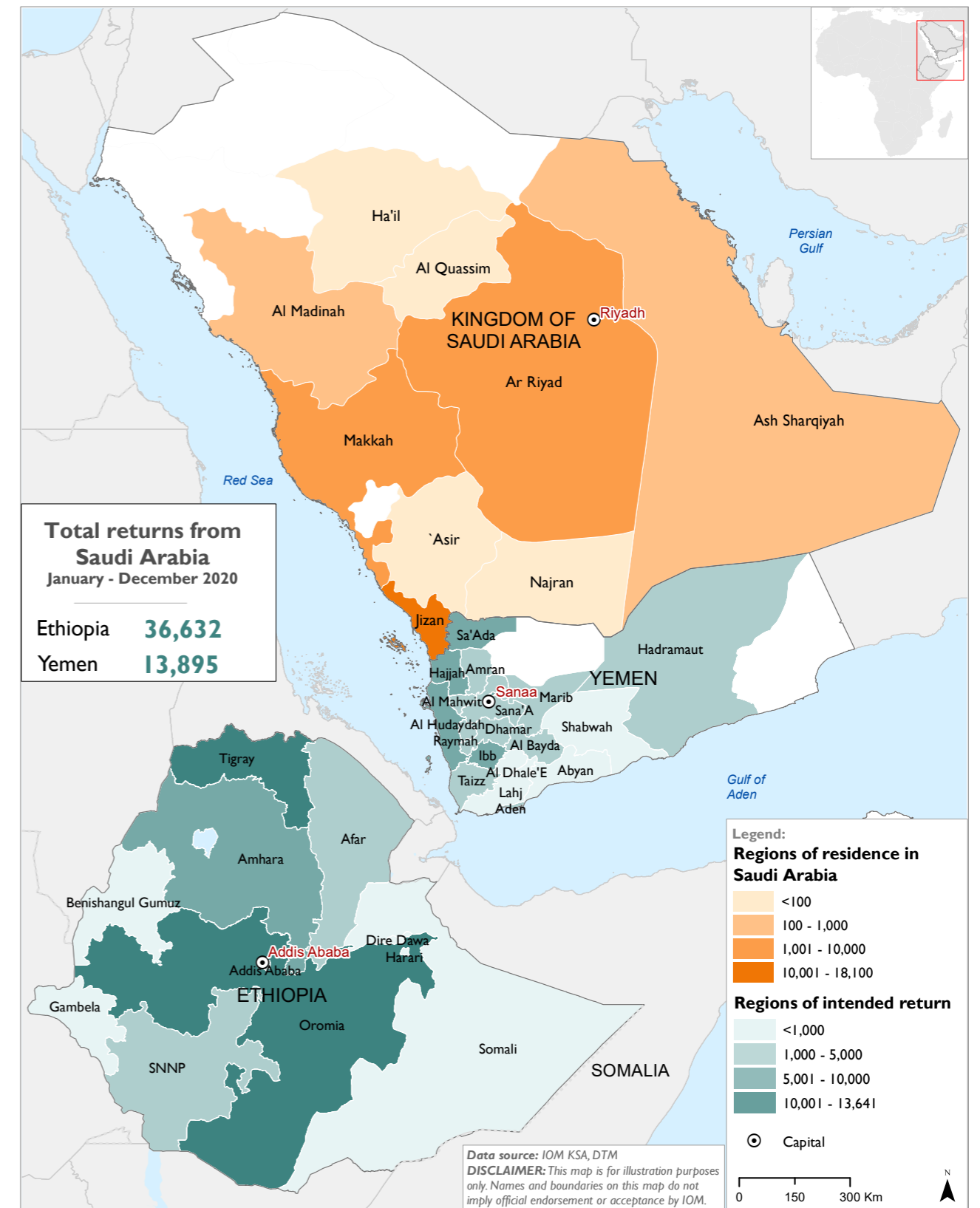


Figure 20: Returns from Saudi Arabia by areas of departure and of intended destinations in 2020

Migration to Saudi Arabia started in the 1970s, with well-established migration networks operating between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia until this day. However, following the 2016 announcement of the 2030 vision reforms, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia committed to reducing unemployment among Saudis through the tightening of immigration policies for undocumented migrants.²¹ An estimated 500,000 migrants were present in Saudi Arabia when the decree was issued. IOM has registered 352,483 Ethiopian returnees at Bole international airport since April 2017. Ethiopian migrants were not the only ones affected by the decree. A further 137,150 returnees from Saudi Arabia have been recorded in Yemen since data collection began in 2018. Of these, 50,065 migrants returned from Saudi Arabia to Yemen in 2020. The majority of those who returned in 2020 were men (93%), while 2 per cent were women, and 5 per cent were children. Returns to Yemen were halted at the end of March and only resumed for a few days in May due to the pandemic. No returns to Yemen have been recorded since September due to access issues.

In 2020, IOM registered 36,632 Ethiopian returnees upon arrival at the Bole airport. This represents an almost 70 per cent decrease compared to the number of returnees registered in 2019 (120,825). Due to COVID-19, returns were temporarily halted on 22 March, and resumed on 3-13 April, 2-8 June and from September to December 2020. Of the Ethiopian returnees registered in 2020, around 93 per cent reported that they were returning involuntarily. In 2020, 8 per cent of the Ethiopian returnees were children below the age of 18 and only around one in five were female (21%). The majority of males (78%) and females (64%) completed primary level education, while 18 per cent of males and 12 per cent of females reported having received no education.

During their time in Saudi Arabia, around 65 per cent of male returnees and 56 per cent of female returnees remained unemployed. Male returnees who had been employed were most commonly working as manual labourers in agriculture, fishery or as shepherds (16%), while female returnees were most commonly employed as domestic workers (30%). Most migrants were returning from the Saudi Arabian cities of Jizan (49%), Makkah (26%) and Riyadh (14%). A large majority of migrants (82%) reported that they had spent between 7 months and 2 years in Saudi Arabia, 5 per cent had stayed for 3 to 5 years and 3 per cent had stayed between 6 and 10 years.

In 2020, most migrants reported that they were returning to the Tigray (37%), Oromia (32%), and Amhara (26%) regions of Ethiopia. Female migrants were less likely than male migrants to be from Oromia (26% versus 33%), but more likely to be from the Amhara region (34% versus 24%). The vast majority of interviewed returnees (88%) reported that they were planning to stay in Ethiopia, while 9 per cent reported not having a plan regarding the future, and 3 per cent wanted to return to Saudi Arabia.

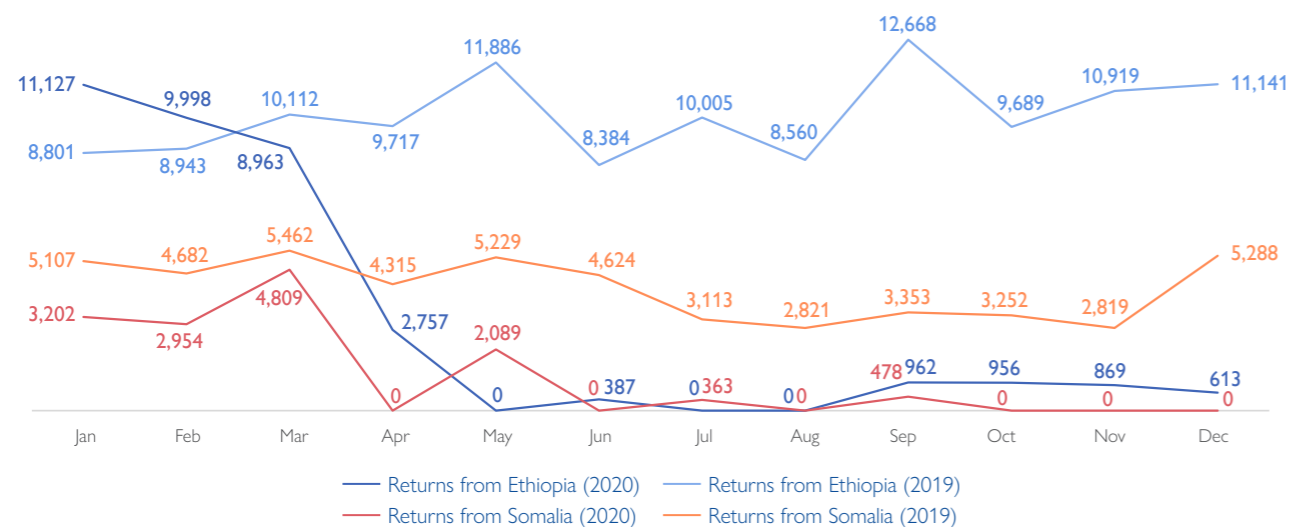


Figure 21: Returns from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia and Yemen in 2019 and 2020

Humanitarian Evacuations from Yemen

IOM assists migrants stranded in Yemen by helping those who wish to voluntarily return to their home country through its VHR programme. In 2020, IOM facilitated the return of 319 migrants by air, 248 of whom were Ethiopians returning from Aden, Yemen to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. More than half of those assisted were men (56%), 2 per cent were women and 42 per cent were children (94% of whom were male, and 6% were female). These movements occurred in early March prior to the closure of receiving ports in Ethiopia. IOM's VHR programme has faced significant challenges since the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, as many countries in the region lack the capacity to receive their stranded citizens. IOM Yemen continues to advocate with receiving countries to find solutions to allow for the safe return of migrants. VHR movements to Ethiopia resumed in March 2021.²²

In partnership with UNHCR under the Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme, IOM also provides return support to Somali refugees in Yemen who wish to return home.²³ In 2020, IOM facilitated the movement of 329 Somali refugees to Somalia by commercial vessel from Aden, Yemen to a reception centre in Berbera. Movements occurred in February and March, before the pandemic. Around one third of those returning were men (37%), 30 per cent were women and 33 per cent were children.

Missing Migrant Project



In 2020, IOM's MMP recorded a total of 58 migrant deaths and disappearances in the EHoA. This marks a sharp decline compared to 2019, when 155 migrants were recorded as dead or missing in the region. Most of these were recorded in Djibouti (51), followed by Somalia (5) and Rwanda (2), and predominantly involved migrants returning from the Arabian Peninsula to the HoA, in particular to Djibouti. A total of 40 deaths were attributed to drowning in three separate incidents where migrants were forced to disembark at sea off the coast of Djibouti. The second most common cause of death was dehydration, resulting in 11 recorded migrant deaths that occurred in the Djiboutian desert in the Obock region. Of those who died, most were young Ethiopian men. Only two female deaths were reported in the region in 2020.

Furthermore, all but two of the deaths were recorded in the second half of the year. The reduction in recorded migrant deaths and disappearances can be attributed to the pandemic's impact on movements. Given multiple lockdowns, closed borders, and travels restrictions imposed by governments across the region, fewer migrants were moving, while the pandemic also impacted IOM's capacity to collect data on migrant deaths and disappearances. These figures are therefore likely underreported and are not an indication of the lack of migrant deaths and disappearances in the first half of 2020, or of the actual numbers throughout the rest of the year; rather, these figures are reflective of the scarcity of sources on the reporting of missing migrants, and the fact that many migrants die or disappear in remote, hard-to-reach areas, away from public scrutiny.

Box: Female Migration on the Eastern Route

Migration from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia is highly gendered, with women accounting for the vast majority of regular, documented migration to Saudi Arabia, but only making up around a fourth of migrants in irregular channels.²⁴ Female migration to the Gulf countries is pulled by a strong demand for domestic work. The migration of Ethiopian women to Saudi Arabia dates back to the 1990s, when the Philippine and Indonesian governments imposed bans on migration to Saudi Arabia for their citizens, following cases of abuse of domestic workers in these countries.²⁵ Domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, due to their work being carried out indoors and away from public scrutiny. There exists extensive literature documenting the exploitation that Ethiopian domestic workers face in the Middle East, including discrimination, delayed or partial payment of salaries, food deprivation, psychological, physical and sexual abuse, confinement as well as social isolation.²⁶

During some qualitative interviews conducted by the RDH as part of a larger research study on young Ethiopians migrating to Saudi Arabia, respondents in Obock were asked why they had chosen to migrate irregularly when regular channels between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia exist.²⁷ The majority of migrants reported that they had considered and initially preferred regular migration, but had been deterred from starting the process or unsuccessful in completing it. Several barriers to regular migration stood out, in particular the lack of money to afford the regular migration recruitment process. All migrants who reported prohibitive costs to regular migration reported that they had decided that irregular migration was the cheaper alternative.

A comparative analysis between the demographic data of the female research respondents and country-level data²⁸ on women and girls in the same age bracket (15-29) found that female migrants seem to be less likely to have started a family than their non-migrant counterparts, as they are almost half as likely to be married (27% versus 51% at country level), and much less likely to have children (29% versus 47%). Female migrants also appear to be far better educated than their non-migrant counterparts in Ethiopia. Over 40 per cent of young women in the sample had completed either lower or upper secondary education, versus only 17 per cent at country level.

Another comparative analysis of female and male respondents found that women migrate to Saudi Arabia for similar reasons as men. According to survey data collected in both Bossaso and Obock, their most commonly reported drivers are economic in nature (86%). Only 20 per cent of female respondents reported that they had a source of income in the 12 months preceding their journey, with average wages as low as 60 USD per month. In contrast, according to information provided by re-migrating women and girls, nearly three quarters of those who entered Saudi Arabia were able to find employment, earning around 500 USD per month on average. This is significantly higher than the salaries that female respondents reported earning in Ethiopia prior to migration.

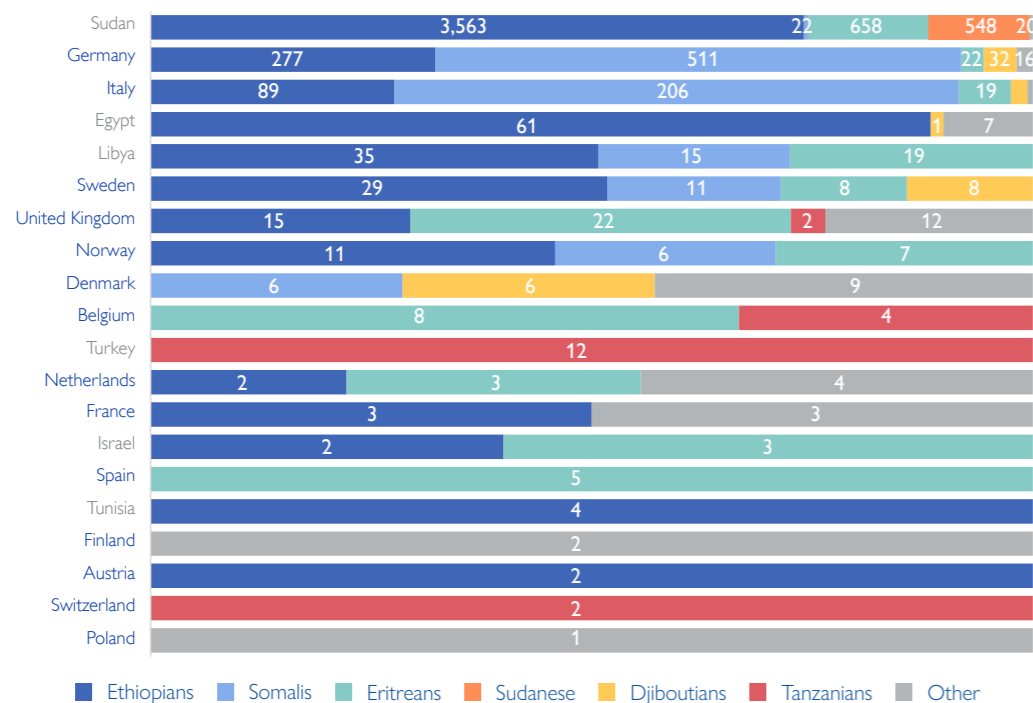
Compared to men and boys, women and girls are slightly more likely to report that they were migrating because they were asked to do so by their family and/or spouse (5% versus 2% of males), although only 2 per cent reported that they were forced to migrate by their family or spouse (1% for male migrants) and 17 per cent reportedly made their decision collaboratively with family members (12% for male migrants). Stronger family ties were also visible in female migrants receiving more support for their migration journeys. Around half of the female respondents reported that they had been supported by their families, most commonly financially, compared to around one third of men. Although families of female migrants seem to be slightly more involved in the migratory process than families of male respondents, most women and girls indicated that they were the primary decision-maker of their choice to migrate.



A group of migrants is walking in the desert to reach Obock. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

NORTHERN ROUTE

Over 6,300 movements were tracked along the Northern Route in 2020, a 59 per cent decrease compared to 2019, likely to be a result of COVID-19-related restrictions. Nonetheless, these movements, which represent around 1 per cent of all movements tracked in the region, are severely underestimated due to operational limitations along this route which have curtailed the ability of DTM to accurately estimate movement trends. Similar to previous years, and contrary to the trends along the Eastern and Southern Routes, a comparatively greater proportion of Eritreans (12%) and Sudanese (9%) were tracked along this route, alongside Ethiopians and Somalis. Almost 78 per cent of the recorded movements originated in Ethiopia, 76 per cent were headed towards Sudan, while almost a quarter (22%) were directed towards Europe, mainly to Germany (62%) and Italy (23%).



Migrants from the East and Horn of Africa in Europe

As the main country of embarkation of migrants from the EHoA headed to Europe, Libya is a key country of transit for those travelling along the Northern Route. Of the total migrant stock recorded by IOM Libya between November and December (571,464), over 2 per cent were EHoA migrants (13,771), most commonly from Somalia (49%), Eritrea (36%) and Ethiopia (15%).⁹²

A better understanding of the profiles of EHoA migrants in Libya can be gleaned from interviews with 193 migrants who were surveyed by DTM in 2020.¹⁰⁰ Eritreans constituted the majority of respondents (37%), followed by South Sudanese (28%), Ethiopians (18%), Somalis (14%) and Ugandans (3%). On average, respondents were aged between 26 and 27 years old; South Sudanese were more likely to be younger than 20 (33%) compared to Eritreans (13%), Ethiopians (11%) and Somalis (7%). Most EHoA migrants were single (77%), with Ugandans (80%), Somalis (81%) and South Sudanese (89%) slightly more likely to be single than Ethiopians (71%) and Eritreans (69%). In addition, one in three EHoA respondents reported having no education (33%).

A vast majority of migrants (91%) reported having travelled to Libya in a group rather than alone, particularly South Sudanese (96%) and Eritreans (94%) followed by Ethiopians (86%) and Somalis (85%). Moreover, the most common push factors were the lack of job opportunities in their home countries (23%), war/conflict (21%), targeted violence or persecution (19%) and insufficient incomes (15%). Over

half of respondents reported that their final destination was in Europe, while 27 per cent intended on staying in Libya and 12 per cent did not have a fixed intention or plan.

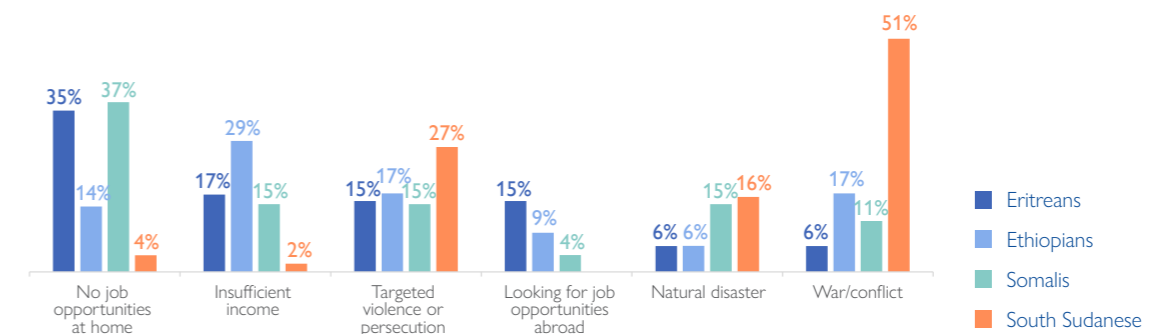


Figure 22: Top six reasons for migration

Threats to migrants' welfare in Libya continue to be highly present, as the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country gives cause for concern.¹⁰¹ The abuse of migrants and refugees who are abducted and deprived of their liberty by militias, armed groups and traffickers is well documented, including reports of inhumane conditions in facilities where they are held, tortured and subjected to other ill-treatment, exploitation and forced labour.¹⁰² As of December 2020, IOM estimated that in addition to the above at least 517 EHoA migrants were being detained in official detention centres in the country (462 Eritreans, 37 Somalis and 18 Ethiopians). However, it should be noted that interviews with migrants arriving in Europe and reports from detention centres do not necessarily reflect the experiences of all migrants transiting through Libya as many want to stay in the country, attracted by economic opportunities locally. In a study carried out in 2019 by DTM Libya and Columbia University, among 1,244 interviewed migrants who had been in Libya for more than 1 year, around 15 per cent indicated having experienced incidences of abuse. Verbal abuse, robbery and physical violence were the most commonly reported abuses migrants had experienced or witnessed. Robbery, physical violence, arrest and detention were among the most commonly reported perceived threats.¹⁰³

Concerns for the security of migrants who are returned to Libya's shores after being intercepted or rescued at sea while crossing the Mediterranean are heightened, as refugees and migrants are often deprived of their liberty once they are returned to Libya. By the end of December, 11,891 migrants and refugees had been intercepted or rescued and returned to Libya while trying to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean.¹⁰⁴ Throughout 2020, IOM has identified several instances of migrants being transported to undisclosed locations and disappearing following disembarkation.¹⁰⁵ Of particular concern in light of the ongoing pandemic are barriers to migrants accessing healthcare in Libya. Migrants are generally at heightened risk of contracting the virus due to their living conditions and Libya's public health system which is struggling to cope following years of conflict. While refugees officially registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) can seek medical care through UNHCR, migrants face great obstacles accessing public healthcare and are often unable to afford alternative, private health care services.¹⁰⁶

DTM publishes data on arrivals by sea and by land in the Mediterranean region, provided by national authorities and based on declared and registered nationalities upon disembarkation. According to data collected from government authorities, a total of 3,018 EHoA migrants were registered across European disembarkation and entry points in Greece, Italy, Spain and Malta in 2020, marking a 26 per cent decrease compared to 2019 (4,101).¹⁰⁷ The majority of the recorded arrivals were Somalis (1,840), followed by Eritreans (955), Ethiopians (104), South Sudanese (95), Ugandans (15), Burundians (8) and one Kenyan. Italy recorded the largest number of EHoA migrants arriving by sea in Europe (52%), followed by Greece (29%) and Malta (18%). Most migrants recorded in Greece were Somalis (820), 92 per cent of all EHoA arrivals in Greece. In Italy, the majority of registered EHoA migrants were Somalis (52%) and Eritreans

(41%). Malta also registered Eritreans (48%) and Somalis (38%). Ethiopians were registered in Greece, Italy and Malta, albeit in relatively low numbers (1%, 4% and 6%, respectively), while South Sudanese were only registered in Italy and Malta (3% and 7%, respectively). Additionally, 564 EHoA migrants (71% Eritreans and 26% Somalis) were apprehended while transiting through the Western Balkan region¹⁰⁸ in 2020; this is 53 per cent less than the 1,194 migrants registered in 2019.

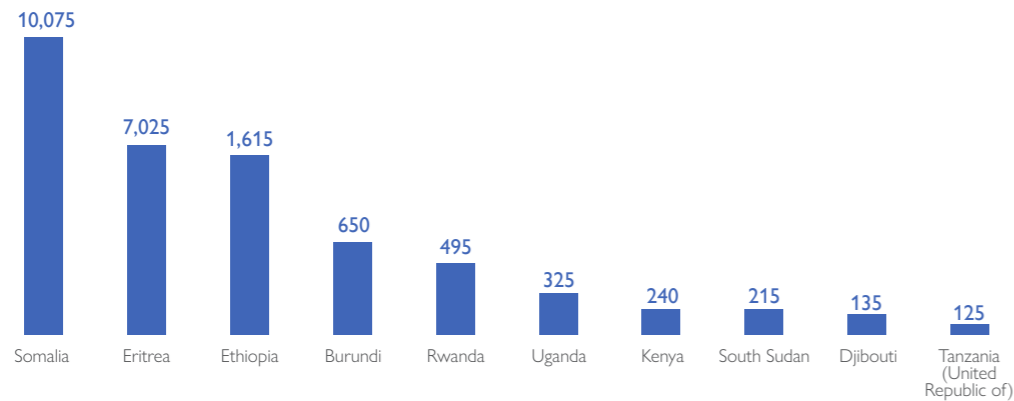


Figure 23: First-instance asylum applications lodged by EHoA migrants in Europe in 2020

Eurostat data for 2020 highlights that Somalis were not only the most commonly tracked EHoA nationality arriving in Europe by sea and by land, but also made up almost half of all 20,900 first-time asylum applications lodged by EHoA citizens in the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU), followed by Eritreans (34%) and Ethiopians (8%). These proportions are very similar to the breakdown of EHoA first-instance asylum applications in 2019, when Somalis (45%), Eritreans (34%), Ethiopians (7%) and Burundians (5%) accounted for the majority of the 28,870 applications.¹⁰⁹

Children's first-time asylum applications from the EHoA in 2020 were filed most often by Eritreans (56%) and Ethiopians (49%), while South Sudanese (9%), Ugandan (20%) and Tanzanian (28%) applications had the lowest proportion of children. Applicants were predominantly male with the exception of applicants from Kenya and Uganda, of whom 60 per cent and 52 per cent were female, respectively. South Sudanese applicants were overwhelmingly male (88%), while males were only slightly more represented than females amongst Somalis (61%), Tanzanians (56%), Djiboutians (56%), Eritreans (56%), Ethiopians (56%), Burundians (54%) and Rwandese (51%).¹¹⁰

In 2020, Somalis mainly applied for asylum in Germany (2,605 applications), France (2,390 applications), Greece (1,530 applications) and Italy (750 applications), whereas Eritreans commonly lodged first-instance asylum applications in Germany (2,560), Switzerland (1,635), Sweden (1,130) and France (1,045). Likewise, Ethiopians submitted applications in Germany (605), France (430), Sweden (320) and Switzerland (100). The data therefore indicates that migrants from the EHoA arriving in Europe do not necessarily apply for asylum in the first European country they arrive in.¹¹¹

Eurostat also publishes data on first-instance decisions of asylum applications submitted by EHoA citizens.¹¹² Of the 23,245 first-instance asylum decisions regarding applicants from the EHoA in the 27 EU Member States in 2020, 60 per cent were positive, while 40 per cent of applicants were rejected. Eritreans (63%) and Burundians (62%) most commonly received Geneva Convention Refugee Status, while over half of South Sudanese applicants also received a positive status (60%), although they were less likely to be granted full refugee status under the Geneva Convention (35%). Similarly, 60 per cent of Somali applicants received a positive status, but only 38 per cent were granted a Refugee Status. Around one in three Djiboutians (38%) and Rwandese (33%) applicants were recognized as refugees under the Geneva Convention (all other Djiboutian applicants were rejected), while only 28 per cent of Ugandan and 26 per cent of Ethiopian applicants were offered a positive status. Applicants from the United Republic of Tanzania (90% rejected) and Kenya (93% rejected) were the least likely to receive a positive

response to their asylum claims in the 27 EU Member States in 2020.¹¹³ The kind of protection applicants are granted matters, as the rights, length of stay and benefits granted by one's status varies depending on the type of protection granted. Those who are accorded non-refugee statuses such as subsidiary protection or humanitarian status are often accorded fewer rights in many countries compared to those who are granted full refugee protection under the Geneva Convention.



Portrait of a migrant waking up on the beach in Obock. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

SOUTHERN ROUTE

The Southern Route remains understudied compared to other routes in the region, with little current data available. In 2009, IOM estimated that as many as 20,000 migrants from the EHoA used this route per year.¹¹⁴ This estimate was revised in 2017 by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) to between 14,750 and 16,850 migrants.¹¹⁵ In 2020, over 56,200 movements were tracked along this route, an almost three-fold increase compared to 2019. This surge is attributed to the addition of 9 FMPs in Kenya (4) and the United Republic of Tanzania (5), as well as the re-opening of the Moyale FMP in Ethiopia along the border with Kenya. Movements along this route made up almost 12 per cent of all movements tracked in the region, with the majority originating in the United Republic of Tanzania (37%), and Somalia (26%), and most heading to Kenya (61%), and the United Republic of Tanzania (28%). An estimated 3 per cent of all tracked movements in the region (1,694) were towards South Africa, most through the Moyale FMP (96%). Of these, a large majority were Ethiopians, most commonly from the SNNP region (90%), travelling for economic reasons.¹¹⁶



Detention data collected by IOM Tanzania can shed further light on the significant number of migrants from the HoA migrating along the Southern Route. IOM continuously monitors the situation of migrants in detention centres in the United Republic of Tanzania, and conducts periodic verification missions to assess how many migrants are detained in the country. During the most recent assessment which was carried out between 3 and 17 December 2020, IOM and the Ethiopian embassy conducted joint verification missions to 13 prisons across four Tanzanian regions (Tanga, Morogoro, Pwani and Dar-e-Salaam) where they identified 1,097 Ethiopians in detention and provided medical assistance to those in need. IOM Tanzania estimates that the number of Ethiopians in detention is likely closer to 1,789, as not all prisons holding Ethiopian migrants were assessed during the verification missions in December. Furthermore, IOM assisted 1,342 Ethiopians to return to Ethiopia from the United Republic of Tanzania through IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme between February and March. These numbers are merely a small fraction of the likely sizeable number of EHoA nationals who migrate along this route annually.

In mid-2020, the RDH launched a scoping research project to better understand the dynamics of migration and the profiles of migrants along this corridor. As is the case with all migratory routes in the region, the pandemic greatly impacted southern flows due to border closures, travel restrictions and localized lockdowns, especially in its early months. In Kenya, the lockdown of Nairobi and the Eastleigh area within the city had a great impact on movements, as Eastleigh is one of the main transit hubs for both Ethiopians and Somalis headed south, as well as an area where local brokers are based and from where movement is coordinated. As countries gradually began to loosen restrictions around August, movements seem to have picked up again in the later months of the year. Additionally, IOM received multiple reports of groups of Ethiopian migrants who were intercepted in southern Kenya, near Lunga Lunga along the Tanzanian border. Whether movements resumed to an equal, lesser or greater extent than pre-COVID-19 is unknown.

The two main nationalities of migrants observed along the Southern Route are Ethiopians and Somalis. Those departing from Somalia usually start their journey in Dhobley, Kismayo or Mogadishu - particularly the Yakshid district, and reach Kenya by truck or on foot through Mandera in the north, or through Dadaab to then reach Garissa in the south, on their way to Nairobi. Those originating from Ethiopia usually travel through Moyale, to then reach Nairobi via Isiolo. Other nationalities from the EHoA have also been recorded along this corridor, including Kenyan and Eritrean nationals. In fact, research respondents reported that the number of Eritrean migrants on the Southern Route has increased in recent years following the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and subsequent opening of the border between the two countries, thereby facilitating southward movement. The Southern Route has long been characterized by mixed migration flows as economic migrants travel alongside asylum-seekers. The Republic of South Africa, as a more affluent African country, holds promise for migrants looking for greater economic opportunities and higher pay, and finding employment in South Africa is facilitated by the strong networks that exist between sending communities in the EHoA and South Africa.

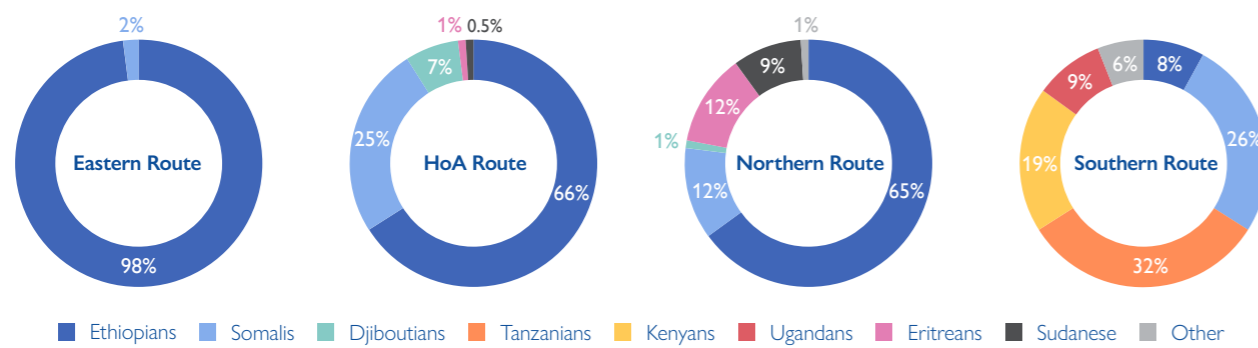
Migration along this route is comprised largely of young men, likely due to the nature of most migrants' intended work. In Ethiopia, there has been a tendency for young female migrants to favour travelling to the Middle East and Gulf countries, especially to Saudi Arabia along the Eastern Route. Middle Eastern countries have a long history of offering domestic work opportunities for young, Ethiopian female migrants, while labour migration to South Africa is characterized by small businesses. Strong and long-established Ethiopian and Somali networks to their homeland link the Ethiopian and Somali migrant communities in South Africa, creating demand for a steady flow of labourers to work in their businesses. Young female migrants make the journey to South Africa mostly to re-join family or get married.¹¹⁷

A recent IOM study on child migrants from Ethiopia confirms this, finding that in Hadiya, a community with a long history of Southern Route migration, female child migrants most commonly use the Eastern Route towards Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries while male child migrants from the Hadiya zone most commonly migrate via Hosaena and Moyale before crossing to Kenya on their way to South Africa.¹¹⁸ The research findings from Hadiya also show that young women, some as young as 15 years of age, often travel as prospective wives to businessmen in the diaspora in South Africa. Prospective wives most commonly fly to their destination, rather than using the more arduous overland route.¹¹⁹ The presence of a growing number of UMCs on the Southern Route is a concerning trend. According to a study in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 2018, migrant children often face a multitude of protection challenges, such as violence, kidnapping, ransom demands and lack of access to basic services.¹²⁰

Ethiopian migrants travelling to South Africa use a variety of different travel modalities, oftentimes travelling long segments in vehicles, while circumventing border and police checkpoints on foot. Some who can afford it fly part or all of the journey. The majority of Ethiopians in South Africa are from rural areas in southern Ethiopia, such as Hosaena (Hadiya zone) and Durame (Kembata Tembaro zone) in the SNNP region.¹²¹ Compared to other zones inside the SNNP region, both the Hadiya and Kembata zones are distinguished by high rates of migration combined with low average school performance, a high dropout rate as well as a very high population density.¹²² The recent IOM study on child migration from Ethiopia found that education is inextricably linked to migration in Shashogo (Hadiya Zone). In the 2000s, when migration from Hadiya to South Africa began increasing, most migrants were school dropouts. In recent years, Shashogo has witnessed an increasing migration of teachers, graduates and civil servants to South Africa, with the consequence that many children are motivated to migrate to South Africa as well.¹²³

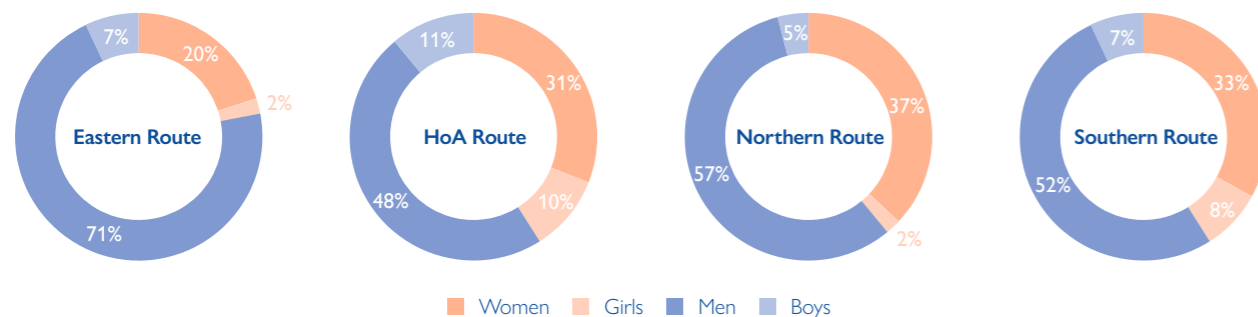
MIGRANT PROFILES¹²⁴

Nationalities¹²⁵



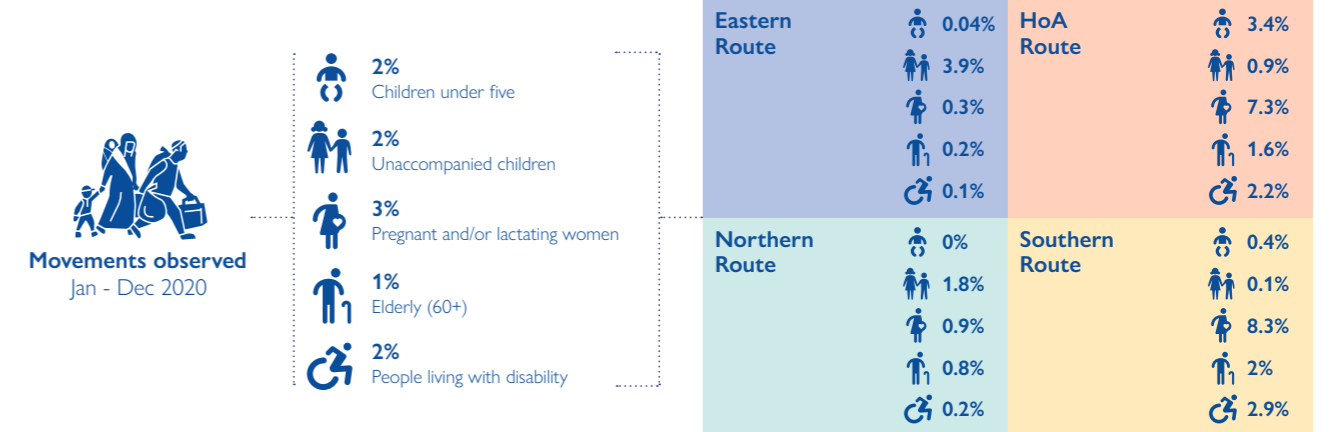
Migration in the EHoA has historically been dominated by Ethiopian nationals, largely due to a culture of migration present in many areas of the region, encouraging young people to attempt these perilous journeys, oftentimes with little information and risk awareness of the challenges lying before them, and even fewer funds. In total, 336,266 Ethiopians were on the move in 2020, of whom 154,367 were migrating along the Eastern Route, while 173,558 were tracked on the HoA Route. Most of the 84,661 Somalis on the move were tracked along the HoA Route (66,240). Migrants of other nationalities were also present in the region, especially with regards to the Southern Route which has a large proportion of Tanzanian, Somali and Kenyan nationals.

Sex and Age

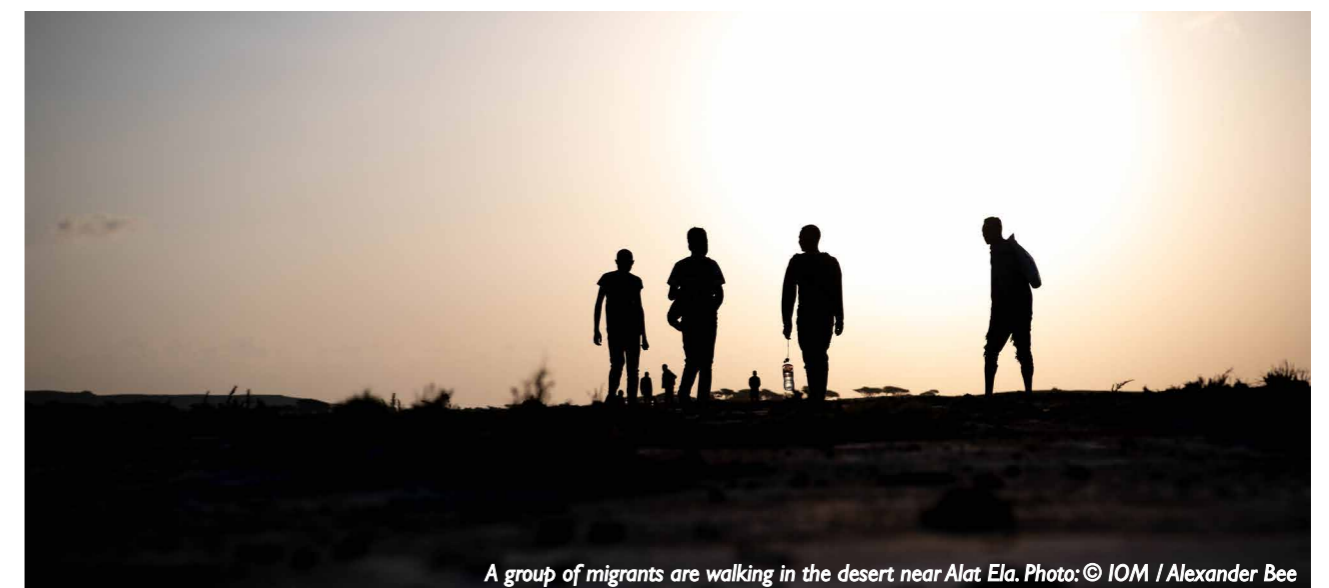
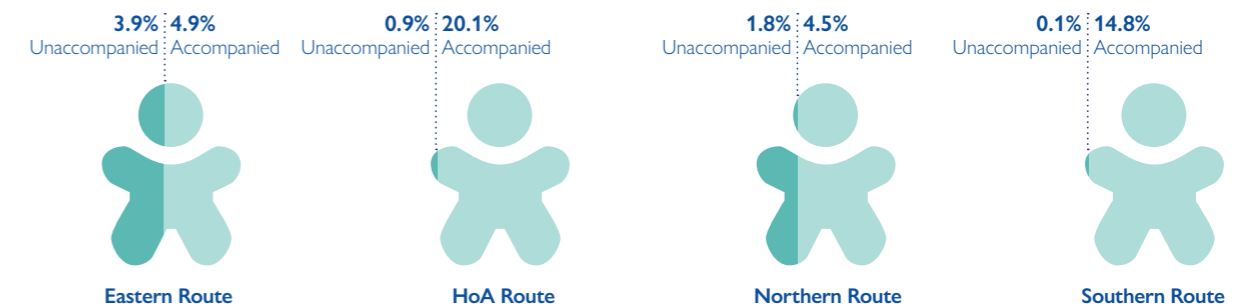


Migrants across all routes are most likely to be men (56%); the demographic profile of the migrants along each of these routes has remained fairly consistent since 2018.¹²⁶ Historically, the migration journey along the Eastern Route has been undertaken by young Ethiopian men given that migration is viewed as a rite of passage for many young men who are motivated by success stories within their communities. Hence, migration tends to be longer term in nature, with over 47 per cent of migrants along this route unsure of when they would return, and 7 per cent not planning on returning. In contrast, the migration along the HoA Route has been more seasonal in nature, with families moving together for relatively shorter periods of time (32% for a week or less and 19% for less than 3 months).¹²⁷ To a smaller extent, the migration along the Northern Route is also undertaken for economic reasons, and largely male-dominated likely due to uncertainty regarding success rates, and the dangers involved in crossing Libya and the Mediterranean Sea. In addition, the Southern Route is also likely to be dominated by economic migration as it entails a very long journey across multiple countries largely undertaken by men, however, data collected through the current network is largely focused on more localized movements, similar to the HoA Route.

Vulnerabilities



Overall, vulnerabilities observed along all routes decreased from 2019 (97,148) to 2020 (56,008), representing a decrease in overall vulnerabilities as a proportion of the total movements.¹²⁸ The overall proportion of UMCs tracked in 2020 also decreased compared to 2019, from 4 per cent of all movements in 2019 to 2 per cent of all movements in 2020. This represents a decrease from 23 per cent of all children tracked in 2019 to 11 per cent in 2020. While the overall vulnerabilities decreased, the number of UMCs tracked along the Eastern Route drastically increased, considering that almost half of all children along this route were unaccompanied in 2020, whereas one third of all children were unaccompanied in 2019. During the previous year, 64 per cent of all UMCs tracked in the region were travelling along the Eastern Corridor, while this increased to 70 per cent in 2020. This increase in vulnerabilities is especially concerning in the context of the pandemic.



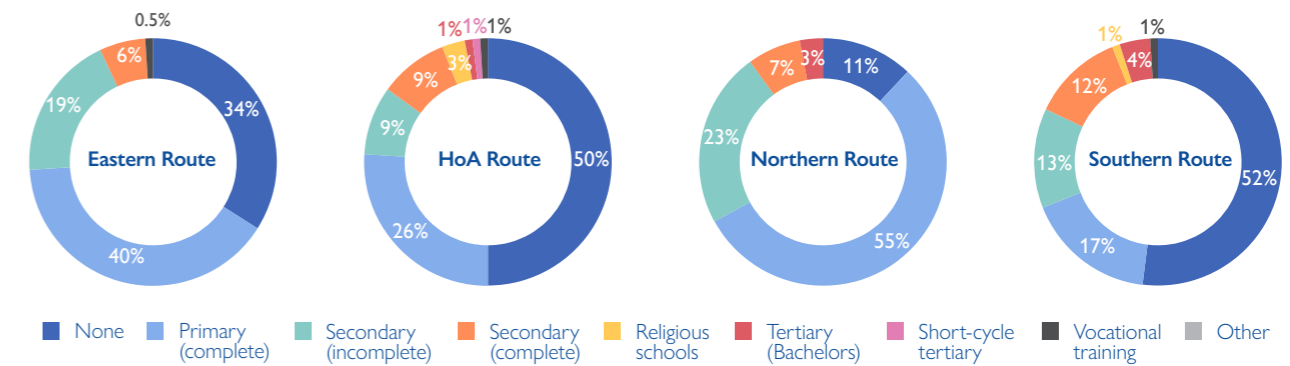
Box: A Study on Child Migrants from Ethiopia

In December 2020, IOM published a study on child migrants from Ethiopia, aimed at providing a comprehensive assessment of irregular child migration based on five case studies conducted in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray, SNNP and Dire Dawa.¹²⁹ The study sheds light on the socio-demographic profiles of child migrants, the drivers behind their migration, how child migrants make their decision to migrate and the vulnerabilities and protection risks they face during their journeys. The study found that the average age of child migrants is between 13 and 17 years, although children as young as eight can be found migrating on their own without guardians. Respondents in the study mostly came from poor backgrounds and large households. The study found a multitude of factors pushing and pulling Ethiopian children to migrate, including economic factors (absolute and relative deprivation), poor access to basic services, natural disasters, political instability and a culture of migration. A disinterest in rural life amongst the younger generation, migration histories of parents and other family members, and low educational performance were also found to be driving migration in some cases.

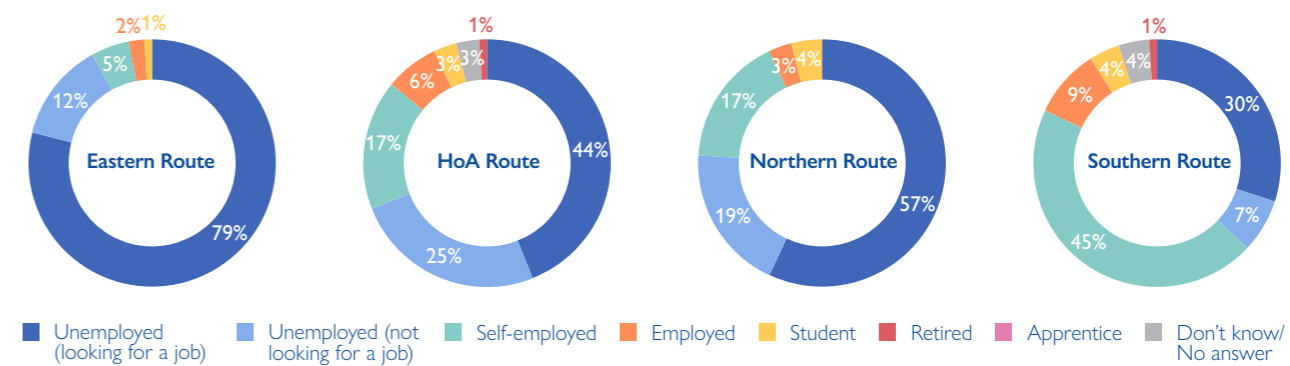
The study also highlights how many different actors shape children's decision-making process, including families, returnees, smugglers and peers. Nonetheless, most child migrants did not involve their parents in the decision to migrate and many departed from their communities without informing their parents. The journeys of Ethiopian child migrants are fraught with protection risks, including kidnapping and being held against their will, commonly to extort relatives at origin, exploitation and forced labour, violence including sexual and gender-based violence, detention and deportation as well as a lack of access to basic services. After returning to Ethiopia, many child migrants re-migrate due to unaddressed vulnerabilities and the stigma experienced by some child migrants upon return to their communities.



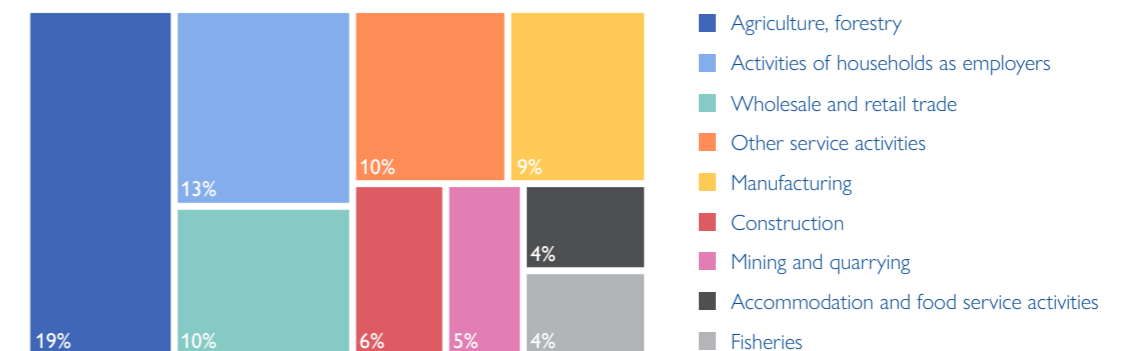
Education and Employment¹³⁰



Almost half of flow monitoring survey (FMS) respondents had no formal education, and only around 3 per cent had a higher than secondary education level. Most of the educated respondents had specialized in religious studies (38%), followed by a field related to education (23%), social sciences (8%), and health and welfare (7%). There was little variance between males and females in terms of study areas with the exception of religious studies where females (44%) were higher than males (34%).¹³¹



While migrants in the region generally have a low level of education, 46 per cent of respondents were unemployed and looking for a job, and 20 per cent were self-employed prior to migration, which usually refers to farming or herding activities. Indeed, many respondents reported being involved in the agriculture or forestry industry prior to migration, which is usually more male dominated (25% versus 11% for females). The sector of wholesale and retail trade was also male dominated (12% versus 6% for females). Conversely, females (28%) were more commonly involved in activities of households than males (4%). There was practically no difference between males and females in the manufacturing industry.¹³²



Previous Displacement and Migration Attempts

The history of migration is a key indicator to explore the nexus between decision-making, perceptions, and reintegration challenges back home, as well as to get a better understanding of the environment in which migration is taking place. An estimated 60 per cent of migrants stated that they had not attempted migration in the past versus 40 per cent who had. Compared to other routes, migrants along the Southern and HoA Routes were more likely to have attempted migration in the past. This might be an illustration of the nature of migration movements along these routes that tend to be shorter-term¹³³ and cyclical in nature,¹³⁴ hence more migrants are likely to have attempted it and returned back to their areas of origin.¹³⁵ Overall, more migrants were likely to not have attempted migration in the past (60%) compared to the ones who did (40%), although of those who did attempt to migrate in the past, a higher proportion were female (55%) versus male (45%). This higher likelihood of females is also found along the HoA Route. However, along the Eastern Route, which had the greatest disparity between the sexes, males were almost three times more likely to have attempted migration compared to females. Both sexes were equally likely to have attempted migration along the Southern Route.

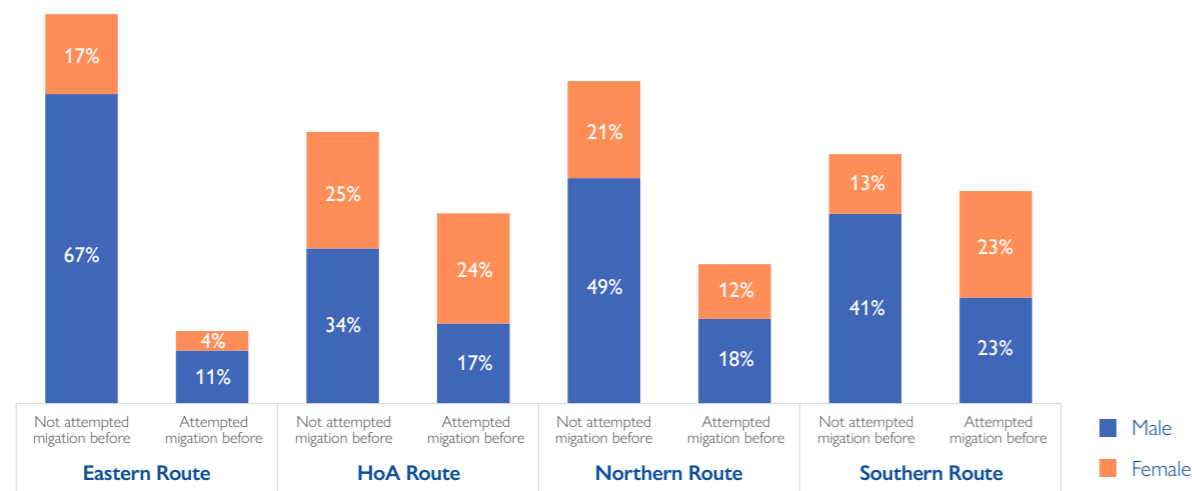


Figure 24: History of migration by sex and route in 2020

Furthermore, most respondents reported to have not been displaced in their country prior to migration (67%) versus 33 per cent who had. The gender dynamics of this indicator illustrate the higher likelihood of males of having been displaced previously (78%) compared to females (54%). Migrants along the HoA and Southern Routes are more likely to have been displaced; this might be correlated to the fact that countries along these routes are more prone to both natural and man-made disasters, such as Ethiopia and Somalia.

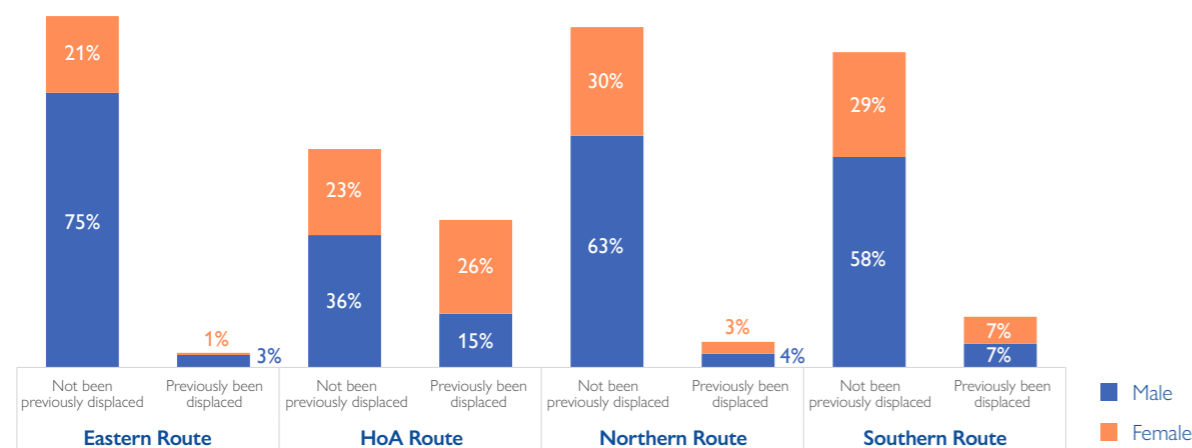
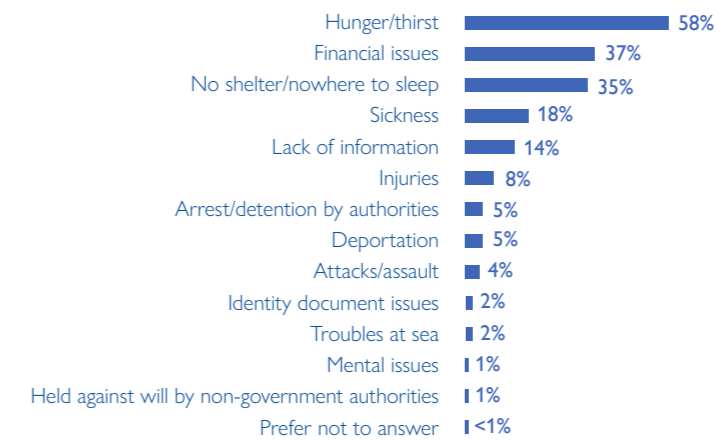


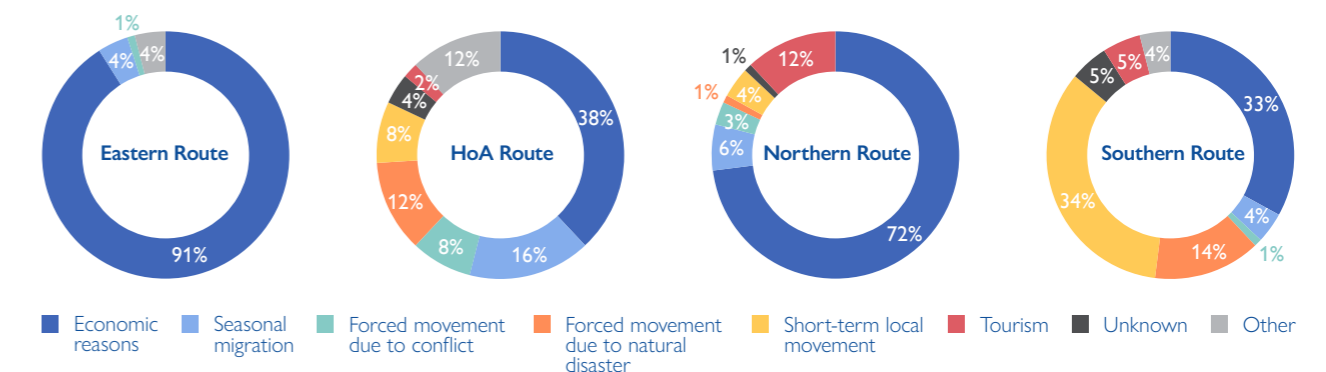
Figure 25: History of displacement by sex and route in 2020

Difficulties Faced

Overall, only around a quarter of those surveyed responded to the question regarding difficulties faced during the migrant journey.¹³⁶ Of these, 77 per cent of respondents said they have been facing difficulties during their journey. The main challenges reported en route were related to access to food and water, lack of financial resources, and access to shelter.



Reasons for Migration



In the region, migration tends to be largely driven by economic factors (55%), with the largest majority captured along the Eastern Route. Movements along the Eastern and Northern Routes are generally longer term in nature (for 6 months or longer), while movements along the HoA Route are usually shorter and more localized. Almost 23 per cent of all movements along the Eastern Route were for a duration of more than 3 months at the intended destination, 7 per cent were not planning on leaving once they reached their destination, and over 47 per cent were unaware of when they would return to their areas of origin. By contrast, 32 per cent of the movements along the HoA Route were for a duration of a week or less, 20 per cent were for a duration of less than 3 months, and only 19 per cent were for 3 months to 1 year with 17 per cent for unknown duration. Additionally, 19 per cent of overall movements were shorter term in nature, including seasonal migration (11%), with 46 per cent movements tracked along the HoA Route reported to have been driven by shorter-term drivers, and most shorter-term movements lasting for a week or less (41%).

Forced movements due to various reasons made up 13 per cent of all movements, and most of these were tracked along the HoA Route (82%). The highest proportion of movements driven by economic reasons were headed towards Saudi Arabia (46%), followed by Somalia (17%), while the highest proportion of movements for health care were headed towards Kenya (56%); the highest proportion of movements driven by economic reasons were originating in Ethiopia (64%) and Somalia (18%). Of all forced movements, most originated in Ethiopia as well, followed by Somalia.

Furthermore, FMS data shows why certain countries were chosen as intended destinations, and although the largest reason was the search for job opportunities, appealing socio-economic conditions was also notably high on the list. Overall, of the migrants intending to travel to Saudi Arabia, 56 per cent reported about their perceptions regarding job availability, and 20 per cent followed their friends and families; the latter shows the importance of diaspora in making migration decisions.



MIGRATION RESPONSE CENTRES

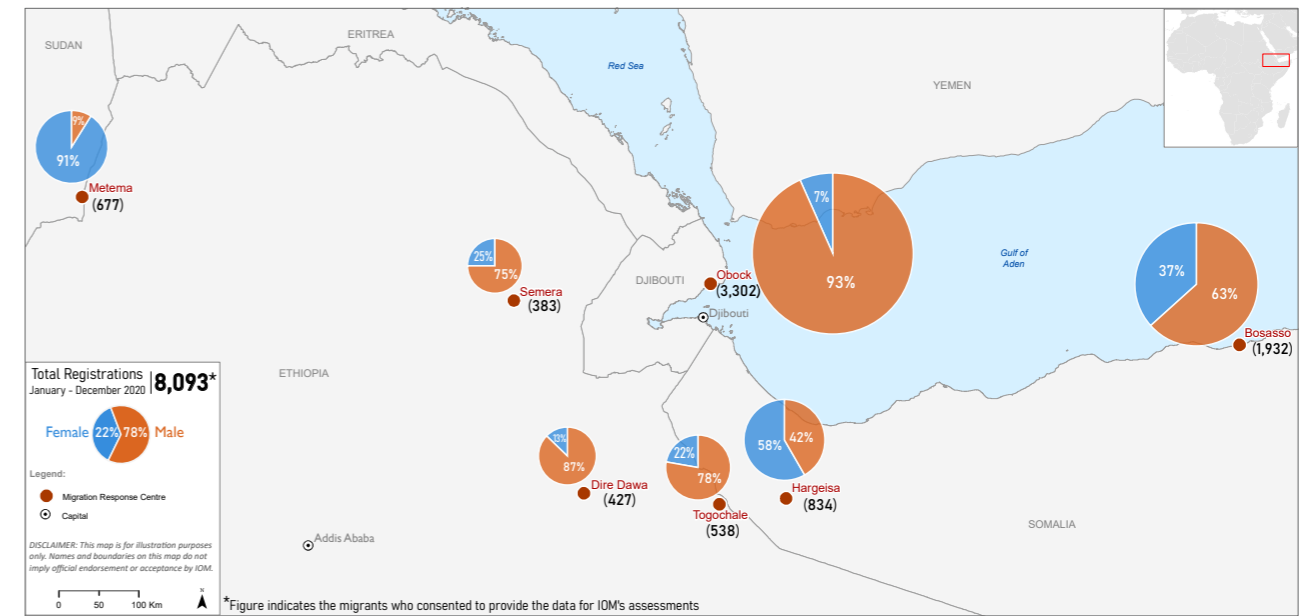


Figure 26: Migrant registrations by sex and MRC in 2020

Situated along key migration routes in Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti, the MRCs provide direct assistance, including food and healthcare, as well as service referrals to migrants in need. The services provided by each MRC vary depending on migrant needs in the particular area. Seven MRCs were operated by national governments, IOM, and other partners in 2020: Hargeisa and Bossaso since 2009, Obock since 2011, Semera and Metema since 2014, and Dire Dawa and Togochale since August 2019. Due to the pandemic, only three out of seven MRCs (Bossaso, Hargeisa and Obock) continued to register migrants throughout the year, whereas migrant registrations were gradually disrupted at the MRCs in Ethiopia (Dire Dawa, Metema, Semera and Togochale) starting from the end of March. Since then, the MRCs in Ethiopia have supported the Ethiopian Government by providing assistance at COVID-19 quarantine facilities, as well as to returnees and stranded migrants. Although the pandemic and related border closures in the region have had an impact on IOM's ability to assist migrants in need, IOM continues to provide basic, life-saving assistance and support as well as referrals for stranded migrants at its MRCs.

A total of 8,093 migrants were registered across all MRCs in 2020, with the largest number of migrants registered in Obock (41%). Less than a fifth of registered migrants were women (22%) while around 19 per cent were children, most of whom were registered in Hargeisa (30%), Obock (25%) and Bossaso (21%). A vast majority of registrants were Ethiopians. Migrants heading to the Arabian Peninsula were most commonly departing from the Oromia (39%), Amhara (10%) and Tigray (8%) regions in Ethiopia, while almost a fourth of registered migrants were Ethiopians returning from Yemen and intending to return to their habitual residence. As was the case in 2019, economic reasons (84%) continued to be the most commonly reported reason for migration.



Figure 27: MRC registrations in 2019 and 2020

VI. 2021 MIGRATION OUTLOOK



Portrait of a migrant sitting under a tree in Fantahero while waiting to board a boat to Yemen. Photo: © IOM / Alexander Bee

In addition to being a public health emergency, COVID-19 has severely affected local economies, people's livelihoods and almost every aspect of daily life for over a year now. The impact of the pandemic has not only been felt by people on the move, but by both the host communities and communities of origin, especially those who are reliant on remittances. Remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries are projected to decline by around 14 per cent in 2021 compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.¹³⁷ The likely reduction of these flows is expected to have a considerable financial and social impact, such as increased poverty and reduced access to basic services including healthcare and education.¹³⁸ Hence, while the core drivers of migration, namely poverty, conflict and environmental events persist, the economic drivers have been exacerbated further, and at the same time, migration as a livelihood strategy has become even more risky as smugglers try to circumvent restrictions and maximise profits over the fewer migrants that undertake the journey. Consequently, as mobility restrictions are eased, both intra- and extra-regional migration from the EHoA are likely to increase in 2021. However, unpredictable and prolonged movement restrictions may push more migrants towards irregular channels of migration and increasingly risky smuggling routes.

Despite an increase in recorded movements towards the end of 2020, with overall movements increasing by an average of 17 per cent per month between October and December, the impact COVID-19 will have on the migration landscape in the region is far from over. While many countries worldwide have begun mass vaccination campaigns, vaccine availability in the EHoA remains severely limited, with few prospects of vaccinating a significant percentage of the population before the end of 2022. The region will therefore likely suffer further waves of infection, resulting in additional lockdowns and other measures to prevent the spread of the disease, which will in turn exacerbate and prolong the impact of COVID-19 on the EHoA. A recent study found that the long-term socio-economic impact of the pandemic is set to widen the poverty gap between countries as an estimated 41 million people in low and medium development countries could be pushed into poverty by 2030, with the heaviest burden falling on Africa.¹³⁹

Aside from the pandemic, the region's political landscape has undergone important changes in 2020, and more developments and transitions are expected in 2021. General elections were held in Burundi in May 2020, electing new President Évariste Ndayishimiye, as well as in the United Republic of Tanzania at the end of October 2020 during which President Magufuli was re-elected for another five-year term. However, after Magufuli's sudden death in March 2021, the country sworn in its first female head of state, President Samia Suluhu Hassan, marking a new chapter in the country's history. Moreover, Uganda's general elections were held in January 2021, while both the Ethiopian parliamentary elections and the Somali presidential elections have been delayed due to the pandemic and are planned for mid-2021. These delays have subsequently sparked tensions, and the political turmoil is still ongoing. In addition, the Kenyan general elections, which are scheduled for 2022, also come with a level of uncertainty considering that a significant number of people were displaced due to post-election violence in 2017.¹⁴⁰

The security situation in the EHoA will remain complex and unpredictable in the second half of 2021 as long as conflict, violence and other shocks are persisting. In South Sudan, the establishment of a unity government in February 2020, as stipulated in the peace deal, has initially brought hopes of peace and stability, and the same applies to the recent, awaited dissolution of parliament announced by President Salva Kiir on 8 May 2021. However, intercommunal clashes are still on the rise, at a time when the country is also tackling famine. In Somalia, violence is escalating at an alarming pace due to the simmering political crisis, with intensified fighting in Mogadishu at the end of April 2021. Meanwhile, the Tigray crisis entered its sixth month with no clear end in sight. Hostilities are ongoing, communication channels are constrained, and humanitarian access remains obstructed as of early May 2021. The number of IDPs is expected to drastically increase from the current 1 million estimate, when at the same time, a famine is emerging with an estimated 4.5 million food insecure people across Tigray.¹⁴¹

METHODOLOGY

GEOGRAPHICAL DENOMINATION

The East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region, for IOM, is comprised of ten countries: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The IOM Regional Office for the EHOA is located in Nairobi, Kenya. IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) components were active in eight out of the 10 countries, including Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda, as well as Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania; for the latter two, DTM was only operational from October to December 2020. Yemen is part of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and although not part of the EHOA region, is integral to understanding the regional migration dynamics.

PERSONS OF CONCERN

- **Migrant:** as defined by IOM, any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.¹⁴²

- **Internally displaced person (IDP):** a person (or group of persons) who has been forced or obliged to flee or to leave his/her home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who has not crossed an internationally recognized state border.¹⁴³ An IDP is a specific kind of migrant, but for this report, 'migrant' is used to refer to any person, or group of persons, who have crossed an internationally recognized state border for any reason, whereas IDPs are displaced within their borders.

- **Returnee:** any person who was displaced internally or across an international border, but has since returned to his/her place of habitual residence.¹⁴⁴ The definition may vary at the country level and may encompass former IDPs or refugees returning to the area of their habitual residence, and not necessarily their home, or hometown.

FLOW MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The purpose of flow monitoring (FM) is to provide regular and updated information on the volume and profile of population movements. The information and analysis of FM data also aims to contribute to improved understanding of shortcomings and priorities in the provision of assistance along the displacement/migratory routes. FM consists of three basic steps:

- **High Mobility Area/Location Assessments:** aimed at mapping locations of high mobility to establish where to set up flow monitoring points (FMPs) through key informant interviews.

- **Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR):** aimed at capturing quantitative data about certain characteristics such as the volumes of migrants, their nationalities, sex and age disaggregated information, their origin, their planned destination and key vulnerabilities. This is done by enumerators at FMPs.

- **Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS):** aimed at capturing qualitative information about the profiles of migrants, migration drivers and migrants' needs. This is done through interviews with a sample of migrants passing through the FMPs.

Limitations: Geographical coverage of FM activities is not exhaustive and is limited to selected FMPs. Information

provided by FMR cannot be generalized to the overall population passing through the selected locations (FMPs) where they were collected. Moreover, FMR results are not indicative of movements in other non-monitored transit locations. The combined results must be read as indicative of change in trends, rather than exact measurements of mobility.

Migration Networks

Migration in the region has been broadly categorized in four main networks:

- **Migration Routes:** categorized as longer-term movement, migration along the four main routes (Eastern, Horn of Africa, Northern, and Southern) is mostly intended for relatively longer durations and may encompass border crossings of more than one country. Flow monitoring points in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen are categorized as points that measure this kind of movement.

- **Health Vulnerability Monitoring:** Various points established in key locations in Burundi, South Sudan and Uganda (as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo), provide valuable information on movements to and from areas affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), although they operate under the standard Flow Monitoring methodology.

- **Cross-border Movements:** FMPs established mainly in South Sudan and Uganda, along the border with Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania, respectively, track this kind of movement, which is usually shorter-term in nature and confined to these two countries.

- **Movements between Burundi and United Republic of Tanzania:** following the conflict in Burundi, many Burundian refugees are currently making their way back from the United Republic of Tanzania. Eight FMPs established along the border between the countries track the returns of this population, as well as other kinds of movements between the two countries.

Note: Although the points have been categorized in specific ways as per location and purpose of establishment, they continue to operate as standard FMPs and monitor all kinds of movements. Categorization is based on generalization of movements and does not exclude other kinds of movements.

Migration Routes

The routes are categorized by looking at the countries of intended destination and have been done so in the following way:

- **Eastern Route:** Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

- **Horn of Africa (HoA) Route:** Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

- **Northern Route:** Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Libya, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

- **Southern Route:** Angola, Congo, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

- **Other routes:** There are some movements that were tracked going to other countries, mostly to the Eastern hemisphere, and North America, but those have not been considered for the purposes of this analysis as they were outliers, and not part of the regional migration trends. About 0.1 per cent

observations were observed of these 'other' destinations; thus they did not have a substantial impact on the analysis.

Note: The FMR and FMS data are likely to be biased, or incomplete, due to lack of operational coverage along some of these routes – particularly the Northern and Southern Routes.

Yemen Arrivals

DTM teams in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen track movements along the Eastern Route. Yemen, through a network of five FMPs, covers the southern coast of Yemen only, which tracks new arrivals reaching the Peninsula from the HoA across the Gulf of Aden. Due to the ongoing conflict in the region, DTM teams do not have access to the western coast of Yemen which borders the Red Sea. For this reason, it is likely that the figures on new arrivals to Yemen are under-estimating actual arrivals, and a large proportion of movements originating from Obock in Djibouti, likely headed across the Red Sea, are not captured through FM.¹⁴⁵

Change in Indicators

During February and March 2020, the FMR tool was updated to include a wider range of options for relevant indicators. The various missions adapted the new tool at varying paces, hence the data collected during this period is not directly comparable. The likely impact on findings can be indicated through the following:

- **Flow Type:** additional options included another option related to economic reasons (forced movement due to food insecurity), additional options for short-term movements (travel to collect aid, health care, market visits), and additional options for other kinds of movements (family visits, return visits, education related travel). A proportion of the change in reasons for movements, especially with relevance to economic, may be attributed to the addition of these new options, and should be interpreted in the same light.
- **Sex and Age Disaggregation:** additional age brackets were added.
- **Vulnerabilities:** additional options were added, including sex breakdown for unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs), and for mental disability, and the categories of pregnant and lactating women were separated.
- **Chronic Diseases/COVID-19:** later in the year, additional questions were added regarding health condition of the migrants, and if they suffered from any chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, etc. A question was also added about their knowledge of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak.

POPULATION MOBILITY MAPPING METHODOLOGY

Population Mobility Mapping (PMM) has been developed through an adaptation of the DTM model. PMM involves analyzing the characteristics and dynamics of population mobility to facilitate informed decision-making in public health interventions. More broadly, it aims to improve prevention, detection and response to the spread of infectious diseases through an improved understanding of spaces of vulnerability and prevailing human mobility patterns. PMM is comprised of three separate but related stages that combine qualitative and quantitative methods:

- **Participatory Mapping Exercise (PME):** aimed at identifying and prioritizing strategic transit points (e.g. Points of Entry (PoE), Points of Control (PoCs), etc.). PME is conducted to rapidly collect information on human mobility profiles and patterns in order to inform effective, more targeted resource allocation at a time of a public health risk. This is done through group discussion, using basemaps prepared ahead of time as basis for discussion.

- **Site Observation:** aimed at assessing spaces of vulnerability that were identified and prioritized through PME (e.g. Priority Sites Assessment, Priority Health Facilities Assessment, Priority Markets Assessment, Priority Traditional Healers Assessment).

- **Flow Monitoring:** aimed at profiling the volume and dynamics of human mobility at selected strategic transit points connecting spaces of vulnerability, which are formal or informal PoEs/PoCs covering land, water and air transportation.

COVID-19 MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS METHODOLOGY

The current outbreak of COVID-19 has affected global mobility in the form of various travel disruptions and restrictions. To better understand how COVID-19 affects global mobility, IOM developed a global mobility database to map and gather data on the locations, status and different restrictions at PoEs.¹⁴⁶ In the EHoA region, DTM teams in nine of the ten countries covered by IOM Nairobi Regional Office are actively collecting information on various PoEs, internal transit locations, as well as other areas of interest in an effort to better understand the extent of these restrictions, as well as the impact on different types of population groups.¹⁴⁷

Data is collected about the following locations:

- **Airports:** currently or recently functioning airport with a designated International Air Transport Association (IATA) code.
- **Blue Border Crossing Points:** international border crossing point on sea, river or lake.
- **Land Border Crossing Points:** international border crossing point on land.
- **Internal Transit Points:** internal transit point inside a given country, territory or area.
- **Areas of interest:** region, town, city or sub-administrative unit in a given country, territory or area with specific restrictions.
- **Sites with a population of interest particularly affected by or at risk of COVID-19:** stranded, repatriated and returning migrants, IDPs, nationals, asylum-seekers and regular travellers.

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132. Indicators on employment sectors are compiled using an FMS sample of 1,670 respondents from data collected between October and December 2020.

133. Southern Route migration is generally longer term, however, the sample collected by DTM is biased due to limited coverage and capturing localized movements primarily.

134. Northern Route in the current sample mainly captures localized movements between Ethiopia and Sudan. With expanded coverage in the future, more longer-term movements may eventually become part of this sample.

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ANNEXES

1. February 2021 – [Regional Data Hub Snapshot 2020](#)

At the regional level, the Regional Data Hub (RDH) aims to enhance technical coordination, harmonize the different data collection activities and foster a multi-layered analysis of mixed migration movements, trends and characteristics across the region. Progressively, the RDH has become a technical hub able to provide information management services to countries in the region for programming, analysis and data management support. Through a combination of IOM data collection methodologies, research initiatives, and continuous and active engagement with National Statistical Offices (NSOs), key line Ministries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the RDH aims to fill in the existing gaps in strengthening the regional evidence base on migration. This contribution will, in turn, help improve policy-making programming and coordination between all the stakeholders involved.

2. April 2020 – [Displacement Tracking Matrix East and Horn of Africa Info Sheet 2020](#)

The Regional Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Support Team is based in Nairobi, working closely with DTM coordinators in country and with the DTM Global Support Team in headquarters. Composed of experts with various technical and operational backgrounds, the team strives to provide support services for DTM implementation in the region. Support includes strategy, methodology and tools design, deployment of technical expertise, capacity building support, quality control, analysis and development of information products, coordination of cross-border activities as well as intra-regional coordination.

3. March 2021 – [Displacement Tracking Matrix East and Horn of Africa: Monthly Regional Snapshot \(December 2020\)](#)

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region is currently active in eight countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania), and its methodology includes four main components (mobility tracking, flow monitoring, registrations, and surveys). As of December 2020, DTM in the region tracked 6.4M Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 2.7M Returnees, as reported during the last round of DTM assessments for each country, or through secondary data sources. A total of 65 Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) were operational in the regional network with the main aim of tracking cross-border movements trends in the region.





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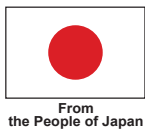


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