

A REGION ON THE MOVE

Mid-year Mobility Overview January to June 2021

IOM Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa



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EU-IOM
Joint Initiative for
Migrant Protection
and Reintegration



MiRAC
MIGRATION RESOURCE
ALLOCATION COMMITTEE



german
humanitarian
assistance
DEUTSCHE HUMANITÄRE HILFE



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Cover photo: Nyatin, a resident of Gummuruk in the Greater Pibor Administration Area receives much-needed lifesaving items after being displaced due to conflict in her village. © IOM 2021 / Liatile Putsoa

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfCFTA: African Continental Free Trade Area	MMP: Missing Migrants Project
ARC: African Risk Capacity	MoU: Memorandum of Understanding
AU: African Union	MRC: Migration Response Centre
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation	MRP: Migrant Response Plan
BTI: Bertelsmann Transformation Index	MRP: Migrant Response Point
CFR: Case Fatality Rate	MT: Mobility Tracking
COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019	NRC: Norwegian Refugee Council
COVAX: COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access	NSO: National Statistical Office
DRC: Danish Refugee Council	OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – UN
DTM: Displacement Tracking Matrix	OHCHR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights – UN
EAC: East Africa Community	PoC: Protection of Civilians
EHoA: East and Horn of Africa	PoC: Point of Control
ENSO: El Niño Southern Oscillation	PoE: Point of Entry
ESACRED-WG: East and Southern Africa Sub-regional COVID-19 Vaccine Readiness and Delivery Working Group	PME: Participatory Mapping Exercise
EVD: Ebola Virus Disease	PMM: Population Mobility Mapping
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization – UN	R-ARCSS: Revitalization Agreement of the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan
FFPI: FAO Food Price Index	REC: Regional Economic Community
FEWS NET: Famine Early Warning Systems Network	RDH: Regional Data Hub
FM: Flow Monitoring	RMMS: Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
FMP: Flow Monitoring Point	SDG: Sustainable Development Goal
FMR: Flow Monitoring Registry	SNBS: Somalia National Bureau of Statistics
FMS: Flow Monitoring Survey	SNNP: Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (Ethiopia)
FSIN: Food Security Information Network	SWALIM: Somalia Water and Land Information Management
FSNAU: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit	TDF: Tigray Defense Forces
GDP: Gross Domestic Product	TPFM: Task Force on Population Movement (Yemen)
GPAA: Greater Pibor Administrative Area (South Sudan)	UMC: Unaccompanied Migrant Children
HAC: Humanitarian Aid Commission	UN: United Nations
HNO: Humanitarian Needs Overview	UNCT: United Nations Country Team
HoA: Horn of Africa	UNDRR: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
HRW: Human Rights Watch	UNDSS: United Nations Department for Safety and Security
IATA: International Air Transport Association	UNHCR: United Nations High Commission for Refugees
IDMC: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre	UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council
IDP: Internally Displaced Person	UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
IFRC: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	UNMISS: United Nations Mission in South Sudan
IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development	USD: United States Dollar
ILO: International Labour Organization	VHR: Voluntary Humanitarian Return
IMWG-TWG: Information Management Working Group - Technical Working Group	WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
IOM: International Organization for Migration – UN	WFP: World Food Programme – UN
IPC: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification	WHO: World Health Organization
IPNA: Immigration, Passport and Naturalization Authority (Yemen)	WMO: World Meteorological Organization
MENA: Middle East and North Africa	
MHPSS: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	

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Jama, a camel herder, carries his jerrycans filled with water at a borehole in Garowe. © IOM 2020

I. HIGHLIGHTS

COVID-19 IMPACT

- In the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region,¹ coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases stood at an estimated **631,000** (almost 125% increase compared to December 2020) and deaths accounted for **over 10,000** (150% increase since December 2020) by the end of June 2021.
- Vaccination programmes have been rolled out in seven countries in the region, but the ability of governments to secure and distribute vaccine doses has been limited and as of mid-2021, **only 4.7 million** people had been vaccinated with Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda leading the way.
- **A quarter of migrants** interviewed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported difficulties with sending and/or receiving remittances from abroad.

FORCED DISPLACEMENT

- The EHOA region was home to **9.4 million** internally displaced persons (IDPs) and **3.6 million** refugees and asylum-seekers as of June 2021.
- From February to May 2021, the waters of Lake Tanganyika rose at an alarming rate due to heavy rains thereby triggering floods and displacing thousands of people. As of June 2021, **over 125,000** persons were displaced across Burundi, mainly due to natural disasters (85%).
- **More than 4 million** persons were displaced across Ethiopia at mid-2021. This number includes **over 2 million** persons displaced due to the Northern Ethiopia crisis, of whom 97 per cent were displaced in the region of Tigray, over 2 per cent in Afar and less than 1 per cent in Amhara.
- From January to June 2021, there was an increase in new displacement in Somalia due to conflict, drought and floods. The internally displaced population stands at an estimated **3 million** persons of whom 1.6 million IDPs are the most in need of assistance.
- South Sudan currently hosts **over 1.7 million** IDPs. Conflict, widespread insecurity and climate events have contributed to severe food shortages across the country, therefore sustaining high levels of food insecurity with **7.2 million** people facing acute food insecurity from April to July 2021.

REGIONAL MIXED MIGRATION TRENDS

Migration Movements

- Over **820,000 movements** were tracked through **70 flow monitoring points (FMPs)** in the EHOA flow monitoring (FM) network from January to June 2021.
- Health Vulnerability Monitoring Network: **50,980** movements were tracked through a total of seven FMPs established in South Sudan.
- Migration Routes Network: **332,370** movements were tracked through 24 FMPs established in Djibouti (7), Ethiopia (5), Somalia (7) and Yemen (5).
- Movements Between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania Network: **238,893** movements were tracked through 11 FMPs in Burundi.
- Cross-border Movements Network: **147,395** movements were tracked through 14 FMPs in South Sudan.

Migration Routes

- Out of the 332,370 movements observed, **39 per cent** were tracked along the Eastern Route, **52 per cent** along the Horn of Africa (HoA) Route, **1 per cent** along the Northern Route and **8**

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 was directed towards the Eastern Corridor.

- Overall, **24 per cent** intended to travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, **21 per cent** towards Ethiopia, **19 per cent** towards Somalia, **17 per cent** towards Yemen, **9 per cent** to Djibouti, **7 per cent** to Kenya and **4 per cent** were headed towards other countries.
- Along the Eastern Route, **56 per cent** were migrating towards Saudi Arabia, **40 per cent** were headed to Yemen and around **4 per cent** to other countries on the Arabian Peninsula.
- **9,989** new arrivals from the HoA were tracked by FM teams through five FMPs along the coast of Yemen (**69% decrease** compared to the second half of 2020).
- Spontaneous returns from Yemen to **Djibouti (8,329)** and **Somalia (1,649)** were also tracked in the first half of 2021. From February to May 2021, more migrants were **returning from Yemen (7,228)** than **arriving in Yemen from the Horn (3,944)**.
- As of mid-2021, over **250** migrants were stranded in Somalia, **1,600** were stranded in Djibouti and an estimated **32,000** were stranded in Yemen.
- IOM registered **30,899** Ethiopian nationals returning from Saudi Arabia upon arrival at the Bole airport in Addis Ababa in the first half of 2021. A further **1,231** Yemeni returnees from Saudi Arabia were also tracked by IOM in Yemen.
- Along the Northern Route, **30 per cent** movements were tracked with the intention of going to Europe, mainly to Germany (25%), the United Kingdom (17%) and Italy (14%).
- From January to June 2021, **2,174** migrants from the EHOA region were registered across European disembarkation points in Greece, Italy, Spain and Malta, with another **866** EHOA migrants apprehended by local authorities while transiting through the Western Balkan region.
- Along the Southern Route, **16 per cent** movements were tracked with the intention of going to South Africa, while the majority were travelling to Kenya (78%).
- A total of **97** migrants were reported missing or deceased in the first half of 2021, the vast majority of whom died or went missing on the Eastern Route.

Migration Routes Profiles

- The two main nationalities of migrants tracked through FM were **Ethiopian (71%)** and **Somali (27%)**.
- **56 per cent** were men, **27 per cent** were women and **17 per cent** were children.
- Of the total population tracked, **3 per cent** were children under the age of five, **2 per cent** were unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs), another **2 per cent** were pregnant and/or lactating women and less than **1 per cent** were elderly (60+) and people living with disabilities, respectively.

Migration Routes Reasons

- **67 per cent** were travelling for economic reasons, **10 per cent** were forced movements due to various reasons, **9 per cent** were returning to their habitual residence, **5 per cent** due to seasonal reasons, **3 per cent** to visit their families and **5 per cent** for various other reasons.

Migration Response Centres

- **4,345** migrants were registered across **8 Migration Response Centres (MRCs)** in the region in the first half of 2021.

II. INTRODUCTION



Portrait of a migrant in Obock in front of the sea. © IOM 2020 / Alexander Bee

The political and humanitarian landscape of the EHoA region has been highly fluid since 2018. Despite the complex mix of protracted crises and new emerging internal displacement, especially due to conflict in Ethiopia which drove the regional number of displaced persons to nearly 8 million at the end of 2018,³ the region witnessed several major positive advancements during that year. Particularly significant was the signing of the historic Eritrea-Ethiopia peace deal in July 2018 after 20 years of hostility between the two neighbouring countries, followed by the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018. In addition to these accords, Kenya and Uganda signed a pact to promote cross-border sustainable peace and development in September 2019 and during the same year, both Ethiopia and Somalia developed national policies for

displaced persons and refugee-returnees. By the end of 2019, the displaced population across the region dropped to 6.3 million IDPs⁴ and remained relatively constant until the end of 2020 with an estimated 6.5 million IDPs.⁵

2020 has been a time like no other, a year during which the world and the EHoA grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic response. Long before the COVID-19 crisis, the EHoA region was already exposed to numerous vulnerabilities, namely widespread political instability, armed conflict, erratic weather patterns, socioeconomic shocks and food insecurity, all of which triggered movements within and out of the region in parallel with traditional seasonal incentives for the search of water and pasture. Due to these intertwining factors, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan recorded some of the highest new displacements in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020.⁶ With an upsurge in conflict and violence at the very end of the year due to the unfolding Northern Ethiopia crisis, internal displacement rose by 44 per cent between the end of 2020 and mid-2021. By June 2021, the displaced population in the EHoA accounted for nearly 13.1 million people, of whom over 9.4 million were IDPs and more than 3.6 million were refugees and asylum-seekers.⁷

Similarly, the number of people in need of assistance in the region soared by 75 per cent between 2020 and 2021.⁸ Funding and resources to respond to humanitarian crises in the region have been redirected to competing priorities, including the continued fight against COVID-19 and the need to support the recovery of domestic economies, thereby stretching the capacity to address multisectoral needs altogether. Further, remittances which provide an economic lifeline to the most vulnerable households have not been spared the brunt of the pandemic as many migrant workers lost their jobs and thus were unable to send money home.⁹ Food inflation linked to the pandemic disrupting global supply chains have also made many households more vulnerable; the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food price index hit its highest point in a decade in May 2021.¹⁰ Hence, while the immediate effects of COVID-19 have been less drastic than initially anticipated on the health of the displaced and migrant populations in the region, the impact on every other aspect of life has become profound in 2021, although the far-reaching effects will not be fully comprehended for many years to come.

With the pandemic, mobility and migration slowed down significantly but did not come to an end. Several groups of migrants became stranded due to travel restrictions and border closures while other migrants sought alternative routes and plans, including the decision to return home and put a stop to the migration process. These COVID-19-related hurdles often pushed migrants to undertake journeys that are more dangerous, particularly along the Eastern Route which runs from the EHoA to the Arabian Peninsula. In 2021, notably from February to May and for the first time along this maritime route, more migrants were returning from Yemen than arriving in Yemen from the Horn. Such trend reversal gives a sense of how irregular migrants in Yemen are contending with miserable conditions that often turn into a hopeless situation. Movements picked up again from June, however, they remained limited in the summer months due to extreme weather conditions at sea which make it difficult for migrants to travel by boat.

IOM's Regional Data Hub (RDH) for the EHoA,¹¹ which aims to promote evidence-based migration dialogue, lead regional research efforts and foster a multi-layered analysis of regional migration data, has been active since 2018. The RDH consolidates and monitors both primary and secondary data sources to provide timely and relevant information on key migration trends in the region. The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)¹² is the main methodology used to track and monitor displacement and population mobility, while other IOM data sources are utilized to target specific sub-groups of populations on the move. In 2020, the RDH revised some of its data collection tools to include COVID-19 indicators to monitor aspects such as the awareness of the pandemic and its impact on remittances. Furthermore, multiple research activities have been launched by the RDH since 2019 to strengthen the evidence base on migration and provide a rich overview and deeper understanding of the regional dynamics, notably along the Eastern and Southern migratory routes.

ETHIOPIA / SUDAN *

The Tigray crisis pushes over 56,000 refugees to flee across the border to Sudan, including some 800 people just in the first few days of January. Tunaydbah, a second camp site hosting Ethiopian refugees fleeing the Tigray crisis, opens in Sudan as the Um Rakuba refugee camp approaches its full capacity.

UGANDA

General elections are held on 14 January 2021, re-electing President Yoweri Museveni who has ruled the country since 1986.

JANUARY

Trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) begins on 1 January 2021.

AFRICAN UNION (AU) *

The United Republic of Tanzania swears in President Samia Suluhu Hassan, its first female head of state, after President John Magufuli's sudden death on 17 March 2021.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

COVID-19 vaccination campaigns begin with almost all countries in the region receiving their first batches of vaccine doses in March.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

FEBRUARY

DJIBOUTI

At least 20 migrants drowned off the coast of Obock on 3 March 2021 after being thrown overboard by smugglers on their way to Yemen. An additional 44 people drowned on 12 April 2021 as their boat capsized while they were trying to return from Yemen to Djibouti.

SOMALIA

Fighting intensifies in Mogadishu in late April due to the simmering political crisis over delayed presidential elections.

ETHIOPIA

Authorities in Ethiopia declare a state of emergency in southern Amhara over intensified communal violence that started in mid-April.

MARCH

President Ismail Omar Guelleh, who has served as President of Djibouti since 1999, is re-elected for another five-year term on 9 April 2021.

DJIBOUTI

A drought is officially declared by the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the humanitarian community following the concerning deterioration of dry conditions across Somalia.

SOMALIA

APRIL

SOMALIA

The Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia signs a Treaty and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Risk Capacity (ARC) in order to better prepare, plan and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters.

SOUTH SUDAN

The dissolution of parliament, as stipulated in the peace deal, is announced by President Salva Kiir on 8 May 2021. Members of Parliament will be nominated by different political parties.

MAY

A roadmap for closing both the Dadaab and Kakuma refugees camps by 30 June 2022 is being discussed between the Government of Kenya and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). An estimated 434,000 refugees are currently living in these two camps.

KENYA

On 20 April, the Government of Burundi, through the Meteorological Director General, officially declares the flooding disaster due to the overflow of Lake Tanganyika, asking populations in affected areas in the provinces of Rumonge, Makamba, Bujumbura Capital and Bujumbura Rural to evacuate.

BURUNDI

* YEMEN

A boat capsizes off the coast of Yemen near Ras Al Ara on 13 June, leaving some 200 migrants from the HoA missing, while dozens of migrants are found dead.

ETHIOPIA

On 28 June 2021, the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) took control of the regional capital Mekelle, and the Ethiopian National Defense Force withdrew from most of the regional state, announcing a unilateral ceasefire.

JUNE

After having been delayed twice, Ethiopia's national and regional elections take place on 21 June 2021. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is sworn in for another five-year term.

ETHIOPIA

In the evening of 22 May 2021, the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, one of the world's most active and dangerous volcanoes, forces thousands of people to flee the city of Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo towards the nearby Rwandan border.

RWANDA / DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO *

* Although the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Yemen 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?

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic infected over 181 million people and claimed the lives of more than 3.9 million individuals by mid-2021.¹³ The numbers exponentially grew between December 2020 and June 2021 with nearly 100 million new infections and over 2 million new deaths.¹⁴ Similarly, the number of confirmed cases across the African continent have also grown substantially since the end of 2020 and accounted for 2.2 per cent of global infections and 2.4 per cent of global deaths by 30 June 2021.¹⁵

In the EHoA region, COVID-19 cases stood at an estimated 631,000 and deaths accounted for over 10,000 by the end of June 2021.¹⁶ Compared to December 2020, this represents an increase of almost 125 per cent in cases and of over 150 per cent in deaths. The case fatality rate (CFR) for the EHoA correspondingly rose to 1.7 per cent at mid-2021, 0.2 percentage point more than the end of 2020.¹⁷ The spike in cases has been largely attributed to new highly transmissible variants as well as more lax public health practices around a widespread pandemic fatigue caused by the prolonged crisis. In particular, the Delta variant is believed to be more than twice as contagious as previous variants and to cause particularly severe outcomes in people who are not vaccinated.¹⁸ The higher infectious rates linked to this variant have been reported in both Kenya and Uganda by June 2021.¹⁹

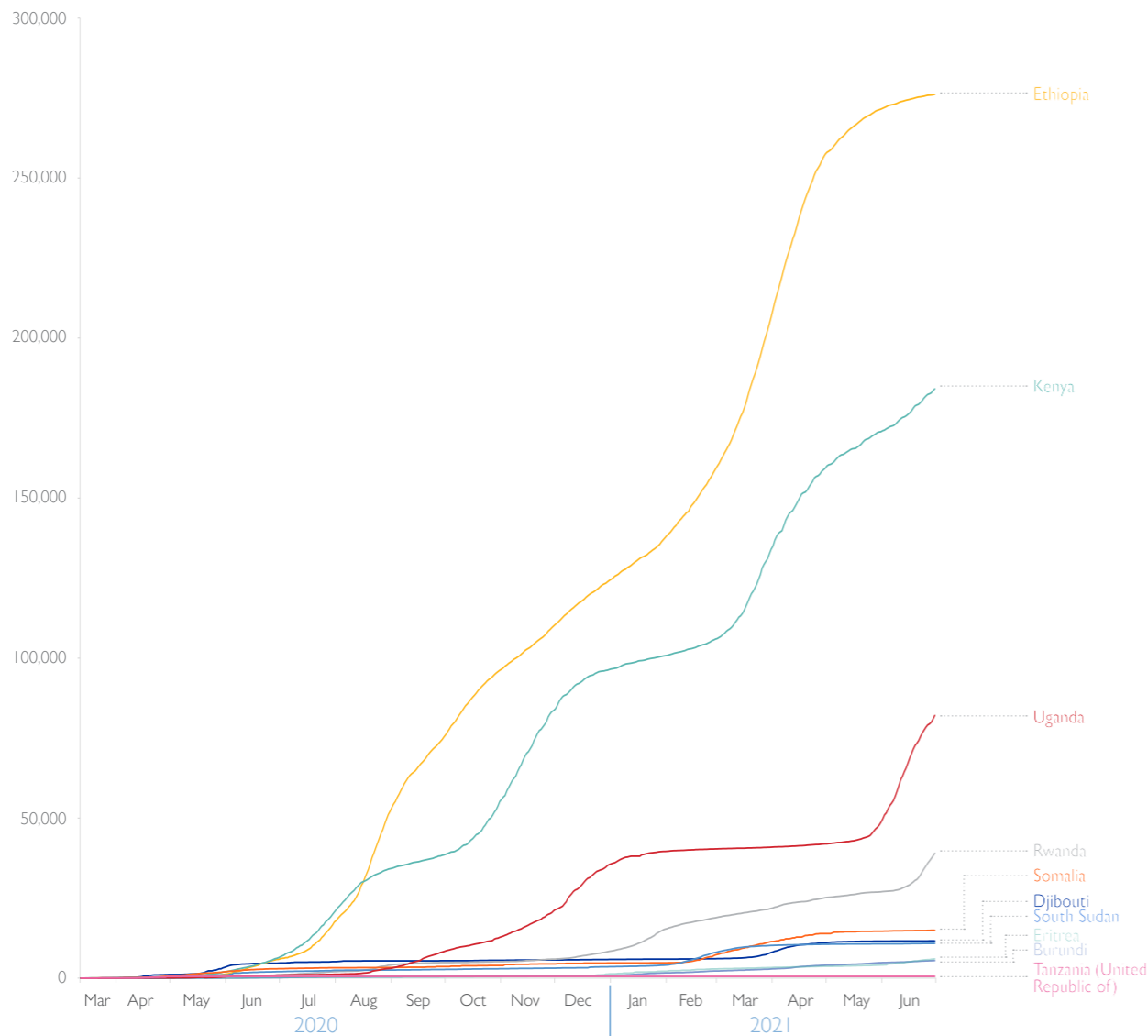


Figure 1: Incidence trend of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the EHoA (30 June 2021)

While vaccination programmes have been rolled out in seven countries in the region²⁰ throughout the first half of 2021, the ability of governments to not only secure, but also distribute vaccines received through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) or bilateral agreements has been limited. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that of the 5.7 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses administered globally, only 2 per cent of them were administered in Africa, which has an estimated population of 1.2 billion people.²¹ By the end of June 2021, an estimated 4.7 million people in the region received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine with Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda leading the way.²² Among the countries that have begun their vaccination campaigns, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda have also vaccinated a number of migrants and refugees present in-country. There is, however, great concern over the shortage and availability of vaccine doses to complete the full COVID-19 vaccination series for those who are waiting for their second dose as well as for the rest of the population.

Given that data on COVID-19 prevalence and testing among IDPs is very limited, the direct health effects of the virus on the displaced populations cannot be fully assessed. However, in some instances, the COVID-19 impact has been much less severe than initially feared. This has been partially thanks to the efforts of the humanitarian community, such as in South Sudan where various mitigation measures were put in place at Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites/IDP camps, namely school closure, shelter decongestion, availability of handwashing materials and prevention of transmission amplification events. Moreover, IDPs have been conducting most of their activities outdoors, including eating, cooking, wood collection and business, all of which are less likely to pose risks of COVID-19 transmission. Another possible explanation for the lighter impact of COVID-19 on IDPs could be linked to these populations' isolation from society and services. In general, a high population density is a major factor for high community transmission; yet, while most infections occurred in densely populated urban areas, IDP settings seem to have been isolated from entering in contact with the main infection hotspots. These include facilities like hospitals and schools, the access to which is limited to IDP populations.

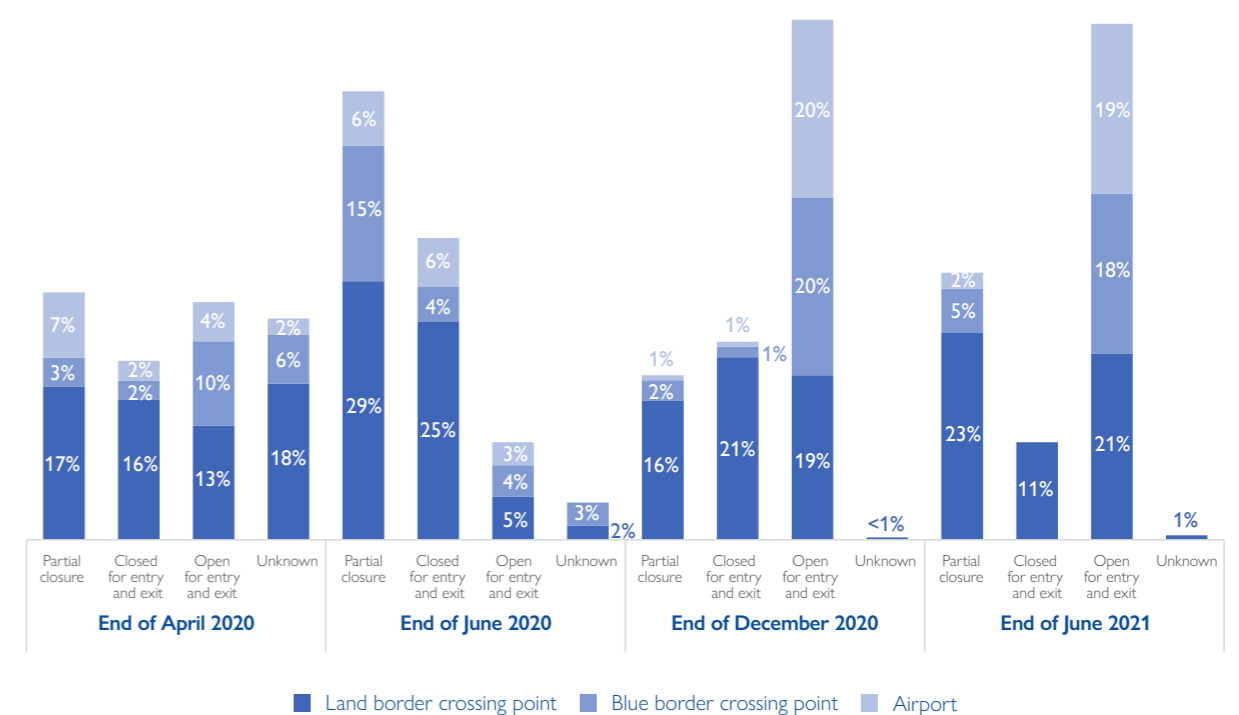


Figure 2: Operational status of PoEs (April 2020 - June 2021)

As the actual impact of the pandemic may never be completely understood, data is instrumental in understanding how COVID-19 recovery is taking place, at least partially. In early 2021, restrictions at points of entries (PoEs) were relaxed significantly across the region compared to 2020, and thus, over half (59%) of the 344 PoEs regularly monitored by DTM were fully operational. Meanwhile, only 22 per cent were completely closed and 19 per cent were partially operational. The picture did not change significantly by June 2021, when 58 per cent of the 381 assessed PoEs were fully operational, 11 per cent were completely closed, 30 per cent were partially closed and two PoEs had unknown status.

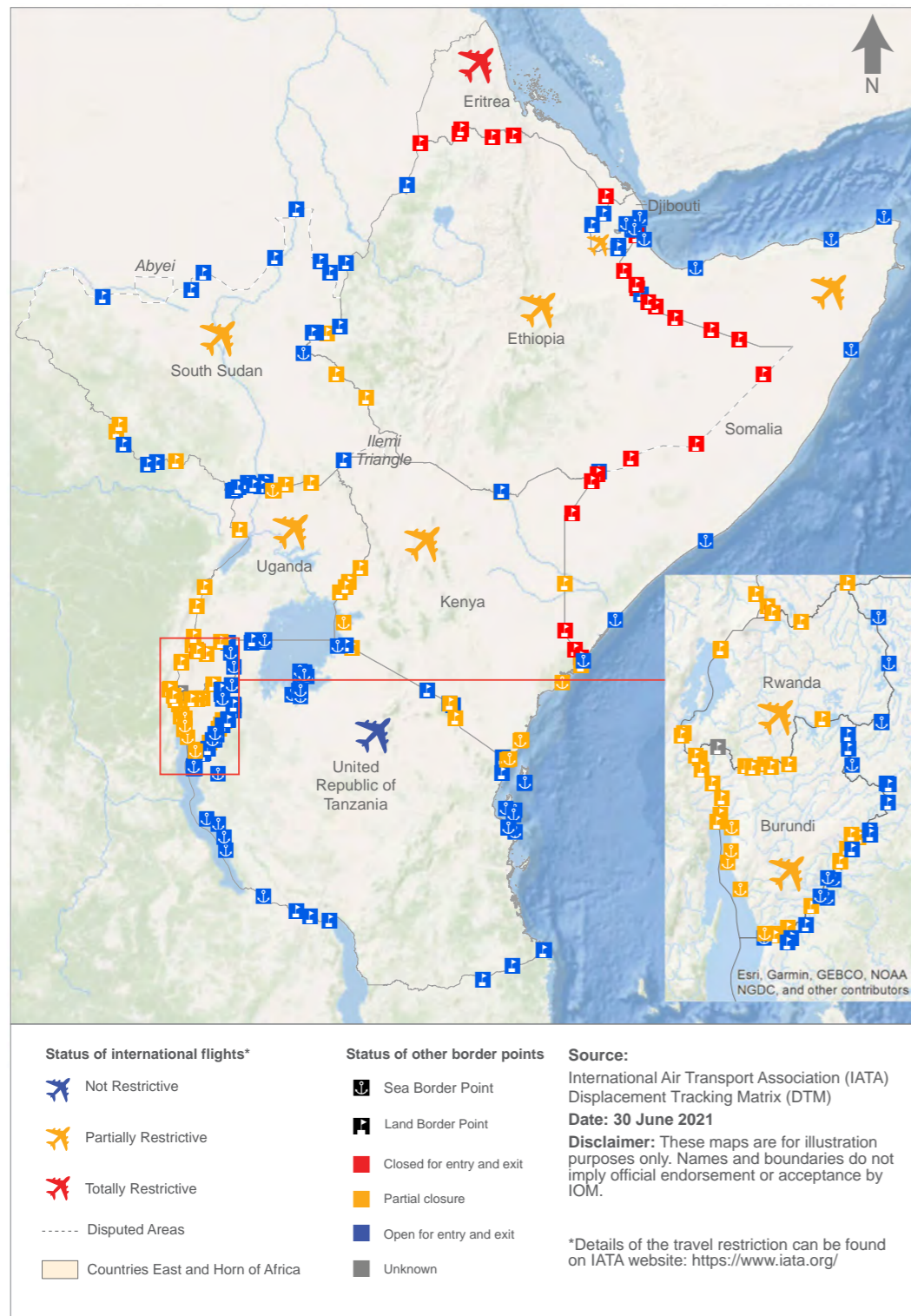


Figure 3: Status of PoEs in the EHoA region (30 June 2021)

Far from reflecting pre-COVID-19 volumes, migration flows monitored by IOM in the region increased substantially in 2021 after the drastic decrease witnessed as of March 2020, with a 38 per cent increase in movements in the first half of 2021 compared to the second half of 2020.²³ The level of awareness of migrants interviewed by IOM about COVID-19 has not change significantly since September 2020 even as migrant movements are increasing. By mid-2021, over 71 per cent of migrants tracked reported having some level of awareness about COVID-19.²⁴

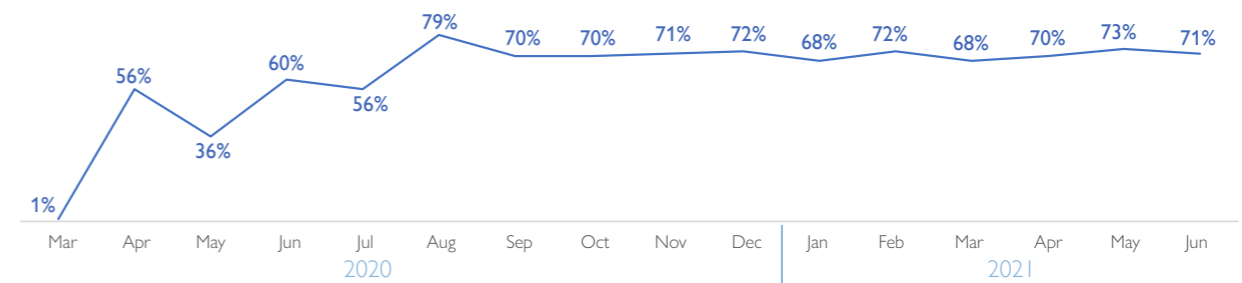


Figure 4: COVID-19 awareness over time

Migrants also consistently reported having a fairly accurate understanding of the most common symptoms of COVID-19, as well as the most effective ways to prevent infection. Around 70 per cent of the migrants were aware that the spread of the disease could be mitigated by frequently washing hands with soap or using sanitizer, while more than half knew to cover their nose and mouth when around other people.²⁵ Similarly, over two-thirds of the migrants were aware that fever was one of the most common symptoms of the COVID-19 virus and over half knew that a persistent dry cough was also one of the more common symptoms.²⁶

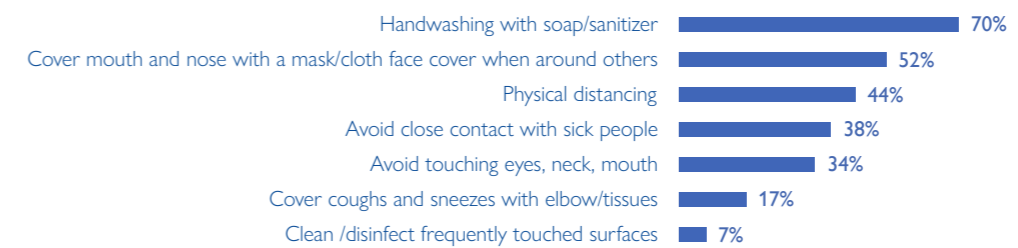


Figure 5: Awareness of COVID-19 protection measures (January to June 2021)

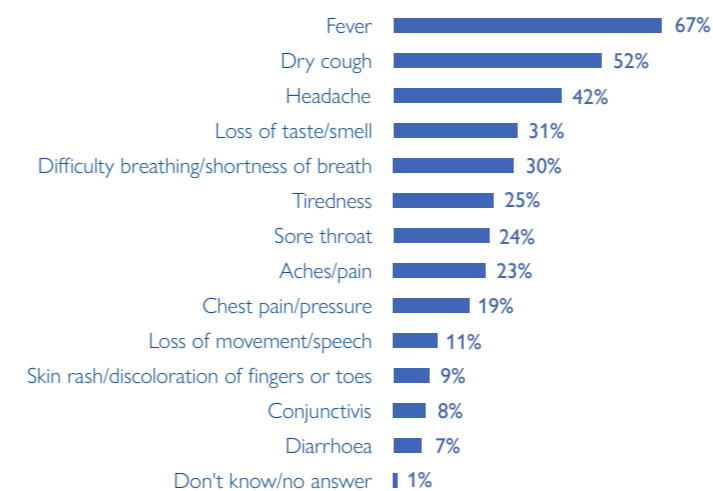


Figure 6: Awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (January to June 2021)

With regards to the most reported difficulties faced by migrants as a result of the pandemic, around one third of respondents had difficulty with access to basic services, including food and water, while a little less than a third had difficulties with income earning activities. A quarter of the respondents had difficulties with sending and/or receiving remittances from abroad, with the highest proportion (39%) reporting that they had lost their jobs and were unable to send money to their families in their home countries.²⁷

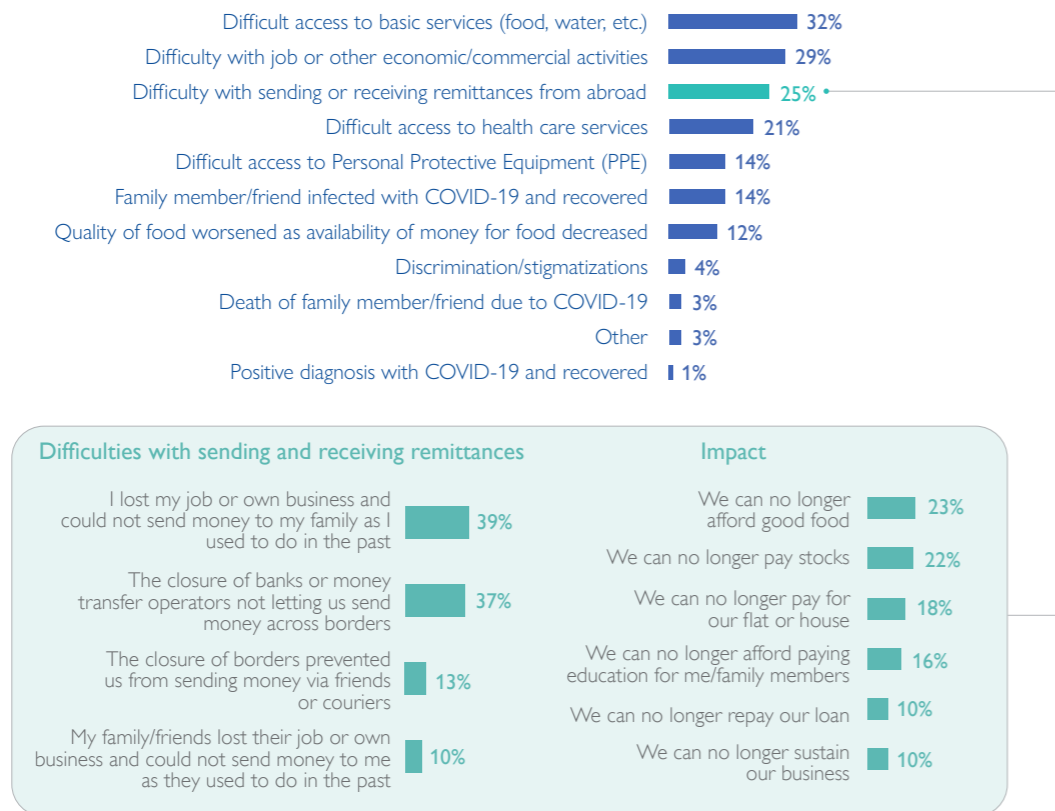


Figure 7: Challenges encountered since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (January to June 2021)

Despite predictions to the contrary, available data from the World Bank shows that global remittances have been resilient during COVID-19, with recorded flows for 2020 falling by only 1.6 per cent below 2019 levels.²⁸ This less severe decline, on the one hand, was linked to individual desires to support family members and, on the other hand, reflected the generous fiscal incentives issued by many countries.²⁹ However, data on remittance flows are sparse and of uneven quality in Sub-Saharan Africa where the World Bank reported a 2.3 per cent increase in remittance flows, excluding Nigeria.³⁰ For the EHoA, data is currently not broken down specifically to represent the full country coverage, apart for Kenya and Somalia. The two countries reported a 9 per cent and 16 per cent increase in remittance flows in 2020, respectively.³¹ Additionally, Sub-Saharan Africa is overall recognized as the most expensive region to send remittances to with an average cost in 2020 of 8.2 per cent to send USD 200, compared to a cost of 4.9 per cent in South Asia and much higher than the 3 per cent target set out in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10.³² Looking at the EHoA in particular, the average transaction cost of sending remittances in 2020 was 9.54 per cent from Kenya, 8.54 from Rwanda and 19.73 from the United Republic of Tanzania.³³

Such shifts in remittance flows are critical in a region where this type of income contributes to over 35 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) such as in Somalia, or 30 per cent in the case of South Sudan.³⁴ Furthermore, the EHoA is a region where almost 40 per cent of the population lives in extreme poverty and millions rely on remittances to put food on the table and to keep children in school.³⁵ Nonetheless, remittances alone are not sufficient to assess the level of resilience or economic stress on households and need to be viewed in the broader economic context of food prices, inflation, trade and unemployment.



A health worker stands at the entrance of the IOM-supported mother and child health clinic in Garowe, Somalia with a thermometer to check incoming patients for COVID-19 symptoms. © IOM 2020 / Tobin Jones

IV. FORCED DISPLACEMENT

OVERVIEW

Halfway through 2021, the displaced population across the EHoA region accounted for nearly 13.1 million people, including an estimated 9.4 million IDPs and 3.6 million refugees and asylum-seekers.³⁶ While the refugee population remained relatively stable between the end of 2020 and mid-2021, the number of IDPs surged by around 44 per cent over the same time period.

This upsurge in displacement was mainly driven by conflict and violence. In Ethiopia, over 2 million people were displaced by the Tigray crisis alone.³⁷ At the same time, instances of violence in other parts of the country, such as Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's (SNNP), also sustained high levels of displacement. In Somalia, the ongoing armed conflict entered its thirtieth year and an uptick of violence linked to the upcoming presidential elections engulfed the capital, Mogadishu, at the end of April. Meanwhile, South Sudan continues to struggle with localized, intercommunal conflict even though the peace deal has deescalated the political conflict. Moreover, as climate change has increased the frequency and intensity of droughts and seasonal floods, the risk of resource-based conflict has become greater as many South Sudanese continue to fight over scarce natural resources, namely water, livestock and land.

Floods and droughts are among the most devastating climate events affecting the EHoA region. Their unpredictability has contributed to a heightened sense of urgency to address such environmental stresses and respond to them effectively. Emergencies over floods and droughts were declared in Burundi and Somalia, respectively, at the end of April. While the effects of flooding are immediate and visible, droughts have deep, widespread and underestimated impacts on societies, ecosystems and economies that can linger over time and contribute to food insecurity, poverty and inequality.³⁸ In the HoA, persistent droughts have forced displacement, particularly placing already vulnerable women and girls at greater risk of sexual violence as they have to walk further or walk during the night to collect water. The burden of water collection falls disproportionately on women (72%) and girls (9%), who, in some cases, spend as much as 40 per cent of their calorific intake carrying water.³⁹

In addition to these challenges, concerning levels of food insecurity have prevailed across the region, with food stocks running dangerously low in Ethiopia and an estimated 108,000 people facing Catastrophe food security outcomes in South Sudan.⁴⁰ These two countries were among the 10 worst food crises of 2020, with 8.6 million and 6.5 million people acutely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 or above), respectively.⁴¹ Moreover, important desert locust infestations remain in parts of the HoA, especially in Ethiopia and Somalia, which place additional pressure on the food security situation.⁴²

Overall, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in the region rose by 75 per cent, from 23 million in 2020 to over 40 million in 2021,⁴³ and as governments have been handling multiple priorities, including the COVID-19 response, resources to respond to food insecurity and other multisectoral needs have been increasingly stretched.

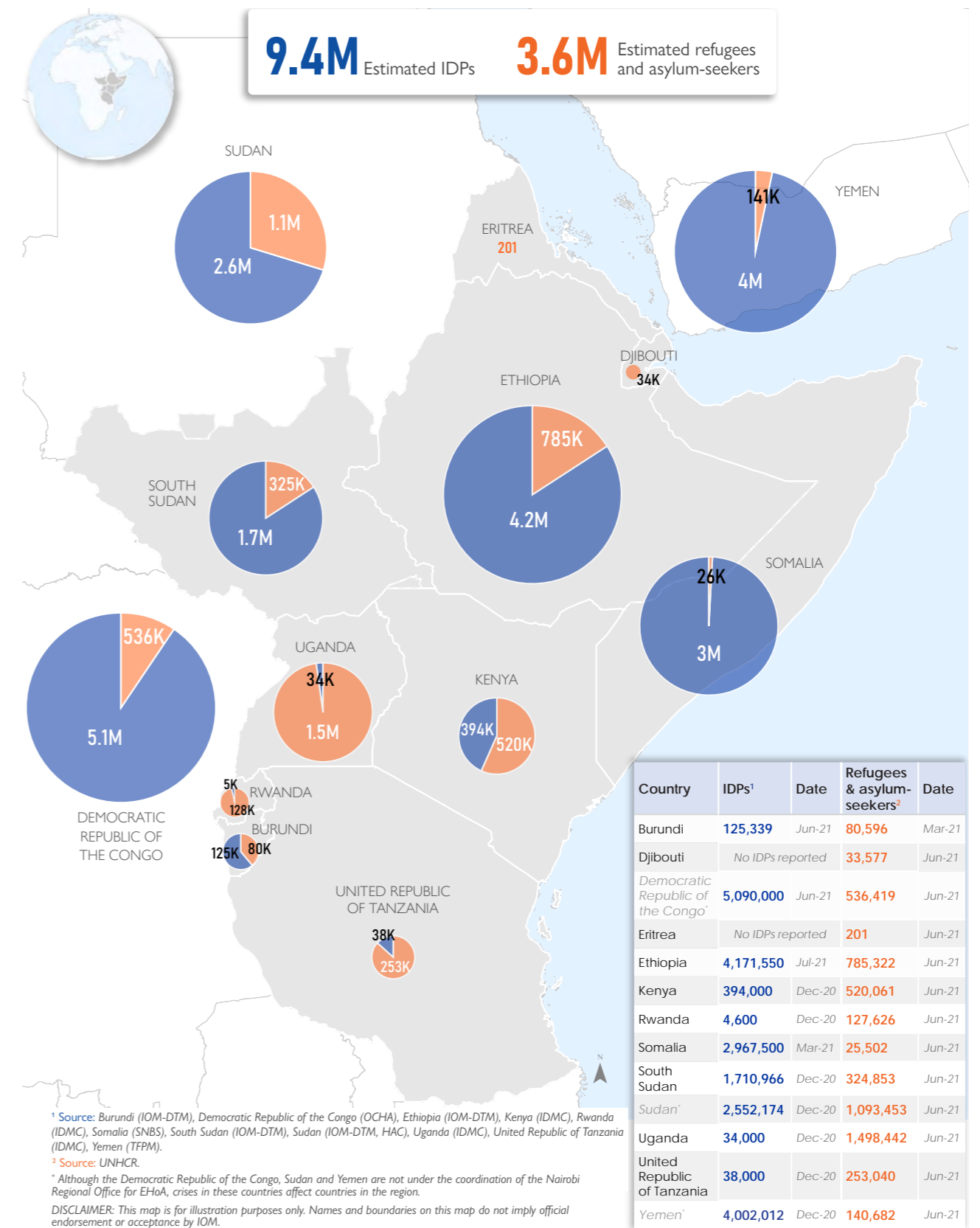


Figure 8: Overview of IDPs, refugees and asylum-seekers in the EHoA (June 2021)

BURUNDI: IN A PERPETUAL STRUGGLE WITH CLIMATE SHOCKS

The first half of the year in Burundi was marked by a series of recurring climatic events such as floods, torrential rains, strong winds and landslides, most of which caused unprecedented displacement, destroyed people's livelihoods and exacerbated poverty levels. Nearly 73 per cent of workers in Burundi are currently living below USD 1.90 per day; this percentage represents the highest poverty rate in East Africa.⁴⁴ The country continues to bear the brunt of climate change which continuously aggravates land degradation and the overuse of natural resources. According to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI), 90 per cent of the Burundian population depends on subsistence farming,⁴⁵ and each year, Burundi loses almost 38 million tons of soil and 4 per cent of its GDP to land degradation.⁴⁶ With a largely rural population that relies primarily on agriculture, Burundi's poverty and conflict – mainly related to land disputes – are closely linked to resource dependence and climate fragility.⁴⁷

Moreover, the inadequate access to land and other factors of crop production amidst the cycle of recurring climate shocks has contributed to concerning levels of food insecurity. Over 1 million people experienced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between April and May 2021, including an estimated 107,000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 1.5 million in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). However, this number (1.61 million) was projected to fall by 35 per cent from April-May to June-September⁴⁸ due to above-average crop production and improved food access during the months of June and July which were estimated to stabilize food prices through September.⁴⁹

Over 125,000 persons were displaced across all 18 provinces of Burundi as of June 2021, with higher IDP concentrations recorded in Bujumbura Mairie (22%), Bujumbura Rural (14%), Rumonge (13%) and Cankuzo (12%).⁵⁰ Most of the displacement (85%) was triggered by natural disasters, followed by other security reasons (15%).⁵¹ A vast majority of those displaced lived in host communities (94%), while 5 per cent lived in displacement sites and 1 per cent in collective centres.⁵² IDP numbers decreased by 5 per cent between December 2020 and March 2021 following greater local integration in rented houses and increased return to communities of origin, especially for many IDPs from the Gatumba zone.⁵³ However, displacement peaked by the end of May 2021 at nearly 128,000 IDPs,⁵⁴ representing a 17 per cent increase from March 2021, mainly due to floods that occurred between April and May.

Since the rainy season started in February, heavy precipitation has caused the water levels of Lake Tanganyika to rise steadily. Further, rainfall during the months of April and May, the peak of the rainy season, worsened the existing situation. Lake Tanganyika, which is the world's longest freshwater lake, has seen its waters rise by more than one meter over the past two years.⁵⁵ Consequently, many of the country's coastal provinces were severely flooded and thousands of persons were affected and displaced. Flooding was particularly prevalent in the provinces of Bujumbura Rural, Rumonge, Bujumbura Mairie and Makamba. The Government of Burundi officially declared this a disaster on 20 April 2021 and asked the affected populations to evacuate the flooded areas.⁵⁶ By June 2021, an estimated 52,000 people were affected by the rising lake waters, including nearly 22,600 displaced persons.⁵⁷ Likewise, an estimated 8,000 houses were flooded, nearly 2,000 completely destroyed and over 200 partially destroyed.⁵⁸

The Mutimbuzi commune in Bujumbura Rural alone hosted 78 per cent of all affected persons and nearly 60 per cent of all displaced persons.⁵⁹ In this commune, local villages on the shores of Rukaramu and Gatumba zones have been among the hardest hit. Similar to last year's floods, areas around the overflowing Rusizi river were inundated and severely damaged. Kigaramango site, one of the temporary displacement sites at high risk of flooding, which the Government of Burundi recommended closing in February 2021, was also impacted before its closure was completed. A total of 365 displaced households remaining in the site were relocated to the Sobel site in the Maramvya zone.

With an estimated 2.3 million people in need in Burundi,⁶⁰ the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and pushed more people into needing humanitarian assistance. Implementing durable solutions to displacement that are viable remains a challenge in the country. According to return intention surveys conducted by IOM, more than half of the displaced households

(61%) intended to leave the place of displacement.⁶¹ Among them, 51 per cent of households wanted to return to their place of origin and 49 per cent wanted to go to a place other than their place of origin.⁶² However, the main causes which prevented their return were the destruction of their homes and the lack of financial means. In addition, access to land for farming or for shelter construction remains problematic as more than 70 per cent of households reported not having access to land.⁶³

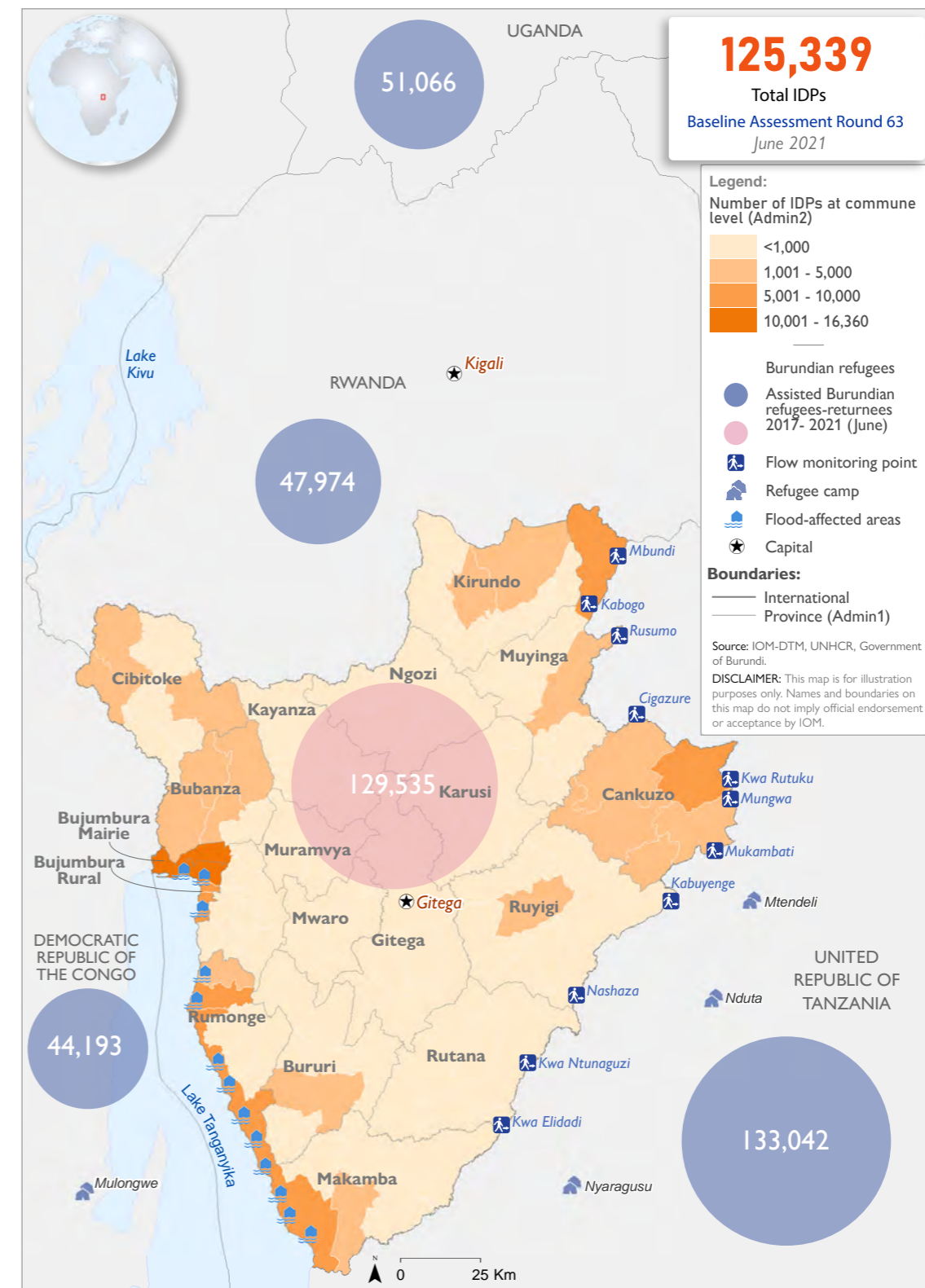


Figure 9: Burundi's returns, refugee and IDP presence by commune (June 2021)

ETHIOPIA'S TIGRAY CRISIS: A COMPLEX AND FLUID CONTEXT



Shewit, a former teacher displaced by the conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region. © IOM 2021 / Kaye Viray

Between early November 2020 and June 2021, more than 63,000 Ethiopian refugees from Ethiopia's Tigray region crossed the border into eastern Sudan,⁶⁴ while the Eritrean refugees who were already present in Tigray before the conflict broke out were caught in the middle of heavy fighting and were displaced from the destroyed Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps. Internal displacement caused by the Tigray crisis alone was estimated at over 2 million IDPs, of which 97 per cent were displaced in Tigray, slightly over 2 per cent in Afar and less than 1 per cent in Amhara.⁶⁵ On 28 June 2021, the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF) took control of the regional capital Mekelle and the Ethiopian National Defense Force withdrew from most of the regional state, announcing a unilateral ceasefire. Since then, the security situation in Tigray has remained volatile and unpredictable.⁶⁶

By mid-2021, more than 4 million persons were displaced across Ethiopia.⁶⁷ The primary reason for displacement remained conflict (84%), followed by drought (7%), flash floods (4%) and seasonal floods (3%).⁶⁸ The Somali region continued to be home to a large displaced population with over 800,000 IDPs affected by a combination of conflict, drought and floods, and mostly concentrated in the zones of Dawa and Liben.⁶⁹ The Oromia region is also an important displacement hotspot with over 500,000 IDPs (primarily located in the Borena zone) in addition to hosting the highest number of returning IDPs.⁷⁰ This number has been increasing following the return process, which was initiated by the regional authorities, from the conflict stricken Konso Zone in SNNP region.

Within the Tigray region, IDPs were predominantly concentrated around Mekelle and in the Northwestern, Central and Eastern zones. A large number of IDPs were hosted in urban settings, near the cities of Shire (33%), Mekelle (15%), Sheraro (13%), Adwa (11%), Axum (7%) and Adigrat Town (4%).⁷¹ Many IDPs have also fled to rural areas for safety and security; however, these areas remain difficult to access and therefore have not been reachable by aid actors.⁷²

Displacement movements inside Tigray have been fluid since the start of the conflict. In the first half of 2021, ethnic violence in the Western zone led to mass displacement towards Northwestern (55%), Central (22%), Mekelle (17%) and Eastern (5%).⁷³ IDP movements to the Northwestern zone were mainly due to a perception of safety, particularly in Shire and Sheraro, which explains the high concentration of IDPs (39% and 16%, respectively).⁷⁴ However, these movements have resulted in an overcrowding of collective centres in different parts of Tigray thereby compelling several IDPs to stay with the host community or to live in open spaces and in abandoned buildings. These conditions have raised concerns, particularly with the beginning of this year's rainy season in June, which is expected to be wetter than usual in much of the northern two-thirds of Ethiopia.⁷⁵

According to IOM's DTM, 82 per cent of the IDPs, predominantly in Tigray, reported their intention to return to their place of origin if safety can be guaranteed and transportation can be provided, compared to 18 per cent of IDPs, mostly in Amhara and Afar, who preferred local integration.⁷⁶ In July 2021, IDPs in Tigray were noticeably beginning to return to their places of origin, however, a vast majority (95%) of those who wished to return highlighted that food availability should be ensured before starting their return.⁷⁷ With Tigray's economy and livelihoods centred around agriculture, conflict-related property damage combined with the loss of crops and livelihood assets has severely threatened the food security situation. By May 2021, over 350,000 people in Tigray and neighbouring Amhara and Afar were facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) food insecurity, which is the highest number of people in IPC Phase 5 since the 2011 famine in Somalia.⁷⁸ From July to September 2021, around 400,000 people were projected to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), in addition to an estimated 4 million people in Crisis or Emergency (IPC Phase 3 or 4).⁷⁹ Food stocks are currently running dangerously low, and as farmers in many parts of Tigray missed this year's agricultural planting season (from June to September), it is expected that only 25 to 50 per cent of the normal cereal production will be available by the end of 2021.⁸⁰

The continuity of humanitarian assistance in Tigray has been hampered by the absence of fuel, banking services, telecommunications and electricity. However, by the end of June 2021, humanitarian access was significantly improving, allowing aid actors to expand their coverage. The current Northern Ethiopia Response Plan, which was finalized in May 2021, targets 5.2 million people in need of assistance until December 2021.⁸¹ The most reported needs include food and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health services.⁸²

While the focus has been turned to Tigray, many areas in the rest of Ethiopia still suffer from conflict, drought, floods and desert locust infestations. A state of emergency over communal violence in southern Amhara was declared on 18 April 2021,⁸³ and similar tensions persist across other regions such as Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Harari, Oromia, Somali and SNNP. Additionally, below-normal Deyr rains from October to December 2020 sustained drought conditions affecting an estimated 5.8 million people in the Oromia and Somali regions, while flooding impacted over 437,000 people and displaced more than 171,000 people in Afar, Oromia, SNNP and Somali during this year's Belg season (February to April).⁸⁴ Moreover, locust breeding was expected to occur in the northeast part of the country from July until September, constituting an additional hazard.⁸⁵

In this regard, Prime Minister Abiy's ruling Prosperity Party, which was confirmed as the majority party following the general elections that were held on 21 June after having been delayed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will face notable challenges ahead both domestically and in relation to the international community.

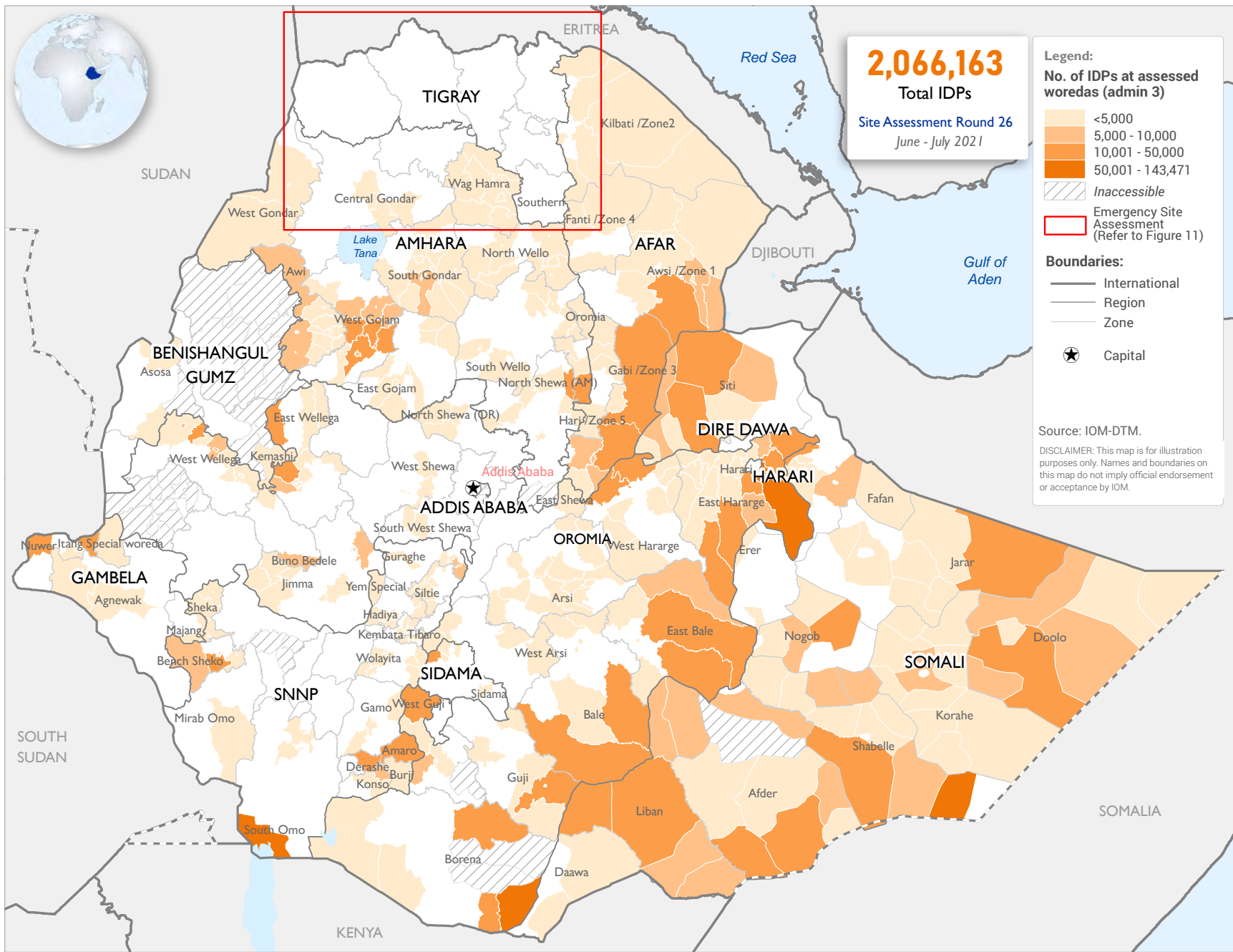


Figure 10: IDP presence in Ethiopia by woreda (June 2021)⁸⁶

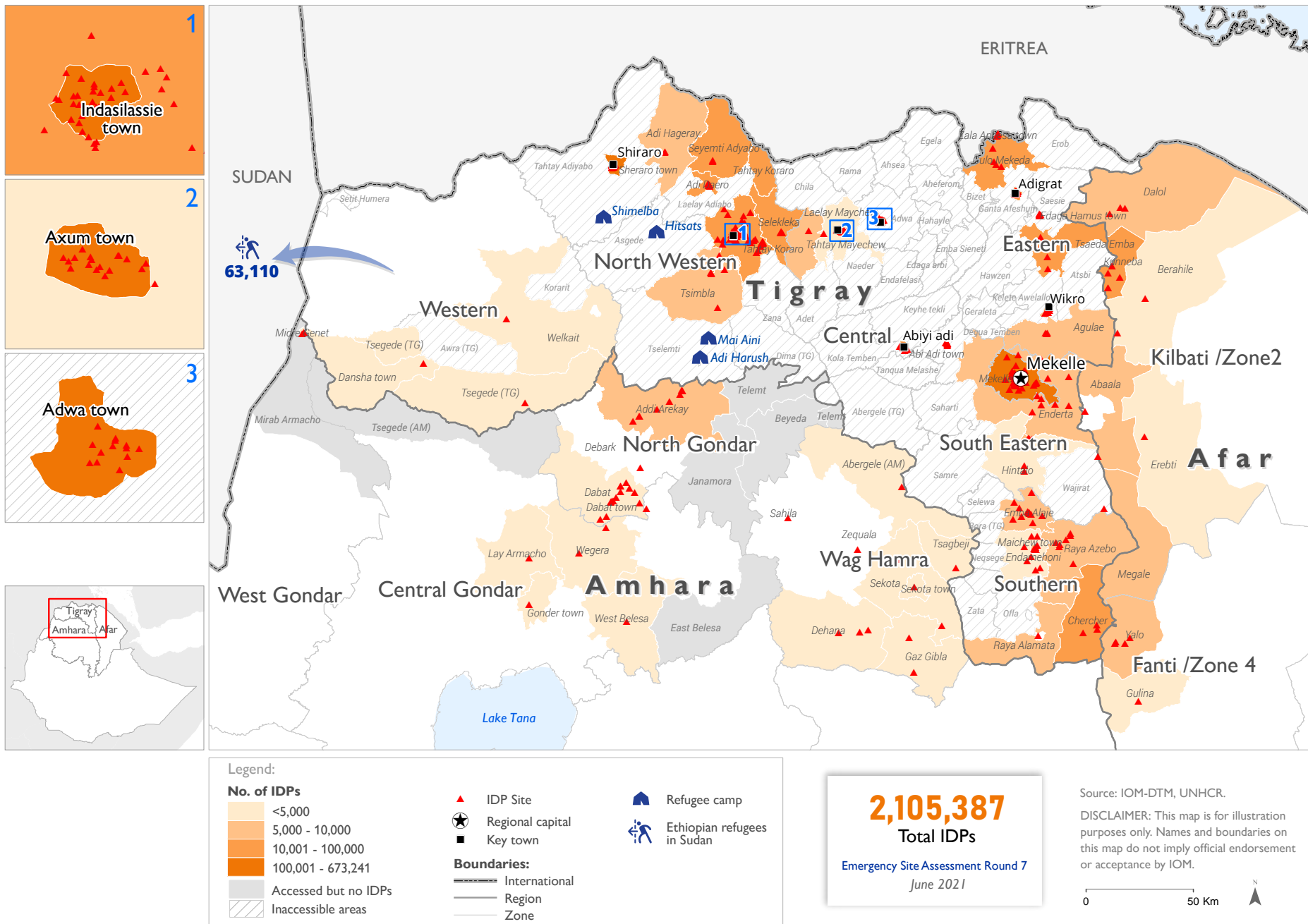


Figure 11: Displacement triggered by the Northern Ethiopia crisis (June 2021)

SOMALIA: ON THE FRONT LINE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

A decade after a severe drought and food crisis hit the East African region in 2011, Somalia continues to be threatened by critical drought conditions while simultaneously being exposed to armed conflict, devastating floods, desert locust invasions and the economic burden of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first six months of 2021 have seen an increase in new displacement due to conflict, drought and floods, but also due to a combination of all three causes depending on the location. Somalia currently hosts an estimated 3 million displaced persons⁸⁷ of whom 1.6 million IDPs are the most in need of assistance.⁸⁸ A further 4.3 million (excluding IDPs) are also in a vulnerable situation, totaling nearly 6 million people across Somalia who have been pushed into needing humanitarian assistance in 2021.⁸⁹ Higher needs were reported in the health (4.7 million), WASH (4.6 million) and food security (3.5 million) sectors.⁹⁰

Since 2011, the country has had only one proper rainy season, which occurred in 2013.⁹¹ At the end of 2020, pre-drought conditions were already prevalent due to water shortages, including widely depleted berkedes (traditional water reservoirs that collect and store rainwater in Somalia) and shallow wells, in addition to the loss of livestock and pasture.⁹² In the first quarter of 2021, 112,000 people were already displaced, of whom 34 per cent were uprooted because of drought.⁹³ As more than 80 per cent of the country was experiencing moderate to severe dry conditions, the Federal Government of Somalia and the humanitarian community declared a drought emergency at the end of April.⁹⁴ Rainfall during the Gu season, which usually lasts from April to June, came to an early end in May. With below-average to no rainfall expected in the coming months until the beginning of the next rainy Deyr season (from October to December), drought conditions are projected to worsen and further impact food security.⁹⁵

Between January and March 2021, an estimated 1.6 million people in Somalia were experiencing acute food security outcomes (IPC Phase 3 or above).⁹⁶ With a deterioration of the situation through the second half of 2021, this number is projected to rise to up to 3.5 million people who are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above).⁹⁷ Moreover, roughly 1.2 million children under the age of five are likely to be acutely malnourished, including an estimated 213,400 likely to be severely malnourished.⁹⁸ With two consecutive below-average rainy seasons in late 2020 and early 2021, the resulting crop and livestock losses as well as reduced agricultural labour incomes are expected to sustain these high levels of food insecurity, especially in rural areas, through early 2022.⁹⁹ On top of these challenges, desert locusts remain a serious threat to food security in Somalia. In June, numerous hopper bands continued to form and develop in the northwestern part of the country; however, control operations have significantly helped reduce swarm formation.¹⁰⁰

While parts of the country were struggling with droughts, other areas were experiencing flooding. Heavy rains during the short Gu season led to flash floods in the northern parts of the country¹⁰¹ and claimed the lives of at least 25 people, including nine children who died after their house flooded in Banadir.¹⁰² By early May, at least 150,000 people in the Hiran and Middle Shabelle areas were at immediate risk from imminent riverine floods as the Shabelle river levels had risen at an alarming rate.¹⁰³ The Belet Weyne and Jowhar districts along the Shabelle river were inundated as was Doolow along the Juba river. An estimated 25,000 people in 15 villages in Jowhar were affected by riverine floods, displacing people in eight villages.¹⁰⁴ Seasonal floods, both flash and riverine, have been intensified due to La Niña's cooling conditions in 2021.¹⁰⁵ Even though the event ended in May with a high probability of neutral conditions prevailing over the following months, uncertainty remains for the second half of the year.¹⁰⁶

Somalia's cycles of erratic weather events are projected to drive up humanitarian needs and fuel more displacement throughout 2021. At the end of April, the Federal Government of Somalia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the African Risk Capacity (ARC) to effectively address the impacts of extreme weather events as the country requires pre-emptive disaster risk reduction strategies to improve multi-hazard early warning, preparedness and national coordination for disaster response.¹⁰⁷

Concurrently, conflict has also been on the rise this year, not only linked to terrorist activity but also related to interclan fighting. In the first few months of 2021, more than 523,000 people were forced

to flee their homes, of whom 66 per cent were displaced by conflict and insecurity, including close to 207,000 people in the capital, Mogadishu, who were temporarily displaced in April and May due to violence over the 2021 elections.¹⁰⁸

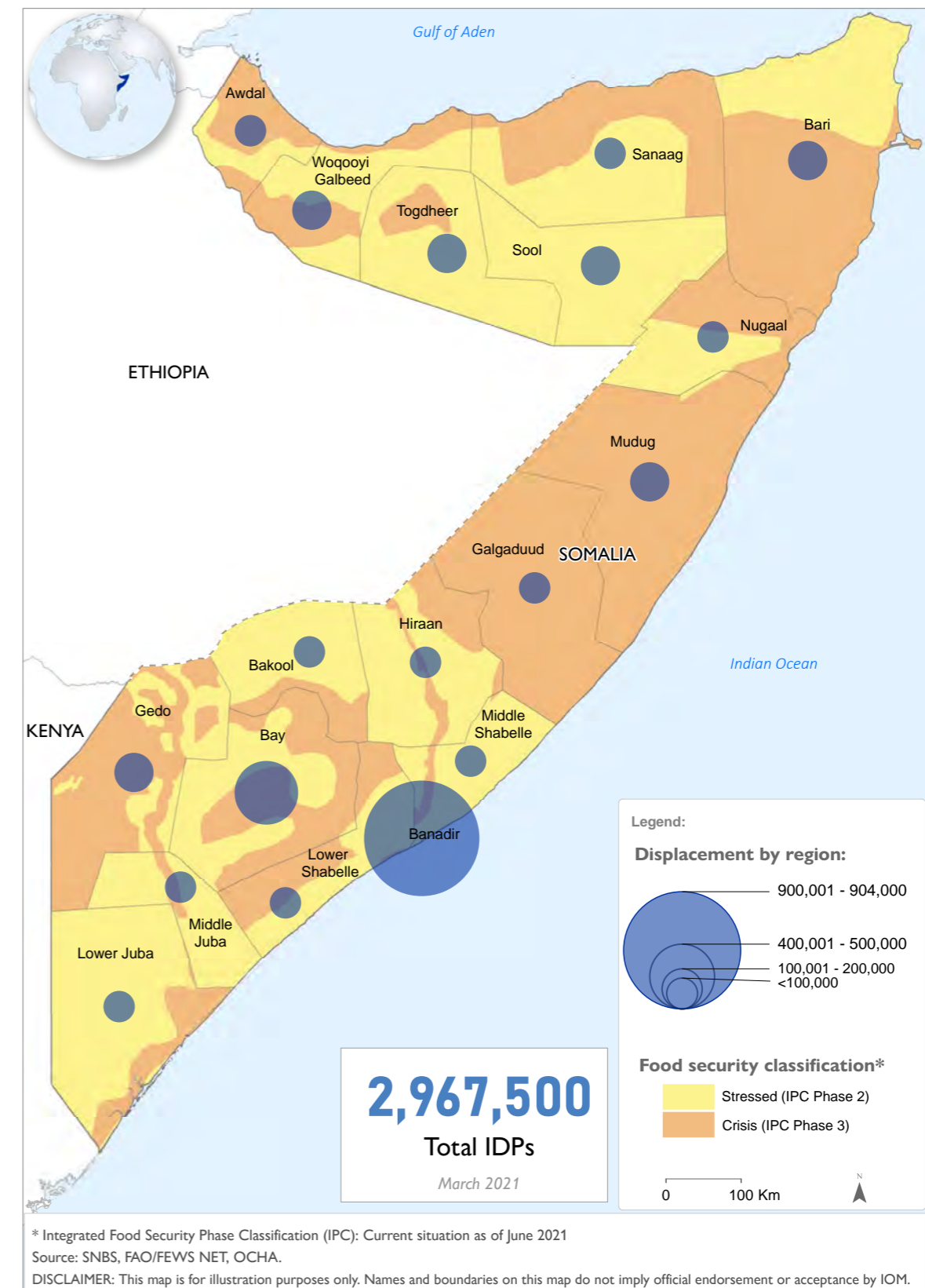


Figure 12: Somalia's food insecurity and IDP presence by region (June 2021)

SOUTH SUDAN: AFTER A DECADE OF INDEPENDENCE



Women, including the elderly, displaced by conflict across South Sudan's Greater Pibor Administrative Area. © IOM 2021 / Liatile Putsoa

Ten years after gaining independence, South Sudan remains a complex humanitarian emergency characterized by a combination of political conflict, substantial protection risks, a severe macroeconomic crisis, crippled infrastructure, extreme levels of food insecurity and natural hazards, including seasonal flooding. The signing of the revitalized peace agreement in September 2018 as well as the formation of the unity government in February 2020 have done little to mitigate continued conflict and other drivers of vulnerability and displacement in the country, as the implementation of the peace deal remains slow. The long-awaited dissolution of parliament, which is stipulated in the peace deal, was only announced in May 2021, paving the way for the appointment of members of parliament from opposing sides.¹⁰⁹

Nearly 4 million people remain displaced by the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, including almost 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees abroad¹¹⁰ and over 1.7 million persons displaced internally.¹¹¹ Of the total number of IDPs, 94 per cent were displaced only within the country and 6 per cent were previously displaced abroad and remain displaced even after having returned to South Sudan, unable to reach their areas of habitual residence.¹¹² Even though there has been an overall net increase (6%) in IDP numbers since September 2020, DTM observed a 3 per cent net decrease in the displaced population across locations which were re-assessed, demonstrating that population movements are not linear.¹¹³

Around 8.3 million people are estimated to be in need of humanitarian support in 2021, of whom more than half (54%) are children.¹¹⁴ The overall number of people in need represents nearly 70 per cent of South Sudan's population of 12.1 million people¹¹⁵ and is much higher than the numbers recorded between 2013 (4.4 million) and 2018 (7 million), at the peak of the national conflict.¹¹⁶ The high levels of food insecurity across South Sudan are particularly concerning with 7.2 million people estimated to face acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) from April to July 2021, which represents the highest levels

since IPC was introduced in South Sudan in 2007.¹¹⁷ Of this number, around 108,000 people were likely to face famine conditions (IPC Phase 5) in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap.¹¹⁸

While there has been a decline in conflict between signatories to the peace agreement, conflict at the sub-national and local levels has continued and hampered the true realization of durable peace, with political competition being pushed down and out. Clashes have remained prevalent, while widespread insecurity has obstructed crop cultivation and resulted in livestock losses, contributing to food shortages across the country. In the first half of the year, different instances of localized conflict and tensions caused the displacement of close to 300,000 people.¹¹⁹ The situation in the GPAA worsened in May 2021 due to escalating violence that displaced over 20,000 people into Pibor Town from surrounding payams (sub-area administrative divisions), most of whom have settled in collective centres within existing school buildings.¹²⁰ Even before this event, the GPAA was classified as the only county in catastrophic need, according to the intersectoral severity of needs analysis.¹²¹

Besides the GPAA, longstanding tensions related to land ownership were further challenged in Mangala.¹²² With the arrival of new IDPs who fled their homes due to floods at the end of 2020,¹²³ and with the underlying conflict dynamics between communities in the area, this increase in Mangala's population, in parallel to economically motivated movements, is likely to re-ignite disputes and potentially cause displacement. Political and ethnic tensions linked to land and administrative control have also been recurring in Upper Nile's Malakal county, which hosts the last remaining PoC site in South Sudan.¹²⁴ IDP returnees in Upper Nile are among the most exposed to conflict-related incidents, and recently, tensions linked to the new political appointments have triggered displacement, increasing the number of arrivals at the PoC due to insecurity and flooding in surrounding counties, in the second quarter of 2021. This situation could become worse the closer the country moves towards elections.

Flooding has only exacerbated the current situation. By June 2021, floods affected an estimated 21,000 people in Old Fangak county in Jonglei and some 3,000 people in Guit county in Unity.¹²⁵ With the onset of the rainy season at the end of April, concerns have been raised over the arrival of further rain in some parts of the country where previous floodwaters have not receded yet, already causing the displacement of over 100,000 individuals across the country.¹²⁶ In Bor South and Twic East, areas remained inundated months after the floods and many people were not able to return there. The waterlogging of the soil also prevented crop cultivation in parts of Unity. Consequently, the population at the Bentiu IDP camp increased by an estimated 5,000 individuals in absolute numbers between the end of 2020 and early 2021.¹²⁷

Instability remains a key driver of humanitarian needs among both IDP and returnee communities and is an obstacle to preventing systematic return movements. More than 1.7 million returnees are currently present in South Sudan, of whom 66 per cent returned from within the country and 34 per cent from abroad.¹²⁸ Instances of new return in the first six months of 2021 amounted to nearly 91,000 returnees across ten states and the Abyei Administrative Area.¹²⁹ Overall, 72 per cent of the returnees arrived from neighbouring countries mainly from Uganda (87%) and Sudan (6%), while 20 per cent returned from the same county, 5 per cent from a different county and 3 per cent from a different state.¹³⁰

However, a considerable number of returnees still face protection challenges, including housing, land and property issues, with homes occupied and people living in damaged housing and improvised shelters. Even more, in most areas of return, there is a high need for multisectoral response and service provision due to years of underdevelopment and the burden of conflict on existing infrastructure, namely education, health and transportation. While needs are generally most severe in less accessible rural areas, they remain essential in urban settings as well where population movements add strain on already limited resources and services. In Juba, for instance, returnee households have been found to have more needs than the IDP or relocated households with regards to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), protection, education and health.¹³¹

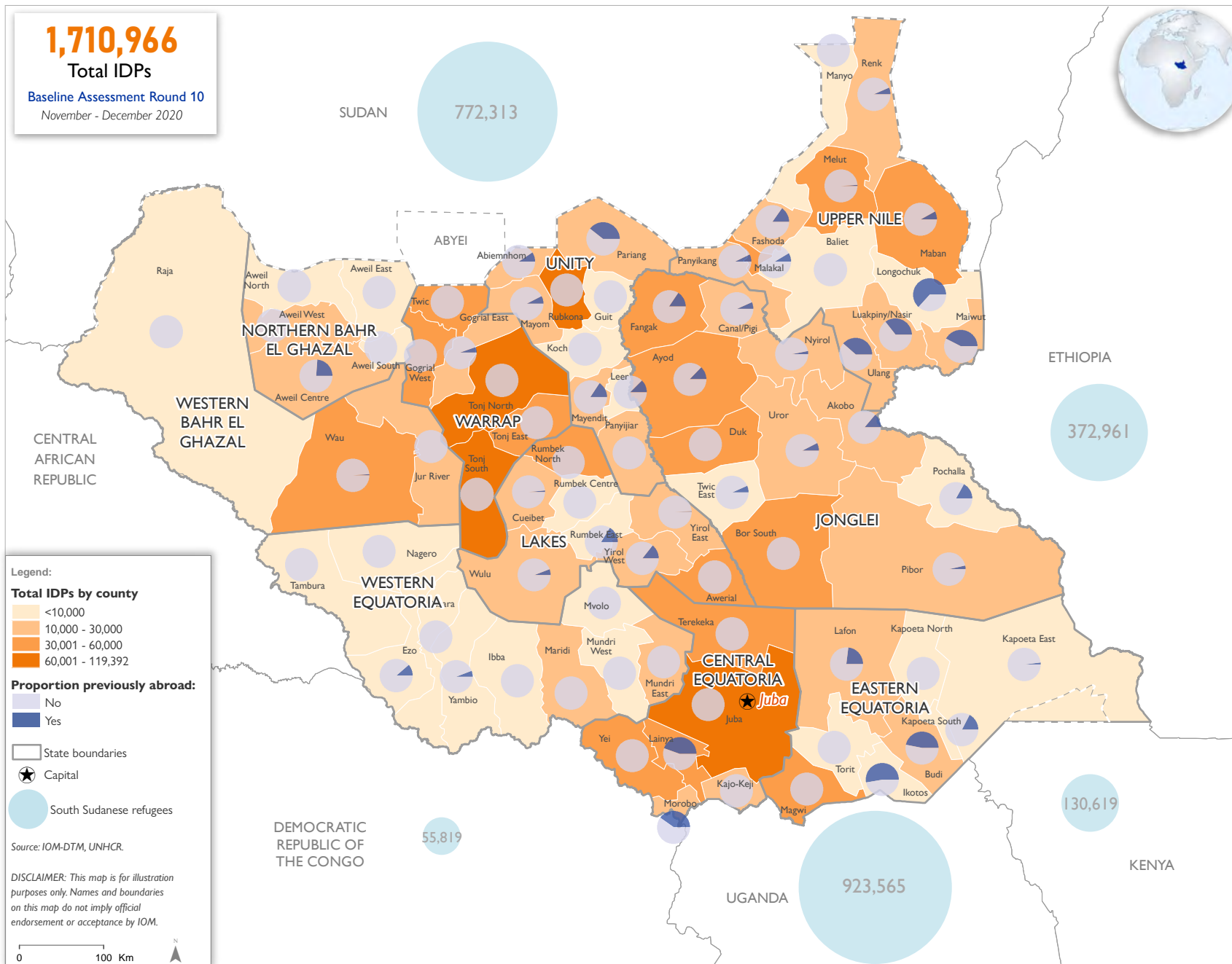


Figure 13: IDP presence in South Sudan by county (June 2021)

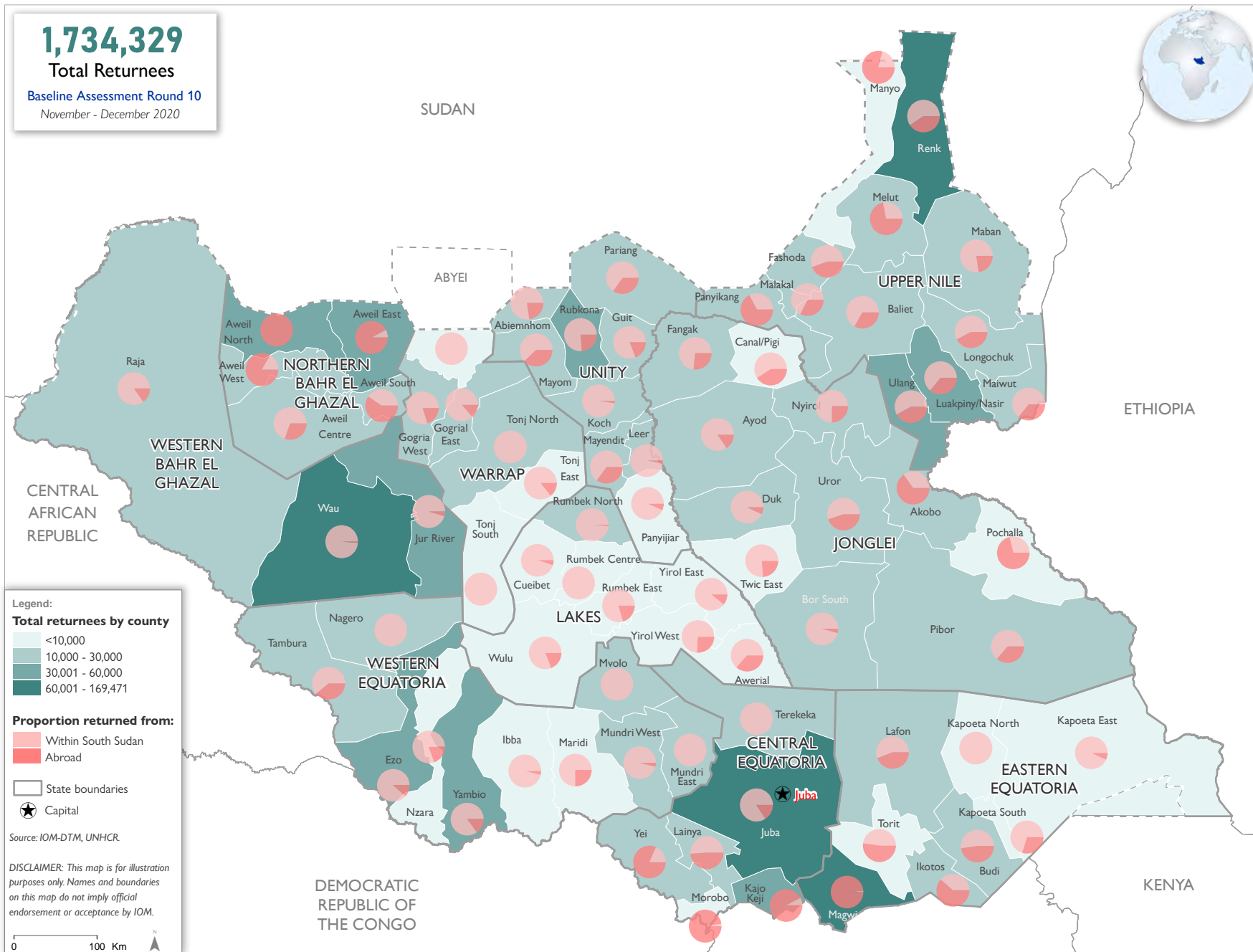


Figure 14: Returnee presence in South Sudan by county (June 2021)

V. REGIONAL MIXED MIGRATION TRENDS

OVERVIEW

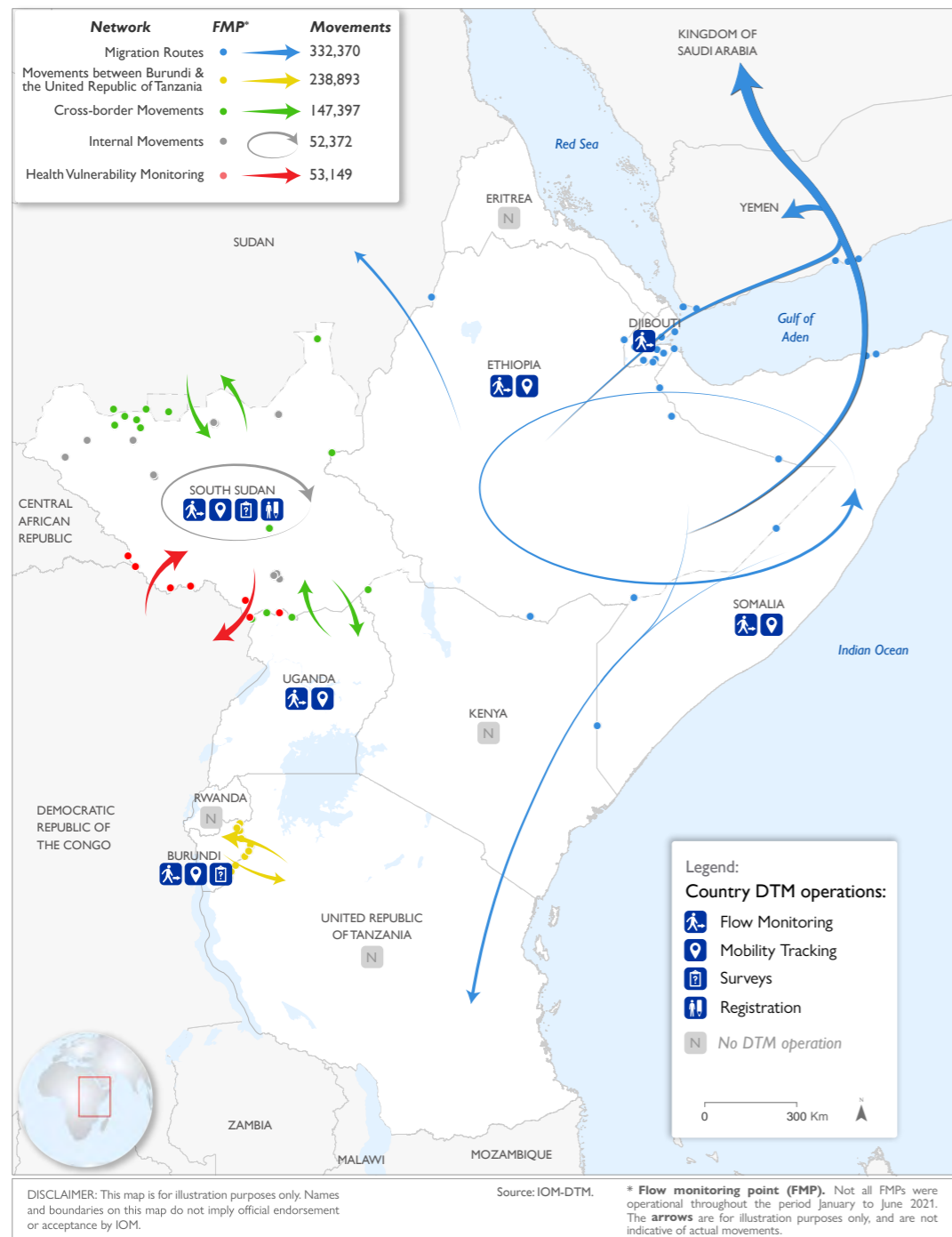


Figure 15: FM networks tracked in the EHOA (June 2021)

During 2021, under the umbrella of the RDH, IOM continued to observe migration movements through its regional FM networks. The goal of this activity is to track movement trends over time as a way to both gain an understanding of the nature of migration as well as cross-examine these findings with external factors impacting mobility in the region. In terms of coverage, the basic structure of the operational networks has remained largely unchanged, though points may be established or discontinued according to the operational needs. During the reporting period, the coverage reduced from 112 to 70 FMPs across

four FM networks active in the region, as various points in Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania were closed. The four FM networks are: first, the migration routes network (Eastern, HoA, Southern and Northern) with points in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen tracking longer term migration heading outside the region (332,370 movements); secondly, the network established in the context of public health concerns with FMPs in South Sudan, monitoring population movements to and from areas affected by the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and COVID-19 (50,980); thirdly, the Burundi returns network tracking movements between Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania (238,893); and lastly, the cross-border network monitoring movements between South Sudan and Sudan, between South Sudan and Uganda and between Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania (147,395).¹³² Over 820,000 migrants movements were tracked along these four FM networks from January to June 2021.

Further data sources used to complement this mixed migration analysis are registration data collected through a network of eight MRCs that were operational in the EHOA in 2021, 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 in Yemen to migrants wishing to return to their home country in a safe and dignified manner is also analyzed. An overview of the 2020 IOM's Missing Migrant Project (MMP) findings related to migrant deaths and disappearances in the EHOA are also presented. Finally, findings of research efforts launched along the key migration routes over the past two years are also integrated to build a stronger evidence base of the region's migration narrative.¹³³

MIGRATION ROUTES NETWORK

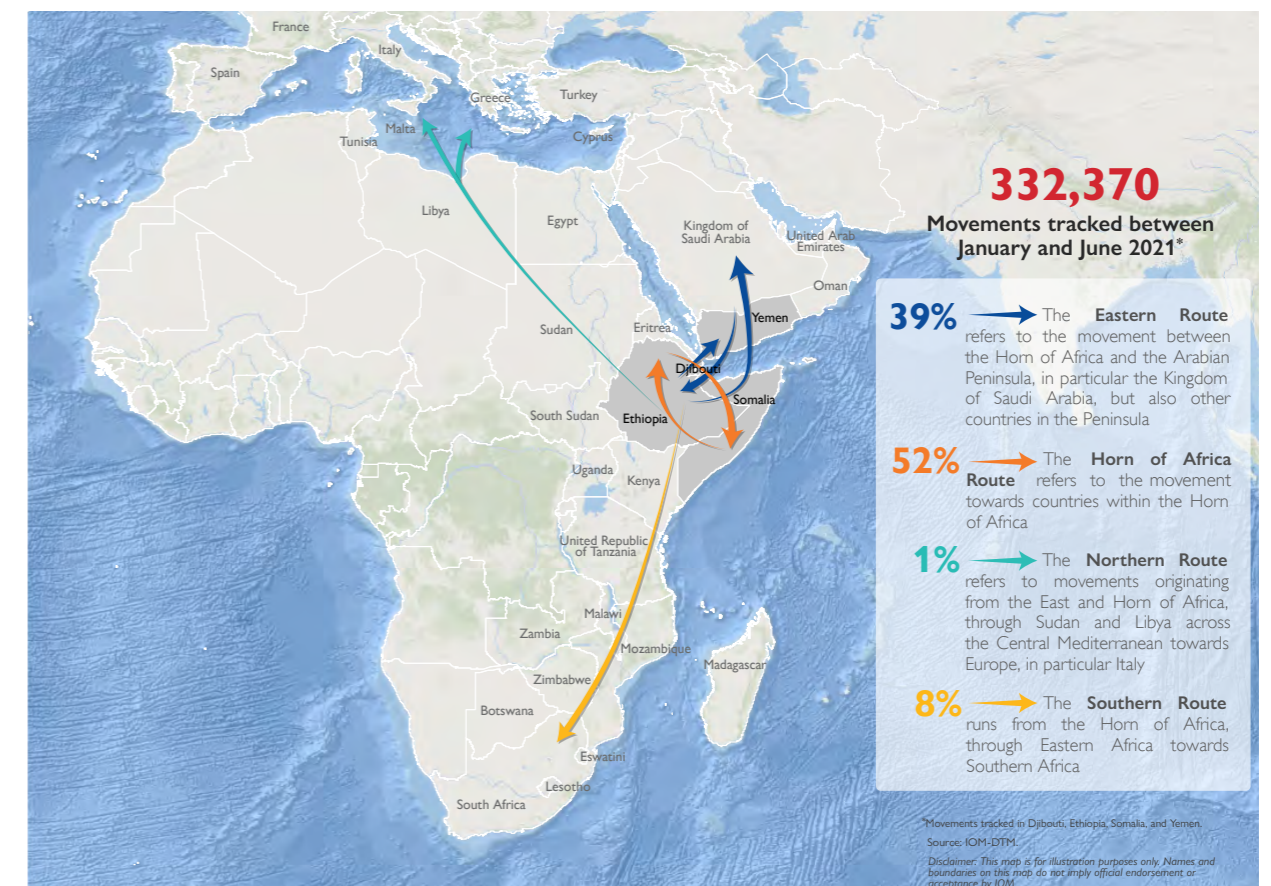


Figure 16: Main migration routes in the EHOA (January to June 2021)

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically reduced migration along the four migratory routes. These movements started to increase again towards the end of 2020 and further intensified during 2021. As of June 2021, an estimated 332,000 migration movements were tracked in the region, which was 38 per cent higher than the second half of 2020 and 37 per cent higher than the first half of 2020. This year observed a significant resumption of movements along the Eastern Corridor, traditionally the most trafficked in this region, which reported an increase of 20 per cent compared to the first half of 2020. This rise corresponds to an average increase of 600 per cent per month during the second quarter of 2021 compared to the second quarter of 2020.¹³⁴ In fact, this route was heavily impacted by travel limitations along international borders, especially in the Arabian Peninsula between Saudi Arabia and Yemen, while the lifting of several mobility restrictions in recent months led to a rise in these irregular migration trends as highlighted by the data.

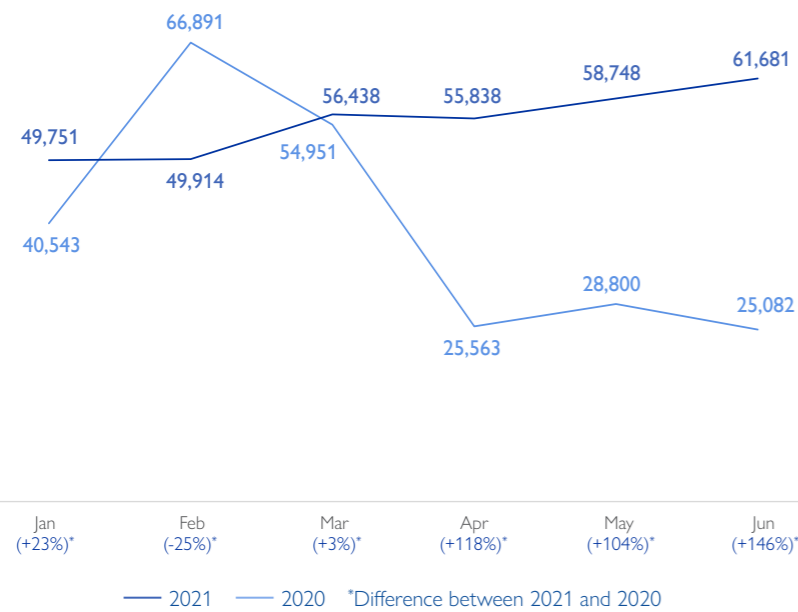


Figure 17: Total movements tracked along the four routes (January to June 2020 and 2021)



Portrait of a migrant woman sitting on the ground in Alat Ela. © IOM 2020 / Alexander Bee

Similar to previous trends, the direction for the majority of overall movement intentions remained largely unchanged, with most tracked movements originating in Ethiopia (62%) and headed towards Saudi Arabia (24%) and Yemen (17%), which are on the Eastern Route, as well as towards Ethiopia (21%) and Somalia (19%), along the HoA Route.

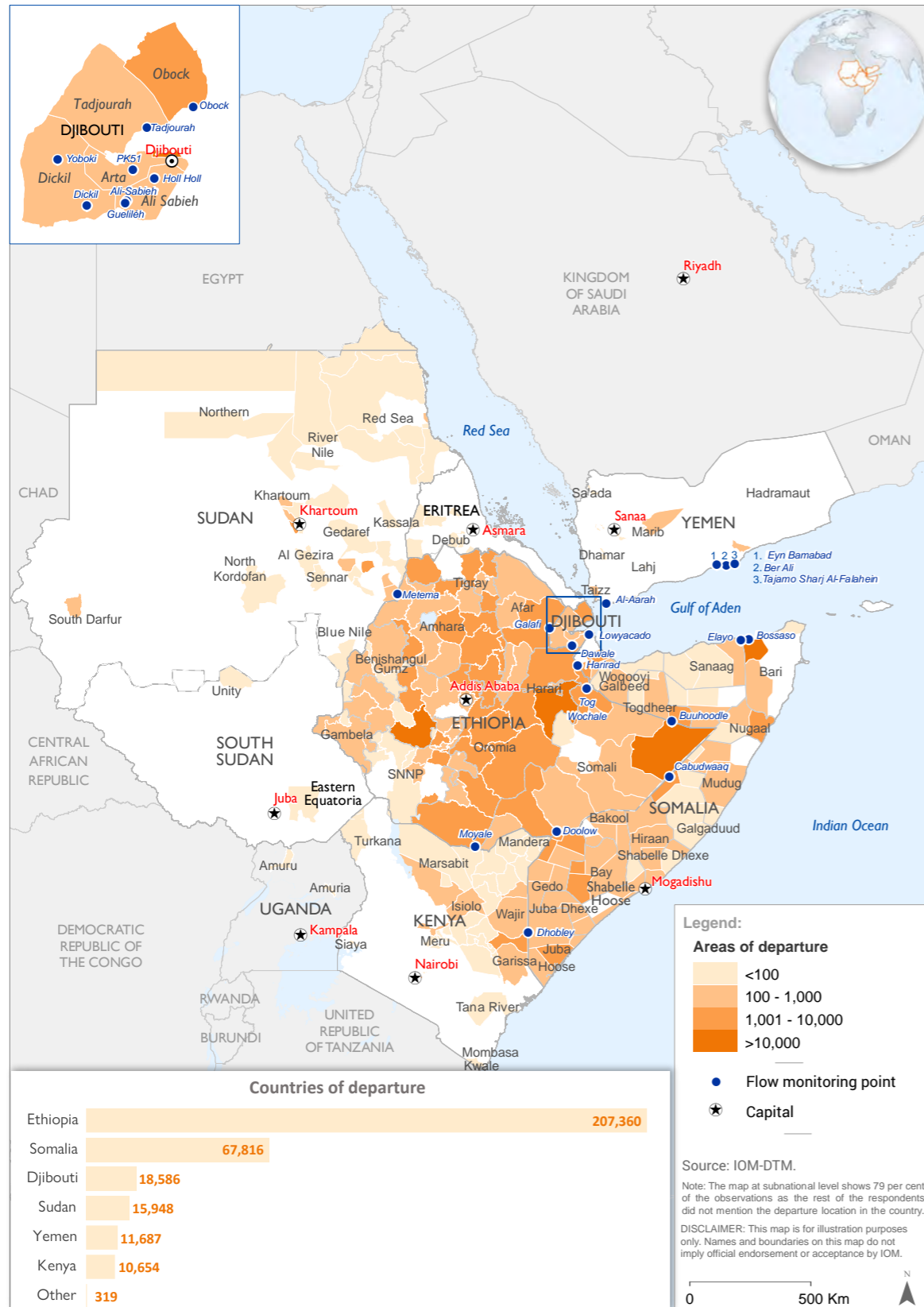


Figure 18: Main areas of departure (January to June 2021)

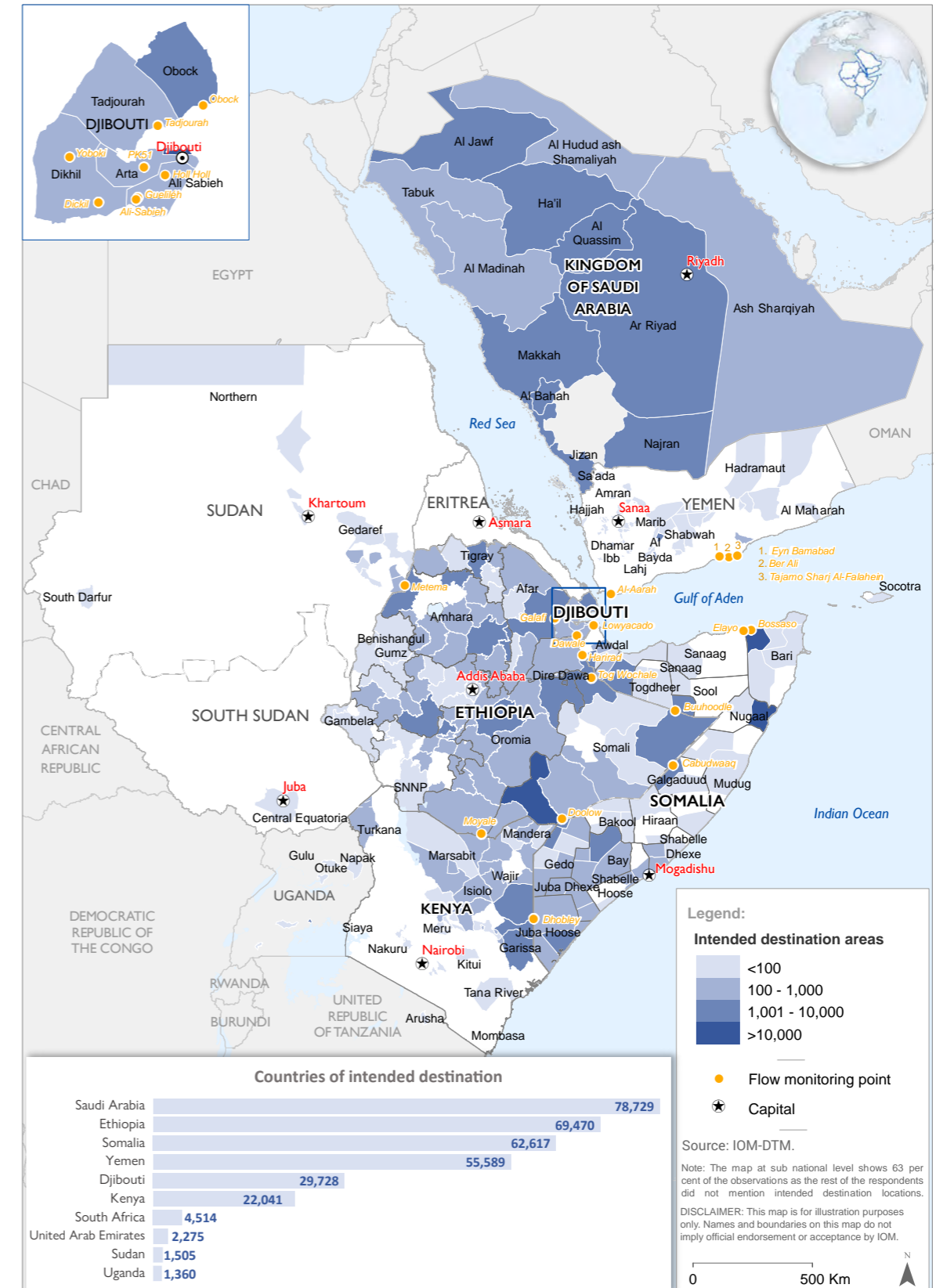


Figure 19: Main areas of intended destination (January to June 2021)

Stranded Migrant Populations

The public health emergency around COVID-19 has caused dramatic shocks and disruptions to the economy and to people's way of living with impacts that are likely to be felt both in the short and medium term. Despite these challenges, the will to migrate has not significantly decreased. In recent months, many individuals kept attempting to migrate and, as a result, would often become stranded in countries where they were unable to either continue their journey or return home. At the same time, host communities struggled with the socio-economic burden of the pandemic and its associated political and social restrictions, the fear of infection as well as the limited capacity of some countries to provide adequate sensitization about the new disease. The combination of these factors has led to an increase in xenophobia, discrimination and stigmatization whereby migrants and returning migrants were believed to be carriers of the virus. This further contributed to instances of arrests, detention, forced relocations and deportations of stranded migrants and exacerbated the reintegration process of migrants returning to their home countries. There have been numerous incidents of returnees facing stigma from their communities due to the unsuccessful nature of their journeys, as well as discrimination due to the fear of their families and communities that they may transmit COVID-19.

The impact of these mobility restrictions and subsequent increase in pockets of stranded migrants were particularly evident along the Eastern Route, although they have also been reported across other countries in the region as well. Notwithstanding that the actual number is likely higher, in Djibouti over 1,600 migrants were reported to be stranded at various locations, while other 200 to 300 migrants were identified in Somalia as of mid-2021. In Yemen, the number of stranded migrants was most difficult to ascertain; however, available estimates indicate the presence of over 32,000 individuals. Stranded migrants were also reported along other migration routes, including over 2,200 migrants stranded in detention centres in the United Republic of Tanzania.

EASTERN ROUTE

The Eastern Corridor via Djibouti and Somalia to the Gulf countries is the most important migration route in the region. This route is shorter and less expensive compared to the Northern and Southern routes and most commonly used by Ethiopian nationals. Although the pandemic reduced the proportion of movements tracked along this corridor, following the easing of travel restrictions and stabilization of infection rates in various countries, the numbers started to increase again in the beginning of 2021.

From January to June 2021, around 130,000 movements were observed along this route and monthly movements increased by over 600 per cent during the second quarter when compared to the same time period in 2020. In keeping with historical trends, most of the people on the move originated from Ethiopia (82% of the movements). Similarly, the intended destination for most of the migrants was the Arabian Peninsula, as around 56 per cent were headed towards Saudi Arabia and another 40 per cent towards Yemen. Both research and anecdotal evidence has shown that Yemen is most often used by migrants as a transit country and the intended final destination for migrants arriving in Yemen is almost always Saudi Arabia. This corridor has continuously proven to be the most well-travelled and recent data has shown that neither the ongoing crisis in Yemen, nor the COVID-19 global pandemic has impacted the will of migrants to move to Saudi Arabia in search for better economic opportunities.

This is not to say, however, that no change in migration trends has been observed; since the start of the pandemic, more bi-directional flows have been observed on this route, as migrants not only attempt to cross to the Arabian Peninsula, but are also tracked upon return from the peninsula. Even more, data from February to May 2021 shows that more migrants were returning from Yemen (7,228) than arriving in Yemen from the Horn (3,944).¹³⁵ This is the first time that trends along this maritime route have been reversed and such reversal points to how deteriorating and hopeless the situation for irregular migrants in Yemen is. In addition to route changes and the emergence of new trends, the forced returns organized by Saudi Arabia back to the EHoA for irregular migrants that were detained or apprehended at the border with Yemen continued in the current year after a short hiatus during 2020.

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

Depending on their areas of departure, migrants originating in Ethiopia make the decision to travel either through Djibouti towards the Obock coast, or through Somalia towards Bossaso. The smaller proportion of Somali migrants on the move along this corridor tend to exclusively use the Bossaso port, or surrounding coastal areas, for their departure towards the Arabian Peninsula. Likewise, since 2014, the route via Bossaso has gained popularity and has surpassed Djibouti as the main area of departure. This rise was 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.¹³⁶

With the WHO declaring the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic in March 2020, the immediate reaction by many nations was to curtail movements across borders to varying degrees. In the region, migrants were to some extent still able to travel within the HoA but the number of migrants able to cross into Yemen decreased significantly and almost none were able to migrate onwards to Saudi Arabia.¹³⁷ As a result, migrants tracked upon arrival along the shores of Yemen decreased by almost 73 per cent between 2019 (138,213) and 2020 (37,535). However, there was an increase in entries into Yemen during this year, with 9,989 migrants arriving between January and June 2021. This is an increase of around 69 per cent compared to the second half of 2020 when 5,918 entries were tracked; however, figures from the first half of 2021 are still 68 per cent less than the first half of 2020 when 31,817 movements were tracked.¹³⁸

Departures from Somalia were the most affected by the pandemic; while more than 21,000 arrivals from Somalia to Yemen were monitored in the first half of 2020, this number was less than 5,000 in the first half of 2021. Similarly, the arrivals from Djibouti in 2021 were around half as much as those tracked over the same period last year. However, arrivals after May 2021 increased significantly and were higher than the same time period in 2020. Although movements picked up again following the relaxation of restrictions from June 2021, they remained limited due to extreme weather conditions at sea until September which make it difficult for migrants to travel by boat.¹³⁹

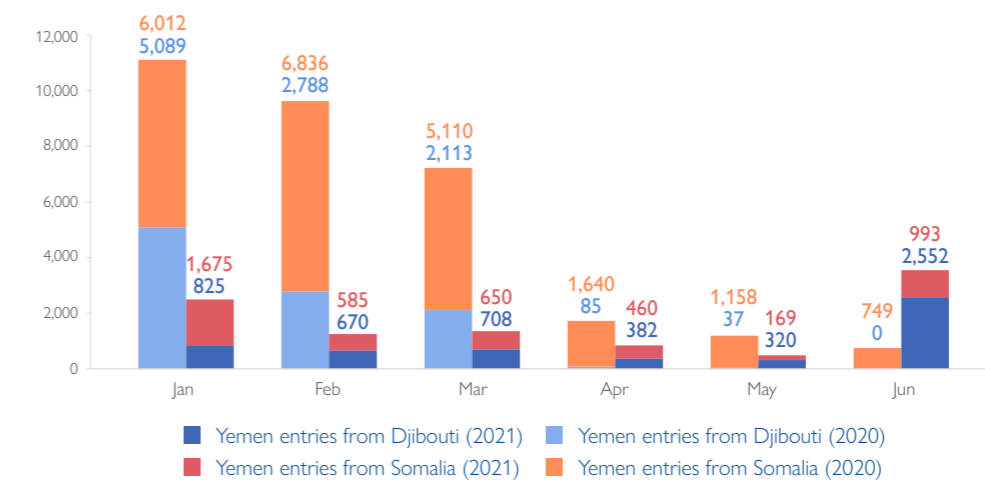


Figure 20: Entries into Yemen from the HoA (January to June 2020 and 2021)

Migration Profiles – Yemen Arrivals

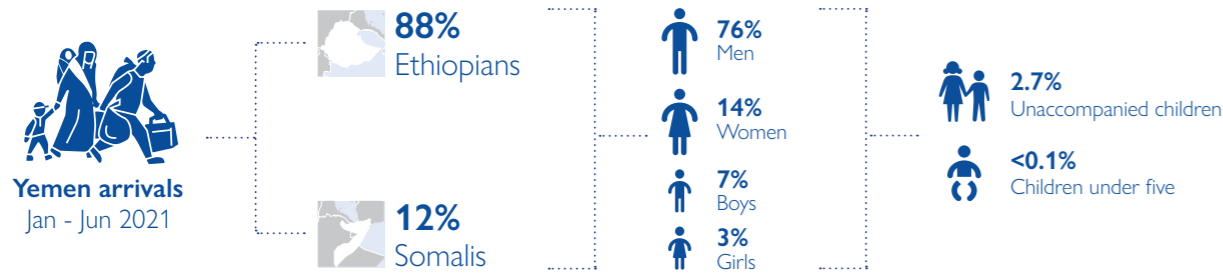


Figure 21: Yemen arrivals' nationalities, sex and age and vulnerabilities (January to June 2021)

The largest group of migrants arriving in Yemen continue to be Ethiopian, with many more adult males arriving compared to females. Although last year was marked by significant shifts in terms of migration routes and volumes, the sex and age breakdown remained consistent with what was observed pre-COVID-19, with the highest proportion of entries consisting of adult males. While the proportion of children has been significantly high in the past, the proportion of UMCs decreased between the first half of 2020 (9%) and the first half of 2021 (3%). Overall, UMCs made up 28 per cent (265) of all arriving children in 2021, compared to 75 per cent (2,889) in the first half of 2020. There is little evidence to explain this decrease beyond the fact that children seem to be more reluctant to migrate to Yemen during the pandemic.

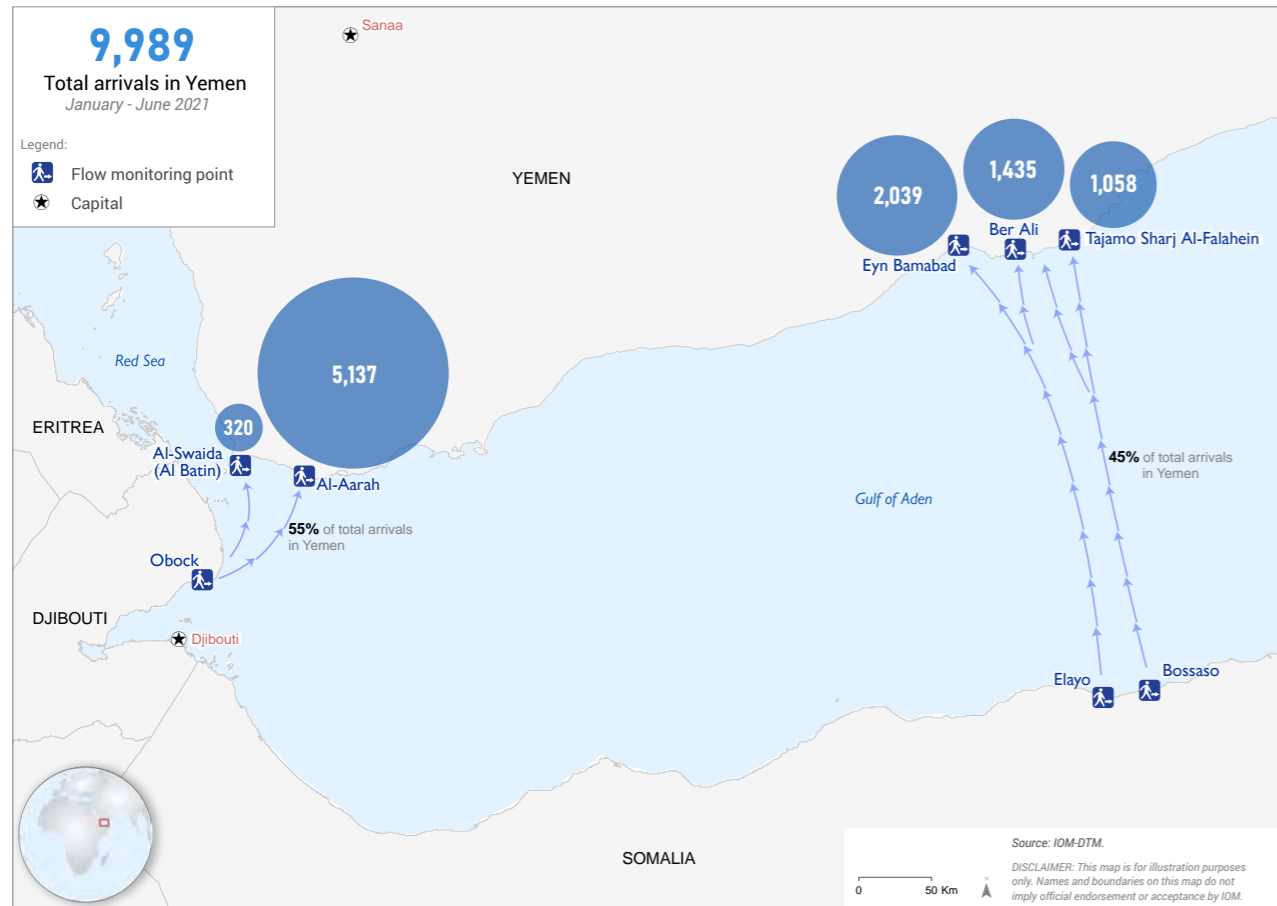


Figure 22: Yemen arrivals from the HoA (January to June 2021)



Portrait of a migrant in Obock. © IOM 2020 / Alexander Bee

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



As the conflict in Yemen entered its seventh year, the unprecedented pressure exerted by the pandemic on the already decimated health system has been immense and migrants across the country have been particularly suffering from the impact of COVID-19. With a reduction in support from the local community, their living conditions have continued to deteriorate and at the same time, widespread discrimination and stigmatization has limited their access to essential services such as life-saving health care. Many migrants have also become stranded in areas where armed conflict and COVID-19-related border restrictions have prevented them from continuing their journey towards Saudi Arabia or other Gulf states, therefore, pushing many of them to consider returning to the Horn.

Furthermore, the forced transfers of migrants within Yemen continued in the first half of 2021, leaving many of them exposed to smugglers and traffickers' exploitation. Hundreds of migrants have been entrapped within smugglers yards and dens across the country, the numbers of which are hard to ascertain due to access challenges. If not in the hands of smugglers, migrants were held in detention centres across Yemen. The number of migrants in detention centres at mid-year could not be confirmed given that access to these facilities has not been possible, especially in northern Yemen. It is believed that migrants in detention are held in undignified circumstances and without due process of law which exacerbates their vulnerability. Since the fire incident at the Immigration, Passport and Naturalization Authority (IPNA) holding facility in Sana'a on 7 March 2021, which killed 45 people and injured over 170 people,¹⁴⁰ IOM has not provided humanitarian assistance within the facility. To that end, the verification of potential detentions or forced returns has been difficult.

While the forced returns from Saudi Arabia resumed in 2021, humanitarian evacuations from Yemen's detention centres were halted for a few months because of the pandemic. Between October 2020 and March 2021, over 6,500 stranded migrants had approached IOM's Aden Migrant Response Point (MRP) asking for return assistance to Ethiopia through VHR.¹⁴¹ Migrants' presence in the streets of Aden City increased community tensions and destitution amongst these migrants who continue to live in deplorable conditions. This situation urged the resumption of VHR flights for Ethiopian migrants to provide an alternative to the life-threatening conditions they were facing in Yemen. While these operations restarted in March 2021, challenges remain due to delays in the process of verification of nationality.

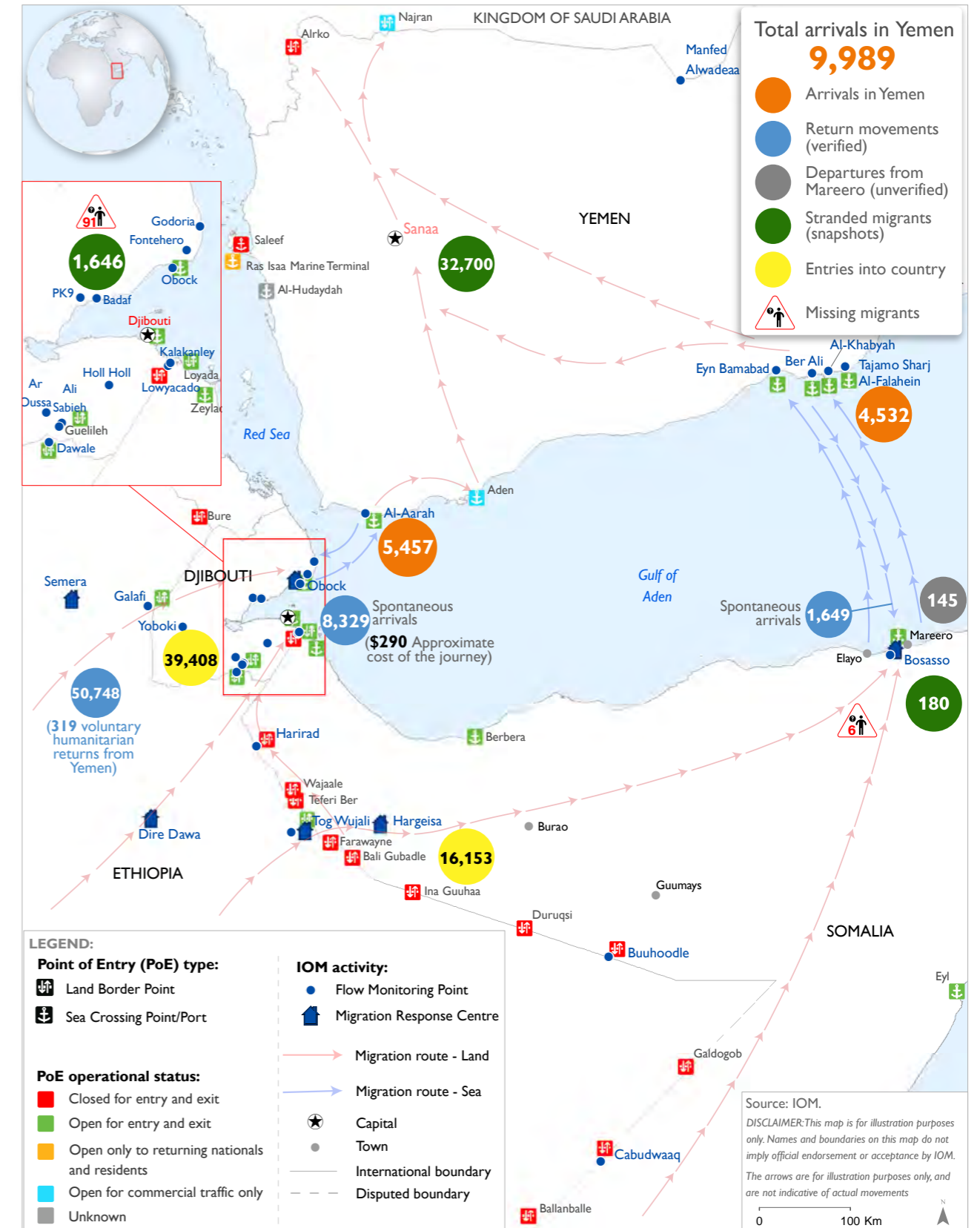


Figure 23: Impact of COVID-19 on migration trends and routes (January to June 2021)

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

Among the emergency mobility trends prompted by the pandemic, there was an increase in spontaneous returns of stranded migrants from Yemen back to the Horn. Based on interviews at disembarkation points, these groups of migrants can be considered as among the most vulnerable persons on the move along this corridor. Having already faced the hardships and challenges of the onward journey to the Arabian Peninsula, many found themselves stranded in Yemen, unable to proceed to Saudi Arabia due to strict border closures, in the hands of smugglers or held in detention centres. Suffering from malnutrition, multiple abuses and depleted funds, the migrants that had the ability to make this choice used the same network of smugglers to attempt the journey back home. These return movements began in May 2020, and during that year, IOM tracked the arrivals of around 7,000 migrants in Djibouti and over 1,300 migrants in Somalia who returned along the coast of Berbera and Bossaso.

The new trend of return movements across this maritime corridor has steadily continued in 2021. IOM in Djibouti confirmed the arrival of 8,329 migrants, while 1,649 migrants returned to Somalia. This return journey is arguably even more perilous for the migrants who, having failed their migration aspirations, decide to return home. In recent months, the media has reported several instances of drowning, as smugglers forced migrants to disembark in the middle of the ocean.¹⁴² Those who managed to reach the shores would often find the return journey on foot through the desert too much to bear, as the migrants had little to no resources left for their return journey.

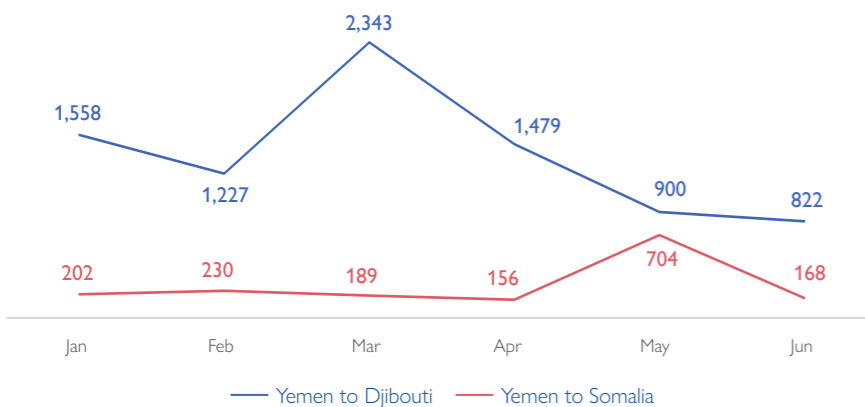


Figure 24: Spontaneous returns from Yemen (January to June 2021)

Returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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, Saudi Arabia committed to reducing unemployment among Saudis through the tightening of immigration policies for undocumented migrants.¹⁴³ An estimated 500,000 migrants were present in Saudi Arabia when the decree was issued. IOM has electronically registered 376,640 Ethiopian returnees at Bole international airport in Addis Ababa since May 2017. Ethiopian migrants are not the only ones affected by the decree. A further 138,381 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 2019, while 13,895 returned in 2020. So far, in 2021, only 1,231 returns have been reported.¹⁴⁴ No returns to Yemen were recorded between January and May 2021 due to access issues. Somali migrants were also returned from Saudi Arabia to Somalia, although data on the full magnitude of this movement is not currently available.

In the first half of 2021, IOM registered 30,899 Ethiopian returnees upon arrival at Bole airport. With

an average of 5,150 returnees per month, figures during the reporting period have increased slightly compared to the monthly average of 3,053 returnees in 2020. Following the onset of the pandemic in the region, deportations from Saudi Arabia were temporarily halted on 22 March and only briefly resumed on 3-13 April, 2-8 June and since September 2020. Figures also remained at around half of the average number of returnees registered per month in pre-COVID-19 years (9,551 in 2018 and 10,069 in 2019). However, the number of returnees has gradually risen over the first half of 2021, from 2,199 returnees registered in January to 12,062 returnees registered in June. On 24 June 2021, the Government of Ethiopia announced that 40,000 migrants detained in Saudi Arabia would be returned to Ethiopia. These returns commenced on 26 June and continued into July. Figures are expected to continue to increase in the second half of 2021, with 31,911 returns recorded in July alone. This represents an average of 2,300 returns per day and constitutes the highest number of returnees ever registered by IOM since this data collection began in May 2017. Returnees are often arriving in Ethiopia after having spent many months in prison, where migrants report experiencing abuse and being held in inhuman and degrading conditions within these facilities.¹⁴⁵

Of the Ethiopian returnees registered in the first half of 2021, 84 per cent were male, 16 per cent were female and 4 per cent were children, mostly younger than five years of age (84% of registered children). The majority of male returnees reported only having completed primary school (54%), with slightly under one in four having completed secondary school (23%) and less than 1 per cent reporting that they completed university education. Female returnees were also most likely to have only completed primary school (48%) or secondary school (22%).

During their time in Saudi Arabia, around 81 per cent of male returnees and 34 per cent of female returnees remained unemployed. Male returnees who had been employed were most commonly working as manual labourers (15%), while female returnees were most commonly employed as domestic workers (53%). Most migrants were returning from the Saudi Arabian cities of Makkah (45%) and Riyadh (31%). The majority of migrants (57%) reported that they had spent between seven months and two years in Saudi Arabia, 14 per cent had stayed for three to five years and 5 per cent had stayed between six and 10 years.

Between January and June 2021, most migrants reported that they were returning to the Tigray (40%), Amhara (29%) and Oromia (26%) regions of Ethiopia. Most returnees (72%) reported that they were planning to stay in Ethiopia, while 28 per cent reported not having a plan for the future. Migrants from Tigray (32%) were slightly more likely than migrants from Amhara (24%) and Oromia (25%) to not have a plan for the future, possibly due to the ongoing conflict in the region.

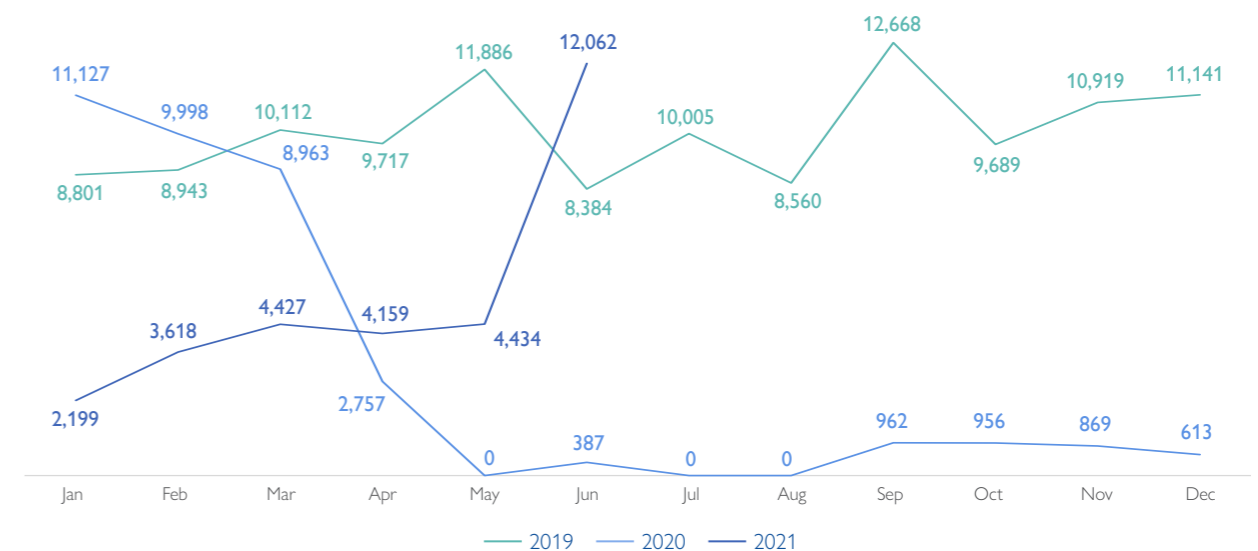


Figure 25: Returns from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia from 2019 to mid-2021

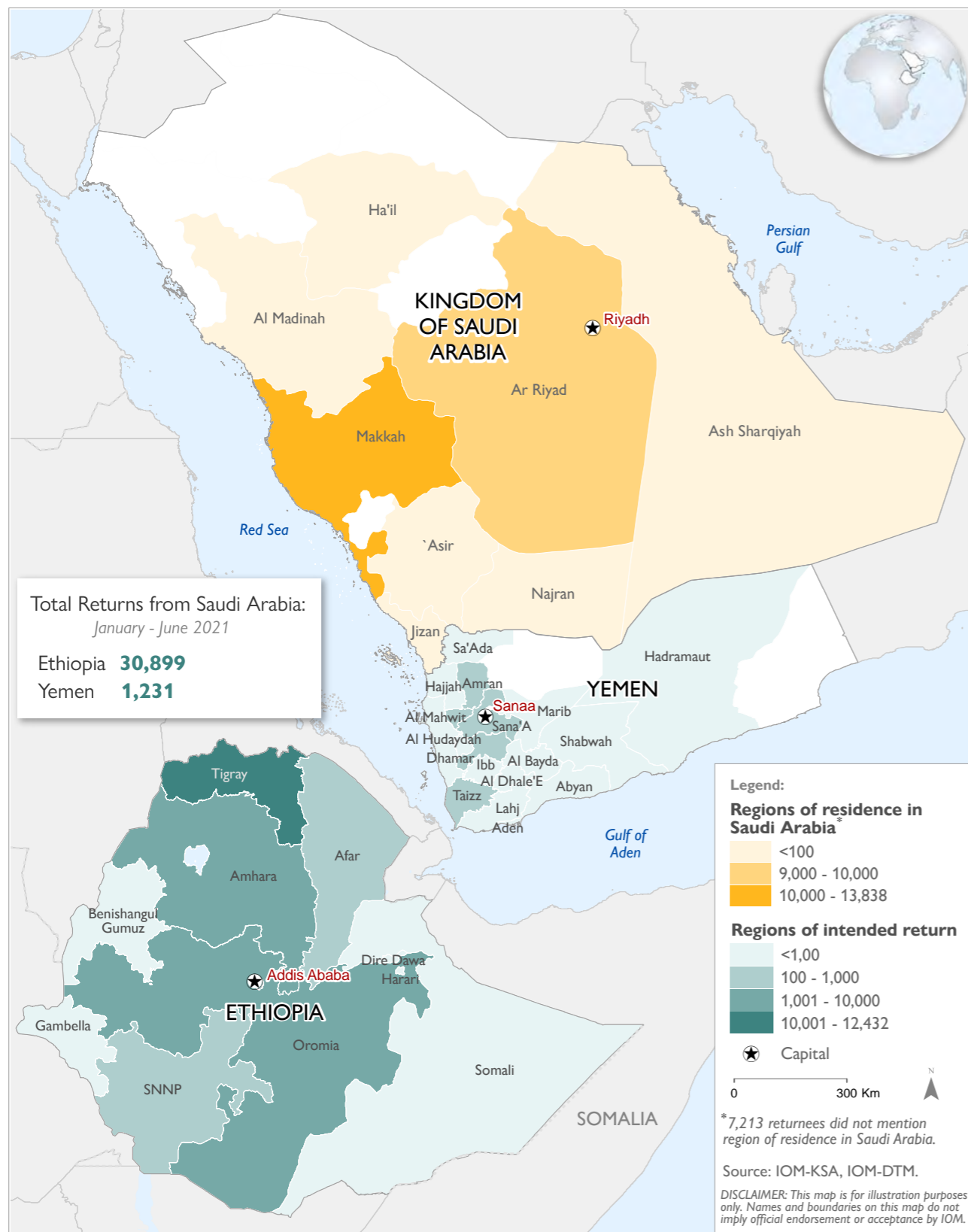


Figure 26: Returns from Saudi Arabia by areas of departure and of intended destinations (January to June 2021)

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 the first half of 2021, IOM facilitated the return of 348 migrants by air, 261 of whom were Ethiopians returning from Yemen to Ethiopia. Most of those assisted were men (89%), 3 per cent were women and 7 per cent were children (all of whom were male). VHR movements to Ethiopia resumed in March 2021 after IOM's VHR programme faced significant challenges due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many countries in the region were unable to receive their stranded citizens.

Missing Migrant Project

From January to June 2021, IOM's MMP recorded a total of 97 migrant deaths and disappearances in the EHoA. This marks a sharp increase compared to 2020, when 58 migrants were recorded as dead or missing throughout the entire year. Most of these incidents were recorded in Djibouti (5) and Somalia (5), and predominantly involved Ethiopian migrants travelling on the Eastern Route. A total of 64 deaths can be attributed to drowning in two separate incidents off the coast of Djibouti, involving migrants who were headed to Yemen. Smugglers along this route often overcrowd their vessels, resulting in shipwrecks or migrants being thrown overboard at sea to prevent the boats from capsizing. Tragic incidents of boats capsizing on the maritime route between the HoA and Yemen have become more frequent in recent months. In addition to the migrant deaths that occurred off the EHoA coast, a boat that had departed from Djibouti carrying nearly 200 migrants capsized off the coast of Yemen near Ras al-Ara on 13 June 2021. The migrants on board were both EHoA and Yemeni nationals and at least 25 were found dead, while up to 175 remain missing after the incident. Another 27 migrants died in different locations along the route from Ethiopia to Obock due to harsh environmental conditions, exhaustion, dehydration and starvation from inadequate access to shelter, food and water. Migrant deaths and disappearances recorded in Somalia were most commonly due to COVID-19 (3), while one migrant died in a vehicle accident. All deaths related to COVID-19 occurred in Burao in the Togdheer region.

As the responses to the pandemic continue to shift the routes migrants take while simultaneously impacting IOM's capacity to collect data on migrant deaths and disappearances, these figures are likely underreported and are not representative of the true number of deaths and disappearances that occurred in the EHoA region in the first six months of 2021. Rather, these figures are reflective of the scarcity of sources reporting on missing migrants and the fact that many migrants die or disappear in remote, hard-to-reach areas, away from public scrutiny.

Box: 'To Change My Life': Migration Drivers and Aspirations of Young Ethiopians on the Eastern Route



Portrait of an Ethiopian returnee from Lebanon in Gatira Town, Setema Wereda, Jimma Zone. © IOM 2021 / Yonas Tadesse

In May 2021, the RDH launched the report 'To Change My Life'.¹⁴⁶ The report is the final of a series of reports and briefing papers presenting findings from the first two phases of its research on young Ethiopians on the Eastern Route in Obock and Bossaso. The research explored migration dynamics, migrant risk perceptions, migration decision-making and the migration experiences of young (ages 15-29) Ethiopians migrating along the Eastern Corridor towards Saudi Arabia. Data collection for the third and final phase of the research ended in July 2021 and was conducted in communities of high emigration in Ethiopia. It examines COVID-19's impact on migration aspirations, the role of families in migration decision-making, how remittances and their usage impact families and communities of origin and prospective migrants' knowledge of the migratory process and dangers involved.

The research findings confirm data collected through other IOM and non-IOM sources indicating that economic factors are at the root of most movements along the Eastern Route. Of all movements tracked in 2020 along the Eastern Corridor by IOM's DTM, 87 per cent were economically driven. A recent study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency found that an estimated 36 million out of 41 million children in Ethiopia can be considered multi-dimensionally poor.¹⁴⁷ The reasons for the persistence of widespread poverty

in Ethiopia are varied, including rapid population growth, declining land holding size, environmental factors such as erratic rainfall and soil erosion and high levels of youth unemployment.

In the RDH study, over three fourths of interviewed migrants reported that their migration was primarily driven by economic reasons (95% in Obock and 77% in Bossaso). Although migration along this route can generally be seen as a response to cope with economic concerns, economic drivers are diverse and there is often a combination of factors that push an individual to migrate. Unemployment was found to be a key economic driver, with over three in four respondents reporting that they did not have an income in Ethiopia before migrating. Insufficient or intermittent wages stood out as a strong migration driver amongst respondents who reported that they had an income prior to migration. The median monthly income of respondents surveyed in Obock was just over USD 50 per month and over half of the study participants who reported having an income in Ethiopia stated that their income was insufficient to meet their basic needs. One third of migrants reported that their households occasionally exercised food-related coping strategies such as reducing portion sizes or skipping meals to cope with a lack of resources. Even migrants who reported that they had migrated internally in Ethiopia in search of employment prior to embarking on an international migration journey reported that their endeavour had been unsuccessful due to a lack of job opportunities and low salaries that could not support living in an urban centre. Another commonly reported economic driver was the lack of access to jobs that provide higher incomes due to a lack of capital to start a business such as opening a small shop or owning a taxi. Opening a small business in Ethiopia was one of the most frequently cited goals migrants were hoping to achieve through their migration.

Amongst the many co-factors pushing young Ethiopians to migrate abroad, land-related and climatic factors stood out most prominently. The land-related drivers that were frequently reported by study participants were land shortages, land fragmentation, land depletion, soil erosion and weather-related shocks such as drought, floods and heavy rainfall. Many Ethiopian families work on increasingly fragmented, small and in some cases, infertile plots that are not only inadequate to feed the family, but also do not yield any profit. Moreover, the uncertainty of weather-related shocks and climatic events may push young Ethiopians to migrate to help their families diversify their income sources to minimize economic risks. The majority of migrants surveyed in this study on the Eastern Route come from rural, agricultural areas where many families rely heavily on agriculture to sustain themselves. Land-related factors are therefore often strong secondary drivers pushing migrants and their families into economic vulnerability and migration.

Young Ethiopian migration along the Eastern Route is not only driven by strong economic push factors, but also by pull factors attracting migrants to Saudi Arabia in particular. In contrast to the economic problems migrants reported facing at home, study participants had very high expectations for how successful migration could help them achieve their goals and ambitions for the future. The expected median income of first-time migrants surveyed in Obock and Bossaso was around USD 500, which is about ten times the median income migrants reported earning in Ethiopia. Migration success stories spread by friends and family abroad, returnees, brokers and other community members play a strong and influencing role in shaping such expectations and encourage young Ethiopians to migrate on the Eastern Corridor to achieve their goals and improve their lives and the lives of their families. Almost 50 per cent of qualitative respondents in Obock reported that they had felt drawn to migrate to Saudi Arabia after witnessing the 'successes' of their peers, siblings and other members of their community. Some reported that the successes of others around them had fuelled a sense of relative deprivation that had inspired them to try and achieve the same for themselves. Regardless of the driver of migration that respondents cited, interviewees overwhelmingly described the economic landscapes of their communities as preventing them from achieving their aspirations, such as starting a career or a family. The lack of hope and appealing alternatives respondents reported feeling at home together with grand expectations of what can be achieved abroad stood out most clearly in the most repeated phrase throughout qualitative interviews: "I am migrating to change my life".

NORTHERN ROUTE

The Northern Route has historically been less travelled along by migrants in the region, who largely move along the Eastern Route and, to a lesser extent, along the Southern Route. Although the DTM operational coverage along the Northern Route is limited, and thus, actual movements are likely to be severely underestimated, triangulation with other data sources in transit countries (Libya) and at final destinations (arrivals to Europe) tends to confirm the low popularity of this journey for migrants in the region.

A total of 2,195 movements were tracked along the Northern Route in the first half of 2021, which is a 46 per cent decrease compared to the first half of 2020. This decrease is likely to be a result of COVID-19-related restrictions. Overall, these movements represent around 1 per cent of all movements tracked in the region. Similar to previous years, the majority of the migrants were Ethiopian (95%) while, unlike the previous year, only 4 per cent Eritreans were tracked (compared to 12% in 2020). Almost 95 per cent of the recorded movements originated in Ethiopia, 68 per cent were travelling towards Sudan, while almost a third (30%) were directed towards Europe, mainly to Germany (26%), the United Kingdom (18%) and Italy (15%). Like the Eastern Route, migration along the Northern Route is also undertaken for economic reasons and is largely male-dominated likely due to uncertainty regarding success rates and the dangers involved in crossing Libya and the Mediterranean Sea.

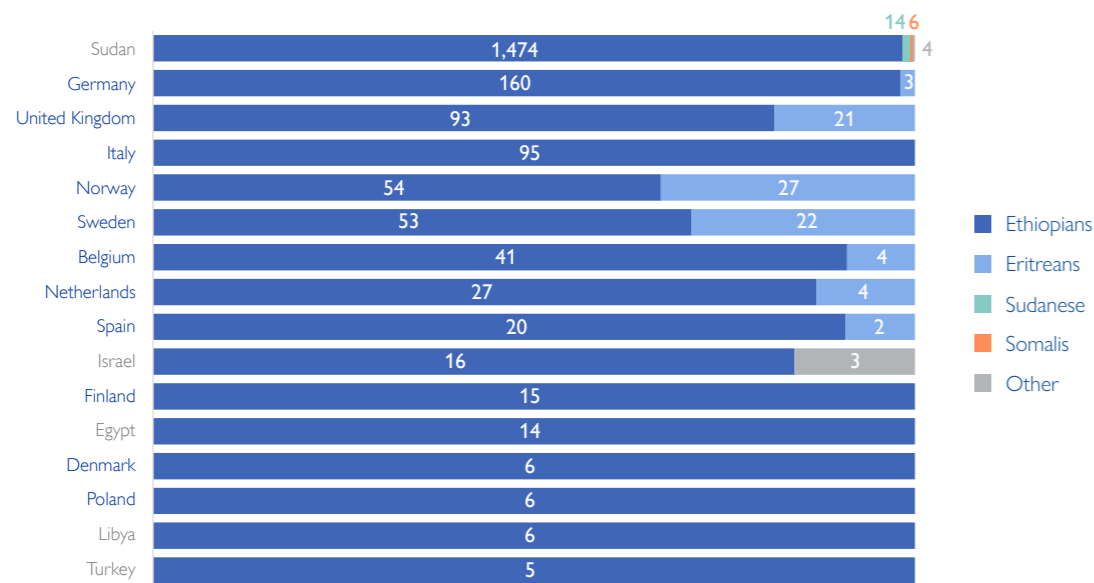


Figure 27: Nationalities along the Northern Route by destination countries (January to June 2021)

Migrants from the East and Horn of Africa along the Central Mediterranean Route

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 May and June 2021 (597,611), over 2 per cent were EHoA migrants (13,079) and were mainly from Somalia (43%), Eritrea (38%) and Ethiopia (14%).¹⁴⁸

A better understanding of the profiles of EHoA migrants in Libya can be obtained from interviews with 119 migrants who were surveyed by DTM between January and June 2021.¹⁴⁹ Eritreans constituted most of the respondents (50%), followed by Somalis (27%) and Ethiopians (23%). On average, most respondents were aged 20 to 29 years old; Somalis were most likely to be younger than 20 (19%) compared to Eritreans (15%) and Ethiopians (11%). Most EHoA migrants were single (63%), with Eritreans (31%) slightly more likely to be married than Ethiopians (14%) and Somalis (13%). Few EHoA

migrants (14%) reported never having attended school, while most had completed primary (25%) or middle school (32%).

The majority of EHoA migrants (88%) reported having travelled to Libya in a group rather than alone. The most common push factors were insufficient incomes at home (24%), targeted violence or persecution (21%) and the desire to look for job opportunities abroad (16%). Somalis were most commonly migrating for economic reasons such as a lack of job opportunities at home (28%) and the desire to look for a job abroad (28%), Ethiopians were most commonly migrating due to targeted violence or persecution (32%) and Eritreans were most commonly migrating due to insufficient income at home (39%).

Over half of the respondents reported that their final destination was in Europe (66%), 22 per cent did not have a fixed intention or plan and 9 per cent reported they planned on staying in Libya. Around one in three migrants (34%) reported that they had been in Libya for less than a year, 45 per cent had stayed in Libya between one and four years and 21 per cent had been in Libya for more than four years. Nonetheless, 61 per cent of respondents reported they were not working in Libya, nor were they looking for a job; the unemployment rate is much higher among EHoA migrants than among the average migrant population in Libya (20% in June 2021).

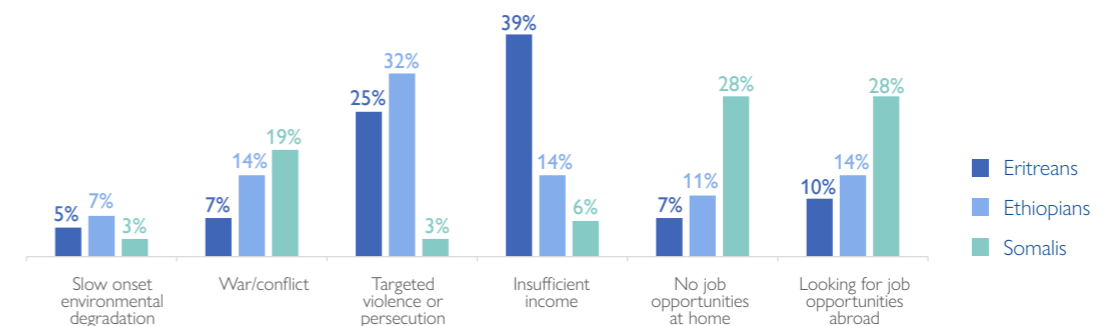


Figure 28: Top six reasons for migration (January to June 2021)

Migrants' welfare in Libya remains of concern, as Libya's slow pace of recovery following years of political instability and conflict and the impact of the pandemic on the country's economy continue to affect migrants.¹⁵⁰ The overall migrant unemployment rate in June 2021 remained higher than pre-pandemic levels (20% versus 17% in February 2020). Interviews with migrants show that unemployment is higher among migrants who arrived less than six months ago (48%) compared to migrants who have resided in Libya between one to two years (12%) or longer (14%). Recent studies on migrants in Libya have shown that recent arrivals are generally less settled and less likely to be employed, which may amplify their vulnerability to risks such as lack of access to adequate food and housing. Migrants who have settled in Libya for longer periods of time are often able to rely on their local network for assistance. This trend could have been exacerbated as a result of the pandemic. The majority of the 1,983 key informants interviewed by DTM between April and May 2021 identified migrants as one of the most COVID-19 affected populations living in Libya due to the loss of livelihoods and increased risks to their health and well-being.¹⁵¹

In general, all migrants in Libya are particularly in need of greater access to health services, with a recent IOM assessment (4,166 interviews) finding that 77 per cent of migrants have limited or no access to health services, most commonly due to them not being able to afford available services.¹⁵² Cost and affordability were also the main issues migrants reported in accessing food, as prices of basic food items have been volatile since the pandemic, thus placing additional financial strain on the poorest households which may already be experiencing reduced income due to COVID-19.¹⁵³ A recent study published jointly by IOM and WFP on hunger and COVID-19 in Libya found that while mobility restrictions have eased in 2021, the economic situation remains highly affected by the pandemic with 69 per cent of interviewed migrants

reporting they had problems finding employment and three in four reporting that their income had been negatively affected by the pandemic.¹⁵⁴ One in five migrants interviewed can be considered as food insecure, while more than half are considered marginally food insecure, with younger, unemployed, lower educated and recently arrived migrants particularly at risk of food insecurity.¹⁵⁵ Comparisons between 2020 and 2019 continue to demonstrate that East Africans tend to have the highest proportions of poor and borderline food consumption levels compared to others.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, migrants' situation in Libya has improved slightly compared to 2020 since mobility restrictions have been eased significantly since the beginning of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Libya in mid-April 2021.¹⁵⁷

DTM publishes data on arrivals by sea and by land in the Mediterranean region, which is provided by national authorities and based on declared and registered nationalities upon disembarkation. According to data collected from government authorities, 2,226 EHoA migrants (11% of all 20,744 arrivals by sea) were registered across European disembarkation and entry points in Greece, Italy, Spain and Malta in the first half of 2021.¹⁵⁸ This is 78 per cent more than the 1,250 EHoA migrants registered at arrival in the same countries in the first half of 2020. The majority of the recorded arrivals were Eritreans (56%), followed by Somalis (28%), Ethiopians (11%) and South Sudanese (3%). Italy recorded the largest number of EHoA migrants arriving by sea to Europe (1,873), followed by Greece (297), Malta (52) and Spain (4). Most migrants recorded in Greece were Somalis (281), 95 per cent of all EHoA arrivals in Greece. In Italy, the majority of registered EHoA migrants were Eritreans (65%), Somalis (18%) and Ethiopians (13%). Malta also mainly registered Eritreans (73%) as well as South Sudanese (23%) and Somalis (4%). Additionally, 899 EHoA migrants (52% Eritreans, 47% Somalis, 1% Ethiopians and 3 migrants from Burundi) were apprehended while transiting through the Western Balkan region in the first half of 2021.¹⁵⁹ Most of these migrants were recorded in North Macedonia (480) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (311), followed by Croatia (64), Romania (24) and Slovenia (20).



28-year-old Roam Khot in his small shop in Juba. In 2017, he left South Sudan for Egypt with the hope of starting a new life there after losing both his parents. © IOM 2020 / Nabile Loyce

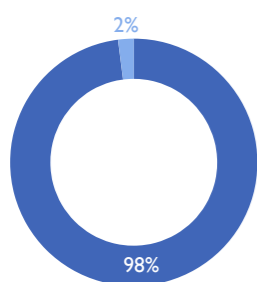
SOUTHERN ROUTE



Data collectors gathering information from the residents of Misha Wereda about migration in the region. © IOM 2021 / Yonas Tadesse

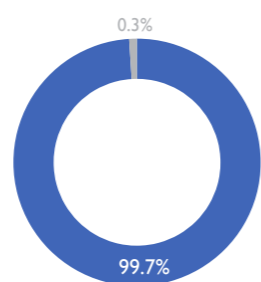
The Southern Route remains understudied compared to other routes in the region, with little current data available. In 2009, IOM estimated that as many as 20,000 migrants from the EHoA use this route per year.¹⁶⁰ This estimate was revised in 2017 by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) to somewhere between 14,750 and 16,850 migrants per year.¹⁶¹ During the first half of 2021, 28,090 movements were tracked along the Southern Route, which is more than twice the movements tracked in the latter half of 2020 (12,376).¹⁶²

Movements along this route made up almost 8 per cent of all movements tracked in the region, with the majority originating in Ethiopia (65%) and Somalia (33%), and headed towards Kenya (78%) and South Africa (16%). Almost all the movements tracked towards South Africa were done through the Moyale FMP (99%) located in Ethiopia at the border with Kenya, which is one of the main gateways to the Southern Route. Migrants crossing this area are Ethiopians (99%), most commonly from the SNNP region (71%) and are travelling for economic reasons.¹⁶³ Furthermore, they largely consisted of adult males (60%), while 29 per cent were adult females and 11 per cent were children. Overall, the Southern Route is also largely dominated by economic migration as it entails a long journey across multiple countries and is predominately undertaken by men.



■ Ethiopians ■ Somalis

Figure 29: Movements towards South Africa by nationality (January to June 2021)



■ Economic reasons ■ Other

Figure 30: Movements towards South Africa by reason for travel (January to June 2021)

Detention data collected by IOM in the United Republic of 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 August and September 2021, IOM and the Ethiopian embassy conducted joint verification missions to prisons across three Tanzanian regions (Tanga, Morogoro and Mbeya) where they identified 786 Ethiopians in detention of whom 114 were children. It is estimated that the number of Ethiopians in detention is above 2,200, as not all prisons holding Ethiopian migrants were assessed during the verification missions. These numbers are merely a small fraction of the likely sizeable number of EHoA nationals who migrate along this route annually.

In 2020, the RDH launched a scoping research project to better understand the dynamics of migration along the Southern Route. Although evidence suggests that the pandemic resulted in a temporary reduction in movements due to border closures and lockdowns in key transit hubs such as Eastleigh in Nairobi, movements began to increase again from August 2020 onwards. In the first half of 2021, IOM received reports of migrants intercepted or stranded in transit locations in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, including some UMCs. In March 2021, IOM opened an MRC in Moyale, a border town which Ethiopian migrants travelling along the Southern Route pass through on their way into Kenya. The MRC registered 520 migrants between March and June, 90 per cent of whom reported that their intended destination was South Africa.

Migration from the EHoA along the Southern Route is mostly comprised of Ethiopians and Somalis, although Eritrean and Kenyan migrants have also been reported along this route, albeit in very small numbers. Somali migrants in South Africa are often from Mogadishu, from where they either fly to Mozambique to reduce the length of the irregular, overland journey or travel overland via Mandera in northern Kenya or Dadaab in southern Kenya to Nairobi. Ethiopians travelling along the Southern Route cross into Kenya through Moyale to then migrate to Nairobi via Isiolo.

Both Somalis and Ethiopians have established large and economically successful diaspora communities in South Africa. Members of the diaspora often sponsor migrants in their home communities to work in their businesses in South Africa and their economic and social success acts as a strong pull factor for migration. Hence, similar to other migratory routes in the region, migration along the Southern Route is mainly driven by economic factors such as unemployment, underemployment and low wages in Ethiopia compared to greater economic opportunities in South Africa that offer higher wages and lifestyle improvements. Ethiopian migrants on the Southern Route generally originate from the SNNP region in southern Ethiopia, particularly from the Kembata and Hadiya zones. Both zones are characterized as areas that rely heavily on agriculture and have very high population densities compared to other parts of the country, which therefore results in land shortages due to fragmentation and insufficient economic alternatives to agriculture for younger generations.

While around one in four migrants along the Eastern Route are female, labour migration along the Southern Route is overwhelmingly male, with female migrants from SNNP usually migrating to the Middle East for domestic work. Middle Eastern countries have a long history of offering domestic work opportunities for female Ethiopian migrants, while labour migration to South Africa is largely characterized by small businesses and is viewed as dangerous due to the high crime rates in the areas in which most migrants run businesses. Likewise, female migrants on the Southern Route tend to be migrating to re-join family or get married. A recent IOM study on child migrants from Ethiopia found that female migrants from the Hadiya zone, some as young as 15 years old, often travel as prospective wives to businessmen in the diaspora in South Africa. Prospective wives usually fly to their destination, rather than using the more arduous overland route.¹⁶⁴ Journeys are sponsored and organized by the prospective husbands.

MIGRANT PROFILES¹⁶⁵

Nationalities

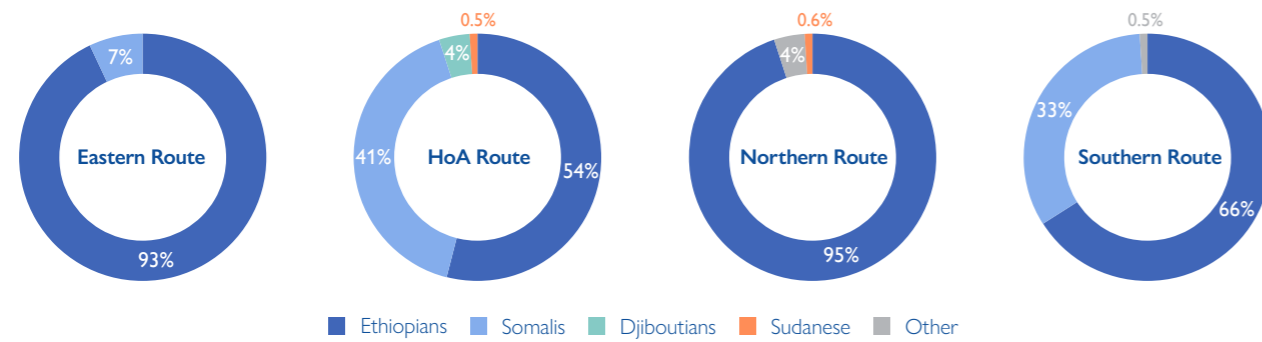


Figure 31: Nationalities by route¹⁶⁶

As mentioned previously, Ethiopians are the largest national group on the move in the region across all four migratory corridors. There is a culture of migration present for most communities in Ethiopia and the push to migrate is often viewed as a rite of passage, especially for boys that are motivated by the success stories and enhanced living conditions of some members of their communities which receive remittances from abroad. The pull to migrate is strong enough for most to ignore the risks associated with these perilous journeys, and more often than not, these migrants are unaware of the actual extent of these risks and have little information about the challenges ahead. In total, 234,852 Ethiopians were on the move in the first half of 2021, of whom 121,138 (52%) were migrating along the Eastern Route and 93,049 (40%) were tracked on the HoA Route. On the other hand, most of the 88,969 Somalis on the move were tracked along the HoA Route (70,666 or 79%).

Sex and Age

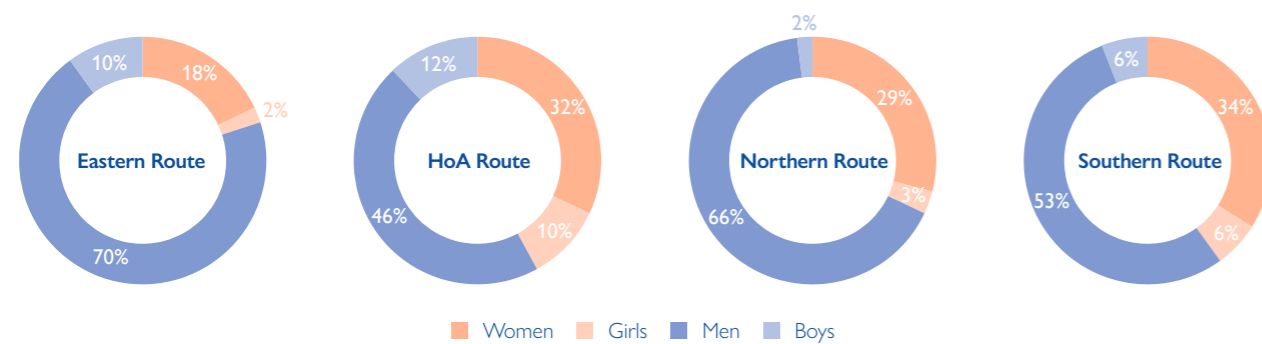


Figure 32: Sex and age group by route

Migrants across all routes are most likely to be men (56%), while women accounted for 27 per cent and children for 17 per cent (10% boys and 7% girls); the demographic profile of the migrants along each of these routes has remained fairly consistent since 2018.¹⁶⁷ Migration along the HoA Route is mostly shorter term in nature and more cyclical, hence families tend to travel together which accounts for the fairly even sex and age distribution. Profiles along the Southern Route are representative of a very small sample size due to the limited operational coverage.

Vulnerabilities

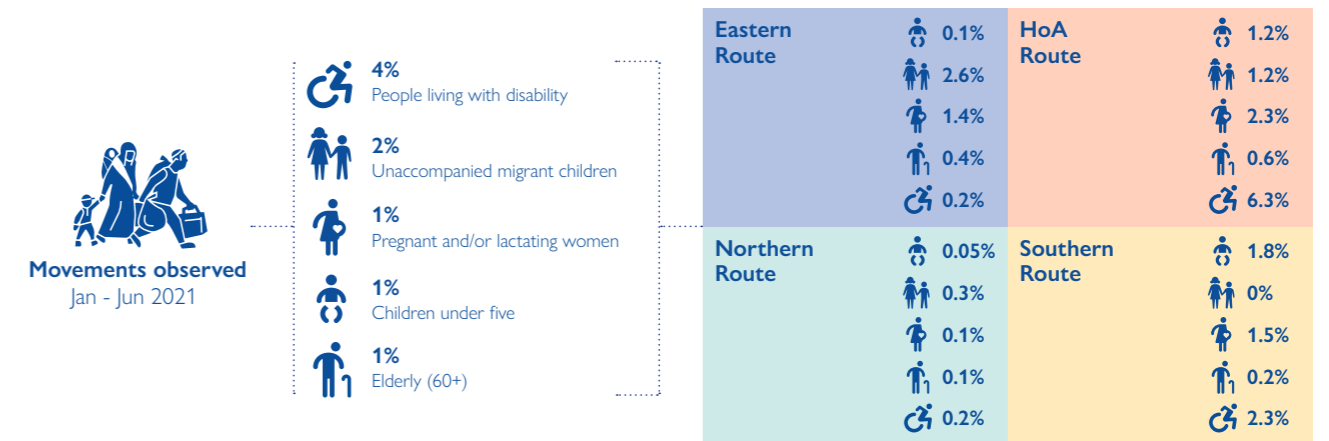


Figure 33: Vulnerabilities overall and by route

As the volumes of migration decreased between January and June 2021, it seemed that vulnerable people were more reluctant to face the risks associated with migration on top of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the reporting period, only 28,127 vulnerabilities were tracked compared to the first half of 2020 (31,903); this represents a decrease from around 3 per cent of all movements in 2020 to less than 2 per cent of all movements in 2021.¹⁶⁸ UMCs have historically made up the vast majority of all vulnerabilities tracked, but even these were reported to have decreased significantly. Almost half of all the children travelling along the Eastern Route were unaccompanied in the first half of 2020, whereas only 21 per cent were unaccompanied in the first half of 2021. From January to June 2020, 70 per cent of all UMCs tracked in the region were travelling along the Eastern Corridor, while this decreased to 62 per cent in the same period in 2021.

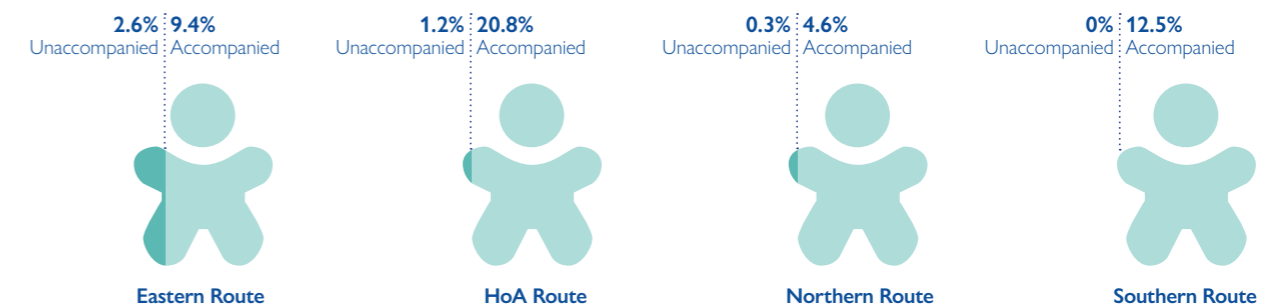


Figure 34: Unaccompanied and accompanied children by route

Education and Employment

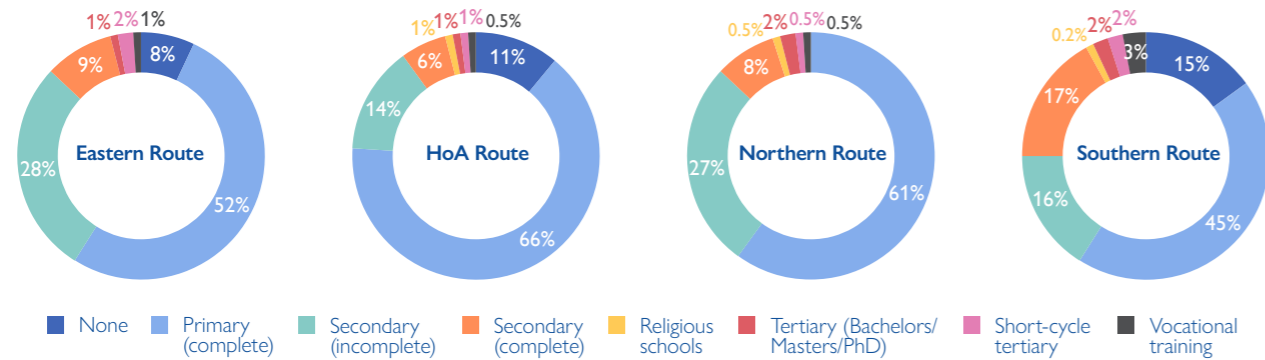


Figure 35: Education level by route

A smaller sample of people on the move also agreed to be interviewed in more detail by DTM field teams and the results from this data show that around 11 per cent of the respondents had no formal education, more than half had completed primary schooling and 11 per cent had a higher than secondary education level.¹⁶⁹ This is a sharp change from the second half of 2020 when over half of the respondents were completely uneducated and only 3 per cent had an education level that was secondary school or higher. Most of the educated respondents had specialized in a field related to education (35%) while 16 per cent said they had specialized in religious studies (38%), followed by social sciences (11%) and engineering (10%). There was little variance between males and females in terms of study areas with the exception of religious studies, which saw more females (24%) than males (13%), and engineering, which more males (13%) specialized in than females (1%).¹⁷⁰

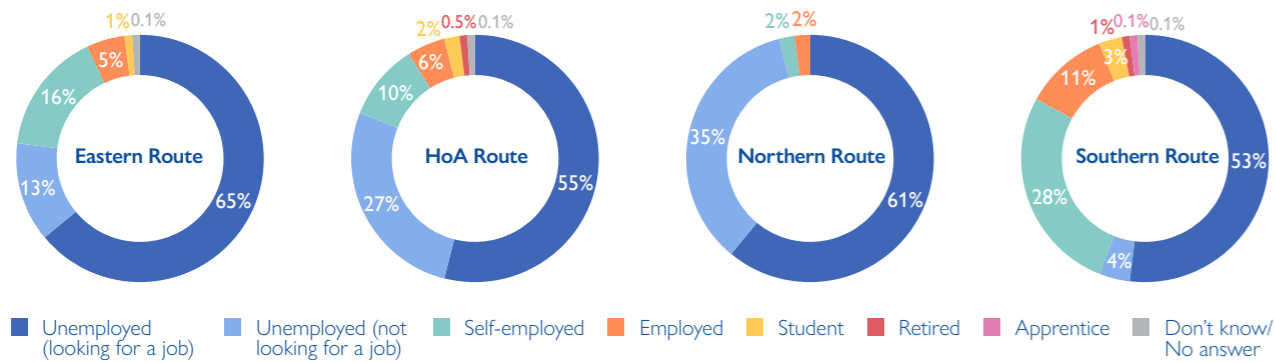


Figure 36: Employment status by route

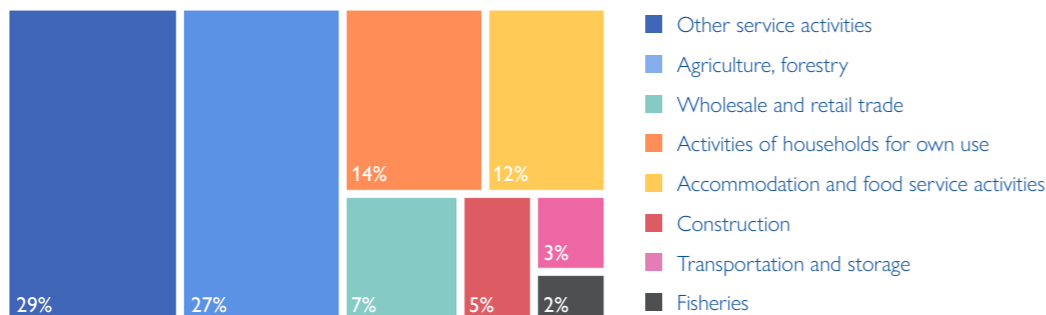


Figure 37: Main employment sectors

In alignment with the results that show that most migration was economic in nature, most migrants (56%) were unemployed and looking for a job prior to migration, and 13 per cent were self-employed prior to migration, which usually refers to farming or herding activities. When further questioned about the nature of their work, many respondents reported being involved in the agriculture or forestry industry, with more males giving this response than females (36% versus 5%). In fact, the responses from this line of questioning reaffirmed some assumptions about traditional male and female roles in these communities,¹⁷² with more females being involved in the accommodation and food service industry (15% females versus 4% males) and more males (8%) being involved in construction compared to females (less than 1%).¹⁷³ Participation in the wholesale and retail trade sector was fairly evenly distributed between both sexes (14% versus 13% for females), though females (34%) were more commonly involved in activities of households than males (3%).

Difficulties Faced

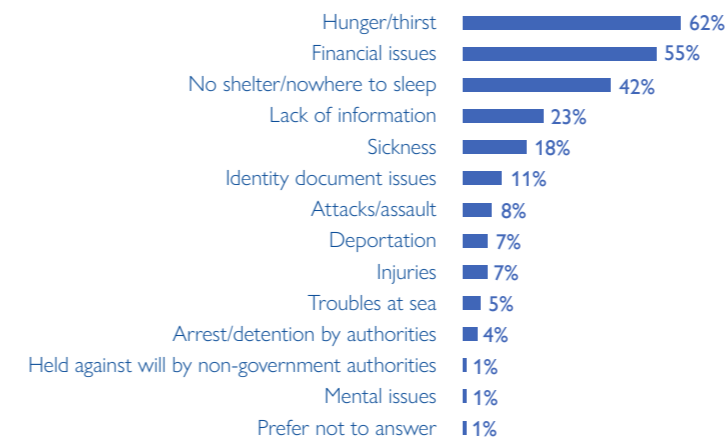


Figure 38: Difficulties faced during the journey

Overall, less than a quarter of those surveyed responded to the question regarding difficulties faced during the migrant journey.¹⁷¹ The main challenges reported were related to access to food and water, lack of financial resources and access to shelter.

Reasons for Migration

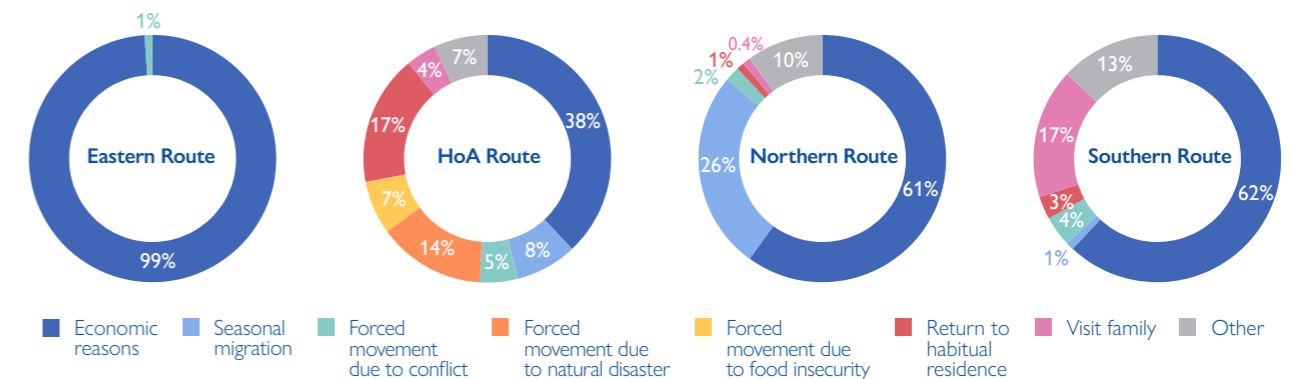


Figure 39: Main reasons for migration by route¹⁷⁴

Most people in the EHoA region moved for economic reasons (64%), with almost all the migration along the Eastern Route motivated by economic factors (99%). Movements along the Eastern and Northern routes were also generally longer term in nature (6 months or longer), while movements along the HoA Route were usually shorter and more localized. The data also suggests that a large portion of those intending to travel along the Eastern Route were not aware of when or if they would return (47%) and almost 19 per cent were not planning on returning for at least three months after reaching their intended destination. By contrast, most movements that were more localized were much shorter in nature, with 20 per cent of the movements along the HoA Route lasting only a week or less, 15 per cent for less than three months and only 16 per cent for three months to one year. Migrants along the HoA Route were involved in seasonal migration (8%), but the movements reported were mainly driven by economic reasons (38%) or were caused by forced movement (26%). In general, forced movements were not a significant contributing factor towards movements in the region and made up only 10 per cent of all movements. Most of these forced movements were, however, tracked along the HoA Route (94%).

The nature of migration coincides with the expectations the migrants tend to have about intended destination countries. As the data shows, the highest proportion of movements driven by economic reasons were headed towards Saudi Arabia (36%), followed by Yemen (26%), while the highest proportion of movements for health care reasons were headed towards Kenya (32%). Overall, of the migrants intending to travel to Saudi Arabia, 43 per cent reported their reason to be job availability, 25 per cent thought they would be able to access asylum procedures more easily and around 19 per cent followed their friends and families; the latter shows the importance of family and community networks in making migration decisions. Most of the movements driven by economic reasons originated in Ethiopia (81%) and Somalia (10%). Of all the forced movements, most originated in Somalia (55%), followed by Ethiopia (41%).

MIGRATION RESPONSE CENTRES

Situated along key migration routes in Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti, the MRCs provide direct assistance, including food and health care, as well as service referrals to migrants in need. The services provided by each MRC vary depending on migrants' needs in the area. Eight MRCs were operated by national governments, IOM and other partners in the first half of 2021: Hargeisa and Bossaso since 2009, Obock since 2011, Semera and Metema since 2014, Dire Dawa and Togochale since 2019 and Moyale since March 2021. While several of the MRCs continued to experience disruptions in services due to the pandemic, all MRCs were registering migrants in May and June of 2021.

A total of 4,345 migrants were registered across all MRCs in the first half of 2021, with the largest number of migrants registered in Bossaso (1,324), Obock (980) and Hargeisa (621). Around 22 per cent of the registered migrants were female and 78 per cent were male. Over one in four migrants (1,207 individuals) registered at the MRCs were children, most commonly 15- to 17-year-olds (55% of registered children), followed by six- to 14-year-olds (27%) and children aged five or younger (18%). While most children above 15 years old were UMCs (94%), just under half of the children between six and 14 years old were also unaccompanied (46%). Although MRCs predominantly registered UMCs, almost all children registered in Hargeisa were accompanied. The Bossaso and Obock MRCs registered the largest number of unaccompanied children (334 and 306, respectively).

The vast majority of registered migrants were Ethiopian nationals (99.8%) who had departed from the Oromia (44%), SNNP (18%) and Amhara (11%) regions in Ethiopia. Around 14 per cent of migrants were returning from Yemen to the HoA, almost all of whom were registered at the MRC in Obock. Migrants registered in Bossaso, Hargeisa, Togochale and Dire Dawa were most commonly travelling from Oromia, while migrants registered in Metema and Moyale were most commonly travelling from SNNP. Unlike other MRCs which mainly capture movements along the Eastern Route, the Moyale MRC is

situated along the Southern Route and 90 per cent of the 520 migrants registered at this MRC reported that they were headed towards South Africa. As was the case in previous years, economic reasons (77%) continued to be the most reported driver of migration.

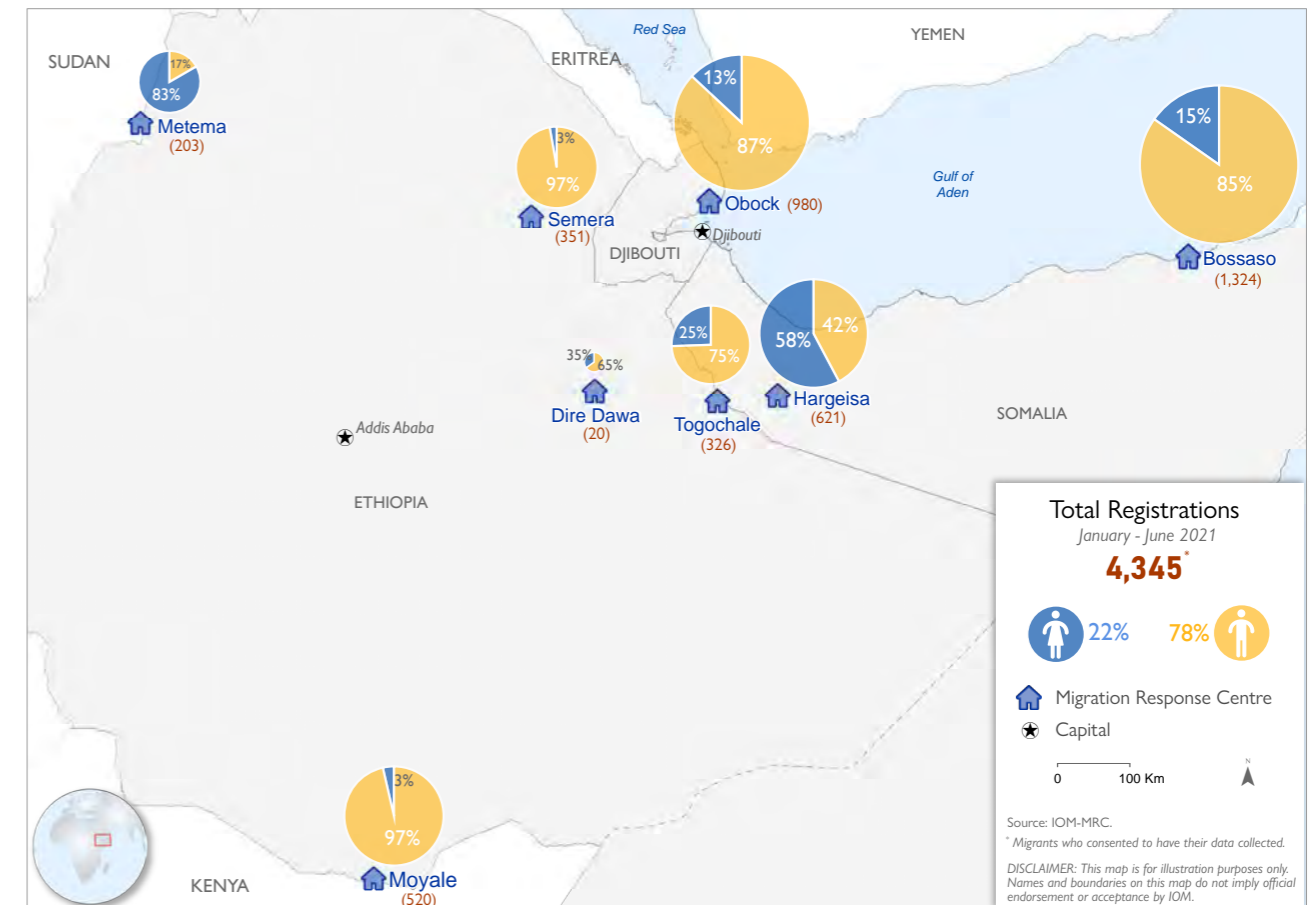


Figure 40: Migrant registrations by sex and MRC (January to June 2021)

VI. MID-YEAR OUTLOOK

More than one year into the pandemic, the health, mobility and socio-economic effects of COVID-19 remain burdensome for the EHoA region and a transition to normalcy still seems far from now. All but three countries (Burundi, Eritrea and the United Republic of Tanzania) have rolled out COVID-19 vaccinations under the COVAX initiative, with Kenya and Rwanda already in the second phase of the vaccine rollout. As of 29 July 2021, the World Bank has approved USD 4.6 billion for operations to support vaccine rollout in 54 countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and South Sudan.¹⁷⁵ Rwanda, in particular, has made remarkable progress in terms of building local capacity by scaling up COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing to promote Africa's health security.¹⁷⁶ However, renewed concerns over a third wave of infections began in the second half of July, as the highly transmissible Delta variant appeared in more countries across the African continent and as COVID-19-related deaths and hospitalizations were rapidly rising, especially in Uganda.¹⁷⁷ The strengthening of social safety nets is critical for governments in the region to tackle chronic poverty and address vulnerability to various shocks. To mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic, access to services and labour markets as well as inclusivity in COVID-19 recovery and vaccination campaigns should be enhanced to encompass the most disenfranchised communities, among them the displaced and migrant populations.

While lengthy border enforcement and erratic travel rules have devastated regional trade and livelihoods, evidence shows that these measures have not put a stop to irregular migration and migrant smuggling. Even more, such mobility restrictions have redirected migrants towards more risky migration channels and further endangered their safety, especially for those who have become stranded while travelling irregularly. The impact of COVID-19 on migratory trends has been significantly reflected in the shifts observed along the busiest maritime route out of this region, the Eastern Route. After a few months during which movements had largely reduced, thousands of migrants still became stranded in Yemen, unable to cross into Saudi Arabia. As the crisis in Yemen becomes more and more protracted, many EHoA migrants were often left with the choice to terminate their journey and return home to the extent that migrants returning to the Horn exceeded the number of those arriving in Yemen. Movement dynamics are slowly recovering although they are by no means close to pre-pandemic levels. Meanwhile, in parallel with the ongoing forced returns of EHoA migrants from Saudi Arabia driven by the current Saudization efforts, Yemeni migrants who have also struggled to make a living in Saudi Arabia and who cannot go back to their war-torn country have begun to consider Djibouti as an economically viable alternative.¹⁷⁸

Migration along this corridor will continue to be ever shifting and of great concern. In this regard, the complex nature of such issues requires regional solutions to migration management, systematic advocacy and dialogues. Recognizing the value of migration in economic development and recovery, the regional Migrant Response Plan (MRP) for the HoA and Yemen aims to support governments' efforts and the work of humanitarian and development actors by providing protection and humanitarian assistance, implementing durable return and reintegration solutions, developing livelihood opportunities and safety nets and promoting safe and orderly migration along the Eastern Route with the impetus to address the root causes of irregular migration.¹⁷⁹ Accordingly, the need for timely and reliable data to monitor the situation is fundamental to encourage governments' cooperation vis-à-vis labour migration and to ensure that mechanisms are in place to support vulnerable migrants facing hardship and host communities.

Beyond that, 2021 has not been spared from the widespread political instability that characterizes the EHoA. As fighting continues one year into the Northern Ethiopia crisis, protection concerns as well as humanitarian needs are still on the rise and there is no concrete indication that the conflict will subside in the coming months. To date, aid organizations continue to report major challenges to access the region and deliver life-saving assistance.¹⁸⁰ While long-standing disputes will linger in other regions of Ethiopia as well, neighbouring Somalia might experience heightened tensions linked to unfinished or further delayed electoral processes. Meanwhile in South Sudan, localized conflicts remain rampant,

with levels of violence exceeding those of December 2013, at the start of the civil war.¹⁸¹ The 2018 peace agreement's implementation seriously lags behind schedule; in early August 2021, South Sudan's members of parliament were sworn in after months of delay, taking small steps towards the creation of an inclusive national assembly.¹⁸² It thus remains crucial to maintain humanitarian assistance in these critical hotspots and to promote holistic, multisectoral approaches to addressing the needs of the affected populations.

While floodwaters from late 2020 and early 2021 have not completely receded, and some river and lake water levels remain high, floods are likely to continue to ravage the region. However, even though above-average rainfall was expected across many countries in the region through September, there is also a chance of having more than usual dry spells.¹⁸³ Globally, up to 700 million people are at risk of being displaced as a result of drought by 2030.¹⁸⁴ In the EHoA, drought exposure will likely carry on in the second half of the year, namely in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia¹⁸⁵ and Uganda.¹⁸⁶ As erratic weather patterns have been accentuated by climate change over the past years, weather shocks will continue to either disturb normal rainfall, and therefore sustain dry conditions, or trigger severe floods that hamper sufficient farming and crop cultivation to feed populations especially during lean seasons.

Further, the combination of conflict, climate events and other macroeconomic shocks is projected to drive an increase in the population facing acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) across the region, including in Kenya,¹⁸⁷ while Ethiopia's Tigray region and South Sudan remain the most severe hunger hotspots.¹⁸⁸ Displaced populations are also anticipated to experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes considering that funding cuts have resulted in reductions to planned food assistance ration sizes by 10 to 40 per cent for refugees in several countries in the region.¹⁸⁹

As the combined effects of these shocks continue to affect the EHoA region, greater efforts at the regional and continental levels have been devoted to achieving better regional integration and advocating for regional mobility and trade, cross-border financial services, peace and security and coordinated approaches to natural resource management. On 1 January 2021, the African Union (AU) announced the start of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) thereby creating a new market estimated to be as large as 1.3 billion people across Africa and with a combined GDP of USD 3.4 trillion.¹⁹⁰ This continental achievement will enhance regional trade flows, including in the East African Community (EAC) which has an advanced trade regime and is more integrated than any other economic bloc in Africa.¹⁹¹ Likewise, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has continued to facilitate the free movement of persons and transhumance, and improve opportunities for regular labour mobility through the development of models of intervention, in the broader context of the regional integration.¹⁹²



Through a cash-based intervention activity, 200 families in Baidoa received technical support to construct transitional shelters and be better protected from the elements. The community took the lead in the shelter design and construction, building shelters that met their needs and preferences. © IOM 2021



METHODOLOGY

Geographical Denomination

The East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region, for IOM, is comprised of 10 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 six out of the 10 countries, including Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. 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.¹⁹³
- **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.¹⁹⁴ 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.¹⁹⁵ 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. FMPs 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) as well as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), although they operate under the standard FM 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 six FMPs, covers the southern coast of Yemen only, which primarily tracks new arrivals reaching the Arabian Peninsula from the HoA across the Gulf of Aden as well as outgoing movements to a limited degree. 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.¹⁹⁶

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 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.¹⁹⁷ 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.¹⁹⁸

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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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. October 2021 – [Displacement Tracking Matrix East and Horn of Africa Info Sheet 2021](#)

The DTM Regional 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. August 2021 – [Displacement Tracking Matrix East and Horn of Africa: Mid-year Regional Snapshot \(January - June 2021\)](#)

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region is currently active in six countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda) and its methodology includes four main components: mobility tracking (MT), flow monitoring, registrations and surveys. The regional network of Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) established at key areas of high mobility aims to track cross-border movements trends in the region. These FMPs monitor different kinds of movements, including movements along the four main migration routes (Eastern, Horn of Africa, Southern and Northern); movements in the public health context; post-conflict movements of Burundi nationals returning from the United Republic of Tanzania; and other shorter-term cross-border movements, mainly tracked in South Sudan. Additionally, internal movements within the country, mainly in South Sudan, are also monitored through FMPs established at key transit locations.



