



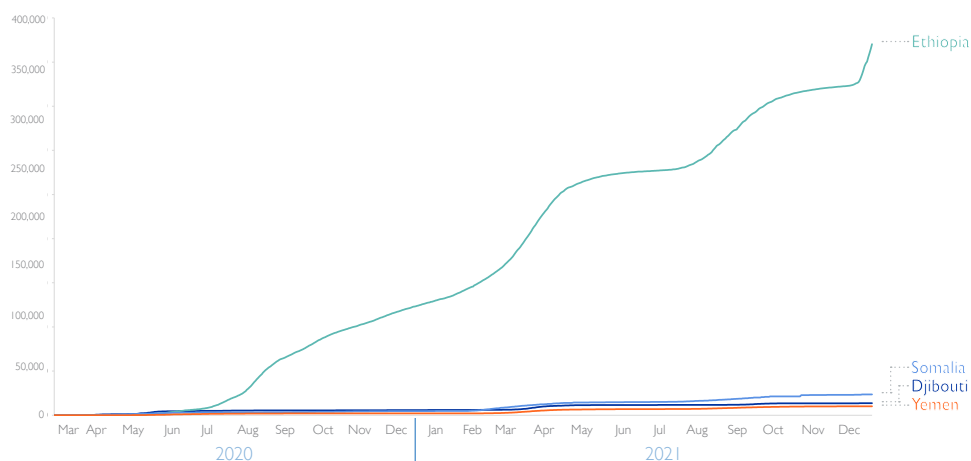
Hygiene promoters in Digaale. © IOM 2021 / Claudia Rosel

BACKGROUND

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

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE AND RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK

Incidence Trend of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases as of 31 December 2021



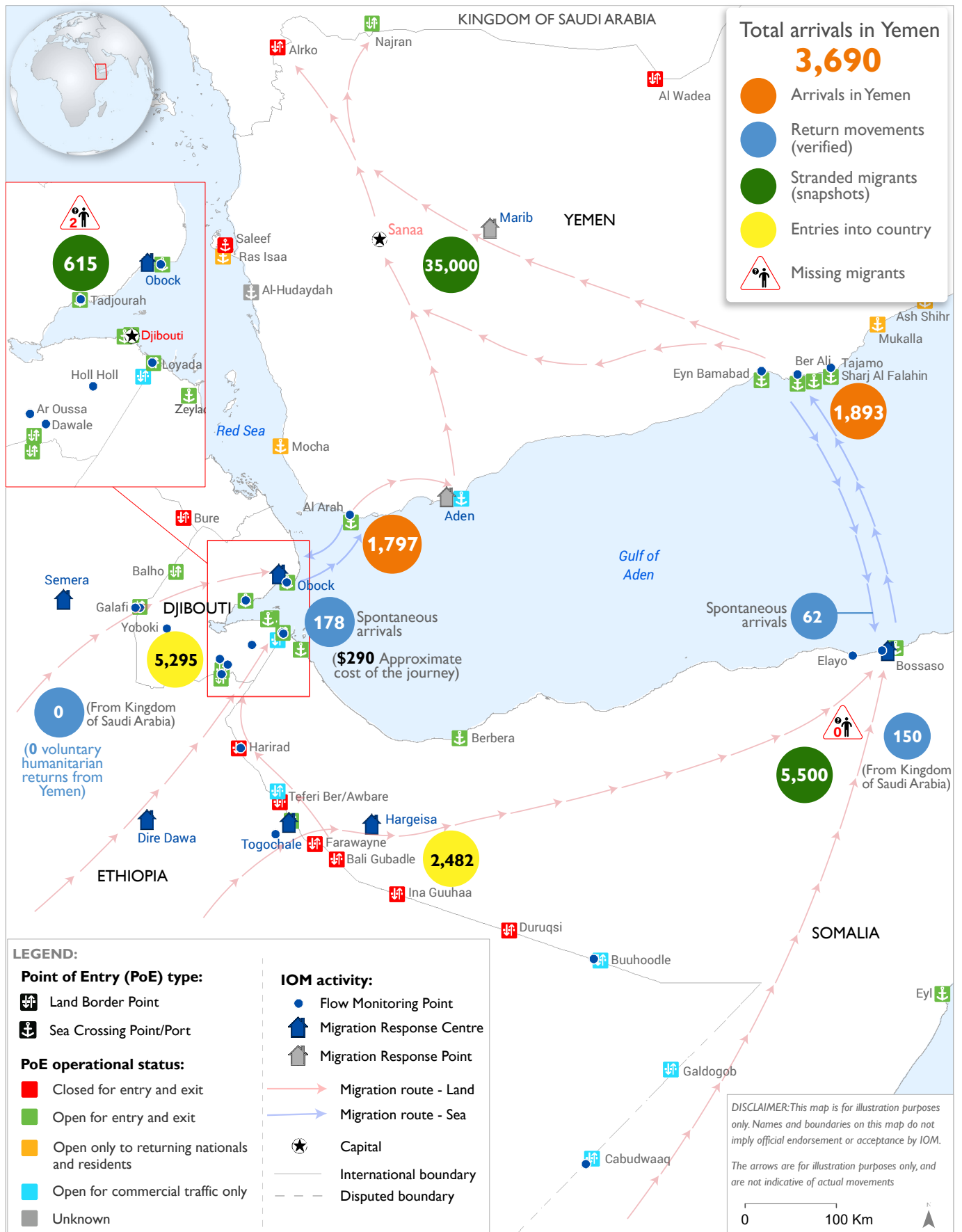
	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Somalia	Yemen
Confirmed cases	13,656	420,342	23,532	10,126
Deaths	189	6,937	1,333	1,984
Recoveries	13,370	355,046	12,948	-
Active cases	97	58,359	9,251	-

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

CONTACT

Regional Data Hub (RDH), IOM Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa:
rdhronairobi@iom.int

For more information:
ronairobi.iom.int/regional-data-hub-rdh



COVID-19 Epidemiological Situation

As of 31 December 2021, the number of COVID-19 cases along the Eastern Corridor stood at 467,656. Ethiopia continued recording the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases (90% of total cases). The country, of almost 115 million people, distributed over 9.3 million vaccine doses obtained through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative by the end of 2021. Following Ethiopia are Somalia (5% of total cases) and Djibouti (3% of total cases), while Yemen cases represented 2% of the total cases. As of 31 December 2021, the number of COVID-19 related deaths along the Eastern Corridor stood at 10,443, the majority of which were recorded in Ethiopia (66% of total deaths). Yemen holds the highest case fatality rate (CFR) at approximately 19.6%, compared to Djibouti (CFR 1.4%), Ethiopia (CFR 1.7%) and Somalia (CFR 5.7%). This is much higher than the global average CFR of 1.9% and is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war.

COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions

Mobility restrictions remain largely unchanged in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen as of the end of 2021. Nearly a year and a half after the reopening of the country's air, land and sea borders in July 2020, the Djiboutian health authorities recorded a 2.13% COVID-19 positivity rate and a 99% recovery rate among all incoming passengers screened at the various Points of Entry (PoEs).

DJIBOUTI SITUATION

Migrant Flows Observed Through Djibouti and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Migrant movements into Djibouti increased in December 2021, with 5,295 entries observed from Djibouti's western borders, which is a 5% decrease compared to November 2021. This brings the total entries into the country in 2021 to 78,175. Almost all migrants entering Djibouti (98%) were Ethiopian nationals while the rest were Somali nationals. Around 86% of migrants were adults (76% men, 11% women) and 14% were children (12% boys, 2% girls).²
- Most entries into Djibouti were of migrants originating in the Oromia region of Ethiopia (60%), followed by Amhara (30%), while only 2% were from Tigray. Overall, 66% of the arrivals in Djibouti in 2021 originated in Oromia, 19% in Amhara and 10% in Tigray. Arrivals from Tigray remained in the single digits throughout 2021 with the exception of April-June 2021 when around 25% entries were from Tigray. During 2020, a similar spike was seen during the first two months as well as the last two months of the year.
- With 1,797 new migrant arrivals in December, a total of 16,607 migrants arrived in 2021 from Djibouti to Yemen. Unlike previous months where all migrants who arrived from Djibouti disembarked near Al-Aarah FMP in Lahi governorate in Yemen, 46% of migrants who arrived from Djibouti in December disembarked near Al-Cawah FMP, 36% disembarked near Al-Ghaseen FMP, 15% near Ras Ashareef and 3% near Al-Aarah FMP. Around 91% of the migrants tracked were adults (72% men, 18% women) and 9% were children (7% boys, 2% girls). Like the previous month, no unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs) were tracked upon entry from Djibouti in December

Migrant Movements through Djibouti to Yemen (January 2020 - December 2021)



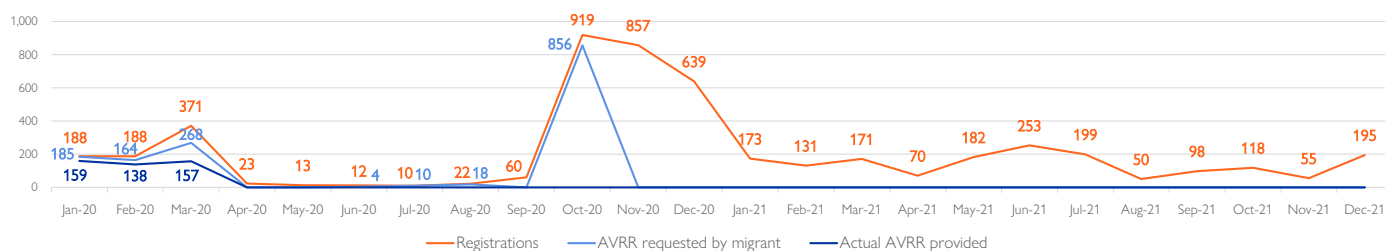
- Spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Djibouti continued in December with the return of 178 Ethiopian migrants (down from 211 returns reported in November); the majority of the returns were men. Since May 2020, IOM tracked 16,641 spontaneous returns of Ethiopian migrants, 10,547 of which were in 2021.

² The sex and age disaggregated data of entering migrants is an estimation because of the data collection methodology.

Migrant Protection and Assistance

- Two adult males lost their lives in Djibouti's Obock region in December 2021. Both were Ethiopian nationals from the Oromia region. The first one was an 18-year-old migrant who died of natural causes at the MRC in Obock, while the second one was a 21-year-old migrant returning from Yemen who was found dead (unknown causes) by the IOM mobile clinic team in Moulhoule.
- As of 30 December 2021, 615 migrants on their way to the Arabian Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered in eight spontaneous sites located along the migration route; most migrants were stranded in the Obock region.
- 195 new migrants were registered at the Obock MRC in December (192 male, 3 female).
- IOM's AVRR programme has been suspended since early November 2021, following Ethiopia's declaration of a state of emergency over the current Northern Ethiopia crisis. Together with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and ONARS (Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et Sinistrés), IOM is supporting migrants who wish to seek asylum in Djibouti by facilitating referrals. There were no referrals in December 2021.

Registrations at the MRC in Obock and AVRR Services Requested and Provided (January 2020 - December 2021)

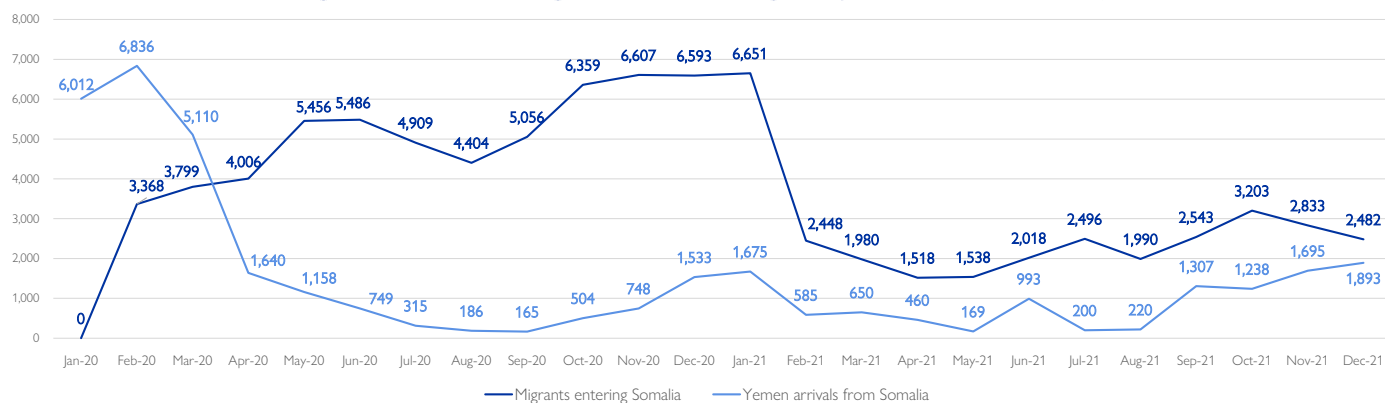


SOMALIA SITUATION

Migrant Flows Observed Through Somalia and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Migrant entries into Somalia decreased by 12% between November (2,833) and December (2,482). Almost all migrants were Ethiopian nationals, although 103 movements of other nationalities were also tracked including 32 Eritreans, 14 Yemeni nationals (likely headed to Yemen), 13 South Sudanese and 12 Egyptians.
- Entries of Ethiopian migrants into Somalia primarily originated in the Somali region of Ethiopia, with over 65% in December 2021 (76% in 2021), while only 12% originated in Oromia (8% in 2021). Around 3% of migrants entering Somalia were from Tigray (1% in 2021).
- Migrant arrivals to Yemen from Somalia stood at 1,893 in December, which represents a 12% increase compared to November (1,695) and brings the total arrivals from Somalia in 2021 to 11,085, proportionally less numerous than arrivals to Yemen from Djibouti. Similar to what was observed in the past, the majority of the migrants tracked upon arrival in Yemen from Somalia were Ethiopian nationals (67%) and 33% were Somali nationals; the arrivals from Somalia were tracked through the FMPs on the southern coast of Yemen, along the Gulf of Aden. Around 94% of arrivals were adults (71% men, 23% women) and 6% were children (4% boys, 2% girls). This is the fifth consecutive month that no UMCs from Somalia were tracked.

Migrant Movements through Somalia to Yemen (January 2020 - December 2021)



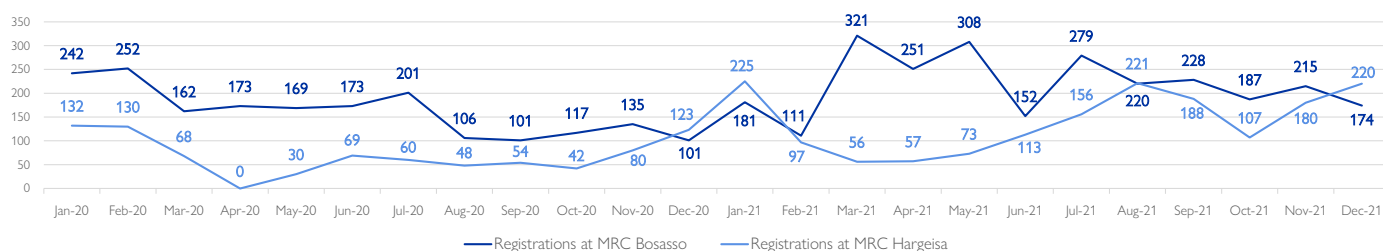
Note: Figures are reported separately for Somalia for January 2020 and February 2020 due to the complexity of data at the time of arrival points in Somalia.

- Like in Djibouti, spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Somalia continued with 62 movements (55% male, 45% female) tracked upon arrival in December (down from 200 in November).³ All movements were returning Somali nationals. This brings the total returns from Yemen to Somalia since May 2020 to 3,576, of which 2,578 occurred in 2021.

Migrant Protection and Assistance

- IOM estimates that around 5,500 migrants continue to be stranded in and around Borama, Bossaso, Burao and Hargeisa with few options available to continue their journey or return home. The sustained high numbers of stranded migrants come as a direct result of the intensified crisis in Ethiopia and the associated suspension of AVRR assistance. The situation inside the safe houses near Bossaso has become difficult for many migrants who already are vulnerable, and in many instances, tensions within the migrant community arose, although no deaths were reported in December 2021. Inflows of Ethiopians fleeing the conflict into Somaliland have continued throughout the month.
- Migrant registrations at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa remained at the same level with 394 registrations in December (174 and 220, respectively). A total of 114 migrants came from Amhara (82), Tigray (28) and Afar (4).
- While AVRR movements remained suspended, 138 AVRR requests were received at the MRCs in Bossaso (69) and Hargeisa (69) in December.
- A total of 150 Somali migrants, including 14 children, were returned to Mogadishu from Saudi Arabia in December.

Registrations at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa (January 2020 - December 2021)

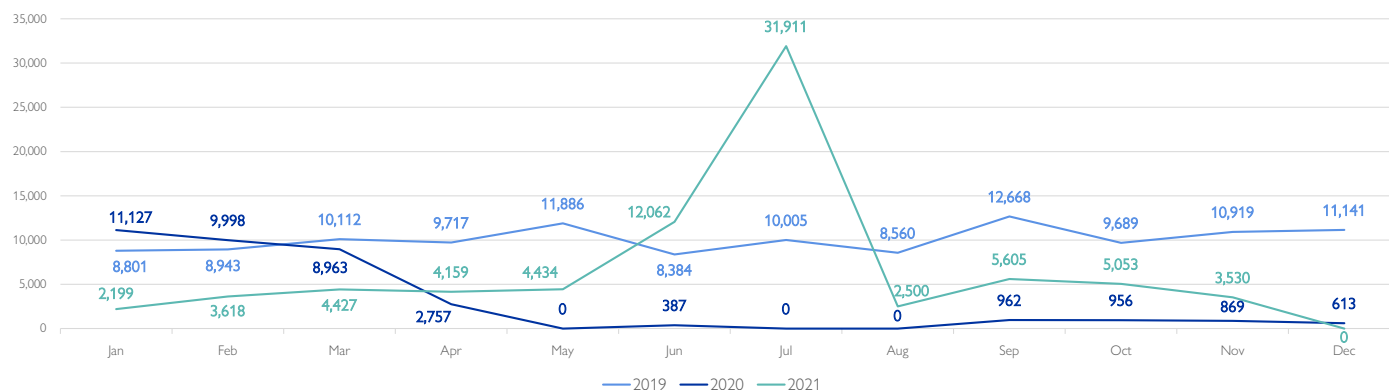


ETHIOPIA SITUATION

Migrant Flows, and Protection and Detention Concerns

- Returns of Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia were halted throughout December with the last return flight taking place on the 19 November 2021. No official communication on the reason behind the interruption and resumption of the flights was made by either government, however, it is expected that the flights will resume soon. Overall, in 2021, 79,498 migrants were returned to Addis Ababa from Saudi Arabia, many of whom were not able to go back to their place of origin due to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia.
- A total of 107 migrants, including 34 UMCs, were registered at MRCs bordering Djibouti and Somalia in December, namely in Dire Dawa (52), Togochale (52) and Semera (3). Migrants mainly departed from the Oromia region (96%). No migrants who departed from the Tigray region were registered by MRCs in Ethiopia during this month.
- Between 2019 and 2021, there has been an increase in migrants registered at MRCs across the region who reported ‘armed conflict’ as their main reason for movement. While armed conflict represented 5% or less of all reasons reported by migrants in 2019 and 2020, this same reason accounted for roughly 11% of all reasons between August and December 2021.

Returns of Ethiopian Nationals from Saudi Arabia Electronically Registered by IOM



³ 62 movements tracked upon arrival in Somaliland only. Figures for Puntland could not be confirmed.

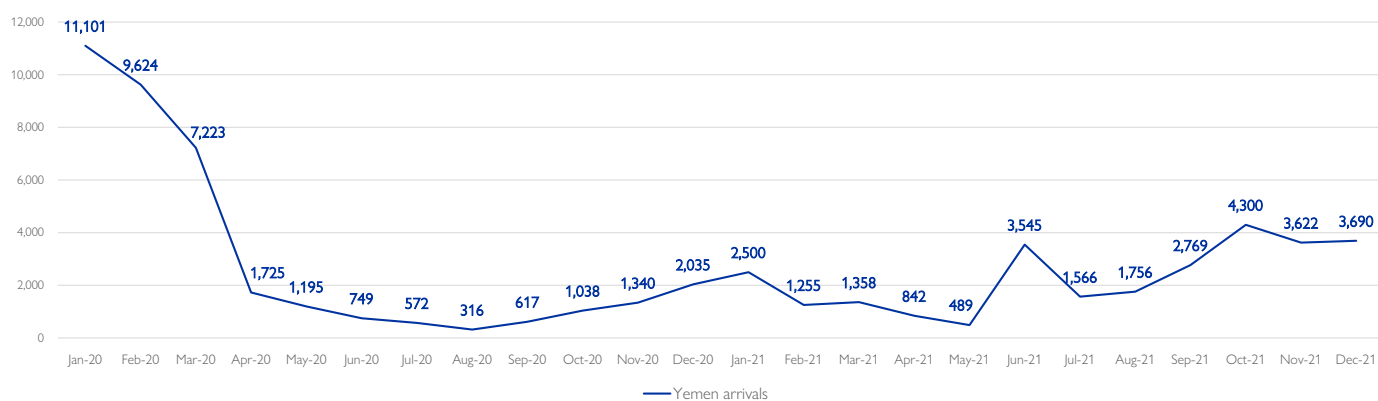
- Around 2,894 Ethiopian migrants travelled from Ethiopia to Kenya in December, of which 45% originated in Oromia, 39% in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's (SNNP) region, while only 1% were from Tigray. All of these were tracked through the Moyale FMP which has been reactivated during the last quarter of 2020. Around 84% of the migrants tracked through this FMP were travelling for economic reasons (up from 80% in November), while 10% were forcibly moved due to conflict (down from 12% in November). As for the 123 migrant entries into Sudan from Ethiopia in December, most were from Amhara (74%), while 15% were from Tigray.

YEMEN SITUATION

Migrant Flows Observed in Yemen

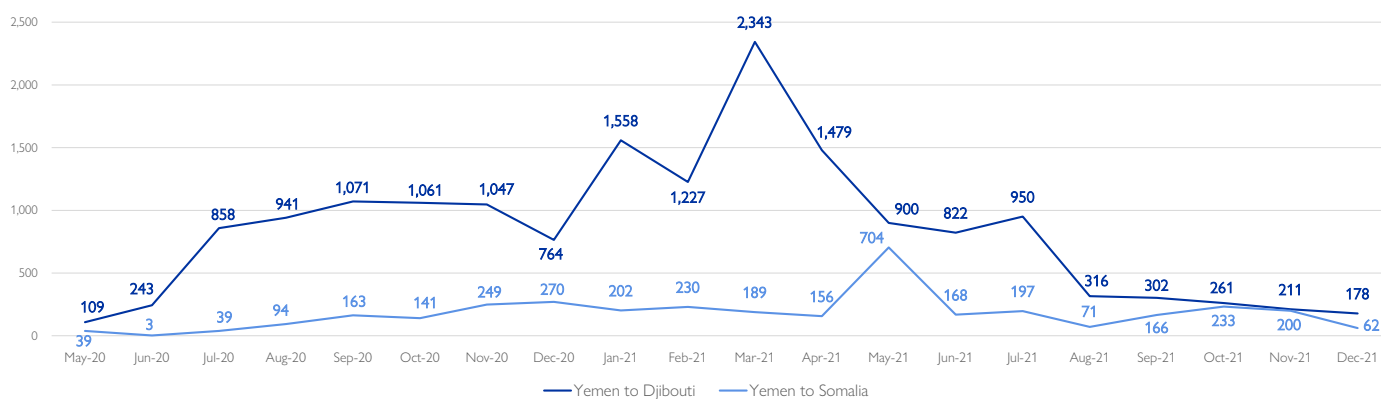
- 27,693 migrant arrivals from the Horn of Africa were tracked on the shores of Yemen in 2021, of which 3,690 arrivals were recorded in December; this is a 2% increase from November.
- In December, migrants travelled from Djibouti (49%) or from Somalia (51%); the arrivals from Somalia increased by 12% while the arrivals from Djibouti decreased by 7%.⁴ Most migrant arrivals were Ethiopian nationals (83%), with the remainder being Somali nationals (17%).
- Around 92% of migrants were adults (71% men, 21% women) and 8% were children (down from 9% in November). No UMCs were tracked in December.

Migrant Arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa (January 2020 - December 2021)



- DTM Yemen continued tracking returning migrants from Saudi Arabia in December as access to the FMP at the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border remains possible. A total of 27,845 returns were tracked in 2021, of which 5,836 (21%) were tracked in December.
- Due to the difficulties faced by migrants upon arrival in Yemen, the challenges in moving onwards towards Saudi Arabia, as well as ongoing conflict and living conditions in Yemen, many migrants opt to return back to the Horn of Africa. Moreover, many migrants have been reluctant to return to Ethiopia due to the escalation of the Northern Ethiopia crisis. Since May 2020, 20,217 migrants have made this perilous return journey back to Djibouti (16,641) and to Somalia (3,576) including 13,125 returns in 2021.⁵

Spontaneous Returns from Yemen (May 2020 - December 2021)



⁴ Nine migrants were also tracked internally, travelling within Yemen.

⁵ Return figures for Puntland were not confirmed during the reporting period.

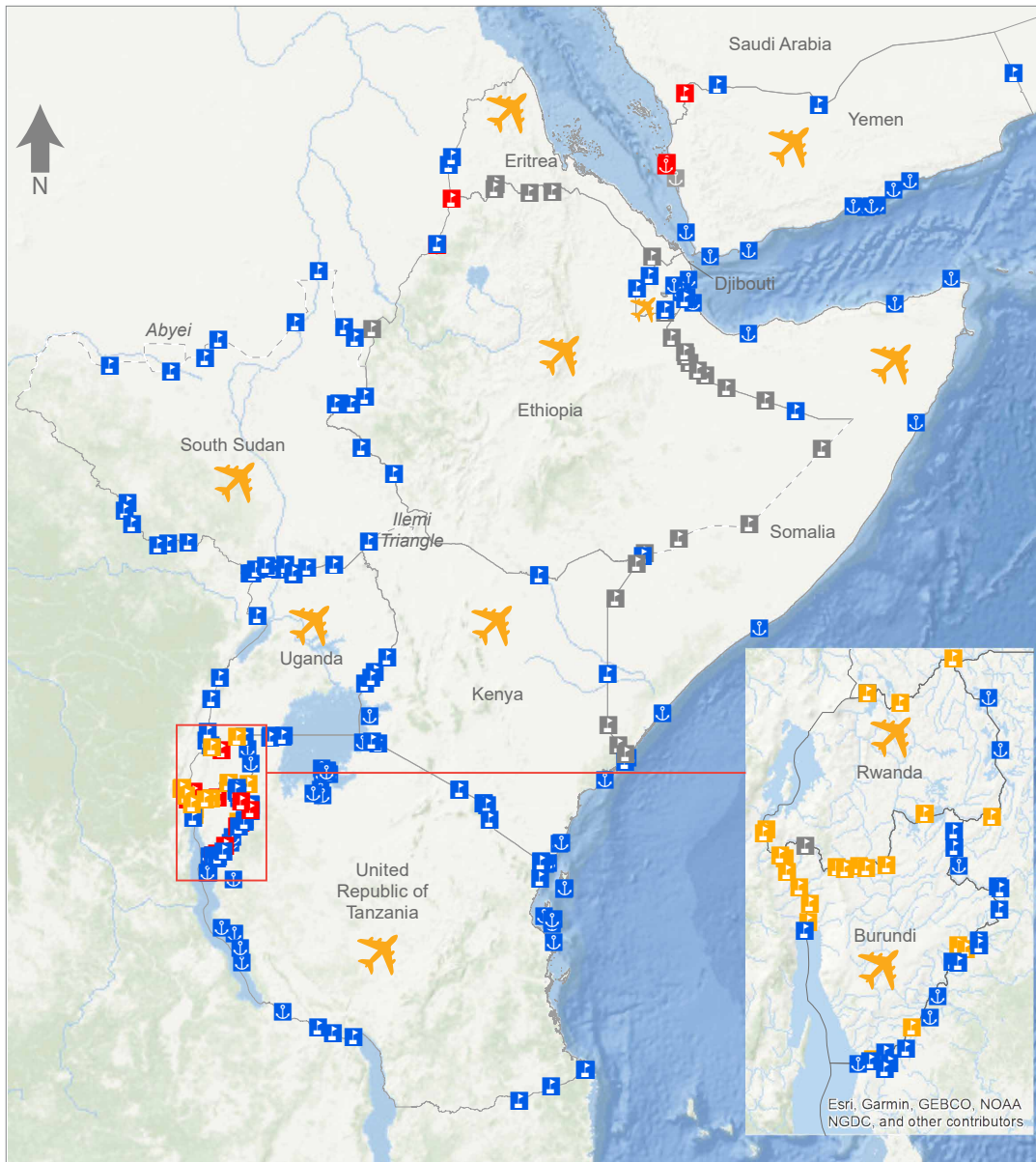
Migrant Protection and Assistance

- Due to the conflict in Ethiopia, there continues to be a high number of stranded migrants across Yemen. IOM estimates that approximately 35,000 migrants are stranded or trapped within Yemen's borders and this figure is likely to increase in 2022.
- With the escalation of hostilities in Yemen, many migrants have opted to use informal routes through areas such as Shabwa, Abyan and Aden and into locations such as Marib. As a result, many stranded migrants have ended up in informal sites in and around Marib and are unable to continue their journey into Saudi Arabia.
- Moreover, reports of migrants being forcefully pushed back from entering Saudi Arabia show that an increasing number of migrants have been caught up in conflict and wounded by gunshots and air strikes. As many public hospitals have little to no capacity to offer rehabilitative care, these migrants have been taking perilous journeys to Sanaa in order to access healthcare, often facing extortion from smugglers despite being injured. At the same time, these hostilities affect migrants' freedom of movement, pushing many to resort to informal means to cross into Saudi Arabia.
- Forced transfers from the Northern to the Southern governorates have continued, with around 600 migrants transferred per week. These transfers occur without any humanitarian involvement and therefore, many migrants end up missing. Extremely vulnerable migrants often fall through the cracks from the case management aspects, which makes it difficult to track them. At the end of December 2021, IOM estimated that a total of 42,000 migrants were forcefully transferred from the Northern to Southern governorates.
- An estimated 3,000 migrants are also believed to be detained in Saada and further transferred to Sanaa (the facilities in Sanaa act as a transit point before further transfers to the South). Thousands of stranded migrants have approached IOM's Aden Migrant Response Point (MRP) asking for return assistance to Ethiopia through VHR. VHR flights, which had resumed in March 2021, were temporarily suspended again in November due to the Northern Ethiopia crisis and the inability to return migrants to places of origin affected by the conflict.
- Compared to the first half of 2021, migrant movements into Yemen have continued to increase in the second half of the year following the ease of COVID-19 restrictions. However, misinformation around the fact that COVID-19 and other diseases are brought to and spread around Yemen by migrants contributed to their stigmatization and lack of access to health services. Migrants have been excluded from social programmes across Yemen leaving them exposed to various risks.

ANNEX 1 | 2021 MRC REGISTRATION DATA

MRCs	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	MRC Total
Bossaso	181	111	321	251	308	152	279	220	228	187	215	174	2,627
Dire Dawa	0	0	0	0	6	14	1	8	119	123	34	52	357
Hargeisa	225	97	56	57	73	113	156	221	188	107	180	220	1,693
Metema	0	0	72	80	15	36	336	188	134	139	65	8	1,073
Moyale	-	-	187	230	44	59	51	314	50	71	258	137	1,401
Obock	173	131	171	70	182	253	199	50	98	118	55	195	1,695
Semera	0	0	71	33	34	213	112	12	32	21	21	3	552
Togochale	31	126	14	61	49	45	76	88	26	65	36	52	669
Monthly Total	610	465	892	782	711	885	1,210	1,101	875	831	864	841	10,067

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



Status of international flights*

- Not Restrictive
- Partially Restrictive
- Totally Restrictive
- Not available
- Disputed Areas
- Countries East and Horn of Africa

Status of other border points

- Sea Border Point
- Land Border Point
- Closed for entry and exit
- Partial closure
- Open for entry and exit
- Unknown

*Details of the travel restriction can be found on IATA website: <https://www.iata.org/>

SOURCE:
International Air Transport Association (IATA)
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

DATE: 31 December 2021

DISCLAIMER: These maps are for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.