

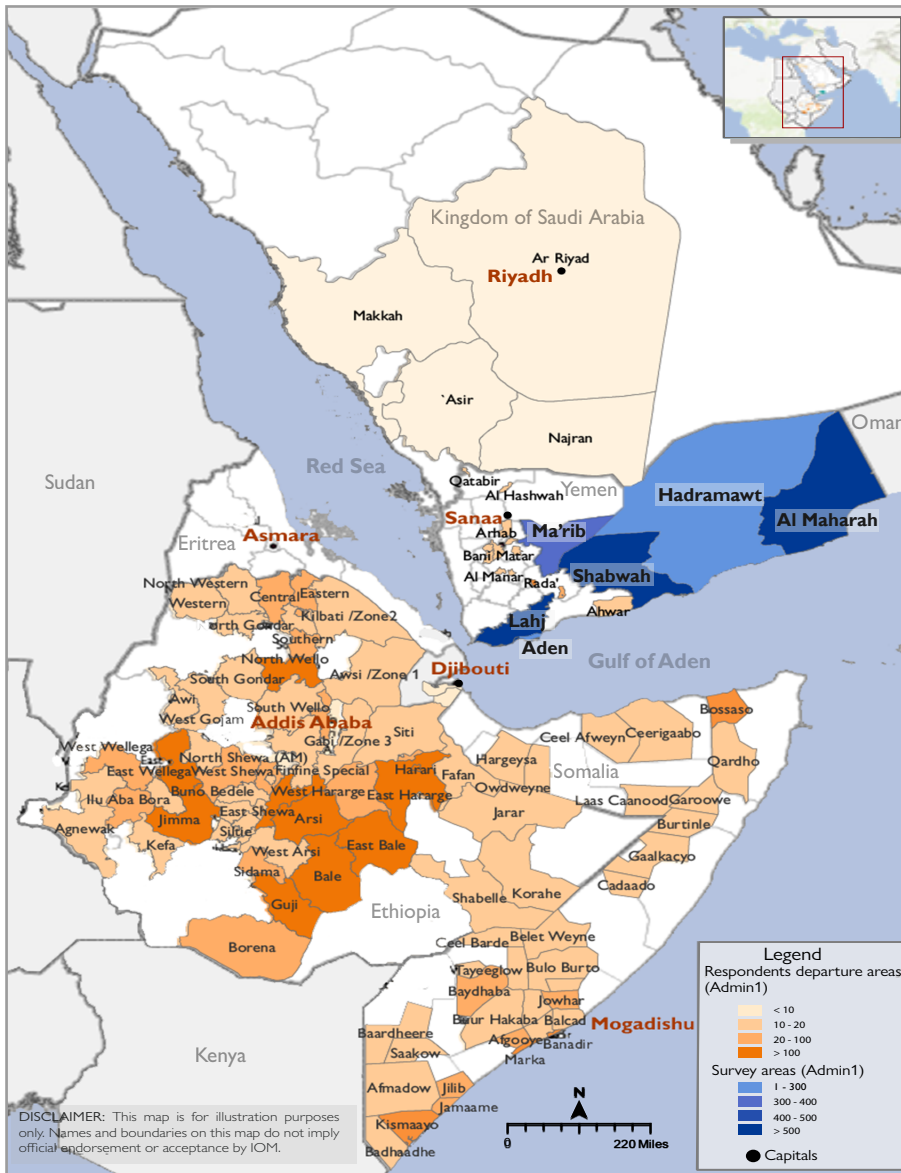
FLOW MONITORING SURVEY (FMS) QUARTERLY DASHBOARD

October - December 2023

IOM Yemen

Publication: 19 February 2024

FMS Data Collection Network



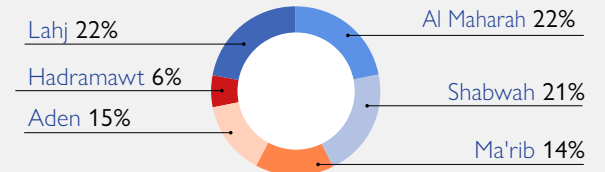
OVERVIEW



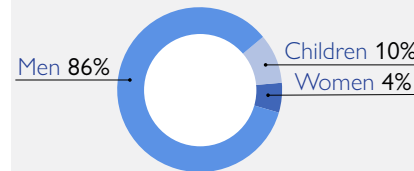
2,897

Surveys conducted between October and December 2023

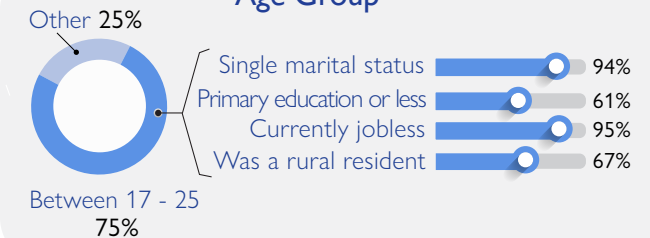
Governorate of Survey



Demographics



Age Group

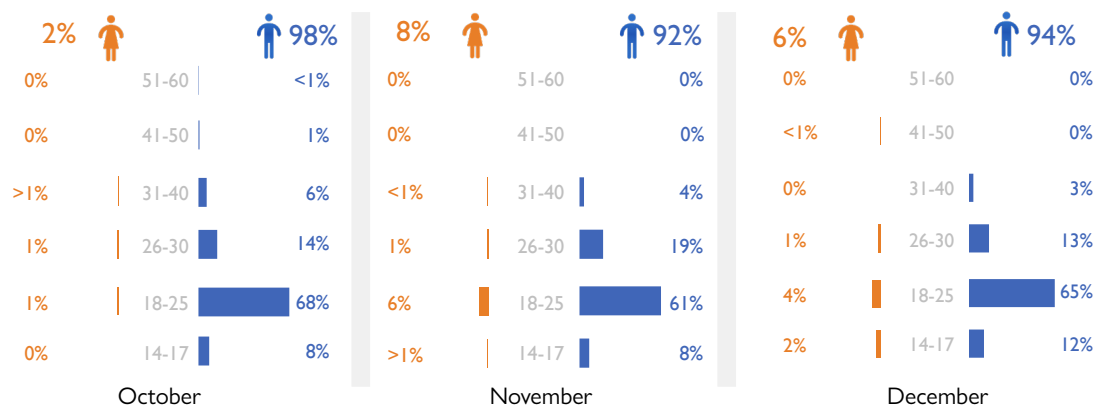


This dashboard compiles flow monitoring survey (FMS) data collected in Yemen between October and December 2023 and provides an analysis of migrants' demographic and socio-economic profiles, including education and employment backgrounds, reasons for leaving their country of origin or habitual residence, future travel intentions, protection and challenges faced during the journey. Also included are migrants' highest level of education achieved and their labour status prior to moving.

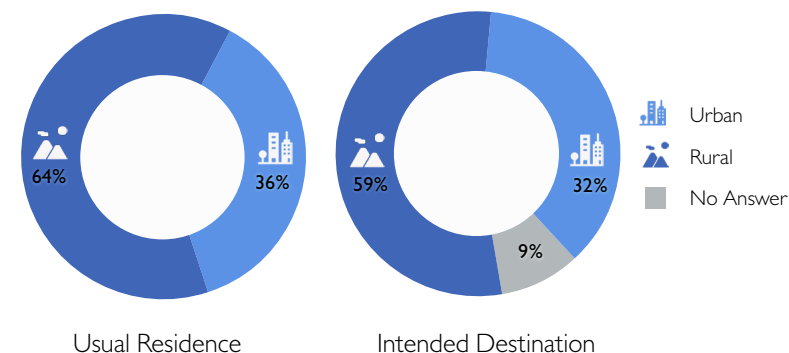
The migration routes in the southern part of Yemen are categorized along two main routes: the south-eastern route towards Shabwah, Hadramawt, and Al Maharah governorates and the north-eastern route towards Lahj and Ta'iz governorates. Both routes are travelled by a large number of migrants each year. Through the Flow Monitoring Registry tool, which focuses on total numbers of migrants (as opposed to the more detailed migrant profile established through the FMS), DTM recorded 4,853 migrants entered Yemen through the south in the fourth quarter of 2023. This figure represents a significant decrease (-68%) compared to the previous quarter. The significant and steady decrease observed since August is likely attributed to the ongoing joint military campaign initiated to combat smuggling and secure the coastline of Lahj, a well-known governorate for receiving the largest proportion of migrants. The campaign involved deploying troops, conducting raids, and establishing checkpoints. During the fourth quarter of 2023, a total of 2,897 surveys were conducted. In Aden (435), Lahj (636), Ma'rib (407), Shabwah (609), Hadramawt (174) and Al Maharah (636). The overall number of surveys increased by seven per cent over the previous quarter. The majority of respondents were young male adults between the age of 17 and 25 (75%) searching for economic opportunities (97%), most of whom were single (94%), attained primary education or less (61%), were currently unemployed (95%) and departed from rural areas (67%).

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Sex and age distribution by month of survey ¹ (n= 2,897)



Rural-urban distribution (n= 2,897)

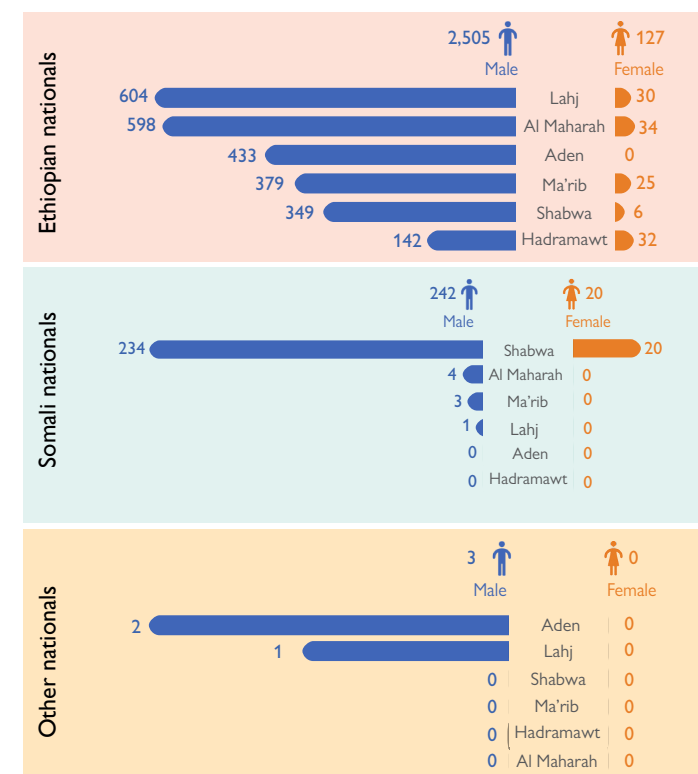


• **Sex and age distribution:** The overall sample was predominantly male (95% versus 5% female). It should be noted that female travellers are more commonly difficult to find for interviews meaning that this is not a representative sample. Some 10 per cent were children aged 14 to 17, with males comprising 94 per cent. Female migrants represented five per cent of the total (2,897) of migrant arrivals during the fourth quarter of 2023². As main reason, 95 per cent of migrants reported traveling for economic reasons through Shabwah (21%), Lahj (20%), Al Maharah (19%), Aden (15%), Ma'rib (14%) and Hadramawt (6%). Young adults between the age of 18 and 25 make up the largest percentage (69%).

• **Nationalities and routes:** All Somali nationals (100%) traveled from Bari to the governorate of Shabwah via the south-eastern route. The majority of Ethiopian nationals (76%) used the south-eastern route from Bari, Somalia to the governorate of Shabwah. The remainder (24%) of Ethiopian migrants travelled from Obock, Djibouti to Shabwah (88%) and Lahj (12%) – where Shabwah represents a slight derivation from the traditional north-eastern route, likely due to the aforementioned military campaign. Six different governorates hosted Ethiopian migrants who left their home country: Lahj (38%), Shabwah (22%), Ma'rib (19%), Hadramawt (11%), Aden (9%) and Al Maharah (<1%). The majority of migrants who have new journeys (78%) intended to migrate to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which implies that they would take various routes within Yemen to reach the governorates bordering KSA, including Hadramawt, and Hajjah and Sa'dah where FMS data collection has not been activated. Some 26 per cent of travellers owned passports or other forms of ID and just over half of these (52%) carried them – 13 per cent of all migrants.

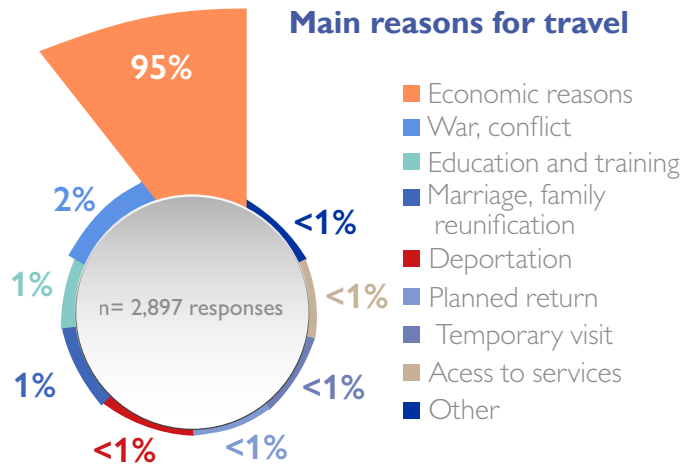
• **Rural-urban distribution:** Most interviewed migrants moved between rural settlements. In particular, 64 per cent of migrants reported to have left from what they considered to be rural settlements and 59 per cent reported intending to migrate towards rural destination areas. Most Ethiopian migrants (62%) started their journey in rural areas and 41 per cent of these intended to migrate to rural areas. Similarly, the majority of Somali migrants (83%) reported to have left from rural areas with 75 per cent aiming to migrate to other rural areas. Altogether, 44 per cent of all migrants left rural areas for rural areas. Some 14 per cent of those who left rural regions planned to go to towns and cities. In contrast, 18 per cent of migrants have left urban areas for other urban areas. A further 14 per cent of migrants travelled from urban areas and aimed to reach rural destinations.

Main nationalities and sex, by governorate of survey (n= 2,897)

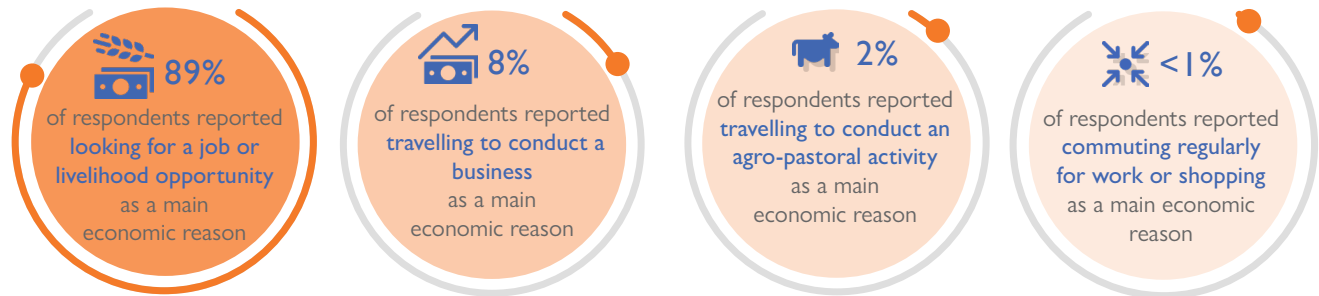


¹ The FMS survey is not administered to children under the age of 14 years. Refer to [About the data collection](#) for more details.

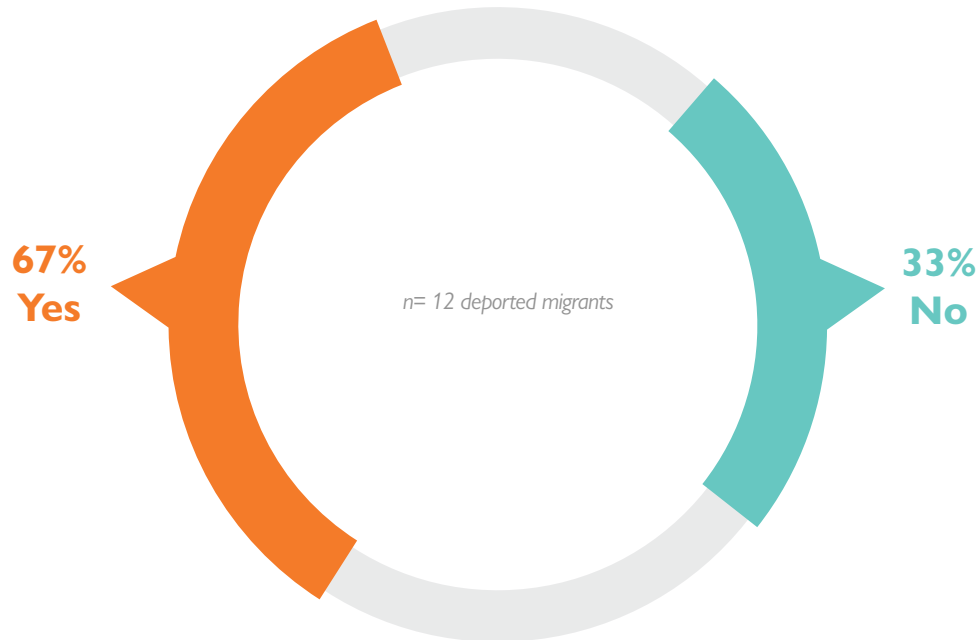
² For reference – according to FMR data, of 4,853 tracked migrants during the reporting period 54% were men, 27% women, 8% boys and 11% girls (boys and girls refer to persons under 18).



Economic reasons³ (n= 2,749 ind.)



If you are travelling due to deportation, do you intend to re-attempt the journey to your former destination?



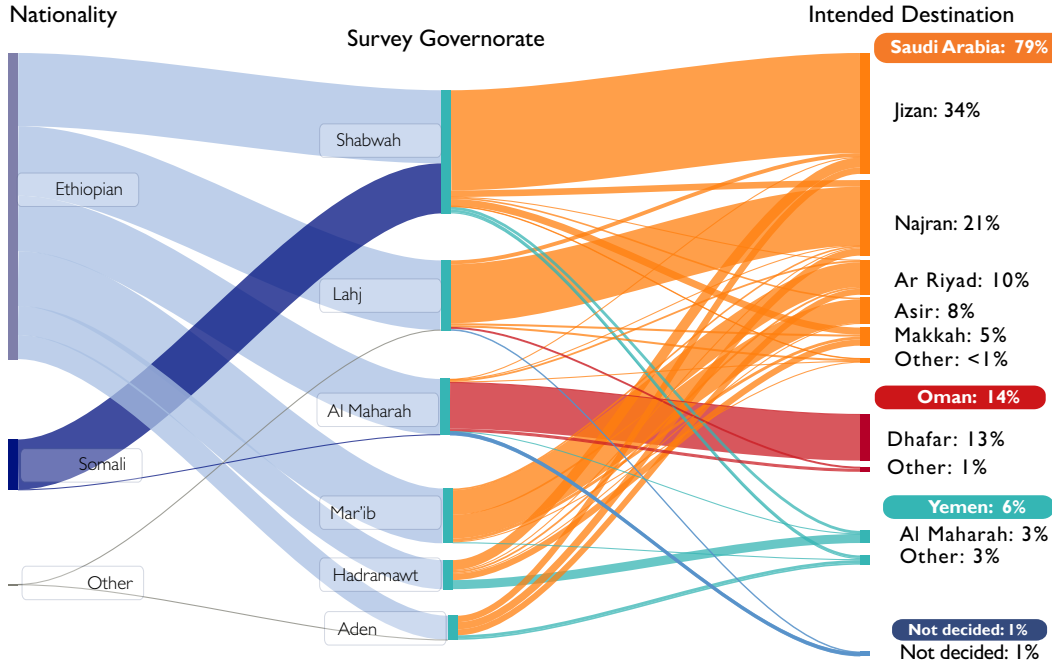
Reasons for travel: The vast majority (95%) cited economic motives as their primary reason for migrating. A small proportion (2%) of respondents stated that war and conflict were their main reason, while a smaller percentage (1%) left in pursuit of education and training opportunities. Another one per cent stated that marriage and family reunification were their main reason. Among those traveling for economic reasons, 89 per cent expressed their intention to seek any available job in their chosen destination, while eight per cent specifically aimed for travelling to conduct a business. Just two per cent stated travelling for agro-pastoral activities, whereas a mere of less than one per cent of respondents claimed to be either temporary migrants or local travelers who commute regularly for work or shopping.

Additionally, only a tiny proportion of respondents (<1%) reported that deportation was the main reason for their travel, with 67 per cent of them indicating that they intend to re-attempt the journey to their former destinations. On the other side, a third of deported migrants (33%) stated that they had no intention of trying to return to their previous destinations; the majority of them (75%) intend to return to their home countries and remain there for a while before embarking in new journeys.

Gender aspects of the journey: The highly distribution of economic motivations between both males (95%) and females (98%) indicates that gender does not significantly influence the decision to travel for economic purposes. When examining the dynamics of war and conflict, it becomes apparent that a bigger percentage of males (2%) are more inclined to flee such situations compared to females (1%). This finding is unusual as it challenges the common stereotype that men are more likely to stay and fight, while women are more likely to flee.

³ If respondents were going for economic reasons, the survey moved on to learn about the different types of economic reasons.

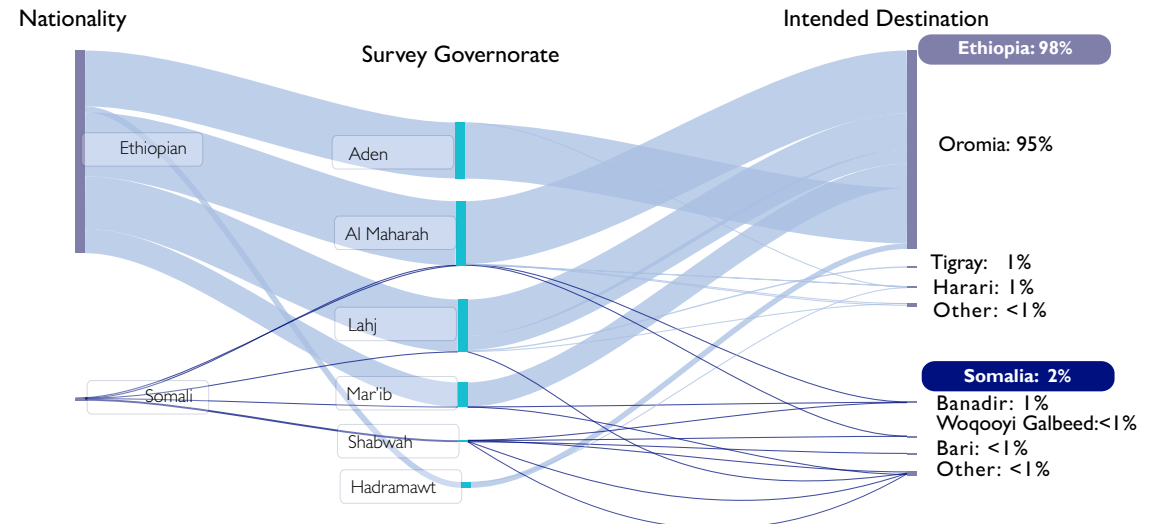
Nationality and intended destination - new journey (n= 1,733)



• **New journey:** Posing new challenges to migrants along the main migratory routes that were already rife with danger, conflict related restrictions had an adverse impact on mobile populations and pushed many migrants to be stranded, stuck in transit and unable to continue their journeys. Migrants who have recently arrived, those who are currently in transit and still intend to continue their journey, and those who have failed to reach their intended destinations or were deported back to Yemen and have changed their intended final destinations to new ones are categorized as migrants embarking on new journey. As the diagram shows, the majority of new journey movements detected within Yemen occurred along the route in Shabwah, Lahj, and Al Maharah, with 79 per cent en route to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, mainly to Jizan (34%) and Najran (21%). Following the extension of the Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) coverage in Al Maharah and Hadramawt, there has been a noticeable upward trend in the proportion of migrants expressing their intention to migrate to Oman. Over the specified period, a total of 14 per cent of those respondents indicated that Oman is their desired destination. In contrast, a mere six per cent mentioned locations within Yemen as their final destination, while additional one per cent had not yet made a decision.

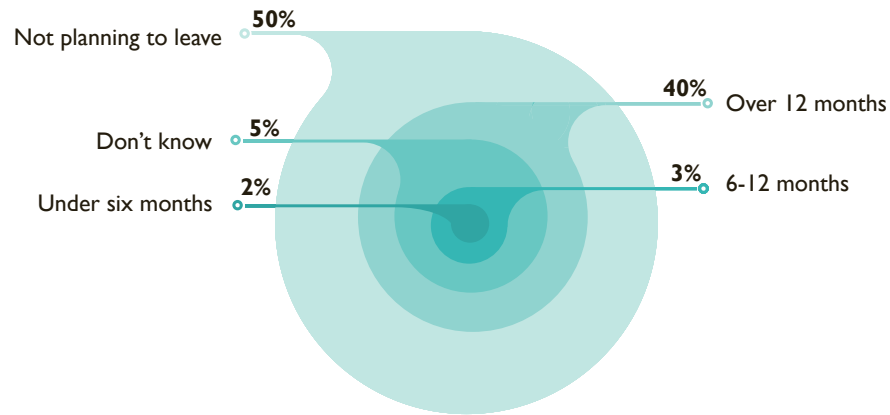
• **Returning journey:** Migrants who were unable to reach their intended destinations for various reasons, such as conflict related restrictions, deportation, or other impediments, as well as those who had arrived at their intended destinations but were unable to meet their main reasons for migration and seek to return to their habitual residencies are categorized as migrants embarking on returning journey. As the diagram shows, the majority of returning journey movements detected within Yemen occurred along the route in Al Maharah, Lahj, and Aden. These areas have been significant transit points for migrants seeking to return to their countries of origin or habitual residencies. The diagram also reveals that 98 per cent of the returning journey movements from Yemen were directed towards Ethiopia. Among these returnees, the majority (95%) are reported to be returning to Oromia, indicating a specific regional preference or connection among the returning migrants. On the other hand, a mere two per cent of returning migrants are Somalis who seek to return to their home country.

Nationality and intended destination - returning journey (n= 1,164)

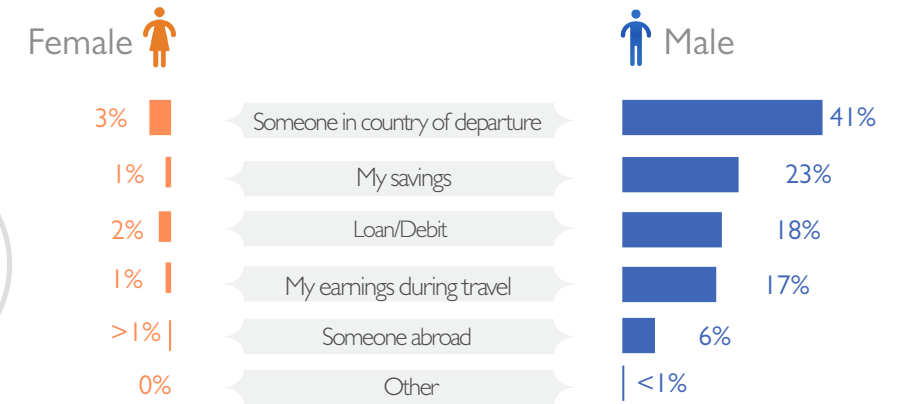


REASONS FOR TRAVEL AND INTENTIONS

How long do you plan to stay in your intended final destination country? (n= 2,897)

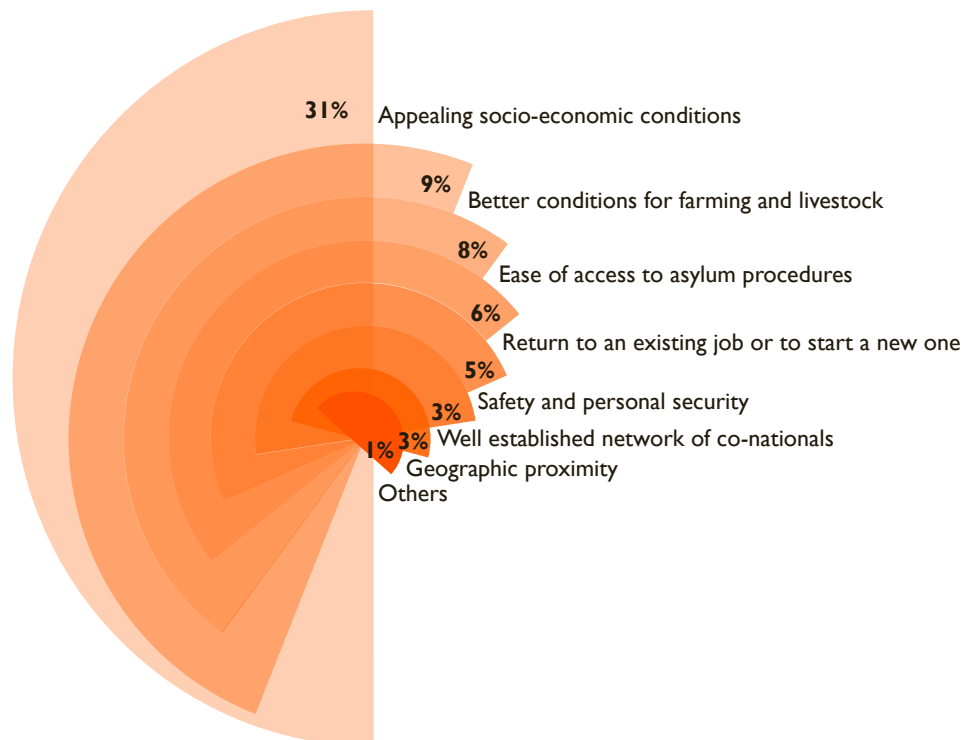


How did you pay for your travel? (n= 2,897)



1% are registered as refugees

Reasons for choosing final destination over other locations (n= 2,497, i.e. all excluding those traveling for a temporary visit)



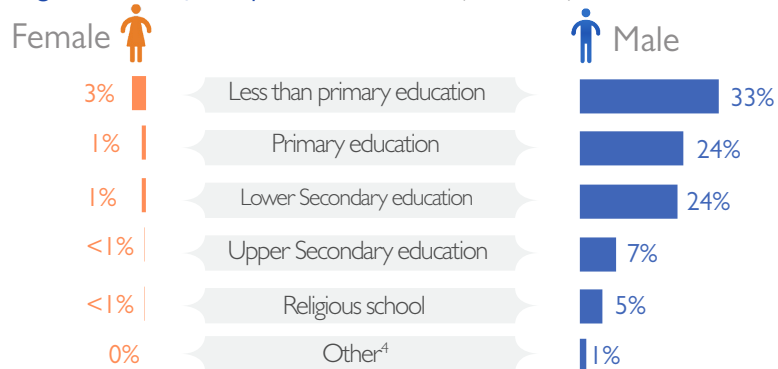
• **Predetermined length of stay:** Over half of respondents (50%) reported having no plans to return, and of this group, an overwhelming majority (79%) stated that their desired final destinations were the countries where they had previously resided. Just over a third (40%) of respondents reported to stay in their final destinations for more than a year. Only a proportion of five per cent said they planned to stay in their final destinations for periods under 12 months.

• **Reasons for choosing final destination country:** The perceived attractive socio-economic conditions at the final destination countries were cited by 31 per cent of respondents as the reason for choosing their final destination over other locations. Others (9%) claimed that their decision to travel to such countries was motivated by the opportunities for farming and grazing livestock there. Some eight per cent of respondents chose their final destinations based on the accessibility of asylum procedures. Others (6%) claimed that their decision to travel to such countries was driven by the desire to either return to their previous careers or embark on new ones in their final destinations. A proportion of five per cent stated that their choice of final destination was based on safety and personal security. Approximately seven per cent of respondents selected their final destination based on factors such as closeness to their home country, a well-established international network, and the desire to return to their country of citizenship.

• **Payment for travel:** Approximately 44 per cent of respondents reported that friends and family members in their home countries covered their travel expenses. Additionally, some 24 per cent of those surveyed stated that they used their personal savings to fund their journey, while 20 per cent of respondents relied on loans and debits. Some 18 per cent claimed to have worked while traveling and earned enough money to cover their expenses. A mere seven per cent of respondents were supported by someone in countries other than their departure/origins.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

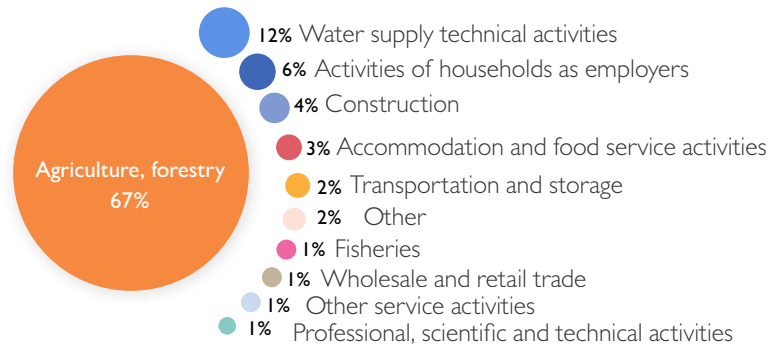
Highest level of completed education (n= 2,897)



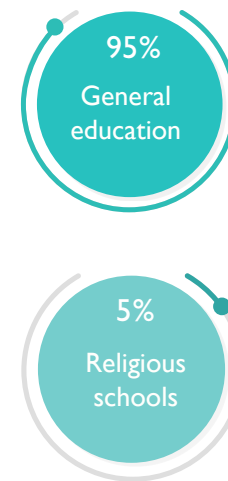
Last employment status prior to migration (n= 2,673 ind. without current employment)



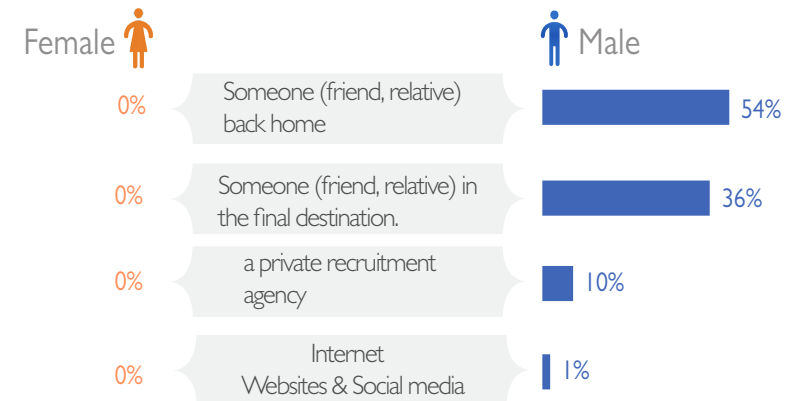
Main sectors of employment prior to migration (n= 1,145)



Forms of schooling



How did you become aware of this job/business opportunity in the final destination country? (n= 277 migrants traveling for a job)



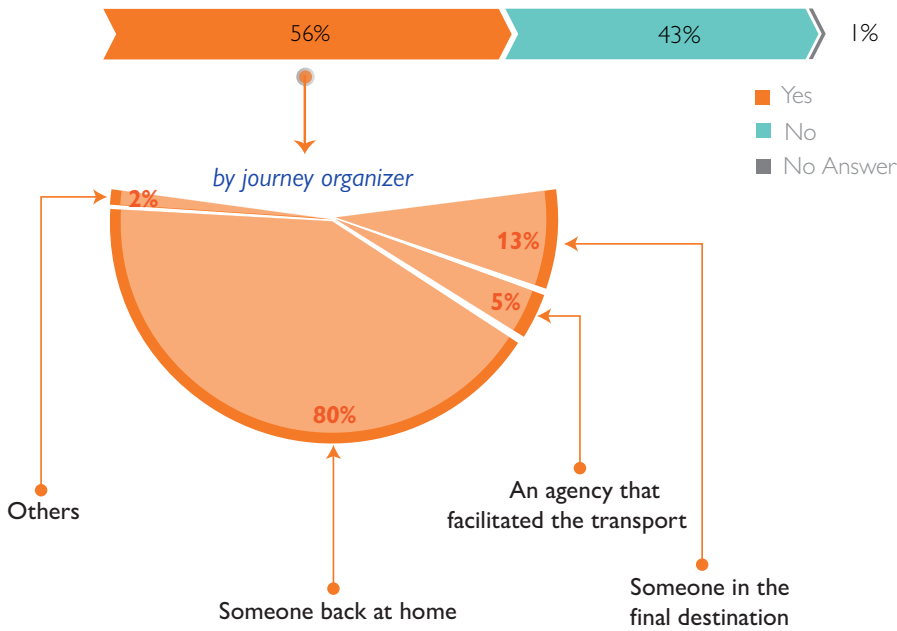
- **Education:** While 25 per cent of migrants reported to have completed their primary school, 36 per cent had not. Ethiopian nationals (34%) were less likely than Somali nationals (50%) to have left elementary school. Just less than eight per cent of the migrants surveyed claimed to have completed high school, 96 per cent of whom were Ethiopian, four per cent Somali. Ethiopian nationals (3%) were more likely than Somali nationals (2%) to have attended and graduated from a religious school.

- **Employment status prior to migration (among those currently unemployed):** While 42 per cent of migrants were unemployed and looking for a job prior to travelling, 24 per cent worked as daily worker and 16 per cent were self-employed. Among self-employed, almost all were in agricultural related work (98%). Some 14 per cent were students before embarking on their journey.

- **Information sources:** Among migrants travelling for a lined-up job, (277 ind.), the majority (54%) learned about these opportunities via friends or family members in their country of origin. Meanwhile, 36 per cent of migrants learned about these opportunities from friends and family in their country of destination. Just ten per cent of migrants reported learning about these opportunities from a private person or a private recruiting agency. The remaining one per cent stated learning about them from Internet, a public recruitment agency and other sources.

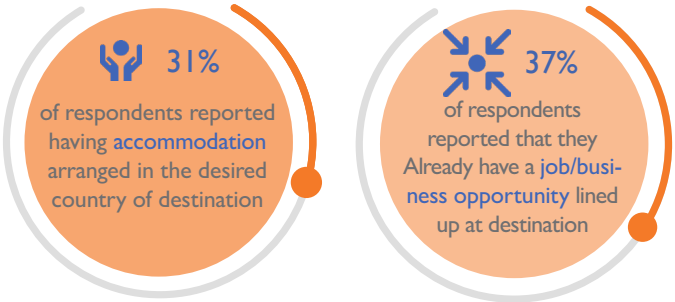
⁴ The "other" group includes persons with tertiary degrees or higher and other forms of education.

Did anyone help you in organizing this journey? (n= 2,897)



• **Journey organizing:** Overall, the majority of surveyed migrants (56%) indicated that their travels were planned by third parties. Of those, a high proportion (80%) reported they received assistance from someone in their country of origin. Just 13 per cent reported they received assistance from someone in their final destinations. A further five per cent reported that an agency had facilitated their journey. The remaining two per cent stated getting help from other organizers such as a private recruitment agency or a future employer in the final destination country. Some 43 per cent of respondents reported not having received external support preparing for their journey. Migrants are involved in a combination of organized and unorganized journey legs at different parts of their journeys between departure points and intended destinations. Based on focus group discussions (FGDs) held in 2022 with returning migrants in Djibouti, migrants frequently travel with smugglers due to concerns around safety, health, and having enough funds to complete their journey without being harassed. Finding work opportunities along the way also gave migrants a sense of safety. Additional money allows migrants to pay for transportation, avoid facing physical danger and it allows them to buy water and food. For those traveling with smugglers, the biggest issue was not having enough water and being afraid to be extorted money that was not agreed upfront. Overall migrants reported that they felt safer with smugglers, but what brought them the biggest sense of safety was travelling with people from the same ethnic group. Young male migrants heading to Yemen reported that they had been told about beatings inflicted by smugglers and were not surprised when they experienced these.

• **Protection measures:** In total, 31 per cent of migrants reported having accommodation provided in the destination country, with 89 per cent of these reporting that someone at the end destination arranged it for them. Some 79 per cent of these indicated having a job/ business opportunities lined up at their destination. Overall, 37 per cent have a job/business opportunity lined up at their destination. Almost a third (31%) confirmed having to repay expenses related to the journey and six per cent having to repay recruitment fees upon arrival.



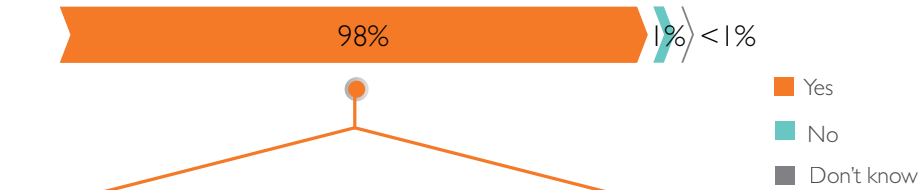
Sectors of employment and business opportunities lined up at destination (n= 1,069)



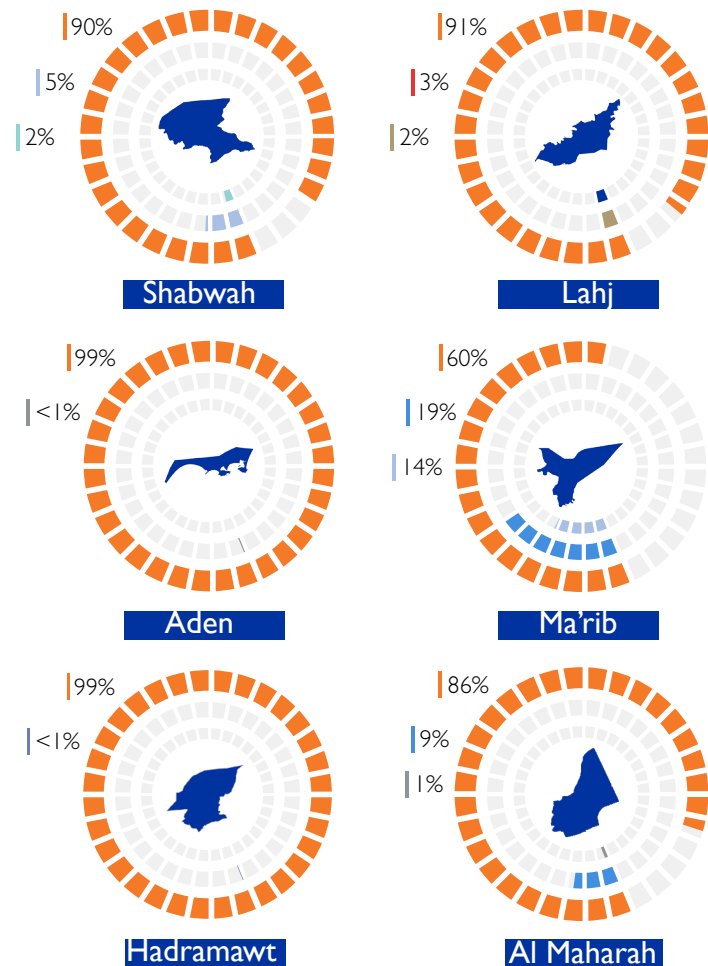
⁵ Percentages are rounded up and may not add up to 100.

CHALLENGES

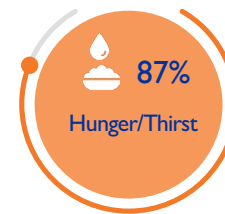
Have you been facing any specific difficulties during this journey? (n= 2,897)



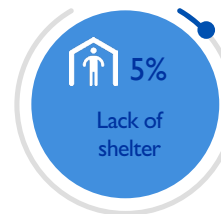
Top three main difficulties (n= 2,854) by governorate of survey



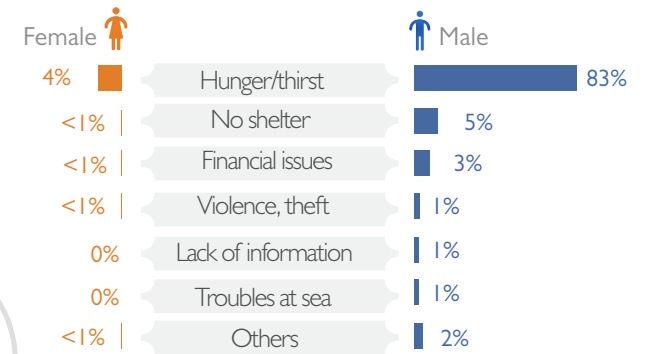
Main difficulties faced



Secondary difficulties faced



Challenges being faced at the moment (n= 2,854)

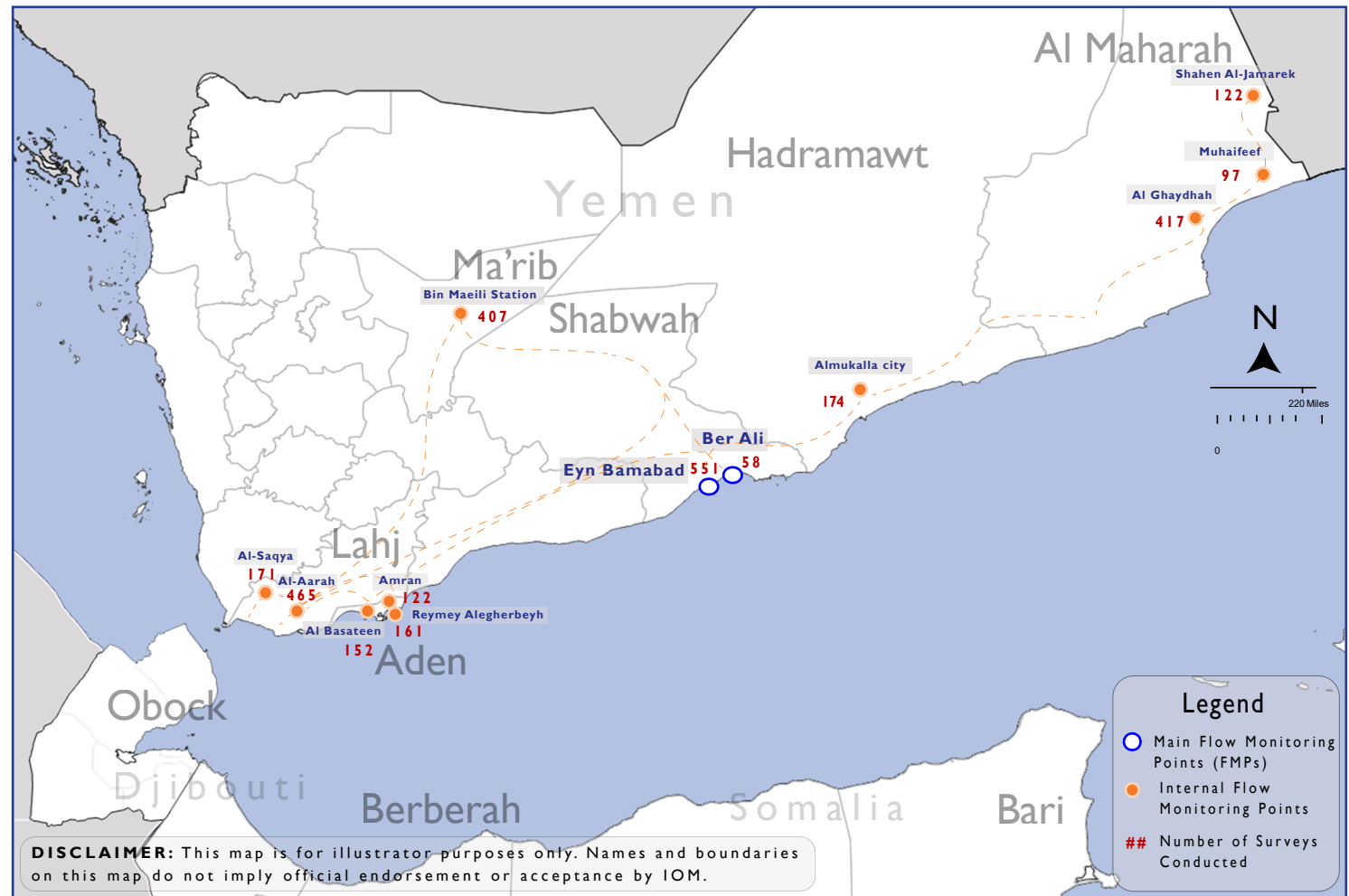


• **Difficulties and challenges:** Based on the FGDs conducted in 2022 in Djibouti with those returning from Yemen, all migrants stated that the journey to Yemen via Djibouti was much harder than they anticipated. This was confirmed during a participatory migrant mapping (PMM) exercise in March 2023. Walking long distances in the heat, the lack of water and hunger were harrowing experiences that many said they would never forget. Migrants reported that hunger and thirst were something they had never experienced to that degree and some of them recalled that for a week, they only ate a spoonful of uncooked rice. Most migrants are reported to be in dire need of food, water, shelter, clothing and healthcare (mobile clinics). Female travellers are in need of dignity kits. Some further request support with voluntary return. As migrants often spend longer periods of time in Yemen to fund their journey, they further require support with income-generating projects. Others report the need for support with identity / travel documentation and other ways to ensure safe migration between governorates and across international borders. In cases of deaths at sea or elsewhere, migrants also require support in the form of funeral related needs.

Overall, 98 per cent of migrants reported coming across several difficulties and challenges during their journey. Hunger and thirst were the most common difficulties cited by 87 per cent of migrants. Shelter was listed as a primary challenge by five per cent of respondents, while it is listed as a secondary difficulty by 69 per cent. Additionally, seven per cent of travellers reported hunger and thirst as a secondary difficulty. Some ten per cent reported violence, theft and problems at sea as a problem being encountered. Among under 18-year-olds, 90 per cent reported that their biggest issue was hunger and thirst. Similarly, 84 per cent of female migrants reported that their main difficulty was hunger and thirst. Hunger and thirst are described as the most difficulty in Shabwah (90%), Lahj (91%), Aden (99%), Ma'rib (60%), Hadramawt (99%), and Al Maharah (86%). Migrants in Ma'rib commonly reported a lack of shelter (19) and financial issues (14) as main challenge.

• **Route trends and difficulties:** When deciding which Yemeni governorates to temporarily settle in before continuing on to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, migrants may be influenced by a number of factors, such as stability, economic opportunity, and proximity to a major migration route. Most of the time, migrants have two options for traveling to their next destinations. The first option is to take a long sea route, which may enable them to walk just a short distance inland to their next places. The second option, which is often favored by migrants who cannot afford to pay high fees for their journeys, involves travelling a short distance by boat but a long overland walk to reach their desired destinations. Migrants who intend to travel to Shabwah, Ma'rib, or Hadramawt governorates as their next destination would usually prefer to make most of their journey inland through Bari in Somalia and take a shorter maritime journey from Bari to Shabwah which is also close to Ma'rib and Hadramawt. Usually, most migrants who travel from Obock, Djibouti reach Lahj governorate due to its proximity. However, in the fourth quarter of 2023, many decided to travel to Shabwah from Djibouti. Others take it as an arrival point to start their inland walk to Aden. This isn't always the case, though. To get to distant locations like Shabwah, Ma'rib, or Hadramawt from Lahj, some Ethiopian migrants travel via the Obock-Lahj route. Lack of personal contacts or networks in Somalia, difficulty accessing alternate smuggling channels, or other particular conditions are a few things that could influence this decision. Additionally, it is found that almost all migrants who take Obock-Lahj route in order to get to Shabwah, Ma'rib, or Hadramawt and those who take Bari-Shabwah route in order to get to Lahj or Aden, have these governorates in mind as their final destinations.

Among surveyed migrants, 37 per cent were interviewed closer to the Djibouti coast in the east (15% in Aden and 22% in Lahj). Some 49 per cent were interviewed closer to the Somalia coast in the west in Al Maharah (22%), Hadramawt (6%) Shabwah (21%). A further 14 per cent were interviewed in Ma'rib further inland.



Map depicting migration routes and movements overall during the fourth quarter of 2023

ABOUT THE DATA COLLECTION

The Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) is one of the methodological components implemented under IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) portfolio in Yemen to supplement more quantitative findings of the Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR). The FMS aims to capture qualitative information through direct interviews with a sample of migrants passing through Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs). The FMS collects detailed information on the demographic and socio-economic profiles of migrants, including age, sex, highest level of completed education and employment status prior to migration, migration journeys, migration drivers, migrants' intentions and migrants' needs.

The surveys are fully anonymous and voluntary. In all cases, the respondents are approached in an ad hoc manner by IOM field staff, with those who give their consent to be interviewed proceeding with the remaining questions (only migrants aged 14 and above are approached). The sample is not random and therefore is not representative (due to the fact that there is no sampling frame and the total population of reference is not known). Women and girls remain underrepresented, and efforts are made to make the survey more representative in this regard.

More information on flow monitoring data and reports can be accessed via [IOM DTM Yemen's website](#).

ABOUT THE DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of mobile populations, whether on site or en route. DTM in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region is currently active in six countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda).

DTM started operating in 2004, and has been continuously refined and enhanced through years of operational experience in over 80 countries in both conflict and natural disaster settings. DTM provides decision makers with primary data and information on human mobility, both in country and at the regional and global level. It has four distinct methodological components:

- 1) **Mobility tracking:** area-based assessment that regularly tracks numbers, locations and cross-sectorial needs of observed populations (stocks) to target assistance;
- 2) **Flow monitoring:** tracks movement tracking of mobile populations at key transit points (FMPs) to identify scale and direction of flows and reasons for movement;
- 3) **Registration:** individual and household-level information used for functional identity management in beneficiary selection, vulnerability targeting and programming;
- 4) **Surveys:** gather specific information through sampling from the population of interest, on return intentions, displacement solutions, community perceptions and other thematic areas of interest.

More information on the DTM methodological framework can be found [here](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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OUR PARTNERS

