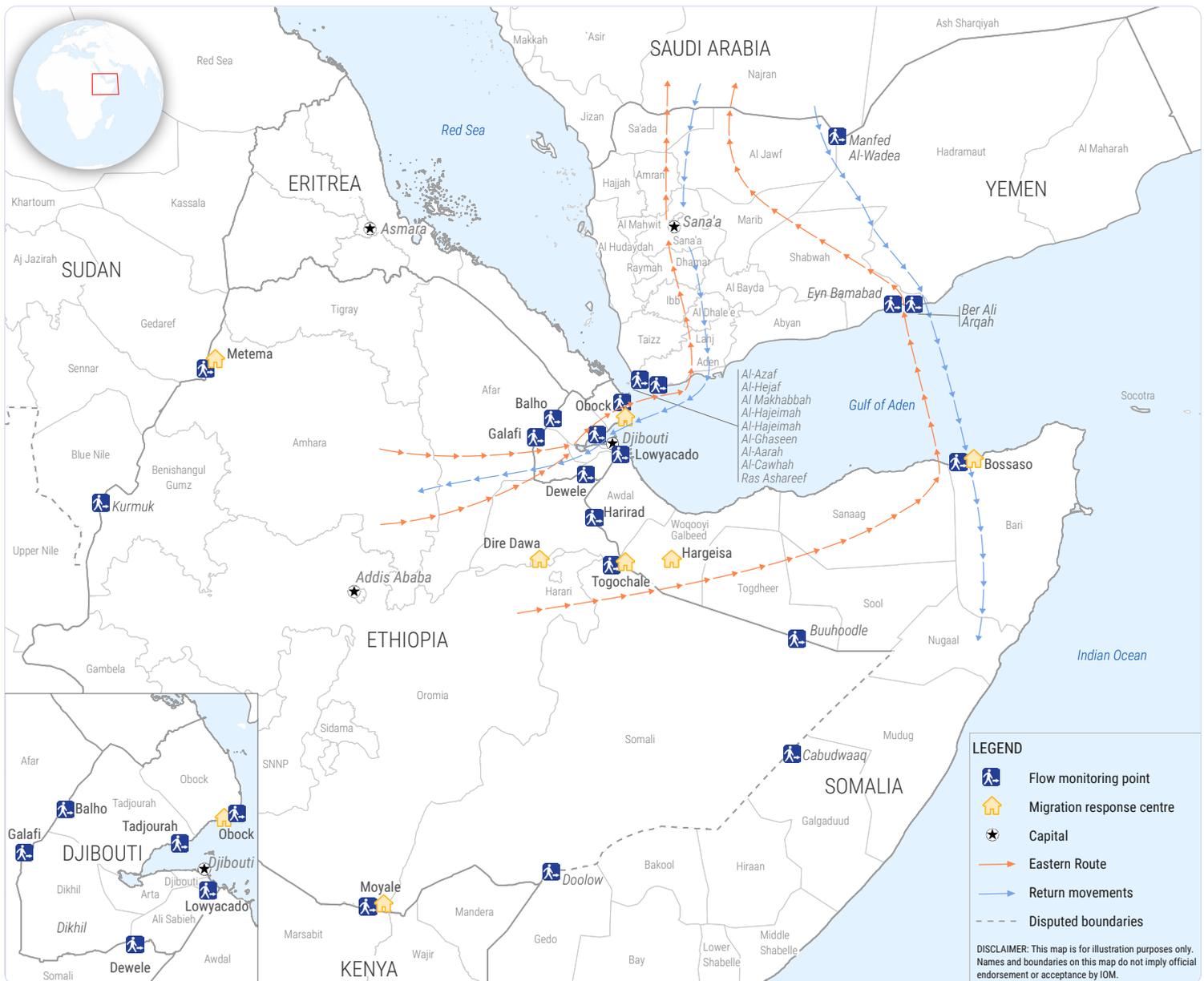


About the report

The Horn of Africa and Yemen is one of the busiest and riskiest migration corridors in the world travelled by hundreds of thousands of migrants, the majority of whom travel in an irregular manner, often relying on smugglers to facilitate movement along the Eastern Corridor. This regional report provides monthly updates on the complex migratory dynamics through [Ethiopia](#), [Djibouti](#), [Somalia](#) and [Yemen](#) based on diverse data sources and consultations with key informants in the four countries. Moreover, it provides information on the main protection concerns for migrants along the journey, [a focus on children](#) and information on the [forced returns from Saudi Arabia](#) to Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen.

Key findings:

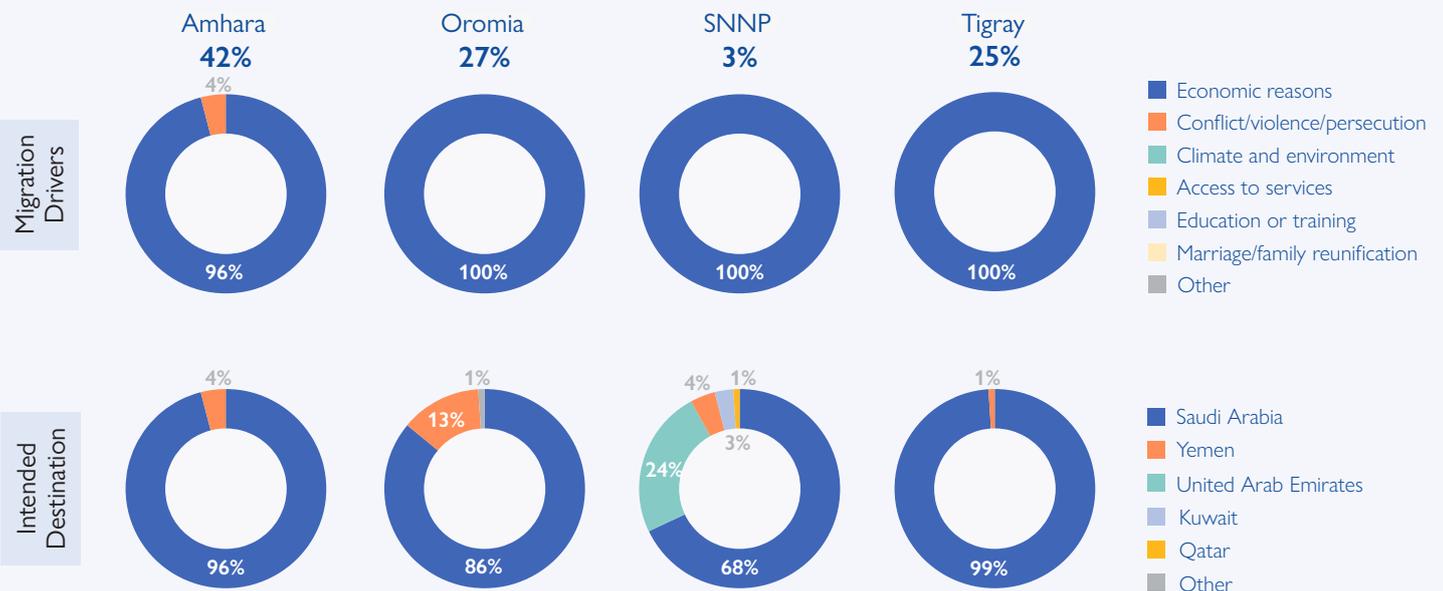
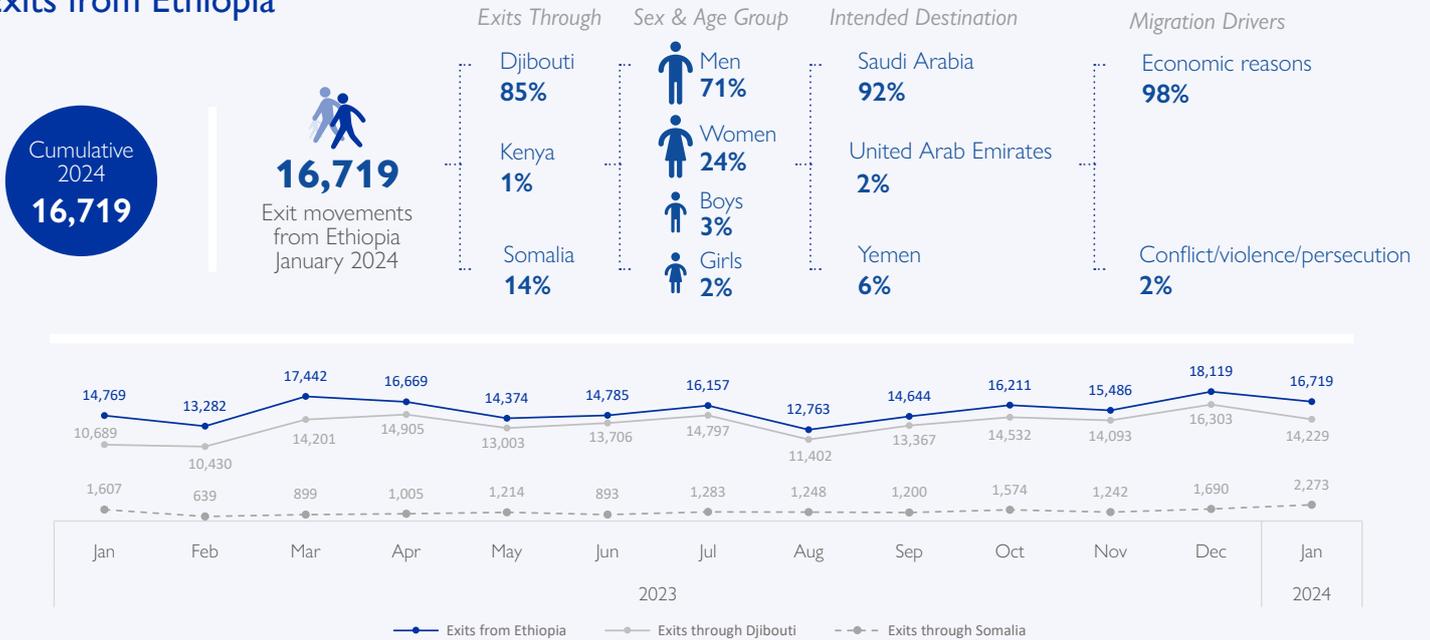
- While arrivals from Djibouti in Yemen observed a significant decrease (-56%), arrivals from Somalia increased by more than one-fourth (+28%).
- This is largely attributed to the campaign against irregular migration in the Bab-al Mandab Strait, which has been ongoing since August 2023.
- Exits from Ethiopia through Somalia increased by 34% from December 2023 to January 2024.
- Over half of children leaving Ethiopia were travelling alone (64%), and around one-third of children (30%) were heads of household. Relatedly, field teams in Yemen have noticed an increase in the number of children, including unaccompanied and separated children, moving towards the border with Saudi Arabia.
- The number of stranded migrants in Somalia, mainly in Bossaso and Hargeisa, increased by 25% between December 2023 (5,995) and January 2024 (7,450), with women (23%) and children (13%) representing more than a third (36%) of stranded migrants.



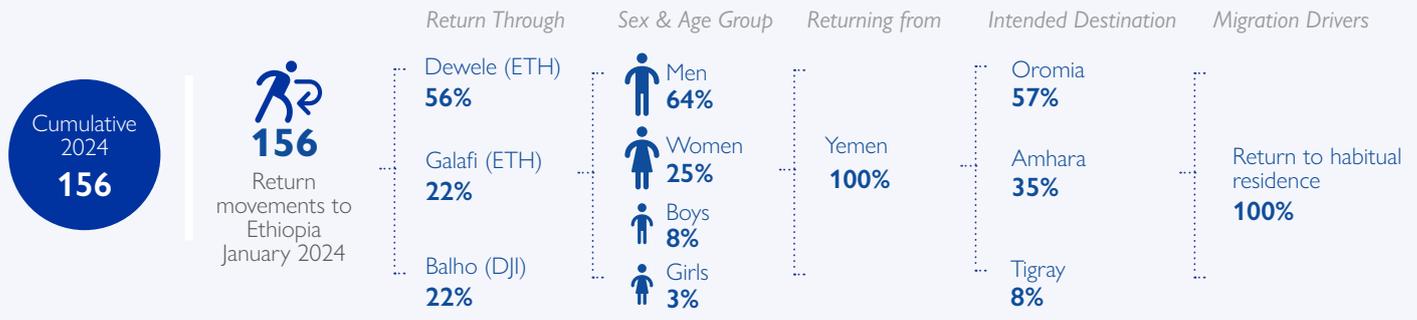
Migration Through Ethiopia

- Overall exits from Ethiopia in January 2024 (16,719) slightly decreased (-8%) from December 2023 (18,119). However, exits through Somalia increased by 34% (from 1,690 to 2,273).
- Since the start of the Sudan conflict in mid-April 2023, migration to Sudan through Metema and Kurmuk has been incidental, with only 16 movements tracked since then (7 in July 2023 in Kurmuk and 9 in January in Metema). The monthly average of movements travelling on the Eastern Corridor at these two FMPs in the three months before the conflict was 2,276.
- Contrarily, there has been a steady increase in monthly movements through Moyale, from 77 in September 2023 to 208 in January 2024.
- Despite a decrease (-14%) in the number of children travelling alone between December 2023 (540) and January 2024 (465), more than half of children leaving Ethiopia were travelling alone (64%), of whom 60% were boys and 40% were girls. Also, around one-third of children (30%) were heads of household.
- Return movements to Ethiopia decreased by around one-third (-32%) between December 2023 (228) and January 2024 (156). Despite this decrease, the share of returning women and children increased from 24% to 36%.
- Return movements to Oromia increased by a quarter (25%) and represented more than half of the returns in January (57% versus 31% in December 2023).
- Registrations at the MRC in Moyale and Dire Dawa respectively increased by 406% and 136% from the previous month, while registrations in Metema decreased by 10%. Nonetheless, MRC Metema hosted over three-quarters of the MRC registrations in Ethiopia (77%).
- At the MRC in Metema at the border with Sudan, 98% of people reported physical or psychological abuse. Conflict in the Amhara region continues to hinder onward transportation assistance for Ethiopians returning through the Metema border point with Sudan.
- In Moyale and Togochale, 99% and 96% of people reported being detained. In Moyale, all 67 children registered at the MRC were unaccompanied, all of whom were boys.

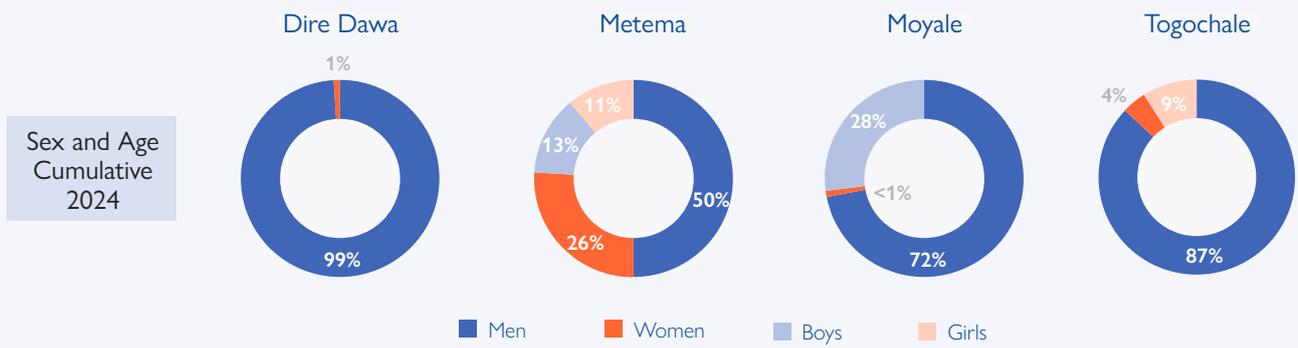
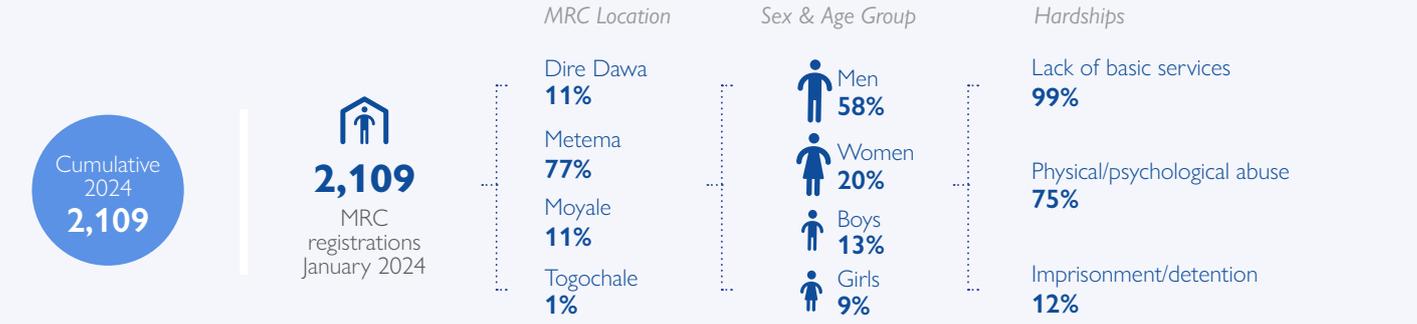
Exits from Ethiopia



Return Movements to Ethiopia



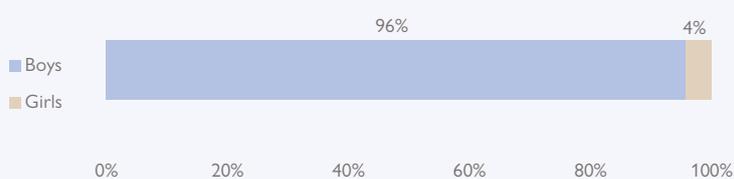
Migrants Seeking Assistance



Unaccompanied Children (Share of All Children) at MRCs in 2024



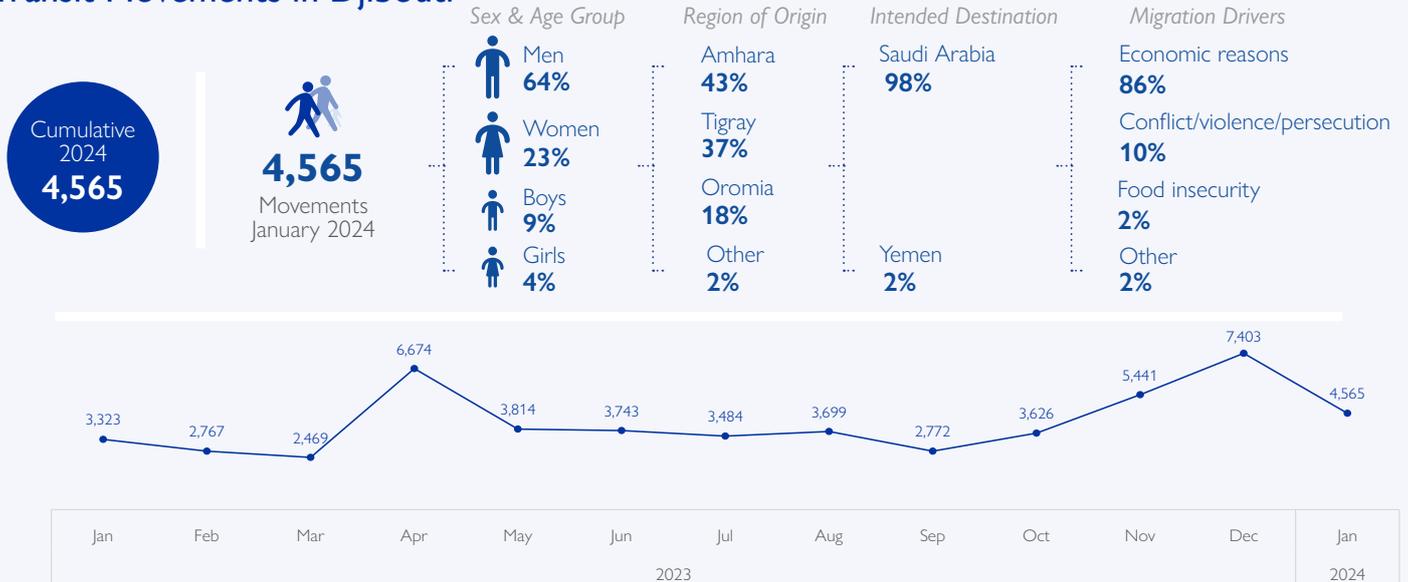
Unaccompanied Children by Sex in 2024



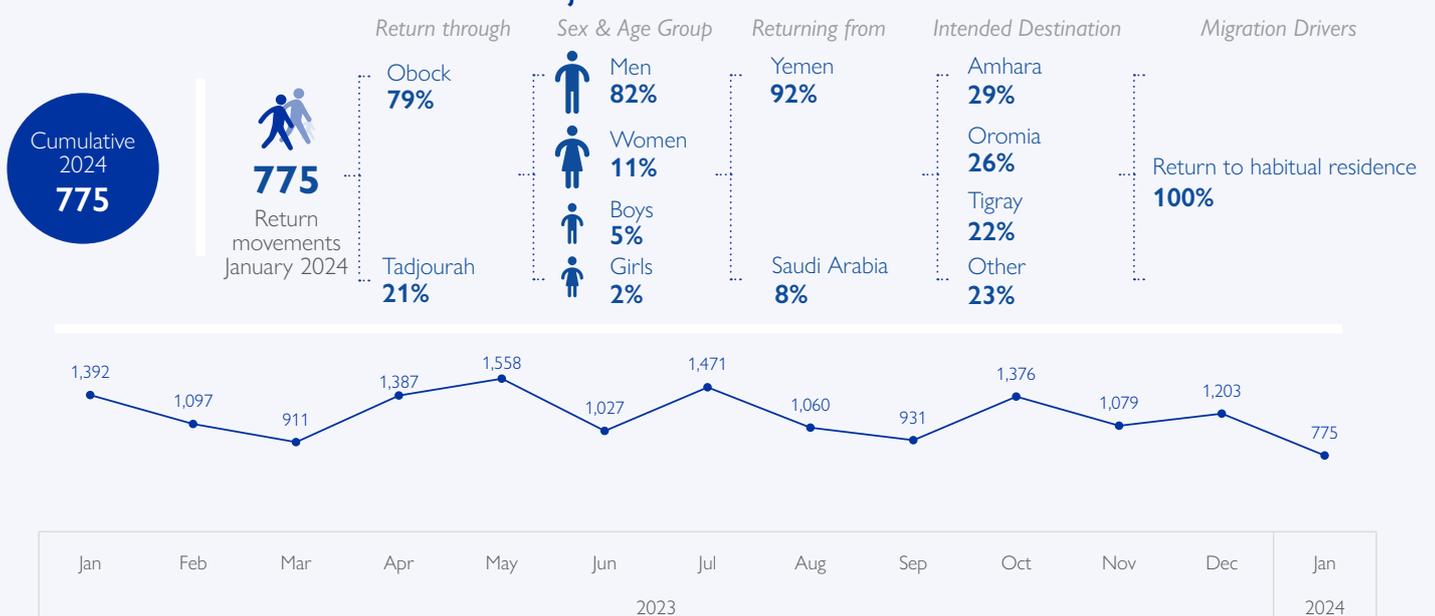
Migration Through Djibouti

- After three consecutive months of increase in movements towards the Arabian Peninsula tracked in Obock, January 2024 (4,565) observed a 38% decrease in movements from December 2023 (7,403). Similarly, January 2024 also observed a decrease (-36%) in return movements in Obock and Tadjourah from the Arabian Peninsula. These decreases could be attributed to fewer days of data collection due to the enumerators' participation in capacity-building activities on data collection.
- In Lowyacado FMP, in the border between Somalia and Djibouti, there were 10 movements tracked returning from Yemen to Djibouti.
- Although economic reasons continue to be the main migration driver, around one-fifth (21%) of those departing from Amhara were doing so due to conflict, violence or persecution.
- Also, around one in ten (9%) of those departing from Tigray reported food insecurity (5%) and conflict, violence, and persecution (4%) as a push factor for their migration journey.
- Of the 619 stranded migrants, around half (47%) were women (22%) and children (25%).

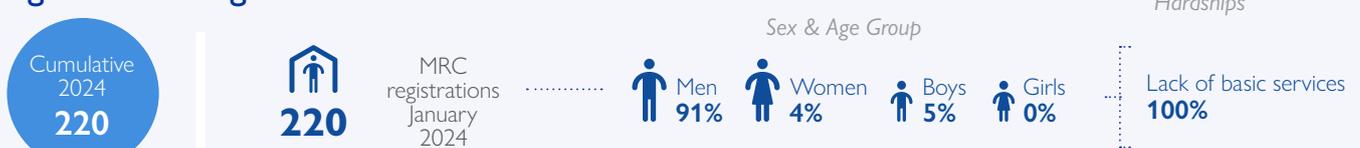
Transit Movements in Djibouti



Return Movements to Obock and Tadjourah



Migrants Seeking Assistance



619 Stranded migrants January 2024

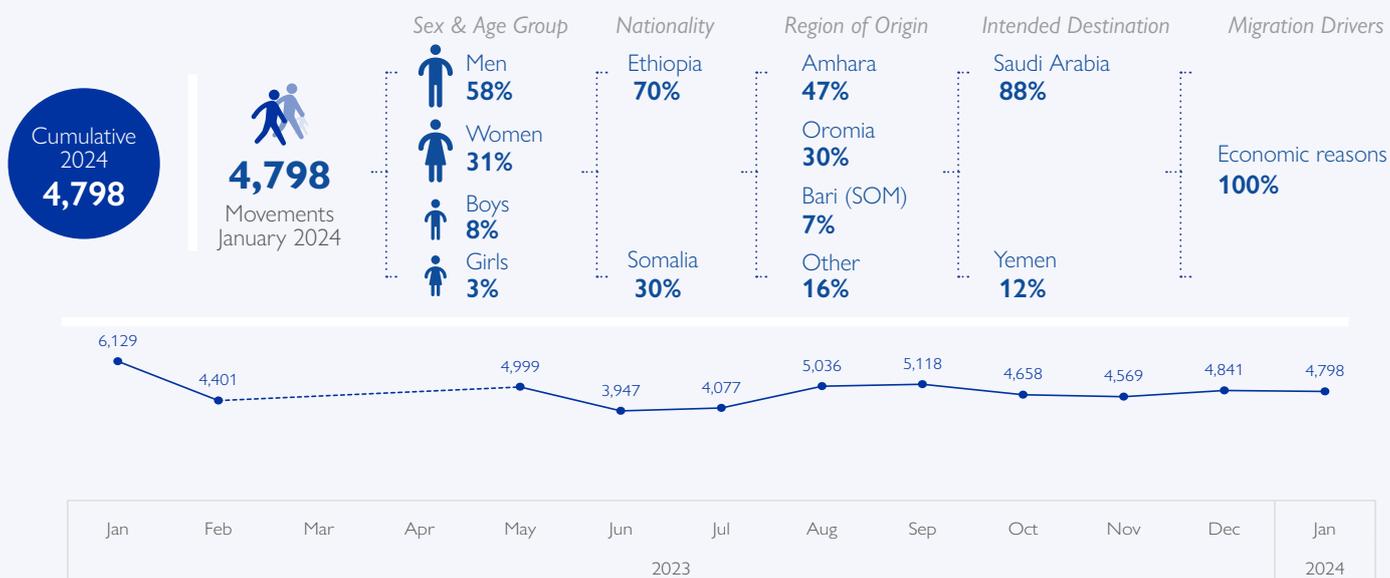
None reported

Dead/missing migrants January 2024

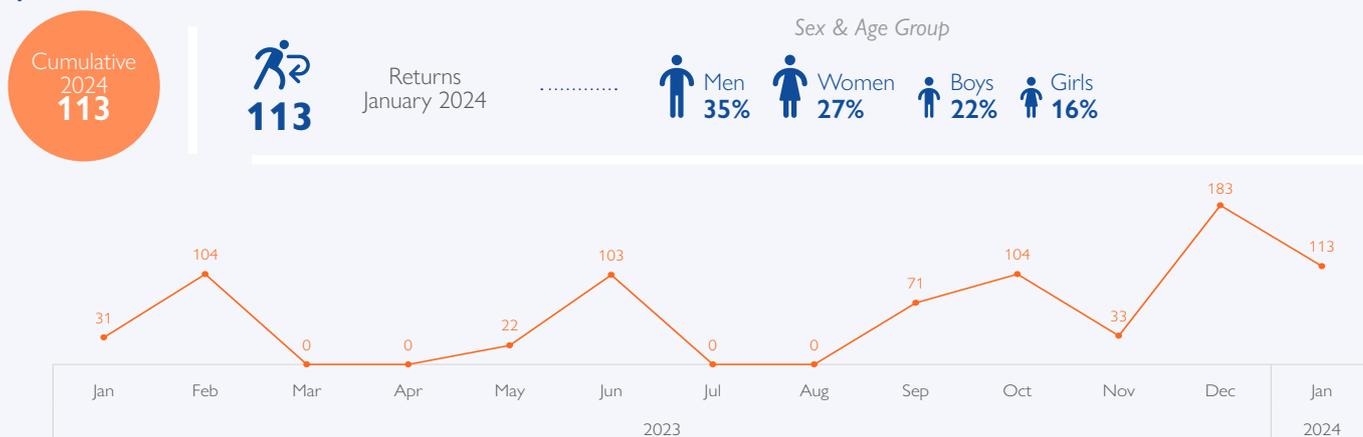
Migration Through Somalia

- Movements tracked in Bossaso travelling towards the Arabian Peninsula remained similar (-1%) between January 2024 (4,798) and December 2023 (4,841). However, tracked movements that originated in Afar more than doubled (+153%) from December 2023 (74) to January 2024 (187). Similarly, movements from Tigray increased by 57% (from 141 to 221).
- In Lowyacado FMP, in the border between Somalia and Djibouti, there were 17 tracked movements returning from Yemen to Somalia.
- The number of **stranded migrants** in Somalia, mainly in Bossaso and Hargeisa, increased by 25% between December 2023 (5,995) and January 2024 (7,450), with **women (23%) and children (13%)** representing more than a third (36%) of stranded migrants.
- Some migrant women reported encountering many challenges on their journey on the way to Buuhoodle, some of whom were pregnant and felt sick after travelling long distances in crowded vehicles.
- The MRC in Bossaso observed a significant number of migrants who were seeking **AVR services**, which are currently unavailable due to budget constraints. Around 70% of people who registered for AVR were unaccompanied children. The MRC team in Bossaso also registered around 30 survivors of trafficking in persons.
- Around 200 people on the move were detained in Bossaso for security checks by authorities and were released after 13 hours.
- **Children formed 44% of people seeking assistance** at MRCs in January, with Hargeisa reporting children in over half (58%) of registrations.
- At the MRC in Bossaso, over half (58%) of people reported **health problems** and all children (58) were **unaccompanied**.
- **Male migrants** seeking assistance at MRCs in Somalia mostly reported being on the move for **education opportunities (62%)**, followed by economic motivations (32%) and armed conflict (3%), while **female migrants** primarily reported moving for **economic reasons (73%)**, followed by armed conflict (14%) and education opportunities (11%).

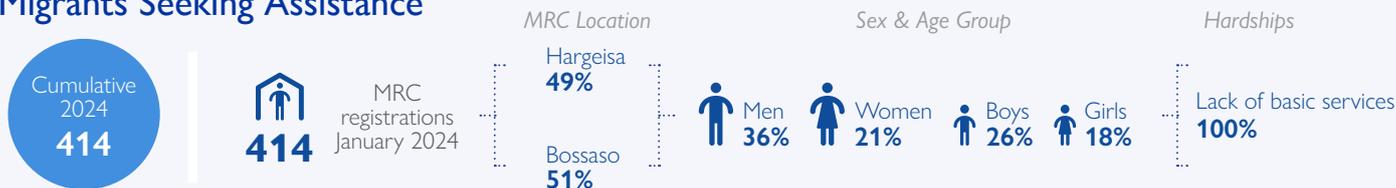
Transit Movements in Somalia



Spontaneous Returns from Yemen to Somalia



Migrants Seeking Assistance



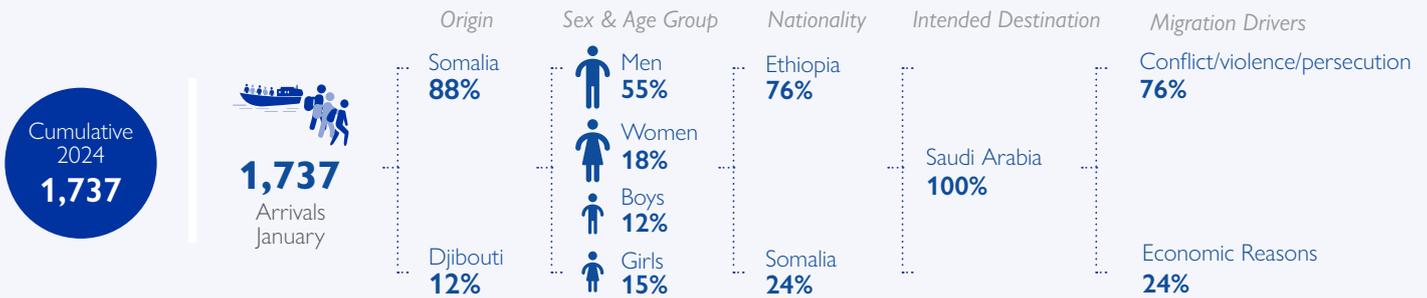
7,450 Stranded migrants January 2024

None reported Dead/missing migrants January 2024

Migration Through Yemen

- Migrant arrivals from the Horn of Africa to Yemen remained similar (+3%) between December 2023 (1,679) and January 2024 (1,737).
- While arrivals from Djibouti observed a significant decrease (-56%), arrivals from Somalia increased by more than one-fourth (+28%).
- This is largely attributed to the campaign against irregular migration in the Bab-al Mandab Strait, which has been ongoing since August 2023.
- As a result, the new migration trend observed in November and December 2023 continued, whereby to avoid coast guards, boats departing from Djibouti travel around 450 km eastwards from the Bab el-Mandab Strait towards the Gulf of Aden before disembarking along the Shabwah coast, which has historically mostly received migrants departing from the Somali coast. Due to these changes, some movements may be eluding enumeration efforts, which may be contributing to the low numbers in arrivals tracked from Djibouti.
- In January 2024, DTM teams in Yemen managed to track 210 migrant arrivals from Djibouti who were following this new route. Those boats now cover a longer distance (450 km) than those departing from Somalia (300 km), therefore increasing the risk of shipwrecks.
- It is also worth mentioning that, except for December (110), DTM teams at the Lahj coast of Yemen have not reported any migrant arrivals from Djibouti since October 2023.
- As a consequence, there has been not only a shift in the proportion of arrivals from Somalia since September 2023, but also a shift in the migration drivers of arriving migrants, in which migration due to conflict has increased in proportion to economic migration, which was historically predominant. This has also been the cause of the shift in a higher proportion of Somali nationals arriving in Yemen when historically most arrivals were of Ethiopian nationals.
- It is important to note, however, that the overall figures of arrivals in Yemen remain historically consistent and the decrease in absolute arrivals of Ethiopians from Djibouti likely explains the shift in the share of migrant arrivals from Somalia, migration drivers and nationality since September.
- A delegation from the Ethiopian Government was present in Aden from 16 to 30 January to verify nationality and provide travel documentation to around 3,100 migrants who registered for VHR, of whom 633 were able to receive VHR. However, due to operational constraints, national verification has been delayed for some Ethiopian migrants in Ma'rib.
- Field teams have noticed an increase in the number of children, including unaccompanied and separated children, moving towards the border with Saudi Arabia.
- IOM teams received reports from key stakeholders that many migrants have been held captive by smugglers and traffickers to extort ransom from family members. Incidents of torture, harsh conditions and sexual and physical abuse have also been reported.
- On 30 January, 3 Ethiopian women who were migrating were killed by violence in Ma'rib. Around half a dozen more people were injured.

Arrivals in Yemen



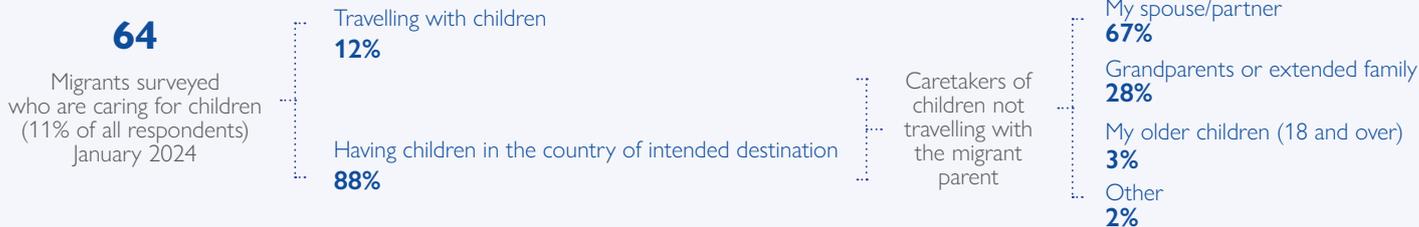
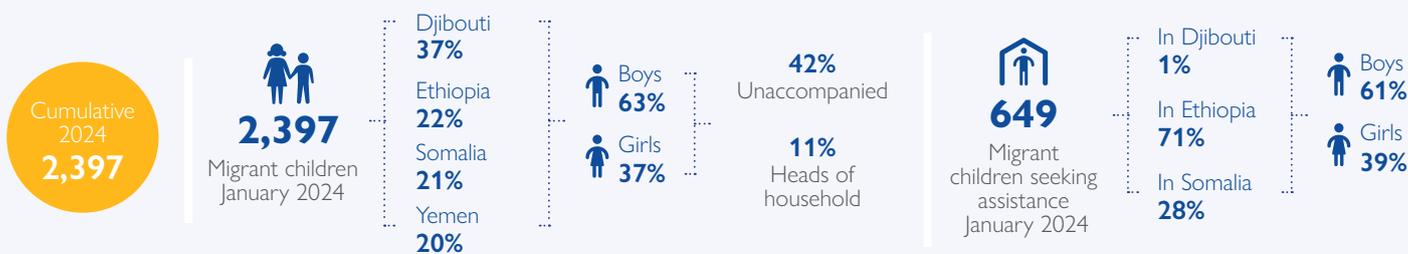
None reported

Stranded migrants January 2024

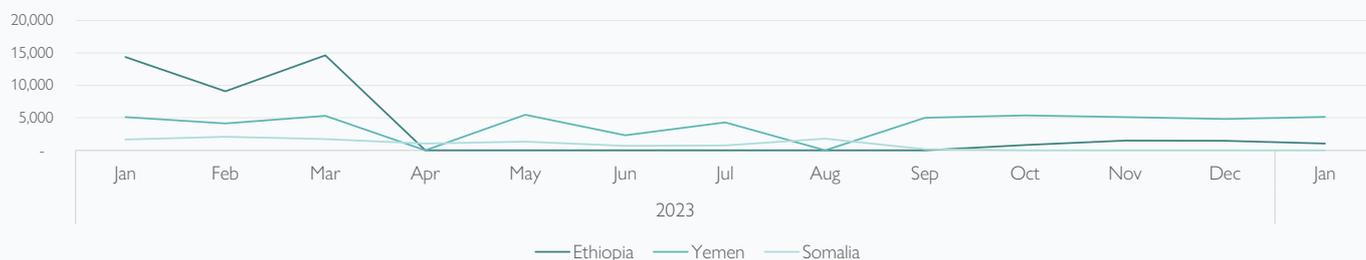
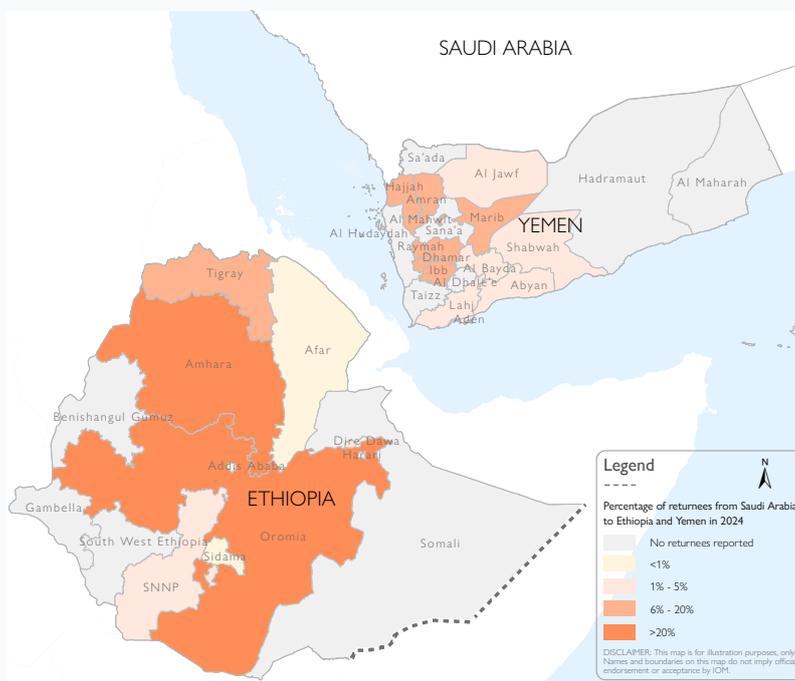
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Dead/missing migrants January 2024

Migrant Children Along the Eastern Corridor



Forced Returns from Saudi Arabia



Data Sources

- [Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\)](#) data collected at flow monitoring points (FMPs), which includes flow monitoring registry (group level) and flow monitoring survey (individual level) data
- [Migration Response Centre \(MRC\)](#) data on migrants seeking assistance, including data on assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR)
- Voluntary humanitarian returns (VHR) from Yemen
- [Forced returns from Saudi Arabia](#)
- [Missing Migrants Project \(MMP\)](#) data on migrant deaths and disappearances

Contact