29,636 migration movements observed,[1] including **28%** at the Obock flow monitoring point (FMP)

+29% movements compared to November 2023

12,630 migrant flows from Ethiopia

286 spontaneous returns from Yemen[2]

250 exits to Ethiopia

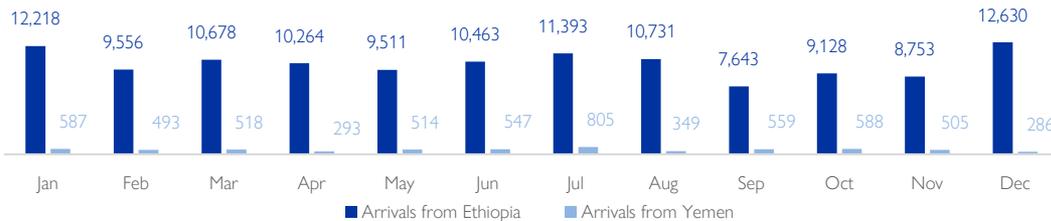**718** stranded migrants in Djibouti as of 28 December 2023[3]

OVERVIEW

In December 2023, 29,636 migratory movements were observed at flow monitoring points (FMP) in Djibouti, with a daily average of 956 migratory movements. Migration flows observed across all FMPs increased slightly by 29 per cent compared to November 2023 during which 22,968 movements were recorded.

Of these 29,636 movements, 8,216 (28%) were observed in the Obock region where migrants cross the Gulf of Aden towards the Arabian Peninsula. Migration flows to the Obock FMP saw an increase of 69 per cent compared to November 2023. This increase could be due to a reduction in border controls with Ethiopia combined with rumors of resumption of boat departures from starting from the coasts of Obock where migrants are used to crossing the Gulf of Aden to reach the Arabian Peninsula.

Between January and December 2023, arrivals from Ethiopia reached (122,968) marking a significant increase of 20 per cent compared to the same period of the previous year (101,656). Migratory movements in November were mainly directed: towards the Arabian Peninsula (48%), inbound (43%), transiting towards Ethiopia (4%), transiting within Djibouti (4%), and outgoing (1%). Spontaneous returns from Yemen fell by 43 per cent due to high tides in the sea, from 505 in November to 286 in December, including 14 women (5%).

TYPE OF FLOWS[4]

29,636 Movements observed

- Transiting towards the Arabian Peninsula — 48%
- Incoming — 43%
- Transiting to Ethiopia — 4%
- Transiting within Djibouti — 4%
- Outgoing — 1%

MIGRATORY FLOWS ARRIVING FROM ETHIOPIA AND YEMEN IN 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Arrivals from Ethiopia	12,218	9,556	10,678	10,264	9,511	10,463	11,393	10,731	7,643	9,128	8,753	12,630
Arrivals from Yemen	587	493	518	293	514	547	805	349	559	588	505	286

AVERAGE DAILY MOVEMENTS OBSERVED AT FMPs IN 2023

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
774	778	765	892	728	721	719	813	618	733	766	956

2023

DISclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.
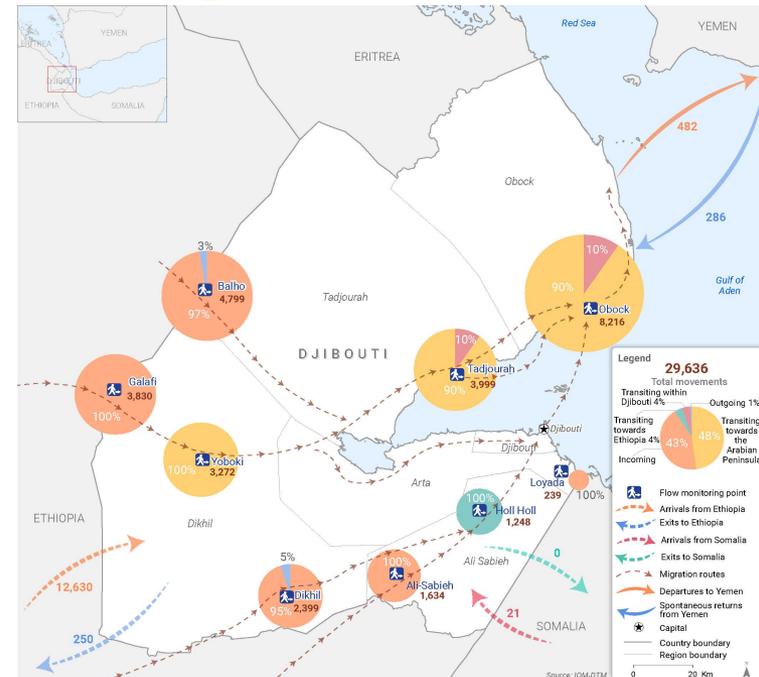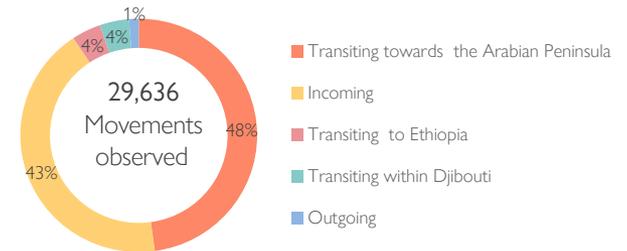
[1] As of March 2022, the movements of Djiboutian nationals (transiting, leaving or returning to the country) are included in the data except for internal movements.

[2] The data on returns from Yemen were collected through key informants.

[3] Information on the definition and methodology for counting stranded migrants in Djibouti is available on the last page of this dashboard.

[4] In the context of this report, the method of analysis has changed compared to previous reports. The analysis considered that inflows refer to flows from Ethiopia and Somalia border flow monitoring points. Transiting flows refer to flows crossing localities in Djibouti or leaving Djibouti to another country that is not the final destination. While outgoing flows are those that cross the border of Djibouti and another country, where the latter country is the final destination.

MIGRATION MOVEMENTS FROM ETHIOPIA

ARRIVALS FROM ETHIOPIA IN 2023

122,968 Arrivals from Ethiopia in 2023

12,630 Arrivals from Ethiopia in December 2023

Monthly 2023 values: Jan 12,218 · Feb 9,556 · Mar 10,678 · Apr 10,264 · May 9,511 · Jun 10,463 · Jul 11,393 · Aug 10,731 · Sep 7,643 · Oct 9,128 · Nov 8,753 · Dec 12,630
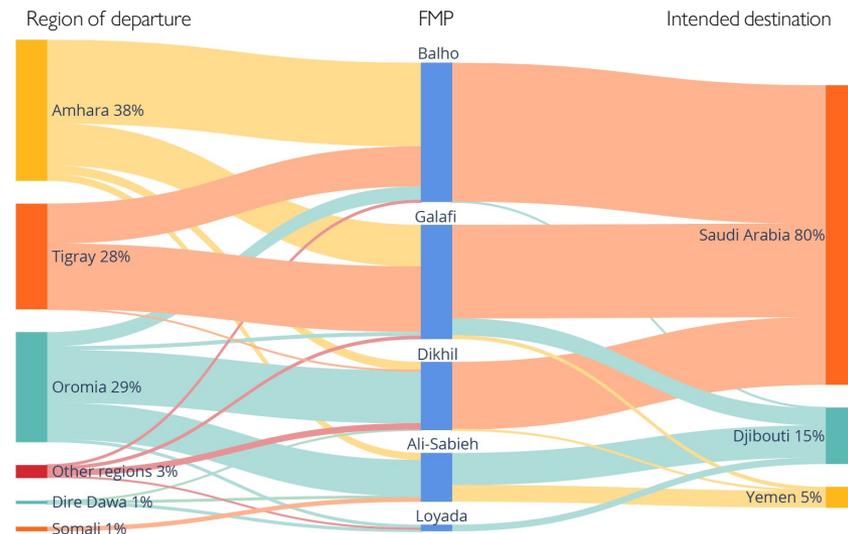
In December, half of the inbound movements from Ethiopia were observed in the Dikhil region (48%) via the Galafi (30%) and Dikhil (18%) FMPs. The Tadjourah region observed 37 per cent of inbound movements into Djibouti through the Balho FMP, while movements from Ethiopia observed in Ali-Sabieh accounted for 13 per cent. The Loyada FMP, on the border with Somalia, accounted for 2 per cent of inbound movements from Ethiopia.

Compared to the previous month, a 44 per cent increase in movements from Ethiopia was recorded in December 2023. This increase is due to the reduction in border controls with Ethiopia and false rumors of resumption of smuggling activities mastering the crossing of the sea during the up coming winter period. The increase is also attributed to an enhanced operational capacity in Balho FMP.

The main departure regions for migrants from Ethiopia were Amhara (38%), Oromia (29%) and Tigray (28%). Most migrants intended to reach the Arabian Peninsula, mainly Saudi Arabia (80%) and Yemen (5%), while 15 per cent had Djibouti as their destination country.

ARRIVALS FROM ETHIOPIA IN DECEMBER 2023 BY REGION OF DEPARTURE AND INTENDED DESTINATION

Region of departure: Amhara 38%, Tigray 28%, Oromia 29%, Other regions 3%, Dire Dawa 1%, Somali 1%

FMP: Balho, Galafi, Dikhil, Ali-Sabieh, Loyada

Intended destination: Saudi Arabia 80%, Djibouti 15%, Yemen 5%

RETURNS FROM YEMEN

RETURNS FROM YEMEN IN 2023

6,044 Returns from Yemen in 2023

286 Returns from Yemen in December 2023

Monthly 2023 values: Jan 587 · Feb 493 · Mar 518 · Apr 293 · May 514 · Jun 547 · Jul 805 · Aug 349 · Sep 559 · Oct 588 · Nov 505 · Dec 286

Male • 95%   Female • 5%

In Obock, the coastal region of Djibouti where migrants cross the Gulf of Aden towards the Arabian Peninsula via the Eastern Corridor, spontaneous returns of Ethiopian migrants from Yemen continue to be observed. In December 2023, 286 returns were recorded, a decrease of 43 per cent compared to November (505). This drop is mainly explained by the closure of borders in Yemen and difficulties in reaching Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, according to the DTM in Yemen, there was a 21 per cent increase in migrant arrivals from Obock between November (400) and December (482). This increase could be explained by the reduction in regular checks by the Djiboutian authorities resulting in the increase in migrant movements.

EXITS TO ETHIOPIA [5]

EXITS TO ETHIOPIA IN 2023

2,463 Exits to Ethiopia in 2023

250 Exits to Ethiopia in December 2023

Monthly 2023 values: Jan 6 · Feb 13 · Mar 57 · Apr 39 · May 391 · Jun 91 · Jul 162 · Aug 702 · Sep 293 · Oct 150 · Nov 309 · Dec 250
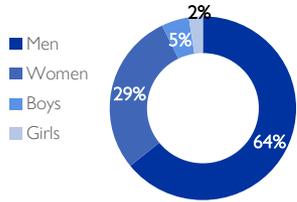
[5] the means of transport used by Ethiopian migrants vary: while most of them move from Obock to Ali-Sabieh on foot, the majority of Tigrayan migrants returning from Yemen cross the border at Balho and Galafi by car or by bus, which makes it more difficult to record their movements.

In December, 250 exits to Ethiopia were recorded, a decrease of 19 per cent compared to November (309). This decline can be attributed to the reduction in surveillance operations against irregular migration carried out by the authorities of Ali Sabieh, Dikhil and Tadjourah, who frequently return migrants stranded at the border.
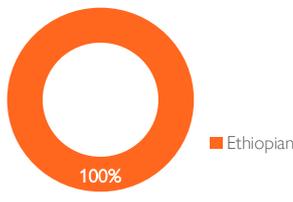
Outgoing movements were identified in the Dikhil regions through the Dikhil FMP (47%) and in Tadjourah through the Balho FMP (53%) and were mainly heading towards the regions of Oromia (47%), Amhara (33%), Tigray (20%).
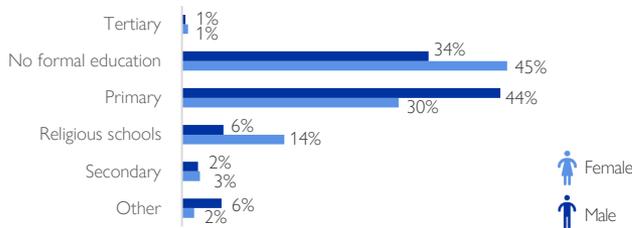
DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

SEX AND AGE GROUP

- Men
- Women
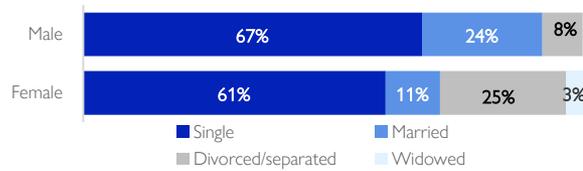- Boys
- Girls

2%
5%
29%
64%

NATIONALITIES

- Ethiopian

100%

MARITAL STATUS BY SEX [7]

	Single	Married	Divorced/separated	Widowed
Male	67%	24%	8%	
Female	61%	11%	25%	3%

[7] 1% of male respondents did not answer this question.

EDUCATION LEVEL BY SEX [6]

	Female	Male
Tertiary	1%	1%
No formal education	34%	45%
Primary	44%	30%
Religious schools	6%	14%
Secondary	2%	3%
Other	6%	2%

[6] 5% of female and 7% of male respondents did not answer this question.

PROFESSIONAL STATUS BY SEX

Other	1%	
Unemployed and looking for a job	60%	75%
Unemployed and not looking for a job	22%	19%
Self-Employed	2%	
Daily worker	5%	3%
Employed	10%	3%
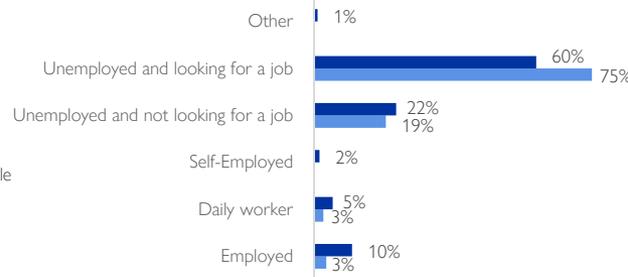
As of December, most migrants identified in FMPs were adults (64% men and 29% women), while 7 per cent were children (5% boys and 2% girls). All migrants tracked were Ethiopian.

A total of 516 children were traveling alone (77% boys and 23% girls) and 611 children were heads of household.

Of the 517 respondents (77% male and 23% female) to the flow monitoring surveys (FMS), more than half of the migrants were single (66%), while 21 per cent were married (including 24% men and 11% women), 12 per cent divorced or separated and one per cent widowed.

Nearly half of the migrants surveyed (41%) had received primary education (30% male and 44% female) and 37 per cent had received no formal education (34% male and 45% female). Additionally, 14 per cent of female migrants had attended a religious school.
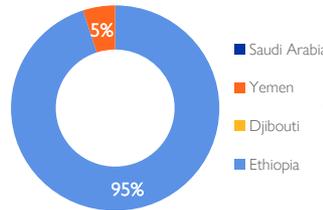
In addition, more than half of the female migrants surveyed (75%) were looking for work.
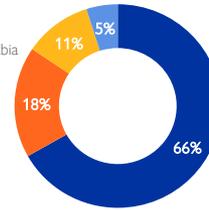
TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS

In December, almost all of the individuals identified at the FMP level had left Ethiopia (95%). Most of the migrants observed intended to reach the Arabian Peninsula (67% to Saudi Arabia and 18% to Yemen). The migrants observed traveled mainly for economic reasons (85%) and on foot (45%).

Furthermore, of the 517 people surveyed via the FMS, 76 per cent said they encountered difficulties during their journey. Male migrants are more likely to encounter or report difficulties (80%) than female migrants (62%). The most recurring challenges mentioned were lack of food and water (74%), lack of shelter (57%), and almost half of respondents who had encountered difficulties during their trip also reported lack of information (23%) or financial challenges (21%).
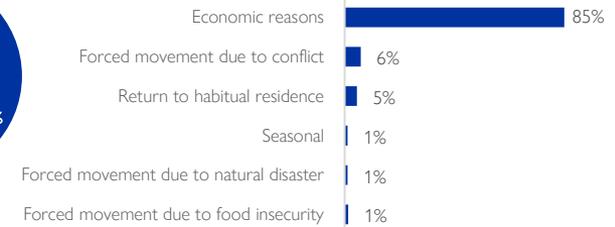
DEPARTURE COUNTRIES

- Saudi Arabia
- Yemen
- Djibouti
- Ethiopia

5%
95%

INTENDED DESTINATIONS

5%
11%
18%
66%

REASON FOR TRAVEL

Economic reasons	85%
Forced movement due to conflict	6%
Return to habitual residence	5%
Seasonal	1%
Forced movement due to natural disaster	1%
Forced movement due to food insecurity	1%

MEANS OF TRANSPORT

45% On foot
35% Car/taxi
12% Truck
7% Bus
1% Boat

Several migrants transiting through Djibouti on their way to or from the Arabian Peninsula remain stranded in Djibouti, mainly due to the lack of resources or opportunities with smugglers to continue their migratory journeys. These migrants find themselves stranded in informal sites along the Eastern Corridor where they have little or no access to basic services and are exposed to protection risks. Their priority needs are access to drinking water, food, hygiene kits and non-food items.

As of December 28, 718 migrants were stuck in 6 informal sites distributed in the regions of Dikhil (44%), Ali-Sabieh (30%), Obock (19%), and Tadjourah (7%).

MIGRANTS STRANDED IN DJIBOUTI

718 Migrants stranded in Djibouti as of 28 December 2023

29% Female
71% Male

6 Informal sites

44% in Dikhil
30% in Ali-Sabieh
19% in Obock
7% in Tadjourah

DTM in Djibouti

IOM works in collaboration with the Government of Djibouti to better understand the migratory dynamics in Djibouti as well as the profile of migrants passing through the country. IOM implements Flow Monitoring, a DTM component which consists in collecting data in the localities through which migrants transit (Flow Monitoring Points). The data presented in this monthly report provides an overview of the movements and profiles of the migrant population in Djibouti.

Flow Monitoring

Flow Monitoring is a component of the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The objective of this component is to regularly provide updated information on population flows and on the profile of populations on the move (migrants, internally displaced persons, returnees, etc.). The information and analyses obtained through the Flow Monitoring methodology provide a better understanding of the difficulties encountered by migrants throughout their migratory route or forced displacement in order to better define priorities in terms of assistance.

Spontaneous returns from Yemen

Spontaneous returns from Yemen are a component of IOM's DTM which started in May 2020. The objective of this data collection tool is to provide updated information on population flows returning from Yemen following the harsh conditions in Yemen and in the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The information and analyses offered by DTM provide a better understanding of the current difficulties encountered by migrants throughout their migratory route. While the number of arrivals is gathered through a well-established system, not all returns can be captured due to their coastal location. Thus, the number of arrivals from Yemen is most probably higher than reported.

Migrants stranded in Djibouti

Information on migrants stranded in Djibouti as well as on informal sites is collected through enumerators deployed at key transit points. Data is collected on a daily basis, during time slots when the flows are most acute. Data in this dashboard does not include flows observed in Djibouti City.

Limitations

The spatial and temporal coverage of the surveys carried out is partial and does not allow all migratory flows in the country to be captured. The data presented in this report mainly shows migration trends. Furthermore, it is possible that migrants crossing several FMPs may be counted for more than once. Thus, the total number of migrants observed at the FMPs does not necessarily reflect the true migratory flows in each region. It is also worth highlighting that the number of enumerators responsible for data collection can change from one month to the other, which can partly explain some changes in the flows observed. In addition, the data on the vulnerabilities are based on direct observations by the enumerators and should only be taken as an indication. All data included in this report are based on partial observations and are not representative of the entire migrant population. IOM assures that the data included in this report is reliable, but stresses that it does not provide a complete picture of migration movements in Djibouti.

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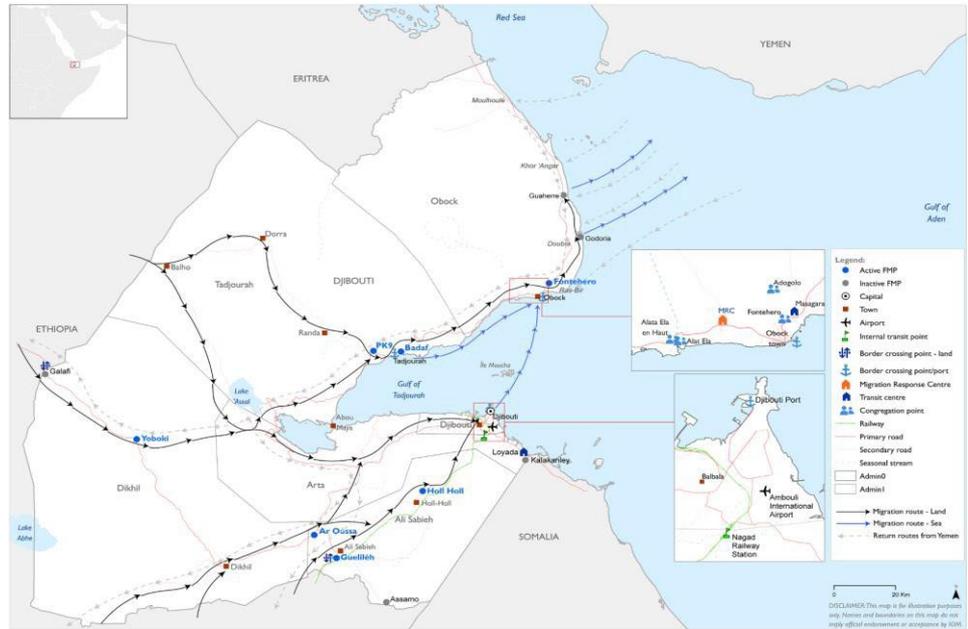
FUNDING SUPPORT

Funded by the European Union