

IOM Yemen's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) was launched in Yemen in April 2015 in an effort to better inform the humanitarian community about the location and needs of the displaced populations in Yemen. By the end of 2016, IOM Yemen began implementing the Flow Monitoring (FM) assessments to track the movement flows of groups and individuals through key points of origin, transit locations and intended destinations. The information provided through the FM assessments contributes to the Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) which provides up-to-date information on the scale of migrant and Yemeni returnee population flows and profiles.

In Yemen, DTM's FMR monitors migrant arrival on the southern coastal border and Yemeni return locations on Yemen's northern border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Enumerators placed at Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) document approximate arrival numbers of migrants and returning Yemeni nationals in order to identify different patterns of migration, and to provide quantitative estimates to help define the population of irregular migrants entering the country. FMR is not representative of all flows in Yemen and should be understood as only indicative of cross-border movement trends during the time frame indicated. Access constraints limit the ability to collect data at some migrant arrival points.

## 2022 MIGRANT ARRIVALS OVERVIEW

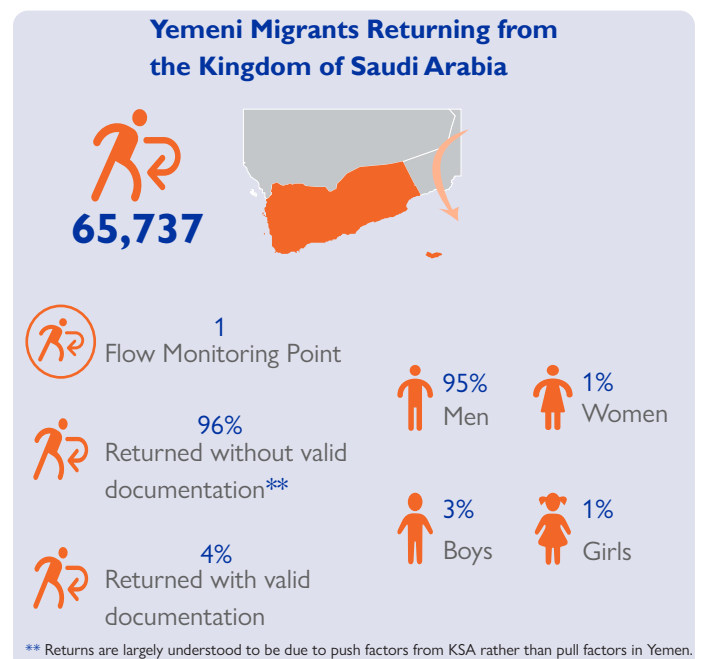
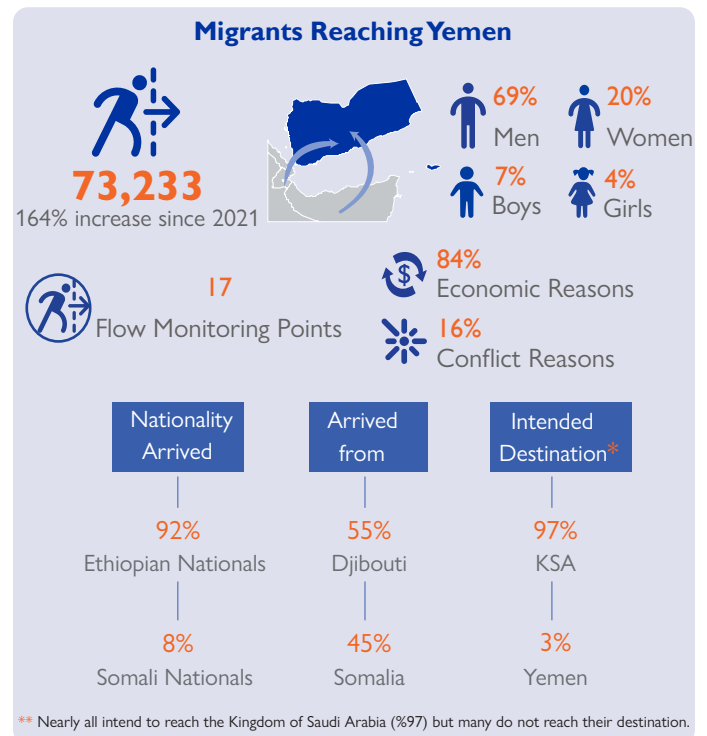
Yemen, despite the ongoing humanitarian crises in the country, continues to be a major transit point along the eastern migration route between the Horn of Africa (HoA) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). IOM's DTM recorded 73,233 migrant arrivals in Yemen in 2022, through operating at key migrant landing locations along the southern coast in the governorates of Lahj, Shabwah, and Hadramawt. Irregular migrants, mainly from Ethiopia, travel to Yemen via boats, from Djibouti and Somalia, and face severe protection risks, which worsen upon arrival in Yemen.

The main migration route starts from Ethiopia to the seaport city of Obock in Djibouti. Migrants then depart Obock and arrive at Bab Al Mandeb Strait, an area that spans the coasts of Lahj and Ta'iz governorates. A secondary route via Somalia gained traction during increased military patrolling along the main route between Djibouti and Yemen. More migrants departed from Bossaso in Somalia arriving at the coasts of Shabwah and Hadramawt than from Djibouti during six non-consecutive months of the year (January, March, June-September). The journey along this route is said to be longer and more precarious. Please note that Somali nationals are granted prima facie refugee status by the Internationally Recognized Government of Yemen ([see UNHCR for more details](#)).

The majority of migrants intend to reach Saudi Arabia (97%) but for most, as DTM field staff have observed, their transit in Yemen can last months to years. Migrants attempt to reach KSA through the Monabih district in Sa'dah governorate, mainly through Al Raq, Al Gar and Al Thabet towns which fall on the northern border.

In pursuit of better economic opportunities, migrants endure heightened inhumane conditions. Migrants are amongst the most underserved, marginalized and at-risk population groups in Yemen. With the deepening of the political and security crisis in Yemen, migration dynamics in the country have remained perilous. Migration trends seemed unaffected by the conflict as the influx of migrants was the lowest during the time of truce in 2022 (April to October). Many migrants DTM staff talked to were not aware of the war. Trends seem more related to seasonal and otherwise changing weather conditions at sea as well as security measures on

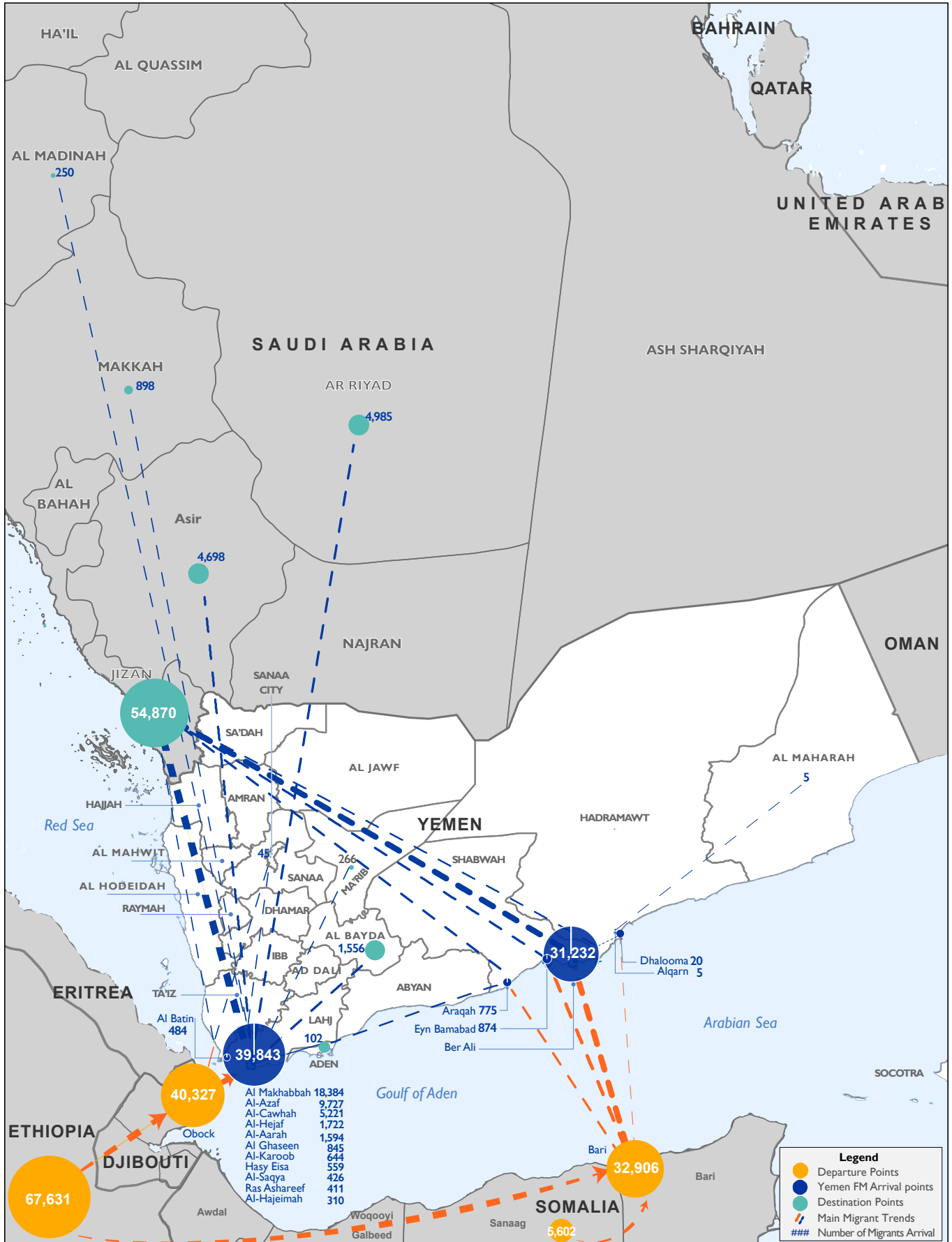
## KEY FINDINGS



Djiboutian or even Sudi Arabian borders.

Fleeing destitution, poverty and often violence, migrants in Yemen experience aggression, abuse and exploitation. The majority are living in dire conditions with extremely limited-to-no access to essential services such as shelter, food, water and healthcare.

**2022 MIGRANT ARRIVALS MOVEMENT PATTERN**



Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only and should not be used for navigation. IOM can not take responsibility for any damage or injury resulting from the use of this map.

## MIGRATION TRENDS

In 2022, DTM estimates that 73,233 migrants entered Yemen, a 164 per cent increase compared to 27,693 migrant arrivals in 2021 but still just over half of the flow recorded by DTM in 2019 (138,213 migrant arrivals) before COVID-19 pandemic related movement restrictions were put in place.

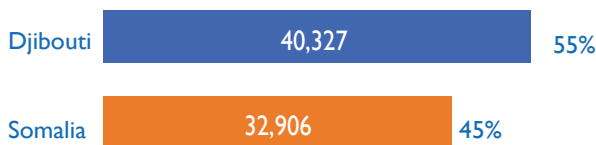
Whilst flows of migrants increased in 2022 compared to 2021, the ongoing conflict has left thousands of migrants stranded across Yemen with limited options for safe movement and the risk of forcible transfer across frontlines. IOM estimates that nearly 43,000<sup>1</sup> migrants are stranded throughout the country, grappling with dire condition and vulnerable to experiencing grave abuse.

IOM conducted the [Area Assessment](#) to inform the humanitarian community on the number of IDPs, IDP returnees and migrants in IRG-controlled areas in October to November 2022. Within 12 assessed governorates reaching 118 districts, 294 sub-districts and 3,371 locations, IOM tracked the presence of 28,916 migrants. The majority of migrants were found in Ma'arib (26%), Aden (22%), Shabwah (21%) and Al Maharah (18%). Further data is available in the above linked report as well as a [dataset](#) and [map](#).

During the first quarter of the year, flow volumes significantly increased compared to the same period in previous year. Between January and March 2022, DTM tracked 19,652 migrants arriving in Yemen, compared with 5,114 in the same period in 2021, but 27,948 in 2020 before movement restrictions appeared in Yemen.

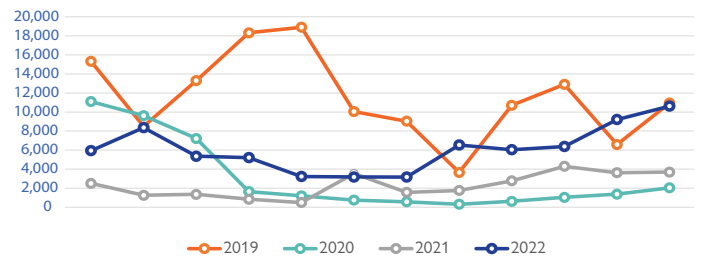
The rising trend of migrant flows continued in the fourth quarter of 2022 and is most likely linked to improved weather conditions and the easing of COVID-19 related mobility restrictions. According to anecdotal evidence, the rise was also heavily influenced by the lack of security measures from the Djiboutian coast guards and the smugglers tended to use bigger boats to take between 250 to 300 migrants on a single trip.

### Migrants by Country of Departure

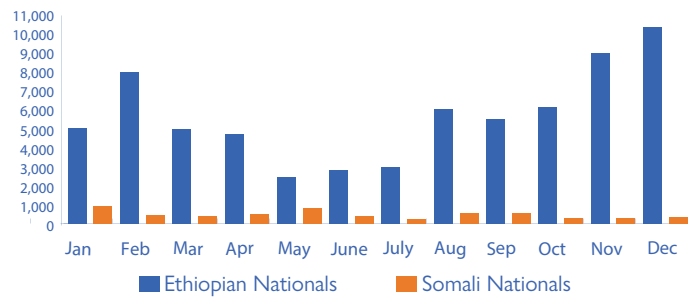


1- IOM estimated the number to be 43,000 migrants during 2022, but is likely to have increased since due to a continued positive net influx of migrants.

### Number of Migrant Arrivals Tracked per Month and Year



### Number of Migrant Arrivals Tracked per Month

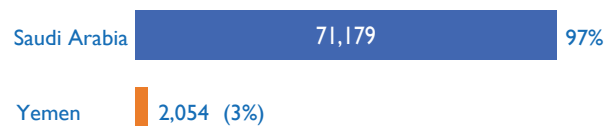


### Reported Reasons for Migration



**Economic Reasons 84%**  
**Conflict Reasons 16%**

### Migrants by Country of Destination



## MIGRANT PROFILES AND ROUTES

As in previous years, the majority of migrants during 2022, an estimated 40,327 total (55%), arrived from Djibouti to Lahj governorate, while 32,906 (45%) arrived through Somalia to Shabwah and Hadramawt governorate. Among migrants arriving from Somalia, 32,881 were recorded in Shabwah's FMPs, and 25 in Hadramawt. Despite the decrease in arrivals since the pre-pandemic period, the profile of migrants in Yemen remains similar. The majority were Ethiopian (67,631 migrants), comprising 92 per cent of the migrant population, and a smaller 8 per cent Somali nationals (5,602 migrants).

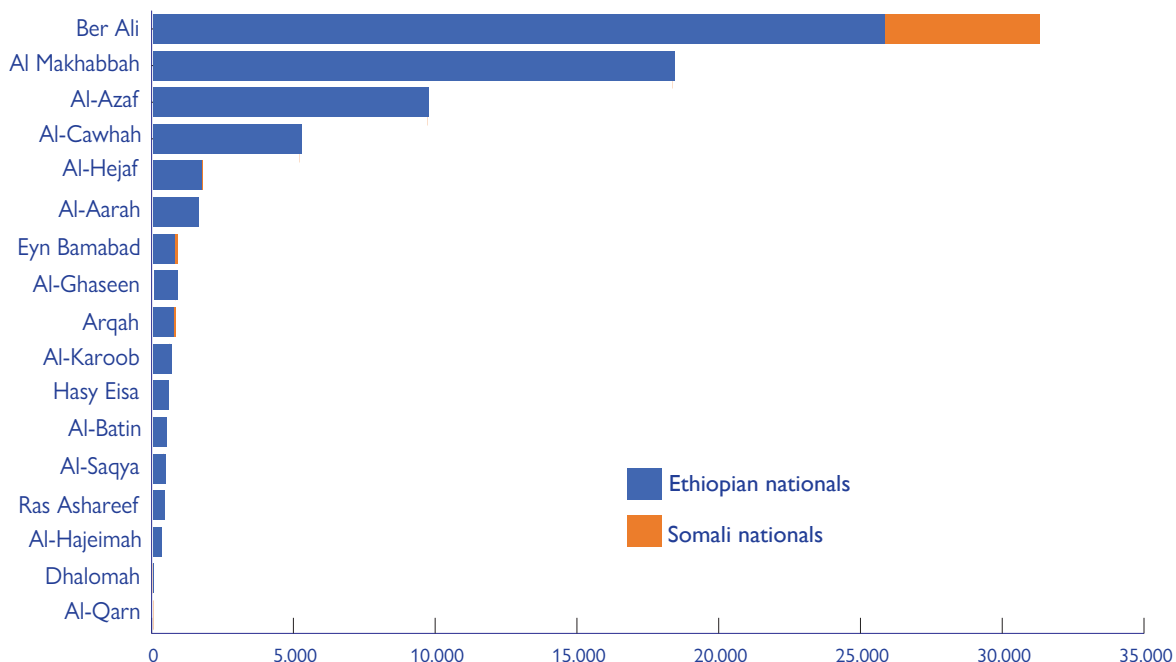
Throughout the year 69 per cent of those traveling along this route were men (50,557 migrants) and seven per cent (5,034 migrants) boys<sup>1</sup>. Women (20%) and girls (4%) made up nearly a quarter of arrivals in 2022 (14,599 women and 3,043 girls) and were exposed to significant protection risks en route.

Some 97 per cent, or 71,179 migrants, intended to reach KSA, seeking better economic opportunities, primarily crossing from Sa'dah governorate in Yemen. The majority of migrants (54,870 or 75%) indicated Jizan was their destination point, a port city in southwest KSA that lies directly to the north of Yemen's border. Others cited Al-Riyad (7%) or Asir (7%) as destination while 11 per cent did not have a specific destination point in KSA. According to anecdotal evidence, the majority expressed being unaware of the conflict and challenges in Yemen, only learning of the harsh realities of the situation upon arrival.

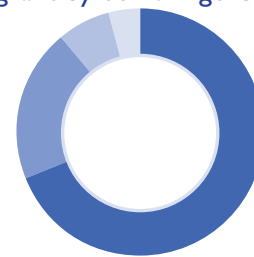
In 2022, DTM teams in Djibouti and Somalia recorded over 6,000 migrants (5,970 to Djibouti and 431 to Somalia where DTM activities are pending since March 2022) taking on the risky return journey by boat from Yemen.

<sup>1</sup> - Boys and girls are 17 years of age or younger.

### Migrants by Nationality and FMPs

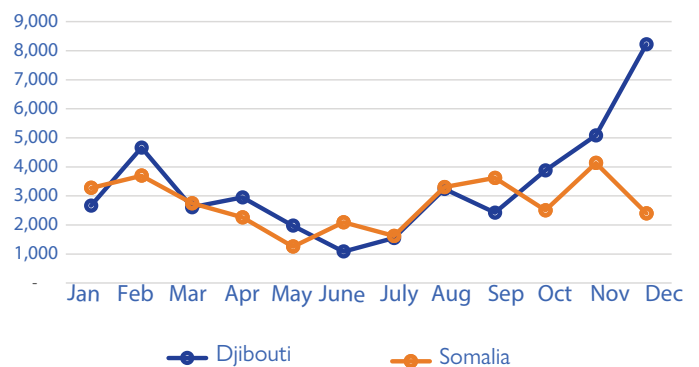


### Migrant by Sex & Age Groups







Men 69% Women 20% Boys 7% Girls 4%

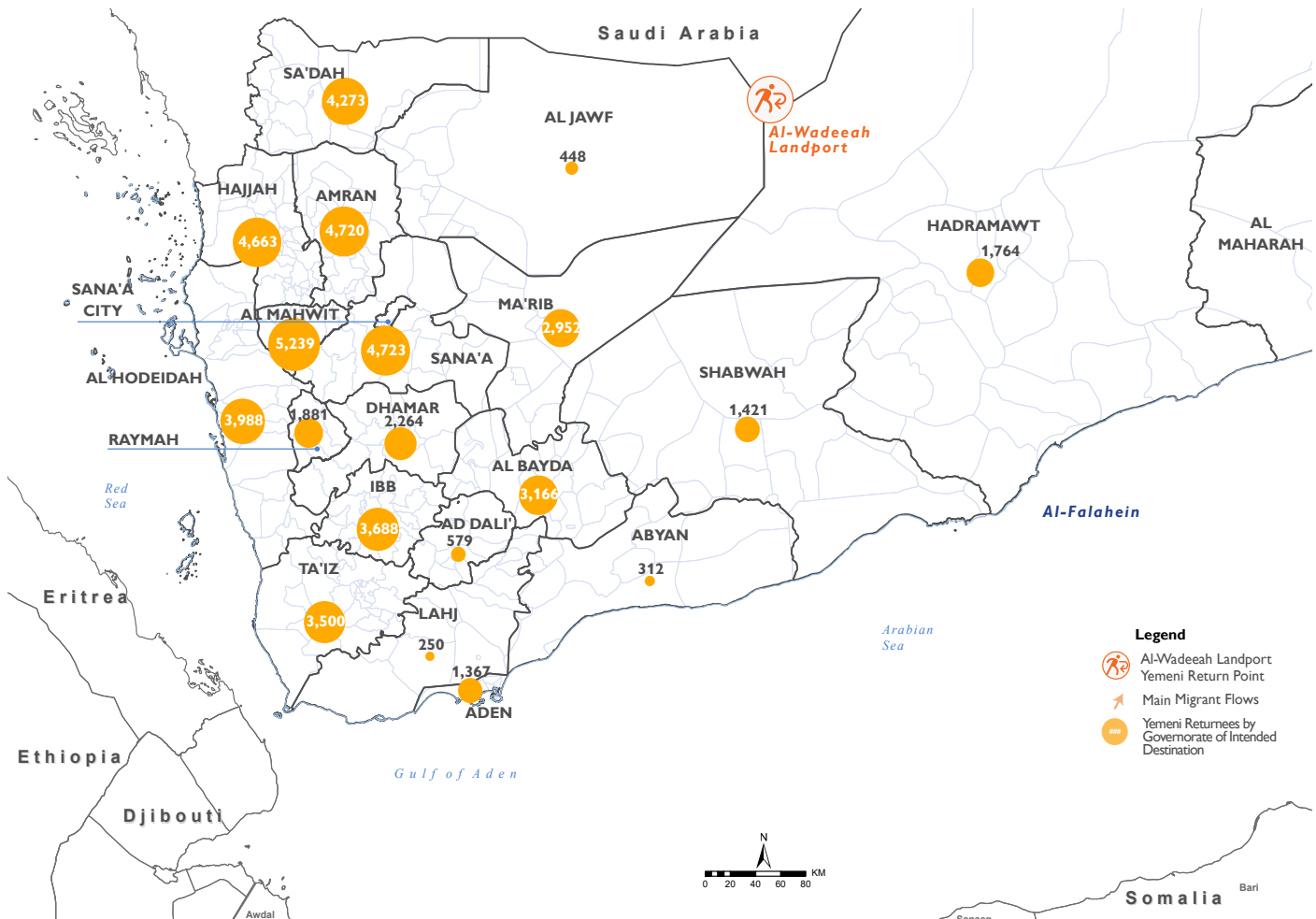
### Arrivals from Djibouti vs Somalia 2022



### Vulnerabilities

-  1,176 Unaccompanied children
-  58 Children less than 5 years of age
-  17 Elderly persons (+60)
-  4 Pregnant or lactating

## YEMENI MIGRANT RETURNEES FROM KSA TO YEMEN



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In April 2017, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia launched a campaign titled “A Nation without Violations”, granting all irregular migrants an amnesty period of 90 days to leave the country without facing penalties. In July 2021, Saudi authorities imposed new regulations requiring businesses to limit the number of workers in the country from certain nationalities, by not renewing and even terminating their working permits<sup>1</sup>. Workers who couldn't find other employers to sponsor them were forced to leave the country or faced deportation. In 2021, thousands of Yemeni nationals began returning to the country after reportedly facing visa issues in neighboring KSA. Return numbers can therefore not be seen as sign of improved conditions in Yemen but rather as indicative of worsening conditions for Yemeni nationals living abroad. As of 2022, the price of a one-year work permit valid for limited number of occupations cost 1,800 SAR – a price that is too high for large part of this labour migrant population<sup>2</sup>.

All Yemeni nationals return through the border crossing point of Al Wadeeah land port in the north of Al Abr district in Hadramawt governorate, established along the KSA border. In June 2021, DTM began monitoring these returns by reactivating Al Wadeeah Flow Monitoring Point (FMP). DTM scaled up activities at the border by coordinating with local authorities, to include day and night flows and thus capturing more accurate figures.



In 2022, DTM recorded 65,737 Yemeni migrants returning from Saudi Arabia to Yemen, compared to 27,845 in 2021 and 14,161 in 2020. Throughout the reporting period, the majority of Yemeni returnees had faced deportation after irregularly entering KSA. Others did not have any other option but to return to Yemen because they could no longer afford the recent immigration and taxation rules. Around 96 per cent of Yemeni returnees (63,022 individuals) returned without travel documents and only four per cent (2,657) returned with a final exit stamp.

Returning Yemeni nationals were predominately men (95%), only two per cent women and three per cent children. This route continues to be characterized by a high volume of unaccompanied migrant children. In 2022, roughly one in three children was unaccompanied.

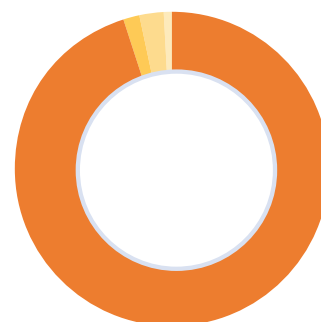
1- The European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (ECDHR): *The Plight of Yemeni Workers in Saudi Arabia* (accessed Jan 2023).

2- Charlotte Lysa, *Governing Refugees in Saudi Arabia (1948–2022)*, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 2022.; hdac027, <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdac027>.

### Vulnerabilities of Returning Yemeni Nationals

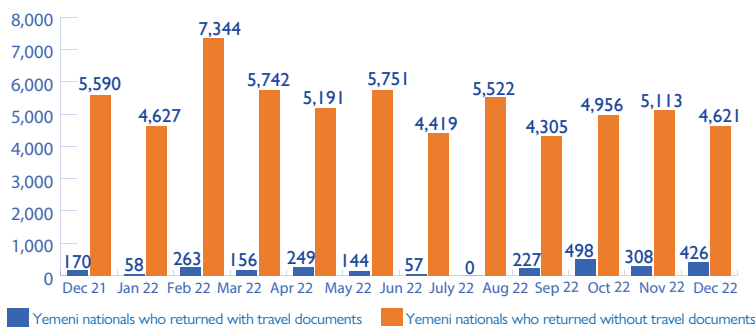
-  713 Unaccompanied children
-  561 Elderly persons (+60)
-  136 Children less than 5 years of age
-  57 Pregnant or lactating

### Returnees by Sex & Age Groups



Men 95%      Boys 2%  
Women 2%      Girls 1%

### Returnees by Travel Documents and Month



Irregular migrants (those who do not possess legal residence in KSA) make up most of the flow from Saudi Arabia to Yemen and their movement is relatively constant- throughout the entire week and during the day and night.

Regular Yemeni migrants (with valid documents) return to Yemen in fewer numbers. They mainly return because their residency period has expired, and they are unable to renew their permits or to visit family during the holidays.

To access the Flow Monitoring Report's 2022 dataset, please click [here](#).

#### ABOUT DTM

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in Yemen is implementing various assessment activities including the Rapid Displacement Tracking (RDT), the Baseline Sub-Area Assessment and Flow Monitoring Registries and Surveys. DTM Yemen also supports the humanitarian planning cycle (HNO/HRP) and clusters with implementation and data processing of the Multi-Cluster Location Assessment (MCLA).

Disclaimer: Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) is not representative of all flows in Yemen and should be understood as only indicative of migration trends of the unknown total number of migrants arriving in Yemen at Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) during the time frame indicated. Access constraints limit the ability to collect data at some migrant arrival points.

Flow Monitoring Activities are Supported by



<https://migration.iom.int/yemen>

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