



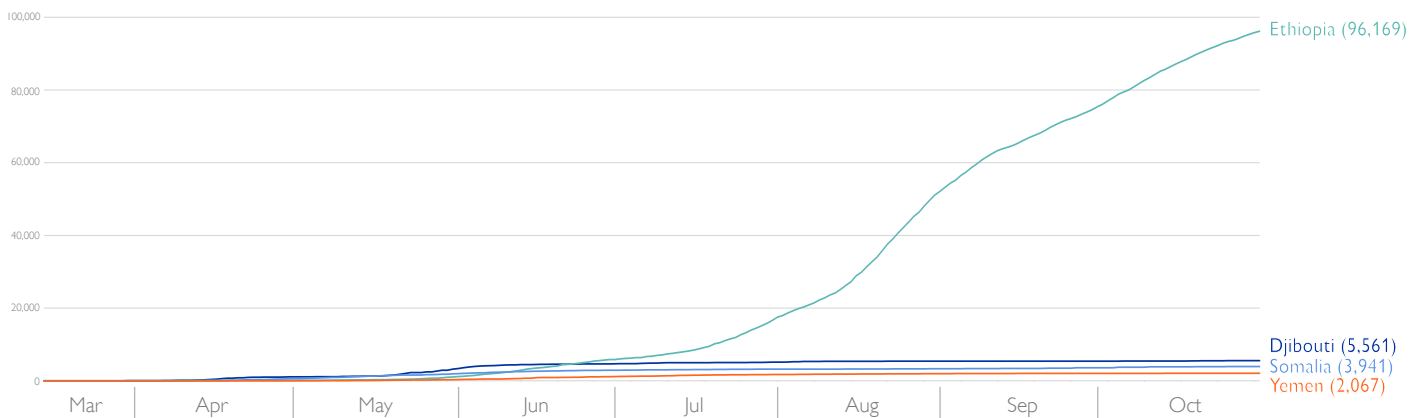
Children wash their hands at a water point in a displacement site in Marib. Photo: © IOM / Olivia Headon

## 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), Migrant Response Centres (MRCs),<sup>1</sup> Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) data, as well as anecdotal information provided by IOM team members working in the region.

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

Incidence Trend of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases as of 31 October 2020



Source: Ministry of Health (MHC) Reports, World Health Organization (WHO)

<sup>1</sup> 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. Seven MRCs are currently operational in the Horn of Africa: Obock (Djibouti), Hargeisa, Bossaso (Somalia), Semera, Metema, Dire Dawa and Tog-Wajaale (Ethiopia).

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## COVID-19 EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

As of 31 October 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases along the Eastern Corridor stood at 107,738. **Ethiopia is still experiencing a rise in community transmission, while Djibouti and Somalia continue to experience a steady increase in new detected cases.** Ethiopia continued recording the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases at 96,169 (89.2% of total cases). Following Ethiopia is Djibouti with 5,561 confirmed cases (5.2% of total cases) and Somalia with 3,941 cases (3.7% of total cases), while Yemen cases amounted to 2,067 (1.9% of total cases). As of 31 October 2020, the number of COVID-19 related deaths along the Eastern Corridor stood at 2,235, the majority of which were recorded in Ethiopia (66% of total deaths). Yemen holds the highest case fatality rate (CFR) at approximately 29.1%, compared to Djibouti (CFR 1.1%), Ethiopia (CFR 1.5%) and Somalia (CFR 2.6%). This is much higher than the global average CFR of 2.5% and is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war. As of 31 October 2020, Ethiopia held the highest number of active cases (42,183), followed by Somalia (652), Yemen (99) and Djibouti (52). **Due to Yemen's various challenges and limited testing capacity, COVID-19 figures appear relatively low and the disease keeps spreading undetected among the Yemeni population.**

## COVID-19 MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

**As part of COVID-19 prevention measures, Djibouti reclosed its land borders for a period of 15 days effective on 20 October, except for the transfer of good and merchandise.** Between the reopening of the country's air, land and sea borders on 17 July and the end of October, the Djiboutian health authorities recorded a 3.84% COVID-19 positivity rate and a 98.76% recovery rate among all incoming passengers screened at the various Points of Entry (PoEs). From 20 October, only nationals of Djibouti were allowed to return to Djibouti through land border crossings. In Somalia, all airports and seaports remained operational in October, and two out of 21 land border crossings were open. Meanwhile in Ethiopia, the five-month state of emergency due to COVID-19 has been lifted since September, and all air and land borders have reopened for tourism. **Since the end of September, Yemen's Sana'a International Airport has reopened for humanitarian flights.** A total of 15 sea border points and three land border points have remained partially open for movements throughout October; transit points along land borders were partially open to facilitate the return of stranded Yemenis. In addition, inter-governorate public movement tracking continued at 10 internal transit points, especially in Taizz and Al-Bayda.

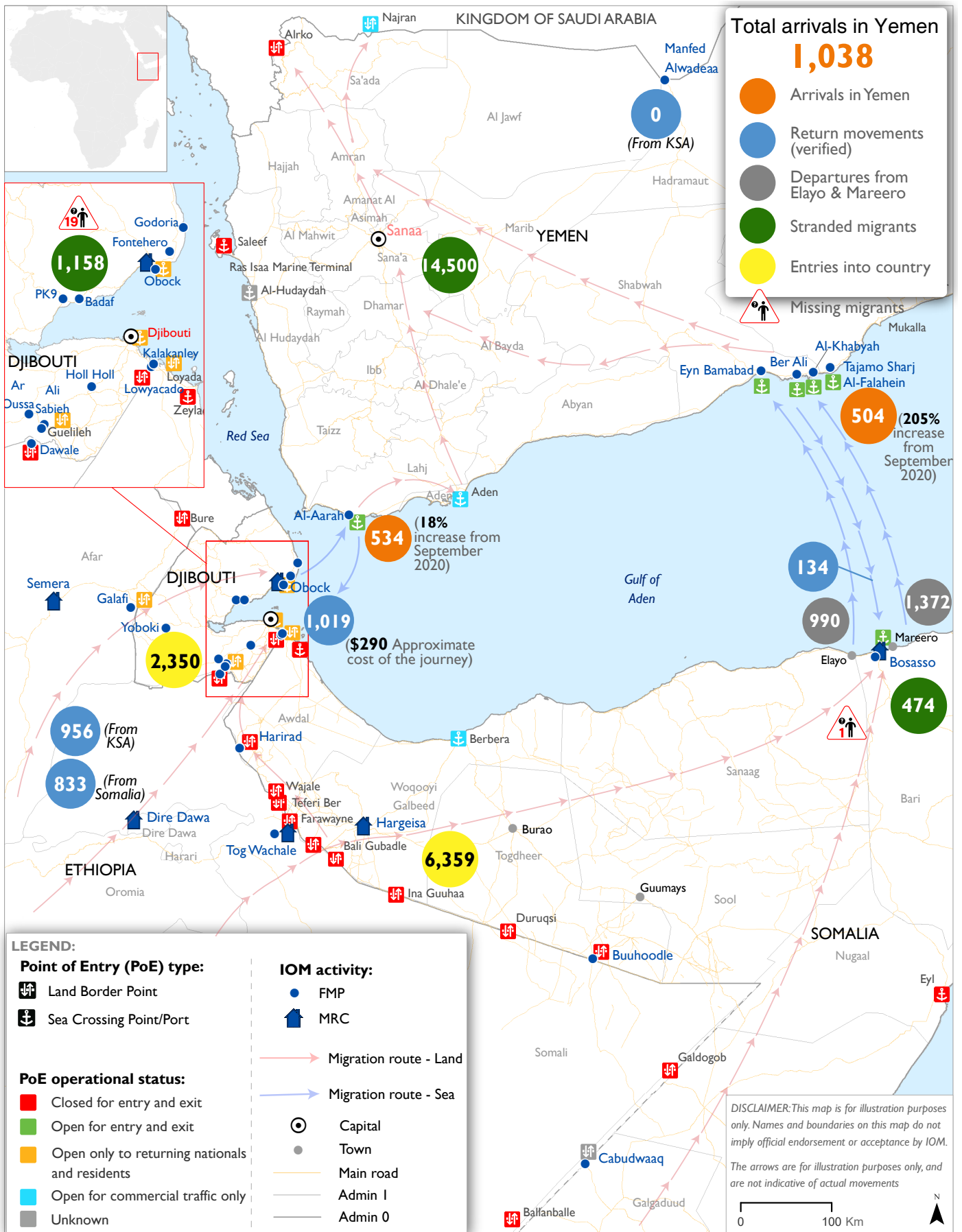
## COVID-19 IMPACT ON MIGRANT FLOWS

Overall migrants' arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa increased by 68% between September (617) and October (1,038) as restrictions on mobility eased, however, this represents a decrease of over 71% in relation to overall arrival trends between January and October of 2019 (120,686 arrivals in 2019 and 34,426 arrivals in 2020). **During October 2020, 51% of the arrivals came from Djibouti while 49% originated from Somalia.** Meanwhile, spontaneous return movements of Ethiopians from Yemen to Djibouti continued to be observed with over 4,241 returns since May 2020, 1,019 of which occurred in October. Please see Map 1 on the following page for an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on migrant flows along the Eastern Corridor.

## MIGRANT PROTECTION CONCERNS

**By the end of October 2020, it is estimated that over 14,500 migrants were stranded in Yemen, 1,158 in Djibouti and between 400 and 500 in Somalia.** Their situation is now normalizing with the reopening of borders and some resumption of AVR and Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) assistance which would assist in allowing migrants to return. With the instrumentalization of COVID-19 mitigation measures, migrants in Yemen continue to face the threat of arrest, detention and forced transfers by authorities: thousands of migrants have been forcibly transferred from the northern to the southern governorates since March 2020. **Spontaneous returnees from Yemen to Djibouti continue reporting extreme violence experienced in Yemen not only at the hands of smugglers, armed groups and government authorities, but also from other Ethiopian migrants of different ethnic groups.**

MAP 1 | COVID-19 IMPACT ON MIGRATION ALONG THE EASTERN CORRIDOR (OCTOBER 2020)



## MIGRANT ASSISTANCE (MRC/AVR)

IOM continues to provide basic life-saving assistance and psychosocial support at the MRCs. IOM Djibouti is currently assisting 705 vulnerable migrants at the MRC in Obock, as AVR assistance is still severely limited. COVID-19 risk sensitization is ongoing among stranded migrants and IOM is providing search and rescue operations along the coast of Obock. **AVR services resumed at the MRC Bossaso in October, although at reduced levels, with a total of 21 vulnerable migrants, including 16 unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs), returned to Addis Ababa from Garowe, Puntland.** In addition, 159 new migrants were assisted at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa, while over 400 migrants continue awaiting for AVR.<sup>2</sup> In Yemen, movement restrictions, the deterioration of migrants' living conditions and the increased danger migrants are facing due to a variety of factors are leaving many with no other option than seeking to return home. In this scenario, the resumption of VHR assistance is a priority to address life-threatening conditions migrants are living in Yemen. While the Government of Ethiopia continue the preparations for the planned repatriation of 1,400 Ethiopians from Aden in southern Yemen, in the north, little progress has been seen as negotiations are still pending with De Facto Authorities (DFA).

## MIGRANT RETURNS

**Returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards Ethiopia (956) continued in October though no returns of Yemeni nationals to Yemen occurred in this month.** Returns to Ethiopia decreased by over 65%, between March and April 2020, falling from 8,963 to 2,757. After a one-month suspension throughout May, 387 migrants were returned to Addis Ababa in June, but no other return had been carried out since then until September when 962 Ethiopians were returned. Returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Yemen had also been put on hold until September, although there was a brief resumption in activity during July when 363 returnees were tracked in Manfed Alwadeeya, and 478 returns occurred in September. Overall, the returns of Yemeni nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia since January 2020 has amounted to 13,895, almost one-third of the returns recorded in the same period in 2019 (41,958). Additionally, 259 Yemeni returnees travelled from Djibouti to Yemen in June and an additional seven travelled from Somalia to Yemen in July. **Similarly, returns to Somalia from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continued, and although the total number flown back to Mogadishu was not confirmed by the Immigration and Naturalization Directorate (IND), 89 were referred for assistance to IOM.**

## QUARANTINE MEASURES

During the month of October, the National Office for Assistance to Refugees and Disaster Victims (ONARS) organized two movements of migrants (557 migrants in total) from the Massagara transit site in Obock region to the Ar-Aoussa quarantine site in the Ali Sabieh region, where migrants were COVID-19 tested and quarantined before their travel to Ethiopia. **In early October, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health announced a new directive according to which persons arriving in Ethiopia with a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test result no older than 120 hours were to home quarantine.** However, returnees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were nonetheless quarantined by a decision of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute as a precaution. **At the same time, almost all the quarantine centres in Addis Ababa and the regional states were closed due to the re-opening of schools and universities on 19 October.**

<sup>2</sup> The number of migrants awaiting AVR assistance is an estimate based on the number of unattended requests received. However, as the service has been suspended for over six months due to COVID-19 restrictions and stranded migrants have spontaneously returned to Ethiopia, the precise number of migrants awaiting AVR would be available only by conducting a new registration.



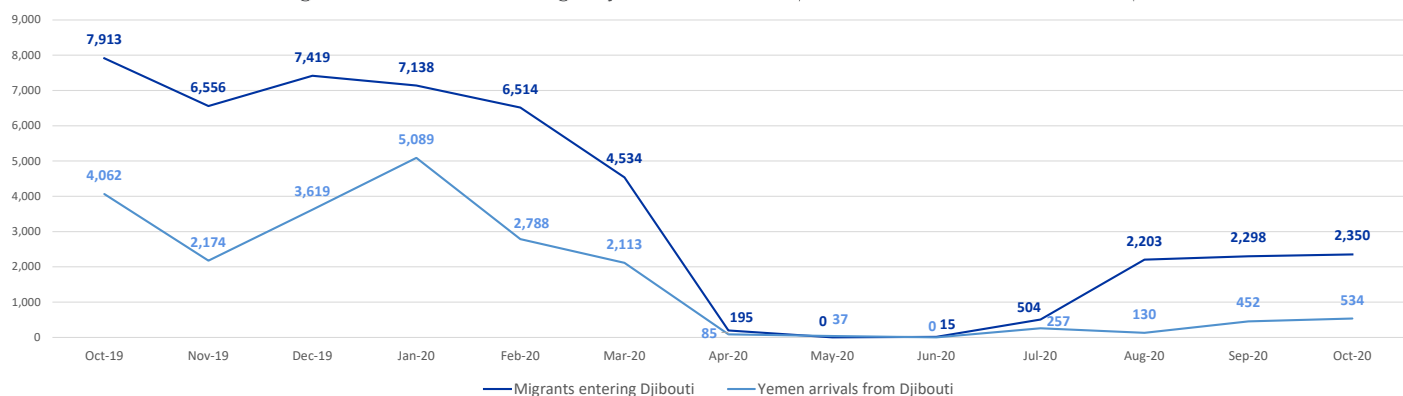
## DJIBOUTI SITUATION

As of 31 October, Djibouti recorded a total of 5,561 confirmed individuals, 61 deaths and 5,441 recoveries. The number of new COVID-19 positive cases in October (145) was five times higher than in September (29). Following this increase in cases, Djibouti ordered the closure of all land borders for a period of 15 days on 20 October. Exceptions were in place for the transfer of good and merchandise, and only nationals of Djibouti were allowed to return to Djibouti through land border crossings. Since 17 July, Djibouti's borders have remained open under strict health protocols for travellers issued by the Ministry of Health, and the Djiboutian health authorities recorded a 3.84% COVID-19 positivity rate and a 98.76% recovery rate among all incoming passengers screened at the various PoEs.

### Migrant Flows Observed Through Djibouti and at Yemen Points of Entry

- In October, migrant movements into Djibouti increased for the fourth consecutive month with 2,350 migrants (25.5% female and 74.6% male) compared to 2,298 observed last month. From May to October, 7,490 arrivals from Ethiopia have been recorded. All of these were Ethiopian nationals tracked along Djibouti's western borders at various FMPs; this is an increase of 2% from the 2,298 migrant entries observed in September as migrants continue to attempt to migrate along the Eastern Route. Interestingly, this increase in arrivals occurred despite the temporary closure of borders during the latter half of the month;
- 534 arrivals from Djibouti were tracked in Yemen near Al-Aarah FMP in Lahj governorate, all of whom were Ethiopian nationals. A majority of the migrants were adult men (478) and only 50 were women, while six male children were also tracked; between 85 to 230 migrants arrived on each of the four boats that came ashore between 6 and 31 October;

*Migrant Movements through Djibouti to Yemen (October 2019 - October 2020)*



- Spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Djibouti, although organized through smugglers, continued in the current month with 1,019 arrivals in October, and a total of 4,241 returns tracked between May and October.

### Migrant Protection Concerns

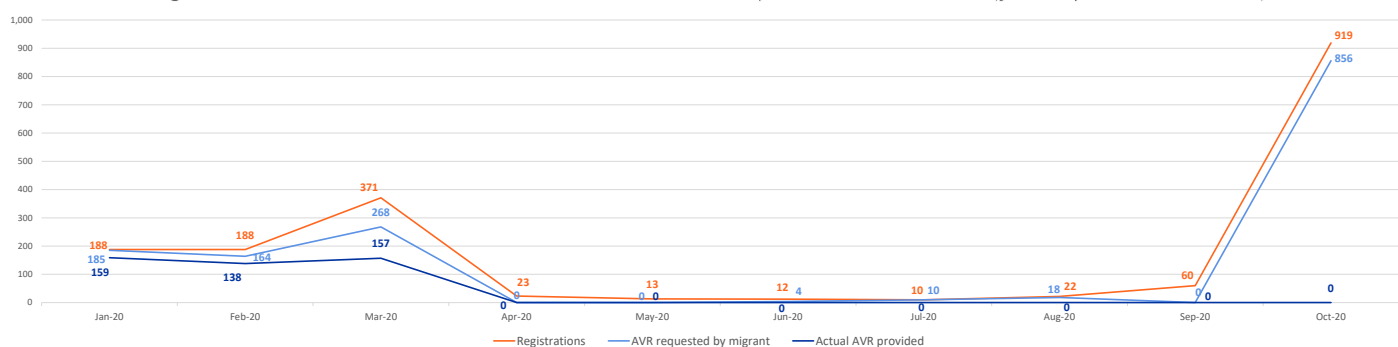
- Migrants returning from Yemen to Djibouti continue to report experiences of violence, deprivation and abuse. Most migrants return because they are unable to proceed into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia due to border closures and strict controls and are given the option by smugglers to be taken back to Ethiopia. Allegedly the cost of the journey from Yemen to Djibouti is around 10,000 ETB (around 294 USD) but migrants that are dropped off at the coast in Obock are in much worse conditions as compared to the journey outwards as a result of the difficulties faced in Yemen and the scarcity of financial resources. The 50 km return journey through the deserts often results in tragedy as more migrants go missing or are unable to survive during this leg;
- During the month of October, a total of 27 migrants died or were reported missing. Almost all the deaths/disappearances (26) occurred on two separate incidents which occurred on 2 and 15 October off the coast of Guehere in Djibouti. These migrants were forcefully thrown off the boats into the sea by the smugglers and forced to swim ashore, resulting in most of them dying by drowning (21), while five bodies were never recovered. The bodies of those who drowned were washed ashore, and recovered and buried by IOM officials and the Djibouti Coast Guard. A total of 60 survivors from both incidences managed to swim to shore, and were treated for minor injuries and shock, and cared for by IOM staff at the MRC in Obock. One other death which was reported by DTM enumerators occurred in the Arta region in Djibouti, and was attributed to dehydration as the body was recovered in the desert. All the missing migrants were Ethiopian males aged between 20 and 35 years old;

- As of October, the government-managed Massagara site was closed, so most of the returnees flocked to the MRC in Obock for first assistance, before they were to be transferred to the Ar-Aoussa quarantine site in Ali Sabieh region. Here, conflict among migrants is not infrequent, especially when there is an unbalance in the representation of different ethnicities;
- Both the closure of the Djibouti-Ethiopia border and the stricter border controls in Yemen have left many migrants stranded in the country. As of 31 October, 1,158 migrants on their way to the Arab Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered in 18 spontaneous sites located along the migration route. All the stranded migrants were Ethiopian nationals and most of them were men (86%). Immediate needs included water, food, hygiene kits and non-food items (NFIs);
- When asked about COVID-19 awareness, around 63% of all migrants tracked through Djibouti reported to be aware of the COVID-19 outbreak and this represents a decrease from the 73% reported in September.

## Migrant Assistance (MRC/AVR)

- The MRC in Obock was assisting, as of 31 October, 705 vulnerable migrants including new arrivals from Ethiopia, returns from Yemen, as well as migrants who have been stranded for several months. A total of 919 new migrants were admitted to the centre in October, which is a sharp increase from the 60 registered in the previous month; this increase was precipitated by the closure of the government-run Massagara reception site;
- Similar to previous months, AVR assistance remains suspended for all but the most vulnerable of migrants. Additional hurdles with this were faced due to re-closure of the border with Ethiopia for two weeks since 20 October. However, while no new AVR requests were received in September, 856 AVR requests were received in October;
- With the increased number of spontaneous arrivals from Yemen and the many casualties witnessed in the past two months due to the reckless practices of smugglers and the difficulties in which migrants have to walk to reach Obock town, the MRC has set up search and rescue activities between Obock City and Khor Angar. An ambulance with medical staff assists migrants en route, providing medical care and water to those in distress.

Registrations at the MRC in Obock and AVR Services Requested and Provided (January - October 2020)



## Quarantine Measures

- In addition to the 85 migrants sent by the Djiboutian authorities on 10 October, IOM with the support of the Djiboutian authorities sent 472 migrants on 13 October from the Massagara site in the Obock region to the Ar-Aoussa quarantine site in the Ali Sabieh region to facilitate their departure to Ethiopia after seven days of quarantine and COVID-19 testing. On 28 October, another group of 337 migrants were also planned to be transported by IOM with the support of the authorities to the Ar-Aoussa quarantine site, but due to logistical issues, the movement was postponed.

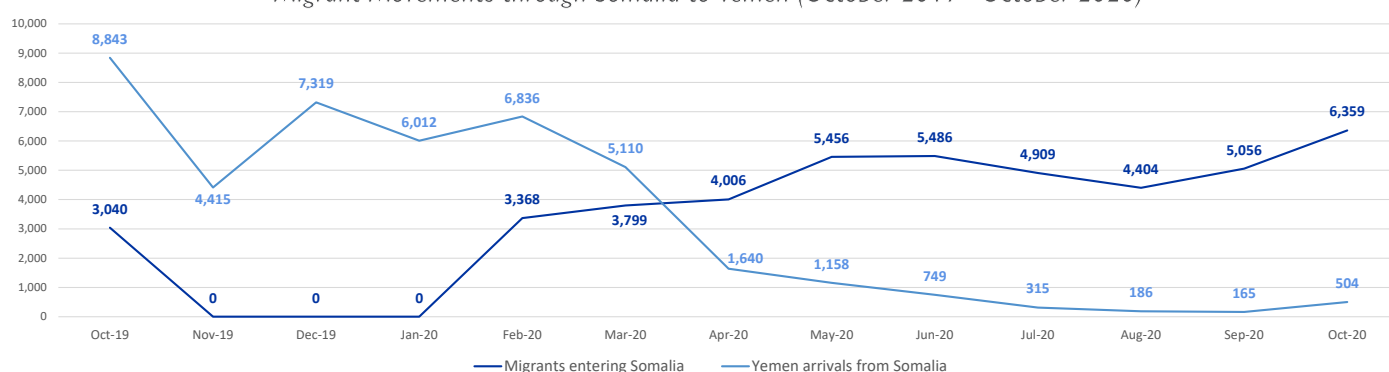
## SOMALIA SITUATION

As of 31 October, Somalia reported 3,941 confirmed positive COVID-19 individuals, 104 deaths and 3,185 recoveries. A total of 353 new COVID-19 infections were recorded in October, compared to 278 new infections in September – an almost 27% increase. International and domestic air services continued to operate in October, while all seaports remained open for cargo. Land border crossings have started to reopen with two of 21 points open in October. In addition, the border between Somalia and Kenya remains closed as well as the border with Ethiopia, though some movement of people and commodities is allowed, subject to agreements between local authorities in the border area. The border with Djibouti remained open for cross-border commercial trade only during the first half of the month, however, there was a complete closure of all cross-border movement during the latter half in an effort to control the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases. Despite the official closure, Flow Monitoring (FM) activities continued to track movements across the border between the two countries.

## Migrant Flows Observed Through Somalia and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Yemen arrivals from Somalia stood at 504 in October, a 205% increase from the 165 arrivals recorded in September; the increase was likely affected by the calming of unfavorable weather conditions following the later summer months and the relative opening of borders between the various countries. Similar to previous months, the largest proportion of these migrants were Ethiopian (85%), with the remainder being Somali (15%) nationals. As in September, the majority of the migrants arriving in Yemen from Somalia were adult males (73%), while 17% were adult females, and 11% were children, of which 86% (41) were UMCs;
- FM data showed a marked increase in migrant entries into Somalia with 6,359 movements observed in October versus 5,056 movements tracked in September; almost all the migrants were Ethiopian nationals (99.3%). A total of 37 Yemeni nationals were also tracked intending to return to Yemen from Somalia;
- As in September, a significant number of Ethiopians travelled through Djibouti to Somalia (1,056), which is a substantial increase from the 500 recorded in September. These movements made up 17% of all the migrants tracked entering Somalia;
- Similar to Djibouti, spontaneous return movements from Yemen are currently ongoing, and an overall 134 migrants were tracked upon arrival in October, of which 55 migrants arrived in Berbera (14 Somalis and 41 Yemenis) and 79 arrived in Bossaso (all Somali nationals);

Migrant Movements through Somalia to Yemen (October 2019 - October 2020)



Note: There were no migrant entries into Somalia for the period from November 2019 to January 2020 due to the temporary closure of Djibouti borders to Somalia.

- Unverified reports received by IOM stated that 1,372 migrants departed by boat to Yemen from Mareero, a small town 15 km east of Bossaso. These departures represented a slight decrease of 16% as compared to September when 1,415 departures were reported. Spontaneous returns of Ethiopians continue with approximately 30 migrants leaving Somaliland each week crossing at Wajaale border.

## Migrant Protection Concerns

- IOM estimates that between 400 and 500 migrants continue to be stranded in and around Bossaso, with few options available to continue their journey or to return home;
- The Ethiopian border with Somaliland at Wajaale town remains closed from Ethiopia's side, yet irregular migrants continue entering Somaliland via two main routes. The first route goes through the east of Somaliland, and migrants usually pass through Hargeisa, Berbera and Burao with the main aim of reaching Puntland. The second route cuts across the west side, through Borama, Hariirad and Lowyado. Migrants on this route often aim to reach Obock via Djibouti and then continue to Yemen;<sup>3</sup>
- Due to the closure of the Djiboutian land borders on 20 October, a number of Ethiopian migrants from Oromia became stranded in the town of Lowyado in the Awdal region as they were unable to cross the border and return to Ethiopia.

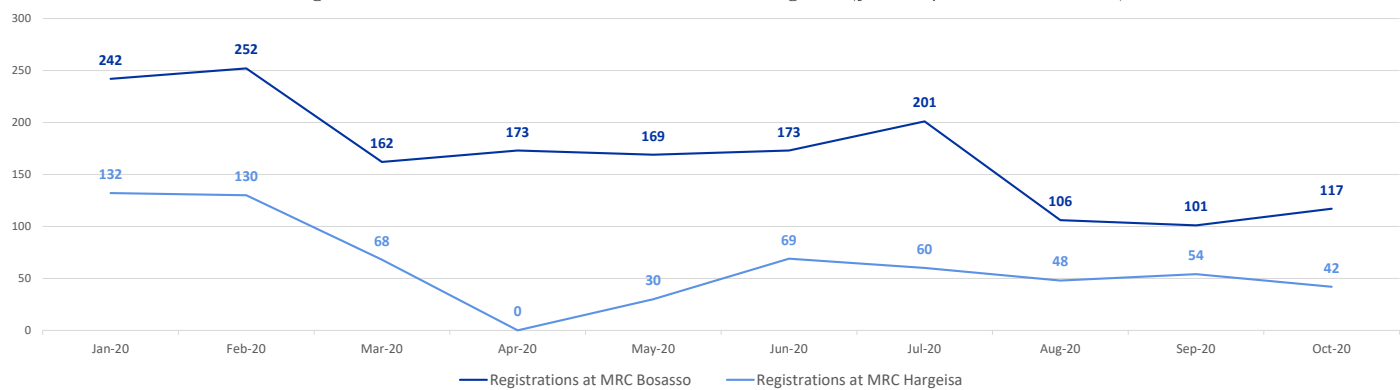
## Migrant Assistance (MRC/AVR)

### Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

- Arrivals in Puntland varied with a downward trend identified over the course of the month entering from Gumasor. Assistance in Puntland is usually provided at the reception facility run by UNHCR in Bossaso;
- Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers are still reported engaging in begging and informal activities at the Wajaale border in Somaliland.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Somaliland Immigration Officer.

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



### Bossaso

- Migrant registrations increased slightly between September (101) and October (117). This is similar to the trend seen in the summer of 2019, when smugglers slowed down the departures in the summer months due to the windy season which leads to unfavorable conditions at sea, but picked up again later in the year;
- 47 migrants have been provided with primary health care while 67 received NFIs. No new AVR requests have been received in October;
- AVR operations have resumed this month for the first time after the outbreak of COVID-19 with the return of 21 vulnerable migrants (16 males and 5 females) including 16 UMCs to Addis Ababa from Garowe, Puntland. The children have been stranded in Bossaso for the past seven months following the border closure and were unable to cross into Yemen to reach the Gulf countries. IOM and partners continue providing shelter and basic services to vulnerable migrants;
- The MRC in Bossaso and the Ethiopian Community Centre (ECC) conducted three COVID-19 awareness sessions (risks, signs, symptoms and modes of transmission) reaching out to 103 Ethiopian migrants (80 male and 23 female).

### Hargeisa

- A total of 42 new migrant registrations were carried out by the MRC in Hargeisa in October, and 12 new AVR requests were recorded, adding to a backlog of approximately 150 requests;
- On 28 October, the MRC conducted COVID-19 awareness raising sessions inside the MRC compound and at the ECC, reaching 45 Ethiopian migrants (40 males and 5 females), and provided protection materials to the migrants.

### Migrant Returns to Somalia

- IOM assisted 89 people (83 males and 6 females) returning to Mogadishu from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with accommodation and Onwards Transportation Assistance (OTA) to their communities of origin. The overall number of arrivals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is retained with the Immigration and Naturalization Directorate (IND) and not shared with IOM.

### Quarantine Measures

- There are currently 27 functional isolation facilities in Somalia, accounting for a total of 760 ready isolation beds as of the end of October.

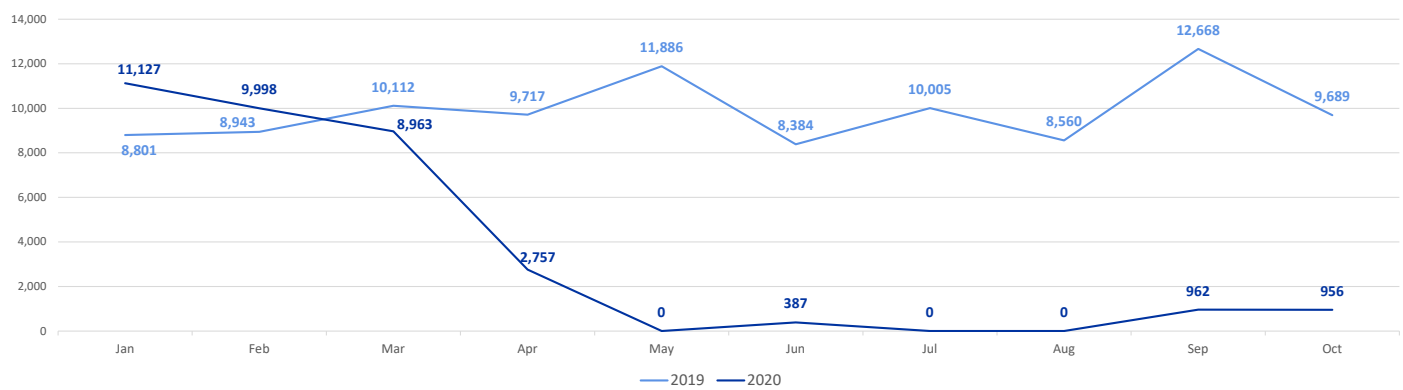
## ETHIOPIA SITUATION

As of 31 October, the Government of Ethiopia recorded the highest number of COVID-19 cases among the countries on the Eastern Corridor, with a total of 96,169 confirmed individuals, 1,469 deaths and 52,517 recoveries. The month of October saw a slight decrease in new COVID-19 cases which fell by 10% as compared to September (20,801 new cases in October, and 23,237 new cases in September). Sustained community transmission within Ethiopia is still ongoing, resulting in increased pressure on quarantine, isolation, and treatment facilities as well as the health system in general. Since September, the state of emergency has been lifted in Ethiopia, and all air and land borders have remained open for tourism. In addition, Ethiopia's Public Health Institute issued new COVID-19 preventive measures on 5 October, including on social distancing, mask-wearing and public transportation carrying capacity.



## Migrant Flows, and Protection Concerns

Returns of Ethiopian Nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Electronically Registered by IOM in 2019 and 2020



- The returns of Ethiopian nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa continued in October with 956 Ethiopians returning as part of a government-to-government agreement between Ethiopia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Returns continued at the rate of one flight per week, with an average of 300 returnees arriving on each flight, though returns were halted in late October due to the closure of quarantine sites (please see section below);
- In comparison, October 2019 saw the return of 9,689 migrants, while the cumulative returns between January and October decreased by 64% (35,150 in 2020 and 98,765 in 2019). Returns across land borders also continued;
- The flow of migrants has shown an increase mainly due to the relaxation of restrictions previously placed by the government to reduce the spread of COVID-19. In fact, the lifting of the state of emergency is now allowing migrants to easily move from one place to another.

## Migrant Assistance (MRC/AVR)

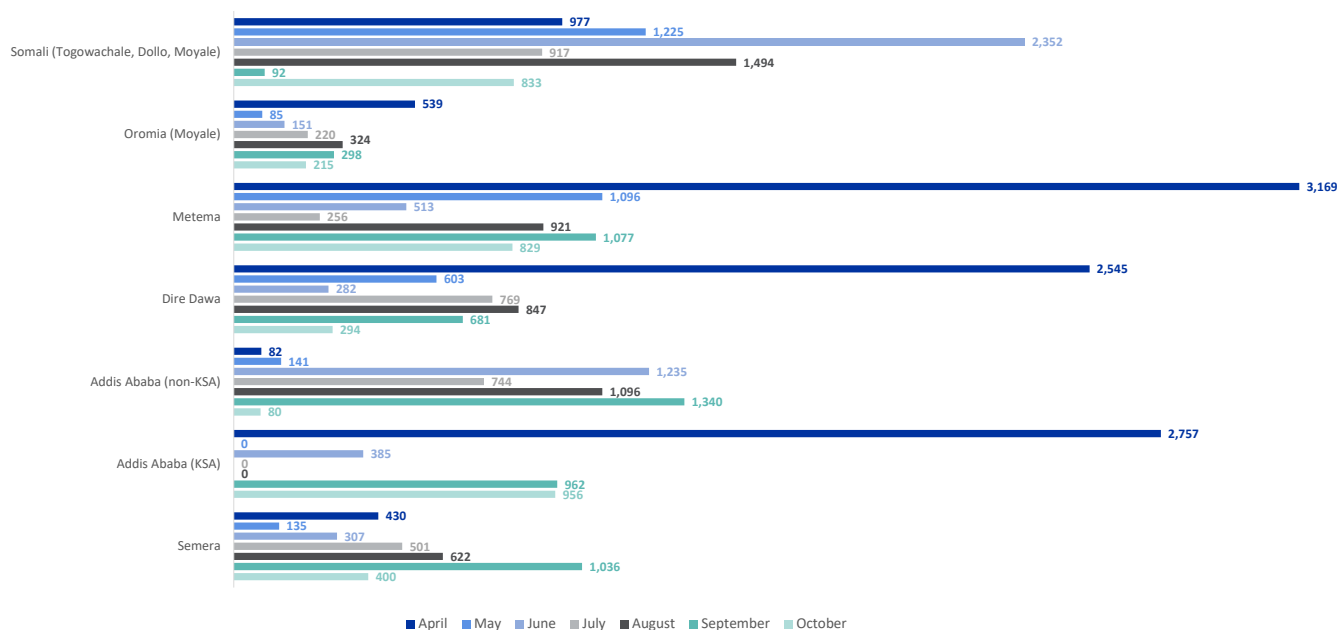
- Since the adoption of travel restrictions by the Government of Ethiopia last 23 March 2020, IOM's AVR operations have been significantly reduced but picked up again in October with 21 migrants who received AVR from Somalia, including 16 UMCs;
- Similar to previous months, the Government of Ethiopia, with assistance provided by IOM upon returnees' arrival in Addis Ababa, facilitated the return of some of the 4,292 Ethiopian nationals returning from many countries, including from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (961, though 956 were part of the mass return operation, while the remainder were regular returnees);
- IOM also supported returnees upon arrival at several PoEs, including Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, and quarantine centres designated for returnees in the capital and in regional states (namely Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Dire Dawa). IOM also distributed NFIs to 1,115 returnees in Semera, Metema, and Moyale PoEs, and provided food assistance for 60 returnees in Moyale and Jigjiga PoEs;
- OTA was provided to 1,268 (96 males, and 1,172 females) returnees from quarantine facilities and treatment centres in Addis Ababa. An additional 585 returnees received OTA in Moyale, Dire Dawa, Jigjiga, Semera and Metema towns;
- IOM Ethiopia strongly advocates for the inclusion of stranded Ethiopian migrants in the national, multi-stakeholder COVID-19 response plans of host and transit countries – in terms of humanitarian responses, socioeconomic and psychosocial support, as well as legal assistance to migrant workers.

## Quarantine Measures

- In early October, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health announced a new directive on the prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic replacing the state of emergency lifted in September. According to the directive, persons arriving in Ethiopia with a negative PCR test result no older than 120 hours are to home quarantine. However, returnees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were nonetheless quarantined by a decision of the Ethiopian Public Health Institute as a precaution. In the last week of October, with the last operational quarantine centre resuming its normal functions as a university dormitory, returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were postponed while the Government of Ethiopia began efforts to identify, designate and operationalize an alternative quarantine centre;
- Almost all the quarantine centres in Addis Ababa and the regional states were closed due to the re-opening of schools and universities on 19 October. This had meant that the assistance provision has had to be reoriented to PoEs, migrants' home communities and the institutions and organizations that continue to provide post-arrival assistance to returnees. Needs at PoEs continue to be NFIs, OTA, family tracing and reunification, and vulnerability screening/referrals. The needs of migrants and the capacities of stakeholders in different regions and different PoEs vary considerably;

- Overall, IOM reported that in October a total of 3,607 returning migrants from many different countries were quarantined in different facilities across the country. This marks a 34% decrease as compared to September.

Returnees Accommodated in Quarantine Centres (April - October 2020)

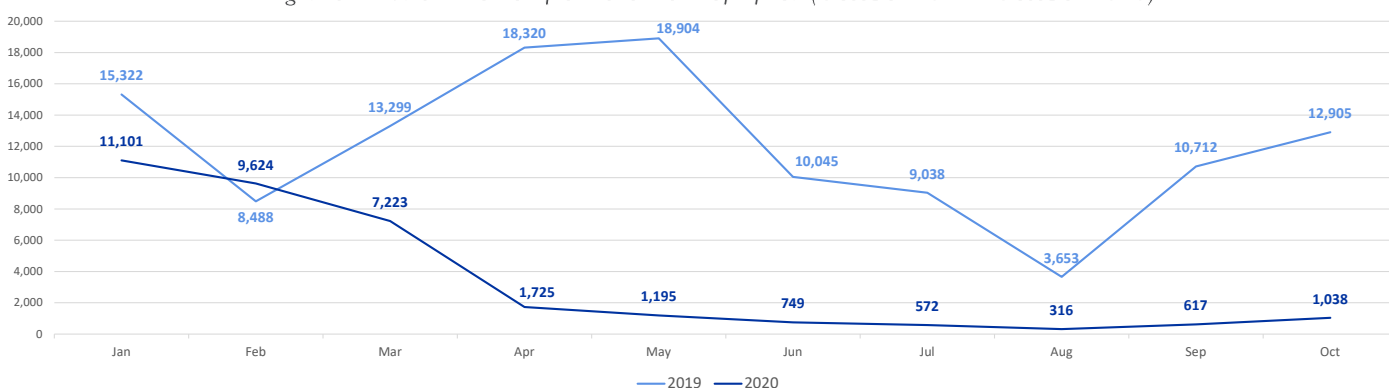


## YEMEN SITUATION

As of 31 October, the Yemeni authorities have reported 2,067 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 601 deaths and 1,367 recoveries across 11 governorates in Yemen, with Hadramaut, Taizz and Aden governorates reporting the highest cases. Yemen continues to experience a steady increase in new detected cases. The high case fatality rate is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war. Sana'a International Airport has reopened for humanitarian flights on 28 September. A total of 15 sea border points and three land border points have remained partially open for movements throughout October; transit points along land borders were partially open to facilitate the return of stranded Yemenis. In addition, inter-governorate public movement tracking continued at 10 internal transit points, especially in Taizz and Al-Bayda.

### Migrant Flows Observed in Yemen

Migrant Arrivals in Yemen from the Horn of Africa (October 2019 - October 2020)



- Overall, 1,038 migrant arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa were recorded in October, a 68% increase from 617 arrivals in September, but more significantly, a 92% decrease in relation to arrivals during the same period in 2019 (12,905). Ras al Ara (Lahj) continues to be one of the main landing points in Lahj governorate, and new arrival points have been observed by partners on the ground in Taizz, probably due to an increase of coast guard patrolling outside of Lahj coast;
- In particular, arrivals to Yemen from Somalia increased by 205% in October (504) as compared to September (165), while arrivals from Djibouti increased by 18%, from 452 in September to 534 in October;
- Contrary to previous months with the exception of September, most migrants travelled to Yemen from Somalia, however in October, there was an even divide in terms of departures, with 51% of migrants travelling from Djibouti, and 49% from Somalia;

- Most migrant arrivals were Ethiopian nationals (92%), while the remainder were Somali nationals (8%); all of the latter were travelling from Somalia;
- Overall, the majority of the migrants were adult males (82%), while 13% were adult females, and 6% were children, of which 72% (41) were UMCs.

### Migrant Protection and Detention Concerns

- Risks of arrest and detention remain a significant concern for migrants in Yemen. Over 1,500 migrants are estimated to be held in detention in Sa'ada governorate only. During the month of October, the number of migrants detained in the Sana'a detention facility fluctuated between 700 and 1,000 individuals due to systematic forced transfers to the southern governorates carried out by the local authorities;
- Migrants' living conditions across the country continue to deteriorate due to a drop in support from the local community since the beginning of the pandemic, added to the widespread discrimination that prevents them from accessing essential services such as health care. As migrants often turn to smugglers to seek services and shelter, the exposure to abuses and exploitation is increasing, especially for women and girls – the most vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and trafficking. As living conditions are deplorable and life-threatening for many, seeking smugglers' support to return home via sea is the only option left, despite the well-known risks awaiting in the journey;
- The constant inflow of large numbers of migrants being arrested, detained and transferred through Sana'a migrant detention facility continues despite high-level advocacy with local authorities. The continued risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in the facility as well as other communicable diseases remains a huge source of concern as does the conditions migrants are living in.

### Migrant Assistance

- The lack of access in the northern governorates to conduct migrant assistance activities remains an issue. Response efforts by IOM and partners therefore remain focused in the south, with the provision of standard health and protection assistance through IOM's migrant centres, supported clinics and mobile teams at the main transit hubs, along migratory routes and at new arrival points along the southern coastline;
- Efforts to kickstart VHR flights are moving forward, and preparations are underway for a Government of Ethiopia consular team to visit Yemen to conduct nationality verification activities. Meanwhile, IOM and partners continue ensuring the provision of humanitarian assistance (relief and hygiene items, health, food, counseling) through the migrant response point and mobile teams;
- In Aden, IOM has expanded assistance introducing food vouchers distribution and registering migrants for a cash for work opportunity starting in November, in collaboration with a local governmental organization (Hygiene Fund). This is interim assistance provided to migrants as they await VHRs to Ethiopia.

### Quarantine Measures

- Due to the complex conflict dynamics and migrant protection concerns across the country, IOM and partners continue to advocate against discriminatory policies and human rights abuses against migrants. This includes detention and forced transfers, the establishment of quarantine centres to hold migrants (de facto detention centres that do not follow COVID-19 standard protocols), and the lack of inclusive solutions in the management of the COVID-19 crisis throughout the country. IOM also keeps advocating against quarantine centres for migrants and refugees only, as a measure to avoid discriminatory policies of arrest, encampment, or detention.

ANNEX 1 | 2020 MRC REGISTRATION DATA

MRCs	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	MRC Total
Bossaso	242	252	162	173	169	173	201	106	101	117	1,696
Metema	149	220	246	41	8	0	0	0	13	0	677
Tog-Wajaale	200	267	38	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	538
Dire Dawa	182	168	89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	439
Hargeisa	132	130	68	0	30	69	60	48	54	42	633
Obock	188	188	371	23	13	12	10	22	60	919	1,806
Semera	56	92	235	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	383
Monthly Total	1,149	1,317	1,209	270	220	254	271	176	228	1,078	6,172

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

