



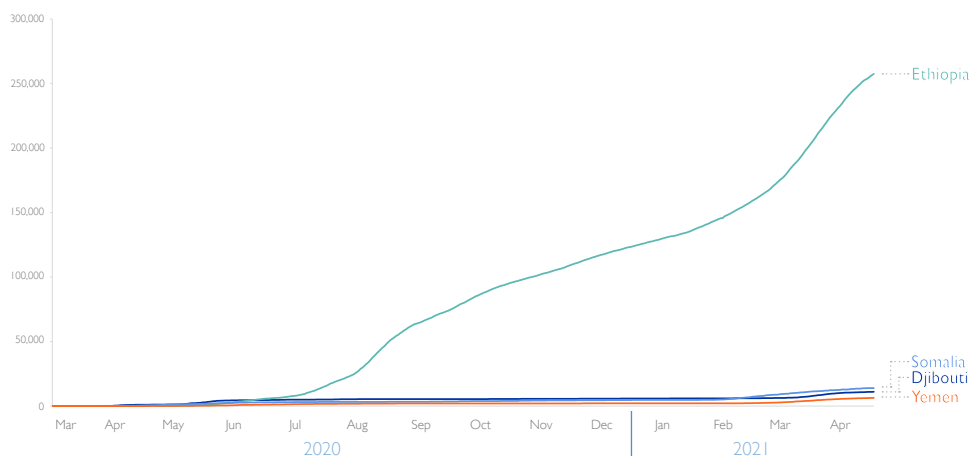
A migrant was found in the desert near Obock by the IOM Mobile Unit in a state of advanced exhaustion and dehydration. © IOM 2020/Alexander Bee

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),¹ Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) data, as well as anecdotal information provided by IOM team members working in the region.

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE AND RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK

Incidence Trend of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases as of 30 April 2021



	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Somalia	Yemen
Confirmed cases	11,100	257,442	13,915	6,321
Deaths	143	3,688	713	1,227
Recoveries	10,708	198,862	5,847	-
Active cases	249	54,892	7,355	-

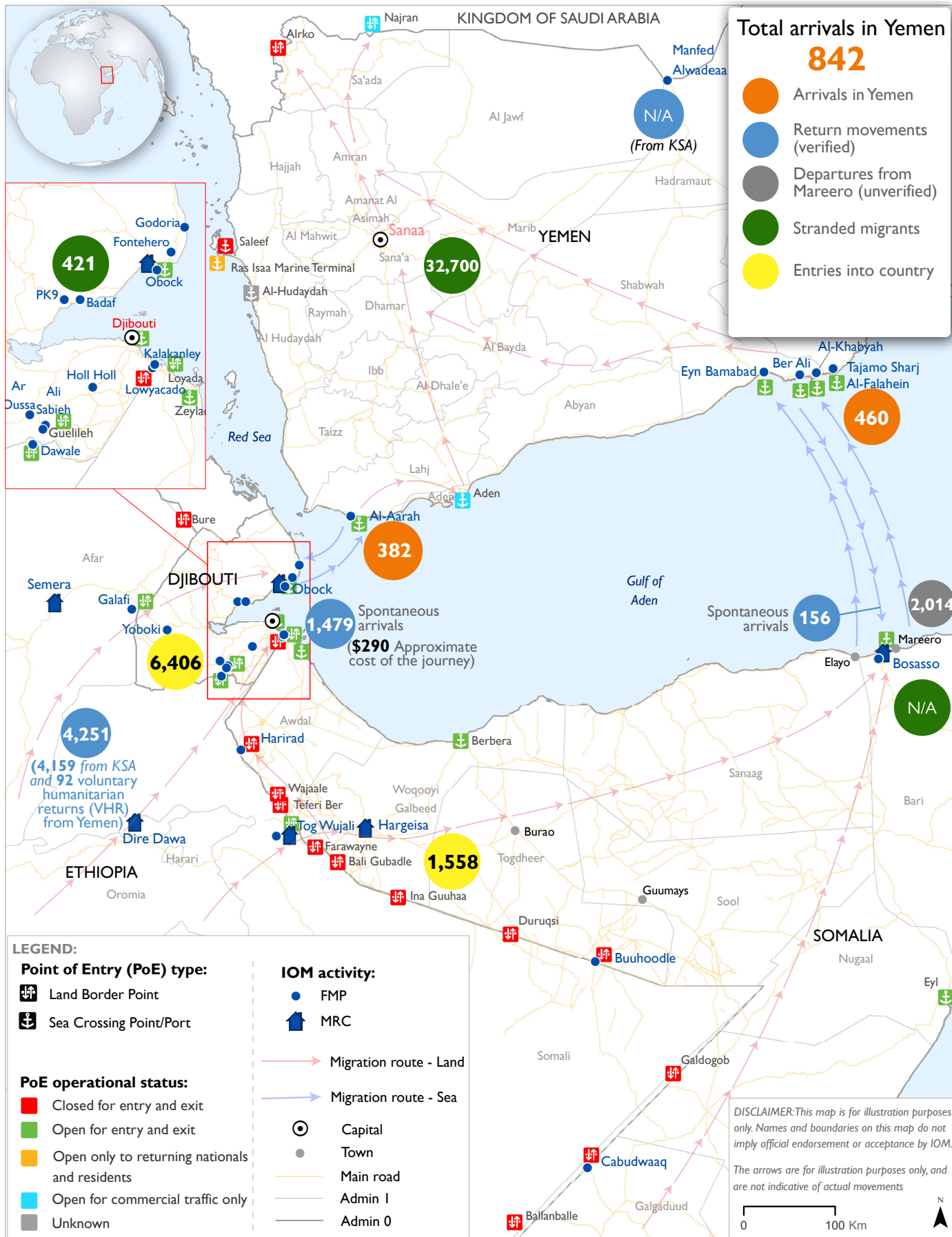
Source: IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs)

¹ 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. Eight MRCs are currently operational in the Horn of Africa: Obock (Djibouti), Hargeisa, Bossaso (Somalia), Semera, Metema, Dire Dawa, Togochale and Moyale (Ethiopia).

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COVID-19 Epidemiological Situation

As of 30 April 2021, the number of COVID-19 cases along the Eastern Corridor stood at 288,778. Ethiopia continued recording the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases (89% of total cases). The country distributed over 1.1 million vaccine doses out of the 2.2 million doses obtained through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative by the end of April. Following Ethiopia are Somalia (5% of total cases) and Djibouti (4% of total cases), while Yemen cases represented 2% of the total cases. As of 30 April 2021, the number of COVID-19 related deaths along the Eastern Corridor stood at 5,771, the majority of which were recorded in Ethiopia (64% of total deaths). Yemen holds the highest case fatality rate (CFR) at approximately 19.4%, compared to Djibouti (CFR 1.3%), Ethiopia (CFR 1.4%) and Somalia (CFR 5.1%). This is much higher than the global average CFR of 2.1% and is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war. The extent of the impact of COVID-19 in Yemen is largely unknown given limited testing capacities, reduced health seeking behavior, and growing public skepticism around COVID-19. Yemen continues operating under the public health state of emergency which was declared on 23 March 2021. The country launched the first round of its COVID-19 vaccination campaign on 20 April 2021 in Aden and covered 13 governorates. The campaign aims to reach over 317,000 people in 133 districts across Yemen.

COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions

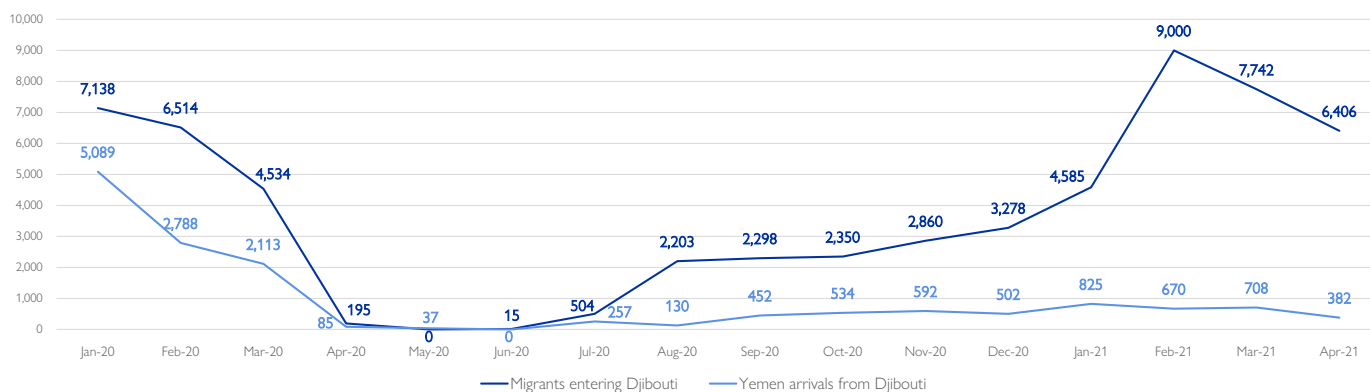
Between the reopening of the country's air, land and sea borders on 17 July 2020 and the end of April 2021, the Djiboutian health authorities recorded a 4.75% COVID-19 positivity rate and a 99.59% recovery rate among all incoming passengers screened at the various Points of Entry (PoEs). Following a surge in confirmed cases, authorities in Ethiopia have maintained the COVID-19-related restrictions in place as of end of April 2021, with local restrictions imposed by the regional states, although these directives remain unclear. Meanwhile, mobility restrictions have partially eased in Yemen, despite the current state of health emergency. Yemenis returning from Saudi Arabia and Oman continue to use Al Wadeeah and Shahin land border points, respectively, provided that they hold a negative COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

DJIBOUTI SITUATION

Migrant Flows Observed Through Djibouti and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Migrants' movements into the country reduced for the second consecutive month, with 6,406 entries observed in April 2021 from Djibouti's western borders, which is 17% lower than the entries observed in March, though continue to be higher than what was observed during the earlier months of the pandemic when only 195 such movements were tracked during April 2020. The entries include over 27% adult females, nearly 65% adult males, and 8% children (which is a decrease from 14% in March). Unlike previous months, when almost no Somali nationals entered Djibouti, 26 Somali nationals were also tracked upon entry to Djibouti.
- 382 migrant 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 tracked were men (92%), 1% were boys, 6% were women, and less than 1% were girls.

Migrant Movements through Djibouti to Yemen (January 2020 - April 2021)

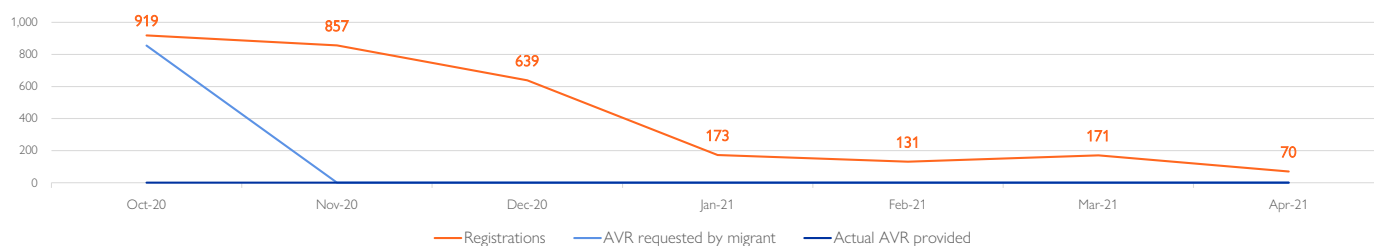


- Spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Djibouti continued in April 2021 with a total of 1,479 Ethiopian migrants, which is a decrease from the 2,343 returns reported in March. A vast majority of the returns were men (99.7%), returning from Yemen to the coast of Obock; this represents a 37% decrease compared to March 2021. Since May 2020, IOM tracked a total of 12,701 spontaneous returns of Ethiopian migrants which are believed to have paid roughly the equivalent of 290 USD each for this return journey.

Migrant Protection and Assistance

- On 12 April, a boat coming from Yemen with almost 60 migrants onboard capsized off the coast of Obock, close to a location called Guherere. In the incident, tragically, 44 migrants drowned. Among them were 16 children and 26 adults. 14 people, including two children, survived and were assisted at the MRC in Obock. Since the beginning of the year, 89 migrants lost their lives between Djibouti and Yemen attempting to either migrate towards Saudi Arabia or return home.
- As of 24 April 2021, 421 migrants on their way to the Arabian Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered in 8 spontaneous sites located along the migration route; most migrants were stranded in the Obock region. All the stranded migrants were Ethiopian nationals and most of them were male (81%). Immediate needs included water, food, hygiene kits and non-food items (NFIs).
- 70 new migrants were registered at the Obock MRC in April 2021, which is a 60% decrease from the previous month.
- Only the most vulnerable migrants continue to be admitted to the MRC to benefit from AVR services. During this month, a group of 95 migrants were returned to Ethiopia as part of IOM's AVR programme.

Registrations at the MRC in Obock and AVR Services Requested and Provided (October 2020 - April 2021)



SOMALIA SITUATION

Migrant Flows Observed Through Somalia and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Migrant arrivals to Yemen from Somalia stood at 460 in April 2021; a 29% decrease from the 650 arrivals recorded in March 2021. The movements consisted of Ethiopian (78%) and Somali (22%) nationals, with the majority of arrivals being adult males (64%), while 18% were adult females (down from 26% in March), and another 18% were children (down from 20% in March), of which 63% (52) were unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs), down from 85 in March.
- Unverified reports received by IOM stated that 2,014 migrants departed by boat to Yemen from Mareero, a small town 15 km east of Bossaso.
- Migrant entries into Somalia decreased by 27% between March (2,141) and April (1,558). Of these, almost 96% were Ethiopian nationals, while 4% (66) Yemeni nationals were also tracked, intending to return to Yemen from Somalia.
- Similar to what observed in Djibouti, spontaneous movements from Yemen to Somalia are occurring, and 156 movements were tracked upon arrival in April (118 to Bossaso, and 38 to Berbera), consisting of 55% males and 45% females. 113 were returning Somalis, and 43 were Yemeni nationals.

Migrant Movements through Somalia to Yemen (January 2020 - April 2021)

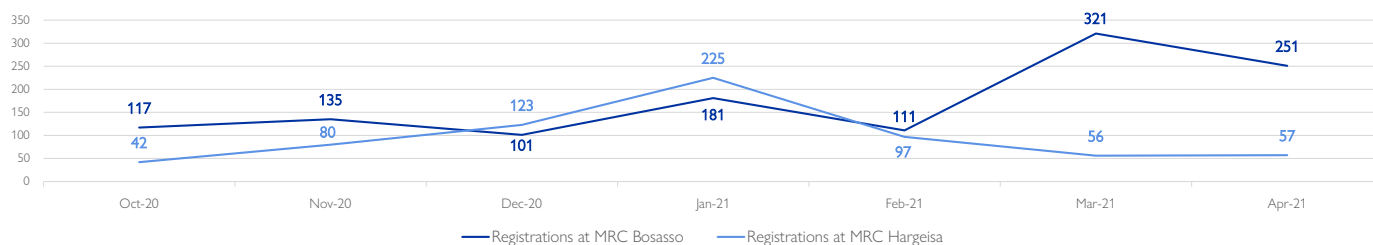


Source: IOM's Migrant Movements through Somalia to Yemen (January 2020 - April 2021). Based on the reporting capacity of IOM's Monitoring Points in Somalia.

Migrant Protection and Assistance

- IOM was not able to update the estimates for the number of stranded migrants in and around Bossaso.
- In relation to migrant incidents, on 21 April, a male Ethiopian migrant was hit by a vehicle on the Bossaso-Gardo highway near Armo. He was immediately taken to the hospital in Armo, where he unfortunately passed away.
- A total of 308 migrants were registered at the Bossaso (251) and Hargeisa (57) MRCs; an 18% decrease from March. Unlike traditional trends, the month of Ramadan was not a peak month for migration this year likely due to COVID-19 mobility restrictions imposed by the Somaliland authorities which reduced the movement of migrants in the area. In addition, for the last two months, the Somaliland Immigration Department has been deporting Ethiopian migrants who do not have travel documentation and this has been a deterrent. Reduced migrant movements were also common in Puntland during the month of April on account of increased security in the area.
- The number of registered UMCs at the Bossaso MRC have been increasing, with almost a quarter of all registrations in April being UMCs (60). Additionally, as a result of heightened ethnic clashes in Ethiopia, most of the new arrivals were young males belonging to the Oromo ethnic group versus migrants from Amhara or Tigray.
- A total of 18 AVR requests were received at the Hargeisa MRC, and no request were received in Bossaso. The actual provision of AVR services has slowly resumed with 51 AVR movements taking place in April, from the MRC in Bossaso.
- Due to travel restrictions imposed at Somaliland's borders, the MRC in Hargeisa assisted 25 stranded Ethiopian migrants, including 11 UMCs, and provided direct assistance through the MRC outreach mobile patrol.

Registrations at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa (October 2020 - April 2021)

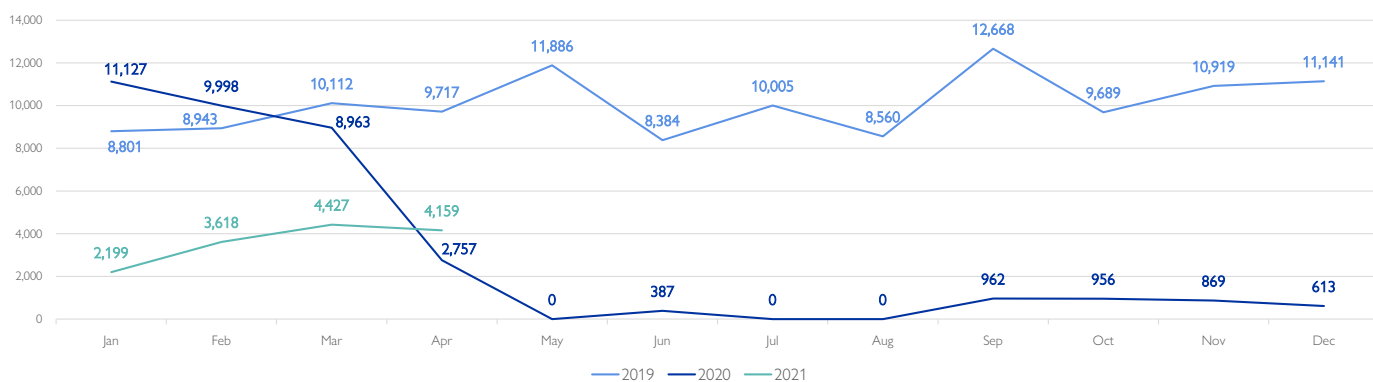


ETHIOPIA SITUATION

Migrant Flows, and Protection and Detention Concerns

- The returns of Ethiopian nationals from Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa decreased by a slight 6% between March (4,427) and April (4,159). When compared to last year, this represents a 51% decrease from the 2,757 returns recorded in April 2020, a month after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Tigrayan returnees continue to arrive in significant numbers from Saudi Arabia, roughly 45% of all arrivals. Many areas of the Tigray Regional State remain inaccessible due to ongoing hostilities, and other areas are suffering from disruptions of basic services and food insecurity. Many returnees who are unable to return to Tigray might need temporary accommodation and services in Addis Ababa.

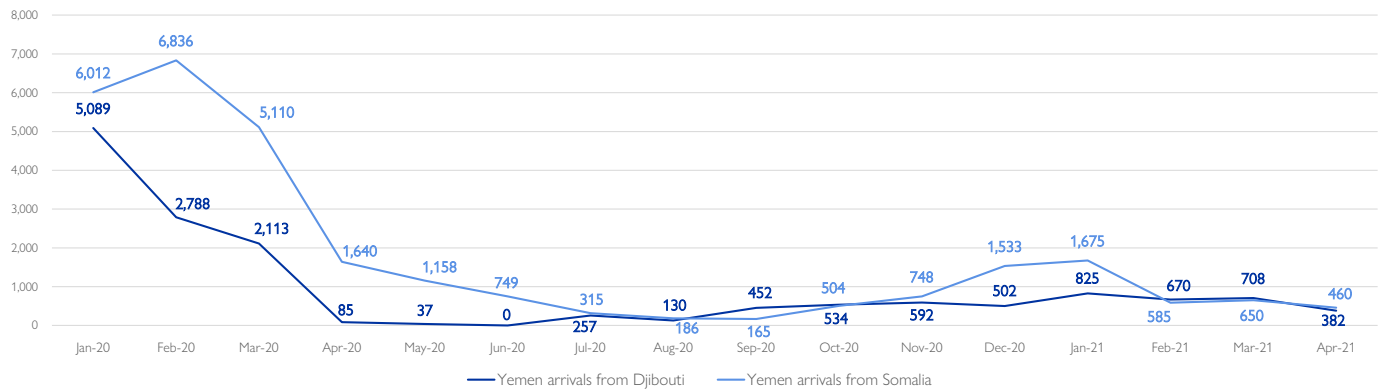
Returns of Ethiopian Nationals from Saudi Arabia Electronically Registered by IOM



Migrant Flows Observed in Yemen

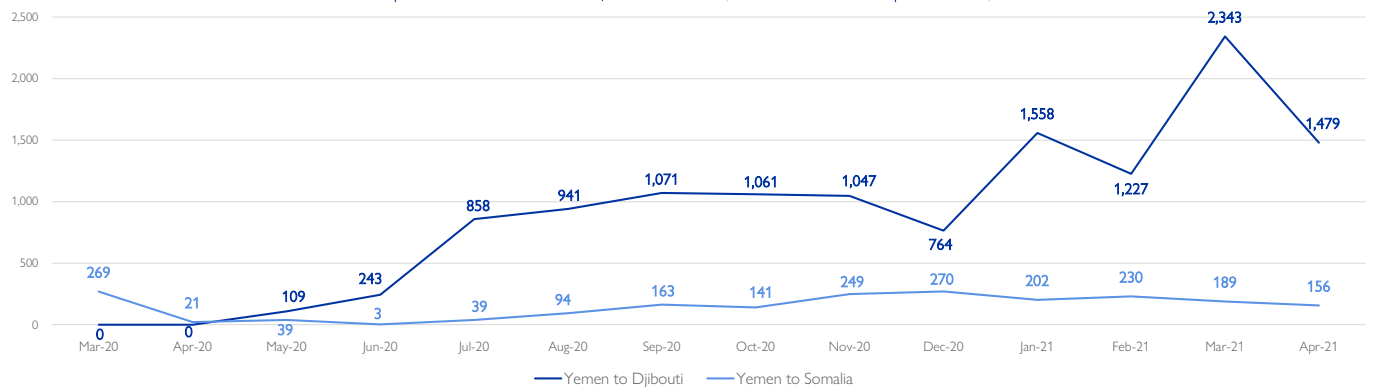
- Overall, 842 migrant arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa were recorded in April 2021; a 29% increase from March, however, this represents a significant decrease of 72% compared to April 2020. Contrary to the previous month, but similar to trends observed in the past, the majority travelled from Somalia (55%), with the remaining travelling from Djibouti (45%); the arrivals from Somalia decreased by 29% while the arrivals from Djibouti decreased by 46%.
- Most migrant arrivals were Ethiopian nationals (88%), with the remainder being Somali nationals (12%).
- The majority of the migrants were adult males (77%), while 13% were adult females, and 11% were children (same as last month), of which 58% (52) were UMCs.

Migrant Arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa (January 2020 - April 2021)



- Due to the difficulties faced by migrants upon arrival in Yemen with their inability to move onwards towards Saudi Arabia, as well as the protection environment and living conditions in Yemen, many of them often opt to return back to the Horn of Africa. Since March 2020, almost 15,000 migrants have made this perilous return journey back to Djibouti (12,701) and to Somalia (2,065), using the same network of smugglers utilized on the journey towards the Arabian Peninsula.
- DTM Yemen could not track any returning migrants from Saudi Arabia in April 2021 due to the inaccessibility to the FMP at the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border.

Spontaneous Returns from Yemen (March 2020 - April 2021)



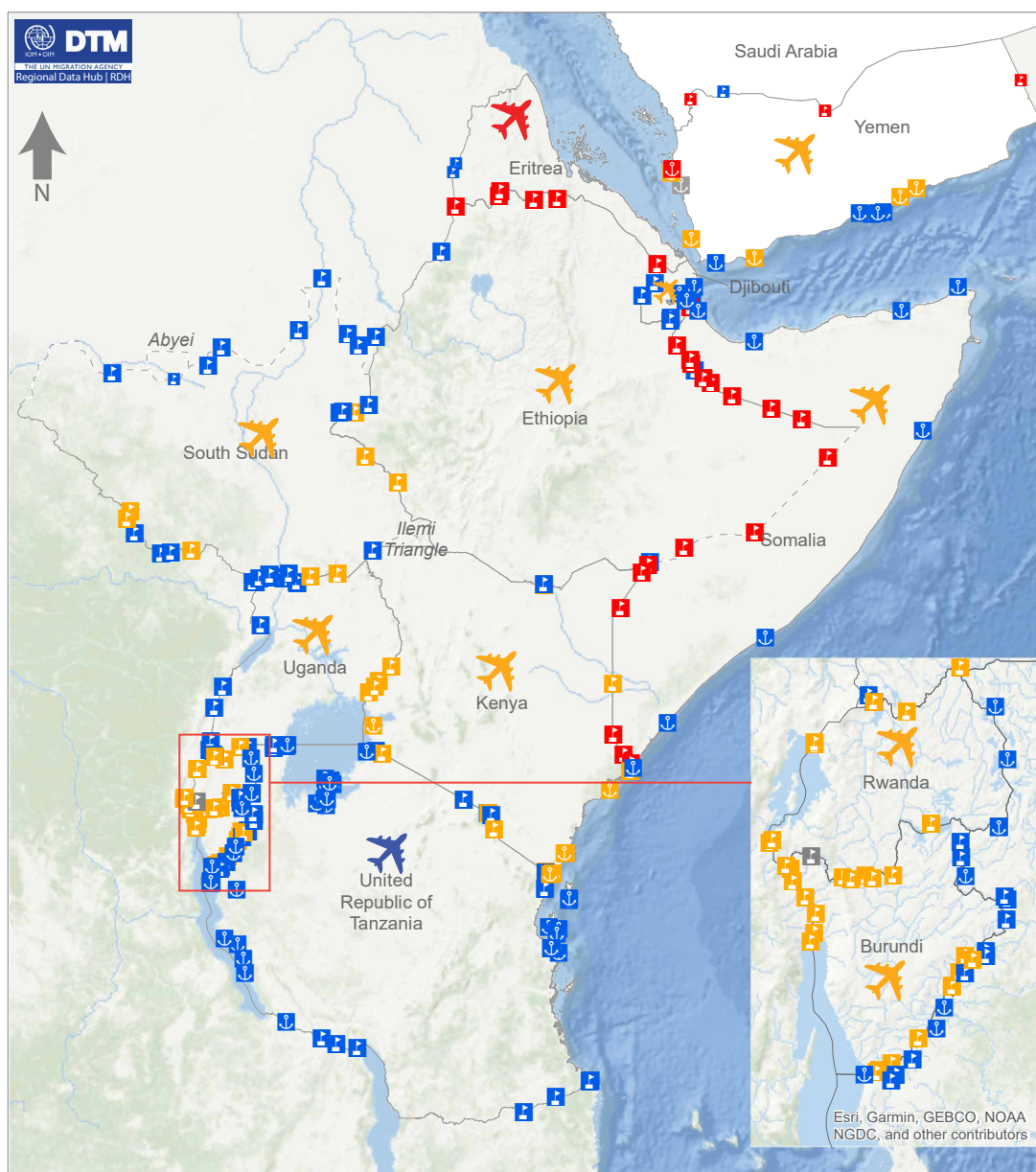
Migrant Protection and Assistance

- Over 32,000 migrants were estimated to be stranded, including around 5,000 migrants in detention across the country.
- Migrants' living conditions across the country continue deteriorating due to a reduction in support from the local community since the beginning of the pandemic and widespread discrimination that prevents them from accessing essential services such as health care.
- Thousands of stranded migrants have approached IOM's Aden MRC asking for return assistance to Ethiopia through VHR. These VHR flights resumed in March after months of disruption, and a total of 92 migrants were returned to Ethiopia on 19 April. These operations have restarted but challenges remain due to delays in the process of verification of nationality.

ANNEX 1 | 2021 MRC REGISTRATION DATA

MRCs	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	MRC Total
Bossaso	181	111	321	251	864
Dire Dawa	0	0	0	0	0
Hargeisa	225	97	56	57	435
Metema	0	0	72	80	152
Moyale	-	-	187	230	417
Obock	173	131	171	70	545
Semera	0	0	71	33	104
Togochale	31	126	14	61	232
Monthly Total	610	465	892	782	2,749

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



Status of international flights*

- Not Restrictive
- Partially Restrictive
- Totally Restrictive
- Not available
- Disputed Areas
- Countries East and Horn of Africa

Status of other border points

- Sea Border Point
- Land Border Point
- Closed for entry and exit
- Partial closure
- Open for entry and exit
- Unknown

*Details of the travel restriction can be found on IATA website: <https://www.iata.org/>

SOURCE:
International Air Transport Association (IATA)
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

DATE: 30 April 2021

DISCLAIMER: These maps are for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.