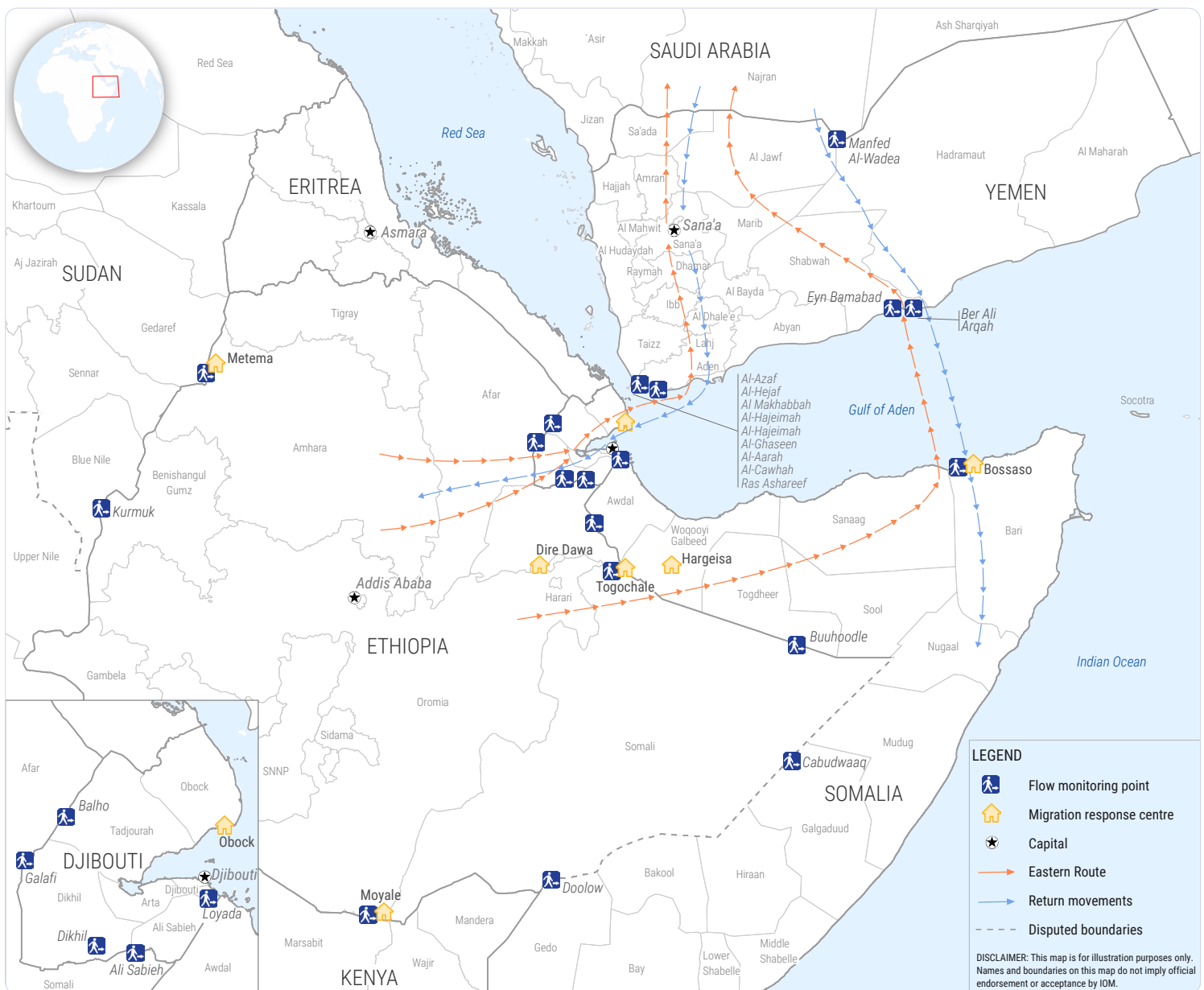


About the report

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 Route. This regional report provides monthly updates on the complex migratory dynamics through [Djibouti](#), [Somalia](#), [Yemen](#) and [Ethiopia](#) 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, information on [spillover effects of the conflict in the Sudan](#) observed at the border with Ethiopia, [a specific focus on children](#) and information on the [returns from Saudi Arabia](#) to Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen.

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 in Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia, including information on [assisted voluntary return and reintegration \(AVRR\)](#)
- Voluntary humanitarian returns (VHR) from Yemen
- [Returns from Saudi Arabia](#)
- [Missing Migrants Project \(MMP\)](#) data on migrant deaths and disappearances (reporting based on those that could be verified)



Migration Through Djibouti

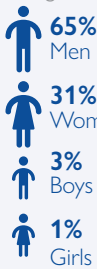
- Migrant entries into Djibouti increased by 34% from November.
- While the number of spontaneous returns from Yemen decreased by 43% between November (505) and December (286), numerous migrants are still observed returning to Ethiopia in key transit locations, such as in Obock (813) or Tadjourah (390).
- Women and children still represent over one-third (35%) of all entries and more than one in ten (14%) children were travelling alone (all boys).
- Stranded migrants decreased by 14% since November (from 838 to 718), with women (23%) and children (19%) representing around two-fifths (42%) of stranded migrants.
- Although migration through Djibouti continues to be predominantly economic, most of those departing from the Somali region of Ethiopia were migrating due to natural disasters (58%), while almost two fifths of those departing Amhara were fleeing conflict (18%).
- IOM carried out two AVR convoys in which 133 people received voluntary assistance to return to their place of origin. Due to the renewed conflict in northern Ethiopia, much of Amhara and Tigray are inaccessible and return of migrants to these regions is suspended.

Entries into Djibouti

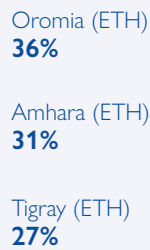
Cumulative
2023
138,196

12,467
Entries
December 2023

Sex & Age Group



Region of Origin



Intended Destination



Migrants surveyed in December 2023

486

Migration Drivers

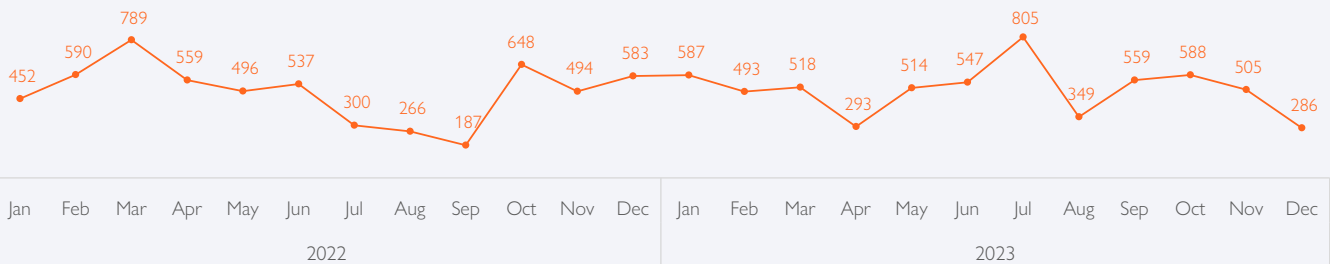


Spontaneous Returns from Yemen to Djibouti

Cumulative
2023
6,044

286
Returns
December 2023

Sex & Age Group

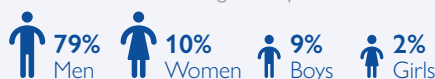


Migrants Seeking Assistance

Cumulative
2023
2,845

100
MRC
registrations
December 2023

Sex & Age Group



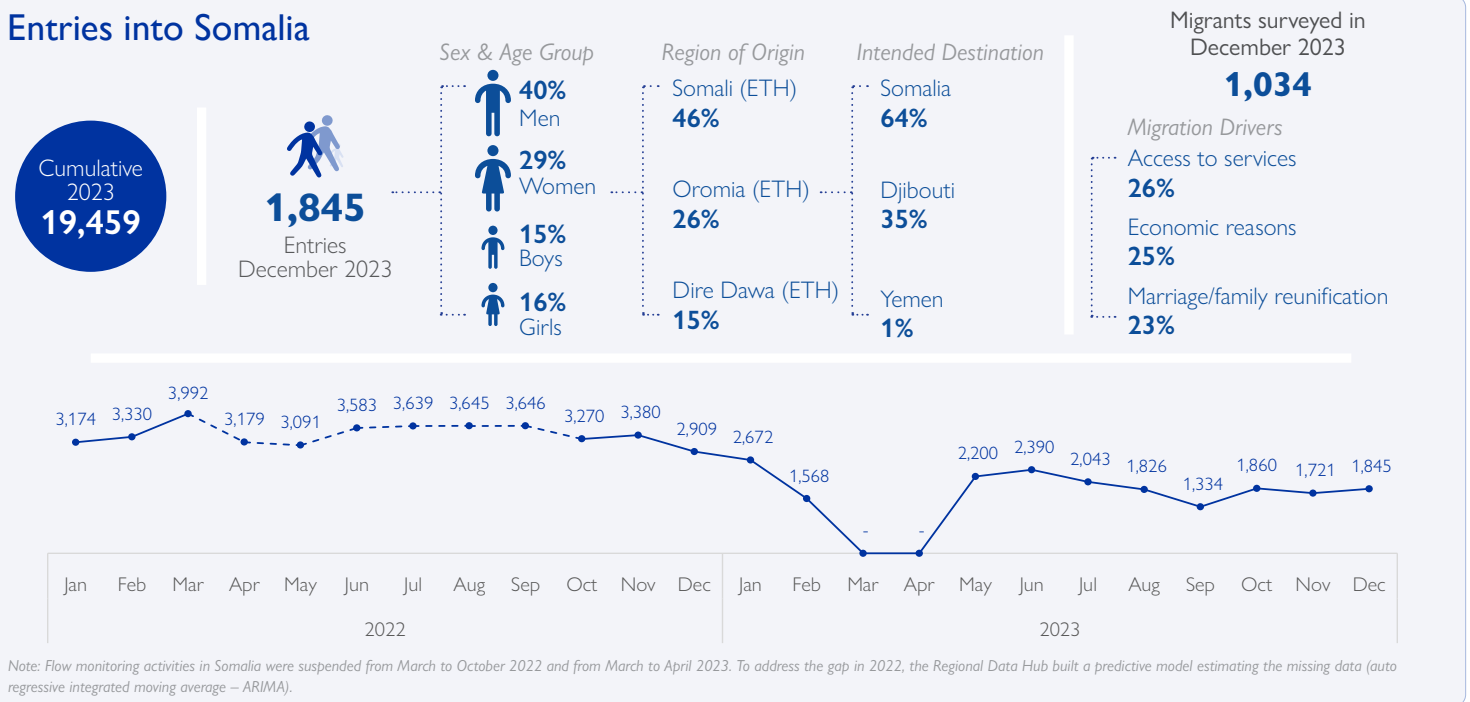
718 Stranded migrants
December 2023

None reported Dead/missing migrants
December 2023

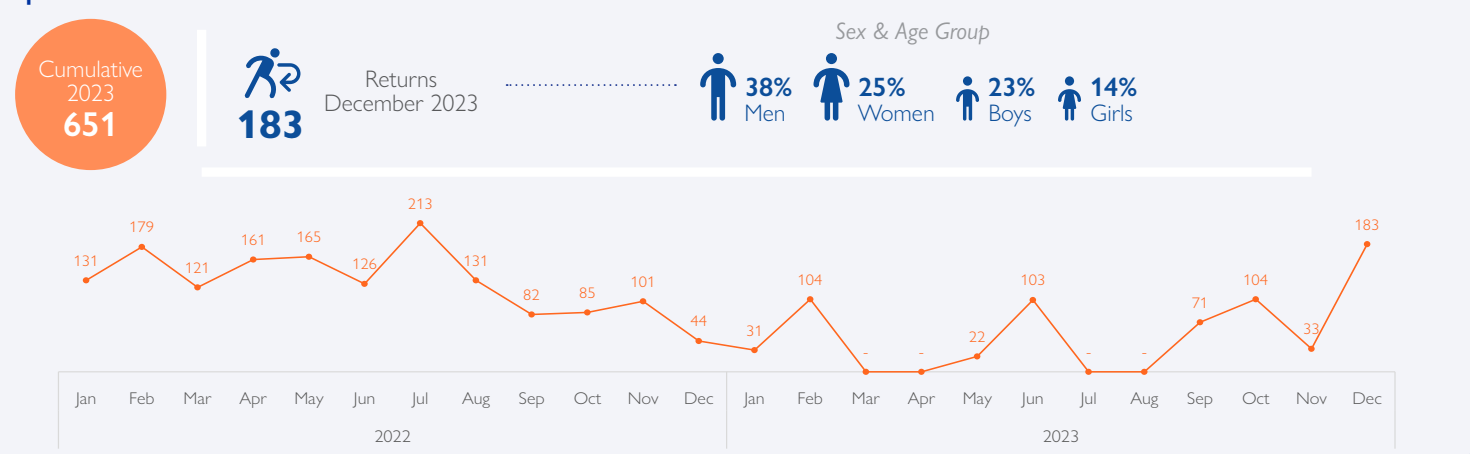
Migration Through Somalia

- Migrant entries into Somalia increased by 7% from November.
- Ethiopian community centers reported that around 1,250 migrants entered the Somaliland region.
- 3,131 Ethiopia migrants were observed transiting through Bossaso, the main departure point before crossing the Gulf of Aden towards Yemen, in the regions of Sanaag and Buuhoodle.
- The number of **stranded migrants (5,955)** remained similar (-2%) to November (6,080), with **women (22%)** and **children (13%)** representing over a third (35%) of the stranded migrants. Notably, **all stranded migrant children were unaccompanied**.
- Some **migrant women in Harirad** have reported encountering many challenges on their journey, such as pregnant women who felt sick after travelling long distances in overcrowded vehicles. Some other migrants have reported lack of food and shortage of water during their trips as most of the water sources are dry.
- **39 Ethiopian migrants received AVR** assistance to return to Addis Ababa, while many more requested the service but were unable to receive it due to funding constraints. Twelve of the most vulnerable were referred to safe houses and await AVR in the next convoys.
- **Stranded migrants in Bossaso** continue to seek assistance at the MRC. The migrants reported being deceived by smugglers who promised them jobs in Bossaso and easy passage to Yemen, only to endure harsh journeys and encounter job scarcity in transit. Over **half (55%) of people at MRCs were children** and **one-third (31%) of children were unaccompanied**. Female migrants reported a higher proportion of movement due to economic reasons (72%) compared to male migrants (54%) and similarly for conflict reasons (12% vs. 5%).

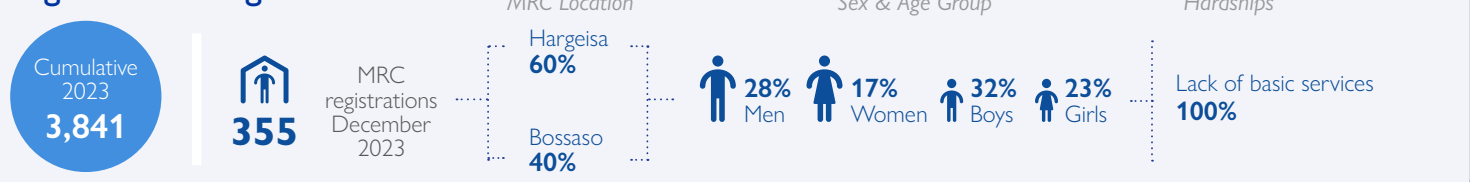
Entries into Somalia



Spontaneous Returns from Yemen to Somalia



Migrants Seeking Assistance



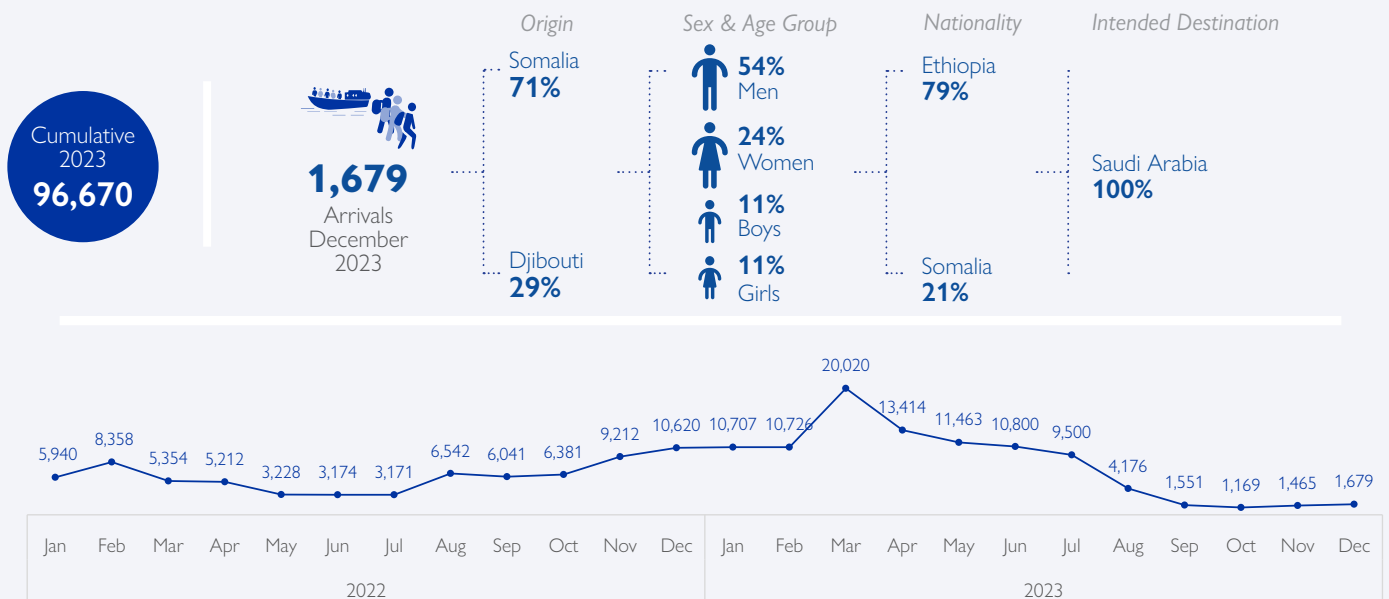
5,955 Stranded migrants
December 2023

None reported Dead/missing migrants
December 2023

Migration Through Yemen

- December observed a 15% increase in migrant arrivals in Yemen.
- This increase is attributed to the increase of migrants departing Djibouti, which increased by 21% from November (from 400 to 482) and due to migrants departing from Somalia, which increased by 12% (from 1,065 to 1,197). Arrivals in Yemen from Somalia have been higher than those from Djibouti for the fourth consecutive month.
- The new migration trend observed in November continued, whereby to avoid coast guards, boats departing from Djibouti travel around 450 km eastwards from the Bab el-Mandeb Strait towards the Gulf of Aden before disembarking along the Shabwah coast. However, for the first time since October, there were also migrant arrivals at the Lahj coast (110).
- It was also reported that local authorities along the Lahj coast intensified their presence to pursue smugglers' boats, arrest smugglers who assisted in transporting migrants, and raid their properties. The increased presence of authorities continues in Lahj governorate, which used to receive a high number of migrants from Djibouti before August 2023.
- Migration drivers for migrants arriving in Yemen from the Horn of Africa have seen a shift since September 2023. Before then, the main drivers were economic reasons, mainly due to the major influx of economic migrants arriving from Djibouti. However, since September, movements due to conflict increased significantly in proportion (from 25% in August to 50% in September) and increased even more since October (78%). This may be due to the new trend observed since September when fewer migrants arrived from Djibouti, which has historically observed more arrivals due to economic reasons than those from Somalia. It is important to note that the overall figures of arrivals from Somalia remain historically consistent and the decrease in absolute arrivals from Djibouti may explain the shift in the proportion of migration drivers since September. In December, most migrants arriving in Yemen were fleeing conflict (73%) or in search of better economic opportunities (27%).
- The proportion of women and children increased from 42% in November to 46% in December. Particularly relevant has been the increase in boys (+113%) and girls (+27%) in the last month.
- Following the announcement of the resumption of VHR, there has been a significant influx of Ethiopian migrants from Shabwah governorate to Marib – approximately 50 to 80 per day. Migrants have walked long distances with limited access to food and water.
- Partners reported interactions with migrants who lacked awareness of the Yemen context, including the hazards at the departure point in Obock.
- Migrants continued to be targeted and killed while crossing international borders. IOM and partners have supported with cash for protection to cover medical follow-up costs, transportation, and other necessary basic needs.
- In December, 280 migrants returned voluntarily to Ethiopia through the IOM VHR programme, of whom almost half were women (21%) and children (24%). All were offered pre-departure support including accommodation and counselling.

Arrivals in Yemen from the Horn of Africa



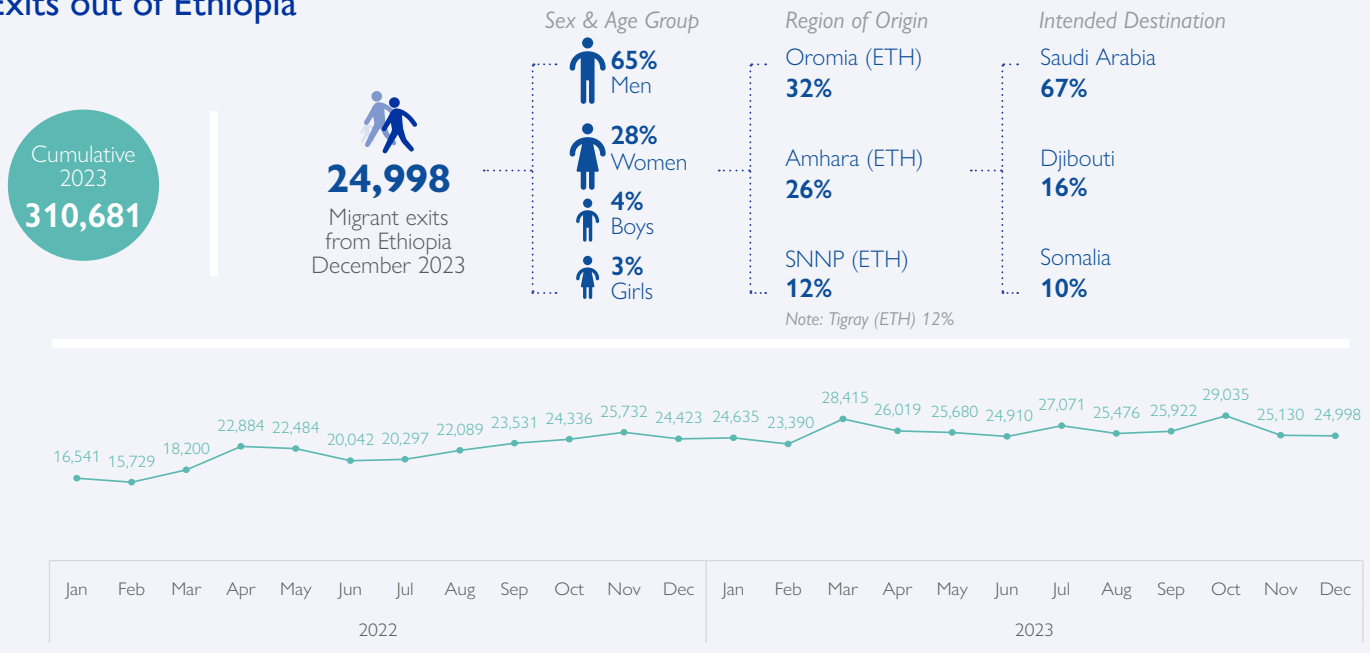
40,000 Stranded migrants December 2023

Under verification Dead/missing migrants December 2023

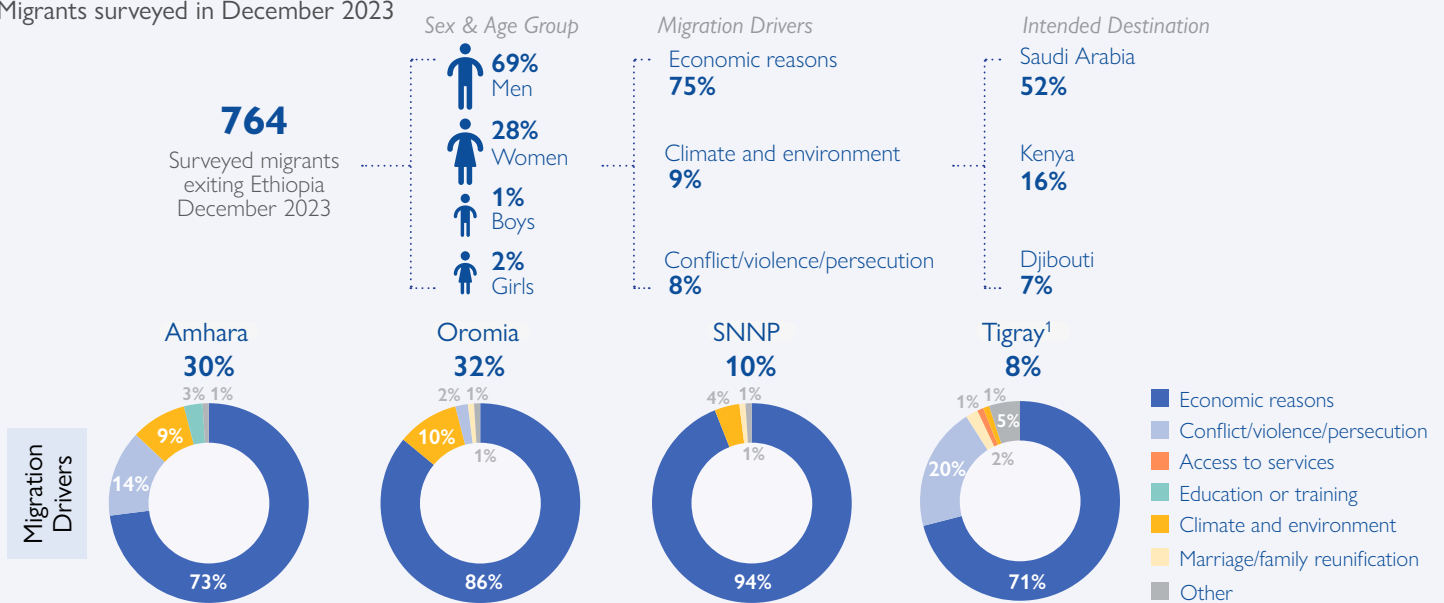
Migration Through Ethiopia

- Migrant entries from the Sudan in Metema and Kurmuk more than doubled (+106%) between November (3,910) and December (8,071). This increase is attributed to the escalation in the Sudan crisis in mid-December.
- Women (29%) and children (28%) represented more than half (57%) of all entries from the Sudan, while almost two-fifths (38%) of all child entries were under five years.
- Sudanese nationals continue to be the majority (61%) of the arrivals from Sudan fleeing the crisis and have increased in proportion of the arrivals (compared to 57% in November) followed by Ethiopian nationals (37%), Eritrean nationals (1%) and additional arrivals of 24 other nationalities fleeing the crisis.
- 46 people received AVR support from MRCs in Ethiopia to return to their communities of origin. Nearly 2,000 people also received onward transportation assistance, largely by way of bus fares. For migrants needing such assistance from the border with Sudan, the insecurity in Amhara continues to hinder voluntary return journeys to the region.
- Vulnerable individuals continued to be forcibly returned from border countries to Ethiopia, albeit in lower numbers.
- A quarter (25%) of people seeking assistance in Ethiopia in December were children. In Metema, the number of people seeking assistance increased by a further 36% from November, an over ninefold increase (+827%) since March before the conflict erupted in the Sudan. At the MRC in Togochale, 97% of people reported being detained. According to IOM focal points, this is often at the hands of extorters who hold migrants for ransom in Somalia, after which, migrants who have escaped decide to return home through the Togochale border point. In Moyale, half (49%) of people reported being detained, including unaccompanied children. Half of people at the MRC in Metema (49%) reported suffering from physical or psychological abuse.

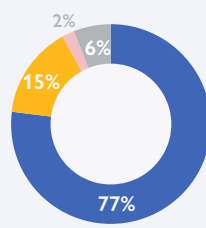
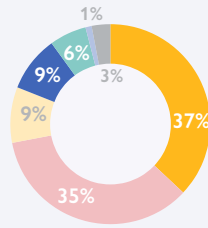
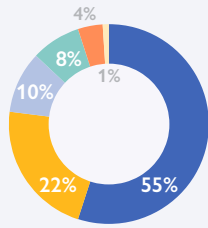
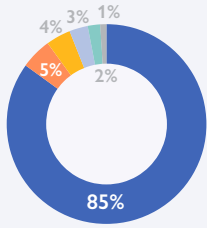
Exits out of Ethiopia



Migrants surveyed in December 2023



Intended Destination



- Saudi Arabia
- Yemen
- Djibouti
- Somalia
- Kenya
- United Arab Emirates
- South Africa
- Other

Migrants Seeking Assistance



MRC Location

- Metema **91%**
- Dire Dawa **5%**
- Moyale **2%**
- Togochale **2%**

Sex & Age Group

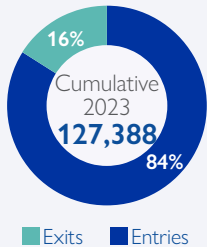
- 49%** Men
- 26%** Women
- 14%** Boys
- 11%** Girls

Hardships

- Lack of basic services **52%**
- Physical/psychological abuse **46%**
- Imprisonment/detention **2%**

Impact of the Sudan Conflict Along the Border with Ethiopia

Metema Border Point



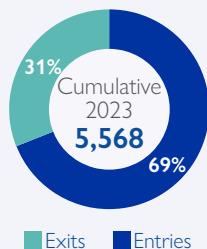
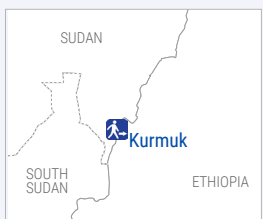
Migration Drivers

- Conflict/violence/persecution **6%**
- Economic reasons **3%**
- Other **91%**



- Conflict/violence/persecution **87%**
- Other **11%**

Kurmuk Border Point



Migration Drivers

- Marriage/family reunification **50%**
- Conflict/violence/persecution **25%**
- Access to services **25%**



- Conflict/violence/persecution **100%**

Note: A new flow monitoring point was established in Kurmuk on 11 May 2023 to increase coverage.

Migrant Children Along the Eastern Corridor

Cumulative
2023
22,874

1,578
Migrant children
entries
December 2023

Into Somalia
50%
Into Djibouti
34%
Into Yemen
16%

64%
Boys
36%
Girls
17%
Unaccompanied

706
Migrant
children seeking
assistance
December 2023

In Ethiopia
71%
In Somalia
28%
In Djibouti
2%

57%
Boys
43%
Girls

394
Migrants
surveyed
who are caring
for children
(17% of all
respondents)
December 2023

Travelling with children
21%
Having children in the country of intended destination
28%
Who left children behind in the country of origin
50%

Caretakers of
migrant children
not travelling
with the migrant
parent

My spouse/partner
45%
My older children (18 and over)
28%
Grandparents or extended family
23%

Returns from Saudi Arabia



6,278

Returns
December 2023

Cumulative
2023
109,382

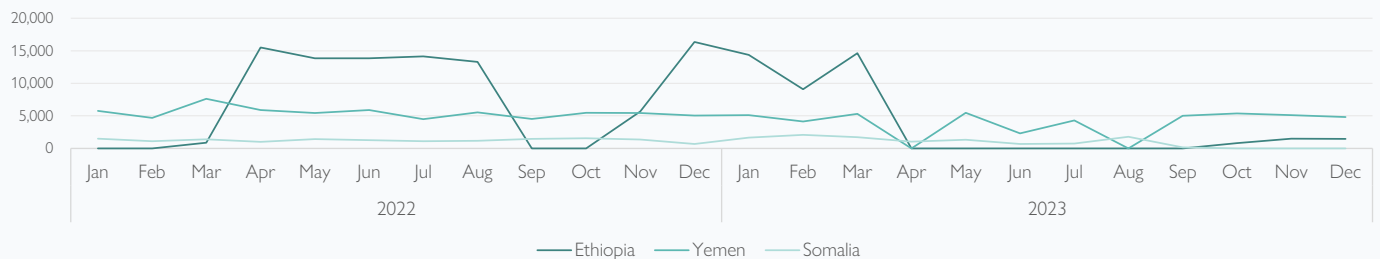
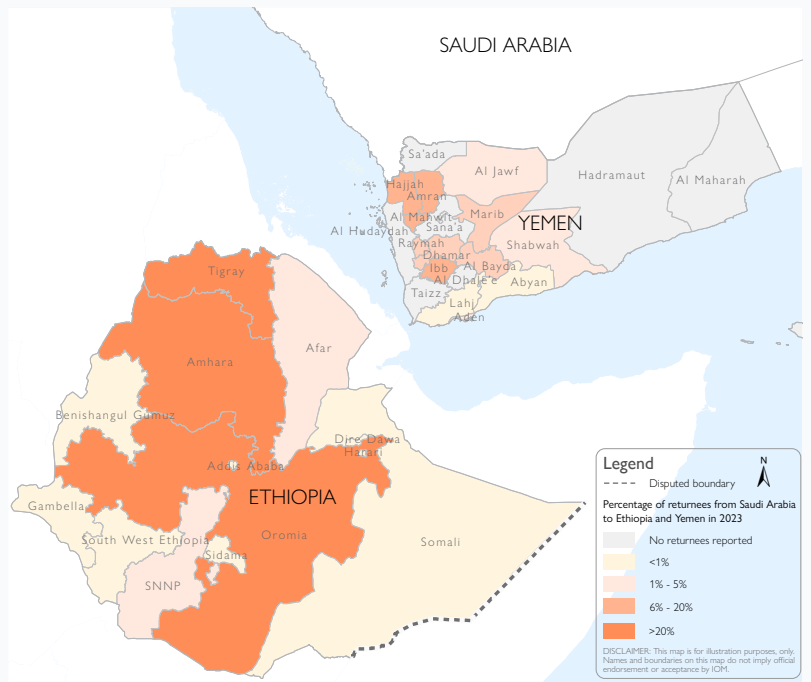
Returns to

Ethiopia	Yemen	Somalia
1,451	4,827	None reported

Ethiopia	Yemen	Somalia
42,948	55,202	11,232

Region of intended return
in Ethiopia 2023

Amhara	Oromia	Tigray	SNNP	Afar
35%	34%	26%	3%	1%



Note: From December 2021 to February 2022 and from September to October 2022, returns to Ethiopia were suspended due to the conflict in northern Ethiopia. Returns were again suspended from early April 2023 for unspecified reasons and resumed in October 2023. IOM has only partial information on returns to Somalia for 2023 and data were not available for December 2023.

Contact

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eastandhornofafrica.iom.int/regional-data-hub