

mixed migration research series

explaining people on the move

Migrant Smuggling in the Horn of Africa & Yemen

the political economy and protection risks



RMMS

Regional
Mixed Migration
Secretariat



1

Study

June 2013

Migrant Smuggling in the Horn of Africa & Yemen: the social economy and protection risks

This is the first of a series of studies focusing on different aspects of mixed migration associated with the Horn of Africa and Yemen region.

Acknowledgements

The research and publication of this report was funded by the SDC – the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The lead researcher and writer was Mr Bram Frouws, an independent consultant. The text was developed using statistical data and information developed by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS). The views and opinions of this report are entirely those of the RMMS.

Published: June 2013

The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS).

Formed in 2011 and based in Nairobi, the overall objective of the RMMS is to support agencies, institutions and fora in the Horn of Africa and Yemen sub-region to improve the management of protection and assistance response to people in mixed migration flows in the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea in Yemen. The co-founders and Steering Committee members for the RMMS include UNHCR, IOM, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), INTERSOS and the Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force. The RMMS is therefore a regional hub aiming to provide support and coordination, analysis and research, information, data management and advocacy. It acts as an independent agency, hosted by the DRC, to stimulate forward thinking and policy development in relation to mixed migration. Its overarching focus and emphasis is on human rights, protection and assistance.

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HORN OF AFRICA



- ⊛ National capital
- Town, village
- ✈ Airport
- - - International boundary
- Road
- +— Railroad

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

Glossary

Selected definitions from the International Organization for Migration's Glossary on Migration 2004. (Definitions used here copied without editing: Full Glossary found at: http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/IML_1_EN.pdf)

asylum seekers

Persons seeking to be admitted into a country as refugees and awaiting decision on their application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, they must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any alien in an irregular situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds.

internal migration

A movement of people from one area of a country to another for the purpose or with the effect of establishing a new residence. This migration may be temporary or permanent. Internal migrants move but remain within their country of origin (e.g. rural to urban migration). *See also de facto refugees, internally displaced persons, international migration, rural-rural migrants, rural-urban migrants, urban-rural migrants, urban migrants.*

internally displaced persons/ IDPs

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (*Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UN Doc E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2.*). *See also displaced person, externally displaced persons*

irregular migrant

Someone who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who infringe a country's admission rules and any other person not authorized to remain in the host country (also called clandestine/ illegal/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation). *See also clandestine migration, documented migrant, illegal entry, irregular migration, undocumented alien*

irregular migration

Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries. There is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. From the perspective of destination countries it is illegal entry, stay or work in a country, meaning that the migrant does not have the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations to enter, reside or work in a given country. From the perspective of the sending country, the irregularity is for example seen in cases in which a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfil the administrative requirements for leaving the country. There is, however, a tendency to restrict the use of the term "illegal migration" to cases of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. *See also clandestine migration, irregular migrant, regular migration, undocumented alien*

mixed flows

Complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants.

palermo protocols

Supplementary protocols to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000): Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and

Children; and Protocol against the Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Illicit Firearms, Ammunition and Related Materials.

refugee (mandate)

A person who meets the criteria of the UNHCR Statute and qualifies for the protection of the United Nations provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not s/he is in a country that is a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951 or the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, or whether or not s/he has been recognized by the host country as a refugee under either of these instruments.

See also refugee (recognized)

refugee (recognized)

A person, who “owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (*Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol*). *See also asylum seekers, de facto refugees, externally displaced persons, refugee, refugees in orbit, refugees in transit*

refugee status determination

A process (conducted by UNHCR and/or States) to determine whether an individual should be recognized as a refugee in accordance with national and international law.

regular migration

Migration that occurs through recognized, legal channels. *See also clandestine migration, irregular migration*

smuggler (of people)

An intermediary who is moving people in furtherance of a contract with them, in order to illegally transport them across an internationally recognized State border. *See also smuggling, trafficking*

smuggling

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (*Art. 3(a), UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000*). Smuggling contrary to trafficking does not require an element of exploitation, coercion, or violation of human rights. *See also illegal entry, trafficking*

trafficking in persons

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (*Art. 3(a), UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Organized Crime, 2000*). *See also abduction, coercion, exploitation, fraud, smuggling, trafficker*

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Recommendations

When offering these recommendations, RMMS is aware that they do not target the underlying causes of mixed migration. Different migrants move for different reasons: the drivers are multiple and often deep rooted, making them difficult to address. Each of the many factors - whether it be the effects of climate change, endemic poverty, conflict, forced recruitment, forced marriage, land scarcity or perceived political oppression - are complicated to address and require considerable national, regional and global political will to resolve. Equally, on the 'pull' side, in a globalised world of international communications, media and entertainment, the aspirations of a new generation of potential migrants are being formed. Expectations around remittances have become entrenched in some communities and a 'culture of migration' has already been established. Where there is geographic inequality of wealth, opportunity, resources, security and freedom, migration will thrive. Paradoxically, irregular migration (with the closely associated businesses of smuggling and trafficking) is in fact a symptom of increasingly restrictive immigration policies, border controls and neighbouring states hostile to migrants and asylum seekers. However, migration policies have generally been found to fail to meet their stated objectives because they refuse to recognise that migration is an integral part of structural transformation processes, rather than a problem that can be 'solved' by stemming the migrant tide.

The following recommendations therefore do not seek to address migration per se, but are chosen to address the specific protection concerns around the mixed migration flows in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. They aim to defend and enhance human rights and legal protections for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees across the region.

1: Advocate for the rights of migrants

1a) Smuggled migrants face high levels of violence and abuse at every step of their journey, including abduction, torture, sexual assault and extortion. Whether or not the affected migrants entered a country illegally should not make a difference to the commitment of governments to bring an end to this endemic violence. A call for action is urgently needed to increase international, national and local efforts to address these human rights violations and prosecute the smugglers and gangs responsible for them.

1b) It is important that the documented experiences of smuggled migrants are communicated effectively in the countries of origin so that prospective migrants are aware of the hazards of smuggling. This requires targeted information campaigns, combining the efforts of governments, relevant agencies, NGOs and civic groups, to ensure that people are informed both of the potential dangers of migration and their rights to protection and assistance during their journey.

1c) Governments need to be aware that formal labour migration can also result in exploitation, rendering the experience for some migrants closer to trafficking than regular labour exchange. Governments need to maintain or establish close monitoring of private employment agencies (PEAs) and hold them accountable for the working conditions of migrants under their charge.

1d) Due to the close collusion of some state officials with smugglers and other criminals, as well as the limited resources of many states in the region, a culture of impunity exists around smuggling and trafficking. States need to train and resource their security apparatus with a view to ending this facilitative environment, increasing the prosecution and sentencing of perpetrators to raise the gravity of rights violations against migrants in countries of origin, transit and destination.

2 Develop effective mechanisms (including capacity building) to distinguish between trafficking and smuggling and different groups of migrants in mixed migration flows and implementation of existing laws

2a) The formal distinction between smuggling and trafficking is being challenged by events in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Some of the cases described in this report do not fit classic smuggling or trafficking models, but nevertheless the criminal activities involved and the associated rights abuses are tolerated in all countries. There is a need to build the capacity of state officials and other stakeholders to understand conceptual differences between smuggling and trafficking as well as the importance of defending the rights of all people within a state's territory.

2b) Following recommendation (2a), the implementation of existing national laws that guarantee the rights and protections of migrants is essential. It is not necessarily the case that new laws or policies are required: all states in the region already have clear legislation against those who beat, rob, extort, abduct, kidnap, torture, rape, sell people into servitude and murder. However, these must be applied as rigorously in defence of migrants as they do against citizens within the state's territory. Furthermore, the governments of victimised and abused migrants should be more vocal in demanding that neighbouring states implement their laws to protect them, regardless of whether their entry was regular or legal.

2c) There is a need for increased debate concerning the conceptual differences between different groups of migrants (such as refugees, asylum seekers, smuggled migrants and trafficked persons) as they are increasingly difficult to distinguish and often use the same routes and/or modes of transport. Donors, governments and other stakeholders need to revisit their designation of persons of concern so that irregular migrants (who currently fall outside of conventional aid or development categories) do not fall through gaps in terms of assistance.

3: Promote integrated approaches to tackle smuggling related corruption

3a) The finding that smuggling is often organised by networks involving a range of transnational actors who profit from the business has implications for the way it should be tackled in the region. A more integrated intraregional approach is therefore required to address the complex economic structures underlining the smuggling and trafficking industries.

3b) Due to the interconnectedness of the flows of mixed migration in the region, with many countries serving simultaneously as countries of origin, transit and destination, a more sustained and collaborative approach to regional debate and policy-making is strongly recommended (see point 5 below).

3c) As the range of actors involved include corrupt public officials such as border guards, police and military airport personnel, border management and protection of rights are closely related to the effectiveness of measures to control bribery, corruption and extortion in border crossing procedures. Anti-corruption strategies should form an important component of national policies to tackle migrant smuggling and enforce the Palermo Protocols.

4: Support effective migration management through a regional and coordinated approach

4a) Border control capacity should be improved so that countries in the region are able to patrol the long and porous frontiers in the Horn of Africa and make sure people use official border crossings. However, stricter border controls alone will not substantially reduce the root demand for struggling. These should therefore form just one part of a wider and integrated approach to migration

management. To improve capacity, data collection must also be enhanced to better understand mixed migration flows. This should include training of border officials to ensure they are able to recognize migrant smuggling and are aware of migrants' rights.

4b) Countries acting alone will only displace existing smuggling routes. What is needed is a regional and coordinated approach in which countries of origin, transit and destination work together to effectively fight migrant smuggling. At present, regional coordination is weak.

5: Encourage the ratification of the Smuggling of Migrants protocol and implementation of regional action plans

5a) Multilateral measures, including regional harmonization of anti-smuggling policies and procedures (point 5 above) as well as regular information sharing, are essential if the migrant smuggling problem is to be addressed. States in the Horn of Africa and Yemen that are not yet party to UN Smuggling of Migrants Protocol should be encouraged to ratify.¹ Moreover, they should be urged to implement regional action plans in line with the recommendations of the UNODC Framework for Action and UNHCR's Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration 10-Point Plan.

6: Facilitate accessible routes to regular and labour migration between the Horn of Africa and Gulf States

6a) As long as there is demand for low-skilled workers in destination countries (such as the Gulf States and the Middle East) and a lack of opportunities and enduring poverty in countries of origin, people will continue to migrate. Attempts to implement regular temporary labour migration programs between the Horn and the Gulf States should be supported, as this can contribute to development in the Horn of Africa (for example, through remittances), fill labour gaps in the Gulf States and lower the demand for and dependence on smugglers – thereby reducing human right violations and the criminal extortion of migrants.

7: Engage in further research and analysis

7a) To better understand the phenomena of mixed migration and migrant smuggling in the region, more research is needed. The RMMS offers a tentative list of potential areas for further exploration as Annex 1 in this report. These and other studies will inform evidence-based policy making to improve prevention of smuggling and protection of smuggled migrants.

7b) Changing policies and increasing risks along certain routes may have the effect of rechanneling migration flows in new directions or encouraging new methods of smuggling. It is recommended that these developments be continuously monitored, both to enhance protection for migrants and offer more detailed information for those seeking to tackle migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the region.

¹ UNHCR and IOM, 2010

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Migrant Smuggling in The Horn Of Africa & Yemen

This publication, the first in a new series of studies by the RMMS on specific mixed migration issues, focuses on **migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa and Yemen**.²

Globally, migration and mobility are important survival and poverty reduction strategies for a large and growing number of people.³ This is no different in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, a poor, environmentally fragile and conflict-prone region that has generated a heavy flow of mixed migration in recent years.⁴ In 'mixed migration', different groups of migrants may travel with or alongside each other, using the same routes and means of transport but with different motivations and objectives. The term is relatively new and encompasses groups of refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, Internally Displaced People, stateless persons on the move and trafficked persons. The 'status' (regular, irregular) of people on the move often changes and adapts over the course of a journey, leading to increased difficulties in classification. In this report the term *migrant* is often used to include all those in the mixed migration flows, even if they include refugees and asylum seekers.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), such movements often involve irregular or clandestine travel, "exposing people to exploitation and abuse by smugglers and traffickers or placing their lives at risk. Most migrants, when they travel irregularly, are in vulnerable situations".⁵ The majority in the Horn of Africa and Yemen move with the assistance or under the control of migrant smugglers.

Although the results of migration may contribute to social and economic development, such forms of irregular migration represent huge challenges for governments and international organisations with regard to promoting the rights of migrants, addressing the issue of irregular migration and border management, ensuring national security and correct immigration procedures, and countering the activities of criminal networks.⁶

Migrant smuggling is a disturbing phenomenon due to the power dynamics and attendant protection risks between migrant and smuggler as well as between migrant and officials in the states through which migrants travel. Unlike human trafficking, the migrant starts his or her journey on a consensual basis, but this often soon changes. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), migrant smuggling can be a 'deadly' business.⁷

Between 2006 and 2012, when regular monitoring of new arrivals first began, a conservative estimate indicates that almost half a million migrants (447,000) have set off to Yemen in boats from Djibouti or the Somali

2 IOM, 2009
3 UNHCR and IOM, 2010
4 Soucy, 2011
5 UNHCR, 2009
6 UNHCR and IOM, 2010
7 UNODC, 2010

introduction

Mixed movements are complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants".²

Migrant smuggling is a deadly business (UNODC)

"Thousands of smuggled migrants have suffocated in containers, perished in deserts or drowned at sea. Smugglers of migrants often conduct their activities with little or no regard for the lives of the people whose hardship has created a demand for smuggling services."⁶

port city of Bossaso, almost all of them Somalis and Ethiopians⁸. According to Human Rights Watch, and as this study will illustrate, asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants travelling to Yemen from the Horn of Africa suffer severe human rights abuses, violence or loss of life. They also claim that “despite the numbers and despite the human rights abuses, this has been largely ignored by the outside world”.⁹ Many Eritrean migrants and asylum seekers take the western route through Sudan into Libya, while a large cohort of other Ethiopians and Somalis stream south through Kenya and towards South Africa. Almost all of this movement is facilitated by human smugglers.

“Although states have legitimate interests in securing their borders and exercising immigration controls, such concerns do not trump the obligations of the states to respect the internationally guaranteed rights of all persons, to protect those rights against abuses, and to fulfil the rights necessary for them to enjoy a life of dignity and security”.

Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 4th Global Forum on Migration and Development, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, 10 November 2010.

This report provides a full overview of what is known about the scope, nature and dynamics of migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

1.2 Objectives, methodology and structure of the report

Objectives

The objective of this study is to provide a full overview of what is currently known about the scope, nature and dynamics of migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa and Yemen by compiling existing information on the phenomenon in a single publication. The study aims to serve as a key reference for all stakeholders working directly or indirectly with migrant smuggling and protection issues in the region. It also aims to act as a trigger for further research on identified knowledge gaps to fuel dialogue between major stakeholders and provide policy guidance for officials from governments, international organisations and NGOs.

Methodology

This report is based on desk research conducted by an external consultant between February 11 and March 1st 2013, based on existing reports, articles and data. Moreover, as an RMMS study, the country sections in chapter 2 draw heavily on the RMMS country profiles, monthly reports¹⁰ and other research.

However, assessing migration flows and smuggling routes is difficult, as the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) noted in a study on East Africa migration routes in 2007. Flows and routes are dynamic and fast changing, continuously affected by a range of factors such as competing smuggling networks, government policy and border controls.¹¹ The media reports used for this study contain more recent information, but are often anecdotal and not based on thorough research.

8 Data on new arrivals in Yemen have been collected for the last seven years by members of the Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF), where UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council work with local agencies to monitor new arrivals and refugee registrations on a daily basis.

9 Human Rights Watch, 2009

10 RMMS data and texts from country profiles and monthly reports are used freely and frequently throughout this report, without explicit references.

11 ICMPD, 2007

Although good statistics are in some cases available, this study does not aim to provide more than indicative numbers on how many people are affected by smuggling in the region. The flexible and adaptive nature of smuggling, with both migrants and smugglers doing their best to stay 'below the radar', makes it difficult to provide a fully accurate account of its routes, volume, economics and networks.

Structure

For each country the report aims to provide some information on the economics of smuggling. Given the fragmentary information available for some routes, however, these calculations can only be rough estimates. Despite these limitations, the report provides a comprehensive profile of migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa and Yemen¹². It also presents vivid information on the hardship, physical abuse and psychological trauma that smuggled migrants often have to face once leaving their country of origin. This is as true for involuntary migrants (refugees and asylum seekers) as it is for other migrants. Finally, the report calls for improved action to protect the human rights of all migrants in the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

introduction

1.3 Migrant smuggling: definitions, distinctions and organisation

Definitions

It is important to define migrant smuggling and differentiate it from trafficking, as these are two related but distinct phenomena. *The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime*, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organised crime. The Convention opened for signature by Member States at a High-level Political Conference in Palermo, on 12-15 December 2000 and entered into force on 29 September 2003. The Convention is further supplemented by two protocols that include the formal definitions of trafficking and smuggling: the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* and the *Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, also known as the *Palermo Protocols*.

As this study is on migrant smuggling, we focus on the 'Smuggling of Migrants Protocol', which entered into force on 28 January 2004. A major achievement of the Protocol was that, for the first time in a global international instrument, a definition of smuggling of migrants was developed and agreed upon.

- Article 3 defines smuggling of migrants as: "*the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a state party of which the person is not a national*".
- Article 6 of the Protocol requires the criminalisation of such conduct. In addition, it requires States to criminalise the conduct of "*enabling a person to remain in a country where the person is not*

As this study is on migrant smuggling, we focus on the 'Smuggling of Migrants Protocol', which entered into force on 28 January 2004. A major achievement of the Protocol was that, for the first time in a global international instrument, a definition of smuggling of migrants was developed and agreed upon.

¹² It may be noted that the geographic focus of the Horn of Africa and Yemen (combining parts of Africa and the Arabian Peninsular) is necessary to cover the core displacement axis and movement in the region. The Danish Refugee Council, (RMMIS's hosts) regional office in Nairobi covers the same territory in its assistance and development interventions.

*a legal resident or citizen without complying with requirements for legally remaining by illegal means” for financial or material benefit.*¹³

- Article 5 of the Protocol addresses the importance of not criminalizing the migrants themselves: “*migrants shall not become liable to criminal prosecution under this protocol for the fact of having been the object of conduct set forth in article 6 of this Protocol*”.

Criminalisation only covers those who profit from migrant smuggling and related conduct. The protocol does not aim to target persons such as family members or non-governmental or religious groups that facilitate the illegal entry of migrants for humanitarian or non-profit reasons.¹⁴

Distinctions between smuggling and trafficking

There are frequent misunderstandings concerning the distinctions and overlap between migrant smuggling and human trafficking.¹⁵ According to UNODC there are three basic differences, summarised below:¹⁶

- Exploitation: The primary source of profit of trafficking in persons is exploitation, while the smuggler has no intention of exploiting the smuggled migrant after transporting him or her irregularly in-to another country. The relationship between smuggler and smuggled migrant usually ends after the procurement of illegal entry or residence. In contrast, in trafficking the exploitation may last for several years.
- Illegal entry or residence: Smuggling of migrants always has a transnational dimension involving at least two countries. The objective is always to facilitate illegal entry or residency from Country A to Country B. Trafficking in persons may also involve this element, but not always. Transportation can also occur in a legal way and trafficking often occurs within the home country of the victim, without crossing borders.
- Victimisation: Smuggling does not necessarily involve the victimisation of the smuggled migrant and generally involves their consent. Trafficking in persons, on the other hand, is always a crime against a person. Victims of trafficking have either never agreed to be part of the process or, if their initial consent has been given, this was only secured through control, deception or violence. However, during the smuggling process other crimes are often committed against migrants, such as physical violence or other acts endangering their lives.

These differences, besides the transnational characteristics of the two activities, are also defined by the source of profit: smugglers earn their income primarily by facilitating travel while traffickers benefit from the eventual exploitation of the victim in some form of servitude or modern day slavery. The role of coercion and deceit is also explicitly present in trafficking, whereas smuggling is normally initiated through a consensual agreement between the smuggler and the migrant ‘client’.

¹³ UNODC, 2010

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ UNODC, 2012

¹⁶ UNODC, 2010

Although the two phenomena are different, human trafficking and migrant smuggling share many of the same abusive characteristics. There is often a fine line between the two, which is highlighted by recent trends of smuggling (and kidnapping) Ethiopians in Yemen.

Media coverage and even public policy documents use the terms *human smuggling* and *human trafficking* interchangeably and often inaccurately. In most cases, human smuggling is confused as trafficking. For example, the ‘agents’ arranging boat travel crossing the Gulf of Aden are described as human traffickers, as are transporters who bring migrants from the border areas to cities. However, though they may indeed be human traffickers, it is more likely that they are in fact human smugglers.

Nevertheless, IOM research in 2009 illustrated that smuggling and trafficking share many of the same abusive characteristics and that there is often a fine line between activities defined as smuggling or trafficking.¹⁷ The differences are becoming increasingly blurred as migrants are treated as exploitable commodities by smugglers, certain state authorities and criminals. UNODC illustrates this as follows: some trafficked might start their journey by agreeing to be smuggled into a country, but find themselves deceived, coerced or forced into an exploitative situation later in the process.¹⁸ In fact, as will be described in this report, a recent trend in the smuggling (and subsequent kidnapping) of Ethiopian migrants to Yemen, in particular, points to a certain overlap between the two phenomena, suggesting there may be limits to the formal definitions that separate smuggling from trafficking.¹⁹

Organisation of migrant smuggling

UNODC provides insight into the *organisation of smuggling, the actors and their roles, the different types of smuggling and payment modalities and methods.*²⁰

Level of organisation: Smuggling networks are not necessarily mafia-like or organised criminal structures. Many are loosely connected chains of individual criminals, each with their own part in the smuggling process. UNODC warns that it is precisely this varied level of organisation and *modus operandi* that makes them difficult to dismantle. However, unless these groups are systematically disbanded at all points in the process, they will continue to operate by simply adapting their methods or replacing necessary elements.

Actors: There are various actors performing a range of different roles in the smuggling process, although the scale depends on the size of the smuggling network.

- The *coordinator* or *organiser* has overall responsibility for the smuggling operation.
- *Recruiters* advertise the services and establish contact between smugglers and migrants, often tempting them into making the journey by misinforming them about both the process and the reality of the destination country.
- *Transporters* or *guides* manage the operational side of smuggling by guiding and accompanying migrants through one or more countries and overseeing border crossings. Migrants may be handed over from one guide to another along the way. They are often men from border regions with local knowledge, either affiliated with larger smuggling networks or providing services on a contract basis.

The differences are becoming increasingly blurred as migrants are treated as exploitable commodities by smugglers, certain state authorities and criminals.

17 Ibid.

18 UNODC, 2010

19 Horwood, 2012

20 UNODC, 2010; UNODC, 2012

Migrant smuggling is regarded as a low-risk, high-profit business. The organisational level of smuggling networks varies and many different actors are involved. It can consist of ad hoc smuggling services, misuse or abuse of documents or preorganised stage-to-stage smuggling. Payment can be made up front, en route or by credit and in cash, through regular bank transfers or through trust systems (such as the Hawala system).

- *Spotters, drivers, messengers and enforcers* perform other jobs in the smuggling process, such as providing information about police checks or protecting the business by using threats or violence.
- *Service providers and suppliers* often maintain a relationship with the smugglers and are paid a share of the profits for their role in the smuggling process. Examples are boat owners, corrupt public officials and people who harbour smuggled migrants throughout the process, such as hotel owners, document counterfeiters or taxi drivers.

Types of smuggling: UNODC distinguishes three types of migrant smuggling²¹:

- *Ad hoc smuggling services*: the migrant travels on his or her own, occasionally using smuggling services, for example, to cross a border.
- *Migrant smuggling through misuse or abuse of documents*: migrants who can afford to use this type of smuggling often have sufficient financial resources to purchase visas and other necessary papers.
- *Pre-organised stage-to-stage smuggling*: the whole journey is organised and migrants are accompanied for most of it by smugglers.

Modalities and methods for payments: There are three main *modalities* and methods for payment: up front before departure, en route to the different people involved or by credit. In the latter case, the smuggling fee is advanced to the smuggled migrant by a third party whom the smuggled migrant has to pay back after arrival. UNODC warns that investigators need to be especially alert to this form of smuggling, as it can become a form of tracking or debt bondage.²² The three main methods for payment are cash, regular bank transfers and trust systems, such as the Hawala system (see the section on Somalia).

1.4 Scale and protection of migrant smuggling

Scale of migration

Precise figures on the volume of people smuggled globally are not known. However, it is suggested that it is far greater than the number of people trafficked.²³ According to the US Department of State (2012), there are approximately 27 million victims of human trafficking across the world²⁴: it is likely that the total volume of smuggled migrants far exceeds this. As mentioned above, in the last seven years alone a conservative estimate of almost 500,000 Ethiopians and Somalis have crossed the Red Sea or Gulf of Aden as part of mixed migration flows. Analysts document the smuggling business as growing from small scale cross-border activities affecting a few countries to a multi-million dollar international enterprise involving transnational crime networks.²⁵ Migrant smuggling is regarded as a low-risk, high-profit business that can occur by air, sea or land, often by complex routes which change rapidly and frequently.²⁶

21 UNODC, 2010

22 UNODC, 2010

23 Horwood, 2009

24 US Department of State, 2012

25 Horwood, 2009

26 Interpol, 2010

Protection of smuggled migrants

The vast majority of the Member States of the United Nations (112 signatories; 135 parties) have ratified the *Smuggling of Migrants Protocol*. Of the countries featured in this study, Djibouti and Kenya ratified the protocol while Ethiopia acceded in June 2012. Only Eritrea, Somalia and Yemen have not signed the protocol.

However, most countries do not have dedicated action plans or strategies to respond to the issue. In its recently published *International Framework for Action to Implement the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol*, UNODC identified the following challenges as impediments to its full realisation: (a) insufficient prevention and awareness; (b) lack of data and research; (c) lack of legislation; (d) inadequate policies and planning; (e) weak criminal justice system response; (f) inadequate protection of the rights of smuggled migrants; and (g) limited international co-operation.²⁷

With regard to the inadequate protection of smuggled migrants, the two protocols were not developed as human rights tools but in response to a growing concern about the rising incidence of trafficking and smuggling.²⁸ It is argued that the failure of the two protocols to include mandatory protections provides a strong indication that, for many governments, trafficking and smuggling are issues of crime and border control, not human rights. As a result, smuggled migrants may be regarded as the lawbreakers in a number of transit or destination countries.²⁹ As we will see in the remainder of this report, this leads to serious protection issues and rights violations for smuggled migrants.

27 UNODC, 2012

28 Horwood, 2009

29 Gallagher, 2002

Table summarizing movement in the region May 2013

Country	Refugees and asylum seekers	Trafficked Persons	Irregular migrants	IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)
Djibouti	UNHCR were planning to assist 26,000 refugees and asylum seekers in early 2013 – the majority of whom are Somali. The number has been relatively stable in the last 3 years.	The 2011 and 2012 US State Department TIP reports list Djibouti as source, transit and destination for persons subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The extent is not known.	The number of Djiboutian irregular migrants is not known.	In times of severe drought, such as 2011 and early 2012, some Djiboutians move to the towns and particularly Djibouti city, but generally there are no IDPs in Djibouti.
Ethiopia	UNHCR were planning to assist 395,000 refugees and asylum seekers in early 2013. In 2011, Ethiopia was host to 290,250 refugees and asylum seekers. By March 2013 the number increased to over 377,000.	The 2011 and 2012 US State Department TIP reports list Ethiopia as an origin country for persons subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The extensive and regulated market for labour migration through Private Employment Agencies includes a high number of trafficking cases. Child labour within the country is also common.	In 2011, a total of 75,804 Ethiopians crossed the Arabian or Red Sea to Yemen and 84,446 in 2012. Indications from the first quarter suggest a similar number will make the crossing in 2013.	The number of IDPs in Ethiopia has not been independently estimated, but the GoE claimed in late 2012 that there were 200,000 IDPs incountry.
Kenya	UNHCR were planning to assist 649,000 refugees and asylum seekers in early 2013. Since 2011 there have been significant increases in Dadaab refugee camp – Africa’s oldest and largest camp. In 2011 almost 115,000 new refugees from Somalia were registered in eight months alone. In 2011 and 2012 over 210,000 Somalis entered Kenya and were registered at the Dadaab refugee camp. However, since late 2012 a steady flow of refugees are leaving the camps to return to Somalia.	The 2011 and 2012 US State Department TIP reports list Kenya as source, transit and destination for persons subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking.	The total number of irregular migrants from Kenya is undetermined. The most popular movements are to the Middle East and Gulf States. It is estimated that over 40,000 Kenyans are migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, but many of these are regular migrants.	UNHCR project 300,000 IDPs in their planning estimations for 2013, in addition to 30,000 stateless persons. By the end of 2012, only 6,973 IDPs (as a result of the 2007/8 post-election violence) were yet to be settled (according to the Government of Kenya).

Table summarizing movement in the region May 2013 (cont.)

Country	Refugees and asylum seekers	Trafficked Persons	Irregular migrants	IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)
Somalia	<p>UNHCR were planning to assist 13,000 (almost entirely Ethiopian) refugees and asylum seekers in early 2013.</p> <p>In 2011, more than 290,000 Somalis fled their country.</p> <p>At the start of 2013 there were an estimated 1,024,698 Somali refugees in the region.</p>	<p>Somalia does not feature in the US State Department TIP reports but is considered by relevant agencies a source and transit country for persons subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The extent is not known.</p>	<p>In 2011 and 2012 over 210,000 Somalis entered Kenya and were registered at the Dadaab refugee camp but some find their way into urban centres and avoid the camps. Rough estimates suggest there may be up to 200,000 Somali unregistered irregular migrants and refugees in Nairobi alone. A total of 27,350 Somali migrants in 2011 and 23,086 in 2012 crossed the Arabian or Red Sea to Yemen.</p>	<p>In 2011, over 1,300,000 were displaced, mainly by conflict but also by drought. By the end of 2012, the number had risen to 1,355,000 IDPs.</p>
Yemen	<p>Al Kharaz is the only refugee camp in Yemen, but most refugees and asylum seekers live in cities. UNHCR were planning to assist almost 248,000 asylum seekers and refugees (or persons in 'refugee-like' situations) and asylum seekers in early 2013. As of March 2013 the total was 240,335, representing an 11% increase from two years earlier (2011) and comprised of the following groups:</p> <p>Somali: 229,447 Ethiopian: 5,229 Eritrean: 1.124 Iraqi:3,917 Others: 818</p>	<p>The 2011 and 2012 US State Department TIP reports list Yemen as an origin and to a much lesser extent transit and destination country for persons subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. However, increasing reports of abductions of females (to be sold for domestic and sexual servitude) have been recorded in 2011/12.</p>	<p>In 2011, a total of 103,154 migrants crossed the Arabian or Red Sea to Yemen. In 2012 the total was 107,532. Current trends suggest a similar flow will make the same move to Yemen in 2013.</p>	<p>In September 2012 the UNHCR reported over 500,000 registered IDPs. In their planning calculations for 2013 they estimate 390,000 IDPs, 200,000 people in 'IDP-like situations' and 50,000 returnees.</p>

2.0 Country/Area Profiles

2.1 Djibouti

Djibouti is a major transit country for migrants *en route* to Yemen. It is also a de facto destination country for an estimated 30,000 migrants, including refugees at the Ali Addeh camp and in urban areas. In 2012, over 80,000 migrants arrived in Yemen via Djibouti, representing 75% of the annual total entering the country from the Horn of Africa. Most depart from the vicinity of the small coastal town of Obock, which since 2009 has become the preferred departure point for the majority of migrants attempting to reach Yemen. Remote coastal locations 30-40 kilometres north from Obock are increasingly used as smugglers try to avoid major towns where local authorities reportedly have patrols in place. The volume of migration from Djibouti has been growing rapidly. The numbers of those arriving in Yemen from both Djibouti and Puntland almost doubled from 53,000 to 103,000 between 2010 and 2011, increasing again in 2012 to 107,000. In October 2012 alone, approximately 102 boats carrying an average of 68 passengers left Djibouti for Yemen. During 2012 as a whole, a total of 1,213 smuggler boats made the crossing.

Country/Year	2010	2011	2012
Djibouti departures	34,894	72,142	80,564
Yemen (all arrivals)	53,832	103,154	107,532
% of total arrivals	64%	69.9%	74.9%

Table: Departures and arrivals of smuggled migrants from Djibouti to Yemen, 2010-12

Most of those entering Djibouti are seeking escape from harsh, oppressive and undesirable conditions elsewhere, mainly Somalia and Ethiopia. Despite widespread poverty, very few Djiboutians have been documented leaving their country. Djibouti offers most asylum seekers from Somalia refugee status on a 'prima facie' basis, whilst those from Eritrea, Ethiopia and other neighbouring countries undergo individual Refugee Status Determination procedures under the auspices of the UNHCR, in collaboration with ONARS³⁰ (the government refugee authority). However, given the troubled political history between the two countries, Eritreans entering Ethiopia are sometimes regarded as a potential security threat. Young men in particular may be placed in detention facilities as a result.

Overview of migration

Migration into Djibouti

Of the 22,000 refugees residing in the south east of Djibouti, in the Ali Addeh refugee camp, the overwhelming majority are Somali. In late 2011, approximately 1,000 Somalis were entering Djibouti every month via the Loya Ade border crossing with Somaliland. During 2012 this number fell, partly due to the increased scrutiny of single male Somali migrants - regarded as a potential security risk following anti-Djibouti threats made by Al Shabaab militants in Somalia. According to an assessment of the Somaliland Mixed Migration Task Force (SMMTF) in late 2012, smuggling

country profile

Djibouti

In 2012, over 80,000 migrants arrived in Yemen via Djibouti, which is now the preferred departure point for mixed migration flows to Yemen. Djibouti is mainly a transit country for Ethiopian and Somali migrants, to a lesser extent a country of destination for mainly Somali asylum seekers and hardly a country of origin, with very few Djiboutians leaving the country.

30 l'Office National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés et aux Sinistrés - ONARS

is the main economy for the communities living around the Somaliland / Djibouti border, with locals escorting (and sometimes robbing) Ethiopian and Somali migrants as they cross from one country into the other.

Numerous times each week UNHCR, in collaboration with the local authorities, buses any newly arrived Somalis to the Ali Addeh refugee camp, where some remain. Despite these incoming arrivals at the camp, the population has remained stable in recent years at around 22,000, suggesting that most refugees do not remain. According to UNHCR, some refugees have also left the camp to find jobs in Djibouti city. Many new arrivals use locally based smugglers to continue their journey through Djibouti to the coast and on to Yemen. It is common for Somali migrants to register as asylum seekers or refugees and then remain in the camp long enough to receive some international assistance before moving on, trading what supplies they have obtained from UNHCR as part payment to the smugglers who operate openly within and around the camp.

"I was raped there, on the road, by all of them. They covered my eyes, held my head back and held my arms and legs. They injured my left hip and left me pregnant."

Ethiopian female, Djibouti City

Those who can afford to contract smugglers may be transported from border crossing areas to Djibouti city or Obock. Those who cannot may walk along the roads or through desolate areas to reach their destination. During 2012, drought, rising food prices and unemployment also caused increased internal migration within Djibouti, with members of host communities moving closer to refugee camps in the hope of obtaining food and other supplies. However, the number of Djiboutians joining the international migration flows remains very low.

Risks and protection issues

The journey to the coast

The majority of migrants using Djibouti as their departure point from the Horn of Africa to Yemen are Ethiopian. Djibouti is far closer to certain parts of Ethiopia and it avoids passing through Somaliland where, in the past, migrants faced multiple abuses and frequent robbery from waiting gangs – often in collusion with the smugglers.³¹ But the journey to any of the coastal departure points in Djibouti is a dangerous affair for migrants. Some die in the hot deserts on the Ethiopian as well as the Djiboutian side of the border, suffering from dehydration, starvation or less commonly as a result of abuse or neglect by smugglers.

Smuggling and trafficking networks have also become more organised. What were once relatively ad hoc arrangements have developed into highly organised criminal networks operating in Djibouti. Migrants are passed from one group of smugglers to the next and are often forced to pay large sums beyond the price originally agreed upon in order to continue the journey. For example, migrants may be promised that the journey will take place by vehicle but then may be asked for additional money: if unable to pay, they will then be forced to walk the remainder of the way. Smugglers using this route have also been known to crowd migrants in container tracks that result in cases of death by suffocation. Some migrants report having been robbed and beaten in Djibouti.

During their journey, migrants are not free to move or leave. As the authorities increase their crackdowns, migrants are often forced to wait for days at a time - often without food or water - while smugglers wait

31 Getachew, 2006 and Human Rights Watch 2009

until authorities are not around in order to continue the journey. In many cases migrants are also forced to buy food and beverages from selected vendors who work in collaboration with the smugglers along the route. Migrants have explained that usually food and beverages were part of their original package, yet they are often subsequently forced to purchase these themselves.

In addition to these risks, frequent road accidents occur with overcrowded buses or trucks travelling clandestinely during early morning. On occasions, the authorities set up road blocks along the road and do not allow migrants to pass. This happened in July 2012, creating a bottleneck of over 200 migrants in Tadjourah trying to reach Obock.

Soucy reported sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) risks for women while in transit on the inland route between Loyaade and Obock. Perpetrators of sexual abuse of migrant women in transit are reportedly members of the Djibouti military or gangs of villagers, with particular mention of Afari men.³² Female migrants arriving in Yemen also report cases of rape and sexual violence, sometimes prolonged and while being held by migrant smugglers, in the Obock area (see right side).

According to the Oromia Support Group, there are several thousand undocumented immigrants from Ethiopia in Djibouti City (approximately 5,000 Oromo and 6,000 Amhara). They lead a marginal existence in Djibouti city, due to high unemployment and exploitation of cheap casual labour. Xenophobic and sexual violence is commonly reported in Djibouti city and in the area of the Ali Addeh refugee camp.³³

The wait in Obock

Smuggled migrants may suffer abuse and violence while waiting in Obock to depart to Yemen. After they are transported to Obock, they are kept in smugglers' or brokers' houses or even on the beaches without shelter prior to departure. There, they are often dependent on the smugglers for food or water. Several deaths at this departure point have been reported as migrants die from dehydration and starvation under the 'care' of negligent smugglers.³⁴ There have also been increasing accounts of migrants being held hostage in Obock until they can produce ransom money to secure their release.

There are other reports of physical abuse of migrants as they approach and wait along the coast. The perpetrators are reportedly the armed groups that control the smuggling. In addition, smugglers impose strict discipline on the queues of migrants waiting on the coast, using force, sometimes lethal, to dominate them. In December 2012, new arrivals in Yemen reported that they had seen three male Ethiopian bodies lying unattended at the coastal departure points in Obock.

Somalis fare worse than Ethiopians in Obock due to the smugglers giving priority to Ethiopians. Unlike the Somalis, who mostly apply for refugee status, the Ethiopians continue on their journey once they arrive in Yemen and so present greater potential profit.³⁵ There have also been increasing reports of forced embarkation from migrants who have escaped smugglers or traffickers in Djibouti. According to these accounts, migrants are being forced to continue the journey even if they wish to stop or return

country profile

Djibouti

There have also been increasing reports of forced embarkation from migrants who have escaped smugglers or traffickers in Djibouti. According to these accounts, migrants are being forced to continue the journey even if they wish to stop or return to Ethiopia.

32 Soucy, 2011

33 Oromia Support Group, 2012b

34 Soucy, 2011

35 Ibid

to Ethiopia. As smugglers are paid per capita, they do not want to lose potential revenue or get in trouble with other smugglers for not delivering the number of migrants agreed upon. This could also explain the increase in those seeking assistance or voluntary return in Aden and along the coast of Yemen. This is a recent phenomena, as in the past migrants would attempt to make their way north as quickly as possible without seeking support.

Sexual violence – an added risk for female migrants

Besides other forms of abuse and brutalisation, female migrants in particular face the threat of sexual exploitation by smugglers and brokers while awaiting departure in Obock. The usual modus operandi of the perpetrators starts with the denial of payment of fees for their brokering and smuggling services, followed by sexual servitude for extended periods, until the perpetrator decides that the women has earned her fare across the sea to Yemen. In November 2012, for instance, young women reported that they had been held hostage in Tadjourah and Obock by Afari smugglers before being allowed to make the crossing to Yemen. Female migrants registered by Migration Response Centre (MRC) Obock or supported by MRC staff during outreach activities have also recently been requesting birth control pills in the hope of avoiding unwanted pregnancy due to rape during the journey.

The boat trip to Yemen

The sea passage itself is dangerous. Abuse is frequently reported by those that take boats from the Djibouti shores to Yemen, including violence, rape, outright murder and forced disembarkation in deep water. Chronic overcrowding in appalling conditions is the norm: often men are tightly packed in the hold where engine fuel and exhaust fumes cause burns and can lead to lethal suffocation. In an effort to mitigate the impact on ship safety, smugglers also force migrants to sit motionless throughout the journey, with movement or speech severely punished. Brutal tales of shootings, beatings, drownings and even killing of infants are reported. Women and girls are normally held on deck where they are frequently subjected to sexual abuse, rape and sometime murder. Increasingly, new female arrivals talk of being subjected to or having witnessed sexual abuse during the passage.

In a rising number of reported cases the abuse extends to the destination shores, where migrants are held hostage and violently brutalised or robbed by smugglers demanding more money (see country profiles of Ethiopia and Yemen) or sold to criminals who do the same. Deaths at sea have become far less common in the last two years, however, particularly on the Red Sea crossing departing from Djibouti. RMMS suggests this is due to the increased commoditisation of migrants and their value alive, as smugglers can sell migrants on to criminal gangs in Yemen, or other members of their own gangs, who continue to extort the migrants after arrival. It is also a reflection of decreasing activity by coastguards in Yemen during 2011 and 2012 as a result of the recent and ongoing civil conflict in the country. New initiatives in 2013 suggest the government is beefing up coastal patrols and anti-smuggling actions.

Considering that 84,000 migrants undertook this journey in 2012, the business was worth USD 11-12.5 million to the handful of boat owning smugglers for the sea crossing alone.

36 Ibid.

The economics of smuggling from Djibouti

New arrivals in Yemen reported that they paid smugglers USD 130-150 for the boat trip from Obock to Yemen's Red Sea coast. Considering that 84,000 migrants undertook this journey in 2012, the business was worth USD 11-12.5 million to the handful of boat owning smugglers for the sea crossing alone. Some Somali new arrivals in September claimed to have engaged the services of a smuggling network based in Mogadishu. They paid between USD 350- 400 to travel from Mogadishu via Djibouti to the Red Sea coast of Yemen. Ethiopians using a new smuggling ring in Harar reportedly pay approximately USD 290 for the journey to Yemen.

Because it is not known how many of the 84,000 Somali and Ethiopian migrants used these routes and paid these amounts for the whole journey, it is not possible to estimate the total value of smuggling through Djibouti to Yemen. Nevertheless, it is fair to conclude that the Djiboutian smuggling business is a multimillion dollar industry.

Government response

Smuggling and trafficking are illegal by Djiboutian law and Djibouti ratified the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air on 20 April 2005.³⁷ The government reportedly takes a strong stand against smuggling by sea from their territory and the Djiboutian Coast Guards frequently intercept boats full of smuggled people. In 2012 approximately 3,533 irregular migrants were intercepted and 'rescued at sea' as they were being smuggled on boat trips to Yemen.

Intercepted migrants are normally returned to Djibouti and sent to detention facilities or local prisons awaiting deportation. According to migrants interviewed in Yemen, however, in some cases boat owners and captains pay the Coast Guards to continue their journey. As this kind of collusion between the authorities and smugglers is widely evident elsewhere, this comes as little surprise.

The Djibouti security forces mounted a campaign against migrant smuggling in November 2012. On 20th November, security agents arrested 300 illegal migrants around the port area and transported them to Djibouti town for possible repatriation and deportation. Authorities in Djibouti frequently round up and arrest migrants travelling through the country without proper documentation. Often they are held at the Nagad Military Academy, near Djibouti city.

Somali migrants arriving in Yemen also report being arrested as they journey through Djibouti. Due to limited detention facilities and other resources, the arrest of migrants appears to be arbitrary and not systematic. The flow of migrants through this small nation state is very visible and it is hard to see how, were there sufficient political will to do so, the business of human smuggling could not be easily intercepted or curtailed.

37 UNODC

country profile

Djibouti

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2.2 Eritrea

Country profile

Besides being one of the poorest countries in the world, Eritrea is a closed society with a highly securitized state and an authoritarian government. Endemic poverty, lack of livelihood opportunities and limited political freedom are the main drivers of its mixed migration. Many Eritreans flee the harsh conditions and, in particular, a period of compulsory national service which migrants report as being oppressive and potentially almost unlimited in time, for some. They leave the country illegally, without obtaining an exit permit or visa. The risks are considerable, as departing unofficially or fleeing military recruitment is seen as an act of defection, treachery and political dissent that could result in serious individual censure by Eritrean authorities.

Eritrea is predominantly a country of origin for mixed migration. Its role in the region as a transit or destination country is negligible. Given its geographical location, its current political regime and the options of other destination countries in the region, this is unlikely to change in the near future. However, Eritrea does host a small population of refugees (4,719), the majority of them Somali³⁸. Mixed migration cases predominantly include forced and economic migrants who leave the country in significant numbers, south into Ethiopia or west into Sudan. Because they can register as refugees, many Eritreans become asylum-seekers once they have left their country, even if they frequently use the refugee camps as springboards for onward movement elsewhere.

According to reports from Yemen, few migrants appear to depart from Eritrea's coastline: this is reportedly well guarded by the authorities to prevent clandestine movement across the Red Sea. Nevertheless, given the desperation of some Eritreans to leave their country, it may be assumed that some fishing boats manage to cross to Saudi Arabia. There are, however, no monitoring systems in Saudi Arabia or northern Yemen to track this movement at present.³⁹

The exodus of disaffected Eritreans is significant but attracts little international attention, despite the large numbers involved. According to unofficial estimates by UNHCR staff, between 1,000 and 3,000 Eritreans were leaving every month during 2011. This figure may now be lower, but there are no sources collating data as Eritreans move through eastern Sudan clandestinely, protected and hidden by smugglers and traffickers. UNHCR report that as of early 2012 there were just over 266,000 Eritrean registered refugees (251,954) and asylum seekers (14,172) globally. UNHCR are planning for 115,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan, with 88,500 directly assisted in 2013⁴⁰.

According to field sources of the Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) the total arrivals of Eritrean refugees at the reception camp of Shagarab in Eastern Sudan reached 58,362 in the 32 month period between 1 January

country profile

Eritrea

Eritrea is predominantly a country of origin. Its role as a transit or destination country is negligible. Eritreans flee poverty, lack of livelihood and political freedom and compulsory national service. East Sudan hosts over 30,000 Eritrean refugees but in recent years many stay at the camps temporarily before moving on.

38 The Government of Eritrea recognizes Somali and Sudanese refugees on a prima facie basis. Somali and Sudanese refugees are camp based and reside in Emkulu and Elit camps. Ethiopian refugees, recognized under UNHCR's mandate, reside mainly in the Eritrean capital, Asmara.

39 The patrolling along the western coast has not been possible to date due to funding constraints. However, new funding in 2013 from the Swiss government and CERF will enable Danish Refugee Council patrol teams to expand up the coast into Hodeidah governorate.

40 Up to 2011, Sudan hosted more than 80,000 Eritrean refugees in the eight refugee camps in eastern Sudan along the Ethiopian border, but due to the risk of kidnapping and abduction by criminal gangs the number reportedly fell in 2012.

2010 and 31 August 2012. EPDP report that 'the rate of monthly arrival was around 2,000 until recently. The reduction is believed to be due to a number of factors including the border controls of the dictatorial regime whose shoot-to-kill policy has been tightened and enforced mercilessly. Another factor could also be the increased criminal action of smugglers and middlemen who kidnap refugees from Shagarab and its environs for ransoms and organ harvesting in the Sinai.'⁴¹

Besides the refugee camps, Sudan has also become a transit country for Eritreans on the move to Egypt, the Sinai desert and further on to Israel. UNHCR reported an increase in the number of Eritreans crossing the border from Sinai to Israel from 1,348 in 2006 to 17,175 in 2011⁴² and an 11.5% increase in the number of Eritrean refugees outside the country in the same period. New Israeli laws, passed in 2012, appear to have disrupted its use to some extent, although criminality and trafficking of migrants along this route remains evident.

The civil war in Libya severely disrupted all migrant routes through its territory for some months in 2011 and 2012. However, reports suggest that despite difficult conditions for migrants, smuggling into the country has now resumed.

Overview of migration

Migration routes

Apart from the most common crossings into Sudan, towards Egypt and Israel, Eritreans are reported to move in significant numbers north west towards Libya with the ultimate goal of reaching Europe, in particular Italy. This route has been popular with Eritreans for a number of years and provided a lucrative business for Libyan based smugglers both overland and by sea. The exact figures are unknown, but new research planned by RMMS for 2013 may offer an indication of the scale of this flow. The civil war in Libya severely disrupted all migrant routes through its territory for some months in 2011 and 2012. However, reports suggest that despite difficult conditions for migrants, smuggling into the country has now resumed.

Alternatively, some Eritreans go south, either in transit or with Kenya as the final destination. There is also evidence that some migrate into Yemen. It should be noted that despite the severe risks and hardships Eritreans face as migrants and asylum seekers, most of them succeed in eventually reaching an external destination outside Eritrea. The Eritrean diaspora is growing in Europe (see above) and North America.

The impact of Israeli policy on irregular migration

The Population, Immigration and Border Authority of Israel states that 59,858 asylum seekers entered Israel between January 2006 and March 2012. Of these, 57% (33,912) were from Eritrea. Lacking legal migration opportunities, many of them are smuggled through the Sinai to Israel. Recently, however, there has been a sudden drop in the volume of border crossing into Israel.³⁸ This is a result of the Amendment to the 1954 Prevention of Infiltration Law passed in the Israeli Parliament on January 10, 2012. Since then, all irregular border crossers have been defined as 'infiltrators' - so ending the distinctions between refugees, undocumented migrants and those with an intention to harm Israel's security. As a consequence, all infiltrators besides unaccompanied minors can be detained by the authorities for three years before their deportation. Moreover, the Israeli government has implemented other deterrence measures, such as a fence along the Sinai-Israeli border and a 10,000 person detention centre in the Negev.³⁹

41 EPDP online new articles accessed April 2013.

42 Humphris, 2012

43 Humphris, 2012

44 Ibid.

Smuggling by Bedouin groups

Given the difficulty of leaving Eritrea legally the use of smugglers is widespread. There are reports that the military is involved and accepts money to smuggle Eritrean citizens out of the country.⁴⁵

“There are brokers everywhere inside Eritrea so there is no problem – you will know someone who knows someone – these networks have been established for a very long time.”

Interview with Jemal Ferah 27 July 2012⁴¹

Once in east Sudan, a group of Bedouin known as the Rashaida, nomadic camel pastoralists confined to the more arid, inner areas of east Sudan, control the smuggling business. It is estimated that approximately six or seven large extended families of Rashaida in east Sudan are engaged in migrant smuggling, as well as practices that could be regarded as trafficking.⁴⁷

The smuggling route from Eritrea through the Sinai and Egypt to Israel is, however, complex and involves many different actors.⁴⁸ As with smuggling networks in general, some arrangements seem very informal while other elements appear to form part of a highly organised criminal network.⁴⁹ According to the UN Security Council Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, members not only of the military but also of the Eritrean Government are complicit in smuggling. Apparently, Eritreans play an important role as brokers between those who want to leave the country and the Rashaida in east Sudan.

The road to Europe

Despite ongoing demand, the number of Eritrean asylum seekers reaching Italy has been decreasing in recent years from 2,515 in 2007 to just 505 in 2011, when Eritrea disappeared from the top six sending countries of asylum seekers to Italy.⁵⁰ This coincides with a sharp increase in the number of detected illegal border crossings by Eritreans. The explanation for the reduction in the number of Eritrean asylum seekers is the beginning of refoulement operations by Italian authorities in 2009. Under agreements signed between Italy and Libya, surveillance has been carried out in the Mediterranean with the aim of intercepting boats attempting to reach Europe and pushing or diverting them back to Libya.⁵¹

According to Amnesty International, this is part of a trend in which European countries have increasingly sought to prevent people from reaching Europe by boat from Africa, and have “externalised” elements of their border and immigration control. Externalisation refers to a range of border control measures including measures implemented outside of the territory of the state – either in the territory of another state or on the high seas. A recent example of such measures is the proposal released by the European Commission, as part of a USD 410 million package to bolster EU border security, to deploy drones across the Mediterranean to detect and intercept migrant vessels at sea.⁵²

45 UK Border Agency, 2009

46 Humphris, 2012

47 Humphris, 2012

48 Ibid.

49 UN Security Council, 2012

50 van Reisen, Estefanos and Rijken, 2012

51 Amnesty International, 2012

52 Reuters, 2012b

country profile

Eritrea

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These externalisation measures are usually based on bilateral agreements between individual countries in Europe and Africa. The agreements between Italy and Libya resulted in the search by migrants for alternative routes, such as through Egypt and the Sinai. It also made the business much more profitable for kidnappers and smugglers. As described earlier, the route to Israel has become increasingly difficult too, pushing the prices up even further and putting migrants at greater risk.

As described earlier, The route to Israel has become increasingly difficult too, pushing the prices up even further and putting migrants at greater risk.

According to Frontex⁵³, in total there were 58,821 detected illegal border crossings into Europe in the first three quarters of 2012. In the third quarter of 2012, there were fewer detected illegal border crossings than in any previous third quarter. Despite this reduction, there were some significant increases during this period of various nationalities such as Somalis and Eritreans departing from Libya. For example, following a precipitous rise, the highest ever level of Eritreans (411) were detected on Lampedusa in the third quarter of 2012. The total number of detected Eritreans illegally crossing European borders increased from 321 in the first quarter of 2012, to 525 in the second and 771 in the third.⁵⁴

The number of asylum applications by Eritreans in Europe is increasing, from 7,865 in 2010 to 10,058 in 2011. In the first two quarters of 2012, 2,182 and 2,446 Eritreans applied for asylum in Europe (in total 4,628 in the first half of 2012).⁵⁵ Switzerland is the preferred country to apply for asylum for Eritreans, with 1,249 applications in the second quarter of 2012. In terms of the number of asylum applications, Eritreans were the most numerous in Switzerland in the second quarter of 2012. In 2011, 3,356 Eritreans applied for asylum in Switzerland, an increase of 86.5% from 2010.⁵⁶ Other countries that received Eritrean asylum applications in the second quarter of 2012 are Sweden (364), Norway (176), France (146) and Germany (100).⁵⁷

Risks and protection issues

The northern route through the Sinai

The journey through the Sinai is in itself dangerous, taking place mainly in pick-ups that are open at the back. Migrants fall out of the vehicles and die or sustain injuries from other road accidents, reportedly caused by over-loaded pick-ups driving at high speed over uneven terrain. In addition, some Eritrean refugees report that the smugglers often fail to provide enough food and water. As the travel to Sinai can take more than 8 days, many refugees lose their lives as a result of starvation and thirst. There are also accounts of people being left in the desert to fend for themselves.⁵⁸

Harassment and torture by smugglers also appears common, according to the testimonies collected by UNHCR's Policy and Evaluation Services research. Women are often victims of rape and sexual assault. An increasing number of Eritreans who arrive in Israel have also referred to violence, extortion and kidnapping by migrant smugglers while crossing the Sinai and east Sudan.⁵⁹

53 European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union

54 FRONTEX, 2012b

55 Statistics for the first two quarters of 2012 are the most recent UNHCR statistics on asylum applications in industrialized countries.

56 Federal Office for Migration, 2012

57 UNHCR, 2012

58 Humphris, 2012

59 Ibid.

The UN has described the growth of the kidnapping and human trafficking trades in Sinai as one of the most unreported humanitarian crises in the world.⁶⁰

During captivity the Eritrean migrants are subjected to brutal torture that often results in death or maiming. An estimated 95% of the refugees held as hostages in the Sinai are Eritreans. Large numbers of the refugees have died, either while being held hostage or after their release – often even after their ransom has been paid. A large number of refugees simply ‘disappear’ or are killed while being held.⁶¹ One Bedouin leader trying to rescue kidnapped migrants reported seeing ‘hundreds of bodies’. He told the BBC that “many people we bring here have been really badly tortured. In two cases recently some of those we rescued died, here in this house, because they had been injured so much.”

Other reports, backed up with extensive evidence, data and testimony, indicate that the same is happening in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula to many hundreds of Eritrean migrants *en route* to the Israeli border.⁶² International rights-based agencies have obtained detailed information concerning the perpetrators of these crimes, as well as the conditions and locations of migrants in their captivity, but the practice still continues. Often these accounts are gathered through the use of mobile phones as the perpetrators encourage the migrants to communicate with their relatives: in some cases migrants are also in direct contact with human rights organisations during and after captivity. There are also multiple reports of organ theft including kidneys and corneas of migrants who normally died after their ordeal.

As relatives and friends of kidnapped migrants, as well as the external Eritrean community, have shown their willingness to pay large sums of money to secure the release of migrants on the move, they have inadvertently perpetuated and exacerbated a ruthless and high-profit business involving migrant smugglers. As in all smuggling operations others are involved and profit such as brokers, translators, as well as certain border guards and police.⁶³

“The kidnappers would make me lie on my back and then they would get me to ring my family to ask them to pay the ransom they wanted. As soon as one of my parents answered the phone, the men would melt flaming plastic over my back and inner thighs and I would scream and scream in pain.”

“They had about four or five of us tied up together and they would pour water on the floor and then electrocute the water so that all of us would get electrocuted at the same time.”

“They would starve us, they would burn us and they would not let us sleep. All of us were actually hoping for death because that would have been an escape from the torture.”

60 6 March 2013 BBC report by Mike Thomson. BBC News, Sinai

61 van Reisen, Estefanos and Rijken, 2012

62 Ibid.

63 Humphris, 2012

country profile

Eritrea

He told the BBC that “Many people we bring here have been really badly tortured. In two cases recently some of those we rescued died, here in this house, because they had been injured so much.”

"If their families can't pay, they have no use for them and torture them to death."

6 March 2013 BBC report by Mike Thomson. BBC News, Sinai

The vulnerability of Eritrean migrants to exploitation and abuse is also sharpened by the serious consequences facing them on their return from their own government. This exposes them to particular targeting by smugglers and traffickers:

"I did not plan to come to Israel. I left Eritrea in November 2011 for Khartoum, Sudan, where my aunt lives. I planned to work with my aunt. But I could not reach Khartoum, because in Kassala, Sudan, the Rashayda (smugglers) kidnapped me. They took me to the desert, where they held me for a month. The smugglers called my aunt and demanded that she pay \$10,000 to release me to Khartoum. My aunt told them that she would pay them once they brought me to Khartoum. The smugglers did not take me to Khartoum; they kept me there and raped me. After a month, the smugglers told me that they were transferring me to Khartoum, but they lied and transferred me to Sinai."

Female migrant from Eritrea in Israel (Interview conducted by the Administrative Tribunal in the Saharonim prison in February 2012)⁶⁵

"Eritreans are smugglers' favourite people, because they know very well that if they go back to their country, it is over for them. So, when they hear that there is an Eritrean in the group, they know that it is going to be a good deal for them."⁶⁴

The risks of the European route

Frontex reports several accounts of sub-Saharan migrants being deceived, overcharged or even left to drown by their facilitators during the embarkation process.⁶⁵ Most of them entered Europe via the so-called Central Mediterranean route, departing from Libya and crossing the Mediterranean to Malta or Italy. The dangers have also been heightened by the increasing securitisation of Europe's borders, in particular the 'externalisation' of its border management. For instance, the partnership between Italy and Libya to intercept migrants during their boat crossing attracted the censure of European Court of Human Rights in February 2012. These measures frequently have the effect of redirecting migration to more circuitous and dangerous routes.

The economics of smuggling from Eritrea

The information available on migrant smuggling from Eritrea is insufficient to make accurate calculations of its economic scale. Nevertheless, there is indicative data suggesting it is a highly lucrative business. From Sudan, Rashaida smugglers sell space on trucks to Eritrean migrants for an average of USD 3,000 for relatively short distances into Sudan, while there are reports of smuggling fees from Eritrea all the way to Israel as high as USD 15,000.⁶⁶ Getting out of Eritrea clearly demands a high premium when contrasted with the less than USD 3,000 charged by smugglers to take Ethiopians and Somalis from their homelands all the way to South Africa.

Research in 2012 suggested that the trucks used by the smugglers are also loaded with weapons and ammunition, indicating migrant and weapons smuggling go hand in hand - pointing again to the involvement of the Eritrean military. It was estimated by the UN Monitoring Group that the Eritrean General Teklia Kifle gained USD 3.6 million from smuggling of arms alone.⁶⁷

In addition to migrant and weapon smuggling, money is made by holding migrants for extortion and through their sale to kidnappers. The amount of ransom money demanded is reportedly increasing. Demands from smugglers ranged between USD 3,500 and 5,000 in 2011. However, testimonies

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Humphris, 2012

67 UN Security Council, 2012

now report ransoms in east Sudan of USD 15,000 or more, even reaching as much as USD 50,000.⁶⁸ Furthermore, on release, individuals may be transferred to another smuggler and forced to pay a further ransom. There also appears to be a growing trend of Eritreans being held captive in Sudan.

Kidnapping by Rashaida tribes is a particular risk at present. Instead of delivering passengers to their destination, they hold them captive and demand exorbitant ransoms from their families for their release. The smugglers have also been known to abduct refugees from camps in eastern Sudan.⁶⁹ According to a briefing given by UNHCR in January 2013, 'UNHCR is seeing rising incidents of abductions and disappearances of mainly Eritrean refugees, allegedly involving border tribes, in eastern Sudan. This is occurring in and around refugee camps'.

Over the last two years we have seen people disappearing from the Shagarab camps – some of them kidnapped, and others believed paying to be smuggled elsewhere. Those who are kidnapped are often held for ransom or trafficked onwards for the purpose of forced marriage, sexual exploitation or bonded labour.

UNHCR Briefing 22nd January 2013

The number of refugees in camps in eastern Sudan fell in 2012, reportedly due to a widespread fear of abduction. There are similar reports of kidnapping of Eritrean refugees from northern Ethiopian refugee camps.⁷⁰

Government response

According to the 2011 U.S. Department of State *Trafficking in Persons* report, the government of Eritrea has provided no information on any efforts that it has taken to combat trafficking. There is little information available on the government's response to migrant smuggling. Eritrea is not a party to the 2000 UN Protocol against Trafficking in Persons or the Protocol against Smuggling of Migrant.

The current regime exercises strict control over its population. There are tight restrictions to obtain passports and exit visas. This poses a particular challenge for Eritrean migrants and forces them to use illegal routes. Eritreans who apply for asylum in another country are considered traitors and may be subject to life imprisonment or the death penalty. It is therefore impossible for many to return. Given this current policy, and taking into account the complicity of members of the military and Eritrean government in the industry, it seems that smuggled migrants currently face higher risks of prosecution by the government than the smugglers themselves.

In practice, considering the poverty of Eritrea, the government may in fact maintain an ambivalent attitude to departing migrants. Not only are they likely to be politically dissident, but they may also provide future income in terms of remittances and the 'diaspora tax'⁷¹, as well as providing immediate income to well-placed members of the smuggling and trafficking business.

68 Humphris, 2012

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 This is a 2% tax levied by the government on the income of Eritrean diaspora groups outside the country. Failure to comply can have dangerous implications for family members remaining in Eritrea or may bar external Eritreans from gaining visas to return to their homeland.

country profile

Eritrea

The number of refugees in camps in eastern Sudan fell in 2012, reportedly due to a widespread fear of abduction. There are similar reports of kidnapping of Eritrean refugees from northern Ethiopian refugee camps.

According to the UN Monitoring Group report and some migrant testimony, these may include senior state officials.

It should be noted that despite the available mass of information concerning smuggling or trafficking practices and in some cases the locations and names of the gang leaders and perpetrators, particularly in the Sinai, the governments in Sudan and Egypt have not made clear efforts to prevent or suppress the trade in and abuse of migrants. However, according to UNHCR in January 2013, 'the Government of Sudan has already deployed additional police and we are supporting the authorities to improve overall security, including with the construction and rehabilitation of police stations, provision of vehicles and communication equipment. UNHCR is also assisting the refugees in the Shagarab camps with setting up a community-based policing system to reduce security risks.'

In a March 2012 resolution, the European Parliament encouraged Egypt, Israel and the international community to step up the fight against human trafficking and smuggling in the Sinai. It urged the Egyptian authorities to rapidly intervene in order to provide effective protection and of all those refugees currently being detained, tortured and mistreated in Egyptian Sinai.⁷² The European Parliament's Group for Democratic Eritrea organised a high-profile hearing in Brussels on 26 September 2012 where Tilburg University also released their important report detailing trafficking in the Sinai - *Human Trafficking in the Sinai: Refugees Between Life and Death*.

72 European Parliament, 2012

2.3 Ethiopia

Country profile

Over the last two decades, Ethiopia has reported remarkable and sustained economic growth, more recently accompanied by significant social welfare improvement in terms of education, water and health. Yet, as development indicators show, it remains one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Significant challenges to its development include climate change, drought, soil degradation, high inflation and population density.

Since the 2005 elections, the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has allegedly become increasingly repressive. Open critics of the regime face possible arrest and detention while opposition groups such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) remain outlawed and branded terrorist organisations.⁷³

These factors contribute to a context where multiple drivers push some Ethiopians to leave the country. The majority report that they are motivated to migrate for economic reasons and lack of livelihood opportunities at home. Insecurity is cited as the second most important driver, which in the Ethiopian context refers to oppressive political context. A high proportion of ethnic Oromos claim actual or feared political oppression or persecution as the motivation to migrate. ILO has recently suggested that there is also a strong 'culture of migration' in Ethiopia where children are expected to go abroad and provide remittances to assist the family back home. 'The 'culture of migration' is another key factor underlying high levels of trafficking [and migration]. Cross-border migration is considered as personal, social, and material success in most communities, creating wrong role models for the younger generation.'⁷⁴

Hence, Ethiopia is predominantly a country of origin for mixed migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Ethiopia is also a country of destination and hosts the third largest refugee population in the region, consisting mainly of Somalis. To a far lesser extent it is also a country of transit for mixed migration flows.

Overview of migration

Irregular and regular labour migrants from Ethiopia travel towards a wide range of destinations. According to a detailed report by ILO in 2011, they journey in significant numbers to South Africa through Moyale and Kenya; to Saudi Arabia through Bossaso and Yemen; to Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) through Djibouti and Yemen; to Sudan through Metema and on to Lebanon; Saudi Arabia and UAE through Bole International Airport; and to Djibouti through the Afar region⁷⁵. Of course, the destinations listed here may represent primary movement only. Migrants often move on to secondary and third locations in what is often a long migration process, largely conducted irregularly and with the help of migrant smugglers. This country profile will concentrate on the most prevalent transportation routes.

country profile

Ethiopia

Many Ethiopians want to leave the country, because of extreme poverty, insecurity, drought, high inflation, lack of opportunities and a reportedly repressive regime. Ethiopia is mainly a country of origin, but also hosts the third largest refugee population in the region

Ethiopians now dominate irregular migration flows to Yemen, with over 84,000 new arrivals in 2012.

⁷³ Human Rights Watch, 2012

⁷⁴ ILO 2011

⁷⁵ ILO 2011

Profile of Ethiopian migrants

Ethiopia is made up of more than 80 tribes, but the majority of those encountered in South Africa for IOM's 2009 research on the southern route were from the Kembata and Gurage communities, from the southern part of Ethiopia.⁷⁶

The Ethiopians travelling the southern route towards South Africa differ slightly from those heading to Yemen. The latter group consist of mostly Oromo and Amhara. Moreover, based on research by Médecin Sans Frontières in 2008, and confirmed by UNHCR statistics, there seem to be more women, adolescents, children and older people amongst migrants taking the eastern route compared to those travelling the southern route, although the majority are still men in their mid-twenties.⁷⁷ Irregular migrants from Ethiopia are typically uneducated and unskilled rural farmers.

In recent years, the volume of Ethiopians leaving the country has increased rapidly. The majority travel east to Yemen. The number arriving at Yemen's shores doubled between 2008 and 2009, then increased again between 2010 and 2011 from 34,422 to over 75,000. This trend continued in 2012 with 84,000 Ethiopians arriving in Yemen - a conservative estimate based on findings of the continual coast monitoring patrols organised by NGOs and UNHCR.

Ethiopians now dominate irregular migration flows into Yemen, accounting for over 78% of new arrivals. Previously Somalis made up two-thirds of the migrants, but since 2010 the proportions have reversed. Interestingly, this occurred at a time when conflict in Somalia and the catastrophic drought of 2010/11 caused a large exodus of Somalis to neighbouring countries. Most departing Ethiopians are employing smugglers to organise all or part of their travel east, with many using the Djiboutian area of Obock as the point of departure.

The cumulative number of Ethiopians arriving in Yemen over the last six and a half years is at least 230,000. The real figure is probably significantly higher, due to monitoring limitations, and because most new arrivals do not register but instead are transported immediately north towards Saudi Arabia (see below). Large numbers of undocumented Ethiopians are also found living in Kenya and Somaliland, while significant flows are reported in Libya and Egypt. The volume of Ethiopians transiting Kenya to South Africa is also high. One calculation in 2008/9 suggested a major part of an estimated 17,000 – 20,000 strong flow of smuggled migrants entering South Africa every year were Ethiopians.⁷⁸ More exact data on this important flow is unavailable. However, the Ethiopian Embassy in South Africa told ILO in 2011 that between 45,000- 50,000 Ethiopians were living in South Africa, of which 95% had entered the country irregularly.⁷⁹ Given the increase of Ethiopians choosing to leave their country, this migration may also have increased significantly since 2009.

However, there are other factors that suggest the exodus towards Yemen is now the direction of choice, instead of the southern route. For example, the southern passage can take many months and passes through multiple countries - mainly Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique - that all have their own protection risks for migrants.

Migrants without any resources are most vulnerable. They walk for most parts of the journey and have to work en route. Smugglers do not worry about their reputation amongst these migrants, as they don't have any other options, which makes them vulnerable to abuse.

76 Horwood, 2009
77 MSF, 2008
78 Horwood, 2009
79 ILO, 2010

Additionally, South Africa itself is becoming less welcoming to irregular migrants and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, the ILO report quotes the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as estimating that 75,000 – 100,000 Ethiopians migrate illegally to Libya every year.⁸⁰ To what extent the change of regime in Libya has impacted this flow is not yet known.

The importance of resources in the migration

Recent research argues that a distinction can be made between three groups of smuggled migrants, of which most are in transit towards Saudi Arabia.

- The first group has enough resources to be able to travel either regularly or irregularly (sometimes even by plane) and pay a high price to smugglers to ensure their safety.
- The second group has limited resources and enters Yemen illegally by sea. However, they do have sufficient resources to travel to their final destination directly.
- The third group has hardly any resources. These are mostly male Oromo from rural areas who travel by sea to Yemen and have to work en route to be able to pay for water and smuggling services to reach Saudi Arabia.

Those smugglers who rely on smuggling people from the first group as their long-term livelihood are the more professionalized and expensive operators, but they ensure smuggled migrants arrive in safety. To sustain their business, they need to build and maintain a reliable reputation.

The third group has not much choice, on the other hand, and smugglers do not have to worry about their reputation amongst these migrants or restrain their abuses towards them. With little in the way of money or resources, this third group is the most vulnerable of all. They often continue their journey north by foot, working on qat farms in Yemen or engaged in other forms of casual work to fund their journey onwards to Saudi Arabia. Those who cannot afford smugglers to arrange transport all the way are the most vulnerable and reportedly face numerous hardships along their way.⁸¹

Legal labour migration and trafficking concerns

In the first half of 2012 alone, over 160,000 Ethiopians were reported to have migrated to Saudi Arabia to work in the domestic sector as maids on time-bound contracts arranged by a wide variety of Private Employment Agencies (PEAs). Saudi Arabia claims to be in need of 0.75-1.5 million domestic workers, indicating that there is a huge potential for legal labour migration from Africa to the Arabian Peninsula. Ethiopia regards itself as being tough on migrant smuggling and trafficking, and so tries to regulate the recruitment market for labour migrants. Recognising the importance of remittances, the government also facilitates and encourages labour migration through different ministries and special programmes. However, there are concerns that a high incidence of trafficking is embedded within official labour migration. The ILO report *Trafficking of Persons Overseas for Labour Purposes* states that, 'Despite the lack of a common and clear understanding, there is ample evidence that trafficking of Ethiopian domestic workers for labour exploitation is highly prevalent in Ethiopia.' Though demand for labour in destination countries is high, the barriers to employment impact heavily on the safety and wellbeing of migrants. 'Most

80 Ibid

81 Ibid

Ethiopians are regarded as economic migrants in Yemen and have a high chance of being arrested and deported. Consequently, they move away from the beaches as soon as possible after arrival.

of these countries have restrictive immigration policies, exposing migrant workers to a range of human rights abuses, including labour exploitation, violence, trafficking, mistreatment in detention and even killings.⁸²

Migration routes

Travel from Ethiopia to Djibouti, Somaliland and Puntland

The majority of Ethiopians enter Yemen illegally on boats from either Djibouti (Obock and around) or Puntland (Bossaso and around). They travel out of Ethiopia either by foot or transport by private vehicles in containers and trucks. There is a wide network of small-scale ‘brokers’ and groups of smugglers who organise transport from different parts of Ethiopia to the country’s borders crossings and beyond.⁸³

Limited rule of law in Somalia and Puntland means that detection by authorities is less likely. The drawback, however, is that attacks from criminal gangs are more probable.

Ethiopian migrants have to balance different pros and cons when deciding to leave from Djibouti or Puntland. The sea crossing from Obock is faster and safer, but the overland route to Somaliland and Puntland is easier for some Ethiopians than travelling north through Ethiopia to reach Djibouti.⁸⁴ The crossing from Somaliland, and Puntland takes much longer (approximately 30 hours) but is also cheaper than from Djibouti (between 4 – 8 hours). Ethiopians also distrust the Djiboutian authorities. They perceive the governments of Djibouti and Ethiopia as close allies and hence fear detention and forced return. Limited rule of law in Somalia and Puntland means that detection by authorities is less likely. The drawback, however, is that attacks from criminal gangs are more probable.

The sea crossing to Yemen

The large majority of the tens of thousands of Ethiopians arriving in Yemen by boat primarily travel in search of work. Yemen is generally not their preferred final destination and many continue onwards to Saudi Arabia almost immediately after reaching the country.⁸⁵ There are many cases where Ethiopian migrants arrive in Yemen thinking that they have reached Saudi Arabia and are not aware of the long and harsh journey ahead. They face arrest and detention by Yemeni authorities and few attempt or succeed to be registered as asylum seekers or refugees. Some make prior arrangements with smugglers who collect them at the beach and immediately travel onwards towards the Saudi border. Others are gathered by force and taken away by smugglers or criminal gangs.

Allegedly, crews of the boats call the smugglers at the shore with mobile phones when the boats are still half an hour or more from the shore. This ensures that the smugglers waiting at the shore do not arrive too early and risk being detected by security forces, but are also on time to drive towards the next destination within minutes of arriving in Yemen.⁸⁶

“When we could see the Yemeni coast the boat stopped. One of the two boatmen was calling somebody in Yemen. We thought that he got lost. Later we realized that he was waiting for the smugglers to arrive before he lets us reach the beach. He asked the girl to translate for us migrants that there will be a man called Abdul Alqawi who will be waiting

82 Ibid
83 DRC & RMMS 2012

84 Ibid.

85 Human Rights Watch, 2009

86 Human Rights Watch, 2009

for us on the beach and that he will feed us and provide us with water and help us reach Saudi Arabia. When two small trucks appeared on the beach, our boat turned and reached the beach in few minutes and it stopped a short distance from the beach. To go ashore we had to swim. When we reached the two trucks we realized that there were eight armed men. We got on the trucks and we were transported to a house in the desert.”

Ethiopian boy interviewed in Haradh⁸⁷.

In terms of offering a welcome to Ethiopian migrants, Yemen is ambiguous. Some migrants experience racism, discrimination, exploitation and violence from smugglers, but others find work and an accepting environment. In terms of refugees Yemen has been very welcoming to Somalis, giving them *prima facie* refugee status, but not so welcoming towards Ethiopian asylum seekers. Few Ethiopians apply for or receive refugee status, and the authorities have a history of detaining, deporting and in some cases *refouling* Ethiopian migrants.

Although some Ethiopians remain in Yemen and join the sizable Ethiopian communities in Aden, Sana'a and other cities, the majority move through Yemen to Saudi Arabia. While there is work for some of the female migrants as domestic labour, the overarching intention of Ethiopian male migrants is to go north into Saudi Arabia in search of work. Some aim to travel even further, into the Middle East, Turkey and Europe. During their passage Ethiopian men seek work in the grey economy, informal sector or the qat fields where they work for some months to afford the onward movement into Saudi Arabia.⁸⁸ According to a representative of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs there were, in 2010, about 130,000 Ethiopians living in Saudi Arabia, most of them irregular migrants.⁸⁹

It has become difficult for migrants to cross the border into Saudi Arabia without paying high fees to smugglers. The Saudi authorities, since 2011, have taken a hard stance against African migrants, essentially closing the border at Haradh, with regular reports of gunshots being used to prevent border crossings. In late 2012 they started to construct what will become a 1,800 km fence from the eastern coast by Oman to the western coast by Yemen. It remains to be seen how effective this measure will be in reducing the flows of African (mainly Ethiopian) and Yemeni irregular migrants.

Civil conflict – an opportunity for Ethiopian migrants

The instability of civil conflict, increased Islamic militancy and the political upheaval of 2010/11 has had a somewhat counterintuitive effect on Ethiopian migration into the country. While these factors have raised the threat of criminality and other forms of dangers, it also has served to attract large numbers of Ethiopian migrants. This is because, in a context of acute insecurity, application of the rule of law and the resources available to address flows of irregular Ethiopian migrants have sharply reduced, providing smugglers and migrants with greater opportunities to travel through the country without being intercepted.

87 DRC and RMMS, 2012

88 DRC and RMMS 2012

89 ILO 2011

country profile

Ethiopia

Some migrants experience racism, discrimination, exploitation and violence from smugglers, but others find work and an accepting environment.

Through Libya to Europe

There are also Ethiopians who travel the western route to Libya as the key gateway to Europe through Italy. This route towards Libya is characterized by protracted, hazardous and expensive desert crossings. Travelling in overcrowded pick-ups, water supplies are limited and migrants report starvation and thirst leading to the death of fellow passengers.⁹⁰ Another route taken by some Ethiopians under smugglers' control involves going north to Cairo and then travelling west into Libya, but it is not clear how many Ethiopians use this route.⁹¹

A small number of Ethiopians apply for asylum in Europe or the United States and Canada. In 2011, 2,379 Ethiopians applied for asylum in Europe and 1,318 Ethiopians applied for asylum in the United States and Canada. In the first half of 2012, there were 863 asylum applications by Ethiopians in Europe and 626 in the United States and Canada.⁹²

The southern route

A major route for Ethiopians is the southern route to Kenya and most often further south to the Republic of South Africa. The flow of Ethiopians to South Africa started in the early 1990's, but in recent years has increased according to a 2009 study by IOM.⁹³ The majority of Ethiopians travelling to South Africa are young men aged between 18 and 35. Some use South Africa as a springboard to fly to North America, South America, Australia or Europe. South Africa's key cities and particularly Johannesburg, like Nairobi in Kenya, are hubs for migrants and refugees obtaining false or legal documentation to change their citizenship or ease access to countries elsewhere. As the South African economy continues to grow, migrants find employment and money-making opportunities to finance further movement. There are multiple reports of authorities being complicit in irregular migration and accepting bribes to facilitate the movement of people.⁹⁴

Relatively few of those travelling south fly directly from Addis Ababa or Nairobi to Johannesburg, but it is clearly a method of movement used by those with the resources and contacts to do so. For a price, tickets, visas and other documents can be obtained in Kenya. In South Africa, at the airports, smugglers have connections with officials and staff that can facilitate access to the country unofficially. The numbers using this method are not known. More irregular migrants fly part of the journey, sometimes from Addis Ababa to Nairobi. More often, however, they travel the first part south overland to Kenya and fly from Nairobi to a capital close to South Africa such as Harare, Maputo, Lilongwe or Lusaka. From there, they continue their journey overland again to South Africa, by foot, car, bus or truck.⁹⁵ According to a 2008/9 IOM report, South African visas can be arranged for between USD 400 and USD 600 through facilitators in Nairobi.⁹⁶ Early indications from ongoing research by IOM suggests all costs associated with migration, such as documents, visas and smuggling fees, have risen significantly since then.

“During our trip through the desert we came across the body of a dead girl that was half buried in the sand, probably she died of starvation.”

Ethiopian male, travelling through Ethiopia towards Djibouti⁹⁹

90 Hamood, 2006
91 ICMPD, 2007
92 UNHCR, 2012
93 Horwood, 2009
94 DRC and RMMS, 2012
95 Horwood, 2009
96 Ibid.

Selling the South African dream – the role of smugglers in encouraging migration

The smugglers themselves may play an important role in creating the aspirations to migrate, generating demand for their services among vulnerable populations through deception and manipulation⁹⁶. Young men in poor rural areas are actively targeted by smuggling networks, with promises of better livelihoods opportunities in South Africa.⁹⁷ It has to be noted that local evidence of successful migration by earlier migrants (such as brick-built homes, trucks and businesses) also creates a demand for smugglers' services as part of the 'migration culture' in some parts of Ethiopia. Some migrants also have relatives among the Ethiopian diaspora in South Africa or Nairobi, for example, who are central to funding and organising new movement as part of what is known as 'chain' migration.

Risks and protection issues

The overland journey to Djibouti and Puntland

There are many risks for Ethiopian migrants at different stages of their journey: during overland travel, boat crossings and increasingly also after arrival. In a study in 2010 on the mixed migration flows of Ethiopians and Somalis to Yemen, Syria and Turkey, the 955 Somali and Ethiopian respondents reported 877 dangerous en-counters along the way. Overall, smugglers themselves are the biggest danger and they were the most common perpetrators of violence and abuse.⁹⁹

The overland journey for Ethiopians to reach either Djibouti or Puntland, where they make the crossing to Yemen's Red Sea or Arabian Sea coast, is notoriously dangerous and with little access to food, water or shelter. In Somaliland they are also vulnerable to attacks by thieves. Not all migrants walk to one of the embarkation points, as some are instead smuggled in containers. Once they reach the Djiboutian coast they are at risk of being physically and sexually abused by smugglers (see Djibouti profile).

The overland journey south

For those Ethiopians going south to Kenya and further on to South Africa, for example the journey is also hazardous. They are handled by multiple groups of smugglers and often face various abuses at the hands of smugglers or officials in the different countries through which they pass on foot, by vehicle or boat.¹⁰² Robbery and harsh treatment is ubiquitous, while sexual violence is also frequently reported. Some migrants die of suffocation, neglect, drowning, and excessive violence by bandits or smugglers. The 2009 IOM report highlights the fact that this complex structure of subcontracting transportation guides and so called facilitators is at the heart of the abuse and brutality that migrants face on their journey. The chief smugglers, often based in Nairobi, have limited control over how their 'clients' are treated once they are in the hands of other smugglers further along the route.

97 DRC and RMMS, 2012

98 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

99 Jureidini, 2010

100 DRC and RMMS, 2012

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

country profile

Ethiopia

The dangerous conditions in which many Ethiopian migrants are smuggled can also prove fatal. In February 2012, for example, a container truck with 75 Ethiopian migrant on board was apprehended near the Djibouti border. Eleven of them had already suffocated to death. Some respondents in a DRC/RMMS study even claimed that as many as 50% of those who begin the journey die from either exposure to the elements or suffocation in transit. Though it is impossible to verify this number, many respondents claimed that more died during the land crossing than at sea.¹⁰⁰

The journey from Ethiopia to South Africa is long, complex and dangerous. On average, it takes eight weeks for Ethiopian migrants to reach South Africa, but some travel much faster and others take many months.¹⁰³ In theory, migrants travelling most of the journey overland must cross only three countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique. But often, as they try to avoid detection by authorities, smugglers travel much more complicated routes. These may even involve passing through Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe before finally entering South Africa.¹⁰⁴

Some migrants die while many others are detained en route to their destination. In June 2012, for instance, a group of irregular Ethiopian migrants boarded a boat on the shores of Lake Malawi to head southwards. A few minutes after departing, the overloaded boat sank, drowning 49 of its passengers. According to a smuggler who claimed to be part of a group smuggling migrants from the Horn of Africa to South Africa and was interviewed in the context of this accident, the use of boats to cross Lake Malawi gained popularity after other land routes became too risky¹⁰⁵. In Tanzania, in line with the crackdown of authorities on irregular migrants in 2012, in August 2012 24 immigrants from Ethiopia were arrested at Kitogoto village in Mwanga district. They were found hiding in the house of a local resident.¹⁰⁶ According to IOM, about 1,300 irregular migrants, most of them from Ethiopia and Somalia, were being detained in Tanzania as of March 2012.

In June 2012, for instance, a group of irregular Ethiopian migrants boarded a boat on the shores of Lake Malawi to head southwards.

The sea journey to Yemen

For some migrants, the sea journey is worse than their experiences overland, particularly in recent years. It seems in the last two years treatment at sea is resulting in less deaths. Migrants interviewed for studies by MSF and Human Rights Watch describe many aspects of the abusive journey: the enormous number of people on one boat, the discrimination against Ethiopians, the harsh conditions, the beatings and drownings.

"We left Bossaso on a boat with a lot of people, about 130. The Ethiopians were separated from the Somali. The Somali were treated better and were on the upper deck. We Ethiopians were at the bottom. People urinated and vomited on us. The conditions were very hard. The smugglers beat us with sticks and even belts. When we arrived close to the shore they ordered us to jump out. Some could not swim and four people died."

Group of six Ethiopians, October 2007¹⁰⁷

"There was a woman with an infant of six to eight months old. The baby was crying and the smuggler told the women to shut the baby up. The women replied: I have nothing to give to him, not even water. Where can I get some water? The smuggler took the baby and threw him into the sea, saying now he can drink water."

Somali passenger.¹⁰⁸

103 Ibid.
104 UNHCR and IOM, 2010
105 IRIN, 2013
106 RMMS monthly report August 2012
107 MSF, 2008
108 Ibid.

“When we were on the sea she was sitting near the driver. They wanted to rape the girl. When I heard her scream I stood up but they beat me with a stick on my neck. They played with her. They raped her. They did what they wanted. And when they raped my sister they kicked her. I saw her, she was crying. But no one talked. If a person talked they would kick him or throw him to the sea.”

A young Somali describing the rape of his 13-year old sister by smugglers, Aden, July 2009 ¹⁰⁹

Once in Yemen, Ethiopians, despite being valued as potential targets of extortion, may be treated more harshly than Somalis, as suggested in a study by the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies where 94% of Ethiopians (as opposed to 21% of Somalis) reported harassment by smugglers on the boat trip and on arrival in Yemen.¹¹⁰

Deaths at sea or at disembarkation points have become common in recent years. MSF teams working at the coast of Yemen have often witnessed dead bodies on the shore, sometimes a few but in several cases a dozen or more.¹¹¹ In addition to deliberate killing by smugglers, some passengers die of exposure, dehydration or suffocation. Especially when stowed below deck, the conditions are toxic, with petrol fumes and fuel mixed in water, along with faeces and urine from their fellow passengers.¹¹²

Recently, however, except for an increase in 2011, the number of deaths or ‘missing on arrival’ at sea have decreased. The frequency of fatal incidents at sea are also reducing: from 1,056 in 2008 and 529 in 2009 to 19 in 2010 and 131 in 2011. A total of 98 people died in 2012, in two major accidents at sea: previously there were many more incidents, with smaller number of deaths in each one. Nevertheless, Ethiopian respondents in a 2012 DRC/RMMS study suggested that deaths were being underreported: most killings seem to occur at night, and in highly congested boats passengers may simply be unaware of certain incidents. It is also possible that passengers themselves, and not just the smuggling crew, push other passengers overboard to increase their survival chances. Some incidents, such as the sinking of an entire boat, may never be known.¹¹³

It is not entirely clear why the numbers of deaths at sea should be decreasing. One possible contributing factor is the training that UNHCR and other agencies have provided to the Yemeni coast guard to allow boats to come closer to shore. Previously, smugglers forced people overboard in deep waters to avoid interception by the Yemeni coast guard.¹¹⁴ However, the coast guard’s capacity to patrol the shores remains limited, so smugglers have been able to bring passengers to shore without hindrance. Political disturbances during the 2010-12 period have further eroded Yemen’s ability to patrol and implement their rule of law, providing increased opportunities for smugglers and other operators. However, since early 2013 it appears that the government intends to fight smuggling with more zeal.

109 Human Rights Watch, 2009

110 Jureidini, 2010

111 MSF, 2008

112 DRC and RMMS, 2012

113 Ibid.

114 Soucy, 2011

country profile

Ethiopia

There are several explanations for the decreasing number of deaths at sea. The most disturbing is the commoditisation of migrants: the increasing trend in 2011 and 2012 of kidnapping after arrival in Yemen to get a ransom means smuggled migrants are now worth more alive.

A more likely explanation is that passengers are increasingly seen as a valuable commodity by the smugglers, who therefore have a greater incentive to ensure they reach the coast alive: the decrease in the numbers of deaths at sea coincides with a rise in kidnapping and extortion of smuggled migrants. The sea smugglers therefore no longer make their money with the sea crossing alone. Now they also make money with the delivery of migrants to land-based gangs in Yemen.¹¹⁵

The threat of abduction

An added danger for many Ethiopian migrants is the increasing prevalence of kidnapping or abduction on arrival in Yemen and other destinations by well-organised and coordinated criminal gangs. These operate in a loose confederacy - as opposed to strict and hierarchical syndicates of smugglers and traffickers operating elsewhere - and appear to be sufficiently well connected and savvy to avoid arrest or interference by law enforcement agencies. The strongest network links appears to be between Yemen and Djibouti. Both sides maintain contact during the journey: gang members in Yemen tell the boats when to arrive to avoid the authorities and are waiting for them in pick-up trucks at the coast.

These gangs are controlled by Yemenis, but they reportedly employ Ethiopians as thugs and enforcers with the hostage migrants. The level of brutality is severe. Victims told researchers in the DRC/RMMS study that some victims die as a result of their treatment and many suffer acute psychical and psychological trauma.¹¹⁶

“Only after eight months, when my father was able to send the smugglers \$ 5,000 did they release me....I must have an abortion. My husband should not know what happened to me in Haradh, and I must not give birth to this child.”

Rape victim in Haradh, Yemen¹¹⁷

“Kidnap, robbery, sexual abuse, it’s part of everyday life here.....It’s become a business, an industry in itself.”

IOM logistics officer, Reuters interview, 2012¹¹⁸

Kidnapping seems to not only occur to Ethiopians travelling the eastern route: there are also reports of Ethiopian migrants being abducted after their arrival in South Africa. A 2012 IRIN article tells of smugglers demanding an additional USD 2,400 during the last leg of the journey, citing the costs of bribes and food. The smuggled migrants had to call friends or relatives in South Africa and tell them to have the money ready. The victim was kept a house in Johannesburg in the suburb of Mayfair for two days after arrival, until relatives brought the cash for release.¹¹⁹

Migrants stranded in Yemen

The majority of Ethiopians arriving in Yemen intend to cross the border to Saudi Arabia, but some become rapidly destitute as a result of repeated robbery and harassment, pre-existing poverty, lack of income from work and absence of any national provision to assist vulnerable migrants.¹²⁰ Many others are working informally inside Yemen, often in rural areas as

115 DRC and RMMS, 2012

116 Ibid.

117 IRIN, 2012a

118 Reuters, 2012a

119 IRIN, 2012b.

120 DRC and RMMS, 2012

An added danger for many Ethiopian migrants is the increasing prevalence of kidnapping or abduction on arrival in Yemen and other destinations by well-organised and coordinated criminal gangs.

labourers (mainly on qat plantations) and herders. Some can also be found in specific areas of large cities such as Sana'a, Aden and Ta'iz.¹²¹

IOM estimates that over 12,000 Ethiopian migrants are stranded in the north of Yemen, at the border with Saudi Arabia.¹²² In January 2013, the Yemen government estimated that over 25,000 Ethiopian irregular migrants were stranded in various locations near the Saudi border. Those who succeed to cross the border and obtain employment in the informal sector in Saudi Arabia or other Gulf States are still vulnerable. Apart from abusive treatment and conditions, women in particular may be forced into, or fall into, the sex trade for survival. The section on Yemen will describe smuggling from Yemen to Saudi Arabia in further detail.

country profile

Ethiopia

Economics of migrant smuggling

In 2012 it was estimated that roughly three-quarters of the 84,000 Ethiopians travelling to Yemen departed from Obock and the rest from Bossaso. From Obock, fees for the sea crossing vary between USD 130-150 and from Bossaso between USD 50-80, but can be much higher. Based on these numbers, the business of smuggling Ethiopian migrants along the eastern route to the shores of Yemen in 2012 alone was worth over USD 9 - 11 million, excluding the value of overland smuggling from Ethiopia and smuggling from the shores of Yemen onwards to Saudi Arabia.

There is also some fragmentary evidence on figures on the southern route. For example, Ethiopians interviewed by the Tanzanian Mixed Migration Task Force (TMMTF)¹²³ reported paying a fare of USD 850 to move from the Kenya/Tanzania border to Malawi.¹²⁴ Reportedly, it is estimated that Tanzanian counterparts of the smuggling networks charge USD 100 to 250 to facilitate movement through Tanzania. In total, IOM research in 2009 estimated the overall fee for being smuggled to South Africa at between USD 1,750 and 2,000. Based on these fees and the number of smuggled migrants, the author of the report estimated that the value of the business of smuggling Ethiopians and Somalis into South Africa was in the range of USD 34 - 40 million¹²⁵.

Given that approximately two-thirds of the smuggled migrants were Ethiopians, for them alone this figure is USD 25 - 30 million. IOM are currently conducting a review of the 2009 report to update and augment its findings. Preliminary findings suggest the smuggling fees for Ethiopians have doubled since 2008/9, but the numbers of migrants taking this route cannot be estimated yet.

Finally, in 2007, ICMPD reported smuggling fees for the desert trips along the western route from USD 60-180 to as much as USD 1,000.¹²⁶ These trips head to the coast, either to Benghazi or Tripoli. Recent interviews by RMMS (January 2013) with migrants and others in Libya (Tripoli and Sabha) suggest the fees are much higher today. Migrants pay many hundreds of dollars just to cross Sudan to the Libyan border and then hundreds again (USD 800 commonly quoted) to be taken from Sabha to Tripoli – normally an 8 hour journey by car. Once in Libya, migrants pay USD 1,200 – 2,500

In total, IOM research in 2009 estimated the overall fee for being smuggled to South Africa at between USD 1,750 and 2,000.

121 DRC and RMMS, 2012

122 Ibid.

123 Tanzanian Ministerial Task Force on Irregular Migration into and through Tanzania

124 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

125 Horwood, 2009

126 ICMPD, 2007

to cross the Mediterranean Sea.¹²⁷ Other reports indicate fees were as high as USD\$5,000 in 2012.¹²⁸

In short, as in the other country sections, it is impossible to provide an accurate figure on the total value of smuggling Ethiopian migrants along the several possible routes. Nevertheless, these estimates suggest that it is a business worth tens of millions of dollars, and one that becomes more valuable every year.

However, kidnapping and abduction also makes up a major portion of the migrant smuggling economy. It is not clear how many of the 84,000 Ethiopians that arrived in Yemen in 2012 were taken hostage. Nevertheless, what started as an occasional hazard in recent years now appears to be routine. The majority of the respondents in the DRC/RMMS research who arrived in Yemen in the last 18 months reported being taken hostage for a ransom payment - and some more than once.¹²⁹ There are also reports of women and girls being abducted on arrival and never seen or heard of again. The gangs involved in kidnapping are frequently referred to as Abd al-Qawi (or variations thereof). These criminal groups capture and torture migrants until a payment is made by friends and family. The money is transferred using the unofficial *hawala* banking system¹³⁰. The ransom demands appear to be increasing. In early 2012 the rates were just USD 100-USD 300. By the end of the year, however, the rates reported by freed migrants were between USD 600-800. As of early 2013, the rates had risen to as much as USD 1,000.

It is not clear how many of the 84,000 Ethiopians that arrived in Yemen in 2012 were taken hostage.

Government response

As Ethiopia is mainly a country of origin, most of the smuggling practices described in this section occur beyond its borders in Djibouti, Puntland, Kenya or Yemen. According to public statements, the Ethiopian government treats human smuggling as seriously as human trafficking and perpetrators are prosecuted when caught. Every year smugglers and traffickers (the distinction is not always clear) receive prison sentences.

The Ethiopian embassies in Yemen, Kenya and Tanzania appear concerned at the number of Ethiopians that suffer abuse, become destitute, or are detained and imprisoned as irregular migrants and frequently request international agencies (in particular IOM) to assist their citizens, claiming lack of resources to do it themselves. The regime does not accept that any Ethiopian has cause to claim asylum outside of the country and is reported to encourage neighbouring countries not to accept Ethiopians as refugees.

“Some [refugees] are returned back to Ethiopia by force. The regime had made alliance with neighbouring countries. Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen, Kenya committed crime on refugees and also immigrant. The refugees, even those who are living with [the protection of the] mandate are not safe.”

Oromo Muslims, living in Yemen since 1995 as recognized refugees¹³¹

127 ILO 2011

128 RMMS field visit reports from January 2013

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 DRC and RMMS, 2012

Notwithstanding the relatively large numbers of irregular, smuggled migrants from Ethiopia, it is relatively easy for Ethiopians to obtain a national passport irrespective of whether the applicant is planning to travel as a labour migrant or independently. It is also clear that remittances are a significant income source for the country and Ethiopia encourages and facilitates labour migration annually for thousands of its citizens, especially into the Gulf States. Ethiopia closely regulates the labour migration sector as part of its effort to combat abuse and human trafficking. Recruitment agencies have to be registered and are officially accountable to those they recruit into employment abroad. Those who do so without official approval are liable to be prosecuted under anti-trafficking legislation. Ethiopia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, but has yet to ratify the Convention.

country profile

Ethiopia

2.4 Kenya

Country profile

Kenya has a significantly better poverty rating than most of its neighbours and has enjoyed sustained economic growth for over a decade. Education, health and business infrastructure and services are the best in the region while the climate is temperate. With approximately 40 million citizens, Kenya is also significantly less populated than its Ethiopian neighbour. Civil freedoms are arguably greater than its neighbours and political stability appears secure despite ethnic divisions. It is a centre for international and regional assistance as well as development organisations, with a mature (if troubled) system of assistance for refugees. For these and other reasons Kenya has considerable attraction for migrants in the region, making it both a country of destination and transit as well as a critical hub for mixed migration in the Horn of Africa.

Mixed migration in Kenya includes forced migrants (refugees), involuntary migrants (trafficking victims) and economic migrants. Kenya hosts the largest refugee population of Somalis globally as well as a sizeable number of Ethiopians. Most refugees reside in the two Kenyan refugee camp complexes of Dabaab and Kakuma, as well as certain urban centres. In 2011, there was a dramatic rise of refugees from Somalia, who fled drought as well as the two-decade long civil conflict. According to UNHCR statistics, the current refugee population in Kenya is 608,974 (as of end of March 2013).

There is no accurate data available on the number of those transiting through Kenya, either smuggled or trafficked. In 2009 IOM estimated that up to 20,000 Somali and Ethiopian male migrants were smuggled to South Africa, mostly via Kenya, every year.¹³² That figure may have changed considerably in the last 4 years. There is a need for new research to develop contemporary estimates.

Given Kenya's geographical location, permeable borders and the government's inability to control and regulate migrant movement, Kenya's role as a point of transit is of high regional importance. Somalis, Ethiopians, and to some extent Southern Sudanese, Eritreans and Congolese take advantage of this porousness, crossing into the country independently or facilitated by smugglers or brokers. Many come as asylum seekers but most remain in the country, whether or not they succeed in their asylum applications.

To a limited degree Kenya is also a country of origin. However, for those Kenyans who do leave the country, the push and pull factors are different than for migrants in neighbouring countries. Most of the Kenyan emigrants are skilled and well-educated, leaving Kenya through legal channels (at least initially) to seek training or work in different countries including Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, and also further afield in the USA, Europe, the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East.

132 Horwood, 2009

country profile

Kenya

Kenya is mainly a country of destination and transit and a major hub for mixed migration. Kenya hosts the largest refugee population in the world (Approx. 610,000). Kenyans who emigrate are mostly young enterprising males looking for better opportunities elsewhere.

Kenyans borders are porous and efforts to control and regulate migration are somewhat ineffectual. Irregular migrants from neighbouring countries take advantage of this, often facilitated by smugglers or brokers.

Overview of migration

Migration routes

Once in Kenya, there are several routes used by those moving on elsewhere. For Somalis and Ethiopians the overland journeys from the Horn of Africa to Southern Africa tend to begin in Kenya. In both the Dabaab and Kakuma refugee camps and in Nairobi, there are well-established smuggling networks. Refugees are able to travel out of Dabaab camp, with or without the official movement passes issued by the Kenyan Department of Refugees Affairs. Some pay organised smugglers to transport them to Nairobi, either by covert routes or with the collusion of bribed police officers. Some refugees reported that they had paid public officials or police to escort them along these routes.¹³³

The next destination for those heading south is often Tanzania. In 2008, the Tanzanian Mixed Migration Task Force (TMMTF) recorded a total of 74,215 “officially identified” irregular arrivals in Tanzania, suggesting that the actual figure “could run into hundreds of thousands of persons”.¹³⁴

Both vehicles and boats are used to get to Tanzania. If the coastal route is used, many of the smuggled Somalis and Ethiopians pass through Mombasa, which together with Nairobi is a centre for migrant smuggling in Kenya. From there, they move on by boat in groups of 100 or more, operated by smugglers from Mombasa, typically to the Tanzanian coastal town of Mtwara, where they are dropped off and have to track through thick forest on their way to Mozambique.¹³⁵

By the end of 2011, the government of Japan and IOM, together with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, launched an initiative to provide assistance to and encourage the voluntary return of stranded Somalis and Ethiopians within the borders of Tanzania.

The role of corruption in the smuggling chain

Besides Kenya’s geographical location and its relatively lower levels of poverty, there is a third factor making it a popular transit country for smugglers – its endemic corruption. Kenya is perceived as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, ranking 139th on a list of 178 countries in 2012.¹³⁶

According to the International Peace Institute, such an environment enables criminal networks to thrive, as they can buy protection, information, documentation and power.¹³⁷ The IOM study on irregular migration from East Africa and the Horn to South Africa found that alleged corruption and complicity of national officials was one of the forces driving the regional international smuggling business, without which it would not be able to function the way it does.¹³⁸

A large proportion of the migrants that were interviewed in IOM’s 2009 research, suggested that “the officials involved in complicity and corruption

Kenya’s persistent corruption enables criminal migrant smuggling networks to thrive.

133 RCK, 2012
134 Horwood, 2009
135 IRIN, 2011b
136 Transparency International, 2012
137 Gastrow, 2011
138 Horwood, 2009

are not chance opportunists succumbing to occasional bribes, but should be considered part of the overall illegal and abusive enterprise".¹³⁹ The study by the International Peace Institute on transnational crime refers to several other studies that confirm that corrupt police, airport officials and customs officers facilitate smuggling and trafficking in Kenya.

"The smuggling and trafficking networks and organisations transcend all sectors, the ticket bureaus, the check-in desks, the immigration officers."

Airport immigration officer in Kenya.¹⁴⁰

Nairobi: a centre for migrant smuggling networks

In Kenya, Nairobi is the major hub of the migrant smuggling business, where migrants can obtain the false documentation necessary for creating new identities or visas. There is an experienced network of brokers in Kenya, specialising in assisting Somalis to organise their departure from Kenya to another destination.¹⁴¹ The International Peace Institute, in a presentation on International Organised Crime in Africa, labelled migrant smuggling and women/children trafficking networks – mainly Somali and Kenyan – as one of the three most prominent groups of African criminal networks in East Africa¹⁴².

According to the International Peace Institute, there are between five and ten small networks, mainly Somali and Kenyan, that dominate the business in Kenya. Each network is headed by a Mukhali, normally a respected figure in the community, who operates from within a legitimate business. These networks have links with networks in other countries or regions, such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Europe and the Arab countries, highlighting the transnational character of their operations.¹⁴³

Most Somali migrants and a large number of Ethiopians reside in Nairobi's Eastleigh area. This is also where various smugglers, brokers and their agents reside and where safe houses for smuggled Somalis are found. Clandestine offices where forged travel documents are made are also located in Eastleigh.¹⁴⁴

Risks and protection issues

Crossing the Kenyan border

Many of those crossing into Kenya experience harassment near the border by Kenyan police, who extort bribes from migrants. Before and after crossing the border, migrants with few resources often make long journeys through desert terrain. Apart from cases of bribery, some irregular migrants face detention and deportation, but the numbers overwhelm the Kenyan authorities and they struggle to control the migration issue. The absence of sufficient protection of refugees and the direct abuse and violence perpetrated by Kenya's security apparatus against refugees has been well documented.¹⁴⁵

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 Moret, Baglione and Efonyai-Mader, 2006

142 Gastrow, 2010

143 Ibid.

144 Horwood, 2009

145 RCK 2012

In Kenya, Nairobi is the major hub of the migrant smuggling business, where migrants can obtain the false documentation necessary for creating new identities or visas.

In a recent study by the Refugee Consortium of Kenya, 27% of Somali asylum seekers who crossed the border since the beginning of 2012 and met police on the road to Dadaab reported arrest, threats and extortion.¹⁴⁶ Some individuals reported violence and rape of women by the police.¹⁴⁷ The camps at Dadaab also continued to be the scene of insecurity, violence (including gender-based) and protection concerns, partly due to the Al Shabaab presence in the camps but also, again, at the hands of the Kenyan police.¹⁴⁸

Somali asylum seekers crossing into Kenya are also vulnerable to common criminals. The widespread police abuses compel asylum seekers to travel on small paths away from the main Liboi-Dadaab road, where criminals prey upon them, stealing their belongings and raping women.¹⁴⁹

“Three of us, a man, a young girl about ten years old, and I, ran in one direction and two gunmen chased us and caught me. They were not wearing uniforms and had what I know were AK 47s. They spoke English and Somali. Both of them hit me with the butt of their guns in my lower abdomen and then they both raped me. They took everything I had and then they left me.”

Somali woman, HRW interview, Ifo camp, March 2010.¹⁵⁰

“I encountered many different problems coming over the border from Somalia, but the most painful was the moment when we were attacked by bandits, and all the girls in my group were raped. I was one of them. There was nothing we could do about it. Later we found our way to the hospital in Hagadera camp and got some medication”

Female migrant, RCK survey, arriving in Hagadera in early 2011. ¹⁵¹

Road accidents and migrant fatalities – for example, when kept in sealed containers or when boats sink, as happened at Lake Malawi in 2012 - also claim lives after Ethiopians and Somalis have passed through Kenya and continue on the southern route towards South Africa.

The route south

Road accidents and migrant fatalities – for example, when kept in sealed containers or when boats sink, as happened at Lake Malawi in 2012 - also claim lives after Ethiopians and Somalis have passed through Kenya and continue on the southern route towards South Africa. The IOM 2009 report, *Pursuing the Southern Dream*, offers a detailed analysis of routes and conditions of migrants going south who mostly start their journey with Kenyan smugglers.

For those relatively few Kenyans who are smuggled to South Africa, the experiences are entirely different from those of Somalis and Ethiopians. They are not subjected to notable hardships or abuse. They frequently make the whole journey in the same vehicle on all-weather roads but they do, reportedly, have to bribe officials when crossing borders.¹⁵²

146 RCK, 2012

147 Human Rights Watch, 2010

148 RCK, 2012

149 Human Rights Watch, 2010

150 Human Rights Watch, 2010

151 RCK, 2012

152 Horwood, 2009

Economics of migrant smuggling

Not much is known about the payments migrants make to their smugglers for transit through Kenya. IOM's 2009 study on the southern route includes some examples of the fees for different smuggling services in Kenya.

"We can use trucks with false bottom or roll people up in canvas. They pay us about 40,000 to 45,000 Kenya shillings (USD 600-700¹⁵³) to take two men without papers through to Nairobi".¹⁵⁴

Truck owner in Moyale, Kenya, who occasionally smuggles migrants without papers to Nairobi.

"The cost to get from Nairobi to South Africa is between USD 1,100 and 1,500. I think about 25 people leave Eastleigh every day to be smuggled to South Africa".

Agent for a major smuggler in Nairobi: he estimates that his boss handles around 75 people per month.¹⁵⁵

The 2009 IOM study also reports numerous informants in Moyale claiming that the average rate to obtain an entry / travel stamp was USD 300 per Ethiopian passport. At that time an average of 20 passports per day were stamped, six days per week. From this, the author calculated that the immigration officers could theoretically earn USD 144,000 per month from these bribes and unofficial payments.

Based on information from a variety of sources in IOM's 2009 research, the annual revenue of smuggling Ethiopians and Somalis along the southern route to South Africa was estimated to be approximately USD 40 million. As the IOM study provides the most comprehensive account of the economics of the smuggling business along the southern route, this figure features in other reports, including the International Peace Institute study on organised crime in East Africa.

Government response

The borders with Somalia, Ethiopia and Southern Sudan are convenient entry and exit points for mixed migration flows. Whether the government officially opens or closes the borders, they remain porous and vastly unprotected. However, the Kenyan military operation in South-Central Somalia in the latter part of 2011 and through-out 2012 has reportedly resulted de facto in stronger border control and a lower number of Somalis crossing into Kenya. Refugee registration was also severely curtailed in 2012 due to restrictive registration policies issued from the Department of Refugee Affairs.

Kenya has ratified the *Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*, but there is little evidence of prosecution of smugglers, who appear to be able to avoid detection or prosecution through various means. While the Kenyan government is struggling to know how to deal with the large numbers of irregular migrants and refugees, the security forces and police appear to be antagonistic and at times even predatory towards them.

¹⁵³ Exchange rate at the time of research in 2009

¹⁵⁴ Horwood, 2009

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

country profile

Kenya

Kenya has ratified the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, but there is little evidence of prosecution of smugglers, who appear to be able to avoid detection or prosecution through various means.

Attacks by extremists have fuelled tensions between the refugee population and host communities and as a result there have been anti-migrant and particularly anti-Somali attacks as well as increased levels of police harassment, intimidation and extortion of urban refugees and irregular migrants. In December 2012, the Government of Kenya instructed all registered refugees living in urban areas, an estimated 55,000 persons, to return to the refugee camps following a series of grenade and other terrorist related attacks in Nairobi and other major towns.

Arguably, the threatened forcible relocation of refugees and the stricter encampment policy contravened the Refugee Convention and members of Kenyan civil society took the government to court. The Petition is challenging the constitutionality of the Directive from December 2012. At the time of compiling this report, the case before the High Court was still ongoing and the High Court had issued a conservatory order that effectively placed on hold the implementation of the Directive. However, the merits of the petition, submitted by the civil society and later adjoined by the group of individual refugees, are still to be heard and decided by the High Court of Kenya.

Nevertheless, some urban refugees, feeling harassed by the police and administration, opted to leave the country for Mogadishu or Kampala. It is not yet clear how this will further affect the large Somali population in urban areas in Kenya and those in refugee camps where conditions of overcrowding and insecurity are making life increasingly difficult for many. Whether they will continue to return to Somalia or move elsewhere, and to what extent the Kenyan government will push for the return of more refugees as Somalia becomes more stable, remains to be seen.

2.5 Puntland State of Somalia

Area profile

In 1998 Puntland declared itself an autonomous state within Somalia. UNDP does not provide separate human development and poverty indices for the area but it remains one of the most undeveloped regions of the world, with an estimated population of 2.4 -3.9 million. The capital city is Garowe, although with an estimated 700,000 inhabitants Bossaso is by far the largest city.

Though extremely poor, few documented migrants in Yemen originate from Puntland. Nevertheless, it is an area of origin for a limited number of migrants, especially the young and unemployed, who choose to migrate to the Middle East and Europe in search of better livelihoods. UNHCR figures from Yemen, however, indicate that the majority of Somali migrants arriving in Yemen from the Bossaso area (mainly departing from the coastal areas of Elayo village, Marrero and Shimbiro) are from South-Central Somalia. Puntland is therefore an area of destination and, in particular, a transit point for mixed migrants in the Horn of Africa.

Overview of migration

Most mixed migrants come from Ethiopia and South Central Somalia and intend to cross the Gulf of Aden into Yemen. At the start of 2013, the number of asylum seekers, refugees and IDPs in Puntland was estimated to be 143,501.

Previously, when Bossaso represented the 'epicentre' of smuggling in the region, approximately 3,000-4,000 people departed with smugglers every month from Bossaso and its surroundings to cross the Gulf of Aden per month. Last year a decrease was reported, however, with a total of 27,067 migrants crossing the Arabian Sea to Yemen in 2012 (2,250 per month), a 15% decrease from the previous year. In 2012, departures from Bossaso represented 25% of the total traffic from the Horn of Africa to Yemen. The majority now departs from Djibouti, as described earlier in this report. In 2010, the number of Bossaso-departing irregular migrants and asylum seekers was still approximately 35,000, which by then represented 65% of the total traffic to Yemen. According to the RMMS trend report over 2012, the decrease could be partly the result of the increased government efforts in Puntland to curb smuggling and trafficking.

Nevertheless, every year tens of thousands of migrants and asylum seekers still make the hazardous journey from Ethiopia (mostly Ogaden region) and South Central Somalia to Puntland. The main migration drivers are poverty, insecurity and the reported political oppression of Ethiopians of Oromo ethnicity.

Year	Departing from Bossaso
2008	34,314
2009	30,185
2010	18,488
2011	31,012
2012	27,067

area profile

Puntland State of Somalia

Puntland is a major transit country for Somalis and Ethiopians trying to cross the Gulf of Aden to Yemen. It is estimated that Puntland hosts 143,501 asylum seekers, refugees and IDP. Despite extreme poverty few citizens leave Puntland.

The number of irregular migrants leaving/ departing from Bossaso decreased last year. The majority now departs from Djibouti, while before the majority departed from Bossaso. This might be the result of government efforts to curb smuggling.

Smuggling networks facilitate this substantial migration flow and, efforts to curb smuggling notwithstanding, benefit from the poor institutional capacity of Puntland's authorities to monitor its borders and to manage migration. It may be noted that Somali pirates, who have in recent years harassed international shipping through the Gulf of Aden and beyond, predominantly operate out of coastal hideouts and settlements along the western coast of Puntland. Those Somali and Ethiopian migrants who can afford it organise road transport all the way from Mogadishu and Addis Ababa to Bossaso, from where boat smugglers take them to Yemen.

The smugglers who operate the boats from Bossaso are for the most part Somali nationals.¹⁵⁶ According to research from UNODC, many other people are involved in the smuggling business.¹⁵⁷ In addition to approximately 34 agents in Bossaso, several hundred other people are involved in different aspects of the smuggling chain, including boat owners, boat crews, restaurant and café owners, telephone centre owners, policemen, businessmen, truck owners, and landlords.¹⁵⁸ There are indications of strong links between individuals within the local government and the migrant-smuggling network.¹⁵⁹ This, together with a vibrant money transfer network and flourishing organised crime, make Puntland attractive for irregular migrants. Smugglers in Bossaso are reported to aggressively market their services, often providing misleading information about the risks.

In addition to an estimated 34 agents, several hundred people (including boat owners, police men, individuals within the local government and business men) are involved in the Bossaso based smuggling business. Most smugglers are Somali nationals (UNODC).

Risks and protection issues

The overland journey to Puntland

As detailed earlier in this report, the overland trip to Puntland is dangerous. Migrants recount many abuses during the journey, including forced payments at numerous checkpoints along the road. They also reported attacks by armed bandits and the theft of their money and belongings, with passengers killed in several instances.¹⁶⁰ There is an unofficial policy that undocumented Ethiopian migrants should not be given lifts and they are often forced to disembark from public transport and taxis at checkpoints. However, host communities have also offered migrants assistance and sustenance. This was more often the case in the past, when the flows were less numerous.

The wait in Bossaso

Once in Bossaso, waiting to board smugglers' boats, migrants face similar risks to those departing from Obock in Djibouti. For some, this period may last months or years as they accumulate enough money, through casual labour, to pay for their passage. There are specific and frequent reports of sexual and physical abuse of migrants in Bossaso and elsewhere along the coast. The perpetrators are reportedly the armed groups that control the smuggling, as well as the captains and crew of vessels that transport the migrants.

Crossing the Gulf of Aden

The journey from Bossaso to Yemen is considered more hazardous than from Djibouti, with rougher seas and a far longer crossing. Cases of boats capsizing and deaths at sea are not uncommon. In recent years hundreds

156 Human Rights Watch, 2009

157 UNODC, 2011

158 Mixed Migration Taskforce Somalia, 2008

159 UNODC, 2011

160 MSF, 2008

have been reportedly found dead along the Yemen coastline, and in two incidents just off Bossaso coast in 2012, two boats capsized causing 98 fatalities – but not all from drowning. There were reports from the February 2012 incident that some migrants were shot by smugglers as they tried to force them off the overloaded boats in stormy weather. In both cases, no boat owners or crew members have been prosecuted.

More recently, on the night of 18th December 2012, it was reported that fifty five people, all Somalis and Ethiopians, drowned or went missing after an overcrowded boat that left from Bossaso capsized. Among the 23 bodies that were discovered were 14 women, 8 men and a boy of less than four years old. It was the biggest loss of life in a single smuggling event in the Gulf of Aden since February 2011.¹⁶¹

Apart from these incidents, deaths at sea have reduced since the violent period of 2008/9 when over 1,500 migrants were murdered or died while being transported by smugglers. At that time it was common for migrants to be thrown overboard during the crossing or when close at the Yemeni shores.

Economics of migrant smuggling

According to a Puntland police report, approximately 12-14 boats operate out of Bossaso, heading to the Yemeni coast twice a month.¹⁶² MSF reported in 2008 that smugglers had begun to use a new type of smaller, faster boat to transport migrants. For these, passengers were charged between USD 100 and USD 160 and for the older boats between USD 50 and USD 80. Reportedly, migrants were treated better in these fast boats and did not encounter major problems. It has been estimated that around half of the boats arriving on the shores of Yemen were of this smaller type.¹⁶³ In the last 5 years the fees are likely to have risen substantially.

Using the 2008 prices and the 2012 figure of 27,067 smuggled migrants leaving from Puntland, the 2012 revenue for the boat smugglers from Bossaso alone can be estimated to be in the range of USD 2.0 - 4.4 million. Given the increased fees since 2008, it is more likely that the business is worth somewhere between USD 5 and 10 million at a minimum. However, the Puntland maritime authorities have, in recent years, received substantial grants to improve their capacity in responding to criminality along their coast, including piracy and smuggling. This may impact of such grants can also be said to have implication on the wider economics around smuggling. The Puntland administration claims they are active in the fight against smugglers: there are apparently many dozens of smugglers and pirates in Puntland's prisons. The authorities report cracking down on smugglers and confiscating their boats in order to bring the activity to a halt. This may have had an effect, as the number of smuggled migrants leaving from Bossaso decreased last year. However, the departure points have changed in recent years, with most now leaving from Elayo. This village is in the disputed region of Sool and the Puntland authorities are reluctant to intercept smugglers in that area. As a result, many of the departures of smuggler vessels go unreported. The majority of Yemen-bound migrants now depart from Djibouti. The government has reportedly played a significant role in shifting migration routes within Puntland. For example, its increased vigilance has

In recent years, hundreds of people who left from Bossaso have been found dead along the Yemen coastline.

Given the increased fees since 2008, it is more likely that the business is worth somewhere between USD 5 and 10 million at a minimum.

161 UN News Service, 2012

162 Mixed Migration Taskforce Somalia, 2008

163 MSF, 2008

resulted in more circuitous and dangerous walking routes from Bossaso to departure points on the coast, with a greater risk of robberies and attacks by villagers and bandits.¹⁶⁴

Nevertheless, there have been some positive developments in the monitoring and surveillance of migrants smuggling in the area. The Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF), for instance, is a locally recruited, professional maritime security force that is primarily aimed at preventing, detecting and eradicating piracy, illegal fishing and other illicit activity off of the coast of Somalia, in addition to generally safeguarding the nation's marine resources. The PMPF was established after the Puntland administration in 2010 passed Somalia's first and only Anti-Piracy Law, in response to requests from the international community and the U.N. Security Council to establish local law enforcement institutions in this area.

In conjunction with IOM, the Puntland authorities also operate a temporary transit and processing unit (the Migration Response Centre -MRC) where Ethiopian migrants receive counselling and assistance from local and international humanitarian organisations. The MRC also conducts outreach and information campaigns to migrants about the dangers of taking the hazardous journey to Yemen and the challenging life ahead of them upon arrival. It is difficult to assess whether these messages have any impact.

Nevertheless, given the low population levels in Puntland and the limited amount of economic activity, it seems unlikely that local authorities and police do not know who the smugglers and boat owners are. It should be assumed that some degree of corruption or collusion with smugglers must exist for the illegal business to continue. According to the Trafficking in Persons report 2008 (United States State Department), government officials may be involved in smuggling practices. It seems that business people who are involved in migrant smuggling in Puntland enjoy protection and work with the knowledge of influential officials within the administration.¹⁶⁵

164 Sourcy, 2011

165 US Department of State, Since 2008 Puntland has not been analysed in the TIP annual report.

2.6 Somaliland

Area profile*

Somaliland is an origin, destination and transit 'country' for mixed migrants in the Horn of Africa. Somaliland is relatively calm in comparison to other parts of Somalia, and is consequently a chosen destination of refuge and transit for a large influx of mixed migrants.¹⁶⁶ Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, but has not gained widespread international recognition. Its authorities estimate the population to be approximately 3.5 million. According to Somaliland's National Development Programme, youth unemployment stood at 75% in 2011. Increasing numbers of Somalis seek refuge in Somaliland. Poverty, economic motivations, insecurity and cultural links are the main drivers of mixed migration into Somaliland. In 2011, the heightened insecurity in South-Central Somalia and extreme drought that affected much of the Horn of Africa increased the mixed migration flows, including into Somaliland.

In 2009, most refugees in Somaliland were Ethiopian Oromos or Ogaden Somalis. In 2010 most were Ethiopian Oromo or Amhara, with a small number of Eritreans as well as some refugees from DRC and Uganda. According to refugees in Hargeisa, in November 2011 there were still 50-100 Ethiopians arriving every month, but most were moving on to Puntland, Djibouti and Yemen when they saw how difficult life was for refugees in Somaliland.¹⁶⁷ Aid agencies estimate there are at least 20,000 undocumented migrants in Somaliland, including unknown numbers of Ethiopian economic migrants and others seeking asylum. There was no new registration of refugees in Somaliland between 2008 and late 2012, so the number of asylum seekers and bona fide refugees that entered and transited as irregular migrants is unknown.

Overview of migration

Large numbers of Somalis and Ethiopians use Somaliland as a transit country to Puntland or Djibouti, from where they are smuggled by boats to Yemen. According to a recent Joint Assessment report by the Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF), the Loya Ade border town between Somaliland and Djibouti is a major transit point with well-established smuggling networks.¹⁶⁸ Some directly use the Somaliland coastlines to sail to Yemen. However, Bulcado, along the Somaliland coast between Zeila and Lughaya, has now become a military base - making boat departures to Yemen difficult.¹⁶⁹ Somaliland is also used as a transit country for journeys west and north across the Sahara desert, passing through Ethiopia, Sudan, and Libya before crossing the Mediterranean.

Somaliland is a country of origin for some migrants. Given the level of poverty, it is surprising that Somalilanders are rarely represented in the flow of mixed migration within and outside the region. In 2012 less than 3,000 migrants arrived from Somaliland to Yemen, comprising just 3.2% of the total and largely drawn from majority clans such as the Dir, Darood and

area profile

Somaliland

Somaliland is mainly a 'country' of destination with at least 20,000 undocumented migrants/refugees and a transit country of Somalis and Ethiopians on their way to Puntland or Djibouti. Some use Somaliland directly to sail to Yemen. Despite poverty, not many Somaliland citizens leave the country.

¹⁶⁶ UNHCR and IOM, 2010

¹⁶⁷ Oromia Support Group, 2012a

¹⁶⁸ MMTF Somaliland, 2012

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

* Despite Somaliland's declaration of independence, it is not yet recognised as an independent country.

Hawiye. As Somalis automatically qualify for refugee status, it is possible that Somalilanders going to Yemen disguise their true identity and register as Somalis from South Central.

The town of Hargeisa in Somaliland is the point of convergence for migrants being smuggled or making their own way from Ethiopia and South-Central Somalia. Private vehicles and mini-buses organised by brokers or smugglers from the point of origin, such as Mogadishu or other cities in Ethiopia, are the most common means of transport to Somaliland. Others make their way on foot. In an effort to avoid the Transitional Federal Government or Al-Shabaab checkpoints in South-Central Somalia as well as checkpoints in Puntland, some travel by air to Berbera and Hargeisa. This is increasingly considered a safe, timely and even cost-effective means of travel compared to the route overland. There is also, reportedly, a smuggling network that starts from Addis to Loya Ade for those going to Djibouti and from Addis to Buraq for those going to Puntland. There is another smuggling network that takes migrants from Hargeisa, through Jigjiga and Addis, into Sudan and on to Libya.

Others are known to fly using finance and contacts from the Somaliland diaspora in the Arabian Peninsula and western countries.

There were also increasing reports of unemployed but educated youth in Somaliland attempting to migrate to Europe, using the western route through Ethiopia, Sudan to Libya and then across the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁷⁰ According to IOM, in August, September and October 2011 some 3,500 young men and women from Somaliland travelled this route. Others are known to fly using finance and contacts from the Somaliland diaspora in the Arabian Peninsula and western countries. No numbers are known regarding these flows. The RMMS suspects that Somalilanders do migrate for work or further education, but prefer to fly to avoid the dangers of overland or overseas travel with smugglers.

Risks and protection issues

Somaliland has long been notorious amongst migrants as a dangerous territory to transit on their way to Bossaso. Multiple robberies and harassment from authorities, as well as incidents of sexual violence and even murder, have been reported over recent years. In one assessment, an official stated that during 2012 at least 20 Ethiopian migrants were known to have died of thirst in the middle of the desert, between Loya Ade and Ceel-gaal.¹⁷¹ Many Somalilanders are subjected to rape, kidnapping and other human rights abuses as they pass through Sudan on their way to Libya.

The reality is that tens of thousands of Ethiopian irregular migrants live and work in Somaliland – mainly Hargeisa. The government claims they number 80,000 individuals, but international agencies consider the true number to be lower. They fill unwanted jobs such as cleaning, guarding, baby-sitting and manual work for lower wages than Somalilanders. Stigmatisation and even violence by authorities and local communities is reportedly commonplace:

“They don’t like us being Christian; they call us gaal (non Muslim). We are abused for speaking our language...we are blamed for making the city dirty, bringing TB and HIV”.

Ethiopian male, 41, in Hargeisa¹⁷²

170 IRIN, 2012c

171 MMTF Somaliland, 2012

172 Ibid.

"We have been tortured and detained by the regime. Even in neighbouring countries immigrants are kidnapped, tortured and killed (...) Women refugees are raped in a house they are working by Yemenis. They even raped in the street. Our children are even kidnapped and raped by the Yemenis. In the work area they don't give us our wages. Our women refugees are being insulted by the Yemeni and stones being thrown by the Yemeni showing their dislike towards us."

Claims from three Oromo men, living in Yemen since 2003¹⁷³

A 2012 report by the Oromio Support Group paints a bleak picture of the living conditions of Ethiopian migrants in Hargeisa. They survive in overcrowded and unsanitary environments, with little protection, regular food shortages and a lack of medical care. According to the report, their choices are limited: possible persecution, torture and death if they return to Ethiopia; destitution, death from hunger or disease and the risk of refoulement if they remain in Somaliland; or the ordeal of renewing their journey to apply for asylum elsewhere.¹⁷⁴

In September 2011 the Somaliland authorities issued a statement demanding that all 80,000 'illegal' and 'un-documented foreigners leave Somaliland within one month. Ethiopians began receiving heavy-handed treatment by state officials as well as the local community. An unknown number (reportedly thousands) chose to return to Ethiopia before they were forcibly deported.

In the following months and throughout 2012 the Somaliland authorities have had a tense and uneasy relationship with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. At times the government authorities have been accused of refoulement and some incidents have turned violent. A recent MMTF Mission found that detention of Ethiopian migrants and asylum seekers is common in Loya Ade . Migrants are detained for unlimited days, depending on the availability of transport to take them back to the Ethiopian border. The mission witnessed 27 Ethiopian migrants being held in poor conditions at the Loya Ade police station before being forcibly returned to Ethiopia. It is estimated that on average 200 to 250 Ethiopians are deported in this manner each month, without screening of potential protection needs or status determination.¹⁷⁵

Economics of migrant smuggling

According to the MMTF mission report, the smuggling business thrives in Loya Ade . South Central Somalis and Ethiopian migrants reportedly pay between USD 50-60 to be smuggled into Djibouti.¹⁷⁶ Late 2011, approximately 1,000 Somalis were entering Djibouti every month via this border. However, during 2012 this number fell and the current number is unknown. It is also uncertain, given the fragmentary information available, how many of the 84,000 Ethiopians who made the passage to Yemen crossed Somaliland borders. A recent article on smuggling from Somaliland to Europe alleged that migrants paid about USD 5,000 for the whole journey through a network of brokers in Ethiopia, Sudan and Libya.¹⁷⁷

173 DRC and RMMS, 2012

174 Oromia Support Group, 2012a

175 MMTF Somaliland, 2012

176 MMTF Somaliland, 2012

177 IRIN, 2012c

area profile

Somaliland

In September 2011 the Somaliland authorities issued a statement demanding that all 80,000 'illegal' and 'un-documented foreigners leave Somaliland within one month.

Government response

It is not clear how the anti-migrant policy affects smuggling from and through Somaliland. To date, prosecutions have been virtually non-existent while the victimisation and criminalisation of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers (who for the last 4 years have been unable to register for status determination) continues. The government in Somaliland is disturbed by the number of people caught up in mixed migration that pass through and/or reside in their territory. In particular, the Somaliland government's close relationship with Ethiopia has negatively impacted on the protection of Ethiopian refugees and migrants. However, their attitude towards Somalis from South-Central appears to be far more tolerant than towards Ethiopians. They allow Somalis to stay on similar terms as IDPs from within Somaliland. International agencies, and particularly United Nations agencies, cannot legally treat Somaliland as a recognised independent state and therefore refugees and asylum seekers from South Central suffer from definition and categorisation problems.

As mentioned, in September 2011 the Somaliland government called for the expulsion of all irregular Ethiopians and also banned the employment of foreign nationals who did not have work permits. The government deported an unknown number, reportedly in the hundreds, of mainly Ethiopian migrants. IOM assisted some 1,000 Ethiopians to return home under their Assisted Voluntary Return Programme (AVR). Nevertheless, in October 2012, during the same period, the ban on the registration of refugees was lifted. By the end of the year close to 2,500 existing refugees and documented asylum seekers were undergoing the process of registration in Somaliland with UNHCR.

2.7 Somalia - South Central

Area overview

Generally, Somalia (including Puntland and Somaliland) is exceptional in both the scale and proportion of its mixed migration. Besides the settled Somali diaspora, reckoned to be somewhere between 1-2 million strong, there are over 1 million Somalis living in refugee camps or urban centres outside their homeland in the Horn region, mainly in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Yemen. Somali migrants continue to flow out of the country in large numbers. Additionally, there are over 1.3 million IDPs displaced within their territory, and each year tens of thousands more Somalis move as economic migrants - ultimately towards the Arabian Peninsula, Europe or North America. Considering the total population is approximately 9 million, these figures represent an unusually large proportion of people on the move or displaced.

Conditions in Somalia have been harsh and remain so for much of the population. The country scores lowest in the world on the UNDP Multidimensional Poverty Index and data for several other UNDP indices are not even available. Apart from international assistance, the country receives an estimated USD 1.3 to 2 billion of private remittances each year.¹⁷⁸ This may help sustain some families or communities, but for many displacement or migration are the only viable options. Besides extreme poverty, the primary motivation to migrate is to avoid the generalized violence and serious human rights violations that affect southern and central parts of Somalia. They also move to escape specific and personal persecutory threats as a result of their political affiliation, clan membership and gender, to evade forced conscription or because the war has prevented them from accessing basic needs such as food, medical services, healthcare and livelihoods.¹⁷⁹ As documented by many sources, until September 2012 Somalia had two decades without effective central government and is driven by power conflicts between rival militias, clans, warlords and different armed forces. The chronic insecurity that has resulted from this vacuum has contributed to the large-scale displacement and migration:

"I am from Mogadishu, I had a family there. I was working as a driver. One day, I went to work as usual and when I came back from work, I saw a lot of people who gathered around my house. A missile had fallen on my house, killing my wife, two of my children and my mother. Fortunately, one of my children survived, because he was not at home at that moment, he was at Quranic school. After that, I decided to leave Somalia with my son."

32-year old driver from Mogadishu (13/03/08)¹⁸⁰

UNHCR analysis show that migration trends in 2011 increased significantly as a result of the drought in the Horn of Africa region and due to a major thrust by the combined African military force, AMISOM, to eject the Al Shabaab group from Somalia. Generally, people cited the absence of livelihood opportunities and lack of access to foreign assistance as the tipping points in their decision to flee.

178 UNDP, 2011b

179 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

180 MSF, 2008

area profile

Somalia - South
Central

Somalia is endemically poor and has been driven by violent conflicts for a long time. For many Somalis, displacement or migration are the only viable option. Consequently, Somalia is a major country of origin in the region.

In 2012, displacement and movement continued to occur, partly due to increased insecurity as fighting continued with AMISOM fighters freeing major cities and towns. The dearth of employment opportunities remained the major motivation for migration in 2011 and 2012 for those going north into Yemen. The mixed migration flows were characterised by forced migration, with refugees arriving in Ethiopia and Kenya in large numbers, as well as internally displaced in different parts of South Central and into Puntland.

Given this context, South Central Somalia ranks high as a country of origin for mixed migrants in the Horn of Africa. In 2012, the number of Somali refugees displaced outside their country and in the region reached 1 million persons. By the end of 2012, there were between 1.1 million and 1.36 million IDPs in Somalia, which is slightly less than the 1.4 to 1.5 million IDPs at the end of 2011. Somalia is not a country of destination for asylum seekers or refugees from neighbouring countries and does not host a refugee population.

Besides the three main routes, there are many variations and a large number of Somalis travel onwards after a few years. At the end of 2012, an increasing number of Somalis have been returning to Mogadishu.

Overview of migration

Migration routes

There are three main migration routes that are used by Somali migrants and refugees fleeing out of Somalia:

South, either staying in or transiting through Kenya with the intention of reaching South Africa: In 2011 there was a large influx of 150,000 Somali refugees due to famine and insecurity in Somalia. The border had been officially closed since 2007, but in 2012 the Government of Kenya's DRA suspended refugee registration in Dadaab. As a result a much lower number (around 18,000) of migrants entered Kenya in 2012. The country currently hosts over half a million Somalis in refugee camps and in Nairobi. Some estimates suggest there may be as many as 200,000 irregular Somali migrants living in urban centres in Kenya, although the official number of urban refugees from Somali is approximately 32,000. An additional unknown number leave South Central and travel through Kenya with the intention of reaching South Africa. In 2009, it was estimated that some 5,500-6,500 Somalis are smuggled along this southern route each year, crossing the border into South Africa.¹⁸¹

East, crossing the Gulf of Aden through Yemen and across the Arabian Peninsula: The number of Somalis fleeing to Yemen itself increased from some 18,000 in 2010 to 27,000 in 2011, the majority originating from South Central Somalia. The political insecurity in Yemen in 2011 did not act as a deterrent to the irregular migrant flow, but may in fact have served to encourage migration: overwhelmed by internal strife, the capacity of the authorities to impose effective border management was substantially reduced. In 2012, the number slightly decreased. Of the 107,532 migrants arriving on the shores of Yemen, an estimated 23,657 (or 22%) were from Somalia while the remaining majority were from Ethiopia. The same year, hundreds of migrants were recorded as returning voluntarily from Yemen and Oman through Bossaso into Puntland and Mogadishu as conditions reportedly improved.

181 Horwood, 2009

North, towards Libya with the intention to access Europe: There are no accurate numbers available on the volume of Somali irregular migration along this route, representing an important research gap in the mixed migration sector, although some information is available on Somali irregular migration into Europe and asylum application in Europe.

There are, of course, many variations of these main routes. Migrants and asylum seekers and refugees may travel onwards after staying for a few years in the initial country of destination: for example, travelling from the Middle East through Syria and Turkey before crossing into Europe via Greece or Bulgaria. Alternatively, they may travel on from South Africa to Europe, North America (sometimes through South America or the Caribbean) or Australia. In August 2008 it was estimated that approximately 25,000 Somalis were living in South Africa. Interestingly, the number was the same in 2006, indicating that the volume of Somali arrivals approximately equals the number of onward departures. In addition, a significant portion of Somalis return to Kenya after some years.¹⁸²

Recently, there were indications that Somali refugees were returning from countries such as Kenya and Yemen. For example, between November and December 2012, over 18,000 Somalis reportedly returned to Somalia from refugee camps in Kenya in search of jobs and security as conditions in camps and urban areas became increasingly intolerable. The improved perception of stability and safety in Mogadishu may also have drawn many home in what may be the initial steps in an eventual mass return of Somali refugees.

Entering Kenya

The Kenyan-Somali border near Liboi was officially closed on January 1st 2007 to prevent further crossings of irregular migrants and undocumented foreigners. Despite this, together with increased surveillance by the Kenyan police, between January 1, 2007 and April 30, 2010 over 140,000 Somali asylum seekers and refugees entered Kenya, in addition to an unknown number of irregular migrants who may not have applied for asylum. According to Human Rights Watch, the vast majority of them did so with the help of smugglers.¹⁸³ A further 168,000 refugees have been registered since then (2010 -2012 inclusive), many of whom were also assisted by migrant smugglers for part or all of the way from their place of origin and the border to the camps or directly to urban centres within Kenya.

In March 2010, Kenya's Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA) told Human Rights Watch it believed a comparable number had travelled from Somalia directly to Nairobi.¹⁸⁴ There is evidence that Somali migrants are increasingly using scheduled flights from Mogadishu-Berbera/Hargeisa to Nairobi to avoid road blocks, possible detention and other obstacles, but this is only an option for those with the resources and facilities to do so.

Heading south: means and routes of travel

The majority of smuggled Somali migrants heading south travel by foot and by road in trucks, buses, containers or cars for large parts of the journey. Although the most direct route only involves three countries - Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique - Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are more common transit routes for south-bound migrants being led by smugglers. For instance, IOM's research has identified routes from Nairobi to Kampala

¹⁸² Ibid.
¹⁸³ Human Rights Watch, 2010
¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

area profile

Somalia - South
Central

The improved perception of stability and safety in Mogadishu may also have drawn many home in what may be the initial steps in an eventual mass return of Somali refugees.

in Uganda, leaving for Rwanda and crossing straight into Burundi, waiting for a few days in Bujumbura and then taking a boat bound for Zambia before boarding a truck to Lusaka, then taking a bus to Mozambique and walking from Maputo to cross the South African border. ¹⁸⁵This reflects the way in which smugglers are adapting to changing conditions. In order to avoid detection they frequently switch between different unofficial tracks or “panyas” [Swahili for rat-routes- informal tracks].¹⁸⁶

A significant number of smuggled Somalis travel part of the journey by boat. Often these are overloaded, primitive trading dhows without rescue equipment, protection from sun or storm or food and water supplies.

“When travelling by boat from Mombasa to Dar es Salaam, we got lost at sea and spent nine days floating around in the water. We then spent a further seven days in Tanzania, locked up somewhere.”

Somali migrant, 28, Nelspruit, South Africa, describing his journey to Tanzania.¹⁸⁷

Several routes have been identified:¹⁸⁸

- From Mogadishu (Somalia) to Mombasa (Kenya)
- From Kismayo (Somalia) to Mombasa (Kenya)
- From Mombasa (Kenya) to Pemba or Mocimboa (Mozambique)
- From Mombasa (Kenya) to Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)
- From Mombasa (Kenya) to Tanga or Mtwara (Tanzania)
- From Shimoni and Funzi Island (Kenya) to Tanga, Bagamoyo or Pangani (all in Tanzania)

There is evidence that smugglers are also bypassing East African land routes and arranging for their clients to travel directly by boat from Kismayo in Somalia all the way to Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. As with land routes, however, and as illustrated by the summary above, these sea journeys normally include additional movements by land with multiple irregular border crossings.¹⁸⁹

The eastern smuggling route

With regard to the eastern route, the towns of Mogadishu, Beledweyne, and Galkayo in South Somalia act as transit towns and points of departure for migrants flowing north to Puntland, Somaliland and Djibouti, where most Somalis embark on boats to Yemen. Smugglers often present themselves as travel agents or brokers, facilitating the movement from Mogadishu and organising their transportation north through the town of Galkayo to Bossaso in Puntland.

Somalis also travel by road through Hiiraan and Puntland where they often have to pay bribes, particularly at the Garowe and Las Anood checkpoints, to proceed on their journey. Those who cannot afford to pay smugglers walk for miles through the stony plains that typify the landscape north of Galkayo heading to Bossaso.

The route to Europe

185 Horwood, 2009

186 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

187 Ibid.

188 Horwood, 2009

189 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

Those migrants with an ultimate destination further afield are prepared for their journey to take months or even years.

Generally in Europe there has been a decrease in the number of illegal border crossings. Like Eritreans, Somalis are part of the exception. In the Central Mediterranean route to Europe, on the Italian island of Lampedusa, there were continued detections of Somalis in 2012. The total number of intercepted Somalis illegally crossing European borders increased from 1,017 in the first quarter of 2012 to 1,673 in the second before decreasing to 1,283 in the third quarter. Moreover, Somalis ranked third among all nationalities detected with fraudulent documents on intra-Schengen flights. According to Frontex, this suggests that these migrants have the means and the confidence in their documentation to use flights to move around within the Schengen area, even if a proportion are apprehended.

Thousands of Somalis every year apply for asylum once they reach Europe. In 2011, 12,190 Somali asylum application in the EU as a whole - a significant decrease from 2009, when as many as 19,529 applied. Sweden received most applications by Somalis in 2011 (33%; 4,045), followed by Norway (18%) and the Netherlands (16%; 1,985).¹⁹⁰ The same year, various European countries, (Norway (2,215), Malta (455) and Slovakia (80)) Somalis ranked number one in terms of the number of asylum applications.¹⁹¹ Figures in the first two quarters of 2012 were not so different, with 3,223 and 4,577 asylum applications respectively by Somalis in Europe. In the second quarter of 2012, again, Sweden ranks first with 1,172 applications, followed by Malta (671), Norway (585), Denmark (385), Turkey (322), Switzerland (300) and Germany (251).¹⁹²

However, the acceptance rate of Somali asylum applications is also a significant factor and varies considerably in different countries. In the first quarter of 2012, there were 2,505 first instance decisions on Somali asylum applications in the EU-27, with 815 applications rejected (33%) and 1,690 (67%) approved.¹⁹³

Onward travel

For many Somalis, South Africa, Kenya and Yemen are not the intended destinations. Those migrants with an ultimate destination further afield are prepared for their journey to take months or even years. From Yemen, for example, migrants may arrange to be smuggled in 4-wheel drive vehicles and mini vans into Saudi Arabia along the desert coast of the Red Sea to Jeddah, where there is a long-standing Somali community. From Jeddah, there are smugglers who will arrange to have women and children on their passports and travel with them over land through Jordan or by air to Syria. From there, the sparsely populated agricultural areas bordering Turkey south-east region of Hatay are quite porous and many walk across.¹⁹⁴ Once in Turkey, it is relatively easy to enter Europe. According to Frontex¹⁹⁵, the land border between Greece and Turkey is now an established illegal entry point for irregular migrants and facilitation networks. Migrants travel to the Greek-Turkish land border in order to cross the River Evros at night in small groups, using small-size inflatable boats with oars. For 2013, Frontex expects the border between Greece and Turkey to continue as one of the main areas for illegal border crossings.¹⁹⁶

Those who cannot afford to pay smugglers walk for miles through the stony plains that typify the landscape north of Galkayo heading to Bossaso.

¹⁹⁰ UNHCR, 2012

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Statistics for the first two quarters of 2012 are the most recent UNHCR statistics on asylum applications in industrialized countries. It should be noted that 2012 statistics for the Netherlands (a country that usually received a substantial number of Somali asylum seekers) are missing in this overview.

¹⁹³ Eurostat 2012b

¹⁹⁴ Jureidini, 2010

¹⁹⁵ European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union

¹⁹⁶ Frontex, 2012a

Smuggling networks in Somalia and the Hawala system

According to IOM's 2009 research, there are smuggling chains with Somali linchpin "managers" who reside in major capitals and at key nodes along the way, such as ports, refugee camps or border area. The criminals and opportunists who actually transport or guide irregular migrants are hired by these managers from a pool of local contacts. The report described it a "supermarket model, with relatively low costs, a high failure rate at border crossings (requiring repeated attempts) and multiple actors acting independently or in loose affiliation". This complex structure, with its large number of subcontracted operators, contributes to the abuse and brutality that smuggled migrants have to face on these journeys: managers have limited control over the behaviour of their affiliates along the way.

The closure of the Somali Kenyan border at HarHar, near Liboi, forced migrants to use smugglers and consequently increased migrant smuggling between Somalia and Kenya.

The role of the Hawala system in smuggling

Migrant smuggling in Somalia is directly facilitated by the widespread use of the 'Hawala' system. These are money transfers that occur in the absence of, or parallel to, formal banking sector channels. It is a trust system in which, for example, someone in country A makes a payment in a certain convertible currency through a Hawala intermediary. This intermediary contacts the Hawala counterpart in country B who arranges the payment in local currency to the recipient of the money. The informal Hawala system possesses several characteristics that account for its widespread use, including speed, convenience, versatility and potential anonymity, which makes it useful for illicit purposes as well as legitimate transactions.¹⁹⁷

The involvement of police and government officials

Police and government officials are reported to play a significant role in the smuggling of Somali migrants. According to Human Rights Watch, police have free rein to intercept Somali asylum seekers who cross the border into Kenya with the help of migrant smugglers. Human Rights Watch reports violence, unlawful detention in overcrowded conditions, and threats of deportation to extort money from migrants. The widespread threat of police interception and abuse forces most asylum seekers to travel on small paths away from the main road between border and refugee camps. However, these isolated areas also carry an added risk of robbery and sexual assault by common criminals.¹⁹⁸ One of the respondent accounts from the Human Rights Watch report points to the collusion between smugglers and police:

"The police stopped us on the road from the border to Liboi. We were in the police station for one night. The smugglers talked to the police all night, but they did not agree on a price [for our release]. The next day the police took us back to our bus and drove us to the edge of Liboi. They told the driver to drive us back to Doblely [inside Somalia] and he did."

Somali woman, Ifo camp, March 7, 2010¹⁹⁹.

Somali migrants face many abuses while being smuggled. Apart from the harsh climate and geography the main danger comes from fellow Somalis, such as officials, militias, local communities and others involved in the smuggling process.

The closure of the Somali-Kenyan border

On 1 January 2007, Kenyan authorities officially closed the Kenyan-Somali border at HarHar, 15 kilometres from Liboi. However, Human Rights Watch reports that since 2007 the vast majority of Somalis have continued to

197 El Qorchi, Maimbo and Wilson, 2003

198 Human Rights Watch, 2010

199 Ibid.

enter Kenya through this border crossing. Consequently, it has not had the intended effect of reducing the numbers of incoming asylum seekers: in the five years since, over 300,000 Somali asylum seekers have crossed the border and made their way to Dadaab and other locations in Kenya.²⁰⁰

When authorities officially closed this border, they also closed the UNHCR-run refugee transit centre in Liboi. According to Human Right Watch, this greatly increased the vulnerability of asylum seekers travelling from the border to the camps. As they could no longer rely on the safe passage guaranteed by UNHCR's presence, they were forced to use smugglers to deal with corrupt and abusive Kenyan police officers along the way.²⁰¹ It serves as an example of how stricter border controls, or in this case border closure, may only increase migrants' dependence on smugglers: this approach is rarely a sustainable form of border management if the incoming flow of migrants are sufficiently desperate.

Risks and protection issues

The overland journey

Like other migrants, Somalis face many risks and vulnerabilities along their journey. Travelling by foot, vehicle and boat, they pass through hot and dry terrain and dangerous areas such as forests and national parks. During these travels, their physical and mental condition deteriorates: many are exposed to severe abuse and exploitation.²⁰² The main dangers not only come from the climate and geography but also, while still in Somalia, from officials, militias, local communities and others involved in the smuggling process.

65% of the Somalis interviewed in a 2009 IOM study said they were beaten or physically robbed at least once during their journey to South Africa, while 6% claimed that sexual abuse of someone in their group had taken place and 10% spoke of witnessing death.²⁰³ In a 2010 study on mixed migration flows of Somalis and Ethiopians to Yemen, Syria and Turkey, the 955 Somali and Ethiopian respondents reported 877 'dangerous encounters' along the way. In Yemen, 41% of Somalis reported harassment by smugglers.²⁰⁴

"Everyone was kicked and beaten by the smugglers. They were physically violent. Many times they would come to us drunk demanding money or other stuff. When we said we were not willing to give them what they wanted, they would start yelling, cursing and kicking. I was led to believe that the journey would be smooth. It was really very rough."

Somali, 29, George, South Africa.²⁰⁵

In particular, those travelling to Bossaso in Puntland are vulnerable to smugglers and exploitative middle men who may extort or rob them of any money and valuables in their possession. It is impossible, however, to say how many people lose their lives in the process of making the journey.²⁰⁶ One theory why death is less common today than in recent years is that the structure of payment from migrant to smuggler has reportedly altered. Previously the whole fee was paid in advance and so, once paid, smugglers

200 RCK, 2012

201 Ibid.

202 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

203 Horwood, 2009

204 Jureidini, 2010

205 Horwood, 2009

206 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

area profile

Somalia - South
Central

The main dangers not only come from the climate and geography but also, while still in Somalia, from officials, militias, local communities and others involved in the smuggling process.

had less incentive to care for their clients. Migrants report that now the payments are structured so that they only pay part of the fee up front, with the remainder settled once they reach their mutually agreed destination. It is not clear on which route and to what extent this new payment structure applies, but it is clear that the implications for the migrant in terms of the smuggler's concern for basic standards of welfare could be considerable. Secondly, migrants have become more valuable to smugglers alive due to increased kidnapping and extortion of new arrivals in Yemen.

The sea crossing to Yemen

Those who travel north east from the Horn to Yemen face the dangerous sea crossing to Yemen, as described in other sections of this report. Smugglers use unseaworthy and overcrowded boats and subject migrants on board to abuse, exploitation, extortion and even death.

"They beat people throughout the journey. They beat my mother once because she stood up. I could not speak because I was afraid for myself to be dropped into the sea. They beat her on her back badly. They were beating her for several minutes. She was shouting."

Young Somali man, Yemen, July 18, 2009²⁰⁷

"They threw my aunt into the sea. They raped her first. She said to them, 'When I reach Yemen I will tell the government and the UN,' and she was shouting and abusing them. That's when they threw her into the sea. At that time I tried to shout but some of the crew came and beat me on the head many times. The other passengers said 'If you talk, they will kill you'. So I became quiet. I had only this aunt in my life and at that time I decided to die. I tried to throw myself into the sea but the other passengers caught me. Now I am alone."

Young Somali man, Aden, July 20, 2009.²⁰⁸

Though evidence is anecdotal, it was also reported in 2011 that the business was flourishing and smugglers would now charge USD 3,000 to bring Somalis to South Africa from the Kenyan refugee camps. Overall, prices along the southern route seem to be rising.

Even though the number of deaths decreased in 2011 and 2012, a UNHCR representative recently stated that "the Gulf of Aden is now the deadliest route for people fleeing conflict, violence and human rights abuses in the Horn of Africa."²⁰⁹ This was in response to an accident in December 2012 in which 55 migrants drowned or went missing. In another incident in 2012, at least 28 dead bodies were found on a Beach in Lasqorey town of Sanaag region in Puntland. Their boat, which was heading to Yemen, capsized near the coast but most people did not know how to swim.²¹⁰

The coastal Indian Ocean route

Fatalities not only happen while crossing the dangerous Gulf of Aden. Although the number of deaths do not yet compare, the coastal Indian Ocean route can also be lethal. As the numbers using this route increase, in an attempt to avoid more heavily checked land routes, the number of fatalities may also rise. There have been accidents in which Somali migrants drowned off the coast at Tanga, Tanzania and off Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.²¹¹

207 Human Rights Watch, 2009

208 Human Rights Watch, 2009

209 UN News Service, 2012

210 allAfrica, 2012b

211 UNHCR and IOM, 2010

Arrival in Yemen

As with the other groups, the risks remain once Somali migrants are on Yemeni shores. Nevertheless, there is a difference between Somalis and Ethiopians arriving in Yemen. For Ethiopians, Yemen is mainly a transit point en route to the Gulf States. Most move away from the coast, often transported by smugglers, as soon as possible to avoid being detected by the authorities. Usually, the majority of Somalis (over 90%) seek refuge upon arrival in Yemen as they are granted refugee status on a prima facie basis.

However, Somalis arriving in Yemen still face difficulties as refugees either in the Al Kharaz refugee camp or in poor urban neighbourhoods throughout the country, such as the main Somali neighbourhood in Al-Bassateen, Aden.²¹² Some Somali migrants, like many Ethiopians, also try to reach Saudi Arabia and face similar risks en route. For example, in 2012 at least ten Somali migrants were killed at the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. According to the deputy Somali ambassador in Yemen, gunmen shot and killed them as they were trying to cross into Saudi Arabia.²¹³

Economics of migrant smuggling

There is little information on the fees for migrant smuggling within Somalia. Other fees that relate to smuggling of Somali migrants have been mentioned elsewhere in this report. In particular we know of just over 27,000 migrants (mainly Somali) that departed from Bossaso for Yemen in 2012. If the average payment to Bossaso smugglers is \$100 for the crossing, the smuggling business of this leg alone was worth at least USD2.7 million in 2012. In 2009, it was estimated that the value of the business of smuggling Ethiopians and Somalis into South Africa ranged from USD 34 million to USD 40 million²¹⁴. Given that approximately a third of the smuggled migrants were Somalis, for them alone this figure is USD 9 - 10 million.²¹⁵

Though evidence is anecdotal, it was also reported in 2011 that the business was flourishing and smugglers would now charge USD 3,000 to bring Somalis to South Africa from the Kenyan refugee camps. Overall, prices along the southern route seem to be rising. In a recent IOM-sponsored 'verification report' on the health vulnerability of mixed migration flows to Southern Africa, fees of USD 4,000-5,000 were reported for each person smuggled south through the Zambia route and USD 2,500 for Ethiopians and Somalis smuggled through the Malawi route.²¹⁶

In 2012, 23,657 Somalis travelled to Yemen. We know that 78% of all arrivals in Yemen (including Ethiopians) departed from Djibouti. Assuming the same ratio for Somalis, the business of smuggling Somalis from the shores of Djibouti and Puntland to Yemen in 2012 is worth between USD 2.7 and USD 3.2 million. In addition, the quoted fees for desert trips along northern route towards Egypt and Libya ranged from USD 60-180 and as much as USD 1,000 in 2007.²¹⁷ It is not known, however, how many Somalis travel these routes and what the current fees are.

212 Soucy, 2011

213 allAfrica, 2012a

214 Horwood, 2009

215 IRIN, 2011a

216 Lawry Research Associates International, 2012

217 ICMPD, 2007

Finally, some Somalis are smuggled to Europe by air travel, which usually involves the use of forged, purchased, borrowed or stolen passports (usually a lookalike method) or documentation that falsely relates the migrant to the smuggler. This is the most convenient and safe way to travel to Europe, but the most expensive too. For a trip from Somalia to the Netherlands, the price was USD 1,000 in the early 1990s and USD 7,000 post-9/11. It can be assumed that, ten years on, the prices are considerably higher. Some reports suggest 20,000 USD is the going rate from Nairobi, all inclusive of passports, tickets, friendly immigration officers and visas. Despite the greater costs of smuggling by air, in 2007 it seemed it was mainly nationals from the Horn using this method, suggesting they may have received financial support from diaspora in Europe.²¹⁸

It is very likely that a significant part of this smuggling revenue flows back to Somali smuggling networks. These calculations are speculative, but it offers some indication of the value of the industry.

Government response

Somalia has not had effective central government for two decades and suffered power conflicts between rival militias, clans, warlords and different armed forces. Although Somalia might currently be at a turning point, in terms of positive political developments and the commitment of the international community for a sustainable solution to the crisis, the situation nevertheless remains fragile.²¹⁹

Finally, some Somalis are smuggled to Europe by air travel, which usually involves the use of forged, purchased, borrowed or stolen passports (usually a lookalike method) or documentation that falsely relates the migrant to the smuggler.

Not much is known about the official approach to migrant smuggling as the government has only been in power since September 2012 and faced critical challenges in its early months, not least the ongoing conflict with the Al Shabaab. As a consequence of the situation described above and the economy around human smuggling, an effective government approach to curb migrant smuggling is unlikely to arise in Somalia in the near future. With regard to trafficking, for example, the US State Department reported there are no laws in South Somalia explicitly prohibiting forced labour, involuntary servitude or slavery. Trafficking for sexual exploitation may be prohibited under the most widespread interpretations of Sharia and customary law, but there is no unified police force in the territory to enforce these laws or any legal system through which traffickers can be prosecuted. The Ministry of National Security and Internal Affairs of the former Transitional Federal Government (TFG) (now Federal Government of Somalia) is in theory responsible for anti-trafficking efforts, but lacks capacity and awareness. Somalia has not ratified the UN Trafficking in Persons or Smuggling of Migrants protocols.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ African Development Bank, 2012

2.8 Yemen

Country profile

Poor as it is, Yemen is a major country of destination and transit for large mixed migration flows from the Horn of Africa. The exodus from the Horn to Yemen in 2012 was unprecedented, with 107,532 persons conservatively estimated to have arrived on the shores of Yemen. This was the highest recorded migration movement from the Horn of Africa to Yemen - an increase of 4% compared to 2011 and 49.6% compared to 2010.

As described earlier, the composition of these migration flows in terms of country of origin has changed. In 2010, 55% of those new arrivals were Ethiopian and the rest Somali, but in 2012 over 78% were Ethiopian while the large majority of the remainder were Somali. The nine-year-old conflict between the Yemeni government and Shi'ite al Houthi rebels in the north has also led to the internal displacement of over 300,000 Yemenis.

The scale of this mixed migration may seem surprising, given Yemen's widespread poverty, rising insecurity and ongoing political conflict since March 2011. Yemen does not appear to be an attractive option as a country of destination and still the numbers of new arrivals rise. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has tightened its border controls (see below) and regularly deports irregular migrants back to Yemen and other countries of origin.

Nevertheless, several factors contribute to these large numbers. First of all, the fact that the migration flows continue to increase provides an indication of the extreme situations the migrants are fleeing. Second, the countries in the Middle East and the Gulf offer many opportunities for low-skilled workers. Given its geographical proximity to the Horn, Yemen serves as an important gateway to these countries.²²⁰ Finally, the insecurity in Yemen itself seems to be partly responsible for the increase in migration flows. There is a lack of effective law and order and especially outside the capital, Sana'a, government reach is limited. As a result, Yemen's land and sea borders are now relatively porous.²²¹

Yemen is not only a country of destination or transit: it is also a country of origin. A large proportion of undocumented migrants in Saudi Arabia are Yemeni, but no data has been collated to illustrate the scale of this movement of irregular / economic migrants.

Overview of migration

Data gathering and migrant tracking

Mixed migration monitoring patrols organised by a network of local and international organisations cover the major known landing sites for boats from Djibouti and Puntland. However, these do not cover the entire length of the Yemeni coast (approx. 2,200 km), due to insecurity and lack of resources. Patrols have been active since 2006 and have provided the best source of authoritative data on new arrivals in Yemen. They focus on the main areas of coast where boats have typically been arriving, but are an underestimation at best of the real numbers arriving, many of which are undetected and unobserved. Increased coastal patrols by Yemeni authorities

220 ICMPSD, 2007

221 DRC and RMMS, 2012

country profile

Yemen

Yemen is a major transit point for Ethiopians heading north towards Saudi Arabia. Many Ethiopian use smugglers, who collect them right after they set foot on Yemen's shores to avoid detection by authorities.

Some are also forced by gunpoint into vehicles and driven for hours into clandestine desert locations. Others are coerced to accept transportation by smugglers north to Saudi Arabia.

in the second half of 2012 have pushed smuggling boats further north to the Red Sea coast in Taiz, Hodeidah and Hajjah Governorates, where there are still no monitoring operations, although plans are underway to extend the reach of the monitoring network from April 2013. Furthermore, for security reasons patrols do not start until 08:00 in the morning, while many smugglers arrive with migrants at dawn or during the night.

Smuggling of migrants to Saudi Arabia

Ethiopian migrants who travel onwards to Saudi Arabia after arrival in Yemen often use the help of smugglers. Consequently, much of the remainder of this section on smuggling applies to Ethiopians. In fact, recent data collected by the Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force indicates that Yemen's role as a transit point for trafficking and smuggling is increasingly important, in particular with regard to Ethiopian migrants, but also affects Somalis and other nationalities.

Upon arrival in Yemen, the majority of the smuggled migrants head north towards Saudi Arabia. Ethiopian migrants are often collected by new smugglers or criminals as soon as they set foot on Yemen's shores. Those who can afford it are collected by vehicles. Some of them have already made arrangements in their countries of origin and have trucks waiting for them to take them to the Saudi border.²²² Some are also forced by gunpoint into vehicles and driven for hours into clandestine desert locations. Others are coerced to accept transportation by smugglers north to Saudi Arabia. In many cases, these situations are closer to trafficking than consensual smuggling.

Villagers in the disembarkation area on the Red Sea coast appear to be involved in smuggling, in collusion with military authorities.²²³ This is different from the Gulf of Aden coast, where smugglers are less active. Allegedly, communities there have less tolerance for smugglers. Moreover, there is a lower rate of non-Somali arrivals on the Gulf of Aden coast. Somali arrivals are of less interest, as they are granted prima facie refugee status. Moreover, on the Gulf of Aden coast, most arrivals are transported to registration centres without exception as the majority are Somalis. Nevertheless, smugglers are also present at these reception centres, where they try to lure Somalis into being smuggled to Saudi Arabia.²²⁴

Those without sufficient resources attempt to walk from the coast towards the northern border. The western coastal road in Yemen passes through Ta'iz, Hodeidah and Hajjah Governorates and also passes major qatfarming areas in Rada and Dhamar where many stop to find temporary work.²²⁵ They have to leave the main arrival points on the coast as soon as possible, to avoid detection by the authorities or criminal gangs, but many do not succeed. Many of them start moving from the shore when they are still exhausted and weak.²²⁶ Along the way, many irregular Ethiopian migrants work for some time in Yemen, for example as car washers in the major cities or on qat farms, to fund their onward travel to Saudi Arabia. From the two main cities in Yemen, there are two main smuggling routes operated by two different networks of Ethiopian, Somali or Yemeni smugglers. One operates from Al-Bassateen in Aden while the other is based in Sana'a.

222 Ibid.

223 Soucy, 2011

224 Ibid.

225 Ibid.

226 MSF, 2008

From Aden there are two main routes: the more expensive one by boat and the cheaper one by foot. Smugglers either bring migrants to the border or all the way to Jeddah. When brought to the border, they usually cross at night and have to walk for up to 17 days. Once they are a sufficient distance from the border, they start looking for work.²²⁷ Many others, however, choose to use the smugglers from Sana'a, who again either bring them close to the border or cross the border. Other migrants make their own way north along the coastal roads towards Al-Hudaidah and Haradh, arriving frequently in large numbers and in a state of exhaustion and destitution. Many arrive having endured various hardships, including kidnapping, torture, extortion and sexual violence.

The more complex and larger smuggling routes from the Horn to Europe may also cross Yemen. These routes start, for example, in Bossaso and cross Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Cyprus and from there go to the Netherlands or the United Kingdom. On the other hand, smuggling from Yemen to Oman does not seem to be a major concern. According to the Omani Border Control, no more than 4 Somalis and 5 Yemenis cross the border irregularly each month.²²⁸

227 Soucy, 2011

228 Ibid.

Irregular migrants being smuggled to Yemen face severe risks. Migrants die during the sea crossings and report extreme violence, kidnappings after arrival in Yemen are on the rise and stranded migrants in northern Yemen experience serious health problems.

Saudi border policy and the deadly cost to migrants

The Saudi-Arabian authorities are becoming stricter in their treatment of irregular migrants. Because conditions in Yemen and Ethiopia are leading to a larger number of Ethiopians and other migrants attempting to enter Saudi-Arabia, the country forcibly deports migrants through its desert border with Yemen.²²⁹ Additionally, they are completing a 1,800 km fence between the two countries. This Saudi policy will likely increase the number of migrants in Yemen, in particular in its border region.²³⁰ Many migrants who have been unsuccessful in reaching Saudi Arabia or are in a state of trauma and exhaustion have grouped in northern Yemen. In 2011 between 6,000 and 9,000 migrants were reported as stranded in the border town of Haradh in destitute conditions. Yemeni authorities have claimed that, as of early 2013, the figure was closer to 25,000. Large numbers remain today without even minimal resources and are unable to go forward or return to Ethiopia. Devoid of money, knowledge of Arabic and largely without remunerable skills, it is only through the generosity of sympathetic locals and their own resourcefulness that migrants obtain enough food to survive on the streets.

Unscrupulous criminal smugglers and trafficking gangs in the area are profiting from the desperation of these migrants. Reports suggest there are local hide-outs and compounds that hold kidnapped migrants. IOM has also witnessed an increase in health and overall protection concerns amongst stranded migrants in Haradh. Most of those registered for return assistance have suffered physical injuries, including broken limbs, due to abuse and torture at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. Furthermore, reports of extreme torture and sexual abuse have increased in the past year. IOM also report a recent increase in gunshot and landmine wounds as migrants try to evade the strict border control near Haradh by travelling east into regions with a history of conflict. Over 42,887 medical cases have been treated at IOM's health facilities in Haradh since May 2011. Some migrants refuse surgical treatment in Yemen, preferring to be assisted by IOM to travel back home instead for medical care. The Haradh hospital morgue is currently beyond capacity due to unclaimed bodies of undocumented irregular migrants.

Abduction and kidnapping

The protection risks facing migrants entering Yemen have been detailed in the previous sections on Ethiopia and Somalia. In the last three years at least hundreds of people have been reported drowned or killed by smugglers. Since the beginning of 2012, however, the number of migrants thrown off boats and left to die has declined, although there were still a high number of reported incidents of rape and sexual violence against female migrants on the sea passage to Yemen. At the same time, alarmingly, the reported number of migrants being 'sold' to kidnappers has risen. This could explain the decrease in the number of deaths as the rising number of ransom kidnappings means migrants are more valuable to smugglers alive. Migrants held hostage in Yemen report coercion, rape, murder, extortion and physical assault. The perpetrators are normally 'smugglers', including criminals and traffickers, but may also include state officials and villagers.

229 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 2012. Many Ethiopians are simply dropped off on the Yemeni side of the border. IOM facilitated humanitarian assistance through emergency voluntary return of some of these stranded migrant (Soucy, 2011).

230 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, 2012

“Concerning myself, I had nobody who could send me money for my release so I was beaten severely and my hand nailed to the ground. After two months of suffering I was thrown to the desert when they realized I had no money”

Ethiopian man, 22 from Gaffan, Chagni District ²³¹

Kidnapping is not restricted to the beaches. Migrants hiking along main roads towards the main cities have also reported being kidnapped by villagers asking for ransom for their release. Ransom demands have also gone up from USD 300 to USD 600 and in early 2013 appear to have reached USD 1,000. Some instances of abduction of women have also been reported. In these cases, female migrants have been separated from their male escorts, such as husbands, brothers or cousins, and never seen again. As mentioned elsewhere, stranded migrants along the Saudi border in northern Yemen face serious health problems. Most arrive in Haradh hungry, sick and exhausted from their long walk, which for many may have started in their countries of origin in the Horn of Africa. Tightened Saudi border controls now make it extremely difficult to cross. They live in Haradh without adequate shelter, food or water. Although the number of stranded migrants in Haradh seems to be increasing, more limited funding in 2012 constrained the humanitarian assistance that could be provided to these migrants. According to IOM data, only 11,308 stranded migrants received humanitarian assistance in 2012, compared to 15,814 in 2011. This resulted in a higher incidence of illnesses, injuries, psychological distress and even deaths.²³² In 2011 IOM helped over 7,000 Ethiopian migrants to return home from Haradh.²³³ In 2012, only 2,815 Ethiopian migrants were assisted with voluntary return: the programme is expensive and few donors are interested to fund the return of economic migrants.

Economics of migrant smuggling

It is not clear how much of the fees paid by migrants for their sea travel from Djibouti and Puntland goes to Yemeni smugglers. In earlier sections we estimated Djibouti's and Puntland's migrant smuggling industries as being worth between USD 11 -12.5 million and USD 2.0 - 4.4 million respectively for the sea crossings alone.

Given the volume of Ethiopian arrivals, it is certain that smuggling networks operating out of Yemen control a multi-million dollar business that may still be in its early stages of development. In 2011, Soucy reported smuggling fees of USD 100-300 from Sana'a to either the Saudi border or all the way to Jeddah. From Aden, the prices seem to be somewhat similar. Apart from transport, criminal gangs, whether or not related to the smuggling networks, are increasingly making money out of migrant smuggling - often forced smuggling where the migrant is only freed after paying spurious and inflated 'fees'. Kidnappings appear to be the most lucrative method of extracting money from migrants. With ransom levels as high as USD 1,000 and the significant numbers of migrants affected, the business is clearly becoming increasingly lucrative and looks set to continue to rise in 2013 unless effective intervention takes place.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Immap, January 13, <http://www.immap.org/>

²³³ Reliefweb, 2012a

country profile

Yemen

Some instances of abduction of women have also been reported. In these cases, female migrants have been separated from their male escorts, such as husbands, brothers or cousins, and never seen again.

Government response

The increasing number of arrivals poses a major challenge for Yemen, the poorest country in the Arabian Peninsula, with high poverty and unemployment, rapid population growth and dwindling water resources.²³⁴ According to Human Rights Watch, the Yemeni government is in a difficult position as the large numbers of refugees and migrants represent a strain on the country's fragile economy and its security resources. Migrants are also perceived as contributing to rising criminality around migration. The sight of stranded and destitute migrants in urban areas is another discomforting reality of their presence in the country. Yemen is also under strong pressure from Saudi Arabia and other neighbouring states to halt the flow of migrants transiting through Yemen into their territory.

Yemen is a signatory to but has yet to ratify the Convention and its Protocols relating to Smuggling and Trafficking. The Yemen government cooperates closely with international agencies working with migrants and refugees and participated actively in international round-tables and conferences on the issue. The government also co-leads and regularly participates in the Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force. However, although Yemen is the only country on the Arabian Peninsula to have ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) and its 1967 Protocol, the government openly flouts the core provisions in its treatment of non-Somalis asylum seekers, particularly Ethiopians, according to Human Rights Watch.²³⁵

There appears to be some degree of complicity between state officials, such as military and border guards, and the smugglers. For example, local authorities in Haradh report collusion between border guards and smugglers, but say they are overwhelmed, lacking both the authority and firepower to flush the smugglers out.²³⁶ This was illustrated in a recent news article that quoted a military officer from Haradh who claimed to be one of a handful of Yemeni security officials who have made a fortune helping smugglers move Africans into Saudi Arabia. His coordination with smugglers earns him around USD 20,000 a month.²³⁷

However, there have also been some positive indications that some local leaders and communities are unhappy with the level of criminality and abuse affecting migrants in Yemen. During 2012 and early 2013, for example, there were armed raids by authorities on compounds where migrants were being held. One dramatic raid in April 2013 led to the release of over 450 captive migrants: many showed signs of having been abused and tortured. Subsequent raids in April and early May released almost 2000 kidnapped migrants and resulted in at least 40 perpetrators being arrested. The government claimed that it was forced to stop the raids due to overloading of government detention facilities, and the limitations international agencies' capacity in terms of shelter, health care and assistance to return migrants to their country of origin. It appears Yemen and Ethiopia are cooperating and using military transport aircraft to enable the returning hundreds of these liberated migrants in mass deportations with limited status screening processes. Nevertheless, the much publicised 'liberations' do not appear to have slowed the rising trend of violence towards migrants in Yemen and have in some instances resulted in the deaths of migrants caught in the crossfire. It remains to be seen if the government has sufficient resources and political will to tackle the growing 'industry' of extorting and mistreating migrants.

Subsequent raids in April and early May released almost 2000 kidnapped migrants and resulted in at least 40 perpetrators being arrested. The government claimed that it was forced to stop the raids due to overloading of government detention facilities, and the limitations international agencies' capacity in terms of shelter, health care and assistance to return migrants to their country of origin.

²³⁴ MSF, 2008

²³⁵ Human Rights Watch, 2009

²³⁶ Reuters, 2012

²³⁷ Reuters, 2012

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This report is the first study of a new RMMS series offering data and analysis on a range of issues relating to mixed migration relevant to the Horn of Africa and Yemen region.

Unlike some regions of the world, free movement of people between countries in the Horn of Africa and Yemen (and their neighbours) is restricted by immigration policies. The result is that smuggling proliferates in the region as a thriving multi-million dollar business facilitating, organizing and exploiting the movement of tens of thousands of economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. This report documents the social economy and protection risks associated with mixed migration flows involving Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia (including Puntland), Somaliland and Yemen. It is a compilation of most recent knowledge, data and analysis available of migrant smuggling in the region.



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