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Unpacking the Myths: Human smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa

In-depth analysis on migrant smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa – using quotes from smugglers to understand the illicit migrant smuggling economy, how people move, and the risks faced by smuggled migrants.

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Abstract

This RMMS briefing paper provides an update on the volume, trends, and modus operandi of migrant smuggling¹ within and from the Horn of Africa. It offers new estimates of the volume of smuggling, the value of the illicit migrant smuggling economy, and the conditions and risks faced by smuggled migrants. This paper finds that migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa continues to occur, with new smuggling routes opening in response to irregular migration related risks and law enforcement responses to migrant smuggling on traditionally popular routes. Smuggling as part of the mixed migration flows are more and more common, particularly as travel across borders becomes more dangerous. The paper also provides information on the operations of migrant smuggling – including smuggling routes, activities, and profiles.

Summary of Key Findings

The research draws on various primary and secondary sources, and relies heavily on data from the RMMS Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi), a unique longitudinal monitoring approach using informal migrant monitors and remote mobile survey technology. During this research period, September 2014 to March 2017, monitors conducted 3,522 interviews with migrants from the Horn of Africa and 153 structured interviews with smugglers in various countries in Africa and the Middle East.

4Mi data shows that at least 73% of migrants are using smugglers for at least part of their journey. This paper finds that the following trends and characteristics define the migrant smuggling dynamic:

- Migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa remains a vibrant business, and new smuggling routes continue to open - largely in response to political and economic factors, migration risks, and law enforcement efforts to curtail certain routes.
- Many smugglers are young men who enter the smuggling trade because they have limited employment opportunities in their home countries, and smuggling activities are more lucrative than other job opportunities in their home countries.
- Smuggling networks across all three major routes leading out of the region are organised. Some networks resembling loose, horizontal networks in which smugglers work collaboratively across national borders. In these networks, smugglers tend to hand over the migrants at borders to new smugglers operating the subsequent leg/s of the journey. Other networks, particularly Libya-based smuggling networks along the North-western route to Europe are increasingly hierarchical, with smuggling kingpins dominating the smuggling business from Libya, and Horn of Africa smugglers playing important, but usually subordinate, positions to the Libyan kingpins.
- For most smugglers operating in the region, migrant smuggling is the primary criminal enterprise. Predominantly on the Eastern, and North-western routes, smugglers may also be involved in other criminal activities, such as trafficking in persons,² kidnapping, and extortion.
- Government officials are reported to be involved, directly and indirectly, in migrant smuggling operations. Without this collaboration smugglers would likely encounter significant obstacles to conducting successful migrant smuggling ventures.
- With a reported pre-departure average expenditure for smuggling services of USD 1,036 per migrant,³ the smuggling business remains lucrative for those involved. With a reported average expenditure of USD 2,371⁴ per migrant on bribes and extortion, it is clear that many other individuals, including border guards, militia, kidnappers, and traffickers, are also profiting from the flows of smuggled migrants within and from the Horn of Africa.
- The migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa are mixed,⁵ with asylum seekers and refugees being smuggled alongside economic migrants.
- Various political and socio-economic factors motivate irregular migration from the Horn of Africa region. The level of migration is highly reactive to political and other pressures, as well as national migration policy. Movement from the region is both in response to short-term crises, as well as rooted in long-term factors.

1 The Smuggling of Migrants Protocol, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, defines the 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 or a permanent resident." (Article 3, Smuggling of Migrants Protocol).

2 Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

3 This is the average amount that interviewed migrants reported paying to smugglers, prior to the smuggling venture. The figure is derived from RMMS structured interviews with migrants, conducted between September 2014 to March 2017.

4 This is the average amount that interviewed migrants reported paying on bribes, extortion etc. The figure is derived from RMMS structured interviews with migrants, conducted between September 2014 to March 2017.

5 Irregular migration in and from the Horn of Africa region is mixed, comprising undocumented migrants, irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who are motivated to migrate due to various political and socio-economic factors. Mixed migration can be understood as complex population movements including asylum seekers, refugees, economic and other migrants travelling in an irregular manner, on similar routes, using similar means of travel, but for different purposes.

- Most smuggled migrants from the Horn of Africa are young, single men; however, the number of female migrants is reportedly increasing. Also reportedly increasing is the number of unaccompanied Horn of Africa minors travelling irregularly to Europe, the Gulf States and Middle East, and Southern Africa.
- Some migrants initiate the first leg of travel, and navigate one or more subsequent segments of travel without the aid of smugglers. These migrants tend to pay smugglers, where they are used, for each individual part of the journey, using cash or informal money transfer systems, such as hawala systems (informal financial transfers outside of the traditional banking system).⁶ Other migrants use the services of smugglers to take them from their home country all the way to the destination country - some of these migrants pay for the entire journey in advance.
- Paying for the entire smuggling journey in advance does not reduce the vulnerability of migrants to exploitation and abuse during the journey.
- In terms of volume, the most popular smuggling route is the Eastern route to the Gulf States and the Middle East. Horn of Africa migrants are also still being smuggled in large numbers to Europe, and to Southern Africa, particularly South Africa.

This paper provides an up to date analysis, informed by qualitative and quantitative data, of migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa including unique interviews with smugglers themselves. The author drew on 4Mi data, collected through structured interviews with migrants⁷ and migrant smugglers. The interviews with migrants and migrant smugglers were conducted between September 2014 and March 2017 by trained field monitors using smartphone technology to transmit completed interviews to RMMS.⁸ This paper presents the relevant data on migrants, collected through the structured interviews with migrants, as well as direct quotes taken from smugglers during the interviews. The author also drew on multiple referenced sources, including the accumulated data and analysis of four years of RMMS resources⁹.

6 Hawala is an informal money transfer system, which is widely used in the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Indian subcontinent. The system operates outside of, and/or parallel to, traditional banking and remittance systems.

7 It should be noted that the findings of the 4Mi data on migrants, in some regards, are a direct result of 4Mi methodology (for example, more interviews were conducted with migrants in some countries than others), and as such cannot be considered representative of all migrants travelling within and from the Horn of Africa region.

8 The RMMS 4Mi project is an innovative approach to collect and analyse data on mixed migration flows, which started in the Horn of Africa in 2014. Through a growing network of over 100 locally-recruited monitors in strategic migration hubs in Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa, Europe and Central and South East Asia, the 4Mi project tracks migrants on the move. Latest findings can be accessed at <http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/4Mi-page>. As part of the 4Mi project, 3,409 interviews with migrants from the Horn of Africa, and 152 interviews with migrant smugglers were conducted in various countries in Africa and the Middle East over the period 2014 – 2017.

9 This includes a study on trafficking and smuggling RMMS conducted with an international consultant and national field researchers in 10 countries in the region and along the migration route to Europe, commissioned by Expertise France. This study included field research in a number of trafficking hotspots in the region including Moyale and Mombasa (Kenya), Khartoum, Kassala, and El-Gedaref (Sudan), Alexandria, Aswan, and Cairo (Egypt), Asmara (Eritrea), Obock (Djibouti), Metema (Ethiopia), Bossaso, Mogadishu (Somalia), Hargeisa (Somaliland).

Introduction

Migrants and refugees¹⁰ from the Horn of Africa travel irregularly both within the region. For the purposes of this paper the author examines three major routes out of the region: North-western towards Europe through Egypt, Libya and North African countries, East through the Gulf States and the Middle East, and South through southern Africa. Many migrants and refugees use smugglers to navigate multiple land, sea, and/or air borders to reach their destinations. The map below shows these routes and their key characteristics, as well as the estimated size of the migrant smuggling flows.

The North-western route (transiting through Sudan, Egypt and Libya across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe):

- 40,773 migrants from the Horn of Africa arrived in Italy in 2016. 8,688 migrants from the Horn arrived in Europe in of 2017.
- Predominantly used by Eritreans and Somalis.
- Most enter Europe via the Central Mediterranean route (Libya/Egypt to Italy);
- There are significant protection risks along this route, including abuse, kidnapping and fatalities while crossing the desert, and drownings while crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe.

The Eastern Route (into Yemen, then Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, and Middle East countries):

- Almost exclusively used by Ethiopians (over 80 percent) and Somalis.
- Nearly 55,000 migrants have transited this route in 2017.
- Despite the conflict in Yemen, 2016 was a record year with 117,107 arrivals in Yemen.
- A new route emerged since the end of 2015. Some smuggled migrants travel to Yemen first via the Red Sea or Gulf of Aden then cross the Red Sea again to Sudan and onwards to Libya/Egypt before reaching Europe.
- There are significant protection risks on this route including hazardous sea journeys, and trafficking in persons, particularly in Yemen.

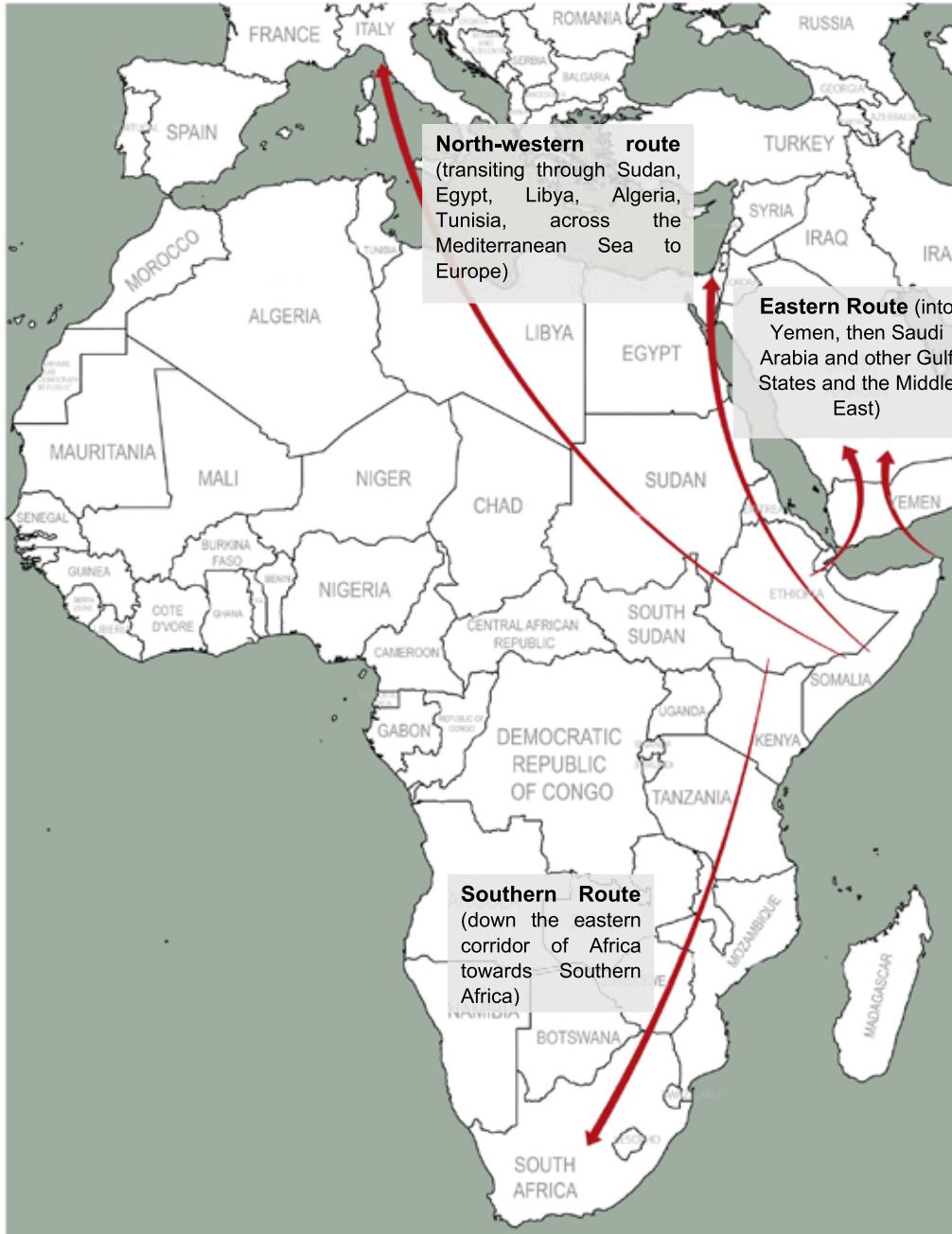
The Southern Route (down the eastern corridor of Africa towards Southern Africa):

- Mostly used by Ethiopians and Somalis.
- Less frequently used in recent years: approximately 14,300 persons per year are using this route now, compared to 17,000 – 20,000 persons in 2009.
- South Africa is the major destination.
- Some migrants continue to journey onwards from South Africa to the United States or other countries.

Various factors both push and pull migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa to Europe, the Gulf States and the Middle East, and Southern Africa. The push factors include political, economic and social push factors in the migrants' home countries, which include war and conflict, persecution, compulsory military service, lack of employment opportunities, poverty, as well as environmental factors such as drought. At the same time migrants are pulled to destinations where they have family or friends, or perceive the destination country as welcoming and one where employment opportunities are available. Various other factors come into play when migrants are deciding where to travel to, including the funds available for the smuggling journey, the known or perceived conditions and risks on the journey to the destination country, and the perceived or real likelihood that the migrants will be accepted as refugees or be able to secure employment in the destination country. These factors are further influenced by the advice of smugglers and others.

However, the harder it is for people to move, the more likely that they are going to need a smuggler. 4Mi data shows that at least 73% of migrants are using smugglers for at least part of their journey. Due to the absence of legal avenues for regular migration from the Horn of Africa to migrants' desired destinations, migration within and from the region frequently occurs

¹⁰ For the purposes of this paper, a 'migrant' may be understood as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. A 'refugee' is person who, "owing to a 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". (Art. 1(A)(2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol). In addition to the 'refugee' definition in the 1951 Refugee Convention, Art. 1(2), 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention defines a 'refugee' as any person compelled to leave his or her country "owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country or origin or nationality."



in an irregular, and often clandestine manner. Expanding networks of smugglers¹¹ have emerged to meet the demand of migrants seeking assistance to travel. These smugglers (who perform an array of facilitation roles) tend to work in loose, horizontal networks, though more organised criminal groups have been detected, particularly on the North-western route to Europe. The structure of these networks is consistent with the typologies outlined by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with individuals playing different roles in the network, including as brokers or recruiters, facilitators, coordinators and organisers, transporters and guides, and service providers.¹² Smugglers are also responsible for a range of other services, which may include acquiring fraudulent travel documents, bribing border guards and other government officials to enable safe passage of the clients, and paying militia and others to release captured migrants and enable them to continue their journey.

It is important to note that there is a close relationship between smuggling networks and trafficking networks. Smuggling can be defined as “the illegal entry of a person” into a country “in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.”¹³ Traffickers, on the other hand, move people from one place to another without their informed consent and exploit them along the way or at their final destination¹⁴. Irregular migrants can start a journey using smugglers, who later engage in exploitation or abuse, and the lines between formal definitions of trafficking and smuggling blur. Thus, migrants could experience both trafficking and smuggling along the same route¹⁵. However, for the purposes of this paper, only the smuggling economy and dynamics are fully addressed.

While some smuggled migrants from the Horn of Africa travel across multiple national borders to their desired destination in relative safety, others experience or witness abuse, extortion, kidnapping or are trafficked for sexual or labour exploitation. Particularly along the North-western route through Sudan and Libya, these crimes are occurring at alarming rates. In some cases, abuses are perpetrated by smugglers who exploit their clients during the journey; however, recent research suggests that these abuses are more commonly carried out by groups that specialise in kidnapping for ransom, forced labour, and trafficking in persons¹⁶.

This paper provides an updated overview of migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa to Europe, the Gulf States and the Middle East, and Southern Africa, including new estimates on the volume of migrant smuggling, and new information on the routes and destinations, the modus operandi of smuggling, and the major protection issues faced by smuggled migrants. The paper is based on data collected through the RMMS Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi),¹⁷ including data collected through structured interviews with migrants and migrant smugglers.

It must also be noted that smugglers or brokers also play a key and arguably necessary role in the travel of migrants. Global Initiatives Against Transnational Organized Crime notes that the relationship between smugglers and migrants is typically characterized by high levels of trust with safeguards built in. As this paper notes, smugglers are complicit in many protection abuses against migrants. However, 4Mi data shows that over half (52%) of migrants who received assistance, said assistance was provided by smugglers themselves, pointing to the dual role of smugglers as both abusers and protectors.

Migrant smuggling routes and mixed migration flows

Migrant smuggling along the North-western route

The North-western route is predominantly used by irregular Eritrean and Somali migrants travelling through neighbouring Sudan and on to Libya before embarking onward to Europe¹⁸. Migrants travel to Sudan with the intention of claiming asylum and finding employment in North Africa, Libya in particular, or Europe.¹⁹ From Sudan, Horn of Africa migrants are smuggled overland to Libya or Egypt. From those transit points, the migrants that wish to reach Europe then undertake irregular maritime travel across the Mediterranean.²⁰ 4Mi data indicates that approximately 40 percent (n=1,361) of interviewed migrants from the Horn of Africa intend to reach Europe.

11 In this paper, the term 'smuggler' may be understood as encompassing a range of roles, including recruiters, brokers, and facilitators of migrant smuggling journeys.

12 UNODC, 2010. Issue Paper: A Short Introduction to Migrant Smuggling. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Issue-Papers/Issue_Paper_-_A_short_introduction_to_migrant_smuggling.pdf> (last accessed 02/06/2017).

13 Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Article 3.

14 Human Rights Watch 2017, questions and answers: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/07/smuggling-and-trafficking-human-beings>

15 Carling, Gallagher and Horwood, 2015. Beyond Definitions: Global migration and the Smuggling–Trafficking Nexus. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/DiscussionPapers/Beyond_Definitions.pdf> (last accessed: 12/06/17).

16 Sahar Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

17 The RMMS 4Mi project is an innovative approach to collect and analyse data on mixed migration flows. Through a growing network of over 100 locally-recruited monitors in strategic migration hubs in Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa, Europe, and Central and South East Asia, the 4Mi project tracks migrants on the move. Latest findings can be accessed at <http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/4Mi-page>.

18 Horwood (2015). Irregular Migration Flows in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and implications for source, transit and destination countries, p. 10. Available at: <<https://www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/research/horn-of-africa.pdf>> (last accessed 5/09/2017).

19 UNHCR (2014) Smuggling and trafficking from the East and Horn of Africa: Progress Report, p. 2. Available at http://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/workshops/UNHCR-Smuggling_and_Trafficking-Progress_Report-screen-final.pdf (last accessed 02/09/2017).

20 Marchand, Roosen, Reinhold, and Siegel (2016). Irregular Migration from and in the East and Horn of Africa, p. 29. Available at <<https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1496241719.pdf>> (last accessed 02/09/2017).

Intended final destination

Where is your final intended destination?		
Europe	1,361	40%
South Africa	620	18%
USA	410	12%
Other	374	11%
Wherever I can be repatriated	329	10%
Saudi Arabia	265	8%
Turkey	15	0%
Yemen	10	0%
United Arab Emirates	5	0%
Israel	4	0%
Libya	4	0%

“ The majority of the migrants are heading to Europe.”

48-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. November 2016.

2017 figures suggest a significant decline in the number of Horn of Africa migrants travelling irregularly on the Central Mediterranean Route to Europe. Only 1,419 migrants from the Horn (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan) arrived in Italy in the first quarter of 2017. This is a comparative 80 percent decline on movement in the final quarter of 2016 (7,244 arrivals), and a 55 percent decrease on migration in the same period in 2016 (3,179 arrivals).²¹

For smuggling journeys along the North-western route, the border crossings of Metemma and Humera are the main entry points from Ethiopia into Sudan.²² The Metemma crossing is reportedly used primarily by smuggled migrants from Ethiopia and Somalia. Ethiopians can cross the border in a regular manner by obtaining a visa using official documents. For this reason, some Ethiopians travel to Sudan overland or by air through regular channels, and only seek out migrant smugglers upon arriving in Sudan to facilitate their onward, irregular travel to Libya or Egypt. Ethiopians who are unable to organise the required documents for regular travel to Sudan enlist the assistance of smugglers from within Ethiopia. According to RMMS field research, the smugglers arrange the migrants' passage through regular channels by procuring fraudulent documents, or alternately, the smugglers guide the Ethiopian migrants out of Ethiopia by bypassing official border crossings.

Because obtaining passports is difficult for many Somalis, they often enlist the services of smugglers for travel along

the North-western route while they are still in Somalia. Other Somalis travel to Addis Ababa where they then identify smugglers operating in Ethiopia and purchase 'full-package' smuggling arrangements, which cover their irregular travel from Ethiopia to Sudan, then onward to North Africa and, eventually, to Europe.²³

From Sudan, smuggled Horn of Africa migrants travel into neighbouring states, principally Libya. A 2016 report by the Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP) indicates that a significant number of irregular Horn of Africa migrants are travelling through Sudanese territory to Libya, facilitated by a well-organised network of smugglers, facilitators and transporters who are working together to move smuggled migrants through Sudan to Libya and onward to Europe. The report identifies a camp near Khartoum, known to migrants as 'Hajar',²⁴ as a key transit hub in Sudan that is used by smugglers and smuggled migrants prior to onward travel from Sudan.²⁵

Smuggled migrants who have travelled the North-western route from Sudan to Ajdabiya (Libya), have described a journey lasting approximately one week, which crosses deserts, and avoids villages and towns. According to migrants who were interviewed for the 2016 Sahan Foundation and ISSP study, smuggling ventures are divided into a number of possible routes through Libya that all involve journeys through the desert in extremely isolated areas of the country. Vehicles transporting the smuggled migrants drive on sand to avoid encountering the authorities. Smuggled migrants have also reported interceptions on the route through Libya by armed groups, which the migrants believe to be Chadian or Egyptian.²⁶

The final leg of the journey along the North-western route involves irregular maritime travel from Libya or Egypt to Italy. Frontex estimates that 90 percent of irregular migrants who reached Italy in 2016 embarked on their sea journey from the shores of Libya.²⁷ Most irregular maritime journeys across the Mediterranean Sea begin on the west coast of Libya, in the coastal area of the country that is geographically closest to the Straits of Sicily and Lampedusa. Irregular maritime journeys to Europe also occurred from Benghazi and Tobruk, as well as from near Alexandria in Egypt.²⁸

23 RMMS, 2017. Ethiopia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 5.

24 The authors of the Sahan Foundation and ISSP report were unable to establish the geographic location of 'Hajar'.

25 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 22. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

26 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 22. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017), pp. 15 – 16.

27 Cited in Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 11. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

28 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 11. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

21 RMMS, 2017. Regional Mixed Migration in East Africa and Yemen in 2017: Quarter trend summary and analysis. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/trends/RMMS%20Mixed%20Migration%20Trends%20Q1%202017.pdf> (last accessed 01/09/2017).

22 North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force (2015). Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa: Study 2. Available at: <<http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Conditions-and-Risks-in-Mixed-Migration-in-North-East-Africa.pdf>> (last accessed 02/06/2017).

Migrant smuggling along the Eastern route

The Eastern route is the most documented route, and remains the most popular one²⁹. On the Eastern route migrants are smuggled from the Horn of Africa into Yemen, then to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, and the Middle East³⁰. Much of the irregular migration flow on the Eastern route from Ethiopia towards the Middle East and Gulf States uses Djibouti and Somalia as key transit countries³¹. From these transit countries, smuggled migrants travel by sea to Yemen, with the intention of finding employment in Saudi Arabia and or other locations in the Persian Gulf.³²

Between 2008 and 2016, approximately 365,000 irregular migrants arrived in Yemen from coastal departure points in Djibouti. Approximately 80 percent of these irregular migrants started their journey from Ethiopia.³³ RMMS field research on smuggling and trafficking in 2016 identified that – contrary to the expectation that the ongoing Yemeni civil war would result in a significant decrease in irregular migration along the Eastern route – irregular migration flows through Djibouti into Yemen increased.³⁴ Recent figures, however, suggest that the anticipated decrease in migration flows on this route may now be occurring. Arrival figures for Yemen for May 2017 (2,861 arrivals from the Horn of Africa) suggest a significant (50 percent) decrease from April 2017 figures, when 5,750 arrivals from the Horn of Africa were recorded. May 2017 arrivals were the lowest figures recorded since June 2015 (2,044).³⁵

Recent research has identified the emergence of a new route through Yemen that is not used by Horn of Africa migrants to reach the Gulf States and the Middle East but, rather, is used to reach Europe via Italy.³⁶ The route, which reportedly started to increase in popularity at the end of 2015, involves irregular sea journeys from remote coastal towns near Bossaso to Mukallah in Yemen; followed by land travel from Mukallah to Mokha, a coastal town in western Yemen; then travel from Mokha by sea to Sudan; then overland travel through Sudan into Libya; and finally, irregular maritime crossing of the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.³⁷

In addition to the flow of smuggled migrants travelling the Eastern route through Yemen to the Gulf States and the Middle East, there is an inverse flow from Yemen to the Horn of Africa.³⁸ In this bi-directional flow, irregular Horn of Africa migrants and refugees are both ‘pushed and pulled’ due to various factors in the migrants’ home countries, and factors in Yemen, namely the conflict in that country.³⁹ The bi-directional flow means that Ethiopians being smuggled into Yemen are likely to cross Yemenis being hosted in Djibouti, and Ethiopians who are returning home after fleeing the war in Yemen.⁴⁰ As at 30 April 2017, an estimated total of 95,807 persons had fled Yemen to countries in the Horn of Africa (37,428 in Djibouti; 36,763 in Somalia; 14,570 in Ethiopia; and 7,046 in Sudan) since March 2015.⁴¹

Migrant smuggling along the Southern route

The Southern route is primarily used by Ethiopians and Somalis crossing into Kenya for onward travel to countries in southern Africa, particularly South Africa.⁴² 4Mi data indicate that some irregular migrants travel to South Africa with the intention of using that country as a springboard for further travel to the United States, Europe or Australia.⁴³

“Migrants sought hope and opportunity in Canada and a few European countries where migrants are welcomed. But they have changed their hopes in the USA when the President passed anti-immigration executive orders. Most of the migrants are from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea.”

43-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. March 2017.

RMMS research published in 2017 suggests that mixed flows of migrants from the Horn of Africa travelling to South Africa are declining.⁴⁴ The possible reasons for this decline include the attraction of Europe and perceived ease of entering Europe; the continued ‘Afrophobic’ attacks against Horn of Africa migrants in South Africa; reduced tolerance among South African government officials and the general

29 Horwood (2015). Irregular Migration Flows in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and implications for source, transit and destination countries, p. 10. Available at: <<https://www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/research/horn-of-africa.pdf>> (last accessed 5/09/2017).

30 Marchand, Roosen, Reinhold, and Siegel (2016). Irregular Migration from and in the East and Horn of Africa, p. 30. Available at <<https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1496241719.pdf>> (last accessed 02/09/2017).

31 UNHCR (2014) Smuggling and trafficking from the East and Horn of Africa: Progress Report, p. 2. Available at http://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/workshops/UNHCR-Smuggling_and_Trafficking-Progress_Report-screen-final.pdf (last accessed 02/09/2017).

32 Human Rights Watch (2014). Yemen's Torture Camps: Abuse of Migrants by Traffickers in a Climate of Impunity, pp. 20, 25. Available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/yemen0514_ForUpload.pdf (last accessed 02/09/2017); RMMS (2016). Country Profiles: Ethiopia. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/country-profiles/Ethiopia>

33 RMMS (2016). Country Profiles: Djibouti. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/country-profiles/djibouti>

34 RMMS, 2017. Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 6.

35 RMMS Monthly Summary June 2017.

36 IOM (2016). Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A Global Review of the Emerging Evidence Base, p. 60. Available at <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/smuggling_report.pdf> (last accessed 05/09/2017); RMMS, 2016. Pushed and Pulled in Two Directions: An Analysis of the Bi-directional Refugee and Migrant Flow between the Horn of Africa and Yemen, p. 12. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Pushed_and_Pulled.pdf> (last accessed 02/06/2017).

37 RMMS, 2016. Pushed and Pulled in Two Directions: An Analysis of the Bi-directional Refugee and Migrant Flow between the Horn of Africa and Yemen, p. 12. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Pushed_and_Pulled.pdf> (last accessed 02/06/2017).

38 IOM (2016). Regional Mixed Migration Program Overview: Horn of Africa and Yemen, 2016 – 2017, p. 2; RMMS, 2016. Pushed and Pulled in Two Directions: An Analysis of the Bi-directional Refugee and Migrant Flow between the Horn of Africa and Yemen, p. 11. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Pushed_and_Pulled.pdf> (last accessed 02/06/2017), p. 1.

39 RMMS, 2016. Pushed and Pulled in Two Directions: An Analysis of the Bi-directional Refugee and Migrant Flow between the Horn of Africa and Yemen, p. 11. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Pushed_and_Pulled.pdf> (last accessed 02/06/2017).

40 RMMS, 2017. Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 4.

41 RMMS Monthly Summary May 2017.

42 Marchand, Roosen, Reinhold, and Siegel (2016). Irregular Migration from and in the East and Horn of Africa, p. 30. Available at <<https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1496241719.pdf>> (last accessed 02/09/2017); Sahar Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 18. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017), p. 10.

43 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017. Smuggled South, p. 11. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

44 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017. Smuggled South, p. 6. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

public for ‘illegal foreigners’; increased border security; and worsening employment options in South Africa.⁴⁵

“ Few are going to South Africa due to the xenophobia.”

48-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. November 2016.

“ Initially migrants are from Ethiopia. Due to increased vigilance at the border to contain the illegal migrants flow out of Ethiopia, we are only getting a quarter of migrants compared to the previous years. The average age of migrants is between 20-27 and they are mostly men. Cases of female migrants are rare and it’s only those that are seeking courtship or being brought by their husbands who are in South Africa.”

49-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. February 2015.

The smuggling of migrants from Ethiopia into Kenya mostly occurs near Moyale, which is situated at the border between Ethiopia and Kenya, and, to a lesser extent, in Mandera, which borders Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.⁴⁶ Ethiopian citizens do not require a visa to enter Kenya, but many Ethiopians do not possess the required official documents and passport to enter Kenya. Those Ethiopians without the required documentation seek out smugglers to help them acquire the necessary documents, or guide them into Kenya without passing through official border crossings.⁴⁷ Having entered Kenya, regularly or irregularly, Ethiopians then use smugglers to organise their subsequent travel to Tanzania, or the entire journey to South Africa. When the overland route is perceived to be unsafe due to armed conflict or other reasons, some smuggled migrants choose to undertake maritime travel over some distances, heading South on the Indian Ocean in boats to Southern Africa.⁴⁸

Malawi is also frequently used as a transit country on the Southern route.⁴⁹ For smuggled migrants transiting through Malawi, the smuggling journey involves travel through northern Malawi towards Dzaleka camp, which is situated

near the capital, Lilongwe.⁵⁰ Dzaleka camp is reportedly used as a rest stop for smuggled migrants before continuing the onward journey to South Africa.⁵¹ Another popular transit country on the Southern route is Mozambique. 4Mi data indicate that Somalis have been choosing to bypass Kenya and Tanzania on the Southern route and instead travel by air or sea to Mozambique. In 2014, 11 percent of migrants from the Horn of Africa were transiting through Mozambique, rather than Kenya or Tanzania, compared to only 1.6 percent using the route via Mozambique prior to 2013. The journey from the Horn of Africa to Mozambique is believed to be safer than other Southern routes, with no reported deaths, and only five percent of interviewed migrants reporting that they witnessed or had heard of someone who disappeared.⁵² Another factor that may be influencing the decision of migrants travelling on the Southern route to transit via Mozambique may be that it is reportedly relatively easy for Ethiopians to acquire a tourist visa in Mozambique, allowing them to travel overland through the country to South Africa.⁵³ Most smuggled migrants from the Horn of Africa travelling on the Southern route, however, continue to enter South Africa through Zimbabwe. RMMS research in 2015 indicated that 100 percent of the migrants who travelled from Tanzania to Mozambique, subsequently crossed into Zimbabwe before reaching South Africa.⁵⁴

Profiles and motivations of smuggled migrants from the Horn of Africa

Previous research has established that the overwhelming majority of smuggled migrants from the Horn of Africa are young men between 20 and 35 years old.⁵⁵ Recent research has identified that an increasing number of female migrants, and unaccompanied minors from the Horn of Africa are on the move.⁵⁶ Recent research has also noted that elderly Horn of Africa migrants are being smuggled to Europe using air and land routes.⁵⁷

45 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017. Smuggled South, p. 7. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

46 Sahar Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 18. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017), p. 10.

47 RMMS, 2017. Ethiopia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 6.

48 Kanko, Bailey and Teller, 2013. Irregular Migration: Causes and Consequences of Young Adult Migration from Southern Ethiopia to South Africa. Paper presented at the XXVII IUSSP International Population Conference 26-31 August, 2013. Busan, South Korea, p. 24. Available at: <http://iussp.org/sites/default/files/event_call_for_papers/irregular%20Migration%20from%20south%20Ethiopia%20to%20South%20Africa%20%5B%20Teller%5D.pdf> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

49 IOM (2016). Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A Global Review of the Emerging Evidence Base, p. 58. Available at <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/smuggling_report.pdf> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

50 IOM (2015). Migration in Malawi: A Country Profile 2014, p. 47. Available at <http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mp_malawi.pdf> (last accessed 02/09/2017); Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017, p. 11. Smuggled South. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

51 IOM, 2014. Health Vulnerabilities Study of Mixed Migration Flows from the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region to South Africa. Executive Summary Findings from the formative state. Geneva: International Organization for Migration, p. 15. Available at: <http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration_health_study_finalweb.pdf> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

52 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017, p. 11. Smuggled South. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

53 Kanko, Bailey and Teller, 2013. Irregular Migration: Causes and Consequences of Young Adult Migration from Southern Ethiopia to South Africa. Paper presented at the XXVII IUSSP International Population Conference 26-31 August, 2013. Busan, South Korea, p. 25. Available at: <http://iussp.org/sites/default/files/event_call_for_papers/irregular%20Migration%20from%20south%20Ethiopia%20to%20South%20Africa%20%5B%20Teller%5D.pdf> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

54 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017, p. 11. Smuggled South. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

55 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. 8. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

56 IOM, 2014. Health Vulnerabilities Study of Mixed Migration Flows from the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region to Southern Africa. Geneva: International Organization for Migration. Available at: <http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration_health_study_finalweb.pdf> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

57 Samuel Hall (2015). Returns to Somalia: Assessment of DRC’s AVRR Pilot Programme to Mogadishu, commissioned by the Danish Refugee Council and funded by the Norwegian Immigration Directorate. UNHCR and IOM.

“ There are more women and children in the process of migration now.”

27-year old male smuggler, interviewed in February 2017. Location not specified.

“ It’s always the same in terms of the home country. Somalia and Ethiopia are the majority. There are more female migrants.”

46-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. December 2014.

4Mi data indicate that political and socio-economic factors, and other factors such as lack of safety, are the main push factors for Horn of Africa migrants to travel on the smuggling routes out of the Horn of Africa. Economic opportunities in the destination country are identified as the leading pull factor. 4Mi data indicate that 92 percent (n=3,121) of interviewed migrants expect to find employment at their intended destination.

Reasons for selecting the chosen destination

Why did you choose this destination over the other options?		
Economic opportunity	1,360	19%
Family or friends at destination	980	14%
Security of the migration route	895	13%
Greatest security at destination	876	12%
Social protection for migrants offered at destination	858	12%
Education opportunity	700	10%
Broker/smuggler options	517	7%
Ease/cost of migration	431	6%
Diaspora at destination	330	5%
Other	99	1%

Did you expect to find employment at the destination?		
Yes	3,121	92%
No	273	8%
No answer	15	0%

“ There are changes of destinations where migrants are heading but there is no any change of where migrants are from.”

38-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Somalia. August 2016.

RMMS field research identifies that Eritreans seek out smuggling services to assist them to leave the country because of several key push factors, including mandatory military service, poor economic prospects, and lack of political freedom. The government of Eritrea restricts movement within the country, and rarely grants exit visas to Eritreans who have not completed national service. Attempting to leave the country without permission, or assisting other individuals to leave the country illegally, is punishable by up to five years in prison and/or a fine of up to 10,000 Eritrean Nakfa (USD 652).⁵⁸⁵⁹

An additional push factor for the irregular migration of Somalis to Europe and other destinations is the fear of many Somali refugees of having to return to Somalia after having been displaced for decades by conflict. Many Somalis who return to their home country end up in camps for internally displaced persons, or find themselves living in areas where security is inadequate. As a result, Somali refugees living in refugee camps in Kenya, particularly at the complex at Dadaab, may decide that irregular migration is a better option than returning home to Somalia.⁶⁰

Modi operandi of migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa

Recruitment of smuggled migrants

4Mi data indicate that while most interviewed migrants report initiating the start of the irregular journey themselves, with assistance from friends and family, as the next graph shows, three quarters (73 percent; n=1,639) of interviewed migrants report using smugglers along subsequent stages of the journey.

Facilitation of departure from home

Who facilitated your migration out of your origin country?		
Friend or family	1,114	49%
Broker or smuggler	917	41%
Ethnic or cultural support networks	120	5%
Other	48	2%
Official government agency	27	1%
Employment agency	24	1%
No answer	1	0%

⁵⁸ European Asylum Support Office (2016). Eritrea: National service and illegal exit. Available at: https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/COI-%20Eritrea-Dec2016_LR.pdf; RMMS, 2017. Eritrea Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report).

⁵⁹ Currency conversion correct at the time of writing – September 2017.

⁶⁰ Somalia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 4.

Facilitation of the rest of the journey

Who facilitated your migration for the rest of your journey?		
Smugglers	1,639	73%
Self	434	19%
Other	176	8%
No answer	2	0%

While smugglers proactively recruit new clients, 4Mi data indicate that 51 percent (n=467) of interviewed migrants report identifying and contacting the smugglers themselves. 36 percent (n=326) of interviewed migrants report using ethnic/cultural networks to identify smugglers. In most cases (74 percent; n=679) the organisation of the smuggling journey begins with the migrant liaising directly with smugglers (usually, smuggling intermediaries), but in a small number of cases the initial smuggling venture is organised through former employees of recruitment agencies, returnee migrants and other individuals.

How did you get in contact with the Broker-Smuggler?		
I contacted the facilitator	467	51%
Ethnic/cultural networks put us in touch	326	36%
The broker/smuggler contacted me	99	11%
Other	25	3%

Who was the Broker-Smuggler?		
Smugglers	679	74%
Former employees of recruiting agencies	96	10%
Returnee migrants	51	6%
Migrants returned on holiday	30	3%
Broker of recruiting agencies	27	3%
Travel agency	15	2%
Other	12	1%
Unofficial government assistance	7	1%

“ We recruit individuals who act for us as agents in the border areas and main towns. We have links with transportation companies and travel agents.”

44-year old Male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. October 2015.

The available literature suggests that the most common way to recruit migrants remains the use of intermediaries. Senior-level smugglers focus on coordinating the smuggling operations, and leave the work of contacting

and recruiting potential new clients, to intermediaries. These intermediaries are crucial for ensuring successful smuggling enterprises because they build trust with migrant communities and convince their fellow countrymen of the quality of the smuggler’s services.⁶¹

Recent research highlights the importance of social networks and social media for the effective functioning of smuggling networks.⁶² For example, research has demonstrated that a prospective migrant will have been, in one way or another, already connected to smugglers through the migrant’s social network – through friends or family members.⁶³ Mobile technology and apps such as WhatsApp are increasingly being used to recruit new clients, with smuggling intermediaries sharing images and stories of successful migrants now living in countries in the West.⁶⁴

Services provided by the smugglers

While some migrants travel independently, only occasionally using smuggling services during their journey, most migrants are involved in what UNODC refers to as ‘pre-organised stage-to-stage smuggling’ where smuggling services are provided by smugglers throughout the migrants’ journeys.⁶⁵ Once a migrant makes contact with a smuggler, the migrant is connected to the larger smuggling network that ensures that a migrant arriving in a country is put in touch with a smuggler operating the next leg of the journey.⁶⁶

The work of the smuggler often involves organising transport, transporting the migrants across the national border, and liaising with the smuggler on the other side of the border to facilitate the transfer of the migrant for travel on the subsequent leg of the journey. Smugglers may organise transport by land, air and/or sea. 4Mi data indicates that most interviewed migrants travelling within and from the Horn of Africa region report using land-based transports such as buses, trucks, and cars. Only a small number (7 percent; n=975) of interviewed migrants report using air transport; and only one percent (n=103) report using maritime (boat) transport. 4Mi data indicates that 50 percent (n=463) of interviewed migrants report that the smugglers also organised the migrants’ travel documents. 40 percent (n=901) of interviewed migrants report being put

61 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 27. Available at <<http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/>> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

62 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. 10. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

63 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. 10. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

64 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. 10. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

65 UNODC (2010). Issue Paper: A Short Introduction to Migrant Smuggling. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Issue-Papers/Issue_Paper_-_A_short_introduction_to_migrant_smuggling.pdf> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

66 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. 10. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

in touch with the smuggler for the subsequent leg of the journey by the previous smuggler.

Methods of transport used

What were the various means of transport used?		
Bus	28%	3,953
Lorry/truck	20%	2,830
Walking	20%	2,849
Compact vehicle	15%	2,151
Other	8%	1,175
Airplane	7%	975
Boat	1%	103
Unofficial government assistance	7	1%

Did the Broker-Smuggler agree to arrange necessary travel documents?		
Yes	463	50%
No	453	49%
No answer	1	0%

How did you get in contact with the Broker-Smugglers when you were in new places?		
Handed off by previous Broker Smuggler	901	40%
Ethnic kinsman networks put us in touch	871	39%
I found them myself	334	15%
Other	141	6%
No answer	4	0%

Network structures and activities

The migrant smugglers that facilitate the movement of smuggled migrants within and from the Horn of Africa are members of increasingly organised and sophisticated transnational smuggling networks, stretching from the Horn of Africa to the destination countries in Europe, the Gulf States and Middle East, and Southern Africa.⁶⁷ The structure of these networks is consistent with the typologies outlined by UNODC, with a range of individuals assuming different roles within the broader smuggling network, including coordinators and organisers, recruiters, transporters, guides, and service providers.⁶⁸

Analysis of the recent literature and available data suggests that while some smuggling networks operating on the various Horn of Africa routes are organised criminal syndicates, with a clear hierarchy and individuals assuming defined roles and responsibilities, most networks are less hierarchical, with smugglers only operating in certain hubs within a country. In this type of loose smuggling network, smugglers do little more than transport migrants and deposit them at a national border when they have reached an agreed destination, and connect the migrants to another smuggler who can facilitate the next leg of the migrant's journey.

“ We use a huge network including taxi drivers, brokers and travel agents to get us clients.”

39-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. March 2017.

In these loose networks, linkages between smugglers tend to be on a “hub to hub” basis, meaning that a smuggler or group of smugglers operating in one hub will likely only have connections with smugglers in the adjacent hub on the route. The smugglers usually have only limited knowledge of, or connections with, smugglers along the rest of the route. Smuggling networks that adopt this form of loose collaboration are nonetheless well-organised and streamlined.⁶⁹

“ The network is long, we have brokers all over... We all work together.”

42-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. August 2015.

On the North-western route to Europe, however, migrant smuggling from the Horn of Africa is increasingly being dominated by highly integrated networks of transnational organised crime groups. These networks make significant profits from the movement of thousands of irregular migrants from the Horn of Africa to Europe. The often-connected networks are coordinated by key individuals, who are in frequent communication with each other, and who operate mainly between Europe (especially Italy), Libya, Ethiopia, and Sudan.⁷⁰ Dominated by Libyan kingpins who are mostly based in Libya, these hierarchical networks recruit their clients through word of mouth, the Internet, and through face-to-face recruitment at schools and universities.⁷¹

69 Somalia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report) p. 9.

70 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 18. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

71 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 5. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

67 Marchand, Roosen, Reinhold, and Siegel (2016). Irregular Migration from and in the East and Horn of Africa. Available at <<https://www.merit.unu.edu/publications/uploads/1496241719.pdf>> (last accessed 02/09/2017).

68 UNODC (2010). Issue Paper: A Short Introduction to Migrant Smuggling. Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Available at: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Issue-Papers/Issue_Paper_-_A_short_introduction_to_migrant_smuggling.pdf> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

A 2017 report by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime suggests that since the fragmentation of Libya, migrant smuggling, and trafficking in persons activities have consolidated on the dominant smuggling routes running east and west of Libya. The report notes that over 2013 and 2014, Libyan smugglers in the smuggling hubs of Zuwara, Sabratha, Kufra and Ajdabiya who were connected with East African hawaladar from Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Eritrea, emerged in dominant position in the smuggling business. These smugglers possessed long established connections with sub-Saharan counterparts linked to smuggling hubs in, for example, Khartoum, Asmara, Addis Ababa and Nairobi; however, the collapse of Libyan state control allowed ‘top-tier’ Libyan smugglers to take control of, and integrate smuggling routes within Libya.

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A recent report notes that non-Libyan players may play key roles in the Libyan-based smuggling networks, beyond the level of recruiting clients.⁷⁵ The non-Libyan smugglers may operate in Libya, or operate internationally but hide, at least temporarily, in Libya.⁷⁶ Further, while Libyan groups have control over the North-western smuggling route, some Eritrean and Sudanese networks have reportedly risen in influence.⁷⁷ A Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime report similarly suggests that manadeeb⁷⁸ are indeed important figures in the smuggling operations through Libya, and that they have leadership roles in the smuggling networks; however, they usually remain

subordinate to the more powerful Libyan smuggling kingpins.⁷⁹

These networks frequently bribe government officials to ensure uninterrupted smuggling ventures across national borders, and collude with Libyan militias to secure safe passage across the desert to launching points for irregular maritime migration on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. The conditions and risks for migrants using these networks are significant: migrants are vulnerable to kidnappers and traffickers, and smugglers are known to cut the irregular migrants adrift on the Mediterranean Sea, close to the limit of Libyan territorial waters, to avoid interdiction and arrest by European security forces.⁸⁰

“ We receive them in the desert between Libya and Sudan, from other smugglers.”

44-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Libya. July 2015.

Smuggling costs, methods of payments, and estimated revenues

Recent research indicates that there are different methods of payment, and several different payment structures available for migrant smuggling services. The payment to smugglers can be made in cash; through the use of third party guarantors; through instalments using the hawala system; or through ‘pay later’ schemes.⁸¹ 4Mi data indicate that three quarters (75 percent; n=2,852) of interviewed migrants report not having paid for the entire cost of the journey prior to departure. 4Mi data further indicate that 65 percent (n=1,868) of interviewed migrants report paying for the rest of the journey through continuous payments, and nearly half (42 percent; n=1,960) report using informal money transfer systems to access funds to pay the smugglers.

Did you need to pay the entire cost of the journey prior to departure?		
No	2,582	76%
Yes	813	24%
No answer	14	0%

72 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017. The Human Conveyor Belt: Trends in Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Post-Revolution Libya, p. 2). Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/report-the-human-conveyor-belt-trends-in-human-trafficking-and-smuggling-in-post-revolution-libya/> (last accessed 03/06/2017).

73 See note 10.

74 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017. The Human Conveyor Belt: Trends in Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Post-Revolution Libya, p. 7). Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/report-the-human-conveyor-belt-trends-in-human-trafficking-and-smuggling-in-post-revolution-libya/> (last accessed 03/06/2017).

75 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 24. Available at <http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

76 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 24. Available at <http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

77 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. ix. Available at <http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

78 Manadeeb means ‘agent’ or ‘representative’.

79 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017. The Human Conveyor Belt: Trends in Human Trafficking and Smuggling in Post-Revolution Libya, p. 40). Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/report-the-human-conveyor-belt-trends-in-human-trafficking-and-smuggling-in-post-revolution-libya/> (last accessed 03/06/2017).

80 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 5. Available at: <http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

81 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. vii. Available at <http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

What were subsequent payment details?		
Continuous payment throughout the migration	1,868	65%
Payment on arrival at destination	810	28%
Other	165	6%
Payment through labor services	18	1%

How do you, or plan to, access more money while traveling?		
Informal money transfer	1,960	42%
Cash in hand	1,267	27%
Cash handlers in other countries	762	16%
Western Union	187	4%
No access to money while travelling	184	4%
Mobile phone payment system	145	3%
Other	70	2%
Work providing services	45	1%

For smuggler services in which migrants pay for smuggling for each section of the journey—each leg often only involving being guided on foot or using land transport to a national border—payments are usually made up front in cash. In some cases, migrants pay for half the journey in advance and the other half on arrival.⁸² Smugglers often do not carry large amounts of money on them and instruct migrants to also not carry much cash.⁸³

Before each leg of the smuggling journey, the migrants are given a phone number to memorise, which they call once they have reached the designated ‘checkpoint’. The smuggler who receives the phone call instructs the migrant to go to a certain business or small shop, where a contact can confirm that the migrant, or the migrant’s family, has paid for the next leg of the journey. At this juncture, migrants who are paying in instalments take the opportunity to tell their family to pay for the next leg of the smuggling journey.⁸⁴

“ We made a fixed price for each migrant who has to pay USD 5,000 and we are three network groups united...We divide this price into three parts.”

28-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Ethiopia. January 2015.

Recent research suggests that smugglers’ fees have become less standardised than in previous years. Today, the price of smuggling on a particular route, or segment of the journey, depends on various factors including the nationality of the migrant, the means of smuggling, and the level of service that the migrant is willing to pay for.⁸⁵ On the North-western route, the pricing of smuggling by sea to Europe is now reportedly broken into a basic fare (only the boat journey) with optional ‘extras’ for food and water, life jackets, and use of a satellite phone.⁸⁶ In addition to the different prices for smuggling depending on the migrant’s nationality, other factors, such as the security context, the season, and the availability of transport and equipment, all affect pricing.⁸⁷

“ I take 25 percent commission for each migrant.”

28-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Ethiopia. December 2015.

On the North-western route, for smuggling journeys of Ethiopians from Ethiopia to Khartoum, via the Metemma crossing, the cost is between USD 50 and USD 200 depending on the arrangements and on whether the smugglers must bribe the authorities to allow safe passage across borders. Prices for Somalis are reportedly more difficult to determine because Somalis use several payment schemes to pass through Ethiopia, including ‘leave now, pay later’ arrangements made in Somalia, which allow Somali migrants to start the first leg of their journey (e.g. from Somaliland or Somalia to Addis Ababa) without making any initial payment.⁸⁸ The total cost of smuggling journeys from Somalia to destinations such as Europe reportedly varies according to other factors, including the modes of transportation used, the starting point of the journey, the time of year, the maritime launching points to Europe, bribes and ransom fees paid during the journey, and external factors such as changes in national policies that result in the closure of certain routes or crossings.

As of mid-2016, Somalis using the most frequently traversed overland routes through Sudan, and onward to either Libya or Egypt before departing for Europe, generally pay between USD 4,000 and USD 6,000 for the entire journey. There are reportedly bespoke packages on offer, costing more than USD 15,000, which cover fraudulent documentation, airfares, land transport, and all other costs associated with the smuggling journey.⁸⁹ Using 2016

82 RMMS, 2017. Eritrea Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 5.

83 RMMS, 2017. Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 8.

84 RMMS, 2017. Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 8.

85 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 32. Available at <<http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/>> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

86 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 32. Available at <<http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/>> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

87 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 32. Available at <<http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/>> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

88 Rift Valley Institute (2016). Going on Tahrir: The Causes and Consequences of Somali Youth Migration to Europe. Research Paper No. 5. Available at: <http://riftvalley.net/publication/going-tahrir#_V_eGnJMrK9Y> (last accessed 02/06/2017).

89 Somalia Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 7.

figures, if the 40,773 Horn of Africa migrants who arrived in Italy paid approximately USD 5,000 each for the smuggling journey to Europe, the smuggling business on the North-western route from the Horn of Africa to Europe in 2016 was worth approximately USD 203 million.

On the Eastern route, a trip from Ethiopia through Saudi Arabia costs migrants between USD 330 and USD 550.⁹⁰ RMMS field research on smuggling and trafficking in 2016 suggests that the value of the migrant smuggling industry on the Eastern route from Ethiopia, into Djibouti, across the Red Sea to Yemen, and finally to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States is conservatively valued at a minimum of USD 4.5 million per year.⁹¹ As an estimated 117,000 migrants arrived in Yemen in 2016, each paying at least USD 300, the smuggling business for the Eastern route in 2016 was valued at a minimum of USD 35 million.

RMMS field research on smuggling and trafficking in 2016 notes that the cost of smuggling services on the Southern route, from Ethiopia to key border crossings such as Moyale, and onward to major towns in northern Kenya is approximately USD 500 to USD 600. Most Somali migrants travelling on the Southern route pay smugglers between USD 2,500 and USD 5,000 to reach South Africa, with prices varying depending on which countries they travel through.⁹²

“ Business is booming.”

36-year old male smuggler, interviewed in South Africa. June 2016.

Using 2016 figures, if approximately 14,300 smuggled migrants travelled on the Southern route from the Horn of Africa in 2016, each paying approximately USD 2,500, the Southern smuggling route is currently valued at approximately USD 35 million per annum.

While these fees and annual revenues suggest that smugglers are making significant profits on all smuggling routes within and from the Horn of Africa, some migrant smugglers interviewed for the 4Mi project report that the smuggling business is declining in profitability. 52 percent (n=78) of interviewed smugglers stated that the smuggling business has been less profitable in the last several years.

Has business been better or worse lately?		
Worse	78	52%
Same as always	40	26%
Better	31	20%
Null	3	2%

In addition to the smuggling fees, smuggled migrants are often forced to pay ransom fees during the journey. For example, on the smuggling route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, then onto Sudan, Libya, and, finally, Europe, Somali youth are recruited by smuggling networks in secondary schools and universities. The young Somalis are told that they will not have to pay anything for the journey to Europe. This promise is honoured while the young migrants are smuggled from Bossaso and through Yemen to Sudan or further to Libya; however, on arrival in Sudan or Libya, the young Somalis are held in smuggling dens until they pay a ransom fee for their release. RMMS research published in 2016 notes that the ransom fee is usually more than USD 5,000. The ransom fee is often paid by the migrant’s family members, who sell assets to cover the ransom costs.⁹³

“ The costs are becoming high, more people are involved in the business. Immigration, police are making our costs high, actually too high because they need us to pay them more money. The law enforcement agencies are also putting restrictions and making our business hard. Some routes are very risky because they are controlled by armed militias who will kidnap our clients for ransom. These are all the challenges we are facing.”

43-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. March 2017.

4Mi data indicate that nearly a quarter of interviewed migrants report having been required to make unexpected, additional payments during the course of their journey. 40 percent of the interviewed migrants report that the unexpected, additional payments were made to smugglers, while 26 percent reported that the payments were made to police.

90 RMMS, 2017. Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 9.

91 RMMS, 2017. Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa (unpublished report), p. 1.

92 RMMS (2016). Country Profiles: Somalia/Somaliland. Available at: http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/country-profiles/somalia-somaliland#_edn1

93 RMMS, 2016. Pushed and Pulled in Two Directions: An Analysis of the Bi-directional Refugee and Migrant Flow between the Horn of Africa and Yemen, p. 12. Available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Pushed_and_Pulled.pdf (last accessed 02/06/2017).

Were you required to make unexpected additional payments during the course of the journey?		
No	78%	6,620
Yes	22%	1,900

To whom?		
Broker/smuggler	40%	1,251
Police	26%	801
Border officials	16%	490
Smuggler/broker or trafficker/criminal	15%	466
Other	3%	85
Government officials	1%	36

Conditions and risks of migrant smuggling

While some smuggled migrants reach their destination without encountering any major hazards or poor treatment, most irregular migrants face an increasing range of protection risks during their journeys, including physical and sexual violence, kidnapping, trafficking, and death through, amongst other causes, lack of access to medicine, dehydration, starvation, or drowning. Smugglers, traffickers and unscrupulous officials do not discriminate between asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants; all persons being smuggled within and from the Horn of Africa region face substantial risks to their safety and lives.⁹⁴

Low levels of abuse appear to be relatively common on all routes leading out of the Horn of Africa region, and such abuse is, according to some reports, expected and even tolerated by many migrants and refugees.⁹⁵ The levels of abuse vary on the major routes leading out of the Horn of Africa but violence on the North-western route towards Europe has been documented as particularly severe. There has been an increasing number of reports of kidnapping for ransom, torture, and trafficking in persons on this route.⁹⁶

“ The journey is less safe for migrants because they face physical, sexual and psychological abuse”.

34-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Somalia. November 2016.

⁹⁴ Horwood (2015). Irregular Migration Flows in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and implications for source, transit and destination countries, p. 16. Available at: <<https://www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/research/horn-of-africa.pdf>> (last accessed 5/09/2017).

⁹⁵ The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. vii. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017); Horwood (2015). Irregular Migration Flows in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and implications for source, transit and destination countries. Available at: <<https://www.border.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/research/horn-of-africa.pdf>> (last accessed 5/09/2017).

⁹⁶ The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. vii. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

Deception regarding the journey

The maltreatment of smuggled migrants and refugees may begin as early as the recruitment phase. Over half of the migrants interviewed for the 4Mi project report that the route, means of transportation, and conditions of travel were not adequately explained to them by smugglers prior to departure. Most (73 percent) of interviewed migrants believe that they were intentionally misled by the smugglers about the route and the conditions of the journey. It follows that many migrants are ill-prepared for the journeys to their destination and often leave the departure points with insufficient amounts of food and water, and a lack of appropriate clothing to protect them from the elements.

Were the route, means of transportation and conditions explained to you prior to departure?		
No	1,740	51%
Yes	1,650	48%
No answer	19	1%

Do you believe you were intentionally misled about the route and conditions, or circumstances unexpectedly changed outside con		
Intentionally misled	611	73%
Unexpected circumstances	221	27%

Conditions of transport

According to RMMS research published in 2017, migrants are sometimes forced to travel in sealed, airless containers, and overcrowded boats. Irregular migrants travelling on the Southern route have reported that the provision of food, water, and health and sanitation amenities, is often minimal.⁹⁷

4Mi data indicate that 37 percent (n=3,172) of interviewed migrants report having experienced difficulties accessing food and water during their journey. Key problems to accessing sufficient food and water were that the smugglers did not provide a sufficient quantity (38 percent; n=2,093); that the migrants and refugees were unable to purchase food and water (27 percent; n=1,463), and that the food and water they were able to access caused them to be ill (20 percent; n=1,095).

⁹⁷ Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017. Smuggled South, p. 21. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

Did you have any problems regarding food or water in this country?		
No	63%	5,345
Yes	37%	3,172

What was the problem?		
Not enough provided	38%	2,093
Unable to purchase	27%	1,463
Poor quality causing sickness	20%	1,095
Nothing provided	13%	718
Other	2%	118

Fatalities

In *Fatal Journeys*, a 2014 IOM report,⁹⁸ IOM examined migrant deaths across the world and identified large gaps in data concerning the number of deaths of migrants, and the identities of those who die. The report notes that for the smuggling routes from the Horn of Africa, precise figures on the number of migrant deaths are not available. The report notes that migrants from the Horn of Africa region often die in remote and clandestine contexts, and, furthermore, smugglers and traffickers know that migrant deaths would bring unwelcome attention from authorities and for this reason they do not report fatalities.⁹⁹

“ The migrants are facing a number of risks, including rape, torture, kidnappings and even killing. Female migrants are more prone to such accidents.”

36-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. October 2014.

4Mi data collected through interviews with migrants indicate that 8 percent (n=658) of interviewed migrants witnessed the deaths of other migrants during their journey. Interviews show that most of these deaths occurred in the transit countries of Sudan (n=970) and Libya (n=832) on the North-western route towards Europe. The interviewed migrants reported that most deaths were caused by sickness and lack of access to medicines (26 percent; n=332), while 14 percent (n=179) of deaths were due to starvation, and 13 percent (n=160) were due to harsh weather and inadequate shelter. A smaller number of deaths were reportedly due to physical abuse (10 percent; n=122), sexual abuse (5 percent; n=69), or being shot or stabbed (6 percent; n=75). Half of the interviewed migrants reported that the deaths were caused by the smugglers; however, 29 percent were reportedly the fault of the police.

⁹⁸ IOM, 2014. *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration*. Available at: <<https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/pbn/docs/Fatal-Journeys-Tracking-Lives-Lost-during-Migration-2014.pdf>> (last accessed 13/06/2017).

⁹⁹ IOM, 2014. *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration*. Available at: <<https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/pbn/docs/Fatal-Journeys-Tracking-Lives-Lost-during-Migration-2014.pdf>> (last accessed 13/06/2017).

Were there any migrant deaths in this country from your group?		
No	92%	7,860
Yes	8%	658

Number of, and location of deaths

Countries crossed/Country deaths took place	Number of reported deaths
Sudan	970
Libya	832
Egypt	111
Yemen	68
Somalia	68
Ethiopia	58
Tanzania	34
Eritrea	30
Mozambique	29
Kenya	14
Other	5
Zimbabwe	5
Djibouti	3
Malawi	2

Cause of death

What was the death caused by?		
Sickness and lack of access to medicines	26%	332
Starvation	14%	179
Harsh weather/lack of adequate shelter	13%	160
Vehicle accident	11%	137
Excessive physical abuse	10%	122
Dehydration	7%	89
Suffocation	7%	89
Shot or stabbed	6%	75
Sexual abuse	5%	69
Other	2%	25

Who did this? (death)		
Broker/Smuggler	50%	98
Police	29%	56
Other	16%	32
Local community	5%	9

A 2016 Sahar Foundation and ISSP report further notes that, travelling west from Ajdabiya on the North-western

route, migrants now face the risk of being abducted or killed by militia loyal to the 'Islamic State' (IS) group. According to the report, numerous migrants and refugees have been executed by IS in recent years. In March 2015, a group of more than 200 migrants and refugees, including Eritreans, Somalis, and Ethiopians, was travelling north from Ajdabiya when they were held up near Sirte by an IS checkpoint. Several days later, some of the migrants, most of whom were reportedly Ethiopian nationals, were beheaded by IS.¹⁰⁰

Physical and sexual abuse

Other risks to migrants and refugees on the smuggling journeys are sexual and physical abuse. Human Rights Watch has extensively documented the physical and sexual abuse of both male and female smuggled migrants travelling from the Horn of Africa.¹⁰¹

Interviews conducted with migrants for the 4Mi project indicate that sexual abuse is common on the major smuggling routes out of the Horn of Africa. Seven percent (n=612) of interviewed female migrants, and 9 percent (n=734) of interviewed male migrants reported that they either experienced or witnessed sexual abuse during the smuggling journey. Forty percent (n=1,034) of the interviewed migrants reported that the perpetrator of the sexual abuse was the smuggler, while border guards were responsible for 18 percent (n=458) of sexual assaults, and a similar percentage (17 percent; n=451) of sexual assaults were by committed by police. Most incidents of sexual abuse were identified by interviewed migrants as occurring on the North-western route.¹⁰²

Sexual abuse

Sex	Did you experience or witness any sexual abuse in this country?		
	No	Yes	Total
Female	No	27%	2,260
	Yes	7%	612
Male	No	58%	4,903
	Yes	9%	734

Who committed the sexual abuse?	Percentage	Number
Smuggler/broker or trafficker/criminal	40%	1,034
Border guards	18%	458
Police	17%	451
Local community	13%	328
Migrant	7%	183
Military	5%	127
Other	1%	23
Immigration	0%	3

“ This is why I left the job. The smugglers don't have heart. They are heartless, they beat the migrants, they rape females.”

35-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Egypt. November 2014.

In the RMMS report, *Blinded by Hope*, 70 percent of interviewed Ethiopian migrants who had returned from Yemen reported either witnessing or experiencing “extreme physical abuse, including burning, gunshot wounds and suspension of food for days”.¹⁰³ Migrants travelling on the Eastern route also report being physically or sexually assaulted during their journey.¹⁰⁴

“ I left the job because it's very risky, and I didn't want to see my people tortured. I always fight with the Aswan smugglers because of the physical harm and rape that they commit. They beg me to be with them again but I've decided no more smuggling. I even advise my community to not use illegal migration.”

35-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Egypt. November 2014.

The 4Mi interviews with migrants have also identified cases of physical abuse of migrants on all smuggling routes from the Horn of Africa. The types of physical abuse reported include verbal abuse, denying migrants food or water, confinement, deprivation of sleep, and stone throwing, amongst others. As illustrated below, 28 percent (n=2,416) of interviewed migrants reported either experiencing or witnessing physical abuse during their journey. 41 percent (n=1,790) of the interviewed migrants reported that smugglers or traffickers were responsible for the physical abuse, and that police were responsible for a further 20 percent (n=877) of abuse, and border guards for 15 percent (n=684) of physical abuse cases.

100 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. *Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route*, p. 27. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

101 Human Rights Watch (2014). "I wanted to Lay Down and Die": Trafficking and Torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0214_ForUpload_1.pdf (last accessed 05/09/2017).

102 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), 2017. *Smuggled South*, p. 26. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf?platform=hootsuite> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

103 RMMS, 2014. *Blinded by Hope*, June 2014. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms_publications/Blinded_by_Hope.pdf> (last accessed: 12/06/2017).

104 RMMS, 2017. *Djibouti Country Statement: Addressing Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking in East Africa* (unpublished report), p. 1.

Physical abuse

Did you experience or witness any physical abuse in this country?		
No	72%	6,103
Yes	28%	2,416

Who committed the physical abuse?		
Smuggler/broker or trafficker/ criminal	41%	1,790
Police	20%	877
Border guards	15%	684
Local community	14%	624
Military	4%	189
Migrant	4%	176
Other	2%	70
Immigration	0%	7

Control, extortion, and trafficking in persons

Smuggled migrants and refugees travelling within and from the Horn of Africa are often also subject to being controlled by smugglers and other persons. This may involve being threatened with violence, having personal and travel documents confiscated, or even being physically restrained.

4Mi data indicate that 36 percent (n=3,092) of interviewed migrants reported being controlled by the smuggler or another person. 24 percent (n=1,527) were reportedly controlled through threats of violence; 23 percent (n=1,450) through the use of force; 22 percent (n=1,388) through being physically restrained; and 15 percent (n=979) through the confiscation of their passport or other personal documents.

Were you in some way controlled or prevented from leaving by the Broker-Smuggler or another party?		
No	64%	5,426
Yes	36%	3,092

How were you controlled?		
Threat of violence	24%	1,527
Use of force	23%	1,450
Physically restrained	22%	1,388
Maintained control of my passport identification documents	15%	979
Blackmail	11%	716
Other	5%	350

Other significant protection risks for migrants travelling on the major smuggling routes within and out of the Horn of Africa include kidnapping and detention while crossing the

desert, and also while crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. An increasingly significant problem for smuggled migrants and refugees is extortion by smugglers, which often involves migrants being detained in ‘safe houses’ and forced to pay to be released or to continue the journey. This extortion often involves the migrant being tortured to place pressure on the migrant and his/her family at home to transfer a ransom for the migrant’s release.¹⁰⁵

“ Arrest and kidnapping by militia groups in Libya, Sudan and Malawi. Females can be raped and detained. But we don’t tell those threats to our clients.”

42-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. August 2015.

“ Arrest and kidnapping are most cases we encounter. Sometimes migrants are robbed, female migrants are raped. Risks are too many but people decided to be on the move.”

39-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. March 2017.

4Mi data indicate that 13 percent of interviewed migrants (n=1,119) reported being held against their will with a demand for ransom at some point during the irregular journey. 60 percent (n=920) of the interviewed migrants reported that the person who held them against their will was the smuggler, while 13 percent (n=205) were held by state officials, and 27 percent (n=408) by other individuals or groups.

Were you ever held against your will with a demand for ransom?		
No	87%	7,396
Yes	13%	1,119

Who held you?		
Brokers or smugglers	60%	920
Other	27%	408
State officials	13%	205

Human traffickers are another key threat to migrants and refugees travelling within and from the Horn of Africa on the major smuggling routes. The available literature suggests that while migrant smugglers are not necessarily responsible for the exploitation and trafficking of migrants

¹⁰⁵ Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 34. Available at <http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

and refugees, there is often at least some level of collusion between some smugglers and traffickers.

Human traffickers are particularly active in Eastern Sudan, in the area surrounding the Eritrean border. In this region smugglers are known to ‘sell’ migrants to a third party for up to USD 7,000. The third party may then either force the migrant into forced labor, or force the migrant to pay a ransom to secure release for onward travel.¹⁰⁶

“ There are traffickers called Rashaida in the middle of the desert. They are pastoralists. They live there. We know at what time they are going to come. And we calculate that and will try to escape...They don't usually hurt the smugglers but they hurt the migrants. They take some of the migrants or rob them. If they take the migrants they hurt them.”

27-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Egypt. October 2014.

“ The route is long and tedious, and criminal groups are another challenge.”

41-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. December 2015.

Smuggling on the North-western route to Europe is also increasingly linked with trafficking in persons.¹⁰⁷ A 2016 report by the Sahan Foundation and ISSP notes that, particularly in the crossing between Sudan and Libya, many smuggled migrants are at serious risk of harm, including being sold to ransom collectors and human traffickers in Sudan if the migrants are unable to make the first payment for smuggling services.¹⁰⁸

Corrupt officials may be involved in the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons. Corrupt officials may either facilitate migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons by turning a blind eye to it, or they may be involved more directly, by accepting bribes for the safe passage of irregular migrants across national borders, and even profit from the exploitation and trafficking of migrants and refugees.

“ It's admittedly becoming very challenging and difficult in the recent past. However, the more difficult smuggling is, the more we charge migrants...We have to do everything to evade any foreseeable arrest and unnecessary costs that we encounter in our journey down to South Africa. Nevertheless, when avoiding the police becomes impossible, we take the bull by the horns and pay them what they deserve for them to help us get away with it. There's nothing that money can't buy under the sun.”

49-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. February 2015.

4Mi data indicate that 27 percent (n=2,320) of interviewed migrants reported that government officials were involved, paid or rewarded for facilitating their irregular journeys. In most cases (37 percent; n=1,707) interviewed migrants reported that the police were involved in smuggling crimes. A further 20 percent (n=942) reported that border guards were involved, and 17 percent (n=797) reported that other Immigration officials were involved. The majority (51 percent; n=2,211) of interviewed migrants reported that these state authority personnel received bribes from smugglers and traffickers.

Were government officials (immigration officials, coastguard, military, police, etc.) unofficially involved, paid or rewarded		
No	73%	6,200
Yes	27%	2,320

Who was it that was involved?		
Police	37%	1,707
Border guards	20%	942
Immigration	17%	797
Smuggler/broker or trafficker/ criminal	17%	773
Military	4%	188
Local community	4%	187
Migrant	1%	36
Other	0%	10

106 The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (2017). Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe, p. 21. Available at <<http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/global-initiative-human-smuggling-from-the-horn-of-africa-may-2017-web.pdf>> (last accessed 04/09/2017).

107 Altai Consulting (2017). Leaving Libya: Rapid Assessment of Municipalities of Departures of Migrants in Libya, p. 34. Available at <<http://www.altaiconsulting.com/insights/leaving-libya-rapid-assessment-municipalities-departure-migrants-libya/>> (last accessed 05/09/2017).

108 Sahan Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP), 2016. Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, p. 10. Available at: <<http://igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/policies/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route>> (last accessed 01/06/2017).

In what way were they involved or rewarded?		
Received bribes	51%	2,211
Turned blind eye to trafficking	15%	635
Extortion	10%	421
Sexual abuse of migrants	7%	309
Returned escaped migrants to traffickers criminals	6%	277
Directly involved in operation of human smuggling or trafficking	6%	242
Sold or handed over to traffickers/ criminals	4%	188
Other	1%	60

Recent policy responses to migrant smuggling

The national and regional policy responses to migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa region have in recent years focused primarily on enhancing border control agencies' capacity to prevent irregular migration. Under this approach, national authorities have collaborated with their Horn of Africa neighbours, and counterparts in destination countries, on strategies to prevent migrants from irregularly crossing national borders. Activities have included the capacity building of immigration officials, police and other relevant national authorities to identify and apprehend irregular migrants before they cross national border crossings, to detain (in detention centres) irregular migrants while their asylum claims are processed, and hold them in detention centres prior to returning them to their home countries, and on activities to arrest migrants smugglers and prosecute them for migrant smuggling and related offences.

The policy response in Europe to migrant smuggling from the Horn of Africa has also been driven almost exclusively by a border control agenda. On 18 May 2015, the EU Council approved the Crisis Management Concept for a military operation to disrupt the business model of migrant smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean. On 22 June 2015, the EU launched a military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED). The aim of this operation is to identify, capture, and dispose of vessels and enabling assets that are used, or suspected of being used, by migrant smugglers or human traffickers.

The law enforcement response to migrant smuggling has led, in some cases, to unanticipated consequences, including an increased number of migrant fatalities. For example, Operation Sophia, which involved the destruction of maritime smuggling vessels, did not result in the anticipated decrease in maritime smuggling from Libya

to Europe but, rather, led smugglers to use unseaworthy vessels, and a peak in migrant deaths by drowning.¹⁰⁹

Migrant smuggling legislation in the region remains patchy and inadequately implemented. Furthermore, while under international law, smuggled migrants should be protected, under national legislation, migrants are often criminalised for crossing national borders irregularly, including those who cross a national border in order to seek asylum. Only some countries in the region have signed and ratified the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have either signed or ratified the Protocol; however, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan have neither signed nor ratified the Protocol. There is, therefore, an overall lack of adherence to legal frameworks on the smuggling of migrants in the Horn of Africa region.

Various regional initiatives have attempted to develop a coherent, long-term response to migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa region but have, to date, only met with limited success. The Khartoum Declaration of 16 October 2014 launched the Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants. It outlined member states' commitments to ratify international conventions on migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons; address the socio-economic causes of migration; strengthen law enforcement efforts, and cooperation with international organisations that are interested in developing states' capacities to combat migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons; and improve efforts to protect victims.

On 28 November 2014, Ministers from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Egypt, and Tunisia met with their counterparts from the 28 European Union (EU) countries as well as the European and African Union Commissioners responsible for migration and development, and the EU High Representative. Collaboratively, they launched the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, also known as the Khartoum Process, which aims to combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants from the Horn of Africa to Europe. The Khartoum Process provides a political forum for facilitating the practical measures that must be achieved at international, national, and regional levels to effectively combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The Khartoum Process replaced the African Horn of Africa Initiative that had previously been the key forum for dialogue on migration and related issues. The Process has an 'international protection' pillar, but the focus of the Process remains on root causes and ending irregular migration, rather than providing clear protection responses. Furthermore, the transition between the two initiatives has resulted in a shift away from development-centric interventions aimed at improving migration management

¹⁰⁹ House of Lords (2017). Operation Sophia: A Failed Mission, p. 2. Available at <<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/lddeucom/5/5.pdf>> (last accessed 03/09/2017).

in the region towards more security-focused policies to promote border control.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

Irregular migration within and from the Horn of Africa region is increasingly complex, mixed, and larger in volume. Despite the efforts of the international community, through the development of regional initiatives and other activities, irregular Horn of Africa migrants remain under-protected. Smuggled migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa are increasingly subject to abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. All the while, the patience of host and transit countries of smuggled migrants and refugees has continued to diminish, with 'Afrophobic' attacks increasing in number and frequency.

The drivers causing migrants and refugees to migrate are multiple, and often interlinked. Political, economic, and humanitarian motivations for migration continue to intersect, encouraging asylum seekers, refugees, and economic and other migrants to move. Horn of Africa migrants travelling to their destinations for economic opportunity purposes may also be migrating because of environmental factors such as drought, or fleeing situations of conflict or oppressive regimes. The flows of migrants within and from the Horn of Africa region are therefore increasingly mixed, with smugglers transporting, at the same time, economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

Smuggled migrants and refugees face an increasing number of protection risks. They face high levels of abuse from smugglers, as well as criminal gangs, some state authorities, local communities, and traffickers, who all seek to profit, financially and in other ways, from the migrants and refugees. While an increasing number of campaigns document the exploitation and abuse of smuggled migrants and refugees from the Horn of Africa, these appear to have only a negligible effect on the desire of Horn of African migrants to migrate.

An effective response to addressing irregular migration in the Horn of Africa region is one that will only be achieved in partnership between Horn of Africa governments and the international community. A shift away from a purely law enforcement approach to migrant smuggling is required. Renewed efforts to invest in regular migration channels are paramount. Policy responses should be based on the understanding that irregular migration flows are likely to continue in the medium-term and may increase in the future. Responses to migrant smuggling within and from the Horn of Africa must be nuanced, and tailored to reflect an understanding of the complex reasons for which migrants and refugees are increasingly on the move in such great numbers.

¹¹⁰ Reitano (2016). *The Khartoum Process: A Sustainable Response to Human Smuggling and Trafficking?* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.



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 to people in mixed migration flows in the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea in Yemen. The Steering Committee members for the RMMS include UNHCR, IOM, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), INTERSOS, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, IGAD, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union. The RMMS is a regional hub aiming to provide information and data management; analysis and research; support and coordination; and support to policy development and dialogue. 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.

The content of this paper is entirely the responsibility of the RMMS East Africa & Yemen and the authors and in no way could be taken to reflect the position of its hosting agency the Danish Refugee Council, other members of the Steering Committee or any of the donors who have contributed to this paper by supporting the RMMS and the 4Mi project.

Cover photo: © Sven Torfinn | Niger, Sahara. Truck loaded with about 150 migrants bound for Libya or Algeria, making a stop for repairs between Agadez and the border.

See our websites www.regionalmms.org and <http://4mi.regionalmms.org>

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