



**MMC East Africa
& Yemen**

QUARTER 2 2019



Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: East Africa & Yemen

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the East Africa and Yemen region (EAY). The core countries of focus for this region are Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

The Mixed Migration Centre is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration.

For more information on the MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel — often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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Michael Kirby Smith (2013)

Ethiopian migrants outside the Migrant Response Centre in Haradh,
Yemen, May 2013.

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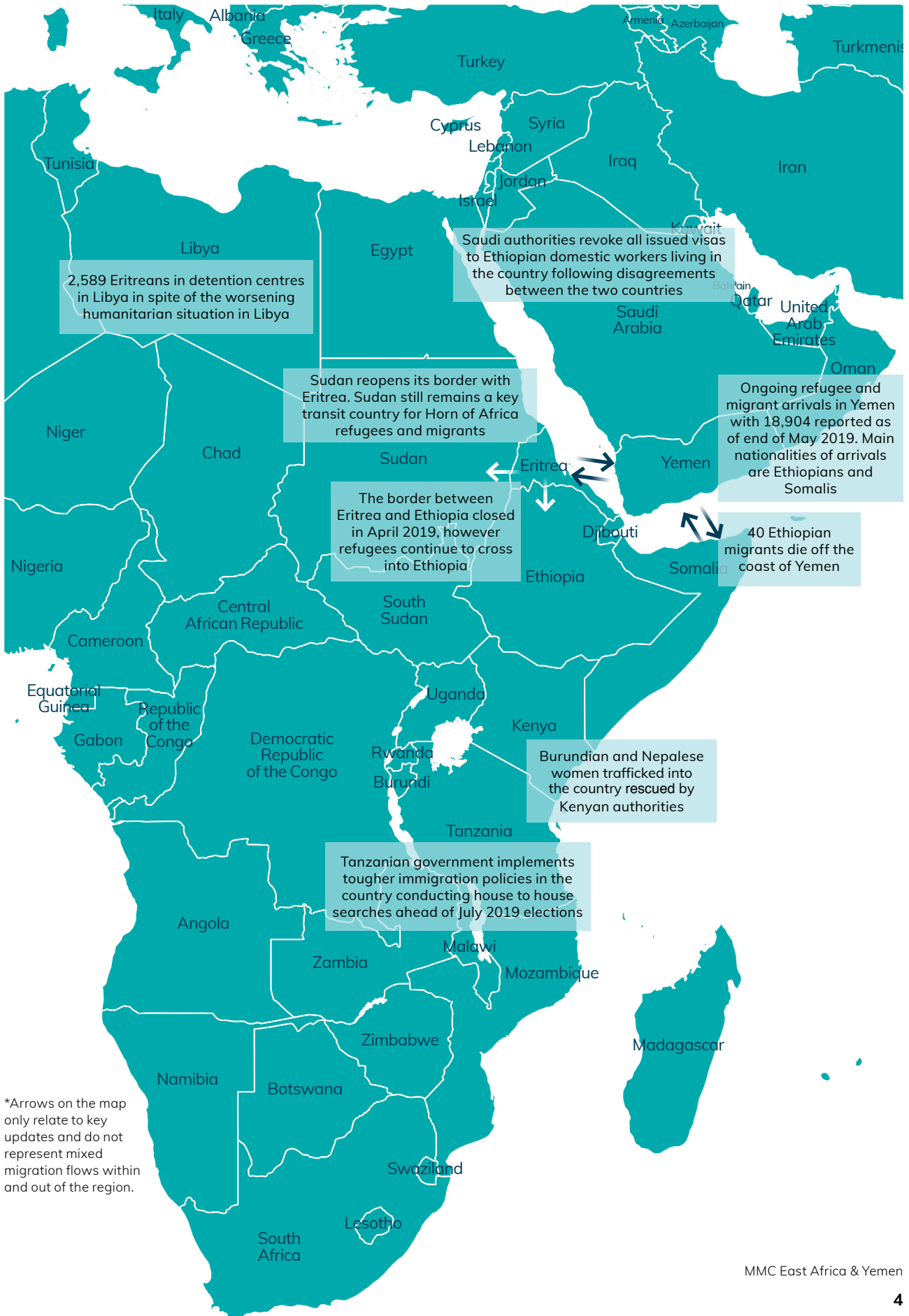
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Quarter 2 - 2019

Key Updates

- **Increased flows through Somalia:** In May, the number of people migrating in and out of Somalia (mainly to Yemen, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti) increased by 41%. These movements are largely made up of Somali, Ethiopian and Djiboutian refugees and migrants.
- **High arrivals in Yemen:** In April 2019, 18,904 Ethiopians and Somalis were recorded arriving in Yemen (this is in addition to 5,229 Yemenis returning to Yemen from Saudi Arabia). In addition, small numbers of Nigerian migrants started to arrive in Yemen on the Red Sea route in April. By the end of May, the total number arrivals to Yemen for 2019 reached 74,333, in addition to 24,795 Yemeni returns.
- **Migrant deaths at sea:** In April, at least 40 Ethiopians drown off the Yemen coast. The maritime route from East Africa to Yemen remains highly dangerous for refugees and migrants.
- **Ongoing protection abuses of refugees and migrants in Libya:** Though arrivals in Europe via the Central Mediterranean Route have slowed (less than 50 East Africans arriving in 2019), many East African refugees and migrants remain trapped in Libya facing detention, harsh conditions and human rights abuses.
- **Ethiopia-Eritrea border closure:** Despite improvements in Ethiopia-Eritrea relations and the opening of borders in 2018, borders were closed in April. However, the movement of Eritreans into Ethiopia continued this quarter with as many as 300 people per day crossing the border.
- **Border between Sudan and Eritrea reopened:** During the last quarter, Sudan reopened its borders with Eritrea, following high level government talks.
- **Human trafficking in Kenya:** Kenya remains a key transit country for trafficked Nepalese, Ugandan, Ethiopian and Burundian nationals on their way to southern Africa. Crackdowns on migration and trafficking of migrants in Kenya happened this quarter.
- **Ethiopians detained in Yemen:** Ethiopians face confinement in detention centres in Yemen.

Regional Overview*



Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Mixed Migration within East Africa

Policy debates on mixed migration

Policy responses to mixed migration continue being addressed through both regional and Africa-wide efforts. In June, IGAD held a [validation meeting](#) to validate the National Consultative Reports, the study on benefits and barriers of free movement, the Draft Protocol and the Roadmap for the implementation of the Protocol. The main themes of the Protocol include labour mobility, right of residence, right of establishment, disaster induced displacement, and vulnerable groups such as refugees and pastoralists. There are also plans to schedule working missions to the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) Secretariats to learn best practices.

Similarly, in a bid to widen conversations around forced displacement and mixed migration in the region, IGAD and the Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) held an “International Scientific Conference on Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the East and Horn of Africa” [conference](#) in Nairobi that brought together researchers and academics, policy makers, practitioners and development partners to interrogate the relationship between forced displacement and mixed migration. There was a general consensus that sound legal frameworks and policies for the protection and empowerment of vulnerable populations need reliable data and scientific research.

In the last quarter, UNODC in March 2019 organized a 2-day workshop for the Uganda Task Force on Trafficking in Persons and the Counter Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee of Kenya. Trafficking of Ugandan nationals through Kenya is not uncommon. There have been several reported cases involving the trafficking of underage Ugandan girls to Oman for [sex slavery](#) and exploitation and [child labour](#). The aim of this meeting was to [promote bilateral cooperation](#) between Kenya and Uganda on matters of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Both countries identified new ways for formal and informal actions to enhance bilateral cooperation to counter these crimes.

Ethiopian migrants convicted in Kenya

In May 2019, 500 Ethiopian nationals serving prison sentences in Kenya after being [convicted of illegal entry](#) were reported to be repatriated back to Ethiopia after they had planned to use Kenya as a transit point en route to South Africa. Other reports indicate that 22 Ethiopian nationals were arrested in May 2019 on their way to Nairobi as they were headed for South Africa. These migrants reported having paid smugglers to transport them through [Moyale \(on the Ethiopian-Kenyan border\) to the Tanzanian border](#). Reports indicate that at the Moyale border point, document checks are lighter than at other border points, making it easier for Ethiopians to cross over. Interviews conducted by the Daily Nation show that migrants can pay around USD 500 to travel from Nairobi to beyond the Tanzanian border [without being intercepted](#) by police officers. This fee is meant to cover bribes and fake documentation. The interviews further point to a human trafficking syndicate involving rogue immigration officials, corrupt police officers and public transport operators with these networks stretching beyond Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and Asia. Public transport operators are said to charge between USD 580 and 800 to ferry these migrants.

Changing relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia

In April 2019, Eritrea allegedly shut all border crossings with Ethiopia (which had been reopened in December 2018). While the Eritrean government has not provided a reason why it has closed borders on its side, its Ethiopian counterpart argues that it had not been notified of these closures beforehand. Despite the closure of borders between the two countries, Eritrean refugees continue to arrive in Ethiopia, approximately 250-300 people per day. Somali refugees living in Eritrea are also joining these flows into Ethiopia with sources approximating that [around 5,000 Somali refugees](#) have arrived in Ethiopia as of June 2019.

Increasing migrant flows through Somalia

During this quarter, high numbers of people were recorded moving in and out of Somalia. According to IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, there [were](#) 32,933 movements of Ethiopian, Somali and Djiboutian migrants observed in April which marked a 41% increase in comparison to flows the previous month. This includes both inward and outward movements to mainly Yemen, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti with outward movements accounting for 61% of the flows. In May, a reduced number of 24,018 people were observed at flow monitoring points. The change can be linked to the changes in drivers – in April more people reported conflict as primary reason for movement and in May seasonal movement was the primary reason for those moving.

Notably, the [increase in flows was identified in Bosasso towards Yemen](#) and this is believed to be due to the “perceived reduction in border controls and coast guard operations during Ramadan and the conclusion of the anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking operation conducted by the Government of Puntland”. According to IOM reports, 59% of these movements were voluntary and 30% forced (conflict was the primary reason for forced movement) and 11% unknown.

Human trafficking in and through Kenya

Kenya remains a key transit country for East African migrants travelling to Southern Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. In April 2019, Kenyan police arrested [Nepalese women](#) at a bar in Nyali, Mombasa. These women were allegedly being sexually exploited at the bar and were often given a monthly target that they had to meet. Most of these women reported having left their homes in Nepal in search of better opportunities to support their families when they met “agents” that told them of job opportunities in Kenya. However, upon arrival in Kenya their passports would be confiscated and they would be held together in one apartment only being allowed outside at night when they are chaperoned to the club. The Kenya-based tycoon reported to be responsible for bringing in these women has been arrested and charged with three counts of trafficking, promoting human trafficking, and interfering with travel documents through seizing the girls’ passports.

Crackdowns targeting the perpetrators and victims of human trafficking are becoming more common, as the prevalence of trafficking in Kenya increases. Practitioners of anti-trafficking organisations in Kenya have argued that a lack of tough rules for foreigners getting into the country has made trafficking more prevalent as a majority of these people are brought into Kenya using [tourist visas and temporary travel documents](#), often end up being exploited in bars and brothels. Media also reported police raids in the last quarter that rescued 25 [Burundian women](#) between 24 and 33 years old in transit to Asian countries and 2 Burundian men on their way to [Saudi Arabia](#).

Kenyan migrant workers in the Gulf

Reports indicate that there are an estimated 100,000 Kenyan nationals currently working in Gulf countries mainly Dubai, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In response to the numerous cases of abuse reported by Kenyan migrant workers, the Kenyan government in May 2019 stated that it would [intensify a crackdown](#) on rogue employment agencies responsible for organizing for Kenyan workers to travel to the Gulf countries. This crackdown would include signing of labour pacts with countries in the Middle East, vetting of all local private employment recruitment agencies, and posting of labour attaches.

Tougher immigration rules in Tanzania

Tanzania, like Kenya, remains a transit country for many people intending to migrate to Southern Africa including Ethiopians, Somalis, Rwandans, Burundians and Mozambicans. At the beginning of the year, the Home Affairs Minister Kangi Lugola ordered that immigration officials conduct [house-to-house searches](#) in Kagera and Kigoma regions which border DR Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. It remains unclear whether this is politically motivated by the upcoming civic elections in those two regions in July 2019. [12,600 migrants were arrested](#) in various parts of the country between January and November 2018, of which 6,918 have been repatriated and 2,499 charged in court for violation of immigration laws.

The Eastern Route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen

The Eastern Route refers to movement of refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa towards Yemen and the Gulf countries. The main profile of people on this route are Ethiopians and Somalis. Given the ongoing humanitarian situation in Yemen, as in previous quarters, bi-directional flows continue, with in addition to the ongoing movement of Ethiopians and Somalis to Yemen, also Yemenis and returning Ethiopians and Somalis going from Yemen to the Horn of Africa. For a majority of refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa, Yemen is a transit country on their way to Saudi Arabia.

High number of arrivals in Yemen

This quarter has seen some of the highest monthly averages of East African refugees and migrants entering Yemen in recent years. [IOM estimates](#) that 18,320 refugees and migrants arrived in April 2019 and 18,904 people arrived in May 2019. Monthly averages for the same period in 2018 were below 12,000 arrivals [per month](#). The total number of refugees and migrants arriving in Yemen by May 2019 was 74,333, surpassing figures for a similar period in 2018 (between [January and June 2018](#), 50,339 arrivals were recorded). If trends continue, arrivals for 2019 will far exceed the estimated [150,000 refugees and migrants](#) who arrived in Yemen last year.

Ethiopians make up the largest (and fastest growing) population of arrivals at around 92%, and Somalis account for around 8% with slight variance from month to month. Recently, small numbers of Nigerians have also been recorded on this route. Yemenis continue to return from Saudi Arabia as well, with 24,795 returns arriving in Yemen in 2019.

Many of these refugees and migrants intend to transit through Yemen on route to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Despite the dangerous sea journey from departure points in Djibouti and Somalia, ongoing conflict in Yemen, and harsh conditions in [Yemen](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#), East African arrivals to Yemen have been steadily increasing since 2006 (when data became available). [Interviews with](#) refugees and migrants in Djibouti and Yemen show that perceived economic opportunities in Saudi Arabia typically outweigh the risks of the journey, and they feel that migration may be their only chance for a better life. High unemployment rates and political insecurity are still major drivers for [Ethiopians](#) to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. The challenging [political situation](#) in Ethiopia, and the largest population of [internally displaced people](#) in the world could further stress limited services and economic opportunities at home, which may push more refugees and would-be migrants to leave Ethiopia in search of jobs and security.

Challenging conditions for Ethiopians living in Saudi Arabia

[Reports](#) indicate that 1,400 Ethiopians were released from prison in Saudi Arabia in May 2019. Although the Ethiopian foreign ministry did not mention a reason for the release, it did indicate that these nationals would be returned home. It's [estimated](#) that 500,000 Ethiopians live in Saudi Arabia. With many Ethiopians migrating to Saudi Arabia in search of better economic opportunities, the recent move by the Saudi Arabian government to [revoke visa for Ethiopian housemaids](#) came as a surprise. The Saudi Ministry of Labour and Social Development has additionally cancelled all work visas already issued for Ethiopia saying there were

deep differences with its Ethiopian counterpart over wordings in work contracts and the Ethiopian side allegedly refusing to set up a centre for health check-ups for the maids.

In March 2017, Saudi authorities announced a crackdown on undocumented migrants, and [IOM estimates](#) that 260,000 Ethiopians living in Saudi Arabia returned to Ethiopia between April 2017 and March 2019. Data collected from registered returnees between May 2017 and February 2019 show that small numbers [still plan to return to Saudi](#) Arabia. The high numbers of Ethiopians that continue to arrive in Yemen indicate that mixed migration to Saudi Arabia from Ethiopia will continue, and possibly increase as legal channels now may become harder to access.

Somali refugees seek support to leave Yemen

With support from UNHCR, nearly 4,300 Somali refugees have returned to Somalia as of May 2019. Yemen is still home to nearly 250,000 Somali refugees, yet as the situation in Yemen continues to deteriorate, UNHCR reports that more and more refugees are coming forward to be helped to return home.

Dangerous sea journeys for Ethiopians

In April 2019, at least 40 Ethiopians [drowned](#) in the Red Sea as they were ferried on a boat to Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The accident happened near the Yemeni coast as victims were heading to Saudi Arabia. This follows drownings in January 2019 that killed 58 people, most of whom were Ethiopians.

Ethiopians Confined in Yemen

Over 2,000 migrants, mainly from Ethiopia, were rounded up by security forces in Yemen in April 2019 and confined to a [soccer stadium in Aden](#) in harsh conditions. These included 1,789 adult men, 389 boys and 28 girls under the age of 18. Interviews with the migrants largely indicate that they were in Yemen with the intention of traveling on to Saudi Arabia. Throughout April and May, more migrants arrived in the stadium, likely after receiving news that [voluntary humanitarian returns](#) (VHR) were being organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) who had access to the facility. By the end of May, 2,457 people remained in harsh conditions in the stadium and VHR efforts were in process.

A small but notable number of women and girls are recorded as arriving in Yemen every month. However, the lack of women being recorded in the detention camps raises concerns about the whereabouts and safety of women on the move through Yemen. Women along [this route](#) face extreme protection risks – including sexual abuse and kidnapping – thus the total absence of adult women in these facilities is alarming. There have been no specific number of adult women provided by agencies on the ground, but the protection of girls in the facility remains a focus for IOM.

Also during this quarter, at least 60 Ethiopian migrants were reported stranded in Aden, Yemen in April and were seeking help to be [repatriated back home](#). In May, IOM began to repatriate them back to Addis Ababa with [over 200 migrants](#) having been repatriated by the end of the month. There have been concerns raised that some of the migrants are being forcibly recruited to fight in Yemen's civil war with the Yemeni military sources accusing the Houthi militias of paying USD 100 a month to recruited migrants.

The Northern Route towards North Africa & Europe

The Northern Route refers to movements of refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa (mainly Eritreans and Somalis) towards North Africa and, for some, onwards to Europe passing through Sudan, Egypt and Libya.

Border between Sudan and Eritrea reopened

In February, Sudan's then President Omar El-Bashir announced the [opening of the border](#) with Eritrea, a year after the Sudanese government accused Eritrea of supporting attacks against his regime. In June 2019, the Head of the Transitional Military Council of Sudan and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki held talks in Asmara which confirmed the move to open borders.

Sudan is a major transit country for refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa travelling to Europe, with a large number of Eritreans passing through Sudan on their way to North Africa. [Yet Sudan](#) remains one of the most dangerous places for refugees and migrants. Harsh conditions, insecurity and strong smuggling networks enabled by corruption of certain state officials leave migrants vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. MMC's [4Mi project](#) shows that refugees and migrants passing through Sudan face the most serious protection risks – and are subjected to physical and sexual abuse, [kidnapping](#), robbery, and death. The open borders with Eritrea could encourage more migration through Sudan on their way to Libya and for some onwards to Europe. However, worsening conditions for refugees and migrants in Libya and record low numbers of arrivals into Europe could put Eritreans (and other people on the move through Sudan) at [greater risk as smugglers and traffickers look for new ways](#) to make money, including kidnapping and extortion.

East African refugees and migrants in Libya

In May, UNHCR reported that it had [evacuated 149 refugees and asylum seekers](#) from Tripoli, Libya and brought them to safety in Italy. These refugees and asylum seekers were from Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia. A majority of these were said to suffer from malnourishment. Prior to this, 62 urban refugees including those of Sudanese and Somali nationality had been transferred from Tripoli to UNHCR's Emergency Transit Centre in Romania. In total, there are an estimated 7,800 Eritrean, 3,277 Somali and 1,227 Ethiopian [refugees and asylum seekers](#) in Libya.

In May 2019, the Eritrean government deemed unacceptable the decision by UNHCR to [send Eritreans to a Niger camp under a third-country resettlement scheme](#). It further stated that 50 Eritreans had returned home voluntarily from Libya with more scheduled to return and that there was need for an urgent ratification of eligibility guidelines used by UN in resettlement. The Eritrean government further protested stating that UNHCR undertook “unwarranted acts to hamper GOE efforts to bring home its citizens stranded in Libya”.

NB. There were 3,898 refugees and migrants and migrants from East Africa living in [detention](#) in Libya as of mid-June 2019 (2,589 Eritreans and 614 Sudanese, 496 Somalis, 161 Ethiopians and 38 South Sudanese).

The Southern Route towards South Africa

Despite receiving limited attention in comparison to other migratory routes out of the region, south-south migration from the Horn of Africa towards countries in Southern Africa, notably South Africa, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique remains prevalent.

Crackdown on migrants in South Africa

In an attempt to crack down on undocumented migrants, the South African ANC government announced its plans to [enforce tough measures](#) against those who crossed the country's borders illegally. Although some factions view this as a xenophobic move, the government insists that this is not the case but instead welcomes those who enter the country legally. The move against undocumented migrants comes after comments made by government officials that specific nationalities were involved in drugs and violent crimes and putting a [strain on social services](#). Soon after, the country's Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said that they could consider [using drones](#) in an effort to keep the country's borders safe.

Highlighted New Research and Reports



[Fatal Journeys Volume 4: Missing Migrant Children](#)

IOM | June 2019

IOM released its fourth 'Fatal Journeys' report, focused on missing migrant children. This report looks at vulnerabilities of migrant and forcibly displaced children, legal obligations of States with regards to child migrant deaths and disappearances, and ethical considerations surrounding research on missing migrant children. This report features an overview of MMC's work interviewing children migrating on the route towards Southern Africa.



[“No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate”: Vulnerability of children on the move in the Horn of Africa](#)

UNICEF | June 2019

This UNICEF report highlights research into children on the move, including child IDPs, child refugees, undocumented child migrants, child returnees among other profiles. The analyses the different push and pull factors for these children, their vulnerabilities on the move and existing frameworks for responding to vulnerabilities for practitioners and local authorities..

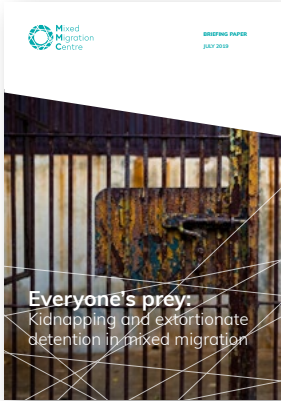


[Migration, Development, and Global Governance: From Crisis toward Consolidation](#)

Migration Policy Institute (MPI) & GIZ | June 2019

This brief looks at the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration and the relationship between migration and development. The report also looks at migration drivers, labour mobility and legal pathways for both low-skilled and high-skilled migrants, and the governance of international migration including humanitarian protection and return and reintegration.

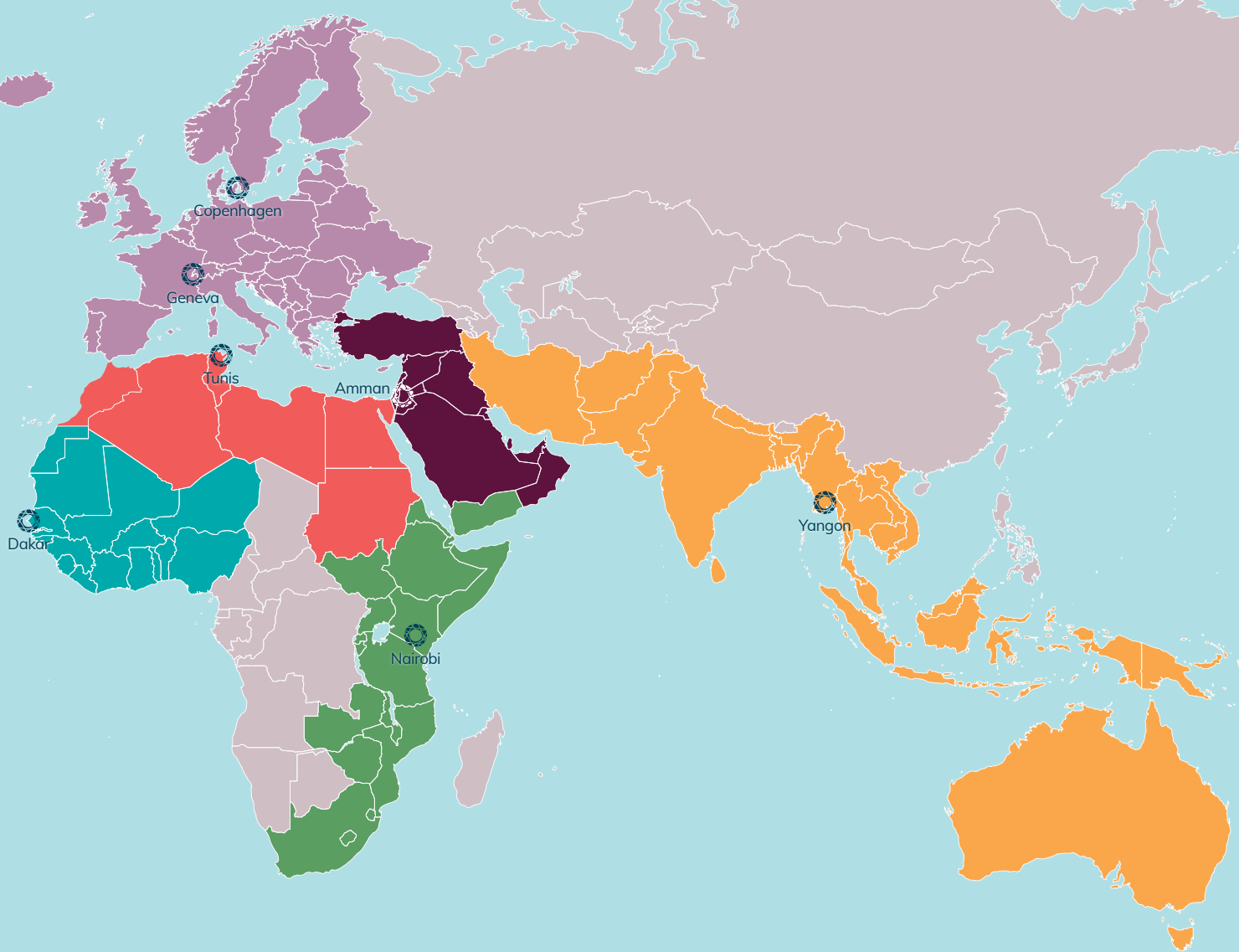
MMC publications



[Everyone's prey: Kidnapping and extortionate detention in mixed migration](#)

Christopher Horwood and Roberto Forin | May 2019

This Briefing Paper draws on published research and 4Mi primary data to deliver, in the first section, some general and global observations and case studies. The second part of the paper offers a deeper exploration of experiences from the Horn of Africa, using interviews with and surveys of refugees and migrants from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia to illustrate the role of kidnapping and extortionate detention in mixed migration flows along three routes out of the region.



The MMC is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

The MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and global and regional MMC teams are hosted by the DRC offices in Amman, Copenhagen, Dakar, Geneva, Nairobi, Tunis and Yangon.

For more information visit:

mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

