



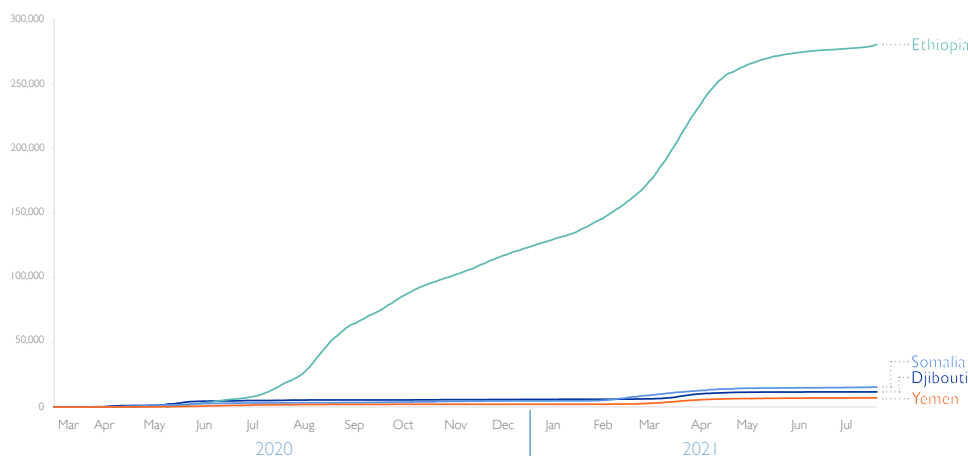
In Yemen, IOM provides emergency food, health and protection assistance. © IOM 2020

## BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 outbreak has restricted global mobility, whilst heightening the risk of exploitation of vulnerable populations. This report provides a snapshot of the **COVID-19 epidemiological situation** and **mobility restrictions**, and of the **current migration trends** along the Eastern Corridor migration route, in addition to an analysis of the impact that movement restrictions have had in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen. Moreover, it provides **information on the main protection concerns for migrants** and **assistance provided**, and **COVID-19 risk mitigation measures**. This report utilizes data collected through IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs), Migrant Response Centres (MRCs),<sup>1</sup> Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) data, as well as anecdotal information provided by IOM team members working in the region.

## EPIDEMIOLOGICAL UPDATE AND RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK

Incidence Trend of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases as of 31 July 2021



	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Somalia	Yemen
Confirmed cases	11,651	280,365	15,403	7,061
Deaths	156	4,385	811	1,375
Recoveries	11,490	263,500	7,533	-
Active cases	5	12,480	7,059	-

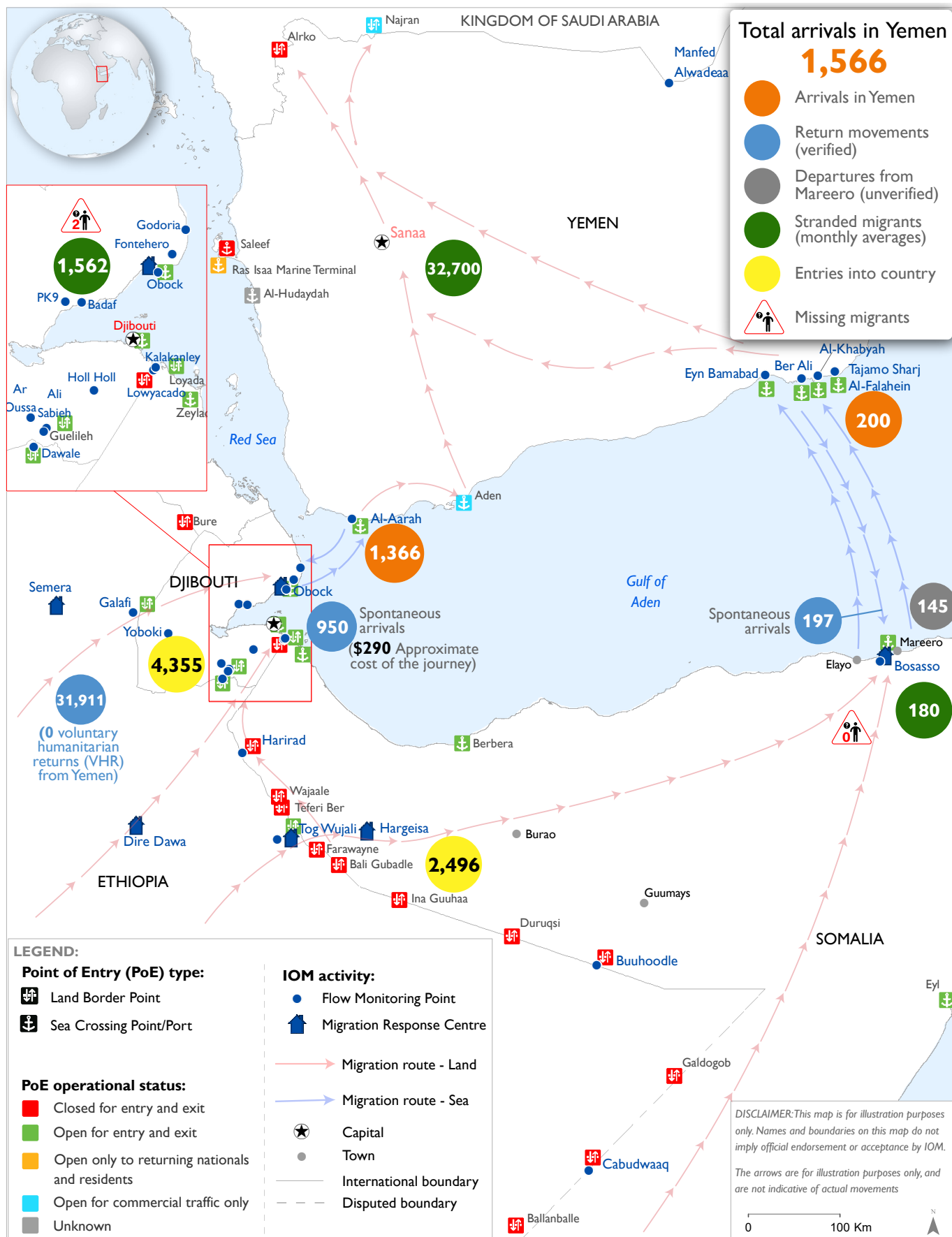
Source: IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) and Migrant Response Centres (MRCs) (IOM/WHO)

<sup>1</sup> Migration Response Centres (MRCs) are situated along key migration routes, where they fill critical gaps by providing direct assistance, including food and temporary shelter, information and service referrals to migrants on the move. MRCs bring together key partners to facilitate the identification of migrants in vulnerable situations, and ensure that they receive appropriate, immediate and longer-term support. Eight MRCs are currently operational in the Horn of Africa: Obock (Djibouti), Hargeisa, Bossaso (Somalia), Semera, Metema, Dire Dawa, Togochale and Moyale (Ethiopia).

## CONTACT

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## COVID-19 Epidemiological Situation

As of 31 July 2021, the number of COVID-19 cases along the Eastern Corridor stood at 314,480. Ethiopia continued recording the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases (89% of total cases). The country distributed over 2.2 million vaccine doses obtained through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative by the end of July. Following Ethiopia are Somalia (5% of total cases) and Djibouti (4% of total cases), while Yemen cases represented 2% of the total cases. As of 31 July 2021, the number of COVID-19 related deaths along the Eastern Corridor stood at 6,727, the majority of which were recorded in Ethiopia (65% of total deaths). Yemen holds the highest case fatality rate (CFR) at approximately 19.5%, compared to Djibouti (CFR 1.3%), Ethiopia (CFR 1.6%) and Somalia (CFR 5.3%). This is much higher than the global average CFR of 2.1% and is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war. On 28 July, Yemen's Ministry of Public Health and Population announced that the country is expecting to receive 151,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses within the next week, while a further 360,000 doses are expected to arrive in August.

## COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions

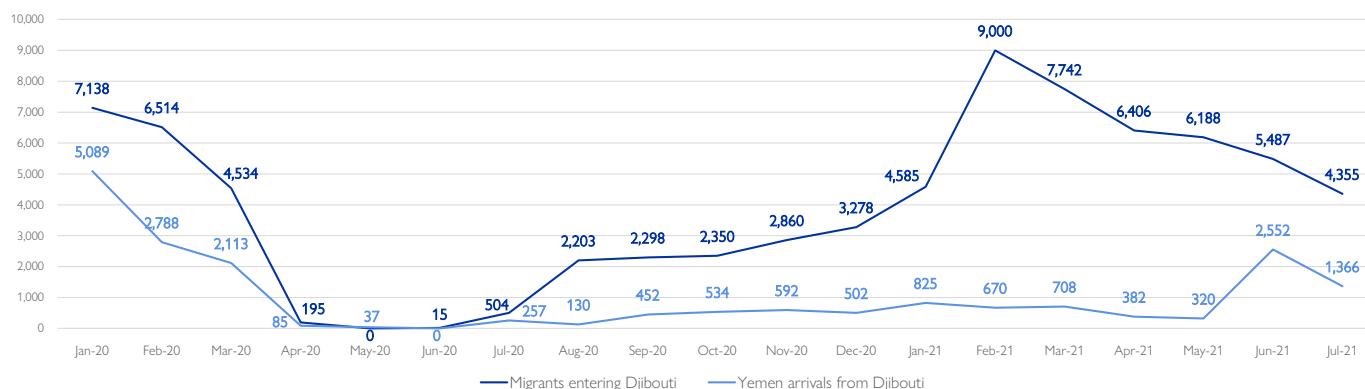
Within a year from the reopening of the country's air, land and sea borders in July 2020, the Djiboutian health authorities recorded a 3.63% COVID-19 positivity rate and a 99.93% recovery rate among all incoming passengers screened at the various Points of Entry (PoEs). Since 1 July, COVID-19 paper certificates have no longer been accepted in Ethiopia as travellers are required to produce a digital test based on the African Union's Trust Guidelines and the UN-sponsored Global Haven Program. In Yemen, mobility restrictions as well as health screenings at internal transit points have remained lifted. Al Wadeeah land border point is still open, allowing Yemenis holding a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test in addition to a COVID-19 vaccination certificate to enter Saudi Arabia. Yemenis returning from Oman continue to use Al Shahin land border point, provided that they hold a negative PCR test.

## DJIBOUTI SITUATION

### Migrant Flows Observed Through Djibouti and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Migrant movements into the country continued to decrease, with 4,355 entries observed in July 2021 from Djibouti's western borders, which is 21% lower than the entries observed in June. This brings the total entries into the country in 2021 to 43,773. Migrants entering Djibouti in July were all Ethiopian nationals and mainly adult males (65%), followed by adult females (28%), and children (7%).<sup>2</sup>
- With 1,366 new migrant arrivals in July, a total of 6,823 migrants arrived in 2021 from Djibouti to Yemen. All July arrivals disembarked near Al-Aarah FMP in Lahj governorate; the decrease in arrivals this month is likely due the extreme weather conditions, including strong winds, heavy rainfall, and high tides, which made it difficult for migrants to travel by boat. A majority of the migrants tracked were men (86%), 5% were boys, 8% were women, and 1% were girls. Similar to the previous month, five unaccompanied migrant children (UMCs) were also tracked upon entry from Djibouti.

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



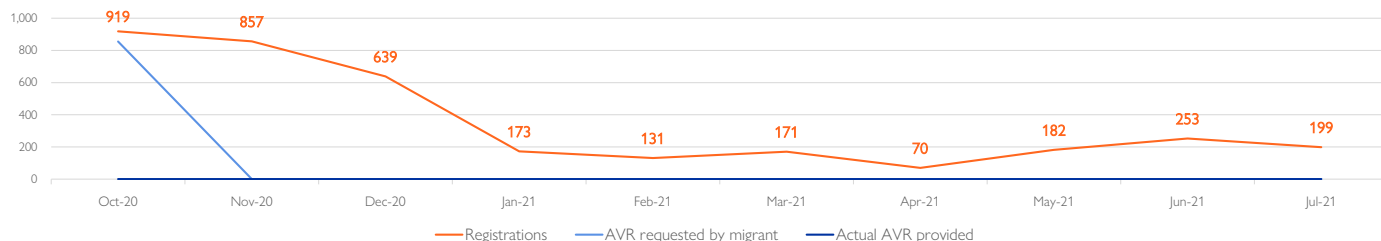
- Spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Djibouti continued in July 2021 with a total of 950 Ethiopian migrants, which is an increase from the 822 returns reported in June 2021. A vast majority of the returns were men (95%). Since May 2020, IOM tracked a total of 15,373 spontaneous returns of Ethiopian migrants, 9,279 of which were in 2021.

<sup>2</sup> The sex and age disaggregated data of entering migrants is an estimation because of the data collection methodology.

## Migrant Protection and Assistance

- Two female Ethiopian migrants lost their lives near Djibouti in July due to dehydration in the Holl-Holl region.
- As of 29 July 2021, 1,562 migrants on their way to the Arabian Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered in 8 spontaneous sites located along the migration route; most migrants were stranded in the Dikhil region. Immediate needs included water, food, hygiene kits and non-food items (NFIs).
- 199 new migrants were registered at the Obock MRC in July 2021, which is a 21% decrease from the previous month.
- During this month, a group of 201 migrants were returned to Ethiopia as part of IOM's AVR programme.

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

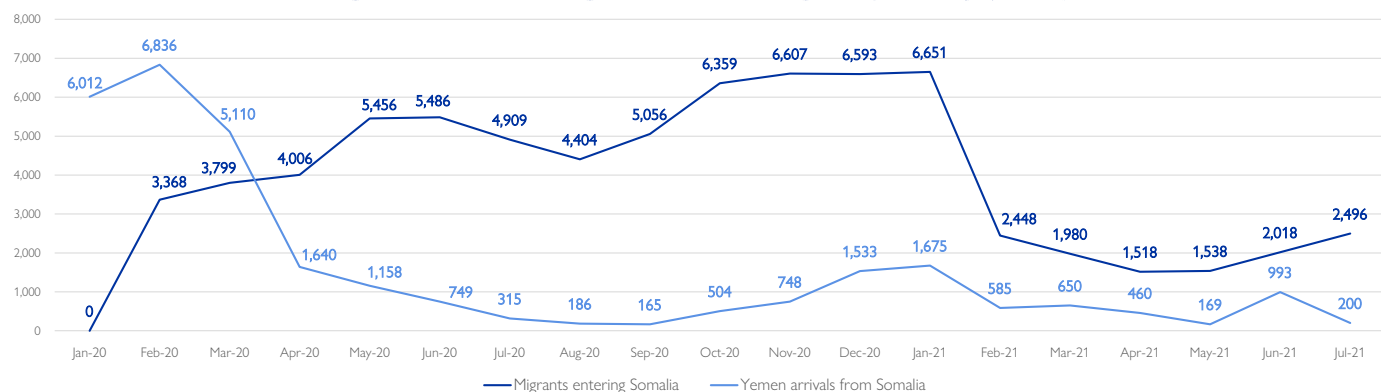


## SOMALIA SITUATION

### Migrant Flows Observed Through Somalia and at Yemen Points of Entry

- Migrant entries into Somalia increased by 24% between June (2,018) and July (2,496). Of these, over 97% were Ethiopian nationals, while 32 were Yemeni nationals; the latter were intending to return to Yemen through Somalia. In 2021, a total of 18,649 migrants entered Somalia.
- Migrant arrivals to Yemen from Somalia stood at 200 in July 2021; less than a quarter of the 993 arrivals recorded in June 2021 as the rough seasons and windy weather conditions during the late summer months make the sea-crossing almost impossible. This brings the total arrivals from Somalia in 2021 to 4,732. In line with traditional trends, more than half of the migrants tracked upon arrival in Yemen from Somalia were Ethiopian migrants (51%) with the remaining being Somali nationals (49%). The largest proportion of arrivals were adult males (40%), while 15% were adult females (up from 14% in June), and 46% were children (up from 27% in June). Unlike reports from previous months, no UMCs from Somalia were tracked during this month.
- Unverified reports received by IOM stated that there was a 63% decrease in migrant departures from Mareero, a small town 15 km east of Bossaso, compared to May, with only 145 migrants boarding boats to Yemen. Following an Al-Shabaab attack against the Bossaso prison in March 2021, the Puntland police has established security bases near Mareero.
- Similar to what observed in Djibouti, spontaneous movements from Yemen to Somalia are occurring, and 197 movements were tracked upon arrival in Bossaso in July (70% males and 30% females). The majority of movements were returning Somalis (162), while 35 Yemeni nationals were also tracked. This brings the total returns from Yemen to Somalia since May 2020 to 2,844, of which 1,846 occurred in 2021.

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

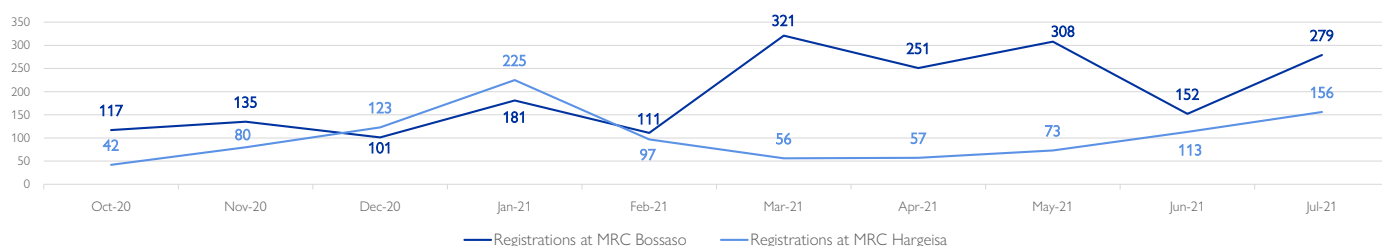


Note: Flows for irregular entries into Somalia for January 2020 and 10% increase of the percentage of total movements observed at Yemen Points of Entry in Somalia. Small changes were made to monthly entries for March and April 2021 due to data clearing.

## Migrant Protection and Assistance

- IOM estimates that around 180 migrants continue to be stranded in and around Bossaso (170) and Hargeisa (7), with few options available to continue their journey or return home; this number includes an estimated 40 UMCs (25 male, and 15 female) stranded around Bossaso.
- A rival clash involving two Ethiopian migrants occurred in the city of Bossaso on 18 July 2021. One male migrant who was repeatedly stabbed in the chest was taken to the Bossaso General Hospital where he undertook surgery and was transferred to the in-patient ward for recovery. The other male migrant was brought to the Armo Orthopedic hospital after having sustained a visible leg fracture.
- A total of 435 migrants were registered at the Bossaso (279) and Hargeisa (156) MRCs; a drastic 64% increase from June. This increase in registrations is primarily attributed to greater migrant movements along the border with Ethiopia triggered by the ongoing Tigray conflict which has spilled over to other regions in the country. Most migrants fleeing the conflict were young people aged between 16 and 30 years old. Additionally, growing interest in IOM's AVR programme in the Bossaso area has brought more migrants to the MRC.
- A total of 188 AVR requests were received at the MRCs in Bossaso (103) and Hargeisa (85) in July. Yet, no AVR movements took place during this month.

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

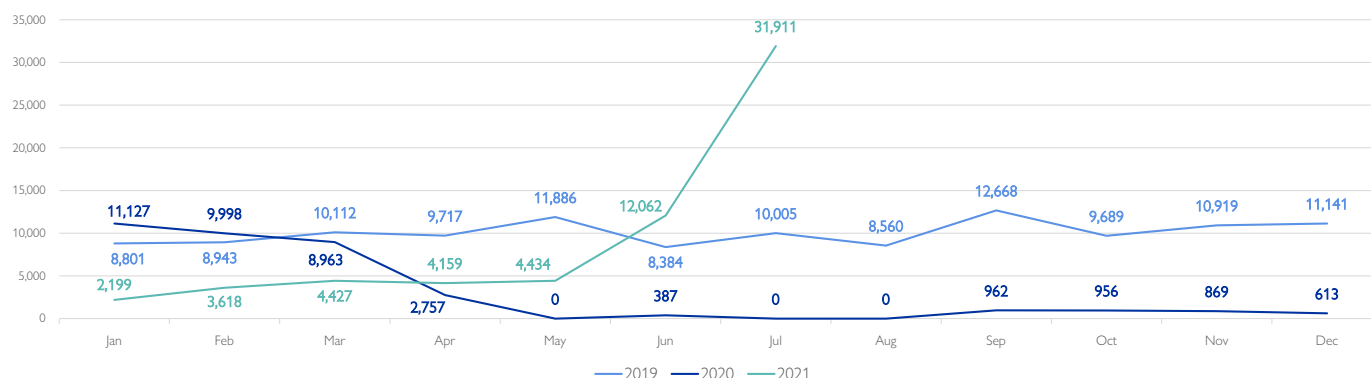


## ETHIOPIA SITUATION

### Migrant Flows, and Protection and Detention Concerns

- On 24 June, the Government of Ethiopia announced that 40,000 Ethiopian migrants detained in Saudi Arabia would be returned to Ethiopia in the span of two weeks. These returns commenced on 26 June, bringing back an estimated 9,000 Ethiopian nationals in that month alone. Throughout July, an additional 31,911 returns were recorded with an average of around 2,300 returns per day. Return figures from this month represent the highest number of returnees ever registered by IOM since May 2017.
- Tigrayan returnees continue to arrive in significant numbers from Saudi Arabia, roughly 34% of all arrivals. The Government of Ethiopia has arranged dedicated shelter sites in Addis Ababa for Tigrayan returnees to accommodate for a possible extended period of time, while those with relatives in Addis Ababa are encouraged to reunite with their family members.
- A total of 189 migrants, including 12 UMCs, were registered at MRCs bordering Djibouti and Somalia in July 2021, namely in Semera (112), Togochale (76) and Dire Dawa (1). Migrants mainly departed from Amhara (35%), Oromia (34%) and Tigray (31%), with less than 1 per cent departing from Addis Ababa.

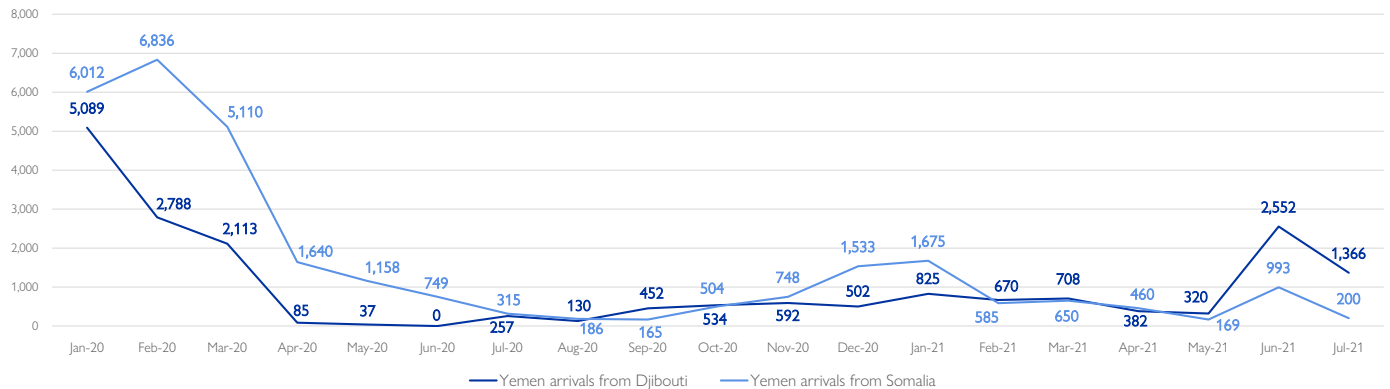
Returns of Ethiopian Nationals from Saudi Arabia Electronically Registered by IOM



## Migrant Flows Observed in Yemen

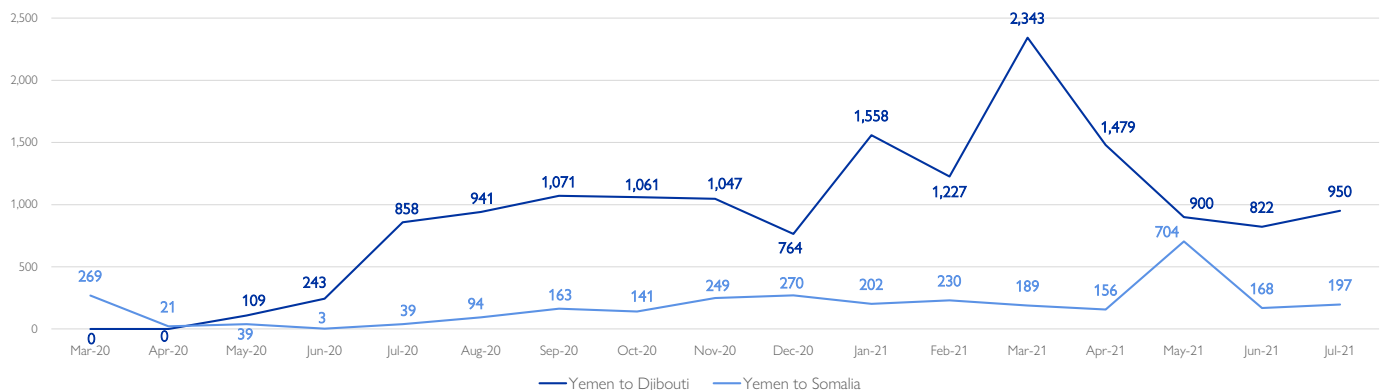
- Overall, 11,559 migrant arrivals from the Horn of Africa were tracked on the shores of Yemen in 2021, of which 1,566 arrivals were recorded in July; this is a 56% decrease from June 2021 likely due to harsh weather conditions at sea.
- The majority of the migrants who arrived in July travelled from Djibouti (87%), with the remaining travelling from Somalia (13%); the arrivals from Somalia decreased by 80% while the arrivals from Djibouti decreased by 46%.<sup>3</sup>
- Most migrant arrivals were Ethiopian nationals (93%), with the remainder being Somali nationals (7%).
- The majority of the migrants were adult males (81%), while 8% were adult females, and 11% were children (up from 9% in June). Five UMCs were tracked during this month.

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



- DTM Yemen resumed tracking returning migrants from Saudi Arabia in June 2021 as access to the FMP at the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border was restored. During this month, 1,821 such returns were tracked. This is the second time since September of 2020 that any returns have been reported.
- Due to the difficulties faced by migrants upon arrival in Yemen with their inability to move onwards towards Saudi Arabia, as well as the protection environment and living conditions in Yemen, many of them often opt to return back to the Horn of Africa. Since May 2020, a total of 18,217 migrants have made this perilous return journey back to Djibouti (15,373) and to Somalia (2,844), using the same network of smugglers utilized on the journey towards the Arabian Peninsula.

*Spontaneous Returns from Yemen (March 2020 - July 2021)*



## Migrant Protection and Assistance

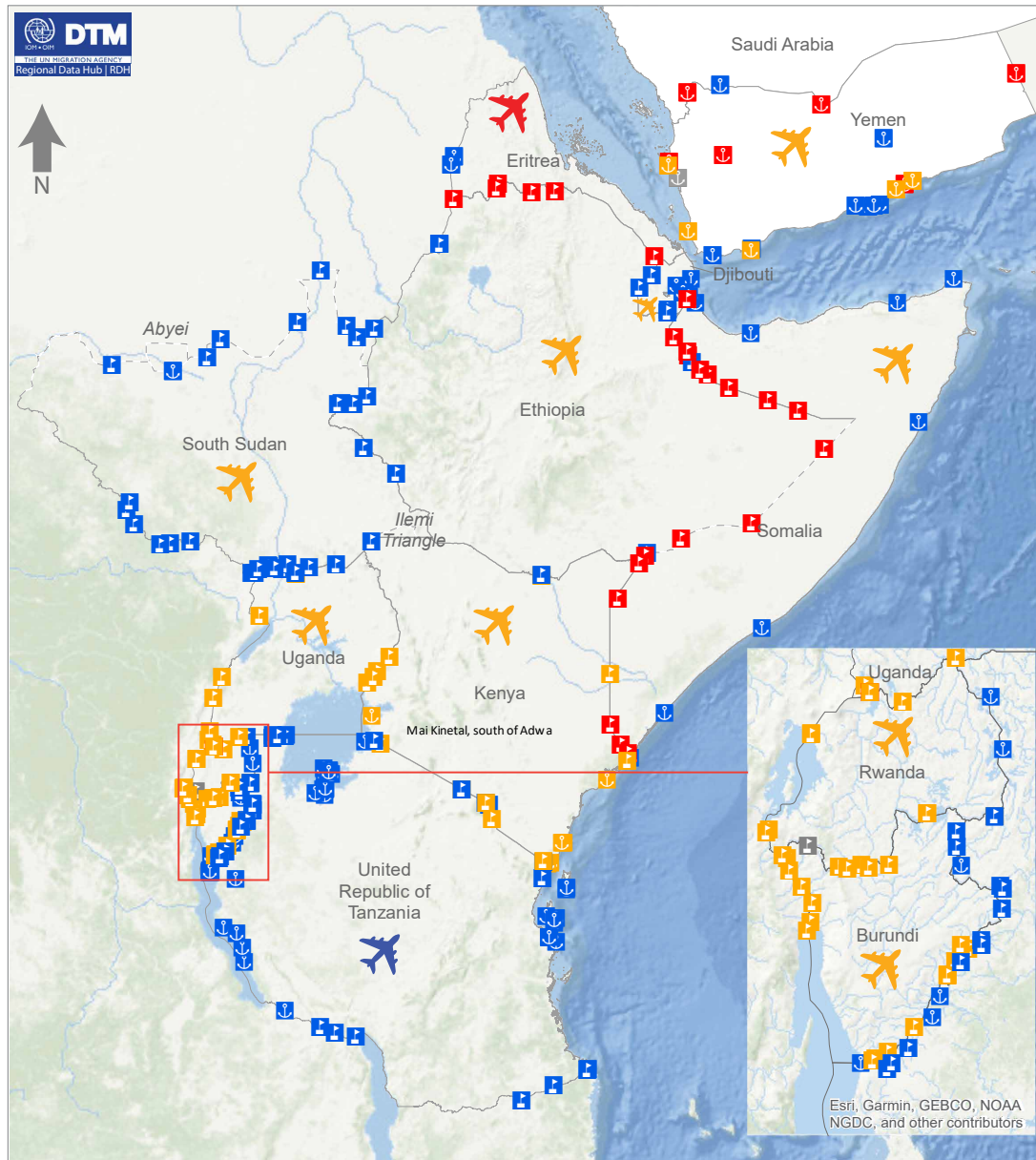
- IOM estimates that approximately 32,000 migrants continue to be stranded in Yemen. An increase in the number of arrests has been reported in the north, which may result in an increase in forced transfers from northern to the southern governorates through August.
- Thousands of stranded migrants have approached IOM's Aden MRC asking for return assistance to Ethiopia through VHR. These VHR flights resumed in March after months of disruption, however, no migrants were returned to Ethiopia in July. Challenges remain due to delays in the process of verification of nationality. A total of 8,600 Ethiopian migrants were registered by the end of July.

<sup>3</sup> Four migrants were also tracked internally, travelling within Yemen.

## ANNEX 1 | 2021 MRC REGISTRATION DATA

MRCs	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	MRC Total
Bossaso	181	111	321	251	308	152	279	1,603
Dire Dawa	0	0	0	0	6	14	1	21
Hargeisa	225	97	56	57	73	113	156	777
Metema	0	0	72	80	15	36	336	539
Moyale	-	-	187	230	44	59	51	571
Obock	173	131	171	70	182	253	199	1,179
Semera	0	0	71	33	34	213	112	463
Togochale	31	126	14	61	49	45	76	402
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>5,555</b>

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



**Status of international flights\***

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

**Status of other border points**

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

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

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

DATE: 31 July 2021

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