



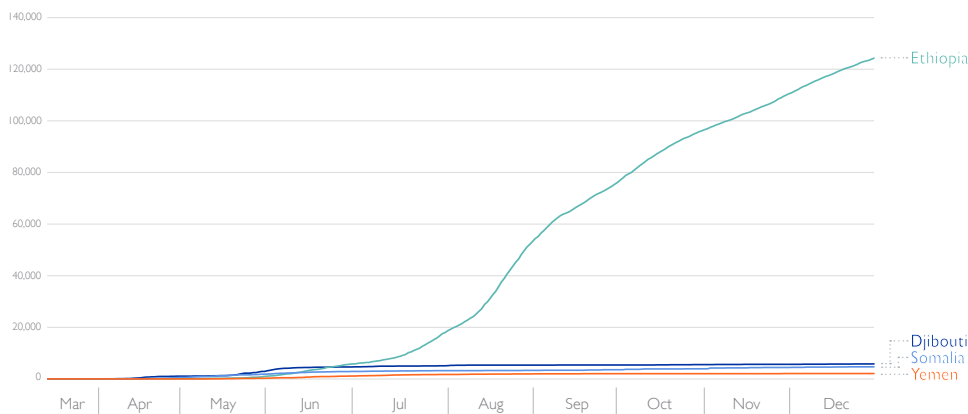
17-year-old stranded migrant from Harar wants to return to Ethiopia fearing COVID-19, Bossaso ECC Safe House. Photo: © IOM Somalia 2020

## 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 Since the Beginning of the Outbreak

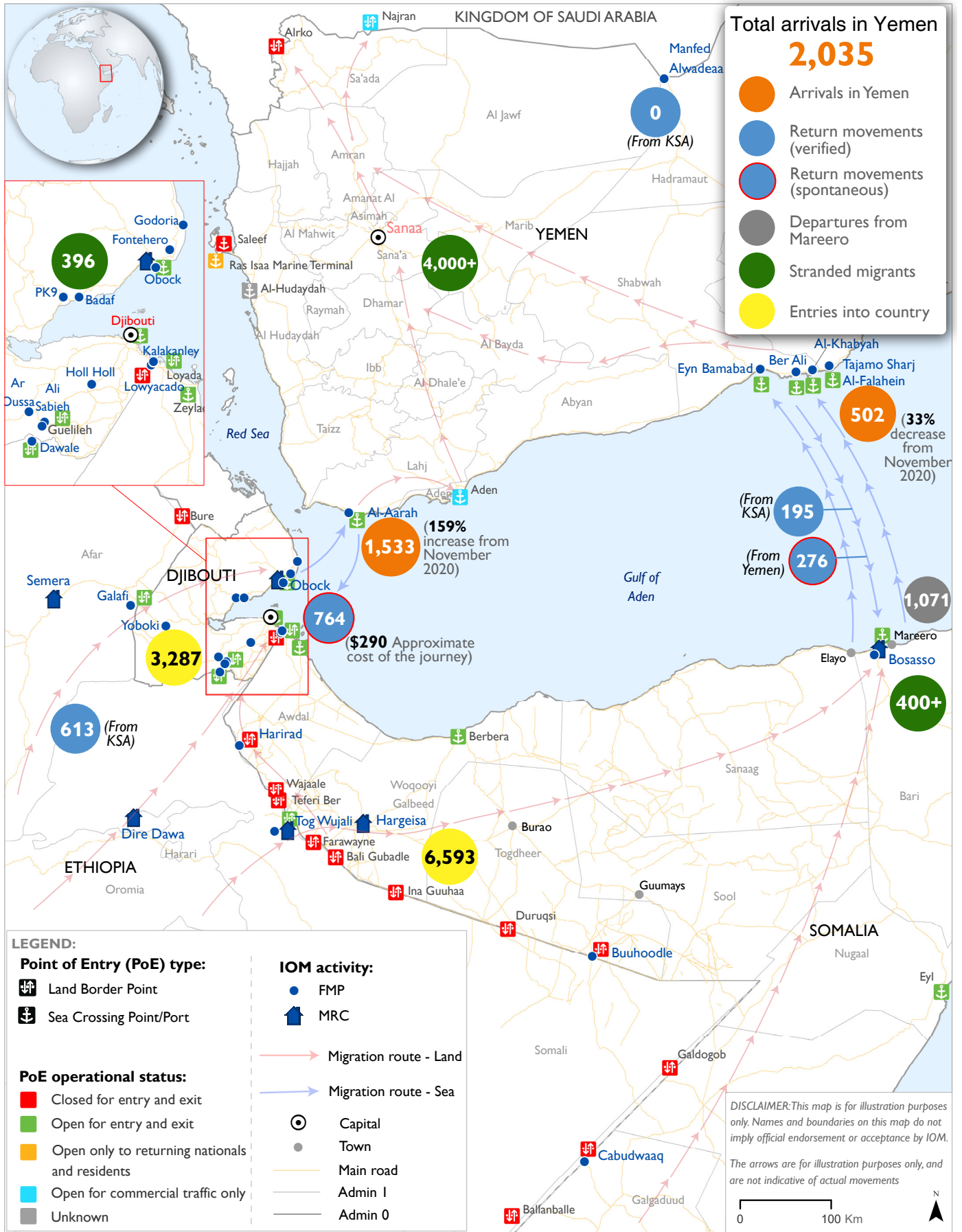


	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Somalia	Yemen
Confirmed cases	5,831	124,264	4,714	2,105
Deaths	61	1,923	130	611
Recoveries	5,728	112,096	3,612	-
Active cases	42	10,245	972	-

Source: Ministry of Health (MoH) Reports, World Health Organization (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. Seven MRCs are currently operational in the Horn of Africa: Obock (Djibouti), Hargeisa, Bossaso (Somalia), Semera, Metema, Dire Dawa and Tog-Wajaale (Ethiopia).

## CONTACT



## COVID-19 Epidemiological Situation

As of 31 December 2020, the number of COVID-19 cases along the Eastern Corridor stood at 136,914. Ethiopia continued recording the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases at 124,264 (91% of total cases). Community transmission is still ongoing in the country, resulting in increased pressure on quarantine, isolation, and treatment facilities as well as the health system in general. Following Ethiopia is Djibouti with 5,831 confirmed cases (4% of total cases) and Somalia with 4,451 cases (3% of total cases), while Yemen cases amounted to 2,105 (2% of total cases). As of 31 December 2020, the number of COVID-19 related deaths along the Eastern Corridor stood at 2,725, the majority of which were recorded in Ethiopia (71% of total deaths). Yemen holds the highest case fatality rate (CFR) at approximately 29.0%, compared to Djibouti (CFR 1.0%), Ethiopia (CFR 1.5%) and Somalia (CFR 2.8%). This is much higher than the global average CFR of 2.2% and is largely attributable to the challenges of accessing a health care system which has been decimated by years of war. The extent of the impact of COVID-19 in Yemen is largely unknown given limited testing capacities, reduced health seeking behavior, and growing public skepticism around COVID-19.

## COVID-19 Mobility Restrictions

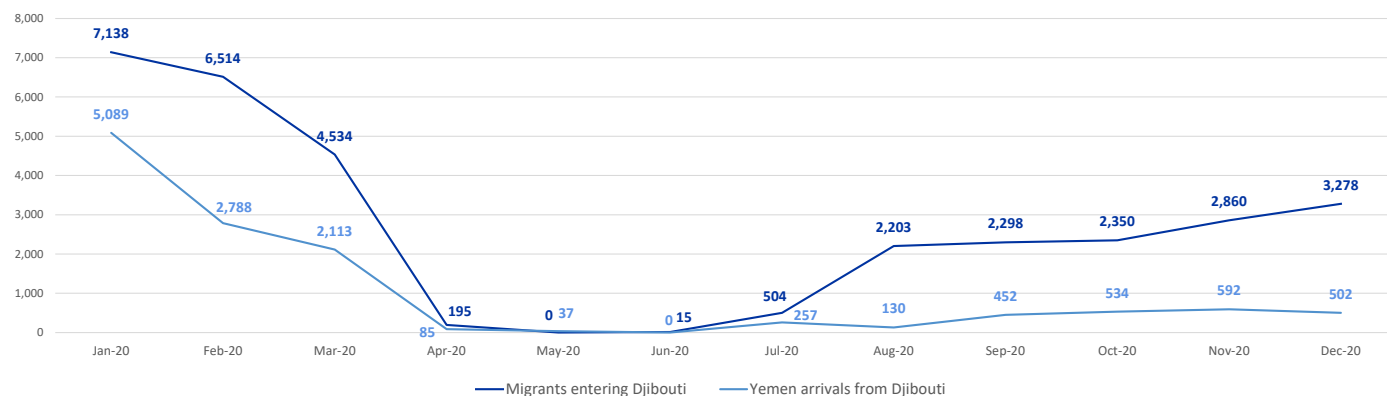
Between the reopening of the country's air, land and sea borders on 17 July and the end of December, the Djiboutian health authorities recorded a 4.41% COVID-19 positivity rate and a 99.42% recovery rate among all incoming passengers screened at the various Points of Entry (PoEs). In Somalia, all airports and seaports remained operational, while all air and land borders remained open in Ethiopia. Inter-governorate public movement tracking continued at 10 internal transit points in Yemen, especially in Taizz and Al-Bayda, although the movement restrictions have been eased and the health screenings have been removed from the transit points. On 20 December, the Saudi authorities announced the closure of Al Wadeah border entry point for a week and was extended for another week for Yemenis to enter the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## DJIBOUTI SITUATION

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

- In December, 3,278 (32% females and 68% males) migrant movements were tracked entering Djibouti, which is an increase of 15% as compared to the previous month, likely a result of borders opening up. A total of 13,645 entries from Ethiopia were tracked from May to December into Djibouti.
- 472 arrivals from Djibouti were tracked in Yemen near Al-Aarah FMP in Lahj governorate, all of whom were Ethiopian nationals. A majority of the migrants were adult men (77%) and only 10% were women, while 11% male and 2% female children were also tracked.

Migrant Movements through Djibouti to Yemen (January - December 2020)



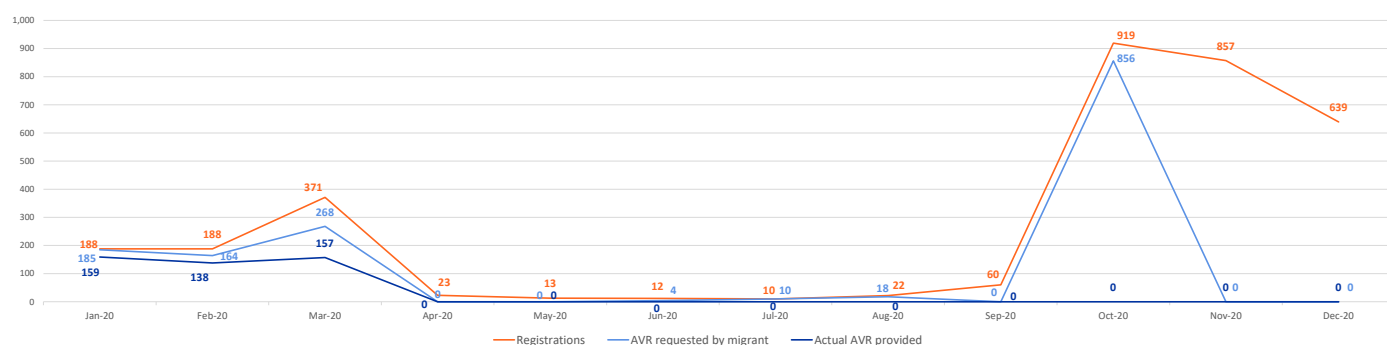
- Spontaneous return movements from Yemen to Djibouti, although organized through smugglers, continued in the current month with 764 arrivals (8 females, and 756 males) in December, and a total of 6,094 (89% male and 11% female) returns tracked between May and December.



## Migrant Protection and Assistance

- As of 30 December, 681 migrants on their way to the Arabian Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered in 15 spontaneous sites located along the migration route, majority of them were stranded in the Obock region. All the stranded migrants were Ethiopian nationals and most of them were men (90%). Immediate needs included water, food, hygiene kits and non-food items (NFIs).
- When asked about COVID-19 awareness, around 61% of all migrants tracked through Djibouti reported to be aware of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- A total of 639 new migrants were registered at the Obock MRC in December, which is a slight decrease from the 857 registered in the previous month.
- IOM, with the support of the Djiboutian authorities, transferred 877 migrants including seven women from the MRC Obock site to the Ar-Aoussa quarantine site to facilitate their departure to Ethiopia after a period quarantine and COVID-19 testing.
- On 23 December, a total of 43 vulnerable Ethiopian migrants (42 male and 1 female) were provided with AVR services from Djibouti to Ethiopia, including 35 UMCs.

Registrations at the MRC in Obock and AVR Services Requested and Provided (January - December 2020)

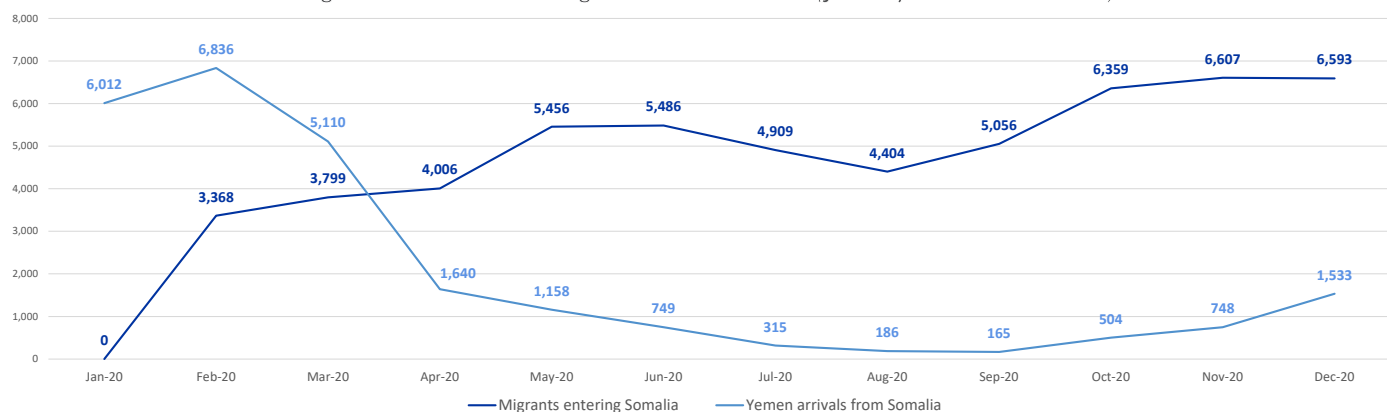


## SOMALIA SITUATION

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

- Yemen arrivals from Somalia stood at 1,533 in December, a 105% increase from the 748 arrivals recorded in the previous month, following the relaxation of movement restrictions. The movements consisted of Ethiopian (89%) and Somali (12%) nationals, with the majority of arrivals being adult males (65%), while 16% were adult females, and 19% were children (sharp increase from 9% last month), of which 57% (178) were UMCs (up from 48 in November).
- Migrant entries into Somalia decreased slightly as compared to November (6,593), with 99% being Ethiopian nationals, while 43 Yemeni nationals were also tracked intending to return to Yemen from Somalia.
- A significant number of Ethiopians travelled through Djibouti to Somalia (1,137); these movements made up 17% of all the migrants tracked entering Somalia.
- Similar to Djibouti, spontaneous return movements from Yemen are currently ongoing, and an overall 276 migrants were tracked upon arrival in December (226 to Bossaso, and 50 to Berbera), consisting of 66% males and 34% females.

Migrant Movements through Somalia to Yemen (January - December 2020)



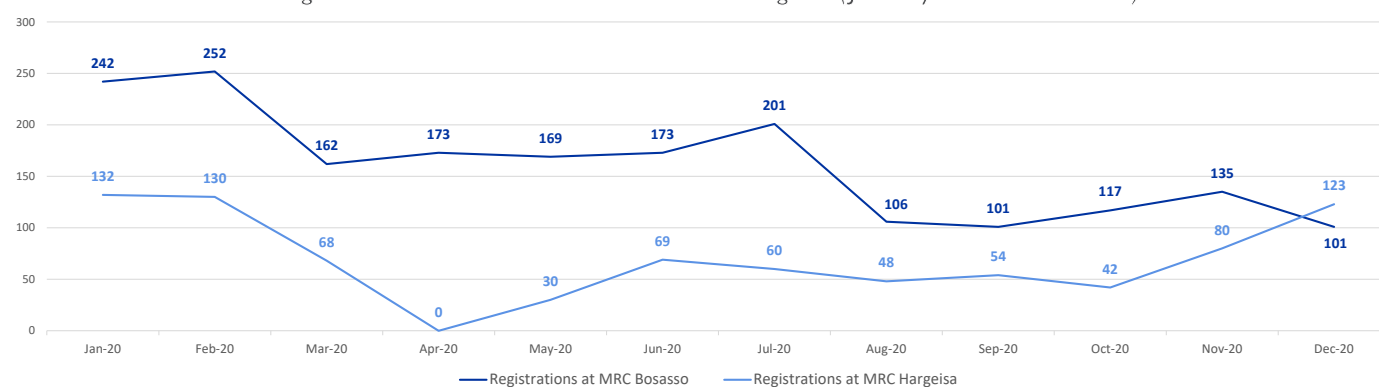
Note: Figures for migrants' exits into Somalia for January 2020 are "0" because of the temporary closure of Flow Monitoring Points in Somalia.

- Unverified reports received by IOM stated that 1,071 migrants departed by boat to Yemen from Mareero, a small town 15 km east of Bossaso; this represents a decrease of 42% from November.

## Migrant Protection and Assistance

- IOM estimates that between 400 and 500 migrants continue to be stranded in and around Bossaso, with few options available to continue their journey or to return home.
- While the MRC in Mogadishu remains closed, a total of 224 migrants were registered at the Bossaso (101) and Hargeisa (123) MRCs.
- A total of 76 AVR requests were received at the Bossaso (4) and Hargeisa (72) MRCs, which is an increase from previous months, and also a departure from historic trends where the majority of requests are registered at the MRC in Bossaso. The actual provision of AVR services remains limited, with only eight returns processed in December, all from Hargeisa.
- A total of 195 (80% adult males, 12% adult females, and 7% children) forced returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia arrived at Mogadishu airport during the month of December – all of them were provided temporary accommodation and Onward Transportation Assistance (OTA) for travel to their final destination.

Registrations at the MRCs in Bossaso and Hargeisa (January - December 2020)

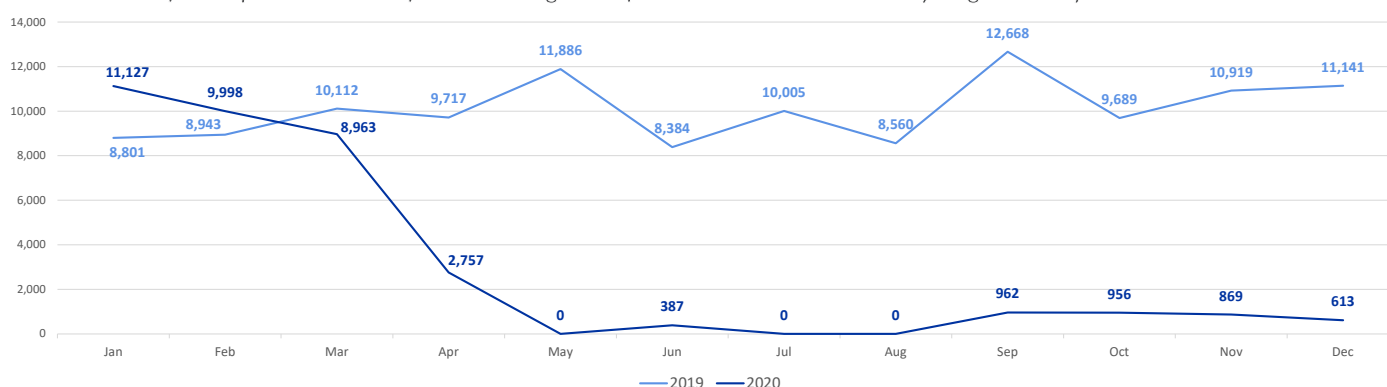


## ETHIOPIA SITUATION

### Migrant Flows, and Protection and Detention Concerns

- The returns of Ethiopian nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Addis Ababa continued in December with 613 Ethiopians returning compared to 11,141 returns in December 2019; the cumulative returns between January and December decreased by 70%, with 36,632 total returns in 2020 compared to 120,825 in 2019.

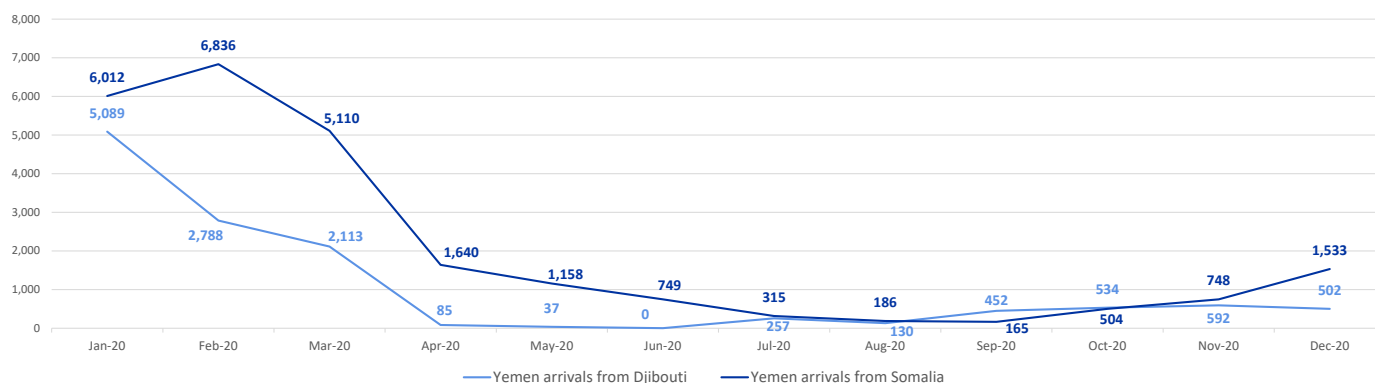
Returns of Ethiopian Nationals from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Electronically Registered by IOM in 2019 and 2020



## Migrant Flows Observed in Yemen

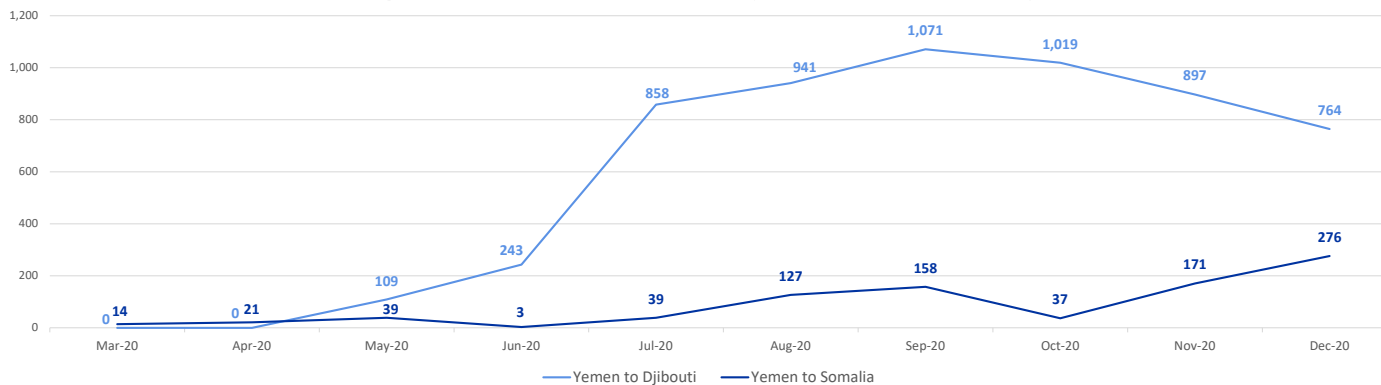
- Overall, 2,035 migrant arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa were recorded in December; a 52% increase from November but a decrease of 81% as compared to December 2019. The majority travelled from Somalia (75%), with the remaining travelling from Djibouti (25%); the arrivals from Somalia increased by 105% while the arrivals from Djibouti decreased by 15%.
- Most migrant arrivals were Ethiopian nationals (89%), while the remainder were Somali nationals (11%).
- Overall, the majority of the migrants were adult males (65%), while 17% were adult females, and 19% were children (up from 9% in November), of which 47% (178) were UMCs.

Migrant Arrivals to Yemen from the Horn of Africa (January - December 2020)



- Due to the difficulties faced by migrants upon arrival in Yemen with their inability to move onwards towards the Kingdom of 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 March 2020, almost 6,000 migrants have made this perilous return journey, using the same network of smugglers utilized on the journey towards the Arabian Peninsula.

Spontaneous Returns from Yemen (March - December 2020)



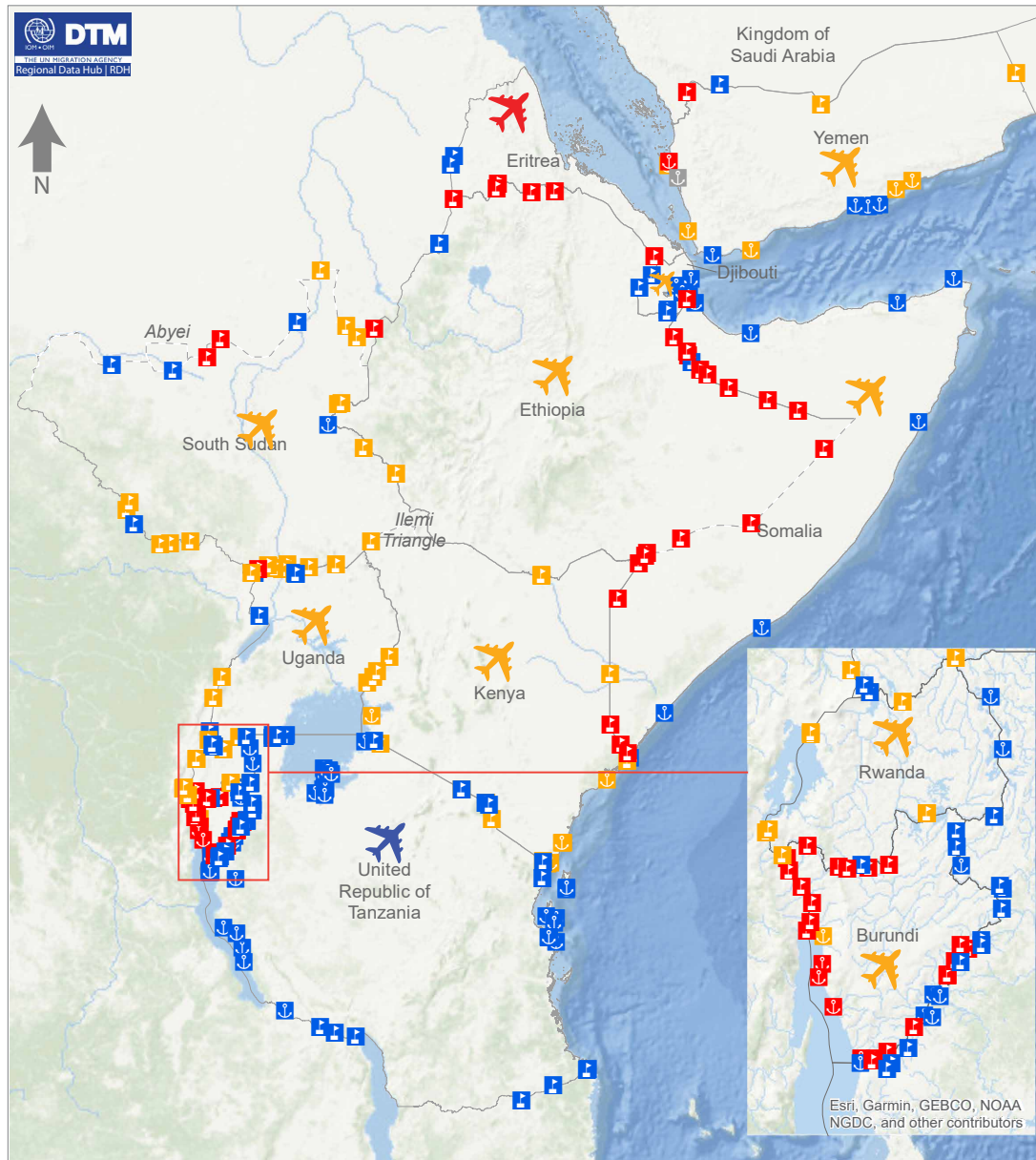
## Migrant Protection and Assistance

- The protection and humanitarian conditions of migrants has worsened throughout 2020, and by the end of the year, over 15,146 (2,020 in December) migrants were forcibly transferred within Yemen as part of localized deportation campaigns. In addition, an estimated 400 migrants were killed in indiscriminate and targeted violence, and 4,000+ migrants were stranded and trapped in urban areas and hard to reach locations.
- The Government of Ethiopia has verified 1,100 individuals who will be part of the first Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) movement that will take place once relevant travel documents are received for the Ethiopian Government.

## ANNEX 1 | 2020 MRC REGISTRATION DATA

MRCs	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	MRC Total
Bossaso	242	252	162	173	169	173	201	106	101	117	135	101	1,932
Metema	149	220	246	41	8	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	677
Tog-Wajaale	200	267	38	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	538
Dire Dawa	182	168	89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	439
Hargeisa	132	130	68	0	30	69	60	48	54	42	80	123	836
Obock	188	188	371	23	13	12	10	22	60	919	857	639	3,302
Semera	56	92	235	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	383
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>1,149</b>	<b>1,317</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>1,078</b>	<b>1,072</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>8,107</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 December 2020

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