

QUARTERLY MIGRATION OVERVIEW

APRIL - JUNE 2021



Ethiopian women carrying emergency aid items and heading to their shelter © E. Al-Oqabi / IOM 2021

HORN OF AFRICA-YEMEN MIGRATION TRENDS IN 2021

With the recent loosening of restrictions on international movements, migrant arrivals into Yemen have started to show a slow increase, although the overall numbers remain low compared to pre-pandemic years. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that 4,876 migrants arrived in Yemen during the period, compared to 3,669 in the same period in 2020, 47,269 migrants in 2019 and 31,644 migrants in 2018. Irregular migrants are often traveling to Yemen via boat, from Somalia or Djibouti. This journey is dangerous, and incidents of capsizing boats are frequently reported. On 14 June 2021, media reported a boat originating from Djibouti sunk with upwards of 200 Ethiopian migrants in the Bab-al-Mandab strait. Although the number of victims could not be confirmed, IOM's Mobile Medical Teams (MMTs) recovered at least one body and local fishermen reported the recovery and burial of over 30 victims.

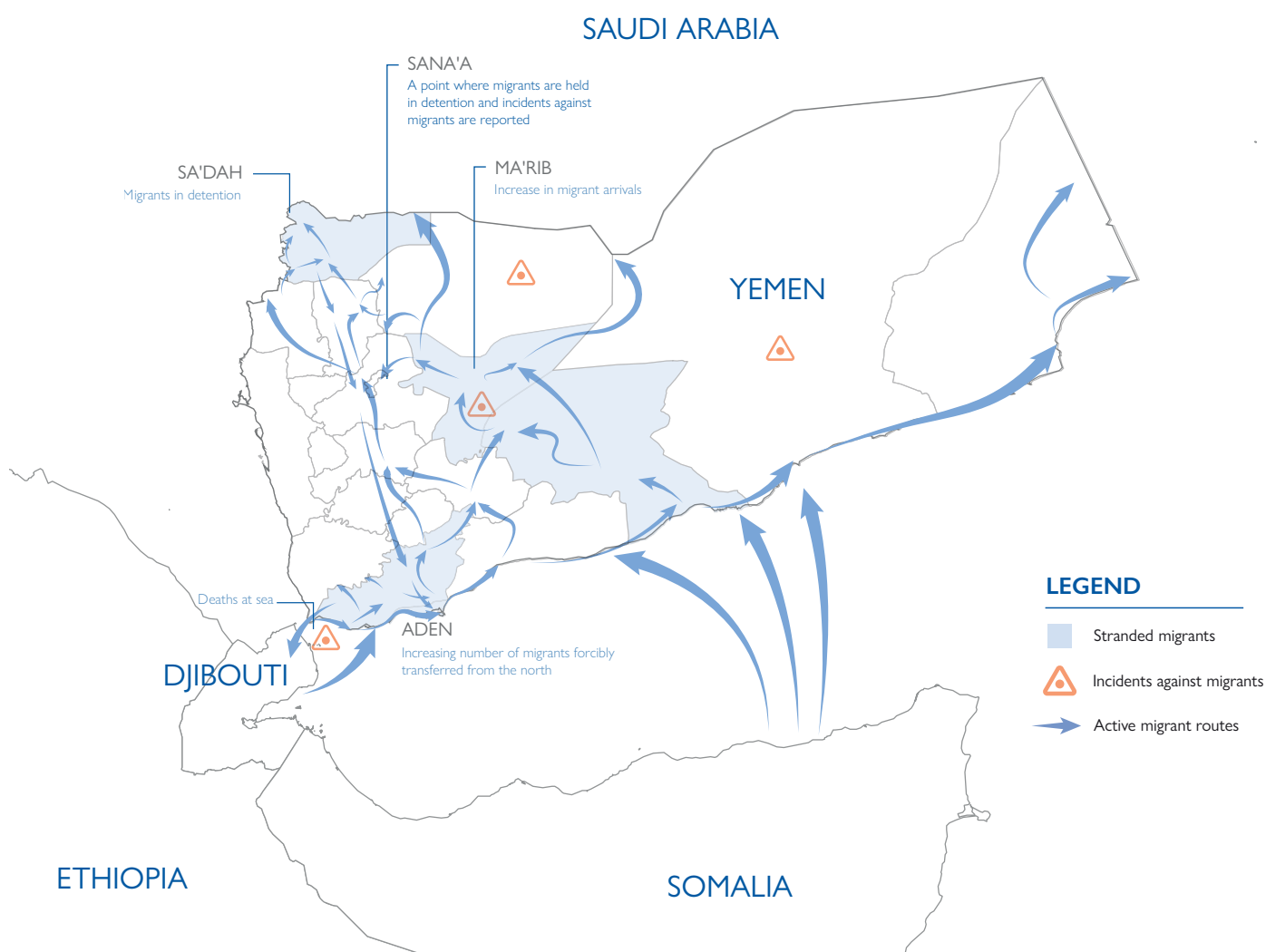
For over a year now, IOM and partners have been responding to larger groups of stranded migrants in what were traditionally transit hubs, mainly because controls along the border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) are much stricter, and the conflict has disrupted internal flows. As a result, IOM estimates that more than 32,000 migrants are stranded in these major urban hubs (in Aden, Ma'rib, Shabwa, Al Bayda, Sana'a and Sa'dah governorates). A majority are living in dire conditions with extremely limited-to-no access to essential services such as shelter, food, water and health care. Women and children in particular face significant risks, being held in smugglers yards and dens across the country and subject to physical violence and abuses. Others attempt to continue to the north towards exit points in the Sa'dah governorate and face increased risk of arrest and transfer to the south. In Ma'rib, for example, IOM estimates that around 650 migrants arrived during this quarter; the majority are coming through Shabwah. Of the arrivals, an estimated 200 are women who, while in prolonged detention by smugglers, reportedly faced at least one form of gender-based violence and increased levels of extortion. The total number of migrants currently stranded in the governorate fluctuates between 4,000 to 5,000, as some migrants leave in attempt to cross the border

In the aftermath of the 7 March fire incident at the Immigration Passport and Nationalization Agency (IPNA) holding facility in Sana'a, IOM has continued to provide community-based support to survivors including medical, non-food and food assistance. IOM is advocating for closure of the facility, limitations on use of detention and halt forced transfers. Further humanitarian actors are appealing for restrictions on humanitarian responses to migrants to be lifted to allow comprehensive assistance to be provided, including independent support for voluntary humanitarian return.

As migrants in Yemen continue to face multifaceted issues around arrest, detention, forced movements across frontlines, abuse by smugglers and significant barriers to access to life sustaining services, IOM continues to prioritize voluntary return solutions for those who wish to return home. In April 2021, IOM was able to successfully negotiate a process for registering 900 extremely vulnerable individuals from Sana'a with the authorities and in close coordination with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE). By the end of the month, 192 Ethiopian nationals were registered. Despite the challenges, IOM continues to work with relevant authorities to ensure that a return flight takes place in the next quarter, marking a significant step to alleviating needs of migrants who have been stranded. In Aden, three VHR flights have taken place this year, and over 8,600 migrants have been registered for future flights. A delegation of officials from the Government of Ethiopia are scheduled to travel to Aden to conduct a new nationality verification exercise for registered migrants. Once travel documents are issued, IOM will make necessary arrangements to ensure safe return of VHR applicants and post arrival assistance in coordination with IOM in Ethiopia.

In the meantime, the Cash for Work (CfW) programme for 1,200 migrants in Aden – initiated in November 2020 to support migrants who awaited VHR – has continued to provide a means for migrants to earn a living. IOM is also providing emergency assistance (water, food, non-food and health assistance) to migrants who move along migratory routes between Lahj and Aden, working also with partners to cover areas in Shabwah and Al Bayda. In response to the growing migrant population in Aden, Ma'rib and Lahj, IOM is deploying additional mobile teams to provide emergency aid and health assistance.

HORN OF AFRICA TO YEMEN MIGRATION ROUTES



MIGRANT PROFILES & TRENDS

IOM's DTM team recorded 9,989 migrant arrivals into Yemen between 1 January to 30 June 2021 at five flow monitoring points along the coast, among 4,876, during the second quarter of the year alone. This marks a slight increase from the same period in 2020 when 3,669 migrants arrived. The majority of migrants arrivals thus far in 2021 have travelled through Obock in Djibouti to Lahj and through Bosaso in Somalia to Shabwah and Hadramawt. As has been the case for years, most of those travelling on this route are young boys or men from rural areas with little to no education, and they express intentions to travel to KSA in search of economic opportunities. The majority of migrants arriving in Yemen are Ethiopian (89%) and a smaller number are Somali (11%).

Despite the smaller number of migrants making the journey through Yemen to KSA (as compared to pre-COVID-19 years) smuggler networks are being maintained as smugglers continue to prey on vulnerable migrants. Smugglers, being the main source of information about the route for many migrants, often share misinformation on what migrants may expect in Yemen. Many migrants report not being aware of the conflict or the risks that come with the journey. The pandemic and increased controls along the KSA border have meant that the smuggler network is not as remunerative as it used to be, to maintain a low profile, smugglers are taking smaller groups of migrants. To make up for the financial losses, they are adopting alternative ways to exploit migrants to still make a profit during this period. For example, in Ma'rib, women are often sent to farms to work off debts, while others are held in overcrowded conditions where they are exploited and abused. In other parts of the south, IOM and partners continue to document some of the most egregious forms of abuse at the hands of smugglers and traffickers, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), torture, abduction for ransom, forced labour and physical violence. DTM interviews with migrants along the coast highlight their desperation to return home after months of facing harsh conditions in Yemen and awaiting return assistance. Smugglers are capitalizing on this to further exploit migrants who are desperate to return home, usually transporting migrants in overcrowded boats across turbulent seas. Since May 2020, IOM estimates that 11,000 migrants have returned to the Horn of Africa on dangerous boat journeys, aided by smugglers.

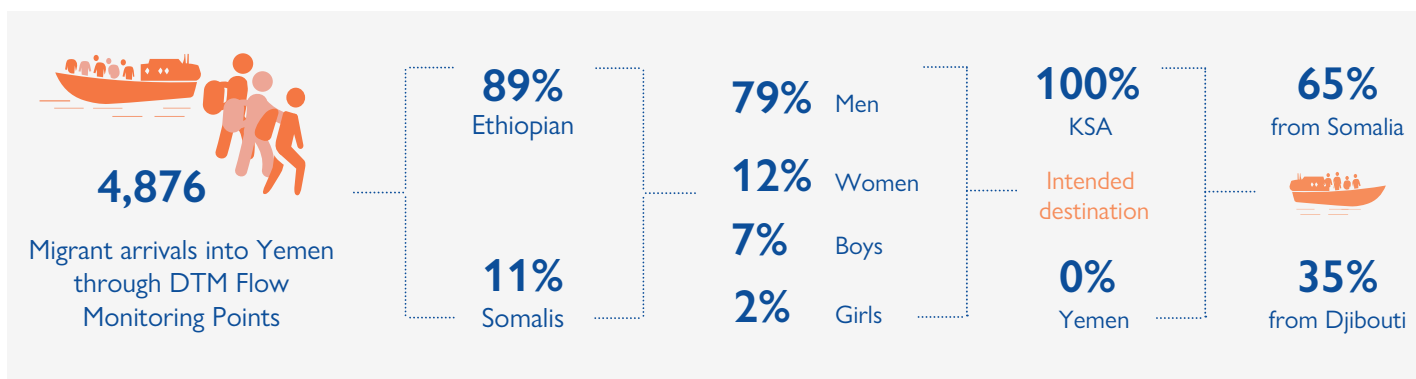
Forcible deportation and transfer of migrants from northern to southern governorates has continued to increase during the second quarter. Between December 2019 and March 2021, IOM documented at least 23,000 individuals pushed across active frontlines in a systematic campaign to deport migrants out of certain areas. Since April 2021, IOM has received anecdotal information of a further 10,000 moved to southern governorates, as humanitarian actors have observed migrants being transported in cramped trucks and provided with little information about their journey. The systematic campaign of forced deportation and transfer has meant that migrants seeking transit through northern governorates are increasingly prone to arrest, some form of detention and transfer. IOM has also noted that a number of migrants have sought to return to the north once crossing areas of control, creating a circular transit that is exacerbating humanitarian and protection needs. In addition, organized raids in key urban areas of Sana'a, Sa'dah, and Al Bayda in May and June 2021, led to arrests of hundreds of migrants and anti-migration sentiment continues especially across the north. Humanitarian actors working on mixed migration issues have faced further restrictions reducing their ability to support migrants on the move through humanitarian assistance or to ensure the safety of the population.



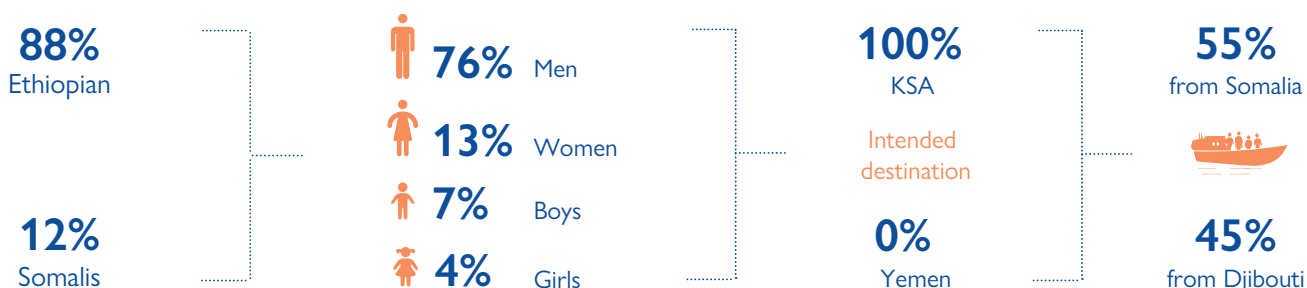
Ethiopian migrants gathering after receiving emergency shelter materials in Ma'rib © E. Al-Oqabi / IOM 2021

BREAKDOWN OF APRIL, MAY, JUNE ARRIVALS

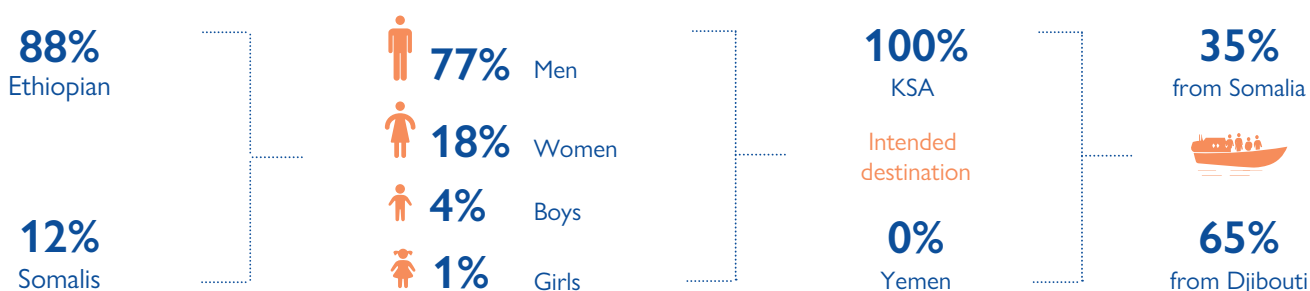
ARRIVALS APRIL TO MAY 2021



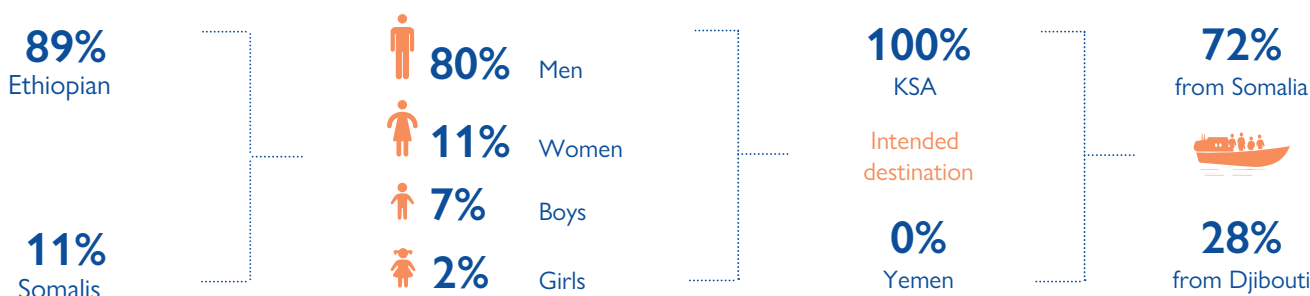
842 MIGRANT ARRIVALS IN APRIL



489 MIGRANT ARRIVALS IN MAY



3,545 MIGRANT ARRIVALS IN JUNE



MIGRANT VOICES

Abdullah, Ma'rib

"Two of my friends and I decided to take this journey from our homeland, Ethiopia, to Yemen. We were running from many problems and hardship in our life, and we were looking for better future. We reached Yemen after one year and two months. The journey was extremely hard. We've faced a lot of problems and obstacles here in Yemen. All the roads in front of us have been blocked. We're now working as cleaners with the Governorate Hygiene and Improvement Fund cleaning the streets for a daily wage. After two weeks there was an accident and our hygiene trucks overturned. All four passengers were injured. My leg was broken, and my back was hurt badly. I am worried because I cannot work, and I don't know what will happen to me now."



A stranded migrant in Aden waiting at the MRP to get support © M.Mohammed/IOM 2021

Abdulzaraq, Aden

"In my home country of Ethiopia, I used to work as a farmer, but the income was not enough to make a decent life for my family and I decided to travel to Saudi Arabia to look for work with a better income, but no one told me about the difficulties of the journey. Smugglers were lying and saying that the trip would be simple. I've been in Yemen now for two years and have gone through very difficult circumstances. I worked as a car cleaner for a long time. I carried stones and construction work, but the income is never consistent. I was beaten, detained and exploited by people who I work for. I do not have any money to eat, and I go to sleep hungry most of nights. I have no relatives or friends here. I sleep under trees or on the street. I am tired and would like to go back to my country. I would like to go back to work on my farm again in Ethiopia. It would be better than this life."

All names have been changed to protect the identity of the people interviewed

IOM MIGRATION RESPONSE IN YEMEN IN 2021

PILLARS OF INTERVENTION

Since IOM began operations in Yemen, its migrant assistance programme has aimed to ensure that migrants in Yemen have access to life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection of their rights, safety and dignity.

1. Protection and life-saving humanitarian assistance is provided through fixed centres (health clinics, migrant response points) and mobile teams provide access to immediate medical care, relief items (clothes, shoes and hygiene items), food, information on safe migration, case management, psychosocial support, cash for work and options for voluntary humanitarian return.
2. Opportunities for safe and voluntary return assistance for undocumented Ethiopian migrants and stranded migrants from other nationalities is offered through IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Returns mechanism. Somali refugees are provided return solutions through the Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme, in coordination with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Assistance includes the provision of 'fit-to-travel' medical screenings and medical escorts as needed before and during travel.
3. Analysis of trends including inflows, push and pull factors, migration routes, protection dynamics, risks and mitigation measures.
4. Development and implementation of a regional approach to safe, dignified and orderly migration to promote engagement within the region on a coordinated rights-based response at the governance level, a component of which involves strengthening the capacities of relevant actors in counter-trafficking and assistance to victims.
5. Enhancing coordination with partners on multi-sectorial migration responses, strengthening advocacy and ensuring clear referral mechanisms at both regional and country level.



A stranded migrant during a health consultation at the MRP in Aden © M.Mohammed/IOM 2021

COVID RESPONSE

IOM's aim is to ensure that principled public health and protection interventions are integrated into Yemen's COVID-19 response plan and are inclusive of all population groups, including migrants and irrespective of status. IOM's main interventions include:

1. Hygiene and health prevention awareness among the migrant population and local communities.
2. Access to life-saving assistance including food, water, and hygiene and relief items.
3. Continuation of standard health and protection assistance through IOM migrant centres, supported clinics and mobile teams at main transit hubs, along migratory routes and at new arrival points along the southern coastline.
4. Protection monitoring to continue to identify, mitigate and respond to protection risks and violations of human rights, exacerbated by conditions created by COVID-19.
5. Advocacy for the equitable inclusion of migrants in vaccination campaigns.
6. Resumption of safe and dignified return from Yemen to Ethiopia for those who express desire to return home.

IOM RESPONSE APRIL-JUNE 2021

9,915	Migrants provided with health assistance
17,466	Migrants supported with protection assistance
3	Internal protection monitoring monthly reports, in coordination with partners
3	Regional Migration Response Plan (RMRP) meetings between IOM and partners working on migration responses in Yemen

APRIL

3,780	Migrants provided with health assistance
7,217	Migrants supported with protection assistance
1	Internal protection monitoring monthly report, in coordination with partners
1	IOM Regional Migration Response Plan (RMRP) regional workshop

MAY

2,381	Migrants provided with health assistance
2,929	Migrants supported with protection assistance
1	Internal protection monitoring monthly report, in coordination with partners
1	Yemen Regional Migration Response Plan (RMRP) coordination meeting

JUNE

3,754	Migrants provided with health assistance
7,320	Migrants supported with protection assistance
1	Internal protection monitoring monthly report, in coordination with partners
1	Yemen Regional Migration Response Plan (RMRP) consultations meeting between



IOM's mobile medical team nurse screening a boy at a displacement site in Ma'rib © E. Al-Oqabi / IOM 2021

IOM'S MIGRANT ASSISTANCE IN YEMEN IS SUPPORTED BY

