



# Regional Migrant Response Plan

for the Horn of Africa and Yemen

Regional Migrant Response Plan

Horn of Africa and Yemen

# 2021

## Second Quarter Update

April - June

### Migrants on the Move



**18,081**  
Entered Djibouti

**5,074**  
Entered Somalia

**4,876**  
Entered Yemen

### Stranded Migrants



**1,646**  
in Djibouti

**250**  
in Somalia

**32,700**  
in Yemen

### Migrant Returns



**3,201\***  
Yemen - Djibouti

**1,028\***  
Yemen - Somalia

**20,656\*\***  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - Ethiopia

### Population Reached in Q2

**156,433**  
60,858 Migrants  
95,575 Host Communities



Obock, Djibouti, June 2021. 136 migrants intercepted by Djibouti coast guards while trying to cross to Yemen.  
Copyright: Alexander / IOM 2021

\* Spontaneous Returns

\*\* Forced Returns

# SITUATION OVERVIEW

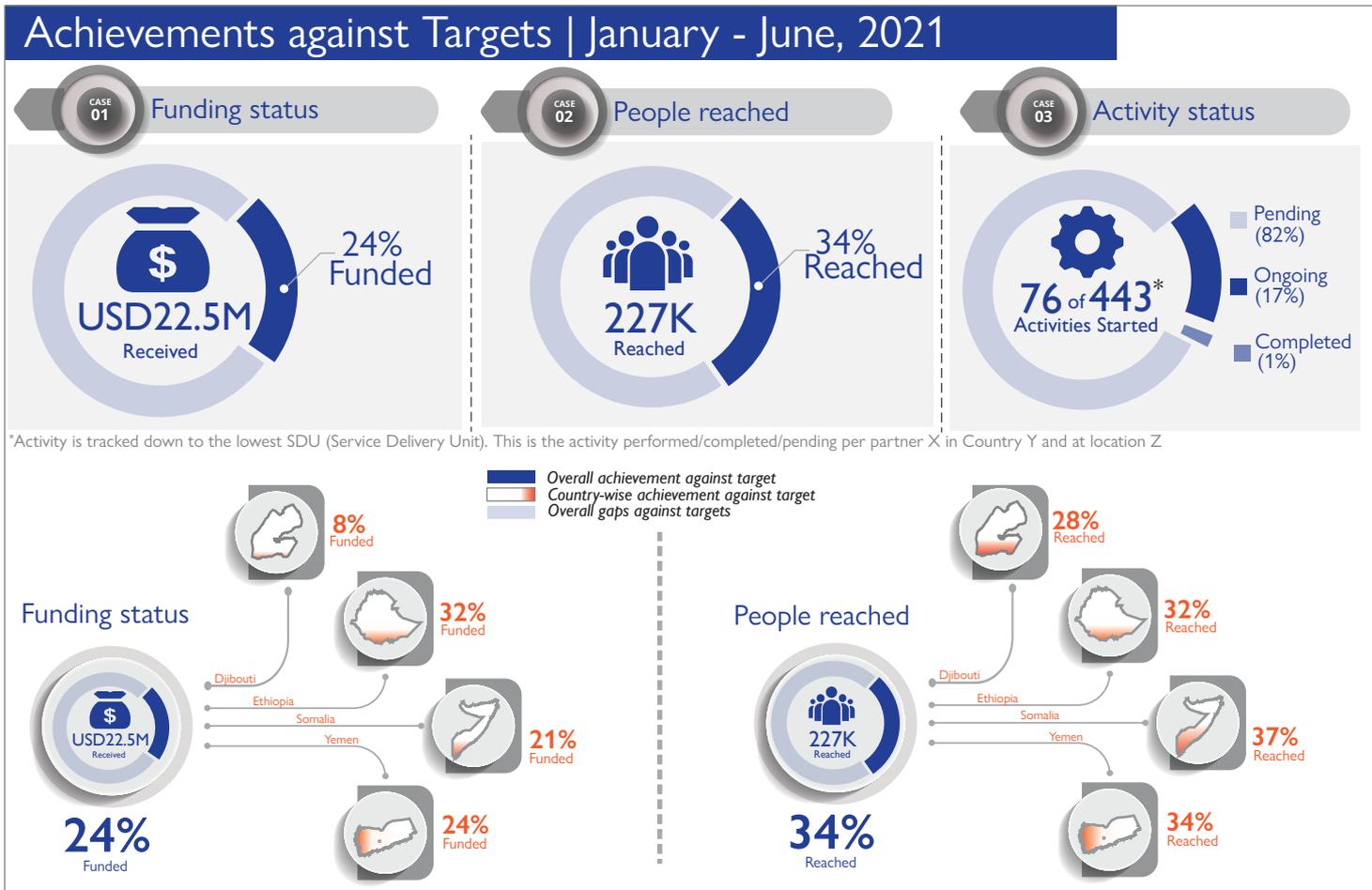
The continued easing of movement restrictions across international boundaries in the second quarter of 2021 (Q2) resulted in an increase in the number of migrants arriving in Yemen when compared to the same period in 2020. Enumerators at the Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) recorded 4,876 migrant arrivals in Yemen during the period, a 33 per cent increase compared to 3,669 in the same period in 2020. However, overall numbers remain low compared to pre-pandemic years. The bi-directional movement of irregular migrants along the eastern route continues to be dangerous, and during Q2, two incidents of boats capsizing were reported. In April, a shipwreck on an overcrowded smugglers' boat coming from Yemen resulted in the death of 44 migrants<sup>1</sup>. Fourteen survivors were assisted<sup>2</sup> by the authorities and MRP partners in Djibouti. On 14 June 2021, international media reported that a boat originating from Djibouti and carrying more than 200 Ethiopian migrants capsized in the Bab-al-Mandab strait. Although the number of victims could not be confirmed, MRP partners' mobile medical team recovered at least one body and local fishermen reported the recovery and burial of over 30 victims<sup>3</sup>.

In Yemen, stricter controls along the border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the protracted conflict in Yemen saw an increased number of migrants stranded in traditionally major urban transit hubs (Aden, Marib, Shabwa, Al Bayda, Sana'a and Sadah governorates). IOM estimates that more than 32,000 migrants are stranded in Yemen, the majority of whom are living in dire conditions with extremely limited or no access to essential services. Many of the migrants are held by smugglers for extended periods with significant protection risks and threats to their lives, safety, and dignity. Thousands of migrants in Yemen are also being held in detention centres, particularly in northern governorates.

In Ethiopia, forced returns from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that had been on hold since April 2020 resumed in September 2020 and had stabilized at 1,000 returns per week in January 2021. However, on 26 June, the rate of forced returns increased 15-fold, with over 2,000 returnees being brought back to Ethiopia on a daily basis. In Q2 a total of 20,656 returnees (2,689 females and 17,222 males including 88 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)) were received in Ethiopia from Saudi Arabia. Of those returned, 37 per cent were

from parts of Tigray region<sup>4</sup>. Amid a dramatic upsurge in the number of returnees, the conflict in the north, coupled with the onset of a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Ethiopia and MRP partners were hard-pressed to deliver the necessary post-arrival assistance.

In Djibouti, an increasing numbers of spontaneous returns were tracked along the shores of the Obock region from the 352 observed in Q2 2020 to 3,201 in Q2 2021. Voluntary humanitarian return (VHR) from Yemen to Ethiopia continues to be a priority for MRP partners who are determined to provide safe return to migrants in various situations of vulnerability. During Q2, MRP partners continued to provide protection case management, referrals, and relevant information to enable the returnees to make informed decisions in line with their needs.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iom.int/news/44-dead-after-smugglers-boat-capsizes-coast-djibouti>

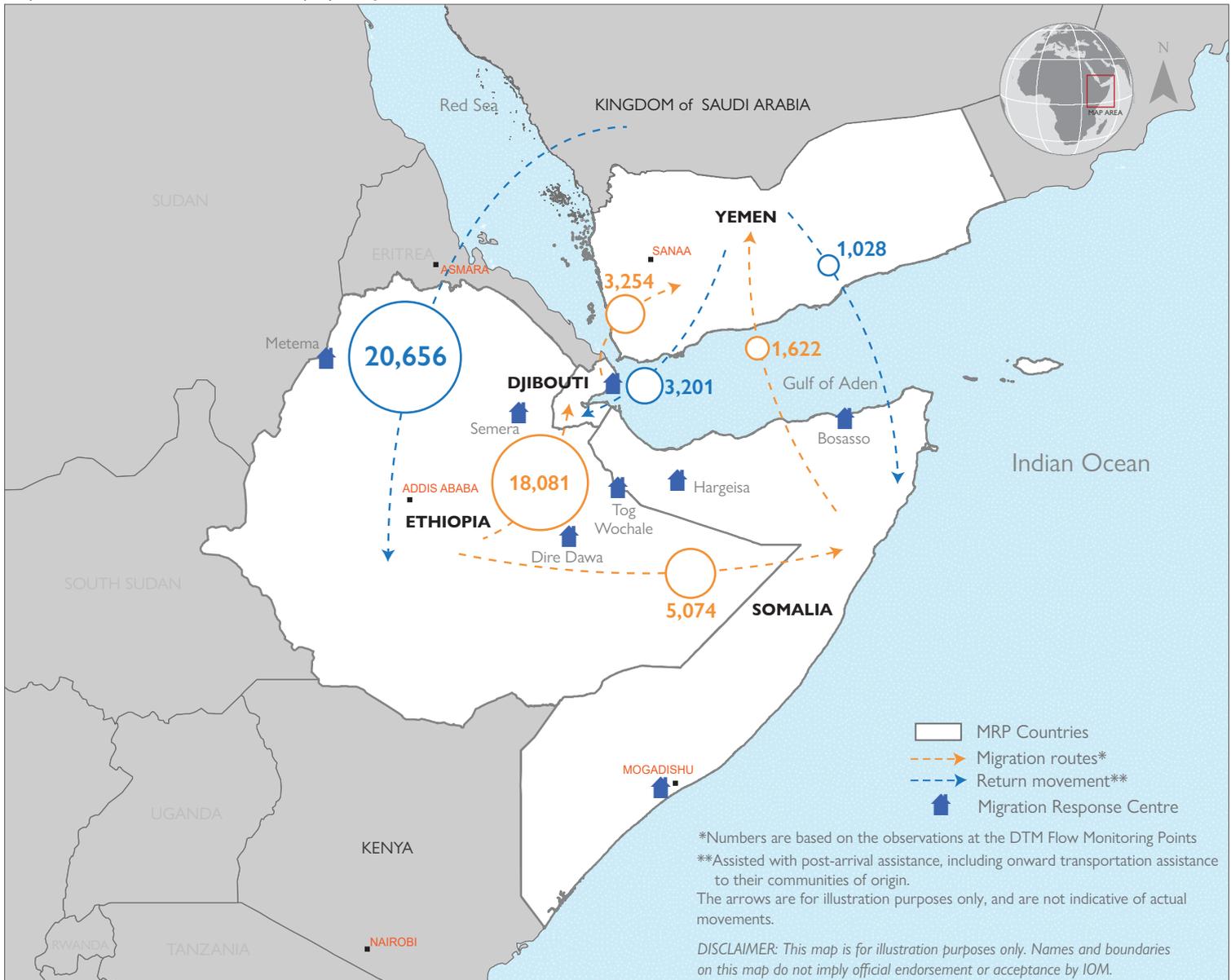
<sup>2</sup> The assistance included psychosocial counselling, temporary accommodation, food, water, and assisted return to Ethiopia in the weeks following the shipwreck.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/14/bodies-of-25-migrants-recovered-off-yemen-after-boat-capsized>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-ethiopia-appeals-usd-40-million-assist-additional-16-million-people-northern-ethiopia>

# Mobility Flows

Population Movements Overview | April - June 2021



Following the slight relaxation of mobility restrictions due to COVID-19, migrant arrivals in Yemen rose slightly in Q1 2021 (5,113) but fell again in Q2 (4,876). Part of the explanation is that the seas may have been too rough to cross safely during the later summer months. However, this represents an increase of 33 per cent as compared to the second quarter of 2020 when only 3,669 migrant arrivals were recorded in the wake of movement restrictions put in place by the authorities. The Yemen arrivals came from Somalia (1,622) and Djibouti (3,254). The majority of arrivals into Yemen were Ethiopian nationals (89 per cent), with the rest being Somali (11 per cent).

Contrary to previously observed trends, only 55 UASCs (1% of total movements) were tracked upon arrival in Yemen. This represents 13 per cent of all the children travelling, which is a significant decrease as compared to the 39 per cent recorded in the first quarter of 2021. The reduced figure of UASC arrivals also represents a drastic fall compared to the 77 per cent tracked in the second quarter of 2020.

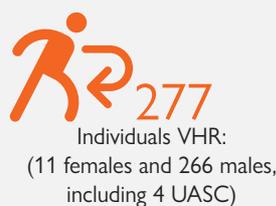
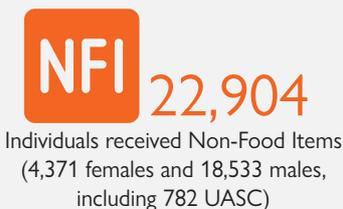
As of 30 June 2021, 1,646 migrants on their way to the Arabian Peninsula were stranded in Djibouti and had gathered at 11 spontaneous sites located along the migration route. All of them were Ethiopian nationals, and most were men.

In Somalia, IOM estimates that 250 migrants continue to be stranded in and around Bossaso, with few options available to continue their journeys or to return to their communities of origin.



IOM staff at the Migrant Response Centre in Hargeisa during an outreach activity. Copyright: Claudia Rosel Barrios / IOM 2021

# Strategic Objective 1 | Provide life-saving assistance to vulnerable migrants and host communities

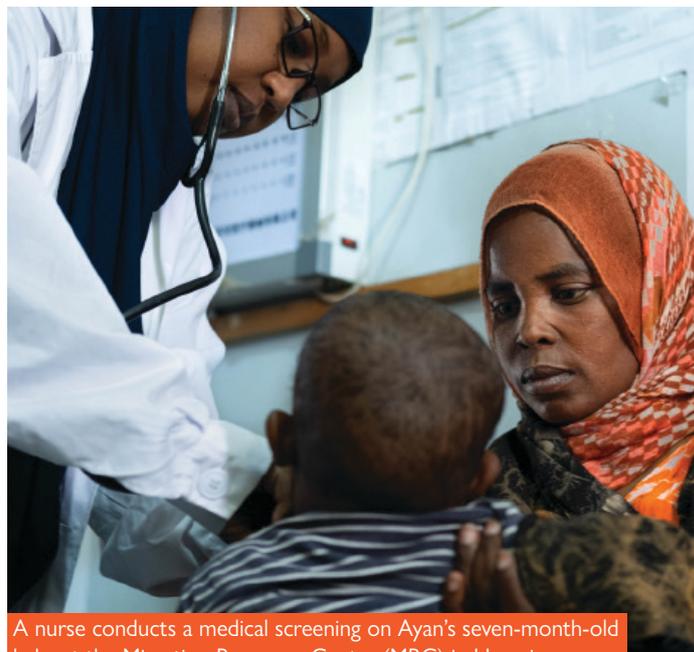


During Q2, MRP partners continued to provide life-saving assistance while also implementing COVID-19 mitigations, as well as engaging in awareness-raising campaigns, and providing personal protective equipment (PPEs) to migrants<sup>5</sup> in situations of vulnerability.

A total of 60,858 migrants (17,270 females, 43,588 males including 2,798 UASC) received life-saving assistance including registration, counselling, water, food, non-food items (NFIs), primary health care, and referrals to specialized care), along with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA), WASH services, accommodation and VHR across the MRP countries. The breakdown is as set out below:

- Djibouti, 6,495 (849 females, 5,646 males)
- Ethiopia 18,153 (3,498 females, 14,655 males)
- Somalia 18,294 (9,744 females, 8,550 males)
- Yemen 17,916 (3,179 females and 14,737 males)

In Ethiopia, the UASC received a range of specialized child protection services, including registration, detailed assessment, legal as well as health support, family tracing and reunification (FTR). For the FTR assistance, the UASC were accompanied by social workers and reunited with their families living in the Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR and Afar regions.



A nurse conducts a medical screening on Ayan's seven-month-old baby at the Migration Response Centre (MRC) in Hargeisa. Copyright: Rosel Barrios / IOM 2021

## OTHER FORMS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY MRP PARTNERS IN Q2 2021

**20,290**  
Vulnerable migrants received food distribution during the reporting period.



**4,685**  
Vulnerable migrants benefited from Water, Sanitation and Hygiene items, services and infrastructure



**22,904**  
Vulnerable migrants received Non-Food items



**258**  
Vulnerable migrants were referred to local health facilities for more serious medical conditions.



**514**  
Vulnerable migrants received Multipurpose cash allowances



<sup>5</sup> The assistance was provided through the Migration Response Centres (MRC), Migrant Response Points, mobile health teams, mobile health teams, way stations, points of entry and host communities.

# Strategic Objective 2

Provide quality, timely and inclusive protection assistance and services to migrants and host communities



Migrants were provided with Psychosocial support



Vulnerability Assessments conducted at the MRCs

128 VoTs

Victim of Trafficking supported with rehabilitation packages (12 females, 116 males and 79 UASC)



Migrants were registered at the MRCs (16% females and 84% males)

In Ethiopia, during the reporting period, 128 victims of trafficking (12 females, 116 males including 79 UASC) were supported with rehabilitation assistance, including FTR for the UASC, protection and reintegration support through partner shelters such as Agar Ethiopia Charitable Society, Hope for Justice, and Good Samaritan Association. Also provided was a once-off cash assistance to 13 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) who were returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. MRP partners provided financial support to the shelters to improve comprehensive service provision to victims of trafficking and migrants in vulnerable situations.

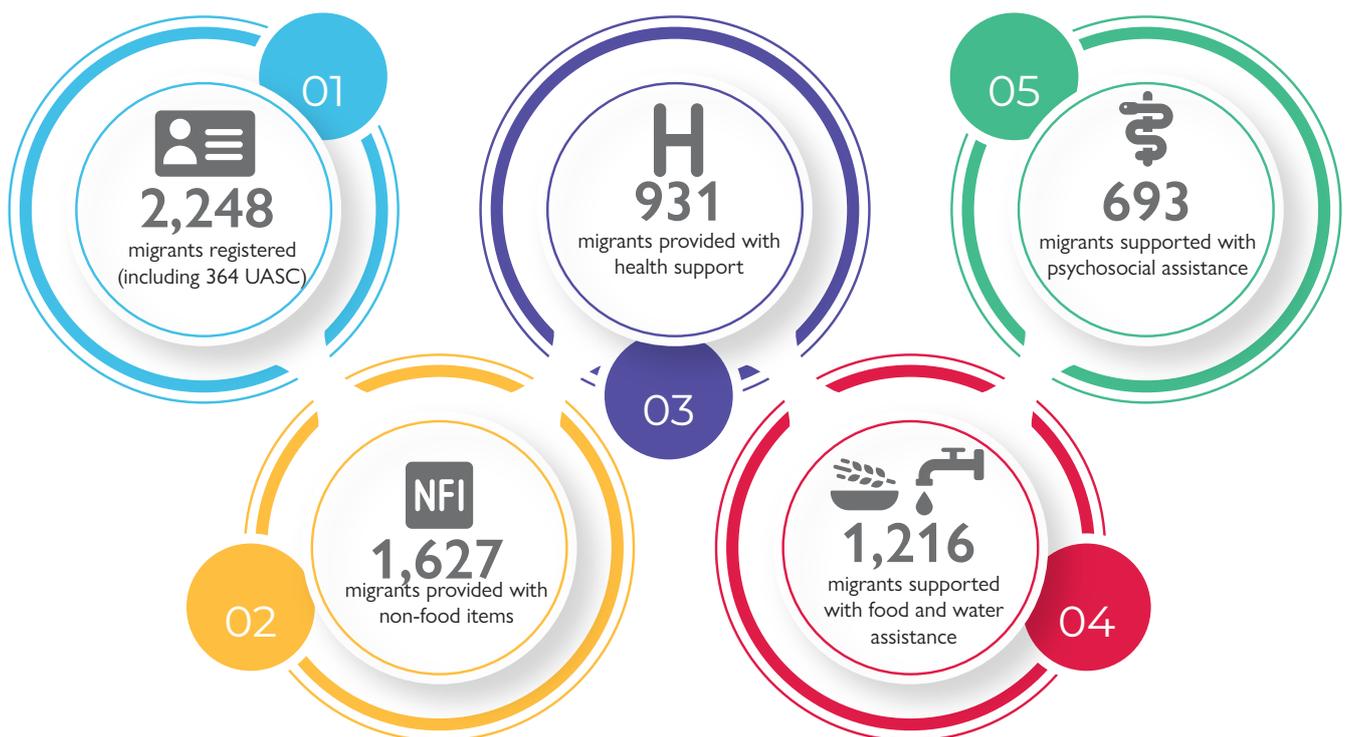
In addition, one new Transit Centre was established in Ethiopia while the existing Transit Centre in Addis Ababa was improved following the set-up and equipping of child-friendly counselling and interview rooms with appropriate materials and furniture.

During the reporting period, MRP partners in Ethiopia supported 103 child returnees (11 girls, 92 boys) and 247 vulnerable children (130 girls and 117 boys) with economic reintegration packages that included training on basic entrepreneurship skills, financial literacy, life skills empowerment, and lessons on successful transition into adolescence.



Reception and registration of returnees from Djibouti at the IOM Transit Centre in Addis Ababa. Photo: ©Kennedy Njagi / IOM 2021

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS THROUGH MRCs



# Strategic Objective 3

Strengthen access to return, sustainable reintegration, and community stabilization



Benefitted from house-to-house hygiene promotion activities on COVID-19 prevention messages



Community Development Projects  
28,630 Individuals benefited from CDPs



Migrants benefited from AVR support



Individuals benefited from Sustainable Reintegration & Economic Empowerment Opportunities

In Q2, in Djibouti, MRP partners collaborated with the Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry (DAF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Fisheries, Livestock and Fisheries Resources to conduct a training on the appropriate techniques for tree planting and maintenance at the MRC in Obock. The training was held on 22 June and six MRC staff members participated. The overall objective was to provide skills for the MRC staff to establish and maintain a green garden in the MRC. Migrants at the MRC will also be empowered with garden maintenance skills and at the same time tending the garden will provide them with something to do during their time at the centre. The saplings produced will also be transplanted to Obock city and its surroundings in partnership with the local authorities.

In Somalia, MRP partners concluded the community-based reintegration project "Sustainable Livelihood & re-Integration through Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET), Skills Training in Farming and Apiculture implemented by Hano Academy". Over the seven-month

project period, a total of 50 individuals (17 male returnees, 3 female returnees, 5 male host community members, 25 female host community members) were equipped with beekeeping and agroforestry skills and supported to create a Village Savings and Loans Association. 50 beehives were raised and stacked and 4,000 trees were planted.

In Yemen, MRP partners promoted participatory and community-centred approaches at grassroots level and engaged local communities through involving community members and local leaders in decision-making processes to ensure ownership and accountability to the affected populations.

## Awareness Raising Campaigns

During the reporting period, several information campaigns and sensitization activities on the topic of migration and the dangers of irregular migration were organized in the MRP countries as follows:

In Djibouti, three activities were held in May and June 2021:

- Children hosted at the Caritas centre participated in an awareness raising workshop on children's rights and the risks of irregular migration. The children were actively engaged through painting and drawing activities on the subject matter;
- More than 600 people attended comedy shows and watched a play on migration ("Cher voisin", shown at the French Institute of Djibouti and in the Community, Development Centres of Ali-Sabieh and Obock) organized by MRP partners in collaboration with ORION troupe;
- Three workshops dedicated to the writing of poetry, and short stories on migration by 30 young aspiring writers. In addition, three evenings of storytelling on migration were organized for the benefit of 22 school children from Djibouti City.

In Ethiopia, the Community Conversation Groups (CCG) established by MRP partners in collaboration with the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs facilitated 1,047 community conversations (with 416 females and 631 males) on safe migration.

In Somalia, 7,055 individuals benefitted from house-to-house hygiene promotion activities on COVID-19 prevention messages, and a total of 5,842 individuals received hygiene kits.



MRC, Obock, Djibouti, May 2021. Migrants gather outside the MRC to be registered by IOM and ONARS staff for assistance and AVRR to Ethiopia. Copyright: Alexander/IOM 2021

During Q2, Flow Monitoring (FM) activities and surveys continued to produce evidence-based data of internal flows and trends in the MRP countries along the Eastern Route.

A total of 19 FM reports and six migrants' presence dashboards were released in Q2:

Djibouti: 3 FM reports and six bi-weekly migrants presence dashboards: <https://dtm.iom.int/djibouti>;  
Ethiopia 3 FM reports: <https://dtm.iom.int/ethiopia>;  
Somalia: 10 BPFM reports: <https://dtm.iom.int/somalia>;  
Yemen: 3 FMPs <https://dtm.iom.int/yemen>.

## Surveys/Assessments/Research

### UNHCR and the Mixed Migration Centre

In Somalia, UNHCR in collaboration with the Mixed Migration Centre published the 4MI (Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative) reports in June 2021, on the dynamics affecting movement and protection risks within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 2,600 refugees and migrants at various entry and transit locations in Puntland and Somaliland were interviewed. The key findings highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 on their journeys and the associated protection risks. The majority of respondents indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had increased the risk of arbitrary arrest/detention and forced returns during the journey<sup>6</sup>.

### Regional Data Hub

IOM's Regional Data Hub (RDH) and WFP conducted a joint study report titled "Life Amidst a Pandemic: Hunger, Migration and Displacement in the East and Horn of Africa" - which explores the impacts of COVID-19 and the impact of COVID-19 containment measures on migrant workers, as well as on remittance-dependent households and the forcibly displaced, while also exploring the pandemic's implications on people's mobility, food security and other livelihood outcomes in major migration and hunger hotspots across the region.

The key findings indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) has further weighed down a region already reeling from conflict and insecurity, extreme weather conditions, climate change and more regular outbreaks of insect pests. Furthermore, the pandemic has placed major strain on mobility, public health, and the economic development of countries in the EHOA.

Additionally the results from the research revealed a direct connection between the COVID-19 pandemic and migrants finding themselves stranded and at odds with the immigration regulations in the countries of transit and destination. Consequently, thousands of migrants have become irregular, unable to safely return to their communities of origin while lacking support from the authorities and host communities.

### Migration Environment and Climate Change, (MECC)

On 25 May, IOM, as the Convening Agency, co-organized<sup>7</sup> the launch of the first regional Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Joint Programme in the East and Horn of Africa<sup>8</sup>, "Addressing drivers and facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration in the context of disasters and climate change in the IGAD region."

The Joint-Programme has a strong multi-partnership and multi-stakeholder approach and will bring together various parts from Governments in the region, UN agencies, and other entities, in line with the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)'s core principles of whole-of-government and whole-of-society engagement in advancement of migration governance. Presiding over the virtual launch was the IOM Director General Antonio Vitorino whose presentation followed guest speakers who introduced climate change push factors along with the policy landscape suitable for addressing climate change and disaster-related migration in the IGAD region.

The launch gathered 140 participants from key partners, stakeholders such as UN agencies, the donor community, and the broader civil society. Learn more about the Joint-Programme [here](#).

### Save the Children

Save the Children conducted several studies on children and youth migrants in the EHOA. The research findings provided comprehensive analysis and recommendations for mitigating violence among children and youth. Summaries from the researches are set out below:

- Conflict and violence and mixed migration flows of children and youth in the EHOA: The main findings indicate that smugglers are deeply entrenched in migrants' social networks within local communities. Such is the demand for their services that 92 per cent of migrants who had used the smugglers reported that either themselves, friends or relatives had voluntarily made the initial contact. [Conflict and Violence and Mixed Migration Flows of Children and Youth in East and the Horn of Africa | Resource Centre \(savethechildren.net\)](#)
- The political economy of mixed migration flows of children and youth in the East and Horn of Africa: The key findings highlighted the complexity and the multi-layered reasons for mixed migration, including the socio-political realities such as community, ethnicity, access to information and personal decision-making processes, including the influence of friends and family, gender norms and the experience of violence in the home. [The Political Economy of Children and Youth in East and Horn of Africa | Resource Centre \(savethechildren.net\)](#)
- Stakeholder mapping in mixed migration flows of children and youth in east and the horn of Africa: The research focused on Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan and included mapping stakeholders with the intention of strengthening the understanding of formal and informal actors, including government departments and service providers whose actions have implications for children on the move. Results from the research showed that the most significant gaps in service provision that children and young migrant face are in the areas of medical assistance, psycho-social care and support, legal assistance, and safe accommodation for both women and children. [Stakeholder Mapping in Mixed Migration Flows of Children and Youth in East and Horn of Africa | Resource Centre \(savethechildren.net\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-refugees-and-migrants-moving-through-puntland-somalia/>

<sup>7</sup> The launch was co-organized with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), UNHCR, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Secretariat.

<sup>8</sup> The project includes some of the MRP countries-member states of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development – IGAD (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda).

Several meetings were held at the regional and country levels

### Regional Coordination

One Regional Coordination Committee technical forum meeting was held in Q2, and the discussion centred on the establishment of the Strategic Objective 2 Working Group, funding challenges faced by MRP partners and MRP partners proposed the need to develop a resource mobilization strategy.

### Country Level Coordination

In Djibouti, one UN Migration Network meeting was held at the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) level to review and validate the draft workplan. The UN Migration Network is co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and IOM. Its objectives are interlinked to the MRP and in this vein, the network will be one of the coordination platforms for the MRP.

In Ethiopia, during the reporting period, MRP partners participated in the UN Migration Network coordination meeting that was convened to develop a Joint UN Work Plan on Migration (2021-2022). During this forum, pertinent issues pertaining to mixed movements in Ethiopia were discussed among the key stakeholders. The Joint UN workplan was endorsed by the UNCT on 18 June 2021 and members expressed their readiness to engage more closely on the topic of migration management and the GCM implementation.

In Somalia, several migration management coordination meetings were held through the Mixed Migration Task Force, the main platform for addressing mixed movement situations, with a protection-centred approach.



Migrants returning from Yemen who were rescued in the desert are assisted by IOM to go to the Migration Response Centre in Obock Djibouti for further assistance. Copyright: Wilson Johwa / IOM 2021.

# Capacity Building

A vital component of the MRP is providing capacity building support to governments in the region. Such support includes providing equipment, improving access to technology for more coordinated migration management processes and protocols, building existing migration management capacities and strengthening the ability to protect migrants in vulnerable situations.

In Djibouti, several capacity building initiatives were conducted by MRP partners as set out below:

- A two-day virtual workshop on the review and finalization of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for vulnerable migrants was organized from 15-16 June 2021 and discussions included issues on child protection, food and material assistance, medical and psychosocial support, reproductive health, and GBV. Contributions from representatives of government, civil society, and UN agencies who participated in the workshop will be included in the final NRM structure. The NRM will also include a mapping of actors who can provide assistance to vulnerable migrants across Djibouti with the aim of enabling a quicker and more efficient response.
- Two training workshops on the identification and assistance to victims of trafficking were organized by MRP partners in May 2021, targeting 39 border and patrol agents (6 females and 33 males). The purpose of the training was to enhance the capacity to identify and provide assistance to victims of trafficking in persons.
- In response to the increased number of shipwrecks observed in the first half of 2021, MRP partners donated equipment to the Djiboutian Coast Guard (200 body bags, 120 life jackets, 15 first aid kits) and to the Prefecture (office equipment) in June 2021. The equipment is meant to facilitate the conduct of search and rescue operations at sea, along with dead body management.

In Ethiopia, MRP partners conducted several capacity building initiatives as set out below:

- One vehicle was donated to the Attorney General's Office, the National Partnership Coalition (NPC) and Regional Partnership Coalitions. The vehicle will support the work of the NPC which oversees the coordination of migration management among government and non-government actors.
- Twenty policymakers (4 females and 16 males) attended a half-day webinar organized by MRP partners on 27 May 2021 with the objective of familiarizing government officials with the role of labour attachés in promoting ethical recruitment practices and protecting migrant workers and their families.
- MRP child protection partners held a two-day workshop designed to strengthen the identification and provision of assistance to victims of human trafficking and smuggling for 31 task force members (7 females and 24 males) in Hararegea, a town in Oromia Regional State.
- Two hundred and twenty-eight health officials, volunteers, and community workers (118 females and 110 males) were trained on a wide range of MHPSS-related topics in Mekelle. It is envisaged that the community workers will use the skills acquired, to supplement the efforts of humanitarian actors in providing timely psychosocial support to populations in need, including Tigray returnees.



Sanitizing tunnel donated to the Ethiopia Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency Copyright: IOM 2021

- The World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with MRP partners and Mekelle University, conducted four trainings focused on strengthening technical capacity in the region to provide holistic MHPSS services and standardized post-rape medical management in emergency settings. The training was attended by 33 participants (9 females and 24 males) from academic institutions, government health facilities, non-governmental health facilities, among others.

In Somalia, 54 government officials (16 females and 38 males) from the the departments of Immigration, Coast Guards and Police and other partners were trained on counter-trafficking and in detecting and countering the smuggling of migrants.

## CHALLENGES AND PREDICTIONS FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

Partners in Yemen continue to face restrictions in operating an independent Migrant Response Point as well as in scaling up efforts to provide comprehensive support to the protection of migrants. In Djibouti, MRP partners face constraints in providing assistance to the increased numbers of migrants in need of immediate humanitarian assistance and protection as the MRC in Obock can only host up to 250 migrants at a time.

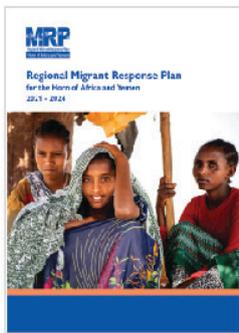
Looking ahead to the next quarter, MRP partners foresee COVID-19 mobility restrictions remaining in place and continuing to affect migration flows on the Eastern Route. The pressure to ensure the safe return of stranded migrants will increase as significant caseloads of vulnerable migrants remain in Yemen and other countries of transit and destination. Forced returns from Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia are expected to continue at the rates seen towards the end of Q2.

The MRP remains underfunded, with only USD22,5 million of the USD99 million 2021 appeal having been raised by the end of the second quarter.

## ABOUT THE MRP

The regional Migrant Response Plan (MRP) for the Horn of Africa and Yemen 2021 – 2024 is an inter-agency migrant-focused humanitarian and development response strategy for vulnerable migrants from the Horn of Africa, specifically Somalia and Ethiopia, transiting through Djibouti, moving to and from Yemen. It provides an essential strategic framework to ensure a whole-of-society, whole of-route, and whole-of-government approach to addressing migrants' protection needs, risks and vulnerabilities. The MRP is led by IOM's Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa based in Nairobi. MRP partners include intergovernmental and non-governmental actors working in close collaboration at the regional and country levels to set strategic objectives, determine yearly operational priorities and budgets, support country offices in implementation through capacity building and technical support, and identifying challenges and trends that inform partners' responses.

## Publications



[Download](#) the four-year Regional Migrant Response Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen 2021-2024 and 2021 Appeal.



[Download](#) the Regional Migrant Response Plan Mid-Year Update: January - June 2020



[Download](#) the Regional Migrant Response Plan Quarterly Update: July - September 2020



[Download](#) the Regional Migrant Response Plan Quarterly Update: October - December 2020



[Download](#) the Regional Migrant Response Plan Quarterly Update: January - March 2021

## MRP Partners and Donors



## Contact Information

IOM Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa

[RONairobiPIU@iom.int](mailto:RONairobiPIU@iom.int)