

Displaced Minorities

Part I: Migration and displacement trends of Somali, Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and other migrants in Jordan

April 2017

Introduction

Donor conferences in London (2016) and Brussels (2017) have strengthened international commitments to support Jordan in its efforts to protect and assist more than 1.3 million Syrians living within its borders, of whom 658,000 are registered refugees.¹ Despite the importance of addressing the needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan, a focus on Syrians has overshadowed the equally important needs of refugees and other migrants from other countries living in the country. Among the 2.9 million non-Jordanians living in Jordan are 728,000 refugees and asylum seekers from 41 countries registered with UNHCR.² Of these, 10,000 are Somali, Sudanese or Yemeni.³ Despite representing a substantial proportion of people in need of assistance in Jordan, these smaller population groups often receive insufficient attention and inadequate support, which some have argued is due to hierarchical aid distribution and a tendency to put nationality ahead of needs.⁴ Bringing together what is known from the limited literature and media reporting, this feature article examines migration and displacement from Somalia, Sudan and Yemen to Jordan, analysing the mixed motives for fleeing these countries, the routes taken, recent trends in arrivals and registration, and the intentions of these groups once in Jordan. Part II of this article (forthcoming) will elaborate on the situation faced by Somali, Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and other migrants living in Jordan, highlighting their specific humanitarian and protection needs. The articles form part of a larger project on displaced minorities in the Middle East, being undertaken by the Mixed Migration Platform (MMP), which will include a roundtable discussion, a rapid needs assessment, and further research.

Methodology

This article presents a review of the available secondary data on Somali, Sudanese and Yemeni refugees and other migrants in Jordan. Given the limited amount of reporting on these populations, the study supplemented desk research with a small series of key informant interviews carried out during the course of February-April 2017. Nine open-ended interviews were carried out in Amman with NGO staff, researchers and members of the focus communities. These interviews were exploratory in nature and conducted in order to triangulate information from secondary data, identify key issues and highlight information gaps.

¹ UNHCR (2017) Syria Regional Refugee Response: Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal, figures as of 5 April 2017. For more information on the refugee response framework in Jordan, see Government of Jordan (2016) The Jordan Compact.

² The Jordan Times (2016) Population stands at around 9.5 million, including 2.9 million guests, 30 January 2016.

³ UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheet, February 2017.

⁴ Davis, R., A. Taylor, W. Todman, E. Murphy (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan: Hierarchies of Aid in Protracted Displacement Crises, Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), MER 279, Summer 2016; ARDD-Legal Aid (2015) Putting Needs over Nationalities: Meeting the Needs of Somali and Sudanese Refugees during the Syrian Crisis, Briefing paper, March 2015; ARDD-Legal Aid (2016) Hidden Guests: Yemeni Exiles in Jordan, Protection Issues Report #1, May 2016.

Mixed motives: Fleeing conflict and poverty

Somalia, Sudan and Yemen continue to suffer some of the most violent conflicts in the world, inducing local, regional and international displacement. Civil war, human rights abuses and economic decline have affected parts of Sudan since the 1990s, triggering widespread displacement within the country, the region, and beyond.⁵ Likewise, Somalia has faced insecurity, conflict and economic troubles since 1991, and more recently, battled a severe drought putting many at risk of famine.⁶ As a result, millions of Somalis have been displaced internally as well as to nearby countries, including Yemen, Kenya, Egypt, Syria and Jordan.⁷ Although large-scale displacement from Yemen is more recent, escalating conflict since 2015 has caused upheavals to Yemeni society and economy, and shows few signs of abating. In addition to around two million internally displaced persons (IDPs), some 184,000 people have fled from Yemen to nearby countries, including both Yemenis and other foreign nationals previously living in Yemen.⁸ At the same time, refugees and other migrants from Ethiopia, Somalia and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa region continue to travel to Yemen, adding further complexity to the mixed migration context in the region.⁹

While Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis are displaced across the Horn of Africa, Gulf, and Middle East regions and beyond, Jordan is often seen as a suitable destination due to its relative stability, prosperity, access to services (particularly healthcare), and access to resettlement processes.¹⁰ Changes in the pattern of arrivals to Jordan have tended to align with changes in the displacement context in origin or transit countries. For example, as the displacement crisis in Sudan's Darfur region escalated between 2012 and 2014, the number of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan quadrupled, and has since stabilised as violence has receded in Sudan.¹¹ Similar dynamics are seen in Yemen, where an increase in Yemeni refugees in Jordan has coincided with the escalation in conflict since 2015.¹² At the same time, because of the variety of routes taken to reach Jordan, which often involve multiple and/or lengthy transit stops, clear causal links between the complex causes of displacement and the reasons Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis arrive in Jordan are difficult to isolate.

Routes to Jordan

Most Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis enter Jordan with valid visas obtained prior to arrival; overland or overseas smuggling operations directly into Jordan are understood to be limited.¹³ Where possible, Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis aiming to reach Jordan fly directly from their country of origin to Amman, or via a connecting airport. However, as access to formal entry points into Jordan directly from all three countries has been tightened in recent years due to security concerns, recent arrivals are reported to have attempted a wide range of alternative routes into Jordan. Such routes may involve the use of smugglers at earlier stages of the journey, for example to exit conflict zones, enter transit countries or to acquire documentation for onward movement.¹⁴ Despite the challenges of mapping clear geographical pathways from Somalia, Sudan and Yemen to Jordan, a number of common features can be identified among the range of individual migration and displacement experiences reported.

Yemenis

Since the escalation of conflict in March 2015, the ability to travel from Yemen to Jordan has become increasingly constricted. Prior to the conflict, Yemenis could fly directly from Sanaa to Jordan and obtain visas on arrival.¹⁵ After maintaining its open-door policy for one month, Jordan introduced new security measures in April 2015 to control Yemenis coming to Jordan. By December 2015, Yemenis were required to obtain visas prior to entry, and those in country without the requisite documentation (valid temporary residence, annual residence permit, or asylum seeker certificate) became

⁵ International Crisis Group (2017) Crisis Watch: Sudan; ACAPS (2017) Sudan: Crisis Analysis.

⁶ RMMS (2017) Famine's final blow: Somali refugees trapped by climate, politics and fatigue, 3 February 2017.

⁷ Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan.

⁸ UNHCR (2017) Yemen: Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan, figures as of 28 February 2017.

⁹ Refugees Deeply (2017) Desperate Red Sea Journeys: Refugees Pour Into and Out of Yemen, 28 March 2017; See also Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) for analysis of mixed migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen region.

¹⁰ Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan; Tiber (2016) Seeking Asylum, Again.

¹¹ OCHA (2017) Sudan: Darfur Humanitarian Overview, 1 January 2017; Reuters (2014) Darfur Conflict, 31 July 2014; Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan; IRIN (2014) Jordan's Other Refugees Feel Forgotten, 5 February 2014.

¹² ARDD-Legal Aid (2016) Hidden Guests: Yemeni Exiles in Jordan. Protection Issues Report #1, May 2016.

¹³ Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan.

¹⁴ Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

¹⁵ Middle East Eye (2016) Out of Aden: Yemeni refugees in Djibouti recall horrors of war, 24 June 2015.

liable to deportation.¹⁶ As such, although Yemenis are still able to travel to Jordan, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain the necessary visa. Moreover, air and naval blockades have severely restricted freedom of movement both in and out of Yemen.¹⁷ Despite opening for short periods over the past two years, the international airport at Sanaa has remained closed for the most part. Although international airports at Aden and Seiyun have been open for significant periods since 2015, ongoing insecurity and restrictions on travel between the north and the south of Yemen limit freedom of movement not only within the country, but also in and out of the country, especially for those trying to reach or leave the Houthi-controlled north.¹⁸ While smugglers operate boats to and from Djibouti, as well as overland routes to Saudi Arabia, the options are limited and dangerous.¹⁹ Despite barriers to exiting Yemen, some 184,000 people have managed to leave since 2015, and are now displaced across the region, in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan, as well as in Egypt and Turkey.²⁰ While for many these countries serve as destinations, some members of the Yemeni community in Jordan report having spent time in transit in these and other locations in the region, while waiting for a visa to enter Jordan regularly.²¹

Somalis

Similarly, multiple reports of Somalis using transit countries, including Yemen, Syria, Kenya, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates indicate that there is a high degree of complexity in the routes Somalis take before reaching Jordan. Moreover, there is variety in the length of time spent in transit, as well as the motives for moving onwards from the transit country. Some Somalis report spending only a short period in transit, often in order to access administrative procedures unavailable at home, ranging from the informal (smugglers and document forgers), to the semi-formal (doctors able to dispense medical certificates), to the formal (government authorities and embassies).²² For others, transit may last longer, in some cases starting as an indefinite stay in the country before evolving into a continued journey to a third country. One study found many Somalis in Jordan had spent long periods in displacement, often in Yemen or Saudi Arabia, before coming to Jordan when UNHCR increased its presence in the country due to the influx of Iraqi refugees in 2003.²³ Another study indicated that some Somalis who arrived in Jordan from Yemen had been forced to leave after 2015 for safer onward destinations.²⁴

Sudanese

Most Sudanese refugees in Jordan originate from conflict-affected Darfur. Despite initially fleeing conflict, many are understood to have arrived in Jordan on medical visas, before later registering with UNHCR.²⁵ Other Sudanese in Jordan had initially travelled for work, before deciding to stay due to the escalation of conflict at home.²⁶ Tighter restrictions on medical visas for Sudanese and a number of other nationalities since 2015 has limited their access to Jordan, although these rules were partly eased in February 2017 to reverse a decline in medical tourists.²⁷ While Sudanese are also included among those who have transited through a third country en route to Jordan, with cases via Iraq and Bahrain among those reported, the use of transit countries appears to be more common among Somalis and Yemenis than Sudanese.²⁸

¹⁶ ARDD-Legal Aid (2016) Hidden Guests: Yemeni Exiles in Jordan. Protection Issues Report #1, May 2016; Personal communication (4), Amman, 5 March 2017.

¹⁷ RMMS (2016) Country Profile: Yemen, May 2016.

¹⁸ Oxfam International (2016) Closure of Yemen's main airport puts millions of people at risk, 14 August 2016.

¹⁹ RMMS (2016) Country Profile: Yemen, May 2016; Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017.

²⁰ UNHCR (2017) Yemen: Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan, figures as of 28 February 2017; Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017.

²¹ Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017; Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

²² Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan.

²³ Davis, R. & Taylor, A. (2012) Urban Refugees in Amman, Jordan. Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM), Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS).

²⁴ Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017; Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017.

²⁵ Al Jazeera (2016) Jordan's Sudanese Refugees: 'We are tired,' 19 September 2016; Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan.

²⁶ Davis, R. & Taylor, A. (2012) Urban Refugees in Amman, Jordan.

²⁷ The Jordan Times (2017) Government facilitates entry of Yemenis, Sudanese for medical treatment, 2 March 2017; The Jordan Times (2017) Medical tourism conference concludes with 'Amman Declaration,' 4 March 2017; The Jordan Times (2017) Sudanese patients over 50 to be allowed to receive visas on border crossings, 26 February 2017.

²⁸ Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan.

Arrivals in Jordan: Recent trends

Sudanese

Since 2015, the number of Sudanese asylum seekers and refugees registered in Jordan has remained relatively steady at around 3,000, fluctuating slightly with new arrivals, births or departures. The biggest recent shift in the Sudanese population in Jordan occurred between late 2015 and early 2016, when hundreds of Sudanese were deported to Khartoum following a crackdown on protesters calling for better protection and assistance from UNHCR.²⁹ While the exact number of deportations is unclear, with estimates ranging up to 800, it is clear that the number of registered Sudanese refugees in Jordan shrunk from 3,514 in November 2015, before the deportations, to 3,033 in April 2016. As of February 2017, there were 3,322 Sudanese registered with UNHCR in Jordan.³⁰

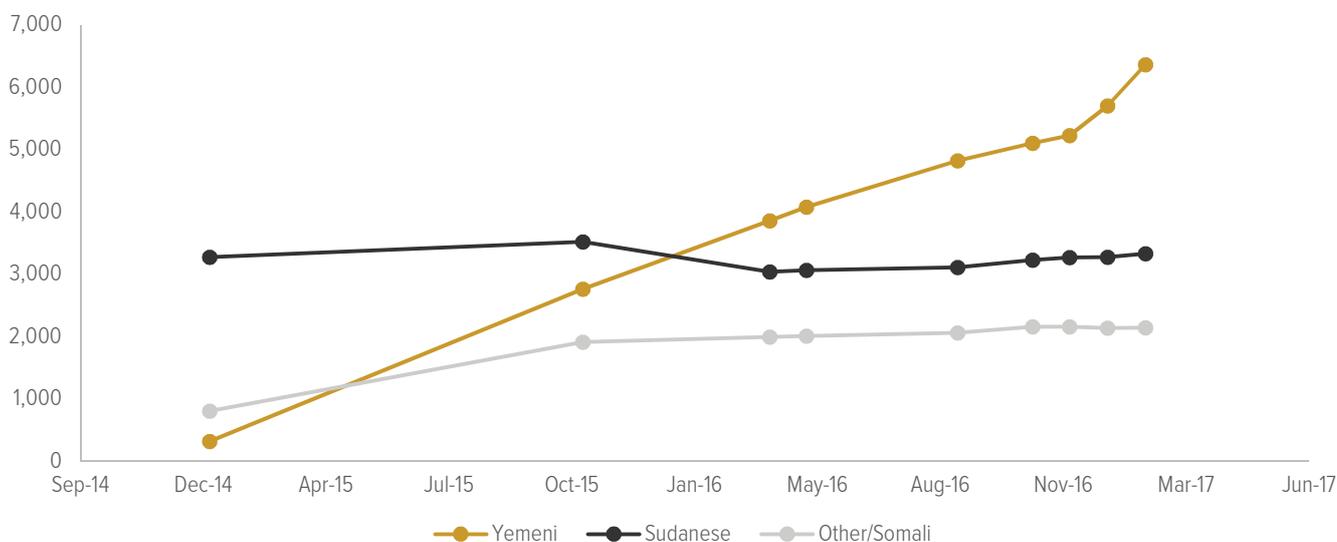


Figure 1: UNHCR Persons of Concern (Yemeni, Sudanese, Others (incl. Somali))³¹

Somalis

Although the total number of Somalis in Jordan is not regularly reported, the number of ‘registered asylum seekers and refugees of other nationalities’ grew from 1,901 in November 2015 and 2,136 in February 2017.³² Among this population are an estimated 800 Somalis.³³ Although some Somalis are reported to have arrived in Jordan having fled conflict in Yemen, where they had been living, the overall number of Somalis in Jordan has remained relatively static since 2015, with 797 Somalis reported to be registered with UNHCR in Jordan in January 2015, compared to 792 in March 2017.³⁴

Yemenis

In contrast to the protracted and relatively static nature of Somali and Sudanese displacement in Jordan, the number of Yemenis seeking asylum in the country is clearly on the rise. In January 2015, prior to the conflict, only 308 Yemeni asylum seekers and refugees were registered with UNHCR in Jordan. However, within six months of the conflict, 2,755 Yemenis

²⁹ Al Jazeera (2016) Sudanese refugees nervous after deportation from Jordan, 3 February 2016; New York Times (2015) Jordan Deports Sudanese Asylum Seekers, Spurring Outcry; 18 December 2015.

³⁰ UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheets November 2015, April 2016, February 2017.

³¹ Data from UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheets (available for: January 2015, November 2015, April 2016, May 2016, September 2016, November 2016, December 2016, January 2017, February 2017).

³² UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheets, November 2015, February 2017.

³³ Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017; Personal communication (8), Amman, 5 April 2017.

³⁴ UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheet, January 2015; Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017.

had registered with UNHCR. As the conflict and displacement has endured, the number of Yemenis registered with UNHCR has continued to grow steadily, reaching 6,360 by 2017.³⁵

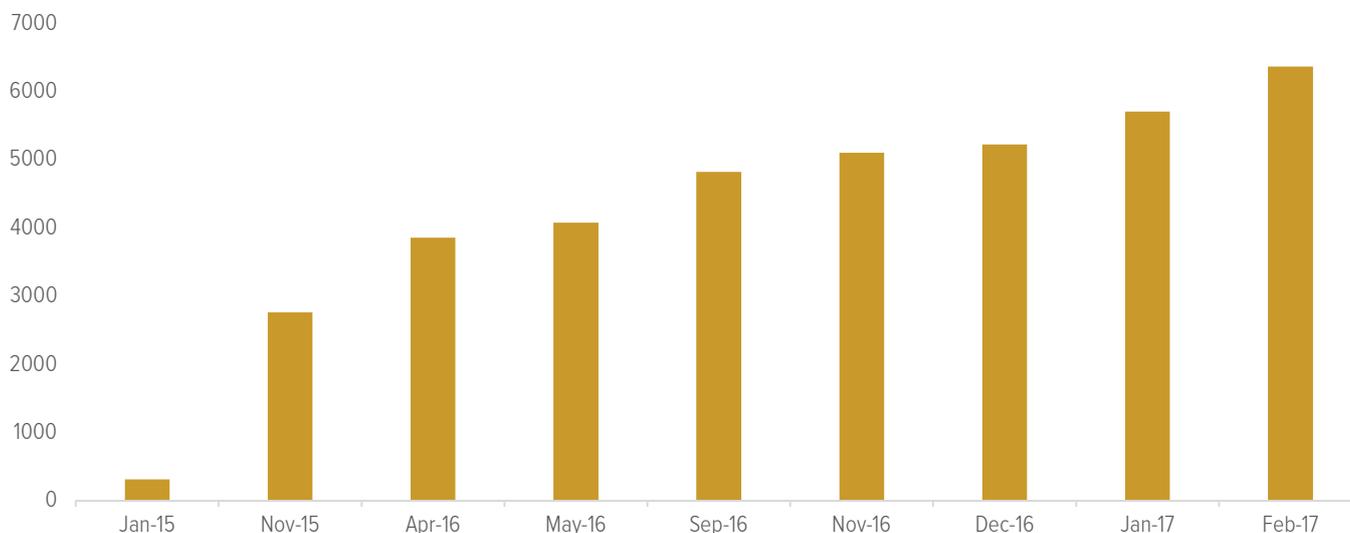


Figure 2: Yemenis registered with UNHCR in Jordan (selected months 2015-2017)³⁶

Growth in the number of Yemenis registering with UNHCR is only partly due to the arrival of newly displaced Yemenis since 2015. While significant arrivals from Yemen were reported during the initial months of the war, barriers to exiting Yemen and restrictions on entry to Jordan slowed flows after April 2015.³⁷ As such, the rising trend in the number of Yemenis registering with UNHCR in Jordan is also partly explained by the deepening vulnerability of those already in Jordan, who are no longer able to return home nor move onwards. The 2015 census estimated the number of Yemenis living in Jordan to be 31,163 – 0.33% of the total population.³⁸ Although not all Yemenis in Jordan seek international protection and assistance, increasingly vulnerable families among the Yemeni population, whether newly arrived or already in country, may be turning to UNHCR in the face of rising living costs, limited livelihoods opportunities, and an inability to return home due to the fear of violence and persecution, expense, or lack of travel routes.³⁹

Intentions and solutions

Registration with UNHCR

Once arrived in Jordan, whether directly or via a transit route, Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis must decide whether to register with UNHCR following the expiration of their entry visa. Without registering an asylum claim, or if it is rejected, not only are they ineligible for assistance, but they also face penalties for overstaying their visa, shifting their status from regular to irregular.⁴⁰ While UNHCR and the government have reportedly agreed to waive fines for resettlement cases, all others remain liable to pay the fine, which at 1.5 JOD per day, can increase substantially over a period of months and years. If the mandatory payment is not made, departure may be possible but will incur further penalties, including at least a ban on re-entry.⁴¹ As a result, not only do exit fees discourage voluntary return, but they also encourage those who owe them

³⁵ UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheets, November 2015, February 2017.

³⁶ Data points extracted from UNHCR Jordan Fact Sheets (available for: January 2015, November 2015, April 2016, May 2016, September 2016, November 2016, December 2016, January 2017, February 2017).

³⁷ Personal communication (8), Amman, 5 April 2017.

³⁸ The Jordan Times (2016) Population stands at around 9.5 million, including 2.9 million guests, 30 January 2016. Note that estimates prior to the census ranged from 35,000 in April 2015 to 50,000 in December 2015, ARDD-Legal Aid (2016) Hidden Guests: Yemeni Exiles in Jordan.

³⁹ ARDD-Legal Aid (2016) Hidden Guests: Yemeni Exiles in Jordan; Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.; Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017.

⁴⁰ Davis, R. et al (2016) Sudanese and Somali Refugees in Jordan; Davis, R. & Taylor, A. (2012) Urban Refugees in Amman, Jordan; Personal communication (4), Amman, 5 March 2017.

⁴¹ Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017.

to stay in irregular situations. Although owing fines does not prevent access to administrative and legal services (as it had previously), indebtedness and lack of status nevertheless enhance vulnerability, protection risks and liability to detention.⁴²

Registering with UNHCR does not eliminate these risks, but it does entitle the beneficiary to an asylum seeker certificate, which is necessary for any official assistance, refugee status determination, and ultimately, access to the resettlement process.⁴³ For Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis, refugee status determination is a lengthy process involving interviews and home visits, often made even more complicated by the fact that some Somalis and Sudanese enter on false documents (typically forged passports).⁴⁴ Delays are common and success is not guaranteed, resulting in perceptions that the system is unfair.⁴⁵ Although most Somali asylum seekers in Jordan have been granted refugee status, around one third of Sudanese have not, with some of these awaiting decisions and others having had their claims rejected.⁴⁶

While the asylum registration process is similar for Yemenis in Jordan, in practice they have approached it differently. In part this is because most of the 31,000 Yemenis in Jordan arrived before the war broke out, usually with no intention of claiming asylum.⁴⁷ However, some Yemenis who have arrived since the outbreak of war also decide not to register with UNHCR, even if intending to remain in Jordan in the medium-term.⁴⁸ One reason is a perception of low chances of success. Only around 180 (2.8%) Yemenis out of the 6,360 who have registered with UNHCR have been granted refugee status.⁴⁹ One Yemeni interviewee reported being told that because of the way the war in Yemen is classified, only those with evidence to support their claims of individual persecution can be granted refugee status.⁵⁰ Another deterrent to registration is a perception that the process takes too long, leaving some Yemenis hopeful the war will end before they can benefit from having refugee status, thereby deterring them from registering at all. According to one member of the Yemeni community, it can take over 18 months just to receive an initial asylum interview with UNHCR.⁵¹ Lastly, some Yemenis have preferred to concentrate on seeking alternative ways to move onwards from Jordan, such as through medical, study, or tourist visas, particularly to the US and/or EU countries.⁵² Nevertheless, despite an initial reluctance to enter the refugee status determination process in Jordan, since 2015 a growing number of Yemenis have been registering as asylum seekers as the conflict and displacement crisis continues in Yemen (see Figure 2).

Return

Intentions to return tend to differ not only between Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis, but also within these groups, making it difficult to deduce any trends among the complex range of push and pull factors that influence migration decisions. Nevertheless, limited evidence suggests Yemenis are more likely to be willing to return than Sudanese or Somalis, largely due to a combination of the unsustainable cost of living in Jordan, hope that the conflict will soon end, and the shorter time they have been displaced. According to aid workers assisting Yemenis in Jordan, many of the most vulnerable have already sought to return despite the dangers, or intend to return as soon as possible due to the high cost of living in Amman. Moreover, as some Yemenis' report that their savings are diminishing, and previously financially secure families grow increasingly reliant on negative coping mechanisms, the number of those considering premature return may be increasing.⁵³

Possibilities to return, however, are limited for Yemenis. For many, the dangers and fear of persecution remains high, as do the risks of violence and conflict.⁵⁴ Moreover, no voluntary return schemes are in place, as these cannot be considered a durable solution due to the high level of ongoing conflict.⁵⁵ Lastly, Yemenis who have the desire and financial means to return unassisted face limited ports of entry – for example, one Yemeni family wanting to return after medical treatment

⁴² Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017.

⁴³ Personal communication (1), Amman, 14 February 2017; Personal communication (2), Amman, 23 February 2017.

⁴⁴ Personal communication (1), Amman, 14 February 2017.

⁴⁵ Personal communication (8), Amman, 5 April 2017.

⁴⁶ Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017; Personal communication (9), MCC Jordan, Amman, 20 March 2017.

⁴⁷ The Jordan Times (2016) Population stands at around 9.5 million, including 2.9 million guests, 30 January 2016.

⁴⁸ Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁴⁹ Personal communication (5), ARDD-Legal Aid, Amman, 7 March 2017; Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017; Personal communication (9), MCC Jordan, Amman, 20 March 2017.

⁵⁰ Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017; Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁵¹ Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017; Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁵² Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁵³ Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017; Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁵⁴ Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁵⁵ Personal communication (8), Amman, 5 April 2017.

was prevented from doing so for six months, due to the closure of Sanaa airport and the strain and danger of taking the overland route to Sanaa via Aden.⁵⁶

By contrast, intentions to return are less commonly reported among Somalis and Sudanese, including Somalis displaced from Yemen. In one media report, a Somali woman, who had spent 15 years in Yemen prior to arriving in Amman, ruled out returning to Yemen due to the dangerous situation there.⁵⁷ In another, a Sudanese man said he would return only if forced; voluntary return was not an option due to fear of death or arrest.⁵⁸ From the limited reporting on Somali and Sudanese intentions, return appears to be considered a last resort, due to general concerns about safety and security at home.⁵⁹ Such concerns have proven well founded by reports that some of the 800 Sudanese deported to Khartoum in December 2015 faced intimidation and detention upon their return, with around 145 of the group already fleeing Sudan a second time, for Cairo, due to renewed persecution.⁶⁰

Resettlement

Rather than return, the intention to wait for resettlement appears to be more common among Somalis and Sudanese. Some Yemenis also report seeking resettlement, but many are still waiting for places given the long processing times.⁶¹ Until recently, resettlement of Somalis and Sudanese from Jordan had predominantly been to the US, with only a few hundred resettled to Europe. Some others have been resettled to Canada and Australia through private initiatives. However, a significant proportion of Somali and Sudanese communities in Jordan are made up of single men and few countries are prepared to accept people of this profile.⁶² Targets are correspondingly modest. UNHCR's goal for 2016 was to resettle 157 Sudanese refugees, some 7% of the total.⁶³ Although resettlement rates from Jordan are similar for non-Syrian and Syrian refugees, the length of time many Somalis and Sudanese have spent waiting generates perceptions of unfairness compared to the larger refugee groups. Moreover, rates may slow further before they speed up, as potential changes to US immigration policies are expected to limit resettlement of Somalis and Sudanese from Jordan.⁶⁴

Onward movement

Limited information on the intentions of Somali, Sudanese or Yemeni refugees to move onwards from Jordan through informal channels means it is unknown to what extent this option is being considered. However, following the 2015 deportation, Sudanese patience with poor conditions in Jordan and the slow resettlement process may be running out, pushing people to consider alternative options. Although only an isolated report, one Sudanese refugee has been quoted as saying he intends to smuggle himself into Iraq, then onward to Turkey, having lost hope that his emergency resettlement case, already ongoing for two years, will ever be successfully resolved.⁶⁵ Further research is needed to understand if and whether others are thinking of moving on, and if so, how and whether to assist them to migrate safely and securely, or to remain.

Conclusion

The movement of Somali, Sudanese and Yemeni populations to Jordan is marked by a complex interaction of push and pull factors, involving a mixed range of motives and multiple migratory routes, often via transit countries. For some, displacement from countries of origin due to conflict, poverty and/or natural disaster, has been followed by displacement from a third country for the same or similar reasons. For others, migration for medical, work or travel reasons has evolved into a situation of displacement, as conflict has cut off routes of return or the viability and safety of heading home. With over 10,000 Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis registered with UNHCR in Jordan, as well as many more outside the international protection system, it is imperative that efforts to address the needs of these minority displaced groups recognise the mixed nature of migration flows with the Horn of Africa and Yemen region, as well as from there to Jordan.

⁵⁶ Personal communication (6), Yemeni social worker, Amman, 13 March 2017.

⁵⁷ Tiber (2016) Seeking Asylum, Again.

⁵⁸ Tiber (2016) How does a refugee barred from working survive with no assistance?

⁵⁹ Tiber (2016) What are the options of a Somali refugee with an autistic son?

⁶⁰ Al Monitor (2016) Deported from Jordan to Egypt, Sudanese refugees are fleeing again, 8 March 2016.

⁶¹ Personal communication (7), Yemeni NGO worker, Amman, 23 March 2017.

⁶² Personal communication (1), Amman, 14 February 2017.

⁶³ Al Jazeera (2016) Jordan's Sudanese Refugees: 'We are tired,' 19 September 2016.

⁶⁴ Personal communication (1), Amman, 14 February 2017; Personal communication (8), Amman, 5 April 2017.

⁶⁵ Foreign Affairs (2016) Why Jordan Is Deporting Darfurian Refugees, 4 February 2016.

Despite refugees and other migrants reporting intentions ranging from return and resettlement to onward movement, addressing the humanitarian and protection needs of Somalis, Sudanese and Yemenis in Jordan remains as important and urgent as addressing the needs of Syrians, Iraqis and all other vulnerable groups in the country.

In addition to exploring the specific needs these groups face in Jordan, which will be addressed in Part II of this article (forthcoming), further action is needed in the following areas:

- Exploring possibilities for improved integration, including by waiving visa overstay fees, expediting refugee status determination, and ensuring access to services.
- Mapping of population locations and available assistance to better connect vulnerable groups with available assistance and support.
- Further analysis of population movement within Jordan (between houses, suburbs, cities, urban-rural, etc.).
- Deeper investigation of the routes taken, particularly the physical and mental strains involved in these journeys that could impact on needs once in Jordan, as well as the impact policies have on the routes taken.
- Forecasting the expected impact of an increase in new arrivals, registrations, or onward movement.