A Region on the Move

Migration Trends in the East & Horn of Africa, 2017
Drone image showcasing the kind of terrain Ethiopian migrants travel on near the Lake Assal region, Djibouti. Photo: Muse Mohammed/IOM.

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In 2017, migration in the East and Horn of Africa continued to be driven by a range of factors including conflict, insecurity, extreme weather conditions, political unrest, the youth bulge, and uneven economic growth. This report outlines key trends that have been observed, with a focus on forced displacement, mixed migration, and resettlement movements. Noteworthy developments on the policy front are also highlighted, including the adoption of instruments to promote the free movement of Africans on the African continent as well as consultations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM). Unless indicated otherwise, the East and Horn of Africa refers to Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania. The term migrant is used to cover people in mixed migration flows (including asylum seekers, people moving irregularly for economic reasons, trafficked persons, and refugees). If the caseload only refers to refugees or asylum seekers, it will be clearly indicated.

**EAST & HORN OF AFRICA MIGRATION STATISTICS DASHBOARD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burundi</th>
<th>Djibouti</th>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>South Sudan</th>
<th>Somalia</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Rwanda</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population (UN DESA, 2016)</td>
<td>10.5 million</td>
<td>942.3 thousand</td>
<td>102.4 million</td>
<td>40.5 million</td>
<td>12.2 million</td>
<td>14.3 million</td>
<td>14.5 million</td>
<td>11.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population ages 0-14 (% of total) (UN DESA, 2016)</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>41.10%</td>
<td>40.90%</td>
<td>41.90%</td>
<td>46.50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total number of international migrants residing in the country (UN DESA, 2017)</td>
<td>299.6 thousand</td>
<td>116.1 thousand</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
<td>1.1 million</td>
<td>845.2 thousand</td>
<td>44.9 thousand</td>
<td>1.1 million</td>
<td>443.1 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population (UN DESA, 2017)</td>
<td>2.80%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of emigrants who have left the country (UN DESA, 2017)</td>
<td>435.6 thousand</td>
<td>15.8 thousand</td>
<td>800.9 thousand</td>
<td>501.3 thousand</td>
<td>1.8 million</td>
<td>2 million</td>
<td>501.2 thousand</td>
<td>568.8 thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three largest immigrant groups by country of destination (UN DESA, 2017)</td>
<td>DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania</td>
<td>Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen</td>
<td>Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea</td>
<td>Somalia, Uganda, South Sudan</td>
<td>Sudan, Uganda, DRC, Ethiopia, Yemen, Eritrea</td>
<td>South Sudan, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda</td>
<td>Burundi, DRC</td>
<td>Burundi, Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Development Index Ranking [1 = High - 188 = Low] (UNDP, 2015)</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate of total population (ILO, 2017)</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>2.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth unemployment (ILO, 2017)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
<td>22.10%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
<td>22.10%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abdumalik is a 10 year old child migrant from Ethiopia. He came to Djibouti to try and find work to send money back to his village. Alone and homeless, Abdumalik sleeps on the beach along with several other Ethiopian migrants who are also looking for decent work. Photo: Muse Mohammed/IOM.
OVERVIEW

Political instability, protracted conflicts, insecurity, extremism, as well as drought and climate-related changes contributed to significant movement in 2017. As of 31 December 2017, refugee and asylum-seeker numbers stood at 5.22 million in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region, marking a 30 per cent increase from the beginning of the year (4.02 million). Similarly, internal displacement remained a humanitarian and development challenge, with an estimated 5.77 million IDPs in Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan in 2017. On the upside, the year saw some important developments. Key among them was the practical application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) by some East and Horn of African countries (the CRRF forms part of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants). In March, IGAD Member States adopted the Nairobi Declaration and Comprehensive Action Plan as a regional version of the CRRF, addressing the protracted Somali refugee situation. This was described as an unprecedented opportunity to connect the refugee policies of host countries with Somalia in a positive way. The Governments of Uganda and Ethiopia launched their CRFs in March and November, respectively. Djibouti, in turn, has begun to apply the CRRF. The government adopted a new and progressive refugee law in January 2017, which envisages a shift away from encampment and a move towards including refugees further in Djiboutian society.

Another development was UNHCR’s recommendation for the cessation of the refugee status of Rwandans who fled the country between 1959 and 1998 by 31 December 2017. Over 3.4 million Rwandans have returned home since 1984, with 17,097 returns taking place in 2017.

Meanwhile, the Government of Uganda, with the support of the United Nations, convened a ‘solidarity summit’ in June 2017 to rally support and fundraise for the South Sudan refugee situation, one of the largest and most complex emergencies in Africa. The ‘solidarity summit’ raised USD 358 million in pledges at its closing. While these developments are significant, displacement numbers in the region are rising and there are limited examples of successful durable solutions being achieved. The section below outlines forced displacement situations in select countries in the East and Horn of Africa region. They all highlight that the drive to adopt integrated, comprehensive, and well-funded responses remains critically important for the millions of people who have been forced out of their homes.

Somalia situation

The humanitarian crisis in Somalia is the result of a combination of natural and man-made factors. While large-scale famine was averted in 2017, the impact of prolonged drought conditions will have reverberating effects in 2018. According to UNOCHA, 3.3 million Somalis will require urgent life-saving assistance in 2018. More than one third of those in need are internally displaced persons (IDPs). IDP numbers stood at an estimated 2.1 million in 2017, with more than one million newly-displaced in 2017 alone. The reasons for displacement are primarily drought-related, followed by conflict/insecurity and other factors, including flooding and the outbreak of disease.

Between May and June 2017, IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) rolled out its Emergency Tracking Tool covering 1,548 IDP sites in 26 districts in Somalia. During these assessments, IOM found that the majority of people displaced were children and women, with 35 per cent of respondents reporting that they had not received humanitarian assistance. The largest concentration of IDPs is in Mogadishu, followed by other urban centres, which take the form of informal and unplanned settlements. The living conditions in these sites are poor and IDPs generally lack adequate access to food, shelter, basic services, and are particularly vulnerable to protection-related risks, as well as unannounced evictions.

With regard to forced migration across international borders, 843,725 Somali refugees and asylum-seekers were hosted in the East and Horn of Africa as well as Yemen as of 31 January, 2018. About 33 per cent are hosted in Kenya, 30 per cent are hosted in Yemen, and 29.7 per cent in Ethiopia. In 2017, UNHCR recorded 35,409 Somali refugee returnees from Kenya (75,297 Somali refugees have returned to Somalia from Kenya between 2014, the year that UNHCR began a pilot project supporting returns to Somalia, and 2017). In addition, UNHCR recorded 5,487 Somali refugee returnees from Yemen in 2017 (34,990 Somali refugees have returned from Yemen between 2015, the year that the Yemen conflict began, and 2017).

South Sudan situation

The economic, political, and social crisis in South Sudan raged on in 2017 despite numerous peace talks, repeated ceasefires, and considerable diplomatic efforts to broker peace. Since December 2013, more than four million people have been displaced internally and across the country’s borders. Children and women reportedly make up 85 per cent of those displaced. Regarding refugees, the country has been described as ‘almost...emptying itself’. As of December 2017, 2.43 million South Sudanese had fled to neighbouring countries. A grim milestone was reached in August when the one millionth South Sudanese refugee crossed into Uganda. This influx earned the title of the fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world and contributed to Uganda’s becoming the third-largest refugee-hosting country after Turkey and Pakistan.

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Many of the South Sudanese who have remained in South Sudan are extremely vulnerable because of the political, economic, and social crisis, which has seen widespread human rights violations. The population is also highly reliant on humanitarian food assistance. In February 2017, famine was declared in parts of South Sudan, with 100,000 people facing starvation and a further one million classified as being on the brink of famine. Although famine was checked by multi-sector humanitarian assistance, there were reports in February 2018 that 150,000 people in various parts of the country could face famine, with food insecurity at an “unprecedented level”. IDP numbers in South Sudan stood at an estimated 1.9 million in December 2017, up from 1.61 million in June 2016. Many South Sudanese have sought protection in Protection of Civilian (PoC) and other sites (with more than half a million South Sudanese biometrically registered in such sites in November 2017). The mobility into and out of these sites remains fluid, according to the seasons, location, intensity of conflict, and as people try to maintain connections to land and property. The overwhelming majority of IDPs seeking protection continue to point to insecurity as the reason for their displacement. However, most live outside of Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)-assessed locations, including in host communities in hard-to-reach locations. Ensuring that these groups are also provided with protection as a priority is more critical than ever after years of not receiving services.

Providing aid to the extremely vulnerable population in South Sudan is a dangerous endeavour. More than 90 aid workers have been killed since the beginning of the conflict, with nine killed in November 2017 alone, making it the most dangerous month for aid workers since December 2013. Moreover, humanitarian service delivery is increasingly disrupted by active conflict in the areas of greatest need, bureaucratic and physical access impediments, threats to safety and security of humanitarian actors, as well as logistical constraints. There was an increase in humanitarian access incidents in 2017 with 1,160 incidents reported. This is a 28 per cent increase from the number reported in 2016 (908).
IOM constructs boreholes at the El Salam displacement camp in Rubkona, South Sudan, to provide clean water for the community. Photo: Amanda Nero/IOM.
**Burundi situation**

There are currently over 427,000 Burundian refugees hosted across the region,39 393,317 of whom fled the country after the political crisis began in April 2015.40 The majority who fled after 2015 are hosted in Tanzania (58.4%), with smaller numbers in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Uganda.41 The ‘crowded global landscape of crises’37 has meant that the Burundi situation has been one of the least-funded refugee crises in the world.42

While Burundian refugee arrivals in neighbouring countries are expected to reduce in 2018,43 those hosted in camps live in difficult conditions where they face insecurity as well as food and water shortages. They also have limited access to health and education services.44 Prolonged underfunding has greatly affected reception capacities and has strained the asylum space.45 In the first half of 2017, Tanzania, Uganda, and DRC all stopped granting refugee status on a prima facie basis.46 Tanzania also decided to reassess its decision to grant citizenship to a residual caseload of Burundian refugees who fled the country in 1972, and it announced its withdrawal from the CRRF in January 2018 (despite adopting a roadmap for the implementation of the CRRF in November 2017).

In July 2017, the Government of Burundi issued a call encouraging Burundian refugees to return. To support the spontaneous returns,43 issued a call encouraging Burundian refugees to return. The Government of Burundi announced its withdrawal from the CRRF in November 2017, which was also a decrease from the previous month (189,000 in October). In December’s round of data collection, natural disasters were identified as the primary reasons for displacement followed by the socio-political situation. 81 per cent of the displaced were women and children under 18 years.47

**DRC situation**

Although DRC is not covered by IOM’s Regional Office for the East and Horn of Africa, it features in this report because many Congolese have fled to neighbouring countries. Over 470,000 refugees from DRC are hosted in Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya.48 In 2017, the humanitarian situation in DRC deteriorated dramatically. A massive escalation of conflict and widespread insecurity were the major contributors to forced movement, which was compounded by deadly floods as well as the worst cholera epidemic in 15 years.49

Over 1.9 million people were newly displaced in 2017, primarily in the Kasai, Tanganyika, and Kivu regions.49 At the end of December 2017, there were 4.49 million IDPs in DRC (the highest number in an African country), of which more than 60 per cent were children. 55 per cent of the IDPs were found in three provinces: North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika, all of which are in the troubled eastern part of the country.50

In 2018, the humanitarian outlook remains grim. An estimated 13.1 million people will require humanitarian assistance and 7.7 million people are food insecure (with 1.9 million children suffering from acute malnutrition).51 Humanitarian actors aim to provide 10.5 million people with humanitarian assistance in 2018, which is a 48 per cent increase from the numbers targeted in 2017. To meet the extreme need, an appeal for USD 1.68 billion was launched in January 2018, which is the largest ever for the country.52

Congolese refugees speaking to UN officials have identified forced recruitment, violence, rape, and murder perpetrated by armed groups as reasons for fleeing to neighbouring countries. Armed groups also pose a serious threat to UN peacekeepers. In early December 2017, 14 Tanzanian peacekeepers were killed in an attack by an armed group, which was described as the worst attack on UN ‘blue helmets’ in recent history.53 If the fighting continues, the region is bracing itself for increased refugee flows. There are already indications of an upward trend, with 34,000 new refugee arrivals in Uganda from DRC in the first two months of 2018.54 New flows will inevitably add to the significant number of Congolese refugees currently hosted in the region, the majority of whom live in Uganda.55

**Ethiopia situation**

Over the last two years, conflict and drought have contributed to significant internal displacement in Ethiopia, with conflict being the primary driver. Between November and December 2017, IOM identified 1,078,429 conflict-affected and 528,658 climate-affected IDPs, as well as 89,658 people displaced by other factors.56 Tensions between Ethiopia’s Somali and Oromia ethnic groups, as well as a flare-up of violence in September 2017 contributed significantly to this displacement. The unrest, which saw an escalation in the last quarter of 2017, revolves around disputes over resources between the two ethnic groups as well as the unresolved division of administrative units between their respective regions.57

Humanitarian actors are facing substantial challenges in responding to what has been a rapid escalation of internal displacement, while the political context, seen most recently in the resignation of Prime Minister Desalegn and the declaration of a new state of emergency, introduces an additional dimension of complexity. The government is planning to address the conflict displacement by supporting return to areas of origin and resettlement, of which the voluntariness, safety, security, and durability will have to be closely monitored.

With regard to refugees, Ethiopia continues to be one of the world’s largest refugee-hosting countries with over 847,200 refugees from 19 countries, the majority of whom come from South Sudan.58

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*An IDP woman and her child walk in the new section of the IDP camp in Doolow, Ethiopia. Photo: Muuse Mohammed / IOM*
The gap between global refugee resettlement needs and quotas set by resettlement countries continued to grow in 2017. UNHCR estimated that nearly 1.2 million refugees needed resettling globally in 2017, with an estimated 93,200 places available in resettlement countries. This gap has been attributed to fluctuations in country quotas, which has been linked to heightened attention to national security and the politicization of migration and refugee flows. In 2017, UNHCR described the situation for refugees from sub-Saharan Africa as particularly acute, with limited places available for more than half a million refugees who are in need of resettlement.

Resettlement assistance provided by IOM globally

Globally, IOM provided 135,729 individuals with resettlement assistance in 2017, which was a 32 per cent decrease from the number assisted in 2016 (200,638). In 2015, 125,195 individuals received IOM resettlement assistance.

Outlook for 2018

Resettlement movement from the East and Horn of Africa will continue for the foreseeable future. It is expected that the United States will continue to be the largest resettlement country for the region based on an admissions ceiling of 22,000 per fiscal year. The vast majority of individuals will continue to depart from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Resettlement to Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom is also expected to continue. By country of origin, UNHCR projects that over 300,000 refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, and South Sudan will be in need of resettlement in 2018. This makes up over 50 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa’s needs.
Overview

Mixed flows continued to be a prominent feature on the East and Horn of Africa’s migration landscape in 2017. Consistent with previous years, the most popular route out of the region by volume was eastwards: across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to Yemen with onward movement to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. In 2017, it was estimated that at least 99,516 migrants crossed into Yemen from the Horn of Africa. This is a reduction from the 117,107 migrants recorded to have made the journey in 2016. The route’s continued popularity – despite crossing Yemen’s devastating war zone – is remarkable and underscores the extent that migration is viewed as an economic strategy by some migrants and communities.

Turning south, the route to South Africa continued to be popular, particularly for young Ethiopian males. However, data published in 2017 indicated that the number of Ethiopians and Somalis entering the Republic of South Africa (RSA) irregularly has reduced by between 21 and 30 per cent in recent years. Possible reasons put forward for the decline include xenophobia and policy changes aimed at curbing irregular migration to RSA, as well as the perception, particularly between 2013 and 2016, of Europe as a more attractive destination. On the other hand, the number of Ethiopian migrants in detention in transit countries could indicate that migrant flows along the southern route have not declined, but are at the levels estimated in 2009 (between 17,000 and 20,000 migrants entering RSA per year).

Looking north, Europe continued to hold its allure for migrants. However, a combination of actions taken in transit countries contributed to a significant reduction in the numbers that arrived on its shores in 2017. There was a 52 per cent drop in recorded overall arrivals on European territory via various irregular routes when compared to 2016 figures. Consistent with these broader arrival patterns, there was a 66 per cent reduction in the number of migrants from the Horn of Africa who were registered as arriving in Italy in 2017 when compared to 2016.

Eastward bound: the forgotten maritime migration route

Size of the flows

It is estimated that at least 99,516 migrants crossed into Yemen from the Horn of Africa in 2017. Recorded arrivals in 2016 were higher, with 117,107 migrants making the journey. It is possible that the decrease in recorded numbers is a result of a reduction in migrant monitoring and data collection activities on Yemen’s shores. Remarkably, however, the civil war in Yemen has not stemmed flows from the Horn. In fact, the record-breaking numbers reported in 2016 took place in the midst of the conflict.

Bi-directional flows on the eastern route

Similar to previous years, migrants/refugees continued to escape the war in Yemen by fleeing to neighbouring countries. Between 2015 and October 2017, UNHCR recorded 37,428 arrivals in Djibouti from Yemen, 14,602 in Ethiopia, and 40,044 in Somalia. A total of 190,352 individuals are registered as arriving in Italy in 2017 when compared to 2016 figures. Consistent with previous years, migrants/refugees arrived on its shores in 2017. There was a 52 per cent drop in recorded overall arrivals on European territory via various irregular routes when compared to 2016 figures. Consistent with these broader arrival patterns, there was a 66 per cent reduction in the number of migrants from the Horn of Africa who were registered as arriving in Italy in 2017 when compared to 2016.

Profile of migrants on the eastern route

Data collected by Migrant Response Centres (MRCs) operated by national governments, IOM, and other partners in the Horn of Africa gives some insight into the profile of migrants using the eastern route. In 2017, 6,580 contacts were registered at MRCs, out of which 80 per cent were adults and 20 per cent of were children. 77 per cent of the contacts were male and 23 per cent female. Of the children contacts registered, 28 per cent were unaccompanied. A fair number of the 6,580 contacts had attempted the journey before (21%), and 64 per cent planned to send remittances to their families and friends. The vast majority of contacts registered at MRCs have been Ethiopians (99.6 per cent of the 10,958 contacts registered between August 2016 and December 2017 were Ethiopians). One possible reason that registrations are heavily represented by Ethiopians is because other nationalities might seek support from other humanitarian actors in the region. Somalis, for example, are often considered ‘refugees’ and are supported through UNHCR programmes.
Obaa practices his acrobatic moves on the beach in the morning. As an Ethiopian migrant, he came to Djibouti when he was a child looking for work. Photo: Muse Mohammed/IOM
Motivations for moving and intended destinations

The 6,380 contacts registered at MRCS in 2017 gave multiple answers for their reasons for migrating. Limited economic opportunities in their place of origin/usual residence was the most popular reason (58%), with poverty also featuring frequently (25%). In contrast, war/armed conflict (7%), family reunification (7%), political reasons (2%), and human rights violations (1%) were less common reasons. A noteworthy development was a spike in the number of contacts registered in the Semera MRC between September and December 2017. This corresponded in timing with clashes that broke out in Ethiopia’s Oromia and Somali regions.

The vast majority of contacts (74%) identified KSA as their intended destination. Somalia and Ethiopia were the next popular destinations at 14 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively. The majority of contacts planned on engaging in income-generating activities at their destinations, with seasonal work and contacts primarily based their choice of route on family recommendations (49%), and middlemen (29%); other less popular factors included the routes’ perceived safety and affordability. Most contacts’ mode of transport was walking (46.2%), followed by vehicle (34.3%), and then a mix of walking, vehicle, boat, and air (19.1%). Those arriving at MRCS reported a range of immediate needs. Psychosocial support (27%), food and water (26%), as well as emergency shelter (22%) were the most mentioned needs. The contacts reported that they experienced various hardships. The majority of these were a lack of basic needs, such as shelter, food, and water (51%). Other concerning experiences that were described included paying bribes (6%), forced labour (4%), and imprisonment/detention (3%).

In line with the above, beatings, sexual assault, and kidnappings are well-documented experiences that migrants face along the eastern route. Dying mid-journey – by drowning, because of the harsh terrain, or at the hands of smugglers – is also a real risk. This is clearly seen in the events from 23 January, 2018, when at least 30 people were reported to have drowned because a boat carrying 101 Ethiopians and 51 Somalis capsized after gunfire was reportedly used against the passengers. The incident took place off the coast of Yemen and it is reported that the boat was operated by smugglers.

Choice of route and experiences en route

KSA scales up activities to curb irregular migration

In March 2017, KSA announced that all irregular migrants should leave the country within 90 days. Those who left within the grace period would be exempt from the KSA’s deportee fingerprint system as well as fines and penalties linked to violating the Kingdom’s immigration and labour laws. Migrants who took advantage of the amnesty and voluntarily left would still have the option to return through regular channels in the future. The amnesty period was extended four times, with the last one ending in November 2017. According to media reports in February 2018, the KSA authorities arrested 562,963 migrants for violating Saudi labour, residency, and border security laws since November 2017 (when the amnesty period ended). In addition, a total of 7,996 people were apprehended while attempting to enter KSA irregularly, 29 per cent of whom were reported to be Ethiopians.

IOM estimates that 130,000 Ethiopians have returned to Ethiopia from KSA between March 2017 and March 2018. Since the end of the amnesty period in November 2017, an average of 2,800 irregular migrants have been deported to Ethiopia each week. By 13 March, 2018, IOM Ethiopia had registered and profiled 106,016 arrivals (73% male and 27% female). At the time, it was estimated that between 17,000 and 20,000 Ethiopians and Somalis engaged smugglers to take them to RSA per year. But an RMMS report published in 2017 suggests that the number of migrants leaving the Horn of Africa on the southern route dropped to between 14,750 and 16,850 per year in recent years, with an estimated 13,400 to 14,050 entering RSA. In contrast, some practitioners on the ground have suggested that the number of migrants using the southern route has not declined, but is still at the levels estimated in 2008/2009 (between 17,000 and 20,000 migrants entering RSA per year). This is based on the large number of Ethiopian migrants held in detention in Tanzania (which is just one transit country) as well as strong indications that relatively few migrants are actually intercepted by authorities while en route.

Detained while pursuing the ‘southern dream’

The Government of Ethiopia estimates that over 500,000 Ethiopians reside in KSA and that there are many Ethiopian migrants held in detention awaiting deportation.

IOM also recorded an increase in the number of Somalis deported by KSA authorities to Somalia by air in 2017, 25,796 Somalis were forcibly returned by the KSA authorities in 2017, compared to 16,623 in 2016 and 20,732 in 2015. It is unclear whether KSA’s activities to curb irregular migration will reduce the size of flows along the eastern route. If past trends hold, there is unlikely to be much effect. In late 2013/early 2014, the KSA authorities conducted a similar exercise, which resulted in the expulsion of more than 163,000 Ethiopians from the Kingdom. Arrival in Yemen are reported to have decreased in early 2014. However, by the end of the year, there was a 40 per cent increase in the number of irregular migrants arriving on Yemeni shores, with record numbers reported in 2016.

IOM’s 2009 publication ‘In Pursuit of the Southern Dream’ lifted the lid on the vibrant smuggling business operating from the Horn of Africa to the Republic of South Africa (RSA). At the time, it was estimated that between 17,000 and 20,000 Ethiopians and Somalis engaged smugglers to take them to RSA per year. But an RMMS report published in 2017 suggests that the number of migrants leaving the Horn of Africa on the southern route dropped to between 14,750 and 16,850 per year in recent years, with an estimated 13,400 to 14,050 entering RSA. In contrast, some practitioners on the ground have suggested that the number of migrants using the southern route has not declined, but is still at the levels estimated in 2008/2009 (between 17,000 and 20,000 migrants entering RSA per year). This is based on the large number of Ethiopian migrants held in detention in Tanzania (which is just one transit country) as well as strong indications that relatively few migrants are actually intercepted by authorities while en route.


Notes: The Missing Migrants Project tracks incidents involving migrants, including refugees and asylum-seekers, who have died or gone missing in the process of migration towards an international destination. Figures from the Horn of Africa and Yemen from 2015 to 2017 were calculated using data from the Missing Migrants Project. However, the figures are likely to be much higher because migrant deaths often occur in remote areas and on routes chosen with the explicit aim of evading detection.
Migrants in detention in Tanzania

The detention and imprisonment of irregular migrants is common in the region. It is used to deter irregular migration, as punishment (because irregular migration is viewed through a criminal lens), and because there are no real alternatives to detention being implemented.91

Tanzania’s geographic location makes it a key transit country for irregular migrants on the southern route. As per its national laws, unlawful entry/stay, as well as migrant smuggling, are offences and anyone convicted of these is liable to either fines or imprisonment. Many irregular migrants are unable to pay the fines once convicted and are imprisoned, with some estimates placing the number of detained/imprisoned migrants in Tanzania at more than 1,000.

Profile of Ethiopian migrants detained in Tanzania

In November 2017, IOM conducted a series of detention monitoring visits in Tanzania. During this period, 618 out of 858 Ethiopian migrants in four prisons were interviewed. Most of the migrants were adults, but over one quarter were unaccompanied children (158), with some being as young as 14 years old. The vast majority were male (99%) and in their teenage years to early twenties, which is consistent with the general profile of migrants making the journey south. All the interviewed migrants identified RSA as their final destination. They had hopes for a better future, with many looking to work in retail, restaurants, and as truck drivers. No migrant reported that a fear of persecution forced them to leave Ethiopia.

Cost of the journey south and experiences en route

In keeping with the pattern seen along other routes, the price paid for the journey was considerable.92 Each migrant paid a smuggler/agent between USD 3,000 and 4,300 for the journey, which in turn confirms the commercial viability of the route (RMMS recently estimated that it generates up to USD 47 million per year).93

The migrants and their families/friends paid the smuggling fees by using personal savings, selling assets (land, cattle, and other property), or through contributions and loans. In exchange, the smugglers procured fraudulent documentation, arranged for accommodation and vehicles (trucks/buses/boats), provided food and water (which was usually insufficient and/or contaminated), and identified the routes used. Smugglers were predominately used to facilitate the journey.

The migrants reported that the smugglers physically assaulted them, lied about the journey’s duration or its irregular nature, stole their money, starved or denied them water, and temporarily or permanently abandoned them in remote areas. This type of ill-treatment sometimes had fatal consequences, which is seen in the fate of eight Ethiopian men whose bodies were discovered near a remote Tanzanian village in the Rukwa region in mid-2017.

At the time of being interviewed by IOM, a number of migrants had not received treatment for skin rashes, scabies, wounds, fungi, and boils because of medication shortages in prisons. Others complained of hearing problems, headaches, coughs, as well as chest and lung pain. With their journeys cut short, the detained migrants were poorer than when they first headed south. Most could not pay the conviction fine of USD 225 and were forced to serve prison terms, which ranged between three months and three years.

IOM, with funding from the European Union and in cooperation with the Governments of Tanzania and Ethiopia, will repatriate 300 of the most vulnerable Ethiopian migrants in detention in 2018. These migrants will receive reintegration support upon their return to Ethiopia.

Getting to Europe at all costs

Arrivals in Europe

Arrivals in Europe via various irregular routes fell sharply in 2017 when compared to previous years. At least 186,76894 migrants arrived by sea and land, which marks the first time that numbers fell short of the 200,000 threshold last seen in 2013.95 In 2016, an estimated 390,43296 migrants arrived compared to 1,007,49297 in 2015. The latter year went on record as the highest migration flow to Europe since World War II.98

In keeping with the falling trends, 10,674 migrants from the Horn of Africa were registered as having arrived in Italy by Italy’s Ministry of Interior in 2017. This compares to 31,466 Horn of Africa migrants who were registered in 2016, marking a 66 per cent reduction.99 It is noteworthy that there was an 80 per cent decrease in the number of Horn of Africa migrants registered in Italy in 2017 when compared with the number registered in 2015 (54,226).
Profile of migrants from the Horn of Africa arriving in Italy

Of the Horn of Africa migrants registered by Italy’s Ministry of Interior, adult males comprised the largest group in 2017, which is consistent with 2016’s arrivals. Of the children who were registered as arriving in 2017, a staggering percentage were unaccompanied (91%). This forms part of a broader pattern of large numbers of unaccompanied migrant children making the journey to Europe, including reports of an unprecedented number arriving in 2016. A total of 15,779 unaccompanied children (of various nationalities) were registered as arriving in Italy in 2017, which was 13 per cent of all arrivals.

Table 2: Arrivals in Italy in 2017, Horn of Africa migrants
Source: Italian Ministry of Interior, 2018
Notes: Percentages are rounded off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Arrivals</th>
<th>Adult male</th>
<th>% of Adult male</th>
<th>Adult female</th>
<th>% of Adult female</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>% of Children</th>
<th>Unaccompanied Children</th>
<th>% of Children unaccompanied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horn of Africa migrants</td>
<td>10,674</td>
<td>6,032</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2,145</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2,497</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,261</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Arrivals in Italy in 2016, Horn of Africa migrants
Source: Italian Ministry of Interior, 2018
Notes: Percentages are rounded off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Arrivals</th>
<th>Adult male</th>
<th>% of Adult male</th>
<th>Adult female</th>
<th>% of Adult female</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>% of Children</th>
<th>Unaccompanied Children</th>
<th>% of Children unaccompanied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horn of Africa migrants</td>
<td>31,446</td>
<td>17,729</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7,087</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6,630</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5,817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Arrivals to Italy in 2015, Horn of Africa migrants.
Source: Italian Ministry of Interior, 2018
Notes: Percentages are rounded off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Arrivals</th>
<th>Adult male</th>
<th>% of Adult male</th>
<th>Adult female</th>
<th>% of Adult female</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>% of Children</th>
<th>Unaccompanied Children</th>
<th>% of Children unaccompanied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horn of Africa migrants</td>
<td>54,226</td>
<td>36,061</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>12,031</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6,134</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4,469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Migrant deaths in the Mediterranean

IOM recorded 3,116 migrants as dead or missing in the Mediterranean in 2017, compared to 5,143 in 2016, 3,783, in 2015, and 3,283 in 2014. More than 400 children were reported to have died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean in 2017.
Cost, duration, and destinations of Europe-bound Horn of Africa migrants

In 2017, IOM carried out a DTM survey in Italy which provides insight into the cost, duration, and destinations of Europe-bound migrants. 499 migrants from the Horn of Africa were interviewed, of which 89 per cent were males and 11 per cent were females. The interviewed migrants were generally young, with an average age of 21 years, with more 17-year-olds being interviewed than any other age.

Similar to what is observed along other routes, the majority of Horn of Africa migrants paid a high price for the journey to Italy, with over 44 per cent reporting that they paid more than USD 5,000.

According to the DTM survey, Italy was the most popular destination for the Horn of Africa migrants, with 41 per cent identifying it as their intended destination at the time of being interviewed. 18 per cent identified Germany, while 10 per cent identified the U.K, and another 10 per cent identified Switzerland (other countries were also identified).

For the majority (57%), the journey to Italy lasted more than six months from the time of their departure from their country of origin or usual residence. 21 per cent said it took them between two weeks and three months to arrive, 15 per cent reported that the journey lasted between three and six months, while 7 per cent reported that the journey took them less than two weeks.

The protracted journey for the majority of interviewed Horn of Africa migrants is concerning in light of IOM’s research, which indicates that a lengthy trip increases vulnerability – the longer it lasts, the higher the predicted probability that a migrant will suffer an experience indicating human trafficking or other exploitative practices.105

War/conflict and personal persecution/violence were the most cited reasons Horn of Africa migrants gave for making the journey to Europe. Figure 11 provides an overview of the different reasons given by migrants.

**Figure 10:** Cost of journey to Europe, Horn of Africa migrants
Source: IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Survey 2017 in Italy

**Figure 11:** Reasons for moving provided by Horn of Africa migrants (%), multiple answers possible
Source: IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Survey 2017 in Italy

Notes: A distinction is made between initial reasons for leaving the country of origin and reasons for leaving the country of departure (where the latter is different from the country of origin). 44 per cent of the respondents had spent one year or more in a third country before resuming the journey to Europe.
Vulnerabilities experienced during the journey

IOM research in 2017 found that migrants travelling along the central Mediterranean route were more vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking when compared to migrants using the eastern Mediterranean route. The former route, which has Libya as the departure point to Europe, is the preferred choice for migrants travelling from the Horn of Africa.

IOM’s research singled out Libya as a country where migrants are most vulnerable to potential human trafficking and other exploitative practices. For some migrants, the experience in Libya is simply ‘hellish’. Throughout 2017, IOM, rights organizations, and media houses reported on horrific abuses against migrants, including arbitrary detention, forced labour, kidnapping, physical assault, extortion, sexual exploitation/assault, deprivation of food/water, and slavery.

Libya’s migrant detention system has been described as ‘broken beyond repair’ by rights and humanitarian organizations, and IOM has called for detention centres (both official and unofficial) to be closed and replaced with open centres. In November 2017, an estimated 19,900 migrants were held in facilities controlled by Libya’s Department of Combatting Illegal Migration. According to Amnesty International, thousands more migrants are held in places of captivity run by militias and criminal gangs. In 2017, 19,730 migrants returned home via IOM’s voluntary humanitarian return assistance programme, which is one of the few solutions available to stranded migrants in Libya.

Overall, 621,706 migrants (in regular and irregular situations) were identified in Libya by IOM’s DTM in December 2017. Of these, 14,797 were nationals of East and Horn of Africa countries.

Displaced women seated under tree during a post-distribution monitoring focus group in Oromia region, Ethiopia. Photo: Rikka Tupaz/IOM
The free movement of Africans on the continent was high on the African Union’s agenda in 2017. Under the auspices of the AU, key negotiations were held during the year, which paved the way for the adoption of the continental ‘Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment’ (continental Free Movement Protocol) and its ‘Draft Implementation Roadmap’ in January 2018.115

The continental Free Movement Protocol aligns with the AU’s aspiration for an integrated continent, where facilitated movement of Africans will create employment, support intra-Africa trade and investment, foster tourism, increase remittances, and support the use of human and material resources for the continent’s self-reliance and development.116

The AU also adopted the Decision on the Establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) in January 2018, which was combined with the commitment of 23 AU Member States to immediately implement the Yamoussoukro Decision.117 The SAATM will be key to supporting sustainable development by reducing air transport costs in Africa, facilitating the movement of persons, boosting intra-African trade, and increasing air connectivity. This is supported by research by the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) which projects that if 12 African countries opened their skies to each another, airfares would drop by up to 35 per cent, an extra five million Africans would afford to fly, an additional 155,000 new jobs would be created, and USD 1.3 billion would be added in GDP.118

A key development at the regional level was IGAD’s launch of a process to establish a regional Free Movement of Persons Protocol covering the East and Horn of Africa bloc, which took place in July 2017. National consultations with stakeholders were held in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda in 2017, with further consultations slated to take place in Djibouti and Ethiopia, and a second round in South Sudan from 2018. The negotiations on the draft regional Protocol are expected to start once the national consultations have been finalized. Apart from focusing on the Protocol’s provisions, the negotiations are likely to consider how to balance overlapping Regional Economic Community (RECs) memberships (some states are members of COMESA, the EAC, and IGAD), as well as the need to ensure coherence with the AU continental Free Movement Protocol. Importantly, the latter does not prevent regional economic communities (like IGAD) from granting more favourable provisions in their regional free movement instruments or proceeding with implementation at an accelerated pace.119

Signing of the AU Continental Free Movement Protocol

During the 10th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Rwanda on 21 March, 2018, 30 Member States signed the continental Free Movement Protocol (see Table 5 for an overview of East and Horn of Africa countries that signed the Protocol). This surpassed the minimum number of signatures for its entry into force (it will enter into force 30 days after the Chairperson of the Commission receives the 15th instrument of ratification). Since the Protocol is open for signature, more countries are expected to sign it in due course.

AU Member States to relax visa requirements by December 2018

Member States party to the continental Free Movement Protocol will implement it progressively, along a phased trajectory.

1 Right of Entry and Abolition of Visas

2 Right of Residence

3 Right of Establishment

Phase one of the Protocol’s implementation will involve Member States relaxing visa requirements for citizens of other AU Member States by December 2018. This will include issuing visas on arrival to AU citizens and using simplified visa-processing procedures and mechanisms (such as e-visa online applications and multiple-entry/multi-year visas). It is also expected that the African Passport, which is provided for under the Free Movement Protocol as a tool to facilitate free movement as well as being a sign of Africa’s collective identity, will be issued by Member States to their citizens from 2018 onwards.120 By December 2023, AU Member States are expected to abolish visa requirements for AU citizens.121

Visa openness in Africa with a focus on the East & Horn

As highlighted by the African Development Bank, “Africa is one of the regions in the world with the highest visa requirements. This situation is even more restricted for Africans traveling within Africa, as compared to Europeans and North Americans.”122

Rwanda and Kenya forge ahead with visa relaxation in 2017

In 2017, Rwanda announced that it would issue 30-day visas on arrival to citizens of all countries, while allowing citizens of COMESA Member States 90-day visas on arrival. Before this, only citizens of African countries and a few others were eligible for visas on arrival. Some citizens, like those of EAC Partner States, continue to enjoy visa-free access to Rwanda.

In the case of Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta, during his inauguration speech in November 2017, announced that any African wishing to visit the country will be eligible to receive a visa on arrival.123 President Kenyatta also stated that citizens of EAC Partner States will be treated like Kenyans.
They will only need “identity card[s]...to work, do business, own property, and farm.” It is noteworthy that the commitment was made “with no conditions for reciprocity, but [is] driven by... [Kenya’s] desire for deeper regional integration.”127 Once implemented, the decision will be a watershed moment for regional integration in East Africa. However, some commentators have raised concerns about its potentially divergent effect on Kenyans and Kenya’s interests.128

**Outlook for 2018**

High on the agenda for the AU Commission in 2018 is the implementation of its action plan for the ratification, promotion, and popularization of the continental Free Movement Protocol. It is expected that the AU Commission will meet with members of the Pan African Parliament during their sessions as well as with AU RECs as part of this work. It is anticipated that at least 15 countries will deposit their instruments for the continental Free Movement Protocol to enter into force by June 2018. With regard to the African Passport, experts from the AU RECs met in Kigali in March 2018 to develop draft Guidelines and Specifications for the African Passport. The draft Guidelines will be considered by immigration officers from AU Member States before their adoption in the July 2018 Summit.

A separate but related development in 2018 was the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) agreement, which also took place in Kigali, Rwanda, on 21 March, 2018. The AFCFTA brings together 55 African economies into a larger more coherent market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments.129 The expected benefits of the AFCFTA include a 52 per cent increase in intra-African trade by 2022 and a 6 per cent increase in African exports to the rest of the world, significantly strengthening Africa’s position in the global trading system. The AFCFTA was signed by the majority of AU Member States (44 countries), but some large economies, most notably Nigeria and South Africa, did not sign the agreement. Like the continental Free Movement Protocol, the AFCFTA is expected to deepen Africa’s integration further.130

**How open is the world to citizens of East & Horn of Africa countries?**

When it comes to visa-free movement on a global scale, it is evident that the world remains quite closed to citizens of East and Horn of Africa countries. We see this when we compare how countries in the region fare on global passport indices.131 According to the Henley Passport Index, Kenya leads the region with its citizens enjoying visa-free access to 72 countries (ranking 67th on the Index). In contrast, Somalia ranks 101st with Somalis having visa-free access to 32 countries. Other countries in the East and Horn of Africa region fall in between Kenya’s ranking of 67 and Somalia’s ranking of 101 on the Index. Globally, Singapore ranks number one on the Index, with its citizens enjoying visa-free access to 180 countries in total. Seychelles takes the 24th spot as the highest-ranking African country, with its citizens having visa-free access to 144 countries. In turn, Afghanistan sits at the bottom of the Index (105th), with Afghans enjoying visa-free access to 24 countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>AFCFTA Consolidated Text</th>
<th>Free Movement Protocol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5**: East and Horn of Africa countries that signed the AFCFTA and Free Movement Protocol on 21 March, 2018

Source: African Union. Indication of Legal Instruments to be signed at the 10th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly on the Launch of the AFCFTA

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When it comes to visa-free movement on a global scale, it is evident that the world remains quite closed to citizens of East and Horn of Africa countries. We see this when we compare how countries in the region fare on global passport indices. According to the Henley Passport Index, Kenya leads the region with its citizens enjoying visa-free access to 72 countries (ranking 67th on the Index). In contrast, Somalia ranks 101st with Somalis having visa-free access to 32 countries. Other countries in the East and Horn of Africa region fall in between Kenya’s ranking of 67 and Somalia’s ranking of 101 on the Index. Globally, Singapore ranks number one on the Index, with its citizens enjoying visa-free access to 180 countries in total. Seychelles takes the 24th spot as the highest-ranking African country, with its citizens having visa-free access to 144 countries. In turn, Afghanistan sits at the bottom of the Index (105th), with Afghans enjoying visa-free access to 24 countries.

**Figure 12**: Visa-free access enjoyed by citizens of select countries with a focus on the East & Horn of Africa

Source: Henley Passport Index, Henley & Partners132

Notes: According to Henley & Partners, the Henley Passport Index’s contents are based on data provided by IATA and supplemented with other data. The index is updated in real-time so figures are subject to change.
On 19 September, 2016, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. As the first-ever UN declaration on migration adopted at this level, it sent an important political message that migration and refugee matters rank high on the international agenda.

The Declaration also underscores the pressing need for a comprehensive approach to human mobility and the importance of enhancing global cooperation on migration. Crucially, UN Member States made a commitment to launch a process of intergovernmental negotiations which will culminate in the adoption of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in an international conference that will take place in Morocco in December 2018. The process for developing the GCM kicked-off in April 2017.

IOM is providing technical and policy expertise to this states-led process as called for in the Modalities Resolution, and is working closely with the Secretary-General of the Conference (Special Representative to the Secretary General for International Migration – SRSG). Other stakeholders (civil society, the private sector, academic institutions, parliaments, diaspora communities, and migrant organizations) are participating in line with the commitment to develop the GCM through an open, transparent, and inclusive process.

Consultations on the GCM with a focus on the East & Horn of Africa

Between April and November 2017, 52 national consultations took place across the globe in addition to six informal thematic sessions as well as seven regional civil society consultations. In the East and Horn of Africa, national multi-stakeholder consultations were organized in Uganda, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia, and Ethiopia in close coordination with IOM.

The consultations drew participants from government ministries, civil society organizations, the private sector, and UN agencies in order to gather substantive input and concrete recommendations to inform the development of the GCM. This culminated in a regional preparatory meeting that took place in Addis Ababa in October 2017, which was organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in partnership with the African Union Commission and IOM. This meeting was attended by the two co-facilitators of the process (Mexico and Switzerland), and by Louise Arbour, the SRSG for International Migration.

In January 2018, the African Union adopted the Common African Position on the GCM, which will inform the respective member states in the negotiations phase. More information on the GCM is available on IOM’s website and that of the Office of the SRSG.

7 New Times. We are withdrawing support, UN warns Rwandan refugees (2018). http://www.newtimes.co.rw/story/east/a/2273177.


A Region on the Move


113 IOM. DTM Flow Monitoring Libya’s Migrant Report Round 16 December 2017.(2018) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oNuOX5Gsk/SLgFz/ view. Any person present in Libya who does not have Libyan nationality is a migrant for DTM Libya purposes. DTM Libya does not differentiate between migrant statuses, length of residence in the country, or migratory intentions. It counts as migrants those who may have come from refugee producing countries, along with long-term residents and labour migrants who engage in a circular migration pattern between Libya and their homes.


124 Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tanzania, and Uganda are members of the East African Community (EAC).


129 Passport Indices include: the Henley Passport Index, the Passport Index, and the Nomad Passport Index.


