Figure 1: Mixed Migration routes within the Horn of Africa, 2017

**Northern Route (through Egypt)**
Mostly used by migrants from countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Although migrants are no longer entering Israel along this route, it’s worth noting 46,437 Africans live in Israel with majority from Sudan and Eritrea.

**North-Western Route (Central Mediterranean route)**
By end of December 2017, 178,500 refugees and migrants had arrived into Europe with 99.5% of these arriving via sea and 3.5% via land. Sending countries include Eritrea, Sudan, Nigeria, Ivory Coast among other countries. However, the number of migrants arriving into Europe in 2017 compared to 2016 has gone down by 51%.

**Eastern Route (between Horn of Africa & Yemen)**
By 31st October, there were 190,352 Yemeni nationals living within the region with close to 2 million people internally displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict. Within the country, however, there were approximately 260,539 refugees and asylum seekers. Over 30,000 Ethiopian and Somali migrants have used this route in 2017.

**Southern Route (towards South Africa)**
Approximately 1.6 million refugees and asylum seekers from East Africa & the Horn of Africa, Great Lakes, and the Southern African Development Community were living within the Southern Africa sub-region. Protection concerns include xenophobia, reduced tolerance by South Africans, and other human rights abuses have been reported.
At the beginning of 2017, movement from Yemen was primarily influenced by the ongoing conflict that left approximately 2 million internally displaced people. However, the numbers of migrants arriving into Yemen from the Horn of Africa via the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden, were slightly lower than in 2016 particularly along the Red Sea route due to reports of deportations from Yemen. Primary areas of arrivals via the three aforementioned routes were Berbera and Bossaso in Puntland where mostly Ethiopians, Somalis and Djibouti nationals migrated to. At the time, Oromos comprised a higher percentage (89%) of Ethiopians on the move following reports of persecution by the Ethiopian government on suspicion of involvement with the Oromo Liberation Front while other Ethiopians cited economic reasons as the primary motivation for migration. Noting the challenges within Ethiopia, most migrants opted to use smugglers in their migrant journeys with migrants reporting paying between USD 132 and USD 1,540 for parts or all of their journeys.

Somalis on the other hand attributed their migration to their search for economic opportunities as well as in response to the drought in Somalia that had resulted in loss of livelihoods for most Somalis. However, Somali migrants reported paying significantly less than their Ethiopian counterparts, paying between USD 100 to USD 250 for part or all of their journey. By the beginning 2017, an estimated 92,603 people had fled Yemen to countries within the Horn of Africa, mainly Djibouti. However, by the end of 2017, there were approximately 280,539 Yemeni refugees and asylum seekers, 190,653 living within the region, and over 2 million internally displaced.

During this period, the drought in the Horn of Africa reduced available resources that would have been used to fund migration journeys. In March 2017, Saudi Arabia announced a 90 day grace period for undocumented migrants in the country to regularize their immigration status where migrants would be exempted from paying any penalties or fines. This was cited as being potentially beneficial for Ethiopian migrants who accounted for a higher number of migrants entering Saudi Arabia.

In the region, 871,843 Somali refugees were reported to be living in the Horn of Africa by the end of 2017 with a majority of these living in Kenya (313,255) followed by Yemen with 256,169 according to UNHCR. Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea combined hosted approximately 265,226 Somali refugees. However, approximately 34,990 Somali refugee returnees from Yemen between 2014 and 2017 had returned with most settling in the Southern Somalia region of Banadir while 10,776 Yemeni refugees and asylum seekers had arrived into Somalia with most returning to the Somaliland region of Woqooyi Galbeed. Notably, there have been more returnees from Yemen in 2017 compared to 2016 with October and December recording the highest numbers.

The reduction in the number of Somali refugees living in Yemen is due to Yemen’s worsening humanitarian situation and the country’s limited capacity to provide protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers during a time when Yemen itself is facing internal civil strife. As a result, authorities discontinued the prima facie refugee status for Somali refugees and actors on the grounds such as UNHCR are undertaking Assisted Spontaneous Returns (ASR) for Somali refugees and asylum seekers leaving Yemen.

Terminology: Throughout this report the term migrant/refugee is used to cover all those involved in the mixed migration flows (including asylum seekers, trafficked persons, smuggled economic migrants, refugees). If the caseload mentioned refers only to refugees or asylum seekers or trafficked persons it will be clearly stated.
According to IOM’s 2018 report, migration of North Africans to Gulf States and Europe continues with this movement considered to be higher than migration to other countries within Africa. This has been characterized by movements from north-western countries of Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and those from north-eastern countries of Egypt and Sudan. The primary driving factor of migration for these groups has been large income disparities between the origin and destination countries, as well as high levels of unemployment. In addition, media sources reported in March 2017 that more illegal migrants are setting off from Sudan, heading to Egypt and sailing from Alexandria port.

South Sudanese comprise the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers residing in Sudan with the UN reporting that approximately 195,599 new South Sudanese refugees had arrived into Sudan in 2017 alone, higher than the 134,370 South Sudanese in Sudan in 2016 alone. Cumulatively however, data shows that there are approximately 772,715 South Sudanese refugees living in Sudan since the beginning of the conflict with 20% of these being between the ages of 18-59. In addition, more children (14% of total refugee population) between the ages of 5 & 11 have been documented as living in Sudan. Movements into Sudan by South Sudanese peaked in the first half of the year with March 2017 recording the highest number of South Sudanese refugees according to UNHCR (at 49,282). This was due to clashes and conflict in Easter Equatoria, Jonglei, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Unity, Bentiu, and West Bank as well as a cholera outbreak which saw more than 3000 people flee Yirol East to the highlands.

In September 2017, the European Union announced its plan to resettle 50,000 refugees from Libya, Egypt, Niger, Sudan, Chad and Ethiopia in a move to deter illegal migration and reduce the number of smugglers. The bloc announced that it would set aside approximately 440 million GBP towards this move. In addition, the European Union introduced a compulsory quota scheme to distribute 160,000 migrants within the EU which did not fully roll out as some countries within the EU (Hungary and Poland) refused to accept the quotas. EU’s Migration Commissioner, Dimitris Avramopoulos, cautioned that there would be stricter requirements on states wanting to introduce temporary border checks during times of emergency, thereby limiting the checks to a maximum of 3 years. However, despite the European Union moves to reduce the term for border checks for immigrants, reports showed that the bloc was instead seeking to ‘export’ the problem from where it came through disrupting humanitarian rescue missions in the Mediterranean, offering aid to north African countries to stem the flow if immigrants, and funding repatriation programs from Libya, including beefing up the Libyan coastguard.

In Israel on the other hand, approximately 85,000 migrants were ‘legal’ migrants while around 18000 migrant workers had had their visas expire in 2017. However, by mid-2017, 2,081 asylum seekers left Israel voluntarily while 2,461 were expelled to other African countries. In total, however, the African Refugee Development Center estimated that there were approximately 46,437 Africans in Israel that consider themselves asylum seekers with 73% of these being from Eritrea and 19% from Sudan. On 19 November 2017 the Cabinet in Jerusalem voted unanimously to close the Holot detention facility in the Negev desert which houses thousands of Africans who have entered Israel illegally. Despite Israeli authorities referring to them as ‘infiltrators’, many of the migrants are from Eritrea and Sudan and describe themselves as refugees seeking political asylum. Some Israeli politicians blame migrants for rising crime and a deteriorating quality of life which the Interior Minister, Aryeh Deri, cited as the primary reason for the deportation.
Israel’s policy towards infiltration involves halting the influx of immigrants through building of a fence along the Egyptian border and enacting laws that blocked such movements, removal of infiltrators through various measures, and a ‘potential’ international agreement that would allow Israel to remove the remaining immigrants. This follows Prime Minister’s Benjamin Netanyahu statement in September 2017 that thousands of Africans in Israel illegally are not legitimate refugees or asylum seekers but instead economic migrants.

UNHCR appealed to the Israeli government to halt its policy on relocating Eritreans and Sudanese as many of those interviewed reported having travelled hundreds of kilometers through conflict zones in South Sudan, Sudan and Libya suffering abuse, torture and extortion before crossing the Mediterranean to Italy. Most refugees and asylum seekers also reported receiving US$3,500 lump sum as an ‘exit’ package, however little to no support upon arrival.

In 2017, Chad became the center of discussions on international migration following French President Emmanuel Macron’s plans to establish an asylum center in the country to aid in future asylum applications from within the African continent. This plan was fostered during the Paris Summit in August 2017 that brought together leaders from France, Germany, Italy and Spain (main destination countries for Central Mediterranean route migrants) where representatives of these countries said they would accept asylum claims for refugees who apply for protection while in Africa instead of their destination countries.

In October 2017, there were proposed plans to establish a five-nation (G5) joint security force across North Africa as a means of combating human trafficking and terrorism across the Sahel and into Libya which would cost around US$400M in the first year and consist of 5,000 armed personnel. Countries such as France and Italy provided strong backing but the force still suffers a shortfall in funds, and lack of political goodwill from other European powers.

According to UNHCR, 178,500 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Europe between January and December 2017. It is estimated that 172,301 arrived via sea while the rest arrived via land. Migrant deaths were also reported in the year at 3,119 migrants by the end of 2017 which marks a decrease from the 5,096 migrant deaths reported in 2016. Majority of these arrivals were migrants from Nigeria, Syria, Guinea and Ivory Coast.

The three main countries of destination are Italy, Spain and Greece with Italy accounting for the majority at 119,369 arrivals in 2017 compared to Greece at 29,718 and Spain at 28,349. In addition, data collected shows that more men than women are making these journeys with men comprising over 70% for arrivals in Italy and Spain and over 40% in Greece. However, in Greece, more children (37%) and men (41%) are entering the country compared to women.

Furthermore, data collected by UNHCR shows the different nationalities entering Europe through the three countries. In Italy, for example, Nigerians, Guineans, Ivorians and Eritreans. Moroccans and Algerians comprise the majority arriving in Spain. In Greece, Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans comprise the highest percentage of migrants arriving in the country.

According to UNHCR, East African irregular migrant arrivals to Europe in 2017 were made up of 7000 Eritreans, 6,200 Sudanese, 2,522 Somalis, 690 Ethiopians.
Along the Southern Route (towards South Africa)

Within Southern Africa are four categories of states in relation to migration. The first category is that of migrant-sending countries and this includes Lesotho, Malawi and Mozambique. The second category include migrant-receiving countries and these are South Africa and Namibia. However, Botswana and Swaziland fall in both countries while countries of major refugee influxes are Zambia and Tanzania. However, increasingly, more and more migrants are crossing over from the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa.

According to UNHCR, there are approximately 1.6 million refugees and asylum seekers mainly from East and Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes, and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries within the Southern Africa sub-region. This marks a significant increase from the 500,000 people of concern at the end of 2016, mainly from DRC, Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Zimbabwe. Countries within this sub-region continue to face social inequalities, poverty, seasonal floods, drought, food shortages, xenophobia, HIV/AIDS, and poor social protection. This is exacerbated by restrictions regarding freedom of movement and access to employment including limited movement of refugees.

According to another report, South Africa has attracted migrants from other African nations due to the relative wealth and stability of the country. In Johannesburg’s Mayfair neighborhood, East Africans are the majority with most reporting relying on traffickers and corrupt officials to reach their destination. This report further highlights the various routes used, including through Kenya into Tanzania then Mozambique with migrants facing detention risks. Others are unlucky, getting arrested and detained in either of these countries or dying from thirst and hunger. Once in Mozambique, migrants report going through Malawi, Zimbabwe and into South Africa. However, upon arrival in Southern Africa, migrants report experiencing xenophobic attacks fueled by shortage of jobs, housing and services, or even political incitement. However, the number of mixed migrants heading towards Southern Africa has significantly reduced according to RMMS’ research “Smuggled South”, which shows that the possible reasons for this decline include the xenophobic attacks, reduced tolerance among South African government officials, and perceived ease of entering Europe.

In mid-2017, the South African government began building massive border camps that will house approximately 62,000 people who apply for refugee status annually – a move heavily criticized by other stakeholders. The first of these centers would be built near the Mozambican border and will accommodate asylum seekers until the Home Affairs Department decides their case. Fears have emerged of further human rights abuses of migrants and refugees who already face a lengthy asylum process. More often than not, South African politicians are reported to scapegoating refugees and asylum seekers for the unemployment and crime prevalent in the country and the government accused of using inflated asylum figures to justify new restrictions.

Protection Space and Protection Data from 4Mi

In 2017, an RMMS’ monthly report showed that Yemeni or Afari boatmen notified criminal groups on shore of the expected arrival of these migrants. These migrants were then sold to Yemeni groups who would then transport and deliver them to human trafficking gangs. In addition to this, Ethiopian nationals in Yemen reported human rights violations which included abductions and interceptions during migrant journeys. This often took place near the shore upon arrival where criminal groups held migrants for ransom in smuggling dens until these migrants were able to raise enough money for their release.

Once released from these smuggling dens, migrants reported being abused, starved, mistreated and sexually violated (particularly women and girls). During other incidents, women and girls would be removed from the dens and sold to traffickers for forced labor. Similarly, other migrants would be intercepted and deported by authorities in Yemen, Djibouti and Ethiopia.

RMMS’s recent report titled “Unpacking the Myths: Human Smuggling from and within the Horn of Africa”, looks at smuggling across the various routes used during mixed migration. Of the 3522 interview respondents, 73% reported using smugglers for at least part of their journey. Smuggling in the region is seen as a vibrant business with new smuggling routes opening up in response to a myriad of factors (political, economic, and legal).

A majority of these smugglers are young men who resort to this due to limited employment opportunities in their home countries and who often find themselves inter-twined in smuggling networks that work across all three major routes. Some government officials are reported to be involved in smuggling operations and this further increases the risk of migrants on the move. Often, migrants are forced to part with between US$ 1,036 and US$ 2,371 as payment for smuggling which also ends up in the hands of border guards, militia and other individuals.
A similar paper published by RMMS titled ‘Weighing the Risks’ also shows that a majority of migrants have either directly witnessed or experience one or multiple abuses with incidents happening in certain locations, especially along national borders and that a higher number of women and girls go missing along their journeys. The report further highlights the potential involvement of law enforcement officials, such as border police, in such abuses.

Data from the 4Mi shows that between January and December 2017, more migrants faced physical abuse, sexual abuse and robbery along the four routes of Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan. In Libya for example, 49% of interviewed migrants faced physical abuse, 59% sexual abuse and 19% robbery. In Egypt, 46% of migrants faced physical abuse, 16% sexual abuse and 14% robbery. In Eritrea, 14% faced physical abuse, 13% sexual abuse and 6% robbery. In Ethiopia, 29% faced physical abuse, 28% robbery and 21% sexual abuse while in Sudan, 56% faced physical abuse, 42% faced sexual abuse and 34% faced robbery.

Regional and Global Initiatives

Regional

In February 2017, the European Union concluded a migration deal with Libya pledging 200 Million Euros towards supporting, training and providing equipment to Libyan coastguards to enable them set up refugee camps in the country. This was in a bid to contain the number of migrants’ crossing over from Libya into Europe. At the time, Libyan politicians had expressed reservations over the deal stating that priority should be given to Libyan nationals instead of migrants. However, later in 2017, leaked footage showed slave auctions in Libya with youth migrants being sold to buyers for about US$400. This had reportedly been happening over the course of the year with other reports also citing child abuse, human trafficking, kidnapping, rape, torture, extortion, abandonment at sea and illegal detention.

Following this, foreign governments during the AU/EU Summit held in November 2017 adopted a joint statement calling for international cooperation to fight the crimes happening inside and outside of Libya and to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice. The EU also agreed to establish a Joint Migration Task Force with the African Union to accelerate assisted voluntary returns to countries of origin and also speeding up the resettlement of those in need of international protection. Through this, IOM began the process of assisted voluntary returns for the migrants in Libya.

In Egypt, one of the primary routes towards the Mediterranean, the Migration Policy Center (MPC) and IOM signed a MoU on 14th December 2017 establishing an Observatory on Human Mobility under the umbrella of the MPC. The aim of this observatory facility is “to conduct in-depth research and provide evidence-based recommendations for dialogue on education, training, and labor mobility between Egypt and European Union member states”. Through this collaboration, the observatory will aim to foster dialogue on human mobility (including that of Egyptian workers) with a variety of stakeholders including government agencies & destination countries. In addition, this observatory was establish on the backbone of Egypt’s population increase and Europe’s declining fertility rates, an ageing population and private sector needs.
Global

Through the launch of the EU Trust Fund (EUTF), approximately 69 Million Euros has been pledged towards improving migration management in the Horn of Africa. This money was channeled through EU’s partners in the region GIZ, ILO, IGAD, UNDP, and IOM with a focus on countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Eritrea and Djibouti. The EUTF Better Migration Management (BMM) aims to: support national authorities develop and enact frameworks and procedures for better migration; strengthen capacity of all institutions and agencies responsible for migration and border management by training and offering them technical assistance; identify, assist and provide protection for victims of trafficking; and raising awareness of the dangers of irregular migration. Other initiatives include IGAD/ ILO’s ‘Towards Free Movement and Transhumance in the IGAD region’, and the ‘Research and Evidence Facility’ administered through University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies, Sahan Research, University of Oxford and the International Migration Institute.

Following the September 2016 UN High-Level Summit in New York aimed at improving international cooperation and governance of migration and refugee issues, member states committed to negotiating a Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. This will be an agreement that states make with one another and which states have committed to completing in time for the UN New York Summit scheduled to take place in September 2018 where it will be formally adopted. This Compact will: present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility; and deal with all aspects of international migration, including the humanitarian, developmental, human rights related and other aspects of migration. Its provisions must be consistent with states’ obligations under existing international human rights law and labor standards. It is based on six thematic areas: human rights of all migrants; addressing drivers of migration; international cooperation and governance of migration; contributions of migrants and diaspora to all dimensions of sustainable development; smuggling of migrants, trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery; and irregular migration and regular pathways. It is structured to be rolled out in three phases between April 2017 and July 2018.

Within Africa, the regional consultation took place in October 2017 in Addis Ababa and focused on analyzing international migration in Africa, discussions on the six thematic areas of the Compact, and developing recommendations and the way forward into the next phase. Some of these recommendations were that member states were encouraged to: prioritize the effective implementation of the conventions, treaties, declarations, and principles on the human rights of migrants; address the root causes of migration in order to promote migration as a choice and not as a necessity; establish and adapt their migration policies with the aim of liberalizing mobility and migration among member states; recognize and promote the contribution of migrants and the diaspora to the economic growth and development of countries of origin and destination; enforce effective measures to prevent smuggling and trafficking; and create more legal pathways for migration as a means of discouraging irregular migration and exploitation of African migrants within and outside of Africa. However, in December 2017, the US government pulled out of the Compact stating that “the process interferes with American sovereignty, and runs counter to US immigration policies”.

In April 2017, the Italian parliament approved new asylum rules that aimed at accelerating asylum procedures and expediting the deportation of rejected asylum seekers. Italy has been among the primary routes of arrivals for migrants but despite this, reservations emerged regarding the limitations to migrant rights that these rules would bring about. For example, there were reservations that these rules would eliminate the second instance for those who have been denied asylum in the first instance thus sacrificing the rights of vulnerable people for the sake of faster law courts and temporary reception centers. Later on in the year, Italy called for standardization of asylum procedures across the EU which deepened rifts with states such as Poland, Hungary and Czech which refused to be obliged to take in asylum seekers as had been earlier proposed under the EU Relocation Scheme.

In the smuggling hub of Mareero, Somalis and Ethiopians crowd into caves to wait for dark to fall and the dhow boats that will take them on the perilous journey to Yemen, and eventually Saudi Arabia and Gulf states. © Nichole Sobecki
Key Developments

Drought

2017 was a year marked by significant changes in the Horn of Africa and Yemen that resulted in mixed migrants undertaking journeys within and outside the region. The 2017 drought in the Horn of Africa led to massive displacements of individuals with Somalia facing severe food insecurity due to consecutive seasons of poor rainfall. By late 2017, cereal production in Somalia’s major crop production zones in the South was 37% below long-term average, food prices had increased, and malnutrition and the spread of water borne diseases had peaked. As a result, approximately 6.2 million people were in need of emergency food or livelihood support while 3.1 million were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Internal displacement was also high in the country with the UN reporting that approximately 2.1 million people were internally displaced in 2017 with around 701,500 having been displaced in the first half of the year due to various factors. However, drought-related displacement stood at 874,000 people in November 2017 in Somalia. In Kenya, the drought led to crop failure, lack of pasture and loss of livestock forcing pastoral communities to migrate in search of pasture. In addition, 15.2 million in the Horn of Africa were severely food insecure in 2017 and 5.2 million women and children acutely malnourished.

Human Rights

Human rights abuses were also prevalent in the Horn of Africa in 2017 as captured by a Human Rights Watch report. In Sudan, for example, the government has been accused of repression and human rights violations including restricting freedom of religion and expression. In the areas of Darfur, Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, government forces reportedly attacked civilians including IDPs. Arbitrary arrests were also evident in Sudan with a prominent rights defender, Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, being arrested and held up to eight months by national security agents for ‘undermining the constitutional system and crimes against the state’.

In addition, journalist and opposition members were detained for long periods without charge or access to lawyers with cases of torture also reported by detainees. In September 2017, government forces opened fire on protestors in the Kalma IDP camps in South Darfur killing and injuring campers who were protesting President Al-Bashir’s visit to the camp.

Conflict and Insecurity

Similarly, conflict and insecurity were on the rise in various countries in the Horn of Africa, which in addition to loss of life and livelihoods, has also led to massive displacements both internally and within the region. In Yemen, for example, 2017 saw the death of Yemeni President, Ali Abdullahi Saleh, in December 2017 with reports of the Houthi rebels being responsible for his death. This followed his discontinued ties with the Houthi group when Saleh expressed his openness to talks with the Saudi-led coalition which the Houthi rebels labelled as a “coup” against their fragile alliance. This saw a reduction in the number of migrants making the journey to Yemen from the Horn of Africa from around 155,000 in 2016 to approximately 87000 in 2017.

In Djibouti, tensions with Eritrea regarding the Dumeira Island continued. In Somalia, according to INSO, 4736 incidents were reported between January and December 2017 with January and April recording the highest number of incidents. However, the most significant security issue was the twin bombings in Mogadishu in October 2017 reportedly by Al Shabaab that killed more than 300 people.
The Libya Situation

The Libya situation highlighted by CNN’s video footage in November 2017 showed migrant men being sold at auctions in Libya for US$400. However, the issue of migrants crossing through Libya and facing abuses is not new. Reports point back to 2015, parallel to the EU migrant crisis when European governments gave increasing amounts of funding and training to the Libyan coastguard and to detention centers to keep migrants in Libya as part of the EU approach of stemming the flow of people from Libya. In 2016, UNICEF released a report that highlighted child abuses with women and children experiencing sexual abuse during migration.

Other actors that highlighted these abuses include RMMS, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other entities. In mid-2017, the Libyan coast guard made threats of violence to INGOs who engaged in search and rescue missions at sea forcing some INGOs to cease operations. This came after the Italian government in July 2017 had dispatched a naval mission to assist the Libyan coast guard with anti-smuggler patrols, compounded by Libyan ‘set of rules’ that forbade rescue ships from entering Libyan waters to save migrants without specific authorization. Following the release of this footage, European governments have come under pressure from human rights activists, aid agencies and other international observers as they believed that the EU’s support to the Libyan coastguard was causing more harm than good.

Further to this, reports pointed to the poor conditions in detention centers which were overcrowded and unsanitary. In reaction to the slave auction footage, governments of Burkina Faso and Democratic Republic of Congo recalled their ambassadors from Libya; Niger’s President Mahamadou Issoufou summoned the Libyan Ambassador and demanded the International Court of Justice to investigate Libya for slave trade; France called an emergency Security Council meeting at the UN; the EU and AU launched a joint statement and a military and policing action to rescue African migrants enslaved in Libya; voluntary repatriation began, led by IOM, which saw 8819 migrants returned home by 23rd October, 2017.

Policy Development

Policy Development has also been a major process in 2017 with the discussions on the Global Compact for Migration, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the IGAD Regional Consultation Process, and the Khartoum process. The process to develop a Global Compact for Migration (GCM) began in April 2017 following the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted in September 2016. The aim of the Compact is to improve the governance on migration, to address the challenges associated with migration, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

Discussions around the Compact are rolled out in different phases. The first phase includes a series of consultations also known as the ‘consultation phase’ and involves thematic sessions, regional and stakeholder consultations. The thematic consultations took place between April and November 2017 and focused on human rights, drivers of migration, international cooperation and governance of migration, contribution of migrants and diasporas, human smuggling and trafficking, and labor mobility. The regional consultations took place between August and November 2017 which were organized by the Economic Commission for Europe,Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Western Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

During the regional consultation on Africa in September 2017 at Addis Ababa, several recommendations were made by attending state representatives. Some of the recommendations are: to strengthen protection mechanisms for migrants and to ratify relevant international and regional conventions on migrant rights; to facilitate the social and economic integration of migrants into host communities; to build awareness on migration issues while also involving all stakeholders in building inclusive and resilient communities for social inclusion; to address the drivers of migration and to intensify efforts towards poverty eradication, job creation and good governance; to prioritize conflict prevention and peace-building; to ensure the rights and access of all populations to resources and social protection and to promote sustainable livelihoods; to strengthen coordination mechanisms while also linking humanitarian to development planning; to decrease barriers that affect the internal mobility of people; to develop and harmonize African migration policies and ensure that they are not driven by external interests; to encourage bilateral and multilateral agreements between and among countries; to develop policy mechanisms that provide pathways to legal residence for irregular migrants and towards granting permanent residence to and naturalization of migrants who reside legally; to invest in border management tools, and other recommendations.

In August 2017, the Africa civil society organizations regional consultation on GCM took place in Bamako Mali which focused on analyzing the root causes of mobility in Africa, human rights and social inclusion, cohesion and regional integration, xenophobia and racism, the work and civic rights of all migrants, ending criminalization and detention of migrants, good practices in policies and international conventions, coherence on policies between international, regional, sub-regional and national organizations and capacity-building of decision makers and internal migration and agriculture in Africa, and Women and Migration.

Since August 2017, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), several actions have been undertaken by different countries Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda. In Ethiopia, government and development partners are working with the Ethiopian government to make 30,000 jobs in industrial parks available to refugees.
The Khartoum Process progressed significantly in 2017. In February, a Senior Officials Meeting took place in Malta which gathered representatives from both Europe and Africa to review progress on the implementation of the Valetta Action Plan. A follow-up Senior Officials Meeting was held in Ethiopia in April 2017 to discuss the implementation of the Khartoum process for the year, which RMMS was part of and which it made a presentation on migratory trends from and within the region. In May, the first thematic meeting of 2017 was held in Berlin where Uganda joined the Process for the first time since its inception. Some of the key agenda and discussion points were protection challenges of refugees and host societies, durable solutions, linkages of donor interventions with local priorities, legal and orderly pathways, and holistic approach to the issue of refugees and migration.

In July, the UK hosted both African and EU partners to discuss human smuggling and trafficking in the Horn of Africa and how this can be combated. Other topics of discussion were governance, legislative frameworks, capacity building and cross-border investigative cooperation. The issue of cross-border financial flows was also highlighted with the UK moving forward to work with partners in developing an action plan on these issues. Towards the end of 2017, a trilateral meeting took place in Luxor between AU-Horn of Africa Initiative, the Khartoum Process, and the Rabat process. Key issues discussed during this meeting include unaccompanied minors and human smuggling and trafficking which representatives proposed to solve through expediting information flow within the three processes, enhancing operational synergies, and advancing joint efforts in addressing these challenges. In November, the 7th thematic meeting took place in Khartoum which focused on irregular migration and drivers of irregular migration and, in December, the last Senior Officials Meeting took place in Rome where Ethiopia handed over its chairmanship to Italy.

Over the course of 2017, IGAD held a series of Regional Consultative Process (RCP) meetings within the IGAD region. In March 2017, IGAD launched a technical experts meeting in Uganda to discuss durable solutions for Somali refugees prior to the IGAD Heads of State meeting. This meeting brought together experts from refugee management agencies and relevant ministries. The aim of this meeting was to discuss a draft Summit Working Paper as well as the need for more social services to be provided to refugees, and the need to address the issue of smuggling. In May 2017, the Pan African Forum on Migration meeting took place in Kampala, Uganda and which brought together authorities from IGAD member states, IOM, UNICEF & other UN agencies, ILO, GIZ, and the EU.

This was later followed by another meeting in Entebbe in August 2017 that looked at barriers and benefits of free movement of persons in the IGAD region as well as generating national recommendations towards the provisions of the protocol. This was part of the National Consultations towards the development of an ‘IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD region’. In July 2017, IGAD held a consultative workshop with its member states in Djibouti to deliberate on and adopt common position on the Global Compact for Migration.

Still in July, IGAD held another round of consultation in Nairobi, Kenya on climate change and human mobility with the aim of increasing awareness around issues related to displacements caused by natural disasters. The meeting also aimed at forging a common understanding on the protection gaps and opportunities for IGAD member states. In attendance were government officials from IGAD member governments, embassy officials, IOM & IGAD. In September 2017, IGAD held a 3 day consultative meeting in Juba, South Sudan as part of the national consultations towards the development of the protocol on free movement of persons in the IGAD region. The main objective of the meeting however was to gather information on the benefits and barriers to free movement of persons as well as to generate national recommendations towards the provisions of the protocol. In attendance were government ministry officials, civil society representatives, youth, women, and academia.

Similarly in September, UNHCR along with IGAD briefed the African Union Permanent Representatives Committee on CRRF in Africa and its application in the IGAD region. During this presentation, IGAD was praised for championing the application of durable solutions in Africa particularly with regards to the Somalia situation. Later in the year, IGAD held another RCP meeting on migration in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia that focused on validating the study on climate change and human mobility commissioned during the previous RCP Meeting in July 2017 and to prepare for regional input for the stocktaking meeting of the Global Compact for Migration.

Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) is to support agencies, institutions and forums in the Horn of Africa and Yemen sub-region to improve the management of protection and assistance response to people in mixed migration flows within and beyond the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden or Red Sea in Yemen.
www.regionalmms.org.

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