



**Regional mixed migration summary for January 2017 covering mixed migration events, trends and data for Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Puntland, Somalia, Somaliland and 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.

Country	Events /trends /data /analysis
<b>Yemen</b>	<p><i>The conflict in Yemen entered its twenty-second month with shelling and fighting putting civilians at risk. As previously reported, due to the conflict, monitoring and data collection activities along the Red Sea and Arabian sea coasts continued to be affected, with a majority of monitoring exercises suspended. Therefore the data presented in this report concerning new arrivals in Yemen cannot be considered comprehensive or conclusive.</i></p> <p><b>Internal displacement:</b> There were approximately 2 million internally displaced persons in Yemen at the end of January 2017.</p> <p><b>Continued arrivals from the Horn of Africa:</b> In January 2017, at least 5,125 migrants and asylum seekers (3,943 Ethiopians and 1,182 Somalis) arrived from the Horn of Africa to Yemen via the Red Sea, Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden. Numbers arriving overall were slightly lower than in December 2016, which was more pronounced on the Red Sea route from Djibouti, where reports of deportations of new arrivals from Yemen continue to persist (see below on migrant vulnerabilities). It is however understood that the actual number of arrivals from the Horn into Yemen is likely to have been higher during the period, due to the reduction of monitoring missions along Yemen's coast.</p> <p><b>Arabian Sea arrivals:</b> In January 2017, an estimated 4,158 (2,987 Ethiopian and 1,171 Somali) migrants and asylum seekers arrived in Yemen via the Arabian Sea mostly from the Bossaso area in Puntland</p> <p><b>Red Sea arrivals:</b> An estimated 967 (956 Ethiopians and 11 Somalis) migrants and asylum seekers arrived on the Red Sea coast of Yemen in January 2017, an 18% reduction on figures in December 2016. Migrants and asylum seekers arrived aboard 18 boats, which departed from Obock (Djibouti), landing in various towns in Lahj and Ta'iz governorates.</p> <p><b>Ethiopian profiles, drivers, intentions and costs:</b> 89% of Ethiopian nationals encountered in Yemen identified themselves as Oromo, reflecting an ongoing rising trend with Oromo comprising an increasing proportion of the Ethiopians on the move. Seven Ethiopians indicated their intentions to seek asylum on the grounds that they were being persecuted by the Ethiopian government for their real or perceived involvement with the Oromo Liberation Front during ongoing protests against the government. Most Ethiopians (98%) cited economic reasons for migration, including a desire to secure well-paying jobs in Saudi Arabia. Two Ethiopians expressed an intent to travel to Saudi Arabia to further pursue their education.</p> <p>Most (63%) Ethiopians relied on either being assisted or facilitated to enter Djibouti, using the services of smugglers and/or other migrants who had made the journey before. New arrivals reported paying between 3,000-15,000 Ethiopian Birr (approx. USD 132-600) for segments of the journey, including for some, the cost of the sea crossing to Yemen. One group of Ethiopian migrants reported paying 4,000 Saudi Rials (approx. USD 1,000) to be smuggled from Yemen to Saudi Arabia. Another group reported paying 35,000 Ethiopian Birr (approx. 1,540) to be transported to Saudi Arabia, with an option to pay less on condition that some of the way they would move on foot unaccompanied by smugglers.</p> <p><b>Somali profiles, drivers and facilitation:</b> Somali nationals originated from various locations in Somaliland and Puntland. Some cited economic reasons for their movement, motivated by a desire to secure better employment opportunities in Yemen or in the Gulf States. Others, who were farmers in Somalia, stated that they had been affected by the drought and resulting poor crop. Somalis paid between USD 100-250 for their journey, including the cost of the boat trip to Yemen.</p> <p><b>Migrant vulnerability and ongoing deportations from Yemen:</b> Migrants and asylum seekers did not report many</p>

protection risks on the sea crossing from Djibouti to Yemen. Some migrants did however report that the Yemeni or Afari boatmen notified criminal groups on shore of their expected arrival.

Based with interviews with 428 Ethiopian nationals in Yemen (44% of all those arriving on the Red Sea coasts in January) a total of 1,687 human rights violations (either directly experienced or witnessed) were reported in January 2017. Abduction and interception continued to account for the largest proportion of protection concerns. 772 incidences of abduction were reported in the month, almost all of which were reported to have taken place on or near the shore upon arrival. Once captured by criminal and often armed groups, migrants are held for ransom in smuggling dens until they are able to raise enough money for their release. In an exceptional and unheard-of scenario, one Ethiopian interviewed in January indicated that he had paid an additional 4,000 Ethiopian Birr (approx. USD 175) in advance to be immediately released on arrival and to avoid kidnap by such groups. This points to the complete 'commodification' of migrants by smuggling networks.

Those who escape or are released from these dens continue to report that they were mistreated, starved, abused and that some, particularly women and girls, were subjected to sexual violence including rape. One migrant reported that migrants who were unable to pay for their ransoms would be tortured, and that women and girls would be subjected to sexual abuse or removed from the dens and sold to traffickers for forced labour.

612 separate incidences of interception and deportation by authorities in Yemen were also reported in January. In separate instances 500 Ethiopian migrants were deported from Yemen back to Djibouti, where all voluntarily decided to return to Ethiopia, 100 of whom were assisted to return by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). A further 100 were deported by Djiboutian authorities back to Ethiopia.

One Ethiopian asylum seeker, who fled Ethiopia after being detained by Ethiopian authorities for his involvement in protests in the country, reported that other protesters had been intercepted and handed over to the Ethiopian Federal police. Others further reported that the Djiboutian authorities are complying with the Ethiopian government's demands to expel any wanted Ethiopians back to Ethiopia. These are unverified reports and it has not been determined whether those encountered were given an opportunity to claim asylum, raising concerns about possible *refoulement*.

Protection issues reported by migrants transiting through Djibouti on their way to Yemen are reported in the Djibouti country section below.

**Departures from Yemen:** As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, an estimated total of 92,603 persons had fled Yemen to countries within the Horn of Africa (36,603 in Djibouti, 34,760 in Somalia, 14,102 in Ethiopia, and 6,838 in Sudan) since March 2015. Yemenis and Somalis continue to represent the largest proportion of people moving out of Yemen, accounting for 30% and 35% of movements respectively. Djibouti is the primary destination for Yemeni nationals, with 71% of those moving opting to travel to Djibouti. The general outflow of persons from Yemen has reduced since peak figures in 2015. More recent figures were not available at the time of writing this report.

The latest statistics and overview of the displacement situation arising out of the Yemen crisis can be found on the UNHCR data sharing and information [portal](#).

## Djibouti

**Departures to Yemen:** In January 2017, an estimated 967 (956 Ethiopians and 11 Somalis) migrants and asylum seekers arrived along the Red Sea coast of Yemen. New arrivals landed aboard 18 boats in various towns in Lahj and Ta'iz governorates. Due to the reduction of monitoring missions along Yemen's coast, it is likely that the actual number of arrivals from the Horn of Africa to Yemen was higher during the period.

**Migrant vulnerability:** Migrants and asylum seekers transiting through Djibouti continue to face a multitude of risks. In January, those interviewed particularly reported being held against their will by smugglers and brokers. In all incidences migrants had paid an agreed amount to their smugglers for facilitation of a safe trip to Yemen. The smugglers then demanded more money from the migrants and held them, subjecting them to forced labour, until they were able to secure additional funds (approx. USD 140). Two teenage girls who escaped from a broker in Djibouti claimed that instead of facilitating their trip across the sea, raped them and attempted to force one to marry his associate. Two days after their escape their broker found them with another broker and took them by force.

<p><b>Somalia/ Somaliland</b></p>	<p><b>Somali refugees in the neighbouring countries:</b> As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, there were 885,083 Somali refugees displaced in the region. The refugees are mainly hosted in Kenya (324,735), Yemen (255,399) and Ethiopia (241,624).</p> <p><b>Internal displacement:</b> According to UNHCR, there are approximately 1.1 million internally displaced persons across the whole of Somalia (Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia) a figure that has remained constant in recent months.</p>
<p><b>South Sudan</b></p>	<p><b>Regional displacement:</b> South Sudan is now Africa's largest refugee crisis and the world's third after Syria and Afghanistan. As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, there were a total of 1.5 million refugees from South Sudan displaced within the region. More than 75,000 persons were displaced in January 2017 alone. Nearly half of those displaced are being hosted in Uganda (698,030), with others hosted in Ethiopia (342,419), Sudan (305,029), Kenya (89,834), Democratic Republic of the Congo (68,185) and the Central African Republic (4,932).</p> <p><b>Internal displacement:</b> UNHCR estimate that as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, there are 1.8 million people displaced inside South Sudan.</p> <p><b>Refugees in South Sudan:</b> Despite the dire humanitarian and security context, South Sudan continues to host refugees in the country. As of 31<sup>st</sup> January there were 260,868 refugees in South Sudan, the majority (92%) of whom are from neighbouring Sudan.</p>
<p><b>Sudan</b></p>	<p><b>Irregular migration through Sudan:</b> According to <a href="#">media reports</a>, Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) claimed that they had disrupted an attempt to smuggle a group of 64 irregular migrants across the desert to Libya. Those apprehended were from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Yemen and included 48 men, 10 women and 6 children. They reportedly travelled from Port Sudan to North Darfur and paid smugglers. Preliminary investigations show that the group was headed towards Europe as their final destination. In early January the RSF <a href="#">reported</a> that it had intercepted 1,500 irregular migrants over the last seven months as they attempted to enter Libya.</p>
<p><b>Ethiopia</b></p>	<p><b>Refugees in Ethiopia:</b> As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, there were 793,321 refugees and asylum seekers registered in Ethiopia. The majority of refugees are from South Sudan (338,823), Somalia (241,624) and Eritrea (162,252). According to UNHCR 81,084 Eritrean refugees previously registered as living in the camps are believed to have spontaneously settled in Ethiopia. This figure is subject to verification.</p> <p><b>Ethiopian migrants repatriated from Zambia and Zimbabwe:</b> A group of 147 Ethiopian migrants were supported to repatriate from Zambia. The group, who were facing prison sentences for irregular entry into the country, were recently pardoned by the Zambian president. Another group of six migrants, from Ethiopia and Somalia, were deported from Zimbabwe by authorities after being apprehended as they crossed into the country from Zambia. Migrants from the Horn of Africa are frequently arrested in the transit countries along the popular migration route between the Horn and South Africa.</p>
<p><b>Kenya</b></p>	<p><b>Kenyan court blocks plan to close Dadaab refugee camp:</b> A <a href="#">ruling</a> by the Kenyan High Court has termed the government's plan to close Dadaab refugee camp is "illegal" and "discriminatory". The government's decision, announced in May 2016, stated that Kenya would no longer continue to host refugees in the country and confirmed plans to shut down Dadaab refugee camp within six months, where more than 300,000 Somali refugees reside. According to the ruling, the plan specifically targets Somali refugees and "is an act of group persecution, illegal, discriminatory and therefore unconstitutional". The court further ordered the government to reinstate the Department of Refugee Affairs, which was disbanded in a directive last year and replaced with Refugee Affairs Secretariat. The Kenyan government has vowed to appeal the ruling.</p> <p><b>Refugees in Kenya:</b> According to UNHCR figures there were 496,420 refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya as of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The majority of refugees are Somali nationals (324,883), but other populous groups include</p>

refugees from DR Congo (147,406), South Sudan (90,864) and Ethiopia (27,369). The majority of refugees live in refugee camps across the country (429,153), while 67,267 refugees reside in Nairobi.

**Voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees:** The pace of voluntary return movements of Somali refugees to Somalia picked up in January 2017. 5,085 persons were supported to return to Somalia from Dadaab in the month (a 59% increase on movements in December). This increase can be attributed to an increased number of flights increasing the capacity of returns. So far 45,483 Somali refugees have returned to Somalia since the voluntary return programme began in 2014.

**Other regional news and news from other regions**

**EU signs a migration compact with Libya:** In early February 2017, the European Union concluded a [much sought after](#) migration deal with Libya, which it hopes will reduce the migration flows from the African continent towards Europe. The Malta Declaration has pledged EUR 200 million in support to training and equipment for Libya's coastguard, the setting up of "safe" refugee camps in Libya, and the voluntary repatriation of those willing to return to their countries of origin. The European Council acceded to these pledges as part of its [conclusions](#) on Libya. The Italian government also announced a pledge for EUR 200 million of its own to support the work of the Libyan coastguard.

However, Libyan mayors have reacted negatively to the deal, instead stating that their priorities are to take care of Libyan nationals. "If the Europeans want to allow them to stay, they can have them in their own land...we have our own problems to take care of," the mayor of Sabha is [reported](#) as saying. Furthermore, a [leaked internal report](#) from the EU's border mission for Libya suggests that the situation in Libya is very fraught, casting doubts over the EU's aims to control its migration flows to Italy.

In an ongoing bid to reduce migration via the Central Mediterranean route, the EU is [reported](#) to be planning to offer simplified visa procedures and an increase in economic aid to Tunisia and Egypt in exchange for smoother deportations of unwanted African migrants. The EU already has 17 such deals, including with Turkey and Pakistan.



Source: UNHCR

**Mediterranean Sea arrivals:** A total of 6,856 migrants and asylum seekers arrived in Europe in January 2017. This represents a 36% decline on arrivals in December 2016, and a 91% drop compared to figures in January 2016. It is also the lowest overall monthly arrival figure since January 2015.

61% of these flows (4,208 people) were counted along the Central Mediterranean route from North Africa

to Italy. Arrivals from the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan) were uncharacteristically low during January. Only 70 people arrived from the Horn, accounting for just 2%, a group which represented an average of 23% of all arrivals along this route in 2016. It is unclear at this point whether the flows have been disrupted or whether they will resume to typical levels later in 2017.

**Migrant deaths:** Despite the reduction in overall arrivals by sea, loss of life on both land and sea continued to be a challenge in January 2017. 253 died in the Mediterranean Sea in January, accounting for 63% of all global loss of life (of irregular maritime migration). 228 of these deaths occurred along the Central Mediterranean route between north Africa and Italy, a route frequented highly by nationals from the Horn of Africa (as well as West Africa).

**Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries:** As of 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017, there were a total of 380,344 Burundian refugees displaced in the region. The majority of the refugees are being hosted in Tanzania (59%), with other sizeable populations in Rwanda (22%), Uganda (9%) and DR Congo (9%).

**New Research, reports or**

**Famine's final blow: Somali refugees trapped by climate, politics and fatigue:** The announcement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia that famine could soon be a reality in some of the worst drought-affected areas in Somalia is the latest blow to Somali refugees in Kenya. Their future prospects look increasingly gloomy. This article

**documents**

summarizes the current highly negative dynamics facing Somali refugees.

**[The Eritrean Exodus: What happened in 2016?](#)** The total number of migrants and refugees arriving in Italy in 2016 hit a record number, however the number of Eritrean arrivals decreased significantly in the same period. This new feature article by RMMS explores the possible explanation for this sudden drop in Eritrean arrivals in Europe.

**[The EU's ethical dilemma: The scramble to stem the refugee and migrant flow to Europe](#)**: In addition to the multitude of migration cooperation agreements being signed between the EU and African countries, a new deal with Libya has just been concluded in Malta. This new feature article by RMMS explores the new plans to engage with Libyan authorities and asks whether they will work.

**[Frontex Annual Risk Analysis 2017](#)**: This annual report by the EU's border agency gives an overview of irregular migration at the external borders of the EU and Schengen countries. It provides an overview of the migratory trends, and analysis on the key risks affecting the security of the EU, including issues such as smuggling networks in Libya, return system vulnerabilities, and the situation at migrant reception centres.

*This information sheet is distributed to over 1,200 agencies, academic institutions, donors, embassies, journalists, government officials / departments, international and multi-national organisations and related non-government organisations. Sources: Data is sourced from a wide variety of collaborators, partners, international and local organisations, media outlets and individuals in the region. The key refugee agency – UNHCR – and migration agency – IOM – are frequently the origin of specific refugee or migrant return-related data. RMMS is a unit/project within the Danish Refugee Council and also uses data and information generated by DRC activities. RMMS makes its own independent editorial decisions as to what sections and what data is included in this monthly update.*

