

Briefing Note – 12 December 2016

# MIXED MIGRATION

## Central Mediterranean route: Horn of Africa to Europe



Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Major

### Key findings

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Anticipated scope and scale</p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 173,500 migrants have reached Italy so far in 2016, around 29,000 more than in the same period last year. While migrant flows are expected to continue, the rate is likely to fall in winter.</li> <li>• The estimated number of deaths on the Central Mediterranean route has grown disproportionately, to over 4,200 people this year compared to less than 2,900 at the same point in 2015. It is unknown how many people die on their journey though Africa.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Priorities for humanitarian intervention</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protection:</b> Migrants face detention, sexual exploitation and forced labour. More unaccompanied minors are arriving in Italy.</li> <li>• <b>Livelihoods</b> among populations along the route.</li> <li>• <b>Health:</b> access to healthcare is poor .</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Humanitarian constraints</p>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of access to people who are smuggled or trafficked</li> <li>• Political insecurity in transit countries.</li> <li>• Competing funding allocations to meet livelihood and humanitarian needs of host populations and refugees in countries of migrant transit.</li> </ul>   |

Central Mediterranean migration route from the Horn of Africa



Map adapted from AP 2015

## Crisis overview

The number of migrants arriving in Europe has fallen dramatically in 2016, to 350,000. 1,000,000 arrived in 2015. This is mainly due to the EU–Turkey agreement of March 2016, which has meant very few people are now arriving in Greece (only 17,000 since April, compared to 851,000 in 2015). Most people on this route come from Syria (IOM 06/12/2016).

However, numbers have not fallen on the other routes, and protection concerns in particular remain high. The number using the Central Mediterranean route – arriving in Italy from Libya, Egypt, or Algeria – has increased in 2016. 153,600 arrived in Italy in 2015, and 173,500 so far in 2016 (IOM 06/12/2016). 4,200 deaths at sea had been reported by the end of November, compared to close to 2,900 at the same time last year (IOM 06/12/2016, IOM 05/12/2016). This large increase is likely due to increased overcrowding on inadequate vessels. Most protection incidents reported along the route are reported in Libya.

The profile of the people using these routes has not changed dramatically. The vast majority are from sub-Saharan Africa, although an increase in Egyptians arriving in Europe has been observed. In part due to the increase in Egyptian arrivals, there has been a slight increase in the number of people who leave Egypt, although Libya remains by far the most-used route. Syrians and Afghans, who made up the majority of people using the eastern route via Greece, do not appear to have begun taking the Central route.

It remains to be seen how EU agreements with African states will impact on migration flows. Neither is it clear whether the number of Somalis will increase given the closure of the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.

### Report limitations

This report provides an overview of the population using the Central Mediterranean route to reach Europe, starting from the Horn of Africa, and their humanitarian needs. However, information gaps are significant, and include:

- Number and location of migrants along the route.
- Sectoral breakdown of migrants' needs along the route.
- Number of people leaving refugee and IDP camps to head for Europe.
- Detail on scope and scale of protection issues for people on the move, especially children.
- Effect of agreements between the EU and African countries to stem migration.
- Basic needs and livelihoods of camp and host populations along the route.

## Protection needs

4,200 deaths at sea had been reported by the beginning of December, compared to around 2,900 at the same time last year (IOM 06/12/2016, IOM 05/12/2016). There are indications that as many people are killed on the land journey as at sea. The RMMS Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) reported, based on interviews with over 1,300 migrants between 2014 and 2016, that 1,245 people perished on the move in Libya, Sudan, and Egypt. This is assumed to be a huge underestimate, given the degree of underreporting. Lack of access to medicine, food, water and shelter contribute to the deaths, as do vehicle accidents (RMMS 27/06/2016, Reuters 25/02/2016).

Migrants face multiple risks of physical and sexual abuse, as well as other mistreatment by bandits and smugglers. They are at high risk of abduction and kidnapping, held until family members or friends pay a ransom (RMMS 16/07/2016). Access to humanitarian assistance is hindered by their constant movement and irregular status.

### Detention

Of close to 3,000 migrants interviewed between June and September 2016, 49% reported having been held in a location against their will during their journey, by armed individuals or groups other than governmental authorities. The vast majority of incidents were in Libya, followed by Egypt, Algeria, and Sudan. Migrants have reported being kidnapped or having witnessed other people being kidnapped by members of the Rashaida tribe in the Eritrea–Sudan border area, with the collusion of the military (MEDU 2016). Eritreans are particularly vulnerable to kidnapping, especially in Sudan and Northern Ethiopia. The kidnapped are frequently subject to sexual abuse or torture (MPI 20/09/2016).

### Forced labour

47% of 3,000 migrants interviewed had been forced to work or perform activities against their will. Nearly all of these events were reported to have taken place in Libya, and some in Algeria, Niger, Sudan, and Egypt (IOM 10/2016).

### Border crossings

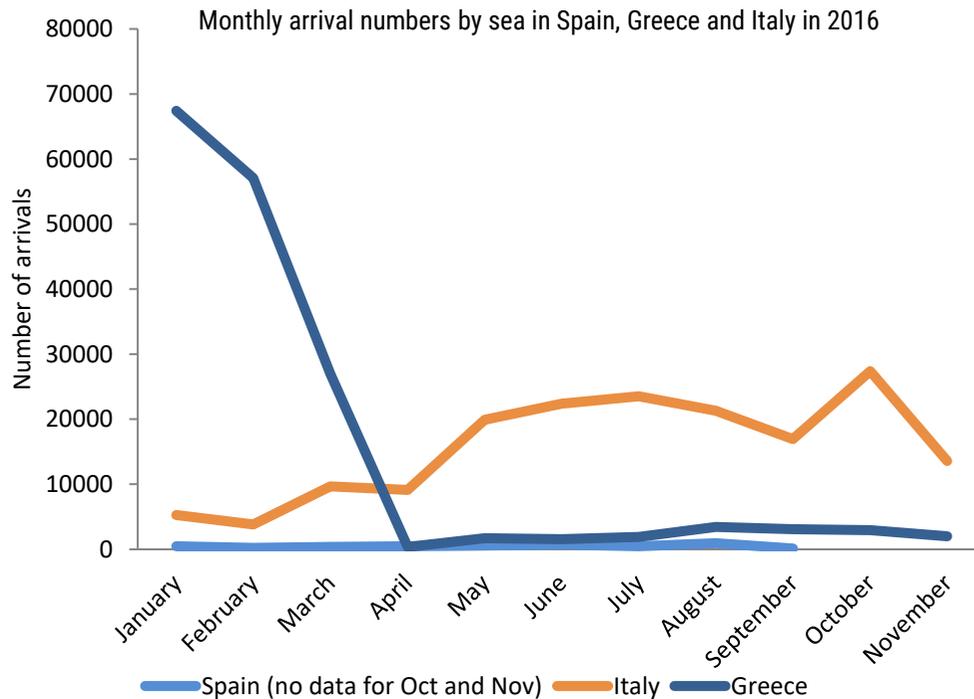
For migrants coming from Eritrea, the border crossing with Sudan is reportedly very dangerous. Eritrean military have a shoot-to-kill policy against Eritrean citizens who attempt to leave the country (MEDU 2016).

## Children

Although data is highly fragmented for children and youth on the move in the Horn of Africa, available numbers suggest that the number of children overall, and of those travelling independently of adult family members, is on the increase (RMMS 09/2016). More than 24,200 unaccompanied children had arrived in Italy by the end of November, almost double the 2015 total of 12,300 (Ministerio dell' Interno 31/11/2016).

Children are both physically and psychologically damaged by the journey. During transit, children often experience serious violence at the hands of traffickers and criminal gangs (Save the Children 11/2016).

## The Mediterranean routes

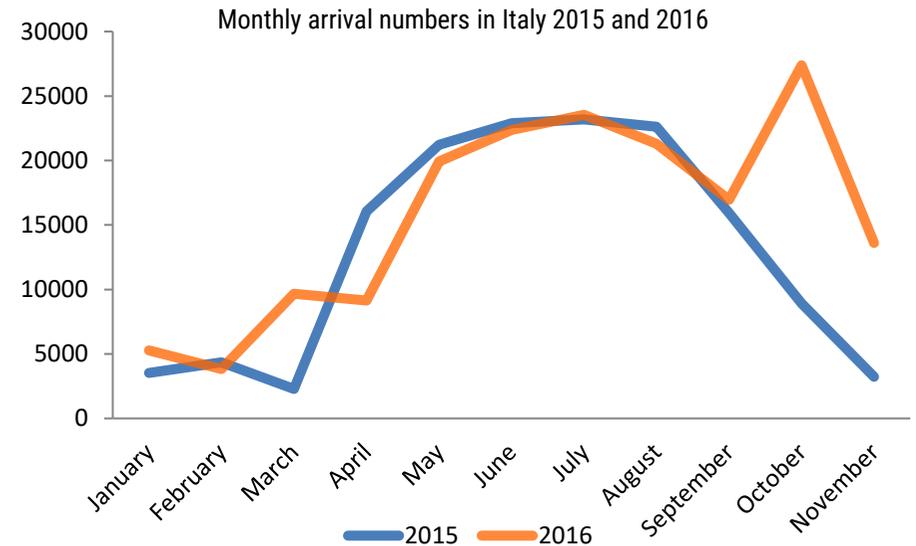


Sources: UNHCR 05/12/2016, UNHCR 16/11/2016, Ministerio dell'Interno 30/11/2016

The journey to Europe via the Mediterranean is generally divided by arrival point: the Western route, landing in Spain; the Eastern route, via Greece; and the Central route, via Italy. Since the closure of the eastern route in March, the Central route has been by far the most used in 2016.

## Central Mediterranean route

Italy has seen more than 173,500 arrivals so far on the Central Mediterranean route, compared to 153,600 in all of 2015 (IOM 06/12/2016). In October an unprecedented spike of more than 27,000 migrants was recorded (Ministerio dell'Interno 30/11/2016). This could be attributed to better weather conditions than usual just before winter, or changing political and security conditions in Libya.



Sources: Ministerio dell'Interno 30/11/2016

Libya remains the most popular departure point on the Mediterranean: almost 90% of departures from north Africa are from Libya, and close to 7% from Egypt (UNHCR 01/12/2016).

However, Egypt is seeing more departures. Despite the sea journey to Italy being longer and more dangerous from Egypt, it has recorded 25% more departures in 2016 compared to 2015. Some 13,000 people have landed in Italy so far in 2016 (EC 18/10/2016). The route via Egypt is mainly used by people from the Horn of Africa and

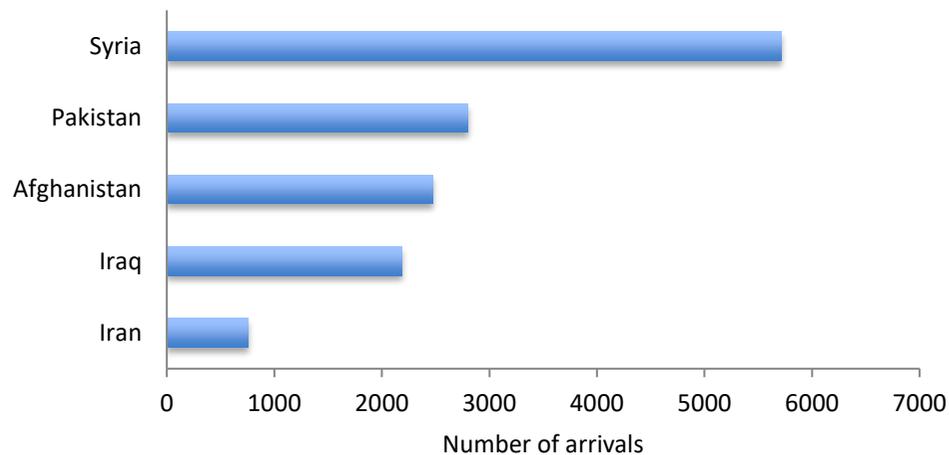
Sudan, as well as by Egyptians (IRIN 06/06/2016, Guardian 23/09/2016). In 2015, Sudanese were the majority group using Egypt as a departure point to Europe, with 7,400 arriving in Italy (Migrant Footprints 2016).

Migrants from these countries who are departing from Egypt mostly have travelled via Khartoum in Sudan, headed to Egypt via Aswan and Cairo, and on to Alexandria and surroundings on the coast (MEDU 2016).

### Eastern Mediterranean route

17,048 people reached Greece between April and November (UNHCR 05/12/2016). Syrians made up the vast majority, followed by people from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq (UNHCR 16/11/2016, UNHCR 05/12/2016). The total for the year, including arrivals before the EU–Turkey agreement, is around 170,000 (UNHCR 05/12/2016).

Nationality of people arriving in Greece, April-October 2016



Source: UNHCR 16/11/2016, UNHCR 05/12/2016

### Western Mediterranean route

On the Western Mediterranean route, more than 5,400 migrants had arrived in Spain by sea from Morocco by the end of September this year. This includes arrivals by land into its enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta in north Africa, which share a land border with Morocco. About 40% of all arrivals on the Spanish Mediterranean coast, equivalent to

more than 3,700 people, used these land entry points up to the end of September (UNHCR 16/11/2016).

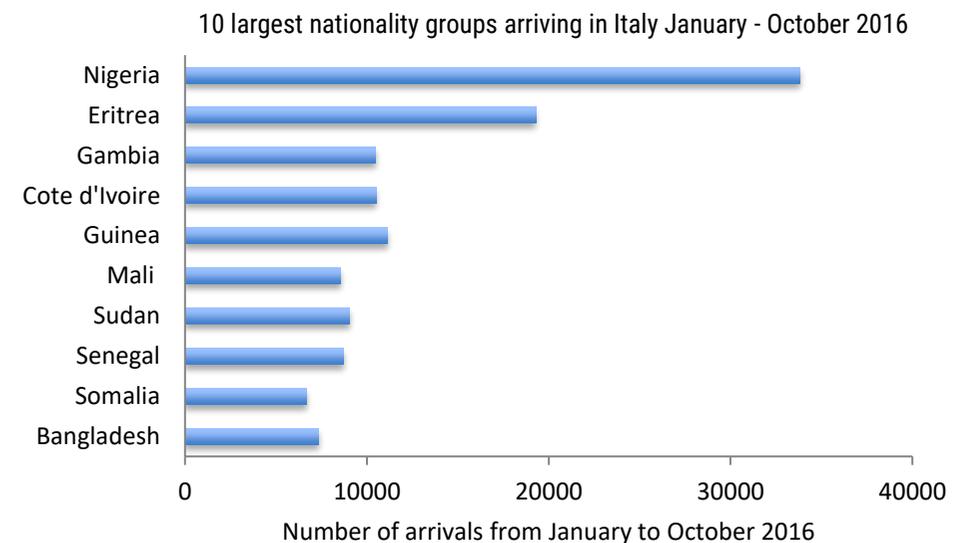
Algeria is a departure point for very few migrants, although recently flows have turned to Algeria’s coastal cities, where an increase in the number of sub-Saharan migrants has been observed this year (IRIN 25/10/2016).

### Measures to stem migration

The EU is developing a number of agreements with selected countries as part of a Partnership Framework to stem migration. The agreements offer financial support to encourage collaboration with the EU on returning migrants and border controls (EC 18/10/2016, Reuters 21/10/2016).

Initial agreements in July involved Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Jordan and Lebanon. Other countries included in the Partnership Framework comprise Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan (EC 07/06/2016). The effects of these agreements on migrant numbers and their humanitarian needs require further analysis.

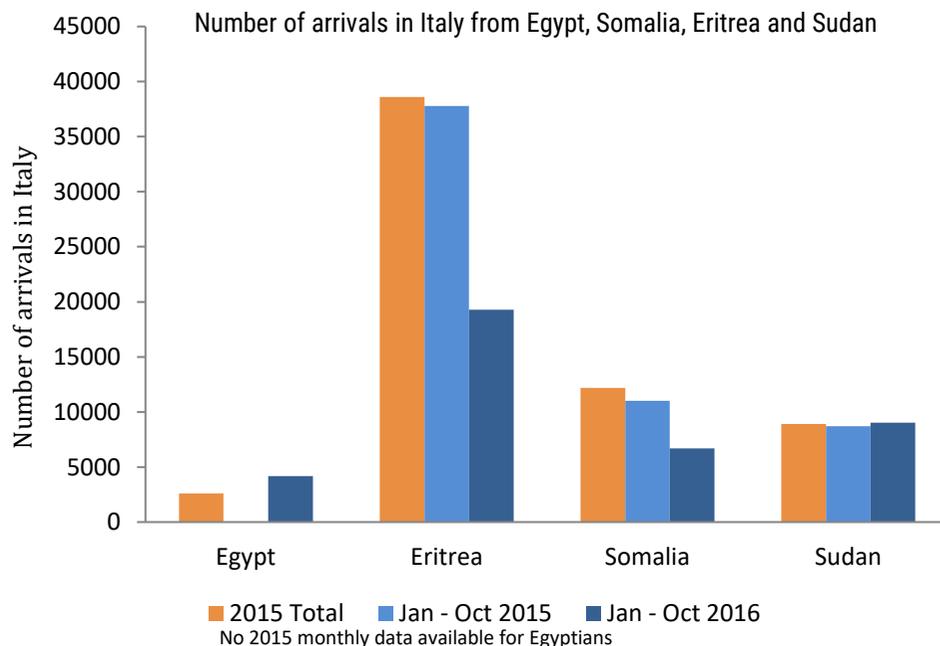
### Populations using the Central Mediterranean route



Source: UNHCR 01/12/2016

Arrivals in Italy along the Central Mediterranean route originate mainly from sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 25% are from countries in the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan) and Egypt; 30% from West Africa (mostly Nigeria); and the rest were other nationalities (IOM 22/11/2016). Nigerians and Eritreans make up the largest number of migrants (IOM 06/11/2016). 69% of Nigerians and 96% of Eritreans said they left their country for war or political reasons, according to IOM Flow Monitoring (IOM 11/2016).

The number of arrivals in Italy from Eritrea has halved since 2015: almost 37,800 arrived between January and October 2015, compared to around 19,000 in 2016 (Ministero dell'Interno 2016, CFR 16/09/2016, IOM 06/12/2016, IOM 22/11/2016). The number of Somalis also shows a marked decline compared to the same period last year. The number of Sudanese remains much the same. The reasons for the decline in arrivals from Eritrea and Somalia are unclear, but many transit through Ethiopia, one of the first countries included in the EU Partnership framework. Ethiopia announced in September 2016 that it would use international funding to provide 100,000 jobs to refugees (EU 18/10/2016, BBC 21/09/2016).



Sources: Ministero dell'Interno 2015, IOM 22/11/2016, IOM 06/12/2016, UNHCR 01/12/2016

In contrast, reports indicate that Egyptians make up a larger share of arrivals in Europe (Stratfor 07/10/2016). Up to 59% of those who arrived in 2016 were minors (UNHCR 01/12/2016). Overall, 14% of new arrivals between January and September 2016 in Italy

were unaccompanied or separated children, as opposed to 7% in 2015 (UNHCR 01/12/2016). Egyptian children who landed in Italy in 2016 have a lower mean age (14–16 years) than those who arrived the year before (15–17 years). The children reportedly have a very low level of education (Save the Children 11/2016). Under Italian law, minors cannot be deported (IRIN 10/10/2016).

Nationals of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, who were primarily arriving in Europe via Greece, do not seem to have transferred to the Central Mediterranean route. By September 2016, only 784 Syrians had arrived in Italy via the Central Mediterranean route (UNHCR 11/11/2016). Syrians made up the majority of people leaving for Europe from Egypt in 2014, but Egypt, as well as Tunisia and Algeria, has since imposed visa requirements on Syrians, making entry more difficult (Newsweek 12/04/2016, ISS 11/2015).

## Libya

Libya has long had a large population of migrant workers, and despite the challenging political and security situation, it continues to be a major destination and transit country (Independent 22/11/2016). Migrants today are among the most vulnerable populations, as their unofficial status inhibits access to livelihood opportunities, protection, health services, and security (OCHA 15/11/2016). Effective protection of the most vulnerable is severely hindered by conflict and insecurity across Libya (OCHA 15/11/2016).

### Refugees in Libya

According to UNHCR there are 38,000 refugees in Libya: 19,209 from Syria, 5,840 from Palestine, 4,652 from Eritrea, 3,066 from Iraq, 2,341 from Somalia, 2,288 from Sudan and a few hundred of other nationalities (UNHCR 11/2016).

### Migrants in Libya

IOM has identified 256,690 migrants in Libya, with the highest numbers coming from Niger, Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana, Mali and Bangladesh (IOM 04/11/2016). Other estimates indicate the number of migrants in the country to be up to four times higher. At least 80% of migrants from Egypt, Chad, and Sudan intend to stay in Libya. The majority of Nigerians, however, intend to travel to Italy and Germany (IOM 22/11/2016).

## Smuggling and trafficking networks

People smuggling and trafficking networks have exploited the security situation in Libya to expand operations. These profitable activities in turn are likely to have provided both direct and indirect funding for armed groups.

Moreover, as border controls tighten and in the absence of safe and regular migration routes, the smuggling market grows (UN 07/09/2016). This has likely contributed to the higher fatality numbers at sea this year, with smugglers using perilous boats, even more overloaded than before.

## Egypt

According to interviews of on-the-ground-observers by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), Egypt is no longer seen purely as a destination country for migrants and asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa. Instead, many people try to leave Egypt as soon as possible, although some must stay to raise the money necessary for the sea voyage (RMMS 09/08/2016).

In mid-2016 there were indications that the number of departures from Egypt was increasing (Refugees Deeply 08/09/2016, IRIN 10/06/2016, Mada 11/08/2016). In addition, the proportion of departures from Egypt to Italy had risen: from 5% in mid-2015 to 9% by 31 July 2016 (UNHCR 23/09/2016). By September it was 8.1% (UNHCR 11/2016) and by October under 7% (UNHCR 01/12/2016). The varying preference of departure via Egypt has mostly been attributed to the level of insecurity in Libya (IRIN 06/06/2016).

## Refugees in Egypt

Syrian refugees make up two-thirds of the approximately 190,000 officially registered refugees in Egypt (UNHCR 20/10/2016). The largest groups of registered refugees from Africa are Sudanese, Ethiopians, and Somalis (UNHCR 23/09/2016). There is concern that African refugees in Egypt with pending refugee status are vulnerable in terms of access to work opportunities and basic services, which makes them more likely to consider moving on to Europe as an option (UNHCR 20/10/2016).

## Detention of people in transit

The number of migrants detained in Egypt before their departure for Europe has grown in recent months (Mada 19/10/2016). 4,600 foreign nationals, predominantly Sudanese, Somalis, Eritreans and Ethiopians, were arrested for attempting irregular departure between January and September 2016, 28% more than the whole of 2015. People who

are registered with UNHCR are typically released after an average of 15 days, and it has been observed that many try again to leave the country soon after release. Those who are not registered with UNHCR are at risk of deportation (UNHCR 23/09/2016).

A new migration law was passed on 17 October (Mada 19/10/2016). It imposes prison terms and fines on those found guilty of smuggling migrants or acting as brokers or middlemen, or who provide shelter to trafficked migrants, and gather, transport or otherwise facilitate their journey (Reuters 17/10/2016).

## Sudan

Sudan is country of origin and transit country for migrants and refugees. More than 8,000 Sudanese arrived in Italy in 2015, likely including a significant number of people who have fled conflict in Darfur (OCHA 28/02/2016). In the first ten months of 2016, Italy has seen 9,000 arrivals (IOM 06/12/2016).

## Sudanese refugees and migrants

Sudan has approximately 3.2 million IDPs. Malnutrition rates are high and basic services are poor. Access constraints for humanitarians are high, while an estimated 5.8 million people are in need (ECHO 11/2016). 300,000 Sudanese refugees are living in camps in neighbouring Chad, and some 250,000 are in South Sudan.

## Refugees and migrants in Sudan

More than 90,000 refugees and asylum seekers live in eastern Sudan, and are mostly Eritrean (ECHO 11/2016). Water resources are scarce and infrastructure is limited. Pressure on these resources is exacerbated by the large number of migrants who pass through on their way to Egypt and Libya (IOM 11/04/2016).

## Arrests and deportations

In May 2016 there were reports that authorities in Sudan had launched a crackdown on Eritrean migrants, when about 900 living in Khartoum were arrested, and another 400 were intercepted travelling north. Deportations were reported, as was an increase in border controls on the Eritrean side of the frontier (HRW 30/05/2016, IRIN 26/05/2016).

## Ethiopia

Ethiopia hosts the largest refugee population in Africa, and is a major hub for people leaving Somalia and Eritrea to take the route through Sudan towards Europe (RMMS 05/2016). Ethiopians themselves, however, more often leave for Gulf states via Djibouti and Yemen. In 2015, only 2,600 Ethiopian migrants reached the shores of Italy (Migrant Footprints 2016)

### Ethiopian migrants and refugees

About 10,000 migrants, mostly from Ethiopia, make the journey to Djibouti every month and transit to Yemen (TesdaNews 14/10/2016). 95% of Ethiopians arriving in Yemen are from Oromia. Unrest in Oromia region has grown in 2016. Ethiopian migrants and asylum seekers interviewed in Yemen are increasingly referring to the unrest as a key reason for leaving the country (RMMS 10/2016).

Significant numbers of Ethiopians also head south towards South Africa (RMMS 05/2016).

### Refugees in Ethiopia

By August 2016 almost 744,000 refugees were registered in Ethiopia. The largest populations were South Sudanese, Somali, and Eritrean (IRIN 24/10/2016, UNHCR 08/09/2016).

## Eritrea

Limited socio-economic opportunities, insecurity and greatly restricted political freedoms have prevailed in Eritrea for the last decade. The decision to leave the country unofficially is perceived by authorities as an act of defection, treachery and political dissent (MPI 09/2016).

In recent years more active smuggling networks have led to a rise in the number of people leaving (ISS 11/2016). For most Eritreans aiming for Europe, Sudan is the first major stop. Many leave refugee camps in eastern Sudan and northern Ethiopia to head to Europe (RMMS 06/2016, MEDU 2016). The high rate of onward movement of Eritreans from camps in neighbouring countries has been attributed to the relatively high acceptance rate of asylum claims in European countries, access to funds, and diaspora support. There is a higher proportion of young men among Eritrean refugees – many are fleeing compulsory, indefinite military service – than other refugee populations. Somali refugees, for example, comprise a disproportionately large number of women, children, and older people (MPI 09/2016).

## Somalia

Approximately 1.1 million people are internally displaced in Somalia and nearly 1 million are refugees in the neighbouring countries of Yemen, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

### Somali returnees

The Kenyan government intends to close the Dadaab refugee camps and repatriate Somali refugees by May 2017 (AI 04/11/2016, HRW 16/11/2016). This includes more than 300,000 people, many of whom have never lived in Somalia (BBC 15/09/2016, FP 21/07/2016).

Camp residents have begun to return to Somalia under a voluntary return agreement (Guardian 15/09/2016, OCHA 28/07/2016). However, there are concerns that returnees will not be able to build livelihoods in Somalia and will end up in IDP camps, or attempt to leave for elsewhere, perhaps taking the route to Europe (HRW 14/09/2016). So far this year more than 9,200 Somalis have arrived in Italy (Ministerio dell' Interno 30/11/2016). An MSF survey in Dadaab's Dagahaley camp in July and August revealed that 86% of people were unwilling to return to Somalia, and had concerns over the availability of such essentials as food, water and shelter (MSF 10/2016). In Somalia, five million people, approximately 40% of the population, are food insecure (WFP 2016).

The large-scale return of refugees risks increasing tensions, even aggravating conflict, over limited resources (UNHCR 07/2016).