

Regional Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen in 2013: 2nd Quarter trend summary and analysis

Policy changes on immigration and emigration in the region

Across the region various Governments are making efforts to stem the inflow or out flow of migrants. Saudi Arabia introduced measures to tighten its border control by resuming the construction of a 1,800 km fence with Yemen, and instituting a series of policy changes that impact directly on the thousands of migrant workers in Saudi Arabia working illegally under the so-called “free visa” arrangement. ‘In Somaliland the authorities are planning to pass laws that will stiffen penalties for human trafficking and smuggling offenses. The move follows a resurgence of Somaliland youth irregular movement to Libya and the concomitant risks they face including rising cases of kidnapping in the first half of 2013. During the month of June 2013 in Ethiopia the Government held a public forum to sensitize the public and relevant stakeholders on human trafficking. The National Movement against Human Trafficking was urged to strengthen its efforts in controlling the flow of citizens to neighbouring and Middle East countries in search of jobs and encourage them to make use of domestic job opportunities.

Deportations

Since the beginning of King Abdullah’s “corrective period” last April, at least 656,000 migrants were deported or have willingly left the Saudi kingdom. The Kingdom has extended the grace period for migrants to regularize their status for three more months set to end in November. Officials have threatened raids and punishment for migrants who do not adhere to the new regulations by the end of the amnesty period. In the second quarter of 2013, over 200,000 Yemenis were expelled for being in the country illegally.

Movements from the Horn of Africa to Yemen

In the second quarter of 2013, a total of 16,948 migrants/refugees both Somali and non-Somali crossed the Arabian Sea and Red Sea to Yemen. This new arrival figure is 25% lower than the same period in the year 2012 and 42% lower than the first quarter of 2013. In terms of proportion, non-Somalis (mostly Ethiopians) continue to dominate the flow with the proportion of Somalis significantly decreasing. During this quarter, an estimated 81% of the new arrivals were Ethiopians while 19% represented refugees/migrants of Somali origin. Port Obock, in Djibouti remains the main departure point. Raids in April led to the release of over 2,000 migrants/refugees kidnapped/abducted for ransom in Yemen.

Refugee/IDPs population matrix in the region

Country	Refugees	IDPs	Comparison with 1st half 2012	
			Refugees	IDPs
Yemen	242,000	314,019	225,618	545,318
Ethiopia	407,985	-	334,347	-
Somalia	2,339	1.1 million	2,124	1.3 million
Kenya	600,000	-	570,800	-
Djibouti	25,000	-	-	-

Camps	F	M	2013	M	F	2012
Camp Hagadera	67,618	68,103	136,322	68,905	70,000	138,905
Camp Kambios	10,799	10,706	20,126	6,743	6,682	13,425
Camp Dagahaley	54,418	49,755	104,173	63,120	60,371	123,491
Camp Ifo	51,514	49,092	100,606	58,679	59,074	117,753
Camp Ifo II	32,794	32,248	65,042	36,884	36,281	73,165
Total	217,143	209,904	427,047	234,331	232,408	466,739

Overall, the population of refugees in the Horn of Africa region has increased. The highest increase was in Yemen and Ethiopia where the number of refugees/migrants increased by 7% and 22% respectively.

Somali returns in 2013

The relative peace and stability in Somalia during the first half of 2013 has led to a rise in the number of Somali refugees/migrants either returning back or expressing interest to return specifically from Yemen. In the first half of 2013, there has been heightened debate over the policy shift by the Government of Kenya, where it directed that urban refugees should be relocated to camps in Dadaab as a precursor to their eventual return to Somalia. The High Court of Kenya quashed the government directive on grounds that it threatens the right to movement and fundamental freedoms of refugees as a vulnerable group of society. Return continues to be discussed by the Governments of Kenya, and Somalia, with UNHCR advocating for safe, orderly and voluntary return.

The UN has reported that over 20,000 Somalis refugees have returned to Somalia from Kenya.

Camp demographics in Dadaab refugee complex

The population of refugees in Dadaab refugee complex (comprising camp Hagadera, camp Kambios, camp Dagahaley, camp Ifo 1, and camp Ifo II) decreased by 8.5% in the first half of 2013 compared to a similar period in the year 2012.

Camp Ifo II which has been open for 2 years since June 2011, is 8,000 below full capacity. The camp was opened over the course of the 2011 [Horn of Africa famine](#), where an estimated 1,300 people were crossing the Somali border every day.

Camp Kambios which was [opened in April 2012](#) is the only camp that has recorded an increase in the number of refugees being hosted. In the month of June 2012, the camp population was 13,425, but currently the population has increased by 49.9% compared to a similar period last year.

The number of female refugees in Dadaab refugee complex decreased by 6.6% in the first half of 2013 compared to a similar period in the previous year. In terms of proportion, women refugees increased by a percentage point compared to male refugees who decreased by 1.7%.

The noted trends in the first half in terms of camp demographics could partly be attributed to either the relative but uncertain peace in South Central Somalia, end of famine, and the shift in refugee policy in Kenya especially after the order to relocate urban refugees into camps which was issued in December 2012 and eventually quashed by the High Court of Kenya in July 2013.

Movements within Somalia

Despite the slightly over 15% decrease in the number of internally displaced persons in Somalia, that is comparing the first half figures of the years 2012 and 2013; fresh displacements have been recorded in the first half of 2013, mainly attributed to conflict and clan related insecurity and drought due to poor rains.

Both Somaliland and Puntland have also been affected by the drought and significant rural to urban migration continues to take place. The search for durable solutions for IDPS remains a challenge.

Among the IDPs in South Central, women are the most vulnerable, the UN [recorded](#) 1,700 rapes in the camps in 2012 – many thought to have been carried out by members of the Somali security.



A case in point was in March 2013, and after the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Xudur in Bakool region. The Al-shabaab overrun the region leading thousands to flee. Approximately 2,500 people arrived in Ceel Barde, 90 km to the north on the Somalia border with Ethiopia, while 5 persons [allegedly](#) died of dehydration.