

RMMS BRIEFING PAPER 5: OCTOBER 2017



Weighing the Risks

Protection risks and human rights violations faced by migrants in and from East Africa

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Abstract

This paper builds on nearly 4,000 interviews with migrants and smugglers to present an analysis of the protection incidents occurring along the four main migratory routes within and from the Horn of Africa (North-west towards Libya and Europe, East towards Yemen and the Gulf, Northern towards Egypt and Europe, and South towards South Africa). Quantitative surveys and qualitative statements collected from September 2014 to March 2017 through the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) depict an in-depth overview of the multiple human rights violations facing migrants on their journey. Divided into thematic sub-chapters, the paper outlines statistics and hotspots for the main incidents investigated. Quotes from migrants and smugglers are included to detail individual experiences and perspectives. Findings complement the existing literature on migrant's smuggling and abuse in the Horn of Africa and allow for a closer look at new trends in this field.

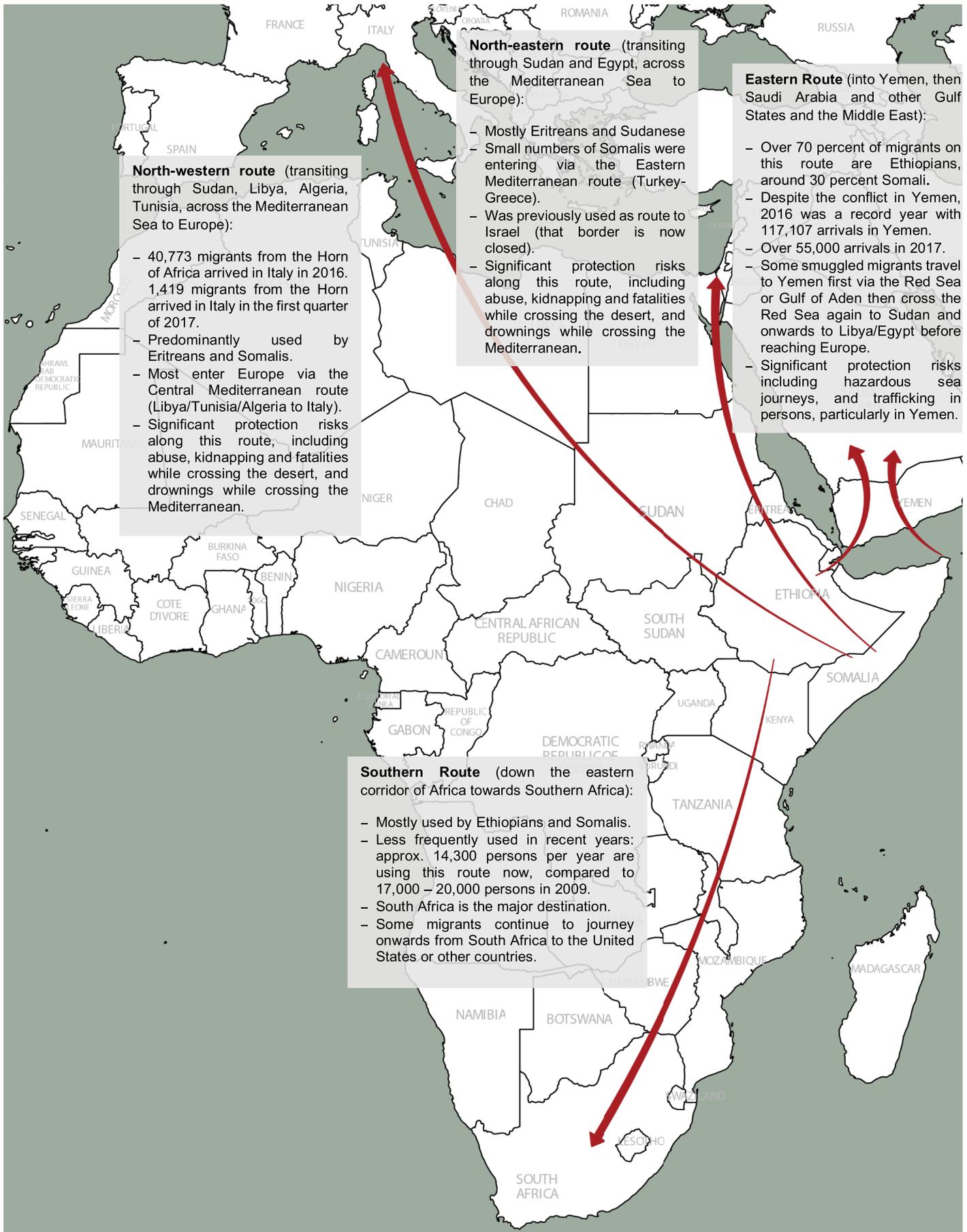
Summary of Key Findings

Regardless of their destination, migrants from the Horn of Africa face serious protection risks on their journeys. Previous research has well documented the plight suffered by people on the move, focusing on specific abuses or dangerous locations along their route. The purpose of this study is to present an updated overview of the human rights violations facing migrants travelling from the Horn of Africa, by analyzing nearly 4,000 interviews collected along the main migratory routes from the region over a period of three years (2014 – 2017). Backed by a wide range of secondary sources from a variety of international organizations and researchers working in the field of migration, the new data collected by the RMMS Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) highlights the magnitude of the abuses faced by migrants in countries of origin, transit and destination. Key findings of this study reveal that:

- **79 per cent of all migrants interviewed have either directly witnessed or experienced one or multiple abuses** during their journey, including extortion, sexual violence and torture. The figures collected suggest that some migrants might have experienced the same abuse (including kidnappings) more than once during their migration;
- While abuses are experienced along all routes and in all countries considered in this study, **incidents seem to cluster in certain locations, especially along national borders or in areas that constitute a geographical frontier** (such as deserts). The social and economic isolation of borderlands, as well as the limited control from central authorities, might make abusers prone to prey on irregular migrants crossing those areas;
- **Law enforcement officials are among the main perpetrators of human rights abuses towards migrants**, according to the data collected along all routes. Government forces are reportedly responsible of sexual and physical abuses, kidnappings, disappearances and migrants' deaths. Some forces not directly involved with the abuses can also be bribed to turn a blind eye to smugglers' actions. Local police forces seem to be involved in the most illegal behavior, followed by border guards and immigration officials;
- While both male and female migrants suffer a wide range of abuses *en route*, **a high number of women and girls on the move seem to go missing along their journey**. The disappearance of female migrants has already been highlighted in a previous research¹, yet the scale and scope of this phenomenon remains unknown;
- Qualitative statements collected among migrants travelling between Ethiopia and Sudan point to the **possible existence of illegal cross-border operations which connect migrant smuggling with the trafficking of narcotics and weapons**. According to migrants' testimonies, some police officers also take part in such activities. No verifiable evidence exists on such trends, and more research is due to confirm it, yet if true, this discovery would represent a revealing new finding in the study of smuggling in the Horn of Africa region.
- The flows of people leaving their countries of origin continue to be mixed, as **most migrants are pushed to leave by a combination of protection and economic factors, often influencing each other**. The lack of regular migration options forces migrants to undertake unsafe journeys which leave them vulnerable to harsh living conditions and multiple abuses, further blurring any potential distinction between economic migrants and people in need of international protection.²

¹ RMMS (2012). Desperate choices. Conditions, Risks & Protection Failures Affecting Ethiopian Migrants in Yemen. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/RMMSbooklet.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017)

² Consequently, in this study the label "migrant" is used to describe all people moving through mixed migratory flows from the region, including refugees, asylum seekers, irregular migrants and others.



North-western route (transiting through Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe):

- 40,773 migrants from the Horn of Africa arrived in Italy in 2016. 1,419 migrants from the Horn arrived in Italy in the first quarter of 2017.
- Predominantly used by Eritreans and Somalis.
- Most enter Europe via the Central Mediterranean route (Libya/Tunisia/Algeria to Italy).
- Significant protection risks along this route, including abuse, kidnapping and fatalities while crossing the desert, and drownings while crossing the Mediterranean.

North-eastern route (transiting through Sudan and Egypt, across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe):

- Mostly Eritreans and Sudanese
- Small numbers of Somalis were entering via the Eastern Mediterranean route (Turkey-Greece).
- Was previously used as route to Israel (that border is now closed).
- Significant protection risks along this route, including abuse, kidnapping and fatalities while crossing the desert, and drownings while crossing the Mediterranean.

Eastern Route (into Yemen, then Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States and the Middle East):

- Over 70 percent of migrants on this route are Ethiopians, around 30 percent Somali.
- Despite the conflict in Yemen, 2016 was a record year with 117,107 arrivals in Yemen.
- Over 55,000 arrivals in 2017.
- Some smuggled migrants travel to Yemen first via the Red Sea or Gulf of Aden then cross the Red Sea again to Sudan and onwards to Libya/Egypt before reaching Europe.
- Significant protection risks including hazardous sea journeys, and trafficking in persons, particularly in Yemen.

Southern Route (down the eastern corridor of Africa towards Southern Africa):

- Mostly used by Ethiopians and Somalis.
- Less frequently used in recent years: approx. 14,300 persons per year are using this route now, compared to 17,000 – 20,000 persons in 2009.
- South Africa is the major destination.
- Some migrants continue to journey onwards from South Africa to the United States or other countries.

Introduction

Each month, hundreds of men, women and children leave the Horn of Africa for various reasons, including to escape political oppression and lack of livelihood and search for better opportunities elsewhere. Their journey develops along four main axes of movement: The Western Route towards Libya and Europe; the Eastern Route towards Yemen and onwards to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries; the Northern Route to Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea, previously used to enter Israel; and the Southern Route towards Kenya and southern Africa. While aimed at ensuring safety and a better future, these trips often develop through dangerous circumstances, exposing migrants to a wide range of abuses from criminal networks and law enforcement officials alike.

Over the last few years, a growing interest around mixed migration from the Horn of Africa has translated into considerable literature on its features and risks; Human Rights Watch³, Amnesty International⁴ and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)⁵ among others, have published in-depth studies on protection issues facing migrants on the move. Nevertheless, no system has been yet developed to systematically monitor migratory flows and abuse of migrants across the region. The challenges are many, as these journeys are predominantly irregular and therefore clandestine in nature, commonly taking place in remote areas and facilitated by criminal networks. The lack of reliable data affects humanitarian operations as well as political debates on migration, with poorly-informed premises and, often, poorly-informed results.

To overcome part of these issues and support the existing research on migrants' smuggling and abuse in the Horn of Africa, in 2014 the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) launched the Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi), an innovative, low-cost approach to collect and analyse data on mixed migration flows. Based on a custom-designed survey application to collect comparable data from people on the move, the 4Mi is run through a network of monitors stationed at key migration hubs through which migrant movement occurs. Monitors are local individuals, members of existing agencies and other actors chosen due to their closeness to the migratory flows in their locations. Provided with a mobile phone application, they collect and submit data from people on the move, focusing on protection risks faced by migrants, but also including routes taken, drivers of migration, migrant profiles, interactions with smugglers and statistical trends.

During Phase 1 of the project between 2014 and 2017, the 4Mi East Africa and Yemen programme interviewed 3,522 migrants, 153 smugglers and 289 observers along the main migration corridors within and from the Horn of Africa⁶. Alongside quantitative data, over 650 qualitative statements about migrants' experiences during the journey were also collected, revealing individual stories and vivid testimonies. A dedicated RMMS report (Human smuggling - No victimless crime: Voices from those on the move)⁷ presenting these statements was published in June 2017.

This paper complements the qualitative report and presents an in-depth analysis of over 3,964 quantitative interviews with migrants and refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia, focusing on the human rights violations and protection issues they face along their journey on the four main migratory routes from the Horn of Africa. The report is divided into thematic sections outlining statistics and hotspots for the main incidents investigated. A selection of quotes from the migrants and smugglers interviewed is used to detail the extent of the abuses described⁸. The report also draws on multiple referenced sources from agencies, organisations and researchers working on mixed migration and human smuggling, primarily in the Horn of Africa. Data previously accumulated by RMMS in East Africa and Yemen is also featured.

The main limitations of the analysis are the possibility of double counting (with different migrants reporting the same incident twice) and inaccurate reporting, as there is no system in place to verify the incidents reported along the migratory routes. Additionally, the number and gender of monitors varied in different locations, possibly resulting in a wider collection of data highlighting certain countries, or higher access to female migrants in others. Finally, and due to the nature of the study, the setting of interviews varied highly between countries and even continents, and its role on migrants' testimonies is unknown.

While not aiming to be representative of all the migrant population from the Horn of Africa, the wide geographical focus of this research, the significant number of interviews collected, and the rich accounts provided by migrants themselves allow to capture the extent of human rights violations along migratory routes from the region with unprecedented detail.

3 Human Rights Watch (2014). Yemen's Torture Camps. Abuse of migrants by human traffickers in a climate of impunity. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/25/yemens-torture-camps/abuse-migrants-human-traffickers-climate-impunity> (last accessed: 3/07/2017); and Human Rights Watch (2014). "I wanted to lie down and die". Trafficking and torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/11/i-wanted-lie-down-and-die/trafficking-and-torture-eritreans-sudan-and-egypt> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

4 Amnesty International (2015). 'Libya is full of cruelty': stories of abduction, sexual violence and abuse from migrants and refugees. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/libya_is_full_of_cruelty.pdf (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

5 IOM (2009). In pursuit of the southern dream: victims of necessity. Assessment of the irregular movement of men from East Africa and the Horn to South Africa. Available at: <http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iomresearchassessment.pdf> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

6 Phase 1 refers to the pilot phase of 4Mi, during which the project was developed and first implemented by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) in Nairobi, and gradually expanded across migration routes with increasing numbers of interviews conducted on a monthly basis. As of June 2017, 4Mi started Phase 2, using revised and upgraded migrant and smuggler surveys. The same surveys, while allowing for regional variation, are now used in other regions where 4Mi expanded to, including West Africa and Central Asia. While moving on to Phase 2, this paper provides an exhaustive account of all protection focused data collected during Phase 1. A similar upcoming RMMS Briefing Paper provides an exhaustive overview of all smuggling related data from Phase 1.

7 RMMS (2017). Human smuggling - No victimless crime: Voices from those on the move. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Human%20Smuggling.pdf> (last accessed: 5/07/2017).

8 All quotes have been entered as free text in a mobile survey on smartphones. For ease of reading, spelling errors have been corrected by the author and in some cases the flow of text has been slightly altered, while leaving the meaning of the quote intact and staying as close as possible to the authentic entry.

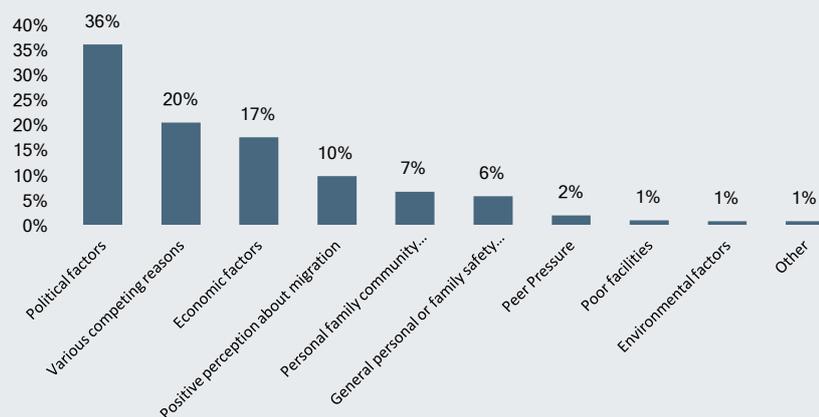
Reasons for leaving – lack of protection at home

Migration flows from the Horn of Africa respond to a large number of factors, ranging from conflict and political reasons to social and environmental pressures, as well as wider migration policies. The multiplicity of issues driving such movements and the diverse profiles and needs of those on the move constitute what's defined "mixed migration", a term that loosely encompasses the movement of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, but also victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, smuggled persons and others along the same routes. While much of the current narrative on irregular migration focuses on the attempt to distinguish those who flee for their life from those in search of better economic opportunities, research shows that clear-cut distinctions are often difficult to make⁹. Data collected through the 4Mi confirms the variegated composition of migration flows from the Horn of Africa and indicates that these journeys often arise from a lack of protection at home.

Similarly, the system of forced and indefinite conscription¹² still in effect in Eritrea is mentioned by Eritrean respondents as one of the main reasons to leave their country.

Besides pure political factors, 20 per cent of the respondents indicate that they have been pushed to leave by a combination of reasons, rather than a single one; political, economic and environmental issues are often intertwined in the migrants' stories, confirming the complex patterns behind these movements. Economic factors are mentioned as the third main driver of migration, mainly due to unemployment (36 per cent), poverty (32 per cent) and sense of responsibility to send remittances (28 per cent). Many of the qualitative statements collected by the 4Mi monitors point to a direct correlation between political situations and personal resources, showing how economic struggles can be produced or worsened by a lack of protection.

Primary push factors for leaving their country of origin



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

According to the majority of the respondents, political factors represent the main reason behind their migration, due to oppression (36 per cent), tribal or ethnic discrimination (26 per cent), forced military service (17 per cent) and high levels of corruption (10 per cent) among others. Migrants' accounts are consistent with the situations ongoing in their countries of origin. For example, while fighting between Al Shabab and government forces continues to stir a climate of violence and instability in Somalia¹⁰, a rise in political unrest and persecutions has been reported in Ethiopia, where the parliament has declared a state of emergency following months of anti-government protests and violence¹¹.

“The administration of the Somali region of Ethiopia highly marginalizes non-Ogaden clan ethnicities. There is no equal employment opportunity for all. There are a lot of people who got their houses confiscated. My own brother's house in Jigjiga was taken by the paramilitary police commissioner. No one can protect us from him because is the cousin of the president of the region.”

42-year old Ethiopian male, interviewed in South Africa about experiences in Ethiopia. July 2016.

⁹ Irin (2015). Refugee versus migrant: time for a new label? Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2015/06/15/refugee-versus-migrant-time-new-label> (last accessed 05/07/2017).

¹⁰ International Crisis Group (2017). Instruments of Pain (III). Conflict and famine in Somalia. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/b125-instruments-pain-iii-conflict-and-famine-somalia> (last accessed 5/07/2017)

¹¹ Al Jazeera (2017). Ethiopia extends state of emergency of four months. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/03/ethiopia-extends-state-emergency-months-170330110807086.html> (last accessed 5/07/2017).

¹² Amnesty International (2015). Eritrea: Just deserters: Why indefinite National Service in Eritrea has created a generation of refugees. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr64/2930/2015/en/> (last accessed: 5/07/2017).

“Since 12 of November 2015 when the Oromo protest took place, the government has been using excessive force, killing Oromo students and continuously land grabbing from poor farmers and transferring to the rich people in the name of investment.”

32-year old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Ethiopia. September 2016.

“[Migrants] come from Somalia and they are mostly young men who ran from the insecurity and the terrorist groups in the region, who either force them to join them or radicalise the youth. Since the terrorists occupied some areas in Southern and Central Somalia that affected the normal living conditions, resulting in no job opportunities in the area.”

29-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. July 2015

A lack of protection in the family or at the community level also represents a catalyst for migration. When asked about additional factors behind their reason to leave, 24 per cent of the respondents mentioned personal safety factors and social circumstances, such as abuses at home (23 per cent), isolation due to the death of family (20 per cent) or divorce (17 per cent), as well as risks experienced in their community, such as ethnic or religious discrimination (46 per cent), conflict (28 per cent) and general crime levels (23 per cent).

The 4Mi results show that migration ideas are highly widespread in the respondents’ areas of origin; The decision to leave is often a communal choice, as 62 per cent of the respondents reported to have been somehow encouraged to migrate by their network. Ideas of better living conditions at destination, alongside freedom from oppression and better economic chances, are shared by families and communities, and reportedly perpetuated by the stories of previously migrated persons, social media and brokers. While 87 per cent of the migrants interviewed asserted that migration is common in their communities, regular migration opportunities are often lacking, as only 1 per cent of the respondents managed to receive the assistance from an official government agency to leave.

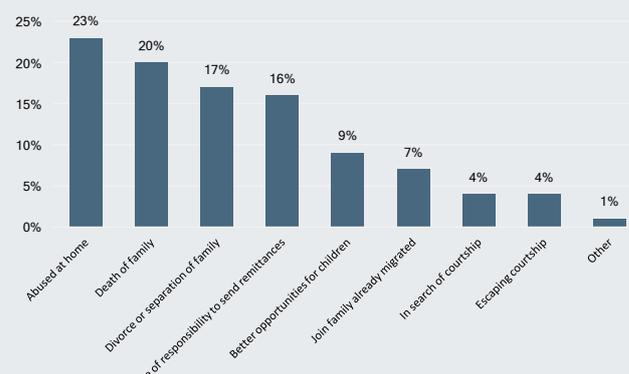
“If someone wants to fulfill any required procedures like having a passport for making his/her trip legal, it’s hard to have it easily - except for those who are government’s supporters. But if any of the other citizens try to migrate they are arrested while travelling, they are blamed for breaking the country’s law and put in prison for the simple reason that they were trying to seek better opportunities - as they had no other option to sustain their life at home, because of the political atmosphere of the country.”

50-year-old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Djibouti about experiences in Ethiopia. December 2016.

The role of smugglers

While the size of mixed migration from the Horn of Africa and the risks faced during such journeys have been increasingly acknowledged by regional policy initiatives such as the African Union’s Khartoum Process and the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, little attention has been so far given to the lack of legal migration channels¹³. Migratory trends explored by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)¹⁴ and Amnesty International¹⁵ among others, have proven that political attempts to repress irregular migration further drive migrants underground, exposing them to increased human rights violations. Furthermore, a study on practices

Personal & Family Circumstances



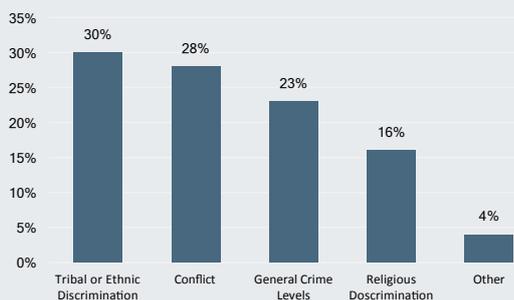
Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

13 Migration Hub (2015). Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Conditions-and-Risks-in-Mixed-Migration-in-North-East-Africa%2520%281%29.pdf> (last accessed: 5/07/2017).

14 OHCHR (2015). End of Mission Statement Migrants and the Mediterranean: UN rights expert on human rights of migrants follow up visit to Brussels for further development of his study on EU border management. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15544&LangID=> (last accessed: 12/07/2017).

15 Amnesty International (2017). A radical change is needed to failing EU migration policy. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/a-radical-change-is-needed-to-failing-eu-migration-policy/> (last accessed: 7/07/2017).

General Personal or Family Safety Factors



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

and attitudes of Ethiopian migrants¹⁶ has demonstrated that migrants and refugees are often aware of the risks they face when they embark on their journeys, but that these don't deter their hope to reach protection and a better future. In the absence of regular options, migrants are easy prey of the propaganda of brokers, who, in 74 per cent of the cases reported, are active members of a smuggling networks.

According to the majority of the respondents, smugglers are in charge to facilitate the whole journey, with an integrated network of members or affiliated criminal groups in different countries. Interviews confirms that a very thin line exist between smuggling and trafficking activities; While a clear legal distinction between the two has been defined by the Palermo Protocols (the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* and the *Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*) that supplement the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, differences between smuggling and trafficking are becoming increasingly blurred in mixed migration flows¹⁷.

Due to the common practice of passing individuals from one group to another, migrants may contact smugglers to facilitate their journey and find themselves passed onto traffickers. Both traffickers and smugglers can show abusive behaviors towards migrants, by deceiving them, extort more money or exploit them through sexual violence and forced labour, pointing to a certain overlap between the two phenomena. The blurred nature of smuggling operations clearly emerges from the start of some journeys: Half of the migrants interviewed through the 4Mi survey stated that they did not receive information about routes, conditions and means of transportation before the departure. Of those who did, half asserted that the conditions were not as told, and almost all believe to have been intentionally misled.

“When I was back at home I received information from one of my friend that, “the smugglers are very nice and honest, they can help you if you need something without problem and I guarantee you their honesty” but what I faced on my journey to Egypt was very different from what I heard from my friend. What I saw and what I saved in my mind is their brutality. I was raped by smugglers, police men and border guards and also I paid extra money outside our agreement.”

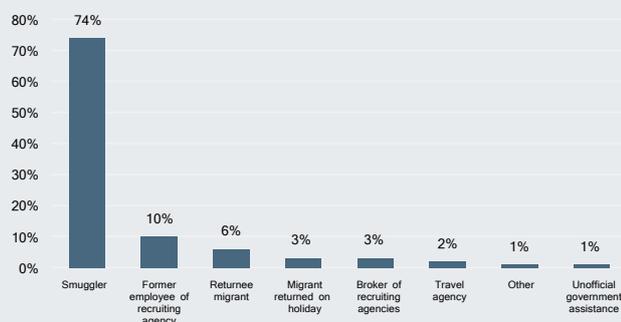
24-year-old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. December 2016.

“[Migrants face] arrest and kidnapping by militia groups in Libya, Sudan and Malawi. Female can be raped and detained. But we don't tell those threats to our clients.”

42-year-old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. August 2015

Treatment along the routes seems to depend on the smugglers' networks and sometimes differs between migrants that are travelling as part of the same group. While not all migrants interviewed by the 4Mi monitors reported to have experienced abuses, suggesting that it might be possible for some to conduct a relatively straightforward journey, the vast majority of the respondents (79 per cent) reported to have directly witnessed or experienced one or multiple protection incidents along the route. In several cases, migrants experienced the same abuse more than once during their migration experience, at different stages in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Reported identity of the broker



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

¹⁶ RMMS (2014). *Blinded by Hope. Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Ethiopian migrants*. Available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Blinded_by_Hope.pdf (last accessed: 5/07/2017).

¹⁷ RMMS (2013). *Migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa and Yemen*. Available at: http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Migrant_Smuggling_in_the_Horn_of_Africa_and_Yemen_report.pdf (last accessed: 5/07/2017).

Sexual abuse

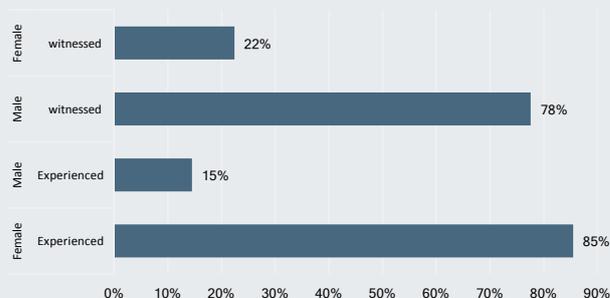
Exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) appears to be a significant risk for migrants and asylum seekers travelling from the Horn of Africa, particularly for women and girls. A World Bank/UNHCR report¹⁸ on forced displacement and mixed migration in the Horn of Africa has claimed that SGBV represent a “pervasive challenge” across the region, while multiple protection actors have reported on societal, sexual and gender-based violence faced by migrant women and girls in Libya¹⁹, Egypt²⁰ and South Sudan²¹. Figures emerging from the 4Mi survey clearly confirm the high presence of sexual abuses along migratory routes within and from the Horn of Africa.

From September 2014 to March 2017, 1,093 cases of sexual violence have been either directly witnessed (638) or personally experienced (455) by the respondents, while 253 additional cases have been reported by indirect witnesses. Rape is the most common SGBV incident faced by migrants, accounting for almost 60 per cent of the reports, but other abuses, such as assault or harassment, are also experienced. While SGBV survivors are overwhelmingly female (90 per cent), accounts of sexual abuse towards migrant men or boys have also been reported.

While women and girls make up half²² of the refugees and migrants worldwide, the balance between males and females in such flows differs²³ across regions and cultures; Although it is estimated that female migrants from the Horn of Africa outnumber males in a number of age groups²⁴, only a third of the respondents reached by the 4Mi monitors were women. Considering such limited access to female respondents and the general underreporting²⁵ that surrounds sexual violence, it is likely that figures on sexual abuse are considerably higher. In a paper on the Central Mediterranean migration route published in February 2017, UNICEF²⁶ claimed that nearly half of the women interviewed has suffered sexual violence or other SGBV during the journey, while all the Eritrean women interviewed

by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)²⁷ on its search and rescue vessels in the Mediterranean Sea reported to have either directly experienced or known someone who had experienced sexual violence, showing wounds and other medical conditions consistent with their testimonies.

Gender of migrants reporting sexual abuse, experienced or witnessed



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

“ I was handed over by smugglers to traffickers, while traveling from Shagarab refugee camp to Khartoum in a place called Hajer. I was forced to pay a ransom of USD 3,000 for my release. I was tortured all over my body, and raped several times by as many as three men a day for about one month, because initially I was fighting to defend myself. However, I couldn’t. I was released after one month, because my relatives paid the ransom. I went to Khartoum and I found myself pregnant as a result of the rape.”

27-year old Eritrean female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. July 2016.

4Mi data indicate that SGBV perpetrators target victims across ethnic and age spectrums, and throughout all the main migratory routes. However, a relatively larger number of sexual violence cases are reported in Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia, and in specific locations within those countries – such as Khartoum (98 incidents reported) and Al Shimaliya (62) in Sudan and Aswan (125) and the Sahara Desert (58) in Egypt²⁸. Women on the move seem to be aware of these risk; Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants interviewed by a 2016 IGAD study on human trafficking and smuggling along the western route, reported to have purchased intravenous contraception in Sudan before their journey through

18 World Bank Group; UNHCR. 2015. Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa. World Bank, Washington, DC and UNHCR, Geneva. © World Bank. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22286> (last accessed: 4/07/2017)

19 Amnesty International. 2015. 'Libya is full of cruelty': stories of abduction, sexual violence and abuse from migrants and refugees. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/libya_is_full_of_cruelty.pdf (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

20 State.gov. (2016). Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper> (last accessed: 2/07/2017).

21 Edwards, R. (2014). The Girl Has No Rights: Gender-Based Violence in South Sudan. Insights. careinternational.org.uk. Available at: <http://insights.careinternational.org.uk/publications/the-girl-has-no-rights-gender-based-violence-in-south-sudan> (last accessed: 2/07/2017).

22 Mixed Migration Platform (2016). Women and girls on the move: A gender analysis of mixed migration from the Middle East to Europe. Available at: http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/20161215_mmp_briefing_paper_womens_migration_to_the_eu_december_2016_0.pdf (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

23 M. Donato, K. and Gabaccia, D. (2016). The Global Feminization of Migration: Past, Present, and Future. migrationpolicy.org. Available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/global-feminization-migration-past-present-and-future> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

24 RMMS (2016). Young and on the Move: Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Young%20and%20on%20the%20Move%20Sep%202016.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

25 WHO (2003). Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence. Available at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/med_leg_guidelines/en/ (last accessed 2/07/2017).

26 UNICEF (2017). A Deadly Journey for Children: The Central Mediterranean Migration Route. Available at: <https://www.unicef.de/blob/135970/6178f-12582223da6980ee1974a772c14/a-deadly-journey-for-children---unicef-report-data.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

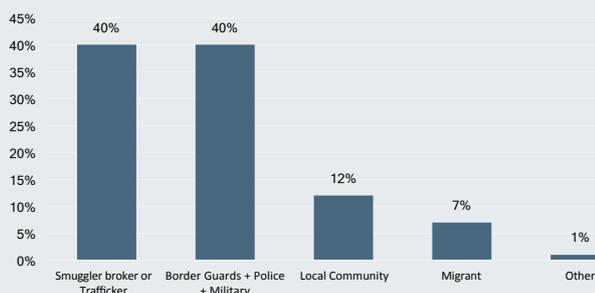
27 MSF (2016). Dying to reach Europe: Eritreans in search of safety. Available at: https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/usa/files/report_dying_to_reach_europe.pdf (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

28 As mentioned among the limitations of this study, the number and gender of monitors in different locations may have played a role in the overall access to migrants and their testimonies. Therefore, these findings cannot be regarded as representative for the whole migratory flows from the Horn of Africa but only apply to the sample of respondents of this research.

Libya²⁹; similarly, the staff of the Migration Response Centre in Obock, Djibouti, reported female migrants asking for oral contraceptives before continuing their migration for Yemen³⁰. Both cases show that migrant women often believe rape to be a concrete possibility on their journey, yet not a sufficient threat to deter their onward migration.

According to the migrants' survey, 96 per cent of SGBV cases suffered *en route* are not reported to the authorities, due to fear (38 per cent), lack of faith in the justice system (41 per cent) and lack of access (19 per cent). Coupled with the social stigma usually associated to SGBV survivors³¹, it is possible that the irregular status of migrants in transit and destination countries further hinders their access to justice. The very nature of perpetrators may also play a role in the lack of reporting; 4Mi data show that around 40% of SGBV incidents are committed by law enforcement officials (police, military, border guards), and in the same percentage by member of the smuggling network. Other perpetrators include local community members and fellow migrants.

Perpetrators of sexual abuse



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org>)

“ The smugglers and police, including border guards, have strong relationship and work together. Therefore, there was no way to report what had happened to us.”

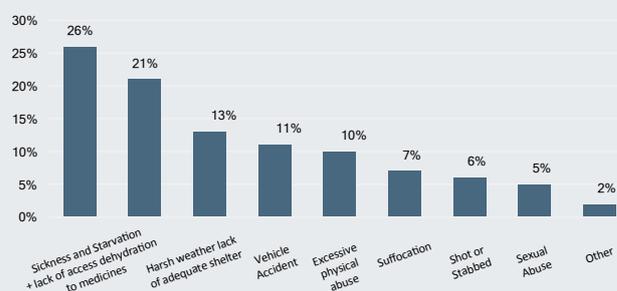
34-year old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Ethiopia. October 2016.

Migrant deaths and disappearances

Providing an account on the deadliness of migratory routes from the Horn of Africa, or precise figures about the number of deaths occurring along these journeys, remains difficult. 4Mi data collected from September 2014 to March 2017 report 2,233 deaths scattered along the different routes; However, this refers only to deaths directly witnessed by the migrants participating in the survey, suggesting that the overall death toll could be much higher. The causes behind these casualties range from lack of access to medicine and health care (26 per cent), starvation or dehydration (21 per cent), lack of shelter and consequent exposure to harsh weather (13 per cent) and vehicle accidents (11 per cent) - but also include violent deaths (21 per cent), such as those due to excessive physical abuse, shootings and stabbings and sexual abuses.

Data suggest that the harsh living conditions experienced on the trip and dangerous means of travelling account for a vast portion of migrant casualties. Several among the respondents reported to have witnessed vehicle accidents during transportation, and struggled due to overcrowding, lack of air and dangerous driving. Reportedly, migrants falling out of trucks or pick-ups due to the speed or bad roads are left behind, as the smugglers do not stop to rescue them.

Cause of death of migrants



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org>)

“ No food, no water and no good transportation. Around 18 migrants were loaded on a Toyota car. When three migrants fell from the car no one could get back to pick them up and they remained there in the desert.”

24-year-old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. December 2016.

29 IGAD (2016). Human trafficking and smuggling on the Horn of Africa – Central Mediterranean route. Available at <https://www.igadssp.org/index.php/documentation/human-trafficking-and-smuggling-on-the-horn-of-africa-central-mediterranean-route/download>. (last accessed: 02/07/2017)

30 HPN/ODI (2014). Leading either to money or the sea. Mixed migration from the Horn of Africa to Yemen. Available at: <http://odi.hpn.org/magazine/leading-either-to-money-or-the-sea-mixed-migration-from-the-horn-of-africa-to-yemen/> (last accessed: 02/07/2017)

31 Tearfund (2016). Stigma against rape survivors undermines effort to combat sexual violence in conflict. Available at: http://www.tearfund.org/en/media/press_releases/stigma_against_rape_survivors_undermines_efforts_to_combat_sexual_violence_in_conflict/ (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

“ Most migrants suffer from hunger and suffocation especially when they are in large numbers. The smugglers who deal with large number of migrants are less concerned about the wellbeing of their subjects; For them it's like a money-making adventure. It takes a lot of discipline and humanity to cater for their wellbeing. Its only when you are dealing with smaller numbers that it becomes manageable to ensure their wellbeing, safety and security. Subsequently, migrants' death is rampant.”

49-year-old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. February 2015.

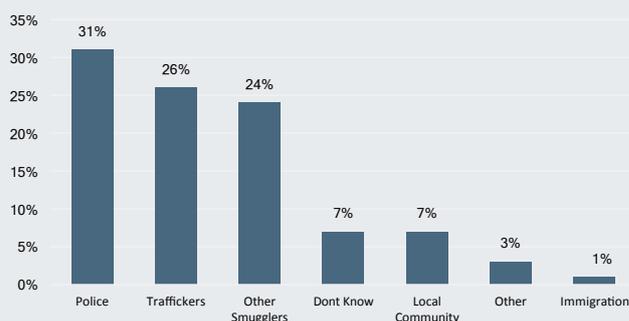
Transport at sea is also challenging; Images of overcrowded fishing boats sinking in the Mediterranean Sea have become a common representation of the migration flow to Europe, which has received increasing political and media attention since October 2013, when over 400 migrants died in two shipwrecks near the island of Lampedusa, Italy. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)³², the number of deaths in the Mediterranean Sea in 2016 has been the highest on record, with 4,578 casualties in the Central Mediterranean alone compared to 2,913 in 2015. Similarly, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)³³ reported 1,985 deaths in the Mediterranean Sea in the first six months of 2017. Based on these figures and on the comparably smaller numbers of deaths registered along the routes in the Horn of Africa and in North Africa, the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea has been called the deadliest migratory route worldwide³⁴.

4Mi data collected so far may contest these findings. Reports from the migrants interviewed at various locations along the main migratory routes from the Horn of Africa indicate that possibly far higher numbers of casualties occur on land, particularly in Sudan (970 reported deaths), Libya (832), Egypt (111), but often go unaccounted for. These numbers only include deaths reported by migrants interviewed by 4Mi monitors, a relatively small group within the overall population travelling along these land routes towards the Mediterranean shores since 2014, suggesting that the death toll could be much higher.

These forgotten fatalities³⁵ are not explained through a disparity in actual risk but rather through a disparity in reporting, as reliable data on migrant deaths on land routes have so far been unavailable. As recognized by a 2014 IOM report on the collection of migrants' deaths worldwide (Fatal Journeys³⁶), the challenges involved in accounting for the deaths of migrants along these routes are multiple: irregular travels are clandestine in nature, making tracing people, and deaths, extremely difficult; the landscapes through which these trips take place, crossing deserts or extremely remote areas, hamper the discovery and recovery of bodies; the typical involvement of criminal actors and corrupt state officers in the migration flows means that deaths are not reported, if not actively covered up.

Finally, even when information is accessed, as in the case of the 4Mi project, precise numbers of deaths are difficult to get, as data arise from estimates from the survivors and could be inaccurate or incomplete. In addition to witnessed deaths, migrants interviewed by the 4Mi monitors were asked to provide an estimate of fellow travelers gone missing in the different counties along their routes. The sum of all accounts provided adds up to 8,778 persons whose traces were lost. While some of them might have managed to continue their trip along a different route, returned home or remained in a country of transit, others might have faced death, kidnapping or further abuses, especially considering the reported responsible for their disappearance; Half of the instances are indeed attributed to smugglers and traffickers, for reasons connected to failed payments (33 per cent of cases) or forced separation from the group (14 per cent) while law enforcement officials are indicated as responsible for over 30 per cent of the cases.

Reported responsible for disappearances



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

32 UNHCR (2017). Desperate Journeys. Refugees and migrants entering and crossing Europe via the Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/58b449f54> (last accessed: 02/07/2017)

33 IOM (2017). Missing Migrants. Migrant Fatalities Worldwide. Available at: <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/latest-global-figures> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

34 IOM (2017). Mediterranean migrant arrivals top 43,000 in 2017; Deaths 1,089. Available at: <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean-migrant-arrivals-top-43000-2017-deaths-1089> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

35 RMMS (2016). Forgotten fatalities: the number of migrant deaths before reaching the Mediterranean. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/research-publications/feature-articles/item/18-forgotten-fatalities-the-number-of-migrant-deaths-befor> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

36 IOM, 2014. Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration. Available at: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/fataljourneys_countingtheunaccounted.pdf (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

From the demographics reported, primarily female migrants seem to be going missing; this is consistent with a RMMS report³⁷ on the irregular migration of Ethiopians to Yemen, where migrants regularly reported the disappearance of women companions upon arrival on shore. While sexual exploitation and trafficking have been hypothesized, the real scale and scope of these disappearances are still unknown.

Children on the move

Children on the move represent one of the most rapidly growing migratory flows worldwide, and account to over a third³⁸ of all migrants originating from Africa. According to a RMMS report³⁹ on youth on the move, almost half of the international migrants in the Horn of Africa are under the age of 20 and children make up the majority among forcibly displaced populations in the region. Among such groups, around 90,000 minors are recorded as unaccompanied or separated – a figure that is likely to under-represent the true size of this phenomenon.

Figures on children travelling alone are corroborated by latest UNICEF report on child migration⁴⁰, which found that between 2015 and 2016 at least 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children moved across borders, a rise of almost 500% of the 66,000 documented in 2010-2011. The same study found that 92 per cent of children who arrived in Italy in 2016 and the first two months of 2017 from the Central Mediterranean passage were unaccompanied.

Although 4Mi data on children and youth on the move is still limited – only 106 underage respondents were interviewed in the first phase of the project - the figures available show that children tend to travel in the company of other peers or adults, but independently from their parents or legal guardians, who, in most cases (88 per cent) remain at destination. As for their adult counterpart, the motivations for children to move are frequently multiple and driven by a general lack of protection; the majority of respondents indicate political factors as the primary reason to leave, together with abuses at home or in the community of origin. Previous RMMS research has detailed how the death of a caregiver as well as violence at home, negative relationships and parental divorce are amongst the primary drivers of migration for children in the Horn of Africa⁴¹.

As their adult companions, children are exposed to multiple protection risks during their journey. Underage migrants

interviewed by the 4Mi monitors report a constellation of abuses faced during their trip, including beating, confinement, kidnapping as well as lacking food, proper shelter and medicine. Sexual violence against teenagers of 14 and 15 years old – and particularly on girls – is reported by both minor and adult respondents, and seems to be particularly prevalent in Sudan and Ethiopia. While most child migrants travelling from the Horn of Africa are in their teenage years, testimonies collected by the monitors also indicate the presence of small children travelling with their parents. Despite the lack of data on the age group 0 to 10, this trend is consistent with the recovery of babies⁴² and toddlers⁴³ reported by search and rescue teams in the Central Mediterranean Sea. According to some of the interviews, families travelling with children risk being separated at a certain point along the route, and several reported the “*kidnapping*” of children from their parents in the desert between Sudan and Egypt.

“ The traffickers (...) took the children to the Sinai desert without the family’s consent. They said that the children will load on other cars, but it was not true, because I saw when they took the children back to the desert.”

16-year-old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. January 2016.

“ In this group there were minors and a migrant mother with two children. They told me the smuggler put them in a house for more than four days in Bulawayo. Sometimes they stayed the whole day without food. The mother with two kids said she could not even get milk for her children and one mother with a small baby told me she was using pieces of cloth for her baby since they were locked in a room.”

16-year-old Somali male, interviewed in South Africa about experiences in Zimbabwe. April 2015.

It has been estimated that at least 10,000 unaccompanied migrant and refugee children have disappeared after arriving in Europe, 5,000 in Italy alone⁴⁴. According to Europol, the EU’s criminal intelligence agency, thousands of minors have vanished after registering with state authorities, and many are feared to have fallen into the hands of organized trafficking rings. Experts have argued

37 RMMS (2012). Desperate choices. Conditions, Risks & Protection Failures Affecting Ethiopian Migrants in Yemen. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/RMMSbooklet.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017)

38 UNDESA (2015). International Migration 2015. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/wallchart/docs/MigrationWallChart2015.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

39 RMMS, 2016. Young and on the Move: Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Young%20and%20on%20the%20Move%20Sep%202016.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

40 UNICEF, 2017. A child is a child: Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_95956.html (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

41 RMMS, 2016. Young and on the Move: Children and youth in mixed migration flows within and from the Horn of Africa. Available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Young%20and%20on%20the%20Move%20Sep%202016.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

42 Save the Children International. (2016). Two babies amongst more than 300 refugees and migrants heading for Italy on board Save the Children’s search and rescue ship. Available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/article/two-babies-amongst-more-300-refugees-and-migrants-heading-italy-board-save-childrens-search> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

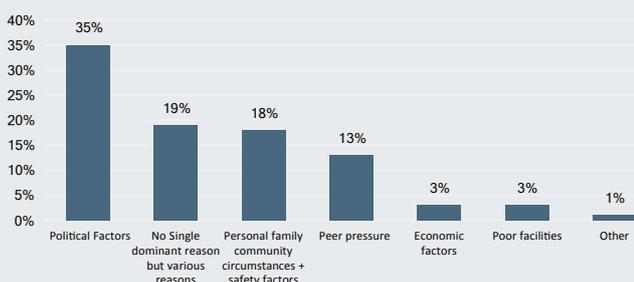
43 Nick Squires (2017). More than 30 migrants, ‘most toddlers’, drown off coast of Libya. The Telegraph. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/24/30-migrants-toddlers-drown-coast-libya/> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

44 The Guardian (2016). 10,000 refugee children are missing, says Europol. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/30/fears-for-missing-child-refugees> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

that the disappearance of young movers is often imputable to weak bureaucratic systems within and between EU states, or to children’s decision to abscond from burdensome states’ protection systems and seek to continue their trip on their own⁴⁵; those with strong social networks may be able to find their way, while isolated children might be vulnerable to abuse by more or less organised gangs.

Nevertheless, young movers often experienced several protection incidents before reaching Europe. The risks faced by migrant children crossing the Central Mediterranean Sea are detailed in a 2017 UNICEF study⁴⁶, which found that over three quarters of the migrant children in Libya had suffered violence, harassment or aggression during their journey; Most of the children reported verbal or emotional abuse, while about half had experienced beatings or other physical violence. In addition, the majority of children interviewed for the study said they had to rely on ‘pay as you go’ arrangements with smugglers; Reportedly, these agreements may leave children more vulnerable to abuse in case of failure to provide additional payments or a change of smugglers, while for some the debt might be converted into forced labor or prostitution.

Primary push factor for migrants under 18 years old



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

Physical abuse

In the first phase of the 4Mi project, during over 3,400 interviews with migrants, monitors collected 2,416 cases of reported physical abuse, 80 per cent of which experienced directly by the respondents. Half of the instances concerned physical and psychological mistreatment, with around 30 per cent of migrants reporting mild physical abuse and 20 per cent degrading or verbal abuse. Severe violence, including confinement, stone throwing, forced labour and extreme physical abuse added up to 34 per cent of the cases reported.

These figures are consistent with the findings of agencies working along the Horn of Africa’s migratory routes; According to over 100 interviews conducted by Amnesty International⁴⁷ with migrants and refugees who crossed or attempted to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, physical abuse is common along the route and perpetrators include smugglers, employers in transit locations as well as guards in detention centres and other law enforcement officials. Eritrean nationals interviewed in Israel and Ethiopia⁴⁸ reported to have been subject to whipping and various methods of torture, including burial in the sand, electric shocks, burning with hot-iron bars and prolonged exposure to the sun, often with the intent to extort money. Similarly, a recent RMMS report on the Southern route⁴⁹ has documented a wide range of physical abuses, including torture, shootings and muggings, suffered by migrants and asylum seekers travelling to South Africa. Out of all instances of physical abuse collected through the 4Mi survey, 40 per cent have been reportedly committed by government officials (police, border guards or soldiers) – roughly the same percentage of those perpetrated by smugglers and traffickers.

According to some of the migrants’ testimonies, the reasons behind the attacks range from discrimination on their origin or faith, theft, or simply their being vulnerable. So far, the 4Mi survey found that victims of across all ethnic and age groups suffered physical abuse *en route*, but Ethiopian nationals reported more incidents compared to other nationalities - 45 per cent of all the Ethiopians interviewed reported to have been subject to physical abuse, compared to 18 per cent of Eritreans and 14 per cent of Somalis. Overall, and across all types of abuse investigated, Ethiopians respondents consistently reported more abuses than the other ethnic groups on the move, followed by Eritreans and lastly Somalis; as the majority of migrants interviewed from Ethiopia and Eritrea are from Christian communities, while Somalis are Muslim, it has been speculated that religious discrimination might be at the basis of such disparity, given the fact that countries as Libya, Sudan and Egypt are Muslim and might treat fellow co-religionists less harshly⁵⁰.

Finally, limited yet concerning accounts reported physical abuse connected to the trafficking of body parts. Thirty six migrants reported to have either directly witnessed or received violence due to the trade of organs or other body parts and several of the qualitative statements refer to “organ trafficker” gangs, especially active in the Sinai and Sudan deserts. Although hard evidence has not yet been established, the removal and sale of blood or body parts

45 Sigona, N. and Allsopp, J. (2016). Mind the gap: why are unaccompanied children disappearing in their thousands? Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/nando-sigona-and-jennifer-allsopp/mind-gap-why-are-unaccompanied-children-disappearing-in-thous>. (last accessed: 07/07/2017).

46 UNICEF (2017). A Deadly Journey for Children: The Central Mediterranean Migration Route. Available at: <https://www.unicef.de/blob/135970/6178f-12582223da6980ee1974a772c14/a-deadly-journey-for-children---unicef-report-data.pdf> (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

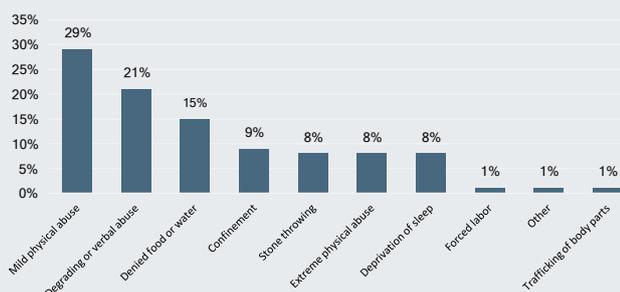
47 Amnesty International (2015). ‘Libya is full of cruelty’: stories of abduction, sexual violence and abuse from migrants and refugees. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/libya_is_full_of_cruelty.pdf (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

48 Lijnders, L. and Robinson, S. (2013). From the Horn of Africa to the Middle East: Human trafficking of Eritrean asylum seekers across borders. [Antitraffickingreview.org](http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atjournal/article/view/36/57). Available at: <http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atjournal/article/view/36/57> (last accessed 02/07/2017).

49 RMMS (2017). Smuggled South: An updated overview of mixed migration from the Horn of Africa to southern Africa with specific focus on protections risks, human smuggling and trafficking. Available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

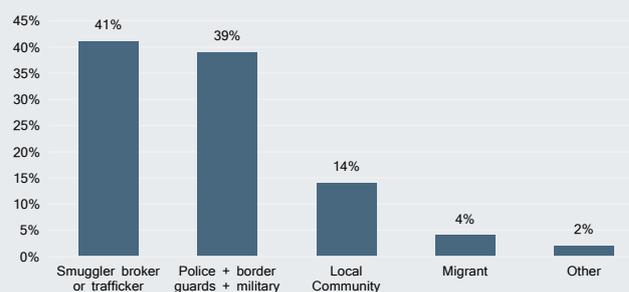
50 Horwood, C. (forthcoming) IOM Global Report on Missing Migrants: Fatal Journeys Volume 3. Sub Saharan Africa Region.

Nature of the physical abuse reported



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

Perpetrators of physical abuse



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

has been reported on numerous occasions. In a 2016 IOM survey on mixed migration flows in the Mediterranean⁵¹, 6% of all respondents reported to know or have received offers of cash in exchange for blood, organs or body parts. Some migrants reported that blood was taken against their will and in a condition of captivity, others that trafficking in organs was known to be a possibility to pay one leg of the journey.

“ We were tortured and forced to call our family back at home for ransom. They said if my family failed to pay in 4 months they will remove our organs. They showed us the bodies of dead people whose organs were removed.”

16-year-old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. October 2016.

“ The smugglers also killed some migrants in the Sahara desert. The organ traffickers took them before they died.”

27-year-old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. December 2016.

Overall, the bulk of the incidents reported to the 4Mi monitors occurred in Sudan (795), Egypt (528) and Ethiopia (374), but hundreds of instances have also been reported in Somalia and Libya. Of all the 2,416 cases of physical abuse collected, only 54 (2 per cent) were reported to the police. As for the case of sexual abuses, a combination of fear, lack of faith in the authorities and lack of access prevented the official reporting.

Robbery and extortion

Robbery is pervasive along migratory routes from the Horn of Africa. Through the 4Mi survey, migrants reported 1,783 cases of theft, in the vast majority (80 per cent) experienced in first person. The perpetrators were found to be mostly law enforcement officials; military, police and border guards cumulatively account for 44 per cent of the cases reported, compared to a slightly smaller percentage of smugglers (36 per cent). Members of the local community and other actors can also be responsible for robberies; According to a research from the University of Witwatersrand, quoted by RMMS report on the southward route to South Africa (Smuggled South⁵²), criminal groups systematically target migrants attempting to cross the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

“ There is a trend of criminal smugglers along the bush who robbed the migrants when they cross the border in the bush. Sometimes they end up with few physical abuses and if they cooperate they are hardly harmed but lose their personal belongings and any cash in their pocket.”

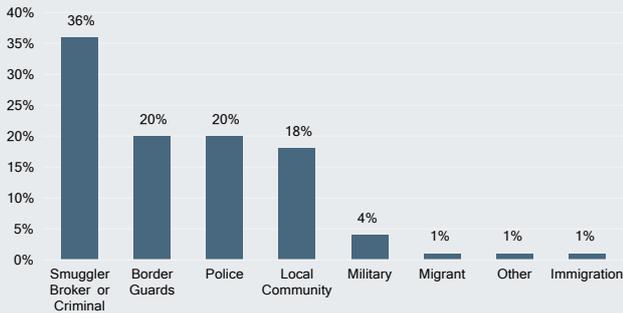
34-year-old male smuggler, interviewed in South Africa. December 2016.

Robberies target both male and female migrants, either for money (43 per cent) or other personal belongings (41 per cent). 27 per cent of the migrants interviewed claimed to travel with all the money needed for their trip with them, while others opted to collect additional money *en route*, through informal money transfers (42 per cent) or cash handlers (16 per cent). Additionally, several respondents were not asked to pay the entire cost of the journey upfront (76 per cent), but rather expected either to provide continuous payments during the trip (65 per cent) or to finalise the payment once at destination (28 per cent). Nevertheless, in around 2,000

51 IOM (2016). Analysis: Flow monitoring surveys. The human trafficking and other exploitative practices prevalence indication survey. Available at: http://migration.iom.int/docs/Analysis_-_Flow_Monitoring_and_Human_Trafficking_Surveys_in_the_Mediterranean_and_Beyond_-_6%20October_2016.pdf (last accessed: 03/07/2017)

52 RMMS (2017). Smuggled South: An updated overview of mixed migration from the Horn of Africa to southern Africa with specific focus on protections risks, human smuggling and trafficking. Available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Smuggled_South.pdf (last accessed: 02/07/2017).

Perpetrators of robberies



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

“ The first time I met with the broker at a coffee shop, he explained to me all the services that they will offer to me on my way and its comfortability, but on my way what I faced was the opposite. The broker that discussed with me was not with me during the trip and when the others started asking for the payment I tried to tell them I had paid and tried to contact him through the phone, but they refused and one started beating me and then he put me in dark room and locked it.”

27-year-old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Ethiopia. July 2016.

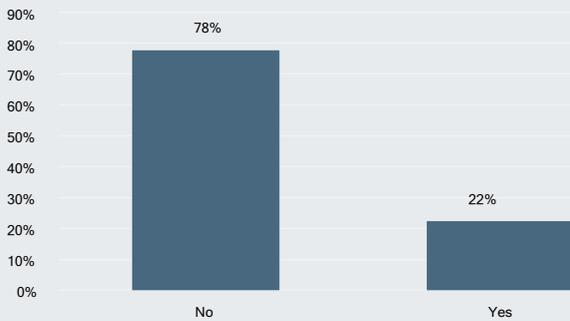
cases, migrants reported to have been misled on the sum required for the trip, and asked to produce additional and unexpected payment during the journey.

“ We were asked for additional money by the smugglers, claiming they had to bribe the border guards. When we refused, we were held captive for three days, threatened to be sold and physically abused.”

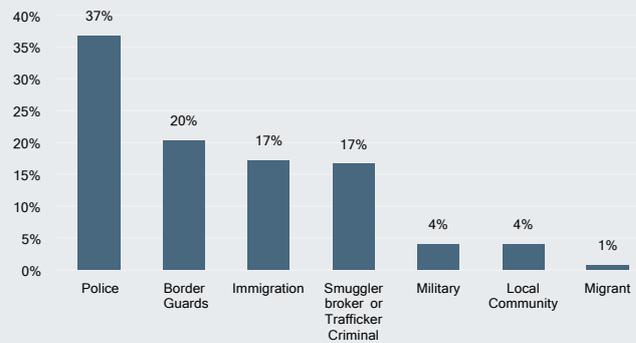
25-year-old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. January 2016.

The 4Mi infographic below show that instances of robberies and extortion, as well as request for unexpected additional payments, tend to happen around the same locations in Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt. The Sinai Desert, Eastern Sudan and the border between Sudan and Ethiopia represent specific hotspots for such incidents.

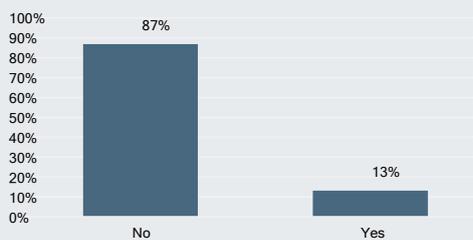
Did you have unexpected additional payments?



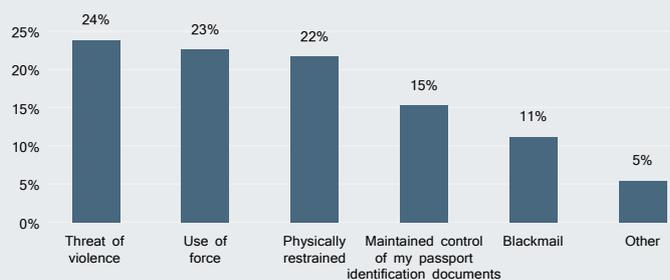
Who was involved in extortion



Were you ever held against your will with a demand for ransom?



How were you controlled?



Abductions

In 3,091 testimonies collected by the 4Mi monitors, migrants reported to have been restricted in their movement and prevented from leaving. Methods of control ranged from use or threat of violence (47 per cent), physical restrictions (22 per cent), confiscation of travel or identity documents (15 per cent) and blackmailing (11 per cent). In 1,119 additional cases, migrants have been held against their will with the purpose of requesting a ransom; Together with the cases of forceful restraint, the figure adds up to 4,210 cases of kidnappings directly experienced by the respondents in the period under study. Since this number is higher than the total sample size, this indicates that part of the interviewed migrants have experienced incidents of kidnapping and abduction more than once during their migration journey.

Abductions prevail in Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt; According to testimonies, kidnappers hold migrants in basements, makeshift buildings or desert areas and demand a ransom to be paid for their release. Torture, rapes and degrading conditions during the detention are universally reported by the migrants interviewed by the 4Mi monitors.

If migrants cannot afford the ransom, they are forced to contact their families so that additional money can be sent. According to the testimonies collected by a Human Rights Watch report⁵³ on trafficking of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt, traffickers typically hold a mobile phone line open to their hostages' relatives as they physically abuse their victims; casualties due to the tortures are common. In June 2017, a Somali journalist based in Turkey posted online a video call received by a criminal group responsible for migrants' abductions in Libya. The video showed around 260 Somali and Ethiopian migrants and refugees, including many children, held captive in an overly crowded concrete room, looking emaciated and afraid. Speaking to the recorder,

the migrants say that they have been beaten and tortured, and ask the receiver to do whatever possible to free them. Some stated that their teeth have been removed, their arms broken and that none of them have been given any food. They explained that women have been put in different cells, likely to be abused both sexually and physically. In a press statement following the release of the video⁵⁴, IOM expressed concern over the situation, and noted that other relatives of the captive migrants were receiving video clips via social media, with the request to pay between USD 8,000–10,000 or their relative will be killed.

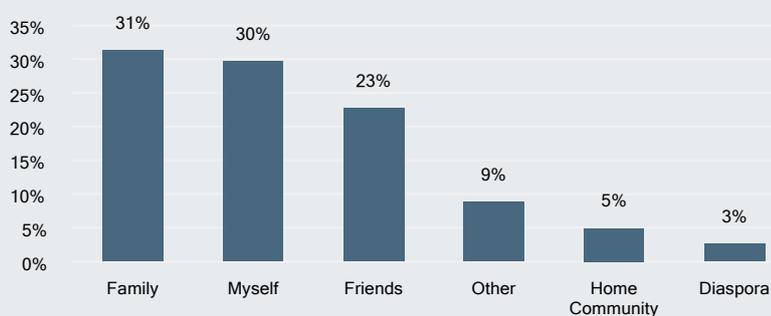
“ There were people whose fate was meant to be killed in the most heinous manner, with their limbs being mutilated, their backs burnt with a melting rubber, and their necks cut off with swords just to make the other kidnapped ones push their relatives pay ransoms for their releases.”

28-year-old Eritrean male, interviewed in Malta about experiences in Egypt. November 2015.

According to the migrants interviewed, smugglers and brokers are often responsible for the abductions (60 per cent of the cases), demonstrating the thin line between smuggling and trafficking operations. Arrangements between different criminal groups seem to exist in Sudan and Egypt especially, as several respondents reported to have been held captive multiple times and sold by one group to the other to make additional profit. State officials are also involved in the abductions; While in 13 per cent of the cases government forces have been indicated to be directly responsible for the kidnapping, testimonies suggest a rather common cooperation between the captors and some law enforcement officials, who reportedly catch fugitive migrants and bring them back to their kidnappers, or warn traffickers about the arrival of the army or police checks.

Human Rights Watch⁵⁵, in a 2014 report, has detailed the existence of structured “torture camps” in Yemen, and especially around the border town of Haradh, where some government officials told researchers that smuggling and trafficking operations could make up about 80 per cent of the local economy. While the southern route represented quite a safer

Who paid for the ransom?

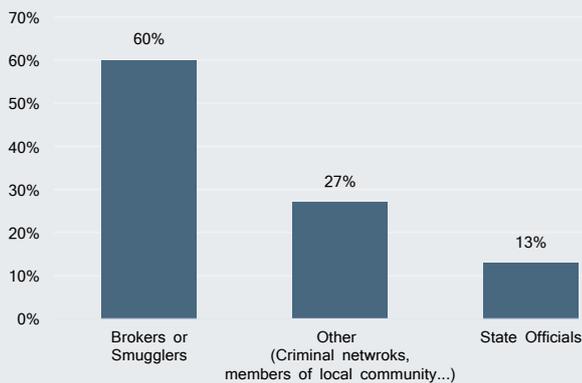


53 Human Rights Watch (2014), “I wanted to lie down and die”. Trafficking and torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/11/i-wanted-lie-down-and-die/trafficking-and-torture-eritreans-sudan-and-egypt> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

54 IOM (2017). Facebook Video Circulates Showing 260 Somali and Ethiopian Migrants and Refugees Abused, Held Against Their Will by Gangs in Libya. Available at: <http://www.iom.int/news/facebook-video-circulates-showing-260-somali-and-ethiopian-migrants-and-refugees-abused-held> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

55 Human Rights Watch (2014). Yemen’s Torture Camps. Abuse of migrants by human traffickers in a climate of impunity. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/25/yemens-torture-camps/abuse-migrants-human-traffickers-climate-impunity> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

Perpetrators of kidnappings



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

path in the past, with IOM reporting no migrants being held for ransom in 2009⁵⁶, 218 cases of migrants' abductions have been reported to the 4Mi monitors in South Africa and Zimbabwe, consistently with the increase of smuggling activities in the area.

Libya is also among the most reported locations of abductions. Amnesty International has documented how kidnappings have been on the rise since 2014, due to the growing chaos and violence in the country, allowing a multitude of criminal networks to hold migrants captive for extortion or trade with other groups. Recent information collected by IOM⁵⁷ suggests that trade in human beings has become so normalised in Libya that migrants are being bought and sold openly, in modern-day "slave markets" managed by Libyans with the help of Ghanaian and Nigerian traffickers. Kidnapped migrants would be sold multiple times to different Libyan owners, and used for further extortion of their families, for forced labour or as sex-slaves.

Consistently with the literature in this regard, 4Mi data show that captivity periods and ransoms' amounts vary greatly; migrants can be held from some days to several months and pay ransoms ranging from a few hundred to over ten thousand dollars, with some reporting to have been able to negotiate the fee down to what they could afford. The ransom demands are met by the migrants themselves in 31 per cent of the cases, but more often collected and sent by families (30 per cent) and friends (23 per cent). Demographics show that the age group below 29 years of age tend to rely more on their family compared to older migrants, who tend to pay through own funds.

“ I was trafficked by the smugglers, from around Shagarab refugee camp, taken to Hajer. I was joined by other people in an underground room. There I was tortured, raped and abused extremely, until I wished to die. All that the traffickers wanted was a ransom for my release. My family paid their demand and saved my life”.

22-year old Eritrean female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. June 2016.

Corruption, collusion and involvement of law enforcement officials in abuse of migrants

The data collected through the 4Mi project indicate that state officials play a major role in the abuse of migrants from the Horn of Africa.

In 2,320 separate instances, migrants reported that one or more government officials colluded with criminal networks, misusing their public power to gain personal benefits from the smuggling operations. According to the cases reported, the degree of interaction varies greatly, and ranges from turning a blind eye to smugglers' actions to actively participating in trafficking operations or directly enforcing abuse on migrants. Bribes account for most of the cases reported (51 per cent), as migrants recounted of law enforcement officials paid or rewarded not to interfere with smugglers' operations under their watch.

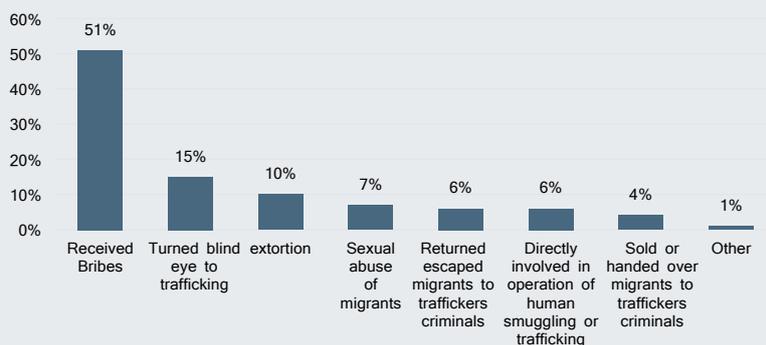
According to the testimonies collected, opportunities for bribery mainly arise at entry and exit points along the borders, in the purchase or use of fake travel documents and to escape detention. Bribes are either produced by smugglers or by migrants themselves. Data show that police and border officials account for 42 percent of the payments requested to migrants during their trip. In smaller yet significant percentages, government officials reportedly turned a blind eye to human trafficking (15 per cent), or extorted migrants (10 per cent). Respondents also reported incidents of sexual abuse committed by government officials and close collaboration between government officials and human traffickers.

In many of the interviews collected, migrants equate the conduct of smugglers to that of the officers encountered along the route, and many provide testimonies of the cooperation between the two categories. Previous research corroborates the existence of trafficking networks that count both criminal groups and law enforcement officials among their members: in their report of Yemen's migrants' "torture camps", Human Rights Watch describes how Yemeni officials regularly free traffickers from jail, warn them of

⁵⁶ IOM (2009). In pursuit of the southern dream: victims of necessity. Assessment of the irregular movement of men from East Africa and the Horn to South Africa. Available at: <http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iomresearchassessment.pdf> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

⁵⁷ IOM (2017). IOM Learns of 'Slave Market' Conditions Endangering Migrants in North Africa. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-learns-slave-market-conditions-endangering-migrants-north-africa> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

How were law enforcement officials involved in abuse?



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

military raids and actively help them in capturing and detaining migrants; According to a 2013 research published on the Anti-Trafficking Review, Sudanese law enforcement officials often participate in the abductions and trade of Ethiopians along the Sudan-Eritrea and the Sudan-Egypt borders⁵⁸; while a RMMS article on South Africa's asylum system has detailed the common fraudulent practices used by state officials to extort money from asylum seekers⁵⁹. 4Mi infographics show that corruption and collusion of state officials prevalently occurs in Ethiopia, Sudan and Kenya, especially along border areas. These remote locations, with no constant overview by superiors and little payment, could make officials prone to participate in illegal activities such as the irregular cross-border movements. Research has indeed shown that in transit and destination countries where public officials are poorly remunerated, refugees and migrants can represent a significant source of additional income for border protection and immigration control officials⁶⁰.

“The costs are becoming higher, more people are involved in the business. Immigration, police and border control units are making our costs high, actually too high because they want us to pay them more money.”

43-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. March 2017.

“The police help in facilitating the trip and they are paid for that, though there are a few clients who fall into the hands of serious officers who are loyal to their jobs and complicate our jobs - but we often ask the friendly officers to update us so that we can travel during the days they are on duty.”

40-year old male smuggler, interviewed in Kenya. June 2016.

The results of the 4Mi survey show that migrants recurrently indicate state officials among the perpetrators of the human rights abuses identified through the 4Mi interviews. Authorities along the route are consistently mentioned as responsible for sexual and physical abuses (40 per cent of all cases), kidnappings (13 per cent) disappearances (31 per cent) and deaths (30 per cent). Local police forces along the route detain the highest level of illegal behaviour, accounting for around 40 per cent of the abuses reported, while both border guards and immigration officials are reportedly involved in almost 20 per cent of the cases of abuse towards migrants on the move.

Qualitative testimony provided by the migrants during the 4Mi interviews corroborate the quantitative results and allow to further detail some of the abuses experienced at the hands of government officials. Hundreds of testimonies report of arbitrary detention along the route, with no official charges and for indefinite periods of time. Beatings and dire living conditions while in prison appear to be the norm, as are the cases of sexual violence against women and girls. Release is often gained through sexual favours or through the payment of a ransom. Some testimonies report of police officers directly trading migrants with traffickers, and bringing them back to them if they manage to escape.

58 Lijnders, L. and Robinson, S. (2013). From the Horn of Africa to the Middle East: Human trafficking of Eritrean asylum seekers across borders. *Antitraffickingreview.org*. Available at: <http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atjournal/article/view/36/57> (last accessed 02/07/2017).

59 RMMS (2015). Protection for sale: the big South African asylum racket. Available at: <http://regionalmms.org/index.php/research-publications/feature-articles/item/40-protection-for-sale-the-big-south-african-asylum-racket> (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

60 OECD (2015). Responses to the refugee crisis; Corruption and the smuggling of refugees. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/corruption/Corruption-and-the-smuggling-of-refugees.pdf> (last accessed 2/07/2017)

“ There is a changing trend these days where police hands over migrants to us in exchange for cash unlike before when we use to hide from the government’s forces.”

28-year old male smuggler, interviewed in South Africa. December 2014.

“ The brokers and police are working together and have strong relationship and they violate human rights in different ways. For example, when migrants refuse to pay more money for brokers, the police beat migrants and put them in prison until the money is paid.”

31-year old Ethiopian female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. July 2016.

“ While I and my best friend were walking towards the border with Sudan we were caught by border guards and detained in Forto Sawa. Soon the police separated us. I was tortured, extorted, and received all forms of abuse. Eventually I escaped to Sudan with the help of detention guard in compensation of sexual reward. I have no news of my best friend.”

45-year old Eritrean female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Eritrea. January 2017.

In a yet under researched trend, several among the respondents travelling from Ethiopia to Sudan have revealed that state authorities have forced them to smuggle drugs across borders; reportedly, migrants crossing the border between Ethiopia and Sudan would be requested to carry drugs, prevalently khat, to Khartoum – a crime

punishable with life sentence by the Sudanese authorities. Those who refuse would be beaten or detained. Other have reported the collusion of Sudanese police officers in loading the vehicles used to smuggle migrants across the country with weapons and drugs. This trend, which has not been investigated so far in the research of the Horn of Africa’s migratory routes, points to the possible existence of transnational criminal networks which couple migrants smuggling operations with the trafficking of narcotics and weapons.

“ The brokers and smugglers are working with border guards and police officers and violate human rights, especially around the Ethio-Sudan crossing border. They’re raping women and using them to transfer drug like Chat and alcohol like white Arake, which is illegal in Sudan.”

27-year old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Ethiopia. June 2016.

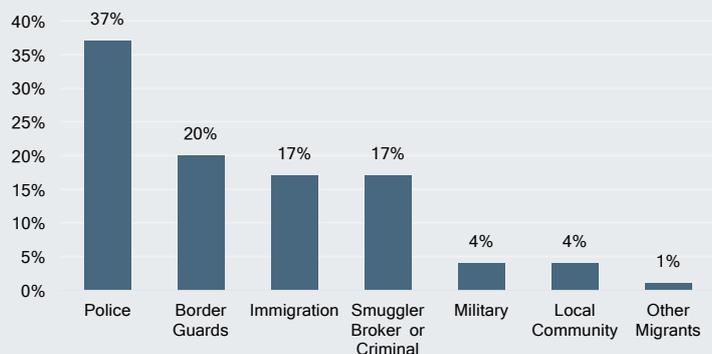
“ Smugglers are working with police and human traffickers and moving military weapons from Sudan to Egypt by loading it on the car that I loaded on.”

40-year old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. April 2016.

“ These traffickers are not only moving migrants from Sudan to Egypt, but they are moving weapons and different drugs.”

42-year old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. December 2015.

Law enforcement officials units involved in the abuse of migrants



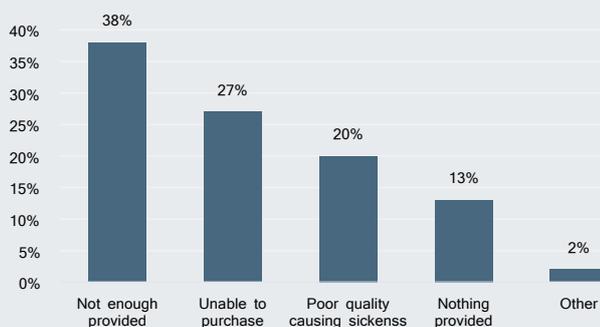
Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

Weather, food, shelter

In addition to the abuses suffered at the hands smugglers and law enforcement officials, harsh living conditions represent a usual challenge faced by Horn of Africa's migrants during their trip. Accounts of extremely hot weather, insufficient access to food and water and lack of adequate shelter emerge from many of the 4Mi testimonies, and further harden the journey. While areas along the Red sea coast of Eritrea, the Gulf of Aden coast of Somalia, Djibouti and in the Ethiopian's Danakil desert register extreme temperature throughout the year⁶¹, the whole region has been recurrently on the headlines for drought⁶², partly due to a steady decline in the primary "long" rainy season over the last 30 years⁶³. According to many of the accounts collected, the crossing of the scorching Sudan-Libya Desert represents one of the most difficult stretches to overcome, with temperatures over 50-60 degrees and minimal access to water or shelter. Overall, at least 160 deaths have been directly witnessed by the respondents due to exposure to harsh weather.

Missing rainfall have not only risen the average temperatures, but also had major consequences for regional food security. While humanitarian agencies report on the general deterioration of access to food and water in Somalia⁶⁴, Kenya⁶⁵, Ethiopia⁶⁶ and Djibouti⁶⁷, migrants appear to face equal struggles. 4Mi data show over 3,172 instances of lack of sufficient food and water, as nothing (13 per cent) or not enough (38 per cent) was provided by the migrants' handlers or because their own limited finances prevented them to purchase (27 per cent).

Problems with food and water



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

According to migrants' testimonies, deprivation of food and water is a common occurrence during transportation in the desert, kidnappings and detention periods, and account for at least 259 witnessed deaths due to starvation and dehydration. Former detainees interviewed by Amnesty International⁶⁸ on the conditions in detention centres in Libya reported of lack of food and drinking water, as well as squalid conditions due to a shortage of sanitary facilities. In their testimonies, as well as in over 1,000 instances collected by the 4Mi monitors, migrants reported that, even when provided, water and food had been of poor quality or intentionally mixed with fuel or salt, causing them sickness.

“ The police lacks humanity during the arrest and our time in the cells. We cried to them to get us some quality food but in vain. They all refused to listen to us until one of us suffered greatly and was almost on the verge of death due to hunger.”

45-year old Ethiopian male, interviewed in Kenya about experiences in Kenya. September 2015.

“ We were held confined at the desert, because the smugglers said the route was in intensive police guard. We spent three weeks in the open-air desert with almost no food and very little water. As a result of starvation one 5-year-old child died.”

42-year old Eritrean male, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Sudan. June 2016.

“ When travelling we were extremely crowded, suffocating, and were given water mixed with fuel which caused sickness.”

20-year old Eritrean female, interviewed in Egypt about experiences in Egypt. October 2015.

Together with problematic access to food and water, 4Mi data reveal that migrants commonly struggle to find adequate shelter during their trip. Out of the 3,213 instances reported, 32 per cent suffered the complete lack of shelter, having to rest under trees, or in caves, and exposed to the weather, while 48 per cent reported to have been accommodated in shelters of poor quality and highly overcrowded, mainly in underground rooms or remote buildings.

61 Christopher C. Burt (2004). *Extreme Weather: a guide & record book*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. pp. 24–28. ISBN 0-393-32658-6.

62 Al Jazeera (2017). How to tackle repetitive droughts in the Horn of Africa. [online] Aljazeera.com. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/02/tackle-repetitive-droughts-horn-africa-170214090108648.html> [Accessed 29 Jun. 2017].

63 Tierney, J.E.; Ummenhofer, C. C.; deMenocal, P.B. (2015). Past and future rainfall in the Horn of Africa. *Science Advances*, vol. 1, issue 9, pp. e1500682-e1500682.

64 ReliefWeb (2017). Somalia: Drought - 2015-2017 | ReliefWeb. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000134-som>. (last accessed: 3/07/2017)

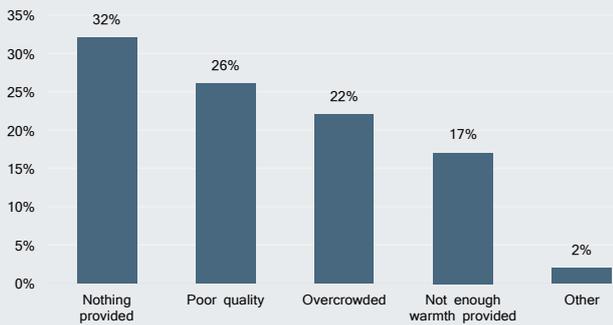
65 ReliefWeb (2017). Kenya: Drought - 2014-2017 | ReliefWeb. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2014-000131-ken>. (last accessed: 3/07/2017)

66 ReliefWeb (2017). Ethiopia: Drought - 2015-2017 | ReliefWeb. Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000109-eth>. (last accessed: 3/07/2017)

67 ReliefWeb (2017). Djibouti Humanitarian Response Plan, January - December 2017 - Djibouti | ReliefWeb Available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/djibouti/djibouti-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2017>. (last accessed: 3/07/2017)

68 Amnesty International, 2015. 'Libya is full of cruelty': stories of abduction, sexual violence and abuse from migrants and refugees. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/libya_is_full_of_cruelty.pdf (last accessed: 3/07/2017).

Problems regarding shelter



Source: 4Mi (<http://4mi.regionalmms.org/>)

Conclusion

In line with the literature on protection risks facing migrants travelling within and from the Horn of Africa, this study found that most men, women and children from the region experience a wide variety of abuses during their migratory experiences. Apart from the extremely poor living conditions suffered while travelling, dangers primarily arise from the

violent conduct of smugglers, criminal gangs and law enforcement officials encountered at various stages during the trip; In this regard, migrants' irregular status, which prevents them to access any kind of statutory protection or official reporting, seems to leave them vulnerable to predatory behaviours finalised to the extortion of economic assets, as well as sexual and physical abuses.

Despite these risks, and as previously analysed in a dedicated RMMS study⁶⁹, most of the migrants interviewed en route did not seem to be deterred from their migratory plan, possibly due to strong migration drivers and lack of regular migration opportunities in their areas of origin. While the experiences collected in this study are not meant to be representative of the whole migrant population from the Horn of Africa, the large sample of respondents and the time span of this research allow to depict a common pattern of abuses, as well as perpetrators, regularly encountered by people on the move. The severity of the human rights violations detailed, often arising from a close collaboration between smuggler rings and government forces, points to the importance of establishing a closer protection monitoring of mixed migratory flows from the region.



© Nichole Sobecki. 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.

69 RMMS (2014). Blinded by Hope. Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Ethiopian migrants. Available at: http://regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Blinded_by_Hope.pdf (last accessed: 5/07/2017).



REGIONAL MIXED MIGRATION SECRETARIAT (RMMS)

Formed in 2011 and based in Nairobi, the overall objective of the RMMS is to support agencies, institutions and fora in the Horn of Africa and Yemen sub-region to improve the management of protection and assistance to people in mixed migration flows in the Horn of Africa and across the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea in Yemen. The Steering Committee members for the RMMS include UNHCR, IOM, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), INTERSOS, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, IGAD, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union. The RMMS is a regional hub aiming to provide information and data management; analysis and research; support and coordination; and support to policy development and dialogue. It acts as an independent agency, hosted by the DRC, to stimulate forward thinking and policy development in relation to mixed migration. Its overarching focus and emphasis is on human rights, protection and assistance.

The content of this paper is entirely the responsibility of the RMMS East Africa & Yemen and the authors and in no way could be taken to reflect the position of its hosting agency the Danish Refugee Council, other members of the Steering Committee or any of the donors who have contributed to this paper by supporting the RMMS and the 4Mi project.

Cover photo: © Jeroen Oerlemans | African migrants wait in Libya's Misratah harbour for buses to take them to a detention centre west of Tripoli.

See our websites www.regionalmms.org and <http://4mi.regionalmms.org>

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