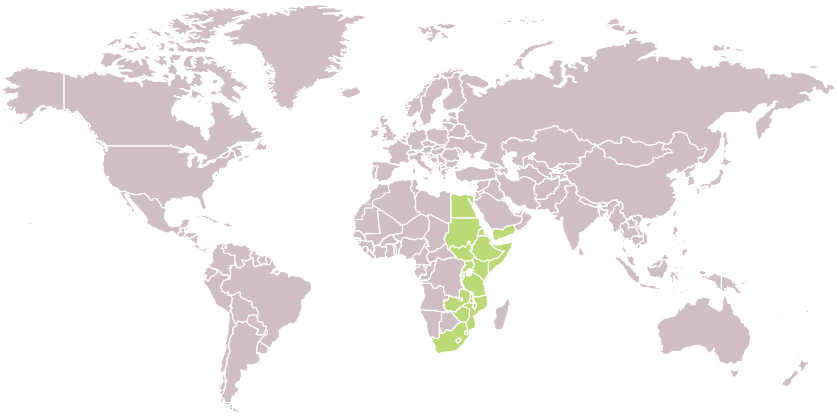
Mixed Migration Centre



MMC Eastern and Southern Africa | Egypt and Yemen

QUARTER 1 2023

# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Eastern and Southern Africa | Egypt and Yemen

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the Eastern and Southern Africa region plus Egypt and Yemen (ESA). The core areas of focus include the Eastern route, from East and the Horn of Africa towards the Arabian Peninsula; the Southern route from East Africa and the Great Lakes towards South Africa; the Central Mediterranean Route (also called the Northern Route) from East and the Horn of Africa towards North Africa; as well as intra-regional mixed migration dynamics. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in Danish Refugee Council (DRC) regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels. For more information on MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at @Mixed_Migration

### MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people engaged in mixed migration have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Mixed migration describes refugees and migrants traveling along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often traveling irregularly, and wholly or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

**Front cover photo credit:**
Michael Kirby Smith (2013)
Ethiopian migrants outside the Migrant Response Centre in Haradh, Yemen, May 2013.

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*Danida*

# Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: **Eastern and Southern Africa | Egypt and Yemen**

## Quarter 1 - 2023

# Key Updates

- **A sixth failed rainy season in the Horn of Africa has extended the drought crisis exacerbating displacement**, with over 3.5 million drought-affected people internally displaced in Ethiopia, and close to 1.5 million drought- and conflict-affected IDPs in Somalia. Around 100,000 Somalis have crossed into Kenya, seeking refuge in Dadaab refugee camps.

- **In Q1, 41,453 refugees and migrants arrived in Yemen, compared to 19,652 during the same period last year.** This increase signals return to pre-pandemic figures of refugees and migrants moving along the Eastern Route, as also anticipated by IOM.

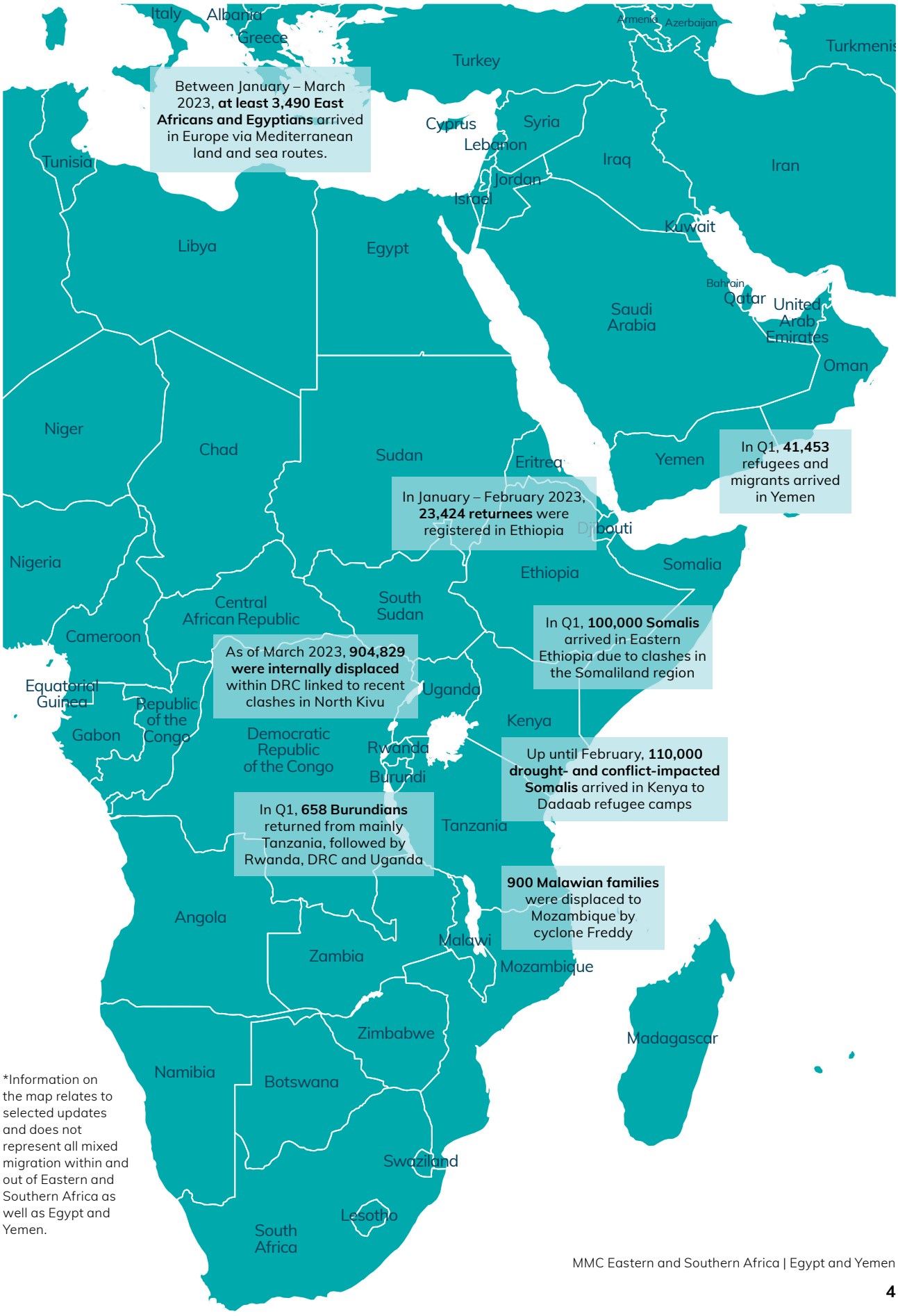
- **Yemenis voluntarily returning to Yemen decreased by 41% this quarter (9,438), compared to the previous quarter (15,922).** The worsening humanitarian crisis in Yemen and difficulties entering Saudi Arabia are prompting increased returns of (mainly Ethiopian) migrants back to the Horn of Africa.

- **In Q1, Egyptians represented the 4th nationality to arrive in Italy (2,366). In contrast, East Africans (Eritreans (653), Sudanese (320), Ethiopians (132) and Somalis (19) moving along the Central Mediterranean Route did not feature in the top 10 arrivals this quarter.** This represents a shift from 2022, when Egyptians were the most represented among arrivals in Italy.

- **Uganda's parliament passed a new law criminalising persons identifying as LGBTQI+, which shall impact not only Ugandans but also LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers residing in the country**, and could spur movements out of the country. HIV-positive LGBTQI+ individuals are particularly targeted and may not be able to access critical health and protection services due to fear of identification.

- **Tropical cyclone Freddy has caused large internal and cross-border displacements in Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar** following its trajectory impacting land on two separate occasions in February and March. At least 900 Malawian families fled into Mozambique's Niassa region.

## Regional Overview*




*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration within and out of Eastern and Southern Africa as well as Egypt and Yemen.

# Mixed Migration Regional Updates

## Mixed Migration within East Africa and the Great Lakes

### Uncertainties around potential return for Tigrayans

At the end of 2022, the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) signed a peace treaty which marked the official end of two years of war in Tigray and wider Northern Ethiopia, as reported by MMC in Q4 of 2022. Yet, in early 2023, Tigrayan refugees hosted in Sudan's eastern regions made their doubts known. Some speculated the peace deal may be fragile and are hesitant to undertake a return journey. Moreover, uncertainty and tensions remain over access to former lands and property, and access to and availability of basic services in Tigray. Tigrayan refugees interviewed in camps in Sudan by The Guardian noted persisting fears and safety concerns due to an absence of security arrangements for the return journey and upon arrival. At the same time, the number of Tigrayans still exiting Ethiopia in January were the highest reported since June 2021. IOM has attributed this increase to the improved security situation and opening of infrastructure in Tigray to allow for exit.

Despite resumed flights from Addis Ababa to Mekelle, Tigray's regional capital, reconnection to the national electricity grid and better access to humanitarian aid, Tigrayans report banks are operating without money. A lack of cash flow will no doubt impede the full restart of economic activities and successful reintegration of returnees. Furthermore, two weeks after the resumption of flights, reports emerged of an ad-hoc travel ban imposed on Tigrayan passengers, allegedly targeting Tigrayan youth seeking to move between Tigray and the Ethiopian capital.

In March 2023, the United States Biden administration maintained that all parties involved in the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, which killed an estimated half a million civillians, were responsible not only for war crimes, but also for committing crimes against humanity. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that those responsible must be held accountable and prosecuted. The same month, Secretary Blinken announced $331 million in new humanitarian assistance for Ethiopia in 2023, bringing the total amount of assistance for the year up to $780 million.

### New conflict in Somaliland region spurs cross-border displacement into Ethiopia

Since February 2023, the Somali Sool region, part of the disputed territory of the Somaliland region in Somalia, has been the site of clashes between Somaliland troops and local militias from the Dhulbahante clan, OCHA reports, effectively ending the ceasefire recently announced by its President Muse Bihi Abdi. In particular, heavy fighting has taken place in and around Laascaanood, the region's administrative capital. The clan has expressed its aim of separating the Sool region from the Hargeisa-led Somaliland administration, and forming a new federal state under the federal Somali administration in Mogadishu.

An inter-agency assessment mission found that more than 185,000 have been internally displaced in Somalia since the onset of the conflict, while UNHCR reports that 100,000 have sought refuge in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has recently experienced a deteriorating humanitarian situation triggered by conflict and drought, forcing newly arrived Somali refugees to sleep in schools, outside public buildings or in open areas outside. UNHCR has pledged for additional funds to meet the needs of this recently arrived group.

## Drought-related movements in Ethiopia and the region

Ethiopia's sixth failed rainy season is extending the current drought crisis, already affecting over 30 million people mainly in the Southern and Eastern parts of the country. The impacts of the drought combined with localized and protracted conflicts in the Oromia, Afar and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, are exacerbating humanitarian challenges and yielding diverse migration and displacement patterns. For instance, an increase in drought-related movements was observed exiting Ethiopia towards Moyale, Kenya, accounting for 22% of all movements. 95% of these movements originated in Oromia. 3.5 million people remain internally displaced in Ethiopia, linked to the drought, and an additional 20 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. In the wider region, the drought also continues to severely impact large areas in Somalia and Kenya. In 2023 alone, 287,000 drought-impacted people have been internally displaced in Somalia and tens of thousands have crossed into Kenya to find relief and assistance (also see Thematic Focus of this QMMU). In February, UNHCR launched an appeal for 137 million USD in order to provide life-saving support in the region to over 3 million refugees, host community members and IDPs.

## New displacement from Sudan into Chad

In the third week of March, local Sudanese media reported on a new series of tribal attacks in West Darfur, which has been the scene of violent clashes between different communities since 2019. During attacks in Tandulti, close to the region's capital Al Geneina, at least 30,000 people fled from West Darfur into Chad. Conflict is contributing to a dire food insecurity context in Western Darfur, with close to half of the population of Al Geneina locality being in need of humanitarian assistance, OCHA reports.

## Calls for returns of South Sudanese and Burundian refugees

In February 2023, the President of South Sudan Salva Kiir urged around 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees living in neighbouring countries and another 2.2 million internally displaced to return to their locations of origin. The three main countries currently hosting South Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers are Uganda (865,363), Sudan (802,748) and Ethiopia (412,594).

President Kiir stated that return would be made possible through support from the government and partners around security and logistics. For those who are unable to return to their locations of origin, and in order to provide an alternative durable solution, concerned local authorities have been notified to allocate land to designated IDP populations. Fearing the country's instability and ongoing protracted conflict, some South Sudanese in Kenya voiced a strong disinterest to return. At the same time, displacement in and from South Sudan due to ethnic violence as well as floods continued in Q1 of 2023, with 14,431 refugees and asylum seekers seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, UNHCR reports.

Also in February, the Burundian government encouraged more Burundian refugees residing in Tanzania to return. In December 2022, the Burundian Ministry of Repatriation announced they intended to support the repatriation of 70,000 refugees in 2023. The majority of these refugees fled Burundi in 2015, as a result of political unrest and violence. From January – March 2023, however, just 658 Burundians returned. UNHCR has maintained its stance that while it does support voluntary return, it does not consider the situation in Burundi conducive yet for actively promoting assisted returns. To further support the initiative, the EU announced in February its aims to fund €40 million to multiple partners working on solutions towards the successful reintegration of Burundian returnees over the coming years. Overall, according to UNHCR, 200,000 Burundians have been assisted to repatriate since 2017.

## Continued displacement in and from DRC

During Q1 of 2023, violence and displacement in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continued to escalate following a series of attacks by non-state armed groups. An attack in January in an IDP site in Ituri province killed more than 200 civilians and caused further displacement, with 17,000 people directly fleeing to the nearby town of Bule. UNHCR has warned of a potential humanitarian catastrophe in eastern DRC as worsening conditions exacerbate the plight of vulnerable displaced populations. New displacement and growing needs are creating added pressure on already overcrowded locations.

Ongoing insecurity in North Kivu caused by conflict between government forces and the March 23 (M23) rebel group, which began in March 2022, led to displacement to Rwanda this quarter. In January, Rwanda reported setting up an emergency camp, after around 3,000 new arrivals were registered between November 2022 – January 2023. In March, UNHCR reported over 5,400 Congolese refugees had arrived in Rwanda, adding to the 72,200 Congolese refugees already present in the country. In the same month, Tanzanian media noted the arrival of 2,600 Congolese in Tanzania over the course of 2 weeks. As of March 2023, IOM DTM reported that 904,829 individuals and 180,402 households have been displaced in North Kivu.

As the hostilities between government forces and the M23 escalate, tensions heightened further in January as the Congolese government accused the Rwandan government of providing support to the militia group. In the same month, in a retaliation speech, Rwandan President Paul Kagame refuted these claims and announced Rwanda will no longer grant refuge to displaced Congolese, stating this was no longer the country's responsibility. He added that ''Rwanda has hosted Congolese refugees for over three decades, and the country will no longer carry the burden."

## UK High Court Ruling on deportation of refugees to Rwanda faces appeal amid concerns

As mentioned in the previous quarter, despite violating the right to apply for asylum enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 5-year partnership signed between the United Kingdom's (UK) Home Secretary Office and Rwanda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the relocation of refugees and asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda was considered lawful by the UK High Court. Yet, in January, a London Court granted permission to a group of asylum seekers to appeal against the ruling, and in March another group of ten

asylum seekers originating from conflict areas won permission to challenge the UK Home Office on their deportation order in the Court of Appeal, halting deportation flights for the time being.

The charity organization Care4Calais showed concerns in January on the lawfulness of the UK-Rwanda agreement after carrying out surveys with asylum seekers facing deportation. Approximately 50% of respondents were married, and close to 20% had children. The deportation of individuals could therefore expose families to separation and harm. Furthermore, some of the interviewed asylum seekers identified as LGBTQI+, despite Rwanda being a country with legal provisions to persecute LGBTQI+ individuals.

While Rwanda has committed to taking in and potentially hosting more asylum seekers through this agreement with the UK, in January, Burundian refugees residing in Mahama camp, the biggest refugee camp in Rwanda, reported reduced and delayed food rations of up to three months, generating concerns of malnourishment and insufficient access to food. Others cited extremely low cash assistance of the equivalent of $5, and sometimes $3, which did not cover basic needs. UNHCR working together with the Government of Rwanda clarified that while assistance had not decreased, rising inflation had decreased the purchasing power of cash.

## Impact of Uganda's new anti-LGBTQI+ bill on human rights and mixed migration

In March 2023, the Ugandan parliament passed sweeping anti-LGBTQI+ legislation with its 'Anti-Homosexuality Bill'. The bill criminalises the act of identifying as LGBTQI+; family members', relatives' and organizations' support to those who identify as such; and LGBTQI+ promotion in education and public spaces. Those found to be involved directly or indirectly in ''cases of homosexuality'' or "cases of aggravated homosexuality", referring to those identifying as LGBTQI+ with a positive HIV status, could be subject to incarceration for life or the death penalty in more extreme cases. According to Human Rights Watch, Uganda's National Bureau for Non-Governmental Organizations has banned the activities of organizations aimed at advocating for the rights of the LGBTQI+ community in the country. In this regard, LGBTQI+ Ugandans as well as refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those in need of HIV medication, may be deprived of healthcare and social and legal protection due to their sexual orientation. The new bill awaits assent or rejection from President Museveni before passing into law.

In 2013, Uganda's parliament passed an Anti-Homosexuality Bill (AHB, drafted in 2009), but it was nullified by the Ugandan Constitutional Court in 2014. Before rejection, the AHB sparked global attention as it spurred numerous LGBTQI+ Ugandans to flee to neighbouring East African countries, especially Kenya. Similar movements of LGBTQI+ Ugandans as well as the redisplacement of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees hosted in Uganda should be anticipated with the new bill.

In 2022, Uganda received over 112,000 new refugees, and new arrivals from DRC and South Sudan are expected to continue in 2023. In this context, the EU announced in Q1 it has mobilized additional funds towards the assistance of both refugees and host communities in Uganda in 2023. Yet, the passing of the new bill could damage Uganda's human rights reputation and its access to humanitarian funding, mirroring the situation that unfolded in 2014 before the rejection of the previous AHB bill when the United States, Norway, Denmark and The Netherlands announced to cut Uganda-destined funds.

# The Eastern Route from East Africa to Yemen

## New policy agreement for Kenyan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia

In January, Kenya and Saudi Arabia announced joining forces to combat irregular and poor working conditions for Kenyans employed in Saudi Arabia. Between 2019 and 2021, at least 89 Kenyans died while employed in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, in 2022 alone, the human rights organization Haki Africa recorded over 51 complaints of domestic abuse of Kenyan domestic workers in Saudi Arabia. In 2022, Saudi Arabia ranked third among the countries from which Kenyans send the greatest remittances home. Within the first 8 months of 2022, Kenyans remitted KSh22.65 billion from Saudi Arabia.

The agreement represents a new initiative to work towards curbing the abuse of Kenyan workers in Saudi Arabia and in the Arabian Peninsula in general. After reports of abuses and death of several Kenyan workers came to light in 2014, the Kenyan government suspended the migration of workers to the region and revoked 930 licenses from recruitment agencies. The ban was lifted in 2017 when bilateral labour agreements were signed with Qatar and Saudi Arabia. Nonetheless, improved safeguards were still needed. In July 2022, the Kenyan government announced putting in place additional measures to protect migrant workers in countries including Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

In March 2023, IOM renewed its commitment towards the governance of labour migration in 11 countries in the East and the Horn of Africa, including Kenya. Ministers of Labour of concerned countries pledged to improve collaboration, coordination and advisory structures on labour mobility, gender-sensitive migration governance and regional integration. This commitment was made at the 4th Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration, where the ministers agreed to work together to address migration issues in the region and establish a more effective negotiating position with migrants' destination countries, especially on the Arabian Peninsula and in the European Union.

## Returns to Ethiopia via the Eastern Route

In 2023, according to IOM, a total of 23,424 Ethiopian returnees were registered upon arrival up until the end of February. Most returned from Saudi Arabia. From March 2022 – January 2023, over 107,000 Ethiopians were returned from Saudi Arabia as part of an agreement between the two countries. In March, local Ethiopian media reported on the recruitment and training of young- and middle-aged women to travel and join the Saudi workforce. While the reporting did mention the risk of imprisonment and torture for Ethiopian labour migrants travelling to Saudi Arabia, the Ethiopian government intends to send 500,000 women to work in Saudi Arabia over the course of 2023. This new development was described as tied to an effort by the authorities to increase the introduction of foreign currency in Ethiopia, which will then be exchanged for birrs. There were reportedly no agreements in place between Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia that would safeguard women from being detained and forcibly returned at a later stage. That being said, a national migration policy has been stuck in draft phase for the last three years and would seek to address, among other things, regulating safer labour migration.

IOM DTM found in January that the dual impact of the worsening humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the difficulties associated with reaching Saudi Arabia has resulted in a significant number of migrants choosing

to return from Yemen to the Horn of Africa. In January and February, 1,080 migrants, of which more than 90% were Ethiopians, spontaneously returned from Yemen back to Djibouti.

## Mixed migration in Djibouti and Somalia

In the Regional Migrant Response Plan for 2023 for the Horn of Africa and Yemen, IOM anticipates migration along the Eastern Route in 2023 to revert to pre-pandemic levels. In January – February 2023, DTM recorded 29,839 entries into Djibouti. This represents an increase when compared to the last two months of 2022 (25,409). At the same time, in Q1, IOM also identified a noteworthy shift in movements toward coastal embarkation points, from Obock, Djibouti being the most common to Bari, Somalia. This was accompanied by a shift in disembarkation points in Yemen, with increased arrivals in the Shabwah region and a small decrease in Lahj. The change could be due to varying weather conditions and sea tides, as well as greater patrolling of the Djiboutian Coast Guard. In March, Djiboutian authorities rescued 383 Ethiopian migrants on a boat that risked capsizing in the Gulf of Aden. Reports mentioned that responsible smugglers who facilitated the risky crossing were subsequently detained in Djibouti. On 31 March, IOM reported 11 fatalities after a road accident involving Ethiopians travelling between Garowe and Bosaso, Somalia. The migrants were being transported in a truck facilitated by smugglers, which overturned, also leaving at least another 20 injured.

## Mixed migration in Yemen

In Q1, IOM DTM recorded the arrival of 41,453 refugees and migrants in Yemen, compared to 19,652 in the same period of 2022. Q1 also saw a decrease in the return of Yemenis to Yemen, with 9,438 returning which represents a drop of 41% from the previous quarter (15,922). The protection situation for Yemenis as well as refugees and migrants continued to deteriorate in the country this quarter. According to IOM, women and girls face routine abuse and exploitation, resulting in many cases of gender-based violence. Health and protection teams often identify cases through evidence of pregnancy and sexual/reproductive health issues, despite self-disclosure challenges. After an increase in disembarkations in the Shabwah region from Somalia, IOM reported movements of new arrivals in Marib from Shabwah were also detected, following increased hostilities towards migrants from local authorities in that region. It was added that, once in Marib, migrants are under the tight control of smuggling networks and are hard to reach for aid organisations.

## Malawian women held for ransom in Oman

In March, Deutsche Welle reported on Malawian women being held for ransom in Oman, after travelling to the country to find better employment opportunities. The Malawian NGO Centre for Democracy and Economic Development (CDEDI) has launched a campaign with the aim to raise the required money (around $ 2,450) and seek the release of 50 Malawian women in Oman. According to the source, the women were initially recruited by middlemen with the promise of regular employment in Oman, but were then eventually maltreated, exploited and held for ransom. A Malawian woman who had recently returned described her living and working conditions in Oman as ‘‘modern slavery’’. CDEDI has accused the Malawian government of ‘‘turning a blind eye on the matter’’, and they reported an additional 300 Malawian women are being held in similar conditions in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

# Routes towards the Mediterranean

## East African arrivals along the Mediterranean routes

Between January and March, 36,340 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe via Mediterranean land and sea routes. This represents a 15% decrease compared to the previous quarter. Conversely, arrivals increased by 431% compared to the same period last year (6,832). At the same time, Yemenis and East Africans were not among the main nationalities to move along the Central Mediterranean Route and arrive in Italy (see below). Despite shifting from most common nationality among arrivals to 4th most common, Egyptians remained present among the top nationalities to arrive in Italy, with absolute numbers (2,366) higher than at the same period last year (1,878). Increasing numbers of Egyptian arrivals coincide with new EU funding to support Egypt with a new border migration programme at the end of last year.

Zooming in on arrivals in Italy during Q1, these included Egyptians (2,366; 4th), Eritreans (653; 11th), Sudanese (320; 14th), Ethiopians (132; 18th) and Somalis (19; 23rd). In February 2023, a rubber boat sank off the Libyan coast carrying at least 95 Sudanese migrants and 10 others, resulting in 12 fatalities and dozens missing. In Greece, the most represented nationalities among arrivals included Somalis (191; 4th), Congolese (DRC; 185; 5th), Eritreans (137; 7th), Yemenis (112; 8th), Sudanese (81; 10th), Ethiopians (16; 12th) and Egyptians (5; 15th).

# The Southern Route towards South Africa and mixed migration within Southern Africa

## Arrests of Ethiopians in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi

Several media outlets cited the arrests of Ethiopians travelling along the Southern Route this quarter. In February, local Kenya media reported 11 Ethiopians were arrested in a house in Nairobi, awaiting travel to Tanzania, while another 9 were caught and arrested in Voi, on the Nairobi-Mombasa highway. In March, other reports from Kenya mentioned 45 Ethiopians were arrested on several occasions in the southern Kajiado region while intending to cross into Tanzania in order to reach Southern Africa. In February, Malawian police arrested another 45 Ethiopians who were discovered travelling in a lorry upon their arrival in Malawi.

## Concerns over Rwanda-Mozambique extradition agreement

In June 2022, an extradition agreement between Rwanda and Mozambique was signed by the two countries seeking to address general crimes and crimes linked to the Rwandan Genocide, specifically targeting war crime suspects residing in Mozambique. After the approval of the extradition agreement in March 2023, Rwandan refugees residing in Mozambique expressed concerns over potential forced returns to Rwanda and reportedly fear that the agreement may be used to target exiled Rwandans who oppose the Rwandan government. At the end of 2022, there were 4,127 Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Mozambique. Rwandans in Mozambique have allegedly already become victims of targeted

attacks since 2019, after the Rwandan government sent troops to the country to fight militants in the Cabo Delgado conflict. In late March, UNHCR stressed in a statement that Rwandese refugees registered with the UN Agency are not at risk of extradition following the new bilateral agreement.

## Cyclone Freddy causes destruction and displacement in Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar

At the end of February, tropical cyclone Freddy arrived in East Africa, first hitting Madagascar on February 21st, and southern Mozambique and Malawi days later. Recorded as the longest lasting cyclone ever, Freddy caused major flooding and displacement in the three countries. Moreover, after looping back and gaining energy from warm waters, Freddy exceptionally struck the Mozambican coast for a second time in mid-March, causing displacement in the central Zambezia region. As of March 26th, IOM reports that over 74,827 individuals, including 16,320 families, remain internally displaced and are hosted in accommodation centres across the country. Displacement caused by the cyclone adds to the already large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country – over 1 million due to conflict in Northern Mozambique. Citing the additional support needed for conflict- and climate-affected IDPs in Mozambique, Germany announced in March it would donate €27 million to the country. This follows a similar announcement from Japan, which committed $7.6 million to support humanitarian action.

In Madagascar, according to IOM, close to 80,000 people were estimated to be affected by Cyclone Freddy, including 24,300 who became displaced. Furthermore, in Malawi, according to Malawi's Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), and reported by OCHA, 563,771 people were displaced as of March, with many in accommodation camps in the Nsanje, Chikwawa and Mulanje districts. According to media reports, more than 900 Malawian families arrived in Mozambique following the destruction of their livelihoods by cyclone Freddy, and were receiving assistance from the Mozambican authorities in the Niassa region.

## New passport-free travel agreements in Southern Africa

In February 2023, the Presidents of Namibia and Botswana reached an agreement to open their borders to each other, with their citizens no longer needing passports to travel between them, in an attempt to further collaborate on economic growth, among other themes of partnership. A similar discussion took place between Botswana and Zimbabwe to facilitate the movement of people and goods between their nations. Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi mentioned also having intentions to discuss scrapping passport controls between Botswana and Zambia. While some analysts expressed concerns over Botswana's potential agreement with Zimbabwe, noting the latter's struggling economy and the potential for a high increase in arrivals from Zimbabwe, Masisi assured that Botswana would be placing high-tech equipment to ensure orderly and secure passport-free cross-border movements. Overall, he added, the move is a positive development for Botswana's economy to boost regional trade.

# Thematic Focus: New arrivals of Somalis affected by drought and conflict in Kenya

## Background

The Horn of Africa is currently experiencing its longest drought in decades, leading to the displacement of many in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. The devastation of crop production resulting from the prolonged drought has made it nearly impossible for pastoralists and herders in the region to find sustenance for their livestock, prompting some to move greater distances and others to exit from their nomadic livelihoods and seek out assistance. For many in Somalia, a conflict-affected country with insufficient resources and capacity to mitigate the adverse effects of the drought, the events meant they had to engage in new movements, after they had previously become displaced due to protracted conflict. This was confirmed by qualitative data MMC gathered in Garissa, eastern Kenya, where key informants cited they had come across new arrivals in Kenya who had previously left Kenya and returned to Somalia, but had now become displaced again.

Somalia's unstable political climate has hindered efforts to tackle the climate crisis and safeguard at-risk populations most affected by the drought. Furthermore, the drought has led to increased conflict between communities competing for scarce resources. Many Somalis depend on pastoralism for a source of income and, during times of drought, pastoralist mobility tends to increase, change or be disrupted. Occasionally, pastoral groups converge upon the same location, leading to resource competition and conflicts. This phenomenon has been observed in the southern regions of Ethiopia, northern Kenya and parts of Somalia.

## Context and figures

Close to 1.5 million Somalis are estimated to be currently internally displaced, a number that has been growing over recent years due to the dual impact of conflict and drought. At the same time, an increasing number are crossing borders to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, particularly in Kenya. During the last two years, and up until Q1 of 2023, 110,000 new arrivals were registered in Kenyan camps due to the joint impact of drought and conflict. Of these, 24,000 arrived between September and December 2022 in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps. This demonstrates the delayed impact climate can have on mobility, and indicates populations may only decide to move after a certain amount of failed rainy seasons, or when access to assistance continues to be an issue. According to Save the Children, the movements of Somali refugees crossing the border into Kenya constitute the largest in volume in over a decade.

## Humanitarian situation and needs in Dadaab

It is estimated that the overcrowded camps which constitute the Dadaab refugee camp complex currently host over 233,000 registered refugees, and over 80,000 who are not registered. In 2022, around 50,000 new arrivals were registered in Dadaab and UNHCR treated over 5,000 children for malnutrition. Further,

MSF reported a 33% increase in the number of malnutrition cases in Dadaab in 2022, of whom most were children, citing limited resources to cater to the large number of new arrivals. Moreover, MSF cautioned in January that the current rise could soon surpass levels manageable by those providing aid in the camps. Alongside dwindling resources available, new arrivals, including those who had previously returned to Somalia and are now coming back to Dadaab, have reportedly encountered difficulties to register and access assistance, due to Kenya's shifting policies on the future of the refugee camps, as local media reported.

UNHCR maintains that limited resources, overcrowding and the effects of the drought, also felt in the area of Dadaab, have further impacted the livelihoods and protection situation of 230,000 refugees already residing in the camps. In particular, women and girls face an increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV). While basic needs including food and shelter have become hard to access, women and girls are forced to rely on negative coping mechanisms, increasing their overall vulnerability to GBV. Moreover, the dire need for sufficient food and water supplies has led to the poor prioritization of sexual and reproductive health services, placing thousands of women and girls, including victims of GBV, at an aggravated health risk.

The impact of the drought has not only been felt by Dadaab camp residents, but also by host communities in Northern Kenya. Nevertheless, due to the overstretched context inside Dadaab, host communities have engaged in accommodating new arrivals outside the camp facilities in exchange for receiving assistance from aid organizations, MMC has learned from key informants in Garissa. The prevailing drought conditions have therefore further compelled NGOs operating in Dadaab and Northern Kenya to prioritize including local communities in their efforts to alleviate the impact of the drought.

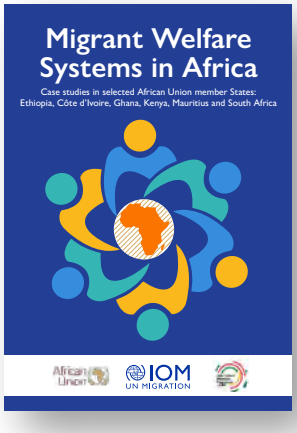
## Policy implications

Over the last decade, the Kenyan government has attempted to shut down the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps, citing rising insecurity threats linked to terrorist attacks in Nairobi and Garissa. Most recently in 2022, before the Kenyan general elections and the appointment of the current government, the previous Interior Minister had ordered the closure of Dadaab and Kakuma complexes by the end of June. However, as MMC mentioned in Q3, this closure did not take place. In 2021, the Kenyan Government had set a 14-day ultimatum for UNHCR to devise a plan for returning Dabaab and Kakuma refugees to their countries of origin, before closing the camps. In response to this ultimatum, UNHCR and various other organizations globally advocated against implementation.

While the population of Dadaab has declined over the past ten years from its peak of nearly 500,000, the recent surge of drought-impacted new arrivals has overwhelmed policy and programming efforts. A consequence of the Kenyan authorities' threat to close the camps has been that many who arrived in Dadaab from Somalia since 2016 have been unable to officially register. This has impeded the ability of unregistered refugees to access official documents and assistance.

In response to the recent advocacy efforts of human rights organizations, Kenyan President William Ruto has agreed to reopen two refugee camps in Dadaab, namely Ifo II and Kambioos, which were established to accommodate refugees from Somalia between 2011 and 2013. These camps had been closed in 2018 during a period of decreasing numbers of new arrivals, leaving 3 camps in Dadaab open at that time: Dagahaley, Ifo and Hagadera.

# Highlighted New Research and Reports




## Migrant Welfare Systems in Africa: Case Studies in Selected African Union Member States: Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius and South Africa

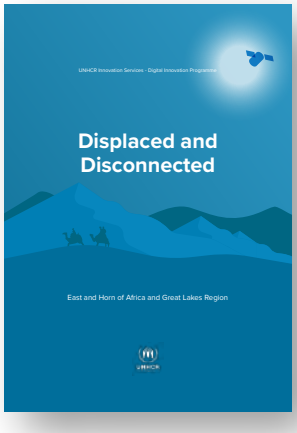
**African Union, IOM and JLMP | January 2023**

This report examines the challenges faced by African migrant workers in accessing social protection and welfare support. Despite human rights frameworks in place, they often cannot access meaningful social protection. Bilateral and multilateral agreements play an important role, but country of origin measures can also provide support. The report focuses on the weak social protection received by many African migrant workers in Gulf countries and analyzes the social protection provided by six African countries to their nationals abroad. The report considers these measures in comparison to the treatment of immigrant workers in other countries and showcases best practices.

## South Sudan's decades of displacement: Understanding return and questioning reintegration

**Samuel Hall | February 2023**

Over generations, displacement has become a common experience for South Sudanese, despite efforts by local and international agencies to support their return and reintegration after periods of violence. This report aims to understand the factors influencing displacement and return for South Sudanese refugees, returnees, and internally displaced persons. The study examines how the 2020 "triple shock" of conflict, COVID-19, and climate-related disasters have impacted the country's peace-building processes and food security. The research hopes to inform policies regarding return and peace-building processes in South Sudan.




## Displaced and Disconnected: East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region

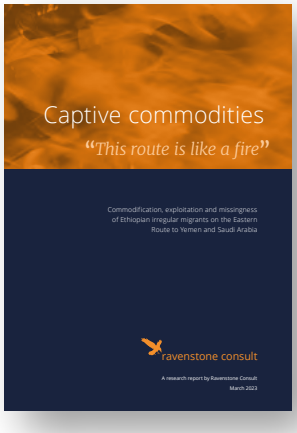
### UNHCR | February 2023

Refugees and displaced persons worldwide struggle to access basic services such as mobile phones and bank accounts. This is also the case in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, where legal barriers hinder refugees and asylum-seekers from obtaining proof of identity documentation required for SIM card registration and KYC/CDD procedures for financial services. This report specifically examines the challenge posed by these legal requirements in the nine East African countries studied, where SIM registration is mandatory and proof of identity is necessary for registration.

## Refugee-Led Organisations In East Africa: Community Perceptions In Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, And Tanzania

### Refugee Studies Centre | March 2023

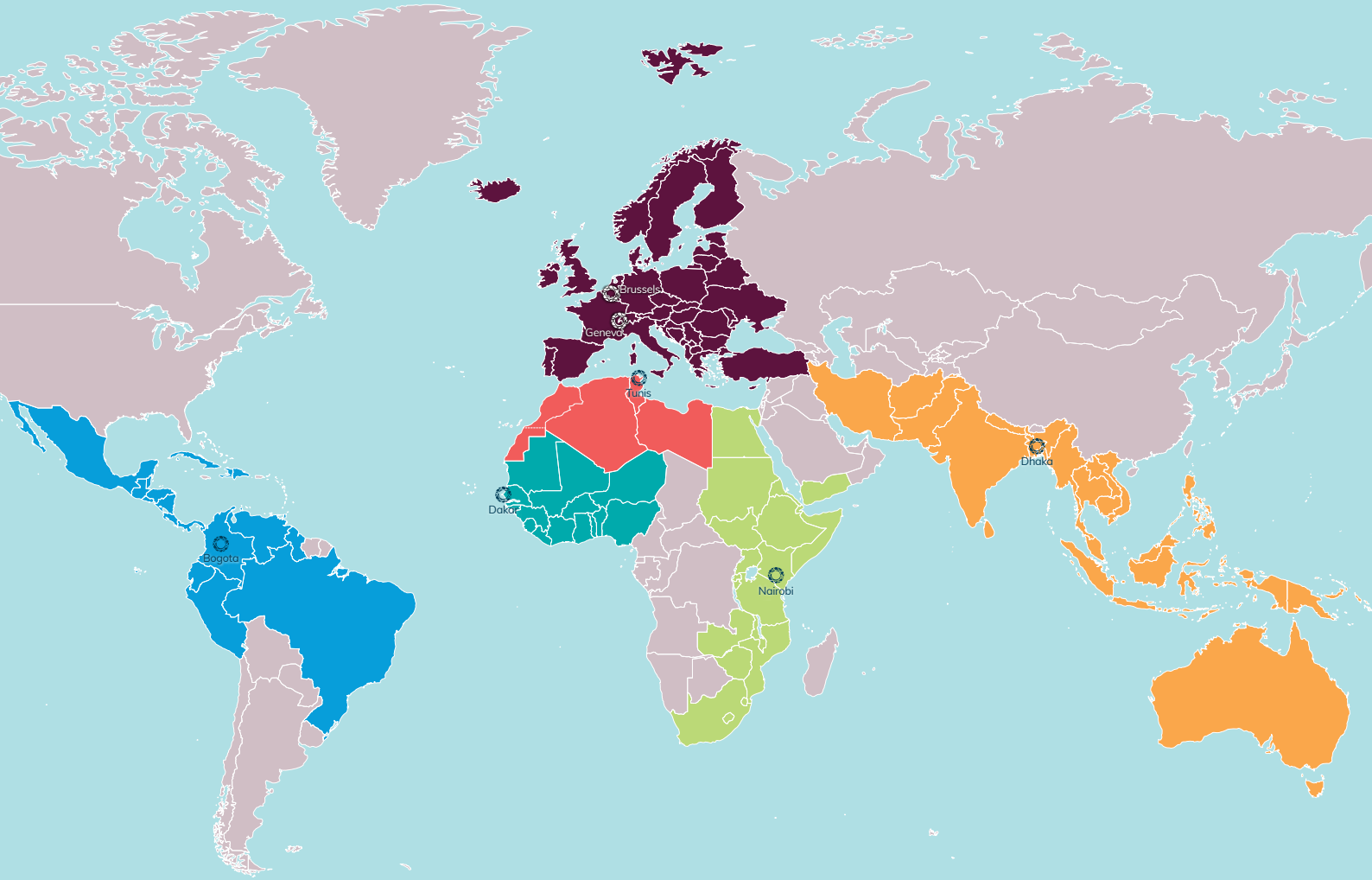
Refugee-led organizations (RLOs) in East Africa are crucial in addressing community needs, but there is a reported lack of evidence on their impact and perceptions by displaced communities themselves. Carleton University's Local Engagement Refugee Research Network and the Refugee-Led Research Hub at the University of Oxford aim to bridge this gap through this study, focusing on 11 urban and camp/settlement sites in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.




## Captive Commodities: ''This route is like a fire''. Commodification, exploitation and missingness of Ethiopian irregular migrants on the Eastern Route to Yemen and Saudi Arabia

### Ravenstone Consult | March 2023

This research report focuses on the experiences of risk of Ethiopians travelling along the Eastern Route towards Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The Eastern Route is a major mixed migration route for Ethiopians in search of labour opportunities in Saudi Arabia and other countries on the Arabian Peninsula. The study details in-depth the grave protection incidents, abuses and exploitation Ethiopians face on the journey, at times crossing the boundaries between smuggling and trafficking.




MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in DRC regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

For more information visit:
mixedmigration.org and follow us at @Mixed_Migration

Mixed Migration Centre

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