

**MMC Eastern and Southern
Africa | Egypt and Yemen**

QUARTER 3 2024



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 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](https://twitter.com/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 migrants travelling along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often travelling irregularly, and wholly or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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Michael Kirby Smith (2013)

Ethiopian migrants outside the Migrant Response Centre in Haradh, Yemen, May 2013.

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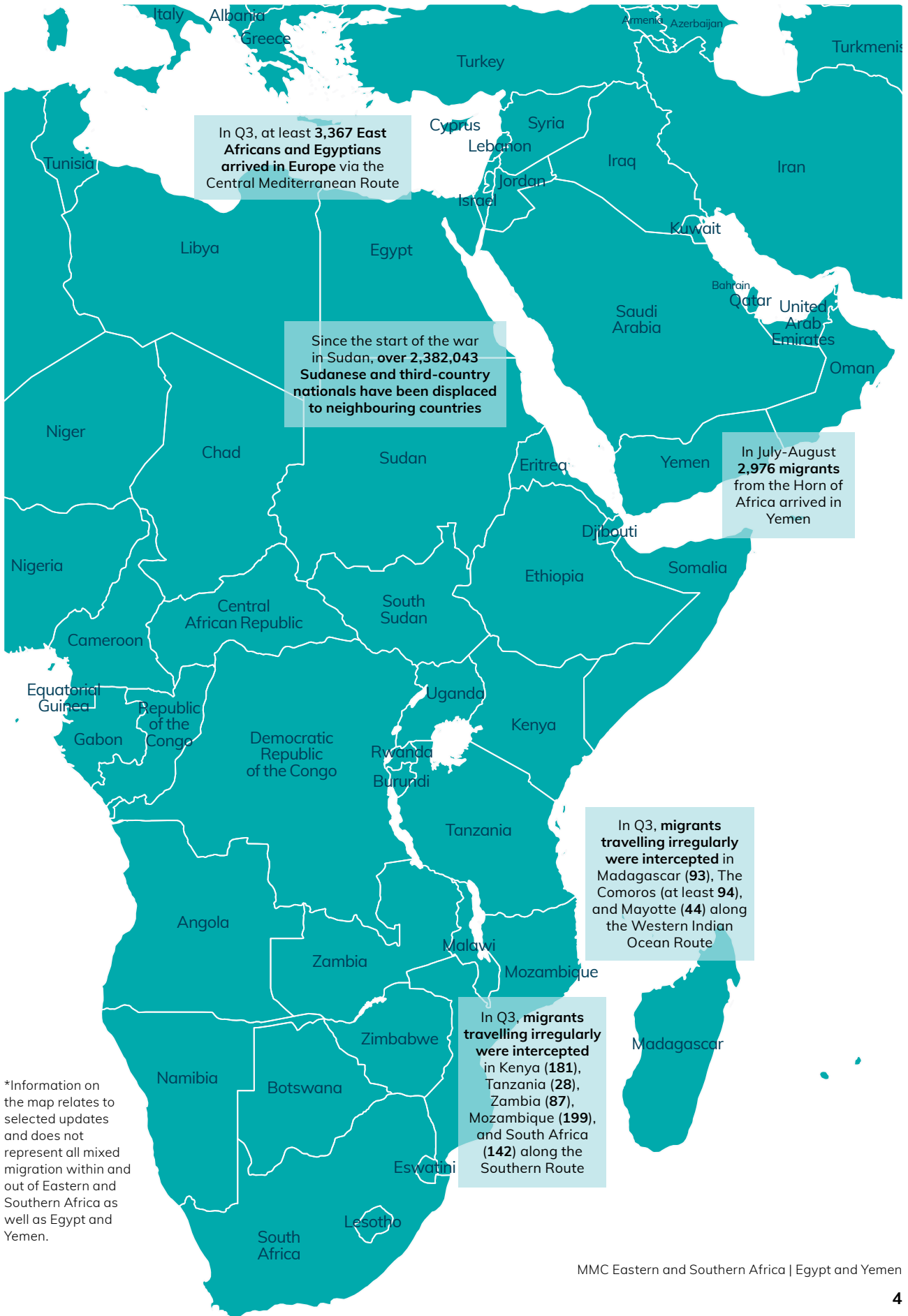
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Eastern and Southern Africa | Egypt and Yemen

Quarter 3 - 2024

Key Updates

- **The war in Sudan continues to fuel internal and cross-border displacement:** Compared to the [previous quarter](#), [cross border movements](#) have increased by 140% in Egypt (1,200,000), 43% in Uganda (57,017), 11% in South Sudan (803,341), 10% in the Central African Republic (CAR) (35,228), 7% in Chad (652,496), 7% in Ethiopia (60,688), and 3% in Libya (98,700).
- **Increase in Sudanese arrivals in Libya:** In Q3, UNHCR noted up to [350 Sudanese](#) are entering Libya daily through the Alkufra border entry point, overwhelming the existing infrastructure. [Reports](#) furthermore cited increased movements towards coastal cities in northern Libya.
- **Extended military campaigns lead to continued decrease in arrivals in Yemen:** In July-August [2,976](#) migrants entered Yemen, marking a 78% decrease from the same period in 2023. In Q3, two boats capsized off the coast of [Yemen](#), with at least [54](#) migrants drowning. At the start of Q4, a [double shipwreck incident](#) occurred off the coast of Djibouti, involving boats on a return journey from Yemen, causing at least 45 fatalities and 111 missing.
- **Continued mass arrests in Saudi Arabia:** Similar to [Q2](#), mass round ups and arrests of mainly Ethiopians and Yemenis in Saudi Arabia continued, with [15,324](#) individuals apprehended for allegedly breaching residency, work and border security regulations.
- **Migrants intercepted along the Southern Route:** In Q3, several groups of Ethiopians and other nationalities were apprehended while en route to South Africa in [Kenya](#), [Tanzania](#), [Zambia](#), [Mozambique](#), and [South Africa](#). Furthermore, Zambian authorities [reported](#) deporting 577 Ethiopians over a six month period between February-August 2024.
- **Migrants intercepted along the Western Indian Ocean Route:** In Q3, several groups of migrants from the Great Lakes region, The Comoros and Madagascar were intercepted while en route to or after arrival in the French department of Mayotte in [The Comoros](#), [Madagascar](#), and [Mayotte](#). Moreover, Comorian authorities proceeded to legal hearings in the first-ever court case against two smugglers, after new anti-smuggling legislation was promulgated in July.

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

War in Sudan continues to drive internal and cross-border displacement

[As of 24 September](#), 8,126,265 people in Sudan have been internally displaced since the start of the war in April 2023, representing a 5% increase compared to [Q2](#) (7,720,119). In total, Sudan is home to 10,890,722 internally displaced persons (IDPs), including an estimated 2.8 million who were displaced prior to the war. Some [2,382,043](#) have fled Sudan to neighbouring countries, marking a 9% increase compared to the end of the previous quarter (2,196,355). In contrast to Q2, the number of migrants crossing borders increased at a higher rate than the number of people displaced internally.

For those who have crossed borders, according to [UNHCR](#), a majority have fled to Egypt (1,200,000), South Sudan (803,341), Chad (652,496), Libya (98,700), Ethiopia (60,688), 57,017 (Uganda), and CAR (35,228). Of note, the number of arrivals in Egypt, provided by the Egyptian government, has more than doubled since March 2024 (500,000), when it was last updated.

During Q3, flooding affected large parts of Sudan, further exacerbating the situation for those on the move. [44%](#) of those who had been displaced by floods were cited to have been forced into secondary displacement after having already been displaced by conflict.

Sudanese refugees in precarious conditions in Ethiopia

In August, a large group of [Sudanese refugees](#) who had become stranded in a forest makeshift camp in the Amhara region, Ethiopia, announced their departure towards a refugee registration point at the border with Sudan, decreasing the number in the forest from 6,080 to 2,411. This follows reporting from [Q2](#) on the movements of Sudanese refugees from the Kumer and Awlala camps to the same forest area, citing safety concerns. A representative of the group now departing from the forest noted 23 individuals had become injured by gunfire, further emphasising the highly fluid security situation in Amhara, which [remains](#) partly held by the Fano militia. In September, local Sudanese media [stated](#) that there were more than 700 Sudanese people stranded on both sides of the Gallabat-Metema border crossing due to intensified fighting on the Ethiopian side. Two Sudanese were reported to have been killed by cross-border shelling.

Ethiopia cracks down on human trafficking network

In July, the Ethiopian National Intelligence and Security Service [announced](#) dismantling a large human trafficking network operating in Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. The operation led to the arrest of 49 travel agency owners, along with a seizure of documents including Ethiopian passports, birth certificates, and airline tickets. The travel agencies had been disguising human trafficking operations as legitimate businesses

with the alleged aid of government officials. The network is believed to have trafficked approximately 15,000 Ethiopians out of the country between June 2023 and August 2024.

Migrants apprehended in Uganda and western Kenya

In July, Ugandan authorities apprehended [135 migrants](#) in various areas of Kampala, including South Sudanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Congolese (DRC), and Chinese nationals, who had entered the country irregularly. The Senior Immigration Officer and Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Internal Affairs stated that those arrested will be arraigned in court and may face penalties including fines, imprisonment, or deportation.

In September, [11 individuals](#) were arrested and detained in Kitale, western Kenya, after a targeted operation by Kenya's Directorate of Criminal Investigations Operation Support Unit. The group included [eight Ugandan and Somali migrants](#) and three Kenyan smugglers who were travelling from Uganda to Nairobi's Eastleigh area. The Anti-Terrorism Police Unit was reported to have taken over the case to explore the possibility that the migrants may have become victims of human trafficking, particularly as Ugandans benefit from [free movement arrangements](#) with Kenya and can enter the country with their national identity cards.

The Eastern Route from East Africa to Yemen

Continued decrease in arrivals in Yemen

In Yemen, IOM DTM recorded 2,976 new arrivals in [July](#) and [August](#),¹ representing a 78% decrease compared to the same period last year ([13,676](#)). All migrants in July-August arrived in Shabwah Governorate, similar to [Q2](#). The new arrivals had all departed from Bari, Somalia, for which Shabwah serves as the usual point of entry into Yemen. The concentrated military campaign in Lahj, active since 2023, continued to deter arrivals from Obock, Djibouti. This decreasing trend fits into an overall pattern of a sharp drop in arrivals in Yemen, which has not been seen in over a decade, except for the COVID-19 years.

Two fatal shipwrecks occurred this quarter off the coast of Taiz Governorate. In July, UNHCR [announced](#) that four survivors were found after a boat carrying [45 migrants](#) capsized due to strong winds and overloading. In August, after a boat originating from Djibouti capsized, IOM [reported](#) that 13 people had drowned and 14 were unaccounted for. With the ongoing military campaigns around Lahj Governorate, boats departing from and to Djibouti are likely to take considerably longer routes, increasing the risk of accidents and fatalities. In [early October](#), a double shipwreck incident took place off the coast of Obock, with at least 45 people drowning and 111 gone missing. The boats were on return journeys from Yemen.²

In August, [30 Ethiopians](#) were rescued in Shabwah Governorate after a joint security operation resulted in the raid of a house close to the city of Ataq. Authorities disclosed that the trafficking ring which held the group hostage comprised of four Ethiopians who targeted fellow nationals and demanded ransoms of up to 3,000 Saudi Riyals per person.³ The victims were tortured during their captivity.

¹ Figures for September were not available at the time of publishing.

² More details on this fatal incident will feature in the QMMU for Q4.

³ Approximately 800 US Dollars (USD).

Continued increase in arrivals in Djibouti

In July, IOM DTM [recorded](#) 40,118 entries into Djibouti.⁴ This marks a 86% increase [compared](#) to the same month last year (21,573), and presents a continuing trend from [last quarter](#). With a continuing decline in arrivals in Yemen, more migrants are believed to remain stranded in Djibouti upon arriving in the country. IOM has noted that the increase in arrivals is due to conflict and political violence in Ethiopia, prompting people to leave the country and engage in movements along the Eastern Route. This trend continues to be reflected in the profiles of new arrivals in Djibouti. While a total of 19,310 Ethiopians arrived from Ethiopia in July, most originated from conflict-affected Amhara (35%), followed by Tigray (31%), and Oromia (28%). Some 1,000 migrant returns from Yemen were recorded in Obock and Tadjourah, representing a 24% increase compared to the same period last year. At least 28 migrants died due to illness and harsh conditions in Djibouti in July, one of the hottest months of the year in the country.

Continued mass arrests in Saudi Arabia

Similar to [Q2](#), the mass roundups of migrants in Saudi Arabia continued into Q3. In September, authorities in Saudi Arabia arrested [15,324 migrants](#) in one week for allegedly breaching residency, work, and border security regulations. According to the official report, 9,235 migrants were arrested for violations of residency laws, while 3,772 were held over irregular border crossing attempts, and a further 2,317 for informal labour-related issues. Among the 1,226 migrants arrested for trying to enter the country irregularly, 51% were Ethiopian and 48% Yemeni. [11,894 individuals](#) arrested as part of these nationwide raids were deported in the last week of September. The Ministry of Interior announced that anyone found to be facilitating irregular entry, including providing transportation and shelter, could face imprisonment for a maximum of 15 years, a fine up to 1 million Saudi Riyals,⁵ as well as confiscation of vehicles and property. In June, MMC [published](#) a follow-up article on the ongoing targeted killings of migrants at the Saudi border, with the direct involvement of Saudi border guards.

Routes towards the Mediterranean

East African and Egyptian arrivals along the Mediterranean routes

Between July and September, [60,633 refugees and migrants](#) arrived in Europe through land and sea routes. [This represents a 91% increase](#) compared to the previous quarter, and a [41% decrease](#) when looking at the same period last year. Egyptians represented the 4th most common nationality to arrive in [Italy](#) in January-August 2024, rising from [5th during the last quarter](#). However, the absolute number of Egyptian arrivals (971) in July-August is 21% lower than [in the same period in 2023](#).⁶ Other nationalities from East Africa to arrive in Italy since the beginning of the year include Eritreans (1,468; 7th), followed by Sudanese (1,256; 8th), Ethiopians (821; 11th), Somalis (402; 20th), and South Sudanese (95; 27th).

⁴ Figures for the rest of Q3 were not available at the time of publishing.

⁵ Approximately 260,000 USD.

⁶ Nationality figures for September were not available at the time of publishing.

This quarter, UNHCR retroactively published data on arrivals in [Greece](#) from January-June 2024. The most represented nationalities include Egyptians (2,244; 3rd), Eritreans (797; 4th), Yemenis (701; 6th), Sudanese (356; 7th), Somalis (253; 10th), Congolese (DRC) (53; 14th), and Ethiopians (46; 15th). In [Cyprus](#), the most common East African nationalities to arrive between January-August 2024 include Somalis (163; 5th), Congolese (DRC) (119; 6th), and Sudanese (81; 7th).⁷

Increase in Sudanese arrivals in Libya

In August, UNHCR estimated that the Alkufra border entry point in southeastern Libya was receiving around [350 new arrivals](#) from Sudan every day, overwhelming the existing infrastructure, while [98,700](#) Sudanese refugees have now officially been recorded since the outbreak of war in Sudan. [IRC](#) noted that 73% of the new arrivals were crossing directly from Sudan to Alkufra, while others arrived after transiting through Chad or Egypt. Despite Sudanese not figuring among the top nationalities to arrive in Italy (see above), both [UNHCR](#) and [Al Jazeera](#) report increased movements of Sudanese towards Libyan coastal cities, including Zwara, Azzawya, Aljara, Tripoli, and Misrata.

Continued obstacles for Sudanese to reach Egypt

In Q3, Sudanese refugees continued to face challenges and risks while trying to enter Egypt. After Egypt implemented visa restrictions for Sudanese in [2023](#), Sudanese refugees have had to pay visa costs, which are [cited](#) to now be up to 1,500-2,000 USD. On top of these expenses, movements to Cairo from Sudan have become more expensive as transport fares have increased to an estimated 250 USD with a combination of flight and bus tickets and ‘fees’ collected by Sudanese and Egyptian border guards prior to entering the country. In July, an anonymous source from the [Egyptian security forces](#) stated that since the signing of the deal with the EU in [March 2024](#), the objective of the authorities has been to curb Sudanese from reaching Egypt, impeding them from accessing international protection and asylum. A human rights defender noted that “in Egypt, security concerns often outweigh humanitarian considerations.” With the number of Sudanese arrivals having gone up sharply since early 2024, which could also (partly) indicate a backlog exercise by the Egyptian government rather than a doubling in arrivals over the last months, it is believed more and more Sudanese rely on smugglers to reach Egypt. Local Sudanese media have indeed been pointing towards an increase in perilous journeys, particularly taking place at night, to irregularly cross the border into Egypt. In July, [51 bodies of Sudanese](#) who had attempted to cross into Egypt were discovered in the desert over a three-day period.

Egyptians intercepted prior to embarkation

In September, [45 Egyptians](#) were intercepted and detained by the Egyptian army off the coast of Salloum, near Libya, after their boat had launched a distress call. The group had intended to cross the Mediterranean towards Europe. [The General Command of the Armed Forces](#) in Egypt directed naval forces to rescue the group, after which they were handed over to the authorities.

⁷ Nationality figures for September were not available at the time of publishing.

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

Migrants intercepted and detained along the Southern Route

In July, Kenyan police apprehended groups of [38](#) and [64 Ethiopians](#) thought to be in transit to South Africa in Kitengela, Kajiado county. In the same month, [28 Ethiopians](#) were arrested and detained in Arusha, Tanzania, after the truck they were travelling in was involved in a road accident. In Zambia, authorities apprehended [a Tanzanian](#) driving a tanker truck transporting four Ethiopians concealed on a bed inside the vehicle. The Ethiopians were taken into custody, while the driver was fined 80,000 Kwacha for aiding and abetting the [irregular entry of foreigners](#).⁸

Also in July, in Mozambique, [27 Malawians](#) en route to South Africa, including several women and young children, were intercepted in Manica province, after which they were returned to Tete province, closer to the border with Malawi. Four days later, the same group was stopped again, after which they were detained pending their deportation. In the same month, the Mozambican police claimed to have prevented the irregular entry into the country of [172 foreign nationals](#), of which 98 Malawians. Finally, in Ermelo, South Africa, 11 Ugandans were arrested in July for being in the country in irregular situations and for possessing 3 million Rand in counterfeit money.⁹

In August, [15 Ethiopians](#) were apprehended in a residential house in Nairobi, Kenya. Authorities stated that the group would be arraigned in court before their deportation. Also in August, two groups of [five](#) and [47 Ethiopians](#) staged hunger strikes at police cells in Nairobi demanding to be repatriated after they were arrested. On 20 August, [12 Eritrean migrants](#) escaped from a police station in Gigiri area, Nairobi. Eight officers were [interdicted](#) over the escape, as preliminary investigations indicated that the group might have been aided. On 27 August, the Department of Immigration in Zambia [reported](#) that 44 Tanzanians and 39 Ethiopians had been deported that week. The Zambian authorities furthermore announced that a total of [557 Ethiopians](#) were deported between 17 February – 24 August. In South Africa, [41 Mozambicans](#), including teenage girls and women with toddlers, were arrested. In the [same month](#), police in Johannesburg rescued 90 Ethiopians from a human trafficking ring, after which [two suspected human traffickers and kidnappers](#) were arrested.

Malawian authorities raid refugee camp to arrest suspects of smuggling and trafficking

In July, the Malawian army raided Dzaleka Refugee Camp and arrested [over 200 individuals](#) linked to the smuggling, or trafficking,¹⁰ of young undocumented men from rural Ethiopia to work in South Africa. This follows reporting from [Q2](#) on the Malawian authorities apprehending an Ethiopian couple for allegedly running a human trafficking ring in Dzaleka. Authorities believe that there might be 13 to 14 smuggling

8 Approximately 3,000 USD.

9 Approximately 171,000 USD.

10 The New Humanitarian reports it is likely that there could be a mix of smuggling and trafficking elements along the journey to South Africa.

syndicates operating in the camp. Those arrested in July included six of the syndicate leaders running the various trafficking rings in the camp. In September, the local NGO Youth and Society [argued](#) that the networks in the camps must have been running with complicity of immigration officials, police and other government staff, as it would otherwise have been impossible to operate on such scale. The Executive Director of the NGO urged for the scrutiny of institutions responsible for security in the camp.

The Western Indian Ocean Route towards Mayotte

Updates on this route are shared in this quarter's *Thematic Focus*.

East Africans and Yemenis farther afield

Kenyan workers stranded in Lebanon

The Kenyan government issued a warning on [6 August](#) urging Kenyans to leave Lebanon due to escalating unrest and violence. Prior to the ongoing conflict, in 2022, Kenya officially suspended the clearance for its nationals to seek work in the country. The ban was driven by human rights concerns surrounding abusive and exploitative labour practices. For those who remained in Lebanon during this quarter, a number expressed concern over their inability to leave as the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah escalated. Some of them noted they were unable to afford the cost of flights to Kenya of up to [1,000 USD](#). Others cited their employers had refused to allow them to leave while they were working under the [abusive kafala system](#). In September, Kenyan media [reported](#) that more than 26,000 Kenyans in Lebanon would likely remain stranded if a full-scale war erupts. In response, Kenyan authorities stated that in the event of a war, an evacuation plan will be put in place, with the Director of Diaspora Affairs noting Kenya would issue travel documents to nationals without their passports and organise emergency flights in [October](#), with [1,500 Kenyans](#) already registering for evacuation.

Kenya signs migrant worker agreement with Germany

In September, Kenya and Germany signed a labour deal that would allow for the movement of skilled and semi-skilled [Kenyan labourers](#) to Germany. Germany's Interior Minister Nancy Faeser clarified that while Germany wants to attract qualified workers, Germany will at the same time continue to consistently enforce the return of people without a right to remain in order to curb irregular migration. The agreement is [non-quota-based](#) and does not specify the number of Kenyan workers that will be allowed into Germany. This follows an earlier announcement from Kenyan President Ruto [detailing](#) 250,000 Kenyan workers would be enabled to find jobs in Germany, after which German authorities noted that this figure was not accurate. In order for the agreement to become a success, Germany agreed to ease some of its immigration laws to enable Kenyans to find employment in the country, including extending [residence permits](#) for those who have secured an approved job, and long-term visas to study or seek vocational training in Germany. The Kenyan Department of Diasporan Affairs [stated](#) that the agreement will focus on creating a framework for matching Kenyan talent to German labour market needs through providing access to job opportunities, protection of employee welfare, and other forms of cooperation, accreditation, and recognition of skills and certificates between the two countries.

East African women rescued from prostitution ring in India

Authorities in India rescued [17 women](#), including 14 Kenyans, two Ugandans and one Tanzanian, in August from a prostitution ring based in Hyderabad. According to the police, the women were lured to India after connecting online with the suspected ring leader Shiv Kumar. They arrived in India on [medical and tourist visas](#), and were made reliant on the traffickers for accommodation and other services. Authorities [stated](#) that the ring leader had used a classified website to run the prostitution network, while operating on the ground in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. [On 16 August](#), the Kenyan government issued a notice warning to Kenyans not to seek illusory jobs in south(east) Asian countries as many have been lured to the region only to end up in exploitative situations.

Yemenis receive (extended) temporary US deportation protection

In July, the Biden administration [announced](#) that Yemenis in the United States would be eligible for Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for 18 months up to March 2026, protecting them from deportation. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas announced that 2,300 Yemeni refugees would have their TPS extended to 3 March 2026 while another group of 1,700 who have continuously resided in the US since July 2024 would be eligible for the programme.

Thematic Focus: Mixed Migration along the Western Indian Ocean Route

Background

While remaining underreported compared to other key mixed migration routes on the African continent, including the Southern Route to Southern Africa, the Central Mediterranean Route to Europe and the Eastern Route to the Arabian Peninsula, the Western Indian Ocean Route to Mayotte, a French overseas department,¹¹ has gained more prominence and attention in regional policy discussions over the last years. Since the French authorities started 'Operation Wuambushu', targeting migrants in irregular situations on Mayotte in [early 2023](#), and with a [second phase](#) taking place in 2024, international media including *The Guardian* have [reported](#) on the demolition of slum-like migrant housing, and France's goal to deport up to 20,000 individuals. Comorian nationals, considered to be the majority group among those who arrive in Mayotte, have been [deported](#) back to the Comorian island of Anjouan. Some individuals of other nationalities who have received refugee status have been [airlifted](#) to mainland France.

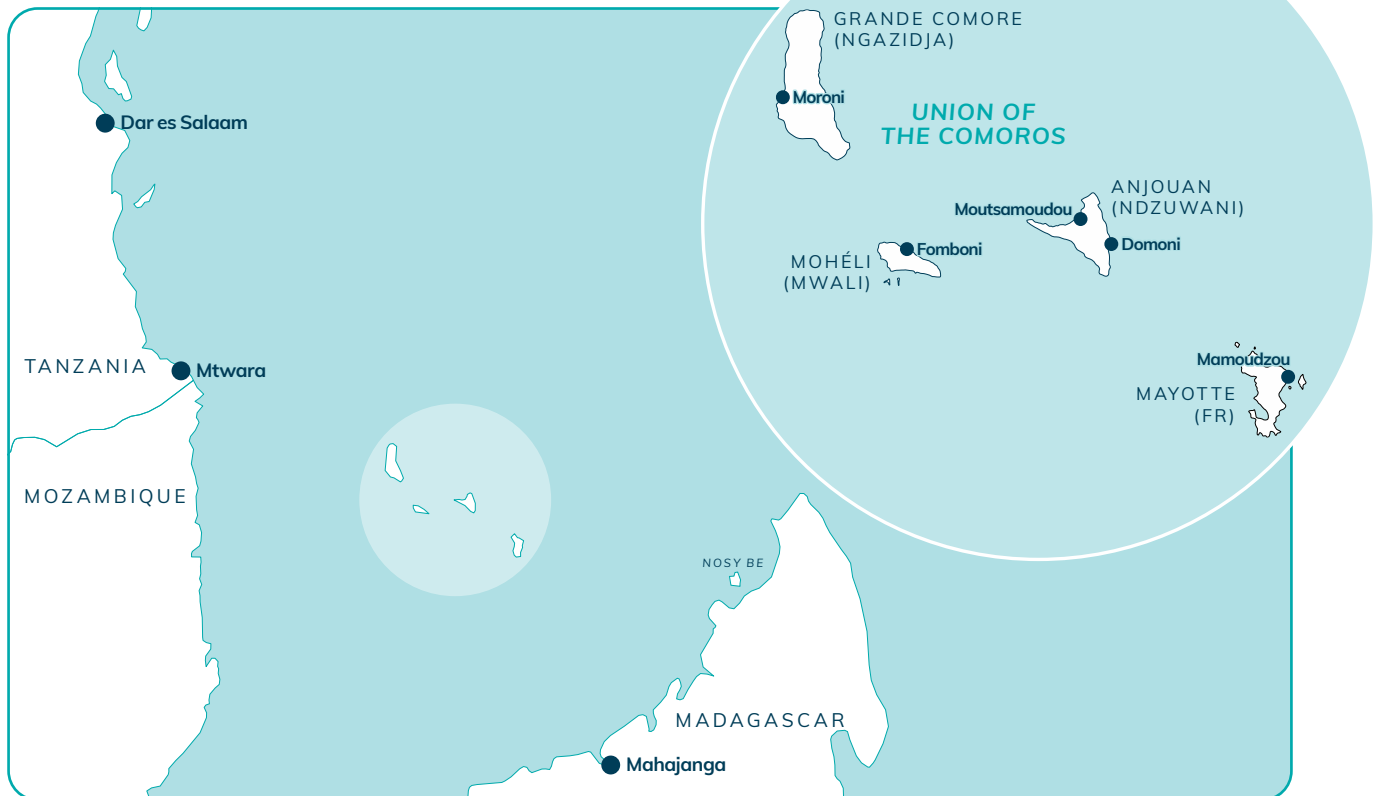
Defining the route

Regional policy and migration experts have recently started to define what is the 'Western Indian Ocean Route', as has been done with other more well-known mixed migration routes in Africa. Key actors interviewed by MMC in 2024 considered that the Western Indian Ocean Route consists of two main trajectories. The first one originates in the Great Lakes region, and in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Mainly Congolese and Burundians cross over into Tanzania, from where they arrange their boat journeys towards The Comoros. The boats depart from the Tanzanian coast between Dar es Salaam and Mtwara. Once in The Comoros, the last stretch from Anjouan to Mayotte is mostly organised separately, where migrants are often joined by Comorian nationals to make this crossing. The sea journeys are highly perilous and carried out in ill-equipped small boats, better known as *kwassa kwassa*.

The second route originates in Madagascar, where Malagasy and other nationals, who benefit from a [tourist visa on arrival](#), transit through the country prior to embarking a boat to the Comoros, with a transit there, or directly towards Mayotte. Alongside Malagasy nationals, nationalities engaging in these journeys from Madagascar are diverse, and have included [Somalis, Ethiopians, Kenyans, Yemenis, Syrians and Iraqis](#).

11 Mayotte is geographically a part of the same archipelago as the three other Comorian islands but remained part of France after The Comoros gained independence through a referendum vote. As such, the status of Mayotte has remained contested by The Comoros, and [using the argument](#) of the four islands being 'one nation' with the same ethnical origin and culture, Comorians who have moved to Mayotte may or may not be considered (undocumented) migrants. The ethnologist Sophie Blanchy [has pointed out](#) that the only difference between these populations is that "some find themselves in French territory, and others do not".

Map 1. The East African coast depicting key locations of transit along the Western Indian Ocean Route



Numerous deaths over decades along perilous routes

In 2018, *The Economist* already [dubbed](#) Mayotte's sea boundaries as "France's leakiest border", with almost half of Mayotte's population being [estimated](#) to consist of Comorians and migrants of other nationalities, many of whom are in irregular situations. While a large data gap remains on the volume of people on the move along the entire Western Indian Ocean route, and on how many of them succeed in arriving in Mayotte,¹² available reports on interceptions from local media in [The Comoros](#) and [Madagascar](#) depict an increasing trend. Interviewed key informants confirmed this, adding that movements have picked up since 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions and border closures made it harder for those on mainland Africa, particularly from the Great Lakes region, to travel along longer continental routes with more border crossings.

Local media note the daily departure of boats, particularly from Anjouan, and '[hundreds arriving every week](#)' to Mayotte. In Q2, MMC reported on the record number of boats arriving in Mayotte in 2023, with [661](#) having been apprehended. While updated figures on fatalities are not available, Comorian stakeholders and authorities working between Anjouan and Mayotte describe this stretch as "the largest sea cemetery in the world", with [outdated Comorian estimates](#) of up to 50,000 deaths, while the French Senate [estimated](#) between 7,000-12,000 deaths from 1995 to 2012.

¹² MMC is collaborating with UNHCR on a research project which should shed more light on the journeys and experiences of people on the move along the Western Indian Ocean Route, with a research report to be published in early 2025.

Continued interceptions and shipwrecks along the route

In Q3, at least one small boat originating from Anjouan capsized, close to Petite Terre (Mayotte), with [three migrants drowning](#). Furthermore, in early July, [43 individuals](#) were intercepted and arrested on the Malagasy islet of Ambariobe, close to Nosy Be. The group consisted of 16 foreigners, including Somalis, Comorians and Ethiopians, and 27 Malagasy nationals, with individuals ranging from 5 to 54 years old. On 25 July, another [26 migrants](#), including 14 Somalis and at least 10 Malagasy, were stopped in Maromandia, Analalava district, in Northern Madagascar. The group had departed towards the remote island of Nosy Iranja, before moving onwards to Mayotte. After a change of course by the captain of the boat they were brought back to Malagasy mainland. They were [caught and placed in custody on the same day](#).

On 2 September, the Mayotte Coast Guard apprehended [two boats with 44 Comorians](#), including two smugglers, originating from Anjouan. The group was expelled from Mayotte back to Anjouan, while the two smugglers were placed in police custody. Furthermore in early September, a group of [24 Congolese \(DRC\) and Burundians](#) were apprehended in Pvanambwani, Grande Comore. Out of nine Comorian smugglers found to be complicit, five were traced and detained by the police. On 14 September, another group of [over 70 migrants](#), with their nationalities to be confirmed, was intercepted in Mohéli, while planning an onward journey to Mayotte. In the same month, in Madagascar, [23 Malagasy and one Comorian](#) were stopped on 13 September in Ambanja while planning to depart for Mayotte. The two smugglers were identified as one Malagasy and the one Comorian, while the journey to Mayotte according to local media was cited to cost between 1 and 4 million Malagasy Ariary.¹³

After the Comorian authorities promulgated the country's first ever anti-smuggling legislation in July 2024, a lawsuit against two smugglers commenced in the court of Moroni in [September](#). The two were cited to be prosecuted for human smuggling and involuntary manslaughter linked to various cases of migrant fatalities and disappearances between 2019 and 2021.

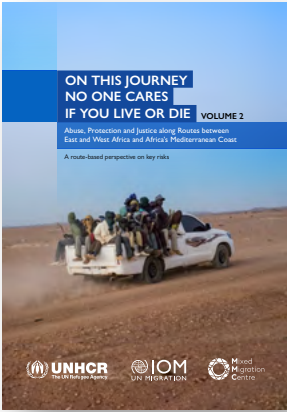
Future outlook

Key informants interviewed by MMC questioned the effectiveness of 'Operation Wuambushu' in Mayotte, citing that deported Comorians are likely to engage in new attempts to reach Mayotte from Anjouan with the help of smuggler networks, sometimes even on the same day. This indicates the well-connectedness of the smuggling network on the Western Indian Ocean Route, and in particular between Anjouan and Mayotte. With more and more prospective migrants on the continent discovering Mayotte as a part of France just off the African coast,¹⁴ the route is likely to further gain in prominence with increasing numbers. One element which could act as a deterring factor is the [French announcement](#) to revoke *jus soli* (birthright citizenship) in Mayotte, aimed at [discouraging immigrants](#) through further complicating their access to documentation on the island. Rescinding this right on Mayotte would create an exceptional case within the French legal framework.

¹³ Approximately between 220 and 877 USD.

¹⁴ [Since 2011](#), Mayotte is administratively a French overseas department, and therefore has the status of outermost region at EU level. While this includes access to French social welfare, mobility to France for migrants is restricted. [Residence permits](#) granted in Mayotte do not permit access to travel to other parts of France. Furthermore, a work permit issued in Mayotte is [only valid there](#), and does not guarantee access to the labour market of mainland France.

Highlighted New Research and Reports



“On This Journey No One Cares if You Live or Die.” (Volume 2). Abuse, Protection and Justice along Routes between East and West Africa and Africa’s Mediterranean Coast

IOM, MMC and UNHCR | July 2024

This report sheds light on the stark realities faced by refugees and migrants traversing the Central Mediterranean Route from East and West Africa to North Africa, and across the Mediterranean. Similar to Volume 1, the findings give an updated overview of the protection risks faced by people on the move during these perilous journeys. It aims to inform increased and concrete routes-based protection responses to reduce the suffering associated with the desperate journeys people on the move undertake. It also launches a call to action to address the root causes of displacement and drivers of migration through positive action on peace, climate change, governance, inequality and social cohesion, as well as the creation of safe migration pathways.



“They don't give you accurate information about anything.” Pre-migration experiences of Ethiopian migrant domestic workers

The Freedom Fund | July 2024

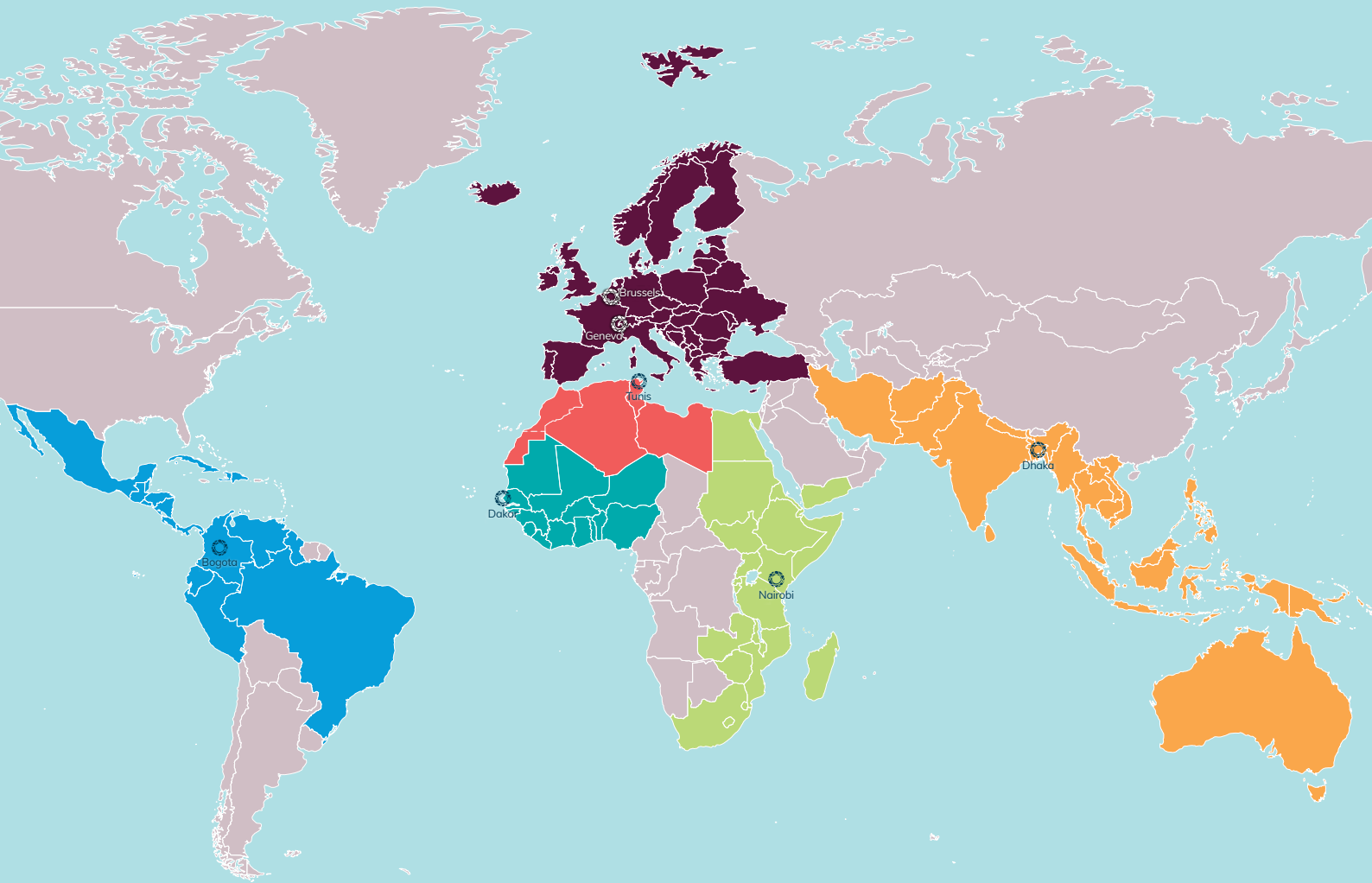
This research provides a set of recommendations on regulatory reforms, increased transparency around migration costs, and decentralisation of pre-migration services from Addis Ababa to other regions of Ethiopia. It highlights how addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by Ethiopian migrant domestic workers is essential for improving their working conditions and allowing them access to safety and dignity while abroad.



[An Analysis of Migration Governance Frameworks in Kenya](#)

New South Institute | August 2024

This report examines Kenya's migration governance frameworks, highlighting historical evolution, current dynamics, policy implementation gaps and strategic recommendations to enhance current migration policies. It provides a critical evaluation of key legislative measures, including the 2011 Immigration Act and the 2021 Refugees Act, revealing significant gaps and providing targeted recommendations. These include inter-agency coordination, strengthening of the legal framework, and adopting best practices from other contexts.



MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs 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 mixed migration 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](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

