

# Study on the **onward movement** of refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia



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# Foreword

Global displacement has forced more than 60 million persons from their homes, more than two quarters of a million to Ethiopia which is now the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa and ranked fifth in the world. To date, Ethiopia has generously opened its borders to protect some 760,000 persons fleeing conflict and persecution in their home countries.

Whilst the majority of refugees flee to countries in close proximity to their homes, some move onward from their first country of asylum to other States. This phenomenon, in which a refugee or asylum-seeker enters a territory of another country using means other than the legal “immigration pathways” is commonly referred to as ‘Onward Movement’. The onward movement of refugees and asylum-seekers stems largely from inter alia a lack of hope resulting from the absence of educational and employment opportunities and the lack of a foreseeable durable solution to their plight, i.e. voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement. Far too often, for many refugees or asylum-seekers, this movement poses increased risks of violence, exploitation, other human rights violations and even death.

This study on *‘The Onward Movement of Refugees from Ethiopia’* commissioned by UNHCR and undertaken by DRC in Ethiopia, in close cooperation with the Administration of Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) of the Government of Ethiopia, aims at understanding the root causes and modalities through which refugees and asylum-seekers, who have sought protection in Ethiopia, pursue onward movements.

It is our hope that the study will further assist the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia, UNHCR and its humanitarian partners to provide better protection and assistance services to refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, thereby reducing the frequency of onward movements and the associated risks faced during these dangerous journeys.

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The views and opinions in this report are entirely those of DRC, unless otherwise referenced.

DRC has been providing relief and development services in the Horn of Africa since 1997 and traditionally focused on assisting those who are displaced by conflict. DRC has offices across the region, and has been operational in Ethiopia since 2009. In Ethiopia, DRC has operations in the areas of Tigray, Gambella, Dollo Ado and Jijiga.

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# Acronyms

<b>ARRA</b>	-	Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs	<b>KII</b>	-	Key Informant Interview
<b>AU</b>	-	African Union	<b>MSF-H</b>	-	Médécins sans Frontières Holland
<b>BIA</b>	-	Best Interest Assessment	<b>NFI</b>	-	Non-food item
<b>CP</b>	-	Child Protection	<b>NGO</b>	-	Non-governmental organization
<b>CVT</b>	-	Centre for Victims of Trauma	<b>NRC</b>	-	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>DAFI</b>	-	Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund	<b>OAU</b>	-	Ouagadougou Action Plan
<b>DICAC</b>	-	Development and InterChurch Aid Commission	<b>OCP</b>	-	Out of Camp Policy
<b>DRC</b>	-	Danish Refugee Council	<b>OIC-E</b>	-	Opportunities Industrialization Centre - Ethiopia
<b>EU</b>	-	European Union	<b>RCC</b>	-	Refugee Central Committee
<b>FGD</b>	-	Focus Group Discussion	<b>RMMS</b>	-	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
<b>FGM</b>	-	Female Genital Mutilation	<b>SNNPR</b>	-	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
<b>SGBV</b>	-	Sexual and Gender Based Violence	<b>SOP</b>	-	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>GSA</b>	-	Good Samaritan Association	<b>SPSS</b>	-	Statistical Package for Social Software
<b>HoA</b>	-	Horn of Africa	<b>TIP</b>	-	Trafficking in Persons
<b>IOM</b>	-	International Organization for Migration	<b>UASC</b>	-	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
<b>ICRC</b>	-	International Committee of the Red Cross	<b>UNHCR</b>	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>IHS</b>	-	Innovative Humanitarian Solutions	<b>VoT</b>	-	Victims of Trafficking
<b>INGO</b>	-	International non-governmental organization	<b>WASH</b>	-	Water and Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>IRC</b>	-	International Rescue Committee	<b>WFP</b>	-	World Food Program
<b>JRS</b>	-	Jesuit Refugee Service			

# Glossary

**ASYLUM-SEEKER** this can either refer to an individual whose refugee status has not yet been determined by the authorities but whose claim to international protection entitles him or her to a certain protective status on the basis that he or she could be a refugee, or to persons forming part of large-scale influxes of mixed groups in a situation where individual refugee status determination is impractical.

**DEPORTEE** A person who had legally or illegally entered a state but who, at some later time, is physically removed against their will from the state's territory and transported to their presumed country of origin, habitual residence or a country that they have transited or to which they have agreed to be removed rather than being returned to their country of origin.

**DIASPORA** a group of people who live outside the area in which they had lived for a long time or in which their ancestors lived.

**MIGRANT** 'Migration' is often understood to imply a voluntary process, e.g., someone who crosses a border in search of better economic opportunities. Migrants may move to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. They may also move to alleviate significant hardships that arise from natural disasters, famine, or extreme poverty.

**LEGAL MIGRATION** A term used in this report to signify all types of state sanctioned migration from one country to another including for work purposes, family reunification, family sponsorship and educational scholarship opportunities.

**LOCAL INTEGRATION** A complex and gradual legal, economic social and cultural process whereby refugees attain a wider array of rights in the host state, are able to establish sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to the host community and are able to attain a level of adaptation and acceptance that enables the refugees to contribute to the social life of the host community and live without fear of discrimination.

**MIXED MIGRATION** The complex population movements of persons with different objectives who move alongside each other using the same routes and means of transport or engaging the services of the same smugglers. These movements could include refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants.

**ONWARD MOVEMENT** The movement of a refugee or asylum seeker out of his or her first country of asylum towards a third country. This can be regular and irregular. The movement is irregular if it has not been officially sanctioned by the governments of the first country of asylum, transit or destination. The movement is regular if it has been officially sanctioned by the first country of asylum and destination country governments. This can also be considered part of the process of flight and search for asylum where the refugee is confronted with serious protection problems in their first country of asylum or can be understood as a form of migration where the refugee is moving onwards to seek for example, a better standard of living or to be reunited with family.

**REFUGEE** People outside their country of origin because of feared persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order, and who, as a result, require 'international protection'. Their situation is often so perilous and intolerable, that they cross national borders to seek safety in nearby countries, and thus become internationally recognized as 'refugees' with access to assistance from states, UNHCR, and relevant organizations. They are so recognized precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they therefore need sanctuary elsewhere. These are people for whom denial of asylum has potentially deadly consequences.

**RESETTLEMENT** A tool to provide international protection and meet the specific needs of individual refugees whose life, liberty, safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in the country where they have sought refuge. It consists of the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them – as refugees – with permanent residence status. UNHCR refers vulnerable cases to Resettlement States, but each State makes their own decision on who they will resettle after processing the case. It is a durable solution for individuals and larger numbers or groups of refugees, alongside the other durable solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration.

**RETURNEES** Former refugees who have returned to their country of origin spontaneously or in an organized fashion but are yet to be fully integrated, including those returning as part of the operationalisation of the cessation clauses in the 1951 Convention and regional equivalents. Such return would normally only take place in conditions of voluntariness, safety and dignity.

**UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN** Unaccompanied children are children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so. Separated children are separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives.

**VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING** A person who has been trafficked pursuant to the definition of the Trafficking Protocol<sup>[1]</sup>.

**VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION** The free and voluntary return to one's country of origin in safety and dignity.

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[1] See Infra, at note 104.

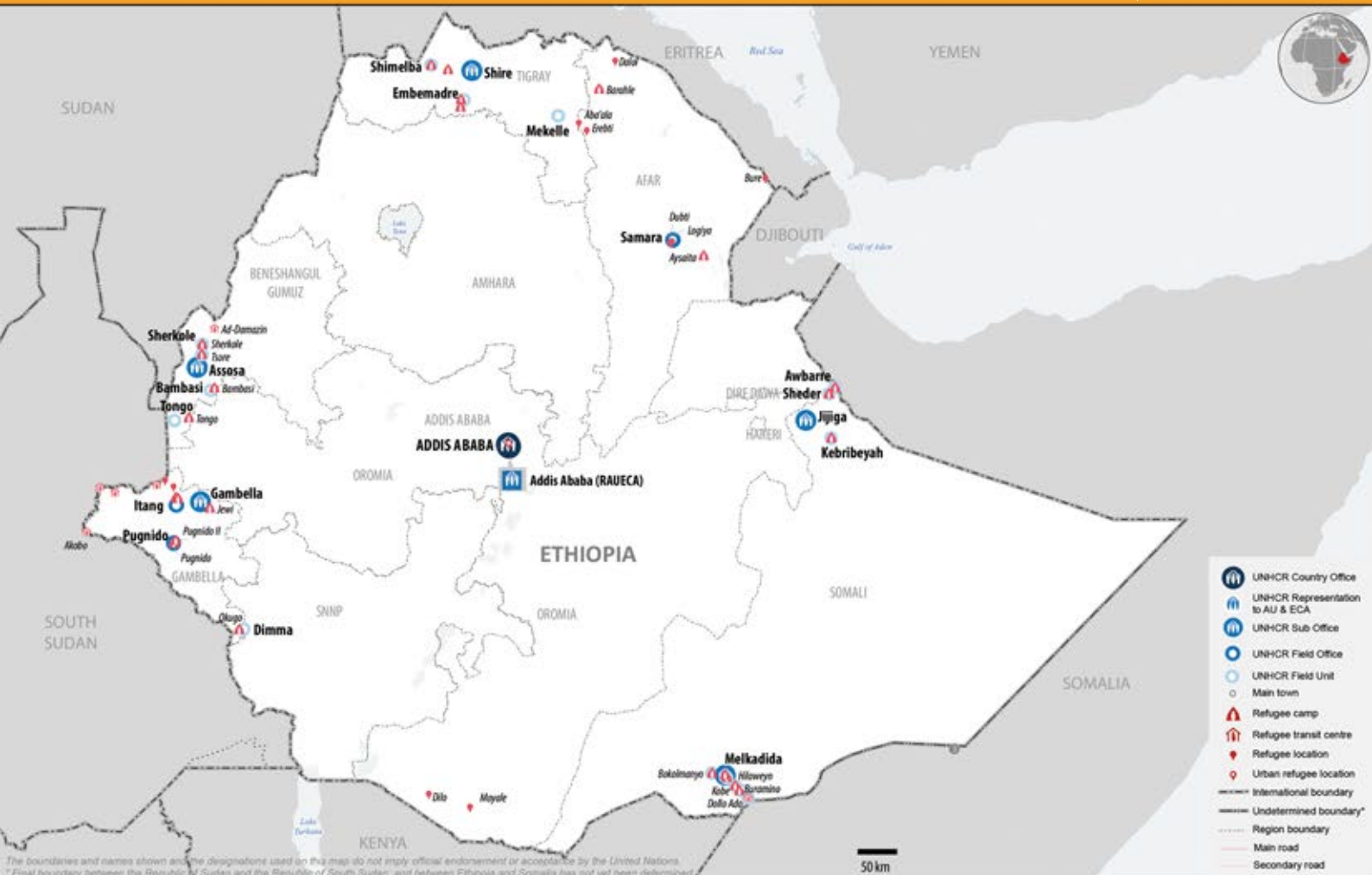
# Objectives and Methodology of the Study

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been increasing its global efforts to better understand and respond to the phenomenon of onward movements of refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern. In 2007, UNHCR issued its 10 Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration, and the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action on Trafficking and Smuggling from the East and Horn of Africa in 2013. These documents formed the basis for the development of UNHCR's National Strategy to Address Trafficking and Smuggling of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Ethiopia, launched in 2014.

In 2015, UNHCR commissioned the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to undertake the present study. The main objectives of this study are to understand the onward movement of refugees and asylum seekers out of Ethiopia through the collection of accurate and reliable data. The study provides an in-depth examination of all aspects of the irregular migration journey out of Ethiopia by first providing an overview of the refugee situation in Ethiopia which then leads to a clearly illustrated portrait of which populations of refugees and asylum seekers are moving, their motivations for undertaking these journeys and the role of the diaspora, how they are facilitating and financing their migration, as well as their preferred destinations. In addition, while there are numerous reports concerning the route and dangers migrants face once they have left Ethiopia toward third countries, this report focuses on the internal Ethiopian channels and dangers as well as the role of smugglers. Key to any policy undertaking addressing irregular migration is also an understanding of this population's comprehension and tolerance of risks as well as their knowledge of the alternatives to these dangerous journeys. To provide the full domestic context, this report finally looks at Ethiopia's implementation of its international obligations to protect refugees and counter trafficking and smuggling from the lens of prevention, protection and prosecution of offences, including services available to refugee victims of trafficking. Based on an analysis of all of this data, this report further provides recommendations for action.

DRC conducted this study between November 2015 and June 2016. Based on information provided by UNHCR with respect to the trends of irregular onward migration from the Ethiopian refugee camps, the study focused on camps in four regions in Ethiopia: Tigray (Adi Harush, Hitsats, Mai-Aini and Shimelba camps), Afar (Aysaita and Barahle camps), Benishangul-Gumuz (Sherkole and Tsore camps) and Somali (Aw-barre and Sheder camps).

Figure 1: Refugee camps in Ethiopia. Source: UNHCR



The first aspect of the research methodology was a quantitative structured interview (“survey”) using purposive sampling. The survey sought to elicit general information about the profile, motivations, routes and means of irregular migration of refugees in Ethiopia, knowledge of risks to irregular migration and knowledge of legal alternatives to living in the camps. Surveys were rigorously reviewed and field tested before use, were translated into the relevant local language where possible and delivered by trained refugee incentive workers in Tigrinya in the Shire area camps, Somali in the Jijiga area camps, English in the Afar area camps and French and English in the Assosa area camps. Due to time and budget constraints and concerns about ensuring child protection and confidentiality, no subjects aged 15 and under were included in the sample. A total of 1,448 surveys, (718 men, 703 women and 27 of unidentified gender) were administered in the 10 camps to respondents aged 16 and above. Quantitative data was then entered using an online Google forms survey platform and analyzed using the statistical software tool, SPSS Statistics. The data was first cleaned and checked for consistency, then back weighted in proportion to the nationality, age and gender of each camp population as a whole (for those aged 16 and older) to account for any bias from the purposive sampling methodology. Descriptive statistics on various data sets was utilized to analyze the data.

In the survey itself, interviewees were asked about their migratory intentions. Utilizing migratory intentions or plans as the “fulcrum”, the research team went on to disaggregate information on a number of grounds. Key demographic characteristics of each group were analyzed such as age, gender, marital status and time spent in Ethiopia. Motivations were divided into four broad categories, lack of life opportunities or hopelessness, family and friend considerations, camp protection gaps and issues and other additional issues that were raised by respondents but not captured in the initial survey design.

It must be noted that the survey sample selection was non-random so there is a potential for bias, including towards those who have already been in the camps for over one year, as UNHCR trend analyses indicate that these are the ones most likely to be encountered in the camps<sup>[2]</sup>. To the extent possible, this bias potential was countered by back-weighting the data using age and gender populations in each camp. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that this data set is a snapshot in time and that the subjective intention to move irregularly, while valid at the time of survey and interview, may change or may not be acted upon.

The second aspect of the research methodology was to give further depth to the quantitative aspect through 117 individual interviews with refugees and asylum seekers, 68 key informant interviews with well-informed stakeholders such as government actors, diaspora members and UN agencies (KIIs) and 17 focus group discussions (FGDs). This qualitative data gathering was conducted with refugees, refugee community leaders, government officials, UN agencies, INGOs, NGOs and Eritrean diaspora in the refugee camps, Endabaguna reception centre in Tigray, in a variety of urban settings as well as remotely by phone and Skype in Ethiopia and abroad.

Qualitative data was anonymized, transcribed and data coded for analysis. Important and cross-cutting themes were identified, analyzed and compared with survey data. Thematic and specific data was used to supplement existing quantitative data and also to detect new themes and fill any existing data gaps.

For all refugee and asylum seeker interviews, interviewees were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research, confidentiality and anonymity guaranteed and individual or guardian consent obtained prior to beginning the interviews.

Prior and subsequent to fieldwork, a literature review was conducted on the reasons for seeking refuge and asylum in Ethiopia, the irregular onward migration of refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia, the international and domestic policy and legal framework on trafficking and smuggling, as well as risks faced by irregular onward movers on their migratory path.

Research results indicate that the Sudanese and South Sudanese refugee populations in Benishangul-Gumuz area camps are not generally migrating irregularly from Ethiopia. As such, the discussion below will focus only upon the Eritrean (Afar and non-Afar), Somali and Congolese refugee populations.

[2] UNHCR trend analyses demonstrate that the majority (80 percent) of refugees tend to migrate irregularly onwards within the first year and 40 percent within the first three months of arrival in Ethiopia.





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# ONE Introduction

## The Ethiopian Context

Ethiopia is a country of destination and transit for refugees, asylum seekers and other persons of concern who are fleeing persecution in their country of origin. It is a State party to the United Nations 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Convention) and maintains an open door policy for asylum seekers, granting prima facie refugee status to more than 90% of arrivals. As of May 2016, Ethiopia hosts 737,979 refugees and asylum seekers, making it the highest refugee hosting country in Africa. The majority of refugees originate from neighboring countries, with approximately 287,000 South Sudanese, 250,000 Somalis (primarily from Central/Southern Somalia), 150,000 Eritreans<sup>[3]</sup>, 37,000 Sudanese (primarily from South Cordofan and Blue Nile) registered by the Ethiopian Government and UNHCR. Other nationalities are also present including some Yemenis, Congolese and other refugees from the Great Lakes. Refugees and asylum seekers are hosted in 24 refugee camps, seven settlements and three transit centres located in bordering areas, as well as in urban locations like Addis Ababa and Mekelle<sup>[4]</sup>. UNHCR, the Ethiopian Government's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) and various implementing partners provide protection and service delivery in the camps and urban centers.

Despite Ethiopia's generous open door policy to refugees, at the time of their accession to the 1951 Convention Ethiopia entered reservations declaring that the provisions on the right to wage earning employment and access to elementary education are recognized only as recommendations and not as legally binding obligations<sup>[5]</sup>. Accordingly, the Ethiopian Refugee Proclamation imposes restrictions on the right of refugees to work<sup>[6]</sup>. Additionally, almost 99% of the refugees hosted in Ethiopia are required to live in refugee camps or settlements, where job opportunities are restricted to low wage refugee incentive work. Some refugees are permitted to reside in urban areas for medical, protection, or humanitarian reasons. In 2010, the Government also introduced an "Out of Camp Policy" (OCP) that allows Eritrean refugees to live in urban areas as well<sup>[7]</sup>.

The OCP is an initiative of the Government of Ethiopia and available only to Eritrean refugees. It allows them to live in urban centres around Ethiopia, including Addis Ababa, subject to a number of criteria as set out in the OCP directive<sup>[8]</sup>. As part of the OCP, refugees are required to sustain themselves in the urban setting. Some participate in OCP specific vocational training and livelihood activities with the goal of finding employment in the informal sector<sup>[9]</sup>. It is reportedly difficult to enter the informal sector given that most employers still require official identification to work.

[3] According to UNHCR food ration verification exercises, the Tigray region refugee population decreased by 81, 078 refugees in September 2015: these refugees no longer reside in the camps and are believed to have spontaneously settled elsewhere in Ethiopia, subject to verification.

[4] See U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Ethiopia Fact Sheet (February 2016), available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EthiopiaFactSheetFebruary2016final.pdf> [UNHCR Ethiopia Fact Sheet].

[5] At the time of Ethiopia's accession in 1969, it entered a reservation with respect to a number of articles, recognizing them only as recommendations and not as legally binding obligations: Article 8 (exceptional measures that can be taken against foreign nationals with respect to property or interests); Article 9 (which allows states to take provisional measures on the basis of national security against a foreign national during times of war or other grave emergency); Article 17(2) relating to non-imposition of restrictive measures on employment of refugees; and Article 22(1) that requires states to afford the same treatment for refugees as nationals with respect to elementary education.

[6] Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Proclamation No. 409/2004, "Refugee Proclamation", article 21(3), available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/44e04ed14.html> [Refugee Proclamation]

[7] See Articles 21(2) of the Refugee Proclamation, *ibid* allows the Ethiopian government to designate places of residence for refugees.

[8] The OCP directive is available only in Amharic and only upon written request to the relevant government agency. Qualifying criteria include the need for sponsorship from a person resident in Ethiopia. The sponsor must be willing and able to cover the living expenses of the refugee as the refugees are not permitted to formally work, will no longer have access to food rations or any other services available to urban refugees aside from medical assistance. Refugees under the age of 45 must have resided in the camps for at least 3 to 6 months in one refugee camp to be eligible. Refugees over the age of 45 are eligible immediately. See Samuel Hall Consulting, Living Out of Camp: Alternative to camp-based assistance for Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia (2014), commissioned by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

[9] For example, OIC-E and NRC are in the process of constructing an urban refugee centre and NRC is providing financial assistance (2000 ETB) to 100 selected individuals to undertake activities informal sector, e.g. hairdressing.

Moreover, even if they are able to enter into the informal sector, these individuals have none of the legal protections afforded to “formal sector” employees with resulting employer abuses such as non-payment of wages. As of March 31, 2016 there were officially 4,064 Eritrean refugees registered as OCP’s in Addis Ababa and 458 in Tigray (including Mekelle and Shire towns). Following a 2015 UNHCR food distribution monitoring exercise carried out in the Tigray camps, after which 81,000 Eritrean refugees were found to be absent from the camps, UNHCR and ARRA started a verification exercise in May 2016 with the Eritrean urban refugee population. The exercise seeks to confirm the number of Eritrean refugees living in urban centres and to offer official OCP status to qualifying refugees. Interim results in July 2016 indicate that some 15,000 Eritrean refugees are in Addis Ababa.

While generally refugees have access to camp or host community based pre-school, primary schools and secondary schools, at the time of research, there were no primary schools in Tsore camp, Beninshangul-Gumuz region and no secondary school access in Hitsats camp, Tigray region. There are also a limited number of post-secondary education scholarships<sup>[10]</sup> available to qualifying refugees through either the government<sup>[11]</sup> or DAFI<sup>[12]</sup> programs through which refugees may leave the camps and study in Ethiopian government universities. Upon graduation, refugees are expected to return to their camps, with limited livelihood opportunities and existing restrictions for refugees to obtain work permits.

Thus, while there are some limited out of camp opportunities, access to durable solutions is limited as local integration is difficult; return to country of origin is often not feasible given ongoing conflicts and the political regimes found in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea; and opportunities for resettlement limited given recipient country resettlement quotas. In 2016, UNHCR’s Projected Global Resettlement Needs indicate that some 50,200 refugees in Ethiopia are in need of resettlement. However, while Ethiopia has the largest number of refugees in Africa and one of the largest resettlement targets in the continent, the resettlement target of 6,465 amounts to only 0.09 percent of the current refugee population in Ethiopia and 13 percent of the resettlement needs. Similarly, worldwide, this durable solution is generally available to less than one percent of the most vulnerable refugees. Furthermore, the processing timelines are very lengthy and, according to one of the resettlement countries, a case submitted from Ethiopia takes on average 1,000 days to process in the resettlement country before departure. Regular onward migration options like family reunification and sponsorship exist but are only available to, and pursued by, those who have strong family connections overseas.

The general belief is that the domestic context, combined with a perception or misperception about the potential dangers associated with irregular migration and life in destination countries, has resulted in large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly Eritreans, moving irregularly onwards from Ethiopia to third countries, often with the services of smugglers<sup>[13]</sup>. This phenomenon, referred to in this report as “irregular onward movement or migration”, includes movements to neighboring countries like Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan, from where onward movers try to reach destinations further afield in Europe, the Middle East and southern Africa. The refugees and asylum seekers engaging in irregular onward movements form part of the mixed migratory flow out of Ethiopia and out of the Horn of Africa region.

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[10] In Ethiopia, the cost of post secondary education for all students is cost-shared. The government pays all the initial costs but the student is expected to pay back approximately 25 percent of the costs upon graduation and obtaining employment. For refugees, UNHCR pays for this 25 percent cost. The program was originally began in conjunction with the OCP initiative for Eritrean refugees but has been expanded to include all refugees, see UNHCR Ethiopia Fact Sheet, supra note 4.

[11] A government scholarship program is administered and supported by ARRA and the Ministry of Education with some support from UNHCR. This program allows refugee students who are able to pass the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination Certificate to study in a public Ethiopian University and covers food, lodging and modest living expenses. These students are not required to present previous educational documents and are also not required to have already obtained a place in a university. The program began in 2010 and there are currently approximately 1300 refugee students enrolled, although in 2015, only 68 refugees (40 percent of those who sat the exams) were able to avail themselves of this option. See UNHCR Ethiopia Fact Sheet, supra note 4.

[12] The DAFI scholarship program is implemented in Ethiopia through a partnership between UNHCR and the Association of Ethiopians Educated in Germany, and funded by the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (supported by the Government of Germany and otherwise known as DAFI). To qualify, students must have completed secondary school in Ethiopia and must have successfully been admitted to an Ethiopian public university. DAFI, like the government scholarship program, supports the student through their full post-secondary studies providing tuition, books, food lodging and some modest living expenses. The program began in 2000 and there are currently 287 enrolled with some 500 graduates.

[13] Millena Belloni, “Cosmologies of Destinations: Roots and routes of Eritrean forced migration towards Europe” (2015) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Trento) [Cosmologies of Destination].

# Chapter ONE

The actual drivers motivating irregular onward migration in this context are not well understood and form a significant portion of this study. However, it is worth highlighting at the outset that it is clear that complex family and friend dynamics, in Ethiopia, at country of origin, as well as the broader diasporic extended family and friend networks, are a very central component to irregular onward migration<sup>[14]</sup>. Refugees can easily communicate through modern technology, and these family and friend networks encourage irregular migration, its organization and finance. They are instrumental in connecting smugglers with irregular migrants, often through social media<sup>[15]</sup>. Potential clients tend to trust and utilize smugglers, particularly those from their own countries and regions, introduced through family members, friends or acquaintances<sup>[16]</sup>. It is commonly believed that these smugglers are more trustworthy given their dependency upon keeping a good reputation for business, whereas smugglers found through anonymous means have no clear accountability to their clientele<sup>[17]</sup>. Whether a smuggler is “good”<sup>[18]</sup> or “bad”, including mistreatment, challenges faced on the route and recommendations, is often posted by migrants on social media sites like Facebook and sent directly to family and friends through Viber and WhatsApp<sup>[19]</sup>. Similarly, information about routes and destination countries is commonly conveyed via social media<sup>[20]</sup>. Upon arrival in destination countries, family members, close relatives or friends provide migrants and asylum-seekers with documents, transport, housing and employment, functioning as “role models” through which new arrivals start their new lives<sup>[21]</sup>. Diaspora networks are also central in raising the funds necessary to pay for irregular migration and facilitating the payment systems<sup>[22]</sup>.

There are three primary irregular migratory routes from Ethiopia:

- 1) The **Northern route** through Sudan and Libya to Europe (at times countries like Sudan can be countries of final destination) or through Sudan and Egypt to Israel or Europe. Those who try to reach Europe by landing at Italy or Malta and departing from Libya or Egypt to cross the Mediterranean are said to follow the **Central Mediterranean route**<sup>[23]</sup>;
- 2) The **Eastern route** through Djibouti and Northern Somalia towards the Arabian Peninsula including Yemen, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Some of these refugees continue onwards to Europe; and
- 3) The **Southern route** through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and/or Malawi with the final destination at times being South Africa.

Countries along these routes may be characterized as countries of origin, transit and/or destination for migrants from IGAD member states<sup>[24]</sup>. These routes are constantly in flux due to factors such as changing national border controls, ongoing and new local and regional conflicts and security concerns<sup>[25]</sup> that affect the ease at which migrants can be moved into any given country, the demand for specific destinations and profitability and the existence of smuggler connections along the route to provide intelligence, facilities and personnel to facilitate illegal entry<sup>[26]</sup>.

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[14] In addition to being supported by our research this is a theme that underlies much research about onward migration, see for example MHub, “Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa, Study 2, November 2015” (November 2105), found at: <http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Conditions-and-Risks-in-Mixed-Migration-in-North-East-Africa.pdf> [Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa].

[15] European Commission, DG Migration & Home Affairs, A study on smuggling of migrants: Characteristics, responses and cooperation with third countries (September 2015), available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/study\\_on\\_smuggling\\_of\\_migrants\\_final\\_report\\_master\\_091115\\_final\\_pdf.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/reports/docs/emn-studies/study_on_smuggling_of_migrants_final_report_master_091115_final_pdf.pdf) [EC Study on smuggling of migrants, 2015].

[16] See Ilse van Liempt and Joreoen Doornik, Migrant’s Agency in the Smuggling Process: The Perspectives of Smuggled Migrants in the Netherlands, *International Migration Vol. 44(4)*, 2006 [Migrant’s agency in the smuggling process]. Also see Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa, supra at note 14 where the authors interviewed Eritrean youth in Cairo, Egypt.

[17] Migrant’s agency in the smuggling process, *Ibid*.

[18] A “good” smuggler is someone who takes care of his clients, does not make mistakes, provides people with food, lets them rest, provides shelter, does not repeatedly ask for more money on the way, knows the routes, has good contacts at borders, or provides good documents. See EC Study on smuggling of migrants, 2015, supra at note 15.

[19] *Ibid*. This is consistent with our findings in the family and friends - diaspora section of the report below.

[20] *Ibid*.

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] Frontex, Central Mediterranean Route, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/central-mediterranean-route/>, (last accessed April 27, 2016).

[24] IGAD Background Paper, Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants in the Context of Mixed Migration Flows: State of play in the Horn of Africa (draft, October 2015), 6th IGAD Regional Consultative Process.

[25] Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa, supra at note 14.

[26] See Migrant’s agency in the smuggling process, supra at note 16.

The route chosen by a migrant will depend on his or her income, social status and diaspora connections; those with the least alternatives generally choosing the most dangerous journeys<sup>[27]</sup>.

In the past, irregularly migrating refugees and asylum-seekers from Ethiopia, particularly large numbers of Eritrean refugees originating in Tigray region, took the Northern route towards Israel<sup>[28]</sup>. The dangers of this route were dramatic and well documented. Between 2009 and 2013 there were 25 to 30,000 victims of trafficking in the Horn of Africa, 95 percent of whom were Eritrean and 5 to 10,000 of whom died<sup>[29]</sup>. Since the end of 2013, trafficking and abuse in the Sinai has been rerouted along the Northern Route to Europe, through Libya primarily due to the construction of the Israel/Egypt wall but as well because of a reinforced Egyptian military presence in the Sinai<sup>[30]</sup>. Many of the Eritreans who were detained in Egypt by authorities, often having suffered horrendous abuses at the hands of traffickers<sup>[31]</sup>, were brought to Ethiopia rather than repatriated to Eritrea<sup>[32]</sup>. Between 2011 and 2013 and the month of June 2014, 2,317 Eritrean victims of trafficking came to Ethiopia from Egypt, the majority being between the ages of 18 and 30 years of age. Interviews revealed that 99 percent of these individuals transited through Sudan towards Egypt, while one percent declared having reached Israel, Yemen, Dubai, Kenya, Libya, Turkey, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia before their deportation from Egypt<sup>[33]</sup>. In 2015, sources indicate that only 100 Eritreans were sent from Egypt to Ethiopia confirming that this route is no longer very active for Eritrean refugees.

Since 2014, migrants and asylum-seekers have been trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea in record numbers, sparking what many commentators have referred to as the “European Migrant Crisis”<sup>[34]</sup>. In 2014, Eritreans comprised one of the two largest groups of migrants and asylum-seekers trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea via the Central Mediterranean Route to Malta or Italy, the successful ones ultimately claiming asylum in the EU<sup>[35]</sup>. Between January 2015 and February 2016, Eritreans made up 24 percent (39,336 individuals) and Somalis made up eight percent (12,877) of all arrivals in Italy<sup>[36]</sup>.

[27] See Tuesday Reintano and Peter Tinti, *Survive and advance: the economics of smuggling refugees and migrants to Europe* (November 2015), Institute for Security Studies, accessed at: <https://www.issafrica.org/publications/papers/survive-and-advance-the-economics-of-smuggling-refugees-and-migrants-into-europe>

[28] Miram van Reisen, Meron Estefanos and Conny Rijken, “Human Trafficking in the Sinai: Refugees between life and death” (October 2012), found at: [http://www.eepa.be/wcm/dmdocuments/publications/Report\\_Human\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_the\\_Sinai\\_Final\\_Web.pdf](http://www.eepa.be/wcm/dmdocuments/publications/Report_Human_Trafficking_in_the_Sinai_Final_Web.pdf). Specifically, the report refers to refugees originating from Mai-Aini refugee camp.

[29] United States Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report 2015” (July 2015), found at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/245365.pdf> [U.S. TIP Report 2015]; Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa, supra at note 14. Also see for example, Rachel Humphris, “Research Paper No. 254: Refugees and Rashaida: Human smuggling and trafficking from Eritrea to Sudan and Egypt” (March 2013, UNHCR), found at: <http://www.unhcr.org/51407fc69.html>, the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, “Abused and Abducted: The plight of female migrants from the horn of Africa in Yemen” (October 2014), available at: [http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms\\_publications/Abused\\_\\_\\_Abducted\\_RMMS.pdf](http://www.regionalmms.org/fileadmin/content/rmms_publications/Abused___Abducted_RMMS.pdf) and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, “Smuggling and Trafficking from the East and Horn of Africa : Progress Report” (2014), found at: [https://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/workshops/UNHCR-Smuggling\\_and\\_Trafficking-Progress\\_Report-screen-final.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/congress/workshops/UNHCR-Smuggling_and_Trafficking-Progress_Report-screen-final.pdf)

[30] Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa, supra at note 14.

[31] The trafficking and abuse suffered by migrants, particularly the Eritreans, is well documented in a number of sources. See for example, Human Rights Watch, *I wanted to lie down and die – trafficking and torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt* (February 11, 2014), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/11/i-wanted-lie-down-and-die/trafficking-and-torture-eritreans-sudan-and-egypt> [Human Rights Watch, *I wanted to lie down and die*] which details kidnapping for ransom and torture of Eritrean asylum seekers, as well as the United States Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report 2013” (June 2013), found at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/210739.pdf>.

[32] See Protection for Refugee Victims of Trafficking Section below.

[33] The reason for being deported from Egypt despite reaching these other countries is not clear.

[34] See for example Infographic, *Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts*, B.B.C., January 28, 2016, found at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

[35] U.S. TIP Report 2015, supra at note 29. Also see European Commission Fact Sheet, *Questions and Answers: Smuggling of migrants in Europe and the EU response* (January 13, 2015), available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-15-3261\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-3261_en.htm); and U.N. Human Rights Council, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Sheila B. Keetharuth, A/HRC/29/41” (June 19, 2015), found at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/129/07/PDF/G1512907.pdf?OpenElement> [UN Special Rapporteur report on Eritrea].

[36] U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, *Europe Refugees & Migrants Emergency Response: Nationality of arrivals to Greece, Italy and Spain January 2015 – February 2016* (2016), found at: <https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=864>

The current popular route to Europe involves a dangerous journey through Sudan and onto Libya<sup>[37]</sup>. Capture by or sale to traffickers is well documented. Overcrowding of migrant transport vehicles and lack of safety measures for passengers leaves them vulnerable to fatal risks resulting from falling off vehicles and frequent car accidents<sup>[38]</sup>. Dehydration and hunger are concerns<sup>[39]</sup> especially for those who are left in the desert when their transporters do not arrive on time<sup>[40]</sup>. Where refugees are caught by militants, beatings and torture are common and ransom in the amount of 1,200 to 3,400 USD is often demanded. Migrants and asylum-seekers are kept prisoners until such amounts are paid<sup>[41]</sup>. Where migrants and asylum-seekers are caught by the Islamic State (IS), these individuals have reportedly been forced to convert to Islam upon threats of death<sup>[42]</sup>. Others are caught by Libyan military and held in prisons and detention centres where they may be mobilized by private employers for forced labour on farms or construction sites and returned to detention once their services are no longer required<sup>[43]</sup>. Rapes are routinely committed against all female migrants by the Libyan militia and transporters<sup>[44]</sup>. Upon termination of the North Africa portion of the journey at the northeast town of Ajdabiya, Libya, migrants and asylum-seekers are held by smugglers in warehouses, often for several months in poor conditions, until their smuggling and Mediterranean boat fares have been paid<sup>[45]</sup>. The dangers of the Mediterranean crossing are also significant; in 2014 an estimated 3,379 migrants died attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea and in 2015 a reported 3,771 died<sup>[46]</sup>. This trend continued in 2016, with IOM reporting 536 deaths in the first three months of the year<sup>[47]</sup>.

Against this backdrop, in the hopes of creating a greater understanding about the complexities of irregular migration from Ethiopia, the following report studies in detail the Eritrean, Somali and Congolese refugee populations. Specifically, this report provides a detailed literature and field based examination of: the profile, motivations and means of refugee movements; awareness of the risks of irregular migration and sources of knowledge; and the routes of irregular migration and costs. The report further explores the profile of refugees who choose to remain in Ethiopia and pursue other opportunities and the rationale behind their decision. Finally, the report provides a brief overview of the Ethiopian smuggling and trafficking legal and operational context followed by recommendations on the way forward. The study is not an academic piece but is rather meant to provide a practical overview and present actionable information for policy makers both in Ethiopia and abroad, humanitarian or development practitioners, students and any other interested individuals who wish to obtain detailed insights into the situation of the onward movement of refugees from Ethiopia.

[37] Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa, supra at note 14 and SAHAN Foundation and IGAD Security Sector Program, "Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa – Central Mediterranean Route" (February 2016), found at: [http://igad.int/attachments/1284\\_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii%2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf](http://igad.int/attachments/1284_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii%2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf) [Trafficking and Smuggling on the HoA].

[38] See for example Selam Gebrekidan, Behind the refugee crisis, families in the West willing to pay and pay, Reuters (February 24, 2016) [Reuters Behind the Refugee Crisis] and Trafficking and Smuggling on the HoA, Ibid.

[39] Reuters Behind the Refugee Crisis, Ibid.

[40] Trafficking and Smuggling on the HoA, supra at note 37.

[41] Reuters Behind the Refugee Crisis, supra at note 38.

[42] Also refer to the high profile executions in April 2015 of 30 Eritrean and Ethiopian Christians by the Islamic State.

[43] U.S. TIP Report 2015, supra at note 29.

[44] Trafficking and Smuggling on the HoA, supra at note 37.

[45] Reuters Behind the Refugee Crisis, supra at note 38, see also Trafficking and Smuggling on the HoA, supra at note 37.

[46] See International Organization for Migration, Mediterranean Sea: Data of missing migrants, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean> (last visited April 26, 2016) [IOM Data of missing migrants]. Also see UN Special Rapporteur report on Eritrea, supra at note 35 and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Mediterranean boat capsizing: deadliest incident on record (April 21, 2015), available at [www.unhcr.org/553652699.html](http://www.unhcr.org/553652699.html)

[47] See IOM Data of missing migrants, Ibid.

