POST ARRIVAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE to ETHIOPIANS RETURNING from the KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
AN ACCOUNT OF IOM’s OPERATION IN ASSISTING OVER 160,000 ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
November 2013 - March 2014
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PUBLISHER: International Organization for Migration

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POST ARRIVAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE to ETHIOPIANS RETURNING from the KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

An account of IOM’s operation in assisting over 160,000 Ethiopian returnees

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FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
POST ARRIVAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIANS RETURNING

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Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)
FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
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FOREWORD

Due to changes in the Kingdom of Saud Arabia (KSA)’s foreign workers legislation and the subsequent crackdown on irregular migration, over a 160,000 Ethiopian migrants were expelled from the country to Ethiopia over the period of a couple of months. In the wake of this crackdown on irregular migrants, IOM was asked by the Ethiopian government to provide post-arrival and reintegration assistance to the Ethiopian returnees. In addition to providing post arrival assistance to the returnees, IOM worked on educating the public in Ethiopia regarding the consequences of irregular migration since 1995.

Following the Government of Ethiopia’s (GoE) official request for post-arrival assistance to Ethiopian migrants returning from KSA, IOM began providing vital humanitarian assistance in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia and other partners to those who were deported.

In this request GoE, mentioned that an estimated 30,000 Ethiopians would be returning from Saudi Arabia. However, within seven days of the operation the Government indicating that many more Ethiopian migrants were still held at 64 detention centres awaiting identification and the estimate of actual arrivals was revised upwards to 80,000 returnees. There was, however, a further revision upwards putting the estimate at 120,000 returnees. It later turned out that the actual number of returnees exceeded 155,000 by the time the operation closed.

The KSA post-arrival assistance operation was a colossal one which was handled well through a collaborative effort among the government of Ethiopia, IOM’s staff members, International organizations and key partners including: CERF-OCHA, HRF-OCHA, ECHO-ERM, BPRM, Plan International, Indian Business Forum, Irish Aid, Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia- through US Association for International Migration (USAIM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, MSF Spain, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, ICRC, VEDIKA Ethiopia Telugu – Association, Association of French in Ethiopia (ADFE) and Medhanialem Church Fellow Members Association, Pathfinder International (JSI-PI) Integrated Family Health Program (IFHP) Staff members.

Josiah Ogina
IOM Ethiopia Head of Mission and
Representative to the AU/ECA/IGAD,
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In times of emergency, the coordination of efforts among all stakeholders is vital. The Post-Arrival Humanitarian Assistance to Ethiopians Returning from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is one operation that needed such coordination of efforts. The harmonious coordination on this operation made it possible to assist over 160,000 Ethiopian returnees to get back to their homes with speed and efficiency not seen in recent history.

IOM would like to thank donors and partners, as well as its diligent staff members who responded to the cause and went the extra mile to lend a hand. Working around the clock, IOM staff member’s contribution to the operation was vital in providing humane assistance to the vulnerable returnees. In addition to the staff from Addis Ababa and sub-offices, support was given from other country offices in Kenya, Uganda and Somalia in the areas of communication, finance, operation and logistics. Their assistance was invaluable throughout the emergency operation.

IOM greatly appreciates the generous contributions of the donors who financially supported the operation and made it possible; the partner organizations that supported the operation did so both financially and in-kind including human resource support. In particular, IOM would like to recognize the invaluable contribution made by: the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), Canada, Ireland, CERF-OCHA, ECHO-ERM/IRC, HRF-OCHA, Indian Business Forum, Irish Aid, John Snow, Inc. and Pathfinder International (JSI-PI) Integrated Family Health Program (IFHP) Staff members, Plan International, and Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia - which sent contribution through US Association for International Migration (USAIM) for their assistance. Special thanks and appreciation also goes to individuals who went out of their way to support the operation financially.

IOM also appreciates the in-kind contributions from valuable partners including the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Save the Children, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, Plan International, MSF Spain, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, ICRC, VEDIKA Ethiopia Telugu - Association, Association of French in Ethiopia (ADFE), Ethio-French Association, Medhanalem Church Fellow Members Association.

The volunteer services support received by IOM from partners including from OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO, World Vision International (WVI), UNECA, OXFAM Canada, Spanish Cooperation, DFID, MSF (Spain), Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and individuals is also most appreciated.
# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADFE</td>
<td>Association of French in Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPRM</td>
<td>Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
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<td>ECHO-ERM</td>
<td>European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection- Emergency Response Mechanism</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
<td>Ethiopian Red Cross Society</td>
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<td>HRF</td>
<td>Humanitarian Response Fund</td>
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<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IOM SLO</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration Special Liaison Office</td>
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<td>IRC</td>
<td>International Rescue Committee</td>
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<td>KSA</td>
<td>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSF Spain</td>
<td>Médecins Sans Frontières, Spain</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>Narcotics Anonymous</td>
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<td>NFI</td>
<td>Non-food Items</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNECA</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Africa</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
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<td>UNOCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>USAIM</td>
<td>US Association for International Migration</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The recent crackdown on irregular migration by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in November 2013, which led to the expulsion of thousands of vulnerable migrants from KSA, highlighted challenges posed by irregular migration in the Horn of Africa, including socio-economic reintegration challenges. Not only did the expulsion of these vulnerable irregular migrants from KSA affect Ethiopia but also numerous countries in the region and beyond. The expulsions left many migrants empty-handed and traumatized with nowhere to start from, as most of them came with nothing having left all their belongings behind due to the hasty manner in which the exercise was conducted. Six months after the expulsion, the impacts are still palpable, particularly on migration in general.

Although migration crises of this kind are not new, the massive outflow of migrants deported from KSA represents one of the largest migration crises in modern history. In comparison, the last major migration crisis directly affecting migrant populations was the 2012 crisis in Libya, which led to the mass evacuation of 790,000 migrants. The scale of the crisis in KSA and the hasty and inhumane manner in which it was conducted served to highlight to key stakeholders such as the Government of Ethiopia, IOM, UN organisations, the Donor Community, International NGOs and others the issue of protection and rights of migrants caught in such a crisis. It engendered serious implications for State actors in regard to the need to bolster coping mechanisms in the face of such a crisis as well as for wider migration management systems. Expectant women in the full-term of their pregnancy were among those who were indiscriminately rounded up and forced to travel, many of them starting their labour either on board the aircraft or at the airport; baggage was not tagged, and most of the migrants were not allowed to travel with their luggage or other valuables which were all collected together in one plastic bag and thrown onto the plane prior to departure. not allowing any carryon bags, denying migrants basic facilities to use while on board particularly affecting mothers with infants not having anything to cover their babies in the biting early morning cold for those that arrived at night and a host of other irregularities. To compound the problem, the withholding of hard-earned personal belongings by the KSA exacerbated ongoing cases of poverty at home in Ethiopia. Therefore, this particular crisis and the ban of labour migration to the Middle Eastern countries may have implications for the quality of life and poverty levels of the returnees and may further complicate migration management challenges for the future, and is therefore a concern for the entire region.
This report addresses the effect that the KSA crisis has had on Ethiopian migrants caught in the crisis. It is based primarily on the experience of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the post-arrival assistance, onward transportation assistance and reintegration needs of migrant workers from KSA. The report takes a brief look at the background of the migration situation prior to the crisis, including the migrants’ profiles. It then provides a detailed account of the emergency post-arrival assistance operation including the central role played by IOM, the roles of the Government of Ethiopia and other partners including international organizations, national NGOs, the diaspora, associations and private individuals. The effects of the emergency humanitarian crisis on the migrants and their communities are also examined. Finally, the report considers the challenges and lessons learned with regard to the response to the crisis.
BACKGROUND OF THE MIGRATION SITUATION

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is predominately a destination and transit country for regular and irregular migrants alike. It is increasingly becoming a major destination country encouraging low-skilled and unskilled workers from sub-Saharan Africa to fill its manpower gaps. The country is one of the main destinations for Ethiopian migrant workers. Thousands of Ethiopians make their journey to the Kingdom either following the regular labour migration procedures or through irregular means via the eastern migration route.

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), thousands of Ethiopian domestic workers travelled to Saudi Arabia legally every year. Meanwhile, following the eastern migration route, tens of thousands more irregular migrants also made their journey to Saudi Arabia, crossing the border through Yemen. Yemen serves as a transit country for the Horn of Africa migrants, mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia. Ethiopian migrants who follow this route are increasingly vulnerable to abuse and many human rights violations before they make it to their final destination. Those who cross into KSA without legal travel documents automatically get irregular status. Even a significant number of those who enter regularly as formal labour migrants became irregular because they either overstay their visas or they run away from their employers.

According to Human Rights Watch, over 9 million migrant workers in Saudi Arabia – more than half the work force – are engaged in manual, clerical and service jobs. Human Rights Watch further mentions that many of these migrants suffer multiple abuses and labour-related exploitation, sometimesamounting to forced labour. According to other sources, the labour crackdown against foreign workers, which included road checkpoints and raids on businesses, was part of Saudi Arabia’s effort to combat high levels of unemployment among Saudi citizens by opening jobs previously filled by undocumented workers. Those targeted included workers who did not have the proper residency or work permits and workers who were caught working for an employer who was not their legal sponsor. According to the KSA foreign workers policy, a migrant worker with regular status is not allowed to move from one employer to another, irrespective of the working conditions. The rules require that a worker must obtain permission from his or her employer prior to changing jobs or else leave the country. These rules leave foreign workers with few or no options for redress in cases of abuse or labour violations. If workers insist on switching jobs, they automatically become irregular.

1 International Centre for Migration Policy Development - ICMPD, East African Migration Route Initiative - 2008
It is difficult to obtain an exact number of how many Ethiopian migrants live in KSA. The Ethiopian government’s initial estimate of returnees from KSA was 30,000. However, within one week of the operation, the estimate soon escalated to 80,000 as the daily arrivals soared to 8,000 migrants. The Government revised the number after learning that many more Ethiopian migrants were still held at 64 detention centres in Saudi Arabia awaiting identification and deportation. The number was further revised to 120,000 and subsequently to 155,000. These fluctuations in figures highlighted the fact that the migration data, at least in this particular case, were variable and that no accurate estimates existed. The lack of accurate data on Ethiopian migrant populations in KSA proved to be a challenge when assessing the scale and what type of response is needed during the post arrival assistance efforts and thus putting a tremendous strain on the entire operation.

The World Bank April 2014 report states that more than 370,000 migrants were sent back to their home countries from Saudi Arabia alone in the five months since November 2013, nearly half of these were from Ethiopia. From these Ethiopian migrants, women serve as domestic workers, while men are usually employed in farms, construction work, looking after goats or camels and so on.

The hopes of many irregular Ethiopian migrants to have a better future in KSA took a new direction as the Kingdom put in place a new labour law to regulate migrant workers. In April 2013, the Saudi Arabian government announced an amnesty period to correct the labour and residence status of “illegal” migrants in the Kingdom without penalties. According to Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 38,000 were able to rectify their labour and residency status within the amnesty period, tens of thousands more migrants were unable to use the timeframe. In July 2013, the KSA government extended the amnesty period up until November 2013. Subsequently, after the expiration of the new deadline, the government followed with serious action to expel migrants not holding proper work and residency permits.

This incident affected many Ethiopian migrants whose status in the Kingdom was irregular. According to interviews given by the migrants, many workers awaiting to return home were being held in makeshift detention centres primarily in cities like Riyadh and Jeddah before they were deported back to Ethiopia. Many said that their stay in the detention centres were with limited access to public utilities, inadequate food or shelter and general lack of privacy. The conditions in the detention camps made migrants very vulnerable, particularly with psychological and other health related needs demanding immediate attention upon arrival, including water and high-energy biscuits to those that were hungry and weak.
PROFILES OF THE RETURNNEES
According to the interviews with the migrants and other available information on the migration trend and routes from the region Ethiopian Migrants enter KSA in different ways:

- **REGULAR LABOUR VISA**: women, who opt for domestic employment opportunities, get visas through the legal labour migration process. This is mainly processed by overseas employment agencies operating in the country. However, this is not usually the case for male migrants.

- **INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIP VISA**: some female migrants whose relatives have already started working in Saudi Arabia get individual sponsorship deals. Their relatives make all the arrangements either through an agent in KSA or directly from the employers. There are also a few male migrants who get individual sponsorship contracts to work as drivers and/or mechanics.

- **RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE**: the Hajj and Umrah Muslim religious pilgrimage is another means for many men and women migrants to enter KSA. Migrants use these religious pilgrimages as a case to get visas even though the cost is higher than the regular labour visa.

- **CROSSING BORDER VIA YEMEN**: men predominantly enter into KSA following the eastern migration route. Many of the migrants make difficult journeys crossing the Gulf of Aden to enter Yemen and then to KSA. There is a significant number of female migrants who follow this route. These migrants do not necessarily enter into KSA immediately after arrival in Yemen. They rather spend months in the hands of traffickers who either detain them for ransom payments or hand them over again to other traffickers. Some migrants also remain in Yemen for some time under forced labour before they make it to KSA.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN KSA
Female Ethiopian migrants are engaged in domestic work employed in individual households. They perform a variety of household chores including cleaning, laundry, and providing care for children and the elderly. Apart from domestic work, a few female migrants also work in institutions like schools and clinics as cleaners.

On the other hand, male Ethiopian migrants are engaged mainly as construction workers. These migrants are unskilled labourers doing manual work on construction sites such as buildings, stadiums and other facilities. A considerable number of male migrants are engaged in farms and looking after goats and camels while a few manage to work as drivers and/or mechanics.
EMERGENCY POST ARRIVAL ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES FROM KSA

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND IOM’S INTERVENTION

National Governments have the prime responsibility to protect their nationals, even when abroad. In cases of imminent danger or in crisis situations, States may entrust IOM with the operational role of assisting their nationals in need of help, while retaining the overall responsibility. Providing assistance and protection to vulnerable migrants is at the core of IOM’s mandate. This mandate has been further reiterated in IOM’s Strategy Document (IOM, 2007a) and calls on IOM “to participate in coordinated humanitarian responses and to provide migration services in emergencies or post-crisis situations as appropriate and as relates to the needs of individuals and uprooted communities, thereby contributing to their protection” (ibid.). Because of the migration consequences of the crisis, IOM, in line with its international mandate and upon the request of the Government of Ethiopia, took a leading role in responding to the needs of the affected migrants.

When the KSA government cracked down on irregular migrants, regular flights started airlifting migrants back to their home country. At the onset of the expulsion to Ethiopia of vulnerable irregular migrants from KSA, the Government of Ethiopia, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requested the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support migrants with post arrival and reintegration assistance. Despite limited resources, IOM quickly responded to the situation. IOM, in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) as well as other humanitarian partners, provided vital post arrival assistance to the returnees. The operation was very intense. Within one month, an unprecedented 120,000 migrants had been assisted (according to information compiled by IOM from national sources - the protocol department at the airport). The data reported in the following sections were compiled by IOM staff at the registration points, in cooperation with national authorities. Migrants assisted by IOM with food, water, transportation from the airport to the transit centres and onward transportation to the areas of origin were registered by IOM and statistical reports were updated regularly. In order to respond effectively to the needs of returnees from KSA in their areas of origin, IOM and its national partners will conduct a socio-economic needs assessment along with an evaluation of possible post-crisis employment opportunities to get information that will further inform successful future reintegration programmes.
FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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The first flight returning Ethiopian migrants arrived at 11am on 13 November in Addis Ababa with only 24 migrants on board a regular flight. The next group of 34 migrants arrived the same day in the afternoon and was subsequently followed by a group of 2,000 migrants on the following day. Subsequently, thousands more continued arriving as Saudi Air and Ethiopian Airlines chartered flights and made several rounds a day. By the end of November, more than 75,000 migrants had arrived in Addis Ababa.

IOM provided assistance to the returnees mainly from its existing transit centre. However, due to the increasing number of arrivals on a daily basis, additional space was needed. In response to this unexpected emergency, the government of Ethiopia took immediate action by securing premises next to the IOM transit centre as a supplementary transit centre for the migrants, with capacity to accommodate 2,000 persons. The numbers, however, further escalated with a maximum of 9,000 migrants and 20 flights daily. The magnitude of the daily arrival was too immense to be handled in one place. In light of the emergent needs of the migrants and the need to fast track the assistance, the government established a reception centre at Bole International Airport. With government support, IOM set up several registration points at Bole International Airport as a temporary migrants’ reception area where migrants who arrived early in the morning and were fortunate to get their luggage on time, were registered, provided with the necessary support and went direct to their home areas without spending a night at the centres. Such cases, however, were a very small proportion of the daily arrivals. As the numbers increased, government further secured more transit centres. For this operation Gerji Transit Centre (TC2), Millennium Transit Centre, Kotebe Trainers College, Civil Service College I, Civil Service College II and the Addis Ababa Leadership Institute were used. IOM established its presence in all the Transit Centers where the returnees were temporarily accommodated until the following day when they received their luggage.

Since most of the migrants were detained before they returned home, many of them arrived in need of medical support, empty handed or with little of their personal belongings. Therefore, the need to provide humanitarian assistance to the returnees was imperative. IOM’s post-arrival assistance to the returnees included provision of water and high-energy biscuits immediately upon arrival. Hot meals and accommodation were provided at the transit centres. IOM also provided transportation from the airport to the transit centres and (vice versa), and to the bus station. Post-arrival medical and psychosocial support to migrants with health problems was also provided. Family tracing and reunification support to Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs), non-food items (such as shoes, soap, sanitary pads and so on) and onward transportation allowance disbursement were also extended to the returnees.
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Despite the sustained increase in the number of arrivals the humanitarian coordination of IOM, the government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners was effective. Returnees had access to 24-hour services in terms of transportation, health services, meals, accommodation, immigration, telecommunication and banking services. Special attention was given to women, children, and those with medical conditions. The involvement of social workers, volunteers and the youth also provided additional support to the operation.

**SPECIFIC SERVICES PROVIDED TO RETURNEES:**

**UPON ARRIVAL**

Given the deportation nature of this operation, IOM provided assistance only started after the migrants completed immigration processing and customs clearance. This restriction is due to the IOM’s constitution which does not allow IOM to get involved in deportation, as deportation issues are matters handled between governments without IOM’s interference.

In light of this, the Government of Ethiopia provided direct assistance to migrants prior admission into the country. When they arrived, they were immediately welcomed by government authorities at the airport. Government was organised with established committees each responsible for a specific task. A team of government officials from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and members of the Ethiopia Red Cross Society welcomed the migrants on arrival to give them the assurance that they were safe and all was well. The government gave a brief of the services the migrants were expected to receive including the future reintegration plans. After the briefing, the migrants were then led to immigration processing centres where pink cards with unique identification numbers were issued. These cards were very vital as they identified the returnees as having returned from the KSA. The card thus meant that the returnee was assured of any available assistance.

After immigration processing, the migrants were then led to the IOM registration and processing centre. A team of IOM staff, in close coordination with government officials, was always ready to give direction and receive the returnees. At the IOM processing centre the returnees were given water and high-energy biscuits prior to commencement of registration. The migrants would then be registered and given a transportation cash allowance to enable them travel back home. Unaccompanied minors who were identified after registration, were put in a separate tent and later would be transported to the transit centre. Once they arrived, further assistance and data collection was conducted for family tracing and reunification in close coordination with UNICEF and the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs.
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International Organization for Migration
Special Liaison Office (IOM SLO) in Ethiopia

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)
TRANSPORTATION WITHIN ADDIS ABABA

IOM provided transport to returnees from the airport to the transit centres and later to the bus stations where they boarded buses to their areas of origin. Upon payment of cash allowance, migrants who were fortunate and managed to get their luggage immediately were provided transport, to the bus station. Those that did not get their luggage, or who arrived late in the evening or at night, were transported to the transit centres where they spent a night. IOM also provided trucks to transport the luggage of the returnees to the Transit Centres and to the Bus stations.

The transportation to the bus station was stopped in subsequent weeks as the operation progressed. This was mainly due to the insecurity that the returnees were experiencing, particularly with pickpockets. Consequently, a bus station for up country buses was created near the Airport Transit Centre. Hence the shortened trip helped to expedite the evacuation process.

TRANSPORTATION CASH ALLOWANCE

In addition to the transportation services within Addis Ababa, IOM provided transportation cash allowance for the migrants. The transportation allowance made it possible for those who had come back to Ethiopia with no money to travel home. Initially, the cash allowance was intended to cover both reinsertion and transport to the areas of origin. This was mainly because, the returnees, particularly the first groups, did not have any of their belongings. They had tattered and dirty clothes and, in the worst cases, were barefooted. Beyond shoes, blankets and other non-food items, IOM also provided a reinsertion grant to cover some other basic, immediate needs for the journey home. IOM gave a USD 100 allowance to each returnee in the first batch to facilitate reinsertion and onward transportation. As the number of returnees kept increasing, this allowance could not be sustained and was accordingly reduced to a bare minimum of USD 50 per returnee in the subsequent batches. This allowance was only enough to cater for bus fares back home with no reinsertion assistance per se. As the deportation progressed, more returnees started coming with their luggage and other belongings. This complicated an already difficult situation as the handling of baggage increased the time the returnees were spending at the airport and transit centres with the associated costs of transporting them back to the airport to check for their luggage and other holding costs like meals and medical care. Despite reducing the transportation fee, IOM was still faced with a huge number of returnees to assist with transport allowance. The cost of the transportation for over 150,000 returnees proved tremendous.
A

other important form of assistance IOM provided to the returnees was post-arrival health care. The IOM Medical Team, in close coordination and collaboration with the teams from the Ministry of Health, Bole Sub-City Health Office and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, provided the post-arrival health assistance for the Ethiopian returnees. IOM deployed four medical doctors and 24 nurses to the Airport Reception Centre and at the transit centres. The IOM health team worked on eight-hour shifts covering all the centres 24/7 despite the increasing caseload. Immediately upon arrival and disembarkation from the plane, triage would be done for those who were critically ill and they would receive urgent medical attention at the mobile clinics at the airport. Those returnees who needed further medical attention would immediately be referred to the nearby hospitals.

A few instances of severe medical conditions were referred to the hospitals for admission and further management including:

- Advanced pregnancies and labour
- Severe pneumonia with hypoxia
- Hypovolemic shock with acute gastro-enteritis
- Psychiatric illnesses with Acute Psychosis
- Septic patients from various foci
- Acute abdomen and twisted ovarian cyst

The rest of the patients with mild illnesses received treatment in the clinics at the airport and transit centres. A referral system was arranged to suit the medical cases that needed further investigation and management including referring them to specialised hospitals. An ambulance service at the airport was on standby 24/7 for any medical emergency. On the other hand, patients already on treatment for chronic illnesses like hypertension, diabetes mellitus, HIV cases on ARV, tuberculosis, etc. were referred to the health institutions nearby their cities/towns of residence to link them with the existing National Health Service system.
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THE MOST COMMON MEDICAL CONDITIONS IDENTIFIED WERE:

- Upper Respiratory Tract Infections
- Lower Respiratory Tract Infections
- Diarrhoeal Diseases
- Myalgia & Arthralgias
- Acute febrile Illnesses
- Psychiatric Illnesses
- Physical Traumas
- Advanced Pregnancies (half of which were in labour)

IOM further coordinated with the MOH for all returnees under fifteen years of age to receive measles vaccinations and OPV at the airport as well as at the two transit centres designated for women and small children. Vitamin A was administered to all those under the age of five and all women of reproductive age (15-49 yrs) received TT.

MEALS AND ACCOMMODATION

IOM also provided hot meals for returnees who stayed overnight in the transit centres. Returnees who arrived late and those who did not manage to get their luggage on time were accommodated in the transit centres. IOM was fortunate enough to find a building next-door the IOM Gerji main transit centre to use as a temporary transit centre. Though this building was complete in terms of construction, it was very handy at the onset of the operation and made work a lot easier particularly in terms of sharing human resources and other logistical services. The catering company which was already serving the existing transit centre also helped with the provision of food for the new one. The food provided was a ready made enjera (Ethiopian pita bread) with Ethiopian sauce. This made matters easy in two senses: the returnees’ were accustomed to it and its readiness made it immediately available for serving. The catering service providers were able to deliver the orders within one hour of request. Some wastage of resources such as returnees taking a sip of a bottle of water and then throwing it away only to ask for more in a few minutes was observed especially at the beginning of the operation. That had the general effect of increasing the cost of the operation, especially at the beginning. Later on, proper management of the resources helped in minimizing the wastage and control costs.

In addition to the accommodation and meals provided at the transit centres, IOM provided:

- 30,000 packs of energy biscuits
- 6,000 packs of instant noodles
- 250 kg of macaroni
- 1,000 baby formula cans
NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFIs)
Most of the returnees, especially those who arrived at the beginning of the operation, were coming back with no luggage and no more clothes than what they were wearing. Some of the returnees did not even have shoes on. Hence, there was need to provide some NFIs. IOM provided the following to assist the returnees.
- 1,650 pairs of shoes
- 30,000 bars of soap
- 10,000 blankets
- 15,000 dignity kits
- 300 diapers
- Infant care products

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS
Special attention and care was provided to Unaccompanied Minors (UAMs) once they were identified after arrival at the airport. UAMs aged 10-17 were identified and received at the airport by social workers and were referred to IOM staff. Subsequently, UAMs were accommodated at the IOM transit centre while the process of tracing their families continued. IOM, in close coordination with the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs and UNICEF, facilitated the reunification of these minors with their families. Once the family tracing was done, IOM provided an additional bus that transported UAMs to their home areas and handed them over to their parents. During the reunification, the UAMs were accompanied by social workers to their areas of origin which was often hundreds of kilometres away from Addis Ababa. This was a very costly and tedious exercise as sometimes a vehicle would be hired to transport only three children who were going to different directions. Because children had to be handed over to their parents by the social workers, the reunification exercise would take many days, up to about 5-6 days, particularly due to the stopovers while handing-over children in different locations that were hundreds of kilometres apart.

The figures updated 25 March, 2014 shows the eight rounds of UAM family reunification missions since the operation started.

I. FIGURES

Reunification: In collaboration with UNICEF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REUNIFICATION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Round</td>
<td>19 Nov. 2013</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Round</td>
<td>26 Nov. 2013</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Round</td>
<td>5 Dec. 2013</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Round</td>
<td>17 Dec. 2013</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Round</td>
<td>26 Dec. 2013</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Round</td>
<td>15 Jan. 2014</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Round</td>
<td>30 Jan. 2014</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Round</td>
<td>19 Feb. 2014</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total UAMs IOM has transported and reunified with families at countryside</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>UAM returnees reunified at TC (Families came to TC to pick up UAMs)</td>
<td>431</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>520</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
POST ARRIVAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO 
ETHIOPIANS RETURNING 
FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

An Account of IOM’s Operation 
In Assisting over 160,000 Ethiopian Returnees
ARRIVAL TRENDS

ANALYSIS OF THE ARRIVALS: WEEKLY ARRIVAL TRENDS

The first arrival of Ethiopian migrants from KSA was on the 13 of November 2013. Then, only 23 Ethiopian returnees arrived onboard a regular flight. A week from the first arrival, the total number of Ethiopians returned home rose to over 7,000. The weeks of 20th November 2013 – 7th December 2013 saw the highest number of returnees. The arrival within this period peaked from a daily average of 2,500 up to 9,000. The number of flights per day also increased from six to twenty flights. The high influx demanded a 24-hour and seven days shift, which IOM and its partners along with GoE worked out.

ARRIVAL BY GENDER

From the total number of arrivals, men constituted 62 percent whereas women constituted 33 percent and children 5 percent.
The Amhara region constituted 42.16% while Oromia 26.13% and Tigray region constituted the third Highest with 22.46% of the total returnees. Following the Southern Nations and Nationalities People’s Region (SNNPR) with 5.14% and Addis Ababa welcomed the 5th highest number of returnees with 2.29%. 

A sampling conducted in the middle of the operation shows the total percentage of returnees per regions. The sampling shows that the majority of the returnees are from the Amhara, Tigray and Oromia regions.
FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
POST ARRIVAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO
ETHIOPIANS RETURNING

International Organization for Migration
Special Liaison Office (IOM SLO) in Ethiopia
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

Number of Returnees

Legend

Areas of Origin of Returnees from KSA - by Region

International Organization for Migration
Special Liaison Office (IOM SLO) in Ethiopia
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organisation internationale pour les migrations (OIM)
Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)
PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

Commendable coordination efforts between all partners and relevant stakeholders allowed timely response to the influx of migrants returning from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As the lead, GoE was responsible for coordinating the movements and providing post-arrival assistance at the airport, including immigration clearing procedures. The GoE’s role in the whole process was very significant, ranging from provision of airport arrival assistance, securing facilities for temporary accommodation, including meals and sourcing NFIs such as mattresses and blankets, as well as providing reintegration support once returnees reached their areas of origin.

IOM responded directly to the humanitarian needs of the returnees and the GoE’s request for support in complementing its efforts in providing the returnees with basic support to return home safely and with dignity. IOM closely liaised with the Government and other active partners to ensure the smooth conduct of the operation.

Active partners in the implementation of the project included: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Agriculture through the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS); Ministry of Health; Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs and their respective bureaus; UN agencies (OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP); international and local NGO partners including AGAR Ethiopia, Ethiopian Red Cross, MSF Spain, IRC, Save the Children, ICRC among others.

To ensure coordinated resource mobilization given the magnitude of the problem, IOM, in close cooperation with donors, UN agencies, international and local NGO partners, hosted weekly meetings, as the situation demanded from time to time. To ensure coordinated resource mobilization, given the magnitude of the problem, IOM, in close cooperation with donors, UN agencies, international and local NGO partners, hosted weekly meetings, as the situation demanded from time to time.

VALUABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The financial support from the following partners towards this operation made it possible:

- CERF-OCHA
- HRF-OCHA
- ECHO-ERM
- BPRM
- Japan
- Canada
- European Union
- Plan International
- Indian Business Forum
- Irish Aid
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Special Liaison Office (IOM SLO) in Ethiopia

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POST ARRIVAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIANS RETURNING FROM THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia through US Association for International Migration (USAIM)
- JohnSnow, Inc. and Pathfinder International (JSI-PI) Integrated Family Health Program (IFHP) Staff members

VALUABLE IN-KIND SUPPORT
IOM also received in-kind contributions from valuable partners:
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Save the Children
- UNHCR
- WFP
- UNICEF
- Plan International
- MSF Spain
- Ethiopian Red Cross Society
- ICRC
- VEDIKA Ethiopia Telugu -Association
- Association of French People overseas in Ethiopia (ADFE)
- Ethio-French Association
- Medhanialem Church Fellow Members Association

HUMAN RESOURCE SUPPORT
Volunteers from OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, WHO, World Vision International (WVI), UNECA, OXFAM Canada, Spanish Cooperation, DFID, and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) supported activities at the airport reception and transit centres.

DONOR VISITS TO THE OPERATIONAL SITES AND PARTICIPATION IN DONOR BRIEFING
Various delegation of diplomats, including Ambassadors and deputies visited the sites to witness firsthand the post-arrival assistance provided to the Ethiopian migrants returning from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ambassadors and other high ranking officials from: USA (USAID, OFDA, PRM), UK/DFID, Norway, Canada, France, Brazil, Yemen, Liberia, Italy, Egypt, Mexico, Switzerland, Spain, Austria, the Netherlands, EU, ECHO, Ireland, OCHA, Germany, Burundi and Israel visited the operational sites.

Two donor briefing sessions were conducted by IOM and participants included Ambassadors, deputies and representatives from Italy, EU, DG ECHO, DFID, SPAIN, Netherlands, US, Italy, UAE, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, Ireland, France, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, Qatar, US/USAID, UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO, UN WOMEN, UNHCT, OCHA) and International NGOs

AN ACCOUNT OF IOM’S OPERATION IN ASSISTING OVER 160,000 ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES
CHALLENGES

Since its establishment in 1951, IOM has developed a number of operational systems to manage large-scale migrant movements/evacuations and gained expertise in assisting migrants in a wide range of situations as demonstrated during the Saudi return emergency operation. Other, recent, large-scale emergency operations led by IOM include the evacuation of migrants during the crises in Libya, Haiti and Lebanon, among others. Despite the logistical challenges, IOM was able to provide assistance to vulnerable irregular migrants from KSA because of its historical expertise in migrant movement management and its experienced operational staff on the ground.

IOM’s experience in responding to the migration consequences of different crises and, in particular, the KSA crisis, highlighted a number of important elements regarding today’s humanitarian architecture. From a migration perspective, the KSA crisis presented a unique situation for several reasons – not least because KSA is a migrant destination country, particularly from Ethiopia with a significant migrant population in need of assistance. The complexity of migration in this crisis raises issues with regard to the role of the international community, existing international coordination mechanisms and frameworks, state actors, and the role of international organizations such as IOM.

IOM worked closely with government and other partner organisations in order to provide migrants with the most effective and humane assistance possible in the circumstances. Whereas IOM had had previous experiences in handling movements of such a magnitude the KSA emergency operation highlighted the following challenges observed by IOM, the international community and local NGOs in its response, as well as future considerations:

- The need to have the capacity to manage large numbers of migrants within a very short time;
- Lack of information on returnee numbers and their condition;
- The resource mobilisation and funding gaps;
- Missing, untagged or unaccompanied luggage which caused further delays;
- Abrupt loss of income with families dependent on remittances and financing debts owed to smugglers;
- Mothers who aborted or attempted to abandon babies for fear of going back home with children or pregnancies by non-Ethiopian men or pre-marital pregnancies;
- Reintegration challenges, as some migrants had lived in KSA for over 30 years and psychosocial rehabilitation as some returnees had been traumatised owing to the abuses they had suffered.

CAPACITY ISSUES

The Saudi operation was an unprecedented operation. Handling such large number of returnees with so varied ages and needs in such a short time was unique. This placed a heavy toll on staff, transport and other logistic needs. IOM’s transit centre, which had a capacity of supporting a maximum of 600 returnees, was stretched to full capacity within the first two days leaving many without room at the centre. At IOM’s request, the
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AN ACCOUNT OF IOM’S OPERATION IN ASSISTING OVER 160,000 ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES
government of Ethiopia assisted in acquiring the newly-constructed Nyala Warehouse next door to the Gerji transit centre to work as an additional transit centre. The building did not yet have running water and electricity. Hence, IOM had to bring in water and power from its centre next door. The building, not being built for holding such large crowds, also made sanitation challenging. It was not until later, when external mobile toilets and three additional 10,000 litre water tanks were brought to the centre, that the situation was eased up. This generous contribution from the IRC significantly contributed to the water sanitation and hygiene needs of the migrants at the centre. In addition to the transit centre next to the Gerji transit centre, five other transit centres were opened in different parts of the city. The opening of more centres meant more staff requirements and more logistical demands. This increased the cost of operation even more than previously anticipated. Fortunately, however, partner organizations were lending out a hand and providing NFIs. IOM’s TDYers coming from the country offices in Kenya, Uganda and Somalia and Ethiopian sub-offices Jijiga, Gambella, Shire, Asosa, Dolo Ado eased up the staffing challenge.

**LACK OF INFORMATION**

Not having adequate information in advance proved to be the leading challenge in the operation. The inability to acquire complete information on how many returnees were expected to arrive, and when they were arriving, made it very challenging to plan ahead and arrange for transport, prepare meals and accommodation in advance. As a response to this challenge, IOM put 10 buses on standby as a stop-gap measure but keeping buses on standby increased the transport costs. The buses used for transporting the returnees to the transit centres and back were previously working as cross-country buses that transport people to the countryside. Hence, there was a temporary shortage of reliable long distance buses on the roads as the buses were being used in Addis Ababa for the operation. As the proportion of returnees who were originally from the countryside increased, it worsened the situation. As earlier observed, the issue of meals was taken care of by having a catering company serving readymade enjera which could be made available within an hour’s time of ordering. Large tents with the capacity to hold about 800 persons were erected to ease the accommodation challenge. The lack of information on the condition of the returnees also made arranging for ambulances and other medical care facilities difficult. As response to this challenge, IOM, along with the Ministry of Health, set up mobile clinics at all transit centres to be on standby 24/7.

**FUNDING GAP**

Next on the list of challenges was the funding gap IOM faced. Initially IOM had budgeted USD 130 per person. This figure included the USD 100 per person for reinsertion and transportation allowance. However,
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as the number of returnees that were arriving started to increase, it was getting increasingly more difficult to sustain this amount. A high degree of planning and flexibility was required in terms of financial, human and material resources to meet these challenges in a cost-effective manner while maintaining high standards of accountability and humane assistance. IOM therefore decided to scrap the reinsertion allowance and give only transport allowance of USD 50. Finally, the cost per person was brought down to USD 69. Because, IOM was not prepared for such a major emergency operation at such short notice, it had to reprogram internal funds from existing projects to the emergency operation as mobilisation efforts were going on and also had to take an internal loan to narrow-down the gap.

Further funding gaps were caused by the uncertainties in the number of migrants to be assisted. As earlier mentioned, the initial request by GoE indicated that an estimated 30,000 Ethiopians would be returning from Saudi Arabia. Thus, in its funding appeal, IOM budgeted for this number of migrants. However, within seven days of the operation, this number was revised by the government, indicating that many more Ethiopian migrants were still held at 64 detention centres waiting for identification and the actual arrivals would be revised to 80,000 returnees. This therefore meant that the funding appeal had to be adjusted accordingly. A further revision to the appeal was made when the figures of the expected migrants was revised to 120,000 returnees and later to 155,000 returnees. These changes in the figures meant that the funding appeal had to be changed as well. This caused some level of confusion among the donors and other actors in the response to this crisis as to the exact amount of funds required. In addition, the revision of the figures by government was not formal in nature but verbal and thus there was no supporting documentation to this effect to be provided to the donors and thus putting a strain on the fundraising drive.

IOM, however, continued the drive to raise funds to bridge, or at least narrow, the funding gap. A number of partners, chiefly: BPRM, Canada, CERF-OCHA, ECHO-ERM/IRC, HRF-OCHA, Indian Business Forum, Irish Aid, Japan, Plan International, and Global Alliance for the Rights of Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia through USAIM and private individuals positively responded to the appeal for funding and made invaluable contributions. By the end of the operation IOM received 7,428,403 and in-kind contributions worth USD 640,000. Notwithstanding the good will of the contributing partners, still by the time the operation ended on 14 March 2014, there was still a deficit of 1,286,388. The appeal to cover this gap is ongoing.

MISSING, UNTAGGED OR UNACCOMPANIED LUGGAGE

The issue of missing, untagged or unaccompanied luggage further posed a challenge. Passenger and luggage were not arriving on the same
An Account of IOM’s Operation in Assisting over 160,000 Ethiopian Returnees
flight. Passengers arrived two days before or after their luggage. This caused further chaos, delays and strain on the operation. This meant that migrants had to be transported every day back to the airport from the transit centres to look for their luggage. Some returnees stayed at the transit centres for over 7 days waiting for their luggage. As a result, migrants remained confined to the transit centres and airport until their luggage had been identified. Although there was a good effort to address these challenges through the work of the airport authorities in liaison with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the problem persisted almost up to the end of the operation. Government however, worked to create more space for luggage and further discussed with the KSA authorities to tag luggage, significantly reducing the challenge at hand. Due to the delays in getting the untagged and missing luggage, the number of migrants still waiting for their luggage reached its peak of 5,000 migrants on xxx December 2013. The caseload steadily increased and further added to the backlog of migrants awaiting transportation assistance as new arrivals continued at a sustained pace.

**LOSS OF INCOME**
There was negative impact of massive returns in the respective areas of origin and, in particular, where large numbers of families were dependent on remittances and where some returnees were financing the debts they owed smugglers. There were some cases of returnees who owed smugglers money and were fearful to face them on their return. There are those who had been paid their transportation cash allowance but later requested for more claiming that the smugglers had taken it away from them at the airport. Such human trafficking cases were referred to some NGOs, where they were further provided assistance for victims of trafficking. In order to address the reintegration needs, a plan to conduct a socio-economic reintegration needs assessment is under way in order to provide targeted reintegration assistance as necessary.

**ATTEMPTED ABORTIONS AND CHILD ABANDONMENT**
There were also mothers who attempted to abandon or abort their babies because they did not want to go back home with children or pregnancies by non-Ethiopian men or let it be known that they had become pregnant before marriage. The authorities were immediately informed and later the mothers took their children. However, there was need for further follow up on these cases. There are those cases who refused to go back home because they feared that their families would not accept them. This was a big challenge as further counselling and negotiations were engaged including referral for psychological support to be able to provide the necessary assistance to the returnees.
LESSONS LEARNED
Throughout the emergency response to the humanitarian crisis, we were able to learn many lessons; perhaps even more than any other time before. Through the coordination of humanitarian response by government, IOM and other partners, it was possible for the returnees to get meals, water, healthcare, accommodation, transport, free phone calls, SIM cards and dignity kits, all at the same venue. This is an example of a harmonious coordination from the government, IOM, and partner organizations. Such coordination has made it possible to assist a large number of people in a short time.

In addition, all stakeholders were able to have a glimpse into the scale of irregular migration and the factors that drive people to migrate from their homes through very uncertain routes to a risky future. They witnessed the risks and dangers such as hunger and thirst, sexual abuse, extortion and even death the people go through before and after they reach their final destinations and the inhuman treatment in the concentration camps after they were rounded up for deportation. It was discovered that the primary factors that drive these migrations are: promises of better livelihoods in other countries, and lack of information about the dangers on the way, uncertainty of post arrival job procurement, the illegality of their actions and the potential consequences to themselves in the event that they were arrested anywhere along the irregular migration path.

Although the stakeholders already knew this information, the direct testimonies by the returnees further served as an eye-opener or at least consolidated the evidence that was already being obtained of the phenomenon of irregular migration, especially as it relates to the existence of organized human trafficking and smuggling. Firsthand accounts gave insights into a number of aspects to irregular migration including: the methods used to lure victims into leaving their homes; migration routes used to the countries of final destination; the methods used by traffickers to avoid detection and apprehension by security and anti human trafficking agencies; the target population; the modes of communication that connect the traffickers themselves and their victims and the modes of transport.

This phenomenon contributed very useful information to government policy makers and agencies working against human trafficking in the effort to combat irregular migration and human trafficking. The knowledge obtained has informed the sensitization drives the government and other stakeholders have implemented to educate the population of the dangers of human trafficking and of the deceptive nature of the promises of better livelihoods abroad. The scale of this phenomenon, as seen especially in this humanitarian crisis just concluded, might precipitate government to dedicate more resources in combating irregular migration at large and human trafficking in particular. Government may also want to improve the livelihoods of the people through small-scale businesses and community projects so that the people may not be easy targets of traffickers.

There were also lessons for IOM and all the other partners in the operation. To the UN agencies, international NGOs and many other stakeholders, the operation exposed the reality of the phenomenon of irregular migration to them more vividly. This calls for efforts to determine how much project focus will be directed towards this phenomenon now and in the future. It calls for constant readiness in terms of technical know-how to respond to such a
situation in the future should it arise again, and capacity-building to mobilize resources at short notice. However, the most important the lessons learned is that no effort should be spared to forestall a reoccurrence. Projects should focus on community sensitization and building government capacity to combat irregular migration and human trafficking.

The operation also gave the staff of IOM and other participants invaluable hands-on experience in responding to a crisis of those proportions. At the beginning of the operation, there were no proper system to help expedite the process, but along the way as the staff became more experienced, there was regularity of flow of activities. This helped during the entire operation, so much so that, though with difficulty, the system was able to handle an inflow of about 9,000 persons a day. Should such a crisis occur again, this experience would prove invaluable and a better response would be expected.

There were lessons also for the donor community. The role the donors played can never be over-emphasized. They provided the funding that was needed for the operation. The on-site visits and the regular donor briefing meetings gave them a feel for the level of the crisis and background to the irregular migration problem. As a result, they graciously and generously donated funds to support the operation. This experience gave them an opportunity to appreciate the problem and it is therefore hoped that in future, they will more readily understand and therefore be more inclined to support projects that would help forestall the reoccurrence of such a humanitarian crisis. It was also learned that effective humanitarian responses require quick mobilization of financial, human and material resources to sustain the lifesaving emergency assistance to migrants. IOM was able to respond to the emergency situation by utilising the limited existing resources while mobilising resources through funding appeals. Out of the xxx million requested from donors, by December 2013, IOM had received USD xxx million from donors and USD 300,000 in in-kind donations. However, the lack of immediately available financial resources at any given time during the emergency response phase affected the operation. At the height of the emergency operations, up to USD 100,000 were required per day to provide the necessary support to the migrants. In circumstances where there was no cash available, IOM had no option but to wait for donors to provide the funds. Consequently, IOM was able to get a loan from the Migration Emergency Funding Mechanism to sustain the operation pending contributions from the donors. The purpose of the fund is to bridge the gap between an emergency occurring and donor funding being received so the situation on the ground can be rapidly assessed and initial assistance provided with minimal delay. Thus, there is always need for donors to respond immediately in the event that there is such an emergency.

The returnees themselves learned very precious lessons. They may not want to go through the same experience again. Many testified of their disappointed hopes and were grateful to be back home alive. In future efforts to combat or mitigate irregular migration, they will prove an invaluable resource. They will be helpful in informing the communities where they came from of the dangers of irregular migration and the deceptive character of the promises given. Returned migrants will be an effective tool against future irregular migration and human trafficking because they will be able to give first-hand testimony to family and community members of its dangers. They should therefore be partners in the effort to forestall this vice.
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AN ACCOUNT OF IOM’S OPERATION IN ASSISTING OVER 160,000 ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

International Organization for Migration
Special Liaison Office (SLO) in Addis Ababa
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