OVER 2,100 ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS RETURN HOME FROM YEMEN WITH IOM SUPPORT

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ADDIS ABABA - ETHIOPIA
JUNE 2019

The protracted crisis of mass internal displacement throughout Ethiopia, due to consecutive years of drought and conflict, have left nearly nine million people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is appealing to the international community for USD 50 million to continue offering life-saving assistance to 1.5 million people in need.

IOM’s request is part of the comprehensive inter-agency 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) appeal for Ethiopia, which aims to raise USD 1.3 billion to support 8.3 million people. Half-way through the year, less than one-third of the HRP has been funded.

“IOM has been steadfast in its commitment to assisting the people
in need of humanitarian assistance throughout Ethiopia,” said Maureen Achien, IOM’s Chief of Mission in Ethiopia. “With the threat of an impending drought that is feared to be just as bad - if not worse than the one in 2016-2017, the international community must continue to focus on saving lives and supporting the protection and safety of millions of people in need.”

The strongest El Niño phenomenon on record led to an extreme drought in 2016 and 2017, that left over 16 million people in need of food and nutritional assistance, access to safe drinking water and livelihoods support.

Funds received from this year’s appeal will allow IOM to offer shelter, non-food items, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) assistance, protection, mental health and psychosocial support to affected populations. It will also allow IOM to continue its work in cluster coordination, site management support and refugee movements, as well as managing its Rapid Response Fund and Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM).

In 2018, IOM also significantly increased its humanitarian response in Ethiopia to address emergency needs in multiple conflict-induced internal displacements along the Somali-Oromia border in Dire Dawa, and in Gedeo (SNNP) and West Guji (Oromia) Zones. To better serve the Gedeo-Guji inter-agency response, IOM manages humanitarian hubs in both zones.

In addition, IOM assisted nearly 9,000 most vulnerable returnees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with post-arrival assistance last year.

The second largest refugee hosting country in Africa, Ethiopia is hosting some 900,000 refugees primarily from South Sudan, Somalia and elsewhere, with additional refugees continuing to arrive daily. Transportation of newly arrived refugees from border entry points remains critical, as well as the provision of shelter, WASH and livelihood support.

“With continued support from our donors and partners, IOM hopes to continue the multi-sector life-saving assistance that has helped mitigate the worst effects of the crisis in previous years,” added Achien. Resources for ensuring durable solutions through community stabilization, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and durable shelter initiatives are also prioritized in the 2019 response plan.

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For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/2LVJfjD
cans, soaps and female hygiene supplies (for women-specific distributions).

In addition to coordinating services within IDP sites, IOM’s site management support (SMS) teams seek to track the number of people within each site with the aim of understanding the scale and locations of need, and to identify vulnerable people such as persons with disabilities, or the elderly who may need additional tailored assistance.

Among the other stops on a site management system visit was the Kebele (ward) administration office in Suke Giga, where a group of displaced people had gathered three weeks earlier in hope of returning to their homes. As the IOM team listened and took notes, the group voiced their need for medicine, clean water and new latrines.

Through this meeting, the IOM team identified two new sites where displaced families had gathered behind a nearby church.

In order to have a lasting and positive impact on the communities and economies of Gedeo and West Guji zones, IOM pairs its humanitarian assistance with training workshops meant to build local capacity in a variety of technical areas and to tackle obstacles at the community-level.

In line with this, IOM’s WASH Officer led a four-day training with local builders and water bureau staff on well drilling. IOM implements water point rehabilitations and well construction across dozens of sites in Gedeo and West Guji to serve both displaced and host communities.

For IOM and its partner communities, the work continues. The needs along this part of the SNPP and Oromia remain vast, as fighting continues to displace many.

For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/2NgXmi

IOM CONDUCTS TRAINING FOR REGIONAL MIGRANT RESPONSE CENTERS

To enhance overall data quality and reporting capacity at Migrant Response Centers (MRCs), IOM conducted a regional training to help formulate and standardize definitions across service provisions and migrant categorization - as well as to introduce a new reporting template in the Horn of Africa. The training was held on 25-27 June and was attended by MRC staff working in Hargeisa, Bosasso, Djibouti, Semera, Metema, Gedaref and in Khartoum.

For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/2NgXmi
TUNIS - TUNISIA
MAY 2019

Officials from nine countries in the Horn of Africa region and two regional economic communities gathered 7-10 May in Tunisia, for a workshop on managing migration data within the context of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The workshop was jointly organised by the Government of the Republic of Tunisia, IOM’s Special Liaison Office Ethiopia, and the African Union Commission (AUC), under the auspices of the AU Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (AU HoAI).

The four-day meeting which was organized with the financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, brought together national coordinators from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia. Two regional economic communities, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) were represented by their regional coordinators, in addition to coordinators from the African Union Commission (AUC). Also present were statistics and migration officials from AUC, IOM, INTERPOL and Statistics Sweden.

Head of the Statistics Division in the AUC, Leila Ben Ali emphasized AUC’s will to support all countries and RECs in collecting, gathering, harmonizing and aggregating data, and producing quality statistics on human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Providing comparable, reliable and updated statistical information in a timely and regular manner supports evidence-based decision-making that underpins the continent’s agenda on integration.

“IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) expert, Emma Borgnas, explained the global agenda on counter trafficking and migrant smuggling, and the role of migration in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She clarified the importance of collecting data for migration relevant indicators and how to disaggregate data by migratory status. Harry Cook, IOM’s Data Management and Research Specialist, delivered an illustrative presentation on the Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) – the first global data hub on human trafficking.

Delegates agreed to keep cooperating to improve the definition of both human trafficking and migrant smuggling in their laws, standardization of surveys, and data sharing. They drew a roadmap for developing a solid framework to guide data collection on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants within the Horn of Africa region, that runs into the year 2020. This road map will help improve identification of smuggling and trafficking hotspots in member countries and strengthen work to prevent this often elusive criminal activity, whilst protecting victims. The AUC and member states also affirmed a new commitment to working with the CTDC to combat irregular migration, migrants smuggling and human trafficking.

For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/2Yx3HiB
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has partnered with nine local NGOs in Ethiopia to facilitate the reintegration of migrant returnees in four of the country’s nine regional states. The partnerships in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR) are being established under the programme: EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (the EU-IOM Joint Initiative).

The programme aims to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration management through the development of rights-based and development-focused procedures and processes on protection and sustainable reintegration. It is backed by the EU Trust Fund, covers and has been set up in close cooperation with a total of 26 African countries.

In the last two years, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative has provided support to more than 4,500 migrant returnees in Ethiopia.

Over 1,300 migrant returnees and vulnerable children are expected to be assisted by the implementing partners in 2019. The partners include the Beza Posternity Development Association; AGAR Ethiopia; Facilitator for Change; Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment; Hunde Oromo Grassroots Development Initiative and Haramaya University.

In addition, the Good Samaritan Association; the Mary Joy Development Association; the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development; and Social Service Commission North Central Ethiopia Synod Branch Office were involved.

Through these partnerships, returnees will receive needs-based, tailor-made assistance to help facilitate their reintegration, such as vocational and technical skills trainings, job placements and in-kind support for income generating activities. Additionally, linkages with financial institutions as well as other services like shelter, medical and psychosocial support will be provided as necessary.

Those vulnerable, such as children in the target areas, will be also able to access protection mechanisms and other relevant services including education, health and legal support. Community-based child protection systems will also be strengthened, and their accessibility improved through the programme.

Sara Basha, the Programme Coordinator of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Ethiopia, described reintegration as a very complex and multi-sectoral process requiring close partnerships with key stakeholders, namely, government and non-government actors.

Basha explained that establishing and strengthening partnerships is among the key strategies of the programme. “By engaging local NGOs, the programme is able to increase its capacity to reach out to as many returnees as possible and provide reintegration assistance.”

IOM has also moved to strengthen linkages with the private sector, academic institutions and local community structures to ensure the implementation of effective reintegration activities.

“In all the locations, the implementation partners work closely with the local government and the local community. This strengthens the programme’s follow-up and monitoring system and enhances local ownership of the programme.”

Sara Basha, Programme Coordinator for the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Ethiopia

For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/2YFXRNG
An ever-present danger for irregular migrants in the Horn of Africa is the fear of being trafficked: a very real possibility, with those most vulnerable being women and children.

In most cases, victims of trafficking (VOT) are drawn by the false promise of a lucrative job, or better opportunities for them and their loved ones. Their documents are usually confiscated. The victims are kept away from the outside world and made to work with little or no pay, sometimes in the sex trade.

28 year-old Lensa* from Oromia, the most populated of Ethiopia’s nine regional states, was persuaded to migrate by smugglers. She decided to migrate to Sudan en-route to Libya. Upon arrival in Sudan, her ‘employer’ kept her documents, denied her basic needs and rights, and forced her to work long hours. Her condition worsened and she decided to continue her journey to Libya where she was detained, physically abused and faced attempted sexual abuse.

Zinash*, a 40-year-old Ethiopian mother who lived in Sudan with her family. Like many, she made the decision to migrate to Europe in search of better opportunities. While transiting through Libya, Zinash, along with her family, were held captive and forced into domestic work. Her 12-year-old son and 18-year-old daughter also faced extreme hardship.

Both Lensa and Zinash recently returned home, assisted by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa (the EU-IOM Joint Initiative). They were part of a group of six VOTs.

Upon their arrival in Ethiopia, Lensa and Zinash - together with the children - received additional medical support provided by IOM and partners.

Lensa was referred to the Good Samaritan Association, a shelter working in partnership with IOM, and is currently receiving additional medical support. Zinash and her children are now back in their home town preparing for economic reintegration and educational support through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative.

The programme facilitates orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration management through the development of rights-based and development-focused procedures and processes on protection and sustainable reintegration.

It supports the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia, which has recently made significant effort to improve oversight over recruitment agencies, while also embarking on awareness raising work.

The Joint Initiative, backed by the EU Trust Fund, covers and has been set up in close cooperation with a total of 26 African countries.

*Not her real name
OVER 2,100 ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS RETURN HOME FROM YEMEN WITH IOM SUPPORT

ADDIS ABABA - ETHIOPIA
JUNE 2019

On 20 June 2019, a flight chartered by IOM with 96 migrants on board took off from Yemen, headed for Ethiopia. This movement was the 18th flight from Aden, Yemen, to Addis Ababa under IOM’s Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme, helping a total of 2,133 stranded migrants, including 570 children, return home since 28 May.

On 21 April, the authorities in Aden began detaining irregular migrants in large numbers. At its peak (between 27 April to 3 May), IOM estimates that over 5,000 people were held across three sites. The majority of the returning migrants were detained, many for nearly two months, in a makeshift migrant detention site at the 22 May Stadium in Aden city.

Since April 2019, IOM has been coordinating partners’ responses to this acute humanitarian situation. IOM is providing emergency food, water, sanitation and 24-hour health services to migrants in the stadium. IOM also established a diarrhoea treatment centre (DTC) in Ibn Khaldoon Hospital.

While IOM has supported over 2,000 people to return home so far, an additional 2,000 migrants are still in the stadium, many of whom are children. A couple of weeks after the arrival of the first batch, IOM supported the voluntary return of the remaining children.

“IOM provides voluntary humanitarian return assistance to detained migrants, as a last resort, and does not support the further detention of migrants, especially children, women and vulnerable groups,” said Mohammed Abdiker, IOM Director of Operations of Emergencies.

“All governments are obliged to provide protection for all people within their borders, regardless of immigration status. This protection is extended to detained migrants, including access to food, water, sanitation, health services and safe accommodation,” he added.

Despite the conflict in Yemen, migrants seeking opportunities in Gulf countries continue to make the treacherous journey by land and sea to the Arabian Peninsula. All along the route, migrants face many challenges in accessing protection and assistance.

Abdiker reaffirmed IOM’s commitment to supporting Yemen and other governments in the region to better manage migration, ensuring the safety and dignity of migrants, and trying to ensure that no one is left behind.

For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/325blyK

REINTEGRATING MIGRANTS SUSTAINABLY WHILE REHABILITATING THE ENVIRONMENT

Acute land demands and a degraded environment are issues returning migrants must often contend with

SANA’A - YEMEN/ADDIS ABABA - ETHIOPIA
JUNE 2019

Competition for scarce living space is a driving force in global migration, especially within Africa.

For migrants who opt to return to their countries of origin, coming home to confront the same scarce land that contributed to their initial migration can be quite disheartening.

Climate change and environmental degradation can result in serious economic challenges for populations that are highly dependent on rainfed agriculture. Migration can be an effective adaptation strategy but can
also place people in situations of grave vulnerability if not managed in a safe and regular way.

A degraded environment is just one issue returning migrants often must contend with, especially in countries with acute land demands, like Ethiopia. The adverse impacts of climate change in Ethiopia, particularly droughts and floods, displaced almost 300,000 people in 2018, according to research conducted by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

A new intervention, known as the “Integrated Sustainable Reintegration Assistance Project for Ethiopian Migrant Returnees in Amhara Region,” is designed to address this reality, by seeking change through a community-based approach under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.

The project was launched in June 2019 in Kombolcha town, in Ethiopia’s Amhara region, under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration.

IOM will implement this initiative in partnership with the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus/ Development and Social Service Commission (EECMY/DASSC).

The project aims to create an enabling environment that ensures sustainable reintegration for vulnerable Amhara returnees. It plans to promote sustainable economic, social and psychological reintegration through increased livelihoods and employment opportunities. Referral systems and counselling services are being designed to improve social cohesion between returnees and their communities of origin.

At the same time, a different arm of the community project is due to be implemented to help reduce land degradation in selected watershed areas in two kebeles (wards) of Habru Woreda (district), North Wollo Amhara region. Fruit tree cultivation will play a key role for identified community members and returnees.

“The community-based approach to programming through community focus groups ensures that the project does not only benefit returnees but also influence those who may be considering irregular migration, as they will be engaged in conversations about safe, regular and orderly migration during the focus group meetings.”

Endashaw Kassa, EECMY/DASSC Programme Officer.

Community members, along with returnees, will develop 70 hectares of watersheds whereby suitable soil conservation structures will be constructed to harvest rain water and trap silt sediments. That, in turn, will improve soil fertility and promote the productivity of trees and grasses that can help restore lost vegetation cover in these arid spots.

Fruit tree cultivation will also help generate income. In addition, over 240 community members will participate in “community conversations” that will discuss land degradation and how to minimize it.

Addisu Alamirew, the director of the implementing partner EECMY/DASSC, explained: “This new community-based project will not only address environmental and economic challenges faced by local people, but it will also extend to other societal issues affecting this region including climate change awareness, migration, gender and public health, through the community focus group activities.”

The EU-IOM Joint Initiative in the Horn of Africa is a EUR 43 million programme funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and is currently in its third year of implementation. It aims at facilitating safe, regular and responsible migration management through the development of rights-based and development-focused procedures and processes, focusing on migrant protection and sustainable reintegration. It is active in 26 African countries.
YOUNG ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES SHARE THEIR HARROWING IRREGULAR MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Two families reveal the true cost of irregular migration

ADDIS ABABA - ETHIOPIA
MAY 2019

IOM staff set off early from Addis Ababa, on Monday 8 April 2019, on a mission to reunite seven teenagers with their families. All of them are former irregular migrants who have voluntarily returned to Ethiopia, their country of origin.

Although unaccompanied minors are among the most vulnerable migrants and are always accompanied by a social worker on these re-unification missions, the actual process of reunification with their parents and guardians has become a routine act. IOM takes them home, often a day or more away from the capital.

As we travel by road to their localities, all seven boys on this particular trip open up and share their harrowing experiences.

Six have come from Djibouti — the main transit country traversed by Ethiopian migrants aiming to reach Yemen and then Saudi Arabia — while one has returned from conflict-ridden Yemen. All have spent a few days at the IOM-run Migrant Transit Centre, adjacent to Addis Ababa’s Bole International Airport.

We pass small towns in Oromia, the largest region in the country, and experience rural Ethiopia, the very communities from where many make the decision to emigrate. Neat houses line up on both sides of the highway, with minarets and the occasional church frequently breaking the skyline.

Livestock — mainly cows and goats — cross the busy highway with much more frequency than humans. There are also motor bikes and ‘bajaj’, the ubiquitous three-wheelers — clearly the main means of local transportation and also the most popular local business, in addition to restaurants and coffee stands.

On the second day, we say goodbye to four of the boys at Omo Nada in the Jimma Zone, where by prior arrangement their guardians are there to meet them. The advance preparation by IOM, which takes a couple of days, includes family tracing conducted by social workers from the government Bureau for Women, Children and Youth Affairs (BoWCYA). Among these social workers is Kasahun Worku, my companion on the trip.

The reunification of all seven boys must happen under the auspices of the Department of Women and Children in Oromia. This is in line with the working arrangement between IOM, UNICEF and BoWCYA.

Facilitating the return of the seven is the Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa, launched in December 2016 with funding from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). It is the first comprehensive programme of its kind to save lives, protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa.

The programme covers and promotes close cooperation among 26 African countries in the Sahel, Lake Chad, North Africa and the Horn of Africa regions.

“We’re living in extreme poverty. I took it (his emigration) as a solution to our situation.”

Yusuf embraces his mother, Bultu. Photo: IOM

Bitul: mother of a returnee
Back in Oromia, Yusuf hugs his mother, Bultu, who cannot hold back her tears when they reunite. It has been two months since they last saw each other.

Bultu says she was the only one who knew when her 17-year-old son left home. Her husband was unaware. “We’re living in extreme poverty. I took it (his emigration) as a solution to our situation,” she says.

Bultu has three other children, all girls. She’s also the breadwinner, as her husband cannot work — he is a TB patient. The family has no farmland. All they have is the patch of land where their house stands, she says. What little money they get comes from her cultivation and sale of khat, a stimulant plant.

“I’m so happy because he came back safely but I still have the same problem: what will I do for him?,” asks Bultu. She is certain on a couple of things though. “I don’t want him to try to emigrate again. I want him to go back to school.”

However, the family simply does not have the money for this. Even the three girls are not in school, Bultu says. She fears that unless Yusuf does not engage in a productive activity, he will again try to leave the country irregularly.

Misganu Guddina, the Protection Officer overseeing the reunion says the district receives many returnees, mostly from Yemen, Saudi Arabi and Djibouti. But there is no material assistance from the state to help them make a fresh start.

“When they ask for reintegration assistance we tell them to teach their neighbours about their suffering away from home, and to be strong in working to show us that they can change their lives in their country,” says Guddina.

Yusuf says he experienced a lot of hardship in the two months that he was away, such as hunger and sleeping outside in the bush.

“I am very disappointed in being back without achieving my goal,” he says. “I want to be involved in a trade but I have nothing to get me started…If I can get this, I can change my life and my family’s prospects.”

From onset, he enlisted the help of a smugglers’ network in his neighbourhood, recieving assurances that he would be assisted in his journey. But along the way, having paid money to get into Djibouti, he and his group were abandoned by the smuggler.

“Still, Sali made it to Yemen but soon sought to return home due to the extreme conditions he faced. His plan now, is to resume his education. But since school is several kilometres away, he wants to work and earn money to buy a motor bike that he will use to get to school, and also to earn money.

We leave him in the care of his aunt who has come to meet him. It also emerges that Sali’s 14-year-old brother, with whom he had travelled, is still in Yemen.

Indeed, the biggest pull factor for migrants is someone in their neighbourhood who has made it, says Worku, my travel companion.

Sara Basha, the coordinator of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative in Ethiopia, explains that the seven teenagers will be supported in line with the programme’s protocols. Reintegration support starts with post arrival assistance offered to returnees at the Transit Centre.

Migrants are provided with temporary accommodation, hot meals, general medical screening, psychosocial counselling and specialized medical follow-up for those with specific medical needs. Family tracing also happens at the Transit Centre with the support of social workers — like Worku — assigned by the government.

As of October 2018, out of 2,500 returnees assisted by EU-IOM the Joint Initiative in Ethiopia, 22 per cent were minors.

This piece, adopted from Medium, was prepared by Wilson Johwa, Regional Communications Officer at IOM’s Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa in Nairobi.

For more information please visit: https://bit.ly/2MaYeFV
ADDIS ABABA - ETHIOPIA  
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IOM Ethiopia, in coordination with the National Anti-trafficking and Smuggling Taskforce Secretariat and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) conducted a sensitization/capacity building workshop on 20 June 2019 in Bishofutu, on mainstreaming migration into national development plans. The workshop has been conducted under the framework of the “integrated migration into national development plans: towards policy coherence and the achievement of SDGs at the national and global level” project, with the support from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund, where the Government of the People’s Republic of China is a major contributor. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the familiarity and understanding of all taskforce members (and selected members of the regional taskforce) on structures of the migration related SDGs, as well as to enhance capacity on how to mainstream migration into national development plans.

All members of the National Anti-trafficking and smuggling taskforce at the federal level (about 36 in number) and member of the regional taskforce from six regions participated in the workshop, providing an increased awareness of the practical application of mainstreaming migration-related SDGs into national development policies.

IOM’S WORK IN ETHIOPIA IS SUPPORTED BY: