

CONDITIONS AND RISKS OF MIXED MIGRATION IN NORTH EAST AFRICA

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This report represents the knowledge, insights and contributions of many people, not least the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who gave their time and shared their experiences with the research team.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background:

This report focuses on the conditions and risks of migration in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. In particular, it focuses on the experiences of people who are on the move. The pattern of migration in this region is complex. No evidence was found to support the idea that large numbers of people are leaving their countries of origin with the intention of reaching Europe. The idea of crossing the Mediterranean to Europe often arose from disappointment at the conditions in neighbouring countries. Many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers target regional employment markets, such as Khartoum, or the closest options for protection, such as Cairo. There is substantial circular migration and intra-regional networks. Onward movement took place when these strategies failed to address protection needs or livelihood strategies and sometimes resulted in additional vulnerability to human rights abuses.

Research in Europe (Malta and Italy) was focused on interviews with almost 100 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees about their experiences before reaching the Mediterranean, so it does not consider direct EU policy responses to the sea crossings. Individuals interviewed for the report recount details of crossings of 10 separate border points between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, but also between Ethiopia and Sudan and Eritrea and Sudan and Libya. These crossing points vary very substantially in terms of the numbers of people crossing, the need for facilitators and the nature of the populations making the crossing.

Key Findings:

The lack of safe, regular migration opportunities drives migration underground, leading to risks of new human rights violations and abuses during the journey. Traditionally understood claims for international protection relate to circumstances in an individual's country of origin. These new protection concerns arise outside of individuals' countries of origin and are therefore unlikely by themselves to result in a successful asylum claim. Yet they require urgent humanitarian response. They may involve recognised refugees and asylum seekers but also those whose original migration was motivated reasons beyond those detailed in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. These motivations are typically mixed. Individuals often move to escape a combination of factors, including discrimination or human rights abuses, poverty or environmental degradation. Yet, regardless of motivation or status, individuals on the move are also at risk of human rights violations outside their country of origin. These circumstances of humanitarian protection appear to be growing across the region, but detailed information is lacking. Research identifies four major human rights and protection risks facing individuals on the move in this region, or at least circumstances which leave individuals more vulnerable to human rights violations and protection concerns.

First, onward movement of refugees, particularly Eritrean refugees, arises from a lack of protection but also creates further distinct protection risks.

Second, there is a risk that smuggling operations develop into trafficking once migration has begun. There is a clear legal distinction between smuggling and trafficking. Due to the common practice of individuals being passed from one group to another, in practice these processes may blur. Individuals may contact smugglers to facilitate their journey and find that they are then passed onto traffickers who, extort more money through ransom and mistreatment, sexual exploitation or forced labour. These exchanges are associated with border crossings. Individuals who have paid for their entire migration in advance or those who are suspected of being relatively wealthy in their countries of origin are most at risk.

Third, it is extremely common for migrants to lack official documentary evidence of their identity and this can increase their vulnerability when in contact with state officials. This may involve legally sanctioned punitive measures such as detention or deportation, additional demands for bribery, or both.

Finally, there is a growing population of unaccompanied minors migrating internationally and they face increased risks compared to other groups, since they are seen as significantly more vulnerable.

Research for this report paid considerable attention to flows of information and finance. Social networks remain of central importance in influencing the direction of future migrations and in many cases, funding those migrations. It is clear that potential migrants try to make the most of as many different information sources as possible. Movement may be organised and/or funded by family members, particularly when they are already in wealthier countries. Alternatively, several people interviewed for this research reported that they had left without telling family members in their countries of origin for fear that they would try to prevent them.

The ways in which states in the region manage migration and refugee movements is typically driven primarily by security interests. Plausible reports circulate of state officials' involvement in both smuggling and trafficking. Yet government regulation of migration is necessary to protect citizens and ensure proper treatment of migration groups. Spaces beyond government control, such as Southern Libya are the scenes of the greatest abuse of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The rule of law is the essential precondition to any attempt to start to resolve the abuses of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers that often occur with impunity.

Migration across the region is, by definition, international and so a coordinated international response is required to help ensure migrants' rights are protected. Although there are obvious European interests in supporting and financing such coordination, regional civil society actors reported significant mistrust of EU involvement in migration management and argued that regional concerns should always take priority. The paucity of data on intra-regional migration makes any long term planning particularly challenging.

FIGURE 1



*From the Migrant Footprints Database

1. INTRODUCTION

The scale of fatalities in the Mediterranean has become a humanitarian emergency that continues to shock the world (IOM 2014). Policy responses have failed to address this crisis, indeed the number of people rescued or killed at sea has seen further dramatic increases in the first months of 2015 (Grant 2015). The high level of political and media attention devoted to the Mediterranean crossing is largely explained by the tremendous, wasteful loss of life, but it is also facilitated by the systematic collection of relevant information and the obvious responsibility of wealthy countries to address the issues. The North East African migration system links the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia) and East North Africa (Egypt and Sudan), though research for this report only took place in Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan, in addition to interviews in Malta and Italy with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with recent experience of moving across the region. The central objective of this research is to investigate the conditions and risks faced by people on the move.

Serious human rights abuses of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers exist across this region but the lack of sufficiently detailed, regularly updated information about what is happening means that it does not receive the international attention that it deserves. A key finding of this research is that most people crossing borders in this region do not have the intention or the capacity to reach the Mediterranean. Yet increasingly regional migration systems are becoming inter-linked, so this broader regional migration system offers obvious potential for policy interventions to address the continued suffering of vulnerable migrants and may even help to address the Mediterranean tragedy. Looking beyond the Mediterranean is vital if the decision making of migrants and refugees is to be fully understood.

This report focuses on this regional North East African migration system, before the sea crossing. It pieces together the most current information available about regional migration, supplemented with interviews with migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and other stakeholders in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt as well as with people who have reached Italy or Malta and can reflect on their own experiences crossing North Africa. It draws on almost 100 interviews conducted between December 2014 and April 2015. The report's primary focus is Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, though those interviewed have a variety of origins. The governments of these three countries have long histories of support for refugees, though they have all responded to migration in robust ways in recent years, sometimes through repression and closure, at other times through approaches to protect human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. As growing numbers of individuals are willing to risk these international overland journeys, international coordinated response becomes increasingly necessary.

In the absence of opportunities for direct travel to desired destinations around the world, long, dangerous overland migration routes have become increasingly common over the last few decades. Four distinct international migration routes have been identified from North East Africa: a previous northern route, through Egypt and into Israel, and occasionally onwards to Europe, an eastern route to Yemen and Saudi Arabia, a southern route, through Kenya and onward to South Africa and a western route to Libya and for some eventually on to Europe (RMMS 2014). This report considers all cross border movements, primarily from the experience of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who are making the crossings. The report considers experiences across five significant borders, many with various crossing points, in addition to separate consideration of movement across Sudan: Eritrea to Ethiopia, Ethiopia to Sudan (with two obvious crossing points), Eritrea to Sudan, routes across Sudan, routes into and out of Egypt (with five common crossing points) and Sudan into Libya.

The origin of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers along this route highlights the significance of international protection as a key motivation for migration. Reliable statistics are only available once individuals have reached the Mediterranean, but at this point, Eritreans are shown to be one of the most significant migrant groups, accounting for 25% of all those rescued in the central Mediterranean in 2013 (Frontex 2014). There is also anecdotal evidence of Syrians flying to Khartoum in order to reach Libya and ultimately Europe, following the barriers to direct air travel, though this research could not confirm the significance of this migration pattern. Officials from international organisations also highlight concerns about particular vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied children, making up an increasing proportion of international migrants, though again, reliable statistical evidence simply does not exist to

confirm this. There is evidence of rising number of unaccompanied children arriving by sea in Italy where numbers doubled from just over one thousand to just over two thousand between April and July 2015.

Yet clearly not all those moving in the absence of human rights protection have clear protection claims under the definition found in Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Statistics of cross Mediterranean rescues for 2014 (Frontex 2015) suggest that refugees may have accounted for the majority of all those apprehended during the year.¹ This was not the case in this research, though interviews did not involve a representative sample of people on the move. A substantial number of Eritreans interviewed began their journey not in Eritrea itself but in the refugee camps in Sudan, or more frequently in Ethiopia. There is no systematic data on the significance of this onward movement, but the Eritreans interviewed in Ethiopia for this report emphasised the complete lack of hope of such protracted refugee situations (IOM et al, 2012). Other individuals emphasised motivations that would not give rise to protection claims under the terms of the 1951 convention, often arising from significant and long-standing experiences of poverty. There is often significant overlap between these groups. This, then, is the classic 'mixed migration' scenario involving individuals with both protection and non-protection related motivations for migration using the same routes and the same facilitators and typically experiencing the same levels of exclusion and abuse.

The remainder of this report is divided into eight additional sections. The following section reviews recent published information on migration in the North East African region, focusing particularly on information on Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. Section three provides an overview of the methods used in each of the five countries where research took place and the fourth section turns to the policy framework governing migration at a national level in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. The following three sections draw on new empirical research conducted for this report. Section five provides an overview of risks on the journey and reviews the very limited data that is available about different stages in the journey. Sections six and seven focus thematically on questions of protection, which were emphasised in interviews with most stakeholders and the nature, sources and extent of information used by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Finally, section eight turns to responses of states and non-state organisation, section nine concludes and the two appendices provide information on legislation in force in the three target countries and provide details of all individuals interviewed for this report.

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¹ Frontex's Annual Risk Analysis 2015, which covers 2014 (Frontex 2015) only lists the major nationalities of individuals apprehended on the Central Mediterranean route (from Egypt and Libya to Italy) which accounted for the large majority of maritime apprehensions during the year. Of a total of 170,664 apprehensions, there were 39,651 Syrians, 33,559 Eritreans and 26,340 'unspecified sub-Saharan nationals'.

2. THE CONTEXT OF MIXED MIGRATION IN NORTH EAST AFRICA

Migration across North Africa has not received the international attention that migration across the Mediterranean has received in recent years. This is beginning to change. This section reviews the most recent available information on migration across this region. The tremendous challenges of any kind of data collection are starting to be recognised, if not yet properly addressed. Since most government migration statistics are not public, these initiatives are mostly the result of cooperation between major Non-Governmental Organisations and international agencies, such as through the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) and the more recent Mixed Migration Hub (MHub). Interest from national governments is growing however, as international migration moves up national and regional agendas and several governments have passed new legislation targeting international migration. There are also regional initiatives, such as the twin Khartoum Processes, the African Union's Horn of Africa Initiative and the European Union's Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative which illustrate the significance of cooperation. All of this encourages further regional level research, most recently the comprehensive Going West report (RMMS 2014) but also substantial expansion of research activities in separate national contexts. This section reviews the main themes of this growing bibliography of research into migration across North East Africa, highlighting some significant gaps in current knowledge.

REGIONAL APPROACHES

Mixed migration flows from the East and the Horn of Africa to Europe started receiving attention only in the last decade. So far they have been mostly researched and documented in media and INGO reports published by international or Europe based organizations. There is a conspicuous lack of scientific studies and policy reports on mixed migration flows in the East and Horn of Africa published by local research institutions and national governments in the region, though there are a growing number of relevant policy initiatives, which address elements of mixed migration.

Recent research reports map the evolution of East African routes and highlight a developing trend amongst migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan to move westward passing through Libya by land and reaching Europe by sea (UNHCR, 2013; RMMS, 2014). These changing migratory trajectories reflect the growing obstacles and closure of previously used migration routes towards the east heading to Yemen and the Gulf States and towards the north through the Sinai Peninsula to Israel (Murphy and Ismael, 2014; The Global Initiative, 2014). The military operations in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the conflict in Libya have affected the evolution of migratory routes and the nature and dynamics of cross-border criminal smuggling and trafficking networks, which represent a source of internal instability and growing insecurity for the governments of transit countries (Aronson, 2014). All this research highlights the dynamism of these routes. Some people interviewed for this report suggest that the intense media focus on the dangers of migration to Libya in the first few months of 2015 is already having an impact on the selection of alternative routes. Information on the organisation and financing of smuggling and trafficking networks in the region is currently very limited (Altai Consulting and the UNHCR 2013, Shaw and Mangan, 2014, Altai Consulting for IOM, 2015).

A number of studies have also focused on the risks and dangers faced by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on the route, paying particular attention to immigration detention (RMMS, 2015, Altai Consulting for IOM, 2015), to the trafficking and smuggling of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (van Reisen et al. 2013), and to the fatalities of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees during irregular migration (IOM, 2014). The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (2015) published a study on the detention of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from the East and Horn of Africa in the main transit and destination countries on the Eastern Africa-Europe route. The analysis focused on various aspects of the detention of non-nationals for immigration-related purposes, including the integration in national legislation of international legal instruments regulating immigration detention, types of immigration detention centres and conditions in detention, the effects of detention on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and possible alternatives to detention. According to the report, most countries, with the exception of Eritrea, allow some degree of detention monitoring, but none of the countries in the region have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which allows for the establishment of a system of regular visits undertaken by independent international and national bodies to state-run detention facilities (RMMS, 2015).

Other studies on mixed migration flows on the Eastern Africa route concentrate on the trafficking of Somali, Eritrean, Ethiopian and Sudanese migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and highlight cases of extreme violence and human rights abuses exercised by traffickers against the trafficked victims (van Reisen et al. 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2014; RMMS, October 2014). Van Reinsen et al. (2013) describe how during the journey, the situation of people on the move changes, they may start as smuggled migrants or refugees, but then become hostages, victims of trafficking and torture. These reports also examine how international legal instruments addressing trafficking in persons have been integrated into the national legal frameworks of transit countries and conclude that the governments of Egypt, Sudan and Libya have so far failed to adequately identify and prosecute human traffickers and the government officials colluding with organised trafficking networks (van Reisen et al. 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2014; RMMS, October 2014).

The monitoring and reporting of migrant fatalities has also attracted attention, particularly after the International Organization for Migration published the report 'Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost During Migration', which estimates that globally since 2000 around 40,000 people lost their lives during irregular migration by land and sea. The highest number of reported victims in 2014 was from Africa and the Middle East (IOM, 2014). The report stressed that the actual number of fatalities may be higher given that many migrants and refugee die and disappear in dangerous waters and remote regions of the world and their bodies are never discovered. The RMMS report 'Blinded by Hope' (June 2014) demonstrates that migrants and refugees are often aware of the risks that they face when they embark on the irregular journey to Europe, but they still take the decision to move in order to escape the unbearable circumstances in their home countries, in the hope of reaching a safe place where they can find protection and a better future (RMMS, June 2014).

The growing awareness of increasing numbers of migrants and refugees ready to face violence and human rights violations and abuses in order to reach Europe through irregular migration channels has led to the establishment of two new parallel regional policy initiatives, the African Union's Khartoum Process and the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (or the EU Khartoum Process). Discussions to establish these processes began in May 2014, at a meeting between the European Union and the African Union in Khartoum. This was followed by a sub-regional conference involving Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Sudan, and Tunisia, in October 2014 under the auspices of the African Union² which launched the AU Khartoum Process. Participating States recommend ratification of relevant international instruments; measures to prevent trafficking and smuggling; build capacities to prosecute perpetrators, protect and support victims, and ensure the treatment of persons in need of international protection in line with relevant regional and global conventions; and strengthened international cooperation and coordination to fight trafficking and smuggling. The member states also agreed on a joint strategy and action plan to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling, which stresses three main areas of intervention: prevention, victims' protection and assistance, and enforcement of laws and prosecution of traffickers and smugglers. The parallel EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative was officially launched in November 2014 in Rome.³

In April 2015 the Government of Egypt hosted the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Khartoum⁴ process and attended by Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Malta. Neither the AU, nor the EU Khartoum Process, however, tackle one of the key root causes of irregular migration from the Horn of Africa to Europe, that is the lack of legal migration channels (Reuters and RMMS, 15 April 2015). Some observers have therefore suggested that these processes could be expanded and turned into regional dialogues on migration and mobility which can also address the causes of irregular and mixed migration flows in a more comprehensive manner (Martin and Bonfanti, 2015).

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2 <http://weblog.iom.int/khartoum-process-eu-au-cooperate-combat-human-trafficking-horn-africa>

3 <http://italia2014.eu/media/3785/declaration-of-the-ministerial-conference-of-the-khartoum-process.pdf>

4 <http://www.iom.int/news/khartoum-process-meeting-agrees-concrete-action-needed-save-lives-mediterranean-sea>

ETHIOPIA

In the Ethiopian context, migration from Ethiopia and Eritrea to Europe has been given much less attention than migration to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In 2011 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) provided numbers from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggesting that there were between 75,000 and 100,000 Ethiopians going to Libya each year (ILO, 2011). No more recent estimates exist. In addition, many Eritreans in refugee camps in Ethiopia also migrate through Sudan with the intention of reaching Europe. Despite the high numbers of Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants and refugees, little is known about their journeys from Ethiopia to Sudan. Attention has focused on the Metemma border crossing (Terre des Hommes, 2013, UNHCR, 2013, RMMS, 2013) although there is limited research conducted on how people cross the border and what risks they encounter on the journeys.

In recent years research has turned to the risks and dangers in Libya and Egypt (see e.g. MHUB 2015, IOM, 2014, RMMS 2014, UNHCR, 2013), but on the Ethiopia-Sudan border Terre des Hommes (2013) has highlighted the risk of trafficking and women becoming involved in sex work in Metemma. Border crossing in the area of Humera, where Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea meet has been overlooked, but is widely used by Ethiopians in the north of the country as well as Eritreans. Moreover, the ILO claims that another 'route recently being used to reach Sudan goes through Wollega and then Gambela or Assossa (2011: 49). Traffickers/smugglers use these routes to avoid being intercepted by officials.' There is no other information available on this route, and with the civil war that has followed the independence of South Sudan this route may have changed.

In contrast to the conditions in the northern parts of the route from the Horn of Africa to Europe, much less attention has been paid to the conditions of migrants and refugees in Ethiopia and how they perceive them (an exception is Treiber, 2013, 2014). Despite being prima facie refugees, Eritreans in Ethiopia actually face similarly constrained livelihood opportunities as many Ethiopian migrants faced in Ethiopia. Once their immediate protection concerns have been resolved, by getting out of Eritrea, the reasons which push them to seek further opportunities are often closely related to the causes of migration for many Ethiopians. These conditions, and the complete lack of hope for positive change in the future, are central to their decision to migrate. Migrants and refugees appear to be aware of the potential dangers of irregular onward migration, though not always the details. RMSS (2014: 5) finds that a large proportion of Ethiopians going to Yemen were 'prepared to endure harsh circumstances in order to attain their migration goals'. There is no information on how migrants and refugees evaluate these risks. In order to fill this gap, the current report considers how migrants, refugees and asylum seekers obtain information about the journeys and how they perceive the risks and dangers.

Possibilities for migration also need to be considered in relation to the increasing attention to trafficking in Ethiopia. In 2012, the government set up a 'National Committee Against Trafficking', and 'Ethiopia regards itself as being tough on migrant smuggling and trafficking, and so tries to regulate the recruitment market for labour migrants' (RMMS, 2013: 35). With increased emphasis on prosecuting and punishing the government intends to control migration and protect vulnerable migrants and refugees (Messele and Gebeyehu, unpublished). There is currently no clear distinction between smugglers and traffickers (RMMS, 2013) and at present all cross-border movements are subject to government efforts to control migration, though a distinction is planned in the law that is currently under discussion.

EGYPT

Egypt is home to a large population of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, from the Middle East, Europe, East-Asia, and Africa. The largest state in the Middle East and North Africa in terms of population, it has historically been – and continues to be – primarily a country of emigration towards the oil-producing countries of the Arab Middle East, as well as towards Europe and North America.

Since the 1990s, however, Egypt has also become a significant destination and transit country. According to census data, in 2006 184,070 foreigners were regularly resident in Egypt, mainly from Arab and European countries (EUI MPC, 2013). Inward refugee flows on the other hand originate mostly from Sudan and the Horn of Africa, but also, since the mid-2000s, from Iraq and more recently Syria. As of 2014, the biggest refugee communities were from Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.

UNHCR planning figures for 2015 estimates that over 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers are resident in the country, of whom less than 200,000 were assisted by the agency in Egypt (UNHCR 2015b). Of them, 140,000 are Syrians, while the second biggest groups are Sudanese and Somalis. Outlining its planned operations for 2015, UNHCR underlines the need to enhance 'sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) response measures', and warns that the instability that has characterised Egypt since the 2011 uprising is likely to negatively affect its operation also in 2015 (UNHCR 2015b).

Migration to Egypt from the rest of Africa and the Middle East is neither a new nor a recent phenomenon. Students, migrants and refugees from Sudan and Somalia, for instance, have been moving to Egypt since its independence, counting on facilitated visa regimes and on well-established community networks in all of the country's major cities. In the last two decades however, the dynamics of the migratory route originating from the Horn of Africa and transiting through Sudan and Egypt have been significantly altered by protracted instability, political violence, and wide-spread livelihood insecurity across the region.

Throughout its history since independence Egypt has never hosted major refugee camps – the only exceptions being the two Palestinian camps opened near Cairo in 1948 and quickly dismantled, and the Salloum camp, at the border post with Libya, closed in late 2014. Its refugee population is thus primarily self-settled in urban areas. As a consequence, academic studies and policy analyses about migration to the country thus tend to focus on protection space, livelihood opportunities and rights framework for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees living in major cities like Cairo and Alexandria. Even though these analyses are crucial for a thorough understanding of migration in the region, the focus on migrant lives in urban areas has also meant that significantly less attention has so far been paid to the conditions in which people travel to or transit through Egypt.

In the last few years however, international rights groups' concerns about trafficking networks active in the country on the one hand, and migration-related detention on the other, have contributed to the development of a different body of research. Concerns about trafficking have grown in particular after the publication of the 2014 Human Rights Watch report entitled "I wanted to lie down and die", detailing the phenomenon of kidnapping for ransom and torture of Eritrean asylum seekers in the Sinai Peninsula. Already in 2013, both Amnesty International and the US Department of State Trafficking Global Report expressed concern about trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, trafficking of domestic workers, and exploitation of children – including street children – in sex tourism, but also highlighted the worrying phenomenon of migrants being kidnapped and tortured for ransom.

“Foreign migrants, particularly from Eritrea, Sudan, and to a lesser extent Ethiopia, are smuggled or kidnapped by organized criminal groups and, in many cases, held captive under extended periods in the Sinai by Bedouin and other Egyptian smugglers as they attempt to migrate to Israel. An increasing number of these migrants are reportedly forced into sexual servitude or forced labor during their captivity, based on documented victim testimonies; in many cases, there were also allegations of extreme torture. As many as 2,000 migrants, including men, women, and children, cross the Israeli border from the Sinai every month; Egyptian border patrols commonly shoot and sometimes kill these migrants, some of whom may be trafficking victims, as they attempt to cross the Israeli border.”
(US Department of State Trafficking Global Report, 2013, p. 146).

According to Dan Connell (2013), recent developments such as information campaigns by Eritrean diaspora-based media, cases of legal persecution in Sudan and – since the transition to the new government led by Abdel Fattah El Sisi – the launch of Egyptian military operation in Sinai to control the local Islamist insurgency have led to trafficking being rerouted, rather than eradicated.

Smuggling and trafficking in persons in Egypt, and the migration routes through which they take place, are complex and shifting transnational phenomena, encouraged by the 'artificial' nature of African borders and linked to historical movements of nomadic populations and goods that "blur the boundaries of licit and illicit trade" (Brown 2013, p. 2). As will be shown in the analysis below, the land and water routes that connect Egypt to Sudan, Southern Libya and Sub-Saharan Africa historically allow the circulation not only of migrants, but also, for instance, of fuel, metals, water and fishery. Human mobility along these

routes is strongly influenced by the dynamics through which goods circulate, but also by the complexity of local cultures and family relations, and by the ever shifting political and social contexts, in the countries of origin as well as in Egypt.

SUDAN

Sudan is a source, transit and destination country for asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants transiting along the Eastern African Migratory Route and into North Africa in what is widely referred to as mixed migratory flows (IOM and UNHCR, 2015). There are several economic, social or structural factors, as well as conflicts, which compel people to leave their countries of origin and migrate to North Africa and onwards to Europe and other locations. However, with limited or no options to legally migrate, many undertake the risk of travelling across borders violating border controls. During their journey they face harsh conditions, unscrupulous brokers, and punitive treatment by government authorities. This often resulted in widespread human rights violations, gaps in migrant protection, and significant human suffering.

Sudan currently hosts 167,000 refugees and asylum seekers in eastern Sudan, Darfur and Khartoum (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2015). As with current trends in the Greater Horn of Africa region and beyond, the numbers are expected to increase exponentially as the humanitarian situation deteriorates, adding further pressure on the host government, communities and organisations providing essential services. According to UNHCR estimates, there could be up to 460,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Sudan by the end of 2015 (UNHCR, 2015). The largest numbers of refugees are South Sudanese and Eritrean refugees, countries which saw a sharp increase of refugees in 2014 (UNHCR Briefing Note, 2014).

Apart from hosting a large number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, Sudan is also host to a large Internally Displaced Population (IDP) estimated at 3,100,000 (IDMC, 2015). With conflicts and tension in several areas of the country, this has added pressure on service providers in the country.

3. METHODS USED IN RESEARCHING THIS REPORT

Research was coordinated from the University of Sussex, UK, in close cooperation with the Mixed Migration Hub (MHub) and the IOM Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa. Primary data collection took place in Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Malta and Italy. These countries are key points in a complex and increasingly intra-regional migration system. They are also reasonably practical locations for fieldwork, whereas fieldwork would not have been possible in other important locations in the region, such as Eritrea and Somalia. Fieldwork focused on collecting very recent information on migration routes and associated risks within North East Africa. The primary data source was interviews with migrants, members of their families and other stakeholders. The aim was to interview migrants and refugees who had left their country of origin since the beginning of 2014 or with members of their families. In some cases individuals had left and then returned, in others they were en route through the research locations and in a few cases their relatives were interviewed about the information that they had gained through communication with the migrants. Given the difficulty of contacting and interviewing migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in some contexts, the 2014 cut-off date was not absolutely rigid and some people were interviewed who had left their countries of origin earlier.

Interviews with migrants and refugees included questions on the following topics: family and social background, reasons for leaving their country, sources of information about routes, dynamics of their journey to or from Egypt, Ethiopia or Sudan (including smuggling economies), perceptions of risk and vulnerabilities during the journey, living conditions in the country in which they were located at the time of the interview and protection. Interviews with migrants and refugees were supplemented by interviews with other stakeholders. In a few rare situations this included government employees but this group was mostly made up of NGO and IO officials. All data collected was protected in accordance with IOM Data Protection Principles⁵.

All researchers had extensive experience of fieldwork in their destination country and all spoke at least one of the official languages of the countries in which they were working. Interviews generally lasted for one hour. Nevertheless, given the diversity of migrants and refugees interviewed, approximately half of the interviews were conducted with an interpreter. Interviewees were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research and how the information they provided would be used. Researchers obtained oral consent for each of the interviews. No incentives were provided to individuals in exchange for their testimonies. Where interviewees agreed, interviews were recorded, otherwise detailed notes were taken. All names, precise ages, neighbourhoods, and other identifying details have been withheld in this report at the request of the interviewees. Full details of all interviewees (for migrants and refugees: sex, approximate age, nationality, location of interview; for other stakeholders: position, organisation) are provided in the appendix. The rest of this section outlines methods for each of the five national studies.

ETHIOPIA

Research in Ethiopia took place from 20 January and 9 February 2015. In total, 17 migrants and refugees and three family members of migrants were interviewed. Eight representatives from government offices and international organisations were also part of this research. The interviews were conducted in Amharic, Tigrinya (with a translator) and English and took place in Addis Ababa, Adigrat, Shire and the refugee camps Mai Aini and Adi Harush. The ages of and family members interviewed ranged from 20 to 45 years, and there were eight females and 12 males. Three of the interviewed females from Eritrea had come to Ethiopia as unaccompanied minors.

A challenge for this research was to find migrants and refugees who had gone to Sudan since the beginning of 2014. The interviewees had recently returned from Sudan or arrived from Eritrea, and many were preparing to migrate to Europe. Information about routes to Sudan is therefore not completely up to date, but reflects how migrants and refugees drew on their own former experiences on these routes as well as other sources to assess the risks and dangers.

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5 IOM Data Protection Manual http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=47&products_id=759

EGYPT

Fieldwork in Egypt took place between 8 and 18 of January 2015. Although initial plans included a short period of research in the Aswan governorate, this was subsequently abandoned since we were unable to get appropriate permission to conduct research in that location. Empirical research was thus limited to the Cairo area: all the migrants, refugees and practitioners interviewed were living and working in the Egyptian capital, with the exception of one IOM medical coordinator based in Aswan, with whom interviews (a first one in January, and a follow-up one in April) were conducted over Skype. The overall sample included 26 individuals: 21 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, 2 IO medical coordinators, 1 IO caseworker, and 2 IO translators and community facilitators. Asylum seekers and refugees included individuals from 4 nationalities: 8 Ethiopians (Oromo), 6 Eritreans, 5 Sudanese (4 Darfurian), and 2 Syrians; among these, 6 were women, and 15 men. Unaccompanied minors were also represented in the sample (2 individuals, both Ethiopian-Oromo). In order to make sure that up-to-date data on routes are gathered, all the asylum seekers and refugees interviewed had arrived in Cairo in the second half of 2014. Similarly, since protection and trafficking had emerged as major issues from the analysis of secondary literature, all of them – including those who were selected from the IOM caseload – were registered with the UNHCR.

Since over half of the interviewees were not fluent in the languages spoken by the researcher – English and Arabic – interpreters were used in interviews with informants whose mother tongue was Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, and Massalit. All the interpreters employed were professionals working for international and non-governmental organizations in Cairo, and had received specialised training in interpretation in asylum settings through the Cairo Community Interpreter Project, based at the American University in Cairo.

Overall, the sample was significantly diverse, and the data generated rich, covering nearly all the aspects of migrants and refugees' journeys. Nevertheless, the following limitations due to legal and security restriction to research activities in Egypt should be taken into account. First, the migrant, asylum-seeker and refugee sample was drawn exclusively from the IOM and UNHCR caseload, and all the interviews were conducted in a designated area at the IOM Egypt office. This is likely to have influenced interviewees' responses to questions related to aid agencies and protection issues, although, as will be shown, some of the informants were particularly vocal in expressing what they believed were their unmet protection needs. Also due to the limited access to migrant and refugee communities outside of the UNHCR-IOM caseload, the sample included only 2 Syrian individuals, belonging to the same household. Syrians being by far the biggest refugee group in Egypt, this constitutes a particularly significant limitation. Besides the reasons related to the specific conditions in which the study was carried out (timing and setting), the difficulty in accessing Syrians might be related to the tendency among this particular group of refugees, who generally can count on better family and financial resources, to minimize contacts with aid agencies. However, given the absence of substantial interview or ethnographic data about Syrians in Egypt, this hypothesis cannot be supported empirically.

ITALY

The fieldwork in Italy took place between 29 January and 8 February 2015. The two main locations were the city of Rome and Sicily, which has become the first port of entry for migrants and refugees arriving from Northern Africa in recent years. In Italy, a total of 20 interviews were conducted: 12 interviews with migrants and refugees and 8 interviews with institutional actors. In Rome, interviews were conducted with four young male asylum seekers, two Syrians and one Palestinian from Syria and one Palestinian from Gaza. All the interviewees had travelled through North East Africa and arrived in Rome in 2014, taking a boat either from Egypt or from Libya. In Sicily most research was conducted in the Centro Accoglienza Richiedenti Asilo (CARA) [Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers] in Mineo. The interviewees were identified among the arrivals in 2014 on the management's database and were contacted and recruited with the assistance of the Eritrean and Somali cultural mediators who also translated the interview interaction. A final interview took place in the Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati (SPRAR) Centre (the System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) located in an old agriturismo renovated to host asylum seekers and refugees seeking international protection in Italy.

Only one woman was interviewed in Italy. This is an obvious limitation in terms of the representativeness of the sample since women were present in significant numbers but were unwilling to be interviewed, although the interviewer was also a woman. This was explained by lack of time due to childcare responsibilities, although it is also likely that this reflected an unwillingness to discuss the dangers and sufferings they experienced during the journey, or refusal of permission from male relatives. In addition to the interviews with the asylum seekers, in Italy the researcher also interviewed two representatives of IOM Italy in the Head Office in Rome, 1 UNHCR Legal advisor and 1 IOM Legal Advisor working at the disembarkation ports in Sicily, the Director of the CARA in Mineo, the Director of the SPRAR Centres in Mineo, Ragusa and Comiso.

MALTA

The fieldwork in Malta took place between 3 and 10 December 2014. Research involved 11 interviews with asylum seekers and refugees who arrived in Malta at the end of 2013 and in 2014. Three interviews were conducted in the Balzan Open Centre and two interviews in the Hal-Far Open Centre. The rest of the interviews were conducted in a small park near the Marsa Open Centre, all with migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees from the centre. The interviewees were recruited through a snowballing technique working with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Malta and the managers of the Balzan and the Hal-Far Open Centres. In addition to interviews with the migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees, interviews were conducted with the JRS Deputy Country Director and a Maltese Human Rights activist. Interviews with Arabic speaking asylum-seekers and refugees from Syria and Sudan were conducted by the researcher while interviews with Eritrean and Somali asylum-seekers and refugees were conducted by the researcher with the support of translators. Fieldwork in Malta took place at the same time as a change of the Minister for Home Affairs and National Security, and for this reason it was not possible to contact officials from this Ministry.

SUDAN

Research in Sudan took place in March and April 2015. The principle researcher for the Sudanese research was not granted a visa so could not visit Sudan in person. Although a short visit to Sudan was made by a member of the research team who did not require a visa, the researcher was not able to visit eastern Sudan due to a lack of travel permission and was not able to interview any representatives of the government or any international organizations in Khartoum due to concerns about the involvement in what was seen as a potentially sensitive piece of research. Two migrants were interviewed in Khartoum but were very hesitant to discuss issues of irregular migration with a Sudanese national who many assumed was working for the government. Two members of migrants families were also interviewed in person in Khartoum. Several intermediaries with knowledge of Sudan helped to identify and contact a further five migrant interviewees and those who could not be interviewed in Sudan were interviewed later remotely.

In total nine interviews were conducted with migrants and refugees or members of their families in Sudan, eight men and one woman. This included detailed accounts of people who were trafficked and those who had made the trip from Sudan to Europe. Two of these interviews were with Eritrean refugees, including the only woman interviewed and were conducted in Tigrinya, with a translator. The remaining seven were conducted in Arabic. These included two interviews with Sudanese return migrants, two interviews with family members of Sudanese migrants who had left very recently, two interviews with Ethiopian migrants and one interview with a family member of a recent Ethiopian migrant who was living in Khartoum. In addition, two Sudanese journalists who are closely monitoring trafficking and smuggling trends in and through Sudan were interviewed, again remotely.

4. POLICY CONTEXT

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is a major receiving country for refugees. It is party to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. It is also one of the original signatories on the 1969 Organisation of African Unity (now African Union) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. In January 2015, UNHCR was providing assistance to more than 720,000 people in the country. The largest national groups were approximately 100,000 Eritreans, 250,000 Somalis and 300,000 South Sudanese. UNHCR planning figures for 2015 estimate that these populations will rise by between five and ten percent by the end of the year (UNHCR 2015a).

There are no simple solutions to the current refugee situation in Ethiopia and UNHCR is attempting to provide better conditions for the refugees:

UNHCR has been urging States to increase the yearly resettlement quota from about 3,700 in 2014 to double that in 2015, but few countries are open for accepting more refugees. Through increased resettlement, there will be some hope for the refugees living in the camps and may contribute to decreased irregular migration and human trafficking. To improve the conditions in the camps UNHCR is advocating with the Ethiopian government for the grant of the right to work for Eritrean refugees. Ethiopia has signed the UN 1951 convention on refugees, but with reservations regarding possibilities for work. Because of lack of work for their own population and not wanting to put more pressure on the limited possibilities by allowing refugees to work, the Ethiopian government is holding back. UNHCR is negotiating to allow refugees to be allowed to work, though there is some acceptance for them working informally. ⁶

Thus, the UNHCR has limited means to do more than attempt to advocate with the Ethiopian government as well as other countries to receive more Eritreans through state resettlement schemes.

In Ethiopia, there has been an increasing emphasis on regulating migration after the National Committee Against Human Trafficking was established in 2012. According to Fernandez (2013: 819) 'licensed PEAs [private employment agencies] are regulated through government proclamations, while unlicensed brokers engaged in smuggling and trafficking are regulated under criminal law.' Any support provided for irregular border crossing is considered smuggling or trafficking:

According to public statements, the Ethiopian government treats human smuggling as seriously as human trafficking and perpetrators are prosecuted when caught. Every year smugglers and traffickers (the distinction is not always clear) receive prison sentences (RMMS, 2013).

Although Ethiopia has ratified the 2001 Palermo protocol, which clearly distinguishes between smuggling and trafficking, this distinction has yet to be translated into domestic law and available information suggests that this distinction was not operated in practice. There is therefore no distinction between those who help people reach their destinations for payment and those who seek to take advantage of migrants and refugees. It is clear that 'there are many gaps in the legal frame-work in Ethiopia making prosecution challenging for the Ministry of Justice' (Siegel and Kuschminder, 2011). Fernandez elaborates on these gaps:

Notwithstanding the official discourse on combating trafficking evident in the constitution of the task force, a point to note is that the existing weak regulatory enforcement makes little distinction between trafficking and the smuggling activities of unlicensed brokers. The public prosecutor revealed that Articles 596 and 597 prohibiting trafficking are rarely used to prosecute transnational trafficking offences. Instead, the article on smuggling - 598 (Unlawful Sending of Ethiopians to Work Abroad) - along with Article 571 (Endangering the Life of Another) are more commonly used for prosecution, because proving the degree of coercion and deception required to establish trafficking is more difficult (2013: 822).

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⁶ Interview, two staff members at UNHCR, Addis Ababa, January 2015.

In addition to the issues of legislation, the numbers of convictions and the sentences given are not readily available. The only published source is the US Department of State (2014), which claims that:

The federal government reported prosecuting 137 cases involving an unknown number of defendants relating to transnational labor trafficking under Article 598; of these cases, the Federal High Court convicted 106 labor traffickers.

This number does not present the total number of convictions related to smuggling and trafficking, but the number is very low considering the large number of people crossing Ethiopia's borders irregularly. In contrast to unlicensed brokers, smugglers and traffickers, migrants and refugees are generally not prosecuted for 'illegally crossing borders and violating the immigration law' (ILO, 2011: 19) although they could be under existing laws. With little risk for prosecution, brokers operate freely and many Ethiopians and Eritreans use them to facilitate their journeys to Sudan (Terre des Hommes, 2013).

EGYPT

Egypt has ratified nearly all of the most significant international instruments, including the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, its 1967 Protocol and the core human rights treaties. Egypt is party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol (although with reservations as to labour and social rights), as well as of the 1969 Organization of the African Union (AU) Convention, yet Egypt never developed its own internal asylum procedures and institutions. Asylum matters are formally administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior, in particular, by the Refugee Affairs section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, according to a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNHCR signed in 1954, the UN office is de facto in exclusive charge of registration, documentation and refugee status determination (RSD) procedures.

The Ministry of the Interior Decree 8180, issued in 1996, formally introduced a three-year permit for refugees. However, both refugees (holding a UNHCR 'blue card') and asylum seekers (UNHCR 'yellow card'), are more commonly provided with temporary, renewable permits valid no longer than six months. Different residence regulations apply to Palestinian refugees. Like all foreigners, refugees in Egypt are also excluded from the ownership of land by Law 124 of 1958 (an exception to this was introduced in 1963 for Palestinian refugees). This applies to both desert and agricultural land, and, according to the 1996 decree, it is motivated by "security reasons".

In the last decade, improvements have been made to the legal provisions ensuring the protection of vulnerable migrants and refugees. Anti-trafficking legislation has been adopted: Law 64/2010 on Combating Trafficking in Persons stipulates the provision of protection services under Art 22; while an anti-smuggling law is currently in the process of being drafted, in accordance with the relevant Palermo Protocol. A number of constitutional amendments introduced between 2012 and 2014 have increased the available legal guarantees for refugees and asylum seekers in particular. For instance, the Egyptian Constitution of 2012 – suspended in 2014 by the new Constitution – explicitly forbids the extradition or deportation of political refugees. The 2014 Constitution also provides guarantees that are applicable to migrants and other categories of non-citizens, particularly in relation to detention. For example, Article 54 defines the right to challenge detention, while articles 55 and 56 clearly forbid torture and establish that judicial oversight be a requirement in all detention institution. Nonetheless, migrants and refugee rights-groups in Egypt commonly report cases of refugees being deported.

As a result, legal guarantees remain limited and assistance and integration policies tend to be neglected, while efforts are concentrated in the areas of border enforcement, detention of undocumented and irregular migrants, and deportation agreements. In this regard, several legal instruments have been introduced: the 2014 Constitution, the 1960 Law on Entry and Residence, the Criminal Code, and a number of presidential decrees.

The Law on Entry and Residence of Aliens in the Territories of the United Arab Republic and their Departure Therefrom (Law No. 89 of 1960 as amended by law No. 88 of 2005) and the Presidential

Decree Security of the Eastern Border of Arab Republic of Egypt (1995) are the two main administrative law instruments that deal with irregular entry into or exit from the Egyptian territory. Both include particularly strict detention measures for irregular border crossing. For instance, Article 27 of Law No. 89 of 1960 establishes that "authorities can keep non-citizens in detention after they complete criminal sentences until they are deported" (Global Detention Project, 015).

The actual application of these laws, however, appears uneven. For instance, the Global Detention Project has noticed how detention terms vary significantly depending on the nationality of the migrant, circumstances of apprehension, and judges and police forces' discretion. Arbitrary, unlawful detention and trials of migrants in military tribunals for illegal entry into the country is also common (Human Rights Watch 2008, 2013). The US Department of State (2013) defines Egypt's anti-trafficking efforts as "significant, but uneven" (US Department of State Trafficking Global Report, p. 147).

SUDAN

The largest refugee group in Sudan are Eritreans, of whom there were over 110,000 at the beginning of 2015, the majority assisted by UNHCR (UNHCR 2015c). Eritrean refugees are supported are in a number of camps in Eastern Sudan. The number of Eritrean refugees is expected to grow to more than 125,000 during 2015. Other smaller refugee groups include Chadians and South Sudanese.

The Sudanese government devotes increasing attention to their efforts to combat trafficking in and through Sudan, and the number of verified incidents has declined since 2012 (UNHCR, 2015). In March 2014, an anti-trafficking legislation was signed into law, which prescribes between three and 10 years' imprisonment for acts of trafficking, between five and 20 years' imprisonment for aggravated trafficking, and capital punishment in cases where the trafficking victim dies or other serious crimes are committed, such as rape (The combating of Human Trafficking Act, 2014). This is supported by the establishment of a National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking .

According to recent data, the number of reported incidents of trafficking reduced significantly in 2013 and 2014 from 338 reported incidents to only 73 in a year (UNHCR and IOM, 2015). However, this may not reflect the rise in the number kidnapping (UNHCR, 2014), or other forms of human rights violations.

An increased number of refoulement cases were reported in 2014, highlighting a trend that the Sudanese authorities are attempting to curb irregular movement (UNHCR, 2015). This also emerged with the passing of the latest Asylum Act, which was signed into law in March 2014, with provisions to maintain a restricted freedom of movement for refugees. In November 2013, Gedaref state enacted its Immigration and Human Trafficking Law and similar laws were passed in Kassala. Sudan is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention⁷ and the 1967 Additional Protocol⁸, and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems In Africa⁹.

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7 Ratified February 1974

8 Ratified May 1974

9 Ratified on December 1972

5. MAPPING ROUTES AND RISKS ACROSS NORTH EAST AFRICA

The routes and intended destinations for all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed were flexible and changed along with the opportunities and constraints they faced on their way. The length of the journey depended on the circumstances of migrants and refugees' departure and their migratory plans. Many of the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed stated that they had no plans to reach Europe, they only wanted to reach the first place of safety in neighbouring countries, or a country where they expected to have access to better living conditions and work opportunities. Several Eritrean refugees interviewed had simply crossed the border to the camps in Ethiopia. The resources that people had at their disposal to cover the costs of the travel and the encounters, risks and dangers they faced on the route also affected the duration of their journeys. Some interviewed in Europe had left their hometowns in 2006 and arrived in Malta and Italy in 2014, others started their journey in 2013 and arrived the following year, in 2014.

This section considers five significant borders, many with various crossing points: Eritrea to Ethiopia, Ethiopia to Sudan (with two obvious crossing points), Eritrea to Sudan, routes across Sudan, routes into and out of Egypt (with five common crossing points) and Sudan into Libya. These are sequenced to follow a route northwards, although only a small minority of those interviewed for this research planned to make the whole journey and few of those interviewed in Europe, left with the explicit intention of making it that far.

FROM ERITREA TO ETHIOPIA

Over the last three months of 2014 about 5,000 Eritreans entered Ethiopia each month. By the end of 2014, a total of 123,000 Eritreans were formally registered as refugees in Ethiopia.¹⁰ Eritreans cross the border to Ethiopia by foot and often at night to avoid detection because of the risk of being shot or detained by Eritrean border guards. All interviewees reported being very scared when fleeing Eritrea. Some of them crossed in groups of up to eight people, some with just one other person and some on their own. The crossings took place in rural areas away from main roads, but the areas where the interviewees had crossed were close to Rama, Gerehu Srlay, Zalambessa and Badme on the Ethiopian side. All of them had been found by Ethiopian soldiers who had taken them to the closest police station. From there they had been sent to the main registration centre for Eritrean refugees in Endabaguna and later to one of the four refugee camps located in the Tigray region. Refugees interviewed reported that the entire crossing, from leaving Eritrea to arrival at a refugee camp took from two to six days.

GD¹¹, a 27 years old man from Senafe in Eritrea now living in Adi Harush camp in Ethiopia explained the background to his decision to leave, the difficulties of crossing and the challenges Eritreans face in the refugee camps:

I have crossed to Ethiopia before, fleeing the army. I went to Shimelba and then to Sudan. There I stayed in Shegerab [refugee camp] for three months. There was no food, no facilities and no safety. Eritrean soldiers came to take people and I was taken too, but I did not know who they were and that they were taking me back to Eritrea until they showed me the Eritrean flag. I was put in a prison underground for six months in a very hot place. If you stay more than that you'll die. Because we were soldiers we were beaten with sticks a lot. Civilians get interrogated, but since they knew we were soldiers we were just beaten. After six months underground I came back to earth [up from the underground prison], and was sent to be a soldier at the border.

There were changing orders on how to deal with people who tried to cross the border; sometimes to catch them and sometimes to shoot to kill. Especially young soldiers didn't want to kill people fleeing from Eritrea so many shot off target, but we had to be careful not to be detected by superiors. We could only shoot off target once, if we missed a second and third time we would be punished. If Ethiopian soldiers started shooting back we could get away with it and let the refugees go. Military service doesn't end, so I fled. I went on a break to see my family, but didn't tell them that

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¹⁰ Interview, UNHCR staff, Addis Ababa, January 2015.

¹¹ All names used in this report have been changed.

I was intending to go to Ethiopia. I returned to military service and escaped with a friend. When we were crossing the border nobody was shooting at us because

we knew all the places well. Also, we left on a Sunday around lunch time when the soldiers would be drinking a bit and when there was little chance of being detected. Normally it would be 10 minutes to cross to Ethiopia, but we were hiding and being careful so it took us 40 minutes. Then we were taken by Ethiopian soldiers. First when I came to Ethiopia I was very happy, I felt like I had overcome Satan. Now, however, I can't be happy because I'm young and there are lots of things I have to change. I need to progress so that I can help my family, but in this situation I can't. I am at peace here, but I can't be happy. However, I'm human and have hope. For refugees here hope is cut, but one day one can overcome the challenges. (authors' interview with GD)

All Eritrean interviewees expressed great relief to have escaped safely from Eritrea. TS, a 25 year old man from Adi Kula in Eritrea, crossed to Ethiopia with four friends after hearing rumours that soldiers were coming to take him back to military service. They crossed at night and slept outside until Ethiopian soldiers found them in the morning:

I was very happy when I came to Ethiopia. Everything was peaceful in Ethiopia, and the first one or two months I didn't think about any problems, I was only happy. After that I started thinking about the problems and how to live. Being a refugee is difficult, there is no comfort. I want to accommodate to life in the camp and be happy with it, but it's hard. I don't want to go outside the camp and go to Shire, but I have to go because of malaria, health problems and worries. I have seen many people who have stayed for many years in the camps, but my hope is not cut yet. I still have hope. (Authors' interview with TS)

The hardship of living in camps for extended periods of time was evident to the interviewees, and it is necessary to consider how Eritreans experienced their migration from Eritrea and their current situation in Ethiopia to understand how they perceive the risks and dangers of onward migration to Sudan and Europe. TS intended to try to get resettlement through UNHCR, but if that did not work out he was determined to find other ways to go abroad: 'With or without enough money to go abroad illegally I will try to go, regardless of the risks.' He clarified that many people who did not have relatives abroad could not afford to pay smugglers and walked to Sudan on their own, and that he intended to do the same. For those who live in the camps of Mai Aini, Adi Harush, Hitsats and Shimelba the nearest route to cross into Sudan is in the area of Humera.

FROM ETHIOPIA TO SUDAN

Over the past years, a large number of refugees and migrants who are smuggled have been exploited, abused and in several instances end up being trafficked in transit in Egypt, Libya and Sudan. The monthly arrival rate in 2015 to Sudan is approximately 1350 people, of whom 80 percent leave the refugee camps within a few months (UNHCR and IOM, 2014). However, the actual number of refugees and migrants transiting through Sudan is believed to be much higher. Anecdotal evidence has shown that many of the Ethiopians, Eritreans and other nationals who have made it to Italy or perished along the way, have come through Kassala and Gadarif in eastern Sudan, while exit points include Northern State via Dongola onto Libya and Halayeb en-route to Egypt (Interviews, 2015). Many Sudanese are also using the same migratory routes and suffering the same abuses but largely once they leave Sudan (Interviews with TR, 8 March 2015; Interview with QS, 29 March 2015).

There are some data gaps in eastern Sudan and other areas where tensions exist between local populations and the government, but where the scale of forced displacement remains unknown. According to UNHCR, at the end of 2014 there were 167,000 recognised refugees and registered asylum-seekers in eastern Sudan, Darfur and Khartoum (UNHCR, 2015). The majority left their countries of origin after 2004, fleeing widespread human rights abuses, including mandatory and indefinite military service, arbitrary arrest and detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression and movement. According to interviews with Sudanese journalists, the largest number of refugees are Eritreans followed by Ethiopians, and increasingly Somalis and Syrians. As relations between Sudan and Eritrea improved,

several reports highlighted the violation of the principle of non-refoulement through the deportation of Eritrean refugees (Osman, 2010), including the deportation of 300 undocumented Eritreans back to Eritrea on October 17th 2011 (UNHCR 2011). Those seeking to enter Sudan from Ethiopia have two common options: the more obvious route direct from Addis Ababa via Metemma, or the less common route via Humera that is more convenient for the camps in Tigray.

Ethiopia to Sudan via Humera

The Humera border crossing has been given little attention in studies of migration from the Horn of Africa, and no estimates are available on the numbers of migrants crossing in this area. The ways Eritreans and Ethiopians use the route over Humera differ; Eritreans in the camps are not able to travel on main roads towards Sudan because of the need for travel permits and checkpoints along the roads. Ethiopians, on the other hand, can travel freely to the town of Humera which is located about five kilometres from the border with Sudan. BY, a 25 year old man from Adigrat, Ethiopia, went to Israel via Sudan in 2010. He organised his trip to Sudan by phone from Adigrat with an agent in Humera, and travelled with regular bus transport to the border town. He paid 4,500 Birr (222 USD) to be taken across the border:

We crossed to Sudan by foot, it took about four hours of walking and crossing the Tekeze river with rope and floating jerry cans. People pulled the rope to help us cross. We were 19 people travelling together and everybody arrived OK to Sudan. In Sudan, we went by foot to a place called Hamlayt and spent a night there. There was no food when we were walking and it was very difficult. There was no information, and we were taken to Shegerab camp by car. (Author's interview with BY)

The major risk on this border crossing is the river Tekeze. Both Eritrean and Ethiopian interviewees reported crossing it with help of ropes or with groups of people holding hands. Eritreans are also at risk of being detained in Ethiopia if they are found outside of the areas they are permitted to go and for this reason Eritreans avoid travelling on main roads and embark on long walks, with the risk of not finding enough food and water. Having crossed the border to Sudan, the small town of Hamlayt serves as a transit point for migrants going to the Shegerab camp, Kassala, Khartoum or Port Sudan.

Ethiopia to Sudan via Metemma

The route from the town of Metemma is more commonly used and more widely known than Humera. It is the most common place to cross into Sudan for Ethiopians from Addis Ababa and other parts of the country. Although there is more data available for the Metemma crossing the numbers are estimates. UNHCR (2013) suggests that between 18,000 and 36,000 Ethiopian migrants a year cross to Sudan at Metemma, whereas the ILO (2011: 48) cite statistics from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of between 75,000 and 100,000 Ethiopians who migrate illegally to Libya annually. Many of these cross over Metemma, but there are no exact numbers available.

There are no restrictions on movement for Ethiopians within the country and the interviewees who used this route travelled without any problems from Addis Ababa to Metemma. Out of the four migrants interviewed who had gone via Metemma to Sudan, three had obtained passports and visas whereas one had crossed without documents. Those who had visas referred to the three-day bus journey from Addis Ababa to Khartoum as an unproblematic part of their migration. SF, a 29 year old man from Addis Ababa, did not have a visa and had a more challenging journey from Metemma to Khartoum in 2009:

I took the bus with three friends to Metemma, it cost 240 Birr (12USD). A fourth friend did not come along because his family found out that he was planning to go and prevented him from leaving. I went secretly. The bus took two days to Metemma. We found an agent there and we got a discount because we were four together. We paid 1,000 Birr [50USD] each to be taken across the border and to Khartoum. It took three days to arrange this. Metemma is a hot place. There are lots of people who have been injured from their migration attempts, returned women with children, and people with no money to return to Addis Ababa and are stuck in Metemma after being

deported from Sudan. But even if they had money to go back, they would not because of the shame of returning without anything. They will rather try to go to Sudan again. Metemma is not a nice place. When we left from Addis Ababa we were excited about going to Europe, but Metemma was scary and we got a bad feeling for the onward journey. The agent told us that it was no problem to go and we decided to try. We were put in a house by the agent, and were about 20 people in total. About half were women, eight at least. The agent gave us bread and told us not to spend money on food there because we would need it for later. Along the route to Sudan food and water was expensive. A bottle of water that would normally cost 3 Birr [15 Cent] was 15 Birr [75 Cent].

We started at 7pm and walked and ran at night. We were told that we would be in trouble with the police if we didn't make it to the planned hut before the night was over. We were put into small huts during the daytime to avoid being caught by the police. We walked for 15 days in total. I think the agent paid the border guards to not look for us because we did not face any problems crossing the border. Two women were exhausted during the journey and decided to not go on. The guide said they would be in trouble, but the women were not able to continue the hard journey. We walked with sandals. Before leaving the agent advised us that it would be too hot with shoes. It was good advice. The agent was a good person if he got his money and bad if he didn't.

I have no idea where it was, but at some point we were loaded onto the back of a car. The women were crying out of fear not knowing what would happen to them. In the evening we were put into a house that was very hot and had only mattresses on the floor. After we had been chased into the house we were left on our own. Everybody was crying from exhaustion. Some people fainted. It was very hot and dusty and we slept a lot. Two days later a woman who worked with the agent came. She offered people to use the phone to call their connections in Khartoum. Half of the 20 people had connections, and the rest of us considered and discussed what to do and thought it might be better to return to Ethiopia. The woman who worked with the agent told us that we would have to leave the house because the next group from Ethiopia was coming soon. We were seven people who remained in the house, five men and two women. All the others had contacts and left. One of my friends had an uncle living in the neighbourhood of Geraf in Khartoum, so our only option was to go there to look for him. The woman took us there by car. (Author's interview with SF)

In Ethiopia, brokers and smugglers are often considered criminals that take advantage of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, but SF's story illustrates a more complex picture. Despite charging the migrants, the broker and his colleagues provided food and advice before the journey and attempted to make sure that they got in touch with contacts in Khartoum.

SF returned to Addis Ababa in September 2014, but because he could not find work in Addis Ababa he was planning to use the same route to go to Sudan again. The main risks on the irregular route from Metemma to Khartoum are exhaustion from long strenuous walks, detention and deportation, whereas in all interviewees who had been to Khartoum reported having to pay regular bribes to the police to avoid imprisonment or deportation.

FROM ERITREA TO SUDAN

Thousands of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and Sudanese nationals rely on smugglers to transport them into, through and out of the East of Sudan every year. Officially, Eritreans crossing into Sudan have to register at the UNHCR office in Shagarab. According to UNHCR statistics, in 2014 approximately 1,500 people per month arrived and registered officially in this way. This has fallen slightly to 1,350 a month in the first few months of 2015. The unknown number of people who cross without registering are obviously not included in these statistics, though expert interviews suggested that there were probably

as many unregistered as registered. Most of these new arrivals move on to Khartoum or beyond within a short time of arrival (UNHCR, 2015).

Interviews for this project confirm impressions from existing secondary data of set of connected, mostly ad hoc arrangements between a large number of smaller scale operations that enable movement of people from Eritrea through eastern Sudan to Khartoum, Egypt, Libya and beyond (RMMS 2014). Media reports from Sudan highlight an increasing number of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers en-route who have been subjected to kidnapping, extortion, and severe sexual and physical violence by criminal groups involved in the smuggling of persons. Victims of these crimes tell horrendous stories of what they went through whilst being abducted.

Most of the smuggling and trafficking in eastern Sudan is reported to be dominated by Eastern Sudan's border tribes. However, in recent years other groups have become more active, notably Al Shukria and Al Habab tribes based in eastern Sudan (Author's interview with SA; Author's interview with ZE).

There are many ways in which individuals plan to flee Eritrea, however with limited options to migrate legally, many are forced to undertake the often treacherous route into Sudan (Humphris, 2013). One of the Eritrean participants highlighted this struggle and asked at the end of the interview:

“We pay so much money and risk so many things, even death and torture, but then when we reach Europe they give us asylum as they know things are bad in Eritrea. Why do they make us go through this?” (Author's interview with MK)

The Eritrean border is a difficult area due to the presence of Eritrean forces, but also the presence of land mines from the WWII as well as the presence of dangerous animals. Some of those who cross the Sudanese border come on their own, whilst some others pay for a smuggler to get them through (Author's interview with SA; Author's interview with ZE). In earlier migratory waves from Eritrea, most refugees came from the centre and north of Eritrea and travelled directly to or through Kassala, a main hub for Eritrean refugees since the arrival of the first official Eritrean refugee in 1964. The profile of Eritreans has now expanded to include those from the east and south of the country, with larger numbers now migrating via Ethiopia; however, migration through Kassala remains the main route. Those coming from Ethiopia come from different regions, and usually come to Sudan legally via Gadarif in eastern Sudan.

In most cases, those who crossed the border are taken by the police or army to UNHCR's reception centre at Shagarab camp where they are registered. However, some are passed on to traffickers in Sudan, at the border, and it is at this point that concerns about potential trafficking arise, though we did not interview any migrants who had experienced that for this report. Eritreans are more of a target for trafficking than Ethiopians or Sudanese as it is believed they have family in the diaspora and so they can get more ransom money from them.

From Shagarab camp, migrants and refugees have to cross Atbara River to allow them then to go by land to Khartoum. This is usually facilitated by villagers, but can be risky as there have been several incidents of drowning (Author's interview with SA; Author's interview with ZE). Once they cross the river, they are usually taken by trucks. So as to not stand out, they are given traditional Sudanese dress to wear and have to travel at night away from the main road due to fear of being caught by the Sudanese authorities or traffickers (Author's interview with MK; Author's interview with DL). Those who have been smuggled are then offloaded from the trucks in a bush area by Um Dawamban, a small town South East of Khartoum, where they get onto buses. The cost of the trip from Kassala to Khartoum is between \$100 and \$300 (Author's interview with SA; Author's interview with ZE).

ROUTES ACROSS SUDAN

Between 2006 and 2012, many migrants hired smugglers to help them reach Israel via Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (interviews with NGO representatives). Around 2009, reports began to surface of smugglers turning on the migrants during the journey and holding them while they extorted increasingly large sums

of money from desperate relatives (HRW 2014, UNHCR, 2013). According to Human Rights Watch, by the end of 2010, Sudanese traffickers were kidnapping Eritreans in or near eastern Sudan's refugee camps and selling them to Egyptian traffickers operating in Sinai (HRW, 2014), but this pattern appear to have ended. According to expert interviews in Khartoum, since the fall of the Gaddafi government in Libya, there has been a rise in the number of people who opt to travel through the country due to the deterioration of the situation in Libya leading to decreased border controls; however, there is no accurate data on the number of persons who undertake journeys through this route.

Khartoum is a central transit point for migrants and refugees from Eritrea, Ethiopia, and increasingly Somalia. For some, Khartoum is a final destination, others pass through more or less quickly. People are initially spread around the city, mainly in the areas of Al Jereif, Al Daim and Al Haj Yousif. The majority tend to stay in the capital to work and save for subsequent parts of their journey. During their stay in Khartoum they seek brokers to facilitate their journey across the desert to Libya (Author's interview with MK; Author's interview with YD). Those seeking to travel to Egypt may also do so from eastern Sudan undertaking the route to Halayeb, a disputed border area between Sudan and Egypt. Most of those interviewed for this project described a considerable reduction in the number of person who undertake the Sudan-Egypt route due to the tightened security along the Egyptian/Israeli border, as one of the interviewees highlighted:

“Egypt has become very difficult, so now everyone is focusing on Libya because of there is no government”. (Author's interview with YD)

The main route from Khartoum to Libya is also the Dongola in the Northern State, and then onwards through the desert to Kufra on the Sudanese/Libyan border. Souq Libya and Al Haj Yousif are key transport hubs in Khartoum for those travelling in and outside the capital (Author's interview with ZE). The majority of those smuggled are transported in buses to avoid attracting attention, and after passing the last checkpoint in Khartoum State towards the Dongola people are transferred into pick-up trucks (referred to as thatcher) for the desert journey to the Libyan border (Author's interview with SA; Author's interview with ZE; Author's interview with TR). QS, who went by road to Egypt both had his trips sponsored by relatives who were directly involved in smuggling. QS was reluctant to speak in detail regarding his trip across the Sudanese/Egyptian border as his trip was facilitated by a relative involved in smuggling along that route. He faced physical and verbal violence when he reached Alexandria, and it was at that point where he received the least information on the difficulty of the journey.

ROUTES INTO EGYPT

Interviews with migrants and refugees in Cairo highlight the existence of four main routes into Egypt. The most significant three of those cross the Egyptian-Sudanese border: the Aswan-Abu Simbel-Lake Nasser route, the East Oweinat route in the West, and the Halayeb-Shalateen route – which, due to high military presence in the Red Sea region, can in some cases also cross the Allaqi Valley – in the Southern-Eastern part of the country. A fourth route transits through the Northern region of the country connecting the capital to Libya, via Matruh. In 2012-2014, networks of smugglers operating sea trips from Alexandria and Damietta port have also been active.

The Aswan-Lake Nasser route: Towards a refuge in Cairo

Most of the migrants and refugees interviewed in Cairo – 17 out of 21 – had entered Egypt from Sudan through the land route via the Aswan area. The majority of the people who had travelled on this route reported having transited through Sudan, in some cases spending months in Khartoum, to then reach Cairo via Aswan and apply for international protection. The Aswan route, as remarked by an IO officer in Egypt, is the privileged way of reaching the North of the country for refugees whose primary immediate concern is seeking asylum. The route might therefore involve migrants who, despite being willing to continue their journey across the Mediterranean, find themselves unable to follow their plans due to lack of contacts, availability of funds, or for family, health, and other personal reasons. In such cases, seeking asylum in Egypt provides a relatively stable temporary solution, made more attractive by the existence of programs of resettlement. However, resettlement places remain rather limited and the completion of status determination procedures usually takes several years.

The main reported risks encountered by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who transited via the Aswan route are detention and kidnapping for extortion by the smugglers – a phenomenon that mainly involves Eritreans. Migrants are typically held in basements or makeshift buildings located in rural or semi-desert areas and, while subject to violence, required to contact their families – usually by phones provided by the smugglers (in this case, turned into traffickers) – so that a ransom can be paid. While this phenomenon has been largely documented in the Sinai Peninsula until 2013, the current counter-insurgency initiatives in Sinai as well as the restrictive measures imposed by Israel have led to a re-location of such extortion and trafficking-like activities (see Connell 2014). In this regard, the most significant data emerging from interviews conducted in Cairo in 2015 is that 5 of the 6 Eritrean migrants reported having been held for extortion in an area of Southern Egypt that they identified as located in the surroundings of Aswan, or in the Aswan governorate. Further research is needed – possibly involving fieldwork in Aswan – in order to investigate these claims.

Another common way of entering Egypt via the Aswan route is by fishing boats through Lake Nasser. According to sources in both Aswan and Cairo, this modality of travelling is particularly common among asylum seekers from Syria who entered the country irregularly after visa restrictions for Syrian nationals were imposed in summer 2013. In 2014, the main reported risk for migrants who were smuggled into Egypt via ferry was that of being apprehended by border police and detained. Alleged collusion between smugglers – who often operate also in other sectors of the cross-border economy, including fishing – and state officers is reported by NGO representatives to make the risk even higher. Some of the migrants interviewed reported episodes of corruption involving local border officers to whom, after reaching the Egyptian port of Abu Simbel, migrants would have been handed over by the smugglers, often in exchange for fishing or other commercial authorizations.

SM, 34, and AD, 45, a Syrian family with 3 small children, entered Egypt at the end of August 2014 from Sudan. After fleeing Syria, SM and AD first travelled to Algeria, hoping to reunite with family members who had fled their country several months before them. In Algiers, however, they were unable to find their relatives, and soon realised that conditions for seeking asylum were far from good. The couple thus decided to leave to Khartoum, where they spent several weeks before deciding to invest almost all their saving to try and enter Egypt. They were in fact sure that living conditions and refugee assistance in Egypt would be better than the one available in Sudan. Egypt, however, had since 2013 introduced visa restrictions for Syrians that made entering the country legally de facto impossible for SM and AD. The family paid a total of USD 1,200 to be smuggled by ferry via Lake Nasser, to then reach Cairo via land. When interviewed in Cairo in January 2015, in spite of holding UNHCR yellow cards and regular residence permits, they reported being still worried about their legal position, due to the shame and trauma of having entered the country illegally.

East Oweinat: Re-routed hopes

The Western route from Sudan to Egypt passes through the New Valley governorate – a desert area known for the ambitious water engineering projects developed under former president Hosni Mubarak – and more specifically through the East Oweinat area. None of the interviewees reported having transited through the East Oweinat route, however, according to IO officers in Cairo, the majority of migrants who would end up in detention in the Aswan region would be apprehended in the New Valley area. The route is used when small smuggling convoys on their way to Libya from Sudan – usually made of no more than three cars – are deviated into Egyptian territory due to security and logistic reasons, or because of financial issues involving the migrants. As of 2014, a trip from Sudan to Europe via Libya and the Mediterranean Sea was estimated to cost around USD 3,000. Situations in which migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who fail to pay similarly high amounts of money are forced to transfer to convoys travelling to Egypt – instead of Libya – are thus not uncommon. As for the Aswan route, the highest number of convoys on the East Oweinat route is recorded from March-April until the end of summer.

Allaqi Valley and the Halayeb Triangle: Migration and gold mining

The Southern-Eastern route into Egypt transits through the Allaqi Valley, in the Aswan governorate, and the so-called Halayeb-Shalateen area, in the Red Sea governorate. Also known as the 'Halayeb triangle', the latter is the object of a decade-long border dispute between Egypt and Sudan. Local livelihoods are based on traditional and low tech gold mining. According to IO officers in Cairo, until 2013 the route used to be transited by Eritreans travelling to Israel via the Sinai Peninsula, while more recent movements involve primarily Sudanese migrants and refugees.

Interviews with IO officers in Egypt report episodes in which Sudanese miners were caught while crossing the borders in order to carry out their mining activities, and detained and fined. Under Law No. 89 of 1960 and law No. 88 of 2005, sentences for such unauthorized border crossings can amount to up to 1 year in detention and fines for as much as 20,000 EGP (approximately 2,600 USD).

Alongside these episodes of occasional border crossing, however, migration of Sudanese miners working in the region is also a growing phenomenon. For most of the people who cross the border into Egypt in the Halayeb Triangle area, the search for a more stable, less dangerous source of livelihood than the volatile mining business constitutes the main reason for travelling. In addition, interviews with migrants who transited through the Allaqi Valley suggest that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers coming from other regions of Sudan also occasionally use the route.

Osman is 30 year old asylum seeker born in Kagourma, in Northern Darfur, with a long and complex internal displacement and migration history. Osman left his village for the first time in 2003 due to the conflict in Darfur. He reached Khartoum, where he found a job and worked until 2007, when he decided to go back to Darfur to live closer to his family and get married. In order to sustain his family's livelihood, however, in August 2013 Osman had to leave again, hoping to find work in the North of the country. This time however, he did not head to Khartoum, but to the Northern Eastern region, where the mining business was thriving. His daughter was born while he was away working in the North. At the time of the interview, Osman had never seen her. This is how Osman describes his mining job and the circumstances of his migration to Egypt:

We used to search for and sell gold in the area... there is a market for that. But now the government is trying to take control of the mines... and prevents people like me from working in mining. I was harassed by the police many times, because of that. (Mining) is very, very hard. I cannot tell you what kind of physical effort it requires. You are digging, with your own arms, 20 meters underground or more... it is very risky. And money-wise, you can never tell, that's the thing. It depends on luck... if you have a good day and you find gold and you manage to sell it, then it is fine. But there are days when it is a lot of hard work... for nothing. Simply nothing. When I was told that if you come to Cairo you can apply for asylum, I decided to try and do that too. I left Sudan on the 15 of September 2014. I travelled for 15 days. It was very difficult.... you know how smuggling works: they collect large groups of people, mostly Eritreans and Sudanese, to put them in a truck or in a convoy of pick-ups. It is an international network: the Sudanese bring you to the border with Egypt and then the Egyptians take over. In my case, we had agreed I would pay 1000 Sudanese pound (SDG; 175,7 USD) But at every place, at every stop along the route, like if there were check points and we had to pay. I ended up paying 4 times what we had agreed, in total I paid around 4000 SDG (700 USD).

In early 2014, Omar, 22 year old, left his mother and younger siblings in Darfur to look for a job in Khartoum. After several months of unsuccessful job searching, he heard that his family had also had the opportunity of leaving Sudan and was now in Cairo. Omar decided thus to travel to Egypt and reunite with them. He travelled first to Port Sudan and then crossed into Egypt through Shalateen.

I arrived to Port Sudan by bus, and then together with other migrants we took a box (white Toyota pick-up) and we travelled for about 8 hours... I do not know exactly how many kilometres, but it was about 8 hours driving, until we reached a place with mountains. Then the drivers told us that their friends were waiting for us on the other side of the border, but that they could not drive us there. So we had to cross on our own, walking. Luckily it was not difficult, it was very easy. I am not able to tell the exact name of the place where we crossed, but I think it was Halayeb, or Shalateen. We walked for about 2 hours and on the other side we found these people who were waiting for us. We took a car, and they took us to the place where we found a bus. From there, by bus, we arrived directly to Ramses Square, in Cairo.

The Cairo-Matruh-Benghazi route: in and out of Egypt

A well-established land route connects Cairo to Benghazi via Marsa Matruh and Salloum, crossing the Northern-Western region of Egypt. Until 2012, the route was used for smuggling migrants and refugees from Egypt into Libya. The phenomenon involved Egyptian workers, but also, to a lesser extent, Sub-Saharan migrants – also Western Africans not included in this study – coming from Egypt and ready to embark on a journey to Europe via sea. Although at the time of writing Libya continues to be a significant destination for Egyptian labour migrants, since 2012, due to the ongoing instability in Libya, migration flows have rather been reversed (Tsouparas 2015). In particular, a high number of Sub-Saharan migrants and asylum seekers fled Libya and entered Egypt. Until 2013, asylum seekers and refugees fleeing Libya found help and, in most cases, resettlement to third countries, at the Salloum refugee camp. After the end of UNHCR's operations in Salloum – and the arrest of most of the migrants who had staged a protest asking the UN office to keep the camp in place – it seems that the majority of those entering Egypt from Libya now head to Cairo in order to apply for asylum.

Interviews conducted in Cairo highlight how, particularly in the case of Sudanese, the migrants who transit through the route often have complex histories of both forced displacement – within Sudan – and labour migration, mostly to Libya. Two of the Sudanese respondents, for instance, had lived several years in Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps. The interviews suggest that similar background might be common among those transiting on the route from Cairo to Benghazi.

Saeed was born in South Darfur, and lived most of his life in the IDP camp of Kalma. Managed by the Government of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission, Kalma is estimated to be the biggest camp in Darfur. Saeed lived there until January 2013, together with his family, in the area of the camp called Centre 1. Saeed explains how conditions in the Kalma camp were particularly harsh: food was scarce, medical assistance almost non-existent and it was very difficult to find work opportunities in the area. Because of this, Saeed had been planning to leave Sudan since he was very young. It was mostly financial reasons that prevented him from doing that. It's difficult to travel, you know. You want to travel because you need to work and have money, but you need money to be able to travel in the first place, he comments. In January 2013, Saeed finally decided to borrow money – around 2,000 Sudanese pound (351 USD) – from a friend who was also living in Kalma, and travelled to Suq Libya (the Libya Market), in the major Sudanese city of Omdurman. Suq Libya, he explains, is a major market place as well as a bus and taxi station for people who travel to and from Libya, or export and import goods from there. There, Saeed boarded a convoy travelling through the desert route in Western Sudan and reached Benghazi, in Libya. In Benghazi, in spite of the ongoing conflict, Saeed worked for over a year as metal waste collector in the small business run by another Sudanese migrant, in the area of the city known as Qas. In April 2014, however, Saeed was kidnapped and held for ransom by a Libyan armed group he refers to generally as milishiyat, militias, and released only after a friend paid his ransom – a debt Saeed had to pay back. After this episode, Saeed decided to leave Libya. He travelled first to Musaid, on the Libyan-Egyptian border. From there he reached Marsa Matruh, then Alexandria. From there he moved to Cairo and registered with the UNHCR.

Hussein is a 43-year old father of 7. He was born in South Darfur and spent most of his life in the Gaga refugee camp, in Chad. Suffering from a chronic health condition and desperately in need to find a job that would allow him to provide for his family, in June 2014 Hussein decided to leave the camp and travel to Libya. He was hoping to find a job as a doorman, something

that would allow him to earn a decent salary without being to challenging for someone with his precarious health. In Libya, he first went Jalo (an oasis in the Northern-Eastern Libyan Desert), then to Al Baida (Eastern Libya) and finally to Tobruk, near the border with Egypt. Unable to find a job and worried about the growing violence and instability in the country, Hussein eventually decided to cross the border to Egypt and ask for asylum there. I had to leave and come to Egypt, he explains. I had no choice.

Other routes out of Egypt: Alexandra and Damietta

Smuggling via sea from the Alexandria and Damietta ports is a widely-reported – in interviews with both mixed migrants and IO officers – phenomenon whose visibility increased in particular in summer 2013 and 2014. Occasional boats leaving from the Egyptian Northern Coast to cross the Mediterranean were reported also before the 2011–2012 Arab uprisings. However, it is especially after the deepening of the Syrian conflict and the arrival of a large number of refugees in Egypt that movements from the coast near Alexandria grew in significance, coming to resemble, in the words of one Egyptian IO officer, “a very well organized business”, with perfect logistics. Syrians are in general in a much better financial situation than the majority of migrants and refugees in Cairo – particularly migrants from the Horn of Africa – and their willingness to invest their savings in trip to Europe boosted the business. IO officers in Egypt also point to the role of Syrian smugglers, and highlight how, in summer 2014, migrants and smugglers of other national backgrounds also started to be involved.

None of the migrants and refugees interviewed in Cairo disclosed having plans or having made contacts to leave Egypt via sea from Alexandria. However, some of them were aware of this possibility, and had at least an idea of fares and modalities, though often not detailed and based exclusively on hearsay. Other migrants, however, had never heard about boats travelling from Alexandria’s port.

When interviewed, Tsega, an 18-year old Eritrean girl who travelled to Egypt alone and applied for asylum with the UNHCR, summarized what she knew about smuggling routes to Europe as follows:

Q: Do you know people who live in London?

A: (Smiling) Well, I know that there are many Eritreans who cross the sea and make it there, but I don’t know anyone in particular...

Q: Would you do that?

A: I would have already done it, if I had enough money!

Q: Right. It’s expensive isn’t it...?

A: Yeah...

Q: But do people cross from here? Or do they go to Libya?

A: Many people leave from Sudan to Libya... the journey is Eritrea – Sudan – Libya.

Q: And from Egypt?

A: From Egypt they can also cross to Libya and then to Italia (sic)

Q: And how much is the trip from Libya to Italy today?

A: It’s expensive. But I would not be able to say how much...

Q: It’s a very dangerous trip...

A: Yeah, I understand what you say. Even worse than the amount of money that you have to pay are the things that you will have to face along the way... The way the Libyans, the Sudanese, and the Egyptians would treat you.

Q: Would you live in Egypt if you had a good job?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: Here is a little better, but basically is like Sudan, like Eritrea. There are only problems, is the same kind of country. Here in Egypt there are a lot of protests all the time, a lot of upheaval. It is not safe. (Tsega)

FROM SUDAN THROUGH LIBYA

The most serious levels of abuse were reported by migrants who had travelled recently (during 2014 and early 2015) through southern Libya. Most migration flows from Khartoum among non-Sudanese nationals take place by road. Sudanese nationals are better positioned, and depending of financial support available to them, seek to reach Libya by plane. One of the interviewees, AB, was able to meet a broker to facilitate an employment contract for a job in Libya, which facilitated this first part of his journey. After asking around and research, he found out there are brokers who arrange for people to get an employment contract in Libya. He met a Libyan company owner, who makes regular trips to Sudan to sell work contracts and obtained an employment contract in Benghazi, which cost his 8,000 Sudanese Pounds (around \$1,327 USD).

Direct air travel seems to be limited to Sudanese nationals or those with permanent residency in Sudan. It is also exceptional due to the high costs associated with it. TR a Sudanese national based in Khartoum travelled by road to Libya. His trip was sponsored by relatives who were directly involved in smuggling. However, this did not completely protect him as he travelled outside the sphere of influence or links to smugglers across the border. TR travelled in a group who all paid different amounts to the smugglers, but he did not pay anything towards the trip and had hoped to gain employment in Libya to raise funds to migrate to Saudi Arabia. However, after crossing the border into Libya, he found himself held to ransom and his family had to pay to get him released. To enable him to raise funds to return home, he worked in the same town and eventually was able to fly back to Khartoum. It is during that time he witnessed several incidents, in which migrants were targeted for kidnapping and extortion.

GH, a young Eritrean woman, was interviewed in Sardinia. She had been smuggled from southwest Eritrea to Khartoum in 2009, which was her intended final destination, but she had become frustrated with limited opportunities in Khartoum. In late 2013, she continued her journey by land through Libya. She travelled with a group of Eritrean refugees. They contacted Sudanese smugglers in Khartoum and were asked to pay \$300 per person to be taken from Khartoum to Libya by car. On the third day of travel, the smugglers stopped the cars in the middle of the desert and demanded a further \$300 for each passenger. If the migrants refused to pay, they threatened to leave them in the middle of the Libyan Sahara. The migrants paid and continued the journey. After another four days, the Sudanese smugglers handed the migrants over to a group of Libyan smugglers who asked each migrant to pay \$400 per person in order to continue the journey. Everyone paid also this time and the Libyans loaded the group of Eritreans on 3 Land Cruiser cars and after 6 days of travel the group arrived in the oasis of Kufra. It is approximately 1,300km from Khartoum to Kufra mostly off road, 16 days for the journey fits with what other people have reported.

In Kufra, the group was taken to a farm where the smugglers asked for more money in order to be taken to Tripoli. Those who could pay and continued the journey by car to Tripoli while GH and two other young women and a man were kept hostage for about 20 days in the farm by the Libyan smugglers, until the other Eritreans paid for her to be set free. During her captivity in Kufra, GH was gang raped several times by the Libyan smugglers and became pregnant from the rape. Finally she was set free and taken to a prison in Kufra. When she was released from the prison, GH continued her journey to Benghazi where she had her baby and then went to Tripoli to take a boat to Italy. After several failed attempts and after being deceived and robbed of several thousands of dollars by smugglers who did not fulfil the promise to take her to Europe, she finally managed to take a boat to Italy.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS, PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE ISSUES ON THE ROUTE

This research reinforces arguments made in other recent research (eg. Coutin 2003; Collyer 2010) that over the last 10 to 15 years, new protection and assistance challenges have arisen for migrants and refugees en route. Established systems of international protection are based on the original causes of flight from and conditions in individuals' countries of origin. In contrast, these new protection challenges relate to the journey and conditions faced in transit or the country of destination.

Human rights, protection and assistance needs beyond the circumstances of departure from refugees' countries of origin are now widely recognised amongst the publicised priorities of UNHCR. For example, UNHCR in Cairo has identified the threat of sexual and gender based violence against refugees in Egypt as one of the priorities for 2015. Onward movement of recognised Eritrean refugees from camps in Ethiopia arises from a perceived lack of protection in the camps, but also places refugees in an extremely vulnerable situation and may lead to further protection concerns. UNHCR in Addis Ababa highlights the trafficking of Eritrean refugees from the camps as a priority concern for 2015.

Research carried out for this report highlights three other, increasingly significant developments which potentially raise further human rights and protection issues. The heightened levels of risk and abuse through individual journeys, the reported increase in the number of asylum applications made by unaccompanied minors, and the precarious legal status of undocumented asylum seekers in particular are phenomena that require further research, as well as targeted intervention aimed at enhancing the response currently put in place.

ONWARD MIGRATION OF ERITREAN REFUGEES IN ETHIOPIA

Eritreans living in refugee camps in northern Ethiopia are the most vulnerable groups identified in relation to migration to Sudan. UNHCR and the Ethiopian government provide basic livelihoods for Eritreans, but the restrictions on formal employment and lack of opportunities make life in the refugee camps challenging. The refugees cannot return to Eritrea because of protection concerns. These circumstances put them in a precarious condition where the only chance for making a better life for themselves and their families is through migration abroad. Their frustrations with the limited protection was aimed at UNHCR:

They [UNHCR] don't help people and why try for resettlement when it is not possible? Because of this people will go in other ways. Many people are not happy with UNHCR and the way they give information and support. The way it is now it doesn't help the refugees, we are forced to go illegally. All people have a goal in life, but there is no solution here. Many people go to Sudan because they have a goal to change their life. They don't go there to die. If UNHCR respected that people have goals in life there would be a solution. The way it is now it's not good. (Author's interview with TS)

The discontent with the resettlement process was partly based on perceptions that people who were eloquent had better chances for getting resettlement than others. With feelings of injustice in who were given resettlement, many interviewees were frustrated and had little hope for obtaining a legal way out of the camps:

Regarding resettlement, nobody knows or understands the process. It should be written and explained what it is and how it works. Now it seems to be a lottery so there is no point of them interviewing us. People are not content with the UNHCR. The food we get every month is not enough. Even though there is information about the rations, it's not enough and people go hungry. It's important to increase the food rations. (GD)

GD did not have relatives abroad who sent him remittances, and he made ends meet by making 700 Birr [34 USD] a month working for one of the NGOs in the camp. The monthly food rations were reported to consist of 15 kilos of wheat, one litre of cooking oil, one soap, one cup of sugar, and some protein powder.

With little hope for the future in Ethiopia, due to the lack of possibilities for obtaining citizenship, finding formal employment or other permanent solutions, onward migration stands out as the only feasible option to improve their lives. Eritreans depend on people who can facilitate their journeys and smugglers and brokers offer a potential solution to their difficult situations.

As long as the options for Eritrean refugees remain very limited they will have no other choice but to embark of dangerous journeys. The risks en route to Europe are formidable (IOM, 2014), but need to be considered in relation to the lack of prospects for any improvements and the despair Eritreans felt in refugee camps. FL who had spent about seven years in the refugee camps pointed out that there 'are many suicides in the camp, just the other day a woman set herself on fire with petrol. This and hanging is common'. Many Eritreans were willing to try to improve their lives elsewhere despite knowing the great risks on journeys.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON VIOLENCE

Trafficking is a legally distinct process from smuggling. According to the internationally agreed definition, trafficking is distinguished from smuggling by the use of force or other forms of coercion in the movement of people and the fundamental purpose of that movement for exploitation¹². Yet in practical terms, the two processes may be more difficult to distinguish. An individual can be abused or harmed by a smuggler without becoming trafficked, for example. It is also possible for an individual to initially contact a smuggler to arrange a journey and then be passed to traffickers at some stage along the journey. Trafficking in persons has been a high-priority protection issue in Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia for several years now, mostly due to the kidnapping for ransom and torture of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the Sinai Peninsula. According to a study published in 2013, between 2007 and 2013 around 30,000 persons were trafficked in the Sinai. It is estimated that between 5,000 and 10,000 people have died as a consequence of trafficking in Sinai in the same years (van Reisen, Estefanos and Rijken 2013: 63)¹³. Originating mostly from Eritrea, most of the victims are part of the UNHCR population of concern. Indeed, UNHCR (2014) reports that approximately 95% of trafficking victims in the East and Horn of Africa are Eritreans.

The phenomenon is reported to have significantly decreased since the end of 2013, due to both reinforced Egyptian military presence in Sinai and to legislative and judicial measures adopted by the Sudanese government in order to tackle the phenomenon within its own territory. However, recent analysis highlights how, far from having been eradicated, the trafficking in Eritrean refugees in particular has been re-routed. Connell (2014) reports how the kidnappings that used to take place in the area of the Shagarab refugee camp, in Sudan, have now been displaced to the "no man's land" along the frontier between Eritrea and Sudan, or even, increasingly, to Khartoum. The places where they are held for ransom and often subject to torture have also changed. Six Eritreans interviewed for this study reported having been held captive and having money extorted from them after crossing the Egyptian border, in an area that they identified as located in the South of the Aswan Governorate.

BH, a 23-year old Eritrean man, is one of such cases. He left Eritrea with his girlfriend to avoid an arranged marriage, and he recalls his experience of travelling to Egypt as follows.

I contacted the smugglers in Eritrea, through people I knew. It is them who helped

me to reach the border with Sudan. We got to Tesseney first, and then we crossed the border walking. We walked for hours, at night time. As soon as we got into Sudan, we were handed over to the Rashaida, who put us in a hut and they kept us there for the day. (...) When we arrived at the hut though, there were other people there, and some of them told me they had stayed there for 3 or 4 days... I am not sure how that worked, why those people had been held there for so long. Probably they did not have money to pay. Maybe they asked them for 800-1000 USD and they did not have them. As to us, we had paid our share and as soon as night came, we were released. They took us onto a covered car, like a small pick-up truck. I remember we were 14 people on that car, including a kid. I remember well. We crossed the desert; we travelled for 4 days. That

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12 Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime.

13 This figure is reached by taking the total number of people thought to have been trafficked over this period (30,000) and an estimate, from interviews with survivors and traffickers, that %25 of them did not survive.

part of the trip was smooth, you could tell the guys just wanted to get us there, get us through Sudan at the border with Egypt. They were driving fast, and they would stop to give us water, make sure we are OK, well, at least that we do not die. We reached the border with Egypt by that car... I am pretty sure it was the border with Egypt, although I can't tell exactly. There we were transferred to another car, and handed over to other smugglers. See, that is what happens when you end up in the hands of the Rashaida: you just get sold, they keep selling you to other smugglers groups along the road, according to what is safer and most convenient for them, in terms of money. Where they think that they will make the highest amount of money, to those people and who they would sell you to. All the way up to Egypt, from Eritrea, being sold from one group to another. When we arrived to Egypt, I don't know where we were exactly, but it was a town. I can't tell the name, but they divided the people who were in the car into two groups. The 7 of us who were in my group, including a kid travelling alone, were kept in a basement, in the basement of a building, and we stayed there for 8 days. I remember well, they took us there on the 24th of September and we left the 2nd of October. It was horrible. We were starved, my fiancée and I... everyone there really. Starved and very dirty. I remember the hunger... Every day, every single day they would come to the basement and give us mobile phones, to get the money. They ask people to call their family and relatives in Eritrea, or even more in Europe, and send them money for ransom. It was scary... I tried many times to call my father, but I could not reach him. See, and even if I could reach my dad... for what? We are poor, we are from the countryside, and my father does not have that money. I am unlucky you see? I have no relatives in Europe, no one, where can I go, who would help me? (Author's interview with BH)

More recent experiences highlighted the security concerns entering Libya from Sudan. Three of the people interviewed in Italy, who had travelled across that border reported that they had witnessed or been subject to violence, one of whom was trafficked and his family had to pay ransom for his release. One of the interviewees described witnessing the rape of three Eritrean women. According to the interviewee, they were first raped by the drivers of the vehicles crossing into Libya, and when they arrived in Kufra they were held to ransom in a different room (Author's interview with TR). AH was allegedly sexually assaulted several times along the route from Eritrea to Khartoum. The smugglers, who later passed her to traffickers who raped her along the Sudanese-Ethiopian border, and again she was assaulted when she was sold to Sudanese traffickers (Author's interview with AH). The rapes marked the transition of her being smuggled to being trafficked. In both cases, it appears that the status of being smuggled changes to being trafficked along the route, with the defining moment occurring when the level of physical violence escalates. This transition is associated with a shift in perception of the individual migrant, refugee or asylum seeker. A strict business analysis, sees the individual as a customer to whom a service must effectively be provided if reputations are to be maintained and business is to continue. Smuggling operations depend on this kind of business logic. The shift to trafficking is accompanied by a very different logic in which the individual becomes a commodity from whom financial rent can be extracted by whatever means is necessary. If there is a reputational concern here it is entirely the opposite, to create a reputation for violence, since individual migrants, refugees or asylum seekers must believe that a threat will be carried out if they are to be convinced to obtain further payments from distant relatives.

Smugglers and traffickers are also actively recruiting people to undertake the journey to Europe, in which they target young people including minors. Several interviewees reported that they were initially offered the opportunity by the smugglers to travel and to make the payment later. However, they cited cases of people who chose to pay later but were then held to ransom. Those who make the introductions to the smugglers charge around 1,000 Sudanese pounds (\$166 USD) per person.

We have seen so many case, I even help in the payment arrangements ...and sometime the prices increase, and people have to sell whatever they have as they don't want to see their loved being tortured (Author's interview with FG).

Over the last couple of years, it was observed that there is a notable increase in the number of money transfer shops in Kassala; a possible indication of an increase during this time in the facilitation of migration, whilst most of the transfers from Khartoum take place in boutiques which act as fronts for smugglers and traffickers (Author's interview with SA; Author's interview with FG; Author's interview with DL). Since the route through the Sinai has been effectively closed from 2013, the route to Libya through Sudan has seen a considerable increase due to the unstable situation in Libya (Author's interviews with FB, SA, ZE), however, there is no specific data available.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Between January and November 2014, UNHCR Cairo's Child Protection Team conducted 237 Best Interest Assessment (BIAs) for unaccompanied minors, separated children and child spouses who had registered with the office. Interviews with community leaders and UNHCR Cairo officers in early 2015 highlighted yet a further increase in the number of unaccompanied minors – particularly Eritreans and Ethiopians – arriving to and transiting through Egypt. Oromo and Eritrean community workers in particular repeatedly expressed concerns about the number of cases of underage migrants and refugees reaching Cairo without family members and recurring to refugee community centres for basic support, including shelter.

Unaccompanied minors interviewed for this report did not make the choice to move alone, but were supported by family and broader social networks until the moment to leave. Both the Ethiopian youths interviewed in Cairo, for instance, stemmed from a rather disadvantaged rural background and, crucially, had family members, usually older brothers, who had migrated – to Sudan, Libya, or Egypt – before them. Family is thus often a central source of information and “know-how”, providing first contacts with the smugglers and, not uncommonly, being willing to invest significant amounts of savings into journeys that are seen as the only possible options for building secure livelihoods in a safe environment.

While the role of family is central in the phase that precedes the actual travel, once en route unaccompanied minors often find themselves feeling confused and unsafe, without points of references or reliable sources of help. Their journey into Egypt is particularly risky and traumatizing, to the point that both reported having doubted several times that they would reach their destination safely. Both of them experienced extreme hunger and thirst as well as violence and attempts at extortion by the smugglers.

IO officers also stressed that detention of underage migrants and refugees, both within family units and unaccompanied, constitutes a significant problem in Egypt, highlighting the need for both legal reforms and sensitization of security officers and judges. After reaching their destinations, unaccompanied minors are likely to find employment – in very precarious and irregular conditions – for example, as domestic workers, as in the case of the second of the two people quoted below.

SI is a 17 year old girl born in the Oromia region of Ethiopia. An orphan, she was raised by her older brothers and uncle and attended school until the 9th grade. After one of her brothers left Ethiopia and other two had problems with the authorities due to the presence of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in their village, her uncle decided to arrange for SI to leave the country too. He thus paid for her trip to Sudan, which SI recalls in this way:

I went from my district first to Addis Ababa, and then from there to Metemma, from where we crossed into Sudan. (...) My uncle did not accompany me to the border, I was with the smuggler during the trip. He just made sure everything was arranged and paid for with the smugglers, he paid for me, he paid 4,000 Ethiopian birr (200 USD) for the trip to Sudan, and he left me with them. I travelled alone. We crossed the border in the area near Gallabat. It was night time, and upon crossing we were forced to walk to reach a place called Khamis. From there then we were loaded into another truck by which we reached Khartoum, the capital. (...) It was very difficult there at the border. We stayed there waiting in Khamis for over 3 days. The smugglers were scared and we were scared too, that actually continuing the trip into the Sudanese territory would be dangerous because of border patrol, and we might get caught.

We waited and waited. I was very scared too. They were giving us water, some bread too, but there was not enough food for all the people who were there. We were stuck there for three days, and the smugglers were getting very nervous and anxious. They also got violent, especially towards women. Then when we finally could leave, they loaded us into a truck, with Sudanese smugglers, and they drove us to Khartoum. I waited for 8 days in Khartoum. (People warned me) that it was very dangerous to stay there, because I could be caught by police and end up in prison, or sent back. So this is how I left, also with other people, to come to Egypt. (On our way to Egypt) the driver on that truck by which we crossed the desert in Northern Sudan was going at very high speed. At some point I remember that the truck had like a small accident, [...] When the accident happened, the driver and the smuggler told us to get out of the truck, so that they could fix it. It was very hard, even just to step out: the sun was too hot, and so was the sand, and we did not have enough water for all of us, [...]. The smuggler and the driver then drove away to look for help with the truck. We were all shocked. We were afraid they might not come back, ever, to pick us up. They left at 9 am and came back around 3 pm in the afternoon, on that day. [...] We continued the journey, and along the way they stopped again, and they transferred us to another truck. This one was full of stuff, I think they were transporting oil, gasoline maybe, and probably other stuff too. There was almost no space for us to sit, and we were told to hold on the ropes of the truck. We travelled in those conditions for two days. We asked the smuggler to give us some water. Instead of water they gave us a piece of stone, and they told us to put it on our lips, to get some liquids and salt. After that we were transferred to another group of smugglers, near the Egyptian border, and with them we reached Aswan. We stopped outside the actual city of Aswan, and there, in Aswan, they asked us to pay. I had no money on me. When I told them that I had no money to give them, straightaway they told me that they were going to kill me and sell my organs. I didn't know whether that could actually happen, but I was scared, and I cried and cried and begged them not to do that. They kept repeating that they would not let me go till I pay the 800 USD, and I would just cry. Then other two Oromo who were there said that they had friends and relatives here in Cairo, and that they would try to contact them to explain my problem, that I had been kidnapped by the smugglers. So those people who are living in Cairo offered to settle the accounts, they sent the money for me, and they let me go. (Author's interview with SI)

AH is a 16 year old boy who, like, SI was raised in rural Ethiopia and arrived in Egypt at the end of 2014. Unlike SI, however, he reports having ended up in Egypt 'by chance': he did not have enough money to pay for the much more expensive trip to Libya, where he had originally planned to go. His journey to Cairo through the desert was also particularly difficult, both physically and emotionally. AH was robbed and beaten and, for most of the time he spent travelling, he felt he could not really count on anyone for advice or help.

I went to Metemma through Addis Ababa, first. In Metemma we crossed into Sudan, we went to Gallabat. I was forced to walk for hours in the desert before we were loaded into another truck to Qatarif (Gadareef) and then to Khartoum. But the worse thing is that I got robbed, when I was waiting to get the car to Khartoum. They (the smugglers) beat me and they took all I had. (...) They took the money I had on me, as well as my bag and my belongings. They left me with a t-shirt and a pair of trousers; this is all I had when I arrived in Khartoum. But when I left I had all my belongings with me. I had clothes, and a picture of my family and a phone. They took everything. I was sorry (about that). (When I arrived in Khartoum) I did not have anything, as I said. I ended up staying 7 months there. I wanted to find work, but all I could find is a job as a cleaner with a Sudanese family. I lived with them for over 6 months. At the beginning, I thought it was good, but they did not treat me well at all. They would only give me food and shelter, a very small room, and almost no extra money. (...) I was doing everything in the house, everything they asked me to do. I was like being in a cage, it wasn't a good situation to be in. So after some time I met an Oromo person who knew people who could take me to Egypt, so I escaped from that house,

and I travelled. (On our way to Egypt) they took us to Wadi Halfa as they knew that another smuggler would help us to cross there. I arrived to Aswan via ferry. However, I had very little money to pay to the smugglers then, and I still owe them 800 EGP (around 105 USD; the price for a 'regular' trip from Aswan to Wadi Halfa is around 35 USD). I travelled 24 hours on the Nile, through Lake Nubeyya (known as Lake Nasser in Egypt). I was with another Oromo person they had put me in contact with back in Khartoum, but he knew other people in Cairo. When we arrived in Aswan, we took a bus to Cairo together. (...) I didn't know anyone so I came to the community (Oromo community centre) and they helped me letting me stay there. (Author's interview with AH)

PROTECTION OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

The possession of identity documents is unusual in Ethiopia and Sudan and the majority of asylum seekers who approach protection agencies in Egypt have no official documents (passport, identity card, birth certificates etc.) from their country of origin. In some cases documents are confiscated by smugglers, lost during the journey, or deliberately destroyed. For migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from Eritrea and the region of Darfur in Sudan however, leaving their country legally is often impossible, because authorities do not issue travel documents to everyone in the first place. Some of the informants from Darfur and, to a lesser extent, Northern Sudan, reported not being aware of their exact date of birth, which had never been officially registered.

For UNHCR, lack of documentation constitutes a major impediment to effective protection measures being put in place. When an undocumented asylum seeker registers with the office in Cairo, she is provided with an 'attestation paper' – an A4 sheet of paper containing personal details and their file reference number. Attached to it is usually an 'appointment slip', specifying the date of the refugee status determination interview, for which the average waiting time in January 2015 was around 3 years.

Unlike the asylum seeker "yellow card", the 'white paper', as refugees refer to it, is not recognised by Egyptian authorities. Thus it cannot be used to obtain asylum seeker resident permits.

People with special needs – mostly single mothers, minors, victims of trafficking and individuals with disabilities – generally undergo a second interview aimed at evaluating their protection needs, after which, in selected cases, 'yellow cards' are issued. These provide access to financial assistance and health services (through CARITAS Egypt). The attestation paper, on the other hand, precludes access to UNHCR-funded medical assistance. Although refugees registered with UNHCR fall outside of the IOM mandate, 'white paper' holders often have no option but trying to access the latter's medical services. In this regards, for victims of trafficking who are also refugees, medical assistance is provided by the IOM under arrangements such as the global IOM-UNHCR Standard Operating Procedures to Facilitate the Protection of Trafficked Persons.

Migrants who had been living in Cairo for months on a 'UNHCR white paper' also expressed fear of facing detention and deportation. Eritreans in particular felt that the measure was generally penalising towards applicants who, as in their case, have de facto no access to travel documents in their country of origins.

Like most people holding the UNHCR 'white paper', Tekle – a 30 year-old Eritrean asylum seeker who used to work in the public administration in his country – did not have any identification documents with him when he arrived in Cairo. Tekle explains that he never had a passport, but he did have a national ID which, however, he lost it during the trip.

I am OK with this... this UNHCR 'white paper', whatever it is. Because I was in the hands of the traffickers, I feel safe with whatever sheet of paper I have on my hands right now that gives me some protection. I now feel a little safer and secure. (...) However, with the white paper here I cannot even buy a SIM card, I have to rely on other people who buy it for me. But I cannot change that. The responsibility is with the UNHCR. I have to accept this for now. It is all I can do. (Author's interview with QP)

However, it should be noted that, although migrants' grievances often focus on UNHCR's 'white papers', UNHCR cards should be regarded merely as a tentative remedy to lack of official documents - a situation which the office has no legal mandate to address. Even in contexts in which a memorandum of understanding between the agency and the relevant ministries has been signed, like in Egypt, in both sending and receiving countries the legal and political responsibility for widespread lack of documentation continues to lie with the state.

7. SPHERES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The level and quality of the information available to the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed before leaving their country varied significantly across different nationalities, and according to age and level of education, and so did reasons to migrate (see Humphries 2013). In general, however, family and other informal networks – including transnational ones – are migrants, asylum seekers and refugees’ most significant source of information about the risks and dangers along the route. None of the individuals interviewed in Egypt, for instance, cited media or humanitarian organizations in the country of origin amongst the significant sources of information on routes before they decided to travel.

This research reinforces previous findings (eg DIIS 2015) that the risks and dangers of migration are well known to migrants, refugees and their families before migration takes place. Information is shared in a variety of ways; returnees share their stories, people communicate with friends and family abroad through phone communication. Even for the most excluded from modern communications, there are several internet cafés in the Ethiopian towns which Eritrean refugees are allowed to go to and Facebook is a central social media for sharing information. In addition, in the camps there is access to international TV channels such as BBC and Al Jazeera that have reported on the routes through Sudan. IOM is also working with the governments of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan on information programmes regarding the risks and dangers of the routes. Despite the good access to information the interviewees’ living conditions and future prospects made them consider migration the only feasible option to improve their lives. Although they do not always know the details or how they will react to the difficulties they may face, they are well aware that migratory journeys to Europe are very dangerous and that there is great risk to their lives. Most of them know people who have been kidnapped, disappeared and died.

CONTACT WITH SMUGGLERS

For most of the Eritrean and Ethiopian youths – aged between 18 and 30 – interviewed in Cairo the first contact with the smugglers took place through the mediation of family members, or members of the closest circle of friends. For those who had close relatives or friends who had previously left – or attempted to leave – the country irregularly, these people had often acted as privileged mediators. At the same time, especially for the youth, their migration experiences were the object of emulation. In other cases yet, migrants explicitly described their journey as motivated by a desire to reunite with close relatives. Overall, family dynamics and extended family networks are central in determining reasons, modalities, and outcomes of the migratory project.

In the case of Eritrean migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who spent months – in some cases years – as inmates in the Sawa Military Camp or other military detention and forced labour’s facilities in Eritrea, other inmates were often an important source of information. In some of the cases examined for this study, migrants and refugees had started to get organized to leave the country in the time they had spent in the military camps, and ended up travelling together with other inmates.

Eritreans and Ethiopian migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who had lived or transited through Khartoum reported being able to collect information about migration and asylum conditions in both Sudan and Egypt from members of their national communities living in the city.

NT is a 19 year old woman, born and raised in a rural area of Eritrea near the border with Sudan. She studied in state schools until the 11th grade but, since her grades were not good enough to be admitted to further secondary education, she was forced – according to the laws currently in force in Eritrea – to enter the Sawa military camp. The camp proved an extremely distressing experience. NT developed an eye disease that partially damaged her vision, for which she was given eye drops at Sawa’s clinic. The medicine, however, was only partially effective, to the point that, at the time of our interview, she still lamented problems with her vision. For NT, things started to change significantly when she found out that one of her closest friends had been allowed to leave the military camp, and was now attending college. That news made me feel at the same time happy for her, and very bad for myself and the kind of life I was leading: miserable, sick, with no future. Everything was getting too much to endure, and I decided to leave the country, she recalls. NT explained that another important reason behind her decision was the desire to reunite with her sister, who had fled from their village to escape forced marriage. Although she did not have news about her, she had always thought that her sister had crossed the border to Sudan, which was not far from the place where her family lived. NT escaped from Sawa together with other inmates. At the Sawa camp, she recalls, people were constantly getting organized to try and escape, and one can always find fellow travellers to help her. Escaping is very dangerous: some people are caught, brought back, and given hard punishments. Others are shot at by the soldiers who guard the surroundings of the camp. But some people, as in the case of NT, do succeed. (Author’s interview with NT)

KR, an Ethiopian mother of 3, used to live with her husband and children in Saudi Arabia, where the couple were employed as domestic workers. As a consequence of the raids, rounds of deportation, and riots that followed the introduction of the Nitaqat policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2013, KR's husband was arrested. Unable to find out about her husband's circumstances, KR decided to sell her belongings and leave the country with her children, in order to escape the likely deportation to Ethiopia.

I paid for the trip to Port Sudan, and once there the same people who had helped me to leave Jeddah told me how to get to Khartoum. So I got on a car to Khartoum, paying for that trip too. I was in contact with one my husband's friends, a Sudanese man who had also been working in Saudi Arabia and had been deported. He was now back to his life in Sudan, in Khartoum, with his family. He helped me to find an Ethiopian family in Khartoum, Ethiopians that could host me and help me. We stayed there for 2 months, but we were scared. It reminded me of Saudi Arabia: so much police, you heard of deportations all the time. It was not safe. Even my kids were scared. (...) The Ethiopians we were staying with kept telling me that it wasn't a good option to stay there, that if I had some money, I should travel to Egypt. And so I did. (Author's interview with KR)

Interviewees' level of information and awareness about the smuggling routes and the potential risks they faced varied. Before embarking on the journey some interviewees had no time to plan the journey and had very little information about the travel route and the means of transportation because they had to leave their home areas in a hurry in order to avoid becoming targets of violence.

GH, the young Eritrean woman, claimed that she and the other people travelling with her knew that in order to reach Europe and freely profess their religion they had to resign themselves to face certain tests, face maltreatments and violence from the traffickers. She believed that this was the price to pay to be able to practice her religion freely. From a number of interviews it appeared that they accepted, or became resigned to the fact that physical violence was an integral, even a normal part of the journey that they had to experience in order to achieve their objective, which paradoxically is to reach a place of safety where their human rights and freedoms are protected by law.

Other migrants, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed in Italy, like YA, a 32 year-old man from Darfur, reported that he had some general information from other people from his village who travelled to Europe before him before embarking on his journey. He knew that he had to travel by sea and that the sea journey would take some days. He did not choose to go to Italy, when he sought information on ways to reach Europe from Sudan, the smugglers offered trips to Europe through Italy. YA was not aware of other available routes to Europe, he said that the people he knew reached Europe through Italy.

Most interviewees in Italy reported that they obtained information through phone calls to family and friends and word of mouth communications with others who embarked on the journey before them and who could put them in contact with smugglers on the route, who were also key information agents. The capital cities of Addis Ababa, Khartoum, Nairobi, and Cairo among other recipient cities of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, have become critical hubs of information on the East African migratory route. They are places of transit, encounter and interaction for people of different nationalities travelling to Europe.

Interviews in Italy and Malta suggested that Internet usage among migrants and refugees was widespread both on computers and mobile phone devices.

ID is a 20 year-old refugee from Darfur who now lives in the CARA in Mineo uses some of the Lycas card that he receives as part of the subsistence package to call his family back in Sudan and inform them about his new life in Italy. ID is also in contact through WhatsApp and Facebook with his friends who are still in Sudan and who seek his advice on the living conditions in Europe and the best smuggling routes and means. The patterns of usage of social media as means of information and communication are influenced by the ICT infrastructure and services available in

the countries of origin, transit and destination but also by the level of literacy and computer skills of the migrants.

However, some of the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed for this study were illiterate in their own mother tongue, and did not know how to use a computer. In some cases the information that they acquired through informal social networks contributed to increasing their awareness of the dangers that they faced on the route but this information played less of a role in their decisions to migrate because the circumstances at home were such that they had no alternative but to leave their home countries. In some other cases, however, interviewees stated that they were deceived by the smugglers who told them that the journey they offered was safe and only once they embarked on the journey they found themselves at risk and with no way to escape or turn back.

WI, a 25 year-old Palestinian man claimed that he was deceived by the smugglers, he was told that he was going to be taken to the border with Libya by car but instead he had to walk for three entire days in the mountains and in desert areas. He was completely unprepared for the journey, with no water and food because he did not know that he had to walk. He claimed: "I bought death with \$700"(Author's interview with WI)

Thousands of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, rely on smugglers to transport them into, through and out of the East of Sudan every year. All the interviewees in Sudan, with the exception of TR who was trafficked, were aware and knowledgeable of the risks they were likely to face. The two other people who undertook the migratory route through Libya and Egypt to Europe knew of the risks and costs associated with the trip.

These risks are also well known by family members and where they are not involved in the individuals' decisions to leave they were often kept deliberately in the dark. None of the interviewees in Ethiopia (all Ethiopians or Eritreans) had told their family members that they were going abroad. They knew that their family would use any means to stop from embarking on risky journeys. For families to find out that a family member was on their way to Europe was a disturbing realisation. Just before crossing the border to Sudan, TS's brother had called his family to inform them that he was leaving for Europe: 'I never saw my father crying before that. My parents cried every time we talked about him' (TS). His brother made it to the United Kingdom, but even though 'we were happy that he arrived, I thought only of his life when he was in the hands of the traffickers. I didn't care if he made it to Europe or was going to be rich, only that he survived' (Author's interview with TS). All interviewed family members of migrants expressed deep concern about their relatives' wellbeing during what was considered to be extremely dangerous journeys. How migrants themselves perceived of the dangers and risk on journeys depended, to some extent, on their former experiences of migration and on their current situation. However, this pattern was not universally reported. In Egypt, interviewees reported that they had often been encouraged by their families to leave, as a kind of insurance policy, to be able to support those who had been left behind, though this obviously did not diminish the concern that was felt for them during the dangerous stages of their journeys.

DETERRENT EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE MIGRATION EXPERIENCES

Interviewees who had had particularly negative migration experiences linked those experiences to their decision to stop any further migration attempts. In particular, those who had been kidnapped and tortured in the Sinai had decided to avoid irregular migration. FL, a 29 year old man, had come from Eritrea to Ethiopia in 2007 and stayed for six months in Shimelba camp. He had been content when he first arrived, but over time he found it increasingly difficult to live there and went to Shegerab camp in Sudan where he stayed for three months. He described the conditions there as 'very bad', and in 2008 he paid 4,500 USD to go to Israel. Rashaida took him and others to Sinai, but demanded more money to be taken to the border of Israel: 'We were put in a place that was fenced with barbed wire and had no roof. It was very hot and there was no shade, and there was little food and water. We were beaten every day, it was very difficult.' After three weeks FL managed to pay 12,000 USD and was taken to the border of Israel. He tried to cross into Israel, but three others were shot by Egyptian soldiers and he was arrested and imprisoned for one year and seven months. He was not sentenced and did not get any information about how long he would be in prison. The conditions in the prisons were good, FL said, and

the guards only beat people who caused trouble. He spent one month in El-Arish prison, two months in Raafa, four months in Suez prison, and then to Alexandria for some months before he was finally sent to different prisons in Cairo for the rest of the time. In a prison in Cairo, staff from the Ethiopian embassy came and said that Eritreans could be returned to Ethiopia if they wanted. He opted for that instead of being returned to Eritrea, and the process to go to Ethiopia took about six-eight weeks. He arrived in Addis Ababa in June 2009:

I won't try to go illegally again because of my experiences in Egypt. Only if I get resettlement I'll go abroad. It's OK here now. I've seen the problems on the journey and advise people not to go, but they don't listen. Many people have been sent back from Egypt and they also give advice telling people that it's better not to go. But it's very difficult to sit around all the time not knowing about the future, and sometimes when I feel desperate and worry a lot I think about trying to go to Europe again. (FL)

With personal experience of torture the interviewees reconsidered irregular migration as a feasible option to improve their lives. FL, despite his experiences of being kidnapped and imprisoned in Egypt considered the situation in the refugee camp so difficult that he sometimes thought about trying again.

While most of the interviewees claimed to have in-depth knowledge about the risks and dangers on the route, there were also cases of migrants who did not know what to expect from such journeys. An Ethiopian interviewee, SE, 24 years old, was doing relatively well in Humera, Ethiopia, and had managed to buy a rickshaw that brought him a steady income. He was convinced to go with a man who repeatedly told him that he could make much more money in Israel. When the agent said he would be going too SE sold his rickshaw and paid 51,000 Birr [2,500 USD] and embarked on the journey in June 2012. In the end, the agent did not travel with him:

I had not wanted to go in the first place, and only went because the agent convinced me. I was not happy at this time because the journey was very hard, but I had no choice but to continue. If we changed our minds we would be left in the desert to die. (Author's interview with SE).

SE ended up being kidnapped and tortured in Sinai. He was beaten with plastic cords, tied together in groups of 10 people and given electric shocks, and was blindfolded for extended periods of time. After about six months he only wanted to die and stopped eating, and because of this they opened the ropes on his hands so that he could move his arms. SE was able to escape with an Eritrean man. He spent three-four months in a hospital before he was sent to a camp where he stayed until his brother sent him an air ticket to return to Ethiopia. He came back in June 2013, exactly a year after he had left Ethiopia. Because of limited knowledge about the migration routes as well as being fed false information by an agent SE's life had become worse than it was before migrating:

Life had been good before I left for Israel, but now everything is bad. I have lost everything I had and my family has lost lots of money because of me. Now I am doing day labour and living from hand to mouth (Author's interview with SE).

Interviewees who had such experiences preferred to live under difficult situations in Ethiopia rather than to try irregular migration again. BY, an Ethiopian, who was also kidnapped in Sinai in 2010 said: 'I have found work here, and even though the salary is small at least I won't be killed here. I'm not thinking about going abroad again, I prefer to die in Ethiopia.' Extreme cases of torture deterred interviewees from considering migration again, but it did not have a broader deterrent effect. Widespread awareness of the dangers of going through Egypt encouraged individuals to consider migrating to Libya.

DECISION TO MIGRATE AGAIN ON RETURN

Some of the Ethiopian interviewees who had had experiences of migration that were less traumatic found their living conditions and lack of prospects in Addis Ababa unbearable and were eager to migrate again despite being familiar with the risks involved. YO, 34, was originally from Eritrea. He went to Djibouti in 1999, but because he did not have any identification documents he was deported to Ethiopia after two years. He had been living in poverty since he arrived in Ethiopia in 2001 and had only been able to find manual labour in recent years. He went legally to Sudan in 2012 and overstayed his visa. He found work in Khartoum, but was not able to save the 1,500USD he needed to go to Libya. Because YO's visa had expired the police regularly demanded bribes of about 30 SUD [5 USD] from him, and he avoided leaving his home as much as possible because of this. When it became clear to him that he would not be able to make enough money to migrate further he decided to return to Ethiopia in 2013. In early 2015 he was, however, trying to collect money to go to Sudan again:

Half of those who travel die and half of them make it. If I get a new visa for Sudan I will go again. I have to go if I can, I have no choice. This is no life. There is no hope here, there is nothing here. There is risk, but I will go. People are being sold as slaves in Khartoum, women get raped by people dressed as policemen. Egypt is bad now and they take kidneys there. There are problems in Libya too but it's better than Egypt. (Author's interview with YO)

Considering that the situation had improved in Egypt in 2014, and Libya had deteriorated, YO's information was not up to date but many of the interviewees regarded their chances for surviving the journey to Europe to be about 50-50.

DW, a 30 year old man from Addis Ababa, had left for Libya in late 2014. He had been to Sudan before and said he knew the risks: 'a friend of mine died when the transport from Sudan dropped us around the Libyan border and the Libyan transport did not come. Several people died there'. DW was caught in Kufra and sent back to Sudan where he was imprisoned outside Khartoum for 20 days:

It was very very bad, hardly any food, men who could rape you, thieves and so on. A very bad condition. My friends paid 250 USD to get me out of prison. I returned to Ethiopia four days after being released. I feared staying in Sudan and came back to Ethiopia two months ago. (Author's interview with DW)

Despite having been imprisoned after travelling to Libya, being familiar with the risks and having returned just two months earlier, he was planning to go to Sudan again to make it to Europe:

My mother does not want me to go, but I want to go. I will not tell my mother when I go. Sitting waiting for God to help doesn't work, one has to practice [i.e. one has to try to improve the situation oneself]. I have tried DV-lottery but didn't get it. I have tried to progress in my life, but now at 30 I have still not seen any progress. But I am a Christian, and for Christians hope is never cut. (Author's interview with DW)

After they had returned from their first journey to Sudan the conditions in Addis Ababa remained unfavourable for these individuals. All male Ethiopian interviewees who had been to Sudan intended to go there again and to use their experiences to make it to Europe.

DECISION TO STAY IN ETHIOPIA ON RETURN

Some interviewees had come to think differently about the opportunities of migration despite relatively unproblematic experiences. In contrast to unmarried men, women with children wanted to stay and try to manage under the challenging conditions in Ethiopia rather than going abroad again. Although they had made better salaries as domestic workers in Egypt and Libya than they could in Ethiopia, they had not been able to improve their lives significantly. AL, a 40 years mother of three children, had a passport but no visa when she travelled to Egypt by plane in 2007. She returned to Ethiopia in 2014 and was determined not to migrate irregularly again:

I can live freely here and with confidence, but being a refugee one has no friends, no family, which makes it difficult. I tell this to people who want to go abroad. However, if people go legally I support it. I'll be happy if my children go abroad when they are 20-25 years old, but it has to be by plane and legally. Not overland because there is rape, killings, stealing of kidneys. I find it surprising that people go when they know the problems. I have seen many people with serious problems at UN in Cairo. But people go because there is no work. (Author's interview with AL)

Some of these dangers, such as the stealing of organs, were cited quite widely by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, although none of those interviewed for this report had experienced this, knew of anyone else who had experienced it, or even knew of any specific cases. While legal migration was attractive, all interviewees were well aware that legal migration to Europe or the United States was close to impossible, as HA said: 'There is no hope for people like me to get a visa'. Only rich people were considered able to obtain visas to such desired destinations. Also AM, who had flown to Libya and worked there as a domestic worker for three years, found that migration abroad was not a means for her to improve her life:

The idea of going abroad does not make me happy. I feel sad when people go abroad, how many die? How many are killed? People don't want to leave, but have no choice. Everything is good here, but there is no work. There are no other problems here Alhamdulillah. I'll continue working like this [selling tomatoes and onions], I don't want to go abroad again. One doesn't find anything good there, in Arab countries. I don't want to go anywhere. (Author's interview with AM)

For AM, even legal migration was not an attractive option for her after her experiences in Libya. For many Eritreans, on the other hand, both legal and irregular migration out of Ethiopia was attractive.

INFORMATION ON ROUTE IN SUDAN

For those who are in Sudan, it appears they all have up-to-date information on the risks and costs associated with the journey from Sudan to Europe. Word of mouth, mobile communications and the internet are key avenues to finding up-to-date information on migration routes and possible risks. In one incident, an online Eritrean news site published the names of traffickers and smugglers whom migrants should avoid (Author's interview with SA). In some cases, migrants and refugees have already endured serious violations along the route including physical and sexual violence. The traffickers are able to operate within the Shagarab refugee camp kidnapping refugees within the camp (UNHCR, 2013). Significant efforts have been made to secure Shagarab by IOM, UNHCR and the Sudanese government and incidents of kidnap were dramatically reduced in 2014 and 2015. Nevertheless, during the drafting of this report there was a further incident in which 14 Eritreans were kidnapped by an armed group while being transported to Shagarab (UNHCR 2015c). Kidnapping is also reported in Khartoum where one of the interviewees was held to ransom (Interview with AH, 17 April 2015), however the situation in the camp is reported to have improved with no reports of kidnapping from the camp since 2014. Also, several of the interviewees cited having to pay ransoms for individuals trafficked in Libya (Author's interview with TR; Author's interview with FG).

ONWARD MOVEMENT OF ERITREANS

With little hope for improving their lives in Ethiopia, Eritreans in the refugee camps considered onward migration their only option. They had already taken great risk to come to Ethiopia, as the case of 21 year old KD illustrates: KD was arrested the first time she tried to cross the border from Eritrea to Ethiopia and spent five months in an Eritrean prison: 'It was very bad there, little food but there was enough water.' During the time in prison she changed her way of thinking and wanted to try to stay in Eritrea. However, after being released she found no opportunities to improve her life in Eritrea and two months later she crossed the border to Ethiopia. 'Fear is obligatory when crossing the border', and she knows that the journey to Europe will be hard too:

If possible I'll go abroad legally, but if not I'm not scared to die. I'll go if I can obtain money to go. There is no hope for the future living in the camp. I have all the information about the journey to Europe, about prisons in Sudan, about Sinai, about the prices and so on. Everybody knows these things. (Author's interview with KD).

KD's perspectives were reflected among other young Eritrean refugees. With 'hope being cut' in the camps and few prospects for the future, they had to take great risks to try to improve their lives:

All refugees in the camp know the problems on the road to Libya. But because of the small chances for resettlement everybody will try to go the illegal way. At this time of the year the weather is good, so maybe I will go after one month. I fear it a lot, but because I have no other option I have to go. There are lots of people I know that have gone. Some of my friends have made it to Europe and others have died. (Author's interview with TS)

Lack of information about the risk of migration was not the main issue. It was rather the difficult situations in Ethiopia and Eritrea that constituted the challenge for them. Some of the Eritrean interviewees expressed frustration that the international community did not sufficiently understand their difficult situations in refugee camps as well as in Eritrea. GD, who had been in the Adi Harush camp for two years, had been provoked when he had heard about a Danish report in late 2014 suggesting that Eritreans had few protection issues (see DIS, 2014):

We heard in media from abroad that they said the government in Eritrea was not so bad and that people wanted to go abroad only to have an easy life. Everybody in the camp got very angry because we know the condition in Eritrea very well and all the problems there. I wouldn't be in Adi Harush if there were no problems in Eritrea. (Author's interview with GD)

Rather than considering themselves to be economic migrants, the interviewees said that the difficult conditions in Eritrea as well as in the refugee camps in Ethiopia were the main reasons why migration to Europe is an attractive option to them despite the risks and dangers.

8. RESPONSES: ROLE OF STATE AUTHORITIES/IOS AND NGOS

This section supplements section four, on policy contexts, though this section is concerned with implementation of policy, rather than policy itself, drawing largely on interview material. There is a clear relationship between the effectiveness of government authority and the incidence of smuggling and trafficking. Where migration is criminalised, migrants are forced into these underground networks, which often increases their vulnerability. Where centralised state authority is weak, such as it is currently in Libya, smuggling and trafficking flourish. This does not mean that state authority inevitably protects migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Reports of direct involvement by state agents were common. In a context where the financial rewards of involvement in smuggling and trafficking are now so great, punishments are weak and the chances of discovery are small, this does not seem surprising. Nor does strong centralised authority automatically eliminate smuggling and trafficking; criminal networks obviously continue to flourish within the European Union, where much greater resources are available to counter this. Yet the rule of law does reduce the likelihood that migrants, asylum seekers and refugees will suffer abuse by restricting criminal activity, reducing impunity of state officials and providing an environment where humanitarian organisations can operate without fear.

All states in this region have existing legislation to protect human rights in a range of areas such as access to healthcare, treatment in prison or detention or labour rights which are not specific to smuggling and trafficking, but, if properly enforced, would have a dramatic impact on the security of migrants and refugees. Yet it is also common for states to introduce new legislation, particularly anti-trafficking legislation, and this has the advantage of increasing the profile of these concerns and highlighting their significance for law makers. It also enhances the potential for international cooperation, which is essential in any effective strategy to reinforce protection. There are examples of all of these efforts in the North East African region, though implementation and international coordination require much greater attention.

OFFICIAL STATE RESPONSES

Ethiopia

The ways in which the Ethiopian government approaches migration is largely through the framework of trafficking. Irregular migration is portrayed as a major problem that can be resolved by informing people about the risks involved, legislation and punishment, as well as by providing opportunities for people in Ethiopia. A government official¹⁴ emphasised that: 'The government tries to make people stay and work in their own country'. The reason for this, he elaborated, was because of the problems associated with irregular migration:

Illegal traffickers suck money from the people. The illegal migrants might get work for some time, but then get deported. So it's the traffickers who benefit. If people go legally to other countries there are no problems, it's going illegally that is the problem.

Traffickers and smugglers were seen as taking advantage of migrants, and irregular migration was a problem that only traffickers benefitted from. An official working for the Migration Task Force¹⁵ explained the need to educate people and crack down on irregular migration:

The government has awareness programmes to make young people understand the implications of irregular migration. There are also programmes for economic empowerment and creating opportunities for young people. The government is trying to incarcerate brokers, smugglers and illegal exporters. But the main thing is to make young people understand what irregular migration is.

Also IOM¹⁶ has had information programmes to inform Eritreans in the camps about the risks of irregular migration, but there has been little success in reducing migration through this method. More recently,

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¹⁴ Interview, staff at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa, January 2015.

¹⁵ Interview, staff at Migration Task Force, Addis Ababa, January 2015.

¹⁶ Interview, staff at IOM, Addis Ababa, January 2015.

IOM has started programmes focusing on community conversations, theatre forums, concerts and various activities including sports to highlight the risks of migration. But as shown above, the issue is not only lack of information about the risks of migration, but rather situations in Ethiopia and Eritrea that make migration stand out as the only feasible option to create a better future. SF, a 29 year old man, pointed out the difficulties of living in Ethiopia:

It's been six months since I came back [from Sudan], but I have no work and I'm staying with my mother. There is work available, but the salary is so low that it is not worth it. It's only through being a migrant that one can make any progress. (Authors' interview with SF)

As long as opportunities of relatively well paid employment remain limited Ethiopians will pursue opportunities elsewhere. As in other regions of the world (eg the US-Mexico border in the late 1990s, Cornelius, 2001) governments' emphasis on criminalising smugglers and traffickers does little to reduce the incidence of smuggling and trafficking but does create further challenges for migrants because they have to pay higher prices and take longer and potentially more dangerous routes to avoid detection.

Eritrea

All Eritrean interviewees were concerned about the potential threat of the Eritrean state, but because of the highly militarised border Eritrean refugees felt safe in Ethiopia, though not in Sudan. GD stated: 'It's not only Esaias [the President] that has to disappear, but the whole party has to die for the country and the region to be peaceful.' This perception was common among Eritrean interviewees, and KD, who came to Ethiopia in October 2014, said:

Even though I only know one country I know there is no freedom there. Everybody thinks it is difficult there, my family, my friends. Everything is controlled by the government; TV, internet, there is no choice for education or for business. I left because of this. (KD)

When crossing the border to Ethiopia the interviewees were scared of the Ethiopian soldiers as well, but reported to having been treated well and fed before being transported to registration facilities in Endabaguna, close to Shire. AW came to Ethiopia when she was 14 years old and had lived in Mai Aini camp for six years. She was on her first leave from the camp to visit relatives in Adigrat, and in contrast to how interviewees saw the Eritrean state she considered Ethiopia to be a country developing quickly: 'Although life in the camps is hard, life in Ethiopia is good. I think the country will be good in the future' (Author's interview with AW). For Eritrean refugees, however, they had limited possibilities to take part in this development.

Eritreans in the camps are only allowed to move freely around the camps and to the nearest town/city to use internet and other services. If they wish to go beyond these, they need permits:

No refugee can move outside the camps without permit at night. Only at daytime to nearby towns, such as Mai Tseberi for those who are in the Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps. If they are caught in other places it's considered a petty crime and they get fined. But if the police find evidence of them intending to go abroad they'll be sentenced by Article 243.¹⁷

Eritreans in Ethiopia are typically detained when they are found breaching the regulations regarding refugees, particularly on movement out of the camps. In Article 243 (1) of the Criminal Code of Ethiopia (2004), illegal departure or entry can be punished 'with simple imprisonment or fine or with both. The simple imprisonment is defined in Article 106 (1) and extends 'for a period of from ten days to three years.' In addition to migrating to Sudan, also migration back to Eritrea is subject to punishment:

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¹⁷ Interview, former public prosecutor in Inda Aba Guna, Addis Ababa, February 2015.

I had a case where an Eritrean tried to return to Eritrea over Zalambessa. The man was bored of sitting in the camps and wanted to go back. He had been two-three years in Mai Aini. He was also helping two boys to cross. He was caught and sentenced for five years and six months. If he was only crossing himself, his punishment would have been between 10 days and up to three years, but because he was helping others it was considered smuggling and he got a longer sentence. In the Criminal code of Ethiopia, Proclamation no 414/2004, this was according to article 243, subarticle 1 for crossing himself and subarticle 2 for helping others to cross and making money out of it. The man claimed that he did not receive any money for helping the others to cross back to Eritrea, but that he did it to help the boys who were missing their parents. The boys testified against the man in court.¹⁸

Article 232 (2) is more serious and is 'punishable with rigorous imprisonment from five years to ten years.' Although Eritreans are not detained in the camps, their movements around Ethiopia are highly restricted which contribute to the difficulties of living in the camps for extended periods of time.

Egypt

Migration policies in Egypt are mostly limited to border policing and the control and repression of criminal acts associated with crossing borders illegally. Migrants' encounters with Egyptian authorities thus take place mostly in the context of detention and deportation operations.

Although none of the migrants, asylum seekers and refugees interviewed had a history of immigration-related detention in Egypt, IO officers in Cairo confirmed that, in recent years, detention has become an increasingly important area of intervention for international and non-governmental organizations in the country. Officers expressed concerns about two issues in particular. First, as already mentioned in section 6, they highlighted the tendency on the part of Egyptian authorities to detain underage migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers – both unaccompanied minors and those who travel with their families – regardless of the legal provisions available in the law to prevent such practices, and to Egypt's international commitment to respect the rights of children. Secondly, they underlined that, UNHCR not being authorized to visit detention facilities in Egypt nor to operate in the Southern and Eastern areas of the country, those apprehended while crossing the Southern border do not have access to any form of protection.

None of the people interviewed reported having witnessed or having been involved in episodes pointing to the collusion of state authorities – border intelligence officers, military or police – with smuggling and trafficking networks. Many of the interviews, however, highlighted how, particularly in the case of clandestine boats leaving from the Alexandria port between 2012–2014, authorities are likely to have 'turned a blind eye' on the rather well organized network connecting Syrian communities in Cairo and Alexandria to the smugglers. Egypt's draft law on illegal migration and smuggling would help to counteract these activities, once it is passed. Further research, including more extensive fieldwork, is needed in order to investigate these claims.

Sudan

In an attempt to curb smuggling and trafficking of people, the Sudanese government have taken part in several initiatives and signed a number of agreements with the neighbouring countries including Eritrea and Ethiopia, established joint border patrols with Chad and (as noted in section 6) takes part in the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (the Khartoum Process) aiming to combat such abuses (Sudan Tribune, 2014).

The Sudanese parliament also endorsed a bill in December 2013 on combating human trafficking and called for carrying out deterrent penalties including capital punishment and life imprisonment against those involved in those crimes, which became law in March in 2014. This included the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, tasked to develop the national coordination body

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¹⁸ Interview, former public prosecutor in Inda Aba Guna, Addis Ababa, February 2015.

and a National Plan of Action, which reportedly is currently under development (Interview with BR, 14 April 2015). It was only on 11 February 2015 that Sudan started the first trial against alleged traffickers, who were arrested the previous year in February 2014 (Sudan Tribune, 2015).

From secondary sources and some of the interviews, it appears there is little distinction, between smuggling and trafficking in terms of punishments of those found guilty. This is due to a number of factors, notably that both activities are related to organised crime, also, it is seen as a risky area to investigate in detail due to possible colluding of the Sudanese authorities in smuggling and trafficking (interviews, HRW 2014).

COLLUSION WITH STATE OFFICIALS

Bribes at border crossings and in detention

As discussed already in the section on protection issues, travelling without the necessary documents is a key source of vulnerability for refugees. Most of those interviewed for this study were arrested a number of times while trying to cross a border or during their transit through Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and Libya. Some interviewees reported that while in detention they were victims of forms of violence and forced labour and in order to be set free they had to pay bribes to the prison authorities.

When AL, a young Eritrean man and another seven people, arrived near the border crossing point (between Eritrea and Sudan near the town of Tesseney) they were arrested by the Sudanese authorities who threatened to send them back to Eritrea unless they paid. The men gave all the money that they had to the Sudanese border officers and were released and continued their journey to Kassala.

In their December 2014 report, rating perceptions of corruption in 175 countries, Transparency International place Egypt 94th, Ethiopia 110th and Sudan 173rd (Transparency International 2014). This suggests that the sampled population of those countries considers them to be places where bribes are required parts of daily life. It is not therefore surprising that non-citizens report that bribery is a standard part of border crossing in the region.

Collusion between facilitators and state officials

Some migrants, asylum seekers and refugees also reported forms of collusion between the smuggling networks and state authorities, particularly the corruption and bribing police officers and prison authorities as well as the direct involvement of individual officers in smuggling and trafficking operations.

AP, a Somali refugee, resorted to the service of a smuggler to be taken to Libya, he claimed that in Sudan it is very easy to find smugglers because they operate relatively overtly without fear of being identified and arrested by the police. He explained that the Sudanese smugglers do not fear being arrested because they pay bribes to high-ranking government officers to ensure that no action is taken against the smugglers.

MO, another refugee from Darfur, arrived in Tripoli in July 2013 and settled in the area of Azawyah where he was arrested and taken to As-Sulah At-Tomminiyah prison because he was undocumented. In prison there where many people who were caught by the Libyan police while trying to embark on smuggling boats to cross the Mediterranean Sea and reach Europe. During the two months Mohammad spent in prison he was exposed to forced labour by the Libyan prison authorities. He was taken to a building site where he was forced to lift heavy rocks and iron pipes for the construction of the local sewage system.

ID, another refugee from Darfur decided to reach Tripoli through the southern city of Sabha, but before reaching Sabha he was arrested at a check point and put in

the Garyan Hamra prison, near Sabha. He remained in prison until the last week of August 2013. The prison guards asked him if he had money to pay for his release; he did have the money but he was afraid to say it because he did not want the guard to take the money and leave him in prison. One day a Libyan man arrived and asked if among the prisoners there was an Arabic-speaker whom he could take with him to work in his farm. ID told the man that he was Sudanese and that he would work for him if he helped to get out of prison. The two men agreed and ID was released. He worked for about a week in the farm of the Libyan man, who after a week told ID that he either had to pay him 200 Libyan dinars to be taken to Tripoli or he would take him back to prison. ID paid the 200 Libyan dinars and the man took him to Tripoli.

AM, a 21 year old Somali refugee, claimed that during his detention in a prison in Addis Ababa, he was victim of a scam orchestrated by the prison officers. One day AM went out to buy milk and he was arrested by the Ethiopian police because he did not have any documents. The Ethiopians took him to a prison where he spent about a month. During his detention, AM was not allowed to make any phone calls, he was not given the possibility to see a lawyer and he was beaten, insulted and laughed at by the prison guards. One morning, he was told to get ready to be deported back to Somalia. He was taken along with other prisoners to an isolated mountain area on a military van. The guards made the prisoners get off the van and told them that the border with Somalia was in front of them and that they had to carry on walking and then the guards left. After a while another military van arrived, and other Ethiopian officers asked AM and the other migrants whether they wanted to be taken back to Addis Ababa and whether they had any money to pay to be driven back on another military van. AM told to the guards that he wanted to go back to Addis Ababa and that he had money at home in Bole and that upon his arrival in the Ethiopian capital he would have paid the guards the money they asked for, which was about 50US dollars. The guards gave AM a mobile phone, with which he called a friend and instructed him to pay US dollars to a middleman who was collecting payments on behalf of the guards in Addis Ababa. AM's friend paid the sum of money the guards asked for and AM and other eight men were taken to the city of Awasa, where they were told by these men wearing military uniforms and driving a military vehicle to continue their journey to Addis Ababa by public transports. AM believes that this episode was a fraud planned and implemented by the Ethiopian prison officers in order to extort money from undocumented migrants.

The testimonies presented above support previous studies which documented the active collusion of law enforcement authorities with smuggling and trafficking networks in Sudan, Egypt and Libya and highlighted the failure of governments of these key transit countries to identify and take action against the perpetrators of these crimes (van Reisen Mirjam, 2013; USIP, 2014; HRW, 2014).

9. CONCLUSIONS

This report contributes to a growing research and policy focus on the North East African system of international migration. Attention to this part of the world is predominantly driven by international and European organisations and is at least partially motivated by the dramatic growth of undocumented arrivals in Europe on the Central Mediterranean route since 2013. The chronic lack of any reliable or systematic data about movements across this vast area makes the picture presented here inevitably uncertain. This research involved almost 100 interviews across five countries, but the nature of the research means that these were not and could never be representative of all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in this area. The tremendous uncertainty of any general image of regional migration patterns is further exacerbated by the growing instability in large parts of the region, most obviously Libya. Nevertheless, some conclusions can be made with a degree of confidence.

This research illustrates that **migration across this region is highly complex**, far more complicated than the picture of one-way travel towards Europe that sometimes emerges from media or policy accounts. Interviews with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt highlight the complexity of regional, cross border, frequently circular migrations only a small minority of which are directed towards an attempted Mediterranean crossing. Interviews with recently arrived migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Malta and Sardinia suggest that Europe is not the intended destination even for many of those who eventually get there, at least when they leave their homes.

Migration projects typically change along the route. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are encouraged onwards by social networks and spheres of information that have expanded in recent years through much greater internet access. Most significantly in the context of this report, people on the move are forced to change plans by the situations of chronic insecurity, lack of access to human rights including labour rights or limited protection, which they find along the route or across the nearest international border. Although many people have been compelled to move due to persecution or armed conflict, seeking asylum and protection elsewhere, **this research has documented a series of abuses of migrants** that occur during the journey and further increase the need for human rights protection even for those whose initial motives were not motivated by persecution in the sense of the 1951 Convention, but by a search for livelihoods and dignity.

This research has prioritised the perspectives of those on the move, partly out of a desire to give voice to those with direct experience of migration and partly due to the difficulty of gaining interviews with policy makers, especially in Sudan and Egypt. This perspective highlights the desire to leave for many on the move in this region. This desire arises both from fear of direct or impending persecution and from a broader, deep rooted hopelessness about economic or political prospects. Eritrean refugees provide a clear example of this level of hopelessness, no opportunities to return home, restricted mobility and lack of other opportunity –and that is for those lucky enough to be in Ethiopia. Those in Sudan must contend with the additional fear of potential refoulement to Eritrea. This level of hopelessness is the daily reality for many, particularly young people, across the region and forms the ever present undercurrent to any decision to leave.

This level of hopelessness is further exacerbated by the increasingly easy access to information about life in other places and ways of getting there. This comes both from family and friends who have already made the journey and from the increasingly widespread access to the Internet, facilitating communication with social networks but also providing links to other key information sources. Although there were examples of individuals who appeared to have little advance information about particular sections on the route, the overwhelming majority had a clear knowledge of the dangers involved at different stages. This knowledge appears widespread, explaining the commonly reported experience of individuals having to hide their migration intentions from family members for fear that they would be prevented from leaving. Despite knowing the risks, people still decide to move. Still, there is also evidence that even if the intensity of the potential risks were widely appreciated, some of the details were not. A large number of interviewees stated a preference for the route via Libya due to its perceived lack of risks, drawing on information about the extreme dangers of the Sinai route that was at least a year out of date. Yet, in terms of direct experiences at the time of research, the Libya route posed far greater dangers for migration than the journey into Egypt.

The research has documented four distinct areas of or which are likely to result in major human rights protection concerns. First, the specific context of onward movement of recognised refugees, specifically Eritrean refugees from the camps in Ethiopia or Eastern Sudan. In some cases individuals who have been living in the camps for many years get an opportunity to leave but the small population of Eritreans interviewed for this research suggest that it is more common for individuals to use the camps as a staging post of a few months before moving onward.

Second, there appears to be a relationship between smuggling and trafficking, now well documented in the case of the Sinai (HRW 2014) and although the Sinai is much more effectively controlled similar patterns of abuse are reported elsewhere. Although only a small minority of individuals interviewed for this project reported experiences that indicated they were trafficked, the key point of danger appears to be at the handover from one smuggling organisation to another, particularly when entering the uncontrolled territory of southern Libya. This raises the issue that migrants who would probably not qualify for international protection under existing conventions, have genuine human rights protection concerns due to the circumstances they have encountered on the journey.

A third area of concern is the very widespread lack of identity documents reportedly carried by migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. In Europe such lack of documentation is assumed to be strategic, since it may impede a removals process, but across the North East African region, where removals take place they are rarely to individuals' countries of origin, much more commonly to the closest border crossing to a neighbouring country. There are no obvious advantages to migrants to be undocumented, and plenty of disadvantages, so this reflects the fact that identification is not very widespread in society as a whole, but particularly amongst lower socio-economic groups. This research has highlighted several areas where a lack of any form of identification may create problems for migrants, particularly at encounters with state officials where formal identification may provide a degree of protection from requests for bribes, detention, removal and more widespread abuse.

Fourthly, there is a growing presence of unaccompanied minors migrating across this region. This is frequently associated with issues of protection at points of origin. The only people interviewed who had travelled when they were under 18 were Ethiopian and Eritrean, suggesting an underlying issue of human rights protection specifically relevant to minors. In Eritrea, minors are motivated to leave to escape conscription in the army. Minors migrating across this region will face all of the other difficulties highlighted, further compounded by their increased vulnerability.

These problems are increasingly widely recognised across the region. Any systematic effort to address the wide range of issues highlighted in this report must involve state authorities in the region.. The only regional state officials involved in this research were from Ethiopia, but judging from recent legislation and information on the behaviour of police and border control officials in Sudan and Egypt there is growing attention paid to the issues posed by irregular migration, though much of the attention is repressive.. Credible reports of the involvement of state officials in bribery or mistreatment of migrants are widespread and there are huge areas where state control is limited or entirely absent, most notably Libya, but state authority has generally declined towards the borders. Most policy initiatives, notably recent legislation in Ethiopia and Sudan, focus on the prevention of trafficking without fully acknowledging the certainly much more widespread incidence of smuggling. Policies to counter smuggling must be implemented with respect for the human rights of those who may have no other options to move.

Finally, complex regional migration systems require regional responses. Until the twin Khartoum processes, international coordination was ad hoc and systematic pan regional attempts to address the issue were totally absent. If these processes can be used as an opportunity for free and frank discussions between representatives of the states of the region it will certainly be a step forward in responding to the large proportion of international movement that remains within the region.. However, if it is simply another vehicle for the exercise of European pressure, driven by a dominant concern about migration to Europe it will struggle to address the urgent issues raised by migration in this region.

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Interviewee	Sex	Language	Age	Location	Nationality	Reference
Migrant 1	Female	Amharic	45	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	
Migrant 2	Female	Amharic	40	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	AL
Migrant 3	Male	Amharic	29	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian (but grew up in Eritrea)	FL
Migrant 4	Male	Amharic	34	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian (but grew up in Eritrea)	YO
Migrant 5	Male	Amharic	30	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	DW
Migrant 6	Female	Amharic	36	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	
Migrant 7	Male	Amharic	29	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	SF
Migrant 8	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	20	Adigrat	Eritrean	
Migrant 9	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	25	Adigrat	Ethiopian	BY
Migrant 10	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	24	Adigrat	Ethiopian	SE
Migrant 11	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	21	Shire	Eritrean	KD
Migrant 12	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	21	Shire	Eritrean	
Migrant 13	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	20	Mai Aini	Eritrean	HA
Migrant 14	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	29	Mai Aini	Eritrean	AL
Migrant 15	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	27	Adi Harush	Eritrean	GD
Migrant 16	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	25	Shire	Eritrean	TS
Migrant 17	Female	Amharic	28	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	
Migrant 18	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	23	Cairo	Eritrean	BH
Migrant 19	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	19	Cairo	Eritrean	
Migrant 20	Male	Arabic	26	Cairo	Sudanese	
Migrant 21	Male	Massalit (w/translator)	43	Cairo	Sudanese	
Migrant 22	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	19	Cairo	Eritrean	NT
Migrant 23	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	18	Cairo	Eritrean	
Migrant 24	Female	Amharic-Dromiffa (w/translator)	35	Cairo	Ethiopian	
Migrant 25	Female	Amharic-Dromiffa (w/translator)	37	Cairo	Ethiopian	KR

Migrant 26	Female	Amharic-Oromiffa (w/translator)	17	Cairo	Ethiopian	SI
Migrant 27	Male	Amharic-Oromiffa (w/translator)	23	Cairo	Ethiopian	
Migrant 28	Male	Amharic-Oromiffa (w/translator)	29	Cairo	Ethiopian	
Migrant 29	Male	Amharic-Oromiffa (w/translator)		Cairo	Ethiopian	
Migrant 30	Male	Amharic-Oromiffa (w/translator)	51	Cairo	Ethiopian	
Migrant 31	Male	Amharic-Oromiffa (w/translator)	16	Cairo	Ethiopian	AH
Migrant 32	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	30	Cairo	Eritrean	QP
Migrant 33	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	26	Cairo	Eritrean	
Migrant 34	Male	Arabic	30	Cairo	Sudanese	
Migrant 35	Male	Arabic	22	Cairo	Sudanese	
Migrant 36	Female	Arabic	36	Cairo	Syrian	
Migrant 37	Male	Arabic	42	Cairo	Syrian	
Migrant 38	Male	Massalit (w/translator)	24	Cairo	Sudanese	
Migrant 39	Male	Arabic		Khartoum	Sudanese	TR
Migrant 40	Male	Arabic		Telephone	Sudanese	SA
Migrant 41	Male	Arabic	37	Skype	Ethiopian	FG
Migrant 42	Male	Arabic		Skype	Ethiopian	DL
Migrant 43	Male	Tigrinya (w/translator)	31	Skype	Eritrean	MK
Migrant 44	Female	Tigrinya (w/translator)	34	Skype	Eritrean	ZE
Migrant 45	Male	English	36	Malta	Eritrean	
Migrant 46	Female	Arabic	28	Malta	Syrian	
Migrant 47	Female	Somali	27	Malta	Somali	
Migrant 48	Female	Somali	27	Malta	Somali	
Migrant 49	Male	Arabic	33	Malta	Sudanese	

Migrant 50	Male	Tigrinya	30	Malta	Eritrean (lived in refugee camp in Sudan)	
Migrant 51	Male	Tigrinya	26	Malta	Eritrean (lived in refugee camp in Sudan)	
Migrant 53	Male	Arabic	26	Malta	Sudanese (Darfur)	MO
Migrant 54	Female	Arabic	40	Malta	Syrian	SM
Migrant 55	Male	Arabic	31	Malta	Syrian	AD
Migrant 56	Male	Arabic	24	Rome	Palestinian (Gaza)	WI
Migrant 57	Male	Arabic	28	Rome	Palestinian (Gaza)	
Migrant 58	Male	Arabic	28	Rome	Palestinian (lived in refugee camp in Syria)	
Migrant 59	Male	Arabic	21	Rome	Syrian	
Migrant 60	Male	English	25	Mineo, Sicily	Somali	AP
Migrant 61	Male	Somali	21	Mineo, Sicily	Somali	AM
Migrant 62	Male	Somali	25	Mineo, Sicily	Somali	
Migrant 63	Female	Tigrinya	28	Mineo, Sicily	Eritrean	GH
Migrant 64	Male	Arabic	20	Mineo, Sicily	Sudanese (Darfur)	ID
Migrant 65	Male	Tigrinya	26	Mineo, Sicily	Eritrean	
Migrant 66	Male	Arabic	24	Mineo, Sicily	Sudanese (Darfur)	
Migrants' family 1	Male	English	32	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	
Migrants' family 2	Male	English	30	Addis Ababa	Ethiopian	
Migrants' family 3	Male	English	30	Adigrat	Ethiopian	
Migrants' family 4	Male	Arabic		Khartoum	Sudanese	YD
Migrants' family 5	Male	Arabic		Khartoum	Sudanese	
Migrants' family 6	Male	Arabic	33	Skype	Ethiopian	

Interviewee	Non-migrants/policy officials	Language	Location
Stakeholder 1	IOM	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 2	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 3	UNHCR	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 4	UNICEF	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 5	Migration Task Force, Mekelle	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 6	Ethiopian Red Cross	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 7	Red Cross Tracing Unit	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 8	Former prosecutor Inda Aba Guna	English	Addis Ababa
Stakeholder 9	Journalist	Arabic	Khartoum
Stakeholder 10	Journalist	Arabic	Skype
Stakeholder 11	IOM Medical Coordinator I	English	Cairo
Stakeholder 12	IOM case worker	English	Cairo
Stakeholder 13	IOM translator I	English	Cairo
Stakeholder 14	IOM translator II	English	Cairo
Stakeholder 15	IOM Medical Coordinator II	English	Cairo
Stakeholder 16	JRS Malta Vice Directr	English	Malta
Stakeholder 17	Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers, Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security	English	Malta
Stakeholder 18	Andre' Callus, Migrant Rights Activist, working with NGOs in Malta	English	Malta
Stakeholder 19	SPRAR Torre Maura, Rome, Linguistic and Cultural Mediator	Italian	Rome
Stakeholder 20	IOM Italy Head Office	Italian	Rome
Stakeholder 21	Director CARA Mineo	Italian	Mineo, Sicily
Stakeholder 22	Manager SPRAR Comiso	Italian	Comiso, (RG) Sicily
Stakeholder 23	Manager SPRAR Ragusa	Italian	Ragusa, Sicily
Stakeholder 24	UNHCR Legal Advisor	Italian	Syracuse, Sicily
Stakeholder 25	IOM Legal Advisor	Italian	Catania, Sicily

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on the conditions and risks of migration in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt. In particular, it focuses on the experiences of people who are on the move.

The pattern of migration in this region is complex. No evidence was found to support the idea that large numbers of people are leaving their countries of origin with the intention of reaching Europe. The idea of crossing the Mediterranean to Europe often arose from disappointment at the conditions in neighbouring countries. Many migrants, refugees and asylum seekers target regional employment markets, such as Khartoum, or the closest options for protection, such as Cairo. There is substantial circular migration and intra-regional networks. Onward movement took place when these strategies failed to address protection needs or livelihood strategies and sometimes resulted in additional vulnerability to human rights abuses.

Research in Europe (Malta and Italy) was focused on interviews with almost 100 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees about their experiences before reaching the Mediterranean, so it does not consider direct EU policy responses to the sea crossings. Individuals interviewed for the report recount details of crossings of 10 separate border points between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt, but also between Ethiopia and Sudan and Eritrea and Sudan and Libya. These crossing points vary very substantially in terms of the numbers of people crossing, the need for facilitators and the nature of the populations making the crossing.



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