



**MMC East Africa
& Yemen**

QUARTER 4 2019



Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: East Africa & Yemen

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers the East Africa and Yemen region (EAY). The core countries of focus for this region are Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Somalia, DR Congo, South Sudan and Yemen. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

The Mixed Migration Centre is a global network consisting of seven regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration.

For more information on the MMC, the QMMU's from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

MMC's understanding of mixed migration

“Mixed migration” refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel — often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

Front cover photo credit:

Michael Kirby Smith (2013)

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

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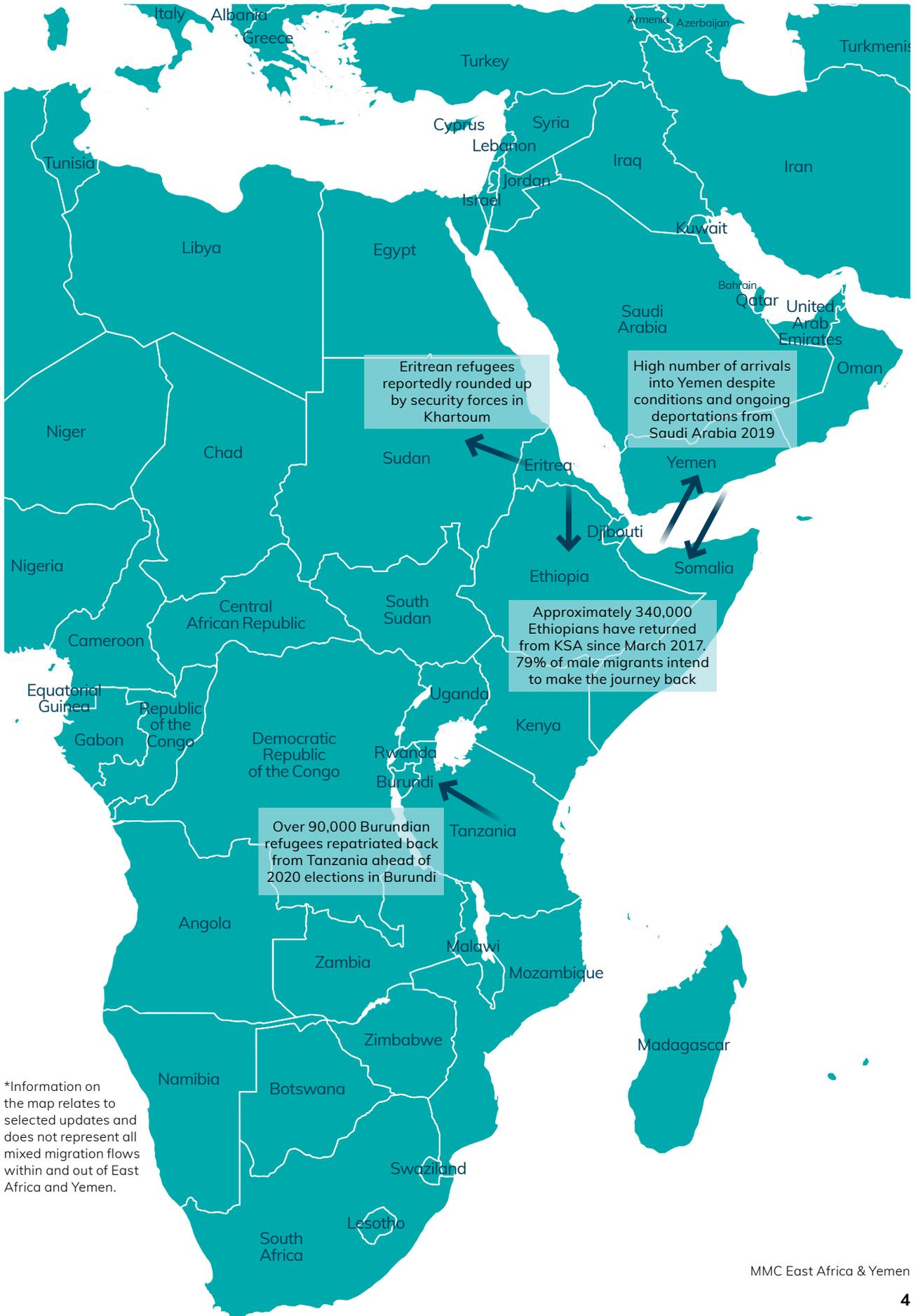
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Quarter 4 - 2019

Key Updates

- **Somali refugees and migrants in Yemen assisted to return home:** [Over 5,000](#) Somali refugees and migrants were assisted to return home from Yemen by mid-December 2019 as part of UNHCR's Assisted Spontaneous Returns Program. Refugees and migrants travelling on boats disembark at the Port of Berbera in Somaliland.
- **Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees rounded up in Sudan:** An unknown number of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees and migrants were rounded up in Khartoum by security forces in December 2019. Cases of [extortion](#) by Sudanese officials are reported amid growing concern over dangerous journeys through Sudan.
- **Steady movement across the Burundi-Tanzania border despite Tanzania's mounting pressure for repatriation:** Over 78,000 Burundian nationals [repatriated](#) back to Burundi as at end of November 2019 ahead of 2020 presidential elections amid growing concerns on the voluntariness of the returns process. UNHCR reports that approximately 20,000 Burundians have been assisted to [return voluntarily](#) in 2019 alone.
- **117 refugees from East and Horn of Africa returned from Libya to Rwanda:** [117](#) Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis, Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees were among those evacuated from Libya in November 2019. Refugees were given asylum-seeker status while various [solutions](#) including voluntary return to countries of previous asylum, voluntary return to countries of origin, local integration and resettlement are explored.

Regional Overview*



*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration flows within and out of East Africa and Yemen.

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Mixed migration within East Africa

Burundian nationals continue crossing into Tanzania despite repatriation efforts

Despite renewed efforts by the Tanzanian government to repatriate Burundian refugees by the end of December 2019 as part of the new returns process signed in August 2019, IOM notes that outflows from Burundi into Tanzania outnumber the flows from Tanzania to Burundi. In October and November 2019 100,506 movements were observed across the border. Of these, [48,952](#) were Burundian nationals moving into Tanzania and 41,991 Burundian nationals moving into Burundi from Tanzania. The remaining 9,563 were Tanzanian nationals moving into Burundi and out of Burundi into Tanzania.

Critics have raised [concern](#) about the manner in which the returns process, which first began in August 2017, has been conducted, with some arguing that the process has not adhered to the principles of [voluntariness](#) and informed decision making. Although no updated figures have been provided as at end of 2019, UNHCR data shows that over [78,000](#) Burundian refugees had been repatriated from Tanzania by the end of October 2019.

Burundi is scheduled to hold its Presidential elections in 2020 and there is a growing concern about the [safety and security of returnees](#) in the context of political violence that led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Burundians in 2015, and concern of repeated fear and intimidation ahead of the 2020 polls. At the end of 2019, Tanzania was host to [332,840 Burundian refugees](#), the highest caseload of Burundian refugees in the region (50%) in comparison to other neighbouring countries such as Rwanda (21.9%), DR Congo (14.2%) and Uganda (13.7%).

Migrants evacuated to Rwanda hopeful about life after Libya

In November 2019, over 100 migrants were evacuated from Libya to Rwanda under a [deal](#) between the two countries to have 500 refugees and asylum seekers mainly from the Horn of Africa to be [voluntarily transferred](#) to Rwanda. A total of [117](#) Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis, Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees were among those evacuated. Upon arrival in Rwanda, evacuees were given asylum-seeker status while various [solutions](#) including voluntary return to countries of previous asylum, voluntary return to countries of origin, local integration and resettlement are explored. Anecdotal reports indicate that while many refugees and asylum seekers receive support in Rwanda, some still dream of [living a better life in Europe](#). On the other hand, the number of resettlement submissions and arrivals to Europe has gone [down](#) since 2017.

More Ethiopians arrested under suspicion by Kenyan authorities

In an [often occurring](#) scenario, [three Ethiopians were reportedly arrested](#) along the Moyale-Isiolo highway in Eastern Kenya and charged for being “unlawfully” present in the country. Moyale is a border town that borders Kenya and Ethiopia, and the highway to Isiolo is a major road that is frequently used by undocumented migrants on their way to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Police recovered documents that they suspected were falsified and four Kenyan nationals were also arrested under suspicion that they were part of a human smuggling syndicate.

Policy debates on mixed migration

IDPs, refugees and migrants a priority in IGAD migration meetings

In October 2019, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in partnership with IOM, convened a meeting in Ethiopia to find solutions for the return and reintegration of migrants, with the goal of coming up with recommendations that would inform capacity building initiatives for the [improved delivery of reintegration services](#). The Regional Consultative Process (RCP) on Migration was also convened in Ethiopia with a theme on supporting resilience and durable solutions to internal displacement. Finally in Uganda, IGAD brought together Heads of States to finalize the draft Protocol on Free Movement of Persons within the IGAD region.

States urged to ratify the African Union’s Protocol on Free Movement of Persons

The African Union held its third ordinary session of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on migration, refugees and internally displaced persons in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November 2019. The aim of this session was to validate the report on the implementation of the [Protocol on Free Movement of Persons](#), decide on structure and budget for the establishment of various centres in the region for information sharing and research on migration, as well as review the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Africa. Member States were urged to ratify the protocol on Free Movement in the coming months so that it may come into force. This protocol once ratified will ensure that nationals of AU Member States are able to travel within region visa-free, enjoy the right to residence, and to establishment among other benefits to both countries and citizens.

Diaspora engagement top of the list in Khartoum Process meeting

In October 2019, the Khartoum Process (EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative) held a meeting in Eritrea to discuss ways to leverage diaspora potential for development through engaging diaspora living in host countries, fostering a favourable environment for [diaspora engagement](#) with their countries of origin, and ways of maximising the impact of remittances. Remittances are a significant factor in African country economies and according to the World Bank, the volume of remittances into five East African countries (Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi) increased by [more than 60%](#) between 2013 and 2018 and 10% in Sub-Saharan Africa in general.

The Eastern route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen

High number of arrivals into Yemen despite conditions

Large numbers of refugees and migrants continued to arrive into Yemen this quarter. The total number of registered arrivals in Yemen from the Horn of Africa and from Saudi Arabia in October and November 2019 was [19,494](#) (December figures were not available at the time of this report) bringing the yearly arrival figure to an estimated 127,275 people. With an average monthly arrival figure of approximately 11,500 people, it is unlikely that recorded numbers will surpass yearly [arrival figures in 2018](#), which stood at 159,838 persons at the end of the year. Nonetheless, this monthly arrival average is significantly higher than monthly arrival figures recorded in years before 2018. Reports by UNOCHA indicate that as many as 1,000 migrants cross into Saudi Arabia from Yemen on [daily basis](#), suggesting that actual arrival figures are in fact much higher.

Refugee and migrant arrivals into Yemen continue to take place in the context of deportations from Saudi Arabia, which seem to do little to deter movement along this route. IOM reports that approximately [340,000](#) Ethiopians have been returned from Saudi Arabia between March 2017 and December 2019, an approximate 30,000 of whom were returned between October and December 2019. Male returnees appear particularly undeterred by deportation, as data indicates that 79% intend to make the journey back to Saudi Arabia in the near future, compared to just 21% of female returnees. Although no explanation is readily available for this disparity in male and female intentions, it could be linked to the fact that more male [returnees \(79% compared to 20% female returnees\)](#) reported that they were unemployed at the time of deportation and thus had not achieved their financial goals, spurring a journey back to Saudi Arabia. Interviews conducted with migrants upon arrival in Yemen point to the fact that [lack of water and food](#), as well as the risk for abduction were among primary concerns for refugees and migrants.

Somali refugees and migrants assisted to return back home from Yemen

By mid-December 2019, IOM and UNHCR had assisted around [5,087](#) Somalis to return home from Yemen through the Assisted Spontaneous Returns program that began in 2017. Travel back home is often by boat with those departing on boats arriving at the Port of Berbera in Somaliland. Many Somalis travel to Yemen with the hopes of crossing into the Gulf countries to search for economic opportunities. By mid-2019, there were approximately 274,000 Somali and Ethiopian refugees and asylum seekers in Yemen and in October and November 2019 alone, [1,376 Somalis](#) had arrived in Yemen. Similarly, there was a slight decrease in Somali arrivals in Yemen in 2019 at 11,037 between January and November 2019 in comparison to 12,412 recorded over the same period in 2018.

Arbitrary migrant arrests and detention in Yemen

In December 2019, reports indicated that [78 African refugees and migrants](#) mainly from Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Somalia were being held in a prison in Ta'iz in the southern part of Yemen. When interviewed, they reported that they had been held in prison for three months with security authorities claiming that

there were no other shelter alternatives for migrants. This adds to ongoing reports of [protection abuses](#) faced by refugees and migrants in Yemen including imprisonment, extortion and sexual abuse.

The Northern Route towards North Africa & Europe

Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees rounded up in Sudan

In December 2019, media houses reported on the [roundup and arrest of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees](#) by security forces in Khartoum. The refugees were allegedly extorted by security personnel, who demanded bail payments ranging between USD 1,100 to USD 2,200 for their release. Eritreans comprised the [second largest group](#) of refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan by August 2019 and cases of refugee and migrant abuse and exploitation in Sudan have been reported in the past, with human rights practitioners [criticizing](#) the European Union for funding 'migration programs' in Sudan that may predispose refugees and migrants to further risks along their journeys. Following these concerns, the EU suspended migration related projects in Sudan in July 2019.

Refugees and migrants continue facing risks travelling through Egypt

Despite the declining popularity of Egypt as a transit route for movements to Europe, reports indicate that migrant smuggling networks continue to operate from the country. In November 2019, authorities in Egypt arrested nine individuals for forming a migrant [smuggling gang](#), who were offering the transit of young refugees and migrants across the Mediterranean Sea for the cost of [USD 3,000 to USD 9,000](#). Authorities also confiscated forged documents such as passports, IDs and university certificates.

Eritreans, Ethiopians and Yemenis are among the common nationalities of refugees and migrants in Egypt. Unpublished 4Mi interviews by MMC with Yemenis and Ethiopians in Egypt in 2019 point to the fact that Egypt is a major transit hub with respondents often stopping in Egypt to look for smugglers to organize the next stretch of their journey, among other reasons.

African refugees in Egypt resettled in Europe

In October 2019, 259 refugees were [resettled in Germany](#) with the help of IOM. Among the refugees were South Sudanese, Sudanese, Eritrean and Somalis. Reports indicate that Germany is increasingly granting resettlement to third-country nationals as other Western countries remain unwilling to take in refugees and migrants. Upon arrival in Germany, refugees and migrants are [granted work/residency visas](#) for one to three years without having to apply for asylum.

Effects of Sudan-Libya-CAR border closure

In October 2019, one month after Sudan closed its border with Libya to the North West and with the Central African Republic (CAR) to the South West citing [security reasons](#), impacts on trade have started being felt by both countries. Anecdotal reports however show that some Sudanese traders view the move

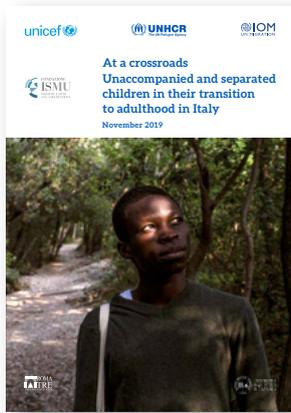
by the government as [positive](#) for deterring irregular migration particularly of Sudanese youth en route to Europe. Sudan is also a major transit country for refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa region. Although the border with Libya is quite porous, this closure could affect irregular migration routes through the country, with smuggling networks opting to use alternative and often more dangerous routes, with increased protection risks for people on the move.

The Southern Route towards South Africa

Tough border controls in South Africa and Zimbabwe

In December 2019, authorities in Zimbabwe and South Africa reportedly arrested [1,944 undocumented migrants](#) and 179 children who were being smuggled into either country via Beitbridge border post on the Zimbabwe-South Africa border. An additional 28 people from Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and other African nationals were denied entry into Zimbabwe after lacking the proper documentation (visas) to enter and stay in Zimbabwe. South African authorities report that transporters charge between USD 130 to USD 200 to illegally move children to Zimbabwe and South Africa. In addition, authorities arrested eight transporters who were arraigned in court for smuggling children across the border and fined between USD 1,000 and USD 2,000.

Highlighted new research and reports



[At a crossroads: Unaccompanied and separated children in their transition to adulthood in Italy](#)

UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM | November 2019

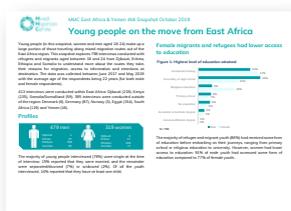
This report looks into the trends and possible pathways to adult life for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) in Italy by evaluating factors that either facilitate or constrain successful transition individually and structurally. The case studies include Eritrean, Gambian, Guinean, Ivorian and UASC from other countries.



[World Report | 2020- Events of 2019](#)

Human Rights Watch | January 2020

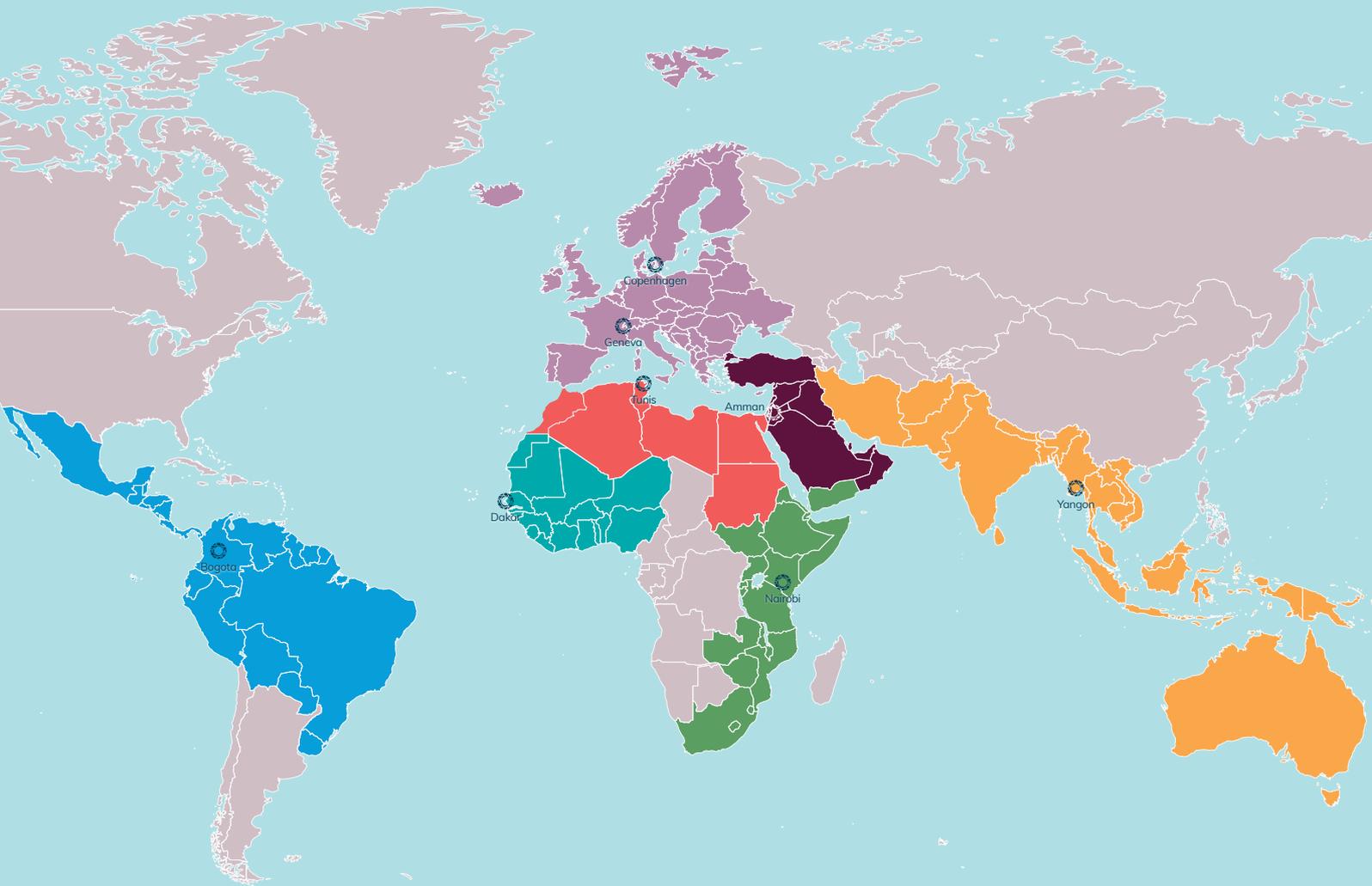
This report provides an annual review of human rights around the globe. For Ethiopia and Eritrea, the report looks at issues around detention, forced labour, freedom of expression among other issues. For Somalia, displacement, security, abuses by government, international actors. For Sudan and South Sudan, justice and accountability, detentions, armed conflict, refugees and migrants. For Yemen, civil society, migrants, detentions, humanitarian access, armed conflict and violence. For Kenya, accountability, abuses among others.



[4Mi Snapshot: Young people on the move from East Africa](#)

MMC | October 2019

This snapshot looks at the experience of young people from Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia and shows that the reasons for migration are mainly economic and a lack of rights in country of origin. The top intended destination countries are Saudi Arabia, Australia, Canada, Germany and South Africa.



The MMC is a global network consisting of seven regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

The MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and global and regional MMC teams are hosted by the DRC offices in Amman, Copenhagen, Dakar, Geneva, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Yangon.

For more information visit:
mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

