



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Field Mission Report:

**Stranded Ethiopian Migrants
In
Bossasso, North East Somalia/Puntland**

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ANNEX

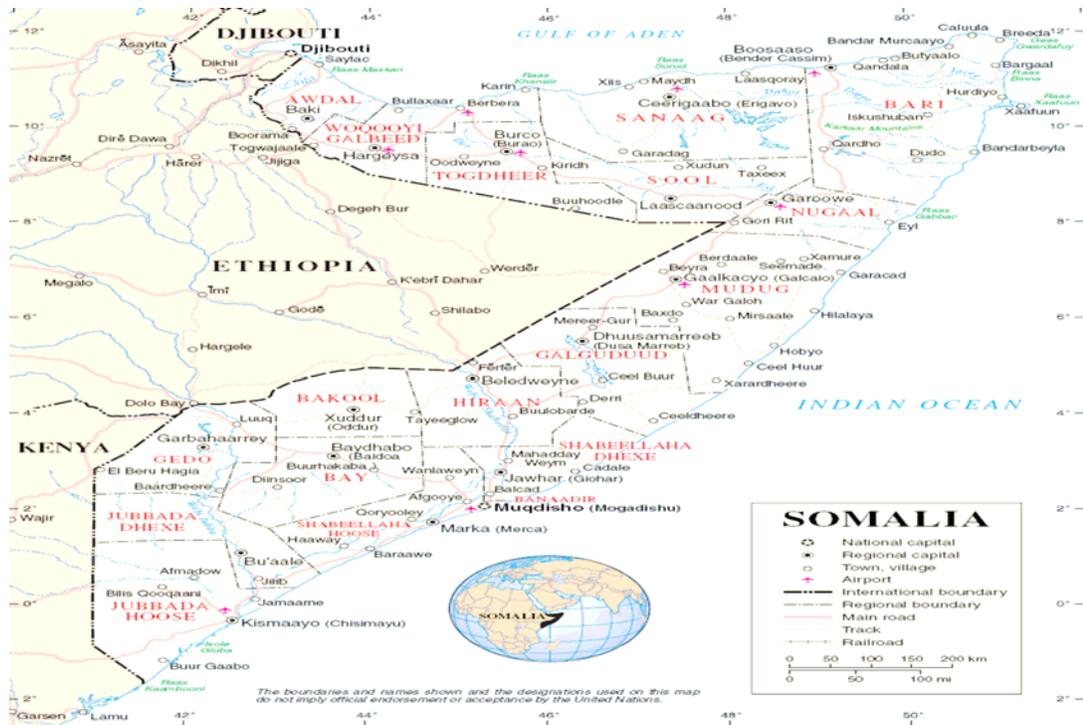
- Interview Questions
- Summarized responses for interview questions
- Map showing typical route from Ethiopia to Puntland (Bossasso) as described in this report. Prepared by UNHCR

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Bossasso, Puntland is a port town at the Northeast tip of Africa. For many years, Ethiopian migrants have travelled to Bossasso for the purpose of taking boats across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen and the Arab States in search of economic opportunities.

On 8 October 2006, the Puntland Authorities rounded-up 1,370 individuals in Bossasso and deported them by road to Ethiopia. The Puntland Authorities continued to round-up Ethiopians in Bossasso but, at the urgent request of the UN, delayed deportation until a screening process is conducted to identify individuals who should not be deported. Those individuals in need of special protection included: Asylum Seekers, Victims of Trafficking, Unaccompanied Minors and Individuals with Significant Medical Conditions. At the beginning of November 2006 there were approximately 500 Ethiopians residing at a closed centre awaiting the screening process. Puntland authorities estimate that there are about 5000 Ethiopian irregular migrants in the town of Bossasso alone.



1.2 Projected activities of the mission

The major projected activities of the mission include:

1. Work with UN and NGO staff at Bossasso to develop and implement a screening process that identifies potential victims of trafficking.
2. Interview and identify victims of trafficking.
3. In coordination with IOM offices in Addis Ababa and Nairobi, develop a project proposal and budget for the return and reintegration of the identified trafficking victims.

1.3 Scope of the mission

Initially UNHCR made two specific requests of IOM:

1. To screen the population, identify victims of trafficking, and to assist in their return and reintegration.
2. To serve as the focal point with the Puntland Authorities regarding deportation movements to ensure the Puntland Authorities are aware of international obligations for humane and safe movements and ensure that if deportation movements are carried out by the Puntland Authorities they are monitored by the international community at all border points

1.4 Expected deliverables of the mission

As per the TOR, the Counter Trafficking Expert Consultant was expected to conduct the following activities:

1. Develop, in partnership with other agencies, and describe the screening process that identifies breakdown of population according to the relevant categories, e.g., illegal migrants willing to repatriate, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, victims of trafficking, etc. Report would detail human trafficking systems and provide details on victim experiences.
2. Develop a project proposal and budget toward the reintegration and return of identified victims of trafficking at Bossasso, Puntland to their homes in Ethiopia by 20 November 06.

2. OVERVIEW OF IOM ACTIVITIES

2.1 IOM activities in the processing centre

IOM carried out registration of 276 migrants who opted to return to Ethiopia voluntarily. Travel documents were prepared for each migrant containing bio data and other relevant information including photographs. Each migrant responded to a set of questions to determine whether further interviewing was required to achieve the purposes of the mission.

IOM also dealt with some logistical aspects of the centre as it happened to be the only agency with continuous presence in the centre through the whole duration of the operation. This involved dispute resolution between migrants themselves as well as between migrants and the centre management.

IOM liaised with Ethiopian immigration authorities, to ensure the assignment of two officials who travelled to Bossasso to verify the identity of the registered migrants. The officials carried out their own brief interviews with the migrants for that purpose. Each migrant was medically screened to determine fitness to travel. Out of the total registered caseload, 209 migrants were returned back to Dire Dawa, Ethiopia on two chartered flights on the 22nd and 24th of November 2006. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), which paid for most of the operation, provided them with pocket money to reach their final destinations.

With regards to this particular mission, about 40 interviews were carried out with close to 50 respondents. The respondents were selected on a number of peculiarities observed in the pre screening process including vulnerability due to age, sex, and locality of origin. Attempt was made to use the IOM counter trafficking screening interview form. However, it was soon found out that form was not quite suitable to collect the type of information offered by the respondents; largely due to the fact that there was very little indication of trafficking in the information offered.

2.2 IOM Activities out of the centre

IOM participated in a number of meetings with the local UN country team to coordinate activities and ensure flow of information. Three meetings were held with the Puntland authorities, particularly the Minister of Interior, to clarify the position of UN/IOM in this operation and solicit support for implementation. After prolonged discussion, consensus was reached that the centre should be closed once the registered migrants were returned and all asylum seekers were provided with documentation pending their refugee status determination.

UNHCR succeeded in having the Refugee Affairs Committee established which would function with active government participation to register potential refugees and asylum seekers which caseload would then be processed by UNHCR. The authorities were emphatically informed that neither IOM nor the other UN agencies will be involved in the deportation of migrants and that any assistance offered within the respective mandate of each organization is currently faced with lack of adequate resources.

The authorities declared disappointment at the scale of assistance being offered and expressed their wish to expel all irregular Ethiopian migrants from Puntland territory; be it through voluntary return operations or deportation exercises.

In response to the above statement all agencies involved, particularly IOM and UNHCR, affirmed that all efforts will be made to raise resources to continue to assist the government in effective migration management while pointing out the negative repercussion of summarily deporting the migrants.

IOM joined the Puntland authorities and UNHCR in a joint appeal for resources to donors in a joint statement to the BBC. A separate interview was carried out with the BBC in response to their questions on the conditions in Bossasso (TV).

2.3 Limitations and Challenges

The centre was located a few miles away from the Bossasso airport on a secluded dry piece of land encircled with hills. The authorities had at least four armed officers making sure no one escaped from detention. The weather is extremely hot, dry, and dusty and shelter for the migrants consisted of plastic sheets mounted on wood sticks. The major challenges faced by the consultant in respect to his assignment include the following:

1. One of the first major challenges was preparing a suitable interview area. The interview was carried out in Amharic while some respondents spoke only Oromiffa or Tigrigna. Migrants who volunteered usually carried out translation during the interviews. There was little opportunity to assess their competence.
2. The second considerable challenge faced by the consultant was that several people are said to have left the camp during the nights, reportedly bribing their way out. Hence, in a few cases, which were considered of interest, it was not possible to carry out the more thorough interviews, as the persons were no longer available in the centre.
3. The three IOM program staff were the only personnel present everyday in the camp and had to deal with several camp management issues. Dispute among the different ethnic groups, a day-long hunger strike, fights of a personal nature, and grievance hearing had to be carried out while conducting registration and interview of migrants simultaneously. These events disrupted data collection for several hours on a number of days, which was aggravated by security restrictions, which in turn compelled early departure from the centre.

IOM initially intended to use its standard counter trafficking screening form. This however was not feasible as the caseload reflected more trends of smuggling than of trafficking. A set of open-ended questions was thus developed to carry out the interviews.

N.B. The interview questions used to collect the information and the respective responses are annexed to this report.

3. KEY FINDINGS OF THE MISSION

3.1 Understanding the Migrants

➤ Who is the typical migrant?

The typical migrant at Bossasso, as identified during this mission, is male, single, usually in his twenties, with very little or no education, and travelling alone. Women too travel along the same route. They are young, sometimes as young as 15-16, but usually in their twenties and often travelling with a male relative.

Most of the migrants are farmers who have left behind large families consisting of usually more than five siblings and one or both parents. The families are generally poor and live on subsistent farming. The majority in this caseload are from North East Ethiopia, particularly Kemisse, Atyae, Senbete, and Tumuga. A small number are from Maychew town in Northern Tigray region and still less from the southern zones of Bale and Arsi in Oromiya region. The latter are invariably from the Oromo tribe as is the case with the majority of the caseload, i.e. even though the majority originate from the Amhara region, they are from the Oromo tribe followed by the Amhara and Tigre migrants.

➤ Why travel?

Almost all of the migrants left home to seek employment in Saudi Arabia. The men generally look forward to working as shepherds for camels and goats. The women, on the other hand, anticipate employment as housemaids. Most do not have any idea as to how much they can expect to earn and those that do expect to earn between 700- 900 Saudi Riyals (USD185-240) per month. It is widely believed that women would earn more than men though none of the respondents had any idea as to how much men would be paid.

The migrants also believe that women will have better working conditions as they will not have to leave the house and are thus protected from the heat and harassment by law enforcement officials. The latter indicates that there is a general perception among the migrants that their presence in the country of destination is not entirely lawful although their general understanding of migration related rules and regulations appears to be very low.

➤ Why Saudi Arabia?

Almost all of the migrants state that they decided to head to Saudi Arabia because there are people in their localities who had been there and subsequently deported back. The deportees left home without much in terms of wealth but when they came back showed relatively marked improvement in their living standards. Many of the migrants have not directly spoken to a person who has been deported back from Saudi Arabia. Some stated that the deportees assume a higher class on their return and keep contact with other villagers to a minimum.

The few who have spoken to such persons acquire very fragmented pieces of information. Such information generally consists of a statement that life in Saudi is

much better than it is in the village of origin, that a few years work in Saudi Arabia will dramatically improve one's life, and that if you cannot afford to fly there, the way is through Bossasso. The only potential risk most have learned of is the crossing by boat to Yemen, which they admit could be dangerous but not enough to change the decision to migrate.

The migrants cite two distinct features to support the claim that those who had been to Saudi Arabia did improve their lives

- They left with their cloths in plastic bags and came back with suitcases full of not only cloth but other valuable property
- They changed the roofs of their houses from the traditional hay roof into the modern corrugated irons.

Apart from the deportees, the migrants also mentioned people who have children or relatives in Saudi Arabia who receive remittances and thus live better lives. The issue appears to be discussed in the localities of origin as all of them have somehow learned of these 'success' stories in their communities. It is generally based on this perception that the migrants have set off from home to Bossasso.

➤ **Financing the trip**

Upon making the decision to leave to Saudi Arabia, a traveller would then proceed to raising the necessary amount of money for the trip. This could be anywhere between 1000-7000 Birr (USD 115-800). Some have saved money earned through their normal sources of income. Many borrow it from two sources:

- A. The first of these sources is government loans. These loans are extended to agricultural communities to improve their production or set up micro level businesses, where group of farmers will act as co-guarantors towards its payment. This suggests that there is a feeling that the migrant will be successful in reaching the destination and securing good paying employment.
- B. The other source is loan from local merchants. The loan agreements are usually in such a way that 100% interest will be charged on payment if the migrant reaches Saudi Arabia and gets a job or only the principal if he/she fails to reach the destination. This also suggests that there is a perception that the jobs to be found at the destination will generate handsome pay.

These loans for the trip are usually supplemented by the sale of property, which is normally in the form of oxen used for farming, cattle or houses, and furniture.

3.2 The route

Once the necessary funds for the trip are secured, the migrant decides on a date to leave home. The decision is almost always approved by other family members, who may sometimes help in raising the funds presumably with expected rewards later on. A migrant may be travelling alone, which is often the case, or may be joined by friends. In the case of women, there is usually a male relative travelling along.

I. Commencement of the Journey

The first leg of the trip heads to the capital Addis Ababa on a local public transport bus. Inside the bus, several individuals or groups going on the same trip come to know each other and form loose bonds. The trip to Addis from northern Ethiopia will require an overnight stay in the town of Dessie (about 450 KM northwest of Addis Ababa) for those who come from beyond. There will be another overnight stay in Addis before proceeding to the eastern city of Harrar, which is also a spot where there is often an overnight stay. By the time, travellers arrive in Harrar, groups will already have formed based on the broker engaged, the bus boarded, or accommodation for overnight stay.

II. Harrar-Hartishiek-Bossasso Expedition

From Harrar, the groups proceed to Hartishiek further in the east where they usually stay for two to four days while the brokers wait to get enough people to fill their trucks. These trucks head to the town of Burro in Somaliland. There is usually a full night and a day stay in Burro before proceeding in the direction of Bossasso. The trucks will take the travellers some distance between Burro and Bossasso and abandon them in the desert. They will have to travel on foot for five to 21 days to reach Bossasso, begging for food from villagers and rides from truck/bus drivers.

All the routes used by the trucks beginning in Hartishiek are in the bushes away from the main roads. This is presumably to avoid detention by boarder officials and the police. Travellers abandoned between Burro and Bossasso in the desert generally try to find their way to the paved road (normally 3-5 days walk). They are assisted by villagers along the way, who offer them food and water and sometimes even employment in their houses to do chores. They generally ask the direction to get to the main road and head east once they find it. They may be able to get free or paid rides from mini bus and truck drivers who take them relatively short distances in the direction of Bossasso, often getting them to the outskirts of towns like Lassanot, Gerewe, Qarlo, and Galqayoo which are on the main road to Bossasso.

In very few cases, the trip from Hartishiek to Burro may divert en route to Berbera at the Hargessa junction, but later come back to Burro. Very few mention passing through Hargessa, which indicates that the route used by the trucks somehow manages to go around the town without getting into town.

Upon arrival in Bossasso, they proceed to the port area where there are a number of teashops owned by Ethiopians. They are usually directed to the ones owned by people from their respective regions in Ethiopia or people from their respective tribes. Thus the town has Oromo, Tigre, Arsi, Ataye, Kemisse, Harrar etc. quarters. The teashops and customers therein usually assist the travellers in getting free space for sleeping (normally outside the shops on the street).

The owners of the teashops and /or their agents are said to facilitate the boat trip to Yemen. Payment is made without any formal agreement or documentation whereupon the traveller is told when to show up and at which part of the coast to embark the boat. The time fixed for embarkation is often late after dark. Like the town itself, the boarding points are distinguished from each other based on place of origin or tribe in Ethiopia. The boat ride is said to take more than thirty hours on boats, which are reportedly not so sea worthy and often overcrowded. Many of the migrants interviewed were, however, arrested before reaching the boats.

3.3 Brokers

“Broker” is a term the migrants use to describe a person who charged them money to secure safe passage and lead the way to Bossasso. The brokers operate at town centres on the way from Addis to Bossasso. The traveller meets his first broker at the central bus station in the Mercato area of Addis Ababa. In very few cases, contact with the brokers was established in the locality of origin.

A. The first Steps

At the Mercato bus station in Addis, brokers approach travellers getting off buses (normally from Dessie) in a fairly aggressive marketing fashion. They ask them a set of consecutive questions on where they want to go and if they wish to get to Bossasso and on to Saudi Arabia. They tell them they can help them in that venture and that a particular broker can deliver them safely at the destination. They also indicate that the trip is not to be attempted without a proper guide, as it is full of bandits. They go to the extent of convincing the travellers that the Ethiopian army in the desert might stop and rob them if they get lost. They say they have previously carried many safely to Bossasso and if the traveller decides to proceed on his own he is making a big mistake eventually facing the consequences.

The tired and confused traveller may resist this hustle initially but usually give in after awhile. Immediately after securing the consent of the traveller for the use of the services, the broker will proceed to get onward transport or accommodation for overnight stay depending on the time of arrival for the bus from Dessie. Those who arrived too late to continue their journey to Harrar on the same day will be directed to hotels in the Mercato area. The most often sited hotels are Bezabih and Debebe. It appears as though the brokers use these hotels as offices as well. Others are directed to American Gebi, a sort of shanty common lodge with beds where one could spend the night for 2 or 3 Birr.

B. Arranging the Trip to Harrar

Transport to Harrar is arranged by the broker, who will charge up to Birr 500 including the transport fare. The vehicle may be a mini bus or any public transport bus. The broker may or may not accompany the group. If he does, he will hand over the group to another broker waiting for the dispatch in Harrar. A pair of brothers are said to operate on such a network, one sending people from Addis while the other receives them in Harrar and sends them onward to Hartishiek. The groups may be as large as 40 persons at times.

The brokers in Addis also operate based on localities of origin for the migrants. Hence there is a broker for people from Ataye, another one for those from Kemisse, yet another one for those from Tumuga, and so on. The distinction may also be based on tribe, i.e. a broker for Ormiffa speakers, another one for Tigriyans, and still another for Amhara speakers. This appears to be a technique to approach the traveller and win his/her trust. In certain cases, the broker is known to the traveller back in the village of origin. In some cases, the brokers from Harrar were reported to have boarded the bus some distance before it reaches town.

There is one female broker who repeatedly appeared in the interviews who is said to tell travellers that they may be arrested at the check post at Harrar, which could be avoided by getting off the bus shortly before reaching the post and taking a taxi to town. She arranges the taxi trip for which the traveller pays and then takes him/her to a safe house in the city. It appears that she works with another broker there whose name is K.¹ The house in question is located near St. Michael's church in Harrar. Once travellers are accommodated there, they are told not to make too much noise and never leave the premises. Food and drinks are brought in by the lady and for which the travellers are charged. It is an overcrowded house often accommodating as many as 25 people. Stay at this house may be as long as five days. When enough people have gathered, they are put on a bus to Hartishiek and will be charged several hundred Birr for the services of the brokers.

C. Proceeding to Harrar-Hartishiek-Burro

Those who are not directly delivered to the brokers in Harrar are received at the bus station in Harrar by brokers who hustle them competing for their attention. The conditions are similar to those faced by travellers who meet brokers at the Addis bus station. Here too, depending in time of arrival, travellers will either be directed to hotels to spend the night or be put on buses to Hartishiek. This short trip will also cost the travellers as much as 300-400 Birr by way of fees to the broker. Sometimes, travellers may be charged for the trip in Addis, which may extend the destination beyond Harrar to Hartishiek.

Hartishiek appears to be the point of consolidation. All travellers delivered to the town appear to be handed over to a single broker by the name S, described as a tall, big man with dark skin, who is claimed to have shelters made of plastic sheets in the bushes where travellers may sleep. These shades are probably some way out of town.

S is said to have operated since some years ago and seems to be well networked with the brokers delivering people to him. Depending on whether enough people to fill

¹ Full names have been withheld.

S's trucks have arrived, travellers may have to wait up to three days in the bushes before starting to travel to Burro. S's trucks are reported to be double deck vehicles in which his men put women on the top deck and men on the lower one for transportation.

Many reported that the trucks show signs of use for transportation of sheep and goats judging from excrement visible on the decks. It is possible that they may well be used for this purpose when not in use for transportation of people. Some respondents said there was also human waste on the decks. This is explained by the fact that stops are infrequent on the way and travellers are not allowed to get off when they wish to. The decks in the trucks are separated by wooden piles.

S's men charge 400-700 Birr to get travellers safely to Burro and they sometimes breakdown the payment into two: for safe passage through check posts along the way and for the boat trip to Yemen. Apparently, they have no control over the later and are simply deceiving travellers.

S's trucks, which are normally overloaded with up to 200 people, travel to Burro in the bushes away from the main road. They stop several times on the way and ask passengers to pay Birr 10 – 40 to get past a certain check post. The check posts are usually strings tied between two barrels with no attendant. The money is collected by the driver and the assistant. S accompanies the convoy from time to time in his station wagon. S's trucks invariably deliver the travellers to the outskirts of Burro to a place controlled by a person named A's man. It is difficult to assert if they are bandits or brokers.

A himself is said to have died a few months ago reportedly of excessive use of alcohol. His sons and relatives are claimed to have carried on his activities. They maintain a compound where travellers will often stay overnight and sometimes days. The compound is guarded by armed men who shoot at will on suspected would-be escapees. There appear to be families consisting of the wives, relatives, and children of these men who participate in making sure nobody leaves without being seen. The women hand out rice and water to the travellers.

D. The final Deal to Bossasso

Upon arrival at Burro, travellers are asked to pay 200-300 Birr to get to Bossasso. A similar amount is requested on the following morning to secure seats on the boat to Yemen from Bossasso. Like S's men, A's also appear to have no control on the boats but still charge travellers for the service. Those who refuse are beaten, strip searched including cavity searches for women, and put in a hole in the ground where they are threatened to be set on fire until they agree to pay (only men). Those who comply are not subjected to such treatment.

Once the money matters are settled, travellers are put on A's trucks, which will drive towards the direction of Bossasso. They do reach Bossasso from time to time but the most common practice is to abandon the migrants midway between the two towns. These places are usually in the middle of the desert, as the trucks never drive on the main road. The driver will come up with the pretext that the truck has broken down, get everyone off, and tell them to hide in the bushes until the problem is fixed. They then swiftly turn the trucks around and drive back.

There are no reports of brokers after A's men up to Bossasso. In the town of Bossasso, agents to the boat owners and operators are referred to as brokers also.

However, their services are confined to collecting money and organizing boarding of the boats.

A respondent who has made this trip for the fourth time offered a list of no less than seven brokers.

3.4 Risks

There are several risks involved in the trip to Bossasso faced by the migrants at various stages. The most notable of these include:

- I. The abuse and robbery committed by A's people at Burro. Most have been humiliated by the searches conducted by these men including on women. With the view to extort money for their services and beyond, these men reportedly beat the migrants with sticks, demand all clothing be removed, and tear up seams of clothing and soles of shoes looking for money. These thorough searches include private parts and braided hair in the case of women. A woman reported that she hid a one hundred Birr note in her mouth to save some resources for the rest of the trip. Men who refuse to pay had been put in a five feet deep hole in the ground where firewood is thrown in and one of A's men threatens to set them alight with a torch.
- II. The trucks used for transportation are almost always overcrowded, dirty, and driven in rough terrain in attempts to avoid the main road and thus detection. Travellers are seldom given enough food and water while hardly allowed to relieve themselves except where the driver chooses to. This is usually the case between Hartishiek and Bossasso.
- III. Many have been abandoned in the desert between Burro and Bossasso having to have walked for up to three weeks in search of the main road leading to Bossasso. They recount horrible tales of thirst, hunger, exhaustion, and attack by bandits. Their special vulnerability due to lack of knowledge on the local language and direction results in being robbed repeatedly, swindled out of their money, and attacked physically.
- IV. Another issue of concern is loss of identity documents. Most reported that their IDs were taken along their money. This leaves them in a condition where they cannot prove their identities to authorities. What happens to the lost IDs is not clear. In this area of porous borders and heightened threat of infiltration by terrorist actors, the Ethiopian authorities may be interested to find out how these documents are used after they are taken away from the original holders.
- V. The financial burden of the trip has also left many with relatively large amounts of debt, which they cannot expect to pay easily. The initial exercise of fund raising often compels one to part with essential valuable property including property used as means of earning basic livelihood.
- VI. Even though almost all of the migrants interviewed did not make it to the boat trip, that part of the journey is also widely believed to be exceptionally dangerous. The boats used are hardy seaworthy, often overcrowded, and under high risks of capsizing. Many are believed to have perished in the open sea having being thrown overboard by boat operators.

Suffice to say that the trip beyond Bossasso is equally, if not more, dangerous. It will, however, require further study to identify the risks in more detail, which the present respondents are unable to provide, as they did not do the crossing.

3.5 Human Trafficking

There is very little information to suggest the presence of human trafficking at a noticeable extent, at least among the migrants in the centre. The patterns involved in the journey to Bossasso were not sufficient to meet the requirement of recruitment for exploitation in transit or at destination employed to determine the presence of trafficking. The brokers are involved in the transportation of people but do not do so with the intent to benefit from the exploitation of the migrant (by means of labour exploitation, sexual exploitation, organ removal etc) at the end of the day. Rather, the patterns indicate a well-organized smuggling network beginning from Addis running up to Burro. There are also indications that the police and border law enforcement officers might be aware of the operations and might even benefit from it through bribes.

Nonetheless, a handful of cases indicated the possible presence of human trafficking on routes overlapping with that of smuggling. A few girls reported that they were recruited in their places of origin (Kemmisse, Ataye) by men who promised to get them employment in Saudi Arabia as housemaids in return for which they had agreed to forego two to three months of their prospective pay. Some said they knew of such arrangements in their places of origin. The men had drawn pictures of good working conditions and returns as high as 900 Riyal (240USD) per month. These men are also said to organize a group of five to twelve girls going on this journey, which suggests the possibility of financial gain by the movement of the girls. It is also suspicious that these men are interested only in girls and very young ones at that, indicating the possibility that these may be cases of trafficking.

A respondent who has been deported from Saudi Arabia four times claimed to know of such people and further explained that the men acquire fake marriage certificates in Bossasso, which are used in Saudi Arabia by the men to pose as the legitimate husbands to sign contracts of employment on behalf of the girls and subsequently collect the monthly salaries until the girls find a way out of the arrangement. Additionally, it is reported that such men are involved in supplying these girls as wives to Ethiopian men for whose services they are paid.

These cases, if confirmed, will qualify for human trafficking. (See interviews 12 and 28). According to this respondent, the girls leave home with huge amounts of money, sometimes as much as 20,000 Birr and travel relatively expensively yet safely. They take a four-wheel drive from Hartishiek to Bossasso where the girls are placed in safe houses. This may explain the absence of such cases in the centre.

3.6 Asylum seekers

Of the total caseload a total of 132 asylum seekers were registered by UNHCR. Some twenty registered asylum seekers opted to return voluntarily once UNHCR advised them on their initial findings regarding their cases and the low probability they will be recognized as refugees. However, many of the migrants registered with UNHCR showed reluctance to have interviews with IOM as the migrants had made a distinction based on who is registered with who that effectively discouraged open dialogue. On the last day of the operation, UNHCR expected to find only about 92 of

their registered cases as some of the migrants had apparently bribed their way out of the centre and probably took the boats to Yemen.

4. PROPOSED SETS OF INTERVENTION

4.1 Prevention

- Mass awareness campaigns in the areas of origin i.e Kemisse, Ataye, Senbete, Tumuga, Maychew, Robe. Migrants returned by IOM show willingness to participate in such schemes. It will also be wise to target as well as get the involvement of villagers deported from Saudi Arabia. They will need to understand that they are the 'role models' and the information they disseminate is used to make decisions by aspiring migrants. They also have a first hand experience of both the travel and the conditions at destination, which will give further impetus to the campaign.
As most of the potential migrants are illiterate or with very low levels of education, radio, and peer group activities will appear to be the best vessels of communication. Road shows, musicals, dramas, and mobile film presentations may also be considered.
- A similar approach to sensitize the large number of Ethiopians stranded in the town of Bossasso, which will need to be coupled with direct assistance for return and reintegration for those willing to repatriate.
- Training of media personnel to draw public attention to the plight of migrants and encourage them explore effective ways of reaching the target population with sensitization materials

4.2 Prosecution

- Provide available data to the National Counter Trafficking Task Force in Ethiopia on the criminal activities of smugglers. As the police and the Ministry of Interior are part of the task force, they should be encouraged to investigate networks of smuggling operating in Ethiopia with special focus on bus stations in Addis, Harrar, Jijiga, and Hartishiek. Caution should be exercised in setting out on a rush operation resulting in small numbers of arrest and prosecution.
- Training of the members of the National Task Force on collection of relevant data and designing responses to the challenges of smuggling and trafficking. Looking into ways to enhancing the capacity of the force to pull resources together in order to implement counter trafficking/smuggling activities with technical support from IOM.
- Training of police officers, boarder control authorities, judges, and prosecutors on effective law enforcement to curb smuggling and trafficking. Law enforcement officials and judiciary in areas of origin and transit, including those in Puntland, should be the primary target.
- Approaching members of parliament, especially those from districts of origin to draw their attention to the challenges and lobby in parliament for the revision/ promulgation of relevant laws.

4.3 Protection

- Establish a screening mechanism in Bossasso to identify stranded migrants. This may be achieved by working together with the Refugee Affairs

Committee recently established through UNHCR's efforts. IOM may work with UNHCR to have the mandate of the committee broadened and enhancing its capacities to handle caseloads. A special mechanism may be set for vulnerable individuals including victims of trafficking, minors, unaccompanied women, and persons with disabilities.

- Organize the return and long-term reintegration of stranded migrants to Ethiopia on voluntary basis.
- Carry out consultation and sensitization activities among Puntland authorities on the rights of migrants and state responsibility concerning the issue.

4.4 Regional Consultations

- Organize a series of consultation processes between Ethiopian and Puntland authorities to discuss the challenges involved in the irregular migration of people. Major areas of focus include regional law enforcement, security concerns including issues potentially related to terrorism, border control mechanisms, and the broad subject of migration management.
- Organizing consultation between Ethiopian, Puntland, Yemeni, and Saudi authorities as the issues affect all the four countries. The thematic focus may be on migration management with the view to prevent irregular migration, seeking ways of benefiting from the movement, protecting migrants, and strengthening relations to work together on regularizing migration patterns.
- Providing technical assistance in the implementation of policy decisions reached by the consultative processes.

ANNEX

Annex 1: Interview questions used to collect information

Depending on the level of understanding of each respondent and relevance to each particular phase all or a combination of these questions were asked in random order during the interviews. Each interview lasted an average of 50 minutes.

- Where were you headed?
- How did you select your destination?
- What did you intend to do at the destination?
- How did you raise the money for the trip?
- What route did you take?
- Who helped you in finding the way?
- Where did you stay overnight along the way?
- Who arranged the accommodation for you?
- What was the accommodation like? Who paid for it?
- How did you get in contact with the broker/s if nay?
- Who was the broker?
- How much did you pay?
- What did the broker promise you?
- Where did you meet the broker/s?
- Did the broker accompany you?
- How did you cross the boarder?
- Were there other people travelling with you?
- Do you have an ID? Where is it now?
- Were you robbed or attacked in any other way? How?
- What arrangements, if any did you make for the boat trip?
- Who was to receive you at the other end?
- How did you plan to proceed to your final destination once you crossed the sea?
- How were you arrested?

Annex 2: Responses to interview questions

Interview 1

Profile
Sex Female
Age 17
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Tumuga
IOM Case no 0047

I am travelling with my elder brother B. There are a lot of people in our neighbourhood who are deported from Saudi Arabia. They went away with small plastic bags and came back with big suitcases. They also lived better than the rest of the villagers. They said they went to Saudi Arabia through Bossasso. We wanted to improve our lives just like they did. I was hoping to work as a housemaid. My brother and I tried to find a broker in our village who could make the arrangements for the trip for us. We could not find anyone. We were however told that a fellow villager by the name of A worked as a broker in Addis. We took a loan from a rich merchant in our village and set off to Addis. We met A at the bus station; everyone there knew him and it was not difficult to find him. A escorted us to Harrar for Birr 400 each. Initially he had promised to go with us up to Jijiga but abandoned us at Harar. He has places for overnight stay both in Addis and Harar. I do not know the names and the addresses. Once we reached Jijiga a bus driver helped us to cross the border to Somalia for Birr 1000 each. We were stopped several times on the way and had to pay more money. Somali bandits robbed us once. We also had to travel on foot for several days. I do not know how much we lost and at which places. I do not know the area. My brother was doing all the payments and he carried all the money.

Interview 2

Profile
Sex Female
Age 18
Clan Tigre
Occupation Farmer
Education 7th Grade
Place of origin Tumuga
IOM Case no 0056 – unaccompanied minor

I travelled alone. I borrowed 3000 Birr from a local rich merchant and promised to pay back 6000 Birr once I reached Saudi Arabia. Returnees and deportees lend money in our village at 100 % interest. People in my village who had been to Saudi Arabia (most of them deported) told me about the opportunities in that country. I wanted to get to Saudi to work as a housemaid. I took a bus to Addis. When I reached the terminal in Mercato, a group of men approached me offering me help. That is when I met M who happens to be a broker. He helped me to find a place to stay overnight. The place is known as American Gibi. I paid Birr 400 to reach Jijiga. When we reached Harar we were joined by a large group going on the same trip. There were even more people waiting to join us at Jijiga. They were staying in makeshift shades. Another broker received us in Jijiga and put us on a double deck truck. The driver and the assistant stopped the vehicle several times and asked us to pay check post crossing fees. There were no visible check posts though. We were robbed on the

way. A group of armed men stopped the truck, asked everyone to get down and pay for passage. They carried out thorough searches. They made us remove our underwear looking for hidden money. They threatened to set alight travellers who refused to pay. We were also beaten. The truck eventually abandoned us in the dessert and took off. It was not too far from Bossasso. We walked to the town. Boat fares to Yemen are about 350 Birr. No ticket is issued. Passengers are just told when to appear at the dock. Boat owners go around teashops where they meet potential passengers and collect the fares. They also inform them of the time for departure. The boat owner told us that the trip to Yemen might be a bit rough but crossing to Saudi is very simple. The boat owner speaks Amharic. I had paid the fare and was waiting to cross to Yemen when the police carried out a raid and we got arrested. The soldiers in the camp harass the women.

Interview 3

Profile

Sex Female

Age 21

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education 6th Grade

Place of origin Kobo

IOM Case no 0034- pregnant

I travelled with my sister and husband. I heard rumours in my village that people who went to Saudi Arabia made a lot of money. My husband and I sold our house and left my 3-year-old daughter with my parents. We heard everyone went through Bossasso. I was hoping to work as a housemaid. We took a bus to Addis. We spent a night in Dessie. When we reached Addis we spent the night in a small hotel. We then took another bus to Harar. In Harara we met people from our village who got there with the help of a broker. We left Harara at 1:00 AM. The bus was full of people. We paid Birr 450 each to reach Hartishiek. We reached Hartishiek at 4:00 PM the next day. We paid some money to another broker there. I cannot remember how much. He accompanied us to a place, which we reached early in the morning. This is a place where a person named A robs people. We were asked to pay Birr 200 each to be taken to Bossasso. Those who refused to pay were thoroughly searched. We protested but they searched our hair braids, our pockets as well as the insides of our underwear. I lost Birr 1000. The driver of the bus and the assistant were not robbed. We were reloaded on the bus. The bus took us to the outskirts of Burro town where we were abandoned. We walked to the town. As we had lost all our money, we begged in the town. We had not eaten for 5 days since we left Harar. We walked to Bossasso for 3 days. We begged for food and transport along the way. When we reached Bossasso, we found a village of Ethiopians an several teashops they owned. They gave us shelter for free. We made calls back home for money to be wired to us. We were arrested before we made contact with the boat owners. We had no specific plan on how to reach Saudi Arabia. I wanted to be a housemaid there. I got separated with my husband after we got arrested. He is deported back to Gelade a couple of weeks before. I do not know if he has reached home. I am afraid of going back home, as people there will probably hold his sister and me responsible for his absence.

Interview 4

Profile

Sex Female

Age 25

Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Senbete/ Kemissie
IOM Case no 0039

I travelled alone. I am divorced and have a five-year-old daughter. I saw people in my village who had been to Djibouti and Saudi Arabia. They had better lives than the rest of the villagers. I decided to try my luck so as to improve my life. I wanted to work as a housemaid. I went to Dire Dawa and worked menial jobs to save money.

Note: Unable to finish interview as she is incoherent, confused and paranoid. Claims that the Somalis drowned people in wells and fire guns at them. She says she really wants to go back home.

Interview 5

Profile
Sex Female
Age 30
Clan Tigre
Occupation Trader
Education 6th grade
Place of origin Alamata/ Maychew
IOM Case no 0040

I travelled with my brother. I used to sell oil seeds back home. Many people in my village went to Saudi Arabia and came back with a lot of money. They were mostly deported. They all say they went through the same route- Bossasso. I hoped to work as a housemaid. I left home with Birr 5000, which I borrowed, from a rich merchant in the village. I signed a contract promising to pay back double the amount once I reach Saudi Arabia. I wanted to work as a housemaid. A group of people in my village who were deported from Saudi Arabia decided to go back. I wanted to join them but we missed them as they set off earlier; by a day. We decided to go on our own. We took a bus. We spent a night in Dessie and continued to Addis on the next day. We spent the night in Addis and caught the early bus to Harar. Shortly before we reached Harar, a female broker approached them in the bus and convinced them that it would be wise to disembark before entering the city. She said the police at the check post will arrest them if they were in a bus. She offered to take us by taxi across the check post into the city. We gave her some money for the taxi. She took us to town and put us in her house. She told us to stay inside. We gave her money to buy us food and drinks. Next day, she came with a male broker who took us to his house near St. Michael's church. My brother and I covered all expenses including those of the brokers for 5 days. There were more than 20 people in the house with us who were also going on the same trip. It was a small house. The brokers allowed calls on their cell phones only for those who wished to get more money wired from their families. The female broker acted as a negotiator between the travellers and the male broker. After several hours of negotiation, everyone agreed to pay Birr 500 per head to the male broker for his services to get them to Hartishiek. Everyone boarded an Isuzu truck. The truck was stopped by the police on the way between Harar and Hartishiek. The police asked for bribes and got Birr 20 from each passenger. They did not allow the truck to pass however. They forced it to return to Harar. We returned to the house in the city. The brokers asked for an additional Birr 50 per head for their extra expenses. Everyone boarded the truck for another try. This time, everyone disembarked before reaching the check post. The driver passed through the check post with the empty truck. The broker led everyone on a walk in the bushes away from the check post and eventually met up with the truck on the other side. We arrived at Hartishiek. We

reached S's house. S is the broker in Hartishiek. He took us to the bushes to hide and charged each of us Birr 150 and an additional Birr 200 for the boats in Bossasso. He used a truck normally used to transport sheep for the short trip. We spent the night in the bushes. S came back with more travellers on the next day. He put us on a truck and we proceeded to Burro. Shortly before reaching Burro, we were stopped by A's children. I heard that A himself used to rob travellers but has been dead since a few months. People say he died of excessive use of alcohol. His children are said to have taken over. They charged everyone Birr 200. I lost birr 3000 which I had hidden in my underwear. S went back at this point. We were put in another truck. The driver and his assistant stopped the truck several times and demanded we pay Birr 20 or 10 for passage. A's children arranged this part of the trip. They abandoned us a few kilometers away from Bossasso. We started walking to town but got arrested before reaching it. The Punt land police took away whatever we were left with including our IDs. My brother was deported back to Gilade a couple of weeks ago.

Interview 6

Profile

Sex Female

Age 14

Clan Oromo

Occupation Farmer

Education None

Place of origin Senbete/ Kemissie

IOM Case no 0108

Interviewed with her cousin IOM case no 0012

Interview carried out through interpreter

Many people in our village improved their lives after they went to Jeddah. We learned that they all went via Bossasso. My cousin's parents borrowed Birr 2200 for him. I stole Birr 2500 from my family. I wanted to work as a housemaid. We took a bus to Addis. A group of brokers approached us at the bus station but we chased them away. We spent the night in a small hotel. On the next day, we asked people in the hotel how we can get in contact with a broker who can help us with our trip. They put us in contact with one. The broker promised safe passage up to Jijiga and charged us Birr 500 each. He came up to Harar with us where he disappeared. We found another broker in the bus station who charged us Birr 400 each to get us to Burro. On the way from Harar to Burro we changed cars several times and sometimes had to walk but were not robbed. The broker disappeared when we reached Burro. We travelled on our own up to Bossasso. We took buses. We do not remember the names of the brokers.

Interview 7

Profile

Sex Female

Age 20

Clan Oromo

Occupation Farmer

Education 5th grade

Place of origin Bekoji/ Lemu Bilbilo

IOM Case no 0106

I travelled with my husband. We lived in Bale province in Robe town. People who had travelled on Haj and villagers deported from Saudi told stories of better opportunities. They

said life is better there. So, I decided to take my chances. I wanted to do whatever was available. There were four other people from Robe who set off with us. They were acquaintances. We took buses from Robe to Bekoji then to Assela, on to Nazereth and then Harrar. We met the broker on the streets of Harrar. He approached us. He charged Birr 200 each to get us to Jijiga and another 500 from there to Burro. He came with us up to Jijiga and helped us board a bus to Burro. We paid Birr 30 to the driver to help us cross the boarder. The bus left us at the outskirts of Burro and we walk to town. The broker in Burro came and met us the place we stayed in. He charged Birr 1000 for each of us to help us get to Bossasso. He did not come with us but put us on a bus heading to Burro. The bus never reached Bossasso. It left us some distance away from town. We had to walk for two days before we reached town. We have no idea what kind of job may be available to us in Saudi. Two of the people who set of with us made to Yemen, we hear. One got deported back to Gelade and three are still in the camp. We were staying in the Ethiopian village in Bossasso. We had no money to pay for food. I was robbed twice by Somali bandits. I lost Birr 300 the first time and another 500 the next. We had Birr 5000 when we left home, now we have nothing. What little we had left when we reached Bossasso was taken by the police upon our arrest. They also took our IDs. I want to return to my 4 children and miss my one-year-old most.

Interview 8

Profile

Sex Female

Age 22

Clan Amhara

Occupation Housewife

Education None

Place of origin Gobiye/Woldiya

IOM Case no 0041

Interviewed with her husband IOM case no 0020, 30 years old, farmer

People in our locality who went to Saudi Arabia years ago through Bossasso came home. They were mostly deported back. They told us that life is much better there. We sold our house and farming equipment to finance the trip. I wanted to work as a housemaid. We took a bus from Gobyie to Dessie where we spent the night. We proceeded to Addis Ababa. We travelled to Harar, Jijiga, Burro, Gerewe and finally Bossasso. We met the first broker in Addis Ababa at the Mercato bus station. He approached us and offered us help to get to Bossasso. He said his was the best and safest way. We spent the night in hotel and paid for it ourselves. Next day, he helped us board a bus to Harar but did not come with us. We paid him Birr 200 for each of us. We were met by another broker at the bus station in Harar. He showed us where we should stay and charged us Birr 50 each to help us get to Jijiga. He did not come with us. We met another broker at Jijiga bus station. He put us in house where we stayed for 15 days. We were not allowed to leave the house. We gave him money to buy us food; we paid Birr 10 for each meal and Birr 25 for each night of accommodation. We paid him Birr 900 to get to Hartishiek and another 100 each to get to Burro. A and/or his men stopped the small cars we use to travel from Hartishiek to Burro shortly before we reached Burro. There were 10-15 people in each mini bus. We crossed the border at night. A's men took the Birr 3000 we had hidden. We walked and begged for rides to Bossasso. As we had run out of money, we started working to raise money. I worked as a housemaid and my husband worked as a daily labourer. We paid Birr 400 each for the boat ride to Yemen. We got arrested before the day we were supposed to leave. We had been on the boat once but were told it had problems and we got back to the shore. An argument broke out between the passengers and friends of the boat operators. They were

armed. In the heat of the argument shots were fired and a friend of ours was killed. There were about 100 people on the boat. We have no idea how we could reach Saudi Arabia.

Interview 9

Profile
Sex Female
Age 17
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Kobo/Woldiya
IOM Case no 0042
Traveled with her cousin IOM case no 0167

There are a number of people in our village who have been to Saudi Arabia. Most are deported back from there. We looked at how they lived and were impressed by the improvement they achieved after their trip. We thus decided to try it for ourselves. I wanted to work as a housemaid. I borrowed Birr 2500 and my cousin Birr 3000. We agreed to pay back double the amount once we reached Saudi Arabia. We took a bus to Addis Ababa and spent a night in Dessie en route. Brokers spotted us at the bus station in Addis and approached us to offer help in getting us to Bossasso. We spent the night in a hotel and paid for it ourselves. We paid Birr 400 each to the broker to accompany us to Harar. He handed us over to another broker in Harrar who took us to Hartishiek. He charged us Birr 150 to get us there. In Hartishiek we were received by S's people. We paid Birr 450 each and were assigned with an escort; an Amharic speaking dark complexion man. He came with us up to Burro where we came to A's brother. A's people charged us Birr 300 each to get to Burro. We travelled in a group of 50 beginning Addis. A's people abandoned us shortly before reaching Bossasso. We had no money left so we begged and stayed in Bossasso until our arrest.

Interview 10

Profile
Sex Female
Age 20
Clan Amhara
Occupation Student
Education 8th grade
Place of origin Waja/Maychew
IOM Case no 0046
Travelled with her husband IOM case no 0158

We heard stories about jobs in Saudi Arabia and how people who were there earned a lot of money. There are many deported people in our locality. Tumuga is a nearby town where many of these people have started building new houses. We never directly spoke to anyone of them about their stay in Saudi; they are rich people now and do not wish to mingle with poor people like us. In the stories we heard, it was said that women had more chances of earning money, as they will be working inside houses where the threat for arrest is minimal. I hoped to work as a housemaid. We borrowed Birr 2000 from a local merchant promising to pay double the amount back. We raised another Birr 2000 by selling our house and an additional Birr 1750 by selling what little property we had. We took a bus to Addis. We met a broker in Addis at the bus station who accompanied us to Harrar for a fee of Birr 450 each.

We did not trust him initially but later saw that he was helping people from our locality also and changed our minds about him. A few kilometres from Harrar, the broker said that the police will stop the bus at the check post and will arrest people like us. We disembarked and got a taxi, which he arranged. We went to his house in town, which is located near St. Michael's church. He was joined by a woman there. He gave us his name and cell phone number. He asked everyone to call their families back home and tell them how good his services were and if anyone is interested that he may easily be reached. He did not allow us to leave the house for 7 days. We were 15 when we left Addis yet 20 more people came and joined us at the house. It was a small room for maybe five people but we were about 40. We gave him and the women money to get us food from town.

The women finally said that we have to pay Birr 650 each to get to Burro. She got us into a bus and took us to Hartishiek where she handed all of us over to S. She went back. S is a tall, big, dark skinned Somali man who speaks little Amharic. His assistant is a man from Maychew, fair skinned and speaks both Amharic and Tigrigna. The latter promised safe passage in a difficult territory and informed us that it would cost us Birr 450 each.

On the way to Burro, the assistant and the driver stopped the truck several times to inform us that there is a check post or a border for which we need to make payments to pass. We did not see much to indicate there is a post though.

Shortly before reaching Burro, A and his armed men stopped us and charged Birr 600 each to get us to Bossasso. They also said that we needed to pay for Donek i.e. boats which would take us to Yemen. That came to an additional Birr 400 per head.

Those who refused to pay were beaten; strip-searched and had all their money taken. We were then put on trucks and taken some distance. They abandoned us in the desert. Somali nomads found us and robbed our money and belongings. We walked for five days trying to find the paved road. We finally found the town of Qarlu. We paid 50,000 shillings to taxis to get to Bossasso. The driver told us to go around the border and meet up with him on the other side. As soon as we got off, he turned back and went away. We walked another six days to get to Bossasso. We were very hungry and water was in very short supply. In Bossasso we met a man named E who is a broker for the boats. The fee was 400 Birr each. We paid him 200 each as down payment. E put us in a house where we stayed for four days. He did not show up again. We were arrested inside the house. We had been in town 10 days when we got arrested. We had called home and asked for money to be wired to us. My brother in law sent us 500 Birr having sold his ox.

Interview 11

Profile

Sex Female

Age 21

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education None

Place of origin Kobo/Woldiya

IOM Case no 0043

I travelled with a neighbour. Both of us were attracted by the improved life of people deportees from Saudi Arabia. I was hoping to work as a housemaid. My father borrowed Birr 3500 from a rich merchant in the village and promised to pay double the amount when I get a job in Saudi. We took a bus from Kobo to Addis and spent a night in Dessie. When we reached Addis, a broker approached us and promised to help in arranging the trip. We paid him Birr 450 each to get to Harrar. He had 15 other people travelling in our group. In Harrar, he handed us over to another broker who kept us in a small house for four days. We paid him Birr 450 each to get us to Hartishiek. Yet another broker received us in Hartishiek

and took us to the woods where we stayed overnight. We paid Birr 300 each to get to Burro. The truck that took us drove through the bushes avoiding the main road. Once we passed Burro, the driver told everyone to get off. As soon as we did, he turned back and drove off. A group of bandits stopped us and searched each of the sixteen people in our group. They took away everything we had. I lost Birr 1500 and my ID, which I had hidden in my panties. I managed to hide a 100 Birr note in my mouth. We walked five days in the desert trying to find the main road. We begged truck drivers to give us rides for the next four days to reach Bossasso. Since I got here, I have been working as housemaid for a month and my escort worked as a daily labourer. We finally got arrested. A day before our arrest we had paid Birr 400 each to a man named A for the boat ride. He is a broker for the boats.

Interview 12

Profile

Sex Male

Age 22

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education 7th grade

Place of origin Alamata/ Maychew

IOM Case no 0182

I have been deported four times in each of the past four years from Saudi Arabia. I worked as a gardener there. I have been arrested on several occasions including for selling alcohol once. I lived with Ethiopians and worked for Arabs. I had several friends who flew out to Saudi and made a lot of money. I had no money and they told me it would be cheaper to go by boat. I sold all my property and set off. When I crossed to Yemen for the first time four years ago I had little difficulty and it cost me the brokers in Addis work based on their localities of origin. They are well known by the community and their contact numbers are available. You have a broker for Tigriyans, another for Oromos, another for those from Arsi, others for Ataye, Kobo etc. N and H are brothers who are involved in this business. N operates in Addis and H receives the people in Harrar. People deported from Saudi Arabia who have used the services of N recommend him highly. Debebe Hotel and Bezabih hotel, which are located near the bus station in Mercato, Addis Ababa, are where the brokers keep people overnight. When a group reaches 30 – 40 people, movement begins. People are put on Isuzu trucks the drivers of which bribe the border police or take side routes away from the main road to travel. Once they reach Harrar, a broker named K receives the consignment. K leaves near St. Michael's church in Harrar. H, the other broker in Harrar, lives near Tana Hotel. People usually stay for a week until H gets a group of 100 or so people. He hands all of them over to S in Hartishiek. For Tigriyans, the broker in Harrar is Girma. There are about 50 brokers in Harrar who all feed into S's center in Hartishiek. S waits for 3-4 days before he gets enough people to move them to Burro. S has a large truck now. He did not have vehicles four years ago. Now he owns three station wagons and a big truck. He usually drives one of the station wagons at the head of the convoy on the way to A in Burro. A has two holes dug in the ground; one for male and one for female travelers. He would ask for money gently. Those who refuse are put in the holes and are threatened with fire. His men put fire wood on either side of the hole and put the people in the middle. A or one of his men will then raise a torch and go around making gestures of setting the fire. People generally pay at this point. People who try to run away from his compound are fired at. A's drivers take routes to Bossasso on territories controlled by their clan. A is known to charge for boats to be boarded in Bossasso. A man named S used to be the boatman who received all the people A brings to Bossasso. However, his boat sank a few years ago and people now look for other boatmen.

Most of the people in A's convoys are Ethiopians although some Somalis join in after Gerewe.

The first time I went on this trip I spent Birr 2000, the second time Birr 2500 and the same on the third time. On the fourth attempt, I brought a girl I knew along and the expenses went up to Birr 3850. The girl turned back as she got too scared.

As I did this trips several times, I started to escape the convoys and travel on my own to avoid paying the fees. A found out about that and threatened to get me killed.

I know that there are brokers who work with the police on the check post between Harar and Dire Dawa to identify people who they refer to as Kobe, meaning fleeing. These are people who are going to Bossasso by passing the normal channel of the brokers. The police arrest them and take them for questioning which will abort their trip. Brokers are paid to avoid this confrontation. They exchange signs at the check post with the police or outright tell them "this is my convoy". Many people I know who take this trip raise money through two types of loan schemes. One is borrowing money from rich merchants promising to pay double the amount once they reach Saudi. The other is a loan from the government commonly known as extension. This is a loan given out for small scale trade or agriculture with a group of five becoming co guarantors.

I also know men who get a group of up to eight girls together and assist them to get to Saudi Arabia where they promise them they will find them jobs. They agree that the first few months of salary will go directly to these men as payment for their services. I have seen it in Saudi. They do get the girls employed but usually sign the contract of employment with the employer (known as M) pretending to be the husbands. The girl gets employed as a housemaid and her 'husband' receives the salary ever month. There are many girls who work without getting their pay beyond the agreed first few months. Fake marriage certificates are produce in Bossasso for this purpose. In such arrangements, the girls sometimes leave home with as much as 20,000 Birr for the trip. They cover all the expenses en route including those of the brokers. They often rent a four wheel drive when they reach Hartishiek and drive straight to Bosssao.

Having gone through this trip for a number of times, I have the names and contacts of some of the brokers.

H hands over his clients to K who in turn hands them over to S who then gets them to A. That is how they work.

Interview 13

Profile

Sex Female

Age 22

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education None

Place of origin Kobo/ Woldiya

IOM Case no 0036

I am divorced and have a six-year-old son who stays with my parents. I heard rumours about people who have been to Jeddah and got back successful. I wanted to work as a housemaid. My village Waja is about two hours walking distance from Kobo where the word about this people originated. I took a loan of Birr 3000 with a promise to pay double the amount. My father gave me another 500. I travelled with my brother who is now deported back to Gelade by the Punt land authorities. My brother took the lead and was in charge of the whole process. He did the paying and the negotiations. I do not remember any of the names, places or amounts. I remember that I was robbed once on the way- my brother had asked me to hide Birr 1000 in my underwear. They took it from there. I do not know the name of the place or who those people are. I was completely dependent on my brother.

Interview 14

Profile

Sex Female

Age 20

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education 4th grade

Place of origin Waja/ Maychew

IOM Case no 0044

Interviewed with her brother who travelled with her, IOM case no 152, farmer, Aged 42

Everyone in the village knows of people who have been to Saudi Arabia and who came back deported. These people have relatively better lives by local standards. We decided to try our luck in Saudi. I wanted to work as a housemaid. We took a loan of Birr 3500 each. Her loan was to be paid in double the amount. It is like that for women, as it is generally believed that they will get jobs quickly and earn more than men. He took a Birr 4500 loan from the government commonly known as Igir Metkeya- more or less like a start up loan. We took a bus to Alamata and then on to Addis via Dessie. When we got off the bus at Addis, a group of brokers approached us and got us really confused. They finally got us into a hotel named Woyra Minch near American Gebi in Addis. We paid for our rooms and met a group of ten people on their way to Bossasso. The brokers are known as M and A. We know A in Tumuga; he used to work in the municipality until he run away with a lot of government money. They told us that the Ethiopian army was robbing people on the way and the only way to be protected against that was to pay for their services. At about 7:00 PM they took us to the Teklehaimanot area in Addis and put us in minibuses headed to Harrar. We paid Birr 500 each. A returned when we reached Harrar but M continued with us up to Hartishiek. He handed us over to S. We stayed overnight in Harar on the way and were accommodated with about 100 people at a place near St. Michael's church. We could hear the mass. We left Harar at 2: 00 AM

S charged us Birr 500 for the donek (boat) and another 200 for safe passage at the various check posts. We stayed 2 days in Hartishiek in S's make shift shades made of plastic. He finally brought a double deck truck and got about 350 people to board it. Women were put on the top deck and men on the lower one. The truck appears to have been used to transport sheep. There was urine and human waste on the lower deck. The upper and lower decks are separated with wooden planks. It took 12 days of driving to Burro. Everyone was required to pay 20-30 Birr each time we were told we reached a check post. This happened several times. We also paid the driver and the assistant for food but all we got was 2 packs of biscuits and dates. The driver demanded 100 Birr each from the travellers claiming that the truck has broken down and money was needed to get it fixed. Shots were fired at those who refused to obey.

The truck go us near Bossasso when the driver told us that the car needed maintenance and that everyone needed to hide until it was fixed. When everyone got behind the bushes, he turned the truck back and drove off leaving everyone in the desert. We walked the rest of the way to town. Twelve of us jointly paid Birr 4800 to a man named M to get places on a boat to Yement. N is a broker for the boatmen. He took us to a place where we were supposed to wait for the boat. The police put us under arrest before we could board the boat.

We know of people in Waja, our village, who arrange travel and employment in Saudi. They assist only women and usually take them in groups of 5-12. All of these men have been to Saudi Arabia for more than two years before they got deported.

Interview 15

Profile
Sex Female
Age 16
Clan Tigre
Occupation Farmer
Education –
Place of origin Waja/Tumuga
IOM Case no 0115 Unaccompanied minor

I travelled with my brother who is now deported back to Ethiopia through Gelade. I was married once but got divorced after some time. It was basically my brother's decision. He had heard of people in our village who had been to Saudi Arabia. They were deported back. Their lives, he said were much better than ours. We took a loan of Birr 7000 and promised to pay double the amount.

We took a bus to Addis and spent a night in Dessie en route. When we reached Addis we met a group of brokers who immediately arranged our trip to Harar. We travelled at night. When we reached Harar, we met M the broker who accompanied us to Hartishiek. We were put on a double deck bus and travelled to Burro. There we met A's people. They demanded money. My brother was protecting me. He paid whatever they asked. I do not know how much. They did search us in Burro. They put us in a bus, took us some distance and abandoned us in the desert. We walked for several days to get to Bossasso. My brother paid Birr 800 for the donkey. We were arrested before we boarded the boat.

Interview 16

Profile
Sex Female
Age 21
Clan Amhara
Occupation Housewife
Education None
Place of origin Waja/Maychew
IOM Case no 0035
Interviewed with her husband who is not registered with IOM

I travelled with my husband who is a 32 year old man. He used to be a weaver and I helped him with his work. He convinced me that people who had been to Saudi were better off even though most of them were deported back. We decided to give it a try. I wanted to work as a housemaid. We have been married for 6 years and have a 4-year-old daughter who is now staying with my father. We sold all our property and took a loan from Marat- a government loan scheme to the tune of Birr 600. We took a bus to Addis and spent the night in Dessie. When we reached the central bus station in Addis a loud group of brokers approached us and started pushing and shoving us. My husband chased them away but they returned. They told us that they can help us get to Saudi and their way was safe. Finally we gave in. They showed us a house where we can spend the night at. Next morning they put us on a bus to Harrar. We paid them Birr 450 for each of us. When we reached Harrar they handed us over to another broker who was waiting with a group of about 20 people. Each of us paid Birr 600 to get to Hartishiek. They let us stay in a hotel of our choice in Harrar. Next morning, they put all of us in a bus headed to Hartishiek. The broker came with us. In Hartishiek we were told to wait in the red canvas shelters of S where there were about 300 people. We waited for two days. In the end, they put us in two buses, charged us Birr 600 to get to Burro and set off. When we reached Burro, it was getting dark. We paid Birr 200 each for the trip to Bossasso. Next morning they made us pay another Birr 200 each,

apparently for the boat to Yemen. Then they searched everyone. I had some money in my panties very close to my private parts. One of the men got in there and took away the money. Another asked me to go into the bushes alone. My husband got furious and told him that this was 'haram'; unacceptable in Islam, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. He let me go. They put us on a truck and started heading for Bossasso. They stopped the truck several times saying there was a check post which we never saw. We paid Birr 20-30 to get past each of these imaginary boarders.

Interview 17

Profile

Sex Female

Age 33

Clan Tigre

Occupation Farmer

Education None

Place of origin Tumuga/ Maychew

IOM Case no 0052

Interviewed with her nephew who travelled with her, IOM case no 147, farmer, Aged 28

I am a widow and have three children aged 14(girl), 10(boy) and 3(girl). People deported from Saudi Arabia told me of opportunities available there. I wanted to work as a housemaid. I also saw that they lived better than many of us in the village. They told me that there was a way through Bossasso where you can take a boat to Yemen. I took a loan of Birr 3000 at 100% interest and sold some property, which raised about Birr 500. My nephew sold his property and raised Birr 3500. We took a bus to Addis where we met the broker M. He was with his assistant A who we knew back in our village. He used to work for the municipality. M accompanied us to Harrar. M put us in a house near St. Michael's church in Harrar. There was a tall, fair skinned lady who was coordinating things. We paid Birr 500 each to get from Addis to Harrar. From Harar to Hartishiek we paid Birr 400 each to the broker. Hartishiek to Burro cost us Birr 500 each and another 500 each to get to Bossasso. We paid Birr 200 each for an imaginary check post between Hartishek and Bossasso and Birr 300 each at Burro for the boats to Yemen. There were several places where we will find a string held between two barrels. The driver and the assistant said these were check posts and order us to pay for passage. My nephew complied and made all the payments so we were not attacked or robbed. A's people used double deck trucks to transport us; women on top and men at the lower deck. When we reached Gerewe, we had to pay Birr 300 each to a Somali man who knew the driver for "clan protection". Once we reached Bossasso we located M who facilitates the boat ride to Yemen. We paid him Birr 400 each for the donek. Away from the official port, there is a concrete structure without a roof, which is used to get people together to board the boats to Yemen. We got arrested as we were waiting for the boat.

Both of us know of people who take groups of girls from our village to Saudi Arabia promising to get them good paying jobs there. I myself was offered such an opportunity. The man said he could get me a job as a housemaid and I would be earning as much as 1000 Real a month. I was to let him have the first three months' pay. I decided not to go along as I did not trust him.

They confirmed M's cell phone number as he had given it to them to pass it around.

Interview 18

Profile

Sex Male

Age 20
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Senbete/Kemisse
IOM Case no 0241

I got married very early but got divorced soon afterwards. Everyone in the village talked about people who came back from Saudi Arabia and how well off they are. I had a friend named M who was deported some time back. We decided to go together. I wanted to do any kind of work available in Saudi. I sold some property and raised Birr 1000. M led the way. We took a bus from Senbete to Addis. We found a broker in Addis. We paid him Birr 400 each to get us to Harrar. We stayed one night in Addis. When we reached Harrar, it was dark. We stayed for a few hours there and proceeded to Hartishiek where we stayed for three days in the bushes. We paid 200 Birr each to S's people at Hartishiek who took us to Burro. They handed us to A. Since I had run out of money, I could only pay them a hundred Birr. M and I walked for seven days to get to Burro. It was terrible. We were hungry and thirsty all the time. When we reached Bossasso, M got a boat and crossed the sea to Yemen. I remained behind as I had no money. I got arrested.

Interview 19

Profile
Sex Female
Age 17
Clan Tigre
Occupation Student
Education 6th grade
Place of origin Waja/ Maychew
IOM Case no 0038
Unaccompanied minor

I travelled with my brother who was deported back to Gelade, Ethiopia, a few weeks ago. Many people in our village who had been to Saudi Arabia and deported back told us about better opportunities there. All of them went to Saudi through Bossasso. I wanted to work as a housemaid when I reached Saudi Arabia. We are a poor family. My father drives carts in town and my brother is unemployed. My brother and myself borrowed Birr 3500 each with promises to pay back double the amount. We took a bus to Addis; spent a night in Dessie and arrived at the central bus station in Addis. There we met A who used to work in the municipality in our village. He also served in the militia previously. We knew him. He charged us Birr 450 each to get us to Harrar. In Harrar, we were handed over to a broker named T who charged Birr 400 each to get us to Hartishike. There was a lady who worked with him. We were told not to leave the house they put us in. We gave money to the lady to get us food. There were about 20 people in total in that house waiting to go to Hartishiek. S's people received us in Hartishiek. There were about 200 people waiting to go to Burro. They put us on a double deck truck and drove to Burro. When we reached Burro, A's people demanded we pay Birr 200 in the evening and asked for 400 more on the next morning. I did not want to pay all that money but they searched my body and took away whatever I had. I had hidden Birr 500 in my hair braid, and another 500 along with my ID in my panties. They took all of it. We stayed for 3 days in Burro in A's compound. Then they let us go. We walked for two weeks, asking people the way to Bossasso and begging for food and water. It was terribly hot. We got arrested as soon as we reached Bossasso. I got separated with my brother during the first round of deportation.

Interview 20

Profile
Sex Female
Age 16
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education 2nd grade
Place of origin Arbowayu/ Ataye
IOM Case no 0193
Unaccompanied minor

I travelled with two men and three girls. A was leading the way and I was escorting me. I is my fiancée's brother. My father trusted him to take me safely to Saudi where I was supposed to meet with my fiancée to whom I have been engaged since I was six years old. I and A are somehow related. The three girls who came along are all from my village and all are in their teens. Their names were: Z, Z and H. We all wanted to work as housemaids in Saudi Arabia and the two men promised to get us there safely as well as find us jobs. The girls had agreed to pay the men their first two months of salary when they get there. My father borrowed Birr 2500 from a relative and gave it to me when I left home. We took a bus to Addis from Ataye. When we reached Addis, we met the broker H who was already known to A. We paid H Birr 500 each to get us to Hartishiek. H came with us up to Harrar. We took another bus to get to Hartishiek. We stayed for 2 days in the shades prepared by S and his men. They put us on a double deck truck and took us to Burro. A's children received us in Burro. In the evening they asked for Birr 200 each to get us to Bossasso. We paid. Next morning, they asked for 200 more. This also we paid. We stayed at that place for fifteen days until they had enough people to transport. They fed us poorly- usually plain rice. On the 16th day, we found it too much. We escaped from the compound and walked for three days before we reached the town of Burro. We then took small cars to get to Bossasso. They charged us Birr 350 each. On the way however, the driver said he had run out of fuel, went to buy gas and never returned. We went to the police who got us a car to Gerewe for Birr 250 each. We took other cars for Birr 150 each to get o Bossasso from Gerewe. They dropped us quite a distance from Bossasso. We had to walk 6 days before we got here. We begged for food and water all the way. All the places where the brokers put us in Burro, Gerewe and Hartishiek were away from the main town area in the bushes.

As the cars could not take more than four people at a time, we got separated. A took off with the three girls but I stayed with I. We got arrested as soon as we reached Bossasso. I escaped from this camp but I decided to stay. I know of people in my village who have been to Saudi who come back to take away a group of girls. These men have been in Saudi for more than two years. They promise the girls that they will find them jobs. The girls are told that when they get there they will be staying in some houses until they find a job. The rent for these places, which is Birr 200/ month, will be paid by the girls when they get the job. Additionally, they will agree to hand over the first two to three months pay to the broker for his services.

Interview 21

Profile
Sex Male
Age 22
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Mequey/Debre Birhan

IOM Case no 0023
Interviewed with his friend from the same village

Profile
Sex Male
Age 18
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Afesso/Debre Birhan
IOM Case no 0030

In our village, the rich people are the people who have been to Saudi or those whose children and relatives send them money from there. We heard men could find good paying jobs working as shepherds. We made friends with a young man named Said at the market place. The local market place is called Meqoy. S had been to Saudi Arabia and was deported back sometime ago. S promised to show us the way to Bossasso and told us to get Birr 2500 each. We borrowed Birr 2500 each. The arrangement was such that we would pay double the amount if we reached Saudi but only the principal if we did not. We also sold our oxen. We paid S Birr 400 each. We took a bus from Meqoy to Kemisse and then on to Addis. From Addis, we took another bus to Harrar. S got us to Harrar without using the services of any broker. In Harrar, said took us to a broker named K who is a fair skinned, medium height, man between 35 to 40 years of age. A woman who appeared to be his wife worked with him. K's place is near the St. Michael church in Harrar. There were 46 people there. He put us in one bus and we drove to Hartishiek. We paid him Birr 450 each. When we reached Hartishiek it was dark. We spent the night in the bushes. We paid Birr 240 each to S at Hartishiek. Out of this amount, S's people told us 40 was for passing check posts. We set off for Burro late in the afternoon the next day. We were delivered to A's place in Burro where they put us in shades with wooden roofs and plastic walls. The place was out of town in the bushes. We paid Birr 500 each to A. Those who refused to pay were put in a small hole in the ground and threatened with being burned alive. As both of us complied, we were not put in the fireplace. They put us in a double deck truck in which we drove for four days. They never used the main road but drove in the bushes. At the edge of Bossasso town, we were robbed by bandits and lost all our remaining money. When we reached town, we were directed to the Red Cross compound. We got arrested shortly after arriving there. S came with us all the way but escaped from this camp some days ago.

Interview 22

Profile
Sex Male
Age 20
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education 5th grade
Place of origin Harar/ Alemaya
IOM Case no 0001
Interview through interpreter

I wanted to work in Bossasso; do whatever was available to earn some money. My aunt lives here. I was told that there were a lot of jobs here and I assumed it would be easier for me as my aunt lived in the town. I travelled with my uncle who also wanted to do the same. He was returned by IOM during the first movement. I left home with Birr 1500. I travelled to Harrar where we were approached by a broker in the bus station. We paid him Birr 100

each to get us to Jijiga. Another broker approached us in the bus station in Jijiga. We paid him Birr 100 to get us to Hartishiek. We arrived at Hartishek late at night and stayed overnight. I did not see much as it was dark. The next day we travelled to Hargessa but were not charged for the trip. We found another broker in Hargessa who charged us Birr 500 each to get us to Burro. We did not stop at Burro but went on to Lassanot without additional payment. We had to pay Birr 200 each to get from Lassanot to Bossasso. The car dropped us before we reached town. We walked three hours to get here. The police arrested us at the gate but later on they set us free. I paid a man Birr 200 so he can show me my aunt's teashop. I worked at her shop for a month, which is located in that part of town where the Oromo stay. I was arrested in that neighbourhood.

Interview 23

Profile
Sex Male
Age 31
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Asendabo/ Assela
IOM Case no 0068
Interviewed with his friend from the same village

Profile
Sex Male
Age 27
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Asendabo/ Assela
IOM Case no 0069

We heard that people who go to Saudi Arabia get good jobs and earn a lot of money. There were some returnees in our village who lived better than most of the people there. We had no idea what kind of job we should expect to get. We met a person we distantly knew previously in the town of Robe. He had been to Saudi and was deported back. We asked him to help us. We took some loan and sold our cattle to raise money. We took a bus to Robe, and then on to Nazereth. A broker approached in the bus station. We paid him Birr 200 each. He put us on a bus to Harrar but did not come with us. We were approached by a broker at the Harrar bus station; we paid him Birr 300 each and he got us on a bus to Jijiga. He did not come with us. The same thing happened at Jijiga bus station. This time we paid Birr 250 each to get to Wuchale. From Wuchale, we paid a broker Birr 450 each to get us to Gerewe. We had run out of money when we got there as we got robbed at the gates of the town by bandits who also beat us. We started working to raise the 80,000 Shillings needed to get to Bossasso. We dug toilets and made charcoal. We paid that amount to get to Bossasso but got arrested as soon as we reached town.

Interview 24

Profile
Sex Male
Age 15
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer

Education None
Place of origin Bala/ Maychew
IOM Case no 0136
Unaccompanied minor

Neighbors in our village who had been to Jeddah and back lived a much better life than the rest of us. They told me the way to Jeddah was through Bossasso. I wanted to go there and find a job as a shepherd looking after camels and goats. They said that was the job available for men. I left home with Birr 2000 having sold my cow and a few goats. An acquaintance by the name D who was deported back from Saudi Arabia promised to accompany me to Bossasso. I did not pay him. D wanted to go back to Saudi. We met at the town of Kobo. We took a bus to Addis where we met a broker named G at the central bus station. D knew him from his previous trip. We spent the night at American Gebi. We paid G Birr 200 each to get us to Harrar. He came with us. In Harrar, he put us in a place where we could rest. A bus full of people came and joined us at the house. He put all of us in a larger bus and we headed for Hartishiek. G did come with us. When we reached Hartishiek, he handed us over to S. We paid Birr 600 each to get to Burro. S accompanied the truck to Burro. He handed us over to A when we reached Burro. A charged us 200 each in the evening and demanded another 300 each the following morning. He then put us in trucks, took us out to the desert and abandoned us there. We begged and walked for eight days to reach Bossasso. I stayed in the Amhara quarters of town for two weeks. My father had wired me Birr 700 when I got here but thieves took it away. I got arrested in the streets.

Interview 25

Profile
Sex Female
Age 22
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Senbete/Kemissie
IOM Case no 0223

I am divorced and left my 8-year-old daughter with my mother. I saw people in my village who had been to Saudi Arai improve their lives. I wanted to go there and work as a housemaid. I saved Birr 2000 and got some more from my brother. I went to Addis and met a broker at the bus station. I stayed the night in the Mercato area where many Oromo people stayed. I paid the broker Birr 600 to accompany me to Hartishiek. We arrived at night in Hartishiek where we stayed for two nights. I paid Birr 700 to get from Hartishiek to Burro. I paid another Birr 400 to get to Bossasso. I lost my ID in Burro while washing my cloths in a pond. I cannot remember the names of the brokers and did not notice much on the way. The routes we took were always in the bushes away from the main road. When I got to Bossasso, I found my way to the part of town where Oromo people stay. I was arrested a week later.

Interview 26

Profile
Sex Male
Age 18
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer

Education 2nd Grade
Place of origin Senbete/Kemissie
IOM Case no 0184

People in my village talked about life in Jeddah. They said jobs were plenty and paid well. I took a bus to Addis and was approached by a broker at the bus station. He put me in Bezabih Hotel in Mercato to spend the night. His name was O. I paid him Birr 500 to get me to Harrar. Another broker picked me out at the station in Harrar. I paid him Birr 500 to get me to Jijiga. He put me in a three-room house where there were four other people. Police raided the place and took our money. We tried to leave the town. Police stopped the bus and picked out some passengers. They took us to the station. I had to pay Birr 20 in bribes to leave the town. One of the police officers got me into a bus headed for Wuchale. I stayed the night in Wuchale. I took a bus and paid a broker Birr 400 to get to Hargessa. The bus however took me up to Berbera. The broker got off at Hargessa. I begged and walked all the way to Bossasso.

Interview 27

Profile
Sex Male
Age 29
Clan Tigre
Occupation Mechanic
Education 4th grade
Place of origin Entichew/ Axum
IOM Case no 0027

I worked as a mechanic in Addis. I heard that I could get a good paying job in Saudi Arabia. I took a bus to Jijiga on my own. I stayed at the Fire Hiwot hotel in Jijiga. I made friends with people who stayed there. They got me in contact with a broker named M. I paid him Birr 500 to get me to Hartishiek. He got me to S's place. I paid Birr 300 to S to get to Burro. A's people beat me up when I refused to pay and took away Birr 400 from me. A has an interpreter/ assistant who goes by the name A. That man speaks both Amharic and Oromiffa. A's truck got me to Bossasso where I got arrested after a few days.

Interview 28

Profile
Sex Male
Age
Clan
Occupation
Education
Place of origin
Resident of Bossasso, came to camp to register with UNHCR, married a Somali woman and lived in Bossasso for eight years

I do seasonal jobs at the port. I have lived here for eight years and married to a local woman. There are several teashops in the port area owned and run by Ethiopians. They accommodate new arrivals based on their respective clans. You have the Amhara, Oromo, Wollo etc quarters. The same shops receive money from the travellers to arrange the boat trips to Yemen. Separate docks exist for the different tribes. The owners of the boats are

often confronted by the authorities who they pacify by paying bribes. To reduce their visibility, boat owners often recruit agents who operate for them.

Many men who were repatriated during the first movement in June have come back with groups of young women destined to Saudi Arabia. They all come through Hartishiek where they rent four-wheel drives. They drive in the bush away from the main route. They place the girls in several safe houses in Bossasso. These are usually the teashops owned by Ethiopians. The girls sometimes pay these men as much as 30-40 thousand Birr. These brokers are contracted by men in Saudi Arabia who would like to have their wives smuggled through Bossasso into Saudi Arabia. There are also many Ethiopian men who contract this people to get them girls from back home who they will take as their wives. The brokers are known to lure girls into taking this trip by promising them jobs. Once they reach Bossasso, they acquire forged Nika (marriage) documents, which they use in Saudi Arabia to enter into contracts of employment for the girls on their behalf. They will collect the girls' salary until the girls find a way out of this arrangement. Many times, the girls are told that payment of their salary has been effected to the "husband" when they raise the issue with their employers.

Interview 29

Profile

Sex Male

Age 18

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education 3rd grade

Place of origin Senbete/Kemisse

IOM Case no 0140

Many people in our village talked about life in Saudi Arabia, which they said was so much better than the one we have in our village. May of the people who told this stories are deportees from there. I wanted to be a shepherd. I left home in a group of about forty people. All of us had decided to leave when two brokers named K and O showed up. They said they knew the way and would make things easier for us. They came from Addis. I left home with Birr 1500 my parents gave me. We took a loan from to government to buy goats. We sold these goats to cover my expenses. I have two brothers and 4 sisters; we are poor. There were about 10 girls in our group who paid the men Birr 500 each to get them to Saudi Arabia where they will also find them jobs. They charge us Birr 100 each to get to Addis from Senbete. They hid us in Addis so other brokers will not see us. They said they will get us to Harrar and then find us someone else to guide us through the rest of the way. We paid them Birr 500 to get to Harrar from Addis. We paid another Birr 550 to get to Hartishiek. We joined S's large group there and had to pay him Birr 500 each to get us to Burro. When we reached Burro, A's men searched us. They took away Birr 100 I had hidden in the seams of my cloth. They put us in a truck, took us some way into the desert and abandoned us there. We walked six days in the desert until we reached the town of Bossasso. We were arrested as we entered the town. The girls were also arrested. Their relatives in Saudi Arabia wired them some money since which they used to bribe their way out of the camp. I believe they have already crossed the sea. The men are supposed to get them to their relatives and find them jobs afterwards.

Interview 30

Profile

Sex Male

Age 18
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer
Education Basic education
Place of origin Ataye/ Debre Birhan
IOM Case no 0072

I lived with my mother and my brother who is a year younger. I had heard about how people went to Saudi Arabia and improved their lives. I discussed my intent to do the same with some farmers. They introduced me to a broker from Kemisse. The broker promised to get me to Saudi and find me a job as a shepherd. He disappeared after our first meeting. I sold my ox and left home with Birr 1500 to find the broker in Addis. I could not find him. Many brokers approached me in the bus station. One of them took me to Bezabih hotel to spend the night there. On the next day, he put me on a bus to Jijiga in which there were many people going on the same trip. He remained behind; I paid him Birr 450. When I reached Jijiga, another group of brokers approached me in the station. I paid Birr 450 to get to Burro. The bus stopped several times on the way and we were asked to pay for passage to what the driver indicated to us as check posts. We reached Hartishiek and were handed over to S. S put us in a double deck truck; women on top and men at the lower deck. We paid Birr 50 each to pass a check post. It took two days to reach Burro. A's men took us and put us in a compound. They asked for Birr 200 in the evening for the rip. In the morning, they asked for another 200 for the donek-boats. We spent the night in the bush. I refused to pay the money for the boats. They beat me up and made me remove my cloths. They took Birr 200, which I had hidden in my underwear. They put me in a hole in the ground, which could take about ten people. It is about a meter and half deep. They made me sit in the hole in which there was dry firewood. A man came up with a torch and threatened to set us on fire. He also threw thorns at our heads. Everyone was scared and those who had hidden some money screamed to say they would pay. A's compound is fenced. His men fire shots on top of our heads so we will not try to escape. They gave us little water and the heat was unbearable. One of he boys with us went nearly crazy out of thirst. He jumped over the fence and escaped. After a few hours the same thing happened to me. I could not control myself any longer. Another boy and myself jumped over the fence. Nobody noticed. We begged and walked our way through to Burro. We continued walking and begging to Bossasso. We were on the road for 25 days. We were hungry, tired, thirsty and scared all the time. Bandits stopped us a couple of times and threatened us with sharp objects. When I got to Bossasso, I called my mom and she wired Birr 700 to me. I worked for three weeks as a daily labourer before my arrest. I stayed at the Amhara quarters and spent the nights on the streets. I paid Birr 370 to Elias' wife to get a place on a boat to Yemen. E owns a teashop and collects donek money. I was arrested in that teashop.

Interview 31

Profile
Sex Male
Age 30
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Dobi/ JImma
IOM Case no 0065
Interviewed through interpreter

I am married and have two children. I worked on the fields with my father. I heard that people were going to Saudi Arabia to get better jobs with higher pay. I had no definite desire about what I wished to do; I just wanted to do whatever job was available. I left home with Birr 1000 having sold my ox for 500 and borrowed the rest. I took a bus to Addis and started looking for a broker. I found one at the bus station. I did not trust him so I began to travel on my own. I went to Harrar, then to Jijiga, on to Wuchale, Hargessa, Burro, Lassanot, Gerewe and finally Bossasso. I did not pay any broker and was never accompanied by one. I have not been robbed. As my money started to get short, I begged in some of the towns. I was arrested in Bossaso while looking for a job. I did not pay for donek.

Interview 32

Profile
Sex Male
Age 16
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Masale Mide/ Arsi
IOM Case no 0231

I lived with my mother and 12 siblings. In our village, there are some people who came back from Saudi after a couple of years stay there. Their homes had iron roofs and their cloth looked very good. I wanted to have the same kind of life. A neighbour told me that the way was through Bossasso. I saved Birr 1500 and left to Robe. I met a group going on the same trip at Robe bus station. I joined them. We went to Addis and then took another bus to Harrar. I found a broker when I reached Harrar. He put me in a bus to Jijiga and came along. When we reached Jijiga, he took me to corner hidden from view and told me that I needed to pay Birr 500 to get to Burro. He searched me and took the 500 Birr. He then put me back on a bus to Hartishiek. When we reached Hartishiek, there were many people waiting to leave to Burro at S's place. S demanded we pay Birr 500 each. I refused for which they put me in a very dark room and locked me away. I had to pay. They put all of us in a truck used to transport cattle. S then asked for Birr 200 more which he said was needed to bribe our way through check posts in the desert. He came with the travellers but abandoned us after we made the second payment. We walked and begged our way through Hargessa and then on to Burro. Shortly before reaching Burro, we were stopped by an armed group. Only three of us were in my group by then. They strip searched us and took all our money. It took us four days of walking and begging for rides to get to Bossasso. I worked on the streets for 3 months before I got arrested. I did not pay for donek.

Interview 33

Profile
Sex Male
Age 18
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education 4th grade
Place of origin Senbete/ Kemissie
IOM Case no 0032

I worked on a farm with my brothers. Many people in our village were travelling to Saudi Arabia; I decided to try it for myself. I was willing to do any kind of job available there. I sold

some cattle and raised Birr 2000 when I left home. I took a bus to Addis where I was approached by a broker at the bus station. He showed me a hotel where I could spend the night at. We met on the next day and agreed that he would escort me to Jijiga for Birr 450. He came with me up to Harrar and handed me over to another broker there. The new broker did not charge us but simply put us in a bus to Jijiga. There we were met by another broker who charged all of us (we were now a group of about ten going the same way) Birr 200 to get to Burro. We never saw him again. We walked all the way to Burro. Someone was leading the group. When we reached Burro, A's men stopped us, told us to remove our cloth and beat us up. They robbed all the money we had. I lost Birr 500, which I had hidden in my underwear. They even split open the soles of our shoes to see if we were hiding money there. We begged and walked the rest of the way to Bossasso.

Interview 34

Profile
Sex Male
Age 18
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education 4th grade
Place of origin Ataye
IOM Case no 0007

My father is dead and I took care of the family. Friends who had been to Saudi Arabia and deported back lived much better than the rest of us. We left home as a group of three. I sold my ox and raised Birr 1500. We met the broker in the bus station in Addis. He immediately put us on a bus to Harrar. His name is K. He is dark, short, about 25 years old with a receding hairline. He also appears to be from Ataye. We spent two nights in Harrar in a small house where 15 other people were also staying. We were told to be quiet. We paid the broker Birr 500 each to get us to Burro. He escorted us to Hartishiek and handed us over to S. We spent the night in the bush. They did not ask for money apart from Birr 20, which they said, was for the check posts. S put all of us on a truck used to transport sheep. We drove for about 14 hours to reach Burro. When we got to Burro, we were handed over to A's men. They demanded we pay Birr 200 as soon as we arrived. They asked for Birr 150 more on the next day, which they said, was for donek. They did beat those who did not want to pay. They took us in a truck to the desert and abandoned us. We waked for four days to get to Bossasso. We were stopped by armed bandits at one point. We were too tired to protest. We could not even run as we had not eaten for days. We got arrested shortly before reaching town.

Interview 35

Profile
Sex Female
Age 17
Clan Oromo
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Senbete/ Kemissie
IOM Case no 0224

I had no job back home. I did not know where to go. I just followed what people did; leave the village and go to places where their lives improved. I know some people who have been

deported back from Saudi Arabia whose lives improved dramatically. I saved up Birr 1100 working on fields during the weeding season. I took a bus to Addis and asked the driver to help me. He put me up in a hotel in Addis. The next day, I just boarded a bus, which fortunately for me was headed to Harrar. I met two girls who were going on the same trip; they too had no idea where they were headed to. We joined any group, which was traveling. We were not robbed. I do not know any of the places and did not take notice of the names of the towns. When we reached Bossasso, we were arrested at the check post. I did not meet any broker. I finished all my money on transport and food. The trip took eight days. I have been in prison for two months now.

- Took the normal route but faced little difficulty. Perhaps it is because she looks Somali.

Interview 36

Profile

Sex Female

Age 25

Clan Oromo

Occupation Farmer

Education None

Place of origin Senbete/ Kemissie

IOM Case no 0225

I was once married but got divorced soon afterwards. I was a shepherd in my village. I saw people in our village who had been to Saudi Arabia. They had better houses, cloth and generally better lives. I wanted to go there and work as a housemaid. I saved some money by burning wood to make charcoal, which I sold. I took a bus to Addis and spent the night on the streets. I paid someone Birr 2 to let me sleep on the street. I got up next day and took the closest bus I could get. I changed buses frequently but had no idea where they were going. I did not meet any broker and was never robbed on the way. I reached Bossasso after several days. My ID was taken away by the police at Jijiga. I got arrested before entering the town of Bossasso. I did not make it to the boats.

- Has very little information to share. Very timid and simple of mind

Interview 37

Profile

Sex Female

Age 15

Clan Amhahra

Occupation Student

Education 7th grade

Place of origin Tumuga /Maychew

IOM Case no 0045

I travelled with my brother who got deported back to Gelade a few weeks ago. We noticed that people in our village who had been to Saudi Arabia lived better lives. Some opened hotels and others moved to the more affluent town of Alamata. I spoke to some of the women who made the trip and got deported back. They said the way to go is through

Bossasso. They told me that I could get a job as a maid in Saudi and earn as much as 600-900 Riyals a month depending on how well I could speak the language. My brother was told that he could work as a shepherd and earn as much. We borrowed Birr 5000 from a local merchant. The agreement was such that we would pay double the amount if we made it to Saudi and only the principal if we failed. We took a bus to Addis. At the bus station a broker approached us and asked us where we were going. He said he will arrange a safe trip for us and put us up in the Bezabih hotel in Mercato area. He accompanied us to Harrar for which we paid him Birr 400 each. He dropped us off at a house belonging to a female broker. She told us that her husband had gone with another group to Hartishiek and that he would be back soon to take us there. She charged Birr 500 for each of us. The husband came back and took us to Hartshiek. When we got there, he handed us over to S who charged us Birr 500 each and put us on a truck a day later. The truck took us to Burro where A's men received us. There were also women in the compound who helped the men prevent escape by travellers. I was strip searched and lost Birr 1500 which I had hidden in my panties. They also beat us up. After 3 days of detention in the compound, they put us on a truck and took us out to the desert where they got us off and turned back to drive off. We were abandoned. We walked and begged our way to Bossasso. We got arrested following the day we got to town.

Interview 38

Profile

Sex Female

Age 17 (claimed to be 19 earlier)

Clan Amhara

Occupation Farmer

Education 5th grade

Place of origin Betefecha/Kemissie

IOM Case no 0057

I saw some girls in my village had improved their lives after having travelled to Saudi Arabia. I knew a man named M who was deported back from Saudi last year. He lived in our village. I went and approached him asking for his help. He said he can help me to get to Saudi and get me a job there. I agreed to pay him Birr 500 in advance and another 2000 once I get to Saudi and found a job. Two other girls named A and Z made similar arrangements with him. He told us that it was easy to find a good paying job in Saudi. He travelled with all three of us. My parents sold their ox and gave me Birr 2500 when I left home. We took a bus to Addis where we met a broker who M already knew. He charge us Birr 500 for his services and came along with us up to Harrar. He handed us over to another broker in Harrar who we paid Birr 500 each to get to Hartishiek. When we got to Hartisheik, we paid Birr 600 each to S to get to Bossasso. We spent two nights in Hartishiek in the bush. They then put us in a double deck truck, which got us to Burro. At Burro, A charged everyone Birr 450. The men got strip searched but managed to protest enough to avoid the searching of the women. A's truck took us to the desert and went back leaving us in the middle of nowhere. We begged and walked for eight days. We sometimes went into local Somali homes to do some chores for which we got paid. Two weeks after we reached Bossasso, we got arrested. I had Birr 400 wired from home for the donek. All three of the girls and M himself were inside the camp. M escaped first and had some money wired from the girls' families. He bribed the guards here to have them escape; I believe by now they have crossed the sea to Yemen. There are many men like M in my village in Ataye who say they can help girls cross the sea to Saudi.

Interview 39

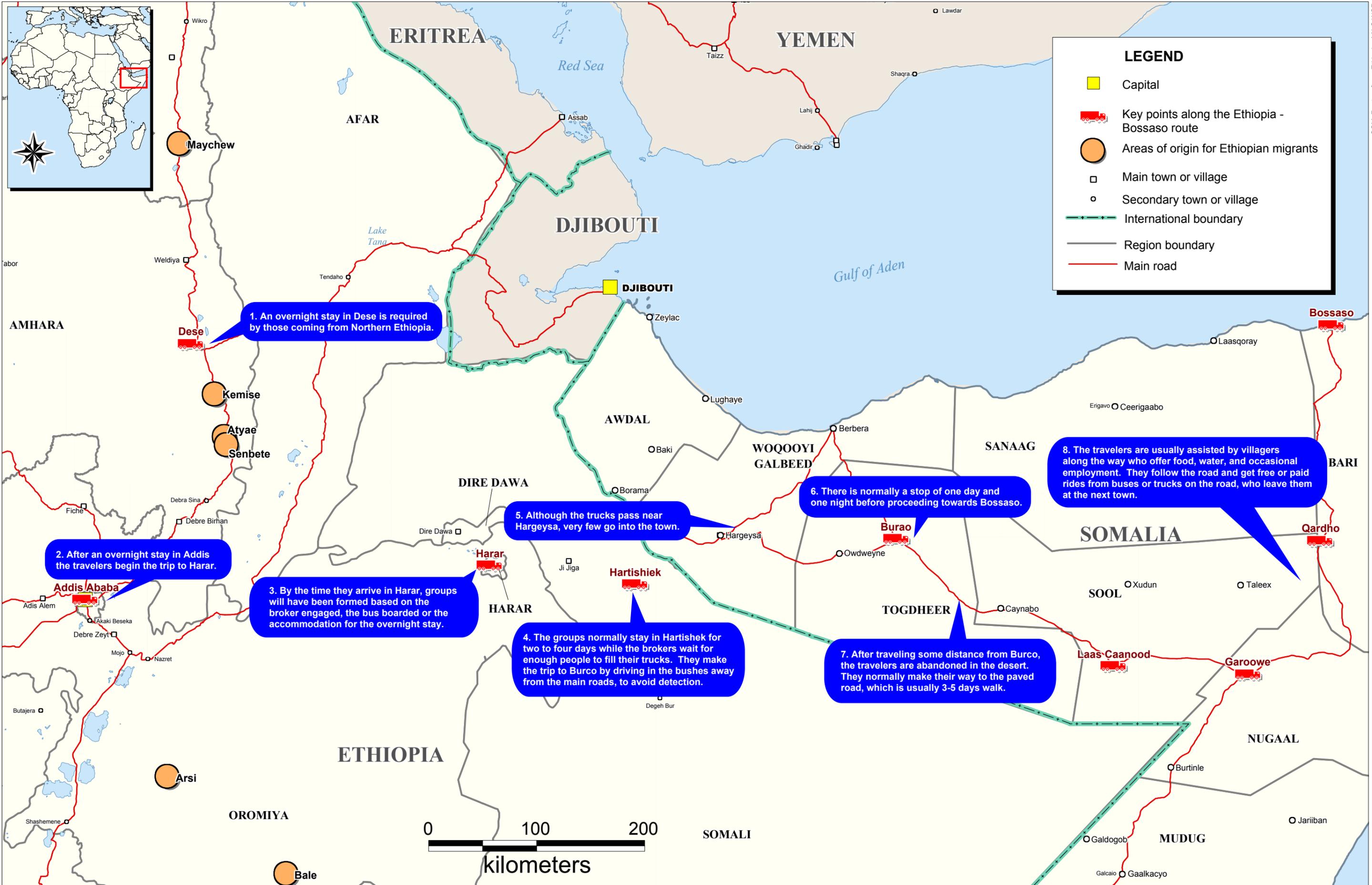
Profile
Sex Female
Age 19
Clan Amhara
Occupation Farmer
Education None
Place of origin Segenet/ Kemissie
IOM Case no 00062

I got divorced a few years ago and lived with my parents. Many people in the village improved their lives after travelling to Saudi Arabia. They never said it was difficult except for the boat trip. I wanted to try it. I travelled with my brother. He was deported back to Gelade a few weeks ago. We raised about Birr 2500 each and left home on a bus heading to Addis. A broker picked us up at the bus station. He said he will arrange everything. We paid him Birr 600 to get to Harrar. Another broker approached us in Harrar to whom we paid Birr 500 each to get to Hartishiek. In Hartishiek we spent a day and a half waiting in the bushes and eventually paid Birr 500 to S to get to Burro. A took over at Burro and demanded we pay Birr 700 each to get to Bossao and get seats on the boat. His men threatened everyone with firearms to get the money. They put us in a truck and left us in the middle of the desert. We paid drivers of small cars to get to Bossasso. It took us five days to get here. Eight days after our arrival, we were put under arrest. I had Birr 100, which I had hidden in my mouth, but it did not last long in Bossasso.

Interview 40

Profile
Sex Female
Age 17
Clan Tigre
Occupation Health Assitant
Education 5th grade
Place of origin Alamata/ Maychew
IOM Case no 0109

I was once married but left my husband, as he did not allow me to go to school. I lived with my mother. Returnees from Saudi Arabia told me about opportunities in that country. They also said that it was very difficult on the way. I wanted to work as a housemaid when I got there. I left home with 4000 Birr. I met a few other girls in the bus who were going on the same trip. When we got to Addis, we checked in a hotel. A broker came to the hotel and talked to us. When we told him of our plans, he said he was the best broker we could find. He charged us Birr 1600 each and accompanied us to Hartishiek. I heard some people say that he was knew to this business. He was escorting a group of about 25 out of whom 10 were women including myself. He handed us over to S in Hartishiek who charged us each Birr 800 and accommodated us in a shade made of plastic and wood. We stayed there for the night. They put us on a single deck truck and drove to the desert. They allowed us to buy biscuits and water at small towns. The drive took a week. When we reached Galkayo, another broker took over. We paid him Birr 600 each to get to Bossasso. I was arrested two days after I got here. The police took away Birr 700, which I had hidden in the braids of my hair.



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