EHoA SITUATION OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact people across East & Horn of Africa. Migrants, including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), are among some of the world’s most vulnerable groups likely to be impacted by the disease. Migrant groups are more likely to be exposed to the conditions and circumstances in which COVID-19 spreads, which includes living in poorer and makeshift locations, and/or overcrowded settings. Migrant groups are also less likely to have access to medical care, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and the COVID-19 vaccines being distributed.

Thousands of migrants remain stranded across East and Horn of Africa due to the impact of nearly one year of movement and mobility restrictions, including air, land and sea border closures, and quarantine rules. Many of these people are in need of food, water, medical assistance, transport, counselling and psycho-social support. Migrants have also suffered involuntarily return to their countries of origin, some have experienced detention and faced abuse in facilities. Others are facing stigma and xenophobia, resulting from being blamed for the spread of the disease.

As of March 30 2021, the number of positive COVID-19 cases in the region stands at 431,428. 3,462 new cases have been reported in the last day with most new cases reported in Ethiopia (1,982 daily increase 1.0%), followed by Kenya (902 daily increase 0.7%), Djibouti (249 daily increase 3.3%) and Somalia (187 daily increase 1.7%). Ethiopia remains the country with the highest number of confirmed cases in the region at 202,545 (47.0% of total case), followed by Kenya 131,116 (30.4%), followed by Uganda 40,867 (9.5%).

IOM is supporting governments throughout the region to respond to COVID-19 in the areas of risk communication, disease surveillance, infection prevention and control, case management, ‘Points of Entry’ (PoEs), procurement and logistics, and in other areas. IOM is advocating for migrants, including IDPs to be included in all government responses to COVID-19, including access to COVID-19 vaccines. On 25 March, IOM launched its global Strategic Response and Recovery Plan – COVID-19 appeal that will allow IOM to continue to assist people struggling with the crisis and its devastating consequences, with a total of USD 86.7 million for the East and Horn of Africa region.


On 25 March, IOM, regional governments and 38 humanitarian and development organizations launched the Regional Migrant Response Plan for Horn of Africa and Yemen (MRP) 2021-2024, which includes an appeal for USD 99 million for 2021 to provide life-saving assistance to over half a million (563,128) vulnerable Horn of Africa migrants, many of whom need urgent help after being stranded along the route taking them from the Horn of Africa to Yemen.

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The funding will help to address the dire humanitarian, human rights, safety and security challenges migrants in the region are facing. Once met, funding raised will assist local communities in affected countries, which are also impacted by the emergency.


IOM COUNTRY RESPONSE

Partnerships and Coordination

On 25 March, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and IOM signed a Cooperation Agreement to strengthen relations followed by a two-day meeting to strategise interventions, in Mombasa, Kenya. Within their respective mandates and as outlined in the signed Cooperation Agreement, IGAD and IOM will further cooperate in the areas of adverse drivers of displacement and irregular migration and durable solutions and sustainable reintegration for displaced persons and returning migrants; assistance and protection to at risk migrants, displaced populations and their communities; health and service delivery to reduce disease-related mortality and morbidity among migrants and mobile populations. They will also cooperate on facilitating mobility and supporting regional integration; inclusion, social cohesion and conditions that empower mobile populations, migrants and the Diaspora to contribute to sustainable development; reducing the incidence of irregular migration and exposure to related vulnerabilities; promoting whole-of-government structures, coherent policies and normative frameworks underpinning migration; and capacity building, research, statistics, data sharing, access and utilization within and across the IGAD member states. IOM Ethiopia is the designated lead agency supporting the Government of Ethiopia in the management of migrant returnees. IOM continues to support 8 temporary places of shelter and at various Points of Entry (PoEs), where returnees receive direct assistance and transportation home to their communities of origin. IOM Burundi participated in the COVID-19 Intra-Action Review (IAR) meeting which brought together key partners engaged in the COVID-19 response to assess the country response. It was also an opportunity for partners to share lessons learnt and explore ways to improve the ongoing response. IOM South Sudan is continuing to work in partnership with the authorities on the Strategic Advisory Group, the National Task Force, the COVID-19 National Steering Committee meetings, Technical Working Groups, and State Task Forces. IOM is also participating in the Inter Cluster Coordination Group together with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Still, IOM is participating in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
In Somalia, 13,154 people in Saanag, Doolow, Kismayo, Baidoa, Dhobley, Hudur and Hargeisa were reached with information on COVID-19 prevention.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

IOM Ethiopia has reached over 13,000 individuals including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and migrant returnees with COVID-19 prevention messaging through campaigns, community mobilization, and health education at health facilities in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Jigjiga, Gebedo, Borena, West Guji and East Wollega Zones as well as in 11 IDP sites Amhara and Tigray Region during the reporting period. IOM also distributed 437 comic books with COVID-19 prevention messages in East and West Wollega Zones. Twenty umbrellas and 120 T-shirts with COVID-19 prevention messages were distributed to teachers and students in East Wollega zone. In Somalia, 13,154 people in Saanag, Doolow, Kismayo, Baidoa, Dhobley, Hudur and Hargeisa were reached with information on COVID-19 prevention. IOM also reached 27 migrants at the Migrant Response Centre in Bossaso with COVID-19 awareness messages and provided them with personal protective equipment (PPE). IOM also conducted an awareness raising session for 15 migrants at the Ethiopian Community Center in Burao, Somaliland. They were provided with PPEs as well as nonfood items such as soap and hand sanitizers. In Somalia, IOM reached 145 migrants with information on COVID-19 in Bossaso. They were also provided with non-food items such as mats, soap and clothing. IOM Rwanda supported UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency, and Prison Fellowship Rwanda to reinforce the risk communication and community engagement activities related to COVID-19 prevention in refugee camps and urban areas. IOM procured and distributed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and other required equipment in different locations, to be utilized for sensitisation and outreach campaigns. More than 91,000 beneficiaries have been reached with risk communication and preventive messages to date. IOM South Sudan continues to conduct COVID-19 sensitization and hygiene promotion activities for communities in Bentiu Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites and Malakal PoC, as well as outside the PoCs in Juba, Jur River, Magwi and Wau, as well as PoEs in Abyei, Renk and Nimule. Risk communication and awareness messages on COVID-19 continues to be disseminated through a network of 194 community hygiene promoters working across the country and reaching 132,818 individuals during the reporting period. IOM has now reached over 8 million people with COVID-19 messages since the outbreak of the pandemic. IOM also reached almost 4,000 people in Bentiu and Wau with mental health and psychosocial support messages in relation to COVID-19 and aimed at changing behavior.
Some 16 people received psychosocial support through the IOM managed hotline in Western Bahr El Ghazal. Over 1,700 people were reached with COVID-19 awareness messages in Wau and Bazia. IOM also conducted seven radio talk shows relating to COVID-19 to discuss negative perceptions (myths) and how to mitigate against them. The beneficiaries of IOM’s Transition and Recovery programme in Wau produced 560 face masks.

National Laboratory Systems

IOM Regional Laboratory Coordinator provides technical support and logistical assistance to IOM laboratories in Kenya, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, which are part of the national COVID-19 testing networks in the respective countries. In the first quarter of the year, new Molbio testing platforms were installed, training conducted, and implementation commenced in Ethiopia after obtaining necessary validations from the Ministry of Health. IOM Ethiopia continues to provide COVID-19 testing for UN staff and their dependents at the Migration Health Assessment Centre (MHAC) lab conducting some 1,272 tests during the first quarter of 2021. IOM laboratory in Bujumbura conducted more than 700 COVID-19 tests for UN personnel in Burundi. In Kenya, the IOM laboratory conducted more than 8,000 COVID-19 examinations for refugees, migrants, UN personnel and dependents, humanitarian organizations and the diplomatic community and diagnosed more than 700 cases in the first quarter of 2021. IOM Rwanda continues to provide COVID-19 testing to refugees to be resettled abroad as well as the UN personnel and dependents. Some 500 examinations were performed between the months of January and March 2021. COVID-19 testing service has been ongoing for staff of the United Nations and their dependents under Frist line of Defense (FloD) program performing more than 470 examinations in since the start of 2021. The IOM Laboratory in Uganda will be introducing a new platform (Molbio) of the COVID 19 test to enhance COVID -19 testing capacity. IOM has continued representing the Laboratory pillar in the National Task force.

Disease Surveillance

IOM Burundi supported 250 Community Health Workers (CHW), working with cross-border communities living along Burundi’s border with the United Republic of Tanzania. These CHWs are implementing essential community event-based surveillance of epidemics, with a focus on COVID-19 in Makamba, Muyinga and Ruyigi Provinces. Since the beginning of the pandemic, IOM Ethiopia has received 62,000 migrant returnees, assisting with disease surveillance in the process. Over the last two weeks 3,039 new arrival migrant returnees were registered at PoEs. IOM Somalia supported the Ministry of Health to provide the COVID-19 vaccine to immigration officers and frontline health workers in Kismayo through one of IOM supported health facilities.

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Points of Entry

A team from IOM Burundi conducted a needs assessment at the Mugina PoE in Makamba Province as part of preparations to build waiting areas for migrants passing through there. The waiting areas are meant to separate the entry and exit corridors for passengers into two different routes with one leading to the isolation room for suspected cases of COVID-19 requiring further treatment or ambulance evacuation, and another directing to the waiting area for immigration procedures. Mugina PoE is situated on Burundi’s border with the United Republic of Tanzania. IOM Ethiopia screened 6,421 returnees and local community members for COVID-19 at IOM mobile health team sites and government supported health posts in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Jigi, Gedeo, Borena, West Guji and East Wollega Zones as well as in 11 IDP sites in Amhara and Tigray Regions during the reporting period. IOM South Sudan conducted arrival and departure screening for COVID-19 at Nimule Ground Crossing reaching 9,194 travellers. IOM has now screened 578,391 travellers in South Sudan since February 2020. IOM continues to provide IPC/WASH support to the PoE in Nimule by supplying clean water through water trucking, rehabilitation and maintenance of sanitation facilities, construction and installation of handwashing facilities, and supply of materials such as face masks, soap, and hand sanitizers. IOM also participated in a community cleaning exercise organized by authorities in Nimule as part of hygiene promotion. In Somalia, IOM is continuing with COVID-19 screening at PoEs. IOM also installed a thermal scanner at Mogadishu’s International Airport to support the Ministry of Health to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

In Ethiopia, thousands of people will benefit from 30 secure handwashing buckets with lockable stands installed by IOM in IDP sites and youth recreational sites in Dire Dawa. IOM also delivered water to handwashing facilities in schools and health facilities in Gambella region.

IOM Rwanda donated 50,000 reusable facemasks to be distributed to refugees across the country. In South Sudan, IOM maintained 652 handwashing devices. During the reporting period, 91,908 individuals were reported to have used the 17 operational handwashing facilities in Juba bringing the total number of people benefitting to 1,269,136. Some 177,936 people benefited from 93 handwashing stations built by IOM in the capital Juba. More than 2,133,644 people have now benefited from these stations since they were built. The upgrading of three boreholes in Juba is ongoing.

IOM South Sudan provided soap, buckets and menstrual hygiene management kits to a partner to support 6,600 households in Yei and Torit.
Some 2,049 accompanied and unaccompanied minor children and adult migrant returnees received onward transportation allowance assistance to travel to places of origin while one unaccompanied minor was assisted with family reunification.

Over the last two weeks, 8,607 people washed their hands at three handwashing stations in Nimule. More than 95,263 people have benefited from these three stations since they were built. IOM handed over a handwashing facility to the Comboni Church Administration in Wau. They were also provided with soap. Still, 16 handwashing facilities have been handed over to the community in Wau.

Case Management and Continuity of Essential Services

Some 27 UN staff including those from IOM and their dependents received COVID-19 health-related assistance at the IOM Burundi run COVID-19 testing clinic. They also benefitted from psychosocial support to help them manage stress related to COVID-19. IOM Ethiopia provided medical consultations on sexual and reproductive health to 6,393 returnees and members of host communities in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Gedeo, Borena, West Guji and East Wollega Zones as well as in 11 IDP sites in Amhara and Tigray Regions during the reporting period.

Logistics, Procurement and Supply Management

IOM South Sudan provided soap, buckets and menstrual hygiene management kits to a partner to support 6,600 households in Yei and Torit. IOM also provided 13 partners with critical WASH supplies to help them integrate COVID-19 preparedness activities into their WASH responses. They were provided with household and bulk water treatment supplies, household water storage supplies, hygiene kits, menstrual hygiene management kits and assorted handpump spare parts. These supplies will benefit 18,214 households in Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Upper Nile, and Western Bahr el Ghazal states. The COVID-19 inter-agency team of which IOM is a member approved 32 PPE requests from 15 organizations. The requests were processed by IOM.

The items released from IOM’s PPE stocks included 8,100 pieces of disposable gowns, 6,450 pieces of face shields, 1,784 boxes of medical gloves, 2,955 pieces of protective coveralls, 739 pieces of thermometers, 700 pieces of body bags and 1,147 bottles of hand sanitizers to support healthcare and frontline workers to bolster COVID-19 prevention efforts. IOM is continuing with prepositioning of key supplies to major logistics hubs accessible by road. Some 222 metric tons of chlorine, soap, latrine slabs, menstrual hygiene management kits, hygiene kits, assorted handpump spare parts, jerry cans, water purifiers, filter cloths and buckets have been released during the reporting period for prepositioning to Bentiu and Wau logistic hubs.

Protection

IOM Ethiopia reached 2,642 people in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Jigjiga, Gedeo, Borena, West Guji and East Wollega Zones as well as in 11 DPs sites in in Amhara and Tigray Regions with gender-based violence and related mental health and psychosocial support and risk mitigation. IOM also provided non-food items such as blankets, bedsheets, dignity kits to 2,082 unaccompanied minor children and adult migrant returnees at different PoEs and places providing temporary accommodation.
Another 165 accompanied and unaccompanied minor children as well as adult migrant returnees were provided with food and medical assistance at different PoEs and temporary accommodation centres across the country. Some 2,049 accompanied and unaccompanied minor children and adult migrant returnees received onward transportation allowance assistance to travel to places of origin while one unaccompanied minor was assisted with family reunification.

**Camp Coordination and Camp Management**

IOM Ethiopia reached 8,491 IDPs and members of host communities with Site Management Support related activities in Dire Dawa, East Hararghe, Jigjiga, Gedeo, Borena, West Guji and East Wollega Zones as well as in 11 IDP sites in Amhara and Tigray Region during the reporting period. In South Sudan, IOM is working with partners in Bentiu to fine-tune the COVID-19 contingency and response plan based on lessons learned from 2020 and revision of achievement and gaps to inform future planning. IOM is working with community leaders in Naivasha IDP site to distribute facemasks. IOM will be conducting a knowledge and perception survey on COVID-19 among IDPs in Wau. IOM Tanzania is continuing with pre-embarkation medical checks for Burundian refugees who are being voluntarily repatriated.

**Displacement Tracking Matrix**

IOM Somalia shared COVID-19 information with 3,531 individuals at 7 Flow Monitoring Points. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in Burundi is continuing with Flow Data collection for COVID-19 surveillance at the borders with the United Republic of Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo. DTM enumerators in South Sudan carried out 6,308 interviews representing 20,215 individual movements at 23 flow monitoring points. DTM is operating 4 displacement site FMPs at the gates of Naivasha IDP camp, Masna collective centre, Bentiu Protection of Civilian (PoC) site and Malakal PoC site. Enumerators conducted 1,337 interviews representing 4,288 individual movements at the displacement sites. The data from IOM enumerator interviews provides an insight into mobility trends, migration drivers and traveller profiles to inform COVID-19 programming by humanitarian, development partners and the government.

**IOM Tanzania is continuing with pre-embarkation medical checks for Burundian refugees who are being voluntarily repatriated.**
POINTS OF ENTRY & MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

Travel Restrictions in the East and Horn of Africa Region

Status of international flights*
- Not Restrictive
- Partially Restrictive
- Totally Restrictive
- Disputed Areas

Status of other border points
- Sea Border Point
- Land Border Point
- Closed for entry and exit
- Partial closure
- Open for entry and exit
- Unknown

Source:
International Air Transport Association (IATA)
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)
Date: 25 March 2021
Disclaimer: These maps are for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

*Details of the travel restriction can be found on IATA website: https://www.iata.org/