

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND RISKY MIGRATION ROUTES: DATA INSIGHTS FROM SOMALI CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

**FREEDOM  
COLLABORATIVE**

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2021

# **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND RISKY MIGRATION ROUTES: DATA INSIGHTS FROM SOMALI CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

Candle of Hope Foundation (COFH)

IIDA Women's Development Organisation

Voices of Somaliland Minority Women Organization (VOSOMWO)

With support from

Freedom Collaborative and the Better Migration Management (BMM) II Programme  
in the Horn of Africa.

October 2021

## FOREWORD

Human trafficking and smuggling are extremely frequent in East Africa, with the majority of migrants being introduced into smuggling routes within the larger context of international migration. The main routes lead respectively towards South Africa, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, and the Mediterranean (Malta and Italy, or Greece and Turkey), where women, men and children are trafficked for a range of purposes, including forced and exploitative labour in factories, farms and private households, sexual exploitation, and forced marriage.

To support the fight against human trafficking, we the Somali Civil Society Organisations (CSO) Coalition which is an informally organised group of anti-trafficking CSOs working in South-Central Somalia, Somaliland, Puntland and Jubaland, conducted a mapping of human trafficking routes. This mapping exercise will provide us with crucial information in the fight against human trafficking, such as trafficking hotspots, routes, modes of transport and types of exploitation. This will empower us to better target our interventions to prevent human trafficking the areas where we work.

Through this report, we aim to support civil society, law enforcement, the private sector, and government by increasing their access to evidence-based data on human trafficking that can support strategic decision making. The joint data collection exercise brought together information and relevant data about locations, routes and context information to analyse the dynamics of human trafficking and exploitation and the experiences of Somali migrants abroad.

In this document, the Somali National CSO Coalition seeks to extend the availability of relevant data on human trafficking and unsafe migration routes for civil society and other Somali stakeholders. It is our hope that this document will serve as a reminder of the added value that civil society brings into our joint efforts to combat human trafficking.

The Somali CSO Coalition would like to give a very special thanks to Freedom Collaborative for their invaluable support in conducting the data analysis and designing and developing the report itself. The content of the report, to the greatest extent possible, reflects the findings elicited through the data collection exercise conducted by the participating CSOs.

We would like to thank the following CSOs for their invaluable time and energy towards the data collection process: Candle of Hope Foundation (CoHF), IIDA Women's Development Organisation (IIDA), Tadamun Social Society (TASS), Voices of Somaliland Minority Women Organisation (VOSOMWO) and Women's Action for Advocacy and Progress Organisation (WAPO). Unquestionably, this document would not have been possible without their contributions.

Last, but not least, we extend our gratitude to the Better Migration Management II Programme (GIZ) for facilitating the process, providing logistical support, translation and the roll-out of the final report. The BMM Programme (GIZ) continue to provide their relentless support and never-ending efforts to the CSOs in the Somali CSO Coalition working on anti-trafficking and the protection of vulnerable migrants in East Africa.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- In total, this report brings together data from 206 route submissions by the participating organisations. The submitted routes refer to a total of 28 countries as origin, transit and destination locations. Eight countries have been mentioned as countries of origin. As destinations, 25 countries have been identified, and five countries – Afghanistan, Chad, Egypt, Malta and the United Arab Emirates – have been mentioned as transit locations.
- The most reported origin and destination combinations include: (1) Ethiopia to Yemen, with Somalia as transit location, (2) Somalia to Italy, (3) Somalia to South Africa, (4) Somalia to Germany, (5) Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia, with Somalia as transit location, and (6) Somalia to Saudi Arabia.
- In the majority of cases, the migrants received help from at least one other person when planning or making their journey, with the most commonly identified facilitators being recruitment agencies. Other types of facilitators included labour brokers/agents, smugglers, friends, family members and the employer themselves.
- Analysis of the collected data shows a significant variation in the length of the migration journeys and their cost – this variation was not just attributable to different destinations but also to the individual experiences of migrants travelling to the same destinations. When looking at the correlation between length of the journey and cost, a relationship between the two could not be identified.
- Within the data set, a wide range of industries of exploitation have been mentioned. The most referenced industry is domestic work, followed by agriculture, construction, commercial sex and begging. Forced labour is the most commonly cited type of abuse or exploitation in the submissions, followed by physical violence and sexual violence.
- This is the first time that the participating organisations have contributed to a structured data collection exercise concerning human trafficking and risky migration routes that relate to South-Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland. The collected data contributes to addressing the lack of consolidated credible data and information on current trends and risks for human trafficking and other forms of exploitation across the region. We applaud the organisations for participating in this data collection that highlights how much knowledge is available when information is brought together and shared.

## **THE SOMALI CSO COALITION**

The Coalition brings together eleven Somali civil society organisations (CSOs) working on anti-human trafficking and protection of vulnerable migrants in South-Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland. Its members have referred victims of trafficking (VoTs) to each other and implemented joint interventions on the ground. Formed as a loosely organised group of like-minded CSOs working to protect vulnerable migrants and VoTs, the coalition meets on a quarterly basis since 2020 to coordinate responses to common challenges.

The Somali CSO Coalition is embedded in a wider Regional CSO Network, a network of over 60 anti-trafficking CSOs from the Horn of Africa. CSOs in the network exchange best practices and lessons learned monthly and have been meeting at an annual CSO Forum since 2017. The Regional CSO Network is supported by the Better Migration Management (BMM) II Programme. The Programme is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by the European Union (EUTF). The Programme's intervention partner countries are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

### Candle of Hope Foundation (COFH)



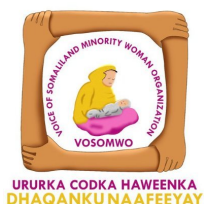
Candle of Hope Foundation (COFH) was formed to address issues affecting vulnerable communities in Kenya and Somaliland, and to ensure access to justice and support services for women, youth, and people living with a disability, as well as victims of trafficking and GBV survivors.

### IIDA Women's Development Organisation



Women's Development Organisation (IIDA), a nonprofit, was founded in 1991 in Mogadishu by a group of Somali women leaders to promote women's political, economic and social rights. Today, IIDA is operationally the largest grassroots movement in Somalia.

### Voices of Somaliland Minority Women Organization (VOSOMWO)



Voices of Somaliland Minority Women Organization (VOSOMWO) works to promote the political participation of women from minority communities in local councils, parliaments and as government officials. The organisation supports grassroots initiatives promoting minority rights and the active participation of minorities in democracy in Somaliland, through mobilization, human rights and civic training sessions, awareness-raising campaigns, and community empowerment.

***We would like to extend our thanks also to Women's Action Advocacy Progress Organisation (WAAPO) and Tadamun Social Society (TASS) for participating in the discussions making this data collection possible.***

## INTRODUCTION

Somalia is a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants, with widespread irregular migration and a high risk of exploitation en route. However, as stated in the 2021 US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, which lists Somalia as a Special Case for the 19th consecutive year, information regarding trafficking trends and victims in the country remains challenging to obtain or authenticate.

The Better Migration Management (BMM) II Programme is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and co-financed by the European Union (EUTF) to improve migration management in the Horn of Africa, and supports the Federal Government of Somalia in developing a national Migration Policy Framework in line with regional migration governance. It also works closely with civil society organisations.

Building on successful data collections in 2019 and 2020 in Kenya, the BMM program partnered with Freedom Collaborative to support civil society groups operating in South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland in increasing their access to shared data on human trafficking, in order to improve their strategic decision-making and advocacy efforts. To achieve this goal, Freedom Collaborative worked with the civil society organisations, so they could contribute and share their data on human trafficking and exploitation activity and use this collective knowledge to capture the complexity of vulnerabilities and movement.

Most importantly, we want to highlight the great commitment of the contributing organisations by participating and submitting their information to a shared data set. The three participating groups submitted 206 routes in total and it is important to note that these relate to recent cases – all the data is from cases and information that the organisations have obtained since the beginning of 2021.

In addition to the data on routes used by at-risk migrants, the CSOs submitted additional details concerning the most recent cases they have encountered using these specific routes. As a result, the data set provides several insights into the migration journeys, including the most common recruiters and facilitators, and payments made by the migrants. We also analysed the relevant industries in which migrants experienced exploitation and specific forms of abuse.

The following chapters provide an overview of the collected data. In order to break down the information and make the insights more accessible, the report is structured according to the most commonly referenced migration corridors. The analysis then provides an overview of the migrants' vulnerability factors, basic demographics, and other relevant aspects of their migration experiences.

The analysis is built upon the dedication and time spent by the CSOs to submit their information in a structured format. Even though the data set should not be understood as comprehensive, organisations and service providers on the ground are still the sector's most comprehensive data source. We applaud the organisations for participating in this data collection to address the need for more data coverage in the region and globally.

We want to emphasize that even if the data set we are working with is incomplete, it does not mean that those seeking to make impactful interventions cannot use it. The information is still useful to guide operational, tactical, and strategic decisions by relevant actors and highlights how much knowledge is available when information is brought together and shared across organisations.

## METHODOLOGY

The data was submitted through Freedom Collaborative's Victim Journey tracker tool, to capture location information for each route as the initial unit of analysis. The submitting organisations selected the source of the information for each submitted route in order to distinguish between the routes of cases they had worked on directly and those they had heard about through their work in the field.

Within the data set, 49 submissions were made based on cases the contributing CSOs had recently worked on and 157 routes were submitted based on information obtained through other work with migrants and affected communities. Of the 49 recently worked on cases, 35 were cases of human trafficking as per the legal definition, and 14 were cases of another form of exploitation.

For all these cases, the following data points were submitted:

- City and country of origin
- City and country of exploitation
- Transit points (in order)
- Type of case
- Year of case referral
- Gender of the client
- Adult or minor client
- Nationality of the client

The data collection form also included data points that allowed a more detailed understanding of the migration journey and form of exploitation in these cases:

- Relevant vulnerability factors
- Year that the route was taken by the client
- Help from another person to make the journey
- Recruitment online vs offline
- One vs multiple facilitators
- Who facilitated the journey
- Solo travel vs group travel
- Cost for the migration journey
- Timing of payment made
- Transport modes used
- Duration of the journey
- Industry of exploitation
- Form of abuse and exploitation experienced
- Any additional details

The participating organisations worked on cases of both male and female migrants and survivors, however, the majority of clients were male (26) vs female (19). Except for four cases involving minors, all the submitted information relates to adult migrants (over 18).

The following chapters dive into the data that has been collected during this project, explain the CSOs' priorities in using the data, and provide recommendations for the ways in which they hope the data will be used by all stakeholders.



## DATA SUMMARY

In total, this report includes data from 206 route submissions by the participating organisations. The data refers to a total of 28 countries as origin, transit and destination locations. Eight countries have been mentioned as countries of origin. As destinations, 25 countries have been identified, and five countries – Afghanistan, Chad, Egypt, Malta and the United Arab Emirates – have only been mentioned as transit points. The illustration below displays all the routes that have been mapped based on submissions made by the contributing CSOs.

The following were the most reported origin and destination combinations:

- Ethiopia to Yemen, with Somalia as transit location (22 submissions)
- Somalia to Italy (20 submissions)
- Somalia to South Africa (16 submissions)
- Somalia to Germany (13 submissions)
- Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia, with Somalia as transit location (13 submissions)
- Somalia to Saudi Arabia (13 submissions)

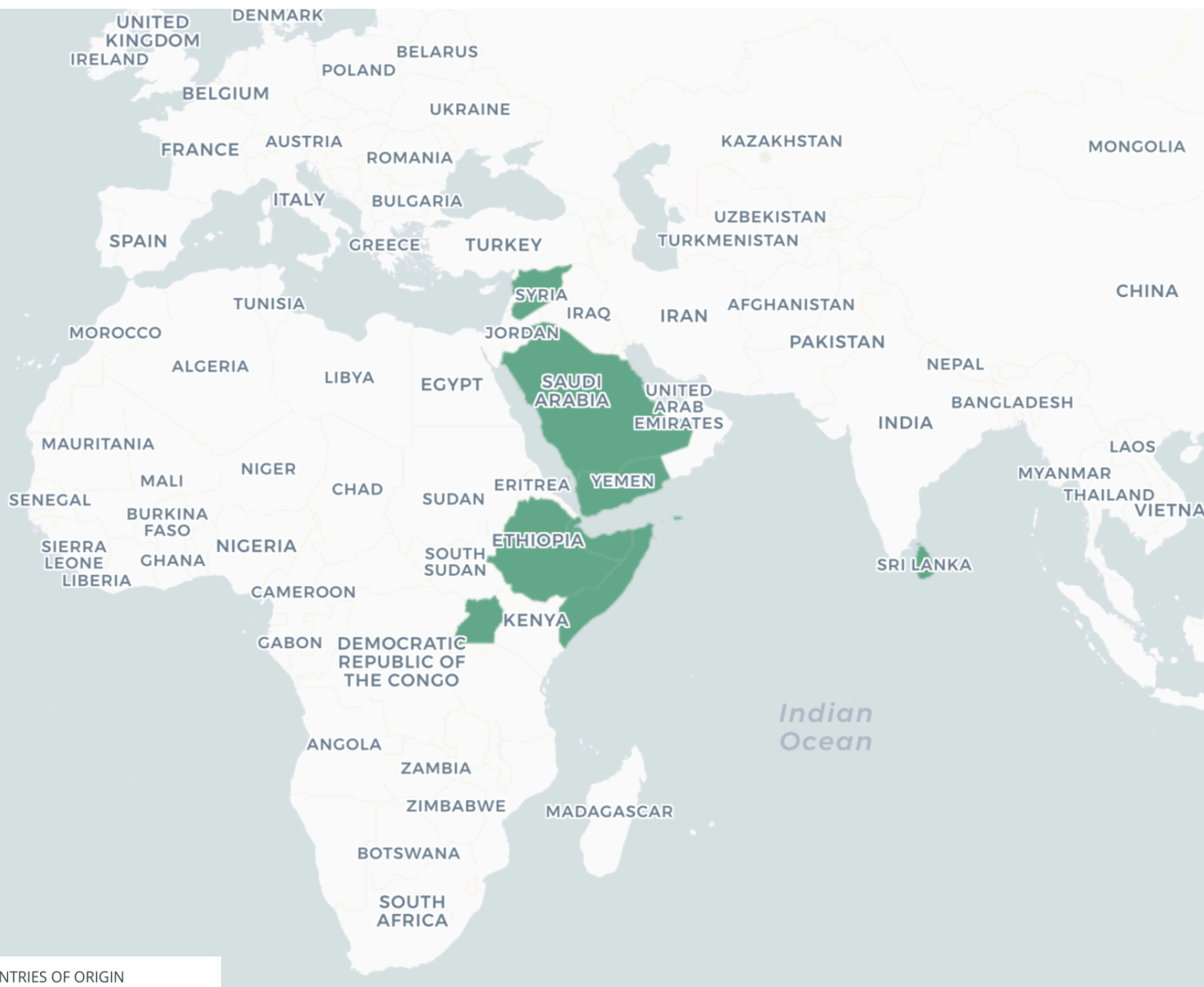


*The interactive version of the map, available on Freedom Collaborative, provides details on the location of origin, actual destination, transit points, modes of transportation and industry of exploitation at the destination for each route.*

## COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

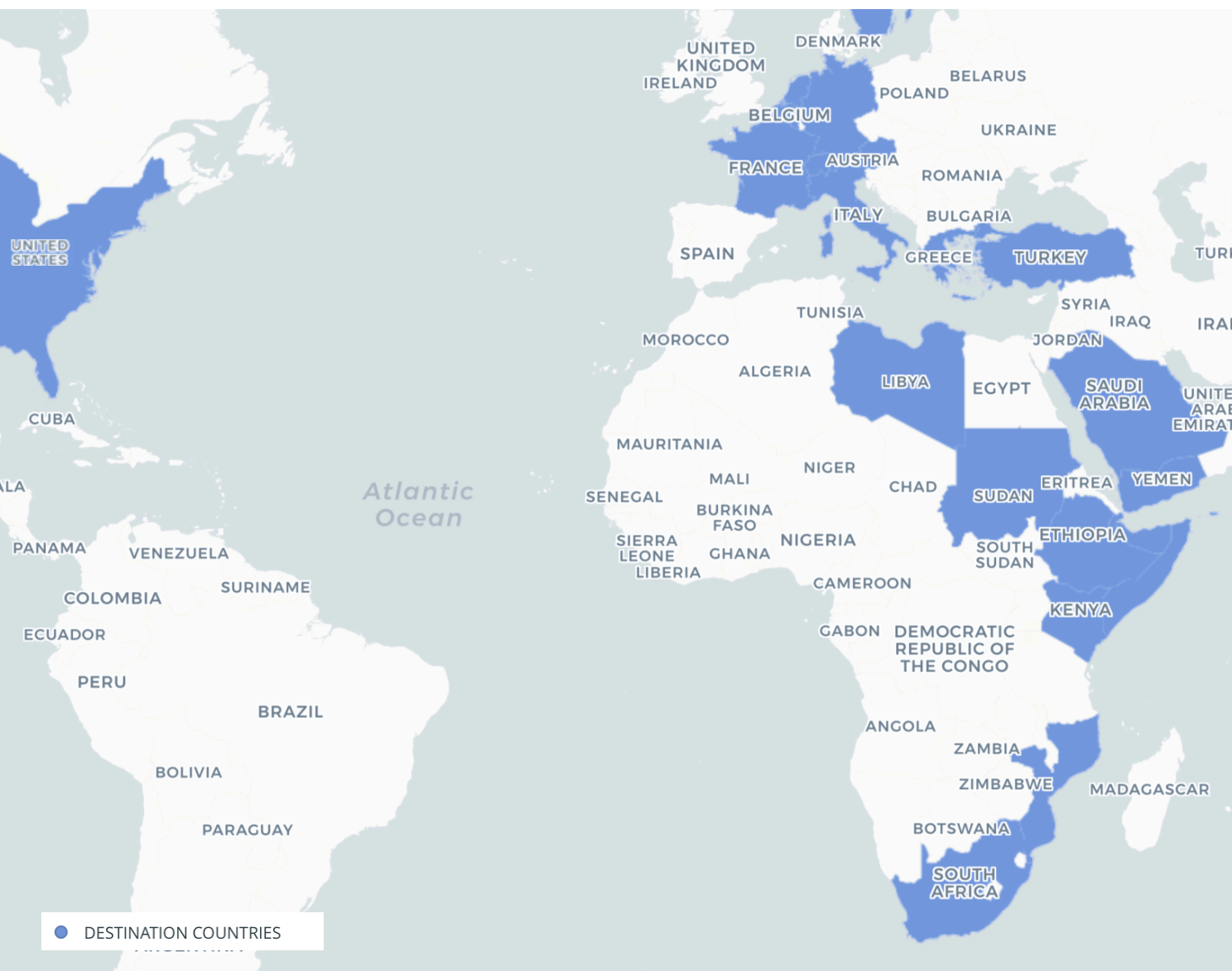
The illustrations below provide an overview of the countries of origin and destination that have been identified through the data submissions.

The eight countries of origin mentioned in the data set are: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Uganda, and Yemen.



The submitted data included a wide range of final destinations and locations of exploitation for Somali migrants and the region.

The 25 destination countries mentioned in the data submissions are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Kenya, Libya, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United States, and Yemen.



## ZOOM IN ON SOUTH CENTRAL SOMALIA, SOMALILAND, JUBALAND AND PUNTLAND

### ***As locations of origin***

From the submitted data, 130 submissions were made that identify South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland as locations of origin.

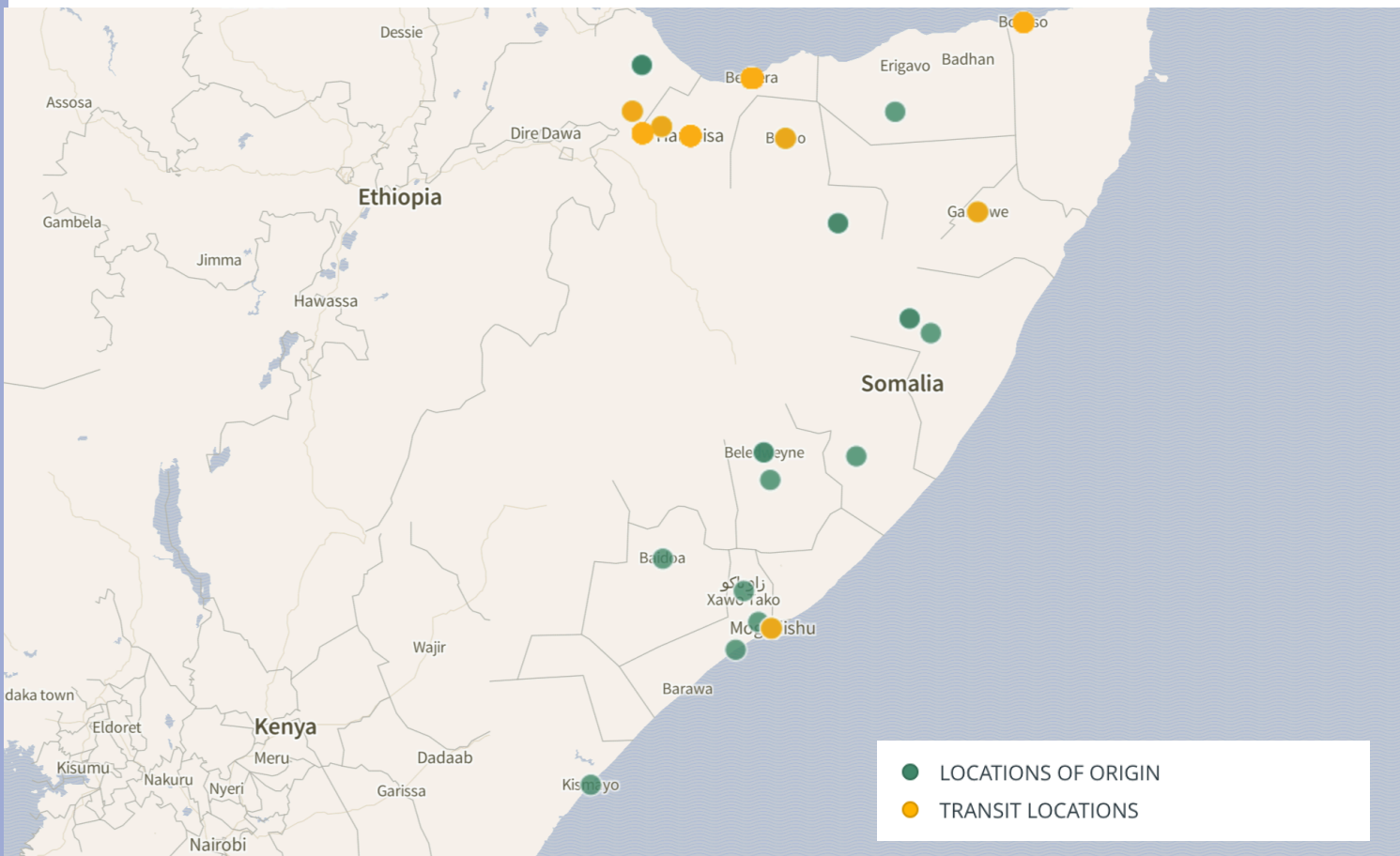
All the submissions included specific city information. The identified locations of origin include Afgoye, Awdal, Baidoa, Beledweyne, Berbera, Bohotle, Borama, Bosaso, Burco, El Afweyn, El Buur, Galkayo, Garowe, Gebilay,

Hargeisa, Hiran, Kismayo, Merca, Mogadishu, Mudug, Wajale, and Wanlaweyn.

The most referenced destinations for Somali migrants are Italy (20), South Africa (16), Germany (13), Saudi Arabia (13), Ethiopia (10), Greece (8), France (6), Sudan (5), Libya (4) and Kenya (4).

### ***As transit locations***

53 routes have been submitted that reference South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland as transit locations. The data identifies the following migration corridors:



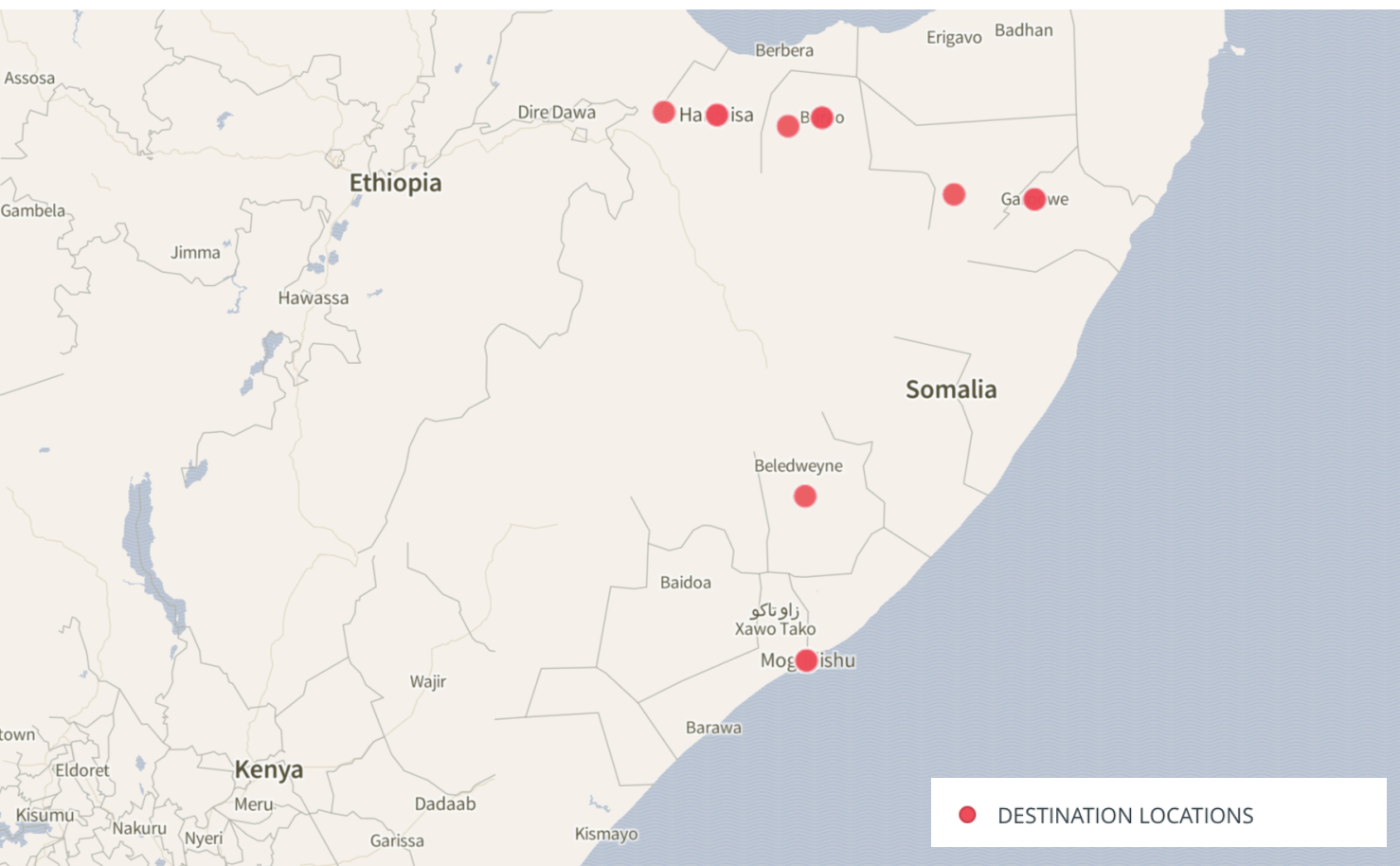
- Ethiopia via Somalia to Yemen (22 submissions) and Saudi Arabia (13 submissions)
- Yemen via Somalia to Ethiopia (8 submissions)
- Saudi Arabia via Somalia to Ethiopia (5 submissions)
- Syria via Somalia to Ethiopia (3 submissions)
- Djibouti via Somalia to Germany (1 submission) and Ethiopia (1 submission)

Wajale, Hargeisa, Berbera, Bosaso, and Borama have been identified as transit points on these routes.

### **As destinations**

Thirty-four submissions relate to South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland as a destination. The specific destination areas identified include Burco, Garowe, Hargeisa, Hiran, Laascaanood, Mogadishu, Oodweyne, Puntland, and Wajale.

The origin locations of migrants coming to Somalia which are most often referenced are Yemen (9) Djibouti (1), Syria (7), Ethiopia (3), Saudi Arabia (1), Sri Lanka (1) and Uganda (1). Eleven submissions were made for Somali migrants migrating within the area.



## MIGRATION CORRIDORS

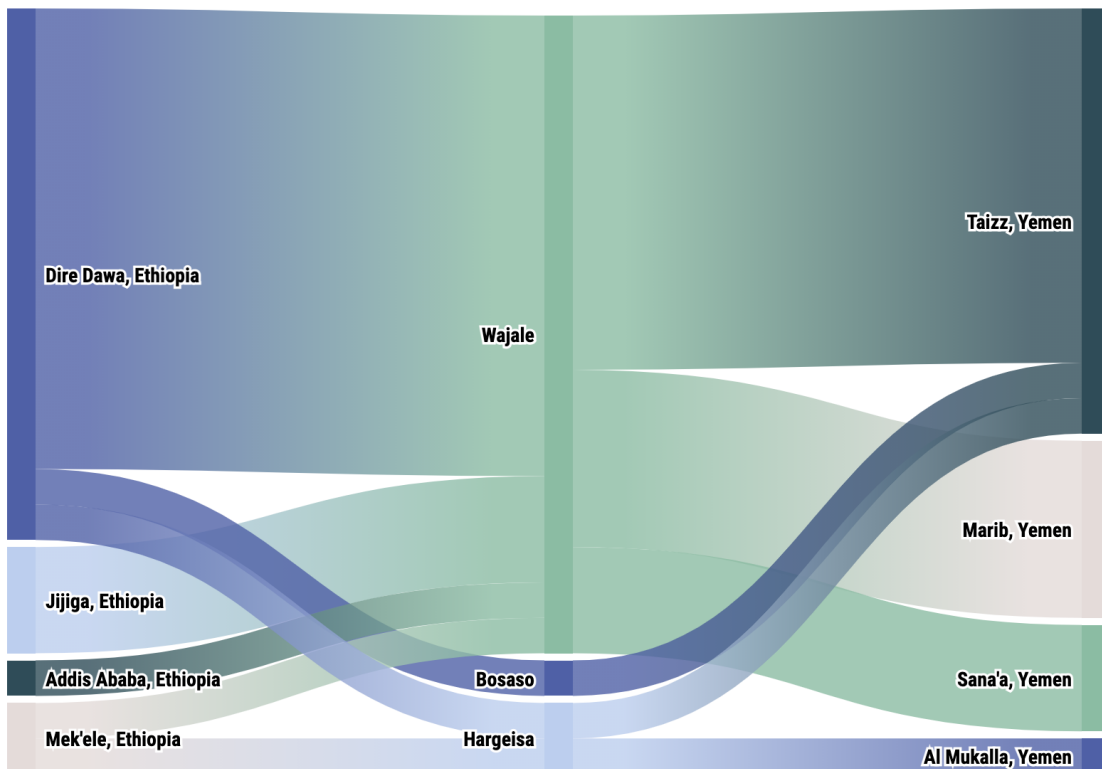
### Ethiopia to Yemen

Most submissions were made for the migration corridor from Ethiopia to Yemen.

The locations of origin in Ethiopia include Dire Dawa, Jijiga, Addis Ababa, and Mek'ele. Wajale, a city at the border of Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as Hargeisa and Bosaso, are transit points for migrants who then make their way onwards to Yemen. Destinations in Yemen include Al Mukalla, Sana'a, Marib and Taizz.

The submissions concerning recent cases provide more detail on the migration journey from Ethiopia to Yemen. In all the submitted cases, migrants traveled in a group for around one month and their journey was facilitated by multiple labour agents and smugglers. In the cases for which we have relevant information, migrants paid between US\$ 750 and 1,000 on arrival at the final destination.

The cases submitted all concerned sexual abuse of female clients who were exploited in the commercial sex industry (hotels, bars, casinos) in Yemen.

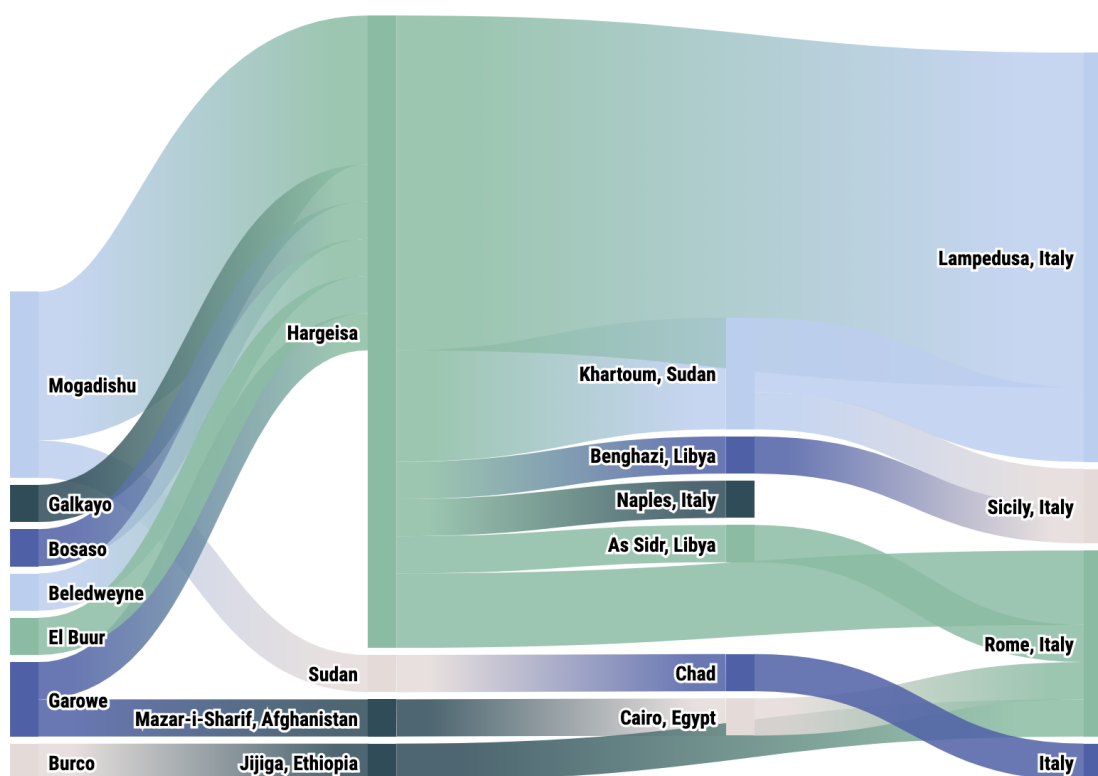


**Somalia to Italy**

Twenty submissions have been made that involve routes from Burco, Garowe, Mogadishu, Galkayo, Bosaso, Beledweyne, and El Buur to Italy. Hargeisa is the main transit hub for onward migration towards Europe, and Afghanistan, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya and Sudan have been identified as further relevant transit points on migrant journeys to Italy.

Based on submitted data from the CSOs' cases, the journey to Italy took the migrants between one month and 75 days. In some cases they traveled alone and in some cases in a group with the help of one or more smugglers or facilitators. The migrants paid from \$US 1,000 to 12,000 and, in all the cases, the fee was paid upon arrival at the final destination.

In Italy, the migrants worked in agriculture, as domestic workers, or in the commercial sex industry, and experienced forced labour, physical abuse and sexual violence.



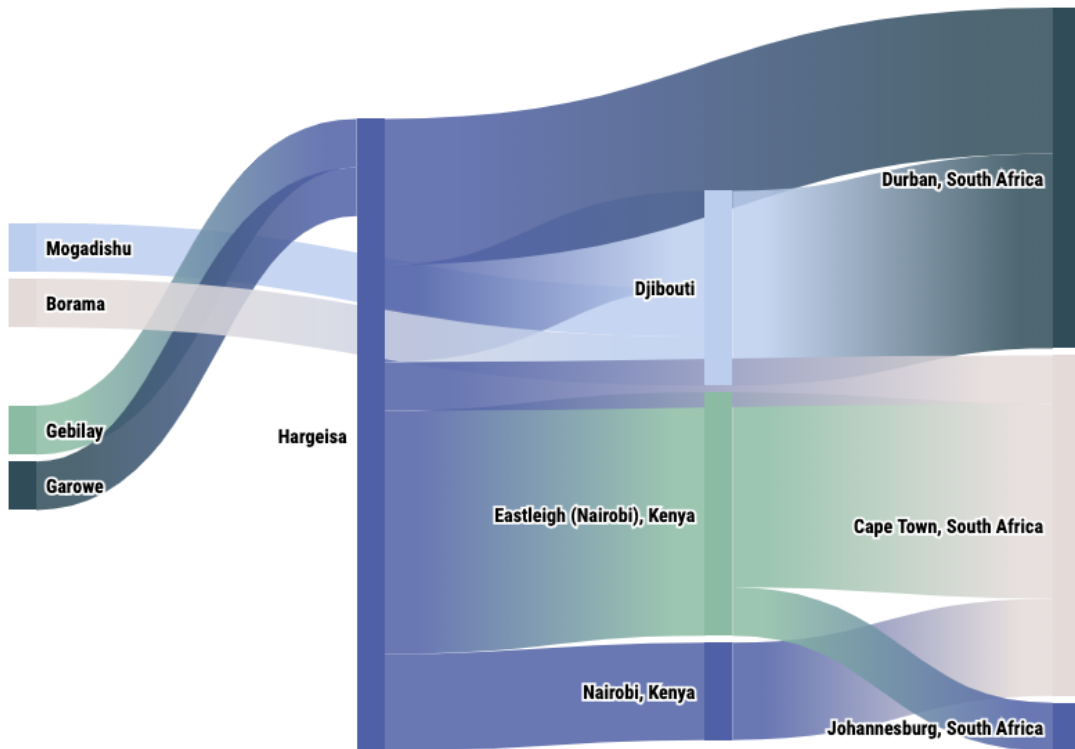
**Somalia to South Africa**

Sixteen submissions specified South Africa as a destination, and included Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg as final locations for their journeys. The majority of migrants first travel from Hargeisa to Nairobi, Kenya, or via Djibouti.

In these cases, the journey to South Africa took from two weeks to eight months and the majority traveled by car and/or bus.

The migrants paid between \$US 850 and 6,500 to one or multiple facilitators and the arrangements varied between payment before departure, at transit destinations along the way, and at the final destination.

In South Africa, the migrants worked in a range of industries, including commercial sex, agriculture, construction, domestic work and manufacturing, and experienced forced labour and physical violence.



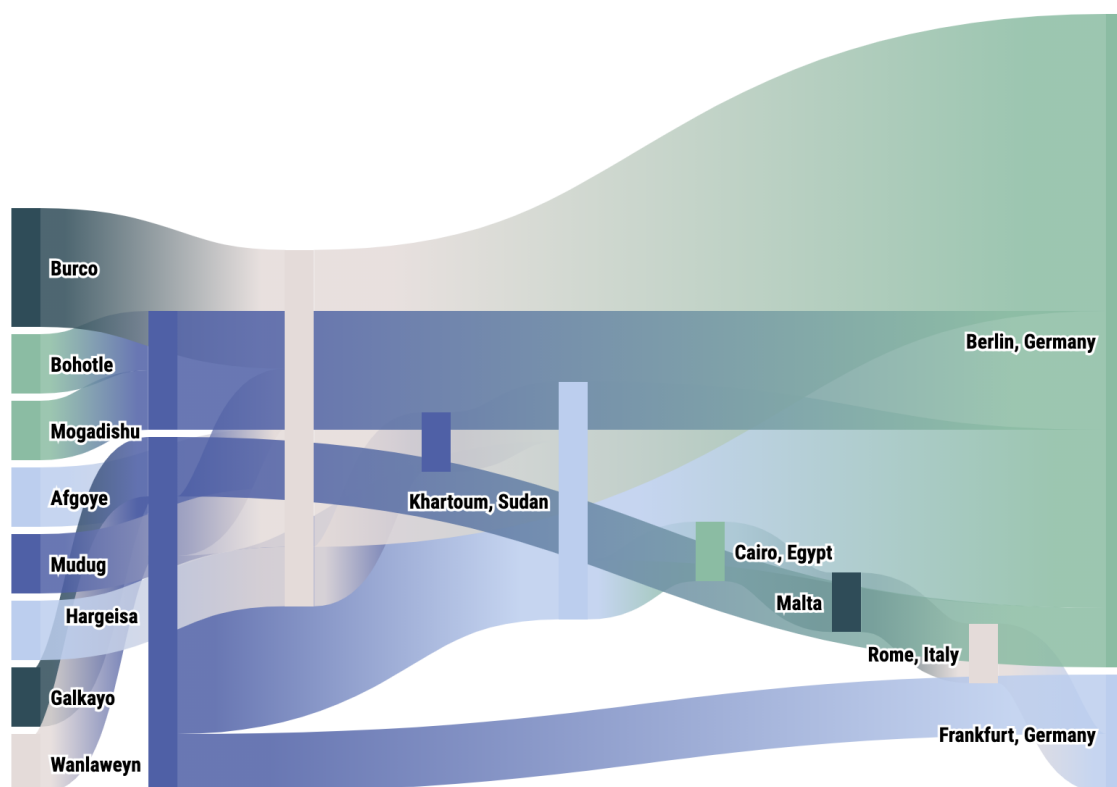


## Somalia to Germany

Thirteen submissions map routes to a final destination of Germany – from Somalia through transit points in Libya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Malta and Italy. The primary destination locations in Germany are the capital, Berlin, and Frankfurt.

All the submitted cases are from 2021 and include situations of forced labour in the agriculture and construction sectors, as well as cases of sexual abuse.

The journey to Germany took migrants between one and two months, and all of them traveled in a group using multiple facilitators. In these cases, the migrants paid from \$US 8,600 to up to \$US 17,500 upon their arrival at the destination.



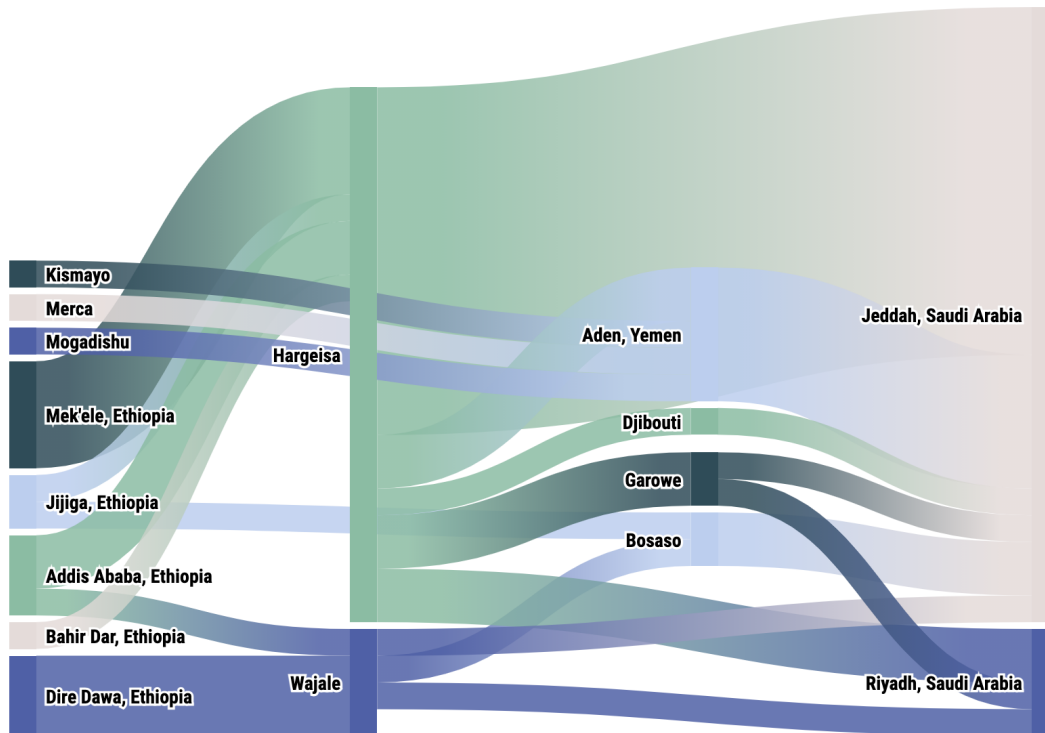
**Ethiopia and Somalia to Saudi Arabia**

In total, 26 submissions were made for routes in which Saudi Arabia was the final destination. Of these submissions, 13 routes relate to Ethiopia as the country of origin with South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland as transit locations, and 13 routes relate to South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland as the place of origin.

Hargeisa has been identified as a main transit hub for onwards travel to Saudi Arabia, and migrants also pass through Aden, Yemen, on their way to Jeddah.

The participating organisations also shared details from eleven recent cases of exploitation concerning Ethiopian and Somali migrants in Saudi Arabia. These cases include forced labour in the agriculture and construction industries, as well as sexual abuse in the commercial sex industry and in domestic work situations in Saudi Arabia.

The migrants' journeys took from one to three months, and they paid between \$US 800 and £US 9,500 to the facilitators – in some cases ahead of the journey, and in other cases upon arrival at the destination.

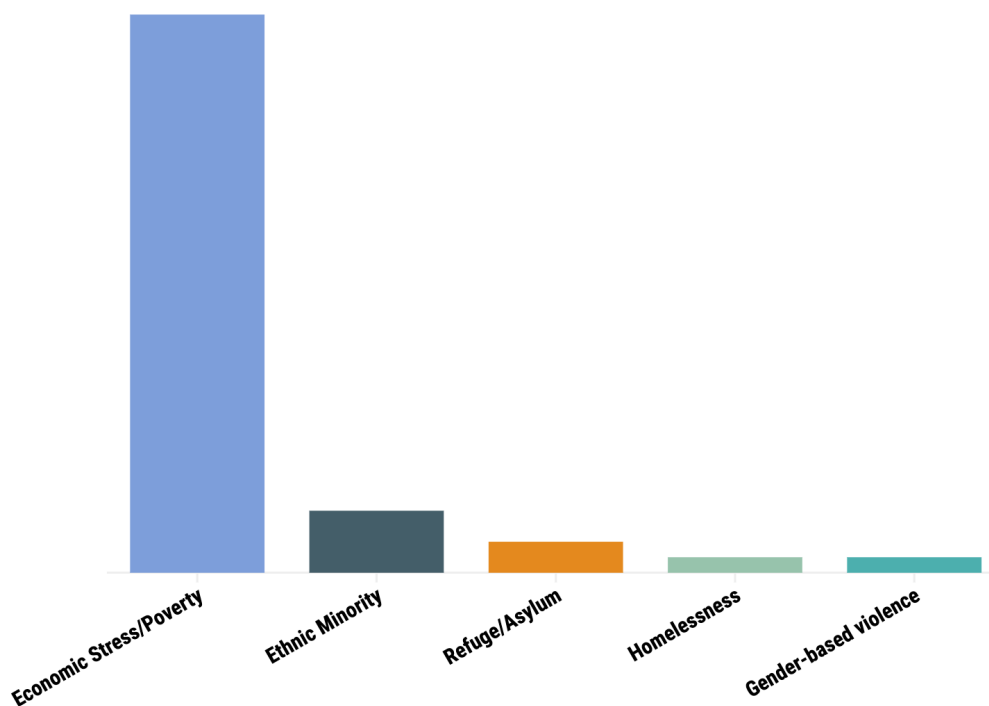


## VULNERABILITY FACTORS

For submissions that are based on cases that the participating organisations worked on, relevant vulnerability factors have been identified.

While there were a range of available possibilities that were specified by us and the civil society organisations before the data collection took place, in the majority of the cases economic stress and poverty were identified as the main vulnerability factors.

In a smaller number of cases, migrants were from an ethnic minority group or were refugees/asylum seekers already in another country. One case each referred to gender-based-violence and homelessness as the vulnerability factor.

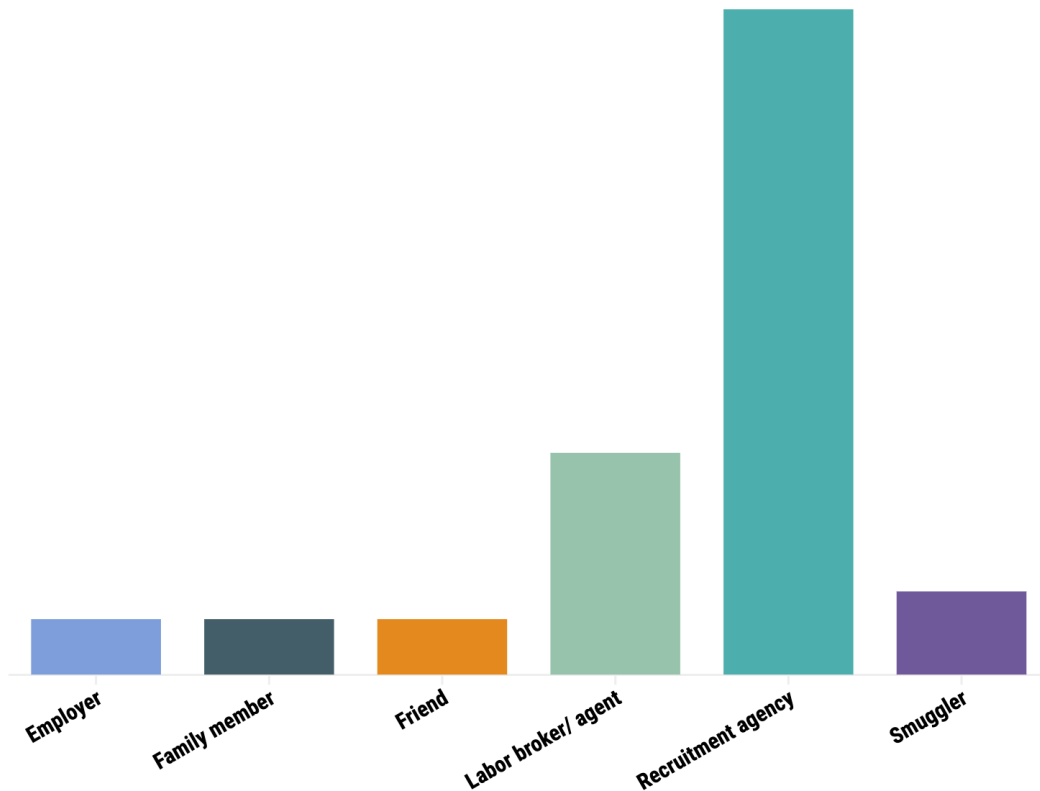


## FACILITATION OF MIGRATION JOURNEYS

In the majority of cases (36), the migrants received help from at least one other person when planning or making their journey. In some cases, one person (28) and sometimes multiple facilitators (21) were involved.

The most commonly identified facilitators were recruitment agencies, who were mentioned in 24 of the cases. Other types of facilitators included labour brokers/agents (8), smugglers (3), friends (1), family members (1) and the employer themselves (1).

In the majority of cases, the migrants travelled in the car of the trafficker/recruiter/facilitator. In only a small number of submissions, migrants used their own car or travelled by public transport – including by bus, taxi, plane or ship.

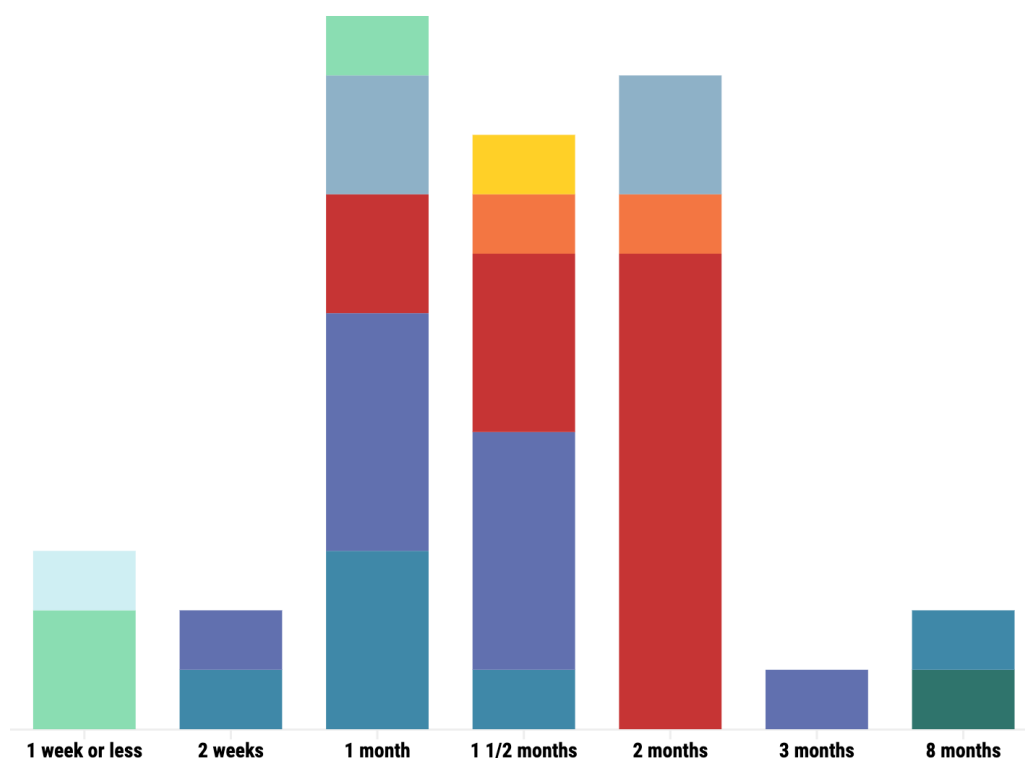


## LENGTH AND COST OF MIGRATION JOURNEYS

Analysis of the collected data shows a significant variation in the length of the migration journeys and their cost – this variation was not just attributable to different destinations but also to the individual experiences of migrants travelling to the same destinations.

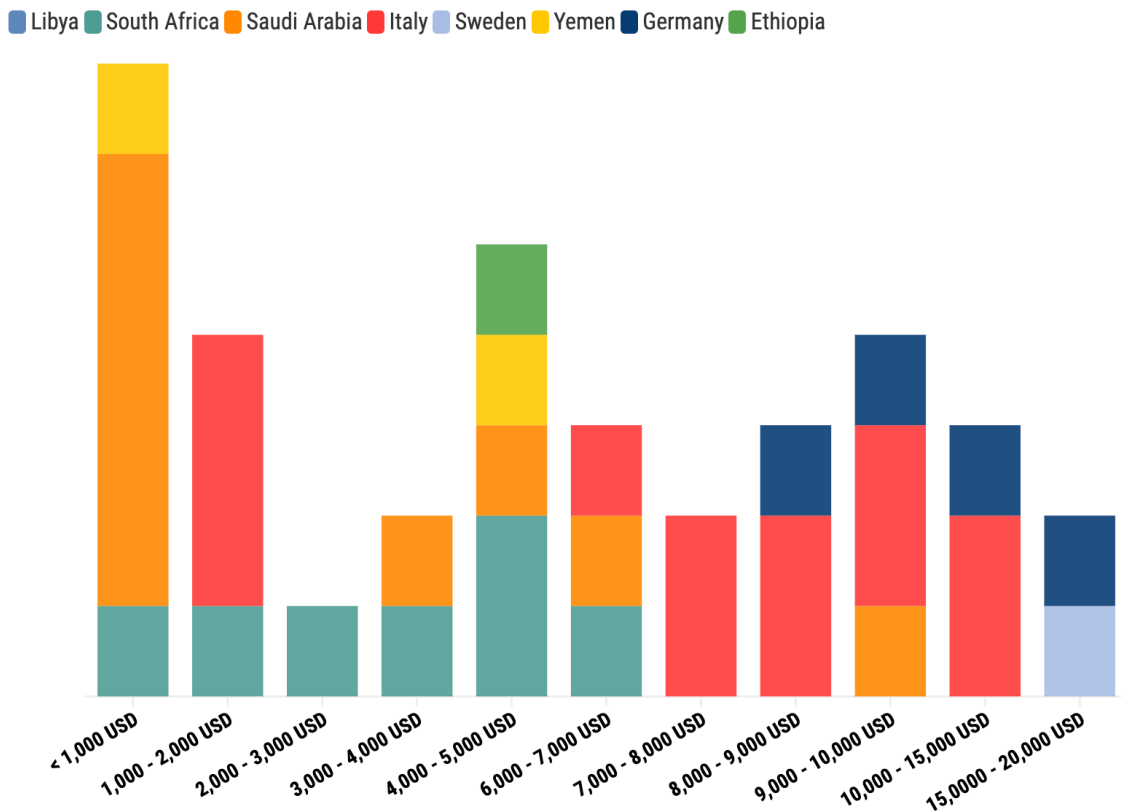
The migration journeys described within in the data set took from one week or less to up to eight months. The majority of journeys took between one and two months, to travel from Eastern Africa to South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Europe.

Legend: Libya (dark green), South Africa (teal), Saudi Arabia (blue), Italy (red), Sweden (orange), Yemen (yellow), Germany (light blue), Ethiopia (light green), Djibouti (pale blue)



Similarly, the costs paid by the migrants for their journey vary significantly, from less than \$US 1,000 to up to \$US 20,000. Overall, migrating to Europe is the most expensive journey to undertake, however, in some cases the organisations reported a cost of less than \$US 2,000 for journeys to Italy.

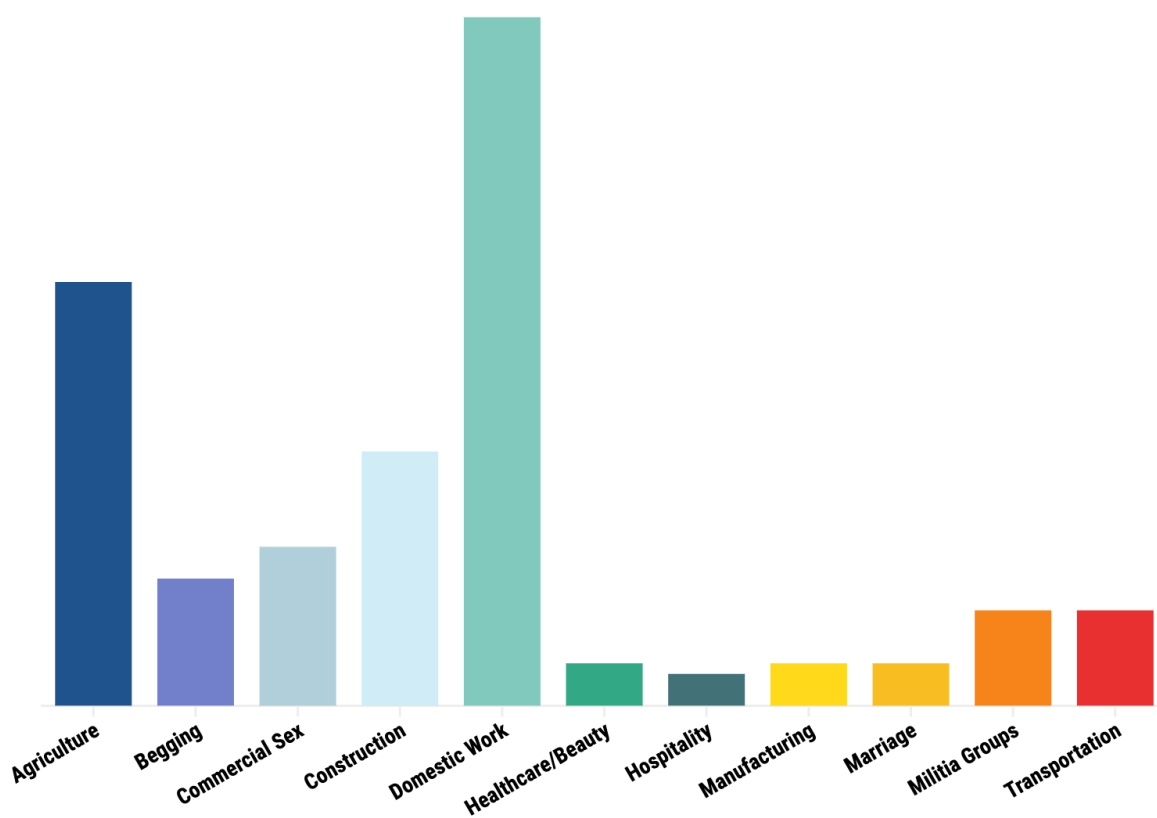
When looking at the correlation between length of the journey and cost, a relationship between the two could not be identified. Again, the cost and length of journey vary significantly between individual cases and migrants' experiences – and do not appear to be related to the destination location.



## INDUSTRIES OF EXPLOITATION

Within the data set, a wide range of industries of exploitation have been identified. The most referenced industry is domestic work (65), followed by agriculture (40), construction (24), commercial sex (15) and begging (12).

Forced labour is the most commonly cited type of abuse or exploitation in the submissions (67), followed by physical violence (47) and sexual violence (21). A wide range of other abuses, including torture, forced begging and psychological abuse, is also seen within the data set.



## DATA APPLICATIONS

This is the first time that the participating organisations have contributed to a structured data collection exercise concerning human trafficking and risky migration routes that relate to South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland, and this report represents their first shared data set.

The project aims to contribute to larger data collection efforts in East Africa. Across the region, organisations recognize the lack of consolidated credible data and information on current trends and risks for human trafficking and other forms of exploitation. The collected data contributes to addressing this gap and helps to highlight the scale of human trafficking and exploitation activity in South Central Somalia, Somaliland, Jubaland and Puntland.

The collected data about human trafficking and unsafe migration routes have several potential applications to help guide operational, tactical and strategic decisions made by civil society organisations, law enforcement, the private sector and government.

It is hoped that the data can support stakeholders to:

- Identify at-risk communities and recruitment hotspots in order to better target prevention programming and protection messaging.
- Identify destination hotspots in order to guide the development of bilateral partnerships and to foster collaboration, so that more robust protection and after-care services can be provided.
- Identify critical transit points in order to design more effective monitoring, outreach and intervention programming, and to inform the development of law enforcement/border protection and public-private partnerships (e.g. identify training needs for airport staff).
- Based on identified critical geographies, collaboratively assess these locations in terms of CSO coverage to avoid duplication of efforts and to help address gaps in areas of high need.
- Identify industries at higher risk of involvement with exploitative labour, in order to improve outreach and identification efforts and inform engagement with industry.



In addition, the report contributes to improving data capture and sharing and coordination across the region, with the aim of achieving the following outcomes:

- Enhanced sharing of information among Somali civil society and with other stakeholders
- Decreased duplication of data collection activities and siloed data sets
- Improved overview of relevant actors in the region and available data contributors
- Increased participation and familiarity of Somali civil society actors with collaborative data collections
- Enhanced understanding of data usage and application for strategic planning and decision making

Freedom Collaborative is the largest community of professionals and other activists working to end human trafficking, forced labour and exploitation globally. It supports collaboration between a wide range of civil society, government, and private sector stakeholders from around the world, through tools and services for data and information sharing. By providing our frontline partners with accessible data collection and analysis tools, Freedom Collaborative brings together data sets on exploitation activity, contextual factors, and the existing response landscape. The team provides anti-trafficking organisations with free support for the development and implementation of data collection that can be adapted to local contexts and implemented quickly.