IOM’S EVACUATION ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS STRANDED IN YEMEN

IN PICTURES

2017
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International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

2017
MIGRATION EX-ETHIOPIA
ROUTE MAP

LEGEND 1
- Eastern Route
- Northern Route
- Southern Route

LEGEND 2
- Outflows of irregular migrants

Disclaimer
The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement by the International Organization for Migration.
FOREWORD

The outbreak of the war in Yemen in late March 2015 resulted in the deterioration of the security situation in the country, leaving thousands of migrants in an extremely vulnerable situation. These migrants, mostly in irregular status, were en route to the Arabian Peninsula in search of better economic opportunities. The war in Yemen not only prevented these migrants from continuing their journeys, but also created a humanitarian crisis characterized by widespread poverty, indiscriminate violence, and gross human rights violations.

Despite the ongoing conflict, Yemen has remained a transit country for thousands of Ethiopian migrants. Each month, an estimated 10,000 migrants enter Yemen irregularly only to find themselves trapped in the country. Upon reaching Yemen, the majority of migrants are exploited and abused by widespread criminal networks that operate with much violence. Moreover, recent reports indicate that thousands of migrants are detained as of late, with a rapid increase in the number of migrants expelled from Yemen to Djibouti in an inhumane manner.

Against this background, thousands of irregular migrants find themselves stranded in the midst of the Yemen conflict without proper documents, access to consular services or commercial transportation, and lacking the means with which to return to their country of origin. These stranded migrants require urgent life-saving support, including medical care, shelter, food, water and essential non-food items.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), through its range of regional projects, has provided humanitarian evacuation assistance - including pre-departure, transit and post-arrival, in close coordination with the Governments of Yemen, Djibouti and Ethiopia, as well as various non-governmental organizations and United Nations partner agencies. These efforts have resulted in the safe and dignified return of some of the stranded migrants to their country of origin. On behalf of IOM, I take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the European Union’s International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) for funding the project, “Addressing the Needs of Stranded and Vulnerable Migrants in Targeted Sending, Transit and Receiving Countries,” which enabled the return of 414 vulnerable Ethiopian migrants who were stranded in Yemen.

Through this booklet, the return journeys of the 414 migrants from Yemen to Ethiopia are documented. Sadly, thousands more still require the same support. The work must and will continue. IOM looks forward to continuing to work with donors and important partners to advocate for projects and initiatives focusing on this important beneficiary group, while concurrently looking at the drivers and root causes of irregular migration.
The evacuation process starts in Hodeidah, Yemen, and is facilitated in close coordination by the IOM missions in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Yemen and their respective host governments.

First, Ethiopian Government representatives based in Yemen conduct preliminary nationality verification and identify Ethiopian citizens eligible to return to Ethiopia.

IOM then conducts medical screening to ensure evacuees’ fitness to travel and identify medical issues to be addressed. Migrants then board IOM-chartered boats to cross the Gulf of Aden to Djibouti.
The returnees are provided with water and non-food items during their journey from Yemen to Djibouti.
The returnees depart from Hodedah, Yemen, by boat heading to Obock, Djibouti.
Returnees are transported by boat to the Port of Djibouti.

2017
Returnees arriving at the Port of Djibouti are directed to the Migration Response Center (MRC) in Djibouti.
IOM’s Migration Response Center in Obock, Djibouti, serves as a transit point for the evacuation of migrants formerly stranded in Yemen. Transit assistance includes: full nationality verification by Ethiopian Embassy staff based in Djibouti and issuance of emergency travel documents to facilitate their travel during the remainder of their journey.
From Obock, Djibouti, IOM facilitates land transportation to bring returnees to the Ethiopia-Djibouti border town of Galafi. Upon arrival of the convoy in Galafi, IOM Djibouti staff transfer the responsibility of operations to the IOM Ethiopia team composed of both operational and medical staff. The transfer is carried out in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia’s Main Department for Immigration and Nationality Affairs office based in Galafi.
At Galafi, the Immigration office of the Government of Ethiopia verifies and processes the returnees.
Upon arrival in Galafi, IOM’s medical staff conduct medical screens to check the returnees’ health condition.
IOM Ethiopia facilitates land transportation from Galafi to its Transit Center located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which takes one and a half days. During the journey, IOM covers all needs of returnees including transit accommodation, food, water and medical follow-up.
Upon return to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, returnees who require intensive medical treatment are referred to local hospitals for more extensive check-up and treatment. Returnees who require long-term medical follow-up are referred to hospitals in their respective areas of origin.
Upon arrival at the Transit Center, IOM provides one night accommodation and feeding for adult returnees while minors stay 7 to 10 days until the family tracing process is finalized.
Upon arrival at the Transit Center in Addis Ababa, returnees receive post-arrival medical screening.
At IOM’s Transit Center, returnees have access to temporary accommodation, food and water.
Onward transportation allowance is given to adult returnees who are deemed fit to travel. This allowance is meant to cover the costs of transportation back to the returnees’ respective areas of origin as well as the subsistence costs incurred on the way. Once the allowance is distributed, IOM provides returnees with transportation to the local bus station.
Returnees are provided with non-food items such as clothes, shoes, blankets and soap.
Minors are accommodated at the Transit Center until their families are traced. The family tracing process is carried out by Addis Ababa’s Bureau of Women and Children Affairs in collaboration with IOM and UNICEF.
During their time at the Transit Center, children have access to a range of recreational equipment plus facilities, including table tennis, television, games and are encouraged to pursue their hobbies.
Minors playing table tennis at the Transit Center.
Individual and group psychosocial counselling sessions with a professional are also conducted to help children cope with the trauma and difficulties they went through while migrating. These sessions are also crucial for helping children rebuild their self-confidence necessary to resume and rebuild their lives.
Once the children’s families are identified and based on their best interest, they are escorted back to their areas of origin and then reunified with their families under the guidance of social workers assigned by the Bureau of Women and Children Affairs officials.
A returnee reuniting with his father after escorted back to his area of origin.
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