

## Taking Stock: Recent & Upcoming Research

### **About the REF**

The Research and Evidence Facility (REF) was established in May 2016 to conduct research relevant to the formulation and implementation of EU Trust Fund activities in the Horn of Africa. It was created to collate and produce evidence and policy relevant knowledge on themes related to the Fund's activities. Themes to be researched include the drivers of migration, dynamics of cross-border economies and centre/periphery relations, the features and limitations of government migration management systems and social service provision, drivers of radicalism and violent extremism, and opportunities for strengthening resilience in the greater Horn of Africa. This region includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

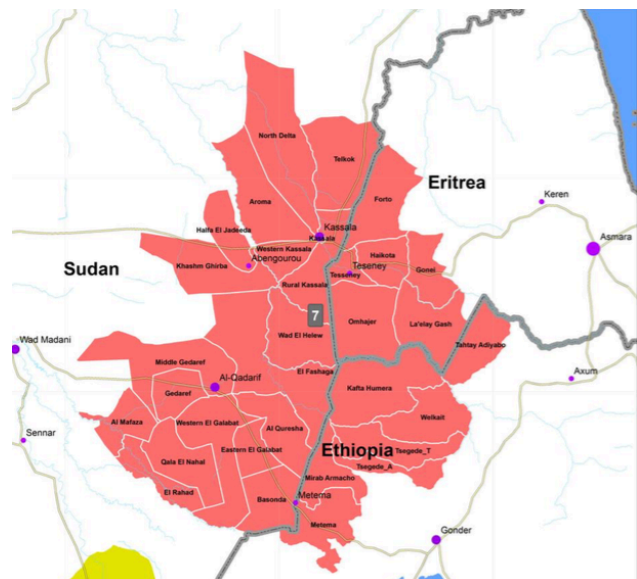
The REF is being implemented by a research consortium led by SOAS University of London with Oxford University's International Migration Institute and Sahan Research, based in Nairobi. The REF provides independent, policy- and programme-relevant research on conflict and irregular migration in the Horn of Africa. Research is carried out both by the REF core team and through collaborative arrangements with individual researchers and research institutes in the Horn of Africa.

This Research Brief provides an overview of work achieved thus far. It includes research completed and outputs currently available.

### **Cross Border Research and Analysis**

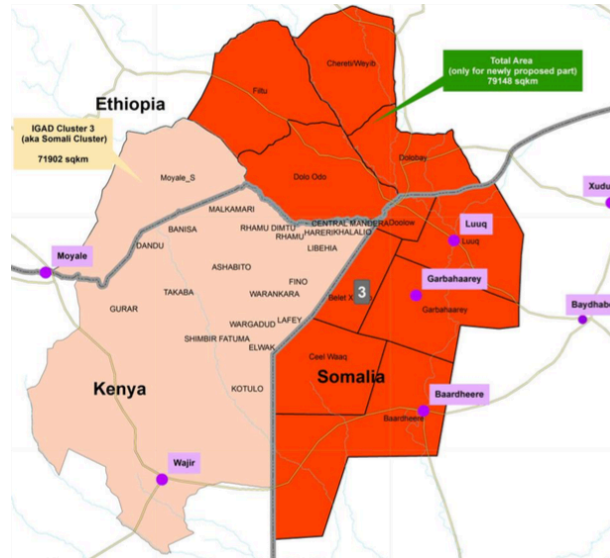
The first major fieldwork project to be undertaken by the REF was an analysis of conditions of migration and conflict, and the drivers underlying them, in four selected border regions. These borders were divided into 4 cluster areas:

- Cluster 1: Southwest Ethiopia-Northwest Kenya
- Cluster 2: Kenya-Somalia-Ethiopia
- Cluster 3: Western Ethiopia-East Sudan
- Cluster 4: Eastern Sudan-Northwest Ethiopia-Eritrea



Common across all of the four border areas is low population density and limited infrastructure capacity, both typical of peripheral border areas.

Water, livestock and land for farming and grazing are the main natural resources identified in the cross border clusters. Resource scarcity is widespread and caused by a combination of man-made (state-sponsored development projects) and natural (climate change and droughts) pressures.



Instability is also common to all the study areas to varying degrees, and manifests itself in a number of ways. It can take the form of clan conflict, as rival groups compete and fight over scarce resources (especially land and water), but also trade and political power. Instability is also linked to protracted conflict between government and rebel forces, as in Blue Nile State in the Western Ethiopia-East Sudan cluster. In the Kenya-Somalia-Ethiopia cluster, instability is frequently generated by violent attacks associated with Al-Shabaab. In this context, a number of different groups and actors are involved in conflict, and instability is taking place at local, regional, national and international levels.

Migration also occurs across each of the research areas, but in different ways, involving different people and to differing extents. Generally speaking, migration is more prevalent in Clusters 2, 3 and 4 than in Cluster 1, which has ceased to be an important migratory corridor since 2012. The research identified a wide range of migratory practices, including transhumance, labour

migration, irregular migration, forced migration, displacement, migration for education and health purposes, family reunification, politically motivated migration, migration for flood retreat agriculture and community resettlement. In this context, the drivers of migration are multiple and often overlapping. They include: resource scarcity, development projects, conflict, natural disaster, coercion, unemployment, lack of basic services, culture of migration, political participation, and so on. While the demographic profile of migrants (particularly in terms of their age, gender and access to resources) varies across the study areas, the research found that labourers, young people and pastoralists typically made up the majority of those moving. Initiatives and activities that have achieved the best results have tended to be those that: adopt a cross-border and conflict-sensitive approach; involve and build on traditional institutions and practices; balance commercial interests and community needs; integrate peace-building; take a market approach; and support already-existing mechanisms.

Based on the research findings, a €63.9 million project financed by the EU Trust Fund for Africa (with €400,000 funded by UNDP) was developed during 2016 and launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Aimed at enhancing development across these borders and aligned with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Drought Disaster Resilience & Sustainability Initiative, the project Collaboration in Cross-Border Areas will seek innovative approaches to make borderlands more stable and prosperous.

For the individual Cluster Reports and Synthesis Analysis, please visit <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/>

## ***Desk Review and Recommendations for Research***

The second piece of research the REF undertook was a literature review that considered the state of research on migration, displacement and conflict in the Horn of Africa. We also looked at the landscape of actors currently working on migration and conflict in the Horn, to identify areas that the efforts of the Research and Evidence Facility would be best placed to pursue over the coming two years. Population displacement and conflict are among the most significant contemporary problems facing the Horn of Africa. Political instability, economic deprivation, changing population dynamics, resource scarcity, and complex influences that travel back and forth between diaspora and home communities all combine to create an environment of flux, in which people are moving, sometimes out of choice but often in the absence of any positive choice, in search of a better life.

Our literature review first examined the major population displacement and conflict hotspots within the region, and assessed the types of mobility and displacement that have emanated from them. We then considered the following thematic areas:

- *Border Economies and Livelihoods*, considering the ways in which migration takes place within and across border areas, and the extent to which dynamics within these areas contributes towards conflict and irregular migration. In this section we also consider rural-urban livelihoods and the ways in which migration influences them.
- *Population, age and gender*. Each of these, individually and taken together, influences conflict and migration outcomes. We consider the issues and highlight key research available.
- *Dynamics of conflict and displacement*, including an analysis of war economies, displacement and response strategies, and human trafficking and smuggling. We consider evidence related to governance and conflict

prevention and dynamics of forced displacement and irregular migration. The ways that conflict and irregular migration work to exacerbate one another are considered. We also explore the impacts of efforts to support peace-building and respond to the needs of the displaced.

- *The Migration-Displacement Nexus* and the need for evidence to inform questions about when and under what conditions development support may result in changes in the levels of irregular migration and displacement.

For the full Desk Review, please visit <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research->

- *Migration management practices*, to document research on the legal and regulatory environment surrounding migration and mobility, the challenges to managing migration, the increasingly securitised nature of migration management, the governance of migration management at the sub-national level. We outline the array of actors engaged in migration management and the kinds of support they provide as well as the challenges and analytic questions that are worthy of attention in future research.

From this analysis we have identified five major themes of research and these form the core of the Research Agenda for the Research and Evidence Facility of the EU Trust Fund for Africa. The themes are:

1. Interactions between rural-urban, regional and international mobility
2. Experiences and impacts of voluntary, involuntary and diasporic return to countries of origin, including reintegration of ex-combatants.
3. Impacts of development changes on people's movement choices and patterns of mobility, including consideration of the

effectiveness of employment generation schemes (particularly targeted at youth) and evidence concerning the so-called 'Brain Drain.'

4. Dynamics of cross-border economies and centre/periphery relations, including local tensions and conflicts and protection needs of displaced persons living in border areas.
5. Features and limitations of migration management systems and the role of regional collaboration

### **Coming soon...**

#### ***Study of Migration between the Horn of Africa and Yemen***

The REF is currently working on a study looking at migration through Bosasso (Somalia) and Obock (Djibouti) to and from Yemen. Between January

2006 and April 2016, at least 736,538 persons reportedly crossed from the Horn of Africa to Yemen, with Somalis mostly staying in Yemen as refugees and Ethiopians travelling onwards to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Since conflict erupted in Yemen in March 2015, Yemenis, Somalis, national returnees and people of other nationalities have fled Yemen into the Horn of Africa, namely Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. The REF study will shed light on how the Yemen conflict is changing the dynamics of migration.

#### ***Working Paper Series***

In addition to in-depth research related to each of the 5 research themes, the REF team has established a working paper series to showcase related research being undertaken by researchers in and/or on the region

For further details on the working paper series, please visit <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/working-papers/>

The REF is funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The Trust Fund has been created to support the most fragile and affected African countries. The Trust Fund aims to help foster stability in the regions to respond to the challenges of irregular migration and displacement and to contribute to better migration management.



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#### ***Follow us!***

Further information about the REF can be found at: [www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch](http://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch)

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Blog series: <https://blogs.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/>