

Swiss engagement in migration issues in the Horn of Africa and Yemen

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Background

A series of destabilising factors are resulting in forced displacement and migration in the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Armed conflict, gross violations of human rights as well as natural disasters, poverty and resource scarcity combined with a lack of prospects and the hope of a better life elsewhere are driving migratory movements within and out of the region. Refugees, internally displaced people and migrants move partially on the same routes, use the services of the same smugglers and are often exposed to the same risks (*mixed migration*).

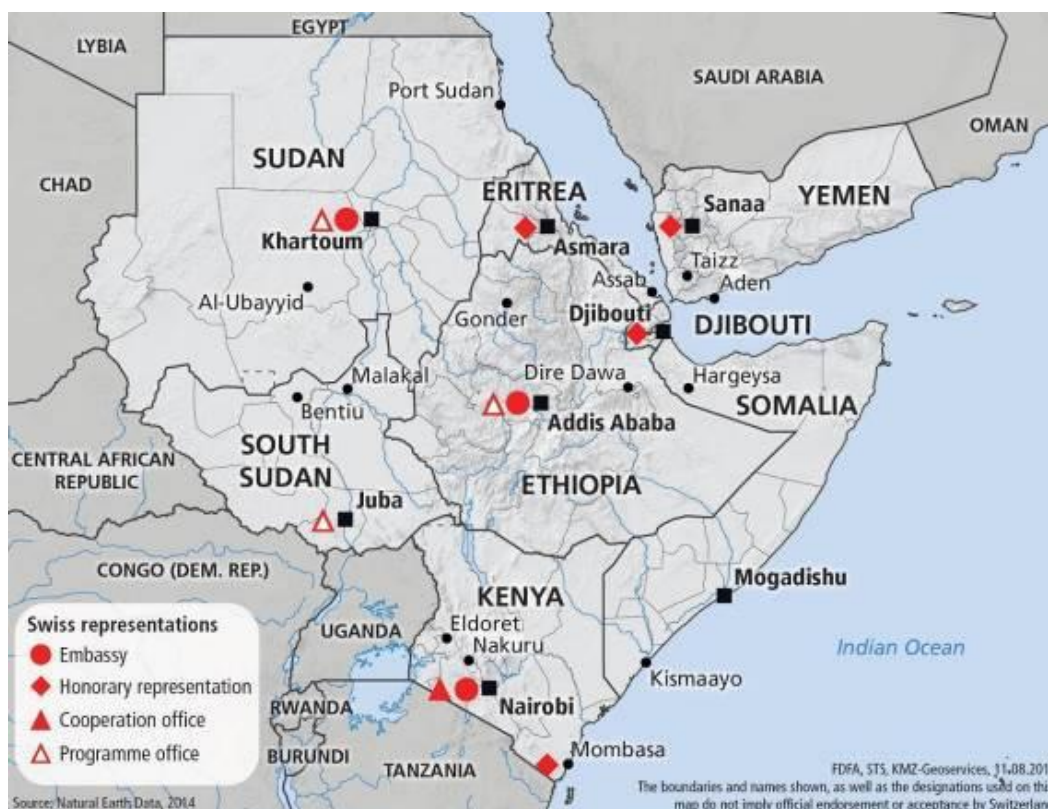
The vast majority of displaced persons seek protection in their region of origin. However, there are refugees and migrants who leave the Horn of Africa. The three main migration routes lead *southwards* to South Africa, *eastwards* to the Arabian Peninsula and *northwards* through Sudan towards Egypt or Libya, and in some cases across the Mediterranean to Europe.

The phenomena of forced displacement and migration are complex and it is difficult to provide adequate protection to the concerned population.

In many cases in the Horn of Africa and Yemen, internal and cross-border movement is a long-term issue. This *protracted displacement* means that returning home is not an option for years or even decades.

The transit and destination countries in the region are themselves affected by poverty as well as political and social tension. Kenya, for example, is both a transit and a destination country for refugees and migrants from Somalia, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The majority of those to whom Ethiopia itself has offered refuge originate from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea, while those coming into Sudan are largely displaced persons from Eritrea and South Sudan.

Yemen, is a key receiving and transit country for refugees and migrants who intend to travel on to the Gulf States. Since the outbreak of armed conflict, Yemeni citizens as well as Yemen-based Ethiopians and Somalis have been seeking safety in Somalia and Djibouti. There are also many internally displaced people in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan as well as in Yemen.



Switzerland's strategy in the Horn of Africa and Yemen

Taking a *whole-of-government approach*, Switzerland's foreign migration policy in the Horn of Africa, Sudan, South Sudan, and Yemen is coordinated and jointly implemented by all of the relevant agencies of the Federal Administration, such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Directorate of Political Affairs at the FDFA as well as the State Secretariat for Migration at the FDJP. It centres on the following three strategic objectives:

- i. *Protection in the Region (PIR)* and, where possible, dialogue with the countries concerned;
- ii. Support for regional dialogue on migration issues under the aegis of the *Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)*;
- iii. Identifying and calling attention to the development potential that the diaspora offers to their individual countries of origin as well as encouraging synergies in this regard between regional, national, and local development programmes.

The objectives of PIR are to provide displaced persons and migrants at risk effective and immediate protection in the field and to help countries of first refuge to fulfil their international obligations to provide protection. For example, these receiving countries are assisted in establishing a fair and efficient asylum system and are supported in their efforts to improve the living conditions of those seeking refuge or in finding permanent solutions for them. The latter encompasses integration, means of earning a living, reducing dependence on aid organisations, safe and dignified return in due course or resettlement in a third country, etc.

By supporting the regional organisation IGAD, Switzerland aims to improve the governance of migration at the regional and national levels. This includes establishing and improving the governmental structures that handle migration as well as institutionalising migration platforms, and cooperation between states.

The IGAD migration project concentrates on building national structures and capacities to cope with *mixed migration* and protection gaps. Other related issues include migration as a result of natural disasters and climate change, irregular migration (including human trafficking), forced displacements, migration and development, etc. The focus at all times is on protecting refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants as well as safeguarding their rights.

Switzerland sees making the most of the development potential that the diaspora can offer as a matter of pinpointing and then harnessing synergies between those living outside their homelands and national, regional and local development programmes.

Switzerland is also a member state of the Khartoum Process, a joint initiative between the European Union and the states of the Horn of Africa.

The objectives of this initiative are to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling within East Africa and from East Africa to Europe, to extend the protection afforded to displaced persons, and to enhance the dialogue between countries of origin, transit, and destination. Switzerland's engagement also includes involvement in the EU Emergency Trust Funds for Africa and in the EU's regional development and protection programme for the Horn of Africa. The latter aims at strengthening the capacities of destination and transit countries to accommodate and protect those seeking refuge.

A selection of migration projects supported by Switzerland

- Financial support to the *Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS)* in Nairobi: Through the mapping and analysis of mixed migration movements, as well as related policy advocacy activities, the RMMS contributes to the development of informed and fact-based migration policies in the Horn of Africa, which put protection and the respect of human rights at the center.
- *Skills for Live Programs*: Youth in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya is given the opportunity to get a basic education, which creates perspectives for their future and greater economic independence (Implementing partner: *Swisscontact*).
- In cooperation with *Finn Church Aid*, Switzerland supports a national institution for the training of teachers in Eritrea. The aim of the project is to make the teaching profession more attractive and to improve the quality of teaching in schools.
- The *Darfur Livelihoods Programme* aims at improving the economic situation of vulnerable people in Darfur. The programme focusses on obtaining an income and improving livelihoods for internally displaced people, particularly women and youth. (Implementing partner: *UNDP*)

Key figures

Number of current projects: 27
2016 budget for bilateral projects: CHF 9.8 million
2016 budget for contributions to international organisations: CHF 24 million

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