

POLICY BRIEF

Mixed migration in Yemen: Current Situation and Policies

Prepared by:

Dr. Tariq Al-Kabsi, Sana'a University

Mr. Mujahid Ahmed Al-Sha'ab, National Population Council - Yemen

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First: General Background

Yemen is located in the southwestern side of the Arabian Peninsula, between the countries of East Africa and the Horn of Africa to the west and southwest, and the oil-rich GCC countries from the north and east (Saudi Arabia and Oman). Yemen has a long coastline extending more than 2,000 km¹ on the southern side on the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea in the west. The population of Yemen is currently estimated at 33 million people ², living on an area of 555 km², hence, it has the highest population density in the Arabian Peninsula. Yemen enjoys a strategically important location, as it links poor countries in East Africa that suffer from economic and political problems and conflicts, and countries that enjoy relative stability and abundance of wealth and job opportunities, namely the Arab Gulf countries, which gave Yemen special importance at the regional and world level in many aspects, including international migration.

Yemen has been in a state of political instability since 2011, and the state of war, which began in 2015 by the forces of the Arab coalition led by Saudi Arabia, has led to the emergence of the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, according to the UN statement³ in 2019, which indicates that 80% of the Yemeni population are in need for humanitarian assistance ⁴. Yemen is one of the environments that have witnessed/are witnessing all types of population mobility (spatial mobility of the population), as it is considered one of the largest sources of Arab labor migration to the Gulf and other countries. Recently, especially since the outbreak of the war in 2015, it has witnessed large waves of migration and internal displacement across its governorates and asylum-seeking to neighboring countries and elsewhere.


Yemen has also hosted/hosts refugees from countries that have lived in a state of war and

¹ Republic of Yemen, Central Statistical Organization, Statistical Yearbook, p.4, Sana'a, 2022.

² General Secretariat of the National Population Council, Central Statistical Organization, Population Projections for Yemen 2005-2025, Sana'a 2010

³ African Migrants: The Journey of Death for Life Seekers, Geneva Council for Rights and Freedoms, March 2021, p. 2)

⁴ JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2022, IOM YEMEN, QUARTERLY MIGRATION OVERVIEW



political and economic instability, such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iraq, and Syria. In addition, Yemen is an important transit state for mixed migration from African countries, especially from Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, to the Gulf States and other countries.

Before addressing our main topic, “Mixed Migration in Yemen: Current Situation and Policies”, we begin with the definitions of key concepts used in this study.

Second: Definitions of Key Concepts:

A. Population Spatial Movement:

Population is a dynamic (mobile) human entity, as humans have known since the dawn of time to move in search of water, food, better living conditions, and to escape from wars and conflicts as well. Humans are still characterized by these spatial movements to this day. These population movements are diverse, and can be classified under several categories, such as international migration across country borders, internal migration across the regions of the same country, besides internal displacement within the same country, and seeking asylum across different countries. Drivers of these human movements are diverse, from searching for work and better life opportunities, at the will of the migrants, and forced migration (both asylum and displacement) to escape wars, conflicts, and poverty, among other reasons. Population movements and migration are also classified by the size and type of members of the migration flows and their legal status. There includes mass migration (of women, men, children), individual migration, in addition to regular migration with documents and official entry to the destination countries, and irregular migration.

For the purpose of this study, we can focus here on a basic concept related to spatial population movements, namely international migration, including mixed migration, as a term describing a specific type of these human movements.

B- International Migration:

There are many definitions of migration and international migration that vary with the type of study, its objectives, and aspects, but there is a consensus that migration means the movement of individuals or groups from their areas of habitual residence to other areas, for a short or long period, temporarily or permanently, legally or through smuggling or illegal routes ⁵. The United Nations defines international migration as “the movement of individuals or groups from their place of habitual residence to another country across international borders, provided that the period of residence in the country of destination is not less than one year ⁶.”

⁵ Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, a report titled “Ras Al Arah: Ethiopian Asylum Seekers’ Gateway to Hell” p. 5.

⁶ <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/en/definitions>

C- Mixed Migration

According to available sources, the concept of mixed migration refers to the movement of people across international borders, where migrants and refugees use the same routes and means of transport to reach their final destination, and sometimes these flows are called “mixed migration flows”. If these people who make up the mixed flows fail to enter a particular country through regular means, they often employ the services of human traffickers and embark on dangerous journeys across the sea or on land, during which many are at risk in order to survive ⁷.

Based on this definition, we find that mixed migration is an international migration, meaning that (the migrant) moves across international borders. This movement may be through more than one country to reach the destination country of migration, it includes those who immigrate willingly in search of work or better living conditions, and those fleeing wars and persecution (who are called refugees) from one country to another. From a legal point of view, it includes legal migrants, that is, they have official immigration documents, and those who do not have such documents, hence, illegal migrants, who are also subjected to smuggling and human trafficking, where they are exposed to many violations. The following are common among these migration flows:


- They often take routes similar to migration, but may pose several risks to their lives and human rights. These can be land and sea routes, but through unreliable means of transportation, and their movement within the other country might be without transportation.
- In these flows, migrants often travel collectively as men, women and children, and they can be from several different countries or nationalities.
- They are irregular, meaning they do not have a specific route or time to reach the destination country.
- Migrants are assisted in their journey by smugglers or people who work in human trafficking.
- There is also mixed intentions and mixed motivations.

Third: Mixed Migration and its Framework in Yemen:

A. Overview of the migration situation in Yemen:

Yemen is one of the countries that have known migration of all kinds, collective and individual,

⁷ Talha Jalal, Mixed Migration Center (MMC), Regional Mixed Migration Prospects 2030, MMC Middle East & Eastern Mediterranean, P. 3, Dec 2018



since ancient times, especially after the collapse of the Marib Dam in the sixth century AD. This migration continued after Islam, as Yemenis headed to all countries of the Arab and Islamic world within the Islamic conquests, and their effects in some of those countries remain noticed to this day through the names of castles, cities and human settlements.

In the modern era, individual and collective migration from Yemen continued during the rule of the Imamate in northern Yemen and the British colonialism in the south. This migration was mainly directed to East Asian countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia, and some African and Western countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Britain and America. Yemenis migrated for several economic, political, security, social, as well as religious and commercial reasons ⁸.

Since the 1970s, following the rise in oil prices in the Gulf countries and their need for more labor to meet the increasing demand for manpower in their markets, Yemeni labor migration began flowing to the GCC countries in large numbers. This Yemeni migration, whether ancient, modern, or current, lacks the accurate data on its volume and characteristics; moreover, what is found in the studies on Yemeni migration are estimates that vary according to their sources and how they were formulated, and there are no reliable records available. In addition, migration to the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, is a **mixed migration**, where men, women and children flow back and forth almost daily across the border that extends between the two countries for about 2000 km. This movement facilitates the link of the Yemeni tribes with the tribes on the Saudi side. Similar social and economic relations, customs and values enable the movement of people across the border continuously, especially before the outbreak of the war on Yemen in 2015 ⁹.

To identify the Yemeni migration abroad, especially to the Gulf countries, different figures and estimates of the recent Yemeni migration can be presented here from different sources and at different times, which show the great disparity between sources in estimating the numbers of Yemeni migrants. Table (1) indicates that the size of this migration until the 2010s and early 2020s is estimated between 923,253 and 1,800,000 Yemeni migrants, according to the estimates of the ESCWA, and other local and international estimates. Moreover, the Saudi General Authority for Statistics in its latest publications estimates the number of Yemeni migrants in Saudi Arabia to have reached 1.8 million in 2022, according to the 2022 Saudi population census. This figure represents about 6% of the population of Yemen and 10% of the total population of Saudi Arabia.

⁸ Mujahed Ahmed Al sha'ab. Escaping the Escape Toward Solutions for the Humanitarian Migration Crisis, the Refugee Crisis and Yemen, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 201

⁹ Mujahed Ahmed Al sha'ab. Escaping the Escape Toward Solutions for the Humanitarian Migration Crisis, the Refugee Crisis and Yemen, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016

Table (1) Estimating the volume of recent Yemeni migration abroad according to available figures ¹⁰

Estimation Year	Receiving Countries	Number of Immigrants	Source
2013	To the Gulf states and other countries	923,253	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
2009	80% in the GCC countries and 20% in Africa, America and other countries	Between 987, 500 and 1,360,000	Yemeni Expats 3rd Conference, 2009
2004	To the GCC countries and other countries	1,700,000	2004 Census - Latest Census Conducted
2023	Saudi	1,800,000	Saudi General Authority for Statistics (2023)


Following the 2014 events and the control of the Houthis over the capital Sana'a and some other governorates, then the outbreak of the war on Yemen in 2015, Yemen entered a new phase of population mobility. Besides the workforce migration abroad, internal displacement in large numbers never witnessed in Yemen before took place, from conflict areas or regions threatened by air strikes to safer areas and governorates. Many Yemeni individuals and families have also sought refuge to many countries in the region, especially Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan.

The estimated number of displaced Yemenis from the areas of armed confrontations to safer areas has reached 4,523,022 displaced persons in 2022, and most of these displaced people are in Marib, Hajjah, Al-Hudaydah, Ta'izz, Amran, Sana'a City and Ibb.

However, for Yemenis who fled the country following the 2014 event, no verified data exists on their numbers. Some sources estimate those who had left to neighboring countries in 2016 alone to be 177,314 people, who moved to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan ¹¹.

¹⁰ Republic of Yemen, Central Bureau of Statistics, Results of the Population and Housing Census in 2004, p. 7, Sana'a, 2005.
 Republic of Yemen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Third General Conference for Yemeni Expatriates, October 2009, Conference Documents Part 1, p. 317, Sana'a
 United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2015 Situation Report on International Migration, Displacement and Development in Changing Arab Region, P.44, Beirut-Lebanon

¹¹ International Organization for Migration, Regional Responses Yemen Crisis, p.1, 2016



On the other hand, the IOM Migrant Tracking Matrix recorded that the number of Yemeni returnees during 2022 reached 54,867 migrants. In 2023 (from January to April), about 19,290 migrants returned, most of them from Saudi Arabia, of whom only 4% held official travel documents and 96% did not. Note that these registered numbers do not represent all returnees, but only from some ports of movement to and from Saudi Arabia, as there are many registries spread at all ports recording all migrant movements. On the characteristics of these returnees, we find that 94% are men, 3% are women, 1% are girls and 2% are boys¹².

B - Estimating the size of mixed migration in Yemen:

Through the aforementioned, certain features of the mixed migration context in Yemen become clear. The country has been experiencing political instability since 2011, and the ongoing war since 2015 has led to the destruction of its infrastructure, health services, education, power, water, and other resources. More importantly, this has created a status of social discord, where the country is divided, and the central state and its apparatus is weakened. It also contributed to the emergence of four entities splitting the country among themselves, the Houthi in Sana'a and most northern governorates, Sharei'a in Aden and southern governorates, a military power in Marib and another in Taiz and Mocha. This has resulted in weakening state authority and control over land and sea borders, controlling security and securing roads, which provided a great opportunity for the flow of mixed migration to Yemen and, in particular from Africa, where many African migrants take Yemen as an international transit country on their journey to the Gulf countries, and from them to other countries in Europe and the US, which will be covered hereafter.

Some specialized sources indicate that the movement of arrivals in general across the international borders of Yemen began early as the 1970s, when Yemen experienced the first wave of these arrivals from the Horn of Africa, most of them heading to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries¹³. Then appeared new waves of immigrants to Yemen, more intensive and diverse in terms of number and countries of origin in the 1990s, after the outbreak of war and armed conflict in Somalia and the rise of a new government to power in Ethiopia in 1991, which lifted restrictions on external migration after the restriction imposed during the era of socialist rule. The armed conflict in Somalia led to the asylum of more than 244,000 people currently living in Yemen, after they obtained refugee status¹⁴.

Estimates of arrivals to Yemen vary from one source to another, as the Yemeni government estimates the number of arrivals to Yemen through its coasts from the mid-1990s to 2013 at

¹² IOM, migrant returnees to Yemen, March 2023, DTM

¹³ Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, a report titled "Ras Al Arah: Ethiopian Asylum Seekers' Gateway to Hell". p. 8.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

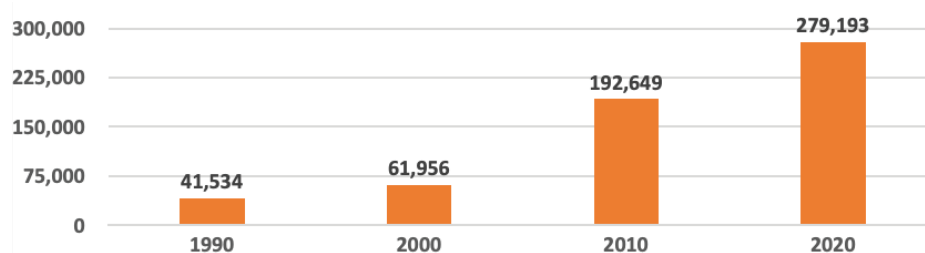
one million illegal immigrant and refugee¹⁵, and the 2015 UNHCR Yemen office indicates that the number of refugees registered in 2015 reached 273,400 person residing in Yemen, the majority of whom are Somalis at 87%, followed by Syrian refugees at 5.5%, then Ethiopians at 5.1%, and the remaining 2.3% of the total refugees hosted by Yemen of other nationalities (Table No. (2)).

Table (2) Estimated numbers of refugees and their nationalities hosted by Yemen in December 2015¹⁶

Residency Type	Country of Origin	count	Percentage
Refugees	Ethiopia	6,800	2.5%
	Iraqi people	3,100	1.1%
	Somalis	238,000	87.0%
	Other nationalities	2,200	1.3%
Semi-refugee expatriates	Syrians	15,000	5.5%
Political refugees	Eritreans	700	0.03
	Ethiopians	7,000	2.6%
	others	600	0.02%
Total		273,400	100%

On the other hand, ESCWA estimates that the number of refugees in Yemen has witnessed a continuous increase since 1990 from 41,534 refugees to 279,193 refugees in 2020, with an average annual increase of 15.7%. The number of refugees has doubled more than 6 times during the past 30 years, and with higher increase rate after 2000. Figure (1) also shows the historical development of the number of refugees between 1990 to 2020.

Figure (1): Number of refugees in Yemen according to ESCWA estimates



¹⁵ Republic of Yemen, Prime Minister Speech in the Regional Conference on the Refugees and Illegal Migration, Sana'a, 13th Nov. 2013.

¹⁶ www.unhcr.org - Yemen Overview, December 2015

In more detail about the evolution of the volume of mixed migration in Yemen and its characteristics according to the most important IOM estimates from their Sana'a office, table (3) tracks the estimated volume of arrivals to Yemen from 2010 to 2023, according to the UNHCR Yemen, which notes that these figures do not represent a comprehensive record of all migrants to Yemen, for they are estimated figures collected by the Organization trackers and counters stationed at border points on the Yemeni coast and the Saudi border, who record the migration movement from and to Yemen since 2015. The table shows a fluctuation in the volume of migrants, due to the limitations of the IOM ability to register migrants along with the conditions of the origin and receiving countries, as well as international conditions and measures applied on mixed migration. We can notice the decline in 2013 due to the restrictions Saudi imposed against migrants to its territories, similar decline is noticed in 2020 and 2021 due to the restricted measures applied in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Table (3): IOM Estimated Numbers of Arrivals to Yemen 2010-2023 ¹⁷

Years	Number of arrivals in thousand	SOURCE
2010	57,000	Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, a report titled “Ras Al Arah: Ethiopian Asylum Seekers’ Gateway to Hell”.
2011	104,000	
2012	108,000	
2013	65,000	
2018	150,000	
2019	138,200	International Organization for Migration (IOM) Migrant Arrivals Flow Monitoring Registry
2020	37,000	
2021	27,693	
2022	73,000	* [AR] IOM Yemen Migration Overview Q4 2022_o.pdf
2023 (April)	13414	International Organization for Migration (IOM) Migrant Arrivals Flow Monitoring Registry until April * [AR] IOM Yemen Migration Overview Q4 2022_o.pdf

¹⁷ Sources: Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, a report titled “Ras Al Arah: Ethiopian Asylum Seekers’ Gateway to Hell”, 2021
International Organization for Migration (IOM) Migrant Arrivals Flow Monitoring Registry 19, 20 and 2021
IOM Yemen Migration Overview Q4 2022_o.pdf

C- Characteristics of Mixed Migration

Countries of Origin and Destination: The available data on mixed migration in Yemen, as we have already noted, indicate that migrants to Yemen come from several African and Arab countries. These countries have often experienced or are witnessing armed conflicts and political instability, including Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. The reasons for this migration to Yemen are due to the political and military conflict in the countries of origin and the search for better job and living opportunities, especially in the Gulf countries. Moreover, the second war in Iraq has led thousands of Iraqis to flee to Yemen from 2003 onwards, where they found temporary job opportunities that enable them to search for other countries to emigrate, especially to Western Europe, Canada and Australia. Since the outbreak of the 2011 events, thousands of Syrians have also arrived in Yemen, who sought Yemen as a transition country while searching for a western country to migrate to, as already mentioned in Table (2).

In the latest available data on the countries of origin of mixed migration to Yemen and their intended destination countries during the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and the first quarter of 2023, the results of table (4) show that the origin countries are primarily Ethiopia, accounting for more than 90% of total migrants to Yemen, and Somalia with about 8% on average during those years. The main destination country is Saudi Arabia for more than 95% of total migrants, while Yemen is the destination country for about only 5% on average.

Table (4): Number and nationality of migrants to Yemen and the country of destination 2019 - 2023(Q1)

Year	Number of arrivals	Nationality of expatriates to Yemen		Destination countries	
		Ethiopian%	Somali%	Saudi Arabia %	Yemen%
2019	138,200	92%	8%	88%	12%
2020	37,500	93%	7%	94%	6%
2021	27,600	88%	12%	94%	6%
2022	73,000	97%	3%	96%	4%
2023 (Q1)	13,414	97%	3%	99%	1%

IOM Yemen, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Non-Yemeni Migrants Arrival and Yemeni Migrants Returns to Yemen in 2022.

Age and gender composition of arrivals: In Table (5), it is clear that the percentage of females among the total migrants to Yemen during the period (2019-2022) ranges between 17% in 2021 and 24% in 2022, meaning that there is about one female on average among every five migrants to Yemen during the past four years. On the other hand, the table shows that children (males and females) represent 10% to 12% of total migrants between 2019 to 2023, and adult men represent the vast majority in all four years, as they constitute between 69% and 72% of the total migrants to Yemen.

Table (5): Relative distribution by gender and age group of migrants

Gender and Age Composition	2019	2019	2019	2019	2019
Men	72%	72%	76%	69%	75%
Male Children	7%	9%	7%	7%	18%
Women	18%	16%	14%	19%	4%
Female Children	3%	3%	3%	5%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
By Gender					
Percentage of males	79%	81%	83%	76%	93%
Percentage of females	21%	19%	17%	24%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

IOM Yemen, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Non-Yemeni Migrants Arrival and Yemeni Migrants Returns to Yemen in 2022.

Departure and reception points and transit routes: The available data shows that there are two major starting points for migration to Yemen from the Horn of Africa, both located on the African coasts: the Bossaso region in Somalia as a primary point, from which more than 60% of migrant departures to Yemen originate, while the second is the Obock Triangle region in Djibouti. The arrival points on the Yemeni shores are many, mainly located in four coastal governorates (Ta'izz, Lahj, Shabwah, and Hadhramaut)¹⁸.

¹⁸ IOM Yemen, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Non-Yemeni Migrants Arrival and Yemeni Migrants Returns to Yemen in 2022.

Table (6): Relative distribution by migrant departure and arrival points

Immigrants' departure and arrival points	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Q1)
Departure Points					
Bossaso (Somalia)	62%	67%	40%	61%	87%
Obock triangle (Djibouti)	38%	33%	60%	39%	13%
Arrival points to Yemen					
Lahj and Tai'zz Governorates			60%		
Shabwah Governorate			40%		

IOM Yemen, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Non-Yemeni Migrants Arrival and Yemeni Migrants Returns to Yemen in 2022.

Reasons for Migration: As previously noted, migration in Yemen is a complex and multifaceted issue with multiple causes, as it encompasses all types of population movement, from voluntary migration abroad in search for job opportunities and a better quality of living, to forced migration due to wars, conflicts, and poverty, the latter applies to the departure tens of thousands of Yemenis to neighboring countries after the outbreak of war since 2014. Besides being a sending country, Yemen has been receiving flows of mixed migration from some Arab and African countries. Specialized data and studies show that Yemen is considered both a transit and asylum country at the same time for mixed migration since the 1990s¹⁹, as a result of the volatile situations, wars and conflicts witnessed by the countries of the Horn of Africa, especially Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, in addition to Iraq and Syria. The reasons for mixed migration in Yemen can be summarized as follows:

- Economic reasons, as the figures show that 90% of migrants to Yemen in the last decade are looking for new job opportunities. The most obvious example is the Ethiopian migrants to Yemen, who are often seen in large groups traveling on foot, for long distances sometimes from the far south of Yemen to the north to reach the borders of Saudi Arabia.
- Wars and armed conflicts in sending countries, such as in the migration of Somalis in the 1990s and 2000s, as well as for Iraqis and Syrians in the 2000s and 2010s.

¹⁹ IOM Yemen, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR), Non-Yemeni Migrants Arrival and Yemeni Migrants Returns to Yemen in 2022.

- Poverty in sending countries, as all migrants to Yemen are from countries suffering from poverty, drought, and unstable humanitarian situations, as in Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea ²⁰.
- Foreign interference, as in the case of Yemen, where the intervention of the so-called “Arab Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen” led by Saudi Arabia has complicated the situation and made living in the country more difficult than before.
- Climate-related reasons, as the drought in the Horn of Africa has caused the migration of many young people who worked mainly in farming and herding.

Returns from Yemen: Although returns happen in minimal numbers, it is important to highlight and encourage it, as the IOM mixed migration tracking matrix indicates that 1,073 migrants returned to Somalia from Yemen in 2021, compared to 899 returnees in 2020 and 1,797 in 2019. For Djibouti, the figures show that 10,547 migrants returned from Yemen in 2019 compared to 7,652 in 2020. While for Ethiopia, the IOM recorded the return of 1,857 migrants in 2021, 247 in 2020 and 3747 in 2019, through voluntary humanitarian return (VHR).

Fourth: National Migration Policies, Legislations, and Associated Practices

National Policies on Migration: Although Yemen is one of the sending and receiving and transit countries of traditional international migration in general, and mixed migration in particular, due to its economic and social conditions and its medial location between the poor African countries and the rich Gulf countries where job opportunities are abundant, Yemen does not yet have an official policy on the various Yemeni and non-Yemeni migration streams. This is one of the underlying reasons that complicate the issue of migration and dealing with it. As many migrants to Yemen are exposed to many difficulties and human rights violations of all kinds besides smuggling and human trafficking, especially migrants from the Horn of Africa who seek to reach the GCC countries, as evident in dozens of reports and studies carried out by international entities concerned with mixed migration ²¹.

Here, some exceptions can be mentioned, as the Yemeni government has taken some measures regarding migration, including establishing a ministry dedicated for expatriates within the formation of the post-unity Yemeni government in the 1990s, which exists to date, despite its weak and almost negligible performance compared to the volume of migration. One of the major undertakings of this ministry is holding annual conferences on Yemeni

²⁰ DRC and RMMS, East Africa and Yemen Regional Mixed Migration, Human Smuggling, Voices from those on the move, 2017

²¹ IOM, Yemen Office, Migration through Yemen, Sana'a, 2021.

expatriates, the last of which was the third edition in 2012, as Yemen has suffered a period of political instability to this day. These conferences issued studies on Yemeni migration, its aspects, significance, and future. The studies relied on data and estimated from various sources often inconsistent with each other. The main objective of these conferences was to connect Yemeni migrants to their homeland, and urging them to invest in it. However, these efforts have stalled as a result of the instability and war that Yemen has been witnessing since 2014 until now. Additionally, in the National Population Policy 2001-2025, the Yemeni Government has approved a paragraph urging the government to pay attention to foreign migration and qualify migrants to meet the demand of the foreign labor markets, especially in the Gulf countries ²².

Legal Cooperation with the Countries of the Region on Mixed Migration: In 2013, after Yemen and its neighboring countries felt the gravity of the mixed migration situation in Yemen with the violations faced by migrants, a regional conference on political asylum and mixed migration was held in Sana'a. The conference included representatives from the GCC countries – Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates – as well as representatives from the Horn of Africa, namely Djibouti, Somalia, and Ethiopia. The most important outcomes of this conference were the “Sana'a Declaration”, which calls for strengthening cooperation and coordination between the countries of the region and international organizations specialized in migration, in protecting the rights of migrants, encouraging voluntary return to their countries of origin, raising awareness about the danger of illegal migration among communities in the sending countries, developing a database on migration, establishing focal point units in those countries to assess the development of mixed migration, identifying difficulties and proposing remedies for this [mode of] migration.

In the light of the results of this conference, the IOM began its work in this aspect and was able to convince some migrants and refugees in Yemen to return to their countries of origin, albeit in a few numbers. With regard to international cooperation on international migration, it can be mentioned that Yemen is the only country in the Arabian Peninsula that signed the 1951 International Convention on Asylum and its 1967 protocols. In light of Yemen's commitment to this Convention and the fact that Somalia is also a signatory to this treaty, Yemen treats Somali migrants as refugees who are entitled to reside and access education, health care, and other public services just like Yemeni nationals. This advantage is not enjoyed by migrants from Ethiopia and Djibouti, as they are treated in Yemen as irregular (or illegal) migrants.

²² Prime Ministry, National Population Council, National Population Policy 2001-2025, Sana'a

Fifth: Future Vision and Recommendations for the Government and Its Partners

It is clear from the above on the situation of migration in general, mixed migration in Yemen and its various complexities require further studies and research to understand and be familiar with its dimensions and impacts. With regard to the development of a future vision and recommendations to the Yemeni government and its partners to deal with this issue, it is necessary above all for the Yemeni government and its partners to consider that dealing with international migration in general and mixed migration in particular has become a topic that has developmental, security, and human rights dimensions at the present time. This is due to several reasons, the most important of which are:

- The large volume of this migration flowing to and from Yemen, where hundreds of thousands of migrants move across the country's borders every year, which became an influential phenomenon with tangible economic, social, and human rights consequences.
- Risks, violations, and injustices migrants are exposed to by brokers, smugglers and traffickers, especially women and children, who comprise about one-fifth of the overall volume of mixed migration flows.
- International situation and laws and measures restricting human movement and mobility across countries and from Yemen to the GCC, which have become more difficult with many risks, as this may lead to imprisonment, torture and expulsion in a humiliating manner, and in violation of human rights.
- Yemen's socio-economic conditions no longer allow for such indiscriminate migration (with large numbers of irregular migrants), and receiving migrants under current difficult conditions has resulted in hostility and discrimination all expatriates in Yemen, as nationals feel they have to compete with them fiercely over the country's limited livelihoods and services.

To deal with this important phenomenon in an appropriate manner to mitigate its severity and address it in the future, the vision of addressing it must be based on the understanding that mixed migration is a trans-national issue, affecting and being affected by local, regional, and international factors. Therefore, dealing with them must take into consideration its international and regional dimension besides its national dimension, through cooperation, coordination, exchange of information, and building positive relations between countries and concerned agencies in countries concerned with mixed migration. In this context, the Yemeni government and its local, regional, and international partners should:

- Achieve political, economic and security stability in Yemen, as it is not possible to discuss any development efforts, or develop and implement migration policies

and measures, without ensuring the stability and security and activating the state apparatus to carry out its functions.

- Provide statistical data and information on mixed migration, its causes, sources, trends, dimensions, effects and future prospects, by supporting and migration data collection points and centers, and cooperating with local and international institutions interested in migration.
- Develop an explicit national policy to deal with mixed migration, and develop an executive action program that includes all relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies, and establish a specialized sector under the structure of the Ministry of Expatriates to follow up on the achievement of this policy objectives and its action program.
- Fulfill the needs of refugees and mixed migration to Yemen, and working on their voluntary return to their countries of origin whenever it safe, in cooperation and coordination with the relevant countries, Somalia and Ethiopia in particular, along with regional and international bodies and organizations concerned with international migration issues.
- Issue laws and taking strict measures in dealing with all migrants, and take into account their rights in accordance with the relevant international treaties and agreements.
- Increase cooperation and coordination with neighboring countries sending and receiving mixed migration in a way that reduces the flow of this migration into the country and preserves the human rights of migrants.
- Support the competent migration authorities and agencies with the human and financial resources that enable them to carry out their tasks in this aspect, including the competent security agencies, monitoring and evaluation agencies, NGOs, the IOM and UNHCR Office.
- Establish official camps under the state supervision to receive migrants, which shall facilitate addressing their humanitarian needs and provision of services, and spare them the violations they are exposed to by smugglers, brokers and human traffickers.
- Adopt effective programs to address the problem of poverty and create job opportunities to enable the absorption of job seekers and reduce unemployment.

On the international side, we recommend the following:

- Helping Yemen and countries concerned with mixed migration by the international community, especially rich countries, to develop effective national policies to address this phenomenon and mitigate its repercussions.

- Focusing on providing data, research and studies on mixed migration in order to better understand it and develop appropriate solutions.
- Competent international organizations shall carry out their duty to monitor mixed migration, provide for the needs of migrants, protect them from exploitation and violations of their rights, and work to return them voluntarily to their countries of origin whenever safe.
- Working through formal channels to raise awareness among youth at risk of migration and relevant communities about the dangers of irregular and unregulated migration.

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