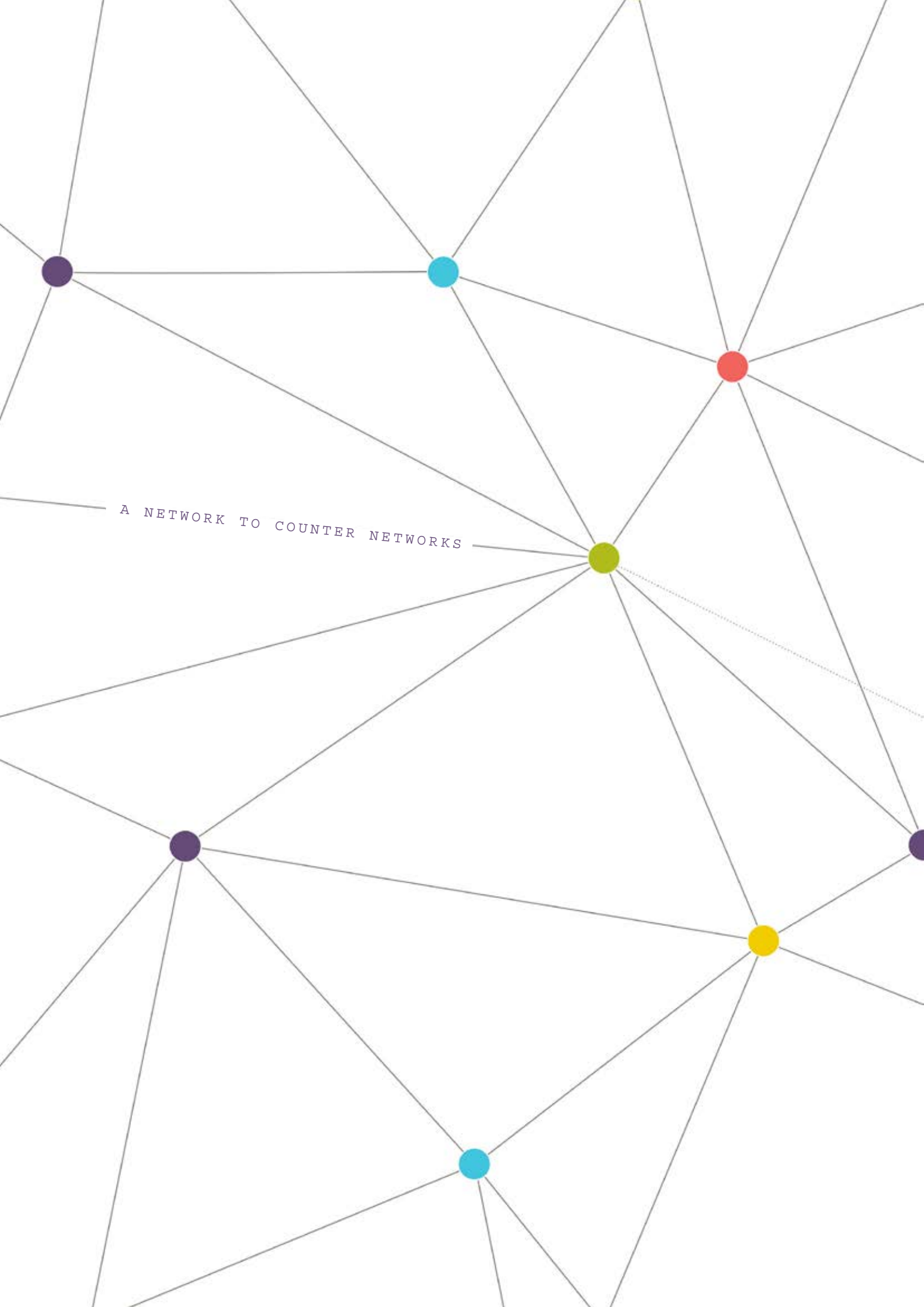


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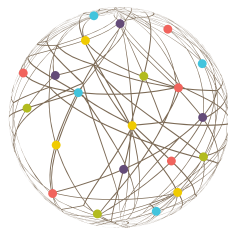
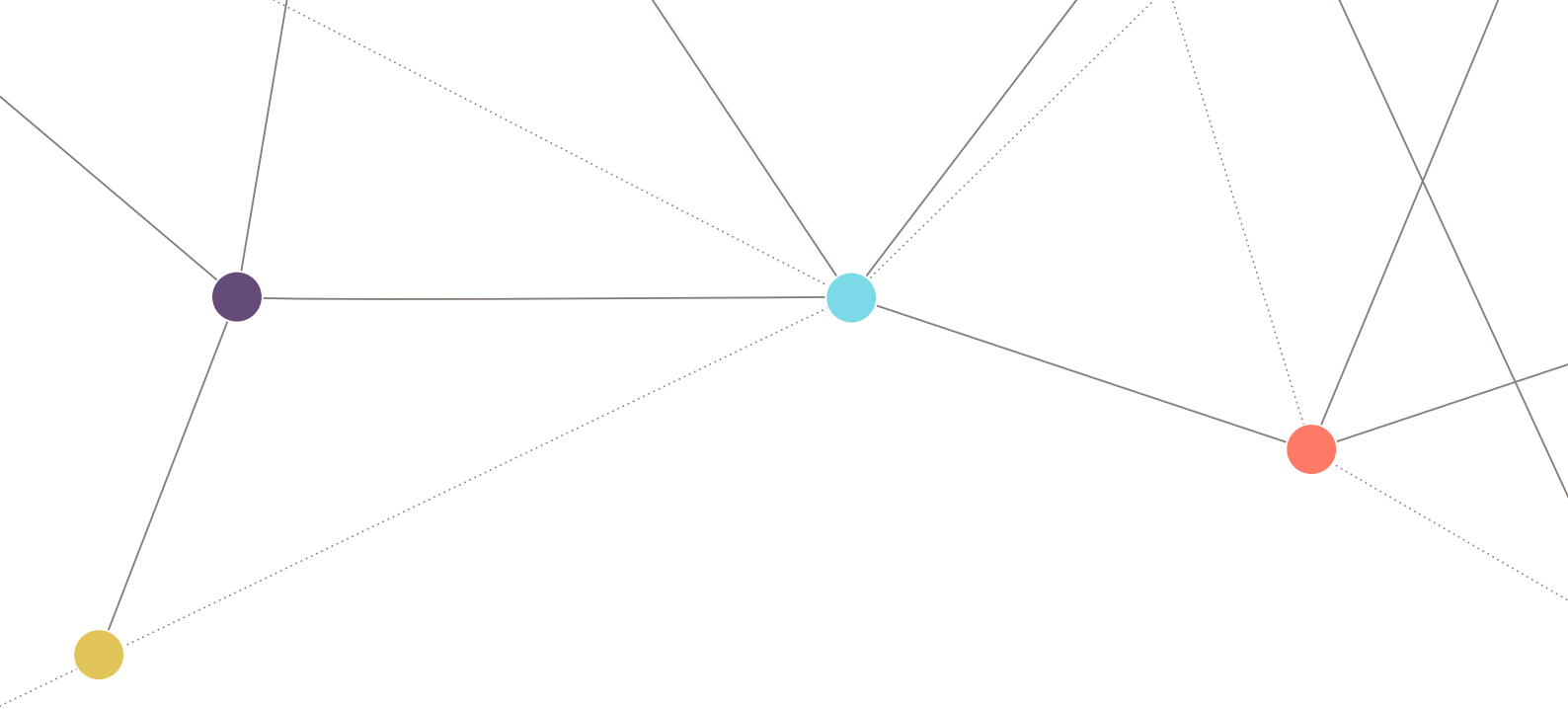
# Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe



May 2017



A NETWORK TO COUNTER NETWORKS



# **Integrated Responses to Human Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe**

May 2017



Cover photo: Dadaab Refugee camp: credit U. Świerczyńska /2011

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# Executive Summary

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In the period 2013-16, more than 1.5 million people have converged towards Europe from across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Some seek asylum from conflict, violence and humanitarian need; others are migrant workers taking the opportunity of a confluence of political instabilities and circumstance that has made migration to Europe more affordable and accessible than ever before.

The rapid acceleration of this mass movement, and the diversity of motivations behind each individual journey have together overwhelmed the capacity of European policymakers to respond. It has invalidated the repertoire of existing migration management measures as well as the lexicon typically used to describe migration, asylum and protection. Migrants now come from and traverse along routes that inevitably cross the weakest of states, ratcheting up criminality, instability and human misery along their journey.

This has resulted in an urgent effort to understand the phenomena and the vectors propelling people toward Europe, and by doing so to design a better set of responses. One such vector that has risen to prominence are human smugglers, who have been universally vilified for their callous profit taking, practices of abuse and carelessness with the lives with which they were entrusted. Sacrificed to an industry that is now estimated to be worth more than €6billion a year, 10,000 people are known to have died seeking passage to Europe.

Heralding from a region characterised by intense insecurity, with ongoing violent conflicts and widespread food insecurity, citizens from the Horn of Africa, most notably Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, have been amongst the highest arrivals to Europe in the past five years, but of greater concern, Horn of Africans have consistently represented a disproportionate share of those whose lives were lost attempting this journey.

While many nationalities remain unknown, and the exact percentages for each source country consequently impossible to calculate, of those identified as having died between 2014-15, 10% were from the Horn of Africa.<sup>1</sup>

In the contemporary context, the complexity of addressing the challenge of irregular migration is compounded. Mobility is a source of resilience in a troubled and fragile region. Political, humanitarian and economic motivations for migration interweave, and the political reality of authoritarian source and transit states limits the leverage wielded by European states and the international community, leaving them struggling to find partners with which to cooperate. This context highlights the urgent need to move away from traditional perspectives focussing on border security and support to state security institutions, and rethink ways of working to focus on improving and reinforcing stability, governance and development for the people of the region.

This report presents the major findings of research conducted between July and September 2016 over eight major smuggling hubs between the Horn of Africa and Europe. The research methodology was a broad selection of key informant interviews – more than 600 individual interviews - with national government officials, civil society actors, international officials, think tanks and policy bodies, but most importantly with migrants and traffickers themselves. This was supplemented with a review of the growing body of literature on mixed migration in the region and towards Europe. In doing so, the study adopts an innovative approach, situating human smuggling within its local political economy, and proposing context relevant approaches in response.

***"One such vector that has risen to prominence are human smugglers, who have been universally vilified for their callous profit taking, practices of abuse and carelessness with the lives with which they were entrusted."***

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1 Based upon author calculations using the "Full Incident Dataset" provided by the IOM, Missing Migrants Project: <http://missingmigrants.iom.int>





# Market Analysis of 3 Migration Systems

This report assesses the nature of the smuggling market according to the three inter-dependent smuggling ‘systems’ that feature along the major route for Horn of Africans moving towards Europe:

Horn of Africa System	Sahel System	Maghreb Coastal System
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Agadez, Niger	Zuwara, Libya
Dadaab, Kenya	Kufra, Libya	Subratha, Libya
Khartoum, Sudan	Sebha, Libya	Alexandria, Egypt
Sudan/Eritrea Border		
Eastern Sudan		

The goal of the market analysis was to understand the political economy of each system, identify key actors, and assess the extent of market consolidation by examining indicators provided through price and violence.

## A: Horn of Africa Migration

The human smuggling industry in the Horn of Africa is widespread and well entrenched, having been necessitated over decades by widespread humanitarian vulnerabilities, violent conflicts and predatory authoritarian governments. It is a fragmented market: there are estimated to be four to five high-level actors with capacity for sophisticated levels of transnational smuggling organisation, but there are thousands of lower level actors offering smuggling at varying levels, as well as community actors whose livelihoods depend on servicing the smuggling industry by providing food, shelter or other non-criminal acts. At the highest levels, it is Eritrean and Sudanese nationals that dominate the smuggling trade, and accordingly, the most professional routes are out of Eritrea, where levels of corruption are exceptionally high, and in Sudan which serves as a central clearing house for all routes.

While there are significant disparities still, the level of professionalism of the industry is growing across all routes, with the commensurate commoditisation of migration increasingly evident, including in routes going south. Low levels of abuse and forced or exploitative labour are relatively common throughout the region, and are expected and tolerated by migrants. The level of violence exacted against migrants as they begin to move northwards can be extreme. Instances of kidnapping for ransom, forms of torture and organ trafficking are consistently rumoured and have been documented. During the interview period, migrants expressed widespread concern of violence targeted against them by terrorist groups (e.g. the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIS / IS) following an incident in Libya.

In this regional system, the smuggling industry should be understood as state-enabled. First because it is primarily the policies of states which prompt movement; secondly because their policies towards migration and the punitive approach to irregular migration taken by some key states ensure that there is a consistent demand for smuggler services at the most sophisticated level; finally, and related, is that to operate as a smuggler facilitating movement across the region’s most controversial borders requires the capacity for high-level corruption or the direct involvement of state officials. It is noteworthy that the average price paid to leave the region’s most repressive states is the same as, or even higher, than the prices quoted for passage across the entire Sahara and onward to Europe.

The payment of smugglers can be classed into four different modalities, namely cash in hand, the use of third party guarantors (typically family members or prospective employers), through instalments via the informal hawala payment system, and the more recent ‘migrate-now-pay-later’ phenomenon. Two points are worthy of highlighting – firstly the importance of social contacts and networks facilitating smuggling, including by diaspora in destination states; and secondly the emergence of the pay-later scheme and the increased protection risks it presents to migrants. The region’s numerous and highly populated refugee camps are a primary recruitment ground for smugglers.



## B: Sahel Migration

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The shape of the human smuggling trade across the Sahel, with hubs at Agadez in Niger, and Sebha and Kufra in Libya, is deeply entrenched in the pre-colonial history of the Greater Sahara. However, its current form is a recent phenomenon, transformed by key regional developments, principally the fall of Muamar Gaddafi and the ensuing complex political transition, the Syrian conflict, the Mali separatist movement and the 'war on terror' in the Sahel. These events have mutated all facets of the smuggling market - the dynamics between its key players, the levels of violence utilised, and the prices paid by migrants to smugglers. Fundamentally the migrant smuggling trade has become unprecedentedly lucrative in a region increasingly characterised by instability and poverty, placing the smuggling economy at the core of the regional economy and socio-political fabric.

It is now exclusively African migrants using the route through Libya and the western Sahel, as instability and violence have deterred Syrians who used the route in earlier years. The journey across the Sahara is itself inherently dangerous, with a high mortality rate that the practices of smugglers do little to try to offset. Use of violence, abuse and exploitation such as forced labour is commonplace across Libya and the Sahel, though in Libya this is now escalating. Migrants are a currency in the country, and are kidnapped, traded and taxed by various militia groups as well as state officials, including via state controlled detention centres. The levels of risk in Libya have begun to serve as a deterrent to migrants from sub-Saharan African, but sharp reductions in price for the sea-crossing have kept the risk-return ratio favourable for the meantime, hence there has been no appreciable reduction in levels of departures from Libya's coast.

Along Libya's southern border, it is an ethnic African nomadic group, the Toubou, that have become the foremost active agent in migration from the Horn to Libya. The Toureg, a Berber group that previously enjoyed primacy over key routes, with connections both to trans-Saharan drug trafficking and Islamic extremism in the Sahel, have largely been pushed aside in a series of violent clashes over trafficking routes. The Toubou pass migrants to a series of Libyan militia groups who control smuggling, with departures primarily from a concentrated section of the coastline west of Tripoli that form the base of the 'Lampedusa triangle'.

***"These events have mutated all facets of the smuggling market - the dynamics between its key players, the levels of violence utilised, and the prices paid by migrants to smugglers."***

Horn of Africans will not be substantially affected by interventions in Niger, as they are not generally using routes that far to the south-west. The role of Libya is central to this system, and without a stable Libya, achieving a reduction in migration flows through this gateway will be a challenge. That is not to say, however, that there are no options. While stressing agreements around migration flows with the nascent and still highly contested Government of National Unity may put undue pressure on the still fragile state consolidation process, engagement at the sub-national level with municipalities and ethnic groups directly involved in the trade may be more productive.

## C: Maghreb Coastal System

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The focus of most of the migration crisis has been on the Mediterranean boat crossings, particularly from Libya. In fact, there are two main sending sites: from Libya where departures are concentrated within a 150km coastline west of Tripoli; from Egypt, mostly Alexandria, where multi-day voyages are made towards Italy with a final trans-shipment to merge with the Libyan boats. While this analysis divides the coastal system from that of the trans-Sahel, in fact they are closely interlinked, and a solution to irregular migration cannot be achieved without interventions that are holistic.

Following the decision of the predominantly Berber-Amizagh town of Zuwara to recuse the municipality from the smuggling trade, the coastal market has fragmented significantly. The dynamics along Libya's coast are now as complex as Libyan politics itself, with almost constant shifts in the balance of power, influence and control. Any intervention will require a careful political economy analysis, including those that seek to reinforce state actors





and agencies (such as the Libyan coastguard), as even the official branches of the state are a part of localised militia politics. The case of Zuwara's shift from smuggling epicentre to a community-led resistance movement to the smuggling economy which, with further examination, could provide an interesting model with potential for replication in other coastal communities.

While Libyan groups still have pre-eminent control over the smuggling, some Eritrean and Sudanese networks have risen in influence, playing a far more strategic role than might previously been imagined for Africans in the Libyan Arab state. These connections are facilitating migration from the Horn through to Europe, though recruitment is being maintained at a high level through a combination of coercion and price reductions.

Egypt has persistently been a marginal and overlooked player in trans-Mediterranean smuggling, facilitating both Syrian and African migrants to Europe. Led by a combination of Arabs, including Egyptians, Palestinians and Syrians, the industry exists at a higher price point than at the Libyan coast, and requires a greater deal of sophistication, as the average journey from Egypt to Italy takes days rather than hours. There is evidence of coordination between Egyptian networks and Libyan networks, demonstrated by at least two documented cases of trans-shipping Egyptian migrants into Libyan convoys before a rescue is requested. The number of departures from Egypt have been comparatively low, thanks to the significant border control efforts by the Egyptian government. The coastal smuggling market, now centered around Alexandria, is still consolidating, with pressure likely to grow as Egypt becomes an alternative to the Israel-bound Sinai route that is completely closed, and as East African migrants increasingly show preferences for Egypt over the violence in Libya. For this reason, Egypt warrants close monitoring, despite the low departure rate. The strength of the Egyptian state requires that a practice as politically sensitive and lucrative as human smuggling could not be conducted without a level of collusion of state officials.

## An Integrated Programme Response

The goal of shifting towards an integrated programme response is to complement and reinforce the security and justice sector interventions that typically stand at the forefront of the response to organised crime. In this case, considerable investment has been made in security interventions intended to tackle human smuggling, spanning a spectrum from international efforts to increase security through the deployment of military and intelligence assets in key locations; to building the capacity of state institutions to combat smuggling and trafficking. But these are yet to have any significant impact: both smugglers and migrants have been prosecuted, but the numbers of asylum seekers arriving on Europe's shores has remained steady, whilst the loss of life has in fact increased.

Based upon the research and market analysis, this report therefore proposes a more holistic series of programmatic interventions that could be pursued by development or other actors, as well as a reorientation of some law enforcement priorities.

### For Law Enforcement

Due to levels of corruption, and the widespread practice of levying bribes as 'taxes' to supplant inadequate salaries, and a widespread culture of impunity for both corruption and human rights abuses, state institutions including law enforcement, border control and the military for all of the countries in the systems often contribute more to exacerbate migration than to counter it. Furthermore, weak capacity, inadequate levels of appropriate equipment, a generally sparse capacity for investigation and little political support ensure that efforts to counter human smuggling tend to result in mass arrests of more migrants than smugglers, and few follow-up investigations or prosecutions.

- Promoting good governance and adherence to human rights by states and their institutions, particularly those in the security sector.
- Distinguish clearly between human trafficking and human smuggling interventions (including capacity building). Smuggling enterprises have shown links to transport industry and recruitment companies for established smuggling schemes in the region, in Egypt, as well as in the Horn of Africa.



- Alternative banking systems such as Western Union, Moneygram and hawala are the means by which the majority of money in the smuggling industry is transacted. Yet little is known about the onward movement of smuggling profits: initial indications are that money is laundered domestically in real estate in Khartoum, used for livestock purchases across the Sahel, and at the highest levels funds are moved abroad primarily to the Gulf. Investigations into the highest-level actors, including through tracing money flows and seizing of assets may prove a significant disincentive to operators, more potent than arrests.
- Increasing capacity for identification of fraudulent documents at primary and secondary air hubs: it was observed that many from the Horn of Africa fly into airports and depart on fraudulent documents from Istanbul for onward movement to Europe.
- Build a more detailed political economy approach to intelligence gathering, which would situate responses within the fragmented regional and national politics.
- Avoid, to the extent possible, the further securitisation of migration.

### For Foreign Offices

Migrants are increasingly being used in the region and beyond as a bargaining chip to leverage other concessions from European governments, including the lifting of sanctions, increased development assistance and political support on key issues. One risk of placing migration at the top of the policy agenda is that it may expose European states to being extorted on the threat of increased migratory flows. Ways to ensure that these forms of trade-offs move towards positive migration trends could include:

- Remaining highly cognisant that actions taken to support states with questionable adherence to human rights, international norms and standards will impact the legitimacy of the international community, including in the eyes of vulnerable communities prone to migration. This reduces the ability of these actors, including humanitarian workers, to engage from a position of trust.
- In diplomatic engagements around migration, maintain an emphasis on the importance of good governance, accountability and human rights, and build metrics for adherence to those principles into negotiations.
- Invest in and promote civil society to advocate for and report on the needs and priorities of refugee communities in the region, and to rebuild 'safety nets' inherent to migration that have been stripped away in the increasing securitisation of the issue.
- Negotiating for the minority rights of key groups identified as part of the smuggling economy (Toubou, Rashaïda) without demonising the entire group as 'traffickers', and building means by which they can achieve political inclusion and derive benefit from state consolidation and peacebuilding exercises.
- Promote, advocate and provide host country incentives to support better refugee integration in states hosting large refugee populations. A better integrated population would reduce the impetus for irregular movement.
- Create multiple options: open dialogues with alternative host countries, in particular Africa's larger economies to increase freedom of mobility, resettlement and integration options for refugee populations in the region.
- Negotiate with the Gulf states, formerly a significant employer of migrants from the Horn of Africa, to reverse recent clampdowns on irregular migration (including mass returns) which have placed undue pressure on routes to Europe.

***"One risk of placing migration at the top of the policy agenda is that it may expose European states to being extorted on the threat of increased migratory flows."***



## For Interior Ministries

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Through the diaspora, one of the most potent answers to addressing irregular migration may lie at home. Human smuggling and migration are industries that rely heavily on social networks, and the diaspora are often the linchpin, encouraging movement, providing funding, coordinating journeys and supporting integration. The diaspora often bear the highest costs of irregular migration and the criminalisation of smuggling: they pay the ransoms, and find their absorptive capacity to provide support overwhelmed by large surges in undocumented arrivals.

- The capacity for monitoring smuggling markets needs to improve. The report lays out the ways in which effective monitoring of smuggling markets could, over time, provide a predictive capacity to both identify criminal market consolidation and anticipate large scale migration surges. This would allow proactive response to incipient movement, diverting it, ensuring protection and preparedness, and reducing the political pressure that is generated by perceived uncontrolled levels of irregular migration.
- Create centres by which asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa can seek asylum and have claims processed closer to source, thereby ensuring compliance with international conventions and reducing the justification for asylum seekers to travel to Europe.
- Build up networks of trusted diaspora within home states, which can be used as a protection mechanism for migrants and a trusted communication channel to migratory communities. Information campaigns featuring the diaspora that highlight the challenges of integration as an illegal immigrant (as opposed to campaigns highlighting the risks of the journey) may serve as a more effective deterrent.
- Create community supported relocation schemes to increase the number of safe and legal routes for migration, underwritten by the diaspora.

## For Development Actors

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Addressing the demand for migration is mandatory for any long-term and sustainable response to large scale irregular migration. The longstanding assumption around reducing migratory pressure has been in improving socio-economic conditions for vulnerable populations. In fact, however, migration tends to increase as income levels improve. Instead, an adaptation of approach is required:

- Enhancing humanitarian and development assistance to refugee communities, in particular promoting policies by which refugees' rights to employment and citizenship in their countries of refuge, or in neighbouring states, might be enhanced.
- Monitor remittance patterns and support initiatives that would reduce the costs of remittance sending and offer a force multiplier to investment in regional growth, rather than being spent on irregular migration.
- Addressing inequality rather than outright poverty. This includes unequal access to inclusive political processes, as well as socio-economic goods and opportunities: political marginalisation was identified as a key feature of smuggling groups.
- Tailor livelihood and development programmes to the risk profile and desire for social advancement that migration can represent to youth. Livelihood opportunities also need to target the groups involved in smuggling, and should be appropriate to populations whose livelihoods have long been predicated on movement and trade.
- In Libya specifically, engagement with municipalities at a sub-national level could prove a potent means by which to influence the local political economy and reduce the importance of the human smuggling economy.
- Support the growth of independent civil society institutions to counterbalance the hegemony of states over development norms. In particular, human rights leagues, refugee advocacy and protection groups, and independent journalism have an important role to play in promoting stable societies, changing attitudes to migrant populations, calling out human rights abuses and investigating corruption and criminal networks.



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	v
Executive Summary .....	vi
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Context.....	1
Mixed Migration from the Horn of Africa .....	2
Applying an Integrated Approach.....	3
Methodology .....	4
<b>2. Market Analysis: Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Demand for Smugglers .....	8
Supply of Smugglers .....	9
Overview of the Market Analysis .....	10
<b>A: Horn of Africa System.....</b>	<b>12</b>
A1: Route across Sudan .....	12
A2: Sudan.....	16
A3: Sudan to Libya or Egypt.....	17
A4: ‘Southern Route’ through Kenya to South Africa or other southern states.....	17
A5: Route into Yemen to the Gulf.....	18
Market Analysis .....	19
Opportunities for Intervention.....	22
<b>B: The Sahel Migration System .....</b>	<b>25</b>
B1: Southern Libya Routes .....	25
The Political Economy of the Sahel System.....	28
Market Analysis .....	32
Opportunities for intervention.....	34
<b>C: Maghreb Coastal System.....</b>	<b>35</b>
C1: The Lampedusa Triangle.....	37
C2: Egypt.....	40
Political Economy of the Maghreb Coast.....	43
Market Analysis .....	44
Opportunities for Intervention.....	47
<b>3. Integrated Programme to Respond to Human Smuggling.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Applying an integrated approach to the Horn of Africa .....	51
Principles for Intervention.....	53
i. Isolating the Criminal Market.....	54
ii. Reducing Impunity; Increasing Exposure .....	59
iii. Mitigating Harm; Building Resilience .....	62



# Acronyms

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<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<b>ASD2030</b>	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<b>AQIM</b>	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
<b>ARSC</b>	Ajdabiya Revolutionary Shura Council (Libya)
<b>AU-HOAI</b>	African Union Horn of Africa Initiative
<b>COMESA</b>	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>ECA</b>	East African Community
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GNA</b>	Government of National Accord (Libya)
<b>HOR</b>	House of Representatives (Libya)
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>IGAD</b>	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (East Africa)
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISIS</b>	so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also IS)
<b>LNA</b>	Libyan National Army
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>NTC</b>	National Transitional Council (Libya)
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>PFG</b>	Petroleum Facilities Guard (Libya)
<b>RSF</b>	Rapid Support Forces
<b>SPLA</b>	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
<b>SSR</b>	Security Sector Reform
<b>TFSL</b>	Toubou Front for the Salvation of Leader (Libya)
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>UNTOC</b>	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar



# List of Figures

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- Figure 1:** Horn of Africa arrivals in Europe (2013-15)..... 2
- Figure 2:** Horn of Africa arrivals by boat in Europe (2013-15) ..... 2
- Figure 3:** The major smuggling hubs and systems from the Horn of Africa to Europe ..... 5
- Figure 4:** Smuggling systems and hubs ..... 5
- Figure 5:** Analysis and programme framework for development responses to organised crime..... 6
- Figure 6:** District map of Sudan with neighbours ..... 13
- Figure 7:** Main smuggling routes through the Sahel ..... 26
- Figure 8:** Libya smuggling networks ..... 30
- Figure 9:** The Lampedusa Triangle and key departure points from Libya..... 37
- Figure 10:** External interventions to end human smuggling..... 50
- Figure 11:** Three pillars of an integrated response ..... 53







Darfuriian Refugees in Eastern Chad: credit European Commission

# 1. Introduction

## Context

In Europe's 'migration crisis', which has spanned from 2013 and continues to the present day, nearly two million people have entered Europe irregularly. Whilst this flow has been dominated by those displaced by the five-year civil war in Syria, it has been substantially reinforced by asylum seekers and migrants from across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Travel has concentrated along two main corridors crossing the Mediterranean from the North African coast, primarily from Libya and Egypt to Italy, and in spectacular numbers in 2015 to early 2016 across the Aegean Sea from Turkey to Greece.

Smugglers have played a dynamic role in facilitating and shaping the nature and scale of movement. Globalisation and means of travel by land, air and sea from any corner of the planet has made it possible for networks to organise transport of enslaved victims, refugees and migrants at previously unknown scales. EUROPOL estimates that more than 90% of the people who arrived in Europe used a smuggler, paying them on average \$3-6,000 for their journey which together have cumulated in an industry worth more than €6 billion a year.<sup>2</sup> Smugglers' practices of overloading boats and using unseaworthy vessels are largely accountable for the nearly 10,000 people who have died in the central Mediterranean in the last three years.

Addressing irregular migration and the burgeoning transnational organised crime of smuggling of migrants is an urgent challenge which the states of the region must address in partnership with the international community through an integrated response. Moreover, it is increasingly clear that this will need to be led by development actors, as criminal justice and security approaches have not only failed to have a meaningful impact on the problem, but in some cases have actually lead to an increase in the harm caused by the crime's continued proliferation.

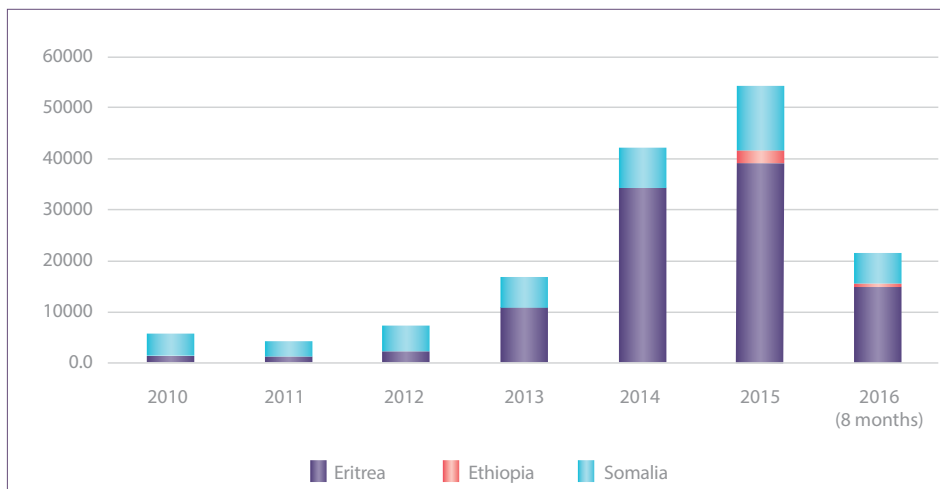
The migration crisis that has become visible across Africa and into Europe has only accelerated the need to find sustainable solutions that not only deals with transnational organised crime, but also addresses vested interests by key stakeholders and builds community resilience.

2      Europol, "Migrant Smuggling in the EU 2016", The Hague: Europol



## Mixed Migration from the Horn of Africa

In the past five years citizens from the Horn of Africa, most notably Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia, have been reaching Europe in increasing numbers (see graph below).<sup>3</sup> Throughout this period, with the exception of 2015, Horn of Africans constituted a substantial proportion of the total number of illegal arrivals by boat to Europe. In 2015 previous trends were eclipsed by an unprecedented spike in arrivals through the Aegean Sea, largely of Afghans, Iranians and Syrians. Regardless of this spike, even in 2015 there was a record number of arrivals of Horn of Africans in Europe, totalling circa 60,000. However, an even more worrying trend has emerged. Across this period Horn of Africans have consistently represented a disproportionate share of the vast number of fatalities on the journey to Europe. The exact proportion is impossible to calculate as the nationalities of many of those who lost their lives remains unknown, however the data available suggests that 10% of those identified as having died on the journey between 2014 and 2015 were from the Horn of Africa.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 1:** Horn of Africa arrivals in Europe (2013-15) (Source: 2011- 2014, Frontex; 2015 and 2016, UNHCR)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Arrivals by boat by Horn of African citizens	14,981	11,896	47,273	179,179	994,951	21,086
Percentage of total arrivals of all nationalities	15%	46%	34%	23%	6%	7.4%

**Figure 2:** Horn of Africa arrivals by boat in Europe (2013-15) as a percentage of total (Source: 2011- 2014, Frontex; 2015 and 2016, UNHCR)

There have been tales of the most horrific exploitation and abuse to which citizens of the Horn have been subject in the course of their migration journey. From 2010 to today, Libyan authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and human rights agencies have documented myriad cases of organ trafficking, systematic rape, violence, extortion and torture,<sup>5</sup> yet these have acted as a negligible curb on the seemingly unstoppable desire to migrate.

The Horn of Africa remains a region plagued with active conflicts as well as multiple land and border disputes. The separation of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 has done little to stop both states repeatedly contesting borders

<sup>3</sup> For greater detail see "The Khartoum Process – A sustainable response to human smuggling and trafficking", Policy Brief 93, November 2016, Reitano, published by the Institute for Security Studies and The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

<sup>4</sup> Based upon author calculations using the "Full Incident Dataset" provided by the IOM, Missing Migrants Project: <http://missingmigrants.iom.int>

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Human Rights Watch, "I Wanted to Lie Down and Die": Trafficking and Torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt', 11 February 2014: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/11/i-wanted-lie-down-and-die/trafficking-and-torture-eritreans-sudan-and-egypt>, or Sahar / IGAD (2016) 'Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route, Djibouti: IGAD: [http://igad.int/attachments/1284\\_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf](http://igad.int/attachments/1284_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf)

in a series of violent clashes, while Sudan itself appears to be stuck in a mire of systemic “civil war of interlocking civil wars”.<sup>6</sup> A similar stasis characterises the Ethiopia and Eritrea deadlock regarding a border dispute which has continued for over 15 years. Meanwhile, despite 25 years of political transition, Somalia continues to struggle to achieve the basics of stability and governance. Instead, the contagion of instability threatens to spread to other regional states which have sought to assist in Somalia’s ongoing efforts to subdue Al-Shabaab.

The region is afflicted by severe drought on a cyclical basis, an ecological phenomenon which triggers extreme food insecurity. As of June 2016, the United Nations (UN) reports close to 24 million people in the region are facing critical and emergency food insecurity levels. An estimated 38% of the Somali population is believed to require humanitarian assistance, while in Ethiopia, 10.2 million people require emergency food assistance to meet subsistence level needs.<sup>7</sup> Unsurprisingly this extreme and widespread human insecurity has had a profound impact on migration - the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) records seven million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the region and in the region, with South Sudan and Sudan earning the dubious distinctions of being the fourth and fifth largest source countries of refugees worldwide.<sup>8</sup> Ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Government and the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in Southern Kordofan and the Blue Nile states of Sudan have displaced an estimated 1.7 million people, fleeing warfare which has included aerial bombing campaigns and attacks by the government on civilian targets.<sup>9</sup> In the Darfur region, mass movement has been triggered by ethnic violence reported to be tantamount to ethnic cleansing inflicted by the state-supported Janjaweed militia group.<sup>10</sup>

***"Political, humanitarian and economic motivations for migration interweave, multiplying push factors and further complicating the targeting of root causes. This context highlights the urgent need to move away from traditional perspectives."***

These dynamics make mobility a key source of resilience in this fragile region, further heightening the complexity of addressing the challenge of irregular migration. The political reality of authoritarian source and transit states limits the leverage wielded by European states and the international community, leaving them struggling to find partners with which to cooperate. Political, humanitarian and economic motivations for migration interweave, multiplying push factors and further complicating the targeting of root causes. This context highlights the urgent need to move away from traditional perspectives focussing on border security and support to state security institutions, and rethink ways of working to focus on improving and reinforcing stability, governance and development for the people of the region.

## Applying an Integrated Approach

Since 2013, the Global Initiative has been facilitating a process known informally as the ‘Development Dialogue on Organised Crime’,<sup>11</sup> which has come at a time when the international community, through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (ASD2030), now explicitly recognises the importance of all forms of transnational organised crime on overall development (especially through Goal 16.4) and has made responding to organised crime a core part of the mandate of development actors.

But development actors have, as stated, often struggled to determine where and how they can make a contribution. Without an overarching conceptual framework or approach, programmatic interventions are likely to be scattershot,

6 Attah el-Battahani, “A complex web: politics and conflict in Sudan,” Accord, 2006, pg. 1: [http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Accord%2018\\_3Acomplexweb\\_2006\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Accord%2018_3Acomplexweb_2006_ENG.pdf)

7 OCHA, “El Nino in East Africa,” New York: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, updated June 2016: <http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-east-africa>

8 UNHCR, Mid-year trends 2015: <http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/56701b969/mid-year-trends-june-2015.html>

9 ACJPS, FIDH and IRRRI, “Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan 2016,” September 2015: [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/20150922\\_pj\\_joint\\_submission\\_upr\\_sudan\\_2016.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/20150922_pj_joint_submission_upr_sudan_2016.pdf)

10 HRW, 2008, “Failing Darfur: five years on,” <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/features/darfur/fiveyearson/report4.html>

11 <http://globalinitiative.net/>



or fall back on the default responses that often fund law enforcement capacity building or border security with little understanding of the implications of those actions, how they fit within the socio-economic or governance framework, or the linkages to a wider set of activities.

It was understood that development actors would benefit from a dedicated analytical tool that would frame transnational crimes through a development lens. Existing instruments to analyse transnational crime have focused on criminal justice metrics and data, which has tended to concentrate on the size and direction of the flow rather than either the networks that perpetuate it or the impact that it is having on governance, development and human security. As a result, the Global Initiative created a conceptual, analytical and programming framework to provide a clear approach to help development actors to analyse and respond to forms of transnational organised crime and illicit markets. This framework, "Development Responses to Organised Crime: An Analysis and Programme Framework",<sup>12</sup> was published in April 2016.

Taking a broader analytical focus makes apparent the need to bring to bear a more diverse set of actors and instruments – those not only of the security sector, but also instruments and leverage from the political system, incentives and penalties that relate to the economic environment and which would impact on the market dynamics behind illicit flows, as well as a set of socio-cultural or development investments that may change the risk-return ratio or offer legitimate alternatives to those involved in criminal industries.

One of the aims of this analysis is to pilot the framework tool within the context of human smuggling in the Horn of Africa, and demonstrate its application. As such, it provides both a conceptual approach and a proposal of specific programmatic responses to meet the challenges of irregular migration in the Horn of Africa, including a range of proposed interventions that would draw upon all of the opportunities and strengths presented by different state and non-state actors.

## Methodology

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This research and the conclusions and programmatic recommendations presented in this report are the result of a three-phase line of inquiry, which follows that laid out in the Development Responses to Organised Crime framework tool described above.

Analysis of human smuggling typically involves tracing transnational migration routes. More current analysis, however, has shown that while routes change quickly based upon a number of factors, a number of smuggling hubs have developed that have a more constant quality, persisting and growing in importance over time. These hubs serve as nodes which connect, change and define routes, structuring the myriad of route options on offer and connecting migrants from diverse places of origin with a variety of smuggling service providers at all levels to fit their budgets, and offering itineraries to innumerate destinations.

The structure of the smuggling industry mirrors the structure of the routes - specific groups specialise from one hub to the next, working in cooperation with each other to pass groups of migrants between them, onto the organisation that controls the next section of territory. As with any criminal industry, the connection and handover between criminal actors, and the points in which they engage with the legitimate economy, present entry points to disrupt markets and flows.

Thus the investigation was structured not on routes, but on the key hubs of the smuggling industry for the people of the Horn of Africa moving towards Europe. At the initiation of this project, the Global Initiative identified eight key hubs in the Horn of Africa region based on prior research.<sup>13</sup>

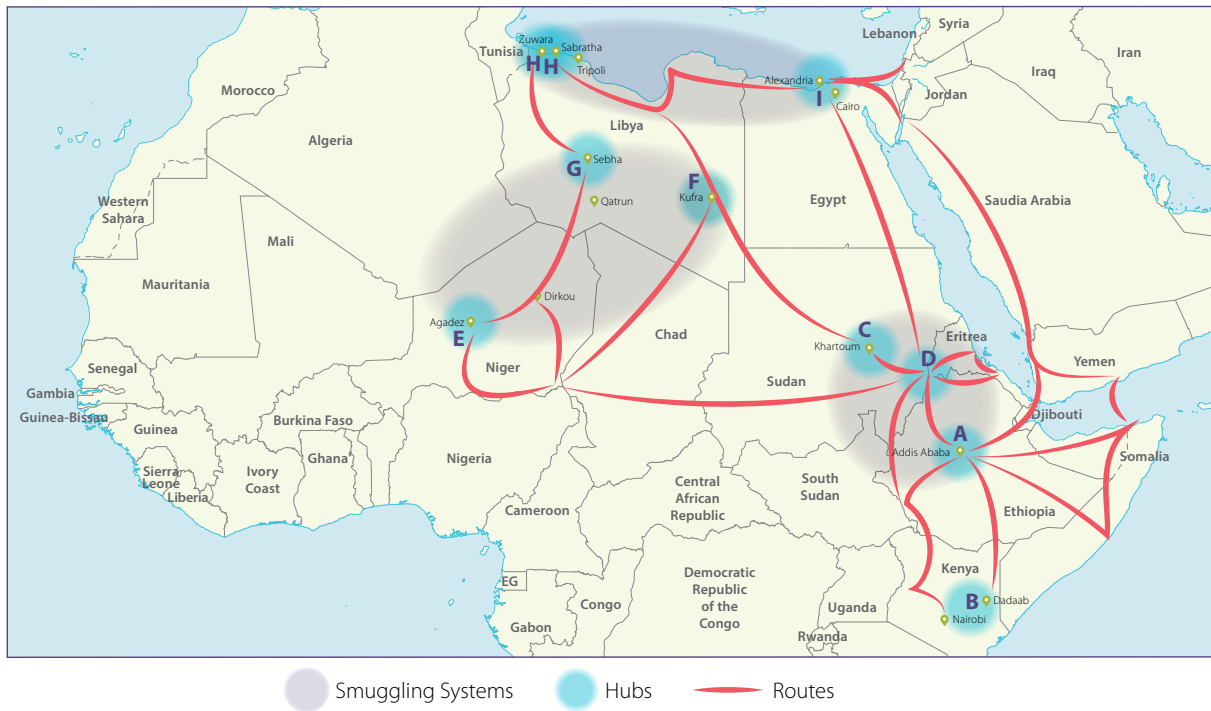
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12 Global Initiative (2016) "Development Responses to Organised Crime: An Analysis and Programme Framework", Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/development-responses-for-organised-crime-a-planning-and-programming-framework/>

13 Including, inter alia, Tuesday Reitano and Peter Tinti (2015) *Survive and Advance: the business of smuggling migrants to Europe*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, and Mark Shaw and Fiona Mangan (2013) *Profits and Losses: Illicit economies and emerging patterns of organised crime as obstacles to peace and state consolidation in Libya*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace



**Figure 3:** The major smuggling hubs and systems from the Horn of Africa to Europe (Source: Authors)



In the course of the investigation and analysis, it was required to partially modify the research plan, as it became apparent that some of the pre-identified hubs were of less relevance than initially indicated, and that others were rising in prominence as the overall migration and security landscape was evolving. In particular, and as documented in greater detail in a dedicated report on human smuggling in Libya published by the Global Initiative, “The Human Conveyor Belt: Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Post-Revolution Libya”,<sup>14</sup> the shift of coastal smuggling from Zuwara to Sabratha, and the rising importance of Kufra district as a hub for smuggling, which was similarly changing in profile over the period of study.

Thus, while each hub has a unique political economy that is highly context specific, there is nonetheless a considerable degree of interdependence between these hubs and accordingly it became more useful to present the hubs around the hubs as part of a migration ‘system’ where aspects of the political economy are shared, and to note pertinent distinctions in specific hubs as needed. The systems are grouped as follows:

**Figure 4:** Smuggling ‘systems’ and hubs (Source: Authors)

Horn of Africa System	Sahel System	Maghreb Coastal System
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (A)	Agadez, Niger (E)	Zuwara, Libya (H)
Dadaab, Kenya (B)	Kufra, Libya (F)	Subratha, Libya (H)
Khartoum, Sudan (C)	Sebha, Libya (G)	Alexandria, Egypt (I)
Sudan/Eritrea Border (D) (Eastern Sudan)		

For each system, the investigation followed the three-phase process laid out in the framework and assessment tool described above.

This framework attempts to move beyond traditional investigative structures by offering a means for policy-focused analysis, a means by which responses can be prioritised using the nature of the impact and harm caused as the

14 Mark Micallef (2017) “The Human Conveyor Belt; trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya”, Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf>





primary lens of analysis, and finally offers a set of programmatic responses that are sensitive to opportunities and entry points for engagement.

**Figure 5:** Analysis and Programme Framework for Development Responses to Organised Crime (Source: Global Initiative, 2016)



Research was conducted between July and September 2016, and included field visits to all of the identified hubs either by a member of the research team or a close proxy and commissioning of local researchers in some of the more remote or insecure sites for supplementary information.

The research methodology was a broad selection of key informant interviews with national and international government officials, civil society actors, local and international think tanks and research institutions, diplomatic and international security officials, but most importantly with migrants and traffickers themselves. For example, in Libya more than 60 people were interviewed in Misurata, Tripoli, Zawiya, Sabratha and Zuwara ranging from security, intelligence and military officials, law enforcement and coastguard officers, militiamen, migrants, smugglers and activists, NGOs and concerned civilians in affected communities. More than 600 individual interviews were conducted in the course of this study.

Much of the information contained within this report, therefore, has been the result of first-hand research conducted by trained researchers on the ground that were commissioned to undertake monitoring of mixed migration trends in order to identify and map networks of human smuggling, and the means by which they exercise their practice.

Field research was supplemented by an exhaustive review of the literature. Given the current policy focus on the issue of irregular migration to Europe, there has been a proliferation of studies commissioned on the topic, and these were useful in providing additional perspectives and for triangulating information sourced in our own interviews and field research. Historical record, political analysis and public perceptions surveys were also sought out and reviewed in order to ensure an accurate and nuanced political economy of each jurisdiction.







Migrants wait on a Somali Beach to be smuggled to Yemen: credit UNHCR

## 2. Market Analysis: Smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe

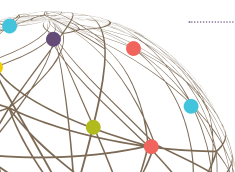
This section presents the major findings of research conducted between July and September 2016 following the research methodology detailed in the introduction.

The lines of inquiry taken in the course of this investigation were:

1. To develop a **political economy analysis** of human smuggling at each hub, understanding the major actors involved in the industry and their place in the socio-political and economic environment.
2. To **analyse the market** according to four key conditions: price, ease of market entry, levels of violence and local legitimacy of key actors.
3. To **analyse the impact** that human smuggling is having within the local environment, assessing both harms caused, but also where relevant the benefits accrued, along a multi-dimensional scale that includes governance, societal, economic, environmental and security impacts.

The analysis first draws some overall conclusions in regards to the supply and demand for smugglers by citizens of the Horn of Africa. It then presents the results of the market analysis according to the three smuggling 'systems' identified in the course of the research: (i) the Horn of Africa System, (ii) the Sahel System; and (iii) the Maghreb Coastal System (see Figure 4 above for greater detail of the hubs within the systems).

It should be noted, however, that this is a fast-paced policy environment, with a number of actors both in the region and externally taking actions in both a coordinated and discordant fashion within a volatile political environment. Thus, the information presented here is necessarily a point-in-time analysis, and can only be used as indicative of possible future evolutions and trends. Ongoing monitoring of the situation is highly recommended to ensure that policies and responses designed are relevant and effective.



## Demand for Smugglers

Migrants from the Horn of African nations broadly identified four motivations to leave their country of origin:

- to escape conflict;
- to escape individual or group persecution;
- to improve on their socio-economic position, including escaping hunger, disease and famine; and
- to reunite with family members.

Those migrants interviewed professed a general desire to travel to Europe and to other “western countries”, with the UK repeatedly being a notable preference for linguistic reasons. More pragmatically, however, migrants were clear that their overall goal was primarily to avoid the push-factors that motivated them to move (conflict, violence, persecution, economic want) and to improve their position, at least in the immediate term, for themselves and their wider family. As such, they acknowledged that there were other alternatives than Europe to achieve these goals, and they would consider other destinations if they suited the purpose. Opportunities offered and relative cost played a greater role than physical risk in their decision making about how and when to move.

The overwhelming majority of migrants moving from the Horn are young males between the age of 20 and 35. Observers have noted an increase in the travel of families, including children and elderly persons, the majority of which are Syrians who have exercised their right of visa free travel to Sudan. Some have chosen to settle in Sudan or Ethiopia, though the poor economic situation leads many to continue their journey to a third destination.

As shown in the figure presented in the introduction (see Figure 1), despite the fact that it is Sudanese that make up the greatest of the displaced population in the region, it is Eritreans who are the nationality from the Horn of Africa who are landing in Europe in the greatest numbers, followed by Somalis. Several ethnic groups of Sudanese are of particular importance in their flight from the country as a result of general conflict and persecution. Notably these are persons from Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. As a result of their perceived legitimacy as refugees, individuals from throughout Sudan including from the centre, the north and the east sometimes claim to be Darfuris or from South Kordofan or Blue Nile in order to increase their chances of successfully claiming asylum once abroad.

In transit, most Eritreans proclaim to be members of the Beni Amer ethnic group, an ethnicity split between Sudan and Eritrea, which allows migrants to utilise ties of kinship to arrange their travel and any subsequent support between the two countries. Interestingly, individuals who observers were clearly able to identify as Tigrinyas – due to their language and religious beliefs – would also proclaim to be members from the Beni Amer ethnic group. It was believed by those interviewed that, if arrested at the border, the police would take the Beni Amer to the refugee camps in Eastern Sudan whilst Tigrinyas were more likely to be arrested and sent back to Eritrea. This belief centred on an understandable fear that they would be persecuted for religious affiliation, as most Beni Amer are Muslims whilst Tigrinyas are typically Christians and most of the countries in the region, in particular Sudan, are Muslim. There have been human rights abuses within Sudan relating to the freedom of religion. Cases include the arrest and death sentence, though later overturned, of Meriam Ibrahim<sup>15</sup> and the arrest of Christian pastors.<sup>16</sup>

This argument was wholly rejected by a smuggler interviewed in Khartoum, who denied that individuals would be treated differently if they were arrested at the border due to their ethnicity or religious beliefs. But subsequent instances where Eritrean and Ethiopian Christian migrants were kidnapped or killed by ISIS over the course of 2015 has further reinforced this identity swapping.<sup>17</sup> Ethiopians sometimes claim to be Eritrean due to the higher

15 Amnesty International, “Meriam Ibrahim Freed from Death Row in Sudan,” 24 July 2014: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/meriam-ibrahim-freed-death-row-sudan-apostasy-pregnant-motherz>

16 Amnesty International, “Urgent Action: Two South Sudan Pastors Risk Death Penalty,” 9 June 2015: [https://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/two\\_pastors\\_in\\_sudan.pdf](https://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/two_pastors_in_sudan.pdf)

17 See, for example, Laura Angela Bagnetto, “Ethiopians, Eritreans shocked by Islamic State murders,” RFI, 20 April 2015: <https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/amp.rfi.fr/en/africa/20150420-ethiopians-eritreans-shocked-islamic-state-murders?client=safari> or Gianluca Mezzofiore, “ISIS in Libya: 86 Eritrean refugees kidnapped by Islamic State outside Tripoli,” IB Times, 5 June 2016: <http://ibtimes.co.uk/isis-libya-86-eritrean-refugees-kidnaped-by-islamic-state-outside-tripoli-1504608>



possibility of success in their asylum claims in Europe. There have, however, been no studies done of the ethnic grouping of Eritreans upon arrival, which would perhaps offer a greater insight into the perceived validity of religious or ethnic persecution.

Aspirations and the extent to which a culture of migration that has developed in the Horn over the last few decades should not be under-estimated. Various diaspora communities, which have been living abroad, sometimes for decades, have obtained higher levels of education and work experience, giving them better access to jobs within international organisations operating in the region, and to capital to invest in local business and homes. Many hold foreign passports that afford them the freedom to go back and forth between the region and somewhere else, a luxury that is highly coveted by youth who feel trapped either within their countries or within the confines of restricted life as a refugee. Thus, not only is there little prospect of a future within the region, members of the Diaspora who left a generation before reinforce a powerful image that the best way, if not the only way, to be successful is to leave.

It was universally the case that every migrant has sought the services of a smuggler at some point along their journey. Three interlinked factors justified the use and reliance of smugglers to move irregularly: firstly, the reason for their departure requires a covert departure from their country of origin, where they fear violence or political persecution; secondly, the perceived lack of legal avenues afforded to them, including due to the inability to secure national identification documents that are a pre-requisite to allow access to formal and legal options for migration; and finally, in the cases of certain nationalities, the recruitment of smugglers was mandatory to mitigate the risks associated with illegally crossing borders as well as the dangers faced whilst in a foreign country, particularly those that are hostile to migrants.

In recent years, the increasing rate of migration has led to unprecedented levels of profits being made by these networks. Those interviewed noted proliferating signs of visible wealth in Khartoum, for example, which was directly associated with the smuggling economy. Efforts by organised groups to smuggle individuals have proved successful largely due, but not limited to, the region's long, porous borders and the broad-based corruption practiced. The success of groups practicing smuggling, and the financial rewards associated with it, has furthermore led to the development of criminal networks and increased competition that has resulted in a growing prevalence of abusive smuggling and human trafficking in the region.

***"It was universally the case that every migrant has sought the services of a smuggler at some point along their journey."***

That said, however, it is important to note the low standards of human rights observed by the governments in the region. In Sudan and Eritrea, practices of abuse are equally as common amongst security officials as they are by smugglers. The Sudanese 2010 National Security Act grants immunity for all security agents during the carrying out of their work, and the authorities are known to torture and mistreat individuals perceived as criticising the government or their policies. Eritrea similarly has seen institutionalised levels of violence, abuse and sexual exploitation by officers of recruits within the country's indefinite national service. Independence of the media, judiciary and civil society in most of the countries of the Horn (Somalia being the exception) is, in general, extremely restricted. Journalists, students and others have been targeted by repressive regimes and migrants caught fleeing for political or economic reasons have expressed credible fear of reprisals.

## Supply of Smugglers

It is simply never hard to find a smuggler in the region or throughout the journey. Given the levels of insecurity in the Horn of Africa region, the lack of legal mobility options due to repressive states and low levels of regional cooperation, as well as the challenging terrain of the Sahel Sahara, the need for a smuggler is ubiquitous. Irregular movement is highly commoditised, and smugglers run the gamut of the smuggling industry, from small localised players, through to hierarchical transnational players. Overall, however, examples of the 'benign' smuggler are rare in the Horn, Sahel and Maghreb, and have become increasingly scarce on the now booming routes to Europe and along the borders where protests are flaring.



Social networks and social media are absolutely critical for the functioning of human smuggling networks. They are an enabling feature for both migrants and smugglers, and a crucial safeguard around which the industry is built. Analysis in Sudan, for example, showed that a prospective migrant will have been, in one way or another, already connected to people smugglers through their social networks – either through ties of friendship, family or kinship. Migrants obtain recommendations and contact details about smugglers from their friends, or from those they know who had previously and successfully made the journey.

Smugglers use their social networks to source potential clients. Smugglers encourage past clients to recommend them to others and they also employ brokers in key locations such as refugee camps to entice further individuals. Social media is of particular importance as smugglers 'advertise' and market their services. Apps such as WhatsApp are said to be used to send around images and stories of successful migrants in western countries. In one particular text chain we saw, images of Eritreans, Ethiopians and Sudanese well dressed and residing in cities including London, Paris and Berlin were accompanied by text noting the ease of their journey and their new life and higher standards of living.

Once a migrant has made contact with a smuggler or a local network of smugglers, they are inadvertently connected to a larger and more sophisticated transnational organised network. This network ensures, for example, that an individual arriving from Eritrea or Ethiopia is put in touch with another smuggler in Sudan, or that those leaving Sudan for Egypt or Libya are in turn put in contact with another in a chain that stretches into and across Europe.

This reliance upon social networks will only increase as governments attempt to clampdown on the practice. Smugglers, fearing their infiltration by security agencies, are now requiring potential clients to display sufficient levels of proof of their identity and their intentions, often in the form of recommendations and references from those already known to the smuggler.

There are a panoply of people working in, supporting or profiting from human smuggling in each of the systems. The trickle-down effect of this industry is manifold, and thus its importance as part of an informal economy, and the legitimacy it has as a livelihood and resilience structure cannot be under-estimated.

### Overview of the Market Analysis

System	Key Actors	Market Consolidation	Price	Violence
<b>Horn of Africa</b>	<p>Government prompted and enabled, through corruption and abuse of power.</p> <p>Fragmented market, many players, very few distinct players emerge.</p> <p>Eritreans and Sudanese seem dominant in the organised networks.</p> <p>Widespread involvement of the community.</p> <p>Particularly focused around refugee camps.</p>	<p>Very low. A few big players running networks, but a massive industry which includes a variety of actors of varying degrees of organisation, depending on the specific borders.</p> <p>The most professional routes are out of Eritrea, where levels of corruption are exceptionally high, and in Sudan which serves as a central clearing house for all routes.</p> <p>The growing professionalisation of the industry and commoditisation of migration is evident, including in routes going south.</p>	<p>Significant regional disparities depending on specific borders and the current environment.</p> <p>Prices are high to leave the most repressive source states: Eritrea, Sudan.</p> <p>Travelling around the region is relatively cheap.</p> <p>Trips across the Sahel towards Europe cost several thousand dollars, more once extortion costs have also been factored in.</p>	<p>For travel within the region, violence is relatively low.</p> <p>Moving north, most migrants expect to see some form of physical violence in their journey.</p> <p>The practices of forced or exploitative labour and sex are commonplace.</p> <p>Instances of organ trafficking and extreme abuse are rumoured and have occurred historically.</p> <p>Violence against migrants from the region (e.g. ISIS) have caused widespread concern.</p>



<b>Sahel System</b>	Toubou Toureg Local Libyan militia groups	Increasingly controlled by the Toubou, displacing Toureg off key routes, limited space for new actors given terrain.	Prices have fallen noticeably, and it is only quantity that is sustaining the levels of profits in the market. The migrant trade is taxed by the panoply of local control zones.	Use of violence and exploitation such as forced labour is commonplace but not extreme. The journey itself is inherently dangerous and has a high mortality rate that smugglers do little to offset.
<b>Maghreb Coast</b>	Libyan militia groups Eritrean and Sudanese networks Vast system of brokers Egypt: facilitated by state officials, local corruption. Lead by Arabs, Egyptians / Palestinians / Syrians.	Libya: as complicated as Libya's politics, and plays into financing politically linked and neutral militia groups. Average 2,000 departing a day from various points. Rising organisation of the Eritrean networks in Libya. Connection between Libyan and Egyptian networks.	Prices from Libya are falling to very low levels to make the crossing, but extortion driving the price up for migrants. Egypt, includes higher end services, as well as pay as you go. Corruption costs a higher percentage than elsewhere.	Highly violent, militarised and commoditised in Libya. This is having a deterrent effect on demand. In both localities, it is the migrant who is criminalised rather than the smuggler.







Hundreds of Eritreans are smuggled over the border to Ethiopia every month. Photo: CDE, Eritrean Press, September 2016.

## A: Horn of Africa System

The smuggling networks facilitating movement across the Horn of Africa were operative long before the Syrian crisis captured international headlines and brought migration towards Europe to the forefront of political agendas. Consequently, these smuggling groups are more sophisticated than those in the west of Africa, for example, which only gained a high degree of organisation following the Syrian influx.<sup>18</sup> In the Horn, such networks have performed a key role in facilitating the movement of a steady stream of refugees fleeing repressive regimes in Eritrea and conflict in Somalia, as well as assisting economic migrants move regionally and internationally.

A lack of legal avenues for movement push migrants towards smuggling networks. It is worth noting and highly indicative, that migrants from Eritrea and Sudan pay similar amounts to be smuggled out of their own states, as they do for the entire journey to Europe. However, even where legal routes exist, as is the case for Ethiopian migrants wishing to travel into Sudan or Djibouti, administrative hurdles, particularly the requirement to demonstrate the migrant's economic self-sufficiency and ability to finance the journey, mean many migrants hire the services of smugglers to avoid these obstacles. Consequently, the existing legal options for migration systems typically marginalise those most requiring mobility in order to survive, and swell the coffers of smuggling networks further.

From the Horn of Africa the most popular overland route towards Europe is through Sudan and Egypt, or through Sudan into Libya. Movement across an alternative route, into Yemen and then across to the Gulf states, has decreased due to increased border control initiatives implemented by Saudi Arabia and its neighbours. The third, and least well researched, route leads through Kenya and towards countries in southern Africa, including Uganda and Tanzania but principally South Africa.

### A1: Route across Sudan

The most popular migration route from the Horn of Africa into Europe is across Sudan. Those travelling to or from Sudan are typically Eritrean, Sudanese or Ethiopian, with a notable minority of Somalis. Sudanese migrants are predominantly fleeing regions of conflict or as a result of persecution, they are therefore predominantly from Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. However, the numbers of migrants from these regions may be inflated as Sudanese from other areas of the country are known to claim to be from these regions to increase the possibility of being granted refugee status.

18 Peter Tinti and Tom Westcott, "The Niger-Libya corridor: smugglers' perspective," Institute for Security Studies, November 2016.







**Figure 6:** District map of Sudan with neighbours

Mass exodus of Somalis to Yemen, Ethiopia and Kenya has not been fully reflected in secondary migration towards the West, and Somalis continue to form a minority of migrants trying to reach Europe. Those that do try to reach Europe, rather than travelling into the Yemen as discussed above, typically travel into Ethiopia over the Tug Wajaale border crossing between Somaliland and Ethiopia. Prospective Somali migrants are often tempted into movement by the offer of free travel into Sudan, where the first payment is then expected. At this stage a ransom is often demanded. Alternatively, Somali migrants are drawn into bonded labour to pay off their 'debt'. A government official reported a significant increase in house sales in the Somali towns of Beletweyne and Buroa was reportedly to finance either a migrant's journey or a ransom payment following a journey on a 'travel-now-pay-later' scheme.<sup>19</sup> These schemes have become more popular and more common in recent months.

Eritreans, although they only constitute a small proportion of the total population of the Horn of Africa, represent 25% of arrivals in Italy across the Mediterranean Sea in 2015.<sup>20</sup> The Eritrean diaspora is larger than a quarter of the domestic Eritrean population, creating a further pull for Eritreans in contact with migrants who have successfully completed their journeys. Remittances form a key element of the Eritrean economy, formalised by the 2% diaspora tax introduced by the Government to fund national reconstruction. This tax appears to be a contradictory policy, as the Government officially recognises the role of Eritreans that have emigrated, while forbidding further movement.

Most Eritrean migrants proclaim to be members of the Beni Amer ethnic group. The Beni Amer are split between Sudan and Eritrea, allowing individuals to utilise ties of kinship to arrange their travel across the border. Reportedly

19 Findings of a field research study commissioned for the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime in August 2016.

20 UNCHR figures, as reported on in RMMS Q1 2016 Report, available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/trends/RMMSQ1Trends2016.pdf>



Tigrinyas also proclaim to be members of the Beni Amer group due to a belief that they would be taken to refugee camps in Eastern Sudan if captured rather than sent back to Eritrea, a belief refuted by Eritrean smugglers interviewed.

Eritrea considers itself to be a country at war with Ethiopia over the unresolved land dispute on the Ethiopian border, centred around the city of Badme, declared by the UN to be Eritrean but currently controlled by Ethiopia. This border dispute has resulted in mass deportations of Eritrean citizens from Ethiopia, and Ethiopian citizens from Eritrea. As a result of this conflict, the Eritrean Government has declared a state of emergency, and used this justification to suspend National Elections, effectively creating an absolute presidential dictatorship and a high level militarisation of state and society, subordinating tertiary education and swathes of the economy to the military. In 2002 President Afewerki lifted the 18-month time limit on mandatory National Service, making it indefinite, leading a number of Eritrean migrants to describe the National service enrolment as a form of slavery. A number of small-scale student protests have equated post-school life in Eritrea to a form of living death due to this indefinite enrolment. Movement, and escape from the National service obligations is therefore perceived to be the only source of freedom.

Crossing from Eritrea to Ethiopia is considered as an act of treason, and a shoot to kill policy is implemented across the heavily militarised border with Ethiopia. Migrant smuggling is therefore embedded into the core of survival in the country in its present context.

The greatest movement of Eritrean migrants is overland to Ethiopia and Sudan, with a more limited number travelling across Djibouti to the Yemen across the route described above. Eritrean migrants and refugees travel south out of the country, often from large refugee camps, into Ethiopia by border crossings at Humera and Metemma, often via Gondar or Bahar Dahr. Since early 2014, international protection officers in the camps have noted a significant rise in secondary migration by Eritrean refugees to Europe across Sudan and Libya. The presence of smugglers recruiting in the region's refugee camps has become ubiquitous.<sup>21</sup>

There are presently two principal routes from Eritrea into Sudan - the "northern" and "southern" routes. The northern route, known to be more dangerous as migrants are often captured by traffickers, transits through areas settled by the Hadandawa towards Kassala, whilst the southern route involves the migrant crossing near to Al-Lafa and Jira through Al-Sawagi South and Mastoora areas. The relatively amicable relations between Eritrea and Sudan mean the border is less heavily militarised, however the terrain is still harsh, and the lack of rule of law and the presence of militia groups mean that risk of capture by traffickers is greater.

***"Eritrea considers itself to be a country at war with Ethiopia over the unresolved land dispute on the Ethiopian border, centred around the city of Badme, declared by the UN to be Eritrean but currently controlled by Ethiopia."***

### **Smuggling Structures – The Consolidation of a Fragmented Market?**

It is well established that the smuggling routes out of the Horn of Africa are the most established and criminalised of the migration routes leading from Africa to Europe. However, sources interviewed for this report offer contradictory assessments of the degree of organisation operating across networks. Although some interviewees suggested that the smuggling industry was highly organised, evidence does not seem to support this, suggesting that currently market consolidation is low, with numerous loosely interconnected players operating across a large-scale industry. Players may be linked through kinship or through repeated co-operation, they are predominantly independent, with only a small segment of the market characterised by a high degree of coordination.

However, although sources disagreed on the market's current state, and it is possible to identify indications a shift towards greater consolidation. This is suggested by the growth of the full package payment system, where

21 Interview, former UNHCR protection officer, Addis Ababa, May 2016.



payment for a journey from the Horn of Africa to Europe is given at the beginning of the journey, together with the increasing speed of the journey times, the 'travel now, pay later' schemes and the longer routes being offered in source countries such as Somalia.

Interviewees agreed that the proportion of the market operated by organised criminal networks is increasing as the profits generated and the scale of migration flows involved are facilitating their recruitment, corruption and laundering activities. The sharing of facilities by rival smuggling groups in Sudan and Libya further supports the view that there is a higher centralising power starting to shape the market. Recent research by international organisations and Italian law enforcement officials corroborate the belief that the routes are increasingly coordinated.<sup>22</sup> The increasing power of organised networks is likely to result in fewer more established players, and higher barriers to entry. Interviews with a number of diplomats and law enforcement officials in East Africa and the Horn suggested that there are five to ten highly organised networks with control centres in Europe, Libya, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. This was corroborated by research in Libya.

Trafficking groups are reportedly better organised than smuggling networks and often linked to highly criminalised transnational structures which facilitate the onwards sale of the migrant.

Ethiopia, and principally its capital Addis Ababa, acts as the key crossroads for migration out of the Horn of Africa, predominantly from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. Migration out of Ethiopia started in earnest in the period of military dictatorship between 1974 and 1999, and has continued in ebbs and flows to the present day, where movement of Ethiopians through Sudan and Libya towards Europe has been increasing since early 2014.

Mass migration from a number of areas in Ethiopia has created a 'migration culture'. One interviewee pointed to Sama Senbet, a town in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, as a notable example of the importance of migration profits to the local economy, stating that all houses were built using remittances sent back from illegal migrants, highlighting the uniform architectural style of the town as evidence of this overseas influence. Ongoing Oromo and Amhara protests have served to fuel further movement into Sudan as well as toward Yemen, in which Tigrayan in an effort to escape violence and government crackdowns. Widespread civil protests caused the Government to declare a state of emergency in October 2016.

Travel within Ethiopia is unrestricted, and some Ethiopians may use formal channels such as temporary visas to cross the border into Sudan, only contacting smugglers in Khartoum to facilitate the onwards journey into Libya or Egypt. In contrast, the vast majority of Eritreans crossing into Sudan from Ethiopia use the services of smugglers, having already needed their help to cross the heavily militarised Eritrean border. The areas near the border crossings of Metemma and Humera serve as the key entry points from Ethiopia into Sudan.

### Air Travel

This report focusses on the overland and sea routes towards Europe, however a number of migrants interviewed also reported travelling to Europe by plane. The price for an irregular Sudanese passport with a Turkish visa and exit stamp was reported to be \$1,400 by an Eritrean migrant. Further payment of \$1,700 was then required in Turkey for accommodation across a period of roughly eight months and onwards travel to Greece. More typically Eritreans wishing to fly out of Sudan with Eritrean passports together with Turkish visas and Sudanese residency permits reportedly pay between \$5,000 and \$6,000.

A number of schemes involving the issue of Turkish student visas, visa requests from members of parliament for their families or international company managers for their junior staff all operate to facilitate travel between Horn of Africa States and Turkey. All point to significant collusion with state officials.

22 Sahan/IGAD ISSP, "Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route," February 2016, Sahan, IGAD Security Sector Programme: [https://www.igad.int/attachments/1284\\_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.igad.int/attachments/1284_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf)



## A2: Sudan

Geographically located as the gateway between North Africa and the Horn of Africa, Sudan is a key destination for East African migrants as well as a necessary transit country for irregular migrants traveling towards Egypt, Libya and possibly then on to Europe. Sudan's long and porous borders have proved difficult to secure, which, together with endemic corruption across all levels of government, has allowed smuggling groups to flourish. Sudan, and in particular Eastern Sudan, is characterised by a high degree of mobility and fluidity of both the native population, primarily from Darfur, South Kordofan or Blue Nile, and migrants transiting through. The Sudanese government has long denied that migrants smuggling and trafficking is a problem, however under mounting international pressure, in 2014 authorities passed human trafficking legislation. To date no legislation specific to smuggling exists, and there is little indication that the government recognises the distinction between the two crimes.

Resource-rich Eastern Sudan has attracted large scale migration, but the centralisation of Sudanese power systems has left the majority of the population marginalised and impoverished, and consequently highly dependent on the informal market. Ethnicity plays a significant part in framing socio-economic relations, with the Beja constituting an estimated 50% of the population, and a number of Arab tribes, including the Rashaida and Zibeidya, comprising the majority of the rest. Ties of kinship bind these groups to others across the borders in Egypt, Eritrea and Ethiopia, forming the underlying networks of cross-border trade that are then leveraged for migrant smuggling.

Demand for smugglers in Sudan from East African migrants has increased as a number of regional governments have implemented enhanced restrictions upon migrants obtaining legal exits from their country of origin or procuring visas for their country of destination, and established increasingly draconian border control methods.

Most migrants enter Sudan through its eastern borders, primarily through the areas of Kassala (which borders Eritrea) and Gederef (bordering Ethiopia), where large poorly controlled refugee camps facilitate evasion of government interference.

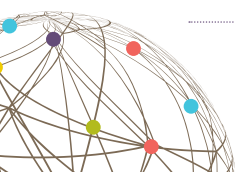
A significant proportion of migrants smuggled or trafficked into Sudan, almost exclusively Eritrean and Ethiopian together with a notable minority of Somali, travel to Khartoum before securing onwards travel. Migrant smugglers facilitating flows directly from Eastern Sudan to Libya or Egypt typically bypass Khartoum, moving migrants through the River Nile state either to the Red Sea State, where they will continue to Egypt, or to the city of Dongola in the Northern State which borders both Egypt and Libya. In Dongola the path bifurcates with some migrants travelling north towards Egypt and others northwest to Libya.<sup>23</sup>

### The Rashaida

The Rashaida ethnic group, a nomadic and insular community originally from Saudi Arabia, are perceived to dominate the people smuggling and trafficking industry in Sudan.

The Rashaida predominantly reside in western Kassala in the border regions with Eritrea and typically possess multiple citizenships, making them highly mobile communities and perfectly placed to conduct cross-border trade, particularly the smuggling of goods and people. Originally the Rashaida were dual smugglers, moving goods into Eritrea and people back into Sudan, leaving them at refugee camps or handing them over to smugglers specialising in migrant transport. However, upon noting the significant profits derived from the migrant smuggling business, more recently the Rashaida have focused on migrant smuggling and trafficking, which has heightened tensions between the Rashaida and both the groups previously dominating migrant smuggling, including freight company employees and owners, and those most affected by their activities, particularly the Ben Amir.

23 Interviews in Sudan, August 2016.



The Rashaida have consolidated their grip on the regional migrant smuggling industry by entering into agreements with strategic partners, including the Bedoiun [in Eritrea]. The Rashaida are known to be heavily involved in the kidnap and trafficking of migrants, and there are allegations that they are also involved in the organ trafficking industry.

Although only small number of the Rashaida are believed to be involved in the smuggling trade, the perception is likely multiplied by the fact that many migrants confuse Zibeidya smugglers, also originally from Saudi Arabia, with the Rashaida they are similar to.

### A3: Sudan to Libya or Egypt

From 2002 to 2013 Egypt has acted as a key transit route to Sinai, however this route has decreased in popularity since Israel completed its frontier with Egypt in 2013 (it was raised by 1m in March 2016) and the Sudanese authorities increased their attempts to disrupt this route due to concerns it posed a possibly threat to national security.

Over the past year multiple sources confirmed that an active push is taking place in Khartoum promoting Egypt as a safer route than traversing Libya, which seems to be supported by the data collected by border officials in Egypt and Italy.

Smugglers are allegedly re-routing migrants from Eastern Sudan and Khartoum to Darfur and then through Chad into Libya. Migrants along this new route are predominantly Eritreans and Ethiopians, together with Darfuris, while smugglers operating in Darfur and Chad are principally Zaghawa and Toubou. This is of particular concern because several Eritrean networks known to be involved across these routes between Sudan and Egypt have a history of human trafficking in the Sinai at its peak between 2009 and 2014.

### A4: 'Southern Route' through Kenya to South Africa or other southern states

85% of irregular migrants currently in Kenya are from Somalia or South Sudan, however the number of Ethiopian migrants is on the rise, principally constituting economic migrants travelling through Kenya to South Africa. The Kenyan government has been increasingly hostile to the Somali refugee population due to growing fears of cross-border Al-Shabaab infiltration. In May 2016, the Kenyan Government announced plans to increase the speed of its repatriation plan for Somali refugees. The threatened closure of Kenya's sprawling Dadaab refugee camp in late 2016, known to act as the hub for southwards smuggling networks and home to at least 263,000 Somalis, engendered a return of many Somalis to Somalia. This flow may cease following the Kenyan High Court ruling declaring the government's order to shut the camp invalid. However, as the situation in Somalia remains highly unstable, with Al-Shabaab mounting successful attacks in Mogadishu,<sup>24</sup> and regaining key towns in South Central as AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) troops withdraw,<sup>25</sup> this suggests that the prospects for sustained reintegration of the Dadaab returnees and other Somalis is limited, and that they will be seeking to travel out of Somalia again.

Smuggling networks operating across this route are reportedly loosely inter-connected and largely national – groups typically co-operate across borders to facilitate movement rather than functioning trans-nationally. Demand for smugglers is high - 96% of irregular migrants interviewed by the RRMS in South Africa admitting to using smuggler services when transiting Kenya.<sup>26</sup> The average price cited by migrants for journeys between the Horn of Africa and South Africa was \$3,300, pointing towards high prices and an extremely lucrative industry. The Kenyan government is increasingly shaping policy regarding refugees through a counter-terrorism lens, however heightened risks appear to have had little effect on smuggling networks other than to drive the prices higher.

24 For example, Al Jazeera, "Somalia: Al-Shabaab attack at Nasa Hasblod hotel kills 15," 26 June 2016: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/blasts-gunfire-hit-hotel-somalia-mogadishu-160625135956380.html>

25 Aaron Brooks, "Somalia: Al-Shabaab seizes another town as peacekeepers withdraw," East Africa Monitor, 26 October 2016: <https://eastafricamonitor.com/somalia-al-shabaab-seizes-another-town-peacekeepers-withdraw/>

26 Research conducted for an RRMS paper to be published shortly. Interviews conducted with 287 migrants who had transited Kenya and were now residing in South Africa.



Little research has been done into this southern migration flow, although it appears to be a growing phenomenon, estimated to involve between three and six million migrants as if the beginning of 2016,<sup>27</sup> that merits further study. Such an analysis falls outside the scope of this report, however could be a fruitful source of further investigation in seeking to find alternatives to migration towards Europe.

## A5: Route into Yemen to the Gulf

Strict border controls across the Gulf region, together with an 1,800 km fence constructed along the Saudi border with Yemen has diminished migration flows across this route, displacing movement into the route across Sudan to Europe. This displacement was further encouraged by the Saudi government's declaration that the state would no longer tolerate illegal migrants, and subsequent deportation of over many illegal migrant workers, including 150,000 undocumented Ethiopian workers from 2013 onwards. Although this has acted as a deterrent for many, a notable proportion of those deported are known to have repeatedly attempted to re-enter Saudi Arabia to continue the lives they were forced to leave upon deportation. This is particularly true as many Somali migrants deported reside in the increasingly prevalent IDP camps in terrible conditions.

The resurgence of the Yemeni conflict since December 2013 contributed to a further dwindling of migrant numbers along this route, and displaced over a tenth of the Yemeni population, triggering a movement of Yemeni and Somali migrants out of the Yemen into other countries in the Horn of Africa. However, the conflict has also engendered a different migratory flow – a significant number of migrants, 85% Ethiopian and 15% Somali as of the first quarter of 2016,<sup>28</sup> are reportedly smuggled or trafficked into Yemen, the majority of whom seek onward transport to Saudi Arabia in search of employment opportunities.

The Somali government has been increasingly vocal in its support for the Yemeni military in its struggle against Yemeni Shia Houthi rebels, allowing the United Arab Emirates (UAE) use of its air space to facilitate battling the Houthi rebels and reportedly sending Somali troops to fight in the conflict.<sup>29</sup> Recent statements by the Somali president portrayed the conflict as a Shia uprising against a legal government, which it is the duty of Arabs to protect. In line with this, the migration route into Yemen has benefitted from Somalis being smuggled into Yemen to fight in the conflict.

A more recent phenomenon has for other African nationals, predominantly Ethiopian Oromo, to be recruited or forced into the war in Yemen. Ethiopians and Somalis are prized as good fighters costing under half of Yemeni wages and therefore targeted by militia groups wishing to enhance their troops. Yemeni officials interviewed in the research period suggested that Ethiopians are easy to 'recruit', partly because Ethiopians, unlike Somalis, are rarely granted refugee status and are therefore particularly vulnerable to deportation and detainment. Consequently, they constitute easy prey for a wealth of smuggling and trafficking groups who hold them for ransom upon arriving in Yemen. This kidnap and trafficking market is well developed, a number of camps reportedly exist across Yemen where migrants are held awaiting ransom payments.<sup>30</sup> In January 2016, 72% of arrivals in Yemen that month reported abduction on arrival.<sup>31</sup> Upon their release by smugglers, Yemeni militia groups prey again on this vulnerability by

***"Strict border controls across the Gulf region, together with an 1,800 km fence constructed along the Saudi border with Yemen has diminished migration flows across this route, displacing movement into the route across Sudan to Europe."***

27 Regional MMS Q1 2016 Report, available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/trends/RMMSQ1Trends2016.pdf>

28 Ibid.

29 Abdalle Ahben, "Somalia lends support to Saudi-led fight against Houthis in Yemen," The Guardian, 7 April 2015: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/07/somalia-aids-saudi-led-fight-against-houthis-yemen>

30 Human Rights Watch (2014). Yemen's Torture Camps: Abuse of Migrants by Human Traffickers in a Climate of Impunity. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/05/25/yemens-torture-camps/abuse-migrants-human-traffickers-climate-impunity>

31 Regional MMS Q1 2016 Report, available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/trends/RMMSQ1Trends2016.pdf>





providing accommodation and basic pay to recruit them into the conflict, which allows migrants to pay their debts to smugglers, or fund onward or return journeys.

A significant minority of Ethiopian and Somali migrants travel through Djibouti to reach Yemen. The price requested by smugglers to facilitate the journey from Somalia across Djibouti and into Yemen is reported to be circa \$250. The journey is typically effected in several stages, and Somali nationals or ethnic Somalis based in Djibouti are the prevalent brokers used – Djibouti nationals are known to report illegal migrants to the authorities and do not appear to be involved in smuggling networks. Although traditionally most migrants crossing into Yemen transited the Red Sea, increased military presence across this route has meant that by the end of 2015, 85% of migrants crossing into Yemen from the Horn of Africa were travelling across the Arabian Sea.

Somali Arabs living in the Yemen dominate the smuggling market from Yemen into Saudi Arabia and are typically from the following clans: Isaq-Habar-Jeclo from Burco, Isaq; Habar Gidir-Ayr, Rahanweyn- Leysan, Abgaa.

Trips from Ethiopia into Bosasso in Somaliland typically cost between \$100 and \$200 and increased efforts by authorities in Somaliland to prevent Ethiopians travelling through have resulted in increased use of smuggler services. From Ethiopia, payment is usually made in Ethiopian Bir prior to crossing the border, this is changed into US Dollar (USD, \$) in Somaliland. From this point onwards, payments are dispersed between smugglers coordinating different legs of the journey through mobile phone banking transactions which are widely used across Somaliland.<sup>32</sup>

Interviews with migrants arriving on the shores of Yemen from areas of Somalia, (Somaliland and Puntland) suggest that the majority of vessels are operated by individual fishermen or transport company employees contracted by smugglers operating along the coast. Government officials in Somaliland warned that rival militias are currently vying for the right to tax smuggling networks operating across their territories.

***"Migrant smuggling across the Horn of Africa is largely enabled, and in some cases actively facilitated, by government officials. Sudanese officials and members of the police are known to act as brokers."***

### Market Analysis

Opportunities for intervention by external actors are highly limited, as the trade is highly protected, both by the government and the community.

Firstly, migrant smuggling across the Horn of Africa is largely enabled, and in some cases actively facilitated, by government officials. Sudanese officials and members of the police are known to act as brokers, together with members of the Sudanese Refugee Agency, who reported in interviews that they have repeatedly handed primarily Eritrean migrants over to smugglers. Similarly, a number of interviewees suggested that members of the Sudanese Armed Forces, National Intelligence and Security Services also co-operated with smuggling and trafficking networks, while migrants report the involvement of Sudanese airport officials in facilitating transport by air. A number of established police checkpoints across the Sudanese borders active in the prevention of drug and weapons smuggling reportedly allow migrant smugglers to pass unimpeded.

Similar collusion is reported of Ethiopian and Eritrean border officials, namely the Eritrean Border Surveillance Unit, who collect cash payments either from local brokers or drivers transporting migrants. A number of migrants travelling from Ethiopia are in possession of genuine local identification cards suggesting the involvement of government officials.

Secondly, there is widespread community involvement in the migrant smuggling industry, which appears to be markedly less stigmatised than the smuggling of other illicit goods.

32 Mixed Migration in Ethiopia: Migrant Smuggling and human trafficking networks, and Institutional Responses, October 2016.



**Payment and Prices:** The payment of smugglers can be classed into four different modalities, namely cash in hand, the use of third party guarantors (typically family members or prospective employers), through instalments via the informal hawala payment system, and the more recent 'migrate-now-pay-later' phenomenon.

The hawala system operates similarly to a banker's cheque whereby the money is deposited by the migrant prior to embarking on the journey and released on instructions from the migrant or their relatives upon safe arrival of the migrant at each leg of the journey.

Prices vary significantly depending on the specific region and borders being crossed, prices are highest for migrants seeking to leave the most repressive states, namely Eritrea and Sudan. It is worth noting that interviews with Eritrean migrants suggested that prices for travel between Asmara, the Eritrean capital, into Sudan or Ethiopia as at late 2016 are typically between \$3,000 and \$5,000. While this fluctuates based upon the time of year, the itinerary, and the territorial span covered by the journey, this is a higher cost than they are reporting paying for the trip across the Sinai towards Libya and Europe. The migrant smuggling industry is thus already lucrative for even intra-regional travel, which has laid the foundation for a well-organised industry.

Prices for crossing from Ethiopia into Sudan are significantly lower, reflecting the more permissive border control measures. The two principal crossings into Sudan from Ethiopia are at Metemma and Humera, the former is most frequently used by Ethiopians who can often obtain official documents to travel across the border and then directly to Khartoum, while the latter, located very close to Eritrea, is most popular amongst Eritreans and Tirgrinya-speaking Ethiopians from northern Ethiopia. Somalis are more likely to cross at the Metemma crossing and are unlikely to have official documents, necessitating the services of smugglers.

Irregular journeys from Ethiopia to Khartoum across the Metemma crossing currently cost between \$50 and \$200 depending on the arrangement, and whether the smugglers are bribing or bypassing authorities. Itineraries predicated on bribes are more expensive but typically perceived to be less dangerous.

Reflecting the prevalence of Eritreans who cannot cross the border legally, at the summer of 2016 journeys across the Humera crossing cost between \$200 and \$500, with prices varying depending on the final destination (Khartoum, Kassala, Gedaref, or locations just across the border), and the mode of transportation. Smugglers offering migrants transit via motorised transport for the entire journey, which requires going around checkpoints or paying bribes, charge more than those who lead migrants across the border on foot.

However, the price for travel through Sudan is significantly heightened if authorities are involved in collusion, or if the migrant is first captured and then made to pay for release. Police officers interviewed in Kassala state stated certain officers will assist migrants captured by authorities in reaching Khartoum for a fee of \$6,000. Similarly, an employee of the Sudanese Refugee Agency admitted cooperation with police officers and smugglers in moving migrants into Kassala for \$1,500.

Prices for travel directly between Eastern Sudan and Egypt or Libya ranged between \$1,000 and \$5,000 in late 2016, not including fees paid as ransoms or due to extortion. From Khartoum, a key hub for secondary migration, to Europe prices typically range between \$1,500 and \$3,000, although some reported prices as low as \$500 for travel merely into Southern Libya.

Travelling within countries is significantly less expensive, however widespread extortion and kidnap for ransom engenders a significant disconnect between prices quoted by smugglers and the total price paid by the migrant.

***"The Hawala system operates similarly to a banker's cheque whereby the money is deposited by the migrant prior to embarking on the journey and released on instructions from the migrant or their relatives upon safe arrival of the migrant at each leg of the journey."***



In regions where the majority of the population live below the poverty line, and the average monthly earnings of a worker living in a Sudanese refugee camp are under \$7, smuggling emerges as an almost uniquely lucrative trade.

**Violence:** High levels of violence are endemic throughout the Horn of Africa migration routes, with migrants reportedly experiencing severe abuse not only at the hands of smugglers, but also to traffickers to whom they are later sold.

Throughout the region there is significant overlap between smuggling and trafficking groups. A number of smuggling networks are known to effectively kidnap their clients and demand a ransom, while separate trafficking groups reportedly capture migrants before selling them on to third parties or using them for forced labour.

Human traffickers are known to be particularly active in Eastern Sudan, and more specifically surrounding the Eritrean border into Sudan in the Kassala region. Migrants hire the services of smugglers to cross the Sudanese border for a small fee and are then sold on to a third party for up to \$7000. This party may then force the migrant into employment or request a ransom for release and onwards travel.

A number of migrants are choosing to travel straight to Khartoum in order to minimise exposure to human traffickers operating in the East of Sudan. Although human trafficking and the practice of forcing migrants into indentured labour is rife in the Khartoum area, particularly targeting Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants, it is perceived to be less commonplace than in the East.

Migrants who enter into arrangements with their smugglers in which they 'travel-now-pay-later,' are particularly susceptible to abuse as the ability to meet smugglers' financial demands are essential in allowing the migrant to retain some degree of power in the relationship. Ethiopian and Somali migrants are most vulnerable to this increasingly popular payment structure as smuggling networks, keen to maintain the numbers of migrants seen in preceding years, are encouraging migrants with insufficient financial power to attempt the journey. Historically Somali migrants were predominantly tertiary educated and with significant spending power, however as smuggling networks are able to move ever larger volumes, brokers are increasingly targeting would-be-migrants from segments of society with lower income.

A similar payment structure is used by brokers in Ethiopia to encourage Ethiopian and Somali women to take positions as domestic help, namely cleaners, cooks and nannies, with Sudanese families. Payment of such brokers is to be made through the future wages of the migrants. Such migrants find themselves in indentured slavery, sometimes able to pay off their debt after a significant period of work, sometimes in a never-ending cycle of debt bondage where their debt accrues due to daily living expenses unfunded by meagre wages.

#### **'Magafe' – The one who never misses**

In Somalia both authorities and migrants reported of the activities of the 'Magafe' who were responsible for the kidnap of Somali migrants in the Libya / Sudan desert. The term 'Magafe' can be translated roughly as 'the one who never misses', however it is misleading in its allusion to a single powerful player. Instead the term is used by Somalis to refer to individual traffickers, militias, and border control officials operating across the route, though the term is most often used in relation to groups operating on the border between Sudan and Libya. Reportedly the Magafe capture migrants and extort a ransom, those who are unable to pay are brought into forced labour, such as at commercial bee keeping farms in the desert, or sold on to traffickers or organ harvesters.

The term is also used to refer to the debt-collectors at the end of 'travel-now-pay-later' schemes. This could just be an expansive use of the term but could suggest that operators specialising in the 'travel-now-pay-later' structure, although working principally with smugglers, also foster direct links with human trafficking groups in the common eventuality that the migrant fails to pay.

Kidnapping of migrants, where the smugglers contact families for ransom, is particularly prevalent in Sudan and Libya. Somali migrants, who often enter into the 'travel-now-pay-later' arrangements, have been victim to these schemes so often that the government of Somaliland attempted to restrict payments made to beneficiaries in Libya



and Sudan. These efforts have done little to stop the flow of payments, merely increasing the risk for the hawala operating illicitly and driving up the cost for the migrant.

While the levels of violence experienced at the hands of smugglers is severe, it should be emphasised that this is commensurate to the levels of violence they might also experience at the hands of government officials, should they be picked up by police, the army or other border patrols in the region, or by militia groups in areas where there are still ongoing active conflicts.<sup>33</sup> Reports of violence and sexual violence against conscripts in the Eritrean national service are well documented by human rights organisations, for example, and are often cited as a reason why people chose to migrate.<sup>34</sup>

The June 2016 deployment of over 500 vehicles carrying the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a highly independent paramilitary force with a proven track record of human rights abuse, by the Sudanese government to patrol Sudan's northern borders with Egypt and Libya appears to be causing further displacement. The RSF is reported to have made two bulk arrests of irregular migrants as part of Sudan's compliance with the European Union (EU) requests to crack down on migration,<sup>35</sup> although our field researchers working in the area found little evidence to substantiate the reports of the crackdown.

## Opportunities for Intervention

The smuggling networks facilitating the movement of migrants from the Horn of Africa, through Sudan and then onwards through Libya or Egypt to Europe are well established and will prove difficult to displace. This is partly because they are providing a service desperately required by high numbers of refugees and economic migrants moving out of repressive states across East Africa.

Furthermore, as the evidence above has shown, in almost all cases the smuggling industry is enabled and protected by actors in state institutions, the police and the military. The more challenging the border crossing, the more likely it is that state actors are engaged, and at higher levels, as these become the only ones who can guarantee safe passage. Therefore, in the East Africa region, migration and the industry that facilitates it irregularly, profit everyone in the chain: the migrants, the smugglers, the communities that support movement and the state institutions that profit from the bribes and payments.

Migrants from East Africa form a decreasing proportion of migrants travelling towards Europe, and those moving typically have a viable asylum claim. By contrast, West Africans are overwhelmingly constituting the bulk of people moving, largely for economic reasons. If the goal is to reduce the flow of irregular arrivals to Europe, policy responses should therefore focus on West African movement which overwhelm the system and trigger significant costs in terms of return and reintegration, and for East Africans, the focus should be on ensuring protection of asylum seekers, and ensuring their rights under the Refugee Convention.

Attempts to cease the flow of migrants have been rendered largely ineffective by policymakers' inability to affect the push factors driving movement. Policy responses should be predicated on an understanding that irregular migration is likely to continue to be a large-scale phenomenon in the short to medium term. In fact, given the scale of displacement in the region, it is a surprise that the numbers of those migrating towards Europe is not significantly higher.

In accepting that the increased criminalisation of smuggling is unlikely to decrease the desire for movement, the widening of legal avenues for migration empowers the migrant and makes them less vulnerable to abuse. Where legal avenues for movement exist but are characterised by administrative complexity, as is the case with Ethiopia, a simplification of the process would allow for greater regular migration and decrease demand for smugglers.

33 There have been consistent reports of sexual abuse and other violent practices in the Eritrean military over the last decade. The 2013 UN Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) report documented this in some length.

34 HRW, "Such a Brutal Crackdown: killings and arrests in response to Ethiopia's Oromo protests," Human Rights Watch, 16 June 2016: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/16/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopias-oromo-protests>

35 Sudan Tribune, "Sudan's RSF arrests 300 illegal immigrants near Libyan border," 4 July 2016: <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article59515>



Regionally there is a high level of collusion between communities and smuggling networks, and migrant smuggling is typically perceived as the provision of a service rather than a crime, both by the smugglers and the migrants, where the state and its agents are the hostile and predatory actors. In this environment, given the low levels of trust people have of the state agents and institutions, rarely is the state the best placed interlocutor through which to work. This is to suggest that, for example, communication strategies to deliver information to migrants about the risks of irregular journeys will be perceived with suspicion, rather than taken as advice; efforts to reinforce the role of border guards, police or other security personnel to investigate or close down smuggling networks and irregular movement will be met with hostility.

A factor that further exacerbates this dynamic is that the security sector of most Horn of Africa countries has a known proclivity to neglect human rights, and the risk of international investment in strengthening law enforcement action or border control results in exacerbating one of the primary drivers of human mobility in the region. Furthermore, interdiction efforts intended to restrict or reduce mobility will heighten demand for smugglers, and drive up prices as risks increase, rather than quash the industry. As the rise of the 'travel-now-pay-later' payment structure has demonstrated, rising prices do little to change the level of demand, they just increase the vulnerability of migrants unable to meet smugglers' financial requirements.

Thus, rather than attempting to prevent movement, an alternative response could be to maximise mobility on a more dispersed basis, using incentives to encourage regional countries to move towards a freedom of movement zone, or bilateral agreements, which would reduce the pressure on the current hosting states and the tension of protracted refugee situations. It is worth noting, that the displaced in the Horn are more stagnant than any other population globally: 76% are housed in camps, as compared to less than 50% of any other region or the 28% global rate.<sup>36</sup> Greater mobility within sub-Saharan Africa, with assisted programmes and host country incentives, may prove a more productive and positive investment than further trying to control movement across borders.

### The Khartoum Process

The dialogue on migration from the Horn of Africa is centred on the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative – also known as the Khartoum Process – which was launched in November 2014. The Khartoum Process endeavours “to undertake concrete actions to prevent and tackle the challenges of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants between the Horn of Africa and Europe, in a spirit of partnership, shared responsibility and cooperation.”<sup>37</sup>

The Khartoum Process overtook the African Union Horn of Africa Initiative (AU-HOAI) that had previously been the principle forum for dialogue around migration. The transition between the two initiatives resulted in a noticeable shift away from development-centric interventions aimed at improving migration management in the region, towards far more security-focused policies to promote border control.<sup>38</sup>

From what is known of the initial projects indicated for funding, which selects only four of the priorities in the ministerial declaration, it is clear that, despite being described as regional in scope, the projects seem to concentrate down to just four countries: Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. As indicated by the EU Commission Action Fiche for €40 million, which describes the EU financed support to the process, the majority of the available financing goes towards capacity building, and the action fiche indicates that this is all spent on state institutions dealing with law enforcement, the justice sector, and border security functions. In addition, the €5 million dedicated to policy

36 Philip Verwimp and Jean-Francois Maystadt, “Forced Displacement and Refugees in Sub-Saharan Africa,” Policy Research Working Paper 7517, World Bank, December 2015: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/546181468194940969/pdf/WPS7517.pdf>

37 Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process, Rome, 28 November 2014: <http://italia2014.eu/media/3785/declaration-of-the-ministerial-conference-of-the-khartoum-process.pdf>

38 Tuesday Reitano, “The Khartoum Process: A sustainable response to human smuggling and trafficking?” Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, November 2016.



harmonisation funds the efforts to promote the ratification and implementation to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) protocols, thereby also contributing to the same primary objective of taking a securitised approach to the 'challenge' of irregular migration in the region.<sup>39</sup>

There are a number of reasons to have concern about the impact of some of the activities planned under the Khartoum Process. The authors of the report assess that some of these activities can make the management of migration in the region more difficult and also impact the stability of states and the security of citizens in the region. These include:

- While in some ways the Khartoum Process offers an unprecedented opportunity, given that it brings together Eritrea and Ethiopia together in a multi-lateral forum, it must be seriously interrogated the extent to which this level of cooperation can be expected in a region where the trust between the regional states is so low that they do not share a common and functioning regional body must be seriously interrogated. Furthermore, it provides international legitimacy to states that have well-documented records of human rights abuses, and lack of compliance with international norms and standards.
- By focusing on the states as the principle interlocutor, the Khartoum Process fails to keep the interests of refugees and IDPs at heart. It not only compromises their long-term prospects, but by placing the onus on state actors to prevent irregular migration, it also fails to reinforce basic principles of human rights and protection obligations. Too often in the Horn of Africa, it is the actions of repressive regimes and state backed militias that has triggered mobility, and the programming allocations of the EU funds to build border capacity (the activity to which the bulk of funds thus far have been allocated) and equip security institutions are likely to only exacerbate this.
- Strengthening border control capacity, promoting intelligence haring and joint investigations to counter human trafficking and smuggling in a region where borders remain contested and neighbouring states are hostile is unlikely to be only used for the nominal purposes for which the investments are made. There is high risk that the Khartoum Process will be used to legitimise militarised interventions against marginalised populations, political opposition, or to exacerbate intra-state violence.
- A flaw of the Khartoum Process, albeit a common one, is that it conflates the distinct crimes of human trafficking and human smuggling into one instrument, which allows the Khartoum Process partners to take the relatively neutral and security focused actions to combat trafficking, whilst overlooking the broader requirements for suppressing smuggling and migration, and still claim to have complied with the spirit of the compact without achieving EU goals.
- The Khartoum Process is being perceived on the ground and amongst displaced populations, as confirming that the goals of all international actors and interventions are to prevent migration, which is a right that they hold tightly as an important resilience and advancement mechanism. This has reduced their trust of international actors, including humanitarian workers, and undermines any efforts of the international community to communicate and raise awareness raising amongst these communities.
- The Khartoum Process, and the EU's decision to put migration at the top of the policy agenda, creates incentives that encourage the states of both source and transit not to integrate and cater for their refugee and migrant populations within their territory,, but instead to hold refugees in a way that they are visible, counted and seen, so that they can be used as bargaining chips to gain concessions from the EU. This has had a clear backlash on the decades of discourse by the UNHCR, for example, on how to deal with the large refugee communities like in Kenya's Dadaab camp, or the Darfurian populations in Chad.

39 European Commission, "The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa: Action fiche for the implementation for the Horn of Africa window (T05-EUTF-HoA-REG09)", undated: [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/t05-eutf-hoa-reg-09-better-migration-management\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/t05-eutf-hoa-reg-09-better-migration-management_en.pdf)





This analysis suggests that some of the activities under the Khartoum Process, if performed without a robust risk assessment and mitigation, have the potential to undermine the achievement of the strategic goals of the Process which are to tackle human smuggling and trafficking in the region. There must be a continuous evaluation as to whether the negative consequences are equal to the limited possibility for success in achieving the principle goal of better managing irregular migration flows.

## B: The Sahel Migration System

The shape of the human smuggling trade across the Sahel, with hubs at Agadez in Niger, and Sebha and Kufra in Libya, is deeply entrenched in the pre-colonial history of the Greater Sahara.<sup>40</sup> However, its current form is a recent phenomenon, transformed by key regional developments, principally the fall of Muamar Gaddafi and the ensuing complex political transition, the Syrian conflict, the Mali separatist movement and the 'war on terror' in the Sahel.

These events have mutated all facets of the smuggling market - the dynamics between its key players, the levels of violence utilised, and the prices paid by migrants to smugglers. Fundamentally the migrant smuggling trade has become unprecedentedly lucrative in a region increasingly characterised by instability and poverty, placing it at the core of the regional economy and socio-political fabric.

The situation in Libya is becoming increasingly complicated, as the unity government - the Government of National Accord (GNA) - faces a number of rival governments and armed groups. There are indications that foreign actors, have commenced limited military interventions in Libya targeting the spread of ISIS. Such intervention risks triggering a flow of militants through Libya's uncontrolled southern borders, further exacerbating conflict.

Meanwhile the swollen profits of the smuggling trade continue to empower the non-state actors that control it. The Toubou have emerged as the major player in the increasingly consolidated smuggling market along the southern border of Libya. Policy actors should recognise this and seek to establish a dialogue rather than concentrating solely on supporting the GNA whose influence is scarce in southern Libya. Engaging the Toubou will be critical to any long term resolution, but must be undertaken cautiously, and with the right incentives on the table.

The initiative by the Italians to convene southern tribes around a migration dialogue is a promising development, but nuance, caution and patience are all advised. Clashes in the south remain linked to the struggle for control at the centre, and rapid and/or large injections of cash by the EU or its member states could prove destabilising. For the Toubou, political incentives and recognition may prove more potent and sustainable than financial ones.

### B1: Southern Libya Routes

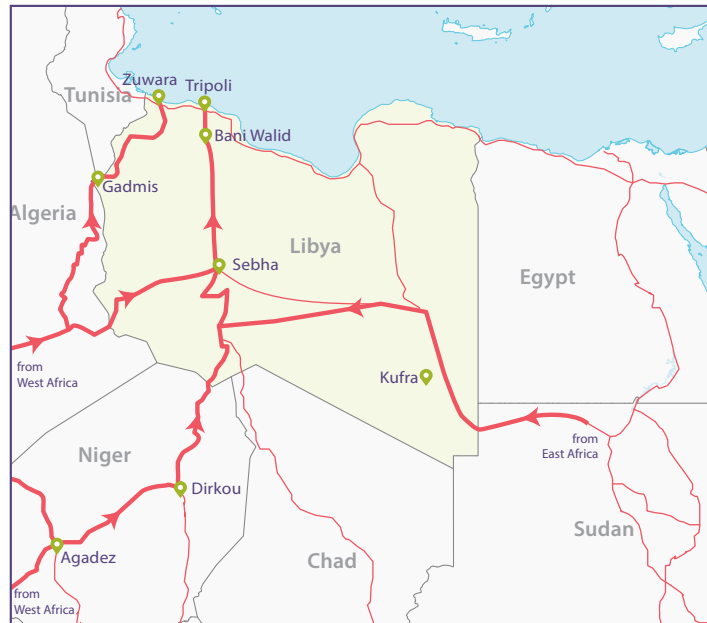
There are three key routes into southern Libya, the western route through which migrants enter from Algeria through the town of Ghat, the eastern route linking Sudan to the Libyan town of Kufra in the south east, and the central route linking Niger to southern Libya.

The western route, predominantly used by West Africans and controlled primarily by Tuareg smugglers, has declined in popularity since 2014, where conflict between Tuareg and Toubou militia fighting a proxy war on behalf of Libya's rival national governments caused the road from Ghat to the Libyan coast to close temporarily, reopening in 2016. This route requires travel through Northern Mali, where violence is ongoing, and Algeria, a strong state with relatively effective border control, and for which most sub-Saharan need a visa. Consequently migrants need to rely on the services of smugglers to pass through Algeria undetected, complicating the route for the migrants and raising the price of the journey north. The combination of these factors has served to displace more migrants towards the east and Niger.

40 A more detailed overview of the current context in Libya specifically, which is abbreviated in Section B: The Sahel Migration System, can be found in Mark Micallef's 2017 report "The Human Conveyor Belt; trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya", Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf>







**Figure 7:** Main smuggling routes through the Sahel

Those holding a West African passport can move freely among the 15 countries which constitute the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), meaning West Africans can reach Niger through lawful means of travel. This, together with instability across the western route, have meant that the central route is by far the most popular among West Africans, who form the bulk of migrants moving through Libya. The number of West Africans moving across this route is increasing sharply, with West African arrivals in Europe rising 61% in the first quarter of 2016 as compared to the same period in 2015.<sup>41</sup> Border control between Niger and Libya, together with the harsh geography of the Sahel, means that migrants arriving in Niger typically require assistance to cross the Libyan southern border into North Africa, creating a demand for smugglers. Both the western and central routes funnel migrants through the southern city of Sebha, cementing its position as a migration hub.

#### **Agadez: The rise and fall of the Sahel's smuggling hub**

Agadez, a desert city in northern Niger has long been a major hub for trans-Saharan migration. But between the period of 2012-16, the trade was booming. In 2015, the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) reported that as much as 3,000 people a week, from all over West Africa and the Horn had been congregating there to be smuggled northwards into Libya. Numerous articles in the international press documented the highly visible trade, describing the convoy that would leave every Monday night in a cloud of red dust, as around one hundred 4x4s each carrying between 25-35 migrants, would leave town with a military escort from the Nigerien army. This was the gateway out of the ECOWAS zone and into the Maghreb, for a four-day trip across the desert to Sebha, the capital of Libya's Fezzan region.

Nigerien smugglers typically handed over to Libyan partners just before crossing the border, which means that strictly speaking the Nigerien convoy drivers have committed no offense, as movement within the ECOWAS borders is legal for all West African citizens. After crossing the Libya/Niger border through or avoiding the official border crossing at Tummo, vehicles travel across the 600 km paved road that leads to the town of Sebha. The territory from the Libya/Niger border to about 20 km south of Sebha is traditionally Toubou controlled, border controls and security checkpoints across this area, abandoned by state officials, are largely Toubou controlled. Toubou smugglers

41 Regional MMS Q1 2016 Report, available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/trends/RMMSQ1Trends2016.pdf>

typically drop the migrants south of the town of Sebha, where their zone of control ends, often transporting barrels of fuel back into Niger, taking advantage of the lower price of oil in Libya.

The smuggling trade was a significant economic injection into the economy of Niger's north, a region usually driven by a combination of cross-border smuggling of subsidised goods and weapons, the profits from kidnap for ransom and protection payments of various sorts to the militia and separatist groups, and the artisanal gold trade from a lootable seam in the Sahel. The whole city and its surrounds were buzzing from migrant money – shops were full of fresh produce, the payments made for migrants for housing, food and onward travel, as well as the fruits of their casual labour as they tried to cover the costs of the journey, translated into a boom of construction, livestock investment and growth. For a region normally characterised by its instability and frictions with the central state, the migrant smuggling trade served to temporarily subdue much latent discontent.

All of this came to an end in late 2016, when the Nigerien government was finally offered the right combination of incentives and investives to close down the hub. The failure of any Mediterranean intervention to appreciably stem the tide, and the lack of obvious entry points in the failing and fractured state of Libya, led the international community to see Niger as the next gatekeeper in its growing war on irregular migration to Europe. The EU offered a €610 million contribution from the Valletta Trust Fund to support Niger's anti-smuggling efforts in December 2016. The military escorts stopped, the migrant ghettos were cleared out, and about one hundred smugglers were arrested, almost all Toubou, and all low-level drivers or brokers.

But while Agadez is a ghost town compared to previous years – the IOM estimates of numbers of arrivals in Sebha and its surrounds remained high: 44,000 were recorded between January and March 2017 – this suggests that other, more circuitous and discreet routes are being found. In an effort to avoid detection and arrest, migrants and smugglers are also avoiding main roads and travelling at night, making what was already a dangerous journey through the Sahara, even riskier. Reports of deaths in the desert have become more frequent since the restrictions have been in place.<sup>42</sup>

At the time of this report being finalised, there is little clear indication of what new routes are being used, and how they are impacting the dynamics of militia competition. There is some evidence to suggest that the importance of routes through Algeria, from Tamanrasset across to Ubari, is growing in the wake of Agadez's closure. This would favour the Toureg smugglers over the Toubou. There is also evidence that the Toubou are concentrating on routes towards the east, and seeking to open up new routes to Egypt, to compensate for the reduced profits to be made in the West. But without more concerted monitoring, the full impact on routes cannot be known.

Moreover, the impact of the collapse of the smuggling 'bubble' for the economy and security of Agadez's residents should be carefully monitored. In a region (and a country) characterised by its fragility, human insecurity, and political instability, economic shocks could well translate negatively across the spectrum. In the context of the volatile Sahel, this could have still wider reverberations.

The third key route into Libya, and most relevant for East African migrants, goes through Sudan, travelling along Libya's southern border through the towns of Qatrun, Murzuq and Umm Al-Aranib, before journeying onwards to the town of Kufra in south-eastern Libya, and either westwards along the small routes through the desert to join the major flow from Sebha, or they head northwest first to Tazirbu, Zillah and eventually Bani Walid, although this route has been challenged by increased military activity towards the end of 2016/beginning 2017.

These routes pass through the most barren heart of the Sahara Desert, where there is almost no surveillance. Security concerns across this route mean that data is scarce, however interlocutors in Sudan and security personnel

42 Ibrahim Manzo Diallo, "EU strategy stems migrant flow from Niger, but at what cost? IRIN News, 2nd February 2017: <https://www.irinnews.org/special-report/2017/02/02/eu-strategy-stems-migrant-flow-niger-what-cost>





Militias take control: Robert Young Pelton, Migrant Report

in Southern Libya state the route has increased in popularity in the last few years among East Africans, particularly among Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis travelling towards Europe from the Horn of Africa. Throughout 2016, there was a movement to divert migrants from Khartoum to Egypt, rather than Libya. This explains the drop in Eritrean asylum seekers travelling through Libya between 2016-17.

## The Political Economy of the Sahel System

The structures and patterns of the current migrant smuggling trade across the Sahel are shaped by the region's socio-economic history and its geographical landscape. The harsh topography of the Sahara has made movement and connectivity key to the way of life of its inhabitants. Nomadic tribes have long relied upon shared cultures, notably the legal tradition of Islamic law, language and ethnicities to create networks spanning vast swathes of the Sahara across which goods were transited. Clan-based affiliations, although at the core of the transit structures, were insufficient to guarantee the safe passage of goods across the significant distances involved. These bonds were therefore formalised into protection services offered by clans across their territories, which also engendered the taxation of goods transiting through areas in return for guarantee of safe passage. These characteristics have developed into key facets of the migrant smuggling trade today, where smugglers regularly pay tax at checkpoints to the dominant tribe in the relevant territory, and militias provide protection to the residents of their territory.

Until the 1960s and 70s the illicit smuggling trade, of both migrants and illegal goods, was largely a supplement to other livelihoods, predominantly pastoralism. However, a sequence of policy decisions taken by the Saharan and Sahelian states rendered pastoralism an unsustainable way of life. Consequently, previously complementary economic activities, namely illicit smuggling of goods and people, became central to communities. The concurrent strengthening of border controls in the region further damaged pastoralism by creating barriers to movement while enhancing the market economy for smuggling - as states toughened borders the obstacles to movement became greater and the need for facilitation grew. The nomadic tribes, whose networks spanned national borders, were perfectly placed to act as these facilitators.

For many communities of the Sahara, nomadism has historically been a way of life. Control over movement, most starkly in the drawing of arbitrary national boundaries, is a long-standing exercise of power by states and outside actors. The



granting and removal of citizenship for these nomadic tribes has been used by multiple states as a punitive measure, and these groups are often identified predominantly by their longstanding marginalisation as minorities in multiple states.

The smuggling of illicit goods across Libya's borders has long been a key part of the political economies of northern Niger and Southern Libya, rendered profitable by the substantial subsidies granted by Gaddafi, particularly at the end of his rule where they became an essential tool in holding onto his increasingly tenuous control structures. The current Libyan Government has, to date, been unable to reduce these subsidies for fear of exacerbating unrest and popular discontent.

The transitional governments' attempts to quash the smuggling of illicit goods has been rendered largely irrelevant by the explosion in the migrant smuggling market. It is only since circa 2011 that the smuggling of people has occupied a central position in the smuggling trade, prior to this it was a collateral activity within other forms of smuggling, which added profit but was not sufficiently lucrative enough in itself to warrant the development of professional transnational crime networks. However, in the 2012-16 period, with the displacement triggered by the Arab spring, and more specifically by the conflict in Syria, the unprecedented profits generated by facilitating the irregular movement of people have firmly embedded the smuggling industry within the regional political and security structures.

Human smuggling has become an economic mainstay of significant elements of the population involved in the trade, particularly those of the two key players in the Sahelian migrant smuggling route - the Tuareg and the Toubou - as well as the communities through which these routes pass. The Tuareg and Toubou populations each span multiple country borders, but remain a minority in each. Both are therefore well positioned to facilitate cross-border transit, and, as minorities in each state, are marginalised in each of the countries they inhabit, economically disadvantaged, and therefore particularly reliant on informal livelihoods. The Toubou and Tuareg have remained largely marginalised in the central state process, but have vied for control of Libya's southern region.

Partly by ethnography and partly by arrangement the two have experienced limited geographical overlap in their activities. A political agreement between the Toubou and Tuareg in 1875 grants the Tuaregs the territory west of the Salvador Triangle (which is situated where the borders of Algeria, Libya, and Niger intersect, and is often considered to be the hub of all trans-Saharan trafficking) and Toubous to the east of it.<sup>2</sup> Such divisions were largely respected until recently, when the improved fortunes of the Toubous have led them to challenge the status quo and to successfully consolidate their position.

Following the fall of Gaddafi, tensions have escalated. In the immediate aftermath of the Libyan revolution, 'border tribes' have clashed, in an effort to renegotiate and carve up the territory and border control between them. The Tuareg, through their existing militias and presence in the national army, would administer the western region from the town of Sebha to Ubari and Ghat, maintaining control of their traditional strongholds including parts of southern Algeria and northern Niger into southern Libya. The Toubou would administer the region eastward from Sebha all the way to Kufra, having access to the routes linking northern Niger, Chad, Sudan and parts of Egypt to southern Libya. A buffer zone established between the Toubou border post, controlled by the Toubou, and the Anay pass, controlled by the Tuareg, would be under Tuareg control.

This agreement was tested continuously, in a period of flux between 2012-15, in which there was marked levels of violence around specific smuggling hubs such as Ubari, Kufra and Sebha. The Toubou challenged the Zway in Kufra, and wrested control of the area south of Sebha from the Awlad Suleiman. As a consequence, the current migrant smuggling trade in southern Libya is heavily consolidated in the hands of the Toubou. Yet, control over the southern border continues to be marked by a volatile and violent evolution. At the time of release, the Tuareg had re-asserted control of Ghat and Ubari, while Arab tribes have secured Sebha itself. The Magarha control the onward movement from Brak Al-Shaati onwards. There remain, therefore, a number of interlocutors which must be critical to any negotiation around reducing smuggling in the south: the Toubou, the Tuareg, and the Awlad Suleiman.<sup>43</sup>

43 For the full analysis of the competing fortunes of the Tuareg and the Toubou in the Sahel in the post-Gaddafi era, see Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, "Atlantic Currents and their Illicit Undertow: fragile states and transnational security implications," George Marshall Fund of the United States, October 2015: <http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Reitano-and-Shaw-Atlantic-Currents-and-their-Illicit-Undertow-October-2015.pdf>



The Tuareg are concentrated in Eastern Mali, Northern-Eastern Niger, Southern Algeria and South-East Libya. The Tuaregs, whose roots date back to the 6th or 7th century, were active players in the trans-Saharan caravan trade, and key in its consolidation. The discovery of oil reserves in the 1960s and 1970s drew youth migration northwards in search of employment. At the same time, large numbers of Tuareg were displaced as a result of brutal state actions which targeted the Tuareg community in response to Tuareg rebellions in Mali and Niger. As a result, the numbers of Tuareg living in the Maghreb, and particularly in Libya, increased. Gaddafi encouraged Tuareg migration from Mali and Niger, favouring them politically, swelling the national army with Tuareg ranks and investing in the Tuareg areas of these source countries. In line with his own dreams of a cross-border unified Saharan region, Gaddafi politically supported Tuareg rebellions across the late 20th century and encouraged Tuareg desires to create an independent region, the Azawad. The Tuareg supported Gaddafi in the beginning of the revolution and only recently declared their affiliation to the GNA.

The Toubou are a nomadic and pastoralist tribe of African descent, whose current population of approximately 250,000 are concentrated largely in Chad, southern Libya, and northern Niger. The Toubou were victims of a consistent campaign of discrimination waged by Gaddafi which denied them access to a range of basic services including health care and education, and stripped many of citizenship in 2007. Illicit smuggling trades have therefore been key to the economic survival of the marginalised Toubou in the face of barriers to education and exclusion from much of the formal labour market. Due to their diffuse networks spanning across the Horn of Africa and Chad to the East the Toubou have been able to utilise bonds of shared kinship to gain the trust of migrants, positioning themselves as key facilitators in the migrant route into the southern borders of Libya from repressive regimes in sub-Saharan Africa. The Toubou quickly declared their affiliation to the rebels in the revolution, nominally siding with the Tobruk Government before declaring their allegiance to the GNA.



**Figure 8:** Libya smuggling networks

Moving northwards into Libya, however, the Toubou stronghold remains relatively limited in geographic scope. In Kufra, and shortly before Sebha, they need to hand over to Arab Libyan militia groups, which are more influential in the migrant smuggling route from southern Libya to the Libyan coast and then to Europe.





Arab Libyans, particularly from the Gaddadfa, Awlad Suleiman, Warfalla and Magarha tribes play an increasingly significant role in the smuggling of both goods and migrants in Sebha and to the north of it. Some may also have families in Niger, and are largely involved in dual smuggling operations whereby they move both people and goods, largely licit commodities such as household wares and food, across the southern Libyan/Niger border, predominantly transported in lorries. They conduct dual smuggling operations centred around the movement of licit goods, with migrants as a complementary profit-multiplier. Goods and migrants, between eight and 25 at a time, are transported in lorries, typically taking eight to ten days from Agadez to Sebha, making this a cheaper but less popular alternative amongst migrants. This is less true of the smaller number of migrants making the journey from Libya back into Niger, who often wish to take goods with them. Such migrants typically prefer lorries, which will charge between \$140 and \$180 for the trip back to Niger. Toubou smugglers from the South report leaving migrants either in, or just to the south of Sebha, where their role ends, sometimes handing over migrants to the Awlad Suleiman tribe, with whom the Toubou have clashed politically and militarily despite their cooperation in migrant smuggling. The Awlad Suleiman rule over everyone else when it comes to fuel smuggling, which provides them significant alternative income sources, and thus greater possibility of withdrawing from the human smuggling business.

Following the expansion of Toubou control in the South of Libya certain Arab Libyans conducting smuggling activities in the region have employed Toubou men as 'fixers' to facilitate passage through certain Toubou-controlled areas. The southern border is now out of bounds for Arab smugglers. Similarly, Toubou smugglers report leaving migrants at Sebha where they will be found by Arab Libyans, engendering a loose form of co-operation.

In the south-east of Libya, the relationship is more contested. Kufra occupies a key strategic point on the trans-Saharan road between Darfur in Sudan and Bani Walid on the Libyan coast, pivotal to both East African migrant and weapons smuggling. The Zway majority, showered with favour under the Gaddafi regime, control Kufra, and are dominant on the Eastern smuggling route from Libya's border northwards. However, the Toubou's connections across the Sahara into Sudan, Chad and Niger made them indispensable partners.

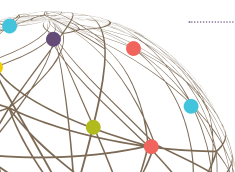
Zuwaya Arabs (Zway), historically a nomadic pastoralist tribe, form the majority in Kufra, the migrant smuggling hub in south-eastern Libya. Rivalry between the Zuwaya and the Toubou is longstanding, fuelled by decades of manipulation by Gaddafi during his reign.

Following the revolution the Toubou sought to take over the majority of the northward passage, roughly from Kufra to Ajdabiya. Fighting between Zway and Toubou commenced in February 2012, catalysed by the National Transitional Council's decision to entrust Toubou commander Abd Al-Majid with patrolling the south-eastern border, further consolidating Toubou power across the southern borders. This fighting served to displace migrants to the central route, only subsiding in early 2016 as the Toubou and Zway entered into new agreements, including standing brigades. Although continuing to collaborate with their Zway competitors the Toubou have consolidated the position of their networks through forging more integrated partnerships across the region.

Previously nominally aligned with the Tubruk government, the Toubou declared allegiance to the GNA. However, they have remained largely marginalised, failing to receive any material support from the government and excluded from the 2014 constitution drafting exercise which they boycotted due to insufficient representation.

This lack of representation, together with the prevalence of tribal conflict in post revolution Libya which makes it dangerous for Toubou to travel across many regions, has forced Toubou areas in southern Libya to function as largely autonomous states. As a result, Toubou remain unable to access many education and employment opportunities, securing the place of smuggling at the core of Toubou economic survival.

***"Toubou profit from the smuggling of migrants and illicit goods, ranging from alcohol to weapons and even taxing the cocaine trade flowing through its territories, have enhanced their military strength."***





The Toubous have 'protected' a number of the oil facilities peppered across Libya's desert, reaping further profits from extortion and leveraging their control over economically vital facilities. The Toubou have cooperated with Zinanti militias in southern Libya to guard oil resources and have leveraged their control of such resources politically - halting production capacities of the Elephant oil field at various points from the summer of 2013 onwards to negotiate upon a number of demands, including greater employment opportunities, representation in the Kufra municipal government, and an end to state sponsored discrimination. The only non-operative oil facility is located in the Kufra basin, within Toubou control, granting them further negotiating power for the future.

Toubou profit from the smuggling of migrants and illicit goods, ranging from alcohol to weapons and even taxing the narcotics trade flowing through its territories, have enhanced their military strength. The failure of any government to address Toubou grievances have led the Toubou to regroup the Toubou Front for the Salvation of Leader (TFSL), headquartered in Kufra. Isa Abd al-Majid Mansur, leader of the TFSL has been vocal in positioning the Toubou in the eyes of the international community as a possible provider of security across Libya's southern borders and a secular entity capable of resisting terrorist groups.

Were international interlocutors to accept the Toubous' offer and engage with them as a key regional partner in international counterterrorism and anti-smuggling operations this would likely re-ignite tensions between Toubous and Arabs, including the Zway, who would view this as an unacceptable challenge to the Arab dominance of the Libyan state. Any engagement with the Toubou would have a greater chance of viability if built around negotiation of political rights rather than simply putting money and equipment on the table.

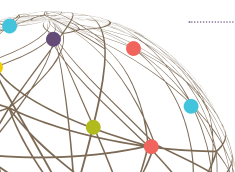
## Market Analysis

**Market Consolidation:** It is clear from the political economy analysis above that in order to address smuggling to Europe, engagement with the Toubou will be an absolutely critical element of an integrated solution, given their consolidated control over Libya's southern border, with entry points both from the East (servicing the Horn of Africa) and from the West (servicing West Africa).

The central Sahel route from Niger to Libya appears to be a lot more standardised than on the equivalent market on the east. Though Agadez has fallen away as a singular hub (see text box), the region around Agadez nonetheless remains the major through-way to Libya. This reflects the far more dispersed market out of the Horn (as described in the Horn of Africa system) where there is less consolidation around one departure hub, and multiple routes. Only Kufra stands out as a consolidated hub in the eastern Sahel, with multiple routes both into and out of it, but the Toubou's dominance in this city means that they nonetheless have considerable capacity to shape and control the nature and direction of migrant flows.

They have professionalised the relatively lax 'relay' structures that facilitated smuggling prior to 2011. Under the Toubou hegemony, both on the east and west Sahel, this system has been replaced with increasingly organised networks reaching into the Horn of Africa and spanning to the Libyan coast. Where previously migrants could negotiate their own journeys, with repeated and often protracted stops at various points along the route, there is now a much more streamlined process in place. Migrants have a lot less agency over their journey. Migrants travelling with rival smuggling groups report they are being made to share facilities and convene at key hubs, although animosity between groups remains strong. This has dramatically increased the speed of journeys across the network, particularly across the more professionalised groups serving East African migrants. This pattern suggests increasing network integration and the existence of a central influence, a power which can only be wielded by key players with significant geographic access.

***"While there are disparities in prices quoted, depending on origin country, where the payment was made, and sometimes due to the nationality of the migrant, nonetheless it is notable that the prices for the trans-Sahel legs of the journey are surprisingly low."***



While this is not to say that the Toubou are an entirely unified group, nor that they present a singular solution to ending human smuggling across the Sahara, it is safe to conclude that an improvement in the status quo is unlikely to be achieved without their engagement.

**Price:** While there are disparities in prices quoted, depending on origin country, where the payment was made, and sometimes due to the nationality of the migrant, nonetheless it is notable that the prices for the trans-Sahel legs of the journey are surprisingly low. On the western Sahel (the Agadez to Sebha route), prices paid by migrants for a seat on a 4x4 convoy average between \$200 and \$400 per person. On the eastern Sahel, while the price is rarely distinguished from the total cost from Sudan (or earlier) through to the Libyan coast, disaggregated figures suggest that it is in a similar range. This low per capita cost reinforces the fact that crossing the Sahel (particularly in the west where there is one dominant route) is an economy of scale industry where profit lies in maximising the number of people using the route.

Payment is taken in either cash or credit, whereby a guarantor, typically a relative, friend or prospective employer, guarantees payment upon arrival. Migrants are increasingly reporting paying the entirety of the price at the beginning of the journey, typically employing a *samsar* (broker) to release tranches of payment upon completion of portions of the journey. Interviews with Toubou smugglers in June 2016 suggest they are earning circa \$750 per trip. The majority of the price paid by the migrants is distributed amongst quasi state officials, Islamist gunmen and other forms of bribery or taxation.

Toyotas commonly pass reasonably close to Libyan checkpoints, re-joining the paved road after each. One soldier interviewed reported that they had stopped apprehending the Toyotas in 2013, when they were last paid, due to a lack of equipment, money and support. Eye witness accounts report that many Toyotas pass straight through checkpoints, handing bundles of cash to those manning them.

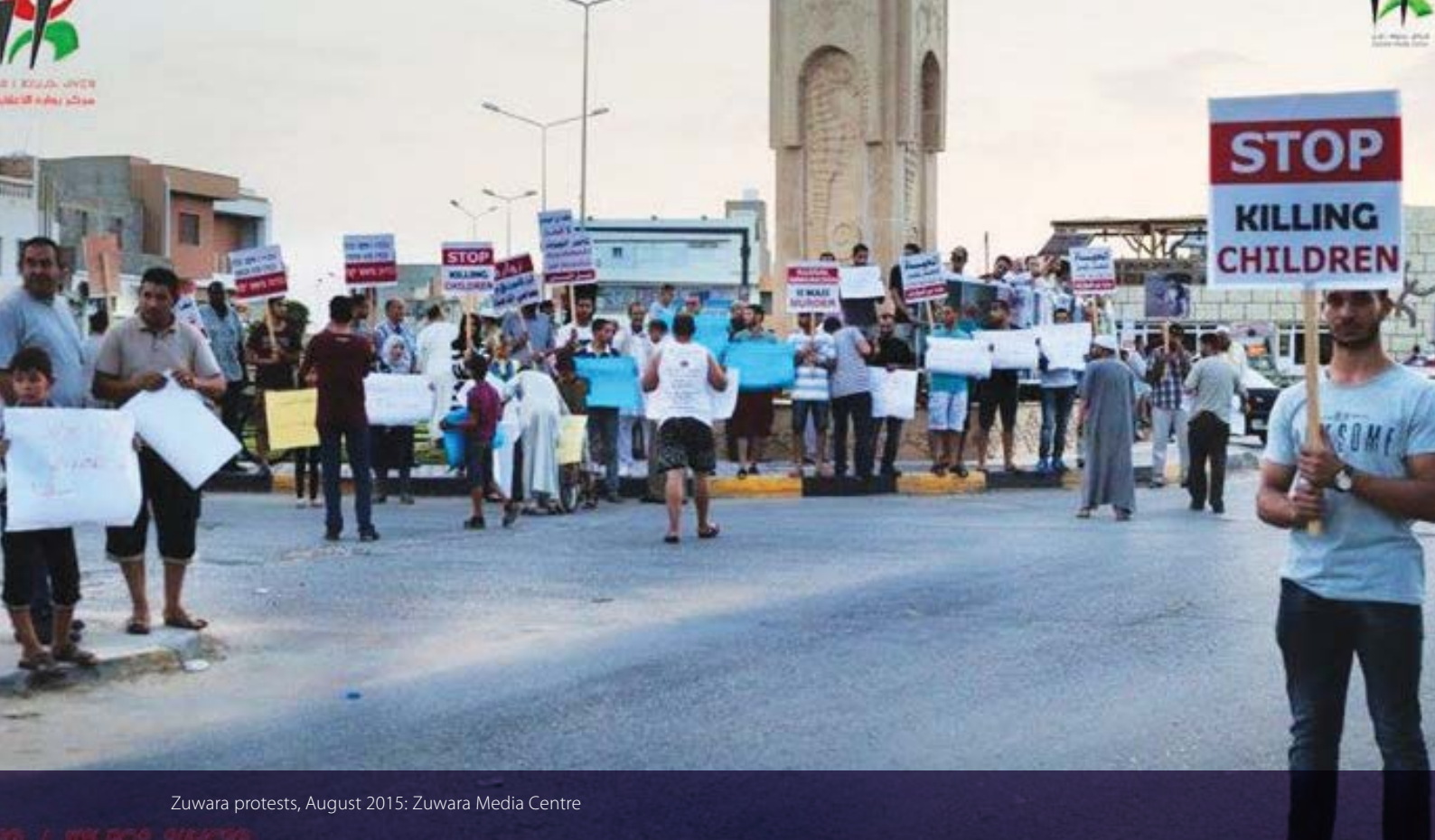
On the western route, the Nigerien army commonly escort loaded Toyotas northwards from Agadez for a slice of the profit. Smugglers interviewed in summer 2016 cited the average price paid at each Nigerien checkpoint to be between \$150 and \$250 per car, although on the return journey (from Libya into Niger) the price is sometimes paid in a portion of the smuggled goods. A number of officials and smugglers commented that the migrant smuggling trade was now a key element of the regional economy, becoming a force for stability by providing incomes where other sources have long failed. Were the flow to cease Niger's coup-prone military would lose a significant revenue stream, requiring government to reassign limited funds to appease them.

**Violence:** Historically the migrant smuggling trade across Libya's southern borders was characterised as facilitation of the right of movement, smugglers often shared ethnicities or cultural backgrounds with the migrants. Although in some cases the smugglers did little to mitigate the dangerous nature of the journey levels of violence were relatively low and migrants enjoyed a significant degree of power in the smuggler-migrant dynamic.

Following the Libyan revolution and the Syrian conflict the migrant smuggling trade has been commoditised, shifting power away from the migrant and towards the smuggler. This has been disastrous for migrant welfare - smugglers are taking fewer precautions across the inherently dangerous route, resulting in higher casualties, and increasingly using violence as a tool to extort more money or exert control.

The industrialisation of the smuggling trade has blurred the line between human smuggling and trafficking, particularly within key smuggling hubs in Libya. Kidnapping has become rife across Libya, particularly across the southern desert outposts. Reportedly desert smugglers facilitating movement across Libya's southern borders, primarily Toubou, Tuareg and Arab smugglers, drive migrants into remote desert locations and demand more money. Victims are often forced to contact family members for ransom, with torturing the migrant with family members listening on the telephone is a method used to accelerate ransom payments. If the money is not received migrants are either forced into labour, made to work in brothels or, as evidenced by the bodies of migrants littering the route, murdered. This is more common where the group of smugglers transporting the migrants has changed from the point of initial negotiation. Ransom demands typically range between \$3,000 and \$5,000. Smugglers may





Zuwara protests, August 2015: Zuwara Media Centre

sell the migrants to kidnapers who then extort a ransom, which can reach up to \$10,000. The significant difference between the ransom demanded and the falling prices being charged for smuggling elucidate why kidnapping is becoming an increasingly favoured source of income across criminal groups in Libya.

In the south of Libya, Sebha has become renowned for kidnapping. Migrant reports of being captured and forced into indentured labour, sexual servitude and debt bondage abound. Many report being held in quasi-official detention centres. The use of these centres by migrant smugglers is long established, however the infiltration of such facilities has become increasingly industrialised and the number believed to be held in such centres have swelled.

## Opportunities for intervention

The smuggling market in Libya has become increasingly consolidated since the Libyan revolution, with the Toubou emerging as the key player. The unprecedented territorial control exercised by militia across Libya has facilitated increasing co-ordination between smuggling networks, expanding the logistical capacity of the smuggling industry and causing migrant numbers to rocket from 2013 onwards.

The power of rival militia across significant swathes of territory has threatened the unity of Libya as various groups have been loud in considering the possibility of independence, namely the Tuareg in the southwestern border regions, certain Arab factions in the Fezzan and the Toubou centred around Kufra.

The central state continues to have extremely limited influence across Libya's south - Sudan and Libya established a joint border patrols of Libya's southern borders in 2013, however Libya pulled out of this in the summer of 2015, leaving the southern borders fully under the control of various militias. Unfunded by the state, these militias profess to stop 'social evils' entering the country, namely weapons and militants, while taxing the transit of fuel and migrants.

This report seeks to contribute to the patchy understanding of the migration trends through Libya. A fuller account of the dynamics in Libya is provided in an accompanying report *"The Human Conveyor Belt: Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Post-Revolution Libya"*. However, the situation remains volatile, and changes of control, and violent clashes linked both to the local dynamics as well as to processes in the central state transition, mean that continuous monitoring is required. This level of nuance is, however, essential. Only a more in depth understanding of the key players and regional dynamics will engender durable solutions.



Thus far, international attention has focussed predominantly at sea and on Libya's largely inaccessible coastline. But it is clear that, given the weakness of the central authorities and institutions in Libya, a more comprehensive approach that also includes Libya's southern border will be essential. It is essential for national and international policy makers to recognise that migrant smuggling profits have become central to economic survival across much of the region and exercise caution in seeking to disrupt them without providing viable economic alternatives.

Similarly, the disproportionate focus of international mediation around Libya's post-revolutionary transition on northern Libyan dynamics, has paid insufficient attention to developments in southern Libya and the emergence of the Toubou as the major player in a newly consolidated and centralised smuggling market. As early as 2012 Toubou spokesman Hassan Mousa declared that "The stability of the south depends on Toubou's rights. And Libya's stability depends on the south's stability." The demands of the TFSL demonstrate increasing politicisation of the Toubou, who seek fair representation in government and an end to discrimination. International policy actors should seek to establish a dialogue with the Toubou, rather than continuing to focus solely on the succession of central governments, most recently the GNA. As previously noted, however, the Toubou are not the only important actor in the south, and thus a negotiated exit from smuggling will have to include agreements with - at a minimum - the Tuareg, the Toubou and the Awlad Suleiman, and a consideration of their other investments into illicit trade and livelihood alternatives.

Finally, given the enhanced consolidation and the more amenable set of actors in the western Sahel, and further considering that East African migrants form the minority of those moving towards Europe, and that most have strong claims to refugee status, international policy actors may find it more effective to focus on the stream of migrants flowing from West Africa who can predominantly be classed as economic migrants.

***"Between 2012 and 2013 lower grade rubber boats of the same size, typically imported from Tunisia or China, were overloaded with between 100 and 150 people. The smuggling market had transformed into an industry with serious profit margins, as prices lowered profits could only be swelled or even maintained by moving more numbers per boat."***

### C: Maghreb Coastal System

Following the Syrian crisis, the Mediterranean smuggling routes leading from Libya's coast towards Europe received considerable international attention, however the policy decisions targeted at diminishing this flow have been largely unsuccessful.<sup>44</sup> The changing socio-political context of Libya has engendered key shifts in migration patterns over the last 12 months. In order to tailor policies to this fluid market, it is key to analyse its key players, routes and modus operandi. A failure to understand the mechanics of the Maghreb Coastal migrant smuggling system has resulted in policy decisions which have done little to stem the flow of migrants, but have merely serving to increase casualties.

As outlined in the analysis of the Sahelian migration route, the fall of Gaddafi liberalised the migrant smuggling regime in Libya and transformed it into a haven for migrants, albeit beset with increasing levels of violence and kidnap rates. Concurrently Egypt, historically not a key migration hub, has increasingly become a key transit and collection point in the coastal migration route. While there is only a limited level of inter-dependence between Libya and Egypt as departure points, it is nonetheless relevant to analyse the two countries as part of a broader trans-Mediterranean system, in which the Turkey-Greece dynamics are also a consideration.

The mechanics of migrant smuggling from the Libyan coast towards Europe changed drastically between 2009 and 2016, with 2011 being the pivotal year for migrant treatment as the overloading of boats began in earnest.

44 A key source of information for the evidential background to Section C: Maghreb Coastal System, (with the exception of the evidence for the analysis set out in sub-section C2: Egypt, is Mark Micallef's 2017 report "The Human Conveyor Belt; trends in human trafficking and smuggling in post-revolution Libya", Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/global-initiative-human-conveyor-belt-human-smuggling-in-libya-march-2017.pdf>





Historically the number of migrants making the crossing were relatively small, payment to smugglers was sometimes conditional upon safe arrival and there were some concessions towards migrant safety. The boats used were sturdy wooden vessels, and commonly skippered by smugglers or facilitators. This then transitioned to a mother ship system (with migrants loaded onto and off the mother ship via smaller vessels). Even when rubber boats began to replace the wooden vessels, phased out because they were more expensive and in increasingly short supply, they were of a higher quality and typically loaded with 35 to 40 people.

Between 2012 and 2013 lower grade rubber boats of the same size, typically imported from Tunisia or China, were overloaded with between 100 and 150 people. The smuggling market had transformed into an industry with serious profit margins. As prices lowered profits could only be swelled or even maintained by moving more numbers per boat. Greater demand, a shortage of vessels, and the proliferation of inexperienced smugglers ignorant of the basic safety precautions formerly in use, all contributed to this mutation.

The search and rescue operation launched by Italy in 2013, dubbed *Mare Nostrum*, further changed the modus operandi of the smugglers. Italian ships were conducting rescue operations just outside Libyan waters. Smugglers quickly realised the boats no longer needed to reach European waters, but merely had to move the migrants into the area of rescue. This lowered costs for smugglers as they provided less fuel and increasingly flimsy vessels, which was reflected in falling prices paid by migrants.

By 2014 *Mare Nostrum* was replaced by an EU led operation which vastly misjudged the 'pull factor' created by *Mare Nostrum*. The catastrophic effects on migrant deaths engendered by the more limited Frontex operation which replaced it peppered international press across 2014 and 2015.

European policy makers hoped to reduce the flow of migrants and reverse the changes to the modus operandi; however, they have broadly failed to understand the dynamics of the North African smuggling trade. By the time *Mare Nostrum* was retracted the new modus operandi of the smugglers was deeply entrenched. A significant proportion of smugglers who had only joined the industry post its liberalisation upon the revolution had known nothing else. The unchecked demand for smugglers meant that the standards of migrant treatment, initially lowered by new market entrants, were permanently changed as there is no incentive to improve them. Following the unprecedented power of rival militias, market dominance was now determined by the protection smugglers enjoyed in the marketplace rather than on the level of service provided to migrants, which quickly became universally dire.

The change to a more limited rescue therefore triggered a spike in migrant deaths, but had no effect on the modus operandi of smugglers. 2016 has thus become the deadliest year on record for migrants making the journey from North African shores to Europe. The UNHCR estimates that one in every 47 migrants is dying – a rate far higher than has been seen at any point during the duration of the crisis.<sup>45</sup>

Subsequent European operations, principally Operation Sophia, have had a limited deterrent effect. By August 2013 the operation had neutralised 230 boats, a tiny proportion of those in action. It does appear to have forced smugglers to operate more clandestinely - an interview with a source at Sabratha on the northern coast of Libya states that the smugglers have stopped advertising on social media and are increasingly relying on fishermen to recover lost boats rather than conducting recovery operations themselves.

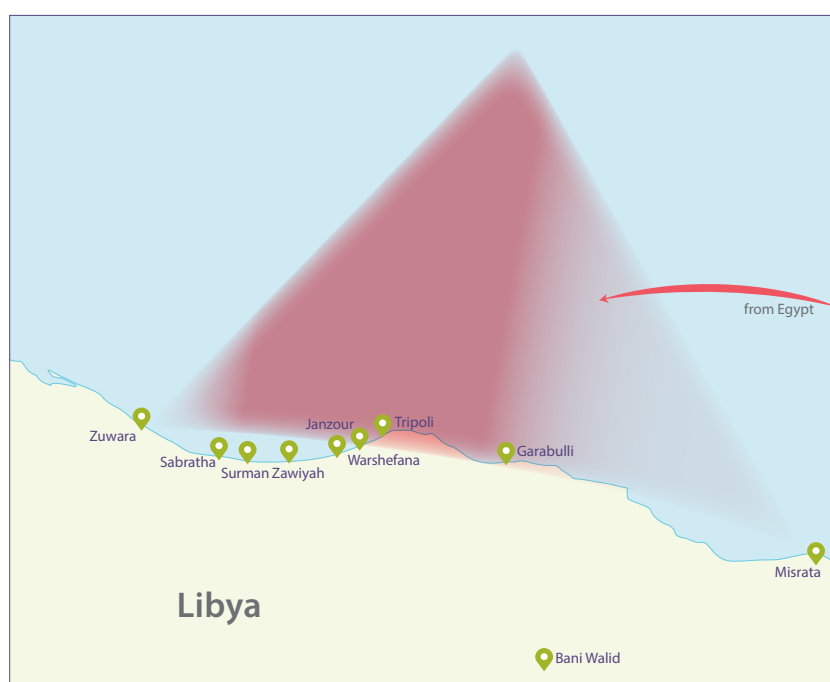
While over-filled boats are one cause for the heightened rate of death, so too is the growing practice of transshipment of migrants from one vessel to another; a practice that has risen considerably as larger seagoing vessels departing further along the North African coast as far east as Egypt are meeting in open water to connect to smaller boats carrying migrants from Libya which are seeking to be rescued. The coordination between smugglers from Libya and Egypt highlights the increasing scope of the networks and their heightened professionalism.

45 BBC News, "Migrant Crisis: Mediterranean to have 'deadliest year ever'", 25 October 2016: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37763052>



## C1: The Lampedusa Triangle

Despite Libya having a coastline of more than 1,770km, the clear majority of departures of migrant boats have launched from a concentrated 200km portion of the shoreline. While these originally sought a landing point in Italy, on the island of Lampedusa, Mare Nostrum removed the requirement for smugglers to actually endeavour to cross the entire sea, but merely to make approximately 20km off the coast, to the point where boats could be rescued by international patrols or merchant ships. Nonetheless, even following this evolution, boat departures from Libya have remained focussed around this concentrated stretch of coastline, where a significant smuggling architecture has developed. This high-intensity route saw more than 180,000 people cross in 2016.<sup>46</sup> In the last year, however, with the withdrawal of Zuwara as the primary hub for coastal smuggling, the nature of the market has become increasingly fractured, and is closely caught up in the political dynamics and the volatility of local competing militia groups. At the time of writing, the closest alternative hub, where departures are consistent is Garabulli, about 50km east of Tripoli, and are increasingly infrequently being launched from the strip of coast between Tripoli and Misrata.



**Figure 9:** The Lampedusa Triangle and key departure points from Libya

But while the focus of international efforts, as described above, has been largely on dynamics at sea; the dynamics of the human smuggling industry are closely tied to policies on land and as part of Libya's volatile transition process. The lucrative industry serves as one additional form of revenue financing competing interest groups and their militias in the fragmented post-Gaddafi era.<sup>47</sup> Control over smuggling routes and launch sites therefore require constant monitoring, given the rapidity at which fortunes and alliances rise and fall. The following provides an overview of the more recent trends, as of Autumn 2016.

**Zuwara:** Until autumn 2015, the epicentre of the Lampedusa Triangle was Zuwara, a coastal town of approximately 80,000 predominantly populated by Amazigh Berbers. The Amazigh had, like many non-Arab groups in Libya,

46 Data based on arrivals to Italy, from IOM statistics as of 17 November 2016: [http://migration.iom.int/docs/WEEKLY\\_Flows\\_Compilation\\_No29\\_17\\_November\\_2016.pdf](http://migration.iom.int/docs/WEEKLY_Flows_Compilation_No29_17_November_2016.pdf)

47 Very worthy of a read in terms of understanding the impact of illicit trade on Libya's transition is: Mark Shaw and Fiona Mangan (2013) Profits and Losses: Illicit economies and emerging patterns of organised crime as obstacles to peace and state consolidation in Libya, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace



suffered an ongoing campaign of discrimination during Gaddafi's reign. Following the revolution Amazigh fought for greater cultural acceptance, with little success. Amazigh resistance to discrimination was largely culturally rather than politically motivated, with a focus on retaining their language and traditional names rather than seeking political integration. Zuwara, as an Amazigh majority town, survived economic discrimination by relying largely on the illicit smuggling economy of both goods and people, much of it regime sanctioned.

The Amazigh drew on the connections with fellow Berber Tuaregs to establish Zuwara as a smuggling hotspot with routes leading southwards as well as across the sea. During the Gaddafi era, such smuggling activities were not stigmatised by society, and were viewed as a form of economic survival woven into the national fabric. Zuwara was differentiated from other smuggling hubs by its relative stability and safety - the lack of conflict in the area made it an attractive destination for migrants, with the treatment of migrants being relatively favourable in comparison to other smuggling hubs.

Prior to 2011, migrant deaths had been significantly lower, but the shift in the modus operandi of the smugglers, as delineated above, resulted in a steady and ever-growing stream of migrant bodies being washed up on the shores of Zuwara. Three tragedies in August 2015 resulting in over 650 bodies washing up on the shores of Zuwara, turned public opinion firmly against the migrant smugglers. The Amazigh resented the fact that Zuwara, and indeed the Amazigh themselves, had become synonymous with human smuggling now that the trade had become significantly more criminalised and stigmatised.

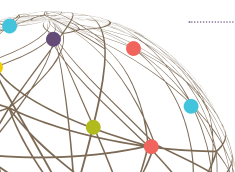
Faced with overwhelming popular protest the municipality sanctioned the actions of local militia groups to quickly arrested over 60 smugglers, who were then subjected to a murky judicial process resulting in fines or jail sentences. The Zuwara population effectively drove out the migrant smuggling networks that had long been established in the town, prompting a significant shift in the migratory patterns of coastal Libya. The fast co-ordinated response of the Zuwara populace was facilitated by the fact that it is a largely minority population with high levels of social cohesion, together with an active social media network which allowed for fast mobilisation of militia.

The actions of the Zuwara Amazigh led to a 40% drop in the number of migrants leaving the Libyan shores in September 2016 compared to that of September 2015, a downwards trajectory which continued largely uninterrupted until April 2016. By the end of June roughly the same number of migrants had made the crossing as the same period in 2015, however the patterns of migration were radically changed, and Zuwara remains largely free from migrant smugglers.

The Amazigh of Zuwara can draw on other forms of smuggling activities, such as the smuggling of illicit goods which had become complementary to that of migrants. Their engagement in fuel smuggling is particularly notable. However, in the latter half of 2016, militias from the border town of Zawiyah have begun seeking to dominate the border crossing with Tunisia, a key lifeline for Zuwara. In addition, the latest report by the UN's panel of experts to the Security Council has focused scrutiny on fuel smuggling, stifling such activities. Together this could squeeze Zuwaran's alternative profit lines and force municipal leaders to soften their zero-tolerance stance on migrant smuggling.

**Sabratha:** As the Amazigh in Zuwara closed down their smuggling trade, migration was displaced to the neighbouring town of Sabratha. However, this shift heightened existing territorial disputes between militias, which coincided with the explosion of tensions across the coastal towns of Zawiyah and Janzour on one side and Warshefana on the other, to the west of Tripoli. The former had fallen under command of the Libya Dawn,

***"During these conflicts, militia in Sabratha fostered a growing terrorist cell, shielded by the municipal military authorities. However, the US bombing of this hotspot in February 2016 turned the town against the terrorists in fear they would attract further bombings."***



supporting the western Government and then more recently the GNA. The latter were perceived to be a pro-Gaddafi stronghold. Attempts to mediate violence failed and the road linking the towns remains closed, forcing new routes circumventing this key transit road to blossom, paying increased levies to Warshefana checkpoints.

During these conflicts, militia in Sabratha were challenged to deal with a growing ISIS terrorist cell. Concern with being accused of harbouring terrorists, or being labelled as members of sympathisers with the controversial group, yet at the same time fearing ISIS reprisals, the militias and municipal authorities in the town were divided and paralysed. However, the US bombing of this hotspot in February 2016 turned the town against the terrorists in fear they would attract further bombings, and militias in Sabratha were on the front lines of fighting ISIS. International and Libyan authority concerns that the profits of the smuggling industry were benefiting the so-called Islamic State prompted Tripoli authorities to reach a deal with the Sabratha militias to shut down smuggling operations. This agreement appears to have been short-lived, with activities re-commencing in March and April 2016, although reports suggest that boats rarely leave from Sabratha itself, favouring nearby Surman. Zawiya smuggling networks, which also benefited from the Zuwara withdrawal, also appear to be favouring Surman.

**Ajdabiya and Bani Walid:** The significant displacement of migration from Ajdabiya, a key transit and collection hub for the vast majority of migrants travelling from the south-east, is perhaps the second most notable change in the recent migratory landscape of northern Libya.

Since 2014, there has been ongoing violence between the area's precariously balanced group of armed factions with disparate loyalties. The Ajdabiya-Sirte operations room is loyal to the Operation Dignity, led by the Libyan National Army's (LNA) General Khalifa Haftar, and seeking to combat terrorist groups and Islamist militias. The single most powerful militia in the area, the Petroleum Facilities Guards, led by Ibrahim Jadhran – brother of the mayor Salem Jadhran – publicly denounced Haftar and more recently pledged allegiance to the GNA. Militants from the Ajdabiya Revolutionary Shura Council (ARSC), formed in a 2015 merger of militant hard line Islamist groups, including the UN-designated terrorist group, Ansar al Sharia are based roughly 20km south of the town.

In June 2016, the Benghazi Defence Brigades, a newly formed coalition of Islamist militias, advanced on the town and even briefly took charge of properties in the centre before being forced to retreat by the LNA. Both the Petroleum Facilities Guard (PFG) and the LNA oppose them. The Islamic State and AQIM (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) also both have a presence in town.

Unsurprisingly this precarious mix of rival militias has caused numerous outbreaks of violence. Despite the instability caused by ongoing conflict between the groups, Ajdabiya had retained a degree of functionality until 2015, where the frequency and geographic spread of the clashes had a negative impact on the large open trucks typically transporting migrants from Ajdabiya through the main coastal roads. The highly publicised murder of two groups of Eritrean and Ethiopian migrants kidnapped by the Islamic State at a checkpoint in Nawfaliya, on the route in Ajdabiya, has further dampened the flow of migrants into the region.

This displacement has shifted many migrants into the town of Bani Walid, a Warfalla-majority town of 80,000 positioned circa 180 km southeast of Tripoli. Bani Walid gained fame as the last Gaddafi stronghold to fall following the revolution. The Social Council of Warfalla Tribes led the town's unsuccessful resistance to historic rivals, the Misuratis. Bani Walid suffered two prolonged sieges by Misurati forces, and when the Council re-established itself in February 2013 after its self-imposed exile it adopted a policy of neutrality. This stance enabled the town to survive, although the Warfalla have been increasingly marginalised in post-Gaddafi Libya.

Due to its neutrality and pro-Gaddafi history, the town has become a haven to many internally displaced persons perceived to be pro-Gaddafi. This, together with reports that a number of Islamic State militants have established themselves in Bani Walid after fleeing Sirte, has contributed to the town's tenuous security situation. It has, however, continued to function as a logistics staging post for smuggling groups moving migrants towards the coast, principally to Garabulli, Zawiya and Sabratha, in that order.





A boat packed with illegal migrants near Abu-Qir Port, Alexandria, Egypt, July 2016  
(Photo: official Facebook page of the Egyptian military spokesperson)

**Ghadames:** In Ghadames, a town on the Algerian border close to the border with Tunisia and circa 600km south of Tripoli, the number of migrants transiting through has increased significantly in the last 12 months. Furthermore, the groups operating in Ghadames and across the Algerian border appear better coordinated with networks operating on Libya's coast.

Smugglers who previously handled only licit goods are increasingly turning to migrant smuggling as numbers have swelled and economic alternatives dwindled. Primarily Tuareg smugglers transfer migrants aiming for Libya's western embarkation points to Arab smugglers able to operate within the territory which is controlled by Zintan militias. The migrants are transported across key roads to Zintan and onwards to Surman or Sabratha on the coast, facilitated by historic connections between several families residing in Sabratha and Zintan.

## C2: Egypt

Egypt has grown in importance as a regional migrant smuggling transit and collection point, principally since the influx of Syrian refugees from 2012 onwards. With the onset of the Arab Spring in 2010 and the subsequent conflicts in Libya and Syria, Egypt has emerged as a key transit country from which migrant smuggling networks facilitate the movement of economic migrants and asylum seekers from East Africa and the Horn, as well as from Syria to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea. Migration through Egypt to Europe, both by Syrians and sub-Saharan Africans, appears to have increased still further following the EU-Turkey Agreement, which closed the Aegean route to the east.

There is relatively little reliable data regarding the numbers of migrants departing or attempting to depart by boat from Egypt, in part because estimates are deduced from detentions in Egypt and arrivals in Italy, both of which are problematic measures. It is unlikely that those detained at the coast are an accurate cross-section of those departing, and the frequency of detentions and interceptions may not correlate in any way to departures from Egypt. Similarly, figures based on arrivals in Italy do not clearly indicate whether the migrants departed originally from Libya or Egypt, a distinction further complicated by the fact that sometimes migrants who depart from Egypt are consolidated at sea in larger boats with migrants departing from Libya, or may stop in Libya before continuing to Italy.

Despite these quantitative limitations, there are strong indications based on what limited figures are available, as well as qualitative observations in Egypt and in Italy, that more migrants are departing from Egypt in 2016 than in



2015, with some suggestions that the rate of departures from Egypt doubled from 3,500 to 7,000 during the first six months of 2015.<sup>48</sup> The UNHCR estimates that 10,112, or 8.8% of the approximately 115,068 arrivals in Italy in 2016 as of August, embarked from Egypt. During the same period in 2015, that figure was only 8,324, and those who embarked from Egypt comprised only 7.2% of total arrivals in Italy.<sup>49</sup>

Among those leaving Egyptian shores for Europe are nationals from Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Syria and, as with before 2013, Egypt itself. Egypt emerged as a transit country for asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa, primarily from Eritrea, seeking irregular entry into Israel in the mid-2000s. According to the Israeli government, close to 60,000 asylum seekers entered Israel between January 2006 and March 2012, of which 57% (33,912) were from Eritrea.<sup>50</sup> UNHCR statistics indicate that asylum applications in Israel increased from 1,348 in 2006 to 17,175 in 2011, with almost 1,000 people crossing the Sinai into Israel every month during 2010.<sup>51</sup> In 2012, in response to the spike in asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa, Israel amended its existing law on preventing infiltration to define all adult persons who crossed the border irregularly, including refugees, as “infiltrators” who can be detained by the Israeli authorities for three years before being deported. Subsequent legal challenges to the 2012 amendment in Israel have led to changes in law in 2013 that now allow for “infiltrators” to be detained for up to one year in “open” detention facilities, before being deported to their country of origin or to a third country.<sup>52</sup> Israel has reinforced these legal measures with the construction of 10,000-person detention centre for “infiltrators” and the building of a fence along the Sinai Israel border.<sup>53</sup> Additional reports claim that the Israeli government has pushed back migrants from the border using force such as firing warning shots, throwing stun grenades, and using teargas to discourage border crossings into Israel.<sup>54</sup>

The two key smuggling hubs are Cairo and Alexandria, with various rural locations outside of Alexandria in northern Egypt, particularly in Beherirah, Kafr al-Sheikh, Damietta, and Dakahlia that have emerged as key areas for boat departures. Migrants typically make their first point of contact with smugglers over the phone or via text message and social media, from where they are given instructions, to arrive at a given location, often in Cairo or Alexandria, from where they are transported and consolidated before being brought to another location along the coast and placed on boats.

***"Violence is endemic across the Egyptian human smuggling industry, where the lines between smuggling and trafficking are notably thin, particularly in the Sinai region where Bedouin tribes reportedly traffic largely sub-Saharan African migrants."***

Migrants and asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa are believed to be increasingly using Egypt as a transit country for onward migration directly to Europe via the Mediterranean. Although the majority of Eritreans going to Europe go through Libya, more Eritreans are reported to travel through Egypt due to increased dangers for Eritreans along the route to Libya via Sudan. However, intensifying policing of the border due to the region’s worsening security situation has diminished migrant flows across the east coast of Libya. These have been further impacted by Operation Dignity, the military offensive launched in May 2014 by General Khalifa Haftar, commander of the LNA loyal to the House of Representatives (HOR), based in Tobruk. As such, more migrants with the financial means are departing from Egypt directly, rather than risk making the land journey across the Maghreb coast.

48 Nielsen, N. People Leaving Egypt to Italy doubled in past year. EU Observer. 1 July 2016. Available at: <https://euobserver.com/migration/134163>

49 UNHCR (2016). Italy Sea Arrivals Dashboard. January – August 2016.

50 Humphris, R (2013). Refugees and the Rashaida: Human smuggling and trafficking from Eritrea to Sudan and Egypt. New Issues in Refugee Research, Paper No. 254. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/51407fc69.pdf>

51 Ibid.

52 van Reisen, M., Estefanos, M., and Rijken, C. (2012). Human Trafficking in the Sinai: Refugees between Life and Death. Brussels: Tilburg University/EEPA. Available at: [http://www.ehrea.org/report\\_Human\\_Trafficking\\_in\\_the\\_Sinai\\_20120927.pdf](http://www.ehrea.org/report_Human_Trafficking_in_the_Sinai_20120927.pdf)

53 Humphris, op.cit.

54 RMMS (2014). Going West: Contemporary mixed migration trends from the Horn of Africa to Libya & Europe. Available at: [http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Going\\_West\\_migration\\_trends\\_Libya\\_Europe\\_final.pdf](http://www.regionalmms.org/images/ResearchInitiatives/Going_West_migration_trends_Libya_Europe_final.pdf)



Three main routes have been identified into Egypt from Sudan: the Aswan-Abu Simbel-Lake Nasser route, the East Oweinat route, and the Halayeb-Shalateen route which in some cases also crossed the Allaqi Valley in south-eastern Egypt due to the heavy military presence in the Red Sea governorate.<sup>55</sup> Researchers for this report found that the crossings into Egypt from Sudan were so diverse that they did not necessarily track exactly with the routes outlined above, but the MMTF routes did fit within the broader flows identified during fieldwork in Sudan and Egypt.

In some cases, for example, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Somali migrants crossing into Egypt from Sudan pay smugglers in Eastern Sudan to cross directly into Egypt without passing through Khartoum, in which case their routes to Egypt may pass only through Eastern Sudan (with the city of Port Sudan and the surrounding area sometimes serving as a consolidation point). They enter Egypt by crossing into the Red Sea Governorate. In other cases, migrants in Eastern Sudan who pay for direct passage to Egypt, without stopping in Khartoum, follow the same route as those who pay for direct passage from Eastern Sudan to Libya, with the area near Dongola, Sudan, serving as the crossroads from where the itineraries to Egypt and Libya diverge.

Similarly, migrants who leave from Khartoum, depending on the smugglers they use and the services for which they pay, may be taken back into Eastern Sudan, or fly to Port Sudan, from where they cross into Red Sea Governorate in south-eastern Egypt. Migrants departing from Khartoum may also follow the same route as those transiting to Libya from Khartoum, with Dongola and its surrounding areas once again serving as the point from where the itineraries to Egypt and Libya diverge. Those continuing to Egypt from Dongola may cross into Red Sea Governorate, Aswan Governorate, or New Valley Governorate depending on the itinerary. Another route from Sudan into Egypt, identified in the aforementioned MMTF report, sees irregular migrants entering via Aswan by using fishing boats through Lake Nasser. This route is reportedly most popular among asylum seekers from Syria.<sup>56</sup>

According to Meron Estefanos, the director of the Eritrean Initiative on Refugee Rights, based in Stockholm, speaking with the news outlet IRIN, both Chadian gangs and Islamic State militants have been responsible for kidnappings of Eritreans in Libya.<sup>57</sup> Prospective Eritrean migrants have long been familiar with the risks associated with transiting through Sudan and Libya, including abuse and kidnapping for ransom, but the emergence of the Islamic State and similar groups, which are reported to target Christian migrants for mistreatment and enslavement rather than ransom,<sup>58</sup> is believed to be an emerging deterrent for Christians who are instead choosing to transit through Egypt.

Historically a steady flow of migrants was moved by co-ordinated Egyptian and Libyan smuggling groups around El Salloum and across the border where they would be loaded onto large cargo trucks or panelled vans, typically towards Tobruk via Bardiyah. Sea crossings from Salloum or Alexandria to Tobruk or Bardiyah are another known method of transit. A previously small but consistent reverse flow of Syrian, Eritrean and even Sudanese migrants crossing to Egypt from Libya, temporarily swelled following Libya's civil war, appears to have ceased. Violence is endemic across the Egyptian human smuggling industry, where the lines between smuggling and trafficking are notably thin, particularly in the Sinai region where Bedouin tribes reportedly traffic largely sub-Saharan African migrants.

Two vessels believed to have been operated by the same smuggling network sunk in the waters off Crete in April and June 2016, resulting in over 800 casualties. Sources interviewed in Tobruk suggest that smugglers in Alexandria are seeking to cooperate directly with networks in Tobruk in an effort to evade heightened border security. These

55 North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force (2015). Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa: Study 2. Available at: <http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Conditions-and-Risks-in-Mixed-Migration-in-North-East-Africa.pdf>

56 North Africa Mixed Migration Task Force (2015). Conditions and Risks of Mixed Migration in North East Africa: Study 2. Available at: <http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Conditions-and-Risks-in-Mixed-Migration-in-North-East-Africa.pdf>

57 Haddon, H (2016). For Eritreans, Egypt is the new route to Europe. IRIN, 6 June 2016. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2016/06/06/eritreans-egypt-new-route-europe>

58 Gebrekidan, S. How an Eritrean Woman Escaped ISIS' Enslavement in Libya. Reuters. 19 August 2016. Available at: <http://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/isis/1.73713>





groups are attempting to ferry migrants into Libya in small fast vessels before boarding larger fishing boats in Tobruk or its environs to attempt the sea crossing. While smugglers in Khartoum have attempted to promote the Egyptian route as a safer alternative, with rising deaths due to transshipment and the limited data on violence rates across the Horn of Africa smuggling routes, conversely it suggests violence is more endemic across the Egyptian border with Sudan, and across the south of Egypt, than across any other region.<sup>59</sup>

Although Cairo has long been home to a small community of Eritreans, interviews with aid and humanitarian workers in Cairo corroborated a surge in Eritrean arrivals in 2016, many of whom are registering for protection services as they plan for onward movement across the Mediterranean. Aid and humanitarian organisations have noticed a similar trend among Sudanese migrants, who are departing and being detained along the North Coast in greater numbers than before.

Egyptians as well as migrants living in Egypt also seek smuggler services to travel to Europe by air out of Cairo or regional airports that fly internationally. According to one source who tracks departures and interdictions out of Egypt, the vast majority of those stopped at the airport, or at some point along a multi-leg flight itinerary starting in Egypt, are Sudanese nationals who “may become something else once they arrive,” alluding to the fact that they may claim to be Eritrean or Somali if they think it will increase their chances of receiving international protection. According to diplomatic sources, the Egyptian government has shown little interest in helping European governments verify identities, and expressed disinterest in receiving training on these issues.

Those who pay for smuggler services use fake or stolen passports, and the actors that facilitate procurement broadly fall into two categories, per foreign law enforcement officials based in Cairo. The first category of facilitators is organised crime rings that can make high quality forged documents or procure them. The second is individuals who steal and sell European passports or arrange to lend one that someone can use. In some cases, this may be an individual who has authentic documents and visas and is lending them to someone who has a similar likeness. Similarly, there are believed to be certain 'soft' entry points into the Schengen zone (Malta and Greece were both cited) which are believed to grant visas more liberally to groups traveling and applying for visas through tour operators, many of which might offer smuggling services within the context of their legitimate business activities.

***"The message from the Libyan coast was clear – the gates towards Europe were open and there was an unending pool of smugglers willing to facilitate the journey!"***

## Political Economy of the Maghreb Coast

Traditionally the Libyan coastal migrant smuggling trade was more profitable than that of the southern border because it was largely dominated by Libyan Arabs. This has largely remained true as the rebel militias who now control significant swathes of the Libyan coast are split across tribal factions. There are some exceptions to this, notably that of the Amazigh town of Zuwara which until recently was at the epicentre of Libyan coastal smuggling.

Libyan officials believe certain terrorist organisations have invested in the migrant smuggling trade for greater returns in profit. The Islamic State is known to have drawn profits from the taxation of smugglers at checkpoints in the Sirte region in the north during 2015 and at the northern smuggling hub of Sabratha until at least February 2016. Similarly, AQIM is also believed to have benefited from funds from the migrant smuggling trade in Ajdabiya, a key northern transit point for migration from the southeast. The head of the Libyan Navy, Col Ridda Eassa, confirmed in an interview in mid 2016 that he believed Islamic State was underwriting smuggling activities with its wealth for greater profit.<sup>60</sup> However, this theory is undermined by the cash-rich nature of the migrant smuggling trade –

59 Regional MMS Q1 2016 Report, available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/trends/RMMSQ1Trends2016.pdf>

60 Nancy Porsia, “Non solo jihad, i soldati del Califfo investono sul traffico di esseri umani” (Not only Jihad, the Caliphate’s soldiers invest in human trafficking), Il Fatto Quotidiano, July 31, 2016, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/premium/articoli/non-solo-jihad-i-soldati-del-califfo-investono-sul-traffico-di-esseri-umani/>.



smugglers operate either cash in hand or through hawala. Consequently smugglers are not incentivised to share a cut of their profits unless they are able to receive something additional in return.

However, the involvement of terrorist organisations in a particular area typically compromises its stability and acts to make it less attractive to migrants. A key example of this is the bombing of an Islamic State stronghold in Sabratha in February 2016, which turned the previously pro-Islamist populace against Islamic State, driving them out and facilitating intervention by authorities. This has acted to limit the involvement of such organisations in the trade, while continuing to benefit militias who typically retain control of a given area for a prolonged period. Rebel militias have now become deeply enmeshed in the Libyan migrant smuggling economy, reaping taxation for providing protection. As explained above, control ebbs and flows between groups as part of the overall dynamic of the Libyan transition.

Sudanese and Eritrean networks are prevalent in the routes from the western coast of Libya, centred around Garabuli and Gargaresh. Eritrean networks, in particular, are also known to operate in Egypt, suggesting their power may expand further as this alternative route continues to grow.

In Egypt, the strength of the Egyptian state suggests that activities of this level of organisation and profit could not take place without some degree of state knowledge, though this may remain at operational levels. Egyptian authorities also stand accused of colluding with human traffickers, particularly in the Sinai and southern Egypt. According to testimonies gathered by the human rights NGO Human Rights Watch, Egyptian soldiers and police handed victims over to traffickers in police stations, turned a blind eye at checkpoints, returned escaped trafficking victims to traffickers, and, colluded with traffickers every step of the way: at checkpoints between the Sudanese border and the Suez Canal, at the heavily-policed canal or at checkpoints manning the only vehicle bridge crossing the canal, in traffickers' houses, at checkpoints in Sinai's towns, and close to the border with Israel.<sup>61</sup>

*"These are there high-level smugglers, sometimes referred to as "kingpins" in international media, whose identities are concealed and are far removed from the day-to-day operations of migrant smuggling."*

## Market Analysis

**Market Consolidation:** Following the fall of Gaddafi, the limits to the control exerted by the National Transitional Council (NTC) became quickly apparent, heralding a new liberalised dawn for the Libyan smuggling market. Established smuggling groups capitalised on this, acting with increased impunity and seeking to swell numbers by encouraging migration across their networks spanning deep into sub-Saharan Africa. The message from the Libyan coast was clear – the gates towards Europe were open and there was an unending pool of smugglers willing to facilitate the journey. Migrant numbers spiked and established Somali, Sudanese, Eritrean and Ethiopian smuggling networks immediately reaped significant benefits.

Simultaneously, a multitude of new market players seeking to make a quick profit took advantage of the lowered barriers to entry. Rebel militia groups and armed gangs proliferated in post-revolution Libya from the southern borders up to embarkation points on the northern shore. Gaining protection from the prevalent group in the territory is now key to the smuggling business and determines the success of any smuggling group. Following the revolution, weapons have proliferated amongst groups, forming highly armed brigades formed along tribal or local lines. This development has transformed the smuggling trade and had a profound impact on Libyan society. The gangs have caused violence to increase dramatically, exacerbating existing fissures in society, while also providing some degree of stability in post-revolution Libya. Militias typically tax the smuggling market, of both goods and migrants, in their area, often with the support of the communities and in some cases co-operating with municipal authorities.

61 Human Rights Watch (2014). I wanted to Lie Down and Die: Trafficking and Torture of Eritreans in Sudan and Egypt, Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/11/i-wanted-lie-down-and-die/trafficking-and-torture-eritreans-sudan-and-egypt>



Economically this has become key to the fabric of society as the money gained by militias in this protection racket is often ploughed back into local economies stagnating in post revolution Libya. In addition, the downfall of the state and growing power of the militias, often colluding with authorities, have allowed smugglers to act with unprecedented impunity. This has not only facilitated an increase in operational efficiency but had a negative effect on migrant treatment. Although in some areas militias are relatively stable, conflicts abound. Periodic explosions of violence are centered around smuggling hubs across Libya, as groups compete for control over key routes and departure points. Control over smuggling along Libya's coast is now highly fragmented and deeply embedded in the political process, making it challenge to tackle one without addressing the other.

Although they both operate along the Central Mediterranean route, migrant smuggling networks in Egypt tend to be more organised than their counterparts in Libya. The technical expertise as well as human and political resources required to facilitate journeys across the Mediterranean Sea in the Egyptian context are considerably greater than in Libya. Within the context of the anarchic state in Libya, for example, migrant smuggling networks need to devote relatively few resources toward evading or bribing authorities (de facto or official) and their business models along the coast are tailored to the presence of EU and humanitarian rescue missions patrolling the Mediterranean just outside Libyan territorial waters. In Egypt, however, a tightly controlled and pervasive state apparatus means that most smuggling operations must take place in the shadows, outside the purview of state security structures, or with direct cooperation with them. Barriers to entering the market are high, and migrant smuggling activities can only be carried out by groups that have the ability to avoid detection, or the requisite criminal connections to operate in collusion with, or the tacit endorsement of Egyptian security officials.

These are there high-level smugglers, sometimes referred to as 'kingpins' in international media, whose identities are concealed and are far removed from the day-to-day operations of migrant smuggling. They finance the necessary inputs to make migrant smuggling networks function, coordinate with other high-level smugglers at the regional and international level (particularly in Libya and Italy), and manage relationships with the Egyptian security apparatus.<sup>62</sup> Local analysts suggest that there are between five to ten actors operating these highest levels, European law enforcement officials, as well as analysts in Egypt, indicated that some have direct connections with criminal counterparts in Italy.

As discussed in the analysis of the Sahelian route across Libya, there is evidence of the historic relay system of loosely affiliated networks being replaced by increasingly organised smuggling consortia across the Maghreb coast, both to Libya and Egypt. The sharing of facilities between smuggling groups, the increased speed of travel and changes to payment structures all point to a greater degree of consolidation, coordinating journeys from primarily East Africa all the way to the Libyan coast.

**Price:** Syrians typically had a spending power that far outstripped that of sub-Saharan migrants that had previously made up the bulk of Libyan 'clients'. By late 2012 Syrians were typically offering to pay over \$2,000 per person for a place on a wooden boat departing from Libyan shores, a journey which had typically been priced by smugglers at between \$500 and \$1,000 less than that. The critical mass of Syrian migrants gave them collective power against the smugglers, further enhancing their negotiating position. This superior spending power, together with collective bargaining tactics, allowed Syrian migrants to shape the migrant smuggling trade, demanding better conditions than sub-Saharan migrants, including superior accommodation prior to departure and faster service, shrinking the time lags between arrival in Libya and departure for Europe.

The price had hovered around \$1,000 to \$1,500 until late 2013 / early 2014 where it began to slide due to two key factors - Syrian demand began to dry up as the prohibitive levels of violence deterred them travelling into Libya,

62 Reitano, T. and Tinti, P. (2015). *Survive and Advance: The economics of smuggling migrants and refugees into Europe*. Available at: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/Paper289-2.pdf>; Tinti, P. and Reitano, T. (2016). *Migrant, Refugee, Smuggler, Saviour*. Hurst Publishers, London.; and Kingsley, P. *Trading in souls: inside the world of the people smugglers*. The Guardian, 7 January 2015. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/07/sp-trading-souls-inside-world-people-smugglers>



and the *Mare Nostrum* operation allowed smugglers to slash costs by providing transit only into rescue waters. By 2016 the price had stabilised at circa \$250 per migrant, a staggering drop from a few years earlier.

Despite the sharp drop in the price for transit onwards from the Libyan coast, the cost to migrants remains high as levels of extortion have increased. Militia-controlled checkpoints proliferate across Libya, all of which require 'tax' to be paid. In the 12 months to late 2016, the cost of the average checkpoint stood at between \$2 and \$10 per migrant, rising to \$20 where the checkpoint is manned by groups with links to more criminal organisations. Curiously, accounts by migrants who have passed through Islamic State manned checkpoints on the coast in the area surrounding Sirte reported that payments fall within the \$2 to \$10 range.

A further factor which typically causes the price of specific checkpoints to rise is where they allow transit through areas which are difficult to circumvent, largely because surrounding regions are more dangerous. Militias controlling such checkpoints are aware of their value, and heighten the prices to match.

In Egypt, the average price for sea crossing towards Europe as at 2013 was between \$2,500 and \$3,500 per person, markedly higher than the concurrent prices in Libya, perhaps reflecting the greater Syrian domination of the migrant market at that point. Prices have suffered a less dramatic decline than those from Libya, reaching between \$1,800 and \$3,200 in 2016, depending on the quality of the travel being provided.

According to local observers who have been monitoring prices by interviewing migrants and smugglers, the migrant smuggling industry in Egypt has proved highly influenced by and responsive to events outside of Egypt. In 2013 and 2014, for example, the price for crossing the Mediterranean to Italy was generally in the range of \$2,500 – \$4,000, with fluctuations in demand, the time of year, the nationality of the migrant (Syrians were willing to pay more for safer boats) effecting the price. In 2015, however, average prices fell considerably, to as low as \$1,800 due to an increase in supply (smuggling networks had matured around Syrian demand for their services) and external factors. The emergence of the Turkey-Greece route and the opening of the Balkans in 2015, for example, meant Syrians in Egypt were flying back to Turkey to make the safer, less expensive journey to Europe. Smugglers had to adjust their prices accordingly to compete with alternative routes.<sup>63</sup>

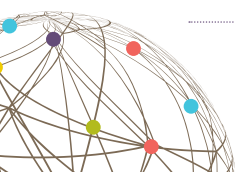
***"The levels of organised criminality are considerably higher along the eastern corridor linking Sudan to southern Libya, and in southern Libya proper, where militias and criminal organisations specialise in the exploitation and enslavement of migrants."***

### **Detention Centres**

Migrants have increasingly found the facilitators of their mobility turned into captors. Arbitrary detention centres are increasingly overcrowded by migrants placed there either by smugglers or after being the victims of kidnapping gangs. Release carries a rate of circa \$100, with onwards travel from the coast by boat reportedly between \$300 and \$500, suggesting that migrants kept in detention centres are then charged a premium for freedom. Many centres are quasi-official and operate within the purview of the state, although typically beyond its limited control. This is sanctioned by the position of the migrant as criminal within the Libyan legal system, rather than the UN-sanctioned criminalisation of smuggler rather than migrant. Detention centres are particularly prolific in the region of Tripoli, and are an increasing phenomenon in Egypt.

**Violence:** Libya has long been known as a high-risk transit area among sub-Saharan migrants, where risks of detention, extortion, forced labour and violence were already widespread.

63 Tuesday Reitano and Peter Tinti (2015). *Survive and Advance: The economics of smuggling migrants and refugees into Europe*. Available at: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/Paper289-2.pdf>



Originally, Syrian refugees experienced favourable treatment at the hands of Libyan smugglers who often perceived them to be blood brothers fleeing war. This meant the levels of violence experienced by migrants were relatively low, and even in the case of arrest or detention Syrian migrants reported being released quickly. However, by late 2012 the collapse of the Libyan state brought with it a growing xenophobia, particularly toward sub-Saharan Africans who were accused of being pro-Gaddafi mercenaries. The wave of nationalist propaganda and xenophobia also coincided with a significant spike in the scale of the migrant smuggling industry, causing migrants to become increasingly commoditised, indicative of profit margins. The industrialisation of the migrant smuggling trade, most notably from mid 2013 onwards, and the unprecedented power of rebel militias across Libya has caused violence level in the smuggling route in the coastal regions of Libya to spike.

The levels of organised criminality are considerably higher along the eastern corridor linking Sudan to southern Libya, and in southern Libya proper, where militias and criminal organisations specialise in the exploitation and enslavement of migrants. Whereas previously, the levels of violence and abuse were relatively ad hoc in nature, in the current context they have been institutionalised as part of a sub-Saharan migrant's experiences of travelling through Libya. The practice of using migrants for indentured labour, although present during Gaddafi's reign, has expanded significantly and is now relatively commonplace, particularly in major smuggling hubs such as Tripoli.

The networks facilitating flows from Eastern Sudan directly into Egypt run parallel to and overlap with groups that are engaged in trafficking in migrants, and migrants along this route, especially Eritreans, are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. As previously mentioned, migrant flows from the Horn of Africa to Israel via the Sinai have largely stopped since 2013, but between 2009 and 2013, when the flows were at their greatest, a wide network of traffickers emerged that specialised in kidnapping for ransom and exploitation of migrants from the Horn of Africa, who would be taken to Egypt's Sinai desert to be held for ransom.

Some analysts have argued that the levels of violence and the risks of transit are either (a) unknown to the migrants; thereby encouraging the need for information campaigns that would inform migrants of the risks and thus deter them from making the journey; or (b) will become sufficiently extreme as to serve as a deterrence alone. Our research in source countries would suggest, however, that migrants are already broadly aware of the risks, are prepared to accept them, and factor them into their preparation both mentally, physically and financially. For example, several Eritrean women reported purchasing hormonal contraceptives prior to attempting the journey through Libya due to the prevalent rates of rape; similarly, prospective migrants anticipated and budgeted for the additional costs of bribes and extortion should they be detained.

## Opportunities for Intervention

The migrant smuggling market across Libya appears to be demonstrating signs of greater consolidation and organisation, with networks across Libya and into sub-Saharan Africa being increasingly co-ordinated from source through to the sea. However, as demonstrated by the significant shifts to the migrant smuggling landscape across coastal Libya in the last 12 months, it remains a fluid and dynamic market. While this means any policy intervention may quickly become outdated, it also suggests the networks are highly responsive to changes in policy can therefore be recalibrate their activities relatively quickly. This interdependence also means, however, that a tunnelled focus on reducing migratory flows risks further destabilising the situation in Libya.

European policy makers have predicated their broad migrant smuggling plan on the ability of the GNA to negotiate and deliver a cooperation agreement with Europe. Any short-term border control agreement between the EU and the GNA, whose Tripoli power base is increasingly precarious, is likely to fail unless it is preceded by the comprehensive de-arming or co-option of standing militias into state institutions. The GNA is making limited progress on both security issues, such as stopping the rise of kidnapping for ransom, and economic ones, namely uncontrollable inflation together with the plummeting of the Libyan dinar. Ongoing co-operation between the HoR and the GNA remains uncertain and the loyalty of key militias, such as the Misurati forces who lead the fight against ISIS in Sirte, is wavering.







Migrants stranded in the desert waiting, after the Toyota they travelled to Libya in broke down.  
Photo: Tom Westcott

Consequently, the ‘easy win’ presented by a coordination agreement modelled on that between Italy and Gaddafi appears increasingly unlikely. Furthermore, such a policy response does not attempt to tackle the root problems driving migration, or seek to engage the smuggling networks entrenched in Libya’s current economic fabric. Instead, demand side action is required to undermine the business model of smugglers. A substantial relocation programme in Libya could constitute a first step in seeking to divert business away from smugglers and weaken the place of the migrant smuggling trade at the heart of Libya’s vast informal economy.

The case of Zuwara, although unique in the socio-cultural conditions that fostered it, suggests that increased engagement with local communities and municipalities could yield significant results in disrupting the migrant smuggling trade. More specifically, it highlights that where community engagement with the smuggling industry is limited, networks are effectively displaced. One of the silver linings of Libya’s decentralisation of power is that in some instances, it has helped nourish fledgling civil society movements. There are opportunities in this development that are not recognised properly let alone exploited in favour of the overall stated objective of helping to build democratic institutions.

Attempts to increase the stigmatisation of the migrant smuggling trade could therefore yield results, however this must be accompanied by the support of viable economic alternatives. The contrast between Ghadames, where smugglers have reportedly transitioned into migrant and drugs smuggling from licit goods, and Zuwara, which has been able to rely on profits reaped from other, less damaging, smuggling activities serves to underscore the importance of alternatives.

Egypt is emerging as a key transit country for refugees. Policy makers should focus on establishing a dialogue with the Egyptian government to shape future policies unlike the repressive shoot to kill border controls and short-term entry restrictions which have characterised the response to date. Undermining the smuggling networks operating in Egypt before they become more entrenched into the informal economy is paramount, particularly given the significant overlap with the trafficking industry.





### 3. Integrated Programme to Respond to Human Smuggling

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What does it mean to deploy an 'integrated programme'?

As laid out in the introduction, the goal in an integrated programme is not only to counter the criminal market directly, but also to reduce harm both to migrants themselves and to the stability of states and communities through which they are sourced, through which they transit and where they seek to remain. This reflects both the legal obligations to vulnerable persons, but also a moral imperative.

If this is the case, then the objective of any policy to counter human smuggling should be aimed at reducing the market to its most benign form, where smugglers profits are minimised, and the services that they offer are a source of protection and resilience for their clients, where there is minimal violence, minimal abuse, and the actors involved in the market remain an embedded part of their communities and societies. Policies should thus be targeted at reducing profit margins and preventing criminal consolidation, whilst at the same time allowing migrants the opportunity to find safe passage to places where they have the opportunity to build productive lives.

An illicit trade like human smuggling presents multiple, sometimes contradictory, concerns:

- for interior security, uncontrolled, irregular or illegal immigration presents possible internal security threats, and resources criminal networks that may potentially have engagements in other forms of transnational crime or security threats relevant to national interests;
- for foreign affairs, mass migration facilitated by criminal networks increases the fragility of already vulnerable regions, and requires collaboration with third countries. States should seek to leverage existing bilateral relationships to facilitate collaboration;
- from the perspective of development agencies, large-scale displacement, protracted refugee situations, human smuggling and human trafficking all present protection challenges for vulnerable persons and impact (admittedly both positively and negatively) the development perspectives of third country partners; and finally
- for economics, trade and labour, migration affects balance of payment calculations through changing remittance patterns, prevents good migration management which in turn impacts the composition of the domestic labour force, and swells the grey and black economy of trading partners, and contributes to illicit financial flows.

Bringing together a programme that addresses this multiplicity of interests is not always possible, but it is the goal of an integrated programme to try. Moreover, recognising the stakes involved, to deploy an integrated programme means to attempt to address a multi-dimensional threat in a coordinated way, using a 'whole of government' approach that includes responses drawn from multiple toolboxes. It means using a combination of investments, political engagement, incentives and deterrents to make a paradigm shift on a problem of criminal economies, both to reduce the illicit industry itself, and to mitigate the impact on development objectives.

It is increasingly recognised now that many of the causes of organised crime relate to a wider set of governance, social, developmental and other factors, which has highlighted incontrovertibly that a narrow security approach will not be effective in countering the problem, and building institutional capacity will be invalid without foundational investments in livelihoods, stability and the rule of law are not in place.<sup>64</sup>

As the diagram below shows, when you recognise the complexity of criminal economies, organised crime and illicit flows, then the levers and programmatic impacts that are available to external actors are much more diverse, including:

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64 Tuesday Reitano and Marcena Hunter (2016) *Protecting Politics: Deterring the Impact of Organised Crime on Public Service Delivery*, Stockholm: International IDEA.



1. In some, but not all cases, it is necessary to first shape the security environment, reducing violence and conflict, or signalling sharply to the market to end the perception of impunity. This creates space for other, diverse or more comprehensive interventions can be made;
2. Engage with communities and other stakeholders, both those affected by the crime, but also those engaged in the crime either directly or as part of a broader enabling framework or 'grey' actors;
3. Provide alternatives that address economic and social incentives for engaging in illicit trade, and to bolster the formal economy and financial inclusion;
4. Mobilise political will that is critical to success, through external incentives and deterrents, which could range from political, economic or normative strategies, as well as supporting advocacy and exposure within the society itself;
5. Build state institutions, not only from a technical capacity, but also their legitimacy and capacity for service delivery across the spectrum of the population.



**Figure 10:** External interventions to end human smuggling

This is a departure from the way that organised crime, illicit trade and criminal economies have traditionally been addressed. On the whole, organised crime is perceived as primarily a security threat, to be addressed through criminal justice interventions, and, when and where the criminal justice system falls short, it requires a more militarised approach. Longer-term activities have focussed on building capacity of state institutions, but without the recognition of the level of capacity or legitimacy of those institutions. All the other strategic entry points shown in the diagram above are deployed haphazardly, or not at all.

Regrettably, in the case of human smuggling, the overwhelming focus on the security and state institutional responses (the dark blue and the green in the diagram above) have proven largely ineffective. Securitised strategies, whether they manifest themselves in the form of warships, border patrols or criminal investigations are symbolic gestures at best, and counterproductive measures with far-reaching negative repercussions at

worst. These policies have forced smuggling to the other extreme, exacerbated crises and enhanced the market for smugglers. Worse, diplomatic engagement with the states in the region is legitimising and normalising their critically poor records of governance, including human right abuses and systematic practices of state sponsored persecution. This has damaged the legitimacy of European actors both on the international stage, as well as closer to the ground, where the motivations of humanitarian and development practitioners are being called into question.

The goal of this exercise, therefore, is to draw upon a wider and more comprehensive set of responses which together build up a set of investments, political engagement, incentives and deterrents to make a paradigm shift on a problem of criminal economies, both to reduce the illicit industry itself, and to mitigate the impact on development objectives.

## Applying an integrated approach to the Horn of Africa

While organised crime and illicit trade are never neutral nor detached from the state, there is arguably no flow more political than the movement of people. As a careful political economy analysis has shown, the reasons that prompt people to take a migration journey are often related to their marginalisation, persecution by the state or from the unequal distribution of economic resources and life chances. Furthermore, the trust-based nature of the smuggling relationship means that the smugglers are often closer in profile to the people they move, than to the criminal networks that are commonly portrayed in the media.

Where the smuggling of migrants bears more similarities to other forms of illicit trade, however, is in the formidable profits it can generate, particularly in the current climate of a world destabilised by the potent forces of globalisation. Illicit flows cut paths of corruption, resource strongmen, conflict actors and erode institutions. While they may serve as a source of livelihoods and boost local informal economies, they also tend to raise levels of violence, and impact negatively the most vulnerable in society.

Conclusions from the applied analysis of the eight major hubs in the three systems highlight clearly that there is no silver bullet that is going to address the problem of irregular migration from the Horn of Africa to Europe. Not only are these systems highly interdependent, there are several systemic and structural factors that are strikingly similar in each of the systems that were studied that are going to serve as major obstacles to the development of effective responses:

- The networks facilitating irregular migration have concentrated and consolidated around ethnic groups that are historically marginalised (e.g. Rashaida in Sudan; the Herculean and the Toubou in Libya) and who have structured their society and livelihoods around cross border smuggling of commodities and people. Few, if any, prospects for alternative and legitimate livelihoods exist and the level of disenfranchisement of these groups is not easily reversed.
- Institutionalised transactional corruption facilitates human smuggling at every border crossing, and at every interaction between migrants and the state. The bribes and taxes paid to security officials across the broader Sahel have made irregular migration a source of livelihoods and funding for state officials that is considered almost a right of office. Far from being partners in ending the trade, state actors are key facilitators.
- The people of the Horn of Africa have justifiable reasons for moving, and the majority would easily have grounds for a viable asylum claims. The fragility in the region is manifold and deep seated, including

***"The reasons that prompt people to take a migration journey are often related to their marginalisation, persecution by the state or from the unequal distribution of economic resources and life chances."***



conflict, political repression, food insecurity, protracted displacement and widespread under-development. Migration is, therefore, regardless of the levels of potential abuse they might suffer along the journey, almost universally a benefit for the migrant and an investment that pays generational dividends.

To genuinely combat human smuggling in and from the Horn of Africa region itself would require Herculean political will and regional cooperation amongst a number of states not only in the region but along the transit route to Europe, and there is absolutely no credible indication that this is a feasible prospect. Not only would this require putting aside attitudes, conflicts and prejudices that have existed longer than the states themselves, a building of awareness and institutional capacity that is a long-term endeavour, but more seriously it would require addressing the structural corruption and clientalism that permeates throughout these states, and to shift towards a form of equitable and development-centric governance. There is nothing in the current reality or the incentive structure around migration that makes that likely in any of the states of source or transit.

That said, timing is also a key consideration. Not all interventions make sense all the time and occasionally strategic opportunities present themselves which can be seized. Questions around the level of consolidation of the market, relative power relations and legitimacy of actors including the state, combined with the degree to which illicit markets have evolved, must all be taken into account in deciding when, and more importantly how, to intervene.

According to the analytical framework developed by the Global Initiative,<sup>65</sup> two considerations prevail over considerations of whether or not to intervene in any particular market. They are the extent of state capacity and political will (both are relevant and required, as either one without the other reduces the capacity to be effective), and the level of consolidation of the market.

An intervention will be more effective, and more likely to be sustainable where state will and capacity is strong, and where a criminal market is either well consolidated and stable, or highly diffuse and low level. Where the market is fragmented, contested and violent is where external intervention will struggle most to gain traction, and may result in exacerbating broader harm.

The greatest challenge in addressing migration from the Horn of Africa, regrettably, is that on both of these axes, the opportunities for intervention to prevent human smuggling are extremely limited and from a development perspective may risk doing more harm than good. Even where states are cooperative, their capacity to effectively intervene is limited. From our analysis:

- States demonstrate an extremely low level of awareness around issues of irregular migration, human smuggling, human trafficking and the distinctions between them. While they have been sensitised over the past decade to the unique requirements of countering human trafficking, this is being excessively used to restrict facilitated irregular migration.
- States in the region have demonstrated limited capacity to undertake complex investigations into serious organised crime. Border control efforts in relations to other forms of organised crime may result in increased seizures, but limited investigations or prosecutions of the networks enabling the trade. The criminalisation of the migrant is a far more likely outcome than any effective breakdown of smuggling networks.

***"The greatest challenge in addressing migration from the Horn of Africa, regrettably, is that on both of these axes, the opportunities for intervention to prevent human smuggling are extremely limited and from a development perspective may risk doing more harm than good."***

65 Global Initiative (2016) "Development Responses to Organised Crime: An Analysis and Programme Framework", Geneva: Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. Available at: <http://globalinitiative.net/development-responses-for-organised-crime-a-planning-and-programming-framework/>



- State reach often does not penetrate into the remote and borderland areas, and has limited authority with the local populations, limiting the capacity of them to be effective in understanding and impacting on local dynamics.
- The adherence of key source and transit states in the region with international norms and standards has been proven to be minimal, and securitised interventions that further impinge on human rights of their populations can serve to exacerbate the very phenomenon such an intervention is trying to avoid.

Where opportunities for intervention are the greatest are at a non-state or community level. As smuggling is in essence still a community activity, facilitated by familial networks and diaspora, these are the leverage points for changing and re-shaping the industry.

It must be recognised, however, that this is a volatile situation, and strategic opportunities may present themselves that will allow effective intervention at a later date. Changes in government, for example, whether constitutional or unconstitutional, would offer opportunities for leveraging a more open attitude towards migration and the actors involved in facilitating irregular migration. This analysis, combined with ongoing monitoring, would ensure that opportunities that open up in the future can be seized.

Smarter interventions are urgently required, but these smarter interventions may involve making uncomfortable trade-offs and difficult choices about what to focus on, toning down the idealism in some cases, making overtures to non-traditional partners in others, and also accepting that levels of migration may remain higher than has previously been the case. Smarter interventions may also be about accepting when not to intervene at all.

## Principles for Intervention

In the following tables, a number of catalytic initiatives have been proposed that will either shape the thinking of key actors; build lines of communication and possible avenues for intervention with protagonists in the smuggling trade, and finally that will build the resilience of communities to protect themselves from the harms of smuggling and find safer, more productive long-term alternatives.

**Figure 11:** Three pillars of an integrated response



The recommendations and possible interventions presented herewith are aligned to set of principles around interventions that could be deployed when strategic opportunities arise. They are organised under the three principle intervention areas of the framework: (i) isolating the criminal market; (ii) reducing impunity; increasing exposure; (iii) mitigating harm and building resilience.

For the sake of clarity, in the subsequent section which provides programming options, proposals have then been ordered into three sub-categories: research; policy and programmatic responses, though clearly these will overlap, and many of the activities may inform multiple objectives at the same time.





In each case, dedicated and comprehensive due diligence should be undertaken before programmes are deployed, because, as noted, these proposals are made in a situation that is highly dynamic, and where circumstances might change significantly.

### **i. Isolating the Criminal Market**

In response to a traditional form of illicit trade, the strategic response is typically one rooted in increasing the cost of the criminal entrepreneur of doing business and thereby reducing the profit margin. In terms of responses, this means investing strategically in deterrents including through seizures, prosecutions and heightened penalties for being an actor in the market.

Human smuggling is perverse because these types of security and control-based interventions make the smuggler more necessary to the migrant, thus making it possible for them to charge more, the industry profitable, the requirement that the smuggler be more professional and have better networks of corruption – i.e. it requires the smuggler to be more criminal. Furthermore, they make the migrant more vulnerable in the relationship, thus more likely to open them to violent and exploitative treatment, and less likely to seek recourse.

Even without addressing the demand side of the equation, there is an urgent need for a new toolbox to be deployed to counter human smuggling, particularly in its most negative manifestations. Given the highly localised nature of smugglers and smuggling, these alternative solutions must necessarily be tailored to the local context and environment. They should include a close mapping of the political economy of the region in order to establish to whom and how the profits of the industry are directed. This requires ongoing monitoring of market conditions around the smuggling industry to identify outbreaks of violence and the consolidation of control. They then require finding means to address human smuggling within the context of the broader socio-political framework of the country. This would facilitate the identification of incentives that would shift the interests of groups away from enabling this form of illicit trade and towards central state consolidation and development, even in the furthest borderlands.

***"Smuggling has become the most profitable livelihood strategy for smugglers and for residents in key towns along the route. If the trade is to end, then holistic alternatives will be needed for all actors in the criminal industry of human smuggling and trafficking."***

- **Identify the political economy interests of actors in the industry**

The research has emphasised that, unlike other forms of organised crime, smugglers often have a uniquely political motivation and a close affiliation to the communities they serve. They must then be understood to be a party to their domestic political economy, and not simply a criminal element to be excised. Instead, they should be expressly included in any political, economic or social negotiation or agreement as an interest group, and incentives provided to encourage them to renounce this form of illicit trade.

The analysis shows that human smuggling is highly integrated into local political economies, and these markets must be closely understood and monitored to understand the root causes of flows; their direction and scale, but also the likely impact on local socio-economic conditions that a growing migrant flow will have. How much money smugglers are earning, and how they are spending those funds, is critically important to understanding the potential impact of the trade on the stability of states and levels of violence and criminality.

Alternative spheres of influence can provide entry points away from key hubs where access may be restricted. Solutions generated with internal initiative and imperative are more likely to be successful and sustained than those imposed as an external priority with nothing other than financial incentives offered.



• **Provide economic alternatives for actors in the industry**

Attention needs to be paid to the communities and groups whose livelihoods have become reliant on income from smuggling of migrants. Smuggling hubs have formed in remote border communities, serving as a crucial income source for where there are few other alternatives. When interventions are made to close down smuggling routes and reduce the number of people travelling, the consequences on the local economies can be grave. Efforts to stop the industry should not be attempted without a clear plan on what should replace it, as in some cases breaking down the smuggling industry may do more harm than allowing it to stand.

New approaches are needed to tackle actors who aid illicit migration and to reduce the incentives of engaging in those criminal industries. Smuggling has become the most profitable livelihood strategy for smugglers and for residents in key towns along the route. If the trade is to end, then holistic alternatives will be needed for all actors in the criminal industry of human smuggling and trafficking.

• **Rebuild Safeguards**

Migrant smuggling is an industry that is largely based on trust and reputation, with inherent safeguards built into it that protect the migrant for their journey, and which act as de facto regulation over the industry as a whole. These safeguards include the way payments are structured, how communication technology is used, the role of the diaspora and source communities play in decision making, support and oversight. A range of initiatives are proposed to promote and reinforce these safeguards as resilience mechanisms for the benefit of the migrant and the stability of the countries along the route.

<b>i. Isolating the Criminal Market</b>				
<b>Research / Monitoring</b>	<b>Target Country (-ies)</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Building up a standing capacity to monitor and analyse smuggling markets through a smuggling 'Observatory'	Global	While a growing number of tools exist for measuring the movement of people, there is none that maps the role of smugglers as a vector in human migration.  To develop a responsive evidence basis upon which changes in the smuggling market can be monitored, opportunities for intervention can be identified, programming options can be predicated, and progress can be measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a central analytical unit who can map and analyse global and sub-regional smuggling trends.</li> <li>• Establish a network of local researchers, journalists, community leaders who can feed into an ongoing, civil society monitoring of human smuggling dynamics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International experts / development professionals.</li> </ul>
Develop and continue political economy analysis of smuggling hubs	Trans-Sahara		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feed data from front-line migrant support agencies on prices, payment structures and key actors into an online mapping tool.</li> <li>• Preparation of regular briefs and updates highlighting changing routes and dynamics in the market.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local journalists and researchers.</li> <li>• National and international political and security analysts.</li> </ul>
Prices of key inputs, leg prices and prices of protection	Global	This can, as appropriate, be combined with police data, and data collected during the asylum process.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International humanitarian and migration professionals.</li> <li>• Local journalists and researchers.</li> <li>• National security officials</li> </ul>



Policy	Target Country (-ies)	Rationale	Activities	Stakeholders
Strengthen the awareness, data gathering and response capacity of frontline migration and refugee support agencies	Global	Humanitarian and migration-related international organisations have constant contact with people on the move, often conducting registration, or entry/exit interviews. Yet the data that they collect provides no indicators that allow them to understand how the smuggling market is evolving and the likely impact on migration trends, thereby preventing them from responding appropriately and proactively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene a working group of key frontline NGO and UN agencies.</li> <li>• Strengthen awareness of human smugglers are a vector in migration management.</li> <li>• Assess data collection capacity, protocols and data gaps related to smuggling.</li> <li>• Agree a common set of indicators, and a neutral central collection / analysis unit on human smuggling.</li> <li>• Identify a series of common 'red flags' to warn of (i) impending migration surges; (ii) evidence of human trafficking and undue violence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanitarian and migration-related international organisations (e.g. UNHCR, IOM, ICRC, Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils, etc.)</li> </ul>
Adherence to human rights and governance principles in multilateral interventions	Horn of African / Khartoum Process states	<p>Policy making and programmatic response priorities to human smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe are currently negotiated within the Khartoum Process.</p> <p>If this platform is not to produce counter-productive results, the participation of all states needs to be predicated on adherence to human rights and international norms and standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governments and the international community should be strongly encouraged to consider using their influence and assistance in Africa, and specifically the Horn, to advocate for better human rights-oriented and open governance among the states partners to the Khartoum Process.</li> <li>• The Khartoum Process should be used to promote an integrated, migrant-centric understanding of migration management rather than focusing on border control.</li> <li>• Avenues for dialogue with non-state actors should be opened into the Khartoum process.</li> <li>• Mechanisms for the monitoring of implementation, in line with international norms and standards, should be built into activities of the Khartoum Process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States parties to the Khartoum Process</li> </ul>



Programmes	Target Country (-ies)	Rationale	Activities	Stakeholders
Rebuilding safeguards into human smuggling	Horn of Africa Sinai Sahel Maghreb Coastal	<p>As noted in the analysis, migrant smuggling is an industry with safeguards inherently built into it, which break down when migrant smuggling becomes commoditised. A series of activities could replicate and rebuild those safeguards, thereby both enhancing protection for migrants, but also reducing the potency of smugglers in the industry.</p> <p>Rather than provide these services directly, or through the state which may not have legitimacy with local populations, the international community should educate and engage with local communities to set up these services for themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote access to information, through ensuring migrants have access to the internet in key hubs and remote locations.</li> <li>Developing hotlines, rapid response and rescue numbers for reporting kidnapping and abuse that migrants could call to report their whereabouts, or seek assistance.</li> <li>Provide confidential reporting services for trafficking victims – migrants and asylum seekers have noted that they feel too vulnerable going to national police in many jurisdictions where migrants are unwanted.</li> <li>Use community engagement campaigns to create referral and verification checks for smugglers.</li> <li>Build awareness about staged payment schemes that release funds in instalments to the smugglers, as a counterpoint / alternative to 'travel-now-pay-later' schemes which leave migrants vulnerable to abuse.</li> <li>Financial services and alternative money transfer firms should promote financial inclusion and easy-access schemes that provide migrants with alternatives to using unregulated financial services.</li> <li>Engage with diaspora to also provide information, serve as guardians, guarantee travel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local community groups and NGOs</li> <li>International diaspora groups</li> <li>Trade associations</li> <li>Tech and communications companies</li> <li>Financial services firms.</li> </ul>
Focused intervention on full-package travel from major hubs	Egypt, Ethiopia, Turkey, Sudan (Khartoum)	Where traditional law enforcement has the maximum efficacy is not in the informal networks that move people via the 'relay method', but those which integrate into the formal financial system through commercial travel – i.e. the 'full package' options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building of airport officials, immigration, staff of travel companies to identify and detect fraudulent documents.</li> <li>Tracking of financial transactions in key smuggling hubs, particularly those where the relay method has been closed or restricted.</li> <li>Identification oversight of key persons in the protection economy of the irregular transport sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International and national law enforcement</li> <li>Financial intelligence units, banking sector, high-street banks.</li> <li>Private sector, transportation sector, regulators.</li> </ul>
Increased regulation and oversight in sectors vulnerable to smuggling and trafficking.	Global, but specifically Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan Israel, UAE, Qatar, Lebanon, EU countries	<p>Certain industries in the global economy have been seen to blur the line between legitimate migration; irregular migration and human trafficking. In particular, these include labour migration recruitment industries, and the tourism, travel and transport sector.</p> <p>Enhancing oversight in these sectors specifically would enhance channels for regular labour migration, whilst reducing the risks of irregular migration turning into situations of human trafficking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are numerous best practices and lessons learned regarding providing effective oversight to labour migration and mobility schemes, using both government institutions and independent or civil society bodies.</li> <li>These should be advocated for and supported both in countries of source and of destination to improve the quality of legitimate migration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UN, inc. ILO, UNODC, UNDP</li> <li>World Bank and development banks.</li> <li>National labour institutions in countries of source and destination.</li> </ul>



<p>Negotiated 'demobilisation' strategy for human smuggling communities</p>	<p>Niger, Mali Libya coast</p>	<p>Too much dialogue has taken place on the state level, rather than directly engaging with the actors involved. Given the weak states in question, agreements to end human smuggling have little credible prospect for implementation or sustainability. Instead, the first step to a negotiated 'demobilisation' strategy to end human smuggling, requires engagement and dialogue with the key ethnic groups themselves.</p> <p>The priority would be to build the ownership of those directly involved in the trade, to understand their interests, priorities, concerns, and conditions for stepping away from human smuggling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and initiate dialogues with primarily Toubou, but also Tuareg communities across the Sahel – possible points of intervention:</li> <li>• Niger</li> <li>• Chad</li> <li>• Mali</li> <li>• Diaspora groups in France and elsewhere</li> <li>• Small scale dialogues outside of the main hubs can be built up into more direct negotiations, including through central state processes in future iterations and when trust has been built.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toubou, Tuareg leaders</li> <li>• National authorities in the Sahel</li> <li>• Peace negotiators, mediators.</li> <li>• EU / International community.</li> </ul>
<p>Livelihood alternatives tailored to the smuggling community</p>	<p>Niger, Mali, Chad, Sudan</p>	<p>Beyond those direct actors in the smuggling hierarchy, human smuggling has proven a highly profitable industry for many in the community who provide collateral services both to the migrants and the smugglers.</p> <p>Furthermore, as noted, those who succeed in human smuggling and cross-border illicit trade often have specialised skill sets with propensity for higher levels of risk and mobility. Standard livelihood programmes need to be reconceptualised to cater for the communities and individuals in these regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote targeted investment of livelihood generation strategies in borderland and northern regions, including broad-based economic development, retraining programmes and small enterprise schemes that will provide alternatives for communities dependent on livelihoods from smuggling.</li> <li>• Alternative livelihoods need to provide employment opportunities that enhance social standing and provide a viable future, rather than merely labour-intensive short-term investment.</li> <li>• Given the profile of the targeted group, building legitimate enterprises built on cross border trade may prove more successful than community focussed investment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International community development actors, development banks and economists.</li> <li>• Local and international private sector, SMEs.</li> <li>• Local business schools, professional trade associations and local community associations.</li> </ul>





## ii. Reducing Impunity; Increasing Exposure

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The findings observed that corruption facilitates all aspects of the human smuggling industry, in every country from which migrants are sourced, through which they transit, and once they land in Europe. In this environment, the efficacy of responses depends much on the quality of political will and state capacity. One of the challenges in addressing transnational crime effectively, particularly in more fragile states with weak institutions, is the extent to which corruption at all levels is often a central component of illicit economies. If enough boats or trucks continue to get through, the border will always appear porous. If enough arrests are waived away without prosecution, enough cases dismissed for nebulous reasons, or enough convictions made but with penalties that are a mere slap on the wrist, then criminal justice institutions and the rule of law are undermined rather than reinforced and an atmosphere of impunity results.

Continuing with criminal justice interventions in an environment of widespread impunity is not only of limited efficacy, but are highly damaging in the current context. While successful prosecutions can be used to great effect as a means of signalling, unsuccessful criminal justice responses send the opposite message. The case of Kidane, the Eritrean smuggler arrested in May 2016 highlighted very clearly the risks and challenges with achieving prosecutions, and the impact on the smuggling market was significant.<sup>66</sup> Those that we had been monitoring and engaging with quickly closed ranks. Previously amenable interlocutors refused to take our calls, suspicious that we might also be intelligence officers. Yet at the same time smuggling went on unabated, and a record number of people were put to sea from Libya in June 2016. Whether correct or not, the marred investigation sent a message to the smuggling community that the European authorities are not only ineffective and out of their depth, but that interlocutors in general are not to be trusted. Networks have receded further into the shadows, but the migrant flows continue just the same.

Instead of supporting states whose lack of leadership, governance and development posture is longstanding, international efforts should build integrity from the top. Police officers cannot be expected to carry the burden of this inherently political issue alone, and a series of investigations, technical interventions to build capacity of security interventions, or even to address transactional corruption will spend resources but will not achieve results. Heads of state and senior government officials need to create, promote and endorse independent anti-corruption units, support investigations, publicise findings transparently and conduct symbolic prosecutions. These will send an important message down through patronage networks and protection economies that corruption will no longer be tolerated.

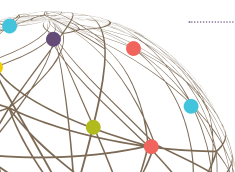
### • Symbolic Prosecutions

Prosecutions can be used as an effective strategy within a broader set of responses, however, when they signal to the rest of the smugglers in the industry that the justice system is capable of prosecuting them and being caught leads to serious penalties. Where possible, making a limited number of symbolic arrests of mid-level and controlling members of smuggling groups, as opposed to the lower ranks of the industry can send a strong message.

But such measures cannot be the only strategy, as the shock effect of prosecutions diminishes over time, and criminal groups tend to be very effective at transferring risk to the most expendable members of their networks, while the more competent actors maintain a lofty distance. This is an industry that communicates rapidly and effectively, so prosecutions at the right level will amplify quickly across multiple hubs. If such interventions are combined with other actions to restrict the supply of key smuggling infrastructure (e.g. boats; fuel) and increasing surveillance in key hubs, it could take the wind out of the sails of many markets, and would certainly knock the most opportunistic players out of the market.

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66 Eric Reidy, "The General and the Refugee", New Republic, 27 March 2017: <https://newrepublic.com/article/140974/general-refugee-hunt-europe-most-wanted-smuggler-immigration-crackdown>



However, criminal justice measures employed in isolation, without the symbolic prosecutions at the higher levels will only make the smuggling environment more challenging and established. This will likely prompt more violent criminal organisations to move in, filling in gaps in the smuggling market once occupied by opportunists and criminal entrepreneurs. These scenarios not only place migrants in greater danger, they help create a criminal infrastructure within source, transit, and destination countries that can be even more challenging to eradicate in the long term. This therefore, must be nuanced with other parts of the integrated response.

<b>ii. Reducing Impunity and Increasing Exposure</b>				
<b>Research / Monitoring</b>	<b>Target Country (-ies)</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Mapping and networking of civil society, local community groups, independent media and activists who could serve as sources of community activism, citizen oversight and advocacy.	Horn of Africa, Libya	In the absence of effective governance and where there is widespread, civil society has a very important role to play in changing attitudes and public opinion, investigating and highlighting corruption and putting pressure on the leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of civil society actors through a network based approach.</li> <li>• Creating a regional civil society network that can self-identify, professionalise, support and protect civil society activism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International community / UN System</li> <li>• International NGOs and umbrella organisations</li> <li>• Global and regional investigative journalism networks</li> <li>• Regional and national civil society organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Target Country (-ies)</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>• Activities</b>	<b>• Stakeholders</b>
Adherence to human rights and governance principles in multilateral interventions	Horn of African / Khartoum Process states	<p>Policy making and programmatic response priorities to human smuggling from the Horn of Africa to Europe are currently negotiated within the Khartoum Process.</p> <p>If this platform is not to produce counter-productive results, the participation of all states needs to be predicated on adherence to human rights and international norms and standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governments and the international community should be strongly encouraged to consider using their influence and assistance in Africa, and specifically the Horn, to advocate for better human-rights-oriented and open governance among the states partners to the Khartoum Process.</li> <li>• The Khartoum Process should be used to promote an integrated, migrant-centric understanding of migration management rather than focusing on border control.</li> <li>• Avenues for dialogue with non-state actors should be opened into the Khartoum process.</li> <li>• Mechanisms for the monitoring of implementation, in line with international norms and standards, should be built into activities of the Khartoum Process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States parties to the Khartoum Process</li> </ul>



Protecting civil society and activists	Horn of Africa; Maghreb	Civil society performs an important oversight function in a healthy democracy. However, there are risks to independent and civil society organisations and individuals who seek to counter illicit trade, particularly in authoritarian states, which may result repercussions and persecution (which is then a rationale for increased mobility).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping of civil society actors through a network based approach.</li> <li>• Support independent media and civil society efforts to monitor and report on individual traffickers and acts of political repression, raising pressure on governments to act against them.</li> <li>• Creating a regional civil society network that can self-identify, professionalise, support and protect civil society activism.</li> <li>• Publicise individuals persecuted for civil society activism, and provide legal channels for migration for political asylum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International community / UN System</li> <li>• International NGOs and umbrella organisations</li> <li>• Global and regional investigative journalism networks</li> <li>• Regional and national civil society.</li> </ul>
Programmes	Target Country (-ies)	Rationale	Activities	Stakeholders
Mapping of illicit flows and Libya's political economy	Libya	No credible reduction of irregular migration to Europe will be possible until Libya is stabilised and can credibly maintain its internal security borders. The process around Libya's transition is insufficiently informed of the political economy of the human smuggling industry and the nature of how these flows are profiting different parties to the conflict. If an eventual peace settlement and stable governance arrangement is also to contribute to a sustainable reduction in migration flows, engaging relevant interest groups into the process must become an explicit part of transition planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ongoing mapping of the political economy of human smuggling and illicit flows is conducted (see above).</li> <li>• Negotiators of Libya's transition, and international sponsors, are regularly briefed on changes in the political economy.</li> <li>• Dialogues are initiated within the context of the peace accords to bridge to communities key to human smuggling and address their concerns in the post-transition (i.e. Amizagh; Toubou).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International mediators.</li> <li>• Local journalists and researchers.</li> </ul>
Anti-corruption programming, promoting integrity and ethics training	Horn of Africa Sahel Maghreb	Longer term efforts to manage migration and border control efforts better will require engagement with the institutions of the state and the officers for whom these are primary functions. Thus far, for many of the states of source and transit, these institutions are weak, corrupt and are frequently accused of violent abuses of power. Strengthening their integrity, efficacy and client orientation will be a key requirement, but one that cannot be conducted in isolation from other parts of the integrated programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wide range of trainings exist for human rights, integrity, service delivery, among others that are targeted at professionalising security institutions.</li> <li>• In addition, a range of technical solutions have been piloted to reduce the opportunities for technical corruption – such as mobile phone payments – can be effective given the right incentive systems.</li> <li>• Aligning these with programmes for civilian oversight is critical to their long-term efficacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International community – SSR, anti-corruption.</li> </ul>





Refugee camp in Hargeisa, Somalia. Photo: Adobe Stock

### iii. Mitigating Harm; Building Resilience

For as long there is a demand for mobility that cannot be met by legal channels, there will be a demand for the services of smugglers. But as this report has shown, the smuggling industry can take many forms, some of which are positive, where smugglers are embedded in their communities and are a source of resilience. In other scenarios, smugglers are violent, abusive and exploitative. The goal of interventions here, therefore should be to reduce the need for smugglers, rather than heighten it. Where smugglers remain necessary, they should exist in their most benign form.

This means creating alternatives, rather than closing avenues. Building borders creates concentrations of people and intensifies zones of migratory pressure. A better approach would be to diffuse this to the maximum extent possible, promoting sub-regional opportunities for migration and encouraging nearby states to offer more open migration options. It is noticeable, for example, that in the ECOWAS zone where there is a broad freedom of movement policy amongst the 15 member states, the vast majority of migration is inter-regional, and the smuggling market is low-level, garnering minimal profits.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the goal should be to shift the need for smugglers inwards, and funding spent on border control would arguably be better spent on offering incentives and support to neighbouring states to provide progressive integration strategies for migrants and refugees.

One of the greatest risks of a strategy focused on border controls and restricted movement is that it creates stagnant populations behind new borders. Therefore, in the logic of good migration management, there are very few incentives for states of transit to build up borders and restrict movement of people earlier in the journeys. It creates a source of insecurity and a recruitment ground not only for smugglers but also for human traffickers and other criminal groups. Stagnant populations, where there is a strong unsatisfied desire to migrate, become easy recruiting grounds and visible potential profit centers. Migration and trafficking – along with deliberate use of atrocities to drive out populations - have been applied through conflicts in millennia, more so in recent years to gain territorial control for certain political or ethnic groups, or to generate incomes by controlling smuggling routes, or to sell fuel to refugee camps or to tax human traffickers. Examples include atrocities to drive out populace from

<sup>67</sup> Tuesday Reitano, 'Human Smuggling from Africa to Europe' in OECD/AfDB (2016) *Illicit Financial Flows: Criminal Economies in West Africa*, Paris: OECD Publishing. The relative levels of migration within the region is difficult to measure, but some expert studies have suggested that as much as 90% of West African migration takes place within the ECOWAS zone.





Darfur to gain access to resource locations, atrocities in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to drive refugee streams and subsequently sell charcoal to refugee camps or utilize forced labour in illegal mines,<sup>68,69</sup> or the push in 2014-2015 of ISIS to control the Syrian border to Turkey, vital for smuggling of oil and antiques.<sup>70</sup>

Protecting vulnerable migrant communities in this stagnant state is critical, firstly for the sake of the migrants themselves, and secondly to prevent them becoming a security threat or a source of political unrest. Rather than encouraging them to pool and stagnate, and thus serve as a highly visible and profit recruitment ground for smugglers and criminal groups, finding multiple locations and means where migrants and refugees can safely disperse, and find productive livelihoods in alternative locations closer to source should be made a priority.

Given the community nature of smuggling, one conclusion is clear: the debate around migration and smuggling and the locus of responses needs to be shifted from the state level to a grass roots debate. Many of the states from which migrants and refugees are coming, and where the major smuggling hubs exist, are either mired in conflict and crisis, or are critically weak with minimal institutional capacity. In some cases, it is the states themselves that are responsible for the persecution or marginalization that has prompted the displacement in the first place, which makes them far from perfect interlocutors and rewards the poor governance that is the root cause of migration.

This does not mean accepting all migrants in Europe. Part of the reason for the EU becoming the focus of all the recent migratory movement was that options that previously existed in other regions – the Gulf, Israel, even Yemen and the Middle East – had reduced, leaving Europe as one of the remaining few credible options for aspirational migrants.

Overall, therefore, interventions in this section should reinforce some of the proposals in earlier sections: to build up community engagement, create safety valves and alternatives, and to build long-term foundations for better migration management.

#### • Build up Community Engagement

There is a critical need to engage directly at the community level, and to break the hegemony of central state institutions over the migration dialogue. It is rarely interests of the state to prevent irregular migration and in some cases in the Horn of Africa they are directly responsible for the motivations for movement. Moreover, smuggling networks have tracked closely to systematic patterns of marginalisation, and thus are likely to be largely excluded from any dialogues with the central state. Working directly with communities is more likely to shift smuggling towards its model as a resilience mechanism rather than a source of insecurity.

#### • Create Safety Valves

Large displaced populations, particularly those that stagnate for protracted periods of time, are critical sources of vulnerability. Therefore, initiatives that further restrict movement and cause large stagnant populations to build up with no medium to long-term perspectives, as the EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016 has done, are inherently a great risk. They create the conditions for the worst forms of the smuggling industry to thrive.

Short term responses need not only to strengthen support to UNHCR and aid organisations to improve living conditions in refugee and IDP camps to reduce motivation to leave, but also to advocate for better policies in refugee and migrant hosting states to allow populations to integrate and become profitable members of society. For the Horn of Africa, continuing the Khartoum Process without guarantees of adherence to basic human rights standards as well as international governance norms is incredibly risky.

68 UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG. 2015. Experts' background report on illegal exploitation and trade in natural resources benefitting organized criminal groups and recommendations on MONUSCO's role in fostering stability and peace in eastern DR Congo: <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=26802&ArticleID=34958>

69 UNEP-INTERPOL. The environmental crime crisis. A rapid response assessment: <http://www.unep.org/uneal/docs/RRACrimecrisis.pdf>

70 Tuesday Reitano and Mark Micallef, "Breathing Space: the impact of the EU-Turkey Deal on Irregular Migration through Turkey to the EU," Institute for Security Studies, November 2016.





Rather than create stagnant populations in former transit states, and as an alternative to gathering people into camps and service centres, an optimal alternative would be to disperse them as thinly and widely as possible, by offering incentives and alternatives for localised movements. In regions where freedom of movement exists the smuggling industry makes little profit and therefore remains a marginal or collateral activity.

Efforts should go into maximising the number of potential places where migrant populations could move freely, and to maximise their rights to live and work on their own reconnaissance. Strengthened ODA targeting not only to least developed countries, but also to transit or neighbouring countries to push stronger sustainable development and business opportunities along with democracy and post-conflict reconstruction.

• **Create alternatives**

While creating safety valves is necessary in the short term, in the long term credible alternatives are needed for people to develop productive livelihoods. Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is the only region of sub-Saharan Africa that has made no progress on a freedom of movement treaty amongst its members. By contrast, the East African Community (ECA) region (South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda), and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) both have in place provisions and have made advances to promote the free movement of people within their members.

Recent reports, as well as findings from this study, have shown finding stable work opportunities overrides the desire to get to Europe. Campaigns to provide regular employment in neighbouring states in Southern Africa, in the Maghreb, for example in Morocco,<sup>71</sup> have to some degree averted migrants from pursuing migration to Europe. The noticeable growth in the Southern Route towards South Africa during the period of study reinforces this.

***"Recent reports, as well as findings from this study, have shown finding stable work opportunities overrides the desire to get to Europe."***

Programmes to create more sustainable options for work, safe living conditions and a more welcoming environment could provide an alternative for many aspirational migrants and mobile populations. It would reduce the appeal for migrants of using smugglers to attempt the one-way trip to Europe, and matches the well-established patterns of migration in the region, as well as the parameters of sustainable migration as a result of development.

• **Building up better communication with diaspora and migrant communities**

In the region, international migration has become strongly associated with personal, social and material success, a culture of migration sometimes develops. Migration becomes a social norm or even a modern rite of passage. In this sort of environment, migrating becomes the norm rather than the exception, with staying home associated with failure.

A culture of migration has an impact on both destination and source countries. This creates a culture of transnationalism and a connection across borders between individuals, communities and societies. This, in turn, changes the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes in both places. The way migrants are treated and the way they perceive their experiences both on the journey and once settled at their destination reverberates in different ways. It informs how they integrate and develop as part of a new transnational society, and how long it takes them to settle, be productive and enjoy the benefits of having migrated.<sup>72</sup>

Embedded within EU states, Diaspora communities are an obvious means by which to influence migration dynamics back in their source communities. As noted above, they are often the financial drivers and sounding

71 Malakooti, A. (2015), Migration Trends Across the Mediterranean, IOM/Altai Consulting, Cairo: <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-trends-across-mediterranean-connecting-dots>  
72 OECD (2015), Settling In: Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015, OECD Publishing, Paris.



boards for migrants on their journey. The question then, is how to engage with diasporas so that they invest productively in building opportunities and support change within the source communities rather than promoting irregular migration.

**• Build up proactive monitoring and analysis capacity**

Finally, it would be short-sighted to assume that this is the last mass-migration of people towards Europe, and the risk of treating this as a once-off ‘migration crisis’ is that an over-emphasis of focus goes into responding to this specific set of circumstances, without building a foundation to analyse, set policies and respond to future surges in migration.

The international community needs to shift towards a more predictive, proactive and preventative approach to human smuggling. One of the greatest challenges, which most inflames negative public rhetoric and prompts the securitised clamp downs, is the speed at which smugglers amplify migration markets, activating their networks to mobilise new clients.

The movement of people is not something that should be catching the international community and the first-line responding agencies by surprise, creating the poorly managed and shameful displays that have characterised contemporary ‘migration crises’. Instead, early-warning systems need to be built into migration monitoring, with analysis that will indicate smuggling networks are gearing up, consolidating, or shifting routes. Interviews with the displaced or the irregular migrant need to include questions that will provide market insights, including on prices being paid, the existence of safeguards in the system, and the local control groups. This is by no means a difficult policy to implement.

It would be ideal to shift from ‘point-in-time’ assessment and ad hoc research efforts, towards a system of continuous and systematic monitoring, by which the international community and national actors could benefit from a platform that provides a continual, longitudinal basis for analysis. The data gathering and analytical capacity of front line refugee and migrant support needs to be addressed to be more cognisant of the role of smugglers and the dynamics in the smuggling market. This would allow a more proactive capacity to anticipate and prepare for large scale migration, and thus mitigate the risks and negative externalities associated with the development of large communities of the displaced.

<b>iii. Mitigating Harm and Building Resilience</b>				
<b>Research / Monitoring</b>	<b>Target Country (-ies)</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>
Building up a standing capacity to monitor and analyse smuggling markets through a global smuggling ‘Observatory’	Global	While a growing number of tools exist for measuring the movement of people, there is none that maps the role of smugglers as a vector in human migration.  To develop a responsive evidence basis upon which changes in the smuggling market can be monitored, opportunities for intervention can be identified, programming options can be predicated, and progress can be measured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a central analytical unit who can map and analyse global and sub-regional smuggling trends.</li> <li>• Establish a network of local researchers, journalists, community leaders who can feed into an ongoing, civil society monitoring of human smuggling dynamics.</li> <li>• Feed data from front-line migrant support agencies on prices, payment structures and key actors into an online mapping tool.</li> <li>• Preparation of regular briefs and updates highlighting changing routes and dynamics in the market, which could serve to trigger preventive and coordinated action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International experts / development professionals.</li> <li>• Local journalists and researchers.</li> <li>• National and international political and security analysts.</li> <li>• International humanitarian and migration professionals.</li> <li>• Local journalists and researchers.</li> <li>• National security officials</li> </ul>



Adapting development policy to cater to populations with a propensity to migrate	Global	<p>Some have questioned the efficacy of standard development interventions to counter illicit migration. Migrants choosing irregular routes are typically both somewhat better off and risk takers; they are not the usual target group for 'classic' development interventions focused on the poor.</p> <p>The costs of using smugglers is high. Those available to afford them are not at the bottom of the poverty pyramid, and may have relatively substantial opportunities at home. More customised development interventions could appeal to those attracted by illicit migration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive to better understand this target group of illicit migrants and how they differ from those who do not take the opportunity to migrate, through systematic monitoring and targeted research.</li> <li>• Offer target training opportunities matched to sectors of the economy where labour is sought, which include a high-skills apprenticeship and include a possible opportunity to migrate legally. A competitive or lottery-based system for select candidates could appeal to the higher risk profile of those prone to illicit migration.</li> </ul>	
Policy	Target Country (-ies)	Rationale	Activities	Stakeholders
Promoting a standing capacity for diaspora engagement	Horn of Africa / Europe	<p>The role of the Diaspora in enabling irregular migration and the human smuggling industry is increasingly pivotal. The Diaspora often provide the initiative and the funding to allow a migration journey to take place; they provide referrals to specific smugglers, and serve as a sounding board and safety net to the migrant throughout their journey. They are also an important support to the migrant in integration in their destination state.</p> <p>Despite this, European states have largely failed to establish effective forums for dialogue with diaspora communities in their own states. Efforts are convened on an urgent and ad hoc basis in response to specific crises, and without a full understanding of the Diaspora's own place in local political economies. This reduces their incentives to engage, as well as the efficacy of any subsequent intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the local community level, EU states may consider establishing standing 'diaspora councils' or advisory boards which can engage with policymakers on irregular migration.</li> <li>• Over time, these diaspora councils could serve multiple functions, including as a communication channel to source countries; a source of information and support to migrants in need (as Meron Estafanos does for the Eritrean community, for example), an early warning mechanism for changes in local dynamics.</li> <li>• Diaspora sponsored relocation schemes (like the refugee sponsorship programmes piloted in Canada and the UK) could offer a means by which to provide additional safe and legal routes for migration, thereby presenting a viable alternative to irregular movement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local councils in EU states</li> <li>• Migration policy units in EU states</li> <li>• Local diaspora groups, community leaders, religious leaders</li> </ul>

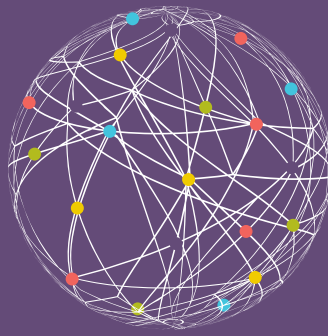


Advocate with former migrant hosting countries and the continent's larger economies, to provide more legal options	Israel, UAE and other Gulf States, Egypt, Algeria, South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania	Part of the reason for the extraordinary pressure of movement towards Europe by citizens from the Horn (the collapse of Libya's border control notwithstanding) has been the reduction in alternatives. The Gulf States, Israel and Yemen have all closed both legal and irregular migration channels; other countries in the Maghreb have become noticeably less hospitable.  Recreating alternatives by advocating with other regions and countries to provide legal options would reduce pressure on Europe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Gulf States, broader Maghreb and East and Southern Africa states in migration dialogues.</li> <li>• Diplomatic overtures and incentives made to broaden legal channels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International community</li> <li>• International diplomatic community.</li> </ul>
Support more innovative dialogue around IDP and refugee management	Global	With the dramatic reduction in credible return options for most conflict and displacement scenarios, protracted refugee have become the norm. These arguably need a different set of policies and responses than the short-term nature of the current refugee camp structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a number of dialogues ongoing about how to promote innovations and new policies in regards to refugee movement, displacement and the management of protection that deserve support, resources and experimentation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanitarian policy community.</li> <li>• Private sector, tech and innovation sector.</li> </ul>
Programmes	Target Country (-ies)	Rationale	Activities	Stakeholders
Remittance fee matching and local investment schemes.	Horn of Africa Sahel	A lot of money is spent on paying smugglers for irregular migration – the average migrant moving towards Europe will spend several thousand dollars on their journey. It would be preferable that this money is invested in the economies from which migrants come, and help to build viable and productive economies. There are some models of incentives that have been used for remittance payments that could perhaps be modified to provide incentives for local investment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore pilot programmes that match remittances with grants to serve as an incentive and multiplier of their impact. Since 2002, Mexico has been matching remittances sent by nationals under the "3x1 programme", which supports investments in high net migration regions. The supplementary funds are invested in social and infrastructure projects. Switzerland has similarly pooled ODA with financial contributions of the Albanian government to match remittances from Albanians to their hometowns.</li> <li>• Explore pilot programmes that offer time limited 'diaspora bonds', which provide incentives for diaspora to invest locally key development undertakings rather than on financing migration – can be combined with a matching scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International development agencies.</li> <li>• Development banks.</li> <li>• National governments.</li> </ul>



<p>Incentives to third countries and host communities to support and integrate refugees and migrants.</p>	<p>Israel, Maghreb, ECA, COMESA states</p>	<p>Further to the point above on advocating with states to accept and absorb more foreign migrant populations through legal channels, there are ways to provide financial or development incentives for them to do so.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessments of legal barriers to integration and accessing of benefits in third country host states.</li> <li>• Technical assistance to states willing to provide migrant integration and support strategies.</li> <li>• Development, economic and infrastructure investments in third countries that provide equal benefit to migrants and host populations.</li> <li>• Supporting employment generation, trade and small enterprise schemes for migrant and host communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International development agencies.</li> <li>• Development banks.</li> <li>• Regional economic commissions.</li> <li>• National governments.</li> </ul>
<p>Awareness raising in host communities to reduce stigma towards migrant communities and support integration.</p>	<p>EU states Regional states</p>	<p>Migration has an impact on the social, cultural, economic and political landscapes in both places. The way migrants are treated and the way they perceive their experiences both on the journey and once settled at their destination reverberates in different ways. It informs how they integrate and develop as part of a new transnational society, and how long it takes them to settle, be productive and enjoy the benefits of having migrated.</p> <p>Preventing secondary migration, but also many of the other social ills and security risks that come with poorly integrated migrant communities requires an education of the host population.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civic information schemes to promote immigrant, refugee integration.</li> <li>• Awareness raising and training with local media, local leaders, to promote positive messaging around refugees and migrants.</li> <li>• Programmes to promote cross-cultural awareness and dialogue in schools, community centres and other settings.</li> <li>• Creation and support of dedicated integration support schemes (sponsor a family, etc) that involve community in service delivery and support provision to new migrant families.</li> <li>• Engagement programmes (as above) that provide benefits to host countries as well as newly (or longstanding) immigrant communities.</li> <li>• Support for public private partnership in job creation programme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International community.</li> <li>• Local governments, councils.</li> <li>• Local civil society organisations, community based organisations, religious leaders.</li> <li>• Private sector, trade associations.</li> <li>• National governments.</li> </ul>





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