

REPORT WITH DATA AND TESTIMONIES

June 2015



Djibouti



Seas and Walls

Endless lethal barriers for migrants

CONTENTS

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DJIBOUTI | SEAS AND WALLS

Endless lethal barriers for migrants



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Introduction

“Seeds migrate on the wings of the wind; plants migrate on the waves of seas and rivers from continent to continent; birds and other animals move from place to place. But even more do human beings migrate, sometimes in groups, sometimes alone, and, in so doing, are always the free instruments of Divine Providence, which presides over human destiny and leads all people, even through great calamities, to their final goal: the perfection of man on earth and the glory of God in heaven”

G.B. Scalabrini
Second Conference on Emigration
Turin, 1898

“To those who ask: ‘Isn’t it better to stay at home rather than die at sea?’, I reply: ‘We’re neither stupid nor mad. We’re desperate and persecuted. Staying means certain death; leaving means probable death. Which would you choose? Or rather, what would you choose for your children?’”

Awaz Ahmed
Somali refugee in Italy
Rome, 2014

“Seas and walls” are obstacles that millions of men and women – fleeing from armed conflicts, natural disasters and extreme poverty – face every day on their migrant journeys, which are blocking their way. The sea is a natural boundary par excellence, a limitless barrier full of hidden dangers, which often becomes the journey’s final destination. Although media attention has focused exclusively on the Mediterranean – Mare Nostrum, as the ancient Romans called it – migration routes cross various seas around the world. In the past, primarily the Atlantic was sailed across by ships packed with poor Europeans seeking their fortunes in the Americas.

Today the “vessels of hope” are set on new courses, towards new and different destinations: across the Gulf of Aden (the Red Sea) to reach the Arabian Peninsula from the Horn of Africa; in the seas of Southeast Asia towards Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia and in the Pacific Ocean towards Australia; through the islands of the Caribbean Sea towards the United States; and from one side of the Mediterranean to the other, seeking to land in “Fortress Europe”.

This report aims to investigate the phenomenon of migration by taking a special look at the boundaries to be crossed (“seas and walls”) and focusing on the little known but extremely tragic situation of migration from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf of Aden



Often, however, migrants don’t even make it to the shoreline as they are stopped along their journey by other natural barriers: mountains, rivers and deserts. The Sahara Desert in particular, which separates black Africa from the European mirage, represents an immense – and for many impassable – natural boundary. Finally, where nature hasn’t placed barriers suitable for preventing human movement, humans themselves have intervened by building walls.

The Moroccan Wall, also known as “the wall of shame”, that separates Morocco and the former Western Sahara, which was occupied in 1975, from the areas controlled by the Saharawi people, is 2,720 kilometres long and protected by 160,000 armed soldiers, 240 heavy artillery batteries, more than 20,000 kilometres of barbed wire, armoured vehicles, and anti-personnel mines that are prohibited by an international convention.

The border fences of Ceuta and Melilla, the last two enclaves under Spanish sovereignty on African soil, comprise a triple barrier along the two cities’ borders with Morocco, consisting of 6-metre-high fences, topped by barbed wire, and constant monitoring by agents

from the Spanish Guardia Civil. The Tijuana border fence extends more than 1,000 kilometres along the border between Mexico and the United States. And there are many others (more than 50, according to the latest data), such as the Israeli West Bank barrier, the wall between India and Bangladesh, and the one between Iran and Pakistan... forming so many artificial barriers. Thousands of kilometres long – around 8,000 – aimed at separating human beings from each

other and defending the richest countries, or “walled democracies”, from inconvenient intrusions¹.

In addition to natural and artificial walls, metaphorical walls exist within the societies that migrants reach: indifference towards suffering people, preju-

dice against foreigners and narrow-mindedness, and aversion towards asylum seekers and refugees. New barriers that migrants often face at the end of their journeys, when the worst seems to be behind them and the hope of starting a new life begins to emerge. These attitudes give rise to a question: “Why? What’s happening to our humanity?”².

This report, which Caritas Italiana has prepared for World Refugee Day on 20 June 2015, aims to investigate the phenomenon of migration by taking a special look at the boundaries to be crossed (“seas and walls”) and focusing on the little known but extremely tragic situation of migration from the Horn of Africa to the Gulf of Aden.

At the same time, the report aims to recall and promote the fundamental right of freedom of movement, which is guaranteed by international conventions and fully expressed in the Social Doctrine of the Church: “Again, every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own State. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular State does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men”. Since before God, all men and women are equal³.



1. The problem at international level

Every year, at international level, migration regards tens of millions of people. According to the new annual report from UNHCR Global Trends, 59.5 million had been forced to emigrate from their places of origin due to armed conflicts, persecution, widespread violence and human rights violations by the end of 2014. A shocking figure, which clearly expresses the tragedy of migration: on average, someone in the world is forced to flee their home every four seconds⁴.

It should also be noted that the statistics provided by the United Nations only take certain categories of migrants into account: those recognised as refugees in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 1951, asylum seekers, those forced to flee their places of origin but who haven't crossed their country's borders (IDPs – internally displaced persons), stateless persons, and those who have returned to their countries of origin but are not yet reintegrated (returnees). To sum up, the above data refer to “forced” migration and don't take account of the additional millions of people who set out on their journeys for “economic reasons”, driven not by war and persecution but by hunger and extreme poverty, or the legitimate desire to build themselves a better future outside their own countries, and “environmental refugees”, forced to migrate as a result of environmental disasters.

Therefore, at global level, migration is a vitally important issue that regards all latitudes of the planet and inevitably involves all populations. It's also a growing phenomenon, with the number of people fleeing or on the move increasing every year. While a certain rhetoric maintains that global economic growth should guarantee greater international stability and widespread peace, the truth is that the number of armed conflicts is constantly rising. According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research in Germany, 2013 saw the highest number of armed conflicts since the Second World War: 414 conflicts around the world⁵. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, said we are living in “an era in which record numbers of people are fleeing wars”.

Refugee routes

According to estimates from coastal authorities and information from confirmed interdictions and other mo-



onitoring, at least 348,000 people risked such journeys in 2014. Europe, facing conflicts to its south (Libya), east (Ukraine), and southeast (Syria/Iraq) saw the largest number of sea arrivals. More than 200,000 people crossed the Mediterranean during 2014 – almost three times the previous known high of about 70,000 in 2011 when the Libyan civil war was in full swing.

“For the first time, people from refugee producing countries (mainly Syria and Eritrea) have in 2014 become a major component in this tragic flow, accounting for almost 50 per cent of the total. In addition to the Mediterranean, there are at least three other major sea routes in use today both by migrants and people fleeing conflict or persecution.

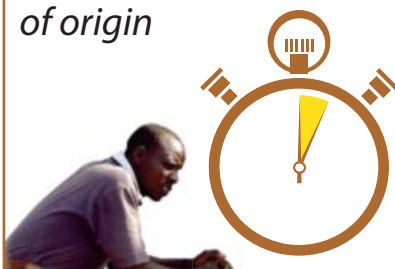
In the Horn of Africa region 82,680 people crossed the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea between 1 January and the end of November en route mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia to Yemen or onwards to Saudi Arabia and the countries of the Persian Gulf.

In Southeast Asia, it is estimated that 54,000 people have undertaken sea crossings so far in 2014, most of them departing from Bangladesh or Myanmar and heading to Thailand, Malaysia, or Indonesia.

In the Caribbean, at least 4,775 people are known to have taken to boats between 1 January and 1 December this year, hoping to flee poverty or in search of asylum”⁶.

In addition to sea voyages, migration continues via deserts (in Africa and the Americas), the steppes of central Asia, waterways, mountains and the great crossing points that nature has placed as obstacles to human movement. The constant attempt to get past walls relentlessly continues as well. These barriers artificially mark the political borders delineated by man-

59.5
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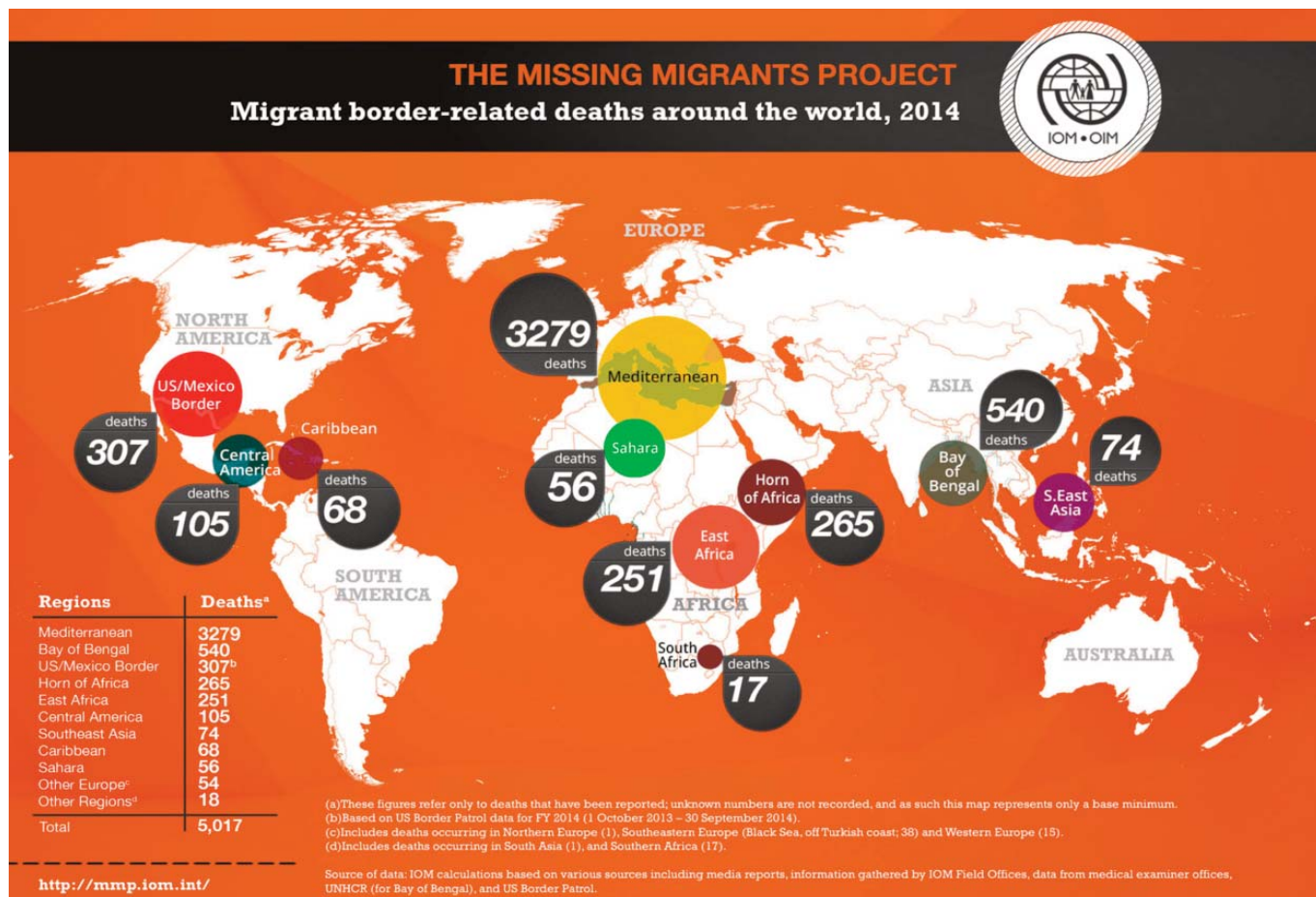


*On average, someone
in the world is forced
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kind and also metaphorically separate the “first world”, still seen as a mirage of wellbeing and affluence by the global South kept in a position of exclusion and marginalisation.

The map below shows data gathered by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) from va-

rious sources throughout the world, which also record the number of definitely identified victims in 2014, amounting to 5,017 people. For the Mediterranean region alone 3,279 victims are reported, 63% of the total number. This is a minimum figure, as it’s impossible to estimate how many people actually died.



THE TRAGIC FATE OF ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN THE GULF OF BENGAL

In early 2015 the tragedy affecting the Rohingya in **Myanmar**, the country formerly known as **Burma**, was given prominent coverage in the news: a tragedy with roots that go far back in history. The term Rohingya defines Moslem communities who speak a dialect of Bengali and mainly live in the border area between Myanmar and Bangladesh, neither of which welcome their presence, to the extent that they've been called "the world's least wanted people". In fact, settlements of Moslem communities in the area historically called Arakan now identified with Rakhine state (in Myanmar) were recorded at the time of British rule. The living conditions of these communities are particularly harsh in Myanmar, where approximately 800,000 Rohingya live on the margins of society, with no citizenship rights, and often confined in refugee camps. The name "Rohingya", despite being commonly used among the Moslem populations of Rakhine state, is even prohibited by the Myanmar government, which doesn't recognise the existence of this ethnic minority. For its part, the Bangladesh government has never encouraged settlement of these communities on its side of the border, and regularly sends displaced people within its territory back to Myanmar.

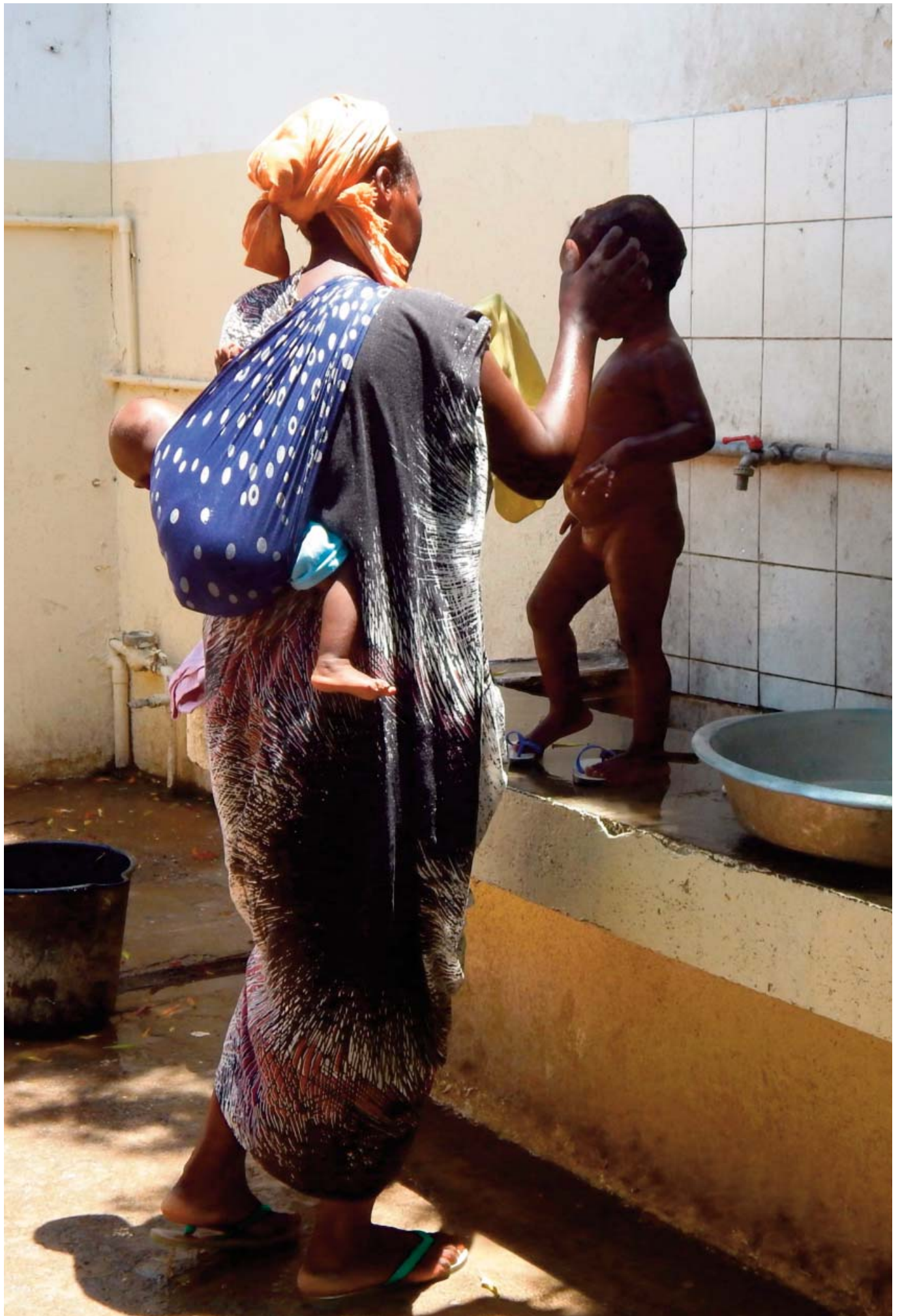
The transition towards a more democratic regime underway in Myanmar in recent years, rather than leading to improvement, has seen a rekindling of tensions between Rohingyas and the Buddhist, Burmese-speaking population, primarily in the southern part of Rakhine state. According to a recent report by the International Crisis Group, "the situation in Rakhine state contains a toxic mixture of historical centre-periphery tensions, serious inter-communal and inter-religious conflict with minority Muslim communities, and extreme poverty and under-development".

This has led to violent clashes since 2012, thereby feeding flows of refugees towards neighbouring countries, especially Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, via the Straits of Malacca. The exodus of Rohingya refugees in the Gulf of Bengal, who in many cases have been refused and pushed back out to sea by the authorities in neighbouring countries, has generated a full-blown humanitarian crisis in recent months, dubbed the "boat crisis". To give an idea of the magnitude of this phenomenon, in one day alone (11 May 2015) four boats containing 1,400 mi-

grants as well as smaller craft with 600 migrants aboard (Rohingya and Bangladeshi citizens) were intercepted off the coasts of Indonesia. On 14 May another 400 refugees were found on board boats without potable water and food; on 15 May 677 were rescued, after clashes broke out between groups causing the death of 200 people, including seven children.

According to the most recent reports from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), updated to 31 March 2015: "Smuggling networks by sea from the Bay of Bengal area to Thailand and onwards to Malaysia have become increasingly lucrative for smugglers, and increasingly dangerous for their human cargoes. Despite the risks, the number of people using these routes and means has recently been on the rise". It is estimated that some 25,000 refugees boarded smugglers' boats between January and March this year – almost double the number over the same period in 2014 – and at least 300 people died as a result of starvation, dehydration and abuse by boat crews and smugglers, as revealed by the recent discovery of mass graves in southern Thailand, containing the corpses of dozens of Rohingya refugees. "Conditions in the smugglers camp are horrific", the report continues. "People are held and abused until their relatives pay for their release. More than half the survivors interviewed by UNHCR since October reported that someone died in the smuggler's camp where they were held. Beatings are common and there are reports of rapes. Those who try to escape, risk being shot".

The approach of elections in Myanmar, scheduled at the end of 2015, doesn't help to find a solution to the problem as they risk alienating the sympathies of the country's Buddhist majority. The Rohingya refugees issue was discussed at a recent summit of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), without however achieving many results. Even though Indonesia and the Philippines offered refuge to the refugees – albeit temporary – implementation of an effective humanitarian response mechanism is extremely urgent. Finding a definitive solution remains complicated, and the thorny issue of the citizenship these people are entitled to cannot be avoided.



2. The problem at regional and national level

Zooming in from the international scene to the Horn of Africa, we find a migratory situation that's both tragic and relatively unknown.

In recent decades political instability and conflicts have rocked Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. In July 2011 the southern part of Sudan became independent – called South Sudan – after a conflict lasting many decades that has continued within the new country. Together with the dire poverty that affects most populations in these countries, lack of employment prospects, discrimination against ethnic groups and minorities, and violation of basic human rights have led to substantial and worrying human mobility in this region of Africa.

Millions of people have left behind their villages, families and loved ones with nothing in tow, except for hope of a better life, and often the hope of survival. An unimaginable flow of human beings endlessly travels these lands in East Africa every day.

Moreover, in the early months of 2015, the crisis in Yemen, located in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, entailing a civil war between Houthi rebels and loyalist forces supported by Saudi Arabia, produced a substantial flow of refugees migrating towards the small republic of Djibouti, on the African coast of the Gulf of Aden.



In this region tormented by wars and disasters, due to its – albeit relative – economic and political stability, the small country of Djibouti, with barely 870,000 in-



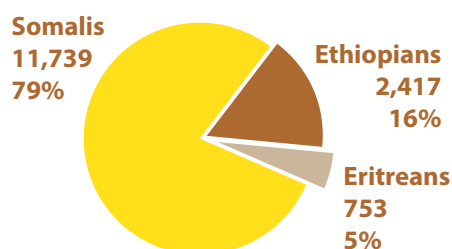
habitants⁷, is usually regarded as an oasis of peace in a storm-wracked desert, and therefore attracts thousands of people in search of a better life. The situation of immigrants to Djibouti varies greatly in terms of their country of origin, reason for migrating and the legal status granted to them.

In general, migrants in the country break down into two main groups: those travelling through the country to reach Yemen and other Arab countries via the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, and those whose final destination is Djibouti. The latter – “economic” and “political” migrants – settle in Djibouti and look for work that enables them to survive, and where there are grounds, embark on the complex bureaucratic procedure to be granted refugee status.

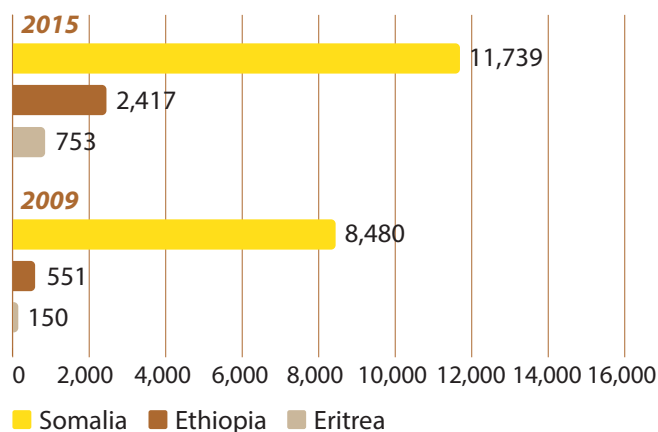
Estimates of the numbers of foreigners present in the country are inevitably partial and imprecise, and primarily regard those people “recognised” by the Djibouti government and the United Nations Refugee Agency as entitled to legal protection (asylum seekers and refugees). According to the most recent statistics as of February 2015, 14,944 registered asylum seekers and refugees are present in Djibouti, living in the refugee camps of Ali-Addé, on the border with Somalia, and Holl Holl, or in the city of Djibouti (2,513 “urban refugees”). The foreigners seeking asylum in Djibouti come from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The charts below and on the following page show details of the numbers of asylum seekers broken down by nationality, according to data provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees⁸:

Asylum seekers in Djibouti (February 2015)



Changes in the number of refugees by country of origin in Djibouti (2009-2015)



In the last ten years the republic of Djibouti has also become a “transit destination” for migrants heading to Arab countries and Europe by crossing the Red Sea from Djibouti’s Gulf of Aden coast to Yemen. These migrant flows are primarily from Somalia and Ethiopia.

The stages of a long flight

The migration route primarily regards, in particular, the journey from Ethiopia via Djibouti to the northeast coast, the point of embarkation to Arab countries. Hundreds of people travel along this route every day. Having set out on foot from Ethiopia, they’re trying to reach the villages of Tadjoura and Obock in the hope of finding a passage to Yemen as quickly as possible. Thirty kilometres north of Obock is a very long sandy coast, extending from Raz Bir to Godoria beach, from which small Yemeni boats leave every night for the other side of the strait. Migrants use local guides (pas-seurs) to get to these beaches. In return for payment, many youngsters from Tadjoura, Obock and other vil-lages in Djibouti lead the irregular migrants along de-sert tracks during night-time to the places the boats leave from. Several youngsters who were interviewed said they did this work regularly and considered the migrants’ journeys to be an asset for their country.

According to estimates by the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), at least 100,000 migrants, mostly Ethiopians, pass through Djibouti every year on their way to Yemen and from there go on to Saudi Arabia and other destinations⁹. The boats heading for Yemen are packed to the gunwales before setting sail. A small fishing boat that normally holds 10 to 15 people, is loaded with 40 or more passengers piled on top of each other. The boats also have very powerful engines that enable them to reach the Yemen coast in just over three hours.

However, due to overloading and the speed main-tained, well above the boat’s capacity, the migrants don’t always make it to the opposite shore. Moreover,

for those who reach the Yemen coast, problems and difficulties may well increase. Indeed, migrants end up in the hands of traffickers and criminals who are ready to do anything to make money. The testimonies of mi-grants who have been abducted and held in full-blown torture camps are literally harrowing. Imprisoned for weeks in the middle of the desert until their families send sums of money to the traffickers, these migrants (especially Ethiopians) are subjected to violence, sexual abuse, torture and in some cases murder on a daily basis.

Poverty and wars

The tragedy of boats sinking in the Gulf of Aden and the violence and abuse meted out to migrants aptly illustrates the global problem of migration: in every corner of the planet economic inequality and its consequences (wars, persecution and diseases linked to poverty) generate migration flows that are hard to control and manage, in which a large number of people lose their lives.

So far the civil war in Yemen hasn’t interrupted the migration flow from Ethiopia to the Arabian Peninsula, but it has created a flow in the opposite direction, from Yemen to Djibouti. According to estimates by the United Nations and Djibouti’s Ministry of Interior, at the end of April 2015 approximately 500 Yemeni refugees were registered at Obock on the northeast coast of Djibouti. In addition, are those people who, able to afford it, have travelled by their own means to the port and airport of Djibouti in order to flee the war. If the civil war in Yemen continues in the coming months, at least 5,000 refugees are expected to arrive between April and June and 30,000 up to September. Long-term estimates, up to December 2015, range from a forecast of 150,000 arrivals, with a worst-case scenario of 300,000, a substantially larger number than a small nation like Djibouti is able to absorb and manage.



3. The causes and connections with Italy and Europe

There are many causes underlying the migratory movements in the Horn of Africa, ranging from persecution in migrants' countries of origin to widespread insecurity and poverty, as well as environmental disasters that force whole families to migrate to survive, such as prolonged periods of drought that make the soil arid and deprive people and animals of their major source of sustenance: water.

The populations of the Horn of Africa are among those suffering most from food insecurity in the world, due to increasing aridity of the soil, frequent droughts, dependence on external food and economies paralysed by conflicts and social injustice. Starting in the autumn of 2010 a particularly severe environmental crisis hit this region of Africa, with the worst drought in 60 years – whose consequences are still being felt today – which caused a serious famine and a food crisis affecting over 80% of the population¹⁰. This environmental disaster indelibly marked the region, drying up watercourses and lakes, making the soil completely arid and barren, and drastically reducing the local population's principal livelihoods, primarily pastoralism and agriculture.

Hundreds of thousands of families were forced to emigrate from their places of origin, having seen their crops destroyed and their livestock dying of thirst. Overall, more than 13 million victims of this crisis were registered in the Horn of Africa.

Drought isn't only a local problem

The environmental crisis and the resulting mass migration to the Arabian Peninsula and Europe entail important interconnections at international level. First of all, the severe drought in the Horn of Africa is closely connected with climate change, which is caused by global pollution and the use of fossil fuels. As has been demonstrated, these factors primarily derive from the most industrialised countries and emerging economies (South America, India and China), and certainly not from the countries of the Horn of Africa, which nevertheless are subjected to the most serious consequences, also due in part to a lack of infrastructure to tackle the crisis.

Moreover, the crisis provoked by drought is connected to other

Italy and Europe have strong interests in this region. An Italian company has been appointed to build the "great renaissance dam" in Ethiopia, which is highly controversial due to its enormous environmental impact and the armed evacuation of groups of residents from the areas concerned by the project



economic and political factors that lie beyond African borders. Indeed, in recent years economic policies have been aimed at meeting the interests of large commercial companies, primarily in the food and agribusiness sector, which have occupied large plots of fertile land to the detriment of the local population (land grabbing) and implemented deforestation strategies and intensive exploitation of natural resources, for agricultural production destined for export.

In addition, the failure of governments to intervene on food prices – and perhaps being unable to do so – has contributed towards turning the drought into a humanitarian disaster, thus putting beyond reach the two main sources of life: water and food. With all its harshness and turmoil, the crisis in the Horn of Africa may be seen as the other face – the more disturbing and tragic one – of the economic crisis and financial instability the world has been wrestling with in recent years. A real crisis of transformation of the geopolitical balances of global capitalism that has struck the heart of the West and degenerated into social crisis, where the volatility of markets predominates and the entire burden falls on the most vulnerable and exposed social groups.

Ideologies or interests?

"The political West is wavering and the post-ideological constructions that have prevailed since the end of the opposition between East and West have fallen into crisis, based on neoliberal and monetarist remedies"¹¹.

Italy and Europe have strong interests in this region. For example, an Italian company has been appointed to build the "great renaissance dam" in Ethiopia, which is highly controversial due to its enormous environmental impact and the armed evacuation of groups of residents from the areas concerned by the project¹².

Finally, another interesting connection between migration movements in this region of Africa and European and international economic interests is the war business. Indeed, one of the main reasons millions of people are forced to move from their places of origin is war, or more generally armed conflicts within and between states, of which there are many in the Horn of Africa region.

For example:

- the civil war in Somalia, that has continued without interruption for 20 years;
- internal conflicts in Ethiopia and the constant border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea;
- the border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti;
- armed conflicts between the Kenyan army and the Somali Al Shabab militia;
- massacres in parts of Sudan (Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile);
- the bloody civil war in South Sudan, which has already caused more than 15,000 deaths;
- the killings in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the recent conflicts in Burundi, in the Great Lakes region.

Beyond the Gulf of Aden the situation doesn't seem to be much better, with endless conflicts in Iraq, Syria and in recent months in Yemen, and thousands of refugees flooding onto the coast of Djibouti.

The large and growing number of armed conflicts naturally raises a question: Who benefits from these wars? One aspect in particular should lead to reflection: 90% of weapons and munitions used in African conflicts come from non-African countries¹³.

Where do these weapons come from in particular? At international level, the largest weapons manufacturers and exporters are: the United States, Russia, Germany, China, France and Great Britain¹⁴. But other "less powerful" countries also play a significant role in the arms business. Spain, for example, is the main supplier of munitions to sub-Saharan Africa¹⁵.

Italy has significant economic interests in this trade, via important companies like Oto Melara, Finmeccanica and Beretta. In 2013, the Italian aircraft carrier Cavour visited 20 African countries to promote the best of military hardware "made in Italy". This travelling show cost €33 million, of which €20 million were provided by the Ministry of Defence and €13 million by the companies involved¹⁶. The amounts invested give some idea of the value of the business at stake.

In conclusion, it may be said that the most developed countries make a decisive contribution to creating the causes – environmental, economic and political – that generate mass migration, yet then adopt policies to reject the migrants who often reach the shores of the "First World" by crossing the sea.



4. Caritas data

The Catholic Church of Djibouti, which is an extremely fragile and minority organisation in a Moslem country, has for years been engaged in the protection of the most vulnerable migrants: children and the sick. In particular, it provides these services via the Caritas office, which began in 1952 as the “Diocesan Delegation of Secours Catholique”, and then became “Caritas Djibouti” in 1978, as well as via the informal LEC (Lire, Ecrire, Compter – reading, writing and arithmetic) schools that offer a basic education to migrant children, orphans and those unable to pay for their schooling.

The Caritas Centre for street children offers a daily welcome and food to around 100 homeless boys and girls aged between 7 and 17. The statistics and stories gathered by the local Caritas – the only office able to provide such updated information¹⁷ – also give a clear idea regarding the migration of abandoned minors.

Refugee and abandoned children

During 2014¹⁸ a total of 19,917 street children attended the Caritas Centre, including 312 registered



children (283 male and 29 female). Of these, only 203 children regularly attended the Caritas Centre during the year, while 90 stopped coming and 19 returned to Ethiopia with Caritas' help. The large number of children of whom trace was lost during the year, and the substantial gap between the numbers of males and females attending the Centre, are indicators of the tragic situation of street children in this region of Africa.

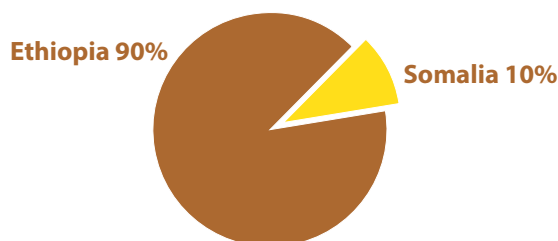
A breakdown of the children's sex and country of origin is clearly shown in this table provided by Caritas Djibouti:

Children followed up by the Caritas Centre in Djibouti in 2014 by country of origin and gender

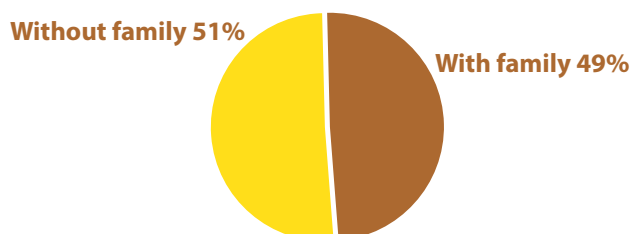
	Ethiopia	Somalia	Djibouti	With family	Without family	Total
	126	57	20	100	103	203
Male	100	54	20	75	99	174
Female	26	3	0	25	4	29

Source: Caritas Djibouti

Female street children attending the Centre in Djibouti by country of origin (2014)



Family situation of street children beneficiaries at the Centre in Djibouti (2014)

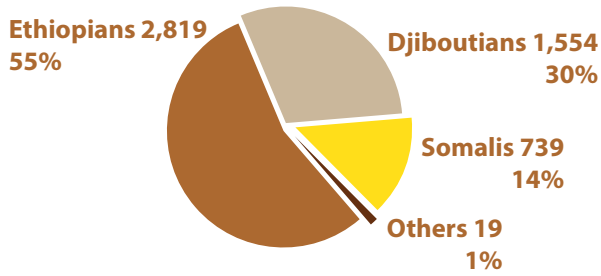


The various activities organised at the Caritas Centre include a food programme, medical assistance and a literacy programme.

In 2014 the literacy programme registered a total of 827 attendances. The youngsters who showed the greatest commitment during the lessons were integrated in the diocesan centres to follow a more structured educational programme within the above-mentioned LEC project¹⁹.

Caritas Djibouti also offers a healthcare service via its own medical clinic and takes charge of the most serious cases, sending them to the public hospital. Data on the number of patients and their nationalities registered by the Caritas infirmary give a clearer idea of the conditions of migrants in Djibouti affected by health problems, as shown in the charts and table below:

Medical examinations conducted at the Caritas Djibouti infirmary by country of origin and gender (2014)
(numbers and percentages)



Total: 5,131

of which

male 4,372 female 759
85% 15%



of which

street children 1.664



Taken charge of by Caritas

Maternity	65
Hospitalisation	385
Clinics	21
Pharmacy	830

Source: Caritas Djibouti

Some interviews gathered at the Caritas Centre regarding street children highlighted the problem of abuse perpetrated on abandoned minors, including by police forces²⁰.

First of all, studies carried out by international agencies present in the country reveal that more than 30% of the migrants who pass through Djibouti are under 18. Some are independent migrants, while others left with their families but often were abandoned during the journey, including very young children under 7.

The majority of these minor migrants are Ethiopian and come from the Oromo ethnic group. They usually follow the route from Addis Ababa to Dire Dawa where they take the train to Djibouti. Once they reach the city they find it very hard to find work (as Djibouti has an unemployment rate of around 60%) and they often end up living from hand to mouth and sleeping in the streets.

According to testimonies gathered from staff and children staying at the Caritas Centre, they are frequently arrested by the police and mistreated and abused in prison, including sexually. Girls living on the street, who are unlikely to go the Caritas Centre, are in a particularly vulnerable situation (only 24 of the 203 children registered are girls). Being alone in the streets in a strictly Moslem country, these girls are easily stigmatised as immoral people and steered towards prostitution and sexual violence perpetrated in the street.



5. Testimonies

ERITREAN STUDENT WHO FLED FROM HIS COUNTRY

"I'm from Eritrea. I was a university student, but strange things happened to me. We were notified that all students had to join the army for a certain period of time to attend a course held by the military. We were students, and we shouldn't have had to join the army. They told us that by joining the army for this period we'd have various benefits, and after the course we'd be able to resume our lessons. It wasn't explained if and when we'd be able to go back to the university. In the end we understood that joining the army was no longer a proposal, and we all had to do it, without having any choice in the matter. They took away our university badges, and a military officer took up residence in the faculty.

Eritrea is governed by a totalitarian regime. The president has the last word on any decision. Democratic elections have never been held in the country. I was a child when the president came to power, I don't remember very well... But I've seen what's happened over the years. Five government ministers ended up in prison for having political opinions different from those of the president. And they're still in prison today. Fifteen members of the Cabinet were also sent to prison. Several journalists have been arrested. Eight private newspapers have been shut down. Freedom of speech doesn't exist; you can't speak about everything you want to. You can only speak about arguments in favour of the government. Saying negative things about the government can be dangerous. The secret services may come to your house in the middle of the night and take you away. It's happened, and nobody knows where these people have ended up. No one speaks about them or dares to ask where they are. Everyone's afraid. A great deal of spying is going on. All the newspapers only disseminate propaganda in favour of the government. The authoritarian nature of the state has become clear to everyone. Freedom of speech has been wiped out".

The desire for freedom and dignity

The student continues: "Freedom of movement is also greatly restricted. The country has started being occupied by an incredible number of checkpoints. To go from my village to the next one, a 25-kilometre journey, I pass through three checkpoints. Can you believe that? In 25 kilometres! And they constantly check documents. The totalitarian regime monitors all movements and everything that happens in the country. They know where I'm going and what I'm doing...



Spying is rife: you find it everywhere, especially among the younger generations. You can't trust anyone, not even your friends. Not even your brothers and sisters.

You can't meet who you want to... If, for example, one day you invite a white person to your home, you can be sure that the next day the secret services will be knocking on your door to interrogate you. It also happened to me. I'd met an old friend, who was coming from Israel. We stopped to have a chat, in English. As soon as we'd greeted each other, people came up and asked me to explain who my friend was and what we'd said to each other. Even if you chat in large groups, more than five or six people, suspicion may be aroused that something is being passed on...

There's no alternative: either you swear obedience to the regime, or you have to leave the country".

Finally, the decision

"In the end, I decided to leave Eritrea. In December 2008. I left my village for Asmara, and from there I went to Massawa, and from Massawa to Ethiopia. It was a terrible journey on foot, and I had nothing with me. There was another person. It was the first time I'd been to this part of Eritrea; I didn't even know the right road. But in the end we arrived at the border. We met a group of Ethiopian soldiers, who were controlling the border. We immediately explained our situation and they told us they'd accompany us to the refugee camp. But they said if you want to enter the camp you'll have to pay. I said OK, and paid a large sum of money. I trusted them. They put us onto a lorry, and we set off on a three-day journey. Finally we arrived in a village. The lorry stopped there and we got off. There was no camp in the village. A soldier told us to wait there, and they would come back soon. They disappeared. We never saw them again...

So we asked where we were. The local residents told us we were on the border with Djibouti. 'What?'; I said. We'd trusted the soldiers, so we had no alternative. We'd ended up in an isolated place on the border with Djibouti. In Djibouti I immediately went to

UNHCR. I knocked on the door, but it was closed. I was scared. I had nothing with me, not even any documents. It was May 2008. I had to wait for several months. Finally, in September 2008, I was able to gain access to the offices, but they sent me to ONARS, the refugee office of Djibouti's Ministry of the Interior, but I never managed to get identity papers. I tried in every way I could think of. I even thought about changing my name. I telephoned and said I was an American, called George, in order to get myself an appointment. But when I arrived, once again they didn't let me in.

You see, for us having a refugee card is vital. To find a job, to be safe... We need to have one! And we also have the right to have one. We left our country due to the dictatorship, and here we have nothing. Water to wash ourselves, clothing, employment, medical assistance... We're human beings. We need these basic things! And what about the United Nations? Why are they there? Shouldn't they be helping us? We've been waiting for more than four years. And in the meantime we continue to be irregular immigrants, exposed to all kinds of risk.

You see, the difference between human beings and animals is that we human beings think, and we think about our future and what we could do. But how can you think about the future in this situation? We have nowhere to go, no hope. We've become like animals. We need something for our future. We have no possibilities in Djibouti. We can't study and improve our lives. We can't find a steady job. And we're afraid because spies from the Eritrean government are also here. They're everywhere, especially in America and Italy. There's a very large Eritrean community in Rome, and they're all in favour of the regime, they support it. And no one talks about what's really happening in our country".

SOMALI REFUGEE FROM MOGADISHU

"My name is Y. I come from Mogadishu. I arrived in Djibouti in December 2013 and went to Ali Addé. I left because of the war. It's too dangerous. There's fighting every day and women and children are continually being killed. You can't stay there. It's too dangerous. They kill you in the street, they shoot you. That's why I left. I have nine children, and my family is still in Mogadishu. I came to Djibouti to get a refugee certificate, to do something for my family. It took me 10 days to get here. It was a difficult journey. So I entered the camp. I went straight to Ali Addé. They give you something to eat, and there's also a school. I'm trying to find a way to bring my family here. Even though there are many problems living in the camp. Especially because there's nothing to do. You can't work, you can't do any-

thing. But at least there's no risk of being killed in the street. I sometimes come to Djibouti to find something to do, but there's nothing here either. So after a few days I take the bus back to the camp. Here in Djibouti I sometimes go to the mosque, where I receive some gifts. But I don't know how to bring my family here. I'd like to have a better life. But in Mogadishu things are getting worse".

Hope and desperation

"Somalia is a wonderful country, but the political situation is unmanageable. Everyone wants to be in charge, to have power; every group wants the presidency to run the country, and this generates war. My children can't go to school anymore. Even going out into the street is very dangerous.

In the Ali Addé camp there are many people from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia. And they all need help. Everyone expects the United Nations to find a solution for them; everyone wants to get out of the camp. And they wait for a resettlement programme. Every night you go to sleep and you hope that the next day something good will happen. But nothing changes. You hope to go to America, but you know it's just a dream and it won't happen.

Every day life is the same. I wake up in the morning, and have a little bread for breakfast. And then... nothing. I go back to sleep a bit, sit near the tent, speak with the others. The afternoon is the same: I sleep a bit, talk with the others. To make the time pass, we chew kat. There's a lot of it in the camp, and everyone takes it. It helps you stop thinking".

ELIAS, ETHIOPIAN, 16 YEARS OLD²¹

"I lived near Harare with my family. My dad became very aggressive and beat my mother every day. We were very poor: two of my brothers died due to hardships. I'm the eldest child and I tried to do what I could to help the rest of the family: I cooked, tended the vegetable garden in front of the house, and looked after my younger siblings. But at some point my father started beating me too. I couldn't live with him anymore. One night we ran away and arrived in Jijiga. There I helped my mother to get organised, and then continued my journey alone to Djibouti to look for work.

With the little money I'd brought with me, I bought some tools to start working. Now I do lots of odd jobs. I clean shoes in Menelik Square, run errands for the shopkeepers in the area, take out rubbish for people who live there, and clean people's homes. In exchange they give me something to eat and sometimes let me sleep in their homes. I'm trying to save as much as possible to send to my family".

6. The issue

The right to live, the first human right

In the face of the plight of millions of fleeing refugees and migrant families in search of a better life, it seems that feelings of welcome, solidarity and compassion are gradually giving way to attitudes of closure, hostility and aversion. Where does this rejection stem from?

Societies are increasingly entrenching themselves within their political and natural borders and regarding with suspicion and mistrust – or even dislike and spitefulness – the arrival of strangers and foreigners. They are militarising seas, constantly building new walls and mobilising armies, almost as if migration – rather than an issue to be managed – were an invasion to be halted, a war to be fought. Even political and media language, which deeply influences public opinion, has become military with the dissemination of strong and misleading terms such as "crisis", "threat", "terrorism", "invasion" and "crime" within public discourse. Consequently, citizens' reactions are increasingly marked by concern and narrow-mindedness.

Fear of migrant invasions

First of all, the main fears primarily regard security, with a widespread notion (fuelled by certain political propaganda) that migrants bring higher crime rates and potentially terrorist groups interested in undermining the foundations and values of our society in their wake. Secondly, concerns relate to the economic aspect, especially the fear that new arrivals may take away jobs (which are already scarce) from resident communities, and that the social cost of services provided to foreigners may place an undue burden on state coffers (as well as the pockets of the host societies). Irrespective of the fact that such fears have been proved wrong by official analyses, which show that an increase in immigration doesn't result in a higher crime rate, and that foreigners even make a greater financial contribution to host societies than the cost of the social services provided to them. Anti-migrant discourse continues to make inroads into public opinion and the prevailing argument remains "how to stop them coming".

Meanwhile, as long as the vast majority of migrants continue to be put in an irregular and undocumented situation, people and powerful groups (people traffickers) will be able to make money out of them by organising illegal movements and journeys: the more restrictive legal regulations regarding migrant movements are, the more handsome their profits are



The issue of migration from the Horn of Africa

There are economic and political reasons that draw societies' attention to problematic aspects of migration and place emphasis on the "blocking" rather than the regulatory option, on rejection rather than welcome and integration.

Meanwhile, as long as the vast majority of migrants continue to be put in an irregular and undocumented situation, people and powerful groups (people traffickers) will be able to make money out of them by organising illegal movements and journeys: the more restrictive legal regulations regarding migrant movements are, the more handsome their profits are.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that in so-called "first world" countries the presence of irregular migrants, without documents and rights, is convenient for many employers interested in having an unprotected and underpaid workforce.

It should also be noted that what happens to sub-Saharan refugees on our shores reflects a similar mechanism in the Horn of Africa: the great economic inequality between neighbouring countries. Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti have a total population of around 110 million inhabitants and an average per capita income of 5-600 US dollars per annum. Only Djibouti exceeds 1,500 US dollars, but with a population of just over 800,000 inhabitants. It's understandable that Yemen, with an average per capita income of 2,500 US dollars, is the first stage on the way to nearby Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, where average per capita income ranges from 30 to 40,000 US dollars (the figure for Italy is 34,000 US dollars).

These inequalities are unacceptable and the globalised economy shows no signs of changing course.

Political manipulation of migration

At political level it's even more obvious that various parties in all industrialised countries have literally built their electoral fortune – not to mention their *raison d'être* – on anti-foreigner propaganda, by proclaiming and disseminating clear and simple messages, albeit scarcely documented, on the migration threat, thus obtaining a growing political consensus in exchange.

Finally, it may be noted that at historic moments like the present one, marked by global economic crises, political authorities have always sought to identify an ostensible cause on which to focus public attention, thereby deflecting their responsibility in the matter and that of dominant interest groups. In this respect, foreign migrants unluckily make ideal targets for assuming the thankless role of scapegoats.

Beyond the reasons that have driven contemporary societies to fortify natural barriers and build walls, the steady decline of feelings of human solidarity, which normally arise in situations of particularly severe hardship (as is undoubtedly the case for migrant families and victims of war, persecution, torture and environmental disasters), should fuel reflection. A growing number of people, from every latitude and of every faith – including Christians – are showing intolerance and hostility towards migrants, raising physical and metaphorical walls against them.

Some food for thought on a growing phenomenon

First of all, realism: in a world of growing inequality, it's not enough to set ourselves the albeit vital goal of "eradicating" hunger, as Expo 2015 in Milan aptly reminded us. If the income gap grows, as everything seems to indicate it will, migration will increase and the "walls" will only worsen the initial situation and levels of irregular immigration will rise.

Conflicts that drag on for years and oppressive regimes are another two elements that here we merely touch on, which obviously only fuel further migration. As on many other occasions, we condemn the inability of international institutions to halt the expansion of hotbeds of tension in so many parts of the world.

Local responsibilities exist too. Countries in the region do not lack laws, against people traffickers for example, but they're relatively unknown and applied even less. Moreover, the traffickers go unpunished and take advantage of local connivance with corruption. Is there nothing else that can be done in the area of international cooperation to halt this phenomenon,

apart from spending money on "armour-plating" rich countries?

Nothing warrants the fear of invasion, even if policies providing greater freedom of movement were adopted, which per se would reduce irregular immigration. Studies regarding the Horn of Africa reveal that the proportion of migrants wishing to leave their countries on a permanent basis is very low (from 1 to 2%). People want to stay in their own homes or return to them, if conflicts, which are the main reason for fleeing, were to cease.

The Church's response

Faced with this "loss of humanity", it's vital to strongly reiterate the message of the Gospel and the mission of the Church, "without frontiers, Mother to all"²². Jesus taught with unambiguous words the moral duty to welcome the stranger and we are called on to recognise God "in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches"²³.

The social teaching of the Church clearly preaches and promotes the right to freedom of movement, as all men and women are sons and daughters of God, who belong to one human family and should be free to emigrate in search of better living conditions. The Church cannot make distinctions between resident and migrant communities, as all men and women are equal before God. Rather, based on social teaching, all Christians are called on to express a preferential option for the poor and the most vulnerable, such as migrant foreigners²⁴. In the light of these principles, one understands Pope Francis' message even better:

"It is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane. At the same time, greater efforts are needed to guarantee the easing of conditions, often brought about by war or famine, which compel whole peoples to leave their native countries.

Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a world-wide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress.

Dear migrants and refugees! You have a special place in the heart of the Church, and you help her to enlarge her heart and to manifest her motherhood towards the entire human family. Do not lose your faith and hope!"²⁵.

7. Experiences and proposals

In the republic of Djibouti

The Catholic Church and Caritas are engaged in accompanying and improving the living conditions of migrants throughout the world. This also occurs in all countries in the Horn of Africa, but here we will only refer to the activities of the two Caritas most involved in migration: the Caritas of Somalia, the geographic place of origin of many refugees, and the Caritas of Djibouti through which migrants must pass on their way to the Arabian Peninsula.

The Catholic Church of Djibouti, which is an extremely fragile and minority organisation in a Moslem country, has for years been engaged in the protection of the most vulnerable migrants: abandoned children, the sick and illiterate youngsters. In particular, it provides these services via the office of Caritas Djibouti. Illiterate youngsters, the most likely social category to fall prey to the most cruel forms of exploitation, attend the informal "LEC" schools which offer a basic education to migrant children, orphans and those unable to pay for their schooling. The country has five LEC centres: in Djibouti (the Boulaos LEC), Arta, Ali-Sabieh, Tadjoura and Obock. Many youngsters acquire the basic knowledge required to look for a job and to avoid setting off blindly on journeys without a secure destination.

Caritas Djibouti's second sphere of activity is aimed at street children. Around 100 homeless boys and girls, aged from 7 to 17, of whom more than half are foreigners, are welcomed and fed every day. For further information about the basic literacy programme, which was attended by 827 youngsters in 2014, see section 4. The youngsters who showed the greatest commitment during the lessons were integrated in the diocesan centres to follow a more structured educational programme within the above-mentioned LEC project.

In addition to these two actions, Caritas Djibouti is increasingly striving to obtain Djiboutian citizenship for many children who otherwise would continue to have an uncertain status and easily fall prey to traffickers. On the other hand, where possible, efforts are also made to contact minors' families of origin, especially Ethiopians, with a view to achieving family reunion which gives the minors hope and the families renewed responsibility for their children.

Finally, Caritas Djibouti also offers a healthcare service via its own medical clinic and takes charge of the most serious cases, sending them to the public hospital.

In Somalia

Somalia has been in a state of total anarchy since 1992, at the mercy of armed gangs and terrorist mili-



tia, and also affected by periodic droughts including a very serious one in 2011. Somalia has a population of no more than seven million inhabitants, of whom three million are in need of aid, more than one million are internally displaced, and another million are refugees in neighbouring countries, in camps from which, if possible, they try to escape at any cost. The majority of the children (1.7 million) haven't attended school for years²⁶.

Caritas cannot operate directly, but rather via certain local NGOs that Caritas Somalia financially supports, thanks to Caritas Italiana, its largest donor. For several years, when possible, given the overall conditions of insecurity, efforts have been made to improve agriculture, schooling in the relatively quiet neighbourhoods, vocational training, healthcare and food distributions. A precarious, silent endeavour that sometimes needs to be resumed after a new outbreak of violence.

For many years Caritas Somalia has been calling in vain for international political action to resolve the situation, while successive peace conferences are held, without any outcome. Not by chance, the boats crossing the Mediterranean always contain many Somalis.

For Caritas Italiana, Somalia also means remembering the greatest gift possible: the death of one of its workers, Graziella Fumagalli, a doctor in the hospital for tuberculosis patients in Merca. Indeed, 22 October this year will mark the 20th anniversary of this unmotivated and unpunished murder, and the witness of a woman devoted to her job even in the most difficult situations, who was killed while attending to patient, because, as she used to say: "This is my duty".

WHAT ABOUT THOSE PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIVE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA?

Aid and advocacy

In Djibouti, as in the rest of the world, the Church and Caritas also have the difficult task of reminding the po-

litical authorities to respect ethical standards and migrants' fundamental rights. Together with the services provided on a daily basis (reception centres, canteens, medical clinics, etc.), it's becoming increasingly necessary to strengthen the political work of advocacy and condemnation, in the light of the Gospel message and the Church's social teaching.

Indeed, the way in which most states are behaving towards migrants is unacceptable. On the one hand, liberal democracies are expressing their concern regarding the millions of people fleeing from wars, persecution, extreme poverty and natural disasters, and in the last century they assumed a precise legal responsibility aimed at granting these people protection, with the ratification of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. On the other hand, the same liberal democracies have implemented ever more restrictive measures to prevent migrants from reaching their territories, by strengthening natural and artificial barriers and obstacles (seas and walls, indeed) in order to hamper human movement.

Another blatant paradox lies in the fact that, in our contemporary global world, the mobility of assets, money, services and information is strongly encouraged, while the free movement of human beings is hampered in all ways possible²⁷.

All-round activities

Therefore, it's the Church's duty to condemn these contradictions and remind political authorities to respect their moral and legal commitments.

- Another important sphere of intervention is communication. Faced with political propaganda that disseminates inaccurate and misleading news on

the "migration threat", a different, in-depth and documented voice should be made to be heard, which makes room for the specific dimensions of migration and gives a voice to the real victims of the situation, who are the fleeing families²⁸.

- Indeed, too little is said about the reasons why millions of people are forced to leave their villages and their countries, which include armed conflicts around the world, human impact on the degradation of the environment and the consequences of environmental disasters.
- Even less is said about the interests the "first world", namely the world of modern liberal democracies (and lately also the new economic powers in Asia and South America), has in the regions with the highest emigration rates: the arms business, extraction of oil and other minerals, and intense exploitation of natural resources.
- Greater awareness of migration as a whole, which takes account of the root causes, the international interests involved and the strategies implemented to deflect attention away from real problems, would enable insight into a great paradox: the fact that, with their policies, the very states that cause migration movements in other parts of the world, then do their utmost to block and repress these migratory flows, thus preventing refugees from reaching their borders.
- Finally, the Church should persevere in its efforts to convert the hearts of rulers and the faithful, reminding us of our duty of solidarity towards the most vulnerable, and putting us on our guard against being "tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length"²⁹.



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NOTES

Introduction

- ¹ Cf. Wallet, E. (2014). *Borders, Fences and Walls. State of Insecurity?* Ashgate.
- ² Card. Rodríguez, O., A. (2009). *A Witness to Hope. Migration and Human Solidarity*. In Groody, G., D., Campese, G. (2009). *A promised Land, a Perilous Journey. Theological Perspectives on Migration*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- ³ Cf. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* and Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

Chapter 1

- ⁴ UNHCR (2014). *Global Trends 2013. War's Human Cost*. Geneva.
- ⁵ Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (2014). *Conflict Barometer 2013. Disputes, non violent Crises, Violent Crises, Limited Wars, Wars*. Heidelberg, Germany.
- ⁶ UNHCR, press release. *In 2014 more than 348,000 people around the world crossed the sea in search of asylum or better opportunities. It's necessary to give priority to saving human lives*. Rome, 10 December 2014.

Chapter 2

- ⁷ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2014*.
- ⁸ UNHCR, Statistics as of February 2015 and Unité d'Enregistrement et Statistiques, Djibouti. The statistics reported do not yet include the number of refugees coming from Yemen.
- ⁹ Interview with Rosalinda Cottone, IOM Djibouti, April 2015. The figure reported compares the number of migrants registered in Djibouti (22,000 per year on average) with those registered in Yemen (over 80,000), and takes into account that registration at IOM sites is a voluntary procedure, which many migrants do not carry out.

Chapter 3

- ¹⁰ Cf. Caritas Italiana (2012). *Fame di pane e di futuro. Emergenza Corno d'Africa*, Rome.
- ¹¹ Zupi, M. (2011). *La crisi nel Corno d'Africa*, Rome, International Political Observatory – Foreign Affairs Department Research Service.
- ¹² Cf. Saini, B., *Diga della rinascita o della discordia?* (1 settembre 2014). http://www.nigrizia.it/notizia/diga-della-rinascita-o-della-discordia_1 – “The dam, under construction since 2011 by the Italian company Salini Costruttori, is 1,800 metres long and 170 metres high. It will have 6,000 megawatts of installed capacity and is scheduled to enter service in 2017. The dam is obviously a concern for the countries along the Nile, especially Egypt which depends on the Nile for 90% of its water supply, and in particular 85% from the waters of the Blue Nile” (<http://www.conflictstrategie.it/le-dighe-etio-piche-sul-nilo-un-caso-di-studio>), 20 October 2013.

- ¹³ IANSA, Oxfam, Saferworld, 2007, *Africa's Missing Billions: International arms flows and the cost of conflict*.
- ¹⁴ Durdon, T. (2014). *Selling War: The World's Biggest Exporters Of Weapons*. <http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2014-05-18/selling-war-worlds-biggest-exporters-weapons>
- ¹⁵ Oxfam (2006). *Ammunition: the fuel of conflict*. Oxfam briefing note, 15 June 2006.
- ¹⁶ Simoncelli, M. (2014). *La fiera galleggiante delle armi. Rientrata la portaerei Cavour. Nigrizia*, 9 April 2014.

Chapter 4

- ¹⁷ Estimates regarding abandoned minors and street children in the Republic of Djibouti are controversial. The government of Djibouti tends to cover up this situation, denying that the problem exists and censoring studies on the issue carried out by UNICEF and other international organisations.
- ¹⁸ Caritas Djibouti, *Rapport Annuel 2014. Un pas vers un avenir plus humain*. Djibouti, 2014.
- ¹⁹ The LEC (reading, writing and arithmetic) literacy centres are supported by the local Church and offer a basic education to orphan students and disadvantaged families. The country has five LEC centres: in Djibouti (the Boulaos LEC), Arta, Ali-Sabieh, Tadjoura and Obock.
- ²⁰ DIIS (Danish Institute for International Studies), High Risk Migration in the Horn of Africa. South-South Child Migrations, April 2015. Research carried out via interviews at the Caritas Djibouti Centre.

Chapter 5

- ²¹ Ibidem.

Chapter 6

- ²² *Church without frontiers, Mother to all*. Message of the Holy Father for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2015.
- ²³ Ibidem. Cf. also Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens*, 14 May 1971, 23.
- ²⁴ Cf. Pope John XXIII, Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, 30, Pope John XXIII, *De Pastoralis Migratorum Cura*, Pope John Paul II, Message for World Migration Day 2001.
- ²⁵ *Church without frontiers, Mother to all*, cit., 2015.

Chapter 7

- ²⁶ Caritas Somalia, *Annual Report 2014*, p. 6 27.
- ²⁷ Cf. Gibney, M. J. (2004). *The Ethics and Politics of Asylum. Liberal Democracies and Response to Refugees*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Hollenbach, D. (2008). *Refugee Rights. Ethics, Advocacy and Africa*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press; Hollenbach, D. (2010). *Driven from Home. Protecting the rights of forced migrants*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press.
- ²⁸ Cf. the annual reports on migration by Caritas and Migrantes.
- ²⁹ Pope Francis I, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 270.

Migration: a worldwide tragedy that doesn't only affect nations bordering the Mediterranean. This report refers to the little known situation in the countries of the Horn of Africa: Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

The republic of Djibouti is a small country on the Red Sea. Many migrants fleeing conflict and repression in their own countries have to pass through there on their way to Yemen on the opposite shore.

In 2014, 82,680 identified people passed through Djibouti en route to Yemen. The number of irregular migrants crossing the country is unknown. 265 casualties were recorded.

The conflict in neighbouring Somalia began in 1992 and is still the main cause of refugees fleeing from this country.

The Horn of Africa is also a region severely affected by periods of drought, another reason for flight.

Stories of hardship, including lack of effective legal protection, which gives free rein to people traffickers.

Meanwhile, theories justifying new walls and fences are gaining ground, which neither resolve the tragic refugee situation nor bring international responsibilities into question.

Caritas Italiana is the pastoral organisation of the Italian Bishops' Conference. It was founded in 1971 by Pope Paul VI to promote charity. It coordinates, supports and trains 220 Italian diocesan Caritas in engagement with the poorest.

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The events of 2015 in which hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants sought help in Europe show that walls and border security don't prevent people from migrating, they just increase their suffering. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency 59.5 million people were forced to emigrate from their places of origin due to armed conflicts, persecution, widespread violence and human rights violations by the end of 2014.

Caritas Italiana's *Seas and Walls* report enables a better understanding of the events that force people to become migrants. It provides insight into the global migration emergency and it also contains some important reflections on human trafficking and the Church's response. It reminds us of Pope Francis' message that "it is necessary to respond to the globalisation of migration with the globalisation of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane". *Seas and Walls* invites reflection on global mobility and how solidarity responds to this urgent challenge. It raises the issues of justice and the effectiveness of procedures.

Many people migrate and they don't automatically have the right to live in the countries that receive them. However, this doesn't detract from the fact that their human rights should in any case be respected. Some people seek better luck in dealing with problems of extreme poverty and lack of opportunities in their own countries. Migration introduces new blood into sluggish European economies. Migrants often provide the caring backbone to aging European populations when families can't provide adequate care.

As we're currently seeing, a growing number of people who migrate are asylum seekers fleeing from war and situations of extreme violence and danger. It's undoubtedly important that they do not end up entangled in bureaucratic complications, the equivalent of less visible walls. However, it's equally true that we need to strive for peace in the war-torn countries from which people flee. This is a massive challenge. Many people, especially Syrians for example, would be happy to remain in their countries or return there as soon as possible. Many others would be ready to return once they saw strife-free stability restored and no longer had to fear for their lives. Many would like to contribute to new peaceful development of their countries.